

Brunswick Neighbourhood House

2020 – 2021 Annual Report



Brunswick Neighbourhood House acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands in the area now known as Brunswick. We acknowledge they have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

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*Cover: BNH Brunswick Multicultural Fiesta at Warr Park, January 2021. Photo by Sue Jackson
Below: Collage section from Nature and Nurture exhibition*



Chairperson and CEO Report

Over the past year, Brunswick Neighbourhood House (BNH) has proven just how important a Neighbourhood House is in maintaining and supporting the health and wellbeing of its community. Achievements during the pandemic have been impressive, addressing residents' needs as diverse as navigating the Digital Divide, food insecurity, and social isolation. Together, staff, tutors, volunteers, and participants have done everything that was possible to make a tough time better. As we look forward to 2022, it is worth reflecting on the successes of the last year, achieved as they were against the backdrop of the pandemic and attendant restrictions, with brief flashes of comparative normalcy and freedom.

The success of our online delivery strategy in the second half of 2020, and uncertainty about the future, led BNH to make the farsseeing decision to apply for the bulk of its training programs to be delivered online in 2021. Our laptop lending scheme, initiated in early 2020, was expanded to facilitate greater participation in online courses; and administrative processes were adapted to manage the new online reality, from introducing systems to enable staff to work from home to training for tutors and facilitators.

Problem solving the Digital Divide was a major effort for the House in 2021. The ability to impart technical advice over the phone became an essential skill for the organisation, highlighted by interactions with two major cohorts of the BNH community – the over sixty-fives and people with an intellectual disability. Awareness of the extent to which these groups would be affected drove the creation of alternative delivery modes and provision of additional supports, resulting in some of the most intensive, challenging and rewarding work the House has ever done. The fruits of this intensive engagement are impressive. 'Nature and Nurture,' an art exhibition of artworks created prior, during and directly after the long lockdown of 2020 by participants of BNH's inclusive art classes, was a major achievement. Impressive too was the number of enrolments in digital literacy and computer classes in 2021.

Food Relief was a major activity, with more than two thousand fresh food hampers and hundreds of ready to reheat meals delivered over the course of the year. To achieve this impressive output BNH trained 43 volunteers, including delivery drivers, packers, cooks, and those who assisted with distribution on Fridays. We are particularly grateful to volunteer Food Relief Coordinator Penny Mirgiannis, who has overseen the program from its inception. We are also indebted to our many partners in this space, who generously shared knowledge, provided in-kind support, and donated funds. More recently, BNH volunteers have provided tailored assistance to people on low incomes looking to claim the Government's Power Saving Bonus.

continued . . . /



In between the lockdowns, capital works projects proceeded at BNH's De Carle St venue, providing desperately needed storage space and improved amenity through enhanced soundproofing and lighting. A big achievement for the organisation in 2021 was the commitment by Council to move BNH's operations to a new site at 33 Saxon St – an exciting step forward that will help BNH to remain sustainable into the future. The need to relocate has become an urgent priority for the Board, with a dedicated subcommittee meeting regularly through 2021.

As always, we extend our sincere thanks to the BNH staff. During the past year they have worked hard to solve a diverse array of problems whilst retaining the friendly, welcoming, and professional atmosphere that is the hallmark of our operations.

We also extend our thanks to our fellow Board members for their resolve and tenacity in meeting the challenges and opportunities of the last 12 months. Our shared vision for a brighter, more inclusive, and better-connected future has resulted in our Strategic Plan 2021-2025, a document providing a compelling blueprint for the organisation's continued growth and innovation over the next four years.

Finally, we thank our sponsors, donors, partners, and the Brunswick community for their continuing support. In particular we would like to thank the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training; the Victorian Department of Education and Training; the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions; Moreland City Council; the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres Association; Transurban, the Inner North Foundation, La Mama Theatre, local businesses Rascal and Very Good Falafel, and numerous other local businesses and individuals who have supported and helped us to continue serving our community.

Deborah Tedge
Chair, Brunswick Neighbourhood House

Nelly Cabala
CEO, Brunswick Neighbourhood House



About Us



We connect members of the community through social, educational and recreational activities.

Our Goals

- Deliver inclusive, affordable and responsive high quality programs and activities.
- Increase community participation and maintain a positive public profile.
- Build and support community networks and partnerships.
- Ensure the viability of the House and grow sustainably into the future.
- Provide a safe, high quality childcare service that enhances children's learning and development.
- Contribute to community health, safety, and well-being by fostering social interaction and lifelong learning.
- Deliver tailored educational programs that support adults to develop the literacy, numeracy, digital and employability skills they need for work, further education, and active participation in their community.
- Lead by example and support our community to tackle climate change.

Our Values

We value collaboration, responsiveness, human rights, diversity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, child safety, viability and good governance.

Our Profile

Board of Directors



CEO - Nelly Cabala



Chair - Deborah Tedge



Secretary -
Wilhelmina Frysteen



Treasurer - Karen Ye



Director - Miluska Robles



Director - John Fletcher



Director - Tracie Andrews

Our Board is comprised of six elected members who are all volunteers and the Cooperative's CEO. We welcome prospective members to become involved in a subcommittee and attend a couple of Board meetings as guests to see the Board in operation and, over time, make an informed choice about standing for election at the AGM. We would like to express our thanks to all our current members for their enthusiasm, support and hard work over the year.

Our challenge as a Board is to provide good governance through sound financial management, accountability and stability, while ensuring we have the capacity to respond creatively to the changing needs of the area. To this end the Board must remain vital by attracting new members with fresh perspectives. In 2020-21 Wilhelmina Frysteen continued her involvement as a member on the North West Neighbourhood Houses Network Executive.

Our Staff

Brunswick Neighbourhood House staff is dedicated to ensuring that we continue to offer a supportive and inclusive space for our community. Throughout 2020-21 our staff and tutors utilised their talents and creativity to deliver a wide and varied range of programs and activities and we sincerely thank them for their hard work and diligence. The organisation is fortunate to have several long standing staff in both the administrative area and among our tutors. We would like to acknowledge their dedication and loyalty, and to thank new tutors who joined BNH over the past year.

Right: Childcare Co-ordinator Mia Paramashinta



Core Staff

Donna Boyle – Administration Officer
Janet Thomson – ACFE Programs & Projects Coordinator
Mia Paramashinta – Childcare Administration Officer
Miaomiao Zhou – Bookkeeper
Nelly Cabala – Chief Executive Officer
Noorie Abbas – Business Development Officer
Olga Kislica – Administration Officer
Rebecca Sanders – Assistant Manager
Rhys Freeman – IT Support
Sarah Mathers – Programs, Marketing & Volunteer Coordinator

Childcare Educators

Ferdaus Ara Naznin
Jie Chen – Room Leader
Prathiba Ramadoss – Room Leader
Widiawati Octavianti

Tutors and Facilitators

Adele Shelley – English Language & Literacy
Brighid Fitzgerald – Mixed Media
Christina Ntaliani – Digital Literacy
Daniel Makowski – Digital Literacy
Deborah Riley – Gentle Exercise and Tai Chi
Dinusha Perera – English Language & Literacy
Doreen Torkomyan – English Language & Literacy
Gavin Liddle – Mixed Media
Georgia Black – Pottery
Gulsen Yulec – English Language & Literacy
Jennifer Bourke – General Education
Jane Clarkson – Yoga & Meditation
Joy Barrett – Introduction to Sewing
Jo Zito – Mixed Media
Lina Martinez – Spanish Conversation
Karina Ojeda Rodriguez – Spanish Conversation
Maged Guirguis – Digital Literacy
Norfiza Zali – English Language & Literacy
Paul Bishop – Art & Creativity
Pauline Montagna – English Language & Literacy
Sharon Gunn – General Education Relief
Stella Huet – Yoga & Meditation
Sophie Moorhouse Morris – Pottery
Thea Bates – Art & Creativity
Vonni Vaughan – English Language & Literacy
Yoko Ozawa – Pottery
Zoe Hunter – Creative Movement

Student Placements

Adam Johnson
Atika Waseem
Amandeep Kaur
Caroline Saan
Farheen Sultana
Fatme Mahmoud
Johanna Collado
Julie Al-Khoury
Kohinoor Nahar
Leif Heiden
Maxwell Emmins
Nusrat Jabeen
Rabbail Khalid
Shyamasree Bose
Sidra Faisal
Toesha Rajkarnikar
Zeina Samaan

Support Staff

Daiyah Fillah
George Vrantzis
Jahratus Safara
Nur Assyifa
Rebecca Rowshan
Sheila Medina
Susan Adella



Right: a busy day at childcare

Our Volunteers

Volunteers keep Brunswick Neighbourhood House going. They give their time, enthusiasm, expertise, skill, kindness and generosity - we could not do what we do without them. Filling myriad roles e.g., running our Food Relief Program, assisting at the Childcare Centre, administration, grant writing, gardening, our volunteers are highly valued and fill a vital role in the day to day life of the House. We look forward to welcoming old and new volunteers back in 2021-22.

Adam Johnstone

Amina Elsheikh Omar

Andrea Hipolito

Andy Craig

Anna Morton

Anthony Harris

Beverly Rosser

Carolyn Saan

David Kiley

Diana Choquette

Farwaz Farid

George Vrantsis

Jackie Bacon

John Harland

Kira Janowsky

Karen Ye

Karin Locke

Kate Allen

Kaye Fechner

Kate Nash

Kelum Palipane

Kieran Loorham

Laura Lam

Lesley Bryceson

Lili Schwab

Lisa Bates

Lorenza Nolan

Loretta Krelle

Lucy Park

Margaret Germaine

Mary Veale

Mary Zeitoun

Maryanne Pilkington

Maxwell Emmins

Melissa Hallis

Mounib Ahmed

Muhammad Asad

Nickolas Dart

Nicole Alarcon Ocampo

Nina Killham

Olga Kislica

Pam Fletcher

Paul Mather

Paulina Juarez

Penny Mirgiannis

Raymond Liao

Roro Sawita

Rhys Mehlstaubler

Seden Kraus

Shaan Dube

Sharon Gunn

Shizuka Murai

Showvie Periquet

Shylicia McTiernan

Stella Capiris

Stephan Yianca

Stewart Roberts

Tracie Andrews

Vesna Fowler

William Osborne

Yanna Guo

Yehudi Saling



Clockwise from above: Volunteers Penny, Farwaz, Nina, Laura, Johanna, Showvie

Highlights 2020–21

It's been quite the roller coaster of a year, with our usual calendar of events replaced by something quite different – borne of necessity, but in some cases more innovative, more profound than what went before. Against this background, our appreciation for the things that did go before – that we took for granted – is increased, and we look forward to what the next year brings us.

2020

August – Adult Learners Week

BNH offered online versions of Drawing and Painting classes and Open Mic.

October – Children's Week – Indigenous story time for preschoolers

This was a new event for BNH, which we opened to seven other local children's services, as well as families at home. Presented online by proud Boonwurrung man, Jaeden Williams.

November – Know your Food Forest workshop

BNH was able to run its first face-to-face activity since July, co-hosting with the Warr Park Food Forest. Although the rules at that time permitted a maximum of ten participants in an outdoor setting, it was still incredibly exciting to be able to run anything face-to-face.

November – Melbourne Fringe Festival 'A Bird's Eye View of a Banquet in Brunswick'

Eight BNH community members got together to devise, write and create a play for entry into the 2020 Melbourne Fringe Festival. Community theatre on Zoom! Led by Nicola McKay.

December – Christmas Party!

A wonderful chance to both thank and connect face-to-face with our many volunteers, including food relief volunteers, student placements and gardeners, as well as tutors and staff.



Christmas party, L-R: BNH Assistant Manager Rebecca Sanders, English tutors Norfiza Zali and Dinusha Perera; Nelly Cabala and Loretta Krelle.



2021

In between lockdowns, Maternal and Child Health Moreland ran its six week New Parents' groups in our Main Hall, checking in with new parents and providing a chance for them to make friends and find support for their parenting journey. For BNH, it was great to be able to provide such a large space when density limits precluded use of groups' usual meeting places - and always a joy to hear the coos and cries of Moreland's next generation!

February – The Brunswick Cultural Harmony Fiesta

For many, this was the first public event they had attended in almost a year, and the joy on people's faces was fabulous to see. Featuring a carnival parade, Uruguayan Candombe dance workshop, face painting and a gardening workshop, it was huge hit, and garnered a visit from our local State Member Tim Read.



Uruguayan Candombe dance workshop, BNH Brunswick Cultural Harmony Fiesta. Photo by Sue Jackson

April – Music in the Park

After a couple of reschedules due to lockdowns, live music well received by locals living near the new Bulleke- Bek Park on West St, Brunswick.

May – Biggest Morning Tea

Squeezed in just hours before the fourth lockdown was announced, our annual fundraiser for the Cancer Council raised \$410 through sales of great coffee and delicious cakes.

May - Nature and Nurture exhibition

Created by participants with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities just prior to, during and after the long lockdown of 2020, the exhibition was a testament to both their creativity and their tutor's ingenuity. Many of the works were the result of online art classes delivered via Zoom and were brought together to create an installation of astounding quality. We congratulate all the exhibitors and tutor Zoe Hunter.



Top and bottom: artworks from Nature and Nurture exhibition

July – Soldier On's new wicking bed

Volunteers replaced two tired wicking boxes with one bigger, better one; and repainted the cubby house, donated by Barkly Square.



Top: Soldier On volunteers; bottom: freshly painted cubby house; building the new wicking bed



Networks and Partnerships

ACFE
Adult Learning Australia
AMEP
AMES
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
Baptcare
Brunswick Business Network
Brunswick Library
Brunswick North West Primary School
Casa Cultura
CERES
CIS Moreland
Community Childcare Centres Cooperative
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
Fawkner Neighbourhood House
Gumboot Theatre
Holden St Neighbourhood House
Hume Moreland Volunteer Coordinators Network
Inner North Community Foundation
Jobs Australia
Justice Connect
Kangan Institute of TAFE
La Mama Theatre
Learn Local Providers Network
Lentara Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre
Moreland Primary School
Max Employment
Melbourne City Mission
Melbourne Polytechnic
Merri Health Service
Moreland Business Network
Moreland Energy Foundation Limited
Moreland Food and Material Relief Network
Moreland Food Gardens Network
Moreland Italian Women's Group
Moreland Maternal & Child Health Services
Moreland Multicultural & Settlement Services Network
Moreland North West Mental Health Services
Moreland Social Connection Network
Moreland Turkish Women's Group
Mosaik Experiences
Muslim Women's Council of Victoria



Rascal's 'Brunswick Recovery' promotional campaign

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House
North West Neighbourhood Houses Network
Open Table
Our Community
OzHarvest
Rascal Brunswick
RMIT
Salvation Army Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service
Salvation Army Brunswick
Second Bite
Soldier On
South Moreland Service Providers Network
St. Margaret Mary's Primary School
VCOSS
Very Edible Gardens (V.E.G)
VICSEG New Futures
Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)

Promotion

Promotion is an important activity for a Neighbourhood House, but particularly in the case in Brunswick, where many people live in apartments and move more frequently than in other parts of Moreland. We work continually to make sure new residents know about BNH and its services. COVID-19 did change the rules, though, with some traditional methods for promotion no longer available to us e.g. The Moreland Leader as a physical newspaper no longer exists. Except for a couple of letterboxing drives, e.g. the 1,500 combined general information/Music in the Park flyers to multiple high-rises around Bulleke-Bek park, online platforms were our primary focus. Social media engagement went to a new level, and BNH audiences have increased substantially.

Collaborating with Atticus Design was a fun lockdown sideline, resulting in a new BNH logo and style guide. We cannot wait to use our new marquee, bright and branded, at outdoor events in the months to come. Also coming soon, new stand-up banners – one branded for our childcare centre, the other for the Neighbourhood House – to promote our services at public events. Direct marketing continued during 2020-21, resulting in an increased profile and strengthened networks for BNH. For example, as BNH courses moved online, geography ceased to be a determinant for enrolment – student cohorts previously not aware of BNH could now participate in its courses. A corollary of this was the opening of new online networks. The ‘Meet BNH’ campaign, directed at local schools, started during lockdown as a way of laying the groundwork for engagement with new generations.

Additionally, BNH provided support and advice to other Neighbourhood Houses and community groups.

Donors

Thank you to all our donors including those who donated anonymously and to those who donated food products for our Community Pantry.

Anneke Donnelly	Michael Kane
Barkly Square Management	Michelle Cherry
Brunswick Mess Hall Pty Ltd	Rascal Brunswick
Deborah Vallance	Rebecca Tsamasiros
Frances O'Brien QC	Rumble Coffee Roasters
Hannah Fearon	Ruth Wilson
Ikuko Nakane	Terry Teoh
Jane Ellen	Very Good Falafel
Marija Newbold	



Adult Community & Further Education

As a Learn Local Provider, Brunswick Neighbourhood House delivers ACFE-funded pre-accredited training and short courses in a wide range of learning areas e.g., communication, study and job skills, literacy, numeracy, English language, computers – as well as preparatory courses for industries such as horticulture, childcare, warehousing, retail and hospitality.

Pre-accredited training can be in a classroom or online, is flexible and can be tailored specifically to suit people's needs and schedule; class sizes are often small and Learn Local tutors have an informal, yet professional, style of teaching.

The COVID-19 situation of the past year resulted in most of Brunswick Neighbourhood House's educational courses shifting to online delivery. Limited face-to-face learning was delivered at Fawkner Neighbourhood House and Max Employment, though lockdowns meant many disruptions for our tutors and students this year.

I congratulate Brunswick Neighbourhood House tutors for their resilience and professionalism over what has been a challenging year – and include here reflections from two of our key teaching staff.

**- Janet Thomson,
ACFE Programs & Projects Coordinator**

***During the last year
BNH delivered 2172 hours
of pre-accredited courses,
providing new opportunities
for participation in
education.***

***'I wanted to advise
that I have been successful
for a role as a bicultural
facilitator. I am really happy
and thankful to you for the
program' - Mariyam***

"The past 12 months have been amazing for me, delivering the online Step to Employment program, together with an English for Occupational Purposes course. The students I have supported in their quest for employment have been truly inspirational. They are dedicated to settling here in Australia and they bring with them amazing knowledge and qualifications, each one with their own unique story to tell and career path to follow. Most students hold international qualifications not recognised in Australia – mostly master's degrees in science or mathematics. They are teachers, doctors, scientists, and chemical engineers to name but a few. They attend every class and diligently take on board everything I suggest without question. I am grateful for their commitment and trust.

The best part of the program is the interview role play. I research their roles to make the experience as real as possible. This builds their confidence, and they start getting interviews and jobs before the course has finished. We can have up to 60 % of the students employed by the end of the program and the rest are on their way with strong resumes and cover letters. I often receive texts from ex-students, telling me that they've found work. Thank you BNH, and I look forward to seeing many students find their chosen careers here in Australia".

- Vonnie Vaughan, Employment Skills Tutor

“Through the ups and downs of multiple lockdowns in 2021, the online English Conversation has had a steady group of regular attendees, who are passionate about improving their English and connecting with their communities.

Representing diverse cultures, backgrounds and ages, these students have become an invaluable support for one another, as they share experiences, and a range of advice for living, working, and raising families in Australia. Several class members are also taking other vocational courses, one learner is setting up on-line business, and others are seeking voluntary and paid work.

A highlight of the year occurred in Term 2 when several learners were able to meet in person at Brunswick Neighbourhood House for the first time – see below! They delighted in each other’s presence and the chance to share food and conversation.

It has been inspiring to witness all learners building confidence, resilience, and friendships throughout the year. The group has commented that this class has not only been important for improving their English, but also for supporting their well-being, as it has enabled them to continue developing their skills and connecting with others, despite the challenges of lockdown.

It is a privilege to work with this motivated, supportive and stimulating group of people”.

- Adele Shelley, English Tutor



Flexibility has been essential over the past year, as has the ability to be ready at short notice to modify our educational activities, adjusting to big swings in enrolments due to the Government Health directions. Huge credit must go to our educators and volunteers who were always prepared, ensuring we could continue engaging with children and families affected by hard lockdown.

During the lockdown, in August 2020, we hit the lowest number of attendances with only 2% of the total capacity per week. However, by the end of June '21, attendance per week had risen remarkably despite COVID-19 and we even saw new families join our waiting list. From Term 1 2021, children under 36 months occupied 61% of total children in care. This trend gives us confidence that the community continues to put their trust in us as a high quality, safe and reliable occasional childcare service. We also believe the combination of word of mouth and social media marketing worked very well and attracted new families.

We are grateful for the Commonwealth Government's support payments i.e., Relief, Transition and Recovery Packages, and Job Keeper, which helped us when enrolments dropped off so severely.



Responses to our Parents' Satisfaction Survey 2021 provided crucial feedback from parents regarding our programs and approaches, quality of service and educators . . .

"Very friendly, helpful and efficient. Being able to attend a smaller group (than the longer day care we also attend) with a bit of one-on-one attention is fantastic"

"I really feel that for an occasional care service BNH goes above and beyond. The kindness and hard work of the educators and administrators were outstanding. My kid loved going there which is saying something given he was only there one day a week. The educators sent care packages during lockdown, made birthday and special occasion gifts, and were very kind and loving"

"They are fabulous! They work hard to develop strong bonds with the children and support their development through an interesting array of activities. They are also flexible in response to my child's changing needs."



Highlights of our childcare program

Pyjama Day

Held each August, this is hugely popular with the children (and parents too) who love the novelty of coming to childcare in their pyjamas! Children shared their bedtime routines and enjoyed bedtime stories from their favourite books

‘Soapy Hero Training’

Along with temperature screening, this is now embedded into our daily program, encouraging clean hands in childcare and at home, with temperature screening ensuring that unwell families do not attend our centre.

Indigenous Storytime for preschoolers

This year we celebrated NAIDOC week online, and invited other local kindergartens and childcare services to attend.

Pretend and Play with Face Painting

Face painting is a wonderful way to encourage children’s imagination. Children nominated their favorite fictional character to have painted on their face – this year, Elsa and Anna from Frozen, Spiderman, bumble bee, and watermelon were the favourite topics.

Fun in the garden

Thanks to our garden volunteer Di Choquette for helping us to maintain a beautiful space for our children, who have loved picking and eating cherry feijoas, sugar snap peas, and all-time favourite strawberries – and feeding the worm farm! Coming up, blueberries, passionfruit and tomatoes.



Program Reports

Social Groups

BNH's social programs help residents meet and connect with each other on a regular basis, reducing social isolation and building connections. The long lockdown of 2020 was followed by a brief taste of freedom in early 2021, resulting in new initiatives and groups for people eager to connect after isolation.

BNH Book Group

The group has continued meeting in and out of lockdown to discuss the books that the group nominates at the end of each year. Fortunately, the neighbourhood house has allowed us to use its Zoom account and we have been able to stay connected and maintain our monthly schedule. The books discussed cover a wide range and most were published in the past five years, providing topics of a contemporary nature for our discussion.

- Carolyn Cohn

Walking Group

The walking group has met as often as possible during the past year. Leaving from Garden St, through the cemetery with a stop at the shrine to Elvis Presley, is always interesting! We also enjoy visiting the De Carle St venue to check on the food forest and garden. While exercise is the fundamental point of the group, the social aspect is also very important. With this aspect in mind, a highlight for many of the group was in April when we were joined by two ex-members – one from Darwin, the other from Geelong.

- Deborah Tedge

Social Sewing and Craft Group / Makers & Menders

In early 2021, we moved our long-running sewing and crafters group from Garden St to De Carle St. The move, and change of time and day, proved energising and we welcomed several new participants. In between lockdowns, people met to chat, work on their own projects, or helped by making bunting for BNH's festivals and events.



Community Lunches

BNH restarted community lunches in 2021 after a hiatus for much of 2020. When things are running normally, the meals are offered twice a month, and are created by two volunteer teams, both led by professional cooks. The quality of meals this year has been outstanding, and BNH thanks its volunteers for their creativity in using produce that would otherwise go to landfill. While several lunches were cancelled due to snap lockdowns, many went ahead – adhering to strict social distancing requirements - providing a valued opportunity for social engagement and some good food.

Image: Bunting made by volunteers and Makers & Menders participants



Inclusive Programs

General Education

It was great to welcome everyone back to the House for the start of 2021, though with ensuing lockdowns classes returned to telephone delivery, again using specially prepared workbooks, for Term 2. Tutor Jenny Bourke created a great program in March and April, including activities in the Kitchen Garden, where the Gen Ed class has its own dedicated garden beds. Despite the shift back to telephone-run classes, participants have retained their commitment to the program, clearly enjoying the opportunity to regularly engage with the House and the Gen Ed program.



Collaborative Art and Movement

Following on from the General Education session on Monday mornings, Collaborative Arts and Movement provided a less structured opportunity for participants to work collaboratively on an art project. For those who stayed on for the afternoon class, this meant a full-day of programs at BNH – and we welcomed some newcomers to just the afternoon class.

Mixed Media & Creative Expression / Art Moves

This long-running mainstay of BNH inclusive courses underwent a name, location and time change at the beginning of 2021. Partly in response to social distancing requirements, but also the introduction of a physical movement/dance component to the program, the group shifted to the hall at De Carle St., where they could dance and make things without a worry in the world. We take this opportunity to thank Mixed Media tutors Gavin Liddle and Jo Zito for their great work and commitment to this group for so many years.

Tutors Zoe and Jenny, back left, and Collaborative Art & Movement participants





'Nature and Nurture' emerged from a 'tree of life' piece that was created collaboratively over 18 months, and online BNH Creative Expression workshops during the first COVID lockdown. The work people created was amazing - but the process was difficult. Putting together, delivering, and collecting materials took many hours each fortnight; and not all participants had access to, or familiarity with, the technology required. Most participants needed support staff whose availability was variable and tutoring via a computer screen put limits on communication and support able to be provided. Distractions from the home environment also limited peoples' ability to focus during workshops. Unfortunately, not all participants who created work were able to attend the exhibition. The tutor personally gave them their works post exhibition. Returning to BNH after lockdown, we talked about how being at Brunswick Neighbourhood House with other groups is important because it gives participants the opportunity to show other people their work. Being part of a community and having access to residential care respite is appreciated by all participants.

- Zoe Hunter, Curator of Nature and Nurture

Pottery

Lockdowns are not conducive to pottery classes – but participants started and stopped and started and stopped again for the sheer love of their time in the studio and creative expression. This is one of BNH's most loved and long-standing programs (25 years and counting!), providing an opportunity for participants to engage in an arts-based program that improves not only their technical skills, but their social skills as well. It attracts a wide mix of individuals who attend for a variety of reasons, including a desire to socialise, to set aside dedicated time for the self, and to experience a break from dealing with difficult or chronic issues and situations.

Creative Arts Programs

Visual Arts

The central aim of Visual Arts (formerly Drawing and Painting) at BNH is to support students to develop their own creative visual language and to produce artworks that they love! The program is flexible, skill based and full of information to enable participants to understand the elements of art and design, composition, and presentation. As a constant theme running throughout, we discuss as a group, how to grow their creative practice and apply their lifelong learning. Each term the course is designed to suit both beginners and those with more experience, ensuring they are supported at whatever their level of confidence. Of course, COVID-19 meant that we had to learn about Zoom and how to work as a group from our own homes. Being resourceful has become an additional skill which everybody took on, turning up week after week, continuing to make great art and supporting one another. That said, being back in the house will be a wonderful thing.

- **Thea Bates, Creative Arts tutor**

Health & Wellbeing Programs

Gentle Exercise, Contemporary Line Dancing, Tai Chi, and Yoga and Meditation courses each had various iterations during the year – stopping then starting, stopping, and starting. Tuesday evening yoga classes switched to on-line delivery, and we were able to keep it going for several months until most participants simply got Zoom-exhausted, and we put the class hold until we can resume in person.

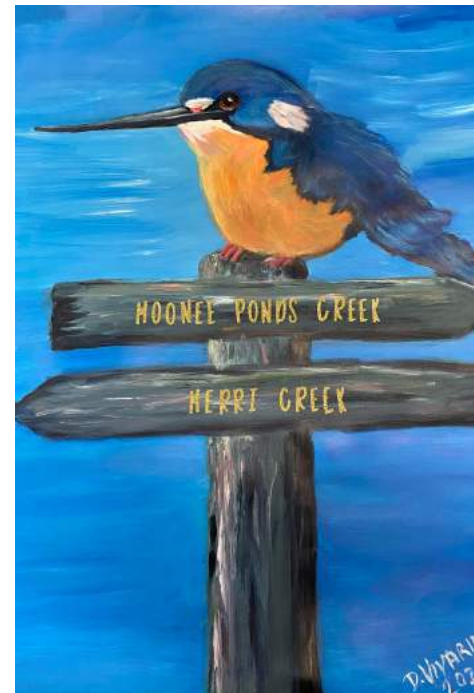
Workshops

- Know your food forest – November
- Managing a food relief program – December
- Worm farming and composting – January
- "Have you got a story to tell?" Creative Writing taster class held at Brunswick Library – March
- Food production in small gardens – April
- Keeping soil healthy and productive – April
- Korean cooking – May
- Soap making – May

School Holiday Activities

- Kids Xmas Cooking – December
- Soap making – April

Artworks for community theatre project, 'A Bird's Eye View of a Banquet in Brunswick'
Top, Deb Vivarini; bottom, Billie Robertson



BNH Kitchen Garden

This year's focus has been on establishing systems that will improve productivity and BNH's food waste management systems. A workshop in January helped BNH volunteers create a worm farm system to manage the increase in compostable waste generated by community lunches and food relief activities. Our composting and worm farm system now consists of a 245L Tumbler compost bin, a Tumbleweed Worm Farm Cafe, a large Hungry Bin Worm Farm and 12-14 DIY worm farms – meaning we are now able to turn food waste to worm juice in just six weeks. Many thanks to Marija Newbold for the generous donation of the new Hungry Bin Worm Farm. Another achievement this year was the replacement of two wicking beds in the courtyard with a new, larger one, created between lockdowns by Soldier On.

- **Karen Ye**

Throughout 2020-21 vegetables from the Kitchen Garden contributed to BNH's community lunches and food relief hampers.



Warr Park Food Forest

Intermittent access over the last year did not deter us from maintaining growth and getting some new plants into the food forest. Problematic irrigation in the wicking beds and in the main food forest, were successfully addressed following advice from Adam Grubb at Very Edible Gardens: the wicking bed water-levels were rebalanced; and the automatic watering system in the forest area now works well, thanks to MCC's irrigation expert. These improvements gave us confidence to plant five more fruit trees, blueberries, and a range of vegetables and herbs given to us by the CERES Propagation Department. In early Autumn, a team of five volunteer gardeners formed the WPFF Group, which operates under the auspice of BNH. We are establishing a relationship with MCC "to maintain and improve the productivity of both the Food Forest and its three wicking beds", so far facilitated by the DFFH Food Relief Grant. One simple, but effective action has been the introduction of netting, which has enabled us to protect plants while they grow to full size. During the year, we held working bees and a workshop where Adam Grubb explained the history of, and plantings in, the Forest.

- **Pam Fletcher**



Treasurer's Report

Despite finishing the year with an operational deficit of \$17,100, BNH remains in a strong financial position thanks to the organisation's healthy reserves built up through the years. The deficit for 2021 was mostly due to two factors, the impact of COVID-19 and the increasing salaries and accommodation costs needed to maintain two facilities whilst receiving funding for one site. Our revenue for the year increased by \$59,626 thanks to various Government assistance payments. These added up to \$325,700 while income generated from our operations decreased by \$41,950. Overall expenditure increased by \$156,843, with the largest increases occurring in salaries, communication and accommodation expenses.

Our balance sheet, however, shows that 100% of our assets are in the form of current assets. With a working capital ratio of well over 2.5, we have sufficient funds to meet all existing liabilities and have a financial cushion to absorb the year's loss. The balance sheet also shows good provision for liabilities and healthy operating reserves to support the organisation into the medium term. The relocation and consolidation of BNH to the Saxon St site in the next few years will certainly ensure Brunswick Neighbourhood House stays a viable and vibrant community asset.



Moreland City Council



Australian Government



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