



Working together to promote the services, attributes and tourism of our region

**Business & Strategic Plan
2014 - 2017**

Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association Incorporated ABN 52928776493
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EDRA's Mission

To support any and all *local* business and community groups through promoting the goods and services and attributes of our region

EDRA's Vision

For the Eastern Dandenong Ranges to be recognised as a destination and sense of place to live, work, enjoy, visit, stay and prosper

EDRA's Philosophy

Our local communities and businesses are all uniquely placed to prosper and thrive, given...

- our wealth of natural and landscape beauty
- our talented people
- our country, small town feel
- our interesting history
- soil and climate which will grow anything
- our range of lifestyle and recreation options
- our proximity to a metropolis of over 4 million potential visitors and customers, which is itself a growing international destination
- a landmark international tourism icon weaves its way through our midst and chuffs backwards and forwards along our length every day.

This enviable combination of assets could lead to thriving local businesses and local employment, if we were a destination that people wanted to visit, stay in and invest in.

But each morning, the exodus commences and we empty out our communities, seeking work elsewhere. Most of us come home only as darkness approaches. Our children will most likely join us when they come of age and not necessarily through choice. There just isn't the range of jobs in the district to keep us. Business is harder than it has to be. Particularly further out in the smaller communities where the big forests start and its no use even opening a shop on a weekday.

Why?

We are a collection of 'edge' communities.

- The edge of the city
- The edge of Cardinia shire Council
- The edge of the Yarra Valley
- The edge of the Dandenongs

We inherit bits of things – identity, policy, infrastructure, budgets. The bits left over – the spare time or budget. Things get half-done over many years. The lobbying needs to

be twice as loud and twice as long. People stop trying. Things get done 'to' us, not 'by' us. EDRA will work on our positives. EDRA can carve a shared identity out of our landscape and people and build a 'brand' with substance.

With over 14,000 residents and hundreds of businesses, we don't need to be the edge of anything.

We are a destination in our own right. A place where people want to be and prosper. A place to relax and breathe with things to do and see and experience. A place that attracts and delights.

But to do it we need the brand and a voice. And it needs to be as representative of our communities as possible. We need the links across business and community and we need people who want to chip in and assist a positive project and vision for their place in the world. Then we can reach out to customers and governments.

We have a voice now in "The Local". It needs a sustainable structure and pool of volunteers behind it. We have Business Groups functioning to various levels of capability and with various levels of support, but they are not co-ordinated. The branding effort is too low-level to compete with Yarra Valley/Phillip island scale. We have many community groups keeping basic community services available to our community but struggle to get a message out to them.

EDRA's aim is to build a brand and identity that we can send out to the world and be recognised. To actively represent and market local business both within our own communities and more broadly. To share successes and draw on inspiration from elsewhere. To build networks.

If successful, our communities and businesses will never be on the edge of anything – again.

- We will be a place people want to come to visit & stay, to live & to work.
- Where the word 'family' can still be in front of the words 'business' or 'farming'.

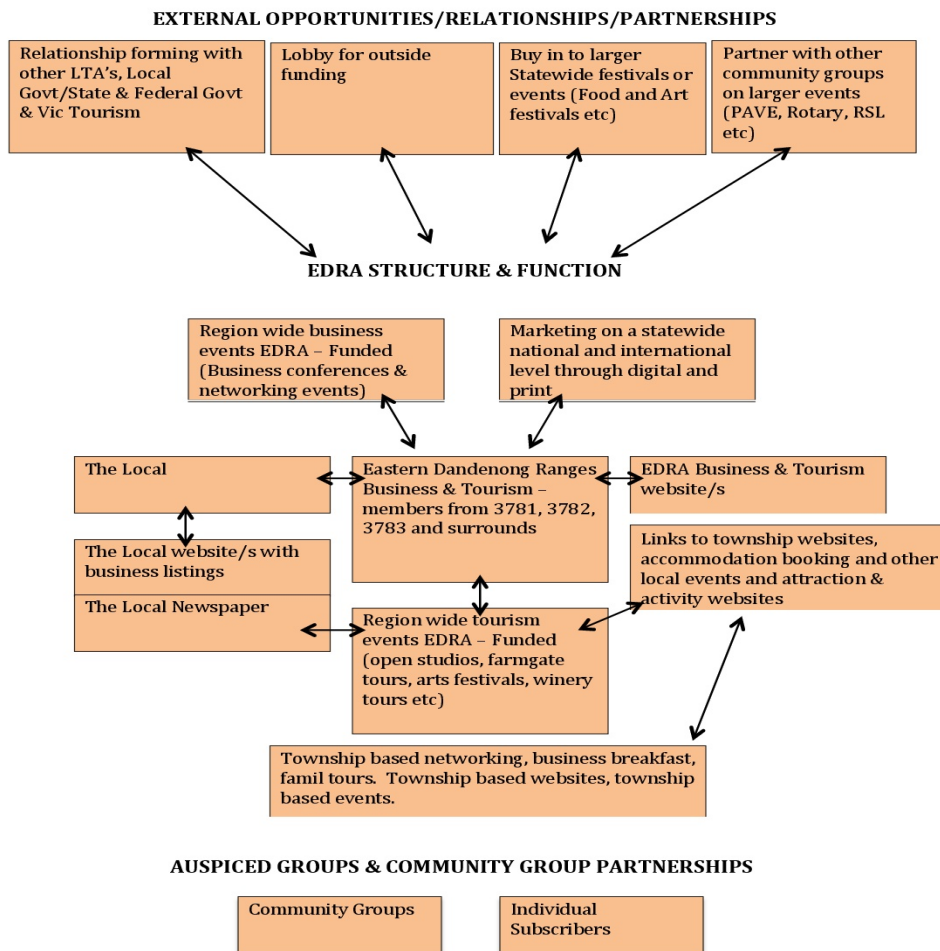
Proud to promote and provide information about our region.

Proud to support business and create employment.

Proud to delight and excite our community and visitors to the Eastern Dandenong Ranges region.

EDRA's Potential for Success

The Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association (EDRA) was formed by residents of Cockatoo, Emerald, Avonsleigh and Gembrook in June 2014, following several years of discussion between active community members from the 3781, 3782 and 3783 postcode areas to ensure a sound business structure is developed to meet the needs of its members. The EDRA team is all about teamwork and we have the combined skills, community engagement, relationships, association experience, passion, drive and local knowledge required to run the new association. Our business model will provide the support needed by our smaller community groups and unincorporated associations to apply for grants, funding and hold events.



EDRA's Team Experience

Kym Griffiths Chair

Kym holds a degree in Media Arts with experience in professional writing, marketing and design. A founding member of The Local Newspaper, Kym also runs her own photography business specialising in weddings and portraits. Kym is Cultural & Business Editor for The Local Newspaper.

David Nickell

David brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience to EDRA. Currently living in between Cockatoo and Gembrook, he is descended from the first settlers of the Emerald diggings. David was a co-founder & first president of the Cockatoo Township Committee from 1998 to 2000, then represented the Eastern Dandenong Ranges as a Ranges Ward Councillor at Cardinia Shire Council from 2000 to 2003. More recently, David has commenced a new local farming enterprise and continued community work as President of Gembrook Township Committee from 2009. David has worked in the corporate sector in Change, Incident, Business Continuity and Risk Management. With an honours degree in Political Science, he is passionate about grass roots communities in the Eastern Dandenong Ranges developing the capacity to set their own agenda and build their own futures.

Lynne Trensky Secretary/Membership Manager

Lynne is actively involved in a number of local organisations including the Emerald Business Group, Emerald Village Committee, Cardinia Shire Tourism Advisory Committee and The Local Newspaper. Lynne has vast experience in strategy development, brand management and livery programmes, project management, marketing and events. Some of the brands Lynne has worked within the tourism sector include Sydney Olympics, City of Melbourne, Ansett, Tabcorp, Victorian College of the Arts, Opera in the Market (Victoria Market), Crown, Grand Hyatt and Spirit of Tasmania.

Phil Byers Treasurer

Phil has a background in graphic design, photography and IT which have helped develop a range of skills in publishing. After a long career in real estate advertising, Phil provides design services through his business Focus Light.

EDRA's Team Experience

Graham Dunstan

Deputy Chair

Graham has had vast experience as a senior executive and more recently as a board member of a number of companies. He is a member of the Emerald Village Committee and has recently been appointed Chair.

Damien Edwards

General Committee Member

With 20 years corporate IT experience, Damien specialises in the integration, support and development of technology for small to large and complex environments: Web development/presence, programming, networking and routing, server/client support, design and management of technology. Damien is a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer and holds a number of industry standard qualifications.

Daniel De Graaf

General Committee Member

Daniel's is a qualified teacher whose work has taken him around Australia and overseas. Through his travels, he is developed an appreciation of why the Eastern Dandenong Ranges are so special in our crowded planet. He is passionate about agriculture, the arts, natural resource management and social enterprises which he fosters through his involvement in his food production business, supporting local arts, being a Landcare committee member and through his family's social enterprise in Cockatoo, where they have lived since 1980.

Marg Megarry

General Committee Member

Margaret Megarry has lived in the Dandenong Ranges for most of her life having grown up in Monbulk, and has lived in Emerald for over 30 years. She experienced Ash Wednesday and how the community pulled together to help each other out. Her three sons and families all live locally and have been captains and played for Emerald Football Club. This community spirit is something Marg has embellished. Marg is Secretary at Emerald RSL and with her husband Matt run "The Heart of Emerald" Bed and Breakfast. Margaret is on the EBG Wedding Expo Steering Group, a member of Puffing Billy Country Getaways and is keen to see the area develop its tourism potential.

Our Local Tourism Associations & EDRA's Corporate Positioning

There are two main Local Tourism Associations representing the Cardinia Casey region. Casey Cardinia Tourism & Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism.

Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism's focus is to promote business & tourism operators in our local corridor and surrounds through destination marketing of the hills region. Collaboratively, the two groups will work to promote the Casey Cardinia Region. Due to crossing council boundaries, EDRBT also has the opportunity to collaborate with Yarra Ranges Tourism.

Casey Cardinia Tourism's focus takes on a more regional approach to promote key attractions across both shires and aims to build awareness of the region as a whole.

The Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism (EDRBT) and The Local Newspaper operate as two sub-committees under the incorporation of EDRA. EDRA's two sub-committees are complimentary and together aim to develop a stronger shared identity and narrative for the Eastern Dandenong Ranges that will strengthen the community and establish a 'destination brand' for the region. The Local Newspaper currently resides out of Gembrook and the tourism and business group is looking for premises in Emerald to hopefully operate a visitor & information centre.

The Eastern Dandenong Ranges are the ridges and valleys stretching from Johns Hill and the Menzies Creek valley to the east, joining the Dandenong Ranges to the foothills of the Central Highlands at the headwaters of the Bunyip River. With rich red volcanic soils feeding tall eucalypt forests & cropland, through to valley soils supporting grazing and heathy foothill forests, the variety of the patchwork landscape is unique.

So is it's beauty, to traveller and local alike. With things to see and do in any direction, the district lies in between the Yarra Valley & Westernport catchments. To the West lies the main Dandenongs range, Corhanwarrabul, presenting a different, gentler face to her east, compared to the steeper, more abrupt rise from the Melbourne side. Several streams rise here and criss-cross the Eastern Dandenong Ranges, including Menzies, Cockatoo, Tomahawk & Gembrook Creeks flowing north to join the Yarra and Cardinia, William Wallace Creeks & the Bunyip River, flowing south to Westernport Bay. Several communities call the Eastern Dandenong Ranges home, including the townships of Clematis, Emerald, Cockatoo through to Gembrook plus smaller ones including Avonsleigh and Macclesfield.

Proposed member base of the Eastern Dandenong Ranges

Avonsleigh, Beenak, Belgrave, Clematis, Cockatoo, Dewhurst, Emerald, Gembrook, Hoddles Creek, Kallista, Macclesfield, Menzies Creek, Monbulk, Mt Burnett, Nangana Selby, Silvan, The Patch, Yellingbo.

Why Join EDRA

Our focus is on supporting the growth and marketing of any business, community group or association that operates in the Eastern Dandenong Ranges corridor.

Benefits depending on your membership:

- EDRBT will **drive** promotion of Eastern Dandenong Ranges as a destination including maps, brochures & flyers (walking and cycling, wineries, day trips, accommodation etc), a highly visible website with links to Visit Victoria, facebook, destination branding and visitor signage/wayfinding.
- EDRA will support you to develop marketing strategies/partnerships to promote your business, industry sector, membership drives, events etc.
- EDRA Incorporated insurance to manage your membership
- Keeping you informed about local issues and opportunities
- Auspicing smaller groups that aren't incorporated apply for grants
- Targeted print & online promotion
- Networking
- Access to research material
- Information sharing
- Industry segment training
- Workshops
- Advocacy & Lobbying
- Advertising discounts on all marketing and promotional material produced
- You will be joining a well considered organisation and operational structure
- Local knowledge and experience of foundation committee members driving EDRA
- Unified communications and support across the membership groups
- Access to design & marketing services including brand strategy, project management, event management, copywriting, design and artwork, database build and management, web build, design and management
- Local Newspaper discounts

Existing community groups, tourism groups or business groups (that are not individual members of EDRBT) may apply to join EDRBT with one vote nominating a delegate to represent them.

An Overview of Associations/Groups, Tourism Associations & Local Newspaper

Associations/Groups

There are many associations and groups both large and small, incorporated and unincorporated operating in the shire of Cardinia. Many groups work in silos, duplicate groups pop-up not knowing others of the same or similar type exist in the same area. As such, groups face a number of challenges in general including obtaining and retaining committee members, securing members, marketing and promotion, networking and partnering with other groups. There are opportunities for like-minded groups that address similar issues to collaborate, potentially merge, share knowledge, support each other for funding and lobbying and share meetings and training opportunities.

Tourism Associations

Regional & Local Tourism Associations operate as part of Australia's Tourism Industry. Best results are achieved when RTO's and LTA's work in collaboration.

Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO's) are generally private sector membership based organisations run by a board of directors that have the business and marketing skills required to develop external destination marketing strategies to attract visitors to their broader region. They are generally funded through memberships, Tourism Victoria & Local Councils. RTO's are not community service organisations. They are not about promoting destinations, they are about targeting business with effective destination marketing strategies. The RTO representing the Dandenong Ranges is Yarra Ranges Tourism. Dandenong Ranges Tourism and Warburton Valley CEDA operate as LTA's under the YVT RTO.

Local Tourism Associations (LTA)/Local & Business Tourism Associations (LBTA) are generally divided into two categories; small locations and large locations within a region. LTA's manage local issues and local marketing along with product and industry development. LTA's need to vary according to the strength of their destination and their membership along with their capacity for the delivery of core responsibilities, viability, resources and skill sets. They are generally funded through memberships.

Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism would be viewed as a small LTA within the Yarra Valley Region. Casey Cardinia Tourism would be viewed as a large LTA.

Local Newspapers

Local newspapers are a valuable part of the community they serve providing small businesses and community groups an economical marketing tool to promote themselves and connect with their community. There are more than 200 community newspapers published in Victoria attracting an enthusiastic following in their communities and information for visitors to their area. Currently there are five Local newspaper published in Cardinia and one in the Yarra Ranges. Bunyip & District Community News, The Local, Signpost Magazine, Village Bell in Upper Beaconsfield & Koo Wee Rup Blackfish. Paper size and type, distribution, structure and pricing varies. Production is generally supported by a mix of paid and volunteer workers.

EDRA's Competitive Advantage & SWOT Analysis

The Local Newspaper - To improve information, communication and overall connectedness between townships.

1. Variety of content
2. Non religious and non political
3. Of community & visitor interest
4. A voice for the community
5. EDRBT member discounts
6. Skills set of the Local team
7. Contemporary image & format
8. Online presence
9. Cross promotional opportunities
10. Social media presence
11. Community Connectedness

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by the community • Skills Set • Contacts • Track Record (2 years running) • Cost effective to produce • Facebook presence • Web (online presence) • Non – political • Non denominational • Don't change editorial • Economical marketing tool for small business • Member discounts • Low financial overheads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editors to cover and write stories • Sourcing material from our community groups • Sections, content and layout long-term objectives for the paper moving forward • To print enough papers for every household • Resources • Equipment • Office space
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadetships • Employment opportunities • Secondary school involvement and workspace • Sponsorship packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production costs • New papers emerging • Social media

EDRA's Competitive Advantage & SWOT Analysis

EDRBT- *Working together to promote the services, attributes and tourism of our region*

1. Knowledge of local region & district strategies
2. Skills set
3. Local Tourism & event projects undertaken
4. Local Community & Business relationships and connections
5. Major tourism attributes to promote
6. Local newspaper discounts

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local knowledge of region • Is a community service organisation • Skills Set • Relationships with other business and community groups • Contacts • Local tourism projects undertaken • Local tourism strategy developed • Puffing Billy • Emerald Lake, walking tracks • Regions unique attributes offer a point of difference to Yarra Valley & other areas in the Dandenongs • Local Newspaper discounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDRBT awareness • Funding • Fixed building premises & facilities
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be recognised as another destination precinct • Enhance the visitor experience • Visitor centre • Booking office • Collaboration with Puffing Billy Railway • Collaboration with CCT • Promotion and support through Yarra Ranges Tourism & Cardinia Council • Auspice 'special interest' groups, in particular arts, culture and heritage, for members to contribute to projects or events • Provide a forum for members to raise issues of relevance to the aims of the Association, for discussion and deliberation at formal Assoc. meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen as competitors by other tourism associations

Marketing Initiatives

A range of key Projects will serve to benefit our range of memberships. Additional projects such as attraction based maps promoting wineries, day trips, accommodation, farm gates, trails etc along with events and training requirements will be developed with our members.

Immediately

1. EDRA and EDRBT website (dandenongsandranges.com.au)
2. Present and build relationship with Yarra Ranges Tourism
3. Present and build relationship with Cardinia Casey Tourism
4. Present and build a strong relationship with Puffing Billy Railway
5. Presentation of EDRA and its sub-committees to all of our local community groups & associations
6. Membership roll-out
7. Seek Council and other funding/support/grants
8. Seek annual sponsorship for categories of The Local newspaper

Short Term 2015

1. Destination/Visitor map. Black & white A2 map, folded to A5 & website. Map from Belgrave to Gembrook (puffingbillycountry.com)
2. Local district A3 tear-off maps (business & tourism) for Emerald, Cockatoo & Gembrook.
3. Work closely with our members to identify business & tourism needs, projects and events for implementation.
4. Develop a list of training requirements with our member types and plan workshops and guest speakers for 2015
5. Trial a 'pop up' visitor centre in Emerald to undertake a needs analysis and measure success of A2 map
6. Apply for funding and grants

Medium to Long Term 2015-2017

1. Destination branding from Belgrave to Gembrook (signage, community, public art etc)
2. Range of visitor brochures, maps and flyers determined by the members

Visitors Map (puffingbillycountry.com) A2 folded to A5 finished size

- The map will be highly visible due to saturation across the member catchment and available in Melbourne and online
- The map will become the visitor's resource to the Eastern Dandenong Ranges
- Equal prominence for all contributors, inexpensive buy-in
- The map will include accommodation, attractions, parks, walking and cycling trails, restaurants, artisans & galleries, farm gates, wineries, camping, health & wellbeing, retail & boutiques listings.

Individual Gembrook, Cockatoo Township & Emerald Township Maps

- Detailed locality maps featuring local businesses and attractions in the area.
- A3 double side, tear off, full colour, inexpensive buy-in.

Marketing Measures (in development)

Goal	Strategy	By Whom	By	Evaluation
<i>Corporate Marketing</i>				
Meet and build relationship with Cardinia Casey Tourism.	Review marketing strategies of both groups and how each can support and work with each other to promote the Cardinia & Casey Cardinia region.	EDRA Comm	Early 2015	Regular meetings and collaboration on projects where applicable.
Increase profile with CCT & other tourism groups operating locally and nearby.	Arrange presentation meetings.	EDRA Comm	Early 2015	Website links. Promotional partnerships and opportunities. Collaboration on projects that are mutually beneficial.
Increase profile with Yarra Ranges Tourism.	Arrange presentation meeting.	EDRA Comm	Early 2015	On-going support and promotion through YRT profile and online resources. Potential funding assistance.
Build relationship with Puffing Billy Railway.	Arrange presentation meeting.	EDRA Comm	Early 2015	To work together to grow Puffing Billy Country as a visitor region/precinct, attract funding opportunities and identify new joint marketing opportunities.
Business Membership Drive	Arrange presentation meetings to Emerald, Cockatoo & Gembrook Business Groups	EDRA Comm	Late Dec/ Early 2015	Understanding of EDRA's operation, vision, support & benefits provided to business through its subcommittees. Uptake of Memberships.
Community Groups Membership Drive	Meetings to Emerald, Cockatoo & Gembrook Village	EDRA Comm	On going	Understanding of EDRA's operation, vision, support & benefits provided to business through its subcommittees.

	Committees & Groups/Clubs			Uptake of Memberships. Collaboration on projects. Auspice special events/projects.
Goal	Strategy	By Whom	By	Evaluation
EDRA & Subcommittees Premises	Continue to work with 3MDR on the old Police Station. Identify other suitable sites that could operate as a visitor centre, member offices/business hub, gallery with others		2014 - 2015	EDRA premises and business hub. Potential visitor centre.
Promotions				
Tourism Membership Drive.	Puffing Billy Country promotion - A2 map and website.	LT	Early 2015	Build a strong member base of tourism operators between Belgrave & Gembrook and surrounds through participation in the promotion. Collect marketing material from all participants for ongoing promotion and potential pop up visitors centre trial & viability in Emerald. Understanding of EDRA's operation, vision, support & benefits provided to tourism business through its subcommittees.
Emerald Township Map	To produce an A3 tear-off map for visitors promoting business and attractions in Emerald.		Mid 2015	Locality maps available end of 2015.
Cockatoo Township Map	To produce an A3 tear-off map for visitors promoting business and attractions in		Mid 2015	Locality maps available end of 2015.

	Cocktaoo.			
Gembrook Township Map	To produce an A3 tear-off map for visitors promoting Gembrook Township Map business and attractions in Gembrook.		Mid 2015	Locality maps available end of 2015.
Projects				
Ash Wednesday Memorial Picnics	1 st Collaborative project between Supporting Cocktaoo Community Dev & EDRA. Reflect and look forward to new Ash Wednesday Memorial.	EDRBT /The Local	Sun Feb 15	Support and promotion via broader community networks. Community involvement, promotion and ownership of the new Ash Wednesday Bushfire Memorial. Connect affected communities, capacity building. If successful to make an annual event.

EDRA Memberships

Business & Tourism Member types

The Eastern Dandenong Ranges Business & Tourism group subcommittee of EDRA will administer Business & Tourism Memberships and Business memberships operating in the postcode areas of 3781 Cockatoo, 3782 Emerald, 3783 Gembrook and more widely..

Where your membership is spent	Tourism Member	Business Member
	\$250	\$150
Management of your EDRBT M'ship	✓	✓
B & T Meets	✓	
Tourism Meets	✓	
Business Meets	✓	✓
Monthly E-Newsletter	✓	✓
Business & Tourism Events	✓	✓
Access to research	✓	✓
Access to free & subsidised training workshops	✓	✓
dandenongsandranges.com.au business listing	✓	✓
Social media promotion	✓	✓
Puffing Billy Country A2 Map	✓	
Puffing Billy Country Website	✓	
Tourism product development & branding	✓	
The Local Newspaper website listing	✓	✓
Discounted Buy-In (promotions)	✓	✓
Discounted The Local Advertising	✓	✓

How is your membership spent?

\$30 to financial administration, \$50 or \$70 to membership management (based on member type) and the balance to EDRBT projects.

EDRA Memberships

Community Group Member

EDRA will administer Community Group memberships operating in the postcode areas of 3781 Cockatoo, 3782 Emerald, 3783 Gembrook and more widely. Community Group members can access a range of benefits as detailed below. In addition and upon request, EDRA can also auspice 'special interest' groups (in particular community, arts, culture and heritage groups that are unincorporated) as subcommittees via MOU agreements.

Where your membership is spent	Community Group Member
	\$75
Monthly E-Newsletter	✓
Access to free & subsidised training workshops	✓
The Local Paper & website articles	✓
The Local Facebook promotion	✓
The Local Discounted Advertising Rates	✓

Individual Subscribers

EDRA welcomes community members to become subscribers of the association. Subscriber membership will keep you up to date with community news, access to free & subsidised training workshops and one-off discounted advertising in The Local. Please note Individual Subscribers don't have voting rights.

Where your membership is spent	Individual Subscriber
	\$50
Monthly E-Newsletter	✓
Access to free & subsidised training workshops	✓
One-off Local Discounted Advertising Rates	✓