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Go back to basics for a true leveller

THE key is to be organised. And when I say organised I mean laden with literally everything, including the kitchen sink and its associated detritus. In fact, taking extraneous implements you wouldn't ordinarily use at home is actually a key to the process.

One forgotten item can ruin the experience and lead to the feverish and immediate creation of a list, usually punched into a dying device, to ensure such a memory failure doesn't happen again.

Camping is a true battle of the wills. On one hand we look to escape the heady complications of life with all its fancy amenities and objectives, while on the other we look to make the camping experience as luxurious and homely as possible.

Finding the balance between the two is the holy grail. A grail whose whereabouts is neither found, nor possessed.

Nothing beats sitting in nature for days on end, wondering each morning what you'll do while away the hours, yet by the time you've decided it's nearly dinner and the day has passed in a glorious kaleidoscope of canvas,

EVE FISHER

“IT'S THE TRUE LEVELLER. SURE, SOME MIGHT HAVE A FAR MORE GLAMOROUS SET-UP BUT ONCE THE FIRE IS GOING AND THE BILLY IS ON THE BOIL, THE OUTSIDE WORLD BECOMES IRRELEVANT AND FORGOTTEN AS MORE PRESSING NEEDS COME TO THE FORE.

dirt, bush and bites (of varying sizes), with barely a blip to the heart rate.

Once you've got your set-up (mine is comprehensive but still basic) very little investment is needed each time you plan to venture out.

Free camping is available everywhere and it doesn't cost much to put together a basic kit.

For those with cash to burn, you can do it in style, with all manner of contraptions on the market

these days putting true pep in the camping step.

Tents on car roofs seems to be the biggest trend at the moment although I do struggle to understand why you'd want to inject a ladder into the camping experience when a tent on the ground is pretty much the same thing.

Still, it's not for me to judge. I save that judgment for those people who create horror problems at events like music festivals where they pack their finest cheap camping gear and happily leave it all behind for others to deal with the mammoth waste problem.

There is a fine tension between keeping camping affordable but not disposable. Admittedly, some stuff you buy is utter rubbish so there is no surprise it ends up in landfill contrasting harshly with the low-impact intentions of most who go camping in the first place.

Camping is also the place for fringe dwellers, particularly in times like these when so many have been shut out of social and travel situations in this new two-tier situation we call society. I guess it always was, when you

think of gypsies and other nomadic cultures who for one reason or another were denied the privileges the rest of their contemporary society were afforded.

But when you consider that in modern times the shut-out pertains to such relatively empty pursuits as the shopping mall, cinema and restaurant, you have to ask yourself if it's a blessing or curse. Are you actually doing people a favour from denying them the right to see the latest Marvel or Fast and Furious instalment? Camping in nature does indeed appear to be a suitable consolation prize. I know I'd rather be fireside than at my local Smorgies.

Camping is the true leveller. Sure, some might have a far more glamorous set-up but once the fire is going and the billy is on the boil, the outside world becomes irrelevant and forgotten as more pressing needs come to the fore.

Is there enough wood? Will the packet of marshmallows survive the night?

Will the adjacent camp-spot start a midnight Barnesy blitz, much to the chagrin of fellow campers and wildlife alike?

Geelong Advertiser GROWING PAINS

WHILE the growth of our region has been years in the planning, the rate at which the pandemic has expedited things would not have been predicted by many.

The flow-on of our region's massive population migration, particularly from Melbourne, has seen development opportunities skyrocket as huge demand creates a housing crunch across the region.

Those fortunate enough to have bought into the area before the spike in demand are counting their blessings and their profits, as the value of local properties continue to climb.

This should also be the case for those astute enough to have seen the opportunities to build and develop properties in the region's growth areas.

However, as today's story reveals, there are some who committed to build in local growth developments who have been left waiting for many key infrastructure promises to materialise. It is not unreasonable to expect some progress on promised sporting ovals, playgrounds and road infrastructure more than four years on from building in a major estate.

Yes, the growth has come faster than most anticipated, but it is imperative that key infrastructure also keeps pace with housing. Otherwise the damage to safety and liveability in some of our newest developments could spark a population migration in the opposite direction.

LETTERS & TEXTS

OUR ELDERLY DESERVE MUCH BETTER CARE

SO a prisoner gets five-star accommodation, pools, fully equipped exercise yards, computers, television, cash and many more luxurious items from the generous taxpayers and now our taxes pay on average \$10 for a meal for these cretins.

Whereas our elderly, who have paid taxes all their life, now have their families paying thousands a month to aged care facilities – most of it going to the owners of these facilities – for accommodation with less than average personal care. Locked up in stuffy rooms smelling of urine, a television with Foxtel that has been supplied by a family member or a friend, no exercise facilities and if lucky they are taken out of the four walls they live in for a grab of fresh air.

With all the money these facilities obtain from the federal government they can only manage a tasteless \$6 meal on average.

We should be bloody ashamed of ourselves.

My solution would be to take this entire organisation out of private hands. Get it run by our federal government that will then have full control and all responsibility over the entire sector. At the moment we have

these private organisations sitting back getting rich and accepting no responsibility at all.

Run it like the NDIS but with proper funding this time that has been thoroughly thought out. The amount of funding these facilities get is obscene and they want more.

Get some lazy politicians off their backsides and let them earn the wages they think they deserve, not to mention their generous retirement pension package for their so-called contribution to our society.

Ross Yockins, Newtown

ALL IN ALL, WE'RE IN PRETTY GOOD SHAPE

WHAT has Scott Morrison done wrong?

His government has presided over the worst pandemic in over 100 years, and apart from a few things that probably could have been done better in hindsight, this country is in pretty good shape.

The economy is going well, unemployment is low and we haven't suffered as much as most other countries with the pandemic.

Meanwhile federal Labor hasn't had to deal with any of this, only the Labor premiers who have gone out of their way to make it difficult for the PM. All they've done is knock everything the government has tried to do.

Could Labor and Albo have done any better? I don't think so, certainly the economy would suffer, because of the push for higher wages and taxes etc.

The thing Labor has done is try to smear Scott Morrison's character, as they know he is preferred PM over Albo.

I don't believe Bill Shorten and co haven't got their sticky fingers in the leaked text messages. These messages were supposedly sent by Malcolm Turnbull who is still bitter about being ousted, and Barnaby Joyce whose track record isn't that great and in my opinion wouldn't have the principles that ScoMo has. Then there is Gladys who has been under investigation for suspect behaviour.

Some of the media are reporting these texts came from people in responsible positions and of high repute. I know who I'd rather trust.

T. Armstrong, Torquay

HEALTH INSURANCE NOT A MAGIC CURE-ALL

L.JONES (GA, 28/1) doesn't understand the problem. Private health insurance only has one effect – it allows specialists to charge more. It doesn't magically create more specialists.

Top-flight oncologists and urologists require decades of training. Private health insurance

can't change this. The true value of insurance is highly dubious.

Kevin V. Russell, Geelong

INCORRECT TO SAY ADBLUE IS A DIESEL FUEL ADDITIVE

LIMITED supplies of AdBlue have contributed to transportation delays in Australia. Articles about this refer to AdBlue as a "diesel fuel additive" which is incorrect.

Putting water or AdBlue, a water-based substance, into the diesel fuel tank of a truck or a car will wreck the engine and cause expensive repairs. Modern diesel engines inject AdBlue into the exhaust pipe, coming from the engine, to chemically reduce nitrogen oxides there to harmless nitrogen, oxygen and water.

The combination of AdBlue injection and a correctly operating particulate filter significantly lowers pollution from diesel exhausts. While modern diesel cars now usually have a dedicated fill point for AdBlue under the fuelling flap, some early European cars had a fill point hidden under the spare tyre in the boot.

Misconceptions about AdBlue being a "fuel additive" need to be avoided to prevent refuelling mistakes that can result in expensive repairs.

Russell Cooper, retired fuel chemist, Point Lonsdale

WRITE TO US

Make sure to include your name, address and phone number if verification is required. Only your name and suburb will be printed. Please note we reserve the right to edit letters for reasons such as clarity and length. **PRIVACY POLICY:** Our privacy policy at <https://preferences.news.com.au/privacy> includes important information about our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information (including to provide you with targeted advertising based on your online activities). It explains that if you do not provide us with information we have requested from you, we may not be able to provide you with the goods and services you require. It also explains how you can access or seek correction of your personal information, how you can complain about a breach of the Australian Privacy Principles and how we will deal with a complaint of that nature.

ON THIS DAY

1788 The French report having fired on the natives at Botany Bay to keep them quiet and for stealing, according to navy lieutenant William Bradley.

1900 American Dwight Davis donates a trophy for a British-US tennis competition, later named after him. On August 10 he wins the first competition with his doubles partner at Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline, Boston, Massachusetts.

1910 HMAS Parramatta, the first warship built for the RAN, is launched at Govan, Scotland, by Margot Asquith, wife of the British prime minister Herbert Asquith.

1923 Stanley Bruce is sworn in as eighth prime minister of Australia after Billy Hughes is forced to retire. It is the first Coalition federal government.

1943 World War II battle for Guadalcanal ends in US victory over Japanese.

1964 The Beatles make their first appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show (right), performing before a "record" 73 million viewers.

1981 Bill Haley, US rock and roll singer and bandleader, dies in Texas.

2002 The Queen's sister Princess Margaret, 71, dies in her sleep in London.

