

Australia Day awards – did we forget someone?



Vicki Jellie (Image:
Peter's Project)

This time last week, the City of Warrnambool was celebrating the announcement of its annual Australia Day award winners and, incredibly, there was not a single woman among the seven recipients*.

The absence of even one woman considered worthy of note for her contribution to the community is even more astonishing given there is a stand-out contender: **Vicki Jellie**.

If there is anyone in Warrnambool who does not know the name Vicki Jellie, then they have either been out of the city, avoiding all media, or unable to attend any of the dozens of social and sporting events that have raised funds for Vicki's cause, [Peter's Project](#).

Vicki, who used to be Vicki Grayson and grew up in the heart of Warrnambool, has worked for **more than five years** on Peter's Project, which – for our out-of-town readers – is named in memory of her late husband, Peter, and aims to raise \$5 million toward a cancer treatment centre in South-West

Victoria.

Since it began in 2009, Peter's Project has slowly and steadily built its public profile to become a tour de force.

Last year's federal election included a defining moment, at a local level, when the Coalition pledged \$10 million toward building the centre and left the ALP stranded: such is the pulling power of Peter's Project.

And you need only visit its [Facebook page](#) to see the number of events by business, schools, groups, clubs and individuals that are all raising money for Peter's Project.

When we last spoke to Vicki, she was preparing to take a year's leave from her paid job so that she could focus on Peter's Project full-time. She, and her campaign team, are doing a magnificent job and as of December, had raised \$4 million of the \$5 million needed.

With such a high profile, we thought it would be a fait accompli that Vicki Jellie would be included in the [Warrnambool City Council Australia Day Awards](#), and possibly odds-on favourite for Citizen of the Year. To see her missing altogether was a shock.

We can't give Vicki an Australia Day award, but she is our [Quiet Hero](#) for being one of the most inspiring women in Warrnambool.

Vicki will receive a \$20 lunch voucher donated by [Lozzar's Lounge Cafe, Kepler St, Warrnambool](#). Thankyou to Loretta and Phil for your support. Bluestone editors Carol and Louise will also make a \$50 donation to Peter's Project.

(*Sixteen-year-old Olivia Niddrie was named Young Citizen of the Year. The council has since told *Bluestone* it received only two nominations for women across all categories.)



Meet our other Quiet Heroes...

[Saving our wildlife from the heat: Nalini Scarfe](#)

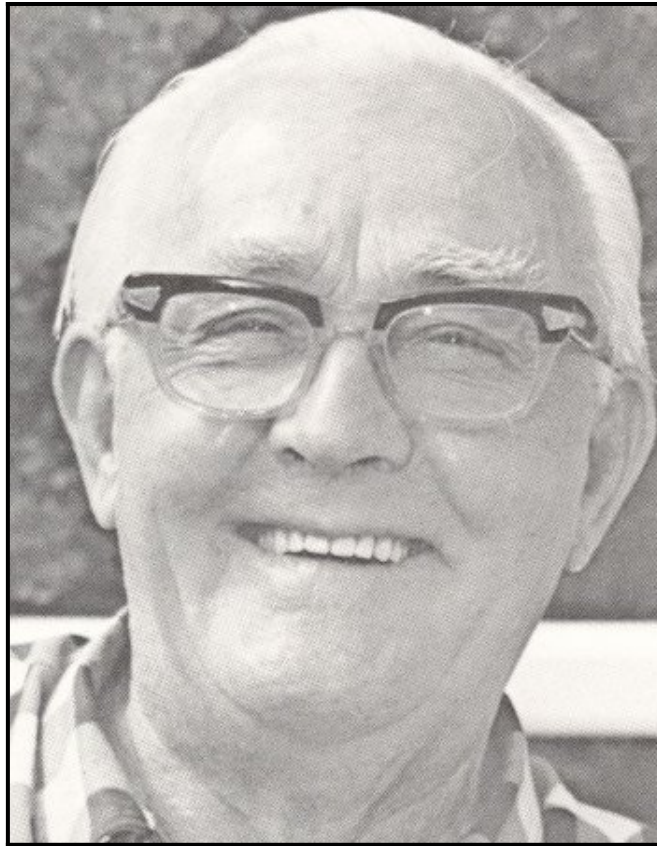
[Walking with strength and purpose: Susie Alexander](#)

[On the road with the Schoolies](#)

[Tackling a hidden terror: Pat McLaren](#)

[A life-changing adventure: Schoolies with a Cause](#)

Who will step up for Fletcher Jones?



Sir Fletcher Jones: a man who helped to put Warrnambool on the map, but whose most visual legacy is being destroyed by neglect.

Analysis – Carol Altmann

In December last year, we first [published an opinion piece](#) about the future of the iconic **Fletcher Jones Pleasant Hill** site in Warrnambool that questions why it is being left to rot as our civic leaders stand by and, it seems, wait for a white knight to show up and make a decision about its future.

At the same time, we also questioned why the [Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village](#) – having been invented as a tourist village in the 1970s – continued to be a priority in terms of concern about its future and its funding, despite its [flagging popularity](#).

We suggested closing Flagstaff Hill and creating a combined Warrnambool Art Gallery and Museum (with a strong maritime

history presence) at Pleasant Hill.

Whether people agreed with this idea or not, the piece has been our most popular story.

It had more than **1600** page views and almost **500** people shared it on Facebook. We received almost **40** comments on our site and the same amount again on [our Facebook page](#). Almost two months after it was first published, it is still attracting attention.

Fletcher Jones matters to Warrnambool and to Warrnambool people. This message is being sent loud and clear, but I doubt that it is being heard by the people that can actually determine its future.



Will Premier and local Member Denis Napthine step up for Fletcher Jones? Has he even been asked? (Image: www.portnews.com.au)

After writing this piece, I sought out a copy of an extensive review into the Fletcher Jones site that was commissioned by the Warrnambool City Council in **2002**: that is 12 years ago.

At that time, the council spent what was no doubt a considerable chunk of your money (\$10,000? \$15,000?) to hire an international consultancy firm [Sinclair, Knight, Metz \(SKM\)](#) to conduct a fulsome investigation into the Pleasant Hill

site. SKM spoke to anyone and everyone. They held focus groups and they set up a steering committee made up of existing and former staff, members of the community and council.

And at the end of all this talking and consulting and investigating, SKM wrote a 100-page report with the not very gripping title of *"Investigation into future economic opportunities for the Fletcher Jones site"* that was presented to the Warrnambool City Council on July 8, 2003.

A copy of this report is now kept under lock and key, literally, at the Warrnambool City Library where a cheerful librarian retrieved it for me and I had the sense that I was the first person to ask for it in a very, very long time.



Will Mayor Michael Neoh or
Councillors Rob Askew,
Kylie Gaston, Jacinta
Ermacora, Peter Sycopoulis,
Peter Hulin or Brian Kelson
step up? Image: ABC.

The report outlines a number of potential recommendations for the future use of the FJ site – for retail, housing, aged care – and also suggested the council, who owned the site at the time, to sell it to a willing private developer. This did not mean, however, that the council simply walk away.

Instead, SKM made a key recommendation that there be **“continuous consultation and communication between the council, developers and the community”** about the site’s future.

The council sold the site in 2005.

And it walked away.

It has been more than a decade since this report was commissioned and the council has done nothing concrete to ensure the preservation of this site. There has certainly been no “continuous communication” about its future.

The council’s apathy is shameful.

All of that time, all of that energy and all of that money – and for what?

Pleasant Hill is recognised by Heritage Victoria as having historical, social and aesthetic significance to *the state*. So perhaps the state should be contributing to its upkeep?

If so, why isn’t the council lobbying **Premier Denis Napthine** for this to happen? **The Premier is our local MP – what better opportunity and access could you ask for?** But has anybody from the council even asked for state support? I don’t think so.



What about the The Standard and its editor Steve Kelly? Will the paper step up? (Image: TheCitizen.org.au)

And what is our local daily newspaper, [The Warrnambool Standard](#), doing to take up the cause? From what I can see, nothing.

In the middle of last year, the editor of The Standard, **Steve Kelly**, [told a forum here in Warrnambool](#) that he believed print was “still king” in the regions and that his paper firmly set the agenda for this city and that other media outlets (the ABC, regional TV) followed.

“Do we have an absolute monopoly on setting the agenda in this district? Well, my answer to that would be ‘Yes’. I think the radio station follows our lead. I think to a large extent [the ABC] follows our lead and I think to a large extent [WIN TV] follows our lead,” Mr Kelly is [quoted as saying](#).

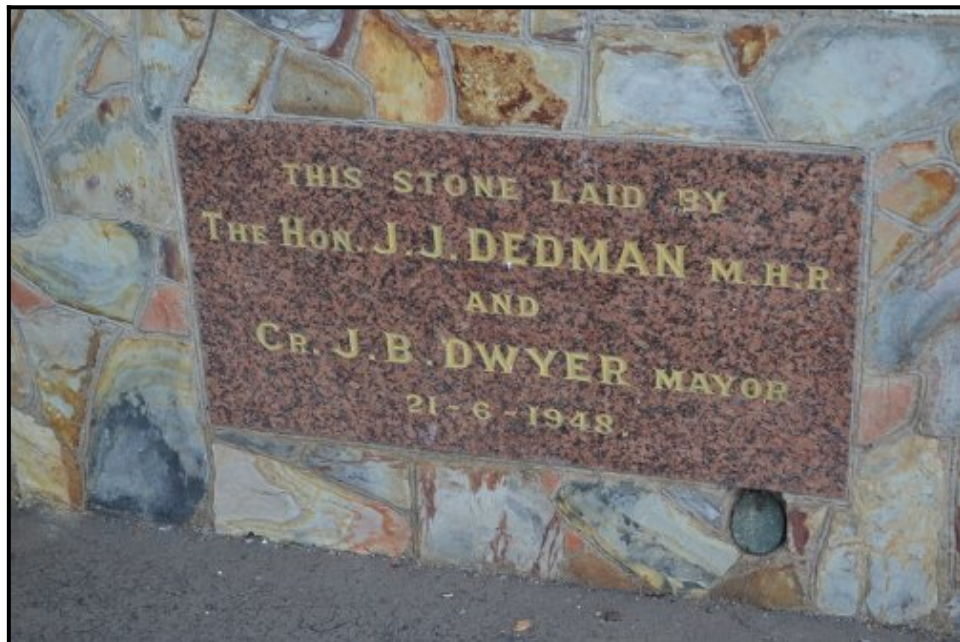
Surely it is time, then, for The Standard to take the lead – to set the agenda – on saving Fletcher Jones.

As a new, still growing forum, *Bluestone Magazine* can only do so much and we are thrilled to have reignited the conversation, but it takes more than conversation: it takes pressure, and it takes action.

Who, I wonder, will step up for Fletcher Jones?

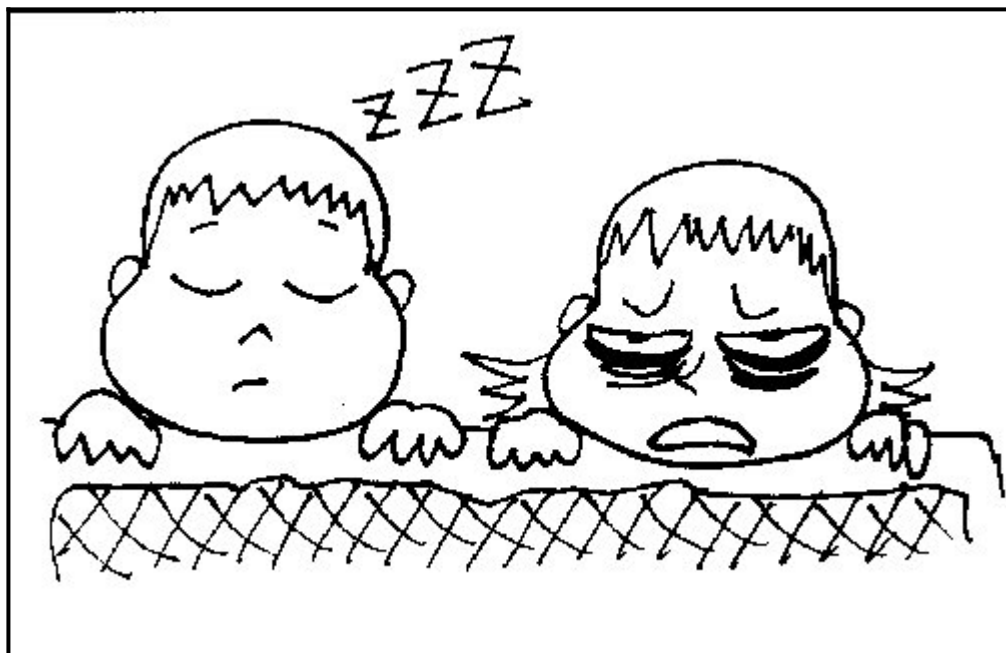
If we care about the Fletcher Jones site, and I believe we do, then we need to make our leaders accountable and ensure it is preserved before all we have are memories, vintage postcards and a dusty report under lock and key to remind us of our failure.

[Since this piece was written, a grassroots supporters group has started to try and save the most important parts of this site. You can join the Save the Silver Ball and Fletcher Jones Gardens group on [Facebook here](#). Read more about the FJ site [here](#).]



Friends in high places: it was a different story of support when Fletcher Jones opened at Pleasant Hill in 1948.

Losing sleep over a load of rubbish



We are not sure what sins Warrnambool has committed to deserve being woken in the middle of the night each week, but its poor residents endure what are possibly the worst rubbish collection times in Australia.

Yes, it's a first-world problem to be worrying about garbage collection times, but what a blessing it was over Christmas – due to a change in routine – to have a brief respite from the normal 3am kerbside collection.

I remember when I first moved to Warrnambool last year and being woken by what I thought was a car accident outside my bedroom window in the dead of night, only to leap out of bed and find the garbage truck squealing and flashing its way along the street.

It later returned to pick up rubbish from the *other* side of the street. Then the recycling truck turned up ... Four passes in two hours does not make for a good night's rest! (We also know of at least one courtyard in Warrnambool where the

rubbish truck reverses the whole way in, despite their being a wide turning circle at the end. Can you imagine the racket?)



An accident in the dead of night?
No...just the garbage man doing his
job at some ungodly hour of the
morning.

Bluestone Magazine decided to do a spot survey to find out if Warrnambool residents are the only Victorians who endure garbage pick-ups anywhere from 10pm to 3am: the 10pm folk are the lucky ones!

Our spot survey included councils and shires in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland and we found that *all* residential kerbside rubbish collections took place between **6am** and **midday** – except in Warrnambool.

Even in the largest city in Australia, Sydney, the rubbish for Sydney City Council is collected at around **9am**.

There is no doubt rubbish collection is a vital weekly ritual and we are grateful for an efficient service, but why has Warrnambool gone for a nocturnal pick-up?

We went in search of an answer.



The only things exhausted after rubbish night in Sydney are the rubbish bins. (Pic: <http://www.walksydneystreets.net>)

Warrnambool City Council contracts [Wheelie Waste](#) to provide a weekly garbage and fortnightly recycling collection. Wheelie Waste also provides rubbish collection services for 12 other council areas in Victoria, including the Moyne Shire and Colac Otway Shire – both of which have rubbish collection starting from 6am.

I called Wheelie Waste to find out why Warrnambool wasn't also on the 6am schedule, but they didn't want to comment to *Bluestone Magazine* and directed me to the council.

The council's Manager of Communications, **Nick Higgins**, was more forthcoming:

"The night time collection of waste occurs for two main reasons: safety and efficiency," he said in an email.

"Collecting during daylight hours would mean the trucks would be on the streets when there is more pedestrian traffic and potentially during school drop-off times."

(But what about Sydney, surely it has more pedestrian

traffic?)

Nick then went on to say:

“Collection of waste during the day is more costly due to the collection being less efficient as a result of factors including traffic, parked cars and school zones, all of which slow down the service.”



So in effect, the council’s main reason for collecting rubbish overnight is about cutting costs – although we are not sure how much is saved – because if it was all about safety, every other council would run overnight collections to avoid running over any school children.

We already know that Wheelie Waste has no problem with collecting waste during the day, because its general manager of contract garbage, **Chris Philp**, said late last year that manoeuvring around traffic and parked cars was not a problem.

“We pick up waste all around Victoria and don’t have problems with cars parked on the road,” he said.

I wonder, if asked, would Warrnambool residents prefer an end to their weekly garbage wake-up calls, or saving a dollar or two from their rates? After all, the biggest savings in the cost of garbage collection have come from recycling. Maybe it’s time for a re-think.

Let's sleep on it.

How we compare: Warrnambool 10pm to 4am; Port Fairy (Vic) from 6am; Portland (Vic) mid-morning; Cheltenham (Vic) from 6.30am; Mirboo North (Vic) around 8.30-9am; Ballarat (Vic) from 7am; Traralgon (Vic) between 6am-9am; Colac (Vic) 6am- midday; Albury (Vic) from 6am; Richmond (Vic) 9am-noon; Gawler (SA) from 7am; Port Adelaide (SA) from 7am; Huonville (Tas) 8am; Kingston (Tas) around 7am; Sydney City (NSW) 9am; Northern Rivers (NSW) 10am; Manly (Qld) from 7am.