

Life is sweet after a rocky road



On the job: Natalie Marshall and her mother, Virginia, at the Port Fairy markets which is one of the many markets they visit as Natalie's Handmade Chocolates.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] I
[/dropcap]n that funny way of life, a painful and unexpected event can often lead to a fresh start and a new way of doing things, which is exactly what happened to Warrnambool chocolate maker **Natalie Marshall**.

It is almost 10 years since Natalie suffered a work accident at the former Nestle's factory, in Dennington, and was eventually unable to return to her job because of chronic back pain. It was while undergoing rehabilitation, however, that she thought about taking a new path in life.

“I used to make chocolates at home when I was a kid and I started to think about possibly doing this as a proper business,” Natalie explained.

“After all, people love chocolates!”



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] N
[dropcap]atalie spent 12 months investigating how to start a small business and drew up a detailed business plan for **Natalie's Hand Made Chocolates** that included a start-up menu of 12 different chocolate varieties all made from a Cadbury chocolate base.

Finally, about three years ago, she went public with her sweet treats at her first market and proved her theory right: people really do love chocolate!

Actually, it was not her very first market, as Natalie once sold some chocolates at a Port Fairy market as a 16 year old, after being invited along by a friend.

“I turned up with a plate of chocolates that I had made in my Mum's kitchen and I had them spread out on a plate with some Glad Wrap over the top: that was it,” she laughed.

“And you know what? I sold out!”



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] Markets have certainly evolved since the days of Glad Wrap covered plates, with savvy customers now looking for hand-made products that are beautifully presented and packaged and that keep up to speed with changing tastes.

Natalie still makes her chocolates from home, which she shares with her mother and co-worker, **Virginia Marshall**, but it is now a registered commercial kitchen that produces not 12, but 35 different menu items including two of her best sellers; a white raspberry chocolate and a rocky road.

"I have been really, really pleased with how it has gone and how we have grown," she said.

Natalie, Virginia and two friends are familiar faces on the south-west Victorian market circuit and will often attend up to four markets a weekend between them, stretching from Willaura, to Geelong, to Port Fairy. It can be exhausting work, but Natalie is determined to keep growing.

“One day, I hope to be able to open my own chocolate shop here in Warrnambool: that’s the five-year plan,” she said with a smile.

[box type=“bio”] Natalie’s Hand Made Chocolates can also be found in florists and select stores around south-west Victoria, including Cheeseworld, Allansford. Visit the [Facebook page here](#).[/box]



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Broken link prompts a fresh start



Warrnambool artist Jenny Altmann was the last person standing at the former Artlink program and has since left to start her own art classes.

By Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] W
[/dropcap]hen the wheels fell off the Artlink program earlier this year, Warrnambool artist **Jenny Altmann** found herself to be the last woman standing.

[Artlink](#), a unique art program for people with disabilities, was [effectively gutted](#) when the owner of the program, **Western District Employment Options** (WDEA), decided to relocate it from the heart of Warrnambool's CBD to the industrial estate because of concerns about rising costs.

Most of the professional artists attached to the program had already tendered their resignations before the move, but Jenny decided to "hang in there" and see if the rump of Artlink that remained was where she wanted to be.

She stayed only a few weeks before making the decision to strike out on her own.



And then there were none. All of the artists in this photo taken at Artlink last December – Daneel Robinson, Jenny Altmann, Amanda Lines and Gayle Clark – are no longer involved with the program, while Deon Cameron has a new position with WDEA.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] J
[/dropcap]enny is now in the process of setting up classes at the former Fletcher Jones factory in Warrnambool, as an [extension of those already on offer](#) by well-known Warrnambool artists **Glenn Morgan, Barry "Po" Tate and Chris Small.**

"I see this as something different for me, creatively," Jenny said.

"I want to offer classes not only for people with disabilities, and not as an art therapist, which involves a whole different form of training, but as what I call a creativity coach," she said.

The classes will, therefore, be open to anyone interested in using art to work through any form of blockage in their life, be it emotional, professional or personal.

"It might be a writer who has writer's block, or a musician...it is about trying to get back on your feet creatively," Jenny explained.

Jenny knows from her years with Artlink that art has the potential to unlock parts of a person that may otherwise have never been discovered. It also has the power to heal, to reinvigorate and to connect likeminded souls.

"I have a number of tricks up my sleeve that have worked for me over the years and I know, from my own experience, that it has always been art that has pulled me through," she said.



Making a few adjustments...the studio space at the former Fletcher Jones factory had been used by a church group but will soon be used for creative coaching.

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[/dropcap]ronically, the decision to run her own art classes has taken Jenny full circle. Before Artlink existed, Jenny was involved with a smaller program called Art Options that was run by WDEA out of the Fletcher Jones building.

Now she is back to a blank slate: an empty, but pleasant, light-filled room, that was previously used by a church group.

“At this point I am just putting it out to the community that I am setting this up and getting what we need in place,” Jenny said.

Anyone interested in donating tables, chairs, easels or other materials that could be used to help set up the studio space can contact Jenny on 0447 627 901. People can also register their interest in the classes.

[box] Last week, WDEA was awarded a five-star rating by Disability Employment Services for its disability management services. It also announced its expansion into Shepparton and Echuca, taking its total number of offices to 12. [/box]



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Double passes to The Quarry garden



CLOSED MARCH 17: Winners, Peter Smid, Phyllis Walsh, Janis Bennett, Lana Campbell, Karen McKenzie,

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] 0
[/dropcap]ur story about the [spectacular gardens](#) created out of an old quarry near Allansford really struck a chord with our readers and we are now giving members of the [Bluestone](#)

[Club](#) a chance to win one of five double passes to the next open day.

Paul Ryan, the man whose vision and hard work has transformed the quarry over the past eight years, will open his garden to the public on **Saturday March 22** and **Sunday March 24** from 10am to 5pm. Entry is \$10 per person. (The garden is on the corner of Hopkins Point and Tooram roads, Allansford – entry off Tooram Rd).

Paul has kindly donated five double passes to *Bluestone Magazine* and to be in the draw, you need to be a paid subscriber ([why not join us](#) and support Bluestone?) and simply email us your name and address by **Monday March 17** to editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au

The winners will be announced Monday morning on our [Facebook](#) page and also in our [weekly newsletter](#).

It should be a fabulous day and Paul is also promising a cup of tea and a biscuit!

Winners: Peter Smid; Phyllis Walsh; Lana Campbell; Janis Bennett; Karen McKenzie.

\$100 voucher to the Pantry Door at Basalt



CLOSED MARCH 14: winner, Loretta Gurnett

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]e have a sensational prize for one of our
lucky [Bluestone Club members](#) (our wonderful paid subscribers).

A very generous (and anonymous) donor has given us a **\$100 lunch voucher to The Pantry Door at Basalt, Killarney** (wow!!).

To be in the draw, you need to be a paid subscriber – [that's easy, just click here](#) – and then email us your name and address to editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au by **Friday March 14**.

We will announce the winner on our [Facebook page](#) that night (and contact you!).

Keep your eye peeled for more great competitions that are open to all of our Bluestone Club members.

Winner: Loretta Gurnett

Lost history finds loyal following



The Warrnambool Foreshore Caravan Park in the days before Winnebagos were invented. Image: Lost Warrnambool.

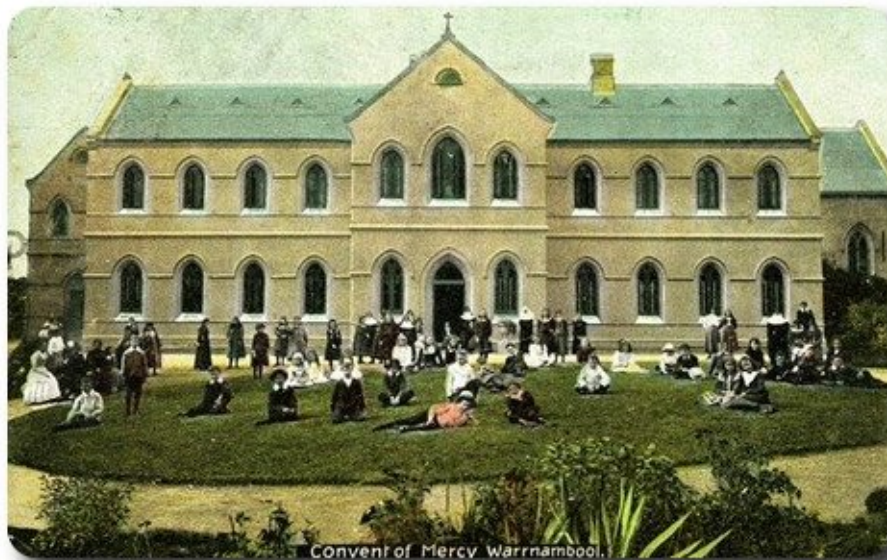
By Carol Altmann

Preserving and, just as importantly, *sharing* our history is no longer only the preserve of museums, academics and a few dedicated souls prepared to pore over faded documents.

Social media has created a new kid on the old block and that is the so-called “Lost” movement, where Facebook sites have been set up for a particular city or town and people are invited to share their photographs and memories.

The Lost Melbourne Facebook page, for example, has more than 41,000 followers who contribute and comment on photographs that capture a past life in Victoria’s capitol city.

Closer to home, we are fortunate to have a [Lost Warrnambool Facebook page](#) that has almost 3000 followers who are united in their love of nostalgia.



Do you recognise this? The Warrnambool
“Convent of Mercy”. Image: Lost Warrnambool.

The page is maintained, monitored and updated by a Warrnambool man whom we won't name here, because he doesn't name himself on the page, mainly because the page is not about him.

It is about us: where we come from, who we are, how we have grown, what has changed, what hasn't.

It is a social forum, a fun forum, like a giant reunion where we share our bond to this city by the sea.

But it also involves a lot of hard work and Lost Warrnambool shares photographs that he has either purchased, been given, or been sent – and anyone who writes a blog or maintains a Facebook page knows that this all takes time.

Lost Warrnambool is creating and maintaining an important social record and opening up our history for us all to enjoy, so, for this, we consider Lost Warrnambool to be a Quiet Hero. Well done, Lost Warrnambool.

Please visit [the Lost Warrnambool Facebook Page](#) and spread the word about this wonderful site.

[box] The founder of Lost Warrnambool will receive a \$20

voucher from [Wyton Cellars, 127 Kepler St, Warrnambool](#):
thankyou to Steve and Jo from Wyton Cellars for your support
of our Quiet Heroes.[/box]



Meet our other Quiet Heroes...

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