



*24th to 26th March 2023*

## **Gathering Report (Proceedings)**

**Di Robinson**

# **Background:**

The 33rd Women on Farms Gathering in Yarram in 2023 came to life in a conversation between Colleen Condliffe and Diane Robinson in March 2022. Colleen, Chair of the 2022 Gathering in Inglewood had a wish to be able to pass the baton for the gathering onto another group. Inglewood would have done this had they been able to hold their Gathering on the original date of March 2020 with Port Fairy signed up for 2021. However as we all know COVID determined that this should not be. The ladies of Inglewood, despite all the setbacks they had held an amazing Gathering in 2022. Diane took on Colleen's wish that the Gathering be passed, but, before accepting the challenge, talked to Cathy Cook co-ordinator of Yarram Neighbourhood House asking if they would auspice the Gathering if it were to come to Yarram. Taking it to her committee of management Cathy reported back that they were willing and that she would like to be part of the organising. With this knowledge, and a belief that '*Dreams can be made if you work at them*', Diane stood in front of everyone at Inglewood and accepted the CHALLENGE, and challenging everyone to bring a young woman to Yarram in an effort to keep the Gatherings going.

## ***The Committee:***

*Our committee was only small and as such was not run as a formal committee. With just four ladies, this meant that each of us did multiple tasks, without being managed. It is a credit to each of us that we were able to achieve such a mammoth event in such a short timeframe I cannot say enough of how proud I am of these women and their commitment to the Gathering. The following is just some of what they did.*

### ***Angie:***

Our connection to the Regent Theatre as a committee member of this, also member of TRIPLEX, Angie came on board and worked at co-ordinating the tours.

### ***Bianca:***

Bringing GCASA with her, Bianca brought her expertise on event co-ordination, technology, workshop presentation and her co-operation and can do attitude. Bianca set up the Facebook page and wrote all the advertising including developing the Try Booking site. She put together the Saturday morning Workshop and presented it and co-ordinated the registrations on the weekend. Bianca would also have been the last to leave each night as she always ensures things are finished.

### ***Cathy:***

As manager of Yarram Neighbourhood House, Cathy, joined the Gathering at the beginning. Cathy with her extensive networks took on co-ordination of the catering for the weekend including the wonderful breakfasts put on by the Yarram Scouts of which she is a leader. Cathy also used her computer skills to put together the program and of course was the person on the end of the phone line if you had any questions about the event.

### ***Di:***

As the person who took on the Gathering and the person with the knowledge of what a Gathering is, Di was the leader. From saying YES and setting a date to development of the weekend program of events and gaining the facilitators etc to getting the sponsorship money, Di played a major part. But it was people's willingness and trust in connecting with Di that ensured it all happened.

# ***The Challenge***

The challenge was to create a Gathering, in just 12 months, that would live up to the 32 previous events, from scratch!

Ensuring the Yarram Neighbourhood House would auspice was the first as this meant we had an incorporated body, to hold the funds, cover insurance and allowed us to apply for grants.

Next was a venue, as I had already set the date of 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March at Inglewood, as soon as I got home I contacted Susan, manager of Yarram's iconic Regent Theatre to make sure we could book this for this weekend. Susan assured me we could and was also the first of many organisations that gave to the Gathering, saying the cost would be just \$350/day. With budget in mind, we set that we would hold as much of the event within this space as possible.

Our budget was probably our greatest challenge, with less than 12 months to organise the event and the knowledge that bookings from participants would not come in until January 2023, we started with a ledger of '\$00.00'. Applying for grants we were informed that because YNH had grants open and unacquitted from FRRR and also Wellington Shire, we were unable to gains grants from them.

Accepting what seemed like a huge setback with the spirit of "Dreams happen if you work at them", I set about connecting with organisations and people asking for sponsorship. The response I received showed over and over that it is your connections and people who are the most valuable things. Everyone I asked willingly came on board donating money, time, goods and expertise because I asked; I cannot thank these people enough. What started as a seemingly huge obstacle of not obtaining grants, actually became a benefit, we did not have to do any formal acquittals.

Unlike other Gatherings, Yarram was taken on by an individual, with the timeframes involved getting a committee together was a challenge too big, until September it was just Cathy and myself. At this point I almost gave up thinking I had taken on too much. Then I thought about my good friend Bianca, Bianca and I have worked on many things together as part of roles in work in the past 15 plus years and I know how brilliant she is and how I can depend on her.

On discussion with Bianca, she not only willingly jumped in, but, also said she could fit our theme into her work with GCASA and on talking to her manager, GCASA also came on board supporting us not only by giving Bianca, but also with technical assistance, goods and of course running the main workshop on Saturday morning. This was a change from previous Gatherings as it was delivered to everyone, which started as a challenge and turned out to be a big success

I also approached another long term friend Angie and she also came on board another huge benefit as not only did she help organise the tours, she also brought into the Gathering the wonderful ladies of TRIPLEX who performed for us on Saturday night.

CONNECTION was also highlighted on Saturday evening by the amazing AG-ARTS, Cate connected with us via the 'Facebook' page and speaking to her we just clicked, these amazing women were just like us. With discussion we worked on them coming to Yarram, showing their film and those incredible creations as a donation such a huge saving for us and I hope a great first showing for them. Once again our challenges were becoming opportunities.

Attendees are always a challenge, not knowing how many people will attend and having to cater for this. For us this was very tricky as we had no funds, Inglewood, through no fault of theirs were not able to forward the 'seeding money' \$3000.00 until January, however we needed to purchase things like mugs, bags, etc which had always been part of gatherings. Rural Family Resources willingly paid for the mugs, badges, pens and other incidentals on the understanding they would be reimbursed, taking this stress away.

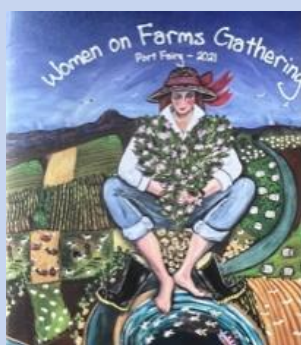
Bianca and GCASA put together the Facebook site and Try Booking registrations, having these helped enormously and all of you who booked and helped others book through these were also a big help. Our attendees amounted to just over 100 a perfect amount as it meant we could nicely contain everything within the Regent and was perfect for the tours we had arranged and also the workshops.

# Sponsors

Yarram Women on Farms Gathering 2023 would like to thank all our sponsors, we are very grateful that you gave so willingly when approached. The money provided by you was the difference between us struggling to make ends meet and being able to have a surplus of about \$10,000.00.



Yarram Real Estate



*Andrew McDougall Building      Warrigal Creek*

A special thanks goes to the Port Fairy Women on Farms Gathering Committee who rang on the eve of our Gathering and donated \$2000.00 'just to help'. This donation brought me to tears as it relieved me of much stress. This money along with another \$2000.00 has been forwarded to Warragul Women on Farms with the \$3000.00 seeding money for future Gatherings.

## ***In kind supports:***

The list of In Kind supporters is extensive and I apologise if I miss anyone:

- |                            |                         |                        |                        |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| YARRAM NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE | THE BRIDGE              | YARRAM REGENT THEATRE  | TRIPLEX                |
| JENNY ANGLICAN CHURCH      | YARRAM HESCO MURALS     | OUR WORKSHOP PROVIDERS |                        |
| MUSEUMS VICTORIA           | SUSAN MCMILLAN          | FIONA CURRAM           | AG-ARTS                |
| YARRAM SCOUTS              | OUR FRIDAY PANEL        | THE COOK FAMILY        | OUR TOUR LEADERS       |
| BUS DRIVERS                | WARRAGUL WOMEN ON FARMS | COLLEEN CONDLIFFE      | CATERERS/FOOD DONATORS |
| CHRIS & ANDREA McCALLUM    | SOUTH GIPPSLAND WATER   | THE GARDEN TOUR HOSTS  |                        |

And not least our families who did whatever we asked.

# **Theme:**

## **CONNECT**

The simple word **CONNECT** was chosen as our theme as it explained what we wanted to achieve:-

- Women to connect with each other
- How connecting and supporting is beneficial
- How with connection great things can be achieved
- That positive respectful connection to others is important

# **Logo:**



The logo was designed by Di and Cathy for simplicity and ease of use.

Bianca was able to use a computer program to generate it. Being circular made it easy for us to use for our products such as the mugs, Tee shirts and badges.

# **Mugs, Pens, Bags and Badges:**

Bianca sourced these items and they were funded by Rural Family Resources until our finances allowed us to refund. The mugs are made from 50% wheat fibre. As our finances were limited it was decided that we would have pens as a cheaper option to bags, however resourceful Bee spoke with the team from Wellington Shire 'Middle of Everywhere' and they gladly donated the bags and other goods including drink bottles. The Badges were put together by Bianca with a group she runs from materials donated by Rural Family Resources. The bags were packed by Yarram Scouts under leadership of Cathy and Angie.



# **Trees, Sunflowers and thankyou Jam:**

In line with our tight budget, Bianca created the seed paper you all got in your bag and Di remembering that many Gatherings had donations of trees from their local Landcare grew 250 Banksia seedlings to give out at the weekend. These grew from tiny seedlings in December to the 20cm trees you took home, and shows that natives too enjoy fertilizer and water being watered daily and fed with Aquasol weekly. The left over seedlings around 100 were donated to other organisations. Di also grew a succession of sunflowers in order to have some flowering at the time of the Gathering. 50 jars of Jam were made over summer as thankyou gifts.

## Catering:



The catering for the Gathering was outsourced to Cathy and Yarram Neighbourhood House. As other Gathering committees have stated, getting the catering right is critical and therefore catering took up the largest proportion of our budget, \$100 of each paying participant's \$250 registration. With the connections Cathy as manager of the Neighbourhood House had she was able to engage many of Yarram's community groups to help with what was a huge task.

Cathy's family and her Scout group members were incredible cooking, serving, and making sure everyone was well fed.

## Setting up the Regent:



Yarram's Regent Theatre is a fabulous setting making the job of setting up for the Gathering easier; however, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March started early for us and creating the transformation took many hands. Our families were again called on to set up the tables and chairs with the Cook family doing this before going to school.

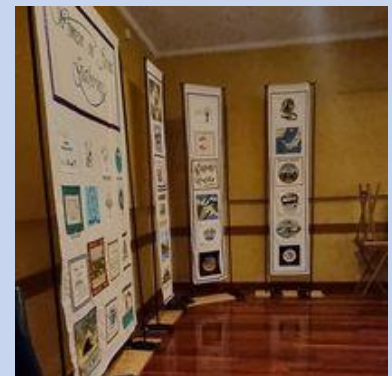
The Stage was the creation of Sue Glebov Yarram's Florist, again Sue gave her time and expertise for nothing saying it was in return for all the flowers she has taken from my garden.

Then Alice and Hannah arrived from the Museum with the banners that they set up at the back of the theatre.



Karen finished the incredible feat with the setting up of the amazing AG-ART'S Creations.

The Foyer and registration area was done by Bianca with the help of Tess and Sarah.



# Program:

## Friday 24<sup>th</sup>:

Our program began with the optional Dept of Ag 'CONNECT' workshop facilitated by Sally Murfet from INSPIRE AG. This workshop taught the benefits of well connected teams, emphasizing the need for good leadership, respectful communication and shared goals. We also learnt how destructive it can be if there is a member of the team who does not share the values of the organisation and how hard it is to spot a saboteur, as we all believe others have the same values as we do. A very insightful workshop thanks Sally and Tess McDougall from Dept of Ag.



## WELCOME:



Our MC for Friday was Bianca; she welcomed us and acknowledged the traditional owners of the lands **THE GUNAI KURNAI**.

## WOMEN'S STORIES:

An integral part of all Women on Farms Gatherings are the Women's stories, and we wanted this to be a major part of our event to focus on the achievements of the women in our area and also of those from further away. We all have a story to tell and I asked each of the members of the committee if they would tell their story at the gathering. Bianca shared her story on Friday a story of triumphs and tragedies love and let down, but,

mostly of her enduring positive personality and giving nature.



## THE PANEL:

We also wanted to celebrate the amazing women we have in our district, especially the young women. Many of these women are too shy to stand on 'stage' and 'BLOW THEIR OWN TRUMPET' so I came up with the idea of a panel where they would be interviewed. This made asking the young women Paige, Eve, Amy and Kate easier for me and it gave me great pleasure that they accepted. Taking up the challenge they each told how Yarram district had become their home and why we are so proud of them and what they do.

Libby and Deb, also have incredible stories of overcoming adversity and building businesses they can be proud of, for me Deb was also the perfect person to interview the 'Panel' with her years of experience as a journalist.

## LOCAL SINGER 'FIONA'

Fiona was asked to perform for us on Friday by Cathy, recognising her talents. Fiona has a beautiful voice and we hope it takes her far. Thank you Fiona.



## **STORY OF WOF'S:**

WOFs are all over the world, courageous, hard working, supporting, loyal and seldom heard.

This is the story of the WOFs in a far away corner of a far away country, Australia. The WOFs in this region have been quietly working to support others since settlement in the 1780's, coming from other lands where they had been unseen WOF's for millennia. Of course the indigenous WOF's of this land had also carried out the same roles since ancient time, it is just what WOF's do.

In 1989 in this region called Victoria, in a town called Warragul a group of WOF's formed a group for discussion and skills training and recognising the need to support each other and also other, often isolated, WOF's they said

"Let's have a gathering"

WOF's from all over Victoria came to that gathering in 1990 and from that courageous small beginning WOF's from across the state took up the challenge. Each year the 'WOF GATHERING' took place in a rural town across the state, from SWAN HILL, to BUCHAN, PORT FAIRY, to CORRYONG and everywhere in between.

At the gathering the WOF's heard stories from their fellows and came to understand that although they were told that they were not as important and shouldn't be recognised for what they did, this was not true and they should be celebrated for their incredible contributions. This became the backbone of the gatherings, helping hundreds of women gain confidence, support each other and take journeys they never thought they could. Yet at all times WOF's live by the belief that all women whoever they are and whatever they do are amazing and should be celebrated, this is so often reflected in the stories told.

The WOF's and the Gatherings have been through many crises like floods, bushfires, droughts and sandstorms not to mention COVID, yet the WOF's who have taken on the challenge of organising their gathering don't let these things stop the event.

This again highlights the resilience and commitment WOF's have and their belief in the importance of 'that one weekend in the year that is about us'.

Each year another group of intrepid women put up their hand to take on the challenge. This is often done very timidly, it is a huge job, most conferences are organised by highly trained and remunerated employee. WOF's are unpaid and are doing this in addition to the many other things they do in life.

So the journey begins,

- The committee, volunteers who will commit, here WOF's have an advantage: as the saying goes 'ask a busy person'.
- Funding, learning how to apply for grants, being able to accept the knock backs coping with 'WOF's aren't important therefore they come last when giving funding'. (Overheard from one organisation 'I told the boss he should support this as her husband is a good fella!')
- Organising workshops and tours involving negotiating. Often not something WOF's are trained in, however they normally are experts in this in the hardest area of all 'FAMILIES'.
- Catering, the WOF Gathering teaches how to be a food logistics expert very quickly, from allergies to costs it is a huge task keeping everyone happy and within budget.
- Logistics, making it all happen seamlessly, while keeping participants unaware of any dramas.
- And last but not least ADMINISTRATION a huge learning curve that changes each year as technology develops.

WOF's take this all in their stride and of course they have many secret weapons to help.

- ❖ Being women, this gives the advantage that we have always been able to be flexible do many jobs at once, it maybe Jack of all trades, master of none, but, Jill can master all things.
- ❖ Women help each other, other's will always's offer (especially women), WOF's accept help, and use their networks, which of course grow with each gathering.
- ❖ The core value of WOF's is support, meaning that those organising will always think of each other and care, understanding the people are the most important. Without the people managing, nothing will survive, be that a farm, a family or a community, we must put people first.

And who are these incredible WOF's?

All of us here today, from those that have been involved from the beginning, through to this the 33rd WOMEN ON FARMS GATHERING.

From those who have courageously organised multiple gatherings through those who have taken it on once and on to those who take it on in the future.

Welcome everyone, this weekend will be a wonderful event, I know because I have been working with the amazing women who have created it.

**Di Robinson 2023**



## ***SATURDAY 25<sup>TH</sup>:***

*For the early birds Saturday began in the park with the Yarram Scouts serving pancakes for breakfast led by Cathy.*

*In the Regent Bianca was busy preparing for the GCASA workshop, setting out the tables with the activities needed.*

## ***WOMEN'S STORIES:***

Angie shared her story of bravery and self – care, I would like to acknowledge the courage that this took and to thank Angie, her courage in being open allowed others after the GCASA workshop, to open up about their trauma, an example of women helping each other.

## ***WORKSHOP:***

*Yarram WOFG chose a different approach to Saturday morning instead of participants having a choice of many workshops; everybody attended a workshop facilitated by Bianca thanks Bee.*

### ***Understanding the benefits of connection***

GCASA presented a workshop on, “Understanding the benefits of connection,” looking at the theme of connection and how it relates to the prevention of sexual assault and violence. The presentation and workshop highlighted the importance for participants to connect with each other and gave some ideas and strategies that they could use during the WOFG and beyond. The workshop was very interactive and generated much laughter and communication.

## **TOURS:**

### **Tarra-Bulga**

### **Local History**

### **Local Gardens**

### **Sale and the Rubeena**

### **West to Welshpool Long Jetty and Fish Creek**

Another change from previous gatherings was our tours, these all began at 11am and each tour group had lunch as part of their tour. This was done in order to make our tours as diverse as possible providing time to travel away from Yarram which locals all know is an hour from anywhere truly the ‘Middle of Everywhere’.

Arranging the tours was made much easier with the input of Neil from True Blue Buslines who co-ordinated the local bus drivers for me, also Warragul WOF who gave their bus and wonderful driver Jarrad to go to Sale and Pam mini bus driver from Inglewood who willingly went on the Port Albert Tour and drove people into the cemetery.

Angie and Di spent many days mapping out the tours with Di driving and Angie taking notes so she was able to write up itineraries for the tour leaders and bus drivers.

A challenge for our tours came in the week before the gathering when we heard the lunch providers were unable to cater for us. However as with other challenges this became an opportunity meaning the Rubeena tour had wood- fired pizza at the Community garden in Sale and the Welshpool tour had lovely fish and chips at the Long Jetty. We also thank the Devon North Hall Committee for stepping in and providing lunch for the Tarra Valley and Garden tour.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our tour leaders, Angie, Ross, Bianca, Di, Tess and Sarah for their knowledge and leadership of the tours.

Also the venue hosts Devon Siding Olives, Tarra-Bulga information centre, The Rubeena and Sale Art Gallery, Port Albert Maritime Museum and our garden hosts **Kaylene & Barry, Lorraine & George, Kay and Les and Jane and Greg.**

## ***SATURDAY EVENING:***

The MC for Saturday Evening was Cathy, she put on the screen photos taken during the tours.

## ***WOMEN'S STORIES:***

Cathy told her story of volunteering and taking leadership roles and of how she came to be in Yarram.

## ***AG-ARTS:***

*Our first key-note speakers were Cate, Karen and Lorraine and the incredible story of how Lorraine created Ag-Art at the Elmore Field Days 20 years ago starting from an idea to being the showcase of*



*the amazing designs some of which were in the Regent this weekend. The film, idea and creation of Karen and Cate, followed the journey of some of the designers and makers of the garments from idea to completion. Thank you, Cate for contacting us and Lorraine and Karen for coming all the way to Yarra and sharing your story with us.*



## ***STORY OF THE REGENT: Susan McMillan***



*Susan was supposed to be joining us as part of the Gathering, the Manager of the Regent she has been on board since the beginning and when I talked to her about guest speakers she said she would love to talk about how the Regent was built especially as it fitted our theme of 'women'. I of course jumped at this adding that it was also appropriate that Susan's own story be part of it too including her role as Manager and what her and the team of volunteers behind our magnificent theatre have done to restore it.*

*Our challenge, with this happened just the week prior to the event with Susan while caring for her mother in Melbourne falling and severely injuring her arm. With doctors saying she*

*must rest and unable to drive Susan, not being defected, put together the film and talked us through, via recording, the story of how we have our beloved theatre.*

*You just can't stop the remarkable women of Yarram.*

## ***TRIPLEX:***



*Our night was finished with another trio of Yarram 'wonder' women, Angie, Penny and Linda, aka **TRIPLEX**, entertained us with beautiful harmonies. These women have come together to perform because they love it and use their skills to make enjoyment for others. This all fitted with our theme for the night of Op Shop Ball and it was lovely seeing everyone joining in with this and the amazing finery that can be obtained from your local Op Shop.*

## ***SUNDAY 26<sup>TH</sup>:***

Once more if you wished breakfast was in the park, this morning the Scouts were cooking bacon and eggs.

## ***ECUMENICAL CHURCH SERVICE:***

*Our Church service in the supper room was conducted by Jenny from the Anglican Church bringing her unique way to worship.*

## ***WORKSHOPS:***

### ***Flower Arranging***

With expert help from local florist Sue, the group created their own arrangement.

### ***Woodwork***

Andrew helped ladies make a lap table including holders for a glass of wine at our local Men's Shed.

### ***Pizza making***

Ross taught participants to make pizza dough like Italians which they got to take home as well as cooking some delicious wood-fired pizzas that they ate!

### ***Yarram Murals***

Yarram has become recognised for the many murals created by Artist Hesco over the last few years. Eric and Kevin told us how it came about and showed all the murals from the comfort of your seat in the Regent Theatre.

### ***Eco Fabric Dying***

Volunteers Justine and Cathy from Yarram Neighbourhood House helped participants create their own fabric dyed item to take home.

### ***The unhurried conversation.***

Facilitated by Bianca from GCASA helped participants learn the art of listening.

### ***From little things, big things grow.***

Sally helped participants to better understand themselves and others to grow themselves, their business, industry and community.

### ***Writing***

Author Cate Kennedy facilitated learning how to get your story onto paper and tips on getting published.

### ***Star of the South Offshore Windfarm***

Facilitated by Star of the South one of our sponsors participants learnt about Australia's first Offshore Windfarm proposed for the coast in our locality.

## **WOMEN'S STORY:**

As MC it was Di's turn to tell her story, Di told of her journey since she had last stood before many in the audience in 2003. It told of her belief in openness and honesty, standing up to bullies and supporting others with her sense of social justice. The benefits of this have been the friendships and support she has gained; and through her work as a Counsellor, the places and communities she has been privileged to go to and help.

## **WHERE TO FROM HERE:**

Normally at the end of a Gathering there will be a passing on to the next group. We in Yarram would have loved to do this, but sadly this was not to be. However, we are hoping that there is a group of courageous women out there who will put their hands up

We know how challenging it can be to take of a Gathering and one of the biggest challenges is finance, with this in mind we are happy to report that Warragul WOF have agreed to hold the seeding money so that it is ready for immediate access to the next group.

We have also passed on the donation of \$2000 given to us by Port Fairy WOF and added an extra \$2000 to this for use by the next group for future gatherings.

Your donations to the Hesco murals added up to \$200 and Yarram WOFG has been added to their list of donators.

Yarram Gathering took place in an effort to keep Gatherings going and it proved that a community can achieve anything by working together and being willing to help each other. We and I know the women who have organised other gatherings will gladly help to put the next one together in any way we can.

## **FEED BACK:**

We asked participants to put their feedback into a book, a change from the feedback sheets normally presented, but, something Bianca and Di have used many times; below is that feedback from 41 comments

*Great Weekend*

**Excellent Weekend**

*Fantastic Best ever*

**Fantastic effort Ladies**

*Congratulations*

**Well Done Thank you !**

*Well done!*

**Awesome, thank you, loved it.**

**WONDERFUL EFFORT BY ALL. AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY A COMMUNITY 10/10**

**Thank you for all your work**

*Thankyou Team, job done so well.*

*Great weekend.*

**Enjoyed myself,**

*Wonderful weekend. Loved it.*

*Top Job - Great Work.*

*Loved it.*

**Well done impressed by your wonderful family helpers**

You have done a fantastic job with such a short time and small committee.

*Congratulations - very relevant speakers*

**THANKYOU FOR A WONDERFUL WEEKEND – GREAT SPEAKERS, VENUE & TOURS**

*Ex Horsham Mt. Gambier. Thankyou so much Yarram. Wonderful Gathering reconnecting.*

**CONGRATULATIONS ON A WONDERFUL WEEKEND, THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.**

*Kym and Olivia, great weekend, thank you. Thank you great Gathering*

**THANK YOU WONDERFUL , GREAT LADIES XXX Congrats on a great Gathering xx**

*Inspiring/amazing Loved it. Just the best, ever.*

**GREAT WEEKEND WELL DONE! A fantastic weekend, congratulations.**

**Yarragon South, such a gift to us all, thank you so much.**

**WONDERFUL WEEKEND, YOU HAVE DONE A GREAT JOB. Brilliant Well Done**

*Wonderful weekend , not too rushed, really enjoyed.*

*Excellent in every area!!!*

*One of the best. Well done Yarram.*

**ABSOLUTELY AWESOME WEEKEND , FANTASTIC JOB, AND COMMUNITY.**

*Great fun - thanks wonderful women.*

*Enjoyed.*

**Other comments:**

Thank you for going back to local women's stories. I have loved my weekend. Good luck and well done.

*Congratulations to all involved in our WOF's Gathering here this weekend - it was fabulous, for all of us - WELL DONE - You're an inspiration!!*

Comments helpful (Not critical) Friday meal – great to see young people of the community involved but rolls were cold. – Sat diner – luke warm – but I appreciate the difficulty in dishing and serving. Sat lunch – sandwiches and fruit- perfect- Morning and arvo teas – too many sugars. Slices – I would like to see more fruit slices, carrot sticks etc. – though I know most women like the sweet stuff. BUT! Really relevant and interesting speakers, fun activities, great tours. I liked the stories and also the one of the Hall restoration.

## **LEARNINGS:**

*In spite of the short timeframe between taking on the 2023 Gathering and actually running it, the Gathering was a great success, however, the stress caused by such a huge task on a small number of people was immense. This was added to by the Gathering committee being formed after the event was taken on and the members not having worked together before, this caused friction in particular because a formal committee was not formed and formal roles determined.*

*Lack of time meant we were not able to meet as often as we probably needed and communication became strained, lack of time at meetings also added to this.*

*A lack of open reporting created a lot of stress in the weeks prior to the Gathering and also after the event.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- *The Auspicing body develop a memorandum of understanding explaining their role and who controls the funds they hold, that is agreed by all members.*
- *Specific roles be set for members of the committee and these be documented*
- *Minutes are taken at every meeting and reporting take place from all areas in particular a financial report from the Auspicing body.*
- *To avoid conflict of interest the treasurer or person controlling payments etc are not associated with the Auspicing body and that all financial decisions are put through the committee before being acted upon.*
- *An action record be created, and all committee members report on the progress they have made on the actions they have undertaken since the previous meeting.*
- *Live, shared documents such as Key contacts, Emergency contacts, running sheets, and budget be created and made available to all committee members.*
- *Debrief and collective evaluation be undertaken to review and reflect on what went well and where improvements can be made: for example, a major cost factor was the catering, requiring considerable co-ordination. A communication plan needed to be developed to update on progress and budget against actual.*

***This should not take away from the fact that the 2023 WOFG in Yarram was a fantastic event and a credit to each member that they can be proud of well done Angie, Bianca, Cathy and Di. We sincerely hope that we have just given you a taste of what Wonderful YARRAM has to offer and you will return to 'THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE' soon.***



