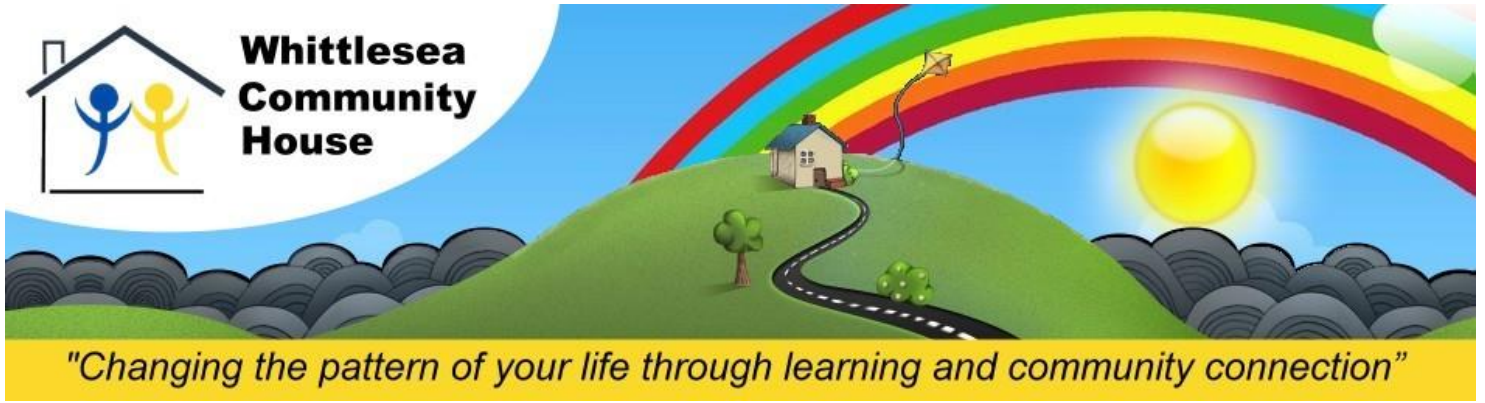




**Whittlesea  
Community  
House**



*"Changing the pattern of your life through learning and community connection"*

# **Whittlesea Community House Incorporated**

## **Annual Report 2021**

## **Whittlesea Community House Incorporated 2021 Annual Report**

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For information on our Annual Financial report please see our separate documentation.

## **AGM 2021**

To be held via Zoom on Tuesday 21st of October 2021 at 1.00pm.

### **AGM Agenda**

**Welcome:** Kerry Clarke

**Apologies:**

**Minutes from previous meeting:** Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### **Motion:**

That Minutes from the 2020 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record

### **Presentation of reports:**

Chair Report and Auspice Groups:

Kerry Clarke

Finance Officer's Report:

Kate Looker

Manager's Report:

Mary-Lynn Griffith

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report:

Judith Stewart

### **Tabling of audited Annual Financial Report 2020-21**

#### **General business:**

#### **Motion:**

That Robin Russell be appointed to undertake an independent accountant's review for 2021/22 financial year.

**Election of Committee Members:** at least 4 and not more than 9 members (R19.1.2)

No more than 6 elected committee members (R19.1.2 (a)), and 1 appointed committee member for each subgroup (R19.5)

#### **Nominations** for all Committee positions

Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and ordinary members to be elected by and from elected committee members at the first committee meeting after the AGM (R19.7)

Call for Nominations from the floor if there are less than 9 nominations already received.

#### **Thank You!**

Thank you to AGM facilitator Kerry Clarke, to all the Committee members past and present for their dedication, to our amazing volunteers and finally, thanks to Karen McDonald, Chris Russo and Sandra Canning who handled the administration of this AGM and the Annual Report.

**Minutes**  
**Whittlesea Community House Annual General Meeting**  
**Tuesday November 24<sup>th</sup> 2020**  
**Meeting Opened: 1.10pm**

<b>1</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	Justine Sless, Kerry Clarke, Mary-Lynn Griffith, Catherine Looker, Judith Stewart, Margaret Brida, Zlata Romek, Rhonda Rose, Jodie Thorneycroft, Karen McDonald, Chris Russo, Tim Russo, Ivan Peterson, Megan Smithwick, Suzanne Coburn, Ursula Jenkins, Angie Dagleish, Johanna Hauser, Heather Jolly, Bev Moore, Jeffrey Wakefield, Brett Flenley, Kelisha Nikitas, Caryn Avelsgaard, Julie Johnston, Abbey Dagg
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	Rob Mitchell, Pauline Tallents

<b>3</b>	<b>Welcome Address from AGM Facilitator:</b> <b>Justine Sless, CoW Community Support Co-ordinator.</b>		
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes from previous meeting</b> <b>Date: November 12<sup>th</sup> 2019</b>	<b>Motion:</b> That minutes from the AGM be accepted as true and correct	Moved: C. Looker Seconded: J. Stewart Carried
<b>5</b>	<b>Reports</b>		
	<u>President's Report:</u> (Available online) Read & presented by: Kerry Clarke	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: I. Peterson Seconded: C. Looker Carried
	<u>Treasurer's Report:</u> Read & presented by: Catherine Looker	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: I. Peterson Seconded: C. Looker Carried
	<u>Manager's Report:</u> Read & presented by: Mary-Lynn Griffith	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: I. Peterson Seconded: C. Looker Carried
<b>6</b>	<b>Sub Group Reports</b>		
	<u>Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report</u> Read & presented by: Judith Stewart	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: I. Peterson Seconded: C. Looker Carried
	<u>Community Garden Report</u> Read & presented by: Megan Smithwick	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: I. Peterson Seconded: C. Looker Carried
<b>7</b>	<b>Election for WCH Committee of Management</b>	All positions were declared vacant and nominations for all positions were called for by: Justine Sless	
	Kerry Clarke	Nominator: C. Looker Secunder: R. Rose	
	C. Looker	Nominator: M. Brida Secunder: R. Rose Carried	
	Judith Stewart	Nominator: C. Looker Secunder: R. Rose	

		Carried
	Zlata Romek	Nominator: K. Clarke Secunder: C. Looker Carried
	Angie Dalgleish	Nominator: C. Looker Secunder: R. Rose Carried
	<b>Subgroup Nominees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margaret Brida WACCA ( Whittlesea Area Community Care and Assistance)</li> <li>• Rhonda Rose WCG (Whittlesea Community Garden)</li> </ul>
	<b>Nominations from the floor:</b>	
	Brett Flenley	Nominator: M. Brida Secunder: K. Clarke Carried
	Ursula Jenkins	Nominator: C. Looker Secunder: M. Brida Carried
	Heather Jolly	Nominator: R. Rose Secunder: K. Clarke Carried
	Tim Russo	Nominator: B. Flenley Secunder: C. Looker Carried
<b>8</b>	<b>General Business</b>	<b>Motion:</b> That Robin E. Russell, Chartered Accountant be appointed to conduct an annual review for WCH ( 2020-2021 financial year). Moved: C. Looker Seconded: K. Clarke Carried
	<b>Thank you</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kerry Clarke expressed her thanks to Justine Sless for facilitating the AGM and also to staff and outgoing committee members for their hard work this year.</li> <li>• Jodie Thorneycroft to stand down from committee due to work commitments. She thanked the staff and committee.</li> <li>• Justine Sless acknowledged the efforts and commitment of staff and committee members during the year.</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Meeting Closed</b>	Time 2pm

## **Whittlesea Community House Team 2020-21**

### **Committee of Management**

Kerry Clarke (Chair), Tim Russo (Vice Chair), Kate Looker (Financial Officer), Angie Dalglish (Secretary), Margaret Brida (WACCA & Food Relief), Maureen Cooper (WACCA), Judith Stewart (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Rhonda Rose (Minutes Secretary), Ursula Jenkins (Boomerang Bags & Food Relief), Heather Jolly (WCH Garden), Zlata Romek and Brett Flenley.

### **Staff**

Mary-Lynn Griffith -Manager  
Karen McDonald – Administration and Marketing  
Megan Smithwick – Whittlesea Community Garden Co-ordinator  
Chris Russo – Front Desk Administration  
Sandra Canning – Accounts and Administration

Book keeper – Jodie Jackson, Up to Date Bookkeeping

### **Volunteer Group Coordinators**

Front of House Volunteer:	Chris Russo
WCH Garden Volunteer:	Heather Jolly
What's Cooking Thursday:	Johanna Hauser
Big Blokes Brunch Coordinator:	Tim Russo
WACCA Transport Coordinator:	Val Grieg
WACCA President:	Maureen Cooper
LAN games facilitators:	Ben Murphy/David Schultz
Qigong/Walking Groups:	Liz Stanley
Boomerang Bags Facilitators:	Ursula Jenkins & Felicity Maniszewski
Crafternoons	Christine Stonehouse
Whittlesea Township Choir:	Kerry Clarke

### **Awesome Teachers**

Gay Chatfield	Weaving and Wreaths
Ricky Nuske	Pilates
Abby Dagg	Digital Literacy
Kate Riddell	Mental Health First Aid
Louise Richards EHS	First Aid
Rod Smith	Boat Licencing
Debbie Burke	Barista Training
Ian Hocking	Welding
RSA for schools	Food Safety and RSA
Cove Training	Stop Slow and C.I Card
Anna Morton	Digital Literacy for Work and Study
Jacqueline Constantin	Auslan

## Volunteers

We couldn't do all the wonderful things we do without volunteers - being on the committee, driving, teaching, administration, front of house, gardening, event management, organising projects and other volunteers amongst other things. We had 85 volunteers and helpers registered this financial year and we are so grateful of their many talents and massive contribution:

- The WCHI Management Committee - Kerry Clarke, Tim Russo, Kate Looker, Angie Dalglish, Rhonda Rose, Judith Stewart, Maureen Cooper, Margaret Brida, Zlata Romek, Ursula Jenkins, Heather Jolly and Brett Flenley
- WACCA Coordinators – Aileen Dundon, Maureen Cooper, Margaret Brida and the amazing Whittlesea Community Care and Assistance team.
- WACCA Drivers
- Women's Luncheon volunteers: Johanna Hauser (co-ordinator), Nicola Rowe, Chris Russo, Allyson Griffith, Aniko Presti, Karen McDonald, Mary-Lynn Griffith, Alison Roguszka, Rhonda Rose, Rebecca Tresize, Judith Senese, and Liz Stanley.
- Big Blokes Brunch facilitator, Tim Russo and his assistant Barrie Stewart
- Big Blokes Brunch volunteers: Johanna Hauser, Rhonda Rose and Sandra Canning and Cecille Singapu
- House garden volunteers: Rhonda Rose, Alison Roguszka and Heather Jolly
- Front of House office volunteer: Chris Russo
- Administration and opening up after hours: Megan Smithwick
- Choir – Choir Leader – Kerry Clarke, administration and special events: Suzanne Coburn
- Whittlesea Community Garden Member volunteers – Pam Dunster, Keith Sutton, Barry & Judith Stewart, Antoinette Hall, Jessie Zander, Anita Burrows, Maryanne Barclay, Margaret Brida, Johanna Hauser, Bev Johnson, Jeffery Wakefield, Ingrid Norris, Elaine Mountey and Rhonda & Geoff Rose, Heather Jolly, Russell Draper, Kevin Clarke, Denise Amos, Dale Hart, Audrey Balmaceda, Judith Senese, Lorraine Gregory, Les James, Gary Appleford, Karen Wilson, Suzie Rose, Dearne Brasher, Trevor Wilson, Yana Dunk and Ann Wright.
- Whittlesea Community Garden Group Members: Journey Early Learning, Whittlesea Library and TLC Sunlight Aged Care
- LAN games supervisors Ben Murphy and David Schultz
- Whittlesea Men's Shed
- Kinglake Seniors weekly Trip organiser Val Scott
- Kinglake weekly bus trip drivers - Jim France and Errollyn Simmonds
- Family Games Night coordinators: Maree Evans and Nicole Stokes
- Landcare Group Co-ordinators, Jane Juliffe and Emma Bennett
- Boomerang Bags group co-ordinators, Ursula Jenkins and Felicity Maniszewski
- Tax Help - Chris Peng
- Food Relief - Ursula Jenkins and Margaret Brida

## Student Placements

Rachel Stephens  
Sharon Varley  
Abbey Dagg  
Charelle Curic  
Lisa O'Sullivan  
Cecille Singapu  
Jazmyn Banda

## Partnerships

Partnerships are crucial to provision of services, training courses and workshops. In the past financial year, we have enjoyed working with these amazing organisations:

City of Whittlesea, Whittlesea Community Connections, Espresso Legal, L2P program, Department of Justice and Community Safety, Whittlesea Secondary College, Whittlesea Library, , Pines Learning, North East Neighbourhood House Network, Whittlesea Local Area Network, Whittlesea Men's Shed, Central Ranges Trades Training Centre, Whittlesea Combined Ministries, Whittlesea Bowls Club, La Trobe University Law School, Whittlesea Cruise Night, TLC Aged Care, Jesuit Community College, CWA Jumbunna, and Bunnings.

## Donations

Many thanks to the following for their great generosity:

**Whittlesea Men's Shed** - for being there -with tools and enthusiasm - in our many times of need

**Bunnings** -for their ongoing support and seeds for our volunteer thank you packages in volunteers week

**Olivia's Café** - coffee vouchers and catering for onsite events

**Rob Mitchell MP** - ongoing support

**Danielle Green MP** - ongoing support

**Whittlesea Bowls Club** - for their invaluable support for the Community Vehicle and continuing sponsorship of Boomerang Bags

**Whittlesea Community members** and surrounds: many many donations of material for boomerang bags, craft materials for Crafternoons and Food Relief supplies.

**Whittlesea Pizza** - for free food vouchers for our **Whittlesea Food relief Project**

**Gilly's Meats** - for free and discount meat supplies for Big Blokes Brunch and food relief programme

**Delightful Frootz** - for free and discount fruit and veg supplies for our food relief programme

**Whittlesea Pharmacy** - for free toiletries for emergency relief programme

**Charelle Curic and the people of Mickleham** - who rallied and donated a truckload of groceries for our food relief programme

**Second Chance Animal Rescue** - for our pet food relief supplies

**Manhattan Music** - for the Tanglewood Ukulele for "Best in Show" - Uke Muster



## Committee Chair Report: Kerry Clarke

Well hello to all on ZOOM Again!!

We had hoped we could be all together for this event - but unfortunately COVID had other plans for the Community House! Thank you to everyone responsible for the awesome Annual Report.

I must thank our **Super Staff** for working over and beyond on behalf of the community. They have really done a splendid job.

Accolades to our House Manager, **Mary Lynn**, for her inspiring leadership and steadfast effort in the face of so many trying events over this challenging year. Mary Lynn has been supported and bolstered by our other **Super Staff** members, both paid and volunteer. Particular thanks to Karen for managing change that has exceeded all expectations and given her multiple headaches.

Thank you to Megan, especially for coming to my rescue when the alarm has not been set!! This has been a demanding year that has called on all our reserves of patience and understanding.

Words of thanks to Chris for her amazing work and her volunteer time. She keeps us on the straight and narrow!

Ursula and Margaret have been exemplary committee and community members, coming to the aid of all who needed it. What a contribution they have made to our community. Thank you to our garden team, Rhonda and Heather - you make the world a brighter place with your work.

To all of our other volunteers and workers, too numerous to mention individually - but I thank them all for their valued contribution to the community.

With the work of the staff, the House has tried to keep on reaching out to our community and support the House users. It has been a really challenging year with stops, starts, stops and pauses, but the inspiring crew have found new ways to connect and support our community. Thank You ALL.

## Finance Officer Report: Kate Looker

The Financial Statements reviewed by our Independent Accountant Robin Russell are available separately to the Annual Report. If you have any questions regarding the Financial Statements, please email them to [accounts@whittleseach.com.au](mailto:accounts@whittleseach.com.au)

Naturally the global pandemic has had a serious impact on the House's ability to generate income from classes and room hire. However, we have managed to generate \$19,024.86 from class income and \$7,124.90 from room hire representing a drop of about 40% from our previous years' income from these entities - that year also being COVID-19 effected from March to June.

Our income has been propped up by a JobKeeper Subsidy of \$92,850, ATO Cash Boost payments of \$19,972 and Business VIC Support Grants totalling \$25,000 allowing us to post a net earning of \$40,510.53.

We hold reasonable reserves to allow our non-profit business to weather the pandemic storm and still support our staff and the local community in different, but much needed ways, whilst we all wait for the opportunity to return to a pre-COVID-19 normal.

A personal thank you to Jodie Jackson, our bookkeeper and BAS Agent, especially for her support with our wages, JobKeeper and the other COVID-19 Support payments. Our staff have also done a magnificent job this year to resolve issues regarding postponed or cancelled classes and adapt to the constantly changing working environment. They have managed to perform well and with integrity working from home and have shown that the ability to work "off-site" can become a new facet of our House working environment going forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to our Independent Accountant Robin Russell, who I believe is retiring (though he has said that for a few years now) and wish him well. He has been an enormous support to both myself, Mary-Lynn and Jodie.



Catherine Looker  
Finance Officer, Whittlesea Community House Inc.

## Manager's Report: Mary-Lynn Griffith

### 2020-2021 : Living and Learning through Lockdown

#### Highlights:

- “Whittlesea Uke Muster 2020 goes online” with ukulele groups and players from local and regional Victoria with some NSW and QLD zoom visitors
- “Wills and Wishes” legal clinic with La Trobe Uni law school, delivering wills, powers of attorney documents, guardianship to around 80 community members
- “Fix it Friday” services outreach services program Phone In and onsite services throughout 2020-2021 helping over 250 people
- “Chalk it Up” community driveway decoration project competition
- “Pandemic Penpals Project” linking Whittlesea Primary school students with TLC Sunlight aged care residents throughout lockdowns
- Digital Mentoring Scheme: assisting people to get online for social connection, study and services,
- Laptop loan library - 10 x laptops available for use by students
- “Text Out Tuesday” - sms direct weekly service keeping up to 400 people aware of activities, services and community information throughout lockdown and continuing
- “Mad Hatters morning tea” women’s lunch went online with themes and laughter
- Big Blokes Brunch onsite supported and fed by the CWA
- Whittlesea Food relief Project : delivering essential food items to around 30 families and individuals. Donations from IGA box, community members as through CoW funding with vouchers from local businesses
- Kitchen renovation thanks to Stronger Communities grant



Fancy Dress Session - UKE Muster 2020

**Meeting our Objects: As a Central point for education skills and training  
-including pathways to employment:**

- 1. As a Central point for education skills and training  
-including pathways to employment-** We have continued to deliver and host high quality training to over 250 people in accredited, pre-accredited vocational and recreational training and classes as follows:-

**Hosting accredited training:**

- CHC33015 Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community) with Pines learning,
- Diploma in Mental Health with Partners in Training
- First Aid Training (all levels) through EHS Solutions Wallan/Allens Training (RTO 90909)
- Mental Health First Aid with Kate Riddell and Mental Health First Aid Australia
- Food Handling course SITXFSA001, RSA for schools
- Responsible Service of Alcohol with RSA for Schools
- RIIWHS205D Control Traffic with Stop Slow Bat: Cove Training
- CPCCWHS1001 - prepare to work safely in the construction industry (White Card): Cove training

**Delivering vocational training:**

- Barista training (Burkes Hospitality)
- QuickBooks online
- Welding for Beginners
- Digital Literacy for Smart Devices
- Digital Skills for work and study

**Running recreational training and classes**

- Boat Licence (ABC Boating College)
- Wellness programmes: walking Group, Pilates, Yoga

- 2. Meeting our objects: In providing activities to connect community and reduce social isolation** we facilitate, host and/or auspice the following regular groups:

- Whittlesea Township Choir, online with Kerry Clarke
- Local Area Network computer (LAN) games for teens , David Schultz, Ben Murphy
- Whittlesea Community Garden supported sessions and workshops: facilitated by Megan Smithwick
- Whittlesea Area Community Care and Assistance (WACCA); committee with Aileen Dundon, Margaret Brida, Maureen Cooper
- Whittlesea Boomerang Bags facilitated by Felicity Mankiewicz and Ursula Jenkins;
- Whittlesea Landcare facilitated by Jane Juliff
- Family Games night facilitated by Maree and Nicole;

- Pilates with Ricki and Tatiana,

### **Community Transport:**

#### **Whittlesea Area Community Care and Assistance (WACCA)**

As a semi-rural community Whittlesea Township is isolated with transport often hard to come by. The WACCA transport service allowed local volunteer drivers support to assist vulnerable residents to get to specialists, clinics and hospital appointments. Lockdown meant that the transport service was unable to continue. WACCA wound down completely in February 2021 and has now ceased. This amazing team worked tirelessly for over 10 years to provide home help transport and monthly lunches for a wide range of people in need, they will be sadly and sorely missed. Many thanks to Maureen Cooper, Aileen Dundon Margaret Brida and the awesome WACCA team.

### **Volunteering:**

This year 52 volunteers have assisted the community, as drivers, gardeners, front of House, delivering brochures, collecting and delivering food relief, facilitating groups, being covid marshals and cooking and preparing meals and running the House as members of the Whittlesea Community House Committee of Management.

### **3. Meeting our objects: Provision of relief and support to community members affected by poverty, distress and economic disadvantage through community lunches and services:**

- **What's Cooking Thursday Community Women's Lunch:**  
30-40 women enjoy a healthy meal prepared by volunteer cooks and coordinated by Johanna Hauser with regular speakers and activities. During Lockdown the women's lunch members who were able to meet on zoom for mad hatters morning tea facilitated by Karen McDonald with themes such as 'what's weird in your pantry and how to use it'.
- **Big Blokes Brunch:**  
30-40 blokes catch up each Tuesday at the Community Activity Centre facilitated by Tim. Meals are prepared by Correctional services participants with a field officer chef. Due to lockdown restrictions the Correctional services team were unable to attend for a large part of the 2020-2021 year. The Whittlesea branch of the CWA saved the day with 10 sessions of cooking and catering. Dave from Whittlesea Deli catered at a discount for the remaining onsite sessions .
- **Whittlesea War Widows Lunch**  
The WACCA group volunteers in addition to community transport also run a monthly lunch for war widows in the Township catering and providing raffle item sandwiches and good cheer. This too has now ended with the wrapping up of WACCA and will be greatly missed.

## Community Services:

- **Wills and Wishes:** Legal Clinic with La Trobe Uni law students supervised by Whittlesea Community Legal service. This partnership has produced over 300 wills and powers of attorney for community members since starting in 2019
- **Fix it Friday:** Launched on 26 July 2019, Fix It Friday is a partnership between WCH and Whittlesea Community Connections and includes specialists from Centrelink, Whittlesea Community Legal service, WCC social work team, Uniting Financial counselling, Merri health victims of crime assistance, Lift mental health programme, NDIS, My Aged care, and staff from Danielle Green, MPs, office. At the monthly sessions people can also be helped with setting up My Gov accounts, applying for Power saving bonus applications, and no interest loans scheme. When onsite, Espresso Legal team offers free coffee and hot chocolate adding a rare hospitality to the provision of legal and other advice. The programme has successfully managed as a Phone In service during lockdown, triaged through the Community House.
- **Whittlesea Community Garden (WCG):** in Laurel St, provides community members with opportunities to maintain own and communal garden beds and attend workshops in wide array of horticultural sustainable and art workshops.
- **Kinglake seniors Bus trip:** senior community members travel weekly to Kinglake seniors for lunch activities and outings with the help of volunteer drivers in WCH community van.

We have also participated in events, partnerships and activities that generate connections and reduce social isolation:

- **WCH Christmas on Zoom December 2020**
- **Whittlesea Uke Muster 2020 Online 29 August 2020** (supported by City of Whittlesea Creative Communities grant)
  - workshops throughout the day,
  - a whiteboard concert at lunchtime and a
  - fancy-dress fiesta finale to finish with the prize for best in show - a Tanglewood ukulele (\$150) donated by Manhattan Music . 217 people registered for the all-day event. Because it ran online via zoom people could attend from faraway Queensland, NSW and regional Victoria. Some of the comments in the follow up survey were as follows:  
*Notable Quotes:* "Thank you! It was definitely the highlight of our lockdown. So good to feel connected to the community and so healing to play music and sing together." - Amy R

"Well done with running a festival online. I'm sure it was a lot of work. Oh three words: fun, creative, worthwhile"

"hi thanks for the great day the song writing was really amazing I loved that the day included all levels and I started to understand strumming a bit congratulations 10 out 10 " Neri M

- **"Chalk it Up"** community driveway decoration project competition. Households were encouraged to contribute driveway art to connect community during lockdown with a 5k radius for walking. City of Whittlesea provided buckets of chalk and local businesses provided prizes. The welcome project was featured in the Whittlesea Review.



**Meeting our objects: made possible by partnerships and funding opportunities, grants and sponsorships.**

## 1. Partnerships in the 2020-2021 Year

- **Whittlesea Bowls Club** : supporting our kitchen and disability access renovation with a \$5,000 matching grant contribution
- **Jesuit Community College**: provision of Horticulture course: Plan Plant and Propagate
- **FRRR schools and Beyond Partnership**: assisting with purchase of 10 laptops for students;
- **Central Ranges trades training Centre**: running "Welding for beginners" (ACFE funded) out of hours with Ian Hocking
- **Whittlesea Men's Shed**
- **CWA Jumbunna** provided Kate to cook for 10 sessions of the Big Blokes Brunch at the Community Activity Centre
- **L2P program**: We have continued our partnership with Whittlesea Community Connections to assist with the delivery of the L2P in the Township.

- **Community Conversations:** this partnership with City of Whittlesea and the Whittlesea library held at the Community Garden was aimed at re connecting community members after long lockdown and featured a series of themed morning teas with Espresso Legal, Whittlesea police, Neighbourhood Watch and opportunities to create garden art.

In addition to our regular DHHS and City of Whittlesea annual Funding, our programmes and activities were supported by the following:

- **Stronger Communities Grant-:** kitchen and disability access renovation,
- **Commonwealth Bank:** Food relief Project \$500
- **City of Whittlesea:** Creative Communities grant “Whittlesea Uke Muster 2020 goes online”
- **Department of Justice and Community Safety:** intercom, window locks, laptop charging trolley

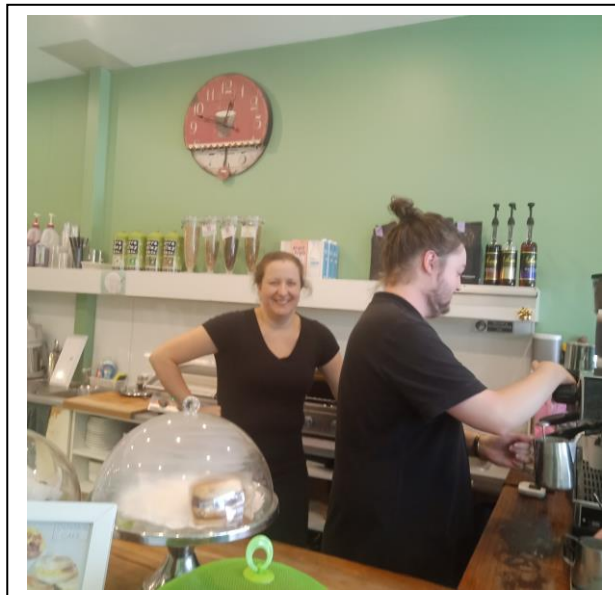
We also received wonderful support from Local Businesses:

**Chalk it Up prize sponsors:**

Happy Belly Burgers  
Charlie Horse Toys  
Whittlesea Flowers and Bears  
Beauty on Walnut  
Delightful Frootz.

**Food relief project partners:**

Starfish Seafoods  
Whittlesea IGA  
Whittlesea Bowls Club  
Royal Mail Hotel  
Café 59  
Whittlesea Deli Café  
Gillys meats  
Delightful Frootz  
Noshi noodle and rice bar  
Elazar takeaway  
Olivia’s café  
Whittlesea Bakehouse  
Chinese xiang garden  
Ferguson Plarre  
Whittlesea Pizza  
Fresco Pizza  
Corner of Thai



The Team at Olivia’s have been great supporters



## The year in numbers

Staff hours per week: 58.5

Manager, Mary-Lynn Griffith -24.5, Marketing and admin, Karen McDonald- 16, WCG co-ordinator, Megan Smithwick- 9, Chris Russo Front of house, 9

- Typical number of visitors per week to the WCH and off-site programmes (pre-lockdown): 336
- Number of people reached through programs, activities and events in the 2020-2021 year: 1100
- Number of different activities/courses offered at the WCH: 43
- Number of volunteers as at 30 June 2021: 52
- Average number of volunteer hours per week: 142.50 hours (around 7125 hours per year of 50 weeks)
- Dollar value of volunteer hours **per week** based on rate of \$25 per hour: \$3562.50. (That is an extraordinary \$178,125 worth of volunteer power per year (based on 50 weeks)
- Number of community luncheons -30 luncheons serving around 1200 meals.
- Food relief - March-June 2021, our volunteers, Ursula and Margaret, drove 1200 kms to deliver 960 grocery bags of food and supplies to vulnerable families in the Township and surrounds.



New Deck Area for the Rear Classroom



Serving Window and New Shelving too



Community Conversations at the Community Garden

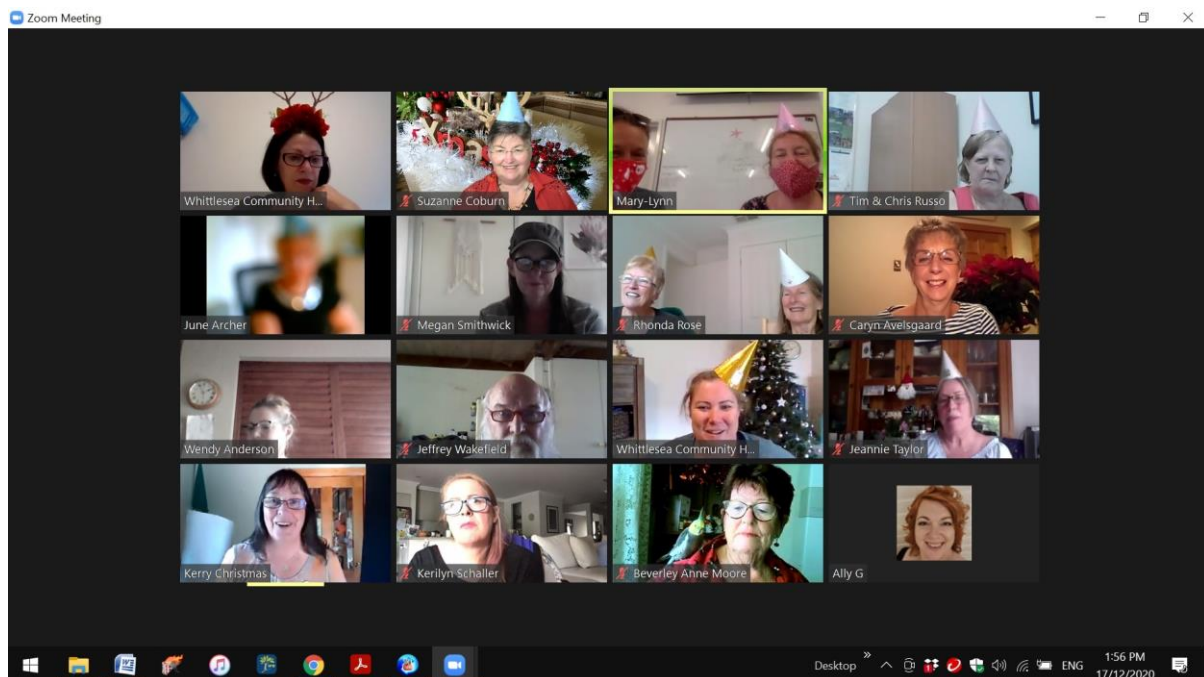


Committee Meetings on Zoom

## Zoom - The Adventure Continues.....

As 2020 drew to a close and we faced 2021 with all kinds of hopes and dreams we still had to navigate the ever changing landscape of restrictions and protections presented to us by COVID 19. Over the past year we have continued to embrace flexible learning and connection using Zoom. Here's what happened:

- Our House Christmas Party has held on Zoom, complete with party packs delivered to all participants including cocktail recipes!
- The staff of the House continued to meet every Monday morning to strategise, share information and support each other.
- The Committee of Management continued to navigate COVID each month on Zoom (although we did have a couple of meetings in person)
- Fix it Friday continued to be held each month mostly by phone (co-ordinated from Karen's "cubby house"). We did manage to hold sessions face to face in April, May and June.
- The Choir have now had 60 sessions on Zoom since the outset of the pandemic!
- Mernda Singers and Strummers are using our Zoom account to get together and they regularly hand out online with the Choir!
- The Community Garden had a Native Bee Hotel Workshop on Zoom
- R U OK Day was held on Zoom (including Laughter Yoga)



Christmas on Zoom

## Fix it Friday

For the past couple of years Fix it Friday has been a regular fixture on the monthly House calendar. The 2021-21 year has seen us operate each month by remote control over the phone more often than face to face but it hasn't stopped us from delivering amazing solutions to our local community.

Each month we have an army of intrepid experts at our disposal and we are pleased to say that we are now being approached by experts to join us (rather than us begging them to come on board)!

Our current roster of problem solvers looks like this:

**Whittlesea Community Connections (Legal, Social Work), Brotherhood of St Lawrence (NDIS), Merri Health Victims Assistance (Domestic Violence), City Of Whittlesea (My Aged Care, Community Home Assistance), Banyule Community Health (Lift Mental Health Program), United Kildonan (Financial Counselling), Services Australia (Centrelink) and NHVic (No Interest Loans Scheme).**

In addition to these services our own staff, students and volunteers are also providing assistance with digital access for things like the \$250 Power Saving Bonus Scheme, MyGov Account set up and Vaccination Certificate access.

Each month on average we co-ordinate queries from 20 locals to access assistance from the experts above. Many of these locals require more than one expert in their corner so referrals each month are often over 30. The session lasts just 3 hours.

Our relationship with our expert team has developed to the point that we can now refer any emergency case we come across immediately (even Centrelink ones). We are currently in discussions with Services Australia to become a hub for all of their products.



WCC Legal Team ready for action!



Fix it Friday - NHVic Community Development Award Finalist

## **Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report - Judith Stewart**

Welcome to my volunteer report this year. 2021 has been as difficult for volunteers as was 2020.

2021 has turned into an on again/ off again year for everyone. Our many volunteers are now volunteers in waiting.

Through this lockdown a small number of volunteers have been able to offer support by administration, working extra hours above normal as a volunteer, looking after the needs of the House outside, contacting volunteers in waiting for a well-being chat, helping with food share and delivering food or vouchers and approaching the local retailers for donations that will help others.

Food and vouchers have been delivered to people in need and are greatly appreciated by the recipients.

The Community House has remained operational via Zoom which has enabled the committee, volunteers and members of the Community House to gather in groups. The amazing and talented Karen has kept us all entertained by organizing gatherings such as the Mad Hatters and a games session with having games items delivered to our homes.

As part of my role I have kept in touch with volunteers during 2021. Recently I asked volunteers that I spoke to by phone why they volunteered, what it meant to them and how they felt about the Whittlesea Community House, the following is a summary of their heartfelt responses:

### **Why do you Volunteer and what does it mean to you?**

"I have had wonderful experiences and circle of friends"

"Sense of belonging and connection"

"Help people feel better and make the world a better place"

"Being meaningful to the community. I do not have a family"

"Makes me feel good helping others to get things done"

"Volunteering is something to repay the privilege I was given when growing up"

"About learning about yourself and others. Contributing, helping, got a lot out of it"

"I like to feel I make a difference to the community in a different way"

"There are many positive outcomes being a volunteer. For me it has transformed my life in a variety of ways, such as learning and improving my skills, increasing my confidence and self-esteem"

## **How do you feel about the Whittlesea Community House?**

“The community house has warmth and connection and I feel that I belong”

“The community house staff and volunteers give kindness to people, the Community House does such a good job and is the centre of the community and the heart. The girls at the house are lovely and offer help to all”

“Community House is like a headquarters you report to”

“The community house is a hub and a focal point, access point connectivity, activity centre, change of life. Everyone who works at the house is unique, individual and lovely”

“House staff are a diverse group of knowledge and people”

“Community house staff are fantastic, cannot speak highly enough of them. They will do whatever you ask (normally hahaha). Community House is well used and a community hub”

“The Community House is awesome and does so much for people and help people in so many ways. Amazing what they can offer, it is the crutch of Whittlesea community. Staff are awesome. Fix it Friday is amazing”

“A great place to be welcomed and feeling welcome”

“The people of the house are great, welcoming and at times overworked. All the services are good and do a lot for the community”

“The community house is a go to hub for people who seek, find a new interest, skill, socializing i.e. Women’s Lunch, Big Blokes Brunch and various projects”

“The Community House is a place where you can walk in or out with no questions asked. It is the core of the community and offers so many choices”

“It’s fantastic being part of the Whittlesea Community House team. As the house is truly a stand out!”

**Judith Stewart**  
**Volunteer Co ordinator**



## Whittlesea Community Garden Report: Megan Smithwick

The Whittlesea Community Garden has continued to pivot, modify and quickly adapt to the changes imposed upon us again by COVID-19 throughout the last year. Our physical presence at the garden was again limited, but we have tried to maintain our friendships and garden interests through online connections.

Our supported session times which are run every Monday 9am - 12noon and Thursday 10am - 1pm were run with limited numbers in November and December 2020. Then in 2021 we enjoyed a whole month of normality in January, before beginning the roller coaster of lockdowns and restricted numbers from February through to now.

Luckily through some of this time we could still attend the garden, but with restrictions on numbers. To accommodate this we introduced a booking system for the Monday and Thursday sessions which worked very well. During the longer lockdown 6 we stayed connected via phone calls, zoom meetings, text message updates and weekly email newsletters.

We always aim to hold one event per month to provide continuing interest and opportunities for members and to promote the garden to the wider community. We have been fortunate enough to still run the following activities in between the changing restrictions:

- Christmas morning tea - 17 December 2020
- CWA visit to the garden - 20 January 2021
- Community Catch-Up Cuppa - 4 February, 4 March and 1 April 2021
- Whimsical Weaving - 1 April 2021
- DIY Terrarium - 15 April 2021
- Community Planting Day (with Landcare) 8 May 2021
- Macramé - 20 May 2021
- Weaving a Pod - 15 July 2021
- Bee Friendly - 25 August 2021 delivered online (originally planned for in person 11/8/21)
- Seed Saving - 15 September delivered online (original planned for in person 11/9/21)



Terrarium Workshop



Weaving in the sunshine!

The following activities have had the dates changed

- Bus tour to the Edible Forest (24 June to 5 August to 4 November)
- Eco Printing on Paper (29 July to 16 October)
- Launch of seed library and visit by Rob Mitchell (2 September to 30 September)

The concept of the three Community Catch-Up Cuppa events, in partnership with the Whittlesea Library and the City of Whittlesea, was to provide an opportunity for people in the community to come out and re-connect with each other post-covid. The Garden provides an outdoor venue where people feel comfortable and it is easier to maintain social distancing. On the 3rd session we also had police officers, neighbourhood watch and Espresso Legal attend.

Over the course of the last year we have applied for the following funding:

- Stronger Communities (Federal) grant- successful for \$3000 for automatic watering system
- Stockland grant- successful for \$1000 to create and launch a seed library
- CoW Reconnection grant - successful for \$5000 to run 6 workshops/activities
- National Science Week - successful for \$1000 to run a Native Bee workshop
- Budget Direct - unsuccessful
- Yates/Life Education - unsuccessful
- Landcare - pending
- CoW Neighbourhood event - pending

We were also fortunate to have two new artworks created for the garden this year through grant funding from the City of Whittlesea which was to support artists out of work due to the pandemic and create community art projects. Meg DeYoung created a new mural that reflects our garden. And Gay Chatfield created a pod. Both are very impactful additions to the garden and have received a lot of positive praise.

While the impact of COVID-19 has been immense it is pleasing to know that every day during the restrictions/lockdowns we have seen people utilising the open spaces of the garden for exercise and social interactions. The positive feedback and thanks from the community is extremely rewarding. We have even managed to have five new members join the garden.

For all of this, we would like to thank the Whittlesea Community House staff and committee of management, as well as the City of Whittlesea, Bunnings and the Whittlesea Township community for their continued support which has enabled the garden to flourish in the past year. We look forward to the ongoing success and growth of the garden and the many benefits it will bring to our community.



Our gorgeous new mural



The Pod

## **Women's Luncheon Report - Johanna Hauser**

To date we've had seven face to face get togethers this year - they consisted of morning tea and slap up feasts at our new venue, Whittlesea Community Activity Centre. We have relocated there because of the much larger space, however we have had to learn to live with time constraints (9am - 12 noon). Not much time to set-up, have a meal together and pack-up. We also had to practice Covid-19 food safety requirements.

Initially, Whittlesea Deli Café, vis-a-vis David Cordell, provided the catering (tasty treats) and then the wonderful Ani Presti took over, cooking up some storms in record speed. Leftovers from each session were delivered to the older and unwell residents of Whittlesea. We were just about to begin a new project 'Catering 101', when we went into lockdown again.

Regular participants have received weekly updates via 'Text Out Tuesday' and I've kept in contact with participants (land lines) with phone calls and face to face meetings. Despite the difficult conditions - we've had another unforgettable year and forged ahead, extending our network, galvanising our connectivity and deepening our ties in our community.

### **MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS**

RE-ORIENTATION OF OUR 'MO'.

Adjusting to the changes and limitations of the new world order.

THE INTRODUCTION OF 'CATERING 101'.

Brilliant idea (courtesy of the brain's trust) to provide catering for our group and also a fantastic, comprehensive course to hone participant's cooking skills. See flyer 'Catering 101'. Our kitchen crew's role would consist of set-up, meet/greet, serve, engage with participants, pack-up and clean-up.

### **OUR KITCHEN CREW VOLUNTEERS DEDICATION**

Even though our conditions were more difficult and challenging, everyone 'stayed the course'.

#### **KITCHEN CREW - THANK YOU!!!**

Nicola Rowe, Ani Presti, Karen McDonald, Mary-Lynn Griffith, Heather Murry, Jazmin (student), Cecille (student), Rachael (student), Sharon (student) and Johanna Hauser (facilitator).

#### **Partners and Supporters**

Sunlight TLC

David Cordell - Whittlesea Deli Café

Whittlesea Community House Committee of Management

### **SPEAKERS/ACTIVITIES**

Deb Morrow - Thermomix demonstration. Deb made tomato relish, which was donated to the Whittlesea Community House to be included in food hampers for people who are experiencing financial hardship.

Carmel Stafford - Financial Information (Utility Relief Grant and other financial issues) - Kildonan Uniting

Melanie Povey - Employment and Training Programs

### **The Numbers - 11<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 TO 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Meals: Seven, Attendees: 182, New members: 24, CALD: 3, Students: Four, Family Violence (Information/Support/Referral): 2, Volunteers: 8, Volunteer hours: 120



## Big Blokes Brunch report - Tim Russo

In the period from 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2021 to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021, the BBB collected \$840 and had an average of 25 attendees. If 2020 was a bad year, 2021 was a stinker. The continuing pandemic has created havoc with us all. The biggest casualties of the pandemic were the lack of socialising and the mental issues associated with that. We only met for 20 weeks this year. Continuity was a problem, it was difficult to plan anything with confidence and we often had to make last minute changes.

BBB people are a tough bunch. When we got together we didn't complain, we only talked about the good things. A positive approach was the attitude of the boys and the comradeship between them. This made my job so much easier.

During the year when the Department of Justice was not able to cook, we, with the help of Mary-Lynn, resorted to other methods to keep BBB going. I would like to thank the CWA ably run by Kate for cooking for us for many weeks. Also the toasties that got us by for a couple of weeks.

I would like to thank Johanna, Rhonda, Cecille and Sandra for helping out so much throughout the year. I couldn't have done this without you. I also wish to thank the WCH, CAC, the Community Garden and Ian McKenzie who collects leftover food for Foodshare for their support over the year.

The final thank you goes to all the BBB boys who turned up under difficult circumstances, you believed this would work and proved it did. Till we meet again, whenever!

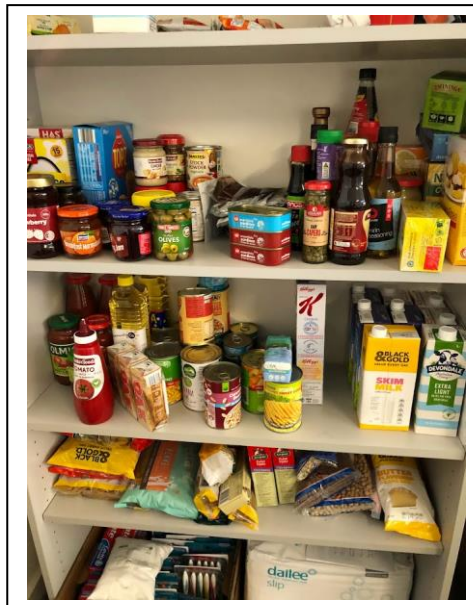
Tim



BBB back in action late 2020

## Food Relief Project - Ursula Jenkins and Margaret Brida

Emergency Food relief from WCH has continued to support an increasing number of families and single persons living on their own. Volunteers from the House spend on average four hours weekly collecting and delivering food items from the IGA donation box and packing up to 25 shopping bags with various household items. The House has reimbursed volunteers for their petrol when driving. The House staff have successfully organised two lots of direct funding used for vouchers across IGA, local takeaway shops, meat and the greengrocer. These shops have also frequently donated extra or matched our purchase which is encouraging. All of this relief has been very gratefully received and has led to ongoing House service connections.



We will keep this pantry stocked on hand to assist anyone new who comes to the House.

## Boomerang Bags report - Ursula Jenkins & Felicity Manislewski

Whittlesea Township Boomerang Bags has continued to sew weekly from home with coordinator Felicity delivering ready-to-sew packs to our valued volunteers in and around the township. Ursula has collected and sorted a staggering amount of fabric as everyone in Whittlesea decided to do covid cupboard cleanouts. The group has saved it all from landfill, distributing bags to the House, Delightful Fruits greengrocer and the Library. The Library has their own name label red tags. The group has made some purchases towards fabric cutting efficiency and storage organisation as well as acquiring perhaps optimistically a brand new 3x3m marquee for future market demonstrations. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the House and promoting a plastic free lifestyle.

Attached is a google drive link to our little slideshow that was used for a funding request this year. It features our incredible House Choir!

[Red Scalloped Pattern Japanese Collage Mood Board.mp4 - Google Drive](#)

## Whittlesea Landcare report

Whittlesea Landcare has shown resilience over the last 18 months and proved its worth to members not just in terms of land management information and support, but for the sense of community and connectivity that being in the group provides during such isolating times. Like all community groups worldwide, Whittlesea Landcare continues to struggle with the ongoing need for social distancing and lockdowns and the difficulties this creates for getting together, planning activities and continuing the momentum of the group. Having said that, we continue to connect when and how we can and have seen a consistent growth in membership and participation.

The group has formed some new community connections, primarily built around planting activities and the planting resources provided by grant funding from FRRR and City of Whittlesea during 2019. Through planting activities Whittlesea Landcare has formed new connections with Whittlesea Community Garden, Whittlesea Primary School, Whittlesea Secondary and Camp Warringal Scout Camp. Whittlesea Landcare always welcomes new members and casual participants.

### Workshops and activities

Activity	Date	Made possible by/Partnership with
Zoom meetings/Frog monitoring talk	October 2020	Merri Creek Management Committee and City of Whittlesea
Equiculture online course	November 2020	AV Jennings - Lyndarum North Community Grant and Melbourne Water
Yan Yean Swamp walk and talk picnic	December 2020	City of Whittlesea and Melbourne Water
Farm Bus tour 25 WL members participated in bus tour to local farms in the Nillumbik area.	March 2021	City of Whittlesea and DELWP
Whittlesea Landcare /Whittlesea Secondary Planting Day	May 2021	Supported by funding from the FRRR and City of Whittlesea

## Grants

Grant	Project	Funding	Outcome
Melbourne Water	Planting Site maintenance - partnering with Whittlesea Secondary	\$2,520.00	Pending
Victorian Landcare Support Grant	Ongoing group costs	\$500	Pending
Volunteers Grant - Federal	Laptop	\$1,890.00	Pending
Stockland	Seed Library - partnering with WCG	\$1000	Successful

Information on the group can be access by emailing [whittlesealandcare@gmail.com](mailto:whittlesealandcare@gmail.com) or visiting their Facebook page [Whittlesea Landcare](#)

## Other

- Whittlesea Landcare has membership and insurance with Landcare Vic Inc. This will be due for renewal for the 2022/23 period
- Secured ongoing DELWP funding for Landcare Facilitator until 2024



Planting Day at Whittlesea Secondary College



Yan Yean Walk and Talk Picnic



## Whittlesea Township Choir

**Whittlesea Township Choir** is our local community choir run out of the Community House. Since the 30 March 2020, the choir has been meeting online using the ZOOM platform provided by the Community House. So far we have had 60 sessions, ranging from 12-15 participants in each session. We were also able to host the Mernda Singers and Strummers to do their Ukulele sing along sessions via the House Zoom account.

The WTChoir and the S&S completed a very successful Virtual Choir recording as part of the Whittlesea Community Carols event, organised by the Combined Churches of Whittlesea, local schools and businesses. The event was streamed live on December 18th 2020. Here is the link just in case you missed it:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0j24ZV8yDs&ab\\_channel=EventsinWhittlesea](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0j24ZV8yDs&ab_channel=EventsinWhittlesea)

Late in 2020 on Zoom we celebrated the 80th birthday of Pat and her 60th anniversary. In 2021 we celebrated the birthdays of choir members, the birth of Kerry's granddaughter and the 16th birthday of our choir - Kerry having been our amazing leader for 14 years. One day we sang with silly hats on. With Zoom we were able to sing with singers who had injuries and we connected with our singers in other parts of the world and parts of Victoria. We appreciate that Zoom technology is difficult for some singers and they are unable to sing with us.

Kerry has made our Zoom experience a very satisfactory one by recording multiple user audio and video tracks for most of our songs so we can practise and learn them. This way we have a singing as a group experience when the time lag in Zoom makes it impossible to sing as a group. Kerry is to be commended for the incredible amount of time and effort she has put into recording parts for our Zoom experience.

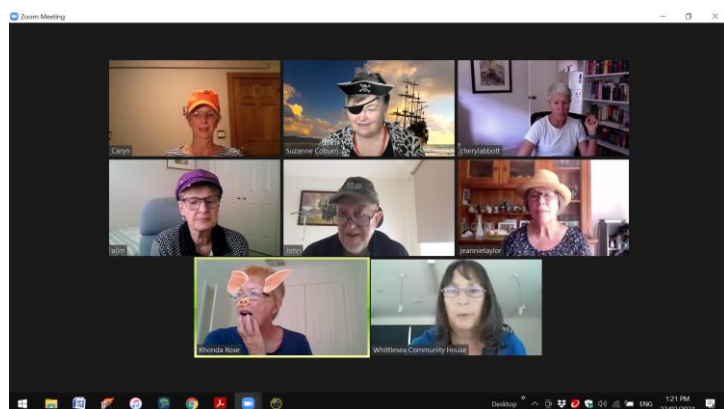
Below is a link Kerry made for "With One Voice" learning video with multiple views of Kerry singing all the parts.

<https://mixcord.co/acapella/p/2avh5uk2gAytEzPvLxss0A/>

We hope we can meet together safely before too long, as we all miss our friends and fellow singers very much, but we are very lucky to still be connected thanks to all of Kerry's efforts.



Special Masks for Singing



Silly Hats Session February 2021