



**Whittlesea  
Community  
House**



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

# **Whittlesea Community House Incorporated**

## **Annual Report 2022**

## Whittlesea Community House Incorporated 2022 Annual Report

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



All together for Christmas 2021



Everyone was in the Spirit for Christmas!

## **AGM 2022**

To be held on Thursday 13th of October 2022 at 10.30am.

### **AGM Agenda**

**Welcome:** Kerry Clarke  
**Apologies:** Judith Stewart and Sharon Palling

**Minutes from previous meeting:** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2021

#### **Motion:**

That Minutes from the 2021 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 2021-22**

#### **General business:**

#### **Motion:**

That Robin Russell be appointed to undertake an independent accountant's review for 2022/23 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**  
**Thursday 21st October 2021**  
**Meeting Opened: 1.05pm**

<b>Attendance</b>	K.Clarke, K.McDonald, R.Rose, B.Flenley, S. Canning, H.Jolly, K.Nikitsis, M.Smithwick, C.Looker, M.Griffith, C.Russo, T.Russo, J.Sless, B.Moore, J.Hauser, S.Coburn, M.Brida, A.Dalgleish, U.Jenkins, J.Stewart
<b>Apologies</b>	M.Dunscombe, L.Wilson, C.Lloyd

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome Address from AGM Facilitator:</b>	Kerry Clarke	Kerry acknowledged the indigenous custodians of the land we are on and paid respect to their elders past, present and emerging. Kerry welcomed all the members, staff and guests and thanked them for Zooming in today.
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes from previous meeting</b> <b>Date: Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2020</b>	<b>Motion:</b> That minutes from the 2020 AGM be accepted as true and correct	Moved: T.Russo Seconded: J.Stewart Carried
<b>3</b>	<b>Receipt and consideration of the Annual Report of the Committee 2021 – Kerry Clarke</b>	<b>Motion:</b> That the 2020-21 Financial Statements, as tabled, be accepted.	Moved: C.Looker Seconded: M.Brida Carried
<b>4</b>	<b>Reports from Auspice Groups</b> <b>Kerry Clarke</b>		Kerry spoke about the activities of the Community Recovery Committee, in trying to get the Emergency Plan updated and the Community Emergency Recovery Network initiated. Negotiating with FRRR for funding to undertake these.
<b>5</b>	<b><u>Manager's Report:</u></b> Read & presented by: Mary-Lynn Griffith	<b>As per the Annual Report</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Receipt and consideration of the Financial Statements of the Association 2020-2021</b> Read and presented by: Kate Looker	<b>Motion:</b> That report be accepted as true and correct	Moved: C.Looker Seconded: M.Brida Carried

7	<b>Presentation of Review of Certified Annual Financial Statement (Auditor)</b> Read & presented by: Catherine Looker	<b>Motion:</b> That the Certified Review of the 2020-21 Financial Statements, by the auditor, be accepted.	Moved: C.Looker Seconded: S.Canning Carried
		<b>Motion:</b> That Robin Russell be appointed to undertake an independent review for 2021/22 financial year accounts	Moved: C.Looker Seconded: T.Russo Carried
8	<b>Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report</b> Read & presented by: Judith Stewart	As per the Annual Report	
9	<b>Community Garden Report</b> Read & presented by: Megan Smithwick	As per the Annual Report	
10	<b>WACCA</b> In recess	As per the Annual Report	
11	<b>Election of Committee Members</b> Confirmation of Secretary (ongoing position). Angela Dagleish (1)	The current Committee stood down and all positions were declared vacant. Nominations have been declared in advance - committee members and auspice/sub-group appointees. There were no vacancies for Nominations from the floor.	
	<b>Auspice/Subgroup Nominees</b> <b>Community Recovery Committee</b> Kerry Clarke (2)	Nominator: M.Brida Seconded: R.Rose Appointed	
	<b>WACCA</b> Margaret Brida (3)	Nominator: U.Jenkins Seconded: R.Rose Appointed	
	<b>Whittlesea Community Garden</b> Rhonda Rose (4)	Nominator: M.Brida Seconded: K.Clarke Appointed	
	<b>Co-opted to ongoing WCH Garden Working Group</b> Heather Jolly	Co-opted	
	<b>Elected Members</b>		
	<b>Zlata Ramek (5)</b>	Nominator: M.Brida Seconded: R.Rose Appointed	
	<b>Tim Russo (6)</b>	Nominator: M.Brida Seconded: K.Clarke Appointed	
	<b>Catherine Looker (7)</b>	Nominator: K.Clarke Seconded: U.Jenkins Appointed	
	<b>Judith Stewart (8)</b>	Nominator: R.Rose Seconded: M.Brida Appointed	

	<b>Brett Flenley (9)</b>	Nominator: R.Rose Seconder: M.Brida Carried
	<b>A full committee of 9 members was elected. Congratulations to all.</b>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Explanation and thank you</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles of Chair, Deputy Chair and other positions will be determined by the committee at the meeting directly following the AGM.</li> <li>• Kerry thanked Ursula for her work on the committee and her dedication to the Food Relief Program.</li> <li>• Kerry spoke about the new Community Recovery Committee.</li> <li>• On behalf of CoW, Kelisha Nikitsis thanked the Chair and Whittlesea Community House for their work within the community. Kelisha also mentioned the Vaccine pop ups in the area and offered any help or advice regarding vaccination.</li> <li>• Marg thanked CoW for their ongoing support for the emergency food relief program.</li> <li>• Suzanne Coburn commented on Whittlesea Township Choir's 67 Zoom sessions and thanked Kerry for her efforts in running these during the past 18 months.</li> <li>• Kerry then thanked the committee members past and present for their dedication. Thanks also to our amazing volunteers. Kerry thanked Karen McDonald, Chris Russo and Sandra Canning who handled the administration of the AGM and Annual Report.</li> </ul>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Meeting Closed</b>	Time 1.57pm

## **Whittlesea Community House Team 2021-22**

### **Committee of Management**

Kerry Clarke (Chair), Tim Russo (Vice Chair), Kate Looker (Financial Officer), Angie Dalglish (Secretary), Margaret Brida (Food Relief), Judith Stewart (Volunteer Co-ordinator), Rhonda Rose (Minutes Secretary), Ursula Jenkins (Boomerang Bags & Food Relief), 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:	Rhonda Rose
Big Blokes Brunch Coordinator:	Tim Russo
LAN games facilitators:	Ben Murphy/David Schultz
Boomerang Bags Facilitator:	Ursula Jenkins
Whittlesea Township Choir:	Kerry Clarke

### **Awesome Teachers**

Ricky Nuske	Pilates
Ursula Jenkins	Digital Literacy
Abbey Dagg	Tea and Tech
Kate Riddell	Mental Health First Aid
Louise Richards EHS	First Aid
Rod Smith	Boat Licencing
Debbie Burke	Barista Training
Ian Hocking	Welding & Machining
Caroline Duke	Food Safety and RSA
Cove Training	Stop Slow
Jacqueline Constantin	Auslan and Auslan Next Steps
Deb Morrow	Thermomix Sessions
Christine Stonehouse	Crafternoons
Cecille Singapu	Catering for Community

## 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, Margaret Brida, Zlata Romek, and Brett Flenley
- Women's Luncheon volunteers: Chris Russo, Allyson Griffith, Karen McDonald, Mary-Lynn Griffith, Rhonda Rose, Ingrid Norris, Deb Morrow, Andrea Chapman and Cecille Paulo and Sandra Canning
- Big Blokes Brunch facilitator, Tim Russo and his assistant Barrie Stewart
- Big Blokes Brunch volunteers: Rhonda Rose and Sandra Canning and Cecille Paulo
- House garden volunteers: Rhonda Rose
- 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 – Keith Sutton, Barry & Judith Stewart, Antoinette Hall, Anita Burrows, Maryanne Barclay, Margaret Brida, Johanna Hauser, Jeffery Wakefield, Ingrid Norris, Elaine Mountey and Rhonda & Geoff Rose, Heather Jolly, Kevin Clarke, Audrey Balmaceda, Judith Senese, Lorraine Gregory, Les James, Gary Appleford, Karen Wilson, Dearne Brasher, Trevor Wilson, Yana Dunk, Ann Wright, Peter O'Brien, Sherrael Smith, Bev Moore, Glenda Vincent, Jodi Trinder, Dianne Trinder, Lynne Wilson and Sean Lineham.
- Whittlesea Community Garden Group Members: Journey Early Learning, Whittlesea Library and TLC Sunlight Aged Care
- LAN games supervisors Ben Murphy
- Whittlesea Men's Shed
- Kinglake Seniors weekly Trip organiser Val Scott
- Kinglake weekly bus trip drivers - Jim France, Errolyn Simmonds and Glenys McDonald
- Family Games Night coordinators: Nicole Stokes and Maree Evans
- Landcare Group Co-ordinators, Jane, Emma and Brigitte
- Boomerang Bags group co-ordinators, Ursula Jenkins and Felicity Maniszewski
- Tax Help - Chris Peng
- Food Relief - Ursula Jenkins and Margaret Brida
- Pet Food Relief Drivers: Glenys McDonald and Lynne Gatehouse
- Water Aerobics Drivers: Glenys McDonald and Ann Wright



## Committee Chair Report: Kerry Clarke

Hello to everyone.

Thank you to everyone responsible for the impressive Annual Report. Please make sure you read it as this is the representation of our activities for this year.

On your behalf, I wish to thank our amazing Staff for working over and beyond on behalf of the community. They work very hard in trying circumstances. Thank you. Particular thanks to our House Manager, Mary Lynn, for her hard work and leadership, in the face of the many challenges faced this year.

Mary Lynn is ably supported by our other terrific Staff members, both paid and volunteer. Thanks to Karen for 'patiently' juggling the many changes involved with our House activities.

Thanks must go to the Committee who volunteer their time and views to keep the House running. It is a demanding voluntary job with very little reward, other than helping our community.

- Ursula and Margaret have been exemplary committee and community members, co-ordinating emergency relief for people in need. What a contribution they have made to our community.
- Thank you to Tim for being Deputy-Chair and filling the Chair so ably, when I double booked myself or dashed off to Adelaide!!
- Again Kate has filled the role of Financial Officer and has managed this challenging role with aplomb.
- Our trusty minute taker Rhonda has excelled yet again, in addition to being the garden stalwart for the House.
- Judith has been wonderful in her role as Volunteer Co-ordinator. She has really helped us all stay connected.
- Zlata has managed to keep in touch despite the challenges of technology!
- Angela continued as our Official Secretary.
- Brett was able to bring new insights and views to the committee.

This has been yet another challenging year that has called on all our reserves of patience and understanding. The seeking of help from the community has really blown out this year. Many people in need have nowhere else to go for help. This puts extra strain on our staff time and our financial resources.

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

Kerry Clarke

Committee Chair

Whittlesea Community House Inc. 2022

## Finance Officer Report: Kate Looker

Please see the independent review of Financial Statements from the Year Ended June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

*Catherine Looker*

Catherine Looker  
Finance Officer, Whittlesea Community House Inc.



The House is visited by Minister for Disability Nicholas Carbines MP and Danielle Green MP for Yan Yean

## **Manager's Report: Mary-Lynn Griffith**

### **2021-2022: Challenges and Highlights:**

We had a further 89 days in lockdown this year from (16 to 27 July then from 5 August to 21 October 2021. After lockdown was lifted we had QR codes for our sites and kept the required register of visitors and vaccinations for our onsite courses and activities. Starting back was difficult for a lot of our community members, staff and volunteers with covid outbreaks continuing to limit activities and participation throughout the year. The Whittlesea Community House staff and volunteers have done an outstanding job in keeping our vulnerable community members engaged and supported and fed remotely as well as in person, and now re-engaged with courses, activities and services at the House, Community Garden and other WCH venues.

There were many highlights...

#### **Highlights:**

- “Careers Night for Grown-ups” - 2 Feb 2022 at the Whittlesea CAC with 19 stall holders attracted 57 attendees keen to catch up on next chapter options
- The “Wills and Wishes” clinic with La Trobe Uni law school students supervised by Legal service lawyers, delivering wills, powers of attorney documents, guardianship to over 140 community members in person and on the phone
- “Fix it Friday” services outreach services program Phone In and onsite services throughout 2021-2022 helping over 250 people
- Installation of a new Solar PV system at the House plus a Community Solar Power talk with John Edwards on 11 Feb 2022
- Try a Trade - Women Onsite Trades tester for women was held on, Sunday 3 April 2022 at the Central Ranges trades Training School with 11 young women in attendance
- Happy Sad Man film night for men's mental health week
- Volunteers Biggest Morning Tea: Celebration of volunteers, 70 attended, with excellent catering at the Whittlesea Bowls Club
- RUOK day saw a zoom online morning tea, with laughter yoga and happy bags delivered to all participants
- Creation of the Whittlesea Community House 2022 calendar with an ‘important’ day for most days of the year. Bringing people together on, for example, bubble wrap appreciation day, amongst others
- Healthy Partnerships project with Department of Health and Neighbourhood houses Victoria, providing \$10K for speakers at Community Lunches such as Diabetes Australia, Stroke Foundation, Let's talk dementia, Unpacking Men's Health toolbox
- Christmas Food Hamper project with Foodshare delivering Christmas Hampers to vulnerable local families
- ‘Pop up’ proof of vaccinations sessions

- Whittlesea Community House Christmas Party at the Bowls club 16 December 2021
- Law Week panel event: Seniors Squad panel Q&A attracting 35 people as well as Attorney General Jaclyn Symes MP, law foundation senior staff and local member Danielle Green MP
- Visit by Minister Anthony Carbines where we could discuss needs of our community and our organisation
- Voices of Victoria VCOSS Listening tour facilitation of 20 Whittlesea Township community members contribution to the 'effects of covid and lockdowns and visions of the future' research
- Launch of WCG street library and seed library
- Big Blokes Brunch Movember Fundraiser Trivia Quiz
- "Text Out Tuesday" - sms direct weekly service keeping up to 400 people aware of activities, services and community information throughout lockdown and continuing
- Big Blokes Brunch onsite Coordinated by Tim Russo and fed by volunteers - Chris, Sandra, Karen and Rhonda, or Dave's Whittlesea Deli
- Whittlesea Food relief Project: delivering essential food items to around 30 families and individuals. Donations are from the Whittlesea IGA drop off box, community members and through grants from City of Whittlesea and donations from community members



Careers Night for Grown Ups



Digital Literacy sessions are a big hit

### **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 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,
- 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)
- Intro to permaculture (Jesuit Community College)
- QuickBooks online (ACFE)
- Machining for beginners (ACFE)
- Animation 101 (ACFE)
- Welding for Beginners (ACFE)
- Digital Literacy for Smart Devices (ACFE)
- Digital Skills for work and study (ACFE)
- Catering 101 (ACFE)
- Auslan and Auslan Next Steps

#### **Running recreational training and classes**

- Boat Licence (ABC Boating College)
- Wellness programmes: Walking Group, Pilates, Yoga
- Beginners ukulele

#### **Careers Event:**

- On Wednesday 2 February 2022, we ran the “Careers Night for Grown Ups” at the Whittlesea CAC in the recognition that many people either lost employment or had to change employment with the changes during and after lockdown. In partnership with the Whittlesea library, we had 16 stall holders from agencies and providers such as Go Tafe Wallan, Job providers, Melbourne polytechnic, Apprenticeships etc with stalls, knowledgeable people and goodies for show bags. 57 people attended the event and many stall holders met their counterparts for the first time.
- **Women Onsite try a trade day for women** at Central Ranges trades training Centre. We partnered with the Women Onsite team, a project from Trades Hall, to set up a day of 4 trades for young women considering a career in trades. In all 11 women attended the programme which was excellent.

## **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 and in person with Kerry Clarke
- Local Area Network computer (LAN) games for teens with Ben Murphy
- Whittlesea Community Garden supported sessions and workshops: facilitated by Megan Smithwick
- Whittlesea Boomerang Bags facilitated by Ursula Jenkins
- Whittlesea Landcare



- Family Games night facilitated by Maree and Nicole
  - Pilates with Ricki and Tatiana
  - Walking Group: Heart Smart with Sandra
  - Crafternoons with Christine Stonehouse
  - Aquarobics at Hidden Valley resort with Tatiana
  - Yoga with Wendy from Eternal Energy Yoga
- 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:**  
Since easing of lockdown restrictions, the fortnightly community women's lunch has grown with new participants and a partnership with our Catering for Community course (ACFE funded which is teaching small groups to cater for large ones thus providing a regular meal for around 35 women. Highlights include Deb's fabulous Thermomix demonstrations making peanut butter on World peanut butter day and lemon curd. Also, speakers from Diabetes Australia and the Stroke Foundation.
  - **Big Blokes Brunch:**  
The Big Blokes Brunch started again after lockdown with an array of helpers - volunteer cooks and takeaways until the department of Justice could return. Facilitated by Tim Russo and helped by Rhonda and others, the Big Blokes brunch continues to provide an excellent platform for engagement. Highlights were raising money for Men's health with a Movember Quiz day and speakers from health agencies on diabetes, stroke and unpacking the men's toolbox on mental health.
  - **Emergency relief:**  
We have continued to provide emergency relief - vouchers from IGA, Gillies Meats and Ampol fuel vouchers as well as pantry packs dovetailing with Foodshare to ensure there is something available when Foodshare is not open. Ursula and Margaret have continued to collect donations and pack and deliver weekly provisions to vulnerable community members.

#### **Community Services:**

- **Wills and Wishes:** Now well established, this weekly Legal Clinic with La Trobe Uni law students supervised by Whittlesea Community Legal service continues to provide free wills and powers of attorney and appointment of medical decision maker in exchange for providing 'real life' clients for final year law students to 'practice' on. Around 140 people utilised this service this year, service continued on the phone during lockdowns.
- **Fix it Friday (FiF):** The FiF Services outreach continues to assist, on average, 25 people with up to 38 agency referrals at each monthly 3-hour session. FiF is a multi-partner project with WCH and Whittlesea Community Connections Legal service and Social work team and includes specialists

from Centrelink, Uniting Financial counselling, Merri health victims of crime assistance, Lift mental health programme, Brotherhood of St Laurence's NDIS, My Aged care (COV assessment team), staff from office of Danielle Green MP, Nils No interest Loans scheme (NH Vic) and Whittlesea Police and HACCPYP. The work of FiF has expanded with the increasing digital divide and services now include my gov accounts and power saving bonus applications. The students were able to help a wide variety of people with minor legal matters supervised by a solicitor from Whittlesea Community Legal service.

- **General Legal Clinic:** We were able to host a fines and everything else general legal clinic with the La Trobe Uni law school both onsite and on the phone.
- **Pop up Proof of vaccination clinics:**  
Many vulnerable community members were unable to show proof of vaccination required to access the pool, some shops and the Bowls club for instance. We set up a series of weekly drop in sessions with digital help volunteers, including community services students on placement, students and staff. Assistance involved a wide variety of help including getting a my gov account, linking Medicare, downloading apps, upgrading software and printing out and laminating vaccination certificates and photo id. In all around 68 people were assisted in the clinics by these 5-star volunteers.
- **Tea and Tech Drop In:**  
With what we'd seen of the digital divide we started the "Tea and Tech drop in" with a range of topics including scams and streaming. Around 5-6 people attend the weekly drop in and seek answers to a wide range of tech issues.

## **Volunteers and Student Placements**

**We could not do what we do without volunteers and our student placements.**

### **Volunteering:**

This year 85 volunteers and helpers 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.

Our volunteer service hours for teaching courses, activities and services was around 1489 and in addition volunteer hours for committee work, emergency relief and driving and cooking was around 800 hours.

**And we have been ably assisted by 8 community services students on placement, with diverse talents:** Rachel Stephens, Sharon Varley, Charelle Curic Lisa O'Sullivan, Cecille Paulo, Jazmyn Banda, Ally Griffith and Zachary Priest.

## Partnerships

We could not do what we do without our wonderful partnerships. Over the past year we have enjoyed the following partnerships:

. In the past financial year, we have enjoyed working with these amazing organisations:

City of Whittlesea	Big Blokes Brunch, many other projects and grants
Department of Justice and Community Safety	Big Blokes Brunch (weekly)
Whittlesea Local Area Network	Member with other community, sporting and traders' organisations
Whittlesea Community Connections	Espresso Legal, Fix it Friday, Wills and Wishes Clinic, General Legal Help Clinic, L2P program support, Emergency relief Network and other projects
Whittlesea Secondary College and Central Ranges trades training Centre	Whittlesea Uke Muster, Trades training Day, Welding and Machining courses
Whittlesea Combined Ministries	Volunteers and helpers for Food share and combined Christmas hampers
Whittlesea Library	Pick up of donations for ER, partner for Careers Night for Grown Ups, sharing of resources and community info
Pines Learning RTO	Onsite teaching of individual support course plus sharing of many resources and community marketing
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria	Power Saving Bonus partner, No interest Loans partner and Healthy Partnerships (with Dept of Health) partner
Bunnings	Gardening projects and free seeds etc for lockdown care bags and RUOK day
Whittlesea Bowls Club	Sponsors for van and boomerang bags plus meal vouchers and community venue for morning tea events.
Jesuit Community College	Provision of horticulture course for our community at the Community Garden

## Donations

Many thanks to the following for their great generosity:

**Whittlesea Men's Shed** - tools, time and enthusiasm

**Bunnings** -Garden equip and seeds for our RUOK day care packs and cleaning gear for our online chem-free event

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

**Rob Mitchell MP** - ongoing support

**Danielle Green MP** - ongoing support and participation in Fix it Friday helping community members.

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



**Whittlesea Community members and surrounds:** Emergency relief supplies through the IGA donation box and material for our Boomerang Bags group sewing bees.

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

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

**Mill Park traders** - for generous donation to Whittlesea Boomerang Bags group

**Kate Looker** for meat for Big Blokes brunch

**Commonwealth Bank** -for donation to our Emergency relief programme

**IGA Community Chest** for donation for emergency relief

### **The year in numbers**

Staff hours per week: 83.5

Manager, Mary-Lynn Griffith -24.5, Marketing and Administration, Karen McDonald- 21, WCG co-ordinator, Megan Smithwick- 9, Front of house, Chris Russo 9, Accounts and Administration, Sandra Canning, 20

- Typical number of visitors per week to the WCH, online and off-site programmes **158**
- Number of people reached through programs, activities and events in the 2021-2022 year: **750**
- Number of different activities/courses offered at the WCH: **36**
- Number of volunteers as at 30 June 2022: **41**
- Average number of volunteer hours per week: **85 hours** (around 4250 hours per year of 50 weeks)
- Dollar value of volunteer hours **per week** based on rate of \$25 per hour: \$2125. (That is an extraordinary \$106250 worth of volunteer power per year (based on 50 weeks)
- Number of community luncheons -**58 luncheons serving around 1740 meals.**

Thanks to all the staff and volunteers who kept spirits up and the Community House going through this challenging year.

Mary-Lynn Griffith, Manager



Craftermoons brings people together



All together for Christmas

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

Welcome to my volunteer report for 2022, which has been a year of getting together again for volunteers.

Hooray! We now have 43 active volunteers.

Whittlesea Community House would not be the extraordinary place it is today without our extraordinary volunteers who perform a wide variety of tasks to enable the House to operate so effectively.

As volunteers, we are part of a very important, dedicated group of people who help carry out our mission in the community we serve.

**Thank you - Thank you**

To all our Community House Committee members who contribute behind the scenes, ensuring the House meets all its legal obligations.

To all the people who come to our House and external venues for our many classes, activities, workshops, women's luncheon and Big Blokes Brunch.

To our amazing administration team for the many extra hours they offer as volunteers.

To all our volunteers who dedicate their time and goodness of heart to support others in the community.

Volunteers are an integral part of the Whittlesea Community House and without them we would be unable to operate effectively.

If you wish to volunteer, we will welcome you with open arms.

**Judith Stewart**  
**Volunteer Co Ordinator**



Together at last! Volunteer Week Morning Tea



VCOSS Listening Tour Volunteers

## Whittlesea Community Garden Report: Megan Smithwick

The Whittlesea Community Garden has flourished post-COVID. Our members were very keen to return to the garden and enjoyed the opportunity to socialise in an outdoor setting with ease of social distancing. With only minor restrictions/lockdowns in the last year we were able to successfully return to our normal supported session times.

The session times have continued to run every Monday 9am - 12noon and Thursday 10am - 1pm.

With support from Bunnings we were able to offer 'return to the garden kits' for all of our members.

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 and encourage new memberships. Over the past year, in between the various restriction periods and the since the continued return to the garden, we have hosted the following activities:

Bees Wax Wrap workshop - 18 November 2021

DIY Christmas Gift workshop - 2 December 2021

Launch of seed library & morning tea - 9 December 2021

Reflect & Make art (2009 bushfire anniversary) - 7 February 2022

DIY Home Cleaning product workshop - 17 February 2022

Bees Wax Candle making workshop - 17 March 2022

Preserving workshop - 19 March 2022

Edible Forest Bus Trip - 4 March 2022

Mosaic workshops x 3 - May 2022

Street Library launch & morning tea - June 2022

Winter Open Day & Winter Warmer workshop - 16 June 2022

Bohemian Terracotta painting workshop x 2 - 30 June & 7 July 2022

Lunch & celebration with presenter at council - 23 July 2022

Spring Open Day & DIY air-dry clay activity - 8 & 15 September 2022



Black Saturday Anniversary Art Session



WCG Little Library is installed



Coming up we have:

Beginners Weaving workshop - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Create & Weave a garden sphere ornament - 27 October 2022

Create & Weave a Christmas wreath - 17 & 24 November 2022

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

- Stockland grant- successful for \$1000 to host bohemian terracotta painting workshops
- Communities Environment Program - successful for \$7500 to run 6 activities
- City of Whittlesea (CoW) Community Recovery grant - successful for \$2000 to run 4 open days with activities
- Landcare - successful for \$500 for promotional material
- Freemasons - unsuccessful
- CoW Neighbourhood event - successful for \$2000 to run 4 weaving workshops
- CoW Gardening Together Again Program - successful for \$2998 to upgrade infrastructure



Bus Trip to The Edible Forest



The Seed Library

We participated in the CoW 'Gardening Together Again' Program. This program was run by council as a pandemic recovery project to encourage new community gardens and re-invigorate existing community gardens. This program consisted of 10 activities, including a bus trip to other community gardens, online and in person workshops and lunch with guest speaker 'Vasilli'.

Some changes to the garden in the last year include:

- New 3 bay composting system which is much more durable and easier to use.
- New irrigated watering system to all garden beds.
- New 'café blinds' to the extended shed veranda area.
- Mosaic seat created and installed at the Lemon Tree Project
- Repairs to notice board and bath stands
- Installation of a seed library
- Installation of a street library

In addition to these physical changes the last year has also seen:

- 8 new garden members
- DVSD school students & Journey Early Learning students visiting the garden regularly
- A Christmas Tree entered in the 'Community Christmas Tree Extravaganza' that will be hosted at the Whittlesea Agricultural Show grounds.
- Increased presence on facebook

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.



Mosaic Installation at the Lemon Tree Project



Bees Wax Candle Workshop



DIY Cleaning Products



Ag Society Xmas Tree Extravaganza entry



## Big Blokes Brunch report - Tim Russo

In the period from 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the BBB averaged 22 attendees each week and raised approximately \$40 per week.

Compared to last year, 2022 was an improvement. We were able to meet more regularly. The Department of Justice came back in August which made it easier on us all. We didn't have to plan week to week. A big thank you to Rhonda, Sandra and Chris who stepped in to cook for the boys. I and the boys are forever grateful for their efforts, especially as I didn't have to cook!

What never changed was the positive approach and the attitude of the boys and the comradeship between them. A special thank you to Rhonda and Sandra again for helping set up and serve food. A big thank you to Barry, Ian and Steve who helped me when needed.

I also wish to thank the WCH, CAC, the Community Garden for their continued support throughout the year.

The final thank you goes to all the BBB boys who turned up under difficult circumstances to keep the BBB viable and relevant.

Tim



Big Blokes enjoy a BBQ at the Garden



Back at the CAC!



Big Blokes November Trivia Quiz!



Enjoying the sunshine

## Food Relief Project - Ursula Jenkins and Margaret Brida

Emergency food relief offered by the House has proven to be an essential lifeline of immediate help to about 20 family groups. It also allows the House to learn more about each person's situation and connect those people with other helpful services.

This year the Foodshare team have focused on collecting donated food items from the IGA box each week and assembling individual shopping bags with enough grocery items to provide at least 5 basic meals, snacks, tea and sugar, toothpaste and brushes, and soap.

Any larger donations such as the 5kg rice, flour and sugar, tea bags, we have further bagged into little portions in an effort to spread these resources further.

Pet food provided by Second Chance in Craigieburn has continued to help us any time we've asked. Thank you to all the House volunteers who give up their time making the trip to collect everything from little kitten milk sachets to huge 20kg dog food bags.

Whittlesea IGA have also indicated they are planning to financially support us again. We received their Community Chest money last year and while it's not confirmed, we will ask for gift cards as this makes it easy for House staff to administer funds.

The Foodshare team is simply thrilled by the Committee's support of the street front pantry cupboard! We accept there will no doubt be some misuse and vandalism but this shouldn't deter your support. Having anonymous access to food support might be the only reason some people in the town eat each day.

From everyone participating in House Foodshare, THANK YOU to the House Staff and Committee for your compassion and willingness to assist.



Pantry Packs with thanks to local donations



Our new Community Pantry



## Boomerang Bags report - Ursula Jenkins

Boomerang Bags is a very active local group of people meeting weekly to upcycle unwanted textile waste. This year marks our sixth in operation and according to our records 800 bags have been produced since the start of the year up to September, bringing our overall production to 5000 bags since 2017. We have seen our bags used for shopping around town, used by Council at promo events, as library bags, as gift wrapping, and even sent interstate and overseas.

In addition to making the free shopping bags we have been contacted by many local town groups wanting us to custom make a specialty bag for them. These include: Journey childcare mini bags for the children to put their clothes in when they get into pj's and take naps, denim utility aprons with buckles for the Whittlesea Men's Shed, Micky's Cafe Mill Park custom logo totes, The People's Pantry custom totes for their foodshare program, Whittlesea Rainbow Pride group bags for Purple day and two sets of curtains hemmed for local residents.

We are a zero waste group, even tiny scraps and unusable fabric is saved from the bin and repurposed as stuffing for foot stools and padded dog beds. We have made three ottomans and giant dice for the library. Two scrap-stuffed dog beds were donated to Kinglake Mountain Vet.



Scrap stuffed dog bed for Kinglake Ranges Vet Clinic



Branching out to Mill Park and beyond!

Boomerang Bags made some welcoming bunting for the House, as the issue of front entrance branding and appearance was highlighted for improvement at the House strategic planning day. We will also soon be installing street signs for both Boomerang Bags and the House so keep your eyes peeled on the community group markers at the entrances to town. We feel it's a worthwhile investment and raises awareness of both our organisations.



We have made use of our marquee, attending the Whittlesea Monday market, Kinglake market and some mini pop up stalls at shopping centres in Mill Park, Ascot Vale and Tarneit is scheduled for November as part of our voluntary thank you to ISPT who awarded us a huge kickstarter grant.

We have acquired a very special display quilt. Made by fellow Bittern BB group, 90 groups from all over Australia posted their unique logo pockets to Bittern who then quilted them together into three gorgeous symbols of unity. We have one quilt and will display it with pride somewhere (probably at the Whittlesea CAC) and use it at our future market stall displays.

Our future plans include more market stalls and a Bunting hire library: sustainable, environmentally friendly party or event hire decorations. We plan to launch with 20 colour and word options and expand from there, offering Happy Birthday/Congratulations/Anniversary etc and lace wedding bunting. Hire will be free and just involve a refundable bond.

We have been asked to have both a gallery wall display and a retail market space at Doreen Bendigo Bank branch for the whole of March 2023. We will feature framed stories and photos from the group in the gallery wall and inspire more people to value community connection.

Ursula, Felicity, Beth, Kerry-Lynn, Margaret, Lindy, Deb, Sharon, Christine S, Terry, Lucy, Shelly, Kelly and Christine E would all like to say THANK YOU to the Whittlesea Community House Staff and Committee for all your administrative support and heartfelt encouragement. May your tea be strong and your sewing machine needles be sharp.

Ursula Jenkins



Boomerang Bags team in action



Produce Bags

## Whittlesea Landcare report

Whittlesea Landcare has been going since 2018 auspiced by Whittlesea Community House.

The second part of 2021 was dominated by ongoing Covid restrictions which did not allow the group to meet up in person. However, we had several interesting Zoom presentations on a variety of topics e.g. nestbox monitoring, microbats, weed identification.

During December members participated at a planting and weeding day at Whittlesea Secondary College in collaboration with the College. We were also able to hold our end of year function with members and friends meeting at the community garden for a BBQ.

March and April were focussed on nestbox building and a walk and talk at camp Warringal. During the visit to Camp Warringal we were able to see many possums and sugar gliders in the nestboxes. Visiting scouts' groups joined us on the walk. April also saw us farewelling our Landcare co-ordinator Jane Juliff.

A well received Propagation workshop in May was held in partnership with the Ag Society and the support of Meagan from the community garden.

17 Household memberships were renewed by the end of June with a total of 33 individual members. The members voted in June for Whittlesea Landcare to get incorporated - process is ongoing.

Whittlesea Landcare would like to Thank Whittlesea Community House for the assistance and guidance over the last 4 years.



Landcare Team Tree Planting at Tambo Conservation Area

## Whittlesea Township Choir

We have had quite a year of changes from singing on Zoom to singing face to face in masks and then back to singing on Zoom. Capably led by our fun and energetic Kerry Clarke, we had our choir rehearsals on Zoom for almost 2 years from 2020-2021.

In late November 2021, the Choir sang live at The New Horizons Church and in December at the Whittlesea Uniting Church for the Community Carols. We also submitted a video of us singing for the City of Whittlesea Carols in December.

From Feb 2022 to July 2022 we sang face to face at the Community House, but sang outside in our specially made singing masks and inside when the weather became cooler. We participated in a fabulous project called the Big Lost Band and performed on stage on the 26th March at the City of Whittlesea Festival which was great fun.

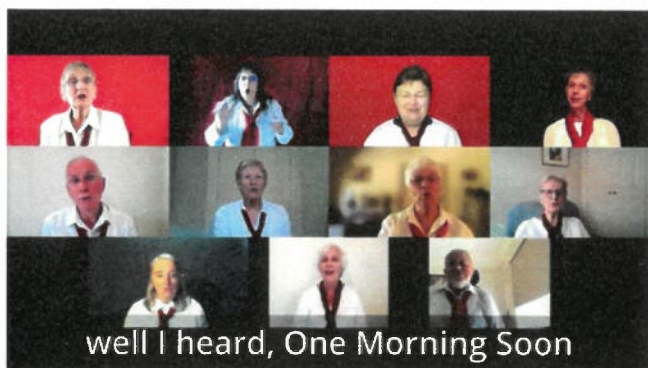
In late July, we were back singing on Zoom again due to the many Covid cases and also colds and flu in the community. Kerry has made this all possible with her desire to keep us connected and singing. She has put in so much effort to make Zoom a very interactive experience for us, making multi-tracks of all our songs so we don't feel like we are singing alone. This has been very much appreciated.

It is with great sadness to report that Joy Chatfield, one of the founding choir members, passed away suddenly on the 28th June 2022. We will miss her very much.

Our Choir had its 16th Birthday Anniversary on 22nd June 2022 and Ivan Petersen a singer in our Choir, had his fun 80th birthday celebration on 28th August at the Whittlesea Activity Centre.

We look forward to another fun year of singing together.

Suzanne Coburn



Looking good online



Choir returns!





Christmas Carols Carpark style!



Careers Night for Grown Ups Finally gets off the ground



Committee shows their appreciation for the staff



All together at Whittlesea Bowls

