

# **Mountain District**

### LEARNING CENTRE

### NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024

### Director's Report

It seems this year has flown by so fast it kind of takes my breath away to be writing up the last report for the year.

The main focus this year for the Board and Janet our CEO has been to register The Avenue School. Hopefully, by the time this newsletter comes to you we will have a positive answer from the VRQA and our plans for 2025 will be in full swing.

It's exciting to think the Centre will have more students continuing their studies in a safe and community minded space.

This has been a year of celebration with the Centre in it's 50<sup>th</sup> year. The event put on with Jane de Wilt reflecting on the early days, members who had joined in the first few years of start up and the newer members who were introduced to the MDLC history was embraced wholeheartedly, with all attending having a great time.

It hasn't stopped there though. Carolyn Hirsh and Debbie Ball have been writing up the history of the Mountain District Women's Co-Op and going through to the present time at MDLC. A special book launch will be organised so our celebrations will be ongoing.

Over the past 12 months we have had two members of staff leave. Barbara going to Ireland for family reasons and Leshelle to enjoy travel time with her husband. Leshelle has been the Centre's Finance Manager, starting off as a volunteer and settling into the job for quite some



time. Thank you for your dedication and wonderful work Leshelle.

I would also like to thank Betty Bibby for the years of service she has put into the Centre. Betty has retired due to family ill health.

Work on the Men's Shed will be commenced in November. It's an exciting project that will extend our community work by enhancing the lives of men who are in need of company or just want to get out and about.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Staff at the Centre, it's a happy place to walk into and everyone always has a smile on their face.

To Janet our CEO, a big thank you for running the Centre so smoothly, at the same time, once again taking on the massive job of the school registration.

To the Board, my thanks to you. I feel we have covered so much to help make the Centre a great place to work in.

Robyn Burke

Mountain District Learning Centre 13-15 The Avenue, Ferntree Gully Victoria 3156 Phone: (03) 9758 7859 Email: office@mdlc.org.au Website: www.mdlc.com.au

## News from the Office

Hello fellow members,

Well, we have had some big changes around here at MDLC recently!

We have said farewell to Barbara Buxton, our Adult Learning Manager who has returned to Ireland. She will be greatly missed by her groups of students who have found her friendly and positive teaching style to be so encouraging. Barbara's knowledge of adult literacy learning is abundant and we have been very lucky to have had her expertise here at MDLC.

After 10 years in our Finance Office and many of those as our Finance Manager, Leshelle Walford has decided to retire. We are grateful to Leshelle for her considerable expertise over the years, managing the very complex finances of an organization like ours. We wish Leshelle the very best as she begins a new chapter. We are sure we will see her around as she embarks on her new life of leisure!

We are grateful to Sarah Zeng, our former Finance Assistant who has stepped up into the Finance Manager position. We have every confidence that Sarah will do well in her new role.

We welcome a new staff member for the Adult Learning Manager role in Franci Buljat.

Franci has "hit the ground running" since she arrived with new initiatives in place already.

We are enjoying having Franci as part of our team. I am sure you will get to meet her before too long!

In November we are starting work on our new Men's Shed (on the 12 Victoria St garden site). We will have a new space for a variety of activities and are looking forward to making growing a welcoming and friendly program for local people.

Term 4 is underway. If you haven't seen our Term 4 Course Guide, we still have copies available in the office or you can find it online at www.mdlc.org.au. There are some enticing new workshops coming up that you might enjoy as well as our usual courses and classes.

We are looking forward to our Makers Market on Saturday, November 23 and of course coming up is our Red and Green Christmas Party. It would be lovely to see many of our members come along to these events in this our 50<sup>th</sup> year.

You are always welcome at MDLC!

Janet



Audrey Hall, Margaret Bottomly, Judy Bouwmeester and Jane Dewilt cutting the anniversary cake.

# The Cottage Program Term 3 2024

What a busy Term 3 we have had in the Cottage Program!

We have held several excursions including a tour of Swinburne Wantirna, Melbourne Museum, Ferntree Gully Library, Cat Café & Queen Victoria Market, and the Melbourne Zoo. Naarm Law Students delivered a session about Tenancy Law & Rights, during this session our students learnt about the following areas:

- Making sure you get your bond back.
- Lease transfers
- Breaking your lease
- Minimum safety standards owed to you and reporting when it's not met
- How to assert your rights and seek support when your rental provider does something they are not entitled to.

Naarm Law Students is collective of law students from the University of Melbourne dedicated to providing free community legal education on issues that disproportionately affect young people.

They hope to empower young people to understand their rights and how to assert them.

Our Pathway Meetings were held during week 9. The pathway meetings offer an opportunity for students and their families to come together with Teachers and Youth Workers to discuss their progress and to consider goals, further education and work opportunities for the following year.

In Term 3, we imbedded additional time for students to work on core curriculum during the Wellbeing days. This change was implemented due to feedback from students wanting additional time to work on assessments and outcomes.

From all reports most students were able to complete additional tasks which allowed them to move forward with their studies. We acknowledge the funding received from Knox City Council to deliver the YES Project, which allowed for many activities to take place throughout the year, which included the Swinburne Croydon Tour, Treetops Adventure.

The YES Project has now been completed and we are grateful for the additional funding which allowed us to experience a variety of activities that we would otherwise not have been able to offer.

We have planned a very busy and productive Term 4. In week 6 we will be offering a tour of Swinburne Hawthorn, Swinburne Resume & Pathways Workshops, Future Career Sessions, where students will work individually with a Pathways Specialist from Swinburne to identify potential career pathways.

Catherine and I met with the Accessibility Inclusion Officer from Swinburne TAFE to learn about the role and potential benefits to our students.

The role of the Accessibility Inclusion Officer will be to work with young people still enrolled in School but who have identified a course at TAFE they wish to study in 2025.

This will include:

- Preparation of a transition plan
- Provision of 90 days 1:1 support
- Assistance with identifying pre-requisite information
- Assistance with the enrolment procedure
- Work with young people to showcase support and resources available to them at TAFE.

I want to acknowledge our students for their persistence this term.

We are looking forward to a happy, healthy, and productive Term 4!

Alison Percy

Education & Training Manager

## Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

The RTO continues to be a busy space which needs to respond to changes in Government Policy & Vocational Education & Training (VET) Sector standards. Sue Dunn (Compliance Manager) has done an enormous amount of work this term to ensure we are fulfilling our contractual obligations. We have completed and submitted our Program Delivery Plans (PDPs) for all the training we wish to deliver in 2025. The submission of the PDPs is used to assess our capacity and capability to deliver the program/s, and to forecast training delivery for 2025.

All Australian governments are committed to supporting quality and integrity in the vocational education and training (VET) system. As part of this commitment, the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 have been revised to strengthen the focus on quality outcomes for learners and employers, provide greater clarity for RTOs and regulators, and allow for more flexibility and innovation in training delivery.

The changes are designed to better reflect the diversity of the VET sector and ensure the Standards are fit for-purpose across different RTO settings. This will help to embed quality aspirations and ensure the Standards clearly articulate characteristics required of RTOs to foster a shared understanding of what constitutes high-quality delivery for all users of the VET system.

MDLC has been a member of the VET Network Meetings for many years, this Network meets for the purposes of exchanging and sharing information and knowledge pertaining to the quality operation of our respective RTOs. Members of this Network meet regularly to provide each other with feedback on the educational integrity and quality assurance of our operations. Members also provide a range of expertise to assist each other with ensuring the integrity of our educational processes and with ensuring that our standards are consistent with industry and education expectations.

The Certificates in General Education for Adults (CGEA) are transitioning to a new training product. Sue is a member of the CGEA focus group who are currently working on the reaccreditation process and as part of the consultation process, they are convening a focus group discussion based on key areas of the CGEA. The key focus group questions include course outcomes, qualification structure, units of competency and Teacher qualifications.

During Term 4 we will be working towards completing students who are ready to pathway out to further education or the workforce. Time will be spent evaluating courses and seeking feedback from students and Teachers so that we can get a better understanding of their experience in our educational setting and any changes suggested are given thoughtful consideration.

As always, we look forward to a productive Term 4 and better weather!

Alison Percy

**Education & Training Manager** 





Check out more Courses available by linking to the latest course guide...

### FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE



### Social Support Program Leisure Program Interest Groups

Hello everyone!

Well I'm very pleased to report that the MDLC Social Support Program has been so busy and productive that Term 3 2024 has whizzed by in a flash!

I'm so proud of all our staff and volunteers who continuously amaze us all with their creative and interesting weekly sessions.

Generally speaking, and as you'll see in the pages to come, Term 3 has once again been a hive of maintaining good mental and physical health, creative achievements and lots of fun in all of our classes across all Community Services Programs here at MDLC.

Term 3 saw us saying farewell to our dear friend and tutor Lillian Brown. Unfortunately, Lillian's Computer class on Thursdays was forced to close due to low student attendance numbers. We still hope to see Lillian around the Centre from time to time when she comes to visit. Thank you, Lillian, for all your wonderful years of teaching here at the centre!!! We will all miss your happy smiley face on Thursdays.

Term 3 2024 also saw us celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Women's Co-Op. It's fair to say that I personally am super humbled and honoured to be in the (Community Services) position to continue carrying on the work that so many wonderful women before me started over the last 50 years. To be able to stand on their shoulders and forge ahead with supporting our local Ferntree Gully community is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I'm forever grateful to them all. (special mention to my friend Jan Corben)

In other news, we are also pleased to announce that we've been successful in securing funding from both the Bendigo Bank and Knox City Council for our upcoming Makers Market in November. Market details are located further below in the Newsletter. We hope to see you there!

In the last week of Term 3 the Mountain Treasures craft group once again held a stall at the Boronia Mall for 3 days. As usual the stall was a colourful display of high quality handmade gifts and homegrown plants. A "thank you" shout out to Laurie at the Boronia Mall for always being hugely supportive of the Mountain Treasures Group over the years.

#### Rachel Bast - Community Services Manager



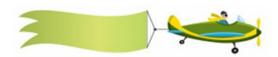
Above: Rachel Bast, Sharon Saliba and Lilian Brown



Left: Jane Dewilt

### FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE

# **Noticeboard**



#### **NEW GROUPS**

A new group has joined the MDLC social support program!

#### "Art for Wellbeing"

Let your creativity flow through mindful art in a safe, relaxed and friendly environment. No previous art experience is necessary.

Wednesdays - 1pm - 3pm

#### MOUNTAIN TREASURES

If you or someone you know is looking to join a lovely craft group, look no further than the Mountain Treasures craft group! The group meet every Wednesday from 10am – 12pm. Call the office on 9758 7859 for more info, or to let us know you're coming

#### MORE NEW GROUPS

If you're looking for more hobbies to learn outside of our normal hours, we are pleased to announce that a couple of new groups are now running at our local libraries:-

Crochet and Conversation – Mondays 6pm – 8pm Boronia Library.

Art for Wellbeing - Thursdays 5.30pm - 7.30pm Bayswater Library

#### PHILOSOPHY FOR THINKERS

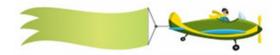
If you or someone you know has a keen interest in Philosophy, our "Philosophy for Thinkers" group meet up every 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday from 9.30am – 11.30am. Call the office on 9758 7859 for more info, or to let us know you're coming!





### FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE

# Noticeboard 3



#### **Social Support Regular Groups**

#### Monday

Women On The Move – 10am – 12pm Monday Makers – 10am – 12pm Nature Craft – 1pm – 3pm

#### **Tuesday**

Craft & Grow - 10am - 12pm

#### Wednesday

Art for Wellbeing – 1pm – 3pm Friendship Group – 1pm – 3pm

#### **Thursday**

All Abilities Craft – 10am – 12pm Mens Chat Group – 10am – 12pm Crafteria – 1pm – 3pm

#### Spotlight On....

#### **Mens Chat Group**

It's been a good term...and we even welcomed a new member!...we are encouraged whenever newcomers are convinced to sit down and chime in... and even more so when they return! We know ourselves, how great it is to have a comfortable place for us men to sit and chat and relax. 

The Hills Mens Chat Group runs weekly on Thursday mornings between 10am – 12pm. If you or someone you know would benefit from the simple act of enjoying a cuppa and a chat – All Welcome!



#### Spotlight On....

#### Art for Wellbeing – Bayswater Library

If you're new to the wonderful world of art and would like to dabble in various mediums, then this little group located within Bayswater Library is just for you! The group runs every Thursday between  $5.30 \, \mathrm{pm} - 7.30 \, \mathrm{pm}$ . Bring along your own art journal to work in and we'll provide the rest! Take a mindful break from the stresses of life and enjoy taking 2 hours out just for you. Bookings can be made on the Library website, or call MDLC on 9758 7859 to let us know you're coming.



### FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Term 3 began with a welcome back afternoon after our 2 week break. Members were happy to share their holiday news.

The next week we had a guest speaker from EACH who gave us some very helpful financial advice.

The end of July and start of August were spent in Olympic celebration mode. We made paper plate discus, discussed Olympic experiences, enjoyed Olympic quizzes and had our own Olympic games day.





Our next week was at Boronia Hotel where everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch together.

Fathers Day was celebrated with a lovely craft activity making a macrame hat hanger. The group enjoyed another guest speaker, Matt from METRO who was very engaging and

informative about all aspects of travel on public transport.

We had an enjoyable afternoon with a Non Alcoholic Happy Hour and nibbles. Members had fun trying to guess the ingredients in each of the drinks.



Several games of Bingo were played including number Bingo and AFL Bingo.

Our final week was a Grand Final sausage sizzle held in the Church Hall due to the dreadful weather. Although the group was smaller than usual the sausages and bread went down a treat.



We also enjoyed the left/right game and some AFL quizzes.

Meredith and Lynn

### Nature Craft Term 3 2024

The term started off with everyone excited to be back and looking forward to catching up with everyone.

We made a Panel card which they could give to someone special they all looked great.

The clients made a key holder using icy pole



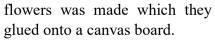
sticks then they painted the front nature inspired and we used pebbles for Owls.

Other popular activities were the Fabric flowers which went over two weeks so everyone got a



chance make them.

Using combination of Protea dried flowers and Pine cones a bouquet of



The clients are very clever with their colour choices they looked fantastic.

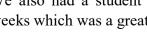
We also had a student for two weeks which was a great help.







Looking forward to next Term. Sharon



### **Monday Makers Term 3 2024**

This amazing group of very talented women have had another awesome term crafting lots of wonderful projects. They have formed genuine friendships and are all very supportive of each other. They share their crafting knowledge with each other and offer helpful advice to one another with their projects.

This term the ladies have made lace pin cushions, painted watercolour flowers, a mixed media rainbow flower canvas, a mixed media board using recycling items and embellishing it with flowers, book page roses, a macrame hat holder,

and a beautiful rainbow macrame wall hanging with feathers.

Our last lesson for the term always involves a

party morning tea which the ladies really enjoyed.

Lynn



















### Thursday all abilities mixed media

This group make me smile every week. They are a wonderful bunch who are very funny and provide endless entertainment during our classes. We have so much fun creating projects and chatting along as we complete them. There is never a dull moment. Everyone gets along really well.

These clients have been very busy bees this term creating a collage in tiles, a mixed media butterfly canvas, a collaged suitcase, a mixed media journal page, a lady's face collaged with creative hair and a lion king bottle.

For Father's Day the clients made macrame hat holders and a card for their Dads.

We ended the term with games, word searches and party food. A great chance for the clients to just chill and chat.

























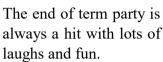
### **Thursday Crafteria**

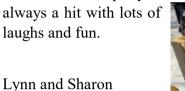
Another great term of crafting with these ladies. They have been very busy creating lots of wonderful projects. These included a mixed media butterfly canvas, a book house, a card based apron with notebook, a tin person plant holder, some neurographic art, macrame wall hanging and a lace jar.

This term we also had a "catch up" day so clients could finish projects where they may have missed a week. This was well received by the clients so we will do it again next term.

























### **Craft and Grow**









The group enjoyed a mix of actives this term. They put their hand sewing to the test with cute felt mushrooms on a wood base, and pin cushion cacti to brighten any sewing table.

We enjoyed the winter sun while working in our journals and used scrap material to make ladybug magnets.

Painted rocks to hold precious photos brought a bit of nature inside.

To finish the term, they made pom pom bookmarks, perfect for the book lovers of

the group.

#### Luise













### Volunteer Garden program



Winter definitely set in during Term 3 in the MDLC Hi Rise Community Garden. With a supply of thermal hand warmers, the volunteers set to work opening the space between the main garden and Victoria garden.

First job was to remove half of the old dividing fence, then they set to work cleaning all the dead branches from the boundary trees.

This has not only made a beautiful shady place to sit but the chickens are loving the extra space for









them to roam.

As spring enters the garden, it starts to wake up. Flowers are blooming, bees are enjoying all the spring blossoms from plums, rosemary and fennel. Daffodils, jonquils, and freesias are filling the air with incredible scents.

### Volunteer Garden program continued

We can't forget to mention the incredible blooms from our native front garden, multiple coloured Grevilleas are the birds' favourite, Leucadendron add a pop of colour among the greenery and our always stunning Protea never fail to impress.

The high rise garden beds are full of leafy greens, broad beans are in flower and the snow peas are delicious. Seedlings of heritage tomatoes are ready to be planted in November, along with a bright array of flowers for the bees.

#### Luise and the Garden Volunteer Team







### Men's Chat Group

Still defying expectations, the *Men's Chat Group* continues to meet every Thursday at the *Hills Op-shop* in Ferntree Gully.

The two gents who began coming last term, have settled in nicely and join us on a regular basis. And everyone is always happy to welcome passersby to sit down for a cuppa and a chin-wag.

Topics range from lighthearted banter, to "How was your week?", and genuine concern about each other's wellbeing.

We even manage to find time to "solve" some of the world's problems!

Henk.



## Ferntree Gully Newspaper

#### The voice of the community

Ferntree Gully News attended the 19th annual Community Newspaper Association of Victoria (CNAV) Conference held on Saturday 12 October in Bendigo.

Anne Boyd (Editor), Liliane Azar (Assistant editor) and Barbara Oehring (Photographer) represented Ferntree Gully News and were very proud to have been recognised as a finalist in two categories:

- Best History Story (for 'Building the Co-op' by Anne Boyd & Carolyn Hirsh, August 2024 edition)
- Best Editorial Comment (for 'Sharing public space' by Anne Boyd, October 2023 edition)

For 'Building the Co-op' article, Anne has drawn upon research done by former MDLC Board President Carolyn Hirsh, on the early days of the Co-op.

Since its beginnings, the Co-op has benefited greatly from local buildings in The Avenue and the support from the Uniting Church.

Barbara, Anne and Liliane at the conference

### 10 Mountain District Learning Centre: the Story

### Building the Co-op: 1975 to 1980s

The April issue of Gully News told the story of the origins of MDLC and how in 1974 a group of women sought funding and set up a business structure, unique for women at the time, in the form of a Women's Co-operative.

During 1975, as members increased, they looked for buildings to house their activities. They founded a shop for the sale of craft work in The Basin. In Ferntree Gully Village they looked for classroom spaces for women's education.



#### 'The Church'

By September 1975 negotiations were underway for a Women's Care Group to rent the Methodist Church in The Avenue, Ferntree Gully. This run down building was to serve as a women's drop-in centre along with space for childminding, discussion groups, craft classes and other interpersonal and educational classes, including HSC. The agreement with the Parish Council included an \$18 weekly donation, plus maintenance and cleaning to be the responsibility of the Co-op. The move took place in September, 1975. From the near derelict church they fashioned a workable space. "There was an area at the back, plus the church, and a long 'veranda thing' that became an office. They had childcare in the back, a drop-in day once a week, classes in the church and other classes in a 'bigger in-between bir'.

Ourse classes in a bigger in-netween bit.

Among the first groups to meet were a Council of
Adult Education book discussion group and a yoga
class that commenced in September. (The book club
continues to meet as do exercise classes in continuity
with the yoga class.)

with the yoga class.]
In February 1976 the Mountain District Women's
Centre was officially opened by journalist and author
Anne Latrielle in front of a large audience overflowing
from the old church in The Avenue into the adjacent
rooms and onto the veranda. Local dignitaries attended
and an ABC television programme filmed the event to
mark International Women's Year. The ABC programme
was well received and gave tremendous publicity to the
Women's Centre. The Co-op's relationship with what
became the Ferntree Gully Uniting Church continues
to this day.



#### 'The Cottage'

Next the Church offered the Co-op the use of an adjoining small house that had been the home of the Methodist minister. It had been rented out by the Church and had become vacant. It was in poor repair but seemed the logical answer to the disruption to programs caused by alterations to the church. It would provide more space for classes - although additional money would be needed to cover the rent.

Morey would be needed to cover the tent.

After many hours spent in painting and generally re-organising the minister's previous residence, "The Cottage' was officially opened by the Mayor of Knox, Councillor Marie Wallace, on 6 July 1979 as part of Knox Civic July any previous colorates."

Knox City's 10th anniversary celebrations.

In 1980 the HSC program was expanded to five subjects as a result of TAFE money provided to pay teacher's salaries. Lower fees for HSC students were applied. More space was available with the use of rooms in The Cottage. The numbers of women enrolled for English Expression were so high that a second class was formed. The numbers of craft classes had also increased with the use of The Cottage, and this high level continued throughout 1980. Over 400 people per week were attending the Co-op by this stage and the Board had their work cut out to keep up with the growing responsibilities.



Students from Box Hill Tafe assembled the Studio.



#### 'The Studio

The third building to be provided was a portable classroom erected behind the cottage. This was donated by Box Hill TAFE and assembled by their young male students.

The building came to be known as The Studio. It was completed in October 1982 and a barbecue was held to thank the 20 boys who had carried out the construction. It was officially opened, upon completion of a large logo window, in June 1983 with 60 people attending. Like the Church and the Cottage, this building, over the next 40 years, has fulfilled its promise to offer a home to many compunity activities: and still does.



#### 13 - 15 The Avenue

Later in the 1980s the property at 15 The Avenue came on the market and staff members put up their own homes as security for the purchase. In 1985 they also purchased 13 The Avenue and obtained approval of the two houses as a public building. They moved administration rooms from the Cottage to houses opposite while classes continued in Church, Studio and Cottage.

This article has looked at how from setting up a local co-op a group of women moved into a series of neighbouring buildings and adapted them to their needs - a wonderful example of how the buildings themselves have become a symbol of the group's advancement.

Anne Boyd, a former Board member of MDLC has drawn upon research done by former Board Chair, Carolyn Hirsh.

Ferntree Gully News August 2024







#### Mountain District Learning Centre

13-15The Avenue, Ferntree Gully 3156 T: (03) 9758 7859 F: (03) 9758 0903 office@mdlc.com.au & www.mdlc.com.au ABN: 20093868002

#### MDLC SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Every Wednesday between 1.00pm - 3.00pm

### Events & Activities - July to December 2024

#### **IULY**

17th - Welcome Back! Hangman & other fun

24th - EACH Guest Speaker Financial Counselling

31st - Olympics! Prep & chat



#### AUGUST

7th - Olympics! Games Day

14th - Break 40 Luncheon

21st - Blankety Blanks

28th - Guest Speaker - Scams in

a Digital World

#### SEPTEMBER

4<sup>th</sup> – METRO Guest Speaker 11th - Non Alcoholic Happy

Hour

18th - Bingo!

25th - Grand Final BBO in the garden with sausage sizzle and

games.





#### **OCTOBER**

2<sup>nd</sup> - Music Trivia by Will

9<sup>th</sup> - Various card games day

16<sup>th</sup> – Cooking Demo with Deb

23rd – Various board games day

30th - Halloween!

#### NOVEMBER

6th - Oaks Day

13th - Spring afternoon in the

20th - A quizzing afternoon

27th - Christmas Crafts



#### **DECEMBER**

4<sup>th</sup> \_ Christmas Crafts

11th - Christmas Celebrations Lunch in the Hall.



<sup>\*</sup>All Activities are subject to change.



SATURDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2024 AT 10AM TILL 2PM

VARIETY OF STALLS | MUSIC | | SAUSAGE SIZZLE | PLANTS | | LIZARD WIZARD









JOIN US FOR THIS ANNUAL EVENT AS WE CELEBRATE OUR COMMUNITY ALONG WITH THE FERNTREE GULLY CFA AND FTG UNITING CHURCH

Proudly sponsored by Bendigo bank FTG & Knox City Council