

Stay warm with social connections

Welcome to the July edition of Evergreen Connections

And just like that, we're into the second part of the year... Our renovation hiatus feels like a distant memory, and we're enjoying the cosy feel of our newly spruced centre. There's something to be said for soft furnishings and efficient heating! If you haven't already, make sure you pop in for a look!

Apart from that, we're updating our calendar with a few events and information sessions - make sure you add those to your diary. The next big one is our cafe launch next month (page 2), which is going to be fun.

Check out page 6 for our new Active Living page featuring our Wednesday and Friday programs, plus updates on the evolving changes to aged care. There's also our digital learning program on page 4, important notices on the back page, as well as a whole lot of other stuff, but we'll let you get on with the business of reading now.

As always, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- The Balwyn Evergreen Centre Team

Balwyn Evergreen price adjustment now in effect

With the upcoming changes in aged care, and to keep in line with rising costs, we'll be implementing a price adjustment from July 1, 2025.

Our fees remain structured around whether you're assessed and approved for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) via My Aged Care or not. Home Care Packages are transitioning to Support at Home and will have a separate pricing structure that will be available for providers directly.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to ask.

Upcoming Events & Info Sessions

Changes in Aged Care: Support at Home and what it means for you

Thursday, July 24

11am-12pm

Deb Coddington from Health Ability Box Hill will look at the important changes to Aged Care including Support at Home. The session will also cover My Aged Care and how to access government-funded services.

Evergreen Connections Café and Community Hub Official Launch

Thursday, August 7

1.30pm-3.30pm

Join us as we officially launch our new café and community hub! Featuring live music, finger food, coffee (of course) and exercise demonstrations, come along and soak up the Balwyn Evergreen atmosphere. If you're curious about our new renovation, then the doors are open for you to come and have a look through! All welcome! Thanks to Bendigo Bank and City of Boroondara for funding this project.

Information sessions are FREE to attend and open to everyone but please book your spot with the office. Please arrive 10 minutes before the start and check in with the office.



Weekly outings leave lasting impression

Our outings crew enjoyed an unforgettable trip last month - to the National Gallery of Victoria for its headline exhibition of French Impressionism with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Featuring more than 100 works from the masters, this exhibition was absolutely breathtaking in capturing the essence of the Impressionist movement.

The exhibition is on until October and we highly recommend it.

If you're keen to jump on board our next outing, please contact the office.



Pouring a fresh cup of connection with new café

Balwyn Evergreen is stirring up community spirit with the grand opening of its dedicated space on Thursday, August 7, from 1.30pm-3.30pm.

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

"The café is not only a great place to grab a cuppa, but it is also about fostering friendships, sharing stories and making sure everyone has a place where they feel they belong," CEO Tina Hogarth-Clarke says.

"Social connection plays a vital role in keeping people healthy and engaged, and we are proud to offer a space that will help our community thrive."

Local resident and Balwyn Evergreen client, Wendy Varrasso, said she was looking forward to visiting the Evergreen Connections Café regularly.

"It's wonderful to have a place that feels so warm and inviting. I am excited about the opportunity to meet new people and enjoy good company in a relaxed setting." Wendy said.

Dawn Baxter, another client of Balwyn Evergreen, is also looking forward to making use of the café.

"Having a space where we can sit, chat and enjoy a coffee together will make it easier for people to stay connected and feel part of something. I'm really looking forward to it."

The café will be open for people to organise their own activities such as knitting, play readings or card games.



The launch will feature live music, line dancing (featuring Wendy and Dawn) and exercise demonstrations, afternoon tea by The Boulevard Food Store in Mont Albert and freshly brewed coffee from the new espresso machine, supplied by Espresso Fix in Balwyn North.

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

Everyone is welcome to come along, celebrate and explore this vibrant new addition to our community offerings, not to mention our new renovation!

The Evergreen Connections Café & Information Hub launch is on Thursday, August 7 from 1.30pm-3.30pm. For more information and to book for this free event, please contact the office.

Celebrating NAIDOC week

This year, NAIDOC Week (July 6-13) marks 50 years of honoring and elevating Indigenous voices, culture, and resilience.

The 2025 theme, "The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy," celebrates not only the achievements of the past but the bright future ahead.

To celebrate, there are lots of amazing exhibitions and events that you can check out.

To find out what NAIDOC events are happening locally, visit boroondara.vic.gov.au.

Or for all events visit: visit.naidoc.org.au.



Shining a light on Diabetes

When was the last time you checked your sugar levels? With more than 1.3 million Australians living with diabetes, National Diabetes Week (July 13-19) is the perfect time to check in on your health, and we are here to help.

At Balwyn Evergreen, we see firsthand how small, sustainable changes can make a big difference. Moving more, eating well and staying socially connected all play a role in preventing and managing Type 2 Diabetes. Our exercise classes and social support programs support both body and mind, as well as creating space to connect with others who care about their wellbeing too.

If you or someone you love could use a little encouragement and support, please get in touch.

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.

Interesting and entertaining, **Heather Stephens** has more than a few yarns to tell. She's proof that stories and conversation create connections and community. Next time you see her, ask about the time she...

Becoming Miss Box Hill

A local lass, Heather Stephens, grew up in Box Hill North. Her home had a market garden at the rear, overlooked an orchard and had a dam at the end of the street. The area was ripe with places to explore and play in, including the site of the future Box Hill Hospital. She attended Camberwell High School and enjoyed playing volleyball and spending time at the local baths. Heather's mother was an early member of Balwyn Evergreen, which she attended with her neighbour. "It was her only respite," Heather recalls.

She credits her mother with her community-mindedness, after helping with backyard bazaars to raise funds for the local primary school and hospital.

Adventures on the high seas

Heather worked as a secretary after leaving high school, and it was this versatile profession that allowed her to dip in and out of work and life experiences.

Her first overseas experience was to Rome to watch the Olympics with a friend – she worked multiple part-time jobs to save for the fare. The friends knew the water polo team from home and were able to get into the athletes' village, where she met Dawn Fraser, who was "thrilled to talk with someone from home".

From there, Miss Box Hill and Miss Sandringham, 1959, hit the road hitchhiking around Europe. London soon called, and Heather set up shop there for 2.5 years, working for a property developer who redeveloped much of East London.

Heather recalls being tasked with "making sure all the brothels were vacated before the demolition".

She worked in a ski resort in Scotland at the site of the Massacre of Glencoe, hitchhiked around Ireland and hung out with artists at the Old Bailey pub in Dublin.



She attended the Commonwealth Games Ball in Edinburgh in mostly borrowed clothes, hitchhiked in Scandinavia, where she was invited for drinks with the king at an inn in the forest, where they met a sea captain who offered them work in Stockholm. When the lack of sunlight became too much, Heather set sail for Australia, where a spark with the first officer led to a three-year romance. Back in Melbourne, she worked for a mining magnate in Collins St, then for Volkswagen. She spent two years in Canberra working at Parliament House, then it was back to Melbourne for six years at the largest ad agency in town. "I had a long list of duties, including secretary, catering, travel agent, and scout for the next Marlboro Man. It was a stressful job... I started writing the newsletter after the previous person died at lunch."

A lifelong practice

Heather says she was glad to retire at 61... but soon found her way back to part-time work and into wellness.

She trained as a yoga teacher at age 74, worked at local community centres and in the city, taught yoga to backpackers on Noosa Beach, and worked with drug and alcohol youth at Box Hill Hospital.

Heather started taking yoga classes in the mid-1960s with Gita Yoga. "I've been doing it for 65 years – I never miss a class. It's a way of life"

She credits the regular practise with her good health.

"I'm always well and still have two knees and two hips."

She also meditates daily, every morning from the comfort of her bed and attends gym sessions at Balwyn Evergreen. Heather has lived locally for the past 15 years and used to volunteer at Balwyn Evergreen with the Friday group. She most recently had a market stall at our 2025 Open Day selling cat memorabilia - "I'm dotty about cats". And then there was the time she...

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Healthy Ageing with Balwyn Evergreen Centre

Lending a digital hand to the community

Did you know we provide hands-on digital literacy support? It's part of our Social Support Individual (SSI) offering and is completely FREE.

Bo Cui, our Operations Lead and resident tech whizz, can help with whatever's troubling you, from how to use your mobile phone, to email glitches, to helping with signing up with My Aged Care. This is all part of the Australian Government-funded Be Connected initiative that aims to provide a family and community-centred approach to supporting, coaching and teaching older Australians aged over 50 years to improve their skills and confidence in using digital technology. Under Be Connected (Digital Devices Grant), we've been able to purchase several devices, including smartphones - iPhone and Android, laptops and iPads.

These are available for use during the session with Bo. You can have a play around and learn how to use them, and Bo will help you with advice on what device suits your needs.

Digital Support sessions run each Monday from 1.30pm-2.30pm
For more information and to book, please contact the office.



Tech support: Bo pictured with MP of Kooyong Dr Monique Ryan at our 2024 Open Day. Bo was on hand to make sure the mic was working.

Channel 31 returning to our fair shores

Carol O'Halloran from Channel 31 is coming back to catch up with what's been going on at Balwyn Evergreen.

The crew from *Over 50, So What!* will be here on **Wednesday, July 16** to find out all about our new renovation, the Evergreen Connections Café & Information hub and our dementia-friendly exercises and activities.



Carol O'Halloran pictured with client Shirley Nathan during the filming for Channel 31 last year.

Those who exercise together stay together

If you'd like to enjoy your group exercise class with a friend, why not bring them along? If you refer a friend, both you and your friend will get your next/first class free. It's our little way of saying thanks. If you have someone you'd like to refer, simply bring them along, or pass their details on to the office, and we'll do the rest.

Our exercise program is a great way to spend time with friends, especially with our new coffee machine up and running!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Ruby Cheung

Hello, friends. I hope you're managing to keep warm! Winter's chill often brings strong cravings for rich, comforting meals like creamy pastas, pies, and decadent desserts.



While these foods can be satisfying, eating them too often can lead to excess energy, saturated fat, and sugar. It's important to enjoy them in moderation and be mindful of portion sizes. Try to balance with lighter sides, such as a fresh green salad or steamed vegetables.

Here are some alternatives:

- When baking or cooking, consider healthier options like using reduced-fat dairy, adding extra vegetables, or choosing lean meat.
- Instead of reaching for sugary treats every evening, try baked apples with cinnamon or a small bowl of Greek yoghurt with honey.
- Hearty comfort, make a big pot of vegetable-rich soup or stew. It's filling, warming, and packed with nutrients.

By making small tweaks, you can still enjoy cosy winter flavours.

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.

Personal Training is back on

If you need the motivation of a one-to-one training session, our Exercise Coordinator, Raymond, is taking on a few personal training clients!

This is a fantastic service if you need to rehab from injury, require extra supervision because of balance issues or have specific training goals.

To find out more about 1:1 training and to check availability, talk to Raymond directly.

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

July Outings

Tuesday, July 1

CARRUM: Freddie's Kitchen

Today we're heading south to Carrum. We'll find a nice spot to break for morning tea, then meander our way to Freddie's Kitchen for lunch. This inviting venue mixes chandeliers with a Frank Sinatra soundtrack. The menu offers a mouth-watering selection, including an all-day breakfast.

Tuesday, July 8

KINGLAKE WEST: Flour Flower Bakery Early Start 9am

With the national park on its doorstep, it's no wonder that Kinglake West is a popular tourist destination. We'll enjoy morning tea at Masons Falls Picnic Area and then head into town for lunch, to the delightful Flour Flower Bakery. This artisan bakehouse specialises in stone-baked sourdough, meat pies and house-made cakes.

Tuesday, July 15

MORABBIN AIRPORT: Flight Deck Bar & Grill

There's no better place to see what's going on at Moorabbin Airport than from the comfort of the Flight Deck Bar & Grill. Interestingly, this airport is the second busiest in Australia, and is home to a range of aviation activities including flight training, flight charter and recreation aviation operations. Lunch options include pasta, burgers and seafood.

Tuesday, July 22

EPPING: Republic Tavern Brewpub

Set in the heart of Epping, the Republic Tavern Brewpub is proof that you don't need to be close to the city to be stylish. The kitchen's focus is on 'great pub food' made from fresh and local produce. The menu offers a range of options from a quick snack to comforting pub classics. If that's not enough, they're also a microbrewery with an interesting story and tasty brews on tap.

Tuesday, July 29

LILYDALE: Harrow and Harvest Cafe

The gateway to the Yarra Ranges, Lilydale offers country charm steeped in history. Lunch is at the Harrow and Harvest Cafe. This stunning cafe is set in a converted church that was built around 1890. Soaring ceilings and stained-glass windows complement the delicious menu of local fare.

- Pick up from 9.30am (unless stated)
- Drop off at about 4pm
- Bus cost: \$28 (CHSP assessed + approved), \$36 non-assessed
- Lunch and tours additional cost (POA)
- 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

Our outings crew had plenty to see and do last month... Pictured right and below left-right: the group soaks up a bit of history at Stamford Park Homestead in Rowville. Pictured bottom: At Turners Bakehouse in Mernda.



Outings newsletter - plan your next trip

If you'd like a copy of the extended Outings Newsletter, which gives you a sneak peek up to October 2025, please contact elise.walle@balwynevergreen.org.au.

ACTIVE LIVING

Keeping Social Connections Strong

Putting a new spin on Wednesdays

We've changed things ever so slightly with our Wednesday Community Group. In response to a need in the wider community, we've added this group to our Supported Lifestyle Program (Fridays) offering. This is a bundled program that provides a complete service. A typical day looks like:

- Pick up from your home by our transport service
- Morning tea, including home-baked treats from our baking volunteers
- Seated Strength Exercise class
- Delicious, home-made lunch, prepared in our commercial kitchen by staff and volunteers
- Afternoon activities and entertainment, including performances, brain games, music, Bingo, board games or whiteboard games
- Afternoon tea - more of our tasty baked goods
- Drop off at your door by our transport service

This is a fantastic program that keeps our clients engaged with their community.

Catering to people over 65 with some cognitive impairment or mild dementia, it's a way for clients to stay active at their own pace. Our staff and volunteers do a great job of ensuring the program is enjoyable and engaging.

For more information about our Supported Lifestyle Program, please contact the office.



Let's get musical

The Balwyn Strummers ukulele group were a hit when they performed for our Wednesday group last month.

Featuring a swag of toe-tapping numbers and interesting facts about each song, the afternoon's entertainment was a definite hit.

Thank you to The Balwyn Strummers for an engaging performance!



Find out more about Support at Home at our free info session

Join us as we unpack some of the recent changes to aged care and how they affect you.

Deb Coddington, from Health Ability Box Hill, will discuss Support at Home, along with My Aged Care and how you can access government-funded services. There will be plenty of time for questions as well as handouts to take home.

This session is on Thursday, July 24, at 11am. It's free to attend, but please book at the office or by scanning the QR code.



Aged Care Number collection

Further to our obligations with the changes to aged care, we now need to collect and store your Aged Care Number on file.

Also known as an Aged Care ID, it's a unique reference number assigned to you when you register with My Aged Care (MAC). It begins with 'AC' and is on the card/letter issued after your initial MAC sign-up. ***Please provide your AC Number to the office when you get the chance.***

AGED CARE UPDATE

Statement of Rights for older people

The new Aged Care Act will include a Statement of Rights, outlining the rights that older people will have when accessing aged care services. The rights outlined in the Act help to ensure that older people and their needs are at the centre of the new aged care system.

The Statement of Rights include the right to:

- independence, autonomy, empowerment and freedom of choice
- equitable access
- quality and safe funded aged care services
- respect for privacy and information
- person-centred communication and the ability to raise issues without reprisal
- advocates, significant persons and social connections.

To view the full-length description of the Statement of Rights as presented in the Bill, visit/search [Part 3 – Aged care rights and principles](#), or scan the QR code.



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

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, Raymond.



Raymond K



Denise Mokasdi

Evergreen Gym Studio + Personal Training

Small Group Circuit Sessions

Thursdays 11am & 1.15pm (45 mins)

Personal Training

Contact Raymond to arrange day/time

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

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 Raymond about joining the next round.



Yanmei Chen



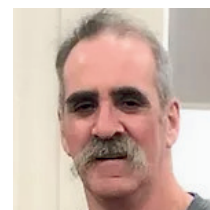
Jo Morris



Jo Golds



Lilei Enright



Tom Scott



Elizabeth Mackenzie

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A little reminder to take care of yourself

July 24 is International Self-Care Day... so if ever there was a time for a bit of indulgence, this is it! We're not talking about paradigm shifts - rather, the small habits we can implement to make meaningful change. Maybe it's drinking more water, reading a book or going for an extra walk. These are the types of actions that can start to shift the needle on wellbeing and physical health. As a provider of social support, promoting positive wellbeing is central to our values and mission, and it's that simple premise that has seen us evolve and thrive throughout the years. Because looking after yourself never changes.



CYBER SNIPPETS

with **Bo Cui**

Criminals often use emotional tricks to manipulate people. This month we look at impersonation and robocalls, which are common phone scams.



Watch out for impersonation scams

- A common scam involves someone calling, claiming to be a grandchild or relative in sudden trouble. Hang up, then call them on their known number to check. Genuine calls won't mind you verifying.

Hang up on robocalls

- Automated calls (often from overseas) may threaten you with legal action or claim you owe money to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Hang up straight away. If in doubt, call the official ATO independently to verify (do not use a number the caller gave you).

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 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

Flu season safety

With winter here, you can help protect yourself and your community by getting your flu vaccine and Covid booster. The vaccines are free for people aged 65+. As a reminder, if you have any cold or flu symptoms, please stay home. This helps to keep our staff and clients well.

Support our work with a donation



As a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity, we rely on donations from our community to run and maintain our programs and services. If you're able to, please consider making a donation. All contributions go directly 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. Thank you 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



'Balwyn Evergreen Centre'



'Balwyn Evergreen Centre'