



You

May 2022

Yarrunga Offerings & Updates

Welcome to Term 2

Isn't it wonderful that we made it all the way through term 1 without any closures and lockdowns? However, we did not go unscathed. We had a few staff who either got Covid or were close contacts, which did impact some classes and activities, while they isolated at home. Some we were able to back fill, but others were given additional make up classes... But we got through it.

We are now open with no vaccine checking and no Service Victoria check ins required, and what a fantastic feeling that is. It has been quite time consuming for all of our staff and hirers. We will continue to operate with Covid cleaning, just as a precautionary measure and seek your support to ensure that you do not attend if you are unwell. As a small team of staff, any impacts to staff attendance have ramifications across the team.

Our AGM was held on April 14, and it was an opportunity to highlight our achievements despite being closed to the public for 131 business days. We thank all who attended and to our re-elected Committee of Governance members. We also welcome Chris Jones our new ordinary member. If you believe you have skills that would be of benefit to our committee and organisation and want to be more involved, please contact me. New members to the committee are always welcome. Time commitment is low and if you think you might like to be involved but can't leave the house during the times of the meetings, we do have our hybrid meeting option available, so you can "Zoom" in!

Neighbourhood House week is celebrating "Building Resilience – Bringing people together" during the week of Monday 9 May and Sunday 15 May. Yarrunga will be holding a morning tea on Friday 13 May at 10.30am. We want to hear your reflections of what Yarrunga means to you and share your stories of how our Centre has improved your life, wellbeing and friendship connections (or tell us what we can do better!). RSVP by Wednesday 11 May to the office.

This year, Yarrunga will celebrate 25 years of servicing and connecting the community. Keep an eye out for further updates regarding this celebration.

Term 2 is a short term of 9 weeks (7 for Monday classes due to public holidays), and we have already commenced our semester 2 course guide preparations. This will be out later in the term.

Don't forget that we will be closed to the public from 27 June- 1 July and re open on Monday 4 July, as we are taking a well-earned break.

Sam Blackwell
Manager

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STAFF CHANGES

Goodbyes

John Hogan

After an amazing 13 years of leading the OM:NI (Older Men; New Ideas) group, John Hogan has turned over the reins of the group to a new leader. John was passionate about this men's group and looked after all the gentlemen extremely well. We are very sorry to see John go and wish him all the very best.



Delise Nunis

After five years working at Yarrunga Community Centre, our Finance Officer, Delise has left to spend more time with family. We thank Delise for all her hard work in making sure bills and wages were paid on time, budgets were set and we were financially doing everything right! We wish Delise all the best in the future.

Shelly Wunhym

Shelly had been with Yarrunga for four years taking on many tutoring positions. In hospitality, Shelly helped build cooking skills for many students and also oversaw the Winter Shelter community cooking, even during lockdown. She also helped participants make around a bazillion cups of coffee in our barista program. Shelly was also a very talented artist and ran the sewing group for the Karen community as well as the Wyreena art program for learners with a disability. She also ran our Covid Art program and helped us stage an amazing exhibition last year. We will miss Shelly, as will her students. Good luck Shelly.



Hellos

Connie Tian

Welcome to Connie in the position of Finance Officer. Connie will be working Tuesdays and Wednesdays and has already become a valued member of the admin team, especially after she bought in Easter treats for us all! Good to have you on board Connie. You can read more about Connie later in this newsletter.

Krissy Robinson

Krissy has stepped into our hospitality programs, working with participants of the Winter Shelter Community Cooking program, and our Introduction to Hospitality learners. Krissy has been involved previously with the Winter Shelter and has her own catering business. She has already filled our kitchen with delightful aromas, and has guided our community cooking program, producing nearly 300 meals already!



Gail Koehler

It's funny how things work out sometimes. Gail wandered into Wyreena and ended up becoming the art tutor for the mixed media art and craft program we run in partnership with Wyreena. Gail will be working with learners with a disability, and has also agreed to take on the role of tutor in our Introduction to Cleaning class. Gail comes from a background in teaching and is a great addition to our team.

Serena Sun

Serena will be running our Introduction to Childcare program. Serena was previously employed by the Bilingual Montessori Early Learning who share our space, and so is perfect for this role. She will provide invaluable insight into the industry for our learners.



Rob Isles

Rob has stepped in to continue the OM:NI group. Rob is an amazing volunteer, also working at the MCG Sports History Museum and doing some regular shifts at the local radio station. We are very lucky to have Rob, and I'm sure the OM:NI group are very glad that Rob is able to continue the group.

TERM 2 ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

NEW - Introduction to Commercial Cleaning



Introduction to Commercial Cleaning is a great program for people who want a career with flexible working hours and lots of different employment options. If you, or somebody you know, might be interested please contact us. The program will commence on 17.05.22 and will run on Tuesdays from 10am – 2pm for 4 weeks.

NEW - Introduction to Childcare

Childcare is a rewarding and flexible career with many employment opportunities including working in early childhood centres or working privately. Our program can provide valuable insight into the industry before you commit to formal training. After completion there is also potential for a one-year traineeship/Cert III, and ongoing employment following the traineeship. If you, or somebody you know, might be interested please ask them to contact us. The program will commence soon and will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am – 2.30pm for 7 weeks.

Chatty Cafe Wellbeing Hub

We have renamed our Wellbeing Hub – The Chatty Café! This is part of the Chatty Café Scheme, which provides spaces for the community to sit, connect, chat and have a cuppa. The Café is open to people of all ages and backgrounds with the aim of socially connecting to their community.

Yarrunga Community Centre is the first 'Chatty Café' at this end of town – nothing beats being a trailblazer!

We thought this was a great fit as part of our PLAY program and wellbeing hub as this connection and sense of belonging is key to establishing and maintaining health and happiness.

We will still explore the PERMAH model of wellbeing – if that's where the conversation heads to! Please join us in Room 4 on Fridays at 10.30am – 11.30am. We would love to see more people join the group, so please contact the Centre.

Barista Taster



Word around town is the hospitality industry is crying out for people. Our Barista Taster program teaches the basics of coffee making and the hospitality industry is full of opportunities at the moment – so dive in and get started. This is a great course for school leavers who are still looking for employment, people looking to re-skill and change careers, and even older people who may have retired but are looking for part-time work.

Contact the Centre for dates and times.

Pickleball

Pickleball combines the elements of badminton, table tennis and tennis. Two or four players use paddles to hit a lightweight ball over a net. Check out this video to learn more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTvPYdKZq00>

We have a wonderful group of ladies who come in weekly to play Pickleball. Whilst they are very serious about the game, they are also available to welcome newbies and introduce them to the sport and show them how it's played. Please contact us if you are interested.



Engagement

The next pillar of the PERMAH model we are exploring in Chatty Cafe is Engagement, which is all about identification, use and development of your natural strengths and values to help you feel more confident, creative, energised and engaged with life and its activities.

There are 3 main aspects to Engagement that are really exciting to explore:

Strengths

Strengths are your 'neurological superpowers'. They are usually things that you're good at, and enjoy doing. Strengths may include talents, skills, interests and character strengths. People who use their strengths generally experience more confidence and energy, and are happier, more creative, engaged and satisfied.

Character Strengths

These are your positive personality traits that are aligned to the values you hold. You can find your character strengths by completing a free survey at www.viacharacter.org. This survey gives you a list of 24 character strengths. The top five are known as your 'signature strengths' and are usually the things that are most important to you.

There are no 'better' or 'worse' strengths – they are just different. But finding work, leisure and friendships that are aligned to your signature strengths will help you feel happier and more fulfilled.



Flow

Flow is about 'being in the zone' – a state in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed and completely absorbed in what they are doing. When you are in a state of flow you may find that all worries and concerns momentarily drift away!

If you'd like to find out more about this pillar, come to the Chatty Café, complete the free VIA survey and we can talk loads about how to make the most from this pillar.



WINTER SHELTER FUNDRAISER

Wonderfully talented Centre participant, Marian Schumenjko, has very kindly donated a beautiful handmade quilt to help us raise funds for the Winter Shelter program.

As we snuggle into our warm cosy homes during Winter there are a number of people experiencing homelessness who gratefully accept an offer of overnight shelter and a warm meal from the volunteers of the Winter Shelter Program.

Funds raised for the program will help towards making sure the Winter Shelter guests receive the shelter and food during the cold winter nights.

Tickets \$2 each

The raffle will be drawn when we have sold a minimum of 300 tickets.

See reception



PROFILE

Jill Fletcher

Meet one of our Centre participants – Jill.

To say Jill is a remarkable woman would be an understatement! Jill has been a single mum to two sons for 43 years, and also worked in the motor industry and solar industry before spending 30 years in politics during which she supported three Howard Government ministers. After retirement in 2013 Jill joined the Yarrunga bushwalking and Living Longer Living Stronger classes in order to stay active.



But in February 2021, Jill undertook a most amazing act of courage and caring by donating a kidney to her son's best friend, Justin. In doing so, not only did Jill save Justin's life, but she also became the oldest donor at Monash, making the age cut off point by only one year.

After knowing Justin and his family since the boys were very young, Jill saw Justin's health decline to the point of being on the transplant list and requiring dialysis. Justin's friends and family were all tested as donors but were not suitable – all except Jill.

The process for a live kidney donation is a long one – with 12 months of various testing and evaluations, and personal conversations with family and planning for all kinds of scenarios. Despite being concerned about having an “old lady's kidney” Jill proved to be an ideal candidate. It was a scary process as the prospect of surgery always carries risks, and in the case of kidney donation the donor goes in well but comes out unwell, and recovery gets harder as you get older.

After donation Jill has been working hard to rebuild her fitness which is an ongoing process at this point. She also faces a lifestyle of medical follow up to make sure she is OK, but so far has experienced no ill effects. She has now returned to her Living Longer Living Stronger classes and having coffee afterwards with her friend, Jan, who she met at the class. She is also busy enjoying her 6 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Jill now enjoys an even closer relationship with Justin, celebrating the anniversary of their journey together.

As thanks, not only did Jill see her son's best friend regain his health, but she also received a Paul Harris Fellow from her Rotary club. Rotary have had a long relationship with the Kidney Foundation, raising over \$150,000 for the Big Red Kidney Bush which is a portable dialysis unit.

It's an amazing story, but one that proves age is often not the barrier you might think it to be, and that compassionate and courageous acts of kindness are a lifelong opportunity.

PROFILE

Connie Tian

Connie, our new finance officer, was born in a northern province in China. After completing a Bachelors degree she came to Australia around 15 years ago to complete a Masters degree in Applied Commerce at Melbourne University, and applied for permanent residency upon completion.

Connie did not have any friends or family in Australia, and even now her family are still all back in China. Her cultural adaptation was a bumpy ride with language the most difficult to navigate, especially understanding Australian slang. Moving from -30-40 degree Winters to +30-40 degree Summers was another new experience. And it took Connie around 12 months to adapt and know different ingredients and how to cook them. Other small things, which we take for granted, like the old pull cords to let the tram driver know how to stop were all challenges that had to be overcome.

Connie's favourite aspect of Australian life is the quietness and simplicity of our lifestyle. Life in China is very fast paced and there is fierce competition from kindergarten onward. Everything in China is at your fingertips, including around 100 restaurants within a 5 km radius.

One of the greatest things Connie has noticed here in Australia is the lack of misinformation from the media about life in China. She would love to see a more accurate understanding about Chinese culture and politics.

Connie's life in Australia is now well established as she has spent the majority of her adult life here. She met her partner, Jeff, here and they now have a lovely little (almost) five year son Jake.



While Connie's move to Australia was one of independence and adventure, she also has a great sense of community. As a student she was part of a volunteer group that went to help out in Sichuan after the earthquakes. Her partner has also been with the CFA for a long time, and so Connie also joined after their move to Mooroolbark. While she began her work there in operations, after Jake's birth she shifted to non-operational activities including fund raising and community activities. Connie finds the work we do at Yarrunga a great platform to engage with local community, and is slowly learning more about the various programs and activities that we run.

OTHER NEWS

Power Saving Bonus - extended until June 30

The State Government's one-off \$250 support payment has been extended to June 30.

To be eligible you need to hold a pensioner concession card or receive JobSeeker, Austudy, Abstudy or Youth Allowance.

If you need assistance we can help you apply. Contact the office for an appointment.



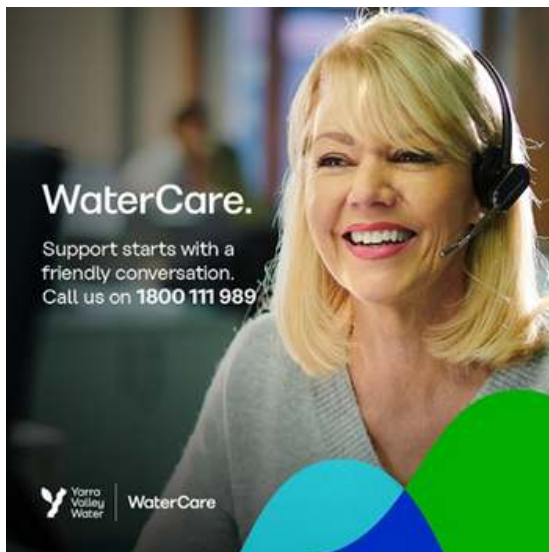
WaterCare

WaterCare is a Yarra Valley Water initiative to help keep on top of your water bills and/or usage.

It can help you with:

- registering your pension or concession card
- applying for the State Government's Utility Relief Grant
- offering a number of solutions to help you manage your bill payments
- access to support if you're experiencing family violence
- water usage reviews
- handy tips and advice on day-to-day usage

Contact WaterCare on 1800 111 989; enquiry@yvw.com.au or visit yvw.com.au/watercare



OTHER NEWS

AGM

Yarrunga held its annual general meeting on 14 April, and it was a great celebration of our 2021 achievements even though Covid impacted our year so heavily. You can see highlights on our video - [click here](#).

Our newly elected committee comprises of old favourites – Peter Feeney, Garth Whitchurch, Suzanne Tobin and Jim Colebatch; and we also welcome our new member Chris Jones. We look forward to being able to benefit from Chris's wonderful expertise and wisdom.



Red Cross Flood Appeal

What an amazing community we have – through our morning tea, book sale, silent auction and some very generous donations we raised \$1008 for the Red Cross Flood Appeal. While the news of the floods have left the front pages of our news feeds, we know the money will be gratefully received and go to good use by those affected by the floods and in the process of re-building their homes, businesses and lives.



OTHER NEWS

Big Thanks

Big thanks to a young woman called Stephanie who recently stepped up with very little notice to run our Barista for Teens program when our tutor pulled out at the last minute. Thank you so much Stephanie – you were awesome and the participants learnt so much from you.

Also big thanks to our newest volunteer Anna who will be preparing lunch for our Karen Seniors group every Tuesday. Thanks Anna – you have made our life much easier and I know the Karen group will greatly appreciate your kindness.

Also, a double thanks – firstly to Wyreena who donated two lovely flip tables for us, and secondly to the Croydon Hills Men's Shed who very kindly collected the tables for us.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Sam on officially becoming an Australian citizen. It only took 42 years, but good things come to those that wait - for her and for us!



OTHER NEWS

Morning Tea - Friday 13 May, 10.30am

Book at <https://www.socialplanet.com.au/request/guest/activity?id=6733>

**LET'S
CELEBRATE**



Neighbourhood House Week

Building resilience by bringing
people together

9-15 May 2022

Join us for a free morning tea

We want to hear your reflections of what Yarrunga means to you, and share your stories of how our Centre has improved your life, wellbeing and friendship connections.



FRIDAY 13 MAY, 10.30AM - 12PM
RSVP WEDNESDAY 11 MAY

Bookings:

<https://www.socialplanet.com.au/activity/view?id=6733>

