

Great pleasure in reflecting and looking back on your 'story'

DURING 2020, the Blackwood Uniting Church had been exploring the importance of 'story' and how the expression and sharing of our personal narratives can lead to a richer and deeper experience of life.

In August and September last year, a series of three workshops were held, professionally facilitated by Rhonda Smedley, called *My Life Story*. In the workshops, participants were guided through the reflective process of putting together their life story in words and images.

One of the participants in the workshop, Merilyn Shield, spoke with Blackwood Uniting Church minister, Michael Dowling, about the experience.

"My feeling is that everyone has a story to tell," said Merilyn. "Everyone's story is unique, and there may be family members who could benefit from that story. There's something really special about producing a book that documents your life. It is a legacy to be passed on to others."

"My recommendation for anyone who is

deliberating about whether it would be worthwhile to do something like this is, just have a go! It is a lot of fun. It's fun going through your memorabilia, however big or small your box is. It's your story, and it's worth writing down, for yourself and for others."

When asked whether there were any particular highlights in the workshop, Merilyn had this to say. "There was great pleasure in remembering and reflecting back on my early life. And also, in that reflection, I gained a deeper appreciation and gratitude for those people who were part of that early life. I think my gratitude toward them has increased, and that's a good place to be."

Michael agrees with Merilyn about the great value of looking back on our lives. "It reminds me of a saying by the philosopher Soren Kierkegaard: *Life must be lived forwards, but can only be understood backwards*."

"I think it can be very helpful to occasionally pause our forward journey, to look back, and try to make sense of the meaning and significance of it all."

Keep tuned for more 'story' developments at Blackwood Uniting Church!

A video interview with Merilyn can be seen at the YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/BwxCPW9IVsw> and brief excerpts from the interview at <https://youtu.be/hpnyesEhNRQ>

The Blackwood Uniting Church is located on Main Road next to the Blackwood roundabout. Phone 8278 7699 for more information.



Climate change training on offer

You are invited to join in with *Climate Ready Communities* training and help take climate action in your community!

This group, based in South Australia is solutions focused and is for sharing thoughts, ideas, and resources about preparing for climate change and increasing extreme weather events.

Even with high levels of climate mitigation efforts, we will still need to adapt to climate change as individuals and communities.

Being "Climate Ready" helps all of us prepare for disasters and emergencies, as well as the changes to our everyday that many of us have already started experiencing.

Have you been inspired by the ABC's *Fight for Planet A* or *Big Weather*?

Then why not join in their online training program and learn more about local climate impacts, ways to avoid the worst of them and how to get your community ready.

The two-part training sessions are from 6pm to 9.30pm on Monday 22 and Wednesday 24 February and cost \$10 per person.

- Topics covered include:
- community climate adaptation 101
 - action planning and next steps
 - climate conversations guide
 - champions' action toolkit
 - champions' online network
 - online champions development opportunities
 - plus more ideas, resources and events!

This training is a partnership between Australian Red Cross and the Resilient South partner councils of Cities of Holdfast, Marion, Mitcham and Onkaparinga.

Check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/climatereadycommunities>

Bookings can be made at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../climate-ready-communities...>

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Tips for keeping your garden healthy in summer



ANDREW TIDSWELL
BLACKWOOD GROUP

SUMMER is a hard time to keep a garden thriving. It is hot and dry and our changing climate is making it more so.

But there are things we can do, to

have a beautiful and healthy garden that saves water and our time. This article will focus on vegetables but the information applies generally to all plants.

Some good veggie gardening tips include:

* PLANTING AND FEEDING

Select summer vegetables that thrive in hot weather. Vegetables need regular feeding, ideally with organic composts and fertilisers which enrich the soil making it easy for plants to access the nutrients they need.

Organic gardener Peter Bennett used to advise that *'the soil is not just to keep plants upright, but is a supermarket of goodies to feed plants'*.

If you have space, have a compost bin or worm farm. These not only provide free plant food, but reduce the amount of our food going to waste.

Shade is becoming important to protect our veggies from increasingly hotter summer sun. 50% shade-cloth is ideal, or consider planting in raised beds that get some shade from trees. Watch the path of the sun to determine where best to provide shade.

* WATERING

Group plants with similar water needs

to make watering efficient and water gardens in the morning or evening and before a heat wave to reduce evaporation.

An occasional deep soak is better than regular sprinkling to drive the water deep into the root zone. A drip irrigation system to be particularly effective.

* MULCHING

Mulch provides an insulation blanket on top of the soil preventing it drying out. It also reduces weeds growth.

About 5cm of mulch is ideal. Pea straw and bark mulch also provide nutrients when they break down.

* MICROCLIMATE

Understand the microclimate of your garden, where the hot and cool spots are, where shade happens and where hot winds come from.

For many who have been spending more time at home this past year, it has meant a new appreciation of gardening, which is excellent for our physical and mental health. A connection with nature reduces our stress levels.

Sustainable gardening can save water, fertilizer and money. Productive gardens provide us with healthy produce and reduce the environmental impact on our food systems.

Follow gardening experts such as Jon Lamb and Sophie Thomson on radio, in print and online for more information.

Check their website for more information about what the organisation is and what it does: <https://www.sustainablecommunities.org.au>

Nature based tourism fund open to potential project applicants

INTEREST in nature-based tourism is on the rise thanks to the State Government's \$5 million Nature-based Tourism Co-investment Fund, with sites such as Cleland Wildlife Park and Myponga Reservoir Reserve experiencing a high level of interest from potential applicants.

Through the Parks 2025 investment initiative, the State Government has committed more than \$130 million into revitalising parks and reserves across the state and is inviting proponents to partner in leveraging this investment to drive the visitor economy further and faster.

The Nature-based Tourism Co-investment Fund includes a range of land options as eligible locations for projects including national parks, forestry reserves and botanic gardens as well as South Australia's reservoir reserves.

Department for Environment and Water Director for Tourism and Economic Development Jo Podoliak said there has been a high level of interest from proponents in the Nature-based Tourism Co-investment Fund.

"We already have many iconic experiences in this state but I believe there are still more opportunities to grow and reaffirm South Australia as a world-class eco-tourism destination, especially as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating 2020 bushfires," she said.

"The \$5 million Fund can provide the stimulus and support applicants need to activate or build on existing sustainable and quality tourism experiences in the state's national parks, reservoir and forestry reserves, botanic gardens and Crown land.

"New nature-based tourism proposals should offer visitors special experiences in these

natural places that nurture and broaden their environmental and cultural understanding and appreciation for conservation."

In order to be considered, potential projects must collectively demonstrate local conservation, community and economic benefits. As part of the development of new experiences in nature, operators will contribute to conservation programs such as restoring habitats, revegetation and rewilding projects.

"Already a number of sites are experiencing a high level of interest from potential applicants such as Cleland Wildlife Park and Myponga Reservoir Reserve," she said.

While applications for the Fund are open until June 2022, both the Department for Environment and Water and SA Water are now setting application timeframes for these high interest sites in order to assess applications together.

Interested parties are asked to submit their Fund applications for Cleland Wildlife Park by 5pm Monday 1 March 2021 and for Myponga Reservoir Reserve by 5pm Wednesday 31 March 2021. Existing applications for both sites will be included in this assessment process.

The Fund will remain open until June 2022 or until the \$5 million SA Government investment is exhausted.

Applicants can seek grants from \$20,000 to \$1 million and are expected to contribute at least half of the total financial costs of their project.

Find out more about the Nature-based Tourism Co-investment Fund by visiting www.coinvest.parks.sa.gov.au

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