



Buda Historic Home & Garden

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026





PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BUDA HISTORIC HOME AND GARDEN INCORPORATED

A.B.N. 53 208 103 038

Registered No. A0011259S

Buda Historic Home and Garden acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country, the land and waters on which we live and work). We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their elders both past and present.

We acknowledge the generous contribution and greatly value the support of our volunteers without whom we would have difficulty operating at our current level.

We also appreciate the continued guidance and assistance of
Henry (Hal) C. Curwen-Walker
Solicitor/Principal

Held in the Garden Room at Buda
42 Hunter Street Castlemaine

Monday 17th August 2026 at 4.00 pm

WHO WE ARE

Buda is held by the Trustees of the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum on behalf of the public of Castlemaine and the State of Victoria. Buda Historic Home and Garden Inc. (Buda Inc.) is an incorporated association registered as a charity and is a deductible gift recipient.

Buda Committee of Management 2025-2026 () = expiry date of term of office

The **Committee** is elected from the membership group of Buda Inc at the Annual General Meeting of Buda Inc. If you wish to have more involvement in the management of Buda, you can join this group by being nominated by an existing member of Buda Inc. The committee provides governance to the organisation, developing policies and procedures, overseeing compliance, finance and risk management.

Committee members for 2025-26:

Officers

President:	Bronwyn Rudolph (2026)
Vice President:	Peter Lukaitis (2026)
Treasurer:	Peter Weston (2026)
Secretary:	Pat Grumont (2026)

Ordinary Members:

Colin Tracey (2027)	Faye Shortal (2027)
Eirwen Stevenson (2027)	

Shire Council Representative: Tony Cordy

Buda Staff

Sarah Frazer	House Curator
Ryan Garratt	Garden Curator
Vivienne Hamilton	Chief Operations officer
Robin Walls	House Cleaner
Andrew Harvey	House Cleaner

Curriculum Vitae Current Committee

Pat Grumont

Retired Teacher
Education Consultant

Peter Lukaitis

Sergeant of Victoria Police (Retired)
Accredited Mediator

Bronwyn Rudolph

BA interior Architecture RMIT 1976
Retired Registered Building Practitioner
Design Connections building design service – Retired
Member of:
Australiana Society
National Trust Victoria
Furniture History Society of Australia
Castlemaine Historical Society

Faye Shortal

Retired Teacher, Librarian and Retailer

Eirwen Stevenson

BSc. MEd. Educator and teacher trainer

Colin Tracey

Retired Operations Manager Telstra
SatelliteServices Bendigo
Campus Manager Girton Grammar School retired
Buildings and Grounds maintenance since 2010

Peter Weston

Accountant – 50 years experience

President's Annual Report

Another year has passed and it has been a challenging one for many reasons, but has also had many highlights and some very special events. One of our staff said recently that it is a very vibrant time at Buda at the moment and I agreed that it is. But then when is it not vibrant at Buda?



The highlight for me this year was the collaboration by our curatorial staff, Sarah and Ryan with our Chief Operations Officer (COO) Viv, during the Victorian Heritage Festival. Alongside exhibitions related to Buda by Diane Longley and Clayton Tremlett, they produced a really high quality and creative, “quiet act of reverence for history, for creative spirit, and for the tiny gestures that connect us to place, past and imagination “ in the form of: In the company of small things. This revealed Nineteenth-century botanical specimens, nature studies, sketchbooks and delicately crafted, flora-inspired objects made by the Leviny family, and was experienced through exhibitions, interpretive garden panels, treasure hunts and nature journaling workshops. We really appreciate the connections our staff make and how they enhance our interactions with the arts and the community as a whole.

Both Sarah and Ryan are passionate, creative people who bring so much to our organisation as they reflect on the Leviny family through their work to care for the objects, the buildings and the garden. Thank you to you both for the hours you also spend on grants, reports, public programs and caring for volunteers and so on. It is a big job to be performed in few paid hours and we appreciate the extra time you both willingly contribute to Buda.

At the very end of last financial year we were notified that we had secured State Government funding for stage two of our Masterplan to prepare documentation for the project to be “shovel ready” for the next funding rounds. However it was a very slow process setting things up for the delivery of the funds. Our process with Heritage Victoria has been drawn out and frustrating for everyone but we are now on track with the help of new volunteer, Lorraine Huddle, and the pursuit of an updated Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Buda. We are so grateful that Lorraine has come at this time as she has already volunteered many hours of pro bono work for our CMP update and is very passionate and interested in the sustainability and conservation of Buda. We will now need to negotiate a new payment structure because of the delay in getting started but we have been told we have three years from June 2025 to complete this stage which we know we can meet. Thank you to Vivienne Hamilton, our COO who performs above and beyond her job description everywhere we look. We truly appreciate the innovative approach she has to getting so much done, especially in her marketing and organisational roles. Viv is always working to position Buda for the future, looking for ways to maximise our efforts in sustainability, connect with the community and support the committee and the volunteers. Words are inadequate but Thank you.



Members of the FONO Dance group, partners for our fantastic Hungarian Folk Festival

I would like to thank all the members of the Committee who volunteer their time, expertise and care to make Buda the special place it is.

Secretary: Pat Grumont is a never ending source of support and information and she approaches all her work at Buda with such cheerful goodwill, it makes her the most important member of our team.

Vice President: Peter Lukaitis who is a trained mediator and a very helpful and practical man when trouble shooting some of our maintenance issues.

Treasurer: Peter Weston has been a wonderful support for Viv and has now made the role his own. It is not easy to take over such a position on a committee when the incumbent has been there for over 20 years but Peter has done well with his attention to detail, calm and considered advice and general interest in all things Buda.

Faye Shortall who can be relied upon to engage in meaningful ways with all the work we do, and serves on special interest sub committees with good advice and active participation.

Colin Tracy who is a problem solver extraordinaire when it comes to the workings of Buda whether they be pumps, garden taps, light fittings, vacuum cleaners, fans or organising the flow of the stall holders for the Traditional Arts Fair. It is so often a case of "just ask Col" Thanks Col for always being able to joke in the heat of the moment.

Eirwen Stevenson: who is a voice of reason and also produces the monthly Volunteer's news letter. Sadly Eirwen is resigning at our AGM as she has other volunteer commitments that are now taking her time. I would like to thank her for her 15months of service and wish her all the best in her other volunteer roles. We will miss her.

Lastly our 125 volunteers also contribute in so many ways and I thank them all.

With the support and interest of people who want to preserve something of value to many, we continue to run the unique and vibrant organisation that is Buda Historical Home and Garden.

Bronwyn Rudolph

Financial Report 2025-2026

Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc.

ABN 53 208 103 038

Profit & Loss Statement for the year to 30 June 2026

	This year 2026	Last year 2025
Income		
Shop sales	16,964.70	16,961.92
Cost of goods sold		
Opening stock	3,862.00	2,664.00
Purchases	7,992.73	9,195.40
Closing Stock	(3,334.00)	(3,862.00)
Profit on sales	8,443.97	8,964.52
Nursery Sales	5,523.65	8,455.61
Cost of goods sold		
Opening stock	1,905.00	1,948.00
Purchases	4,413.90	2,645.01
Closing Stock	(1,800.00)	(1,905.00)
Profit on sales	1,004.75	5,767.60
Garden Room		
Hire	18,883.26	34,344.60
Catering	13,985.47	15,577.71
Less cost of goods sold		
Catering	12,001.75	13,419.50
Cleaning and maintenance	9,507.92	9,702.63
Profit on garden room	11,359.06	26,800.18
Gate takings	49,871.70	55,637.73
Friends of Buda	8,104.49	6,304.55
Donations, (including shire grant)	80,160.35	42,905.53
Fund raising, functions	26,139.09	10,495.46
Traditional Arts Fair	26,098.97	20,493.96
Interest	4,497.71	5,548.18
National Library of Australia	5,500.00	0.00
Copland Foundation	24,975.00	26,399.09

MASC Events Grant	0.00	454.55
Unexpended Grants	(5,500.00)	32,307.00
Total Income	240,655.09	242,078.35

Expenditure

Admin/Operating/Insurance	25,402.08	23,141.80
Advertising/Promotion	12,055.45	11,252.29
Bank charges and interest	306.83	287.49
Depreciation	4,791.92	4,667.66
Functions expense	17,667.32	7,586.41
Maintenance and repairs	20,657.66	9,660.53
Grants project costs	24,975.00	66,536.28
Printing, stationery, website	3,971.39	4,739.19
Utilities	7,474.02	7,891.69
Wages and annual leave accrual	130,306.03	115,994.68
Wages, oncosts, staff expenses	1,892.06	1,420.66
Total Expenditure	249,499.76	253,178.68

Operating Surplus (deficit)	(8,844.67)	(11,100.33)
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Window Frame 4 Detail of rot before treatment
 Window Frame 4 Detail of same section after treatment
 Shutter after treatment, demonstrating a return to functionality



The conservation of Buda's window frames and shutters along the western side of Buda House was made possible by a grant from The Copland Foundation. Carpentry by Jesse Lawrance of Heirloom Carpentry and Joinery. Heritage painting by Peter Sheehan.

Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc.

Annual Statement Values

Balance Sheet as at June 30 2026

	This year 2026	Last year 2025
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bendigo Bank	45,312.79	20,361.26
Cash Floats	462.55	334.45
Bendigo Ethical Term Deposit	32,576.18	55,464.67
Sandhurst Select Mortgage Fund	121,796.22	111,796.22
Trade Debtors	1,338.61	4,175.32
Sundry Debtors	39,156.12	0.00
Prepayments	2,610.00	2,354.63
Nursery Stock on hand	1,800.00	1,905.00
Shop Stock on hand	3,334.00	3,862.00
Fixed assets		
Plant & Equipment	72,781.15	72,781.15
Furniture & Fittings	71,153.75	68,700.11
Less Prov for Depreciation	(111,489.58)	(106,697.66)
Total Assets	280,831.79	235,037.15
Liabilities		
Bookings in advance	1,165.00	120.00
Trade Creditors	38,067.08	2,290.20
Gift Vouchers	370.00	350.63
Unexpended grants Cfwd	5,500.00	0.00
GST due to or (from) ATO	(2,376.14)	1,328.39
PAYG Withholding	2,176.00	2,024.00
Superannuation contributions	2,098.48	1,854.88
Provision for Annual and Long Service leave	20,335.31	14,858.50
Total Liabilities	67,335.73	22,826.90
Nett Assets	213,496.06	212,210.55
Equity		
Opening balance	182,002.92	193,103.25
Deferred Income	40,337.81	30,207.63
Net operating surplus/Deficit	(8,844.67)	(11,100.33)
Total net equity	213,496.06	212,210.55

Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc.

Annual Statement Values

Cash Flow for the year to 30 June 2026

	This year 2026	Last year 2025
Cash Flows from Operations		
Receipts from patrons, venue hire and clients	237,861.86	229,104.72
Grants and employment subsidies	37,475.00	39,353.64
Decrease(Increase) in receivables	(36,574.78)	(2,999.98)
Increase (decrease) in liabilities	44,545.89	(15,157.58)
Payments to suppliers	(141,090.91)	(179,516.37)
Wages , salaries and associated costs	(132,198.09)	(117,415.34)
Nett cash flows from operations	10,018.97	(46,630.91)
Cash flows on tangible assets		
Plant and equipment purchases	(2,453.64)	(11,453.64)
Nett cash flows in relation to tangible assets	(2,453.64)	(11,453.64)
Cash flows - financing		
Interest Income	4,497.71	5,548.18
Nett cash flows from financing	4,497.71	5,548.18
Nett Cash Flows	12,063.04	(52,546.37)
Opening balance, cash	187,622.15	240,158.52
Closing balance, cash	199,685.19	187,622.15
Nett change in cash	12,063.04	(52,536.37)



Pictured with visiting Governor of Victoria (left to right) COO Vivienne Hamilton, President Bronwyn Rudolph, The Honorable Margaret Gardner, Volunteer Tour Guide Kerry Anderson, MASC Mayor Toby Heydon, Garden Curator Ryan Garratt.

Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc.

ABN 53 208 103 038

Financial Report for the year to 30 June 2026

1. General Information

Chairperson Bronwyn Rudolph

Secretary Patricia Grumont

Treasurer Peter Weston **Committee:** Colin Tracey, Peter Lukaitis, Faye Shortal, Eirwen Stevenson

2. Principal Activities

- The activities of the Incorporated Association are set out in its statement of purposes;-
- To operate the Historic Home and Garden known as "Buda" of 42 Hunter Street, Castlemaine in the State of Victoria as a Public Museum and Public Art Gallery
- To administer the said Historic Home & Garden for the general benefit of the public of the State of Victoria
- To develop, maintain, restore, research, preserve and exhibit the various works and collections of Ernest Leviny and his family including home, chattels, goods, silverwork, paintings, gardens and surrounds
- To promote and encourage the education of the public in heritage, art craft and horticulture.

There were no significant changes in the nature of the activities during the financial year.

3. Review of Financial Operations

The operating result for the year was a deficit of \$8,444.67 (previous year deficit \$11,100.33).

The 2026 financial year presented a number of issues which impacted the financial results, including the extreme temperatures of summer and the devastating fires at Harcourt, which impacted overall visitor numbers and Garden Room activity.

The committee thanks the staff, friends, volunteers, donors and supporters for their efforts on behalf of the community's much-valued heritage property.

4. Review of Financial Position

The cash position of the Association at 30th June 2026 was \$199,685.19 (compared to \$187,622.15 at the 2025 balance date)

5. Significant changes in the state of affairs

In the opinion of the Committee there were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Incorporated Association that occurred during the financial year under review not otherwise disclosed in this report.

6. Matters Subsequent to the end of the Financial Year

There is no matter or circumstance which has arisen since 1st July 2026 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect, the Association's operations in future years, the result of the Association's operations in future years or the Association's situation in future financial years.

7. Environmental Regulation

The entity is not subject to significant environmental regulation in relation to its activities.

8. Related Party Transactions

As is the customary practice of all who desire the ongoing operation of Buda as a heritage-listed tourist destination/community asset, members of the committee and their families, from time to time,

- make donations to the entity,
- provide voluntary, honorary and professional services to the entity, gratis.
- are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred for the benefit of the entity.

The Committee has studied guidance notes issued by Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission and, in accordance with that guidance, understands that the above listed related party transactions are not reportable as they do not substantially influence the entity's decisions or activities.

No material contracts involving members of the Committee were entered into since the end of the previous year or existed at the end of the financial year.

Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc.

ABN 53 208 103 038

Financial Report for the year to 30 June 2026

Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

1. Basis of Preparation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commissions Act, the Associations Incorporation (Reform)Act and in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations of the Australian Accounting Standards Board and International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board. The Association is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise.

These financial reports have been prepared on an accrual basis and are based on historical costs. The financial report is a consolidated financial report incorporating the activities of the incorporated association and its ancillary fund, the Buda Historic Home and Garden Foundation. The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period, have been adopted in preparation of these financial reports.

2. Property, Plant and Equipment.

The financial reports exclude the value of land, buildings and the collection as these assets are owned by the Trustees of the Castlemaine Art Gallery & Historical Museum Foundation. Expenditure, by the entity, on improvements to the premises has been written off as an expense in the period when the asset or improvement was acquired. Plant and equipment and furniture and fittings acquired by the entity have been depreciated over the useful lives of the assets commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Class of Asset	Rate of Depreciation.
Computer equipment	33%
Garden Equipment	33%
Furniture and fixtures	10%
Office Equipment	10%
Shipping Container	5%
Blinds	5%

At the end of each reporting period, the entity assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. The assessment will include the consideration of external and internal sources of information. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less cost to sell and value in use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognized immediately in profit or loss, unless the asset is carried at a revalued amount in accordance with another Standard.

3. (A) Critical Accounting Estimates

The Committee evaluates estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the company. Estimates and judgements are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimates are revised and in any future periods affected. The estimates and judgements that have a significant risk of causing material adjustments to the carrying values of assets and liabilities are as follows:

The entity determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and intangible assets (if any) The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where useful lives are less than previously estimated lives.

3. (B) Employee Benefits

The Financial Reports include the entity's liabilities in connection with employment of curatorial and other staff. These liabilities have been measured at the amounts, including oncosts, expected to be paid if the liability was to have been settled within twelve months of the end of the financial year.

3. (C) Grant Funding

Grant revenue is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt. If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before it is eligible to receive the contribution, the recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until any such conditions are satisfied.

3. (D) Investments

Investments are valued at Cost. Interest income is recognized as earned.

3. (E) Inventories

Inventories of merchandise and nursery stock are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

3. (F) Receivables

The receivables at reporting date have been reviewed to determine whether there is any objective evidence that any of the receivables are impaired. An impairment provision is included for any receivable where the entire balance is not considered collectible. The impairment provision (if any) is based on the best information available at the reporting date.

4 Tax

The entity is a registered charity under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act and is exempt from the payment of income tax under the Australian Income Tax Act 1997. Revenues and expenses are recognized nett of the amount of GST except where the amount of GST is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognized as part of the item of expense.



The Buda Nature Journal

Buda Interpretation Panel, Tomato Still Life in-situ in Buda's Kitchen Garden



Statement by the Committee in relation to the Financial Reports

In the opinion of the Committee;

(a) The Financial Report of Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc presents a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30th June 2026 its performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date

(b) At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by



(Signature)

President

(Position)



(Signature)

Secretary

(Position)

Date of signing 17th August 2026



The Hungarian Folk Festival at Buda 2026

House Curator's Annual Report

This year has again seen significant progress across all three areas of Buda's Collection Management, Conservation, and Curation. Buda is grateful for the financial assistance provided by The Copland Foundation, the National Library of Australia, the Mount Alexander Shire Council, The Trustees for the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, and Mandy Leveratt for directly supporting these programs. Thank you, Robin Walls and Andrew Harvey for the beautiful care you take in cleaning the house.



Volunteer Projects

Keeping a house museum clean, preserved and accessible is a huge job and I am very grateful for all the assistance Buda has received with this over the past year. Sincere thanks to each of our wonderful volunteers who have contributed many hours weekly to cleaning and digitising the collection, as well as tidying up both our physical and digital storage: Denise Whelan, Mandy Leveratt, Pam Connell, Sarah Brazel, Alison Sadler and Susan Green. We look forward to having our collection searchable online soon - It has been, and continues to be, a mammoth task. The images shown here are a sneak preview of what's in store once our collection is searchable online.



A borer infestation in the cellar affecting collection items has taken significant co-ordination and effort to treat, and I literally could not have carried out this work without the assistance of Sarah Brazel, Alison Sadler, Pat Grumont, Colin Tracey, Ryan Garratt and our excellent garden team. An enormous effort that is still not yet complete. Thank you to all involved.

And, of course, thank you to our wonderful Tour Guides who bring Buda alive: Anita Martess, Christine Wakefield, Chris Wheat, Jennifer Tracey, Kerry Anderson, Elizabeth Beck and Vanessa Case. It is beautiful to see how you each bring your own personalities to the work of presenting Buda's stories to the public. A special thank you to Chris Wheat, who retired this year from volunteering at Buda after many delightful years. We value your contribution immensely, and wish you our very best.



Top to bottom:

Item 1351 African gourd with incised decoration, gifted to Miss Hilda Leviny from Mrs G. Whaley (c. pre 1970)

Item 1284 Copper butterfly handcrafted by Miss Dorothy Leviny (c. pre 1970)

Item 817 Dabbitse by Chiang Yee, Transatlantic Arts Limited: London (1946), book gifted to Miss Kate Leviny from Ursula Ridley Walker

Preservation Needs Assessment

Following the Significance Assessment (2024) by Laretta Zilles, we have commenced a Preservation Needs Assessment for the house collection with conservator Deb Peart through the generous Community Heritage Grants from the National Library of Australia. We look forward to sharing the results in the coming financial year.

Partnerships

It was wonderful to partner with artists, organisations and businesses this year from local, State and National locations. Thank you Linda Sproul for your excellent enthusiasm and approachability as a Director of the Castlemaine State Festival this year, and Buda's visiting artists, Clayton Tremlett and Dianne Longley, who gave so much consideration to staging their work in-situ at Buda.

Buda continued working with Mount Alexander Shire Council and Castlemaine Art Museum on the public artwork commission for 'Wildflowers: The First Ladies of Castlemaine Art Gallery Historical Museum', with Laura Woodward (local artist) selected for the commission.

Funding was secured for three Cultural Consultations with Dumawul to ensure respectful inclusion of First Nations perspectives in relation to Buda, its collection and its themes of significance. The consultations are scheduled to take place in the FY26/27. Thank you to the Trustees of Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, and Mandy Leveratt, for your generous donations towards funding this project.

Conservation of Window Frames and Shutters

Thanks to a generous grant from The Copland Foundation, Buda was able to conserve deteriorated window frames and shutters along the western side of Buda House. Years of exposure to the elements have caused wood rot, paint delamination, and strong colour fade. This work was carried out by Jesse Lawrence from Heirloom Carpentry and Joinery, and heritage painter Peter Sheehan. We congratulate all involved on their excellent work and commitment. Buda considers this Stage 1 of a multi-project program to conserve all the window frames, shutters, doors and door frames, and timber facias of Buda House.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

In addition to booked house tours, Buda offered public programs alongside our exhibition In the Company of Small Things for the Castlemaine State Festival, which we ran in partnership with artists Dianne Longley and Clayton Tremlett. These programs included the workshops Concertina Books with Dianne Longley, Illuminated Illustration with Dianne Longley, Family Portrait with Clayton Tremlett, and Nature Journalling with myself and Ryan. Everyone's work has been so appreciated – not just by me, but by all the visitors and workshop participants. Our feedback for these events was excellent. I really enjoyed writing the content and designing the pages for the nature journals, and it was truly wonderful to see them in their final iteration, so skilfully bound by Jo Caspi. Thank you Ryan and Viv for your input and help in bringing it all together. And thank you for co-presenting, Ryan. It was fun!

Once again, Buda participated in the National Trust Heritage Festival and celebrated International Museum Day. We ran a second Nature Journalling workshop as part of this festival, and on IMD we announced our project with Dumawul.

For the Hungarian Festival, I created a pop-up display featuring the large-format Hungarian Album and a range of beautifully embroidered textiles alongside collection items. I also created three colouring pages based on items in the collection designed by Dorothy Leviny.

Another project I thoroughly enjoyed in association with these festivals was working with Viv and Ryan on the production of interpretation panels. These are positioned throughout Buda's gardens and help tie the house collection to Buda's outdoor spaces.

Sarah Frazer

Garden Curator's Annual Report

Doing this report for Buda's Annual General Meeting serves two quite distinct purposes for me in my role as Garden Curator. Firstly is putting in summary the goings on in the garden over the last twelve months to communicate to the larger Buda community. Secondly doing this gives me a snapshot of what has been achieved in the course of the year. Being passionate about the gardens here at Buda and the long history of gardening they represent at the micro 'Leviny' level, within Australia and it's southern gold rush as well as in broader international terms can have another side, particularly given the labor and financial constraints under which Buda operates. Sometimes the pace of progression and level of general maintenance can seem inadequate. Sitting down to write this report shows, while there will always be lots to do, that there is a lot achieved in a twelve month period



The bed along the Hunter St boundary had another season to welcome our visitors, was cut back and some plants lifted and slightly rearranged to give the planting as a whole more balance and cohesion. The Golden rod (*Solidago canadensis*) grew particularly vigorously over the year, spreading via its underground rhizomes to become too dominant in relation to the other species in the planting. This was thinned out to bring it back in check with the rhizomes removed providing us with plenty of material for us to propagate plants that will be available for sale in our little nursery when the garden is in flower.

The drainage works have been continuing throughout the garden. This is proving to be up to the task of diverting run-off into garden beds, something that has been adequately tested in the wetter season that has followed our long hot and dry summer that cumulated in bush fire. Path repair is a very heavy job; any relief in this is greatly appreciated.

With the brick edging around the central parterre straightened up and broken bricks relayed, aided immensely by a generous donation from the Goldfields Heritage Rose and Garden Group, and the soil improved we were ready to plant. This is an interesting and very focal part of the garden. Our archives make mention of the Leviny girls re-imagining of this area of the garden in the early 1900's, converting it from an early Victorian style of garden, presumably of Ernest's design, made up of small 'exhibition' beds into the one larger bed reputedly based on one of Ernest's beautiful hand drawn jewelry designs that are held in the Buda collection. Sadly to this point I have not been able to find any clear photographic evidence of what the planting looked like during this re-imagined period. There is a photo that shows the area with its smaller beds intact and then various images of it over the museum period but nothing to illustrate what the girl's intentions and implementation looked like at that time. The final planting design will require quite a bit more research and a degree of finessing before it is ready to be presented for the required permits. But what to do in the meantime?

It could not be left empty. Our temporary solution was to go for an annual planting. Not only are annual planting permit exempt due to their lack of permanency but it could also be done quickly and with little financial outlay for a reasonably long lasting results. The wildflower style of planting that we went for spoke to the Leviny girl's love of these types of plants that can be gleamed from their diaries, letters and sketchbooks and art. It also worked really well within the formal brick edging of the bed adding a softness that reflects the approach of the Gardenesque movement (the garden expression of the Arts and Craft movement) that dominated garden trend throughout the late 19th and early 20th century. It was also a wonderful project to undertake with the garden team, not all of whom had had much experience of growing a flower garden from seed. With no more permanent planting solution having been reached we will let this part of the garden run its course which will give the garden volunteers the opportunity to explore another aspect of this type of gardening, the self-seeding garden. Not only will this approach cost nothing but time and labor it is also something I enjoy in my own garden practice and look forward to sharing this editing process with the garden team.

This year saw another successful Josine McEwan dinner and lecture event. I really enjoy finding the guest speaker for these events. It is always my aim to get someone and a subject that that has some relevance to Central Victorian gardening conditions and at a level that could be both entertaining and informative will still pushing our audiences thinking around gardens and gardening. This year saw Professor John Rayner give a talk based around his long study and trials under the 'Woody Meadow' project as well as his own garden practice. Good food and though provoking conversation!

As a whole Buda was also able to grow the success of our annual Traditional Arts Fair. Along with the fantastic produce available for sale on the day this event is also a highlight for me as it provides a focus point to aim the garden teams efforts and to see the grounds alive with people is reason enough to garden in of itself.

Lastly but certainly not least I offer my heartfelt thanks and admiration to the Buda volunteers. I shudder to think what the gardens would look like if it were not for these wonderful people turning up under all sorts of adverse weather conditions. On top of appreciating the output of the garden team I also thoroughly enjoy my time spent with this diverse group of legends. Thank you!

Ryan Garratt



CHIEF OPERATIONS

My eight years at Buda have been a rewarding combination of hard work, joy and great satisfaction. It is a privilege to fulfil my role and to promote Buda as a professional organisation, a significant tourism attraction and a museum of importance.

Buda could not remain open and accessible to the public without the dedication, commitment and tireless efforts of our volunteers, and I sincerely thank each and every one of them for their invaluable contribution.

I would like to extend my particular thanks to our administration volunteers, Andrea McKey, Marianne Day, Julie Weston, Jennie Renfree and Margaret Clarke, whose generous support contributes enormously to the smooth day-to-day running of the office. An especially heartfelt thank you goes to Pat Grumont for her tireless efforts.

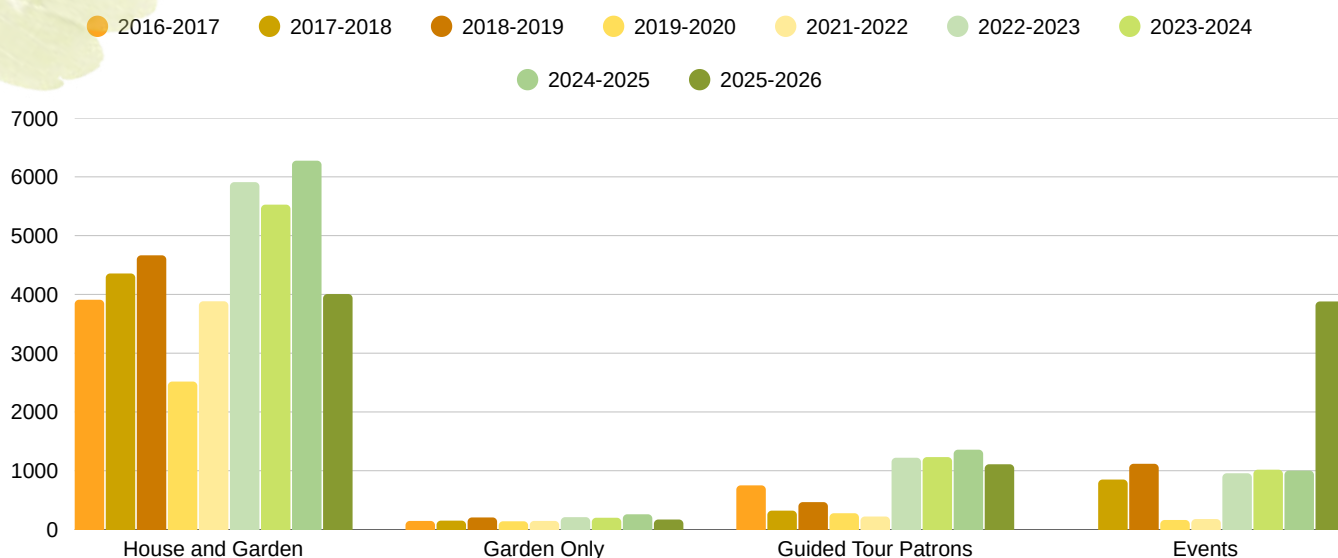
Vivienne Hamilton

VISITATION HIGHLIGHTS

2025-2026 saw a significant drop in visitation of **24%** as the cost of living, the severe and prolonged summer and the impact of the Harcourt fires effected our region. This was partially offset by the increase in outdoor patrons due to the highly successful Traditional Arts Fair and the Hungarian Folk Festival and the increase in numbers for the Council run playgroup in the grounds, reducing the overall decrease to just over 6%.

Total Visitation 2025-2026		2024-2025
Single	1296	1439
Concession	2215	2611
Child 5-15yr	53	53
Family 2 adults 2 kids U15 (total visitor	228	380
Garden	170	259
Friends of Buda free + 1 friend free	162	138
Locals Deal Local free + 1 paying guest	45	31
Big 4 deal - Concession + 1 for free	7	6
Garden Room Patrons	2694	4042
Outdoor Events	3880	1980
Tour Group Patrons	669	732
Tour Group Patrons with Catering	441	626
TOTAL	11860	12297

Visitation 10 year trend



VISITATION YEARLY TRENDS

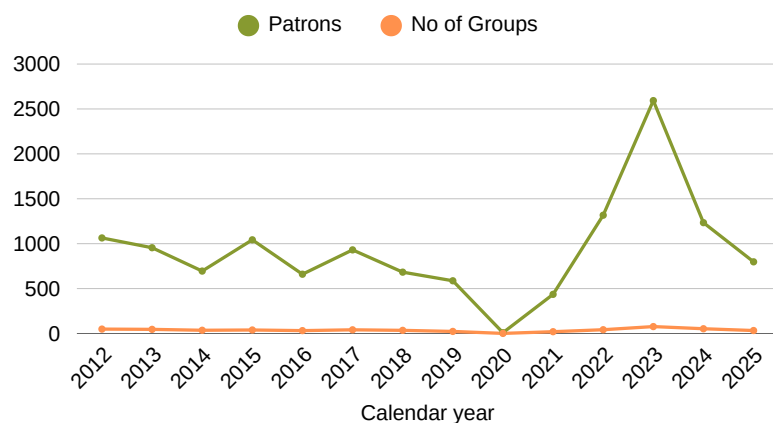
Total visitation 20+ year trend



GARDEN ROOM

Garden Room hire also decreased, with **2,706** patrons, down from **4,042** last year, also likely to the combined effects of heat and fires as there was very little activity in the first 4 months of 2026.

Tour Patrons 10+ year trend



TOUR GROUPS

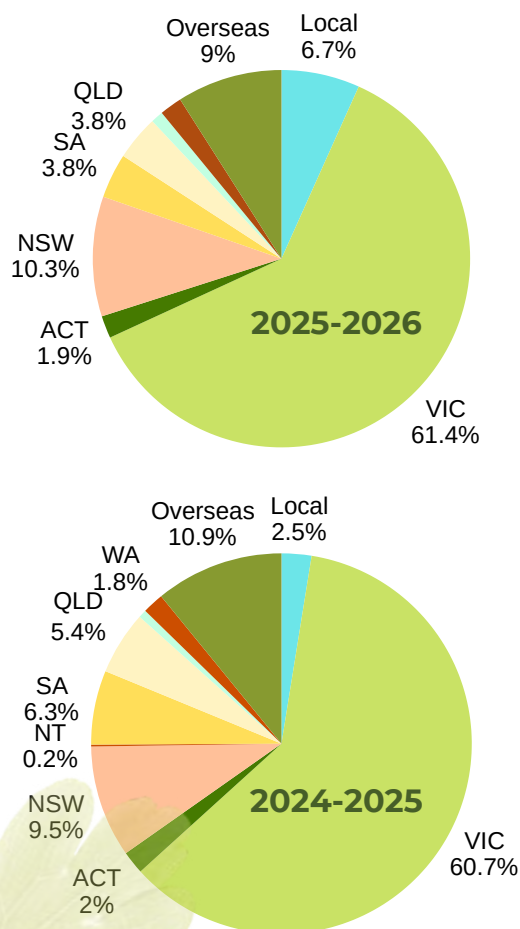
There was a notable decrease in Tour Groups of **49%** despite an increase in marketing to the demographic, as traditional groups begin to age and find it increasingly difficult to cope with the stresses of the cost of living and climate change effects.



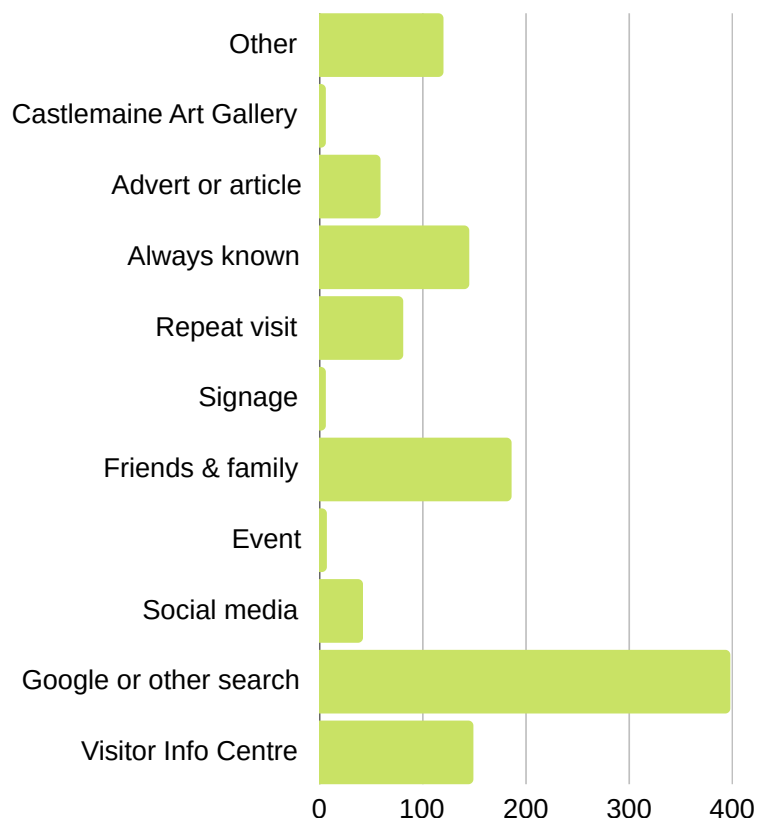
Where do our Visitors come from and how do they find us?

Data compiled from a visitor survey in reception in combination with the voluntary guest book shows that regional demographics remain steady but there has been an healthy increase in local visitation. This will inform our marketing plan for the next year with the aim of attracting a wider base. Our visitors are tech savvy, know how to use Google and social media and value the recommendations of friends and family.

Where Visitors came from



How did our visitors find us? 2025-2026



OUR PEOPLE

Friends and Members

There are **259** current Friends of Buda members, (from 211), **14** of whom are Life members. Membership has increased amongst young local families as they have joined the Council facilitated playgroup that runs weekly in the garden. Friends of Buda receive a quarterly newsletter, free entry for themselves and friend year round, special invitations to events and discounts on events, the nursery and giftshop.

Corporate Members

Corporate members are The Mill Castlemaine, the Castlemaine Vintage Bazaar and Castlemaine Boutique Accommodation. We thank them for their continued support.

The Hungarian Ambassador His Excellency Mr. Zsolt Csenger-Zalán and the Embassy of Hungary are complimentary corporate members.

Community & Education Group members remain steady in 2025-2026:

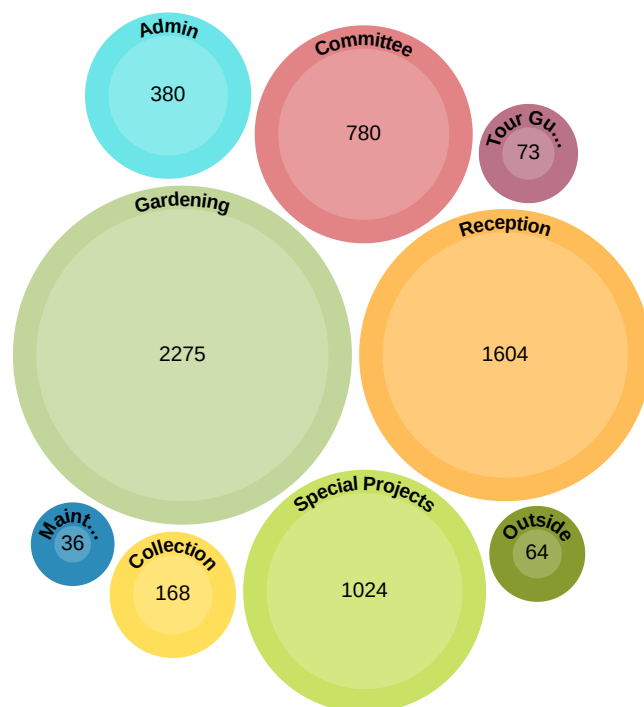
Buda offers annual membership to local community groups that provides a reliable funding stream through the membership fees and regular venue hire. (Reduced rate for venue hire offered)

The Strength of Volunteers

Buda's success is reliant on its **125** registered volunteers, whose collective **6,405** hours this year span across gardening, reception, guiding, events, administration, collections, and governance.

Average Hours by Role:

- Committee Members: 111 hours/year
- Garden Volunteers (28 people): 81 hours/year
- Reception Volunteers (12 people): 133 hours/year
- Overall Average: 51 hours per volunteer/year



This contribution is an extraordinary achievement and we thank every one of them for making Buda the thriving heritage and cultural hub it is today

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Buda operates an annual schedule of public programs that reflects our Statement of Purpose: promote and encourage the education of the public in heritage, art, craft and horticulture.

Exhibitions are also crucial to upholding the Buda Statement of Purpose, creating greater engagement and encouraging repeat visitation: develop, maintain, restore, research, preserve and exhibit the various works and collections of the Leviny family.

This year's diverse and engaging programming reflected our mission to promote heritage, art, craft, and horticulture. Highlights include:

- **Mountains V Mullock Heaps**- House Exhibition. Continues until March 2026
- **12 July 2025** Josine McEwan Dinner with John Ryner heritage garden lecture
- **10 August 2025** Mandy Leveratt – Lecture, All roads lead to Buda plus afternoon tea
- **4 October 2025** Spring Garden Ramble and talk with Ryan Garratt with hot soup lunch
- **16 November 2025** TRADITIONAL ARTS FAIR
- **8 December 2025** Volunteer Christmas party
- **20-29 March 2026** Castlemaine State Festival - Buda program
- Exhibition – In the Company of Small Things
- Dianne Longley – House, Clayton Tremlett – Pavilion, Buda Journals – House & Garden
- 19 March Wine and Cheese launch in the Garden room
- 24 March Nature Journalling workshop with Sarah Frazer and Ryan Garratt
- 21 March Diane Longley Illuminated Flowers, with watercolour and gold leaf workshop
- 22 March Diane Longley Concertina Books workshop
- 28 March Clayton Tremlett Family Portrait printmaking workshop
- **March Exhibition** – In the Company of Small Things continues until May 18
- **19 April 2026** Hungarian Folk Festival in partnership with FONO Hungarian dance group
- **10 May 2026** Mother's day afternoon tea Raziel Gutierrez Classical Guitar
- **16 May 2026** Nature Journalling workshop with Sarah Frazer
- **16 June 2025** Volunteer outing to Systems Garden with Ryan Garratt

TRADITIONAL ARTS FAIR 2025

With **1901** attendees and an impressive **\$28,079** profit, the Traditional Arts Fair remains our flagship event. It continues to celebrate traditional arts in the spirit of the Leviny daughters and brings our community together in the most creative way.



HUNGARIAN FOLK FESTIVAL 2026

In 50/50 partnership with FONO Hungarian Dance group, the folk festival was a huge success with **1155** attendees and **\$7,324** profit for Buda. With Hungarian Dance, Music, Food, stalls and even silversmithing, the day was an honour to the legacy of Ernest Leviny.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our tourism marketing partnerships remain strong with:

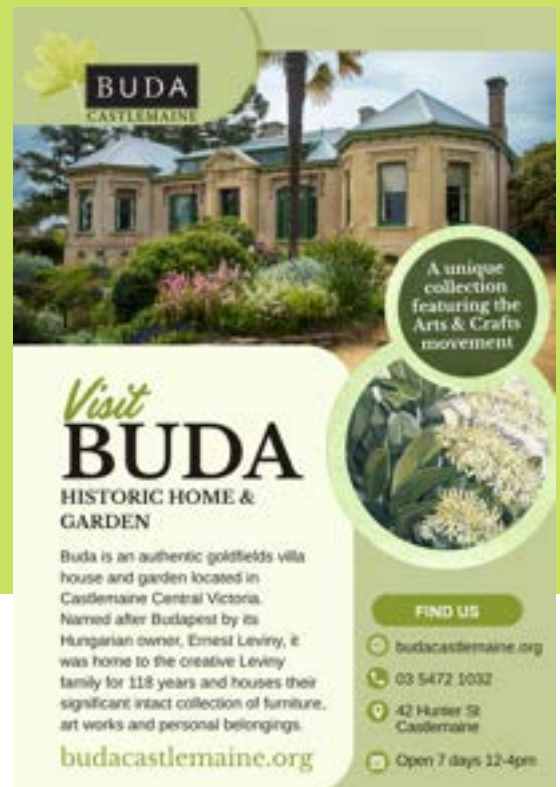
- Tourism Victoria
- Mount Alexander Shire
- Destination Central Victoria

These relationships ensure Buda's inclusion in key publications, visitor guides, and regional events. A key change over the past year has been the amalgamation of shire tourism partners incorporating the four shires of Hepburn, Macedon Ranges, Central Goldfields and Mount Alexander, creating the new brand Destination Central Victoria. This marks a bold new chapter for destination marketing in our region, reflecting the need for a stronger, more connected identity - one that unites communities, attracts visitors and drives sustainable growth across the region. We thank the Mount Alexander Shire Council for their continued endorsement and promotion of Buda as a key cultural asset.

Select visitor feedback speaks volumes:

"Such an interesting history of a family in 1860s Meaghan the office volunteer gave us such a great story about the family. Original furniture and art still present in the home. The surrounding garden was inspiring." – moni lee, Google Review ★★★★★

"We enjoyed viewing all the rooms in this Home, reading all the information, admiring the art works and also enjoyed our walk around the extensive garden. We were here mid week in an off peak season." – TripAdvisor ★★★★★



Digital Reach

Buda's online presence continues to grow, with a combined email and social media audience of over **7,856** followers.

Community-Focused Initiatives

- Locals Deal: Free entry for local residents accompanied by a paying guest promotes repeat visitation
- Big4 Castlemaine Offer: Continues to be a successful co-marketing initiative
- Community Memberships: Support venue hire discounts while fostering a sense of shared ownership.

VISION FOR BUDA'S FUTURE

Buda has been awarded \$500,000 from the State Government, towards Stage 2 of the Master plan. Stage 2 will provide a new Conservation and Management Plan, the planning and building permits, final drawings, documentation and costings to progress the Master Plan to investment ready status. It must be noted that Government grants have a contribution ratio of at least **4:1**. Therefore Buda is required to raise **\$125,000** to finalise stage 2 and potentially **\$1,000,000** towards the final cost of building.



With your support, we can transform Buda into a vibrant cultural hub equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community and visitors. We invite partners, funders, and stakeholders to join us in this exciting phase of growth.

For further information:

Vivienne Hamilton
Chief Operations Officer

manager@budacastlemaine.org
03 5472 1032



BUDACASTLEMAINE.ORG/SUPPORT/DONATE



Crocheted throne at the Traditional Arts Fair 2025

General

George Milford
 Bob Cameron and Alison Hogan
 Grumont Family
 Anonymous
 Marianne Day
 Stojan Iskra
 Bronwyn Rudolph
 Jenny Cato
 Peter Forster
 Christine Wakefield
 Mandy Leveratt
 Lyn McKenzie
 Tamasine Dale
 Rosemary and Peter Turner
 Tom and Dorothy Minchin
 Weston Partners

DONORS 2025-2026

Garden

Marianne Day
 John Rudolph
 Margaret Callister
 Goldfields Roses and Garden Group,
 Beverly and Anthony Knight

Traditional Arts Fair

Andrea McKey
 Diane Linton
 Sam Grumont
 Duang Tengtrirat
 Rae McPhee
 Vivienne Hamilton
 Ivana Minns

Conservation

Diane Linton



Mount Alexander
Shire Council



BUDA HISTORIC HOME & GARDEN INC
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday August 18th 2025 4pm
MINUTES

1.0 Present: Eirwen Stevenson, Pat Grumont, Peter Weston, Ryan Garratt, Claire Baylis, Chris Capper, Max Kay, Alison Hogan, George Milford, Jules King, Tom Comerford, Colin Tracey, John Rudolph, Bronwyn Rudolph (phone), Cr. Lucas Maddock, Sam Grumont, Elizabeth Beck, Julie Weston, Vicky Harris, Jennie Renfree

1.2 Apologies: Helen Hanns, Steve Proeve, Sue Proeve, Faye Shortal, Justin Shortal, Peter Lukaitis, Vivienne Hamilton, Cr.Toby Haydon, Cr. Rosie Hastwell, Nathon Lord, Gillian Harrison, Jennie Renfree, Maree Edwards MLA, Mayor Rosie Annear, Sarah Frazer, Christabel Comerford, Donna Fearne

2.0 Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting 19th August 2024

MOTION: that the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting as tabled be received and passed
Moved Sam Grumont Seconded Colin Tracey

3.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes: Nil

4.0 Presentation of Reports (as seen in the Annual Report document)

4.1 President's Report **4.2 Financial Report**
4.3 House Curator's Report **4.4 Garden Curator's Report**
4.5 Administration Report

5.0 Motions Arising from the Presentation of Reports

MOTION: that the President's Report be accepted
Moved Tom Comerford **Seconded** Elizabeth Beck
Carried

MOTION: that the Financial Statement of Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc. 1/7/'24 to 30/6/'25 be received.
Moved Peter Weston **Seconded** Max Kay
Carried

MOTION: that all other Reports be accepted
Moved Colin Tracey **Seconded** Chris Capper
Carried

MOTION: that the annual fee be set at the same fee as Friends of Buda
Moved Peter Weston **Seconded** John Rudolph
Carried

The rules around this motion are that to be a member of the incorporated body requires two parts:
1. Nominated and accepted by the Committee of Management and
2. paying membership of Friends of Buda

MOTION: That sincerest gratitude be expressed to Sarah Frazer, Vivienne Hamilton, Ryan Garratt, Robin Walls and Andrew Harvey for their hard work and dedication over the last twelve months.
Carried with Acclamation

6.0 Election of Committee Members

Vacating Positions (all eligible to re-nominate) are Colin Tracey, Mandy Leveratt, George Milford, Faye Shortal
Mandy Leveratt, George Milford are not re-nominating

During her time on the committee Mandy has helped us refine our governance files and presentation which has been really helpful. She has also played a pivotal role in photographing our collection. It was exciting to listen to her talk on 'All Roads Lead to Buda' which took us all down a different path!

George Milford came on to the committee in 2008 as treasurer. His work, support and guidance over the past nearly 20 years has been invaluable.

Christine Lloyd resigned from the committee April 2025
Chris Lloyd has moved full time to Canberra. During her time on the committee she has diligently and powerfully lead the Public Programs sub-committee and headed up the children's activities for the fair.

We have 3 nominations
Faye Shortal, nominated by Alison Hogan seconded by Claire Bayliss
Eirwen Stevenson, nominated by Bronwyn Rudolph, seconded by Pat Grumont
Colin Tracey, nominated by Peter Weston seconded by Pat Grumont

There being no further nominations we appoint them for a two year period 2025-2027

7.0 General Business: Nil

Meeting closed: 4.31pm

Guest speaker

Trevor Budge

Trevor Budge AM is a Strategic Advisor to Heritage Victoria on the Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Nomination.

Topic Where Buda Historic Home and Garden fits into the Bid.

BUDA HISTORIC HOME & GARDEN INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Monday August 17th 2026 4pm AGENDA

1.1 Present:

1.2 Apologies:

2.0 Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting 18th August 2025

MOTION: that the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting as tabled be received and passed
Moved Seconded

2.1 Matters Arising from the Minutes:

3.0 Presentation of Reports (as seen in the Annual Report document)

3.1 President's Report 3.2 Financial Report

3.3 House Curator's Report 3.4 Garden Curator's Report

3.5 Administration Report

3.6 Motions Arising from the Presentation of Reports

MOTION: that the President's Report be accepted

Moved Seconded

MOTION: that the Financial Statement of Buda Historic Home & Garden Inc. 1/7/'24 to 30/6/'25 be received.

Moved Seconded

MOTION: that all other Reports be accepted

Moved Seconded

MOTION: that the annual fee be set at the same fee as Friends of Buda

Moved Seconded

MOTION: That sincerest gratitude be expressed to Sarah Frazer, Vivienne Hamilton, Ryan Garratt , Robin Walls and Andrew Harvey for their hard work and dedication over the last twelve months.

Moved Seconded

4.0 Election of Committee Members

Vacating Positions (all eligible to re-nominate) are Bronwyn Rudolph, Pat Grumont, Peter Lukaitis, Peter Weston,

Eirwen Stevenson is resigning due to other volunteer commitments.

5.0 General Business:

Special Resolution:

That Buda Historic Home and Garden Inc confirm to the Trustees of the Buda Historic Home and Garden Foundation (Foundation) that the Foundation be wound up in accordance with clause 16 of the Trust Deed, and that the Australian Business Number 61 315 442 017 be cancelled.

Meeting closed:

Presentation: Restoration of West windows and shutters

We are privileged to be supported by the Copland Foundation with this project and the two skilled craftspeople Jesse Lawrance of Heirloom Carpentry & Joinery and Peter Sheehan (painter) who 27 completed the work are going to share with us how they achieved it.



We thank you for your
ongoing support of Buda

August 2026



Buda Historic Home & Garden

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admin@budacastlemaine.org