

NEWSLETTER - ISSUE 5 OF 2021 (OCTOBER)

BLACKMAIL

Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre

Message From Chief Executive Officer

Warami yura – hello everyone,
We hope you are all staying safe and well!
This issue of Blackmail is celebrating Warada Yanama Muru – Beautiful Walking Paths, in the Blue Mountains.
Our wonderful office person, Cathy has been busy exploring different walks to put together a collection of great local trails and photographs. These will inspire us to go for a walk, breathe in some fresh air and hopefully catch some sunshine to stay well.
Connecting to Ngurra (Country) is so important and is needed more than ever while we are living through covid restrictions, missing our loved ones, friends, and our regular social pastimes. We encourage you to pick out a trail and have a lovely walk.
I would also like to mention a great success we have had lately in being able to run a series of covid vaccine clinics. Firstly, I am acknowledging all ACRC staff for contacting various departments of the NSW Health, to tell them about our urgent needs. Prior to vaccine clinics at ACRC our community was being asked to travel into hot spots in Western Sydney to be vaccinated. We argued that this was a bad idea. We also emphasised how difficult it is to book vaccine appointments at surgeries on the Mountains with long waiting lists.

We acknowledge the Darug and Gundungurra people as the Traditional Custodians of the land in which we live and work.

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Transport Enquiries
Please call Paul:
0427 710 708

After about one month of contacting a number of allies at NSW Health, they recognised our needs and approved a clinic at ACRC. This is an amazing outcome for all our Mobs across the mountains, being acknowledged for what we need... when we need it!

So far, ACRC has facilitated two clinics for 1st and 2nd doses for the Blue Mountains Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community. Our next vaccine clinic will be held on Monday 11 Oct 2021.

ATSI People who had their 1st vaccine at ACRC will be sent an email but if you haven't had a vaccine yet, and need a vaccine, please send an email to ceo@acrc.org.au by 4pm 8 October and include your Full Name, Age and Phone Number. We will get back to you with arrival times.

As usual, I am signing off with our special words yanama budyari gumada – walking in good spirit. I believe these words fit very nicely with the theme for this edition of our Blackmail. When we go out for a walk on Ngurra we are walking in the footsteps of our ancestors. We are following their beautiful ways as paths for life, and as we walk, we can pay our respects by reflecting on how our old ones have cared for Ngurra and thank them for the healthy paths and wildlife we enjoy today...

Yanu (hope to see you soon)
Venessa Possum (Nani)

Story of the Waratah

Told by local Darug man Chris Tobin

'The Waratah is a reminder for us that even after great tragedy, something beautiful can come'

Full story here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4JEMzMU8AM>

Waratahs blooming along Kings Tableland Rd, Wentworth Falls

PHOTOS FROM
CATH RENDELL





Message from the Board

To all community members,

As we continue to work with the frequent changes and updates about Covid-19 and restrictions, we would like to wish you all well. The length of the current lockdown has been challenging for many people in a range of different ways. With everyone's wellbeing in mind it is exciting to hear that the next few months will mean we can all enjoy some regular activities and connect with others in a safe and healthy way.

Members of the board are looking forward to the time when we can work together post lockdown and get back to some of the things we have had to put on hold. We appreciate the patience of everyone during this time as we follow rules and guidelines that impact all of us.

All members of the Board would like to again recognize the continued dedication of BMACRC staff members who have worked throughout the pandemic to provide services and support wherever and however possible. Making arrangements to alter service delivery and ensure that ACRC remains operational shows how committed the whole team is and how well everyone is working together.

The theme for this Blackmail is 'Beautiful walking trails'. With the weather warming, we hope that everyone can spend some time outdoors enjoying the sun's rays and listening to the spring wildlife. It's such a beautiful time of year.

Thank you,
ACRC Board.



ASK YOUR MOB, YOUR WAY,

RUOK?

because we are...

#StrongerTogether

**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

RUOK?
A conversation could change a life.

“Warada yanama muru” Beautiful walking trails

Being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only makes you feel better emotionally, it contributes to your physical well being, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension and the production of stress hormones.

Slowing down and connecting with nature is as important to our wellbeing as food and sleep. A sit spot (or secret spot) is a favourite place in nature that you visit regularly to cultivate awareness as you expand your senses, feed your brain and study patterns of local plants, birds, trees, animals, bugs and ants etc.

And it's one of the easiest things to do. All you need to do is:

- Go outside into your yard
- Find a place nearby to sit quietly
- Observe the elements of nature around you and use all your senses. You can even sketch or write in a journal if you want to
- Do it as often as you can

WHERE? Find a place that calls to you, a place nearby where you can sit comfortably and quietly observe your surroundings. Leave your phone and tablet inside, and do it alone if possible. If not, try and find a place where you can't see other people as this may be distracting. Your sit spot needs to be safe. Keep your eyes open for hazards like bees, snakes or spiders or dead hanging branches. If you feel so comfortable that you fall asleep, that's okay too!

WHEN? Sunrise and sunset are magical times for bird activity and you may even get a bonus natural lightshow. You might like to visit your sit spot at the same time every day and discover the regular visitors to your garden or you could try different times of the day and enjoy the variety of birds and creatures. And as time passes, you'll also get to see how the seasons change your garden.

HOW LONG? Aim for 15-30 minutes. Children may need to start with 5 minutes but if you can manage a longer session you will have a much more worthwhile experience. When you sit down in nature you create a ripple effect around you, much like when you throw a pebble into a pond. It takes time for the birdlife and other creatures to accept your presence and settle back into their usual activity, giving you the ability to really notice what is going on around you. Be curious. Be in the moment. This is your time to connect with nature.

Source: Blue Mountains City Council

BENEFITS OF NATURE TO MENTAL HEALTH

Discover how being with nature improves our mental health and reduces stress.



REDUCES ANXIETY

Our bodies release less cortisol and more natural endorphins, which promote happy thoughts and good feelings.



MORE FOCUSED

There is fresh air, and less noise pollution while being with nature.



IMPROVES CREATIVITY

Less stress and anxiousness makes our minds more clear and open to creativity.



CHANGE OF MOOD

Being with nature makes us more calm and balanced. There is less mood change triggers.



ALLOW TO DISCONNECT

Distractions are reduced by forcing us to put down the phones and computers and to slow down.



REDUCES BLOOD PRESSURE

The muscles are not tensed when relaxed. Heart rate also normalises.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/scientific-benefits-of-nature-outdoors-2016-4>
<https://news.stanford.edu/2015/06/30/hiking-mental-health-063015/>
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_nature_makes_you_kinder_happier_more_creative
<https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/environment/nature-and-us/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/research-projects/research-projects/beyond-blue-to-the-health-benefits-of-contact-with-nature-in-a-park-context-literature-review>



www.pathtomobility.com



“Warada yanama muru” Beautiful walking trails

We have found a list from Blue Mountains City Council with accessible picnic areas, lookouts and bushwalking tracks suitable for the whole family.

Picnic Areas

Glenbrook Park (BMCC) – Access from Ross St, Glenbrook. Electric BBQs, picnic seating, picnic shelters, play equipment, sports oval, adjacent to Glenbrook Village, 1x MLAK Disabled toilet

Euroka Clearing (NPWS) - Entrance via Bruce Rd, Glenbrook. This picnic and camping area is inside the Blue Mountains National Park and remains one of the best places to see eastern grey kangaroos and other wildlife.

Wentworth Falls Picnic Area (NPWS) – Access via Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls. Wentworth Falls and Jamison Lookouts have spectacular views of the Jamison Valley. Wheelchair-accessible toilets and designated parking.

Gordon Falls Reserve (BMCC) – Access via Olympian Pde, Leura. A lovely large area with a new accessible pathway from the car park to picnic area. Playground, toilets, tables, shelters, electric BBQ & water tap.

Govett's Leap Lookout (NPWS) – Access via Govett's Leap Rd, Blackheath. This spacious picnic area enjoys spectacular views into the Grose Valley. Tables, toilets, shelter, wood BBQs & Fairfax Heritage Track.

Lookouts

Mt Portal Lookout (NPWS) - Access via Bruce Rd, Glenbrook. Inside the Blue Mountains National Park, Mt Portal - provides excellent views of the Nepean River and surrounds.

Jamison Lookout & Wentworth Lookouts (NPWS) – access vis Falls Rd, Wentworth Falls. These two stunning lookouts are located at the Wentworth Falls Picnic Area. Beautiful views of the Jamison Valley.

Echo Point Lookout (BMCC) – Access via Echo point Rd, Katoomba. Large paved visitor platform with spectacular views of the 3 Sisters, the Ruined Castle, Mt Solitary and the Jamison Valley. Fully wheelchair accessible. 2 x Accessible toilets

Cahills Lookout (BMCC) – Access from Cliff Drive, Katoomba- Lovely views of Megalong Valley & Boars Head Rock

Govett's Leap Lookout (NPWS) – Access via Govett's Leap Rd, Blackheath. Magnificent views of the Grose Valley and Bridal Falls the longest single drop waterfall in the Blue Mountains. 1x Accessible toilet

Bushwalks

Leura Cascades - Accessible pathway with view of the upper cascades from the accessible lookout.

Katoomba -Three Sister's Walk - Disability access level – medium, Time - ½ Hour return, ½ Kilometre – return. Suitable for wheelchairs with assistance from Echo Point to Oreades lookout. Some sections of the track have a slope of 1:10

Katoomba – Katoomba Falls / Cliff View Lookout. Grade - Easy, Time - ½ Hour return ½ Kilometre – return

Track begins at the southern end of Katoomba Falls Park. Beautiful views of the Jamison Valley and Orphan Rock

Katoomba – The Gully Walk. Grade - Easy, Time – 15mins return , 1 Kilometre – return, Track begins at the car park on Gates Avenue. An interpretive walk to experience authentic Aboriginal culture.

Blackheath - Fairfax Heritage Track. Grade - Easy, Time – 1 hour one way, 2 Kilometres – one way Track begins at the NPWS Heritage Centre, Govett's Leap Rd. Beautiful views of the Grose Valley and Bridal falls



The Gully under snow in June 2021

Grief and Healing in Nature

Three months ago my biological Mother passed away from Stage 4 Cancer. We had just returned home on the day the strict lockdown came into place. I was feeling very overwhelmed, exhausted and sad. A couple of days or so after my mother's death, I experienced a sudden yearning to get out into nature. I remember standing bare foot at Cahills Lookout in the freezing cold wind, except it was very refreshing. I wanted to immerse myself in green space, surrounded by the rushing sounds of waterfalls, the comforting sounds of different birds, in nature and quiet. Since then, I have done a bushwalk everyday and it has very much become apart of my daily routine. I'd like to think my Mum is watching over me, guiding me into the great unknown beauties of our land. To get (gently) real about the facts of life and death. To be present in the moment. To deal with the existential questions that grief inevitably raises in the context of a rugged landscape, unaltered by man. To be forced to enter a more meditative state due to a lack of technological distraction and an increased opportunity for solitariness. While I do miss her immensely, she has shown me a strength I never knew I had to continue on and be extremely thankful and grateful.

I have included some photos of my adventures. Enjoy!

By Cath Rendell.





Bushwalking Safety

Plan your walk

- Research your walk and make sure everyone is comfortable with the planned route.
- Go at the pace of the slowest person and don't overestimate your abilities.
- Walk in groups of 3 or more people. In an emergency one of you might need to wait with the injured person while the other gets help.
- Check the difficulty. Some walks need rock scrambling and abseiling skills. If you're not sure of the difficulty, contact the local NPWS park office.
- Check weather forecasts and park alerts and be aware that weather conditions can change rapidly.
- You may come across waterfalls during a bushwalk. Learn more about staying safe around waterfalls.
- Download the NSW National Parks app and Emergency Plus app for location and emergency services information.

Tell somebody

Tell your family or friends where you're going, when you expect to return and who is with you. They can contact NSW Police if you don't return on time. You can do this by filling in a trip intention form.

Stay on track

Walking tracks in NSW national parks are not always signposted or regularly maintained so please take care.

To protect our landscapes for generations to come, please don't disturb plant and animal communities. Find out how to tread lightly and be a thoughtful walker.

What to wear

- Waterproof and windproof clothing to keep you warm.
- Comfortable, protective shoes. Don't wear high heels or thongs.
- Lightweight layers that you can take off when you warm up and put back on when you cool down. Long, loose clothing to protect you from the sun, insects and scratches is ideal.
- Hat and sunscreen.
- Insect repellent.

What to bring

- At least 2L of water per person.
- Plenty of food for snacks and a bag for rubbish.
- Topographic map and compass (know how to use them) plus download the NSW National Parks app.
- Matches and a torch.
- First aid kit.
- Your mobile phone or a satellite phone. Download the Emergency Plus app.
- If you're really heading bush, a personal locator beacon (PLB) to use as a last resort.
- If you're camping take a good tent and sleeping bag.

Insects and ticks

In a natural environment there's sometimes no escape from pests including mosquitoes, ticks and insects. Wear long, loose clothing to prevent bites, spray your clothing and exposed skin with an insect repellent and reapply as directed. If you're camping be sure to close the tent flap at night. More information on tick bites is available at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/pests/parasites/Pages/ticks.aspx>

Source: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/safety/bushwalking-safety>

Family Support

What a way to end Term 3 with 10 Koori playgroup families joining via Zoom, it was amazing having the families come and join Lesley and I. Koori Playgroup enjoyed 10 weeks held each Monday from 11am to 1pm with the exception of two playgroups held on a Tuesday. I introduced and delivered bags of ingredients and instructions for an online cooking activity that included the older children and their families.

Playgroup started making playdough, cooking banana bread, chocolate crackles, ham and cheese toasties, slow cooker sausage casserole, slow cooker chicken stroganoff, cupcakes, vegemite and cheese scrolls and sausage rolls. They were all yummy.

Some of the activities that were completed included memory cards containing Aboriginal symbols that the children got to colour corresponding with Dharug language with Auntie Corina. At playgroup there has been lots of fun and laughter happening with everyone attending the group on Zoom. All the children and parents love participating in cooking and the craft. One mother said "this is great that ACRC are doing this because it breaks down their day, it's hard to keep the children from going crazy during this time.

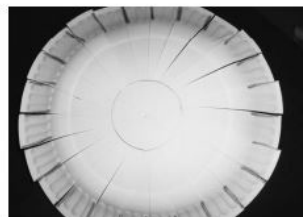
We will be continuing Playgroup via Zoom until the restrictions are lifted and see what new rules are put in place for the safety of our parents, children, grandparents, and our staff in Term 4.



BASKET WEAVING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people weave natural materials such as long grasses, vines, plant fibres, bark, hair, fur and feathers.

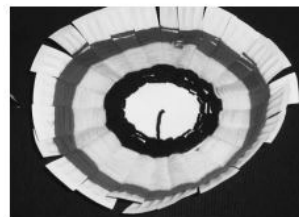
They take great care and time in making baskets, mats, bags and fish nets and traps.



On the back of the paper plate, make a circle in the middle as shown in the photo.

Using a ruler and pencil divide the plate into even sections, make sure there is odd number of spokes.

Cut each line right up to the circle - these become the spokes.



Tie wool around one of the spokes and start to wind the wool under and over each spoke, pushing firmly towards the centre circle to maintain tension.

Continue weaving until you reach about 2 cm from the outer edge of the plate.

Use a stapler to now start forming the basket shape. Hold two spokes together and staple. Continue doing this until all the spokes have been stapled together and the basket is formed.



Paint the white bits of the basket brown to finish it off.

This basket can also be made in other sizes by using cardboard and making a circle of your desired size on it and following the instructions.

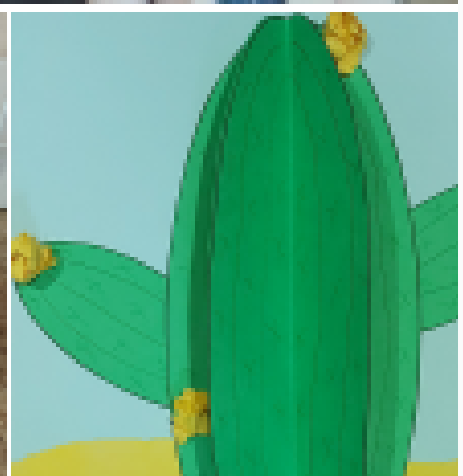
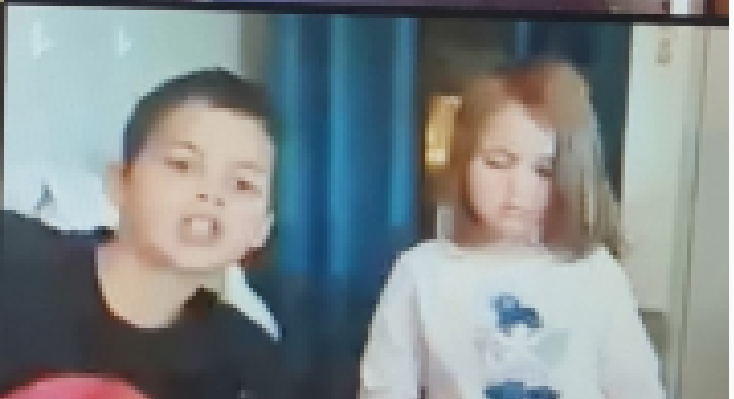
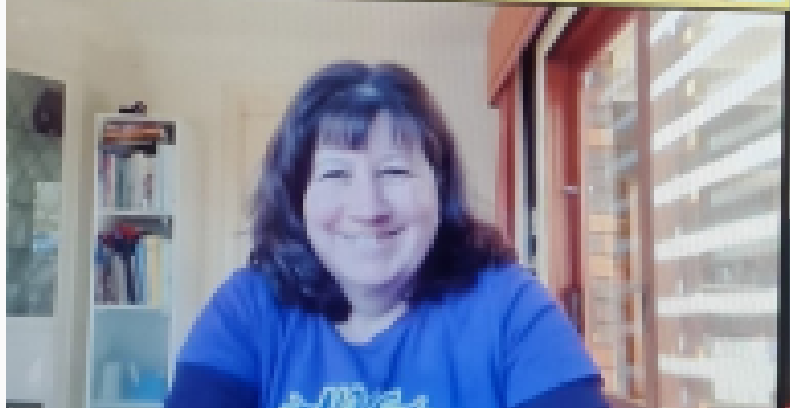
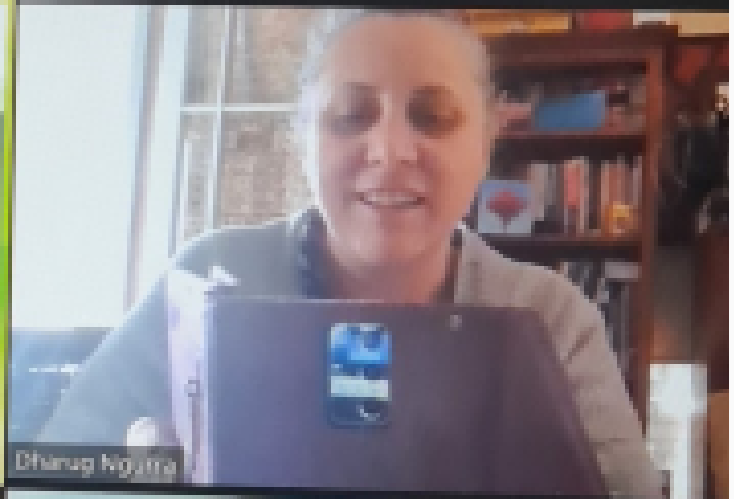
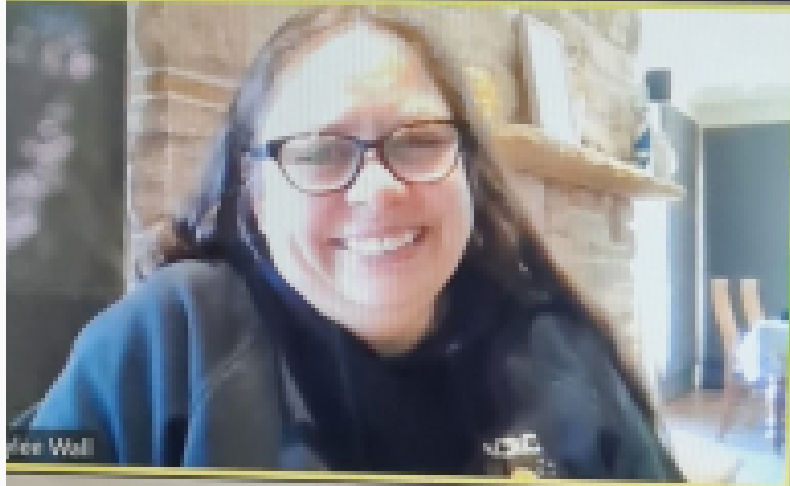
WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper plate
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Wool - can be different colours
- Brown/green paint
- Paint brush
- Stapler and marker



BLUE MOUNTAINS
ABORIGINAL CULTURE
AND RESOURCE CENTRE

ACRC KOORI PLAYGROUP



STARTING BACK ON:

TUESDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2021
TIME: 11:00AM - 1:00PM
BY ZOOM IF LOCKDOWN IS STILL
HAPPENING

KEEP ON EYE OPEN

Raylee will send you a
playgroup flyer with the
details of the next playgroup
zoom before Friday
8th October 2021

Elders Support

Hello everyone. I hope that you have all been well, happy and safe. I am very much looking forward to seeing you all again, once it is safe to do so. While this time of isolation has been somewhat confronting, it has also presented us with a space to be creative and most importantly, it has offered us a time to relax. The world was moving at an extremely fast pace and in reality it could not maintain that pressure.

I know some have made beautiful creations, knitting, crocheting, painting etc, while others have been able to garden and walking has been a welcome activity. I hope that whatever it is you have been doing to occupy your days, has helped to generate happiness and a sense of wellbeing.

While I have been busy with administration work and compiling files, so that we meet the Aged Care requirements, Uncle Lex has been busy delivering items and forms to people, thank you to Uncle Lex. And thank you for your assistance in filing out and returning the forms, I appreciate it greatly as it helps us to maintain the requirements necessary.

I will be back on the phone chatting with everyone shortly. However, please do not hesitate to contact me on my mobile (0478 138 681), even if you only need a chat. You are not alone, we are here to assist.

During this time, we have been working behind the scenes formulating get-togethers and outings for when we return. I am excited and I have missed your smiles.

Stay safe everyone.
Elly Chatfield.

TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE ACRC,

I am looking for help to find the name and /or the address of a woman who was asking ACRC members for information and photographs about Aboriginal veterans in the Blue Mountains.

I am sadly missing the family photographs and information, which I mistakenly loaned for the second time. My photos and information are in a red display folder with black spine.

Any help or information of the lady described would be greatly appreciated as I need them returned to me urgently.
Please contact ACRC with any information on 4782 6569.

Thank you, Uncle Len Murphy

Transport



ACRC Transport

All drivers will undergo Covid-19 testing every 7 days as is required for all essential workers under Transport NSW rules.

Drivers will wear masks as is also required. We are doing regular cleaning of the vehicles as well, vacuuming and wiping down with antiseptic wipes.

We still offer all trips to undertake banking, elective Surgery, essential shopping and regular medical appointments and other trips by CEO approval.

Beautiful walking trails

I have been doing some bushwalking with my kids. Recently we went to Minnitonka Falls, Bullaburra where we came across a beautiful Bowerbird nest.

On the fire trail at the end of Boronia Rd, Bullaburra we spotted a red belly black snake which reminds us that Spring is the start of our weather warming up, so to be vigilant at all times.

If you require travel please call or text Transport for bookings 0427 710 708. Ideally with 24hrs notice between; 9:00am – 4:00pm Monday- Friday.



Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre

TRANSPORT—from 30 May 2021

Zone 1: Mount Victoria to Lawson—
RETURN \$5

Zone 2: Mount Victoria to Springwood—
RETURN \$10

Zone 3: Mount Victoria to Kingswood / Nepean Hospital— RETURN \$15

From 30 May 2021, ACRC will be providing a 'Card Reader' (EFTPOS) for your payment of transport services.

Please Note: ACRC will no longer provide transport beyond Mount Victoria and Kingwood / Nepean hospital.

However, transport for critical care beyond the these zones will be approved on a case by case basis.

New transport fees comply with ACRC funding requirements.

To allow time for transport planning...

Bookings for transport must be made 24 hours ahead of time — between 8.30am and 4.00pm

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PHONE 000

Blast from the Past

Cathy Freeman who won two Olympic Gold Medals on 25 September 2000 ... 21 years ago seems like yesterday!

- Cathy Freeman was born in Queensland on 16 February, 1973.
- Cathy became involved in athletics at a very young age and won her first race at eight years old.
- During her 2000 Olympic Games victory lap in the 400 metre sprint she carried both the Australian and Aboriginal flags — a symbol of reconciliation and pride in her Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Cathy has received numerous awards including the Olympic Order for Sportswoman of the Year in 2001 and was named Australian of the Year in 1998.

Following her retirement in 2003, Cathy pursued interests important to her especially those related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She has been involved with a number of charities and community activities including Cottage by the Sea and the Cathy Freeman Foundation.

More information on her foundation here:

<https://www.cathyfreemanfoundation.org.au/>





In the Spotlight

Coralie Richmond is a local resident who has achieved so much, including being awarded an OAM Medal in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2021. The poem which can be found in Coralie's book 'Blue Mountains - The City Within A Park', below captures the very essence of the Blue Mountains which connects Coralie to Country.



Ode to the Blue Mountains

I love the mountains and the mist,
The roads that climb and twine and twist,
I love the blue ethereal sheen,
The hills and vales that lie between.

I love your crags and rushing falls,
The clouds that spread their fleecy shawls,
Then break and rise like living things,
And soar away on fairy wings.

I love your dark and silent deep,
Where sprites and elves their vigils keep,
And peep at those who pass to see,
The place where ghostly things are free.

I love your gorge and passes too,
Where breaks of light come tumbling through,
The trees and shrubs along the way,
Like twinkling streamers bright and gay.

I love to view the peaks of time,
That rise along your mountain line,
And read in them from page to page,
Some stories of a bygone age.

I love your many ins and out,
The tracks that lead all about,
To where your falls come pitching down,
With rush and roar and gurgling sound.

I love your moonlit winsome nights,
That sprays your hills and distant heights,
With silvery showers of dancing lights,
Wondrous, glorious, mystic sight.

I love your shadows weird and strange,
That sweep across your mountain range,
Casting their mantles here and there,
With patches of light entrancing rare.

I love your echoes when I call,
Answering me from fall to fall,
Like living voices in the glen,
Answering back from ancient men.

I love your sweet refreshing air,
The newborn wine to crush despair,
Like incense on the altar laid
For lives renewed and hopes remade.

I love your age of countless years,
E'er sun or moon or stars appeared,
When seas rolled in and storms beat down,
'Til found by man with beauty crowned.

I love the mystery that entwines
The story of your life with mine,
That makes me pay the tribute true,
To Time's old mountain, dressed in blue.

R.Hart



24/7 Mental Health Services

Beyond Blue

Anyone feeling anxious or depressed

 beyondblue.org.au

 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline

Counselling for young people aged 5 to 25

 kidshelpline.com.au

 1800 55 1800

MensLine Australia

Men with emotional or relationship concerns

 mensline.org.au

 1300 78 99 78

Open Arms

Veterans and families counselling


 openarms.gov.au

 1800 011 046

Lifeline

Anyone having a personal crisis


 lifeline.org.au

 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

Anyone thinking about suicide

 suicidecallbackservice.org.au

 1300 659 467



Is it an emergency?

If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, call **triple zero (000)**