



# DANDENONG

neighbourhood HOUSE



## ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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# Chairperson's Report

I am pleased to report it has been another great year full of challenge, achievements and growth in the work we are committed to providing to our community.

One of our challenges has been to look at our growth and determine whether, as the Dandenong Neighbourhood House, this name still fits with the work and continued expansion of our Learn Local classes and broader community engagement programs. The outcome was a Board of Governance determination that we need a name which clearly reflects who we are today and into the future. Hence, I am pleased to confirm the change in our name to the Dandenong Neighbourhood Community and Learning Centre. As the change in name only happened just prior to the end of the financial year, we are still working on a design for our new logo, which will be presented at the AGM.

Our Treasurer, Gerard Francis, has been in the role a year now, and we are all grateful for the time and commitment he has put in to improving and enhancing our financial reporting and accountability. You will find the Treasurer's Report on page 13.

Our Board Members have all been involved in sub-committees throughout the year to ensure our compliance and reporting. A special thanks to Secretary, Sandra Ainsworth, who's commitment to the Minutes and review of matters is very much appreciated.

Our Manager, Robyn Coslovich, has achieved another year of hard work, commitment and growth in funding, community work, programs and classes. Robyn put together a staff Leadership Team which has a strong focus on the future direction of the Dandenong Community and Learning Centre and the programs being delivered.

Following the previous year's restructure, staff are now well settled into their positions and our Finance Officer, Jenny Shepherd, has achieved a great deal in developing new reporting systems in concert with Treasurer, Gerard. Our long standing Administrative Officer, Susan Paisley, has worked tirelessly in reorganising and managing all administrative tasks, working closely with our highly valued admin volunteer Carol Campbell, and has streamlined systems and efficiencies in administrative operations.

The Centre now employs 20 teachers who between them run many and varied programs attended by large numbers of disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals and groups who reside across the City of Greater Dandenong.

We are extremely grateful to each one of our funders for the support and encouragement we have received from you over the past year. Without this support none of the classes and programs we provide to the community would be possible:

- The Department of Education & Early Childhood (ACFE)
- The City of Greater Dandenong Council (*Community Support Grant*)
- Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) (*Neighbourhood House Co-ordination Funding*)
- The R E Ross Trust (*Program funding for Offenders*)
- Department of Social Services (*Volunteer Grant*)
- Department of Justice and Regulation (*Project Funding*)
- ACFE (*Digital Literacy for Older Victorians*)
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (Stronger Communities Fund)
- Australian Mens Shed Association

The extra space in Clow Street provided by The City of Greater Dandenong Council was set up last year and is now used to run all our computer programs, as well as providing office space for our administrative staff. It also provides opportunities for a range of programs to be delivered from other rooms through advanced bookings.



**Kathleen West**

# Chairperson's Report

We are proud to have delivered a total of 65,890 Student Contact Hours (SCH) which includes delivery of all training funded through ACFE and other funders. An increase of 25,000 SCHs on the 2015/16 year.

Some highlights for the year include:

- Receipt of a grant from CAIF (*Capacity and Innovation Fund*) to develop a partnership with TAFE in the delivery of their accredited programs by assisting CALD learners to achieve learning outcomes.
- The purchase of a commercial coffee machine, which has enabled us to develop a Barista Program for delivery in 2017/18.
- The purchase of 3D Printing equipment also enabled us to develop a 3D Modelling and Printing program that started in early 2017.
- Completion of the ACFE Digital Literacy for Older Victorians with a total of 456 learners reached across the City of Greater Dandenong. This program was to update the digital technology skills of our Seniors and was conducted in partnership with 5 other Neighbourhood Houses.
- We participated in the Growing Pre-accredited Research Trial, funded by ACFE, to understand why our Indigenous and African communities did not come to the House. Through participation in the research it enabled us to recognise how we needed to encourage both communities to have trainers from their own communities. This resulted in the development of a training program. We were then able to identify community members who would like to be trained up to become teachers for their communities. We are pleased to report the outcome from this research is we now have community members who are starting to run programs for their respective communities.
- The development of a partnership with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) on fire hazards and safety in the homes of our Asylum Seeker Program participants. We also provided representation with the CFA at the Annual NHV Conference on our partnership work.
- Funding received from the Stronger Communities Fund has enabled us to upgrade our computer lab, purchase new equipment for the Community Shed, replace whiteboards and purchase new iPads and 4 TVs for the training rooms.

Our Dandenong Community Shed continues to thrive and has given us the opportunity through funding, to purchase new equipment. A big thank you to our Shed teachers for all their hard work throughout the year. You will find a report on the Community Shed on page 30.

I said at the commencement of my report, it has been a great year, as it has been for one of our teachers, Rabia Nadir who welcomed a baby boy into her family. It is also the first baby for our House, which caused great excitement for everyone. Congratulations Rabia to you and your family.

Another great was the development and implementation of an Employee of the Quarter recognition, especially to reward staff for their hard work, commitment and dedication to the job.

On behalf of the Board of Governance we take this opportunity to thank Robyn, staff and all our very special volunteers who give so much of their precious time, for another extraordinary and successful year. We also take this opportunity to thank Ali Aziz, who took up the challenge, whilst managing his own work load, to learn important aspects of Robyn's role and stood in for her on many occasions throughout the year. Well done, Ali.

I conclude my report having seen through another year of growth in development and income which has worked in concert with our Strategic Plan. Through the commitment and determination of Staff, Volunteers and Board Members we have:

- Enabled people to contribute to and have a choice over their lives
- Maintained sustainable growth and development
- Continued our drive to become well known as a leader and innovator in the community sector
- Strengthened our organisational capacity

Lastly, a big thank you to our Board of Governance Members for another year of dedication in ensuring our organisation operates at peak and complies both legally and ethically in all we do for the individuals and groups in Greater Dandenong we strive to help and support.

**Kathleen West**  
**Chair – Board of Governance**

# Manager's Report

Five years have flown by so quickly and I look back and wonder where has the time gone. Upon reflection we have achieved so much in this time and I ask myself what else can we do. The organisation has grown and has built a solid foundation for us to continue to grow. Do we need to continue to grow and strive to lead effectively in this community? This question is a no-brainer and the answer is inequable, Yes. I do believe that because of what we do and how effectively we do it, we really do make a difference in our community and this community is always changing and evolving and we need to do the same. Each day there is a new challenge, a new opportunity, a new learner who needs help and this is what keeps us all going. This is certainly a sector where your job does not become boring and routine.

As our community changes we need to stay in touch with those changes and we need to be able to change with our community. It is our role to assist our community to make positive changes to their lives, this will not only affect our learners but it will trickle through to their families and their local communities.

Many of our learners are so vulnerable and to see them hold their heads high and smile as they walk into or leave our House is such a satisfying thing and this reinforces that we are on track.

Building and maintaining relationships has become such an important part of my role. Not just within our organisation but also with our funders, other community organisations, the funding partners from the City of Greater Dandenong, the Department of Education and Training, the ACFE Board and staff, Department of Health and Human Services and all of our funders who come from a range of different areas. Without the funds that these agencies give to our organisation we would not be able to continue.

Sustainability for the future is now forming our direction, leading into the future and we are now exploring options to ensure that we are a viable entity into the future. This will be through the building of long and lasting partnerships with other local organisations and working collaboratively with other Neighbourhood Houses in the City of Greater Dandenong and surrounding areas.

I would also like to say thankyou, to our Board of Governance who have been very busy this year and they too have achieved so much. A special thankyou to our Chairperson Kathleen West who does an amazing job and supports myself so much. Also thanks to our Treasurer, Gerard Francis for facilitating the strategic planning process as well as keeping the Board on track to complete our new Strategic Plan. Desally Walliker and Garry Porter have been working with me to review our policies and procedures, this is a mammoth task and they are doing a great job. To Ross Lim and Sandra Ainsworth for all the work you have done this year, Sandra for the completion of our Operational Plan.

Sadly this year we said goodbye to one of our Life Members, Norma Murphy who during her time at the House gave so much and she will be sadly missed.



**Robyn Coslovich**

# Manager's Report

Staff and volunteers at Dandenong Neighbourhood House are without a doubt the most extraordinary bunch of individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty everyday. I thank them sincerely for their hard work and commitment this year. We are a close knit team and work so well together and like any family we have our ups and downs but in the end we can all sit down and share a meal and just get on with it. There are always lots of ups and downs through the year but together we achieve some amazing outcomes. Well done to my team and thank you for your hard work and commitment to your learners and everyone who walks through our door. A special thankyou to Ali Aziz for your loyalty, passion and dedication.

This year saw Dandenong Neighbourhood House awarded the Learn Local Legend Award. Nominated by the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Southern Metropolitan Regional Council. The nomination recognises the outstanding contribution made by Dandenong Neighbourhood House to both our learners and our community. This is an extraordinary achievement and just shows what an extraordinary team of people that I work with and it is both a privilege and an honour to receive this award. Congratulations to everyone for this award.

We can now look to the new year and implementation of a number of new programs some that are innovative, to keep up with the ever changing world of technology. Other programs to fill the gaps in service delivery, that have been identified by our communities. Finally thank you to all our funders and our volunteers without whom we would not survive. You help us all through each day and the learners really do enjoy the things you bring to each group that you work with. Lastly a very warm heart felt thankyou to the City of Greater Dandenong community for your support for the House. Without you we would not be here. We look forward to working with and serving the community for many years to come.

**Robyn Coslovich**  
Manager



# Our Vision and Mission

## Our Vision

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

## Our Mission

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

We are:

- A charitable not-for-profit community service 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 **25** paid staff and approximately **45** volunteers, we deliver **43** different programs and services.

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





# Our Values

## Responsiveness

Flexible in responding to community needs, while being proactive when responding.

## 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 so 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 five 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 Centre
- Springvale Neighbourhood House
- Keysborough Learning Centre
- Noble Park Community Centre
- TRY



***“It’s not hard to  
makes decisions  
once you know what  
your VALUES are”***  
*Roy E. Disney*

# Board of Governance

## Board Members



Chairperson  
Kathleen West

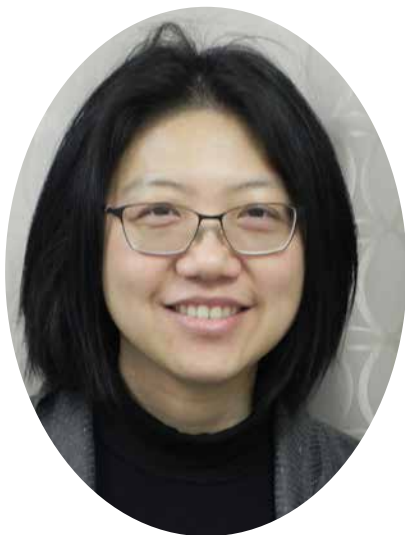


Secretary  
Sandra Ainsworth



Treasurer  
Gerard Francis

## General Members



Rossina Lim



Garry Porter

Desally Walliker  
(Absent)

# Life Members



**Norma Murphy**  
(deceased)



**Dianne Mossenton-Brown**

Sadly this year we said goodbye to Norma who passed away.

Norma commenced volunteering at Dandenong Neighbourhood House upon its inception as an incorporated body in 1989. Prior to this Norma had been an active volunteer of the YWCA under whom Dandenong Neighbourhood House operated.

Norma fulfilled many roles during her long association with the House – President, Secretary, Treasurer and general committee member. Norma was also an active learner in the programs conducted at the House over the years and while Norma was there to learn herself everyone around her also learnt a great deal from her.

However Norma's greatest strength was her wonderful personality and her enormous wisdom. Many of the learners and staff of Dandenong Neighbourhood House benefited from the wisdom that Norma shared with others.

Norma was a vibrant strong lady and she will be sorely missed by all her family and her many friends at Dandenong Neighbourhood House.

## Learner's Stories

### **Meet Rebecca**

Even though Rebecca had only been attending the Mosaic program for one day she was immediately warmed by the conducive and engaging atmosphere at the House, where there was a sense of treating the learners with trust. "... even just walking in the place it's got a really relaxed energy, I've found. And everyone is pretty friendly, there's not many rules but the rules that they do have are pretty standard. So yeah, it's pretty easy going and they're just relaxed".

Rebecca came to DNH through referral from a partner agency and came with a positive attitude to learning. Learning a new art form has had more benefits than just mosaic skills. "Expressing myself creatively, which I always do, I do it at home, but using these hours that I need to do is a chance to do something that I enjoy and express myself".

"I find its good therapy. Getting out emotions and stuff gives me a chance for any stresses that I had during the week, to just forget about it and enjoy myself... Obviously I have to do my program hours. The whole idea behind it for me was, well, it's something that I have to do but I had other options and other places to go but I chose this because at least I'm learning something as well. If it is something that I have to do, then I may as well take advantage of it and learn something, even if it is just creative skills".

"It might not help me at work but it will help me with therapy, dealing with emotions, knowing how to take time out and stuff like that... If there is something I have to do and I want to get it done and get through it, then I'm more likely to turn up if it is something that I'm enjoying especially if I'm learning something new."

Rebecca's feelings reveal how building a positive attitude and good self-esteem helps motivate learners to engage and move forward in their lives.

Despite the adversity Rebecca has faced, her willingness to build a bright future by really making the most of her time with DNH is something to be celebrated.

# Our DNH Team

## Management

- Robyn Coslovich

## Assistant Manager Volunteer Co-ordinator

- Ali Aziz

## Administration and Business Services

- Carol Campbell
- Susan Paisley
- Jenny Shepherd

## Training Support

- Maria Cima

## Teachers

- Atiq Abed
- Ali Aziz
- Rod Bryson
- Greg Burchall
- Maria Cima
- Ayush Gupta
- Raja Gupta
- Marnie Harris
- Ryan Harris
- Robyn Hill
- Michelle Hood
- Sarita Kulkarni
- Donna Mark
- Mystica Perera
- Sharon Ramsay
- Violet Torabi

## Currently on Leave:

- Rabia Nadir
- Diana Lambropoulos

## Volunteers

- Peter Gladman
- Deselene Gnanamuttu
- Sobana Hanif
- Bronwyn Hill
- Shane Hill
- Bozena Kordas
- Janell Neville
- Marie St Anne
- Devi Torpy
- Susan Wilkin



# Treasurer's Report

Dandenong Neighbourhood House has continued with a robust performance for the FY 2017 in a very challenging environment with declining funding from government and affiliated bodies on one hand and ensuring a level of administrative and training stability in administering the programmes of the house. It generated a surplus of \$51,767 in FY17, compared to \$123,859 in FY16.

## **Income & Expenditure**

Income improved by \$43K from 2016 an increase of 7% over last financial against a backdrop where realisable ACFE income dropped by \$41K reflecting a significant change from last year's income streams but this reduction was overcome by a raft of efforts to compensate and provide for growth.

They classify into three broad categories

1. Grant Income avenues: A focussed effort was made to reach out for new grants not availed before contributed 19K over last year
2. Fee for service Income: The house took a targeted approach to improve this area of funding through several new services that added \$43K over FY2016
3. Other Income: Bequests and a clutch of few other donations contributed 17K

Our expenditure made a significant increase of \$115K, more than commensurate to increase in Income. The reasons for increase are:

1. Board approved expenditure
  - Guided by comparative analysis and reasoning, the house approved 35K for remuneration to ensure stability, delivery of services and fair pay for the team in the house
  - \$63k board approved expenditure spent on a 0% surplus basis and equipment grants.
2. The House has begun a process of provisioning with 13K in 2017 for replacement of assets and service related liabilities.

## **Financial Position**

Cash at bank is \$516,503 with net equity at \$358,118 as of 30th June 2017, an increase of 16.90% in equity over last financial year. The houses current financial position is stable and continues to enable us to invest in new programme initiatives and infrastructure to deliver much needed services to the community that we serve in Dandenong. In good leadership and vision that continues to serve the needs of the community I believe lies the sustainability of this wonderful organisation.

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.

**Gerard Francis**  
**Treasurer - Board of Governance**



**Gerard Francis**

# Audited Financial Report

## 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 30th June 2017.

#### Committee Members

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

<b>Sandra Ainsworth</b>	<b>Gerard Francis</b>	<b>Ross Lim</b>
<b>Garry Porter</b>	<b>Desally Walliker</b>	<b>Kathleen West</b>

#### 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 \$51,767.

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



Kathleen West



Gerard Francis

Dated this 13 day of September 2017

# Audited Financial Report

## Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc.

### Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2017

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Miscellaneous income	13,384	2,468	Equipment and Tools	2,159	853
Grants - COGD	80,029	80,322	Hire of Storage Facilities	2,530	969
Grants - ACFE	241,962	282,970	Insurance	787	754
Grants - other	145,530	126,276	Internet	1,000	1,634
Membership fees	30	30	Light and Power	5,153	3,458
Funded enrolment fees - ACFE	21,474	19,321	Long Service Leave Provisions	7,584	(3,062)
Funded enrolment fees - other	5,975	1,703	Meeting Expenses	981	652
Rental income	17,613	19,472	Photocopier Lease & Maintenance	6,375	5,705
Fee for service income	97,862	54,220	Postage	498	588
Donations & bequests	12,841	8,505	Printing and Stationery	5,741	5,016
Interest received	6,658	5,215	Profession Development	1,628	2,505
	<b>\$643,358</b>	<b>\$600,504</b>	Program Expenses - ACFE	18,076	6,027
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			Program Expenses - Other	58,102	32,438
Advertising & promotion	660	2,823	Rate and Taxes	280	285
Affiliation & licences	7,715	5,421	Repairs and Maintenance	1,587	991
Amenities	3,936	3,171	Sundry Expenses	3,367	2,743
Annual Leave Provision	249	723	Superannuation	34,578	30,661
Audit Fees	3,000	2,700	Telephone, mobile and fax	6,080	6,284
Bank Charges	234	256	Time off in lieu provision	3,959	(305)
Cleaning	18	3434	Wages	381,130	331,571
Computer Expenses	1,768	1,190	Waste Disposal	1,842	433
Consultant Services	2,000	2,064	Water	1,245	1,246
Contractors	21,097	19,330	Workcover	4,211	3,706
Depreciation - Leasehold Improvements	2,019	384	<b>Total Comprehensive Surplus</b>	<b>\$51,767</b>	<b>\$123,859</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

# Audited Financial Report

## Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc.

### Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2017

ASSETS	2017	2016
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Petty Cash	300	300
Bendigo Bank Cash Management	268,668	285,499
Bendigo Term Deposit 1	170,083	165,846
BB Cash Management No 2	1,170	2,258
Bendigo Term Deposit 2	76,282	
Trade Debtors	88,204	6,428
	<b>604,707</b>	<b>460,331</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Office Equipment at Cost	4,108	4,108
<b>Less</b> Accumulated Depreciation	(4,108)	(4,108)
Furniture and Fittings at Cost	4,968	4,968
<b>Less</b> Accumulated Depreciation	(4,968)	(4,968)
Leasehold Improvements at Cost	21,895	21,895
<b>Less</b> Accumulated Depreciation	(21,895)	(21,895)
Computers	17,180	17,180
<b>Less</b> Accumulated Depreciation	(17,180)	(17,180)
Leasehold Improvements - Men's Shed	25,543	14,934
<b>Less</b> Accumulated Depreciation	(2,403)	(384)
	<b>23,140</b>	<b>14,550</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>627,847</b>	<b>474,881</b>

LIABILITIES	2017	2016
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Trade Creditors	6,124	5,946
Grants Received in Advance	195,825	136,461
Annual Leave Accrued	5,016	4,768
Superannuation Accrued	(0)	(0)
Leave in Lieu Accrued	4,150	191
Other funds Received in Advance	1,646	
GST Payable	23,177	85
PAYG withholding payable	16,518	11,391
	<b>252,456</b>	<b>158,842</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Long Service Leave Accrued	17,273	9,688
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>269,729</b>	<b>168,530</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>358,118</b>	<b>306,351</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Accumulated Surplus	358,118	306,351
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>358,118</b>	<b>306,351</b>

### Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc.

#### Statement of Changes in Equity

As at 30 June 2017

	Retained Earnings	Total
	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2015	<b>182,492</b>	<b>182,492</b>
Surplus Attributable to Members	123,859	123,859
Balance at 30 June 2016	<b>306,351</b>	<b>306,351</b>
Surplus Attributable to Members	51,767	51,767
Balance at 30 June 2017	<b>358,118</b>	<b>358,118</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements



**Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc.**  
**Cash Flow Statement**  
**Year ended 30 June 2017**

<b>Cash Flows from Operating Activities</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Grant Receipts		526,885	426,485
Funded Enrolment Fees		27,449	21,024
Rental Income		17,613	19,472
Fee for Service Income		16,086	59,371
Donations and Bequests		12,841	8,505
Miscellaneous Income		13,384	2,468
Membership Fees Received		30	30
Payments to suppliers and employees		(547,738)	(504,213)
Interest Received		6,658	5,215
<i>Net cash provided from (used in) operating activities</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>73,208</b>	<b>38,357</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Payments for Plant and Equipment		(10,608)	(14,934)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(10,068)</b>	<b>(14,934)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Proceeds from borrowings	<b>3</b>		0
<i>Net cash provided from (used in) financing activities</i>			0
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash held</b>	<b>4</b>	62,600	23,423
<b>Cash at the beginning of the reporting period</b>		<b>453,903</b>	<b>430,482</b>
<b>Cash at the end of the reporting period</b>		<b>516,503</b>	<b>453,903</b>

**Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc.**

**Notes To The Financial Statements for the Year ended 30 June 2017**

**Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies**

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with the following Australian Accounting Standards:

- AASB 107, Statement of Cash Flows
- AASB 108, Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors
- AASB 1031, Materiality

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

**Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the House commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use. Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

**Employees' Entitlements**

Provisions for employees' entitlements (i.e. annual leave and long service leave) have been made for the liability arising from services rendered by employees to the reporting date at their nominal amount without applying any discount factor to reflect future cash outflow.

*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements*

# Audited Financial Report

## Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. Notes To The Financial Statements for the Year ended 30 June 2017

### Note 2: Reconciliation of Net Cash provided by Operating Activities to Operating Profit

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	51,767	123,859
<b>Adjustment for:</b>		
Depreciation	2,019	384
Changes in Assets and Liabilities		
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	(81,776)	5,151
(Increase)/Decrease in Prepayments		
(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	178	1,491
(Increase)/Decrease in Income Received in Advance	59,364	(63,083)
(Increase)/Decrease in GST payable	23,091	(20,346)
(Increase)/Decrease in Other Payables	18,564	(9,099)
<b>Net Cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>73,207</b>	<b>38,357</b>

### Note 3: Reconciliation of Cash

For the purposes of the Statement of Cash Flows, cash includes cash on hand, in banks and invested in money market instruments. Cash at the end of the reporting period as shown in the Statement of Cash Flows is reconciled to the related items in the statement of financial position as follows:

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Cash at Bank	269,838	287,757
Term Deposit	246,365	165,846
Petty Cash	300	300
<b>Total</b>	<b>516,503</b>	<b>453,903</b>

### Statement by Members of the Committee

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of The Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. as at 30 June 2017 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that The Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

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



Kathleen West - Chairperson



Gerard Francis - Treasurer

Dated this 13 day of September 2017

# Audited Financial Report

## Independent Audit Report To the Members of Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of The Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc., which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30th June, 2017 the statement of profit and loss and comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### The Committee's responsibility for the financial report

The Committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. The Committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as The Committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I have conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the House's preparation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made The Committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

### Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. as at 30th June 2017 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended on that date and complies with Australian Accounting Standards as referred to in Note 1 to the financial statements.

### Basis of accounting and restriction on distribution

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Dandenong Neighbourhood House Inc. to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result the report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Lynne Russon BCom CPA



TAF Solutions Pty Ltd

1 Athol Street  
Mount Waverley 3149

8th September, 2017

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Professional Standards Legislation

# Administration and Business Services



**Susan Paisley**

Administration and Business Services oversees many areas of Dandenong Neighbourhood House including:

- Finance and Payroll
- Administration and Reception
- Learner enrolments and reporting
- Venue Hire

The team works well together as they are committed staff members who strive to make a positive difference to the organisation and the communities with whom we work.

The team continues to pursue efficiency and continuous improvement through streamlining processes. The team is encouraging and supportive of our learners, fellow staff members and our team of volunteers.



**Carol Campbell**

Commencing operation at a second site at 39 Clow Street Dandenong in February 2016 was an exciting opportunity for our teachers and learners alike. The first couple of months saw many trips by the administration team between King Street and Clow Street sites to escort our learners to the new facility. However within a short time 39 Clow Street has become an integral part of the daily operations of our House.

The Neighbourhood House would not be able to operate as efficiently without our team of volunteers. The financial year 2016/2017 has seen many volunteers for short periods of time in our office. The House is also extremely fortunate to have several long term volunteers in the admin team.



**Jenny Shepherd**

Our sincere thanks to Carol Campbell who forms an integral part of our administration team. Without her input and dedication the office would not be able to operate as efficiently as it currently does. Bronwyn Hill and Marie St Ann have joined the team as volunteers and we also value their input.

As we farewell another financial year the team understands that the upcoming year will again hold challenges. However working together as a team, the admin team will assist the Neighbourhood House to go from strength to strength.

**Susan Paisley**  
**Administration Officer**

# Wahines Senior Ladies Group

“Wahine” is a Maori term for “mature woman”. The Wahine’s group has been running for an incredible 30 years. It started through YWCA with 10 members and moved to DNH many years ago. At one point the group was as large as 26 members and the group would hire a coach to have adventures and social engagements across Melbourne. The women are seniors mostly aged over 60. One of the women shared a poignantly, that the numbers of members has slowly dwindled but only because women, who became dear friends, have passed away as the group members aged. These women are really there for each other for life’s ups and downs and even in times of passing. Maree shares, “There were quite a lot of girls here and I enjoyed it very well. We have good conversations about everything, we don’t talk about each other, that’s one thing. I’ve enjoyed it”. Marjorie added, “We discuss things. We discuss the news items, a lot about doctors and our aches and pains as we get older. It’s very helpful and nice to have great friends.”

The depth of connection has really enhanced and even changed the lives of these women for the better. “It’s the matter of socialising, to be out of the house or the routine. I think it is important, mentally and physically...” Susanna

“When it’s all women, it’s more spiritual. You feel more comfortable or better, more connected. Women’s souls go together. I feel connected with other women. These days women are not very connected. We have forgotten this deep inside of ourselves. Work, children, grandchildren, husbands... we forget this deepness.” Joanna

“We don’t talk about it but if you go deeper there is something, a reason we are together, otherwise you will just be doing shopping alone... Sometimes men need to be alone with men, and so yes, it is important.” Susanna

By supporting this group to connect, DNH is facilitating a more cohesive and harmonious society and allowing women from diverse backgrounds to share and develop the language skills and cultural knowledge they need to establish a successful life in the Dandenong community.

“There is always someone that people don’t like, like migrants. It always happens. But you have to be strong. You have to know what you are and what you want. But if you are positive and are willing to work and to do your part and to integrate, and this is the most important.

The first thing that I did, I tried to integrate. And not to be only with my group. And today I’m still the same. I have my friends that speak the language but it is not something where I go there and stay with them all the time, no. You need to be part of everything. And this is important. Otherwise you are never happy. You can’t live two lives. This is what happens with so many migrants” Susanna.



***“I need this, to be with people that speak English because when I stopped working I left that background a little bit and I speak more of my language at home (Greek) and I need to be always part of the English speaking group. I really need to continue with this language because it’s important in order to join groups. This is one of the reasons that I joined the Wahine’s group. And I am really happy here.” - Joanna.***

# Community Development

Community development brings people together to connect, learn and contribute in their local community through social, educational and support activities, using unique community development approaches.

The community development practice 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. Our 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. 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 programs that we are involved in every week, both to involve and give back to the wider community.

## Dandenong Community Work Partnership Program

This partnership aims to run skills development programs building the skills of learners coming to this program to complete a court order programs but along the way learners gain skills for employment and also the opportunity to enrol in further education programs.

The House currently runs a range of programs for this partnerships which includes:

1. Hospitality
2. Community Shed
3. Community Garden
4. Visual Arts
5. ESL Language

The aim of the Community Work programs is for learners to develop skills which support their rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes that reduce the risk of re-offending. Flexible learning provides for childcare and full or part day programs.

A specific local area give-back project that offers benefits to local community organisations offers empowerment to the learners to see the completed product and the appreciation received from the nominated community organisation. A large focus of this initiative is the enhancement of learner's skills, to empower them to change their lives. By working to make these changes new windows of opportunity open for them.

# Community Development

## Disability Programs

Dandenong Neighbourhood House has continued to provide open flexible 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.

During the year, the following programs were delivered:

- **Introduction to Hospitality - Everyday Cooking:** A group of young people all with different disabilities have been attending this program, with the aim of cooking a Community Lunch every Wednesday. Everyone has a job to do ranging from slicing, dicing, cooking, taking orders meal preparation to cleaning and food safety.
- **Introduction to Hospitality - Baking and Decorating:** 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:** The 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.

Other programs that we have delivered for these special groups include Computer Skills, Massage Therapy Basics and Visual Arts.

Disability programs are tailored to meet the needs of the groups and they are designed to maximise the participation of each person enrolled in the program and they also promote community interaction with other groups and people who attend the Neighbourhood House.



# Community Development

## Family Learning Partnerships

Dandenong Neighbourhood House are very excited to be involved for a second year in the Family Learning Partnership Program that is funded by the ACFE (Adult, Community and Further Education) Board. The aim of the program is to develop partnerships with local schools to explore ways of supporting parents to develop confidence and be able to learn with their child and develop their skills enabling them to become involved in the activities of the school.

Dandenong Neighbourhood House is working with a number of schools and approaching a number of schools to discuss the initiative and to discover ways that we can work together.

The Family Learning Partnership is founded on these four core dimensions:

1. Skill development for parents to support their child's learning and development,
2. Skill instruction for parents that can lead to further learning or employment,
3. Learning occurs for children and young people; AND,
4. It is intergenerational: parents and children learn together.

"The earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy and learning practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects."

"By focusing their study on their children and their roles as parents, families can develop skills and understandings about dispositions for learning and early literacy development, and through this become more conscious of their role as children's first and most influential educators.

(page 18. Family Learning Partnerships Literature Review – June 2012. DEECD)

Rosewood Downs Primary School is one of the schools we have been working with providing parents with programs that engage and value education so that they can give back to the school community. These interesting and exciting learning experiences will make a difference to the lives of their children as well as the parents themselves. Programs such as cooking and cake decorating classes to provide skills for the parents to set up their own cupcake stall for the school as a fundraiser to donate the money raised to give back to the school for a new playground. With these sessions we have the CFA working with us to provide home fire safety in the home.

To see the parents engaged, actively participating and enjoying the sessions is really encouraging and we look forward to doing a variety of other sessions in the following year.

**Sharon Ramsay**  
Project Officer



**Sharon Ramsay**



# Community Development

## LEAP – Learner Engagement Activity Program

LEAP is a new initiative introduced by The Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board, to engage students with more flexible pathways in pre-accredited training where longer programs may create barriers for some learners. The programs offered are reduced hours aimed to engage learners and introduce them to other training opportunities.

The programs aim is to engage people of need in the following areas:

- Women (including young mothers, women seeking to re-enter the workforce after considerable time away, who have experienced or are experiencing family violence)
- Those experiencing disadvantaged
- Those from low socio-economic status localities
- Early school leavers
- Low skilled and vulnerable workers
- Indigenous people
- People of culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Young people who are at risk or have already disengaged from community and/or education
- Unemployed /underemployed people
- People with a disability.



**Marnie Harris**

LEAP recognises the role community plays in education and aims to work alongside other community groups to aid and guide new learners to develop meaningful relationships within the community, to build confidence, encourage personal development as well as develop employability skills.

LEAP is a series of short programs to encourage participation for disadvantaged learners. Our teacher, Atiq was the first to run a program under LEAP which was an English and Computers group of 10 CALD learners which has successfully transitioned from a short program of 12 hours into an ACFE program.

Sharon is working with Rosewood Downs Primary School and has been running a series of groups to engage mothers and carers of young children attending the School. The groups so far have been a big hit with group numbers seeing a steady growth over the brief period they have been running.

More exciting things are to come for LEAP over the coming weeks and months with Rod and Atiq working in partnership with Wise Employment to run another two programs under LEAP, What Can I Do for Work? and, Pathways to Employment Online.

In partnership with the Men's Shed and Neami National, a youth mental health organisation, Ryan, will also be running a program with the youth of Neami House to build seating at a newly created Zen garden at the home.

LEAP has been exciting to see the partnerships formed between staff, learners and organisations. It offers a fabulous opportunity for growth at Dandenong Neighbourhood House and I can't wait to see where this journey will take us over the coming months.

**Marnie Harris**  
Project Officer

***“Community development has a long history of innovation and learning from experience.”***  
*Ben Bernanke*

# Community Development

## Community Lunch

Every Monday and 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 2-3 course meal consisting of soup and main or main and dessert, has been planned and everyone is involved.

The smells that fill the house every week draws lots of interest and everyone comes together to talk menus food and any topic that comes up.

The meal is 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.

During the year we have seen more and more community members joining us for lunch. I think our largest meals served was 34.

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



# Community Development

## CFA - Community Fire Authority

On behalf of CFA would like to thank Dandenong Neighbourhood House for allowing our Home fire safety program for being a part of their training and education.

For the past year and half Sharon Ramsay and CFA's Multicultural Liaison officer Nada El-Masri have been working together to spread the key messages of Home fire safety to the multicultural community that have participated in Sharon's cooking class.

After observing the cooking class and how the community cooked, components of Home fire safety were broken down in a course of 8 weeks, each week was a different topic facilitated through cooking with Sharon.

The eight weeks ended with an amazing multicultural cook off, followed by a visit from Dandenong Fire Brigade who presented the community cooks with a brand new fire blanket.



**Sharon and Nada**



Glad to say collective team efforts of both Sharon and Nada have sparked an interest within other communities and community organisations which shows the value of this partnership for all..

This is a great program Sharon and Nada would like to see shared amongst the Neighbourhood houses, but also would like everyone to see the collaboration and passion for others through Sharon and Nada's team work and strong friendship that has been built around culture and people.

Nada said "I wouldn't change a thing with Sharon, she's amazing, the community adore her and the fact she allows a multicultural group to cook "their" food is an amazing approach of acceptance".

For all the hard efforts and work put into this from CFA and Dandenong Neighbourhood house, it was a pleasure to accommodate Sharon and a staff member at their Neighbourhood House Victoria Conference in May 2017. Standing side by side you found Nada and Sharon working their magic behind a CFA and Dandenong Neighbourhood House stand to fellow members about how "they" have worked together and are still working together.

**Nada El-Masri  
Multicultural Liaison Officer - CFA**

***"We aren't looking at changing the ways the multicultural cook, we observe and advise a safer approach to cooking keeping themselves and family safe"***  
**CFA - Nada**

# 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.

The use of partnerships in 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 organisations to utilise their 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 skills development pre-employment programs such as Industry Taster programs proved to be popular areas of training in 2016-2017. The delivery of these programs has been terrifically successful, enabling many members of the community to develop lifelong learning skills. We are very grateful to our staff for supporting the learners to find their wings and fly! We achieved a total of 35,000 SCHs outcome of student contact hours for 2016, we are going from strength to strength.

## Training Programs

- English as a Second Language (Basic through to Advanced);
- Computer Programs (Basic through to Intermediate);
- Landscaping Basics;
- Visual Arts Basics;
- Introduction to Hospitality;
- Pre-employment
- Industry Taster Programs
- Furniture Making Skills

## Vision for the Future

We provide local 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 build on our 3D modelling and printing programs along with the new Introduction to Coding and Robotics. Staff are always keen to implement new programs that are both innovative and cutting edge.

# Community Garden

With Spring just around the corner the Dandenong Community Garden is flourishing, with most of our winter crop being ripe for picking. The pizza oven has had a workout once it was finished and has been serving well. The wider community is beginning to use the garden more regularly.

For the past term, VCAL students have been using the garden regularly to grow their own veggies and herbs whilst learning about horticulture. Meanwhile week to week, the learners in the community garden program continue to engage with and participate in the construction of new elements and maintenance of the space.

There has been a number of learners successfully completing their programs, with some even finding gainful employment with garden 'alumni' as a result of their involvement. With interest from other community groups in sharing the garden coming in, we are looking forward to a busy spring.



**Ayush Gupta**

This year was one spent fixing, tweaking and upgrading different elements of the garden. Along with the pizza oven, we have installed the Hangi though we learned that it was destined for use in Summer when water levels were a little lower.



The greenhouse has been rebuilt with recycled timber that was donated from the Sky Rail projects. We have been planning and designing a lumber drying Kiln that uses a solar collector that we will be building next term to increase our capacity to process salvaged timber for projects in the garden and the workshop. We installed a rainwater tank to catch storm water from the workshop roof, along with strip drains around the place to help with drainage. The compost has been producing great new soil and a new vermi compost bin has been built to accommodate kitchen scraps from the house and create some lovely new worm juice for the garden beds.

As always we welcome new members joining the garden, there is room to share and we have recently added spaces for fruit and ornamental tree cuttings and wood storage spaces for salvaged timber and firewood. This year we will be building upgrading all the raised beds along the back with recycled timber and adding bird netting, as well as completing construction on the solar kiln. Over the next few months we will also be adding a variety of native and/or perennial edible plants around all our fruit trees to move us closer toward a true food forest. With the winter crop due for harvest, germination of seeds and planting of the summer seedlings will begin soon and we invite everyone from the wider community to join us for a new season – or at least for a BBQ with a fresh garden salad.

**Ayush Gupta**  
Teacher

# Community Shed

The Community Shed is now operating 6 days a week Monday to Saturday and we have one evening program running. The Shed offers a safe, friendly and healing environment for its learners who are from a diverse community including learners with a different range of skills and education levels. The Community Shed allows the learners to work on meaningful woodworking projects of their own choices and in the company of each other.

A key focus is to advance the individual's well-being and health and to encourage social inclusion in the community. Each of the programs runs to suit the needs of the groups attending. Some days the Shed operates from 9am to 4pm other days there is a morning and afternoon session for those who preferred a shorter session. Each group is very diverse and they all have a range of needs. This year saw a ladies maintenance group begin, which was a direct result of a discussion that was had at one of our regular morning teas.



**Ryan Harris**

## Monday Chippies

This year has been an exciting one for the community shed, thanks to our generous community. Our local council has begun an environmental initiative of repurposing timber removed from roadworks etc instead of just wood chipping all the timber. This has led to some amazing timber being donated to the Shed, this has included some large timber slabs, which we have been able to use to make some beautiful table tops.

Our Chippies program has helped in all aspects of preparing the timber, from the initial cutting to the final gloss finish. Add to this countless community projects like planter boxes for Myuna Farm, chopping boards for fundraisers and general shed maintenance, it would be safe to say that it's been a very productive year for our Chippies programs.

## Tuesday and Thursday - Open Day

The Community Shed has produced some very intriguing and interesting projects thanks to our amazingly creative learners this year. Each learner works on a project of their choice that they are able to take home at the end of each term.

Every week new projects are started that continue to impress and amaze the learners and staff! In this program, some of the projects completed include the making of penguins, Viking shields, rocking horses and remote-control car ramps. The class couldn't get any more diverse and everyone is always excited to see what the other learners have created.

Our learners have become great friends in this program and it's not uncommon to have full days where someone spends the entire day helping someone else. As a teacher, I am impressed on a daily basis by the characters and friendly nature of all the learners in our open program, it's an amazing environment to work in! If you could call it work, considering the amount of chatting that goes on.

**Ryan Harris**  
**Shed Teacher - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday**

# Community Shed

## Wednesday - Ladies Day

The morning session this year has seen a Ladies group start. This group learns how to use the tools in the Shed to do simple maintenance tasks around the house.

Many of the women in the group live by themselves and wanted to know how to do some simple maintenance or repair jobs in their homes.

These ladies inspire us everyday by their thirst for knowledge and they have formed some great friendships and they enjoy each other's company.



## Friday - Wallara

Every Friday we are lucky enough to welcome two groups of people with a disability from Wallara into the Community Shed. Seniors in the morning and teens in the afternoon. Friday never fails to be a momentous day! Both groups always come in full of motivation and stories to share from their week. The seniors group in the morning have completed some great projects including coffee tables, bi-planes, trucks, cars and even a jewellery box with a hidden compartment (shhh don't tell anyone).

The young guys in the afternoon have really progressed throughout the year, in the beginning most of the guys were very unsure of most power tools and very hesitant to participate, these days I am run off my feet trying to keep up with everybody! I have been told the boys have never enjoyed a woodwork class as much as they do ours! We've built planes, cars, trucks, rockets and even a Simpsons jigsaw puzzle, at the time it seemed a shame to cut it up until we realised how fun it was trying to put it all back together.

## Saturday Chippies

Saturday Chippies learners provided feedback that, by contributing to the Community Shed program, they increased their self-esteem, self-management, well-being, sense of belonging and reduction in risk of re-offending.

They also mentioned that the program gave them a new purpose and direction towards work opportunities and new skills.

Furthermore, the Men's Shed program provides employment opportunity to its teacher as it is an encouragement for me to focus more on further study in the social sector and building up my existing skill and confidence to support the community.

One of the learners improved his woodworking skills and became so determined to develop his carpentry skill through further study in TAFE and seek employment in the construction industry as a carpenter. He also built many beautiful bird boxes, shelves for the shed and encouraged other learners to become a tradie.

**Atiq Abed**  
Teacher



**Atiq Abed**

***“We have all known  
the long loneliness  
and we have found  
that the answer  
is community”***

*Doris Day*

# Digital Literacy for Older Victorians



**Robyn Hill**

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, was 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 Wellsprings for Women.

The program was developed to meet the needs of the learners. The group training sessions were kept small, only 5 to 6 people. 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 throughout the City of Greater Dandenong.

In Dandenong, a Digital Literacy for Older Victorians program has been running in Terms 2 and 3, with emphasis on using their smart phones. Learners bring their own phones and engage in learning through group teaching as well as individual troubleshooting. Increasing confidence in using their own phones and reducing general fear of technology are just some of the positive outcomes of this course.

Things that we have been 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 and 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 and 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, practice time and one-on-one help. Slowly, learners are becoming more familiar and confident with their phones and able to use them for their own purposes.

**Robyn Hill**  
Teacher



# English as a Second Language

## Everyday English

The Everyday English program operates in partnership with Dandenong South Primary School every Tuesday for a period of two hours.

This program offers a fantastic opportunity for mothers who may have otherwise found themselves isolated in the community by allowing mothers to bring their children along to their classes.

This program is very unique and operates as both a classroom and a playgroup. Children are looked after, while mum can sit in the classroom, where she can see her child at all times and even get up and attend to them should they become distressed in any way.

Everyday English is a class that consists of women with varying levels of English, some have little to no English skills and others can speak the English language quite well, there are also different desired outcomes for each of the women, therefore it has been recognised that it is not possible to run classes based around just one topic and in order to keep the women engaged we must adjust to accommodate each individual need. This means working in collaboration with the ladies to find out their needs and topics of interest to them and then offering subject matter based on these needs. Needs usually consist around the following area; learning to read and write the English language, communicating in the English language, how to access medical care and emergency services, telling the time and even working on gaining citizenship.

Teaching this class has been a new experience for me, but one I have enjoyed immensely! It has been great to see the same learners show up week after week and I consider it a huge honour to get to know them and work with them on their English skills.

**Marnie Harris**  
Teacher



**Marnie Harris**

## Learner's Stories

### Meet Oliver

Oliver is from South Sudan, he fled to Egypt and then arrived in Australia as a refugee 10 years ago. Now 30, he came to DNH through a referral from a partner agency and has found himself going from strength to strength through his participation in English programs.

“It improves my writing skills and also it’s a great opportunity to interact with different people as well. It’s a very positive thing. It’s good. It’s good to interact with others. And I’m learning skills... Since I’ve stated coming here, every time I finish the program, I will pick some words that I want to learn how to spell and go home and practice them.

So every week I feel that I am improving my spelling... It gives me a great joy. Before, maybe because I never gave it the time to actually learn. At this stage I just feel like I’m improving. I can see the progress. Before I thought I wasn’t able, the feeling was its just too late and I don’t have time for it, those kind of factors. But now it feels easier.”

Oliver is thinking long-term and has developed a clear sense of a future for himself, hoping to attend TAFE to complete an IT course, with the English programs he is doing now playing an essential role in building his capacity to engage in future learning. “...being here is giving me that confidence and as well practice in spelling so by next year I will be in a much better position”.

Despite the challenges he faces Oliver has many strengths that are supported by DNH. “Thanks to this organisation. It’s a great organisation. I give many thanks to them and I hope they keep continuing and keep going strong. There is people like me that need it.

An organisation like this is really, really helpful...

It’s just a sense of togetherness, the community effort. Everyone from the teacher to the learner, I just feel comfortable and being around in just a good vibe. It’s a positive vibe, encouraging, to benefit each individual as a learner. I believe it is a good place to be”

# English as a Second Language

## ESL – Level 1

In Terms 1 and 2 2017, I taught the ESL Level 1 class at DNH. It took some time for the group to build but by Term 2, we had more consistent attendance and a solid group.

The learners in this class have low level English and a mixture of skill levels and the goal is to build on existing skills and to improve functional English in all four areas: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. Most of the learners in this group are on Workcover and have suffered workplace injuries. They are needing to retrain in the hope of one day re-joining employment and also to fully participate in their communities. Employability skills such as Communication, Teamwork, Learning and Self Management are embedded into the program.

Outcomes for this program include:

- Be able to give basic personal information - written and spoken ( Name, address, family etc)
- Participate in social conversations
- Use English in common community situations Eg. At the shops, making small talk with neighbours etc
- Be able to ask and respond to simple questions with correct grammar
- Be able to read short simple texts for own interest or for practical purposes, increase vocabulary
- Write short simple sentences, fill in forms, writing for social purposes Eg. An email to a friend
- Be able to understand more of what they are hearing. ( New vocabulary).

As said above, a lot of the learners in this group are in quite a bit of physical pain and discomfort due to workplace injuries. This makes even sitting in class and quite difficult for them and it is made clear to them that if they need to stand up from their chairs or stretch or move around, they are encouraged to do so.

Something that I found happening during the term was the learners bonding and recognising their shared experiences are similar. This was something I encouraged, pair work activities, information gap activities where learners have to work together to complete the task. This has led to extra conversational opportunities to work on their speaking and a sense of camaraderie that I believe is an extra benefit that the learners are gaining from this program.

## ESL – Level 2

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

In this program, 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 year, I have witnessed much growth in learners' understanding and English skills, and what has been particularly pleasing is the willingness of every learner to participate, regardless of English proficiency. This, combined with the generous positive feedback received from learners is what makes teaching this group so rewarding. The dynamics in this group 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.



**Robyn Hill**

**Robyn Hill**  
Teacher

# English as a Second Language

## Advanced Literacy

The learners of the Advanced Literacy program held at Clow Street site in Dandenong are a mixed level group of learners from culturally diverse backgrounds. There are: 2 Ethiopians, 3 South Sudanese, 4 Sri Lankans; one each from the Congo and East Timor, an Anglo Indian and a Russian Australian.

Five learners are professionally qualified: a doctor, a lawyer, a web designer, a teacher of history and a bank officer. Two learners have Certificate III in Child Care Services, one is a welder and another is a receptionist at a physiotherapy clinic. Two learners are trained volunteer-tutors and two are musicians.

Even though seven of the learners work part-time they are keen to improve their confidence in speaking in English while improving their grammar, spelling, reading & writing skills. They wish to remain in the program in order to belong to a community environment and continue friendships.

The ways in which learners celebrate and share their culture are: through presentations on cultural practices and by sharing information about festivals and traditions in discussions. They also share food, recipes and remedies. By enrolling in this program the self-confidence of these learners to speak without inhibition and express themselves freely, has immensely improved through interactive language activities.

### **Highlights of the learners' journey:**

- Individual reflections/presentations of their past life and education, the present and the future aspirations of the learners.
- Learners with a higher level of ICT skills, teaching and assisting those with a lower level of skills.
- Learners participated in the International Dress Parade at The Harmony Square:
- Learners volunteered to set up stalls at the CGD Harmony Festival :
- A learner who is a trained volunteer-tutor has successfully completed a Community Facilitator Course.
- Learners together with Deakin University students on placement attended the Biggest Morning Tea at the Springvale Reserve.

Thank you for providing this group with a spacious and well equipped classroom

**Mystica Perera**  
Teacher



**Mystica Perera**

### **A Success Story**

Hanan is a learner from Ethiopia who enrolled in the Advanced Literacy class in Dandenong a year ago. She had completed the Certificate 3 in Childcare and had not been able to get suitable employment.

She enrolled in the program to improve her confidence in speaking and writing in English.

She has found a pathway to work through the Springvale Neighbourhood House, at the -Noble Park Primary School as a childcare worker, while parents learn English.

She is happy to work and continue to remain in this class to further develop her communication skills in English.



*“Learning a language  
is to understand  
others to form  
CONNECTIONS”*

# Hospitality

The Hospitality skills development programs provide learners to participate in a range of hospitality activities that teach the basics of the hospitality industry ranging from everyday cooking, baking and cake making to commercial cookery. Each of our hospitality programs run small events such as community lunches and community morning teas to put their skills into practice.

The baking and cake making programs provides skills and knowledge from the hospitality industry environment with baking, piping, food handling, OHS, following recipes, cake and cupcake decorating using fondant and butter creams. The class learns how to make a variety of cakes, biscuits and cupcakes from Mud cakes, butter cakes, black forest, fruit cakes, lemon meringue cheese cakes to scones and cookies. The next step is from baking to decorating to presentation.

The learners get a chance then go on to sharing what they have learnt to working with and assisting new learners in the program. Photos of items they have baked and made at home are brought in to show each other. To have learners bring in items that they have baked with the skills provided from the program is wonderful to see and great for learners' confidence.

Our baking and decorating program have done a wide range of cake decorating and have worked in different kitchens and gained knowledge of the hospitality field.

The program also conducted the Biggest Morning Tea in which the program made a range of fantastic desserts, slices, cakes, scones and biscuits. The biggest Morning tea fundraiser gave the learners skills and knowledge about organising an event and all the work that goes on behind the scenes.

Wonderful turn out with guests from around Dandenong. This event raised just under \$500.

Our group also went to the local CFA and provided them a morning tea for the support we have had with CFA with our Cooking programs.

The group is also currently working on preparing Christmas decorated cakes for presentation to our partners, staff and valued volunteers and to see the skill and determination they put into completing these cakes is amazing.

**Sharon Ramsay**  
Teacher



**Sharon Ramsay**



**“The heart of hospitality is about creating space for someone to feel, be seen, heard and loved. It’s about declaring your table a safe zone, a place of warmth and nourishment”**

*Shauna Mequist*

# Hospitality

## Introduction to Hospitality

This is a diverse group of learners from all backgrounds who come together to learn the assorted versions of cookery, learning how to place ingredients to achieve various delightful recipes.

Brain storming different ideas from the mystery box options of ingredients we receive from Foodbank to create a 2-3 course meal every Wednesday.

Each learner has a task to complete each week, such as dicing, slicing, mixing, blending, baking, roasting and stewing. Team work is evident when they all work together, self-managing their time, managing cooking times, serving times, cleaning the kitchen and washing/wiping the dishes.

An example menu as follows:

- Vegetable and Lentil Soup with Coconut milk
- Homemade Lasagne
- Garlic Pizza
- Cheesecake served with sticky date pudding

In-house learners, visitors, teachers, staff and community individuals come to enjoy the pleasing meals that are created. The learner's host the public, our community lunch is a great opportunity to meet other people in our local area and connect with a supportive network, only a coin donation needed for delightful meals. Our largest number of meals served for a community lunch has been 48 and these numbers are growing.



**Maria Cima**

**Maria Cima  
Teacher**



## A Learner's Story Meet Summer

Having the opportunity to engage with the community in the kitchen whilst working towards a common goal can have lasting benefits. For the past thirteen months, Summer has been attending Dandenong Neighbourhood House (DNH) to participate in the Community Cookers program enrolled through an agency partnership.

Summer attends the cooking program as well as DNH's Mosaics program and has described the benefits and the challenges she is overcoming. "I suppose my goal here is to get my past behind me. I want to knock out these [hours] really quickly and I want it all behind me." "It's the most motivated I am throughout the week, it's a good break-up [of the week], and it makes me realise I can last the whole day being on my feet."

"Just having that opportunity to rebuild yourself back into the community, this all helps, all these kinds of programmes."

Throughout Summer's time with DNH, her ability to self-reflect and identify areas where her personal development has grown is admirable.

"Coming to community groups, you learn to think about other people and let everyone talk and have their opinions. I guess that's a challenge but at the same time I'm learning as well." "You're actually getting to know yourself because you weren't yourself." Summer has also identified the importance of "just accepting everyone for who they are."

Coming to a program with a group of women who you may not know, in an unfamiliar environment can be daunting, however Summer has expressed the positives of her time with DNH. "You have a laugh and you get to know people. Everyone's pretty open about where we've all come from."

Additionally, "Maria [the teacher] is just awesome, absolutely brilliant, extremely personable and makes you feel really comfortable. Everyone's got a really large, healthy amount of respect for her and we're all here for the same reasons somewhat, obviously different circumstances and everything but I think we all get a lot out of her."

# Hospitality

## Community Cookers

A community based program with referrals coming from a partner agency, engaging a wide diverse group of ladies in a supportive learning environment.

The Introduction to Hospitality, builds skills and teaches basic cookery methods, learning about different styles of cooking, providing our house with smells of wonderful delights. The learners browse through the option of ingredients available, search online, search through recipe books or use their own repertoire to find recipes according to the ingredients accessible.

The ladies undeniably have improved on managing their time with culinary and preparation skills, as assorted recipes require assorted types of cookery. Once the menu is established the ladies work together as a terrific team effort to produce their creations. An array of dicing, mixing, preparing, baking and cookery skills are involved with preparation culinary delights.

Learning a variety of entrée, main and dessert dishes including sauces, soups, salads, how to work assorted ingredients some of which they did not know what they were. A skill they master is how to substitute ingredients, how to use various cooking methods and how to adapt to the ingredients available in the pantry. Ladies have discovered how to make pies, fresh Gnocchi, diverse desserts and delightful mains. In general, there are three courses devised for the menu - (as follows an example)

- Vegetable and Lentil soup with croutons
- Vegetarian Mini Quiches
- Mini Chicken Pot Pies
- Strawberry Crunchie topped Muffins served with ice-cream/cream

The ladies' welcome the in-house attendees, staff, learners and volunteers. Serving other learners who wish to join us for luncheons.

The Dandenong Neighbourhood House hosted a fundraiser event for the Biggest Morning Tea in May this year this was a team effort by all the Hospitality programs, therefore the ladies devised a menu of five finger foods, savoury and sweet.

- Cheese and Bacon Pinwheels
- A range of sandwiches with different fillings
- Chocolate cake pops (blue and yellow)
- Chocolate cupcakes decorating with butter cream and fondant press outs (representing blue and yellow daffodils and teapots)
- Butter cupcakes decorated with butter cream and fondant (representing blue and yellow daffodils and teapots) press outs

In the next term the ladies will be assisting in the Christmas cake decorating with assorted fondants and icing options which will be handed out to partners, staff and volunteers prior to holiday period.

A lovely outcome for all ladies to enjoy as well beautifully presented food, feeding the community in the house subsequently enjoying their own luncheon, as a teacher selecting new ways to cook, engaging the ladies to offer their own life experiences, it has been an inviting challenge, looking forward to more culinary skills and enticing menus.

**Maria Cima**  
Teacher

# Hospitality

## Asylum Seeker Community Lunch

This program is one of our funded skills development programs which was funded by the City of Greater Dandenong. The skills development program builds commercial cookery skills for Refugees and Asylum seekers in a hospitality environment that was not only cooking but English classes and life skills. The cooking was back to basics for some, providing information on fruits and vegetables, what they are and how they are eaten. Back to basics on utensils and equipment from how to use a vegetable peeler to what is an oven. This grouped cooked traditional meals for a Community Lunch for other Refugees and Asylum Seekers to come and meet others, collect food parcels and find out about other services available to them.

Learners that had been in this program from other years have been willing to teach new learners even when no one spoke the same language. This program is very unique in that the lack of language would normally be a barrier however through the use of hand signals and assistance from volunteers and other group members it has all worked out and everyone has understood each other and the learners English language skills improved during the program.

The CFA have also been an integral part of this program teaching the learners and visitors to the community lunch about fire safety in the home and presenting each person in attendance with a fire blanket for use in their own homes. CFA have also brought the fire truck to visit so that the learners can get used to the truck and know that it is not something to be scared of. We thank the CFA for their support with these programs as I am sure this is helping to save lives.

**Sharon Ramsay**  
Teacher



***“ Developing a desire  
to learn is the kindling  
point of all classroom  
achievement”  
(Robert John Meehan)***

# Information Technology

Our digital literacy program saw steady growth over the last year. Dandenong Neighbourhood House (DNH) is proud of its efforts to keep itself abreast with technological changes. To address community and market needs, DNH added following programs to its existing comprehensive digital literacy programs:

- Introduction to 3D printing
- Fun with coding, build animation, game or stories
- Understanding robotics

Our computer skills for beginners and beyond basic computers have been very popular. Our basic computer skills for beginners program focuses on developing essential digital skills. These digital skills have become essential part of our work, leisure and daily lives. This program requires no previous experience or knowledge of computers. Learners are introduced to concepts of word processing, desktop computing, email and searching for information on internet.

Beyond basic computers is designed as a pathway for learners who have finished basic computer skills. This program builds on the content which is covered in the basic program. Concepts of spreadsheets, developing presentations, browsing internet safely and desktop publishing are introduced. Learners were introduced to how internet can be used more effectively and as a tool for learning, support life choices and a mean of social interaction.

Based on feedback and the community need analysis conducted by DNH, numbers of new concepts/topics were introduced to learners. This is part of continuous improvement and making sure our learners are engaged and we meet their needs. These concepts included, learning how to code using Scratch tool, learning how to learn, learning basics of robotics using Lego EV3 kits and learning about cloud computing.

All credit goes to our team who have been instrumental in delivering quality programs. Their efforts resulted in better outcomes for learners. We appreciate the student placements who have made significant contribution to these programs. This year we saw learners from Swinburne University, Chisholm TAFE and other Registered Training Organisations completing their placement at DNH. Our team included our teachers and wonderful volunteers with whose efforts our community benefited so much. Our achievements over the past year have been made possible by the patience and commitment of our volunteers who have supported both the learners and teachers.

We thank each of you for your contribution over the year. :

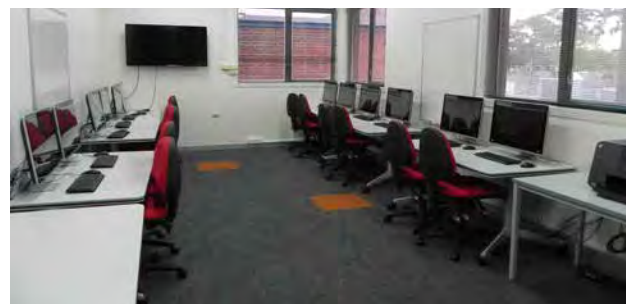
- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| • Muhammad Salman | • Alexandra Pitsikas    |
| • Raza Khan       | • Aya Assem             |
| • Pauline Norris  | • Devi Torpy            |
| • Robert Laida    | • Durshaan Kamalanathan |
| • Sanjay Nand     | • Hakima Ali            |
| • Sobana Hanif    | • Helen Curtis          |
| • Susan Prater    | • Katie Finegan         |



Ali Aziz



Rod Bryson





# Information Technology

DNH made significant investment in furnishing, buying computers and related technology equipment to prepare a computer lab through funding received from the Stronger Communities Fund. This lab can accommodate up to 15 learners and has projector, printer and network facility.

Learners have appreciated new resources and report significant impact on their learning. We are now able to run more classes and can accommodate more learners in a program. DNH recognises the contributions of all organizations towards this initiative. We can very confidently report this investment has provided significant return in short period of time.

Learners have recognised effort by staff and volunteers of DNH in making sure quality of delivery is maintained and they are engaged. As a team we understand that focus on individual needs, providing flexibility to learners, providing a safe, secure and non-judgemental learning environment is key to keep learners engaged.

We do our best to motivate, appreciate progress and recognise effort. Consciously making efforts based on these principles we have seen learners building friendships, supporting each other in their learning and creating an environment which is welcoming and enjoyable.

We also welcome to our IT team Violet Torabi and Robyn Hill who bring with them their own skill sets which the learners will definitely benefit from.

As teachers at DNH we like to thank management, Board of Governance and our sponsors in giving us an opportunity to make a difference to our community.

## Ali Aziz and Rod Bryson. Computer Teachers



## A Learner's Story

### Meet Daniella

In today's modern world, it can be hard to avoid the ever-present necessity to be aware of how to operate and use a computer and the internet.

This can be a daunting task for individuals who have had little to no exposure to computers in the past. Monday's Computer Skills program brings individuals from various backgrounds together to work on their beginner computer skills.

Learners, such as Daniella, are often aspiring to achieve goals.

For Daniella, some of these goals include gaining the skills to develop and deliver a speech to the agency she has been volunteering for. Although this is not where her goals begin and end.

"I personally wanted to socialise with other learners and I just wanted to get some engagement with others."

"I think building the skills and getting some knowledge from it. There's a lot of things that I need to work on and some things I need to get a grapple on and get reassurance."

As an individual with a mild intellectual disability, Daniella values the design of Dandenong Neighbourhood House's approach to learning.

"Coming here you're valued into the group and you're included, you're not excluded."

"I think Rod and Ali give me the encouragement and support that I needed and the feedback and support is really worthwhile."

"The programs have been of great benefit, it's a nice group and everyone has their own goals and I think Rod and Ali provide a very good, strong unit from both of these men and I think I'm getting a lot of benefit out of both of them.

They're giving me the encouragement I need and I think that's important."

# Visual Arts

## Mums N Bubs Program

Enthusiasm showed with the learners, creating our new project for the upcoming Dandenong Show, as we proudly entered a community quilt last year and were thrilled when we won first prize in the category of Something OLD to Something NEW. 49 Preemie Baby Quilts of different blocks were created and given to the Dandenong Hospital and other charities for Mother's Day for new mums.

Dandenong Neighbourhood House engaged in part of the Biggest Morning Tea fund raising project. Our learners designed, cut out, hand embroidered and machine sewed a beautiful quilt which was placed up for auction to raise a total of \$95.00 for the Biggest Morning Tea.

Many library bags, have been created to pass over to children of foster care, an ongoing project happening at this time, creating soft teddy bears for children going through the foster care system to provide some comfort for the children in their time of upheaval. Toiletry bags for women who have suffered from difficult situations or domestic violence, are also been created as they will be



**Maria Cima**



packed with simple necessities like shampoo, hairbrush or toothbrushes.. etc..

Learners have gained various sewing and quilting skills, embroidering by hand and sewing machine, acquiring skills on an overlocker with ease, also enjoying accomplishing their own creativity to generate beautiful designs.

Evidently ladies who have been with us for a while demonstrate

and mentor the fresher learners with their input and guidance to assist them until they learn to further their own knowledgeable skills. 144 Handmade cards were created and donated to the CIKA Foundation for the Royal Children's Hospital.

Generating cloth pads for women in our community for those who cannot afford the basic needs of the necessary items required for their monthly arrivals will be our next ongoing community service over the next 12 months whilst still completing our current projects.

As a teacher with these learners it has been my privilege and honour to establish an in-house friendship and camaraderie sharing my skills and observing some of ladies benefitting from their new found life skills.



**Maria Cima  
Teacher**

# Visual Arts

## Mosaics



**Donna Mark**

This is a female only program and the women really enjoy the artistic experience, as this program brings out their creative talents in a safe and therapeutic environment.

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

All completed projects are donated to aged care facilities or other local community organisations. A variety of materials are used such as stained glass, mirrors, tiles, beads and pebbles. Some of the materials are donated by local businesses such as



National Tiles plus Xcess Glass in Thomastown and also by the public.

We are always seeking other sources and their contributions are invaluable to the program.

Some of the projects completed are tea light candle holders, picture frames, garden spheres, wall murals plus many others.

The program is available to women who have been through very difficult times and this provides them with a safe environment and an opportunity to integrate with others with different experiences and backgrounds.

**Donna Mark**  
Teacher

*“Creativity is giving yourself permission to see things differently”*



## A Learner's Story Meet Rebecca

In attending the Mosaic program Rebecca was immediately warmed by the conducive and engaging atmosphere at the House, where there was a sense of treating the learners with trust.

“...even just walking in the place it's got a really relaxed energy, I've found. And everyone is pretty friendly, there's not many rules but the rules that they do have are pretty standard. So yeah, it's pretty easy going and they're just relaxed”.

Rebecca came to DNH through referral from a partner agency and came with a positive attitude to learning. Learning a new art form has had more benefits than just mosaic skills.

“Expressing myself creatively is something I enjoy. I find its good therapy. Getting out emotions and stuff gives me a chance for any stresses that I had during the week, to just forget about it and enjoy myself...”

Obviously I have to do my program hours. The whole idea behind it for me was, well, it's something that I have to do but I had other options and other places to go but I chose this because at least I'm learning something as well. It might not help me at work but it will help me with therapy, dealing with emotions, knowing how to take time out and stuff like...

If there is something I have to do and I want to get it done and get through it, then I'm more likely to turn up if it is something that I'm enjoying especially if I'm learning something new.”

Rebecca's feelings reveal how building a positive attitude and good self-esteem helps motivate learners to engage and move forward in their lives. Despite the adversity Rebecca has faced, her willingness to build a bright future by really making the most of her time with DNH is something to be celebrated.

# 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 Awards night was held at the Malvern Town Hall on the 31st August, we were up for three awards which has been a truly amazing effort over the past twelve months. We had 15 staff attend the night along with family of Michelle Hood and representatives from the Community Work Partnership Team from the Department of Corrections. Garry Porter from the Board of Governance came along and join everyone in the celebration.

The night was a very formal night and everyone had a wonderful time in celebrating our success. Well done team.



***“Success isn’t about how much money you make; it’s about the difference you make in people’s lives”***

# Learn Local Awards

## In 2017 Dandenong Neighbourhood House was a finalist for:

1. **Excellence in Creating Local Solutions** – this award is about being able to identify and respond to a particular education or training need within a community. This award recognises the key role of Learn Local in creating “local solutions” through strong partnerships with other organisations, business and industry or the community.

DNH Corrections Programs was nominated in this category and it was a great honour to be selected as a finalist. The winner for this section was Paynesville Neighbourhood Centre – congratulations to this organisation for their excellent program.

2. Selection by the Southern Metro ACFE Regional Council to receive the **Learn Local Legend Award for the Southern Metro Region**. This is a unique award in that the ACFE Regional Councils select an organisation from each of the 8 regions across Victoria as an outstanding regional contributor to learners and the network. Learn Locals who are considered to have appropriate growth in learner participation in their ACFE Funded programs and projects and have participated in professional development, information sessions, grant programs and collaboration and knowledge sharing with other Learn Local providers.
3. **The Ro Allen Award – Recognising Pre-accredited Learner Excellence** – Michelle Hood was nominated for this award by DNH to recognise her achievements over the past 2 years. Michelle was selected as a finalist and she deserves all the recognition for the hard work and dedication she has put into making some very big changes to her life and is now a valuable member of our teaching staff. Well done Michelle and congratulations.



# Our Volunteers

## Our Assets

This year saw a number of wonderful people, each with a heart of gold, happily sharing their skills, energy and smiles. We call these people our volunteers.

They chose Dandenong Neighbourhood House (DNH) as a platform to serve our community. They actively share our common vision; “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 the area of community development and services.

Currently we have 18 volunteers with varying skills, availability and levels of engagement. With the help of these volunteers we can better serve our community. Not a day passes by, when we do not hear a compliment, appreciating the work of our volunteers. Indeed DNH is proud of you, our volunteers, and you are an asset to us.

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

I would like to quote one statistic to show appreciation for their work,

“...in 2010 formal volunteering (excluding travel) was worth \$25.4 billion to the Australian economy.” \*

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 career and lives.

Our wonderful team of volunteers this year has included Sharron, Sultana, Twai, Gina, Alimamy, Maritta, Susan, Damika, Yembeh, Bronwyn, Janell, Farida, Nary, Tere and Michelle. A special thank you to Shane and Bronwyn Hill for the work they have done in designing and preparing the Annual Report for printing.

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



**Ali Aziz**

**Ali Aziz**  
**Volunteer Co-ordinator**



**Farida Begum Isa**



**Janell Neville**



**Bronwyn Hill**

# Volunteer Stories

## Susan Wilkin

The volunteers at Dandenong Neighbourhood House (DNH) donate a portion of their time each week to give back to the community and are highly valued members of the House. Volunteers such as Susan play a crucial role in the running and ongoing success of the House and in turn, DNH has greatly benefited Susan.

Whilst looking for paid work, Susan details how “the age factor starts to bite”. Susan participated in a Work for Dole program to increase her skills at the end of the program Susan wanted to stay involved in the House’s activities and saw this as an opportunity to complete volunteer work at DNH and has remained a highly regarded addition for the past 1.5 years.

“I think I’m very lucky to be here and I’m enjoying it and I hope to be here in the future. There are a lot of inspiring people here who have done great work.”

Whilst volunteering, Susan has also had the opportunity to learn new skills by taking part in the various classes available at DNH as a program assistant as well as a learner. Susan has assisted and taken part in cooking programs, computer programs and wood working skills. “It’s a new experience for me...you meet so many different people and hear their stories...I think my life has been enriched by coming here”.



**Susan Wilkin**

## Helen Shaikhan

My name is Helen Shaikhan, I am from Iran. I came to Australia in 2013. During these years living in Melbourne I did a lot of Volunteer work in the cooking fields in different places such as Unho, Dandenong Baptist Church and also with Dandenong Neighbourhood house at Cornerstone . I really like cooking because that is my personality. I will always try to help people and make people happy. Also I am so happy about my family. They help me sometimes when I am going to cook for lots of people.

*“In my role as teacher for the community lunch program I met Helen around 3 years ago and she started in my cooking program for Asylum seekers and Refugees. Our program was to give skills and extra knowledge to learners about cooking, everyday life skills and helping others. Our cooking program helped with English as well by reading labels and recipes and talking to others. Helen was always there with a smile and happy to help.*

*Helen showed us how to make food from her country and talked about her life in Iran. Helen is a fantastic cook, her passion for cooking shows. I love working alongside Helen, I have learnt so much from Helen as well as sharing my knowledge. We are always learning.*

*Helen has volunteered many times with the Dandenong Neighbourhood house from helping decorate Christmas cakes to cooking for morning teas and lunches, wrapping Christmas gifts and Helen is always willing to help out anytime. I always look forward to working alongside Helen, friendly, loving and a wonderful caring lady.”* **Sharon Ramsay**



**Helen Shaikhan**

# Asylum Seeker Programs

## Community Lunch and CFA

This program has been wonderful over the last 12 months providing skills for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. The program was conducted on Monday and Thursday from 10am – 2pm at Cornerstone Church.

This program was very important to the Asylum Seekers and Refugees as it assisted with meals for the program learners and food for them to take home, skills for their day to day lives. Not just cooking we were there for listening as well as helping with everyday questions. To see learners come back from previous years to drop in and say hello and help out for the day, knowing that if they needed to drop in we welcomed them when they returned. Always great to hear what they had been up to and what work they had been doing.

There has been a lot of fear amongst some of the program learners with people in uniform I had organised the local CFA to drop down for our Christmas function and join our group. With help from Nada from the CFA that does our fire training in our cooking programs this became a very successful event. It has also helped to reduce the Asylum Seekers fear of the uniform.



Our learners invited their families to come on the day and enjoy a lunch provided by the learners with help from the CFA cooking and preparing together.

The children had the opportunity to see the fire truck and hop up inside the truck and learn about what the CFA do. The Children thought this was fantastic.

To see the fear be changed with smiles was wonderful.

With all the work we did with CFA they asked Susan and myself to attend the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Conference 2017. This was a fantastic experience to be able to show other Neighbourhood Houses what DNH and CFA had been doing over the last few years working together.

With Steve and Nada from the CFA they have been working with our cooking programs with the Multicultural community as well as in the schools with parents for our family learning partnership program. Nada provides home fire safety as well as working with myself in the kitchen showing kitchen fire safety and fire safety around children. With the support and help from the CFA our cake decorating class has provided the Dandenong CFA with morning tea to say Thank you.

Thank you to the CFA for this wonderful opportunity. We look forward to working with you more in the future.

**Sharon Ramsay**  
Teacher



# Asylum Seeker Programs

## Asylum Seeker Learning Plan/Literacy Language Programs

The English and Computer programs for Asylum Seekers started at the beginning of July and August 2017. This program is based on the needs of the community members who were isolated from the Australian society due to lack of English skills. The purpose of this program is to improve the learners' confidence in social engagement and lead them to further study or employment.

The program focuses on refugee and asylum seekers educating them to gain confidence in understanding the English language, speaking and basic writing skills.

The program started with three learners and currently we have seven learners in the ASLP. They show a lot of enthusiasm during class and talk positively in the community which encouraged others to join too.

We also do a range of practical activities, such as classroom questioning and friendly conversations, group work / role plays to familiarise the new settlers with the Australian culture and social system. For example, they learn how to access to public transports, how to access to legal, social welfare and medical services if required, how to search for their ideal job and apply for it and about the education system in Australia.

As I can communicate in Dari, Hazaragi, Persian and Urdu languages, it has helped the learners to settle in and feel comfortable. They gained confidence in both writing and speaking.

**Atiq Abed  
Teacher**



## Success Story

One of the learners who has physical disabilities, stated that despite living in another suburb, he tries to be in the program every day as he found it very helpful and he is able to understand English language better than before. This learner brought another two learners to the program and they all mentioned that they will focus on further study in the future.

Another learner said that he was feeling distressed and depressed most of the times before coming to this program as he was alone and now he found some friends here.

“Now we go out together and help each other and I am happy to be in this program and would like to participate in any other programs if possible”.



***“Each day is a new day, a new opportunity to work towards making your life the way you want it”***  
*(Josie Cluney)*

# Learner Stories

## David's Story

27 years ago was a very different time in the age of computers. It was a time where David had some exposure to them on a basic level, however the internet and programmes like Microsoft Word and Excel had not been created. It was 1990 when David had last used a computer until he commenced the beginners Computer Skills class with Dandenong Neighbourhood House two years ago.

From a limited understanding of these foreign machines, David has made incredible progress with his ability to utilise the computer for personal and professional use.

During a period of unemployment, David worked with the Salvation Army to produce a resume and Cover Letter, this is where gaps in his computer literacy began to surface. "Because I couldn't use the computer it made it a bit hard. Because [the Salvation Army teacher] was going so quick there was no way I could follow and I just thought I must learn to use the computer going forward. Once I was looking to get back into the workforce, it was something I needed."

In the last 18 months, David has started his own business but continues his attendance at every Monday's class for a variety of reasons. "Just generally week to week I have notes on problems that have arisen during the work week, with the computer.

Probably for the last year, I've had my own little questions and it's always good to know that I only have to wait until Monday to get an answer."

Additionally, "this program has given me the opportunity to go at my own pace and be face to face with someone which I learn better by."

According to David, Dandenong Neighbourhood House is "friendly, it's low key and it's paced according to each person's needs."

"It gives me a bit of structure in my week actually, having Monday morning gets me going during the week, gives me motivation and I live alone so it's nice to meet some strangers and you get to chat."

## Sam's Story

Sam is a learner in his 20s in the Chippies program in the Community Shed. The program gives learners an opportunity to develop wood work skills. As the learners come to attend this program through referral from a partner agency there is a rule around not using power tools. While this could be seen as a problem, the learners actually gain new skills by having to create everything by hand, using hand-tools.

Sam is positive about the program, "You learn things that you never knew before... it's giving me skills I never had... At the moment we are making some tables and benchtops and stools." Sam is part of a team working with some rare pieces of swamp mahogany to make use of wood that would otherwise be wood chipped by the local council.

Previously he has worked as a motor mechanic but he appreciates the difference between mechanics and woodwork, "One is mechanical and working with metals, this is a bit more fragile. You've got to take your time."

When asked if he feels it will help in the future he shared, "Yeah definitely, making tables and stuff, keeps yourself entertained... It's handy, I can do it on the weekend, sell some tables or chairs."

## Melissa's Story

Melissa has been attending both the Mosaics program and the Mums n Bubs programs since the beginning of the year. In the mosaics program Melissa has learned to use the art form to create special pieces such as jewellery boxes and in the Mums n Bubs program she is involved in making quilts for premature babies, angel gowns for stillborn babies and shower bags for women and children who are refugees.

She came to DNH on a through an agency partnership and to her surprise coming to DNH has given her more meaning and purpose than she first thought possible. "It makes you feel like you're giving something back. I like doing it. In the mosaic program, the jewellery boxes I will get to donate to people in need, the tile artwork that you do gets donated to other places, like nursing homes, and it brightens things up for people... It helps you learn."

With the sewing machine I looked at and went "Oh my god, I would only ever hand-sew something". I would either throw it out or give it to mum to fix, but now I've actually got my own sewing machine. So it has been really good. I've actually made a friend here which has been good, because I lost all my friends through my other partner".

Importantly, Melissa has found that she was sensitive about being judged because of her background, but she feels accepted and has found the staff at DNH to be welcoming which reflects the ways in which the staff try to promote inclusion and empowerment. "All the staff are really nice. Just because past is checked they don't look down their nose at you. They're really nice I think. People look at you, because they don't know what you've made mistakes and immediately look down at you. But they don't here. They've been really good ... It gets me out of the house, and it does motivate me more. It puts me back in to the different social atmosphere than what I was stuck in when I got in trouble. The teachers give you a lot of praise as well. I was in a relationship where he ran me right down and my negativity about myself was horrible."

## Raj's Story

Raj is a refugee from Sri Lanka and has been attending DNH for 5 months. He explained it's hard to learn English when the teacher speaks English because he doesn't understand it at first. But he feels it is getting easier and the teacher is nice. He explained that when the teacher speaks in English, he understands more now.

He only spoke Tamil when he came to Australia. He said it took around 1 year of being here for him to feel that he could start to understand English. Coming to DNH makes him feel "very, very, good. My life is very good... Improve my English. I understand more, very good, writing and listening and speaking... Very good".

*All Learner and Volunteer Stories  
were written and produced by  
**Aisha Jakszewicz and Jenna Kruss.***

*Thank you for helping  
our learners and volunteers  
to share their journey.*

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## Support in Kind

- Dingley Village Neighbourhood House
- Hampton Park Community Centre
- Keysborough Learning Centre
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- Springvale Learning and Activities Centre
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We thank those people who made donations towards our day-to-day running costs and to the programs and activities of the House. The donations received in 2017 include:

- Magistrates Court of Victoria
- Cornerstone
- Foodbank
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- Bunnings - Dandenong
- CFA - Country Fire Authority

## Professional Service Suppliers

The House suppliers are:

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



*"The encouragement that teachers have given me has been unbelievable. They do build up your self-esteem. You sit there going "I can't do that" and they go "yes you can, have a go".*

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**For more information, check our website,  
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*Connecting our Community*

**Designed by Shane Hill**

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