

MARCH 2026

IN THE HOUSE

Ross House Association Member and Tenant News



Ross House Trust Awarded DGR Status

FROM THE ROSS HOUSE TEAM

We are thrilled to kick off the new year with some exciting news. In December, the Ross House Trust was listed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2025–26, effective from 1 July for a period of five years. Of the approximately 29,000 organisations in Australia that hold DGR status, only around 230 are specifically listed, making this an extraordinarily rare and significant achievement.

This listing is for the Ross House Trust rather than Ross House Association itself. Ross House Association is the Trustee of the Ross House Trust and the Ross House building is an asset of the Trust. This milestone has been decades in the making, and we thank the many people at Ross House who have worked tirelessly toward it. We would like to extend our thanks to our lawyers at Maddocks, who provided pro bono work over the past two years, in particular Paul Ellis, Chong Ming Goh, and Matthew D'Angelo. We would not have been able to achieve this result without their support.

We are also grateful to Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Productivity, Competition, Charities, and Treasury, and Ms Sarah Witty MP, Member for Melbourne, both of whom were instrumental in advocating for DGR status for the Ross House Trust. We thank them for their unwavering support.

This listing is a game-changer for Ross House. DGR status is a prerequisite for many philanthropic grants, and this recognition will open doors to funding opportunities that were previously out of reach. Work has already begun on positioning Ross House to make the most of this exciting new opportunity.

Our immediate next step is to await the passage of the bill through Parliament, after which we can formally begin this new chapter! A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been part of this story. We can't wait to see what the future holds.

Included In This Issue

Building and Maintenance

Melbourne Rail updates

Colin's Corner

World Bee Day Event
Invite

Grants and Assistance

Update from TreeProject

Member Feature: DANA

Update from NCWV

Community Calendar

RHA Housekeeping
Updates



RHA COMMITTEE 2026

Chairperson

Colin Neave AM
(ABC Friends)

Treasurer

Alba Chliakhtine
(ABRISA)

Secretary

Pia Cameron
Woor-Dungin

Ally Scott

(Ordinary Member DRC)

Sally Davis

(Appointed Member)

Steve Einfeld

(Appointed Member)

Jen Stokes

(Appointed Member)

Nazzareno Marchionda

(Appointed Member RHA Staff)

Michael Griffiths

(Ex-Officio, RHA CEO)

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.



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.

As you will have read on the front page, the Ross House Trust has achieved five-year Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status from 1 July, 2026. This is a remarkable milestone for our community, and I am so delighted to be part of the Committee of Management during what could well be a new era for Ross House.

Efforts to secure DGR status have been underway since 2018 and have involved a number of dedicated people over the years. It has not been a simple process. Ross House Association is not able to qualify as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and therefore cannot obtain DGR status, as we do not directly provide services to individuals. That makes the achievement of successfully securing DGR status for the Ross House Trust, instead, even more significant.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally extend a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed along the way and to acknowledge the persistence, collaboration and shared belief in the future of Ross House that carried this work forward.



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

The Committee of Management will now be establishing a working party to help steer the DGR project and guide our fundraising and donor initiatives. We will be drawing on specialist expertise in this area, and we will be consulting widely amongst Ross House members. Together, we will discuss which projects may be most suitable for philanthropic groups to support, and how additional funding can strengthen Ross House and better assist our community of organisations.

We are also reviewing how our governing documents support the management of funds. Early advice suggests we may need to incorporate a set of rules into the Trust Deed to align with ATO requirements and ensure the Trust is managed effectively into the future. I want to reassure you that throughout this process there will be no changes to Ross House's core philosophy of mutual support and engagement.

This is an exciting opportunity. I look forward to the conversations ahead as we shape this next chapter together. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have thoughts or questions.

Colin Neave AM, Chairperson
Ross House Association



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:

- Additional Cameras have been installed in the front and rear stairwells.
- The Metro Tunnel construction gantry in Royton Place has been removed.
- Level 4 Foyer vinyl has been replaced due to water damage.
- **DDA-compliant toilet renovations.** Level 3 toilet refurbishment will commence in March 2026. We are currently waiting for the final permit to be signed off, and then the works will begin. More information for tenants can be found in your inbox.





First Aid Course: General & CPR

We're putting together a CPR First Aid Session for RHA tenants this month at a subsidised rate.

Where? Hayden Raysmith Room, Level 4.

When? Thursday 19th March 2026,
9:30am - 12:30pm.

Cost? \$135 per person. This cost will be added to your organisation's monthly invoice. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided.

There are a couple of spots still available!

To register, please refer to the email sent to your organisation's primary contact on Friday, 20th February 2026. And complete the form **by COB Wednesday, 4th March (TODAY)**.

Please complete the pre-course Requirements outlined in this email.

As space is limited, we're capping this session at 20 people. If there's a lot of interest, we'll set up another session later in the year.

Please contact Katie for further info at rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au

Metro Rail Update

FROM THE ROSS HOUSE TEAM

Major construction of Town Hall Station is complete.

From February 2026, works within the Town Hall Station precinct will include:

- Station entrance construction and underground build-out works at the Federation Square site.
- Awning reinstatement preparatory works at 244 Flinders Street.
- Reinstatement works on Flinders Street eastbound.

Full details can be found here:

[Town Hall construction update \(PDF\)](#).

From the Metro team:

'As the Metro Tunnel is now open, this will be the final monthly construction update.

We'd like to thank you for your patience over the last several years while we built the Metro Tunnel's Town Hall Station'.

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



Member Feature: Advocacy in Action: The Work of DANA



[[ID: The DANA logo of blue and yellow lines making a circle with a yellow map of Australia inside. Blue text which reads 'DANA' sits to the right of the circle].

Why advocacy matters

Advocacy helps people with disability understand their rights, speak up safely, and access fair treatment in complex systems. It creates opportunities to make choices and influence decisions that affect daily life.

The Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) exists to make this support available. As the national body for independent disability advocacy organisations, DANA is guided by human rights, inclusion, and respect. Its work amplifies the voices of people with disability. Many of its leaders and staff bring lived experience, shaping DANA's priorities and leadership.

Strengthening the sector

DANA supports a network of 80 community-based advocacy organisations offering self-advocacy, family advocacy, citizen advocacy, legal advocacy, and systemic advocacy. It helps members share knowledge, build skills, and maintain services that are inclusive, responsive, and sustainable.

DANA serves as National Secretariat for Disability Representative Organisations (DROs) and Disability Representative and Carer Organisations (DRCOs), coordinating national advocacy efforts and fostering collaboration. It manages the National Centre for Disability Advocacy (NCDA), improving access and quality of advocacy services funded through the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP).

DANA also contributes to national projects, including supported employment advocacy, planning for the future of advocacy, and is a co-partner of the Disability Dialogue - a space for people with disability to create practical, solutions-focused ideas.

A collective voice

DANA connects lived experience with national conversations. Its work strengthens independent advocacy so people with disability are heard, respected, and included. Strong advocacy supports rights, safer systems, and meaningful opportunities for participation.

To find out more information about DANA, please visit www.dana.org.au.

[ID below: Four people are smiling at the camera and holding up purple signs which read 'Speak Up for Independent Advocacy'].



Grants and Assistance Programs

BY RHA

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

Scanlon Foundation General Grant Enquiries

The Scanlon Foundation funds projects and initiatives that contribute to social cohesion across Australia. They support initiatives that enhance their vision and mission.

The Scanlon Foundation's mission is to work with communities, systems and institutions to support those who come to make Australia home. They celebrate our collective strengths and address those barriers that stand in the way of allowing everyone to contribute and participate fully in Australian life.

The Scanlon Foundation welcome grant proposals that align with our core purpose to work with systems and institutions to support people who migrate to Australia and make it their home.

Round: Ongoing

Funding: Undisclosed

Eligibility: NFPs, Unincorporated Groups

Apply:

<https://www.grants.gov.au/Go/Show?GoUuid=af51f2f8-e3e3-4628-9a9d-ab0607ca11e8>



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

Digital Marketing Grants Little Phil Foundation

To aid with the transition to digital giving and increase supporter engagement. The grant will typically cover an average of 30% of the cost of the procurement of the technology or solution.

Grant Option 1 - Digital Marketing and Fundraising Boost (Valued at up to \$30,000)
For organisations who are wishing to invest in building their digital supporters and preparing their organisation for the future of digital fundraising

Grant Option 2 - Digital Giving & Marketing DIY (Valued at up to \$2,380)

For organisations that are looking to adopt digital tools and technology that will assist their team and volunteers with implementing digital fundraising and marketing initiatives.

Round: Ongoing

Funding: \$30k max

Eligibility: NFPs, Unincorporated Groups, DGR Status is required.

Apply:

<https://www.littlephil.org/lp-foundation#wf-form-Nonprofit-Tech-Grant-Application>

QBE Foundation Local Grants Australia Pacific QBE Foundation

QBE Foundation local grants are a way to provide meaningful support for community initiatives addressing specific areas of need.

Climate Resilience

Through this category, we aim to provide support and mitigation options for communities to become more resilient and prepared for climate impacts. Initiatives can be working to address environmental regeneration, climate change and disaster preparedness, resilience and recovery.

Inclusion

Through this category, we aim to increase access to opportunities and resources for the groups in our communities who experience exclusion or are marginalised in society. Initiatives aim to ensure our "whole" community is acknowledged and has the opportunity to contribute and in doing that we all benefit. Initiatives may address reconciliation, LGTBIQ+ inclusion and gender equality.

Round: Open, closes 16 March 5pm AEDT

Funding: Multiple grants of up to \$50,000

Eligibility: NFPs, Unincorporated Groups, DGR Status is required

Apply:

https://dewr.smartygrants.com.au/SE/EFNDG_R03



RHA Members and Tenants
are invited

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

WORLD BEE DAY EVENT



Join us to celebrate the bees with a delicious
morning tea. No RSVP necessary, just show up!

JENNY FLORENCE ROOM, LEVEL 3
ROSS HOUSE

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

CALLING FOR

Volunteer growers

Help Farmers • Help Wildlife • Grow
Seedlings



TreeProject



Growing Hope for Victoria

BY TREEPROJECT

As TreeProject wraps up its annual grower seedling distribution, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to the volunteers who grow native seedlings for revegetation across Victoria. Our growers play a vital role in preparing seedlings for winter planting days, helping restore degraded landscapes and rebuild wildlife habitat.

With many Victorian communities recently impacted by bushfires and flooding, the need for revegetation has never been greater. Replanting native vegetation helps stabilise soil, improve water quality and provide critical shelter and food for wildlife as ecosystems recover.

Behind every seedling planted is a strong community network, from volunteers preparing grower kits and nurturing plants at home, to planting teams working across the state during the winter season from May to August.



[ID: A close-up photo of baby seedlings sit in black planter boxes].

If you're wondering how you can help, there are several ways to get involved. Donations help TreeProject coordinate volunteer planting days and ensure seedlings reach the areas where they are needed most.

You can also visit our weekly Growers Group at our Kensington nursery to learn about native seed propagation, meet our volunteer community, and explore becoming a grower yourself.

Together, we are sowing the seeds for a sustainable future.

www.treeproject.org.au

Schizy Inc Presents Rad Cactus!

Ross House tenant, Schizy Inc's Performing Arts Collective is proud to present Rad Cactus! in the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

Schizy Inc Performing Arts Collective is one of the most established disability-led arts organisations making space in the arts for people with diverse complex mental health.

For more information about Rad Cactus at the International Comedy Festival, please visit www.comedyfestival.com.au/browse-shows/rad-cactus/.

For more information about Schizy Inc, please visit www.schizyinc.org.



[ID: A singing cactus wearing a sombrero surrounded by colourful balloons and streamers].

Rad Cactus has three shows at the festival featuring neurodivergent comedians and well-known Melbourne comedians:

- Saturday 28th March 5pm: Lived Experience and Neurodivergent Open Mic Night
- Sunday 12th April 5pm: RAD CACTUS Showcase
- Sunday 19th April 5pm: RAD CACTUS Showcase



Voice At The Table

Stronger Voices Training



You are invited to our FREE Training about:
How To Be on Boards, Committees and Advisory Groups



This training is for people with Intellectual Disability and an Acquired Brain Injury.
This is a 1 day training.

We will talk about:

- What is an Advisory Group?
- How do I decide which Advisory Group I want to join?
- Tips to get ready for Advisory Group Meetings.
- Tips for when you are in Advisory Group Meetings.

We will:

- Do activities.
- Chat together.

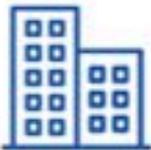




Date: Tuesday 10th March 2026



Time: 10am - 3pm



Where: Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne



We will provide lunch!

How to contact us or sign up for the training:



Email: training@voiceatthetable.com.au



Phone: 0493 315 041 or 03 9070 9070



Max



Natalie

This training is co-designed and co-delivered by trainers with Intellectual Disability and an Acquired Brain Injury.

Voice At The Table received funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

Hidden Costs to Women of Automation in Care Systems

BY NCWV

At the last National Council of Women Victoria (NCWV) February Council Meeting, guest speaker, Sarah Barnbrook, Human Rights, Youth, ICT and Communications NCWV Adviser, and the Founder and CEO of Away From Keyboard Inc, spoke about hidden costs to women of automation in care systems

Sarah explored growing concerns about how automated and standardised assessment tools in the NDIS are shifting risk and responsibility onto women, particularly unpaid carers, whose bodies, health, and labour are quietly absorbing system failure.

While currently used in disability support, these tools reflect a broader trend toward automation in social and care systems, raising serious questions about dignity, safety, accountability, and women's rights. I-CAN (Instrument for the Classification of Support Needs) is, in theory a tool to collect functional capacity information and ensure consistency, in reality it prioritises what can be easily measured over what is actually required. It determines what level of support is 'reasonable' before a human planner is even engaged!

The impact is that human discretion is not considered when calculating risks. Sarah quoted her own experience with high needs family members. The NDIS support was one carer when two were required, so she needed to 'fill the gap' putting herself in physical/emotional harm and she now has a permanent injury.

[ID: White text on a purple background reads 'NCWV, National Council of Women Victoria'].

Evidence was provided that there needed to be two carers, but human discretion was removed from appeal and plan was automatically extended without change, prioritising cost containment. Sarah was not requesting additional support because caring is difficult, but because it is medically unsafe.

Often unpaid carers (usually women) absorb the physical and emotional load that automated systems design out. Reliance on unpaid carers is unsustainable, medically unsafe, places people at risk of harm & economic security. Technology must be governed with human rights at its centre to prevent inequality.



[ID right: NCWV members sit round a table in the Jenny Florence Room, Ross House].

Sarah recommended a Carer Forum to hear I-CAN and automated systems experiences with written, audio/video, and live participation.

Continued on next page...

Hidden Costs to Women of Automation in Care Systems Continued...

Members are invited to consider whether NCWV has a role in listening first to women carrying this burden and shaping a response that recognises emerging technology as something that can entrench inequality when care, complexity, and human judgment are designed.

Response needs to come from Carer Forum evidence, NCWV analysis prior to public advocacy, to demonstrate that we view this as a human rights concern, not a technical inconvenience.



[ID left: Guest Speaker Sarah Barnbrook is wearing a cream patterned shirt and glasses, looking down].

www.ncwv.org.au

VATT Celebrates 10 Years!

BY VATT

The first Voice At The Table (VATT) project was started by Sue Smith at the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU), a project of AMIDA. SARU worked with Reinforce and Brain Injury Matters (BIM) and focused on training self-advocates with cognitive disability and supporting people working at The Victorian Government to run accessible meetings.

VATT still supports people with cognitive disabilities to know their rights and speak up. VATT's aim is for people with cognitive disabilities to be included and become leaders in the community.

VATT still supports people with cognitive disabilities to know their rights and speak up.

VATT's aim is for people with cognitive disabilities to be included and become leaders in the community.

All VATT training is co designed and co delivered by staff with cognitive disability. This includes people with an intellectual disability and people with an acquired brain injury.

Our current trainers, Max and Natalie both completed VATT training and are now sharing their skills and knowledge with others.

For more information about our training, please follow us on our socials, pay us a visit or head to our website:

www.voiceatthetable.com.au.



[ID Graduates from the June 2025 training, smile at the camera holding up their certificates.]

SARU

Self Advocacy Resource Unit



You are invited to SARU's morning tea



The Expert Advisory Group is doing a talk about self advocacy burn out

March

20

When: Friday 20 March



10:30

Time: 10.30am - 12.00pm



Where: Level 3 Hayden Raysmith Room
Ross House



If you want to come email
jessica@saru.org.au or call 9639 6856

17th Sign of the Times Event

Tickets are now available to Sign of the Times. An event where deaf and hard of hearing people, leaders and allies come together to share stories, learning and reflection. Hosted by our tenant, Deaf Victoria.

Where? Library at the Dock, 107 Victoria Harbour Promenade, Docklands

When? Sunday, 15 March 2026, 10am - 4pm

For more information, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/459xuz4j>



About Deaf Victoria:

Deaf Victoria advocates on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing Victorians aiming to make Victoria more inclusive and accessible.

For more information, please visit:

www.deafvictoria.org.au.

Raising Our Voices

The voice of people with disability on the radio



March Show:

International Womens Day ~

Strong Women Coming Together 💪

Wednesday March 11th

6.00pm until 6.30pm

855 am

www.3cr.org.au





Community Calendar

MARCH 2026

Sunday 8th March - International Women's Day

Monday 9th March - RHA office closed for Public Holiday (pg 19)

Tuesday 10th March - VATT Training (pg 11 & 12)

Wednesday 11th March - Raising our Voices radio show (pg 16)

Sunday 15th March - Deaf Victoria Sign of the Times (pg 16)

Thursday 19th March - Tenant CPR First Aid Training at Ross House (pg 5)

Friday 20th March - SARU Morning Tea (pg 15)

Sunday 28th March - Schizy Inc presents Red Cactus Open Mic (pg 10)

Tuesday 31st March - RHA Tenant Grant Applications close

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.

APRIL 2026

Thursday 2nd April - World Autism Day

Friday 3rd April - RHA office closed for Public Holiday

Monday 6th April - RHA office closed for Public Holiday

Wednesday 8th April - Free fitness in the City Square (pg 23)

Sunday 12th & 19th April - Schizy Inc presents Red Cactus Showcase (pg 10)

Monday 20th - Sunday 26th April - International Lesbian Visibility Week

Wednesday 29th April - International Guide Dog Day

MAY 2026

Sunday 3rd May - International Family Equality (Family Pride) Day

Sunday 17th May - International Day Against LGBTQIA and also IDAHOBIT Day

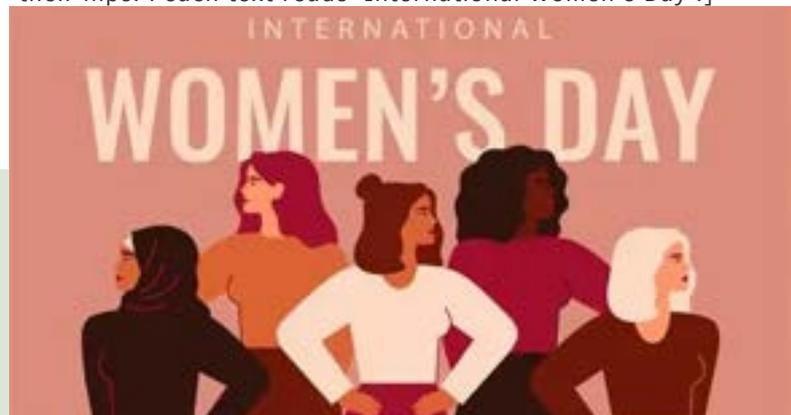
Monday 16th - Friday 20th May - Neurodiversity Celebration Week

Wednesday 20th May - RHA Member and Tenant World Bee Day event! (pg 8)

Thursday 21st May - Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD)

Tuesday 26 May - National Sorry Day

ID below: Cartoon women of colour stand with their hands on their hips. Peach text reads 'International Women's Day'.]



RHA Equipment Grant Applications Now Open!

BY RHA

Applications for Round 2 of the FY2025/26 RHA Equipment Grant is now open.

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 Tuesday, March 31st, 2026 at 11:59PM AEST.



[ID: a close-up photo of a computer keyboard, pen and plant in an office setting].

Read the Grant Guidelines here >

<https://rosshouse.org.au/app/uploads/2026/02/RHA-Equipment-Guidelines-2025-26-Round-2.pdf>

Apply online here >

<https://form.jotform.com/rosshouse/equipment-grant-application-R225-26>

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

the e-bulletin



Weekly guide to environmental and social justice happenings in Melbourne

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!

PUBLIC HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Ross House Association Office will be CLOSED on

Monday 9th March 2026

RHA staff will be unavailable on the above date.
The team will be back online (and in the office) from
10am - 4pm on Tuesday 10th March 2026.



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

2026 Window Displays

The year has well and truly begun!

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.

Well done to everyone who put up their hand to put up a display in this great year 2026!

Over the holiday break of December and January the window didn't rest! No, indeed it kept working by promoting, and informing others of the work of the Victorian Self Advocacy Network (VSAN), part of the Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU), tenants of Ross House.

With events like the Australian Open, and the general holiday break, many people passed by our Ross House window and would have seen the colourful display up for December and January. We especially thank Janet at SARU for her efforts with the display. It looked great!

Please check out the photos of the VSAN SARU window below.

February also saw displays from our tenants, Elder Rights Australia (ERA) and Voice at the Table (SARU). Their window will continue to be on display until the end of March. Pictures of these displays will be in our next newsletter, or come see them in person!



[ID: A colourful banner from PCE promoting their work sits to the left of VSAN posters and a board which reads, 'Disability is not a target!']

Looking Ahead:

The month of April will see Inclusion Australia and Disabled WinterSports Australia (DWA) displays which we will look forward to!

Thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm with filling our window. Most of the months are now booked with some great displays to go in, but there are still a couple of months available. Let me know as soon as possible if you would like to find out more.

For any queries about our window displays, please get in touch with Carol at rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au.

[ID: A colourful banner from PCE promoting their work sits to the left of VSAN posters and a board which reads, 'Disability is not a target!']



Partnering with FF&3

BY RHA

At the end of last year, we were contacted by the team at [FF&3](https://ff3.co/about/), who were working with businesses looking to donate used furniture to community organisations. You can check them out here > ff3.co/about/

We were thrilled to organise with FF&3 to receive over 100 new chairs for our meeting rooms along with a few new tables. The cost of these items brand-new, was estimated to be around \$50k!

At Ross House we fully support the concept of this model of sustainability. It's very much 'win win'! By rehoming items that would otherwise be heading to landfill, we also benefit by receiving a much-needed upgrade to our meeting room furniture, which we otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford. Thanks FF&3!

The older chairs in all our meeting rooms have now been replaced with the 'new to us' ones, and we have also replaced the broken tables in the Rainbow Room.

We've had a lot of positive feedback about our more professional-looking, comfortable, and easy to move around, furniture in the rooms.

The photos below show some of our new setups! From left: the Rainbow Room with new chairs and tables, the Christine McAuslan Room, and the Esther Harris Room (which was in particular need of chair upgrades).

New chairs have also "entered the room" in Hayden Raysmith and Jenny Florence.



[ID: Photo of a white fan on a white ceiling.]

Housekeeping

Fans and lights in the Meeting Rooms:

Please ensure fans and lights are turned off when exiting the Meeting Rooms. Recently, we have noticed an increase in lights and fans switched on after meetings, with doors left wide open. Please be reminded of our cleaning fee policy below.

A cleaning fee of up to \$200 may apply if the meeting room or common area (such as a kitchenette) is left in an untidy state. This includes food crumbs, rubbish, and furniture that is out of place. More information can be found in our Meeting Room User Guide located on page 7.

<https://rosshouse.org.au/app/uploads/2026/01/Meeting-Room-User-Guide-2026.pdf>



Introducing our Front Desk Casual Staff

BY RHA

RHA has two wonderful Front Desk Casuals, Susan McDougall and Olivia Muscat, who each bring a unique mix of skills and experience to the role. Our casual team plays a crucial part in supporting the operations of Ross House, and we cannot thank them enough for their ongoing hard work!

Introducing Susan McDougall

Susan has recently joined the team as a casual Administrative Support Assistant and will be covering staff absences when Katie and Carol are enjoying well-deserved holidays later this year, and on an as-needed basis.

Susan has been part of Ross House life since around 2016 when she joined the Handknit & Crochet Guild (one of our tenants on Level 4), where she volunteered as a librarian in their library, and was President and Event Manager whilst being a Guild member over the last ten years.

She has assisted in relocating the Guild's library three times over that ten-year period, and understands the quirks, vagaries and joys of working in a heritage building.

She brings a wealth of experience to the role through her professional career as a librarian working in university, government and commercial libraries as well as 15 years as a volunteer in Red Cross Australia in the areas of Archives, Emergency Services and First Aid. If she doesn't know the answer, she will work hard to find the right place to look.

Susan also volunteered with Ross House for our successful Open House Melbourne Event held in 2025 and has also volunteered with Open House Melbourne since about 2010.

[ID: A photo of Olivia smiling at the camera. She is wearing a blue patterned top and is sitting at a cafe table.]



Introducing Olivia Muscat

Olivia joined the Ross House team this time last year as a casual Administrative Assistant and she's quickly become a familiar and friendly face at the front desk. From welcoming visitors and managing online bookings to keeping the day-to-day running smoothly, Olivia brings a positive attitude and dedication to everything she does.

Outside of her role at Ross House, Olivia recently completed her Bachelor of International Studies at RMIT University, a degree that reflects her genuine curiosity about the world and her passion for social justice and humanitarian development.

In her spare time, she loves baking, cooking and hosting dinner parties for her friends and family!

We're incredibly grateful to have Olivia & Susan as part of our team! Be sure to say g'day when visiting, calling or emailing the Front Desk.



[ID: A photo of Susan smiling at the camera. She is wearing a green floral top and glasses and is sitting at a table.]



FREE FITNESS



IN THE PARK

Let's get
active
together

01 Zumba and dancing
JJ Holland Park,
Kensington
Sunday 30 November
9.00am

03 Yoga
Fawkner Park, South Yarra
Thursday 29 January, 2026
6.00pm

05 Boxing
Docklands Sports Centre
Docklands
Wednesday 11 March, 2026
12.30pm

02 Tai chi
Princes Park, Carlton
Sunday 14 December
9.00am

04 Pilates
Melbourne Square
Basketball Court, Southbank
Sunday 22 February, 2026
8.00am

06 Family fitness
City Square, CBD
Wednesday 8 April, 2026
(School Holidays)
11.00am

**ACTIVE
MELBOURNE**



Scan the QR code
to register for your free class.
[melbourne.vic.gov.au/
freefitness](https://melbourne.vic.gov.au/freefitness)



ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION STAFF THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!



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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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