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Sales Manager

Kristina Leckenby

Regional Sales Manager

Georgina McLeod

Editor

Peter Simcock

Senior reporter

Danielle Butcher

Staff Writer

Elisa Miller

Contact

9238 7777

journal@fairfax.com.au

Classifieds

Phone: 13 24 25

Fax: 9238 7676

Address

PO Box 318,

Dandenong, 3175.

HEAD OFFICE

General Manager: Colin Moss

Sales Director: Martin Sellers

Managing Editor: Glen Hoffman

Marketing Manager:

Courtney Mitchell

Production Manager:

Rocky Papandrea

Distribution Manager: Neale

Heard

for_circulation@fairfax.com.au

All Account Enquiries:

9238 7777

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Drop in, tune in, align the chakras

This weekend's Holistic Festival of Life in Berwick with readings, crystal healing, astrology, card readings, natural products, gems, massage and more should provide something for everyone's mind, body and soul, DIANA WELLS writes.

CASEY'S Maureen Barrass and her daughter Lesley Williams have been in tune with each other all their lives.

They have been interested and involved in the holistic and spiritual side of life for as long as they can remember.

So getting the Holistic Festival of Life up and running in Berwick was a natural progression for the mother and daughter team.

The festival is a holistic one; it aims to offer locals a chance to learn about treatments and practices that nurture or treat the entire person — physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Maureen says it's Berwick's answer to the better known Melbourne-based Mind, Body and Soul festival.

"We want this to have a real community feel," she says.

There will be many different types of stallholders at the festival including tarot, angel cards, psychic mediums, astrology, numerology, crystals, healings, massage, natural therapies, clothes, aromatherapy oils, jewellery, palmistry, health foods and lavender from Serendipity Farm.

The seeds were sown after Maureen approached a few different businesses she thought would be interested in showcasing at a holistic event in Berwick.

The word spread quickly and people as far as Gippsland have come on board, Maureen says.

"There will also be free workshops



including talks on crystals, spiritual healing, past lives, psychic protection, natural animal diet, crystals can heal, Pilates and yoga demonstrations, astrology and what's in the stars and more."

Maureen is a tarot card reader, a medium and counsellor, who uses astrology in her readings. She has a degree in astrology and more than



30 year's experience in her fields.

She uses the "astrological wheel of life" in her readings which allows her to "give guidance on matters such as career, relationships, money, potential, home, children, spiritual path and karma".

She also reads archetype cards which "show the level at which archetypes play out in our lives".

"I have found that an archetype reading can have a very profound and empowering effect on a client." Lesley Williams also practices as a medium, as well as being a relaxation and Chinese massage therapist.

"After completing my certificate of relaxation massage and tactile therapies 15 years ago my interest in alternative medicine began," she says.



"I wanted to know more and completed many workshops including Tuina (Chinese) massage, , aromatherapy, herbs, homeopathy and nutrition." Lesley says she incorporates other aspects she feels would benefit clients. "Holistic or alternative health incorporates the mind, body and soul with treatments personalised to individual needs."



She has also extended her business to cater for her creative side, conducting Mandala art workshops for all ages and abilities, crystal workshops and has ventured into the clothing market with a range from India and "Gypsy styles". "Mandalas are a style of artwork that basically means circle," Lesley says. "You do not need to be a trained artist or have any artistic experience —

it's a time to connect to that creative part which we all possess and I liken it to inspirational art." Clara Vidotto is a gem cutter who will also be holding a stall selling crystals and Tibetan Bowls, among other things. They all hope the festival will prove a huge success. "I'd like to think we could put this on

our neighbourhood

'This is something where the people involved believe in what they do and are very passionate about their businesses and lifestyles.'

once a year," Maureen says.

A festival involving different practitioners of alternative and natural therapies and people involved in the more spiritual side of life had been on Maureen's wish list for many years, but until now full-time work commitments made it impossible to devote the time and energy.

"The time is now and we are all really excited about this," Maureen says.

"This is something where the people involved believe in what they do and are very passionate about their businesses and lifestyles," Clara says.

"The philosophy of do what you love and love what you do is a good philosophy."

The Holistic Festival of Life is on at the Berwick Leisure Centre, Manuka Road, Berwick on Sunday from 10am till 5pm

Entry is \$7 for adults, with children under 13 years free.

Early Bird tickets are available from 10am-11am on presentation of this article. A percentage of the door will be donated to the local Country Fire Authority.

Exhibitor inquires welcome, phone Maureen 9703 2831 or 0411 260 339.



Opposite page, from left: Hallam's Clara Vidotto is a gem cutter and also lives by holistic practices; Lesley Williams practices in therapeutic massage and crystal healing among many other things. This page, from left: Clara will have a stall selling crystals and Tibetan bowls; Lesley Williams, Clara Vidotto and Maureen Barrass are looking forward to the holistic living festival this weekend.

Above: Maureen Barrass is an astrological consultant and psychic medium; Lesley Williams with her new range of 'Gypsy' clothing. Pictures: Melissa Banks