



Geelong West Neighbourhood House

Celebrating Diversity, Building Community

2021 Coordinators Annual Report

It's been another challenging year with COVID in play, we have spent a greater part of the year closing on very short notice, opening to equally short notice and adhering to State Government restrictions, which have put a strain on participants, tutors and room hirers, not to mention coordination and committee.

We have been lucky to hold several of our classes on zoom and by recording including Qigong, Yoga and Meditation. When able, strength training and Pilates were able to meet in the park and run outdoor sessions, sadly some groups including craft and our Café Care Connect Program have spent long lengths of time unable to meet. These groups give much needed support to our more vulnerable members of the community but have showed incredible resilience and when they are able to attend, showing up with a positive and cheerful mood just happy to reconnect.

In March this year, Geelong West Senior Citizens finished up as a club after 60+ years. We were able to support their exercise program and social art group to continue meeting on Wednesdays.

I have been able to attend ongoing training via zoom with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) throughout the year, including Cultural Awareness Training, Vaccination training and several other relevant sessions.

I have also continued the zoom catchup sessions with the Barwon Network as well as a face to face professional development day for their Reconciliation Action Plan. These days are so important to really understand what we need to do to be a welcoming and diverse Neighbourhood House for everyone in our community.

I have also been very fortunate this year to be part of the City of Greater Geelong Leadership Program. This program has 15 participants and was highly sought after with over 50 applications. Although this program was also interrupted significantly by COVID restrictions, we continued sessions via zoom and had a whole range of guest speakers and trainers covering subjects such as marketing and sponsorship, time management, leadership in the community, grants and funding, conflict management and other varied and interesting subjects. I feel that this program and

meeting other community leaders in the Geelong area has enhanced my work as a community worker as well as a leader.

We were successful in obtaining a grant for this year's Seniors Festival to put on the production of Colin Mockett's *If I Had a Hammer*. This has become an online production because of COVID which has resulted in us now having a You Tube channel. I hope that we can add to it in the future as another dimension of what we offer.

We were also successful in obtaining a grant from CoGG to upgrade some of our technology, including a website designed by Ben Nunn, thanks to Ben for his ongoing support and hard work. We will also be purchasing a large TV screen for the hall which can be used to display notices, our program and be used for our classes in the future.

The committee and I had a much-needed clean-up of the building just before the last lockdown, so the place looks great, and we are really looking forward to a new year being able to hopefully open up and grow our programs to meet even more needs of our community. Our survey we had this year had a good response of over 100 people who shared their ideas of what classes, days and times we would like to see in the future.

We have a very busy House with not only our program but many other community groups meeting and enjoying our facilities. We are running 7 days per week both day and evening. It's good to see the building utilised so much by the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their support and help this year, it's wonderful to work with such a hands-on committee who are so passionate about the role we share in the community.

I would like to thank the tutors and facilitators for being so flexible and understanding of the continued challenges and disruptions throughout the year. Thanks also goes to our bookkeeper, Jo Sampson for her professional and hard work. Thanks to CoGG and DFFS for ongoing support and funding opportunities. Thanks to NHVic and Barwon Network for their guidance and knowledge to ensure we are at the cutting edge of good Governance and Community Development. Thanks to Gateways for their support of Café Care Connect. Finally thanks to all of our participants, friends and supporters, who give us strength in difficult times to continue providing a rich and responsive program.

Lisa Young
Coordinator