

Life honour celebrate



Guests and dignitaries at the Returned and Services League State Remembrance Service - Springvale War Cemetery, Springvale Botanical Cemetery

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND CEO

Today we live in a society where there is immense pressure to surrender to convenience in all aspects of our lives. The ritual of funerals is eroding to a few hours where ashes are scattered with no ceremony and a brief wake is held. People move on without acknowledging the trauma of loss and the impact on society, and the individual, this major life event will cause.

On 11 November, the annual Returned and Services League (RSL) State Remembrance Service was held at the Springvale War Cemetery at Springvale Botanical Cemetery (SBC). It was attended by the Premier of Victoria, The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, and many dignitaries. What resonated with me from all who were present was their firmness of PURPOSE. The RSL Victoria's purpose will continue to ensure it is a most relevant, sustainable and recognised ex-services organisation. It is synonymous with promoting mateship and providing outstanding advocacy, welfare, commemoration and community service.

As the leading advocate for servicemen and servicewomen, the RSL support individuals and families to navigate the trauma of loss with care and compassion,

and work closely in this endeavour with other organisations whose purpose is aligned. SMCT continues to advocate for choice, inclusion, respect and the dignity of human life. We stand against the trend of a final goodbye becoming a matter of 'disposability'.

The Centre for Care & Wellbeing, located in the heart of SBC, was developed to provide a safe haven, where people can take their time on their journey through grief. The Centre was created through the power of observation that loss for many people means isolation, loneliness and disorientation, and that care anchored in compassion was required to counteract the modern push for ever-briefer periods of mourning.

In this edition of LIFE, we have published excerpts of two letters recently received from our community that humbled me and moved me so deeply that I felt compelled to share them with you. They embody the core of this organisation's purpose and the relevance of care and compassion within the modern community.

Our purposed organisation recognises the importance of community empowerment, respect and choice. We honour the dead, and more importantly, support the living

to navigate grief. Through our service offerings, we are listening and responding to the Victorian community during what is for many, one of the most profound life events they will ever experience.

Throughout all of this, SMCT's purpose holds true, that we believe that every person regardless of their religion, culture or personal preference should be free to honour and celebrate their loved one as they choose.

On behalf of myself, the Trust Chair Ms Sue Renkin, the Trust, and the entire team at SMCT we would like to wish you all the best for the holidays and the Christmas Season.

Jane Grover
SMCT
CEO



Sue Renkin
SMCT
Trust Chairman



EVENTS ACROSS SMCT LOCATIONS

SERVICES AND EVENTS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

At Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT) one of our core values is dedication to the community we care for and to our employees who embody our values by taking pride in actions great and small. Nowhere does our spirit of dedication shine brighter than in the services and events held yearly across our beautiful memorial parks. Pivotal to our

community focused approach is our empathy and purpose in welcoming our community to gather and reflect and celebrate life, together.

We hope you enjoy the summary of our events in the montage below. To stay informed of all our future events go to smct.org.au/events-calendar-smct



'Federici' at the Children's Halloween Tour - Melbourne General Cemetery



Restoration of the grave of Surgeon General W.D.C. Williams - Brighton General Cemetery



Ching Ming Festival - Springvale Botanical Cemetery



Friends reconnecting at All Soul's Day - Melbourne General Cemetery



Gourmet food at the Italian Culinary Heritage Tour - Melbourne General Cemetery



Mother's Day Remembrance Service - Bunurong Memorial Park



RSL State Remembrance Service - Springvale War Cemetery - Image; Chris Cassar



Thoughts and Wishes at the Father's Day Remembrance Service - Bunurong Memorial Park



The Most Reverend Archbishop Denis J Hart DD blesses the Saint Padre Pio Stage 2 Mausoleum

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

A SPECIAL COMMUNITY SERVICE HONOURS THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

Over 500 guests attended the 2017 Children's Christmas Remembrance Service held at Springvale Botanical Cemetery on 3 December. Delivered in partnership with Andrews Funeral Care, this was an opportunity for family and friends to bring the spirit of Christmas

to their children's special resting place and reflect on the precious lives no longer with us.

The service, conducted by Celebrant Susan Bent was complemented with songs led by Keenan Te and Imogen

Spendlove. This moving annual event provides a caring and comforting atmosphere, giving everyone within our community a safe place to reflect upon their children alongside others experiencing the grief of losing a child.



A special dessert buffet, provided onsite by
Cafe Vita et flores



Placing Thoughts and Wishes cards



Wendy Gray lights the remembrance candle



A young guest enjoys the Cafe Vita et flores dessert
buffet



Family lights remembrance lantern



Keenan Te and Imogen Spendlove sing beautiful
Carols and moving songs



Macfarlaine family attend the service annually



Siblings light a remembrance lantern



The Gray family at the Thoughts and Wishes tree

SUMMER EDITION

A MOTHER'S TESTIMONY TO OUR PEOPLE'S COMPASSION

"I would like to share a heartfelt testimony from a grieving mother that illustrates the care and compassion our wonderful staff exhibit every day for those experiencing grief.

" I am writing with regards to your staff members and their work ethic and compassion. When my son was first laid to rest, I requested to have his grave filled in due to the settling of the earth. Every single time, the staff came out to fix the issue they took great care with all his flowers and replaced them exactly as they were found and always with such care. It may not seem like a lot to most people, but this is now my baby's home and that they all treat him with so much respect is not lost on me.

A few weeks ago, I was visiting my son as I do every day and your amazing staff were out digging another grave

Her touching words encapsulate what SMCT is all about and illustrate why I am justifiably proud of our people."

- Jane Grover, CEO,
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust.

across from his. A member of your staff went above and beyond when he saw me standing over my son's grave and walked over and offered me a chair. He saw the tears streaming down my face and got me a clean cloth to use. He said some nice words to me and left to continue his work. I have never been so touched and am sure that my son would have smiled down on this young man. This level of compassion is not shown by most people. What an exceptional person.

Please pass this on to your team they can never know how much their care of our son has touched our hearts. ,,

TOURS AND RESTORATIONS KEEP HISTORY ALIVE AT SMCT

As custodians of the cemeteries entrusted to our care, we are conscious of the valuable history recorded within our grounds. The many tours we run throughout the year ensure this history is kept alive. The proceeds from our tours assist to further preserve history through the SMCT Historical Restoration and Refurbishment Fund (HRRF).

Recent restoration works of the Fund were completed on the Clarke family graves at Melbourne General Cemetery. SMCT was delighted to host the unveiling of the plaques for the restored gravesites. In attendance were the Clarke family and organisations that donated towards the project: Janet Clarke Hall and Trinity College

of the University of Melbourne, along with Freemasons Victoria and the Freemasons Victoria Foundation Limited.

The Clarke Family played a very significant role in Victoria's history. Landowner, parliamentarian and philanthropist, Sir William Clarke and his wife Janet Lady Clarke, also a philanthropist, were famous in Victoria as the premier couple in Melbourne in the late 19th century.

Using money raised through the HRRF, the project set about restoring the broken and rusty iron railing and cleaning the stonework of both the couple's grave and the adjacent graves of two young labourers, Jean Henri Petitjean and John Cheyne. These



Front: Jane Grover - CEO SMCT, Celestina Sagazio - Historian SMCT, Ruby Crysell - Trinity College
Back: Margie Richardson (Chair) and Damian Powell (Principal) Janet Clarke Hall

young men were killed by lightning on Sir William's estate. In keeping with his generous character, Sir William paid for their graves.

EXTENDED CAFÉ OPENING HOURS AT SPRINGVALE

Make the most of Daylight Savings with extended opening hours at Café Vita et flores at Springvale Botanical Cemetery. The café will be open until 6.00pm from Thursdays to Sundays during the Summer months.

This is the perfect excuse to unwind after work or gather family and friends and join us for special fine wine and dining experiences procured by our very own Head Chef, Allan Koh.



THE CENTRE FOR CARE & WELLBEING, A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

We are sharing this moving testimonial from a regular attendee to the Centre for Care & Wellbeing, because it captures beautifully, the values of this inclusive haven.

"Your grief may be new and raw, ripping you apart. It may be embedded in your soul because you have kept it inside for so long. There seems to be no end to the grief that consumes you, and the so called 'light at the end of the tunnel' appears elusive and at times patronising. You want to be alone, but you need to be somewhere where someone understands and you are not judged, somewhere you can be nurtured and feel safe."

The Centre for Care & Wellbeing has become a lifeline for people who are suffering from broken hearts, but it is a place where broken hearts can begin to

mend. All are made welcome as friends and kindred spirits.

If you wish to take part in an art class, help knit a quilt for charity, sit quietly in the corner and tackle a jigsaw puzzle, read, enjoy new friendships, take part in various grief sessions, of which there is no pressure to attend, walk around the beautiful botanical gardens, become involved with the Movement and Stretch exercises and be rewarded for your efforts with the most relaxing Meditation, both with lovely Lisa, or if you just want to escape from all the pressures you are feeling, and just BE, then this is definitely the place to come.

Whoever you are, wherever you are from, whatever your loss, you are respected, and your pain is honoured here. There are no expectations,



your grief is yours to share or to hold close to you, it is personal. This is not just a place of receiving, but a place of giving, of mutual understanding, creating strong bonds with all who are fortunate enough to find this amazing sanctuary.

Thank you, Dianne and the team, for all that you do and for all that you are. You are such a blessing."

SMCT RUNNER-UP IN THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA AWARDS!

We are delighted to share with you that the SMCT staff Activate Health program resulted in a Runner-Up award in the 'Best Wellbeing Program' category at the 25th National Safety Council of Australia (NSCA) Awards.

With approximately 120 entries, this is a great achievement and testament that a purposeful organisation can only remain so by investing in the health and wellbeing of the people who care for members of our community across

every one of our sites, every day. Results were announced on 12 October 2017 at a Gala Lunch at Doltone House, Hyde Park, Sydney. Congratulations to our People and Capability team for their continued championing of our people's development.

The NSCA is an independent, non-profit, member based organisation with a vision focused on evolving safe and sustainable workplaces throughout Australia.



STOPPING TO SMELL THE ROSES ACROSS SMCT

The rose beds across SMCT are currently in bloom and well worth a stroll within our grounds. Springvale Botanical Cemetery has over 30,000 rose plants alone, giving the warm morning air a deliciously sweet feel. You may wish to visit the perpetual rose garden at Cheltenham Memorial Park, enjoy the roses that line the iconic scalloped wall at Brighton General Cemetery, or visit the newly-

redeveloped Bunurong Memorial Park's classic areas, complete with traditional and modern rose varieties. Stunning varieties abound in the collection of 35,000 roses that are cultivated and nurtured by our Head Rosarian, Rolfe Stok and his team. Learn more about the flowers that have inspired poets and romantics with Rolfe's Top 6 'Life Hacks' for Roses at HonouringLife.smct.org.au



CCANSW CONFERENCE COMES TO SPRINGVALE AND BUNURONG

The annual Cemeteries & Crematoria Association of NSW (CCANSW) Conference was held in Melbourne on the 16th and 17th November. SMCT were proud to host this important industry event and have Springvale Botanical Cemetery (SBC) and Bunurong Memorial Park (BMP) be the focus of the conference. The CCANSW stating their choice came down to, "Both cemeteries offering industry best practices," and that, "SMCT's dedication to excellence was recognised on the global stage and it is that focus and endeavour that has set SBC, BMP and SMCT at the fore-front of this industry in Australia."

The conference sessions were delivered across two days within the function facilities at BMP and SBC. Sessions included keynote presentations from SMCT executives; Jane Grover CEO, and Angela Uilderks Director - Customer Experience, sharing their expertise



Above: Delegates of the CCANSW Annual Conference - Bunurong Memorial Park
Right: Jane Grover, CEO SMCT meets delegates

in 'Embracing the Experience Economy'.

The conference delegates enjoyed tours of both sites and catering onsite from Café Vita throughout. The overwhelmingly positive feedback received has highlighted how these multi-purpose community assets cater to the needs of our multi-faceted community as they were designed to do.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT SMCT LOCATIONS

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Sunday 28 January 1.00pm - 4.00pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Sunday 4 February 1.00pm - 4.00pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Jazz at Café Vita et flores	Sunday 25 February 1.00pm - 4.00pm	Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Vanitas Arthouse Experience	Saturday 17 - Sunday 18 February Go to mgc.smct.org.au to register your interest and let the mystery and intrigue begin!	Melbourne General Cemetery

For further information about SMCT events, please go to our website www.smct.org.au and follow the link smct.org.au/events-calendar/
*To register your interest to attend, please email events@smct.org.au