

# A decade of suicide prevention

*Tim Barritt reflects, since his first Leader advertisement on June 18, 2013.*

I just thought I'd do one, never dreamed it would end up being one of the most beautiful rides of my life!

Like many of us who've had trauma, my mental health can yoyo with life's challenges. This ride began shortly after I started living on my own.

When I became depressed, couldn't see any way forward or was losing hope?

Every fortnight I suddenly had something to create, which kept me grounded and focused on doing something positive. You just can't beat volunteering!

Slowly, I began to think extensively, expansively and broadly, which my later adverts now reflect, and developing new ideas for the National level too.

I've just created a graph, plotting suicides versus road fatalities from 1980-2021.

While suicides (almost doubled), the Road toll fell from nine per day to three - a result of a well-planned, comprehensive Federal, State and Local campaign lasting decades. Well done Australia!

Councils can play a significant role as ours does, supporting Mental Health and maintaining Road Safety.

Sadly, it took 18 months from me highlighting the danger on Trial Hill, especially the GBA Parson's Lookout corner, in *The Leader*, before speed was reduced to 10km/hour on both bends.

Demonstrating how individuals can contribute to saving lives, a very community minded person, GBA Parsons generously donated the stone for the wall, to make the road safer.

He also kindly allowed my family to swim in the Pewsey Vale homestead weir on Jacob's Creek, circa 1960's.

I remember the stabbing pain! Half our time was spent extracting the leeches from our legs, the rest cooling off.

Ironically, returning home from a swim with my brother Mark, Mum driving our family Chevy Sedan, just above the Lookout, the Chevy lost its brakes!

In a few split seconds, Mum turned us hard left, sacrificing the whole front mudguard, which did an excellent job of absorbing the impact!

We all calmly got out, a little ruffled but totally unhurt. Top job Mum!

My heartfelt thanks to Tony Robinson, for appreciating the value of my work, and supporting me.

Also my eight year long sponsor, without whom my wonderful ride would possibly have ended. You are a gem!

To *The Leader's* Sue Wilson who, two months after I started, picked up the phone when I called from the Lyall Mac. the morning after my squash court heart attack.

Emily Williams, who helped with encouragement, ideas and support.

And all my wonderful graphic designers and receptionists!

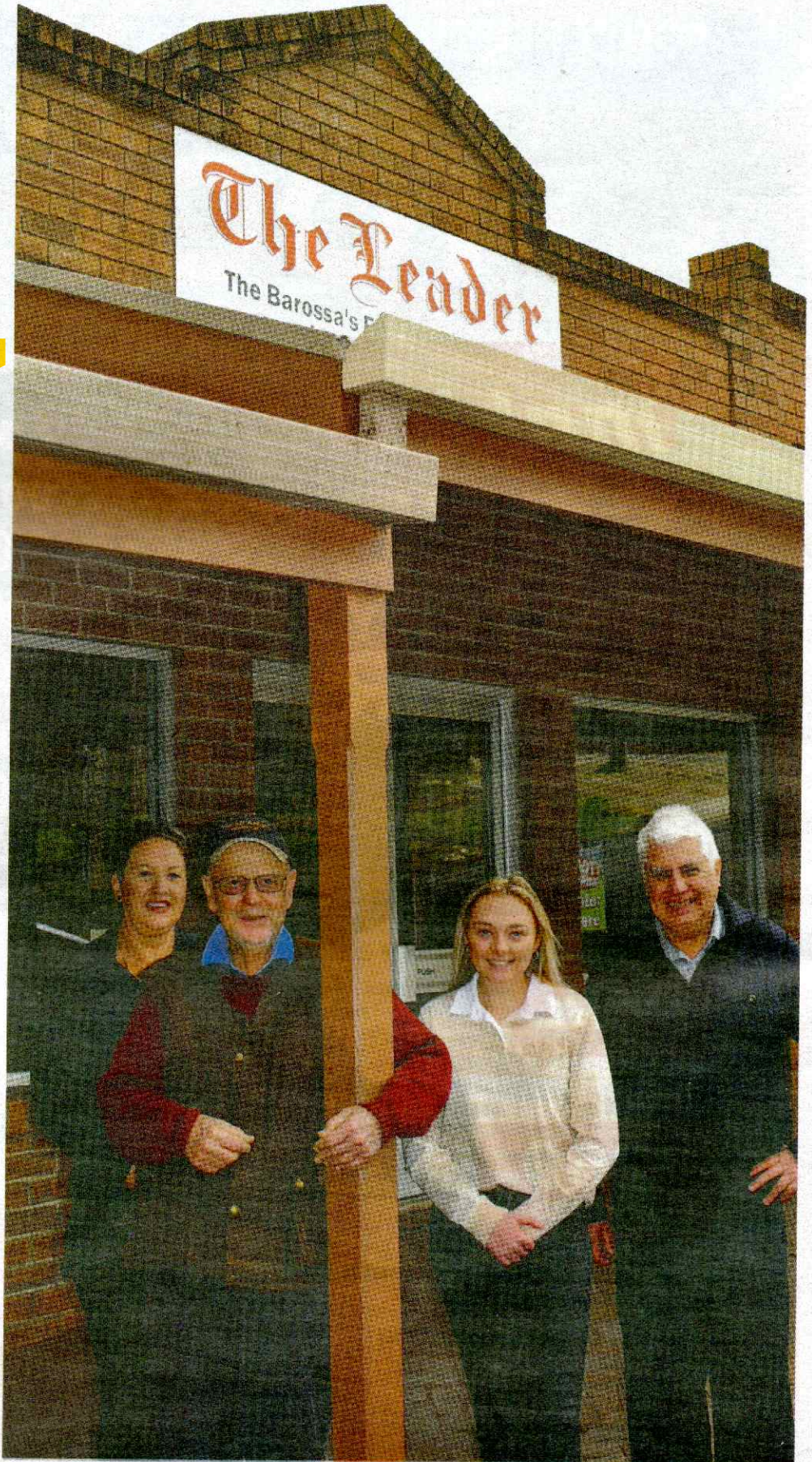
Last, to my very valuable readers! My life is so much richer for you all, being in it. As I quoted in this space after my 250th ad...

*'Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think, and twice as beautiful as you had ever imagined!'*

If I can-do this, you-can too!

Best wishes always and good luck!

Tim Barritt



*Tim Barritt has been advertising his column in The Leader for 10 years on June 18. Assisting Tim over those years has been Sue Wilson (left), Ruby Schutz and Managing Director, Tony Robinson.*