

Our quiet heroes: those looking after nature



Ann and Stella from Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare.

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[/dropcap]ne of the many beautiful things about living in South-West Victoria is the wild environment that surrounds us, from the ocean, to the rivers, the estuaries and the native bush.

While we are so fortunate to have access to such natural beauty, there is a legion of volunteers who are doing their bit to keep it that way and to reduce the environmental impact of humans.

South-West Victoria is home to several well-established and active environmental groups, including Friends of Merri Marine Sanctuary, Making a Difference for the Merri, Friends of Ralph Illidge Sanctuary and the [Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Group](#).

It is the latter that we have chosen as our hero of the week

after finding two of its members – Ann and Stella – hard at work digging out weeds and knee-high grass from an area known as Harris on Merri, near the Rail Trail in South Warrnambool.

We reckon that getting down on your hands and knees and weeding for several hours in order to make a public space more beautiful is worthy of reward: if only the small one that we offer. Thankyou Ann and Stella, and all those like you.

If you would like to know more about landcare groups in the area, the Basalt to Bay Landcare Network is a great place to start. Check their website [here](#).

[box] Bluestone Magazine is donating a voucher for coffee and cake to each of our quiet heroes. This week it will be Lozzar's Lounge Cafe, 52A Kepler St, Warrnambool.[/box]



Who are our other quiet heroes?

[The artist](#)

[The face behind Fifteen Minutes of Fame](#)

[Embracing diversity](#)

[The musician](#)

Our third quiet hero



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]F[/dropcap]or every fantastic community event, there is usually a band of hardworking, energetic, enthusiastic and lowly paid band of volunteers keeping it alive.

Look behind the scenes of many of the wonderful events happening around Port Fairy-Crossley at the moment, and there is fair bet that you will see **Carol McDonald** in there somewhere, helping out in some way.

The indefatigable Carol is technically 'retired', but she is not one to slip into her slippers and watch daytime television. Instead, she has become an invaluable supporter of the local arts community, particular through her involvement in the Port Fairy Ex Libris Festival of Words, held a fortnight ago, and the women's community choir, the [Red Tent Singers](#), who perform regularly throughout the South-West.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]M[/dropcap]ost recently, however, Carol has been the driving force behind the wonderful [Fifteen Minutes of Fame](#) nights held on the first Friday of the month at the St Brigid's Church community hall at Crossley. Carol and her team of volunteers have created an opportunity for newcomers to show their

talents, and for more seasoned performers to reach a new audience, while providing a relaxed and entertaining night out for the audience. The hall is always crowded and each event helps to raise funds for the church building, which is community owned and operated by the Friends of St Brigid's.

Carol loves a laugh, loves a champagne and loves to spread her energy to the benefit of others and so she is our very worthy third quiet hero.

Bluestone Magazine is donating a voucher for coffee and cake to each of our quiet heroes. This week it will be at Slitti Cafe, Bank St, Port Fairy.

Our first quiet hero



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #9b9b9b;"] M
[/dropcap]ost artists don't make much money. Only a handful

can pursue their art full-time, regardless of their talent.

Despite this, many artists remain committed not only to their work, but to encouraging other artists so that, together, they can form a vibrant and resilient community that makes our world so much more interesting.

Megan Nicolson is such a person. The Warrnambool artist makes stunning lino cut prints and a range of quirky soft toys called 'softies' (more about those in later editions), and also donates a huge slice of her time and energy to building up the local arts community.

She has been a central figure in the collective, [The F Project](#), and this year organised two successful artists' markets that helped raise funds toward the establishment of the new [Artery](#) art space at 224 Timor St, Warrnambool.

Somewhere in there, Megan also parents four children – two still below school age – with her partner Lachlan. It is this combination of creativity and generosity of spirit that makes some artists so special and this is why Megan Nicolson has been chosen as our first quiet hero.

Bluestone Magazine is donating a voucher for coffee and cake to each of our quiet heroes. This week it will be at Wyton Events and Catering, Warrnambool.

[box type="bio"] *Do you know somebody in South-West Victoria who is worthy of recognition as a quiet hero? If so, let us know via email – in 200 words or less, plus a photo – and we will consider them for our weekly column. Email us at editor@bluestonemagazine.com.au[/box]