



Castlemaine Society Inc.

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CASSOC Bulletin

Summer, 2025



Welcome to the CASSOC 2025 Summer Bulletin.

Happy New Year to our members, supporters and readers generally.

This year follows on the back of a busy and successful 2024 of dialogue and working with Council, collaboration with other community groups and keeping the community informed as we seek to preserve the heritage of Castlemaine.

The CASSOC committee continues to meet regularly, keeping abreast of developments in heritage and planning, continuing our engagement with Council to strive for sensitive planning outcomes and to acknowledge successes where achieved.

This year, as part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival, and in collaboration with a number of pivotal community organisations, CASSOC has built on last year's success to create an exciting special public forum entitled **The Alchemy of Gold** to take place in May. The forum will explore how the fledgling colony of Victoria was transformed by the discovery of gold (see below).

We hope you enjoy the Summer Bulletin which is heralding an exciting year ahead.

The Alchemy of Gold

As part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival, **The Alchemy of Gold** will be a series of lectures, workshops and field visits which will take place in and around Castlemaine from **16 to 18 May 2025**.

The Alchemy of Gold will be a special forum which brings together experts, historians and the community to explore how the discovery of gold in Victoria in the 1850s reshaped the colony.

From a fledgling colony, Victoria was transformed into an economic powerhouse with gold influencing not just the economy but also environmental, social and political landscapes.

The Alchemy of Gold – The Golden Transformation of Victoria event will offer an inspiring and thought-provoking program designed to illuminate the Victorian goldfields' rich gold history and its transformative impact on the colony. Engaging keynote presentations, panel discussions and field trips, led by renowned historians, cultural leaders and industry experts, will explore themes ranging from the legacy of the gold rush era to sustainable futures and regional development influenced by the goldfields storied past.

The diverse lineup of eminent speakers will include local storytellers, researchers and innovators, each

bringing unique perspectives to the conversation. Whether delving into historical insights, cultural evolution or community resilience, their expertise will captivate and inspire you.

You can visit *The Alchemy of Gold* website at <https://thealchemyofgold.com.au>



The arrival of the Gold Escort in Melbourne
by William Strutt 1851

The
Alchemy
of Gold

Alchemy of Gold - volunteer opportunities

The great success of last year's National Trust Australian Heritage Festival with a week of tours and talks of the Government Camp and surrounding significant buildings relied on the involvement of many volunteers. The Alchemy of Gold forum in May will similarly need the support of locals in volunteer roles such as setting up, reception and hospitality. Early interest can be registered at info@alchemyofgold.com.au. Further information about roles will be available closer to the forum. The CASSOC committee is very thankful for our supporters and volunteers.

The Gold Camp is Castlemaine

Fantastic recent news: the Victorian Goldfields have been added to UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List. This is the first formal step on the path to World Heritage status. We will keep you informed of further developments with this, as well as any decision-making about the Camp Reserve proposed redevelopment.

Heritage valued and respected

It's heartening to see heritage valued and respected by those who live in our town. Fine examples are evident throughout the town from the 1850s through to 1900s to the present day. Two buildings recently developed demonstrate examples of sensitive heritage treatment.



Castlemaine Court House

The new Castlemaine Court House extension has been added in a way which fits in sympathetically with the original facade, maintaining its heritage value, along with the restoration of the front iron and bluestone fence.

Beside the Court House, the current owners of the former Gold Warden's Office have upgraded with restoration of the slate roof, along with fresh paint to the outside of the building.



Former Gold Warden's Office

It's good to see these two original companion public buildings have their heritage features preserved while maintaining their relevance to residents and local amenity.

Hats-off to the Castlemaine Graffiti Busters!

CASSOC salutes and supports the *Castlemaine Graffiti Busters* and their achievements.

When an embarrassing report that made ABC national news in December 2023, tagged Castlemaine as the 'graffiti capital of Victoria', it was the last straw, co-President, Marli Wallace said. It was the impetus to form a small group of five concerned residents to do something about it.

Inspired by the highly successful Beaumaris Graffiti Busters, the group organised a fund-raising concert in June last year which helped raise enough to buy and equip a trailer with graffiti-removal equipment and paint to eradicate tags on private property throughout the shire.



The Castlemaine Graffiti Busters at work
Photo: courtesy Graffiti Busters

Just six months later, the group raised a further \$10,000, including a \$3,000 Community Grant from Mt Alexander Shire Council and another \$1,400 grant from Castlemaine Rotary Club to invest in more graffiti-busting gear.

And they got into it, carrying out more than 20 'busts' to clean up the town. Their initiative has won them well-deserved praise from local traders and residents alike.

The CGB now have about 10 regular 'busters' who spend a few hours twice a month removing tags. There are another 30 supporters on their books Marli said.

The CGB welcome anyone interested to join the Graffiti-busting task force. They meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7pm at Aitken's Corner Café on the corner of Gaulton and Johnston Streets, Castlemaine.

For enquiries please call 0447 767 304.



Outstanding P&ORA historical displays

We compliment the Pioneers and Old Residents Association for bringing history to life with their outstanding displays of rarely-seen historical materials, artifacts and stories in the old Videoland shop window at 18 Mostyn St (new display currently in progress).

