

Portarlington Community Email Tree
Thankyou at the miniature railway, Sunday 4 February 2024

Thankyou for coming to celebrate the Portarlington Community Email Tree.

This is my chance to say thank you to you and the many groups and folk that made the Tree.

You have contributed to the Tree or have been in touch with me to say thanks for receiving the Tree.

Glenda Fraser – I appreciate you saying thanks for the Tree as others have over the years. I've received thanks from family members who live in Victoria or interstate because they had elderly parents living here and they wanted to know what's happening to let their parents know. What makes it as special is **Glenda** doesn't live here full time but values keeping up to date.

The Portarlington Community Building Initiative was the beginning of the Email Tree. It was a State Government initiative to help small rural communities make what's important to them, happen.

The initiative was auspiced by the City of Greater Geelong and Bellarine Community Health.

The City of Greater Geelong, **via Wage**, gave incredible access to resources that contributed to the success of community building initiative projects.

I acknowledge and thank **Wage** for all she did for us.

The Tree was borne from the 2009 Portarlington Community Expo auspiced by the community building initiative at Parks Hall, where over 70 community groups came together to showcase what they offered.

After the sensational Community Expo, group representatives came to an afternoon tea to give 'where to from here' suggestions. **Sarah**, as Chair of the Community Building Initiative, MC'd that meeting.

The message was loud and clear: the most pressing need was effective sharing of information without adding extra work to volunteers.

From that meeting, the Email Tree was born with **Sarah** and I taking it forward late 2009.

I so thank **Sarah** for her wisdom and common-sense advice until the Tree only needed me to take it forward.

Just some thankyous from the Tree:

Thanks **Ingrid** for sending the Tree to folk in Indented Head who appreciate knowing what's happening as we are two very close towns.

Gemma who has done the same by sharing the Tree with those of us who were Port Snappers. **Gemma** made sure info about the North Bellarine Film Festival and Royal Australian Navy Big Band performances were advertised in the Email Tree and elsewhere.

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Jonathan Harris – I'm joined at the hip to my computer and you gave me IT backup from the beginning until early 2018 so I could sleep at night.

I took a photo to promote the Email Tree back in October 2017.

At the same time, **Jonathan**, you were sunning yourself on a remote beach way up north and one of your IT techs sat in for the photo with Richard Underwood, Gemma Tobschall and Susan Doubleday.

Susan Doubleday from Stockdale and Leggo made sure all potential home buyers had access to the Email Tree so they would feel part of our town.

Susan apologises for not making it here today as she and John are working in Cairns. Susan sent a lovely message: *When I look back on all those people that gained so much information about the town and made them feel so welcome, all through your time and dedication, honestly it's a credit to you.*

Kate from the neighbourhood house – thanks for sending through all your programs and happenings that anyone could go to. The House also was borne of the Portarlington Community Building Initiative thanks to **Wage**.

Anna from the Maltese Pensioners Association – your dinner dances and bus trips – no-one can do as good as you.

Karen from the Seniors – bus trips and performers, indoor bowls, I loved the singing and dancing stage performances from some years ago. My special thanks to **Karen** for her incredible proof-reading skills.

Robyn was PUK (Portarlington Ukelele Collective) plus the Music Café. The Music Café brought music lovers together and provided a place for local musos to perform. I fully understand your decision to call it a day.

Vicki your enthusiasm for sustainability and environmental protection – you made sure we kept conscious of what is important where we live.

Jenny Women In Local Democracy and Staying in Port built on what Monica Hayes dreamed of. Staying in Port aims to allow us, as we age, to live where we love rather than move and be isolated from friends and the place where we love to live.

Geoff Fary I hope promoting your dream to find a cure for Motor Neuron Disease via the Email Tree made a dent.

Pam Scott from St Pats and **David and Lorraine** from St Andrews, you've included Communion and Mass services, support for refugees, sing-a-longs, fellowship breakfasts, fund raising days, St Patrick Day, - a host of Christian celebrations to share with all in our town.

Richard Underwood – it's been a delight to promote calls for volunteers and the Mussel Festival every year and I was privileged to organise festival buses for ten years.

Is **Lauren Deale** here? Lauren, on behalf of Bellarine Community Health has sent info to the Tree so we can all benefit from programs.

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Brian and the Miniature railway have supported the Tree for years.

You provide such an exciting adventure for children in the best place possible.
And it's affordable for all families.

I am so grateful to you and all the train volunteers for having us here today.
This is magical. Our beautiful golden retriever Marley used to love coming here
because all the volunteers gave her a pat and a chat.

John – thank you for saying okay all the times I've said 'just wait, I'm doing the
Email Tree'. You giving me space every fortnight since 2009 to prepare the Tree
for publication made it happen and I am so grateful.

For over 14 years, the Tree has done what was asked of it – shared activities,
events, ways to join in, calls for volunteers, opportunities to have a say and so
much more.

I estimate the Tree reached around 1,600 people. For example, one person from
Lions received the Tree and shared it with members. The same happened with
so many other groups.

The decision to close the Email Tree has not been easy however there comes a
time to say 'it's time', and that is now.

Thank you for building the Tree and believing in the value of the Tree.



Eliz Turner

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Some very kind messages

Pam Scott, St Patrick's Catholic Church



So sorry to hear the ceasing of the email tree.

Along with the committee from St Pat's I would like to personally thank you for your amazing commitment. Without your loyalty and extraordinary work the email tree would never have become the wonderful source of information about our community.

The email tree has played a large part in encouraging the unity of our many Portarlington communities. It has been instrumental in bringing volunteers and therefore success to so many projects.

Laureen Deale, Bellarine Community Health

Thank you for your kind invitation – I will do my best to come.



You have done an incredible job over the years in supporting the Portarlington community and that should be recognised far and wide.

Thank you for always sharing our BCH news. The Tree will be missed by many.

David Hughs, St Andrew's Uniting Church



Very sorry to hear the "end is nigh".

I agree, it was a real game changer in this town.

Jonathan Harris, JNH Computers Rtd



Wow, I'm very sorry to hear that.

I understand it has been a huge amount of time, and I am very grateful of your great effort.

I also understand that younger folk prefer social media, but yours was always the preferred factual alternative for news and events.

It will be greatly missed.

Joy Porter, St Andrew's Uniting Church



The email tree has been such a magnificent way of networking in the town.

Thank you SO much for all you have done to initiate it and then keep it flourishing.

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Susan Doubleday, Stockdale and Leggo



Awwwwhhhh Eliz, So lovely to hear from you.

I think you are the one that needs a gold medal for all the tireless work you have done with the Tree.

When I look back on all those people that gained so much information about the town and made them feel so welcome, all through your time and dedication, honestly it's a credit to you.

You were way ahead of the pack on 'social media'. You created your own network and willingly shared it with everyone.

Wish I was there for the photo again, but I'll be there in spirit thinking of all the wonderful people that make Portarlington so special. Take care dear Eliz. Xx

Gemma Tobschall



I'm very sorry but I won't be able to attend the photo session. I was looking forward to seeing you but it is not to be.

I hope everything goes well and thank you for all the work that you've done in preparing the email tree to bring information to all in Port. We're going to miss it.

Gemma with Richard Underwood