



Annual Report

July 2023 – June 2024



Acknowledgment

Watsonia Neighbourhood House acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as traditional owners of this land and we welcome all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to our centre.



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About Watsonia Neighbourhood House

Watsonia Neighbourhood House has been bringing local people together since 1990. We are a grassroots, not-for-profit incorporated association and registered charity. We build capacity in our community by providing resources, services, safe spaces and opportunities that empower individuals and groups, enhance skills and knowledge, foster community engagement and participation, provide support and advocacy, and create a sense of belonging.

We deliver inclusive social, educational and support activities to families and people of all ages, as well as vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. We also provide food relief, free tax preparation service, free child car restraint fittings, a volunteer program, weekly community lunches, daily drop-in sessions, access to free Wi-Fi and laundry facilities, device/tablet loaning and referral pathways to other professional supports. We have a community garden that is open to the public all year round.

Watsonia Neighbourhood House is governed by a volunteer Committee of Governance and run by paid staff with assistance from volunteers.

The vision for Watsonia Neighbourhood House

Our Vision

An inclusive, connected community that works together to create a healthier, fairer and more sustainable future.

Our Mission

Watsonia Neighbourhood House is a safe, welcoming and inclusive community where strengths are cultivated, lifelong learning and sharing is fostered, and people are empowered to thrive.

Our Core values

The core values that inform our work are:



Strengths-based community development framework

We operate on a strengths-based community development model of practice. We bring people together, harness existing strengths and develop our community’s capacity to identify and address common issues and priorities. We support our community to be resilient and connected through social, educational, recreational and support activities.

Community development is about enabling 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. Community development practice is about doing with, rather than doing for.

Our Key Strategic Directions and focus areas



Key direction 1: Building community resilience and connections

- Create opportunities for community participation and connection
- Provide skills development and capacity building opportunities
- Support health and well being
- Encourage greater inclusion and social cohesion in our community
- Empower community to address issues and priorities
- Create a safe and welcoming place



Key direction 2: Environmental stewardship

- Embed responsible use of resource and sustainable practices
- Provide education relating to environmentally sustainable practices for the community
- Respecting and promoting traditional custodianship
- Provide opportunities for individuals to connect with nature



Key direction 3: Organisational capacity and sustainability

- Be a responsible and equitable employer, providing a satisfying working environment
- Formalise professional development and succession planning for the sustainability of the organisation
- Encourage a positive and inclusive organisational culture



Key direction 4: Partnerships

- Establish new strategic partnerships
- Strengthen our existing partnerships



Key direction 5: Innovation and continuous improvement

- Embed continuous improvement and best practice across the organisation
- Capture, measure and evaluate the impact of our work

A year in pictures

Being part of the Watsonia Neighbourhood House community feels warm, welcoming, and fulfilling. It's a place where your presence matters, and you're encouraged to share your skills and ideas. There's a strong sense of camaraderie, with diverse activities and opportunities to connect, learn, and grow. Above all, it's a space where everyone feels valued, supported, and truly part of something meaningful.







President's report

Welcome to the Watsonia Neighbourhood House Annual Report for 2023 to 2024.

We've had great success with grant applications this year, and I'd like to thank our amazing Manager and resident Grant-Writer Extraordinaire – Lucie Holden, for her hard work. I'd also like to thank Banyule City Council, the Sidney Myer Fund, and North East Link Community Fund for bringing several projects to life:

- Banyule Community Grant (Men's Social Connection Group) \$9987
- Banyule Age Friendly Grant (Christmas in July lunch) \$518
- Banyule Council Environment Grant (edible garden project) \$9,769
- Banyule Council Community Grant – Equipment (for community and edible garden) \$3,293
- Supporting Stronger Communities Grant from Sidney Myer Fund (Watsonia After Dark project) \$10,000
- North East Link Community Fund (Social inclusion activities in our community garden and some garden equipment) \$10,000
- Banyule Council Age Friendly Grant (Movie Matinees during Seniors Festival) \$1,500
- Banyule Council Christmas celebration \$300
- Banyule Council equipment grant for kitchen \$1,749 – new pans, pots, appliances used for community lunches and meal sharing.

Earlier this year, the Watsonia Neighbourhood House team focussed our advocacy efforts on supporting the Voice to Parliament, which was closely aligned with our values and strategic priorities. The Committee of Governance made a public statement in support of the Voice, and our team assisted community members to access quality information in the lead up to the vote. We were saddened with the result, although it was heartening to see such strong support across our community.

This year, the team placed significant focus on skill development, and building our capacity to meet the needs of our community. In addition to our usual activities such as First Aid and CPR training:

- Lucie, Shannon and Ross are now certified in providing Mental Health First Aid
- Tassia and Lucie attended training about leveraging online tools to access demographic statistics which is essential for our strategic planning and funding application activities.
- Tassia participated in a North East Neighbourhood House Network Community of Practice for Community Development Workers which was a great opportunity to connect with other organisations and explore opportunities for collaboration
- Tassia also attended Cyber Security training, which will assist our organisation to put a greater emphasis on cyber security
- Lucie was able to develop skills in Conflict Resolution by Negotiation; and
- We also leveraged our existing staff knowledge and experience to build skills throughout the team when Lucie led a group of staff and students through a Grant Writing training session.

We are lucky to have a skilled and dedicated Committee of Governance, and I'd like to thank all our Committee members for their valuable contributions this year. A very big thanks also to Lucie and the WNH team for their wonderful work this year. Your work creates opportunities for community members to meet new friends, learn new skills and feel more connected. Congratulations on another action-packed year!

Finally, thank you to our partners for your continued support this year. Your contribution has enormous impact on the lives of people in our community.

Sally O'Meara

President



Manager's report

This year our local community has experienced high levels of disruption and environmental impacts with the commencement of North East Link construction. We remain committed to supporting our community through a range of inclusive and empowering initiatives, advocacy for better outcomes around local issues, and protection of our natural spaces. As I look back on the past year, I am proud of what we have achieved together.

We have focused on building community resilience and connections through our social inclusion activities. From the walking group, fitness classes, book club, friendship groups, community meals, events, and many creative activities, we continue to deliver safe and inclusive spaces where everyone is welcome.

Collaboration has been at the heart of our work. Through strategic Partnerships, we have expanded our reach and resources. Our partnership with Banyule Council and Banyule Youth Services has been particularly valuable, allowing us to participate in local events such as Eco Fest and Youth Fest. We have delivered social inclusion initiatives in partnership with other local organisations, such as Bundoora Bowls Club, Sustainable Macleod, Buna Community Garden. We have hosted classes of students from Concord school in a variety of activities and applied for grants in partnership with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, Mind Australia, Olympic Neighbourhood House and Greenhills Neighbourhood House.

Our commitment to Delivering on Projects has seen exciting developments. The Edible Garden (funded by a Banyule Council Environment Grant) is flourishing as a shared space for learning and growing fresh produce. The Watsonia After Dark initiative has brought even more activity to our centre during the evenings through workshops and classes. Our series of pop-up events in adjacent suburbs have engaged new participants and provided social inclusion activation in other community spaces.

I would like to thank to our incredible team of staff and volunteers. Their dedication and commitment to our community truly make a difference in the lives of so many. Thank you for your enthusiasm in sharing your skills and passions. Together, we're building a stronger, more connected community, and I feel privileged to work alongside each of you.

And finally on a really personal note, I want to add how much I find immense joy and fulfillment in my role here at Watsonia Neighbourhood House. Every day presents an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to the community in meaningful ways. The diverse projects and initiatives we undertake, and the exceptional people I work with, make this job truly rewarding. I am constantly inspired by those around me and I feel fortunate to be part of such a vibrant community.

Lucie Holden
Manager

Highlights

Boomerang Bag Group

This year our industrious and committed volunteers have made 1092 items, shopping bags, produce bags, Santa sacks, draught stoppers and wheat packs.

We have supplied the food share at Greenhills Neighbourhood House with produce and shopping bags. In addition we have supplied op shops in Watsonia, Macleod, and Rosanna with shopping bags in return for donations of fabric which they are not able to sell. We are very sorry to see the Fruit and Vegetable shop in Watsonia close. They were the first outlet for our Boomerang Bags and always welcomed us.

This year we have broadened our scope to make more items such as produce bags using the Watsonia Neighbourhood House label, particularly for items which are intended to be kept and reused rather than returned. This might also give us more opportunities to support other community groups.

This year we have received great donations of fabric and an excellent overlocker. We continue to receive essential and generous support and cooperation from Watsonia Neighbourhood House.

Valerie Gaskett

Co-facilitator,
Boomerang Bag Sewing Group



792
Shopping bags
179
Produce bags
120
Santa sacks
2
Laundry bags





Pop Up Neighbourhood House Project

In November 2022 we were thrilled to receive a grant from the Banyule City Council Community Grants Fund. This generous grant enabled us to bring to life a new idea to take our programs beyond the confines of our premises and into the community. This project delivered pop-up mini events, workshops, and activities in diverse settings within the suburbs that surround our neighbourhood house, all designed to enrich the community experience. From sustainable living skills workshops that empower individuals to lead more environmentally conscious lives to craft and art-based activities which fostered creativity and provided opportunities for meaningful social connections.

We not only provided new locations for our programs and extended our reach into the community, we forged new partnerships and collaborations with community organisations and local businesses. We established programs in locations such as Watsonia Wine Bar, Buna Community Garden, Jets Studio, Bundoora Bowling Club, and in local parks. Our connections continue to expand even after the project concludes.

Highlights

Celebrations and Community Events

Throughout the year, we have brought the community together through a series of vibrant and inclusive celebrations and events, including Halloween, Harmony Day, International Women's Day, Neighbourhood House Week, Reconciliation Week, Christmas in July, Easter, Winter Solstice, and Seniors Festival. Each occasion offered a unique opportunity for participants to connect, learn, and celebrate the rich diversity and shared values of our community. These events serve as wonderful opportunities to foster understanding for others and nurture a sense of belonging for in our local community.



Banyule Charity Knitting Group

The Banyule Charity Knitting Group continues to meet at Watsonia Neighbourhood House once a month. The group creates children's jumpers, beanies, scarves and cowls, fingerless mitts, rugs (knitted and crochet) and baby clothes like hats, booties and cardigans.

The items are donated to a range of charities including St Mary's House of Welcome, Big Group Hugs Treasured babies, Northern Health, Australians Knitting for War Affected Kids.

Each month members brings along what they have produced at home, we allocate the charity to while it will be donated at our meetings.

We collect a small cash donation at each meeting which in turn has been given to the Melbourne based Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

We have received donations of knitting fibre from various sources over the year, which has been distributed amongst the group to then go on to produce wonderful items for donation.

Lynne McHutchinson

Facilitator,
Banyule Charity Knitting Group





sustainable WATSONIA

Sustainable Watsonia is a series of initiatives aimed at building a more connected and resilient community where people are empowered, and the environment is safeguarded. This year, we transformed an underutilised space at the front of Watsonia Neighbourhood House into a thriving edible garden. With the support of passionate volunteers during multiple working bees, we cleared the area using a mini-excavator to remove existing plants and invasive weeds. We then built the new garden beds using a mix of branches, leaves, composted organic matter, horse manure generously donated by the North Eastern Pony Club in Viewbank, and a premium soil blend from Bulleen Art and Garden. After topping it off with a thick layer of mulch, we sowed a variety of legume and bean seeds to naturally enrich the soil with nitrogen as the beds settled. Now, the garden is flourishing with its first crop of leafy greens, herbs, and vegetables.

Additionally, we installed an accessible library of sustainability resources, featuring a seed bank, informative pamphlets, and books that the community can borrow from and contribute to. This initiative was made possible through a valued partnership with Banyule Men's Shed, who designed and constructed the library's beautiful shell.

Community value



We provided in excess of \$944,000 of value to the community for 2023. We improved quality of life through social connection valued at \$554,304. This is based on data provided through Neighbourhood House Survey 2023.

36 volunteers supported us with 70 hours each week. Valued at \$172,702



Emergency relief provided to vulnerable families valued at \$62,840



38 free tax returns for low income households

Our House is used by other groups and organisations for 276 hours per month



276 people visit us each week

Our House is in active use for 51 hours per week





Our volunteer board members spend 48 hours per month on governance



We provide \$3.28 value to community for every \$1 of income



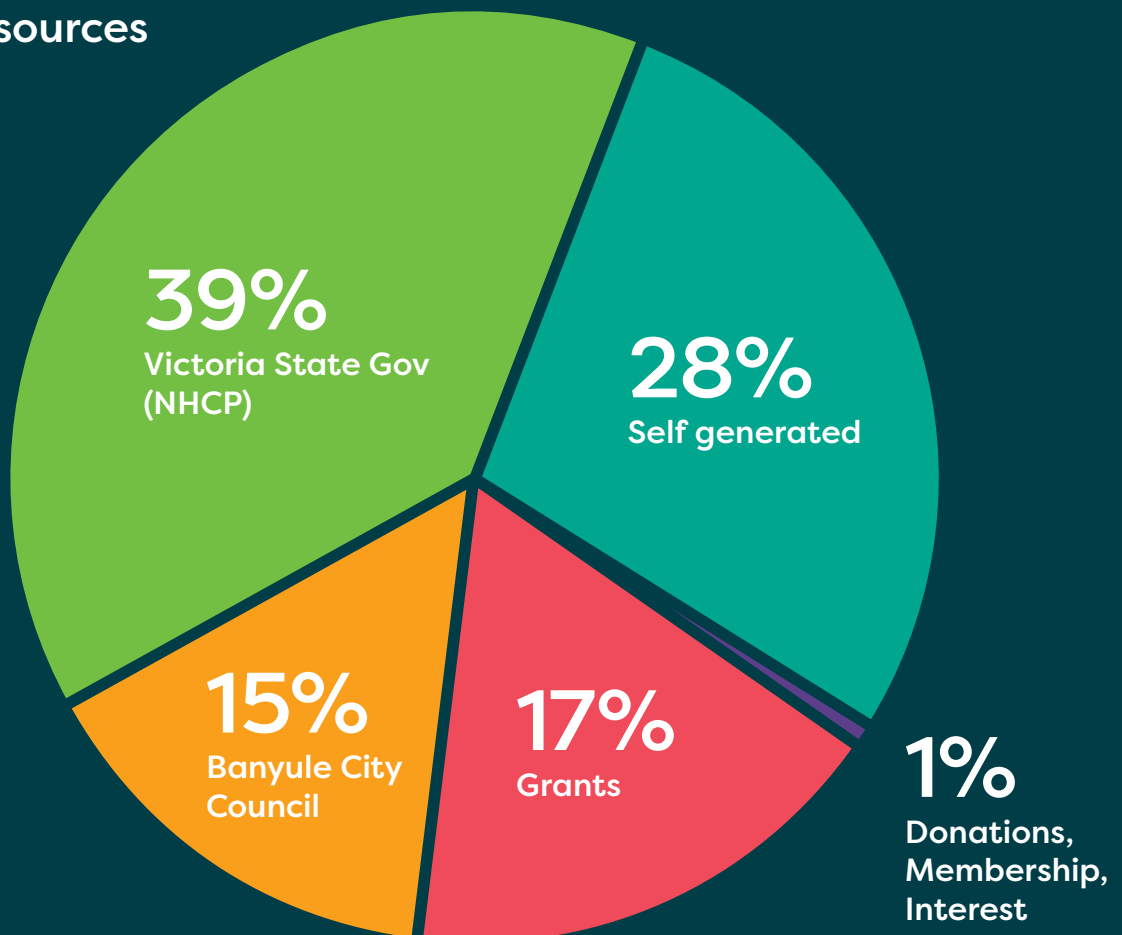
We made 10 funding applications, and secured \$47,116 in grants

We provide \$430.64 value to the community for every hour the neighbourhood house is in use



3 part time staff members work a total of 63 hours per week

Income sources



Treasurer's report

The Watsonia Neighbourhood House has recorded a net operating profit for six out of the last nine years. This year we did not make an operating profit as we had predetermined and budgeted to lower our accumulated financial reserves and record a substantial loss. It was anticipated that we would use some of our accumulated reserves to complete important projects and restructure our staffing requirements to deliver new programs and projects. The Gambling Harm Prevention Program and the Nook Project were examples of this extra expenditure.

The Victoria State Government Department of Families Fairness and Housing and Banyule City Council provided nearly 50% of our total income this year. We continue to be extremely grateful to these two entities for their valuable support which enables us to implement important programs. These two entities provide a stable and reliable source of income although we always experience some anxiety as yearly budgets are prepared. The House generates income of its own, mainly through room hire, although additional income from fees, activities, donations and membership.

The variable each year is the Grants income we receive. Lucie Holden is very skilled at writing grant submissions which has enabled us to source significant extra income from Banyule City Council and the State and Federal Governments. There was also a Grant from Sidney Myer Trust to support stronger communities.

The list is extensive with Banyule's Age Friendly Grants, Environmental Grant (Edible Garden), Community Garden Grant and the Kitchen equipment grant all contributing additional income in this financial year. The State Government contributed a further \$10,000 as the grant named the North East Link Community Fund. The Federal Government, through Kate Thwaites also provided grant money. We are extremely grateful for this additional funding and thank Lucie in particular and the staff for making

the time-consuming submissions and implementing the programs so effectively.

The only downside with this additional income is that it completely destroys our carefully planned budgets. This financial year we had budgeted for a loss of \$15,413. The Grants funding had reduced this loss to a far less significant figure of \$4,399. A nice problem to have!

This year again our budget has been affected with higher utility and insurance charges. In trying to assist disadvantaged families the food relief provided has risen to much higher levels. Finally, we have had some increases in employment expenses as the normal programs resume and new projects and innovations have been introduced.

Income for the year came in at \$246,178 and total expenses came in at \$250,576. This resulted in a net loss of \$4,399 which lowered our accumulated funds from \$76,183 to \$72,536.

Once again, I would like to thank all the Board members, old and new, for continuing to be a caring, cohesive and supportive group. Thanks to Lucie Holden for her valued leadership and strong guidance in budget preparation. I would like to thank Evan Butterworth for providing regular financial updates and putting together the end of year financial figures.

I would like to thank Tassia and Kylie for the assistance they provide to Lucie and the House. They have made a valuable contribution to this year's operations.

I am once again pleased to report that the Watsonia Neighbourhood House remains in a strong and stable financial position.



Bob Regan

Watsonia Neighbourhood Treasurer
2023–2024

Balance sheet

as at 30 June 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	110,820	138,930
Cash on Hand	0	1,199
Accounts Receivable	11,225	5,535
Prepayments	1,620	1,553
Total current assets	123,665	147,217
Non-current assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment at Cost	26,772	26,772
Less Provision for Depreciation	-26,722	-26,772
Total Non-Current Assets	0	0
Total Assets	123,665	147,217
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Trade & Other Creditors	3,748	2,238
ATO – GST & PAYGW Payable	4,510	4,300
Grants received in advance	16,763	33,146
Superannuation payable	0	0
Provision for annual leave	11,155	17,642
Provision for long service leave	14,953	12,956
Total Liabilities	51,129	70,282
NET ASSETS	72,536	76,935
Equity		
Accumulated Funds	72,536	76,935
	72,536	76,935

Income & expenditure statement

as at 30 June 2024

INCOME	2024	2023
	\$	\$
DHS NHCP Funding	96,889	93,718
City of Banyule — Neighbourhood House	36,470	35,000
Program Specific Grants	42,046	101,268
Fees Income	19,595	16,245
Group Income	2,027	2,205
Room Hire	47,094	36,675
Donations	968	1,382
Membership Fees	120	120
Interest Income	969	950
Total Income	246,178	287,563
EXPENDITURE		
Advertising & Marketing	1,100	2,370
Auditing Fees	1,800	1,700
Annual Leave & LSL Accrual	-1,708	2,876
Bank Fees	323	303
Bookkeeping Fees	6,300	6,000
Computer Expenses	3,754	5,606
Course & Group Resources	1,701	724
Electricity, Gas & Water	3,149	3,053
Food Relief Provided	4,583	3,912
House Maintenance	706	717
House Supplies	1,402	1,185
Insurance	1,701	1,879
Office Supplies	496	1,143
Project Specific Expenses	7,284	44,052
Rent Expense	1,797	1,600
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	906	1,839
Staff Training	268	1,485
Subscriptions	1,211	1,880
Superannuation	19,163	19,056
Telephone & Internet	1,385	2,088
Wages & Salaries	190,100	194,467
Workers Compensation	3,157	2,425
Total Expenditure	250,576	300,360
Net Surplus/(Deficit) For the Period	-4,399	-12,798

Statement by Committee

In the opinion of the Members of the Committee of the Association,

1. The accompanying revenue statement is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the Association's income for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.
2. The accompanying balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs for the Association for the financial year ended 30 June 2024.
3. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Association can meet its debts as and when they fall due.

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



Bob Regan
Treasurer



Sally O'Meara
President

Dated this 27 October 2024

Our supporters

We would like to thank our supporters;



Banyule City Council for lease of our premises, annual funding, access to grants and working in partnership on projects and service delivery.



Victoria State Government for our recurrent Neighbourhood House Coordination Funding.



Australian Government

Federal Government and Kate Thwaites MP for access to grants and her ongoing support.



North East Neighbourhood House Network and Julie Johnston for support, training and opportunities to collaborate with other Member houses.



Food Collective through Diamond Valley Community Support, Greenhills Neighbourhood House and Reservoir Neighbourhood House for supporting us to source food and other emergency supplies for our Community Cupboard.

Our volunteers

Our fabulous team of volunteers who support us with daily tasks such as cleaning, gardening, social group facilitation, and cooking for community meals. Special thanks to our Committee of Governance members (Sally O'Meara, Bob Regan, Cheryl Findlay, Gina Wittingslow, Callum Shaw and Elizabeth Townson).





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