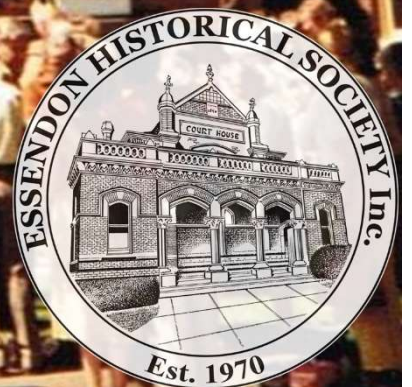
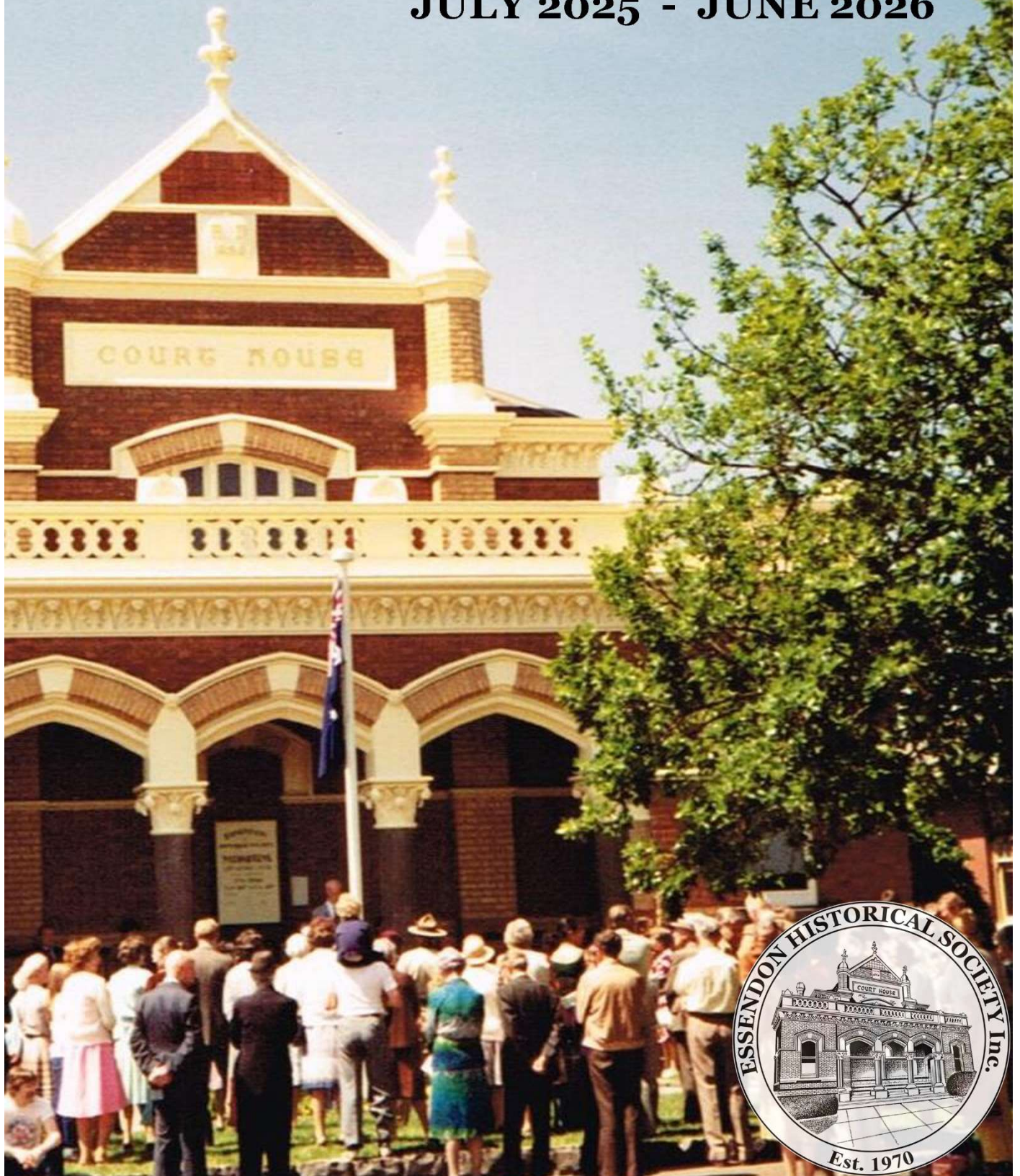


**ESSENDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**JULY 2025 - JUNE 2026**



# Committee of Management

|                       |                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>President</b>      | Cate Hutchings                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Vice-President</b> | Kelsey Collins                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Secretary</b>      | Hayden Williams                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Treasurer</b>      | Amanda Watson                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Committee</b>      | Lyndall Byrne, Bob Chalmers,<br>Darryn Hartnett, Bob Mackay<br>Terry Scott until August 2025; replaced by Sue<br>Becker in August 2025 |

## EHS Objectives

The Essendon Historical Society Inc. (EHS) objectives:

- To foster and promote interest in the history of the Moonee Valley and District (including Exhibitions, Heritage Walks, General Meeting Talks).
- To care for the restoration and maintenance of the Moonee Ponds Court House.
- To collect and preserve items of an historical interest relevant to Moonee Valley and District, according to the EHS Collections Management Policy.
- To undertake research and further develop and record a knowledge of the district's history.
- To affiliate with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.
- To work where necessary (in association with the National Trust of Australia/Victoria and other concerned bodies) in the recording and preservation of buildings and objects of architectural and historical significance and interest within the Moonee Valley District
- To provide the opportunity to educate the wider community in the Moonee Valley District's history and its importance and relevance.

EHS is a not-for-profit organisation, registered charity and Committee of Management of the Museum site.

**Front cover:** EHS has a home! Moonee Ponds Court House Museum opening ceremony, 25 October 1981

# President's Report – Year Ending June 30, 2026

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the President's Report for the 2025-2026 Year.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The two Court House exhibitions “*The Art of Needle & Thread*” and “*Planes, Trains & Automobiles*” were outstanding and very popular. A credit, and many thanks, to the curator, Lyndall Byrne.

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Court House on 26 August 2025, attended by twenty-four members.

Kelsey Collins and Bob Chalmers led highly successful Heritage Walks. Kelsey was also the driving force behind recommencing *The Newsletter* and the cinema fundraiser event.

Lastly, this successful year would not be possible without our many volunteers on our open days and volunteer members of our sub-committees. I have been so very well supported by the wonderful and talented people on the EHS Committee, without whose contribution we would not be able to continue to meet the EHS objectives.

I would like to thank all of you for your contribution.

EHS was fortunate in receiving a grant from Moonee Valley City Council (\$7,000) during the year. This year the EHS Committee formally adopted a Sponsorship Policy which will allow the EHS Committee to make decisions in relation to offers of Sponsorship.

EHS is also very appreciative of Angelo Pratt who acts as “auditor” of EHS finances.

Cate Hutchings  
President  
27 July 2026

## General Meetings

Ten General Meetings were held during the past year, and our Guest Speakers were as follows:

22 JULY 2025

Lesley Uren who also launched *The Art of Needle & Thread* exhibition.

26 AUGUST

Annual General Meeting & Arlene Bennett (The Luck of the Draw: What happened to the 65 Australian nurses on the Vyner Brooke).

23 SEPTEMBER

Madonna Grehan (Visitations by God to Nosologies – Accounting for Maternal Deaths in Victoria, 1850-1870).

28 OCTOBER

Annual Dinner – Richard Broome (The Story of Melbourne's Lanes)

25 NOVEMBER

Bob Chalmers (Aberfeldie Primary School)

24 FEBRUARY 2026

Launch of *Planes, Trains & Automobiles* exhibition with Kath Feehan (Ryan's Buses)

24 MARCH

Peter Hodge (Fly Boy – The Life of Parker 'Joe' Hodge)

28 APRIL

Darryn Hartnett (Transportation Over the Years in Moonee Ponds & Essendon: A Personal Journey)

24 MAY

John Wren (TAA Recollections)

23 JUNE

Megan Stapleton (Moonee Valley Brass)

The average attendance at the 10 General Meetings over the past twelve months was 22.

## Life Members

Alex Bragiola

Elaine Brogan OAM

Mary Cahill

Bob Chalmers

Kelsey Collins

Lenore Frost

Marilyn Kenny

Bob Mackay

Judy Maddigan

Eve Park

Terry Scott

Peter Willoughby

# Membership

[Cate Hutchings is the Membership Secretary]

Our membership at the end of the financial year was 184, including 12 Life Members. This was an increase from 163 financial members in the previous year.

We were pleased to welcome 30 new members during the year:

Oliver Acevedo, Jan Ayres, Susan Baxter, Ross Beale, Arlene Bennett, Alexandria Bischoff, Trevor Brown, Louise Burnett, Karen Clements, Sharon Currie, Robert Foley, George Ghiocas, Maureen Gleeson, Kath Hutchings, Mary Kuc, Ki Le, Diane Mottershead, Marija Newbold, Stephen Pace, Natalie Savkoski, Jan & Brian Smith, Patrick Tighe, Leanne Torr, Jane & Philip Wignall, Jeanette Wirt, Lorraine Wotherspoon, Daniel Zampatti. Pamela Koistinen rejoined.

## Other Reports (in alphabetic order):

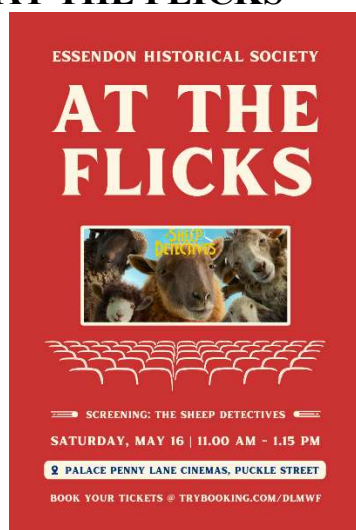
### ANNUAL DINNER

[Cate Hutchings & Lyndall Byrne]

The Annual Dinner was held Tuesday 28 October 2025 at the Gannawarra Convention Centre, Keilor Road, North Essendon. There were 57 attendees. Richard Broome AM was an excellent speaker, and his topic was *The Story of Melbourne's Lanes* was informative and entertaining.

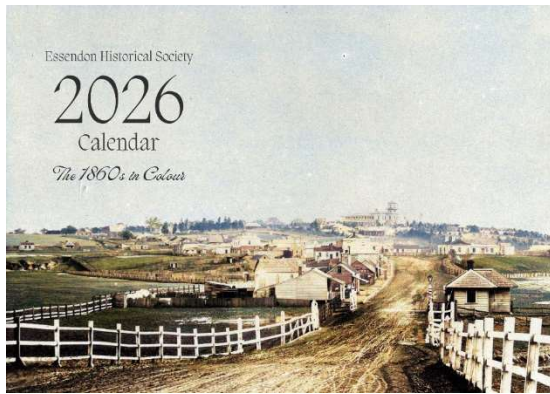
EHS has enjoyed the hospitality of Gannawarra as a venue and has booked it again for our 27 October 2026 event.

### AT THE FLICKS



Kelsey Collins organised a Penny Lane Cinema Fundraiser on May 16. All 34 tickets were sold for The Sheep Detectives film. Feedback was very positive. We will plan another Cinema event for 2027.

## CALENDAR



Kelsey Collins produced another popular calendar. The 2026 edition featured the photos of the Nettleton frame.

## CATALOGUING SUB-COMMITTEE

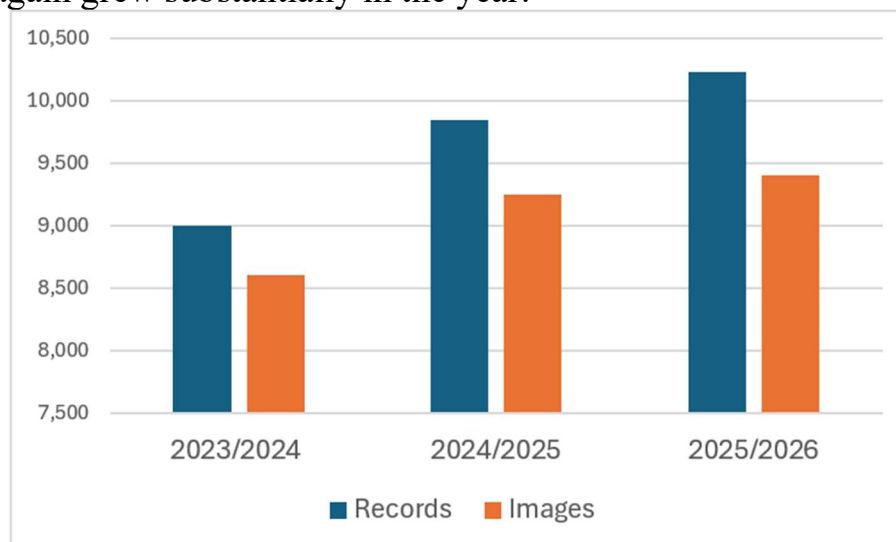
Thank you to Anna Denham, Anne Hillier, Anna Maree Malmgren, Rod McLennan, Stephanie Tamburrino and Bob Chalmers, for their work each Monday morning.

Significant progress was made during the year:

- Cataloguing continued accompanied by scanned images.
- Contents of the Sam Merrifield Room filing cabinets were checked and each file added to eHive, with a description of the contents.
- Biographical files uploading to SharePoint.
- CD files added to SharePoint.
- User guidelines updated.
- Stocktake of the EHS publications

Alex Bragiola and Lyndall Byrne have assisted with the cataloguing of house photos, house plans, costumes and framed photos and plans.

The Catalogue again grew substantially in the year:



EHS has 10,225 records and 9,397 images in the Catalogue. In addition, there are 63,900 files stored in SharePoint.

We commenced using eHive for the Catalogue in June 2023 have used 12,004MB out of our plan's 20,480MB.

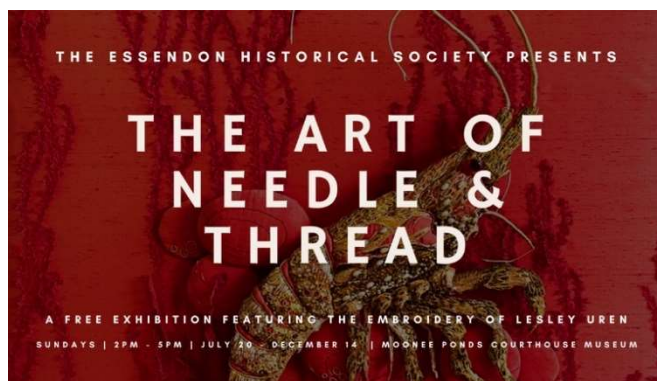
## COMMUNITY & SCHOOL TALKS

EHS provided the following talks and courthouse visits:

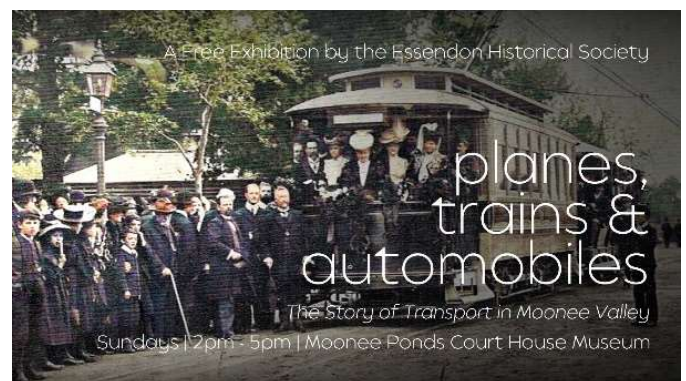
- August 20, St Monica's 80 Year 2 students (at the school).
- October 15, St Johns visit with 4 visitors.
- November 29, Essendon Quilters with 11 visitors.
- December 5, St Mary's 65 Year 2 students.
- April 7, Wingate Avenue Community Centre Men's Group with 3 attendees.
- May 15, Essendon North PS 90 Year 2 students (at the school).
- May 18, Lowther Hall visit with 34 visitors.
- May 28, Rail Group visit with 11 visitors.
- June 10, PEGS talk, 90 Year 3 students (at the school).

## EXHIBITIONS

There were two exhibitions in the Court House over the past twelve months:



“The Art of Needle & Thread” from 20 July to 14 December 2025



“Planes, Trains & Automobiles” from 1 February to 5 July 2026.

EHS was very fortunate to have Lesley Uren show her stunning embroidery in the Court House.



Lesley Uren OAM (left) with EHS's exhibition curator Lyndall Byrne.

## **Planes, Trains & Automobiles**

EHS is grateful to the following who loaned exhibits: Phil Vabre (Essendon Aviation Museum), John Wren (TAA Museum), Liz & Rob Benton, Dr Graeme Dennerstein, Kath Feehan & Daniel Zampatti (Ryan Bros Bus Services), Malcolm McNab, Ian Cordwell, David Watson, Ross Copley, Lisa Laidlaw, Rosalie Coutts and Peter Bromley, Denise Finn, Bob Wilson, Peter Willoughby, Warren Doubleday & Mal Rowe (Tram Museum).



Kath Feehan (centre) of Ryan's Buses launched our transport exhibition. Kath is standing in front of one of the Ryan's Buses exhibits and is flanked by Daniel Zampatti and Liz Ferguson.

Special thanks to Lyndall Byrne and her helpers whose work has been greatly appreciated by all who have viewed them and which has been largely responsible for our high visitor numbers.

## **FIRE ANNIVERSARY**

June 27, 2026 was the ten year anniversary of the disastrous courtroom fire.

## **HERITAGE WALKS**

The Society held five guided heritage walks with four being led by Kelsey and one by Bob Chalmers. All were highly successful, including one where Kelsey had to finish part in torrential weather.

- July 27, Queens Park Heritage Walk (17 attendees).
- October 19, Grand Old Moonee Ponds Heritage Walk (21 attendees).
- October 26, Grand Old Moonee Ponds Heritage Walk (21 attendees).
- March 1, Aberfeldie Heritage Walk (25 attendees).
- May 3, Old Essendon Heritage Walk, National Trust History Festival (23 attendees)

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

EHS systems include:

- eHive online catalogue with 10 users and 10,225 records. Subscription expires on 19 June 2028.
- SharePoint cloud-based filing system with 21 users and 63,900 files stored.

In 2022 Microsoft approved EHS for certain free or discounted software until 29 Mar 2032. This included ten MS365 Business Premium licences. However, with these expiring, eight users were changed on 1 April, 2026 to MS365 Business Basic licences.

## **ITALIAN COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT.**

Cate Hutchings, Sue Becker and Alexandra Burns are working on this project. EHS want to provide a resource for the community that identifies the rich contribution made by Italian migrants to Moonee Valley during the different waves of migration – the gold rush in 1850's, post WW1, and then the 1950's -1970's. We would be pleased to hear from any Italian residents in Moonee Valley and discuss whether they would like to be interviewed as part of this project.

## **MAINTENANCE**

The North Wall project was completed in August 2025 with the painting of the South Vestibule and reconnection of the fire alarm. The total project cost EHS \$21,223.05 and DEECA (via a grant) \$54,755.00.

A garden maintenance working bee was held on Sunday, 1 February.

Other works included replacement of the door lock in the North Lobby Entrance and replacement and mounting of new fire extinguishers.

## **MEMORY LANE GARDEN**

Memory Lane Garden Promotion: Featured as an ongoing item in the Newsletter and was promoted on the Grand, Old Moonee Ponds Heritage Walk.

## **MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL**

EHS continues to work closely with MVCC. The EHS/MVCC licence commenced on 2 January 2020 with a duration of six years. MVCC indicated that the licence will continue. EHS favours a formal extension, and this has not eventuated yet. The updated licence with the Council will return the North Lobby Entrance space to the EHS.

EHS was successful in obtaining a \$7,000 MVCC Community Grant on 10 December 2025 for the *Essendon Gazette* Trove 1931 to 1946 project.

Moonee Valley Libraries supported our exhibitions by including an EHS slide in their presentations.

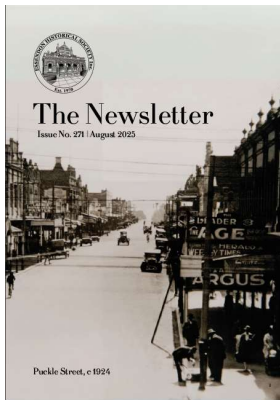
The Clocktower Centre requested EHS assistance with Open House Melbourne and we provided images of events in the former Town Hall. EHS also undertook some paid research for the Council on street names.

## **MOONEE VALLEY FESTIVAL**

With pleasant weather, 281 guests visited the Court House during extended opening hours on Sunday 15 March 2026. Kids loved the writing and colouring activities, and there was positive feedback on the courthouse and exhibition.

## NEWSLETTERS

The new Newsletter Sub-Committee was formed with Kelsey Collins, Lyndall Byrne and David Sivaraj. Newsletters 271 to 274 were produced during the year.



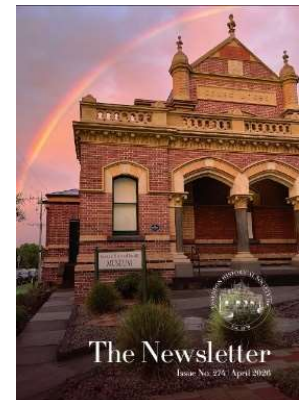
271 August 2025



272 December 2025



273 February 2026



274 April 2026

Thank you to Anna Maree Malmgren for proof-reading the Newsletter copy before it went to print, and to Anna Denham for maintaining the subject index.

## PUBLICATIONS

EHS ordered a reprint of 25 copies of *Steele Creek and the Lady of the Lake* and Lenore Frost has supplied 50 copies of *Murder and Misfortune*.

## PUBLICITY

Jo Briskey, MP, the new Federal Member for Maribyrnong mentioned EHS in her maiden speech on 23 July 2025.

## REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The ACNC Annual Information Statement was submitted on 28 October 2025.

## RESEARCH

Enquiries received by email and website amounted to 62 requests in the following categories: property 27, family history 13, business 8, sport 4, hospitals 3, parks 2, churches 1, films 1, schools 1, theatres 1, transport 1. Many additional requests are received on Sundays at the Court House. In most cases, Alex Bragiola was the major researcher.

## STREET STALLS

A Puckle Street stall was held on 13 December with Kelsey Collins, Cate Hutchings, David Sivaraj and Bob Chalmers. On 2 May 2: Cate and Sue Becker attended a Maribyrnong Council event at Dale Stables with 31 visitors coming to the EHS stall.

## TERRY SCOTT

A big thankyou to Terry Scott for his thirteen years on the EHS Committee. Terry did not stand for reelection in 2025.

## TROVE PROJECT NO. 4

EHS organized additional digitisation of the Essendon Gazette from 2 July 1931 to 31 January 1946 for a cost of \$9,712.78. We received a \$7,000 City of Moonee Valley Community Grant to mostly offset the cost,

EHS is also grateful to the State Library of Victoria for loan of the microfilm masters and Moonee Valley Libraries whose support led to a cost ‘discount’, and the National Library of Australia.

## VICTORIAN HISTORY SHOWCASE

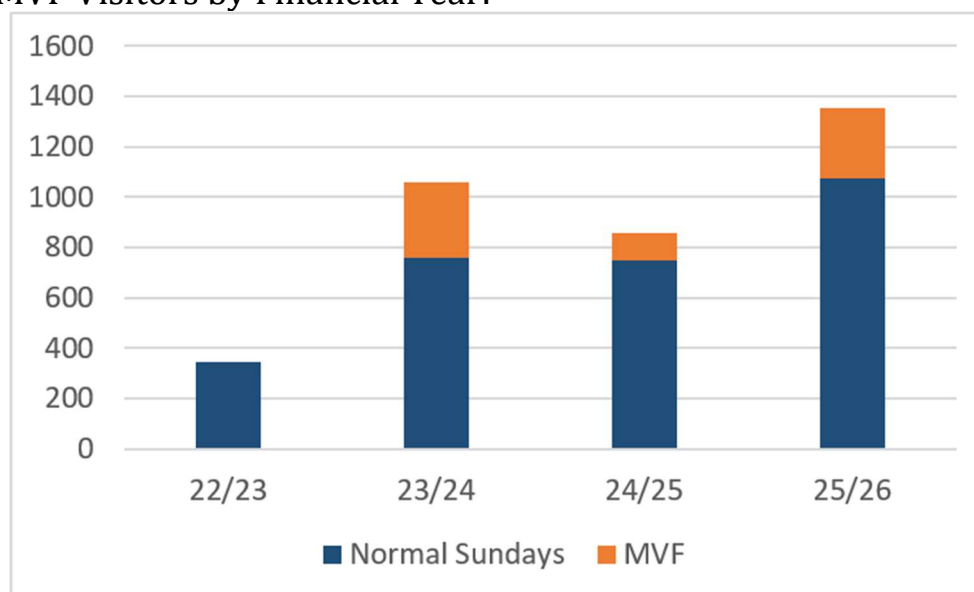
Cate and Kelsey represented EHS at the PMI Victorian History Showcase on 13 September: Victorian History Showcase (PMI) as a networking event.

## VISITORS

Kelsey organised the roster and EHS is grateful for all the volunteers who assisted the public to see the exhibitions and with their questions on history and EHS.

We opened on 47 Sundays from 6 July to 14 December 2025 and 1 February to 28 June 2026. Total number of visitors was 1353. The Moonee Valley Festival (MVF) was held on Sunday 15 March 2026 with 281 visitors. Excluding the MVF, an average of 23.3 persons, up from 15.2 in the previous year, entered the courthouse.

Sunday and MVF Visitors by Financial Year:



## WEBSITE

There were many attempts to disrupt the website or alter administrator passwords. ReCaptcha for WooCommerce, was installed to deter bots. A serious issue in April 2026 that took the website down and disrupted EHS email traffic, needed Vodien (web host) and Inverto (IT consultant) assistance.

In August 2025, The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation approved the text of the First Nations webpage.