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*the southern*  
**CEMETERIAN**

SMCT NEWS UPDATE | **SUMMER EDITION 2016**

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Bunurong Memorial Park has achieved international recognition as runner up in the American Cemetery Excellence Awards 2016

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND CEO

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Welcome to the Summer edition of the Cemerterian.

We are delighted to share the recent announcement that Bunurong Memorial Park (BMP) was runner up in the 2016 American Cemetery Excellence Awards. BMP is relatively young in its life cycle compared to other entrants, the majority of which are locations with a long history. This outstanding achievement is confirmation of the world class facilities and service offering at BMP - the memorial park of the future.

It has been very rewarding to see the community embrace BMP since its opening earlier in 2016, and it is now the vibrant and active space we envisioned it would become. The evolving service offering is a testament to the dedication and customer centric focus of our teams, for which they are to be commended.

Over recent weeks, SMCT have hosted a

record number of people to the community events held across our locations. In early December, we hosted our annual Christmas remembrance services at both Springvale Botanical Cemetery (SBC) and BMP.

As our communities come together for these remembrance services, we are reminded of the unity that there is in the inevitable experience of death and loss that each of us have at some point in our own lives.

At SMCT we are mindful that there is a balance between the very private experience of grief, and the significant element of the sense of community through mourning. Grief is as unique as the life of the departed loved one, and as such is not a linear process. It does not simply begin at a certain point and end at another.

It is for these reasons that SMCT has been developing the new Centre for Care and Wellbeing that will open in early 2017 at

SBC. This Centre will provide a warm and welcoming space with a broad range of programs and support services. We look forward to sharing these programs with our communities over the coming months as an extension of our service offering.

We wish everyone across our communities a safe and happy festive season, and a happy new year.

Jane Grover  
SMCT  
CEO



Sue Renkin  
SMCT  
Trust Chairman



# THE SOUTHERN CEMETERIAN

## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED BEING A FRIEND OF A CEMETERY?

Not many people are aware of the invaluable work undertaken at Cheltenham Memorial Park (CMP) and Cheltenham Pioneer Cemetery (CPC) by the team of dedicated volunteers at the Friends of Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries Inc. (FOCRC).

Formed on 9 May, 2007 the FOCRC are a not-for-profit community group comprised of people who have a passion for researching, preserving and sharing the stories of Cheltenham's cemeteries.

We took a few minutes for a Q&A session with Rosemary Reddick, President FOCRC, to get to the heart of the Friends' work to raise awareness and appreciation of the Cheltenham cemeteries as worthy assets within the community.

### **What first attracted you to being part of FOCRC group?**

I have many family members who are pioneers of Cheltenham buried at CPC, so I have a genuine personal and emotional attachment, as do most of the Committee. Many members join to access the database to discover more about their heritage.

We have 216 financial members, with 654 on

the database. We're always looking to grow our membership.

### **What would you describe are the main goals of the FOCRC group?**

Our aims are to preserve the history and heritage of the CPC and to engender greater knowledge and understanding of its significance in Melbourne's south-east. In particular, the group are interested in seeing heritage-listed headstones restored at CPC, in an effort to maintain the uniqueness of that cemetery.

### **Which of the group's achievements are you most proud of?**

Without a doubt it would be the 150th anniversary of CPC. The three-day event involved many local dignitaries, Cheltenham Primary School and local businesses. We provided free tours, an unveiling of the oldest burial site and a moving ceremony for a WW1 soldier – Thomas Marcellus Boyle – who has lain in a dirt grave for over 90 years.

### **What would you think cemeteries and memorial parks have to offer local communities?**

They provide places of solitude, peace, reflection and learning, and are places where



Rosemary Reddick - President FOCRC

children, especially, can learn about the past and know who has established the cities and towns they live in. Our tours certainly bring history to life and prove that cemeteries and memorial parks shouldn't be places that alarm or upset adults or children, but should be places where they can wander and learn about others.

For further information, or to become a member of the Friends of Cheltenham and Regional Cemeteries, go to: [www.focrc.org.au](http://www.focrc.org.au)

## THE FIRST WEDDING HELD AT THE SANCTUARY, BUNURONG MEMORIAL PARK

Katie and Michael Matthyssen held their wedding ceremony at The Sanctuary on Saturday 3 December. There was a very special reason that they chose this as their venue, as Katie explains:

"In March this year we lost our son Caleb at the young age of 3 years. We held a very special funeral service at Bunurong, with Ian Gibson from White Dove. Ian then went on to offer me a role at White Dove, and I am really enjoying working in the funeral industry. It was Ian who suggested that we have our wedding at The Sanctuary... and we are very glad we did."

The Cemeterian thanks Katie and Michael for sharing their story with us, and congratulates them on their wedding. We wish them many happy years together.

The Sanctuary provided a beautiful lakeside venue for their memorable ceremony.



Katie and Michael Matthyssen celebrating their wedding held at The Sanctuary, Bunurong Memorial Park

# SUMMER EDITION

## THOUSANDS PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED AT THE ALL SOULS DAY SERVICES

Over the weekend of 5-6 November 2016, SMCT was honoured to host five All Souls Day services across our locations.

Thousands attended to honour the memory of the faithful departed at this significant time of year for the religious calendar.

SMCT was delighted to collaborate with the local parishes for these events. Tripodi Funerals were our wonderful event partner for the Melbourne General Cemetery (MGC) All Souls Day Mass.

The feedback received from the parishes and the community was overwhelmingly positive, with the following received from a family attending the service at Cheltenham Memorial Park:

*"I would like to send you our heartfelt sincere appreciation for hosting the Mass of Remembrance on Sunday the 6th of November. We have attended these services each year as we have many relatives buried at the cemetery.*

*This year it took on a more*

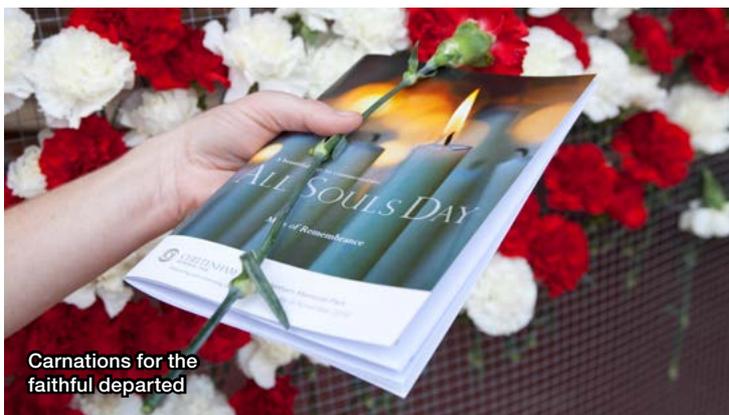
*important meaning to us as my father Michele is resting there too. Attending this service was very important to my mother. This date was etched in the diary... The marquee, the chair, flowers, the priest, music, the service book, afternoon tea and staff in attendance created an exceptional afternoon.*

*We do not take this for granted as we appreciate the work needed for such an event to be organized.*

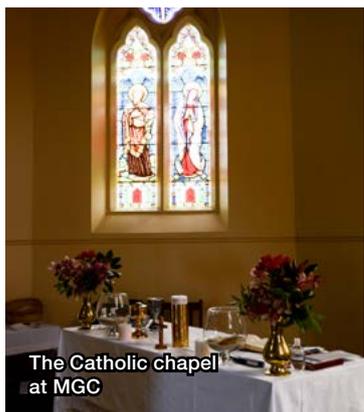
*Sincere thanks, Josie & Natala."*



Candles lit for each of the departed at the Vietnamese Service held at SBC



Carnations for the faithful departed



The Catholic chapel at MGC



Father Bernardi blessing the crypt of the late Father Justin at the Gallery of Angels MGC



All Souls Day at MGC - SMCT team with event partners Tripodi Funerals



The mass underway within the Catholic chapel at MGC



A moment of contemplation before the Mass at MGC

# THE SOUTHERN CEMETERIAN

## INTERVIEW WITH MARIAM ISSA - RESILIENT ASPIRING WOMEN PROJECT

The Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust is delighted to be developing the Children's Community Garden in consultation with the inspirational community leader Mariam Issa.

Designed to be a place for connection and healing, the garden, due to open at Springvale Botanical Cemetery in early 2017, is sure to be influenced by her positive energy and drive.

Mariam comes from an oral culture that has used the wisdom of its elders for centuries. It's appropriate that when she uses various platforms to reach out to all members of the community, she does so as a story teller. A human rights activist, Mariam focuses on supporting the rights of refugees and developing the strengths and confidence of women in Australia and Africa.

Mariam and her family escaped the civil war in Somalia in 1991, fleeing to Kenya ahead of arriving in the largely Anglo-Saxon bayside suburb of Brighton as refugees in 1998. Bridging the culture gap of her new surrounds meant navigating new and often confusing territory. Not one to back down from a challenge, Mariam co-founded the Resilient Aspiring Women (RAW) Project in 2012, converting her own front yard into a social gardening space and welcoming women within her community to connect with her and each other.

We caught up with Mariam to gain further insights into her efforts with her local community, her plans for the future and what personality type RAW would have if it was a person.

### **What has been RAW's key success?**

Breaking barriers and showcasing the presence of community. Connecting with many key and major organisations like Rotarians, Councils, Businesses, Philanthropy, Environment Activists, Community Workers, Social Justice and Social Cohesion Workers, Schools and Universities and many freelance people interested in making a difference!

### **What's the most surprising thing you've learnt about members of the community who frequent RAW?**

Their need for connection, with many of them searching for meaning and harbouring the passion to create.

### **What's the most surprising thing you've learnt about yourself since founding RAW?**

I have learned there is HUGE potential buried in me with a limitless ability to connect and create with others. It's when we slow down and listen with gratitude that we receive more... I also believe I've learned to be less judgemental and more compassionate.

### **If you had one wish for the RAW community, what would it be?**

It would be to replicate a RAW garden in every community!

### ***We wanted to dig a little deeper, and set up a personality quiz for RAW, just for fun:***

**If RAW was a person what would their personality be like?** Nelson Mandela with a personality founded on Unity. Mandela talked a lot about the African word 'UBUNTU'



Mariam Issa - Resilient Aspiring Women

which loosely translates to 'I AM because YOU are - if there is no YOU there is no ME'!

**If RAW was a fashion, what style would it be?** African and Australian inspired, with a fusion of animal prints from both continents!

**If RAW could speak how would it greet everyone?** Namaste - the Spirit in me greets the Spirit in you!

**If RAW was a music genre, what would it be?** Indigenous Aboriginal music with earthy traditional instruments like the didgeridoo.

**If RAW was an animal, which one would it be?** A bear. They stand for strength and confidence against adversity and taking action and leadership. The spirit of the bear indicates using strong ground forces for healing yourself or others. Bears also emphasise the importance of solitude, quiet time and rest. All of that pretty much covers RAW!

## THE CENTRE FOR CARE AND WELLBEING SET TO OPEN ITS DOORS IN JANUARY 2017

Caring for the needs of our community will be taken to a new level when The Centre for Care and Wellbeing opens its doors at Springvale Botanical Cemetery in early 2017.

The finishing touches are being added to The Centre, to create a welcoming and nurturing space for the community to attend programs designed to improve their wellbeing, and assist them when faced with grief and loss.

The programs provided by community organisations will offer a safe place to

connect, share and heal over the common ground of losing a loved one or suffering a great loss.

To find out more or to register your interest in the programs, please contact The Centre Manager, Dianne Lee, via phone: 8772 6111 or email: [care@smct.org.au](mailto:care@smct.org.au). Further details of The Centre for Care and Wellbeing programs can be found on the Springvale Botanical Cemetery website: [www.sbc.smct.org.au/CentreforCareandWellbeing](http://www.sbc.smct.org.au/CentreforCareandWellbeing)



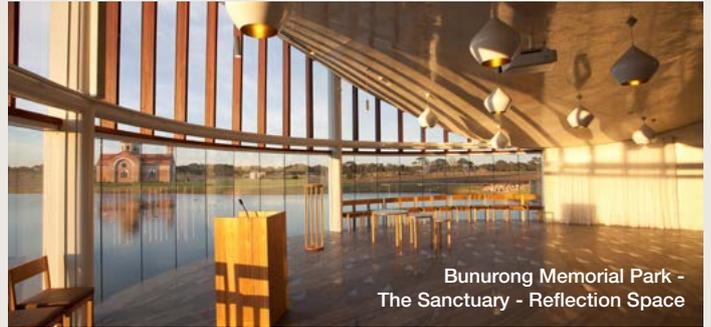
The Community Garden taking shape at Springvale Botanical Cemetery

# THE MEMORIAL PARK OF THE FUTURE RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

The design excellence and community engagement focus of Bunurong Memorial Park (BMP) has received international recognition as runner up in the prestigious American Cemetery Awards 2016.

All facets of this significant development initiative, ranging from the consultation and planning stages through to the evolving service offering and sustainability features, were considered through the judging process.

This achievement is a testament to the foresight of SMCT in anticipating the needs of the community into the future and progressing this innovative project. Likewise, the dedication of all those involved in the Bunurong development program is to be commended in providing our communities with truly world class facilities.



## THE ANNUAL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Over 500 guests attended the twelfth Children's Christmas Remembrance Service held at Springvale Botanical Cemetery on Sunday 4 December 2016.

This special dusk service is an opportunity for families across the community to come together to honour the memory of their loved ones at the start of the festive season over Summer. This year's service was conducted by Celebrant Sally Cant, with carols performed by the Bayside Singers.

The Premier, The Hon Daniel Andrews MP, attended as the local member for Mulgrave, in support of the families across our local communities.



The Premier, the Hon Daniel Andrews MP with Jane Grover CEO and the Milani family at the beginning of the twelfth Children's Christmas Remembrance Service

Lanterns lit during the service for each child

## HUNGARIAN EMBASSY VISIT TO MELBOURNE GENERAL CEMETERY

On 31 October, staff at Melbourne General Cemetery (MGC) were honoured to host His Excellency, Mr Ambassador Dr Attila Gruber and his distinguished colleagues from the Hungarian Embassy to lay a wreath on the grave of Sir Robert Menzies.

The wreath was placed in order to express gratitude for Sir Robert Menzies' assistance and shelter for Hungarian refugees in the years after 1956 which saw an expanded post-war immigration scheme.

It was fitting that such an auspicious occasion, acknowledging the struggles, triumphs and prosperity of the people of Hungary, was held within the beautiful Prime Minister's Garden at MGC.



The delegation from the Hungarian Embassy with SMCT representatives at the grave of Sir Robert Menzies.

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVE BRINGING CHRISTMAS JOY TO STRUGGLING FAMILIES

We're proud to announce this year's Bunurong Memorial Park's Christmas Remembrance Service donations from attendees will be directed towards the 'Merry Mission' appeal.

The Windermere organisation offers programs to support members of the community to overcome challenges such as financial hardship, homelessness, mental illness and disability in order to live positive and healthy lives.

Their 'Merry Mission' appeal assists families in need to enjoy the spirit of Christmas even during the hardest of times. Guests attending the service were generous in their donations of gifts toward the appeal.



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT SMCT LOCATIONS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Saturday 17 December 3pm-6pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Saturday 14 January 3pm-6pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Albert Jacka Memorial Service City of Port Phillip	Sunday 15 January 2pm	St Kilda Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Sunday 29 January 1pm-4pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Saturday 11 February 3pm-6pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Sunday 26 February 3pm-6pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Ching Ming Festival	Sunday 2 April Time: TBC	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Melbourne Food and Wine Festival Visit <a href="http://www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au">www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au</a>	Friday 7 April 6pm-10pm	Melbourne General Cemetery

For further information about SMCT events, please go to our website [www.smct.org.au](http://www.smct.org.au) and follow the link [smct.org.au/events-calendar/](http://smct.org.au/events-calendar/)  
To register your interest to attend, please email [events@smct.org.au](mailto:events@smct.org.au)