

# Hollowbrook set to haunt Swan Hill

## Louis Harrison

WITH school holidays well underway, The Lost Children of Blackthorn Manor - The Hollowbrook Haunting Experience is almost open for sessions at the Swan Hill Town Hall.

The immersive experience will include audio-visual elements to drive the storyline as attendees find clues throughout the house to solve the mystery of the lost children.

The experience has been the brainchild of producer Mark McDowell from the production company, Your Show, with sound design from Mark Buys from Play Pause Record.

Briony Buys, a set dresser and part of the team putting the experience together, said it's been a hands-on job for many weeks leading up to opening weekend, including while they're putting it together on site.

"Your Show has a set making factory, and in it we have been building the sets that you see, so there is a set builder, a set designer, a set painter, and then when we're here, we do the set dressing," she said.

The experience includes an Addams Family-style haunted house that's been designed with rooms to explore, props to engage with and clues to find.

Mrs Buys said a big part of the pre-show preparation involved the community, with the team sourcing props through visits to op shops and local businesses.

"It's myself and another person that are doing set dressing, and the props that you see in there, different items such as toys, games, books, they're all found here in Swan Hill," she said.

"I think that it creates a sense of ownership, that when we're building this, and when we're there, we're part of the community as well, and we want the community to come along, so making it relevant is nice for everybody."

"I thought whilst we do need an article from a newspaper from 1926, what would be better than to have the Swan Hill Guardian as being that newspaper?"

The experience will be open for three sessions each day with the first two catering to a younger audience and the night session being scarier for an older audience.

Mr McDowell said Swan Hill was selected due to the town's need for an activity-driven show that could appeal to all ages.

"Hopefully we get a good mix of, you know, the kids going through finding the clues and I think the adults won't really care about the clues, they'll just want to be scared, and we'll certainly serve that up," he said.



Set designer Christina Logan-Bell has hidden secret clues in unlikely places throughout the house for attendees to solve the mystery. Picture: Louis Harrison

From conceptualising the show and starting work on production, Mrs Buys says the narrative and story had changed and grown.

"It's evolved from being Hollow Brook House to now we're sort of on the grounds of Hollow Brook, which is the family home of the Hollywood family, so in creating this show, the entire story has had to be created as well, including the names of people and their history, so that's been evolving, and we've been writing that as we go," she said.

As opening weekend approaches and tickets are on sale, Mrs Buys said she's looking forward to people coming and visiting the Hollowbrook grounds to experience the world and story they've crafted.

"For me personally, it's about creating an experience for the audience, something outside the normal," she said.



Producer Mark McDowell and set dresser Briony Buys are looking forward to welcoming Swan Hill to the Hollowbrook Haunting Experience. Picture: Louis Harrison

# Wet start to winter



Parts of the Mallee were hit by heavy rain on Wednesday. Picture: Michelle Brady

## Louis Harrison

IT'S been a wet start to winter across Swan Hill and surrounds, with some areas recording well above their usual June rainfall.

The Swan Hill weather station measured 38.6 millimetres last month, exceeding the long-term June average of 26.6mm.

The soggy conditions follow the unseasonal record falls of 50 to 150mm that agricultural districts from northern South Australia to north-western Victoria received during the summer-autumn transition earlier this year.

Mallee residents were issued a severe weather warning on Wednesday.

While the storm was brief, several roads were left strewn with tree debris and pooling water as heavy rain swept across the district.

Swan Hill, Nyah and Lalbert recorded just over 11mm between 5pm and 7.30pm on Wednesday, while Kerang received 14.2mm as June's wet pattern spilled into the new month.

With school holidays underway, Victoria SES is urging drivers to take extra care, particularly around rivers, creeks and lakes, where water levels can rise quickly.

# ***Your local Building Surveyor***

-  **Building Permits & Construction Certificates**
-  **Town Planning & Subdivision Management**
-  **Building Compliance Advice**
-  **Essential Safety Measures**
-  **Maximum Patron Capacity Reports**
-  **Illegal Works**



**National Building Consultants**  
BS U 1062 CBS-U 57874

**7/194-208 Beveridge St, Swan Hill**  
**P: 50 322 342**  
**[bwanational.com.au](http://bwanational.com.au)**





**blue sky**  
outdoor  
experts

**WINTER  
WORKWEAR**

**BUILT FOR THE COLD. MADE TO WORK.**

**GEAR UP  
THIS WINTER**

WARMTH YOU  
CAN RELY ON

TOUGH GEAR.  
ALL DAY EVERY DAY.

WEATHER READY.  
WORK READY.

**TOP BRANDS YOU TRUST**

**FXD**  
WORKWEAR

**CAT**  
WORKWEAR

**Bisley**  
WORKWEAR

**PELBARA**  
COLLECTION  
BY BIRCHWOOD INDUSTRIES

**Hard Yakka**  
WORKWEAR

**SYZMİK**  
WORKWEAR

**ANTHEM**  
WORKWEAR