



Knoxbrooke *Talk*



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2022 SPRING

EDITION

Group CEO Report

The longer days and better weather (when it fleetingly appears) has been a welcome addition with Spring now in full bloom after what felt like an extra-long Winter. Whilst it might not have been due to the change in seasons, there has been sweeping change in the Federal Government and Knoxbrooke has found itself catapulted into the company of new Ministers seeking sector guidance on how best to support people with a disability to be more involved in all aspects of everyday life, particularly employment in all its forms.

On 17 August, at the invitation of the Minister I attended a roundtable meeting with the Hon. Minister for the NDIS, Bill Shorten. Minister Shorten conducted the roundtable to gather the views of people with disability, advocates, providers and public servants on how to better engage and support people with disability to participate in employment and remove those entrenched barriers. The agreed views of the roundtable were then taken to the National Jobs Summit held shortly thereafter.



On 10 October, a Knoxbrooke delegation was invited to attend Canberra to participate in a roundtable with the Hon. Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth. Laura and Suzie supported by Debra, who work at Knoxbrooke social enterprises, spoke about what supported employment means to them in the most powerful of ways. They spoke about the sense of community, empowerment at work and the support that social enterprises provide them.

They also spoke about what they don't like such as wage productivity timings and they would like to see better staff training. Their spoken views

immediately

changed the direction of the roundtable. I remain in awe of both their speeches and was honoured to be with them that day. Powerful, humbling and courageous are words that best describe that day. We will wait and see what Social Services do with this important information.

What has become clear, is the new Federal Government is genuinely seeking to lift and



support all Australians in a practical, sensible way. This approach is terrific and we have now seen the launch of Dylan Alcotts website, <https://www.thefield.jobs/Job/> which seeks to make it easier to find and support people with a disability into employment.

Knoxbrooke recently welcomed to the team Abdul (Ab) Bakhach as General Manager, Knoxbrooke Enterprises. Ab has over twenty years experience at management-level in supported employment and is volunteer President of Eastern Ranges School which supports students with autism. Ab is leading Knoxbrooke Outsource, Jigsaw, Waratah and Yarra View Horticulture. You can expect to see some improvements to our services in coming months, with Ab leading these initiatives. So do stay alert to the changes.

As this will be our last edition before Christmas, I'd like to wish you a Merry Christmas and safe, happy New Year.

Kristian Dauncey

Group CEO



Social Enterprises

Yarra View & Bushland Flora Nurseries

By Trevor Norman

Don't be fooled by the cold weather – it's actually Spring and Summer is only a week away!

Growing conditions have not been ideal and we're probably a month or so behind where we



would typically be at this time of the year. Nevertheless, all sites have been really busy and are filling with great quality stock.

The Commercial team have been flat out tendering for project work and were recently awarded the Mont Albert and Deer Park Level Crossing Removals. We have also won contracts

to supply plants for new housing commission complexes in Prahran, Flemington and Brighton. This will provide a significant amount of work for the three nursery sites through until delivery in autumn 2023.

We've had eight new employees start over the last couple of months including Todd Miles who recently commenced as our Nursery Manager at York Road. Todd's appointment has allowed us to move Scott Cavill to his new role as Group Nursery Production Manager where he will work with the Nursery Managers across the three sites focussing on the execution of production plans and plant quality.

Following a successful trial of our Supported Employee teams model we have now rolled out all teams at York Road and have two teams

operating at Clegg Road. The roll out will be completed at Clegg Road and Wandin pending— recruitment of an additional Area



Supervisor/Supported Employees. This is a huge achievement and I want to thank Fleur George and her team for all their planning as well as Area Supervisors and Supported Employees for embracing the model.

General Manager - Enterprises

By Ab Bakhach

I am really happy to have joined the Knoxbrooke Team after 20 years working with another similar organisation, and I look forward to seeing Knoxbrooke Enterprises become a leader in the supported employment industry.

Waratah Environmental (Gardening)

Spring is traditionally the busiest time of the year for our Waratah Team. To assist us through this challenging time, we implemented a new scheduling system so that we can service all our customers more efficiently and we took the opportunity to also review our customer base in Warragul and the surrounding areas. We are excited with these changes, and we are currently looking for 2 – 3 more new employees to join our team.

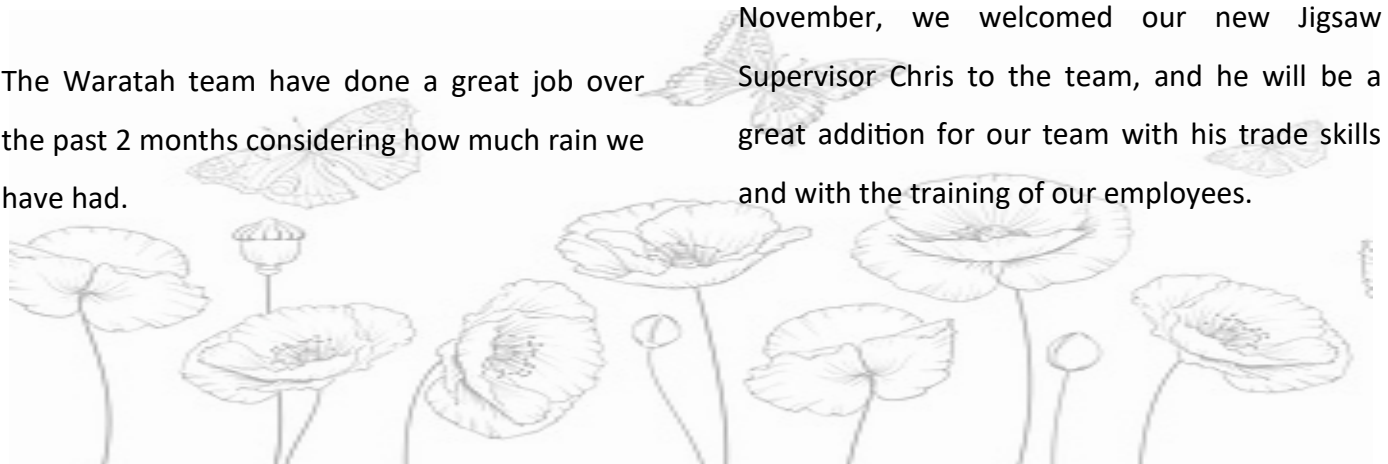
The Waratah team have done a great job over the past 2 months considering how much rain we have had.



Jigsaw (Survey Pegs and Kindling Firewood)

Spring has been a challenging time for the Jigsaw Team as we have been one staff member short. Darren has been managing this business well considering.

We have completed a big spring clean at the workshop over the past month. The future is looking positive Jigsaw as we have reviewed our prices and we are currently talking to a few new customers about doing their work. At the start of November, we welcomed our new Jigsaw Supervisor Chris to the team, and he will be a great addition for our team with his trade skills and with the training of our employees.



Outsource Packaging (Mt Evelyn)

Outsource has been steady with work from our existing customer base, but we have had a few days where we did not have too much work. Over the past 3 months we have started preparing our Outsource business for future GROWTH by introducing a new quoting system and pricing process, as well reviews on all of our current work.

We have started winning some work from new customers and we have more in our quoting pipeline. With this new work, over the coming weeks we will be offering our employees the opportunity to return to working their pre-Covid work hours. We will also be looking to GROW and increase the number of Employees and Staff at Outsource in the coming weeks. We would also love to see some more Volunteers spending some time working with our Outsource team.



Yarra View Horticulture (Mt Evelyn)

Just like the Waratah Environmental team, Spring is traditionally the busiest time of the year for our Yarra View Horticulture team. We recently began a new partnership with

Uniting Agewell, to provide them with our services for all their clients. Our Horticulture Manager, Paul has been instrumental in getting this partnership going

and servicing their clients and we are also looking at some new business opportunities in this area.



Achieve

“Hello, it’s nice to meet you. What is your name?”

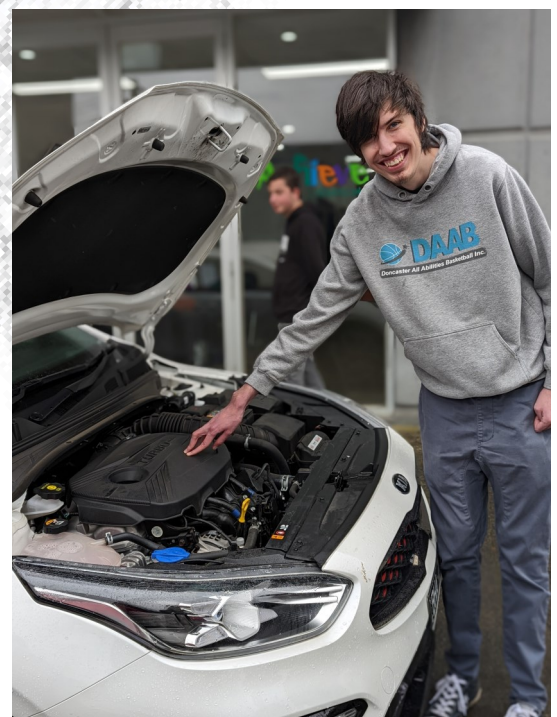
By Michael Beavis—Achieve Manager



Remember that time you went to that party? You know the one. It was an engagement party or something along those lines. You parked your car at the end of the street, hoping that no one would notice while you took an extra five minutes before actually exiting the vehicle. You could hear music and the not so distant chatter of unfamiliar voices as you slowly approached the house. Present in hand, you took an overly deep, calming breath before reluctantly pressing the doorbell. Footsteps, a shift of the doorhandle and then it flies open. Everything happens all at once.

Hugs. Kisses. Handshakes. Lights. Sounds. Smells. Passages. Doorways. Faces. It is a blinding and dazzling journey through time and space. You don’t know names. You don’t recognise faces. You don’t even know where the toilet it is! Then it is done. You stand by yourself and shuffle awkwardly. You look around and a truth you already knew resurfaces - For the foreseeable future you are in a strange new place, with strange new people and no excusable means of escape. You are alone.

It's intake season at Achieve and with each and every school leaver we meet, this scenario plays on repeat inside my head. The young adult in front of us has never met us. Their family has told them about us, but the family has *also* never met us. They have never stepped foot in the Achieve building. Some of them have never visited Ringwood. They don’t know me, and more significantly *I don’t know them.*





All they know is the unfamiliar and now their world is to be turned upside down. Sound familiar?

To combat this at Achieve, we begin by smiling and extending our hand as welcome with “Hello, it’s nice to meet you. What is your name?”

Our approach is complex in its simplicity. We communicate, and we do it a lot. We don’t interview a

person; we have a conversation with them. We want to find out as much about the person sitting with us as we possibly can. The sooner we connect with a person, the better we can support them. The better we support them, the more confident they become in looking towards employment goals.

We brandish an easy read conversation guide like a map, but like any true explorer, we often go off track. A question about pets, may reveal their cats’ names are “Mr Claws and Scratchy.” I wonder why? A comment about McDonalds, may encourage a story about self-advocacy and speaking with a manager. Awesome work! How did it go? Mentioning Starbucks may lead to a story about travelling to Italy. Incredible, tell me more! Sometimes, the comments and stories even surprise the families. There is no set course or pathway for our interactions. We simply, communicate.

Objectively, we converse to provide a point of reference going forward. Where is that person at this point in time? What additional supports do we need to put in place to allow that person to succeed once they truly engage with Achieve? Perhaps introducing the person to like-minded peers is the key. Maybe they need to be guided to the local café where they can purchase a coffee each morning before session commences. Quite often, people simply want to communicate their experiences – both good and bad.

Communication is the natural rhythm of Achieve. We guide people through the process of acclimatising and engaging in learning activities. We encourage people to lean on their strengths and find their voices. We advocate strongly for individual choice and



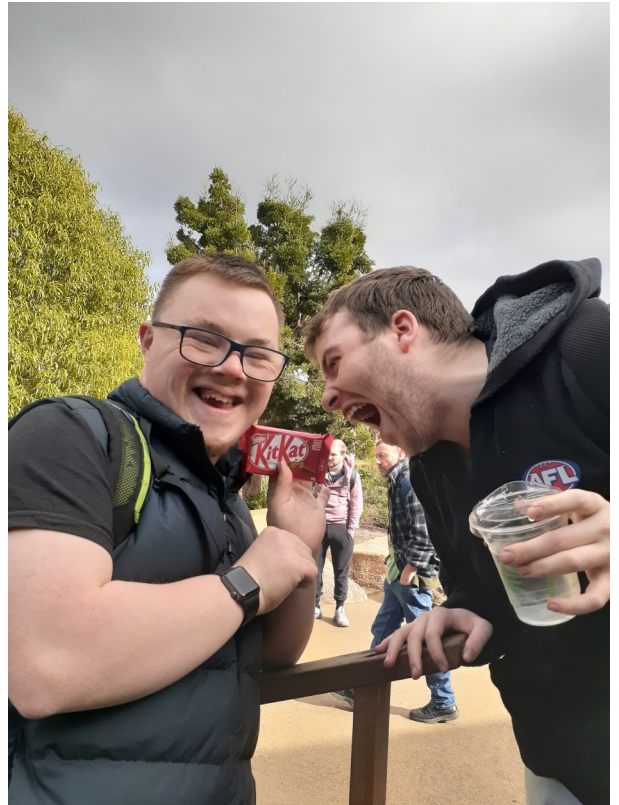
control and pride ourselves on the focus we place on people living the lives that they desire. Importantly, we are guided by what is communicated to us by the people who join us. After all, communication is a two-way street.

With effective communication, we build capacity and provide training to the people who join us. In time, we find that people grow organically in relation to their experiences at Achieve. As we guide them to build their skills their sense of self-worth grows. As we guide them to build relationships, their sense of belonging grows. As we guide them towards employment goals, their sense of future grows. Eventually, a confident young adult, equipped with the appropriate tools to engage in employment or further training options emerges.

At the close of 2021, 67% of young adults at Achieve were engaging in a meaningful outcome related to employment or further training. Those currently at Achieve further attribute to an even higher number of positive outcomes. Much of this stems from the confidence to approach employers directly, or way in which people passionately converse in relation to the direction of their employment pathway plans. At Achieve, communication is paramount to success and so too is guiding the people we support to effectively convey their wants, needs and desires.

And for some of us, the impact of that party with its dazzling lights, overwhelming noises and the sea of nameless faces will never truly leave us. But sometimes, we forget what came next. In my case a random stranger walked over to me and extended their hand. They looked me in the eye, and with a smile they said:

“Hello, it’s nice to meet you. What is your name?”

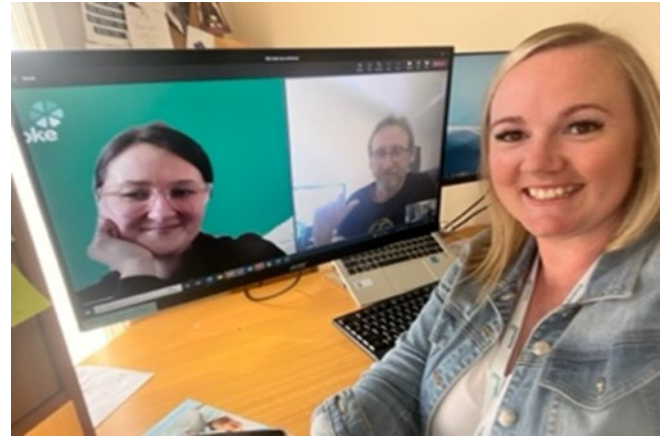


By Kylie Peele

Manager 365

Spring has sprung over here in 365, with requests for supports buzzing in from left, right and centre – Everyone seems keen to jump into some canoes and paddle down the new rivers and lakes that we're NOT used to!

We will not, however, let the wild and wonderful weather deter us – and have been very creative about our supports over the last few months, while we patiently wait for a 'somewhat' dry-er summer! Indoor activities have been popular – from the cat café to private tours at the War Memorial, we've got you 'covered'!! (See what we did there?)



The 365 team is always out and about meeting new clients, and responding to requests to provide additional services to existing clients – whether they be from Outer East or West Gippsland, and everywhere in between!

Our mantra at 365 is building relationships and collaborating with all the amazing services

Knoxbrooke has to offer our clients, working together for amazing outcomes of our service users, creating new skills like travel training, cooking using the Achieve building, and gaining drivers licenses!

365 has supported clients to attend social gatherings, support meetings, hundreds of footy games, musicals, TAFE Classes and 365 is supporting a client to



'Gun N Roses' later in the year! Woahzers! Can we come too? Now that the weather is better, 365 are supporting people to the thousand steps , lake walks, city trips to name a few!

Spring has seen 365 tighten up on policies and processes, with an overhaul of recruitment and induction. This has been a huge success, with 365 hiring 8 people over the spring period! We are excited to introduce these awesome new people to Knoxbrooke, and our aim is to get them excited about career progression and the amazing opportunities that await them within our diverse organisation! If you know anyone who is an absolute superstar, and would love to know more about casual work with 365, send them our way! We're super nice we promise! If they do not have the current qualifications or compliance checks, 365 and our amazing HR team can support them through the application and requirement process. It's a win-win!



'Its time to shine'

By Claire Cutler—Regional Manager West Gippsland
Mawarra day centre is a buzz of excitement as we head into the warmer weather and of course the festive season. It's been a great few months with new clients and programs causing lots of enthusiasm around the centre.

We have had our challenge with Covid making a reappearance at the centre, but I'm proud to say we were able to contain it successfully and not have disruption to services.



MSN is back and popular as ever and we have recently introduced Saturday extras activities that have also been hugely popular. This will be our focus into 2023 offering fun, engaging activities that suit family and clients' budgets and interests outside of the standard 9am-3pm service.



We are in full rehearsal mode for our Mawarra showcase being held at the West Gippsland Art Centre, we are all looking forward to getting back on the stage as a centre and showing off all our skills and talents. This will be on the 16th December and we finished with a BBQ in the park for participants, carers and families.

Vintage Vibes continues to grow from strength to strength, with the support from the community growing and very positive. The quality and volume for the donations are overwhelming and everyone is busy getting the stock sorted and out for sale. Our volunteers continue to work hard and we are, as always so grateful to them for their generosity with their time. Our Supported employees are doing an amazing job and have found their stride gaining and developing new skills all the time.



The Op Shop and the volunteers are doing a fantastic job and provide such an important service to the community. Its as busy as ever with strong sales and community support.



Support Options

By Fiona Sammut—Manager Support Options NDIS Review

Knoxbrooke welcomes the announcement from the Hon. Bill Shorten MP that a review of the NDIS will be undertaken over the next twelve months. Not only is the system often failing our clients with insufficient funding for support needs, the process of plan assessments and changes are difficult, confusing, and stressful. A recent survey of 500 NDIS participants conducted by the Summer Foundation highlighted that although the NDIS has helped many participants achieve outcomes, the difficulty in navigating the bureaucracy and fear of having plans cut is overwhelming for most. The perception from planners that participants are requesting more funding than is reasonable and necessary when in our experience is they are requesting the bare minimum that is required indicates that a cultural shift is required.

We are confident that the review will shine a light on unregistered providers and address the need for all disability providers to employ staff that have successful NDIS Worker Screener checks. These checks are vital in safeguarding people with a disability, any applicant with a criminal history or a reportable incident in the sector indicating they pose a risk to a participant are identified. What is more, unlike a criminal check the Workers Screener check is “live” so if an infringement occurs at any time employees

are alerted and can address any risk immediately.

Achieve GROW

Our Achieve service have implemented additional services for Achieve clients to attend on Thursday's and Friday's which is as the name suggests GROWING in popularity, the service has offered small groups, four hour sessions doing activities such as a “Pop Culture Crawl” touring the CBD pop culture stores and experiences,



“Snapshot” a tour of the MCG, “Suburban Legends” a session at a Bounce trampolining centre, “Anime Eats” cooking a meal from scratch and “TGIF” mini golf and lunch. GROW activities are funded from clients CORE budgets for social and community participation and additional service agreements are required to attend. Please—

contact the NDIS Team if you are interested in joining.



Mawarra Showcase

I have the pleasure of spending a day a week at Mawarra and the upcoming showcase has created a wonderful buzz around the centre, the artwork and performances I have seen glimpses of are amazing. The staff are working hard behind the scenes to pull this extravaganza together and the clients are all looking forward to contributing. Make sure you do not miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate our clients creative abilities on Friday 16th December.

Feedback

In talking to clients and families regularly we hear a lot of great feedback about our services which is fantastic. If you would be prepared to publicly publish feedback it would be greatly appreciated here is a link to get you there [Google Review](#)

If you have any questions concerning the above or about the NDIS in general, please contact the Knoxbrooke NDIS Team, and we will be happy to help.

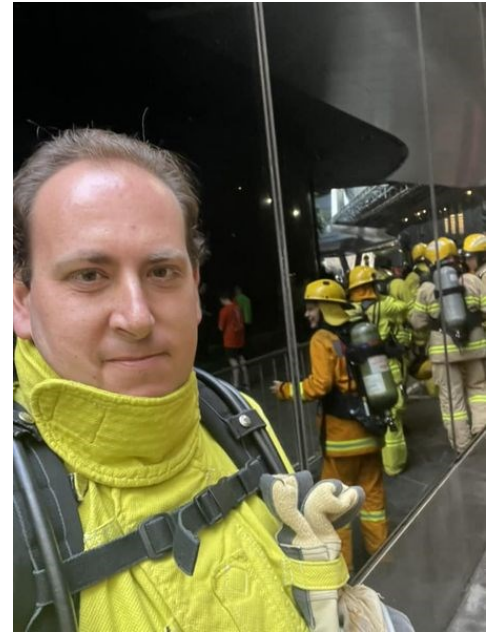


Email: ndis@knoxbrooke.com.au

Phone: **03 9758 3666** Outer East

5624 3400 West Gippsland

Spotlight



Andrew Ermel, a supervisor and supported employee at York Road recently completed the Melbourne firefighter stair climb in a time of 8:03.103!!!. Money raised goes towards supporting firefighters.
Fantastic effort Andrew.



SES volunteers with the Mawarra group (from left) Gavin, Mathew, Ashleigh, Jeremy, Jason, James and Robbie (front).

Participant at Mawarra Day Service had a visit from Warragul SES and appeared in the local paper.



Mawarra Centre's Iris, Mathew, Jasmine, Jason, Ashleigh, Gavin, Adam and Jeremy were so impressed with the work of Warragul SES that they held a fundraiser barbecue for the local crew.

Insight to SES work

A group of seven participants from Mawarra recently visited the Warragul SES to gain an insight into emergency volunteering.

Three SES volunteers showed the group the different vehicles and what they are used for.

They also explained about the joys of life, and let everyone have a turn operating the small jaws of life equipment.

The group also visited the operations room to see the computers and radio system, and then sat and looked at some photos of various incidents Warragul crew have attended.

The visit ended with a sit in the big truck, complete with sirens sounding.

When they returned to Mawarra, the group was so impressed with the work of the SES, that they decided to hold a barbecue fundraiser, which raised \$140 for the local team.

Donate to Knoxbrooke

We value your support.

Your generous contributions help us to:

- Enhance our service offerings
- Help send members of our Knoxbrooke Client Council to the annual VALID 'Having a Say Conference'
- Purchase materials and equipment
- Improve facilities for our supported employees

If you can assist with a tax-deductible donation or would like to leave a bequest, please give us a call on 03 9758 3666

Respectful images policy



Knoxbrooke is wholly committed to a 'respectful images' policy that ensures that all photos of service users and their families that are presented in Knoxbrooke social media, website, newsletters, reports and flyers are respectful, dignified and fit for purpose.

Knoxbrooke has a wonderfully positive story to tell and we are keen to share our activities with family and friends of Knoxbrooke.

If for any reason you do not wish for your loved one to be included in photographs that may appear in publication or our social media page, or you would like a copy of our policy, please let us know.

Management Team

Kristian Dauncey

Group Chief Executive Officer

Scott Buckland

Knoxbrooke Enterprises
Chief Executive Officer

Trevor Norman

Interim General Manager
Yarra View & Bushland Flora Nurseries

Abdul Bakhach

General Manager
Knoxbrooke Enterprises

Fiona Sammut

Manager Support Options

Claire Cutler

Regional Manager West Gippsland

Janelle Ghent

Manager People and Culture

Cassie Gill

Interim Financial Controller



Registered NDIS Provider





Head Office

1/68 Charter Street, Ringwood
03 9758 3666

Our Locations

Achieve

38 Charter Street, Ringwood
03 9758 3666

Knoxbrooke Outsource

21 Clancy Road, Mount Evelyn
03 9736 4984

Mawarra

7 Percy Street, Warragul
03 5624 3400

Vintage Vibes

14 June Court, Warragul
03 5624 3400

Yarra View & Bushland Flora Nursery

136 York Road, Mount Evelyn
03 9737 0400

Yarra View Garden Centre

136 York Road, Mount Evelyn
03 9737 0400

Mawarra Opportunity Shop

40 Palmerston Street, Warragul
03 5624 3492

Jigsaw & Waratah

3 Ryan Court, Warragul
03 5624 3437