

Fletcher Jones site taken off the market



EXCLUSIVE

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] T
[/dropcap]he Fletcher Jones site has been withdrawn from sale, pending a change to its zoning by the Warrnambool City Council.

Real estate agent **Mark Wilson**, from Wilson Real Estate, told Bluestone that the site had been withdrawn from sale by administrators just after Christmas in anticipation that it would be rezoned from industrial to mixed use.

“There are still ‘for sale’ signs all over the property and I am sure if a cashed-up buyer walked in tomorrow they would not be turned away, but it is not on the market right now,” he said.

Mr Wilson said a change of zoning would hopefully make the site a more attractive prospect for a potential purchaser because it allowed for greater flexibility.

“That is certainly the aim,” he said.

The present Industrial 3 zoning allows for such things as small scale retail, workshops, mini factories and office space.

The derelict site was listed for sale again in July last year, at which time [the council indicated it might be prepared to change the zoning](#) if it was presented with a compelling plan.

Despite the withdrawal from sale indicating such a plan may be afoot, the Warrnambool City Council told Bluestone that it has not received a submission for the zoning to be changed.

The 2.3ha site was owned by Geelong businessman **Ian Ballis**, who developed the Mill Markets, but has been under administration since July 2012 as part of his company, Daramking.

Administrator **Ken Sellers**, from SellersMuldoonBenton, is handling the affairs of Daramking, but was unavailable for comment.



The former owner of the Fletcher Jones site, Ian Ballis, who developed the Mill Markets before going into receivership in 2012. Image: Jeremy Lee, ABC Radio. Click on the image to hear Jeremy's story from 2008.

[box] Bluestone Magazine is part of a [growing grassroots campaign](#) to save the best of the Fletcher Jones site in Warrnambool from being lost through neglect. We support a sensitive development of the site that respects its social and physical history and preserves the iconic gardens and silver ball for future generations.[/box]



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From ugly quarry to garden of eden



Landscape gardener Paul Ryan with “Tina” (made by Lust for Rust) who presides over a corner of his magnificent 10-acre garden on Hopkins Point Road, Warrnambool.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]P
[/dropcap]aul Ryan has the salty-haired, stocky, sun-browned

body of a person who has spent a life working outdoors and swimming in the sea, and these twin loves are behind a project that has dominated his life for almost a decade.

The self-taught landscape gardener and avid surfer has spent the past eight years slowly transforming an abandoned quarry on the corner of Hopkins Point and Tooram roads, Allansford, from an overgrown and derelict eyesore into a magnificent, 10-acre garden that almost defies description.

Paul, 45, who grew up on a farm on Terang, had always dreamt of creating a “big acreage garden” and when he saw the ‘*for sale*’ sign on the old quarry property, he could instantly see the potential.

“There was 2.3 acres of flat land at the top that I thought would be ideal for a house block and the remainder was in pretty bad shape, but it was a good size and at a reasonable price,” he says.



Low-water, low-maintenance plants have been used throughout the garden to ensure environmental friendliness and far less upkeep.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] P
[/dropcap]aul bought the land and lived in a caravan on the site for eight months while he built his house, then he set to work dividing the garden into different rooms, or zones, each with their own distinct character: traditional European, modern Australia, renaissance and a gothic garden among them.

Each room has been methodically and meticulously brought to life with mass plantings of extraordinary succulents, grasses, trees, shrubs, bushes and flowers – including rare species such as a South American silk floss tree – that require little water or ongoing maintenance, which are both critical to a large-scale garden.

“When some people see what I have done, they ask how I maintain it all, well a lot of it looks after itself – apart from the mowing and I like my ride-on mower, it is a form of meditation to me,” Paul laughs.



The striking trunk of the rare South American silk floss tree that is part of Paul's collection of more than 6000 plants.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] W
[/dropcap]hile Paul has not kept count of the number of plants he has planted, he believes there would be more than 6000 that he has collected, bought or been given over the years.

"Nurseries to me are like supermarkets. I can walk in and, within a minute or two, I know if there is something there that I want: I know what to look for," he explains.

"You also learn things as you go along and evolve as the garden evolves. I am always learning more about plants, their

heritage and their various meanings to various cultures.”



Recycled driftwood camouflages an otherwise ugly shipping container used for storage.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he plants, however, are only one half of the story. The stunning garden is also a showcase of recycled objects that have been used to landscape or beautify various parts of the property, many of which Paul has collected while surfing – an almost daily ritual.

An ugly shipping container, for example, has been completely camouflaged by long pieces of driftwood. Dozens of discarded fishing buoys decorate a wooden fence and, in another part of the property, a heavy-duty line of marine rope serves as a hand-rail for a boardwalk.

Building materials – timber, bricks, masonry, stones – have also been recycled as paths, walks, and rockeries and the

property is dotted with sculptures that Paul has either purchased or made himself.



The two enormous urns at the gateway to the ‘gothic’ garden are recycled cement mixer barrels tipped on their end.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] 0
[/dropcap]ne of the most intriguing and eye-catching installations are two enormous, rust-coloured urns that stand either side of the gated entrance to the “gothic” garden and house two equally enormous plants. Paul explains that the ‘urns’ are in fact cement mixer barrels that he has cut down and tipped on to their ends.

“It is hard work, but it is my therapy. I see it as garden Buddhism – breaking my rocks, mowing my lawn, fixing my mistakes – but it is also an obsession,” he laughs.

Paul’s great uncle and grandfather were gardeners at the

prestigious *Minjah* property, near Caramut, so he thinks he has obviously been touched by the same gene that doesn't shy away from gardening on a grand scale.

Will Paul's garden, however, ever reach an end point?

"I am giving myself four more years and then it will be finished, but it still won't be complete."



Paul has also made some creative sculptures, like these balls of barbed wire, to decorate his spectacular property.

[box type="bio"] Paul holds an open day at The Quarry about once a month until winter. Entry is \$10 to cover upkeep costs. Bluestone will let you know via our [Facebook page](#) when the next open day is scheduled. **Update:** the next open day is March 22 and 23. If you are a [Bluestone Club](#) member, check out how you can win [a double pass](#). We have removed our slideshow in the hope you will go and see the real thing – and tell Paul you read it in Bluestone! [/box]



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**Walking with strength and
purpose**



Susie Alexander, second from right, with the women she planned to walk with in Melbourne before relocating the walk to Warrnambool: Alison Ridley (left), Lisa Petherick and Pip Norton.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I
[/dropcap]n October, we [brought you the story](#) of **Susie Alexander**, from Warrnambool, who we nominated as one of our first quiet heroes for her inspirational approach to her fight against breast cancer.

At that time, Susie hoped she would be well enough after her series of often debilitating treatments to participate in the annual **Susan Women's Fun Run** held in Melbourne on December 8 to raise funds for the [Breast Cancer Network Australia](#).

Unfortunately Susie couldn't make it to Melbourne, because the health of her mother, who is also battling cancer, is deteriorating*. But she was determined to still do the 5km walk to fulfil the promise that she made to herself and to her dozens of supporters who had donated funds to the cause.



Friends for life: Susie (centre) with Warrnambool High school friends Susan Bruce, Heather Dickie, Caroline Parker, Karen Svensen and Jane Parker. (They have married names now, but they didn't back then!)

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] S
[/dropcap] Susie held her own version of the Sussan Women's Fun Run down at the Warrnambool waterfront and invited her friends, family and supporters to join her. They came on foot and on bicycles, with children, and with dogs and, by 9am, about 100 people were ready to walk for Susie, for her Mum and for everyone else who is facing the challenge of cancer.

It was one of those uplifting moments when people gather for a common cause and, in this case, to celebrate all that makes life so precious.

Thankyou, Susie, for reminding us of how even taking a simple walk by the sea is such a gift.

** (Susie's mother, Jan, passed away peacefully on Dec 18, 2013).*



Ready to stride out: Susie Alexander with her sister, Lynne Wormald.

[box] As of this weekend, Susie had raised \$3500 toward the [Breast Cancer Network Australia](#) and donations were still coming in. She had set herself a target of \$1000. [/box]



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A spotlight on creators this Christmas

Riding a wave of success with surf wax



Members of the (surf) board: Teenagers Jade McCreddan (left), Mick Slockwitch and Isaak Jagoe have come up with their own surf wax recipe and are finding plenty of customers keen to try their product.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] E
[/dropcap]ach member of the “board” is only 13 years old, but

don't for a moment think that the team behind a new, home-made surfing wax is not absolutely serious about making their product a winner.

[Emmanuel College](#) school buddies and surfing mates **Jade McCreddan**, from Yambuk, **Isaak Jagoe**, from Warrnambool and **Mick Slockwitch**, also from Warrnambool, spent most of last Saturday down at the [Made by Me Market](#), at The Pavilion, in Warrnambool, where they put their surf wax – **Stuck Wax** – on sale for the first time.

While most boys their age would be heads-down playing with smartphones, Jade, Isaak and later Mick (who had to first compete in a surf lifesaving competition) chatted enthusiastically with customers about why their surf wax was better than the others. They also demonstrated its sticky superiority by leaving a lump attached to one of two surfboards they had brought in for display.

"We wanted to come up with our own recipe for a surf wax, so we started by looking around on the internet," says Isaak.

Jade's mother had some experience with wax through making beeswax candles, so the boys also sought her advice as they continued to experiment with various ingredients.

"I reckon we had about 12 different attempts until we worked out how we could make it really sticky," Isaak says, "because that's what you are looking for: something you can trust when you stand up on your board".

"It is also eco-friendly and all natural ingredients," Jade adds.



The Stuck Wax crew went public with their product for the first time at the weekend, with a stall at the Made by Me Market.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he product was put to the test in the surf off Warrnambool and Port Fairy, where the boys have spent countless hours through last summer and winter since becoming “hooked” on the sport about a year ago.

Having nailed the winning formula, which, of course, they are keeping a closely guarded secret, the boys turned to marketing and package design.

“I must admit we spent a lot of time in our maths class at school drawing different designs and sharing ideas,” Jade says.

Somehow, we can’t imagine the teacher would mind.

Isaak’s father prints their package design on A4 paper that they then use to wrap each of the 70g wax cakes that are made

in bulk in muffin trays in Isaak's family kitchen.

"We put foil down everywhere," he says, reassuringly.

About 60 bars were on sale for \$4 a pop at the weekend and all were sold out by 4pm, but the boys are not counting their profits just yet.

"Well, first I owe Mum and Dad some money and then we have to buy more ingredients, and then, if we have anything left over, we will split it three ways," Isaac explains.

With this sort of business acumen, Stuck Wax sounds like it will be sticking around.

[box type="bio"] Depending on the surf over summer, the boys may be at other local markets, but in the meantime, you can buy Stuck Wax by emailing them at Stuck_Wax_Enterprises@hotmail.com[/box]



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