

# LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

19 AUGUST 2022

## Lex Volunteers *At the Jeparit Fire Station*

The further he travels from Melbourne, the more likely Lex is to find public properties being managed by volunteers.

In Melbourne, the attitude seems to be 'Leave it to the Council' (or Parks Victoria, or Melbourne Water).

But in some country towns, everything seems to be run by the community itself. The public hall, the tennis courts, the war memorial, the camping ground. So it is at Natimuk, and Koondrook, and Chiltern, and Mallacoota.



Right now, Lex is at Jeparit, enjoying morning tea in the library. The Hindmarsh Shire Council has put on tea (and jam and scones) for the town's volunteers.

As in any country town, one focus of community involvement is the Fire Station. In Jeparit, a six-member team operates the First Responder Unit, rostered to deal with both fires and medical emergencies.

But what intrigues our Lex is the land out of which the First Responders operate. It is situated in the median of a three-chain road, and looks like any other CFA Fire Station.

But this fire station has its very own Act of Parliament. The *Jeparit Land Act 1922*.

Yes, a hundred years ago the Minister for Lands informed parliament that a rectangle needed to be excised from the road reserve, because the cost of other land would absorb all the moneys available, namely £200.



Over the decades, many parcels of Crown land have needed special Acts of Parliament. The year 1922 saw the Brunswick Mechanics Institute Act, the Daylesford Show Yards Act, the Great Ocean Road (Lands Exchange) Act, and a string of Acts relating to specific sites in places as diverse as Boorhaman, Kew, Marnoo, and South Melbourne.

But Jeparit is different, because that Act has survived. All those other site-specific Acts of Parliament, having caused whatever it was to happen, have been revoked. Removed from the statute books. Superfluous.

Does it matter if the statute books are littered with unnecessary Acts? Maybe not. The community at Jeparit certainly couldn't care less. They just get on with the job of managing the town's public lands, and the town's ambulance and fire services. And enjoying tea and scones, courtesy of Hindmarsh Shire Council. ♦

See you there!  
Lex Loci

*Jeparit is in the country of the  
Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali,  
Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations*