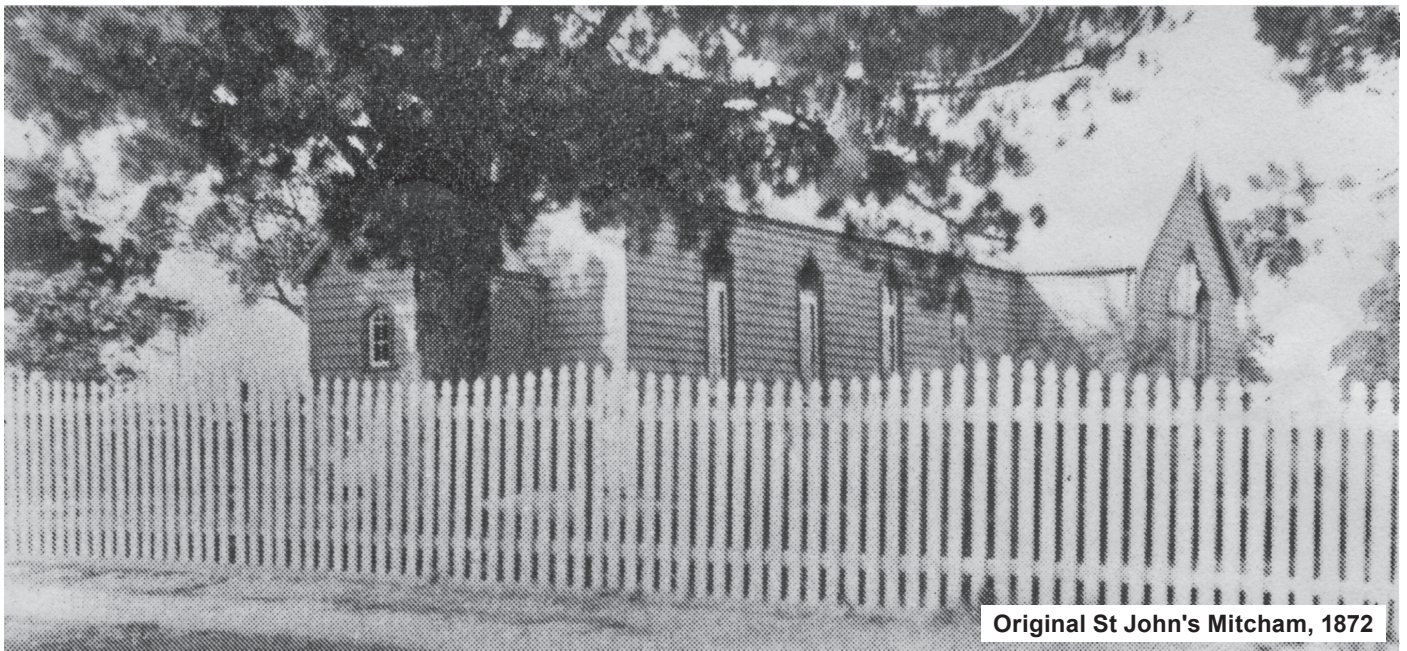


## A look into history



Original St John's Mitcham, 1872

**I**N 1873 St John's, Mitcham, which then included all of the Ringwood area, was probably unique in our Deanery in having a church cemetery.

It was known as the Air Hill "Berrying" Ground. Mr John McGlone, who had donated the land for the church, obtained permission to establish a cemetery where those Catholic pioneers of the area could be buried – they were nearly all Irish immigrants used to a tradition of church-ground burials.

The regulations of the Berrying Ground laid down that those who had donated £2 towards the building of the School Chapel in 1872 could have a grave site. The instalment system was apparently in operation even then as a donation of ten shillings could secure a right, the balance COD!

The burial ground was behind the School Chapel, site of the present tennis court and playground and

partly under the present church.

The earliest burial was probably Rose McClare aged 6; family tradition has it that her father dug the grave himself. Later her mother, Mary, was buried there with Rose.

Most of the recorded burials took place between the 1870s and about 1886, when the cemetery was closed after a dispute over the siting of a grave. However, it's reasonable to assume that families with a legal entitlement there did exercise that right of a burial site, even though the burial may have been recorded elsewhere. It is thought that Miss May Bowen, age 24, was the last, in 1909.

The death certificates of those officially buried at St John's give some insight into the life and times of the early parish – especially the hardships and tragedies.

*(continued on page 4)*

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF MEETING DATE**

**NEXT MEETING**

**General Meeting 1pm Saturday, 17 June**

Gerry Robinson launches Mary Schwerkolt's Amazing Life



# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

*Dear Members*

**A**LL our travellers have returned from their voyages and we are currently being regaled with interesting stories. Kathy and Rob report that the city of Muscat in Oman is so clean that it makes Singapore look untidy!

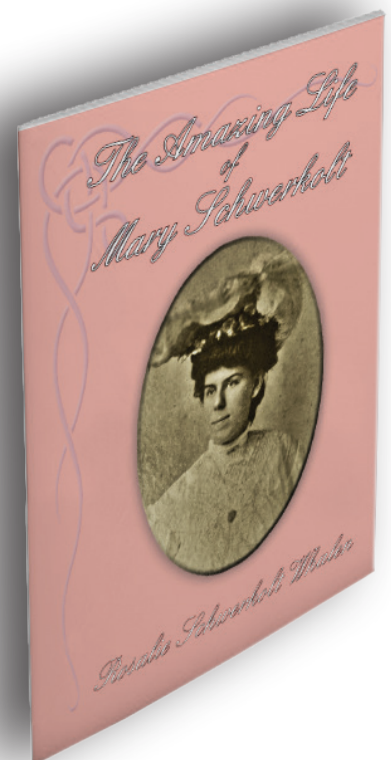
A few weeks ago I attended a heritage meeting at the council chambers. The council has increased the money that can be used for repairs to heritage listed buildings – from \$25,000 to \$40,000. We then had to decide what would be the maximum amount allowed for each individual request. The figure agreed upon was \$2000.

The guest speaker at our last General Meeting was Philip Widmer from the Box Hill Historical Society. He takes tours around the Box Hill Cemetery and is familiar with its history. He had some photographs of some of the largest graves and spoke about the histories of the families interred. He also gave some examples of those with unusual wording. Some dyed-in-the-wool football supporters have inscriptions like “Come on the blues”.

Don't forget that our next General Meeting will be a week later, than usual – on June 17. This is owing to the Queen's birthday long weekend. It will celebrate the launch of Rosalie Whalen's book *The Amazing Life of Mary Schwerkolt*. Our guest speaker,

Gerry Robinson, will keep us engrossed, as he always does. The book will be on sale during the afternoon. Make sure you don't miss this special event – I look forward to seeing you all!

*Pat Richardson*



Our new publication

## Your Committee in Action

- The document digitization project is beginning. It is a big job and anyone able to assist would be greatly appreciated.

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### CONTENTS

President's Report	2	Diary Dates	6
April Meeting Report	3	From the Collection	6
From The Reporter	5	Daring Burglary at Blackburn	7



The new entrance to Box Hill Cemetery

AS Pat mentions in her Report, our speaker last meeting was Philip Widmer, who took us on an enthralling tour of Box Hill Cemetery, showing pictures of some noteworthy graves – as well as some that were simply favorites of his; the reasons for these were often as interesting as the more traditional cemetery highlights.

Box Hill Cemetery is a sanctuary for the remains of over 50,000 people, including many famous Australians. To name just a few: businessmen Sidney Myer (*d. 1934*) and Sir William Angliss (*d. 1957*); poet C. J. Dennis

(*d. 1938*); politician and lawyer Maurice Blackburn (*d. 1944*); inventor of Vegemite Dr Cyril Callister (*d. 1949*); inaugural chairman of the CSIRO Sir Ian Clunies Ross (*d. 1956*) and Australian Drivers Champion and four times Australian Grand Prix winner Lex Davison (*d. 1965*).

And many more graves are also of considerable interest. Box Hill Cemetery's cultural, historic and landscape values are considered of State significance by the National Trust. The unique and fascinating 1929 columbarium and Sidney Myer memorial are on the Victorian Heritage Register.

## History

THE first moves to establish a public cemetery at Box Hill were made in 1872 when an area of twelve acres was set aside and eight trust members were appointed at a public meeting. A grant of £35 was received from the Government of the day for the erection of a fence around the site. The area was part of a large reserve bounded on two sides by Whitehorse Road and Britnells Road (now Middleborough Road).

The first burial took place the day after the cemetery was officially gazetted on 30 August 1873. Prior to this, burials took place on land surrounding the nearby United Methodist Church and in the small



Box Hill Cemetery in winter



The heritage-listed columbarium

Lutheran cemetery established at Waldau (Doncaster) in 1860.

Box Hill Cemetery was enlarged on two occasions in subsequent years. A small adjoining section, still referred to as the “New Survey”, was gazetted in 1886, following the extension of the railway line from Box Hill to Lilydale. In 1935 a further adjoining area of twelve acres was purchased by the Box Hill Council to bring the cemetery to its present size of 30.8 hectares.

From 1875 until 1973, the main entrance to the cemetery was from Whitehorse Road by way of an

attractive avenue. The fine entrance gates and pillars to this approach still stand today, but they are no longer part of the cemetery. The present entrance from Middleborough Road was established in 1973 to eliminate the need for funeral traffic to cross the railway line.

Two features within the cemetery are the commemorative arch built in 1923 to mark the 50th anniversary of the cemetery and the large iron bell hanging over the entrance to the current office. Cast in Manchester, England in 1886, the bell originally served the Box Hill Fire Brigade. In 1927, the Brigade’s Board presented the bell to the Box Hill Cemetery, where it is rung each evening around 5:00 pm as a signal to cemetery visitors that the gates are soon to close.

With few remaining new burial sites available, the first stage of a community mausoleum was constructed in 2002 to provide 130 crypt spaces on 5 levels. A second stage, offering a further 216 crypts on six levels was built in the same style in 2005. A third stage of the community mausoleum was built in 2012, and a fourth was completed early in 2017 to offer another 342 casket spaces.

The former secondary-entrance and side-fence on Middleborough Road were replaced in 2016. The attractive new main entrance and front fence now offer safer and more serviceable access to Box Hill Cemetery.

# A look into history *(continued from page 1)*

Sometimes a priest could ride out from Richmond for the burial, but usually one of the two parish stalwarts, Mr John McGlone or the hard-working John Quinlan, would read some prayers at the gravesite; when one of the Jesuits could attend there would be a final Mass and then a sad procession from the School Chapel through the trees that surrounded it to the burial ground. Unfortunately, all trace has now disappeared, but arrangements are in hand for something to be done to commemorate it.

*Syd Wright*

*(This is one of a series of articles written for the Maroondah Deanery Advocate; this appearing in December 1991)*



**\* Do you have any memories of your past that we could share in the newsletter? We would love to receive anecdotes that paint a picture of how things were in days gone by – not just what has changed, but actual living memories!**

From the

# Blackburn & Mitcham Reporter

CIRCULATING IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF BLACKBURN AND MITCHAM AND DONCASTER.

Volume 48 Number 23

Friday, 7 June 1935

Price Twopence

## VERMONT.

### FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

Last week, Lt.-Colonel H. J. Kirkpatrick arrived from South Africa, and is at present residing with his mother in Vermont. Lt.-Colonel Kirkpatrick left Sydney for the Boer War with the 1st Australian Horse, and afterwards was seconded to the South African Constabulary, under our famous Chief Scout, Baden-Powell. When that body was absorbed into the South African Police, Lt.-Colonel Kirkpatrick remained and became Deputy Commissioner, from which office he has just retired. This is only his second visit in thirty-five years, but he has old associations with Melbourne, since he received part of his education at Melbourne Grammar and the old Queen's College. He imparts some rather startling information about Cape Colony, and assured the writer that he was glad to be back in the country he was born in. He says the racial animosity in the Colony is bitter. South Africa is torn with jealousies and strife. Contrary to the general belief, the Dutch outnumber the British by twenty per cent., and the feeling is definitely anti-British. All departments are overloaded with Afrikaners, as the Colonel calls them, to about eighty per cent. of the total strength. Were it not for this unpleasant condition of affairs, he says, it would be a beautiful country to live in, particularly for one adopting agricultural pursuits. The farmer there, as Lt.-Colonel Kirkpatrick expresses it, is "on velvet." It is a rich country, and the farmer receives every encouragement. In the last four years, twenty-four millions have been written off in farmers' debts, and a great scheme involving millions more, is at present under consideration. Our visitor naturally feels the cold rather keenly, but says he loves Vermont and may decide to make his home here.

*There's Good Money in Fruit!*  
*Don't let it slip through your fingers*



Control the ravages of Peach Aphid, Red Spiders, Scale and Caterpillars in the egg stage, and count on bigger crops, better fruit and more profits.



**I.C.I. WINTER WASH**

I.C.I. Winter Wash can be relied upon to protect your trees from hungry insects — insect tests in Victoria have proved it 100% effective. I.C.I. Winter Wash is a dormant-period, non-diffuse spray, converted into a creamy emulsion that emulsifies in the hardest water. I.C.I. Winter Wash is not an added expense — it saves its cost many times over in more and better fruit. Order now, from your local dealer.

Report of Ardimora test published in Journal of Agriculture, Victoria, Vol. 31, Part 6, June, 1933.

LOCAL AGENTS:  
 G. S. GROVER - - - - - DONCASTER - - - - - BINGWOOD  
 SMITH BROS. - - - - - TEMPLESTOWE - - - - - I. SAUNDERS - - - - - VICTORIA MARKET  
 Wholesale Distributors: RAMSAY & TREGANOWAN LTD., 469 Lotrobe St., Melbourne.

**Imperial Chemical Industries**  
OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND LTD.  
 180 Collins Street, Melbourne 277 Clarence Street, Sydney

## HOW CARDS BEGAN.

Card games have been popular in Europe since the Middle Ages, and there was a story that they were invented to beguile a mad king of France. Actually they are much older, and originated as a fortune-telling device. They are referred to as the Bible of the gypsies and the Book of Hermes-Trizmegistus. For playing purposes the packs varied, and the values were differently represented. The suits we now have find their counterpart in clubs, swords, money and cups in Italy, Spain and Portugal, while in ancient Germany there were hearts, bells, leaves and acorns.

He: "May I have this dance?"  
 She: "Certainly—if you can find a partner."



NOW SHOWING.  
 FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,  
 JUNE 7th and 8th.  
**Shirley Temple**  
 in  
**"Bright Eyes"**  
 Also  
**"The Dude Ranger"**  
 starring  
**George O'Brien**  
 (Both pictures for General Exhibition.)  
 For Reservations Both Theatres,  
 Ring WX1418.

**Community Singing**  
 LYRIC THEATRE.  
 EVERY TUESDAY, 8.30 p.m.  
 Come and Sing the New Songs and the Old Songs.  
 Special Engagement: Sam Jose (Tenor). Next Tuesday Night.

Under the distinguished patronage of the Mayor and Mayoress of Box Hill (Cr. and Mrs. Boyland)  
 R.S.S.I.L.A. (Box Hill Sub-Branch)

**ANNUAL BALL**  
 IN THE NEW TOWN HALL, BOX HILL,  
 TUESDAY, 11th JUNE.  
 Dancing 8:15 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Tickets 3/6.  
 E. A. SMITH, Ticket Secty.  
 J. R. BENNETT, President.

## MITCHAM.

### CHRIST CHURCH MOTHERS' UNION.

Members were well represented when the Mitcham branch of the Mothers' Union held its monthly meeting on May 30. The president (Mrs. Fleming) conducted the service, after which Mrs. Leslie, of Vermont, gave an address, which she based on the "Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity," this being greatly appreciated by those present. Afternoon tea concluded a very enjoyable afternoon.

**NATURALISTS' CLUB.**  
 A delightful evening was spent on May 30, when Dr. Malcolm Fraser lectured on "Crystals." The speaker maintained the close attention of all his listeners by his ability to express the most abstruse scientific definitions in language simple and intelligible. By his answers to the questions that were submitted the members were able fully to appreciate the measure of his attainments. Many of the queries required that the material for the answers should be quarried from other fields than that of chemistry. The sciences of astronomy and physics were the most generous contributors in this connection. A cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Fraser terminated a most interesting meeting.

### A STAGE ILLUSION.

Among stories which Harry Lytton the actor, had to tell, was one of a drama the scenes of which were placed on a desert island.

"We were all dying of thirst," he said. "At least, according to the plot. Nowhere on that desert island was water to be found.

"They sent me out to explore while they rolled about the stage moaning. During my absence from the stage I sat near a fire bucket in the wings. Then came my cue—

"I staggered on.

"Not a drop," I croaked. 'Not a drop of water anywhere,'

"'Liar!' screamed the audience.

"While I was sitting near the fire bucket the bottom of my Arab cloak had dipped into the water, and there it was—dripping, dripping, dripping right across the stage."

"The doctor told my wife she should take exercise."

"And is she doing it?"

"If jumping at conclusions and running up bills can be called exercise, she is."

## FROM THE COLLECTION . . .



NA2135

Jet Cameo. c1890 with rope like edge and a female head embossed on it.

**D**URING the 16th century jet was called black amber and was used to make rosary beads. Archaeological evidence shows that jet was used for ornaments as early as the Bronze Age.

This organic gemstone is the harder, more consistent material from fossilized wood, and is related to lignite coal. Most commercial strands are made with material from Russia, in Central Asia, near Lake Baikal. Other sources are Germany, Poland, Spain and Japan. Most Victorian mourning jewellery was made in Whitby, England, centre of the British jet trade.

Jet was named from *gagates*, because Pliny said the material was first found in the river Gages. In German it is *Gaget*. After widowhood, Queen Victoria was so fond of jet that she made it an integral part of her perpetual mourning costume. Consequently, in Europe and much of America jet came to be considered the only proper adornment for those attending funerals, or for women in mourning. Jet is only a 2.5 on the hardness scale; however it does possess a certain toughness that compensates for this. The light weight, warmth to the touch and dense black colour also make up for its lack of hardness.

In contemporary metaphysics it has been said that jet can be used to dispel fearful thoughts as well as protect the wearer against illness and violence. And it is said to be a calming agent, aiding diminishment of depression.

In ancient times ground jet was burned to produce smoke which was said to drive away demons, repel snakes, bring on menstruation, and serve other magical purposes. British fishermen's wives used to burn jet as a charm to preserve their husbands' boats at sea.

According to Barbara Walker in *The Book of Sacred Stones*, "Modern mystics still cling to the old belief that the coal smoke from burning jet will repel fevers, infections, hysteria, hallucinations, epilepsy, and stomach troubles. Powdered jet drunk in water or wine is also good for ... cold, gout, cramps, toothache, palsy, tumors, and premenstrual syndrome".

David Vance Horste

## Whitehorse Historical Society 2017 WORKING BEES

Please make a diary note and join us on the day.

Working Bees commence at 9.30am and finish around 12 noon with morning tea.

*Saturday 9 September*

*Saturday 11 November*

Please come and help even if you can only offer an hour of your time.

## Whitehorse Historical Society DIARY DATES

Meetings are held at the Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex.

**Saturday, 17 June 2017**

**1.00pm General Meeting**

*Gerry Robinson & Rosalie Whalen*

*The Launch of*

*"The Amazing Life of Mary Schwerkolt"*

**Further Speakers T.B.A.**

## Our Committee

Patricia Richardson – President  
Vicki Jones-Evans – Vice President  
Kathy Innes – Secretary  
Vicki Jones-Evans – Treasurer

### Committee Members

Judith Fry	Chris Gray	Peter McPhee
Bob Gardiner	Judy Hall	Rob Innes

## Statistics

Photographs catalogued	-	4253
Artefacts catalogued	-	4790
Documents catalogued	-	7304
Museum visitors March–April		432
 Facebook 'likes' to April	-	666

# DARING BURGLARY AT BLACKBURN

## Stolen

It appears that the model township of Blackburn has grown to such dimensions and is so wealthy that burglars have included it among the towns which they can visit with profit. They made a successful raid on Wednesday night, on the house occupied by Mr. Minahan, the stationmaster at Blackburn. Mr. Mrs. and Minahan were away from home at the time, attending a concert, in the Recreation Hall, Blackburn. Before leaving, the house was securely locked up, and all the lights extinguished. The robbers effected an entrance at the back door which they broke open with an axe, the property of Mr. Minahan. As soon as they got inside they set to work and ransacked the whole place, in search of money. They pulled all the bedclothes off one bed, in the hope of finding a plant under the mattress, but in this they were disappointed, and in their hurry they fortunately overlooked the sum of £2 10s., which was stowed away in one of the top drawers.

The thieves, who must be adepts in their business, found the children's money box, which they broke open and took its contents, amounting to 25s. They then appear to have made a raid on the bedroom. On the drawers the robbers found two valuable watches – one a gold one valued at £30, which had been presented to Mrs. Minahan by distant relatives, and which was valued because it reminded them of absent friends and relative than for its intrinsic worth, and the other a silver lever hunting watch. Both of them were taken. On the inside of Mrs. Minahan's watch were inscribed the words *huit rubits* [sic]. In addition to these valuable articles, the burglars stole a valuable seal skin jacket valued at £8, two silver cups and a set of silver knives and forks, valued at £15, and a number of other valuables. In fact they scooped everything that they could lay their hands upon, and then took their departure, leaving not a clue behind that would lead to their detection.

Senior-constable Lloyd has the matter in hand, and it is to be hoped that this vigilant official will be able to get some clue that will justify him in making an arrest.

Much sympathy is felt for Mr. and Mrs. Minahan, who are well known and highly respected in the district.



from the Box Hill Reporter,  
14 March 1890

## WHS Committee Contacts

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9837 5840

### Vice-President

Vicki Jones-Evans

### Secretary

Kathy Innes

### Treasurer

Vicki Jones-Evans

Local History Room (03) 9873 4946

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Wendy Standfield

### WHS website

[www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~ndhsinc/)  
[facebook.com/whitehorsehistory](https://facebook.com/whitehorsehistory)

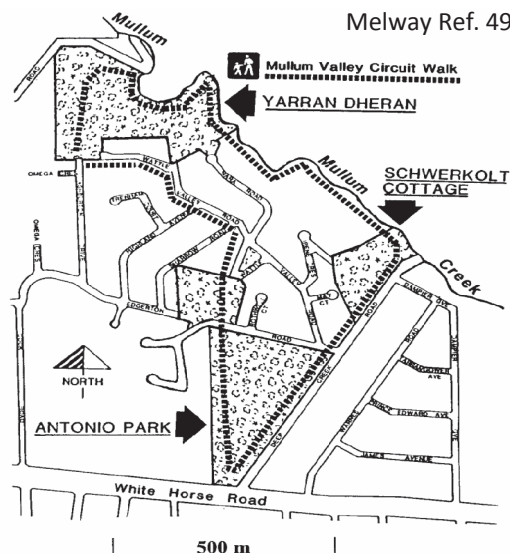
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Melway Ref. 49 D7



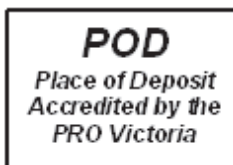
**Copy Deadline for next WHS Newsletter: Wednesday, 12 July 2017**

## The Whitehorse Historical Society Inc.

### Mission Statement & Acknowledgement of Country

*"The purpose of the Society is to foster historical interest and knowledge. To collect, document, research, preserve and exhibit items that show how people have lived and worked in the City of Whitehorse area."*

*"In the spirit of reconciliation, Whitehorse Historical Society Inc. acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land now known as the City of Whitehorse, and pays respect to its elders past and present."*



CITY OF



WHITEHORSE

## REMEMBER

### Whitehorse Historical Society Local History Collection & Place of Deposit

Open 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Wednesdays.

Visitors welcome.

Ring 9873 4946 for an appointment at other times.

### Box Hill Cemetery Records & Nunawading Gazette for 1964-1974

available on microfiche for research.

The Whitehorse  
Historical Society, Inc.  
acknowledges the  
support of the  
City of Whitehorse.



THE WHITEHORSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER IS PRINTED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF MICHAEL SUKKAR MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DEAKIN

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