Women’s Honour Roll 2024

Recipients:

* Anne Bremner
* Nikki Marshall
* Marj Green
* Michelle Clifford
* Yvonne Sillett

**ANNE BREMNER**

A person wearing glasses and a bow in her hair

Description automatically generatedAnne epitomises the spirit of pioneering women, seamlessly managing household chores, caring for family, and contributing to the family farm, Wombat Organics, until her 60s. Her leadership shines through her quiet yet effective management style, effortlessly steering community events and fundraisers.

Gender equality is intrinsic to Anne; she tackles tasks head-on, excelling in every endeavour with dedication and humility. A natural leader, Anne leads by example, empowering others to reach their full potential.

Her leadership extends to various roles, including Club Champion and Board Member at the Daylesford Bowls Club, where she ensures financial stability. Anne's 50-year commitment to the Lyonville Hall as President and Treasurer underscores her dedication to community spaces. Her voluntary work spans over 50 years, encompassing roles in community committees and initiatives like the Healthy Lunches Program. Anne's altruism extends to delivering Meals on Wheels and supporting school nutrition programs, showcasing her unwavering dedication to community welfare.

Additionally, she provides invaluable support to friends and family during health challenges and serves as a compassionate presence during end-of-life care. Anne's selfless contributions enhance the lives of many, reflecting her remarkable leadership and commitment to community service.

**NIKKI MARSHALL**Nikki Marshall is a true wise woman, a much beloved and respected community leader and change agent. She has been described as a Village Builder for her unique ability to bring people together, nurture ideas and forge pathways for action. Nikki has spent a lifetime developing initiatives to facilitate change, to address inequities and to strengthen communities.

Before moving to Hepburn Shire, Nikki spearheaded pioneering projects supporting refugee and migrant women in Victoria. Notably, she established the English Language and Settlement Support Program for women from war-torn African countries, revolutionising teaching methods and influencing agencies like the Adult Migrant Education program. She also played a pivotal role in developing educational programs to combat Female Circumcision/Genital Mutilation, empowering the affected women to develop and implement the program which was subsequently adopted by state government health services. She developed the Multicultural Home Support Program for ageing migrants and won an award for excellence from Department of Human Services.

In Hepburn Shire, Nikki confronts Climate Change head-on, organising impactful events like the Local Lives Global Matters conference, which attracted over 3000 attendees and spurred the formation of the action group, Localising Leanganook. Committed to sustainable farming, she initiated and supported milking cooperatives, empowering local women and young families. Additionally, Nikki facilitated the preservation of the Yandoit Uniting Church for community use and pioneered 'Yandoit Cultural,' a vibrant community-led performance program.

A passionate advocate for storytelling and local history, Nikki organizes events for the shire’s literary arts festival, Words in Winter and History in Story series, telling local stories and imparting a deep appreciation for the Djaara traditional owners’ connection with the land.

Instrumental in establishing the Daylesford Repair Café, she champions waste reduction through repair and re-use and encourages community skill-sharing.

As co-editor of The Chronicle for 12 years, Nikki builds community cohesion through her writing and editing skills, inspiring a dedicated team of contributors. Known for her transformative leadership and compassionate nature, Nikki embodies wisdom, empathy and courage. She serves as a trusted mentor, offering support to individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Nikki's enduring commitment to building relationships and addressing social and ecological challenges with integrity underscores her invaluable presence in the community, enriching the lives of those around her. We feel fortunate to have such a woman in our community.

**MARJ GREEN**

Marj Green has dedicated decades of her life to numerous local organisations, championing the advancement of women's status as a shining example of service.

Notably, her involvement with the Daylesford Girl Guides from 1964 to 1996 showcased her commitment to empowering girls through education and leadership development, aligning with the Girl Guides Victoria's mission. Marj's steadfast support for the Daylesford Ladies Benevolent Society, spanning 60 years, underscores her tireless efforts in promoting women's welfare and housing security.

Her leadership style, characterised by gentle yet influential guidance, has left an indelible mark on her community. A lifelong member of Christ Church, Marj has actively contributed through music, service on the Parish Council and caring for the church's environment. Her dedication extends beyond the church as she actively participates in preserving its historical documents.

Marj's wisdom is widely sought after, both in organisational matters and personal guidance. Despite her humble nature, she has served as Captain of the Newstead Croquet Club, nurturing new members and fostering their love for the game. Additionally, her leadership within the Girl Guides Movement and Brownies section has impacted countless young women, reflecting her enduring commitment to empowerment and mentorship. Through her unwavering dedication and selfless service, Marj Green has left an enduring legacy of empowerment and community enrichment and we feel so privileged to have you in our community.

**MICHELLE CLIFFORD**

A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generatedMichelle Clifford is that rare blend of person who is both the hub that organises action as well as a person who gets the job done. She has been recognised for her tireless efforts for her community and makes a difference in the lives of our community members every day.

If we had to sum up Michelle in one line, she is a diligent problem solver with the single goal in mind to improve the life of people who are often left behind.

Michelle demonstrated three of the five categories for inclusion to the Hepburn Shire’s Heather Mutimer Womens’ Honour Roll.

She is a local champion who has worked tirelessly for our community through her involvement with Daylesford Community Op Shop, Hepburn Regional Cheer, Hepburn Blue Light Committee, the Daylesford CommunityChildcare Committee, the Bullarto Primary School and Daylesford College councils and committees.

She is a change agent - or a force of nature. Michelle tackles challenges head-on, leveraging her extensive network to find solutions. From sourcing a new battery to lobbying for recognition and rights for first peoples; she leads through disaster. Hepburn has been through floods, fires, storms and pandemics. Michelle has been there.

Beyond community-wide initiatives, Michelle provides invaluable support to individuals facing personal hardships, leaving a profound impact on all fortunate enough to encounter her kindness and selflessness.

**YVONNE SILLETT**

Yvonne's journey as a trailblazer began in 1979 when she enlisted in the Australian Army, breaking barriers in a male-dominated field. Despite achieving the milestone of becoming the first female corporal responsible for training recruits at Kapooka, her career was abruptly halted due to discrimination based on her sexuality. Undeterred, Yvonne embarked on a mission for justice, advocating for an apology from the Australian Government and Defence Force for the unjust treatment of LGBTQIA+ personnel. Her story gained recognition at the Victorian Shrine of Remembrance and in the book "Serving in Silence," showcasing her resilience and advocacy. Yvonne's voluntary testimony at the Government Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide further amplified her cause, aiming to empower LGBTQIA+ individuals serving in the Defence Forces. She remains committed to inclusivity and equality, advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights within the Hepburn Shire community and supporting initiatives like the Rainbow Wreath ceremony for Anzac Day. Yvonne's educational efforts extend to fostering awareness and understanding of LGBTQIA+ needs at Hepburn House and securing grants to support LGBTQIA+ elders in the community. As a co-founder of the Discharged LGBTQI+ Veterans Association, Yvonne continues to advocate for justice and recognition, inspiring others through her compelling story. Her unwavering commitment to authenticity and advocacy has sparked artistic tributes and invitations to speak at various events, solidifying her role as a champion for inclusivity and equality in both local and broader communities.