



# THE RAILWAY EXPRESS #15

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER TO HELP US STAY CONNECTED

## AROUND THE HOUSE

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Welcome to the first edition of Railway Express in 2021. As many of you know, we started this fortnightly community newsletter back when the pandemic hit as a way of staying connected with our community whilst we couldn't run our programs. We certainly didn't think we would be producing them in 2021! But here we are again.

As residents of the fourth most locked down city in the world, we are old hands at this. But that sure doesn't make it any easier. We very much hope that you and your families are doing ok and that you are looking after yourselves and finding ways to keep your spirits up.

Term 3 has been very unsettled, to say the least! After just one week we had to close our doors, only to reopen and close again after another week. Sadly, our volunteer dinner had to be cancelled (for the third time) and staff had to start working at home. We have been able to move a number of programs such as choir, knitting, tai chi and karate online, however, and it is great to see many of you participating each week.



Railway House is also able to continue essential services such as food relief, and we have recently formed a partnership with The Church of Christ in Thornbury to distribute food. We now have a mini food market on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with regulars and passers-by coming along to access a range of fresh produce, frozen meals and bread.



We are also reintroducing our Walking Buddies program, and last week **Lewis** and **Arthur** met at the House to go for a walk. Please email us if you live no more than 5 km from Railway House and would like us to link you with a walking buddy!



Jesse Kalic, our Garden Coordinator, is continuing to look after the garden with the help of a couple of volunteers. In preparation for Spring planting, Jesse is asking people to propagate seeds at home. If you would like to participate, please feel free to pick up some seeds from Railway House whilst out on your daily exercise, from next Monday. The seed box will be outside on the platform, together with a seed sign-out sheet, from Monday to Thursday 10am – 4pm. We are also asking for donations of seeds that can be planted at this time of year that you might have some extra of, especially herbs and leafy greens, and donations of pots. Please drop them off! Also, we are thrilled that next week will see the installation of a composting system in the garden.

We are continuing with our plans for a community makers market in November, in partnership with Yarra Libraries (and we are very much hoping that we will be able to go ahead with it!). If you are interested in having a stall at the market, please complete this form: <https://forms.gle/bngREyShBzgj5Qe78>.

Finally, we would like to wish office dog Scout a happy International Dog Day. Miss you, Scout!

We miss you all and cannot wait to see you again. In the meantime, take care and stay well.

Alison





## WEAR IT PURPLE DAY – Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> August



*Wear it Purple* was founded in 2010 in response to global stories of real teenagers, real heartache and their very real responses. In 2010, several rainbow young people took their own lives following bullying and harassment resulting from the lack of acceptance of their sexuality or gender identity.

As the world saw the faces of precious young lives lost, some young people found a new sense of conviction and purpose to ensure that young people everywhere would know that there were people who did support and love them. *Wear it Purple* was established to show young people across the globe that there was hope, that there were people who did support and accept them, and that they have the right to be proud of who they are.

Since 2010, *Wear it Purple* has developed into an international movement. New generations of young people continue to be dedicated to promoting the annual expression of support and acceptance to rainbow young people.

What started out small has now grown; however the message remains the same. Everybody has the right to be proud of who they are.

So join us this year, on August 27th to celebrate Wear it Purple Day. Be part of a movement that has the potential to save thousands of lives. Show your support for rainbow young people by wearing purple tomorrow.

Source: [www.wearitpurple.org](http://www.wearitpurple.org)

Text a photo of yourself wearing purple tomorrow to **0405 312 353**  
or email to [admin@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au](mailto:admin@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au) and we will create a  
collage of all of the wonderful Railway House *Wear it Purple* supporters!



## WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

During lockdown last year, **Brett**, a member of our Bike Riding Group, started making this amazing wooden jigsaw map of Aboriginal Australia (yes, that's right, he *made it!*). Brett has completed it this lockdown and has very kindly offered to donate it to Railway House. We are very much looking forward to having it on display.



**Paul**, also from our Bike Riding group, has been taking some beautiful photos whilst out and about doing his daily exercise. Check out these gorgeous flowers.

**Carolyn**, a member of our choir, celebrated another lockdown birthday. She was happy to get a visit from Alison who, on behalf of the choir, delivered some flowers, a piece of cake and a can of lemonade!





## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

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Hi, if you haven't met me yet I'm **Jesse**, and I've been the Garden Coordinator at the Railway House since May. I grew up in Port Hedland in Western Australia, where my parents grew tropical plants like mangoes, paw paws, and sweet potato. I spent a lot of time playing in the garden but I didn't help out much!

I was interested in science and the natural world and studied conservation biology at uni and worked for three years as a botanist at an environmental consultancy in Perth. I learnt a lot of plants but the job made me feel very depressed about climate change as I worked on a lot of mining and oil and gas sites.



I came to Melbourne to study a Master of Environment because I thought I wanted to work in environmental policy (turns out I didn't) and got involved in climate change organizing. I took a break from studying to work fulltime as a union organizer with cleaners and early childhood educators. It was a stressful job but I started to work on my garden every day after work and it was so therapeutic and I realized that I wanted to do a lot more of it, so I started studying horticulture at Melbourne University's Burnley campus. I also learnt a lot about gardening and permaculture from Jo at Seeds Communal Garden (on Albert St in Brunswick, behind Milparinka Disability Services).

In my other jobs, I work a few hours per week as a garden support worker at Milparinka's Richmond site, I work casually at the CERES retail nursery, and I do garden maintenance for a neighbour. There is so much joy to be found in gardening and I hope that in this role I can help others find that joy (not so easy with lockdown though!). I also think there's so much potential for us to adapt to climate change through gardening and I hope that we can learn about how to adapt our garden together.

In my spare time (other than gardening) I like knitting, crocheting, sewing, reading, and I'm learning the banjo.



**On the following page, Jesse has put together a list of things that you can do in your garden right now.**



## WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN RIGHT NOW

- Prune fruit trees (except apricots – prune those on a dry day in spring to prevent gummosis)
- Add organic amendments like compost and manure to your soil
- Plant seed potatoes
- Plant seedlings in punnets, including:
  - Tomatoes
  - Eggplants
  - Capsicum
  - Chilli
  - Leek
  - Spring onions
  - Basil
  - Dill
  - Asian greens like bok choy and other related plants



I generally try to reduce the amount of plants that I plant in punnets to save time and resources. Some plants do a lot better when planted in punnets, like those above, and some can either be planted in punnets or direct seeded (it won't harm the plant but you will use time and resources that you might be better off spending doing something else!)\*

Plants that can be planted in punnets OR direct seeded include:

- Leafy greens (spinach, chard, lettuce, rocket, kale) (they produce so much seed that it's easy to spread around A LOT of seeds and thin and eat them as they grow)
- Herbs (parsley, coriander) (same as above)
- Cucumber

Plants that should only be direct seeded include:

- Root vegetables like carrot, beetroot, radish, etc) (transplanting them will disturb the roots regardless of how gentle you try to be, and that's the part that you want to eat!)
- Cucurbits like pumpkin, zucchini, melons, cucumbers (can also be sown in punnets to protect from snails and slugs eating them)
- Beans and corn – they germinate so easily and take off immediately – don't waste your time and theirs by starting them off in punnets!

With big seeds like pumpkin, corn, and beans, soak them for 8-12 hours first to speed up their germination. When should you direct seed? Now! Though they might not really take off until spring starts properly. It's Melbourne though so the weather might do wild things.



## A JOURNEY TO RECONCILIATION

by Lisa Giufre

*'At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of us all'*<sup>1</sup>

Reconciliation is about a lot of things. Accepting our histories and truth telling, combatting racism and making sure our institutions have integrity. Reconciliation is restorative, and often means acceptance of things that can cause discomfort.

Railway House stands on the ancestral land of the Woi-Worung people of the Wurundjeri clan, who, in turn, are part of the much larger Kulin Nation (also known as central Victoria<sup>2</sup>). Here in this small community centre, we too are starting to further explore how we can strengthen our commitment to supporting the national reconciliation movement, and work out what practical steps this can entail. We are starting to draw on the experience, passion and commitment of people in our local community. A special thanks goes to Jayne Garnaut, Mary Dykes and Heather Wearne for your work on this so far, and the incredible resources you are sharing with us as we begin our reconciliation action planning process.



We are hoping to develop a small reconciliation working group in the coming weeks, and are seeking expression from interested individuals. The first part of our work will involve a reflective process, focusing on how to express our commitment and prepare ourselves and our space to become culturally aware, safe, and welcoming. From there, we will be able to take more practical steps aimed at promoting reconciliation within our own community context.

If you are interested in getting involved and/or sharing ideas, please email Lisa G at [community@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au](mailto:community@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au).

<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation Australia <https://www.reconciliation.org.au>

<sup>2</sup> Railway House- A History of the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House, Jeff Atkinson, 2010





## TOP PICKS



Cathie Franks, a member of the Railway Readers book club, has written in to let us know about her daughter **Ruth McIver's** upcoming book launch. This online event is free to attend but bookings are essential. Book here: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=792967&>

*I Shot the Devil* won the 2018 Richell Prize for emerging writers. It is an unforgettable story of murder, trauma and childhoods lost.

Erin Sloane was sixteen when high school senior Andre Villiers was murdered by his friends. They were her friends, too, led by the intense, charismatic Ricky Hell. Five people went into West Cypress Woods the night Andre was murdered. Only three came out.



## LOCKDOWN LAUGHS 😂

Just looking at my holiday snaps this year





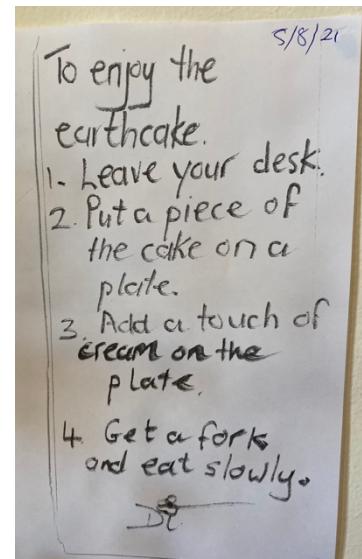
## LET'S TALK FOOD

Di Moloney from our bike riding, table tennis and cooking groups made this delicious cake for Community Lunch right before lockdown. This is a moist, pudding-like cake with a sublime caramel-coconut topping. Australians may recognise it as Lumberjack Cake, but Di first came by it via an environmental group she was involved in some 40 years ago where it was referred to as "Earthcake". Railway House staff were lucky enough to get their very own pieces of "Earthcake" – with instructions for how best to enjoy it - the very next day!

### "EARTHCAKE"

#### Ingredients

- 2 medium apples
- 185 grams dates
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 cup boiling water
- 125 grams butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 ½ cups plain flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 60 grams butter (extra)
- ½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2/3 cup shredded coconut



#### Method

1. Combine peeled, cored and finely chopped apples and dates, bicarb and boiling water. Let cool to lukewarm.
2. Cream butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Add sifted flour and salt alternately with fruit mixture.
3. Pour into a greased and lined 20 cm cake tin and bake at 180° for 1 ¼ hours until done.
4. Combine extra butter with brown sugar, milk and coconut in a pan. Stir over low heat until butter and sugar melt.
5. Spread over hot cake and return to oven for 20 minutes until golden brown.





## AND FINALLY...

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We are proud to announce that Railway House office staff are fully vaccinated.

