

community in action

strathfieldsaye | eaglehawk | bendigo northern district | the otis foundation



Peter Dehnert (General Manager, The Bendigo Miner), Michael McKern (Empowering Eaglehawk), Phil Whiting (Bendigo and Adelaide Bank), Wayne Williams (Bendigo Community Telco) and Alida Robinson (The Bendigo Miner) were at Brassey's in Eaglehawk for the launch of Community in Action. Picture: BILL CONROY

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Welcome

WELCOME to the first edition of Community in Action, an initiative of local community groups and The Bendigo Miner, proudly supported by Bendigo and Adelaide Bank and Bendigo Community Telco.

This monthly publication aims to provide a presence and a voice for groups including Empowering Eaglehawk, Strathfieldsaye Community Enterprise, Bendigo Northern District Community Enterprise and The Otis Foundation.

Over the past month, launches have been held in Eaglehawk, Huntly and Strathfieldsaye to celebrate this new initiative, with another involving The Otis Foundation planned for next week.

“...the power to bring people and community together.”

Earlier this week, Empowering Eaglehawk's Michael McKern, who has been one of the drivers behind the establishment of this new product, described Community in Action as another exciting project for the enterprises who are part of the journey.

"We are pleased to be able to partner with *The Bendigo Miner* for our monthly feature - 'Community in Action',

and we look forward to providing many great stories about the 'Borough and also to promoting Eaglehawk on a regular basis," he said.

"We hope that you will all enjoy this feature and support the enterprise into the future."

General manager of The Miner Peter Dehnert said he believed Community in Action has the power to bring people and community together.

Mr Dehnert said 10 per cent of all revenues from Community in Action would be returned to participating organisations as part of the shared vision for a product that is truly committed to supporting the proud local community we share.

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The Otis experience

THE hundreds of women who take advantage of The Otis Foundation's retreat accommodation each year consider the organisation to be a hidden gem.

Word of "The Otis Experience" is spreading rapidly, but there is still much work to be done to ensure that those in need of a helping hand are empowered to reach out.

Otis provides retreats for men and women with breast cancer at no accommodation charge.

The not-for-profit organisation is a Bendigo-born initiative, and despite undergoing a rapid and exciting expansion over the past two years, remains proudly local.

The Foundation currently has nine properties in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, including a newly-acquired Echuca/Moama retreat.

It is strongly committed to ongoing growth and has plans to evolve into a national network.

Otis retreats offer time out to relax, reconnect and regroup for those struggling with the difficulties that come alongside serious illness.

Each property has been hand chosen for its location, in a beautiful environment which allows guests to draw on nature for strength and comfort.

"A reality check on the important things in life – love, family and friends like Otis."

"...cocooned inside with warmth, healing and emotional well being."

"You feel cocooned inside with warmth, healing and emotional well being."

"This opportunity to be bathed in generosity, tranquility and timelessness is just what I needed."

These are just some of the glowing endorsements provided by Otis guests.

They support a La Trobe University study which found that the retreats provide a tangible psychological health benefit to those who stay.

The Otis Foundation is driven by Chairman Andrew Barling, a well-known surgeon with a passion for helping others and a dedication to supporting those with breast cancer.

His late wife Judy Burley was challenged by the illness at a young age and ultimately lost her battle, providing the impetus for the Foundation's development.

"I hope the Bendigo community feels as proud of Otis and its achievements as I do," Dr Barling said.

"Since our evolution from humble beginnings in 2000, local people have been incredibly generous in their support of The Foundation and the ongoing quest to spread our wings.

"Such strong community ownership gives us tremendous confidence moving forward.

"And thanks to ventures such as the Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise, we're optimistic we can secure the financial backing needed to achieve our goals," he added.



Otis Retreat at Mandurang.



Otis Foundation chairman Andrew Barling and his wife Mary Wooldridge with their son Jamison.



Rob Cook, Patrick Falconer, Rick Dungey and Grant Hoppe enjoyed the sunshine and the golf at Otis Golf Day at Bendigo Golf Club. Picture: NICK McGRATH

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47,000 reasons to smile

THE Strathfieldsaye & Districts Community Enterprise Project will distribute \$47,000 to support the Strathfieldsaye and Districts area through grants to local not-for-profit organisations.

Over the past four years the project has placed more than \$200,000 back into the community through grants, development of services, infrastructure such as the building of the Strathfieldsaye Recreational Precinct, purchased land for passive recreation, new walking tracks around Sheepwash Creek and amenities to support the quality of life of local residents.

This has been achieved all thanks to the support the enterprise received from the local community and their continued support of both the Bendigo Bank and Bendigo Community Telco.

It's thanks to this support the Strathfieldsaye & Districts Community Enterprise has run the Community Grants program which was open to all not-for-profit organisations working within Strathfieldsaye and district.

“...thanks to the support the enterprise received from the local community...”

Local organisations were invited to apply for a grant up to the value of \$5000 which must be used to benefit the Strathfieldsaye and Districts area.

Successful Applicants included The Strathfieldsaye Lions Club, Strathfieldsaye Primary School, Emu Creek Cricket Club, Strathfieldsaye Auskick, Peppercorn Park, Strathfieldsaye Bowls Club, Strathfieldsaye Early Learning Children's Centre, Strathfieldsaye Football & Netball Clubs, Strathfieldsaye Junior Football Club, Eppalock Primary School, Strathfieldsaye Cricket Club and the Redesdale Mia Mia primary School.

The Strathfieldsaye & District Community Enterprise will hold the Grants project twice each calendar year for local groups and organisations working within the district. Details of the next round of grants available will be listed on the website, and in Community in Action.



Sarah Cornell, Belinda Cook and Clare Camm at the Strathfieldsaye and District Community launch. Picture: PETER HYETT

Northern exposure creates change

JUST over three years ago, representatives from the Huntly Strauch Reserve Committee held a community meeting to float the possibility of forming a community enterprise to improve recreational facilities in Huntly and the surrounding area.

With assistance and examples from Strathfieldsaye's highly successful community project, a number of

meetings ensued and from these humble beginnings a steering committee was formed and approaches made to the Bendigo Bank and Bendigo Community Telco to enlist their support. This was achieved and the committee of "Happening Huntly" was formed from Huntly community orientated, like-minded people looking to improve services and facilities for the Huntly community.

Committee secretary Mike Lowther said that since those early beginnings, the enterprise had grown and prospered through the hard work and dedication of the founding community members. In view of this success, the committee last year decided to change our name from "Happening Huntly" to Bendigo Northern District Community Enterprise. The aim is to be more inclusive to people, organisations and businesses and to encompass the wider communities within our district which include the areas from in and around White Hills and Bendigo East, north to Goomong and beyond.

The existing committee is comprised largely of Huntly residents and we strongly urge residents from these wider areas to join the committee to broaden its representation and to assist us in our endeavours to gain improvements for our districts. If you care about your community and would like to become involved, we would love to hear from you. Join the committee and make a difference if you are interested in helping our communities grow. Please contact one of our committee members:

- Sandy Young 54488577
- Cheryl Johnstone 0419 392 807
- Mike Smith 54488510
- Mike Lowther 54488835

Or leave your details at the White Hills Branch of the Bendigo Bank (5441 4944) or at the Huntly General Store and Newsagency.



Sandy Young (Chairperson of the Bendigo Northern District Community Enterprise), Kevin Gibbins (Huntly Newsagency operator), Phil Whiting (Bendigo & Adelaide Bank), Cheryl Johnstone (BNDCE Committee member), Mike Lowther (Secretary BNDCE), Alida Robinson (The Bendigo Miner) and Peter Constable (Bendigo & Adelaide Bank).

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Empowering Eaglehawk – working together!



Ross Mitchell (Manager of IGA Eaglehawk) and Jodi Wilson (Bendigo and Adelaide Bank) were at Brasseys in Eaglehawk for the launch of Community in Action. Picture: BILL CONROY

SINCE its establishment, Empowering Eaglehawk has overseen the investment of more than \$90,000 back into the local community.

Successful recipients of these community building funds have included the Dahlia and Arts Festival, the Bushfire Appeal, Eaglehawk Croquet Club, Eaglehawk Soccer Club, Star Cinema, California Gully Primary School, Eaglehawk North Primary School and the Eaglehawk Men's Shed project.

The diversity of local projects and organisations funded is as rich as the proud 'Borough spirit that underwrites everything Empowering Eaglehawk stands for.

Earlier this year, the launch of a loyalty card scheme marked a first for the region. The card is aimed at retaining local capital and further promoting economic activity within the area, and Empowering Eaglehawk president Michael McKern says that has to be good for local business, the local economy and our community as a whole.

"Plus each shopper also benefits with savings at each of the participating stores," he said.

"...each shopper benefits with savings..."

At last month's launch of Community in Action, held at Eaglehawk's own Brasseys, Mr McKern also said the people of his community had wanted to see the return of community news and local stories about people from their area, and that this could be the start of something significant to both them and the community at large.

For its part, Empowering Eaglehawk has more than 1000 subscribers listed to its regular newsletter as further testimony to how close-knit and supportive the people of the local area are to their community.

Mr McKern's fellow committee members include Future Employment Opportunities CEO and Eaglehawk Ward councillor Peter Cox, Brian Davey, Mary Preston, Noel Claridge, Ross Mitchell, Phil Kerr, Sarah Wainwright, Sonia Isley, Emma Lewis, Jodie Wilson and Kerry Krenz.

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