

The thinking behind building a Big Life

Michael Barling & Sean Kenny on the thinking behind 'Big Life'.

New book: Warrnambool – This is home



Me – Carol Altmann – with my self-published tribute to my hometown of Warrnambool that will be launched on August 19.

[box] “Warrnambool – This is home” is limited to 500 signed and numbered copies: \$30 plus \$8 flat postage anywhere in Australia. You can [order a book direct from the author by direct deposit or Paypal](#). Books are also available from

Warrnambool Books, Fairy St. [/box]

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] W [/dropcap]hen I first returned to live in my hometown of Warrnambool in early 2013 after being away for more than 20 years, I had a new appreciation for the ties that bind people from this seaside city.

Despite Warrnambool now being a place of 32,000 people, we all feel like we know each other and, if we don't, we spend a few minutes playing what one friend described to me as "the game".

This is where you ask each other what school you went to, or the names of your parents/brothers/sisters, or if you knew such-and-such and – usually – within no more than four or five moves, "bingo!" you have made a connection.

But it is also more than that.

It is the environment that also connects us: the wild ocean, the bent trees, the Norfolk pines, the whales, the restless wind...

And it is even more than that.

It is the iconic people and places that are so familiar to us and that we remember so fondly, even nostalgically, as we all age and they start to slip away. Names like Swintons, Kermonds, Macks Snacks, Ryan's Removals, The Savoy, Rauert's shoe store, Politis fish and chips, the Materia Brothers and on it goes.

I chose 30 of these icons to photograph and write briefly (snapshots) about – I could have chosen many more – as a small collection of some of the places and faces that connect us as being "from Warrnambool", even if we live many miles away.



Warrnambool identities: John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis in front of their Kepler St family home. The book is dedicated to Maroulla, who passed away earlier this year.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] A [/dropcap]s the book unfolded, I felt an increasing sense of urgency to capture these special places and faces before it was too late, because there is no doubt Warrnambool is facing unprecedented challenges that are seeing many businesses close and not replaced by others.

In the 16 months since I started this book, the Savoy has closed, the Criterion Hotel building has been pulled down and Lucas Bros butchers was sold out of the family. Just this week it was announced that Capricorn Records would come to an end next month after 35 years.

Warrnambool is changing and, as with any change, there is both an anticipation about what might come and a sadness about what has been lost.

This book is my attempt to preserve some of our shared and precious past.

As I say in the introduction: "Whether you live in Warrnambool, or you simply carry it in your heart, this is a tribute to the place by the sea that no matter how widely we travel, we will always call home".

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***Warrnambool – This is home* features the following:** Swinton's Supermarket (Val Grundy/Dot Grauer); Lucas Bros Butchers (Ken Lucas); Materia Bros (Mario, Paul and Mark Materia); the Sycopoulis family home (John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis); Kermond's Snack Bar (Rob and Bill Kermond); Mack's Snacks (Graeme, Keith and Paul McLeod); Savoy Restaurant (Alan Tampion); Rauert's Shoe Store (Ron and Peter Rauert); The Bowl (Lucas Reid and Andrea Occhipinti); Politis Seafood (Helen, George and Chris Politis); Robert Ulmann whale mural (Justy Ulmann); Warrnambool Surf Lifesaving Club (Lisa Logan (Cole), Ben Logan, Ron Cole); The Warrnambool Standard (Peter Collins and Peter Fletcher); The Warrnambool Woollen Mill site (Mary Jackson); Chittick's Bakery (Ian Robb and John Chittick); Capitol Cinema (Ivan Berndt); Fletcher Jones Gardens (Lex Caldwell); The Quarry/ art collectives (Claire Drylie) Ryan's Removals (Frank and Graeme Ryan); 3YB radio (Steve Welsh and Lyndsay Hill); W'bool Grand Annual Steeplechase (Brian McIver); W'bool Aquarium (Donna Krebs (Livingston)); Timor St Newsagency (Brian Mills); Bojangles Pizza (Simon Mugavin); Isles General Store (Ken Isles); McNeil's BP Service Station (Noel McNeil); the War Memorial Angel; T&G clocktower (Peter Hogg); The Criterion Hotel.

[box type="bio"] ***Warrnambool – This is home* will be limited to 500 numbered and signed editions. If you would like to order a copy (\$30 plus \$8 flat postage if required) from Bluestone Magazine, [you can do so here](#). Books are also on sale at [Warrnambool Books](#).** [/box]

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Why I'm voting for Barling



Opinion – Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I
[/dropcap]MAGINE living in a place where an election was held every three years and, no matter how many candidates ran, the same party kept winning? Would you call this a healthy democracy? Well, we live in a place just like that and it is called the federal seat of Wannon.

For the past ~~58~~ 61 years – that is 10 years longer than I have been alive – the Liberal Party has won Wannon.

In the past ~~58~~ 61 years, there have been ~~22~~ 23 federal elections – the ~~23rd~~ 24th will be held on Saturday – and, in that time, just **three** different Liberals have held the seat of Wannon: Malcolm Fraser, David Hawker and Dan Tehan.

It is not surprising that the Liberal Party has come to treat Wannon as a soft landing for its next generation of MPs. Dan Tehan, who seems like a nice enough guy, was parachuted into the seat of Wannon four years ago.

He had little connection to south-west Victoria, but bought a property near Hamilton to try and fast-track his status as a local. Is that all it takes for the Liberal Party to secure this seat? Judging by the 2010 election result, it appears so.

And while the Wannon electorate has fallen into line year after year, many of these same voters can be heard complaining – yes, complaining – that they are being taken for granted.

Of course this contempt for safe seats is not confined to the Liberal Party, they all do it, but this election Wannon voters have an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and demand a real contest.

With the help of the redrawn boundaries, Wannon is now defined as a ‘marginal’ seat, although it still requires an almost a 6 per cent swing to change hands.

And, for the first time in a long time, the ALP has a strong local candidate in Warrnambool secondary school teacher **Michael Barling** who has had time to build his profile and who has committed an enormous amount of energy toward winning the seat. He has done this despite the antics of federal Labor making it increasingly impossible for him to win: he has not given up.



I am not normally a Labor voter, but I am going to vote for Barling because he represents to me what politics should be about.

It is about presenting voters with a real choice, not a fait accompli.

It is about supporting a candidate who knows and loves the electorate because he or she has spent most of their life here, not because they have been forced to relocate in the lead up to an election.

And it's about having a candidate with a strong moral compass who is prepared to challenge the party line on issues like asylum seekers and gay rights, rather than follow it blindly.

Above all, however, it's about electing an MP who will continually fight hard for the seat, whether in Government or in Opposition, knowing that they will be held fully accountable at each election.

This will happen if Wannon shifts even further into marginal territory after Saturday: that's the sort of democracy I want to see in action.