



## *The Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.*

# RAAV Wrap

March 2025 Vol. 6



President's introduction and welcome

At the last TRAAVI Committee meeting we decided to reduce the size but increase the frequency of the RAAV Wrap to every 2 months. Your feedback pointed out the trouble several of our members were having with downloading such a large file over the internet.

Speaking of computers, the internet and emails, in February one of our Committee Members had the unfortunate experiences of being "hacked" by cyberterrorists.

They had obtained their personal details, took control of their mobile phone and tried to syphon not only bank accounts by also superannuation accounts. Wreaked havoc to the extent of having to replace/renew all their personal documents, driver licences etc.

Fortunately, prompt action and notification to banks, superannuation companies and Police helped to minimise any disastrous damage.

It was an extremely stressful for not only those directly affected but also those indirectly affected as we scrambled to ensure the TRAAVI website, emails etc were secure from other potential cyber hacks.

Our computer partners Computer Initiatives technicians along with AV Cyber Security team have conducted a deep dive our website and email systems are secure as can be.

So let's be mindful and maintain simple cyber security with the use of strong unique passwords, multi-factor authentication example banks sending codes to our mobiles to enter to gain access to online banking. Keep our software updated and be especially cautious about clicking on unknown links and use antivirus software.

Speaking of links check out the [Cyber.gov.au](http://Cyber.gov.au) website an initiative of the Australian Government and Australian Signals Directive which provides some useful information on to protect our valuable personal information.

For those members who do not want interact online with the TRAAVI website for registration or to purchase merchandise please send an email to [webmaster@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au](mailto:webmaster@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au) or myself on 0418 331 984, our Secretary Jim Ballard on 0412 544 011 and we'll provide you with the right assistance.

The news is not all bad.

I'm please to inform everyone that Graham Douglas TRAAVI Vice President (just 1 of numerous caps he wears) has relinquished his role of looking after TRAAVI website and handballed the Webmaster title and role to Graeme Parker. He'll assist you with posting notices to TRAAVI Bulletin Board, downloading PDF forms from the website or assisting with finding other resources contained therein.

Deb Stallard has willingly put her hand up and stepped into the role as TRAAVI Welfare Co-ordinator.

Deb has a long history of peer support involvement within the broader ambulance community and will be willingly supported by the Committee and TRAAVI Chaplaincy Advisor Gary Grant.

If you have any gripes, questions or feedback both good and bad please let us know. There is a lot going on the background especially new internal email system about to come online, cybersecurity, keeping our administration documents updated and current we often loose site of what is important to our members.

So please let us know both the good and the bad!

Take Care & Stay Safe.  
Steve M.

## **Secretary's Report**

This is a much briefer newsletter than those of recent past, the committee have decided that it would be better to have a bi-monthly newsletter which will make the internet file much smaller and make delivery much less intensive for our system.

We will be including district reports from the previous month, so please send reports as soon as you can.

Thank you to those coordinators who regularly submit their reports as it makes it easier to edit the newsletter and interesting reading for our members, especially for those who cannot get around, we hear comments frequently that people like to see what old chums are up to in another part of the state.

We're still very much in need of interesting articles and your comments so put your thinking caps on and contribute to your newsletter.

Our treasurer Ben Ellis did a sterling job managing our accounts and resigned for family reasons and became ill not long after, we will miss Ben at our committee meetings and wish him all the best for a speedy recovery. Hopefully we can catch up at a TRAAVI get together soon.

With this in mind, we are very happy to welcome Warrick Jackson as our interim TRAAVI treasurer. Warrick brings with him an array of management skills which will help the committee into the future, we thank Warrick for stepping up and wish him well.

Jim Ballard

## Webmaster

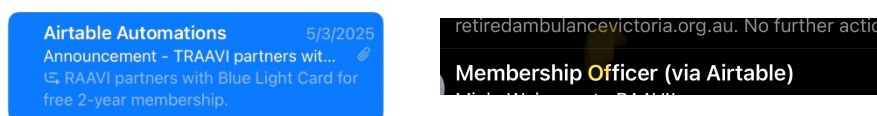
### Webmaster / Membership Officer Report

We have upgraded the way email emails are sent routinely to members.

**Airtable** is the platform we use to administer TRAAVI.

Every aspect from member details, meetings, stock & sale of merchandise as well as subscription notices are facilitated by Airtable.

If you see an email in your inbox that looks like these **No, it's not spam.**



If you drill down into “Membership Officer (via Airtable)” you will see....

[noreply+automations@airtableemail.com](mailto:noreply+automations@airtableemail.com)

Apologies to those members who had their doubts about some of our communications.

To ensure you don't miss an email from TRAAVI put these email addresses in your list of TRAAVI Contacts to avoid them going to “Junk mail”.

The most recent major change to TRAAVI website was the inclusion of a new member application form.

This new version removes the need for transcription of new member data into the Member Register thus reducing the possibility of errors being introduced into the system.

Once submitted the data in the application form goes through a verification & validation procedures prior the application being processed.

I encourage all NON members to join TRAAVI [via this link](#).

Some District Coordinators have already discovered that the Member Check feature has been removed from the website.

This was done in anticipation of new email addresses (with a shorter domain name!) being issued to District Coordinators & Welfare Liaisons.

Once these are issued a secure link to each Districts Member Register will be sent to District Administrators which will enable them to see the “live” Member Register, ensuring all info available is current for all to view.

We anticipate the email addresses will be available early in April.

In the past 12 months we have welcomed **75 new members** to TRAAV.

One contributing factor to this number is the simplification of the application process...going online. Previously the highest number of applicants in a 12-month period was 35.

Today the Membership consists of:

Full Members	344
Life Members	107
Honorary Members	9
Associate Members	39
Pending	2
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>501</b>

We continue to find **member contact details** that are no longer used or out of date.

- If you have changed your address, phone/mobile number or email address there's an online form that can be used to advise us of the change.
- It can be found on the website by navigating to [Main Menu/Members Area/Update your contact details](#) or just click the link.

The new **Membership I.D cards** have now been distributed, if you haven't received yours recently, email [the Membership Officer using this link](#).

Speaking of **BlueLight Card (BLC)** (mentioned in the image above), we announced the partnership with BLC on March 3rd. Founded in the UK by former firefighters, where one in six households now use the discount card.

The card is available in Australia, a few members already avail themselves of the discounts, though now the RAAV Executive & Committee are pleased to offer a 2 year membership now to all members.

We negotiated this to be **free of charge** to members on an ongoing basis. Significant savings can be made on everyday purchases from major suppliers and retailers, including groceries from a national supermarket chain.

The info sheet on how to join up, without cost, can be found [HERE](#) .

What a learning curve creating the TRAAVI website has been!

Now that it is "mostly" bedded down I'm pleased to be able to place the maintenance and the updating of the site into the capable hands of the new Webmaster and Committee Member, Graeme Parker.

District Coordinators should email Graeme with any updates that need to be made to District pages.

If you would like to suggest ideas as to content of the site, news items for the Bulletin Board or comment in general on the site, all suggestions will be considered and comments appreciated.

**Graham Douglas**  
**VP / Membership Officer**  
**15 March 2025**

## New Members

We welcome the following 18 new members to TRAAVI, we hope you enjoy all the friendship and camaraderie which our association is known for;

Clive Wawn	SW Geelong	Dwayne Donison	Metro East
Colin Mclver	Metro East	Clive Lloyd	International
Julie Payne	Metro North	Rob Geerling	Gipps Central/South
Kerry Strachan	North West	Alan Wilkie	Metro North
Brett Cooper	North East	Ian Cocks	Interstate
Eddy Watkins	Metro East	Pauline Hogan	Gippsland East
Clive Butler	Metro South	Dave Reinhard	Metro South
Mick Benjamin	International	Mick Purvis	Metro West
Peter Zadow	Interstate		

## Departed Colleagues.

Steve Hall from East Gippsland passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025. We pay homage to Steve's dedication to ambulance and we send our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

May he rest in peace.

Please see our web site for departed members list.

## RAAV Infirmary

Wishing a speedy recovery to David Booth post shoulder surgery. We know something like this won't confine you for long Dave.

Leo Cartwright has a medical scare recently, all the best for the future Leo.

Please let us know if any other member is on the sick list and we will include it in future editions

## Letters

Hi All,

I hope this email finds you well. We have been passed on your details through the wonderful Col Evans, who has assisted us previously in Preston.

We are excited to share that we are launching the [Empowered Program](#) at another school in Fitzroy.

This program aims to provide mentorship and support to primary school students, fostering confidence, resilience, and a sense of community.

We would love for you and your team to join us in making a meaningful difference once again. Your involvement has been invaluable in the past, and your support could positively impact the lives of these young students as key mentors.

Please let us know your thoughts—we would be thrilled to have you on board for this incredible initiative and to chat more.

Kindly,  
Chloe



**Chloe Taylor**  
**Schools Engagement Program Lead**  
1000 Generations Ltd.

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W: [www.1000generations.org.au](http://www.1000generations.org.au)

## Horible Mensis Mei.

This is Latin for my horrid month.

The reason I'm detailing this is as a learning tool for all and sundry.

On or about the 11<sup>th</sup> February I parked our car in a public "secure" carpark in Melbourne; unbeknown to me my car was electronically opened during the night, the thieves got away with some small change. They disrupted the car but largely we thought nothing much was taken apart from about \$30 in small change. No harm done.

Prior to this I had met up with my wife who had attended another function and had travelled to Melbourne a day earlier than me. We intended to stay in a bayside hotel the following night but on this night we were staying in the city. We met at our next night destination and I took my luggage from my car and put it in my wife's car and parked my car around the back which was behind a gated carpark, then we went off to the city.

I'd been in for a minor procedure that afternoon which was the catalyst for staying in the city. We pulled up outside our city hotel, unloaded our luggage into the foyer and went off to their preferred car park in Latrobe Street, which was about a twenty minute walk back to our hotel.

The rest of the evening was unremarkable until I received a text message at around 3 AM which I thought was the usual overseas spam, so I ignored it. In fact it was one of our committee members who'd been checking our accounts and noticed a sum withdrawn from our accounts under my name. They queried if it was me that withdrew the money via text message and I said "Yes". In fact, at this stage my phone had been ported to another number and the hackers were just starting their evil work. It was them that confirmed the money had been taken while masquerading as me.

The next morning I received an early call to discuss the money which had been withdrawn and I confirmed it wasn't me. I hadn't answered the text message either. This wasn't sounding right so I immediately contacted my bank and said that an account in my name at another bank was misused overnight and I asked them to put a watch on my account.

We went off to the carpark to collect our car and noticed that items which we had inside the car were laying on the ground, the car was now unlocked. I suspect that the thieves had used an electronic scanner to open our car. We looked through the car and found that some change we had in the centre console was missing along with a pair of binoculars and sunglasses. Nothing too drastic, more of an inconvenience really, so we set off to have lunch with the Bendigo group.

Along the way I'd asked my wife to pass me something from the glovebox, to our surprise the glovebox was empty; the service manual was missing, this contained our personal contact details, my keys for my other car were missing along with some other personal details, this was way more serious than we first thought, so we pulled off the freeway and went to the nearest police station to report the crime. The police took our statement but at this stage we hadn't realised that my laptop was missing as I thought I'd left it with the other car.

We decided to return home and sit for the night before returning to Melbourne to collect the other car. On our way home we stopped for a late lunch and I checked my bank balance, to my horror I found that \$2000 had been removed from my account with another \$7000 moved to the S1 in readiness for removal. I immediately rang my bank and put a hold on withdrawals and they put me through to the fraud department in their bank.

We left our lunch spot and motored towards home only to be disturbed by a text message which Chris read out to me, it was a request from PayPal to dispatch \$2000. I pulled over and hunted for a phone number for PayPal and put a stop to the transaction. No more tonight, please!

We got home feeling dirty and exhausted (mentally) and settled in for some rest. I was disturbed about 9:30 PM with a text message from my superannuation company confirming my "request" for \$50,000.

I searched for an after-hours number to no avail, I even rang the police but they couldn't help either. I sweated it out all night.

The next day I went to a phone tech to sort out my phone as I thought at this stage that somehow my phone had been hacked. We updated my Apple ID and I thought that would be all I needed to do to sort the hackers out. They busted the new password within 7 hours and changed the Apple ID so that I couldn't get access to my account. They cloned my iCloud email account and installed around 1000 new contact onto my phone.

So, there was much more to do but the best advice I can give if you're in this predicament is give ID Care a call. I copied this from their website;

"IDCARE is Australia and New Zealand's national identity and cyber support service. They are a not-for-profit charity that was formed to address a critical support gap for individuals confronting identity and cyber security concerns. This gap requires specialist identity & cyber security Case Managers and Analysts that apply a human-centred approach to identity and cyber security. This means they place at the centre of everything they do the concerns and needs of the individual, not the technology or process. IDCARE as a registered charity does not ask individuals to donate or pay for their front line services. They are not a charity that can receive tax deductible donations. Rather, they rely on organisations that care enough about you to care about them to keep their charitable service going"



Ph: [1800 595 160](tel:1800595160)

So what will ID Care do for you?

Each circumstance is individual but this organisation will calmly talk you through your troubles. It's a great 'go to' site or phone as like me, my head was a mess and I didn't initially know where to begin.

Lessons I learned:-

- Don't panic. It's important to keep a clear head so that you can navigate your way through;
- Firstly, no one's car is safe anymore as the technology available to the general public has surpassed the technology implemented by the car companies. **So don't leave anything in your car**, especially if it has personal information on it;
- Secondly, if your phone is hacked, immediately contact the help line associated with your phone; it should be within one of the pages on your phone or through your telco;
- Contact your bank and close down your account so that outside transactions cannot happen.
- Contact your telco and tell them you've been hacked, they will assist you from here.

There are more things to do but with the guidance from ID Care you'll get through this.



I've learned a valuable lesson about strong passwords. Use complex passwords, it's your saviour. And to finish off, don't reuse the same or common passwords, the hackers are aware of this and they have employed artificial intelligence (AI) to quickly break most codes. You make it easier for them if you reuse a regular word.

Here's hoping that this message can save any of us from going through this experience.

## Regional Reports

### Metro East

Hi Jim,

A short report from the Metro East Lunch meeting held on the 13/02/2025 at the Wheelers Hill Hotel. A small gathering of 10 today but plenty of chat and conviviality. There were a few members away travelling and one attending a family funeral so hopefully next time we will have a bigger group in attendance. Thanks again to Tom Rose (chaplain) for attending, It's always nice having his support there.

Our next meeting in May so keep an eye out for the notification and, as always, we encourage as many of you to attend as it is a great forum.

Kind regards,  
David Hadj

### Metro North

The first Metro North lunch for 2025 was held on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> February at the Darebin RSL.

18 Members and partners attended.  
If the overall noise level was an indication, a good time was had by all.

Lots of laughter and reminiscing took place

At this lunch, Stan Sandford was presented with his Life Membership Certificate by Graeme Parker on behalf of the Committee.  
Our next lunch will be on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025, at 12.00 at the Darebin RSL, (Bistro), 402 Bell St Preston. Hope to see you there.

Col Evans



### North East District

The February gathering was again held at the Benalla Bowls Club. There were only 10 of us; I continue to hear that quite a few of our membership are unwell and unable to travel distances so please keep an eye out for one of your meetings coming to a venue near you!

I'm unsure how we get the word out to more recent retirees as it is a nice opportunity to get workmates together in a friendly environment. In May we will attempt to hold our meeting in either Shepparton, Yarrawonga or Wangaratta. Keep an eye on the website and I will email at the beginning of May.

## Gippsland East District

The East Gippsland district had its first luncheon for the year held at the Bairnsdale RSL last Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March. Members and their partners made up a total of thirteen attendees. A number of apologies were also received. Jim Yandle and his partner Lynette and Bernie Goss (Gossy),

Big hello to Rob Standfield who recently joined and came along for his first taste of retirement... he left a very disillusioned man....

Steve Hall, one of our long-standing members is, sadly, no longer with us and will be sorely missed.

Jim Ballard acknowledged Steve's service as a Paramedic and his happy go lucky disposition at the many East Gippsland luncheons he attended. His funeral was held on Friday (7<sup>th</sup> March). It was well attended by friends and family, as well as past and present Ambulance Victoria staff. The Gippsland Welfare Officer (Frank Abela) was able to bring an old Ford ambulance from the museum and drove it in the procession to escort Steve to his final resting place.

Otherwise, the luncheon was a great success with two of our members winning the pub raffle (which doesn't happen very often). They left with smiles on their faces wondering how they were going to spend their millions.

We'd also like to welcome new member, Pauline Hogan, to our region. Hopefully she will be able to attend our next luncheon in a few months.

In the meantime, please feel free to contact either myself or Steve Wood for any East Gippsland queries.

Cheers,  
Paul Lodder & Steve Wood



## Central & South Gippsland District

Gippsland Central & South held a meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> at the Morwell RSL. There was 22 in attendance for the meal and also some vibrant conversations. In fact the conversations continued for many until mid-afternoon. The recent commemoration of the *Angel of Mercy* was a topic of conversation as some attending had served on it and others of course had transported patients to or from it.

There was a presentation of Service Awards to Richard Williams for 15 years and Allan Oaks for 25 years.

Neil Akers  
PO Box 3414, GMC, Vic 3841  
0407 351 626  
[Neil.akers@bigpond.com](mailto:Neil.akers@bigpond.com)



Alan Oaks receiving his 25  
year pin



Richard Williams receiving  
his 15 year pin

## South West District

Our first meeting for 2025 took place on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, at Thomson's Tavern in Hamilton.

12 members attended, along with our AV Chaplain, Lynne Carter. There were 6 apologies. I was extremely pleased with the numbers! A fantastic effort guys/gals! A great time was had by all. Great company, food and conversation.

I notified members that I would be leaving the South West. The time has come to move closer to family. I called for a volunteer to take over the position of SW Convenor, however none were forthcoming. Members were happy for me to continue in the role and I will do so, remotely. I will continue to organize and attend meetings as long as I can.

I informed members that RAAV were using an electronic diary to inform members of future meetings. I will continue to email members regarding our meetings, as this will act as a reminder.



Our next meeting will be held on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June at Rafferty's Tavern, Warrnambool

## Geelong & Surf Coast District

Well, this is my first report as District Coordinator, hopefully not my last. We had our luncheon on the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Belmont RSL.

20 members indicated they were attending and as we got closer to the date I had only 3 apologies so all in all it was a good turnout. The RSL let us use their function room so we had that area to ourselves. It seems that we may get to use the room on a regular basis if they do not have other large functions they need to accommodate.

A few of the members bought along memorabilia to share with us, one depicting a couple of ex G&DAS Ambos receiving an accolade alongside and old ford F250 car, which bought back many fond memories.

Quite a few of our ladies attended, both past employees and wives of sadly departed workmates, I was particularly delighted to see Mrs. Lois Thomas who is the wife of the last Ambulance Superintendent, Mr. Gerry Thomas (departed) we had in Geelong before the RAV amalgamation of the Districts where we went to the concept of CEO bought in from an outside organisation.

A couple of the members wished to visit the Ambulance Museum, so I am investigating costs of hiring a bus and driver to take us. Aside from that I will canvass our members to gauge interest in a bus trip to Werribee park zoo and perhaps also down the Gt Ocean Rd to the twelve apostles.

Inevitably as we age and become less sure of foot, I have to be mindful to arrange outings where members on walking aides do not get left out.

Our next meeting will be in May at the same venue and look forward to the fellowship of our Retired Ambo's and their wives and partners.

The next meeting will be on the 14<sup>th</sup> May at the Belmont RSL unless otherwise organized.

Stephen McFayden  
Coordinator

## Wimmera & Grampian District

The last RAAV Wimmera District Catch-up Lunch was held on Thursday 13th February in Horsham.

It was only a small group in attendance with several of our regulars unable to be there.

I had the pleasure of presenting one of our members, Geoff Pickering, with his RAAV Life Membership Certificate.

Our next RAAV Wimmera District Catch-up Lunch will be on Thursday 15th May at 12:00pm at the White Hart Hotel in Horsham.

Hoping to see as many members there as possible.

Ron Lazones  
RAAV Wimmera District Coordinator  
Mobile: 0412 518 370

## Central Victoria District

The Central Victoria lunch was held on Tuesday February 11, at the Bendigo RSL in Long Gully.

22 members and partners attended, with a 10 Year Service Pin and a Life Membership being presented. Several ID cards were given to those present.

There were many comments of how enjoyable it was to see so many attending and with some that hadn't been on prior occasions was noted.

Everyone seemed eager to be at the next lunch which will be on May 13, 2025.



Frank Bonser  
receiving his 10 Year  
Service Pin



Chris Varley receiving  
his Life Membership



Central Victoria Group Photo

Interim Coordinator  
John Head

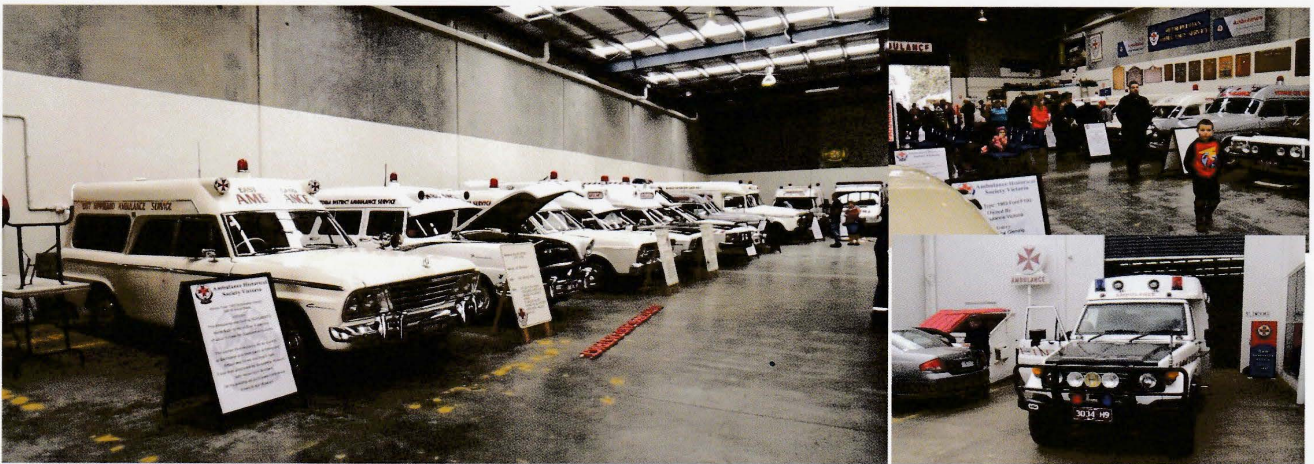
**ITS ON AGAIN!**



## *Ambulance Victoria Museum*

**- FAMILY OPEN DAY 2025 -**

**\* FREE ENTRY \* FREE ENTRY \* FREE ENTRY**



**SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2025 - 10.00 AM - 2.00PM**

**AT: --- 1/55 BARRY STREET, BAYSWATER**

- **THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ESPECIALLY WELCOME**
- **DEVONSHIRE TEA OR COFFEE FRESHLY MADE IN OUR KITCHEN.**
- **PRESERVES, HONEY, JAM, APPLE AND MERINGUE PIES, AND PLANTS ON SALE \* PLUS MUSEUM MERCHANDISE, BOOKS, AND MEMORABILIA.**

**A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY! TO LEARN ABOUT OUR PROUD AMBULANCE HISTORY IN VICTORIA, \* WATCH A FABULOUS PRESENTATION VIDEO EVERY HOUR 11AM – 2PM COMMENCING AT 11AM COVERING A LIFETIME OF AMBULANCE WORK. \* AND BROWSE OUR VINTAGE AMBULANCES, RADIOS & COMMUNICATION, MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, AND RECORD BOOKS OF YESTERYEAR, OR READ OUR CASE INFORMATION BOARDS AT YOUR LEISURE.**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: PH 0419 619 430**  
**EMAIL: AMBULANCE.HISTORICAL@OUTLOOK.COM**  
**OR VISIT FACEBOOK**



## Caravan and Motorhome Club.

February saw a few of us head off to Lakes Entrance for a week. We stayed at the Eastern Beach Caravan Park. I would definitely stay at this place again.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, Marilyn and Pete Raft, Frank and Marilyn Abela and Neil and I went for a lovely cruise to Metung for lunch, travelling on one of Peel's Cruise boats.

It was lovely weather for most of the week, even though the guys needed to play ups and down with the awnings. The wind got a tad rough at times.

We were looking at having a week away in July to either Beechworth or Eden.

Sadly with not having any replies from anyone, then the next week away will possibly be at Beechworth in October.

Please think very strongly about the next week away in October. It would be really lovely to see some new faces and some of the old gang there.

I am looking at the Beechworth Holiday Park. There will be more information to follow at a later date.

Sadly this next trip will be the last trip that I organise. I will be standing down as the coordinator and would love for someone to take over from October. If you would like to do the job, then please let me know.

Neil and I will be selling our caravan.

*Cheers*

*Anne Akers*

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"Give a Smile Today, It's Free"



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