



THE RAILWAY EXPRESS

TERM 1, 2022

AROUND THE HOUSE

Hello friends,

Welcome to the first edition of our new, once-a-term Railway Express newsletter. As you may know, we developed the Express almost two years ago as a way to stay connected with our community during the long months of lockdown in 2020 and 2021. We received a lot of positive feedback about the newsletter and requests to keep it going, so whilst we don't have the time to produce a weekly newsletter, we are very pleased to be able to bring you a Railway Express each term. We would love to include contributions from you in future editions so please consider sending your favourite recipes, poems, classified ads, stories about the interesting things you get up to or whatever you think may be of interest to Lisa at admin@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au and we'll file them away ready for the next newsletter.

We have had a few COVID-related disruptions this term but otherwise it has been a great start to the year. We kick started the term with a Makers Market in early February and haven't had time to pause since! It has been so great to see so many people back at the House enjoying activities and reconnecting with one another, and we have welcomed quite a few new people to the Railway House community, including new volunteers and program participants. One of our new volunteers, the wonderful **Hannah**, a local nutritionist (www.phillipsnutrition.com), has been running a weekly cooking session for a small group of local children, who have been learning about healthier food choices and how to make delicious and nutritious food.



Making pancakes with Hannah

Another new children's program that we have piloted this term is our **Passion Project** scholarship program. This exciting program provides funding for six local children to attend a weekly class at a dance studio, accompanied by a volunteer. As a volunteer myself for this program, I can say that it has been a resounding success so far. It is wonderful to see the children engaged in an activity that they enjoy and which they might otherwise not have the opportunity to participate in, and I am very much looking forward to seeing them take part in the studio's dance concert in June. We are hoping to secure further funding for the Passion Project and expand it to include more children.



New adult programs this term included a Beginners' French class (also run by a volunteer - merci beaucoup **Genevieve!**), a Zumba Gold class (so much fun!) and a fortnightly "Social Seniors" morning tea on a Friday (accompanied by an excellent soundtrack of favourite hits from the 60s and



Our inaugural Zumba group!

70s!). Community member **Donald** also ran some evening BBQs this term. Donald says: *"The House builds community and serves the needs and interests of its diverse participants. Most weekdays it is near capacity, but evenings seemed open to greater use. The lure of the public BBQ facilities at the House gave rise to the idea of an evening BBQ/picnic series, operating similarly to the Wednesday lunches, where people bring along some food to share. Two Monday night BBQs have been held which have been well enjoyed by the 20 people who have come. It is a welcoming, pleasant, intergenerational social event, an opportunity to meet up and dine out with others at low cost in a scenic neutral space. The next one will be during the upcoming school holidays; please contact the office to be included in the email notice which is sent out by Lisa G."* Thanks, Donald, for organising these!

It was also great to welcome back the **VCAL students** from **Princes Hill Secondary College**. As well as helping with jobs around the House two mornings a week, a small group of students took part in a "School of Fish" workshop with sustainability organisation **Awareaway**. This involved creating works of art (fish) from soft plastic as well as learning about the devastating effects of soft plastic waste on the environment. In keeping with the theme of sustainability we were also very pleased to offer a composting workshop and a Visible Mending workshop (courtesy of Yarra Council) this term, both of which were well attended.



Making fish out of soft plastic

In March we celebrated Harmony Day with a delicious multicultural lunch and officially opened the Railway Garden (which we have waited a long time to do!). It was great to have lots of Yarra Council staff in attendance, including the Mayor of Yarra, Cr Sophie Wade, as well as representatives from the Clifton Hill-North Fitzroy Community Bank (a major sponsor of the garden). And of course, lots of gardeners and community members. It was a wonderful day of celebration as well as an acknowledgement of all the people who put in so much work to make the garden happen. Community member Nick has captured the day very well in the write-up he did for his own community newsletter so have included it below, along with some additional photos.

Finally, our Committee of Management has been busy, prioritising actions in our Strategic Plan, revising policies and developing a fundraising strategy. We have some exciting fundraising initiatives in the pipeline, including a special "Meet the Author" evening with local author Tony Birch. Stay tuned.

Happy Easter and Eid Mubarak to all those celebrating.

Enjoy the holidays and see you soon.

Alison



The RH choir provided great music



Brett's amazing puzzle



A great turnout!



Celebrating solidarity at Railway House Harmony Day Lunch

A delightful Harmony Day lunch was held at Railway House on Wednesday 23 March to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity.



Cambodian jelly cake

Several Redmondians attended, sampling from a superb buffet that personified multiculturalism "at taste-bud level", in the form of refreshing sushi, crunchy falafel balls, spicy finger pies, healthy vegetarian sandwiches, smooth Cambodian jelly cake, and much, much more.

Everything was fresh and delicious, and you could sense that every dish had been made with affection for the community members who would gather to share the feast.

Liquid refreshments were provided by the resident Railway House barista, together with two kinds of herbal tea using produce from the Railway House Garden.

Fittingly, the event was an ideal opportunity to formally open the Community Garden. This ceremony was performed by Yarra Council mayor and local councillor, Sophie Wade (a consumer lawyer in her spare time).



Just as fittingly, in lieu of the traditional ribbon cutting, Sophie sliced through a large red sweet potato that had been lifted from the earth moments before.

Following the official opening, Alison Beck – the quietly dynamic manager of Railway House – extended a comprehensive list of thankyou's to the many community members who have transformed what was once a rarely-used bocce court into a compact set of garden beds, now bursting with herbs and vegetables of many kinds (which are freely available for us locals – hurray!).

Entertainment was provided by one of the Railway House choirs, and all in all the event a wonderful demonstration of the solidarity and energy of the wider community to which we belong.

Photos and story from Nick Jans

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN

Railway House was proud to have the Mayor of City of Yarra, Cr Sophie Wade, open the garden on Wednesday 23 March. The garden is being watched with interest by Council as we are developing a new model of community garden as it is open to the public 24 hours per day and all produce is grown collectively and shared locally. This is unlike many other community gardens which consist of locked individual plots.

The mayor was presented with a large sweet potato which had been dug up that morning under the guidance of Dr Chris Williams from Burnley campus of University of Melbourne.

In February Kat Lavers ran a well-attended composting workshop in the garden. Monday group is proud to announce that our first home produced compost is now ready for use. This will not only be very good for the vegetables but is also a considerable saving.



On March 28 twelve gardeners and Jesse Kalic our Garden Coordinator were given a guided tour of the Burnley gardens, particularly the closed area where there are experimental crops and where students carry out their practical work. We came home with many cuttings of a range of sweet potatoes and some young New Zealand Yam plants for our garden. We were surprised how many plants we think of as tropical grow at Burnley including Cavendish bananas, mountain paw and guava.



On Tuesday April 5th we farewelled our Garden Coordinator Jesse Kalic whose twelve-month contract is completed and wished her well for her upcoming European travels with a traditional home baked morning tea. Jesse has helped to establish the garden on a firm footing and from now on it will be managed by the volunteer gardeners under direction from the House manager, Alison Beck.

Visitors to the garden will notice a great deal of renovation of the beds as we move into autumn and plant our new crops for the winter. Snails are proving a challenge for this organic and no-spray/no poison garden. We have run one evening snail blitz, are removing snail friendly plants and will be introducing beer/yeast traps.

The garden continues to attract a regular number of visitors and it was encouraging to hear from one neighbour, Rina, that we appeared in the U3A newsletter this month. U3A members were surprised and delighted by the garden on their historic tour of Princes Hill. Local artist Ceci Cairns has also been in the garden with her art class painting the garden and the gardeners. We may see their pictures at the September Makers Market!

Jane Miller, Garden Guardian

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – CAN YOU HELP?

We are on the lookout for a few more volunteers. If you are interested in any of the roles outlined below, please contact Alison on manager@railwayneighbourhoodhouse.org.au for more information.



Learning Club

Mondays, 3:45 to 5:00

We are hoping to find two or three more people to join our Learning Club so that children can receive one-on-one help with literacy and numeracy. You do not need to be an expert, but you must relate well to primary school aged children.

Required: Working with Children check

Passion Project

Day / time variable

Would you enjoy being a mentor to a child and supporting them to follow their passion? This role involves building a rapport with the child you have been matched with and accompanying them to and from their chosen activity.

Required: Working with Children Check, Police Check, car, full drivers' license and car insurance.



Guest Cooks

Wednesdays, 12:00 – 2:00 (once or twice per term)

We are looking for a pool of guest cooks to facilitate our cooking group. You do not need to be a professional cook, just be able to demonstrate how to cook a simple, nutritious, affordable (and of course delicious!) meal and engage members of the group. You will be reimbursed for ingredients.





GETTING TO KNOW YOU

*In this issue of Railway Express we will be profiling two of our newest community members – **Maci Hamdorf**, one of our Passion Project volunteers, and **Jackie Fristacky**, former City of Yarra Councillor and now Railway House program participant. We are so lucky to have these two women in our midst!*

I grew up on a farm in Cedar County, Iowa, a place so small that my mom was my teacher in three of my high school classes. Growing up in a family of four girls, I developed a passion for women's history and gender equity at an early age.

After high school, I went to Iowa State University of Science and Technology intending to study Mathematics and Actuarial Science for a reason I can't honestly remember. After two years of usually being the only woman in the classroom, I stumbled into the Liberal Arts college building and realised I could actually get a degree in Women and Gender Studies, focusing on how gender impacts divisions of labour.



During University, I spent a semester in Thessaloniki, Greece, studying Greek and travelling Europe. This sparked my love of travel and adventure, which led to me heading to San Francisco for a summer to work as a Camp Counsellor. At camp, I met my now fiancé, a Melbournian who liked to surf and play guitar, and soon after the summer ended, I packed my bags to move to Australia.

Seven years later, I have made Melbourne my home and recently became an Australian citizen. I work as a Diversity and Inclusion Consultant, helping organisations improve their company cultures to be more inclusive of women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disability and cultural diversity.

I started volunteering at Railway House in 2022 as a way to get more involved in the community that I adore.



Turning 70 in 2020 having had a full working life, I decided it was time to retire at the end of the year to pursue other activities.

Having worked in 3 tiers of government including 2 decades as a City of Yarra Councillor, my firm view is that local government is the most effective of the 3 tiers in achieving outcomes for communities.



My Council role was challenging, satisfying and rewarding - especially in being able to achieve funding for building the amazing and long outstanding new North Fitzroy Library on St Georges Road, and agreement with the State on a new Yarra indoor sports centre on the former gasworks site in North Fitzroy. So too in securing funding for the Princes Hill Community Centre, Railway House and its



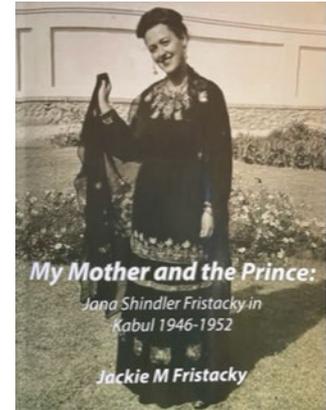
glorious community garden, street landscaping, heritage and village signage, and many other local outcomes.

In 2018, I had the honour of being awarded an Order of Australia, AM, for services to local government and the Melbourne community.

Rewards aside, it was time in 2021 to resume projects in limbo since being elected to Council in March 2001. Key was completing my mother's biography on our family's life in Afghanistan where I was born (see front cover at left).

Apart from this project, I took on being President of the Afghan Australian Development Organisation while retaining several roles in advocacy for sustainable transport. It has been pleasing to join the Railway House Cycling Group and its other activities such as Zumba classes. It is wonderful to have more space in life to do this as well as catching up with neglected friends and the many newer friends made through my Council role.

Demanding attention too, is a backlog of chores, repairs, and sorting accumulated files, books, papers and family possessions - tasks still in progress, no doubt, for many readers as well. There is so much to be done in retirement!



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Would you be interested in a men's exercise class? Or a beginner's running group for older people?

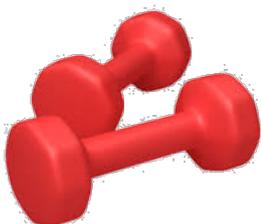
We are taking expressions of interest for both; please contact the office if you're interested or have any questions.

Beginner's Running

Two local women in their 60's and 70's who are accredited running coaches are interested in running workshops for older, absolute or near beginner runners or people returning to running after an injury or other life commitments.



Their aim is to coach this group over a period of time to move from little exercise to being runners – e.g., a "couch to 5k" format.



Men's Exercise

Some of you may remember that we offered some Men's Strength Training sessions back in 2020. We'd like to bring men's exercise back to Railway House! Sessions would focus on strength, stretching and balance and be run weekly.



IMPORTANT DATES – TERM 2

There are a few things coming up in Term 2 – mark your diaries! We've highlighted Railway House events in orange.

Term 2 dates

Tuesday, April 26th to Friday, June 24th (closed for public holiday Monday, 13th June)

Saturday, May 7th (you can also diarise September 11th and December 4th!)

Makers Market

Come along for a great morning out - support local makers and Railway House.

Monday, May 16th to Sunday May 22nd

National Volunteer Week

Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering!

NATIONAL 16-22 MAY 2022
VOLUNTEER
Better Together WEEK

Tuesday, May 17th

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersex and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)

Celebrates LGBTQIA+ people globally and raises awareness for the work still needed to combat discrimination.



Tuesday, May 17th

National Sorry Day

A day to remember the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Friday, May 27th to Friday, June 3rd

Reconciliation Week

A time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.



Wednesday 8th June

Tony Birch Fundraiser

Meet Tony Birch, acclaimed author, academic and activist.

Monday, 20th June

World Refugee Day

Each year on June 20th the world acknowledges the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution.



GOODBYE & HELLO

We are very sad to be farewelling **Jesse**, who has been our trusty Garden Coordinator for 11 months. Using her broad expertise and friendly, consultative approach, Jesse has helped us develop a fully working garden, and has done so with professionalism and a great sense of humour.

We will miss you, Jesse, and wish you safe and happy travels!



We recently welcomed **Anisa** to Railway House. Anisa is a final-year Psychology student who is doing a placement with us. Anisa will be out in some of our programs where she hopes to connect with Railway House users. Keep an eye out for her and say g'day!



WHAT'S ON AT YARRA NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES



carlton neighbourhood learning centre inc
Proudly supporting **Awareaway**

'Make your own sustainable planter pot from organic materials using a gourd.'

Compostable and gourdeous!



'Gourd it.' Workshop

30.04.22
10:30am-12:30pm
20 Princes St, Carlton North

For more information or to register call 9347 2739, email info@cnlc.org.au, or pop in to the office!

FLN

FITZROY LEARNING NETWORK SATURDAY SHORT COURSE

PERSIAN COOKING



1pm - 4pm
SAT 9 APR

\$60 / \$40 students & members.
Book using the QR code or go to <https://www.trybooking.com/BYQRY>

fln.org.au | 9417 2897
198 Napier Street, Fitzroy

Fitzroy Learning Network    

AND FINALLY...

Yarra is taking a fresh look at how the Linear Parklands are used and maintained, to ensure that this significant stretch of open space caters to all who use it.

Have your say in a survey here: <https://yoursayyarra.com.au/linearparklands> and in person on April 13th between 12:00 and 3:00 (near Railway House).

