

Neighbour News

Spring
Edition

August 2025
Issue 128

Connections - the community that we build

Inner West Neighbour Aid is all about making connections and the positive impact this has on our clients, staff, volunteers and community.

Our newsletter is one form of connection but our programs offer many more ways to make new connections and maybe enduring friendships. It can start as simply as with a smile and "hello".

Science will confirm that social connections trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain relievers and mood boosters, contributing to feelings of happiness while reducing stress and feelings of isolation. Anecdotally, even our voices change after a great catch-up.

In July, I visited the *I Made It!* exhibition. What an inspiring display of treasures from our clients. Each piece told a story of courage and love, which made me smile as I wandered around the corridors of the McGlade Gallery.

One piece that had a special connection for me was the painting produced by our Living Well with Dementia group, titled 'It feels like growing'. How profound a statement. Maja's article on page 7 is a must read to learn more about this amazing event.

This month, we explore how we are connecting and more importantly, how you can join in!



Stella Angelo, Editor (volunteer)

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Inner West
**Neighbour
Aid** 

Organisational News

Networking Opportunities

During the month of July, we were approached by, and met with representatives from the offices of the Hon Anthony Albanese PM, as Federal Member for Grayndler and Jo Haylen MP, State Member for Summer Hill. It was a pleasure to meet with Jo Haylen MP, Cate Kerrigan, Tim Murray and Fergus Taylor. We thank them for their curiosity about our programs, for being present and listening to our stories, feedback and suggestions on My Aged Care.

@johaylen post: @innerwestneighbouraid is a fantastic local organisation helping seniors stay independent, active, and connected. From gardening services to dance classes and social outings, they provide essential services that brighten lives and strengthen our community. We're so lucky to have passionate staff and volunteers who go above and beyond every day to make sure all of our neighbours feel supported and included. Thank you for everything you do! ♥



Donations

Thank you to Tae Ahn, Head of Options at VivCourt Trading, who donated his bonus to Inner West Neighbour Aid, in line with VivCourt's social impact and giving policies. In 2023, Tae donated \$10,000 and in 2025, Tae donated a further \$2,500.



Tae receives our newsletter by email and the pictures and stories keep him connected to our community. We are honoured to be selected by Tae and asked him what draws him to Inner West Neighbour Aid and what "connection" means to him.

"It feels like Inner West Neighbour Aid focuses a lot on quality of life for seniors, which is the part that tends to go unnoticed. There are lots of charities focusing on kids, autism, foreign aid etc, which are all great, but for some reason, quite often, seniors are only looked after when it's already too late - when they are sick. I can see that their programs support people to stay independent, build friendships and thrive."

"As for what connection means to me, I guess it's someone you can share your emotions with. How awful would it be, if you had news, whether good or bad, and you had no one to share that with."



Inner West Neighbour Aid participated in Grill'd Leichhardt's Local Matters Program in June and placed 1st, receiving a \$300 donation. A big thank you to the Grill'd community.

Allison Yee-Brogan, General Manager

Acknowledgement of Funding

Inner West Neighbour Aid is primarily funded by the Department of Health and Aged Care. Although funding has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

Organisational News



National Carers Week will run from 12 to 18 October 2025. It is a time to recognise, celebrate and raise awareness about the 3 million Australians who provide care to a family member or friend.

Carers are people who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental health condition, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged. Anyone can become a carer, at any time.

National Carers Week is an initiative of Carers Australia, funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and coordinated with the assistance and participation of the National Carer Network.

Inner West Neighbour Aid was successful in an application for a small National Carers Week Grant and this will go towards our Living Well with Dementia Workshops.



How can our non-subsidised Help at Home program help you? Our services include:

- Lawn mowing
- Hedging
- Pruning
- General garden tidy up, weeding etc
- Pot replanting
- Cleaning and tidying up balconies
- Irrigation
- Preparing and laying new turf
- Lawn and garden fertilizing
- Herbicide spraying
- Laying mulch
- Pressure cleaning
- Window cleaning, ground level only
- Small painting jobs/touch up paint
- Moving furniture

Call Jo, Jake and Mikali ~ our friendly Help at Home team on 9799 5099.

After



Before



In a Neighbour's Garden

Connections in the Garden

Connections are as important to the health of your garden as they are to you. No one is an island and we all need to interact with others to maintain mental and physical health. Much of this season's newsletter will highlight the importance of social connections. I want to put a spotlight on the amazing natural connections that exist in nature and our gardens.

The Connection Between Plants and Insects

Our gardens are bustling ecosystems where plants and insects interact to survive and thrive. Understanding these connections enhances the appreciation of your garden and promotes a healthy environment.

Pollinators: Observe the bees, butterflies and even some flies visiting your flowering plants. They are crucial pollinators, transferring pollen from one flower to another, enabling fruit and seed production. Plant a variety of flowers with different shapes and colours to attract a diverse range of pollinators.

Food Webs: Many insects rely on specific plants for food, while others prey on plant-eating insects. Ladybugs feasting on aphids are a classic example of this natural pest control at work. A single ladybug can eat up to 50 aphids per day.

Shelter and Habitat: Plants provide shelter and breeding grounds for various insects. It is important to always have a variety of plants growing to provide a home for your bugs.

Relationships and Pest Management

Spring is a time of growth in the garden. Plants and animals, good and unwanted. Patience, understanding and observation will help you manage the pests without the need to use strong chemicals.

Vigilance is Key: Regularly inspect your plants, especially the undersides of leaves and new shoots, for early signs of pests like aphids, snails and slugs.

Hand-Picking: For snails and slugs, a good old-fashioned hand-pick at dusk or after rain is often the most effective method. If they get too much, use pet friendly pellets that break down without leaving long lasting chemicals.

Water Blasting: A strong jet of water can dislodge aphids and other soft-bodied insects.

Companion Planting: Certain plants can deter pests. For example, planting Marigolds near vegetables can help repel nematodes and other harmful insects. Nasturtiums can act as a trap crop, drawing aphids away from other plants.

Homemade Sprays: A simple soap spray (a few drops of dish soap in a spray bottle of water) can be effective against aphids and other soft-bodied pests. Test on a small area first.

Encourage Beneficial Insects: Ladybirds, lacewings, and predatory wasps are natural pest controllers. You can now order beneficial predatory bugs from 'Bugs for Bugs' (Phone 07 4646 2628). Plant flowers that attract good bugs eg Dill, Fennel, and Coriander.

In a Neighbour's Garden

Plant in Focus - The Ant House Plant

I recently visited the Royal Botanic Gardens and was privileged to be shown the Ant House Plant. This plant, perhaps more than any other I know, exemplifies the deep connections possible between the animal and plant kingdoms.

This plant grows in tropical North Qld on the branches of Melaleuca trees. It develops natural hollows and tunnels for a particular species of ant to make its home. The plant makes use of the ant dropping for fertiliser, while the ants protect the plant from leaf eaters and provide a safe place for the ants to raise their young. But that's not all. The Apollo Jewel Butterfly lays its eggs on the plant, which smell like ant eggs, so the ants take them deep into the plant to provide a safe place for the eggs to hatch and produce new butterflies.



Connections are an important part of a healthy life. Appreciating and contributing to the connections in your garden benefits everyone and everything.

Stuart Blundell, Garden Projects Coordinator

A Seasonal Recipe

Felicetta's Torte di Mele (Italian Apple Tea Cake)



The Garden Aid team visited our lovely client Felicetta, who treated us to her delicious apple tea cake. From the first bite, I knew I had to get the recipe. It's a simple, comforting cake passed down from her mother when Felicetta arrived from Italy in the early 60s.

With lemon season in full swing, it's the perfect time to use fresh lemons in this recipe. Their zest adds a tangy twist that complements the sweet apples beautifully. A big thank you to Felicetta for generously sharing this special family favourite with us.

- 150g caster sugar
- 200g self-raising flour
- 3 eggs
- Zest from 1 lemon
- 1 espresso coffee cup full of olive oil
- 1 apple (peeled, cored and thinly sliced)

- Preheat oven to 160°C
- Separate egg whites from yolks in separate large bowl, beat the egg whites until fluffy
- Add sugar, egg yolks, lemon zest and olive oil to the egg white mixture all while continuing to mix
- Sift flour in and continue beating until combined
- Pour into cake tin of choice. Felicetta's pick is a cake tin with hole in centre to allow the cake to cook thoroughly in the middle
- Lay apple slices on top of cake in a circular pattern, slightly pressing them in so they are half exposed
- Bake cake in oven for 30 minutes until the top is lightly browned. Top with sifted icing sugar and enjoy!

Melanie Athan, Garden Aid Team Leader

Client Services

New Aged Care Act Update

Aged care in Australia is changing for the better. The new Aged Care Act will make aged care safer, fairer and more respectful. These are some big changes, and big changes take time.

The new Aged Care Act will now start from 1 November 2025.

This will give providers more time to set up new systems and train and prepare workers. It also gives clients more time to understand what's changing. Until the new Act starts, the way you receive care and services will not change whether you receive services in your own home or if you live in an aged care home.

For more information about the new Aged Care Act, visit [MyAgedCare.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

Source: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/videos/new-aged-care-act-starts-1-november?language=en>

2025 Client Survey – Help Neighbour Aid continue to grow and improve

Our Client Survey is conducted every 2 years to gather information about your experiences with us. We would be very grateful if you can fill out this Survey and return it in the reply paid envelope by 28 August 2025. It should take around 15 - 20 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous but if you would like us to respond personally to your feedback, feel free to include your details. If you need help with this Survey, call us on 9799 5099

Neighbour Aid is looking for Home Visiting or Dog Walking volunteers

Would you like to support someone to be more socially connected or find a weekly activity to keep you active?

Home Visits are usually once a fortnight for up to one hour. Enjoy a cup of tea and share stories about the past, talk about music, travels, gardening or cooking. We are looking for volunteers close to Ashfield, Cabarita, Concord West and Five Dock. Male and female volunteers needed.

Do you have 30 - 60 minutes a week to walk someone's furry companion? We are looking for a dog walker for a lovely little dog in Strathfield South.

Emma Torres, Client Services Coordinator

I Made It!

Celebrating Creativity, Connection, and Community at the *I Made It!* Exhibition

A sense of excitement filled the air as people got off the bus and entered the gallery space. Many arrived not quite knowing what to expect, but as they wandered through the exhibition space, their curiosity quickly turned to amazement. Conversations sparked, smiles appeared, and people lingered at each piece, taking time to absorb the incredible detail, heart, and creativity in every artwork. One comment overheard summed it up beautifully: *"I can't believe how skilled these works are—you'd never guess just by looking at someone!"*



The *I Made It!* exhibition ran from 19 June to 4 July, offering nearly 3 weeks of celebration, inspiration, and community connection. The opening event, held on Wednesday 25 June, was a standout moment. It included a touching program of storytelling and shared wisdom, with Sarah and Monica joining a panel to speak about their life journeys and the lessons they've gathered along the way. Their words were heartfelt and resonated deeply with many in the audience.



We also had the privilege of hearing a beautiful poem and reflection read by Lois. This was followed by a delicious lunch and an opportunity for everyone to mingle, share stories, and meet new friends. It was more than just an exhibition; it was a space where creativity met community.

A Celebration of Life, Experience, and Artistic Talent

One of the most powerful aspects of the *"I Made It!"* exhibition was the way it challenged the outdated notion that creativity belongs only to the young. Too often, the talents, perspectives, and potential of older adults are overlooked or underestimated. This exhibition turned that idea on its head by shining a spotlight on the extraordinary artistry and life experience of older generations.

From deeply personal solo works that reflected individual journeys, to vibrant collaborative pieces that spoke of connection and shared purpose, each artwork told a story. The collection radiated perseverance, passion, and the kind of wisdom that can only be shaped over a lifetime. You could feel the strength of the human spirit.

It was also a wonderful opportunity for our Social Support team to work together—something we don't often get to do. Events like these remind us of the importance of collaboration, and I'm grateful to Emel, Chantel, Ruben, and Mikali for their tireless dedication, creative input, and the many hours they spent helping this vision come to life. Your passion truly made the difference.



I Made It!

Moments That Mattered

Some of the most memorable parts of the day weren't planned, they happened naturally, through spontaneous connection and shared joy.

One beautiful example was a new friendship formed between Lois, Vasugi and Anne. These three women had never met before the exhibition, but quickly bonded when they discovered they were all wearing handmade clothing. It was a lovely reminder that creativity doesn't just live in our art, it's also stitched into what we wear, and how we express ourselves.



Another heart-warming moment came when the entire room joined in singing happy birthday to Johann. He shared that he hadn't celebrated a birthday



with others in quite some time, and the surprise sing-along brought a huge smile to his face. It was a small gesture that meant the world to him and to many who witnessed it.

One deeply touching moment came during a quiet conversation with Saras, who had contributed many pieces to the exhibition. When asked how she felt seeing her work on display, she paused for a moment, visibly moved, and said it was "unbelievable" and

something she never could have imagined. She was glowing with pride, and the moment was made even more special by the presence of 3 generations of her family: her daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter, all there to celebrate her achievement.



To everyone who participated, contributed, volunteered, or simply came along to share in the joy: thank you. *I Made It!* was more than an art show. It was a celebration of courage, creativity, and community. A reminder that life as you age can still be filled with purpose, passion and new beginnings.

As shared by a contribution to our wisdom tree:

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."

Thanks to Strathfield Council, who funded this exhibition and the team at ACU's McGlade Gallery for their professional guidance and support.



Maja Sorensen, Social Support Coordinator

Outings Highlights

When: Every Thursday and some Wednesdays.

Pick up times range from 9.30am to 11.30am. Drop off between 2pm to 3.30pm

What: Excursions and lunch at a range of venues incl. cafes, clubs, long drives and galleries

Cost: Transport \$15 and cost of lunch

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

Hooray! Ladies and gentlemen, we made it through winter, spring has sprung, and it's starting to warm up again. How exciting!

Our spring calendar is brimming with fun outings and great places to visit and eat. If you are new to Inner West Neighbour Aid, we extend a very warm welcome — you've joined at a great time. Outings are a fantastic way to get out and about, see new places, enjoy great food and make new friends.

Some highlights from our winter calendar included not one, but two trips to beautiful Bondi Beach. Even the cold couldn't keep us away. We enjoyed a high tea in Camden one week and were inspired the next by our visit to the Art Gallery of NSW. We bought more pies than we could carry at Loftus Pies and said goodbye to winter at the Auburn Botanic Gardens' Cherry Blossom Festival.



September

Spring is here and so is the fun!

We'll be heading to a beautiful riverside café in Emu Plains called The Laughing Boy Cafe (\$25+). We're also going to the cinema again — put your name down if you're interested. The movie will be announced the week of the outing, so you can decide then if you'd like to attend.

We'll have a joint lunch with Strong Together clients at a fabulous butcher restaurant in Newtown, Macelleria (\$20+).

Many of us love the beach and water and if you haven't heard by now— so do I! We've organised two outings that will take us out, on the seas.

We'll be heading to Long Reef Golf Club for a delicious lunch on the Northern Beaches (\$25+).

We'll also catch a short ferry from Balmain to Barangaroo for lunch at The Canteen, a food court with multiple options (\$15+).



October

We'll kick things off with a visit to Clarendon Tavern, a fan favourite (\$20+). Please note: This outing includes a long drive, approximately over an hour from the last pickup.

We have an exciting new outing, a 45 minute concert at the Conservatorium of Music (gold coin donation), followed by lunch at a nearby café called Piccolo Me (\$15+).

We'll head south to the Sutherland Shire for lunch at Cronulla RSL (\$25+), and the following week we'll go north for lunch at Club Palm Beach (\$20+).

To wrap up the month, we've booked a fantastic restaurant, Oliveto, for a lovely fine dining experience. Please note: This outing features a higher-end menu and will be more expensive than usual (\$35+ a meal).

Outings Highlights

November

Can you believe we're already talking about November? This year has flown by!

We have planned some amazing outings to help farewell 2025 in style.

- For the first time, we'll be visiting the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) in Moore Park for a private, 60 minute accessible tour of the stadium. Followed by lunch in the Entertainment Quarter (\$25+).
- We'll also visit the  **Illawarra Beekeepers** at Sutherland Association to learn all about bees — followed by lunch at Hazel Kitchen and Bar in Gymea.
- Due to wet weather earlier in the year, we missed out on visiting the lovely Jade Teahouse, (\$20+) so we've brought it back.
- And finally, for one of our last outings of the year — you asked for it, and we listened. We're heading to Ashfield RSL to feast on their buffet (\$20).



Active Outings

Approximately once a month, we host an **active outing**, which is marked by this symbol:



These outings are ideal for clients who feel comfortable engaging in some physical activity, such as walking longer distances, uphill, or sometimes uneven paths, without much assistance.

If you'd like to attend an active outing but feel unsure, don't hesitate to contact us for a chat. If it's not for you — no problem! We have many other wonderful outings that are suitable and just as enjoyable.

Ruben Hedges, Social Support Worker



Trolley Talk

When: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 9.30am to 11.30am, during school term

Where: Ashfield Mall

Cost: Client transport \$15

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

Intergenerational Connections

Ever fancied having a team of people help you grocery shop? Well now your dreams have come true.

Trolley Talk is our exciting, fun, intergenerational program where you can grocery shop with the support of students from Ashfield Boys High School.

We will pick you up then head over to Coles, Ashfield Mall. You'll have an hour to grocery shop, visit the chemist or fruit shop and tick off your shopping list. The best bit, is you don't have to do it alone. Students volunteering from Ashfield Boys High School will join you for a chat, and to support you with your shopping. No need to worry about heavy bags or even pushing the trolley.

The Ashfield Boys High School students have commented on how much they enjoy meeting and assisting our clients. I have enjoyed working with the students and seeing the reciprocal nature of the program in which the students and clients get so much out of this amazing program.



Ruben Hedges, Social Support Worker

Alive & Kicking

When: Every Tuesday from 11.15am to 1.30pm. Bring your own lunch..

Where: Strathfield Community Centre

Cost: \$7 Client transport if required: \$15

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

Movement and Connection Through the Seasons

Fleur continues focusing on promoting healthy ageing and improving everyday function through her exercises and we're seeing tangible results. One client recently mentioned she's finding it easier to get up and down from a chair—exactly what Fleur's repeated squat exercises are designed to achieve. The classes remain varied and challenging, with Fleur drawing from her broad experience to incorporate everything from salsa dance steps to complex polyrhythm clapping.

Inner West Neighbour Aid recently purchased some new Pilates balls. We've discovered fun ways to use them, from coordination exercises to group ball games that require focus and quick reflexes. Of course, balls don't always go where they're supposed to—and when they bounce across the room, the inevitable laughter and encouragement from the group reminds us that fun is just as important as coordination.



Fleur began our winter sessions in July/August in standing positions to help everyone warm up. Demonstrating how important it is to understand how the seasons affect our bodies and energy levels. These thoughtful adaptations keep the program responsive to what participants need.

Two guest speakers will join us in the coming months. Pascale, an oral health specialist, will run a session on maintaining oral and general health. We'll have two physiotherapists from Essence Physio sharing practical advice on healthy ageing, preventative movement and maintaining mobility.

Our regular favourites—bingo, trivia, and arts and crafts with the Rivendell School students will continue in spring. These activities have become important parts of the program because they consistently bring people together while keeping minds active.

Chantel will continue to facilitate the program, with Ruben facilitating once a month.

Chantel Jurcevic, Social Support Worker

Stand Tall

When: Every Thursday from 11am to 12pm

Where: CSP Gym Ashfield

Cost: \$17 Client transport if required: \$15 Non-Client: \$27

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

Stand Tall: Connection in Action.

Our Stand Tall group at CSP gym in Ashfield connects through their shared love of exercise. These senior athletes dedicate time each week to strengthen their major muscle groups central to living mobile and independent lives.



Our group has grown in size again, as new members sign up and commit to the changing range of exercises provided in 6 weekly blocks, by Patch, our trainer.

While most of our time is spent in the gym itself we do meet every couple of months to have a coffee and a chat after our workout. CSP Gym is located on the Wests Ashfield Leagues site, so there are a variety of options for a coffee and a snack. Relaxing together away from the rigours of our exercise routine allows everyone to connect in a different way. Conversations move from family to dogs, to travel and grandkids, then on to movie recommendations, or good books to read and recipes to try.



There is a mutual respect for everyone's dedication to the discipline of weight training and that intangible camaraderie that grows between strangers as they connect over a common goal.



Neighbour Aid focuses on providing opportunities for these connections to grow and Stand Tall is just another one of the options we provide.

DanceMoves

When: Every Friday from 11.30am to 1.00pm

Where: Woodstock Community Centre, Burwood

Cost: \$7 Client transport if required: \$15 Non-Client: \$22

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

A Connection Through Dance

As the music begins to play we are transported. We connect with our teacher Karen, eyes on her graceful movements, our own bodies mirroring the shapes and spaces she creates. A combination of immersion in the sound and concentration overtakes the group, as we, untrained dancers, emulate our trained teacher's forms. Each song takes us to another place, both physically and emotionally. Fast paced brain training brings eruptions of laughter as we connect with our shared attempts to follow patterns of quick snaps, taps and flicks. The tempo changes and slow moody tunes invite us to connect with our bodies as we swirl and fade into a world of memories; warm days with friends or special nights with families and partners.

The music creates a connection to each other and ourselves, to a world beyond the walls of the room, a world of shared humanity with a language of memory and imagination. Mistakes become part of the glue that binds us, connecting our flawed humanity in a place where perfect is irrelevant.

The class ends. We have stretched and lengthened, laughed and sometimes cried. We are connected to each other, to the music and to this shared space that exists for all who attend DanceMoves every Friday. For in this one brief hour a precious connection is formed and strengthened that fills and affirms our spirits for the week ahead.



Emel Jurd, Social Support Worker

Strong Together

When: Every Tuesday and Wednesday from 11am to 1.30pm

Where: Croydon Park Club

Cost: \$7 Client transport if required: \$15

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

How Do We Connect?

There are so many ways we connect with each other. One of the simplest being through our eyes. A quick glance or a lingering gaze can convey a thousand words, words of support, comfort, love or rebuke. I remember the withering look my mum would throw us if we were misbehaving. That look meant business! There were looks of concern too, when someone was sick and looks of love and pride when we did remember to behave! Do you remember a particular look your mum or dad would give you when you were growing up?

Another way we connect is through the gift of a smile. All of us have given or received a smile that connects us to another human being for a moment or a lifetime. A smile says; "I see you and I like what I see". It can be the smallest movement of our lips or a broad toothy grin, but the connection is instant and the message is loud and clear. A smile transcends language and creates an instant bridge of companionship, acceptance and connection. It reminds us we are not alone. Many smiles and new connections were shared at Strong Together at our recent intergenerational program with MLC School.

At Strong Together, many non-verbal cues connect friends and strangers alike. They are often the beginning of something new, an invitation to connect in a more meaningful way. Of course deeper connections take time and at Strong Together we provide a supportive and welcoming space for such connections to grow. Strong Together is a place where people are able to see each

other regularly to share interests, conversations and common goals. As we exercise, learn, make and talk together we build meaningful connections of companionship, understanding and friendship. Inner West Neighbour Aid creates a supportive environment for people with a wide range of life experiences, personalities and cultures to connect over a cuppa, an outing, a shared interest or concern. These connections give meaning and purpose to our days and allow us to share our stories and interests. They connect us to each other and our community and help focus our lives firmly in the present, where the gifts and meaning of each day reside.

Emel Jurd, Social Support Worker



New Connections, a Conversation with Stella

Our clients' journeys start with one step

When my mother became widowed, I watched as her world narrowed. A normally confident lady, she hesitated in trying new things. If only I had known about Inner West Neighbour Aid.

So I asked our clients, Dorothy and Denise, about their experiences with Neighbour Aid:

- What attracted you to join Inner West Neighbour Aid?
- How important are the connections you have made? Were these surprising?

Dorothy's Journey

Quite some years back, my husband was unwell when he saw a small advertisement in the local paper (back in the days when we actually had a local paper) advertising subsidised lawn mowing services and that is how we first became involved with Inner West Neighbour Aid. We continued for a few years just being 'lawn mowing' clients until my husband passed away some 9 years ago. While talking to Roman (who was the Garden Aid Coordinator at that time), he suggested that I might like to explore the more social programs on offer.

That conversation changed my life, as it made me aware that Inner West Neighbour Aid was a lot more than just a gardening service. I went on a few social outings and then joined the Stand Tall exercise program when it was first introduced. I met so many great people and enjoyed both the exercise and the company so much that I quickly joined the Alive & Kicking program followed by DanceMoves when it started.



Denise (L), Dorothy (R)

These 3 programs have brought me into contact with a number of other like minded people and resulted in very enjoyable friendships being formed. After each class I always feel a lot better and honestly couldn't tell you whether it is a result of the exercise or the great company. Denise is one example of the friendships that I have made. She is always happy and smiling and her upbeat mood is infectious. At DanceMoves a good sense of humour is definitely a 'must have' as we all try hard to turn our inner baby elephants into dainty elegant ballerinas.

Denise's Journey

I had 4 falls in one year and on my third fall I had to have stitches to the side of my head. I was feeling light headed, dizzy and lethargic and was worried. My confidence was going down in getting out and about on my own.

That was when I decided to do something to strengthen my body and improve my balance. I called My Aged Care who helped me to attend DanceMoves through Inner

West Neighbour Aid. Quite quickly I noticed increased changes in my balance, strength and confidence.

First day was a bit scary, I didn't know what to expect, but everyone was quite welcoming and very friendly. I now always look forward to my DanceMoves sessions and find the class very uplifting, with friendly staff, enjoying conversations over a cup of tea. I have got a few very helpful tips from Dorothy.

Editor's note: It seems our programs are stepping stones to taking control, becoming more independent and visible in the community.

Stella Angelo, Editor (volunteer)

5 Senses Garden Workshops



When: Every Monday from 11am to 1.00pm. Light lunch is provided.

Where: 5 Senses Garden Rhodes Park, Concord West. Entrance via Killoola St.

Cost: \$7 Client transport if required: \$15 Non-Client: \$27

Please call us on 9799 5099 to book in.

1 September:

Nutrition for Healthy Ageing

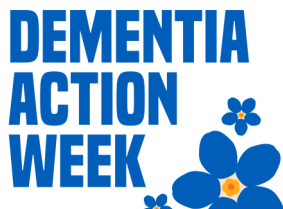
Join Tori, Head Culinary Nutrition Specialist from Grams of Health, for an interactive nutrition workshop designed specifically for healthy ageing. This dietitian-led session will explore practical cooking strategies for solo households and preparing smaller meals, while highlighting the benefits of seasonal eating.



15 September:

Dementia Awareness

For Dementia Action Week, we welcome Anne Tunks, Dementia Advisor and Psychologist from Sydney Local Health District. Anne will share valuable insights about early warning signs of dementia and practical prevention strategies for daily life.



22 September:

Seeds to Trees

We welcome the pre-schoolers from next door for some spring equinox gardening. A perfect way to celebrate the changing season with our cutest neighbours.



29 September:

Cultural Dress & Stories

Come dressed in your cultural clothing and celebrate the rich diversity within our garden community and share your stories.



13 October:

Community Greening

Our popular Community Greening session returns! As always, we'll be exploring the connections between people, plants, and places while working together in the garden.



20 October:

Yoga with Kristen

Join Kristen for Yoga and Movement in the garden. Kristen will guide us through accessible and conscious breathing, movement, and relaxation techniques that work for everyone.



27 October:

Paint Your Own Pot

A relaxing morning painting terracotta pots to take home. Using colourful paints, we will create our own designs.

Express your creativity while making something useful for your garden or windowsill.



5 Senses Garden Workshops



3 November: Food Appreciation Club, Exploring Spices

Food Appreciation Club returns with a focus on the wonderful world of spices. Drawing on the collective wisdom within our group, some people will share their knowledge about spices that might be unfamiliar to others. We'll taste foods featuring different spices and discover new flavours together. Who knows, you might find a new favourite spice to take home to your kitchen.



10 November: Art Therapy with Karen

Karen returns, bringing her warm energy and passion for therapeutic creativity. This session focuses on the healing benefits of art-making rather than the finished product - it's about the process, expression, and joy that comes from creating. No artistic experience necessary!



17 November: Community Cooking with Maja

Maja returns to the garden kitchen to demonstrate a recipe shared by one of our seniors. It's a wonderful chance to learn someone else's cherished recipe while enjoying the stories and memories that come with it. We'll sit down together to share the delicious results, celebrating the culinary wisdom within our garden community.



24 November: Seeds to Trees & Spring Wrap-up

Our intergenerational program returns as we welcome the pre-schoolers to wrap up spring and prepare for the warmer months ahead. There's a chance Marnie might bring along her pet bunny for everyone to meet. Stay tuned - anything is possible when our energetic little Inner West Neighbour Aid friends join us in the garden.



5 Senses Garden Workshops



Reflecting on Winter Warmth and Welcoming Spring

Winter at the 5 Senses Garden proved that community spirit can warm even the chilliest Monday mornings. Each Monday offered new opportunities for creativity, learning, and laughter that brought us together and strengthened the connection within our garden community as we transition into spring with renewed energy.



Our art therapy session with Karen was particularly magical. We sat in the sun and crafted paint brushes from natural materials, adorning feathers with colourful beads and wool that transformed them into what looked remarkably like magic wands. The session took an unexpected turn when we found ourselves dancing to the Bee Gees, wielding our handmade brush-wands as dance partners. The "blind drawings" created during our therapeutic art session with Karen in autumn, along with the lanterns we made with Alice, were proudly displayed at the *I Made It!* exhibition - a wonderful opportunity to share our garden flavoured creativity with our wider community.



The Food Appreciation Club lavished in cheese tasting—goats cheese, smoked cheddar, brie, and swiss. Everyone shared sensory reflections about the different tastes and smells, and I shared some cheese facts along the way. Ling's Tai Chi sessions got us moving despite the winter chill, coaxing us out into the sunshine for gentle movements and a bit of singing.



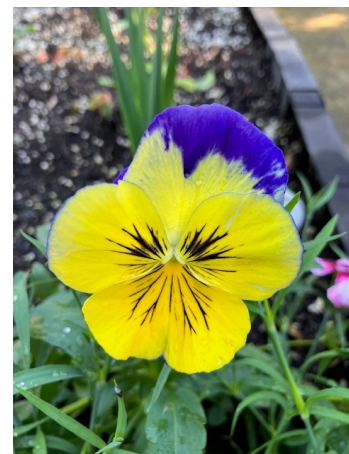
5 Senses Garden Workshops



Christmas in July brought out everyone's fun competitive side. Two teams were formed: The Reindeers" and "Santa's Grannies" (their choice of names, not mine!), and battled it out in rounds of Christmas trivia. The Reindeers scraped a win by half a point, though both teams celebrated equally with hot chocolate and shortbread biscuits. Everyone came dressed in Christmas colours and we treated ourselves to a proper hot meal of roast chicken, chips, and salad instead of our usual sandwiches.



We have a good mix of activities lined up for spring. Seeds to Trees returns with our preschool neighbours joining us for spring equinox planting, and we have everything from a nutrition workshop with Tori from Grams of Health, to Cultural Dress & Stories sessions where people can share the heritage behind their traditional and cultural clothing. We'll also have yoga with Kristen Buckley, and community cooking with Maja to round out a season that promises something for everyone in our garden community.



Living Well with Dementia Workshops



For people living with dementia and carers.

When: 1st Thursday of the month, 11am to 1pm.

Where: 5 Senses Garden Rhodes Park, Concord West

Cost: \$7 for clients with CHSP funding referral. Public Participant: \$22

Please call us on 9799 5099 or email mikali@iwna.com.au

4 September: Exploring the Coal Loader, Waverton and a local lunch

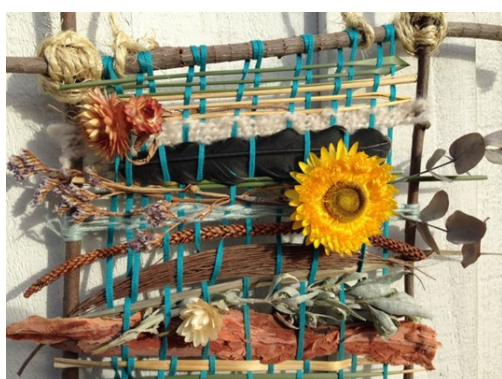
We're heading to the Coal Loader followed by lunch in the local area.

Transport available if required, at \$15 per person. Meet at Cintra Park Netball Courts, Concord (all day parking). Lunch at your own expense. RSVP required. Please call 9799 5099 or email mikali@iwna.com.au



6 November: Bush Looms

Celebrating the colours and textures of spring in the garden, we will be weaving a tapestry from homemade looms. We might even spin a yarn or two while we go!



2 October: Carers Week Art Therapy and lunch

The focus is on our carers as we celebrate National Carers Week. Art therapist Karen, will help us turn attention to ourselves and enjoy creative play. Followed by a special catered lunch.



This event is supported by Carers NSW with funding from the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice.



Mikali Anagnostis, Social Support Worker

Living Well with Dementia Workshops



Mindful Moments

Despite the chill of winter, the Living Well with Dementia Workshops have been full of warmth and new connections. Each month, the garden has come alive with vibrant activity, and no moment captured this spirit more than our joyful intergenerational workshop with a lively new cohort of pre-schoolers. Singing, movement and plenty of laughter filled the garden, as our young friends taught us new songs and we discovered some shared favourites.



The group channelled the spirit of the garden into a stunning banner for the *I Made It!* exhibition. After a mindful walk, we gathered to share the colours, sounds, and sensations from the garden that bring us calm and spark optimism. One member of the workshop commented on the feeling of vitality when she is in the garden, noticing how she takes on a sense of the life around her, "it feels like growing, like things are alive".



Another week, we turned our attention to our bodies with a seated yoga class lead by the wonderful Dympna from Creating Balance. Dympna helped us find postures that were comfortable and enjoyable and taught us easy ways to integrate more movement into our day.

As the season unfolded, so did the connections between our group. Whether it was through a shared memory sparked by a familiar flower or a spontaneous duet during song time, the garden became a space where meaningful connections could grow. We found moments to exchange stories and support, often finding common ground in small details—a bird call, a childhood rhyme, the texture of a leaf.

These moments reminded us how relationships can deepen and a sense of community can thrive through simple, shared experiences.

Mikali Anagnostis, Social Support Worker

Volunteers

Welcome to New Volunteers

Davorka Bilic, Narelle Butler, Fiona Feeney, Anne McNabb, Radhika Shrinivas.

Ashfield Boys High School Students: Caleb, Lennox, Marlow and Shahan.

MLC School Students: Aditi, Amelia, Audrey, Aurora, Beth, Caitlin, Camille, Charlotte, Clare, Ella, Evangeline, Francesca, Freyja, Hana, Lexie, Lucinda, Matilda, Nayana, Olivia and Sophia.

MLC School Executive and Staff: Sarah Jauncey and Sarah Alden.

Rivendell School Students: Alina, Benjamin, Clarissa and Emma.

Rivendell Staff and Support: Danielle Morris

Volunteer Recognition Awards

Margaret Lergessner first made contact with Neighbour Aid in July 2023 as a DanceMoves client and accepted the role of volunteer board member, client representative in October 2023. Margaret attends monthly board meetings, strategic planning sessions, meetings with local politicians and is often a speaker at organisation events. Margaret adds her insights and offers professional feedback to the board so they can govern with a client focus. Margaret is an excellent role model and breaks the stereotype of slowing down as the years progress. She is a shining example of being involved in community, continuing social and professional connections and communicating gratitude and compassion.

Margaret was nominated for Burwood Council's 2025 Volunteer Recognition Awards. The awards presentation was held at Southern Cross College in Burwood on 22 May and officiated by Mayor of Burwood, John Faker and Federal MP, Sally Sitou. There were 4 categories: youth, adult, senior and group volunteers. Across all categories there were 33 nominations.

Margaret was the winner of the senior volunteer category and received a certificate for her nomination and a glass plaque. We are so proud of Margaret and are inspired by her humility, generous spirit and life of compassion and service. Congratulations Margaret, you are a deeply valued member of our community.



Allison Yee-Brogan, General Manager

Volunteers

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week was celebrated in May. The theme for 2025 was 'Connecting Communities', recognising the power of how volunteering brings people together. We acknowledge the spirit of connection and the incredible impact our volunteers have in building a thriving and inclusive community at Inner West Neighbour Aid.

To celebrate National Volunteer Week our volunteers were invited to join us for a Pasta and Pizza Party at I Gladiatori in North Strathfield. Our evening started with a Fun Facts Quiz which involved a Q&A, lots of laughter and a bit of mayhem. It was such a lovely atmosphere, sharing stories and delicious food, a great chance to catch up with each other, have some fun and say a heartfelt thank you to our fabulous volunteers.



Karen Paige, Client and Volunteer Intake Officer

Something to look forward to



Neighbour Aid Xmas Party - Save the Date - 28 November 2025



You're invited to a

Tinsel and Tees ~ Xmas T-Shirt Party


Friday 28th November 2025
11am – 2pm
Burwood RSL
96 Shaftesbury Rd, Burwood

\$25 Xmas lunch (clients)
\$30 Xmas lunch (carers and plus ones)
\$15 Client transport (if required)

Theme / Dress: Wear a festive T-shirt!
Home-made, thrifted or jazzed up with
tinsel, glitter, baubles or iron-on
decorations

Call 9799 5099 and book before 21 November

SEPTEMBER 2025


Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 5 Senses Garden Nutrition for Healthy Ageing with Grams of Health	2 Alive & Kicking Surprise! Air Dry Clay Strong Together	3 Trolley Talk Ashfield Boys High Air Dry Clay Strong Together	4 Stand Tall Outing: Laughing Boy Cafe Living Well with Dementia	5 Dance Moves
8 NO PROGRAMS	9 Alive & Kicking Rivendell School Macelleria Strong Together	10 Outing Macelleria Macelleria Strong Together	11 Stand Tall Outing Cinema	12 Dance Moves
15 5 Senses Garden Dementia Awareness with Anne Tunks, Dementia Advisor and Psychologist	16 Alive & Kicking Trivia Hot Meal + MLC School Strong Together	17 Trolley Talk Ashfield Boys High Hot Meal + MLC School Strong Together	18 Stand Tall Outing Long Reef Golf Club	19 Dance Moves
22 5 Senses Garden Seeds to Trees	23 Alive & Kicking Guest Speaker Bingo Strong Together	24 NO PROGRAMS - STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY	25 Stand Tall Outing @ Canteen @ Barangaroo 	26 Dance Moves
29 5 Senses Garden Cultural Dress & Stories	30 Alive & Kicking Bingo Trivia Strong Together			

OCTOBER 2025

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1 Outing to The Paper Mill Liverpool Strong Together Decorating frames	2 Stand Tall Outing: Clarendon Tavern Living Well with Dementia	3 DanceMoves
6 NO PROGRAMS - PUBLIC HOLIDAY	7 NO PROGRAMS	8 NO PROGRAMS	9 Stand Tall Outing Concert @ the conservatorium	10 DanceMoves
13 5 Senses Garden Community Greening	14 Alive & Kicking Rivendell School Strong Together Decorating Frames	15 AGM—INVITATION ONLY NO PROGRAMS	16 Stand Tall Outing to Cronulla RSL	17 DanceMoves
20 5 Senses Garden Chair Yoga with Kristen	21 Alive & Kicking Trivia Strong Together Hot Meal + MLC School	22 Outing to The Grounds of Alexandria Strong Together Hot Meal + MLC School	23 Stand Tall Outing to Club Palm Beach	24 DanceMoves
27 5 Senses Garden Paint Your Own Pot	28 Alive & Kicking Bingo Strong Together Bingo	29 NO PROGRAMS - STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY	30 Stand Tall Outing to Oliveto (Meals \$35+)	31 DanceMoves

NOVEMBER 2025

Inner West
NeighbourAid 

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3 5 Senses Garden Food Appreciation Club: Exploring Spices	4 Alive & Kicking Speaker: Physio Swap and Share Strong Together	5 Trolley Talk Ashfield Boys High Swap and Share Strong Together	6 Stand Tall Outing: SCG Tour  Living Well with Dementia	7 Dance Moves
10 5 Senses Garden Art Therapy with Karen	11 Alive & Kicking Rivendell School Rowers on Cooks River Strong Together	12 Outing: Rowers on Cooks River Rowers on Cooks River Strong Together	13 Stand Tall Outing Illawarra Bee Keepers	14 Dance Moves
17 5 Senses Garden Community Cooking	18 Alive & Kicking Trivia Hot Meal + MLC School Strong Together	19 Trolley Talk Ashfield Boys High Hot Meal + MLC School Strong Together	20 Stand Tall Outing Jade TeaHouse	21 Dance Moves
24 5 Senses Garden Seeds to Trees & Spring Wrap-up	25 Alive & Kicking Bingo Bingo Strong Together	26 NO PROGRAMS - STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY	27 Stand Tall Outing Ashfield RSL Buffet	28 Inner West Neighbour Aid Christmas Party Burwood RSL

Outings are extremely popular! Call us to book in on 9799 5099