

May/June 2020



Volunteer Newsletter



We understand that this newsletter is coming out to you during what can only be described as very strange times. Blue Mountains Food Services has had to make some difficult but necessary changes to how we operate in order to comply with Department of Health advice, while still ensuring that our vulnerable community members have access to our essential services.

We have suspended our community restaurants as well as our NDIS programs. The Ben Roberts Café has been operating in accordance with Government restrictions by providing a takeaway service & has just recently opened up for a limited dine-in service. And whilst we haven't been able to provide social support in its usual form, we have been in constant contact with those clients that require assistance with their shopping, with staff members currently providing this service for them.

Our meal deliveries & personal care services have continued, uninterrupted, with the introduction of hygiene protocols recommended by the Department of Health. And we have been inundated with people expressing an interest in volunteering with us!

Unfortunately we have had to postpone our yearly 'Thank You' function that is always held during National Volunteer Week in May. All going well we will combine this with our Backyard Bash at the end of the year. The theme for Volunteer Week this year is CHANGING COMMUNITIES, CHANGING LIVES. This could not be more appropriate as we find ourselves living in these extraordinary circumstances.

On another note we wish to advise that our Volunteer Coordinator, Lesley Connor, has moved on from the role at BMFS. We are reviewing the position and will let you know how this will look in the future. In the meantime Leesa & Sarah have been calling volunteers to check-in, update details on file and to confirm volunteering availability & preferences.

Don't forget the office is still open Monday-Friday, 8.30am-4pm. If you need anything at all please don't hesitate to call us on 4759 2811. And as always, a BIG THANK YOU for all that you do to support our organisation & our community.



These tips are from the Ageing & Disability Commission. They are aimed at helping us support the older & vulnerable members of our community - to help them stay as safe & healthy as possible during this challenging time.



Find ways to keep in touch

Social distancing and self isolation are different, but both require keeping in touch with people. Use the phone or email to have daily conversations with each other. Remind them about maintaining a 1.5 metre distance with anyone, to avoid large gatherings and usual greetings (hugs and kisses).



Keep an eye on their diet

The more that vulnerable people stay indoors, the less interested they can become in eating healthy and regular meals. Consider talking to them about ordering home delivery of fresh produce from their local supermarkets, or drop off meals to them while maintaining social distancing rules.



Do not ignore regular medical needs

During a crisis, it can be easy to think a person's daily medical needs are not as important. **This is not the case**, and any form of medical attention must not be ignored, especially for an older person or person with disability reliant on regular medication.



Limit the 24 hour news cycle

The constant news cycle of the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be overwhelming. Consider having a conversation with them about watching their favourite movie, or a new show. This will also help manage increased fear and anxiety.



Remind them of the importance of hygiene

Clean hands thoroughly for **20 seconds** with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub. Sneeze or cough into a tissue or a flexed elbow. And speak with them about avoiding close contact with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms.



Read information from official sources

The amount of information about Coronavirus (COVID-19) increases daily. Encourage them to keep up to date with the latest information from official sources, including **NSW Health**, the **NSW Government** and the **Australian Government**.

People often ask where the name of our café, Ben Roberts, comes from. The café was already named Ben Roberts when we took over in late 2017. And here is a bit of history to explain just who Ben Roberts was!

Ben Roberts Café is currently open for takeaway & limited dine-in meals, Tuesday to Saturday, 8am-2pm. Call us on 0434 314 254 or simply drop in!

BMFS is proud of our volunteers who received **Seniors Week Recognition Awards** earlier this year: Helen Smith, John Fox (unable to attend the ceremony), Jenny Fox, Stafford Lowe, John Stoodley & Doreen Stoodley.



Benjamin William Roberts

Benjamin William Roberts was a gold miner from California who came to Lawson in 1879. He worked as a pumper at Lawson Railway Station. He acquired 300 acres of land west of Queens Road.

In 1887 he purchased Lot 12 from Joseph Slade and built Alameda, first as a guesthouse, then in 1894 as a hotel when he got his publican's licence. In 1895 John Webster bought the hotel and he changed the name to the Grand Hotel, after renovating it & furnishing it in first class style.

Ben Roberts built two shops & several cottages, including Edgeroi & St Helens (changed to Carlton in 1930). He sold one shop to Mr Hart in 1892 which he had as a general store.

In 1893 a Progress Committee was elected & Roberts was one of the members. They accomplished many improvements around Lawson.

By 1895 Roberts decided to move to Castlereagh due to ill health & died there in 1899. His name lives on thanks to Carolynne Skinner who, in December 2007, opened a café named after him in one of the houses he built.

Blue Mountains Food Services continued that naming tradition when we took over the Ben Roberts Café in late 2017.

If you are running out of ideas to keep you occupied during isolation, here are a few suggestions we have come across:

- Spring cleaning
- Fix something
- Have a bath
- Try a face mask
- Call a friend
- Take a nap
- Meditation
- Start a course
- Read a book
- Try painting
- Do some craft
- Cook or bake
- Write a poem
- Keep a journal
- Plan a holiday
- Exercise
- Yoga
- Learn a new language

Birding at home: A Message from BirdLife Australia

We know the coming weeks & months are going to be hard for everyone across Australia, as we stand together to stop the spread of COVID-19. But even at difficult times like this, you can rely on birds to bring you joy, solace & a connection to the natural world.

So, we've gathered some ways that we can all continue to enjoy the beauty of our feathered friends and keep you having fun & learning new skills while our movements are restricted.

BirdLife Australia is a national bird conservation charity with more than 175,000 supporters. Our purpose is to stop extinctions, ensuring native birds are protected & valued. Join us at www.networkbirdlife.org/birding-at-home to partake in some of the following activities: complete the Autumn Bird Survey, explore our online Bird Finder, enjoy some outstanding photography, read Australian Birdlife, & much more!



**blue mountains
food services**

www.bmfs.org.au

(02) 4759 2811

admin@bmfs.org.au

25 Livingstone Street, Lawson NSW 2783 | PO Box 214 Hazelbrook NSW 2779 | ABN: 91 530 248 271

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