



# CLUB DRUMBEAT

## Knox and District Woodworkers' Club (VIC)

For almost thirty years, the Knox and District Woodworkers' Club has been the Ferntree Gully region's focal group for men and women who have an interest in any aspect of woodwork.

The Club, formerly known as the Ferntree Gully Woodworkers' Club, was set up in 1988 under the guidance of its first president, Alf Stephens. For the first year meetings were held in makeshift premises at the local technical school.

Following lobbying by Club members, Knox City Council made one bay of a storage facility available as a permanent workshop. Over the following years, members built two additional workshops and a modern clubroom on the site.

While all machinery use is limited to the workshops, the clubroom houses a dozen workbenches where members can hone their hand tool skills. The workshops have table saws, bandsaws, a jointer and a thicknesser, router tables, pedestal drills, lathes in the turning room and much more. All machines are connected to a state of the art dust extraction system, ensuring that dust from wood-working activities is kept to a minimum.

### The Club

Membership continues to grow and has reached 206. Their age varies with 75% of members aged 45 to 85. The Club prides itself on being a very inclusive group. Age, gender, occupation or football team preferences are not considered barriers to membership. Currently there are about 30 female members, most of whom are very active in the Club.

**Photo.2: Members at work in one of the Club's workshops**



**Photo.1: At local weekend events the Club runs how-to sessions where young children can nail or screw together a wooden toy**

Primarily the Club exists to offer a comfortable place in which to work and good equipment on which members can practise their woodcraft.

### Activities

The members meet at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month.

The Clubhouse is open daily except Sunday, and most weekday evenings. Each session has an emphasis on a particular interest group but members can work on any project at any time (Photo.2). The social aspect of the club is also very important and there are regular family functions.

In August the Club holds its *Be In It* weekend, an event which gives all members a chance to showcase the projects they have worked on in the previous 12 months. Generally there are up to a couple of hundred entries. Woodturning always attracts a large number of items. Other popular categories include chopping and cheese boards, small furniture,

rustic and recycled items, and small boxes. Last year's winner was a carved traditional rocking horse.

Each year the Club participates in two weekend festivals organised by the Knox City Council. These events allow the Club to showcase itself to the general public, and give young children the chance to have a hands-on experience assembling a small wooden toy kit (Photo.1). It is pleasing when members see older children who made their kits in previous years bringing their younger siblings for their chance to sand, glue, nail or screw together a helicopter, toolbox, doll's cradle or perhaps a wooden teddy bear or robot.

A strong focus of the Club is to produce a large number of toys which can be distributed to the less fortunate members of our community at Christmas. In 2016 the Club donated over 600 toys to various aid agencies in the district (Photo.3). This year they intend to make more gifts aimed at adults. Pop's Shed in Croydon has donated 50 pen kits and members are busily turning wood blanks to complete these gifts.



**Photo.3: In 2016 the Club donated over 600 toys at Christmas**

In February 2017, the Club hosted Swiss professional woodturner, Matthias Bachofen Beer, who demonstrated his skills, and talked about his career and craft. Since he was in Australia for just a short visit, members were honoured that he gave them an evening of his time.

The Club used Beer's demonstration as an opportunity to set up a very successful in-house live feed to its Facebook page. This enabled members to view the event from their lounge room if they had been unable to attend. There was even a positive response from a member holidaying in his caravan on the NSW coast! The live feed was a first for the Club and follows the recent launch of its website.

For further information on the Club, visit [www.knoxwoodies.org.au](http://www.knoxwoodies.org.au).