

Time to warm those social connections

Welcome to the April edition of Evergreen Connections

With the weather cooling down and the clocks falling back, we're looking forward to switching focus to staying warm. On the back of a hectic start to the year, culminating in our Open Day on March 28, we're keen to slow things down ever so slightly.

April generally allows this, with Easter and school holidays a welcome pause to routine. It's also a chance to take stock of how the year's going - are you happy with your classes? Would you like to try something new? Would you like to meet new people? If you've got a hankering to mix things up, come and chat with us! As for the Open Day, it went well, and it was lovely to see a lot of new faces there. Check out page 3 for the round-up. If you didn't manage to make it to the Open Day and would like to find out more about what we do, feel free to drop in during business hours for a chat. Similarly, if you know someone who would benefit from our services, please encourage them to come along - or pass them a copy of the newsletter!

In other news, we're excited to welcome two new staff members to our team - Exercise Coordinator Baylee and Volunteer Program Coordinator Tania (more info on page 4). There's an important update about the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme on page 2, and some information session info on page 6. Don't forget all our usual programs and activities, including our super-charged Outings Program on page 5.

As always, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- The Balwyn Evergreen Centre Team

Events & Info Sessions

Aged Care Navigator Sessions
Tuesday, May 5
9am-12pm

Have a free chat about all things aged care with council's Aged Care Navigator. Book your 20 minute session at the office. More info on page 6.

Chatty Café
Thursday, April 30
1pm-2pm

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



Evergreen Connections Cafe & Information Hub

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

Spend some time, have a chat and don't forget to bring a gold coin for the coffee machine!

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.

Happy birthday to Raymond!

Everyone's favourite Activities Coordinator, Raymond, celebrated his 40th birthday last month.

He was, predictably, showered with baked goods - he's pictured here with volunteer Annie, who made him some spectacular cupcakes.

We love celebrating birthdays here, and our groups often include a cake, candles and birthday sing-along.

To find out more about our Social Support Programs, please contact the office.



NEWS CORNER

Updates From the Balwyn Evergreen Community

Learning about community

We're pleased to welcome volunteer Sora Lim back as a placement student.

He'll be here for the next month helping Raymond and Lisa with our group activities.

We asked him to pen a few words explaining what his study is all about...

I'm Sora Lim, and I'm currently undertaking my Diploma of Community Services study at Southern Cross Education Institute (SCEI).

The course is about understanding and knowing the rights and needs of the clients, creating care plans, developing new ideas, and protecting their safety. I'm doing my work placement at Balwyn Evergreen, where I'm learning new things every day. It's a great environment to meet people, volunteers, and clients.

It helps me to understand how to provide correct support to older people in terms of improving mobility and helping them to remain independent. I'm looking forward to getting to know this community better.



Free energy assessments available in Boroondara

Boroondara residents can now access free home energy assessments plus up to \$2000 in subsidies for energy-saving upgrades through the City of Boroondara's new Solar Savers program.

Whether you're looking to stay warmer this winter, lower your bills, or reduce emissions, this is your chance to get free expert advice and make upgrades for less.

This offer is available until December 31, 2026, unless funding is exhausted prior.

For more information and to register, visit:
boroondara.vic.gov.au/energy-efficient-home

Important update on the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

Over the coming months, you will start to see some changes in our Evergreen Connections Program. For the past three years, we have been privileged to be one of many providers of the Federal Government's Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme (ACVVS). This program has ensured that older people living in residential aged care or receiving home care services, who are isolated and lonely, are matched with a volunteer for regular contact and friendship.

Unfortunately, after June 30, 2026, we will no longer be a provider under this scheme.

We still believe in the incredible value of this program to ensure older people remain socially connected, and while we won't be delivering it in future, we are keen to ensure all the wonderful connections we have helped forge continue.

Over the next few weeks, we will commence a transition period where we will work with the government to smoothly transition our ACVVS recipients and their volunteer friends to a new provider. We will no longer be accepting any referrals into this program.

If you are interested in volunteering for this program, or you or someone you know would like a regular visitor, please visit: health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs.

Current participants in this program will remain with Balwyn Evergreen until May, when they will be reassigned to other ACVVS providers. As we have many participants, this may take a month or so to complete.

The good news is we will be continuing our Evergreen Connections Visitor Program under Lucia's watchful eye, but with a slightly different look and feel.

Our Evergreen Connections Café is ready and waiting to be the hub for future fun and friendships.

We participate in Chatty Café once a month and run a few volunteer-led connection activities out of the café.

We are working on a few more, including social groups, tech classes and maybe a furry friend or two.

Also under the Evergreen Connections umbrella is Bo's Be Connected tech support sessions.

Keep an eye out in future newsletters and on our website for details and updates.

Thank you for your support of the ACVVS program. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

OPEN DAY 2026

A Fantastic Day Out



Open Day 2026 - a celebration of our community

Another Open Day is done and dusted, and what a fantastic day out it was. There was genuine concern about the weather forecast, but the little bit of rain wasn't enough to keep people away. We had fun demonstrations, rousing entertainment, an interesting selection of expo stands and market stalls, and some delicious nibbles.

We also managed to raise about \$1200 from the cake stall, raffle and food for sale, which will go towards our High Tea in October. As an independently run, not-for-profit organisation, our events wouldn't be possible without a little fundraising. Thanks to our wonderful community for supporting our Open Day, and to all the new people who came along to find out more. A huge shout-out to our fabulous volunteers and staff who made it all happen.

If you couldn't make it on the day, feel free to drop in for a chat and to have a look around during business hours.



Thanks to our amazing community partners for their support

Of course, an event like this can't happen without a whole lot of community support! Please support the organisations and businesses that support us.



Thank you to...

- **Bennet's Butchery** on Maling Rd for supplying the sausages and **Bakehouse Mont Albert** for the bread and muffins
- **VicProp Boroondara** for the enormous Real Estate board
- **Sing Australia Choir Camberwell Branch**, for the uplifting performance, and **Joseph Zheikat** for his beautiful classical guitar skills
- Of course, to **Camberwell Camera Club** for capturing the day - we can't wait to see the photos!

Hats off to our Market Stallholders:

- Peter Hall Woodworker
- Tan's Green House Plants + Terrariums
- Susan Johns Paper Craft + Knitted Goods
- Scarf Hut Vintage Scarves

Take a bow, our Expo Stallholders:

- Boroondara Chinese Senior Citizens Association
- Hong Kong Club Tai Chi Group
- Elevate Physiotherapists + Pilates
- Joyce Optometrists
- Health Ability
- NeuroHearing Audiologists
- Luxe Care Support at Home

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Healthy Ageing with Balwyn Evergreen

Welcome to the team Baylee and Tania

We're excited to welcome two new staff members to our team – Baylee Eastham and Tania Kennington. Baylee commenced as our Exercise Coordinator at the end of March.



Baylee Eastham



Tania Kennington

She's an ESSA-accredited Exercise Physiologist with plenty of industry experience and a background in hospital rehabilitation. Baylee joins us full-time and brings a passionate and practical approach to supporting health and wellness. She's looking forward to meeting all of our exercise clients and being part of our community.

Tania is our new Volunteer Program Coordinator and will begin her three-day role after Easter. She brings a wealth of experience to the role, most recently working with Ambulance Victoria.

Tania even popped into the Open Day to get a taste of the Evergreen vibe and say hello.

We'll catch up with Baylee and Tania again in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, we have no doubt you'll all make them feel welcome.

Thank you and farewell from David Watson

Sadly, I've had to end my time at Balwyn Evergreen. I've had the pleasure of witnessing this centre's growth over the past six months, as well as watching you all become stronger and fitter. Your support and positive feedback for my role as exercise coordinator have helped me learn a thing or two! I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you all, and take with me many wonderful (and very funny) stories and experiences. Thank you to the wonderful staff and volunteers who keep this place running, and most importantly, to all the amazing clients who make our work here so rewarding. Finally, always remember to keep your chest up and lift your knees!

Staying well over the cold and flu season

We're heading into the cooler months, which means winter bugs are on the rise. You can help protect yourself from cold and flu viruses by washing your hands regularly and avoiding close contact with people who are sick. Boost your immune system with proper sleep, a balanced diet, and staying hydrated. Flu vaccines are now available and 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.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Ruby Cheung

Hello, friends! Have you thought about how many ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) you are eating daily? A recent study suggests that older adults can boost their health



simply by cutting back on UPFs - without needing strict diets or big lifestyle changes.

UPFs include items such as packaged snacks, some ready-made meals, and processed meats, which often contain unnecessary food additives and preservatives.

In the study, people aged 65 and over followed two balanced eating plans that focused on fresh, minimally processed foods. One plan included lean meat, while the other plan was vegetarian. Even though participants weren't asked to eat less, many naturally consumed fewer calories, lost weight, and reduced body fat across both diets.

More importantly, their bodies responded in positive ways.

Participants showed better blood sugar control, healthier cholesterol levels, reduced inflammation, and improved appetite.

The conclusion is to eat less UPFs.

While more research is needed, this study highlights a simple and practical step toward healthy ageing - choosing more fresh, home-style foods to support overall wellbeing, independence, and quality of life.

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.

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.

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

Enjoy a day out with friends as part of our weekly Outings Crew!

Tuesday, April 7

WARBURTON: Riverview Cafe & Wine Bar

EARLY START 9AM

Part of the verdant Yarra Valley, Warburton is the place to go to experience nature. This serene and historic town is a world away from the bustle of the city. We'll enjoy the sights and fresh air, then head to the RiverView Cafe & Wine Bar at the edge of the Yarra River for a delightful lunch.

Tuesday, April 14

BERWICK: Berwick Springs Hotel

Once a small hamlet servicing the farming community, Berwick is now a sought-after destination for those seeking a quieter lifestyle. We'll peruse the tree-lined streets with historic buildings before heading to the Berwick Springs Hotel, which has an expansive menu featuring pub classics and pizzas.

Tuesday, April 21

GISBORNE: Gisborne Telegraph Hotel

Located in picturesque Gisborne, the gateway to the Macedon Ranges, the Telegraph Hotel is a great stop for some pub grub. This outing is a classic road trip with country charm and rolling hills to admire. Of course, it goes without saying that we'll stop for a cuppa and some of Voula's biscuits along the way.

Tuesday, April 28

BEACONSFIELD: Pink Hill Hotel

There's nothing better than a pub meal, and in this area, the Beaconsfield's Pink Hill Hotel excels. But before we sit down for lunch, we'll enjoy the drive south, finding a nice spot to stop for morning tea.

Fortnightly Community Outings

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

Thursday, April 2

MELBOURNE MUSEUM

Emerse yourself in the natural world at the famed Melbourne Museum in Carlton.

Lunch is at the Royal Oak Richmond.

ENTRY: Free with a concession or \$12 for seniors

Thursday, April 16

QUEEN VIC MARKETS

Discover this lively historic landmark and take in all it has to offer on this exciting day out. We'll take our time wandering around the precinct and enjoy coffee and lunch at one of the many cafes at the market.

Thursday, April 30

MONTSLAVAT

Set in leafy Eltham, Montsalvat is Australia's oldest continuous artist community. This semi-rural retreat features extensive gardens and historic buildings.

Lunch is at the cafe onsite.

ENTRY: \$10

Monthly Premium Outing

Treat yourself to something extra special with our monthly Premium Outing option!

Monday, April 13

MELBOURNE SKYDECK

Get a bird's-eye view of the city from the lofty heights of the Melbourne Skydeck on the 88th floor of the Eureka Tower. At nearly 300m high, the Skydeck is the Southern Hemisphere's highest observation deck. The Skydeck is the ultimate experience for locals and tourists alike. Lunch will be at one of the many fabulous eateries the city has to offer.

COST: \$25 prebooked or \$33 on the day

Werribee Zoo a roaring good time

Our Outings Crew enjoyed a backyard safari with a trip to Werribee Zoo last month. They enjoyed the local tour and spotted the big five game animals - definitely not something you see every day! This trip was our monthly Premium Outing - upcoming destinations are: Melbourne Skydeck, Dame Nellie Melba's house tour and Old Melbourne Gaol.

Our expanded Outings Program is proving a hit - if you'd like to try one of these specially selected trips, please talk to Raymond or contact the office.



Make a time to chat with the council's Aged Care Navigator

We're excited to host Helen Craddock, the council's Aged Care Navigator, on **Tuesday, May 5, from 9am-12pm.**

This is the first of a regular bi-monthly session to chat about all things aged care.

The Aged Care Navigation service offers free, confidential support to help people aged 65 and over, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over, to access services through My Aged Care.

These services can help you stay safe, connected to your community and supported at home for longer.

The Aged Care Navigator can:

- Explain how My Aged Care works and who is eligible
- Assist with registration or reassessment
- Help you access government-funded services
- Connect you with local supports and social activities
- Give you clear information and resources so you can understand your options

This is a great opportunity to chat with Helen about any burning questions around aged care.

Book your 20-minute appointment at the office - 9836 9681 or office@balwynevergreen.org.au. Please arrive five minutes before your appointment and check in at the office. For more information about the service, visit boroondara.vic.gov.au/aged-care-navigation

Community Legal Education: Wills and Power of Attorney

Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) has partnered with local community organisations and councils to provide a range of FREE information sessions in 2026 to help community members across the eastern metropolitan region understand Wills and Powers of Attorney.

The next session is on April 23 from 2pm-4pm at the Craig Family Centre, 7 Sanmarinda Ave, Ashburton 3147.

The session will cover:

- Our rights as we get older
- Substitute Decision Making - including Enduring Powers of Attorney and Medical Treatment Decisions
- Wills
- Challenges to deceased estates
- Family care agreements

To book contact: 9885 7789 or email communityprograms@craigfc.org.au. For all other sessions, visit the ECLC website: eclc.org.au/what-we-do/community-legal-education/

EXERCISE & SOCIALISE

Your Ticket to Staying Fit & Well

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
<p>10.30am Exercise to Music with Jo G</p>	<p>9am NEW! Women's Cross Training with Baylee **Time change**</p>	<p>10.15am Strength Exercise with Tom</p>	<p>9.30am Men's Exercise with Tom</p>	<p>9.30am NEW! Women's Cross Training with Baylee</p>
<p>12pm Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee</p>	<p>9.30am Challenge Your Balance with Denise</p>	<p>10.45am Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee **Time change**</p>	<p>9.30am Movement to Music with Jo M **45 minute class**</p>	<p>10am Tai Chi with Lilei</p>
	<p>11.30am Seated Exercise to Music with Jo M</p>	<p>11.30am Line Dancing with Jo C</p>	<p>1pm-3.30pm Table Tennis self run</p>	<p>11am Seated Strength Exercise with Yanmei</p>
	<p>1.45pm Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee</p>		<p>2.30pm Meditation & Yoga with Elizabeth</p>	<p>11.15am Seated Tai Chi with Lilei</p>
	<p>1.45pm Strength Exercise with Tom</p>			

Legend

Gentle

Moderate

Active

Cost of Group Classes

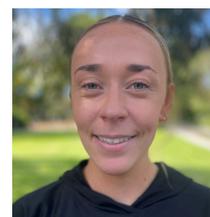
\$12 CHSP assessed and approved

\$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, Baylee.



Baylee Eastham



Denise Mokasdi

Evergreen Gym Studio + Personal Training
Small Group Circuit Sessions
Thursdays 11am & 1.15pm (45 mins)
Max 4 people per class
Personal Training
Contact Baylee to arrange day/time

Find the right class for you!

Before you get started with your exercise plan, book a time to meet with Exercise Coordinator Baylee to make sure you're medically cleared to participate. This ensures you get the most out of your program.



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

Great day out at the BVRC Expo

It was another fruitful outing at the Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre Expo last month. With about 50 organisations represented, and a wide variety of volunteer roles on offer, it's no wonder that Boroondara has one of the highest rates of volunteering compared with other LGAs. A huge thanks to the BVRC for putting on a fantastic event - we look forward to it each year!

If you'd like to volunteer with us, particularly as a driver or Evergreen Connections visitor, please contact the office.



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

Always remember scammers are constantly changing tactics, so staying informed is your best defence.



Here are a couple of ways to stay ahead of their game...

Recognise tech-support scams

Unsolicited calls or pop-ups claiming your computer is infected are almost always scams. If you're concerned, contact a trusted local technician or a well-known Aussie tech retailer such as JB Hi-Fi or Officeworks for advice.

Review statements regularly

Check your bank, credit card, and any other financial statements each month for unexpected charges. Report unknown transactions immediately to your bank to limit potential damage. Don't forget, we're here to help if you have any questions!

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. For the safety of all and in the case of an emergency we need to know who is in the centre.

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.



Connect with us



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