EastsiderNews
Edition Number 41
FREE
News, views and items of interest for residents of Melbourne's east
December 2026

PEACEBUILDING IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Sarah Nelson

YOUNG people across Australia shared their solutions on making school and community more peaceful in the 2026 Peacebuilding National Youth Design Challenge presented by Young Change Agents supported by Rotary Club of Balwyn.

The Peacebuilding National Youth Design Challenge is a free online design thinking challenge for young people across Australia. It asks participants to identify barriers to peace in their school, community or digital spaces and then to design a solution. "These young design thinkers have shown that peace starts with the everyday: how we treat each other at school, online and in our communities. Their ideas are practical, thoughtful and we are so glad to create this opportunity to showcase youth voices for peace," said Young Change Agents CEO Sarah Nelson.

The challenge responds to real issues in young people's lives: One in three students experiences bullying during their school years (eSafety Commission, 2023), and almost half of young Australians report seeing someone treated unfairly because of their background (Scanlon Foundation, 2023).

"Peacebuilding and conflict prevention is one of Rotary's core causes, and this challenge shows young people are ready to lead it. We've watched students identify real barriers to peace in their schools, communities and online spaces, then design practical ways to break them down. The story here is the young people. The Rotary Club of Balwyn is proud to have backed them, and we're delighted that Rotary clubs around Australia connected with local schools to bring the challenge to more students," said Peter Frueh, Past District Governor, Balwyn Rotary.

Young people could enter the challenge alone, with friends, in teams or with siblings, and educators and parents could enter on their behalf. Entrants chose one of five themes: Bridging Cultural Divides, Emotional Resilience & Conflict Skills, Peace Through Art & Storytelling, Promoting Reconciliation or Digital Peacebuilding. Submissions were open from March to November 2026. This year's judges were:

- Dr Tania Miletic, Co-Director, Initiative for Peacebuilding, University of Melbourne
- Satara Uthayakumaran, ABC Youth Advisory Council member and Australia's 2025 Youth Representative to the UN

All finalists receive a Peacebuilding Design Challenge Finalist certificate and feedback from the judges. Winners receive a Young Change Agents prize pack and virtual mentoring sessions.

The 2026 Peacebuilding Youth Design Challenge winners were:

Senior Category (14–21)

The Community Mural, Sheldon College, Redland City: A collaborative mural in the Redlands where young people contributed drawings, words and messages on peace, diversity and belonging; a companion website lets people submit ideas remotely so non-artists and distant participants can take part.

ShareSafe, Sheldon College, Redland City: A youth-led "pause button for the internet": an AI post-checker (text or screenshot), a 15-second risk quiz, and a digital safety toolkit linking to eSafety/Kids Helpline. No logins, nothing saved – to avoid the "snitch" fear.

Junior Category (10–13)

My Voice, Perth College, Perth: A website posting weekly animated videos (drawn from real, anonymised experiences) that teach young people to speak up, with anonymous comments and downloadable QR-code posters for schools.

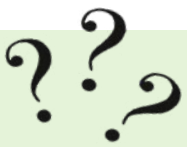
Peace Connect: A Student-led Inter-school Peace Conference, Scotch College, Torrens Park, Adelaide: connecting schools with Peace Poles through creative activities: Connect, Listen, Create, Reflect, Act.

CONTENTS *(Click on article to navigate to it)*

Peacebuilding in schools and communities 1
Quizling Questions 2
News and Topical issues 3
New mayor for Boroondara 3
New mayor for Whitehorse 4
Development Facilitation Program 4
Twelve Young Achievers 5
Local Government 7
St James Park to gain funding 7
Future growth 9
Local stories 10
Whitehorse Art Show turns 60 10
Meet Claude Ciccone 11
Dr Bruce Wong and 'One More Day' 12
Growing up in Surrey Hills 13
Environment, climate and sustainability 14
Avenue Road Reserve 14
Scott Reef 15
Gift of a Lifetime to Maranoa 16
The Urban Guerillas in Nunawading 17
Pastimes, activities, interest groups 18
Bringing cheer to the festive season 18
Lift the Lid 19
Woodsy 19
Finding the right colours 20
Check out The Field Naturalists 21
Local organisations 22
Ashburton Support comes of age 22
Music and recovery 23
Alcove: Looking forward to 25 years 24
Pets 25
Ask a vet with Dr Suze 25
Creative writing, poetry 26
The Boomerang Always Returns 26
The Christmas Elephant 27
Events 28
Community Notices 29



Quizling Questions



Answers on page 35

1. Who are the only two US presidents whose surnames can be spelt exclusively using the letters that end the surnames of any other US president?
2. While Johnny Depp never appeared in HAIR, he did bob up in a 1993 movie whose title spells HAIR with the second letter of each word. No tangling needed, can you comb his backlist to find the film?

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



New mayor for Boroondara

Priya Mohandoss

ON Monday 16 November, Cr Victor Franco, Gardiner Ward, was appointed as the new mayor for Boroondara for the 2026-7 Council year.

Previously, he has occupied several roles within the Council. These have been Deputy Mayor, Chair of the Urban Planning and Development Delegated Committee and Chair of the Greenways Advisory Committee.

In terms of serving the community, he carries a plethora of experience in the public and not for profit sectors ranging from across Australia to his current post as mayor. He also holds an MBA (Executive) from the Australian Graduate School of Management and is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

After being elected, Cr Franco expressed his thanks to past mayor Cr Wes Gault for the amount of time and commitment he had delivered to Boroondara.

Moreover, Cr Franco said, "I'm honoured to serve as mayor and I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to efficiently deliver the high-quality services our communities expect. We are also continuing to invest in our community through an exciting $101 million capital works program. At the same time, we are responsibly managing Council's finances with no new borrowings forecast while paying down existing debt.

"As a Councillor group we are also committed to protecting Boroondara's unique heritage, biodiversity and liveability. Growth is inevitable, but we will be pushing for that growth to be delivered in a way that respects community views and doesn't see overdevelopment in quiet residential streets."

Another project that enthuses him is the endorsement of the Greenways Plan that will have the capacity to spread and join a number of shared trails and corridors needed for the continuation of biodiversity within Boroondara.

"I am proud to see this vision come to life with the strong support of my fellow councillors and the broader community."

In addition, councillors elected Cr Michael Nolan the role of Deputy Mayor.

Cr Nolan said, "I'm looking forward to working alongside Mayor Franco and my fellow councillors to ensure Boroondara remains the best place in Melbourne to live, work, and play,"

Furthermore, two new committee chairs were selected for 2025-26:

- Cr Mal Osborne-Smith - Urban Planning Delegated Committee
- Cr Michael Nolan - Services Delegated Committee

"As Boroondara continues to grow we are focused on ensuring new and existing residents have the amenities and services that make Boroondara the best place in Melbourne to call home," said Cr Franco

Return to Contents

New mayor for Whitehorse

Sal Dugan

COUNCIL was pleased to announce the election of Cr Blair Barker as Mayor and Cr Hayley Weller as Deputy Mayor for 2026/27. Both were elected by their fellow Councillors at the Council Meeting for the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor held on Monday 16 November. At the previous week's mayoral election meeting, Council failed to come to a decision, given each of the two elections held for the position of Mayor ended in a tie. It was no doubt a relief to all that the third and final vote was carried quickly with a decisive majority.

Cr Barker, representing Elgar Ward, was first elected to Council in 2017 and has made Whitehorse his home for more than quarter of a century.In his acceptance speech following his election, he said:

"This honour is not just a reflection of me, it is an endorsement of the many people across our community who have helped shape who I am and how I serve.



"After 26 years living in Whitehorse and nearly a decade as a Councillor, I remain committed to staying connected to our community and listening to the people we serve. Everything we do should be focused on improving the lives of people across our city, from the moment they wake up in the morning to the end of their day".

Cr Weller, representing Lake Ward, is focused on delivering meaningful outcomes for residents and ensuring Council continues to plan for Whitehorse's future. She said "Our residents expect us to deliver results, and we have a responsibility to turn plans into action. The decisions we make today will shape Whitehorse for decades to come, which is why it is so important to listen carefully, think strategically and act in the best interests of our community."

As Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Cr Barker and Cr Weller are committed to working collaboratively with residents, community groups, businesses and stakeholders to continue building a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive city.

Development Facilitation Program

Yvonne Bower

THE state government's Development Facilitation Program (DFP) fast tracks a wide range of development proposals, bypassing local councils and removing residents' rights of appeal to VCAT.

One trade-off is that a development must contribute to social and affordable housing in the form of 10% of the dwellings, although this can be waived by paying a special government levy.

An application via the DFP has been recently approved for the former St Joseph's Home for Boys in Kent Road, Surrey Hills. See our submission at https://www.shmapa.org.au/team-3

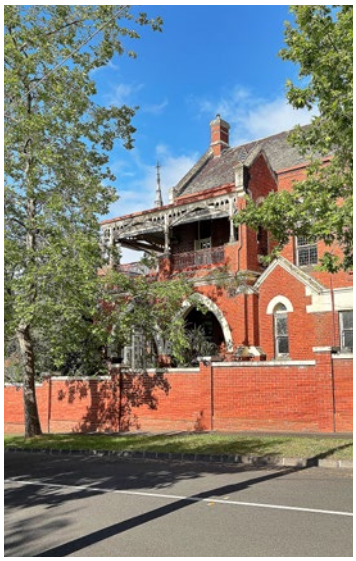
Boroondara Council has raised serious concerns about the DFP and is proposing the Municipal Association of Victoria, the peak body for Victoria's local councils, advocate to the Victorian government to seek an immediate pause and review of the program.

Whitehorse Council, at its meeting on 14 September also raised serious concerns with the program.

Our Association acknowledges the need to boost housing supply.

However, we share Boroondara and Whitehorse Council's concerns with the DFP, that sees significant departures from building height controls, reduced public consultation and loss of appeal rights and provides minimal council input into key planning decisions.

Yvonne Bower is Secretary: Surrey Hills and Mont Albert Progress Association



Return to Contents



(Photo: Glenys Grant)

Twelve Young Achievers

Glenys Grant

ABOVE and BELOW: Youth Achievement Awardees, 2026



(Photo: Peter Koens)

Return to Contents

THIS year Rotary celebrated their 48th Rotary Youth Achievement Awards. The total number of awardees is fast approaching 500.

This unique initiative was established nearly 50 years ago by the Rotary Club of Forest Hill.The Rotary Club of Nunawading acquired program in 2024 and this year again presented this special recognition award to 12 year six students for their achievements.

The purpose of this award – affectionately referred to as the 'Unsung Hero Award' – is to recognise a youngster who may not ordinarily be acknowledged for their contributions to their peers and the school community but has been a great contributor and has presented as a role model to other students.

Twelve local primary schools chose to participate this year.

Each school selected the most appropriate candidate for the award and penned 150-word citations explaining why the child was chosen. The citation was read out when the child received the award.

Selection criteria is as follows:

That he/she:

- is a wonderful role model who upholds the school's values
- can be called upon to help the school or colleagues at any time

Continued on page 6

Ross-Hunt
real estate

Experienced Company Share & Stratum Management

With over 53 years of experience, Ross-Hunt Real Estate delivers proactive management, clear communication and financial oversight for developments across Victoria.

Protect your investment.
Speak to our team today on (03) 9830 4044.



Sales | Rentals | Owners Corporation | A family owned Australian business | Est. 1973

99 - 105 Union Rd, Surrey Hills | 9830 4044 | rosshunt.com.au

Twelve Young Achievers

Continued from page 5

- has achieved success through application and determination throughout the year
- has made a worthwhile contribution to the school community and or the environment
- may not have received many academic or sporting awards but has excelled in other ways,
- and is an 'unsung hero' who strives hard to succeed and to help others.

The 150-word citations received were inspiring and moving to read. They included:

All teachers agree that:

' . . .' is the unsung hero who supports all, constantly taking care of their fellow students no matter what the age, who always reports accurately and is so easily missed as they are such a humble, respectful and quiet achiever . . . '.

'. . .'s care, effort, patience and quiet generosity enhance our school community and make them so deserving of the recognition that this award brings . . . '

'. . .' has faced many challenges over the years, some out of their control, yet continues to be a determined and diligent worker who has gone from strength to strength . . . '.

The prizes this year consisted of a framed Certificate, a laminated printout of the citation provided by their school, a $50.00 gift voucher from Rotary Nunawading and an exciting 'goodie bag' from Bendigo Bank Blackburn South. The prizes also included photos sent later to families and a memento book of the occasion.

To accommodate the numbers of families, Rotarians and young 'unsung heroes' this year held two presentation dinners, both in the Atrium Function room, Blackburn Hotel.Six awards were presented in October and six in November.



Rotary dignitaries presenting a young achiever with his award and prizes.

The following were the wonderful young achievers for this year:

Blackburn Lake Primary School Awardee – **Oliver**,
Burwood Heights PS Awardee – **Lilly**,
Livingstone PS Awardee – **Cohen**,
Mt Pleasant Road PS Awardee – **Mia**,
Nunawading Christian College Awardee – **Gurnaaz**,
Orchard Grove PS Awardee – **Madison**,
Parkmore PS Awardee – **Ryan**,
Rangeview PS Awardee – **Santiago**,
Vermont PS Awardee – **Khloe**
Vermont Sth Special PS Awardee – **Sarah**,
Weeden Heights PS Awardee – **Gargi**,
Whitehorse PS Awardee – **Yvette**

Congratulations to all.

Return to Contents



St James Park to gain funding

Priya Mohandoss



AFTER the counting of votes drew to a close in Round 2 of the Pick My Park program, St James Park, Hawthorn was successful in obtaining $109,469 of Victorian Government funding, with the Boroondara Council to provide the remaining $89,848 that will go towards improvements to be made associated with the St James Park Master Plan.

Cr Wes Gault, Mayor of Boroondara said, "Residents can look forward to seeing a refreshed St James Park in the near future, supported through the Victorian Government's Pick My Park program."

The grant will be used to refurbish former seats and picnic table areas in the park, fit additional picnic table areas, construct new bicycle parking hoops and a drinking fountain as well as restore existing garden strips located within the grounds. These works are designed to be finished within the 2028/9 financial year.

Despite falling short of votes, the two other parks situated in Hawthorn that were also shortlisted will still undergo renovation, however their costs will be subsidised through Boroondara Council. As a result, H.A Smith Reserve will have an enhanced activity hub while Grace Park will receive improvements to its park furniture.

It is important for Boroondara parks to perform modifications to ensure these open spaces are kept in good order to provide a setting for those who wish to relax, have a picnic or enjoy other sorts of physical activity.

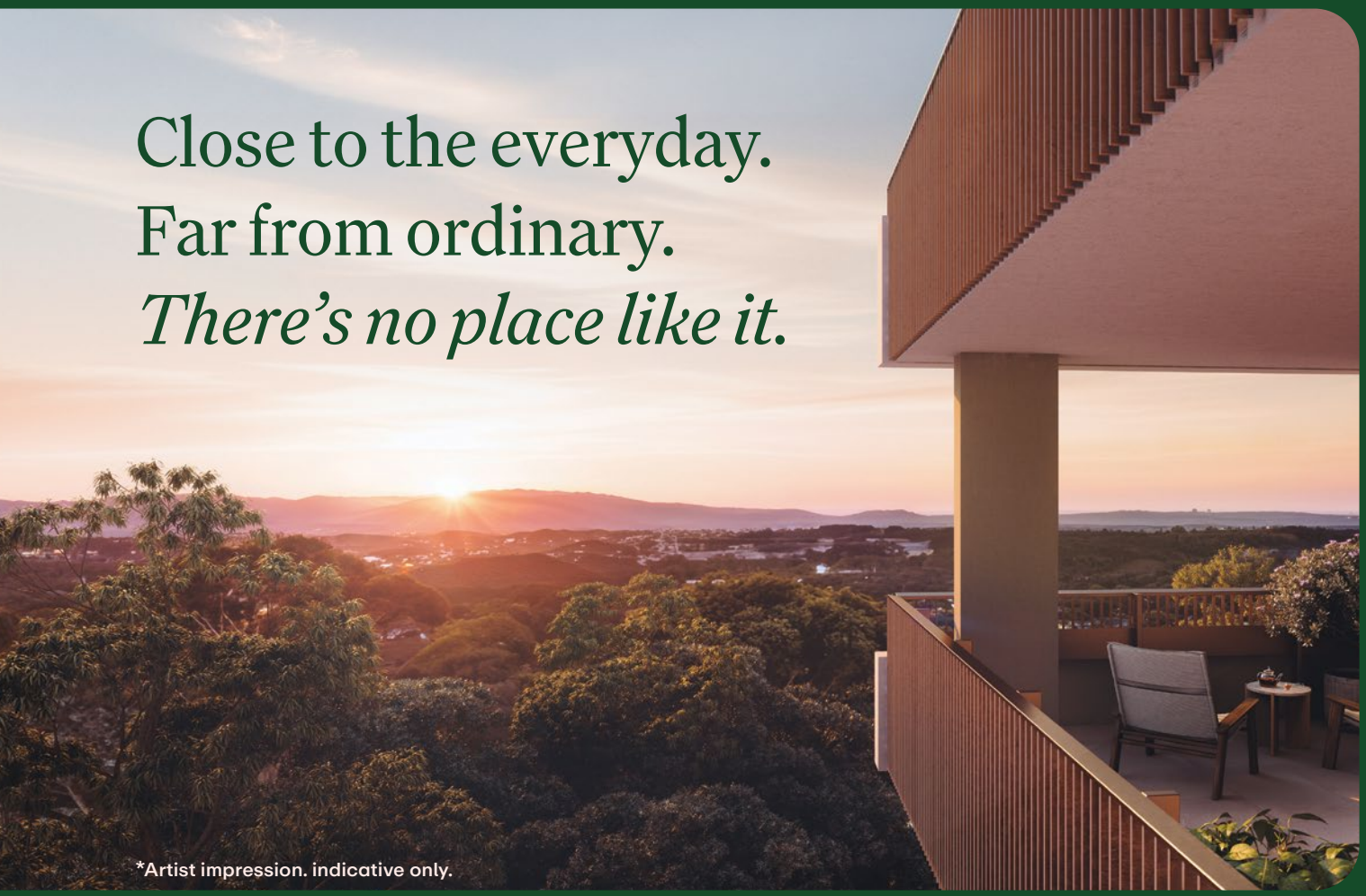
On the whole, the Pick My Park Program has successfully enabled 51 park projects to take shape. In metropolitan Melbourne, 48 of these are to be allocated a portion of the more than $9.3 million while the three park projects in regional areas have already secured their funding.

Cr Gault said, "Thank you to everyone who voted. Thanks to your support the State Government is helping fund a wide range of improvements to ensure St James Park remains a much-loved part of the Hawthorn community."

For more details on the St James Park Master Plan, please refer to https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/your-council/projects-and-major-works/parks-sportsgrounds-and-open-space-improvements/st-james-park-master-plan

Return to Contents

VerSo Place



At VerSo Place, daily life feels beautifully resolved. Shops, transport and all the essentials are close at hand, while tree-lined surrounds, considered design and a strong sense of calm create your own urban sanctuary.

It's where heritage, nature and contemporary living come together with rare ease.

Be among the first to discover VerSo Place and its thoughtfully designed 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments.

Retire with confidence.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST
500 Burwood Highway, Vermont South

1800 550 550
versoplace.com.au

Keyton

Future growth

A challenge for Melbourne's east

Elizabeth Johnstone, Executive Officer – Eastern Region Group of Councils

What's the issue?

AS costs of living rise faster than capped council rates, meeting the needs of growing communities is a growing challenge.

With the State Government target of 225,000 more dwellings by 2051 – 474,000 more residents in the region, it is clear something has to give!

We will have to work differently to keep our neighbourhoods liveable, maintain the amenities communities enjoy, and service future growth. We will also have to think differently about how we grow to build a resilient, sustainable and connected future.

To understand the scale of the challenge, the ERG engaged The Centre for International Economics (CIE).

The Eastern Region Group (ERG) comprises Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges councils, currently home to almost 800,000 Victorians – more people than the Australian Capital Territory.

What is needed?

The CIE found that to maintain current levels of provision, the region needs 300 more hectares of land for parks, gardens and outdoor sports; 25 more hectares of land for new community infrastructure including five district libraries, four regional aquatic centres, 17 community centres, 16 maternal and child health centres, and much more.

Keeping pace with growth would cost $12.42 billion over the next 25 years – $500 million each year or $50,000 for every new dwelling.

Concerningly, they found "growth directed to the ERG region by the State does not bring with it the means to service that growth".

Opportunities for councils to reduce costs through co-location of community uses and services, programming to increase use, shared use of other facilities, such as school gyms, and regional provision of high cost facilities like aquatic centres will help, but not close, the gap.

Current developer contributions are inadequate and could only fund 13% of the open space and community infrastructure needed. New funding arrangements are required so existing residents are not forced to accept reduced standards or make up the shortfall.

How can we do more with our shared spaces?

Globally, cities such as Singapore, Barcelona and Vancouver have demonstrated innovative ways to deal with growth. But for lower density, treed, middle ring suburbs there are fewer examples to draw on. Brickworks precinct in Burwood is one kind of choice.

'Density done well' is a term often used to describe urban and housing design that delivers more homes in established areas without sacrificing neighbourhood character.

In the east, Knox and Maroondah Councils, with State Government and Swinburne University support developed 'Greening the Greyfields' to bring this to life.

By joining multiple lots in key locations close to shops, transport and community infrastructure, larger "precinct" scale redevelopment can transform ageing, car-dependent middle-ring suburbs into sustainable, medium-density, communities that retain canopy trees and space for nature, are permeable and more energy efficient, enjoy shared spaces and better integrate with their local setting.

Given our rapid growth, it is time to work differently and collaborate to make best use of our shared spaces and investment in community infrastructure.

See the report at Community Infrastructure Needs Analysis – Eastern Region Group of Councils



Return to Contents

An Art Show for Whitehorse celebrates 60 years

Glenys Grant



(Photo: Vincent Li

(Inset): The first Art Show in 1964.

THIS year's Whitehorse Rotary Art Show, held from October 28 to November 1, has celebrated its Diamond Jubilee 60 years anniversary.

The opening gala dinner was enjoyed by 150 art enthusiasts and more than 500 viewed the display over the five open days. There were a number of sponsors, with major sponsor the Community Bank Inner East. About 700 works of art were exhibited including those of three visiting/demonstrating artists.

Funds generated from exhibiting fees and sales are used for the benefit of the community, this year to Whitehorse Emergency Relief Support (WERS), a not-for-profit incorporated volunteer run agency supporting those in need in Whitehorse and offering free information, guidance, and financial assistance.

The art show was established in 1964-65. It was initiated and convened through community and service efforts, notably the Rotary Club of Box Hill (now Box Hill Burwood) and local art organisers. Its purpose was to provide a dedicated local venue and community platform for regional amateur and professional artists, giving them the opportunity to exhibit and sell their work.

The event began with outdoor displays and indoor exhibitions (such as early displays in local community spaces and shopping areas including Box Hill Shopping Plaza). It was then displayed on the plantation in Whitehorse Road, where it remained for 25 years. In 1989 Rotarian David Tolstrup convened the Indoor Art Show at Box Hill Town Hall, now a long-standing tradition. David is still part of the Rotary Club today.

Whitehorse Art Show (formerly Box Hill Rotary Art Show) is one of a number of major fund-raising projects undertaken by the Rotary Club of Box Hill Burwood.

The Rotary Club and its members have been at the forefront of many generous donations within the then City of Box Hill, later in the City of Whitehorse. Countless thousands of dollars have been given to aid those less fortunate.

The winners of the 60th Annual Whitehorse Art Show 2026 were presented with awards and prizes to the value of $13,000 by the Rotary Club of Box Hill Burwood. They include:

- **McCubbin Medal Award (Best in Show):** Claude Ciccone for "Ghinni"
- **Best Oil or Acrylic:** David Chen for "Afternoon Repose"
- **Best Oil or Acrylic Runner Up:** Ray Wilson for "Flowering Gum In Ceramic Vase"
- **Best Work on Paper:** Jo-anne Seberry for "Still Waters Sorrento"
- **Best Work on Paper Runner Up:** Jianqiang Xu for "The Blooming Rose"
- **Best Photographic Image (Susan Fenton Memorial Award):** Kynan Tang for "Motherly Love"
- **Best Photographic Image Runner Up:** Robert Wengritzky for "A Hunters Eye"
- **Heritage Award (9" x 5"):** Jo Reitze for "Werribee Wetlands"
- **Community Art Prize (Graeme Milburn Memorial Award):** John Bredl for "Eucalips"

Return to Contents

Claude Ciccone

2026 McCubbin Medal Winner



Co-President of Rotary Club of Box Hill Burwood Ray McLeod- Dryden presenting Claude with the McCubbin Medal. 'Ghinni' is in the background.
Photo: Glenys Grant

ARTIST Claude Ciccone is the 2026 Frederick McCubbin* Medal Award winner for Best in Show artwork at the Whitehorse Art Show for his painting of 'Ghinni', a lifelong friend who is a yoga instructor from Albert Park.

Claude was overwhelmed by the award. He said "It was an incredible honour to receive this McCubbin Medal, which was judged by award winning artist Chris White, and I hope my win will inspire others to keep trying, as I did".

Chris White won the inaugural McCubbin Medal Award in 1994.

Claude has been painting since the age of 10, and even remembers exhibiting in the Box Hill Rotary Art Show in the late 1960's when paintings were exhibited outdoors on the centre road plantations in Box Hill. He loved the excitement of his first ever sale when his painting sold. This is his story.

As a child Claude grew up in Blackburn North. He loved art and was always creative. "I can still remember sitting in my brother's bedroom at his desk drawing portraits from his magazines of famous people like Elvis Presley or John Wayne. I was constantly drawing and building things out of whatever I could find in Dad's garage.

"Eventually mum and dad, seeing my passion, bought me a small set of oil paints, brushes and canvases. My father learnt of an oil painting tutor and I was blown away when I first attended and saw the amazing paintings being produced by her and her students. I think I may have attended her classes for around a year.

"I produced a few oil paintings during this time. Then mum and dad were informed that there was an art show in the Main Street of Box Hill. It was an open-air show held by the Rotary Club of Box Hill.

"I was encouraged to enter a painting - which I did. To my delight when it came time to pick up my painting I was informed it had been sold. I remember being so excited and determined to keep painting"

Over the years, he experimented with oil painting, trying to push the boundaries from realism to expressionism. He enjoyed both processes equally.

Claude moved to Lilydale in 1970, and currently lives there with his wife, Jilda, daughter Mira, and grandson Milan. For the past 20 years he has been running oil painting classes from his home studio and currently tutors art privately.

"I feel that I haven't grown up, as I still create sculptures out of found objects and recycled materials.

"My other passion is tending to my vegetable garden, which always grounds me when I feel unsettled or stressed. My grandson helps me with weeding and watering, which I enjoy tremendously.

Summing up, Claude says "I have won the odd award in the past but winning the Frederick McCubbin award is extra special because of my childhood link. That was nearly 60 years ago.

I feel very blessed."

* https://www.creativewhitehorse.vic.gov.au/treasures-collection/frederick-mccubbin



Dr Bruce Wong and 'One More Day'

Glenys Grant

THE book launch of *One More Day; Killing Fields to Kindness and Compassion*, by Dr Bruce Wong, Whitehorse Citizen of the Year, was held in November at the Box Hill Town Hall.

The audience was vast, the food excellent and the program impressive.

Compered by Bruce's son Edward, the book was introduced by a number of speakers: Whitehorse City Councillors Kieran Simpson, Kirsten Langford and Peter Allan; former Socceroo captain Paul Wade; humanitarian advocate Nasiba Akram OAM; Vivienne Nguyen AM, former Chairperson of Victorian Multicultural Commission; Laurie Nowell, journalist; along with a reading of an excerpt from the book by Bruce's granddaughter Hana.

Speakers were interspersed with dances from Indonesia and Cambodia and a lively and traditional Chinese Lion Dance to bring good luck and fortune and to ward off evil.

Bruce was 14 in 1975 when the Khmer Rouge seized power in Cambodia. His book, *One More Day* is a story of survival, resilience and success.

It tells of his subsistence and suffering in Cambodia's "killing fields" as a boy victim of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. How he was forced at gunpoint into back-breaking labour, denied an education and separated from his family, while enduring disease, beatings and a sense of hopelessness. How he witnessed countless deaths including those of his parents and a brother.

Driven by a deep-rooted belief that a better life would come, he was sustained by an internal mantra and strong Christian faith that 'one more day' would bring deliverance and the chance of a new life.

After four years Vietnam invaded and there was hope. That quickly faded because so many required aid. He and his remaining family struggled again to survive, but finally made their way to the border and transit camps. Fortunately, they were not separated again and came to Australia as refugees in early 1981.

The book tells how Bruce overcame the difficulties he faced in his youth, grasping every opportunity offered and working exhaustively to make a success of his life, as so many other refugees and migrants have done. How he went on to become a successful businessman, multicultural spokesperson and global philanthropist, able to give back to the country that had offered him refuge.

In 2024 Bruce, aided by Sue, his wife, founded the Bruce Wong Foundation, committed to helping multicultural communities break down barriers, have access to opportunities to thrive and succeed, and to empower them in their endeavours.

Bruce's message: 'I thought it was important to share my story at a time when a record number of refugees across the world are in need of support. I wanted to show that refugees are resilient and resourceful people who can make important contributions if given the chance.

'It was also the fulfilment of a promise to my family and friends, that sharing my story might give people who are on difficult journeys the hope and courage to be able to continue.'

Proceeds of book sales go to the Bruce Wong Foundation to continue its work and meaningful impact.

For more information contact Laurie Nowell at nowelll@ames.net.au on 03 9938 4031 or 0498 196 500. https://www.brucewongfoundation.org/about



Bruce's *One More Day* book launch.
Photo by Ausweetmoments.com

Return to Contents

Growing up in Surrey Hills

the games we played at school

Gill Bell

IT was 18 December 1962, my second last day at primary school. It was lunchtime and the summer sun was blazing from a clear blue sky. The leaves of the old gum tree stirred listlessly in the hot air, releasing the scent of eucalyptus. In the shade of the tree a small group of girls played knucklebones, scoring points for the number of knucklebones they could grab on each throw. From the dusty playground on the other side of the school building came the shouts of boys playing chasey.

Despite the heat, a group of girls was lined up to play Oranges and Lemons, with the exciting chant of 'Here comes a chopper to chop off your head! Head head head … Off!' as the next girl was caught and symbolically decapitated.

My friend Helen and I had some housekeeping to do. Earlier in the year we had selected a patch of dirt under a large pine tree. There amongst the exposed roots we had planned out rooms in the soft grey dirt, marking them with shall mounds of pine needles. We found treasures to decorate our nest: a feather, a fragment of floral china and a cicada shell. We were proud housekeepers. When a gust of wind scattered the pine needles, we would pick up miniature brooms of pine needle branches, mend the walls and sweep each room clean. Here in the shade of the pine tree we might thumb through our swap cards. Helen owned a coveted Gainsborough Blue Boy in his shiny blue satin. We also spent many a peaceful half hour here reading the adventures of the families in Seven Little Australians and in the Billabong books.



There was a playground for boys and one for girls. Our games too were divided along gender lines. The only time this line blurred was when the boys began a game of kiss chasey. We girls fled in mock terror towards the safely of the shelter sheds.

The bell rang for the end of lunch. We put away our pine brooms, collected our lunch boxes and drink bottles and made our way back to the echoing space of our sixth-grade classroom. Lessons were finished for the year and there were fun activities to come: perhaps games of Hang the Butcher or even a quiz. Some lucky children might be permitted to draw a Christmassy scene in coloured chalk on the blackboard.

'Out on the plain the brolgas are dancing.'

The wistful strains of a William James Christmas carol drifted from a classroom down the hall.

Tomorrow would be the final day of our primary school education. There would be the usual simple pleasures. We would file into the grand hall to watch a film. The flickering images would be projected by the clunky old black projector with its giant rolls of film. Most of us did not have a television at home, and a film was an unparalleled luxury. We did not complain that the planned film – a Walt Disney animated 1948 production named So Dear to My Heart – was older than any of our lifetimes, or that it was screened for a second time in three years. Afterwards there would be a visit from Father Christmas himself, bearing a large sack full of small bags of lollies – a sweet end to this part of our childhood.

Now it was time. We would shoulder our brown leather school bags, cross the playground one last time, walk out through the small gate in the chain-wire fence and step confidently into the future.

Return to Contents



Avenue Road Reserve

Barbara Wheeler

BEHIND the bustle of Camberwell Junction, Avenue Road Reserve is a small patch of green space being quietly brought back to life.

Adjacent to Camberwell Road near the Civic Centre, the park has long offered residents a moment of calm in one of Melbourne's busiest activity centres. With its mature eucalypts, grassed areas and native garden beds, it is a valued neighbourhood retreat that provides habitat for local birdlife including scrub wrens and spinebills.

But earlier in the year the reserve was not a good place to be. During and following roadworks in May 2026, rubbish dumping, graffiti and vandalism negatively impacted the park that had been a safe, welcoming place for so long. The local police response was to recommend clearing of all shrubs and grasses growing in the park to increase visibility. This was immediately undertaken by Boroondara Council. The wholesale removal of this habitat alarmed local residents – it felt like more damage to the park.

Rather than simply accepting the deterioration of the park, local residents asked their Council to support them to care for it.

Friends of Camberwell Junction is a community-led initiative, auspiced by KooyongKoot Alliance and supported by the Council's Biodiversity Team, dedicated to caring for and enhancing green spaces around Camberwell Junction.

The group met in September and October at Avenue Road Reserve, choosing the small urban park as its first project site. Volunteers began the practical work of restoration: removing weeds, planting and mulching seedlings and tending the garden beds that frame the reserve. It's not glamorous work, but it is the kind of steady local effort that can change how a public place feels – and how it is treated. After recent rains the indigenous flowers and grasses are thriving.

The group's message is clear: engaging and supporting local communities is cheaper, safer and more effective than repeated clean-ups.

When a reserve is neglected, damaged or feels unsafe, the costs to manage the site are simply transferred to the community. Council crews remove dumped rubbish and graffiti, repair damage and clear hazards. Victoria Police may respond to reports of vandalism, drug-related activity or antisocial behaviour. Every incident diverts public resources away from other important services.

By contrast, a well-used and well-cared-for space is less likely to become a target. Volunteers in the park, weeding, mulching and planting, are contributing to a visible community presence. Friends of Camberwell Junction is building that shared responsibility around Camberwell Junction's green spaces.

Avenue Road Reserve is only a short walk from Camberwell Junction, yet it offers something increasingly rare in a dense urban centre: shade, quiet, greenery and a connection to the natural environment. Protecting those qualities is not merely an aesthetic concern. It is part of maintaining a liveable, safe and sustainable neighbourhood.

The group's next community working bee and end of year celebration is scheduled for 4pm on Sunday, 13 December, at Avenue Road Reserve.

For convenor Barbara Wheeler, the project is about more than plants and mulch. It is about reclaiming a shared space for the community and building habitat.

"We are not asking for much, we are asking people to care about a place that belongs to all of us".

As Camberwell continues to grow and change, the Friends of Camberwell Junction believe small green spaces such as Avenue Road Reserve deserve protection, attention and community stewardship. Their work is a reminder that local residents can play a powerful role in keeping neighbourhoods welcoming, and green spaces vibrant and accessible.

For more information, or to get involved, contact Friends of Camberwell Junction at friendsofcamberwelljunction@gmail.com

Return to Contents

Scott Reef

Where's that? Why should we save it?

Elaine Bowers

MANY people on the east coast of Australia do not know! Scott Reef is about 300 km offshore between Broome and Cape Leveque, off the Kimberley Coast. The Browse Basin, a huge natural undersea gas basin, contains Scott Reef, and is the area where Woodside Petroleum wants to drill for gas.

Why is Scott Reef of great concern for conservation, marine, and indigenous groups? They describe the gas project as releasing a "carbon bomb" because the project will release 88 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year until 2070. The drilling would occur in a region which has remained pristine for millions of years. Some species that inhabit the reef area are unique to it. The breeding grounds of endangered green sea turtles, and protection of migrating blue pigmy whales are of special concern. Turning the sea basin into a fossil fuel retrieval project would threaten all species there. The reef is alive with beautiful creatures.



Woodside's proposal includes up to 50 subsea wells operated remotely. Woodside says it has technology (explosive-driven shear rams) to quickly stop spills or leaks, and if that fails, then it says it has methods to stop a spill within 16 days. The shear rams technology is untestable until it is used. But other hazards also exist such as light pollution, deafening noise from seismic blasting and drilling, and the risks of undermining the seabeds, and of gas blow-outs.

To bring the gas onshore, Woodside proposes an undersea pipeline 900 km long, from the reef to Murujuga on the Pilbara Coast. Now we have a double whammy! Murujuga is a World Heritage site, the world's largest collection of indigenous rock art. The rock art is already damaged by the acid fumes released from the existing gas processing plant. Prolonging emissions until 2070 would dramatically increase the impact.

What is the need for this gas? It is not necessary for Australia - it will be sold overseas for the profit of Woodside shareholders. Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) and other environment organizations say there is too much direct risk to Scott Reef and that the risk extends even to the Great Barrier Reef. Our atmosphere is shared. Climate pollution from burning the gas here or overseas would come back to hurt us and the nature we love here in Australia. Science is now able to attribute the "far-beyond" effects of such a project.

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has a priority campaign to keep Scott Reef area safe from the gas drilling plans of Woodside Petroleum. In recent months, all over Australia, people have been signing a colourful paper fish or coral, to form a long 'reef' banner petition to present to MP Murray Watt, Minister for the Environment and Water, who is to make the decision.

Locally, ACF Eastern Rosellas members have collected hundreds of signatures at markets and events There is also an online petition with information at https://www.acf.org.au/save-scott-reef/sign-the-petition In early November we met MPs Carina Garland and Gabriel Ng to show them the reef petition and discuss the need to save Scott Reef. On 7 November our reef banner joined with many others from around Australia to stretch right across Princes Bridge.

The banners will be delivered to Murray Watt, MP with the petition, which now has over 26 thousand signatures nationally.

This is bigger than one project. It's a test of whether our government will keep giving the green light to fossil fuel giants, or finally stand up for our reefs, our climate and our future.

Elaine Hopper is a Volunteer member of Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) Eastern Rosellas group.

References

ABC news on financing of the gas project
Woodside's $30b gas project could struggle to find financial backers - ABC News
Australian Conservation Foundation discussion of the gas project near Scott Reef.
Why Woodside's Browse gas... | Australian Conservation Foundation
The Guardian Australia discussion of nature risks at Scott Reef from the gas project.
https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/oct/27/endangered-turtles-and-exceptional-coral-at-risk-from-woodsides-gas-drilling-in-wa-watchdog-says

Return to Contents



Gift of a Lifetime to Maranoa

Ruth Scharley & Glenys Grant

IN September 2026, Maranoa Botanic Gardens in Boroondara celebrated 100 years of opening to the public. It was the vision of Naturalist John Middleton Watson to create this private garden devoted to Australian and New Zealand native plants.

Today, Maranoa is one of Australia's most diverse displays of Australian plants, with around 4,000 native plants nestled along winding paths.

Over the years local residents Ruthie and Wally, passionate contributors to the environment and working with groups such as Nettleton Park and KooyongKoot Alliance, have delighted in visiting Maranoa. Like many nature enthusiasts, they have enjoyed the peace, beauty and therapeutic connection with nature that comes from wandering through this very special garden.

Last year, after 53 years in their family home, they decided to downsize and move into a retirement village, parting with many lifetime treasures.

As Ruthie said 'For more than 50 years we had nurtured our collection of stag-horn and elk-horn ferns and Nodding Green-hood Orchids. The ferns filled an architecturally designed pagoda, where filtered light created a lush green welcome and the feeling of a tropical paradise'.

The thought of parting with them was hard, and of them possibly being lost, unthinkable. Collecting had begun in the 1970s with the purchase of Nodding Greenhood Orchid corms from South Australia, and staghorns and elkhorns from New South Wales.

Ruthie continued 'Opening those large parcels and discovering the wonderful specimens inside was enormously exciting.'

Wally experimented with ways to mount the ferns, eventually overcoming the challenges. He also became a guru in caring for Nodding Greenhood Orchids. Many marvelled at his expertise and his always thriving plants.His success and wonderful collection came not from expensive products, but from decades of observation, patience and understanding.

How not to lose this special collection forever? Maranoa seemed the perfect place. The plants would remain in Boroondara, a delight for all.

Ruthie continued 'Moving the collection was an enormous undertaking. City of Boroondara staff visited several times to assess and carefully plan the transfer. One huge hanging ball of elkhorns was estimated to weigh more than a tonne.

'On moving day, Council workers arrived with two trucks. Using an industrial wheelbarrow, winches and specialised safety techniques, they carefully transported the collection to its new home'.

This year Wally returned to Maranoa to demonstrate how to repot the orchid corms, passing on knowledge gained through decades of devoted cultivation. He was actually saying goodbye to his beloved plants.

Ruthie said 'This was not just a gift to Maranoa, it was entrusting Maranoa with part of our life together, the plants, their history, our memories and Wally's knowledge.

'As Maranoa celebrates its centenary, we feel happy that our lifetime collection has found a new home there, a living legacy we hope will continue to grow and bring pleasure for generations to come. We also hope to encourage others who have valuable gardens to consider positive outcomes when they move into the retirement stage of their life and are forced to make decisions about what they can realistically manage'.



Shifting the ferns.

Return to Contents

The Urban Guerillas in Nunawading

Sheena Waddell

WALK through Charles Rooks Reserve in Nunawading on a Tuesday afternoon and you will spot a crew working to restore the biodiversity. Known as the Urban Guerillas, a youth-focused environmental group, these young volunteers meet weekly to tackle a major environmental job in Whitehorse: bringing back the indigenous bushland of this 10-hectare site.

Leading the regeneration effort is Ashton, a trained Environmental Scientist who has taken on the challenge. She first started with KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA) and became an Urban Guerillas member in 2023 at the Gardiners Creek regeneration site behind Deakin University. She was drawn to the group because she found them to be friendly, like-minded and proactive.

Volunteering at Greenlink Nursery deepened her knowledge of indigenous plants. Before suburban development, this pocket of Melbourne was a heathy forest. That specific ecosystem is now endangered across the region from Box Hill, Croydon and Nunawading, making every remaining patch valuable. Historically, the land supported a diverse mix of native flora, including hardy eucalyptus trees, tussock grasses, and low-lying shrubs like common pink heath. Today, only a scattering of remnant gums remains to show what the landscape once looked like.

Over the decades, this reserve has undergone major changes. Large, non-native pine trees now tower over much of the area, where invasive weeds have taken hold, crowding out the original understorey. Left alone, the site would continue to lose its native biodiversity. At present this is a perfect habitat for Noisy Miners, which prefer open grass land and trees to support their proliferation. Sadly, they drive the smaller native birds away.

But under Ashton's guidance, the group is taking a steady, methodical approach to bush regeneration. Rather than relying on quick fixes, the team is focusing on clearing the weeds and invasive grasses by hand which has encouraged growth and regeneration of native orchids and heath with young native saplings and shrubs now making a comeback.

The goal goes well beyond just pulling weeds. By restoring the native plant layers, Ashton and the volunteers aim to build healthy, productive soil that can support the whole local food web. A thriving understorey and rich soil create vital habitat for small mammals, native birds, invertebrates, and fungi.

Ashton has clear, practical milestones in mind for the project. Within three years, she hopes to see one and a half hectares of regenerated bushland left unmowed by Council so native grasses and ground covers can take hold. Looking further ahead to the 10-year mark, her goal is a much denser, prickly, shrubby forest. Thick, spiky native shrubs provide essential protection for small birds and mammals, keeping them safe from predators.

The Tuesday sessions also offer a straightforward way for locals to connect with their neighbourhood and learn how to identify native plants and invasive species. Newcomers do not need a background in science or horticulture to contribute, as Ashton and experienced members are always there to advise.

Thanks to Ashton, the Urban Guerillas, and local residents, Charles Rooks Reserve is slowly reclaiming its original character as a functioning Valley Healthy Forest.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/urbanguerrillas.official

BELOW: Ashton weeding. *Photo: Sheena Waddell*



Return to Contents

Bringing cheer as the festive season draws near

Priya Mohandoss

WITH December upon us, we are immersed in the splendor of Christmas. In Boroondara and beyond, amid the lights, trees and multitude of decorations, you may also catch a glimpse of red fabric bows tied to tree trunks, fences or entrance gates.

Many of those displayed are a result of a community-driven venture that began in 2017, aptly named Big Red Bows.

Mr Harrison Haintz, founder and manager of Big Red Bows said, "I started this venture in Camberwell and it has spread through Boroondara at a rapid rate since then. Every suburb I can think of in Boroondara has at least one of these bows.

"From Melbourne, Geelong and Mornington Peninsula to more regional areas like Mildura, Bright, Nhill, Kialla, Bendigo, it's great to see something that started with just one street has now spread to so many communities."

The bows are made up of 95% recycled polyester that is knitted into greige fabric – a raw and unfinished woven cloth taken straight from the loom. After this, the fabric is then dyed to achieve its desired colour and treated in order to provide finishing to its appearance, texture and performance.

Once purchased, the bows can then be used for a number of years. However, when they have reached their capacity, they can be collected for reuse. Last year, they were sent to a textile recycling company and manufactured for use in furniture stuffing and playground equipment.

While the bows are available wholesale or on an individual basis, this venture works as a fundraising model for a range of groups such as schools, charities, local businesses, councils, sports clubs and other community associations.

When a group has determined the number of bows needed for its members, it is then able to put through its orders. Within a few days, the bows are dispatched to the group, ready to be delivered to its purchasing members. In addition, for each bow sold, the group retains a third of the profit.

"We aim to help them raise money by providing tools to help support them run successful end-of-year campaigns. I think it's a great, affordable way to come together, spread Christmas joy and raise funds for groups that are all highly deserving of it."

Furthermore, much of the proceeds from online purchases are donated to the Salvation Army Christmas Appeal, with a small amount of this going directly to the Camberwell Corps to offer some relief to those in need.

Mr Norman Gale, Community Engagement Coordinator, Salvation Army, Camberwell Corps said, "Every donation is provided back into the community to assist people enjoy this time of generosity and peace at Christmas. As well as the actual physical food and gifts, people are also encouraged by the generosity of those in the community who think of them at this time."

On the whole, this venture has been much of a success, in particular with endorsing a number of groups with their fundraising efforts.

Mr Haintz said. "Big Red Bows is far more than a Christmas decoration. It symbolises giving back, environmental awareness and a joyful way for the community to be involved and celebrate Christmas, or the end of the year."

For more details, refer to https://www.bigredbows.com.au/



Photo: Harrison Haintz

Return to Contents

Save the Date – Sunday 21 March 2027

LIFT THE LID
RUN + WALK FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills

THE Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills (MASH) is inviting families, individuals and community groups to come together for its Lift the Lid Run + Walk for Mental Health on Sunday 21 March 2027 at Gardiners Creek Reserve, Burwood, near Deakin University's Burwood campus.

The event aims to raise awareness and funds for Australian Rotary Health (ARH), one of Australia's major independent funders of mental health research.

MASH is committed to continuing its support of ARH, with an exciting fundraising ambition to help fund another PhD scholarship for a Victorian student. The club is already co-funding a scholarship for Jordan Vella, a PhD candidate at Monash University researching the factors that influence the mental health of retired elite athletes, particularly those from high-contact team sports.

There's a distance for everyone!

- **10km Run** – for those looking for a more substantial challenge.
- **5km Run or Walk** – suitable for runners and walkers of varying abilities.
- **2.5km Kids Dash** – a shorter distance for younger participants and families.

Whether you're a regular runner, an occasional walker or simply looking for an enjoyable way to support a worthwhile cause, everyone is welcome.

Bring along family and friends, enjoy some exercise and be part of a community effort to make a difference.

You don't have to run or walk to make a difference!

A successful community event depends on volunteers, and additional help will be needed on the day. There will be a variety of opportunities, including helping with registrations, setting up, directing participants, marshalling the courses and providing general assistance.

Whether you can spare a few hours or the whole morning, your contribution will be greatly appreciated. Volunteers undertaking a volunteer role will need a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Local businesses are also encouraged to support the event. Donations, sponsorship, products or services would all be welcome and would help make the day a success while supporting an important cause.

So do SAVE THE DATE – SUNDAY 21 MARCH 2027 and help Lift the Lid on Mental Health.

Registration isn't open yet, but event information and updates are available at:

https://www.liftthelidwalk.com.au/mont-albert-surrey-hills

To enquire about volunteering, business sponsorship or other ways to support the event, contact the organisers at liftthelid.mash@gmail.com

Return to Contents

woodsy insert brain here



Finding the right colours
for your period home

Steve Bohun



WALK down almost any street in Kew, Hawthorn, Camberwell or Surrey Hills and you'll pass houses from several eras side by side. Each era had its own way with colour, and getting it right is one of the simplest ways to bring out a home's character.

Start by working out when your house was built. Victorian houses (roughly the 1850s to 1901) often have cast-iron lace, bay windows and decorative brackets. Federation and Edwardian homes (about 1890 to 1915) tend to be red brick, with timber fretwork and gables. Californian bungalows (about 1915 to 1940) have low-pitched roofs, wide verandahs and heavy tapered pillars.

Victorian houses were often painted in stone colours, such as cream, fawn and buff, with deeper trims in browns, reds and greens. Federation homes typically paired red brick with cream or off-white trim, picked out in deep red or green. Bungalows leaned towards earthy tones: browns, creams and soft greens.

The best guide, though, is your own house. Earlier layers of paint often survive in sheltered spots, such as under the eaves, behind downpipes or on door and window frames. Carefully scraping back a small patch with a sharp blade can reveal the original scheme. Paint applied before 1970 may contain lead, so test it first and never dry sand it.

Photos: Steve Bohun, used with the homeowners' permission.



If your home is in a heritage overlay, check with your council before you start. A planning permit is generally needed to paint a surface that has never been painted, such as face brick, and in some areas also to change external colours. Your council's planning team can tell you what applies to your street.

Done well, the right colours make a period home look the way it was meant to.

About the author

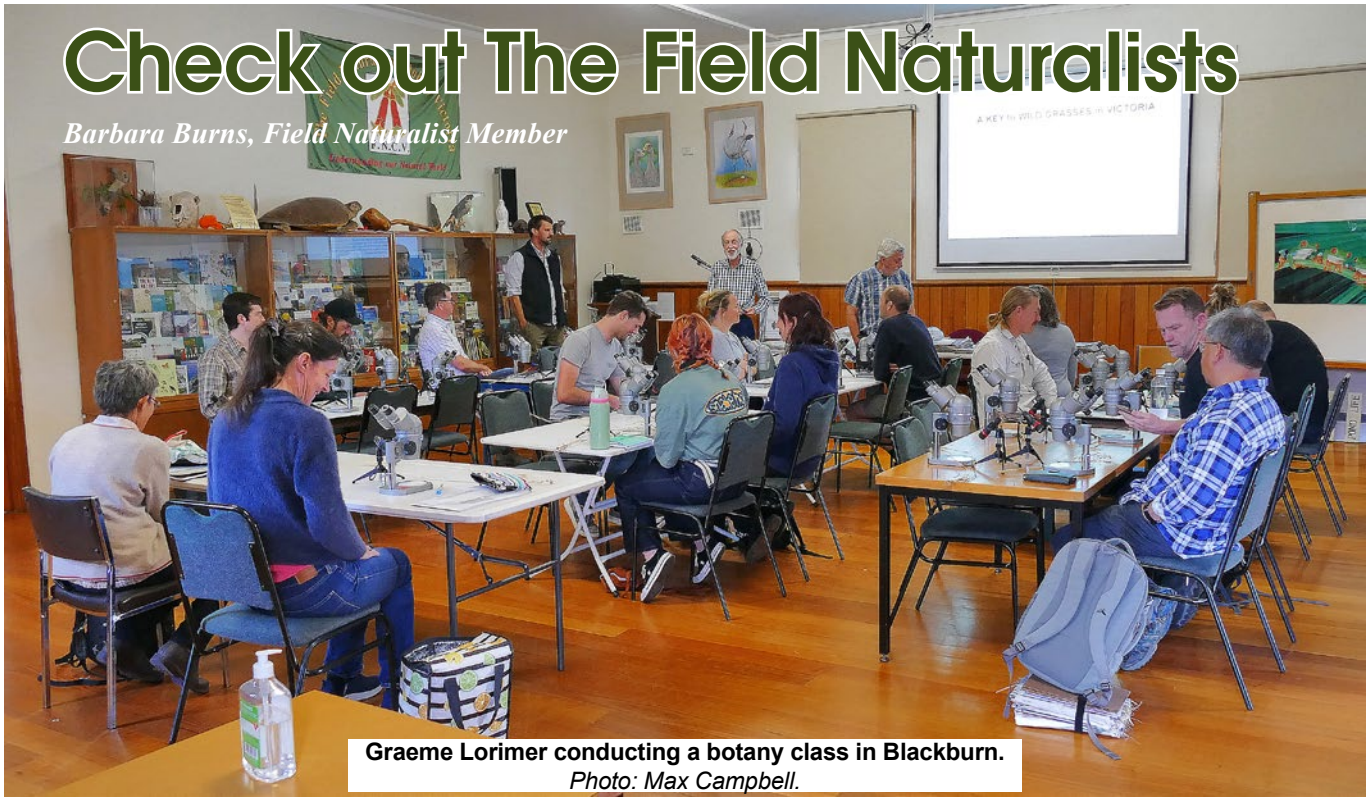
Steve Bohun has more than 30 years in the trade, including over 15 years painting homes across Melbourne's eastern suburbs. He runs Hillcrest Painting and Flooring Services and specialises in period homes across the eastern suburbs, from Victorian and Federation houses to Californian bungalows and interwar homes, where careful preparation matters as much as the colour. Steve quotes every job himself and does the work on the tools.

Return to Contents



Check out The Field Naturalists

Barbara Burns, Field Naturalist Member



Graeme Lorimer conducting a botany class in Blackburn.
Photo: Max Campbell.

DO you have a passion for nature and the outdoors and want to learn more about Victoria's fauna, plants and insects? Have you ever seen a lyrebird in the wild? Would you like to visit some reserves around Melbourne and see native orchids growing? With the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria you can do all these things and more. Check us out at https://www.fncv.org.au/

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria is Australia's oldest natural history group, established in 1880.It has nearly 800 members and nine special interest groups which focus on botany, animals and birds, fungi, geology, invertebrates, marine research and microscopy. There is also a popular juniors group for children and teenagers and a generalist day group that meets once a month on a Tuesday morning.The clubrooms are at 1 Gardenia St Blackburn, a short distance from the Blackburn Railway Station.

The purpose of the FNCV is to gain an understanding of the natural world, not only by the study of what others have written but by going out into nature and exploring it for ourselves.The glue that holds the Club together is a love and interest in nature in all is forms.

As a member of the Victorian Field Naturalists you will have opportunities to:

Participate in excursions and field surveys to collect data which is used to increase scientific knowledge and to advocate for the environment. (Citizen science)

Learn from experts about practical survey techniques. (Note that all research and surveys are carried out ethically under strict government permits and the findings are lodged with the relevant database).

Attend meetings on all aspects of natural history. Each of the Club's special interest groups runs a program of monthly meeting with top level speakers presenting on topics of interest.

Visit our mallee property for camps and working bees.

Meet with likeminded people and exchange information and ideas.

Obtain discounts on a range of natural history books through our bookshop.

Receive six issues a year of the prestigious natural history journal, The Victorian Naturalist which has been published since 1884.

We are distinguished from other environmental organisations in that we offer a regular program of field trips (short and long) where there are hands on experiences with native animals, birds, reptiles, plants, invertebrates, fungi etc. Look up the current program on the website at https://www.fncv.org.au/calendar-of-events/ or https://www.fncv.org.au/field-nats-news/

All age groups and knowledge levels are welcome, including juniors, and activities take place in a friendly, atmosphere. The office at 1 Gardenia St, Blackburn is staffed on Monday and Tuesday from 10.00 am to 4 pm. The phone number is 9877 9860.

Return to Contents



Juniors excursion to the Australian Dingo Foundation.



Ashburton Support Comes of Age

Jan Coffey

ON the evening of Wednesday, 21 October 2026, at the Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre, the Ashburton Support Group celebrated more than 18 years of supporting families, friends, carers and individuals affected by addiction, gambling harm and mental health challenges.

The highlight of the evening was a video presentation by *Three Sides of the Coin*, showcasing their latest project, *AGD and Me: Putting the G into AOD*, a powerful video which presented personal stories of struggles with both addiction and gambling.

Following the video, attendees had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A, with the two storytellers, and then enjoyed a delicious catered supper.

The Ashburton Support group wishes to thank the Alamein Neighbourhood and Learning Centre for providing their beautiful community venue for the event, Sharc/Family Drug and Gambling Help for their support and the City of Boroondara, Carers Victoria and Northeast Metro Mental Health and Wellbeing Connect for their sponsorship and financial assistance, without which this night would not have possible.

Ashburton is one of many Family Drug and Gambling Help support groups, facilitated by volunteers, which have cared for hundreds of families in crisis. Ashburton Support Group officially began in 2008 as the Balwyn-Based Support Group, led by Dr Nina Bruni (although many of its members were already meeting and supporting each as far back as 2000) In the following years the group had several changes of home and title, survived Covid restrictions by going online, and finally came to rest in Ashburton at the newly renovated Alamein Neighbourhood and Community Centre in 2022.

The group meets every 1st Wednesday of the month, online, and every 3rd Wednesday of the Month in person in a safe, welcoming place. All meetings begin at 7pm and include education and information and a safe place where the members can talk, ask questions and find compassionate understanding. A supper is always provided. The group runs all year, with a short break over the Christmas holiday period.

Anyone wishing to join the group should ring the Helpline on 1300 660 068. The only requirement for membership is that you have been affected by another's addiction to drugs, alcohol or gambling.



Return to Contents

Music and recovery

Sal Dugan

IT'S not every day you get to attend a concert at the Donvale Rehabilitation Hospital (DRH), so 26 October was a remarkable occasion. The initiative of Dan Astill, National Manager Person Centred Care at Ramsay Health, with the support of Amanda Broomhall, General Manager Hush Foundation and Andrea Keller, Head of Jazz and Improvisation at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music (MCM) resulted in an hour's concert in the smallest concert hall ever, despite it being the largest room DHR had available for the occasion. An intimate occasion presented by some splendid tertiary student musicians.

Dan's ethos is that good healthcare isn't just measured by clinical outcomes. How people experience care, whether they feel heard, involved, respected and understood is equally important. He is also a keen believer in the role the creative arts can play in the road to recovery, be it painting, craftwork or music.

The Hush Foundation also focuses on the value of kindness and arts-based experiences as vital components for health restoration. The Foundation has so far produced 20 albums that are now played in palliative care units, aged care facilities, paediatric wards and adult treatment centres.

Link these organisations with Andrea and her MCM jazz and improvisation students and the result is a valuable collaboration of minds focussed on a single concept, that of enhancing health by way of the arts, especially music.

Back in May five students from the MCM visited DRH to get a feel for the physical building and the general atmosphere within. Thereafter each of them was tasked to compose a piece of music taking into account their findings on visiting day. They were to return to DRH on 26 October, to perform their music on site. Thus, on that day, from 3pm for an hour of so we heard the compositions of Minna Zhu, Coco Browne, Jack Cannon, Conor Boussioutas and Shahla Paynter, who combined to form ensembles featuring one or other of their number's compositions. The aim is to make the music available for ongoing use at the hospital, offering moments of calm, comfort and connection for patients, families and staff.

Minna, a vocalist, named her song Window, arranged for voice, piano and bass guitar, and saxophonist Shahla's piece, Where Light Comes In, was written for soprano sax, piano and string quartet. Both of these were inspired by the floor to ceiling picture windows that lighten up each patient's room.

Coco's piece for piano and sax, was For Stillness, reflecting the ever-present peaceful atmosphere within the hospital. Jack, a guitarist, wrote Getting There for guitar, bass guitar, tenor and alto saxophone. The audiences' feet were beating to this up- tempo item, emphasising the fact that the patients are moving as fast as possible towards the exit door, and thus to home. Conor's piece, written for piano, bass and sax, expresses sincere thanks for The Miracle of a Second Chance.



ABOVE: Donvale Rehab Hospital – Shahla and her string quartet. *Photo: Julie Mulhauser*

This concert was an inaugural one for the combination of Ramsay Health, Hush Foundation and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. It would be marvellous if they can follow it up with similar events, for there is nothing like music to enhance recovery.

https://hush.org.au/
https://www.ramsayhealth.com/

Return to Contents

Alcove:
Looking forward to 25 years

Denise Dale



TWENTY-six years ago, the Box Hill Community Arts Centre needed new ideas to increase its effectiveness. Mr. Ken West, a long-time resident of Box Hill, proposed that a craft shop would be a draw card. This was in response to the closure of the Meat Market craft hub in North Melbourne. (For all you history buffs, check out, https://www.hothamhistory.org.au/north-melbourne-metropolitan-meat-market/).

With a small band of local artists and lots of hard work, the Alcove Art Shop was established within the centre in 2002 as a non-profit, volunteer organisation. Ken's idea has certainly proved to be correct.

In 2027, the Alcove Art Shop will celebrate its 25th year of supporting local artists who work tirelessly for the benefit of all the members and who are dedicated to keeping good quality, handmade arts and crafts available.

A plaque inside the shop is dedicated to Ken West for his unrelenting volunteer work, negotiating with Whitehorse Council, setting up the various operating systems and procuring shop fittings. Ken used a curved wall from the Meat Market to make the distinctive space that is now the Alcove Art Shop. There is even an award named after Ken. The Ken West Encouragement Award is open to those who have been a member of the Alcove Art Shop for a year or more, to pursue their artistic practice.

Members are routinely given a topic to challenge their creativity. This year our artists have shown great versatility in creating for the themes of *The Beach*, *It's raining cats and dogs* and *Pond life*. A member-run workshop for the public was held on Japanese *Sashiko* stitching and a demonstration on polymer clay jewellery was at our AGM, keeping creative minds busy with new ideas.

The Alcove also has work on display in the Box Hill Town Hill office area and regular updates on items for sale can be found on Facebook, Instagram, our website (www.alcoveartshop.com/), or by phoning the shop on: 0405 909 210.

The shop is stocked with ceramics, paper crafts, paintings, sculpture, glass and wooden items, jewellery, cards, felted and knitted wares, scarves and lots more.

Open from Monday to Saturday from 11–3pm, with extended hours for our exhibitions, Boite nights and on election days. Check out the events page for the upcoming Christmas market in December.

We are always on the lookout for new artists and volunteer workers for the shop and welcome all visitors to pop in, talk to the artist on duty, join the Friends of Alcove list, take a membership application, or just browse and see what's new.

Blackburn and Mitcham Reporter July 8 1932

RAILWAY STATION BROKEN INTO

Another attempt to burgle the Tunstall railway station was made on Friday night. The doors of the offices on both the "down" and "up" sides were forced, but the thieves were evidently disturbed by a gentleman who resides nearby, and who was aroused by the noise. Nothing was stolen. Some months ago a few pounds in money was stolen from the station, when thieves forced an entrance to the office on the "up" side.



Return to Contents



Ask A Vet with Dr Suze

Dr Susanna Gamage



Why does my cat drool?

CATS can drool for many reasons, some benign but some may be cause for further investigation.

Drooling or hyper-salivation can be a sign of contentment and relaxation, particularly if this occurs whilst your pet is kneading or purring. In kittens, kneading with paws stimulates milk let down during nursing and thus reinforces feelings of comfort, satiety and contentment. This behavioural association can carry forward into adulthood and are signs of a happy cat. Cats don't typically salivate at the sight or smell of food but for some particularly food motivated cats this may occur. Stressful and fearful situations can also trigger excessive salivation in some cats, car journeys and trips to the vets can be classic triggers. The aforementioned are all perfectly normal feline responses to their environment, they are short lived, self-limiting and require no specific treatment.

Hyper-salivation may also be a sign of underlying illness or disease process, especially if it is in combination with other clinical signs. For example, bad breath, a preference for soft foods/reduced appetite, reduced grooming and sensitivity around the face may indicate dental disease or other oral issues.

As for people, increased salivation can be a sign of nausea or exposure to a toxin or an irritant. If your cat is drooling and displaying other abnormal clinical signs, then it is best to get it checked out by your local veterinarian.

Our new puppy arrives in a few days. When should I book in for his first vet appointment?

The minimum age for puppies to be rehomed is around 7 to 8 weeks of age. This means that most puppies have already received their first six to eight week puppy vaccination with the breeder but it's always worth double checking. It is a good idea to get any new pet thoroughly checked by your local veterinarian soon after joining the household. The purpose of this first visit is to ensure your new family member is enjoying optimal health. It is also a great opportunity to check that your new pet is receiving an appropriate diet for its life stage as well as running through important health information such as worming and flea prevention.



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: www.drsuzemyvisitingvet.com.au 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.

Return to Contents

The Boomerang Always Returns

What a Piece of Chewing Gum on My Car Taught Me

Dongsub Pyo

NOT long ago, a small incident in Melbourne taught me a lesson I hadn't expected.

After a hospital appointment, I returned to my car in the car park. Just as I was about to drive away, an attendant hurried over and tapped on my window.

"Hey, mate! Your tyre is completely flat!"

He was right. The tyre had deflated almost to the rim. Without his warning, I might have driven onto a busy road, unaware of the danger.

I thanked him and went to a nearby tyre shop. The mechanic explained that the sidewall was damaged and the tyre needed replacing. Before I left, he offered some simple advice.

"Always check your tyres before driving".

The next morning, I was preparing to leave for a round of golf. My wife came outside to see me off. Remembering what the mechanic said, I decided to inspect the car. Perhaps I also wanted my wife to admire the responsible, safety-conscious husband I had suddenly become.

I walked around the vehicle, checking each tyre carefully. Then something caught my eye.

A piece of chewing gum was stuck to the lower part of the right rear door.

"Who would do such a thing?" I complained. "Where have people's manners gone?"

My wife looked at the gum, then at me. Suddenly, she burst out laughing.

"Isn't that the gum you spat out yesterday?"

I stood there speechless.

The previous day, after enjoying a bowl of Vietnamese noodle soup, I had been chewing gum while driving home. It began to bother me, so I lowered the driver's side window slightly and spat it out without thinking.

I had no idea where it had landed. Perhaps the airflow around the moving car had carried it backwards. Somehow, it had ended up stuck to my own car.

There I was, loudly condemning an imaginary stranger for something I had done myself.

My wife was still laughing. All I could manage was a sheepish smile.

I had walked around the car to inspect the tyres. Instead, I had discovered something about my own behaviour.

How easily we notice other people's mistakes while overlooking our own!

I thought again of the car park attendant. He could have walked past without saying anything, but he had taken a moment to warn a stranger. His thoughtfulness might have spared me a dangerous drive.

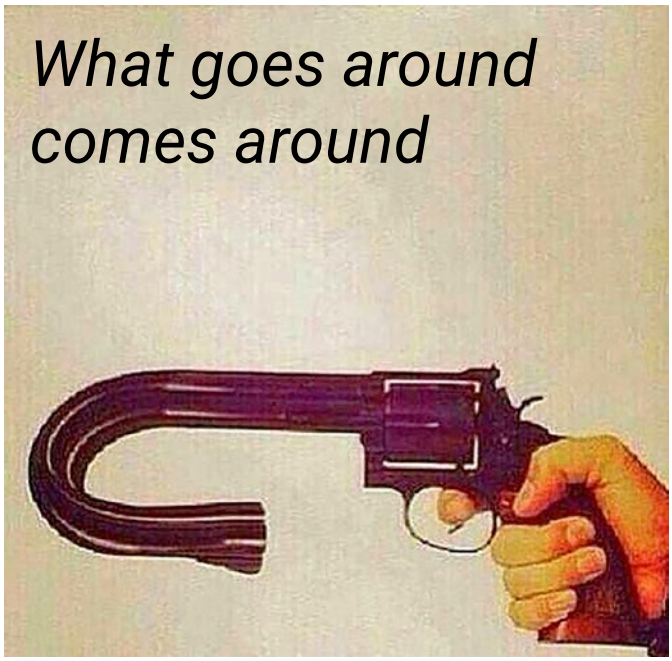
My own thoughtlessness had left a sticky reminder on my car door.

As I grow older, I try to be considerate and slow to judge others. Yet a single piece of chewing gum showed me how quickly I could forget that intention.

Next time I feel tempted to criticise someone, I hope I'll remember to look at myself first.

People say that what goes around comes around.

In my case, it came back quite literally.



Return to Contents

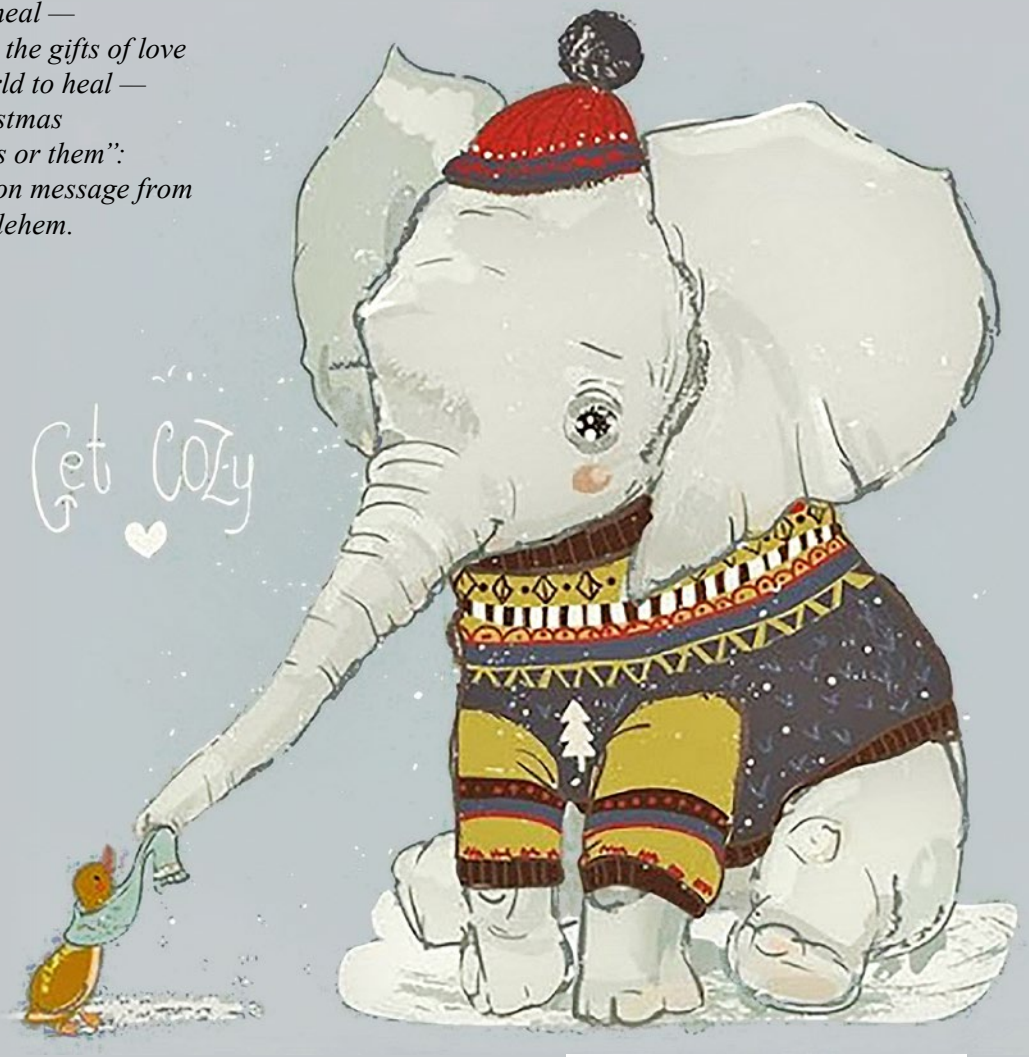
The Christmas Elephant

Jean Cornell

Have you seen the Christmas Elephant?
She's somewhere in the room —
and you might think she'll emphasise
catastrophe and doom,
destroy our festive jollity
or blunder through our joy,
bring down the decorations
and trample on each toy.

But she's come here to remind us
in a quiet persistent way
that not all people celebrate
or welcome Christmas Day.
Perhaps she knew that stable,
observed with other beasts
the truth within the fable —
the reason for our feasts.

Try to find the Christmas Elephant,
invite her for a meal —
she'll tell you all the gifts of love
that help the world to heal —
a universal Christmas
with no more "us or them":
the transformation message from
the Babe of Bethlehem.



Return to Contents

Saturday 19 December 9am–1pm
Christmas market – Treasures and Tastes at Trinity
Holy Trinity, 177 Union Road, Surrey Hills

Brimming with Christmas fare and gifts, so don't miss out. Lovely hand-crafted gifts and jewellery for all ages, candles, soaps, children's clothing and toys, bags, and much more. Amongst the 45 plus stalls you will also find Christmas cakes, puddings, biscuits, slices, honey, jams and chutneys. Plants will feature on Union Road, and you can enjoy a hamburger or snags from the BBQ in the courtyard, or coffee and Devonshire teas in the Treasures Café. For updates on the stallholders please check: www.facebook.com/TreasuresAndTastesAtTrinity/

Thursday, 24 December
Christmas Eve Services
St Clare Church 138 Woodhouse Grove Box Hill North

Carols 8:30pm; Mass 9pm.

Thursday, 24 December
Christmas Eve Services
St Francis Xavier Church 1087 Whitehorse Road Box Hill

Seniors' Mass 4pm; Carols 6pm; Family Mass 6.30pm; Midnight Mass

Friday, 25 December
Christmas Day Services
St Clare Church 138 Woodhouse Grove Box Hill North

Mass 9.00am; Italian Mass 11.00am; Vietnamese Mass 5pm

Friday, 25 December
Christmas Day Services
St Francis Xavier Church 1087 Whitehorse Road Box Hill

Mass 11am





Murnong First Peoples Gathering Place (MFPGP) are pleased to announce the following events at 100 High Street, Glen Iris, adjacent to St Oswald's church.

Saturday 5 December 11am to 2pm
Koorie Kristmas Market.

Return to Contents

Community Notices

From the March issue of Eastsider News, *we have introduced a new section:* ***Community Listings****. This is a free listing for local clubs and organisations to advertise their programs and meeting times. Because of space limitations in the PDF, we will provide up to six lines, plus a small logo, with a link to a longer description/article on our website, if required.*

3147 Love Our Street (Beach Patrol) is a volunteer organisation and we aim to bring people together as a community to look after our environment, to keep our streets beautifully clean and stop litter reaching Gardiners Creek and yOUR oceans. We host monthly clean-ups at litter hotspots across various postcodes.

Contact Moira Tobin at email: 3147@loveourstreet.co .au

ACF Community Eastern Rosellas

Independently organised ACF group

We are a group of passionate people, living in Eastern Melbourne in and around the electorates of Chisholm and Menzies, who are standing up for action on climate and nature. Our group is part of the Australian Conservation Foundation Community Group Network. Email acf.eastern.rosellas@gmail.com

---

Ashburton Support Group provides free, peer-based, confidential support for family and friends concerned about another person's alcohol, drug or gambling addiction.

Every 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7pm at the Alamein Neighbourhood Learning Centre, 49 Ashburn Grove, Ashburton. Also Online Every 1st Wednesday. Call the Helpline on 1300 660 068 or email Jan at wedekindj13@gmail.com to register.

Ashgrove Calisthenics Club is a community club offering classes from Tinies (3 years) to Masters. Calisthenics is a uniquely Australian sport blending dance, ballet and gymnastics. We welcome all abilities, building confidence, teamwork and strong technique – backed by over 60 years of history. Ashburton Uniting Church, 3 Ashburn Grove, & Glen Iris Community Centre, 200 Glen Iris Road. Email ashgrovecalisthenics@gmail.com Web: https://www.ashgrovecc.org.au/

KOOYONGKOOT ALLIANCE

Back2Nettleton Friends Group Be part of a friendly group of volunteers that work to improve the native habitat and biodiversity of Nettleton Park with the help of council. We are a member of the KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA). Join us every Thursday and the 2nd Sunday of the month from 9 to 10.30am. Email back2nettletonfriends@gmail.com

---

Balwyn Rotary

Balwyn Rotary has since 1972 brought people together to create positive change. Known for the Camberwell Sunday Market, Boroondara Council Community Strengthening Grants and Biodiverse Nature Strip transformations, the club supports community projects locally, nationally and internationally with energy and heart.

Email info@balwynrotary.org.au

Return to Contents

Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society (BDTPS), first formed in 1959, continues to encourage the preservation of the local natural environment, protect areas of remnant bush, and stop the loss of the decreasing tree canopy within the City of Whitehorse. Meets bimonthly on the 4th Wednesday of the month at Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Visitor Centre, Central Rd Blackburn. Feb, April, June, Aug, Oct 3rd AGM (see website). Web: https://bdtps.wordpress.com or contact the secretary at bdtps@gmail.com

Blackburn South Probus If you'd like to enjoy retirement with friendly people, good conversation, plenty of laughs, and a wide choice of activities, our Club could be just what you are looking for. The club meets at 10.00 am on the first Wednesday of each month from February to November at the City of Whitehorse Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill. Web: probusblackburnsouth.org.au or call 0408 801 624.

Boroondara Hard Rubbish Rehome

Grassroots Action, Sustainable Solutions, Community Connections.

BHRR helps keep pre-loved items in use and out of landfill while building meaningful, local community connections. Find us on Facebook or email boroondarahardrubbishrehome@gmail.com

Box Hill Ballet Association Inc. is a Not-for profit organisation established in 1951. We offer Classical ballet (Cecchetti), Jazz, Tap, Folk, Wu Tao. Students 3yo–adult. Adult beginners. Grow Confidence. Build Friendships. Feel the Joy of Movement. w. https://www.boxhillballet.com.au/



Box Hill Community Gardens is allotment-based. The gardens were established around 30 years ago on council land. There are 34 plots, three of which are standing plots. Most people grow vegetables for their own use. As at January 2026, there was a waiting list of 1-2 years. To discuss any aspect of the garden, contact Dennis Fitzgerald by email boxhillcg@gmail.com or phone 0438 527017.

Box Hill Historical Society was formed in 1963. We hold mainly paper-based records such as photographs, manuscripts, books, ephemera and loose newspaper cuttings, with some small artefacts. We focus on the suburbs of Box Hill, Box Hill Nth & Sth, Mont Albert, Mont Albert Nth, Burwood and part of Surrey Hills. We meet 2pm on the 3rd Sunday in the month, in the Bert Lewis Meeting Room of Box Hill Library, 1040 Whitehorse Rd. Ph. 0480 651 323. e: boxhillhistory@gmail.com

Box Hill Scottish celebrates its 70th Anniversary in 2026. We meet Tuesday evenings in Koonung Heights Uniting Church Hall, Belmore Rd, Balwyn North lead by teacher Matthew and we love to welcome new dancers. All you need is soft shoes and a reasonable level of fitness. No partner required, we dance in sets. Scottish Country Dance is for normal people, not athletes! Please call Secretary Susie on 0425 883 218 or boxhillscottish@gmail.com Website boxhillscottish.com

Return to Contents

Bungalook Nursery has an abundance of indigenous plants thanks to our volunteers who have been busily propagating trees, shrubs and ground covers, and a range of wetland plants. We are open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am until 1pm and on the last Saturday of every month (except December) from 10am until 12.30pm. For more details email: wcipp@yahoo.com.au web: https://www.wcipp.org.au or phone 0473 122 534.

Camberwell Petanque Club, 2a Wakefields Grove Camberwell 3124 (off Through Road). Discover Something Different. Play Petanque at Camberwell Petanque Club. Join our community for Fun and Friendship. Quick And easy to learn. Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Find a time that suits you. We play 3 times a week – at least. Free coaching and training. Contact Wayne: cpci.secretary@gmail.com or phone 0455 878 289 or 0419 141 417

Eastern Climate Action, Melbourne. Local residents share experiences about making homes more comfortable and healthier, with lower energy bills and tackling climate change. Contact Howard Elston on 0407 785 321 or ecam.enquiries@gmail.com

Friends of Blackburn Lake Sanctuary. We hold regular working bees, the Visitor Centre is open Sundays 2-4pm. Melb. Water Waterwatch monitoring, guided walks – wildflowers, night walks & bird walks, assist with Whitehorse Environmental Education program. Visit our analemmatic sundial, yarning circle, playground; wander through bushland spotting birds & wildflowers in season. Volunteers always welcome. Contact blackylakesanctuary@gmail.com for more details or see the website for the latest activities https://blackburnlakesanctuary.org



Friends of Belmont Park meet on the 2nd & 4th Saturday of the month at 11am to protect and restore this unique park of pre-settlement trees – right in the heart of suburban Balwyn! The group focuses on increasing mid-storey planting, which • Boosts biodiversity • Provides habitat for birds and small wildlife • Strengthens the natural ecosystem • Supports long-term resilience of the park.

Email friendsofbelmontparkvictoria@gmail.com

Friends of Markham Forest Be part of a friendly group of volunteers that work to improve the native habitat and bio diversity of Markham Reserve with the help of council. A member of the KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA). Join us every 1st Sunday of the month from 9.30 to 11.30am. For updates join WhatsApp 'Friends of Markham Forest'. Email fomf3147@gmail.com

Return to Contents

Nestled along Back Creek, South Surrey Park is a cherished green corridor between Riversdale and Union Roads. The **Friends of South Surrey Park** volunteer their time to plant indigenous species, remove weeds, and keep the area clean – creating a flourishing bushland haven for both people and wildlife. Join us in caring for this special place at one of our regular working bees on a Tuesday or the last Sunday of the month 10 am to 12 noon. Email southsurreypark@gmail.com

---

Founded in 1958, **Kew Historical Society** is one of the oldest continuing historical societies in Melbourne. It works to stimulate interest in our history and heritage, publishing information and resources to inform people about Kew's history, as well as organising events relevant to our heritage. We meet 7.30pm on the 2nd Wednesday in the month (June, July August) and 8pm in the other months, in the Just Theatre, Kew Court House 188 High Street Kew e: info@kewhistoricalsociety.org.au web: https://kewhistoricalsociety.org.au/khs/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/kewhistoricalsociety

---

We at the **Kew Croquet Club** are keen to attract new members to our sport. Croquet is an absorbing game involving mallets, hoops and balls. It is excellent for hand/eye coordination and strategic thinking. At Kew, we play three variants of the game, plus the related Gateball. The Kew Croquet Club is located in Victoria Park, 500 High Street, Kew. If you would like to become a member, run an event or just have a go, email kewcroquetclub1@gmail.com or write to The Secretary KCC, 500 High St, Kew 3101 More information can be found on our website at Kew Croquet Club.



The **Kew Philharmonic Chamber Choir** is an early music community (auditioned) choir which rehearses at 7.45 pm on Monday nights at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church Kew under the direction of Stephen Kerr. We present our concerts both at HTK and at the Hawthorn Arts Centre. New singers welcome. https://kewphilharmonicchoir.weebly.com/

Menzies for Climate is committed to working for a safer future. We care about our community, and one of our goals is to bring people together to work towards positive action on climate, renewable energy and our natural environment. Activities include Community Cafe events, speaker nights, market stalls, visits to Local, State, Federal politicians, and support for other local groups' work.
Email menziesforclimate@gmail.com

Mitcham Tennis Club is a community tennis club with 5 courts at the corner of Whitehorse and Dunlavin rds, Nunawading. Our friendly club offers social tennis (any age or ability), competition, coaching (juniors to adults). Play as much as you like for a low annual membership fee. Courts also available for general public booking from our website.
Website: https://play.tennis.com.au/mitchamtennisclub
Email: secretary.mitchamtc@gmail.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/mitchamtennisclub

Return to Contents

Mont Albert North Probus Club Inc. Fun and Friendship in Retirement. 'Enriching our Lives' is our focus. We meet at 10am, on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Regular group activities include walking, book clubs, coffee club, Sunday breakfast, arts and crafts. Highlights in our calendar are social occasions, outings to fascinating places and our annual three-day Getaway. If you're interested to find out more go to https://manprobus.org.au/ or email montalbertnorthprobus@gmail.com

---

Mont Albert Village Business Association (MAVBA) brings together some 50 businesses to promote Mont Albert Village as a shopping and activity hub and celebrates its authentic heritage. Since re-incorporating in 2024, it has worked closely with Whitehorse Council on streetscape upgrades, village events and setting out the Mont Albert Village Vision and Place Activation Plan. New and prospective members always welcome.

Email natasha@gardenerandson.com Web: https://www.montalbertvillage.com/

Mont Albert Village Gardening Group (MAVGG) cares for the cottage-style gardens at Mont Albert Village Plaza and in Hamilton Street, along with replanting native trees and vegetation adjacent to the rail corridor passing through Mont Albert. A member of Landcare Victoria, the group involves some 50 listed volunteers and holds working bees on the 4th Saturday of every second month. New gardeners welcome, no experience needed.
Email bruce.harvey88@bigpond.com Ph. Bruce 0408 949 182.

Murnong First Peoples' Gathering Place invite you to care for country in our Wominjeka Garden. First Saturday of the month – 7 March 9–11am; 4 April 9–11am; 2 May 9–11am: 6 June 9–11am. We welcome new and regular volunteers to care for our Wominjeka Garden followed by a cuppa and a yarn. We recommend you wear comfortable work shoes, protective clothing, sun hat and apply sunscreen. Gardening tools provided. Location: 100 High Street, Glen Iris.

Probus Club of Donvale Hill. Friendship and fun for retirees who enjoy dining, chatting over coffee, walking, going on day trips and excursions, live theatre, etc. Phone Rob: 0417 453 761 or email: thomprwt@bigpond.com

---

The Rotary Club of Nunawading. Want to make your community a better place; want to make new friends, networks and learn new skills. Varied opportunities for you to volunteer. Contact rotarynunawading@gmail.com

---

Rotary Box Hill Burwood is a welcoming local club of volunteers bringing people together to create positive change locally and globally. We support youth programs, mental health initiatives, cultural connections, and service projects that strengthen our neighbourhood. New members and visitors always welcome. Meet at the Box Hill RSL, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 6:30pm. Email Secretary@boxhillburwoodrotary.org.au

The Rotary Club of Hawthorn meets at Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club from 12.30–2pm on Tuesdays (except second Tuesday of the month). We have a variety of guest speakers and guests are very welcome.
Please contact clubservice@hawthornrotary.org.au for more details.

U3A Hawthorn provides opportunities for seniors to learn, teach, share and to give mutual support to each other in a friendly and warm environment. Our courses cover a wide range of interest areas, from academic to physical and artistic activities. U3A Hawthorn is open to anyone over 55 who is retired or no longer working full time.
Courses are listed at u3ahawthorn.org.au/mw-courses/
w: u3ahawthorn.org.au e: mail@u3ahawthorn.org.au

Probus Club of Mitcham Nunawading is a small, friendly Probus group meeting 2nd Tuesaday each month at 10am in the Willis Room, Whitehorse Council. Meetings are short, terrific speakers and include morning tea. w: https://microsites.probussouthpacific.org/microsites/mitchamnunawading/Welcome



Speaking Made Easy is a club for women where you will learn the skills to communicate with confidence. We offer a friendly place to practice writing speeches, learn voice production and how to use gestures and descriptive word pictures to enhance your presentation. We meet 12:15–1:45pm in Meeting Room 1, Camberwell Library on the 4th Thursday of the month. Our meeting dates for 2026 are 27 August, 24 September, 22 October, 26 November and Saturday 5 December. Enq.: vic.membership@speakingmadeeasy.com.au Mb Sherrilyn Ballard 0459 186 670.

Surrey Hills & Mont Albert Progress Association is a voluntary group made up of residents concerned about the future amenity and liveability of our local area (defined by the suburbs of Surrey Hills and Mont Albert falling within postcode 3127). We advocate to governments and other decision makers for the proper consideration of the impacts of their policy and project initiatives in our area of interest.
Email shmapa3127@gmail.com

Vermont Garden Club was established c1930 by Vermont Scouts to grow vegetables during the great depression. For 95 years we've provided all things gardening, information/advice, interesting speakers, workshops, members' garden display, plant trading table, friendly atmosphere. We meet monthly (except Jan) on the 2nd Thurs at 8pm in the City of Whitehorse Horticultural Centre, 82 Jolimont Road, Forest Hill. Annual memb.: $25 single, $35 family. All members receive monthly newsletter. Further info: Ph. Louise on 0401 431 239 or email vermontgardenclub@gmail.com

Box Hill/Mitcham VIEW Club One of our undertakings is to support the Smith Family's "Learning for Life" program. We regularly hear from one of "our" 9 students and share in their successes and plans. We meet on the 4th Sunday of the month at Poppies, in Canterbury Rd, Blackburn; also Morning Coffee at Forest Hill Shopping Centre, on the 2nd Monday; or Happy Hour from 5-6pm at The Platform Pantry, Railway Road, Blackburn, on the 3rd Friday. Email at maxval60@gmail.com

Return to Contents

The next edition

The next edition of *Eastsider News* will be our February 2027 issue.

We will be accepting articles for this until 20 January 2027. 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

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.

Copyright © 2026. Copyright rests equally with the named authors and Independent Community News Group Incorporated. All rights are reserved but, consistent with the community spirit of the venture, a Commons approach to reproducing material is taken on the understanding that it is accompanied by an attribution which refers to both *Eastsider News* and the author, and a copy of the reproduction is sent to eastsidernews1@gmail.com

Responsibility for material related to elections is taken by named authors and Independent Community News Group Incorporated. We accept advertising in good faith, but readers need to apply *caveat emptor*.

If you value Eastsider News, please consider volunteering with us

The *Eastsider News* team would love 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. These include 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. Please respond to our plea for help. *Eastsider News* is, without exception, a volunteer-run organisation and all positions are unpaid. However, if you have time to give, you will find it fully rewarding! 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.



Quizling Answers

1. GRANT (Harding, Carter, Obama, Clinton, Roosevelt), HAYES (Bush, Obama, Kennedy, Coolidge, Adams). Other combinations may be possible.
2. *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?*

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.