



Off-the-Grid

These are exciting days for French Island Landcare. Thousands of young indigenous plants are leaving the nursery for planting around the island. But more than this, plans are well underway for the new Landcare community garden and nursery - next to the CFA, tennis court and Memorial Hall. After many years of generous support from Lyn Hattan, providing a home at French Island Vineyard, it's time to set up shop in a more central location, closer to everyone.

Did you know French Island Landcare is one of the few Landcare groups in the region who grow their own plants, at their own nursery. They also obtain grants, making it easy for locals to improve properties at no cost, and sell native plants at discounted rates. President and Nursery Manager Judith Metcher has been at the helm of this program for years, delivering great outcomes for the community. Unfortunately, due to ill-health Judith has decided it is time to step down as President, leaving a great legacy. She will remain active as Nursery Manager.

We think now is the right time to thank Judith for all the effort she has put in, running Landcare, taking it to the next stage, in an exciting new home – ready for a new era. Thanks to you Jude, the future for French Island Landcare looks rosy and native.

Welcome to Off-the-Grid.

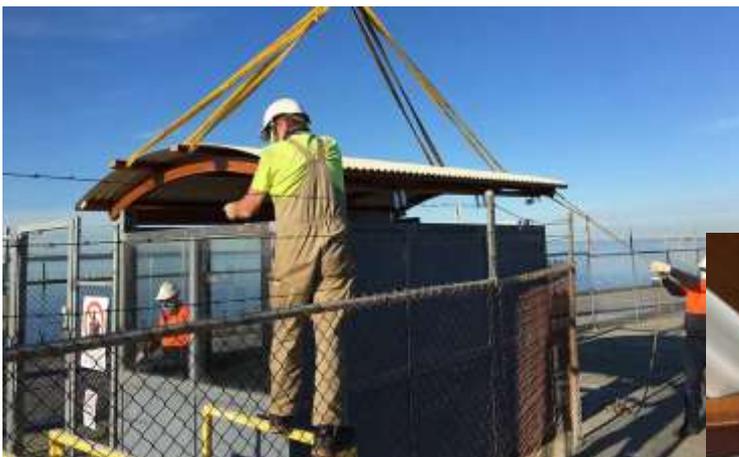
Gimme Shelter

Months ago, **Port of Hastings (POH)** removed the roof on our shelter at Stony Point pier, because their Engineer said it was so rusted it would lift off in a big blow! FICA was then faced with the options of getting **POH** to repair or replace the shelter, for about \$10k.

That was when Maurice Ralph quietly offered to take a look at it. He had the tools and the know-how and reckoned he could save our community a lot of money. It turned out designing and manufacturing the roof was the easy part. Maurice also had to get Engineers plans drawn up, obtain a Certificate of Compliance from the Engineering firm, and create a traffic management plan for jetty. Along the way there were numerous delays and reams of paperwork. It dragged on and on, with Maurice stuck in the middle.



Now, despite all the challenges and delays, it's time to celebrate, as the refurbished shelter is back in action, complete with impressive custom-laminated timber beams.



Big thanks to Maurice for sticking it out, even when the going got tough and the problems multiplied. It wasn't easy but he got there.



This is what success looks like

CFA AGM



This year the French Island 'CFA AGM was a bit special because we were joined by two of the organisation's big brass:

- Mike Maypiece – Catchment Officer for Bass Coast and Cardinia
- Jamie Hansen - Assistant Chief Fire Officer

...and they arrived by chopper! (Click on the picture to see it land)

As part of usual business, all leadership roles were re-elected unopposed, including Keith Airs as Captain and Linda Bowden as his 1st Lieutenant. We also noted that Maurice Ralph was re-elected as both Secretary and Treasurer = again . Are we ever going to give this guy a break? Somebody else take Secretary please.



While Keith greeted our guests - that's Jamie Hansen with the beard and Mike Maypiece on the right.

Gary Airs got on with the serious fire business.



And many volunteers were officially recognised for their service over the years.

5 Years	Julie Tresize	25 Year Medal	Daniel Cox	40 Year Medal	Rose Scott
10 Year Medal	Andrew Celestina		Gary Airs		Judith Cox
	Bill Woodward		Maurice Ralph		James Thompson
20 Year Medal	David Visser	30 Year Medal	James Skinner	50 Year Medal	Robbie Thompson
	Graham Price		Geoff Malloy		
	Terry Martin		Pat Malloy		
	Lynette Martin		Terry Easy		
	Cathy Harper				

It was a good day all round.

More of Those Bridge Pictures



Photo: John Bennetts

Lockdown recipe - Gateaux Pima

Gateau Pima or chilli cake, is a Mauritian snack that goes well with a refreshing drink. It's like a yummy version of falafel, with a bit of a kick.

Ingredients:

- 250gms yellow split peas
- 4-6 red chillies (to taste)
- half a bunch of fresh coriander
- 2-3 spring onions (green stems only)
- 2 teaspoons Turmeric
- 2 teaspoons Cumin seeds
- 2 teaspoon Salt (adjust to taste later)
- Sunflower oil for frying



Method

Soak the split peas overnight, making sure it is covered with plenty of water. Drain and retain half a cup of the water – in case your mixture becomes too dry – this shouldn't happen if you had heaps of water in the bowl while soaking.

Blend the split peas in a food processor until the mixture sticks together, with a texture that is not too smooth and not too grainy. Add some of the retained water if your mix is too dry. The mixture needs to stay together when rolled. Place in a mixing bowl.

Add the rest of the ingredients. Salt is added to taste.

Using a tablespoon, place some of the mix in your hand to form a ball and then half flatten. These can be any size you like

Heat enough oil in a pan to cover the flattened balls halfway. Cook and turn once lightly browned on one side.

Adjust the heat to ensure it is cooked enough on the inside and stay crispy and not burnt on the outside.

Place cooked gateaux pima on a paper towel to drain and slightly cool.

Continue the process until you finish the mix.

Enjoy them fresh, but also store any others in an airtight container in the fridge – they will last three days.

Note the raw mixture can be made in advance and frozen or refrigerated for three days.

Recipe & photo: Mylene Pentland

War Story

I missed the Vietnam conscription ballot by one month, but grew up with a soldier who did fight, in WW2. My father was stranded in Greece when the British withdrew air cover. He was put on a troopship sailing for home through dangerous waters, with no convoy defence. He saw out the war leading a platoon of anti-aircraft gunners, defending Darwin airport - the worst place in town.

Yes my father fought, alongside friends
returned with memories, many dead
while he still lived, a jagged edge
ready to shoot, at shadows, noises overhead.

Nobody spoke of PTSD
soldiers returned, we set them free.
Dad had no time for return service leagues
he said 'the loudest there had done the least'
so instead alone, he calmed down at home
over the years, medals, photos reappearing.
It takes so long for a man to mourn
the mates not turning twenty-four

In WW1 sixty thousand Australians died.
We built memorials in stone.
The names of the dead were written down
in every suburb, city, and town. They're still there.
Statues, odalisques, granite shrines
sometimes three brothers line by line
saying, 'they fought, they died, in terrible noble sacrifice'
but of that war they never say why.

After World War two, instead
memorials were built as council pools.
Families could meet to honour the dead, by swimming, not drowning.
We became a nation of champion swimmers.

Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan
We keep fighting in distant lands
Fighting for what, at what cost?
And who makes up these clever plans?
You don't see their names carved in stone,
reasons they gave, excuses they made, for war! Lest we remember.

World War Two - deaths from conflict:

- Australia 40 thousand
- USA 400 thousand
- UK 450 thousand
- Italy 500 thousand
- 3 million Japanese
- 7.6 million Germans
- 16.8 million Russians
- 20 million Chinese

Our Government recently allocated half a billion dollars, to expand the Canberra War Memorial, to better represent our wars, but somehow, somehow, somehow they forgot to include the war that killed most Australians of all.

20-30 thousand Aboriginal and 2-5 thousand European people, died fighting our Frontier Wars but this doesn't include related deaths from disease and dispossession.

The first fleet came here with smallpox in jars - for medicinal purposes. Then came Influenza, TB, chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, cholera

750 thousand Australian aborigines once occupied this land By 1900, one tenth of that number remained. That's six times more Australian deaths than in WW1 and WW2 combined.

And they are still dying in our jails... for no good reason.

One More Thing



Off-the-Grid is produced on the traditional lands of the Bunurong people. We acknowledge their connection to the land and pay respect to their elders past, present and future.

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