

# Bellevue Ward

July 2023



North Balwyn RSL members and families of members,  
with RSL Victoria State President Dr Robert Webster OAM  
(fourth from left).



**Cr Jim Parke**

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 **BOROONDARA**  
*City of Harmony*



## A message from your Councillor

In May this year, to mark the closing of the Balwyn North RSL sub-branch, I had the honour of gathering with past and present members, their families and friends.

While the sub-branch has closed, its legacy has lived on through the opening of the Greythorn Community Hub in 2018. In light of recent publicity about the Hub, we must reflect on the decades of collaboration between Council and the RSL. With the common goal of serving our local community, our relationship with the RSL on this site spans more than 60 years.

The land on which the Greythorn Community Hub sits was historically Council-owned land. In 1959 Council transferred a part of its land to the North Balwyn RSL. In agreeing to transfer part of its land, a restrictive covenant was placed on the title in 1959 to make clear the expectation this land would be returned to Council when the RSL sub-branch closed, as is now the case.

The restrictive covenant states the land must only be used for purposes benefitting the community in the event the sub-branch closed, such as a public or memorial hall, a municipal library,

a kindergarten and infant welfare centre or community centre. Council is the only organisation that can comply with the covenant. In 2014, the North Balwyn RSL sub-branch committee agreed to support the building of the Greythorn Community Hub which would deliver services complying with the conditions of the covenant on title. This project required both the land owned by the RSL sub-branch and abutting Council land.

The community facilities at the Greythorn Community Hub, in which Council invested \$14 million of a total cost of \$17.2 million, meet the expectations set for this site in 1959 perfectly. Today, a library, early childhood centre, maternal and child health centre and neighbourhood house all operate from the Hub, providing a range of valued services for the Boroondara community – thanks to the generosity shown by the RSL. They are leaving a wonderful legacy.

**Cr Jim Parke**

## Icon sculptures take a break for restoration

You may have noticed that the well-known Greythorn Icons sculptures have been removed – temporarily – from Doncaster Road.

The 5 wooden sculptures, carved by artist Angie Polglaze, were commissioned by City of Boroondara in 2000 and are part of the Town Hall Gallery Collection.

A conservation study of the collection in 2021-22 recommended the Greythorn Icons be repaired, and they have been prioritised for conservation.

They have been moved off-site for treatment and repair, and will be returned to Greythorn Shopping Centre later this year.

In 2022-23, Council allocated \$20,000 annually to begin conservation treatment for public artworks in the Town Hall Gallery Collection and ensure the ongoing viability of a healthy, long-lasting public art collection.







## End of an era: North Balwyn RSL ceremonial closure

On 2 May, the North Balwyn RSL sub-branch held a formal closing ceremony, marking the end of its decades-long involvement in the community.

City of Boroondara Councillors and Council officers joined RSL Victoria representatives and RSL members and their families at the event, held at Greythorn Community Hub in North Balwyn.

The original building housing the North Balwyn RSL in Centre Way, North Balwyn, opened in 1959 and closed in June 2015. The RSL moved into its new home along with other community services and programs in the Greythorn Community Hub, which opened in September 2018. Part of the site occupied by the Greythorn Community Hub has a restrictive covenant dating back to 1959, when Council sold the site to the RSL, which states that should the North Balwyn RSL close, the land must only be used for community services or for purposes benefitting the community. Council has committed to this and is providing vital community services for Boroondara through the Hub.

### Thanking Gwenda Foard and Graham Foard

Marking the official closure of the North Balwyn RSL sub-branch, Secretary Gwenda Foard OAM spoke about its history in the community.

She and club President Graham Foard OAM were singled out for special thanks for their extensive volunteer work in the area, spanning several decades.

Their efforts were key to the running of the North Balwyn RSL sub-branch, and together they made a significant contribution to the planning and development of the Greythorn Community Hub.

In 2017, Graham and Gwenda were named joint recipients of the Boroondara Citizen of the Year award, and in 2022 they were both recognised with medals of the Order of Australia for more than 60 years of service to the community of North Balwyn.

### A legacy for the future

The North Balwyn RSL sub-branch will live on at Greythorn Community Hub, through artefacts and memorabilia housed in purpose-built displays throughout the building.

The Memorial Wall, foundation stone, photographs, flags, honour boards and other items provide a lasting link to the past – reminding all who visit of the presence of the RSL in North Balwyn and the many servicemen and women who were welcomed there.

Today the Greythorn Community Hub provides a vibrant and welcoming facility for residents too, building on a legacy more than 7 decades in the making.

### For more information

To view the memorabilia at Greythorn Community Hub, or to find out more about available services and programs, please visit 2 Centre Way North Balwyn, behind the Greythorn shops, or go to: [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/greythorn-hub](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/greythorn-hub)



## Dirt jump riders off to a flying start

Community volunteers have been working together with Council at Koonung Creek Reserve to create safe dirt jumps for local riders. The jumps, which were built during volunteer construction sessions in March and April, are now open to the public.

Boroondara local and dirt jump construction volunteer Dan Torelli says the dirt jumps have provided a much-needed facility for community members of all ages to practise their mountain-bike skills safely.

“Construction of the jumps allowed us both to connect with some local riding buddies and make new friends,” says Dan.

The initiative started during the COVID-19 pandemic, when makeshift dirt jumps started to appear across Boroondara. Consultation with the community helped identify the existing Koonung Creek Reserve track area as an appropriate site for small-scale community-built dirt jumps.

“My son enjoyed having a say in the design process,” says Dan. “He particularly liked coming up with his own designs which were tabled at volunteer sessions during the design stage of the project.”

### Help maintain the jumps

Volunteers are now being recruited to work with council officers to help maintain the dirt jumps. Work may include helping to shape the jumps with a shovel and smoothing out or filling any holes identified as part of the monthly audit by council officers.

Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Parent or guardian supervision is required for volunteers under 12 years, and parent or guardian consent is required for volunteers under 18.

To apply, complete a Koonung Creek Reserve dirt jumps maintenance volunteer application form online by visiting: [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/dirt-jump-maintenance](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/dirt-jump-maintenance)

## Mowing our open spaces

With spring fast approaching, we’d like to remind community members about our mowing schedule for Council-managed land in Boroondara.

Between September and April, our team mows more than 470 sites every week or fortnight. These sites range from parks, reserves, gardens and sportsgrounds, through to traffic islands and some car parks.

Please be aware that wet weather may impact this schedule, as it can result in:

- grass growing faster than usual
- open spaces becoming too wet to mow safely
- a backlog of locations we need to mow once the weather improves.

Mowing large areas of open space also requires heavy mowing equipment which can damage surfaces if used on wet ground.

If we have not mown a site due to these conditions, we will continue to check it until it is dry and stable enough for our staff to safely proceed.

For information about our mowing schedule, visit: [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/grass-maintenance](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/grass-maintenance)

