

# CONNECTIONS



WNC MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

No. 8 August 2024

6 Murray St., Wonthaggi

Ph. 56723731

*"Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections every few years, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in." - Unknown*

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For updates follow us on Facebook at Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre

## FROM THE MANAGER...

Hello again.

A lot has been happening with us. You may have seen a happy group of people walking around our town on the sunny Saturday morning that was the 10th of August? WNC has been teaming up with a range of local community groups through the Combined Services / Homelessness Coalition which has us sharing our ideas and experiences as we all work to assist those in most need. I love the diversity of our combined group – Yes Youth Hub, CWA/Owls, Rotary, Housing Matters, the Bass Coast Shire, Headspace, Salvos and Myli to name a few. I am continually encouraged and inspired by this wonderful coalition as we not only help in our own way, but that we come together, increasing our reach and strengthening our message. Homelessness and food insecurity in our community is not easily addressed, but the passion and commitment the group members bring to ensuring everyone's right to a roof over their head and food in their belly is a great place to start.

For the next while, we have the Wonthaggi Branch of the Salvation Army operating out of Mitchell House on Mondays for their food relief program. They are also available for individual appointments on Mondays and on Thursdays, so call them on 5667 5202 to book in for both food relief and one on one appointments. I don't know if you've noticed we have a new Art Group? It's on Wednesdays after the Community Lunch and details are in the Grapevine which you can pick up here at the house or download from our website: <https://www.wonthaggi neighbourhoodcentre.com/> Which reminds me – some of you will have noticed that you've not received a copy of the Grapevine or indeed this newsletter, in your letterbox. Unfortunately, the current cost of postage is beyond what our budget can bear. We ask that you either download (or save) a copy of the Grapevine and Connections from our website or that you pick up a hard copy of the relevant publication when you next come into Mitchell House. If you can't see any, just ask at the front desk and we'll print them for you. We thank you for your understanding.

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the WNC AGM is here at Mitchell House on Thursday 26th September which is during the first week of the school holidays.

We would love everyone to come along and hear about what else has been happening and what's ahead for the next year - maybe even how you can contribute to your neighbourhood centre??? From the front desk, to the garden, to the committee room and beyond – there's something for everyone who'd like to get involved. So we do hope to see you on the 26th of September.

*Leslie*



Above - Walk for Warmth began at Mitchell House and concluded at Wishart Reserve where Leslie and Cr. Geoff Ellis addressed the gathering.

Below - Amanda and Kristie from the Salvos with Leslie



# BASS COAST REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP GROUP ACTIVITY

The members of BCRSG continue to work conscientiously and enthusiastically for our Mission, confirmed earlier in the year on our planning day...

***Our mission is to utilise the energy, resources and social capital of our community to help refugees successfully settle in Bass Coast and begin rebuilding their lives.***

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) requires that each member, of a Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) group, undertakes training in order to be involved in the group. Confidential information is often discussed about the family we are supporting during our meetings. As we are currently seeking new members, we have prepared a confidentiality agreement to be signed by potential new members before attending a meeting. This will enable them to attend up to three meetings so that they can make an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to proceed.

The group has decided to endorse the Global Refugee Forum 2023 Australian Community Sponsorship Pledge and a letter has been sent to our MPs advocating the Expansion of Community Refugee Sponsorship. Also, a letter has been sent to support CRSA's plan for a new program to enable Australians to nominate people they wish to sponsor.

A second very successful music event was held at Warrawee in Inverloch on Saturday, 25th of May, this year, to raise funds for the work. We raised just under \$10,000. We also submitted an application to the Gippsland Primary Health Network and received a \$500 grant to support engagement with people not accessing healthcare. Hossam and Eman al Habra participated as well as the Multicultural Women's Support Group.

A fundraising plan for the next 12 months is being developed. We anticipate running a fundraising sausage sizzle outside Wonthaggi Bunnings, next January. Information has been sent to CRSA re the current health of our finances.

We have been advised by CRSA that we have been matched with a third family to help resettle, from Iraq. We expect them to arrive in September/October. The settlement deed has been signed and returned to CRSA. Also, Zamin Rezi's family, whom we have helped financially, have now been granted visas to come to Australia. A small subgroup of members and friends continue to care for the Ali family, who have now exited the CRISP.

All medical/dental and educational participation and opportunities for the children and adults of the al Habra family are progressing well, and Jamal, the eldest child, has received two champion awards at the recent schools District Athletics. Work possibilities for Hossam are being sought and both Hossam and Eman have obtained their Learner Driver permits and are practicing driving with some members and friends of the group. The three children's names are listed at Wonthaggi YMCA for swimming lessons.

A website for the group is now live and the sending of regular quarterly newsletters to an extended group of members and friends, is continuing. The group has been offered free access to Foundation House's online learning platform to complete 'Refugee and Asylum Seeker Experiences' (RASE) course. After completion of this course members will be able to attend a live webinar which will focus on trauma informed care, in July.

Two of our members created a BCRSG Membership Level Discussion Paper, which we discussed and accepted at our June meeting. The paper clarifies the responsibilities of members and the access they have to the shared Google Drive and WhatsApp groups and the activities open to friends of BCRSG. One of our members spoke at a meeting of Phillip Island Rural Australians for Refugees (PIRAR) in June, which was greatly appreciated by them and by us.

We would like to thank WNC and the broader community for your ongoing support and interest.

Visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BassCoastRSG/>



## LOCAL L2P PROGRAM CONTINUES TO ACHIEVE RESULTS

Many within the local community will be familiar with the L2P branded cars displaying "L" plates cautiously making their way through town and country streets. Behind the wheel of these cars are keen learner drivers who do not have readily available access to a supervising driver. The learners enhance their skills and knowledge of the road rules under the watchful and caring eye of their volunteer mentor in the passenger seat. The program continues to support young people as they strive to complete the hours of practice required and improve their driving ability to the point where they can confidently complete the ultimate test and achieve the driving independence they desire with a probationary licence.

Over the past three months 11 young people have successfully achieved their probationary licence, testament to the success of the program and the dedication of the mentors who freely give of their time to guide their aspiring learner drivers to their goal. Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre is proud to be in a position to actively support this invaluable program. Co-Ordinator Melanie Mumford manages the program from her office in Mitchell House three days per week and works tirelessly to recruit, train and support mentors, respond to requests from learners matching them with suitable mentors, ensure the vehicles are maintained in excellent condition and liaise regularly with Vic Roads and the Department of Transport and Planning.

Highlights from Melanie's most recent report to the WNC Committee of Management include...

- Bass Coast TAC L2P achieved within 80% of monthly key performance indicators each month as required by Department of Transport and Planning this quarter, with higher performance in April and May 2024. The program received referrals from parents and self-referral in this quarter and 10 learners were admitted to the program. The wait list is currently at 21 learners. Eleven learners gained their P's this quarter. In this quarter 12 new learners were matched with mentors.
- The program had an average of 21 active mentors per month in this quarter. 19 mentors are currently registered with the program but inactive. These include Phillip Island

mentors awaiting the return of a Phillip Island vehicle, mentors who are away on extended holidays and mentors taking a break from the program for personal reasons. Three mentors withdrew from the program for health or personal reasons.

- Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre held an afternoon tea to celebrate Volunteer Week in May. 11 mentors attended and also had a chance to speak with Harriet Nunan from Wonthaggi Head space.
- New mentor training was held on 18<sup>th</sup> May. Seven new Bass Coast mentors completed training. Six have commenced driving with learners.
- Funding received:  
\$1500 from Gerard Lonergan Philanthropy for professional lessons  
\$13200 from San Remo District Financial Services - Bendigo Bank for a replacement vehicle.

If you would like to know more about being a volunteer mentor or if you or you know a young person who would benefit from participation in this program please contact Melanie Mumford at Mitchell House for information - [basscoastl2p@wonthaggi neighbourhoodcentre.com](mailto:basscoastl2p@wonthaggi neighbourhoodcentre.com)



*Pictured below are Wendy, Martin (new mentors), Don (mentor trainer) and Dave (new mentor)*



**"WNC is on the land of the Bunurong Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land where we gather to learn, work and play. We thank the elders past, present and emerging for their custodianship and their continuing connections to the land, sea and community."**

# AGM

## Annual General Meeting



The Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre will be conducting its AGM this year on September 26th from 2:00pm at Mitchell House, 6 Murray Street. All members, supporters and interested others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The President will provide an annual report, the financial report for the 2023-24 year will also be presented and reports from all active WNC groups will be available.

Come along and see what WNC has been up to throughout the previous year and have your say as a member on future directions and membership of the Committee of Management. Information about Committee of Management roles is readily available from Mitchell House if you are interested in nominating for a position on this governing body.

An afternoon tea will be available following the meeting. RSVP to Mitchell House 5672 3731 by 17th Sept if planning to attend would be appreciated for catering purposes.

## VOLUNTEERING SISTERS

Sisters Julia Harmon (Left) and Vicki Tierney have been giving their time as volunteers at the Mitchell House reception desk for a while now and each here share their thoughts, thank you both!

“Early 2023 I felt a need to do something outside my family. I had heard about Mitchell House, met Leslie and joined the team. I enjoy being a part of a team that has a community caring focus. I get so much more that I give and my life is certainly richer.” - Julia

“After my husband went into full time care, I was lost. My sister was already volunteering at Mitchell House and enjoyed it, so I started. It’s the best thing I have done – love the staff and helping people is so rewarding.” - Vicki



## Carer Catch Up - Wonthaggi

Our Carer Catch Up group will provide a safe space for carers to come together monthly, where you can talk about your caring role, or just catch up with like-minded people.

New carers are always welcome, so if you know other people caring for a loved one, you are welcome to bring them along. **Free Event** for Carers only; morning tea provided.



**The first Tuesday of the month**  
From 10am - 12pm



**Artspace**  
1 Bent Street, Wonthaggi (across the road from Aldi)

RSVP Essential: 1800 242 696 (press 5, ask for Iris in Carer Programs)  
or Email: [Iris.Gaillard@lchs.com.au](mailto:Iris.Gaillard@lchs.com.au) or Text: 0400 107 541

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Lalor Community  
Health service

## MORE COMFORT LESS COST

MYCELIA ENERGY EFFICIENT  
HOMES PROGRAM



### Group Learning Course

#### What is the Mycelia Energy Efficient Homes Program?

Help people save money on energy and increase the comfort of their homes.

This Group Learning Course was designed to support community volunteers and people in a position to help. We will cover the basics of energy literacy, introduce free support available through the Mycelia Household Assessments and Upgrades Program, and learn how to talk about home energy efficiency with householders who might benefit from this information.

#### Learn how to:

- Read and compare energy bills
- Talk about and understand energy efficiency
- Identify ways to improve energy efficiency
- Use a Power Mate to measure how much energy an appliance uses, and costs to use
- Use a thermal imaging camera
- Respectfully share useful information and local resources to relieve energy bill stress.
- And much more!

We will also visit two homes to gain first hand, practical experience!

#### Course Info

4 x Tuesday Sessions  
27th, Aug, 3rd, 10th, 17th Sept

1.00pm-3.30pm  
Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre

Cost: \$40 full fee, \$20 concession  
FREE for volunteers & community workers



Register  
03 5672 3731 [info@mycelia.org.au](mailto:info@mycelia.org.au)