

MARCH 2026

## Keeping up the social momentum

### Welcome to the March edition of Evergreen Connections

It's officially the start of autumn, but we can't see summer going anywhere just yet. What we really mean is we need it to stick around until Saturday, March 28, for our Open Day!

We're excited to open our doors to the community and say a big hello! Importantly, this is an opportunity for people to check out the centre and chat with our staff about our programs, plus enjoy all the other fun things that will be happening!

We're encouraging everyone to spread the word about Balwyn Evergreen - if you have a friend, neighbour or family member who you think would benefit from being part of our community, please invite them to come along! Check out page 3 for the full rundown of the event.

### Aside from the Open Day, there's plenty of other things happening...

We raise a cup of coffee for International Women's Day on March 8 (page 4), which segues into our exercise program.

Of course, there are all our usual exercise classes on offer - check your diary to see if you can squeeze another class in.

Our bumper Bus Outing Program is in full swing (page 5). We're now running fortnightly community outings and a monthly premium outing! These are guaranteed to be popular, so make sure you book with Raymond!

And that's just the tip of the iceberg - put the kettle on and enjoy the read.

As always, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- The Balwyn Evergreen Centre Team

## Events & Info Sessions

### Balwyn Evergreen Open Day

Saturday, March 28  
10am-2pm

Join us for a day of fun, friendship and a whole lot of colour at our annual Open Day! Check our page 3 for more info.



### Chatty Café

Thursday, March 26  
1pm-2pm

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



### We're working on it...

Dates TBC

Keep an eye out over the next few months for Info Session on topics around the changes in Aged Care.

All events and information sessions are free to attend unless stated otherwise. Please book your spot with the office and check in with the office upon arrival.



## We're mooving up in the world

Our Outings Crew is always up for a photo and a laugh, and the big cow at Caldermeade Farm provided the perfect opportunity.

This outing was one of our weekly social outings, which hit the road each Tuesday. We find bus outings are in the Goldilocks Zone for social support - they're just right, which is why they're so popular!

To find out more about our Outings Program and to book your seat, please contact the office.



# NEWS CORNER

Updates From the Balwyn Evergreen Centre Community

## Goodbye Kerri, you'll be missed!

Sadly, this month we say goodbye to our Volunteer Lead, Kerri, who's moving into a new and exciting role in the Aboriginal community sector. She has made a huge contribution to Balwyn Evergreen over the past few years, tirelessly championing the importance and contributions of volunteers. Her passion for volunteering is truly inspiring. In her own words...

"I say with absolute sincerity that working alongside you all has been the greatest privilege of my time here.

"The compassion and kindness you bring to the Balwyn Evergreen community make a real difference, and I'm deeply grateful for your selfless dedication."

During her time here, she's turned the spotlight on to the volunteers, has created connections far beyond role descriptions and has cultivated close community partnerships.

We'll miss her laughter, jokes and love of data. Her PowerPoints are second to none! We wish her all the best in her new role.



## Spend some time at Balwyn Evergreen

Don't forget the Evergreen Connections Cafe & Information Hub casual drop-in times are 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. If you have a group or activity in mind, such as a book club or a card group, let us know, and we'll make sure there's space available for you.

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. This space is a soft introduction to Balwyn Evergreen and a great way to gauge the vibe. If you're new to our community, grab a coffee and have a chat with our staff, clients or volunteers - there's always someone around!

## A Diva and her books

A huge thank you to the incomparable Renee Shapero, who painstakingly alphabetised our book collection! She spent about a week going through everything, putting the books in order of the author's surname.

Renee says it "looks much better now", and we concur.

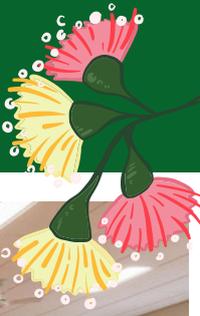
Renee, who turns 97 this month, is part of our Senior Divas group, which meets fortnightly, and she also participates in the Monday Exercise to Music class. Make sure you check out her handiwork, and feel free to borrow and enjoy a book or two.

Our Evergreen Connections Cafe & Information Hub is the perfect spot for a quiet read, along with a cup of coffee.



# OPEN DAY 2026

Saturday, March 28 from 10am-2pm



## Become part of our community

Our Community Open Day is on Saturday, March 28, from 10am-2pm

It's going to be a fantastic day, and we hope to see as many of you there as possible. Even better, bring a friend or two to introduce them to the Balwyn Evergreen experience. After all, that's what it's all about - opening our doors to the community. There's lots to look forward to on the day, including exercise class demonstrations, a BBQ, cake stall, coffee, community partner showcase and market stalls.

For those keen to find out what we do, make sure you swing by our information stand for a chat. Anything you need to know about our programs and services is all right there. The Open Day is going to be a fun and colourful celebration of our community, so please help us spread the word and share the love with friends and family.



### Here's what's happening on the day...

- Balwyn Evergreen exercise class demonstrations, including our famous Line Dancers
- Demonstrations and performances from some of our community partners
- Community partner showcase
- Market stalls with a range of wares
- Raffle with fantastic prizes
- Sausage Sizzle supplied by Bennet's Butchery
- Cake stall - who doesn't love a cake stall?!
- Face Painting - not just for kids!

This event will be photographed by the Camberwell Camera Club.

## Help us make our Open Day one to remember

- Donate to our raffle! We're putting together hampers and are looking for donations of personal care items (hand cream, soap etc) and food (chocolate, biscuits etc). These can be dropped off at the office.
- If you'd like to host a market stall, please let us know - we have a few spots still available.
- Bake a cake, slice or biscuits for our cake stall – start thinking about your creations! You'll be able to drop these off a few days before or on the day. Council requires baked goods to be labelled with ingredients, date made, the best before date and any allergens.
- Spread the word - grab a flyer and share it with your friends. Even better, bring someone along to share the day. The aim of the game is to build our community, and there's no better recommendation than good old word of mouth!

**Thank you for your support - it's going to be a great day!**



# HEALTH & WELLBEING

Healthy Ageing with Balwyn Evergreen Centre

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Ruby Cheung

Happy first of Autumn everyone! This month we're talking about soft drinks.

Many people choose diet or "sugar-free" drinks to cut back on sugar.

While this may seem like a healthier option, recent research suggests we should still be cautious - especially as we get older.

Several long-term studies have found that people who drink artificially sweetened beverages every day may have a higher risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

Scientists believe these sweeteners might affect how the body handles blood sugar or change the healthy bacteria in our gut.

Over time, this could make it harder to control blood glucose levels.

Other research has also reported a link between daily diet soft drink consumption and a higher risk of memory problems, dementia, and even stroke.

In some studies, people who drank these beverages daily were more likely to experience cognitive decline compared with those who rarely drank them.

It is important to remember that these studies show a connection, not definite proof that diet drinks cause these problems.

However, for older adults, choosing water, milk, or fresh juice most of the time may be a safer choice to support brain and overall health.

**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. Before making any significant dietary changes or if you are worried about your health, please consult your doctor.**



## When we give we gain so much more

March 8 marks International Women's Day (IWD). This year's theme is 'Give to Gain', which encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration.

Whether through donations, knowledge, resources, visibility, advocacy, education, training, mentoring, or time, contributing to women's advancement helps create a more supportive and interconnected world.

At Balwyn Evergreen, we recognise the importance of continuing to push for gender equality. Women have been part of our story since our foundation in 1958, and continue to drive our community connections today.

Within our programs, we have women's only spaces – The Senior Divas group and now our Women's Cross Training (previously Super Circuit) exercise classes on Tuesday and Friday mornings. These are a small part of the story and a place for women to feel at home.

## Refer a friend and exercise for free!

We love word of mouth and want to thank those who support us.

So if you share the Evergreen exercise experience with your friends and family, you can have a free class on us! To redeem, simply let David or the office know and we'll do the rest!



# DAY TRIPS

A Month's Worth of Bus Outings

## Enjoy a day out with friends

Keep your social connections strong with Balwyn Evergreen's popular Bus Outings Program, for people aged 65+ who are up for new experiences.

Bookings essential - please contact 9836 9681 or [office@balwynevergreen.org.au](mailto:office@balwynevergreen.org.au).

Ask us about the extended Outings Newsletter, which gives you a sneak peek up to June 2026.

- Pick up from 9.30am (unless otherwise stated)
- Drop off around 4pm
- COST: \$28 (CHSP assessed + approved), \$36 non-assessed. Lunch and tours are an additional cost
- Please advise of food allergies or dietary requirements
- Outings require a minimum of six people to go ahead
- Failure to notify of cancellation of booking by 9am on the day will incur a cancellation fee

## Weekly Social Outings

### Tuesday, March 3

**GISBORNE:** Hanging Rock Reserve Cafe

#### EARLY START 9AM

There's no better place to immerse yourself in the natural history of Victoria than at Hanging Rock Reserve in the Macedon Ranges. Enjoy a gentle walk or simply drink in the majesty of the Rock. Lunch is on-site at the popular cafe. **ENTRY: \$5**

### Tuesday, March 10

**SEAFORD:** BBQ at Keast Park

We're getting our dose of sea air today as we enjoy an outing to Seaford. Relax and take in the coastal scenery as we wind our way to our destination, with Port Phillip Bay as our backdrop. We'll then enjoy a delicious barbecue lunch at Keast Park, overlooking the water.

**COST OF LUNCH: \$20**

### Tuesday, March 17

**MOUNT EVELYN:** Paperbark Cafe

Today we head to the hills, to the close-knit community of Mount Evelyn. Lunch is at the Paperbark cafe, which is part of the Kuranga Native Nursery. The menu features bush foods and locally sourced ingredients.

### Tuesday, March 24

**MOUNT DANDENONG:** Ripe Sassafras

We're heading for the hills, to the Dandenongs, where the bustle of the city melts into towering trees. We'll enjoy the drive through winding roads, stopping along the way for a cuppa and a photo opportunity. Lunch is at Ripe Sassafras, a quintessential hills cafe in the heart of the Dandenong Ranges.

### Tuesday, March 31

**TOORADIN:** Tides Bar and Grill

Tooradin was originally the home of the Western Port Aboriginal people, called the Bunurong. It's long been a popular fishing spot thanks to its coastal location overlooking French Island.

## Fortnightly Community Outings

For people who enjoy active, engaging experiences beyond our Tuesday offerings.

### Thursday, March 5

**BLUE LOTUS WATER GARDENS & CAFE**

#### EARLY START 9AM

Located in the beautiful Yarra Valley, these vast tropical-themed water gardens feature ponds, lakes, amazing fountains and thousands of flowering plants. Make sure you bring your camera! Lunch is at the cafe onsite.

**ENTRY: \$22.50 entry concession**

### Thursday, March 19

**MONT DE LANCEY**

Relive the history of the Yarra Valley at this historic homestead built in the 1880s by an early settler family. Wander the grounds and enjoy the serenity. Lunch is at the cafe onsite.

**COST: \$10 for tour, 10 people minimum required**

## Monthly Premium Outing

Treat yourself to something extra special with our monthly top-shelf outing option!

### Monday, March 16

**WERRIBEE OPEN RANGE ZOO**

#### EARLY START 9AM

Experience the wonders of some of the planet's most amazing animals up close at Werribee Zoo. Featuring an open-range safari to see animals roaming the savannah and easy walks among the other exhibits.

Lunch is at the cafe onsite.

**ENTRY: \$49 includes safari**

## Creating conversations around community care

Last week, Activities Coordinator Raymond gave a dedicated presentation on our Supported Lifestyle Program to Support at Home providers and members of the community. It was interesting, interactive and informative with Raymond's trademark humour peppered throughout. He detailed the benefits of the SLP, which supports people with mild dementia or cognitive decline, for carers and clients alike. It's a niche program that allows clients to stay active in their community, but also provides respite for carers and families. For Support at Home providers, it's a trusted option for them to refer clients to.

**To find out more about the SLP, please contact Raymond or come along to our Open Day on March 28 and chat with him in person.**



## Free hearing clinic at Balwyn Evergreen

Don't miss the opportunity to book a **FREE Specialist Hearing Assessment** with experienced audiologist **Weicen Yan** of **NeuroHearing**.

**On Thursday, March 19, from 10.30am-12pm**

The Hearing Clinic covers:

- Hearing loss screening
- Earwax checks
- Hearing aid cleaning and troubleshooting

**Did you know...** according to Dementia Australia, hearing loss and the risk of developing dementia are linked?

The best way to reduce the risk is by taking care of your hearing and preventing damage.

You can do this by:

- avoiding loud noise
- wearing hearing protection
- quitting smoking
- having your hearing tested regularly

Even with the best prevention, some level of hearing loss is common, but with regular testing, you're giving yourself the best chance of managing hearing loss.

**Book your 15-minute appointment at the office - 9836 9681 or [office@balwynevergreen.org.au](mailto:office@balwynevergreen.org.au). Please arrive five minutes before your appointment and check in at the office. For more information about NeuroHearing, visit [www.neurohearing.com.au](http://www.neurohearing.com.au).**



## AGED CARE UPDATE

### Understanding support roles under the new Aged Care Act

We've touched on this topic previously, but as a reminder, under the new Aged Care Act, aged care providers are required to ask if you would like anyone to support you in making decisions, and who your preferred person is. You can register your supporters with My Aged Care (1800 200 422).

Alternatively, you may feel your existing support network of friends and family is enough without registering them.

Your authorised or regular representatives in My Aged Care before November 1, 2025, were automatically deemed to be registered supporters.

They will remain supporters unless you or they request their registration be cancelled or if their registration is cancelled by the Department.

**We understand these changes can be confusing, which is why we plan to run an information session on Support Roles in the next few months. Stay tuned for upcoming dates.**

# 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
<b>10.30am</b> Exercise to Music with Jo G	<b>8.30am</b> <b>NEW!</b> Women's Cross Training with David	<b>10.15am</b> Seated Strength Exercise with David	<b>9.30am</b> Men's Exercise with Tom	<b>9.30am</b> <b>NEW!</b> Women's Cross Training with David
<b>12pm</b> Seated Strength Exercise with David	<b>9.30am</b> Challenge Your Balance with Denise	<b>10.15am</b> Strength Exercise with Tom	<b>9.30am</b> Movement to Music with Jo M <b>**45 minute class**</b>	<b>10am</b> Tai Chi with Lilei
	<b>11.30am</b> Seated Exercise to Music with Jo M	<b>11.30am</b> Line Dancing with Jo C	<b>1pm-3.30pm</b> Table Tennis self run	<b>11am</b> Seated Strength Exercise with Yanmei
	<b>1.45pm</b> Seated Strength Exercise with David		<b>2.30pm</b> Meditation & Yoga with Elizabeth	<b>11.15am</b> Seated Tai Chi with Lilei
	<b>1.45pm</b> Strength Exercise with Tom			

## 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

## Coming soon... Falls and Balance Program

We're putting the finishing touches on our dedicated progression Falls and Balance Program. To join the waitlist speak with David.



Yanmei Chen



Jo Morris



Jo Golds



Lilei Enright



Tom Scott



Elizabeth Mackenzie

## Notes

- Please check the online Activities Calendar for any timetable changes
- Make sure you wear appropriate sneakers. Sandals are not permitted

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## See how our garden grows

You wouldn't believe how much colour and produce comes out of our little garden, nestled in the north side of the building.

This sunflower stood proudly with its siblings for a long time, smiling at people as they wandered by. Thanks to David Embury, our volunteer gardener and all-around good guy, for keeping the garden blooming.

Not only does it provide beautiful flashes of colour, but it also contributes fresh produce to our various program lunches.



## 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!

## CYBER SNIPPETS

with **Bo Cui**

Managing all your accounts can be tough - especially if you use strong passwords everywhere.

Password managers help, and protecting personal details is always crucial.

### Use a Password Manager

Services like Google Password Manager, Microsoft Edge Password Manager, 1Password, LastPass, or Bitwarden securely store your login details and generate strong passwords

This prevents the temptation to reuse the same password across different sites

### Safeguard Personal Details

Only share your Medicare number, Tax File Number, or Centrelink details with official government agencies or verified medical providers. Be cautious with your driver's licence and birth certificate information as well.

*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**

## Check in at the office

Just a reminder to check in with the office before your class, or if you're running late to check in after your class. We need to ensure we have accurate numbers of clients on the premises and also that no payments are missed. 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 a cancellation fee.

## Update your details

Make sure you let the office know if there are any changes to your personal details.

## 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](mailto:hire@balwynevergreen.org.au).**

## Connect with us



@balwyn\_evergreen



'Balwyn Evergreen Centre'



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