

VOL. 03 | SUMMER 2025-26

# THE OTWAY EDIT

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**DIMBOOLA**  
**FROM BEESVIEW\_**

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**toe**  
MAGAZINE

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we operate, the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples, and pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging. We recognize the deep connection they have to the Colac Otway region and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of this land. As we strive to build a more inclusive and respectful community, we commit to reconciliation and working towards a future where all people can thrive. We acknowledge the historical injustices and ongoing struggles faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we pledge to listen, learn, and work together towards a more equitable and just society.

*You're welcome here, no matter who you are or where you come from. We're a space that celebrates diversity, promotes inclusivity, and loves a good conversation - join us!*

# HELLO SUMMER!

# toe

MAGAZINE

Another massive thank you to everyone that has shown our little magazine support. It's been incredible to connect with so many wonderful people from our community. From artists, interesting characters and local heroes! You all make this region incredible.

This issue is all about WOMAN POWER and I am LIVING for it! The south west region is full of incredibly talented and inspiring women from all walks of life and I'm so excited to share just a snippet in this issue (and issues to come!).

Our theme is BOLD and we have picked some women that really fit the bill! From artist Stacey Williams, Author Georgia Lillie to our inspiring young person Goldie!

Being bold is about being true to yourself, being authentically you and saying a big \*stuff you\* to those who try and dim that shine.

Keep rocking on, being bold and authentically you and sit down and enjoy this issue with a cuppa of choice (stiff drink maybe?). If you're loving our mag - jump on socials and give us a share, post a picture of you having a read and tag us!

April xo

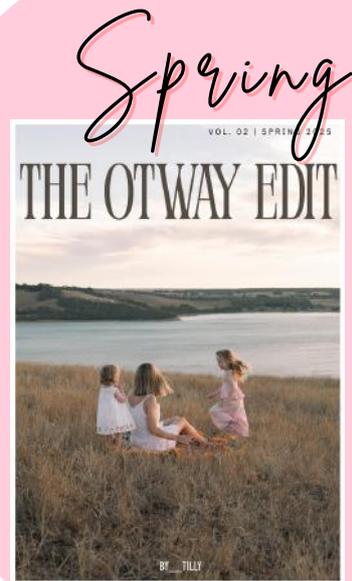


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LAST ISSUE



## Marketing for small business Made clear

Websites . Social Media . Email Marketing.

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# BEHIND THE COVER

Hey, I'm Bee! I'm a creative soul, nurse turned yoga teacher, and photographer, navigating the beautiful southwest of Victoria.

After a workplace injury led me to reevaluate life, I traded city chaos for a tiny cabin on the family farm, embracing a slower pace.

I've always had a camera handy, but it was a spur-of-the-moment drone purchase in WA that sparked something new. Aerial landscapes stole my heart, and with some tips from a locum doc, I found my creative outlet.



**“I'm drawn to offbeat spots, calm landscapes, and moments of connection.”**

For me, inspiration's about sparking that glimmer – people, places, textures, patterns and emotions. My furry mate Samson reminds me to slow down and notice the little things.

I hope my work offers a pause, inviting you to breathe, slow down, and see the world differently. If it sparks joy, calm, or curiosity, that's everything!

**“I'd love it if my images inspire you to explore, create, or simply notice the beauty around you.”**

@frombeesview\_



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**toe** MAGAZINE



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# FIRE SAFETY *With Sarah* CAMPERDOWN CFA

If you're exploring the region this summer, it's crucial to keep yourself safe from fires. Plan ahead and stay alert, especially on hot, windy, or high-risk days when fires can start easily and travel quickly. Here are some tips on how to stay safe this summer!

## CHECK THE FIRE DANGER RATING

Before you set out, take a moment to check the Fire Danger Rating for the area you're visiting. These ratings tell you how dangerous a fire could be if one started. On Extreme or Catastrophic days, conditions can change fast. The safest option is to avoid travelling to or through high-risk areas.

You can find daily rating on the VicEmergency App, the CFA website, or by tuning into local radio.

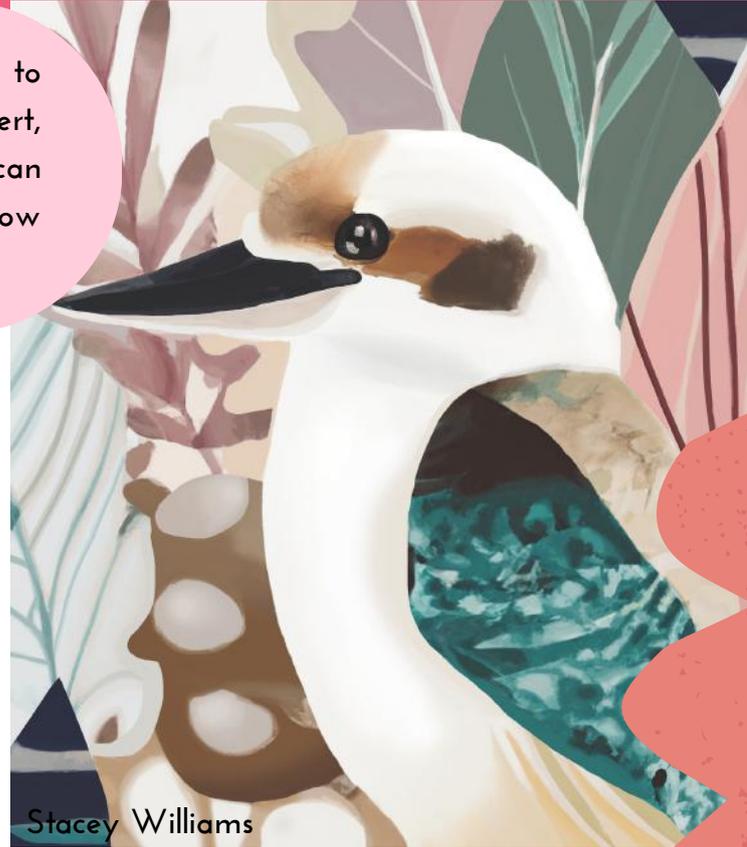
## KNOW WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN'T DO

On Total Fire Ban days, no open-air fires are allowed. This includes campfires, fire pits, and barbeques. Even activities like welding, using a chainsaw, or driving through long grass can start a fire. If you're camping, use designated areas and never leave a barbeque or campfire unattended. Restrictions apply to fires during the fire danger period. Make sure you check out the local laws for the area you're in.

## STAY CONNECTED

Download the VicEmergency App before you travel. It gives you real-time warnings, Fire Danger Ratings, and Total Fire Ban information, plus advice on when to prepare, act, or leave.

In remote areas with limited phone service, tune into ABC Radio 774 AM, the official emergency broadcaster, and download offline maps before you go.



## *Have a plan!*

If a fire starts nearby, it can be hard to know what to do in the moment. Before setting out, think about:

- ➔ Where you will go if you needed to leave quickly
- ➔ What you will take with you
- ➔ What you will do if your planned route is blocked or affected by fire

If you're staying in local accommodation, ask your host about the safest way out and what their fire plan is.

A little planning goes a long way. Stay informed, stay aware, and enjoy South West Victoria safely this summer.

# BEAT THE HEAT

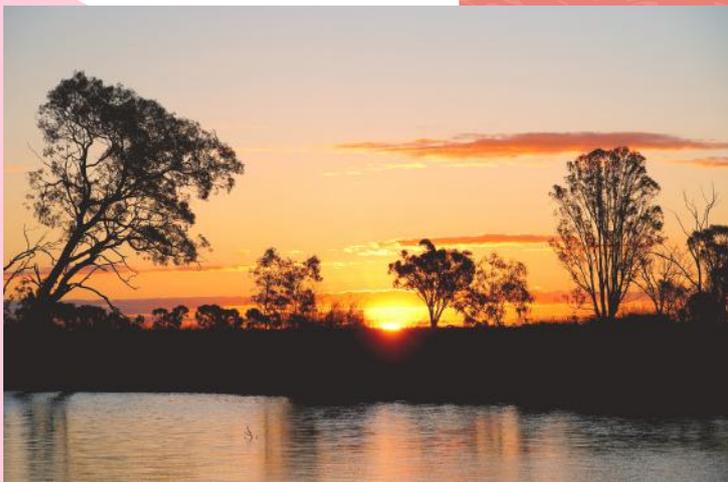
## PREVENTING & RESPONDING TO HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

BY GEORGIE GRETTON,  
STOCKYARD FIRST AID

Summer in the south-west corner of Victoria is a beautiful thing. Long days, golden paddocks, and plenty of opportunities to get outdoors. But with the warmer weather comes an increased risk of heat-related illness, especially for vulnerable people and those working or adventuring outdoors.

Heat related illness happens when the body overheats and can't cool itself down. It's often the result of dehydration, overexertion, or prolonged exposure to hot, humid conditions. People at greatest risk include the elderly, young children, people experiencing disadvantage, and those with chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, respiratory illness, diabetes, or mental health conditions.

**The signs** - fatigue, headache, dizziness, muscle cramps, or nausea - can creep up slowly! **The good news?** With little preparation and awareness, most cases can be prevented.



Visit [www.stockyardfirstaid.com.au](http://www.stockyardfirstaid.com.au) to learn more

- **Save strenuous activity** for the early morning or evening
- **Dress Smart.** Lightweight, light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed hat can make a big difference - and remember sunscreen
- **Stay in the shade.** Avoid being out in the sun during the hottest parts of the day.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink water regularly, not just when you feel thirsty. For those working outdoors, aim for small, frequent, sips throughout the day. Electrolyte drinks can also help replace salts lost through sweat.
- **Check in** with vulnerable people in your circle
- **Never leave kids in cars.**
- **Don't cover a pram** with dry fabric. Instead, use a wet, thin cloth.

If you or someone else feel faint, dizzy, stops sweating, or loses consciousness, call for help immediately. Heat stroke can be deadly.

While waiting for medical help:

- Use any available means to cool the person down
- Loosen or remove unnecessary clothing
- Move them to a shady or air-conditioned location.
- Apply cold, wet cloths, towels, or ice packs (not directly on the skin).
- Immerse in a cold-water bath if possible and safe.

In regional areas like ours, where help can take time to arrive, knowing what to do in those first few minutes can be life-saving.

**Stockyard First Aid** offers local, hands-on training right here in the Corangamite, Colac and Otway regions.

# ROUGH ROADS: ARE WE DOING ENOUGH TO KEEP OUR ROADS SAFE?

& OUR CHAT WITH RICHARD RIORDAN MP

As the sun shines brighter and temperatures rise, locals and tourists are taking to the roads, seeking adventure across the beautiful South West Victoria. However, the condition of our roads is putting both locals and tourists at risk. Potholes, cracked asphalt, and uneven surfaces are just a few hazards that motorists and cyclists face.

The dreaded 'pot hole' has become a common occurrence on many of our roads, causing damage to vehicles and posing a significant threat to cyclists. From broken safety barriers to overgrown vegetation, the state of our roads is appalling.

Narrow lanes, debris, and poorly maintained road surfaces are just a few hazards that road users face. The lack of edge markings or clear pathways for cyclists is a major concern, particularly on popular cycling routes. The potholes are getting worse, and it's not just cyclists who are suffering. Motorists are also feeling the pain, with many reporting damaged wheels and tyres.

The Victorian Government's funding allocation has been criticized for prioritizing infrastructure over maintenance. It's frustrating to see money being spent on new projects when existing infrastructure is crumbling.

Tourists are also struggling to navigate our roads, with many unfamiliar with local conditions.

I recently had a chat with local MP Richard Riordan about the state of our roads, and he shared some insightful thoughts. "The condition of our roads is a major concern, particularly for cyclists and motorists in regional areas," he said. "We're seeing a significant increase in complaints about potholes, broken safety barriers, and overgrown vegetation. It's clear that more needs to be done to address these issues."

According to Richard, the Victorian Government is committed to improving road safety, but acknowledges that more funding is needed to be *used* to address the backlog of maintenance work.

I highlighted to Richard the concerning trend of accidents involving overseas drivers, which have resulted in serious injuries and fatalities among local drivers. "It's heartbreaking to see families torn apart by these tragic accidents, often caused by drivers who are unfamiliar with our roads and rules," Richards says, "Tourists will come here not familiar with our big open roads and faster speed as they are used to smaller, slower roads with a lot more vehicles".

"One of the biggest issues is fatigue on the roads, particularly on long drives to popular tourist destinations like the Great Ocean Road," Richard said. Richard suggested that electronic and car mapping companies could work together to create suggested safer routes for tourists tackling long drives as well as educational videos shown to tourists before picking up their hire cars which shows our road rules, safety and risks.

Additionally, Richard emphasized the need for stricter punishments for tourists causing harm or death to people on local roads due to their driving, although he acknowledged this is a complex issue with international implications.

As we enjoy the warmer months, it's time to take action. Let's work together to make our roads safer for everyone – locals, tourists, cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians alike.



Stacey Williams

Whether you're a local  
or tourist, here are  
some tips to help you  
navigate Victoria's  
safely! Southwest  
roads



## GENERAL TIPS

- Always wear a seatbelt
- Don't drive under the influence
- No phone use while driving
- Be prepared for changing weather conditions
- Know your route and have a plan:
- Visit the VicRoads website for up-to-date road conditions and safety information
- Download the VicRoads app for real-time traffic updates
- Check local tourism websites for road safety advice and recommendations

# SAFETY ON SOUTH WEST ROADS

## FOR TOURISTS

- Check road conditions and plan your route before you head out
- Get familiar with Australian road rules and signs
- Take regular breaks and stretch your legs
- Avoid driving at night, especially in rural areas
- Use GPS or mapping apps to stay on track
- Be aware of local weather conditions and road closures

## FOR LOCALS

- Familiarize yourself with local road conditions and hazards
- Obey speed limits and road signs
- Watch out for cyclists and pedestrians
- Take breaks and avoid fatigue on long drives
- Report any road hazards or maintenance issues to the authorities
- Keep an eye out for wildlife, especially at dawn and dusk

Stay safe, and enjoy exploring Southwest Victoria!



SOUTH WEST VIC

# SUMMER HOTSPOTS



Our region is SO rich in beautiful spots to visit, especially during the warmer months! From beaches to waterfalls, small local towns and places to eat. If you are a local, you might discover a hidden gem or if you are visiting our beautiful region - here are some summer hotspots to visit along the way! Enjoy the South West!



## CHILDERS COVE

A little hidden gem just over an hour from Colac or half an hour from Warrnambool, Childers Cove is a go to beach spot if you're wanting discreet and peaceful!

Park in the car park and walk along the track to the beach steps, you'll get the best of both worlds as you see the rolling hills and farms on one side and the beach and coastline on the other!

The stairs are a bit of a hike (it's totally okay to take a breather!), the view from the top is gorgeous and once you're down there it's a little slice of heaven.

It has gorgeous rock pools, and the waves can come in strong. This beach does not have lifeguards, so keep that in mind. Always keep an eye on your friends and little ones!



## TIMBOON

Good ol' Timboon! This is such a quaint little town to visit if you want to get that real 'small country town vibe'! But it packs a punch!

You can pick your own berries, grab some delicious locally made Dairylicious Farm Fudge, taste test some spirits at the Timboon Railway Shed Distillery and visit the unique shops along the way.

And it would be rude not to stop by the Timboon Ice Creamery and get yourself a nice little sweet treat (you know you deserve it!)

If you love all that history stuff, then you'll love exploring the Timboon Trestle Bridge which was built in 1892 and is the most significant bridge along the Camperdown to Timboon rail trail!

# THE REDWOODS

The magical Californian Redwoods! This is a must see for the region (but can sometimes be a little hard to find). This popular 'hidden gem' was created from a Victorian forestry experiment in the 1930s!

These trees were planted to test their growth with a goal of establishing a new timber resource as logging was destroying native hardwoods. It now stands tall (literally), as one of the most recognisable attractions in the Otways.

This man-made attraction is definitely worth a visit, watch the river trickle along (you might see a platypus!), listen to the birds sing and take in just how beautiful this spot really is!

If you get carsick, pack a sick bag (the road is a little.. well, you'll see)



# STEVENSONS FALLS

Just one of the many beautiful waterfalls you can visit in the Otways! The best thing about this one? It's accessible to nearly ANYONE!

Stevensons Falls recently had a makeover which included a beautiful picnic area to watch the river trickle by and an all-abilities accessible track straight to the fall for beautiful views. This is perfect for wheelchair users, people with mobility needs and even parents with prams!

The path passes through a mini-Californian Redwoods which like the 'big one' was a trial plantation, then after crossing the Gellibrand River the path continues along the river to a beautiful view base at the bottom of the waterfall!

Everyone deserves to see the beauty of the Otways and it makes us over here so happy, that you can do that right here!



# LAKE BULLEN MERRI

This clover shaped, volcanic crater lake is located in the stunning Camperdown!

If you love to have a little fish, you can do that right here at Lake Bullen Merri which has Chinook Salmon, trout and bass! (lunch sorted!). Lake Bullen Merri caters to boating, swimming and picnicking!

The lake was formed by three adjoining caters, which gives it the distinctive clover shape.

Head to Excuse Me Katie's for a coffee and up to the Camperdown Botanic Gardens while you're at it (it's stunning!) and see the viewing platform that overlooks both Lake Bullen Merri and Lake Gnotuk!



# CAMPING HOTSPOTS



## JOHANNA BEACH

This is the perfect place to stop, pinch a tent and enjoy the views of The Great Ocean Road that little bit longer! The campground is located between sandy dunes and soft grass, you can go fishing, dip your toes and sleep listening to those waves crash in.

This campground is close to the Twelve Apostles, Cape Otway Light station and some of the beautiful waterfalls hidden in the Otways.



## BEAUCHAMP FALLS

If you're visiting the Californian Redwoods, why not have an overnight stop at the Beauchamp Falls Campground? It offers some of the best views of the rolling mountains and plantations.

If you're game, take the walk to the falls (watch for falling trees and slippery slopes) - but we are telling you, the end result is SO worth it!



## MEREDITH PARK

Located in Ondit on 6 hectares of Lake Colac shoreline and only 12kms north of Colac.

If you love camping, fishing (maybe sinking a few tinnies) then this is the campground for you. It has nice flat areas perfect for tent and caravan camping, flushable toilets and access to clean town water.

Beware of the snakes!

# BLANKET BAY

Blanket Bay is located east of the Cape Otway coast and is the perfect camping spot for a family looking to have a little getaway!

You get the best of both worlds with the seaside and then take a stroll through the trees and see if you can spot a cute little koala!

If you love to explore underwater creatures, bring a snorkel and explore the small beach and rockpools which are sheltered by the high hills of Cape Otway.

This is a very popular camping location and is not suited for caravans!



# LAKE ELIZABETH

Want to be surrounded by tall eucalyptus trees? Of course you do. This campground is located next to the small Barwon River and is only a 1km walk away from Lake Elizabeth.

If you're a bird watcher, this place is for you. Listen out for the Satin Bowerbirds, watch for the cute little Superb Fairy-wrens and Eastern Yellow Robbins.

This is a tent only campground and dogs are permitted on leads! Lake Elizabeth is scattered with still-upright trunks of dead trees, you can sometimes spot a Platypus going for an early morning or dusk swim and if you're still not sold - GLOWWORMS! - Glowworms are often seen beside the track after dark.



# PARKER HILL

Parker Hill, as the name suggests it is nestled on the top of a forested hilltop which overlooks the beach and river. This is a beautiful, peaceful little campground.

Want to make a little friend? Native animals often visit this campground, from wallabies, koalas and a variety of other wildlife.

The beach is easily accessible, and if you follow the Great Ocean Walk south from the campground you will enjoy panoramic views of the ocean!



# Welcome to Affable Advice *Summer Edition!*

Find your zodiac and receive guidance for your Sultry Summer!

## Sagittarius

Time to fix your hair so you don't look like you've just come out of the tumbler dryer of life. Yeah, the past few months have been a sh\*t show but when life gives you lemons, grab the salt and tequila! Fake it 'til you make it baby!

## Capricorn

Birthday season babyyyy! Get excited because you're about to be everyone else's problem. Your love for the festivities will have you feeling rejuvenated, make sure you know your limits though!

## Pisces

You love catching up with everyone over the holiday season but are so grateful for quiet time in the sun come the new year. Soak it all in and keep those boundaries strong AF!

## Aquarius

Don't let anyone get you down.. you take things to heart especially when you're passionate. When someone says no, they don't mean they hate you, they just mean no. Rise above the no and go find your yes man.

## Taurus

Some conversations will have you banging your head against a brick wall. Try to avoid these conversations, especially when it's with your deranged aunt.. I mean estranged aunt LOL. Keep dancing to the beat of your own drum, and flip the bird to anyone who judges you.

## Aries

Scattered is all that's coming through. You need to touch some grass and ground yourself! You want to be everything to everyone and do all of the things but guess what?! You can't! So just do your best and f\*ck the rest!

## Gemini

You're really bad at remembering to give everyone love. You hyperfixate on one person and love on them hard instead of spreading your love across your whole circle. Time to reach out to those you've forgotten about and let them know you love 'em too.

## Cancer

The weather is warming up and you're shrugging off your seasonal depression... again! Time for you to get emotional over the beauty of warm Summer days and spending late nights driving around with the windows down. You just can't help yourself but have a cheeky cry! Let the tears flow babe x

## Leo

I know you THINK you're the main character but babe, your life isn't a rom com.. get over it. No one is coming to the airport to profess their love and stop you from taking that flight, so just enjoy the destination that you arrive in.

## Virgo

I know you have good intentions, but you really have got to start thinking your actions aaaaaalllllll the way through. You're also not the victim if someone doesn't get the joke.. just declare they have no sense of humour and move on.

## Libra

Being hyper vigilant will be your double edged sword. You know what is about to happen but putting yourself in the middle in hopes of preventing it happening will only leave you as damaged collateral. Stay in your lane and just focus on your circle of control.

## Scorpio

Keep being you. They're in the wrong. You deserve all the gifts even if you were a bitter c\*nt all year. Also go sit in the sun and tan that pasty skin!



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## Behind every great region there's **PHENOMENAL WOMEN**

And we really mean it! During the creation of this issue, I realised just how many incredible women reside in the Southwest of Victoria. I wanted to highlight the diversity of the region as well as just how many incredible women are out there doing superwoman things!

We dug around, asked the towns and had an influx of nominations of amazing local women, which turned into beautiful, uplifting post. That's what it's all about! Women lifting each other up, recognising each other's achievements and being there to cheer one another on.

There are some awesome stories in this issue of local superstar women, now for these next few pages, kick back and read about just how many women are out in our region, building it up and making it incredible!

We've decided to keep this as an ongoing feature for future TOEs! If you are or know an amazing local woman - we'd love to show her off and let everyone know just how incredible she is!

Email us!  
[theotwayedit@outlook.com.au](mailto:theotwayedit@outlook.com.au)

# STACEY BARNES



Meet Stacey, the creative force behind My Crafternoons, bringing art and craft workshops to the southwest. Her mission? Sparking joy, connection, and a little magic through fun-loving groups and community classes.

Stacey's journey began in Hamilton, where she sought creative connections. With no classes catering to her interests, she took matters into her own hands. "I started My Crafternoons to make things whilst making friends," she says.

Battling imposter syndrome and limiting self-beliefs was tough. "Thinking I wasn't 'qualified' to be an artist or business owner held me back," Stacey admits. Now, she's embracing her creativity and inspiring others to do the same.

Women who achieve amazing things while staying true to their values inspire Stacey. "The Crafternooners who leave feeling proud of themselves - that's what keeps me going," she says.

## MANTRA

**"Create the things you wish existed"**

## ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Just bloody start! One night I whipped up a website and invited people to make pom-poms. The right people found me, and it's been a wild ride."**

Meet Ellie, the powerhouse behind Fitzmedia Productions. As Owner and Operations Manager, Ellie's really steering the ship!

Ellie married into the business, bringing her psychology background to Liam's media expertise. "He wrote the business plan on our honeymoon!"

From spare bedroom to studio garage to the Fletcher Jones building, Fitzmedia's growth is a testament to their hard work. Liam's mental health struggles tested Ellie's resilience. "Being supportive while finding my footing in a new industry was tough," she says.

Ellie loves working with strong-minded women and Ellie's mum's unwavering spirit drives her. "She taught me to push through, be strong, and resilient," she says.

## MANTRA

**"You never know how strong you are until strong is your only choice."**

## ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Even if the journey's not as simple as you hoped, push through. You got this!"**



# ELLIE FITZGERALD

# MELISSA SMITH



Meet Mel, the powerhouse behind two thriving businesses in the Colac Otway Shire. As a passionate marketer, mental health advocate, and community enthusiast, Mel is making waves!

Mel is a marketing PRO and proud mum of two sons, with life taking a turn in 2019, Mel rebuilt with purpose and now she is helping other local businesses shine! Mel runs Otway Marketing and Otway Weddings & Events!

Changing careers and building business and juggling it all solo has been a wild ride but every challenge shaped Mel into the woman we know and adore today. Mel's biggest inspo is women who hustle with grace, reminding her the ambition and a good life go hand-in-hand.

## MANTRA

**"Don't you ever let a soul in the world tell you that you can't be exactly who you are! - Lady Gaga"**

## ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Celebrate your wins, big and small. Confidence grows when you recognise your progress!"**

Meet Zoe, the inspirational woman behind Red Door Dance Co, a haven for young creatives in Colac. As Owner and Artistic Director, this mum of two, wife and beef farmer is making waves in the performing arts scene.

Zoe is a self-proclaimed creative soul who is passionate about music and theatre. Married to Lachie, with two tiny tornadoes, Xavier (4) and Alistair (3), Zoe juggles family life on her Irrewarra farm while running Red Door. But that's not all, Zoe is also a Colac Otway Shire Councillor (talk about powerhouse!).

Growing up Zoe loved to dance and perform, noticing opportunities in regional VIC were scarce, she created a space where young talents can thrive. Red Door is about belonging, confidence, and connection through the arts. Juggling studying, event management and launching Red Door left Zoe overwhelmed, but it taught her discipline, time management and that hard work pays off. Zoe's biggest inspiration is her dad, who taught her work ethic, integrity and that business is about people.

#### MANTRA

**"Greatness is not a function of circumstance. Greatness is largely a matter of conscious choice and discipline." - Jim Collins**

#### ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Just go for it! Be brave, curious, and kind. Surround yourself with uplifting people!"**



ZOE HUDGELL



ELLIE SEABART

Meet Ellie, the young entrepreneur behind Ellie Makes! Ellie's special job is 3D printing, making lots of fun and pretty things! Ellie has been hard at work making lots of cute things for first market - including "Elliens" which are funny aliens she has designed herself!

Ellie loves watching the printer bring her creations to life, "it's so cool!" she says. Ellie was inspired by her nana who also runs a market stall and wanted to have her own one! Ellie hopes that everyone loves her creations.

Ellie's heroes are her mum and dad, because they take her cool places and help her with her business.

#### MANTRA

**"Sparkles"**

**IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOURSELF?**

**"I would say, I'm so brave, because I AM so brave!"**

Meet Hannah, Colac local turned big city queen! Hannah has been a Makeup Artists for 8 years, with a decade of experience in the field. From Colac to Melbourne, Hannah's creative journey is inspiring.

Hannah's business was born from a desire for a creative outlet. Working nightshifts at Bulla, she experimented with makeup during Covid, also learning from YouTube tutorials along the way.

Self-doubt was a major hurdle, "Coming from a background where success wasn't prominent, it was hard to believe in myself", Hannah admits. But she's taken control of her future and absolutely THRIVING! Hannah loves inspiring others and her biggest inspiration, her mum. "She's overcome so much, and so have I. It shows it is possible," she says.

#### MANTRA

**"You know know until you ask - it's good to put your foot in the door"**

#### ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Don't let anyone hold you back. Do what you want and don't try and make everyone happy!"**



HANNAH NEWCOMBE

Meet Kerry, the third-generation owner of Hulms Bakery in Colac. Kerry is proud to carry on the family tradition of this iconic bakery which recently celebrated it's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday and was crowned winner of Victoria's favourite pie!

Kerry's passion was instilled by her father and grandfather, a legacy she says she's lucky to inherit. With a focus on customer service, Kerry's made sure the bakery remains a beloved fixture in Colac.

Taking over the business with no prior experience was daunting. Kerry's determination and willingness to learn have been key to the bakery's continued success. For Kerry, customer service is everything. "Making customers feel comfortable and getting them what they want - that's what it's all about," she says. Kerry's biggest inspiration is being the best person she can be, in all aspects of life!

**MANTRA**

**"See first with your heart, then with your eye" - Kerry Hulm**

**ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS**

**"Keep your eyes on your own business, and let the others do what they want!"**



**KERRY HULM**

**BRYONY LAPPAS**



Meet Bryony, the owner of Beauty by Bryony a salon in the heart of Colac providing a haven on tranquility in this small town. The city luxury retreat offers a safe space for clients to unwind and feel pampered, with services tailored to their needs.

Bryony's journey began with a passion for beauty. After overcoming personal struggles, including leaving a DV relationship and her own health battles, she created a sanctuary for others. She wanted a place where people could escape and feel good about themselves.

Securing funds to open the salon was tough but Bryony learned to focus on what she could control and not take things too personally. Managing her health and prioritising self-care have been ongoing lessons. Bryony thrives on supporting fellow women, "we should be lifting each other up, celebrating success and being there for each other" she says. Bryony's children fuel her passion, "I do it all for them, so they can live a good life and know what love is"

**MANTRA**

***"Love the skin you're in"***

**ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS**

**"Don't give up, Study, learn, knowledge is power. It's tough but it'll be w**

Meet Jayne, the heart behind Nourish to Flourish, a support group that's changing the lives of carers and their loved ones. Nourish to Flourish is a support group for carers of people living with eating disorders, providing a safe space to connect, share and grow. There is no judgement, just understanding and empathy.

Jayne is a carer, mum and passionate advocate for individuals living with eating disorders. With a background in teaching and swimming instruction she found her true calling supporting fellow carers and breaking down stigmas around mental health.

Jayne's biggest hurdle has been breaking through the stigma, but seeing people connect and support each other make it all worth it. It's been incredibly rewarding. Her biggest inspo, the carers and individuals living with eating disorders, it's their resilience and strength that motivate Jayne to keep going.

**MANTRA**

**"Do your ish!" It's about focusing on progress, not perfection.**

**ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS**

**"Trust your experience and voice. If you see a need, you've got the insight to create something meaningful"**



**JAYNE PEACOCK**

Meet Carola, the passionate force behind Carlisle River Wildlife Shelter, dedicating a labour of love dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating, and release our furry and feathered friends. Carola is a mum, nanna and wildlife warrior. She has spent decades juggling family, work and a deep love for animals. When she isn't caring for animals, you can find her gardening, reading, bushwalking or painting.

Carlisle River Wildlife Shelter started with a love for animals and a desire to protect them, seeing the threats to our wildlife like culling, habitat loss, and government inaction is what fuels Carolas determination to make a difference.

Carola's biggest challenge was fighting breast cancer while battling a culling permit for kangaroos near her shelter, but it only strengthened her. What a woman!

#### MANTRA

**"Choose only one master - nature" We can never have enough of the natural world.**

#### ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"To aspiring wildlife carers, be prepared for heartbreak, time and financial pressures. But if you're called to it, it's worth every moment"**



CAROLA ANSTIS

RACHEL REYNOLDS



Meet Rachel, the owner of Kin & Folk a boutique that's more than just a shop, it's changing the way small country towns in the region think about fashion. Kin & Folk is all about slow fashion, natural fibres and thoughtful design which is curating pieces that make you feel like the best version of yourself. Rachel has 17 years fashionista experience, is a mum and a creative soul! Rachel believes that clothing should be a force for good and she is on a mission to make that happen.

Rachel has learnt to trust her instincts, being a small business owner in a regional town it can be easy to get caught up in doubt, once she leaned into what makes Kin & Folk unique, things just started to click. Rachel loves women supporting women, sharing knowledge and lifting each other up. Her biggest inspo, her son, who reminds her to stay true to herself and keep pushing forward, even when it's tough.

#### MANTRA

**"If it doesn't matter in five years, it doesn't matter" - Cher & "Find out who you are and do it on purpose" - Dolly Parton**

#### ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Back yourself, even when you're unsure. Stay true to your values, and learn as you go and don't forget to ask for help"**

Meet Eloise, the face behind Haven Photography! Eloise specialises in documenting weddings, families, newborns, and more with a candid, heartfelt approach.

Eloise is a mum to three (under 5!), married to a dairy farmer, and loving life on the road in their caravan - beach days are really her jam! Eloise picked up a camera in her teens, packed it away for a little while until her sister-in-law asked me to capture her maternity photos. Eloise fell in love with working with people behind the lens!

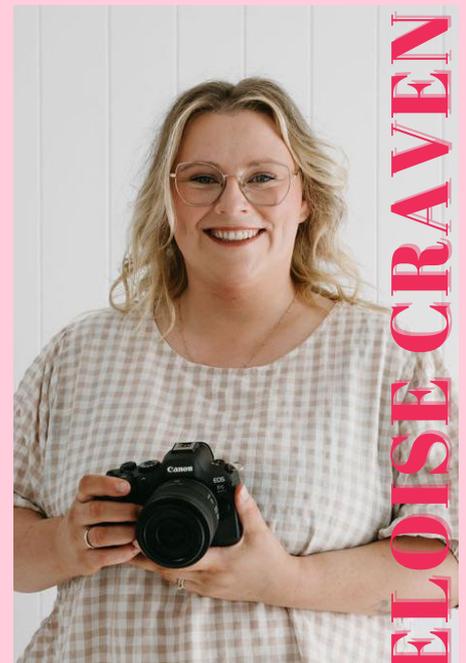
Tech and business stuff can be her kryptonite (you'd never know though!). Eloise believes collaboration is everything! Women lifting each other up, sharing knowledge, and cheering each other on - that's the magic!

#### MANTRA

**"Act confident and no one will question you" - fake it till you make it right?!**

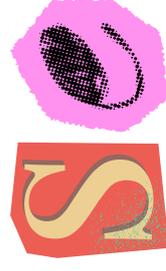
#### ADVICE TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

**"Don't wait to feel ready. You'll learn by doing, not doubting. Set boundaries, ask for help, and take up space. You got this!"**



ELOISE CRAVEN

# LET'S TALK ABOUT



We chatted with Tegan, a somatic sexology coach and 'sex guru' about all things.. well, sex! From misconceptions, yoni mapping, fertility, empowerment and more!

**Q - What inspired you to become a somatic sexology coach?**

**Tegan** - I've always been curious about people, bodies, and emotions. Growing up, sex and bodies were hush-hush, and I had more questions than answers. I realised I wasn't alone in this disconnection.

My background in fitness and nutrition led me to work with women who needed more than just physical advice – they needed to reconnect with themselves.

In 2021, I stepped into Somatic Sexology, and it's changed everything. I work with women to understand their bodies, desires, and boundaries, helping them reclaim their power and confidence. It's a holistic approach that considers the mind, body, and spirit.

**Q - How do you help clients connect with their bodies?**

**Tegan** - I work with women to tune into their bodies, understand their cycles, and

develop a compassionate relationship with themselves.

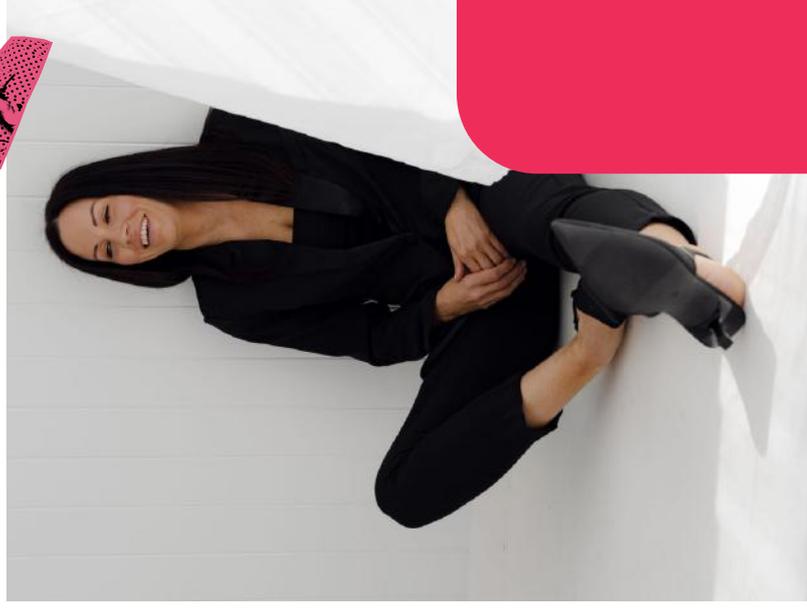
We explore breath, touch, and awareness to rebuild safety and trust. It's about understanding their unique story, not fitting into someone else's idea of sex or intimacy.

I provide a safe, non-judgmental space for women to explore their desires, boundaries, and needs. We work with the nervous system, emotions, and physical sensations to create a deeper connection with their bodies.

**Q - Common misconceptions about sex and intimacy?**

**Tegan** - There are many misconceptions about sex and intimacy. Some common ones include:

- Sex is always sexy and passionate
- Orgasm is the goal
- Libido is consistent
- Intimacy equals penetration
- Pain is a normal part of sex



These misconceptions can lead to pressure, disappointment, and disconnection.

I work with women to redefine what sex and intimacy mean to them, focusing on pleasure, connection, and mutual respect. It's about understanding their desires, boundaries, and needs, and communicating those with their partner.



## Q - Process and insights

**Tegan** - A 3-4 hour session starts with conversation, education, and boundary-setting. We then move into gentle bodywork, including external and internal mapping, with constant consent.

### This process:

- Rebuilds trust and safety in the body
- Identifies areas of tension, numbness, or pain
- Cultivates presence and awareness
- Empowers women to reclaim their bodies and desires
- Enhances pleasure, intimacy, and self-connection

Women often report feeling lighter, more open, and empowered after a session. It's not just about the body; it's about remembering who they truly are.



## Q - Mindfulness and somatic practices?

**Tegan** - Mindfulness and somatic practices are at the heart of my work. We slow down, tune in, and listen to the body. Grounding exercises, breathwork, and body scans help clients reconnect with their bodies.

Practical tools become part of daily life, building curiosity and agency over their bodies. It's not just about sex; it's about reclaiming self-awareness and confidence. We work with the nervous system, emotions, and physical sensations to create a deeper connection with the body.

*“A clear mind can move mountains, and a body free from pain allows women to fully show up for themselves and their lives”*

## SOME EXTRA THINGS WE SHOULD BLOODY KNOW...

### Perimenopause Isn't the End

This stage gets such a bad rap, hot flushes, mood swings, dryness, but it's not the end of your sex life. It's a shift. Your body's changing, and it needs a different kind of love and support. Sex in midlife can be better. Slower, deeper, more connected. But only if you're actually working with your body instead of fighting it every step of the way.

### It's a Vulva, Not a Vagina.

Can we all please start calling it what it is? The vulva is the outer part. The vagina is the inside bit. Most of us were never even shown our own anatomy properly, how incredibly stupid is that! When you actually get to know your vulva, when you touch her, look at her, learn what everything is, it changes how you feel about yourself.

## Q - Fertility cycles and reproductive health

**Tegan** - I guide clients to tune into their bodies, reading signs like cervical mucus, temperature, and emotions. We explore the cycle's phases, lifestyle factors, and overall health. This awareness empowers women to work with their bodies, not against them.

### Benefits include:

- Enhanced self-awareness and confidence
- Understanding and managing fertility
- Informed decisions about reproductive health
- Improved hormone balance and regulation
- Better communication with healthcare providers and partners

## Q - Fertility myths and misconceptions

### Tegan - Common myths include:

- You can get pregnant any day of the month
- Fertility is only about diet and exercise
- Hormonal birth control regulates your cycle
- Fertility ends at 35

These myths can lead to confusion, fear, and disempowerment. I work with women to understand their unique fertility and reproductive health.

## Q - Tips for conceiving or managing fertility

### Tegan -

- Slow down and prioritize nervous system regulation, rest, and nourishment
- Learn your body's language: track cervical mucus, basal body temperature, and cycle length
- Timing is everything: focus on ovulation and pleasure, not just mechanics
- Nourish your body with whole foods, healthy fats, and minerals
- Consider male fertility: lifestyle factors like stress, sleep, and diet impact sperm health

## Q - Fertility awareness and women's health

**Tegan** - Fertility awareness is about understanding your body, your cycle, and your unique rhythm. It's a powerful tool for overall health and well-being, influencing mood, energy, and relationships.

When women track their cycles, they notice patterns, shifts, and changes, building confidence, connection, and compassion for their bodies.

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# SOME EXTRA THINGS WE SHOULD BLOODY KNOW...

## Sex After Kids

Nobody warns you that sex after kids can feel like an entirely different chapter, new body, new hormones, new everything. Your libido might be MIA, your boobs aren't "for fun" anymore, and the last thing you want after a day of being touched is more touch.

## Libido Isn't a Personality Trait

You're not "low libido" or "not into sex." You're human. Your desire changes with your hormones, your stress, your cycle, your bloody mental load. You're not supposed to be horny 24/7, that's a myth.

## Self-Pleasure Isn't Dirty — It's Medicine

Let's drop the shame. Touching yourself isn't gross or wrong, it's how you connect with yourself. It's how you learn what you like, what you don't, and how to come home to your body after birth, trauma, or years of disconnect. Self-pleasure calms your nervous system. It helps you release stress. And it makes you a better lover, because you actually know yourself.

## Fertility Apps Aren't Fertility Awareness

Those "predictive" fertility apps? They're guessing, literally using averages, not your actual body and your paying lots of money for it. Fertility Awareness Method (FAM) is different. It teaches you how to read your own cervical mucus, temperature, and body cues to know exactly where you are in your cycle. It's backed by science, not algorithms, and it's 99.6% effective when done properly. And no, you don't need to lie on your back with your legs in the air after sex. Your body and uterus know exactly what to do.

## Men Need to Step Up

We love our men, but it's time they stop thinking sex is just about getting it done. Women need emotional safety, slowness, curiosity, and genuine connection, not pressure. The number of women faking orgasms or avoiding intimacy altogether is heartbreaking. Most men actually want to please their partners, they just don't know how. Education, communication, and vulnerability on both sides change everything.

## Toys Aren't Replacements — They're Tools

If your partner feels threatened by your vibrator, that's not a sex toy problem, that's an ego problem. Toys aren't competition, they're companions. Every woman should own one, because pleasure is your birthright. You deserve to explore what your body can feel, without guilt or explanation and it can take your sex life to new heights also.



Stacey Williams Artist

# WHAT IS YONI MAPPING?



By far, my most favourite service, and let me tell you... I'm extremely good at it! Yoni Mapping is one of the most profound forms of bodywork I've ever experienced or facilitated. The word "yoni" is Sanskrit and translates to "sacred space" or "life force of the universe". It refers to the whole of the female reproductive system, the vulva, vagina, and pelvic/womb space, but it's also much more than anatomy. It represents our creative power, our sensuality, our intuition, our femininity, our voice.

Most of us grow up completely disconnected from that part of ourselves. We're taught to perform, to please, to silence our desires, to compare our bodies to impossible standards, or to just "get on with it" even when something doesn't feel quite right. Over time, that disconnection shows up as numbness, pain, tension, guilt, low libido, shame, or a general sense of not feeling at home in or trusting our bodies.

Yoni Mapping is an opportunity to come home. It's not about fixing or forcing anything, it's about remembering, reconnecting, and listening to your body in a way most women never have the chance to.

Sessions run for about 3-4 hours. In a session, we start by talking. Every woman's story is unique, and I want to understand what's brought them to me, physically, emotionally, sexually. There's time to share, ask questions, and set boundaries. Then, we move into education, body literacy, learning about pelvic anatomy, arousal, and how the nervous system influences pleasure and pain. So many women leave that part already saying, "Why have I never been taught this before?" it also instils confidence in why we are stepping into yoni mapping and makes the women feel much more comfortable.

From there, we move into the bodywork. The session includes full front body relaxation massage, including the breasts and abdomen, and, if you feel ready and comfortable, external vulva and internal vaginal mapping.

Everything happens slowly, with constant consent and communication. Together, we explore what you notice, areas that feel tense, numb, pain, tender, or perhaps pleasurable. We literally create a "map" of your external and internal landscape, bringing awareness and sensitivity to parts of the body that may have been shut down or ignored for years.

It's an incredibly intimate and powerful process, but not in a sexual way. It's about cultivating safety, presence, and deep trust in your body. Many women describe it as finally feeling what "coming home" to themselves feels like.

After a session, women often tell me they feel lighter, more open, more connected, sometimes emotional, sometimes deeply peaceful. Some say it's the first time they've ever felt fully honoured in their bodies. Others start to experience more pleasure, less pain, and a new sense of clarity about what they want and need, both in their relationships and within themselves.

What I love most about this work is that it doesn't just transform your relationship with your body, it ripples out into every area of life. When a woman feels safe, seen, and empowered in her yoni, that energy touches everything she does. It's like she remembers who she really is.

## **How does it relate to overall pelvic health and well-being? What benefits have your clients experienced?**

Yoni Mapping is a bundle of practices, we work with the mind and the body, not clinical exams and treatments. It's about taking the whole woman into account, her experiences, her history, her cycles, her body, and her nervous system and working individually with her to create a plan that actually supports her life. Don't get me wrong, medical therapies have their place, but for too long the focus has been diagnose and prescribe, not person and circumstance focused. Women want to feel

heard and supported, and unfortunately, our medical system is moving further and further away from that.

Holistic, whole-body healing is what creates real health and happiness. Yoni Mapping gives women more power and advocacy over their bodies by giving them the chance to really get to know themselves. Female sexuality, body literacy, and menstrual cycles are at the core of who we are, the less confusion and shame we carry, the more compassion, confidence, and clarity we can bring to our lives.

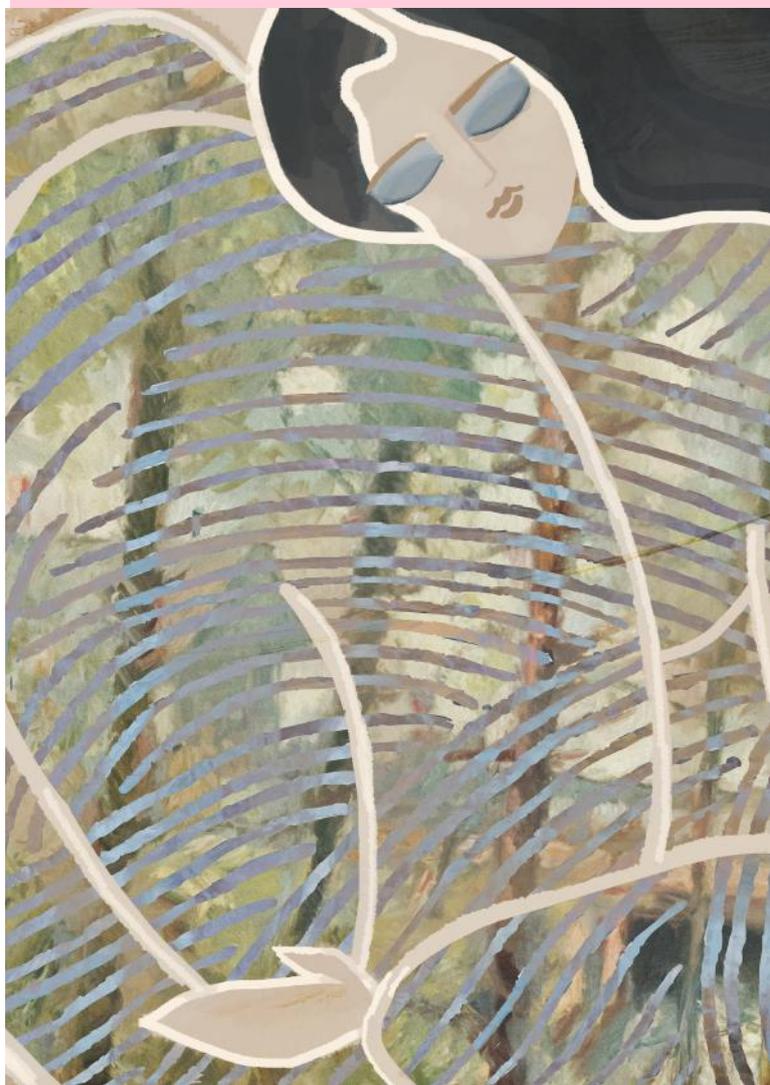
## BENEFITS OF YONI MAPPING

- Release long-held tension, tightness, and discomfort in the pelvic area
- Improve awareness, tone, and control of the pelvic floor
- Reconnect with your libido and natural sexual desire (yep, she's still in there)
- Experience easier, more balanced menstrual cycles
- Calm an overworked nervous system and reduce stress
- Find emotional clarity and build resilience through body-based awareness
- Develop confidence and deep trust in your body's wisdom
- Cultivate self-compassion and understanding of your needs and boundaries
- Feel more grounded in your body – improved posture, movement, and flow
- Step into daily life with a stronger sense of power, presence, and self-belief
- Deepen intimacy – both with yourself and with your partner
- Transform pain and numbness into ease, sensation, and pleasure
- Support for birth preparation and post-birth healing
- Reconnection and recovery after cancer or other invasive procedures
- Improve circulation and blood flow, reducing atrophy and dryness
- Restore libido, vitality, and sexual function
- Experience deeper, more fulfilling orgasms
- Find your voice – gain the confidence to ask for what you want, and what you don't

## YONI MAPPING — THE WORK THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

For anyone wondering, yes, Yoni Mapping is a real, professional practice, not woo-woo, not spiritual fluff. It's registered and covered under the International Institute for Complementary Therapists (IITC) in Australia, and it involves incredibly high levels of training, safety, and ethics. It's a deeply therapeutic practice that blends touch, education, and body awareness to help women reconnect with their pelvic space emotionally, physically, and energetically and yes... spiritually too. It's where trauma, numbness, and disconnection begin to shift, and where real healing starts.

Women leave these sessions saying, "Why did no one ever teach me this before?"



# FIND YOUR Light

Songwriters/storytellers, indie duo The Red Violets, are so excited to release their debut album, "Free To Create."

It is the culmination of five years of storytelling through song, creativity, colour, and heart for Claire Foley and Jill O'Dowd.

We have poured our hearts and souls into our music.

Self-managed and self-funded, creating our music from the ground up.

We began writing five years ago at a time when we couldn't perform live. We found purpose in creativity and the stories we wanted to share.

On the journey of this album, with our children by our sides, we have tried to show them that NOW is always the perfect time to never stop dreaming, to be honest and vulnerable, to push through your fears, and to break free from the boundaries our society confines us in.

Everyone is born to create. You are "Free To Create."

Together, we found our voices and sound to write our songs and found the courage to tell our own stories through the power of music.

Stories are so important. When we allow ourselves the time to listen, you find there is a magic in them. Our songs have been written with the hope of creating a kinder and more inclusive world for everyone.

We are so grateful for all the beautiful friendships we have made along the way; there are so many creatives we have had the privilege and joy to meet, collaborate with, and be inspired by during our creative process.

Videographer Ruby O'Dowd @downtheroadweddings has created the visuals for our film clips; her creative eye for design, photography, videography, and technical expertise is exceptional. We are so grateful to her.

We are blessed to live in the most spectacular and diverse landscapes across South West Victoria, which we have woven into our film clips.



From the energy of the Californian Redwoods deep in the Otways, the Loch Ard Gorge and the Shipwreck Coast along The Great Ocean Road, to Cape Bridgewater, north to the volcanic plains surrounding Red Rock and Alvie, and the stunning canola fields of Cressy. At every turn, we found meaning, inspiration, and layers that gave depth to our experiences and visuals that enhanced our stories and songs.

Along the way, the duo has written songs to support and create education and awareness for Harmony Day, International Women's Day, RUOK Day. These projects have helped connect people through music.

Co-Founders of Find Your Light - All Abilities, Inclusive Community Choir — a passionate group of volunteers.

As we enter our third year, the growth and impact this choir has had on our community is truly inspiring. It has been heartwarming to witness.

We are committed to ongoing education and awareness.

We will continue to advocate so that Find Your Light Choir receives the same opportunities as everyone else in our community.

Our goal is to create positive change through the power of music.

We will be forever grateful to our family, friends, and all those who have supported us and believed in our music along the way.

Music has the power to connect people and the ability to heal; we are forever grateful for what music brings to our lives.

# UNLEASH YOUR INNER ARTIST

Stacey, a rebel with a brush, is shaking up our rural southwest towns with her paint-and-sip events. We're talking *creativity, connection, and a whole lot of fun*. This fearless artist is on a mission to make art accessible to all!

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR ARTISTIC JOURNEY, WHEN DID YOU FIRST START CREATING?

**S-** I honestly can't remember a time when I wasn't drawing or creating. My mum always says I was never happier than when I was covered in paint or glitter, doodling for hours. She loved it because it meant I was totally occupied! Art has always been a part of my day to day.

As a teenager, I studied Graphic Design at TAFE. At the time, I didn't believe I could support myself as a full-time artist, it just didn't seem like a realistic path. But I've since learned that it absolutely is. It took me a while to come back to art with my whole heart, but once I did, I knew it's where I was meant to be.

Over the years, I've had the chance to be part of so many amazing creative projects with incredible people—group shows, solo exhibitions, book illustrations, commissioned pieces, branding work, murals... I love it all. Honestly, give me a surface and some paint or an idea, and I'm in my element. *Let me get my dirty art mitts on it!*

## WHAT DOES ART MEAN TO YOU AND HOW DOES IT INSPIRE YOU?

**S-** Art, to me, means transformation. It's a way to process emotions, release tension, and find relief from the day-to-day. It's also about connection, both with myself and with others. When I'm feeling anxious or low, I know that picking up a pencil and drawing for even an hour can shift the mood. It's such a grounding and healing tool, which is why I'm now studying art therapy part-time, to better understand and share that process with others. At its core, art means joy. Even when I feel nervous before leading a workshop, something beautiful happens; halfway through, as I support others and watch them open creatively, that nervousness fades.

Their energy, their courage to try something new, is inspiring. The people that come to my events and workshops truly encourage me, their willingness to try, and then find joy in it. I'm genuinely so proud of every single person who comes and makes art with me. That's the magic of art—it transforms, connects, and uplifts.

## WHAT DROVE YOU TO START DOING PAINT AND SIPS IN THE RURAL AREAS?

**S-** I was the lead graphic artist at ICONIKO for eight years, creating artwork tailored for the commercial market—pieces that were fashionable and designed to sell in boutiques and large retailers. That experience was invaluable, and it allowed me to hone my skills and grow professionally with a great team. I'm proud of that chapter, but after years of chasing the next bestseller, I became creatively drained and burned out.

It was during that time that one of my mentors and best friends, Chelsea from Alderwood Manor in Cobden, suggested I try hosting a paint-and-sip. She believed in me, and I'll always be grateful for that. Cobden welcomed me with open arms—just this random art girl showing up to paint—and people joined in the fun with genuine warmth.

That first experience showed me how much regional communities value creativity and the effort it takes to bring something different to remote areas. Since then, I've travelled to many rural towns, and each time, I've met the most kind-hearted, generous, and positive people. That connection, that sense of community, is what keeps me doing this.

## WHAT HAS THE RESPONSE BEEN LIKE?

**S-** It's been amazing! From the Paint+Sips, to kid's workshops, to hens' parties – I can't be more grateful and lucky for the positive response.



## WHAT REGIONAL TOWNS HAVE YOU BROUGHT THESE EVENTS TO?

**S-** Cobden, Simpson, Camperdown, Terang, Beac, Woorndoo, Hamilton, Derrinallum, Cressy, Teesdale, Drysdale, Daylesford, Warrnambool, Koroiit – anywhere anyone wants me I'm there!

## ADVICE FOR ANYONE WANTING TO COME ALONG

**S-** First of all—be kind to yourself. It's meant to be fun, not perfect! Give yourself permission to play and make a mess. It's totally normal to feel nervous before painting - and trying something new can feel intimidating, but stepping outside your comfort zone is where the magic happens.

Bring a friend! It's so much more fun when you can support each other, share a laugh, and enjoy the experience together.

Planning and patience makes good paintings! Prosecco never hurts either. Trust the process. Not every stage will look pretty, mistakes might be made, and that's okay.

Most importantly, I'm here to support and guide you. I want you to enjoy it, feel proud, and walk away with something you never thought you could create. I've seen incredible work come from first-time painters—and I truly believe you can do it too!

# FINDING STRENGTH IN ADVERSITY

*Georgia's Journey*

Growing up in Camperdown, Georgia was surrounded by horses and family. She bought her own house at 19, worked in real estate, and married James, with whom she had two boys, Fergus and Freddie, 17 months apart. The family ran a beef, sheep, and cropping farm, creating a life filled with love and adventure.

James' diagnosis was a bolt out of the blue, and the 13 months that followed were a blur of treatment, hope, and grief. Georgia's world was turned upside down, but she found solace in writing and sharing James' story with their boys.

Honouring James' Memory, Georgia wrote children's books about James' spirit, featuring a majestic wedge-tailed eagle as a symbol of his strength. The books have resonated with families who've experienced loss, offering a message of hope and resilience.

Georgia's boys, now 11 and 12, cope with their father's passing in their own way. She encourages open conversations, sharing photos and memories to keep James' memory alive.

"Give yourself some grace," Georgia advises. "Life doesn't have to fit in a box or please anyone else. Ride the waves and know they'll pass."

Georgia's focus is on raising her boys on the farm, surrounded by nature and memories of James. She's working on another children's book, inspired by the same illustrations that brought James' story to life. "I'm stronger than I thought," Georgia says.

*"Life is about living your own way and looking after those who love you back."*



# EMBRACING INCLUSIVITY

*Clare's Journey*

Clare, a psychology graduate and passionate advocate, is on a mission to break down barriers and promote accessibility for all. Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) at 32, she's turned her experiences into a platform for change.

Clare's podcast, MSunderstood, shares authentic stories of people living with MS, offering inspiration, support, and a glimpse into the future. With over 100 episodes, she explores the good, the bad, and the unknown, asking three thought-provoking questions at the end of each episode.

In April 2026, Clare will embark on a 1071km journey from Perth to Albany, WA, on a 4-wheel powered bike, accompanied by her husband and supported by her parents and a documentary filmmaker.

This ride aims to raise funds and awareness for MS research, showcasing the capabilities of people with disabilities.

Clare believes wheelchair-accessible nature tracks can revolutionize inclusivity, offering opportunities for people with disabilities to connect with nature. "Nature might not be what they want but just having the opportunity – breaks barriers."

Clare's advice for others with MS "Don't give up. Listen to my podcast, and remember, diagnosis isn't the end – it's a new beginning."

Clare's determination and resilience inspire us to rethink accessibility and inclusivity. Let's ride alongside her and make a difference.



# Goldie's Dream

A JOURNEY OF LOVE,  
RESILIENCE, AND TRIUMPH

**M**arigold Elsum was born on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and from the moment she arrived, her mum knew she was different. "I knew from the beginning that she was different to other babies," Charlene recalls. "But being a first-time mum, I was always dismissed as being paranoid and overreacting."

As Goldie's symptoms escalated, Charlene's instincts proved right. At 9 months, Goldie suffered her first seizure, and a diagnosis of epilepsy followed. Despite medication, Goldie's seizures worsened, and at 2 ½ years old, she underwent a life-changing hemispherectomy – a surgery that would leave her with paralysis on one side of her body and limited vision.

The road to recovery was arduous, with months of rehabilitation and therapy. But Goldie's determination shone through. She relearned how to walk, and her infectious laughter filled their life again.

Just when they thought they'd found a solution, Goldie's seizures returned. It was a devastating blow, and the search for answers continued. A genetic condition, CDKL5, was eventually discovered, explaining Goldie's unique challenges.

Today, Goldie, 8, uses an eye gaze device to communicate, play games, and create art.

Our Wild Love Photography

*"Goldie is the happiest kid," "She's the absolute best. I am ridiculously proud to be her mum." - Charlene*

Goldie's story is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and community. Her journey inspires us to cherish every moment, to find joy in the little things, and to never give up hope.

Charlene's message to other parents facing similar challenges is simple: "Enjoy your kid. Take a step back and see the joy they bring you. It's easy to forget to have fun."

Goldie's community has rallied around her, and she's thriving. Her friends, who've grown up alongside her, are a testament to the power of inclusion. They're accepting, loving, and curious, asking questions and learning about her world.

Goldie's story is a call to action, encouraging us to create a world where everyone feels valued, loved, and included. By embracing Goldie and her family, we can build a brighter, more compassionate future for all.



# DO YOU KNOW AN INSPIRING YOUNG PERSON IN SOUTH WEST VICTORIA?

[THEOTWAYEDIT@OUTLOOK.COM.AU](mailto:THEOTWAYEDIT@OUTLOOK.COM.AU)



# POTS FOR PALESTINE *at Dar Teta*

COLAC

Otways Mutual Aid and artist Lauren Green collaborated with Dar Teta Cafe on Murray Street in Colac to put on a heartwarming social event, Pots for Palestine. This event marked the beginning of Otway Mutual Aid's Art for Humanity Series.

\$1205 was raised and was donated to both Colac Aboriginal Gathering Place and Olive Kids.

Pots were painted so many different styles and designs with guidance and smiles from the gorgeous Lauren. People young and old gathered to show their solidarity for Palestine.

Co-creator, host and chef was the incredible Ely, and the spread was incredibly delicious! (I haven't been able to stop thinking about it!). Dar Teta is an expectational cafe in the heart of Colac, offering divine middle eastern spreads and a good coffee! It was recently gone through a little glow up, if you are looking for a cosy spot to stop for a bite and coffee - Dar Teta should definitely be on your list.

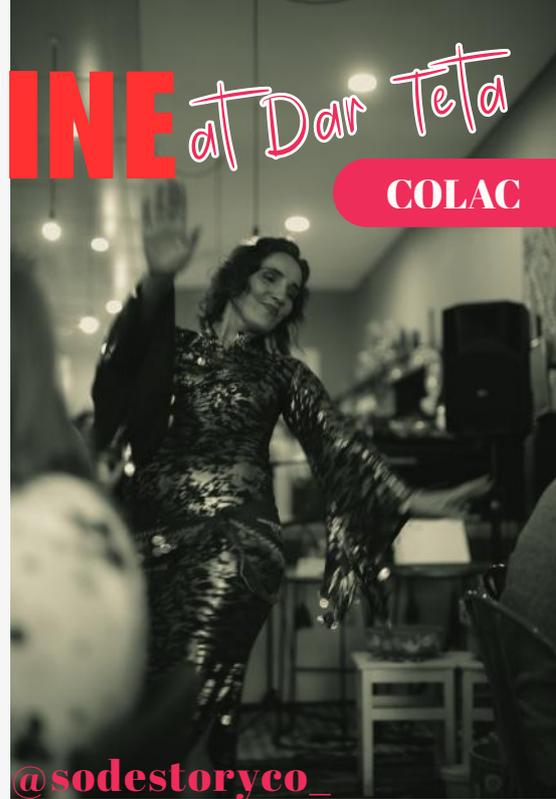
Music performances throughout the night from Yara and Raghid set the relaxed atmosphere and an extraordinary belly dance performance from Suha was truly amazing (I wish I could move like that)!

If you are wanting to keep up with future Art for Humanity events, please give Otways Mutual Aid a follow over on Instagram!

## OTWAYS MUTUAL AID

**An Otways based community group, hosting events intended to connect, fundraise and build solidarity around global, social and humanitarian issues.**

**[@otways.mutal.aid](https://www.instagram.com/otways.mutal.aid)**



[@sodestoryco\\_](https://www.instagram.com/sodestoryco_)



# HELPING REBUILD THE VILLAGE

In a world where new mothers often feel isolated and overwhelmed, a community-driven initiative is making waves by providing essential support to postpartum women. The Village Warrnambool is a grassroots movement that gathers care packages of nourishing meals, snacks, self-care items, and more, all donated by locals, to help mamas navigate the challenges of motherhood.

The Village Warrnambool's founder, Tash, was inspired by her own experiences as a new mom, realizing the importance of community support during the postpartum period. "When a mama is supported and cared for, she can focus on resting, healing, and bonding with her baby," Tash explains. "Historically, mothers were held by their villages. We need to be reminded that caring for mothers isn't a luxury - it's essential!"

Mamas are nominated by themselves or loved ones, and Tash mobilizes her network of volunteers and social media followers to donate items. The care packages are then assembled and delivered to the mama, providing a tangible reminder that she's not alone.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with mamas expressing gratitude and relief at receiving these thoughtful packages. "It was a big warm hug that I needed," one mama shared. "The meals will be an absolute lifesaver."



The Village Warrnambool is a community-driven effort, and there are many ways to get involved:

- Donate items or funds through their social media channels or website
- Volunteer to help assemble and deliver care packages
- Nominate a mama in need of support
- Spread the word about the importance of postpartum support

Tash has also created an online directory, Held in Motherhood, featuring local businesses that support mamas throughout their pregnancy, postpartum, and motherhood journey.

The Village Warrnambool is a shining example of community power and the impact of collective support. By holding our mamas, we support everyone.

[@thevillage\\_warrnambool](https://www.instagram.com/thevillage_warrnambool)

# OUR CHAT WITH Sarah Mansfield MP

Sarah Mansfield MP, a vocal advocate for peace and human rights, shares her insights on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The situation in Gaza is dire, with over 63,000 Palestinians killed, 44% of them women and children. "The lack of access to basic necessities like food, water, and medical care is alarming. As a GP, it's heartbreaking to see the devastating impact on civilians, especially children" Sarah says.

Sarah was inspired to organize the Walk for Peace after seeing similar initiatives in Ballarat. She believes that peace is achievable through non-violent means and that Australia can play a role in promoting diplomacy and ending arms trade.



Sarah is concerned about the rise of radicalisation in communities, particularly far-right racist ideologies. However, she's heartened by the strength of people connecting and advocating for peace and inclusivity.

Australia can contribute to a peaceful resolution by recognizing Palestine, ending arms trade, and imposing sanctions. The government can also support Palestinian communities in Australia by providing resources to organisations and offering refuge to those fleeing violence.

The Walk for Peace aims to raise awareness about the importance of peace and non-violence. The community has responded positively, with many supporting the initiative and advocating for change.

Sarah encourages people to continue advocating for peace and human rights by engaging in conversations, writing to MPs, and participating in rallies and protests.

## ENROLMENTS 26-27

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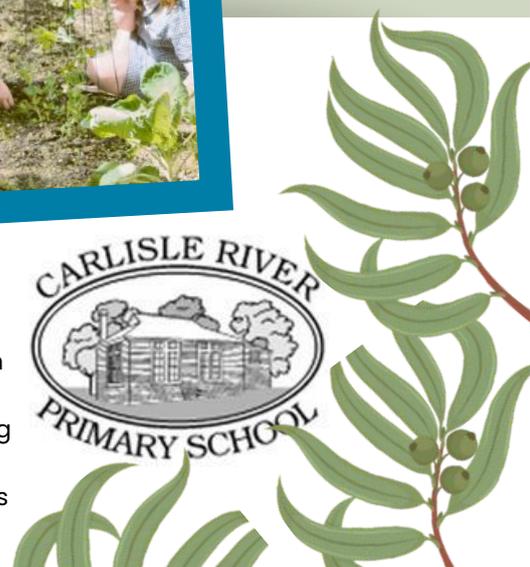


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# WALK FOR RESPECT

Last October, around 200 locals gathered at Colac's Memorial Square Garden for the Walk for Respect, a powerful stand against domestic violence. The event highlighted the regions commitment to tackling this critical and ongoing issue.

Speakers like Stephanie Ward from Colac Police, former ALF player Tim McGrath and Emma from Orange door shared their insights on the issue, while Deb and April (yours truly), shared our personal stories of being survivors. The event was more than just a walk; it was a show of solidarity for all of those affected.



There was face painting, sausages from MeatCrew and the Bulla ice cream van, but they message was clear: domestic violence won't be tolerated in our community.

The Walk for Respect is a reminder that we all play a role in preventing domestic violence. By being supportive, listening and promoting respect, we can make a difference.

Let's keep working together to create a safer, more respectful community for everyone.

**Do you need help?**  
**Safe Step**  
**1800 015 188**

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 EXPERIENCE  
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 INTIMATE PARTNER  
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*"Don't be a bystander,  
 be a changemaker"*



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# What you *will* RECEIVE

## Photography-

- Professional photography coverage up to one hour with up to 50 digital images
- Photographer with over 20 years experience
- Wedding couple and photographer can be driven to various locations on the property for photos in the Polaris if required.
- Landscape, bush and rain forest photo locations
- Zoom consultation on ceremony locations and photo ideas.

## Event Spaces-

- Arbour and swing within the forest.
- 6 wooden pews for ceremony seating

- Chauffeur driven Polaris to ferry less able-bodied people (ie. elderly) to and from ceremony location.
- Chauffeur bridal party to and from ceremony location in the Polaris.
- Table and chairs for the signing ceremony
- Crockery, cutlery and glassware (white and red wine glasses, champagne glasses and beer glasses).
- Tables and chairs to accommodate up to fourteen within the lodge.

## Celebrant-

- Experienced local celebrant recently voted #1 Celebrant for Geelong and Surf Coast (Sue Warner)
- A simple registry-style ceremony\*
- All legal paperwork provided and lodged with Victorian BDM
- Resources and assistance for inclusion of personal vows if required.

## Accommodation-

- Accommodation onsite and venue hire for two nights (Lodge and Hall).

## Extras included-

- Backup generator in the event of a power outage.
- Rubbish removal and cleaning fees.
- Access to commercial glass washing dish washer.
- Consultation on ceremony locations, ideas, and suppliers

## Total package price = \$4,290.

\* Bookings must be made at least five weeks prior to the ceremony to ensure compliance with The Marriage Act 1961 (C'lth).



## THE FUN

*without the*  
**STRESS**  
*the*



**PHOTOGRAPHY  
ACCOMMODATION  
CELEBRANT  
EVENT SPACES**

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# Editor's Shout Out

COLAC



It is definitely time to give a massive shout out and thank you to my 'unofficial office' - Shannon's Cafe located in the Woolworths Complex in Colac.

Amazing is an understatement. Shannon's Cafe is that place you want to go when you want cosy vibes, exceptional food and even better coffee. I haven't chosen this cafe as my daily coffee spot and weekly office space because the location is convenient, the team is amazing and really, THE COFFEE, I can't say it enough!

If you want to taste the best coffee in town, have a delicious meal, this really is the place to stop. If you follow us on social media, you know we love a sweet treat over here so don't skip dessert because the cakes (especially that Biscoff cheesecake!) are to die for (and you deserve a treat sweetie).



## Our picks?

- The coffee (obviously)
- Biscoff cheesecake
- Thai Chicken Salad



## Open

Sunday-Friday  
(closed Saturdays)  
7:30-2pm



# WANT TO BE FEATURED?

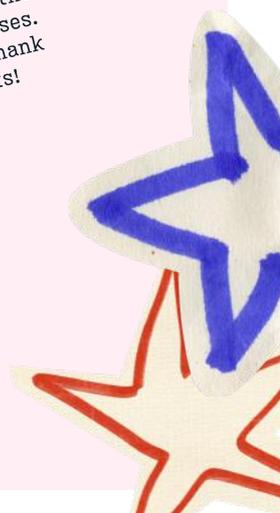
THE OTWAY EDIT STRIVES TO BE A VOICE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE AND WE WANT YOU TO BE A PART OF IT! HONESTLY, WE CAN'T DO IT ALL WITHOUT YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT!

## SUBMISSIONS CAN INCLUDE:

- STORY SUGGESTIONS
- PHOTOGRAPHY SUBMISSIONS
- WRITING SUBMISSIONS
- GRAPHIC DESIGN AND ART WORK
- ADVERTISING SPOTS & MUCH MORE



The Otway Edit is a not for profit magazine, advertising supports us in being able to bring this cool mag to print - in turn sharing the stories of the amazing locals, small businesses. We are growing with every edition and we thank our advertisers from the bottom of our hearts!



SEND THROUGH YOUR IDEAS AND SUBMISSIONS TO  
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