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## **Merbein's getting her groove going**

[www.merbeincentenary.com.au](http://www.merbeincentenary.com.au)

### **The music that the Merbein Centenary Percussion Group is playing just makes you want to swing you hips.**

After many weeks of rehearsal, an enthusiastic percussion group is looking forward to performing in the Merbein Centenary Parade on the 21<sup>st</sup> August. Some Merbein residents have been surprised to find forty people walking along the pavement on cold Thursday nights playing rhythms on drums, tapping sticks, tambourines and 'J Pipes'.

What is a J-Pipe I hear you ask? A J-Pipe is made from black irrigation pipe and is pulled into a J shape by a string. The pipes are then tuned to different notes. This is done by the adjusting the height of the pipes.

Within the group there are smaller groups of instruments. Each instrument group has their own rhythm to play and these rhythms are woven into a rhythmic sequence.

Aleks Pusz, an excellent percussionist who teaches at Merbein High School, agreed to take on the task of teaching the percussion group. Aleks has played in the WOMAdelaide percussion group and the Merbein Centenary Percussion Group is very lucky to have his expertise.

Aleks is a dynamic teacher and has shared his passion for rhythmic work with the group. There has been plenty of laughter and the group are happy to be part of an exciting musical experience. Aleks is also teaching Merbein High School students the rhythms and they will join the group for the parade.

The group is made up of old and young individuals with many local residents and members of Sing Australia volunteering to be in the group.

Barb Mc Donald, one of the percussion group member says "I never thought that I could play the drums." Barb also enthusiastically comments on the group experience and says that group members are already talking about the ensemble continuing after the parade.

Local teacher Mavis Francis is the co-ordinator of the group. She has had extensive experience with adult and children's choirs and the teaching of music in schools. Mavis says of her idea to form the group for the parade "I thought it might be fun."

Mavis is well known in the district for musical abilities and is the director of the children's choirs 'The Sunraysia Singers' and the conductor of the adult choir 'Sing Australia'. She believes that music is not just for an elite or gifted few. Everyone can develop musical skills and enjoy the physical and emotional benefits of music.

Enthusiasm of the group is evident as they all concentrate and play their rhythms.

Mavis says "I've had a wonderful time and have learnt so much. We've all really had to use our listening skills."

Jeremy Blair, who runs a drumming circle in Mildura and grew up in Merbein was very enthusiastic and has been a great help in the planning stages and the rehearsals.

This venture has united the group as members of the community. It will be an enjoyable part of the parade. It will set feet tapping, hips swinging, lift spirits and bring a spark and sense of excitement that every parade needs.

For further information about the Merbein Centenary Celebrations, such the Parade, please see the Merbein Centenary web site [www.merbeincentenary.com.au](http://www.merbeincentenary.com.au)

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