

# *Brunswick Neighbourhood House*

## **2021 – 2022 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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# Chairperson and CEO Report

Over the last year BNH has risen to meet many challenges, at the same time achieving some great successes and punching well above its weight to meet community needs both in and out of COVID lockdowns.

In some ways, the year feels like two separate experiences. The second half of 2021 was marked by uncertainty because of the long lockdown and our efforts to secure adequate accommodation for BNH's services. Both of these experiences were characterised by their lengthy and often frustrating nature, and the difficulty of predicting their outcomes.

BNH again pivoted its programs to online delivery and to emergency relief assistance services. A challenge during this time was providing online instruction to people with no, or few, digital literacy skills. As the lockdown ended, but vaccination mandates continued, new needs emerged, and we were able to respond in practical ways such as helping people upload their vaccination certificates onto their phones.

2021 also saw the last push for BNH to secure accommodation at 33 Saxon St as part of Council's planned redevelopment of that site. After a year of negotiations trying to ensure adequate space for BNH's operations, the last-minute offer made by Council to us was inadequate, in particular for our much-loved Childcare Service. The offer, which included the relocation of our childcare into the Brunswick Baths, did not meet the Children's Services Regulations outdoor space requirements that would have allowed BNH to extend the current service hours to better respond to the current and future demand for the service. This outcome was unacceptable to the organisation. In just six days a community petition supporting BNH's request for adequate space within the Saxon Street site garnered 877 signatures, but failed to persuade Council. The Board was then left with no option but to decline the Saxon St offer in December 2021. We have now entered new discussions with Council and others about the increasingly urgent need to find alternative options to improve BNH's accommodation.

In contrast to the challenges of 2021, the first half of 2022 hurtled by at great speed. The organisation returned to near normal operations against a backdrop of mandated masks, isolation periods, and surging demand for BNH's programs and childcare service – a clear vindication of our arguments for improved accommodation, and evidence of the need that our community has for social connection organisations like Brunswick Neighbourhood House. At the same time, BNH continued to support the community with COVID initiatives such as the Food Relief program, the provision of COVID-19 health information, supporting vaccination drives and helping people to apply for the Power Saving Bonus (PSB) and other Government initiatives.

Behind the scenes, overall BNH was stretched by the pandemic, with COVID isolation periods and staffing shortages previously not experienced by the organisation.

Despite delays in capital works projects, we finally completed the improvements to the kitchen and mezzanine at DeCarle Street in March 2022. These works will enable us to utilise the space available more efficiently for programs and public events.

As always, the Board thanks the BNH staff for its hard work this year. The popularity of BNH's programs and services is a testament to its professionalism over a challenging 12 months. We also extend thanks to our fellow Board members for their support and resolve regarding the hunt for appropriate accommodation for the organisation.

Deborah Tedge  
Chairperson

Nelly Cabala  
CEO



Collaborative Art project for *See the Trees for the Forest* exhibition, May 2022

# 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 -  
John Fletcher



Director -  
Tracie Andrews



Director -  
Margaret Jones

Our Board comprises 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 Board 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 2021-22 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 2021-22 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.



L-R: Rebecca , Janet, Olga , Kitty, Sarah, Mia

## Core Staff

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

## Childcare Educators

Jie Chen  
Prathiba Ramadoss

## Relief Childcare Educators

Atika Waseem  
Amandeep Kaur  
Fatme Mahmoud  
Ferdous Ara Naznin  
Kitty Zhou  
Monica Donoghue  
Nusrat Jabeen  
Pushpinder Kaur Sandhu  
Sidra Faisal  
Widiawati Octavianti

## Support Staff

George Vrantsis  
Jahratus Safara  
Rebecca Rowshan  
Susan Adella



George and Bec

## Student Placements

Margaret Jones  
Yuko Hattori  
Amos Warren  
Sozon Gilo  
Klara Petersons  
Ester Egal  
Meron Gebrehiwot  
Samira Karimi  
Amritha Udayan

## Tutors and Facilitators

Anna Morton – Language & Literacy  
Adele Shelley – Language & Literacy  
Brendan Kelly – Introduction to Hospitality  
Christina Ntaliani – Digital Literacy  
Carly Housiaux – Pottery  
Daniel Makowski – Digital Literacy  
Dinusha Perera – Language & Literacy  
Doreen Torkomyan – Language & Literacy  
Georgia Black – Pottery  
Gulsen Yulec – Language & Literacy  
Helen Donovan – Language & Literacy  
Jane Clarkson – Yoga & Meditation  
Jennifer Bourke – General Education  
Joan Bredebusch – Language & Literacy  
Joy Barrett – Introduction to Sewing  
Karina Ojeda Rodriguez – Spanish Conversation  
Kira Janowsky – Wine Appreciation  
Lina Martinez – Spanish Conversation  
Lorenza Nolan – General Education  
Maged Guirguis – Digital Literacy  
Melissa Houselander – Intro to Horticulture  
Nell Hanson – Pottery  
Patrick Loverso – Life Drawing  
Pegs Marlow – Pottery  
Rana Abdel Qader – Step to Employment  
Stella Huet – Yoga & Meditation  
Tessa Schultz – Language & Literacy  
Thea Bates – Visual Art  
Vonni Vaughan – Language & Literacy  
Yoko Ozawa – Pottery  
Zoe Hunter – Collaborative Art



Above: Kira Janowsky (left), Wine Appreciation tutor  
Below: Tutor, Brendan Kelly (standing, 3rd from left) and Introduction to Hospitality graduates





# 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. community lunches, assisting at the Childcare Centre, administration, grant writing, gardening and more - our volunteers are highly valued and fill a vital role in the day to day life of the House.*

Aisha Dunkal  
Amandeep Kaur  
Anne-Maree Wilton  
Antonia Peric  
Atika Waseem  
Ben Grant  
Beverly Rosser  
Bob Pavlich  
Carolyn Cohn  
Chathuri Costa  
Chris Craft  
Deborah Tedge  
Diana Choquette  
Dila Muslih  
Donna Boyle  
Elizabeth Jackson  
Ezell Phillips  
George Vrantis  
Gillian Manson  
Hannah Bambra  
Hannah Duong  
Jane Erwin  
Jayne Lindhom  
Jenny Jhoty  
Jie Chen

John Fletcher  
Joy Hirst  
Karen Ye  
Kate Nash  
Katherine Blanco Jofre  
Kathleen Gerber  
Kirsten Bindoff  
Laura Lam  
Liyana Gao  
Lorenza Nolan  
Loretta Krelle  
Lou Brugaletta  
Lucy Park  
Margaret Jones  
Margaret Germaine  
Margaret Sheridan  
Maria Failla  
Mary Veale  
Mary Zeitoun  
Maryanne Pilkington  
Mellissa Hallis  
Minnie Frysteen  
Nasra Mussa  
Nelly Cabala  
Olga Kislica

Olivia Schwab  
Pam Fletcher  
Pauline Baxter  
Penny Mirgiannis  
Prathiba Ramadoss  
Rebecca Sanders  
Riyan Sitipu  
Sandie Vaskess  
Sarah Mathers  
Seda Antar  
Seden Kraus  
Sevin Karaca  
Sharon Gunn  
Shyamasree Bose  
Sidra Faisal  
Srividya Patha  
Teigan McLean  
Tracey Oliver  
Tracie Andrews  
Ulrich Gerber  
Victoria Gell  
Wayhu Kappa  
Wendy Yong  
Zeina Samaan



Above L-R: National Volunteer Day brunch; John ; Kirsten

Below L-R: Ash, Lilly, Nelly, Jenny, Karen and Tracey preparing a Community Lunch



# Highlights 2021 – 22

*What a year! With a major lockdown announced in July 2021, we adjusted plans and prepared instead for a busy summer, cramming in as much as we could during the warmer, less COVID fraught months. By March 2022 we had delivered two multicultural festivals, taken part in the Brunswick Music Festival, were planning two art exhibitions and preparing to welcome La Mama Theatre back to DeCarle St, much to the delight of our local community. BNH also returned to hosting new parents' groups meetings in partnership with Merri-bek's Maternal and Child Health unit.*

## 2021

### July – NAIDOC Week Indigenous story time for preschoolers

In between lockdowns, BNH squeezed in its first NAIDOC Week event, with Rebecca Axford of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation visiting Garden St Childcare to teach the children some Wurundjeri words, take part in traditional dancing and touch cultural items. One of our families even brought in their own possum skin cloak from home to share with the children, which was a real treat.



## August – Adult Learners Week

The lockdown impacted our ability to host Adults Learners Week events, but BNH promoted the message, “Learn one new thing every day”, to its community.

## October – Children’s Week

An online activity where BNH was joined by Brunswick Kindergarten. Our childcare staff donned traditional Indian costumes and children wore beautiful scarves for this activity led by Hithanjee from *Bindas Bollywood*.

## December – Brunswick Multicultural Festival

Perfect weather, a super line up of performers, Colombian food by *Donde Mama*, face painting, and a gardening workshop with Karen Sutherland all contributed to making a successful festival. For many, it was the first event they had attended since the end of lockdowns and it was the most successful BNH had run since early 2020, attracting over 300 people. Just one week later, BNH hosted its Christmas party to thank volunteers, students on placement, staff and tutors for their work during what had been an unpredictable but rewarding year.



2022

## February – *Herowines and Feasts*

After seven postponements, Kira Janowsky's feisty and touching *Herowines and Feasts* cabaret played to a full house at our DeCarle St venue. Accompanied by musician Leon Conway, Kira captivated her audience with songs about strong women, food and wine.

## March – International Women's Day, Brunswick Music Festival, Playgroup Week Expo, Brunswick Multicultural Festival

In this action-packed month BNH partnered with PRONIA (Australian-Greek community services agency) to host an International Women's Day event; joined the launch of the Brunswick Music Festival with a painting for children activity at Barkly Square; and ran a face painting activity as part of Moreland City Council's Playgroup Week Expo. Our very own second Brunswick Multicultural Festival for the year drew a crowd of more than 370 people, entertaining visitors with dance performances from the Pacific, African drumming, a Bollywood dance workshop; a gardening class led by Angelo Green; face painting and children's mask-making activities. In addition, BNH hosted the Western Health Unit Vaccination Van and gave away more than 300 RAT kits to assist people to stay COVID safe. These events were also the first we were able to run with minimal restrictions.



Angelo Green sharing his knowledge at a gardening workshop in the BNH Kitchen Garden



Makers & Menders, and Line Dancing, participants making the 'Break the Bias' gesture, symbol of International Women's Day 2022

## May – Neighbourhood House Week, *See the Trees for the Forest*, La Mama Mobile

*See the Trees for the Forest*, a stunning exhibition created collaboratively by artists with intellectual disabilities in our Creative Arts program, was a highlight of 2021 and transformed the DeCarle St venue into a wonderful site of colour and texture.

Soon after, we ran an online exhibition showcasing work created in the Visual Arts programs, both in and out of lockdowns. BNH outreach was on display at Everett St public housing estate, and a week later at Barkly Square, when we partnered with Merri Health to run a pop-up information stall as part of Neighbourhood House Week. National Volunteer Week, soon after, was another opportunity to host events e.g. Music in the Park and a brunch for BNH volunteers. May also saw the return of La Mama Mobile to DeCarle St, with a sold-out performance of *Fire in the Head*.



*See the Trees for the Forest* artists and their work. Clockwise from top left: Stella, Maddy, Patricia, Wayne, Jaris, Frank, Emma

## June – Glenroy Carnival, *See the Trees for the Forest* exhibition at Coburg Library

The launch of the *See the Trees for the Forest* exhibition at the Coburg Library for our Collaborative Arts group was a significant and wonderful experience for everyone involved. This was the first public exhibition outside of BNH for the group, and was supported by funding from the Inner North Community Foundation. The Glenroy Carnival was an opportunity for us to run a BNH pop-up painting activity for children – art is always a winner with children.



General Education participants and BNH staff at the Coburg Library launch of *See the Trees for the Forest*

# Networks and Partnerships

7th Floor

ACFE

Adult Learning Australia

Alevi Federation of Australia

AMEP

AMES

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

Baptcare

Brunswick Business Network

Brunswick Library

Brunswick North West Primary School

Casa Cultura

CERES

Community Information Services (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

Jobs Victoria

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 Art Community of Practice Network

Moreland Business Network

Moreland City Council

Moreland Energy Foundation Limited

Moreland Food & Material Relief Network

Moreland Food Gardens Network

Moreland Italian Women's Group

Moreland Local Partnerships &

Connectors Network

Moreland Maternal & Child Health Services



Moreland Multicultural & Settlement Services Network

North West Mental Health Services

Moreland Social Connection Network

Moreland Turkish Women's Group

Mosaik Experiences

Muslim Women's Council of Victoria

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House

North West Neighbourhood Houses Network

OpenTable

Our Community

OzHarvest

Pronia

Rascal Brunswick

RMIT

Salvation Army Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service

Salvation Army Brunswick

Second Bite

Soldier On

South Moreland Service Providers Network

State Trustees

St. Margaret Mary's Primary School

The Royal Society of Victoria

VCOSS

Very Edible Gardens (V.E.G)

Very Good Felafel

VICSEG New Futures

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)



# Promotion

Over the 2021-22 summer, we worked closely with web designers Boojum to build a new website for Brunswick Neighbourhood House. Vibrant and engaging, it will over time provide us the opportunity to offer many more things online e.g. venue hire, course registration, a volunteer engagement platform.

Building networks and promoting our programs and activities is a big part of what we do – it is these activities that contribute to our mission of community development. Promotion is an important activity for a Neighbourhood House, particularly in the case of Brunswick, where many people live in flats and there is a high transient population. Letting newcomers to Brunswick know that we are here, and what we do, takes time and constant attention – and it is getting harder, as more apartment blocks go up, without on-the-street letterboxes for us to deliver our flyers into. With the demise of local print media, and the emergence of new online players e.g. *The Brunswick Voice*, *Brunswick Daily*, engagement with social media becomes more important – though certainly no more effective than a poster in a local café or library. With many BNH courses running online in 2021, our enrolment numbers continued to grow into 2022 precisely because of the accessibility afforded by online courses. We have matured as an organisation, understanding the power of promoting across platforms, and by being creative in the way we think about messages we want to share, and how we can tap into diverse networks.

## Donors

Barkly Square  
Commonwealth Bank  
Nelly Cabala  
Maria Failla  
Michael Han  
Rumble Coffee Roasters  
Sharpline Stainless Steel  
Wildlife Bakery  
Judy Womersley  
Anonymous



Donations come in many forms! Like Liam's 50 tomato seedlings for our Kitchen Garden

# Adult and Community Further Education

Learn Local Providers like Brunswick Neighbourhood House provide supportive education and training environments where people can improve their English language skills, employability skills or obtain specialist vocational training. Our pre-accredited courses are taught by professional tutors who tailor content to meet the needs of our diverse community, and small class sizes ensure a more relaxed atmosphere than traditional education settings, helping students to feel welcome and supported.

Over the last 12 months BNH provided 379 people with the opportunity to complete a pre-accredited course. Our 2021 program continued – based on experience gained in 2020 – to include a large online delivery component, enabling unbroken tuition during the long lockdown of August to late October. Two courses, *Beginners English* and *General Education*, were delivered remotely, with tutors creating workbooks and communicating with participants via telephone.

The pandemic created an urgent need for digital literacy education, and BNH delivered ongoing training to new cohorts needing to learn how to use their smartphones and devices. Students were assisted to join Zoom classrooms via long phone calls – and sometimes by shouting over front fences! For some participants, many of whom had low level English language skills, being able to join a Zoom classroom was a breakthrough; we also conducted some of the classes in Greek, making it easier for that cohort to join in and learn these important new skills.

In comparison, 2022 witnessed a rush to return to the classroom. With strong demand, and increased confidence provided by wide scale vaccination, BNH returned many of its courses to face to face settings and launched new employability skills programs, including the popular Introduction to Horticulture.

As always, we extend our thanks to everyone who has been involved with our Learn Local programs. We would particularly like thank Janet Thomson, who left us at the end of June 2022, for all her hard work as our ACFE Coordinator. Our thanks also to Noorie Abbas who developed our outreach amongst CALD communities, before leaving BNH in January to take up a new role. Most especially we would like to thank all of our fabulous tutors and students, who stayed the course across another very challenging, but rewarding year.





**“They are THE BEST. Friendly, warm, capable, caring. Know our kids inside out and will do anything for them.”**

**“The workers are amazing! I’ve never felt unwelcome, and my daughter has never had any hesitation with anyone”**

Two responses from the 2022 Parents Satisfaction Survey



Creating positive impacts and strong community connections continued to be the hallmarks of our childcare service, despite the challenges faced by our educators and families throughout the lockdowns of 2021-22. As a result of the way we managed during this time, we gained more trust from families, who in turn promoted the Centre to their peers, leading to an exponential growth in enrolments and families on our waiting list.



On a different note, we were sad to say goodbye to Senior Educator Prathiba Ramadoss in April 2022. Prathiba worked at Garden St Childcare Centre for 12 years and was much loved by parents for her caring and sympathetic manner with their children, and her creativity in developing activities which entertained them and stimulated their development. Prathiba was loved by the children for her sense of fun. Jie Chen, who worked alongside Prathiba, has seamlessly moved into the role of Senior Educator. Jie’s caring nature, creativity and leadership is appreciated, and she ensures that BNH continues to provide the best care for all children attending our service.

# Program Reports

*With lockdowns behind us, BNH social groups bounced back into action in 2022. Community members welcomed the chance to meet in person, to replenish networks and nurture friendships, after more than two years of social isolation.*

## Social Groups

### Book Group

Zoom was once again the name of the game in the second half of 2021, and we were grateful for the provision of this service – providing unlimited online time – from the Neighbourhood House. To celebrate the end of lockdown we held a picnic in December, which was a real treat, and it was lovely for everyone to catch up in person. With nine members, the group is now at full capacity, and we have a waiting list. Our book list covered a wide range, and most titles were published in the past five years, providing topics of a contemporary nature for our discussion.

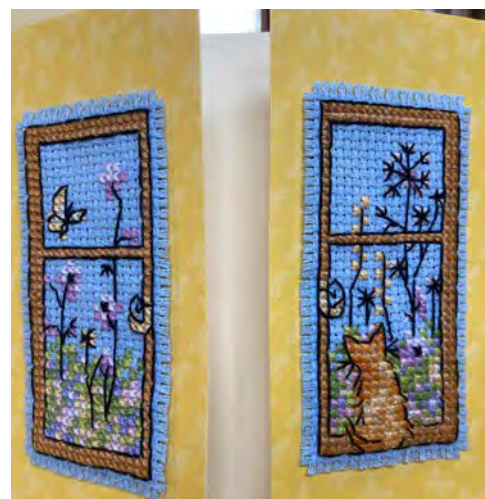
- Caroline Cohn, Book Group convenor

### Community Lunches

While lockdowns put a stop to this program for most of 2021, 2022 has been a new beginning. The quality of the lunches has been outstanding, and BNH owes a huge debt of gratitude to our fabulous volunteer cooks, kitchen hands and clean-up crew for their creativity in utilising food that would otherwise go to landfill. These meals are possible in large part because of our longstanding partnership with Open Table, which has provided us with the fresh produce to make the community lunches since 2013.

### Makers and Menders

This convivial group meets every Thursday to share knowledge about all sorts of art/craft activities, from lacemaking, beading and tapestry to knitting homespun wool. A warm thanks to Kate Nash for facilitating the group, and to everyone for their delicious homemade cakes and biscuits.



Examples of work from Makers & Menders. From the top, Maria's flowers made entirely of autumn leaves, Annette's rug, Shannon's cross stitch greeting card

## Moreland Senior Italian Women's Group

After the lockdowns it was nice to return to our regular meetings, make coffee and catch up with our friends. Our group, which has been meeting for many years, welcomed several new members this year. We have settled into the Pottery room and have transitioned to using only reusable coffee cups for our meetings. Meetings usually involve lots of talking, sometimes singing, and a game of *tombola* (bingo). We also had information sessions on vaccinations and keeping COVID safe delivered in Italian. Participants in the group are Italian speaking, and new members are welcome to join.



Members of the MSIW's group celebrating a significant birthday

## Moreland Turkish Women Group

This year many members, unable to join the group owing to COVID-19 restrictions, were re-united and our group has had strong attendances since November 2021. During the year we had presentations about COVID safety delivered in Turkish to help us stay abreast of the ongoing health situation. We also regularly cooked together, with members keen to share a meal at the meetings. Excursions were also a feature, and we enjoyed the trip to pick walnuts again this year. New members are always welcome to join the group, which is Turkish speaking.

## Walking Group

The Walking Group met as often as possible during the past year. When we couldn't meet due to lockdowns, we managed to stay connected via email and telephone. While exercise is the fundamental point of the group, the social aspect is also important. It was therefore a relief to be able to meet in larger groups again from January, and we have had some great walks. A highlight was visiting the inclusive art exhibition *Nature and Nurture* at the BNH DeCarle St venue during Neighbourhood House Week in May.

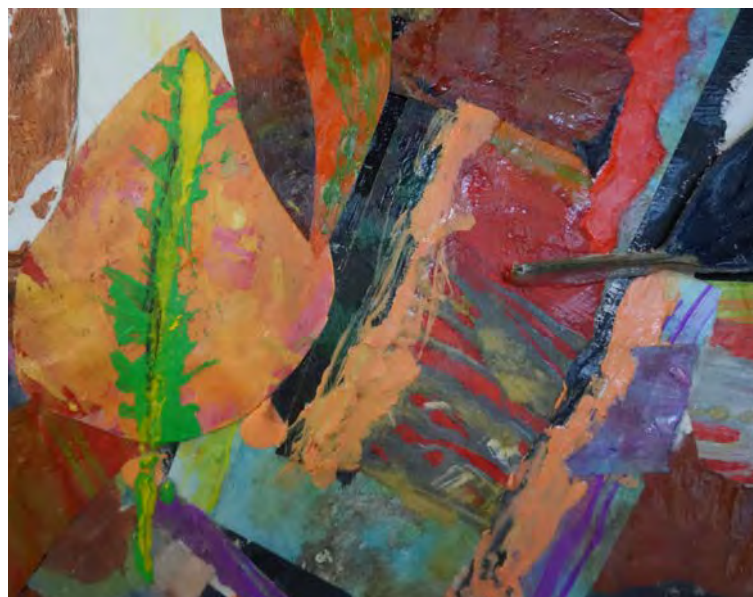
- from Deb Tedge



## Inclusive Programs

### Collaborative Art

Following on from General Education on Monday mornings, Collaborative Arts 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.



L-R: Wayne, Frank, Emma, Craig with one of the group-made collages

Closeup of work from *See the Forest for the Trees*

### General Education

In Terms 3 and 4 of 2021, classes were conducted via telephone, utilising specially prepared workbooks - and dedication to the program from participants, tutor Jenny Bourke, and volunteers. Returning to the house for Term 1 2022, participants enjoyed activities in the BNH Kitchen Garden, where the class has its own dedicated garden bed. The garden program is incorporated into the literacy and numeracy program, as well as providing produce for cooking programs. Participants have retained their commitment to the program throughout the year, clearly enjoying the opportunity to regularly engage with the House. Essential life skills are developed, as well as communication skills through planned group work and targeted language activities, building confidence and making social connections.

### Pottery

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 or to set aside dedicated time for the self.



## Visual Arts Programs

### Life Drawing

Due to community demand, we ran two 5-week Life Drawing courses in the first half of 2022. Led by experienced life drawing tutor Patrick Loverso, the sessions were a great opportunity for beginners wanting instruction, and for more experienced participants wanting the opportunity to improve their practice. The models came to us through the Life Model's Society Inc., and we thank them for helping to make these courses a great experience for everyone involved.

### Visual Arts

The central aim of the Visual Arts courses 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. As a constant theme, we discuss as a group, how to grow creative practice and apply 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.

- Thea Bates, Creative Arts tutor



L - R: Visual Arts participants Heather, Pam, Christine, Judith, Sandie

## Yoga and Meditation

At the beginning of 2022, enrolments for our yoga courses went through the roof, ensuring we could program two evening and one day time course in both Term 1 and Term 2. We decided against the Yoga + Zoom option for the 2021 lockdown, meaning people were keen to get back and practicing with our wonderful instructors, Stella and Jane as soon as things opened up in late 2021.





Making Calzone



Making Mexican decorations

## School Holiday Activities

- Christmas Baking
- Calzone Making
- Easter Baking
- Pottery
- Mexican papier mache



Decorated Easter eggs



Frutta Martorana workshop

## Workshops

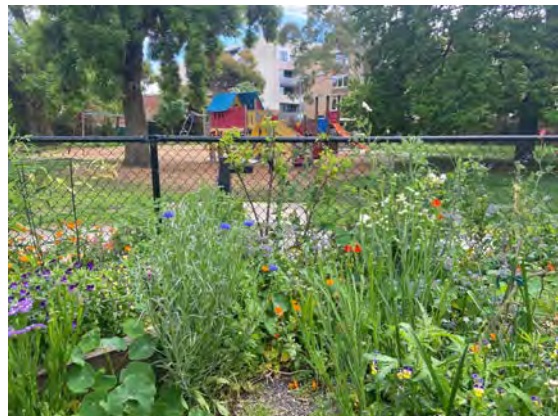
- Dumpling Journey
- Frutta Martorana (Italian Marzipan sweets)

# BNH Green Spaces

*Our garden and the Warr Park Food Forest are hugely valued by those who look after them, and by everyone who wanders through them. They provide wonderful opportunities for learning, and as 'Open Classrooms' are utilised by BNH participants and enjoyed by attendees of many BNH-run community gardening events.*

## BNH Kitchen Garden

This year the focus of gardeners in the BNH Kitchen Garden was to provide vegetables and herbs (proving farsighted as prices of vegetables skyrocketed in the first half of 2022) for use in the Community Lunch and Food Relief programs. In December we ran the popular *Summer Gardening* workshop with Karen Sutherland, and *Preparing for Winter Planting* in March with Angelo Green. We hope to increase the number of these workshops in the coming year. A new garden bed in the courtyard, built by Soldier On in 2021, looks fabulous and is bursting with plants. A DIY worm farming system along the southern side of the House has proved successful in managing increased food waste. The General Education class has returned to take care of plot number 3, which has thrived under their care and provided a terrific opportunity for participants in the group to learn about growing plants.



## Warr Park Food Forest

The Warr Park Food Forest (WPFF) group comprises six dedicated volunteers who enjoy the challenge of gardening in, and maintenance of, WPFF. For all of us, tending the food forest gives satisfaction and pleasure, and we care deeply about this great resource. Brunswick Neighbourhood House auspices our endeavours and we have excellent support from Alex English, of Merri-bek's Open Spaces team. In the last year, support from Merri-bek has included pruning the two Poplar trees overhanging the log seating and the Mulberry tree, and re-mulching, which has helped keep the weeds under control. A food relief grant from the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH) enabled us to add further improvements to WPFF e.g. attractive, informative signage and posters designed and made by Thea Bates (BNH Visual Arts tutor); tunnel netting to protect seedlings in the three wicking beds; and the purchase of shrubs, trees, and plantlets for the forest and to replenish the wicking beds.

– from Pam Fletcher

# Treasurer's Report

Despite finishing the year with an operational deficit of \$34,520, BNH remains in a strong financial position thanks to the organisation's healthy reserves built up through the years. The deficit for 2022 was mostly due to two factors, the decision to implement a much-needed Information and Communications Technology (ICT) overhaul and the impact of COVID-19. It is also worth noting the increasing cost of human resources as well as other accommodation related costs needed to maintain two facilities whilst receiving funding for only one site.

While our revenue for the year decreased by \$37,749 in comparison to FY2021, this is not a true reflection of the overall performance of the organisation, the cessation of the Job Keeper cash injection by the government being a key factor.

Comparison over a longer period shows strong financial performance and strength overall. Pleasingly, childcare revenue was up by \$72,163 on the previous financial year, marking a return to pre-CCS income as well as strong demand for this service by the local community. Venue Hire revenue has also recovered to pre-pandemic levels whereas program related revenue has made more modest gains, as could be expected given the lingering effects of the pandemic. Overall expenditure decreased slightly by \$20,329 on 2021 noting an increased cost in information technology.

Our balance sheet shows a working capital ratio of 2.81. The balance sheet also shows good provision for liabilities and healthy operating reserves to support the organisation into the medium term. This is particularly important given the organisation's ongoing efforts to find an accommodation solution that will enable BNH to continue meeting our community's growing needs.

