

# AGM 2016



**DANDENONG**  
neighbourhood HOUSE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4.....	Message from the Chairperson
6.....	Message from the Manager
8.....	Our Mission and Vision
9.....	Our Values
10.....	Our Board of Governance
11.....	Our Life Members
13.....	Treasury Report
16.....	Audited Financial Report
23.....	Community Development
27.....	Administration & Business Services
28.....	Training and Employment Pathways
42.....	Learner Case Study
44.....	Volunteers – Our Asset
45.....	Volunteer Case Study
46.....	New Facilities
47.....	Asylum Seeker Pathways
48.....	Asylum Seeker Case Study
49.....	Learn Local Awards
51.....	Acknowledgements





# Chairperson's Report

The Dandenong Neighbourhood House (the House), has had a very busy and fulfilling year. We have achieved all our goals, carried out a restructure and set the House up for a succession of years aimed at providing strong and caring service to the community within the City of Greater Dandenong.

The Board of Governance has gone through change this year, having lost two of its members. One of those members being the Secretary, which has been taken up by Board member Sandra Ainsworth, who is an extremely committed Board member. Our highly valued Treasurer, Ross Lim, although remaining as a Board member, needed to step down from the Treasurer's role on 30 June 2016. Ross handed over the role to Board member Gerard Francis, who quickly took up the reins and we are looking forward to working with Gerard who has a strong background in finance. The Treasurer's Report for 2015/2016 is located on page 13.



**Kathleen West**

No business or enterprise can survive and prosper without an ongoing commitment to excellence, and a drive to continually improve our services in recognition of the changing needs of our clients and the community we serve. Our manager, Robyn Coslovich, has provided wonderful leadership throughout the year. Robyn and her team have worked tirelessly to ensure our community receives the very best of service that is efficient, within budget and meets today's needs. As a strong community organisation we are always aware of the changing needs of our clients. We are committed to continually monitoring our service and where necessary change that service to ensure we meet the needs of our community today and into the future.

Located in the heart of the City of Greater Dandenong, the House is easy to access and our inspired and dedicated staff are always happy to engage with all who walk through our doors. We provide a range of core programs, which focus primarily on education, training, skills development, community participation and advocacy.

As a community development organisation, we endeavor to stay close to the grass root needs of the community. We principally work from a social justice perspective and address areas such as disadvantage, empowerment, needs and rights. Some of the important work we undertake is in partnership with other organisations or groups, with similar aims to ourselves.

During the 2015/16 year, we delivered 11,792 hours of service to the community. This is an extraordinary effort from our staff, teachers and volunteers. What would we do without those who volunteers and freely give their time? They are very much the unsung heroes of our community. The House has 45 volunteers

and the Board of Governance is extremely grateful to all our volunteers and takes this opportunity to thank each one of you for your time, commitment and input within the House and community.

**As a community development organisation, we endeavor to stay close to the grass root needs of the community.**

Funding is an ongoing challenge for the House. In the 2015/16 year, we have been well supported by our major funders:

- The Department of Education & Early Childhood (ACFE)
- City of Greater Dandenong Operating Grant
- The Department of Health & Human Services Coordination Grant

The Board of Governance gives special thanks to all those organisations and individuals that donated funds and facilities which enabled us to deliver our programs. Without your financial support, none of the work we undertake would be possible.

I mentioned in our last report the City of Greater Dandenong had provided us with extra space in Clow Street. We are excited at the opportunity this added space will provide by way of extending our community classes. The space has been refurbished and is ready for occupancy. It is very timely, as our King Street premises are fully occupied to bursting point with the many classes we offer as well as community groups, meeting rooms, extended cooking facilities and office space.

Some of the House highlights for the year have included:

- 3 Year Strategic Plan: Developed and Implemented
- 3 Year Business Plan: Developed and Implemented
- A restructure: Changed responsibilities and reporting lines.
- New staff: The employment of a Finance Officer.
- The Men's Shed Refurbishment: Has doubled the floor space; installed heating and cooling; insulated the walls and purchased new tools which have been funded by DHHS under the Strengthening Men's Shed Program.
- Change of name for the Men's Shed: to Dandenong Community Shed.
- Policies and Procedures: Were reviewed, updated and implemented.
- Development of new partnerships: With Swinburne University, Dandenong South Primary School and RMIT.
- Increase in Volunteers and Student Placement Participation: Has provided meaningful opportunities, use of existing skills and developing new ones.
- Digital Literacy: A number of students completed online courses and developed independent learning skills.
- Community Engagement: Weekly community lunch and monthly morning tea.
- New Training Programs have been introduced: Basic Sewing Skills, Digital Literacy for Seniors, Chippies program for the Department of Justice and Regulation, Card Making and Work for the Dole.
- New Programs Under Development: Basic Barista Skills, Intro to 3D Printing.
- The House Delivered 36,000 SCH's for the year including all delivery of Training. This is an increase of 8,000 SCH's on 2014/15 year.

In concluding my report, I would like to give a big thank you to all our Board of Governance members who take responsibility and freely give their time to make the Dandenong Neighbourhood House a relevant and important part of the City of Greater Dandenong. Thank you for your input, time and energy; it is very much appreciated.

It is always a privilege for me to serve as Chairperson of the DNH Board of Governance, and we all look forward to another busy year serving you, our community.

**Kathleen West**  
Chair - Board of Governance

# Managers Report

It feels like just the other day that I sat down to write last year's report, time has flown by so fast and now it is time to reflect on where we came from and where we are. I asked the staff to give me some help to gather highlights of the year and one staff member said to me where do we start? The year has gone so quickly its been a bit difficult to think. The House has come such a long way over the past four years. I have been fortunate to see the House develop and grow over this time to the dynamic community organisation it is today.

Dandenong Neighbourhood House means many things to many people, with our primary objective being to "form an inclusive community that supports people to make positive changes to their lives" whether that be by providing programs and activities for social inclusion or life-long learning opportunities; facilitating community development and capacity building of individuals and groups or by developing linkages and partnerships to respond to collective issues and needs.

The past 12 months has seen us continue to go from strength to strength but the burning question is how do we sustain the growth and maintain viability for the future? Can we continue to grow and lead effectively in this community while maintaining the level of engagement at grass roots level that we have achieved to date? The answer is YES definitely because with engagement comes growth.



**Robyn Coslovich**

**The past 12 months has seen us continue to go from strength to strength but the burning question is how do we sustain the growth and maintain viability for the future?**

No matter how sensitive or compassionate we are, even when faced with the most difficult circumstances and no matter how skilled we have become both professionally and personally, there is a need for us to keep evolving with different skills sets and perspectives that are essential to meet the ever increasing challenges we face.

My job description has changed to one of building and maintaining relationships. Relationships with our local community, learners, funding bodies and key stakeholders. This is a challenge in itself and is our way to the future as we can not survive without the development of these relationships. Having the opportunity to share our vision, ambition and passion with someone new to the organisation and hearing them become excited about sharing their journey with us, to sharing the disappointments of not being able to convince a potential partner of the opportunities we offer or just dealing with some very challenging behaviours that staff come across everyday. Each day my team pull together to support each other to overcome these challenges and turn them into positives.

In the past 12 months we have received funding from the R E Ross Trust, RACV Good Citizen Program, OMAC – Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, Victorian Multicultural Commission, Strengthening Men's Shed Program through DHHS, the Strengthening Communities Program, City of Great Dandenong Council plus special projects funding through ACFE – Adult Community and Further Education. These funders have funded a range of programs and equipment that have developed skills and equipment for learners enabling them to build confidence to embark on a learning pathway to build a future for themselves and their families.

I say a huge thanks to all these trusts, foundations, government departments and businesses for their assistance, advice, introductions and of course their financial assistance. It would be great if we were able to find a grant writer to put the work in that is required to achieve this number of extra applications as not every application is successful.

As always government funding at all levels from local through to federal departments is necessary to maintain our existence and we continue to build relationships with Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice and Regulation, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Education and Training and the City of Greater Dandenong Council at a local level.

In November 2015, our Board of Governance was revitalised with four new Board members joining. Kathleen West has excelled in her role as Chair of Dandenong Neighbourhood House and I wish to thank Michelle Smith (Secretary), Ross Lim (Treasurer), Garry Porter, Sandra Ainsworth, Gerard Francis, Marcus Barber and Wayne Foster Johnson for their enthusiasm and intellectual knowledge that has lead us through a year of building a strong infrastructure to allow us to continue to grow and be a viable entity. For varying reasons we have had to say goodbye to a number of these Board members and we have welcomed Gerard Francis, Desally Walliker and Shyamon Jayasinghe to the our Board. We currently still have two vacancies on our Board and the Board are working to fill those vacancies.

Our strategic plan has refocused us on four goal areas:

- Enable people to contribute to and have a choice over their lives
- Maintain sustainable growth and development
- Be known as a leader and innovator in the community sector
- Strengthen DNH organisational capability

Each day we work towards achieving these goals and we continue to identify areas where we believe we will have the most significant impact. If our learners are happy then staff feel they have done their job well because assisting someone to make even small changes to their lives is very rewarding and the smiles that we see when certificates are handed out at the end of each term is what it is all about. Achieving together!

Staff and Volunteers at Dandenong Neighbourhood House are the most extraordinary bunch of individuals who often go above and beyond the call of duty. They always work together and it was nice to hear one of our volunteers say "Coming here is like having another family". Volunteers are so valuable to us and we appreciate the time and effort they have put in over the year. We have had volunteers with a range of skills and they have completed so many tasks now which we often do not get time to complete. Thanks to all the volunteers for such a fantastic effort.

**Robyn Coslovich**  
Manager

# Our Mission and Vision

## Our Vision

To form an inclusive community that supports people to make positive changes to their lives

## Our Mission

Improve people's lives through community engagement and lifelong learning opportunities.

## We Are

- A charitable, not-for-profit community services organisation
- Managed by a Board of Governance
- A registered Learn Local Provider
- A member of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
- A member of Jobs Australia
- A Tax Concession Charity

With 23 paid staff and approximately 50 volunteers, we deliver 43 different programs and services weekly.

We have grown and evolved with our diverse community and listened to the needs of the community to develop these programs in response to this need in order to achieve our mission of improving people's lives through community engagement and lifelong learning opportunities.





# Our Values

## **RESPONSIVENESS**

Flexibly responding to community needs, while being proactively in the response.

## **INTEGRITY**

Being transparent, accountable, ethical and honest.

## **INCLUSION**

Building capacity within communities, connecting communities, celebrating diversity and allowing communities to have a voice.

## **RESPECT**

Valuing other beliefs, cultures and opinions and celebrating our differences.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Supporting principles of environmental sustainability.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Supporting human rights locally and globally.

## **Our Partnerships**

We know what we are good at and more importantly, we understand our weaknesses and we recognise that to survive we need to build strong partnerships. Where necessary, we seek to partner with other proven organisations that compliment our skills. In the past four years we have partnered with:

- Neighbourhood House Victoria
- Australian Red Cross
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice and Regulations
- City of Greater Dandenong Council
- Dandenong South Primary School
- Wellsprings for Women
- Springvale Learning and Activities Center
- Springvale Neighbourhood House
- Keysborough Learning Centre
- Noble Park Community Centre
- TRY

“

Strength is in the diverse range of programs that are have flexible delivery to our diverse community.

”

# Our Board of Governance



## **Board Members** (left to right)

**Chairperson** – Kathleen West  
**Secretary** – Sandra Ainsworth  
**Treasurer** – Gerard Francis



## **General Members** (left to right)

- Shyamon Jayasinghe
- Garry Porter
- Rossina Lim
- Desally Walliker (absent)

## Our Life Members

At the 2015/2016 AGM two long serving supporters of the Dandenong Neighbourhood House were inducted as augural Life Members of the Association.

Honorary Life Membership recognises outstanding and sustained contributions and service in activities and roles directly or indirectly under the auspices of the Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc by a staff member, volunteer or a member of the Board of Governance. The two ladies were:

### **Norma Murphy**

Norma's daughter was a leader in the Y.W.C.A.'s holiday program in the 1970s. This organisation was looking for a volunteer to assist with their bookkeeping and Norma was suggested. 'This was the beginning of a long haul,' laughs Norma. Prior to this, when her eight children were growing up, Norma had sung in the choir of St. Gerard's Catholic Church and had taught 'Sunday School'. During these twenty approximate years she travelled to New Zealand and to Tasmania with the choir.

Within the Y.W.C.A. (Young Women's Christian Association – Westernport) a program had begun in Clow Street, Dandenong. This program was for women only and was mainly craft orientated, such as macramé. The late Glen Watkins



**Norma Murphy**

established this submitting more proposals to the local council to gain access to a bigger venue. The purpose was to further increase the women's participation and to provide a safe general meeting place. This was the beginning of the Dandenong Neighbourhood House, under the management of the Y.W.C.A.

Norma said that during this time and in earlier years, women had been very suppressed and needed assistance. Prejudice against divorced women was very strong and usually they had lost everything. Men could apply for bank loans, single women could not! Norma said of Glen Watkins that she was a dynamic woman who had laid the foundations for the next D.N.H. co-ordinator, Di Mossenton-Brown, to introduce programs and to incorporate others into the house. It was from a very insecure beginning, basically a 'drop-in-centre,' that Dandenong Neighbourhood House began.

'Prior to this, women were expected to stay at home, to mind their children and be housewives,' said Norma. She on the other hand, had a strong vision and purpose for others. Her thinking was well before her time. 'Mum was the first feminist woman we ever knew,' declared her children. Norma together with like-minded women had the foresight to know that it was in their own best interest to pursue studies, activities and social get-togethers for their own well-being. At first, when the house was a drop-in-centre, it was only for coffee and chats.


Norma was still an active committee member until recently when she retired at age 88. Norma held the position of Treasurer of the house and also attended a range of classes run at the House. Norma said, 'I volunteer every Thursday and I look forward to it and I even get dressed up a bit better.' Norma is also involved in a Glen Waverly Church, where they knit 'teddy bears,' scarfs and cardigans for children in Belarus, Russia.

Norma said the days of seeking assistance for women had gone. Today it is more educational with programs to match. In the early days, women were needing assistance to stretch themselves and to get out of the house. Then the migrant population much smaller, therefore English classes were not needed and computers were only in offices. If you went against the tide, as Norma frequently did, she was often criticised.

Norma said that the Dandenong Neighbourhood House has been a great support to her and has stopped her from becoming bored. 'I have had many great experiences, when I went to Sydney with the 'Wahines' (a group meeting weekly in the house and stayed in the Y.W.C.A. in Sydney).

Over the years there has been 'teething problems' developing and maintaining the Dandenong Neighbourhood House, particularly in the beginning when the co-ordinators were not paid. Therefore a succession of co-ordinators followed each other, until stability was gained through paid, regulated employment. Norma said she has always enjoyed working; she was originally from Queensland and tried for many years unsuccessfully to grow tropical plants. She was very enthusiastic about the community garden, developed in the Dandenong Neighbourhood House and would have planted Queensland plants if they would have grown. She did not foresee that she would still be continuing on at the D.N.H. for so long, but accredits this to the fact that she likes people and likes to be amongst them.

Norma was presented with the 'Greater Dandenong Australia Day Citizen of the Year' award in 2008. The Dandenong Journal said that she was 'a compassionate volunteer, who would rather stay out of the spotlight.' Today, it is still true of how Norma conducts herself. She says 'I like to help others from behind, I do not want notoriety.' Another quote from The Journal is 'My family are very pleased and say I deserve it, but I don't think I do,' Norma said. Norma believes everyone has something to do in their lives and volunteering is her 'me' thing to do.



Too many people  
overvalue what  
they are not and  
undervalue what  
they are.

## Our Life Members - continued

At the time of her award, Mayor John Kelly said of Norma that – ‘She is a shining example for others to follow. Cr. Kelly said that winning the award was a fitting acknowledgement of her valued contribution. I would like to congratulate Norma on this achievement and hope it gives her further encouragement to continue her good work.’

Norma today belongs to Probus, University of the Third Age, a book club and View club. The View club was originally a support group known as the Smith Family and sponsors of children in a program called ‘Learning for Life.’

She said that she has gained, through volunteering, more tolerance, acceptance of people, the understanding of small lives that some people lead due to many differing circumstances. She would like to see for the future at Dandenong Neighbourhood House – more publicity, a bigger building and more funding to match our dreams. She is forever hopeful for the future, and in her own modest way, determined to commit and help others wherever possible.

### Dianne Mossenton-Brown



Dianne Mossenton-Brown

In 1999 Di Mossington-Brown approached the YWCA committee for approval to gain independence by putting forward a proposal for Neighbourhood House program to become an incorporated body called the Dandenong Neighbourhood House.

Di Mossington-Brown was the first co-ordinator of the House and remained in that position until 2002 before leaving to take up a position with the Department of Human Services which she remains in today. During her time as co-ordinator Di sourced funding from Adult, Community and Further Education to run programs at the house which included English as a second language, programs for people with a disability, craft and cooking programs which created a vibrant and active community within the house. Playgroups were also conducted during this period. Di also received funding to extend the house and incorporate a large multi purpose room on the back of the house and an extra office space.

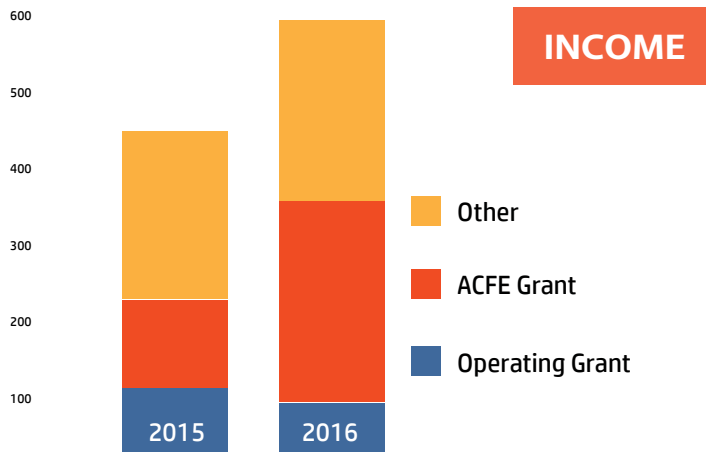
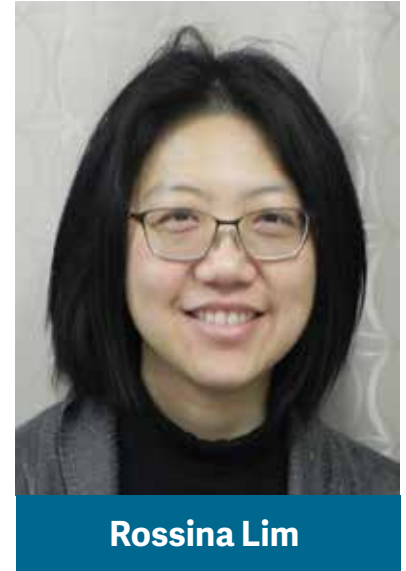
Di has always shown a great capacity towards being very skilled in the area of community engagement and growing house to reflect the community’s needs. She has shown an ongoing commitment to maintain this connection between community and their needs. She is a standout at knowing the community and growing the house to meet that need, Couple of stints in Council and developed knowledge to how to translate those skills to the community.

She is one of the few people who can do both the strategic thinking and not lose site of the everyday reality for the people she was working with.

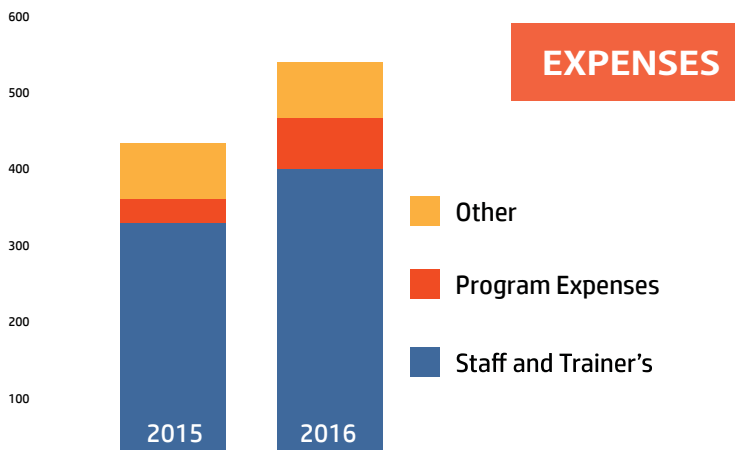
Her legacy is the commitment to the House and to communities in general.

# Treasurer's Report

Dandenong Neighbourhood House is on track to achieve its goal of long term financial stability. It has generated a surplus of \$124,000 in FY16, compared to \$80,000 in FY15. Revenue has increased from \$450,000 in FY15 to \$601,000 in FY16, an increase of 33%.



Our expenditure has increased from \$371,000 in FY15 to \$477,000 in FY16, an increase of 29%. This increase is commensurate with the increase in income and represents the increased level of activities supported by the House.



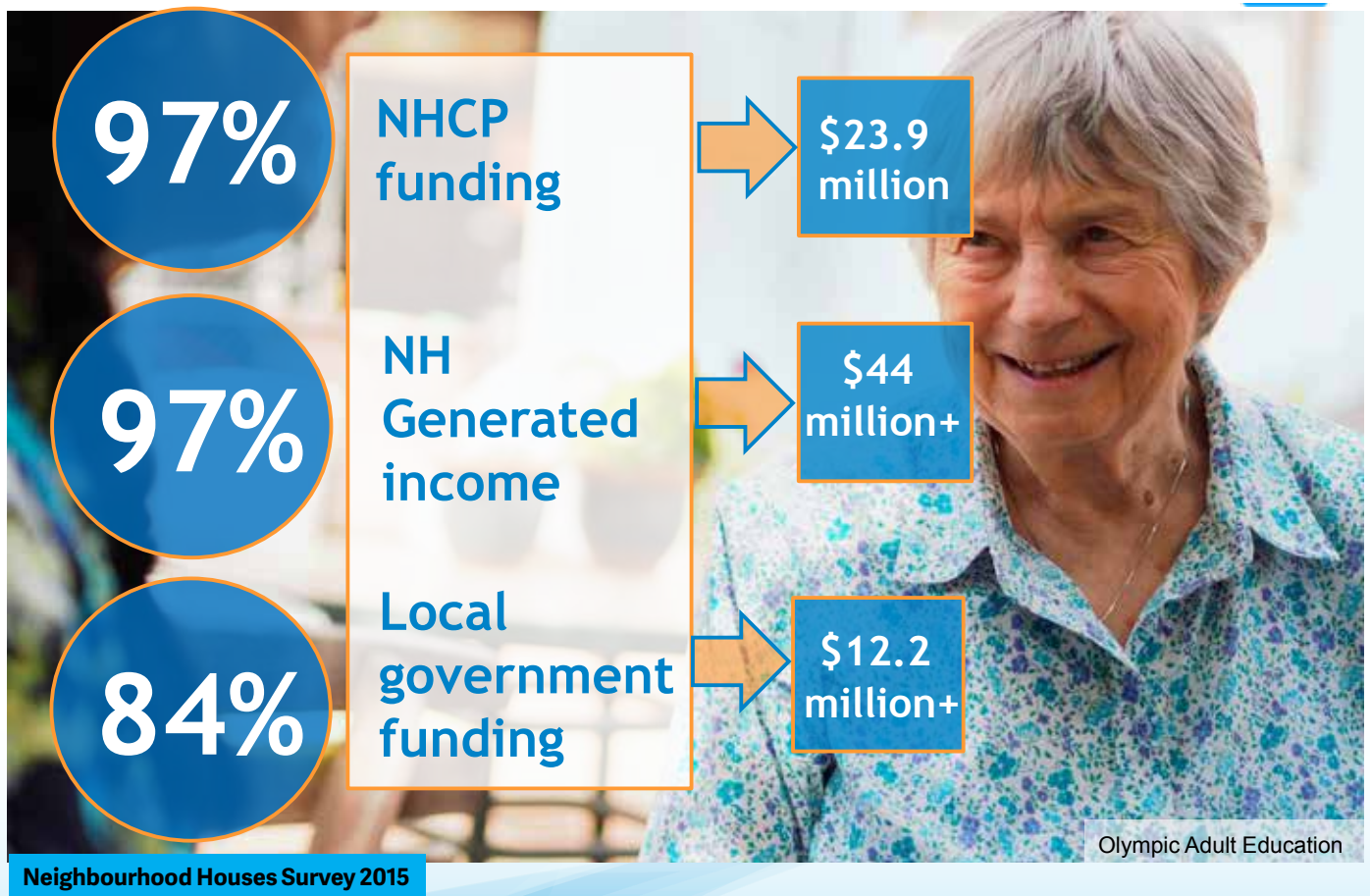
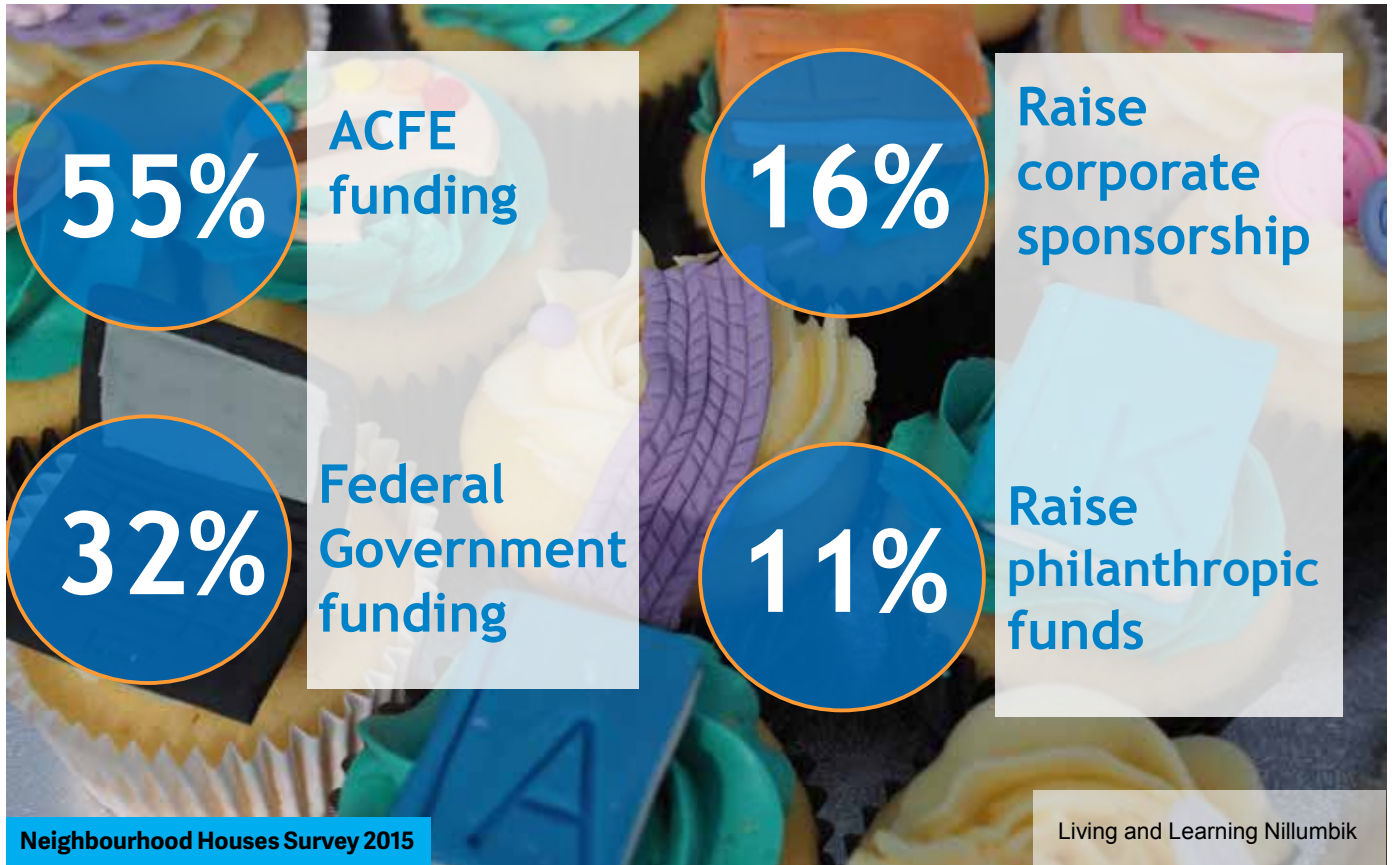
Cash at bank has increased from \$230,000 in 2015 to \$317,000 in 2016 (after netting off any grant we received in advance). DNH's net worth totalled \$306,000 at 30 June 2016, an increase of 68% over prior year.

Our strong financial position enables us to pilot new program initiatives and deliver excellent service to the community that we serve in Dandenong.

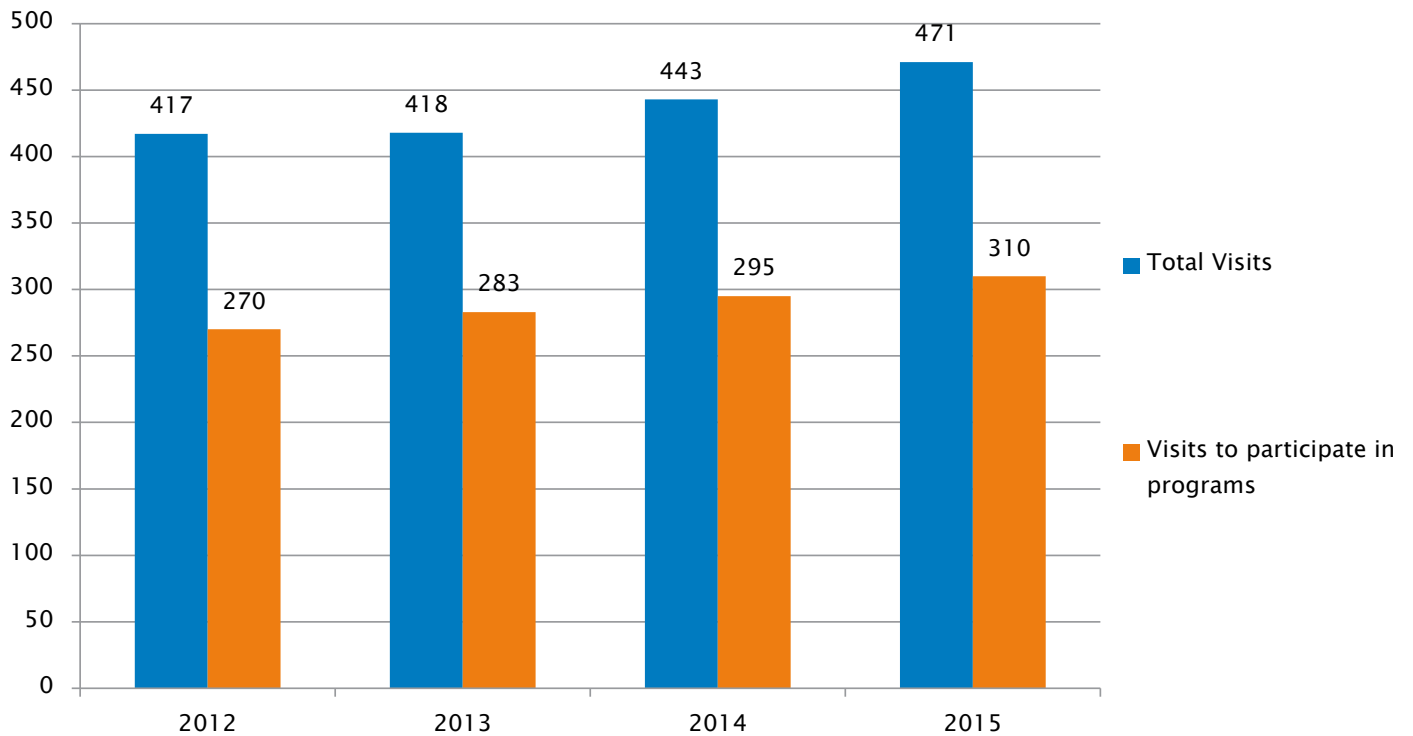
We would like to thank our funders, donors, community partners, staff and volunteers for their continued commitment to the organisation and we look forward to serving the community in the year ahead.

**Rossina Lim**  
Treasurer (July to June 2016)

# Income Sources



# Average visits per Neighbourhood House per week



Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2015

“ The diversity of our organisation reflects our local community and their changing needs we go through the different stages in our lives. ”

**DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.  
COMMITTEE'S REPORT**

Your committee members submit the financial report of The Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. for the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

**Committee Members**

The names of committee members throughout the year and as at the date of this report are:

Desally Walliker  
Garry Porter  
Gerard Francis  
Kathleen West  
Ross Lim  
Sandra Ainsworth  
Shyamon Jayasinghe

**Principal Activities**

The principal activities of the association are to provide opportunities to residents in the Dandenong area to develop their capacities through providing support groups, education programs and community projects.

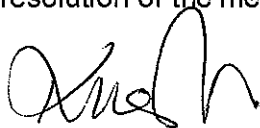
**Significant Changes**

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

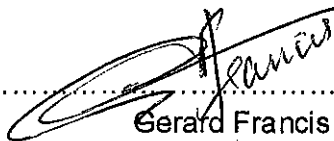
**Operating Result**

The surplus for the year amounted to \$123,859.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the members of the committee.



.....  
Kathleen West



.....  
Gerard Francis

Dated this 13 day of September 2016



# DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Miscellaneous income	2,468	10,046
Grants - COGD	80,322	96,332
Grants - ACFE	282,970	139,668
Grants - other	126,276	106,096
Membership fees	30	103
Funded enrolment fees - ACFE	19,321	8,484
Funded enrolment fees - other	1,703	4,090
Rental income	19,472	12,851
Fee for service income	54,220	39,462
Donations & bequests	8,505	30,042
Interest received	5,215	3,205
	<u>600,504</u>	<u>450,378</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Advertising & promotion	2,823	3,202
Affiliation & licences	5,421	2,547
Amenities	3,171	2,292
Amortisation - Leasehold improvements	384	-
Annual leave provision	723	3,895
Audit fees	2,700	2,500
Bank charges	256	822
Cleaning	3,434	5,387
Computer expenses	1,190	361
Consultant services	2,064	5,249
Contractors	19,330	-
Equipment and tools	853	2,602
Hire of storage facilities	969	249
Insurance	754	732
Internet	1,634	1,659
Light and power	3,458	3,052
Long service leave provision	(3,062)	3,834
Meeting expenses	652	501
Photocopier lease & maintenance	5,705	5,445
Postage	588	878
Printing and stationery	5,016	3,320
Professional development	2,505	3,886
Program expenses - ACFE	6,027	1,286
Program expenses - other	7,642	6,503
Program related expenses	24,797	7,300
Rates & land tax	285	262
Repairs and maintenance	991	2,718
Sundry expenses	2,743	3,591

## DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

### STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Superannuation	30,661	23,577
Telephone, mobile and fax	6,284	6,616
Time off in lieu provision	(305)	(1,060)
Wages	331,571	263,155
Waste disposal	433	25
Water	1,246	1,047
Workcover	3,706	3,263
	<u>476,645</u>	<u>370,695</u>
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE SURPLUS</b>	<b><u>123,859</u></b>	<b><u>79,683</u></b>

# DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Petty cash	300	300
Bendigo Bank Cash Management	285,499	310,183
NAB cheque account	-	31,628
Bendigo term deposit 1	165,846	88,371
BB Cash Management No 2	2,258	-
Trade debtors	6,428	11,579
	<u>460,331</u>	<u>442,061</u>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Office equipment at cost	4,108	4,108
Less accumulated depreciation	(4,108)	(4,108)
Furniture and fittings at cost	4,968	4,968
Less accumulated depreciation	(4,968)	(4,968)
Leasehold improvements at cost	21,895	21,895
Less accumulated amortisation	(21,895)	(21,895)
Computers	17,180	17,180
Less accumulated depreciation	(17,180)	(17,180)
Leasehold improvements - Men's Shed	14,934	-
Less accumulated amortisation	(384)	-
	<u>14,550</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><b>474,881</b></u>	<u><b>442,061</b></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade creditors	5,946	4,455
Grants received in advance	136,461	199,545
Annual leave accrued	4,768	5,557
Superannuation accrued	(0)	7,654
Leave in lieu accrued	191	496
Provision for GST	85	20,432
PAYG withholding payable	11,391	8,679
	<u>158,842</u>	<u>246,818</u>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>		
Long service leave accrued	9,688	12,750
	<u>9,688</u>	<u>12,750</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u><b>168,530</b></u>	<u><b>259,568</b></u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><b>306,351</b></u>	<u><b>182,492</b></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Accumulated surplus	306,351	182,492
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<u><b>306,351</b></u>	<u><b>182,492</b></u>

# DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Petty cash	300	300
Bendigo Bank Cash Management	285,499	310,183
NAB cheque account	-	31,628
Bendigo term deposit 1	165,846	88,371
BB Cash Management No 2	2,258	-
Trade debtors	6,428	11,579
	<u>460,331</u>	<u>442,061</u>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Office equipment at cost	4,108	4,108
Less accumulated depreciation	(4,108)	(4,108)
Furniture and fittings at cost	4,968	4,968
Less accumulated depreciation	(4,968)	(4,968)
Leasehold improvements at cost	21,895	21,895
Less accumulated amortisation	(21,895)	(21,895)
Computers	17,180	17,180
Less accumulated depreciation	(17,180)	(17,180)
Leasehold improvements - Men's Shed	14,934	-
Less accumulated amortisation	(384)	-
	<u>14,550</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><b>474,881</b></u>	<u><b>442,061</b></u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade creditors	5,946	4,455
Grants received in advance	136,461	199,545
Annual leave accrued	4,768	5,557
Superannuation accrued	(0)	7,654
Leave in lieu accrued	191	496
Provision for GST	85	20,432
PAYG withholding payable	11,391	8,679
	<u>158,842</u>	<u>246,818</u>
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>		
Long service leave accrued	9,688	12,750
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u><b>168,530</b></u>	<u><b>259,568</b></u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><b>306,351</b></u>	<u><b>182,492</b></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Accumulated surplus	306,351	182,492
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<u><b>306,351</b></u>	<u><b>182,492</b></u>

**DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.  
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2016**

	<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>Total</b>
	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2014	102,810	102,810
Surplus attributable to members	<u>79,682</u>	<u>79,682</u>
Balance at 30 June 2015	182,492	182,492
Surplus attributable to members	<u>123,859</u>	<u>123,859</u>
Balance at 30 June 2016	<u><u>306,351</u></u>	<u><u>306,351</u></u>

**DANDENONG NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.**  
**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
**Year Ended 30 June 2016**

		2016	2015
		\$	\$
<b>Cash Flows from operating activities</b>	<b>Note</b>		
Grant receipts		426,485	535,905
Funded enrolment fees		21,024	12,574
Rental income		19,472	12,851
Fee for service income		59,371	39,462
Donations and bequests		8,505	30,042
Miscellaneous income		2,468	10,046
Membership fees received		30	103
Payments to suppliers and employees		(504,213)	(366,468)
Interest received		5,215	3,205
<i>Net cash provided from/(used in) operating activities</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>38,357</b>	<b>277,720</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for plant & equipment		(14,934)	0
<i>Net cash used in investing activities</i>		<b>(14,934)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Proceeds from borrowings		0	0
<i>Net cash provided from/(used in) financing activities</i>		0	0
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23,423</b>	<b>277,720</b>
<b>Cash at the beginning of the reporting period</b>		<b>430,482</b>	<b>152,762</b>
<b>Cash at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>453,903</b>	<b>430,482</b>

# Community Development

Community development forms a big part of how we bring communities together and also gives us the opportunity to give back to our local community. It brings people together to connect, learn and contribute in their local community through social, educational and support activities, using a unique community development approach.

The community development process enables us to assist communities to identify and address their own needs. It starts from the assumption that communities have existing strengths and assets that make them part of the solution.

DNH welcomes people from all walks of life. This inclusive approach creates opportunities for individuals and groups to enrich their lives through connections they might not otherwise make, strengthening networks and building social capital.

All of our skills development programs have a community giveback element. The pre-accredited hospitality program prepares a Community Lunch once a week that is open to our local community and the asylum seeker commercial cookery program prepares a community lunch twice a week for their communities, just to name a few activities. The Community Work Partnership programs all have a community give back project they work on together such as making quilts for the neo-natal units at Monash and Dandenong Hospitals, cards for Cancer in Kids Auxiliary at the Royal Children's Hospital. These are only a small glimpse of the activities that we are involved in every week.



Our approach creates opportunities for individuals and groups to enrich their lives through connections they might not otherwise make, strengthening networks and building social capital.

## **Dandenong Community Work Partnership Program**

Since February 2013, Dandenong Neighbourhood House has been in partnership with the Department of Justice and Regulation for people completing Community Service Orders. The work carried out by these programs has been recognised and celebrated at a State Level through the Community Work Partnerships Awards of which we have been a runner up for the past two years. These Awards celebrates the diverse partnerships that Department of Justice and Regulation has with the Victorian community. In 2014 saw 58 nominations judged from across the State for these awards.

In 2013 – Awarded Runner-up – English for All in the Projects Involving Diversity, Indigenous and Aged Offenders/Prisoners and in 2014 – Awarded Runner-up for the Educational Institution/Educational Programs.

More importantly, this initiative enjoys strong support and recognition both from its partners and from the local community.

## Community Development - continued

These programs build on the success of the previous programs to develop a specific local area giveback project that people in need can benefit from. A large focus of this initiative is the enhancement of building skills for the learners to change their lives and by working to make these changes open new doors and windows of opportunity for them.

### Benefits for Offenders

- Engagement in the community
- Increased Self Esteem and Self Worth
- Sense of Belonging
- Development of Life and Work Related Skills
- Volunteering Opportunities
- Reduction in Risk of Re-offending

### Benefits to Neighbourhood House

- Program recruitments completed by Department of Justice and Regulation
- Choice in acceptance of offenders
- Delivery of contracted Student Contact Hours for ACFE
- Partnership and Network building within the community
- Work tasks completed that would not otherwise have been able to be undertaken
- Great support from Community Work Partnerships Team

### Benefits to Department of Justice and Regulation

- Reducing the risk of re-offending
- Enabling offenders to successfully complete their community work hours and orders
- Providing offenders excellent opportunities to pay back to the community
- Providing offenders with educational opportunities to increase their employment opportunities and pathways in further education and training.
- Stakeholder development – meeting the needs in of the local community.

### Disability Programs

Dandenong Neighbourhood House has continued to provide programs for people with disabilities and their families. These programs focus on connecting participants with learning and social activities in order to foster their independence, integrate with their local community and to combat the marginalisation and social isolation that many of them experience.





## Community Development - continued

During the period, the following programs were delivered:

- Introduction to Hospitality: Approximately 12 young people have been attending this program, with the aim of achieving an accredited certificate later in the year. Several hands on activities have taken place, including preparation of lunch for everyone in the building on a Thursday and now moving down to assist with the Community Lunch provided for asylum seekers.
- A group of senior ladies have been building their cake making skills and have provided morning tea and a few birthday cakes for everyone at the House over the year. This program provides opportunities to keep the mind active, increase their socialising skills and the feelings of self worth and achievement.
- Community Shed: Dandenong Neighbourhood House has continued to support members of the of local disability organisation to participate in the Community Shed activities. Group members have gathered weekly at our House to socialise, share information and continue to build a range of projects that they are very proud to display at the end of each term.
- Massage Therapy Basics: this program has been running for a few years now with the group continuing to grow and develop a range of relaxation skills and providing a most valuable service to other people at their centre.



### Schools Programs

The focus of the schools program is to support parents to develop leadership and problem solving skills. Developing these skills will enable parents to identify their needs and issues and give them tools to find solutions to these problems. The program has built the capacity of families to take value education and what it has to offer. The program has also developed partnerships between the local schools and Dandenong Neighbourhood House.

The partnership aims to develop vital local community connections and networks and implement strategies to build stronger communities by:

- providing opportunities to newly arrived, disadvantaged migrants and refugees from a range of demographic backgrounds, to experience and learn how to become socially engaged in the local community.
- increasing program learners English skills coupled with working towards employability by developing language for the workplace thereby increasing their knowledge and the feelings of self worth
- creating connections between migrant and refugees from different cultures and learn from each other's experiences
- teaching families how to communicate effectively with each other, their children and the school

## Community Development - continued

### The program has also aimed to:

- develop a list of roles that parents can undertake in the school and at home to be able to volunteer or assist with their children's development
- develop friendship networks/groups to continue after the completion of the project

Our schools program was supported by the ACFE Board funding through the Family Learning Partnerships which allowed us to assign a project worker to work directly with the schools. Relationship building has been integral to engaging and working with all stakeholders in the FLP. Whether it is staff or parents it has been vital to take the time to listen ask questions and take interest in people in order to build trust and relationships.

Building meaningful connections has come from sitting and talking with parents as many do not have good English skills and are not always confident to complete forms.

A contributing factor to the success of the FLP has been the alignment with the school's commitment to improving student outcomes by involving families in the school and their child's learning. This alignment has ensured ongoing staff support for the FLP's activities.

This work continues to grow.

### Community Lunch

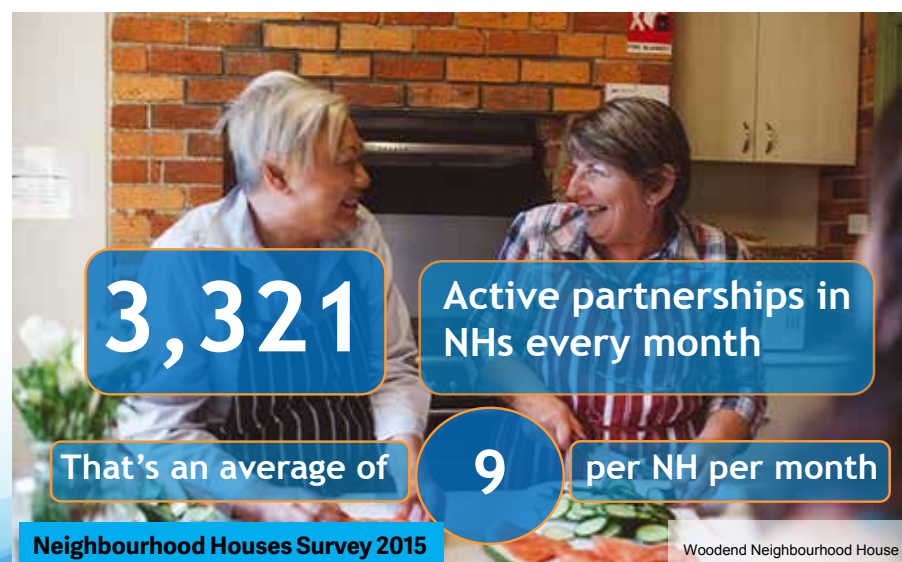
Every Wednesday there is a buzz in the House as the community lunch is prepared by our Hospitality learners. Bookings are essential so that we do not miss lunch.

A 3 course meal has been planned and everyone is involved. The smells that fill the house every Wednesday draws lots of interest and everyone comes together to talk menus, food and any topic that comes up.

The meal is planned, prepared and cooked by our learners. The kitchen becomes a hive of activity with everyone coming into the kitchen stopping to have a chat and make possible menu suggestions.

Everyone interacts with staff, volunteers and learners and gives everyone the opportunity to learn more about what we do and people often leave with a good understanding and appreciation of what we do at Dandenong Neighbourhood House.

The menu varies every week and we do take requests!! Join us every Wednesday at 12.30pm.



# Administration and Business Services

Dandenong Neighbourhood House strives to offer a warm, welcoming environment to all the learners who attend any of the programs offered at the House.

The admin team is often the first point of contact for our learners and we strive to ensure that everyone is made to feel welcome when they walk through the door of our House.

This financial year has been a period of change for the administration team at the House. The Board of Governance, along with the Manager, conducted a review of the administration structure during 2015 and the administration of the House was restructured at the end of 2015.

The House farewelled two admin staff members, Sarah and Asha, in December and in February the House welcomed Jenny Shepherd as our new Finance Officer. Jenny has been a wonderful addition to the House and it has been a pleasure getting to know and working alongside Jenny. Maria Cima, also was assigned a new role during the restructure and her input into the admin team is sorely missed.

The reason the team works so well is the committed staff who want to make a positive difference to the organisation and the community we work with. All of our staff do an amazing job, the growth we have experienced means we needed to ensure we had a strong foundation that worked well and we will continue to further develop and resource all areas in 2017.

Our admin team would not function as well without our office volunteers. Special acknowledgement must be given to Carol Campbell without whom the office would not function as efficiently or effectively as it currently does.

It has been a learning experience for all in the office as we work under the new structure. As with any change, there have been some difficulties, however I am pleased to say that as a team we have worked through these challenges together.

Human resources has been an incredibly busy area in the past year as we have 19 staff members in the team. There has been and will continue to be a focus on strengthening our human resources foundations with the development of a new employee induction handbook and formalised induction process, the implementation of HR policies, and organisational memberships to Jobs Australia. The new Collective Agreement is now going through the final stages of voting by the Board and staff for acceptance.

We can never thank the team enough! Their passion and dedication to the community, creativity and boundless energy is what makes our organisation so special. Everyone is truly valued and an integral part of the team.

Our dedication to staff wellbeing has seen a number of new initiatives being introduced. Dandenong Neighbourhood House has joined the Healthy Together program to better support our staff and provide health and wellbeing opportunities. Some of the key areas that we will be looking into is supporting the staff to ensure a healthy work life balance as well as investigating ways to implement an Employee Assistance program. This program is much needed and will be welcomed with open arms by all staff.

My thanks for the continued support of the House Manager, Robyn Coslovich, as well as all other staff members and of course all the learners who attend the House.

Moving forward we look to another great year in 2017.



**Susan Paisley**



**Carol Campbell**



**Jenny Shepherd**

# Training and Employment Pathways

## Pre-Accredited Training

Dandenong Neighbourhood House has almost a decade of experience in assisting individuals and community groups to meet their full potential through the delivery of non-accredited training programs, professional development events and educational resources to meet a wide range of learning needs.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development works with local organisations to plan and deliver the most responsive programs to the local community and to identify the most affordable solutions to meet organisation's needs, recognising the reality of tight budgets in community services.



Together we all  
achieve beyond  
expectations

The partnerships of training offerings, which began in 2013, represented the most significant repositioning of Dandenong Neighbourhood House's role as a learning centre. It has resulted in a more concise training list that reflects program priorities and has paved the way for new approaches to meet the sector's changing needs. Engagement strategies with learners focused on improving outcomes, choice and independence for learners.

Through funding received from the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) to conduct our training programs, we are able to provide pathways to employment, further study and community connection. We continually endeavour to advance the training that we provide by monitoring each program at the end of each term. In the past few years we have approached new facilities to accommodate the increase in the number of programs that Dandenong Neighbourhood House provides and there are plans to further increase this capacity in the future.

English as a second language, information technology and pre-employment programs have proved to be popular areas of training in 2015-2016. The delivery of these programs has been exceptionally successful, enabling many members of the community to develop lifelong learning skills they can use throughout their lives. We are very grateful to our staff for supporting the learners to find their wings and fly! We achieved an amazing number of student contact hours for 2015, in a difficult year that was heavily impacted by economic uncertainty in the local community.

## Training Programs

- Introduction to English as a Second Language (Basic through to advanced);
- Computer Programs (Basic through to Intermediate);
- Landscaping Basics;
- Visual Arts Basics;
- Introduction to Hospitality;
- Preparing for Work;
- Women's Leadership

## Vision For The Future

We locally provide high-quality, customised, pre accredited training utilising adult learning principles, industry standards to develop employability skills and create pathways that lead to employment, lifelong learning or further accredited training.

Over the coming year we intend to streamline our programs and services in training and to introduce a work skills component to ensure they are innovative and focussed on the needs of hard-to-reach learners and job seekers. Furthermore, we want to establish a process of continuous improvement of our programs and services in both training and work skills that we are always seen as leaders in the provision of such services in the City of Greater Dandenong area.

# Basic Sewing Skills

A new program has commenced in the Dandenong Neighbourhood House titled Basic Sewing Skills. Ladies from the community have joined this program to acquire basic sewing skills.

Learning the terms, techniques and tools of the trade. Discovering how to read a pattern, cutting guides, pinning fabric, the types of fabric, machine sewing skills and hand sewing skills.

Pincushions, Tote Bags, Skirts, Dresses and Pillows have been designed and created.

The ladies supply their own fabrics of choice and DNH supplies the Overlocker and Sewing Machines. Development of sewing skills, coupled with the ladies excitement and pride definitely livens the room up when the ladies have completed their sewing creations. A possible pathway could lead into Certificate III Dressmaking skills, Certificate IV or Diploma which can be obtained through TAFE or other Educational Institutes.

## Community Garden

The Community garden has continued to grow this year as our group kept working away on the community garden each week. We are running a skills development program - Landscaping Basics that focuses on practical building skills and creative problem solving, providing learners with opportunities to get a taste of life in the wider landscape and construction industry.

Weekly sessions have become a place where our learners feel safe and comfortable enough to share their existing skill levels, career aspirations, and life challenges amongst their peers forming a sense of solidarity between the group. As learners come and go, they leave a lasting hand print in the garden, contributing to the community in a meaningful way – often some of the best moments come when our boys come back to visit with their kids!

In the last year the group has undertaken a number of projects in the garden, some were a little mundane, such as the installation of new pathways, building compost bins, and preparing inground beds to allow for crop rotation. Other projects were more fun, we've spent much time learning how to upcycle pallets into all sorts of useful garden objects like vertical gardens, raised grow beds, birdhouses, and planter boxes. The installation of an automated drip irrigation system will help the garden survive the summer when less people are around.

The building of terraced beds and filling them with potatoes and herbs, encouraged one of our learners to show greater initiative to create a reading nook with a little frog pond and some outdoor seating.

The aquaponics area has been set up and has been mostly built with 7 grow beds and capacity for 100+ silver perch in the larger fish pond.

As we move forward into the late stages of 2016, with true spring just around the corner, the garden is gearing up for a large seasonal planting of vegetables and fruits between the aquaponics and rotating crop beds.

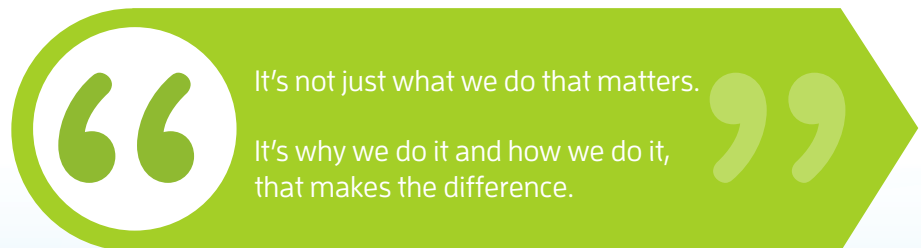


**Ayush Gupta**

## Community Garden - continued

Community members are welcome to come join the garden, there are a number of raised garden beds and spaces available for use, and soon we will have a pizza oven and a hangi out back for some tasty snacks at our social gatherings.

Its been great working with the guys to develop their skills and interests in the area, its been even better when the group has had the chance to learn from many of our learners who bring with them hard earned life skills from their previous workplaces. All in all, the men take pride in the work they while also appreciating what they're doing.



# Dandenong Community Shed

## Monday - Chippies

This is a diverse group with a range of skills and abilities which has been a challenge with rolling starts new learners are coming and going on weekly basis. Some of the learners can be fairly hard to engage particularly in the early stages of them being involved in the program.

I have found that in order to engage them as a group and get them working as a team there has to be an area of leniency with the tasks required to complete the projects we have going at any one time. By giving each individual the opportunity to build on past/current working situations and allow them to use their skills, has engaged many of them. This takes time to build trust with lots of encouragement, but we got there.

We have now started making some items using recycled pallets that can hopefully be sold which also means a greater involvement from the learners to take pride in the projects and even help planning for new and improved models to come.

One of the learners has already bought a wine rack that he has made using the pallet timber to display in his own home.

## Tuesday

Tuesday is a group with some bold characters including our sole female learner. These learners have been making projects for themselves to use within their own household and even some as gifts.

One of our learners used to be an upholsterer so he has helped me upcycle some director's chairs that were donated and had been sitting in our storage shed for quite some time. Together we measured out the canvas that went with the chairs and he cut and took it away to hem it at home. Personally, I love the canvas but others may not due to the black and white stripes.



The lady that attends on Tuesday afternoon brings more of an artistic side to our woodwork program. She has come up with a lot of different ideas for using some very unique materials. For example we used two gum tree branches to make a more abstract pot plant. Once the branches had been stripped of all the bark and loose matter she then stained them. For the pot we used an empty paint tin that we found in the shed which was also stripped back and painted black. We left the handle on the paint tin for ease of movement and also to give the piece a 'industrial' look. She tells me that the pot plant is in great use in her own house.

# Dandenong Community Shed - continued

## Wednesday

Wednesday morning brings in the 'regulars' that have been attending for a number of years. These men have come up with some great ideas (I'm sure it's their wives and partners coming up with them).

Earlier this year one of the men made two wine racks to fit on either side of his fridge at home. We used ply wood and cut all the material to size. After much deliberation he decided to paint the wine rack. Due to the end of term creeping up on us we started to run out of time, so with the majority painted we decided that we had to get cracking on assembling it. We assembled the rack over the next couple of weeks and before we knew the term was finished. He took the half painted wine rack home and much to his partners pleasure the 'half white, half ply' look was in fashion and matched a side board she had in her hall way.



We also made a 5 tier planter box that stood about 1.6m high and a garden cart that could be manoeuvred around the garden carrying all your gardening equipment.

Wednesday afternoon I have a fellow that has a learning disability and comes with a carer. This man loves guitars and music. The first session we had together he explained to me how he loved making guitars, how easy it was to do and how many he had made before..... this I later found out wasn't true. The guitar we made was in the shape of a Snapper (fish). Using cut off nails as frets and shaping the pick ups out some scrap timber we completed the guitar much to his delight.



Since making the Snapper guitar we have decided that the idea of making our own guitar might be at this stage a bit out of our league so we have since converted the fish shape into chopping boards.

It has been a challenging but in the most part a rewarding year testing my abilities and also the learners creativeness in achieving some very nice and challenging projects.

**Rob Cameron**

“ The passion, dedication, creativity and enormous energy of all staff, volunteers and learners is what makes Dandenong Neighbourhood House so special. We are a family working together. ”



# Digital Literacy for Older Victorians

The Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board established the Digital Literacy for Older Victorians program to support the development of sustainable programs that will improve digital literacy outcomes for learners aged 65 and over.

In 2015 Dandenong Neighbourhood House as the lead agency for our City of Greater Dandenong Neighbourhood House Cluster developed a successful funding submission for a project to roll out digital literacy training for people aged 65+ at risk of becoming or being isolated across our region. In partnership with other Learn Locals across the City of Greater Dandenong including Keysborough Learning Centre, Springvale Learning and Activities Centre, Springvale Neighbourhood House, Noble Park Community Centre and WellsSprings for Women.



**Robyn Hill**



The program was developed around the needs of the learners.

The group training sessions were kept small to 5 to 6 people and learners were able to bring their own devices and learn what they wanted to know about technology and the internet. Programs were run across 6 local organisations across the City of Greater Dandenong.

A Digital Literacy Program for Older Victorians has been running in Terms 1, 2 and 3 with an emphasis on using their smart phones.

Learners bring their own phones and with a combination of group teaching and individual troubleshooting, they are increasing their confidence with using their smart phones and taking some of the fear out of using technology in general.

Things that we have covered so far include:

- Adding people to contacts, editing contacts, deleting contacts
- Calling and texting someone from contacts or someone not in contacts
- Opening and replying to text messages
- Sending pictures with text messages
- Opening and saving pictures sent to you by text
- Using the camera to take photos and videos
- Opening the Gallery, open and view photos, managing photos, deleting pictures
- Using Basic Settings to adjust ringtones, volume, screen brightness, wallpaper etc
- Use pull down notifications panel to turn basic settings on and off
- Connect phone to Wifi
- Manage mobile Data and view usage
- Use Google App to search for and find basic information Eg. Phone numbers, addresses, prices, movie times, directions etc
- Using the Play Store: Searching for and installing Apps or games, open and use Apps, manage and arrange Apps on the Home screen, view installed Apps, update Apps, uninstall unwanted Apps, navigate the Play Store, add credit to Play Store account (using store card)

The program is paced at a slow and steady pace to allow for lots of repetition of information and practice time and one-to-one help. Slowly, learners are becoming more familiar and confident with their phones and able to use them for their own purposes.

# Advanced Literacy



**Mystica Perara**

Teaching at the Dandenong Neighbourhood House is challenging because I teach a group of Advanced Literacy learners whose communication skills in English are at very different levels. Even though their speaking skills are at a good level, they need to improve their reading, writing, grammar and spelling strategies. It is also an interesting mix of native speaking learners as well as learners of English as an Additional Language. We help each other to learn and learn from each other as each of us brings a wealth of life experiences into the classroom.

A software engineer who could not obtain employment as his communication skills have to improve; is continuing to attend the class even though he has set up his own business. A learner who is a part time receptionist also continues to study with the group of learners who have bonded well together.

Another learner who joined us recently, has completed a Certificate III in Aged Care Services but has not been successful in obtaining employment since 2008; even though she has volunteered over a long period of time. She has been advised to improve her speaking skills.

By enrolling in this class the self confidence of these learners, to speak without inhibition and express themselves freely, has immensely improved through interactive language activities. Three of them have been encouraged to take a further step in their learning journey by enrolling in a six month course in Study and Job Skills.

There are two learners who had previously found a pathway to being trained as volunteer-tutors, through enrolling in this class. One of them tutors Beginner EAL learners at the library. She has also been successful in enrolling in a six month course to become a Community Facilitator, in order to realize her dream of teaching meditation. Both learners assist each other when they need help during the class; while improving their own skills in communication.



At the end of the second term we went on a tour of the Dandenong Library, highlighting English language and literacy resources; including an introduction to the online resources in the Vault. Three learners have become members of the library so that they and their extended families could also benefit from the facilities at the library.

At the end of last year we enjoyed a cherry picking excursion. The learners are delighted with the new spacious classroom provided for them at the Clow Street venue.

## Harmony Day Celebrations 2016

Our learners dressed in festive attire to participate in The International Dress Parade held at the Harmony Square in Dandenong.

They also took part in a multi-lingual video of New Year greetings to be compiled by the CGD council.

Thank you for enriching my journey of learning and teaching.

# Every Day English

The Every Day English program runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Dandenong South Primary School. This program is available for mums with their bubs in the same room. The program has been running for two years now. Initially we had a smaller group but then the group started increasing gradually. The presence of children with their mothers in the same room makes it more convenient for mothers as well as for the children to come to this program. The aim of the program is to enable the learners to eliminate the barrier of language in order to communicate with the rest of the communities in society.

This program is based on different level of learners. Some of the learners have low level of English, some have intermediate level and some of them have no English at all. With these variations, different types of worksheets and activities are created that can help the women practice their day to day English and also learn how to read and write in English. Filling out simple forms, asking one another questions to know one another and also booking appointments are few examples that are practiced. English grammar, spelling and also learning new vocabularies are being practiced daily so they can be used correctly during speaking and writing.

The achievements that I can see in this program are countless. From starting to learn the alphabet to telling the time in English, from not being able to make a sentence to making a grammatically correct sentence, from not understanding a simple English word to making a doctor's appointment are a few of the achievements that can be counted. I am looking forward to more or even better achievements in the future.



**Rabia Nadir**

## ESL – Level 2

Every Thursday from 9.30-12.30 a group of diverse learners get together to strengthen their English skills.

In this class, the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking are all covered, and constantly reinforced to enhance understanding. Lessons are tailored to meet the needs of the differing levels of English competency present in the group.

Throughout this term, I have witnessed much growth in learners' understanding and English skills, and what has been particularly pleasing is the willingness of every student to participate, regardless of English proficiency. This, combined with the generous positive feedback received from students is what makes teaching this class so rewarding.

The dynamics in this class make it a pleasure to teach. Learners constantly encourage and support each other, and enjoy sharing a joke in class and learning from each other's cultures and experiences.



**Sue Marshall**



**Vanessa Sewak**



# Hospitality

My name is Sharon and I have been working as the chef at the Dandenong Neighbourhood House for the last 3 years. I run different cooking programs 5 days a week. Each cooking program is different and not everyday is the same.

As a teacher you are there to teach but not only do we teach we learn so much as well. This is not just a cooking program it's much more than that. Its filled with laughter, tears, sadness, fear, life's obstacles, stories that are shared after time and most of all friendships form and open up a new world to learners. The journey so far has seen many learning experiences not only for the learner but also for me as a teacher in this program. From traditions that are so different from our own and the way we see things has opened my mind.

From male learners that start in this program that would not eat with women and demand they eat before women and children and how the women should wait till the male finishes their meal and do their dishes and then they can eat. This tradition (for some) took a while as it meant trying new ways of being in Australian society. The classroom is a microcosm of society so the learners essentially are practicing a new way off interacting and relating.

To watch this over the few months it took for this to work was great to see the end result. I approached the males with a translator that helped to explain what I was saying. I put in place from now on we will always let the women and children get their meals before the men. A few tantrums and by week 6 the men were getting meals for the children and helping the women with their meals. The men started clearing the tables and doing the dishes and allowing the women to sit and enjoy conversation with other women.

To see this then spread to the homes was wonderful to hear. It's not changing tradition but actually adding traditions and learning more about other cultures. It's about demonstrating to my learner's knowledge, empathy, understanding and skill development that they will then take home and share with others in their personal lives. Whether this is by telling stories about the day, by actions and maybe even a shift in their disposition as they feel connected, it is all passed along in some form.



Sharon Ramsay



This reflects on the Humanistic traditions. Communication is a major part of this class, even though we don't all speak the same language we have an understanding as we care about each other and about their backgrounds. The learners not only take away knowledge about food and preparation, it's more than that, it's a feeling of family and a feeling of belonging. For some of these learners they have certain times of the year that they fast, and one might assume that they would avoid cooking classes but they don't. The fasting learners come to cook and prepare food. They are true to their traditions but also want to learn and acknowledge Australian traditions. It's about working as a team and it doesn't matter if the fellow learners are from Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan or Egypt, in the program, they all work together as a team and treat each other equally. There is no fighting or arguing over who has more vegetables than the other (which happens), it's about sharing and working side by side to prepare a delicious meal to share with others.

For example, Christmas time is something that the learners don't celebrate but still they want to learn all about it and start a celebration with their families too. This was amazing when the class wanted to know about the Christmas tree and presents, by that afternoon the class went on a field trip and 8-10 learners came back with a Christmas tree and presents. We then had a lesson on how to wrap presents and write in cards, as these are things that they had never done before.

This program is so important for our Refugees and Asylum seekers, this program is now expanding into helping assist young children coming in with their parents. While their parents are learning new skills we hand out home made library bags which are filled with coloured pencils in a hand made pencil case that have been made by the Mums and Bubs sewing class at the DNH, a book and print outs of educational activity sheets. Many children from these countries have not had an education and the female children are not allowed to attend school. The program is now set up to expand in many ways. I have designed it so that while the men are learning cooking skills they have the opportunity to learn English and with their children too. This program also involves the local CFA and they have set up a program for our learners to attend to learn about fire safety . This has been a wonderful addition to our classes and we look forward to carrying out more classes in the future.

## Community Kitchen

A Community Kitchen program on a Wednesday from 9:30-2:30pm. This class involves a range of diverse members of the community. This program aims to bring people together to prepare and cook affordable healthy meals in a friendly culturally diverse environment. The program includes learning how to prepare healthy meals and trying new foods from other cultures.

Learning how to read labels and recipes engage with other women and men from different cultural backgrounds. A place for women to talk and feel relaxed, to share stories and listen to others and building relationships so that they can build and maintain long term friendships

Learn about kitchen equipment and utensils and how to use them. We cover healthy lunch box ideas for children in school.

The program includes gardening, planting and harvesting produce from our community garden. After cooking we can go to the garden to share a meal.

Trips to the Market and learning about different produce that is in season, visiting local supermarkets and local butchers.

The learners will cook together showing each other different techniques that are used in cooking and preparing meals and sharing meals by sitting together for lunch in a relaxed environment, sharing stories.



## Social Cohesion

The Social Cohesion class that was held on a Tuesday was a fantastic way for ladies to attend class, learn some new recipes and socialise with others.

Each cooking something different and sharing what they have made with others while having morning tea and mixing with everyone, talking about what they have made, asking questions to others. Combining food topics to form friendships and discuss what they love about food from their country.

This was a great talking topic and we did this class over a few weeks as parents struggle to know what goes in a child's lunch box for school. This brought up many topics and discussions among the groups. Different foods different cultures, different ideas what they should put in a child's lunch box, many did not think about a piece of fruit. The mums did not know what a sandwich was nor did not know you could put vegetables into cakes. We did step by step instructions about how to make sandwiches and home made snacks for their kids lunches. Cooking desserts and cakes, kids party ideas were things they always asked how to do. This was a place where they could talk, laugh and cook.

# Information Technology Programs

There have been a number of programs offered this year to address the technological needs of our community.

These were:

- Basic Computer Skills for Beginners
- Beyond Basic Computers
- Explore work and learning opportunities using Internet
- Digital Literacy for Older Victorians

Further development in information technology has created opportunities for the House by helping to increase the capacity of the individual and organisations to process information but also created barriers for many. The digital divide is becoming more evident and has become a real challenge for a substantial part of our local community. This year I and my wonderful team saw us on a mission to bridge this digital divide.

Our team are well aware of the challenges that our community faces due to limited digital literacy. We have experienced first hand and listened to many stories on how limited digital literacy skills adversely affects a person's social, work and civic lives. At times it is frustrating, isolating and creates an invisible disadvantage.

Our programs are designed and delivered squarely to address this bridge this gap in digital literacy skills. Learners and their needs are central to all our programs. Listening to and adapting to the needs of our learners has helped us to engage them in a meaningful way. Let me humbly mention that, this approach has not only helped in maintaining but also steadily increasing our enrolments throughout the year.



**Ali Aziz**



Currently, we are running classes from Monday to Thursday and one on Saturday. A substantial research project was conducted by Daniel Kuol (Community Project Officer) into African communities in social and community needs of the African communities and it was strongly highlighted the need to have a class on Saturday morning. This class started with lot of enthusiasm and is currently running at full steam.

Our team was instrumental in taking a few initiatives, which helped our local community. One initiative developed, conducted and compiled the results of a survey for community needs analysis. This was a success and produced a meaningful data to help management in decision making. We also helped raise awareness about completing

## Information Technology Programs - continued

Census forms. We are proud to say that with skills learnt in our programs many of our learners managed to complete their forms online.

Proud moments for us includes when we see our learners achieving their goals. It is wonderful to see how our learners can now do a number of tasks on their own. It is so rewarding to know when learners report the following information to us among many other things that they can now do:

- Apply working with children check online
- Check their electoral enrolments
- Complete their Census online
- Find driving directions using Google Maps using Internet
- Find information and communicate with all levels of government
- Use online communication tools to keep contact with family and friends in Australia and overseas
- Effectively use Internet for job searching and application



The IT programs have enabled our learners to better engage in civic life. For our advanced learners a new program was introduced to explore work and learning opportunities. Our volunteers were also involved in this program. They enjoyed it and found meaningful information for developing their learning pathway.



Topics covered were:

- Facilitating adult education
- Learn how to learn
- Time management and other employability skills
- Exploring meaningful online learning opportunities

Digital Literacy for Older Victorians program has been a successful program. This program was funded by ACFE and run across the City of Greater Dandenong in other Learn Local centres. The major portion of our local senior's population is disadvantaged due to limited digital literacy skills. This program is designed to address this need. Avram, one of our learners of this program can now keep in contact with his extended family overseas, can browse internet and more importantly feel lot more confident in using this technology.

Rod has been instrumental in our team. He has been actively engaged in looking after learner enrolments, developing marketing materials for programs and helping in related administrative tasks, plus utilising his teaching skills in the delivery of programs. Rod started with us as a learner and then moved to become a volunteer and still volunteers today I would be lost without him. Rod has also successful undertaken his Certificate IV in Training and Assessment



Together we all  
achieve beyond  
expectations



# Visual Arts Basics

## Mums N Bubs Program

The Mums N Bubs Visual Arts program is a skill development program. The visual arts are creations we can look at, such as a painting, sculpting, crafting, photograph or a metal work. The Mums and Bubs program is based around sewing skills and quilting skills which teaches learners how to create mini quilts which are donated to the Monash and Dandenong Hospitals for their Neo Natal Units. The quilts are made in two sizes one to go over the humidity crib to give the baby recognition of night and day and the other is a scenting quilt to allow the baby to start bonding with their mother while they are in the humidity crib. The group also produces Angel Gowns to dress the little babies who sadly did not make it for burial and these are made out of donated wedding gowns.

What an enjoyable year we have all had supporting and focusing women of all ages to discover new skills in the quilting and craft industry. Teaching women cutting skills, hand sewing skills, machine sewing skills, captivating their creativity and increasing their self-esteem and self-worth. Remembering nearly all women come into this program with little or no sewing skills and they have all produced some beautiful work throughout the year.



**Maria Cima**



The group has proudly donated within the last year 120 Mini Premie quilts, 12 Large Premie quilts which remain in the Hospitals, 40 Baby Angel Gowns, 2 dozen Baby Linen pouches for our Beautiful Angels who has passed on. Ladies donated 89 Knitted beanies to be worn by preemie babies. Donations are made to the APEC foundation for women who suffer Pre-clampsia in their pregnancies.

The group has also undertaken to design and construct 120 toiletry bags, donated to women who are victims of Domestic Violence, jam-packed with items donated by the View Club of Glen Waverly. The toiletry bags included items such as toothpaste/toothbrushes, hair combs/brushes and hair products. Furthermore, we constructed 169 pencil cases and 40 library bags for underprivileged school children packed with the standard school supplies including pencils, crayons, pens, erasers and pencil sharpeners.

Prior to Christmas all the learners participated in icing 80 fruit cakes and decorating them with fondant icing. Four dozen plum puddings were also iced and decorated. These products were passed out to our partner organisations, our volunteers and staff of the Dandenong Neighbourhood House just a small way to say thanks for the hard work throughout the year.

Additionally, some of the learners have progressed to purchase their own sewing machines after coupled with learning their new found skills and afterwards creating lovely quilts for their families.

It certainly has been a privilege and an honour for me to train and support these women for such a worthy program for the community.



## Card Making

Card Making is a new program which has been developed to assist the CIKA (Cancer in Kids Association).

CIKA is an official auxiliary of the Royal Children's Hospital and is open to any interested persons who feel that they would like to contribute to help CIKA achieve its hopes and dreams. As a fundraising activity for the Auxiliary they sell hand made cards at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

The group has created and decorated beautifully handcrafted Baby, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Congratulations, Sympathy, Birthday, Get Well cards which are created and donated to the CIKA Foundation these cards have been sold to fundraise money for cancer research for the Children's Hospital.



Government Funding only covers a small amount of materials however supplies come from donations and the community input. A few of the learners have kindly donated materials to fill a small amount in the stash. We are continuously looking for ways to support the program for example materials, paper, cards embellishments and donations to keep this ongoing program successful.

The pride that these ladies have when they look at their completed work is great to see and many never thought they would be able to do anything like this. Many have never had the opportunity and sitting around the table helps them to relax and enjoy each other's company while escaping the pressures of everyday life.

Volunteers have been evolving from these groups because the ladies have developed skills that they really thought was not possible. They are really keen to take on a mentoring role for new learners entering the program.

Thanks for the great work everyone!

## Mosaics

The Visual Arts Basic - Mosaic program is run on Thursdays each week at Cornerstone in Dandenong. It is a female only program and the women involved really enjoy the artistic experience, as it brings out their creative talent in a safe and therapeutic environment.

During the program the women are taught how to correctly use the tools and materials enabling them to feel more confident in completing their individual projects.

We use a variety of materials for our projects such as stained glass, mirrors, tiles, beads and pebbles. Some of the materials are donated from local businesses such as National Tiles and Xcess Glass in Thomastown and also by the public. We are continually seeking other sources, for their contributions are invaluable, enabling the program to run more effectively.

Some of the projects we have completed are tea light candle holders, picture frames, garden spheres, a totem pole and a wall mural.

The program is available to women only who have been through very difficult times and the program provides them a safe environment to come and integrate with others. The women within the group are of different age groups having different life experiences and artistic backgrounds. Many of my learners have never attempted mosaics before, however I have found that many have wanted to and even though initially they have been unsure of how mosaics would help them in their daily lives.



**Donna Marks**



All the completed projects are being donated to a range of different places which includes Aged Care facilities, women who are victims of Family Violence and the Community Garden.

Throughout the class I teach them a range of skills and techniques of art to develop and/or recognise strengths, within themselves eg patience, perseverance, goal setting, planning, problem solving and following through along with empathy and understanding.

Working on individual projects enables them to experience their achievements/accomplishments on a personal level while learning to identify problems and solve them using different strategies with practical solutions.

Working on a group project enables learners to listen to one another sharing ideas while negotiating responsibility in order to complete the project more effectively. Each learner contributes to the group project enabling them to be part of the team.

That sense of belonging experienced by many of my learners assists them to improve not only their project goals but also on personal levels allowing them to look to the future and be able to make changes to their lives that will offer them a brighter future. We have had two ladies from the group go on to become volunteers with us until they gained employment.

Many have expressed how much they enjoy attending the class and while taking the initiative in furthering their education leading them into employment.. They have expressed they feel they have a much brighter outlook on their futures and no longer feel trapped by their past experiences.

## Learner Case Study

### Visual Arts Basics

When I was signed up for the Mosaics program I did not know what to expect and I thought I would be stuck in a room with unpleasant people. I was very wrong!

Donna – the teacher was a lovely lady who has helped me explore my artistic flair and assisted me to create mosaic pieces that I did not know I was capable of. Through Donna's support and understanding to everyone's situation the ladies I have met in this program are all lovely and I have made some good friends who have agreed to continue to meet even after we finish the program.

The program is fun and the work that we have all produced is outstanding. I will continue to do mosaics at home after I complete the program and I am considering becoming a volunteer and continue with the program so that I can give back to others what I have got out of this program.

Confidence to get out and live life is one of the things that I have gained from this program. I will look for paid work and become more actively involved in the community.

### Advanced Literacy

We welcomed Paul at the beginning of this year into Advanced Literacy. He is a musician and his group performed at the Harmony Concert held at The Harmony Square. Paul performed with his cousin who has a vision impairment. He is well known as 'The King of Musicians'. He sang in both his native Sudanese dialect as well as in English. He has composed a song about the states of Australia.

## Learner Case Study - continued

Paul is also enrolled in Certificate IV in Disability studies. He has found a pathway to join a conversation group at the library. Our in-class volunteer-tutor Sumanda has very kindly offered to assist him with his written assignments.

We wish him well and all of us hope to continue to assist him to settle down and find employment in Australia.

Never say, "I cant" because this just shows that you can.

### Hospitality

3 years ago Joe took the wrong bus at his disability centre and ended up attending my cupcake class. He returned the following week as it was the first activity they found that Joe was showing interest in attending. He was relaxed and enjoyed it. Joe has now attended nearly 3 years of cupcake and cooking classes that I run through a neighbourhood house.

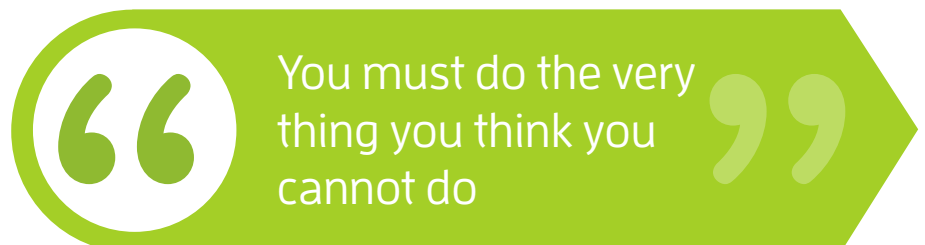
Joe was unable to communicate as he had never spoken or been able to write, but he was very good with visual activities in the kitchen. For example Joe would set out all the utensils that we needed for the session, including cupcake trays and the cupcake cases into the trays.

As a chef with no qualifications in the disability field, I wondered how I would be able to help Joe in Class. Joe kept attending and taking an interest in my class.

Months passed and one day I was teaching the class how to use a piping bag. I said you make an opening like a crocodile and I said "crocodile, snap snap" whilst gesturing how to hold the icing bag to fill it. To this Joe repeated the word crocodile. At first I was not sure so again I said, "snap snap" and Joe replied "crocodile". This was the first word that anyone had heard spoken by Joe and his caseworker burst into tears. From that day I wanted to know and learn more about Joe and working with people with disabilities. I asked Joe to repeat words I would say, just one word at a time and these were repeated by Joe.

I found Joe was starting to help more and he would always unpack the shopping. Joe was the first one to set up the table for class, he was remembered how it was done the week before and would start getting those utensils and equipment out for the session. Joe's vocabulary was widening as he tried to announce more words. I asked the staff if he could read and they said "no", so I decided to see if Joe could read the recipes out. He seemed interested and read the recipes word for word. From that day Joe read out the recipes for class. He could read. I then thought if he can read then maybe he can write as well so I got Joe to write down a shopping list of things we needed as if it was no big deal. I spoke the words and he accurately wrote them down.

Joe was very talented at cupcake decorating with his attention to detail making his creations exactly the same as the one I was doing or the picture. Even if it were something he was shown 2 years ago I'd hand Joe the items that he needed for the project and he would proceed to make it. I felt it had been years since Joe had probably been asked to try things and in all that time he had picked up skills.



# Our Volunteers

## – Our Asset

This year saw a number of beautiful people all with a heart of gold, happily sharing their skills, energy and smiles, which we call volunteers choosing Dandenong Neighbourhood House (DNH) as a platform to serve our community. They actively shared our common vision of “Form an inclusive community that supports people to make positive changes to their lives”.

Seven students from two local TAFEs (Chisholm and Holmesglen) were involved in our student placement program. They appreciated how DNH has helped them in applying their theoretical learning to real world scenarios. It helped them solidify their learning and develop skills in area of community development and services. Currently we have 18 volunteers with varying skills, availability and engagements. With help of these volunteers we can serve our community better. Not a day passes by when we do not hear a compliment appreciating the work of our volunteers. Indeed DNH is proud of you and you are our asset.

Samantha, Shahgul, Samah, Bushra, Luwis, completed their work placement with us. We wish them well and best of luck for their careers and life.

I would like to quote one statistics in appreciation of their work in 2010, formal volunteering (excluding travel) was worth \$25.4 billion to the Australian economy.” \*

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” Sherry Anderson  
My team I appreciate your work. Our local community benefits a lot from your efforts and initiatives. Keep it up and I wish you all a wonderful and fulfilling careers and life.

My wonderful team this year has included Samah, Bushra, Sharron, Sultana, Twai, Gina, Alimamy, Maritta, Susan, Damika, Yembeh, Brownwyn, Tere and Michelle.

\* <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VA-Key-statistics-about-Australian-volunteering-16-April-20151.pdf>

**Ali Aziz**



# Volunteer Case Study

## Community Kitchen

Ali has volunteered and helped out in our Community Kitchen lunch classes too at the DNH. He loves to cook and is always looking for new ideas for cooking. Ali has also been volunteering in the Cornerstone program.

I am Alimamy and I am from Sierra Leone. I came to Australia on the 16th November 2004. I came with my wife. I was in a refugee camp with my family due to the civil war in my country. When the UN approached us, we were promised to be moved to some other country to live peacefully. I have studied to be a Nurse and graduated from the Australian Catholic University with a Bachelor in Nursing. Now I am a student at Chisholm TAFE in Dandenong and I have been completing a placement at the Dandenong Neighbourhood House, completing a Diploma in Community Development. I am currently working as a registered Nurse Division and I have also become an Australian citizen.

I have learned a lot from the staff here and they have made me very welcome during my placement. I have had the opportunity to do a range of things and have been supported by everyone here.



# New Facilities

The City of Greater Dandenong Council has allocated space at the Old Council building site in Clow Street for use by the Neighbourhood House. Council has renovated the space for us and have recently completed the development of the new facilities where a number of local community organisations are now to be co-located.

Being located adjacent to the existing Market and just around the corner from our King Street site, this new facility will form part the Neighbourhood House's co-location of our services including:

- 1 computer room
- 1 training room
- 1 office/meeting room area
- 1 kitchen area

The space has that new feel to it and learners have been able to spread out and enjoy the new space.

The computer room will be moving across in 2017 after the purchase of new computers. Computer programs have been operating in very cramped conditions previously and the new space offers us the opportunity to expand our services. It's a credit to staff and learners who have been able to successfully grow our computer area working within the confines of the current rooms. They have quickly outgrown the space and are eagerly looking forward to the new area.

We thank the Council for their support and the provision of this much needed space. Also a special thanks to Leanne Malcolm who has supported us through this move.



# Asylum Seeker Pathways

Over the last few years we have worked with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, it is recognised that while arriving in Australia may be an exciting new beginning for asylum seekers and most refugees, it can also be challenging and overwhelming. This is because they need to navigate the unfamiliar social and cultural environment of a new country with an unfamiliar processing system, that sometimes prevents them from settling into the new country.

Often with complex and significant needs, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are among the most vulnerable people in our community. This is a result of the traumatic experiences refugees and asylum seekers suffer in their home country, on their journey to Australia, and the challenges they face with accessing the services they need during settlement.

Our community development programs have been fortunate so far to provide skills development programs that were identified as gaps to build skills for employment and the develop English language skills.

We are also placed in a strategic location in central Dandenong that learners can reach from different locations by walking or as they develop their skills to travel by bus or train on our public transport system.

We have been able to achieve most of our successes because of the volunteers who work with us and more importantly, through the funding support received from the City of Greater Dandenong Council and OMAC – Office of Multicultural Affairs and donations we have received.

Asylum Seeker Programs are skills development programs which include:

1. Commercial Cooking Skills
2. Carpentry Skills – Furniture Making and Pallet Furniture
3. English Language Skills
4. Computer Skills
5. Horticulture Skills

With each program there is a community give back component which includes:

1. Free Community Lunch for Asylum Seekers
2. Catering for Neighbourhood House Functions
3. Maintenance of Community Garden
4. Building of Native Bird boxes to protect wildlife from feral cats



# Asylum Seeker Case Study

## Commercial Cooking



Abdulla has been in our Cornerstone cooking program from when it started 3 years ago. Abdulla is very helpful and is always there to lend a hand. Abdulla and his wife arrived to class one day and said they are cooking today and we had a beautiful Afghanistan lunch.

I am Abdulla and I come from Afghanistan. I came to Australia on the 14th July 2013 with my wife and three children. We all came by boat, because in my country there were internal problems which made us face many trials. We found it very difficult to live our day to day life. Since I had small children I thought of leaving my country and come to Australia to live peacefully. At the moment we are happy and quite comfortable here. Australian

government is looking after us very well. We are indeed waiting to get our permanent residency in this country.



Jegardas has been coming to the Cornerstone cooking program for over 1 1/2 years now. He is a fantastic cook and can make some very tasty dishes. Jegardas has taught everyone so much, he has so many cooking skills we all want to learn from him. He loves learning the way we do things here in Australia too. Jegardas is very helpful and is always reliable.

My name is Jegardas. My native land was Sri Lanka. Due to the terrorist troubles in Sri Lanka, I had to leave my country and fly to India. About 20 years I was in India doing various jobs. I got married there and have two daughters. As my long term ambition is to live in Australia and earn more money I left India and came here by boat. I am happy. I'm looked after well by

the community centre at Dandenong and I am also doing various jobs which keep me happy. I like to be busy.



## Everyday English

Elizabeth has been coming to Cornerstone for over a year now. She started off in the cooking classes teaching us her traditions and sharing with us her knowledge of foods and how they are cooked in Sri Lanka. Elizabeth was also keen to see other ways to cook things. Elizabeth then started teaching English to those that wanted some extra help and is still helping every Monday and Thursday.

My name is Elizabeth and I am from Sri Lanka. I was a teacher and a Mediator Trainer attached to a non governmental organisation in Sri Lanka. I enjoy being able to teach again and to help other people to improve their English.

I have a son and a daughter, both of them live here in Australia and they are Australian citizens.

Due to the terrorist problems, they wanted my husband and me to come down to Australia, which we too liked most. Also my husband is an Australian cricket fan, I've left everything and came here on Aged Parental Visa and living happily with my children, awaiting to get suitable jobs.



# Learn Local Awards

The Victorian Learn Local Awards are held annually by the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board to recognise the inspirational efforts of learners, practitioners and training providers in the Learn Local education and training sector.

The Learn Local education and training sector plays a major role in the development of local individuals, local businesses and local communities throughout Victoria. It delivers the skills that support our economy and underpin the inclusiveness of our communities. The Awards are an opportunity to showcase this valuable work. Through the Awards acknowledgement is given to the sector's many contributions and celebrates the success of learners, practitioners and organisations across the State.

## The Rowena Allen Award – Recognising Pre-accredited Learner Excellence

This Award celebrates a significant personal achievement made by a pre-accredited learner. It acknowledges a person who, through taking part in Learn Local pre-accredited training, has made a significant improvement in their life, their career or study prospects. For each pre-accredited learner, there is much to discover about the personal journey on which they have embarked.

Not all learners are entirely clear on what they hope to achieve and often what they learn along the way is what helps them decide where they want to take their further study. For each of the finalists in this award category, the Learn Local experience has been significant and life changing.

**Congratulations** to one of our learners Naryphol Thach for being selected as one of three finalists in this category from across the State. A group of 18 of us attended the awards night to support Nary as she deserves the recognition for the efforts that she has voluntarily put into teaching English to a group of Cambodian Monks. Naryphol a former Cambodian refugee, has developed a life of great purpose by undertaking courses to build her language, technology and life skills – and then passing her knowledge on to a group of local Buddhist monks. Nary says it's never too late to learn and get involved in the community.



She came to Australia in 1990 and settled in Dandenong. She struggled with isolation and with no English language as well as her mother to care for, Nary experienced many difficulties and years of isolation and low self-esteem. But from her first efforts to learn English at Dandenong AMES Australia, Nary has steadily pursued education and knowledge for the past 26 years. At Dandenong Neighbourhood House, Nary has undertaken English as an Additional Language (EAL) Level 2, participated in the Intermediate EAL and Advanced Literacy classes and undertaken a women's leadership program.

## Learn Local Awards - continued

She is now sharing her knowledge — to groups of Buddhist monks visiting from her homeland. The monks stay for about two years, after which they can extend their visa or apply for permanent residency. The monks come to Dandenong Neighbourhood House three days a week to study the English language with Nary and she has seen their English language skills to now be able to hold a simple conversation with others in English.

Since she arrived in Australia, life wasn't easy but she says that she experienced so much kindness from people around me who have supported her to grow.

She now likes to share her knowledge with others who need to learn but have experienced many difficulties too.

Nary said she encourages everyone, especially new arrivals, to have patience and "be resilient". She says that "it is never too late to learn and get involve with your local community." She often says she belongs to this community and she wants to contribute to best of my ability.



Nary feels it is not a favour but an effort to recognise the help and support she received when she came initially as a refugee.

Nary would like to see the world a better place for all, with opportunities for all irrespective of their background, race, colour or religion.

“

Success is also when you have ventured beyond the circle of people who have held you down.

”

# Acknowledgements

Dandenong Neighbourhood House is supported by financial assistance from the Victorian and Australian Governments. We thank all the organisations and individuals who support our work.

## Support in Kind

- Springvale Learning and Activities Centre
- Keysborough Learning Centre
- Springvale Neighbourhood House
- Rowville Neighbourhood Learning Centre
- Noble Park Community Centre
- Hampton Park Community Centre
- Dingley Village Neighbourhood House

## Donations

We thank those people who made donations towards the day-to-day running costs and to the programs and activities of the House. The donations received in 2016 include:

- Magistrates Court of Victoria
- Rotary Club of Dandenong
- City of Greater Dandenong Council
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Cornerstone
- Foodbank
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- Bunnings – Dandenong
- Glen Waverley View Club

## Professional Service Suppliers

The Centre's suppliers are:

- TAF Solutions Pty Ltd – Auditor
- Earle Electricals
- Bunnings – Dandenong
- Officeworks – Dandenong
- Toshiba



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