# MAY 2025 IN THE HOUSE

**Project Updates**

From the Ross House Team

It has been a very busy start to 2025, so I wanted to give you all an update on the various projects underway at Ross House.

**Commercial Lease**

As you would of seen by now, the Melbourne Winery has just opened on the ground floor of Ross House. This project has been through many stages the last 7 years and we are thrilled to finally see it come to completion. This commercial lease is a significant milestone for the Association that will allow us to focus on delivering improved facilities and services for our community over the next 10 years. I would like to thank everyone who has assisted along the way.

**DGR Application Status**

We are also in the process of applying for DGR status for the Ross House Trust. Ross House Association is the Trustee of the Ross House Trust and it is the Trust that owns the Ross House building. We have submitted our application to Treasury, Australian Government, and they have requested that the Ross House Trust be registered for an ABN, which we’ve done. They have also asked that the Trust be registered with the ACNC. Maddocks, who are acting on our behalf Pro bono, are in the process of applying to the ACNC, however there is some question as to whether the Ross House Trust Deed will be sufficient to meet the requirements of the ACNC. If there are any changes required to the Trust Deed, this will have to be done through the Supreme Court and will inevitably delay the application.

**New Strategic Plan**

The 2025-2030 Ross House Association Strategic Plan has just finished community consultation, with Members & Tenants providing feedback through an online questionnaire and in person drop-in sessions. Thank you to everyone for your valuable and constructive feedback, it has now been incorporated into the Plan.

The new Strategic Plan is now with the Ross House Association Committee of Management for final changes and adoption. We look forward to releasing the 2025-2030 Ross House Association Strategic Plan for the start of the financial year on July 1st 2025.

As you can see there is a lot going on at the moment in this grand old building of ours, if anyone wants any further information on the above please contact me at [michael.griffiths@rosshouse.org.au](mailto:michael.griffiths@rosshouse.org.au).

Thank you,

Michael Griffiths (CEO)

Ross House Association

**Included in this Issue**

* Building and Maintenance
* Melbourne Rail updates
* Colin’s Corner
* RHA Ethical caterers
* RHA Open Day
* Welcome Back Brunch recap
* Grants and Assistance
* Update from TreeProject
* Member Feature:
* Filipino Community Council of Victoria
* Update from Retina Australia
* Update from SOWW
* Community Calendar

## Acknowledgment of Country

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.

## 2025 RHA Management Committee List

## Chairperson: Colin Neave AM (ABC Friends) Treasurer: Alba Chliakhtine (ABRISA) Secretary: Denise Boyd (STAR) Ordinary Member: Ally Scott (DRC) Appointed Members: Maggie Maguire AM, Nazzareno Marchionda (RHA Staff) Ex-Officio: Michael Griffiths (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 that a full year has passed since I had the opportunity to join the committee as Chairperson!

I've truly enjoyed attending Ross House functions throughout the year. I often think back to the beautiful and powerful song performed by Heidi at the March event celebrating Neurodiversity Week—moments like these remind me of the incredible talent and diversity we have within our walls.

I'm delighted to report that the Strategic Plan Working Party is now developing the final draft of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030, incorporating all your valuable feedback. Thank you for your supportive responses.

Please keep a look out for updates in your inboxes, we will be sharing the final version with you all over the coming weeks.

I look forward to working with all members on the implementation of our new Strategic Plan in the coming years. Your engagement continues to make Ross House the unique community it is.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about our new Strategic Plan.

Colin Neave AM, Chairperson

Ross House Association

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

**CPR First Aid Sign Up!**

We still have a couple of spots available for our tenants to participate in the upcoming CPR First Aid session on Monday 26th May, 2025 in the Hayden Raysmith Room.

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

**Ross House Open Day – Saturday 26th July 2025**

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to participate in what promises to be a busy and exciting day!

If you're unable to participate, we invite all members and tenants to contribute promotional materials and videos for us to showcase on the day. We already have some fantastic contributions, but we're also looking for additional artwork and information displays to exhibit.

I**nterested in contributing?**

Email us at [rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au](mailto:rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au) or

visit the front desk for more information.

Thank you!

The Ross House team

## Building and Maintenance

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:**

Over the next few weeks, Ross House will be migrating tenants and Meeting Room Wi-Fi Networks to one universal network called RH-Wi-Fi.

Every tenant will have a username and password to access this network. The reason that this is being implemented is to minimise the current number of networks on the system that has been causing congestion issues from time to time.

Nazz, our Facility Manager will be contacting every tenant regarding setting up their new Wi-Fi login over the coming weeks.

## Metro Rail Update

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

* Station entrance construction and underground build-out works at the City Square, Flinders Quarter and Federation Square sites.
* Ongoing construction and fit-out of above ground structures work at City Square including the station entrance canopy.
* Footpath reinstatement works on Swanston Street outside City Square.
* Campbell Arcade restoration works.
* Train testing through the tunnel.

For more information on these works, see the [**April 2025 Town Hall construction update (PDF, 1.7 MB).**](https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/928315/MT-TH-Construction-Update-April-2025.pdf)

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.

**Catering with Purpose**

At our Ross House events, we try to partner with caterers who share our commitment to positive social and environmental impact.

We proudly continue to implement these practices by sourcing local caterers, offering vegetarian and vegan options & using eco friendly and biodegradable plates, bowls and cutlery, disposing of them in the City of Melbourne organic waste compactor.

Our most recent caterer, Waverly Social Enterprises, empower people with disabilities through innovative employment across their services - the yummy food went down a storm!

For a full list of our recommended caterers, please refer to page 7 of our Meeting Room User Guide, available on our website.

[www.rosshouse.org.au/facilities/meeting-room-hire-melbourne](http://www.rosshouse.org.au/facilities/meeting-room-hire-melbourne)

## Member Feature: Filipino Community Council of Victoria Inc.

Last month we welcomed the **Filipino Community Council of Victoria Inc. (FCCVi)** to our Ross House Community.FCCVi is the peak body representing Filipino organisations across Victoria.

Established in the late 1980's at the request of the Australian Government, FCCVi was created to serve as a key communication link between government and the Filipino community.

They proudly continue that mission today - championing representation, access and support for Filipino Australians.

**What they do**

FCCVi works closely with Commonwealth and State agencies to support Filipino individuals and families across Victoria through:

* Aged Care Services
* Emergency Relief Program
* International Student Welfare
* Regional Outreach
* Capacity Building

To find out more information about FCCVi, please visit [www.fccvi.org.au](http://www.fccvi.org.au).

If you would like your RHA member or tenant organisation to feature here, please email [rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au](mailto:rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au).

## Grants and Assistance Programs

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

**Community Service Announcements**

SBS Foundation

SBS allocates free airtime to Australian charities, community organisations and other relevant entities to promote services or events of a social, cultural, welfare, educational or beneficial nature aligned to the SBS Charter.

Eligibility: Not-for-profits, incorporated Groups

Funding: In-kind Contribution

Round: Ongoing

[www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/in-the-community/community-service-announcements](https://www.mercyfoundation.com.au/social-justice-grants/social-justice-small-grants/)

**Community Customer Grants**

**Bank Australia**

If your organisation banks with Bank Australia, you can apply for funding to support projects that will have a positive impact in priority areas such as: climate change, nature and biodiversity, affordable housing, First Nations recognition, refugee support, economic justice, education access, family violence prevention, animal welfare, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, gender equality, and disability inclusion.

**Eligibility**: Not-for-profits, Unincorporated Groups

**Funding**: Up to $20,000

**Round**: Open, closes May 8 2025

[www.bankaust.com.au/community-customer-grants](http://www.bankaust.com.au/community-customer-grants)

**Fair - Community Wellbeing Funding**

**The Ian Potter Foundation**

In the Community Wellbeing program area, the Foundation seeks to identify and support those organisations which have well thought out projects that seek to help vulnerable members of the community to overcome the challenging circumstances in which they find themselves.

**Eligibility**: Not-for-profits, Unincorporated Groups, DGR status is required

**Funding**: up to $60,000

**Round**: Closes 15 May 2025

[www.ianpotter.org.au/what-we-support/program-areas/community-wellbeing](http://www.ianpotter.org.au/what-we-support/program-areas/community-wellbeing)

## TreeProjects Tree Planting Days in Autumn

## By TreeProject

**Calling all planting enthusiasts – our autumn planting days in rural Victoria urgently need more volunteers!**

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

Here at TreeProject we are feeling very excited to begin our Planting Season! With such gratitude for our Volunteer Growers who have been caring for their seedlings of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses which are now ready to be planted in Rural Victoria. It’s that time of year to shake off the city dust, grab your gloves, rally some friends and join us on the paddocks for planting.

We urgently need volunteers for the following planting dates:

* **Tuesday 6th May - Gruyere**
* **Wednesday 7th May - Gruyere**
* **Thursday 8th May - Gruyere**
* **Tuesday 13th May - Yarra Glen**
* **Thursday 15th May - Dixons Creek**

If you think you can help, please register by clicking the link below:

www.treeproject.org.au/how-you-can-help/tree-planting-dates

**Why get involved?**

It’s the perfect way to keep warm, stay grounded, feel good, and help revegetate Victoria.

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.

To find out more information, please visit [www.treeproject.org.au](http://www.treeproject.org.au).

## Research into Inherited Retinal Diseases Matters

Did you know there are an estimated over 19,000 Australians are living with an inherited retinal disease?

Inherited retinal diseases (IRDs) result in progressive, irreversible & incurable vision loss and blindness. They are the leading cause of blindness in working-age adults and the second leading cause of blindness in children in Australia, with an estimated lifetime cost of $5.2 million per person.

Though there is only gene therapy approved and available in Australia for only one rare type of IRD, this innovation has opened the door toward discovering new emerging therapies for other types of IRDs, of which there are over 20 rare forms.

That is why Retina Australia exists.

Our annual Research Grants Program funds projects to accelerate medical research into early detection, discovering preventions & advancing new treatments, with the hope of progression toward unlocking cures for IRDs.

But without any government support, the work we do is only possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters.\

Each year as we prepare for our Annual Appeal, we are reminded of the incredible power of community — the businesses, individuals, and partners who stand beside us to make a lasting difference in the lives of people affected by IRDs.

This June, we are asking people to help Retina Australia support emerging research by donating to our 2025 Annual Appeal.

We also want to give those with lived experience with IRDs a platform to share their stories and talk about why this work is so important to them. While there may be no current cures for IRDs, we want to show that having access to treatments matters and gives our community hope.

There are several ways you can get involved:

* Help us spread the word. We will begin posting about the Appeal on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn from 1 June. A great way to help us to re-share our posts.
* Start conversations on social media. Post your own words, images or videos this June saying why IRD research matters to you. (Don’t forget to tag @RetinaAustralia and use the hashtag #eyematter when you do!
* Subscribe to our newsletter. Be among the first to hear about Retina Australia’s work and the latest news related to inherited retinal diseases: [www.retinaaustralia.com.au/subscribe](https://retinaaustralia.com.au/subscribe/).

Thank you for standing with us.

**www.retinaaustralia.com.au**

## Mojo Festival of Arts for World Schizophrenia Day 2025

## By Schizy Inc

Mojo Festival of Arts for World Schizophrenia Day 2025 by Schizy Inc is on Saturday 24th May at FRINGE Common Rooms Ballroom, Carlton - everyone is welcome to attend!

Mojo Gala performing arts extravaganza features live music, theatre, spoken word, dance & cabaret, from around 30 artists with diverse mental health. This community event is a joyous optimistic celebration of all people with lived experience of diverse mental health rocking out Disability pride.

The sparky and talented Schizy Inc creative community has met every weekend at Ross House since February this year, devising new work, learning skills in performance, creating vocational networks in the arts, and being mentored by amazing arts industry professionals. Artists have created exciting work exploring themes important to them personally and socially, and the event champions lived experience pride at the gorgeous Common Rooms ballroom.

Mojo Festival of Arts is also an award winner! The project won the first ever Melbourne Award for Access and Inclusion in 2023, recognising world-leading practices and attitudes around complex mental health disability. Schizy Inc's vision is to instill positive perspectives of experiences like schizophrenia out in community, with a mission to enable people to explore disability through optimistic, life-affirming ways. Schizy Inc is a unique community arts organisation, being fully led by people with lived experience, with a diverse membership across Victoria, interstate and internationally.

Mojo Festival is one shiny part of a innovative program of Schizy Inc community activities, including Sidas Studio for visual artists and writers at Abbotsford Convent, a regional program based in Bendigo, year-round arts advocacy projects and a project developing a lived experience 'healing farm' in Victoria. Schizy Inc is a registered NFP charity with DGR managed by a Committee, supported by a loved team of volunteers, mentors and allies. Schizy Inc and Mojo Festival 2025 is proudly supported by Creative Australia and Department of Social Services.

[**www.schizy.org**](http://www.schizy.org)

## Book Launch Recap - Write on!

## by Society Women Writers Victoria

February 21st saw members of the Society of Women Writers Victoria come together in the Jenny Florence Room to celebrate the launch of their book Write On!

Charting the first fifty years of the Society, now in its 55th year, the book details our history through recorded documents, members’ memories and photos. Each decade was complied by a different member some of whom have been members for many years.

The book was officially launched by the Society’s patron, Hazel Edwards. We also drew the winning ticket for the raffle of a beautiful patchwork quilt made and donated by one of our members to help towards the cost of publishing our book.

The lucky winner was member, Janice, who had contributed to the book!

What a fabulous day celebrating the history of our society's first fifty years!

For more information about SOWW, please visit

[**www.swwvic.org.au**](http://www.swwvic.org.au)

## Welcome Back Brunch 2025

## Recap By RHA

What a great event we had!

On Wednesday 19th March 2025 many of the Ross House community gathered to enjoy a Welcome Back Brunch.

The event date was chosen to coincide with

Neurodiversity Celebration Week. We had the pleasure of having two wonderful community members speak.

Virginia (Nia) Giddings of SARU - Self Advocacy Resource Unit and Brain Injury Matters, shared her lived experience of neurodiversity. Nia lives with an Acquired Brain Injury sustained as a young adult. Nia truly lives a remarkable, full of adventure and interesting life.

Heidi of Schizy Inc then spoke, sang and played guitar! Just amazing!

Heidi shared her lived experience of autism, schizophrenia, and being a survivor. To see more of Heidi’s awesomeness be sure to check out Heidi’s website www.heidieverett.com.au.

We sincerely thank Nia and Heidi for generously sharing so much with us all.

Lastly, thank you to all who attended and for making these events so friendly, fun, meaningful and memorable!

For those of you who couldn’t make the Welcome Back Brunch, be sure to come along to our Mid-Year Morning tea on Thursday 10th July 2025 celebrating NAIDOC Week - more details to follow!

## Community Calendar

**MAY 2025**

Thursday 15th May: Global Accessibility Awareness Day

Wednesday 21st May: World Day for Cultural Diversity

Monday 24th May: World Schizophrenia Day (see below)

Monday 26th May: National Sorry Day

Monday 26th May: First Aid Session for tenants at Ross House

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

**JUNE 2025**

Thursday 5th June - World Environment Day

Monday 9th June - RHA closed for the public holiday

Thursday 12th June - Child Labour Day

Friday 20th June - World Refugee Day

Monday 23rd June - International Women in Engineering Day

**July 2025**

Tuesday 1st - Thursday 31st July - Disability Pride Month

Thursday 10th July - RHA Morning Tea celebrating NAIDOC Week

Saturday 26th July - RHA Open Day

**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**

## RHA Community Library

## By RHA

Recently when we were kindly given some books from generous Ross House tenants, the idea of a small Ross House Community Library was sparked.

The Community Library is located in the Level 3 Foyer area. Most of the books are available to simply be borrowed/taken and ‘swapping’ is highly encouraged to ensure a good turnover of books is shared.

Some books do have labels in, however, stating they are for borrowing only and need to be returned. Please check with Ross House staff if unsure.

Should you have any books to donate or swap, they will be gratefully received. They will need to be in good condition and suitable for the audience of readers here at Ross House.

Special thanks go to our friends at Positive Powerful Parents (PPP) and Aunty Jane (SARU/Reinforce) for their initial donations from which our library has grown.

If you have any questions about the Ross House Community Library, contact Carol at [rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au](mailto:rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au).

## Happy Birthday Luke!

Happy Birthday to long-standing Reinforce member, Luke Stone!

Luke celebrated his 60th birthday at Ross House on Thursday 1st May 2025, with Reinforce members and the Ross House community.

Luke has been a frequent in Ross House for over 30 years, bringing great joy to the building.

His love for St Kilda football team and cheeky ways have kept the fun spirit in Ross House alive.

Happy Birthday Luke, we hope you had a great day! Thank you to everyone who came to wish him well!

## 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 March, the window housed a lovely display from TreeProject which included an eye-catching, cuddly wombat friend.

Inclusion Australia have had their wonderful “It’s Doctor Time!” display for the month of April.

It’s Doctor Time! is a campaign by Inclusion Australia launched in August 2024 to encourage more people with intellectual disability to see their GP for a yearly health check. If you missed it, take a look at the photo of their great display below.

In May, the window will showcase the Hand Knit and Crochet Guild along with Disability Discrimination Legal Services.

Looking ahead: There is availability in the Window Display calendar for the December/January period. Please email or call Carol on the Front Desk 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](mailto: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!

Thanks,

The Ross House team

## A Decade of Dedication

It’s hard to believe Nazz, Jun, and Katie have been with Ross House Association for over 10 years!

10 years of Katie bringing sunshine to everyone's days, of Nazz's cheeky wit and endless knowledge, and Jun's calming aura and ability to keep us all in check.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to Ross House and its mission. We absolutely couldn’t do it without you. Here’s to another decade.

## Stay Connected and Sign Up to our 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.](https://confirmsubscription.com/h/r/8230E3CE9F55B6B9)

View previous publications by visiting our [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/rosshouseassociation) at [www.facebook.com/rosshouseassociation/](http://www.facebook.com/rosshouseassociation/) and following the links!

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Thank you for your continued support!

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