

# YOUR SAY

## Look to inside

Eve FISHER



WE are in the midst of a collective experience that is destined to not only impact our lives but potentially change them forever.

Not only has our movement been restricted but our ability to engage in the activities that help shape our lives are, for the most part, gone and we are forced to find new ways of making ourselves feel whole.

The question of identity keeps popping up as we sink further down into the new reality: Who am I when no one else is around?

Whether we intend or not, we spend life being defined by our jobs, our activities, our friends and our associations. Think sport, art, politics, religion. Even where we live adds to our identity.

And when everything we attach ourselves to is gone, it's possible we will have absolutely no idea who we really are.

The state of our mental health is likely to become a focus as this plays out and isolation will do one of two things.

It will either plunge us into a state of malaise and despair as we grapple to fill our time without the aid of friends, sports, hobbies or entertainment, or it will force us to look at ourselves without the filter

of our life's trappings, and offer insight into our true selves.

And we might not like what we see.

Being confined to our homes is one thing but, for some, not attending a workplace is likely to have a bigger impact on mental health than anything else.

One of the saddest indictments of our worker-bee existence is that so many people identify with their work, and their work alone. Without it they feel empty.

They happily exchange their time for money and when that is taken away, they are left wondering who they really are. They have no anchor for their existence and this is likely to cause an erosion in mental health.

And that's before you even take into account the impact on finances. As crucial as it is, all the welfare, handouts or superannuation access in the world is not going to fill the void for people

whose entire life is defined by their work.

Current predictions are that two million Australians will join the jobs queue.

The social and psychological effects of this heavy clampdown are going to be felt long after the financial implications are evident, particularly for people who live on their own.

What no one is prepared for is what happens when an entire population is forced to sit with themselves and take a good, hard look at who they are.

Some people will relish the opportunity but for most, learning you actually have no idea who you are will be traumatising. And you know what? That's OK.

It's never bad to look at ourselves, irrespective of how much we don't like what we see or how deep we delve into our shadows.

A corpor-

ate suit sitting at home might realise the only reason they work in a stressful job they hate is because they're greedy and envious.

Or a charity worker might figure out that they're simply seeking validation.

Figuring out who we are when no one else is around is tough work. No one said the road to selfhood was easy but now is the perfect time to start that journey. We should treat this isolation period as a time to work on ourselves. Properly.

Instead of lamenting how bored we are (five minutes in) we could be treating this as a time for growth. A time to meditate on ourselves rather than getting caught up in all the external angst.

Depending on how we view it, this could be our greatest gift seemingly disguised as our worst nightmare because, for many, this will be the first time we have been afforded an opportunity to explore ourselves.

We now have the time to do things, not to simply keep ourselves busy but discover what inspires, motivates and moves us.

Pick up the guitar like you've been planning for 20 years, watch docos instead of binge-watching fiction, meditate, start painting even if you're bad at it.

Most importantly talk, *really* talk, especially to family.

Be prepared to go places you've never been. Be prepared to find pain as well as joy. You will find trauma in the darkness, but you will also find the light if you're willing to sit in the quagmire.



### ADDY READERS HAVE THEIR SAY - LETTERS AND TEXTS

#### REGION PUT AT RISK BY UNTHINKING VISITORS

I LIVE in Queenscliff and am an aged-care worker

Overnight the population of Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff has swelled at least by three times its usual size as people have ignored the current health advice to stay home.

The mechanic and petrol station operation says "in my street alone there are several holiday homes, every one of them today are occupied by people from Melbourne and surrounding suburbs, no one is respecting the recommendations to prevent coronavirus spread".

Another elderly man in Point Lonsdale trying to pay a bill at the post office had to move off the footpath and walk on the road to get past people meeting and chatting away with friends. All had dogs, all oblivious or uncaring to the risk this deluge of extra people pose to the predominantly elderly people of these towns.

Bellarine police were contacted

and stated they would go down to "have a look".

It's not OK! I buy my milk and bread at the local shops. Now you cannot practise social distancing with the extra people who have selfishly chosen to ignore the risks to our community. This increases the risk to the elderly who local aged-care frontline workers attend to every day.

It's a disgrace. These people should be named and shamed and told to go back home and practise decent community care.

So far there are no people with the virus in this community that we know about.

How many people will be diagnosed in a couple of weeks when the selfish entitled crowd return to their homes?

Name and address supplied

#### HANSON NOT THE ONLY ONE TO EXPRESS HER OPINION

HOW ironic that Karen Matthews said exactly the same things that Broelman's cartoon on the same page

ridiculed Pauline Hanson for saying. Accidental or deliberate?

Lorraine Kent, Grovedale

#### DAY CARE AN INCUBATOR FOR TERRIBLE VIRUS

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY agree with "Bustling Childcare Not A Safe Environment" (GA, 4/4).

Firstly there is no media thanking these dedicated workers in this difficult time. And secondly it would be good to do a breakdown of those children still attending daycare.

It would be interesting to see if the healthcare workers are keeping their children home for safety reasons. If this is the only reason daycare centres are open — to facilitate the healthcare workers to attend work — then I believe they should be closed.

Daycare centres can be an easy source of viruses and diseases. I believe the Government should revisit why they remain open and investigate if their reasoning is correct.

Name and address supplied

#### AFL BARWON SHOULD DECLARE SEASON OVER

I AM a local footy/netball club tragic. I am one of thousands across the region who live and breathe for their local club. There first thing in the morning, and there to pack up at the end of the day, while enjoying all the "goings on" during the day.

With the COVID-19 crisis in full swing — and the promise of worse to come — surely it is irresponsible to even consider offering half a season?

AFL Barwon plans to commence the season at the end of May. Smack bang in the middle of winter, when the risk of contracting this awful disease is at its highest.

I realise the bottom line is fiscal, but surely our health security should be the optimal consideration.

If memberships are paid up, consider it a donation to keep your club afloat, and let's pick this up again in 2021.

Tragically, I think that is the most sensible route for 2020.

Name and address supplied

### Geelong Advertiser EDITORIAL

## A ray of light in our dark times

TODAY parents and students alike will be grappling with the reality of more than 10 weeks of conducting their schooling at home.

It is a daunting prospect across the board. Parents will be sweating over long-forgotten maths equations, while students face the challenge of months of learning without face-to-face contact with teachers and classmates.

And for those families where parents are working full-time, there are the added logistical headaches such as having enough internet access, physical space to set up several workstations and the all-important challenge of time.

But they go into this brave new world with more than a modicum of hope with the news that Geelong has done its bit in slowing the spread of the virus.

While Victorian Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton yesterday spoke of his first feelings of optimism looking at results across the state, locals have even more reason for hope with our region recording its second successive day without any new confirmed cases of COVID-19.

But optimism is no excuse for complacency. We are where we are through strong decision-making and discipline. So while the coming weeks of home schooling may be daunting, we know the cause is just.

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1500 - French army, aided by Swiss mercenaries, conquers Milan.

1817 - Governor Lachlan Macquarie opens Australia's first trading bank, the Bank of NSW, in Sydney.

1933 - Unemployment in Australia reaches 500,000, or 24.4 per cent of the workforce.

1992 - US tennis star Arthur Ashe, the first black player to win Wimbledon, reveals he has AIDS.

1975 - Capital punishment is abolished in Victoria.

2019 - New Zealand's official privacy watchdog describes Facebook as "morally bankrupt" after the platform allowed a gunman in Christchurch to livestream some of the slaughter of 50 worshippers.

### ADDY ONLINE POLL

Yesterday's question: Do you think the restrictions on recreational fishing should be reviewed?

YES 57% NO 43%

Register your vote at [geelongadvertiser.com.au](http://geelongadvertiser.com.au)

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POST: PO BOX 91, GEELONG 3220 or [yoursay@geelongadvertiser.com.au](mailto:yoursay@geelongadvertiser.com.au)

Letters should be less than 300 words, carry full name, address and phone number of writer and be signed.

We reserve the right to edit letters.

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Please include your name and address

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