

Noojee News

Edition 11

Your Community Newsletter

Autumn 2026

Memories of Noojee State/Primary School

By Colin Booth

Noojee Primary School opened in 1922, just three years after the completion of the railway line. There were several other schools in the area at the time, but Noojee was one of the few that remained open well into the 21st century.

In early 1926, enrolment had reached 72 students when Noojee was impacted by bushfire and the school building was destroyed. Many families left the area as a result, and the remaining 27 attended the new school after it was rebuilt and reopened in August 1926.

The children had to relocate again after the building was destroyed for a second time, this time due to the 1939 Black Friday bushfires. On this occasion, rebuilding was not completed until 1941. Students initially had their lessons on the back porch of the hotel before later transferring to a marquee.

It wasn't until the mid-1950's that the School Committee agreed to install electric lighting in the classrooms. Because the school was located in a 'deep hollow', the classrooms could become so dark on overcast days that children were often unable to read the blackboard.

The school's longest-serving teacher was Mrs Elsie Blacker, who served as both teacher and principal for several decades.

Alumni often recall her as a 'beautiful lady' who left a lasting impression on the small community.

She was active at the school at least as far back as the mid-1980s, during which time she took long service leave.

She is remembered alongside other historical figures of the school, such as Mrs Nelson and teachers like Ms Clay.

Mark Inglese moved to Noojee as a four-year-old in the late 1970s and attended the school from 1980 to 1986 alongside his older siblings. He recalls that a typical day began with assembly, where all the children sang the national anthem. On special occasions, God Save the Queen was also sung.

By this time, the school had approximately 20 students, who were split across two classrooms. The younger children were taught in the 'little room,' while the older students were in the 'big room.' For a younger child to be asked to take a message to the big room was considered a great honour.

Mrs Blacker taught at the school for the entirety of Mark's time there, with other teachers rotating through. "Mrs Blacker was a kind teacher who easily related to children," Mark said. On one occasion, when the boys were being disruptive and making motorbike noises in class, she asked them to ride their motorbikes outside, park them, and return quietly. "This made school fun."

Older boys were sometimes given the task of killing snakes found in the school buildings or grounds, which was considered an honour. Another privilege afforded to the older students was raising the flag each morning. Outdoor play was an important part of daily life. Children played together during recess and lunch, with cricket popular in summer and football in winter.



Mrs Elsie Blacker



Mark also recalls regular bushwalks and walks to the trestle bridge, where students learned about the flora and fauna they encountered.

From the 1990s onwards, student numbers began to dwindle and the school ceased operations in 2021. It was later decided that the school would officially close in 2025, after more than a century of being part of the community.

The Noojee News acknowledges the original inhabitants and traditional custodians of Noojee and surrounds and pays respect to Elders past, present and First Peoples of Australia who live in this district.

From the editor...

The Noojee News is an independent publication produced by local media group under the auspices of the Noojee Community Hall Committee, to provide information for the town.

If you would like an article, letter or business card ad in the Noojee News email: noojeenews@gmail.com

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Noojee - Warragul Bus Service

Inbound - To Warragul (Monday - Friday)

Noojee Primary School	7:32	15:16
Noojee Post Office	7:36	15:20
Neerim Junction General Store	7:45	15:29
Settlement Rd/Main Neerim Rd (Neerim)	7:48	15:32
St John's Neerim South	7:56	15:40
Addison St/Main Neerim Rd (Neerim South)	7:57	15:41
Jindivick-Neerim South Rd/Main Neerim Rd (Neerim South)	7:58	15:42
Rokeby Hall	8:05	15:49
Buln Buln Primary School	8:10	15:54
Stoddarts Rd/Brandy Creek Rd (Warragul)	8:16	16:00
Brandy Creek Service Station	8:17	16:01
Clifford St/Smith St (Warragul)	8:19	16:03
Warragul Arts Centre	8:20	16:04
Barkly St	8:21	16:05
Queen St	8:23	16:07
Warragul Station Bus Terminal	8:25	16:09

Outbound - To Noojee (Monday - Friday)

Warragul Station Bus Terminal	10:10	16:55
Warragul Club/Victoria St (Warragul)	10:15	17:00
Cemetery/Brandy Creek Rd (Warragul)	10:16	17:01
Lincoln St/Brandy Creek Rd (Warragul)	10:17	17:02
Brandy Creek Service Station	10:18	17:03
Buln Buln Primary School	10:23	17:08
Rokeby Hall	10:29	17:14
Addison St/Main Neerim Rd (Neerim South)	10:37	17:22
Neerim South Post Office	10:39	17:24
Settlement Rd/Main Neerim Rd (Neerim)	10:45	17:30
Neerim Junction General Store	10:49	17:34
Loch Valley Rd/Bennett St (Noojee)	10:59	17:44
Noojee Primary School	11:03	17:48

*Noojee - Warragul Service doesn't operate on weekends or public holidays
For more information: Contact Warragul Bus Lines (03) 56235377*

Telstra Tower update

By Mark Lines

Finally some good news. Telstra technicians have finished their work on the tower and if all goes well, it will be connected on March 4th. Some testing may be done after that.



Noojee Inter-Working Groups

By Lana Horn

SPECIALISED AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IWG

Through the success of this group in establishing well-connected relationships and continuing that outside their monthly meetings, the group are looking to discuss the future of the group and what would be most appropriate to ensure the connection is still there, but maybe not meet as frequently.

POWER & CONNECTIVITY RELIABILITY IWG

You may have seen, or already had conversations with the Power and Connectivity Reliability IWG community members over the past few weeks. The group are currently investigating the issues the community face when the power goes out and whether there is any appetite to switch to renewable power options if affordable. The hope is from the results it will guide the group on the appropriate next steps to help support where possible the community in transitioning to more reliable, renewable energy sources.

NOOJEE – ECO COMMUNITY IWG

Heritage Precinct Masterplan – following the approval of the final draft concept design from the IWG members and Historical Society in their last meeting, this design will be presented to Councils Major Projects and Planning teams to determine what can be done under the current planning provisions, obtain an estimated project costing and potential staging of the development. The results of that meeting will guide the architects in their final draft design, which will be available for the community to view at the upcoming Community Event on Sunday 15th March.

NEW SUB-COMMITTEE

Members have discussed the establishment of a sub-committee, which will focus on a NNEST (Nurture, Nature, Education and Sustainable Tourism) concept, which is a community-led initiative that will work similar to that of a neighbourhood house.

ETHICAL HUNTING AND GAME PROCESSING IWG:

Unfortunately, following the call for Members, we didn't receive the required numbers to reinstate the group. Thank you to those members who did express an interest in joining the Working Group and to those members who originally joined the group when it was established in 2024.

The projects Q1 Community Event is taking place on Sunday 15th March at the Heritage Centre and commemorating the 1926 bushfires. The Historical Society has put together a fantastic display, which will be open and available for viewing. The community will also have the opportunity to view the final draft of the Heritage Precinct Masterplan.

Noojee State/Primary School

Noojee Primary School, Number 4098 known earlier as Noojee State School, located in School Road, Noojee, opened on October 1, 1922. and closed on January 29, 2025.



Noojee CFA News

By Colin Booth

As we move into March and the weather turns autumnal, the worst of the bushfire season may be behind us. This does not mean the risk of fire has disappeared. It will remain until the area receives significant rainfall.

Autumn also brings its own risks. One of the most significant in the cooler months is chimney fires. These are caused by a build-up of creosote, a tar-like, flammable material that accumulates over time as a by-product of burning wood. This risk can be easily reduced by having your chimney swept annually and ensuring the wood you burn is dry.

Another vitally important part of home fire safety is having working smoke alarms. You should test your smoke alarms monthly and replace the batteries as needed.

We're always happy to help with home fire safety, so feel free to get in touch with us, or drop by the Fire Station for a chat on Sundays between 10am and midday.



The Noojee and District Governance Group



Emma Birchall DEECA, Heather Gillespie Resident (Vice Chair), Ken Hitchcock Resident and Noojee CFA member, Glenn Fenton Resident (Chair), Krystal Barr Baw Baw Shire Council, Daryl Brooke Regional Development Victoria, Sharnae Moore Resident

By Glenn Fenton

The Noojee and District Governance Group meets monthly to progress matters raised through the Noojee Forestry Transition Project. The group—made up of local community members, Baw Baw Shire Council, DEECA, and Rural Development Victoria—provides high-level oversight of proposals developed by the Project Innovation Working Groups (IWGs).

Recent work has included ensuring a thorough community consultation process for the Heritage Precinct Development Plan and exploring the suitability of local, state, and federal grants for community development initiatives. The IWGs continue to deliver an impressive volume of work, from investigating the expansion of tracks and trails around Noojee to developing the Noojee Truffle Festival. Some shorter-term projects, such as a comprehensive speed-limit strategy, have required direct engagement with the Baw Baw Council Civil Asset Planning Team.

Representatives of the Governance Group have also recently met with senior DEECA staff to establish a program of workshops and meetings that will define the Noojee Pilot Project under the Victorian Government's Healthy Forests Plan. As this pilot progresses, there will be a strong focus on community consultation.

Over the past few years, it has become increasingly clear to the Governance Group that our district benefits from having a coordinated community voice when engaging with local and state government about the future of Noojee and surrounds. As the Noojee Forestry Transition Project concludes in December 2026, now is the right time for the community to consider whether a successor organisation should be established to continue this momentum.

In the coming months, the Governance Group will announce a series of workshops and meetings to explore this idea—what such an entity might look like, how it could operate, and how it could best support existing community organisations (including the Heritage Society, Hall Committee, and CFA), the IWGs, local businesses, and of course the broader community. These discussions will be an important opportunity for everyone to help shape the future of Noojee and District.

The Toolshed raised more than \$10,000

for fire-affected community *Continued on next page ...*



Celebrating Storytelling in the Heart of Gippsland

On Saturday 14th of March 2026, Gippsland International Film Festival will screen a selection of short films at the Noojee Heritage Centre.

This will be an outdoor cinema event preceded by the West Gippsland Concert Band that will play cinema inspired music before film screenings begin.

Snacks and beverages will be available from the Heritage Centre Cafe and Gift shop.

Don't forget to bring some extra layers of clothing as it can get chilly once the sun goes down.

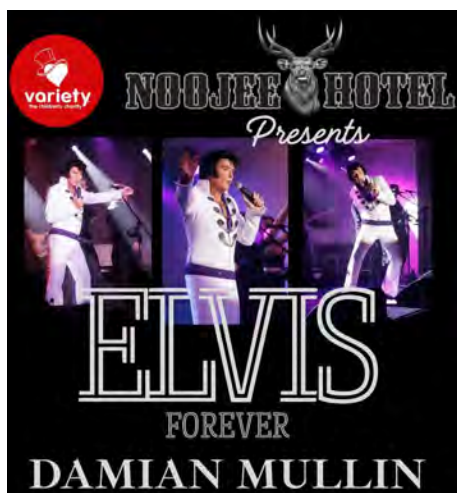
Tickets can be booked via Humanitix or purchased at the door. A portion of the ticket price will be donated to the local Neerim District Rural (Nayook) Primary School.

Gippsland International Film Festival is spearheaded by Alana Auden and Edward Yates, both of whom bring their experience as writers, directors and producers, and aims to increase accessibility to film culture within Gippsland. The goal is to screen as many and as varied number of short films to as many people as they can from the 13th-15th March 2026 in Gippsland.

For further information or to get involved: www.gippslandfilmfestival.com
<https://events.humanitix.com/gippsland-international-film-festival-noojee-session>

Noojee Hotel event raised more than \$15,000 for children's charity

On Saturday February 21st, award winning Elvis Presley Tribute Artist Damian Mullin rocked the house at Nooj Pub. It was a massive night of grooving and fundraising for the [Elvis 1 Variety Bash Car](#) with all funds going to Variety The Children's Charity.



Noojee and District Historical Society



COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF THE 1926 BUSHFIRES

The Noojee & District Historical Society have been busy this year preparing a permanent exhibition at the Noojee Heritage Centre to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1926 bushfires.

On February 14, 1926 (Black Sunday) 31 people lost their lives, and approximately 390,000 hectares were burned, primarily across Gippsland. The significance is the fires led to the first major coordinated bushfire relief fund and prompted significant changes in forest management policies.

The exhibition, which opened on February 14th in the 1960 Louvre Carriage Van, is based on Peter McHugh's presentation, 'The Forgotten Bushfires 1925/26' that highlights the history of forest and bushfire management in Victoria. Valuable contributions were also received from Owen Salkin, Wally Notman and the Neerim–Noojee Forest Interest Group and members of the public.

Upcoming activities at the Heritage Precinct

Wednesday afternoon, 4th March - Targa Classica - Car Event

San Remo through to Yarra Valley with a time trial in Noojee

Saturday, 14th March - Gippsland International Film Festival

Session 4 - Community Connections - Time: 6.30pm - 9.30pm

Sunday, 15 March - Shaping the Future of Noojee - Community Event

Commemorate the Centenary of the 1926 Bushfires – Time: 5pm – 7pm

Free dinner, catered for by The Little Red Duck Café, View the 1926 bushfire display in the Louvre Carriage Van, Live Music, Lawn games, Noojee CFA truck, View the final draft of the Heritage Precinct Masterplan.

Black Sunday

Before the fires on Black Sunday on February 14th 1926, Noojee had grown into a busy town with a railway station, farms, bush sawmills, a store, a post office, hairdresser, motor garage, a hotel, a hydroelectric system, a community hall and a school.

Almost every building in the town including 45 homes were destroyed by the fires. The hotel was all that remained.

Toolshed fundraiser continued from previous page...

By Colin Booth

On Saturday, January 31, the Toolshed hosted a community fundraising event in support of those impacted by the Longwood bushfire in Central Victoria, which occurred just a few weeks prior.

After seeing the devastation caused by the fires, the event was quickly organised by the Toolshed's staff so support could be provided as soon as possible.

Despite a brief afternoon shower, the event drew a strong crowd of locals and visitors who enjoyed a full day of entertainment, including live music, fire-twirling demonstrations, wood-carving displays, activities for kids and a visit from the local CFA brigade. Patrons also had the chance to take part in raffles and auctions, adding to the atmosphere. After weeks of planning, the day was a great success.

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