

# **‘And God Saw That It Was Good’**

## **An Eco-Spirituality Retreat**

*Presented by the Anglican Diocese of Ballarat*

**Dates: 23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**Location: Budj Bim/Lake Condah Cultural Area  
Heywood District – SW Victoria**

*A spiritual and practical exploration of the Christian perspective  
on caring for Creation & Life on Earth*

As far as we know, life on Earth is the only life in the Universe - a Universe larger and older than we can possibly imagine; as we attempt to fathom it in our own terms, we continue to be evermore amazed, even baffled.

As we try to determine the origins of life itself through our own resources, we are similarly amazed - and often baffled, but at the same time rendered the more intrigued, the more incredulous, the more wondering, the more astounded and the more in awe that life exists and that we are here to experience it - from the uttermost origins of the Universe to the reality of us being alive today is truly a miraculous occurrence, the inspiration of a Divine hand and Creator.

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The Anglican Diocese of Ballarat invites you to attend the first of what we are planning will be an on-going program of eco-spirituality retreats, designed to explore our spiritual connections with Creation and to put that spiritual awareness into the context of today’s practical realities of caring for and ministering to Creation.

The 5 day-long retreat will provide opportunities for:

- Spiritual reflection and instruction on caring for Creation.
  - Explanation of latest initiatives being taken world-wide to highlight and deal with ecological health; this segment will include coverage of major policy initiatives and practical projects being undertaken world-wide but with special emphasis on local initiatives.
  - Tours of the Budj Bim indigenous cultural area\* lead by guides of the Gunditjmarra people. Opportunities will be provided during the retreats to use these sites for individual spiritual reflection.
- \*2004 - declared a National Heritage Landscape; 2017 – submission to UNESCO for World Heritage listing
- Coverage of what Christian groups are doing to highlight and redress environmental damage, both to ecosystems and to the reliance of human populations on a healthy environment, and
  - Identifying what can be done at a personal level to provide a Christian and biblical response to caring for, protecting and providing stewardship of Creation.

The location for the retreats will be the internationally recognised **Budj Bim** indigenous cultural area in south-western Victoria, centred on Lake Condah and Budj Bim (Mount Eccles) and close to the nearby town of Heywood, the location of the Budj Bim Cultural Centre.

The area is renowned for its heritage of settlement by indigenous peoples, notably the Gunditjmara, over more than 30,000 years (and counting), the much more recent history of the Lake Condah Mission – a venture of the Victorian colonial government designed to integrate indigenous peoples into European (in particular English) culture – and, most recently, in 1987, the return of the area to the care of the Gunditjmara, including joint management with Parks Victoria of the Budj Bim/Mount Eccles National Park.

The area is probably best known for the powerful evidence around Lake Condah and on Darlot Creek of permanent settlement by indigenous peoples, which includes the existence of the internationally renowned eel traps and stone foundations of former dwellings.



**Accommodation:** is provided on site in the form of shared bunk rooms together with the adjoining dining and amenities building (male/female toilet & shower facilities). These facilities adjoin the remains of the former government-run aboriginal Mission, which closed in the 1960s.

**Facilitators:** the retreats will be led by Fr Constantine Osuchukwu, Parish Priest of St Paul's, Ballarat East, and Hedley Thomson, urban and environmental planner.

**Finding the Budj Bim/Lake Condah site** (see also above map): the Budj Bim accommodation centre is situated on land that was formally part of the Lake Condah Aboriginal Mission and is best approached from the Henty Hwy via the Three Waterholes & Condah Estate Roads and a very short section of the Ettrick-Condah Road between these two roads. The access road to the accommodation centre is located at the apex of a sharp bend where the Condah Estate & Outlet Roads meet. A suitable banner will be displayed at this point to guide you in! Otherwise, phone Hedley and you will be rescued.

**Program:** covering 3 full and 2 half days is attached

**What to bring:** clothing for different conditions – make sure some of it is warm; toiletries; own bedding – mattresses are provided on bunk beds; camera; writing materials, laptop; musical instruments

**Catering:** all food and drinks will be provided by the Heywood Lions Club and St John's Anglican Parish, Heywood. Please be advised that it is a condition of Budj Bim management that alcohol cannot be consumed on the site. Thursday night's evening meal will be take place at St John's Church in Heywood, where alcohol will be available/can be consumed.

**Other supporting information:** you might like to leave your mobile phone behind.... You will be able to contact the outside world if required!

**Cost:** \$550. Covers accommodation, all food & refreshments, half day tour of Budj Bim cultural heritage area and all presentations

**Application:** complete attached form

**Return application form to:**

'Ecospirituality Retreat'  
Hedley Thomson  
PO Box 89  
Ballarat,  
Victoria, 3353

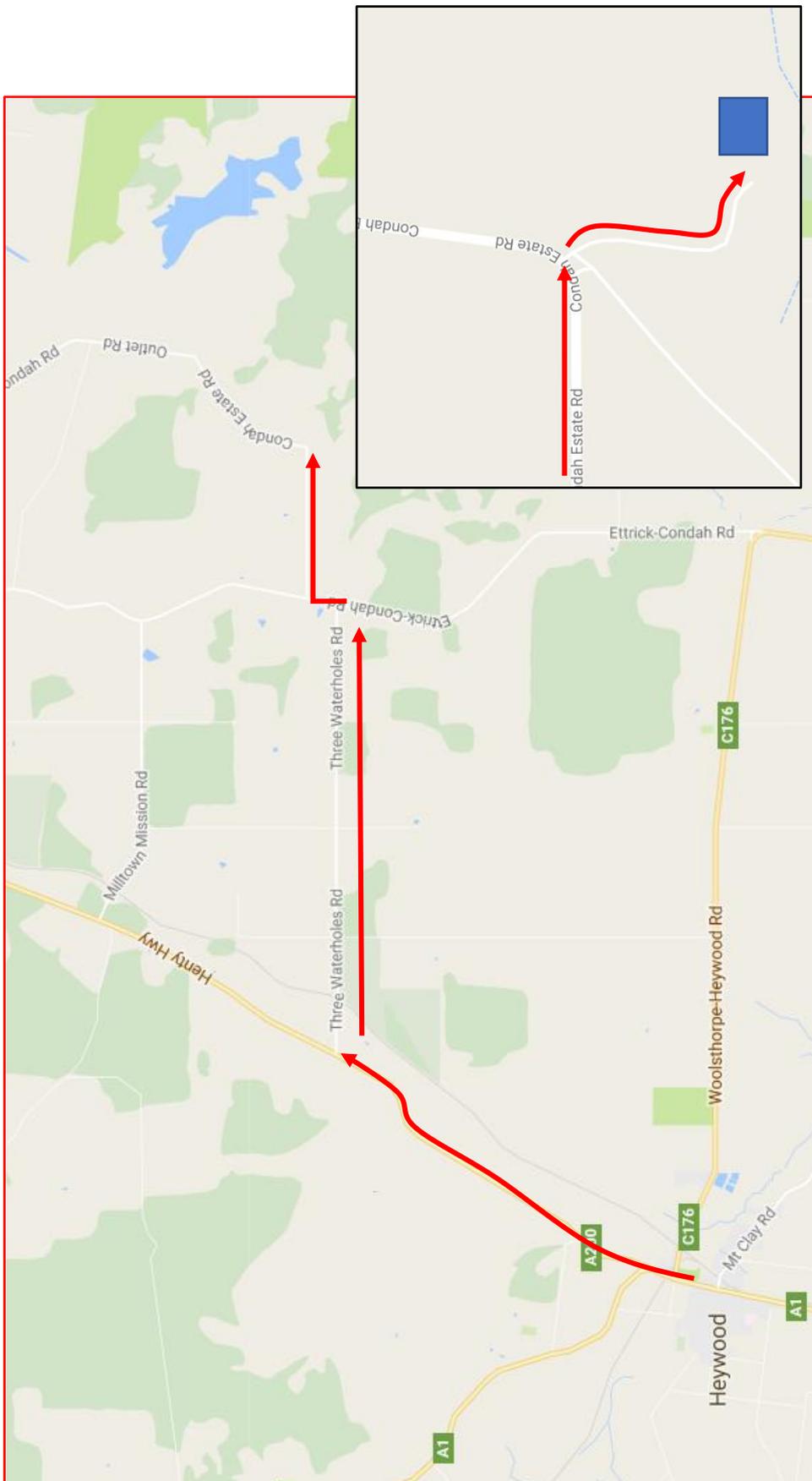
OR by email: [office@ballaratanglican.org.au](mailto:office@ballaratanglican.org.au)

Applications, including payment in full, are to be submitted not less than 3 weeks prior to the retreat. Payment by credit card is preferred.

**Please note:** a minimum of 14 participants is required for a retreat to be run. Participants will be notified not less than 2 weeks prior to the retreat if it is not to be conducted.

**For further information & details:** contact Hedley Thomson; [hedleythomson@gmail.com](mailto:hedleythomson@gmail.com);  
0428 027 895

**Map:**  
Suggested route travelling from Heywood.



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## Application Form

Dates of Retreat:    **FULL**         23 - 27 October 2017  
                              **PART**         .....

Tick if interested in 2018 retreats [Exact dates TBC]:    April         September         November

**Name of applicant/s:** .....

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**Postal address of applicant/s:** .....

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**Email address of applicant/s:** .....

**Phone contact/s:** .....

**Contact/s in case of emergency:** .....

**Special dietary requirements:** .....

**Any other comments or queries:** .....

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**Payment Details are overleaf.**

