

Are we being told the truth about Flagstaff Hill?

I have been looking at visitor numbers for Flagstaff Hill and there are worrying signs.

Taking a stand: “But Carol, where will it end?”

I met two unforgettable people last week while collecting signatures to erase the mural by sexual predator Rolf Harris at the Lighthouse Theatre in Warrnambool.

Both of them, one a man, the other a woman, were survivors of child sexual abuse and were, as they described it, “finding their voice” to talk about such a personal atrocity and do everything they could to ensure that no other child would suffer what they had.

Embracing the winds of change in Warrnambool

I am so glad that the postal vote on same-sex marriage happened while I was living here in Warrnambool, because I needed to make peace with this town.

Can W'bool break its coffee cup habit?



The environmental message is clear: we need to ditch paper cups, even recyclable ones. Image: Responsible Cafes.

By Shane Wilson*

Walk down Liebig Street from 8.30am on every weekday, and come to think of it weekends, and you will see the hastened step of the army of coffee addicts. Head down, almost caressing the plastic lid of their disposable coffee cup, infused by caffeine.

I will be clear, this piece is not about bagging out coffee lovers. That would be hypocritical, as I love my morning and lunch time coffee from my favourite café. There's plenty of vices out there and if yours happens to be coffee, then there is no argument from this corner.

But, and I think this a big BUT, coffee drinkers are becoming an environmental scourge, the equivalent of those despicable nicotine addicts who think it is their right to flick butts on to the footpath and by stubbing it out with their foot, it will disappear.

Former Chaser rascal Craig Reucassel reports in his recent ABC documentary *War on Waste* that it takes 50,000 coffee cups to fill a Melbourne tram. An interesting stat, but even more so when he makes the point that this is the number of coffee cups Aussies dispose of each *half hour*.

The cups are typically plastic lined and not bio-degradable: 50,000 every 30 minutes, one billion a year, destined for landfill.



Activist and comedian Craig Reucassel made a strong visual point by filling a Melbourne tram with the number of coffee cups thrown away every half hour in Australia. Image @craigreucassel, Twitter.

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[/dropcap]his coffee-sipping generation has been hammered in one ear about global warming and in the other about living and eating clean and green.

It's not as if the environmental message is not being delivered. It's just that it is not being heard. Or perhaps, Generation Now would rather promote their own immediate needs – a craving for caffeine – over a little bit of social responsibility.

But does it have to be this way.

Our town with a little good fortune (a regular, cleansing sea breeze and frequent rains) presents as a clean tidy green village.

We can build on this.

So let's *all* support the push by the Leadership Great South Coast (LGSC) to completely phase out non-reusable coffee cups.

The LGSC has been urging local cafes to join the national [Responsible Cafes campaign](#) that goes further than recycling cups.

The campaign suggests, and I agree, that single-use cups be banned altogether and we bring our own, reusable cup.

If this sounds unachievable, just think for a moment on how we now all carry our own shopping bags (unless I leave them in the car!) to reduce the use of plastic bags.

As a city, we can all get behind the byo coffee cup campaign: promote it on the banners at roundabouts in the town. Bang the message out on Facebook. Talk to the schoolkids and let them know why the adults are doing this. For once, our generation can lead by example!

In our town, with leadership and meaningful discussion with our cafes, I am sure we can succeed.



The war on one-use coffee cups is going global – and Warrnambool could lead the way. Image: Beevoz

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[dropcap]ome Warrnambool cafes, including [Country Life](#) cafe, [Brightbird Espresso](#) and [Piccolo Coffee Roasters](#), are already taking on the environmental message by offering bio-degradable cups, selling re-usable cups and offering discounts to those who remember to bring their cup.

Warrnambool City Council is also one of the few councils which recycle coffee cups.

But recycling is not the only answer.

Unless coffee cups are disposed into recycle bins and are then appropriately recycled, it all counts for nought.

Bio-pak, which makes bio-degradable cups, state that if their cups go into landfill, they do not break down. Oxygen is required and unless the cups go into the right bins and the council ensures that the cups are correctly recycled, it's all just more landfill.

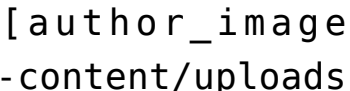
In this day and age, with issues such as Adani's Carmichael coal mine, the degradation of the Great Barrier Reef, and the

enormity of climate change generally, people tune out.

It's all too hard and such issues are typically outside an individual's field of influence. On this issue, however, Warrnambool can make a difference and be an example for other towns to aspire to and in the process do good.

Yes, it's difficult, but let's cut to the nub of this challenge: no more single-use coffee cups in Warrnambool.

Next time you buy a coffee at your local café, take it with a teaspoon of social responsibility and I bet it will taste even better.

[author] [author_image timthumb='on']<http://www.the-terrier.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/wilson.jpg>[/author_image] [author_info]Shane Wilson is a Warrnambool solicitor, a cyclist, an activist and a coffee nut. He will write occasionally on local issues that stir discussion.[/author_info] [/author]

Tourism? We are missing out big time



Moyjil/Point Richie is one of three rich cultural and environmental sites in the south-west that could be maximised to form a major tourist attraction at the end of the Great Ocean Road.

The Terrier

A little statistic popped out of Parks Victoria about six weeks ago that should have had us all gasping and wondering what we are doing wrong in Warrnambool.

[Here it is:](#)

“A record daily peak of 11,000 national and international visitors made the trip to the Twelve Apostles during Chinese New Year celebrations”.

Please read that again, because it took me at least three reads to believe what I was reading: a record **daily** peak of **11,000** national and international visitors visited the Twelve Apostles during Chinese New Year (between January 28 and February 15) this year.

This was a 30% increase on last year. Thirty per cent!

And this is all happening less than an hour from Warrnambool – 72.7km down the road – yet we are seeing so little of the action here.

Why??

This is not a new question.

Over the years there has been much head-scratching, hours of discussion and piles of reports on how to encourage this lucrative market of cashed-up, eager travellers to travel just one more hour down the road to Warrnambool where, we would hope, they stay for more than 24 hours rather than passing through on their way to somewhere else, or turning around and travelling back to Melbourne.

To me, the answer starts here: give them something irresistible, something that they haven't already seen or heard during their trek down the most popular coastal road in Australia.

And what might that be?

To me, the answer starts here: our incredible indigenous story.

I don't know about you, but whenever I travel overseas, I can't wait to immerse myself in the indigenous history, to read about it, see it and experience it through a tour, a trek, a talk, a meal or a spontaneous, random encounter.

Here in the south-west, and right here in Warrnambool, we are sitting on some of the richest indigenous stories in Australia, creating a natural 'trail' from **Moyjil/Point Richie**, to **Tower Hill** and out to **Budj Bim** (Mt Eccles/Lake Condah) near Heywood.

Budj Bim is on the cusp of a UNESCO World Heritage listing partly because of its stone eel traps that are 1500 years older than the Pyramids or Stonehenge.

And Moyjil, apart from being a geological wonder, has been [a site of human occupation for at least 35,000 years](#) and, pending the results of ongoing tests, could also be the oldest site of human habitation *anywhere on the planet*, dating back 80,000 years.

Why are we not celebrating and promoting this far and wide?



December 2016: The western walkway from Moyjil down to the beach.

Tower Hill, meanwhile, is where Great Ocean Roaders can see a koala, emu or a kangaroo while also learning about indigenous culture, but its full potential as a tourist attraction is far from realised, starting with the poorly signposted, pot-holed and dangerous entrance that must be the worst of any tourism attraction in Victoria.

To be fair, progress is being made at each of these sites to promote its significance (especially Budj Bim) and plans have been drawn up to manage their futures, but I cannot find any

coordinated effort to promote the three locations as a **not-to-be-missed tourism experience** that would, in turn, create jobs and boost our local economy.

There is no single, one-stop-shop to find out about what should be a cultural and environmental gem of a self-guided tour: there is no one map, brochure, website, or app.

Try it yourself: visit the [Visit Warrnambool website](#), click on “what to see and do” and see [what you find](#).

The top listings alternate, but when I clicked, the first item was mini golf.

But back to Moyjil for a moment.

A 24-page [conservation and management plan for this area](#) was published in 2013, setting out how it should be cared for by the State Government (which owns it) and Warrnambool City Council (which manages it) but, four years on, there are worrying signs about the financial commitment needed to look after this precious piece of coast.

The western walkway from the carpark fell apart in early December last year, just before the start of the peak tourism season, and access to the beach was blocked.

It is now late April and the walkway is still busted although now, of course, there has been five months’ of people making their own path down the side of the walkway, as we do, and the erosion is obvious.

When it will be fixed, nobody knows.



April 2017: The western walkway from Moyjil down to the beach.

I contacted the state Environment Minister Lily D'Ambrosio and her spokesman said the council had applied last year for a slice of \$730,000 in funding to fix the walkway as one of several work projects it had planned for the site.

It was not successful. (The \$730,000 fund received applications totalling more than \$3.1 million).

"DELWP is willing to look at how it can support Warrnambool City Council in fixing this walkway, and will discuss with Council how the department can assist," he wrote.

I asked the council for its take on the situation and its spokesman said: "We will continue to seek funding from the

State Government for maintenance. It will also be part of Council's upcoming budget deliberations."

And that was it. No passion. No prioritising. No real sense of urgency.

I can only wonder when a wooden walkway – a walkway – can't be fixed (Triton woodworkers + youth unemployment project?), what the long-term future really holds for this magnificent site.

And in the meantime, the vast majority of the tens of thousands of tourists who are travelling to the Twelve Apostles each summer just turn around – or keep driving....