



Meekatharra Dust

JANUARY 2020 | ISSUE NO.321

COST \$2.50



**Meekatharra gathers
round the Manger in 2019**

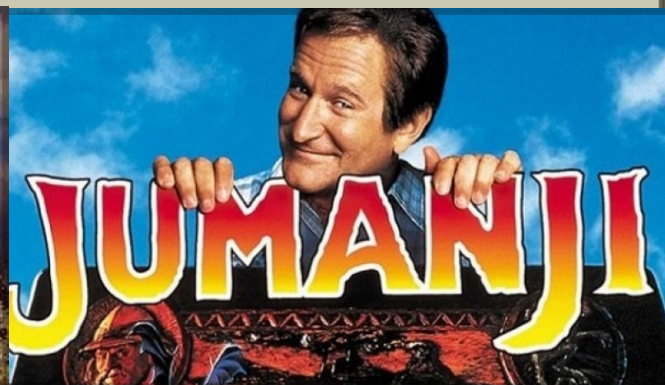
More photos inside

At the Picture Gardens this January

Gates open 6.45, show starts at last light. Entry just \$5 per head

Friday 10th

Friday 24th





Calling for Submissions

If you have any articles with information about any upcoming community events then we want to hear from you!

“The Meekatharra Dust” is a non-profit community newspaper.

If you have an article, a photo you would like to share or an advertisement, you can post them to:

PO Box 129, Meekatharra WA 6642

or drop them in at the Shire office.
Alternatively, you can email us at:

cdo@meekashire.wa.gov.au

Council Dates

Dates for Ordinary Meeting of the

Shire of Meekatharra for 2020 are -

Meeting Date	Last Date for items
18 January	3rd
15 February	31st
21 March	6th
18 April	3rd
16 May	1st
27 June	5th
18 July	3rd
15 August	31st
19 September	4th
17 October	2nd
21 November	6th
11 December	27th

Size	B & W	Colour
Full Page	\$52.10	\$74.05
Half Page	\$26.70	\$43.10
Quarter Page	\$16.50	\$24.65
Eighth Page	\$13.95	\$18.50

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meekashire.wa.gov.au

A FRIENDLY REMINDER ABOUT DOG CONTROL

When walking your dogs on the town oval, please ensure you are in complete control of your animal at all times and dispose of any waste in the rubbish bins provided by Council.

The Shire of Meekatharra provide the Town Oval as the only off-lease exercise area in town—at all other locations your dog must, according to law, be collared and restrained.

To allow your dog to be unrestrained in public is an offence in the Dog Act 1976.

Being responsible for a dog that attacks a person causing injury is also an offence which attracts a significant penalty of up to \$10,000.

Please be a responsible pet owner—keep your dog restrained when exercising them to avoid both injury to bystanders, and significant penalties, and please pick up any droppings left behind. Nobody wants to step in that!!

The Shire of Meekatharra support the neutering and desexing of pets to reduce the number of strays, and provide sponsorship to the Murdoch Veterinary Clinic to attend Meekatharra to provide this service at no cost to health care card holders. Additionally, the Shire fund regular visiting vet service—Newman Veterinary Clinic—to the value of \$5,000 to neuter the pets of health care card holders at no cost to the owner.

Local residents can access this service by attending the Shire Office to present your Health Care Card and prove registration. You will be issued with a voucher for the appropriate service at the visiting clinic.

Further info, contact Tralee at the Shire—99800609



Meekatharra farewells 2019 in beautiful style—sunset Friday 20th December, 2019

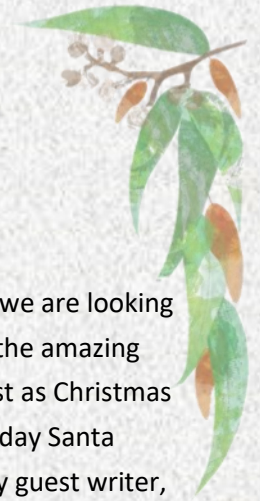
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Note from the Editor



Happy New Year to one and all !

Thankfully the New Year in Meekatharra has begun uneventfully, and as we slide into 2020 we are looking forward to some big events. We have looked back on 2019 with fondness in this edition—the amazing Carols by Candlelight held as a collaboration between all of the denominations in town—just as Christmas should be with all coming together to celebrate in wonder. We have a photo gallery of the day Santa arrived in town, some great suggestions on gardening in the harsh climate from our mystery guest writer, and we congratulate Mr and Mrs Macdonald on their recent nuptials.

The coming year promises much, with the opening of Lloyds in the first half of the year. If you are interested in starting your own business in a brand new facility, let us know at the Shire.

Hope you enjoy this edition.

Happy Reading.



*****OPPORTUNITY*****

The Shire of Meekatharra are calling for
Registrations of Interest from any person
or business to trade from the new Lloyds
Building

There are two retail/office options - 34 and 27 square meters
respectively, available January 2020

For more details, or to register your interest
Contact Tralee Cable at the Shire on 99800600



shire of
meekatharra
a golden prospect





Your Council News

January 2020 • by Anna Johnson on behalf of the Shire of Meekatharra

Winding It Up

At 9:00 am Saturday 18 January the Annual General Meeting of Electors will take place at the Shire office. The order of business will be:

1. Reading of the Auditor's Report
2. President's Report
3. Receiving of 2018/19 Financial Statements
4. Other General Business

The Annual Report, which includes the above-mentioned Financial Statements and Auditor's Report, is available for inspection at the Shire Office in Main Street, Meekatharra, during normal office hours. In accordance with Section 5.27 of the Local Government Act 1995, the general meeting of electors is to be held once every financial year to consider the contents of the annual report for the previous year, and to consider other general business.

An elector is defined in the Local Government Act 1995 as a person who is eligible to vote in an election in the relevant Shire or City. The definition of an elector includes ratepayers.

It's all part of winding up the past year and looking ahead to future plans and ideas. For more information about the Annual General Meeting of Electors, contact the Shire office.

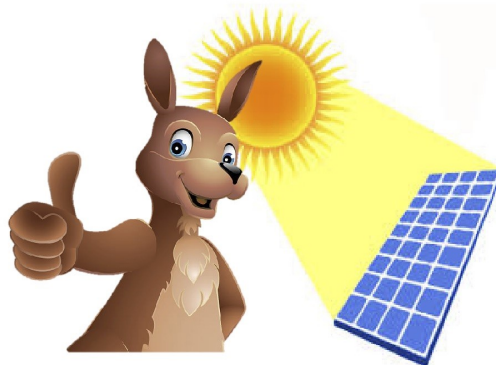
Superb Santa Subbie

Shire staff were transformed into Santa's elves in the week before Christmas, madly bagging lollies for the annual Christmas Day lolly run and wrapping gifts for the Town Christmas Party. The Bagging of the Lollies is taken very seriously, with staff forcing themselves to apply the Random Lolly Taste Test at regular (frequent?) intervals - an essential part of ensuring that the sweet treats are of the best quality for the discerning young recipients.

As a preferred subcontractor, Santa has an ongoing arrangement with the Shire to carry out a range of duties, but this year he was so busy he had to subbie out his own role to some capable Meeka mates. Despite the top-level secrecy and media blackout that accompanies the Santa Stand-In induction process, one alert young person shrewdly deduced that the Town Christmas Party Santa was in fact a certain well-known Shire employee. Youth Services worker Lachlan's Academy-award-winning performance, featuring a compelling North Polian accent and booming ho-ho's, had all the adults guessing, but the keen eyes and ears of the kids quickly exposed the polar pantomime. As our youngest residents will attest, however, we all know that he was just helping Real Santa. Local artist Sam did a fine job as Helper Elf, despite a startling wardrobe malfunction when his jolly green trousers suffered an indignity of the Antarctic regions during the gift-giving goings-on.

A lawn sprinkler was set up in the centre of the picture gardens concrete slab, and was enhanced by a surprise spray from the fire brigade's light tanker truck. A fine time was had by all who attended, and the Shire would like to thank everyone who helped out with the cooking, music, bouncing castle and gift distribution.

It was an event full of smiles, bubble blowing and excitement, a simple but heartwarming get-together once again showcasing the generosity and community spirit that prevail in Meekatharra.



Power To The People

Much of the December Council Meeting was taken up with planning approvals for the members Meekatharra Solar Consortium. Spearheaded by Royal Mail Hotel owner Gitte Heijs, the Consortium is a group of locals with large roof space who are working towards a community solar power supply.

In December, the Council gave planning permission for solar panels and associated tech installation to Consortium members The Royal Mail and Made In Meeka, and to the Auski Motel. Further news about the Consortium is pending as discussions with Horizon Power continue.



Facing page: Subcontractor Santa and local smiles of joy on the Town Christmas Party gift-giving throne. Below: Cooling off Meeka-style at the Picture Gardens with a garden sprinkler and some surprise sprays from the local fire brigade.



Takin' Care of Business

Locals who participated in the community consultation workshop and surveys will be pleased to know that the Shire is acting on the suggestions and thoughts that were expressed. A report with the outcomes and suggestions will be tabled for Council, who will then undertake workshops to determine a five year strategy.

Over the last year, the National Indigenous Australians Agency has been formulating and facilitating an industry workgroup, with the intention of building and growing commercial activities and employment in the region. Initially composed of the NIAA, Yulella, Westgold, Sandfire and Australian Vanadium, the group is working to include local government and businesses.

In an exciting development, the workgroup will host a business forum in Meekatharra in April. It will be open to all local business people, whether it's solo entrepreneurs, artists, family businesses or larger regional businesses who either have a base in Meeka or who make regular visits to service our area.

A list of 53 potential business owner/ reps has been compiled for participation, so if you're in business, watch this space. If you're not sure you're on the list, you can contact Gaylene Newton at the NIAA via Gaylene.NEWTON@official.niaa.gov.au.

This will be an opportunity to open up dialogue between industry and community, the first steps in addressing local business concerns and how industry can better engage with the community on a practical front, such as jobs, investment and contracting.

You're welcome to attend the monthly Council meetings (dates and times are listed in The Dust) and have your say. You can also obtain a copy of the Council Minutes to find out about the many other projects, discussions and improvements that the Shire is undertaking on behalf of the Meeka community. All items or letters for Council should be addressed and sent to the Shire Of Meekatharra CEO, at the Shire address (see right).

CATS - NOT SO MUSICAL

The Shire will once again be hosting the Murdoch University veterinary team for a pet desexing visit in April. Community and Services Development Manager Tralee Cable and local animal welfare advocate Anna Johnson are helping to coordinate a support team similar to last year, helping locals get their pets signed up and setting up the pick-up and drop-off schedule. If you would like to lend a hand either in helping people sign up or helping out on any of the days of the vet visit, get in touch with Anna on 0413 621 786 or drop in to the Shire office during normal business hours.

Unlike the recent movie release of "Cats", Meeka's own miaow-merchants are anything but musical, and are an increasing problem in town and the bush. Are you struggling with strays at your place? The vet visit program can provide desex and return, or euthanasia.

We would like locals to consider the fact that shelters are bursting with unwanted cats and that it is now almost impossible to rehome them. Stray/feral cats and kittens face a grim future in Meekatharra, and have little or no hope of finding a home, so it is kinder to offer them the painless option of euthanasia.

If you have multiple animals - particularly strays who are simply living at your property - and the cost of registration is an issue for you (the desexing and health check are free), please get in touch with the Shire to discuss a solution. We are here to help.



Cute when they're kittens - but shelters are bursting, and the bush is suffering. We all need to work together to solve the cat problem.



Shire Of Meekatharra
Main Street
PO Box 129

Meekatharra WA 6642

Phone : 08 9980 0600

www.meekashire.wa.gov.au

"Meekatharra - A Golden Prospect"

A Meekatharra Manger -

Our kids sing like Angels.

Friday 6th December 2019 saw an unusual sight on the lawns of the Meekatharra Hospital—

A manger—complete with pack mules , camels, a guiding star, and Angels—and our little angels were very convincing.

Tracey Sailor was an amazing stage manager/costumer/ director and had the little Meeka kids performing their hearts out to traditional favourites like Away in a Manger

and Silent Night. Many afternoons and evenings were spent in December practicing words and actions—and all of the preparations paid off and provided a meaningful Christmas tableau.

Its always beautiful to see the kids enjoying themselves, and to see our parents and grandparents enjoying the show. A Merry Christmas was definitely had by all who attended.







Come and Meet Us!

Our next committee meeting is on Tuesday 14th January at 5pm. Come along and find out how you can get involved with your local community resources centre - it's super easy, you'll meet some lovely people and be able to take part in some fun community events and projects as your time allows. Being a part of the committee team also offers the opportunity for skills and experience development - it looks good on your resume too! It doesn't matter if you're new, local, old, young - helping with community input will help you in ways that might surprise you. Drop in for a cuppa and a chat during the week and feel free to come to any of our "second Tuesday of the month" meetings.

What Do We Do?

The CRC offers a whole range of services, including Department of Transport services, office hire, paper and photo printing, laminating, eulogy & poster creation, binding and various secretarial services.

You can also hop on to our WIFI or computer for pretty much anything you like, and we can do copying, scanning and help you learn more about how to access and use technology.

Give us a call during biz hours or pop in to see what's on offer, whether it's simple admin stuff or accessing online courses. As our Manager, Phillip, likes to say, "We're here to help".

CRC On The Move

Anna Johnson has joined the CRC team as the new Customer Service and Project Officer. She will be attending Dept of Transport training this month in order to be able to help you with all your driver and vehicle enquiries. The CRC will be moving into the Lloyd's Building sometime in or after February, we'll keep you posted on what we'll be doing for the grand opening!

The Meekatharra CRC Committee had its AGM on December 10th, with the following results: Chairperson Peter Clare, Vice Chair Kadisen King, Treasurer Svenja Clare, Secretary Anna Johnson. Phillip Moulden is our Manager. We are looking forward to another year of great community events and markets, and welcome new members and ideas. We meet at the CRC office every second Tuesday of the month at 5pm and all are welcome.

January 2020

By Anna Johnson & Phillip Moulden



VISITOR CENTRE COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPT TRANSPORT

- ✓ Souvenirs, Cards & Gifts
- ✓ Maps, Brochures & Local Info
- ✓ WIFI and Computer Use
- ✓ Driver & Vehicle Services
- ✓ Printing, Copying, Laminating
- ✓ Photo Printing Kiosk
- ✓ Secretarial Services

Become a Member and Save!
Join from just \$30 per year and save up to 50% on many of our services.

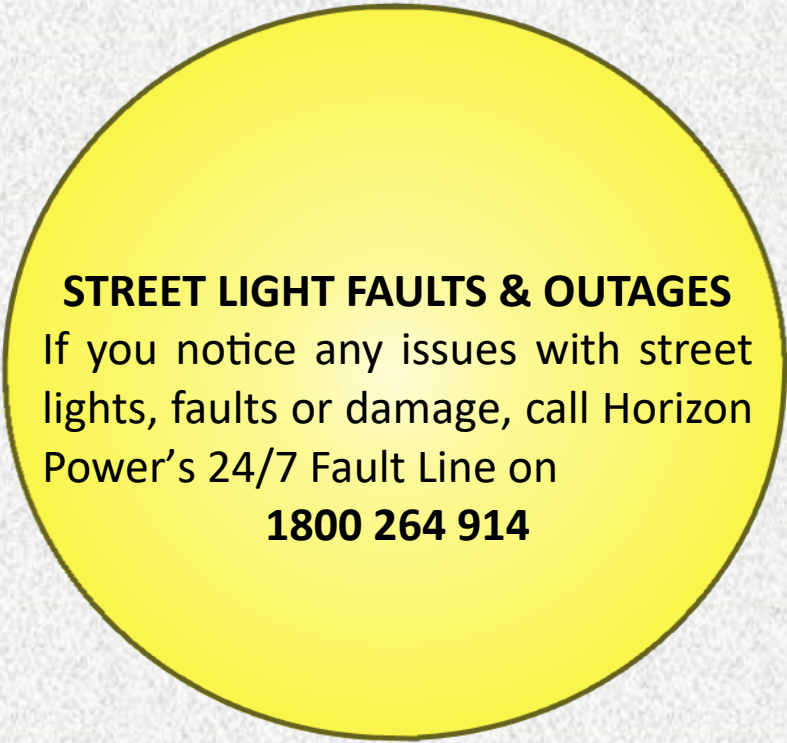


**Meekatharra Community
Resource and Visitor Centre**
Lot 55 Main Street
Meekatharra WA 6642
08 9980 1811

welcome@meekatharracrc.com.au



Department of **Transport**



STREET LIGHT FAULTS & OUTAGES

If you notice any issues with street lights, faults or damage, call Horizon Power's 24/7 Fault Line on
1800 264 914

WORKSHOPS



**UPCYCLING – REUSING – CRAFT –
HOMESTEADING – "MAKING DO"**
(turning ordinary things into awesome things)



**@ RECYCLING CENTRE RAILWAY STREET
FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH - 9 AM**

All Welcome! Gold Coin Donation Entry



The Picture Gardens

Grand Opening Success



Amid all of the Christmas and end of year hijinks, the Youth Services Team of the Shire of Meekatharra opened the Picture Gardens open air cinema, and it was a raging success.

Many days of hot sweaty work went into the preparation of the facility which has not operated as a cinema for many years.

Long time local projectionist Darcy reminisced about the time he spent spinning some reels in the little room upstairs, and we look forward to involving him in the reclamation of some of the very antique equipment that remains in storage at the site.



A veritable treasure trove of historical artefacts presented on first view of the projection room, and led to much consternation about how exactly we actually play a movie on that gear these days.

Thankfully, the new projector accepted a modern DVD, and the task proved to be quite simple in the end.

Local plumber Mark Smith was tasked with ensuring the facilities were functioning and suitable for the night. Mark has assured the Editor that this was the most difficult job he has encountered in his plumbing career, with much sweaty shovelling



required before the drains would run smoothly, thanks to persistent tree roots.

The first movie was a classic Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs, and we have to admit to being unexpectedly surprised at the huge turnout. There were about 70 people through the gate (the vast majority kids). As a special, our concession stand also opened on the first night, with the logical fare of Meatball Subs, with popper boxes of juice.



There were many calls of "is that all you got to eat, Miss?", but the 45 subs that were made in advance quickly sold out, and more hurriedly prepared on the night.

Going forward, in response to the community vote held during November, we will be showing Stormboy on the 10th, Jumanji on the 24th and Labyrinth on the 7th February. There is a clear similarity between all these movies, and we suspect the vote may possibly have been hijacked by the youth in this community.

It would be good to hold an adults night, so to that end we are looking for suggestions of movies that might motivate you to attend.

If you would be interested in helping on these nights, we would certainly also welcome the help, particularly on the concession stand All ideas received and considered.

Tuesday 4th February

8:30am

*Big Brekky & Meet
the Teacher*



Thursday 6th February

1:40pm

Water Play afternoon



2020

**Welcome
Back to
School
Activities**



MISSION AUSTRALIA | together we stand



Tuesday 11th February

1:40pm

*BBQ lunch &
Colour Run*

**Thursday 13th
February 11am**

*Pool Day with
BBQ lunch*

Meekatharra Pharmacy

72 Main Street, Meekatharra WA 6642



New Year, New Me!

We hope everyone had a safe, happy and healthy December celebrating Christmas and the New Year in Meekatharra. We've got some handy tips for your new years resolutions to get you started below. We've had some big ideas which are getting put into motion in the pharmacy this year. We have lots of different stock coming in all the time. Come down and have a look!

Quit Smoking

Have you decided to kick the habit this January? Quitting smoking can be hard and can take time. If you would like a hand, we have some tips and tricks that may help. We have lots of different aids and advice depending on how much and how often you smoke, we can recommend products to suit you. Nicotine replacement therapy is a good way to start and can be tailored to your circumstances. We have patches, gum, lozenges, sprays & inhalers that may help.

Weight Loss

Losing weight is challenging. Diet and exercise are some of the best ways to help lose those few extra Kgs, but if you need some more encouragement, come down and chat to your pharmacists, we may have some weight loss aids that could help. Very Low Calorie Diets (VLCD) which come in the form of replacement meals, may be suitable for some people to aid in weight loss. There are also products that can boost your metabolism such as green coffee bean extract and Garcinia Cambogia.

Meekatharra Pharmacy carry a range of vitamins & supplements, first aid supplies, quit smoking products, suncare, hair, skin & nail care items, ear and eye products, perfumes, cosmetics, jewelry, gifts, baby items, hats, sunglasses, readers and cleaning products. We also provide professional services such as prescription handling, webster packing, free blood pressure checks, m edsch ecks, Diabetes supplies and lots more.

(P) 08 9980 1798



Optifast shakes.



Webster Pack

First Aid Supplies

A First Aid kit should be an essential item in everyone's car and house. Make sure you're prepared if you are going bush or just hanging out in the back yard. Cuts, grazes, splinters, snake bites, strains and burns are just some of conditions you can help treat with a well-stocked kit. So get prepared today!

Webster Packs

A Multi Dose Webster-pak is a sealed weekly calendar pack designed to help people take their medication correctly, according to their doctor's orders. All regular medication that needs to be taken each week is sealed within the blister compartments. If you or your family members may benefit from this, come in and have a chat to us. We offer packing services at low or no cost to you.

Come in and say Hi!

Monday – Friday: 9am-5pm

Saturday – 9am-1pm

Meekatharra Picture Gardens

*We're Open
in 2020*

10TH JANUARY 2020 - STORMBOY
(2019 VERSION)

24TH JANUARY 2020 - JUMANJI
(1995 VERSION)

7TH FEBRUARY 2020 - LABYRINTH

GATES OPEN 7PM, SHOW STARTS
AT LAST LIGHT
ENTRY \$5 PER PERSON



January Program 2

13 January – 24 January 2020

Please visit our website for Late enrolment information
www.education.wa.edu.au/swimming-lessons

Your children can join in the fun of learning to swim for just \$30.00 per child for all other programs / \$20.00 concession* (plus pool entry)

It's even cheaper if you have three or more children - \$81.00 a family for all other programs / \$54.00 concession* (plus pool entry)

Enrolments are open to all children over five years on the first day and under 18 years on the last day of the program

T: 9402 6412
E: vacswwim@education.wa.edu.au
W: education.wa.edu.au/swimming

6 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LEARN TO SWIM



Learning to swim is an important step in every child's life. Unfortunately, some parents do not understand the many benefits of swimming lessons and skip this step. Why should every child learn how to swim and become a skilled swimmer as an adult? Why should you prioritize swimming lessons over music lessons or any other activities for your kids? Here are 6 great reasons why.

SWIMMING IS EXCELLENT EXERCISE

- Teaching kids to swim teaches them the thrill of exercise, how fun it can be, and how much more energy and confidence it gives them to be in good shape.
- It also teaches children good exercise habits that they can continue to uphold long after they become adults and, like most American adults, lose their quick metabolism. Teach them now that physical activity keeps them healthy and energized.



SWIMMING IS A SURVIVAL SKILL

- Being stranded in a boat or falling in a lake might seem like an uncanny situation, but throughout a person's life, everyone has the risk of landing in some dangerous situations they may need to survive.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10 Americans drown every single day. Whether they are swimming recreationally, are involved in an accident, or are exploring the outdoors, teaching kids to swim can help them survive in water.



SWIMMING IS A GREAT SOCIAL ACTIVITY

- Not only are pool parties incredibly common for kids, but they will continue to be common long into adulthood. Swimming is even a common activity at senior retirement centers.
- While it may be too soon to think about your children retiring, you should think about a lifetime of fun social experiences that children can have if they are skilled swimmers. They can meet friends for daily swims, make friends in their swim classes, and be the life of any pool party.



YOU NEVER FORGET HOW TO SWIM



- They say that swimming is like riding a bike: you never forget how to do it! If your kids learn how to swim now, they will carry this skill with them for the rest of their lives.
- While you might not be ready to swim Olympic-length laps after years of not swimming, you can still manage and get back into swimming shape quickly. As long as you stay in fairly good shape, you can at least tread water and swim a short distance if you received good lessons as a child.

SWIMMING ENGAGES THE MIND

- The mental benefits of exercise cannot be discounted. There are so many benefits to physical activity that many great thinkers and artists have shared their experiences of going on long walks or exercising when they wanted to clear their minds or develop innovative ideas.
- The same goes for kids, whose minds are constantly engaged. They learn something new about the world every day. Give them another brain-building activity and take them to swimming lessons.



SWIMMING LESSONS ARE AFFORDABLE



- With how expensive children's after-school programs can be, it is no wonder why many parents that are on a budget choose to skip out on them, as important as they are for keeping children entertained and socialized.
- Thankfully, swimming lessons are incredibly affordable, especially when you consider how many hours of time swimming lessons will fill up.

VacSwim is Australia's longest running swimming lesson program, operating for more than 100 years. VacSwim offers swimming lessons for children aged five to 17 years of age, in both the October and January school holidays.

Your children can join in the fun of learning to swim and vital swimming and water safety skills with lessons conducted at pools and open water venues across the State.

VacSwim has grown from its beginnings in 1919 when five instructors taught 248 children at three venues, to become the largest vacation swimming program in Australia. In recent years, 55 000 children participate in lessons each year with more than 1500 qualified instructors at more than 180 locations throughout the State

Late enrolments for Meekatharra 2020 program will be held Sunday 12 January at the Memorial Pool.

UGH IT'S HOT!

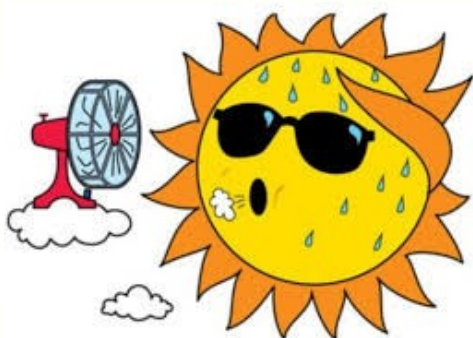


We're well and truly in the midst of summer now. It seems no matter which direction the wind comes from, it's hot. And if there's no breeze it feels even hotter plus the flies are a lot more prominent and effective at attacking our faces.

Let's all escape indoors, crank the aircon up, put our feet up and crack a coldie!

Here are a few energy saving tips (of course – we're your local environmental group after all) to get you through summer:

- No point having the aircon cranked up all day whilst you're out and about, especially if you have an old house that leaks air like a sieve. If you have a



split system it should have a timer function: set the timer so the aircon comes on 15 minutes before you're due home. It will have cooled the room down without having cost you hours of electricity.

- The optimum temperature for aircons in our Meeka climate is around 23 degrees Celsius. You might be tempted to set it to as low as it can go, but when it's 42 degrees outside, and your body temperature is 37 degrees, then anything under 25 feels wonderfully cool. To your body it doesn't matter whether it's blowing air at 23 or 18 degrees – but to your electricity consumption it does matter. And why would you want to waste money that you could instead invest in some icy cold beers? (note: we are not financial advisers. "investing" in beer is not a thing. Unless you own a brewery.)

- Keep your blinds closed to block out the hot afternoon sun. Plant a tree on your west/south

westerly side to shade your house.

- Reminiscing about those lovely cold showers we used to get once upon a time in a season other than summer? Yeah well, forget about it. Bonus: the so-called "cold" tap is so lovely tepid that you don't need to spend any energy heating water for your shower.
- That allegedly "cold" water is also great for doing your laundry! Don't bother putting the washing machine on "warm" - the "cold" water does the trick just fine; it comes out at 33 degrees anyway!
- Best thing to cool down? Take one of those tepid showers, don't towel dry, then stand naked in front of the aircon with your arms stretched out wide. Another reason to keep the blinds closed.
- A lot of ceiling fans have a summer and winter setting. The summer setting pushes air down on you, creating a nice breeze that carries your body warmth away, thereby cooling you down. The winter setting sucks the air up and then pushes it down the walls of the room. Great in winter to avoid cold pockets in your house, but utterly ineffective when wanting to cool off in summer. Make sure it's on the right setting! Fans can be highly effective and use less energy than aircons.
- Wet a flannel, then put it in the freezer for 10 minutes. Enjoy. Surprise your loved one when they come home hot and sweaty and give them a rub down with that icy cold flannel.

Keep up the fluids (I know we've been talking about cold beer, but when it comes to hydration then water is best).



Have some great ideas to share yourself? Tried one of these tips and want to share your success? You can leave a post on Facebook/meekagoesgreen, send us an email meekagoesgreen@gmail.com or pop into the Recycling Centre on Railway Street Saturdays 9-11am.

Workshops

Our monthly workshops are proving very popular as a way to try some new craft or thrifty hack. During the January workshop we recycled fabric into braided baskets by first cutting old clothes into strips, braiding and then coiling the braid. We used an easy to manage slip stitch to bind the braids into items like floor mats, dog beds and even warm people quilts.

Here's an egg collection basket made out of old jeans!

Looking forward to these monthly workshops throughout the year.

Next month: soap making.



Our first of many egg baskets



Participants at our January workshop cutting and braiding



A few ideas and inspiration for further braiding and recycling—a little padding, and a variety of fabrics can make all the difference to the finished product—a cheap and colourful way to furnish your home.





SQUASH

Keys & tokens can be obtained from the Shire Offices.

Only \$12.20 per hour.

Key bond applicable.

(Equipment hire is not available)

For if a kangaroo jumps out on John's drive home.

Every beat of this ordinary life is an extraordinary thing.
And we need your help to protect it.

St John urgently needs volunteers.

If you'd like to help the people of Meekatharra, visit stjohnchangelives.com.au. Or, give Meekatharra Sub Centre a call on 9980 1467, or email sjameekatharra@westnet.com.au.



Life goes on.
Volunteer with St John.



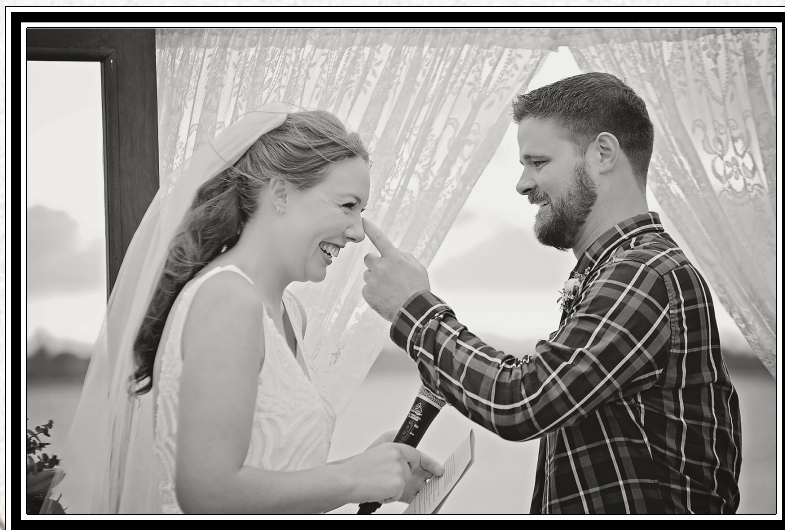


Congratulations

Lachlan and Georgia Macdonald

on your recent nuptials

6th January, 2020



The Shooting Stars



2019 saw the introduction of the Shooting Stars netball program at the Meekatharra District School. The program is an educational program that uses netball and other vehicles to drive its primary vision of increasing school attendance rates for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) girls living in remote communities and regional towns to 80-90%.

Shooting Stars works collaboratively with the local community, schools and service providers to affect genuine change in the lives of more than 350 students Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls.

Importantly, the program produces results. More than 25% of participants improve attendance term on term, while 50% of participants maintain an average attendance rate of 80% or above. Furthermore, Shooting Stars is a key driver in creating equality for female leaders and generational change, with 85% of its staff and 66% of its Board identifying as Indige-

nous. *(taken from the Shooting Stars website)*

Meekatharra has been very lucky to secure the leadership of Marcella Fielding and our own local lady Tilly Kyanga and our girls have responded very well.

December 11th Marcella and Tilly held a graduation night for those girls who succeeded through the program and improved their attendance. All girls improved enough to be awarded certificates of attendance, the greater proportion being 100% attendance.

The Town Hall was decorated to look like an enchanted Forrest by Marcella and her amazing helpers, and it was absolutely a magical night to remember.

The entire community should be very proud of the Meeka Queens and their dedication to improving their attendance at school, and their future prospects.





***Less than 30% of young Aboriginal women
have completed Year 12, compared
with 60% of other
Australian women.
Shooting Stars is
changing this***



A Wet Christmas in Meekatharra

In the recently opened Picture Gardens, on Friday 20th December, 2019, Meekatharra parents, grandparents and kids all came together to celebrate Christmas in Style. Santa took his time getting there, but while we waited Larry Leung, our newest Meekatharra resident filled in the time playing Christmas Carols on his guitar.

The kids were very excited to see the Red Man appear, and took turns sitting next to him on the big red chair to



get a present specifically chosen for them. A few kind words as only a knowing Santa can offer, and the grins on the faces tell the rest of the story.

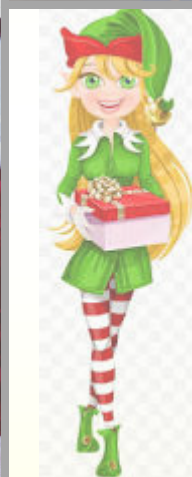
The party was well supported by local business this year, with Sandfire, Australian Vanadium and Westgold all donating to the Santa sack, Coles Express and Yulella providing hands on support as well as gifts, food and the all important icy-poles.

Brigham, our local Community Policing hero bravely cooked sausages for all in the 40 degree heat while Chrissy and Jo plated up salads and Christmas ham dinners.

As usual, the Youth Services Team pulled out all stops and set up the location to be very festive, and have learned many lessons about the heat trap that is the outdoor cinema.

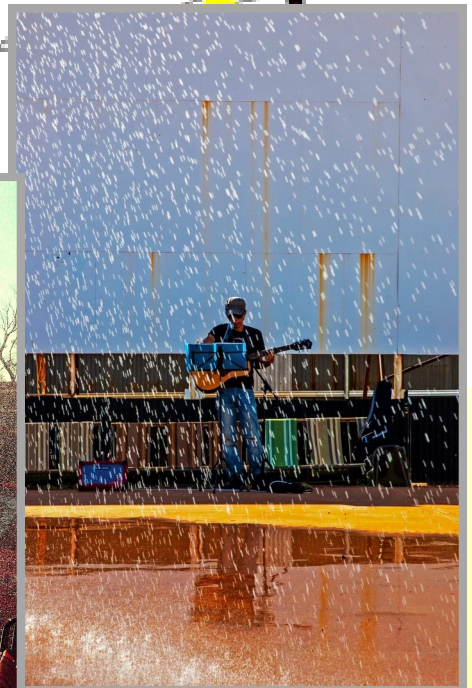
It was the cherry on the cake of the party that the local Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade came along and set up their light vehicle just outside the fence, and sprayed all inside with fire hose volumes of water. Squeals of delight could be heard all over town—Thanks Guys, you made the day.

It was, all in all, a super fun afternoon, and we are already planning for next year—Ho ho ho ho ho.





Such happy little faces, all excited to open their gifts from Santa. They will remember this day for many years to come. Thanks Jason and Steve for giving your own time to provide the lovely wet fun that was had by all—young and old.



Meekatharra Gymnasium

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Sunday of the Month**

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9981 1053
0419 547 175**

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Gardens without Sal, The Garden Gal

Our lovely Sal is away on holidays, just like most of Meekatharra, so we have a mystery guest gardening columnist this month.

Summer in Meekatharra is very hard on our gardens—the wind, the heat, the dry. Don't lose hope, however, there is still work to be done .

It's a great time to get your compost heap in order. Have you that perfect spot yet for fermenting those weeds? A good size for your heap is about 1 meter cubed, so a meter wide, deep and high. Don't forget to allow for air circulation in the heap, so before you fill the pile it helps to place a few lengths of PVC pipe or similar that can be removed later, but will leave a lovely little "tunnel" that allows the air to circulate through to the middle of your heap. We are aiming to use heat to break down the fibres of the compost and create a lovely sweet smelling additive that protects and nurtures the plants through these difficult seasons, and to create the heat we need oxygen and moisture. A perfect mix for compost is a balance of green and brown ingredients, regularly turned to incorporate the oxygen. The mix should not be too wet, or too dry. Too dry will stop the decomposition, and too wet will lead to a nasty smelling sludge. Don't be afraid to stick your hands in and feel the mix, you will be surprised to find you may have a sense of just what is needed and if the mix is right, it will feel good to touch.

GREEN—the "green" component provides valuable nitrogen and will be moist—kitchen scraps, fresh grass clippings, weeds from the garden, manures. You need this component to make compost, but too much will lead to a rotting stinky pile.

BROWN—the "brown" component provides valuable carbon to the mix. This will be things like paper, cardboard, hedge clippings, straw etc. Too much of

this will lead to an abandoned pile in your backyard that nobody wants to take ownership of.

When you make your mixture, try to layer the Brown and the Green, but you don't need to be too scientific. Regular turning of the pile to add oxygen will speed up the composting process, which can take anything from six to 16 weeks, depending on what it is made up of.

You will know your compost is ready when you smell it, and it smells sweet. Truly! I promise you this is true. A well composted pile has an undeniably unique smell, and its one you really want in your garden.

Once you succeed with your first pile, you will find you turn into a different person—soon you will be looking at the cow manure on the side of the road longingly, you will find you are taking plastic bags with you on long road trips to harvest lucky finds, you will put first dibs on the shredded paper at work—its surprisingly addictive.

Compost is great for your garden as it encourages all of the healthy microbes and insects. It protects your plants from heat and cold, and provides valuable nutrients—even in Meekatharra.



A good healthy and sweet compost mix from newspapers, grass clippings and food waste—perfect for heat protection for your plants

If you are looking for what to plant at this time of year, there are a lot of great online resources. A good one to try is www.gardenate.com which has customisable locations, and a handy little phone app. That makes recommendations on what to plant, when, and how.



Arid gardening doesn't mean no flowers—these hardy gazanias provide lots of pretty colour in a dry garden

Gardening Australia provides a great fact sheet on gardening in arid climates, some of their suggestions include -

- The lawn isn't going to be green all summer;
- That by this time of the year many plants - even hardy ones - will be looking ratty.
- Trees are important to ameliorate heat and also provide shade for the house.
- Shade, as a gardening tool, is wonderful because it provides lovely shadows and patterns of shadow.
- That even though it's dry you can still have different interesting shades of green, natural shapes and clipped and cut shapes. You can have leaves that absorb or reflect the sunlight. You can also have things that make patterns of shadow through the day.
- You can have yuccas that make really bold foliage statements.
- You can have interesting pots and paving and even little bits of sculpture and stuff that maintain interest and colour in summer when the garden is pretty much at rest.

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/dry-climate-garden/9428580>

Much of being successful at gardening in a harsh environment such as the one we experience here

is in careful plant selection, preserving shade and trees where possible, changing our expectations of what a garden should look like.

There are many examples of lovely gardens that have been created using hard landscaping structures (ornaments, chairs, pergolas) and desert plants. Typically these have leaves that are tough, leathery, waxy, silver, grey, hairy, succulent, shiny, or needle-like, and use less water than traditional garden plants. You can even explore reusing your grey water (that is from washing machines and showers.). These type of plants and gardens will weather extreme temperatures and events (such as fire or flood) better, and with less interventions.

Once you have settled on your variety of plants, there are other interventions you can take to help your garden survive.

- **Zone** plants with similar watering requirements together
- **Water** longer, deeper, but less often
- **Adjust** your reticulation to suit the weather
- **Regularly** inspect your reticulation
- Use **larger pots** with saucers below
- **Reduce** lawn areas (try native plants like lip-pie)
- **Apply** soil wetting products
- **Mulch** your gardens with compost, straw or well rotted manure
- **Cultivate** Shade and wind protection

But most of all, enjoy your garden and connect with nature. If your garden is growing well and healthily, you will enjoy some respite from the harsh weather yourself.



Hardy Aloes provide colour and some varieties are cooling to the skin after sunburn.

Farmers Across Borders

Who are they?

In 2014, a group of Esperance farmers found they had excess stores of hay, and were in an enviable position of being able to donate it to other farmers in need. In 2018, they travelled across the Nullabor to Bourke in NSW and delivered to very thankful interstate colleagues. The trip was very rewarding for all involved, and on Australia Day, 2019 the journey was repeated, this time 47 road trains travelled to Cobar.

Australia Day, and a little birdie has let on to the Dust Editor that scouts are out for a suitable band to play that evening.

How can we help?

Log on to www.farmerswithoutborders.com.au and click on the donate now button. There are a range of options from paypal to credit card to direct debit that will facilitate speedy support that will get to our community.



Late in 2019, the generous farmers again belted up their vehicles, and this time they travelled to the Murchison region of WA—specifically Sandstone, Mt Magnet and Meekatharra, where desperate pastoralists thankfully received stock fodder for their hungry animals. Picture above is of that delivery at Sherwood Station.

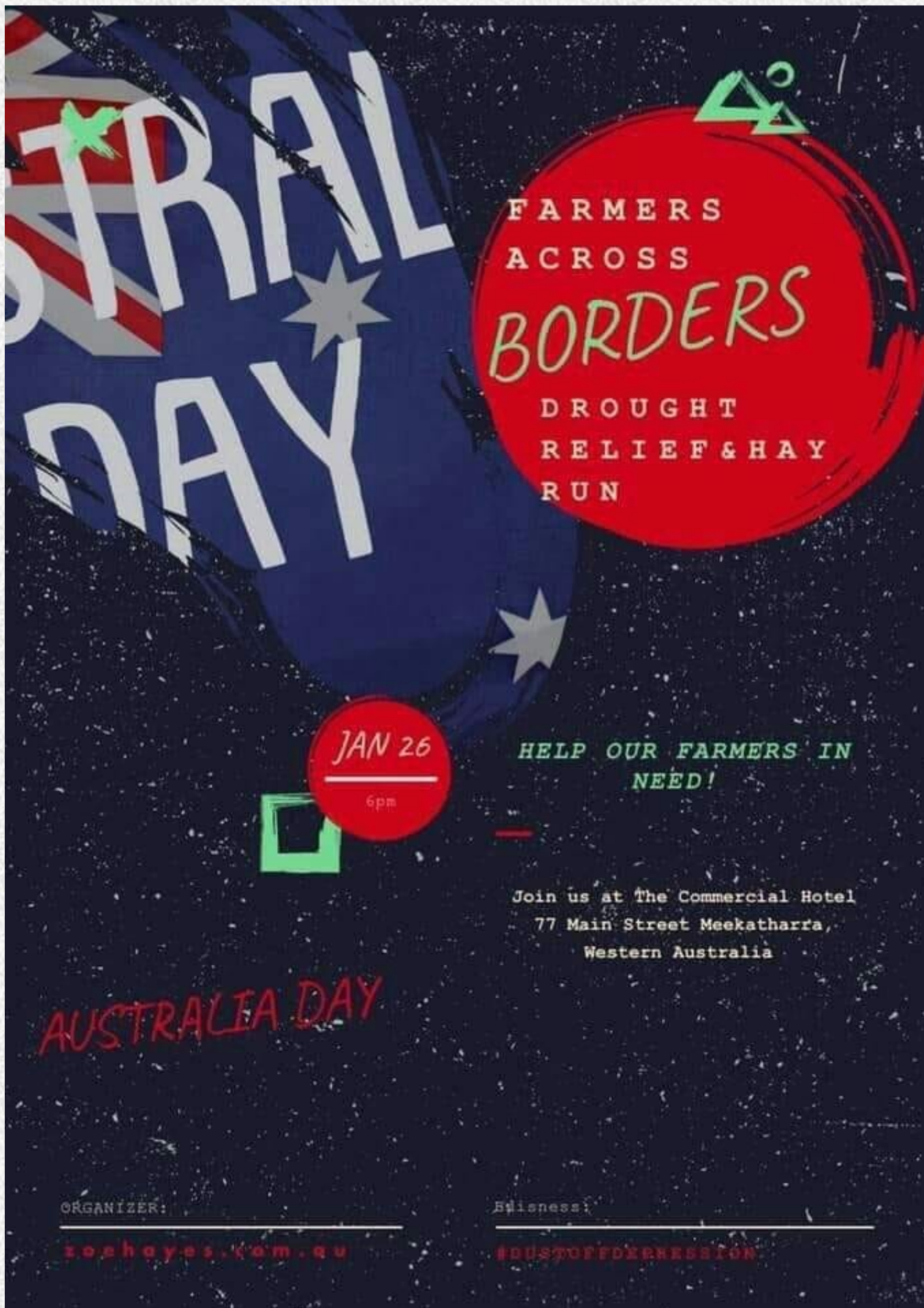
Additionally, lets show up at the Commie in force on Australia Day to welcome and thank the kind hearted souls for their generosity, and show them a real Mee-ka good time.

The Shire of Meekatharra contributed \$10,000 to the venture, and for Australia Day 2020, the roadtrains will again roll into the streets of Meekatharra, laden with delicious fibre for the hungry stock of the Midwest.

The Esperance farmers have been sponsored by Jeep Australia, Dust off Depression, DKT Rural Agencies and a number of other sponsors.

There will be a celebration of thanks and welcome that will likely surpass the big breakfast of 2019, at the Commercial Hotel in Meekatharra on





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IMPORTANT DATES

Stormboy

At the Picture Gardens

Gates open 6.45

Friday January 10th

Vacswim Swimming Lessons

At the Meekatharra Memorial Swimming Pool

Late enrolments 12 January

Lessons begin 13th January

Annual Electors Meeting

Council Chambers

9.00am Saturday 18th January

Ordinary Council Meeting

Council Chambers

9.30am Saturday 18th January

Jumanji

At the Picture Gardens

Gates open 6.45

Friday January 24th

Farmers Across Borders

Hay runners from Esperance celebrate

Sunday 26th January

Commercial Hotel

Australia Day Public Holiday

Monday 27th January

Meeka Goes Green Soap Making Workshop

At the Meeka Goes Green yard, Railway St Meeka

Sunday 2nd February