

THE YARNER

The official newsletter of the **MCAV**

HOLD THE PRESS:

We have just had word that the ABC radio program, Australia All Over with Warwick Long, will be broadcasting LIVE from the Get Together on Sunday morning. Tim Lee, from ABC's Landline, will also be coming along to not only sell his new book, but to help run the forum—held in the Heritage Tent on Saturday.

RB SELLARS



COMING TOGETHER: The Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria and RB Sellars have come together to offer an exclusive line of workwear and country clothing, designed to fit in with every Australian lifestyle. Pictured is Richard Sellars, from RB Sellars.

MCAV partner with RB Sellars

THE Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria have signed a major sponsorship deal with Australia's premier country outfitter, RB Sellars.

Months in the making, the deal is about more than sponsorship – it's the coming together of two identities.

"The Mountain Cattlemen have been synonymous with country living since we first entered the High Country in 1834," MCAV President, Bruce McCormack, said.

"Since then, that image – a horsemen perched high on a plateau – has come to resonate with millions of Australians.

"It is fitting, therefore, that the MCAV has now partnered with RB Sellars – the clothing brand that brought quality country to the mainstream."

RB Sellars is a family owned Australian brand, formed in 1996 – the year the famous 'Burton' half button workshirt was released.

Run by Richard Sellars, the company knows the importance of family values and community, and has become a household name across Australia.

"On behalf of the whole RB Sellars team, Richard Sellars thanks all of our loyal customers from across Australia for their continued support - we're thrilled to be partnering with the MCAV and look forward to meeting you at the Get Together."

Together, the MCAV and RB Sellars want to promote a country life style, support farmers nation wide and remind everyone that sticking together through the good and bad, drought and flooding rains, is what makes Australian's great.

RB Sellars merchandise is now available through the MCAV website, and will make their official debut at the upcoming Merrijig Get Together with a full display of co-branded RB Sellars MCAV products.

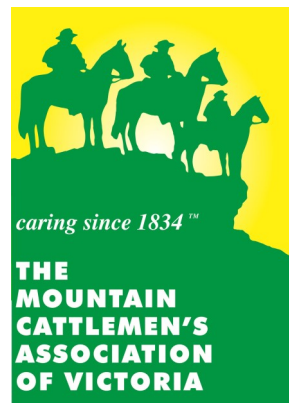
RB Sellars are also sponsoring the main cup events over the weekend, along with many novelties and fun family competitions.

"As a group that represents the average farmer, we are humbled that RB Sellars want to be a part of our history," Mr McCormack said.

"We are even more excited that they also want to be a part of our future."

To view the full range of MCAV RB Sellars products, head to the website at www.mcav.com.au, or for a look at RB Sellars extended lines visit www.rbsellars.com.au

For information on the MCAV Get Together, head to the website or the groups Facebook page.



Get Ready !

It's time for the 2020 G2G

We have had some AMAZING news come through this week—and that is the weather forecast for the Get Together is going to be a perfect 20 degrees.

Yes, it may change, but everything is shaping up nicely.

Our bands are booked—Uprising, Ruckus, Fiction, The Mason Boys and Geoff Wright—and we will have lots of action happening throughout the weekend.

So bring the dog, the horse, the family and all your friends—The Merrijig Get Together is going to be our best one yet!

THE YARNER

Bruce McCormack's president's message:

Hello all and welcome to another edition of The Yarnar.

This is coming hot on the heels of our last newsletter, but so much has been happening of late that we thought we could squeeze in a bonus Christmas edition just for you to have some reading over the holidays.

Everyone at the MCAV has been very busy in the lead up to Christmas — I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many members and supporters we have currently battling not just bushfires, but lack of feed, water and now blazing temperatures as well. Even though we try to be positive here at the MCAV, I'd like to let them all know we are thinking of you and hope that 2020 brings us better weather, better stock prices and plenty of rain.

On another note, we have been luckily enough to take our cattle to the bush again this year (see separate Yarnar story).

This trip for us is what the MCAV is all about—its how the group began, and though we have developed into a voice for all bush users, it is always nice to saddle up and remember where it all began.

My hope is, as always, that this is a tradition my family will be able to continue for generations to come.

On a more official note, the political world has also been busy, and us along with it.

Immediate Past President, Graeme Stoney, has spent many hours putting together an MCAV policy on timber, which, in brief, says we as a group will continue to support and lobby for the retention native logging in Victoria. The full policy can be found on our website if you are interested in having a look.

We have also put in a submission to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and hope to be invited to a panel hearing to discuss our thoughts on this.

We are also seeking a meeting with DELWP in regards to the recent decision that hunters no longer have to let grazing licensee's know when they intend to go out hunting. This is a problem for a few of our members who are not happy with the decision—rest assured, we are following this up and will be discussing this in more depth in January with the Government.

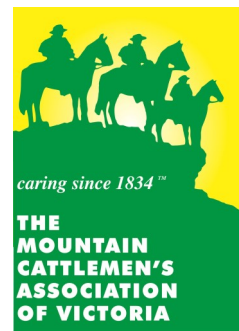


Bruce is pictured here wearing one of the new RB Sellars MCAV workshirts— thanks to the lovely girls from the Mansfield RB Sellars store for agreeing to model our hats as well :)

To finish up, I'd just like to say Merry Christmas to all those who have supported the MCAV over the years, but most especially in 2019.

It was a tough year for us, but we are looking forward to a bright future—and hope to have you all with us every step of the way.

Hope to see you in January at the Get Together,



MCAV Board & People you can contact:

President: Bruce McCormack

Vice President: Ben Treasure

Secretary: Ken Heywood

Past President: Graeme Stoney

Interim Treasurer/ Associate Member: John Andrews

Special Projects Officer: Chris Commins

North East Branch reps: Lyric Anderson & Bruce Treasure

Mansfield Branch reps: Cass & Jack McCormack

Omeo Branch reps: Simon Turner & Darcy Fitzgerald

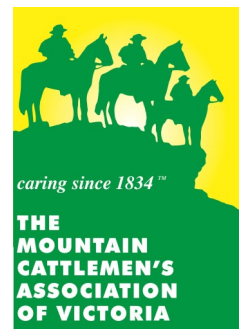
Gippsland Branch reps: Chris Hodge & Chris Cooper

Office Manager: Rhyll McCormack

Get Together Coordinator: Cass McCormack

Email: secretary@mcaav.com.au

THE YARNER



Get to know the MCAV Board: John Andrews, Associate Member

In a first for the Mountain Cattlemen's Association, an Associate Member was elected to the board during the AGM.

John Andrews, together with his wife Ros, have always been loyal supporters of the group—and not only bring with them a great deal of business acumen, but also decades of experience in the corporate world.

John's role on the board is to be a "voice" for all Associate Members. If you have an issue you would like to discuss with John, or would like him to raise on your behalf, please email secretary@mcaav.com.au

"My wife Ros and I have been camping, riding, and 4WDing in and around the high country for more than 40 years.

"Initially, we went to the Crooked River area which Ros' grandfather frequented after he contracted gold fever, and we spent many enjoyable times there with Nellie Gibbs (nee Guy). We often rode with cattlemen families on the Dargo High Plains, Bogong High Plains, and Snowy and Howitt Plains.

We became more closely involved with the Mountain Cattlemen's Association as a result of our (unfortunately aborted) purchase of Wonnangatta Station, and we still count as friends many of the people we met at that time.



Our family have been Associate Members of MCAV for longer than I care to remember, and Ros was the Marketing Officer of the Association for a number of years. So it was a pleasant surprise to be asked to nominate for the Associate's position on the MCAV Board.

I see it as vital for the MCAV to rebuild its Associate Membership base, and I will be doing all I can to encourage everyone interested in sensible, balanced management of public land to support the MCAV by becoming and continuing to be an Associate.

It is clear to me that with nearly 200 years experience in the Victorian high country, MCAV members are uniquely placed to be the voice of reason in the ongoing debate involving issues such as fire management, vermin control, and multiple use of public land. Please feel free to contact me through the MCAV Office, especially if you have any questions about Associate Membership."

Pictured left is John and Ros on a recent trip to the High Country.

2020 MERRIJIG GET TOGETHER

Horses, dogs,
Live entertainment,
displays, living history,
poetry, & much more!

Tickets
on sale now

January 10 - 12,
McCormack Park,
Merrijig

MCAV.COM.AU
PH 03 5779 1747



The Howitt Society—memberships now open

The Howitt Society is a group that has close ties with the MCAV, not just in its membership base but also in its approach to the management of the High Country.

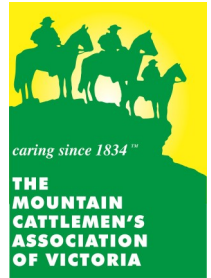
The group consist of some of the most notable scientists in the country— experienced land and fire management practitioners; scientists, foresters, anthropologists, historians, past and current stake-holders.

President of the Howitt Society is MCAV life member and Cattleman, Geoff Burrowes—and Vice President is our Special Project Officer, Chris Commins.

You can find a story from the Howitt Society in the later pages of this edition of The Yarnar.

We encourage all our members to jump on board and support these guys.

Head to www.thehowittsociety.com for more information.



Life after the track

- Merrijig cattleman to swap Herefords for horses

In November, one of Merrijig's most recognisable Mountain Cattleman, Charlie Lovick, saddled up his favourite horse to head out along Swanston Street.

It was a poignant ritual for the pair, who have been involved with the Parade of Champions for more than a decade.

Mr Lovick's horse, Malaki, is a former track competitor—rescued from the meat pens at the Echuca Horse sales.

Since then, he has become a staple favourite at the Lovick family farm – so much so that Mr Lovick is selling off his herd of Herefords in favour of re-purposing racehorses.

The drastic move comes after Mr Lovick was inspired by current issues surrounding the horse industry.

"These horses need a second chance, and I have the space to give them that," Mr Lovick said.

"With all the bad publicity about, there is still a silver lining if you look hard enough – I've got that silver lining."

Mr Lovick does not disagree with racing, but thinks that every horse should be given a good home after they retire from the track.

That's exactly why, by this time next year, he will have 100 ex racehorses grazing on his Delatite River flats.

"I'm going to work with each and every one to find out what they are best suited for," he said.

"These horses often have a great foundation – they've been educated and ridden by the best in the country.

"More often than not, it's just a lack of time that sees these horses end up at the saleyards."

Mr Lovick knows this better than most.

Malaki was bought for \$400 at auction, the only other bidder a buyer from the abattoir.

Psychic Ruler – as he was known then – had seven starts for seven last places.

Luckily for him, his life didn't end when his racing career did.

"I trust him to do everything – he helps me muster, does trail rides and presentation work; there isn't a horse in the paddock I prefer," Mr Lovick said.

"All he needed was someone to show him a little time and patience."

That's exactly what Mr Lovick intends to do when his program begins next year.

Each horse will be given a chance to excel – whether that be in dressage, hacking or at pony club.

"I'll make sure they all find a home after the track – that's the whole plan," Mr Lovick said.

When Mr Lovick saddled up Malaki last month, he was hoping the old chestnut horse might inspire the crowds to think beyond what they see.

He wants people to care what happens after the jockey pad is put away.

Malaki – like all the other years he participated – just hoped someone in the crowd had an apple for him.

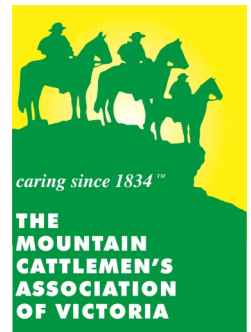
"I've ridden a lot of good horses in my time, and he is right up there at the top of the list," Mr Lovick said.

"He has come a long way from that day I picked him up."

OFFERING HELP: MCAV Cattlemen, Charlie Lovick, will swap Herefords for horses when he begins a thoroughbred retraining program. PHOTO: Jay Sweeney



THE YARNER



Generations in the saddle

- Cattle head to the high country for 2019

It happens twice each year – before the sun is up, Bruce McCormack prepares his family for their high country muster.

It is a tradition stretching back 150 years – something Bruce's father, grandfather and great grandfather all did with their families.

Heading out in the pre-dawn light, Angus cows and calves slowly wind their way along buttercup road, weaving among the gum trees.

Each year is different – and 2019 saw riders dodging snowflakes and cattle huddled together to avoid the rain.

Despite this – wet jeans, slicked hair and misty mornings – smiles can be found on every face.

From the youngest grandchild, four years old, who is riding on the saddle with Nan, to Bruce himself – who still jumps on to lead the riders out of the home yard gate.

Mansfield families have long had an association with the High Country – the Lovicks, Stoney's and Purcell's.

Today, most have had their licenses taken away, or have chosen to remain in the low country over summer.

Bruce McCormack, however, would not swap his muster for all the tea in China.

"It's all about spending time with the family, and doing that while we are out in the bush together," he explained.

"Showing the kids where the cattle need to go, helping them find them again in the early morning on day two and three."

With fires raging across the country, Bruce says it is more important than ever to keep the practice of cattle grazing in the mountains alive.

"There have always been arguments for and against grazing in the High Country, and our run has moved back to the State Forest as a result," he explained.

"But it is pretty obvious, just by driving through the National Park, that not allowing cattle in does make a big difference – there are blackberries and bracken where there would once have been grass."

Bruce, who is also president of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria (MCAV), said he considered his grazing run a privilege, not a right.

"I like to think we are doing something for everyone by being up here," he said.

"That the cattle keep the weeds and undergrowth at bay, while providing a living link to our pioneering ancestors."

Families come from near and far to help out on the muster – flying from

interstate to take part in the long-standing tradition.

"All I want is that we all learn about the bush, about the best way to manage it and to appreciate what we have here on our doorstep.

"After all," Bruce said, "looking after the High Country is something we have been doing for 150 years."





MCAV SNAPSHOTS: Merrijig working bee

UTES MAKE IT EASY:

There were lots of tree branches trimmed back during a recent G2G working bee,



NEXT GENERATION: Connor Stoney, grandson of past president Graeme, helping out at the working bee.



GIRL POWER: Getting in and getting it done was Jan Nelson and Cobie and Cass McCormack.

HELPING: Luke Jenkins



HAVING A BIT OF FUN: Luke Jenkins and Jack McCormack, mixing the hard work with a bit of fun.



BAR FLIES: Wayne Campbell and Scott Jennison, making sure the bar at Merrijig is up to scratch.

WORKING HARD: Dave Stoney, busy at work pulling out old star pickets



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The Don Kneebone Poetry Competition

By Wendy Jubb-Stoney

Some years ago, the Mountain Cattlemen's Association decided that the art of writing and reciting bush poetry needed to be preserved for the culture of its members.

The MCAV decided to hold an annual poetry competition and to name the event in honour of Don Kneebone.

The late Don Kneebone was a Mountain Cattleman and a bush poet without peer. He walked in the footsteps of Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson, and was also a founding of the MCAV.

Don Kneebone was born at Beechworth, in September 1922.

One of a family of ten, he went to school at Whorouly, and from his early teens handled mountain cattle- becoming familiar with Alpine grazing from Mount Bogong to Mansfield. A noted bushman, he also had a passion to work Clydesdale teams. As a poet, he was inspired during long rides through his beloved bush to write and describe the mountains with vivid powers of observation and a remarkable memory.

Well before electronic devices, the only entertainment around the sometimes lonely camps of cattle drives and musters was a man who could paint a picture with words. He—and sometimes she— was the teller of stories or a Bush Poet.

Invariably, these stories and poems revolved around their days work in the bush; of cattle drives, sheep musters and of the stockmen and the brave women who stayed behind and raised, on their own the mainly large families, as best they could.

Stories were also told of swaggies, prospectors, shearers and the many other outback characters.

These days, the care of land has been taken from individuals who lived there— this has also become a theme for bush poetry and stories.

Don would recite his descriptive verse around the camp fire on cattle drives, at cattle sales and very often in the hotel after the sales. Don also performed his poetry at many schools throughout Victoria in order to encourage poetry as a form of both expression and entertainment as well as to promote the Cattlemen's cause.

The Don Kneebone Bush Poetry section of the MCAV Get Together aims to perpetuate the inter-generational knowledge of the Cattlemen by entrants researching, and then describing, the culture and heritage of this unique group of Australians. Importantly, it also aims to give a forum to poets, singers and orators by supporting their art.

Ten years ago, the prize money for the MCAV's Don Kneebone was increased.

It was recognised that history is known from the written word, hence each of the winning poems is published in the Voice of the Mountains.

To encourage poets and writers to publish their own works, the prize money for the Don Kneebone was increased to \$1,000. Other categories were also given an amount of money in order to assist them with their writing and to perhaps put towards the publication of their works.

Don Kneebone passed away in 1991; his book and a vinyl record 'Where the Giant Eucalyptus Grow & Other Verse' is sometimes held by second hand book sellers - so keep an eye out for this rarity.

All categories of the 2020 Get Together Don Kneebone Poetry Competition have entry forms available on Saturday morning January 11, with the competition being held from 12:00 midday. People are also encouraged to bring a story or poem to the Poets Breakfast from 8.00am on Sunday morning.

Please continue to support this important link with our past.

PASSION FOR STORIES: Wendy Jubb-Stoney, pictured here with Sigrid Thornton at Buttercup, is organising this years Don Kneebone



Could you write the next Australian classic?

"The Snowy River riders, on the
mountains make their home.
The river runs those giant hills
between

I have seen full many horsemen
since I first commenced to
roam,
but nowhere yet such
horsemen have I seen"

- The Man From Snowy River
A B Paterson

MCAV

Don Kneebone
poetry competition

email your entries to
secretary@mca.com.au

Poetry Categories:

There are a number of categories in the poetry section at the Get Together—entry forms can be found on our website, or by emailing secretary@mca.com.au.

Here's a little information on those who are our poetry namesakes:

Jack Treasure: a founding member of the cattlemen and also published a booklet of verse. He was also the founding president of the MCAV.

Bill Hicks: was a lover of yarns and also a founding member. He loved listening to the others.

Jim Commins: President of the MCAV through the tumultuous 1980s, during the fight to retain Alpine Grazing when the Alpine National Park was created.

Register your entries during the Get Together at the secretary's tent.

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A bushfire summit should focus on fuel management

- A word from the Howitt Society

There has been much in the media recently claiming that climate change is the cause of the large fires around Australia at present.

"Hiding behind climate change is not a strategy to address the increasing number and intensity of fires across Australia," President of the group, and MCAV life member, Geoff Burrowes said.

"Even if all burning of fossil fuels was stopped across the world tomorrow, climate change is not going to shift into reverse.

"In reality, genuine climate change reversal strategies are years away from being internationally adopted, and decades away from beginning to impact fire regimes. So we need to adapt our fuel management strategies to deal with warmer and drier conditions as they are today."

The Howitt Society supports the call from the Emergency leaders for Climate Action for an Emergency Bushfire Summit after the current fire season, however said the focus of the forum needed to be on reducing the fuel loads in forested areas.

"Whilst the climate is becoming warmer and drier, it is not this that is making the fires more intense and more difficult to control— rather it is the unprecedented amount of fuel that land managers have allowed to accumulate," secretary of The Howitt Society, Gary Squires, said.

"There are three factors that allow fires to burn: an ignition source, oxygen and fuel.

"The only one we are able to influence is the amount of fuel available when ignition does occur, whether it be lightning, an arsonist, a campfire or any other source.

"We know that as fuel availability doubles, fire burns four times more intensely and so there are great benefits in reducing fuel loads— we also know that fuels can be reduced over large areas using existing and familiar technologies. All that is required is policy change at a government level and appropriate funding."

"Hiding behind climate change is not a strategy to address the increasing number and intensity of fires across Australia," Geoff Burrowes, Howitt Society president.

The Howitt Society believe a well funded, well led, state-wide fuel mitigation campaign would be an effective first step in protecting Australian lives, property and the bush itself from the grip of a warmer and drier climate.

For more information on the Howitt Society, head to the groups website at www.howittsociety.com



Geoff Burrowes, pictured here, is one of many who believe a state wide fuel mitigation campaign is the first step in preventing serious bushfires.
PHOTO: Jarod Pinder

Have your say

The Mountain Cattlemen's Association is only as strong as its members, and we need your feedback on issues that are important.

If you have something to say on bush management, heritage, pest control or anything else, please let us know by emailing secretary@mcaav.com.au

There are a number of topical issues you may want to have a voice on—these include native timber logging, brumby numbers in the Parks and planned burns.

There will also be a forum to discuss these and other important issues at the Get Together during the Public Land Forum, being held at 10.30 Saturday January 11 in the Heritage Tent.