

VWA Newsletter

September 2026

VICTORIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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AGM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2026

May I offer a very warm welcome to everyone today, especially on such a chilly day. A particularly warm welcome to our two new residents, Chris and Meg.

I am filled with such gratitude for the home in which we meet in today. When one visits, the love and care expressed by all those that live and work here is palpable.

Today I would like to express appreciation for all these lovely people. The residents both in the house and units here in Glen Iris always seem so happy and caring of each other. Lovely neighbours and loving friends. Recently I was at an MSO concert and came across a group of friends from VWA units enjoying the concert together.

Kay Coady, both a Unit Holder and Board member, along with Janet Pilkington, the Chair of the Unit Holders committee, regularly arrange and cater for events such as New Year's Eve and Australia Day celebrations. The staff at The Heights are universally loving and caring.

Wendy Renehan, as General Manager, leads with the warmest of smiles and a matching dedication to the care of residents and staff alike. Her dedication to Christian Science shines through her every action.

We continue to be blessed to have Josh Kenworthy as Care Coordinator. He gives tirelessly to ensure that The Heights is truly home for all our residents. Josh leads a wonderful band of dedicated carers who go about their duties with such sweetness and gentle care.

Josh has provided valuable training sessions for the care staff as well as ongoing training in the workplace.

We are so grateful for a number of healings supported through the work of the care staff, Care Coordinator and the visiting Christian Science Nurse. There is a high standard of loving care in a Christian Science atmosphere

where there are close working relationships with both Christian Science Practitioners and families.

Josh is finalising, with the General Manager, renewed policies and procedures documentation. This has been a mammoth task, and for this we are exceedingly grateful.

Jennifer Drysdale joined the VWA this year as Residence Facilitator. Jennifer is a dynamo and has instigated new house keeping systems that have increased efficiencies without in any way reducing the quality of the care for our residents.

The weekly menus are enticing and innovative while meeting each resident's need. Frozen meals and soups are available to purchase at a very reasonable rate for unit holders who may wish to have a break from cooking. One initiative is to cook all biscuits and other baked goods in house. Believe me they are scrummy!

There is also a monthly fish and chips night available for all house and unit residents. We are also grateful Jennifer has brought to the VWA her many years' of experience in asset and property management, as well as in maintenance and compliance matters which results in efficiently managed resources. The Board has really appreciated Jennifer's wise counsel on many matters.

We are especially appreciative of Robyn Saynor's organisation of so many wonderful activities for the Heights Residents. The activities have included film and music showings; poetry reading and writing; themed collections shared; art and craft sessions; afternoon tea on the lawn; flower arranging; sing-alongs and special themed meals, some with games and dress themes. On one special occasion, Evie Hamer-Smith, one of our lovely carers, gave a ballet demonstration as part of a ballet themed afternoon.

Staff have also assisted with off-site outings such as visiting special gardens, parks and Christmas lights.

We are most grateful for the dedication of Katy Hood who manages and directs the gardening company that does regular upkeep work. Katy also maintains and improves our main gardens and supports unit holders with their gardens.



VWA Chair: Betty Walters

Again, this year may I express my appreciation for all the hours Board members give to the VWA. Along with a long monthly meeting members also give time to sub- committees such as Finance and Governance, Care, Gardens and Maintenance.

This year we farewelled Val Heath with a celebratory afternoon tea to express our appreciation for her years of service as a cook for many years. Anyone who has tasted her wonderful cooking will realise how blessed residents have been over those many years.

We also express our appreciation to Sarah Haycox who we farewelled as she returned to teaching after her management of the kitchen providing delicious meals and treats.

New legislation regarding retirement villages has been recently enacted. The VWA has always been most principled in all matters regarding life leases and rental costs so this will have little impact, but we are taking legal advice to be sure we are acting totally within governmental requirements.

Leslie House has recently been fitted with split air-conditioning systems on the first floor, roof repairs carried out as well as upgrading

of insulation. The ground floor will be fitted with new air-conditioners next. Residents at Leslie house have been living with extensive scaffolding but the result will be well worth it. The gardens at Leslie house have been called a little natural haven in suburbia providing shade to relax outside.

As part of forward planning the Board is working on a master plan for the future. We are looking at upgrading this community room and the residence. There is now much improved internet coverage in the Residence and Community Room. This has improved access to online Christian Science resources such as Bible lessons, periodicals and lectures.

This year we upgraded our security lighting; new security screen doors have been welcomed by unit residents and the VWA has personal alarms available. We are continuing to see if further steps need to be taken.

This year a lovely stained-glass window in the main residence, which is heritage listed, was refurbished. We are fortunate to be the owners of such a lovely building at the centre, a home much loved and needed.

We have replaced the call system in the Residence and introduced motion detectors. A new lifter for care help has been a welcome addition enabling greater ease and comfort for our residents when needed.

It has been a joy that a number Christian Science members have enjoyed the beautifully appointed rooms in the residence for rest and study, as well as short stays in units to attend Association meetings, holiday or visit family.

In conclusion may I share with you a poem that appeared in the Christian Science monitor in 1943. It was written by Sara King Carleton. It is what the VWA is about, home and love.

NO PLACE APART

Love is no secret, inaccessible place,
But sunlight in the opening of a door,
Accustomed thresholds, and the trodden floor,
The shared, the known,
the undeliberate grace.

Love is the constant remembered thing,
Changeless in exile, changeless in the drift
Of years that move on
Calendars, that shift
Season and time, but not the heart's
own spring.

It is no place apart - it is a home
To which all wanderers of the earth may come,
Needing no map or compass, but the sure
Knowledge that this forever will endure.

A confident serenity that stays
The quiet centre of our whirlpool days.

Betty Walters

Betty Walters (Chair)



Left to right: Nick S, Heather S, Leonie H-S, Chris S, Beverley B-M & staff member Jen Drysdale at Alowyn Gardens.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2025



Rob Kitchingman - Treasurer

The work of the VWA will remain on a loving principled foundation as we “Hold perpetually this thought, — that it is the spiritual idea, the Holy Ghost and Christ, which enables you to demonstrate, with scientific certainty, the rule of healing, based upon its divine Principle, Love, underlying, overlying, and encompassing all true being.” p496:15 Science and Health.

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Revenue and Other Income $1,566,008 (2024: $1,614,708)

Operating Expenses $1,592,082 (2024 $1,429,034)

Profit / Loss -$26,074 (2024 $185,674)

Additional Income: Profit on sale of shares $205,778 (2024 $292,766)

Revenue

Income was less than the prior year mainly due to a drop in Life Lease recoverable income.

Rental income for Leslie House and the Residence are slightly higher his year reflecting rental demand.

Dividends, investment and interest income were maintained ($428,826) compared to the prior year ($428,707).

Expenses

Expenses have increased against the prior year. We note the following expenses have moved:

Depreciation expense is higher this year ($149,028) than last year ($64,826) due to a revaluing of assets last year now being depreciated. This expense is a not cash expense, in other words although it deceases the surplus it does not decrease operating funds.

Employee Benefits, including Salary and wages (and superannuation), are higher this year ($1,035,695) compared to last year ($982,265) primarily due to award increases.

Statement of Financial Position

Bank balance has decreased by $212,397, but liquid funds remain at $1,691,851, sufficient to any life lease repayments or staff liabilities that may arise.

Land and Buildings were revalued this year to match the Site Value (Land) and Capital Improved Value (Buildings) provided by the council in their rates notices and the buildings are now being depreciated from the new value.

Financial Assets are higher this year ($6,685,797) than last year ($5,947,805) due to the rise in their share values during 2025. The importance of the income derived from these assets significantly supports the work of the VWA.

Unit lease liability this year is ($2,803,179) compared to last year ($3,028,772) mainly due to the repayment of the Unit 11 life lease.

Summary

The VWA can subsidise the cost of accommodation and provide very high levels of care thanks to donations ($499,675), investment income ($428,826) and profit on sale of shares ($205,778) without which the VWA would have run at an unsustainable deficit. What a demonstration and how grateful we are for the support of the field. Thank you. For 2026 the VWA is developing major refurbishment plans to modernise the residential wing, nursing facilities and the activities room to better accommodate our and the field's needs. The continued support of the field and demonstration of infinite supply will be a focus for 2026.

The care and accommodation in an uplifting Christian Science atmosphere that the Victorian Welfare Association provides is invaluable. The VWA provided the venue for the Christian Science Nursing Conference in 2026. The conference was a wonderful opportunity for professional development, sharing of solutions and inspiration for the field, as well as VWA care staff.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"
(James 1:17).

"Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need. It is not well to imagine that Jesus demonstrated the divine power to heal only for a select number or for a limited period of time, since to all mankind and in every hour, divine Love supplies all good.
"Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health 494:10

Thank you all for supporting this important work.

RW Kitchingman

Robert Kitchingman (Treasurer)







A fabulous spread after our AGM for guests and staff.













Christmas in the Sunshine











METAPHYSICAL TALK

THE HEALING CHRIST

Thank you to the Board of the Victorian Welfare Association for the invitation to talk with you today. And thank you to everyone here for taking the time to be here.

It's worthwhile to remind ourselves why we are Christian Scientist. What has kept us engaged often through a number of decades?

In essence, it's the healing Christ, which we have all experienced so frequently. And so deeply. It has become very much part of what and who we are.

Our Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, defines the Christ in various ways. In the Glossary of Science and Health, as we know, it is defined as 'the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error.' (p 583) Elsewhere, it is defined as 'the Spirit which Jesus implied" (p 213), 'the divinity of the man Jesus', …'his divine nature, …', the godliness which animated him… ' (p 26) and 'the spiritual idea of divine Love'. (p 213)

In my case, often I feel this healing Christ the first thing in the morning. When the Lesson Sermon is finished, I take and make time to just sit and listen. Listen and feel. On behalf of me and my family, anyone I may be assisting through prayer, my extended family and community. And, in fact, the world.

The sacred sense of God's All-in-allness takes over. And I realise a bit more than previously that there is nothing going on other than God, Love, good. 'All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation,' (S&H p468) says our Leader so precisely. And uncompromisingly. And so accurately.

Matter disappears in the face of God's allness. So too does disease of whatever kind. So too does inharmony of whatever kind. 'All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all'. (Ibid)

At such times, it's good to take time to just rest with this healing Christ and allow it to go to work in our consciousness. To allow the Christ to do its work. To '…let the reign of divine Truth, Life and Love be established in me…' as it says in the Church Manual



Peter Julian, CS - Our Guest Speaker

(p 41). To do more letting, than striving. More feeling than thinking.

In fact, so often in my experience, it's a feeling thing more than a thinking thing. Not a feeling thing as we may feel through the human senses, when, for example our footie team has a win. Instead, it's a deeply and intuitively felt knowing with certainty.

I bet all of us have had this experience before.

We are all seasoned Christian Scientists here. We all pray, intuitively knowing God's All-in-allness to differing degrees. However, in our prayers we have a choice to make.

The first choice is actually a well utilised pitfall.

Mistakenly, we may start by accepting the reality of the problem that we are praying about, whether this is a physical condition, a troubling relationship or a world which seems to have become a bit topsy turvy.

Alternatively, and in the way of Christian Science, rather than following a human therapy model, we can start with intuitively and feelingly knowing God's allness. And Love's perfection, and the consequent perfection of Love's expression. Then rest with this spiritual sense.

We haven't accepted the reality of the problem.

We have started by accepting the allness of God. And the consequent nothingness of the apparent problem.

How does all of this convert into healing?

Let me give you an example from my personal experience.

I have written about this in a Sentinel article called 'Living in the Kingdom of God here and how' (July 22, 2024). Some of you may have read it.

I had been sick and confined to bed for several days when I called a Christian Science practitioner and explained the situation. 'But that's not you, Peter Julian,' the practitioner immediately said. 'You live', and then he paused as if trying to find the right words to describe Truth, before adding the single word, 'everywhere.'

I was stunned. In fact, I was in tears and immediately put the phone down, perhaps through self-consciousness. 'How could I have been so wrong for so many years?' I asked myself. 'How could I have thought I lived in a half cubic metre of space all this time?' Immediately, the symptoms drained away like a plug had been pulled on them.

Three times that day I went back to those same truths and bathed in their reality. In their truth. Each time I was reduced to tears. And that was the end of the sickness.

So often, we are tempted to allow in the physical paradigm, then try to eliminate something from it. Then think that if physical normality is restored, everything is good.

Instead, we need to reject the physical paradigm itself. In fact, it's not really possible to fix a material thing, is it? Why not? Because there is no physicality at all - anywhere.

Instead, we need to go to perfect God with perfect man. Then, as we see and accept this as the fact, the natural result is what we call healing.

What about a more recent example from my public practice of Christian Science, which I pass on with the permission of the person involved.

A little before my name appeared in the Christian Science Journal as a practitioner, I received a WhatsApp message from Africa from a Christian Science nurse saying that such and such was ill and asking for prayer.

Immediately, thought turned to the allness of God. And His perfection. And this man's perfection. I stayed there for some minutes, not really using any words, but just knowing it, in feeling kind of way. My prayer was not especially long or complicated. But it was very pure and uncompromising.

A response to the WhatsApp message was sent, saying that I was praying and asking for a report the next day.

48 hours later, I received the requested report via the Christian Science nurse that the man was up and about, had eaten a normal breakfast and that his symptoms of malaria had disappeared.

I was surprised by the use of this word, malaria. So I re-read the original WhatsApp message. I hadn't even taken in the label applied to this particular claim of illness. Instead, the material hadn't been allowed in. Rather, thought rested immediately and happily with the spiritual ultimate. That is, perfect God with perfect man.

We aren't little mortals struggling to understand God and enact healing. Instead, we are the spiritual expression of God naturally individualising the completeness and perfection of God.

If a loved one were maligned and had lies told about them, wouldn't we go in to bat for them? Wouldn't we politely, but ever-so-definitely point out to the attacker, that they were mistaken? Wouldn't we ever-so-politely point out that our long experience of this loved one was one of joy and happiness and respect and goodness and decency etc?

Why? Because by going in to bat in this way, we are expressing our love for this person. Likewise with God. Correcting the lie and replacing it with truth is our way of loving God and or fellow man. It's our way of acknowledging the presence of the 'Adorable One,' as our Leader defines God at the start of the spiritual interpretation of the Lord's Prayer in Science and Health. (p16) This is so very different to starting with disease or discord and trying to work our way up from there.

Of course, the Christ was symbolised most clearly by Jesus. He identified with the Christ more than

anyone before or since. It's valuable for us also to identify with the Christ, that perfect spiritual and complete idea of God. Rather than as a moral struggling to understand a distant God.

If we identify with the Christ from the start, it removes stress. Eliminates fear. And a sense of responsibility. It fills up our cup. And puts us in a prime position to see Truth manifest in our experience.

Of course, sometimes we are stretched out. But when we feelingly identify with the Christ in the way described, we know that the natural result is what we call healing.

If a situation has been going on for a long time, we need to be patient with ourselves. Let's not fall into the mistake of thinking that, if this is the case, the Truth has suddenly become something other than Truth. Let's trust that, as we feel the presence of the healing Christ, we can feel more of it. We can get better at it. Moments can convert into sequences of seconds, which can convert into 10 second blocks. Which can convert into half minutes. And so on.

Gradually, we allow the presence of the Christ and our identification with it to take over. To the degree that we feel the Christ, the healing is taking place. Or more accurately, to the degree that we feel the Christ, we are allowing God to bring thought into line with Himself where there is no condition to heal.

Even the Master Christian, Jesus, continued feelingly knowing his unity with God and the allness of God, good, after his wonderful healing work of others was finished. As we know, the blind saw. The lame walked. The crazy were restored to mental soundness. Lazarus was raised. So too was a young man carried on his funeral stretcher. A man's severed ear was restored.

We might think that with all this healing work under his belt there was nothing much left for Jesus to do. But when Jesus was crucified and put in the tomb, he continued to set an example for us. He continued to be the Way-shower, the Great Teacher. He was safe in the sepulchre and he was private. That is, he was safely and securely in private audience with the divine Principle, Love. Knowing and feeling his way forward.

Consciously, he was claiming his exemption from not only the crucifixion experience, but the entire mortal story. He was claiming his sonship with the Father Mother, Spirit. He was acknowledging God as the Controller of all, and the only substance of all, and that he himself was perfectly united with God all along. The Christ did not need resurrecting, because it had never been crucified and had never died. The Christ did not need bringing back to perfect mortality because it had never been mortal, and it had never gone anywhere. The Christ, the perfect spiritual likeness of the Father Mother was always at one with the infinite Father Mother.

When Jesus came out of the sepulchre, he continued to pray and feel and identify with Christ. Notably, he still had holes in his hands and side, but very quickly he lost all material sense of limitation. He was not, and had never been, confined to a half cubic metre of matter in time and space. Just as I hadn't.

Instead, as was shown to me in an insignificant way in comparison, he was increasingly experiencing the fact that he lived everywhere as much as Spirit lived everywhere and was All.

Even before his resurrection Jesus knew he was here as much as there, without any discernible passage of time or particular effort. This was shown when the boat he entered was immediately at the destination (John 6, 21).

After his resurrection and departure from the sepulchre, his exemplary demonstration continued. His understanding that he lived everywhere (as much as Spirit lived everywhere and was All) accounts for the fact that he was able to walk very quickly after his feet had apparently been so damaged by nails and hammers. He even walked unaided with some of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24: 13-35.) A distance of about 27 kilometres, or from here in Glen Iris to Dandenong.

That's what accounts for the fact that locked doors were not able to keep him outside if he needed to be inside (John 20, 19-23.)

All of these characteristics point to his acceptance of the fact that he had always been at one with the perfect Father Mother. Living in the kingdom of

heaven now. Which is the only place man, that is, you or your loved ones, can ever live.

And it was only in the eyes of the onlookers that Jesus ascended.

As Mary Baker Eddy says so tellingly: 'This dual personality of the unseen and the seen, the spiritual and material, the eternal Christ and the corporeal Jesus manifest in flesh, continued until the Master's ascension, when the human, material concept, or Jesus, disappeared, while the spiritual self, or Christ, continues to exist in the eternal order of divine Science, taking away the sins of the world, as the Christ has always done, even before the human Jesus was incarnate to mortal eyes'.
(S&H, p 334)

So, let's begin with the solution in our healing work. That is, let's begin with perfect God, Spirit, and perfect man, you. Or perhaps more accurately, let's begin with perfect God, Spirit, with perfect man, you. Jesus did. So too can we. We can get better at it too.

Let's identify wholeheartedly with the Christ, that perfect, spiritual idea, man, of God's creating. Let's allow the Christ to take over our prayers and our lives. Let's recognise that we are already in 'the eternal order of divine Science' where Christ '[takes] away the sins of the world, as Christ has always done, even before [we were] incarnate to mortal eyes' (ibid.) as our Leader says.

Let's just patiently and trustingly and with great hope do this without fearing. Let's let the heart fill with all the fullness of spiritual being which eliminates all else and praises God.

Peter Julian, CS



Beverley B-M enjoying the garden



Another get-together



A welcome visitor



Leonie H-S and Robyn plan their nexr trip..

THE YEAR SO FAR...

What a busy time we've been having at The Heights! We have enjoyed a wide variety of activities in our beautiful indoor and outdoor settings, and have welcomed new some new faces into our home. Robyn Saynor has taken on the wonderful role of creating and coordinating a varied and engaging range of activities, bringing plenty of interest, enjoyment and connection to the community. We are incredibly grateful for the time, enthusiasm and care she brings to each activity.

Regular events continuing this year include our monthly fish & chips evening and Cinema Club, as well as our new 'Cuppa & Chat' sessions – in which residents, unit-holders and staff can share a hot drink and a story (often accompanied by a delicious homemade treat). These sessions have proved very popular, often going on for well over an hour, with participants sometimes bringing artwork or personal items to show to the group.

A second new addition to the activities program are our 'Good Readings' sessions, in which members of our community have an opportunity to share their favourite books. These sessions have been fascinating and popular, with participants swapping books and sharing their insights. We have been told that these sessions provide an excellent opportunity for connection, discussion and learning.

As with every year, The Heights has continued to grow in its vibrancy and spirituality. We would like to take an opportunity to thank Josh Kenworthy and the rest of the wonderful care team for the indispensable prayerful and practical work they do for us every day. Largely thanks to the team, The Heights continues to be a welcoming and stable refuge, firmly rooted in the precepts of Christian Science. We see and feel their expressions of Love, Principle and Soul every day.

As those who live in our community will have noticed, we have been working to provide more opportunities for fun, activity and connection. Here are some of the activities we've enjoyed since the last newsletter was published in December:

- Poetry readings
- Cuppa & Chat
- Art & Craft sessions (inc. Easter bonnet decorating!)
- Cinema Club
- Christian Science lectures
- Fish & Chips night
- Good Readings
- Sewing workshop
- Park & garden outings
- Themed barbecues & dining room roast lunches for all residents
- Annual General Meeting (AGM) and afternoon tea

A key aspect of many of our new events and activities is fabulous catering by the kitchen team, led by Jen Drysdale. Jen has brought years of expertise to The Heights, and she plans and cooks delicious and varied meals for us every week. The kitchen staff worked exceptionally hard to cater for a substantial crowd at our recent AGM, and we heard countless compliments on the quality, variety and flavour of the food.

Special thanks to Katy Hood, who continues to maintain our beautiful gardens and grounds on a weekly basis. The lush and varied plants and trees which surround us are one of our biggest assets at The Heights, providing splendid natural beauty, and a sense of peace. We are so grateful for the work she does in curating and maintaining our green spaces.

Finally, our weekly newsletter the Heights Happenings continues to be very popular among unit-holders.

Our 'Weekly Happenings' has now blossomed into a colourful two-or-three-page spread, featuring stories, photos from outings, spiritual quotes, quizzes and more! As with its newsletter with creative ideas from Robyn, Echo Marriott and Wendy, The Heights continues to become more vibrant, enriching and rewarding every year.



Are you a Financial Member of the VWA?

Thank you to all supporters who renewed their subscriptions for 2026.

We are grateful to those of you who chose to take out Life Memberships. These members do not need to return the renewal form each year.

Annual Membership is $20 and Life Membership is $300.

Renewal forms for 2027 will be sent out in March next year with the invitation to the 2027 AGM. If you would like to subscribe sooner or would like a copy of our new brochure, please email us at the address below, or phone to speak to the General Manager, Wendy Renehan, or one of our administration staff members.

Are you thinking of life-leasing at The Heights?

Be our Guest

Stay in a furnished unit for 2 nights, on us.

We'd love to welcome you to experience Retirement Village life amongst fellow Christian Scientists.

Phone 03 9885 2202 to speak to Wendy Renehan.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS AS AT JULY 2026

Chair
Kerri Callaway

Treasurer
Robert Kitchingman

Kay Coady

Merilyn Hart

Leonie Tidd

Betty Walters

ADMINISTRATION STAFF

General Manager
Company Secretary
Wendy Renehan

Care Coordinator
Josh Kenworthy

Residence Facilitator
Jennifer Drysdale

Administrative Officer
Robyn Saynor

Accountant
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