

HODDLE WARD (COLLINGWOOD) UPDATE

Cr Sophie Wade | Sophie.Wade@yarracity.vic.gov.au | 0400 570 763



Oxford Street Safety Study

Continuing our
cohealth fight

Increasing our
tree canopy

SAVE FREE COMMUNITY HEALTH IN FITZROY AND COLLINGWOOD!

The Federal Government has stepped in with temporary funding so that free community health services continue in Fitzroy and Collingwood.
BUT ONLY FOR A YEAR. We need a permanent solution, not a temporary quick-fix.



KEEP UP THE PRESSURE!

Scan the QR code or go to
yarracity.vic.gov.au/savecommunityhealth
to learn how and get involved.



HODDLE WARD UPDATE | Collingwood

We're now well into spring, and it's wonderful to see our neighbourhood coming to life with longer days and more people out enjoying our parks, cafes and public spaces. I wanted to share a few updates on the work underway to help make Collingwood an even safer, greener and more connected place to live.

Coming up, we have the Oxford Street Safety Study, which is being undertaken in response to concerns raised by local residents with me as your Councillor. The study will help Council better understand how people move through the area and identify opportunities to improve safety for everyone, whether you're chatting to neighbours on the street, walking, cycling or driving. Safe, accessible streets help our community thrive and connect with one another.

We've also recently had the chance to celebrate some of the people who make Collingwood such a caring and connected suburb. After an incredible 46 years of service, community nurse Helen Chakman has retired from cohealth. Helen has supported generations of local families and has been a passionate advocate for accessible healthcare for those who need it most. A huge thank you to Helen for her decades of service! As Council continues to fight for the long-term future of community health in our neighbourhood, Helen's story shows the importance of retaining the community health facility on Hoddle Street.

Across Collingwood, we are continuing to invest in more welcoming public spaces. After a concerted effort, we have achieved a 15.5% increase in tree canopy in Collingwood over the last five years, helping create more shade and cooler streets. We all know that Collingwood can be a bit of an urban heat island, and I'll keep working to increase our canopy cover!

Cr Sophie Wade | Hoddle Ward

Oxford Street Safety Study

A safety study is being undertaken at Oxford Street following feedback from community members. The study will help Council better understand these concerns, identify any underlying road-safety issues, and determine how the street can be made safer and more welcoming for people. The study is planned to run from October to November.

Helen Chakman: 46 years of caring for Collingwood

After the cohealth board said it would stop offering GP services at its Collingwood and Fitzroy cohealth clinics last year, Yarra residents gathered to save the heart of their community. While the pharmacy closed, the Federal Government has thrown the health service a temporary lifeline to continue its free GP service. Yarra Council is fighting for permanent funding.

One of the centre's biggest advocates is nurse Helen Chakman. Yarra Life spoke with Helen before her retirement, after 46 years of service to Collingwood cohealth.

Helen Chakman has one message for decision makers:

"They need to listen to the people on the ground — they can come and sit in the centre and see the work that's done, the people who walk in the door — they are the most vulnerable ... and the people who work there do it because they really care."

She remembers the shock when the closure was announced. "It was a gut-wrenching notice that came to us all," she said. But she was buoyed by the community response. Just three days later, more than 300 people attended a meeting at Fitzroy Town Hall. "It was terrific to see people cared that much and they were willing to fight — and hopefully they will go on fighting."

When Helen first walked into the Collingwood Community Health Centre, now known as cohealth, she had no idea she was about to begin a 46-year chapter of her life.



Helen has cared for up to four generations of Collingwood families. Children she once immunised have returned with children of their own. She has spotted life-threatening illnesses in time, attended clients' funerals and shared honest conversations about their lives.

For Helen, nursing has always been more than just treating an illness. Patients have brought her concerns ranging from family difficulties to paying bills, and she has helped connect them with other services. "Trust is at the heart of community nursing," she said. "Everybody deserves to be seen, to be heard, to be treated well."

Helen recalled the days of women of the community watching Collingwood play at Victoria Park — after the game they would take home the players' shorts to wash them. Over the decades, Helen has watched Collingwood change. She remembers football as part of the area's social fabric and has seen Greek, Vietnamese, African and Arab-speaking communities make the area their home.

She believes Collingwood still has a heart — and that cohealth has long been part of it, a 'one-stop shop' for medical, social and practical support.

After 46 years at Collingwood cohealth, Helen is proud of the relationships she has built with staff and the community.

Working for You

Local projects in your area

WORKING
FOR YOU



Bluestone renewal on Gipps Street, Abbotsford

Works have been completed at the threshold of the Gipps Street pedestrian bridge, addressing long-standing safety concerns in the area. The upgrade involved removing the bluestone pavers and the retaining wall. The space has now been resurfaced with asphalt, providing a smooth, clearly defined pathway and a safer transition onto the bridge. This improvement enhances accessibility and supports safer movement for everyone.



New garden beds on McCutcheon Way, Collingwood

New garden beds have been installed in Collingwood along McCutcheon Way, near Collingwood College. We have planted approximately 260 new plants.



Tree Canopy

Collingwood has seen a 15.5% tree canopy increase, helping to improve equity of shade and cooling across the municipality. By increasing shade and cooling, trees help build resilience to more frequent and intense heat events, while also supporting biodiversity and enhancing the overall urban environment.



Improvements for Forest Street, Collingwood

Forest Street has had a whole-of-street improvement, with upgrades to footpaths, drainage, pedestrian crossings, tree squares and the road itself being repaved. We hope you like it!

Help shape a safer, more welcoming Collingwood

We're running a community safety project in part of Collingwood to better understand local safety concerns and how public spaces are managed and used. We want to hear from locals and visitors. Go to Council's Your Say Yarra website to share your experiences in this part of Collingwood. Drop a pin on the map to tell us:

- what works well and which places you like to visit
- the streets and public spaces where you don't feel safe.

You can also register your interest to join a night time community safety walk in October.

Visit yoursayyarra.com.au to have your say before 11:59pm on Sunday 1 November 2026.



YOUR SAY
YARRA

