


ANNUAL REPORT

2022 – 2023



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 www.bnhc.vic.edu.au

 43a De Carle St Brunswick, VIC 3056

*Brunswick
Neighbourhood
House*

Brunswick Neighbourhood House acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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Chairperson and CEO Report

Another year at BNH has flown by and once again we have achieved a great deal. Full of activities, challenges, laughter and learning, BNH continues to thrive as an essential community hub with 40 years of experience in connecting the community.

The second half of 2022 was a return to what we now know as normal, post Covid life. We were able to host exhibitions, performances, festivals and regular programming for all of our courses and workshops, providing a wonderful opportunity for the community to engage with one another, relax and enjoy socialising once again. We still have masks, Rapid Antigen Tests and related information available to the public and have continued to provide online courses as a result of developing them during lockdown. The search for better accommodation for our much-loved childcare service continues, with our accommodation sub-committee working tirelessly on the task as demand for our childcare continues to grow. We want to be able to meet the needs of our community and are resolved to continue until appropriate accommodation is secured.

We were fortunate to have an in-house engagement in July with consulting company Thoughtworks. Brigid, Loreena and Tripti from Thoughtworks joined the BNH core staff to develop our FY24 Strategic Plan, to ensure it aligns with the growth, capacity, and direction of the organisation. They facilitated workshops to help us improve communication, efficiency, and cohesion within the team to maximise the work we are doing within our community.

Every morning for two weeks we came together to review and celebrate FY22-23 outcomes and to plan, estimate and roadmap FY24. The result was a clear and streamlined strategic plan that outlines our goals and objectives whilst recognising the capacity and growth of the organisation. We continue to strive for best environmental practice and have had our fridge, hot water system and electric switchboard upgraded. We are composting, recycling (including a nappy recycling service for our childcare) and have redeveloped our community garden for increased productivity and engagement.

There have been some notable changes in the BNH core staff team this year. We happily welcomed Laurel Coad, Teagan Crouch, Emily Dannock, Chris McCombe and Marzia Niaz. We also said goodbye to the following and sincerely thank them for their hard work and contribution to the House, and wish them all the best in their new endeavours: Sarah Mathers, Rebecca Sanders, Janet Thomson, Noorie Abbas, Rhys Freeman and Rebecca Rowshan. And finally, a big thank you to the tireless efforts of the BNH staff, board members and volunteers. The first half of 2023 has been a big year for us, with several new staff members and a transition to new, more efficient online systems. BNH continues to grow and thrive due to the hard work and dedication of all involved and we are excited to continue to serve and work with our wonderful community.

Wilhemina Frysteen
Chairperson

Laurel Coad
Deputy CEO

About Us

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



Brunswick Neighbourhood House is a community-based organisation committed to building a strong, connected and inclusive society. We are a not-for-profit organisation governed by an elected Board of Directors who provide direction to the organisation and make key policy decisions. We offer education programs, social activities, community support and childcare for local and surrounding communities.



Artwork by our Collaborative Art Group

About Us



Part of the BNH team: Nelly Cabala, Emily Dannock, Teagan Crouch, Chris McCombe & Laurel Coad

Our Purpose

To build the capacity of individuals and create a healthy, safe, and connected community by offering opportunities to learn, create, interact and engage.

Our Values

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

Our Governance

We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of six elected volunteer members and the Chief Executive Officer. We adhere to the Australian Standards of Governance (AS 8000-2003) & codes of conduct.

Our Goals

We aim to:

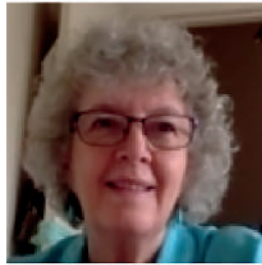
- Deliver inclusive, affordable and responsive high quality programs and activities.
- Build and support community networks and partnerships.
- Ensure the viability of the House and grow sustainably into the future.
- Provide a safe, high quality childcare service that enhances children's learning and 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.

Our People

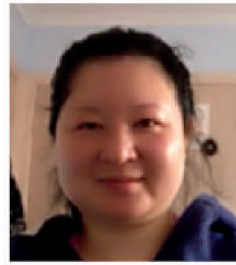
Board of Directors



Chair –
Wilhelmina Frysteen



Deputy Chair –
Deborah Tedge



Deputy Treasurer –
Karen Ye



Treasurer –
Margaret Jones



Secretary –
Tracie Andrews



Director –
John Fletcher



CEO –
Nelly Cabala

Our Board is made up of six elected members who are all volunteers and the Cooperative's CEO. 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.

The Board understands the high importance of attracting new members with fresh perspectives. We welcome prospective members to become involved in a subcommittee and over time make an informed choice about standing for election at the AGM.

Our People

Our Staff

The staff at Brunswick Neighbourhood House are dedicated to ensuring we provide a supportive and inclusive space for our community. Throughout 2022-2023, our staff and tutors utilised their talents and creativity to deliver a wide range of programs and activities and we sincerely thank them for their hard work. 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 to the House, and to thank our new tutors who joined BNH over the past year.

Core Staff

Nelly Cabala – Chief Executive Officer
Laurel Coad – Deputy Executive Officer
Rebecca Sanders – Assistant Manager
Sarah Mathers – Programs/ Marketing / Volunteer Coordinator
Teagan Crouch – Programs and Marketing Coordinator
Christopher McCombe – ACFE Program & Projects / Coordinator
Donna Boyle – Administration Officer
Olga Kislica – Administration Officer
Emily Dannock – Administration Officer
Mia Paramashinta – Childcare Administration Officer
Kitty Zhou – Finance Officer
Marzia Niaz – Community Development Officer

Support Staff

George Vrantsis
Tracey Oliver
Sue Visic
Carolyn Webster
Heninggar Septiantri
Farah Rosaria
Keiryn Bailey
Jahratus Safara
Kirsten Bindoff



Image: BNH staff and Thoughtworks consultants updating the strategic plan.

Our People



Childcare Educators

Jie Chen
Widiawati Octavianti

Relief Childcare Educators

Aditya Yolanda
Alida Sabila
Amandeep Kaur
Angie Liz Caicedo Valencia
Era Zahra
Erika Abubakar
Fatma Mahmoud
Kavitha Yedla
Kitty Zhou
Monica Donoghue
Nasra Mussa
Srividya Patha
Xuan Liu



Image: BNH Educator Jie Chen with little Maive

Our People

Student Placements

Abbey McGrath
Alicia Buckler
Ally Campbell
Angie Caicedo Valencia
Ash Jamali
Ash Waghorn
Candice Halsall
Chris McCombe
Christopher Romesh
Dana Warr
David Djembe
Eli Oliver-Joseph
Emma Chea
Eve Tu
Eyni Abdullahi Osman
Geeta Pantha

Jenny Triantafillidis
John Lopes
Julia Coscolluela
Jutan Kumar Dudhat
Kane Thompson
Katelyn MacDonald
Katherine Blanco Jofre
Kris Jenkin
Lillian Smith
Matthew Stuart
Quang Tran
Shantelle Hibbert
Skye Vongvixay-Smyth
Steven Te
Tilley Hanlan
Zoe Juricic



"Thank you so much for having me at BNH to do my student placement. I have learnt so much over my time here that I know I will take with me long into my career." - Lillian, student placement

Our People

Tutors and Facilitators

Adele Shelly – Language & Literacy
Angela Perez – Spanish Conversation
Brendan Kelly – Introduction to Barista
Bryan Soriano – Digital Literacy
Carly Housiaux – Pottery
Christina Ntaliani – Digital Literacy
Deborah Kananghinis – World Dance
Dinusha Perera – Language & Literacy/ Digital Literacy
Helen Donovan – Language & Literacy
Jane Clarkson – Yoga & Meditation
Jennifer Bourke – General Education
Josefina Barcelo – Pottery
Joy Barrett – Introduction to Sewing
Karina Ojeda Rodriguez – Spanish Conversation
Kim Waters – Art Therapy
Kira Janowsky – Wine Appreciation
Lina Martinez – Spanish Conversation
Lorenza Nolan – General Education
Lucy McMillan – Visual Arts
Maged Guirguis – Digital Literacy
Maria Peña – Oil Painting
Melissa Houselander – Intro to Horticulture
Michael O'Hanlon – Life Drawing
Nell Hanson – Pottery
Parul Sen – ProCreate
Patrick Loverso – Life Drawing
Pegs Marlow – Pottery
Rana Abdel Quader – Steps to Employment
Rhonda Weatherby – Yoga & Meditation
Sarah De LaCerde – Meditation Through Voice
Sarah Flynn – Digital Literacy
Stella Huet – Yoga & Meditation
Sue Taylor Pearce – Arts Programs
Thea Bates – Visual Arts
Tony Chiodo – Intro to Hospitality
Zoe Hunter – Collaborative Arts



Images (from top to bottom): BNH tutors Tony Chiodo, Sue Taylor-Pearce & Parul Sen

Our People

Our Volunteers

We wouldn't be here today without the amazing help of our generous volunteers! From gardening to cooking, administration to grant writing - they are always willing to lend a helping hand when we need it most.

Our volunteers play a very important role in allowing the House to continue to give back to the community we love so much!



Image: BNH Volunteer Annette Luck

Abbey McGrath
Alicia Buckler
Ally Campbell
Angie Caicedo Valencia
Annette Luck
Annie Mullarvie
Ash Jamali
Ash Waghorn
Biftu Musa
Candice Halsall
Carolyn Cohn
Chris McCombe
Christopher Romesh
Dana Warr
David Djembe
Deborah Tedge
Diana Choquet
Dila Muslih
Donna Boyle
Eli Oliver-Joseph
Emily Dannock
Emma Chea
Emma Stott
Eve Tu
Eyni Abdullah Osman
Geeta Pantha
George Vrantzis
Gillian Manson
Irish Villegas
Jan Cramp
Jenny Triantafillidis
Jessica Onate
Jie Chen
Jing Yung Tu
John Fletcher
John Harland
John Lopes
Julia Coscolluela
Jutan Kumar Dudhat
Kane Thompson
Karen Ye
Kate Nash
Katelyn MacDonald

Katherine Blanco
Katherine Blanco Jofre
Kathleen Gerber
Kira Janowski
Kirsten Bindoff
Kris Jenkin
Laura Lam
Laurel Coad
Lillian Smith
Lily Schwab
Lorenza Nolan
Loretta Krelle
Margaret Jones
Matthew Stuart
Mercy Chen
Mia Paramashinta
Nasra Mussa
Nelly Cabala
Oanh Lam
Olga Kislica
Pam Fletcher
Paul Archer
Pauline Baxter
Pooja Goel
Quang Tran
Rachel Wen
Rahul Naik
Shantelle Hibbert
Silas Jones
Skye Vongvixay-Smyth
Sophia Wisniewski
Srividya Patha
Steven Te
Teagan Crouch
Teigan McLean
Tilley Hanlan
Tracey Oliver
Tracie Andrews
Ulrich Gerber
Vivian He
Wilhelmina Frysteen
Zoe Juricic

Highlights 2022 – 23

After a few tough years of isolation and hardship, BNH was thrilled to finally get back to what we love doing most - bringing the community together through creative and inclusive programs, courses and events! Multicultural Festivals, community lunches, theatre shows, art exhibitions and markets were all on the list of exciting highlights for 2022-2023.

Brunswick Multicultural Festival

Brunswick Neighbourhood House hosted two incredibly successful Multicultural Festivals this year with another planned for November 2023. Both days were blessed with plenty of sunshine and a jam-packed roster of workshops, performances, delicious food and market stalls. One of the many highlights was the Chinese Youth Society's Lion Dance which was colourful and spectacular in its pageantry and acrobatics. Around 400 attendees contributed to a lovely fun atmosphere with plenty of positive feedback from community members. Centerstage Costumes donated some pieces to add a touch of frivolous fun to the event. Support and collaboration from local community groups and businesses have grown over the past year too. Other partnerships blossoming through the festival were SisterWorks, Merri-bek Council's sustainability team and IPC Health Vaccination team.



Image: Brunswick Multicultural Festival November 2022.

Highlights 2022 – 23

Brunswick Multicultural Festival April 2023



Highlights 2022 – 23

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle Fundraisers

After being unable to host our quarterly sausage sizzles for 2 years due to lockdown, we were grateful to bring these fundraisers back again this year. In March and May combined we were able to raise a total of \$1,283.15 to go towards various BNH projects and ventures.

Theatre Shows

In collaboration with La Mama Theatre, we have hosted multiple successful theatre shows at our De Carle Street venue. We held 'Kens Quest' in September 2022 and 'Where There's a Will' comedy theatre gig in April 2023. Both shows were booked out and generated donations for the House through bar sales.

Community Lunches

Our monthly Community Lunches have been a thriving success. With fresh produce kindly donated by Open Table, our creative chefs get to work designing a suitable vegetarian menu for our guests. Using fresh edible flowers and herbs from the Community Garden and Food Forest, these delicious lunches are prepared and served to approximately 40-50 community members each month. These lunches wouldn't be possible without the generous help of our dedicated team of volunteers and the support of our Cook Program participants who assist in preparing, cooking and serving the meals on the day.



Highlights 2022 – 23

BNH's Pop Up Market Report

In autumn 2023, BNH delivered four pop-up markets funded by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. 117 participants drawn from BNH's database of COVID food relief recipients plus clients of local community organisations enjoyed an innovative way to access food relief, increase their food literacy and food security. The pop-up markets introduced participants to the economic and health benefits of eating seasonal produce. With recipes for easy-to-make family meals created by Tony Chiodo (The Cook Program) complementing the fresh food and pantry items available. Participants paid \$5 for up to \$60 worth of food and were gifted a sturdy BNH hessian shopping bag. 190 bags of food were distributed across the four markets. Distribution of a weekly schedule listing local food relief agencies and free meals connected the participants with food security into the future. Twelve volunteers donated their time to set up, welcome and assist participants with their shopping. These Saturday morning markets included free coffee in our courtyard with live music, children's activities, Compost and Worm Workshop and 4 Bin Waste System workshops.

Social Planet

BNH transitioned to Social Planet, a community development platform designed for neighbourhood houses and community centres. This platform allowed us to streamline our management of programs, payments, participants, events and venue hires by using one platform across all areas. This has become a much more consistent and efficient way of working for the staff. Social Planet has also allowed us to easily manage our volunteer database providing us with a quicker, easier and more up to date register of volunteers. With a plan to adopt more products within the Microsoft 365 suite and move away from paid licenses in favour of NFP free licenses, we transitioned from Zoom to Microsoft Teams for all internal communications and our online English classes. Part of this move also included migrating from Dropbox to Microsoft SharePoint which in turn saved the House on additional subscription costs. We decommissioned the outdated server and moved to a cloud based system. This created more open space within the office and an opportunity to update our equipment. To make sure we were receiving the best quality IT services and support available within our budget to assist with all these changes, we reviewed our IT Managed Services contract and appointed ITConnexion as our new IT provider for 2023 -2024. Their quality customer service and expertise have been a great support while we transition to these new innovative and more cost-effective platforms and programs.

Highlights 2022 – 23

BNH's Pop Up Market



Networks and Partnerships

ACFE	Merri-bek HIPPY
Active Merri-bek	Merri-bek Local Partnerships and Connectors Network
Adult Learning Australia	Merri-bek Maternal & Child Health Services
AMP Employment Services	Merri-bek Multicultural & Settlement Services Network
ANCHA	Merri-bek Social Connection Network
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre	Moreland Art Community of Practice Network
Australian Communities Foundations	Moreland Business Network
Baptcare	Moreland Italian Women's Group
Barkly Square	Moreland Turkish Women's Group
Brunswick Business Network	Mosaik Experiences
Brunswick Library	Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
Casa Cultura	Multicultural Health Connect
Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health	Muslim Women's Council of Victoria
CERES	Neami National
CIS Moreland	Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
CNM People	Nelson Alexander
Community Childcare Centres Cooperative	North West Mental Health Services
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	North West Neighbourhood Houses Network
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria	Open Table
Dyson	Our Community
East Brunswick Village/East Brunswick Social Club	OzHarvest
Elder Rights Advocacy	Rascal Brunswick
Fawkner Library	RMIT
Fawkner Neighbourhood House	Salvation Army Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service
Hume Moreland Volunteer Coordinators Network	Salvation Army Brunswick
Inner North Community Foundation	Scanlon Foundation
IPC Health	Second Bite
Jobs Australia	Services Australia
Jobs Victoria	South Moreland Service Providers Network
La Mama Theatre	State Trustees
Learn Local Providers Network	Sustainability Vic
Lentara Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre	The Awesome Foundation
Max Employment	The Royal Society of Victoria
Melbourne Airport	VCOSS
Melbourne City Mission	Very Good Falafel
Melbourne Polytechnic	VICSEG New Futures
Merri Health	Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)
Merri Health Service	Western Public Health Unit
Merri-bek City Council	Workskil
Merri-bek Energy Foundation Limited	
Merri-bek Food and Material Relief Network	
Merri-bek Food Gardens Network	

Promotion

Spreading awareness of what we offer at Brunswick Neighbourhood House is integral to our mission of community development. Our programs and activities are designed to benefit a diverse range of people from different socio-economic, religious and educational backgrounds, so we understand the importance of making sure our marketing material can target a wide range of audiences. To tap into various networks we share information through our website, social media channels, onsite signage as well as the distribution of printed brochures, posters, and flyers. We also partner with local government and news outlets such as What's On Merri-bek, Local Food Connect, Brunswick Voice and Brunswick Daily (just to name a few). We have refined our digital marketing channels to improve their efficiency by investing in new software including Hootsuite to analyse social media channels, Social Planet for enrolments and bookings and Boojum for website updates and support. The regular maintenance of our digital channels has been our most effective means of communication, garnering the best results for community engagement. However for the sake of accessibility, our marketing efforts will never stay only within the digital realm. We will always invest our time into print marketing, community events and encouraging community support through word of mouth.

Donors

*We'd like to thank
Barkly Square,
Tim Read MP and all
the anonymous
donors for their
generous donations
over the past year!*



Image: BNH stall at Barkly Square pop up market

Adult and Community Further Education

BNH continues to excel as a Learn Local Provider delivering ACFE-funded pre-accredited training modules to a large and diverse range of students. Our professional tutors have supported and educated our adult learners in English Language, Literacy and Numeracy, Computer and Smart Device Literacy and even preparatory courses for industries such as hospitality, horticulture, and Community Services.

In 2022 we enrolled 494 students in our pre-accredited programs with 2023 on track to reach over 500 by the end of the year. The demand for our flexible, foundational classes has exploded with 90% of our classes at full capacity and interest only growing. Our English Languages classes delivered in partnership with Fawkner Neighborhood House are especially popular where students are having to be put on waitlists. With the technological shift towards moving online since COVID-19, enrolments in these courses have also increased. We've had many success stories where students have gained the skills and confidence to find work thanks to the exemplary work of our passionate and driven tutors.

We continue to monitor and adapt our courses to cater to the needs of the community and the Cook Program is a highlight of this endeavor. Beginning in 2022 as a broad Hospitality course, it has evolved into a focused Cook Program helping students build confidence and skills in the kitchen. Not only has it helped students find work in the sector, but also used the human commonality of food to bring people of all ages, ethnicities, genders and abilities together. As always, a huge thank you to all of our brilliant and hard-working tutors who continue to deliver high quality and engaging classes to our students. Without you we could not achieve the work we do for the community.



Image: General Education class BBQ 2023

Adult and Community Further Education

The Cook Program

A year in the Kitchen

"I have been fortunate and am grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the creation and development of this exciting program for this past year.

Every term a new and excited group of participants enrol, all with such individual needs, diverse backgrounds, differing abilities, varied ages and genders. It's exciting to see, feel and engage with every group for the 10 weeks as I observe new skills being learnt, friendships being made, team work developing and witness caring gestures (not to mention beautifully cooked food week to week).

Every group has a flavour that develops like a good stew. They all bring a special ingredient to the class and as the weeks progress a small community is formed where they develop trust and care for each other whilst under the pressure of creating beautifully edible meals within a timeframe. Most come with a desire to learn how to better nourish themselves, their family or their children. Some want more variety in their diet or to learn how to feed themselves more cheaply and sustainably. Most finish the program having learnt new skills, harnessed abilities, exposed to new foods, techniques and learn new cuisines.

During the 10 week journey, most groups are thrown into the challenge of creating the community lunch for up to 50 people. Here they are put under the pressure of cooking for large numbers with unknown recipes working towards a set time. I often observe most as they truly are engaged and very proud to be involved in the creation and serving others in the community and yes, it's one of the highlights of attending the Cook Program.

I'd like to also mention one of the biggest positives is actually seeing that all the individuals who attend have a craving for community and a thirst to engage with others. During this year I realized that a lot of isolation exists and that this program has brought together all sorts with such diversity. I see each person adding a bit of themselves and as they slowly thaw out becoming more trusting, open and more vulnerable with each other. This idea that we all need each other rings true with every group that attends. I'm always blown away at the friendships that form and the sharing intimacy that grows during this time.

Adult and Community Further Education

The Cook Program

This has led to one of the most rewarding observations, the creation of a community group that for 10 weeks all look forward to attending with such curiosity and excitement that by the end of the program all who are attending are so full of beans and thrilled that they said yes and turned up. Many decide to return for the following 10 week term program or some become volunteers in our monthly Community Lunch and some have gone on to get work within the Hospitality Industry or enrol in further Hospitality Training.

It's been my great pleasure to take this program and every term. I'm open and excited to see who turns up and to be witness to the group transformation as they create meals with joy. Little do they know that I'm actually enjoying the 10 weeks probably more than them and I'm thrilled to see them grow and expand as they learn to bring joy back into the kitchen and create meals of delight!"

- Tony Chiodo (Tutor - The Cook Program)



Image: Tony Chiodo, The Cook Program



Image: BNH Community Lunch

Adult and Community Further Education

Brunswick Neighbourhood House offers a selection of online and face to face English courses for the community. Our English for Beginners, English for Post Beginners and English Conversations 1, 2, 3 & 4 provide educational and affordable opportunities for people from all backgrounds.

English for Beginners

For participants in the English for Beginners class, this year has been a mix of asking questions, finding new answers, understanding and learning new things, with encouragement to continue striving. As most learners have English as a second or third language, their skills in writing and reading are limited or require practice. Interaction between participants has been the best tool to help learners learn, and the best form of reinforcement. Having regular volunteers who have helped during the classes has been invaluable as this class generally has multiple levels of English skills.

English Conversation 2 (online)

As part of the Steps to Employment programs, English Conversation 2 has been a very well attended class in the past year. Participants who have enrolled in the course have been from various Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, with many speaking English at some point throughout their educational or professional life. As per participant feedback and tutor observation, increased confidence in speaking English was highlighted. Lack of confidence in speaking English publicly was the main challenge focused on, especially in different scenarios. Many participants have subsequently applied for jobs and undertaken interviews, and many have been successful in their application, while others have continued towards further study as they wish to update their overseas qualifications.

Adult and Community Further Education

English Conversation Class, Fawkner



Image: Tutor, Helen Donovan and her students, 2023

Community Development

The year 2022-23 has been an interesting one for Community Development at Brunswick Neighbourhood House (BNH). The second half of 2022 was primarily focused on COVID-19 education, awareness, and networking with our community, including completion of Community Grant Programs funded by the Department of Health. This involved developing new networks, alongside the renewal of and continuation of existing community networks.

As part of the Department of Health programs, BNH disseminated and presented COVID-19 related information to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, including the awareness of vaccines and antiviral medication, distribution of free face masks and Rapid Antigen Test kits through the Western Public Health Unit, and hosted IPC Health pop-up vaccine clinics at our Multicultural Festivals. Some of these groups were women's groups, parents of young children, women attending local swimming and gym classes, BNH English and Digital Literacy classes, and older adult groups. The sessions were conducted in-person and online, with translation assistance from some of our networks; Multicultural Health Connect and COVID-19 Community Liaison Officers, among others.

While COVID-19 education and reminders continued into the new year, our focus broadened towards community awareness of new and upcoming BNH services. These included assisting community members with the Victorian Government's Power Saving Bonus online application, with many members joining our Digital Literacy courses. Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy Project strategies, which included community forums and dissemination of information regarding the new 4-bin Waste System, presentations from Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, and networks with Services Australia and Learn Local Providers to increase awareness and participation regarding BNH programs.

Additionally, BNH hosted 4 Pop-up Food Relief Markets as part of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Food Relief Markets Grant. BNH also participated in the Merri-bek Community Food Hub, hosted at the Merlynston Progress Hall in Coburg, which provided a wonderful opportunity to hear and learn from Food Leadership Action Group members actively involved in community food networks.

- Marzia Niaz

Childcare

Despite the challenges we are facing post COVID, we continue to focus on quality and safety in our children centre. As a result, our childcare has achieved significant successes over the past year delivering benefits for our children, families and communities. This was demonstrated by the increase in average centre utilisation by 29% compared to last financial year. We were also pleased to welcome the extension of the CCCFR Grant for 2 more financial years. This support is extremely significant to enable us to improve our viability and sustainability.

Responses from the 2023 Parents Satisfaction Survey

"Thanks for all your work daily! You have become our village of support, as we don't have family nearby. Best educators in Brunny!"

"Like family - this service is a real hidden gem"

"Your childcare centre is brilliant. Our children are the most precious thing to us and it means so much to feel comfortable to leave them with such wonderful educators. Thanks for everything you do!"



Image: Story time with Aunty Helen, NAIDOC 2022.

Program Reports

Our social groups at BNH are highly valued as they provide space for members of our community to come together, connect and combat loneliness. Our social groups are also fantastic for celebrating culture, creative thinking, active living and having fun!

Social Groups

Makers and Menders

Every Thursday morning this creative group gets together to chat all things arts and crafts. Knowledge is shared between the group about a wide range of topics from sewing to knitting, beading to embroidery. Makers and Menders is currently at full capacity but expressions of interest are being taken for the new year. A warm thank you to Kate Nash for facilitating the vibrant group.

"It's been lovely to watch the group grow over time. I'm amazed at all the creative projects that the members are working on and it always makes me smile to see everyone help each other!" – Kate Nash, Makers and Menders volunteer coordinator

Walking Group

Each Wednesday, rain, hail or shine, the Walking Group sets out from Garden Street to explore the streets of Brunswick. "Each week we head off in a different direction but always manage to find a cafe for a drink and a chat before heading back by a different route. The walkers are a diverse group, but all enjoy walking and talking. Although exercise is the fundamental purpose of the activity, the social aspect is also very important. This year we have welcomed many new faces including visitors from overseas. The Walking Group is a great way to get some exercise while making new friends." – Deb Tedge, Walking Group volunteer coordinator



Program Reports

Social Groups

Line Dancing

"Every Friday morning our De Carle Street venue is filled with music and laughter as we aim to teach the FUNdamentals of line dancing, the emphasis being on FUN. This popular class has been running for over 16 years and we have a wonderful group of participants with varying skills. It is a great social activity and also the opportunity to get a bit of exercise. No previous experience is necessary and the group is always open to welcoming more members. Research has shown that dancing is not only good for your physical health but can also improve mental wellbeing. We dance (and laugh) our way through traditional and not so traditional dances to a variety of great music. The atmosphere is incredibly supportive." – Minnie Frysteen, Line Dancing facilitator

Book Group

The Book Group has been relocated to a larger space at Garden Street, as it is currently booked up to its maximum capacity. "Meeting regularly on the third Tuesday of the month, members have enjoyed a variety of fiction genres and so far, there has not been a book that anyone disliked. We have enjoyed titles ranging from "The Fossil Hunter" to "Anxious People" to "Before the Coffee Gets Cold". The group selects the titles for the year in December and the list is forwarded to members so they can start reading early in the new year." – Carolyn Cohn, Book Group volunteer coordinator



Program Reports

Social Groups

Moreland Italian Womens Group

This lively group of Italian women are a pleasure to have in the House. With a fresh pot of coffee always brewing, this group loves to catch up with their friends for their weekly meeting. Freshly picked flowers are set out on the table while their coffee is enjoyed with a range of delicious Italian treats. Their meeting isn't complete without their weekly game of tombola (bingo). Participants in the group are Italian speaking and new members are welcome to join.

Moreland Turkish Womens Group

The smell of traditional Turkish coffee fills the air as the Turkish Womens Group get together to enjoy their weekly meeting. Regularly cooking up a delicious meal for their members, this group is very generous often bringing in abundant leftover lunches for the BNH team to enjoy. Meeting together since 2002, this group is very friendly and always open to welcoming new members.



Image: Moreland Turkish Womens Group, 2023

Program Reports

Inclusive Programs

Collaborative Arts

BNH runs a variety of artistic programs for people with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities living in Merri-bek. Our Collaborative Arts program aims to help this group due to the difficulties they face in accessing arts programs, community programs or indeed, the arts in general. Physical disabilities, mental health issues, gender issues and cultural needs are all catered for, ensuring access and equity for all, regardless of ability, cultural background or geography. Over the past thirty years, BNH has developed and continuously improved a program that was designed to not only meet the needs of participants but also structured in a way that presented as few barriers as possible for them. The stability of tutors, location, and the offer of additional support and volunteers ensured that participants could choose which programs to attend on the basis of desire, rather than ease of access.

Family and Support Worker Feedback

Participants have been especially happy to see family members come along to the BNH Art Exhibitions and have said they were “very impressed by the talent”. Support workers have also made numerous positive comments about the Collaborative Arts workshops and exhibitions and the engagement they see in the person they are supporting:

“She has the freedom to make her own decisions, make her own choices”.

“These workshops are a way of him exploring and expanding his creativity. There is flexibility for him to do things his own way”.

“He is focused upon what he is doing and enjoys the enjoyment he gets from everyone”



Program Reports

Inclusive Programs

Collaborative Arts



Program Reports

Arts Programs

Visual Arts

Our daytime Visual Arts program continues to be booked by long running participants of BNH who often enjoy getting lunch together after class. "Finding delight, even elation, in the artworks that students make in the Visual Arts course at BNH underpins everything we do. The nature of the course is to enable students to find and develop their own visual language, much as learning any other language, in that there are skills, knowledge and experience involved. The program is flexible, skill based and full of information to enable participants to understand the elements of art and design. We discuss as a group how to grow our creative practice and enjoy lifelong learning. Finding confidence is the first step, never comparing our work to anyone else's. At the end of the year we celebrate and share our work at the BNH Art Exhibition." – Thea Bates, Visual Arts tutor.

Life Drawing

Our much-loved Life Drawing course has continued into 2023 with guidance from our new tutor and visual artist Michael O'Hanlon, otherwise known as Eureka. "The course provides a great opportunity for beginners wanting instruction, and for more experienced participants wanting the opportunity to improve their practice. Everyone came away with new strategies to express themselves through life-drawing. We thank the models for making the classes a great experience for everyone involved." – Michael O'Hanlon, Life Drawing tutor



Program Reports

Arts Programs

Pottery

For over 25 years, this much loved program has been providing an opportunity for participants to get affordable hands-on pottery experience in a supportive environment. This unique and collaborative program attracts a diverse range of individuals, including a large group of re-enrolling students who have witnessed their own growth in pottery skills and continue to find joy in the program's creative and social possibilities. Whether a one-term experience or a continued opportunity for creative expression, this program provides an inclusive, affordable and nurturing environment for participants to explore their artistic abilities.



Program Reports

Yoga and Meditation

Yoga remains a popular activity amongst our community, with multiple classes booking out each term. We'd like to thank our talented tutors Jane Clarkson and Rhonda Weatherby. "Yoga classes in 2023 have been filling up, with more people wishing to reconnect on a face-to-face level. Students are providing positive feedback, mentioning that the weekly classes allow them to feel well in their bodies, get out of the house, reconnect with others and to move mindfully."

- Rhonda Weatherby, yoga instructor

Spanish Conversation

"For nearly a decade I've had the privilege of facilitating the Spanish group, and it has been an enriching experience. The members of this group, truly incredible human beings, have shown unwavering dedication to learning and growing together. Over these eight years we've built not just language proficiency but also a tight-knit community, bound by our shared passion for Spanish and the friendships we've forged along the way. It's been a remarkable journey, and I'm excited to continue this linguistic and interpersonal adventure with such a wonderful group". - Karina Rodriguez, Spanish tutor



Image: Spanish Conversation class 2023

BNH Green Spaces

The Warr Park Food Forest continues to provide a great example of the benefit of food plants being incorporated into a public space, bringing enrichment and an increased opportunity for engagement to the community. The group is run by volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure they have a beautiful and productive garden for others to enjoy. The food forest provides not only food but education opportunities, habitat for birds and is often used by people who work in the area to have their lunch, maybe snacking on a cherry guava or feijoa as they ripen on the bushes. The Warr Park Food Forest group oversee raised vegetable beds in the park also, and it is common for people to pick a leaf or two for their salad, some herbs for dinner and to admire the flowers. The group are knowledgeable, passionate, and dedicated to providing this opportunity for learning and the provision of fresh food to all who live in our community.



BNH Green Spaces

BNH Community Garden

The Community Garden has been completely overhauled with a focus on accessibility and community education. Thanks to Sustainability Victoria and Merri-Bek Council we have been very lucky to receive funding to upgrade our garden with brand new, durable, eye-catching wicking bed systems. The garden has been designed in a way that allows adequate wheelchair access and taller beds for those with limited mobility. There is still a lot to do with plans for a new mural along the fence, a recycled timber workbench and crushed rock paths.

Term 4 in 2023 will see the re-introduction of a regular gardening class with many workshops in the pipeline to support the community in growing their own food during these difficult times of high living costs. A massive thank you to the 16 volunteers who banded together to get this huge project done.

Warr Park Food Forest

"Our Warr Park Food Forest (WPFF) group comprises five dedicated volunteers who enjoy the challenge of gardening and maintaining the space. For all of us, tending to the Food Forest gives satisfaction and pleasure. We care deeply about this great resource and know that Brunswick Neighbourhood House appreciates our endeavours. At the recent BNH Multicultural Festival we enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the Forest & offer tours with many interested locals. Lots of praise & joy were given!" – Pam Fletcher, WPFF volunteer



Treasurer's Report

This year BNH had an operational surplus of \$24,098 and our revenue for the year increased by \$89,743 in comparison to FY2021-2022. Our financial position remains strong as BNH continues to grow and expand into new programs and activities which have increased the involvement of our community. Much of this growth has been made possible by the grants we have successfully applied for from a variety of sources. These grants have assisted our centre in achieving an increase in our profit from the previous financial year, despite our budget for FY2022-23 predicting a deficit.

Comparison over a longer period shows strong financial performance and strength overall. Pleasingly, childcare revenue was up by \$89,000 on the previous financial year, marking a significant return to pre-CCS income as well as strong demand for this service by the local community. Venue hire revenue for FY2022-23 was \$31,603 which was above pre-pandemic levels. Overall expenditure increased by \$31,123 due to inflation and increased need for staffing.

Our Balance Sheet shows a working capital ratio of 1.74 which suggests a healthy financial status. The Balance Sheet also shows good provision for liabilities and healthy operating reserves to support the organisation into the medium term.



Department
of Education



Merri-bek
City Council



Australian Government



Australian Government

Department of Education and Training

