



Geelong West Neighbourhood House 2023 Annual General Meeting Chairpersons Report

I would like to start by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which the Geelong West Neighbourhood House (GWNH) sits, the Wadawurrung People. We pay our respect to their Elders of the past, present, and emerging and acknowledge their continuing relationship to this land.

At last year's AGM, Member for Geelong, Christine Couzens announced that \$65,000 from the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, had been awarded to the City of Greater Geelong (COGG) for a renovation at GWNH that would enable both the hall and the smaller carpeted room to be used simultaneously. As mentioned in last year's co-chair reports, the original idea came from the previous committee who saw the need to increase access for more groups and activities. I am pleased to report that the renovation took place from late March and throughout April this year, with the doors to the house reopening on the 2nd of May,

Classes and activities had to be relocated or put on hold during this period and we would like to thank Geelong West Library, City of Greater Geelong (Supper room and Virginia Todd Hall,) One Care, Fairley Lodge (managed by GW Brass Band) and Uniting Church Newtown for assisting us with venue space during this time.

I would also like to thank the work of our coordinator Lisa Young, and committee members Barbara Whelan and Mary Den Dryver, who were part of the working group with Council managing the program.

Since the reopening we have seen an increase in enrolment of classes as well as community groups wishing to hire rooms. Quite a few of our health and wellbeing classes are now at capacity, with new classes for beginners Pilates, chair Yoga and laughter workshops underway.

We also have a range of new community groups using the centre including an endometriosis support group, a karate group, a Scottish dance group and a salsa dance group. We are looking forward to developing new programs and welcoming new groups into the future.

A few other highlights to mention: As Dave said in his report last year, the Café Care Connect program came to an end, however we were lucky to secure



funding from COGG to reinvent it as the Keep Connected program which has run successfully from October 22 through to September this year with both new and old participants under the direction of project leaders Chris Smith and Chris Schiesser. We would particularly like to thank Routley's Bakery for their generosity in providing afternoon tea to participants throughout the year.

This year, to coincide with Neighbourhood House Week in the second week of May, we hosted a very successful *Biggest Afternoon Tea* for the Cancer Council raising \$846. We would like to thank all attendees who contributed to the event by bringing a plate, donating to the raffle prizes, and generally making it a fun afternoon. Thanks to 94.7 the Pulse who did a live broadcast of the event.

And a final highlight to mention was our participation in the *Know Your Neighbourhood House* video project arranged by the Barwon Network of Neighbourhood houses. Filming took place over 2 days in June and we are expecting to see the results very soon, which will then be featured on our website along with social media outlets.

As you would have seen from our financial report, we were pleased to return a modest surplus this year which gives us great confidence in the future for the House. Thanks to Deb Wilson and her team at Good Financials for counting all the numbers. We are also grateful to the City of Greater Geelong for managing our building and providing us with funding for special events and projects.

Finally, I would like to thank Lisa Young our coordinator and all the hard-working members of the committee who have served over the past year: Colleen Carnegie (Treasurer-retiring,) Marg Kellett (Secretary-retiring,) Jo Brown (Deputy Chair), Rosemary Nugent, Lezley Rhodes, Charlene Angus, Barb Whelan, Marg Burke, Liz Hines and Mary Den Dryver. It has been a pleasure working with such a committed group of people who all have the interest of the house community as number one priority.

I will also be stepping down this year but wish the new committee every success in the year to come

Best wishes

Maureen O'Keeffe Chairperson GWNH