

# Capturing precious memories

By Sarah Vella

HEARTFELT is a volunteer organisation of professional photographers, who are dedicated to giving the gift of photographic memories to families.

The free service is aimed at families that have experienced a stillbirth or a premature birth, who have an ill infant, or a child with a serious or terminal illness.

Heartfelt is an Australia wide organisation, with over 40 volunteers in Victoria alone, with each state handling around 50 cases each month.

Malcolm Garth, of Mirboo North is the Victorian representative for the organisation.

With a background as an ambulance officer and professional photographer, a post on Facebook prompted Mr Garth to contact Heartfelt to offer his services.

"I saw the post on Facebook about Heartfelt and thought, I could do that," Mr Garth said.

"There has not been too many families needing the Heartfelt service out this way, but that is probably because it hasn't been strongly promoted.

"We want to put an end to the conversations that start with 'I wish we had known about you', and help as many families as we can."

The position of Heartfelt photographer is one that requires extreme sensitivity and compassion.

"It can be pretty confronting. My most recent job was a baby that was stillborn at 23 weeks. Seeing families at the worst possible time in their lives is difficult, but, at the same time, being able to create everlasting memories for them and make a difference in their lives is really rewarding," Mr Garth said.

"The very first shoot I did was a two-year-old boy with brain tumours, which were also affecting his spine. He could only walk with assistance and I thought, 'I might not be able to cope with this'.

"I got through the shoot, but had to pull up on the side of the road on the way

home for a think."

Describing what he does for Heartfelt to others can sometimes be difficult.

"Most people say 'it is really good that you do that, but it's not something I would do'.

"But I think until someone is in the position to require Heartfelt's services, it is hard to know how they would handle it," he said.

"The best part is making a difference for families, in a trying and difficult time and helping them to remember their children with beautiful images."

For more information on Heartfelt and the services they can provide, go to [www.heartfelt.org.au](http://www.heartfelt.org.au) or check them out on Facebook.



**So small:** Alexandra, taken by Gavin Blue, president of Heartfelt.



**Heartfelt volunteer:** Victorian representative of Heartfelt, Malcolm Garth, at his Mirboo North gallery with one of his own photos.



## Mayor's message

Cr Veronica Dowman



Council is responsible for managing 42 kilometres of foreshore across the Shire. Our foreshores are places of beauty and natural habitats that are attractive for visitors to Bass Coast. Any loss of these places is to be avoided.

Caring for the foreshores involves land management, conservation programs and public access. Council also manages infrastructure projects and programs to upgrade and maintain foreshore facilities such as beach access tracks and recreational boating facilities.

Our Natural Resources Management programs also include control of environmental weeds and indigenous revegetation, the control of pest animals such as rabbits and protection of threatened native animals such as the

Hooded Plover.

Last year Council started a project to address the problem. In June 2011 Council adopted The Foreshore Encroachment plan, with a process to address this misuse of public land. Since then Council has been inspecting our reserves and developing a register of all the encroachment sites. This means that we're in a better position to take further action.

There are a variety of different examples where people are encroaching on public land. Some are extending their lawns into Council reserves or planting exotic and potentially invasive plants. Others have built fire pits and barbecues, or placed equipment, caravans or even sheds on the foreshore. This is happening in Council managed bushland reserves in-

cluding areas of Cowes, Silverleaves, Ventnor, Grantville and Coronet Bay. This issue is of concern to many people in our community. Our reserves belong to the public and shouldn't be used exclusively for private use. So I am pleased that we are taking these steps to protect our unique environment, to reclaim our public land for the community and to conserve indigenous vegetation.

Information on Council's program of encroachment removal is contained in Bass Coast Shire Council, Encroachment into Foreshore and Bushland Reserves: A Procedure for Action, 1 June 2011, available on Council's website at [www.basscoast.vic.gov.au](http://www.basscoast.vic.gov.au)

**Cr Veronica Dowman, Mayor  
Bass Coast Shire Council**

## Mammals of the Bunurong Coastal Heathlands & Woodlands Walk 'n' Talk & Tracks 'n' Traces FREE COMMUNITY EVENT

**SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2012**

**Mammalian Fauna of the Bunurong Coastal Heathlands & Woodlands presentation evening**

**What:** A presentation from Wildlife Unlimited conservation consultant, Jim Reside on terrestrial mammalian fauna of the Bunurong coastal heathlands and woodlands. Following the presentation there is an opportunity for you to share your own experiences/wildlife sightings.

**When:** Saturday, 28 April 2012 7.00pm to 9.00pm  
supper provided

**Where:** The Meeniyah Hall, Whitelaw Street Meeniyah

**What to bring:** Your own wildlife stories and/or photos (not essential but encouraged)

**SUNDAY, APRIL 29, 2012**

**Walk & Tracks 'n' Traces morning**

**What:** A 'live animal' experience with a walk & tracks n traces presentation. Survey equipment will be established by Jim the night before we will be checking the traps for micro bats and small mammals such as antechinus as a group.

**When:** Sunday, 29 April 2012 8.00am to 9.30am  
followed by a cuppa

**Where:** Bald Hills Wetland Reserve, Bald Hills Road Tarwin Lower

**What to bring:** Suitable clothing/footwear

**To RSVP (essential) both events:**

Project Officer Kate Williams by

Monday April 23, 2012

E: [katew@wgma.vic.gov.au](mailto:katew@wgma.vic.gov.au)

T: 5662 5759 or

M: 0428 317 928.

Children are welcome under parental supervision.



*An Antechinus, one of the small native mammals that can be found in the area.*

*Photo courtesy Jim Reside, Wildlife Unlimited 2012.*



This workshop is made possible through a partnership between the South Gippsland Landcare Network and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority through funding from the Victorian Government.

# Invitation

The Great Southern Star's

12th

**SUNDAY  
MAY 6, 2012**

**FREE ENTRY**

**Leongatha  
Memorial Hall  
10am — 3pm**

**A complimentary glass  
of 'bubbles' on arrival!**

*Fantastic prizes  
to be WON!*

