EastsiderNews
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FREE
News, views and items of interest for residents of Melbourne's east
November 2026

A capsule in time







Photos (from left): Mayor Jessie McCallum buries the capsule in 2001; The capsule exhumed; The reburial ceremony.

ON the seventeenth of March 2051 (Trump permitting), a time capsule will be unearthed next to the Federation rotunda on South Parade, Blackburn.

But I'm getting a bit ahead of myself. This article is the story of an unearthing that happened earlier this year, and the subsequent reburial of the capsule on 2 October.

But why was it there in the first place?

To celebrate 100 years of Federation, a Blackburn Chamber of Commerce committee had applied for and received a grant from the Commonwealth Government to carry out activities and build the Rotunda as a lasting monument. The capsule was buried on 17 March, 2001 as part of this project, a year after the rotunda was opened.

It was filled with contributions from local residents, school children and businesses in Blackburn. Historic documents, photographs, information pertaining to the Federation year celebrations, artwork and forgotten technology such as VHS and audio cassette tapes were included.

But again, I'm getting ahead of myself.

The capsule was unearthed on 17 March this year, and the capsule and contents were placed in the hands of Whitehorse Historical Society, to oversee archiving and to provide guidance in the decision of what would be contained in it when it was reburied. We at WHS converted the VHS and audio cassettes to digital media for preservation and ease of retrieval, as they were added to the collection. We then looked forward to the day when the time capsule would be returned to the earth.

The day came – and so did the weather, with rain that was both canine and feline; perhaps the gods intended to replicate the day of the original burial, which photographs show was similarly wet.

Those attending the event crowded under the cover of the rotunda while the capsule was taken into the dry of a nearby shop for resealing, the need for the prevention of moisture entering the container and causing mould being paramount. It reappeared, its hidden contents consisting of some items chosen for reburial, and some new ones, including photos taken that show the Blackburn Station shopping area as it looks in 2026.

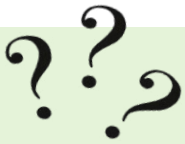
Eventually the container was laid in its (initially somewhat watery) grave and covered up to wait for a Rip Van Winkle-like appearance twenty-five years hence.

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Quizling Questions



Answers on page 35

1. If Generous sort = KIND, can you solve these other double meaning clues?
   Mixing the six initials of the correct answers will solve the double clue, Fix brush.
   - Look noble(4)
   - Moved camp (8)
   - Condition jockey (5)
   - Consider host (9)
   - Cattle drive (5)
   - Summit custom (10)
2. Remarkably this three-letter word has a five-letter homophone, which can then move its end letter to the front to spell a synonym of the original word. Name this unique trio.

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

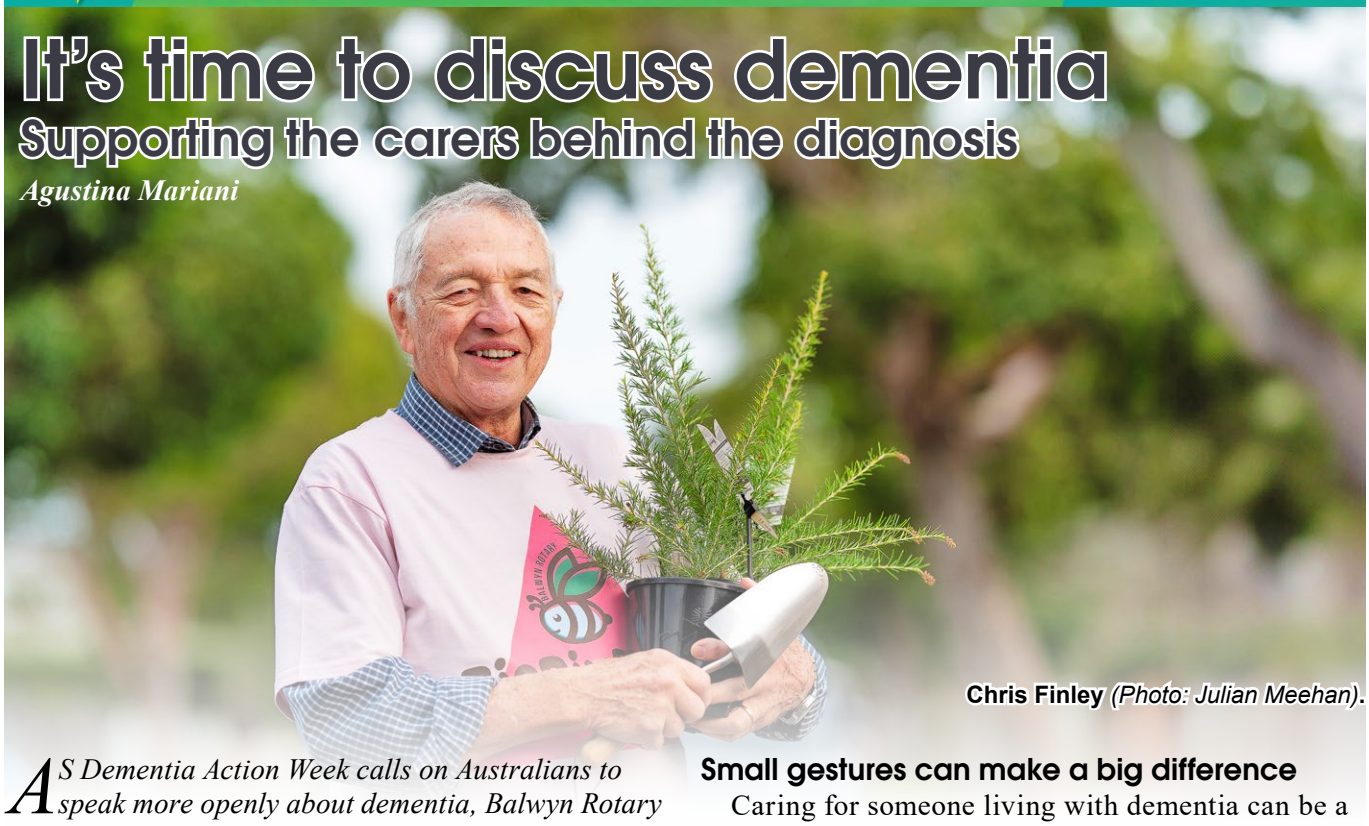
Independent Community News Group Incorporated acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters of the Eastsider News focus area, and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

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

It's time to discuss dementia

Supporting the carers behind the diagnosis

Agustina Mariani



Chris Finley *(Photo: Julian Meehan).*

AS Dementia Action Week calls on Australians to speak more openly about dementia, Balwyn Rotary member Chris Finley highlights the importance of peer support and the small acts of kindness that can make a difference to carers.

Dementia is Australia's leading cause of death, yet conversations about the condition remain difficult for many people. For the hundreds of thousands of Australians living with dementia, and the more than 1.7 million people involved in their care, silence can contribute to stigma and leave families feeling isolated.

During Dementia Action Week, held from 21 to 27 September, Dementia Australia encouraged people to help change this through its message: "It's time to talk about dementia".

For Chris Finley, an 85-year-old retired widower, that conversation needs to include not only people living with dementia, but also the carers supporting them every day.

Finley volunteers in several roles with Dementia Australia, including peer-to-peer support for carers. The role connects him with people seeking support from someone who understands the pressures of caring.

"A support person is put in touch with someone requesting support and six contacts are suggested, usually over six months," he explained. These conversations offer carers a space to discuss difficult situations with someone who understands their experiences. They may also provide practical suggestions to help them navigate the challenges of their role.

Small gestures can make a big difference

Caring for someone living with dementia can be a 24/7 responsibility, with carers constantly balancing present challenges and worrying about the future. "Caring is a 24/7 task, planning (and worrying about) the present and the future," Finley said. The emotional pressure can be particularly difficult when caring for a close family member, while complicated family dynamics and a lack of support can add to the stress. Yet many carers hesitate to ask for help because they feel embarrassed or do not want to burden others. "We tend to maintain a 'stiff upper lip'," he said. Finley believes peer support can help carers feel understood and better equipped to manage their responsibilities, but he also emphasises the role the wider community can play. Rather than simply saying, "If there is anything you need, just let me know," friends and neighbours can offer specific help, such as sharing a coffee, doing the shopping, helping with household tasks or taking the person living with dementia for a walk to give the carer a short break. He encourages carers to communicate their needs and believes workplaces and community organisations could also help by providing dementia-specific information sessions. "With support the role is manageable," he said.

Breaking the silence

Finley believes public discussion and community education can help dementia become a topic people feel more comfortable addressing.

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It's time to discuss dementia

Continued from page 3

He also stresses that dementia is not a single condition with the same effects on everyone. Understanding these differences is essential to providing appropriate support. For anyone unsure how to approach a person or family affected by dementia, his advice is to begin gently and empathetically, rather than telling them what they should do.

Above all, he wants carers to know they are not alone.

"Understanding the need for carers to continue to feel part of the community and not feel isolated" is one of the changes he would most like to see, he said.

For carers who are feeling overwhelmed, Finley recommends seeking support sooner rather than later.

Dementia Australia's **National Dementia Helpline** provides information, advice and support for people living with dementia, their carers, family members and friends.

As Dementia Action Week reminds Australians, talking about dementia is not only about raising awareness of a diagnosis. It is also about recognising the people behind it, listening without judgement and ensuring that carers receive the support they need.

Sometimes, that support begins with a conversation. Sometimes, it means offering a practical hand—and following through.

Visit dementia.org.au/get-support/national-dementia-helpline for information and resources, or call 1800 100 500, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Foster Carers needed!

Glenys Grant



FOSTER Care Week, September 13-19, recognised Victoria's foster carers and the important role they play in the lives of children and young people, while raising awareness of the growing need for more foster carers.

This year's theme, *Open Doors. Open Hearts. Open Opportunities*, recognised the many ways people can support children and young people through foster care and encouraged Victorians to explore how caring for a child can easily fit into their lifestyle.

Following on from this, foster care organisation Life Without Barriers ran a *Sharing is Caring* Foster Care Awareness Campaign, to highlight foster care and encourage more Victorians to consider opening their hearts and homes to babies, children and young people who need safe, stable, and nurturing care.

Foster Carers are desperately needed. Misconceptions and reported past experiences have made those eligible wary. But improved facilities and circumstances mean carers are no longer untrained and isolated.

Fostering is now flexible and a good experience. Carers are respected in the community, ably trained and well supported. Counselling is available to make the role easier for carers and their families.

Carers may be couples, single, LGBTQIA+ community, retired, homeowners or renters, pet owners and be full or part time employed. They must be Australian citizens, pass pre-service training of about eight months and go through a vigorous Police check.

Placements can be single or multiple. Siblings may be fostered together, but each child fostered must have their own room. Those needing therapeutic or specialised care receive it from trained professionals and care can extend to students more than 18 years-old via Better Futures.

Types of foster care include emergency or crisis care, respite, short term, long term, kinship, guardianship or care for those living with a disability. Ages range from babies to late teens. Carers have a choice of the type of care they want to provide and who they accept.

Foster carers are not paid a wage. They receive a fortnightly, tax-free carer allowance to contribute towards the day-to-day costs of caring for a child. Payment is on a tiered level, according to the child's age, care provided, needs and the state or territory lived in.

Downsides of fostering include allowances not being enough to cover expenses, especially for relatives who take on the role during a family crisis. Also, there can be a delay in reimbursement of funds outlaid to outfit a newly fostered child. Finally, as some sad statistics have shown, reform is definitely needed regarding early re-unification with families.

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Foster Carers needed!

Continued from page 4

Eastern suburbs-based Samantha and her partner are active foster carers with private agency Key Assets Australia. They have one child of their own and over the past five years have opened their home to 12 other children needing care, including one long term teen who is now working.

Samantha is in part time paid employment, attends training and communication sessions once a month, has access to the Carers Advisory group and regular coffee catch ups with other carers. She loves helping youngsters.

She says "Kindness and patience are definitely foster care prerequisites. It's a rewarding experience to know that you are giving a child the opportunity for a better future and lovely to see that child smile because they feel safe and loved".

For further information visit Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Fostering.

Road trauma, Ryda, and Rotary

Glenys Grant



Ryda trailer and upkeep for three years purchased by eight Rotary clubs.

EVERY young life lost is a tragedy that ripples through families and communities. Young people are significantly overrepresented in road deaths and serious injury data in every jurisdiction.

So, 25 years ago, Rotary had the vision to tackle this problem and began a road safety program.

It grew enormously, then was taken on by Road Safety Education Limited (RSE) a not-for- profit organisation, which is now the leading and only national provider of youth road safety education throughout Australia and New Zealand.

The program is called Ryda and, to date, more than 900,000 students, accompanied by teachers, have attended.

Recently, three local colleges, Forest Hill, Boronia and Mullauna, combined to send 140 students to a Ryda workshop day.

Forest Hill College was part sponsored by Nunawading Rotary. Leading teacher Adrienne thanked them for providing students with the opportunity to participate in such a valuable program. She said "I was fortunate to accompany our group of Year 10 students and was blown away by the quality of the program, as were the teachers who accompanied me. The feedback from our students was also extremely positive.

"The sessions were informative, interactive and thought-provoking, with the Crash Investigation

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Gabriel Ng MP
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Authorised by Gabriel Ng MP, 651 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster 3108



Road trauma, Ryda, and Rotary

Continued from page 5

session being particularly powerful. This session was supported by Shane, a young man who had been imprisoned for dangerous driving. Hearing his story and reflecting on the decisions he made on the day of the accident had a profound impact on everyone in the session.

"I am sure his story will stay with our students for a long time and encourage them to think carefully about the consequences of their actions."

Ryda's aim is to end road trauma and injury by investing expertise and resources to equip young people to take lifelong responsible action.

The program is accessible and affordable to all year 10 students and focuses on outlining core safety topics. Workshops include the following: understanding the relationship between speed and the ability to stop, vehicle safety features and safe following distances, investigating a real-life crash and prevention, exploring noise, mind state and how personality impacts risk, understanding other road user's perspectives and devising mitigation strategies for key risk areas for young drivers and passengers.

Ryda has direct engagement with schools, students and parents and relationships with governments. States other than Victoria help support the program financially. Other funders include Rotary, local Governments, and Bendigo Bank, ensuring that students never pay more than $30 per day. Attendance can range from 75 to 300 students per workshop

Facilitators number 561. They are highly trained crash survivors, police, driving instructors, sociologists and educators who average 10 workshops each.

Ryda's Community Partner is Rotary. It assists schools with funding students and six to nine volunteers per workshop. This year, in Victoria's Eastern suburbs, the program averaged three workshops per week.

Bob Williams, affectionately dubbed 'Mr Ryda' by all, is the Rotary-Ryda Volunteer Co-ordinator for Rotary District 9815. His 2026 report shows involvement of Rotarians is huge, with 17 district clubs providing volunteers for 33 Ryda days, 40 schools and 4,500 students. Bob's Rotary Club of Nunawading provided 52 volunteers on 16 workshop days averaging seven hours per day, or 360 community service hours. Great work!

The findings of a 2025 Road Safety Grants scheme Queensland Government funded evaluation confirmed Ryda as a program of the highest standard, professionally delivered, evidence-based, and fundamentally aligned with best-practice principles in road safety education. underscoring its unique role in reducing youth road trauma.

Ryda is life-saving education that every teenager deserves.

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No one chooses to be homeless

Amanda Donohoe CEO Servants Housing

THERE is a conversation in the media and amongst services like Servants that housing should be a human right – not simply somewhere to sleep, but somewhere they can feel safe, belong and rebuild their lives.

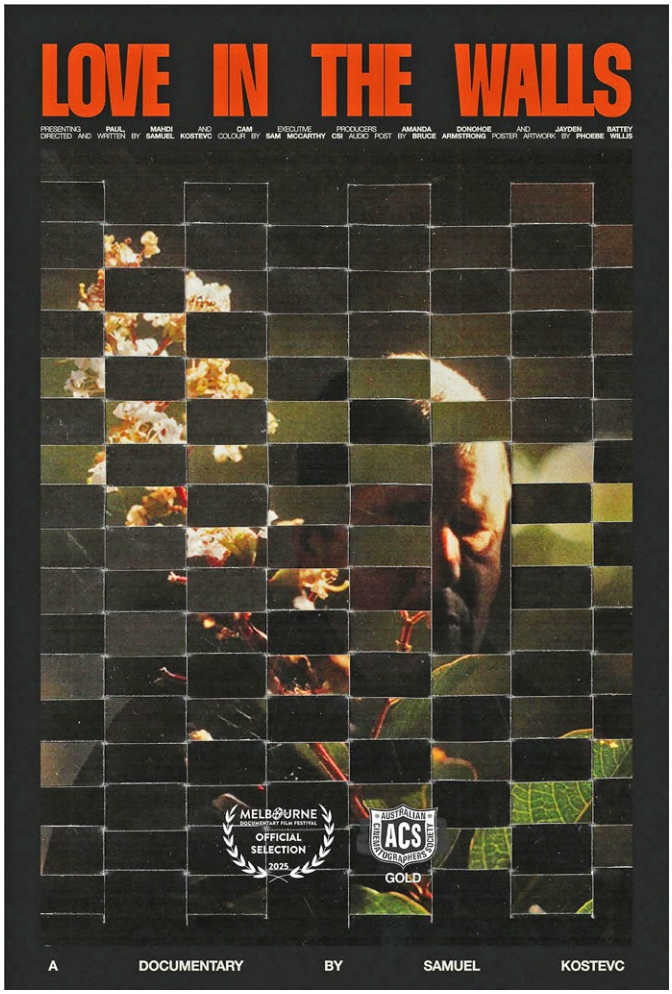
It would mean designing our housing system around people rather than waiting until they reach crisis point. We would invest more in social and community housing, provide support when people need it, and recognise that stable housing is the foundation for better health, relationships, employment and participation in community.

At Servants, we see every day what can happen when people have not only affordable housing, but also safety, connection and a sense of belonging. Our tag line is 'Respect, dignity, hope and opportunity' so for us, we strive to make these true in people's lives.

What can community members can do to support people who are homeless or facing housing insecurity?

I admit I have a Servants bias to that question. As our documentary *Love Between the Walls* showed:

1. See the person, not the homelessness.
2. Treat people with dignity and respect. Challenge the assumptions and stigma that often surround homelessness. People become homeless for many reasons, and it can happen to people from all walks of life.
3. Support organisations providing housing and practical help.
4. Donate, volunteer, buy from our social enterprise 'For The Love Of Good', attend our events or support other organisations working in homelessness and community housing. Community support gives small organisations the capacity to do much more.
5. Use your voice and use your email.
6. Talk to family, friends and elected representatives about the need for more affordable, social and community housing. Homelessness cannot be solved by charities alone, we need policies and investment that make safe, secure housing available to everyone who needs it.



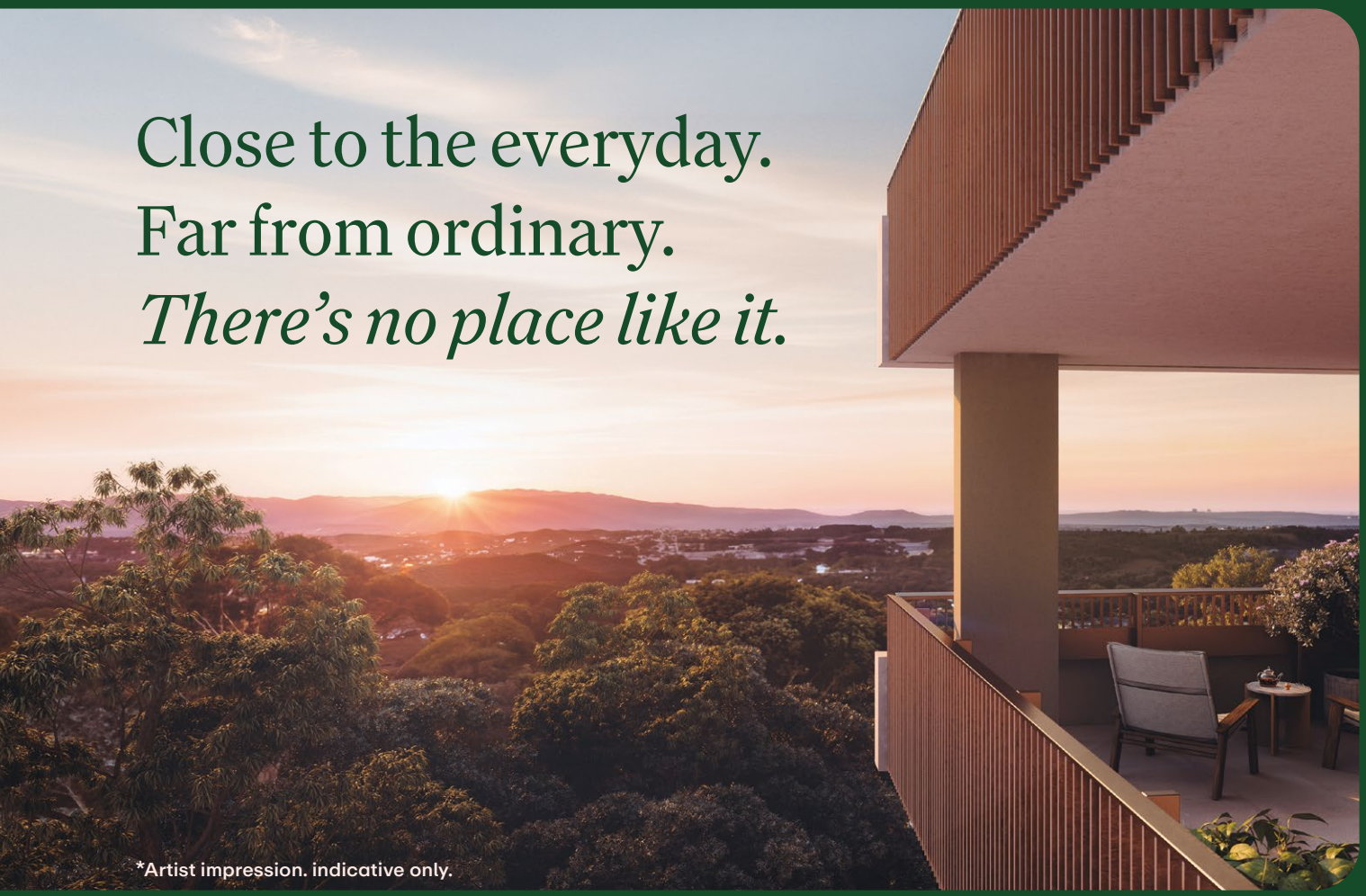


References:

1. In Victoria, women escaping domestic violence wait an average of 18.6 months for social housing, double the Victorian state government's target of 10.5 months. https://chp.org.au/article/victorias-urgent-social-housing-waitlist-passes-40000-threshold/
2. Infrastructure Victoria 2025-55 Strategy. Recommendation #1: The Victorian Government should invest in a 15-year program to build 60,000 new social homes. www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/topics/housing/recommendations/build-more-social-homes?from=/topics/housing

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Bin basket trial in Boroondara

Priya Mohandoss

WHILE strolling through your local surrounds you may have come across some strategically placed white wired baskets attached to the side of public litter bins.

During the past few months, Boroondara Council has been trialing a new method of recycling via the use of bin baskets as a part of Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme (CDS Vic), a State government initiative endorsing the recycling of approved containers for a 10-cent refund.

For the trial, the bin baskets have been assigned to specific areas with at least one being located in each of the 13 main suburbs within Boroondara.

Cr Wes Gault, Mayor of Boroondara said: "We are in the process of rolling out 200 of these new baskets across Boroondara, and we have already had great feedback on how well they are working."

This trial provides another opportunity for residents who are unable to drop their eligible items at refund points, such as reverse vending machines or over-the-counter sites. As a result, they can now put them in bin baskets whilst pursuing day-to-day activities. In turn, this allows for those who do use the CDS Vic system to obtain the reimbursement from these items for either personal use or towards a community group or charity.

Eligible items that can be left in the bin baskets are those that have the 10c mark on their packaging such as:

- Soft drink cans and bottles
- Bottled waters, both plastic and glass
- Small, flavoured milk drinks
- Beer and cider cans and bottles
- Sports drinks and spirit-based mixed drinks

The bin baskets offer a practical means to collect eligible items and assist in the recovery of resources for reuse, such as aluminum, In addition, this initiative will do much to reduce the amount of litter accumulating in landfill.

"By the time we are done, more than two thirds of public litter bins will have a basket, providing a convenient alternative place for residents to place eligible containers."

VicReturn, the not-for profit scheme co-ordinator that oversees CDS Vic, will then determine the fate of the trial after its completion on December 31.

For more details on the bin basket trials, refund points and item eligibility, visit: https://cdsvic.org.au/bin-baskets



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Green, Resilient and Sustainable

A Low-Water Canterbury Garden

Julie Mulhauser

AS we head into summer, it is worth remembering that simple strategies can help us design and maintain green, resilient and sustainable gardens that use less water.

Soil health and organic mulch

A green, resilient and sustainable garden starts with healthy soil. Improving soil structure and supporting its biological activity through the addition of organic matter helps create the foundations for a resilient garden.

Organic mulch is a simple, cost-effective way to reduce evaporation, moderate soil temperatures, suppress weeds and add organic matter as it decomposes. Together, healthy soil and organic mulch help plants make better use of available moisture.

Ground shaping to retain rainfall

Gentle ground shaping to capture and retain rainfall within the garden is a simple, low-maintenance strategy.

By slowing surface runoff and encouraging water to soak into the soil, thoughtful ground shaping can help plants thrive, reduce mulch movement and minimise rapid stormwater flows.

Plant choice and placement

Choosing plants suited to the local climate, soil and rainfall, and positioning them to reduce heat and wind stress, can substantially reduce irrigation needs.

Indigenous plants are particularly valuable in water-wise garden design. They can also provide food, shelter and habitat for native birds, insects and other urban wildlife, bringing nature closer to home.

26 years of sustainable gardening: a low-water Canterbury case study

This 26-year-old garden in Canterbury demonstrates what is possible on a conventional residential block. It supports four large canopy trees, two microforests and multiple layers of vegetation providing habitat for small birds — all without supplementary watering.

The garden illustrates how thoughtful design, appropriate plant selection and healthy soil can help create a green, resilient garden that works with its local environment rather than relying on regular irrigation.

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Safer backyards for wildlife

Julie Mulhauser



VICTORIANS can help protect birds, possums and bats by swapping dangerous fruit tree netting for wildlife-safe alternatives at no cost, as a successful net swap program expands to more communities across the state.

Residents in Boroondara, Whitehorse and 16 other municipalities can take part in the program, which aims to remove illegal fruit tree netting that can trap and seriously injure wildlife.

Many residents may be unaware that the netting they use to protect fruit trees is illegal. In Victoria, netting used on household fruit trees must have a mesh size of 5mm x 5mm or less. Larger mesh can entangle wildlife, sometimes resulting in serious injury or death. Residents can face on-the-spot fines for using non-compliant netting.

The expanded program builds on a successful pilot involving RSPCA Victoria, the Conservation Regulator, Zoos Victoria, Wildlife Victoria, Animal Welfare Victoria and five municipal councils, including the City of Boroondara.

During the pilot, 614 illegal fruit tree nets were collected and 359 wildlife-safe nets were distributed, highlighting both community willingness to protect wildlife and the challenge of removing older, illegal netting that has remained in use since the ban took effect on 1 September 2021.

Wildlife Victoria reported 320 rescues involving wildlife caught in illegal household fruit tree netting over the past 12 months, underlining the ongoing risks posed by unsafe netting in residential backyards.

Chief Conservation Regulator Callie Donaldson said removing illegal netting was an important step in reducing these risks.

"Every illegal net removed from circulation is one less risk to birds, possums and threatened grey-headed flying-foxes," Ms Donaldson said.

Boroondara Mayor Cr Wes Gault encouraged residents to take advantage of the free program and help protect local wildlife.

"Swapping your old nets for brand new ones is free, and most importantly when you make the swap you are playing a part in keeping our wildlife safe from harm."

Residents can find information about the program through the City of Boroondara and Whitehorse City Council websites.

Anyone who finds wildlife entangled in fruit tree netting should avoid attempting to handle or free the animal themselves. Instead, contact 136 186 to find an experienced wildlife rescuer or use the Help for Injured Wildlife Tool.

By replacing unsafe netting with wildlife-safe alternatives, residents can help make their backyards safer for Victoria's native wildlife.





PICTURES (from top left): Grey-headed Flying-fox entangled in an illegal net; Illegal netting; Legal netting.

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Solidarity and Leadership

How Relief in Nepal and Australia's Energy Future Go Hand in Hand

Julie Mulhauser



EMERGENCY relief supplies funded by the 6 September Balwyn Rotary Camberwell Sunday Market fundraiser are now on their way to communities affected by flash flooding in Nepal, via the Rotary Club of Kathmandu and Rotaract Club of Kathmandu.

The valleys of Nepal are on the front line of a warming climate, with vulnerable communities increasingly exposed to extreme weather and flooding. Global warming acts as a critical risk multiplier. It takes existing hazards and can amplify them into sudden, catastrophic flash floods.

For families living in the Himalayas, global warming is not an abstract future debate. It is a present-day risk. What happened in Nepal is not only Nepal's tragedy. It is a warning from the Himalayas about the growing climate risks facing our shared world.

What we do here in Australia matters.

Australia can do more than provide material aid after disaster strikes. As a wealthy middle power with abundant renewable energy resources, we have the capability to decouple our economy from fossil fuels.

Reducing Australia's own emissions matters – but so does demonstrating to the world that a prosperous economy can make the transition to clean energy, and that it is both practical and achievable.

Solidarity in times of crisis, and leadership on the causes of the crisis, can go hand in hand. Let us turn solidarity into partnership – strengthening disaster preparedness, protecting water security, and championing the global transition to clean energy.

Because resilience is not built by one community or one country alone.

Together, we can turn compounding risks into collective resilience – and build a safer, cleaner world for generations to come.

Julie Mulhauser is the 2026-27 President of Balwyn Rotary.

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Nature protection is going backwards in Victoria. Forests still being logged. National parks defunded. Marine life protections gutted. Wildlife homes carved up. Ferals protected and running free. **We're keeping track. And pushing back.**

PUT NATURE BACK ON THE AGENDA THIS NOVEMBER

VICTORIANSFORNATURE.AU

This is an advertisement. Authorised by M Ruchel, Executive Director, VNPA, Suite 3.05, 60 Leicester St, Carlton VIC 3053

Students plant tube stock

Ruthie Scharley

PUPILS from St Cecilia's Primary School, Glen Iris, recently brought energy and enthusiasm to a muddy planting day, as they helped restore the banks of Gardiners Creek and strengthen the local environment at Nettleton Park, Glen Iris.

Nearly 100 Year 3 and 4 students eagerly participated, planting 580 indigenous tubestock. They worked alongside the Back2Nettleton Friends Group (B2N) and City of Boroondara Urban Biodiversity and Revegetation staff to help create habitat for local wildlife and support the ongoing regeneration of the creek banks.

Despite overcast skies and drizzle, spirits were high. Students rolled up their sleeves, dug planting holes and planted several tubestock each, supported by experienced adults.

B2N leader Antony Braakhuis praised their contribution: "The kids were keen to be involved. The job they did was valued as they were part of an important local revegetation project. They did it very well!"

Bound by Gardiners Creek and Back Creek, which meet at a picturesque confluence, Nettleton Park combines valuable habitat with a busy sporting oval. Cricket, rugby and soccer are played there throughout the year, and several local schools, including St Cecilia's, use the park regularly. Some students also have family connections to the oval, with their fathers having played cricket there.

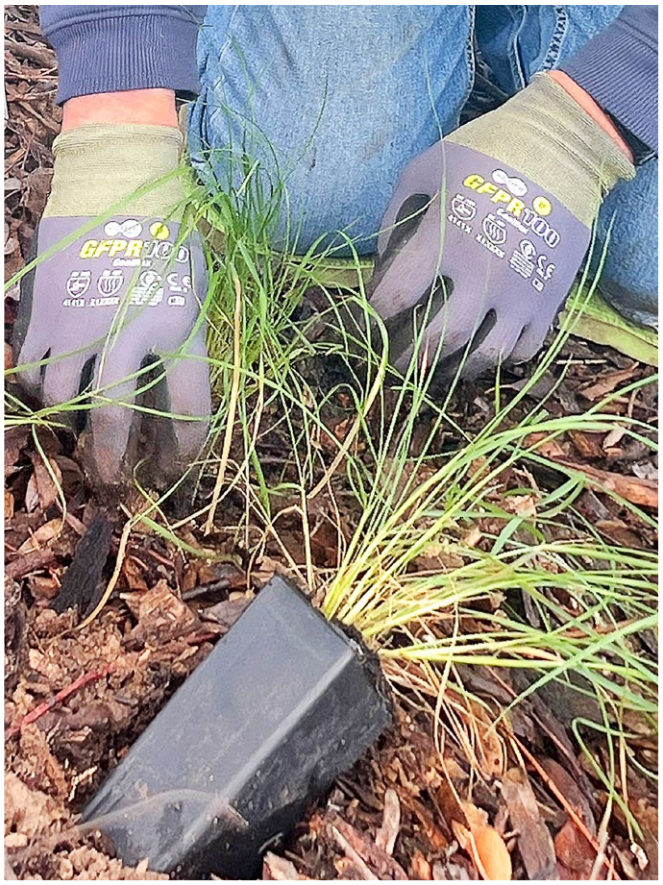
Teacher Anna Clarkson coordinated the school's logistics and safety planning for the day. As someone who incorporates sustainability and biodiversity into classroom learning, she welcomed the opportunity for students to put their environmental knowledge into practice, and learn more.

The day showed that caring for the environment is everyone's responsibility, whatever their age. The students' involvement may also inspire them to return, care for their plants and take an ongoing interest in their local park.

As the day came to a close Antony Braakhuis gave special thanks to Back2Nettleton Friends and the City of Boroondara team, together with the students, dedicated teachers and parents from St Cecilia's, whose support made the day such a success.

The plants may be small today, but the seeds of environmental responsibility have certainly been sown!

Ruthie Scharley is a member of the Back2Nettleton Friends Group – Kooyong Koot Alliance.





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Clean Energy Cuts Bills

John Nihill

THE cost of living is a headache every day for a great many Australians, and the number one concern across Victoria for the State election in November. Household gas and electricity bills are an important factor in cost-of-living stress, and generating cheap and clean energy matters to all of us.

Solar and wind energy, backed by battery and hydro storage, is now the cheapest form of energy in Australia. It is continually becoming more efficient and cheaper.

Already, over 45% of Australia's electricity is generated by solar and wind backed by storage.

https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/what-is-the-cheapest-form-of-electricity-for-australia/

So why are our electricity bills so high and why are renters and apartment residents missing out? And what can be done about it?

Firstly, gas will be needed for a few years to manage peaks in demand. Before 2015, gas was relatively cheap and abundant, but now with more than 80% of our gas being shipped overseas we are paying world market rates. Secondly, our coal fired power stations are old and unreliable, and coal power outages cause electricity price spikes. Thirdly, electricity retailers take advantage of customer loyalty and often charge unfair prices. The ACCC recently reported that nearly 40% of Australian households are paying too much for electricity. Without renewable energy flowing into the system, electricity costs would be much higher.

Many Victorians are generating and storing their own electricity at very low cost, and installing energy efficient appliances. Most renters and apartment residents are not able to access these programs. Our government can further support renters, landlords, owners' corporations and local communities so that all of have these options.

To help everyone know the relevant policies of candidates in this state election, Environment Victoria and Friends of the Earth have drawn up this Cheaper Power Pledge:

1. **Give Victorians the cheapest, most reliable power:** I will back the investment needed to grow Victoria's renewable energy and storage infrastructure, and support delivering Victoria's legislated climate targets as our ageing coal plants retire. I will protect the constitutional ban on fracking, and won't support diverting public funding into slow, expensive technology like nuclear power when cheaper, ready-to-go solutions already exist.
2. **Ensure no Victorian worker, family, or community is left behind:** I will support the policies, funding and genuine community involvement needed to make sure every Victorian benefits from cheap, clean renewable energy: from homeowners, to renters and apartment residents who are too often stuck with old, costly gas appliances they have no power to replace.
3. **Protect Victorians from price shocks:** I will back accelerating the shift to cheaper renewable energy and support electrifying homes and businesses, so Victorians rely less on costly, volatile gas and unreliable coal and are shielded from global price shocks. I will support the State Electricity Commission's place in Victoria's Constitution, because Victorians deserve an energy provider that answers to them, not shareholders.

Local environment groups Australian Conservation Foundation Eastern Rosellas and Chisholm Climate Action Network have been contacting the candidates in the electorates of Box Hill and Ashwood, asking them to sign the pledge. More details about the pledge and a full list of candidates who have signed is available at this link: candidates list

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Electrification saves money

Julie Mulhouser

ON 11 October, Electrify Boroondara held its fourth *Electrify Your Life* expo at Hawthorn Arts Centre, helping households navigate their electrification journey to save money, reduce emissions and improve home comfort.

Operating cost savings

Energy Victoria modelling estimates that switching from gas to efficient electric appliances can deliver the following annual savings:

- Around $2,230 a year for existing homes with solar.
- Around $1,900 a year for existing homes without solar.
- Up to $1,920 a year for new all-electric homes with solar.
- Around $990 a year for new all-electric homes without solar.

These are modelled estimates rather than guaranteed savings. Actual savings depend on household energy use, tariffs, appliance efficiency and rooftop solar generation.

New homes: potential upfront cost savings

New all-electric homes can avoid the cost of a new gas connection, gas plumbing and gas appliances. Reverse-cycle air conditioning provides efficient heating and cooling in one system, potentially avoiding the need for separate heating and cooling equipment.

Heat pump technology saves money through efficiency

Heat pumps used for space heating and hot water can be around three to five times more efficient than gas or conventional electric resistance heating, depending on the system and operating conditions.

Space heating accounts for a substantial share of household energy use in Melbourne, while water heating is another significant contributor. Switching to efficient electric appliances therefore offers considerable potential to reduce running costs. Further savings may be achieved by using rooftop solar electricity to operate these appliances.

Removing the last gas appliance avoids the daily gas supply charge

Households that permanently abolish their gas connection and close their gas account can avoid the ongoing daily gas supply charge.

The charge varies by retailer and tariff. At $1.50 a day, it amounts to approximately $548 a year.

Canterbury case study

By switching to all-electric appliances, installing a 6.6 kW rooftop solar PV system, sealing draughts and installing ceiling and wall insulation, a Canterbury household reduced its energy use by 80%.

Rooftop solar supplies roughly half of the home's energy needs by coordinating household electricity use with solar generation.

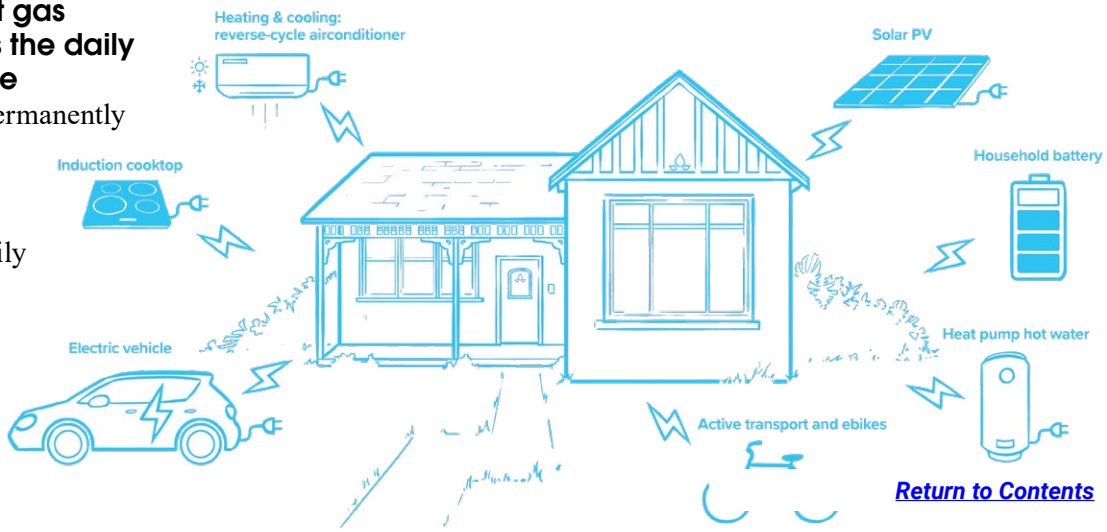
The project illustrates how electrification, solar generation and energy-efficiency improvements can work together to reduce energy consumption and improve home comfort. These measures can also help maintain comfortable indoor temperatures during extreme weather.

New electrification and energy-efficiency standards for Victorian buildings

Victoria is introducing new requirements for residential buildings during 2027.

- From 1 January 2027 — New homes: New residential buildings covered by the regulations will need to be all-electric, subject to applicable exemptions and transitional arrangements.
- From 1 March 2027 — Existing homes: End-of-life gas hot-water systems that cannot be repaired will generally need to be replaced with electric alternatives, subject to applicable exemptions.
- From 1 March 2027 — Rental properties: Updated minimum energy-efficiency standards begin. Requirements for efficient fixed heating and other improvements will apply according to their individual conditions and commencement arrangements.

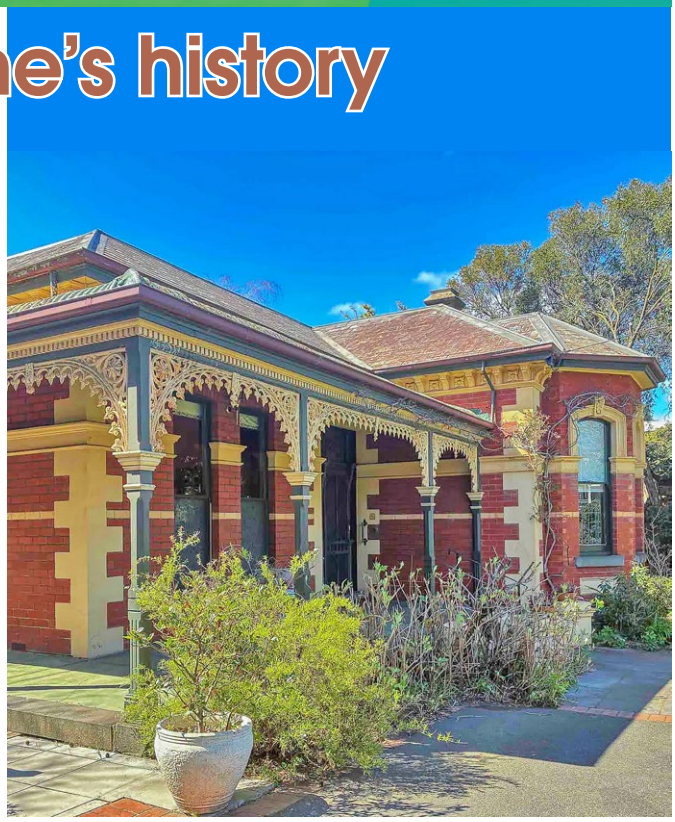
Homeowners, landlords and renters should check the relevant Victorian Government guidance to understand which requirements apply to their property.



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Uncover your home's history

Penny Underwood



WHEN was your house built? Who lived there before you? What did the street look like a century ago?

Hawthorn Historical Society has launched a $25 house history research service to help residents find out more about their homes and the people who lived in them.

The personalised House History Starter Guide draws on historical records to introduce a property's past and suggest avenues for further research. The Society aims to provide each guide within one month.

The service is designed for people who are curious about their home but unsure where to begin. It may also interest those planning renovations or tracing a family address.

"Once you start looking, you can find yourself learning about the whole street and the people who helped make it what it is," says Society historian Liz Yewers.

The Society is increasingly called on by heritage groups and historians seeking detailed evidence to support their work. Its house history service draws on that same local knowledge and research expertise to help residents understand their own properties.

Owners may already have clues: a house name, an old photograph, papers from a previous owner or signs of earlier alterations. Research can help put these details into context.

Depending on the available records, the guide may identify the approximate construction period, early owners or residents, the original subdivision and changes to the address. It may include maps, plans, directory entries or newspaper references, alongside an account of the findings and useful research leads.

Rate books help trace ownership and occupation; street directories list residents and businesses. Subdivision plans show how land was divided into house blocks, while historical drainage maps can record buildings and outbuildings. Newspapers may yield sale advertisements, family notices or accounts of residents' lives.

Piecing these sources together takes care. Street numbers change, houses may once have been known by name, and an owner may never have lived at the property. Comparing records helps researchers follow the right house and the right people.

"The guide gives people somewhere to start and helps them work out what to investigate next," Liz says.

For an additional $50, owners can request a historic title search and receive a digital copy of the title, suitable for framing.

Those wishing to continue their research can bring their guide to the Society's rooms at 25 Inglesby Road, Camberwell, for help using research resources.

Kept with the property's documents, the guide can be passed to future owners and added to over time with family papers, photographs and new discoveries.

With Christmas approaching, it could also make a thoughtful gift for someone interested in their home and neighbourhood. Society membership offers another option, with newsletters and invitations to talks, walks and events.

To order, provide the property address, your contact details and any questions you would particularly like explored.

For details and orders, visit hawthornhistoricalsociety.com.au/house-history

Penny Underwood is the President of the Hawthorn Historical Society

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William Gillies, Philanthropist

Helen Harris OAM and Glenys Grant OAM

IN September a ceremony was held in memory of philanthropist William Gillies at Box Hill Cemetery, and a plaque was unveiled by Helen Harris OAM, the President of the Box Hill Historical Society. The monument had been prepared by stonemasons D.P. Jones & Co., and the surrounds had been beautified with indigenous plants by volunteers from Greenlink Nursery

Helen, aided by Jocelyn Saunders, a Melbourne University Honours student, spoke of the life of Gillies, and of the long-lasting beneficial effects on Victorian school children courtesy of his perpetual bequest. Local resident Gwennyth Baker OAM, spoke of happy memories as a student in a small rural school, and of receiving a regular supply of books from the bequest.



William Gillies was born in Irvine, Ayrshire Scotland and graduated from Glasgow University in 1877 with a Master of Arts. He and his elder sister Anna arrived in Melbourne in 1880 with over £3,000, which he invested in the share market, local banks and investment companies. His brother Robert arrived later.

William took a job with Toorak College, then a private boy's school, and taught there until the late 1880s; he also lectured on literature at several private girls' schools and became friends with many intellectuals and politicians.

In 1886, at the height of the land boom, William purchased for £1,100, nine acres of land with a small weatherboard house and an orchard, fronting Station Street, Box Hill.

By 1890 he had given up teaching to concentrate on fruit growing and land investment. Using the increased value of the Station Street land as security, William borrowed over £2,000 to invest in other property.

Later that year the land bubble finally burst, and a devastating financial crash occurred. William's investments in banks, building societies and shares became worthless and his land unsaleable. In 1892 he was declared bankrupt so he turned to writing children's books, and articles for *The School Paper* which was distributed to children throughout Victoria.

William died in 1925, leaving an estate of over £14,000, equivalent to approximately a million dollars today. The bulk of the estate was to be invested, and a trust fund set up, with interest earned to be given to the Education Department for State schools, in particular country ones, to enable the establishment of school, village and family orchestras or bands, and also for books to encourage reading and for the study of nature.

A committee established guidelines, and in the first 18 months just over £1,000 was distributed. By 1930, seven metropolitan high, technical and domestic arts schools and 13 country schools had reading circles. In 1931 circulating libraries were established in rural areas, and each term 160 rural schools received a new selection of books. By 1933 the Gillies bequest had funded 11 school orchestras, 38 brass bands, 22 fife and drum bands and two infant school percussion bands. The bequest later also funded visual aids and films promoting nature study.

The bequest, now triennial, continues to this day.

The ceremony concluded with a message from the Gillies Trust manager, expressing gratitude to the Society for arranging the plaque and for honouring his generous gift to State school children.



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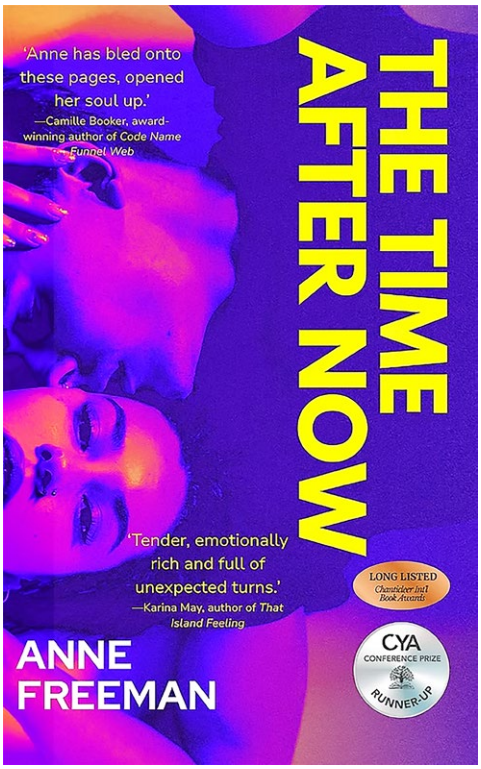
Own Voices in Fiction



OWN Voices fiction describes stories in which both author and protagonist share a lived experience.

Melbourne authors Anne Freeman and Casey Nott have each published a novel shaped by their own very different life experiences.

Freeman's *The Time After Now* is a portrayal of invisible disability, informed by her experience of living with Type 1 diabetes. Cancer survivor Nott's *Five Stages of Grace* draws on her personal experience with cancer, bringing emotional truth to the page.



"Unless an author's research is extensive, and they engage deeply with the community they seek to represent in their storytelling, any portrayals not grounded in lived experience will be reliant on stereotype and cliché. There's simply no substitute for Own Voices storytelling when it comes to authentic representation," Freeman explains.

"Putting my lived experience into the narrative strengthens my story and ultimately deepens my connection with the reader," Nott explains.

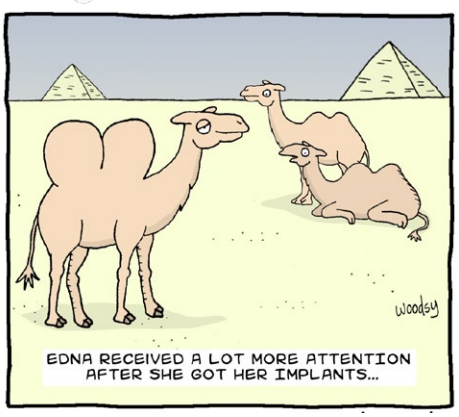
Freeman and Nott will explore the power of Own Voices storytelling at an event to be held at Ashburton's The Leaf Bookshop. Reading fiction builds empathy by allowing us to walk in another person's shoes. However, Own Voices takes us a step further. It gives readers the opportunity to encounter lives through experiential representation.

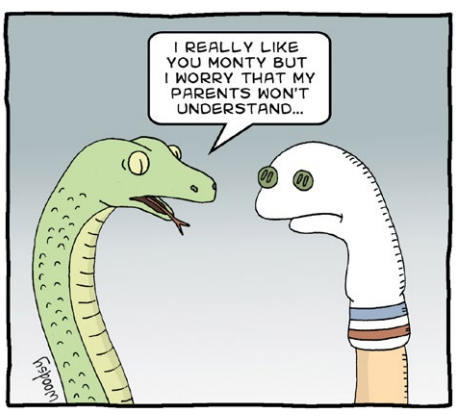
Moderated by Brooke Michie (@bmichie31), the evening will include audience questions, followed by author chats and book signings.

Freeman and Nott will discuss the emotional and creative impact of writing from within at Ashburton's The Leaf Bookshop (Shop 3, 283 High Street, Ashburton) at 7.30pm, Wednesday, 28 November. Tickets $20, include drinks and nibbles.

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woodsy insert brain here







David Berry OAM

Celebrating a life

Anne Payne OAM

A memorial planting day was held at Wurundjeri Walk, South Blackburn in September to celebrate the life of David Berry OAM. David's widow Sally and two generations of David's family attended. Speakers included David Morrison and Anne Payne representing groups including Blackburn District Tree Protection Society (BDTPS), Margaret Edwards from the original Blackburn South Residents for Open Space (BSROS) and Sab Aurisano of today's Friends of Wurundjeri Walk, who spoke of the history of Wurundjeri Walk from its roots in community activism to today. The intrinsic importance of community volunteering was a common theme.

Six canopy trees were planted in David's honour, along with hundreds of other indigenous plants provided by Bungalook Nursery. Whitehorse Council's Parks and Natural Environment staff provided mulch and drilled planting holes.

David's association with Wurundjeri Walk began in 1986 with a long and hard fight to secure all 20 hectares of the ex-Healesville Freeway land in Blackburn South as parkland. Along with other local identities who called themselves 'Residents for Open Spaces', David rallied locals to working bees and planting days to transform the weed-infested horse paddocks, open drains and rubbish. Eventually, the regenerated land was named 'Wurundjeri Walk'.

David was Chairman of the Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee for numerous periods over these years and his work as part of, and leading, this community group alongside Council was pivotal in creating and enhancing the natural environment within Whitehorse.

For 22 years David also provided strong leadership as President of the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society. He kept members informed via the Tree Society newsletter, continually alerted and rallied the local community to issues such as inappropriate development and loss of tree canopy and exhorted everyone to contribute to the Whitehorse Urban Forest Strategy.

He wrote detailed, accurate and persuasive submissions for the retention and increase of trees, based on in-depth knowledge of the relevant laws and regulations applicable in Whitehorse and appeared many times at VCAT supporting BDTPS submissions. The Tree Society was instrumental in the creation of the Special Residential Zone that defined tree control provisions for the first time in the City of Whitehorse. David was the author of *Fighting for the Trees*, the story of the Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society 1959 – 2016.



His other associations included:

Founding committee member (2007) and Chairman (2020 – 2022) – Blackburn and District Environment Protection Fund; Founding member – Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group (CROWAG 2005); supporter and advocate – Bungalook Nursery; member and advocate– Wurundjeri Walk Advisory Committee (1986-2022); committee member – Whitehorse Active Transport Action Group (WATAG)'

David's work in conservation and environment for more than 40 years was recognised in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List, when he was posthumously awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition 'for decades of service to conservation and the environment'.

His contribution is best summed up in the citation from the 2022 inaugural CROWAG volunteers award which stated 'David Berry has demonstrated leadership in many Whitehorse organisations by supporting and enhancing the urban environment and improving bio links for biodiversity:

His energy, interest and expertise are greatly missed.

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Ask A Vet with Dr Suze

Dr Susanna Gamage

NOVEMBER is National Pet Diabetes Month. That's right, the fastest growing chronic disease in Australia that affects almost 1.9 million Australians[1] and 830 million people worldwide[2] also affects dogs and cats.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic disease characterised by elevated blood sugar (glucose) levels. Insulin is the hormone responsible for lowering blood glucose and is produced by a digestive organ called the pancreas. In veterinary medicine, DM can be divided into two different types; type 1 DM (insulin dependant diabetes) or type 2 DM (non-insulin dependant diabetes).

Type 1 DM - caused by the inability to produce sufficient insulin and is most commonly seen in dogs.

Type 2 DM - caused by the body becoming resistant to the effects of insulin or an insufficient production of insulin and is seen most commonly in cats.

How common is diabetes in pets?

A five year study published by the University of Queensland demonstrated a prevalence of 7.4 per 1000 cats, the incidence was significantly higher amongst the Burmese cat population. Risk factors include obesity, age (cats over seven appear at higher risk), breed, physical inactivity, gender and some medications[3].

The reported prevalence of canine diabetes DM varies geographically, with estimates ranging between 0.2% and 1.3% across different studies and populations. Like their human counterparts, the incidence of canine diabetes appears to be increasing over time, potentially due to improved diagnostics and better awareness among veterinarians and pet owners4. Breeds with consistently elevated risk include: Samoyeds, miniature schnauzers, miniature poodles, Cairn terriers, and dachshunds[4].

In dogs, DM can also occur secondary to other conditions such as pancreatitis, oestrus and Cushing's disease.

What signs should I look out for?

The clinical signs of DM, regardless of type are the same: increased thirst, urination and hunger, inappropriate urination, weight loss, lethargy, weakness, poor skin and coat condition. In dogs, cataracts and blindness may also result.

How is diabetes diagnosed?

Diagnosis is confirmed by blood and urine testing.

How is diabetes managed in pets?

The management solution of both DM type 1 and 2 has traditionally involved twice daily injections of insulin, consistent meals and exercise. Pets with type 1 DM will required life-long injections however there is an approximately 50% chance of remission for pets with type 2 DM provided early diagnosis and adequate management[5]. Dogs and cats with well controlled diabetes can go on to lead normal lives and have the same life expectancy as non diabetic dogs and cats.

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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.

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Road tripping with pets?

Dr Georgina Frazer of Evervet, Hawthorn



THE holidays are a chance to refresh and spend time with family, friends and, of course, our pets. We've put together some tips for making a Christmas road trip as stress-free as possible for your pets, and in turn, for you.

Is Everything Up to Date?

Vaccinations and parasite control are crucial preventative care for dogs and cats. Vaccines should be updated yearly, and parasite treatments given regularly. If you're travelling north this summer, your pet will need protection against paralysis ticks and heartworm. Talk to your vet for reliable recommendations.

Daycares, boarding facilities and many caravan parks won't accept pets without valid vaccination certificates. Book a pre-holiday consult with your vet to make sure your pet is healthy and ready to join in on whatever you've got planned.

Don't Forget to Refill!

If your pet takes regular medication, stock up before hitting the road. Many suppliers and pharmacies operate on limited hours over the holidays, so it pays to be organised. Vets also can't legally dispense medication without seeing your pet, so if you run out while travelling, you can't simply pop into another clinic for a refill.

Medications are ready within 24 hours at most clinics, but specialised or compounded medications can take over a week, so leave plenty of time.

Car Sick? Your Pet Can Be Too!

Car sickness and car anxiety are very common in pets. A dog panting and pacing the back seat, or a cat meowing through an 8-hour drive, is unpleasant for us and distressing for them. Over-the-counter options such as Adaptil or Feliway spray and Zylkene capsules can take the edge off and help your pet settle. For those who need more support, book a consult and our vets can discuss prescription options for nausea, anxiety or sedation. These little tablets can make a massive difference to everyone's stress levels and make long drives pass much faster.

Phone Number Changed Recently?

In unfamiliar surroundings, pets are more likely to get lost. Make sure your pet's microchip details are current and their collar tag has your phone number, giving you the best chance of a quick reunion. Your vet can scan your pet's microchip, check the details and tell you how to update them if needed.

It's also worth knowing what you'd do in a veterinary emergency while away. Do some online research or ask for a recommendation before heading somewhere unfamiliar.

Opposites Attract



SANCTION means to *approve*: Putin sanctioned Navalny's murder. It also means to *penalise*: the EU sanctioned Russia.

This is an example of a **contranim**. Contranims are words with two opposite meanings.

To *dust* is another example. It can mean to remove fine particles through cleaning. (Laurie *dusted* his house while wearing his French maid's outfit). It can also mean to add fine particles through sprinkling flavouring on your food. (Laurie *dusted* his vegetables with sugar).

Left can mean departed. If you host a party at your house, somebody might tell you at 8pm that Michael has already *left*. It can also mean to remain. So when you look in the living room at 6am, only Keith Richards is *left*.

Rent can mean to lease *to* or to lease *from*. My landlord rents her house *to* me; I rent the house *from* my landlord.

Last of all we have an interesting cross-Atlantic variation. The verb to *table* in British English means to *add* to the agenda for discussion (The PM tabled a motion that the shadow minister be shot). However, in American English it means to *remove* from the agenda (The committee tabled the PM's motion).

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50 years of Dixons

Chris Gray

IN 1976, David Dixon opened a small second-hand record shop in Blackburn. Fifty years later, that same business is still owned by David, and the Blackburn store remains at the heart of what has become one of Melbourne's best-known second-hand record retailers.

Dixons' story began somewhat unexpectedly. While working full-time at GTV9 in the early 1970s, David Dixon was supplying jukeboxes loaded with back-catalogue records to Melbourne hotels and party-hire companies. As demand grew, he found himself struggling to source enough records to stock the machines. David began advertising for second-hand records. The response was overwhelming, and by 1976 he had accumulated enough stock to open his first shop in Blackburn.

For Blackburn, the anniversary is also a celebration of the suburb's place in the Dixons story. What began as a small shop grew over the following decades into a five-store business employing around 25 people, before eventually returning to the two stores that operate today.

To mark the 50th anniversary, Dixons Recycled Records invited customers to share their Dixons stories. In that spirit, I decided to involve my nephews (whom I had introduced to Dixons) in the preparation of this story. Prior to Dixons, they had shopped for items on line, at JB Hi-Fi (expensive!), or Op shops (limited range). Dixons was a shop with a much wider range at affordable prices for teenagers. Patrick (eldest) described it:

"It has a lot of variety. So for anyone that that likes the physical – CDs and vinyls and stuff, it's like a candy store. You know, it's like hitting a candy store because it's so big. And there's just you, in the place where you would find the things that you've been looking for".

Andrew (youngest) added: "I'd go like once a week, just to see if they put out any new stock".

Gabriel (middle) agreed: "I could find something really good, or just walk out of there with absolutely nothing. Either way, it was fine".

Each of them chose a purchase that represented a "best find". For Patrick it was the Beach Boys iconic *Pet Sounds*. "No one had done it before they did this album – musical genius".

Gabriel chose a record from the succeeding decade: Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk*. This time it was the vinyl iteration that found favour. It was, of course, on his streaming playlist, but to be able to play the real thing was irreplaceable.

Andrew's best find was an album he had been after for a long time: Gojira's 2005 album *From Mars to Sirius*.

So, three diverse musical tastes were served by Dixons – from classic 60s to heavy metal. And long may it continue!



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A Final Gift to the Community

What a 98-Year-Old Woman Taught Me About Legacy

Dongsub Pyo

ONE morning, a message from a friend in Korea made me pause and reflect on what we leave behind.

His 98-year-old mother-in-law had passed away. In accordance with her final wishes, her body was donated to a university medical school to help educate future doctors. What moved me was not only her remarkable decision, but also her family's willingness to honour it.

Growing up in Korea, I was taught that our bodies are precious gifts from our parents and should be treated with deep respect. This belief is woven into traditional ideas of filial devotion: caring for our parents in life and honouring them after death.

For many families, funeral rites are meaningful expressions of love and remembrance. I understand that feeling deeply. Yet this woman's story invited me to consider another expression of the same love.

Perhaps devotion to a parent is not only about preserving familiar traditions. It is also about listening to what they truly want, even when their wishes differ from our expectations.

After saying their final goodbyes, her family returned to everyday life. There was something quietly moving in that simple act of respect.

Her gift reached beyond those who knew her. At the medical school, her donation could help students develop the knowledge and skills to care for future patients. A life that spanned nearly a century might continue to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

Living in Australia, I have come to appreciate how much community life depends on quiet generosity. We see it in volunteers who give their time, neighbours who look out for one another, and blood donors who help strangers they may never meet. These acts are different, but they share a common spirit: what we give can reach far beyond our immediate circle.

As I grow older, I find myself returning to the question of legacy. We may leave our children money, property, photographs and cherished family stories. These things matter. But some of the most enduring gifts cannot be held in our hands.

They live in the strength of keeping a promise, the courage to respect another person's convictions, and the kindness that inspires someone else to be kind.

Body donation is a deeply personal choice, and it is not for everyone. Beliefs about death and the human body differ across cultures, families and individuals. Those differences deserve understanding and respect.

What moved me was not that this woman had made a choice everyone should follow. It was that she had made a choice of her own, and her family had honoured it with dignity.

I never met her. I know her story only through a message from a friend across the sea. Yet her decision travelled from Korea to Australia and prompted me to ask a simple question:

What good might remain after I am gone? I do not have a grand answer. Perhaps it begins close to home: how we treat the people around us, how generously we listen, and whether we leave others feeling that their lives mattered to us.

Some lessons come from books. Others arrive unexpectedly in a message from a friend.

This woman's final gift was intended to support medical education. Yet it gave me something personal as well: a reminder that the value of a life is not measured only by the years we live or the things we accumulate, but also by the good we leave behind.

We cannot choose how long our story will be remembered, but we can choose what we leave in the hearts of others.

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Camberwell Sunday Market

50 years of Community Spirit Impact

Julie Mulhouser

LAST August Camberwell Sunday Market, operated by Balwyn Rotary, celebrated 50 years of turning community spirit into impact.

This remarkable collaboration between Balwyn Rotary, Boroondara Council and the Camberwell Traders Association has generated more than $20 million to support local, national and international projects.

That is an extraordinary achievement and everyone who has been involved over the years should be incredibly proud. But there is another contribution that is just as important, but sometime less visible.

As a community volunteer, I have witnessed first-hand that while grant funding is crucial for purchasing equipment and supporting projects, it is the invaluable contribution of volunteer time, energy and commitment that truly underpins the development of community connections and trust.

These connections are the glue that holds our communities together, helping them grow stronger, more inclusive and more resilient.

On behalf of Balwyn Rotary, I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to the wellbeing of our community by fostering these connections – linking people, place and purpose.

Balwyn Rotary deeply values the time, energy and commitment you dedicate to making our community a better place.

Discover how Balwyn Rotary gives global reach to local action through the Rotary International network.

Julie Mulhauser is the 2026-27 Balwyn Rotary President.



The Herald, 2 May 1941

FOR THE ROTARY BALL TONIGHT

GARLANDS and festoons of autumn leaves will be used to decorate the Palais de Danse, St. Kilda, tonight, when the annual Rotary Ball will be held in aid of the Australian Comforts Fund and the Power House weekend entertainment of men of the fighting forces.

GUESTS will be received by the president of the Rotary Club Mr W K. Burnside and Mrs. Burnside, the hon secretary of the ball committee (Mr Frank Ayre) and Mrs Ayre and the hon treasurer (Mr D. C Hellings) and Mrs Hellings.

The president's table will be arranged with floral decorations and above it will hang the star of the Australian Comforts Fund and the Rotary wheel.

In the official party will be the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Cr. and Mrs Frank Beaurepare), the president of the Power House (Dr C Cordon McAdam), the chairman of the Power House War Comforts committee (Sir Dalziel Kelly) and Lady Kelly, and the presidents of the Geelong, Footscray, Dandenong and Essendon Rotary Clubs.

The chairman of the decorations committee is Mrs J. R. Nowack and Mrs J. D. Johnston is chairman of the supper committee.

The hon ticket secretaries for the ball are Misses Marjorie Mitchell. Barbara Carson, Joan Latham and Marjorie Wray.

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Growing up in Surrey Hills

Ginger Beer Summers

Gill Bell

THE ginger beer plant was sitting on the kitchen bench. The glass jar contained some sandy-looking water covering a muddy layer of powered ginger. Every now and then the mud would convulse and send a jet of ginger towards the bubbling surface of the jar.

It was a hot Monday afternoon during the summer holidays in early 1966. The green cicadas, quaintly named 'greengrocers', were shrilling amidst the foliage of the oak tree. Our black-and-white cocker spaniel Gus was sprawled on the cool concrete floor of the outdoor laundry. Mum had tuned our wooden mantel radio to 3AR for her daily 1pm episode of *Blue Hills*. The hauntingly beautiful theme music began. It seemed to emanate from the landscape, with hints of birdsong and the fragrance of eucalyptus forests. I hummed to myself as I started to make my first solo batch of ginger beer.

Ten days before, I had placed eight sultanas and two cups of water in the screw-top jar. I had added two teaspoons of powdered ginger and four of sugar. This was the beginning of the plant, which, like a sourdough starter, could last a lifetime.

After a couple of days in the warm kitchen the plant had started to come to life. I fed it every day with more ginger and sugar until in the muddy base of the jar the miniature volcanic eruptions began.

Now on this hot afternoon I assembled my equipment: the plastic bucket labelled GINGER BEER, a clean piece of muslin and twelve Marchants lemonade bottles with solid red plastic screw-in caps. They were the only bottles we had found strong enough to withstand the explosive force of ripe ginger beer.

The recipe called for large amounts of sugar. In the bucket I stirred four cups of sugar into boiling water, let the sugar mix cool, then squeezed and strained the sandy mud into the bucket. It was time to add 15 pints of water, mix the ingredients and pour them through a funnel into the bottles.

Once all the bottles had been tightly sealed and wiped free of stickiness they were ready to be placed in the cool outdoor laundry for another week to mature.

Looking back I am amazed at our mother's patience during these culinary episodes. She stood by calmly but watchfully as my siblings and I puddled around in the kitchen. In the past we had experimented with fruit smoothies and milky banana eggnogs, but the crowning delight of our summer refreshment was ginger beer.



The precious summer day wound softly to a close. On the kitchen bench stood a new ginger beer plant, made from the remains of the ginger mud topped with fresh water. It was small and quiet for now but in a matter of days it would begin to come to life.

The cicadas began their urgent sunset call. In the laundry the bottles on their shelf gleamed softly with the promise of more leisurely summer days and sweetness to come. Gus the cocker spaniel yawned as he woke from his afternoon nap and padded round to the back door to await his dinner. Mum put on her apron and reclaimed her kitchen to prepare the evening meal. From the radio came once more the wistful theme music for the evening repeat of *Blue Hills*. The story continued in its comfortable daily rhythm, celebrating hard work, the warmth of family and connection to the land.

And so another perfect summer's day, slid gently into twilight.

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The Gift

Fiona Haines
Blackburn North

Silently she hovered over the salvia.
A bumble bee – but smaller --
and with a buzz cut, fluff, honed
velvet, azure stripes across her fulsome

derriere; not sexy – but kind – as
bumble bees are. Same round face
adorned with a t-shirt of yellow around
her upper body. Pleasure unbound.

Unshaken by my surprise and delight,
she supped salvias – crimson and violet –
ignoring chocolate lilies and twining glycine
sewn in welcome for insects of her kind.

I lifted my camera holding my breath
willing her to stay, mimicking stealth
to immortalise the moment. Yet, as if to scoff
at my antics Amegilla Asserta ambled off.

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Events

Saturday 7 November 7.30pm
Boroondara Proms
Hawthorn Arts Centre, Burwood Road, Hawthorn

Presented by Skunkworks Community, the Proms brings together Glenferrie Brass, Camberwell Chorale and Hawthorn Pipe Band, joined by acclaimed vocalist Matthew Hetherington, euphonium soloist James Blackford and compere Patrick Lawrence. The program combines great music with plenty of opportunity for the audience to join in, celebrating the extraordinary range of musicians and community ensembles that call Boroondara home. Tickets: Full $45 | Child/Concession $30 | Family of four $120. Enquiries: Phillipa Edwards OAM contacttheskunk@gmail.com

Sunday, 15 November 2pm
The history of the Saint Francis Xavier School at Box Hill, 1928-1974.
Box Hill Library, 1st Floor, 1040 Whitehorse Road.

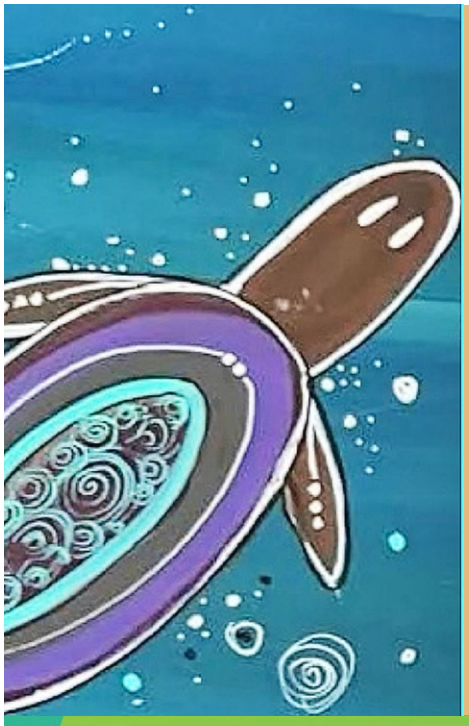
Our special guest Patsy Crotty will conduct this talk.

Thursday 19 November 10–11.30 am and 11.30 am–1 pm
Walking Sports Open Day
Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre, 8 Warner Avenue

Free Walking Sports Open Day. Two published session windows (see above), with participants rotating through short taster sessions of walking netball, walking basketball and pickleball. Suitable closed-toe footwear and a water bottle recommended. More details: https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/events/walking-sports-open-day-ashburton

Saturday, 5 December 1pm
The Poetry and History of Christmas Carols
Schwerkolt Cottage & Museum Complex, Deep Creek Road, Mitcham

Gerry Robinson will provide a fascinating journey through time, telling the story of voices singing about reindeer, snowmen, and coming together as a community. Christmas carols fill homes, schools, and even shopping centres with joy. But have you ever wondered where these songs came from?



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 24 October–Saturday 12 December
N'Dene Riley's exhibition "Ancestors Country Nature and Ocean".

Gallery Opening Hours: Wednesdays 11am to 3pm; Fridays 5pm to 7pm; Saturdays 11 am to 3pm.

Saturday 7 November 9am to 11am
Caring for Country Wominjeka Garden

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

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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.*

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

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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

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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

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

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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

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.

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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

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

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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

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

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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

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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

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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

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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.

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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

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The next edition

The next edition of *Eastsider News* will be our special Election issue later this month.

But we will be accepting articles for the December issue until 20 November 2026. 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.

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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. Peer, affected, rider, entertain, steer, convention: SCRAPE
2. Lax, lacks, slack

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.