

VICTORIAN EASTERN REGION

VER e-Newsletter

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Welcome to the VER e-Newsletter

Hi, we hope we will all be able to have some more freedom in the near future, in the meantime enjoy the warmer weather, stay safe and well.

VER New Committee

The VER ARM and ORM were held via a Zoom meeting on Sunday 30th August. At this meeting a new committee was appointed. The elected committee is as follows:

Nic Holdsworth - President

Lynda Holdsworth - Vice President

Vivian Blacker - Treasurer

Wendy Talbot - Secretary

Tim Blake

Kylie Taylor

Heather Gardner

Angela Betheras

Gwyn Morgan

A big Thank You to the new committee members. We look forward to seeing what their talent, time and expertise can achieve for the VER members over the next 12 months.

All committee members are volunteers, giving up their time to support the VER, please support them where you can.

Contact details for each committee member can be found on the [VER website](#)

More on our new committee members can be found at the end of this Newsletter.



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AAA Certificates of Appreciation

We are pleased to announce that three of our retiring committee members were awarded AAA Certificates of Appreciation for their valuable contribution to our industry. They are:

Joy Skinner has been a AAA member since 1994 and has been a committee member since 1998. Her commitment to the running of shows has been greatly appreciated by all involved.

Lezley Golding has been a AAA member since 2002 and joined the committee in 2010. An active member of the Task Force, Lezley placed her stamp on many Spectacular events.

Chris Pendlebury has been a AAA member since 2008 and also joined the committee in 2010. Chris with her team have run the Lardner Show for the past 5 years.

Our congratulations and heart felt thanks go out to Joy, Lezley and Chris for their significant support of the VER.



Previous members acknowledged for their significant support of the VER include:-

Bill Plunkett – awarded 2002
Brian Worcester – awarded 2006
Ian Earle – awarded 2009
Joy Skinner – awarded 2009
Bob McLeod – awarded 2010
Helen McLeod – Awarded 2010
Rhys Owen – awarded 2012
David Daddo – awarded 2016

[Click here](#) for further information on these awards.

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Alpacas offer hope in race to end COVID-19 pandemic with potential virus-busting treatment.



Filming took place at Auravale Alpacas

As the world waits for a coronavirus vaccine, the scientific race to find a treatment is just as important.

Scientists in Melbourne have found an unlikely inspiration – alpacas.

Researchers from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute have injected alpacas with fragments of the virus that causes COVID-19.

The antibody based therapies could fill a gap in the current treatment for Covid 19.

Alpaca antibodies are liked as they have a different way of stopping the virus from entering cells. Nobody knows why Alpacas make these special antibodies but there is speculation that these smaller antibodies (nanobodies) can target proteins. Nanobodies inside an alpacas are uniquely small enough to fit into the spike protein of a Covid 19 particle.

This process stops the virus spike protein from being able to interact with the alpaca cells, losing its ability to infect the animal.

Researchers are now working to turn this discovery into a IV Covid 19 treatment for humans.



One of the alpacas saying hi to A Current Affair reporter— Mimi Becker

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When Does Your Alpaca Need A Dentist?

Common Signs Your Alpaca May Have a Dental Issue:

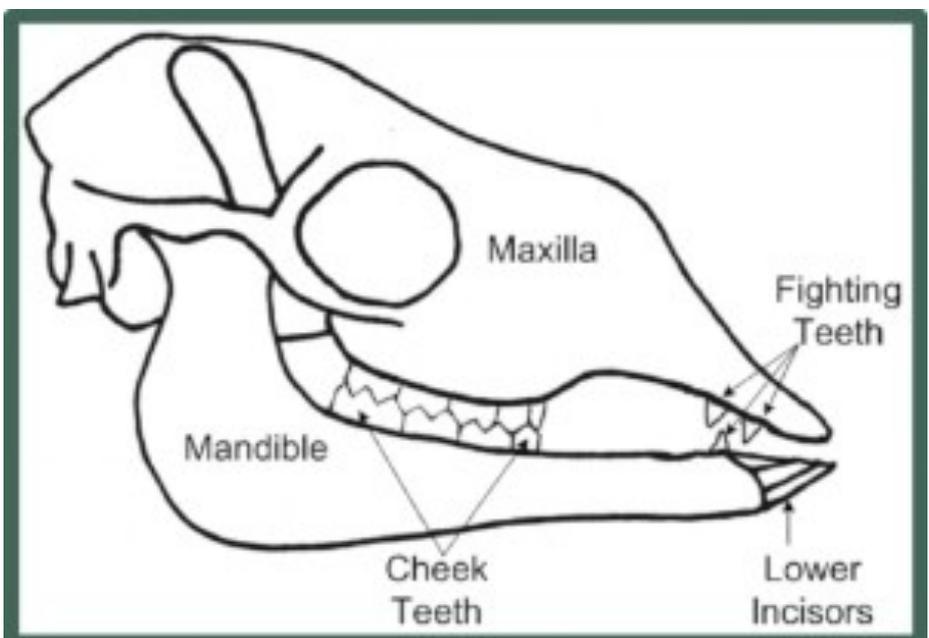
Alpacas of either sex can develop dental problems at any age.

In females serious tooth problems are often more noticeable during late gestation or lactation when they have the highest nutritional requirements.

If your alpaca is showing one or more of the following symptoms they may be caused by dental problems.

- Loss of body condition - especially if the other animals are doing well in the same environment. Regular body condition scoring or weighing can often identify these alpacas.
- A reluctance to eat, accompanied by obvious pain on chewing. Quite often these animals do not finish their share of rations.
- Not chewing cud.
- Feed spillage from the mouth whilst chewing.
- Undigested food in droppings.
- Swelling around the jaw area. Often the swelling comes and goes as the animal makes protective pads from hay or grass to alleviate pain during chewing.
- Unhappy demeanor.
- Jaw abscess.

It is essential as their carers that we understand the basics of alpaca dental anatomy and the effects dental problems can have on the overall health and welfare of our alpacas.



Alpaca skull showing basic dental anatomy

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Common Dental Issues:

Incisors

Incisors are the 'cutting teeth' at the front of the mouth and are used to bite off grass and leaves and also occasionally useful for scratching. One of the most common problems seen with incisors is when they become too long, protrude beyond the dental pad and can be seen sticking out between the lips.

If the incisors do not meet the dental pad they won't wear down and will keep getting longer. This makes it difficult for the animal to graze, causes callouses and bruises to the dental pad and may cut the lips. These teeth need trimming. Left untrimmed the incisors will block the entrance to the mouth resulting in discomfort and loss of body condition.

This can occur in animals of all ages.



Incisors before trimming



Incisors after trimming

Fighting Teeth

Males generally have large, well developed fighting teeth located both sides of the mouth behind the incisors. They develop when the alpaca is around three. Fighting teeth are very sharp, designed to rip and tear during fights for dominance and should be trimmed to ensure the safety of their paddock companions and handlers.

Fighting teeth can also cause discomfort by digging into the opposing jaw, cutting the gum and lips.



Fighting teeth before trimming



Fighting teeth after trimming

We are very fortunate to have a fully trained alpaca dentist living in the VER—Allison Quagliani—the first alpaca dentist in Australia.

Allison is always willing to share her knowledge and is passionate about educating people in the industry about alpaca teeth and the importance of both prevention and recognition of dental problems.

This passion has seen her accept many invitations by Industry and Veterinary bodies to present at seminars and conferences both in Australia and Internationally.

Information sourced from [Alpaca Dental Services](#) website.

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WEEDS!

With the warmer weather already upon us, so too is the pasture growth. It is fabulous to watch our pastures grow and provide feed for our alpacas well into the summer and beyond for some.

However, with the spring pasture growth the weeds also thrive!

Agriculture Victoria provides information on priority weed for eradication, identification and measures to eradicate. Information includes plant status, plant biology, growth and lifecycles, impact and management.

For those who were in the fire affected areas you may be interested in the section on "Weed warnings after drought, fire or flood."

Go to [Agriculture Victoria](#) to find out more.

Below are just a few samples of the weeds featured.



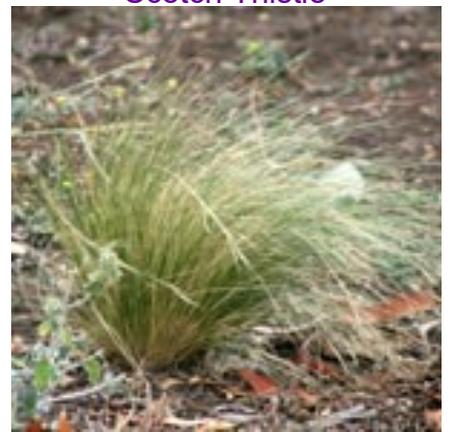
Ragwort



Scotch Thistle

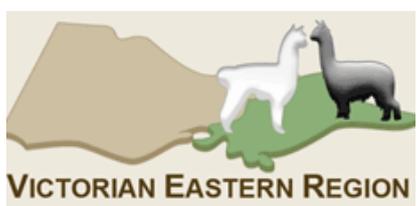


Blackberry



Serrated Tussock

If you have pictures or information you would like to share with others please contact the eNewsletter Officer: [Lynda Holdsworth](#)



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New VER Committee Members Snapshots

Profile: Heather Gardner, OAM

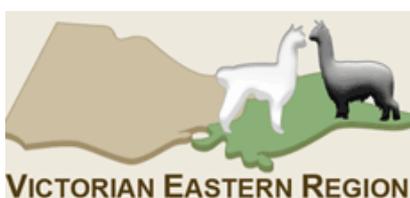
Paul and I have lived on two properties in the Shire of Nillumbik and had had cattle until we found that we thought we should like to have alpacas. This was quite by accident as my daughter had a video which she showed us about keeping alpacas as she thought she would get them on her property. In the event, we bought alpacas for our property in Kangaroo Ground and she continued with horses on her property. It does show the importance of marketing.

I have worked all my life, first in medical laboratory technology at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute with Sir MacFarlane Burnet and was there when he won the Nobel Prize which was very exciting. When he retired, I left to start our family of two children and later went back to University and, ultimately, to work as an academic for 30 years, first at La Trobe and then at the Lincoln Institute of Health Sciences. I went back to La Trobe in 1988 and became the Foundation Head of the School of Public Health at La Trobe. I was the federal Health Minister's nominee on the Board of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in Canberra for six years in the 2000s. I have had nine books on health published and was also foundation editor of two health journals. I was awarded an OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 2014 for service to public health. It is a nice coincidence, that the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute is now researching alpacas and their nanoantibodies to use in the search for vaccines and treatment for Covid-19.

We have had huacaya alpacas since 2002, so nearly 20 years and have continued to love them and their different and sometimes quirky ways. While we started with all white, now we have fawn and brown and more recently appaloosa. The biggest change that we have seen in that time is how much the fleece, both huacaya and suri, has improved and that this is seen in the alpaca shows both in the fleece and animal sections. Similarly, the product in Australia is now first class.

After attending as very new members the Alpaca Conferences in Noosa, in Canberra and in Adelaide, we were convinced that this was the life we wanted. A huge highlight was when we went to Peru in 2007 to the Alpaca Fiesta in Arequipa. This was when Dianne Condon of the VER had been invited to judge in this large and influential biennial show. It was a huge success and showed how Australia was highly thought of in alpaca breeding and judging.





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New VER Committee Members Snapshots cont'd

Profile: Heather Gardner cont'd

My interest in VER Shows began with showing animals and then progressed to Paul and I being trained as stewards at Bob and Helen McLeod's property. From then, I assisted Helen as a fleece steward and she taught me the system. Subsequently, I have been privileged to be a fleece steward at many VER Shows and at the Royal Show. Later, Paul and I have been working together as fleece stewards, which has been very enjoyable.

On a local level, I have been a member of NAGs, the Nillumbik Alpaca Group, from the beginning when it was started by Liz Cecil, and more recently as the convenor. We have made lasting friendships through this group but more particularly, it has been invaluable for discussing and sharing any problems with other breeders, learning about health and husbandry, and sharing equipment and buying animals.

Quite simply, we thought we were buying animals and had no idea that it was a way of life.

Profile: Angela Betheras

I own Nickelby Alpacas in Darnum and for 12 years ran a farm gate shop with a licenced café which was opened 5 days a week promoting all things alpaca. I closed it down in 2019 due to health and opened Nickelby's in nearby Yarragon where I sell my own label; Nickelby Designs. The shop on the farm is now my studio and I think I am the only studio to have a commercial kitchen!

I worked in International Supply Chain within the fashion industry for many years prior to working for myself.

I ran the local tourism association with over 80 members for 12 years and I was the first female board chair at Lardner Park in 53 years. I have done a brief stint on Regional Development Australia (Gippsland) but decided it was too bureaucratic for me. A few years ago now I was the Victorian Rural Woman of the Year which saw me complete my company directors course and keeps in me in touch with many rural women's networks around Australia through the alumni.

When not creating garments I play with my 60 plus alpacas which I started breeding in 2004 when I joined the VER. I was joint magazine editor for a couple of years when we actually posted out a magazine and I have exceeded the spectacular dinner too many times to remember. I look forward to being on the committee with a focus on the end product.



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New VER Committee Members Snapshots cont'd

Profile: Kylie Taylor

My Husband and myself moved to Gippsland in April 2018 from Melbourne for a tree change, we wanted to have animals on our property and decided on Alpacas as they seemed to be a popular alternative to cattle, goats or sheep and way more interesting .

We were introduced to Auravale Alpacas and purchased our first 5 girls in November 2018 and we have been learning everyday since then.

With the help of Lynda and Nick we have been introduced to all aspects of Alpacas and have been involved in the Berwick Show in 2019 and 2020 .

Our aim is to breed up to have the best quality alpacas as we can at Elm Park, and to learn everything we can along the way ,and to be involved in any way we can.

I have been involved in many committees and associations and held numerous positions over the years and am an all in or nothing sort of person and am excited to see what is in stall for the VER in the coming year ahead as the past year has been challenging in many areas.

I look forward to meeting up with our members at meetings and shows and hoping to support the VER for the benefit of us all.

Kylie Taylor

elmparkalpacas@gmail.com

Kylie Taylor
0412075455

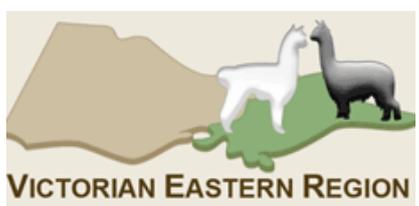


Don't forget to book your shearing for 2020.

Shearing is an essential services and alpacas need to be shorn annually. For more information on shearing during Covid restrictions and a listing of available shearers go to the

[VER Website.](#)





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New VER Committee Members Snapshots cont'd

Profile: Gwyn Morgan

I am half of Pacarina Alpacas, a small stud based in South-east Melbourne, with my animals agisted on the property of some generous friends in Upper Beaconsfield. I breed huacaya alpacas aimed at a commercial alpaca industry, with a focus on blue-black.

I currently have around 40 animals, in every colour except grey (apart from a couple of ageing black girls!)

Pacarina Alpacas is the daughter stud of one of the Australian Alpaca Industry pioneers, Roskhill Alpacas, set up by my mother and her husband Dougal in 1990. Pacarina was formed in 2003 as I took a more active role in the breeding, and the remainder of the Roskhill herd was absorbed by Pacarina in 2010.

One of this year's cria is the great-great- great-granddaughter of the original Roskhill weanling pair.



Victorian Eastern Region Boundaries

The region's boundaries start at Albury/Wodonga, then down the Hume Highway to Benalla, south on the Midland Highway to Mansfield, picks up the Maroondah Highway to Merton, Healesville, Lilydale and on to Melbourne, then follows the coastline to Mallacoota.

The VER covers a geographically diverse area from the vineyards of the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula, to the rich soil farming districts of Gippsland, the coastal extension from Port Phillip to Mallacoota and the grandeur of the Great Dividing Range.

