

# GEELONG WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**Geelong West  
Neighbourhood House**  
*Celebrating Diversity, Building Community*

2020 Annual General Meeting

December 2<sup>nd</sup> 7PM

**AGENDA**

**MC David Kearney, Chairperson Geelong West Neighbourhood House**

1. Welcome to Country – Corrina Eccles
2. Welcome and Apologies
3. Presentation of Annual Reports
  - Chairperson's report
  - Coordinators report
  - Treasurers report
4. Farewell and thank you to retiring members
5. Election – Conducted by Peter Murrhuy
6. Close of meeting



# Geelong West Neighbourhood House

*Celebrating Diversity, Building Community*

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Held at Gateways, Albert Street, Geelong West**

**October 29, 2019, 7.00 pm**

### **Present :**

Pam Virgona, Lyn Morrison, Maggie McNamara, David Kearney, Jason Brown, Jo Brown, Rosemary Nugent, Ros Muir-Morris, Deb Holmes, Madeleine Wilson, Lisa Young, Chris Schiesser, Derek Ryan, Trish Balkin

**Invited Guests:** Rod Charles

Jason Brown welcomed all and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land we meet on, past, present and emerging.

**Welcome & Apologies:** Stella Groves, Colleen Carnegie

President Pam Virgona welcomed all and opened the meeting at 7.05pm

**Minutes of previous AGM** October 9, 2018 read.

**Accepted:** Rosemary Nugent

**Seconded:** Deb Holmes

**President's Report:** presented by Pam Virgona

**Accepted:** Lyn Morrison

**Seconded:** Madeleine Wilson

**Treasurer's Report** presented by Maggie McNamara

**Accepted:** Rosemary Nugent

**Seconded:** Chris Schiesser

**Coordinators Report** presented by Lisa Young

**Accepted:** Maggie McNamara

**Seconded:** Derek Ryan

**Café Care Connect report** presented by Chris Schiesser.

**Accepted:** Rosemary Nugent

**Seconded:** Deb Holmes

**Committee Position Elections** – chaired by Rod Charles.

Rod took the chair, declared all positions vacant and called for nominations.

**President:** David Kearney

**Vice President:** Pam Virgona

**Treasurer:** Roslyn Muir-Morris

**Secretary:**

**General committee members:**

Lyn Morrison, Deb Holmes, Jason Brown, Jo Brown, Rosemary Nugent.

A small presentation of appreciation was made to Maggie of flowers and a card on her resignation from the Committee and positions held over the last 10 years.

**President elect.**

David Kearney took the chair and stated that he's quite honoured to take on this role.

He expressed acknowledgement to:

- The community we work within, and to give thanks to them.
- Tutors and participants for being a part of and believing in GWNH.
- Committee members. Having been a member for two years he's found that the Committee are people who make things happen and has felt a real purpose, such a good feeling. David expressed his admiration in Pam's leadership as President and Maggie's hard work for 10 years.

David said he's looking forward to the future, to connecting even more with our community and to seeing GWNH grow even more.

Those present were invited to enjoy refreshments.

Meeting closed 7.55pm.

## **GEELONG WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE CHAIRPERSON'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

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### **THE YEAR**

The past twelve months has been a significant challenge for Geelong West Neighbourhood House and for our Geelong West community.

The uncertainty that the COVID-19 pandemic created, has visibly impacted on our programs and service delivery during this year. But, I am pleased to report that the professionalism of our Team along with the flexibility and determination of our participants has been remarkable.

Although we closed most programs in late March and again in June, we were able to Zoom-feed several wellbeing programs throughout the year and introduced a short personal wellbeing course, which was well received.

One of our 2020 objectives was to reach out and engage with the Geelong West Community; to identify needs and preferences and ensure that our direction is their direction too.

COVID-19 has defined our community in many ways. It has demonstrated that people have a strong, innate desire to stay connected. It has demonstrated the patience, the persistence and the integrity of the community, not only across Geelong West, but across the State and the Nation. Most importantly, it has confirmed to the Committee of Management, the need for a Neighbourhood House that not only provides a learning-place, a meeting-place and a creative-space, but also becomes a beacon of relief and support in times of crisis.

### **2020 HIGHLIGHTS**

- GWNH officially secured the lease-holder status of Geelong West Community Hub; which has enabled the ideal circumstances for us to locate the majority of our programs under one roof
- THE GWNH Committee participated in a Planning Day in February 2020. This workshop produced 20 exciting ideas for growth and development, including:
  - A sustainability Forum for Young People
  - A rejuvenation of the West-Fest Festival in West Park, an event which proved to be highly successful in the past as well as a highly regarded opportunity for community connection
  - A set of new program ideas for continuing sessional and one-off courses and workshops to benefit the learning and wellbeing needs of the Geelong West Community
  - The objective of initiating a series of surveys to better understand the community need, preference and demographic in Geelong West
- The GWNH Committee established two sub-committees (People & Programs) to enable better business practices and ensure fair participation in decision-making by Committee members
- The Cafe-Care-Connect program, run in partnership with Gateways, was halted due to the virus and therefore risk to participants. The interruption did provide however opportunity for the CCC Team to innovate and deliver phone-based support to clients and their carers. We look forward to further growing this important program in future and engaging with the CCC Team
- Finally, we were successful in our building maintenance and financial endeavours, with a fresh coat of paint for the Hub and we also saw the recruitment and appointment of a new Bookkeeper, who has helped to pave the way for more effective and efficient financial management

### **THANKS**

We are indebted to a number of people and organisations in 2020:

- Thanks to Gateways and program manager, Bronwyn Sizer, for a productive partnership which allowed us to review the standards for aged-care program membership

- Thanks to the Café Care Connect Team for their diligence and commitment to both the program and clients and carers
- Thanks to DHHS for continued program funding, which allows us to employ our co-ordinator, Lisa Young
- Thanks to COGG for their grant funding, COVID-19 leadership and for their responsive approach to building maintenance
- Thanks to our Co-ordinator Lisa Young, who has ensured this year that we delivered quality services in times of need. Lisa has been able to navigate a calm and safe course across an uncertain sea this year. The Committee is very grateful for her work.
- Thanks to the 2020 Committee. They have shown a resilience and commitment to GWNH. The uncertainty we faced this year could have resulted in us losing focus and straying from our goals. But because of your commitment we have managed to stay on course
- Thanks to our departing Committee Members, Jo and Jason Brown. Jason and Jo are '*Originals*'; they have been steadfast committee members for the 11-year life of GWNH. They, through their personal and professional skills, have made an incalculable contribution to the Neighbourhood House and our community. We are indebted to them for their passion for community engagement and the leadership they have brought to the Geelong West Community.
- Lastly, thanks to every participant who commenced a program and also to those who wanted to commence a program; but couldn't. We will welcome you back with open arms!

## **Coordinator's Annual Report 2020**

Well I think 2020 was a year that none of us expected and certainly a challenge to run a Community Organisation in a COVID climate.

The year started well with my attendance and the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) conference in Lorne 4-6<sup>th</sup> March. It was great to attend conference after being out of the sector for over 6 years and good to catch up with some old faces and get to know new ones. The guest speakers and workshops were outstanding, and I learnt lots of new ways to apply Community Development practices and theories as well as finding out what's new in the sector. Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to attend.

We then were hit with the sudden closure of our House at the end of March and had to think quickly on our feet how we were going to continue to be the connection in the

community, especially with the unknown of how long this first lockdown would last. We, along with everyone else, purchased our zoom account and started running some of our classes online. Qigong has continued its classes via zoom all year, which has been very popular, including providing classes for people who have not been previously able to attend face to face classes, due to various reasons, including family responsibilities and disability access. Many of the participants are keen to continue zoom classes beyond COVID for these reasons.

We also started a new zoom class, A chance to talk. This weekly class was an opportunity for local Geelong West community members to meet and chat about their concerns with being isolated, COVID and the future. While this only ran for 6 weeks, it was good to get in early and provide people with connection and comfort.

During this time our Café Care Connect program also had to stop and unfortunately funding for this program was suspended. The wonderful facilitators of this program, Chris S, Stella, Trisha, Chris Mc and Rosemary, decided that the participants of the program needed connection more than ever and volunteered their time to phone participants each fortnight on a rotation basis. What a generous gesture from the facilitators and very much appreciated by participants. We are now planning a Christmas breakup for the group face to face to cheer on Christmas and a New Year.

In June we were able to welcome a new bookkeeper, Jo Sampson, who has done a fabulous job at taking on the new role, cleaning up our last year's reporting and providing amazing reports, which are easy to read and understand by all committee members. Jo was also responsible for obtaining the first round of Job Keeper payments and Business Support Grants. Thank you to Jo for taking on this role during this difficult time. Jo also advised us that we should apply to be registered with ACNC (Australian Charities and Not for profit Commission), which we have done and awaiting to hear back of acceptance. This will make it easier to report each year as well as have access to other types of funding.

Mid-Year we were also able to resume some of our classes including Pilates, Yoga and Art. Sadly with the second wave of COVID, this was short lived, and we once again had to put these classes on hold. The Pilates and Yoga tutors were very adaptable by being able to offer these classes via zoom again to their students, which was very appreciated.

During the year I have been able to keep myself busy, working from home and attending PD sessions via zoom put on by NHVic and Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Houses, including opening a COVID safe house and Cultural Awareness training. I have also been fortunate to attend weekly zoom catchups with the Barwon Network. These have been invaluable to remain connected with other Neighbourhood Houses in the area, share ideas and resources. CoGG and DHHS have been regular attendees to these groups and have offered advice and information. Jill also had several guest speakers, who would share their ideas and resources. These catchup's will run to the end of the year and I think I am actually going to miss them this year as they have helped me in my role tremendously.

During one of these catchup's, we had a guest speaker from the Gordon, who spoke of student's studying Community Services having difficulty in obtaining student placements. In

consultation with the committee, we decided that we would host some students to embark on a project of Asset Mapping the Geelong West area. I attended a workshop on Asset Based Community Development at the NHVic conference and was very interested in exploring this idea in the Geelong West Community. We have 3 students working on this project of looking at what assets Geelong West has and hopefully we can use this information to make up a booklet to give to local community members and community groups who are looking for a venue for their own groups. They are also working on a plan to run an online community event, which will be of great interest to us.

In November, with restrictions eased, we have been able to once again offer limited classes with restricted numbers. Monday crafty has proved popular with ladies eager to return and resume friendships, although many of them have stayed connected throughout the year. These classes will be running through until mid-December and we will take a break until the new year.

We also heard last week that we were successful in our grant submission of City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) to be able to purchase items to keep our building COVID safe, including hand sanitiser stations and increased cleaning. This will be a great starting 2021 as COVID safe and normal as we can and hope to provide lots of new and interesting programs for the year.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Committee of Management for all their hard work and support this year, I have appreciated their commitment very much. I would like to thank all our tutors, facilitators and most importantly participants for their continued support. I would also like to thank our funding bodies (DHHS, CoGG and Gateways), our external contractors, Ben Nunn for his hard work with our webpage and Jo Sampson for her professional and endless bookkeeping skills, Barwon Network for their support and all our stakeholders for their ongoing generosity.



Lisa Young. Coordinator













