

Lighting the spark of connection

Welcome to the August edition of Evergreen Connections

Happy August, everyone! If you're feeling the cold, don't despair; the heater is on at Balwyn Evergreen, and there's always someone to chat with. For a dedicated chat, come along to our Chatty Cafe table on Wednesdays from 10.30am - turn to page 3 for all the info, plus how we're making room for connections during Loneliness Awareness Week (August 3-9). Make sure you check out all our upcoming events and information sessions - we've jammed it with all sorts of things that you won't want to miss. In particular, we have a session on Navigating the Aged Care System (page 8) and a fantastic opportunity to find out how to get the most out of your Support at Home Package (page 2). We also flag our famous High Tea (page 2) and some exciting new exercise opportunities (page 4). All that and a whole lot more - put the kettle on and enjoy the read.

As always, we look forward to seeing you soon!

- The Balwyn Evergreen Centre Team

Update on pricing plus our Cancellation Policy...

Please note that some of our services have a strict cancellation policy due to having limited availability, providing a meal and/or requiring prebooking. These services include but are not limited to: Transport, Outings, Falls Prevention Course, Supported Lifestyle Program and Senior Divas. Late cancellations of these services affect our ability to deliver them cost-effectively and keep our prices low. You can view the full policy on our website, or speak to the office: <https://www.balwynevergreen.org.au/cancellation-policy>



A side of thanks for our kitchen crew

Our wonderful kitchen volunteers enjoyed a thank-you lunch last month as our little way of showing our appreciation for all the hard work they do! Pictured from left: Volunteer Program Coordinator Tania with bakers/cooks/kitchen assistants Tan, Harriet, Giti and Rosie. These legends work tirelessly creating treats, meals and helping to keep the kitchen running smoothly. They're the icing on our cake! Thank you!

To find out more about our programs and services, please contact the office.

Events & Info Sessions

Chatty Cafe Launch

Wednesday, August 5
10.30am-11.30pm

Join us for a special morning tea to relaunch our Chatty Cafe (page 3).

Navigating the Aged Care System

Thursday, August 20
11am-12pm

An Overview on accessing the Aged Care system. Presented by Health Ability (page 8).

Making the Most of your Support at Home Package

Thursday, September 3
11.30am-12.30pm

Small group roundtable coffee and chat, facilitated by Angus Kerr from LiveWell Care (page 2).

Wiser Driver Course

Monday, September 7, 14, 21, 28
1pm-3pm

Brush up on your driving knowledge over four weeks with the trusted Wiser Driver course (page 6).

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.



NEWS CORNER

Updates From the Balwyn Evergreen Community

Understanding the aged care algorithm

By Angus Kerr, Principal Social Worker & Aged Care Navigator at LiveWell Care

When preparing for an Aged Care Assessment, many of us naturally tend to downplay our daily struggles to maintain our sense of independence.

However, the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) used to determine your support funding operates as a rigid, rules-based algorithm. It acts as a digital scorecard that processes checkboxes and specific health conditions, but crucially, it ignores the free-text notes your assessor writes during the interview.

The algorithm relies on binary logic: a need is either covered, or it represents a safety risk. If you are stoic and minimise your difficulties, such as saying you “manage okay” or that family “pops in to help”, the algorithm registers you as independent or well-supported. This can result in a lower funding classification, regardless of the actual care you require. To ensure your assessment reflects your true baseline, you must clearly articulate your risks. Instead of minimising challenges, describe your reality. For example, if you use a Webster pack for medications, explain that you struggle with packaging or tracking, rather than saying you “manage” them. If you experience “near-miss” falls, explicitly state your fear of falling and your loss of balance, rather than brushing off “little stumbles”.

Preparation is vital. Have your medical history, current medications, and a clear understanding of your support network ready. Frame your answers around your limitations: if your family supports you, explain why that arrangement is becoming unsustainable, or how your environment - such as steep stairs - poses a safety risk.

The goal is not to exaggerate, but to be accurate. By focusing on your specific needs, you ensure the assessor can select the boxes that accurately reflect your situation, securing the support you deserve.



Making the most of your Support at Home package

We invite you to join Angus Kerr, Principal Social Worker & Aged Care Navigator from LiveWell Care for an informal, small-group round-table coffee and chat on **Thursday, September 3 from 11.30am-12.30pm at Balwyn Evergreen.**

This session is designed to help you:

- **Clarify your status:** Understand where you fit within the current cohorts and what that means for your access to services.
- **Navigate the rules:** Get clear answers on how to manage your quarterly budget and service types.
- **Share and learn:** Participate in an open conversation where you can share experiences and hear how others are successfully managing their packages.

Whether you are trying to decipher 'in-scope' versus 'out-of-scope' services, or you're concerned about how changes to the program affect your quarterly budget, you are not alone. Come along to get the clarity you need to ensure you are getting the most out of your support package.

This is a small group session with limited spots, so make sure you RSVP to the office ASAP.

Victorian
Seniors
Festival
2026

CONNECT
CREATE
CELEBRATE

VICTORIA
State
Government

SAVE THE DATE

High Tea

**Thursday, October 8
1.30pm-3.30pm**

We're celebrating the Victorian Seniors Festival 2026

Join us for an afternoon of fun, friendship and fantastic food at our annual High Tea!

Featuring live entertainment, a raffle and a welcome glass of bubbles upon entry.

As you know, this event is always a sell-out, so make sure you get in quick! And if you'd like to bring a friend or two, please let us know.

RSVP to the office and make sure you include any seating or dietary requests.

Cost is \$25 per person, and tickets must be prepaid.

Any questions, please contact the office.

SPOTLIGHT

Loneliness Awareness Week

Creating Evergreen Connections in the community

Balwyn Evergreen is making room for connection this Loneliness Awareness Week (August 3-9) with the soft relaunch of our Chatty Café to provide a warm, simple and intentional space for older people to connect over morning tea.

Running every Wednesday from 10.30am to 11.30am, the Chatty Café will be held during one of the busiest times of the week, when Supported Lifestyle Program clients share morning tea with exercise clients.

The Chatty Café will offer a relaxed 'Have a Chat' table where people can sit, talk, listen and feel part of the centre's everyday life. It also provides a gentle way for potential Supported Lifestyle Program clients and their families to be introduced to Balwyn Evergreen in a friendly, non-clinical environment.

This year's theme of 'Make Room for Connection' is especially relevant for older people living with mild dementia or cognitive decline, who can sometimes feel like social spaces are no longer built with them in mind. Balwyn Evergreen's CEO Tina Hogarth-Clarke says the idea was deeply aligned with the centre's purpose.

"Some of the most important moments at Balwyn Evergreen happen over a cup of tea, when people feel seen, included and comfortable enough to start a conversation," Tina says.

"Loneliness can be particularly difficult for people living with cognitive decline or mild dementia because social settings can start to feel uncertain or overwhelming. Our Chatty Café is about making room for people exactly as they are, in a place where they can feel welcome, valued and part of the community."

Founded in Australia by Glenys Reid, Chatty Café Scheme Australia encourages cafés, community centres, libraries and other venues to create regular opportunities for people to connect through conversation.



According to Glenys, Balwyn Evergreen Centre was a natural fit for the scheme because connection is already part of the centre's daily life.

"Chatty Café works because it removes the awkwardness of starting a conversation. A table, a smile and a clear invitation can be enough to help someone take that first brave step," Glenys says.

"Balwyn Evergreen understands that social connection supports belonging, health, confidence and wellbeing. By adding Chatty Café to their program of activities, Balwyn Evergreen is creating a beautiful bridge between people, programs and friendships."

COME ALONG TO OUR CHATTY CAFE LAUNCH
Join us on Wednesday, August 5, from 10.30am-11.30am for the launch of our weekly Chatty Café session. Light morning tea and community connection are included.

WHY MAKE ROOM?

Half of us are feeling lonely and/or socially isolated. It's a shared human experience that requires a shared response.

From the State of the Nation Report 2026, by Ending Loneliness Together with the University of Sydney and Wallis Social

1 in 2 people

Living in Australia experience some form of social disconnection

Having 1 friend

Can reduce loneliness and social isolation by 89%

1-2 hours a week

Spent with friends reduces the risk of loneliness and social isolation by 90%

Find your tribe

Attending community events reduces the risk of loneliness and social isolation by 89%

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Healthy Ageing with Balwyn Evergreen

Get around our revamped circuit class

If you're looking for a welcoming, progressive Exercise Physiology group class, then look no further than our revamped Strength + Balance Circuit on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

The class is open to men and women 65+ who are keen to improve their strength, balance and fitness, want a more dynamic and challenging class and wish to continue enjoying everyday activities. Each session will include a variety of exercise stations targeting the key components of healthy ageing:



- Strength training to improve muscle mass, bone health and function
- Balance training to reduce falls risk and build confidence
- Mobility and flexibility to improve movement quality and joint function
- Cardiovascular fitness using equipment such as rowing machines and functional aerobic exercises
- Core strength and stability through Pilates-inspired exercises including dead bugs, bird dogs and glute bridges
- Functional movement training focusing on activities such as squats, sit-to-stands, carrying, stepping and reaching
- Coordination, reaction time and cognitive challenges through games and movement-based activities that keep the body and brain active

The circuit will differ each week and incorporate a variety of equipment. The class is designed to be engaging and enjoyable while still delivering evidence-based exercise to improve strength, balance, mobility and overall fitness.

Strength + Balance Circuit is on Tuesdays at 9am and Fridays at 9.30am. For more information and to find out if this class is right for you, please talk to our Exercise Coordinator, Baylee.

Green light for Hydrotherapy Program

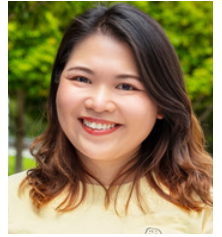
We're hitting the pool for our Exercise Physiologist-led Hydrotherapy Program. We're still taking expressions of interest, so if you're keen to be part of this quality and evidence-based program, please let the office know. The program will be held at Healthways Leisure Centre in Mont Albert, on Fridays from 11am-3pm, and will comprise 45-minute small group sessions. The cost is \$65 per session for CHSP/Non Assessed and \$85 for Support at Home. Private health funds can also cover the cost of the sessions - please check with your fund first.

Participants will need an assessment in the pool with Baylee before beginning the program. We expect these to take place in the last two weeks of September, with the program beginning in October.

For more information, please contact the office or talk to Baylee.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

with Ruby Cheung



Hello friends! Have you ever thought about how big an impact the food we eat every day has on how well we age?

According to a major 30-year study by researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, which tracked over 105,000 adults, we really are what we eat.

The study found that participants whose diets most closely followed the healthy diet had more than 80 per cent better odds of reaching the age of 70 in good physical, mental, and cognitive health than those with poorer diets.

The study compared eight different healthy dietary patterns and found the healthiest eating pattern included plenty of colourful vegetables and fruit, wholegrains, beans and lentils, nuts, healthy fats such as olive oil, and moderate amounts of nutritious animal products like fish and low-fat dairy. On the other hand, diets high in processed meats, sugary drinks, salty foods, and heavily processed foods were linked to poorer health as people aged.

Healthy eating doesn't have to be complicated. Small changes, such as adding an extra serve of vegetables to your meals, choosing wholegrain bread, or enjoying a handful of unsalted nuts as a snack, are never too late to start the changes.

Ruby Cheung is a registered nutritionist who has a Master's in Nutrition and Population Health who has been volunteering with Balwyn Evergreen for several years.

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

Get out and about with the Outings Crew!

Keep your social connections strong with Balwyn Evergreen's popular 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 October 2026.

- Pick up from 9.30am (unless otherwise stated)
- Drop off from around 3.30pm
- **COST: \$28 (CHSP assessed + approved), \$171 non-assessed.** Lunch and tours are an additional cost
- Outings require a minimum of six people and can be changed or cancelled at short notice
- Clients who cancel after confirmation will incur the full transport cost unless extenuating circumstances apply
- Tours and entry costs are prepaid and non-refundable

Weekly Social Outings

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



Tuesday, August 4

ROSEBUD: Rosebud Country Club

EARLY START 9AM

Today we're enjoying the scenic trip down the peninsula to Rosebud, where many of us had childhood holidays by the sea. We'll, of course, check out the beach before heading to lunch at the Country Club, overlooking the golf course.

Tuesday, August 11

ELTHAM: Swipers Gully + Eltham Hotel

It's a bit of a food tour today. The first stop is for morning tea at Swipers Gully, a student-run cafe at Eltham College. Lunch is at the Eltham Hotel, which offers something for everyone, including classic pub meals and a seniors' menu.

COST: \$6 for coffee and cake at Swipers Gully

Tuesday, August 18

WERRIBEE SOUTH: By the Bay Cafe & Grill

We're always keen for a trip to the coast, and today we'll be enjoying the outlook over Wyndham Harbour. Our lunch venue takes advantage of this view and offers a fantastic menu and excellent coffee!

Tuesday, August 25

EPPING: Epping RSL

At the end of the line in Melbourne's north, Epping is a fast-growing area known for its multicultural community and major shopping hub. Lunch is at the Epping RSL, which has plenty of options for seniors.

Fortnightly Community Outings

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

Thursday, August 6

GULF STATION YARRA GLEN

9AM START

Find out what life was like for a family living on the land in 19th-century Australia in this restored Colonial-era working farm. Wander through the homestead, gardens, old schoolhouse, historic outbuildings and meet the resident Clydesdales.

ENTRY: \$10

Thursday, August 20

NOOJEE HOTEL

9AM START

A family friendly country pub, the 'Nooj Pub' offers a cosy atmosphere in tranquil bush surrounds on the banks of the Latrobe River. Established in 1925, the Nooj has served as a community hub ever since. The menu is classic pub grub with plenty of variety.

Monthly Premium Outing

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

Monday, August 24

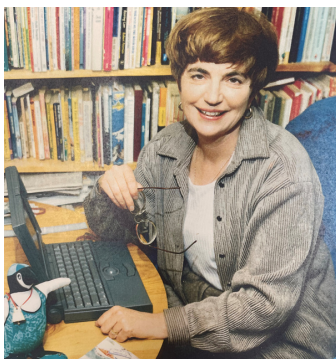
NGV CARTIER EXHIBITION 9AM START

Experience the elegance of CARTIER at the National Gallery of Victoria Winter Masterpieces Exhibition. Featuring nearly 400 extraordinary jewels, timepieces and jewellery objects, the exhibition traces the evolution of Cartier's enduring legacy in art, design and craftsmanship. Exclusive to Melbourne, CARTIER features loans from significant collections alongside highlights from the Cartier Collection.

COST: \$39 concession

Taking the Divas on a literary adventure

At Balwyn Evergreen, we're fortunate to have a treasure trove of clients with interesting stories to call on to be guest speakers for our Senior Divas. One of those treasures, Anne Willett, will speak about her career as a children's book author and lead the group in an immersive writing experience. But before that, she shares how she began her writing process with this intriguing hook...



Anne Willett, pictured deep in the creative process around 1996.

Like many other young mothers, I'd write stories for my children, even trying to publish them. Unsuccessful, of course.

But things soon changed dramatically. Eight difficult years — the children forever hovering around my bed, worried that I was still unwell. Then I'd find them, tucked under the bedclothes, little screwed-up notes, especially from my gentle Sarah: "Mummy, please don't die. I love you".

A good solid Aussie adventure story about a theme of 'death' for 8–12-year-olds? With two children whose mother might die? "None around anywhere, even in the UK," the declaration at a large booksellers' gathering in London where I'd been invited to present my first story. I began my writing life when I was strong enough. Visits to "Penguin Island" (guess where?) to research it all. Then another story set on wild King Island. Then into translations as well. I remain amazed at the origins and adventures of it all.

Anne will be the guest speaker for The Divas on Thursday, August 27 from 11.30am. If you'd like to join the session, please contact the office.

Origin Energy data breach: Stay Alert!

Origin Energy recently reported that some customer information was accessed without permission. Incidents like this can lead to an increase in convincing scam calls, emails and text messages.

Please be especially careful if someone contacts you claiming to be from Origin, your bank or another trusted organisation. Do not provide passwords, banking details or security codes, and do not click links in unexpected messages.

If you receive a suspicious request, stop and check. Contact the organisation directly using the phone number on an official bill, statement or website, not the number or link provided in the message. Remember: There is no need to rush - it's always okay to hang up and check first. You can also ask a trusted family member, friend or a Balwyn Evergreen staff member for help.

For help with this issue or other tech support, contact the office to arrange a time with Bo via the Be Connected program.

Become a Wiser Driver

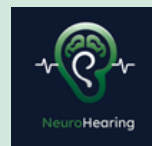
Sign up for the FREE four-week Wiser Driver refresher course beginning September 7. The course is for older drivers, building on existing knowledge and experience to keep you driving safely. There are no practical tests, just good, solid education delivered in a welcoming and collaborative setting. Participants will also receive handbooks and access to online resources, plus tea and coffee are included. ***Wiser Driver is on Monday, September 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 1pm to 3pm. Spaces are limited! For more information and to book, please contact the office.***

Aged Care Navigation times

Book a time to meet 1:1 with Council's Aged Care Navigator at Balwyn Evergreen on: ***Tuesday, September 15, from 9am-12pm*** You can book your 20-minute appointment with the office. For more information about this service, visit: boroondara.vic.gov.au/aged-care-navigation

Get a FREE hearing check

Don't miss the opportunity to book a FREE specialist hearing assessment with experienced audiologist Weicen Yan of NeuroHearing in Canterbury.



The clinic covers: hearing loss screening, earwax checks, plus hearing aid cleaning and troubleshooting.

The next clinic is on Tuesday, September 22, from 10.30am-12pm. To book your 15-minute appointment, contact the office.

Falls Prevention round 2

The next round of our 10-week Falls Prevention course starts on Wednesday, October 7 at 9.30am. If you'd like to join, please put your name down at the office, and Baylee will be in touch for a chat and to arrange an assessment.

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 afterwards.

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10.30am Exercise to Music with Jo G	9am Strength + Balance Circuit with Baylee	9.30am Falls Prevention Program with Baylee **Ends Aug 26**	9.30am Men's Exercise with Tom	9.30am Strength + Balance Circuit with Jo M
12pm Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee	9.30am Challenge Your Balance with Denise	10.15am Strength Exercise with Tom	9.30am Exercise to Music with Jo M **45 minute class**	10am Tai Chi for Balance with Lilei
2pm Falls Prevention Program with Baylee **Ends Aug 24**	11.30am Seated Exercise to Music with Jo M	11am Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee	1pm-3.30pm Table Tennis self run	11am Seated Strength Exercise with Yanmei
Please note, the Falls Prevention Program is a set 10-week course. You must be registered for the full course to participate. For upcoming dates and information please talk to Baylee.	1.45pm Seated Strength Exercise with Baylee	11.45am Line Dancing with Jo C	2.15pm Meditation & Yoga with Elizabeth **75 minute class**	11.15am Seated Tai Chi with Lilei
	1.45pm Strength Exercise with Tom			

Legend:

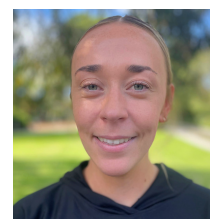
Gentle	Moderate
Active	Social

Cost of Group Classes

\$12 CHSP assessed and approved
\$25 non assessed / private
\$5 Table Tennis

Our team of qualified trainers bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our exercise programs.

For more information, please contact our Exercise Coordinator and Accredited Exercise Physiologist, Baylee Eastham.



Baylee Eastham



Denise Mokasdi

Balwyn Evergreen Gym

Small group sessions (45 mins)
Tuesdays 10.15am
Thursdays 11am & 1.15pm
Max 4 people per session
Limited 1:1 EP sessions with Baylee
Bookings essential!

Notes

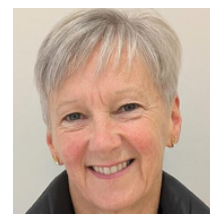
- Please check the online Activities Calendar for any timetable changes
- Make sure you wear appropriate footwear. Sandals are not permitted

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.



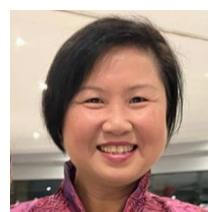
Yanmei Chen



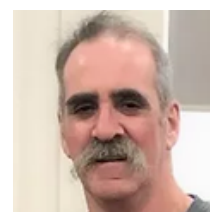
Jo Morris



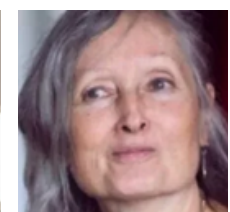
Jo Golds



Lilei Enright



Tom Scott



Elizabeth Mackenzie

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Spending some quality time under the sea

Ruth Shipp got up close with marine life at the Melbourne Aquarium recently - pictured right at the rockpool and below with the Megalodon jaws.

This trip was one of our monthly Monday outings, which add a little something special to the calendar.

To jump on the next one, please contact the office.



Free Information Session Navigating the Aged Care system with Health Ability

Join us for a FREE information session about the recent changes to and how to navigate the aged care system.

This session will be presented by representatives from Health Ability and will cover:

- Recent Support at Home changes
- Aged care support and services available
- Connecting with the My Aged Care platform
- How to access services, and more

Please note, there will be plenty of time for questions and tea and coffee are provided. This session is FREE and open to everyone, so please bring a friend or family member if you think they'd be interested - it's designed to ensure you feel more confident about navigating aged care services.

RSVP to the office: 9836 9681 / office@balwynevergreen.org.au



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

Get your flu shot

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.



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 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



@balwyn_evergreen



'Balwyn Evergreen Centre'



'Balwyn Evergreen Centre'