

*RACV Club*

# HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2020

## STABLE MATES

CLUB MEMBERS AND THEIR  
CONNECTIONS TO HORSES

KEEPING  
MEMBERS  
CONNECTED

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# WELCOME

IN THIS ISSUE

## Celebrating our Members' stories



**JOHN SLATTERY** Club & Membership Committee Chairman

In this edition of *Highlights* we celebrate the diversity and strength of our Club Members, with stories about their achievements and community connections. Judge Katherine Bourke talks about her love of horseracing and the challenges of running County Court cases via Zoom (page 4). Club Members Janet Houghton and her daughter Isabel offer insight into elite-level equestrian and equine welfare (page 6). Aboriginal community leader and educator Dr Lois Peeler reflects on the great relationship between Healesville Country Club and Worawa Aboriginal College and shares what NAIDOC week means to her (page 8). For those Members interested in getting fit and healthy for summer, our Fitness Centre has devised a 7-day challenge to help you get started (page 12). To mark Remembrance Day, we talked to two Members who share an interest in military and naval history (page 14). We hope you enjoy our November edition and, most importantly, don't miss out on our fabulous Member offer with Rochford wines (page 10).



**ROB EVERETT** RACV Club General Manager

I am extremely pleased to announce that RACV Club will begin to re-open in stages to members and their guests from 2 November. With the recent re-opening of the golf course at Healesville, this is exciting news.

Members should note that the re-opening of both club properties will take some considerable time and effort, and this will occur over an extended period with various outlets and facilities re-opening on different dates, as well as being under multiple restrictions that will significantly limit our ability to operate in many areas. We therefore ask for your patience and understanding during this initial re-opening period and also for your help by complying with all our COVID-safe requirements. There has been lots of activity while the club has been closed to maintain and improve the club, and we hope members will enjoy some of the exciting changes. In reference to my recent note about your membership, I would like to thank all our members for their words of support and patience during this lockdown period. On behalf of the whole RACV Club team, we are excited to welcome you back to the club and look forward to seeing you soon. For the latest information regarding your club stay or visit, and for full details of what's operating and what isn't, please continue to visit our club [website](#).

## CALL US OR SEND AN EMAIL

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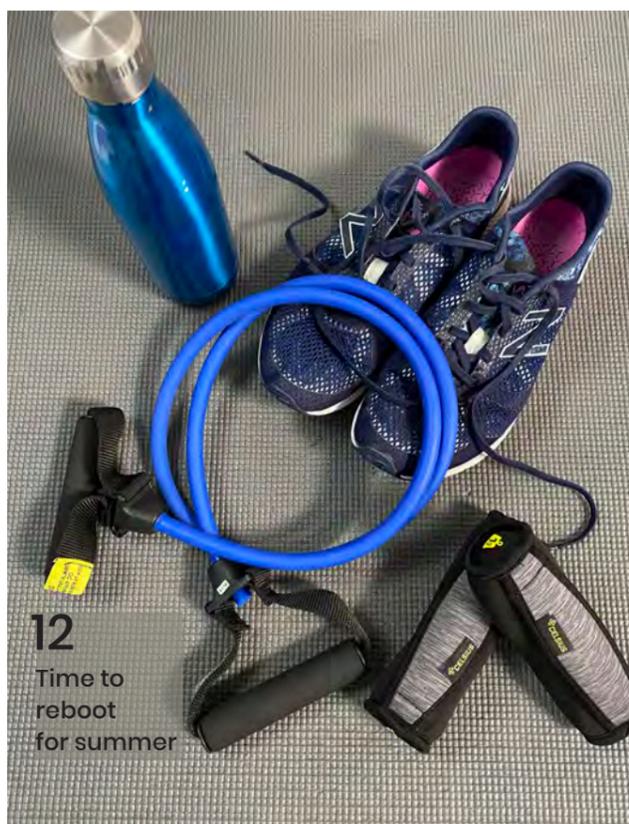
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**8**  
Meet local gem and community leader  
Dr Lois Peeler  
Photo: Kate Baker



**12**  
Time to reboot  
for summer

**14** Two members reflect on war and lockdown



Photo: National Library of Australia

- 4 **Special Feature:** Holding court
- 6 **Cover Story:** Stable mates
- 8 **Member profile:** Local gem
- 10 **Eat&Drink:** Valley dreams
- 12 **Wellness:** Time to reboot
- 14 **Me&You:** Shared values

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### SHARE YOUR STORIES

One of the best ways for Club Members to stay connected is by sharing stories. You can share a moment or memory on social media or send us an email.

- Post a photo on Instagram and use the hashtag #RACVClub
- Post a photo on your Facebook profile and add the tag @racvclub
- Email [highlights@racv.com.au](mailto:highlights@racv.com.au)

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## County Court judge, VRC director and long-time Club Member Katherine Bourke has taken the challenges of 2020 in her stride

Judge Katherine Bourke, a RACV Club Member for 20 years, was practically born with a racing form guide in her hand.

“My father John was the chief vet for the Victorian Racing Club (VCR) and all the metropolitan race clubs, my uncle David was the chairman of the VRC and two of my father’s six brothers were horse trainers, so I’ve been around racing my whole life,” she says.

Katherine has been on the board of the VRC since 2004 and is one of the current directors. “Racing is a great hobby, but I also like the involvement in the administration side of it,” she says.

“The law and racing sit pretty well together for a lot of people. People in the law have racing interests and vice versa. It’s quite compatible.”

Like the RACV Club, the VRC has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home restrictions. But the Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival is going ahead and Melbourne Cup will stop the nation on the first Tuesday in November, as it has for 160 years.

The only thing missing will be the 80,000-plus crowd at Flemington, but millions of people around the world will still witness the race on TV or mobile devices.

Katherine plans to frock up, as she does every year, this time for Fashions on the Front Lawn with friends.

“It will be house-party city,” she says. “Channel 10 will have great coverage and it won’t just be a case of watching the races on the TV, it will be a whole performance leading up to it and entertainment on the day.

“Even though you’re not at the course, you can still have a barbecue lunch, get dressed up and watch great racing.”

Katherine says the COVID-19 restrictions haven’t affected the field for the Spring Racing Carnival, with a strong international contingent keen to win big stake money.



WORDS: BLANCHE CLARK. PHOTO: CLUB MEMBERS  
KATHERINE BOURKE AND HER SISTER CLAIRE QUIN.



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She says equine welfare has become a major focus for the VRC Board. The Equine Wellbeing Fund was set up last year and is funded by a percentage of members subs and, under normal circumstances, gate takings from Cup week.

The money is used to fund industry initiatives such as retired horse rehoming, research into horse welfare and ensure compliance with welfare management and policies.

Katherine is a part-owner of several racehorses with legal friends or family. “My sister has a couple of horses that might get in the Melbourne Cup, but mine aren’t that good,” she says. However, one horse shows promise. Trained by Irish trainer and former jockey Johnny Murtagh, Carrytheone has won two races in Ireland.

Katherine says her work as a County Court judge has continued during Melbourne’s lockdown.

“The criminal work has been cut back because there are no jury trials, whereas I do common law cases, mainly involving personal injury,” she explains. “We are running cases from home on Zoom. I still have to put on my robes, but it can be a bit challenging maintaining a courtroom atmosphere when clients and barristers are at home.”

She’s looking forward to returning to work in the CBD and her regular catch-ups with friends at RACV City Club. “I love the Members’ Dining Room, the wine bar, and meeting for a casual drink downstairs. The Club is a great meeting place for legal people,” she says.

*‘I love the Members’ Dining Room, the wine bar, and meeting for a casual drink downstairs. The Club is a great meeting place for legal people.’*

# STABLE MATES

Club Members Janet Houghton and her daughter Isabel live and breathe horses on their property in the Yarra Valley

Janet Houghton grew up in North Ringwood when it was hugged by orchards and paddocks and still part of Melbourne's suburban fringe. She rode her horse, Stormy, to pony club and competed in state championships.

"In those days you left home for pony club at eight in the morning with a packed lunch and your mum saw you ride back down the driveway at two in the afternoon," she says.

As an adult she competed in eventing, rode in Point to Point steeplechases, worked as an equine educator at Box Hill Institute and bred horses on a farm in Violet Town, where her four children were born.

Six years ago, she became a board member of Equestrian Victoria, after years of involvement with Interschool Championships, which is a rapidly growing area of Equestrian in Australia.

"The recreational horse industry is huge," Janet says. "It ranges from people who have horses for trail riding and pleasure to people who want to be a bit more competitive, which is where I am involved. I run the squads in Victoria for eventing and support the young riders in their national, international or Olympic goals."

As an organiser of the Melbourne International 3-Day Event, a premier eventing competition, she was disappointed when the June event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's an amazing event. We get a permit from Parks Victoria, which allows us to build our cross-country course through the historic Werribee Rose Garden and around the Mansion. We usually have thousands of people attend."

A major sponsor of that event is Off The Track, a program that helps retired thoroughbred racehorses find second careers. "The Off the Track program is very important," Janet says. "It helps promote life after racing for the thoroughbreds. Horses that have raced often make good eventers because they are athletic and like to gallop."

Isabel has inherited her mother's passion and runs Yoicks Equine Rehabilitation at the family's property, Yoicks Farm in the Yarra Valley, where they have lived for 24 years. She has two Off the Track horses, including Kimmi, the offspring of 2010 Melbourne Cup winner American.

Isabel says her clients come from all over the state and she can cater for about 14 horses. "At the start I had mostly pleasure horses and some performance horses and now I have a lot more performance horses and a few race horses.

Rehabilitation can take months because the horses have to weight bear and that can delay healing. Isabel describes her job as the 'middleman'.

"I have a good knowledge and I might know what to do, but it is important to work out a program with the professionals. This would include the vet and often the farrier, dentist and physio. We adjust the program depending on horse's progress," she says.

When COVID-19 restrictions ease, Isabel will continue competing in elite-level equestrian, with an eye on one day representing Australia. She's undeterred by a devastating riding accident in 2016, when she was airlifted to the Alfred Hospital with a brain injury. Her road to recovery included opening her equine business.

In the past, Isabel and Janet have enjoyed staying at City Club if they've had a show or event at Werribee to attend.

"We have a network of friends involved with the RACV Club and the Equestrian Victoria Awards were held at the City Club a couple of years ago," Janet says.

"I also love swimming at Healesville and now I have a grandson I can't wait to take him to the pool as well."

● Share your stories with us by sending an email to [highlights@racv.com.au](mailto:highlights@racv.com.au)



WORDS: BLANCHE CLARK. PHOTOS: ISABEL HOUGHTON COMPETING IN THE MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL 3-DAY EVENT, AND WITH HER MUM, JANET.

# LOCAL GEM

RACV Club member and Aboriginal  
elder Lois Peeler views NAIDOC week  
as a time for reflection and unity

As an Elder and Aboriginal community leader, RACV Club Member Dr Lois Peeler AM strives to increase knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal history and culture in the broader community.

She says NAIDOC week (8-15 Nov) grew out of protests against the status and treatment of Indigenous Australians, in particular the 1938 Day of Mourning.

“My personal feeling is that national pride in our Aboriginal culture is not something that happens in one week of the year. Aboriginal culture is the world’s oldest continuing living culture, it should be a matter of national pride and embedded in Australian culture the way it is with Maori culture in NZ,” she says.

“I think there is a need to reflect on the past, to acknowledge that this is part of our history but it is a time for us to come together in unity to create a brighter future for future generations.”

Lois is the Executive Director and Principal of Worawa Aboriginal College, a boarding school situated in the Yarra Valley on land that formed part of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve.

“We greatly value our relationship with the Healesville RACV Country Club,” Lois says.

“The College uses the beautiful venue for corporate, community and special events. Our students have had the opportunity to explore career pathways when the Club generously facilitated a ‘behind the scenes’ to provide our students with an understanding of the world of work.

“The Club has also assisted the College to acquire a barista coffee machine, which enabled students to undertake barista training and gain the skills to make a good coffee.

“We also have a Pathway to Womanhood (PTW) program to assist young women to make a healthy transition to adulthood. As part of that program we take PTW participants to the Club to experience the pleasure of dining, ordering from a menu, etiquette and social expectations and experiencing what is always a lovely, welcoming environment.”

Lois says the College has risen to the challenge of remote learning during the coronavirus lockdown, with some students on campus and others choosing to undertake remote learning in their home communities in the Kimberley, Queensland and Northern Territory, Central and Top End Aboriginal communities.

Founded in 1983 by Lois’ sister Hyllus Maris, Aboriginal values and pedagogy underpin College operations with Indigenous perspectives embedded across the curriculum.

“All too often in the past our Aboriginal story has been silenced, so we make sure it is prominent in our teaching and learning,” says Lois. “We have developed a Dreaming Trail, History Walk, Resource Centre and Professional Learning Institute to hold onto our traditions and tell of our history and culture.”

She says many students aspire to become leaders within their own communities. “One student who graduated last year is working in schools in her community and there are other girls who have gone on to higher education.”

Lois, who was Senior Victorian Australian of the Year in 2017, has enjoyed an amazingly diverse career.

She was Australia’s first Aboriginal model and TV presenter and a member of the 1960s singing group the Sapphires, which was portrayed in the titular 2012 movie.

After touring Vietnam to entertain the troops, she married a US army medic and lived in America and Europe for a time. Since returning to Australia, she has worked for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, headed the Aboriginal Tourism Australia, and chaired a number of important Aboriginal committees and groups.

“I’ve had a diverse career and I feel blessed. I draw on all those experiences for my current role,” Lois says.

She values her membership of the RACV Club, which she has found a welcoming place.

“For many of our people that is not an everyday thing,” she says. “Our people have not always had the opportunity or resources to be a member of any club.”

She is looking forward to the time Healesville Country Club can safely reopen. “I love standing out on the balcony and looking at the mountains; they seem so close and that is such a beautiful feeling.”



Explore the works of 80 Indigenous artists in the RACV Art Collection at [racv.com.au/artcollection](http://racv.com.au/artcollection)

Read about the artists from the Kimberley region at [racv.com.au/royalauto/club-stories.html](http://racv.com.au/royalauto/club-stories.html)

WORDS: BLANCHE CLARK. PHOTOS: LEFT, LOIS PEELER ON THE GROUNDS OF WORAWA ABORIGINAL COLLEGE AND ABOVE RIGHT, WITH HER SISTER LAUREL AS PART OF THE SAPPHIRES



Rochford Wines represents everything we love about the Yarra Valley, from its stunning scenery to great wine

In a region spoilt for choice when it comes to award-winning wineries and hatted restaurants, one place stands out for its positive outlook.

Rochford Wines, which has welcomed visitors from near and far for almost two decades, has transformed from concerts and cellar door experiences to a makeshift grocer and takeaway venue with the advent of COVID-19.

Business owner and CEO Helmut Konecsny never dreamt of rolling vineyards and fermenting grapes when he was working in a paper-recycling business as an engineer.

“It was a coincidence that I got into winemaking,” says Helmut. “When I moved from Sydney to Melbourne, we purchased a property up in Macedon called Rochford.

“It had a ten-acre vineyard, a winery, a winemaker and a brand; that’s how we got into wine.”

About 20 years ago they purchased the property in Coldstream based on the area’s reputation.

“The Yarra Valley is a tourist destination and probably compared to all the regions in Victoria it’s known exclusively for wine. We don’t have beaches or penguins, but we do have wine, food, and events.

“We are best known for chardonnay, pinot and sparkling wines. It’s what the Yarra Valley is famous for.”

Director of Tourism and Events Faye Hendricksen joined the team 15 years ago, creating new experiences and welcoming A-list stars, such as Rob Thomas, John Farnham, and Rod Stewart, to their open amphitheatre for “A Day on the Green” concerts.

“The Yarra Valley is forever-changing and growing, it’s the place to be seen,” Faye says.

The community spirit is still positive in the Yarra Valley, but small businesses can’t wait for visitors to return.

“There is nothing better than witnessing people enjoying themselves, celebrating milestones, getting married and, of course, indulging in a glass of wine or two,” says Faye.

Wine sales at Rochford have fortunately not dipped and, although the rain has been heavier than normal, the vintage for this year’s wine is looking good.



PHOTOS: HELMUT KONECSNY, LEFT, AND ROCHFORD WINNERY, ABOVE



Receive an exclusive 25% off “The Rochford Halliday 6 Pack”. For a full list of award-winning wines and to purchase this special deal, visit [rochfordwines.com.au/RACV](http://rochfordwines.com.au/RACV)

Many RACV Club Members have included a visit to the winery as part of their leisure activities while staying at Healesville Country Club.

“RACV Country Club has been there from the beginning,” says Faye. “When I first commenced at Rochford I was welcomed to the region by the Club, we have worked together ever since.

“We share ideas, we refer business to each other, and we meet regularly to share new ideas. RACV Country Club is a great asset to the Yarra Valley and they are supportive of everyone.”



# TIME TO REBOOT

Move it or lose it! The warmer weather is here and you can get fit with our 7-day program using our online videos and Better Bods strategy

**G**etting fit and feeling great is as much about attitude as having regular activity and eating healthy and nutritious meals.

One of the RACV Club's most successful nutrition and exercise programs, Better Bods, has helped dozens of Club Members reach their fitness and weight-loss goals.

The Better Bods course usually runs for eight weeks at the City Club Fitness Centre, but you can initiate your own 7-day program by using our online videos and downloadable PDF guide.

Start off gently with our videos of push-ups and squats with Nate Wells and progress to Abs & Core workouts with Fran Furci. If you need to build up strength, do your push-ups and shoulder taps from your knees rather than toes.

In an ideal world, you would have your fitness level assessed by a personal trainer before starting a new fitness regimen. If this is not possible, simply record some baseline measurements, such as the maximum number of push-ups you can do and your current weight or waist measurement. See a doctor or physiotherapist if you have an injury or pre-existing condition.

RACV City Club Fitness Centre Manager Con Kalogiannis recommends you start slowly.

"Even if it's only 15 minutes at the start, you can build up from there," Con says. "Listen to your body and take a break when you need one."

He suggests allowing your body time to recover if you're starting from a low fitness base or if you've had an extended period without exercise.

**HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED**

- Have a goal and write it down.
- Revisit your baseline measurements monthly to review your progress.
- Workout with a friend if possible.
- Make it fun and find exercises you enjoy doing and add some variety.

**CREATING LONG-TERM EXERCISE HABITS**

- Make exercise a priority. Even if you're busy with work or tired. Chances are, you'll feel much better afterwards.
- Take it one step at a time and set small, manageable and realistic goals.
- Wear a fitness tracker. This can show you your activity level, sleep quality and heart rate throughout the day.
- Be consistent.



Try our 7-day fitness program, based on the Better Bods course, with our fitness [videos](#) and a downloadable [PDF guide](#).

WORDS: BLANCHE CLARK. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

ME &  
YOU

# SHARED VALUES



Club Members Michael Buckridge and Jan Roberts-Billett have known each other for 22 years and share an interest in military history

### JAN ROBERTS-BILLETT

Like Michael, I am a child of World War II. My father didn't come home until I was two years old and then he was demobbed (demobilised). As a result, I've always been interested in the effect of war on society, and when I went to university I majored in history and politics.

My second husband, (Major) Bill Billett, used to take me to lunch at The Naval and Military Club in Little Collins St and that's how I became an associate member.

I've known Michael from the time I started working on my book, *Memories of War*. I interviewed 50 members of The Naval and Military Club about their World War II experiences and that book took me about six years to write. Michael was one of the committee members who encouraged me and he organised my contract.

Many of the people I interviewed had quite severe post-traumatic stress, which at that stage not many people knew about. As a woman I think you are much more empathetic. Michael says I don't stop talking, but on the other hand I do an awful lot of listening.

In retrospect there are many things I've done partly because I am a woman. I'm empathetic and I've seen that it's worth pushing a bit. I was successful in getting a plaque at the the Australian War Memorial for the sailors who were part of the Yachtsmen Scheme. I researched this courageous group of men for my master's degree and now I'm writing a book about them.

Michael and I are on the committee of the Pipeclay Club, which is an interest group within the RACV Club. Our functions are held at RACV City Club, with the Anzac Day lunch being the biggest event.

For *Memories of War I* interviewed a number of fascinating women. I think it's interesting to look back at the things people fought for, which are all important for young women today. Times have changed, but it can still difficult be at times.

WORDS: AS TOLD TO BLANCHE CLARK. MAIN PHOTO: AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL, GETTY IMAGES. BELOW FROM LEFT, MICHAEL BUCKRIDGE AND JAN ROBERTS BILLETT



If you're looking for ways to connect with your fellow Club Members or an interest group, our Club Events team can assist you. Call 9944 8888 or email [clubevents@racv.com.au](mailto:clubevents@racv.com.au)

### LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICHAEL BUCKRIDGE

I've known Jan since 1995, when she started working on *Memories of War*, which was published by The Naval and Military Club. Since then we've stayed in touch and we are both on the committee of the Pipeclay Club and the committee of Military History & Heritage Victoria.

I have a master's degree in military history and a long association with the Army Reserve. The Naval and Military Club went into liquidation in 2008 and the RACV Club was kind enough to absorb all the members. The Pipeclay Club was established on Remembrance Day in 2010 to maintain those military connections.

We're a virtual club but we haven't conducted any Zoom meetings during lockdown. Most of our members place greater value on the opportunities to get together in person. Everyone's active service was a long time ago, but people have had long and fruitful lives, so there's plenty of other things to talk about.

Jan brings her enormous enthusiasm for military matters to the Pipeclay Club and she keeps in touch with lots of people. Our biggest event is the Anzac Day lunch, which had to be cancelled this year, but we usually have a speaker. Last time it was Michael Bennett, the great grandson of General Sir John Monash.

I think drawing comparisons between wartime and the COVID-19 pandemic is a stretch, but the lockdown may have given young people an idea of what it's like to have to sacrifice your personal needs for the general good.

The Naval and Military Club Library was donated to the RACV Library, and includes Jan's book, and we are planning to digitise another book, *The Naval and Military Club, Melbourne: A History of its First Hundred Years, 1881-1981*, by Warren Perry.

The RACV Club caters for all sorts of interests, whether it's dining, motoring or going to the gym. It is probably the best fitted-out club of any in Melbourne. Hopefully, after the lockdown ends, people will be fired up and keen to do more next year.

Wine of Australia

Yarra Valley  
Pinot Noir

**R**

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