CONNECTING COBDEN
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
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POLICE in our COMMUNITY

Recent suggestions that police 'superstations' were likely to be established in our area at the expense of smaller stations like Cobden have been dismissed by police authorities . . . thankfully. The possibility of losing our station reminded us about the importance of police to small towns, and how their constructive approach to various situations can have a positive impact on the community. Currently, four police members work out of the Cobden station, two of whom are included in our 'Police in our Community' feature - Sergeant Heather Morris and Senior Constable Tony Hassett.

Sergeant Heather Morris

Where did you grow up and what did you enjoy most about it?
Grew up in Stanhope, Victoria. I liked the closeness of the community, how everyone knew each other and the town was always ready to come together to help those in need of assistance. I also liked farm life and the animals.

Where did you attend school? How far did you go in school?

Stanhope Primary School, Rushworth High School and, then, Latrobe University.

When did you decide to be a member of the police force? Have you worked in any other careers?
I apparently told my parents I was joining the police force, when I was six years-old. I never changed my mind and always knew what I was destined to become but, in those days, women didn't do police work, so neither of my parents were very supportive.

How long have you been in the police force? 29 years.

What have you found particularly challenging/frustrating?
Challenging: mental health issues. Not my area of expertise.

Frustrating: Family violence. Victims of family violence always feel torn about what to do to stop the cycle, without causing the destruction of the family unit. There are a lot of services out there to help: the police are just one of them but it needs to be stopped, for everyone's sake.

What have you most enjoyed about police work?
The challenge of managing a station. General duties policing is the true example of being a "jack-of-all-trades and master-of-none". We must stay up-to-date with continually changing Victorian legislation and practices.. I also enjoy working with my members. They're hard working, we're supportive of each other and, like any close unit, we have our moments but they're great fun and great guys.

What do you do for relaxation?
Garden, read and walk the dogs and spend time at my farm.

Do you have any pets? Yes. Heaps.

Your AFL footy team? None. I hate football.

Favourite type of music and/or TV show?
My musical taste is very eclectic and I don't watch TV. I pulled the antenna off while renovating about three years ago and haven't put it back up. Can't say I really miss it either.

Favourite food? Potato, in any form.
Something that might surprise our readers about you.
I used to sky-dive because I was bored.

What does Cobden need? What should the town be trying to do?
A yearly event, even bigger than the Spring Festival, that promotes tourism, like the Folk Festival or Rainbow Festival, an event to put the town on the map for a weekend each year. Cobden's a pretty town and I think it should be showcased for the purpose of generating finance and exposure. Who wouldn't love to be here?

Finally . . .
People tell me they can rarely find anyone at the station and the reason is we're usually out patrolling and performing traffic enforcement duties, due to the high number of fatalities and vehicle collisions we've had in the area.

If you need police urgently to attend a job like a theft, ring 000. We don't have an answering service because people often rang the station for urgent jobs and we wouldn't get the message until hours later. Now, all unanswered calls are transferred to Warrnambool so you can speak to a police member who can offer advice or pass a message to us.

Senior Constable Tony Hassett

Where did you grow up?
Grew up in the outer western suburbs of Melbourne.

Where did you attend school? How far did you go?
MacKillop College, Werribee. I have a degree in dairy food science.

Your police career so far? Have you worked in other jobs?
I joined the police force at 25 - ten years ago. I spent nine years working in the western suburbs of Melbourne, mainly Sunshine and Keilor Downs police stations, including the Sunshine Criminal Investigation Unit, Brimbank Drug Crew and the Embona Armed Robbery Unit. I have now worked at Cobden for six weeks and at Camperdown for twelve months.

Prior to the police force, I worked on dairy farms, in butcher shops, on farm irrigations, Bonlac Foods and the Victoria Meat Authority.

What have you found particularly frustrating?
I find it very frustrating when I know which offender has committed a crime but I can't get enough evidence to charge them, especially when an innocent member of the community has been assaulted or had their personal property stolen.

What have you most enjoyed about police work?
The thrill of the chase, particularly when I was working in the "Wild Western" suburbs - it was like 21 Jump Street - offenders running around everywhere. Apart from that, just working with good people and having fun doing my job.

What do you do for relaxation? Walk the dog.

Tell us about your dog?
I have a big German Shepherd called Harley. He was going to be a police dog but I couldn't part with him so I kept him as a pet.

Your AFL footy team? Why? Richmond - I like the theme song.

Favourite type of music and/or TV show?
Don't really have any favourite music, just what's on at the time and pretty much the same with TV. I watch the news and channel surf.

Favourite food?
The new Asian takeaway shop in Cobden has great food and great customer service.

Something that might surprise our readers about you.
My family has lived in the district for over 125 years so it was an easy choice to come back home.

What does Cobden need?
I reckon Cobden needs a giant water slide.

Finally . . .
Cobden's a lovely town, full of great people. I'm glad to be here.

cobden.business.network

Business of the Month

COBDEN AND DISTRICTS COMMUNITY BANK

Staff members Wendy Bateman (left) and Sally Mahony (right) with Board director Margaret McDonald and manager Neil Hinkley

Our community-owned bank already has a proud record in the Cobden and Camperdown area.

We provide all banking services and our staff are recognised for the personalised and friendly support shown to our customers. As well as all types of deposits and loans, we specialise in offering a huge range of insurance products.

TEN THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT COBDEN AND DISTRICTS COMMUNITY BANK

1. It was established in 2006 after extensive community consultation with our parent bank, the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, and a comprehensive feasibility study.
2. We have 329 shareholders for whom we continually strive to provide the very best opportunities and profits.
3. We have a board of twelve directors, all of whom volunteer their time to oversee the strategic planning and implementation of all aspects of our company – Cobden & Districts Community Finance Ltd. Our sub-committees within the board meet regularly and report to the board monthly.
4. Our two branches have a total of eight staff with manager Neil Hinkley being responsible for their successful management. All staff are locals with a great knowledge of the needs of our customers. We are proud of what they have done, and continue to do, to promote our bank.
5. Our Cobden branch is open on weekdays from 9am to 5pm and between 9am and noon on Saturdays. Our Camperdown branch is open from 9.30am to 4pm (Monday to Thursday) and from 9.30am to 5pm on Friday.
6. An indication of our strength and success is that we have just declared a dividend for our shareholders, despite the global financial crisis and subsequent tough economic times.
7. What will always set us apart from our competitors is that once we have met all our obligations we are able to invest back into our communities through a system where groups can apply for funds to assist their development.
8. We can proudly say that we have distributed over $250,000 through these investments and this has helped over 100 groups to continue their good work in our communities.
9. Most importantly, we are a bank for our community and we heavily invest and support everyone in our special community. We encourage you to come in and speak to Neil or any of our staff.
10. Our directors are James Green, Gary Kimber, Chris Bodey, Simon Buccheri, Anita Chivell, Bill Duncanson, Robert Fleming, Peter Giblett, Margaret McDonald, Steffi Morris, Milton Parlour and Greg Suter.

COBDEN CALENDAR

Monday 2nd March: 7.30pm Twenty20 Action Groups - Town Appearance and Tourism, Facilities, Services and Infrastructure, 7.30pm, Monday 2nd March, Heytesbury Room.

Sunday 15th March: 1pm Cobden Rotary's "Give It a Go" Information membership day. Cobden Civic Centre. Bus tour, a'noon tea, families welcome. Bookings essential, 0409 951 275.

Monday 16th March: 7.30pm Spring Festival meeting, Heytesbury Room. All welcome.

Senior Citizens' Hall:
Bowls 1pm Mondays. **Cards** 1pm Mondays, Thursdays, Saturdays. **Hoy** 1.30pm first Saturday of the month.

HAPPY WINNERS

Lauren Meade, pictured right with the Cobden Business Network's Trevor Clarke, was very excited about winning the $2500 travel voucher at the CBN's Christmas-on-Curdie event in December.

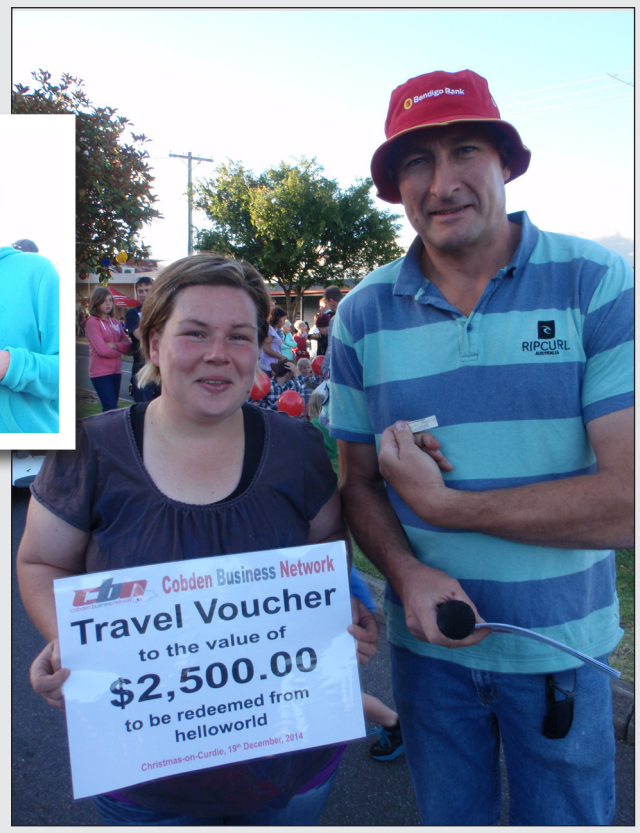
CBN members contributed to the largest prize ever offered as a way of thanking Cobden and district patrons for supporting them during the year.

Lauren plans to use the voucher to take her family to Queensland for a holiday.

"It's the biggest prize I've ever won, so I'm really looking forward to making the most of it, as we haven't been on a holiday for about six years," she said.

Lauren filled out entry forms while shopping at Ritchies IGA and with Belinda Savage Personal Trainer.

The other lucky winner was Lesley Morris (inset) who won $300 in vouchers. She said she had already spent four $50 vouchers in four different shops in Cobden.

"The prize is a great concept because it encourages the winner to use the vouchers in different businesses rather than spending the total amount in one place."

Both winners thanked the Cobden Business Network for organising the event and the draw.