



U3A ... Learn, Laugh, Live Mallacoota & District Newsletter

VOL 18 No 2 March—April 2023

The President's Desk

Membership renewals for 2023/24 are now due (see p 4). Thank you to those who have already renewed.

We will notify you about the Annual General Meeting. We expect it will be held in late April.

First term has been busy. We have had another armchair trip to the Kimberley with Steve Millard, an awakening on Scam/Fraud prevention by Ken Spackman of the Bendigo Bank. The new telescope had its first outing to see the 'Green Comet'. And we still have more to come for this term. Irene and Robert Allen will tell us about the history of Timbillica. Peter Mason will take us on an armchair voyage to Gabo Island. There is a workshop for aspiring volunteers and committee members on governance of Not for Profit organisations.

For star gazers, the principal summer constellation of Orion (aka The Pot) is being replaced by the principal autumn constellation of Leo. For astrology enthusiasts the zodiacal constellations of Aries, Taurus and Gemini are making way for Leo, Virgo and Libra.

Term 2 promises to be just as busy. First up for the fisherperson is Keith Simpson talking about the Dusky Flathead.

Remember you can keep up to date with all our events on our Facebook Page, in the Mouth and on our noticeboard in Post office Alley.

Hope to see you soon

Fiona Raitt, President

Learn Laugh Live

Meetings in the Community Clubrooms

Wednesday **1 March, 10am-midday**, Bairnsdale/Mallacoota

Joint Session **Environmental Issues** Mike Hinchey (Electric Vehicles) & Max Elliot (Friends of Mallacoota)

Friday **10 March, 2pm**, Irene Allan: **'Timbillica Observations: Birds, Weather and History'**

Tuesday **14 March, TIME 1:15pm—3pm**, Sue Nicolaou & George Raitt, **Introduction to Governance for Not-for-Profit Associations.**

Friday **31 March, 2pm**, Peter Mason: **'Gabo, Whales & Lighthouse Keepers'**

Weekly Meetings

Tuesdays **Current Affairs** discussion. Time 3 — 4:15pm, with afternoon tea, in St. Peters Church meeting room.

Wednesdays **Mah-jong**. Wednesdays 1:30 - 4pm. Beginners welcome. Free to U3A Members. For further details phone Ruth 0448 800 342 or Iris 0412 661 683.

Other Events

Star Gazing evenings, weather permitting.



You can be up-to-date

with all activities

Facebook at U3A Mallacoota

The Real Mallacoota Community Page

Mallacoota Community and our regular emails.



Three Years in the Kimberley Part II

Presentation by Steve Millard

A good-sized crowd gathered on Friday 3 February to hear Steve Millard's second presentation in his series on his and Kim's experiences living in remote parts of the Kimberley between 2010-2013. This particular talk focused on their time in the eastern Kimberley while they were based at Halls Creek and Jungdranung, a remote community school near Lake Argyle, where Kim was a teacher.

Living in such a remote region came with many challenges, not least of which was basic communication with the outside world and the arduous drive to Kununurra to get supplies. However, it was clear that Steve and Kim still cherish the many memories they made there.

From their bases at Halls Creek and Jungdranung, Steve and Kim set off on numerous camping trips to explore the natural wonders of the eastern Kimberley, including Purnululu National Park (Bungle Bungles) and Wolfe Crater and the vast man-made Lake Argyle. Echidna Chasm and Cathedral Gorge in the Bungles are a highlight of any visit to the Kimberley. Wolfe Crater was formed when a meteorite struck the earth approximately 120,000 years ago leaving a well-preserved crater over 800m across. It has special meaning for the local Aboriginal people.

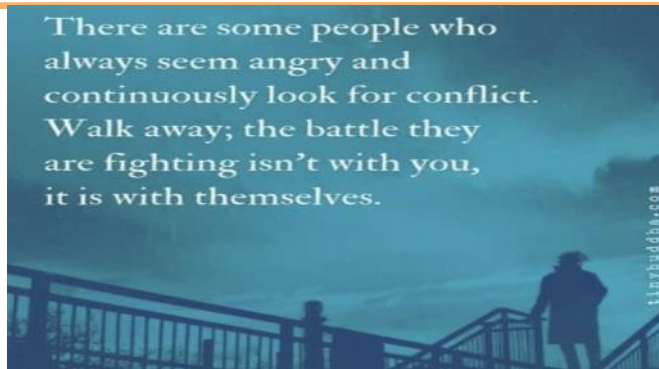


Steve's presentation included beautiful photos (taken mainly by Kim) of the amazing flora and fauna of the region. Plants included purple Mulla Mulla, Wickham's grevillea, Kimberley gold grevillea and Sturt desert pea. Among the wildlife were freshwater crocodiles, double-barred finches, the greater bowerbird, northern rosella and the Australia bustard. We learnt that the latter may not make good tucker after one dinner while out camping went horrible wrong, but perhaps that was Steve's cooking!

Jungdranung is the school settlement linked to the now-closed Argyle Diamond Mine which produced over 400 million carats of diamonds. The diamonds found at the Argyle, including the famed pink diamonds, have been dated to about 1.5 billion years of age. Unfortunately for Kim, the diamonds came with a hefty price tag!

Another highlight of their time in this part of the Kimberley was watching the local Aboriginal people conducting the annual muster of free-roaming cattle, some of which had never been in captivity before.

Steve concluded by giving a teaser on what he plans to cover in Part III of the series, including their experiences at Mitchell Plateau and Mornington Station in the west and central Kimberley. Stay tuned for further details.



Star Gazing Report The Green Comet

On 10 February, about a dozen or more star gazers gathered on the banks of Bottom Lake at Karbeethong to view Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF), also known as The Green Comet.

Comet C/2022 E3 was discovered less than a year ago and had last passed by earth around 50,000 years ago, when we shared the planet with mega-fauna and Neanderthals.

While the comet couldn't be seen with the naked eye, it was clearly visible using U3A's telescope and even binoculars – not bad given the comet was still over 41.8 million kilometres away. However, you needed a long exposure camera to pick up the comet's green colour.

According to the experts, the colour comes from a photochemical reaction between sunlight and certain molecules (like diatomic carbon) exuded by the comet when it gets close to the sun.



With the telescope set up, the group also took the opportunity to view other notable objects in the sky that night, including Jupiter, Orion Nebula and the Pleiades star cluster (also known as The Seven Sisters).

Attention now turns to the conjunction of Venus and Jupiter: over the first few days of March the two planets will appear to pass by close to each other, and can be viewed briefly in the west before they set soon after sunset. Stay tuned for more reports about the antics of Venus in our night skies over the next couple of months.

Bairnsdale U3A Environmental Issues Joint Presentation

Wednesday, 1 March, 10am till midday, with tea break around 11am.

- ◆ *Mike Hinchey offers an update on electric vehicles*
- ◆ *Max Elliot gives an update on projects of the Friends of Mallacoota*

Mike has extensive experience in the electrical industry and as a teacher in electrical trade and renewable energy. He will give an update on electric vehicles, why we might change to an EV, what's available on the market, hybrids and electric, advantages and disadvantages and attempt to clarify some common myths.

Max will talk about the programs run by the Friends of Mallacoota to protect and improve Mallacoota's natural environment, including re-vegetation work, propagating endemic plants, regular weeding groups, rubbish collection from beaches and roads, and publications about native plants.



Weather Report 2022 ... Martin Butterfield

A very brief summary of weather during 2022. Most data comes from my Weather Station (WS).

Rainfall: A very wet year, with the 4th highest rainfall - 1351 mm - recorded. The two heaviest days were 2nd and 3rd April with 144.8 and 120.8 mm respectively, contributing to the monthly total of 300.2 mm (7th highest monthly total ever recorded).

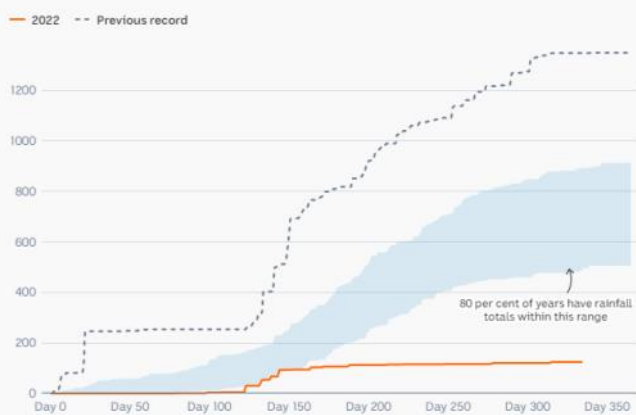
Temperatures: The average temperature for the year was very close to the long term value of that measure. This is a balance between quite a cool year in terms of average maximum temperature (19.6C vs long term average 20.5C) and a somewhat warm average minimum temperature in 2022 of 11.76C against a long term average of 11.0C.

Humidity: I only have 4 years of data from my own weather station. Average readings there in 2022 at both standard times (9AM and 3PM) were above the 4 year mean. This cannot be surprising given the rainfall! It also explains, in part the temperatures with a blanket of cloud more evident than usual.

Wind: Again only 4 years of data is available. 2022 and 2021 were very similar, but somewhat below 2019 and 2020.

Parts of south west WA are bone dry

Cumulative annual rainfall at the Muja Power Station rain gauge

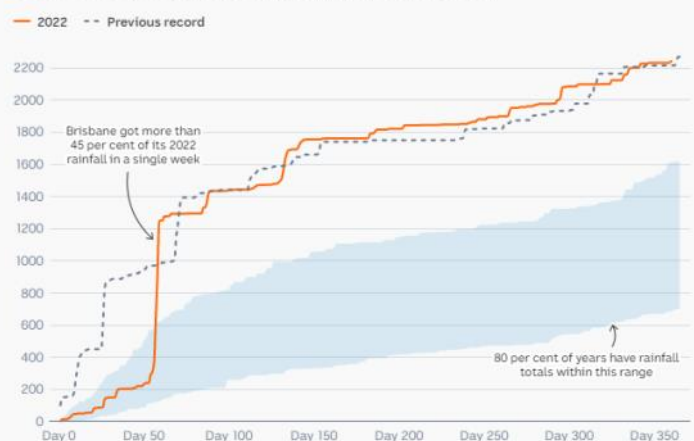


Includes 57 years of rainfall data between 1961 and 2022. Some years excluded from analysis due to incomplete rain data. Figures not yet available for December 2022.

Source: ABC NEWS analysis of Bureau of Meteorology records for weather station 009738

Brisbane is an inch away from a record breaking year

Cumulative annual rainfall at the Alderley weather station



Includes 108 years of rainfall data between 1900 and 2022. Some years excluded from analysis due to incomplete rain data.

Source: ABC NEWS analysis of Bureau of Meteorology records for weather station 040224

With time, women gain weight because we accumulate so much knowledge and wisdom in our heads that there is no more room in there and it distributes it to the rest of our bodies.

So we aren't heavy, we are enormously educated, cultured and happy. Beginning today when I look in the mirror I will think. Good grief... look how smart I am!

www.silversurfers.com

Just a friendly reminder ...

Membership Subscriptions due 1 March 2023.

We are pleased to advise:

Renewals remain at \$15 per annum.

New members are still \$20 per annum.

New members please make sure we have your contact details (see membership subscription form) so that you can receive our local U3A Newsletters and scheduling updates via email.

Payment can be by direct deposit or cash to any committee member. Direct deposit: U3A Mallacoota, BSB: 633108, ACC: 137593372.

Please reference "membership" and your name.



Fraud / Scam Awareness

Bendigo Community Bank kindly sponsored a session for us on fraud/scam awareness, presented by Ken Spackman, manager of the Mallacoota Community Bank.

His lively presentation covered many of the known scams that try to trick us into disclosing personal information like bank account details. They ask us to pay money in our mistaken belief it is a genuine claim.

Scams are so prevalent everyone in the room had received 'phishing' text messages or emails.

It was good to hear about variations on this theme: fake messages seemingly from Australia Post, texts from your bank or a family member, fake messages from service providers such as Microsoft, Amazon, DHL, investment scams, identity theft etc.

Scams are constantly evolving, it was very enlightening as we discovered key elements common to all scams. These provide warning signs that can alert us to be cautious:

Scammers **fake** the appearance of emails and text messages from people we know and trust. Often there are tiny details that can alert us, e.g. Australia Post fake text messages and ATO scam emails often do not come from the proper internet domain, or may be strangely phrased.

Despite this, scammers are getting better at **impersonating trusted sources**. You cannot always identify the fake. Fake websites are found appearing convincingly genuine.

Scams often come '**out of the blue**' so unexpected communications should make us suspicious, e.g. you don't generally get a tax refund at this time of year. However, often we are expecting a communication, eg a parcel delivered by Australia Post. Especially then, caution is required.

A common element of scams is the urgency the scammer creates, e.g. '**must act now**'



to reverse a charge. We are told this has been made to our account. Or, we need to unfreeze our account which has been locked for suspicious activity. Or, to prevent being prosecuted for unpaid tolls, etc.

This sense of urgency is intended to stop us pausing to make enquiries which we might otherwise make. A quick search on Google of e.g. the ACCC Scam watch website, will often confirm that we are being scammed. You can also make enquiries through Google to check out the owners of websites to see if they are legitimate or fake.

'If something appears too good to be true, it probably is'. Lottery winnings out of the blue, etc.

Verify communications allegedly from your bank, e.g. call back using the contact number on your **credit card** or **bank statement**, and don't give your bank account details to anyone.

Do not click on the link in those unsolicited emails or text messages!

Support is available from your bank and IDCARE if you are scammed.

The key message is **don't be rushed by emotional pressure to do something** without taking precautions to verify that the request is genuine. Include Google searches whether this kind of request has been reported as a scam.

Preventative actions we can all take to keep our personal information safe:

- When online shopping use a secure payment method like Paypal or Google Pay
- Don't respond to surveys
- Be careful entering competitions
- Set your online media profiles to Private, and be careful about what you post
- Do not accept friend requests from strangers
- Create strong passwords and don't share

Fraud / Scam Awareness cont.

- Use two factor identification
- Change to biometric or fingerprint ID
- Inform your bank if you are travelling overseas
- Don't click on links in unexpected emails/texts
- Delete anything suspicious

We are all vulnerable to scammers.

They succeed by

- * looking like the real thing

- * catching us off-guard
- * appealing to our emotions
- * often having sufficient information to win our trust
- * creating a sense of urgency to act now.

Our best weapon against scammers is education - talking about it, educating ourselves and our friends, about the risks.



Governance is about the time you dedicate to working 'on' your business, rather than 'in' it. This includes all the checks and balances you put in place to ensure your business runs smoothly, meets its objectives, and stays out of trouble. Governance also means getting expert advice on matters you don't yet know enough about, plus support when making big decisions. Explore why governance is important, and the difference between doing it yourself and getting a board involved.

There are a large number of not-for-profit (NFP) entities in Mallacoota, creating an ever present need to recruit new committee members. The aim of the workshop on **14 March** is to de-mystify governance, making it easier to recruit and induct new committee members and handover responsibilities on change of committee positions.

This introductory workshop (first of a series) will enable committee members of existing incorporated NFP entities, and intending new committee members, to become familiar with a variety of committee roles and compliance obligations.

'**Governance**' refers to all the rules and processes by which the authority of a corporate entity is exercised and controlled, and by which those in control report and are accountable for their decisions and actions.

The workshop will be run by **Sue Nicolaou and George Raitt** and will cover at an introductory level:

- kinds of not-for-profit entities and regulatory regimes
- focussing particularly on small incorporated association
- key governance provisions of the model rules and legislation, including respective powers of the committee and the members in general meeting
- governance standards applying to charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and principles recommended by the Australian Institute of Company Directors for NFP entities
- risk management policies and insurance
- financial management and reporting, including AGM procedures
- handover procedures on change of committee positions, particularly for secretaries and treasurers.

The *Bats* of Mullet Creek

Shortly after we began visiting Mallacoota in 2013 we became aware – probably through hearing the calls – of the Summer camp of Grey-headed Flying-foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), roosting at Mullet Creek where it crosses Lakeside Drive. I find them very attractive : bright orange fur contrasts with the black wings (the grey head is not a dominant feature).

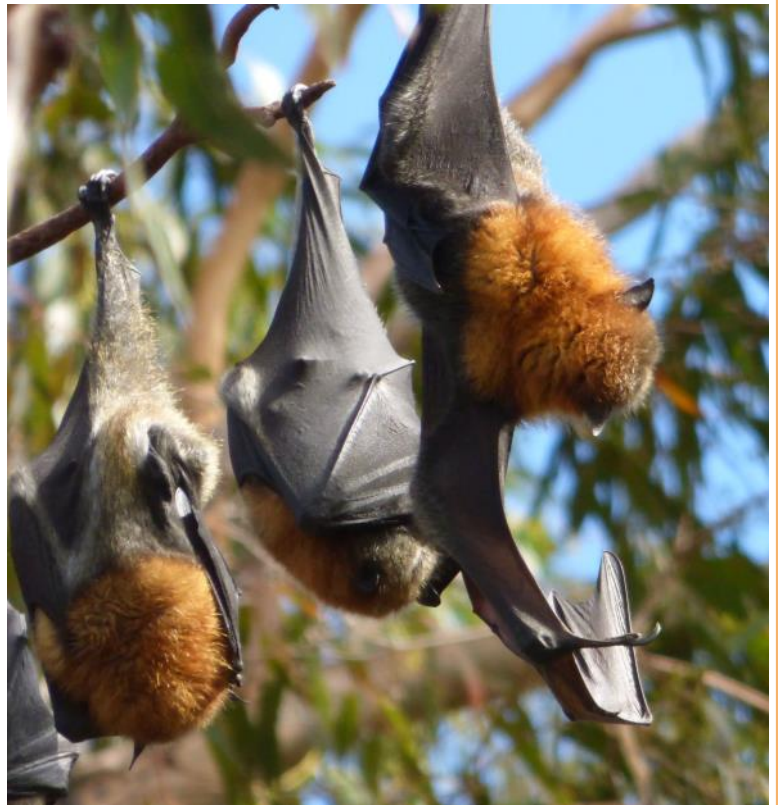
Also known as Fruit-bats, they turn up most Summers. I didn't record any in 2020 but suspect there were few, as there would have been no blossom for them to feed on. There were very few, and only for a short time in 2022.

In 2023 I first noticed about 200 on 20 January, drawn by the noise of squabbling over roost sites. By mid-February the camp had grown to thousands (estimated by a DELWP, now DEECA, researcher at 4,000 bats).

The “flying foxes” mainly come to feed on the flowering gumtrees, principally the Red Bloodwoods (*Corymbia gummifera*). 2018 was the most extensive flowering I have noted. In 2023 the flowering is not as evident: only a few trees are in flower, at the time of writing, in most wooded areas. As would be expected 2018 was also the greatest number of bats as suggested by the image of the outside of the colony.

While the calls are often the first indication of the bats' presence, they are also visible during the day as a few shift about within the camp. When the camp increases in size there is also a distinct smell of digested nectar detectable from the road, and in 2018 from a bit further away.

The most impressive sensory experience is the evening flyout. The image from 2018 shows part of the horde as they left. My initial guess at that time suggested the



flyout lasted 45 minutes, but that was mainly until it got too dark to see: on a night of full moon they were still flowing out 30 minutes after darkness fell. (Currently the flyout only lasts for about 10 minutes – and one night they didn't seem to fly at all before dark.)

How many bats are there in the camp? My guess for 2018 got up to at least 100,000 but for most years since, a lot less.

A scientist from DELWP had found it impossible to count the bats in the stream going out, since even with 13 volunteers positioned around the area they always spotted a stream not covered by observers. Instead he assesses the area of the colony each year and in 2018 this was ~6Ha. At times it is estimated this camp has a third of this species in Victoria.

