

Buy a book for a child this Christmas



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] W [/dropcap]e have something a bit different for our Bookmarks this week that we hope will resonate with our readers who, like us, love words.

Instead of profiling one book, Bluestone Magazine is supporting a campaign by Warrnambool Books to encourage people to buy a book that they think a child might enjoy for Christmas and then donate that book to a very good cause: [Bethany](#).

Michaelie Clark, from **Warrnambool Books**, explains how it will work:

“At Warrnambool Books we really love two things: Warrnambool, and books. We believe in contributing to our local community and we believe in the power of literature. That’s why we’re holding a book pledge this Christmas to benefit disadvantaged children in the Barwon South West region.

Our **Book Angels** campaign will run from **Monday, 18 November** until **Monday, 16 December**. During this time, customers can buy any children’s book from the store at a discount of 25% to donate to our collection, which will be presented to Bethany in the week before Christmas.

Bethany is a long-standing organisation with a base in Warrnambool, which will arrange distribution of the books to

children in need.

There's no better gift to give a child than a book. Opening books can open minds and doors in the future, so we hope lots of Book Angels will open their hearts to a worthy cause this Christmas."



[box] Find inspiration for book donations from Warrnambool Books on their [Facebook](#) page.[/box]



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No time limit on this wearable art



Hawkesdale artist Helen Bunyon has always experimented with putting found objects together in new ways and her latest work uses this approach with old time pieces.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]I[/dropcap]n the dexterous hands of Hawkesdale artist Helen Bunyon, a broken clock, a wrecked watch or a discarded fuse can be transformed into wearable works of beauty.

Helen, who is well-known for her long support of the the local arts scene through The F Project and Customs House Gallery, is

also an established artist in her own right and her latest work builds on her interest in putting together discarded objects to create something new.

“I like to assemble things. When I trained as an art teacher, I trained in ceramics and that has a 3D aspect to it, a sculptural aspect, and this is an extension of sculpture, except on a smaller scale,” she said.



A discarded watch is paired with other pieces of recycled jewellery to become wearable art.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]H[/dropcap]elen scours the junk shops and op shops for discarded watches, jewellery and other bits and bobs that have usually been dumped out of a drawer, into a shopping bag and

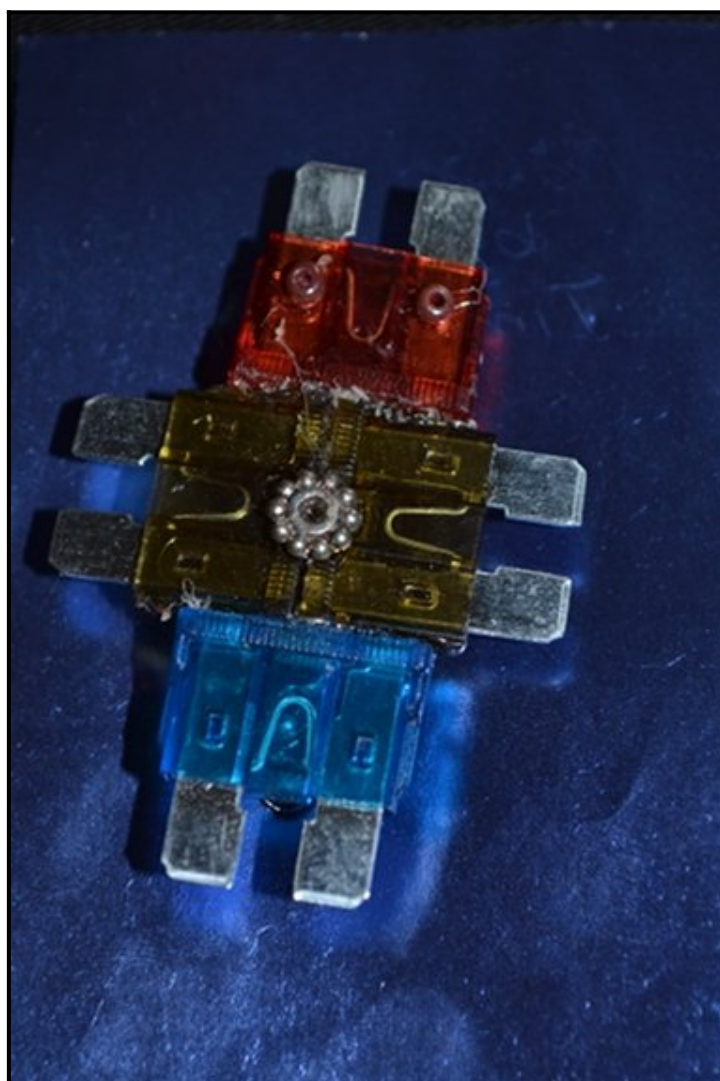
dropped into a charity bin.

From this tangled collection, she creates a range of beautiful, one-off jewellery, including brooches, necklaces and ear-rings, using the reassembled parts.

Called the 'Time Flies' series, the works are delicate and stylish, yet retain a sense of the industrial.

"It is wearable art with a hint of steampunk," she explained with a laugh.

[Steampunk pays homage to the Victorian industrial era – *I only just learnt this, Carol*].



You will never look at a discarded fuse the same way again!

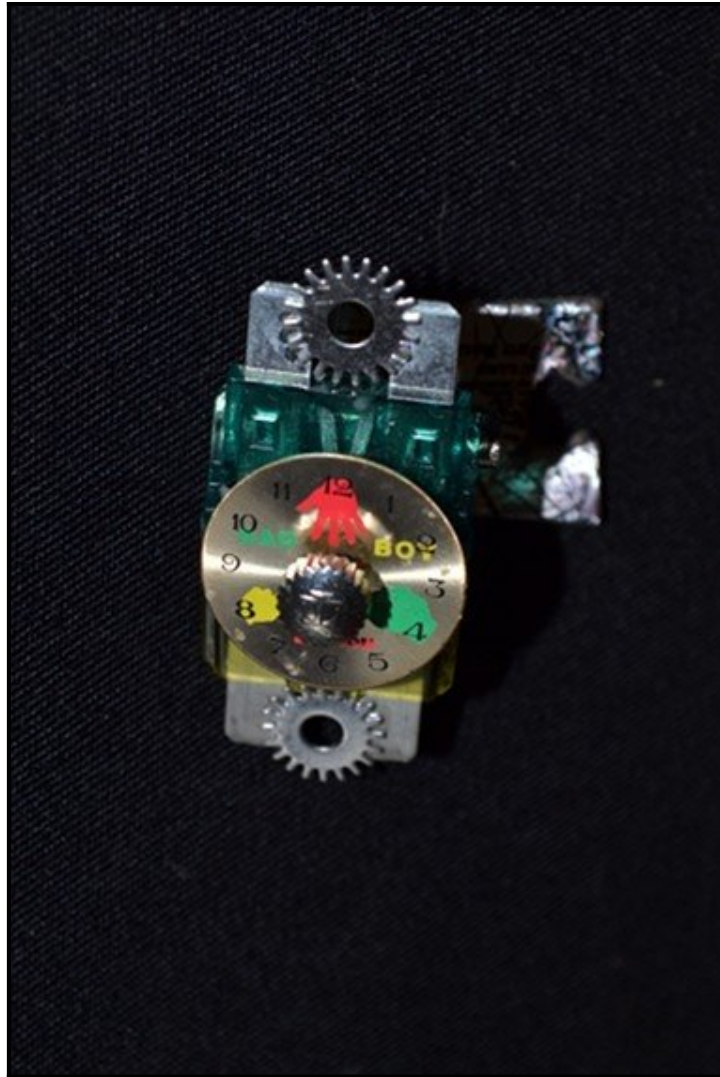
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]he industrial theme of her work extends to the use of blown fuses to create funky brooches that resemble miniature robots. This really must be the ultimate in recycling.

"I really like putting things together in different ways to give them a new life and a new beauty," Helen said.

"The mechanisms of old watches, in particular, are really very beautiful, although they are becoming harder to find these days, with many new watches containing only a battery and not much else."

For Helen, the "upcycling" of former junk also contains a certain romance.

"I find myself wondering what the story is behind something: who owned that piece? How did it get there? All that sort of thing," she said.



Jewellery with a hint of steampunk that pays homage to the industrial era.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]hose with a keen eye will find that Helen uses other discarded items as part of her market stall. The price tags, for example, are pieces of a jigsaw that was once a silver-coloured map of the world. And her display table is draped in old pianola rolls. Even the tissue paper used in the jewellery boxes is recycled from old dress patterns.

"We live in such a throw-away society, where if something doesn't work anymore, we get rid of it, but it often has so many more uses if you just look at it differently," Helen said.

[box] Helen's work is available through The Artery market, 224 Timor St, Warrnambool. The next market is scheduled for December 15. [/box]



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A little less conversation, a little more action



How to improve the CBD: offer financial incentives for property owners to paint the glorious shop tops along Timor St.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]hat is this inertia that appears to be holding Warrnambool in an iron-like grip and preventing this beautiful city from reaching its full potential?

It was with a heavy heart that I read respected lawyer **Roy Reekie's** recent letter to the local paper, lamenting that he had returned to Warrnambool after five years to find the Warrnambool City Council locked in a petty, schoolyard stand-off and he pondered if he had made a mistake in coming home.

A mistake! What an indictment: intelligent, energetic people like Roy should feel delighted to be back, not disappointed.



How to improve the CBD: paint a mural on the hideous Koroit St toilet block and, later, close it down. Relocate the bus transit to the old Post Office area.

I don't regret coming home after more than 20 years, but I, too, have been astounded by how the city appears to have lost its way. There is endless talk – usually accompanied by endless reports – about what could and should be done to revive the CBD, but there is no over-arching vision or leadership to actually make it happen.

Instead, our new-old Mayor wants us to be excited by new housing developments – projects that extend out into the country and make it even more critical to retain a vibrant city centre, or we will end up like the 'doughnut' regional cities of the US, where everybody lives in the 'burbs and shops in malls and the city heart is left for dead.

It is my fear that Warrnambool is at a critical juncture where, unless it gets its act together, we are at risk of that happening. We will have a city centre full of "services", but no heart.



How to improve the CBD: offer up high-profile but ugly walls, like this eyesore, to public art.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] I [dropcap] recently lived near a city like that: Morwell, in Gippsland. It was once a vibrant 'SEC town', but once the power companies were privatised, the jobs went and so did the families who shopped, ate and socialised in the town. It now relies on being a "service" centre, full of bland state and federal government offices providing health, welfare and social support services.

Morwell's main street is full of empty, dusty shops that were once restaurants, clothing stores, jewellers, butchers, bakers and newsagencies, some of which have moved out to the MidValley Shopping Centre – halfway between Morwell and Traralgon – because that's where people now linger. Does this sound familiar?

Warrnambool, however, has a huge advantage over a place like

Morwell and that is tourism. People flock to see the whales, and the beaches, and even good old Flagstaff Hill, but the CBD is letting us down, badly.

We have some of the most gorgeous and historic buildings in Victoria, but you wouldn't know it. We have an incredible, vibrant arts scene, but – judging by the lack of public art – you wouldn't know it. We have a deep and important indigenous history right around this area, but you wouldn't know it.

I walked around the entire CBD last week and did not see one bit of indigenous public art and only a handful of public art. Perhaps I was looking in the wrong places.



How to improve the CBD: stop patching and start paving. Especially on high-profile corners like this one.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]hat I did see were many empty, dusty shops; dirty and stained bitumen pavements that had been patched and

repatched to the point of being unsafe; a dark toilet block and a noisy bus transit zone dominating the hub of Liebig and Koroit streets; and, as always, pedestrians trying to skip between cars at intersections and being grateful when somebody stopped to let them pass.

And it appears that when some people DO try and make a difference, they are blocked at every turn. Take, for example, the artist who tried to open a pop-up market in an empty shop but was unable to find anyone (among the 20 or so people who apparently, between them, own the CBD) who would take it on. They would rather leave their shop empty. (What a contrast to [Revive Newcastle](#), where property owners actively encourage such ideas.)

And so the inertia continues...and more reports are written (*another* Liebig St revival plan is next) and older reports gather dust (remember the 2010 report on revitalising the Warrnambool Railway Station precinct?) and everybody sighs and says, "that's just how it is here", while cities and towns like Bendigo, Castlemaine, Daylesford, Ballarat, Kyneton and even Birregurra, power ahead.

We deserve better leadership and this is Mayor Neoh's greatest challenge: to unite the council and business community around a common purpose and to actually **get things done**.



How to improve the CBD: free (timed) parking, bike lanes and a 40 kph speed limit between Lava and Timor Streets.



What CAN be done: for more examples

of creative street art click [here](#).

[learn_more caption="Ten ideas to improve the CBD, in some cases, almost instantly – click the arrow"]

1. All outdoor eating in Liebig St must use quality furniture – not cheap, plastic tables and chairs.
2. Paint a mural on the ugliest toilet block known to feature on a major intersection anywhere in Victoria...until you can close it down.
3. Relocate the bus transit area from Koroit St to outside the former Post Office Building in Timor St.
4. Provide financial support for all of the historic shop tops along Timor St to be repainted.
5. Repave all of the footpaths along Liebig St.
6. Free parking in the entire CBD, but with time restrictions enforced by local laws.
7. At least half a dozen bare and ugly walls around the CBD to be offered up for public art.
8. Ban all exposed skip bins.
9. Add bike lanes along Liebig St and reduce traffic speeds to 40 kph between Lava and Timor streets.
10. Cars entering roundabouts must give way to pedestrians.

Do you have anything to add?

[/learn_more]



Find other opinion pieces here:

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[Windy? Let's make the most of it!](#)

Restoring a treasure back to life



Behind the renovation of 222 Timor St, Warrnambool: Luke and Nat Taylor, with their son Lucas. They have since had another child, Penny.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A
[/dropcap]fter years of decay, the old piano shop opposite Swintons, in Warrnambool, is being brought back to life by a young lawyer who has taken on a restoration project of

monumental proportions.

Luke Taylor, and his wife Nat, bought the double-storey, derelict building at 222 Timor St more than 12 months ago with the intention of turning it into an investment, but what they didn't count on was just *how* much hard work would be involved, or how much they would come to love the old place.

"At first it was very much about building an investment for the future, rather than being passionate about restoring an old building, but that has completely changed," Luke said.



BEFORE: The front left room was restored from top to bottom, including the ceiling, floorboards and walls.



AFTER...

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] A [/dropcap] turning point was when architect Peter Brooks, from Heritage Victoria, visited for an on-site assessment of the property, which is listed with the National Trust and Heritage Victoria as a significant building. Where most saw a decaying hulk that had to be restored from the ground-up, Peter saw an historic and precious gem.

“He was blown away by it,” Luke explained. “There are basically so few properties like this that are still in their original condition and have not been modified or altered in any significant way. Peter’s enthusiasm and excitement about that was infectious.”

The sandstone building is the oldest, intact commercial building in Warrnambool and dates back to around 1850. It has had many lives since then, including as a piano repair shop owned by my grandfather, Bill Goodall, who bought it in 1932. It was largely because Bill never had an spare money for renovations that the building has remained unchanged, perhaps apart from the wallpaper: Luke removed nine layers from each of the rooms.



BEFORE: Layers of wallpaper and plaster had to be removed and damp walls dried out as part of the renovation.



AFTER...the 'lounge room' has been given a new lease of life.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]
L[/dropcap]uke and a group of skilled, local tradesmen have

spent countless hours since February slowly bringing the place back to life, and it has been backbreaking work. Floorboards have been lifted, replaced and then the old ones recycled. Barrow loads of dirt and dust and debris have been removed. Leaks have been plugged, walls re-plastered, windows replaced...and on it goes. And then some.

"The tradesmen have been amazing, because everything was crooked and had to be made square again," Luke said.

Luke has taken only two weekends off since taking on the project, including one weekend when his second child, Penny, was born.

"I have spent so many hours in the building, and because I have spent so much time there, on my own, I have really come to appreciate it and feel the emotion of it," he said.



BFEORE: The 1850s building was rundown, but still in much of its original condition when the Taylors bought it last year.



AFTER: Hours of back-breaking work have seen the shop slowly restored to how it would have looked in the mid 1800s, right down to the colour scheme.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] I [/dropcap]t is this emotional connection that has pushed Luke through what he calls the “dark times,” when the job ahead seemed overwhelming. He has also applied the same disciplined approach that he uses for his triathlons – one step at a time.

“It has been a huge challenge, a huge amount of work, but we are breathing new life into the building. It may look plain, but it represents an era and reflects that time,” Luke said.

The bottom storey of the building will have a tenant by the end of this month, but it will be another year before a residence and a serviced apartment upstairs are complete. Luke is determined to see it through.

“The way I see it is that if Nat and I can do this, what can’t we do?”

[box] 222 Timor St, Warrnambool had been painted cream for

many years, but this was not its original colour. The new salmon-pink and burgundy facade reflects the original colour scheme that was uncovered by peeling back layers of paint. Pig's blood was often used to tint paint in the 1800s, reflecting a step-up from the whitewash used on working class cottages. [/box]



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Sustaining a vital art link

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