

2023



ANNUAL REVIEW

Balwyn Evergreen Centre



Balwyn Evergreen Centre Annual Review 2023

OUR VISION

A community where members have choice, wellbeing and independence.

OUR MISSION

To foster a community of friendship, health, wellbeing and independence.

OUR VALUES

Integrity: We operate with integrity in everything we do

Compassion: Our approach is always with compassion and empathy

Accountability: We are accountable to our consumers, funders, regulators and the broader community

Respect: We treat people with dignity and respect in a caring manner

Excellence: We strive for excellence in everything we do

OUR FOUNDERS

We respect our history of 65-plus years and continue to be inspired by the dedication of our founders, who identified a need in the community to provide care and support for older people experiencing social isolation. In 1958, the Evergreen Club was established and in 1966, we formally became Balwyn Welfare Association. In 2012, we changed our name to Balwyn Evergreen Centre in recognition of our history, environment, and continued focus on providing social support programs and facilities for older people in and around the Boroondara Community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Balwyn Evergreen Centre acknowledges the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Board Chair and Chief Executive Report

Raghu Nadathur, Board Chair and Tina Hogarth-Clarke, Chief Executive Officer

On behalf of the Board of Balwyn Evergreen Centre, it gives us great pleasure to present the Annual Report for the year ending June 30, 2023.

Balwyn Evergreen's primary purpose is to provide and promote facilities, services and programs that actively assist older people in improving their physical, social and emotional wellbeing, to enable them to continue to live independently in their community.

Management, staff, volunteers and the Board can be proud of their contributions during the past year, which has enabled Balwyn Evergreen to continue to deliver its primary purpose.

Balwyn Evergreen provides social support programs, including the Active Living Program, luncheons and concerts, transport services, exercise classes and pet support engaging more than 70 volunteers across all programs.

These programs mitigate the social exclusion commonly experienced by many older Australians, enabling them to connect with others and participate in a variety of interesting activities, providing a sense of purpose and an overall enhancement of wellbeing.

Consumer feedback highlights our strengths, which include providing services that address quality of life through social interaction, while also improving physical and emotional wellbeing.

Overall, this affirms our consumers feel they are both supported and valued.



Governance

The Board and management of Balwyn Evergreen are committed to ensuring Balwyn Evergreen operates and maintains the standard of ethics expected of a community-focused organisation. Corporate governance encompasses the policies, rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled within corporations.

The Board has delegated specific authority to three Board Committees that assist the Board by examining various issues and making recommendations.

- Finance and Risk Committee
- Strategic Planning Committee
- Marketing and Communications Committee

The Board comprises volunteer directors elected by and from the members. Together with the Chief Executive Officer, they bring a balance of broad skills, knowledge and experience to govern the organisation and fulfil its responsibilities.

Board & CEO Matters

In March 2023, Mrs Jessica Latimer resigned from the Board after seven years. We thank Jessica for her contribution to Balwyn Evergreen and the Boroondara community.

Mrs Fiona Harding and Mr Jonathan Li resigned from the Board in November 2023.

Fiona was a board member for more than seven years and Jonathan for nearly two years. We thank both Fiona and Jonathan for their contributions to Balwyn Evergreen and the Boroondara community.

Mr Ken Mcqualter retired from the role of CEO in February 2023 after 12 years of service to Balwyn Evergreen. Mr Cam Battaglia was CEO of Balwyn Evergreen for six months between February and July 2023. We thank Ken and Cam for their contribution to Balwyn Evergreen and the Boroondara community.

We welcomed Ms Tina Hogarth-Clarke, our current CEO, in September 2023. Tina joins Balwyn Evergreen with a wealth of experience including as CEO of COTA Victoria.



Raghu Nadathur
Chairperson



Jessica Latimer
Board Member



Jonathan Li
Treasurer



Melrick Dias
Board Member



Rodney Harris OAM
Board Member



Dr Marilyn Pool
Board Member



Fiona Harding
Board Member



Joanne Zhou
Board Member

Committees

The Finance & Risk Committee reviewed the, 2023-2024 Budget, audited financial statements and Portfolio Investment performance, and all risk and compliance matters before adoption by the Board. The Strategic Planning Committee considered the proposed Aged Care Reforms and their impact on Balwyn Evergreen's ability to operate a sustainable operating model. Also, what it will take for Balwyn Evergreen to be ready under the proposed reform framework. Balwyn Evergreen has been proactively reviewing the existing business model, including services provided and assessing sustainability. The Marketing & Communications Committee worked closely with Balwyn Evergreen's marketing team to strengthen our branding and develop the Marketing and Communication Plan and new exciting activities for our consumers.

Key Highlights of 2022-2023

Balwyn Evergreen's centre-based activities support our older consumers, empowering them to live independently while connecting with others who have shared experiences and interests. We had another challenging year with the continued impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing Government aged care reform agenda driving change. In a rapidly changing environment, Balwyn Evergreen maintained its enduring commitment to our values and focus on providing care and support for consumers to protect and enhance their health, wellbeing and safety.



Our caring staff adapted to the challenges of delivering programs, supporting consumers to stay healthy and connected and remain engaged in the community. In line with this, we applied for and received a grant from the Federal Government Department of Health and Ageing to auspice their Aged Care Volunteer Visitor Scheme. This program is important for addressing the social isolation and loneliness many older people experience as they age. We are excited to commence this program in July 2023 and positively impact the lives of many older people.

We are thankful for the outstanding efforts of our staff and volunteers, who worked tirelessly through a constantly changing environment. Our commitment to diversity is inclusive - we are a non-denominational organisation that embraces everyone's unique knowledge, skills and experience. We recognise ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age and physical ability, which shapes our approach to all aspects of our work.



Our focus on service delivery

Social Support Group (SSG)

Tuesday Bus Outings

Our weekly outings visit various places around Melbourne and its surrounds, with a monthly special tour or exhibition to keep it interesting. A change to the program in November 2022, saw an increase in numbers with more referrals through My Aged Care. Up to 20 clients access outings each week and enjoy getting out and about and spending time with friends.

Senior Divas

This fortnightly program consistently has 10-12 ladies at each session, with three new clients in the 2022-2023 period and they are now regulars. The group enjoys the program of guest speakers, lunch and quizzes and they've all become close friends.

Friday Active Living Program

This weekly program is for clients who are frailer or have some cognitive issues. 2022-2023 has seen a steady increase in numbers with referrals coming in from My Aged Care to around 18 per session.

This program is crucial for socialisation, physical wellbeing and a sense of inclusion in our community.

Men's Kitchen Cooking Classes

Held fortnightly, this program caters for a group of six with a cooking session followed by a friendly lunch together. The meals are easy to cook at home, but complex enough to extend skills and try new cuisines.

Wednesday Luncheon and Entertainment

Our 'Evergreen Club' luncheons and concerts and an institution. Due to the aging nature of this group, numbers have decreased. While those who attend each week have a good experience, the committee has opted to close in December 2023. The program will be reimaged for 2023-2024.

Musical Group

Launched in early 2023, this monthly music variety and singalong program with morning tea is gathering momentum.

Exercise Program

Our exercise program now falls under SSG in My Aged Care, meaning assessed clients assist in reaching our CHSP targets.

We added a Seated Exercise Music Class to offer a progression for those who feel less confident in following an aerobics routine. We dropped our Zumba Gold class due to low numbers.

Overall, attendance has increased in 2022-2023 by around 40 per cent which shows the reluctance to return after Covid-19 is dissipating.

We're focusing on building our small gym classes and personal training service to reach capacity and raising awareness of Meditation and Tai Chi, which have room to grow. Our goal is to make Balwyn Evergreen a community hub for exercise. Following feedback from our consumers we'll investigate adding further classes. The morning and afternoon teas that follow each session are extremely popular and important socialisation.

Social Support Individual (SSI)

Dog Walking

2023 saw a marked increase in volunteers interested in dog walking, compared with the previous financial year. Thanks to marketing efforts, we have more reliable volunteers to help with SSI. This is a great service for clients who are vulnerable and don't have a pool of friends to help walk their dogs.

Transport Services

Balwyn Evergreen's local transport service is vital in getting consumers to and from their activities. Our minivans are consistently more dependable than taxis and the addition of a car to the fleet ensures frailer clients can access our programs.

Digital Support

This free service offers tailored support in small groups, one-to-one or at home. We've successfully met all our targets for last year.

Service Delivery Attendance	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Social Support Activities	2951	1180	1001	2293	3795
Exercise Programs	6889	4402	2732	5483	8399
Transport Services	2511	1660	1115	2691	4449
Total Attendance	11780	7242	4848	10467	16641

Treasurer's Report

Balwyn Evergreen incurred an operating loss of \$113,985 for the 2022-2023 year before including unrealised loss on equities held. After including unrealised losses on equities held, net comprehensive losses for the year were \$56,140.

Although revenue improved with the slow ramp-up of the year's activities post-COVID lockdown compared with last year, revenue growth was not adequate to cover all costs including wages. Monthly performance reporting against budget allows us to closely monitor our financial performance and develop countermeasures as appropriate to meet budget commitments.

REVENUE	\$2023	\$2022	\$2021
Fee Based Income	303,403	197,170	133,460
Grants	362,605	350,785	320,019
Venue Hire & Property Rental	175,304	137,059	117,151
BEC Membership Fees	6,970	5,871	3,149
Dividends & Interest	108,560	135,703	67,489
COVID Assistance	0	0	246,302,
Other Income	1,294	45	-
Donations & Bequests	45,954	1,510	-
Total Revenue	\$1,004,090	\$828,143	\$887,570

EXPENDITURE	\$2023	\$2022	\$2021
Employee Costs	813,151	694,623	644,338
Depreciation	21,399	24,246	31,751
Occupancy Costs	60,466	43,920	56,653
Other Expenses	72,919	58,678	72,461
Administration Costs	150,140	94,679	57,066
Total Expenditure	\$1,118,075	\$916,212	\$862,269

SUMMARY	\$2023	\$2022	\$2021
Revenue from Operating Activities	1,004,090	828,143	887,570
Total Expenditure	1,118,075	916,212	862,269
Profit [Loss] for the year	[113,985]	[88,003]	25,301
Profit on Sale of Equities	[11,479]	6,804	0
Fair Value Gain [Loss] on Equities held	69,324	[165,285]	278,865
Total Comprehensive Income [Loss] for year	[56,140]	[246,484]	304,166

The detailed financial results for BEC are contained in the audited financial statements, which are available from the office and on our website.

Aged Care Compliance

The Aged Care Act 1997 and the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018 provide the regulatory framework for the funding and regulation of aged care services.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission provides national regulation of services. Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements is an ongoing obligation of Balwyn Evergreen.

The Aged Care Quality Standards focus on outcomes for consumers, reflecting the level of care and services the community can expect from organisations that provide aged care services.

We will continue to offer the high-quality care that our consumers have come to expect.

During 2023 Balwyn Evergreen underwent a Quality Audit. While our performance in five of the seven Standards was compliant, we have some work to do to improve in our assessments and planning for our consumers, to ensure our governance and risk management systems are integrated and continuously improving our service delivery. Even where we are doing well, we can always do better. Our focus in 2023-2024 will be to strive for excellence by looking for ways where we can do better.

Staff

The commitment and contribution of the Balwyn Evergreen team has consistently delivered quality programs and services to consumers in a welcoming and caring manner. We congratulate all staff, instructors and volunteers for their valued efforts and achievements during the year.



Ken McQualter
CEO
Retired February 2023



Simone Arndt
Exercise Program
Delivery Officer



Raymond Kolesnikoff
Exercise & Compliance
Coordinator



Bo Cui
Faculty & Support Services
Coordinator



Lotana Motuku
Social Support
Individual Facilitator



Cam Battaglia
CEO
February 2023-July 2023



Elise Walle
Social Support
Group Coordinator



Mia Yajima
Customer Services
Administration Coordinator



Lucia Agati
Lifestyle & Marketing
Support



Erica Fosbender
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator

Marketing and Communications

The Marketing Plan's objective is to generate interest, appeal, and participation in activities and services, to retain existing and generate new consumers.

A new website was successfully launched in November 2021 and has continued to evolve in 2022-2023. Erica Fosbender, Marketing and Communication Coordinator, and Lucia Agati, Lifestyle and Marketing Support, were responsible for the marketing and promotional tasks. From July 2023, Lucia was redeployed to support the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, while Erica is also providing marketing support to the scheme.



During 2022-2023, the team made good progress with raising awareness of Balwyn Evergreen in the community and gaining new consumers.

Highlights so far include the promotion of major events that were well attended, and the continued development of Balwyn Evergreen collateral including the Information Pack, which is used for new consumers and community partners.

We developed Navigating My Aged Care information sessions and assisted our consumers with signing up for My Aged Care, in line with our price adjustment from July 2023. The monthly newsletter and activities calendar continues to be a go-to resource for our community. Our online activities are also experiencing steady growth and driving traffic to our website.

The team also attended the Boroondara Volunteer Expo, network meetings and gave presentations at independent living communities.

Community mural project

In February 2023 we launched our community mural, Amalgamation by artist Ana Armillas, which makes a bold, botanical statement in our foyer.

Based on the themes of community, culture, history and belonging, Amalgamation is a celebration of all the groups and people that are part of the fabric of Balwyn Evergreen. The concept was informed by consultation with our community.

Amalgamation was funded by an Annual Community Strengthening Grant from The City of Boroondara.

Annual Consumer Survey and client focus group

The 2023 Survey will be conducted in November 2023. The Survey will help us to understand our community needs and what we can do to better cater for them.

In May 2023 we held a client focus group to gain a deeper understanding of our programs and services. The feedback from this has informed our upcoming survey and ongoing planning.



Outlook for 2023

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety stated the current aged care system needed to be improved to better support older Australians living in their home.

According to the Royal Commission, wait times for care are too long, administration fees are too high, program arrangements are confusing and older Australians do not always get the help they need to support their independence.

The Royal Commission recommended merging the existing Commonwealth Home Support Program, Home Care Packages Program, and Residential Aged Care Program into one single program. This change was originally planned to be implemented by July 1, 2023, which resulted in significant focus being directed towards its impact on Balwyn Evergreen. Following the election of the Albanese Government, the implementation date was extended to July 1, 2024. At this stage, the Program structure is still evolving.

Balwyn Evergreen has been proactively reviewing the existing business model, including services being provided and assessing sustainability under the new program and operating environment.

The 2023-2024 Balwyn Evergreen Budget contains investment in branding and marketing to grow the number of consumers accessing our services, including growing CHSP and Social Support Programs participation levels before the implementation of the Aged Care Reforms.

The Board is evaluating strategies for Balwyn Evergreen that ensure short-term and longer-term sustainability while responding to the needs of its community in an environment of constant change.



The Strategic Plan will...

- Provide quality social support services and programs that actively assist older people to improve their physical, social and emotional wellbeing
- Monitor and maintain the health and wellbeing of our clients and staff
- Be agile and responsive to changing circumstances
- Develop programs and activities aligned with consumer needs
- Receive assistance from government-support programs when available
- Continue implementation of the brand and the Marketing & Communications Plan
- Become better known in the local community
- Operate on a strong financial basis with a “not-for-loss” ethos
- Develop a sustainable operating model based on the strategic plan



Volunteers

Balwyn Evergreen was founded by a group of volunteers more than 65 years ago, who came together with a drive to establish support services for older people in the Balwyn community.

Today, this spirit of giving back and reaching out to support those who are most in need continues to inspire more than 80 volunteers from a variety of backgrounds. They generously give their time and energy to support our consumers by driving our buses, lending a hand in social support, exercise classes, Evergreen Club activities, meal preparation, walking dogs, and serving on committees and the board.

Thank you to all our volunteers - you embody the giving, caring spirit of Balwyn Evergreen, and we will always value and appreciate all that you do for us.



City of Boroondara

We acknowledge and thank the City of Boroondara for maintaining our first-class facilities and the surrounding environment. Thank you to Cr Jane Addis, Maling Ward Councillor for The City of Boroondara, for her interest in and continued support of Balwyn Evergreen.

Join us in partnership

We would like to thank everyone who gives their time and resources to support the work we do. Here are some of the ways people choose to support Balwyn Evergreen.

VOLUNTEERING: See above

BEQUEST: An easy and meaningful way people choose to support the work of Balwyn Evergreen is by leaving a legacy in their will.

IN MEMORY: Family and friends often choose to remember their loved ones who have enjoyed the caring services of Balwyn Evergreen staff by giving a gift that contributes to continuing our services.

RELATIONSHIPS: Our relationships with Bendigo Bank and local small businesses are vital to the continued work of Balwyn Evergreen and we continue to seek additional relationships in the community.

BALWYN EVERGREEN CENTRE USER GROUPS: The team at Balwyn Evergreen has built partnerships with local community groups to ensure programs are delivered that improve the wellbeing of our consumers and make the best use of the Balwyn Evergreen facilities. Venue Hire partners include: Boroondara Chinese Senior Citizens, Friendship and Wellbeing Association [Mandarin], Taiwanese Association of Australia Melbourne Chapter, Bahai Community Boroondara, BAPS Group, Melbourne Revival Fellowship, Hong Kong Club Tai Chi Group, Balwyn Table Tennis Club, Melbourne Meditation Group, Wendy Samantha Productions and Ignite Dancing Performance Art. The user groups generate over 24,000 attendances per annum.

Balwyn Historical Society Annual Report 2023

Balwyn Historical Society (BHS), along with many other community groups, also found 2023 (and 2022) an enjoyable year after two challenging COVID-19 restriction years.

Our regular, face-to-face meetings continued with seven evening, and two afternoon meetings held during the year.

Our sincere thanks again to our meeting speakers who engaged and entertained our audiences on a wide range of topics: Anne Hawker, Graham O'Rourke (twice) Philip Barton, at St Barnabas Balwyn, as part of their 150th celebrations, Delta Freedman all in 2022, while Martin Semken, Professor Richard Broome, Pamela O'Brien, and John Cavedon presented in 2023. It remains a pleasure to receive additional material from our members on a variety of topics.

In addition, we communicate updates to our members on other local historical societies, and the RHSV, meetings, as well as other topics of interest including properties with heritage listings.

My deep and heartfelt thanks to the BHS committee for their contributions: Philip Mallis our web manager, Barbara Russell our treasurer, newsletter editor and speaker recorder, and Heather for setting up meetings and organising supper.

Thanks very much to other member helpers, especially Merrick Beesley, our IT specialist during meetings. We also acknowledge and thank Bill Mant for his major contribution to BHS over several years.

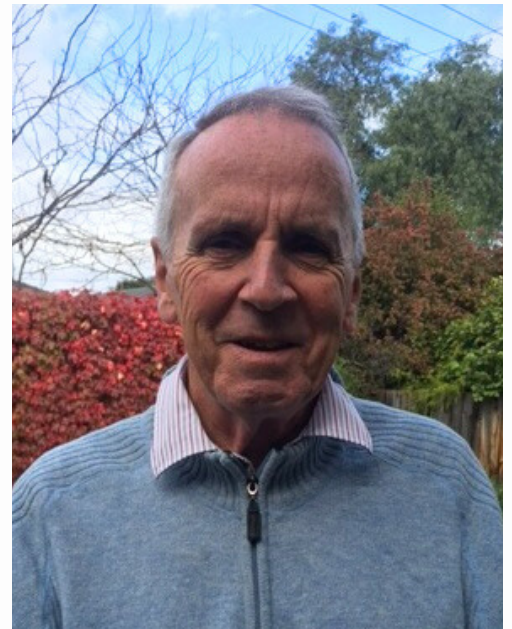
The new Canterbury Community Precinct remains a work in progress with the Canterbury History Group and Surrey Hills Historical Society still waiting to move into the specially designed premises, which includes office space, exhibition space, archival storage, and a meeting room. BHS will remain at Balwyn Evergreen.

Our sincere thanks to Bo Cui and other staff and, especially, Erica Fosbender, who promoted our meetings in Balwyn Evergreen newsletters, for assisting us in holding meetings at Balwyn Evergreen, and in resolving any queries we have.

We have great pleasure in welcoming the new Balwyn Evergreen CEO, Tina Hogarth-Clarke, who recently commenced work at Balwyn Evergreen.

Take care and stay safe,

Matthew Etty-Leal President BHS



Matthew Etty-Leal
President BHS