



North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



**A group we're alive in -
For good writing we're striving!**

**Our Barry's so keen
(he'd never be mean.)**

**His joy is our own,
our writing skills he'll hone.**

**There's John, Janis,
Carolyn, Trish and Don,
(Bill too, he's new)
whose stories roll on.**

**For tales so creative
and gifts that are native,**

**Barry's the one
for inspiring literary
frivolity and fun!**



Barry Dickins, our Writer in Residence at Railway House, leads a group of us in creative writing every Tuesday afternoon. Barry, as a gifted teacher and accomplished writer, functions as a subtle guide, responsive to each individual's propensities. Much mirth, entertainment and many thoughtful moments ensue.

We thank you Barry and look forward to your continued encouragement.

**Carolyn Ilsley
On behalf of the Writing Group**



Barry Dickins' Writing Group

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

During the year we have seen significant progress on a number of fronts at the Railway House.

Our major project – the Community Garden has been supported as a project by the City of Yarra both in principle and in the council budget. The Bendigo Bank has also committed to be a major sponsor. Final planning approvals and design requirements are being undertaken (see Garden Report).

The last twelve months has also seen a continued emphasis by the Committee of Management (COM) on establishing the governance arrangements required to ensure that the expanded program of activities planned for the Railway House can be sustainably achieved.

With the new Constitution or set of rules for the Railway House in place the Committee moved on to develop and review the policies and processes required to be able to demonstrate that the Railway House complies with the regulations and best practice for Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria. Policies prepared by the Committee include:

- Delegations Policy – this sets out the activities of the Committee and the Manager, and who is responsible.
- Privacy Policy – how we deal with participants and members information
- OH&S Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Code of Conduct

These policies are relevant for not-for-profit organisations in Victoria and offer various legal protections for the Railway House.

The COM has also reviewed the Strategic Plan which includes thinking about what programs we offer and why, and who is our community ?

This resulted in a new Vision or Purpose for the House which is to:

“Create a fairer and more sustainable local community by providing opportunities for celebrating diversity , community participation , learning and friendship.”

The key theme or outcome that the House aims for from the Strategic Plan is :

“Increased community connectedness arising from the provision of targeted RH programs and ease of access to services relevant to the individual and the community.”

Whether we are achieving this will be evidenced by :

- The level of participant engagement and satisfaction
- Diverse group representation consistent with neighbourhood demographics.
- Growth in participation
- Growth in collaborative programs/services with other organisations
- Recognition of the Railway House “brand” as an active community organisation.

The Railway Neighbourhood House finished the year in a sound financial position and is well placed to proceed with its plans for the New Year. The House continues to be funded and supported by the City of Yarra, the Department of Health & Human Services and the Adult Community and Further Education Board and we thank them for their support and for working with our community. We also received community grants this year from Bendigo Bank and the Inner North Community Foundation.

Staff have worked hard to identify and introduce new programs during the year and their efforts are greatly appreciated. Participants in the Railway House will have seen an increase in the range of activities this year. Achieving this increase in participa-

tion and involvement is a significant objective for the House.

The Railway House has a vibrant buzz about it this year and credit must go to the staff, the volunteers and tutors who help make the House such a focal point of activity for the neighbourhood.

Finally, I would like to thank the Committee of Management for their work during the year in giving up their time to help the House operate effectively. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of the retiring committee members: Jenny Gardner, who has worked tirelessly for 3 years to achieve approval for the Community Garden; Dianne Kouvelis, who has been the Secretary for the last 2 years; Fiona Ross, who has been a committee member for 5 years; and Eileen Sheridan, who has been a committee member for the last 12 months. Thanks to them all for their contributions.

**Ken Gardner
Chairperson**



Garden Working Bee



MANAGER'S REPORT

This old house with its beating heart, bringing people together...

It is with pleasure that I present my report for 2018-2019. I would like to begin by acknowledging how much I value the staff team and program tutors. Jeff Coley has been in the role of Finance Coordinator for 10 years, Lisa Claiborne in the role of Administrator for the past 3 years and Lisa Giufre joined us as Community Development Worker 12 months ago. Most of our program tutors have been working at Railway House for several years at least. It is a testament to all of their hard work and dedication, and the quality of the relationships they build with the community, that Railway House is the vibrant and welcoming place it is and I would like to sincerely thank them.

I would also like to extend my thanks to our Committee of Management and the many other volunteers who enhance our work. We have been very fortunate this year to have had a number of new, highly skilled, volunteers come on board and we now have five programs that are completely volunteer led. Finally I would like to thank Julie Johnston from the North East Neighbourhood House Network and Kathy Vrettas from Yarra Council for their encouragement and support.

The year has been a busy one and we are seeing an increase in the number of people engaging with the House as more people in the community become aware of our programs and services. Many people come to Railway House to participate in classes or social activities, whilst others come to borrow a book, drop off items for recycling or make donations of food and toiletries. Some people come to have their car washed by local students, others to book the House for an event. For some people, Railway House is a place where they can just drop in for a chat and a cup of coffee, use the computers or collect a frozen meal for themselves, whilst others come for assistance with things like migration applications, resumes, and housing issues.



Staff assisted Okasha in resettling his young family in Australia.

What is clear is that Railway House is many things to many people and continues to be an important and much loved resource in the community. This is reflected in some of the comments in the online survey conducted at the end of 2018.

"Your programs and staff reach out to the community well with a great variety of programs. Many thanks!"

"Railway House has a wonderful, positive atmosphere. Centred in a park like area it is quite unique. Everyone is friendly"

"The Railway House is a fabulous place"

"It is a very happy and welcoming House"

"The increased range of programs over the last few years is terrific"

The diversity of programs, activities and services on offer at Railway House allows for a broader cross section of people to engage with the House. Last year we saw an increase in engagement by male participants, which has continued this year, and our engagement with children and older members of the community has continued to be strong. There has

also been an increase in participation by people in the 20-30 age group through our volunteer program. With the new Food Garden expected to be completed next year, we anticipate further engagement by this age group. Finally, we have seen some increase in engagement with younger CALD women who reside at the Public Housing Estate across from Railway House. Our Community Development Worker, Lisa, has spent time visiting the playgroup at the Princes Hill Child and Maternal Health Centre in order to build relationships with these local families.



VCAL kids crocheting reusable dishcloths

2019 has seen the continuation of the partnership formed in 2017 with Princes Hill Secondary College. VCAL students have continued to attend Railway House on three mornings per week, when they serve coffee and assist with various jobs. This partnership is mutually beneficial and we are in the process of developing an MOU with the school to formalise the partnership. Our partnership with Yarra Youth Service also continued, with Youth Worker Alissia Charaloumbas attending the House on Tuesdays afternoons to facilitate our Youth Drop In session. I would like to extend my thanks to Sue Tyrie (VCAL Coordinator), the VCAL students and Yarra Youth Services.

We also formed valuable partnerships with several other organisations this year, including Rathdowne Place Aged Care, Carlton Library and Circus Oz, which enabled us to provide additional opportunities for participation and inclusion. More infor-

mation on these partnerships can be found in the Annual Report.

I am pleased to report that a restructure in staff work hours has meant that we have been able to extend our opening hours to 37 hours per week and we are now open for half a day on Fridays. Looking ahead, this will facilitate our ability to extend the programs and activities on offer, thereby enhancing community participation. We will continue our focus on providing programs that are accessible to all and which support community wellbeing, inclusion and social cohesion.

As I reflect on the past 12 months, it seems to me that the House is going from strength to strength. There are so many great things about Railway House, but what stands out for me is the way that it fosters a very strong sense of belonging and connection, which is so important to our health and wellbeing.

Alison Beck
Manager



Message from our Learning Club kids, written in chalk at the front door.

REFLECTIONS OF A NEW STAFF MEMBER

With a name that implies quite a physical structure, it turns out that Railway House has a very human heart at its centre.

I first visited Railway House a few years ago, as a Victoria University placement supervisor visiting a student on placement. I recall walking through the beautiful gums that were to reveal an old brick building. I still remember the positivity I felt, a positivity which instantly deepened as I walked through the door. Something I still feel as remarkable, was the complete sense of warmth and authenticity I experienced. This has been echoed by countless people I have met since. It was clear that these people are working their hardest and best for the common good. After experiencing several larger, more bureaucratic workplaces (rife with politics and complicated personalities) Railway House left such an impression on me that I was convinced this was a place I would like to work for should the opportunity ever arise.



Fast forward a few years, upon hearing of the vacancy for a community development worker, I set about my application, knowing I'd have large shoes to fill. At the interview, the initial feelings I'd had about the House were further reinforced. I was appointed some weeks later.

The way that Alison and the team gently eased me into my role, was wise, kind and well-considered. In the study and practice of community development, it is always emphasised that relationship-building is of first and foremost importance, and the rest falls into place. This allowed for an organic transition into the role and the community, as well as the development of my own confidence and ability in the role. Having been in the sector for around 25 years, seeing these principles embodied from the outset has been a stand out experience. More often

than not, a sound 'community development approach' ends up competing with simultaneous requests for immediate and 'measurable outputs' ironically leading to a compromise on ethical practice. It is clear now that my relaxed induction period at Railway House will enable better 'results' in the long term, as my relationships with the people and understanding of the local community gradually deepen. Slowly I am gaining a glimpse into how this dynamic team (and those over history) have built up the hive of activity that is Railway House today. Also, and most importantly, I am gaining a gradual understanding of the role the House plays in the lives of those who engage with it. This has by far been the highlight. I am constantly humbled by this.

I am certainly not new to the humanitarian sector but ironically, have often felt bitter by what I encountered there. I can say in all honesty, that Railway House is the by far the most humane workplace I have ever been in. Thank you for having me and sharing your experiences with me. Hats off to all who work hard to make the House so alive.

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Lisa Giufre
Community Development Worker

OUR STAFF

Office Staff

Alison Beck	Manager
Lisa Claiborne	Administrator
Jeff Coley	Financial Administrator
Tania Jorquera	Community Development (to October 2018)
Lisa Giufre	Community Development (from December 2018)
Nancy Pollock	Cleaner



Jen Mounir



Jeff Coley



Scout

Tutors

Tim Beacham	Computer Class
Lou Barbon Elliot	Kids' Art House
Flip Case	Choir
Alicia Charalambous	Youth Drop-In
Damian Curtain	Art Class
Barry Dickins	Creative Writing
Helen Hadiyan	Kids Karate
Georgia Karavis	Cooking Class
Simone Litchfield	Inclusive Yoga
Jen Mounir	Women's Exercise Tai Chi Mums & Bubs
Shede Olukhale	Soccer Clinic

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Railway House is very fortunate to have a fantastic group of people who dedicate their time to support the work of the House. The contribution made by these volunteers – whether cooking sausages on the BBQ at House events, driving the bus on our monthly bus trips or being a member of our Committee of Management – significantly increases the scope of our activities and we are extremely grateful to them all.

This year we have had a number new volunteers join our community and we now have several programs which are completely volunteer led. These include our bus trip, table tennis program, and three of our five after school children’s programs (Learning Club, Kids’ Craft and Kids’ Art House). We also have two new volunteers working one on one with local residents, in the areas of high school maths and English as a Second Language. Without these volunteers, these programs simply would not exist!



Committee of Management

Ken Gardner	Chairperson
Dianne Kouvelis	Secretary
Geoff Hopkins	Treasurer
Tony Dalton	Committee Member
Jenny Gardner	Committee Member
Fiona Ross	Committee Member
Megan Scannell	Committee Member
Eileen Sheridan	Committee Member
Jack Verdins	Committee Member

Program Volunteers

Grace Apa	General Help
Martyn Brogan	Bus Driver
Carolyn Connors	Learning Club
Suzanne Davies	Sewing
Gabe Devlin	Kids’ Art House
Sue Egan	General Help
Mary Egan	Learning Club
Sandra Hatzis	Knitting Circle
Fin Fitzgerald-Coley	Learning Club
Lydia Ghandi	Maths Tutor
John Gunter	General Help
Bernadette Hall	Kids’ Art House



Helena, Fin and Learning Club kids

OUR VOLUNTEERS (Cont'd)

Program Volunteers (Cont'd)

Noah Hildreth	Learning Club
Indi Johanson-Blok	Soccer
Katia Jomini	Soccer
Craig King	Garden
Helena Leone	Learning Club
Richard Lasek	Bike Riding & Table Tennis
Olivia McKay	Kids' Craft
Jane Miller	Garden
Imogen Parker	English Tutor
Pat Rustad	Learning Club
Esther Stewart	Kids' Craft
Dianne Sutton	Learning Club
Pam Tuffield	Bus Trip
David Woods	Trivia Night



Simon and Tony working on Simon's resume



Pat and Cianna at Learning Club



PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOTS

People from all walks of life visit Railway House for different reasons. Here is a small snapshot of some of them!

Goh

Goh has been coming to Railway House for two years. He lives at the retirement village in Princes Hill and attends the House to play Table Tennis twice a week. He loves the friendly atmosphere, the office dog and the fact that it is so close to his home.



John and Alessandra



John has been bringing his granddaughter Alessandra to the Railway House playgroup for 3 years. Alessandra enjoys drawing and playdough, and John likes that it is so close to his home.

Geoff

Geoff has lived in Princes Hill for 40 years and likes the laughter, trust and community caring at Railway House. He has attended the cooking class, volunteered at Learning Club and Soccer Clinic, helped out with the odd maintenance job, and has been the Treasurer of the Committee of Management for the last 12 months. His dog Rosie enjoys chasing her ball on the Bocce Courts.



Sheryl



Sheryl has been a regular participant at Railway House for 3 years. Previously a member of our Art Class, Sheryl now does Art elsewhere but attends Railway House every Monday morning to work on her own sewing projects alongside anyone else who happens to be there.

Sajha

Sajha lives in Princes Hill and has been coming to Railway House since she was a toddler! She and her sister attend all the after school programs at the House, including Learning Club, Art House, Kids' Craft and Karate. They also enjoy coming to school holiday activities when Railway House can provide them.



Zodia and Jules

Zodia and Jules are VCAL students at Princes Hill Secondary College and have been attending Railway House for the past two years as part of their VCAL program. They run the coffee cart and complete various tasks such as gardening, dropping off the food donations and car washing. Zodia likes the community and enjoys meeting the regulars that come to Railway House for their weekly classes.

PARTICIPANT SNAPSHOTS

Berenice



Berenice is a newcomer to the House, having joined the Knitting Circle just this year. Berenice has attended other Knitting Circles in the past but says that the Railway House one is the best that she has ever been to!

Baden

Baden is a teacher at Princes Hill Secondary College and has been coming to Railway House on Monday mornings for the last two years to supervise the VCAL students. He enjoys having a coffee made by the students and seeing the students engage with older members of the community and undertake the tasks allocated to them.



Zaidan

Zaidan is 12 years old and lives across the road from Railway House. He participated in Learning Club when he was younger and has attended the Youth Drop-In session for the last 12 months. He also visits regularly to use the computers and the Wi-Fi, and has recently started helping out at our soccer classes!



Sue

Sue has been attending programs at the House for around 8 years. She is a member of the choir and the community lunch, and has thoroughly enjoyed learning new recipes at the Around the Table cooking class. She enjoys gardening and is looking forward to the development of the Food Garden on the Bocce Courts.



Esther

Esther is an artist (and miniature enthusiast) who lives in Princes Hill. She has been volunteering at Railway House since April this year, running Thursday afternoon craft sessions for kids. Projects so far have included making miniature houses from shoe boxes and miniature food from clay. We feel very lucky to have Esther!



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Individually, we are one drop.

Together, we are an ocean

The value in working with other organisations to achieve positive outcomes for our community cannot be over stated. In addition to the continued partnerships with Princes Hill High School and Yarra Youth Services, it has been a highlight of this year to have established partnerships with Rathdowne Place Aged Care, Carlton Library and Circus Oz, enabling Railway House to provide additional opportunities for participation and inclusion.

Rathdowne Place: Expanding our community over shared meals

In late 2018, community member Jane Miller connected Railway House with Rathdowne Place, a retirement community in Carlton. Together, Railway House's Community Development Worker Lisa and Social Worker Lloyd from Rathdowne Place shared ideas about opportunities for community-building between the two organisations.

Rathdowne Place aims to nurture an atmosphere of friendship and wellbeing among its residents, and the broader community. With almost identical aspirations, Railway House can play a role in supporting and expanding social networks for both communities.

The first step was taken when Rathdowne Place residents joined the Railway House community for a Summer Pickling Workshop. This was run by the fabulous and energetic community cooking facilitator Georgia Karavis. The workshop was thoroughly enjoyed by all, and tailored to all abilities.

Later in the year we again welcomed our Rathdowne Place friends at Railway House for a lively gnocchi-making session. Maria Brandi lead over 30 people in a wonderful frenzy of mixing, rolling, cutting and shaping the delightful, delicious gnocchi! This was accompanied by Sue Nichols'

famous garlic bread, which, like the day itself, was enjoyed by everyone, each person contributing in their own way in this diverse group.

Finally, we enjoyed the kind hospitality of our neighbours at Rathdowne Place, when our lunch group visited them to make fabulous pizza together in their sunny courtyard. Classic Italian dance tunes were played to much merriment as Maria and Jayne lead the dancing.

There is power and joy in food to bring people together, regardless of their life story. This is the stuff that truly benefits the heart of our communities, and weaves the fabric of community wellbeing.



Maria dancing with a Rathdowne Place resident



Summer pickling workshop



Gnocchi lunch

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Carlton Library: Focus on children and families

In March 2019, Railway House Manager Alison and the Children's and Youth Librarian Krisha Leone from Carlton Library met to discuss ways in which our two organisations could collaborate. One aspect of Yarra Libraries strategic direction is to engage with communities who don't typically use the library, such as people from CALD backgrounds and those from different socio-economic backgrounds, and so partnering with Railway House offered an opportunity for Carlton Library to engage with these groups. For Railway House, being able to offer free programs and activities to the local community at no cost to the organisation is very beneficial. Together, we identified that activities and programs for children and families would be our focus, and that we would begin with some school holiday activities because finding ways to provide low cost school holiday activities for children is a challenge for Railway House.

During the Easter school holidays, two activities were organised. In week one, Alison accompanied a group of children from the Princes Hill Public Housing Estate to the library for a "Journey to Africa". This was a fun session during which the children learned about African animals and participated in songs and drumming. In week two, the library put on a free Family Fun Day at Railway House. Held on a warm and sunny Wednesday, this was a wonderful community event attended by a large number of local children and their parents. Pony rides and face painting were the main attractions, with many children enjoying a pony ride for the very first time in their lives! Also on offer were badge making, art and craft, free books and a BBQ lunch. Such was the success of the Family Fun Day that we are hoping it will become an annual event.

We value our partnership with Carlton Library and look forward to continue to build on the relationship we have established this year.



African Drumming was a hit!



Pony Rides at Family Fun Day



Arts & Crafts



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (Cont'd)

Circus Oz: School holiday fun

In mid 2018, Railway House and Circus Oz discussed ways in which Circus Oz could support the House with its objective of providing low cost or free school holiday activities for local children. Circus Oz offered a series of free workshops in the September school holidays for 10 children, to be identified by Railway House.

The children arrived bright and early at Railway House and were escorted to the home of Circus Oz in Collingwood. The look of amazement on their faces as they walked in to a room filled with tumbling mats, trapezes, foam pits and the like, was a joy to see. The sessions were 2 hours in duration and were also attended by children from the wider community, providing a real sense of inclusion and participation as well as a large amount of fun! It was such a pleasure to see the Railway House children learning new skills and enjoying themselves.

We would like to thank Circus Oz for partnering with Railway House and enabling us to provide school activities for local children.



Saphira masters the trapeze



Ten children from Railway House!



OUR PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

We added three new classes to our program this year: a weekly Creative Writing class, a Book Club and an after school Craft session for primary school aged children. These classes attracted people new to the House as well as those already participating in other classes and activities.

Art Class

Book Club

Bus Trip for Seniors

Community Choir

Community Lunch

Computer Class (Funded by ACFE)

Cooking Class: Around the Table (Funded by Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank)

Crafternoons

Creative Writing

Drop-In Playgroup

Folks on Spokes Cycling Group

Gardening Group

Inclusive Yoga

Karate for Kids (Funded by Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank and Inner North Community Foundation)

Kickstart Soccer Clinic

Kids' Art House

Knitting Circle

Learning Club

Monday Makers' Space

Mums & Bubs Exercise

School Holiday activities

Table Tennis

Tai Chi for Health

Women's Exercise

Youth Drop-In



Inclusive Yoga



Kids Karate



Folks on Spokes Cycling Group



SPECIAL EVENTS

AUGUST 2018 Knitting & Crochet Exhibition

Winter was brightened up with our annual Knitting Exhibition. As always our Tuesday knitting group participants put on a beautiful display of knitted and crocheted items. We were so impressed with the level of skill and creativity on show.

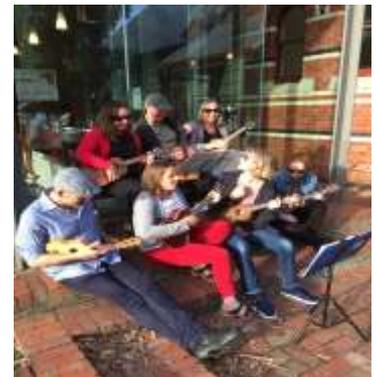


SEPTEMBER 2018 Yarra Neighbourhood Houses Joint Event

The nine Neighbourhood Houses in the City of Yarra hosted a joint event at Fitzroy Town Hall to showcase the wonderful work of Neighbourhood Houses. It was great to have so many groups from Railway House showcased - work by our Knitting and Art groups was on display, our Inclusive Yoga class did a demonstration, our Community Choir performed and our VCAL students served coffee.

NOVEMBER 2018 Trivia Night Fundraiser

This fun community event, held at St Michael's Church Hall, attracted a crowd of 100 people who had their general knowledge put to the test by Quiz Master David Woods and raised approximately \$3000 for Railway House. Entertainment by local ukulele group "The Ukalypts" got the night off to a great start!



NOVEMBER 2018 Annual General Meeting

The AGM was well attended and a new committee elected. Our guest speaker was local author Barry Dickins, who has been facilitating creative writing classes at Railway House for the past 12 months, and we also enjoyed hearing reflections from people who attend Railway House programs.

DECEMBER 2018 End of Year Party

As always, a wonderful community gathering to celebrate the end of the year, with face painting for the kids, a Christmas sing-a-long with the Railway House choir, and a delicious afternoon tea.



SPECIAL EVENTS (Cont'd)

MARCH 2019 Neighbour Day/Harmony Day Celebration

This year we held an event to mark both Neighbour Day and Harmony Day. Celebrating harmony, diversity, community and inclusion, the event included entertainment by the Brunswick Rogues and Railway House community choirs, Latin Dancing, activities for children, a halal/vegan BBQ, and an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony conducted by local resident Seble Girma. A truly wonderful occasion.



MARCH 2019 Family Violence Workshop



Organised by the North East Neighbourhood House Network and run by WIRE (Women's Information Referral Exchange), this free information session was very well attended by members of the community wanting to feel better informed about the signs of family violence and how to respond.

APRIL 2019 Visit from the Mayor of City of Yarra

We enjoyed a visit from the new Mayor of Yarra, Councillor Danae Bosler. As luck would have it, Danae timed her visit to coincide with our cooking class and stayed to enjoy a delicious lunch with us.



JUNE 2019 Great Big Neighbourhood Garage Sale

We hosted our inaugural Neighbourhood Garage Sale, with 20 stall holders from the local community and lots of customers dropping in to grab a bargain.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The last year saw many exciting improvements to Railway House which have improved our accessibility, safety, efficiency and appearance.

The biggest project this year would undoubtedly be the new toilets, which are a vast improvement on the old ones! They are airy, bright and accessible. Much work was done by the staff with Yarra City Council to ensure that the brief was filled and that the works went smoothly.

We have worked closely with the City of Yarra this year to undertake regular maintenance and improvement. Small projects this year included carpet cleaning, bulletin board repositioning, glass repairs and the placement of non-slip strips in the Main Room. Improvements like these are vital to the upkeep and safety of Railway House and we thank the City of Yarra for their ongoing support.

We continue to put a great deal of effort into our day-to-day sustainability efforts, being a collection point for soft plastics, batteries, light globes and e-waste. We also have the solid beginnings of a composting program which we anticipate will really take off next year as the Neighbourhood Food Garden evolves. We also see a steady amount of donations both for the Asylum Seeker Support Centre and the Little Green Bag Initiative. Please see our website for details! We are also in the process of switching all of our cleaning supplies and paper products to eco-friendly versions—this includes buying dish liquid in bulk and refilling our own containers and a complete switch to recycled toilet paper.

We were delighted to launch our new website in August last year. We worked closely with a local web designer to develop a simple, clean, easily-navigable site and are really pleased with the result. Maintaining it has become a key part of my role. We have also migrated our newsletter mail-outs to web-based MailChimp which allows us to better manage our mailing list and to create more attractive and readable mail-outs.

If you visit Railway House on a Monday or a Thursday, you may have met Scout—the Railway House dog. When she's a bit older, Scout hopes to become a certified Therapy Dog, but in the meantime she's enjoying meeting many of the Railway House regulars and getting lots of pats in the process! We think she's a lovely addition to the place and have noticed the positive effect she has on many people.

Another addition to Railway House that we're seeing people really enjoy is the new piano. This was donated—and one of our regular program participants, who happens to be a piano tuner and repairer—spent a great deal of time making sure it was in tip-top shape for playing. It is now regularly used by the Men's Choir, by the children & volunteers at Learning Club and quite often people passing through the Main Room will sit down and play a few notes or a tune!

Lisa Claiborne
Administrator



Chase and Cianna enjoying the new piano

FRIENDS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

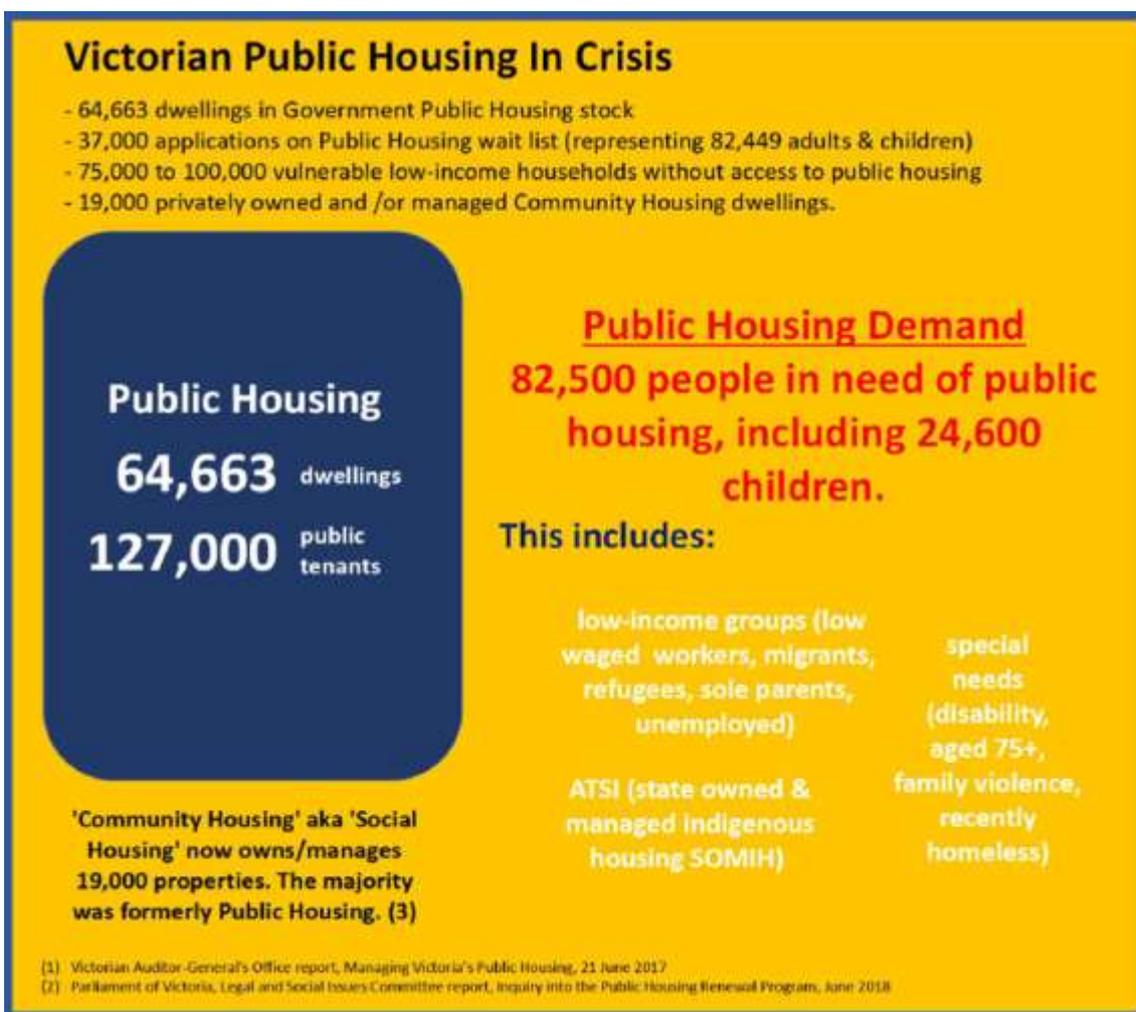
The Committee of Management at the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House has supported a sub-committee to endorse and support the work of Friends of Public Housing Victoria (FOPHV). FOPHV is a grass roots organisation made up of public tenants and supporters of Public Housing. FOPHV believes that Public Housing is a public asset belonging to the people of Victoria. In order to ensure equity of access to the fundamental Human Right to housing, now and for the future, both the titles and management of the properties should remain in public hands.

Instead, we are seeing the often covert privatisation of Public Housing to private entities called 'Community Housing' aka 'Social Housing' and the paradigm shift in policy direction has been made without public knowledge or debate.

Much of our work this past year has been addressing the Labor State Government's Public Housing Renewal Program- PHRP. A total of 11 inner city housing estates are under threat of privatisation. FOPHV wrote a submission for the Upper House Inquiry into this program, and we encouraged many public tenants to have their say. FOPHV also attended a conference in August.

Many thanks to the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House for their invaluable ongoing support.

Fiona Ross and Jack Verdins
Friends of Public Housing Victoria



FRIENDS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

OUR CONCERNS REGARDING THE PUBLIC HOUSING RENEWAL PROGRAM

- That there will be NO Public Housing on the redeveloped estates, as we have seen in the first tranche to go across. The replacement 'social housing' will be either owned and/or managed by private Community Housing organisations.
- An increase in dwellings does not necessarily equate to an increase in the number of bedrooms. The end result can be a decreased capacity to house people in need.
- The shift to smaller sized dwellings will lock out many tenants who might want to return after the developments are finally completed. Families especially will be locked out. This was the situation in the two previous developments at Kensington and Carlton.
- The PHRP is unsustainable. It will result in an irretrievable loss of public land, sacrificed to cram towers of apartments for private sale.
- Dereliction of Duty by the government to maintain and increase Public Housing stock.
- Public tenants are being denied genuine consultation and natural justice. They have been promised that everyone can return and they are leaving their homes in 'good faith.' Yet evidence gathered by the Upper House Inquiry, the Federation of Legal Services and RMIT research indicates otherwise. "The evidence shows that relatively few residents will be able to return."(4)
- In fact the 'Right to Return' is calculated at 20%. Factors include a reluctance by those displaced to go through another major move, long redevelopment periods (from 3-5+ years) and, as stated, the decrease in bedroom numbers in the new units, which will not meet the needs of many tenants and their families.
- The 'Public Housing Renewal Program' is a misnomer. These 'redevelopments' are an exercise in social engineering, displacement and gentrification.
- The PHRP is just the tip of the iceberg! Other Public Housing 'redevelopment' projects are already underway.
- The sell-offs and privatisation of Public Housing (largely unreported and unknown to the general public) is happening right across Australia. For example, the NSW State Government is currently continuing to transfer the management of 18,000 Public Housing properties to Community Housing businesses.

(3) Allocation, Eligibility, Rent Setting CHFA 2014

(4) Understanding the assumptions & impacts of the Victorian PHRP, Kelly & Porter, May 2019, RMIT University Centre for Urban

Research

**Excerpt from a FOPH paper delivered at a Fair Go For Pensioners Conference
10th July, 2019**



A FOOD GARDEN AT RAILWAY HOUSE

The wonderful Railway House gardeners have continued to meet monthly to keep the garden beds around the neighbourhood house healthy and presentable. Much effort has continued towards the establishment of the new food garden proposed for the old bocce site, and the renewal of one of the lanes for bocce.

The Railway House prepared a draft design for the site and invited the community to review the draft and provide feedback. By May, 2019, we had received some great ideas and a fantastic level of support, with 864 unique visits to the Council's project site. 87% of respondents were highly supportive, 8% moderately supportive and only 5% were unsupportive.

We then reached out to different organisations seeking additional grants to assist with the project. Bendigo Bank were always interested and receptive to our vision for the space, and offered to contribute \$30,000 to the project, matching funding provided by Council and the Railway Neighbourhood House itself. It's quite special to think that we have been at the heart of this exciting & generous community collaboration.

Most of this year has been spent providing information to Council Officers to satisfy requirements for obtaining a planning permit and other regulatory matters relating to transferring the licence for the land to the Railway Neighbourhood House. Another of our tasks has been to write a Garden Manual setting out our vision and a management framework for the garden in its early years of operation.

During October, the lengthy quotation process will be finalised, and a local contractor selected for the construction of the garden and renewal of the bocce court. Two information sessions were held to invite members of the public to apply to garden in the new space, and if interested, to nominate for the new Garden Subcommittee. This committee will be responsible for the day to day running of the garden and they will decide on the best way to manage a waiting list, if there is one. Application information was also sent out via email to the Railway House mailing list. We are getting close, and will keep the community informed of progress.

Finally – let us remember how it all began, and return to our vision in the year ahead:

The neighbourhood food garden will be a place for our community to meet and connect with one another, either through gardening activities or simply for the pleasure of being there. People without a garden of their own will be provided the opportunity to enjoy the space, work in the garden, and to grow, harvest and share fresh food with their community.

Jenny Gardner

Member, Committee of Management & Convener, Railway House Gardeners



Neighbourhood Food Garden—artist's impression

TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2018-19 financial year saw the organisation return a surplus of \$3,460. This was a sound result and an improvement on the budgeted small loss projected at the beginning of the financial year. The ability of the organisation to break even or make a small surplus is very much dependent on attracting a number of small philanthropic grants each year. We have again been successful this year in attracting these grants. This requires a good deal of time and effort in designing new programs and applying for these grants. Our particular thanks goes to our funding partners in 2018-19: Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank – Branch of Bendigo Bank, Inner North Community Fund, Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation and The RE Ross Trust.

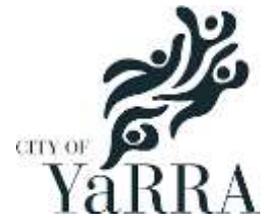
Venue Hire continues to provide a significant income stream to help fund our low cost programs. Program fees increased by 13% over the last financial year which indicates growing support for our activities. Our annual trivia night was another venture to provide some extra income to fund house activities. Thanks to the Committee of Management and staff for their efforts in making the night a success. Many thanks to our trivia night sponsors and the community members who attended.

I would like to thank our core funders for their ongoing support of the house and our programs. Grants were provided by The City of Yarra (\$63,477) Department of Health & Human Services (\$79,277) and Department of Education & Early Childhood Development - ACFE (\$12,458). City of Yarra also provided additional funding towards the Community Garden project and the Family Fun Day (\$10,207). The audited financial statement for 2018-19 provides a full picture of the organisation's financial performance and position for the year ended 30th June 2019.

I would like to thank the staff of the house for their efforts this year in securing new sources of funding for our programs and in containing costs. Finally; a thank you to the committee of management for assisting me in my role as Treasurer.

Geoff Hopkins
Treasurer

FUNDING ORGANISATIONS



SUPPORTERS



And the many local businesses in Carlton North who generously donated goods or services for our Trivia Night Fundraiser.

North Carlton Railway Station Neighbourhood House Inc.

Independent Auditors Report to the Members

Scope

We have audited the Financial Statements of North Carlton Railway Station Neighbourhood House Inc. (the "Association") set out on the attached pages for the year ended 30th June, 2019. The Committee is responsible for the financial statements. We have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements, so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Association's financial position, the results of its operations.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the Financial Statements present fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements the financial position of North Carlton Railway Station Neighbourhood House Inc. as at 30th June, 2019 and of the results of its operations for the year then ended.

Dated 24th October 2019.


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Michael Adasko CPA (Reg No 1771942)

ABR Partners
Unit 7, 617-643 Spencer Street, West Melbourne, VIC 3003
Telephone No: (03) 9376 3455

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2019

	2019	2018
	\$	\$
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Petty Cash	300	300
Cash at Bank Cheque account	66,482	58,615
Bendigo Bank Debit Card	20,367	10,782
Cash at Bank Investment account	48,019	47,093
Accounts Receivable	2,697	5,154
	<u>137,865</u>	<u>121,944</u>
<u>NON CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Property, Plant & Equipment at cost	19,610	19,609
Less Provision for Depreciation	-18,277	-16,211
	<u>1,333</u>	<u>3,398</u>
	<u>139,198</u>	<u>125,342</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>		
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>		
Trade & Other Creditors	16,474	13,375
Provision for Long Service & Annual Leave	32,774	22,626
Provision for Audit Fees	1,870	1,795
Grants received in advance	13,087	16,014
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>	<u>64,205</u>	<u>53,810</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	<u>74,993</u>	<u>71,533</u>
Represented by		
<u>MEMBERS EQUITY</u>		
Opening Balance 1 July	71,533	66,872
Add Net Income (Loss) For the Year	3,460	4,661
<u>TOTAL EQUITY 30 JUNE 2019</u>	<u>74,993</u>	<u>71,533</u>

NORTH CARLTON RAILWAY STATION NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

			2019	2018
			\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>				
Grants Received	Note	2	183,194	162,306
Fees Income			15,965	14,120
Venue Hire			34,387	34,466
Donations			1,006	1,088
Sundry Income			4,322	5,675
Interest Income			2,453	2,289
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>			<u>241,327</u>	<u>219,944</u>
Less				
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
AGM Expenses			515	1,630
Consultants			3,000	600
Audit			1,775	1,375
Bank Charges			-	80
Catering			3,531	1,723
Cleaning			1,839	1,576
Community Grant Expenses			9,804	1,134
Contractors			22,753	24,405
Depreciation			2,066	2,140
Event Costs			-	495
Equipment & Furniture			1,276	1,519
Financial Services			2,425	3,102
Fundraising			207	282
Program Expenses			4,716	3,971
Promotion Expenses			420	-
Insurance			830	1,270
Light & Power			3,152	2,722
Sundry Expenses			18	1,081
Postage			164	123
Printing, Copying & Stationery			3,074	2,835
Publications & Subscriptions			1,568	991
Repairs & Maintenance			94	474
Rent			312	-
Salaries			153,447	140,752
Loss on Disposal of Asset			-	-
Software Expenses			2,110	1,702
Staff Amenities			316	-
Superannuation			13,562	12,716
Telephone & Internet			2,229	2,240
Training			749	849
Travel			13	32
Venue Hire			-	-
Website Development			655	2,000
Workcover			1,247	1,464
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>			<u>237,867</u>	<u>215,284</u>
<u>NET INCOME (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR</u>			<u>3,460</u>	<u>4,661</u>



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