

MARCH 2025

IN THE HOUSE

Ross House Association Member and Tenant News

Invitation to Provide Feedback RHA Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Ross House Association is in the process of developing a new strategic plan for 2025-2030 to guide our direction of the Association for the next 5 years. Our previous plan (2018-2023), created through extensive collaboration with the Ross House community before COVID, has seen substantial progress toward its goals. Now is the time for Ross House to once again establish a clear direction for the Association's future.

A draft of the RHA Strategic Plan 2025-2030 has already been shared with Members & Tenants, and we're now conducting consultations to ensure every voice is heard. More information over the page! This strategic plan outlines our long-term direction and priorities, guiding how we'll focus our efforts and resources to fulfill our mission

Developed by the RHA Committee of Management in collaboration with staff, the draft plan was informed by an audit of the previous plan conducted by Jenny Holiday from Non Profit Training. It builds on our prior work while creating a simple, effective, and achievable roadmap for our future. The plan reflects our shared vision for the future, identifying key goals and initiatives to guide our work while addressing community needs and ensuring long-term financial and governance sustainability. The plan is structured around three key focus areas: Community, Place, and Governance.

After reviewing the feedback, we will finalise the plan and make it available to all members and tenants. This updated strategic plan will provide the foundation for our actions and decision-making over the next five years and the Association is aiming to adopt the plan by July 1st 2025.

Thanks

The Ross House Team

Scan the QR code to view the draft 2025-2030 strategic plan and provide your feedback

Included In This Issue

Building and Maintenance

Melbourne Rail updates

Colin's Corner

RHA Open Day EOI

Welcome Back Brunch:
You're Invited!

Grants and Assistance

Update from TreeProject

Member Feature: BCA

RHA Equipment Grant
Applications Now Open

Update from NCWV

Community Calendar





COMMUNITY FEEDBACK CALL OUT!

2025-2030 RHA Strategic Plan

Drop-in Sessions

Have
your
say!

FEBRUARY DROP-INS

★ TUESDAY 25TH
11 AM -12 PM, LEVEL 4

★ THURSDAY 27TH
11 AM -12 PM, LEVEL 3

MARCH DROP-INS

★ TUESDAY 4TH
11 AM -12 PM, LEVEL 3

★ THURSDAY 6 TH
2 PM -3 PM, LEVEL 3



Scan Here

RHA Chairperson Colin Neave AM and CEO Michael Griffiths invite our Members and Tenants to share your feedback on the proposed 2025-2030 RHA Strategic Plan at one of our four drop-in sessions. They will also be available to answer any questions you might have.

If you are unable to attend a session you can share your thoughts online via the QR code. Scan the QR code to view the draft strategic plan - also available in easy English.

Ross House Association acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and the traditional owners of the land on which Ross House is located. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



RHA COMMITTEE 2025

Chairperson
Colin Neave AM
(ABC Friends)

Treasurer
Alba Chliakhtine
(ABRISA)

Secretary
Denise Boyd
(STAR)

Ally Scott
(Ordinary Member DRC)

Maggie Maguire AM
(Appointed Member)

Nazzareno Marchionda
(Appointed Member RHA Staff)

Michael Griffiths
(Ex-Officio, RHA CEO)

Colin's Corner

Welcome to Colin's Corner!

Colin Neave AM, Chairperson of the Ross House Association, shares some thoughts and highlights from the last couple of months.

It's hard to believe we're already well into 2025. I hope the year is off to a great start for you and your organisations.

We're in the midst of some important conversations about the future of Ross House as we develop the Ross House Association's new Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. I want to personally invite you to be part of these discussions.

Our Strategic Plan is shaped by our members—your voices, and needs are at the core of everything we do. Ross House exists to support the nonprofit community, and that starts with listening. This is your chance to have your say, share your thoughts, and help guide the direction of our unique building and community.



[ID: photo of Colin Neave wearing a checkered shirt, standing in front of green foliage smiling at the camera].

There are still two more drop-in sessions on 4th and 6th of March, and I encourage you to come along. More details about these sessions can be found on page 2.

If there's anything the Ross House Committee can do to support you, please don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming weeks!

Colin Neave AM, Chairperson
Ross House Association

**STAY
TUNED**

New Accessible Toilet Level 3

We're thrilled to share that the rear 3rd floor toilets are getting an upgrade including a DDA compliant accessible toilet and shower!

Plans are drawn and builders are lined up. Thanks to a small but helpful grant from the City of Melbourne, and income from the ground floor commercial lease.

More information will be heading your way soon
so stay tuned!



ROSS HOUSE OPEN DAY 2025

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

After a successful ideas session we are moving forward with the opportunity to participate in The City of Melbourne Open House Melbourne 2025. We are proposing to open Ross House on Saturday 26 July, from 10am to 4pm, as part of this city-wide event.

The 2025 theme, Stories of the City, highlights the hidden and overlooked layers of urban life through architecture, culture, and community. Ross House offers a unique story, reflecting both architectural and social history.

INTERESTED OR NEED MORE INFO?

Email
rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au or
pop into the Front Desk

Tenant Ideas so far include:

- Open Offices
- Visual displays
- Arts and crafts
- Workshops
- Accessibility training



Ross House Association continues to make incredible energy savings as a result of sustainability works to the building, behaviour change and continued commitment from the entire Ross House community.

Building and Maintenance

FROM THE ROSS HOUSE TEAM

There is always a lot going on in this big old building of ours, so please make sure you keep an eye out for the building maintenance emails that circulate regularly.

Current and completed works:

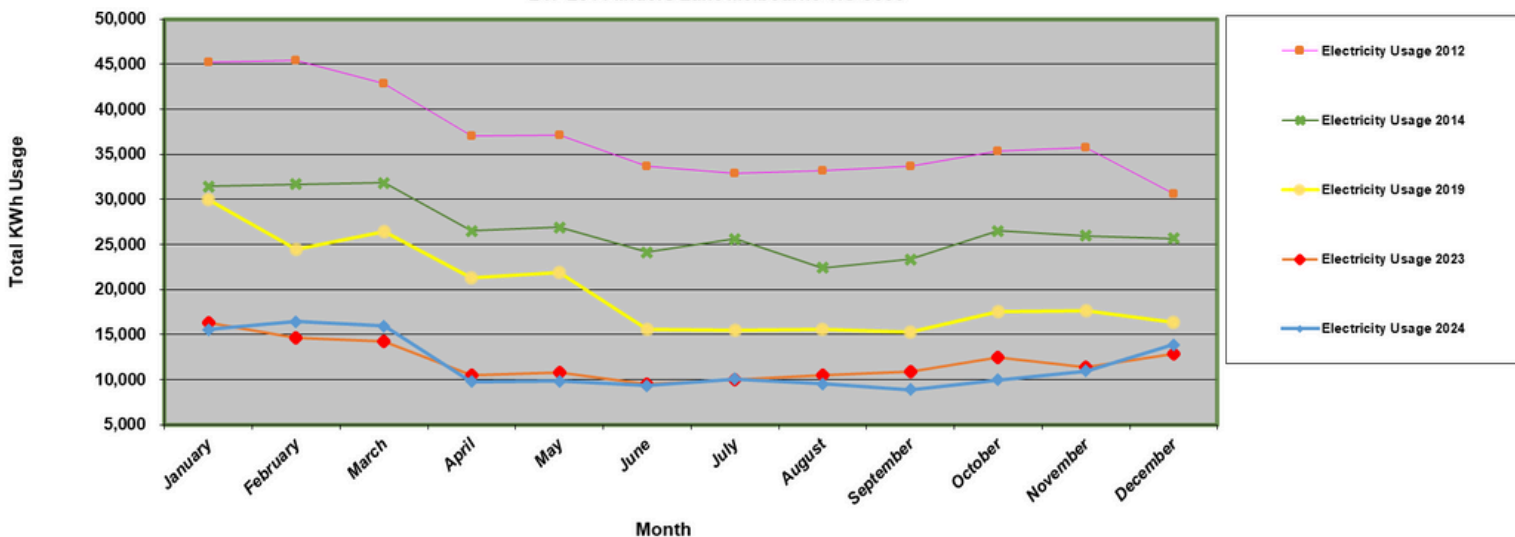
- RHA has a new **Shredex** bin in the Foyer. You can now bring your paper documents to be destroyed, rather than shredding!
- Works continue on the ground floor with the Melbourne Winery expected to open in April 2025.

Looking ahead:

- With the success of the Ross House Emergency Procedure Info Session held in October, we will be hosting another session on Tuesday 18th March 2025, at 11am in the Jenny Florence Room, Level 3.



Electricity Comparison From 2012 to 2024
Ross House
247-251 Flinders Lane Melbourne VIC 3000





Metro Rail Update

FROM THE ROSS HOUSE TEAM

These are the planned and current works for the Melbourne Metro Rail Project. Construction works within the Town Hall Station precinct from February 2025 include:

- Station entrance construction and underground build-out works at the City Square, Flinders Quarter and Federation Square sites
- Ongoing construction of above ground service buildings at City Square
- Tower crane removal and bluestone reinstatement works on Swanston Street outside City Square
- Removal of the Collins Street loading bay and reinstatement of the southern footpath near the site entrance
- Campbell Arcade restoration works
- Removal of the acoustic shed at Federation Square
- Train testing through the tunnel.

For more information on these works, see the [February 2025 Town Hall construction update \(PDF, 1.3 MB\)](#).

If you have any questions regarding these works, or would like more information on the project, please visit www.metrotunnel.vic.gov.au or phone 1800 551 927.

If you have something you would like to contribute to the next RHA Newsletter, please email Katie or Carol at rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au



5 YEARS of SIMPLY CUPS Recycling at Ross House

In 2019 Ross House adopted the Simply Cups recycling collection units into each floor level. Located in each kitchenette you will find these great stations which continue to be utilised daily by many of us.

Here at Ross House we proudly continue to utilise this great service, and remind all tenants and visitors, to do the right thing and put their used cups in the right bin.

It's good to know we can enjoy our morning coffee (or two or three!) and see the cups recycled in a sustainable way.

Simply Cups recycle the used cups into sustainable products such as road material, lightweight concrete materials, garden edging, buckets and cat litter trays.

www.simplycups.com.au.





Wednesday
March 19th

Welcome
Back

BRUNCH



Neurodiversity
celebration week

11:30 AM
HAYDEN RAYSMITH
ROOM, LEVEL 4

Scan here
for more
information
and to RSVP



Tenant Feature: Happy 50th Anniversary BCA!



Blind Citizens Australia

[ID: BCA's logo resembles an eye using 4 simple block shapes in green and purple, the words "Blind Citizens Australia" is written underneath].

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the national representative organisation of people who are blind or vision impaired. Our purpose is to inform, connect, and empower Australians who are blind or vision impaired and the broader community.

A Brief History

Blind Citizens Australia was formed in June 1975. In an era marked by civil rights protests and movements dedicated to social change, people who were blind decided to raise their voices about the issues affecting them. Their actions stemmed from a growing dissatisfaction with their limited social and economic opportunities, a reality exacerbated by a lack of quality services.

More than four decades on, BCA is the united voice of Australians who are blind or vision impaired. Membership is now more than 3,000, with members from every State and Territory across Australia.

The Aim of BCA

BCA achieves its purpose by: a) informing, connecting and empowering people who are blind or vision impaired and the wider community, b) representing and advocating for the interests of people who are blind or vision impaired, c) providing high-quality support, services, projects and events, and d) increasing access, awareness, and expectations across the broader community.

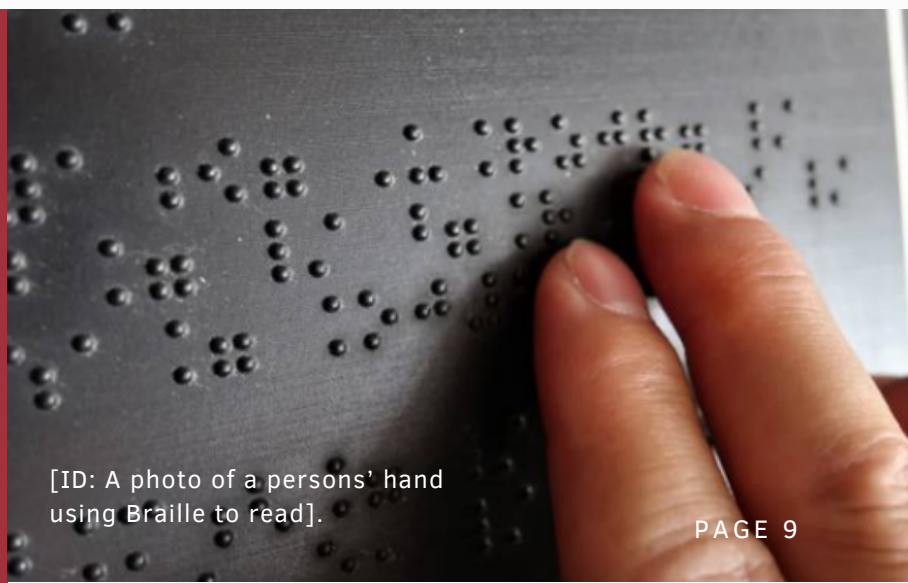
Happy 50th Anniversary!

BCA is hosting its 50th Anniversary Convention in Melbourne, Victoria from Friday, 13th June to Sunday, 15th June 2025. This momentous event marks five decades of BCA's unwavering commitment to supporting Australians who are blind or vision impaired. The convention will take place at the Novotel Glen Waverley. This special anniversary convention will feature a dynamic program, including engaging speakers, informative sessions and ample opportunities for networking and celebration. Key moments will include the presentation of BCA's ongoing advocacy achievements, discussions on future initiatives and reflections on the progress made over the past 50 years.

<https://events.humanitix.com/blind-citizens-australia-national-convention-2025>

www.bca.org.au

If you would like your RHA member or tenant organisation to feature here, please email rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au



[ID: A photo of a persons' hand using Braille to read].

Grants and Assistance Programs

BY ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION



[ID: A yellow sign in front of green foliage reads 'Grants and Funding']

These are some of the grants and assistance programs currently available that we think might interest you.

Local Food Partnership Grant VicHealth

Food shapes more than just our health it can strengthen our communities, nurture our environments and promote equity and sustainability for everyone.

This opportunity is perfect for existing partnerships ready to scale up their impact. With extra support, resources, and guidance, we can amplify the incredible work you're already doing.

Eligibility: Not-for-profits, Local Government, Businesses.

Funding: \$700,000 - \$900,000

Round: Open, closes 18 March 2025, 5pm

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/local-food-partnerships-grant

Social Justice Small Grants Mercy Foundation

This program provides seed funding to assist communities and organisations to build capacity that will help create structural change and bring about greater social justice in Australia.

The Mercy Foundation prioritises projects that target disadvantaged women and/or women with children.

In this grant round, priority will be given to projects that promote the inclusion of marginalised groups in the community.

Small to medium organisations with a turnover of less than \$3,000,000 with limited access to other funding sources are prioritised.

Eligibility: Not-for-profit

Funding: \$1,000 to \$10,000

Round: Open, closes April 4th at midnight.

www.mercyfoundation.com.au/social-justice-grants/social-justice-small-grants

Targeted Building Digital Skills Grants Department of Social Services (DSS) & Good Things

Be Connected is an Australian government initiative that aims to provide a family and community centred approach to supporting, coaching and teaching older Australians aged over 50 years to improve their skills and confidence in using digital technology.

The aim of the Building Digital Skills grants program is to enable organisations to support people aged over 50 in Australia to gain basic digital skills and confidence through free face-to-face contact, either one-on-one or in small groups, utilising the learning courses available on the Be Connected Learning site.

Eligibility: Not-for-profits, Universities, Unincorporated Groups, Businesses

Funding: Unknown - multiple options

Round: Opens 3 March, closes 28 March 2025, 11:55pm

www.goodthingsaustralia.org/mentor-resource/building-digital-skills-grant

**POSITIVE
POWERFUL
PARENTS**



**PARENTS
RIGHTS
NETWORK**



MELBOURNE

FRIDAY FRIENDSHIP GROUP 2025

**FEB
28TH**

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 4
12PM-2PM**

**MARCH
28TH**

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 4
12PM-2PM**

**APRIL
25TH**

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 4
12PM-2PM**

**MAY
30TH**

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 4
12PM-2PM**

**JUNE
27TH**

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 4
12PM-2PM**

**RSVP: CALL (03) 9639 9106 OR EMAIL
INFO@POSITIVEPOWERFULPARENTS.COM.AU**

TreeProject's NEW Weekly Growers Group

BY TREEPROJECT

Have you ever thought about how to grow indigenous seeds in your home garden and not known where to start?

Have you got a lack of space or time to grow your own indigenous seedlings but want to be involved in nature conservation and do something good for the planet?

Join us at TreeProject's Kensington Depot / Nursery for our new weekly grower's group!

Get hands-on experience sowing and caring for indigenous seedlings that will be planted this season and learn everything you need to grow indigenous plants in your own urban garden.

TreeProject gets urban and rural communities working together to put trees back on the land. Our network of trained volunteers grows indigenous seedlings for rural landholders and Landcare groups who need our help with revegetation.

With almost 3 million indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses planted so far and a record number of 162,000 scheduled for this year we are passionate about empowering the community to support biodiversity in any way they can; whether that be growing indigenous species in their urban gardens, volunteering to grow indigenous seedlings for TreeProject or dropping in to our weekly community growers group to help us sow and care for our indigenous seedlings at our nursery.



[ID: Tree Project logo - black text saying Tree Project with a green leaf as the dot on top of the letter J].

By choosing to plant indigenous species, you can support local wildlife and contribute to the restoration of Victoria's precious ecosystems.

TreeProject is unique in that we don't just plant trees - we grow them too. Urban volunteers are trained to cultivate indigenous seedlings in their backyards, nurturing them until they're ready for planting in regional Victoria.

These seedlings are then transported to rural landholders and Landcare groups in need, where yet another group of dedicated volunteers plants them. This model fosters collaboration between urban and rural communities, working together to restore Victoria's landscapes.

Looking ahead, 2025 is shaping up to be one of our biggest years yet. We're calling on nearly 500 volunteers to help grow over 156,000 native seedlings which will play a crucial role in repairing damaged ecosystems across the state.

Thanks to our incredible volunteers' time and energy we can keep costs low for farmers and landholders. For many of them, getting affordable seedlings from TreeProject is all the encouragement they need to start rejuvenating their land.

If you're passionate about making a difference, we'd love for you to join us. Sign up today to grow native seedlings for 2025 and be part of the movement that's transforming Victoria's countryside, one seedling at a time.

From the Ground Up:
www.melbournewater.com.au/media/22441

www.treeproject.org.au



[ID: An image of a person's hands are cupped, holding soil and a small plant].

Weekly Growers **GROUP**

Learn how to sow and care for
indigenous seedlings



**Register
Now**

treeproject.org.au

Assisi Aid Projects Welcome New CEO



BY ASSISI AID PROJECTS

ROOM 4.0

Exciting times are ahead for Assisi Aid Projects as we welcome our new CEO, Cate Coleman.

Cate is delighted that Assisi is based at Ross House, reflecting, "I remember first visiting Ross House way back in 2008 when volunteering with the Darfur Australia Network, so it is a full circle moment to be back working here with Assisi!

Ross House is exactly as I remember - a hub of inspiring, grassroots organisations right in the heart of Melbourne's vibrant laneway precinct".

[ID: Assisi Aid Projects logo - Black text which reads 'Assisi Aids Projects, Empowering Change' sits on a white background with a pink arch shape graphic above].

Our small but mighty team, passionate about making lasting change in the lives of women in the Asia-Pacific, now comprises of Cate, our Program Officer Issy, and our Project and Engagement Officer Kirsty.

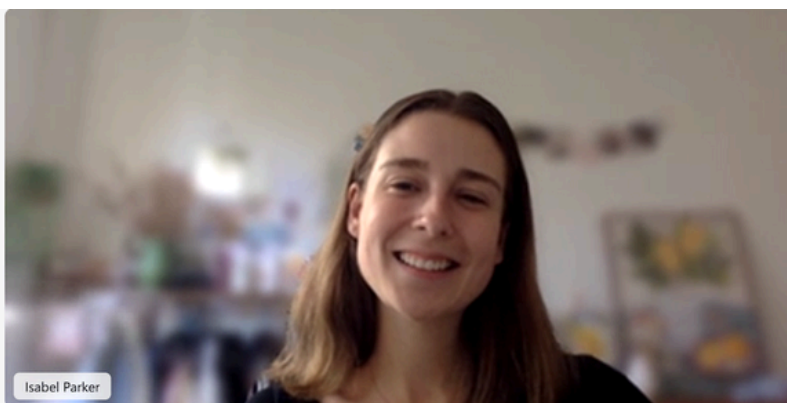
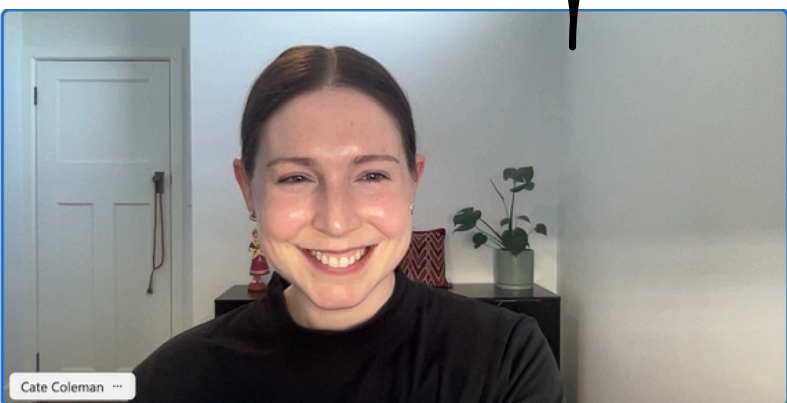
We all work part-time from Ross Hose Level 4, so drop by and say hi if you see us in the office!

Assisi Aid Projects is a small international development organisation with a strong focus on women - empowering women to create positive change in their own lives, in their children's lives, and in their communities.

To find out more about Assisi Aids Projects, please visit

www.assisi.org.au

Image Caption below: The team wishing farewell to the outgoing CEO Jacqueline (bottom left) and congratulating Cate (top left) on her promotion to CEO.



Exciting Updates from Schizy Inc

BY SCHIZY INC

Mojo Festival of Arts by Schizy Inc is on now!

Mojo is a performing arts festival of creative workshops for people with diverse mental health in theatre, comedy, cabaret and music based at Ross House Feb-May. Mojo Festival celebrates mental health lived experience pride and community, culminating in a gala community arts event on World Schizophrenia Day (May 24).

As part of Mojo Festival 2025, Schizy Inc's comedy collective is proud to present Rad Cactus! in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Rad Cactus has three shows featuring neurodivergent comedians and well-known Melbourne comedians.

- Tuesday 1st April, 8pm: Performed by Schizy comedy alumni
- Wednesday 2nd April, 8pm: Open mic night for anyone with lived experience wanting to give comedy a crack in a comfortable and nurturing environment
- Sunday 13th April, 6:45pm: Rad Cactus comedy showcase

For more information, please visit www.comedyfestival.com.au/2025-festival/browse-shows/rad-cactus



[ID: Schizy Inc logo which says 'Schizy Inc' in yellow text on a black circle background with a red border. There are blue, purple and red love hearts on the black circle too].

Heidi Everett from Schizy Inc also met with Melbourne Lord Mayor, Nick Reece to discuss ways complex mental health like schizophrenia might be better embraced in the city.

Heidi says that the meeting with Nick was good-natured and he proved to be a good listener. The meeting sparked potential to really shift attitudes about people with complex trauma to a more optimistic light.

To find out more about Schizy Inc, please visit:

www.schizy.org

[ID below left: A green cartoon cactus with a red hat and glasses, is holding a microphone in a party-type setting.

ID below right: Heidi and Lord Mayor, Nick Reese are smiling at the camera, holding a Schizy Inc logo booklet].





MOJO FESTIVAL OF ARTS 2025

Performing Arts workshops with the fabulously dazzling Schizy Inc artist community of creatives with diverse complex mental health.

- Comedy
- Theatre
- Cabaret
- Harp & Songwriting
- Spoken Word

Starting Feb '25

Ross House
247 Flinders St.
Melbourne

Rad Cactus
Melbourne International
Comedy Festival

Info/EOI: heidi@schizy.org

www.schizy.org



Radically Inclusive Disability Community Gatherings!

Disability Resources Centre is a membership driven organisation managed and staffed by people with disabilities.

They provide individual advocacy for adults with a disability free of charge throughout greater metropolitan Melbourne. They also work in systemic issues and conduct and support campaigns with the aim to protect and promote the human rights of people with disabilities.

You are invited to join DRC, in partnership with RHA at their fortnightly 'Radically Inclusive Disability Community Gatherings'

From DRC:

"Join us to share experiences, wisdom, tea and snacks at our independent, disability-led gatherings".



[ID: Red text saying 'DRC' sits above purple text which says 'Advocacy'. This is the Disability Resources Centre logo].

When? Every second Monday from 2-4pm. The next one is today - Monday 3rd March 2025.

Where? Jenny Florence Room, Level 3, Ross House.

Who is this aimed at? For everyone in the disability community

Together we will build connections- practicing kindness, Disability Justice & Disability Pride. Whatever your disability experience you are welcome.

For more information, please contact info@drc.org.au or call 03 9671 3000.

Congratulations Cam!

A huge congratulations to Cameron Bloomfield who had a meeting with the Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan on 19th February 2025.

Cameron told her about his work as a self advocate and how important it is to have groups like Rainbow Rights and Voice at the Table.

Cameron also got to celebrate his 2024 Victorian Disability Award - Disability Pride Champion.

You can also hear Cam on 3CR community radio at his recent 2024 Victorian Disability Pride Champion Interview >

www.3cr.org.au/boldness/episode/interview-2024-victorian-disability-pride-champion



[ID: photo of Cameron Bloomfield with the Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan in an office-type setting].

64th Pioneer Women's Ceremony

BY NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN VICTORIA

National Council of Women of Victoria's 64th Pioneer Women's Ceremony: Sunday, February 2, 2025, 11:30am-2:00pm was held at the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden in Kings Domain, Melbourne. This event celebrated Victorian Pioneer Women in Agriculture. In 2025 it is 30 years since women in Australia were legally considered farmers under the law and therefore the Australian Bureau of Statistics recognised, under occupations in the Census, that women can be farmers rather than simply "farmers' wives".

Two parliamentarians gave short addresses at the start of the event. Michaela Settle MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture and Regional Development, highlighted the \$20 billion agricultural sector and the critical role of the Victorian Rural Women's Network in championing and empowering women into leadership and influential decision-making positions.

Emma Kealy MP, Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Mental Health, acknowledged the valuable work of the NCWV in supporting women's advocacy and leadership. She paid tribute to women pioneers, past and present, sharing stories of 19th-century women who, despite raising large families, made significant contributions to their towns and regions in the mid-late 1800s.



[ID: photo of the Pioneer Women's Memorial Garden; a group of people are sitting underneath two blue gazebos looking at the speaker].

She emphasised that, while being a mother is an important role, it does not define a woman's entire identity.

Emma highlighted the example of Dr Kendra Clegg, a present-day pioneer, who led the Grampians emergency recovery response while balancing farm work and made significant contributions to the region and community.

Michaela described the early 1990s, where women in New Zealand, including Indigenous Māori and First Nations women, gathered to discuss identity, with Caucasian women remaining largely silent.



[ID: photo of Michaela (left) & Emma Kealy (right)].

NCWV Continued..

Indigenous women wore the cloak of their ancestors, a source of cultural identity, while Caucasian women lacked that connection. Women settlers, especially in agriculture, have contributed significantly since colonisation, but their roles were often ignored in history.

In Australia, until 1994, women were not officially recognised as farmers. In 1891, the Census excluded women farmers, labelling them as "farmer's wives." Alana shared the story of her grandmother, a dairy farmer, who was known as a "farmer's wife," despite her significant work on the farm, such as raising ducks and making butter. This reflected societal constraints and cultural biases at the time which overlooked women's contributions.

Alana referenced Marilyn Waring's 1988 book *Counting for Nothing*, which analyses economics from a feminist perspective and the implications of discounting the work of women (half of the world's population). Historically, women's work, such as farm labour, was unrecognised in the Census. Many women started labelling their work as "logistics manager" or "machinery operator" and recorded long hours with no income.

Alana continued with the women's movement in the 60s and 70s, which pushed for equal pay, financial independence, and recognition. By the 1990s, conferences like the National Conference for Women in Agriculture were established.

The first international conference, in 1994, attracted 800 women from 80 countries and drew media attention.

The Invisible Farmer Project was the largest-ever study of Australian women in agriculture. It began as a pilot project (2015-2016) and evolved into a three-year (2017-2020) nationwide partnership between rural communities, academic, government and cultural organisations, and received federal funding.

The project combined personal stories and research to highlight women's roles in farming, climate adaptation, and rural communities. The project generated vast collections of materials and sparked public dialogue, ensuring women's agricultural contributions were recognised.



[ID: Five women stand in a line smiling at an audience out of shot. Three of these women hold plants in pots].

Alana highlighted stories of female trailblazers such as Irene Lowe, who was the first woman in the Southern Hemisphere to earn an agricultural science degree. She was the only woman in her year at Dookie College. In 1918, Irene was the only graduate of her year as the men went to war. Today, 50% of agriculture students are women, with diverse career options. Cathy Wendelborn, a world champion shearer, was inducted into the Shearers Hall of Fame.

Liesbeth began by sharing that she didn't view herself as a "modern day pioneer" which she associated with harsh early Australian farming life. However, after reflecting on her own experiences, she thought her journey could be considered pioneering. Born in the Netherlands, Liesbeth immigrated to Australia aged 13 years in 1982, along with her parents, two sisters, and grandmother. The transition was difficult, with language barriers and cultural adjustments, but she managed to adapt, learn English and made new friends.

During her school years, she developed a passion for agriculture, which later became a significant part of her life. After finishing high school, she attended Dookie Agricultural College, where she met her future husband, Andrew.

The couple moved across Australia for Andrew's job, eventually settling in various remote areas, including the Kimberley and Northern Territory, where they started their family. During this time, Liesbeth grew to appreciate the beauty of Australia, including "the big, bright blue sky", "the red ochre of the Kimberly", "the smells of gumtrees after rain" and "the sounds of cicadas in summer and that moment when they all stop at once".

NCWV Continued..

In her early adulthood, Liesbeth regained her Dutch nationality and embraced dual citizenship. After a few years living abroad as expats in Papua New Guinea, Liesbeth and Andrew returned to Australia, where they took over Andrew's parents' farm in the midst of the millennial drought.

Despite her excitement about working with her husband on the farm, the transition was difficult. Her relationship with her father-in-law was strained, and she found herself isolated and lonely in a small farming community. Despite these challenges, Liesbeth persevered, eventually starting a bead shop to regain her independence.

She later transitioned into a career in retail and education, obtaining a diploma in Early Childhood Education. At age 50, she took a 'gap year' and returned to Europe, where she walked the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.

During this journey, she realised that Australia was her true home and decided to contribute to her community by running for local council, ultimately becoming a Councillor and, later, the Mayor. Liesbeth faced numerous obstacles throughout her career in farming and local politics, however, she found strength in her experiences and reflected on the importance of embracing challenges and pushing forward.

Liesbeth's journey has been one of resilience, adaptation, and a deep commitment to both her family and her community, resulting in an inspiring and impactful life.

Narelle shared her personal 20-year journey in agriculture, including various roles such as managing a cattle feedlot, trading grain, and working with Elders Rural Services in plant genetics. Raised on a small acreage in Ballarat, Narelle's early experiences with livestock and farming sparked her career in agriculture.

She highlighted the significant contributions of First Nations women, whose traditional knowledge and practices have shaped sustainable land management for over 50,000 years. These women have been key in the native foods sector, such as cultivating Kakadu plums and other bush foods, and they are vital in environmental conservation. Narelle highlighted that First Nations women constitute 85% of bush food harvesters but are underrepresented in agricultural courses, with only a few graduating annually. She showcased the work of leaders like Sharon Brindley and Natalie Sommerville, who advocate for and support Indigenous women in agriculture.

Narelle acknowledged the diversity of women in agriculture, from farmers to scientists, and their vital role in food production and rural economies. Despite challenges such as gender bias and limited resources, Narelle highlighted that women continue to push for gender equality and leadership roles. Narelle spoke of the ongoing work of organisations such as Australian Women in Agriculture (including the Women on Agricultural Boards initiative) and the Country Women's Association in empowering women through advocacy, mentorship, education, and support.

Narelle concluded with the need for systemic change to ensure greater representation of women in leadership roles, particularly on agricultural boards. She honoured the resilience and impact of women in agriculture and called for a more inclusive future where women's contributions are fully recognised and valued.

[ID: Participants stand from left to right, Robyn, Emma Fu, June, Hean Bee, Guosheng Chen, Elida, Liesbeth, Pam R, Michaela, Alana, Narelle, Pam H, Ronniet, Deborah].





SIDAS



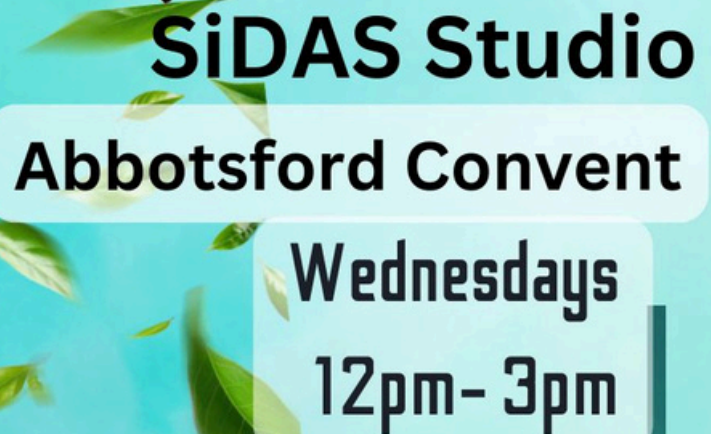
WEDNESDAY



Wilds



**BEGINNERS ART
AND CREATIVITY
CLASSES**



SiDAS Studio
Abbotsford Convent
Wednesdays
12pm - 3pm

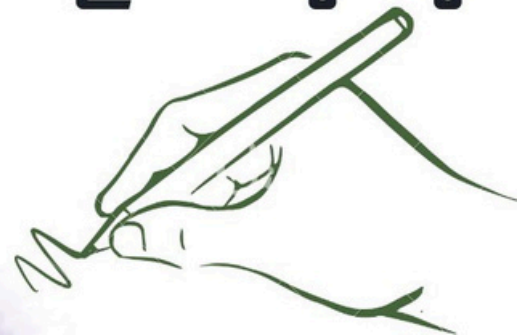
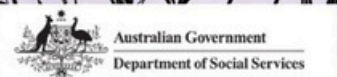
**Learn how to draw, paint and create with a professional tutor
For people with diverse and/or complex mental health.**

For Details and to Register
studio@schizy.org



**SCHIZY
INC.**

www.schizy.org



End of Year Party Recap

BY RHA



A huge thank you to our members and tenants who attended our 70's themed End of Year party on 12th December 2024.

The crowd was definitely hitting the right notes in their retro coats, keeping it real with their 70s apparel.

The afternoon was filled with yummy retro food and drinks, hot 70s beats, funky photos and lots of chatter. It was great to see everyone unwind after another big year in our big old building.. we were definitely feeling the groove.

Thanks again to everyone who attended! what a fun afternoon filled with laughter and smiles.

Join us at our Welcome Back Brunch in March!

For those of you who couldn't make the End of Year Party, be sure to come along to our Welcome Back Brunch on Wednesday 19th March in Celebration of Neurodiversity Week.

During the event, we will hear from two wonderful speakers Virginia Giddings (BIM & SARU) & Heidi Everett (Schizy Inc) who will share their insights and wisdom in a neurodiverse world.

When? Wednesday 19th March 2025, 11:30am - 1:30pm

Where? Hayden Raysmith Room, Level 4, Ross House

To RSVP, please visit www.form.jotform.com/250405693232856

For further information, please contact the Front Desk rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au / (03) 9650 1599



B(RHA) and Heidi (Schizy Inc) pose wearing 70's sunglasses and outfits in front of a gold backdrop.



Denise (STAR and RHA COM), Ruby (RHA) and Ally (DRC and RHA COM) are wearing colourful 70's outfits and smiling at the camera



Left: Members of the community gather in the Jenny Florence Room



Right: Indiancare staff holding plates of goodies, smiling at the camera in front of a gold backdrop



RHA staff members Nazz and CEO Michael smile at the camera in funky retro shirts



Carol and Nazz from RHA stand in front of a makeshift bar with a large sign reading 'Nazz's Bar'



Left: Rohan Quayle (Artist and Schizy Inc Commitee), Colin Neave (RHA Chairperson) & Katie (RHA) smile at the camera



Right: Assisi Aids staff Isabel and Kirsty stand in front of a gold backdrop with their arms in the air



Community Calendar

MARCH 2025

Monday 3rd March: RHA Grant Round 2 Opens (Info page xx) and Disability Community Gathering with DRC (Info page xx)

Tuesday 4th March: RHA Strat Plan Community Drop-in Session 3#, 11am, Jenny Florence Room

Thursday 6th March: RHA Strat Plan Community Drop-in Session 4#, 2pm, Jenny Florence Room

Monday 10th March: RHA closed for Public Holiday

Tuesday 18th March: Emergency Info Session for tenants, 11am, Jenny Florence Room

Wednesday 19th March: RHA Welcome Back Brunch celebrating Neurodiversity Week

APRIL 2025

Tuesday 1st - Wednesday 30th April: Adopt a Greyhound Month



Wednesday 2nd April: World Autism Day

Monday 7th April: World Health Day

Wednesday 16th April: Youth Homelessness Matters Day

Friday 18th April, Monday 21st April & Friday 25th April: RHA Closed for Public Holidays

Saturday 26th April - Friday 2nd May: Lesbian Visibility Week

MAY 2025

Thursday 15th May: Global Accessibility Awareness Day

Wednesday 21st May: World Day for Cultural Diversity

Monday 26th May: National Sorry Day

Sunday 9th February: Victoria Pride

Thursday 20th February: World Day of Social Justice

Tuesday 27th May - Tuesday 3rd June: National Reconciliation Week



If you would like to add your event to our Community Calendar, in our next In the House, please email rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au or phone (03) 9650 1599.

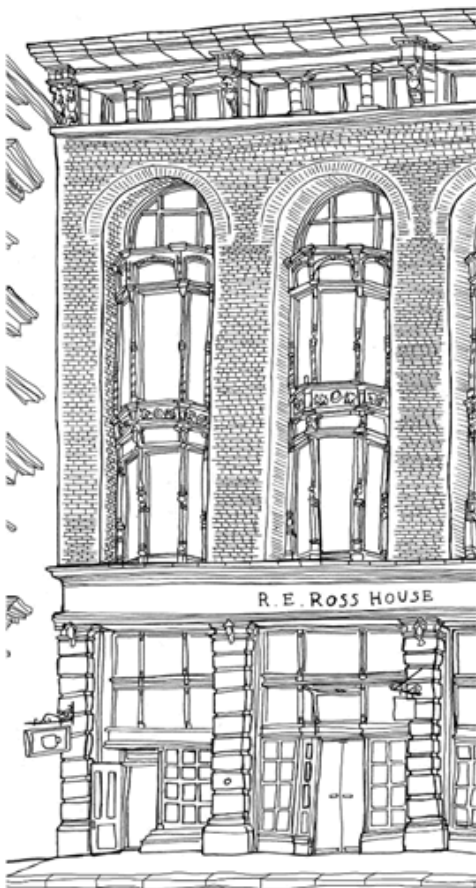
Image Description: Cover image, Reinforce members standing in front of a white wall smiling at the camera. In article image, RHA staff member Ruby's fawn coloured Greyhound poses on a green couch

PUBLIC HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Ross House Association Office will be CLOSED on

Monday 10th March 2025

RHA staff will be unavailable on the above date and will be back online, and in the office 10am - 4pm, on Tuesday 11th March 2025



Access information for tenants:

- Please make sure that you have your swipe key with you
- If you do not have a swipe key you cannot get in to the building
- If you do not have a swipe key, please contact Ross House during business hours prior to the dates above
- If you need help, contact the Front Desk on (03) 9650 1599

For emergencies please contact Security on 1300 02 04 06



If you have any questions please contact reception on (03) 9650 1599

Expressions of Interest: Ross House Open Day July 2025

BY RHA



After a successful ideas session with some of our tenants, we are moving forward with the opportunity to participate in The City of Melbourne Open House Melbourne 2025. We have sent in our expression of interest to participate and are eager to find out if we have been accepted.

In the meantime, we are seeking expressions of interest from our members and tenants who would like to be involved but missed out on the first meeting. Organisations participating would host an event/workshop or open their office up between 10am-4pm on Sat 26th July or put up a display which can be visited.

Some of the individual tenant ideas that came out from our ideas session include:

- Community scarf knitting
- Arts and crafts
- Auslan workshops
- Anniversary info and display
- History of Ross House display
- Self-Advocacy workshops
- Open offices

We also discussed the idea of a self-guided tour with a video on repeat on the Lower Ground. This tour would include:

- Guidance to any open offices - and information
- Arts and crafts destinations
- Guidance to other key displays for example photographs, artworks, or the iconic 'clocks'
- Accessible information - ie. closed captions on videos, braille versions of the tour brochure.



[ID blurred pink and purple image of a gallery with text reading 'Open House Melbourne Weekend 26 + 27 July 2005']

The Ross House staff will be in the building throughout the day, and volunteers are provided by the City of Melbourne on request.

If you have any ideas or would like to be involved, please contact us on rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au or pop into the front desk.

Stories of the City

The 2025 theme, Stories of the City, highlights the hidden and overlooked layers of urban life through architecture, culture, and community. Ross House offers a unique story, reflecting both architectural and social history.

From the City of Melbourne website: "Stories of the City' will illuminate stories hidden behind closed doors or overlooked in everyday life. By exploring the layers of urban life through stories of architecture, culture & community, the 2025 Open House Melbourne Weekend will foster a deeper appreciation of the relationship between people and place, lived experience & built form".

Benefits of Participation:

- Inclusion in Open House Melbourne's program
- Promotion to City of Melbourne 52,000 email subscribers, 60,000 social media followers
- Extending reach to interstate and international visitors
- City of Melbourne provided Volunteers

For more information about the City of Melbourne Open House head to www.openhousemelbourne.org/the-weekend

ROSS HOUSE

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE INFO SESSION # 2



Tuesday 18th March 2025, 11am - 12pm

**ROSS HOUSE LEVEL 3,
JENNY FLORENCE ROOM and ONLINE via ZOOM**

**Inform yourself about the emergency procedures in the
building.**

Register at <https://form.jotform.com/rosshouse/rsvp-emergency> or by emailing rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au. A Zoom link will be emailed to you if you are attending online.

2025 Window Displays

The Ross House team would once again like to thank the members for their wonderful window displays!

We know how much effort and planning goes into each display and it's always exciting to see how the space is cleverly utilised to best effect! During January, we saw Ross House tenants Power in Culture and Ethnicity (a self-advocacy group supported by SARU) and the Melbourne Esperanto Association raising awareness of differing cultural connections in an eye-catching and informative window display.

ABC Friends and the Society of Women Writers have been on display for the month of February.

Take a look at the photo of their great displays in the picture below. In March we will be treated with a display from the Public Transport Users Association.

[ID: ABC Friends and SOWW's colourful displays in the RHA window]



[ID: Janet from PCE is wearing a pink top and smiling at the camera in front of the RHA window display].

Looking ahead: There are a few gaps in the Window Display calendar with availability in the following months – July, November, December/January. Please contact us asap if you would like to place a display in these months. Thank you!

If you would like to find out more information about our window displays, please get in touch with Carol at rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au.

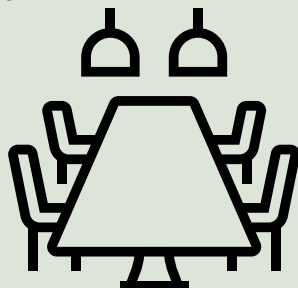
Meeting Rooms

A friendly reminder to all Meeting Room Users to return chairs and tables to their original positions after use.

The RHA team also has a portable vaccum cleaner, if required, for hire which can be borrowed from the Front Desk.

Thank you for your understanding!

The Ross House team



STAY CONNECTED!



@rosshouseassociation



rosshouseassociation



Ross House Association

RHA Equipment Grant Applications Now Open!

BY RHA

Applications for Round 2 of the RHA equipment Grant open today, Monday March 3!

This program is designed to support our tenant organisations with their various equipment expenses, including printing, IT infrastructure, and furniture costs.

Round 2 consists of a single grant of up to \$2000 and is open to all tenants, incubator, small, medium, or large.

Please note that these grants are available to RHA Member tenants only, Associate Members are not eligible.

Applications close on Monday, March 31st, 2025 at 11:59PM AEST.



[ID: Ross House logo - white text saying Ross House Association, with the window and leaves emblem, on a maroon circle].

Read the Grant Guidelines here >

<https://rosshouse.org.au/app/uploads/2025/02/RHA-Equipment-Grant-Guidelines-Round-2-FY2024-25-Updated.pdf>

Apply online here

<https://form.jotform.com/250578818826875>

For more information, please contact Ruby on r.jamesstrawhan@rosshouse.org.au or (03) 9650 1599

STAY CONNECTED AND SIGN UP TO THE WEEKLY E-BULLETIN

Ross House produces a weekly e-bulletin that highlights upcoming workshops and webinars for NFP organisations, and member and tenant events. The e-bulletin goes out every Thursday so please feel free to send us your exciting news to share!

Sign up on the homepage of our website at rosshouse.org.au (scroll to the bottom of the home page) or by [clicking here](#).

View previous publications by visiting our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/rosshouseassociation/ and following the links!

ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION STAFF THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



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Casual Staff: Patti Gerkens, & Isabella Nucifora & Olivia Muscat

In The House is a Ross House Association internal publication, produced five times a year.

If you would like to contribute an article, promote an event or share some exciting news about your organisation, keep your eye out for an email from us, advising of submission deadlines.

Please send submissions to: rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au



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