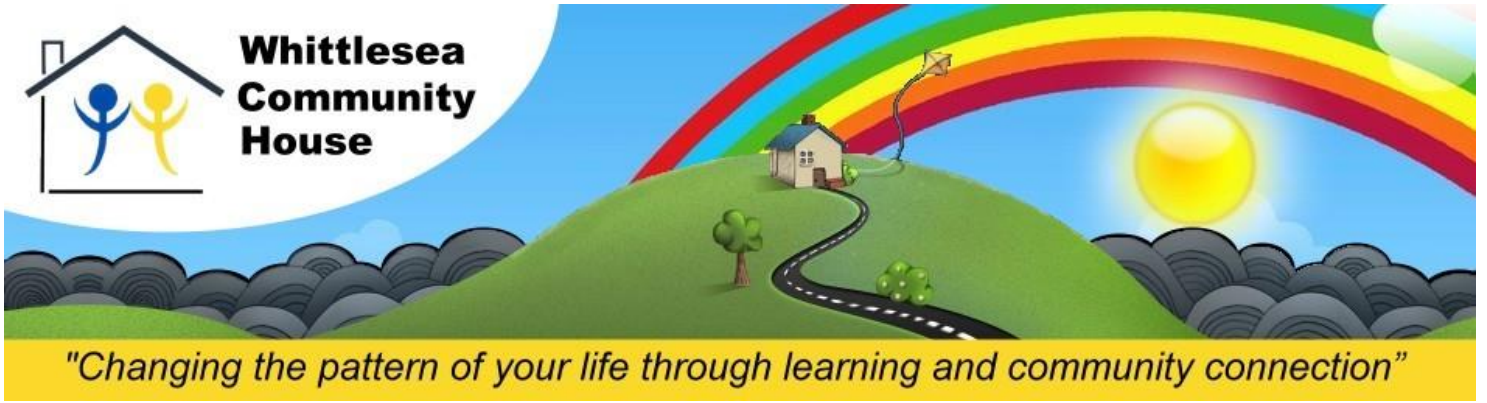




**Whittlesea
Community
House**



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

Whittlesea Community House Incorporated

Annual Report 2023

Whittlesea Community House Incorporated 2023 Annual Report

Table of Contents:

Agenda for AGM 2023	3
Minutes of AGM 2022	4
Whittlesea Community House Team 2022-23	7
Committee Chair Report	9
Finance Officer Report	11
Manager's Report	12
Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report	18
Whittlesea Community Garden Report	21
Fix it Friday	23
Big Blokes Brunch Report	22
Food Relief Report	24
Boomerang Bags Report	27
Whittlesea Township Choir	29
WhittleCUkes	30
WTSCRC	31

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

AGM 2023

To be held on Thursday 19th of October 2023 at 11.00am.

AGM Agenda

Welcome: Kerry Clarke
Apologies: Julie Johnson, Rob Mitchell

Minutes from previous meeting: Thursday 13st October, 2022

Motion:

That Minutes from the 2022 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

Tabling of audited Annual Financial Report 2022-23

General business:

Motion:

That Robin Russell be appointed to undertake an independent accountant's review for 2023/24 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 and Chris Russo who handled the administration of this AGM and the Annual Report.

Minutes
Whittlesea Community House Annual General Meeting
Thursday 13th October 2022
Meeting Opened: 10.45am

Attendance	K. Clarke, R. Mitchell, K. Mc Donald, R. Rose, B. Flenley, S. Canning, G. Vincent, G. McDonald, M. Smithwick, C. Looker, M. Griffith, C. Russo, T. Russo, S. Coburn, P. Everitt, M. Brida, U. Jenkins, J. Stewart, M. Crawford, J. Wakefield
Apologies	J. Johnston, A. Dalgleish, J. Satkowski, S. Palling, Z. Romek

1	Welcome Address from AGM Chair:	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.
2	Minutes from previous meeting Date: Thursday 21st October, 2021	Motion: That minutes from the 2021 AGM be accepted as a true and correct record. Carried	Moved: M. Brida Seconded: B.Flenley Carried
3	Receipt and consideration of the Annual Report 2022 of the Whittlesea Community House Incorporated 2022		
4	Chair Report and Auspice Groups Kerry Clarke		
5	<u>Manager's Report:</u> Read & presented by: Mary-Lynn Griffith		
6	Receipt and consideration of the Financial Statements of the Association 2021-2022 Read and presented by: Kate Looker Presentation of Review of Certified Annual Financial Statement (Auditor) Read and presented by Kate Looker	Motion: That 2021-22 Financial Statements and Reports as tabled be accepted as true and correct Carried Motion: That Robin Russell be appointed to undertake an independent review for 2022-23 financial year accounts Carried	Moved: C.Looker Seconded: T.Russo Moved: C. Looker Seconded: M. Brida

7	Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report Read & presented by: Judith Stewart	As per the Annual Report	
8	Community Garden Report Read & presented by: Megan Smithwick	As per the Annual Report	
9	Big Blokes Brunch Report Read and presented by Tim Russo Food Relief Project Report Read and presented by Marg Brida and Ursula Jenkins Boomerang Bags Report Read and presented by Ursula Jenkins Whittlesea Landcare Report As per the Annual Report. WCH auspice completed as at 1 st October, 2022 Whittlesea Township Choir Report Read and presented by Suzanne Coburn	Landcare now Victorian Farmers Landcare Organisation Motion: That all reports be accepted. Carried	Moved: K. Clarke Seconded: G. McDonald
10	Election of Committee Members Confirmation of Secretary (ongoing position). Angela Dalgleish	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. Nominator: K. Clarke Secunder: R. Rose Appointed	
	Whittlesea Community Garden Rhonda Rose	Nominator: B. Flenley Secunder: J. Stewart Appointed	
	Elected Members		
	Kerry Clarke	Nominator: R. Rose Secunder: T. Russo Appointed	
	Catherine Looker	Nominator: R, Rose Secunder: B. Flenley Appointed	
	Tim Russo	Nominator: R, Rose Secunder: B. Flenley Appointed	
	Margaret Brida	Nominator: J. Stewart Secunder: R. Rose Appointed	
	Judith Stewart	Nominator: R. Rose Secunder: B. Flenley Appointed	

	Brett Flenley	Nominator: R. Rose Seconder: J.Syewart Appointed
	Zlatica Romek	Nominator: K.Clarke Seconder: R,Rose Appointed
	A full committee of 9 members was elected. Congratulations to all.	
12	Explanation and thank you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles of Chair, Deputy Chair and other positions will be determined by the committee at the meeting directly following the AGM. • Rob Mitchell acknowledged the community support and assistance provided by Whittlesea Community House • Kerry then thanked the committee members past and present for their dedication. Thanks also to our amazing volunteers. Kerry thanked Karen McDonald and Chris Russo and who handled the administration of the AGM and Annual Report. 	
9	Meeting Closed	Time 11.55am



Scooter Safety Session May 2023

Whittlesea Community House Team 2022-23

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
Abbey Dagg – Administration and Marketing (during Karen’s leave)

Volunteer Group Coordinators

WCH Garden:	Rhonda Rose
Big Blokes Brunch Coordinator:	Tim Russo
LAN Games Facilitator:	David Schultz
Boomerang Bags Facilitator:	Ursula Jenkins
Whittlesea Township Choir:	Kerry Clarke
Kinglake Seniors Bus Trip	Val Scott
Family Games Night	Nicki Stokes

Awesome Teachers

Ricky Nuske	Pilates
Ursula Jenkins	Digital Literacy
Louise Richards - EHS Solutions	First Aid
Rod Smith – ABC Boating	Boat Licencing
Debbie Burke	Barista Training
Ian Hocking	Welding & Machining
Caroline Duke	Food Safety and RSA
Cove Training	Stop Slow
Deb Morrow	Thermomix Sessions
Christine Stonehouse	Crafternoons
David Cordell, Hala Zakuriya	Catering for Community
David Kleesh	Metal detecting
Sue Arnold	Ukulele
Karen Thompson	Be The Office Pro
Tatiana Eliseeva	Water Aerobics
Cath Murphy	Animation 101

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 51 volunteers and helpers who assisted this financial year and we are so grateful for 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, Ursula Jenkins and Brett Flenley
- Women's Luncheon volunteers: Chris Russo, Karen McDonald, Mary-Lynn Griffith, Rhonda Rose, Ingrid Norris, Deb Morrow, Andrea Chapman and Cecille Paulo, Sandra Canning, Judy Morgan, Glenys McDonald, Hala Zakuriya, Flora Saravia and Adam
- Big Blokes Brunch facilitators, Tim Russo and Rhonda Rose
- Big Blokes Brunch volunteers: Barrie Stewart, Ian McKenzie, Brett Flenley, Jill McKeever, De-arne Brasher, Judy Morgan and Sandra Canning
- House garden volunteers: Rhonda Rose and Sean Lineham
- Front of House office volunteers: Chris Russo, Glenys McDonald, Zac Priest, Bev Moore and Val Greig.
- 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, Rhonda & Geoff Rose, Heather Jolly, Kevin Clarke, Audrey Cobbing, Judith Senese, Lorraine Gregory, Les James, Gary Appleford, Karen Wilson, De-arne Brasher, Trevor Wilson, Yana Dunk, Ann Wright, Peter O'Brien, Sherrael Smith, Bev Moore, Glenda Vincent, Jodi Trinder, Dianne Trinder, Lynne Wilson, Sean Lineham, Erin Aquino and Judy Morgan
- Boomerang Bags Volunteers - Ursula Jenkins, Beth, Margaret, Lindy, Debbie M, Debbie D, Grace, Sue, Barbara, Adam, Christine, Michelle, Di, Sam and Janine
- Whittlesea Men's Shed
- Kinglake Seniors weekly Trip organiser Val Scott
- Kinglake weekly bus trip drivers - Jim France, Errolyn Simmonds, Sue Kenyon, Ann Wright and Glenys McDonald
- Family Games Night coordinators: Nicole Stokes and Maree Evans
- 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 able to make it here today.

Again, a big thank you to the hard-working office staff who put together the Annual Report. Please make sure you read it as this is the summation of our activities for the year.

My list of thank-yous seems to grow bigger every year as more great people put up their hands to work with our community organisation.

Thanks to our hard working and amazing Staff for going over and beyond on behalf of our community. Our staff are funded for limited hours and it always amazes me how much they can achieve. Thank you so much.

Particular thanks to our House Manager, Mary-Lynn, for her hard work and leadership, in the face of the continuing challenges faced by the community, both locally and across the community sector. Mary Lynn is ably supported by our other terrific Staff members, both paid and volunteer. Thanks to Karen and Chris for 'patiently' juggling the numerous requirements to co-ordinate the many activities run at the House.

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

- Sadly, we recently lost our terrific Vice-Chair Tim Russo and we miss his valued input and cheeky grin, particularly at the Big Blokes Brunch.
- Ursula and Margaret have been exemplary committee and community members, co-ordinating emergency relief for people in need. Despite illness and the many demands on them they have made such a difference in our community.
- Once again, our Financial Officer Kate has done a stellar job in trying circumstances, as funds become harder to come by and expenses keep rising.
- Rhonda has again fulfilled many roles, not least of all as our trusty minute taker. She has also been doing an amazing job helping out with the Big Blokes Brunch and has been 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.
- Angela continued as our Official Secretary.
- Brett has been a valuable member bringing new ideas and views to the committee.
- We recently welcomed Glenys, one of our fabulous volunteers, onto the committee. She has already done terrific things, particularly in fundraising.

Once again, this year has been one of challenges. The community need seems to be growing and we cannot always assist everyone seeking help. Many people in

need have nowhere else to go. 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 say thank you for all your valued contributions to our community.

Kerry Clarke- Committee Chair- Whittlesea Community House Inc. 2023



Op Shoppers out and about



Bunnings BBQ - Rhonda and our original and irreplaceable Big Bloke Tim Russo

Finance Officer Report: Kate Looker

Please refer to the Independent Accountants Review and Financial Statements

Catherine Looker

**Catherine Looker
Finance Officer, Whittlesea Community House Inc.**



Heart Matters at the Women's Lunch



"Minnie the Moocher" at Uke Muster



Mary Lynn with too many "balls in the air"

Manager's Report: Mary-Lynn Griffith

Challenges this year included servicing increased community need for emergency and material relief and getting WCH finances back on track after losing significant room hire income due to low numbers enrolling. There were many highlights however:

Some of our 2022-2023 Highlights:

- Delivering \$94,500 into our community by assisting 378 people to make online applications for their \$250 power saving bonus;
- Providing 2295 Community Meals to community members through the Big Blokes Brunch and Community Women's Lunch programs;
- Expanding our Fix it Friday services outreach and assisting 387 people with face to face help through 471 agency referrals;
- In an average per week of 292 people attended WCH groups, activities, community lunches workshops and classes both onsite and off-site, including those attending for emergency relief and pet food relief;
- Hosting Law Week Q&A panel event: \$\$ Money, Money, Money \$\$ on scams, loans and guarantors - attracting 23 people;
- Running the Whittlesea Uke Muster 2022 on 15 October (during week of floods), with 90 people in attendance including 8 community ukulele groups;
- Producing "Welcome to Whittlesea", the Volunteer Handbook" and the "Hard Times Cook Book" -inaugural WCH booklets;
- Creating Scooter Safety Day on 2 May 2023 with Whittlesea Police, Travellers aid, My Aged care (CoW and DPV Health) and DPV Health occupational therapists;
- Running the "Relax, Recharge and Reconnect" Pop Up Drop In at old Westpac site on Church St during November-December 2022 (Australia Post Grant) providing support and information to 120+ people;
- Coordinating the WCH "Pop Up Fresh Food Relief Market" on 7 Feb 2023 to feed 100+ community members (grant from WCC);
- Hosting the Death Café with the "Last Hurrah" alternative funeral company on 3 Nov 2022;
- Providing 35 vulnerable families with Christmas Hampers with the help of students from Al Siraat college.

1.Meeting our Objects:

As a Central point for education skills and training -including pathways to employment we delivered and hosted training and classes as follows: -

Hosting accredited training:

- CHC 53315 Diploma in Mental health: Partners in Training (RTO 21837)
- First Aid Training (all levels) through EHS Solutions/Allens Training (RTO 90909)
- Food Handling course SITXFSA001, RSA for schools
- RIIWHS205D Control Traffic with Stop Slow Bat: Cove Training

Delivering vocational training:

- Machining for Beginners (ACFE)
- Animation 101 (ACFE)
- Welding for Beginners (ACFE)
- Digital Literacy (ACFE)
- Catering 101 (ACFE)
- Be the Office Pro (women's workforce training through WCC)

Running recreational training and classes

- Boat Licence (ABC Boating College)
- Aqua Aerobics - bus trip to Hidden Valley
- Thermomix cooking
- Metal detecting workshops
- Tea and Tech Digital drop in
- Whittlesea Community Garden workshops in: natural dyeing, herbal teas,

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
- Game On (LAN) computer games for young people
- Whittlesea Community Garden sessions, workshops and garden beds
- Boomerang Bags -Whittlesea Kinglake and surrounds (auspice)
- Family Games night;
- Crafternoons;
- Text Out Tuesday program expanding to 400+, directly informing community members of activities and events in eth community,
- Aqua Aerobics
- WhittleCukes (auspice)
- Kinglake seniors bus trip (weekly)
- Beginners ukulele
- Big Blokes Brunch
- Community Women's Lunch

- Whittlesea Community Garden with supported sessions, workshops and beds, including natural dyeing, herbal teas and sustainable Christmas gift making,

And events:

- Whittlesea Uke Muster 2022, a festival of community uke groups
- WCH Christmas Party 15 Dec 2022 provided 55 people with food, community Santa and recycle regifts Kris Kringle,
- Neighbour Day (Whittlesea Community Garden event)
- Neighbour Day BBQ at Big Blokes Brunch,
- Death Café with the Last Hurrah
- Get ready get techy: On 2 February 2023 we provided 15 community members with emergency app information with the help of DEWLP.
- Participating in the Whittlesea Garden Expo 4-5 March 2023 - Boomerang Bags group with a performance by WhittleCukes;
- Disability Scooter session,
- Participating in Whittlesea Volunteer Expo event on 19 Nov 2022 (Rhonda and Judith)
- Participating in Salvos Community Connection Night;
- Fundraising at Bunning Sausage Sizzle 29 April 2023,
- Op Shop Tours fundraiser commenced June 2023,

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

- **Community Women's Lunch:**
38-40 women regularly attend this fortnightly lunch. City of Whittlesea have partnered with the program providing venue and other assistance, speakers regularly attend with community information such as My Aged care and the LEAP program; this year we have produced food for the lunch through our Catering for Community Course which is ACFE funded.
- **Big Blokes Brunch:**
35-40 blokes attend this weekly lunch run in partnership with department of justice and community safety and the City of Whittlesea. The Food is obtained from Second Bite and cooked by correctional services programme participants learning to cook.
The camaraderie has blossomed and new attendees are welcomed and looked after by the group's core members. Speakers from My Aged care and the heart Foundation have attended and Movember trivia Quiz is likely to be a regular feature;
- **Emergency relief Program:**
We have expanded our ER program to meet increased need in the Township. We installed a Community Pantry accessible at all hours (with the help of Whittlesea Lions Club) which is used for donations and supply of pantry items. Signing up with Foodbank in March 2023 we have made good use of the donations we have received for community members and small grants

from IGA, Lions Club and City of Whittlesea. Currently support 35 families per week plus 7-8 walk ins throughout the week; Thermomix Deb also produced 40 mini puds for relief hampers;

- **Pet Food relief**

Our pet food program has also expanded thank to Glenys driving regularly to SCAR at Craigieburn and securing other supplies of pet food to meet the increasing local need;

- **Wills and Wishes Clinic:** The Clinic program in partnership with Whittlesea Community Connections Legal service and La Trobe Uni Law School has continued to provide real world experience to law students and free wills, powers of attorney etc for local especially vulnerable people. This year the weekly program has assisted around 180 people.

- **Fix it Friday (FiF):** Each month the Fix it Friday services outreach continues to provide advice and support through face to face agency help at the Community house. During 2022-2023 in 11 sessions (33 hours in total) 387 people were assisted through 471 agency meetings. The multi-partner program works due to the support and dedication of the following agencies: Whittlesea Community Connections Legal service and Social work team Centrelink, Uniting Financial counselling, Merri health victims of crime assistance, Lift mental health programme, NDIS (Brotherhood of St Laurence), My Aged care (CoW assessment team and now DPV), staff from office of Danielle Green MP, now Lauren Kathage's office, Nils No interest Loans scheme (NH Vic) and Whittlesea Police and HACCPYP (Home and Care) Cow. In 2022-2023 we were also joined by a Jobs Victoria team and Gamblers Help (Banyule). Services will expand with Haven Home Housing in the future. Tax Help and Wills have run at the same time and Emergency Relief is also available at Fix it Friday.

- **Power saving Bonus clinics:**

Karen did the training and set up the Power Saving Bonus clinics for volunteers, staff and student placements to assist local people to apply for online bonuses. During 2022-2023 WCH obtained 378 bonuses of \$250 each thereby provided \$94,500 into the local economy;

- **Tax Help (ATO volunteer)**

Our ATO Tax Help volunteer helped 9 people with their tax returns;

- **Law Week event - \$money money money\$ - Q and A panel session on scams, afterpay and guarantors attracted 23 people,**

- **Fresh food relief pop up market:**

With the help of a Vic Govt grant through WCC we ran a "Pop Up Fresh Food Relief Market" on 7 Feb 2023. In conjunction with Fix it Friday we served 100+ community members with locally sourced fresh fruit and veges with demonstrations from a local grower and pantry items from Foodbank;

Leftovers went to Food Share or were made into sauce via our thermomix expert, Deb. We also produced a Hard Times Cookbook for the occasion.

- **Relax recharge and reconnect: Pop-Up Drop-in Project.** (Australia Post grant), with this project we were able to open a drop-in centre at the old Westpac bank site in the middle of the church St shopping strip. This allowed us to meet a whole bunch of new people, offer a cup of tea, community information and help with phones.

Volunteers and Student Placements

This year we had an increase of active volunteers as post lockdown confidence grew.

We had 51 volunteers helping with driving the community van twice a week, collecting pet food, answering the phones, delivering brochures, facilitating groups, sitting on the Management committee, cooking meals, assisting with food preparation, sewing bags and other recycled goods, and gardening and maintenance. Volunteers contributed around 2500 hours of their time to the Whittlesea Community house this year.

community services students on placement helps with the Power saving bonuses clinics, researching and drafting/updating policies, doing OHS audits and helping with the emergency relief program.

Thank you, Zachary, Kiara, Carey and Sam.,

Partnerships

SCAR - Second Chance Animal Rescue	Pet food and access to reduced fee vet help
City of Whittlesea	Big Blokes Brunch, Women's Lunch and grants and support,
Department of Justice and Community Safety	Big Blokes Brunch (weekly)
Whittlesea Community Connections; also, La Trobe Uni Law School (wills and wishes)	Fix it Friday (legal and social work team and Jobs Victoria team, Wills and Wishes Clinic, L2P program support, Emergency relief Network and other projects
Whittlesea Secondary College and Central Ranges trades training Centre	Whittlesea Uke Muster, Welding and Machining courses
Whittlesea Combined Ministries	Food relief projects - Hampers
Whittlesea Library	sharing of resources and community info
Centrelink, Brotherhood of St Laurence (NDIS), Whittlesea Community Legal service/WCC, Banyule Community Health (Lift and Gamblers Help), City of Whittlesea (My Aged Care and HACCPYP), DPV Health (My Aged care), Whittlesea police, Uniting Financial Counselling, Neighbourhood House Victoria (Nils)	Fix it Friday project partners
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria	Power Saving Bonus, No interest Loans and peak body support
Bunnings	Gardening, project help and Fundraising

	sausage sizzle partner
Whittlesea Bowls Club	Venue for events
Whittlesea police	Fix it Friday and Disability Scooter Information session

Donations

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

Rob Mitchell MP - ongoing support

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

Whittlesea Community members and surrounds: Emergency relief supplies through the IGA donation box and material for our Boomerang Bags group sewing bees and anonymous donation (\$2000) to our Emergency relief fund.

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

IGA Community Chest for donation for emergency relief

Fran and Murray Jeffrey for \$500 Crafternoons donation

Whittlesea Lions Club for generous donations for Community Pantry and emergency relief

The year in numbers

Staff hours per week: Started the year at 83.5 now 59

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

- Typical number of visitors per week to the WCH, online and off-site programmes **292**
- Number of people reached through programs, activities and events in the 2022-2023 year: **1500**
- Number of different activities/courses offered at the WCH: **36**
- Number of volunteers as at 30 June 2023: **51**
- Average number of volunteer hours per week: **90** hours (around 4500 hours per year of 50 weeks)
- Dollar value of volunteer hours **per week** based on rate of \$25 per hour: \$2250. (That is an extraordinary \$112,500 worth of volunteer power per year (based on 50 weeks)
- Number of community lunches -**126 lunches serving around 2295 meals.**

Mary-Lynn Griffith, Manager

Volunteer Co-ordinator's Report - Judith Stewart

Hello! Welcome to my end of year report. Do you wonder as to why we volunteer?

Volunteering is all about making a difference in our community, it also benefits you personally, as it offers the chance to;

- Act on your values, passions and interests
- Make friendships and create professional networks
- Gain work experience and learn new skills
- Enjoy new social and cultural experiences
- Develop personally and build confidence
- Enjoy better physical and mental health
- Challenge yourself in a supportive environment
- Feel warm and fuzzy about helping your community
- Have fun

Volunteers are happier and healthier than those who don't volunteer, just a few hours of volunteering work can make a difference to your happiness and mood,

That is why the volunteers at Whittlesea Community are so fantastic.

Programs that are supported by volunteers

Community Garden	10
Ukelele	2
Choir	4
Crafternoons	2
Big Blokes Brunch	6
Textile Tuesdays	4
LAN Games	2
Digital Literacy	3
Pilates	1
Kinglake Seniors trip	4
Be the office pro-	2
Boomerang bags	7
Women's Lunch	8
Food Relief	3
Committee of Management	10
Fund Raising	4
Pet Food Collection	3
Water Aerobics	3
House Garden	1
Wills and Wishes	2
Front of Office	6
Tax Help	1
Total number of volunteers required	86
Volunteers who actively participate to fill the hours	37

Our volunteers are amazing, they offer their time on multiple occasions so that our support to the community, programs, house and each other is available to all.

Thank you

Judith

Judith Stewart
Volunteer Co Ordinator



Glenys takes delivery of more Pet Food from ARC



Bunnings BBQ crew



Making Lemon Curd with Deb



Water Aerobics Group out to lunch

Whittlesea Community Garden Report: Megan Smithwick

We have enjoyed another great year at the garden and maintained the approximate same number of members - some have left us, but more have joined. The session times have continued to run every Monday 8.30am - 11.30am and Thursday 8.30am - 12.30pm.

We always aim to host one activity 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 we have hosted the following activities:

Spring Open Day & Air Dry Clay activity - 8 & 15 September 2022

DIY Mini Scarecrow - 20 October 2022

Beginners weaving & weaving a garden sphere - 6 & 27 October 2022

Christmas BBQ - 25 November 2023

Weaving Christmas Wreaths - 17 & 24 November 2022

Natural Dyeing to create cards & paper - 23 February 2023

Neighbour Day - 26 March 2023

Fresh Herbs & Herbal Teas- 27 April 2023

Composting - 11 May 2023

World Environment Day (recycled jewellery) -5 June 2023

Defibrillator training - 22 June 2023

Pot painting at Bunnings - 22 June 2023

DIY Terrarium (City of Whittlesea)- 20 July 2023

Winter Weaving - 17 August 2023

R U OK Day morning tea (with painting activity provided by Bunnings) - 14 September 2023

Coming up we have:

DIY Stepping stone & fluid painting- 5 October 2023

Recycle Week garden art - 16 November 2023

Christmas BBQ - 24 November 2023

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

- Peppercorn Hill- successful for \$1000 to host workshops
- Stronger Communities - successful for \$3500 to buy new garden beds
- CoW Gardening Together Again Program (part b) - succesful \$1000 for equipment & celebration

- CoW Neighbourhood event grant - successful \$2000 for Neighbour Day event
- Mill Park Village Community Give back - successful for \$100 Gift Card
- Landcare - successful for \$500 for garden promotions
- \$5000 sponsorship from the North East Build Community program for a workshop series (unsuccessful).
- Donnybrae - \$1500 for workshops (unsuccessful)

Fundraising

- We had a stall at the Mernda Bunning Christmas market where we hosted an activity of DIY insect repellent candles and a raffle for fundraising.
- We held a successful raffle at our Christmas BBQ
- We have continued recycling cans for cash
- We have a donation box at all activities
- We have prepared a raffle for this Christmas where tickets will be sold in Church street.

Some changes to the garden in the last year include:

- 2 new VegePod wicking garden beds
- New portable worm farm
- Installation of a defibrillator
- New seating in shed veranda area
- Repairs to notice board
- Installation of 2 roof vents in shed
- Installation of 2 ceiling fans in shed
- Upgrade to watering system

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'.
- Goecahe event included the garden as a host

For all of this we would like to sincerely thank the Whittlesea Community House staff and committee of management, as well as the City of Whittlesea, Bunnings, Whittlesea Bowls Club, Whittlesea Rotary 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.



Pot Painting with Bunnings



Christmas Party



Mini Scarecrows with Bunnings



Christmas Wreath Making



Neighbour Day

Fix it Friday

Fix it Friday continues to be a focal point for Whittlesea Community House each month. The last 12 months have seen some major developments involving the potential roll out of a “Fix it Friday” training program to other Neighbourhood Houses so they can host their own! This will also potentially present an opportunity for us to earn valuable income from the sale of such training programs. We have also had success with getting the township onto the Services Australia Bus roster and had a visit from them in August 2023.

The current roster of “fixers” each month looks like this:

Whittlesea Community Connections (Legal, Social Work), Brotherhood of St Lawrence (NDIS), DPV (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), Gamblers Help, Victoria Police and Lauren Kathage MP. We are looking forward to welcoming Haven Homesafe (Homelessness services) in coming sessions.

In addition to these services our own staff, students and volunteers are also assisting regularly with digital access for things like the \$250 Power Saving Bonus Scheme, MyGov Account set up and Disability Permit applications as well as many other online access situations. It can sometimes feel like every day is Fix it Friday!

Over the past 12 months we have assisted 341 community members connect with 400 referrals. Each month on average we co-ordinate queries from 30 locals to access assistance from the experts above. Many of these locals require more than one expert and can visit us over more than one Fix it Friday session. The session lasts just 3 hours but we know it changes lives and puts smiles back on faces.

Thank you to all of our amazing “Fixers” and to the students, volunteers and staff of the House for their amazing dedication.



Fix it Friday with NHVic and WCC

Big Blokes Brunch report

This year the Men's Lunch has continued to grow in numbers, with weekly sessions catering for 30 - 40 participants. The Department of Justice has consistently and capably provided their services during the past twelve months, cheerfully serving a variety of meals depending on availability of foods.

The Big Blokes Brunch program aims to reduce social isolation while providing opportunities for participants to engage with other men for conversation and friendship in a relaxed environment. It also fosters community engagement with presentations this year on Heart Health, Aged Care, Adopting and Promoting Healthy Masculinities and Advocacy groups for people with disabilities and troubled youth.

We have also run a Melbourne Cup sweep and a footy tipping competition which raised additional funds for the Whittlesea Community House. Both of these were well received by the men. Tim and I organised and ran a Bunnings sausage sizzle in April with the assistance of several of the men which raised over \$900.

In August our co-ordinator Tim Russo died suddenly. This was devastating news for all concerned and he is sadly missed as the stalwart of Big Blokes Brunch. It was my privilege to work with Tim and he continues to leave a huge gap with both organisation and friendships. I would like to thank the men for stepping up and providing invaluable assistance with the organisation and practicalities of running these weekly sessions. In particular, Ian McKenzie, Barrie Stewart, Steve Middlebrook and Brett Flenley have worked co-operatively and made my role much easier.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Community House in allowing this valuable program to continue. Thank you to Megan Smithwick for organising speakers and events, to Jill McKeever, Judy Morgan and De-arne Brasher for assisting with food preparation and setting up at these lunches. Finally, my gratitude to all the men who attend for their friendship and willingness to help, most especially for accepting me as an honorary bloke each Tuesday.

Rhonda Rose

Food Relief Project

I am pleased to present this report on the Emergency Food Relief Program as part of our annual report for the Whittlesea Community House AGM. This program plays a pivotal role in our mission to support vulnerable local community members and has had a significant impact on the lives of those we serve.

The Emergency Food Relief Program at Whittlesea Community House is designed to provide essential food assistance to individuals and families facing food insecurity in our community. Through a combination of weekly events, we offer nourishing meals, pantry packs, and a supportive environment.

The key components of the program include:

- **Fortnightly Low-Cost Women's Group Lunch Events (Thursdays):** These lunches provide an opportunity for women in our community to come together, socialise, and enjoy a nutritious meal at an affordable price. We have witnessed the positive effects of these gatherings, which foster a sense of belonging and support for participants.
- **Soup and Games (Wednesdays during Winter):** Each Wednesday during winter, we serve delicious and hearty soups to those in need. These hot meals are not only nourishing but also serve as a way to bring warmth and comfort during challenging times.
- **Pantry Packs: (Daily)** Our pantry packs provide essential food items to families and individuals, helping to bridge the gap between their immediate needs and their long-term goals. These packs are distributed to over 38 people and family groups a week. As well as to walk ins as required.
- **After Hours street Pantry:** This essential 24hr cupboard is very well utilised. It is hammered over the school holidays and weekends in particular. This highlights how crucial the Xmas hampers are and the need to prioritise them.
- **Pet Food Pantry:** Provided by Second Chance Animal Rescue and ARC, collected by volunteers driving their own car down to Craigieburn and Narre Warren for donated dog and Cat food. We know companion animals are a key reason women stay in unsafe environments so this is one way we can help.

The Emergency Food Relief Program has made a profound impact on our community:

- **Alleviating Hunger:** Our program has been instrumental in alleviating hunger for those who might otherwise go without an adequate meal.
- **Community Building:** The program has brought our community closer together, creating a sense of unity and support among its members. The Women's Lunch events, in particular, have strengthened social bonds.
- **Improved Well-being:** By providing nutritious meals and pantry packs, we have contributed to the improved physical and emotional well-being of our beneficiaries.

- **Increased Awareness:** Our program has heightened awareness of the issue of food insecurity in our community, leading to increased support from local businesses and volunteers.

Challenges:

While our program has been successful, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges we face:

- **Sustainability:** Ensuring the long-term sustainability of this program is a critical concern. We rely on the generosity of volunteers and donations, which may vary over time.
- **Accessibility:** We continue to work on improving accessibility to our programs, ensuring that all in need can easily access our services.

Future Plans:

In the coming year, we aim to address these challenges by expanding our outreach efforts, securing more partnerships, and implementing sustainable funding models.

Conclusion:

The Emergency Food Relief Program has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Whittlesea Community House. By addressing food insecurity and providing a sense of community, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of over 120 individuals each fortnight. I am proud of what we have achieved so far and look forward to continuing our mission of support.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our generous Committee, dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and the entire community for their unwavering support in making this program a success.

Thank you for your attention, and I am open to any questions or feedback regarding this report during the AGM.

Sincerely,

Ursula Jenkins on behalf of Margaret Brida and Glenys McDonald.



Vegies Galore at the Pop Up Market



Smiley faces to welcome shoppers

Boomerang Bags report - Ursula Jenkins

Boomerang Bags is an active local group of people meeting twice a week to upcycle unwanted textile waste while we chatter about the big questions in life. This year marks our seventh in operation and we have enjoyed every minute of it!

Initially I thought we had a relatively quiet year of activities but on reflection we have actually been very busy:

- We expanded our Yarra Plenty library bag program into Murrindindi libraries so that we will now be making bags for five libraries and a mobile regional bus.
- We strengthened our relationship with the Department of Justice and have hosted two Field Officers for bag making training. We have purchased special logo tags just for their program and consistently receive 50 bags a week from their two offices which we distribute to op shops in Whittlesea and the Foodworks supermarket while we wait for IGA to finalise a display.
- We sent a collection of bags to careworkers at Someset Children's CarePoint Foodshare in SouthAfrica as goodie bags loaded with thank you gifts.
- We had a wall art exhibit of bags at the Mernda Bendigo Bank branch. It's a beautiful gallery wall and retail space aimed at supporting their small business clients. We framed photos of our volunteers working, information about WCH and its programs, and of course lots of beautiful bags in gorgeous colours and fabrics.
- We attended Whittlesea Garden Show and two Bunnings mini market stalls with a variety of recycled and crafted items.
- Lots of produce bags made for WCH Pop Up Foodshare Market and for the Foodworks supermarket.
- Made a set of custom printed WCH aprons for the volunteers to look snazzy at Bunnings BBQ.
- We made four dog beds and donated them to the vet and various ottomans. These are all stuffed with fabric scraps left over from the bag making process. It's one way the scraps can avoid landfill.
- We encouraged our major sponsor from last year, ISPT property group, to install universal 'Bag Borrow Trees' in their shopping centres. These will be installed by the end of 2023.
- We made an enormous quilt for Baby Storytime at the Whittlesea Library. It was a collaborative effort, we invited the public to make squares for it also. The Library staff threw us a thank you morning tea which was very thoughtful.
- We ran several school holiday Tie Dye classes which raised \$100 for Kinglake Foodshare.
- We purchased street signs for Boomerang Bags and signs for WCH. One has recently fallen down so we are supporting the local Rotary group in their effort to replace the whole sign board at the township entrance.
- We sold 220 bags to the Hand Therapy Association for their big conference in Adelaide this year.

I don't know if we answered any of life's big questions but we all certainly enjoyed the discussion (and the fruit cake) so far. We are looking forward to 2024 to continue the journey.

Beth, Margaret, Lindy, Wendy, Debbie M and Debbie D, Grace, Sue, Barbara, Adam, Christine S, Michelle, Di, Sam, Janine and myself would all like to say a huge THANK YOU to the Whittlesea Community House staff and Committee for all your support and can-do attitude, nothing is ever too much trouble and we greatly appreciate it.

**Lots of Love,
Ursula Jenkins xoxo**



Bendigo Bank Bag display



The team in action



Boomerang Bags land in Africa!

Whittlesea Township Choir

Our Whittlesea Township Choir of 14-20 singers, enjoyed another fun year singing with our fabulous leader Kerry.

We performed in February at the Activity Centre where the Community met with the Council and we sang at The New Horizons Church for a great night singing at the Songs from Movies event. In September we sang at the Activity Centre for Women's Health Food and Mood and enjoyed a lovely meal. We ventured to Westfield Shopping Centre in South Morang for RUOK? Day in September where we were joined by other choirs U3A and the Ukulele group for a flash mob or pop up choir which was videoed and put on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s-myQHPT5o>

One of our Foundation Choir members Wilma Wailes sadly passed away on the 4th June this year. We will miss her greatly. Also several of our dear choir members Margaret Mitten and John Szatkowski are no longer singing with us because of their failing health.

On a brighter note on June 22nd our Choir celebrated its 17th Birthday singing at the Whittlesea Community House. Thanks to Kerry for all her dedicated work and making our singing rehearsals and performances so enjoyable.

In October we sang at the Whittlesea Bowls Club for a High Tea Fundraiser and are preparing for our Christmas Carol performances in December at Mill Park Village, Community Carols at the Showgrounds and a Christmas Memorial Service at the Yan Yean Cemetery.

Suzanne Coburn



Choir in action at the Bowls Club

WhittleC Ukes

In the last year the group has grown and we now have just over 20 members. Thanks to the Whittlesea Bowls Club we have access to their board room, however due to its size we have had to restrict membership to its current numbers.

Attendances have been good and the group has improved both in their musical abilities and in the choice and challenges of more advanced musical numbers. We have developed three finished songbooks and are currently working on the development of another two. These are planned to be completed by the end of this year. These books are being used in our performances.

The group originally aimed to perform for the local aged care facilities as well as a local seniors' group; this has now expanded to include the Whittlesea Show, Whittlesea Garden Show, community event at the Whittlesea Bowls Club, an Aged care facility in Kilmore, the Kilmore Busking Festival and Bunnings Mernda. We look forward to attending the Ukulele Muster to be run in November.

During a visit to a ukulele group in Romsey members suggested that we run a ukulele jam session and invite regional ukulele groups to attend. Our inaugural jam was held in July at The Shack Upper Plenty and was such a success it was decided to run one on an annual basis. We have commenced planning for our second one to be run in 2024.

Our group does not only play ukulele but also has a social aspect. We have gone on excursions to see other groups performing and to support members performing in public.

The workload is shared across the membership and if we have the same enthusiasm next year as we have had this year, our group can only go from strength to strength.

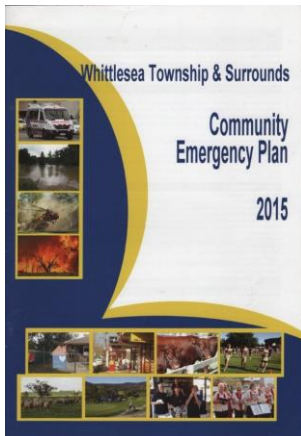
All of this is only possible due to our arrangements with both the Whittlesea Community House and the Whittlesea Bowls Club. Both have given our group the security and venue to practice and perform and to both of them I give our sincerest thanks.

Ron Laurence
Co-Ordinator
WhittleC Ukes

Whittlesea Township & Surrounds Community Resilience Committee (WTSCRC)

WTSCRC - Haven't heard of it? Read on.

Following the February 2009 bushfires, The City of Whittlesea appointed a **Community Recovery Committee (CRC)** made up of and chaired by local people.



When the “end of the recovery period” was officially declared, the committee of community members knew there was much more to be done.

CRC members continued working for the community, formed the “**Whittlesea Township and Surrounds Resilience Committee**” (WTSCRC) and is undertaking this current project.

Funding from the **Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)** enabled employment of a project worker to help develop and publish the **2015 Whittlesea Township & Surrounds Community Emergency Plan.**

(WRSCEP)

Our partners Whittlesea Community House supported the project by supplying the administration required for the governance and financial accountability of the project.

Changes in community expectations mean that the format of the 2015 plan doesn't meet current expectations for, and efficacy of, real time communication, which enables flexible and timely responses to changing circumstances and community needs.

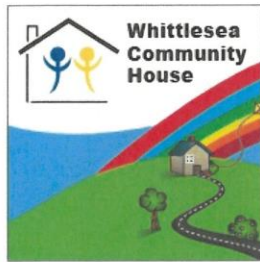
A new grant from FRRR is funding the review and redevelopment of the 2015 Community Emergency Plan that will be a flexible, responsive community emergency management plan, compatible with, and integrated within, current and future Local and State Government Emergency Management Legislation.

With the continued support of our partners FRRR and Whittlesea Community House Inc. this project is well under way.

The new **Whittlesea Township & Surrounds Community Emergency Plan** will be based on the establishment of an active and ongoing **Community Emergency Response Network. (WTSCERN)**

The final draft of the plan will be presented to the community at public meetings and for inclusion as a sub-plan within the Whittlesea Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

Ivan Peterson Co-Chair WTSCRC



Whittlesea Community House

Christmas party

THURSDAY

14TH DECEMBER

11.30AM - 1.00PM

BRING ALONG A "GIFT"

*(DON'T BUY ONE REGIFT SOMETHING YOU HAVE
BEEN GIVEN BUT WON'T USE)*

JOIN US FOR LUNCH -FREE

RSVP 9716 3361

**Whittlesea Community Activity Centre
Laurel Street, Whittlesea**

