



## **GEELONG WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CHAIR'S REPORT**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Wathaurong Elders of the Kulin Nation past and present.

### **2021**

We have been presented with another year of challenges. In November last year, when I reported to you at our AGM, I was confident that our year of COVID restrictions and lockdowns were in their final stages. I look back now and realise this was either naive or optimistic, or possibly both.

Nevertheless, 2021 has been a busy year, even though we have faced significant lockdown and restriction.

### **Planning Workshop**

In March the GWNH Committee engaged in a planning workshop. This provided us with some fresh perspective and insight into our immediate and future direction. We set four new goals:

1. Promote GWNH
2. Maximise space
3. Identify funding potential
4. Trial new programs

I'm pleased to say have been able to activate various aspects of these new directions during the year.

### **Survey**

A key feature of our planning workshop was the design and implementation of a GWNH 2021 User Survey. We sent out a simple, reaction survey to previous participant members. We received about an 11% response, which is an OK figure for a mail-dropped survey. Respondents provided a wealth of program satisfaction and new direction suggestions. We will be using this information to create new programs and implement some new ideas in 2022.

## **Sub-Committees**

We trialled a new internal Committee structure this year, which referred 'out of session' discussion and actionable business to three sub-committees:

- Finance Sub Committee
- Program Sub Committee
- People Sub Committee

Whilst the sub-committees were able to individually and successfully deal with matters and report-back; the Committee will determine the effectiveness of the concept into 2022. It can be honestly reported though, that this system allowed new, refreshing and active ownership by Committee members in 2021.

## **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**

GWNH became a member of the Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Houses Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The reflect stage of the RAP saw a group work on the early stages of an inspirational Program contributes to advancing reconciliation by supporting organisations to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## **Strategic Plan**

In 2021 we refreshed and reconstructed our triennium Strategic Plan (2021-24). A copy of the Plan is attached to this report. The three new strategic themes reflect our shifting direction:

- Promote
- Grow
- Sustain

We also reviewed of our Mission, which is:

1. Providing a welcoming learning community
2. Fostering a sense of belonging
3. Building strengths and capabilities
4. Developing partnerships
5. Advocating and resourcing

## **Building Development Proposal**

We currently have an exciting grant application before Council (COGG Community Infrastructure Grants 2021), which will be determined by Council in early December. Should we be successful, GWNH will have an immense opportunity to move into a new era. We are currently limited by the number of single programs we can offer at the Autumn St premises. We are not currently able to run concurrent programs (more than one at a time), due to noise between the two work spaces.

If our grant application is successful, we would build a hallway between the two areas thus soundproofing and providing independent and undisturbed access into both areas.

### **Artist in Residence**

The Committee has in-principle approved, an *Artist in Residence* pilot program which we hope to introduce in 2022. The aim of this pilot is to:

- provide a public profile of GWNH as a provider of creative programs through community engagement activities. i.e., workshops, talks, creative projects, exhibitions
- increases use of GWNH building at otherwise unoccupied times
- provides access for new people to come and try programs at GWNH through the creation of an open studio and mentoring role in art techniques based on individual requirements and requests
- facilitate access to observing the working process of an artist and how they produce art

### **Website Redevelopment**

GWNH commenced a process to redevelop its website in 2021. The goal of promoting our programs and services is critical to our developing image in the community. The Website will provide new user features, including easier on-line registration and payment.

### **Departing Committee Members**

We farewelled three Committee Members in 2021. Deb Holmes (March), Linda Corcoran (July) and Ros Muir-Morris (October). We thank these colleagues for their diligence and hard work as Committee Members and would welcome their return into the future.

### **Thanks**

Thanks go to a large group of people who keep GWNH ticking over: Lisa Young as Co-ordinator, for her work during a difficult year and thanks to the returning Committee: Pam Virgona, Rosemary Nugent, Lyn Morrison, Moira Donovan, Lezley Rhodes and Colleen Carnegie for their consistent hard work and support to GWNH. We look forward to next year's challenges!

**David Kearney**  
**GWNH Chair, 2020-2021**