

OCTOBER 2025

A celebration of our community

Welcome to the October edition of Evergreen Connections

It's officially the Victorian Seniors Festival, aka the busiest time of the year!

There's so much on that the mind boggles, but it's also a great opportunity to get out and enjoy the multitude of activities and events on offer.

We love biting off more than we can chew, so much so that we can't fit it on one page! We're kicking off the season with our flagship event - our famous High Tea on October 8. This is always a fantastic chance for our community to dust off their glad rags and enjoy some time together.

Later in the month is Get Online Week, and we'll be offering extra hands-on tech sessions with Bo. Plus, Maggie Stamoulis from Community Bank Inner East is hosting a free information session on scams and how to protect yourself from them.

We've also had a staffing restructure, which we discuss on page 2. We welcome new Exercise Coordinator, David, on page 4, farewell Elise on page 6 and celebrate centenarian Gwen on page 3.

If that's not enough, there's our usual lineup of programs and activities.

As always, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- The Balwyn Evergreen Centre Team

Annual Consumer Survey coming up

It's almost that time of year again... Annual Consumer Survey. We'll be rolling this out next month, and would appreciate as many responses as possible! It's a great opportunity to share your thoughts and feedback, which ultimately helps us deliver a better overall service to our community. Stay tuned for more information.



Celebrating with the Senior Divas

If there's one thing our Senior Divas group loves, it's a birthday celebration, and we were lucky enough to share Gwen's 100th birthday last month. She's pictured here with fellow centenarian Ruth, and together they prove that age is just a number. This month, the Divas have some interesting guest speaker topics: skin care basics on 9/10, and nutrition as we age on 23/10.

For more information about The Divas and the upcoming guest speakers, contact the office.

Events & Info Sessions

High Tea at Balwyn Evergreen
Thursday, October 8
1pm-4pm

This is the big one on our events calendar. We look forward to celebrating with our community.

Play Reading in the Café
Thursday, October 2, 16, 30
2.30pm-4pm

Jo Campbell, our line dancing instructor, is hosting fortnightly play reading sessions. Register your interest at the office.

Q&A with Dr Monique Ryan
Tuesday, October 14
2pm-3pm

Chat with Independent MP for Kooyong.

Protect Yourself from Scams
Wednesday, October 22
12.30pm-1.30pm

Free information session with Community Bank Inner East.

Chatty Café
Thursday, October 30
1pm-2pm

Drop in for a chat and a coffee in the café at our monthly Chatty Café session. Everyone is welcome.



NEWS CORNER

Updates From the Balwyn Evergreen Centre Community

Fun, friends and good food to kick off the Victorian Seniors Festival

Victorian
Seniors
Festival
2025

It's officially the Victorian Seniors Festival and we're looking forward to a busy month of activities, information sessions and events. Our flagship event, High Tea at Balwyn Evergreen, is on Wednesday, October 8, from 1pm-4pm and is set to be another epic ride with amazing food, excellent entertainment and even better company. Of course, plenty is going on for the Seniors Festival locally and around the state.

Check out your local council or visit seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/festival for all events and activities.



Volunteer Annie Tang putting the finishing touches on her cupcakes for last year's high tea.

Balwyn Evergreen staffing update

The new Aged Care Act will commence from November 1, 2025. Between now and then in preparation you will see several changes in the way we run our services at Balwyn Evergreen.

To ensure we continue delivering high-quality, fun activities for our clients and enable you to continue using your aged care funds to subsidise or pay for your activities, it was necessary to restructure the organisation.

So, you will see a few new faces join our team and a few of our current team change roles or leave.

This week, Raymond will be starting a new role as our Activities Coordinator and will run the Outings program and our Supported Lifestyle programs, he will also be taking on the Senior Divas.

In his place we have David Watson joining us as our new Exercise Coordinator. David is an exercise physiologist and will be giving our clients the opportunity to test and track their progress.

Lucia will be taking up a role as our Connections Coordinator and will no longer be going on Outings or supporting our Supported Lifestyle Program on a Friday.

Elise is leaving us and will take a well-earned break before looking for her next new challenging role.

Lotana will continue to work from home supporting Erica with our upcoming High Tea.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of Balwyn Evergreen.

If you have any questions or concerns about the changes, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

What's on in the cafe this month?

Q&A with Dr Monique Ryan, MP for Kooyong

Tuesday, October 14 at 2pm

Come along and chat with Independent MP for Kooyong, Dr Monique Ryan. Dr Ryan has recently been appointed deputy chair of the standing committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability.

Her passions are health, aged care, integrity in politics, gender equality and climate change. This is an open invitation to the community to come along and ask questions.



Bo Cui sorting the mic for Dr Monique Ryan at our Open Day last year

Free Information session: Protect yourself from scams

Wednesday, October 22 at 12.30pm

Maggie Stamoulis from Community Bank Inner East is back to raise awareness around scams and how you can protect yourself from them.

Get Online Week: Be Connected drop-in sessions with Bo

Tuesday, October 21 and Thursday October 23 from 1pm-4pm

For Get Online Week (Oct 20-26), we're doing our bit to help support people in feeling safer and more confident online. We're holding two drop-in sessions for clients to get hands-on experience with devices or troubleshoot any tech problems they have. Drop in anytime for a one-on-one device session with Bo.

Cafe casual drop-in times: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1pm-4pm

The cafe is open during these times for clients and the community to enjoy the space and run their own groups from. The coffee machine is free to use for Balwyn Evergreen clients as part of their usual activities. Outside of activity times and for the general public, please help keep us caffeinated with a gold coin donation.

LIFE STORIES

Tales From Our Community

Our series, Life Stories, allows us to celebrate the people of Balwyn Evergreen Centre and share their incredible stories with you.

Gwen Horsburgh joined the coveted centenarian club last month and shared the occasion with her friends at Balwyn Evergreen.

In this special Life Story, Gwen shares her secret to longevity with us.



A life well lived

Balwyn Evergreen Centre is proud to celebrate the remarkable milestone of one of its cherished clients, Gwen Horsburgh, who turned 100 last month.

Gwen has lived a life enriched by family, friendship and adventure.

She is the proud mother of two daughters, grandmother of two and great-grandmother of four. Her memories stretch from growing up in Mildura and boarding school days to living in Hobart in the 1960s. She also fondly recalls overseas travel adventures across Europe, North America and Asia, as well as family holidays at the beach.

Reflecting on her milestone, Gwen says she treasures "spending time with family – particularly my great grandchildren."

She also enjoys going out to lunch with friends, listening to audiobooks and her activities at Balwyn Evergreen, which she has attended for several years. Connecting with friends that she's made at the social groups she attends, in particular the Senior Divas, is extremely important to her.

She says she is grateful for "the company of new and old friends, hearing interesting speakers together with a tasty lunch, and enjoying talking with both the staff and volunteers at the centre."

Gwen also makes a special mention of the volunteer drivers at Balwyn Evergreen, "who are very kind and patient".

Even with the challenge of advanced macular degeneration, Gwen continues to live independently, supported by her daughters and caring neighbours.

The secret to becoming a centenarian

She credits her longevity to staying active - whether through tennis in her youth, sailing, cycling or walking, and to maintaining a positive outlook.

A highlight of her calendar is Balwyn Evergreen Centre's much-loved Senior Divas social support group, where clients come together fortnightly on a Thursday to discuss current events, enjoy lunch, a guest speaker and, of course, a few laughs.

Gwen says these occasions are a special opportunity to connect with friends, old and new and to celebrate the joy of community.

A Balwyn Evergreen treasure

Balwyn Evergreen Centre CEO, Tina Hogarth-Clarke, says Gwen is an inspiration to the whole community.

"Gwen embodies the spirit of Balwyn Evergreen Centre – being resilient, socially connected and always ready to embrace life's opportunities," Tina says.

"Her warmth, her stories and her commitment to staying engaged remind us all of the importance of connection, community and living well at every age."

As Gwen marks her centenary, she looks forward to celebrating with family and friends - a fitting tribute to a woman whose life has been shaped by love, laughter and community.

Gwen celebrated her centenary in style with her friends in the Wednesday Supported Lifestyle Program and the Senior Divas, marking the occasion with laughs, memories and plenty of cake.

It's sharing in moments like these that make Balwyn Evergreen a special place to be.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Healthy Ageing with Balwyn Evergreen Centre

Welcome to the team, David!

We're excited to welcome David Watson to Balwyn Evergreen as Exercise Coordinator.

David takes over from Raymond, and brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role.

He's a qualified Exercise Scientist with a passion for healthy ageing ensuring older people continue to live independently and well.

Please join us in welcoming David to the community!

David has penned a few words to introduce himself...

Hello, I'm David and thank you for welcoming me into the Balwyn Evergreen family! Having worked in industrial health and safety and just about every gym in Melbourne over the past 30 years, I feel fortunate to have found such a wonderful place to call home. I come from a background of working not only with elite athletes, but also older people and clients with a range of physical and mental disabilities. I will always challenge you to get better and improve your quality of life! I am passionate about working with older people because I am one! I have lived through major life challenges such as a major cancer scare in my early 20s, so like you, I appreciate that every day is precious.

While I get up to speed, please be patient with me - I'm not used to serving tea and coffee, cakes and biscuits!



Exercise Coordinator David Watson

Changes to Exercise Programs at Balwyn Evergreen

We've made some improvements in how we deliver our exercise programs at Balwyn Evergreen.

All exercise programs are clinically supervised by David, a qualified Exercise Scientist (Physiologist).

In addition to our regular exercise classes, clients can now access a clinical assessment and health check with David, resulting in a tailored treatment program that may include an exercise class to suit their abilities and health goals, a group or individual gymnasium program or a combination of both.

Progress towards identified goals will be monitored through quarterly assessments. The focus will continue to be on a strength and balance program that will assist an older person to regain or maintain physical, functional and cognitive abilities that support them to remain safe and independent at home.

To find out more about these changes and to book a time with David, please contact the office.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Ruby Cheung

As we age, our gut microbiota can weaken, which can affect digestion, immunity, and overall health, so this month we're looking at the role probiotics and prebiotics play in supporting health and wellbeing.



Probiotics

These are live, 'good' bacteria that can help restore and maintain a healthy balance of gut microbes.

They improve digestion, reduce symptoms of constipation, and enhance immune function, which naturally declines with age.

Certain strains have also shown potential in reducing inflammation and improving mental health, which is particularly important for older people at risk of cognitive decline.

Probiotics can be found in fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, miso, kimchi, sauerkraut and kombucha.

Prebiotics

These are non-digestible fibres that support and feed the beneficial bacteria.

Found in foods like garlic, onions, and bananas, prebiotics help stimulate the growth and activity of good microbes in the gut. This can further support digestion, calcium absorption, and immune health.

Incorporating probiotics and prebiotics into the diet through food or supplements can promote better gut health, which is essential for nutrient absorption, immune defence, and even mood balance.

Working together, they help support overall well-being and contribute to healthy aging.

Ruby Cheung is a registered nutritionist who has a Master's in Nutrition and Population Health. Along with contributing to our newsletter, she's also an Evergreen Connections volunteer visitor and was our Men's Kitchen Class facilitator.

DAY TRIPS

Tuesday Bus Outings

Enjoy a day out with friends

Our Evergreen Ramblers Program takes you on a tour around Melbourne's outer metropolitan area every Tuesday. Discover or revisit lovely suburbs and townships, stopping to enjoy lunch together at an eatery that we've hand-picked for you. Transport is in our iconic minibus, with pick up and drop off at your doorstep, so all you need to do is get comfortable and enjoy the ride.

Bookings essential - please call/email to save your seat

October Outings

Tuesday, October 7

BOTANIC RIDGE: Settlers Run Golf Course & Country Club
Early Start 9am

Taking its name from the neighbouring Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne, Botanic Ridge is a newer settlement with a golf course and country club as one of its main attractions. Lunch today is served overlooking the fairway, which provides a relaxing atmosphere to enjoy a social meal. Of course, there's morning tea to look forward to.

Tuesday, October 14

BUNYIP: Railway Hotel

History comes to life at the Railway Hotel in Bunyip. Like many country pubs, the Railway Hotel is a place for people to come together and enjoy each other's company along with a hearty meal. Set against the green backdrop of Gippland, Bunyip is a quaint village offering a window into the region's past.

Tuesday, October 21

EDITHVALE: Edithvale General Store

Melbourne is blessed with a coastline as far as the eye can see, which means the seaside is never far away. Today we're heading to Edithvale, which means morning tea with a bay view! Then we'll break for lunch at the Edithvale General Store, which is a local favourite. Mixing nostalgia with fantastic food and coffee, this destination is one you'll be keen to return to.

Tuesday, October 28

GREENVALE: Direct Plants

Early Start 9.15am

Always popular on our outings calendar is a trip to a plant nursery. This time we're heading to Direct Plants in Greenvale. Spend some time among the greenery and perhaps buy a plant or two to take home. We'll enjoy lunch on-site at the Forget Me Not Cafe, which is a lovely spot to discuss all things plants and enjoy a coffee and cake.

For a copy of the extended Outings Newsletter, which gives you a sneak peek up to February 2026, please contact office@balwynevergreen.org.au.

- Pick up from 9.30am (unless stated)
- Drop off at about 4pm
- Bus cost: \$28 (CHSP assessed + approved), \$36 non-assessed
- Lunch and tours are an additional cost
- Let us know if you have a food allergy or special dietary requirements
- Outings require a minimum of six people to go ahead

Out and about...

A snapshot of our recent outings



We visited the ANZ Bank Museum in Collins St last month, and it was fantastic. The group thoroughly enjoyed the guided tour of the lovingly restored historic building. If you're looking for an affordable and enjoyable activity, we highly recommend checking this out.



ACTIVE LIVING

Keeping Social Connections Strong

Thanks for the memories, Elise!

After more than 24 years of laughter, social activities and scones, Elise Walle has left Balwyn Evergreen. She's been an integral part of the community, and we'll miss her dearly, but wish her all the best for whatever comes next.

Elise reflects on her time at Balwyn Evergreen...

There have been numerous highlights over the years, but our annual mid-year balls were fantastic. We had different themes, and it was held at night. We also had our end-of-year Christmas lunch for all our clients and volunteers, which Santa would attend. They were a lot of work, but we all enjoyed it, especially the clients, as they would dress up to suit each theme.

I will definitely miss all the clients, volunteers and staff I've met over the years at Evergreen - you become like family, and you get to know so much about each other. I think what I'm most proud of is the different programs I have run or developed, like my beautiful Senior Divas group, which I started seven years ago. I also developed a Community Kitchen for men - we would cook delicious and nutritious meals which we would enjoy together, and they would take home as well.

I ran a Fashion and Fabric group once a month. We would have guest speakers in or go out to see exhibitions at the NGV or other places if any Haute Couture exhibitions came to Australia.



Elise and The Senior Divas

I ran a monthly outing group, which was tours and exhibitions only, for people who were interested in more than just going for a drive and lunch. And more recently, my lovely bakers, overseeing them as they make so many sweet and savoury treats for our clients to enjoy. Next for me is having a few weeks' break and then looking for another position elsewhere with some new challenges.

I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have worked at Balwyn Evergreen. I've been here for a large part of my working life and will cherish the memories and relationships I have built over the past 24 years.

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who supported and helped me make our programs successful and fun for our clients who attended them. It's been a pleasure.

Ducking out

Alec and Raymond are pictured here negotiating the best way to catch ducks at the Supported Lifestyle Program recently. Trust us, this fishing activity is much harder than it looks! It required patience, dexterity and a good sense of humour!



Book a free hearing check today

Audiologist Weicen Yan from NeuroHearing in Canterbury is popping up at Balwyn Evergreen for another free hearing clinic on Thursday, November 20, from 10.30am-12pm. Book your 15-minute appointment at the office today! The clinic covers hearing loss screening, earwax checks, hearing aid cleaning and troubleshooting.

Volunteer workshop: Introduction to Understanding Dementia

Thursday 13 November from 1.30pm-3pm

Led by Raymond Kolesnikoff, our Activities Coordinator and Dementia Lead, who has more than 10 years of experience in this space. We're offering this workshop to our volunteers to help support them in their roles.

Topics include:

- Causes and symptoms of dementia
- The concept of changed behaviour and potential underlying causes
- Practical approaches appropriate for common behaviours

RSVP to Volunteer Program Lead Kerri at volunteer@balwynevergreen.org.au or 9836 9681 by Thursday, October 30.

EXERCISE & SOCIALISE

at Balwyn Evergreen Centre

Join our popular classes, led by dedicated instructors, and enjoy a social morning or afternoon tea with your group and trainer afterwards.

If you're new to exercise with us, your first class is FREE!

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10.30am Exercise to Music <i>with Jo G</i>	9.30am Challenge Your Balance <i>with Denise</i>	10.15am Seated Strength Exercise <i>with David</i>	9.30am Men's Exercise <i>with Tom</i>	10am Tai Chi <i>with Lilei</i>
12pm Seated Strength Exercise <i>with David</i>	11.30am Seated Exercise to Music <i>with Jo M</i>	10.15am Strength Exercise <i>with Tom</i>	9.30am Movement to Music <i>with Jo M</i> **45 minute class**	11am Seated Strength Exercise <i>with Yanmei</i>
	1.45pm Seated Strength Exercise <i>with David</i>	11.30am Line Dancing <i>with Jo C</i>	1pm-3.30pm Table Tennis <i>self run</i>	11am Pilates <i>with Jo M</i>
	1.45pm Strength Exercise <i>with Tom</i>		2.30pm Meditation & Yoga <i>with Elizabeth</i>	

Legend

Gentle

Moderate

Active

Cost of Group Classes

\$12 CHSP assessed and approved

\$16 non assessed

Meet our team of qualified trainers who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our exercise programs. They're always on hand for a chat to discuss your requirements and goals.

For more information, please contact our Exercise Coordinator, David.



David Watson



Denise Mokasdi

Evergreen Gym Studio + Personal Training

Small Group Circuit Sessions

Thursdays 11am & 1.15pm (45 mins)

Personal Training

Contact David to arrange day/time

Falls Prevention Program

A 12-week progression program improve strength, balance and flexibility.

- 40-minute classes
- six people max per session
- With Elevate Physiotherapists

Talk to David about joining the next round.



Yanmei Chen



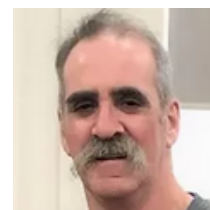
Jo Morris



Jo Golds



Lilei Enright



Tom Scott



Elizabeth Mackenzie

Notes

- Please check the online Activities Calendar for any timetable changes
- Refer a friend to an exercise class and your next class is free
- Make sure you wear appropriate sneakers. Sandals are not permitted

WHAT'S HAPPENING

The power of friendship

Hailey (left) and Dao smiling for the camera. They're one of the newest friendships in our Evergreen Connections Visitor Program, which is part of the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS). This government-funded initiative connects older people with volunteer visitors with the intent of fostering friendships and alleviating loneliness.

And it's working wonders - just look at Dao's smile!

To find out more about the program or to get involved, please contact the office.



CYBER SNIPPETS

with Bo Cui

When browsing or shopping online, how do you confirm a website is safe? This month, we're focusing on recognising secure sites and the value of having a separate email for online shopping.

Recognising secure websites

- Look for "https://" and a padlock icon in the address bar before entering personal information.
- The "s" stands for "secure."

Create a separate email for online shopping

- Consider using a dedicated email address for online shopping or newsletters.
- If it's compromised, your personal email remains protected.

If you need help, give us a call! Or drop into a special session for Get Online Week this month - check out page 2 for more information.

Bo Cui is the Operations Lead at Balwyn Evergreen and also our resident tech whizz. He runs the Be Connected digital training program that offers regular one-to-one sessions on whatever tech problems are irking you. To book with Bo, please contact the office.



Heading away? send us a text!



You can now contact us by text message to let us know of any illness or planned absences. Make sure you include your name and relevant details. This is a text-only service, please don't call this number. If you'd like us to call you back, please state this in the message.

Mobile: 0451 516 079

AC number collection

Don't forget to provide your Aged Care (AC) Number to the office. This is your unique identifying number assigned by My Aged Care and on all correspondence. With changes to aged care, we are required to collect and store your AC Number on file.



Support our work with a donation



As a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, we rely on donations from our community to keep the wheels at Balwyn Evergreen turning. If you're able to, please consider making a donation – all contributions go towards supporting the delivery of our programs and services that, in turn, support our community. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and an official receipt will be provided. Thanks for your support!

Transport policy

As a reminder, we require written or verbal notification of cancellation of our local transport and outing services by 9am on the day of the booking. Failure to notify us will incur the full one-way pick-up fee of \$10 in zone or \$15 out of zone.

Any questions, please contact the office or talk to your program coordinator.

Join our mailing list

Enjoy our newsletter online by signing up to our mailing list either by contacting the office or on our website!

Hire our space for your next event

Balwyn Evergreen has had a spectacular facelift, and our revamped spaces are available for hire! Whether you're looking to host a one-off event or find a new home for a regular group, our versatile rooms could be the answer to your 'where can I find a great venue?' problem.

For more information and to arrange a tour, contact hire@balwynevergreen.org.au.

Connect with us



@balwyn_evergreen



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