



BURKE & BEYOND



Term 4 - 2025

SUMMER

Newsletter

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Term Holiday Dates

Thursday 18 December

Last day of Quarter 4

Friday 19 December 2025 to
Friday 9 January 2026

Summer Break

Service reopens on
Monday 12 January 2026

Monday 26 January

Australia Day (Public Holiday)

Monday 9 March

Labour Day (Public Holiday)

Thursday 2 April

Last day of Quarter 1

Friday 3 April - Monday 6 April

Easter Weekend (Public Holidays)



Message from the CEO

Lisa Sawatzky

As 2025 draws to a close, it is a time to celebrate the achievements and outcomes of participants during this year. Across the five Burke and Beyond sites we have delivered the following outcomes and so much more!

Participants have achieved the following:

- Getting a Learner's Permit
- Completing barista training
- Completing TAFE courses
- Volunteering for their local community
- Completing work experience
- Getting paid work
- Creating amazing art work and exhibiting in the community
- Performing in the community
- Improving their fitness
- Engaging in recreation activities and trying new things
- Developing skills to move out of home

During this year, Burke and Beyond has provided support to 163 participants, across five sites and in outreach. We have delivered over 171,920 service delivery hours and provided just under 5000 Outreach and Social hours of support. We have connected participants to 28 different courses and have supported 65 participants per week to attend work experience placements in the community.

This year has also seen much change in the sector. Despite the pace of change we continue to have a wonderful team of committed staff across our services, including our service delivery team, administration and finance teams and our leadership teams. I thank them for their commitment, hard work and dedication during the year.

It has been a challenging year financially for our organisation. We have experienced lean NDIS pricing that has not kept pace with the rising costs of providing service. Many participants have seen a reduction in plan values, and many people have run out of funds before the end of their plan period. It is important for self and plan managed participants to keep an eye on plan utilisation to ensure they have sufficient funding for the services agreed to in their service agreement. When participants run out of funds before the end of their plan, we can experience budget shortfalls and an increased workload to be paid for the services we deliver. Delays in receiving payment for services that have been provided continues to be a challenge and impacts significantly on the organisation's cash flow. At times there is a need for repeated follow ups with families for invoices to be paid. This is costly and takes our focus away from delivering services. For those who process their invoices on time, we thank you! We deliver our services in good faith, pay our staff and need to receive payment in a timely fashion. As a small non-profit community-based organisation, we need to ensure we remain viable in this difficult funding landscape. We request that all families are up to date with their invoices by the close of service on 18th December. If you need to discuss a payment arrangement, please contact administration to discuss ahead of the recommencement of services in 2026.

We are looking forward to 2026 and the commencement of the new Next Step curriculum. We have invested significantly in reviewing our service offering and ensuring that the Next Step program remains dynamic and responsive to participants' learning and developmental needs. The curriculum review has included input from participants, families, and staff. It has 3 levels - Foundations, Consolidation and Extension that aims to ensure that all participants will be challenged and extended according to their needs. The new approach has a strong focus on numeracy and literacy, communication, safe travel, work experience opportunities, social skill development, and independent living skills. Additionally, the curriculum has a number of elective units designed to ensure that we can respond to individual needs, and preferences within the program. The new Next Step Curriculum will focus on developmental outcomes, and has the flexibility for work on individual goals, through both individual and collaborative project work. It aims to support our young people to develop the core skills that underpin leading a successful and happy life where they are encouraged to reach their goals in all areas of their life. We are excited about the new approach for 2026.

We wish you all the best for a restful and restorative break and look forward to seeing you in the new year. Thank you for your continued support of Burke and Beyond.

DANDENONG



Chisholm Tafe

This term, the group at Chisholm has been busy and thriving. They've taken part in team-building activities with youth work students and visited Signal in the city to watch the stop-motion films they created earlier in the year. All assessments for the year are now

complete, and preparations are underway for their end-of-term high tea. Students have also been focusing on gratitude by writing thank-you letters, exploring their creativity through designing their own theme parks, and using critical-thinking

skills to discuss positive changes for Chisholm. Throughout the term, they've continued strengthening their public speaking, money and currency understanding, writing skills, and overall comprehension.



Podcast

Big news from Burke and Beyond Dandenong! We've teamed up with Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre to launch our very own podcast and the buzz is incredible! Participants are diving into the world of media, learning how to record and edit interviews like pros. They're even hosting conversations with fellow participants about their passions and special interests. The studio has been filled with laughter, creativity, and plenty of "aha" moments as everyone builds confidence and sharpens their communication skills. Stay tuned. This is just the beginning!



Horticulture

This term the Horticulture group have been developing their hands on skills & knowledge on all things horticulture at Doveton Community Centre. The participants have honed these skills while engaging in projects such as building a small pergola in the community garden and completing some small quoting jobs, where they worked on figuring out the area and volume of different garden areas and the overall cost for materials. They also transplanted small plants and vegetables in the garden.



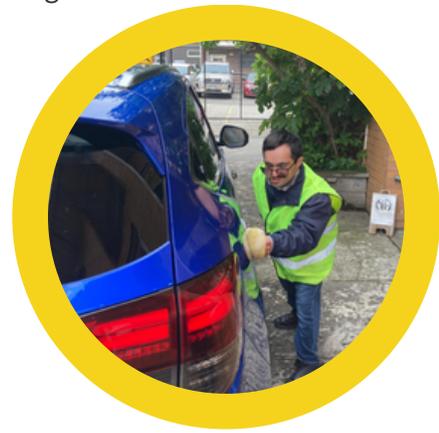
BOX HILL

Activity Week – Egg Day

Participants explored simple DIY-style recipes using eggs. They practiced making omelettes, scrambled eggs, and toast, using both the microwave and sandwich press. Staff observed significant skill development as participants had multiple opportunities to refine their techniques. A focus on healthy habits was encouraged, with participants supported to include vegetables in their omelettes.

Car Wash

The car wash program is back in action and has secured additional work. Participants are enhancing their attention to detail and customer interaction skills, including managing vehicle pick-ups. They are also progressing toward independently handling set up and pack-down routines.



Independent Living & Community Newsletter

Volunteering with Neighbourhood Watch continues, with participants actively engaging in community support. They are also taking on more responsibilities, including ordering cleaning supplies, managing toiletries, and conducting stocktakes of site amenities.

Work Education – Work Placement

Participants have continued their work placements at various locations to develop practical skills. Featured in the photos is a group working with the Box Hill Institute Animal Care facility. Participants have been supporting the care of the small rodents by refilling their water bottles, cleaning their cages and assisting in mealtime preparation and cleaning.



Kew Customer Service

The Kew Customer Service program continues to run smoothly, with participants steadily building confidence and mastering skills. At the Spare Chair Café, they are learning to operate the till, speak clearly, and confirm orders with support from staff. Participants also assist with tasks such as polishing cutlery and managing the pop-up shop.

Independent Living – Travel Skills

Participants have recently focused on developing their travel skills. They successfully planned and completed a trip to the Botanical Gardens, demonstrating growing independence and confidence. They also have been in charge of managing site shopping and have been building their budgeting skills and understanding of unit price. Participants made honey lemon tea as well to support recovery when sick.



RINGWOOD

Overview

As we approach the end of another busy year, it's a perfect time to reflect on the incredible work that everyone here at Ringwood has done across this second semester. While we all are counting down to the holidays we still continue to kick as many goals as possible before the year wraps up. The Performing Art program at Box Hill TAFE has finished for the year, and with this came a performance day where the group invited family, friends and their peers to watch them perform a group dance routine as well as present individual speeches about important people in their lives. This was a fantastic showcase of everyone's work across the semester. Other courses such as Employable Me, Customer Service/Hospitality and Cooking Fundamentals have also concluded for the year, and it has been amazing to see how everyone involved has developed their skills in these areas.

Across the year participants have continued recycling their cans and bottles through the Victorian Container Deposit Scheme and have raised over \$200! This money will be put towards end of year activities and a Christmas BBQ.

We would like to thank Danielle Benincasa for her years of support and hard work at Ringwood as Service Coordinator and would like to send a warm welcome to Veronica Paouros who will be moving into the role before the end of year.

Looking ahead we're all very excited for the Christmas break but we are also looking forward to 2026 and continuing to make progress on our goals and learn new skills.

From everyone here at Ringwood we hope you all have a Happy Holidays and a lovely New Year.



Christmas Preparation

As the year draws to a close, the participants at the Balwyn site have been busy getting into the festive spirit. Participants have been using arts and crafts to make Christmas themed decorations to decorate our activity rooms, and also to take home. During Independent Living Skills, participants have been learning how to gift wrap presents and how to decorate the Christmas tree. Some participants have chosen to engage with crafting activities such as candle making and pottery where they have created items, wrapped them and will be gifting them to loved ones at Christmas time.

BALWYN

Living and Learning



Participant Jobs

Balwyn participants were recently given the opportunity to apply for participant roles where they have the choice to take on some extra responsibilities whilst here on site in the mornings and afternoons. Participants could express their interest in roles such as driveway check in/out attendant, garden maintenance officer and kitchen/dishwasher supervisor, and were then invited to a group interview. Successful participants will be starting in their roles in the new year. It has been wonderful to see so many of our participants want to step into more responsibility and develop their life skills.

Meals on Wheels

The Living and Learning participants have continued to support the broader community through the 'Meals on Wheels' program. Our participants have been doing a fantastic job of delivering locals their meals straight to their door. Participants have built some strong relationships through their regular deliveries and are always eager and excited to be on program supporting the community in this capacity. Our participants willingly take on extra opportunities to support the meals on wheels program when they are short on delivery volunteers.



Summer Activities in the community

Our community access programmes have been taking advantage of the good weather we have had, enjoying the sunshine in some summertime outdoor activities. Participants recently attended the beach where the group enjoyed some games, a gentle walk and a coffee on the beach. Participants have been exploring our local parks and socialising with the broader community, and their dogs. Our participants have been using our neighbouring park to enjoy group activities such as parachute, bocce and footy when the weather is nice. The summer weather has sparked some great group discussion around sun smart behaviour and how to keep ourselves safe throughout the warmer months too.

FRIDAY NIGHT SOCIAL

Summer Vibes are in Full Swing!

Our Friday Night Social crew has embraced Melbourne's summer scene with unforgettable experiences! From savoring flavors at the Asian Street Food Festival to grooving at the African Music & Cultural Festival, participants loved getting out and about, enjoying the weather, and immersing themselves in vibrant cultures.

Other highlights included:

- Grazeland - sampling hundreds of cuisines in one spot
- Holey Moley - navigating quirky obstacles and celebrating hole-in-one moments
- Hero's Karaoke - where natural performers lit up the stage with their talents

Friday Night Social is all about leaving the workweek behind, letting your hair down, and discovering the best Melbourne has to offer.



OUTREACH SUPPORT

Join Our Outreach & Friday Night Socials! We're excited to continue offering these programs to all Burke and Beyond participants.

Come connect, share, and enjoy a welcoming space every Friday night!

👉 Want to learn more?

Contact Elyce Morison - Coordinator, Outreach & Social Programs.

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Follow us on social media!



Inclusion that counts

SUPPORTIVE | PROGRESSIVE | ACCOUNTABLE