



Castlemaine Society Inc.
No. A01153160

CASSOC Bulletin

Autumn, 2026 (already!)



Welcome to our Autumn edition for 2026.

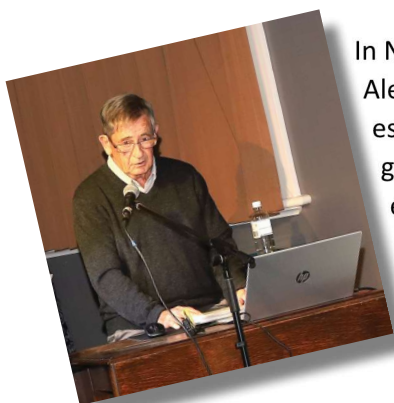
It's been a little while since our last Bulletin update but, right throughout 2025, our small committee has been quietly involved in a number of very successful community information sessions that have, to our delight, taken on lives of their own.

We firstly pause for a moment to acknowledge, now already four months ago, the devastation that our Harcourt community endured with the 9 January fires. We take our hats off to the resilience with which the community has rallied to support, rebuild, renew and importantly to be there for each other with love and practical hands-on support and arms around shoulders to say 'we have your back'.



As part of the National Trust's Australian Heritage Festival, a first for Castlemaine, The Alchemy of Gold was a fascinating series of lectures, workshops and field visits (completely booked out!) which took place in and around Castlemaine from 16 to 18 May last year. CASSOC, together with Castlemaine Historical Society, Pioneers and Old Residents Association and Maldon Museum united to deliver this event.

Clive Willman, geologist with a long career in the geological surveying of Victoria presented a captivating "Scientists on the Goldfields, 170 years of Geoscientific Discoveries", delivered at our AGM in August 2025.



In November, "Selected Views of the Mount Alexander Goldfields" was the topic of our highly esteemed local historian Ken McKimmie. This was the same presentation Ken gave for The Alchemy of Gold. It was so popular that a repeat session was entirely booked out!

CASSOC is applying for grant funding to allow us transform Ken's presentation into an educational YouTube video accessible to all.

"We had no idea about that ..."

"We had no idea about that . . ." has so frequently been echoed by our enthralled audiences, reflecting a thirst for knowledge about the heritage of our region, not only from our community, but well beyond, that it has inspired us to build on last year's successes as templates for the future!

CURRENT issues

Gold Camp Castlemaine, CASSOC and the Camp Reserve in Forest St Castlemaine

CASSOC supports the endeavours of the Gold Camp Castlemaine Inc. (GCC) committee, which campaigns for the Gold Commissioner's Camp historic precinct and more specifically, the Camp Reserve. GCC maintains that this is Castlemaine's premier historic precinct and that the historic significance of the area and its central role in the 1850s goldrushes is poorly understood by the public. As a result, it is constantly at risk from development that is insensitive to the unique precinct.



Aerial view of Camp Reserve site

The Camp Reserve Planning Application

PA077/2025 has been advertised and the current plan for a new sports complex damages the most historically significant part of the Camp Reserve. Gold Camp Castlemaine advocates for creative problem-solving around preserving and enhancing the historic site while achieving substantial upgrades to the sports facilities.

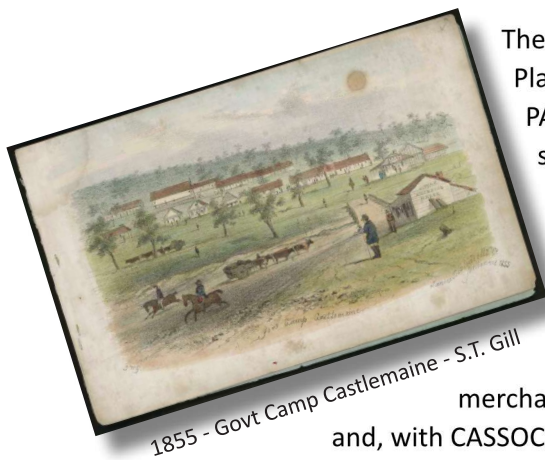
To date the GCC group has fundraised, created Camp Reserve merchandise of shopping bags with historic images, boxed cards, maps and, with CASSOC, have published a book written by Dr Bob Marmion about the colonial administration, the military and the policing history of Camp Reserve. GCC has, with the assistance of CASSOC, run a number of tours of the Government Camp precinct and has tirelessly driven a public education campaign.

Primarily GCC's concern is the integrity of the historic precinct. GCC also argues that there are many compelling reasons to reject this particular plan. It is extremely costly, it is building public assets on a flood plain which experiences cyclical extreme inundation and therefore is not a climate-resilient plan. It is a facility that will benefit a select few and not the wider community. The community consultation process was poor, significant large old trees will be removed.

Heritage advocacy is hard work, but the benefits to Castlemaine make this work worthwhile!

So what can you do?

- Submit an objection and encourage your friends to do the same (**closing 19 May**)
- Attend community update meetings
- Write letters to the local papers
- Let your local and federal MPs know that you do not support the plan
- Contribute to a VCAT fund
- Visit the Gold Camp Castlemaine website to read a history of the Government Camp.



1855 - Govt Camp Castlemaine - S.T. Gill



1853 - Gold Escort leaving Castlemaine Camp

What's coming up



19 May

Upcoming Council meeting - Camp Reserve Masterplan

The **Camp Reserve Masterplan** will be on the agenda for the Council meeting at **6:30 pm** on **Tuesday 19 May**. Council meetings are open to the public and live-streamed.

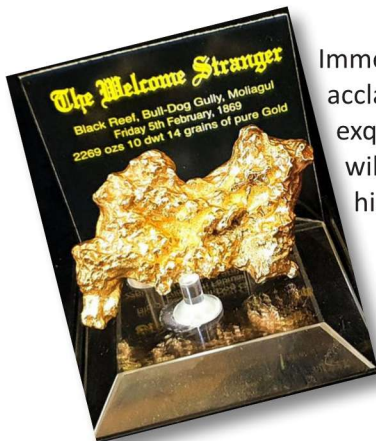
We encourage you to attend Tuesday's Council meeting to show support for the Gold Camp Castlemaine campaign for a more sensitive plan for this historic site. Please be aware that no one is permitted to ask questions about this planning permit on Tuesday, which is normal procedure when an issue is to be decided on the night.

19 June

AGM and guest speaker

Our AGM will be held on **Friday, 19 June at 7 pm at the Northern Arts Hotel**.

Please note: members will shortly receive the formal AGM notification, minutes and election documentation.



Immediately after the AGM, at 7:30, our guest speaker will be **Dean Smith**; highly acclaimed 'Museum Preparator' for the Museum of Victoria. He specialises in exquisite taxidermy, displays, models and re-creations. In his presentation Dean will focus on the astonishing replicas he creates of gold nuggets; from old historical finds to those of the present day!

Image: courtesy
Environmental Creations

30 August (Sunday)

Dr Bob Marmion will speak at the launch about his latest book ***Colossus of the Goldfields***, a biography of Captain John Edward Newell Bull; soldier, visionary and goldfields leader.

The launch will take place at the Market Building Visitor Centre. Bob will be signing his books which will be available for purchase on the day.

We thank the Pioneers and Old Residents Association who will prepare a special John Bull commemorative display in their window in Mostyn St., in concert with the launch of Dr Bob's book.

