

Win an Ella Webb limited edition print



CLOSED: Winners Fiona Haywood and Pat McLaren

[dropcap style="color:#8F9F59;"] T [/dropcap>he generosity of our supporters knows no bounds and this week we are offering one lucky paying subscriber the chance to win a limited edition, framed print by Warrnambool artist **Ella Webb**. ([You can subscribe here](#)).

Ella, who we profiled in our magazine shortly after we started last year ([you can read our story here](#)), has kindly donated a finely executed drawing of a Southern Crowned Pigeon and a runner-up prize of a pack of three gorgeous cards.

Ella has donated the prizes in the hope that they will encourage others to join her as a paying subscriber to *Bluestone Magazine*. We currently have ~~124~~ 125 paying subscribers, but are aiming for 200 by September.

Paid subscribers just need to email editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au to enter the draw.

The first five new subscribers will be entered automatically.

We will draw the prize as soon as we have five new subscribers (update: we have 3 already, so only 2 to go!) so please, if you have been thinking about subscribing, [do it now!](#)

Thankyou so much Ella, for helping *Bluestone* to keep going and growing.

[box] Note: The winner will be announced here and on our Facebook page, plus we will contact you personally. Please note the main prize can be delivered to the Warrnambool area only, so if you are one of our wonderful subscribers from further afield, you will need to arrange collection.[/box]

Traders are right to be asking questions

With Warrnambool traders rallying to stop a controversial levy to pay for promotion and marketing, we have our say in OPINION on why they have every right to be angry and asking questions...

Whimsical art to capture the heart



Falling Knowledge (featuring the book, 'George Eliot' by Robert Speight): one of the works by Jenny Laidlaw in her exhibition at Port Fairy.

A exhibition of whimsical sculptures by artist and illustrator **Jenny Laidlaw** is in its final days at Blarney Books and Art, Port Fairy, with a talk by the artist herself this weekend (May 25).

Jenny, who lives in Jan Juc, on the Great Ocean Road, creates beautiful, eye-catching works by manipulating the pages of a humble book and then adding Prosculpt human figures to each piece.

As Jenny says in her promotional material for the work, “the

figures sit atop their literary throne, creating a vessel for emotion, message and imagination”.

The “Pages, Pen and Paint” exhibition also features Jenny’s highly detailed and colourful illustrations that, once again, capture the world of fantasy and imagination through pen, ink and watercolours.

Jenny will speak about her work at a free event next Sunday (May 25) at 3pm at Blarney Books and Art, 37 James St, Port Fairy. You can also find out more about Jenny’s work on her [website here](#).



‘Release’ (featuring ‘Walden, or Life in the Woods’ by Henry David Thoreau) which also features in the ‘Pages, Pen and Paint’ exhibition.

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New business levy to raise \$600k for what?



A proposed new levy will raise \$600k to promote Warrnambool, but would it not be better spent on actual projects, like funky public art such as this in London?

OPINION

[dropcap style="color: #abccab;"] I [/dropcap]t's a rare day when businesses ask other businesses to pay **more** – not less – council rates, but that is exactly what is happening in Warrnambool.

A group called **Commerce Warrnambool** has asked the Warrnambool City Council to introduce a special levy that would see 1300 commercial and industrial businesses each pay between \$100 and up to \$6000 a year for the next five years, with the first year expected to raise \$600,000.

The levy, based on capital improved property value*, would rise by 5 per cent each year for the next 5 years.

And what would all this money be used for?

Well, according to the Commerce Warrnambool business plan, the first \$200,000 will be used to employ a chief executive (\$90,000) and associated support staff (\$110,000), with the remaining \$400,000 being spent on what can best be described as a huge public relations exercise.

Commerce Warrnambool, which started as a voluntary organisation in 2010 and has about 100 members, effectively wants to professionalise its role in promoting Warrnambool as “a great place to live, work and invest” (the same old mantra) and be paid to do so.

There are already at least three other marketing and public relations bodies that are funded to perform this task, including within the [Warrnambool City Council](#), the [Great South Coast Group](#) and the [Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board](#), but Commerce Warrnambool clearly feels there is room for even more.



Instead of spending more money on trying to convince people to invest in Warrnambool, why not invest in the

things – like public art – that make a city appealing?

[dropcap style="color: #abccab;"] T [/dropcap]he group will also, among other things, lobby the council (in other words, the council will collect a levy that will be partly used to lobby itself) and help to promote events such as the May Racing Carnival, Port Fairy Folk Festival, Fun for Kids and the Allansford Speedway.

From from what I have seen, these events already have significant marketing budgets and, between them, attract tens of thousands of people.

Given the record number of empty shops in downtown Warrnambool, a proposed 5.5 per cent hike in council rates, and the economic times that trouble most traders, I thought the idea of forking out money for yet *another* public relations and marketing project would be shot down in flames.

But no.

Commerce Warrnambool says it has contacted at least 900 businesses and received between 250-300 letters of support. This means that only a third of those surveyed like the idea, but I am stunned that it is even that high.

The council, sensing an opportunity to partially outsource another of its functions, has seized on the idea and recommended that the special levy go ahead: the councillors will vote on it Monday night (May 19).

But let's think about this for a moment.

Do we really need a special levy to promote how wonderful Warrnambool is? Why not spend the money – if we are going to travel down this path – to improve what people actually see and experience when they come here?

Perhaps, for example, some of the \$600,000 could be used to help sustain **The Artery**, which has given a heartbeat back to the lower end of Timor St, but is largely funded by volunteers and artists paying what little they make to hire an exhibition or studio space.

Or maybe it could be used as a building restoration fund, where property owners are given an incentive to freshen up the many tired, peeling and grubby shop facades around the city.



Telling people to work, live and invest in Warrnambool is one thing, but ensuring the city looks fresh and inviting is quite another.

[dropcap style="color: #abccab;"] One of the Commerce Warrnambool arguments is that other regional cities have set up a business fund, so why don't we? It lists Ballarat, Shepparton, Swan Hill and Mildura among its examples of similar schemes, yet if we pick just one of these – Mildura – there is a cautionary tale to be heard.

The Mildura Rural City Council collects a special levy on behalf of the Mildura Development Corporation and Mildura Tourism – both of which are subsidiaries of the council – to be used for the very sort of activities outlined by Commerce Warrnambool.

Last year, however, [the council swiped \\$100,000 from the special levy](#) fund to use for other purposes so that it could keep its overall rates down. Ouch.

Imagine, for a moment, if instead of Commerce Warrnambool fronting up with this levy idea, it was **The F Project** – the local artists' collective that started in 2008 and has around 150 members.

I am trying to picture the F Project president, instead of Commerce Warrnambool president **Tony Herbert**, asking the council to tax every business owner for a special public art fund that would raise \$600,000 a year.

This fund, instead of being used for promotion and lobbying, would be used to commission artists from around South-West Victoria to create new works of public art (including murals, street furniture, sculptures etc) that would be installed around the the city each year.

Such a fund would buy a lot of public art and produce tangible, highly-visual results, yet there is little doubt The F Project would be laughed out of the council offices for suggesting such an “indulgence”.

Yet it is the *tangible* things – not just more words – that will ultimately make a difference to people wanting to visit, or move, to Warrnambool. There is no small irony in the council [spruiking its Liebig St renewal plans from an empty shop](#) in Liebig St, which is next to another empty shop, which is a few doors from another empty shop...

Money needs to be injected urgently into physical projects

that will bring the city back to life – and we don't need to pay \$600,000 a year for somebody to tell us that.

[*The original version of this piece said the levy was based on 3 per cent of property value, which is incorrect. The levy will be calculated as a rate in the dollar based on CIV.]

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A quiet hero who flies like an eagle



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] T
[/dropcap]wo very inspiring and uplifting things have happened around Warrnambool in the past few weeks and a woman by the name of **Julie Eagles** has been at the centre of both.

Julie, pictured left, with **Alice Ugle**, was one of the key organisers of the hugely successful [150th anniversary celebrations](#) of the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve that last month saw hundreds of people enjoy a day of Koori culture, history and pride in a community that is only 30km from Warrnambool, but which many people had never visited before.

The anniversary event changed all that and Julie, together with Alice and the rest of the organising team, artists, musicians, volunteers and supporters, created something very special that people are still talking about – and hope is

repeated, if perhaps on a smaller scale.

Running alongside the Framlingham event has been Julie's ongoing volunteer work as a community campaigner to save Warrnambool's heritage, including the Fletcher Jones silver ball and the best of the former factory site.

[dropcap style="color: #dc943c;"] J [/dropcap]ulie, as part of the **Warrnambool Planning and Heritage Group** and more recently the [Save the Silverball and Fletcher Jones Gardens](#) group, has lobbied for [more than two years](#) to see positive steps taken toward saving this site and, last week, it was finally sold to a developer who, it appears, is sympathetic to its heritage.

At the very least, Julie has been pivotal in ensuring the heritage aspects of the FJ site are now front and centre of the public discussion and many eyes are watching to see what unfolds: quite an achievement after 10 years of buck-passing over the landmark.

To be an agitator in a regional city is not easy, but Julie manages to educate, motivate and empower people toward taking a stand by stating the simple facts and offering alternative ideas.

For this, and her sheer determination to keep fighting, she is our Quiet Hero.

[box] Julie will receive a coffee and cake voucher from [Rocksalt](#), Port Fairy, and we have another coffee and cake voucher for Alice Ugle from [The Pavilion](#), Warrnambool. Thankyou to Rocksalt (Bronwyn and Sarah) and The Pavilion (Mary-Ellen and Jon) for supporting our quiet heroes.[/box]



[box type="bio"] If you know somebody who you think is deserving of a Quiet Hero, please email us at editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au[/box]

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