



Eastsider News is on the brink of disappearing.

We need your help.

IN July 2020, Bill Chandler, with encouragement from Lighter Footprints, invited a group of people from his local networks to establish a community newspaper. The ambition was to create a 'local rag' that would fill the gap left by the demise of the *Progress Leader*. It would serve Boroondara, Whitehorse and adjoining areas and rely on contributions from the local community.

The first edition of *Eastsider News* was published online in September 2020. For the first two or so years, much of the work in producing the newspaper was done by Bill with assistance from other members in the team. This began to change with Bill's illness in early 2022 as the other (ageing) members of the team took over the task of establishing the 'Eastsider' as the voice of Boroondara and Whitehorse. Bill's 'presence' will always be felt, and it would have to be said that his dream has taken shape. Our editor Joy Mettam has been a central force in picking up Bill's legacy and it has grown under her deft guidance and skill. She finds however that it is now time for her to hand over the reins to others.

This is the 32nd edition of Eastsider News. It is also possibly the last.

The on-line publication has become a go-to point for local news, community events, service sector information, Council news, including our

Neighbourhood Centres, local tradespeople, local sporting calendars and results, not to mention many people's reflections on what it means to live in this community, a well-read letters page as well as submitted opinion pieces on relevant issues.

We need your help to make sure we continue.

If you value this publication as a member of the local community, please consider taking on a role with *Eastsider News*. The hard work has been done, now it's time for a new generation of citizen journalists, publishers, advertising managers, letters' page editors and frustrated newshounds and to carry the *Eastsider News* through to the next stage of its evolution. An increased presence through social media awaits us.

Eastsider News has always been the opportunity to broaden the communication reach of the local community at so many levels and bring awareness of impactful local issues that may otherwise have slipped below the radar. Please help us keep this opportunity alive by joining the team. The more the merrier; no previous experience necessary. Learn on the job and age is no barrier. In fact, a generational spread is more than welcome.

Members of the local community keen to take *Eastsider News* on the next stage of its exciting journey can contact us by email at eastsidernews1@gmail.com

In this edition

THE 32rd edition of Eastsider News is a rich and diverse example of what this local community newspaper does best. Since our first edition, we have provided our contributors with a platform for their news, views and creativity. As always, we are delighted with both the quality and range of contributions that our many supporters have sent us for this edition. We ask that you be patient enough to read through all this wonderful content.

This edition covers several themes that continue to concern our community including State and Local Government planning policies and environment and climate change. This is balanced by some delightful reflections on everyday life, stories about local achievers and poetry. Check out the events listings, and read about the many social and interest groups in our region. You'll be surprised with the variety of topics we cover, so keep on reading.





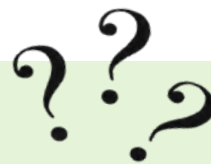
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Quizling Questions



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1. If every word in the English language is spelt backwards, which 'word' would appear last in this bizarre new dictionary
2. There's a European country that opens its name with another part of Europe. Curiously, the rest of the country's name sounds like that other part's typical weather. Where on earth are we talking about?

Thank you, David Astle for allowing us to use your intriguing, teasing, and frustrating quizlings that can drive a person to distraction. These come from his book, Puzzled.

To read more of his work, go to davidastle.com

Acknowledgement of country

Independent Community News Group Incorporated acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters of the Eastsider News focus area, and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

To learn more about the rich culture and traditions of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, explore their website at www.wurundjeri.com.au

Blackburn Activity Centre

Planning Change Concerns

Cr Kieran Simpson

THE State Government planned Blackburn Activity Centre sits in the Cootamundra Ward of Whitehorse Council. Since being elected in October 2024 as the Ward Councillor, I have met with residents and community groups to discuss their views on the upcoming changes. Residents, Whitehorse Council and myself are all concerned about the impact to tree canopy from planning changes.

Blackburn is special in that it has the Bellbird Area which was classified by the National Trust in the 1970s and retains a rural ambience in which the streetscape is dominated by vegetation, particularly trees. The area has a significant landscape overlay in the SLO-1 which has strict development limits and vegetation protection.

In my discussions with the government, including the local state member, I have personally advocated for the government to retain overlays such as the SLO-1 and SLO-2. This is to preserve the uniqueness of Blackburn and our local environment. With the government renewing the SLO-9 I am hopeful that we might see other overlays preserved.

When the draft plans for the Activity Centre are released, Whitehorse Council and I will form a response, and I encourage all residents to participate in the consultation phases.

Residents are also welcome to contact me directly if they want. Until the draft plans are released, any claims about what are in the plans is speculation – even by me. I am disappointed that some residents have been given false information and contact me scared that they are going to lose their homes.

When I door-knocked residents living near Laburnum Village, many people shared with me their concerns about being in the SRL Box Hill Planning Area (the orange shaded area on the diagram). Given the terrain in that area, I can understand frustration from residents that increasing housing density south of the train line, and east of Middleborough Road within the SRL Box Hill planning area doesn't make a lot of sense and would have negative

impacts on the local area and the village feel. The area is quite hilly so there would have to be significant earthworks to build higher density dwellings.

Earlier this year, I personally made a submission to the SRL Draft Structure Plans consultation process. In it, I outlined the reasons why I believe that area should be removed from the SRL Planning Area. I have received an invitation to register to speak to the Planning Panel later this year. I hope that it will result in an opportunity to represent the local residents' views in person.

I attend the Blackburn Station Craft Market every month. Residents are welcome to come speak to me (and buy a couple of sausages). For regular updates my community newsletter will be going into letterboxes and residents can also follow me on Facebook via [@ckieransimpson](https://www.facebook.com/ckieransimpson)

BELOW: Box Hill Structure Plan Area and Planning Area. Page 12 SRL East Draft Structure Plan – Box Hill; annotations added.



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Local Youth act to improve Period Product Accessibility

Ciele Towb

YOUTH Parliament is a program run by YMCA Youth Services that gives young people a chance to be heard in our state's houses of parliament. Through this program, young people between the ages of 16 and 25 can share their views on a wide range of issues relevant to their lives.

Working in teams of six, Youth Parliamentarians are supported through the process of drafting a Bill, which addresses a state-based issue that they would like to see changed or added into Victorian legislation. As the future generation, young people are some of the strongest voices speaking up against the issues that matter. It's important that these voices are heard and action is taken.

The Boroondara City Council team

The Boroondara City Council team comprised Ella Zhang, Rohan Hobbs, Ishan Venkat and Mikael Bonne. The program allowed the team members not only to express their views but to work for change. They did this by writing *The Increased Accessibility to Period Products Bill 2025* and sponsoring it through Parliament. The bill was submitted to the Minister for Youth for review.

The Increased Accessibility to Period Products Bill 2025

On 8 July, the Y Victorian Youth Parliament voted to pass the Boroondara Bill. Debate noted that period products can be at best an inconvenience and at worst unattainable. This is an issue faced by 51% of Victorians.

In speaking to the bill, Ella Zhang spoke with passion about how this reflects gender inequality in society. 'We live in a world where women's welfare is systematically dismissed, disadvantaged and disregarded. And this has to be changed.'

This bill includes the establishment of the Period Product Accessibility Driver Board, made up of experts to oversee implementation of period product dispensaries in public places, a sign on initiative

for private schools and the Period Product Discount Scheme, this involves discount cards that could be used at stores when purchasing period products.

'It is a crucial step forward that enshrines the ease of period product accessibility into law. It delivers a certainty and accountability that previous programs simply could not,' Rohan Hobbs stated.

This Bill's impact could help alleviate the pressure from the cost-of-living crisis, promote women's health, and reduce period stigma.

'The presence of [this Bill] will provide us a sense of security and a sense of being acknowledged, to let us know that people understand and people care. It is time to [foster] a world where women are comfortable with their own biology,' Zhang expressed when speaking to this issue.

Dr Julie Hennegan, Principal Research Fellow at the Burnet Institute and at the University of Queensland leads research around menstrual health in Australia and around the world. She was supportive of this Bill and admired the young people on the Boroondara team for advocating on this issue. She commented on how valuable its implementation would be, pointing to the need for the Bill and how it would provide education, normalisation, and support.

'Our current system, where essential period products are often inaccessible and unaffordable, creates an immense strain for countless individuals,' Venkat said.

The passing of this Bill and the strong voices of passionate young people reflect the need for change, and improve the experience and attitude towards periods for many. Mikael Bonne's opening words in his debate referred to 'a future in which we, as a community, as a people, as a nation, know that this Bill made a true impact.'

Ciele Towb is a 2025 Youth Press Gallery Journalist.

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Boroondara's Bluestone Heritage

George Demetrios

AT Boroondara's Services Delegated Committee meeting on Monday 14 July 2025, Councillors reviewed the outcome of community consultation on the draft Road Materials Policy that was released in March 2024. They found that the feedback provided by residents was overwhelmingly in favour of Council retaining Boroondara's historic original bluestone kerb and channels throughout the municipality, and not just in heritage overlay areas, as proposed by the revised Draft Road Materials policy.

Strong community support for preserving Boroondara's historically significant bluestone laneways, kerbs and channels was clearly evident during the consultations. This was reinforced on the night by the majority of residents who made presentations at the Council meeting. These residents urged Councillors to amend the revised Draft Road Materials Policy to ensure comprehensive protection and appropriate restoration of these heritage bluestone kerb and channels across all areas of the city.

This community advocacy highlighted concerns that the current draft Road Materials Policy could lead to degradation or loss of the original bluestone features.

Simplifying the reconstruction to a single pitcher profile would diminish the heritage and aesthetic value of Boroondara's historic streetscapes. The residents emphasised that bluestone infrastructure in Boroondara, such as bluestone laneways and bluestone gutters, are an intrinsic part of the municipality's cultural heritage, reflecting early settlement patterns and historic road construction methods dating from the 1850s to the 1930s.

Following these appeals, Councillors decided to defer their decision to allow more time to consider the feedback carefully, especially regarding the approach to bluestone kerbs and channels. A revised draft of the Road Materials Policy is expected to be presented for adoption at a Council meeting in September. The deferral reflects Boroondara Council's recognition of the community's strong desire to protect and preserve these bluestone heritage elements by potentially amending the policy to strengthen heritage safeguards.

George Demetrios is Convenor of Save Boroondara's Bluestone Heritage. He can be contacted by email at saveboroondarasbluestoneheritage@yahoo.com

Mahoney's Reserve Master Plan

THE City of Whitehorse is currently developing a Master Plan for Mahoney's Reserve in Forest Hill. The reserve is 9.8 hectares of open space that caters for a range of sporting and recreational activities such as soccer, cricket, badminton, table tennis, walking, dog off-lead area and play.

In January 2024, the Council completed the first round of community consultation on the proposed Master Plan. A major focus of these consultations was an option to build one combined pavilion on the reserve to meet the needs of sporting groups and scouts. Based on the feedback received about the pavilion redevelopment, this project was put on hold while Council develops a Master Plan for the entire reserve.



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Mahoney's Reserve Master Plan

(Continued from page 5)

Council has foreshadowed further consultations for the Master Plan. The time and details are yet to be confirmed.

Council has said these consultations will consider all facilities within the park including the three buildings, play space, sports fields, path network, carpark and landscape and all other facilities in a holistic manner. Local sports clubs (including table tennis and badminton clubs) will remain using the northern pavilion until a decision is made on the pavilion design, which will occur once the Master Plan is completed.

There is deep concern amongst table tennis players that their venue, Mahoney's Hall, is under threat of demolition. Whitehorse Council has encouraged the group to look elsewhere for a new playing venue. This concern is expressed by Bruce Haines, Leader, WAC Afternoon Table Tennis Activity. Below is an extract of his article to Eastsider News in which he asks that readers contact their Whitehorse Councillor to show their support for indoor sports.

To read his full article, [go here](#).

Sport for all at Mahoney's Hall

Bruce Haines

IF you haven't played table tennis, think what you are missing out on. Table tennis may be your ticket to a longer, healthier and happier life, as has been proven by the Mayo Clinic.

At our Indoor Sports Hall at Mahoney's Reserve, you will meet enthusiastic 80-year-old players, along with 300 others, cheerfully engaging with bat and ball and each other. The wonderful thing about table tennis is that while it requires good co-ordination of eyes and hand, it does not have to be strenuous, so it suits all ages. And, it provides an excellent avenue for multi-cultural social interaction, which is good for us all, but especially benefits senior members in our community. As a tonic for physical and mental health, what's not to like?

But table tennis is the poor cousin to outdoor sports in the Whitehorse community. Residents of the City of Whitehorse are blessed with so many opportunities to play outdoor sport. The Whitehorse Council boasts

of at least 54 Council maintained outdoor sports fields providing magnificent opportunities to stay fit and athletic....

However, Council's view of sport is very limited. In the Council's own Sporting Facilities Guide, only six sports are addressed: AFL, soccer, cricket, cross-country, baseball and rugby. There is no mention of racquet sports, such as badminton or table tennis. By comparison with the enormous outlay Council provides to its 54 outdoor sports venues, Whitehorse Council currently manages just three indoor sports venues that cater for badminton and table tennis clubs. These are at Mahoney's Reserve, Eley Park and at Sportlink. Soon, there will only be two....

Sadly, it appears that soon there might be no sport at all at Mahoney's Hall. If you agree that we should support seniors playing indoor sports, please contact your Whitehorse Councillor and let them know.

To read his full article, [go here](#)



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Persistence Pays Off

Julie Mulhauser

CAMBERWELL resident Elizabeth has had a win for community safety and encouraging public transport use. Elizabeth was the driving force behind a decade long local resident campaign to have lighting installed on the pedestrian access to the south of East Camberwell Station.

What appeared to be a simple request faced multiple challenges. Railway station pre-cincts have multiple stakeholders and specific technical challenges due to topography and infrastructure.

Elizabeth's persistence has resulted in Boroondara Council installing handrail lighting along the pedestrian access pathway between Stanhope Grove and Brinsley Road Camberwell. In the section where a communication channel and steep embankment prevent the installation of a new fence, Boroondara Council is installing an illuminated handrail on the opposite side of the path.

Improving safe pedestrian access to East Camberwell Station will hopefully contribute to encouraging the use of public transport.

Public transport use in Victoria has declined 24% from October 2019 to October 2023. Metro Trains has experienced the greatest decrease at 32%. This is due to an increase in working from home and an increase in car travel. At the same time, commuting demand for personal, social, and recreational travel has increased. This has led to an increase in travel to destinations close to where people live and an increase in week-end travel.



Photo credit: Julie Mulhauser

Greenhouse gas emissions from road transport account for 22% of Victoria's total emissions. Road transport is also the fastest growing source of Victoria's emissions. Urgently encouraging mode shifting away from high emissions road transport to public and active transport should be a high priority. Mode shifting will also improve safety, public health, and air quality.

Elizabeth's story of persistence reminds us that we should not underestimate the power of community pressure to persuade our governments to act.



The Editors of Eastsider News welcome letters from our readers and supporters. We want to provide you with a platform where you can express your concerns and share your insights on the things that matter in our communities. All we ask is that you keep them polite, well written, short at no more than 250 words and factually based.

Please note, while we welcome a spread of topics, views and opinions, the specific responses expressed by individual writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors, Independent Community News Group Incorporated, or any other organisation.



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“Burgers Reinvented”

Burgers are becoming a staple food for many Melburnians

No longer confined to your fast-food outlets, the humble burger of the past has stepped up to become a favourite for relaxed dining out in many parts of Melbourne. Patrons are being attracted to burger bars by the casual atmosphere and personality of the venue, as well as the satisfaction and taste of an increasingly sophisticated food choice.

An acclaimed local offering

Rizin’s Smash Burgers has quickly become a household name for burger enthusiasts across the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. They started out in Dandenong and have recently opened a second location at 535 Whitehorse Rd, Mitcham.

Known for their hand-smashed patties and flavour-packed creations, this homegrown burger joint has attracted widespread acclaim. This includes over 4.6 stars on Uber Eats, a finalist in the 2025 Australia’s Best Burger Awards, and as Time Out Melbourne’s 3rd Best Popular Burger Place.

Whatever your taste in burgers, you are likely to find it at Rizin’s. The perfectly cooked patties with fresh, quality ingredients come in a variety of options – the traditional beef patty with cheese; a spicy version for those crave heat; a sweet choice with pineapple and honey mustard; fried and grilled chicken and even a vegan burger.

To find out more, check out [Rizin’s Tik Tok](#) and Instagram ([@rizins_burgers](#)) platforms.



PICTURES (from top): Sweet Rizin’s Burger; Rizin’s Chicken Nuggets; Rizin’s Grilled burger.

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Busy Bees

Trish Carr, Rotary Club Box Hill Burwood and Glenys Grant



THE Bee Education and Protection Project (BEAP) at Parkmore Primary School aims to support the survival of native bees.

Parkmore's Team BEAP have found concerning information that indicates native bees are endangered. If the bee population continues to decline, this could have a dramatic impact on human food production, as well as the global environment.

Team BEAP's endeavours have included running a Native Bee Hotel competition with the finished product on display in their garden; producing a native bee memory card game; and publishing a picture story book on how to protect the native bee in the garden at home. The students have also researched and published brochures on how to protect the native bee, including the use of chemical-free pesticides and weedkillers.

Partnerships and community support

To date, BEAP have successfully implemented several partnerships as part of the project. These include with Beechworth Honey, who have put QR codes on their honey jars taking people to the education centre, and Monash University, who is gathering data in the Native Bee-Safe Garden designed and built at the school. The garden has seen the introduction of the Blue Banded bee, Native honey bee, Reed bee and Red Legged Cuckoo Bee to its precinct on a daily basis.

The project has gained community support from Bunnings, Nunawading Community gardens, Richard Welsh, Whitehorse Council, students, staff, parents and friends of Parkmore Primary. Details of the student's project were also presented to the State Environmental Minister and local MP John Mullahy, who is supporting their work.

Rotary Community Grants

The BEAP project is one of the worthy recipients of Rotary Box Hill Burwood's 2025 Annual Grants. The

students and principal shared information about their exciting environmental project at the recent Rotary Community Grants Presentation Night.

The grant enabled this dedicated team of youngsters to travel to the international 2025 Future Problem Solving Conference Championships at Indiana University, Bloomington to present a video on their excellent environmental work. They competed against teams from 14 countries who presented projects and shared how they have solved problems in their community.

Box Hill Burwood Rotary received over 20 applications from local Whitehorse organisations for their 2025 Community Grants. Many worthy applicants made it very difficult for the committee to select recipients. Parkmore Primary School's Bee Education and Protection Project (BEAP), along with the others chosen, received grants of up to \$3,000 for their projects.

These yearly community grants celebrate the meaningful partnerships between Rotary and the wider community in driving positive change and supporting those in need.



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THE Clean Waterways Expo 2025 was held at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, the headwaters of KooyongKoot (Gardiners Creek) on Sunday, 29 June. This was its second year and keenly supported by the KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA).

Around 200 people attended. They explored exhibitions and participated in activities put on by 50 presenters and demonstrators at the Visitors Centre and in surrounding marquees. The popular BBQ sausage sizzle (free with a pledge to reduce plastic use) was run by the 1st/8th Blackburn Scout groups.

The Expo aimed to raise awareness and inform the public and industry on how to reduce the use of single-use plastics while preventing pollution and littering in our local waterways by improving work and lifestyle practices. At the end of the day, the public went away with a greater understanding of the issues and more respect for the groups working to meet the pollution challenges.

Melbourne Water showcased their new Litter Toolkit – a suite of practical resources for councils, groups and organisations to implement and encourage anti-littering behaviour locally. The Environment Protection

Authority (EPA) demonstrated how they test for pollution, what the tests mean, the fines involved and how to report problems.

The Port Phillip Bay Keeper and the Yarra River Keeper groups spoke about plastics pollution including polystyrene and nurdles. KooyongKoot Alliance and the Gardiners Creek Regional Collaboration also made presentations.

The stalls by Whitehorse Council's Waste Education and Environment Education teams gave information on litter damage, correct recycling, waste reduction, and environment-friendly replacement products. They spoke about how to become involved in the free environment school holiday activities and school term excursions.

The [RUSTIE](#) (Regenerative Upcycling Solar-Powered Trailer with Interactive Education) team showed that sustainable learning is definitely not boring. Their regenerative upcycling solar-powered trailer transformed plastic waste into new usable products while recycling educators provided information on the RUSTIE school incursion program.

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Paul Hamer MP

STATE MEMBER FOR BOX HILL

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Clean Waterways

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Wildlife educator Roberto the Connie and Xavier from Blackburn Lake WaterWatch team helped children spot and identify real waterbugs from the Lake, while explaining how their health indicates the water quality. Teams involved in caring for the KooyongKoot were present. They included KKA and its many Friends Groups, Gardiners Creek Regional Collaboration, Port Phillip EcoCentre and Yarra Riverkeeper Association. Each work to improve water quality, habitat, biodiversity of fauna and flora, and aesthetics. This ensures our waterways can become a more enjoyable place to visit, a better habitat with safer food sources for native birds, plants and animals.

The final event of the day was a guided tour of the Blackburn Lake Wetlands, to explain to the community what the Wetland Regeneration Project* is about and how to get involved.

Beating pollution is an uphill battle, and community education like the expo is a key to better outcomes. The Expo was a great success with the team running it going home happily exhausted and agreeing this should become an annual event!

Editor's note

The Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Wetlands Regeneration Project is an extensive two-year project involving major works and the planting of more than 3500 plants. Whitehorse Council is undertaking the heavy earth work, and the community is needed to assist with weeding and planting. For further information contact BLSAC@bigpond.com



OUR Federal Government will soon take a critical decision for our future, on an emissions reduction target for 2035 and a plan to achieve this target. The Climate Change Authority is developing independent, expert advice on this target, and industry groups and climate groups will contribute.

We can add our voice, and it is a strong voice if we work together. We have a stake in the future of our country and planet, and we elected this government.

Australia committed in the Paris Agreement to help limit the increase in global average temperatures to well below two degrees above pre-industrial levels, and to do all we can to limit this increase to 1.5 degrees.

To reach this goal, both major parties, at present, commit to net zero national fossil fuel emissions by 2050. The Labor Government has legislated a reduction of 43% in national emissions below 2005 levels, and 82% renewable electricity, by 2030.

The government will soon commit to a 2035 target. This of course is only part of the urgent response needed; it does not include emissions from our export

of coal and gas. Even so, this target is a critical response to the climate emergency. The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), with many other climate action organisations, is urging the government to reduce emissions by at least 80% by 2035.

The earth is already dangerously close to 1.5% average temperature increase. We are watching the tragic effects all over the world. These include local heat waves; drought and flood that are new weather records; fire and cyclones of a frequency, ferocity and location not seen before; sea temperature rise, ice melt, sea level rise; and species extinction on land and sea. Global heating is already causing hunger, water shortages, disease and displacement.

A sustainable climate and a healthy environment are all within reach. However, to achieve, will require urgent action in renewable energy, farming practice, land, forest and water management, transport development, and green industry.

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Climate change targets

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Excitingly, the innovation in science and technology and the investment potential are growing rapidly. Every level of government, every sector of the economy and every person has a part in this, but the Federal Government must lead with strong targets and policy and planning. We need to make full use of the opportunities that are here, and to provide incentives and directly invest in greater opportunities.

We need decisive and urgent action in the 2035 target and its plan. Adopting such a plan will provide sustainable jobs and build the skills we need. This will strengthen the economy.

Every emission reduction effort we make now has both an immediate benefit and an ongoing one into the future. Deep emission reductions now make the path to net zero easier and hopefully earlier.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said that he wants his legacy to be action on climate. I believe him. The ACF is asking us to sign an open letter to Mr Albanese to set a strong science-based 2035 emissions reduction target. Please read this [letter here](#), sign it and share it as widely as you can.

John Nihill is a member of ACF Eastern Rosellas Community Group (formerly ACF Chisholm).

Nurturing energy-savvy students Mount Lilydale Mercy College project

How embracing solar technology is helping a Victorian college save 77 tonnes of CO2 and the planet.

Solahart

LOCATED in Melbourne's outer east, [Mount Lilydale Mercy College](#) is a leading Catholic co-educational secondary school. Founded in 1896 and serving the needs of more than 1500 students, the College recognises the importance of sustainable practices, not only for its future but for the environment.

As part of Mount Lilydale Mercy College's commitment to sustainability in the learning environment, the school has installed water tanks for recycled water use, rolled out waste recycling upgrades, and expanded green spaces.

In recognition of these recent efforts, the College has achieved a 5-star rating from the ResourceSmart Schools Awards by Sustainability Victoria and was awarded the title of 2024 Secondary School Winner in the Community Leadership School 2024 – Fostering Responsible, Community-Oriented Citizens category.

Sustainable pathways for future-focused college

With a primary goal to reduce daytime power consumption and offset carbon emissions, Mount Lilydale Mercy College partnered with Solahart Eastern Ranges to upgrade its existing solar infrastructure. Being a family-owned and operated business, the team at Solahart Eastern Ranges are passionate about supporting the local community and were delighted to help Mount Lilydale Mercy College on its journey to a more sustainable future.

As part of its pledge to green solutions and building an energy-conscious cohort, the College enlisted Solahart Eastern Ranges' expertise to explore efficient ways to monitor the school's energy usage and report to the Sustainability Victoria ResourceSmart Schools Program.

Mount Lilydale Mercy College's Assistant Business Manager, Cathy Pote, states, 'Our College has been working towards becoming more sustainable with initiatives such as building outdoor learning spaces, reducing waste and water usage, and creating more green spaces with our annual tree-planting day. In partnership with Yarra Valley Water and Yarra Ranges Council, the students have been actively involved in a regeneration program to revive the natural ecosystem on the College's leased sports ground, including indigenous vegetation, to increase native wildlife.'

Ms Pote explained why they had decided to partner with Solahart. 'Given our energy consumption as a large College, we knew monitoring our usage and creating better energy efficiency was important. As well as upgrading to solar power, the school also consulted with Solahart Eastern Ranges on how we could monitor the patterns and peaks in our usage to conserve energy and identify waste.'



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Urban Forests

Ray Peck

IT was wonderful to see such strong interest in Boroondara's tree canopy and biodiversity. The Lighter Footprints Urban Forests event held in the refurbished Marwal Centre in North Balwyn on Wed 23 July was booked out.

A highlight of the event was the number of ways residents can help to protect and grow the tree canopy and biodiversity. Residents can [nominate significant trees](#) or [request new trees](#) – two very satisfying activities.

The [Boroondara Backyard Biodiversity Project 2025](#) is a gem. It provides workshops on how to turn your garden into a haven for animals. Participants receive landscape gardening advice from a landscape designer and even free native plants. Signing up for Boroondara's [Living for our Future e-news](#) is a good way to stay in touch with biodiversity events.

The [Balwyn North Rotary Nature Strip Program](#) helps residents replace the grass with flowering native shrubs, grasses and groundcovers to attract bees, birds and butterflies!

The [KooyongKoot Alliance](#) (KKA) is comprised of over twenty Friends Groups working in the Gardiners Creek (KooyongKoot) catchment. There's nothing better than working with like-minded people in local environmental projects.

Mature trees are being lost all the time, but if we all pitch in and plant new ones, we can ensure that future generations will benefit from the shade and beauty that Boroondara's trees provide.

A useful summary of the event together with other resources can be found at facebook.com/share/p/19VHDJAc9h/



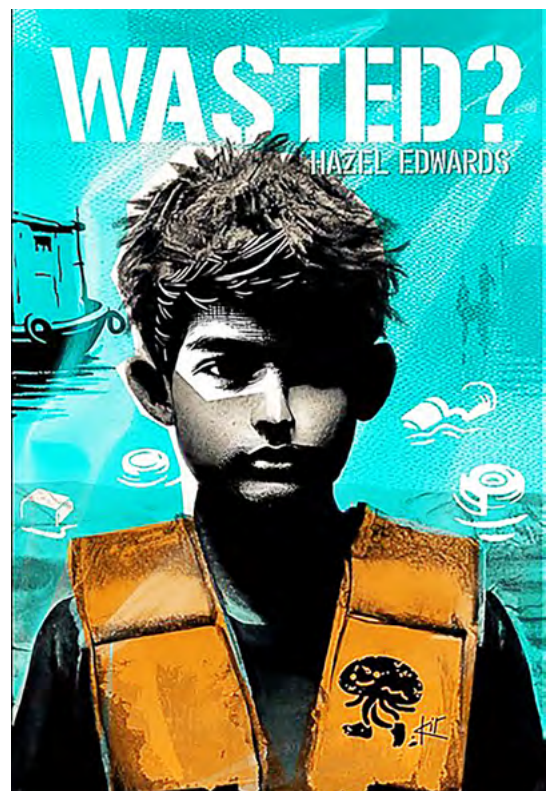
Wasted? a novel about environmental and sociological solutions

Glenys Grant OAM

HAZEL Edwards OAM is an award-winning Australian author of over 200 books, known for blending social themes with engaging storytelling. She is perhaps best known for the picture book classic *There's a Hippopotamus on Our Roof Eating Cake* series, but has also written several young adult fiction novels.

Her latest, *Wasted?* continues her legacy of crafting stories that matter. Aimed at young adults, Hazel's hope is to promote innovative thinking and get them talking about new possible solutions to both environmental and sociological issues.

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Wasted?

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Wasted? covers a range of real issues, based around social and economic themes, set in a real location, with real environmental challenges. Although there appears to be not one real solution, there is the possibility of a better future.

The novel has a political and unique storyline: refugees, runaways, and rebels forming a chosen family and setting up a new home and scientific labs on satellite shanty-boats next to the unlikeliest of places, the Pacific Ocean's Great Garbage Patch.

Mid-ocean, the giant Great Garbage Patch is an eco-embarrassment and no-one wants to own it despite UN recognition. Fed by tidal waves of murky waste, circling currents collect marine debris of ropes, fishing nets and plastic discards into an unstable, fluid place. An environmentally horrifying massive rubbish dump in the ocean, at about three times the size of France, and growing.

The asylum seekers, hoping desperately for visas and their own homeland, prove to be creators and developers. Drawing on their vision, resources and scientific knowledge, they repurpose and create bio-fuel salvaged from the ocean's waste plastics. They plan to trade their fuel for visas, make enough money to survive and grow their new and legal Utopian state. So, what could possibly go wrong? Key themes include who decides what (or who) is disposable and

whether short term survival is enough without long-term vision. Issues include licensing, international lawyers and politics, then success and immense wealth which undermines the collaborative culture that brought them together. And are they creating more environment and health problems?

The diverse, authentic characters and quirky ground breaking Climate Repair problem-solvers are led by 16-year-old Kit, a practical but idealistic teen caught between worlds, who illustrates how to be part of a new future.

Hazel says 'In *Wasted?* I was interested in portraying asylum seekers as innovative problem solvers, not victims. Prior to writing *Wasted?*, I'd checked with my team of experts (all friends) the science that would form part of the plot twists and the unique Garbage Patch setting.

'Was my idea possible, about having innovative asylum seekers setting up a self-sufficient new state which could issue visas? Was it scientifically viable to create a stable base mid ocean on which people could live, have fresh water and nourishing food, and work? Was it feasible to create bio-fuel from garbage, then trade the patents? Yes, yes and yes.'

And so *Wasted?* was born.

Wasted? Is a Young Adult/adult cross over #CliFic.

Published by Bookpod, it was launched at Write Around the Murray Literary Festival on September 14 2024. For more information, [go here](#).

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TOGETHER, WE CONNECT

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING BUT NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN?

Consider joining a Rotary Club. For more information about volunteering opportunities in your local community call Julian Badenach on 0414 609 665 or visit www.boxhillcentralrotary.org.au

Rotary
Club of Box Hill Central



Ask A Vet with Dr Suze

Dr Susanna Gamage

AS August is National Pet Dental Health Month, it is timely to talk about your pet's teeth. Did you know periodontal disease is the number one health problem in our small animal patients?

By two years of age, 70% of cats and 80% of dogs have some form of periodontal disease with small and toy breeds particularly susceptible.

Periodontal disease is the infection of structures that surround the tooth, which include the gums, dental ligament and bony tooth socket. Periodontal, derived from ancient Greek, literally means 'around the tooth'. There are two stages. Gingivitis is the initial, reversible phase where inflammation is confined to the gum. If left unchecked, the inflammation spreads to the deeper structures resulting in periodontitis, the second stage.

Periodontal disease is initiated by bacterial changes that occur due to excess plaque accumulation. Plaque is a biofilm of saliva, oral bacteria and complex sugars which attach to clean teeth within 24 hours. Regular tooth brushing disrupts the biofilm, preventing plaque build-up. Initially, plaque cannot be easily seen with the naked eye, but after a few days it can be detected visually and eventually it mineralises to form tartar. Gingivitis can develop as early as two weeks.

Periodontal disease can have local and generalised health implications for your pet. Locally, some examples include abscesses, fractures, bone infections and oral tumours. Systemic diseases linked to periodontal disease include kidney, liver, lung, and heart diseases, as well as adverse effects on pregnancy and diabetes.

There are many signs of advanced dental disease. These include bad breath, a red gumline, oral bleeding, and hypersalivation, a preference to chew on one side, facial swelling, reduced appetite or a preference for soft food, pawing or rubbing the face, or becoming sensitive to stroking the head. Early signs of dental disease are not as obvious and may only be picked up at your pet's general health check.

Much can be done to address your pet's oral hygiene. Firstly, it is important that your pet is assessed by your

veterinary health care professional to assess and grade the level of dental disease that may be present, before formulating an oral healthcare plan that is tailored to your pet. Give your pet a reason to smile, discuss your pet's oral health at their next check up.

Dr. Susanna Gamage BVSc MRCVS has over a decade of international veterinary experience and is the founding director of Dr. Suze - My Visiting Vet, a mobile veterinary business in the Eastern Suburbs providing caring, personalised and professional veterinary care in the comfort of your own home, keeping things convenient for you and comfortable for your pet.

If you have a general pet question you would like answered by Dr. Suze to be featured in Eastsider News or to find out more about our services, please contact us via the [website here](#).

Please note the information in this article is of a general nature and is not intended to be a substitute for professional healthcare advice. If you have specific concerns about your pet, you should always seek advice directly from your veterinary healthcare practitioner.

To check the references supporting this article, please [go here](#).



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Come Line dance with Marie

Marie Pietersz

MARIE invites you to join her classes to try out line dancing and have more fun than you could ever imagine moving and exercising. Easy to learn and enjoyable, line dancing is perfect for all levels of experience and ability.

Classes are held at Forest Hill, Ashburton, Rowville, Camberwell, Keysborough and Vermont South on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, in both the day and evening. The classes range from Introduction, Beginners, Improvers, Easy Intermediate to Intermediates and are conducted by a thorough and patient instructor. All ages welcome.

Contact Marie about specific class times and locations, how to register and any other questions by email at mariepietersz@hotmail.com. If you prepay or pay in advance for the term, you are entitled to the attractive discounted rate. Pay-as-you-go is also available at the casual rate. If paying cash at the door, please arrive a few minutes early so as not to disrupt the class.

Line Dancing is a great way to stay active and meet new friends. Come and give it a try and workout for your whole body.



THE Harp Golf Club was established by a diverse group of interested golfers in 1983 in order to provide an opportunity for social golf played not only at Freeway Golf Course, its home course, but also at other premier public golf courses on Sunday mornings.

The club runs A and B grade competitions and welcomes golfers of any level. Many of our current members were new to the game of golf when joining the club and have progressed through as their handicaps have improved.

The club welcomes both men and women who enjoy the challenge and the camaraderie offered by a social golf club. All members have an opportunity to play with each other; this also has the benefit of allowing new members to meet and get to know existing members within a short period of time.

The club is a member of the Victorian Golf League (VGL) and can provide an official golfing handicap for those new to golf, along with golf link membership.

Following our home games, we meet in the club rooms for presentation by the President or club Captain. A few laughs can always be guaranteed at the 19th!

Annual membership fees are modest (\$130 pa in 2025) to cover the cost of VGL fees and liability insurance. Members and guests pay green fees when they play.

Whether you are an experienced golfer or a learner wishing to develop your skills, we encourage you to try us out before committing to join the club. If you like the club, you can join and enjoy the benefits of a social golf club. We look forward to hearing from you. In order to play at Freeway on a Sunday, we need to hear from you by COB on a Thursday.

If you are interested in Sunday Golf, we encourage you to get in touch with the club via an email to theharpclub@gmail.com or through our [Facebook page here](#).

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A core-strengthening new class – Pilates

Balwyn Evergreen Centre's latest initiatives

Diane Falzon

Pilates is well known for its benefits in improving balance, flexibility and strength, making it an ideal addition to the Balwyn Evergreen exercise schedule.

Instructor Joanne Morris is excited about delivering Pilates at Balwyn Evergreen, highlighting its suitability for older adults. 'Staff at Evergreen are always looking for new ways to support older adults and we thought, why not Pilates? It's a safe and effective way to help with strength, balance, flexibility and posture, while also reducing the risk of falls,' Joanne said.

Pilates classes is on Fridays from 11am to 12pm at Balwyn Evergreen Centre. For more information on Evergreen's exercise programs, [visit here](#).

To find out more about Balwyn Evergreen Centre, you can go to the Eastsider News [webpage here](#): or the Centre's website here: www.balwynevergreen.org.au

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BALWYN Evergreen Centre is a community centre dedicated to ensuring that older individuals stay active, healthy and socially connected. Recent initiatives by the Centre include:

- its Evergreen Connections Café and Information Hub, to be celebrated at its Grand Opening on 7 August 2025.
- a new class to its exercise program - Pilates!

The Evergreen Connection Café

The Evergreen Connections Café is a welcoming space designed to bring people together. Whether it is for a friendly chat over coffee, an impromptu catch-up or accessing useful information, the Evergreen Connections Café will be the new go-to hub for older residents and the wider community.

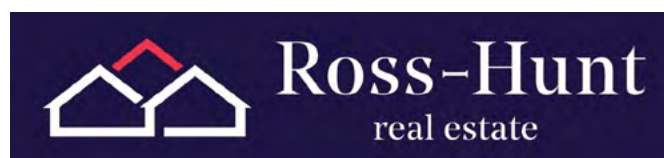
The launch event on 7 August features live music, line dancing and exercise demonstrations, afternoon tea by The Boulevard Food Store in Mont Albert and freshly brewed coffee from the centre's new espresso machine, supplied by Espresso Fix.

The Evergreen Connections Café and Information Hub has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the Community Bank Inner East Community Investment Program and the City of Boroondara Annual Community Strengthening Grants.

Everyone is welcome to come along, celebrate and explore this vibrant new addition to Balwyn Evergreen Centre's community offerings

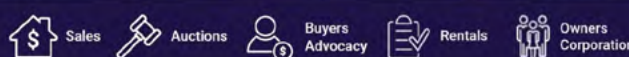
A core-strengthening new class – Pilates

The Centre, has added a new class to its exercise program – Pilates. The class is led by experienced instructor Joanne Morris and caters to all fitness levels, offering modifications for standing, chair and mat-based exercises.



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MEMBERS of the Box Hill/Mitcham VIEW Club meet on the 4th Monday of each month at Bucatini's restaurant in Whitehorse Road Nunawading, where we enjoy a delicious 2-course lunch; have a great time together, and hear a variety of interesting and entertaining guest speakers

This vibrant group of 20 to 30 women enjoy convivial times of friendship while raising valuable funds to support the on-going education of nine children through the Smith Family. Our latest project is collecting stationery items to make up into packs to give to children beginning school in Prep next year. Donations of small exercise books, scrap books, pencils, coloured pencils, glue sticks, children's scissors etc. will be collected at our July and August meetings as all items need to be on hand by the end of September before being assembled into individual packs.

At our May meeting, we heard John Barnao's tales of Italian migrants and their historic fruit shops. Our inspirational, entertaining and empathetic June speaker was Kirsty Porter, a former nurse and founder of the Umbrella Dementia Café. This is a not-for-profit

organisation that has started a number of meeting venues that support those suffering from the scourge of dementia, their carers and families.

July has been especially busy as we commenced collecting stationery; ran a fund-raising sausage sizzle at Bunnings Box Hill on 13 July; and enjoyed a social lunch at Miss Lucy's in Blackburn on 14 July. At our July 28 meeting, we hosted a 'Christmas in July Bring and Buy Table'. Our guest speaker on that day was Geoff Bransbury whose humour, colourful photos, and rollicking tales of his amazing solo motorbike journeys around far-flung and rarely traversed areas of the world had us all entertained and enthralled.

New members to VIEW are guaranteed of a warm welcome, so please contact Mrs. Val. Evans on 9877 2847 (leave a message) or by email at maxval60@gmail.com if you would like to come along and join us at Bucatini's or at some of our other get-togethers and functions.

It's wonderful to know that while you're having such a great time, you are also supporting disadvantaged Australian students on their learning pathways to a better future.



Adedicated group of senior walkers from Burwood Brickworks in Melbourne's inner-East has stepped up in a big way for this year's Walk for Autism, raising thousands of dollars and inspiring others with their community spirit.

Led by local Personal Trainer and Group Fitness Instructor Chrissy Dunienville, the group comes together twice a week at Burwood Brickworks

Shopping Centre for a one-hour walking and exercise session at the centre, which generously supports the initiative by offering it free to the community. The group averages around 50 participants per session, mostly seniors, and this year many members eagerly took on the Walk for Autism challenge, clocking up their steps and rallying donations throughout May.

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Burwood Brickworks Walkers

(Continued from page 18)

‘We’re always keen to get involved in meaningful fundraising efforts, and Walk for Autism really resonated with our members,’ said Chrissy. ‘Many in the group have personal or family connections to autism, and this was a wonderful opportunity to support awareness and inclusion in our community.’

Walk for Autism is Aspect’s major annual fundraiser, with thousands of Australians walking 7,000 steps a day to support the 1 in 40 Australians who are Autistic. The event highlights the mental health challenges faced by 70% of Autistic people, challenges that stem not from autism itself but from a world that is often not autism-friendly.

Dr Vicki Gibbs, Head of Research at Aspect, said Walk for Autism is a powerful way to highlight these urgent challenges and create change.

‘This year, we want to drive home the fact that 70% of Autistic people experience mental health challenges, a number that’s far too high,’ said Dr Gibbs. ‘A world that isn’t designed for Autistic people makes everyday life more difficult and contributes to these struggles. We need to change that.’

‘At Aspect, we’re actively working to create a

more inclusive society. Our Autism Friendly Team collaborates with businesses, transport hubs, venues and public spaces across Australia, offering expert guidance to help make environments more accessible. Education is key, because understanding fosters empathy, acceptance and real change.’

Dr Gibbs encourages everyone to support this initiative: ‘An autism-friendly world benefits us all. Embracing diverse perspectives supports innovation and growth, and many accommodations that support Autistic people can improve experiences for everyone.’

There’s still time to support the Burwood Brickworks team and all those walking to build a more inclusive Australia. Donations remain open, and every dollar makes a difference. To support Walk for Autism, [visit them here](#).

Aspect ([Autism Spectrum Australia](#)) is one of Australia’s largest autism-specific service provider, with one of the world’s biggest autism-specific schools programs. A not-for-profit organisation, we work in partnership with people of all ages on the autism spectrum and their families to deliver distinct services, practices and research.



Blossoms in Balwyn Fintona Girls' School Playgroup

FAMILIES in the City of Boroondara, Balwyn and other nearby suburbs are discovering a standout option for early learning: the new playgroup at Fintona Girls' School.

Catering to children aged 6 months to 3 years, the Fintona Playgroup offers a stimulating and nurturing environment that encourages early learning and social development. Sessions are held at the school’s specialist Early Learning Centre (ELC) on the Junior School Campus in Balwyn, making it a convenient choice for local families seeking a high-quality playgroup in the City of Boroondara and surrounding areas such as Canterbury, Doncaster, Surrey Hills and Kew.

Expert-Led Playgroup Sessions in Balwyn

Each Friday morning during term time, experienced educator Fran Hyde welcomes up to 15 young learners, each accompanied by a parent or guardian. The playgroup runs from 9.30am to 11.00am, providing a safe, engaging space for children to enjoy cooperative play and specialist activities.

High Demand for Playgroups in Balwyn and beyond

Due to overwhelming interest from families in Balwyn, Canterbury, and the wider Boroondara area, the Fintona Playgroup is fully booked for the remainder of 2025.

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Blossoms in Balwyn

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The school is considering adding extra sessions to meet the growing demand for quality playgroups in the local community. Families interested in joining the waitlist for 2025 can register their interest online at [Playgroup - Fintona Girls' School](#).

Jackie Dimattina, Head of Junior Campus, says, 'We're always looking for ways to engage with and support our local community. Our new Rocketeers holiday program has also been hugely popular, and we welcome suggestions for future activities.'

Discover More About Fintona Playgroup

If you're searching for a playgroup in Balwyn or nearby areas, Fintona Girls' School Playgroup offers an enriching environment that fosters each child's natural curiosity, creativity and discovery-driven early learning through connections and play. To learn more or join the waitlist, visit [Playgroup - Fintona Girls' School](#).



Learn to Communicate with Confidence

SPEAKING Made Easy Camberwell Group is part of a women's national organisation that offers members guidance and opportunities to learn to speak confidently. The Camberwell Group is small and friendly, and members will support you to achieve your goals. Women from all cultures and backgrounds are welcome to join our organisation.

At Speaking Made Easy, you will learn communication skills so that you can participate fully in family, social, business, education, and community activities. You will also learn to communicate effectively one-on-one or in front of an audience. We practice public speaking, make impromptu and prepared speeches, give effective opinions, and participate in discussions using conversation skills. Feedback is offered in a warm, positive, and constructive manner.

Confidence leads to new opportunities. Many women have used their Speaking Made Easy skills to get the job they want, enjoy educational opportunities, join community organisations, and speak at functions. Joining Camberwell Speaking Made Easy enables you to connect with like-minded women, have fun and make friends. Visitors are welcome to attend three meetings before paying the joining fee. There is no obligation to give a speech until you feel comfortable. A reduced fee for students aged 15 years and over applies.

The Camberwell Group meets at midday for a 12.15pm start, on the fourth Thursday of every month, from February to November, at the Camberwell Library. These meetings run for 90 minutes. Upcoming meetings are 28 August, 18 September, 23 October, 27 November, and 6 December for our Anniversary celebration.

All enquiries regarding membership should be addressed to the Membership Officer by email at vic.membership@speakingmadeeasy.com.au or by phone to Sherrilyn Ballard 0459 186 670. More information can be found on our [website here](#).



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Lifeblood Champion

Yvonne Bowyer



Photo Credit: Yvonne Bowyer

MY voluntary role as a Lifeblood Champion is to fly the flag for blood donation. Did you know that one in three Australians will need blood or blood products during their lifetime (33%), yet only three percent of Australians donate? New donors are always needed so please consider donating.

There have been recent changes to eligibility. From 14 July 2025, gay and bisexual men and anyone taking PrEP is now eligible to donate plasma. People who lived in the United Kingdom during the mad cow disease outbreak became eligible to donate blood from July 2022.

As a Lifeblood Champion I lead a small team, the Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Blood Donors. We are unique in that we have never met in person as I promote the team solely through a local Facebook group. At the end of the year, I provide data about how many lives we have saved, and in 2024 that was an impressive 126 lives saved. Not bad for 9 people. The group has now increased to 18 members but more are most welcome to join; just mention the team at your next donation.

Where to go to donate your blood

On 19 November 2024, a new permanent purpose-built facility became operational at 293 Camberwell Road, Camberwell (near Petbarn and the Camberwell Police Station). There are other such facilities at Ringwood and Mt Waverley.

If you wish to donate but are uncertain if you are eligible, please call Lifeblood on 13 14 95. If you are unable to donate, why not become an ally and spread the message to your family and friends.

For more information on Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, formerly known as Australian Red Cross Blood Service, go to their [website here](#).

Opening Doors Real Work Experience for Neurodivergent Teens

Jacob Alan Kness

FOR many high school students, work experience is a milestone – a first glimpse into the world beyond school. But for autistic and neurodivergent teens, this rite of passage is often missed due to misunderstanding, lack of support, or low expectations.

The Teens Work Know-How Program, run by Aspergers Victoria, is a unique initiative designed to bridge this gap. Now entering its sixth year, the program pairs neurodivergent students with inclusive workplaces for a structured, supported placement experience. The goal is simple but powerful: build confidence, capability and connection between students and the working world.

Work placements take place during the second week of the April and September school holidays, across four days: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Wednesday is intentionally kept free to provide rest and reflection, supporting energy regulation – something often overlooked in traditional work experience models. Participants are matched with employers based on their interests and strengths. Prior to their placement, they engage in tailored workshops to prepare for workplace communication, expectations, and problem-solving. Meanwhile, host employers receive training and support to ensure the experience is constructive for both student and supervisor.

The program was co-designed by a team of autistic professionals, led by me – someone who left school early because it didn't meet my needs. I now lead employment strategy and innovation at Aspergers

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Opening Doors

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Victoria, and work alongside employers, schools, and support services to build practical pathways into inclusive work.

This program is not about charity or ticking a diversity box. It's about shifting systems that were not built for neurodivergent minds – and giving young people the chance to explore who they are when supported to thrive.

The need is clear. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), only 38% of autistic Australians are employed. This is not due to lack of interest or skill, but to a persistent mismatch between potential and opportunity. The Teens Work Know-How Program is changing this – one placement at a time.

We are currently welcoming expressions of interest from local employers to participate in our 2026 program and beyond. Hosts may be small businesses, creative studios, government offices, or national firms – what matters most is a willingness to learn and offer a safe, respectful space.

The benefits to employers are tangible. Many past hosts have reported improved team morale, stronger communication practices, and a better understanding of what inclusive employment really looks like. One host shared, 'We thought we were doing this to help a student. But we ended up learning so much ourselves.'

Teens Work Know-How Program


Your participation is key to our success. It allows us to:

- **Showcase Unique Talents:** Highlight the skills and abilities of neurodiverse teens.
- **Secure Essential Funding:** Use collected data to advocate for extended or new grants.
- **Expand Our Offerings:** Create more programs tailored to various needs and preferences.

Our ILC Commitment

Since 2019, supported by an ILC grant, we've faced challenges but remain dedicated to our mission: to deliver the Teens Work Know-How Program.

Despite the hurdles, including those from COVID-19, we've persevered, and pivoted through these challenges with the support of our community and stakeholders. We continued to focus on leading by example, employing more lived experience team members, and exceeding past outcomes.



Aspergers Victoria also offers broader employment support across the lifespan, including our Jobseeker Network, Coaching, Peer Mentoring, and Employer Consultancy. To learn more or register your interest as a host, [visit here](#) or email programs@aspergersvic.org.au

Jacob Alan Kness is the Employment Programs Manager at Aspergers Victoria. A social enterprise founder and lived experience advocate, he works to redesign employment systems that empower, not exclude.

Probus Club Mitcham Nunawading an update

Chris Summers

WHERE has the year gone? For the merry people of Probus Mitcham Nunawading, Christmas in July is over and plans are well underway for the remainder of 2025. The year will culminate with Christmas being celebrated at the Canterbury International Hotel in Forest Hill.

What's happening for the rest of 2025?

For the remainder of the year, we have our regular Sunday lunch which is at varying venues. Outings we are looking forward to are a tour of Government House, a proposed tour of Pentridge Prison in September, The Round Theatre in Nunawading for the Andrew Lloyd Webber show in October, a visit to the Johnston Collection in East Melbourne in November, and then we are back ready for Christmas.

We tried a new activity in August which took us back to our youth – Ten Pin Bowling. A small number took part but they did have a 'fun' time. Our photography group are very active and in July visited Williamstown photographing whatever took their fancy. Some featured the boats, some the old buildings and people and shops along the main street.

We invite you to join our meetings

If you would like to come along to our meetings or outings you would be most welcome. Meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month at 10am in the Willis Room at the Whitehorse Council buildings.

Each meeting has morning tea followed by an excellent speaker. Our last speaker was Tammy Shepherd, a physiotherapist. She volunteers to work with Mercy Ships which provides medical facilities and visits poorer countries, delivering surgical, dental, physio, radiation, dietitian services onboard their two ships.

Our future speakers are:

- September 9: Shane Varcoe on Marijuana as a Medicine
- October 14: Alex Maisey on The Lyrebird as an eco engineer
- November 11: Paul Perrottet on Australian Tennis Open History and Highlights.

Visit our website to find out more and to read our monthly newsletter [here](#) or email us at: mnprobus@outlook.com

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U3A Ringwood

40 Years of Lifelong Learning

U3A Ringwood has proudly celebrated its 40th anniversary, marking four decades of offering affordable, accessible learning and social opportunities for people in their third age of life.

Founded in March 1985, just one year after U3A began in Melbourne, U3A Ringwood was among the first of its kind in Victoria. The group officially held its first classes on 17 June 1985 and has since grown into a vibrant hub for education, connection, and community involvement.

To commemorate this milestone, members and guests gathered for a celebratory luncheon at the Norwood Sporting Club. The event was well attended by current members and several special guests, including Mayor Cr. Kylie Spears; Deputy Mayor Cr. Linda Hancock; Matt Gregg, MP for Deakin; Brandi Craig, representing MP Nick McGowan; and Russ Haines, President of the Ringwood Historical Society

President Daryl James welcomed guests and recognised the incredible contribution of 10 volunteer tutors who have each given over a decade of service. The

honourees were: Jill Cowie, Jennie Harvie, Alastair McCracken, Jim Moroney, Irene Pomeroy, Alex Robertson, Mary Semple, Ruth Seferth, Vicky Torresan, and Ken Yelland.

The afternoon featured a delicious lunch, followed by an informative and entertaining talk by Russ Haines on the history of Ringwood. A highlight of the event was the presentation of a commemorative plaque to U3A Ringwood by Mayor Spears, acknowledging the organisation's lasting impact on the local community. The afternoon continued with a lot of chat and discussions which was easier after a glass of wine or two. All in all a very enjoyable day with lots of thanks to the organisers and attendees and may we grow and prosper over the next 40 years.

If you're interested in joining this friendly community and exploring the variety of activities available, you can contact U3A Ringwood at 0481591224 or via email at info@u3aringwood.org.au For more information, go to our [website here](#).

The Reporter, 5 June 1936

FIRE CHIEF DENIES RUMOUR.

At the meeting of the Blackburn and Mitcham Shire Council on 18th May, Cr. Halliday said that it had been reported that the Box Hill Fire Brigade had been seriously delayed in reaching a fire in that city. It was stated, he said, that understaffing and difficulty in starting an engine had been the main causes for that delay. Cr. Halliday's motion that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades' Board be written to asking if the staffing could be improved, and inquiring as to the

truth of the report about the engine, was carried. Monday night a reply was received from the Chief Officer emphatically denying that there had been any delay, and giving the times of the brigade's receipt of alarm and arrival at the scene of the fire. Enclosed also were copies of letters from the householders concerned and independent witnesses complimenting the brigade on their work. The Fire Chief said a searching inquiry had been made, and it had been proved that the information supplied was not in accordance with the facts. Cr. Halliday stat-

ed it had been reported that a lady had rung earlier. He was not satisfied that the ratepayers were getting the protection they ought to, and replies had not been given to the questions asked by the council. He moved, and it was carried, that the writer be thanked for his letter; that he be informed that there had been no desire to cast any reflection on the firemen, and that the council desired particulars regarding the staffing of the station and the suitability of the equipment.

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Vermont Garden Club

THE friendly members of Vermont Garden Club are keen to help you solve your many gardening challenges. We'd love to have you join us at our monthly club meetings and hear your questions and ideas.

We meet at the City of Whitehorse Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill 3131 at 8pm on the second Thursday of the month (except January).

Meeting highlights include a trading table; display bench; demonstrations; guest speaker; raffle; information about open gardens and shows plus lots more, all followed by a delicious supper after the meeting.

Membership. Annual fee: \$25 single; \$35 family (no joining fee). Members receive a monthly e-newsletter.

Our upcoming guest speakers will cover a diverse array of topics:

- On 14 August at 8pm, our speaker will be Clive Larkman from Larkman Nurseries



- On 11 September at 8pm, the topic is pelargoniums
- On 9 October, we celebrate the 95th Anniversary of the club. Dr Jacinta Burke will speak on the Rose Society of Victoria. Our annual plant sale will also be held at Brentford Square Shopping Centre, Vermont.
- On Sunday 19 October, we will have a marquee at the City of Whitehorse Spring Festival.

Please join us at our monthly meeting; we'd love to see you. Visitors are very welcome (gold coin donation please). For further information or to notify your attendance, please call either Louise (Secretary) on 0401 431 239 (mobile) or Margaret (President) on (03) 9878 1702 or send an email to vermontgardenclub@gmail.com

East Burwood Care

THE Burwood Heights Uniting Church, with the support of the Anglican Church of The Ascension in Burwood East, has responded to the decision of Uniting VicTas to withdraw from their site in East Burwood by initiating a new model of their outreach. Known as East Burwood Care, it will operate from the same location, at the East Burwood Centre on the corner of Burwood Highway and Blackburn Road, Burwood East.

Food Assistance

The focus will be on a continuation of the Food Assistance service which has been operating for many years. Opening hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays,

10am to 2pm, offering help to people in our community who are facing hardship.

We are grateful to the churches, organizations and individual people who support the work with donations of food items, and financial contributions that are used to purchase extra supplies and supermarket vouchers. We also collect clothing and warm blankets.

East Burwood Care is a community outreach of the congregations of the two churches. To find out more, including information about ways to make donations, go the East Burwood Care [website here](#) or visit us at 220 Burwood Highway, Burwood East 3151 (enter from Blackburn Road).



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Meet the locals – local heroes and their achievements

Australian Human Rights Awards

Nominations now open

Australian Human Rights Commission

THE search is on to find Australia's leading human rights defenders and advocates who strive to improve the lives of people across the country.

Don't miss this chance to help your human rights heroes get the recognition they deserve. You can nominate a person or organisation for the:

- Human Rights Medal
- Law Award
- Media & Creative Industries Award
- Community Award
- Young People's Award

Big or small, we want to showcase their work to champion equality and justice for all.

Find out more and [nominate now](#). Nominating is free and easy and can be anonymous. Nominations close on Monday 18 August 2025. Contact us if you have questions or need support to submit a nomination. Go to our [website here](#).



Ethan at Oxford

Glenys Grant



(ABOVE): At the University sports awards night Ethan won Fresher of the Year for results in Trampolining.

AS some of you will remember, Eastsider News previously featured the story of Ethan Newnham, a Blackburn resident, who became a Rotary Global Scholar. Supported by the Rotary Foundation, local Rotarians and mentors he travelled to Oxford University to gain his Master's degree.

Ethan has regularly kept in touch with his Australian supporters including those from the Rotary Club of Nunawading, his sponsor club here. He is thriving, excelling both academically and in sports.

We recently received a letter from him telling us the wonderful news that he has been awarded a scholarship to a Doctorate of Philosophy (DPhil) and we wanted to share it with Eastsider News readers. Here it is.

(Continued on next page)

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Ethan at Oxford

(Continued from page 25)

Dear wonderful supporters of my journey, I'm nearing the end of my master's degree in Neuroscience at Oxford, and I wanted to share some incredibly exciting news with you all. Along the way to building a career in science, I have known for a long time that I wanted to pursue a PhD. With funding from The Rotary Foundation to pursue my current master's degree, I knew I'd have a good shot at going to many different places for the next stage of my studies. However, once I arrived in Oxford I knew that this was where I'd love to do my research.

After lots of hard work in the lab, many applications and plenty of patient waiting, I'm thrilled to say that my department has given me a scholarship to pursue a DPhil (Oxford's version of a PhD). After a quick trip

home in September, I'll be back to start the next stage of my studies (the most exciting yet).

This is an important moment to reflect on the opportunity that Rotary has given me by allowing me to be here. Without this stepping stone, I wouldn't have been able to show my potential to mentors and supervisors, which would have made it nearly impossible to receive funding for my DPhil. In my current Master's cohort of around 15 students, I was one of two to receive departmental funding. No international students applying from elsewhere received funding. So, not only can I thank Rotary for this brilliant year, but for the next three to come.

I'll look forward to sharing more with you all when I submit my final dissertation, and when I'm back in Melbourne.

All the best,

Ethan

Fred Gibbs stalwart member of Rotary Balwyn

Julie Mulhauser

FRED Gibbs OAM is one of only two remaining charter members of the Rotary Club of Balwyn, established in 1972. His 53-year journey with the Club began when, as manager of the AMP Trentwood office, he was invited by local pharmacist Stan Clarke to join the newly formed Club.

One of the Club's earliest major projects was the 'Potting Down' Project, initiated by the International Committee that Fred chaired. A local nursery supplied 2,500 native seedlings, which members and their families re-potted and grew at home. Proceeds from plant sales supported a Ringwood Rotary project delivering water tanks to Flores Island, Indonesia.

Fred served as President in 1977, just a year after the Camberwell Sunday Market began.

In 2007, he began a lasting involvement with the Box Hill Miniature Steam Railway (BHMSR), where he still produces the 'On Track' newsletter, maintains the gardens, and photographs events.

Fred played a key role in creating the Club's Family Fun Day for children with disabilities and their families. With support from BHMSR, Parent Support Network (now Interchange Outer East), and sponsors like Bendigo Bank and Bunnings Box Hill, the event features rides, entertainment, food, showbags, and more. It also helped forge a strong partnership between BHMSR and Balwyn Rotary, with many members volunteering regularly.

(ABOVE RIGHT): 2019 Australia Day Honours Investiture. Fred Gibbs and the then Victorian Governor Linda Dessau.



This event holds special meaning for Fred and his wife Denise, whose grandson James has Sturge-Weber syndrome. They know how much a day of inclusive fun can mean to a family.

Fred's favourite club role was serving as Assistant Treasurer for 10 years. He was honoured as a BHMSR Life Member in 2017 and received the OAM in 2019 for his service to the Balwyn community.

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Rayan Raydan's Rapid Rise

Eli Kelly

WHILE most kids his age are out playing AFL, rising star Rayan Raydan has gone against the grain and embraced the world of Gridiron. At just 16, the Croydon local has achieved rapid success in the sport, earning a place on the Victorian Eagles Under-18 State Team, and the national Australian team after only a year of playing.

Having previously participated in soccer and basketball, it was the discovery of the local team, Croydon Rangers, that sparked his passion for playing Gridiron. Rayan was drawn to the idea that the sport offered something 'different', so he decided to take the leap. The Croydon Rangers were formed in 1984 and are one of the two founding teams in Victoria. They have continuously strived to develop the Gridiron scene in Australia; a mission Rayan now shares.

For those unfamiliar with Gridiron, Rayan refers to it as 'American football', the name stemming from the grid-like layout of the field. The game consists of two teams of 11 players competing to score points either through touchdowns or by kicking the ball through the goalposts. Unique to the sport is that 'it caters to all body types and playing styles', Rayan's father highlights. Rayan himself plays on the offensive line, a key component requiring a keen sense of strategy and physical strength.

One of the biggest challenges Rayan recalls was being thrown into the unfamiliar role of centre for the state team. Despite having never played the position before, he adapted quickly, a testament to his resilience and skillset.

Much of his success can also be attributed to the strong support network of his family. Despite a demanding schedule of five after-school training sessions a week, 5:30am starts on Saturdays, and regular games, he remains focused and positive. He has recently elevated his training, joining Conquest Athletic Performance in Endeavour Hills, a high-performance strength and conditioning gym led by renowned coach, Dave Tuinauvai.

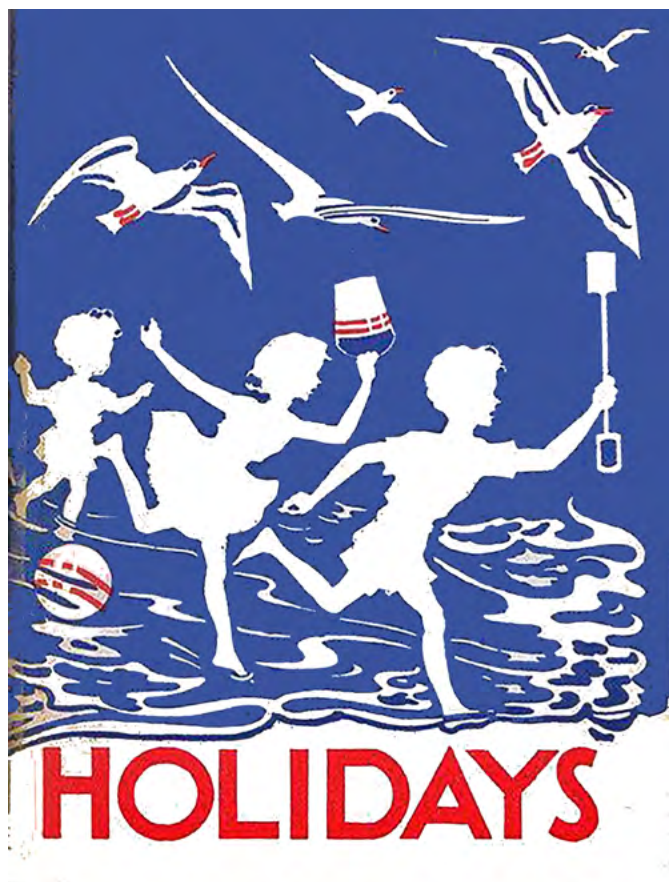
Rayan has experienced notable success during his brief stint in Gridiron, recently helping his team claim a grand final victory. Now, he sets his sights on representing the national Australian team, an opportunity that means a lot to him, particularly as the youngest starter on the team. This selection involved submitting performance footage to selectors in Australia and entails a great undertaking of 5am wake ups, with up five hours of training almost every day during the festival.

Eastsider News August 2025



Looking ahead, Rayan remains open to where the sport may lead him, taking it one step at a time. He is eager to see more young Australians take up Gridiron, calling it an 'exciting game with a lot of talent'. As he puts it, 'If you enjoy football, you'd enjoy this'. With his drive and talent, Rayan Raydan has a bright future, whether in Gridiron or elsewhere.

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HOLIDAYS was the title in bold red of the second reader in our primary school classroom. The children on the cover were running joyfully into the ripples at the beach while white seagulls circled above them.

The picture reflected the joy of our simple childhood holidays. In the autumn or spring term breaks we would spend a week every year in Portarlington, a sleepy little fishing village on Corio Bay. This was a magical time, and I shall write more about these trips next time.

In summer we usually stayed in Surrey Hills, while our neighbours went to mysterious places called Rosebud and Lawn. It took me some years to realise that the latter name was Lorne and so did not refer to grass.

On occasional hot days our father would drive us down Warrigal Rd to the beach. He would park among the tea-trees and we children would change in the hot car before racing over the burning sand into the shallows. The cold water of Port Phillip Bay made us gasp, but we waded on into the waist-deep water where we could try our swimming strokes. I bobbed in the water, feeling the sun warming my back and lulled by the sound of the lapping waves. The distant voices from shore seemed muted in the watery place. Eventually we waded back to shore. The shallows, which had seemed so cold, now felt warm to our feet. My younger siblings would be

Growing up in Surrey Hills Holidays

Gill Bell

shuddering with cold by this stage despite the blazing sunshine, and would need to be towelled dry.

We climbed back into the stifling car and began the long trek back home where our mother was waiting for us. We were sandy and uncomfortable in our seats, and by the time we arrived home we were hotter than when we had left, but these excursions never lost their charm for us. Gus, our black and white cocker spaniel, would greet us, yawning after his nap on the cool concrete floor of the outdoor laundry.

Once a year our Great Aunt Marjorie would arrive by train at Spencer St station. We would pay at the machine for our platform tickets and wait expectantly as the train hissed its way into the station after its long journey from Brisbane.

Later in the *Holidays* book the children received letters from their aunt and uncle who were travelling to England to visit family. This was a familiar scenario for us in those days. Two sets of our aunts and uncles went on such voyages to England and Europe, and they also sent us long accounts of their adventures.

Every now and then relatives would leave for New Zealand on an ocean liner. We would arrive at bustling Station Pier, cross the gangplank to the ship and enter the wood-panelled passageways. I was delighted by the neat, cosy-looking cabins with their little round windows.

The moment of leave taking was poignant. There was one prolonged blast of the ship's horn, and passengers and those bidding them farewell threw coloured streamers for one last moment of contact. As the ship drew slowly out, the paper streamers stretched, snapped and fell into the water. The last links to Australia were severed. At this distance I can still feel the emotion of the moment.

For me any future holidays can scarcely match the magic of these memories. There was the anticipation and then the intense impact of each moment. There was the nostalgia for places not yet visited, and the strange familiarity of greeting unknown relatives from afar.

The *Holidays* reader finishes with the children anticipating their summer break. Farewell, children, as you travel hopefully into the future.

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Where have all our eateries gone?

Mike Daly

NOT long ago, we had a go-to shortlist of favourite restaurants we enjoyed visiting throughout Boroondara and Whitehorse. But recently, one by one, these favourite dining haunts have begun to put up 'closed' notices.

First to go was Jazz Ria, Balwyn's popular Malaysian eatery on Whitehorse Road. We had patronised this local gem for a couple of decades, including during COVID, when takeaway orders helped keep their business going.

Then one day, not long ago, a bleak notice appeared on the door of the now-deserted premises, announcing that, sadly, they had been forced to close permanently. I am sure there are a few alternatives around, and we are looking – but Jazz Ria was our culinary comfort station, and we miss their flavourful nasi lemak and laksa noodle soups.

Next, it was the turn of Bistro Chez Nous, that Francophile oasis in the heart of Surrey Hills, right next to the old Union Road rail crossing. We had dined and lunched there happily over the decades, including during their popular Bastille Day celebrations. The bistro had survived a change of ownership as well as the long, drawn-out crossing removal and Union Station project, involving the amalgamation of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert stations.

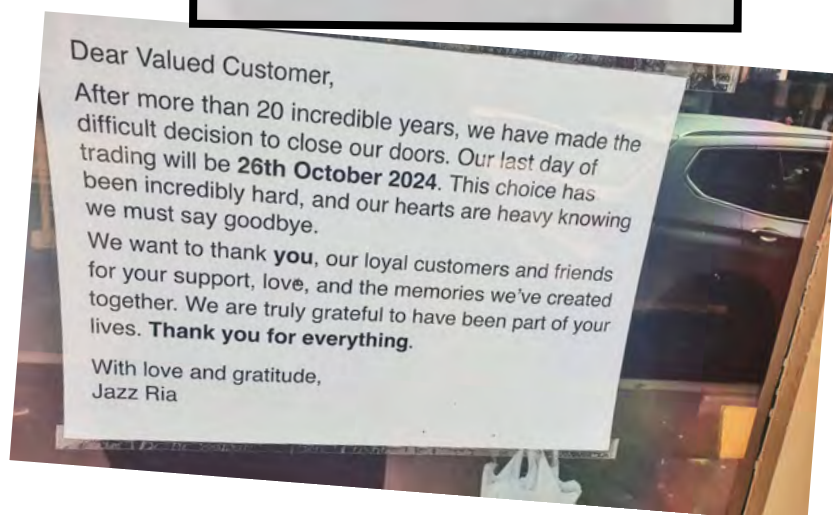
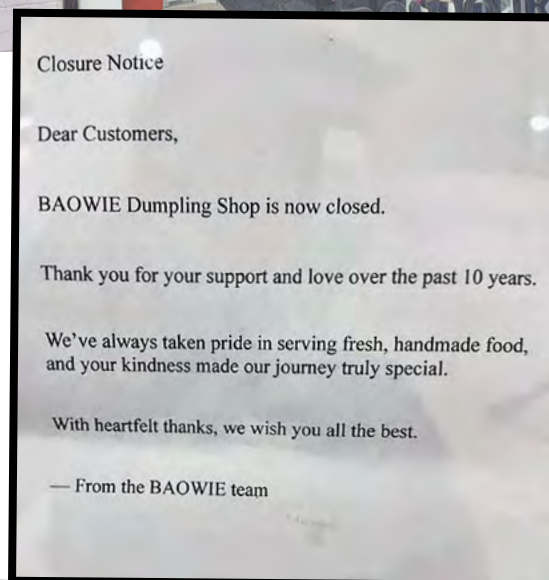
But no, the notice on the front door was emphatic: 'business closed permanently'.

Finally, it was the turn of Baowie, in Forest Hill Chase, to put up a 'closed' notice. This Taiwanese eatery specialised in juicy dumplings and (our favourite) spicy Singapore noodles.

You could watch them making the dumplings front-of-house, while you waited to be seated or for takeaway orders. We know the 'Chase' has been undergoing renovations for a while, but a little bird told us rising rents had made life difficult for some tenants.

Whatever the reasons for all these closures, we are now in desperate search of good French, Malaysian and Taiwanese/Chinese alternatives within easy reach and not requiring a tiresome, costly trip to the CBD.

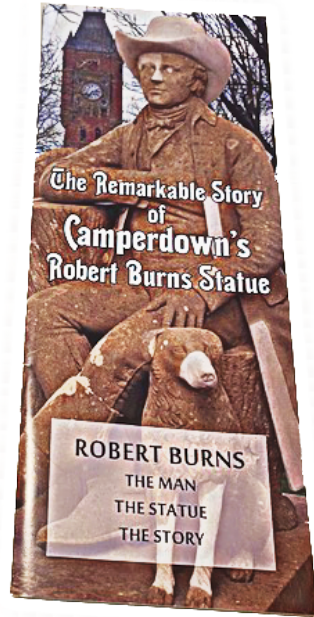
Any suggestions?



Camperdown:

Robert Burns' Statue and the Celtic Festival

Corinne Fenton



ON the last weekend in June, we travelled to the Western District country town of Camperdown. My husband is a member of the Melbourne Male Welsh Choir who were taking part in the annual Robert Burns Celtic Festival.

I took with me a little tartan book of the poetry and songs of Robert Burns which I'd bought in Pitlochry in Scotland when I was living there way back in 1974.

On arriving in Camperdown, the town was alive with performers of dance, poetry and music – choirs, Scottish bands, Celtic dance groups and an outdoor market on the green in the middle of town.

In the foyer of the Corangamite Shire Civic Centre, I came upon the statue of Robert Burns and the statue's story. For 125 years, this statue of Robert Burns and his faithful dog Luath sat on a plinth in the Camperdown Botanic Gardens looking over the hills and plains.

In 2009 vandals attacked the precious statue which was immediately moved to a safe position in town. I quote below, in part, from a brochure entitled The Remarkable Story of Camperdown's Robert Burns Statue, used with kind permission from [Camperdown & District Historical Society](#).

'In the ensuing months, Corangamite Shire Council worked closely with the National Trust of Australia to determine how best to restore the statue, and to raise the necessary funds. In the meantime, publicity about the significance of the statue and its plight attracted national and international attention. It was suggested by one commentator, that the statue should be returned to Scotland. This idea was swiftly rejected by the Council.

After extensive research, stone that closely matched the original was sourced from the Drumhead Quarry nearby Denny, Scotland. The owners of the Drumhead Quarry were so enthusiastic about the restoration that they generously donated the stone. The large block stone arrived on the docks at Port Melbourne with a tartan ribbon tied around it in honour of its intended use.

Local businessman, Trevor Lee, made space available at his Manifold Street premises for restoration work on the statue. Through the shop front window, passers-by were able to watch the work slowly progress. Sculptor, Smiley Williams, and skilled stonemasons from Cathedral Stone in Melbourne, worked throughout 2011 to meticulously restore the statue to its original appearance.

Local residents and Burns lovers the world over, urged Corangamite Shire Council to display the statue at a safe, indoor location. On the 27th January 2012, the restored statue of Robert Burns was unveiled at its new home in the foyer of the Corangamite Shire Civic Centre, Camperdown, by the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Ted Baillieu MP.

The ceremony was attended by Burns admirers from all over Australia as well as from overseas.'

This statue is believed to be the oldest surviving statue of Burns in the world. In 2012, possibly because of the global attention restoration of the statue had received, the Robert Burns Celtic Festival was born.

To find out more about the recent festival in 2025, [go here](#). And, if you are looking for a wonderful weekend of music, dance and history, next year the festival will be held on September 4 and 5, 2026.



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Faith and Mathematics

a reflection

Reverend Jim Pilmer PSM OAM OStJ

YOU may empathise with me if I say that there was a stage at school where I couldn't see the point of learning mathematics. To be honest I still don't know why I did logarithms or vectors all those years ago and my use of algebra has really dropped off of late.

I am prepared to acknowledge that mathematical skills must be relevant to a range of situations and occupations; if not for me as a lost cause at least for those with their careers before them in a constantly evolving world.

Of course, it's not until you need to apply knowledge and theory to a given practical situation that the penny drops. Not all of us will become naval architects or forensic accountants but there are some important principles to be absorbed, even if the fine detail fades. In many areas of work and endeavour we need to measure, estimate, calculate and account for a range of things.

Actually, putting the word Applied in front of most dry subjects can bring them to life. Applied mathematics is just one. Applied faith might be another.

That's the sort of faith you need when a loved one dies, or you lose your job, or your teenager gets hooked on drugs. It's the kind of faith you need when you lose your home and possessions in a fire or are told you have a life-threatening illness. It's the faith you need when life serves up something that doesn't fit with your understanding of a god who is all-powerful, loving and protective.

Where do you go from there? More to the point, what kind of faith do you already possess in your inner tool kit to face life's challenges? Questioning faith, damaged faith or seeking faith is still faith.

Faith contains many ingredients; religious belief or belief in a grand scheme of things maybe, security based on a reassuring experience of the past perhaps, or an innate sense that daily life has purpose. In confronting times all these, and others, may be erased from the largely unquestioned daily framework in which we tend to function. That is a scary spot to be in. It's like floating in space without reference points.



Yet, when we wait and trust the silence, we are applying faith.

To state the obvious, meaning can be a casualty of traumatic life experiences, and if life is bereft of meaning it is bereft of faith almost by inference. But struggling to find a meaning for the tragic or demoralising in life is not necessarily a stepping-stone to renewal of faith. Rather the step into the possibly unfamiliar world of guided reflection, meditation or prayer can bring strength and peace, but it doesn't have to be that formal. Nor will it be a quick fix or a spiritual sedative.

Most of us contain the capacity to think deep and profound thoughts; we just don't acknowledge or own their importance. Go with your inner hunches. Value your journey, all of it. Nurture hope.

Applying faith is sometimes to put reason on hold for a time and to step forward into the 'unreasonable'. In that place we may find that our trauma was not emotional so much as spiritual and that our inner resources were more applicable than we had thought, however fragile.

Applied faith in dark times is not necessarily to see light but to believe that there is a light to be seen.

Jim Pilmer PSM OAM OStJ is an Anglican priest and was senior chaplain to Victoria Police for 13 years. In 'retirement' he remains a voluntary chaplain to the Boroondara Police Service Area (PSA) and is honorary State Chaplain to St John Ambulance (Vic).

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There's Nothing like...

Owen Clark

There's nothing like a sky that's blue
With cumulus clouds, just a few.
The sun, warm, bright, and shining through.
With gold, white, blue. A stunning view!

There's nothing like a tree that's old,
Standing, gnarled, majestic, bold.
A painting, a picture, strong, high.
A treat for the observer's eye.

There's nothing like clean, pure, cold air,
When lungs are gasping in despair.
Air, golden liquid, and pure joy
In every breath, air's to enjoy.

There's nothing like good, sound, deep sleep
In peaceful darkness, not a peep.
Then joy and light to open eyes
In tomorrow, a nice surprise.

There's nothing like life's treasure found,
To grasp a wisdom that's profound.
A goal that has just been achieved,
A burden that has been relieved.

There's nothing like the eyes that smile
A face that twinkles all the while.
Today life's good and all is bright,
A strong spirit reflects the light.

There's nothing like a soul at rest
With peace of mind and heart, the best.
The worry lines of time are there,
But life's been lived, and there's no fear.

Thank you, Owen for your superb poems, some of which we have published on [our website here](#). Owen also sent us A Letter to my body whereby he conducts a conversation with his body in recognition of their inevitable separation. The editor tried to shorten it for publication in our newspaper but concluded this destroyed its tone and liveliness. So, we have posted the piece on [our website here](#). We are sure you will agree it makes a great read.

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Reflection on the Sense of Touch

Jim Pilmer PSM OAM OStJ



TOUCH must rank amongst the most complicated and potentially misconstrued of human senses. On a daily basis the question of when to touch or whether to touch is usually answered for us by referring unwittingly to a built-in regulator. Counsellors find themselves working frequently with issues of non-sexual versus sexual touching. Each has a place in healthy human relationships but both have the potential to create misunderstanding or offence.

Touch is reciprocal. I once read a quote that said: As one touches, one is touched. (That still applies to those who wear protective gloves in their various roles; albeit with some reduction in sensitivity).

In the world of religion, the link between the tactile and the spiritual is a multi-faith phenomenon. Over the centuries so-called 'people of faith' worldwide have relied on touch as a means of conveying blessings, healing and forgiveness. In the Christian Church physical touching is widely associated with sacramental acts; an outward and visible sign of something which is inward and spiritual. The laying on of hands, for example, may signify the giving of the Holy Spirit for a specific role, as in the rite of Ordination.

In formal religious rites consent is expressed or implied, but in pastoral (or medical) situations the consent of the recipient is frequently not possible; as when a person is very ill or close to death for example.

Touch-based symbolism is to be found also in civil ceremonies, such as joining hands at the time of making wedding vows. In daily life shaking hands has carried the connotation of a sacred bond for centuries.

In many ways touch is a metaphor for what we wish to happen. For example, placing an arm around a grief-stricken person may well prove comforting but it is also a sign of what we want for them.

Not all touching involves the hands of course. St Paul exhorted Christians to 'greet each other with a holy kiss'. Until COVID-19 struck, this was still expressed as a kiss in many churches throughout the world.

But in other churches 'the kiss' changed long ago to become a more formal act; a handshake or acknowledgement of each other known as The Peace.

Modifying our physical expressions of love, joy, grief and trust during COVID has quite clearly changed our views as regards physical contact; regardless of our beliefs or background. It has certainly involved people of faith in conscious modifications to age-old practices, whether during formal rites or in more casual settings.

Recently an overseas friend ended an email to me by saying 'Let's not lose touch.' I know what he meant but there's a profound ambiguity there. There is more in a loving touch than words can express and that gift needs to be nurtured at all costs.

In Michelangelo's fresco painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel the book of Genesis' narrative of the giving of life to Adam is depicted by the hand of God as he reaches out towards Adam's fingertips; the spirituality of touch captured in one powerful image.

Jim Pilmer is an Anglican priest.



The English Calendar Riots of 1752

CLAIMS of civil unrest and rioters demanding "Give us our Eleven days" may have arisen through a misinterpretation of a contemporary painting by William Hogarth. His 1755 painting entitled: "An Election Entertainment" (see below) refers to the elections of 1754 and depicts a tavern dinner organised by Whig candidates. A stolen Tory campaign banner with the slogan, "Give us our Eleven Days" can be seen lower right (on the black banner on the floor under the seated gentleman's foot).

The changing of the calendar was indeed one of the issues debated in the election campaign of 1754 between the Whigs and the Tories.

It is also true that when the British government decided to alter the calendar and skip these 11 days, many people mistakenly believed that their lives would be shortened by 11 days. People were also unhappy and suspicious at the moving of saints' days and holy days, and objected to the imposition of what they saw as a 'popish' calendar.

However, most historians now believe that these protests never happened. You could say that the calendar rioters were the late Georgian equivalent of an urban myth.

Ben Johnson

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The Building Supervisor

Annie Wysham

I'm off to buy a hard hat

And some steel-capped tradies' boots,
Fluorescent coat and overalls,
Protective clothing that will suit.
I'll also get a reflector vest
And other safety gear,
Goggles with a faceguard,
I'll want earplugs too I fear!
I'll need a nice tall ladder
With a platform for the view
As one neighbour is rebuilding
And the other will renew.
One home is being bowled over,
The other's going up,
With me smack in the middle -
Or am I in a rut?
I'll apply to get my Union card
And join the CFMEU,
Learn how to go on strike,
So I'll need to pay my dues.
Might trade in my grey Golf
And get myself a Ute,
A 4-wheel drive, with alloy wheels,
A black, dual-cab, big brute!
Safety signs and stickers
Are on my shopping list,
'Safety first's' my motto
And nothing must be missed.
A building supervisor's role
Is right up my busy street,
As I watch two houses come to life
In full view...from my window seat!



'The Building Supervisor' is a poem I wrote when the lovely old Edwardian house on the south side of my place was being demolished and the block denuded of a well-established garden. Ultra-modern townhouses were then built on the site with pocket-handkerchief gardens. On my North-West corner a single unit had an upstairs edition added over a six-month period and the garden re-landscaped.

There were tradesmen to the left and to the right and also up my driveway, which they used to gain access to the townhouse! I was stuck in the middle and felt under siege. Hence, I needed to lighten the load with some humour and a little poetic license, so penned 'The Building Supervisor'.

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Ready. Set. Dance Scottish!



**Come to St Mark's Anglican Church Hall
and Try for free!!!**

7th August 2025 7.30pm

**Learn about the social dancing of Scotland and then join us
for the beginner's course the following week.**

- Fun & welcoming.
- Make new friends.
- No special gear required -
(We don't dance with swords! You don't need a kilt,
Scottish accent or a partner.)
- No previous experience necessary.

Beginners' Course

Join us for the beginner's course to be introduced to
jigs and reels. Learn some lively beginner friendly
dances.

Starts 14th August, 2025

4 week course for \$25.00

Thursdays 7.30 – 9.00pm

St Mark's Anglican Church Hall
303 Canterbury Road, Forest Hill

Mitcham Scottish Society

Dianne 0407882866
Christine 0414386389



**Go on, give Scottish
country dancing a go!**

Sunday 17 August 2025 at 2pm

Street Wise: Box Hill Historical Society's latest publication

Bert Lewis Room, Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill

Want to know more about the origin and meaning of the street names in Box Hill? Then come along to the launch of our new publication, Street wise: the origins of street names in the former City of Box Hill, by Gary Presland and Helen D. Harris OAM.

Street Wise covers the origin of Box Hill's street names. It is the result of detailed research, tracing back street names to when they were first used, then seeking out the circumstances in which they appear, and the reason for the choice of particular names.

Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison AO will launch this latest volume from the Box Hill Historical Society, at the Society's AGM on Sunday, 17 August 2025. The meeting will begin at 2.00 p.m.

Numbers are limited, so please RSVP by 10 August: Telephone: 048 0651 323; Email: boxhillhistory@gmail.com
To order a copy of the book, [click here for an order form](#).

Wednesday, August 20, 2025 from 7:30pm to 9pm

Lighter Footprints: Home Batteries: What you need to know

Balwyn Park Centre, 206A Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn

Are you interested in the home battery subsidy but don't know where to start? The Albanese government has announced the Cheaper Home Batteries Program, started on 1 July, reducing the cost of a typical installed battery by 30%. This may be just the incentive many of us need to take the plunge - to add a battery to your solar, or install both. Learn more about questions to ask, system size and type of tariff to maximise returns. [RSVP here](#).

HOME BATTERIES ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Trent Jones - MD, All Electric Homes

Russell Williams - IT expert, Electrify Boroondara

- Factors in battery choice
- Price range, potential savings
- Questions to ask your supplier

Wed, August 20
7.30 - 9.00pm

Balwyn Park Centre,
206A Whitehorse Rd,
Balwyn



Sunday, August 31, 2025 from 3pm to 5pm

Lighter Footprints: Film Afternoon

Phyllis Hore Room, Kew Library, cnr Cotham Rd and Civic Drive, Kew

Cost: Suggested donation of \$10 (\$5 for students)

Join us for an afternoon of fun and film! We are screening a double feature with the short films *Coral's Last Stand* and *Turning the Ship*. These two films showcase the beauty of Australia's natural wonders, and the grassroots fight to protect them from the impact of climate change. Together, they are a visually stunning and inspiring show.

A full afternoon tea will be provided, with tea, coffee and snacks; craft materials will also be on hand for anyone inspired to create placards we can use to call for climate action. [RSVP here](#).

CLIMATE FILM SCREENING

Sunday, August 31
3.00 - 5.00pm

Join Lighter Footprints
for a screening of two
films about the climate
crisis and how
to take action!

Kew Library
Cnr Cotham Rd &
Civic Drive, Kew
Afternoon tea provided



Sunday 14 September 2025 from 11am to 4pm

Schwerkolt Heritage Family Day

Schwerkolt Cottage and Museum Complex, 2-10 Deep Creek Road, Mitcham

Whitehorse Historical Society's annual Heritage Family Day is the first in this year's Whitehorse Heritage Week Program that runs from Sunday 14 September to Sunday 21 September.

This free event is a day for the whole family. Pack a rug, bring a picnic, and settle in to enjoy the many attractions. These include demonstrations of 'lost trades' like wood turning, and traditional crafts of spinning, weaving, tatting, lacemaking and basket making. Our blacksmith, Gunther, will be firing up the original forge to demonstrate his skills and the Hand Tools Preservation Society of Australia will be attending for the first time.

Old fashioned children's games and picnic races will be held in the Schwerkolt Cottage garden, and the Whitehorse Square Dancing Club will be providing demonstrations during the day with the opportunity for visitors to join in. You can try your hand at Chinese Brush Painting and bobbin lace making in the Visitor Centre.

Brumbies Bush Band will get your feet tapping and there will be the opportunity for all ages to get up and dance. Animals on the Move will again be giving children the opportunity to 'get up close' to farm animals.

Yes, there is food, and EFTPOS is available. Take a break from the activities to enjoy a delicious Devonshire tea provided by the Whitehorse Historical Society served from the Local History Room or enjoy a sausage from the Rotary and Lions Club Sausage Sizzle. Delicious coffee will be provided by Vivere Coffee and yummy home-made goodies will be available at the Society's cake stall where everything is homemade and extremely reasonably priced.

The Museum will be featuring an exhibition by Thomas Cook Boot and Clothing Company who celebrated their centenary in 2024. They will be presenting displays from their archives highlighting their craftsmanship together with props and items from the film *The Man from Snowy River II*.

Do come long and enjoy a special day out for all the family.

Contact the 2025 Heritage Family Day Convenor by email at whitehorsehistory@hotmail.com or [go to their website here](#).



SPORT FOR CHANGE

CLIMATE AND THE FUTURE OF SPORT

- **Nicola Barr, FrontRunners**
St Kilda FC, Board: Footy for Climate
Board: NSW Nat'l Parks & Wildlife Trust
- **Lizzie Hedding**
Champion long jumper
Co-founder Project Planet

Learn more from our expert panel

Wed, Sept 17 7.30pm - 9.00pm
Balwyn Park Centre, 206A Whitehorse Rd, Balwyn

Wednesday, September 17, 2025 from 7:30pm to 9pm

Lighter Footprints: Sport for Change

Balwyn Park Centre, 206A Whitehorse Road, Balwyn

Cost: Free

Australia is a sporting nation. We watch sport, we play sport, we love sport. From the Boxing Day Test to footy finals fever, from early mornings paddling out at breaks around the country to park runs in hundreds of cities and towns. But climate change is threatening the sports we love.

Our cherished sporting life vs global warming - how do we play on? [RSVP here](#).



Sunday 12 October, 10am-4pm

Electrify Boroondara Expo 2025 – Electrify Your Life

Hawthorn Arts Centre

Free Entry

Curious about going all-electric? Come along to this vibrant community event packed with:

- 50+ exhibitors
- Expert advice & hands-on demos
- Info on solar, batteries, heat pumps, EVs & more
- Induction cooking demos
- Kids' activities, food, and fun.

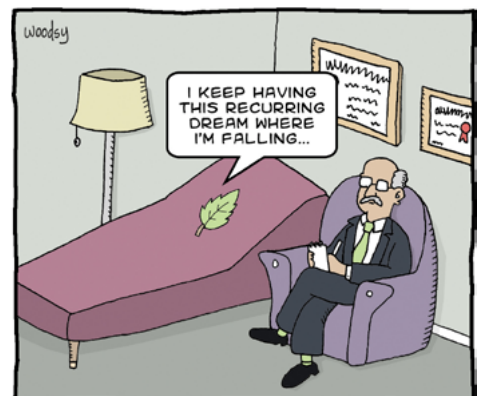
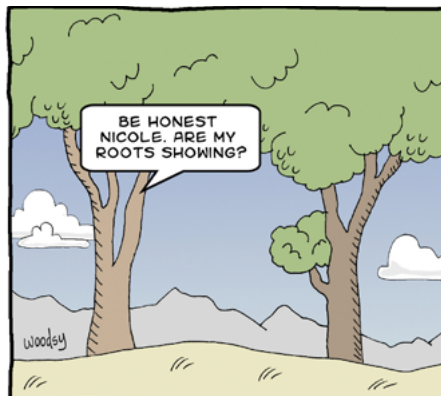
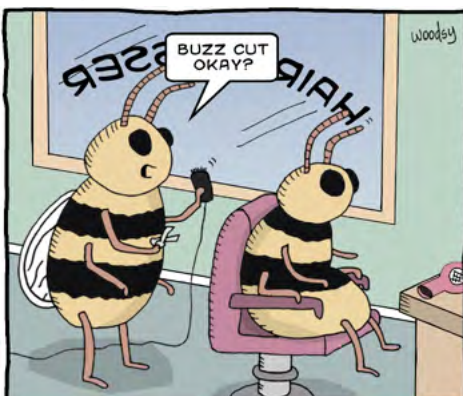
Whether you want to slash bills, stay comfy, or cut emissions – there's something for everyone. [Register now here](#).

Want help with your home energy use? Get free, tailored guidance from our [Home Energy Guides](#). Represent a school or community group? Book a Bupa Healthy Electric Homes presentation to hear from locals who've made the switch.

Email: info@electrifyboroondara.org [Stay in touch & explore more here](#).

woodsy

insert brain here



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The next edition

We hope that we will be able to produce an edition of *Eastsider News* in October 2025. The deadline for contributions will be 20 September, 2025.

But don't wait till then. We love hearing from you at all times and we will continue post your articles, newsworthy material, stories and other content on our website. Whenever you are inspired, please send us your contributions, written and visual to eastsidernews1@gmail.com

We encourage you to send us photographs and images that relate to your contribution. Send them as a separate jpg/jpeg file and to get adequate resolution, please try to make them at least 250dpi and preferably larger at 300dpi or more.

Your opportunity to get published

We encourage our readers to also become writers for Eastsider News. Guidelines are available on our website at <https://www.eastsidernews.org.au/guidelines/> When writing your article, please consider our editorial values at www.eastsidernews.org.au/editorial-values/

If you have any queries, email us at eastsidernews1@gmail.com

If you value Eastsider News, please consider volunteering with us

The Eastsider News team is facing the distinct possibility that this is the last edition of our beloved newspaper unless we can attract more members to our team. We desperately need your help and hope you will put up your hand to become involved in the production of *Eastsider News*.

We need volunteers to contribute in many ways. This includes administrative tasks such content receipt and management; editorial duties; advertising manager, website management and maintenance; local news reporting; and people with new ideas on and experience in digital publishing.

We are sad that we have reached this stage. Please respond to our plea for help. All positions are voluntary and unpaid. Get in touch so we can chat about making best use of your skills and time at eastsidernews1@gmail.com

Guidelines for writing articles

Guidelines for writing for Eastsider News are on our website at www.eastsidernews.org.au/ All contributions should be emailed to eastsidernews1@gmail.com We will always acknowledge receipt.

In summary, we prefer articles of no more than 600 words or 250 words for letters to the editor. Submit your article as a word document and images as a jpg. Editors will usually accept material as written, but may make changes to improve clarity, readability, or focus. Please be respectful, non-defamatory and factual in your writing and choice of topic. As a community newspaper, we seek material of local interest or with a broader context if relevant.

Disclaimers

Eastsider News is a means by which people in Whitehorse, Boroondara and adjacent areas including Manningham and Monash can share information, opinions and experiences. A spread of interests and views that reflects the diversity of people in the area is encouraged, but views expressed in Eastsider News by individual writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors, Independent Community News Group Incorporated, or any other organisation.

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Quizling Answers

1. Fuzz (or ZZUF) is the most common tail-ender
2. UK-'raine'

Contact Eastsider News

Eastsider News is the business name for Independent Community News Group Incorporated. The primary contact point for ICNG and Eastsider News is eastsidernews1@gmail.com or PO Box 392, Mont Albert Vic 3127.