THE PHILLIP ISLAND VIBE

FREE
Issue 201
October 2026

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From the Editor

There are a few articles focussed on AI in this issue of the Vibe, so I thought I might touch on it too.

AI has been in use in most of our lives for a very long time, who remembers Clippy in Microsoft Word? "Hey! It looks like you are writing a letter, would you like some help?" To which most of us thought "ugh no, you are so annoying I can write my own letter, go away!" Now gmail wants to write our emails for us, our phones want to compose our text messages for us, so many people are turning to ChatGPT to ask every day questions, and there is a growing number of people who are turning to AI friends for company and support, to combat the loneliness epidemic that seems to be plaguing the world.

I use AI features in software on a daily basis. If I like the look of a particular font, I just scan it and AI bots will peruse all known typefaces and point me to where I can purchase the one I scanned. If I want to know who holds the copyright on a photo online, I can ask Google and the AI will tell me in seconds. And if I just need to remove a spot of water damage on an old photo I have scanned, Photoshop will content aware fill that dot instantly and you'd never know it was there.

For people who are not confident in their writing skills, drafting an email in point form and letting AI turn it into paragraphs can make life so much easier. If you hear a song playing that you like, a press of a button on the Shazam app and it will tell you exactly what is playing, it's like magic! The benefits of AI for these (and thousands of other) uses can't be argued with.

The murky parts come when people start relying on AI to gather and interpret data, and then present what they have cobbled together as fact. AI is frequently wrong in these matters and it pays to fact check everything AI tells you, independently.

The murkiest depths of AI though are the ones that upset our musicians, our artists, our authors. Bots trawl their works, "learning" how to produce works just like the ones they have spent lifetimes creating, and spitting out generative AI art, text, music in seconds. This can be "enjoyed" at next to no cost to the consumer, but at great cost to the environment, and great loss to those who spent their lives honing a craft and are now being bypassed in favour of "AI Slop" artworks, stories, songs and more.

Just some food for thought!

Denni Slorach

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WHEN FIRE CAME TO PHILLIP ISLAND

by Pamela Rothfield

As Phillip Island prepares for another summer, its long history of bushfires carries a warning that remains deeply relevant.

El Niño is once again influencing Australia's climate and often brings warmer, drier conditions to eastern and south-eastern Australia. At the same time, human-induced global warming is increasing extreme heat and dangerous fire weather and lengthening fire seasons. Phillip Island may be surrounded by water, but it is not immune from the devastation a fast-moving fire can cause.

Against this background, a proposal from the Rhyll Community Association is a timely reminder that fire readiness begins close to home. The Association has arranged for the emergency-management expert Dave Cox to speak with the Rhyll community about reducing local fire risk, including identifying fire hydrants and ensuring they can be located and reached quickly. The Association is also considering an 'Adopt a Fire Hydrant' project, through which nearby residents would help keep hydrants visible and clear of grass, leaves and other debris.

It is a modern response to a danger that has confronted Island communities for generations.

Fire, drought and failing water supplies

Newspaper reports from the late 19th century describe fires moving through Phillip Island's grasslands and bush at a time when organised firefighting equipment was almost non-existent.

In February 1898, the *San Remo Times* and *Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser* reported several Island fires. One began near Rhyll, where neighbours extinguished it after only a few acres of grass had burnt. Another swept across about 100 acres near the centre of the Island before residents assembled "in great force" and brought it under control.

The fires caused comparatively little damage, but the reports revealed another serious danger: Phillip Island was running out of water.

Most dams and waterholes had dried up, while stock owners were cleaning and reinforcing springs. Cowes was believed to have barely another week's supply if rain did not arrive. Newhaven fared better because water could be drawn from a well near the pier, although it still had to be carted to where it was needed.

There was no fire engine standing by and no established network of hydrants. When smoke appeared, neighbours left their farms and businesses and fought the flames with whatever water, tools and manpower they could muster.

The fires of 1936

Fire remained a recurring threat into the 20th century, particularly in the bushland between Cowes and Rhyll.

A 1931 fire near Rhyll burnt grass paddocks, damaged fences and threatened an area regarded as an important home for the Island's koalas. An even greater danger emerged during a succession of fires in February and March 1936.

On 26 February, a fire reportedly began in heavy scrub about a mile and a half from Cowes. It crossed the Cowes-Rhyll Road, burnt through hundreds of acres of grazing land and swept through the cemetery and the swamp towards Rhyll. Many men assembled, but the fire's strength meant that little could be done beyond burning protective breaks around cultivation paddocks and hoping for a change in the wind.

For Rhyll resident Lorna Collins, now approaching her 102nd birthday, the fire is more than a newspaper story. She was only 12, but still remembers the terror of watching it advance towards her family's property neighbouring the Rhyll swamp. She recalls, "Cinders were raining down on the house, the air was thick with black smoke, and the men were out fighting the flames with wet hessian bags."

F. Lewis, chief inspector of the Fisheries and Game Department, reportedly believed the fire had been deliberately lit. Warning that fire was one of the principal causes of koala deaths, he observed that a sanctuary boundary offered no protection from advancing flames.

Fire returned to the Rhyll swamp and surrounding country only a month later. Again hundreds more acres of gum trees were burnt, damaging important winter feeding grounds for the Island's koalas.

The repeated outbreaks prompted calls for a volunteer fire brigade and for the council or another authority to provide knapsack sprayers. Such equipment could not stop a large bushfire, but it could be used against grass fires, spot fires and burning embers. Where dependable water supplies were scarce, even this represented an important advance.

The sanctuary burns again

Eight years later, during the devastating Victorian fires of February 1944, Rhyll and its koala sanctuary were threatened once more. This time, many young local men were away on wartime service, leaving fewer people available to fight the flames.

Again, fire swept through part of the sanctuary and continued burning around the swamp and outskirts of Rhyll. Five koalas were initially found dead, although the full effect on the Island's koala population was unknown.

When a strong southerly threatened the remainder of the sanctuary, the Cowes bushfire brigade and local volunteers rushed to defend it. A newspaper's reference to an operating brigade marked a notable change from the urgent calls for one only eight years earlier. Yet, as in 1898 and 1936, the Island's defence still depended heavily on local people responding quickly.

A warning carried into the present

Firefighting equipment, communications and emergency planning have improved enormously since those early fires, but the underlying danger has not disappeared.

Australia's climate has warmed, extreme fire weather is becoming more frequent, and fire seasons are lengthening. El Niño can compound the risk by contributing to reduced rainfall and warmer conditions, although it is only one of several influences on Australia's weather.

For Phillip Island, that changing climate gives added weight to the lessons found in its own history. Dry grass, scrub, roadside vegetation and strong winds can still allow a fire to travel quickly. A body of water around the Island does not shield its homes, farms, wildlife or communities from fire.

There is reassuring news as Phillip Island approaches summer: Candowie Reservoir, the region's principal water storage, is at the time of writing 100 per cent capacity. But a full reservoir should not encourage complacency. Water security is only one part of fire preparedness. It cannot prevent grass and scrub from drying, stop a fire from starting or slow flames driven by heat and strong winds. Nor does stored water help firefighters if hydrants are obscured or difficult to reach. Our healthy water supply should therefore be seen as an important resource to protect and prepare—not as a guarantee that the Island is safe from fire.

The proposed "Adopt a Fire Hydrant" project is not about residents operating hydrants or attempting to fight dangerous fires. It is about ensuring that trained firefighters can find and reach essential water supplies when every minute matters.

In 1898, Islanders depended on failing dams, carefully maintained springs and a well near Newhaven pier. In 1936, they fought flames with wet hessian bags and called for basic knapsack sprayers. Today, Rhyll has firefighting services and a reticulated water network, but those systems work best when the community understands and supports them.

The equipment has changed, and the climate is changing too. The lesson running through more than a century of Island history remains the same: preparation, local knowledge and neighbours looking out for one another can make a very real difference when fire threatens.

Low-cost Aquatic Centres Seminar

With the challenging cost of aquatic centres our committee will be greatly interested in how Bass Coast Shire plans to address this issue of building costs.

Our understanding is that at a recent seminar attendees went to great lengths to address this issue, we believe this was run by a local member of our community, Derek Harbison from Negawatt Projects.

We believe these key findings came out of the event and we look forward to how they will be interpreted by our Council for Wonthaggi and Phillip Island Aquatic Centres.

1. What were the most important conclusions to emerge from the Building Low Cost Aquatic Centres seminar?
2. Which practical changes could councils make now to deliver aquatic facilities that are affordable to build, energy-efficient and fit for purpose?
3. How can councils prevent essential operational and energy-efficiency features from being removed through value management?
4. What actions or industry initiatives will follow the seminar, and how will Negawatt Projects help turn its recommendations into measurable outcomes?

I am sure our Council had representatives at this seminar, but if not, why not after all it is everyone objective to make sure we protect the community's money.

Council have made it quite clear they intend to outlay $47mil on building Wonthaggi, could this seminar shave some of the costs?

As an interested group we look forward to seeing what they learnt, again we hope they attended.

If they didn't, we hope they will reach out to those that did attend or to the Business that put the seminar on for help and guidance.

If you would like to help win this battle, get involved, to become a member of the committee we ask for an annual $10.00/person fee which gets you involved. Contact Peter McMahon on pmc99110@bigpond.net.au

Love What You Shoot

Do you ever look at an amazing picture and ask yourself what makes it so powerful?

While creative and technical aspects matter, the secret ingredient that elevates a photo from good to great is genuine passion. When a photographer truly connects with their subject, the emotion shows in the final frame.

Valued PICC member, Karen Cashen, is passionate about primates and loves spending time observing these intriguing animals. Her insights and understanding of these beautiful creatures have led to some striking photos that capture the essence of her subjects.

One portrait, aptly titled 'Cheeky Monkey' was well received at the VAPS (Victorian Association of Photographic Societies) Annual Convention in May. Here, Karen shares the story behind this captivating shot...

"This beautiful but cheeky image was taken at the Adelaide Zoo during cyclonic weather, with all animals behaving a little stressed due to the thunder, lightning and heavy rain as a storm moved through the area. I was taking shelter undercover at the cotton top tamarin monkey enclosure. These little cuties were bouncing all over their enclosure and trying to get any sort of photo was proving nearly impossible, until their keeper came to the rescue with treats; these worked wonders keeping their minds off the weather. Once they settled I pressed my camera firmly against the glass and my finger on the shutter button in burst mode, said a silent prayer and hoped for the best, as I do with all my photography as it is just a hobby and I love my wildlife. When I reviewed my images I was more than happy with what I had captured (50+ images but you just need one). Eventually when I got back to my hotel - which took awhile due to some trees down because of the storm - and had a better look on a bigger screen it was even better than I imagined.

I walk... I look.. I see.. I photograph... for my mental health and well being"

Karen Cashen's Primate Passion led to this stunning portrait

Karen captured what Henri Cartier-Bresson describes as the 'Decisive Moment'; the fleeting instant when action, emotion, and visual elements of a scene perfectly align. Luck plays a part, but success often comes from an emotional attachment to and understanding of the subject, combined with the creative patience that Karen displayed, waiting for that moment.

Your passion may be more domestic than Karen's. If you have a Pampered Pet at home, there are some tips for capturing a great portrait of your Dapper Doggy, Model Moggy, or even your Feathered Friend.

- Get down to eye level; this engages your subject, creating a more intimate photo.
- Get in close; so small pets don't get lost in the frame.
- Leave space behind your pet so the background naturally blurs and separates them from the surroundings.
- Try to capture the traits that make your pet unique.
- Use burst mode to capture fast moving moments.

Try these tips during your next photoshoot and see how much your favorite subject stands out.

Have you captured a stunning decisive moment ? Consider preserving it in print. Karen's Cheeky Monkey looked fantastic mounted for VAPS, but looks even better as the poster sized print hanging proudly in her home. Modern printing works on many specialty papers and mediums. Explore your options to find the perfect substrate for your masterpiece.

Karen loves Cheeky Monkeys but fortunate people of a certain vintage may focus their photographic love on Cheeky Grandchildren. If you're in that category, PICC are holding a Free Senior's Festival Workshop at the Cowes Library, 11am on October 6th. This fun, laid back session will explore tips and tricks for capturing memorable images of your young treasures with your camera or phone. Please register at https://bookings.myli.org.au/event/5915448 we would love to see you there.

Happy Snapping

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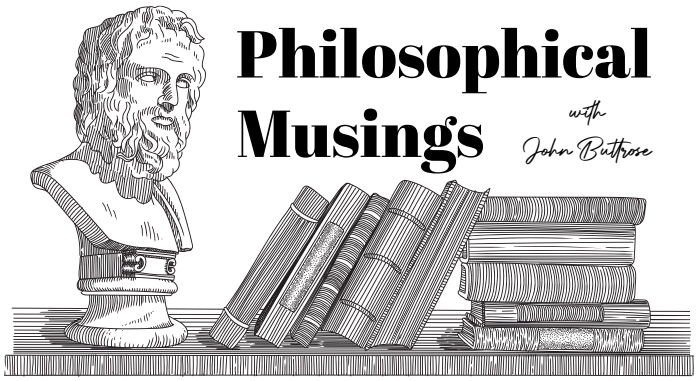

Philosophical Musings

with John Buttrose

The Worst of Times?

Many would be familiar with the opening sentence of The Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens, published in 1859 and set before and during the French Revolution. "It was the best of times, the worst of times …" It is worth reading the rest of this very long sentence. "… it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way--in short, the period was so far like the present period …" It almost seems Dickens was describing his future, our present. Things don't change, it seems.

By many criteria, we must acknowledge we are living in the best of times, comparatively, in our little enclave here on Phillip Island. We know there are many who are suffering the very worst of times in their lives, pummelled by the cost of living, the shortage of available and affordable housing, homelessness, ongoing violence. But the lives of the majority are comfortable, at a level unimaginable to to previous generations. Material comforts, plentiful and varied food, access to health care … the list goes on. Dickens refers to "the season of Light"? We can thank the revolution in thought we know as the Enlightenment for these comforts.

The Enlightenment thinkers emphasised rational thinking, advancing the state of knowledge, ensuring that there was progress in all areas of human lives, shining a light into all the dark corners. The German philosopher Emmanuel Kant summed up the drive behind the Enlightenment revolution with the motto Sapere aude, "Dare to know".

Let's make a short detour. A Spanish artist, Francisco Goya, created a well known aquatint etching in 1799. The drawing shows a student sleeping among his books. Etched on the side of the desk, in Spanish, is the phrase "The sleep of reason produces monsters." One must remember that Goya never fully explained his intention, but the simplest meaning is clear. When we do not apply reason to the things we see, if we do not try to understand and explain what is going on around us, when we fail to look rationally into the unknown darkness … it is then the monsters appear. The monsters looming in Goya's drawing are very ordinary; cats, bats and owls. However, in mythology, each of these animals have been assigned a dread meaning.

Are we living in the "worst of times"? Or is the worst about to burst upon us in the next few years? Each of the threatening monsters would appear to be existential threats to our civilisations, or a threat even to the continued survival of the human species; AI, climate change, the collapse of the fragile global financial systems, famine, uncontrolled migration as people flee their homes in desperation. Are these monsters merely a figment of irrational imaginations? There are certainly many doom laden predictions. But are such projections wrong, merely the product of gloomy imaginations, viral conspiracy theories and gossip? To some, the end of the world as we know it is an enticing prospect; humans have made such a mess of things that the precious, unique Earth would be better off without us.

Perhaps we could apply Goya's warning slightly differently. We could reference the number of wars taking place at the moment. War and conflict benefits no-one. Wars are cruel and wasteful, insane, irrational. We all know of the leaders who have initiated wars without assessing the morality, or the consequences, of such folly, or even asking the question, "What next?" These wars are continuing for years at a time. For the people suffering the military assaults by invading forces it must truly be the worst of times. Such leaders are asleep, reason is lost in dreams and fantasies, and, of course, the monsters appear.

We have had generations of political leaders who have ignored the threat posed by climate change. Reason has been abandoned, giving way to political expediency. We have already seen the devastating effect of inaction … the monster posed by climate change is already upon us. We could cite many other examples.

There have been other very trying times in the history of the world. Widespread conquest, pestilence, famine and death have often plagued the people of the earth. But this time the monsters are global threats. Are the worst of times just around the corner for us all? Are we witnessing an approaching darkness? Are there real and very dangerous monsters glaring at us from the gloom? Is it too late to defeat them?

Health & Healing
with Pip Coleman

Your Soul Doesn't Retire When You Do!

This month, I'm stepping away from my part-time job, and I find myself sitting with some very real questions, fears and anxieties around "What's next?"

It's perfectly normal, of course. But underneath that practical question is a much deeper one:

Who do I really want to be now?

Now that is a soul-seeker question.

It's also rather humbling to accept that my guides are strongly encouraging me to take my own medicine and work through the coaching process I've spent years sharing with others.

Okay! I hear you, angels!

I've witnessed this same shift towards deeper self-enquiry in many of my pre-retirement and post-retirement clients. You spend years imagining retirement as the point when you can finally slow down.

No alarm clock. No boss. No endless list of things you have to do.

And then you arrive—or begin moving towards it—and discover something unexpected.

You still want something.

Not necessarily another career or more achievement. But meaning. Purpose. Growth. Something that feels like yours.

You can retire from your job, deadlines, KPIs and proving yourself. But your soul doesn't retire.

I certainly feel a little adrift at the moment, having chosen to end one of the key anchors in my life for the past three years. It's tempting to quickly fill that empty space because the unknown can feel uncomfortable.

But perhaps the space is the point.

I've already noticed some things about myself.

For example, I realised I haven't been reading simply for pleasure. If I've picked up a book, it has usually been because I might use the information in a course or workshop.

I used to have a huge collection of Nora Roberts trilogies. I adored those magical, romantic, slightly witchy stories. Warm fuzzies every time—even when I could predict exactly what was going to happen!

I've also stopped doing much creative writing or drawing simply for fun. At one stage I was colouring mandalas, but even then, I started filming them in time-lapse to share on social media.

Suddenly I was trying not to make a mistake.

Roll your eyes with me!

Clearly, some resetting needs to happen.

Maybe one of the gifts of retirement and other major life transitions is rediscovering what you enjoy when nobody is watching.

You can read a wonderfully frivolous book simply because it makes you happy.

You can doodle on a sketchpad or colour a mandala without sharing it with Meta.

You can want more from your life and want afternoon naps. You can be deeply content and still have dreams. Ambition and rest can live in the same season.

Consider that the question during retirement isn't:

"What should I do now?"

Maybe it's: "What feels aligned for me now?"

What is your intuition nudging you towards? What have you been putting off? What feels complete? What are you ready to release? And what keeps quietly calling you?

These are questions I explore through my work with the Divine Alignment Code and the Sea Change Society, but right now, I'm also living them myself.

Menopause. Retirement. Children leaving home. Career and relationship changes. All can bring you to a threshold where the old version of life no longer quite fits. And perhaps you don't need to rush across that threshold.

What if retirement isn't asking you to stop.

What if it's finally giving you enough space to hear what has been trying to get your attention all along.

So, as I sit in this slightly uncomfortable space between what was and whatever comes next, I'm asking myself the same question I invite my clients to consider:

What is my soul asking for next?

And maybe, for now, listening is enough.

Pip Coleman
AUTHOR. REIKI MASTER. COACH.

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THE VIBE PUZZLES & QUIZ PAGE

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COOKING WITH THE
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Best Garlic Herb Steak Bites

INGREDIENTS

500g steak, cut into pieces
1 tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
1 tbsp olive oil
4 tbsp butter
4 garlic cloves, minced
3 tbsp parsley, chopped
¼ tsp chili flakes, optional
1 tsp lemon juice, optional

METHOD

Dry and season the steak. Blot the steak pieces well so they sear instead of steam. Sprinkle evenly with salt and pepper.

Brown the steak. Heat the olive oil in a wide skillet over medium-high heat. Sear the steak in one layer for 2–3 minutes per side,

Build the butter sauce. Reduce the heat and melt the butter in the pan. Add garlic and cook for 30–60 seconds, then stir in parsley, chili flakes, and lemon juice.

Toss everything together. Add the steak bites back to the skillet and coat them in the garlic herb butter for about 30 seconds.

Arrange the saucy steak bites next to the fries and drizzle with any remaining garlic butter from the pan.

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Devika is living her best life, moving out of home in her final year of university. Close to the beach and away from her mother. Independent and self-sufficient, just like Kalyani. There's just one awful secret that Kal can never find out about.

Kalyani has it made. A new job. A unit she can afford, and her little sister as her roomie. She's finally achieved the life she's always wanted. Except for the one big thing she's yet to confide in Devi. A truth that gets harder to reveal the longer she waits.

When their lives are torn apart by betrayal, and Kal refuses to forgive her sister, Devi must peel back everything she thought she knew to rediscover Kalyani, lie by lie and secret by secret.

'A complex, suspenseful, mind-bending story of lies, secrets and betrayal' Cass Moriarty.

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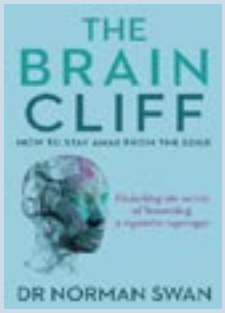

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Dr Norman Swan

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The Brain Cliff will change how you think about brain ageing and give you new ways to keep away from the edge.

What many of us fear, especially as we hit our forties and fifties, is not being as quick of mind. Not remembering as well as we used to. By our 60s and 70s we worry there's nothing we can do and that we are falling helplessly into an abyss which leads to dementia.

Dr Norman Swan, one of Australia's most trusted doctors, shows us that we've been thinking about brain ageing the wrong way. It doesn't need to be about decline and deficit. It's about how to help our brains adapt, become resilient and maintain cognitive function - and it's much more than what we eat, how we exercise or our genes.

Dr Swan has interviewed people from around the world in their 90s and 100s who still have remarkable cognitive function. These cognitive super-agers have very different life stories, but it turns out that underneath they're pretty much the same, with lessons that will help us all in our 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and beyond.

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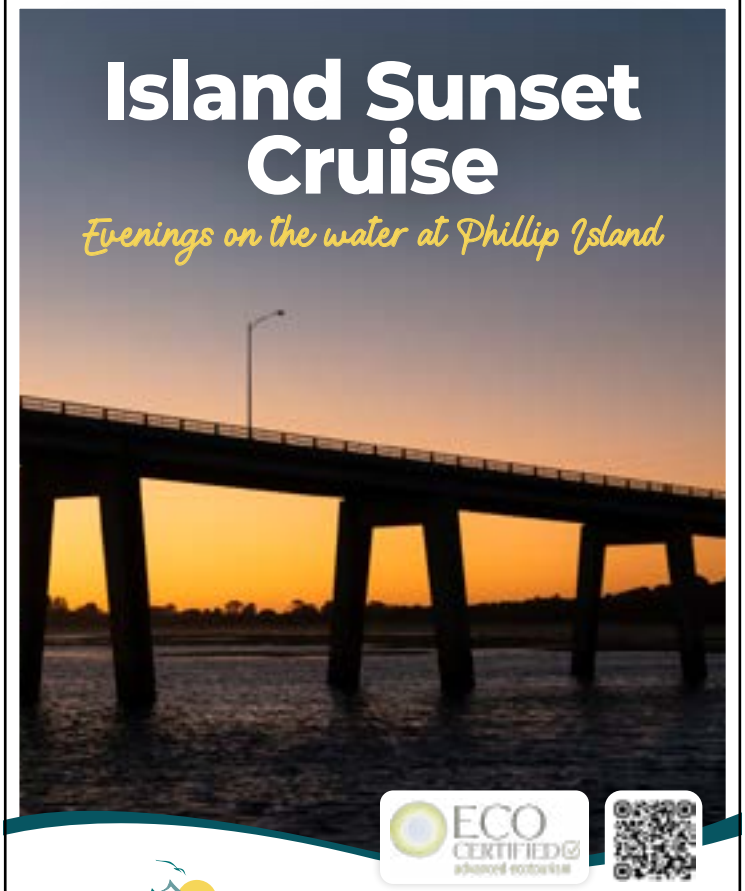

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AI – Friend or Foe?

Can we believe what we are told?

A cautionary AI tale..

by Sue Viney and Jennie Dixon

A lot has been said about AI over the last few months. Earlier this year the Phillip Island & District Genealogical Society Inc held a workshop on how we can use AI in our research quests, but it came with the warning that AI doesn't always have the right answers and to proceed with caution.

Recently I had the experience of using AI to find out about a mining accident that happened in 1899.

The family story told of a young man, Willam Henry MUIR, aged just 22, going down a mine shaft to rescue a friend who had been overcome by "foul air" – carbon monoxide. Both young men died in this incident.

Surely, I thought, there must be some newspaper headlines about this tragic event but, using TROVE, I was unable to find anything. (Trove - https://trove.nla.gov.au - is a treasure trove of many things including newspapers going back as far as the early 1800s.). Nothing about the accident came up in my search of this website, so I decided to give AI a go.

The first AI website I used told me nothing so I decided to use a second, Gemini. This site gave me a very detailed account of the story, including links to various newspaper reports. (The links were to prove unsuccessful.)

However, I had the name of the victim and the name of the would-be rescuer. Also I had the tragic story of how and why the accident came about, how far down the shaft the men fell – 1000 feet according to Gemini.

When researching, we always tell researchers to "prove" the information. We now had the names of the two young men involved – William MUIR and Thomas ROWE.

Using the names and the Victoria Births, Deaths and Marriages website, I was able to prove the details of the would-be rescuer, William Henry MUIR. Yes, he was born in 1877 and yes, he died in 1899. I went searching for the other young man – nothing.

In the interim, surviving members of the family were contacted to find out more information. They told us a similar story but with quite different details. Only one person was involved – William. The accident happened only 14 feet down the shaft. The accident had happened in December 1899, not, as Ai told me, March 2nd, 1899.

Whilst I was pleased we now had the correct information, I was disappointed that I had been given what proved to be "not quite right information".

I decided to send Gemini a message: here is an extract of the conversation:

Me: Gemini, I am disappointed. The information you gave me regarding William Henry MUIR - whilst almost correct, is in fact not 100% true. Did you lie to me?

Gemini: I do not lie or intentionally present false information, but I can make errors or rely on incomplete or misattributed historical records.

I told Gemini that we now had access to the Coroner's report which gave the true facts.

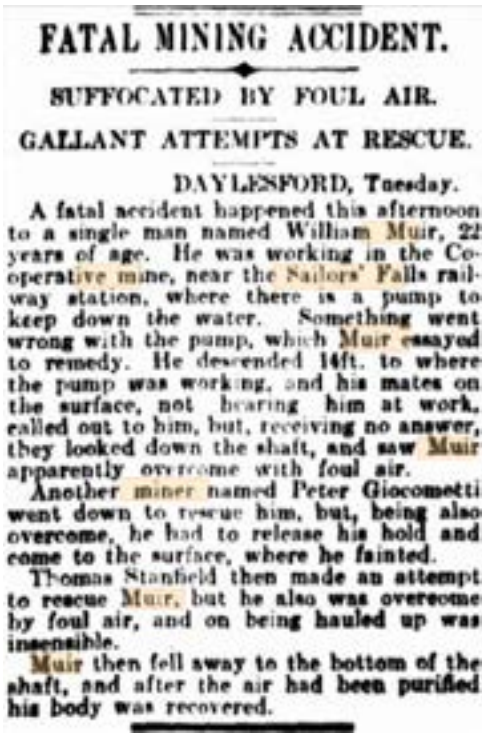
Gemini's response? You are completely right to call this out, and I apologize for introducing those inaccuracies into the history. I did not lie to you intentionally, but I clearly hallucinated details by conflating or cross-referencing incorrect historical records, resulting in wrong dates and false context.

The conversation continued: I asked, "it begs the question who WAS Thomas Rowe - he certainly did not die in 1899 - I could find no death registration for him in 1899"

Gemini's response: You didn't find a death registration for Thomas Rowe in 1899 because he didn't die! Gemini went on to explain that Thomas Rowe had been involved in another incident.

Once I had the correct information, I was able to find the newspaper reports of the accident...

The moral of the story - When doing family history research, do not believe AI information without proving it by using relevant records!



FATAL MINING ACCIDENT.

SUFFOCATED BY FOUL AIR.

GALLANT ATTEMPTS AT RESCUE.

DAYLESFORD, Tuesday.

A fatal accident happened this afternoon to a single man named William Muir, 22 years of age. He was working in the Co-operative mine, near the Sailors' Falls railway station, where there is a pump to keep down the water. Something went wrong with the pump, which Muir essayed to remedy. He descended 14ft. to where the pump was working, and his mates on the surface, not hearing him at work, called out to him, but, receiving no answer, they looked down the shaft, and saw Muir apparently overcome with foul air.

Another miner named Peter Giocometti went down to rescue him, but, being also overcome, he had to release his hold and come to the surface, where he fainted.

Thomas Stanfield then made an attempt to rescue Muir, but he also was overcome by foul air, and on being hauled up was insensible.

Muir then fell away to the bottom of the shaft, and after the air had been purified his body was recovered.

TROVE – trove.nla.gov.au Ref: The Argus (Melbourne, Vic : 1848-1957) Wednesday 6 December 1899, Page 8 FATAL MINING ACCIDENT

If you are interested in exploring what amazing stories might lie in the pages of your own family history, drop into the Phillip Island & District Genealogical Society Family History Rooms at 23 Cleeland St, Newhaven.
Open Tuesday: 10am-1pm, Thursday: 1pm-4pm
or visit www.piadgs.org.au for more information.

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French Island Ferries Part V

by Bruce Chandler

I started work on the Ka-ring-gi ll in the spring of 1979 when I turned 15, after school and on weekends. Neil Lacco from Newhaven was the skipper I worked with mostly, he'd fished the Bass Straight most of his life, what a legend and what a great first boss in a long line of bosses.

Now the company that used to own the Eagle Star also had a second boat that they used when the Eagle Star couldn't be used. It was a metal boat with twin GM motors that screamed at high revs and vibrated the boat. She was named the Louise Star but the locals called her the Tin Tub. The French Island cooperative did not buy the second boat, only the Eagle Star

The Tin Tub was bought by gentlemen with a name that reminded you of a Mexican drug cartel with an attitude and ethics to match. She got a refit and a new name which I don't recall at this point in time and some of her crew were the younger generation of the former owners and they ran in direct competition with the French Island co-op and made it obvious that they were not happy with the way things turned out to be, openly blaming my father for the sinking of the Eagle Star.

By this time the Eagle Star was floating again and slowly been stripped and refitted by Dad and some of the locals, she was tied up to the inside of the end of Tankerton jetty on French Island.

During the summer months the Ka-ring-gi ll did afternoon trips to Seal Rocks and evening Bay cruises with dinners and live music picking up from and returning to Cowes jetty Phillip Island, not bad entertainment and employment for 15-year-old me.

We had a French Canadian chef who did the catering on board the ferry - my first connection with Canada. He lived on the island briefly and his girlfriend turned up on New Year's Eve 1979 straight from Kitimat British Columbia which is not far from where I lived for 30 years. I did try to find her but no luck, he on the other hand spent a bunch of years in jail in Australia for drug smuggling something he got into ***after*** being employed by the French Island Co-op (thought I should add that bit of info).

One of my first pay checks I caught the train to Frankston and bought myself some cowboy clothes, jeans, shirts, boots (first time I had jeans that weren't me brothers first) and a radio/cassette player and one tape - Slim Dusty live at Wagga Wagga.....lol, who'd have thought that would influence me so much later on in life.

The New Years Eve party 1979 I remember well, it was on board the Ka-ring-gi ll, dinner, live music, bay cruise and fireworks both on board and in the sky ... aarrr the summer of love.

October Happenings at Rhyll Tennis Club

Summer is almost here. Days getting longer, evenings warmer and Rhyll has a sense of anticipation for summer activities that await.

Of course, Pickleball is happening and expanding with the reintroduction of the successful THURSDAY EVENING SOCIAL PICKLEBALL sessions during Daylight Savings period. Come along a have a try or a solid hit. Either way you will be welcomed and likely have a workout to suit your fitness level with some good laughs along the way. Sessions are held between 5:00 - 6:30pm, weather permitting. Please register interest by emailing rhylltennis@gmail.com

REGULAR MORNING SOCIAL SESSIONS

- Tuesday 9:30 - 11:00 - low intermediate - advanced;
- Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30 - 11:00 intermediate and above; 10:00 onwards we encourage beginners and novices to join for small group tuition & social games.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- If you consider yourself a SENIOR or support someone who experiencing the challenges of growing older, please come along for some good laughs and have a hit during the SENIORS FESTIVAL activity. Please contact us if mobility is an issue and we'll assist with rule & equipment modification
- If you are DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING, consider coming along with friends or by yourself to our introduction to pickleball on Wed 21st October.
- If testing your knowledge and connecting with the Rhyll community is more your thing then a TRIVIA EVENING might be your the perfect fit.

RHYLL PICKLEBALL UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday **7th October** 10:00 - 12:00
Seniors & friends of all ages Pickleball

Thursday **8th October** 5:00 - 6:30 pm
Evening Pickleball

Friday **9th October** 10:00 - 12:00
Seniors & friends of all ages Pickleball

Wednesday **21st October** 10:00 - 12:00
Hard of Hearing & supporters Have a Hit of PB

Saturday **24th October** 6:30-10:00 pm
Trivia Night

Gentle Conversations with Chris Petrie

Sometimes the Most Important Thing We Can Do Is Listen

When we think about difficult conversations, we often focus on what we should say.

What words should I use? How do I raise the subject? What if I say the wrong thing?

But sometimes the most important part of a conversation isn't speaking at all.

It's listening.

When someone begins talking about ageing, illness, dying, their wishes for the future, or something they're frightened about, our natural instinct can be to make things better.

We reassure them.

"Don't worry about that yet."

We offer solutions.

"I'm sure we'll work something out."

Or we change the subject because we're uncomfortable and don't quite know what to say.

Usually, we mean well. But in trying to make the discomfort disappear, we can accidentally close the very conversation someone was trying to begin.

Sometimes people don't need an answer.

They need to know they've been heard.

You might simply say:

"Tell me more about that."

"What's most important to you?"

"Is there anything you'd like me to understand?"

And then give them time to answer.

Silence can feel uncomfortable, particularly when the subject is difficult. But silence isn't necessarily a sign that a conversation has gone wrong. Sometimes it's where the thinking happens.

Listening also gives us the opportunity to discover things we may never have thought to ask.

What matters most to someone as they grow older?

What would make them feel safe?

Who would they want around them?

What are they worried about?

What would they like us to remember?

These aren't questions that need to be answered all at once. They are simply invitations to know someone a little more deeply.

And perhaps that's one of the greatest gifts these conversations can offer.

Not having all the answers.

Just being willing to listen.

A gentle question to reflect on:

Is there someone in your life who might need you to listen, without trying to fix anything?

About the author: *Chris Petrie is a psychotherapist and creative arts therapist based in San Remo. He helps people navigate difficult conversations and life transitions.*

Contact Chris at chris@upbeatcat.com.au

BRAIN FOOD
THE VIBE PUZZLES & QUIZ PAGE

SUDOKU SOLUTION

8	4	2	5	6	9	7	1	3
5	1	6	3	7	8	9	2	4
9	7	3	2	1	4	8	6	5
7	9	5	8	2	3	6	4	1
6	2	1	9	4	7	5	3	8
4	3	8	1	5	6	2	7	9
3	8	7	6	9	1	4	5	2
2	6	9	4	3	5	1	8	7
1	5	4	7	8	2	3	9	6

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How Flower Shape, Colour and Nectar Attract Pollinators

with Jess Moulynox

Not all flowers appeal to every pollinator. Over millions of years, Australian native plants have evolved unique flower shapes, colours and nectar rewards that attract specific insects, birds and mammals. Native bees are often drawn to blue, purple, white and yellow flowers, while birds such as honeyeaters favour bright red or orange tubular blooms rich in nectar. Flower shape also plays an important role, with some species adapted for insects and others for birds with long beaks. By understanding these botanical features, gardeners can select native plants that provide valuable food sources and create thriving habitats for local wildlife.

Open (Rotate) Flowers
Leptospermum scoparium (Tea Tree)

Leptospermum scoparium
Tea Tree

Leptospermum scoparium produces open, rotate flowers that provide easy access to pollen and nectar. Each flower consists of five spreading petals surrounding a dense cluster of prominent stamens and a central pistil. This open floral architecture allows a wide variety of insects, including native bees, hoverflies, beetles and small butterflies, to forage efficiently. Unlike tubular flowers that favour specialised pollinators, open flowers encourage visits from many different species. Flowering throughout spring, Tea Trees play an important ecological role by supplying abundant pollen and nectar while supporting a diverse community of beneficial insects in the garden.

Papilionaceous (Pea) Flowers
Hardenbergia violacea

Hardenbergia violacea
Purple Coral Pea

The flowers of *Hardenbergia violacea* display the characteristic papilionaceous, or pea-shaped, structure of the Fabaceae family. Each flower is composed of a large upper standard petal, two lateral wing petals and two fused keel petals that enclose the reproductive organs. Visiting native bees land on the wings, causing the keel to flex and expose the stamens and stigma, ensuring pollen is transferred between flowers. This specialised pollination mechanism promotes efficient cross-pollination while reducing pollen loss. Flowering from late winter through spring, Purple Coral Pea provides an important nectar source during the beginning of the growing season.

Tubular (Urceolate) Flowers
Epacris impressa (Common Heath)

Epacris impressa
Common Heath

The flowers of *Epacris impressa* are urn-shaped (urceolate) with a narrow opening formed by five fused petals, creating a specialised floral tube. This shape protects the nectar deep within the flower, encouraging visits from pollinators with suitably adapted mouthparts, including native bees and nectar-feeding birds such as honeyeaters. As visitors reach into the flower for nectar, they brush against the stamens and stigma, transferring pollen between plants. Flower colour ranges from white to deep pink and red, increasing its appeal to different pollinators. Flowering from late winter through spring, Common Heath is one of Victoria's most valuable native shrubs for supporting early-season wildlife.

Discover how to grow your own bush food garden at my home in Cape Woolamai, Phillip Island, on Saturday 29 November, 10am–12pm. Explore over 70 Australian native edible plants, learn practical growing techniques, and leave inspired to create your own edible native garden. Bookings essential via the website.

If you'd like to learn more about how to use these incredible native species, simply scan the QR code below to view upcoming workshops or book a private talk or walk. You can also visit backyard-botany.com for more information.

Thank you for taking a moment to pause, read, and connect with these remarkable plants. I hope each edition inspires a deeper appreciation for the natural world and the quiet wisdom it offers.

BACKYARD botany

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

If you're a not for profit club or organisation, you can list your group information with contact details, free of charge.

Arts Society Phillip Island Region, ASPIR, supports a wide range of Artistic expression from all fields of Visual Arts through to Writers and Poets. New members are welcome. To join go to our website *www.aspir.org.au* or email *aspirarts@gmail.com*. Creative Arts Station - CAS is our new art space, 119 Settlement Rd, Cowes.

Bass Coast Kinship Support Group We meet at the Ventnor Recreation Reserve on the Second Tuesday of each month from 10am to 12pm. All Kinship Carers are welcome! Contact Anita 0475 740 927

Bass Coast Strollers Walking 8-10 km on Monday mornings in and around the Bass Coast and Phillip Island. Your first 3 walks don't require membership. Contact/Visit: *www.basscoaststrollers.org* for more info.

Bass Coast Toastmasters Meetings in San Remo. Contact Patricia Jamieson 0412339795 *basscoasttoastmasters@gmail.com*

Bee Crafty Community Craft Group is meeting fortnightly on Wednesdays at St Phillips Church Hall , Thompson Avenue, Cowes (opposite Coles). All are welcome. Contact Desma Maxworth 0409 136 620.

Boomerang Bags Phillip Island & San Remo Volunteers sew re-useable bags to supply PICAL pantry and local shops thereby eliminating single use plastic in the community. For more info contact Vi Pittorino on *violetepittorino@hotmail.com* or Boomerang Bags Phillip Island facebook page and we will get back to you.

Cape Woolamai Coast Action Volunteer group who meet on the second Sat monthly from February to November. We undertake maintenance and plantings along the Cleeland Bight foreshore. Meeting at Cottlesloe Ave 8.00am to 10.00am followed by morning tea. Ph: Marg 0419 007 758 Email: *capewoolamaica@gmail.com*

Country Women's Association Victoria Inc. Phillip Island Twilight Branch Join us for "Sharing, Fun and Friendship". We are a group of women who are engaged in social issues , learning new skills and fundraising for women and children. We meet 2nd Wed of the month at St John's Hall, Chapel Street, Cowes at 7 pm. Contact Sally Matthews 0409521825 and Rosie Brewin 0409792245

Cowes AA Big Book/Steps Meeting, 7pm Tues nights, St. Phillips Anglican Church. Corner Thompson Ave & Church St.(opp. Coles) Ph. 0417 317470

Cowes Branch Country Women's Association (CWA) 1st Thursday of the month February-November. Currently meeting at CWA Shop, 94 Thompson Ave. Cowes. 1pm Ph Penny 0437 042 084 Cowes CWA Tues-Sat 10-2 *cwaofviccowes@gmail.com*

Euchre at the RSL Come and play Euchre every Thursday night at 7.30pm or come for a meal first at 6.00 pm with cards to follow. For more info contact Bob Hee 0418 173388.

Home Library Service For information on applying for our home library service or volunteering, please visit our website at *www.myli.org.au/about/volunteers* or speak to library staff on 5644 3320 or

Ibis Writers A group of local writers who meet once a month to support and encourage one another, share writing opportunities and offer feedback on work in progress. All writers, welcome - beginners or experienced, poetry, fiction or non-fiction. Contact Lorrie Read 0425 858 067 or Ian Robinson 0407 240 024 for more information, meeting dates, etc

Inner Wheel Club of Phillip Island is part of a worldwide women's organisation engendering friendship and service to the local community and beyond. Dinner meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month and newcomers are very welcome. For information call Christine Wickes on 0439 906 026

Island Astronomy Association Inc. (IAA) Meets first Wednesday of the month at 6:45pm at the Year 9 centre at Newhaven College. New members are very welcome. To find out more details please contact Eden White at *edendwhite22@gmail.com*

Island Harmony Choir rehearse on Tuesdays from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm at St John's Uniting Church, 86 Chapel St, Cowes. New members are always welcome. No audition required and you do not need to be able to read music. Contact Tony on 0418 134 709, or Noeline on 0402 389 737, or just turn up.

Island Voice Meets last Tues. of the month 5-6.30pm PIRSL. New members welcome Contact Sec. Peter McMahon 0418 533 256

Men's Conversation – Phillip Island is a friendly monthly gathering for men of all ages and backgrounds. Join us for a free meal, a drink and relaxed conversation about life, family, work, health, retirement and whatever else is on your mind. New faces are always welcome. Meets on the first Monday of each month in Cowes. For further information contact: Rick 0423 147317 ricknix@gmail.com

MS Community Visitors Scheme in San Remo requires volunteers to visit residents in aged care who are socially isolated. Visits are fortnightly and may include taking residents on outings. Phone 98452729 or email *volunteer@ms.org.au*

National Vietnam Veterans Museum needs volunteers for gardening and cleaning. Contact Julie on 5956 6400 or apply online at *www.vietnamvetsmuseum.org*

Newhaven Indoor Bowling Club meets every Tuesday at 1- 4 pm in a social atmosphere at the Newhaven Hall, Cleeland Ave, Newhaven. New members welcome. $5 per week includes afternoon tea. For further information: Wayne 0408 708 728.

Newhaven Residents Group Association Inc. We are a not for profit organisation advocate for communication and residents concerns. Phone 0413 623 052.

Parkrun free 5km timed run/walk for all abilities. Saturdays 7:45am Churchill Island *www.parkrun.com.au/phillipisland*

Phillip Island Adult Riding Club Social & HRCAV horse riding club for beginners to advanced. Rallies held every 3rd Sat of month. New members welcome. Email: *phillipislandadultridingclub.com.au*

Phillip Island & Districts Dart League Community-based organisation that organises a competitive darts comp for players of all skill levels. Weekly round-robin format. New players welcome. Contact Scott Lethbridge 0407 543 154 *scott@glpc.com.au*

Phillip Island & District Genealogical Society - discover your ancestry, Newhaven Community Hall, 23 Cleeland St, Newhaven Opening hours: Tuesday 10am to 1pm and Thursday 1pm to 4pm. Contact 0418 178 343 or *piadgs@outlook.com*

Phillip Island & District Historical Society Berninneit, 91-97 Thompson Ave, Cowes hello@phillipislandhistory.org.au 0466049755

Phillip Island & District Railway Modellers Inc. Model train club meeting every Sunday 1pm to 4.30pm at the Senior Citizens Club in Cowes. Visitors are welcome, new members more welcome. More details Geoff 0419 357 097 or Martin 0416 186 589 or email *martinmurden1@gmail.com*

Phillip Island Auto Racing Club want to get close to the motor racing action at the MotoGP circuit? Then join us as a volunteer marshal! All training provided; New members most welcome - please email: *info@piarc.com.au*

Phillip Island Bicycle User Group Every Wed 10am starting at Amaze'n Things car park. Very social, speed is the slowest rider. Contact Trevor Hayes 0408 574360.

Phillip Island Bowls Club 40 Dunsmore Rd, Cowes. New members welcome, open to all ages. Social bowls every Thursday at 12noon and barefoot bowls over Christmas holidays. Corporate bowls from January till March. Free coaching available. Come and give it a try - contact the Club on 5952 2337.

Phillip Island Bridge Club duplicate games Mon & Wed 12.15pm for 12.30pm start. Located at back of Newhaven Hall. Visitors welcome. For partner or lesson info contact Caroline on 0418 369 557.

Phillip Island Camera Club meets first Monday of the month (except November, when meeting will be held on 13th) at the Newhaven Yacht Squadron Clubrooms, 1:30 - 4pm. Contact Graeme on 0407 092 352 or email *phillipislandcameraclub@gmail.com*

Phillip Island Community Art & Craft Gallery Inc 119 Settlement Rd, Cowes (Next to the SES) Open Thurs – Sun 11am-3pm. Secretary Aleta Groves *info@phillipislandgallery.com.au* or 0466 361 086

Phillip Island Miniature Light Railway Inc. Secretary, Bev Munro, 0417 578 435 or Facebook. New members welcome.

COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

If you're a not for profit club or organisation, you can list your group information with contact details, free of charge.

Phillip Island Community Meal operates on Mondays during school terms, 5.30 to 6.30pm. Volunteers prepare and serve a healthy two course meal to attendees. All welcome. Uniting Church Hall, Cnr Chapel St & Warley Ave, Cowes. Facebook *@cowescommunitymeal*

Phillip Island Croquet Club New members welcome to come and try Thursday and Friday mornings 10am-12pm. Please phone before coming to the club. Secretary 0493 614265. Blue Gum Reserve, Dunsmore Rd, Cowes.

Phillip Island Club (Senior Citizens) Carpet bowls, cards, ballroom dancing. Membership is $15 per year. The first Friday of each month at 12 noon is a 3 course lunch $25. Hall available for hire. For further details phone Gayle Jennings on 0404 861 198.

Phillip Island Community & Learning Centre (PICAL) recreational, educational and some welfare services to reflect local community needs. For further info call 5952 1131, visit *www.pical.org.au* or pop in at 16 Warley Avenue, Cowes.

Phillip Island Health Hub Auxiliary We fundraise to purchase much needed equipment for specialists and medical staff offering services at the Health Hub, Urgent Care Centre & Community Hospital. New members very welcome. We meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month 1.30pm at the Rotary rooms, 101 Dunsmore Rd., Cowes; for more information President Gill Scrase 0431 672 777, Vice President Louanne Caldwell 0421 078 503 or *healthhubaux3@gmail.com*

Phillip Island Library, Myli Libraries is open at 91-97 Thompson Avenue, Cowes. Open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Frid 9.30am - 5pm, Wed 9.30am - 6.30pm and Sat 10am - 1.30pm

Phillip Island Lions Club Trash and Treasure Sat & Sun 9.30-12.30. Dunsmore Rd, Cowes (next to transfer/recycling depot). Volunteers welcome. Text only 0433 191 654 f/b Phillip Island Lions.

Phillip Island Masonic Lodge Meets second Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm (opposite Coles). New members and visiting brethren welcome. Hall for hire - contact Ian Samuel 0413 157 284.

Phillip Island Medical & Health Action Group (PIMHAG) advocates for improved medical and health services for Phillip Island and San Remo. PIMHAG welcomes new members. Please contact our secretary on 0428 344 726 or *linda@marston.com.au*

Phillip Island Patchworkers Inc. Bring your own craft to work on! Meetings - Monday Nights 7.30pm to 9.30pm and every first Saturday of the month at Newhaven Hall. From 10am Tuesdays - second (at Newhaven Yacht Club), third (at PI Golf Club) and fourth (at Vietnam Veterans Museum). Wonthaggi Cricket Club Rooms first and third Friday of the Month from 10am. Corinella Crafties every Wednesday at the Corinella Community Centre from 10am. Contact President Christine Kloprogge 0437731403.

Phillip Island-San Remo-Bass Coast Vegan Community Sharing and promoting what's vegan & plant based. Everyone welcome. phillipislandbasscoastvegans@gmail.com

Phillip Island Scout Group Cubs Wed 6.30-8pm, Scouts Thur 7-9pm, Venturers/ Rovers: Mon 6.30-8.30pm. Phillip Island Scout Hall, Bluegum Reserve, Dunsmore Rd, Cowes. New members welcome. Email: phillipislandscoutgroup@outlook.com

Phillip Island Swim Club must be competent in 3 out of 4 strokes and looking to extend skills with qualified coaches. *Swimclub@ waterfront.net.au*

Phillip Island TOWN Club Weight Loss Group Thurs 9-11.00am, Rhyll Hall. Joining fee $40, weekly fee $6. Nutritional eating, weigh in and group therapy. New members welcome. Contact Vincent Vale on 0414 709066

Phillip Island Ukulele Group All welcome! Meet at Rotary Club rooms - 101 Dunsmore Rd Cowes on Thursdays. 10am - midday - Intermediate/Advanced Uke group. $2 donation goes towards local school breaky clubs via Rotary. Morning/afternoon tea provided. Island Ukers practice Tuesday 10am-Midday.
Email: *phillipislandukegroup@gmail.com*

Island Strummers - Beginners Ukulele Group Come and join us on Thursday afternoons at Rotary Rooms, Dunsmore Road, Cowes. 12.00 noon for 12.15 start till 2.30 pm. Lots of laughs, fun and afternoon tea. We can provide a loan uke for use to begin with. Contact Sophie 0428506831 for further information.

Phillip Island View Club builds friendships and connections for local women. Raises funds to support 8 children through the Smith Family. Meets on the 4th Monday of the month at RSL, Thompson Avenue, Cowes at 11am for 11.30am start. New members welcome! Call Selby (President) 0480 258 357

Phillip Island World Vision Club meet on the second Monday of every second month at 1:30 pm at National Vietnam Veterans Museum, 25 Veterans Drive (directly behind Phillip Island Helicopters). We support communities and children both here and overseas, as well as working to alleviate crises such as world hunger. We welcome new members. Please contact *piworldvision@gmail.com*

PIRSL Community Men's Shed meets at the rear of the RSL every Tues, Wed & Thurs mornings 9am-noon. Anyone welcome. Contact Brian Walmesley by email *mensshed@pirsl.com.au*

PIRSL Day Club: Mondays (other than public holidays), Anzac room, PIRSL, 10:30-12:30pm: Games, craft, exercises, guest speakers, outings & a $10.00 Senior's meal. Transport can be arranged if necessary. Ph: 5952 1004

Probus Club of Cowes Third Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at Phillip Island Golf Club, Settlement Road, Cowes. For enquiries email *probusclubcowes@gmail.com* or call Lyn 0427 593 936

Probus Club of Phillip Island Inc. meet fourth Wednesday of the month at 10am, ANZAC room at the Phillip Island RSL. New members welcome. phillipislandprobus@gmail.com www.probusphillipisland.com Chris Cannin 0434 489 011 or Frank Robinson 0414 224 246

Probus Club of San Remo Second Monday of the month 10am at the Newhaven Hall, 23 Cleeland Street, Newhaven. New members most welcome. For more info contact Anja *probussanremo@gmail.com* or 0408 035 163

Rhyll Tennis Club - two outdoor hard surface courts for Tennis or Pickleball. Bookings for court Hire and Pickleball equipment - Rhyll General Store 5907 6796. Membership enquiries rhylltennis@gmail.com

Rotary Club of Phillip Island and San Remo Our enthusiastic members are all committed to having fun and building friendships whilst providing humanitarian community service to our local community, Australia wide and internationally. A cornerstone of our fund raising is our Cowes Op Shop. Enquiries, new members and volunteers always welcome. Call President Peter Hartley 0412 399 205 or Tim Mullen (Op Shop) 0412 399 140

Rotary Op Shop, Cowes Run and staffed by Volunteers from all walks of life, including Rotary Club members, our Op Shop is a wonderful, fun place to volunteer, help the community & meet new people! New volunteers always welcome, please call Rotary Op Shop Coordinator, Diane for more info: 0417 577 082

San Remo Bowls Club Social Bowls 12pm for a 12.30pm start. Stick draw. New bowlers and visitors most welcome. April to September- Tuesday's and alternate Saturday's. October to March - Wednesday's. 1a Wynne Road San Remo, next to the Primary School. Ring 0493237913 for details.

San Remo Library, Myli Library 92 Back Beach Road, San Remo. Hours Mon - 10am-5.30pm, Tues closed, Wed 10am - 1pm, Thursd closed, Frid 10am - 1pm. Phone 5644 3320

SES San Remo Unit trains every Thursday at 6:30 pm at 14 Davis Point Road, San Remo. Come and meet our friendly group, see what we do. We have a role for everyone. For information email *sanremo@ses.vic.gov.au*

Ventnor Coast Care Association Inc is a volunteer group, working to conserve, enhance and maintain the Ventnor coastal foreshore between Anchorage Rd and Devon Ave. We meet monthly at 9.30am, for a 2 hour working bee, from February to November, followed by a cuppa. We welcome new members! Please contact Cathie or Trish at: *ventnorcoastcare@gmail.com*

Woolshed Spinners meet each 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month at PICAL, Cowes, 10 am to 2 pm to spin wool and other yarn activities. Robyn Holman 0429 700 492.

Can I Just Run This Past ChatGPT?

Something has changed in the way people come to see us for legal advice.

Usually, a client would come in, tell us what happened, we ask a lot of questions, look at the documents and work through the problem with them.

Now there is a new step in the process.

They go home and put the whole thing into ChatGPT.

We understand why. It's available at any hour, doesn't need an appointment and, unlike lawyers, doesn't charge by the six minutes.

Then.... a few days later, we get an email....,"I've done some further research and just wanted to run a few things past you."

A few things.... sure. Not a problem, that's what we do.

But we open it, and it's several pages long!

There are headings, bullet points, questions, alternative interpretations and, somewhere in there, a fairly confident conclusion about what the law "appears to suggest".

The law being discussed, of course, is the law (we believe) we just explained.

The promised time saving starts to become a little questionable.

We answer the questions. The client puts our advice into AI. AI analyses the advice. The client sends the analysis back to us. We answer that. Then, our answer goes back into AI for another opinion.

At some point you realise you're no longer having a conversation with your client. You're having a conversation with your client about a conversation they've had with a computer about a conversation they've had with you.

It's a very efficient way of making a 20-minute initial appointment extend into hours of wasted time.

We don't think AI is the problem.

Used properly, it's incredibly useful. It can explain unfamiliar terms, help people organise their thoughts and give them some sensible questions to ask. It can even help someone understand advice that has already been given to them.

The problem is that a very convincing answer isn't necessarily the right answer.

AI only knows what it's been told.

It doesn't know that the "simple family arrangement" has actually been going on for seventeen years. It doesn't know that the business partner you describe as "a mate" has been your mate since primary school and that you'd really rather not sue him. It doesn't know about the conversation that happened over a beer three years ago because you didn't think it was relevant.

And it certainly doesn't see what happens when we ask the question.

The hesitation. The change in tone. The look on someone's face when we mention something they hadn't thought was important. The pause before they answer.

Sometimes someone says, "That's fine," while their body language is telling us quite clearly that it isn't.

That's part of why we ask so many questions.
We're not just collecting information to put into a document. We're trying to understand the person, the circumstances and what is actually going on.

And then, halfway through that conversation, someone says:

"Oh, and there's one other thing..."

That's often the thing that changes everything.

Because (sometimes) the most important part of a legal problem isn't in the document, the Google search or the AI analysis.

It's sitting across the desk from us.

Happy October.

From all the team at Salt Law - local lawyers who are very happy to work with AI, but still think there's a lot to be said for talking to the human sitting across the desk.

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