



Summer
2025-26

Newsletter

Community Bank · Lara District

As we come to the close of another remarkable year, the Board and staff would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our community groups, customers and shareholders for your support throughout 2025.

For the second year in a row, we've reinvested over \$500,000 into 40 local groups. We thank our customers for making these meaningful projects and community support possible. Your choice to bank with us allows us to achieve these outcomes and make our community a great place to live.

We wish everyone a joyful, safe, and relaxing Christmas and New Year.



Our community impact

We aim to be the bank of choice for Lara and district and a leader in our community. Banking is our business but community is our purpose in Lara.



\$3,391,587

Reinvested from
2009 to now



\$502,229

Reinvested in
2024/25



100+
Groups supported
since 2009

Community Investment Program



Our second Community Investment Program round for 2025 was well attended with over 70 people and 38 different groups represented. Thank you to the Holy Trinity Anglican Parish who hosted and catered for the evening, and to Sue Eyton from the Lions Club of Lara who shared some heart-warming stories from projects the Lions Club have been involved with over the years.

From the applications we received, we are pleased to announce 25 groups had projects approved for a total amount of \$234,477 in contributions going to a wide variety of projects for the benefit of our community.

AGM and Geelong Youth Engagement Partnership

Our 2025 AGM was held on 6 November at Lifeway Christian Church. As well as the business formalities of an AGM, we love being able to celebrate the year's achievements with shareholders and group representatives of our Community Investment Program. It was lovely to present 25 people with certificates to demonstrate our partnership through grants, sponsorships, scholarships and donations.

The highlight of the evening was premiering our new community impact video which focuses on our partnership with the Geelong Youth Engagement Kokoda Program. This is the third year we have sponsored this program and felt this was a powerful story we wanted to share. The video followed Director Natalie, who we sponsored as a mentor, and student Kayla as they moved through the program from training, to tackling the Kokoda Track and post-trek interviews. This program literally changes lives; it assists youth in our region who face many challenges in their lives and provides them with support, skills and new connections to navigate the next stages of their lives. We feel so strongly about the Kokoda Program that we have extended our sponsorship for another two years and are offering up to two university or TAFE/ Apprenticeship scholarships to the program's alumni.

You can see for yourself how wonderful this program is via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/M3zZXECYaz8>



University and TAFE Scholarship Program 2026

We are proud to be entering our fourth year of awarding scholarships to local students for further study. So far, we have supported four students with university scholarships and three students with TAFE scholarships. It was lovely to meet two of our recipients, Lorinda and Jasmine at our recent AGM and we were provided with an update from Elizabeth, who is studying a Veterinary Nursing/Assistant course at Box Hill Institute. Elizabeth, pictured below, is loving her course, and next year will look more into the surgery aspect of veterinary nursing and is looking to complete a short course in Avian studies. As well as her studies, Elizabeth volunteers for Bannockburn Wildlife Rescue and Wildlife Victoria.



Our 2026 program is now open. We offer \$2,500 per year for university and \$2,000 per year for TAFE/scholarship courses. Eligibility criteria and the application form can be found via the following link: <https://communitybanklaradistrict.smartygrants.com.au/2026Scholarships>



Recently funded CIP Projects



SES: 4WD Vehicle



Mount Rothwell Landcare Volunteers: Wood Chipper

RSL Kokoda Memorial Walk

For the second time, the Lara RSL Sub-branch organised a Kokoda Memorial Challenge to raise funds for RSL Victoria to help them in developing a Veteran Community Integration



Program. Walkers chose whether to walk "legs" of the trek or tackle the length of the walk. Directors Andrew and Natalie walked a couple of legs each, but Branch Manager Kyna showed her determination and walked all 96kms, in conditions that some may describe as horrendous!!

Despite the less than favourable weather conditions, the Lara RSL raised an amazing \$94,000 through their fundraising efforts! It looks like this will become a biennial event, so get training for 2027 and let's see if we can help the RSL to reach \$100,000.



Happy customers!

Our home lending team have been working hard to help these happy customers purchase new homes! Need an appointment to discuss your needs? Our lenders can meet you in branch or they can come to you!

Call the branch on 5282 6430 to book an appointment.



Talk to us today



Kyna Woodford
Branch Manager
5282 6430
Kyna.Woodford
@bendigoadelaide.com.au



Ravi Singh
Business Development Manager
5282 6430
Ravinder.Singh
@bendigoadelaide.com.au



Mitch Austin
Customer Relationship Manager
5282 6430
Mitch.Austin
@bendigoadelaide.com.au

Community Bank · Lara District

5 Waverley Road, Lara VIC 3212

P 03 5282 6430

E laramailbox@bendigoadelaide.com.au
bendigobank.com.au/lara



/LaraDistrictCommunityBankBranch



/bendigocb_lara

We're open:

9.30am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday

9.00am - 12 noon Saturday

Directors

Andrew Hilliard (Chair), Libby Bate (Deputy Chair),
Graeme Duff (Treasurer), Natalie Candy, Jurgen Strauss,
Charles Saliba, Sheyne Berry (Company Secretary, Admin
Support Officer)

Lara District Community Enterprise Limited
5 Waverley Road Lara Vic 3212
ABN 67 134 347 087

Anakie Fresh Food Fair

The Anakie Fresh Food Fair is one sponsorship we approved in our recent CIP round and it was lovely to attend and see the Anakie community supporting their local school. A lot of the food stalls contained produce grown by the students as part of their Stephanie Alexander Kitchen and Garden Program, and we were also part of the official opening for the school's Outdoor Well-being and Learning Space – both projects we have funded. Libby, Charles and Sheyne spent a lovely afternoon chatting with locals and encouraging students to plant seedlings to take home to grow their own gardens.




Share in the merry

From silent nights to loud Christmas lunches, may your festive season be a special one.

During the festive season our branch will close on Thursday 25, Friday 26 and Saturday 27 December and reopen Monday 29 December.

From the Community Bank Lara District team

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Bendigo Bank

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited ABN 11 068 049 178, AFSL/Australian Credit Licence 237879 A1419239 OUT_48006948, 10/11/2025