



Annual Report 2022

Wingate Avenue Community Centre

13a Wingate Avenue, Ascot Vale, 3032
Phone | (03) 9212 0236
Email | admin@wingateave.com.au

ABN | 33 042 739 925
TOID | 6419

The 2022 Annual Report of the Committee on provides information on programs, activities and events delivered by the Association during the preceding financial year (that is, the 2022 financial year). However, as it is published late in the 2022 calendar year, it may also include information on some activities and events undertaken between July and October 2022.

© Wingate Avenue Community Centre.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from Wingate Avenue Community Centre.

Published 25 October 2022.

2021/22 Highlights



Community + Social Connections

- 612 community members attended regular activities
- 300 community members attended Expanding Our Horizons excursions
- 125 young community members attended free school holiday activities
- 38 Safe Seats Safe Kids mornings conducted at the community centre
- 12 Deloitte volunteers completed 72 hours of maintenance (26 Nov 21)
- 12 hours of maintenance donated by Victoria Racing (20 Dec 21)
- 198 community members attended Brotherhood of St Laurence playgroup
- 1 Tuning Into Kids parenting program delivered; 6 parents attended

Childcare

- 4,177 attendances this financial year
- 135 children enrolled in occasional childcare
- 124 children enrolled and regularly attended three sessions per week
- 9 childcare staff

Education

- 15 unique pre-accredited courses offered
- 243 community members enrolled into a pre-accredited short course
- 123 students completed at least one short course
- 8,390 ACFE hours delivered
- 271 individual students enrolled in accredited English programs
- 200+ students completed EAL units of competency
- 100% of EAL students would recommend Wingate Avenue CC

JVES

- 84 community members registered with our JVES team
- 30 participants supported into work
- 7 participants worked for 26 weeks or more
- 13 employers connected with to support our JVES participants

Reconnect

- 77 community members supported by our Reconnect team
- 40 participants registered in our Reconnect program
- 20 participants supported into accredited⁽¹¹⁾ or pre-accredited⁽⁹⁾ courses
- 2 community members supported into work

Food Relief

- 400 people attended 2 Farms to Families markets, feeding over 1,200 ppl
- 2,195 food parcels given out, feeding over 7,055 people
- 250 end of year hampers given out

Social Support

- 2,500 social work student hours supported
- 335 people supported to apply for the \$250 power saving bonus, resulting in \$83,750 paid to community members from State Government

* Regular activities are Art, Men's Group, Patchwork, Senior's Group, Singing, Women's Group and Women's Workout



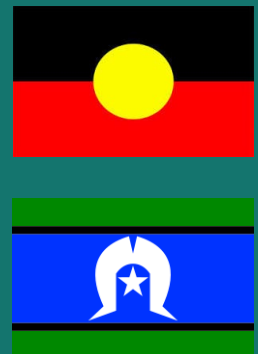
Contents

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Highlights | i |
| Chairperson's Message | 1 |
| FY 2022 In Review | 2 |
| Programs, Events, Activities | 3 |
| Operations | 16 |
| Treasurer's Report | 17 |
| Team | 20 |

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country and their connection to land, sea and sky.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations as custodians of the land on which we meet. We acknowledge that Wurundjeri land is a place of age-old ceremony, celebration, initiation, and renewal, and that the Kulin peoples' living culture has a unique role in the life of this region.

We pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging, and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





Chairperson's Message

The 2021-2022 reporting year saw the continuation of COVID-19 impacts across the community and service delivery, with lockdowns and the centre once again taking a lead role in showing its flexibility when asked to provide the facility for community testing purposes. While these events undoubtedly punctuated the resolve of all who attend and use Wingate's centre – I also recognise that the green shoots of normality began to spring in the latter part of the year.

It is through this context that I openly and proudly acknowledge the resilience and positive results across all areas of our service delivery here at Wingate Avenue Community Centre (WACC).

Critical to WACC's success was the flexibility and desire to be "the very best we can in these times". The staff and management, who, despite another year of COVID based disruptions, met and in many areas exceeded the forecasts for the year. As a not-for-profit organisation, WACC has at its core, the desire to ensure every dollar that passes through the centre is targeted towards better outcomes and deeper social inclusion – as can be seen in this year's Audited Financial Statement, this is exactly what we have achieved.

The Committee of Management (CoM) acknowledges the excellent work and stewardship by WACC's General Manager, Angeline Courtenay in establishing a performance based and delivery centric focused organisation which has enabled the continued delivery. During this time we saw the strong re-emergence of face-to-face teaching, expanded Foodbank deliveries to meet the growing demand, the onboarding of new staff and the continued nurturing of our wonderful childcare kids.

The CoM recognises the practical and valued support WACC has received by all tiers of government (local, state and federal) throughout this time. Without this ongoing partnership, the life-changing opportunities and value that WACC provides to the broader community would be made that much harder.

Looking into the coming period, I see a year of stabilisation, one in which we normalise of our delivery environment – welcoming back the face-to-face teaching contact, expanding the use and role our new Racecourse Road facility can play to an even broader reach of the inner west, continuing to find care places to support our vibrant child-care program, and once again hearing the community's laughter and chatter echoing through our corridor and rooms.

As I look forward to the coming year, I see opportunities and areas for continued growth. Positive challenges will include working with the government and private sectors in increasing work placements, adding more to the wrap-around social services, continuing to be that 'light on the hill' in providing a stable and positive environment for all of the community in order that their dreams are reached and personal development needs met.

Finally, I am again truly humbled and privileged to work an excellent team of WACC management, staff and my fellow committee members, all of whom each day make the challenging tasks seem easier than they should be. During this term I am anticipating new CoM members to join the team, with new ideas and strategic collaborations. I am grateful to each and every one of the team and the community in which we serve as we deliver what is necessary to fulfil our charter and the community's expectations.

Warm regards,

Ashley Hunt, Committee of Management Chairperson



2022 FY In Review

This financial year, much like Melbourne's weather (where you get four seasons in one day – if it's raining, just wait 20 minutes and it'll be sunny soon), has included a little bit of everything; challenging lockdowns, fun activities, empty buildings and crowded events.

In July 2021, a month after we'd emerged from our fourth lockdown, and just as we began to adjust to lighter restrictions, our fifth lockdown was called (16 July to 27 July 2021), swiftly followed by the sixth and final lockdown (5 August to 21 October 2021). In total, Melbournians spent a whopping 262 days in lockdown since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

The oscillation between lockdowns and freedom was challenging for everyone. Community members reported increased social isolation during lockdowns, yet simultaneously we all struggled to adjust to being out of isolation, when they lifted. While isolations were tough, impacting negatively on mental and physical well-being, going out, being in crowds, and socializing was anxiety inducing, and so for many, emerging from lockdowns was a long process that took months.

At Wingate Avenue Community Centre, we adjusted our services, programs and activities to adapt to the change of movement in the community, caused by COVID restrictions. As the team reports in the programs section, we ran online activities and courses during lockdowns, and COVID safe activities when we emerged. One highlight was the Expanding Our Horizons project, which took ~250 community members off the estate as we emerged from lockdowns, to enjoy new environments and reconnect with friends.

To ensure there were no disruptions to programs and activities during or after lockdowns, we kept our staffing levels stable during the 2021 financial year (despite the drop in attendance at childcare and courses, resulting in a drop in income), to ensure we maintained a high level of support to all.

By the start of 2022, we had fully emerged from lockdowns and COVID restrictions (despite the new Omicron strain), and so programs and activities returned to normal; for the most part, we have enjoyed a 'return to normal' in 2022, with community members returning to the community centre in numbers close to pre-pandemic level.

Childcare and community activities numbers bounced back nicely, and it's a joy to have community members of all ages back in the building. EAL student numbers are lower than pre-COVID levels, largely due to a slow return to immigration and a industry skill shortages resulting in students taking up the opportunity to work (which we see as a great outcome).

The demand for our food relief program continues to grow, and by June 2022 bookings for food hampers had expanded out to a three- to four-week wait. Food relief is a self-funded service, and we continue to apply for grants to grow our capacity to support community members experiencing food stress.

Although the world has now largely returned to normal (it's now hard to imagine how we spent 262 days in isolation) the impacts of COVID linger on. Community members that experience systemic disadvantage and vulnerabilities report that they are facing more challenges than before, with a degrading public housing stock not maintained sufficiently, local doctor appointments in decline, utility and food prices increasing, and access to support services limited (due to a digital divide and other social barriers).

Not for profit organisations, such as ours, face more challenges than before, as the need for on-the-ground support continues to increase, while funding and resources decrease. Despite this, we remain dedicated to delivering quality services that the community need, with the limited resources we have. Delivery of our services is entirely due to the dedication of the Committee of Management, staff, volunteers, and our partners, all of whom I wholeheartedly thank for their efforts, passion and commitment.

Angie, General Manager



Programs, Events, Activities

This is my local community centre and a place to better yourself through courses ranging from catering to computer studies ... my personal favourite would have to be the “Men’s Shed” gatherings.

Chris

Community

Reflecting on the past year has highlighted just how far we have come in welcoming back community members to in-person activities. What a cause for celebration!

In late October 2021, as we emerged from a total of 89 days lockdown, we welcomed the community back with a flurry of outdoor weekly events, offering free coffees, hot choccies, music, and frivolity, thanks to the support of our partners at *cohealth*. This was a fantastic way to welcome back young and old in a COVID safe way.

R U OK? Day

Whilst in the midst of lockdown, we supported R U OK? Day on September 9, 2021, by hosting engagement sessions with classes, run on Zoom. Our community development workers 'dropped in' to the online classes, to talk about the meaning behind R U OK? Day, and brainstormed ideas for checking in on friends and family. We also set up systems for individual support and referrals.

Expanding Our Horizons

Thanks to the support of *Moonee Valley City Council*, we ran Expanding Our Horizons, a series of day trips to beautiful locations around Melbourne, to learn, relax, reconnect and celebrate our community. The excursions culminated in the fantastic 'Greening Wingate' event, and each excursion was a resounding success. Sincere thanks must go to volunteers, partners (*Moonee Valley Sustainability* and *Cultivating Community*) and social work placement students, without whom these events would not have been possible.

Youth Engagement

Real Theatre lead a series of theatre workshops for teenagers, (supported by *Moonee Valley City Council*) which was a highlight of our youth activities. Facilitated by *Melbourne Playback Theatre Company*, the incursion explored a wide range of performance styles with a group of 20 teens. Participants built confidence, new social connections, and skills in theatre production and narration. This holiday program concluded with hearty applause from friends and family at a performance delivered by the young people.

School holiday activities were as popular as ever. Online drama workshops were delivered during COVID restrictions. *cohealth*, *The Huddle* and the *NGV* supported our summer school holiday workshop, conducted by the incredible Wurundjeri dance group, *Djirri Djirri*. The *NGV Kids on Tour* packs also facilitated activities to help participants learn about First Nations stories and artworks at the gallery.

Other play-based learning workshops we delivered were Space Tech and an environmental theatre performance, supported by *Moonee Valley City Council*.



I caught up with friends I haven't seen in a long time

Expanding Our Horizons participant





I met a new acquaintance (lived in the same area for six years!)

Expanding Our Horizons
participant

Men's Group

Wingate men's group were keen to reconnect after many weeks of lockdowns and made the most of barbecues, outdoor games, offsite visits to *Werribee Zoo* and *Melbourne Museum*, as well as a presentation from a local historian. Some of our men's group participants also engaged in the gardener's day trip to the Garden of St Erth as part of the Expanding Our Horizons project and we look forward to welcoming new participants and continuing to make the most of new opportunities with the group.

Women's Group

Although lockdowns interrupted some planned activities, the women's group came out in force at the end of 2021 for facilitated group collage and a beautiful end of year shared meal. 2022 has brought plenty of delicious food experiences from learning to make dumplings to enjoying Adana kebabs as well as a trip to the *National Gallery*. *Bunnings Maribyrnong* have continued to be a great supporter of our social groups at and the women's group enjoyed painting and planting pots. Here's to more great adventures in 2022.

Seniors Group

With a strong set of COVID-safe measures we were able to welcome back our senior's group in November 2021 with an afternoon of international cake sampling. The group was also able to explore different fitness activities including chair yoga and water-based exercise thanks to a successful partnership with *Ascot Vale Leisure Centre*.

Volunteers

In November 2021, 11 volunteers from *Deloitte Melbourne* put in a fantastic effort to help spruce up the centre getting their hands dirty with gardening, staining the deck, assembling childcare items and general maintenance jobs. Deloitte also supported the professional development of Wingate managers through an online workshop. Wingate is incredibly grateful for this ongoing partnership that supports the goals of both organisations.

Our volunteers were welcomed back to the full range of roles at the community centre in early 2022, including EAL classroom support, food relief support, administration and arts program facilitation. The easing of COVID restrictions also enabled us to celebrate the ongoing contribution of our volunteer team for National Volunteer Week at which time we treated them to a special lunch at the *National Gallery of Victoria* which we all embraced as a great treat after such a long time apart.

Lauren, Community Development Manager




Community Partnerships

Our partnerships with other local organisations are key to the myriad of activities the community development team engage the local community in, and we gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the following organisations to the vibrant culture of Wingate Ave CC.

- ▶ We supported the inception of **Meals with Impact**, a budding social enterprise, by offering our commercial kitchen for use and supporting the distribution of meals through our food relief program. In turn, we benefited by having culturally appropriate, ready-to-eat meals, cooked with care by migrant and refugee women, to bolster our food relief supplies.
- ▶ **The Huddle** continues to be a key partner in the delivery of community sport and recreation for both young people and adults and we thank Kate for her contribution and welcome **Candela** to the coordinator role. **The Huddle** also supported Wingate's efforts to keep our community safe throughout the pandemic with donations of hand sanitizer and at-home school holiday activities.
- ▶ We welcomed back the **Brotherhood of St Laurence** supported multicultural playgroup who continue to do a fabulous job at engaging new families into their family support initiatives and offer an ever-evolving suite of play-based learning activities.
- ▶ We were pleased to be able to support the delivery of the **Moonee Valley City Council Women's Leadership Program** which built on the skills and interests of local women to define their goals, build confidence and access further education and employment.





*The best people who look
after everyone, from
every background.
Absolutely magical*

Shane



Childcare

Wow it has been great to be operating our normal, pre-COVID face-to-face sessions in 2022. We faced some obstacles when we returned, with children and staff having a lot of sickness (creating a shortage of childcare educators), COVID contacts needing to isolate, and borders reopening finally allowing families to travel overseas to see loved ones. However, we worked through these challenges as a team, and used our skills to adapt and be compassionate with each other.

After low numbers in late-2021 due to COVID restrictions, childcare returned to high numbers and full sessions in 2022. Old friendships were renewed, new ones formed, development milestones met, and new skills have been learnt.

In this reporting period we continued to offer indoor/outdoor play based approach to learning for our youngest community members, from 5-months to 5-years-old. 19 occasional care places were available for three-, four- and five-hour sessions, Monday to Friday during the school term. 5-hour sessions were also available during school holidays.

Families were able to access the service for a maximum of five hours a day, up to 15 hours per week.

Funding bodies during the year were: DEEWR; DIAC; and Adult Migrant English Program.

Families from the local area made use of the service for study (both at the community centre and elsewhere), work, and occasional care (whether for shopping, attending appointments, having a break, or allowing their child to socialise and learn in a safe, stimulating environment).

We had the pleasure of supporting two students from *New Futures Training*, Hani and Maryan. Both were studying Certificate 3 in Children's Services. We hope they have gained some valuable skills that they can use in their future.

Our childcare team expanded during this reporting period, with the addition of Remah and Suad employed as casual educators to support the current team of Kellie, Sema, Vijaya, Faduma, Rosa, Nyankiir and Wafa. They have fitted in well and with them come new skills, knowledge and personalities, to make the team even more diverse.

I would like thank staff, children and families for their ongoing support and working together to achieve positive learning outcomes for all children.

Kellie, Childcare Manager



Great place to do some courses if you want to learn locally

Susan

Education

ACFE, Pre-Accredited Courses 2021-2022 Adult, Community and Further Education

We continue to offer pre-accredited courses that support adult learners to gain confidence to pursue further study and employment opportunities, as well as build social connections. During this reporting period, we offered 15 unique ACFE courses.

In 2021, COVID-19 once again impacted the delivery of some of our classes, particularly the **Family Home Cooking** and **Mobile Know-How** classes. However, with a lot of hard work from our education team and teachers, we successfully delivered our **Beginner Computer**, **Advance Computer**, **Office Administration**, and **Introduction to the Cleaning Industry** classes via Zoom, until restrictions lifted, and face-to-face lessons resumed in Term 4, 2021. Fortunately, 2022 saw a return to in-person classes, although students were initially hesitant to re-engage.

We delivered three Skills for Work and Study courses during the reporting period: **Food Processing** and **Factory Warehousing** in semester 2, 2021; and **Early Childhood Education** in semester 1, 2022. These courses focused on contextualized workplace communication, literacy, numeracy and employability skills, for low literacy learners, and were centrally designed by ACFE.

We partnered with *Built* to deliver a new course, **Building and Construction Pathways** to TAFE L2 course, in 2022. Funded by the *Just in Time* grant, the course aimed to develop an integrated learning and employment program that supports participants to transition into work in the building and construction industry. Partnering with *Built* was a valuable and rewarding experience. Students gained access to *Built's* Dunlop Avenue construction site meeting room (made available for the class to use every Friday), where industry experts delivered industry specific topics, such as site inductions, toolbox meetings, and the importance of PPE and tools. *Built* also funded student's Construction Induction Card (White Card). A big thank you to Eric, Kristy and Nicole from *Built* for their support and to Louise Cindric for teaching this class. Thank you too, to our JVES and Reconnect team for providing pathway support to the seven learners who completed this course.

The success of our ACFE program is a direct result of our education team and our very capable ACFE teachers, Rose, Raveen, Louise, Steve, and our two new editions, Caitlin and Angie. A very big THANK YOU to them for their flexibility and care in delivering these courses to the community.

Overall, we had 123 students complete at least one short course out of a total of 234 course enrolments.

Rita, ACFE Coordinator



English as an Additional Language Courses (EAL) Accredited Courses

After 18 months delivering EAL classes remotely due to COVID restrictions, our EAL students benefited from returning to face-to-face classes in 2022.

Students continued to learn through a remote delivery model in 2021, which included using paper workbooks, WhatsApp, Zoom and phone calls to keep students engaged. Teachers used creative ways to engage students, incorporating videos, YouTube clips, voice recordings, photos of work, Kahoot quizzes and Loop videos, relevant to the day's lesson. Accessing EAL classes was difficult for students, due to the limited digital access, family caring responsibilities, ill health, and new job opportunities.

With the return to face-to-face classes in November 2021, students initially returned for up to two-days a week and remained remote for their other days. Students with children benefited from easier access to childcare, as it also reopened, but the biggest benefit was for students in the lower-level classes, for whom face-to-face classes is essential for learning outcomes.

In 2022, it was wonderful to see teachers and students back in the centre and everyone benefitting from in-person classes once again. However, by term two, student enrolments had drop by 41%, as many students enjoyed the benefits of coming out of the pandemic, travelling to visit family overseas. Employment visa condition changes also meant many students could now work for the first time, so many withdrew from courses to take up this opportunity.

Supporting students with occasional childcare in 2021 was challenging due to Melbourne's lockdowns. Parents with childcare were able to study face-to-face and for two days only (in line with AMEP funding) and this continued to be challenging as classes moved to a mixed model, with some days remote and some face-to-face. Many students stopped attending during this period, as childcare was closed to the general population (open to permitted workers only). In 2022 childcare was back in demand, due to changes to AMEP eligibility opening childcare up to more students, resulting in education related childcare bookings reaching capacity for the first time in a few years.

Satisfied with training provided by Wingate Avenue Community Centre Inc



Overall, students were very satisfied with their training and had a positive experience learning English at Wingate Ave CC (2022 Student Survey). Students reported that learning English built on their skills and knowledge, teachers explained things clearly and the training was relevant, interesting, and enjoyable. During the past year over 200 students completed units of competency, a massive achievement given the challenges associated with COVID-19.

Tracy, Adult Education and RTO Compliance Manager



Learning English is good at Wingate. My reading, writing and listening is better now.

EAL Course Student



Accredited Funded Programs

AMEP

The Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) continues to be an invaluable English program. New legislation in 2021 removed Study Now restrictions on attending the program, and as a result, more students are now eligible for AMEP. AMEP is a federally funded program, which we deliver as a subcontractor of Melbourne Polytechnic.

On average AMEP student numbers were higher than in other years and this was due to students moving into AMEP from other funded English programs. A total of 165 individual students enrolled in the AMEP over the course of a year.

SEE

The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program aims to enable students to participate in training and employment. SEE follows the overarching EAL curriculum, integrating well with AMEP, but with numeracy as a fifth skill.

SEE student enrolments continue to remain low. The change to eligibility to the AMEP program has meant that students better meet AMEP eligibility, rather than SEE. In July 2021, SEE had 16 enrolments and in June 2021 this had reduced to four enrolments.

Skills First

Skills First supports people to access vocational education and training. We are also on the Foundation Skills Approved provider list, which enables us to deliver Certificates in EAL courses.

Students' progress through units and work toward completion of a certificate level. In addition to their accredited EAL course students enrolled in Skills First can focus on language, literacy, and numeracy skills by attending pre-accredited programs such as spelling and grammar, conversation, computer, job seeking or cooking pre-accredited courses.

A total of 90 individual students enrolled through the Skills First over the course of the year. While some students took a break from studying during lockdowns, most returned when face-to-face classes resumed.

| Course | Semester 2, 2021 | Semester 1 2022 |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| Pre-Accredited Courses | | |
| Advanced Computers | ✓ | ✓ |
| Barista Training | | ✓ |
| Computer Fundamentals | ✓ | ✓ |
| Digital Life Skills | | ✓ |
| English Conversation | ✓ | ✓ |
| English Spelling + Grammar | ✓ | ✓ |
| Mobile Know How | ✓ | ✓ |
| Family Home Cooking | ✓ | ✓ |
| Introduction to Cleaning | ✓ | ✓ |
| Office Skills Level 1 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Office Skills Level 2 | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pathways to TAFE – Building + Construction | | ✓ |
| Skills for Work + Study – Early Childhood | ✓ | |
| Skills for Work + Study – Factory Warehousing | ✓ | |
| Skills for Work + Study – Food Processing | ✓ | |
| Accredited Courses | | |
| 22484VIC Course in Initial EAL | ✓ | ✓ |
| 22483VIC Course in EAL | ✓ | ✓ |
| 22484VIC Certificate I in EAL (Access) | ✓ | ✓ |
| 22485VIC Certificate II in EAL (Access) | ✓ | ✓ |
| 22486VIC Certificate III in EAL (Access) | ✓ | ✓ |



Employment

JOBS VICTORIA EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (JVES)

JVES is a free and voluntary program, that supports job seekers into work. We provide individual, specialized support, such as job searching and preparation (job matching, resumes, cover letters, applications, interview preparation) employment pathways, linking to short courses, and post-placement support. We also refer participants to wrap-around services such as financial counselling, career counsellors, housing services and food relief.

Since COVID-19, the local job market has changed. During this reporting period, there has been a worker shortage crisis, especially in hospitality, retail, aged care and construction industries. This has been brought on by a reduction in immigration and international students throughout the pandemic. We find ourselves in a unique situation where, as a result of the current worker shortage crisis in combination with the cost-of-living crisis, we have a limited pool of job seekers that now face more specific requirements from roles that they apply for to stay afloat.

Our JVES team, Clara, Matt and Lucy, have continued to attend lots of job networking events, run by large employers seeking candidates, as well as jobs fairs and exhibitions, such as the *Jobs Victoria Queen Victoria Market* stand. Meeting employers and other services enables us to promote our job seekers into paid, long-term employment.

Other work our JVES team undertook, and worth a special mention, is presenting at the *Monee Valley City Council Women Careers Transferrable Skills Workshop*, in June 2022. The workshop was for local women wanting to start out a new career or navigate a new employment pathway. Our JVES team demonstrated how skills can be developed in all areas of life and transferred to new career opportunities and resulted in a dedicated computer class starting for the group.

We have been blown away by the resilience and adaptability of our participants and continue to work together to support pathways to employment.

Clara, Lucy and Matt, Job Mentors



Reconnect is an excellent program. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. Thank you so much for all the support I had with Reconnect

Reconnect participant

Education, Training + Employment

Skills First Reconnect

In 2022 we commenced our second year delivering the Skills First Reconnect program funded by the Victorian Government. We deliver this program in partnership with *North Melbourne Language and Learning* and *Kensington Neighbourhood House*.

We are committed to using a strengths-based and client-centered approach in our Reconnect program, to support community members to overcome barriers to education, training and employment. Support is personalized, varying for each person, depending on their individual needs. Some examples of support provided during this reporting period includes assisting with applications for childcare subsidy (CCS) through Centrelink, assisting in housing applications and advocating for maintenance issues, and referrals to specialized services such as *Community Collective* for mental health support, *Moonee Valley Legal Service*, family services and many more. The Reconnect program is free and voluntary for people meeting eligibility requirements.

As our caseload continued to grow in 2022, Bronwyn and Ralph were pleased to welcome Lynette to the Skills First Reconnect team in February. Thanks to word-of-mouth and referrals from other services, we reached a full caseload of 40 participants. Out of these 40, we have supported: 11 participants to enroll into accredited training courses including Cert IV Disability, Cert III in Health Services Assistance and Certificate III in Childcare and many more; nine participants have commenced pre-accredited training including Basic/Advanced Computer Class, Office Administration and Cleaning; and two participants successfully commenced employment (teaching and in home care support).

The Skills First Reconnect employment support over the past year has included job searching and preparation (resumes, cover letters, job applications, interview preparation), employment readiness (police and working with children checks, and short courses including White Card, RSA and food handling), and employment support (support as needed when on the job).

Over the past year, the Skills First Reconnect program has supported participants interested in studying by helping them understand the courses available to them, their eligibility for government funding (including Free TAFE and Job Trainer), and pathway planning (how they can reach their dream career). The program has supported participants to cover enrolment fees and study resources including providing a second-hand laptop.

Bronwyn, Reconnect Coordinator

Ralph and Lynette, Reconnect Case Workers





The food program got me through a rough patch. I was able to get support and make social connections when I needed it.

Anon



Food Relief

During this reporting period, our food relief program has continued to provide quality food to families and individuals in need. We value providing healthy, culturally appropriate food in a dignified manner, with an emphasis on making people feel welcome and valued. Community members can easily book individual appointments, which allows our Food Relief Worker and social work students to provide a friendly entry point to the centre, and warm referral to other services should community members need additional support.

From July 2021 to the end of June 2022, we have provided 2,195 food parcels that have reached 7,055 people. The demand for assistance has continued since the height of the pandemic, with the program operating at capacity throughout the year; wait times have grown from two to three weeks, as we try to accommodate everyone seeking support. We have a large group of regular community members that access our food relief program, and we continue to get new bookings from locals as well as those residing more than 10km from the centre. Agencies also regularly connect with us to access emergency food relief packs. We estimate that we have at least five new people each fortnight accessing the service for the first time, or as a once off to get them through to their next pay day.



We also supply hygiene packs for men and women with the support of *Share the Dignity*, baby and toddler clothes for winter with the support of a grant from the *Department of Families, Fairness and Housing*, and handbags for women and teenage girls (also supplied by *Share the Dignity*). We also provided 250 households with Christmas hampers at the end of 2021 thanks to the generous support of *cohealth*. With the easing of restrictions, we also welcomed back the Farms to Families markets, delivered in October 2021 and March 2022, in partnership with *Foodbank*. Over 400 households accessed these two markets, supplying approximately 1,200 people with fresh produce.

Foodbank's latest Hunger Report reflects our experience on the ground; those who were already food insecure prior to the pandemic are going hungry even more frequently (with 43% of all food insecure Australians reporting they have gone without eating at least once a week), and new groups emerged, with almost a third of those accessing food relief being people that had never experienced food insecurity before. Our staff have also found a lot of people seeking assistance for the first

time or returning after months or years of not accessing the program, with many reporting that the increase in the cost of living, particularly of food and household items, as the primary reason for them doing so.

Our food relief program is self-funded, and with our ongoing partnership with Foodbank Victoria, we continue to prioritize fresh food, dry and frozen goods to those in our community that are in need.

Barney, Food Relief Worker





Operations

Common themes emerged from the Listening Tour: the need to quickly address immediate community needs, boost inclusion and provide the foundations for community and individual wellbeing.

VCOSS, Voices of Victoria report (2022)



Treasurer's Report

The 2022 financial year was a challenging year, with the impact of COVID-19 and long lockdowns in Melbourne impacting on the community centre services. Despite the long lockdowns we sustained our revenue level, achieving a small 2% growth from the previous year (excludes other income).

However, with services, programs and activities returning to full swing in early 2022, operating costs for the facilities and staffing returned to normal, and above the previous two years of operating costs during lockdowns. We committed to maintaining staffing levels throughout the pandemic and invested in retaining staff at their current contracted hours during this financial year. This investment, along with natural staff attrition in early 2022 and the accumulation of leave expenses (as a result of no one taking leave for two years during the pandemic) has seen a spike in our wage expenses (including recruitment costs, long service leave and annual leave expenses).

Overall, expenses increased by 10% compared to the previous financial year. We finished the financial year with a small deficit of (\$15,843). Our retained earnings have remained stable and includes \$1M in cash.

Jenny Nolan, Committee of Management Treasurer

Balance Sheet 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Assets

Current Assets

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Cash + Cash Equivalents | \$1,806,916 |
| Trade + Other Receivables | \$250,654 |
| | <u>\$1,337,570</u> |

Non-Current Assets

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Property, Plant + Equipment | \$257,261 |
| Total Assets | <u>\$1,594,831</u> |

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Trade and Other Payables | \$127,720 |
| Provisions | \$166,310 |
| | <u>\$294,030</u> |

Non-Current Liabilities

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Provisions | \$29,599 |
| Total Liabilities | <u>\$323,629</u> |

Net Assets FY 2022

\$1,271,202

Statement of Equity 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Balance as at 30 June 2021 | \$1,287,045 |
| Surplus for FY 2022 | <u>(\$15,843)</u> |
| Balance as at 30 June 2022 | <u>\$1,271,202</u> |

Income and Expenditure Statement 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Revenue

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Grants and Fees received | \$1,990,631 | |
| Sundry Income | \$3,770 | |
| Hire | \$42,934 | |
| Interest Received | \$1,105 | |
| Donations Received | \$143,448 | |
| <i>Total Revenue</i> | | <u>\$2,181,888</u> |

Expenditure

| | | |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| Advertising | \$1,981 | |
| Auditor's Fee | \$3,360 | |
| Bank Charges | \$758 | |
| Cleaning | \$5,699 | |
| Consultant Fees | \$92,047 | |
| Depreciation | \$29,136 | |
| General Expenses | \$22,307 | |
| Photocopying Expenses | \$6,687 | |
| Education Resources and Activities | \$102,762 | |
| Insurance | \$5,451 | |
| Light, Gas and Power | \$8,562 | |
| Long Service Leave and Annual Leave Expenses | \$77,393 | |
| Printing and Stationery | \$11,184 | |
| Rates and Taxes | \$1,489 | |
| Rent | \$23,947 | |
| Repairs and Maintenance | \$3,475 | |
| Security Costs | \$1,615 | |
| Staff Recruitment | \$11,750 | |
| Subscriptions | \$7,478 | |
| Sundry Expenses | \$1,025 | |
| Superannuation Contributions | \$152,288 | |
| Telephone and Internet | \$14,479 | |
| Tool Replacement | \$3,171 | |
| Wages | \$1,594,170 | |
| Workcover | \$15,247 | |
| <i>Total Expenditure</i> | | <u>\$2,197,731</u> |

Surplus/Deficit for FY 2022

(\$15,843)

In 2021, community value provided the community centre was:

\$17.23 for every **\$1** of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding

or **\$1,187.23** for every hour the community centre was in use

Source: Neighbourhood Houses Victoria 2021 Survey

Governance

Wingate Avenue Community Centre is an incorporated association governed by our 2021 Rules. Our aim is to be aware of, and responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of local residents, particularly those experiencing barriers to participation.

The Committee of Management (CoM) is required by the Rules to meet at least four times in each year and hold an annual general meeting of the Association within five months after the end of the financial year. The CoM met nine times during the 2022 financial year, and held its Annual General Meeting on 26 October 2021, meeting its requirements under the Rules.

The Finance Sub-Committee met three times.



Facilities

Facility management and maintenance has been challenging this year. Minor maintenance has been hampered by a lack of funding, and resource management is slow due to a lack of staffing. Despite the lack of adequate funding and staffing resources to manage the ageing building, we have completed the following maintenance during the 2021 financial year:

- Victoria Racing dropped by on Monday 20 December to help with the long list of minor maintenance tasks we had.
- Ascot Vale Housing Office have attended to building maintenance as issues arise. During the 2021 financial year, these have included:
 - Roof leaks repaired
 - Toilet and drain blocks repaired
- Our large room divider in halls 2 and 3 received some much-needed maintenance, after years of use, and no maintenance.
- The leases for our main building at 13a Wingate Avenue, and the land lease for the community shed at rear 14 Dunlop Avenue, expired in mid-2021. We have been endeavouring to work with Homes Victoria (during their staffing shortage) to get the leases renewed.

We opened a new office at 262 Racecourse Road, Flemington in March 2022, as our services have outgrown the building at 13a Wingate Avenue, Ascot Vale. Our Skills First Reconnect program operates out of this space on Monday, and Jobs Victoria Employment Service Wednesdays. We are working to establish English accredited classes in this space as soon as possible.

Team

During the year (1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022), we welcomed the following staff to our team:

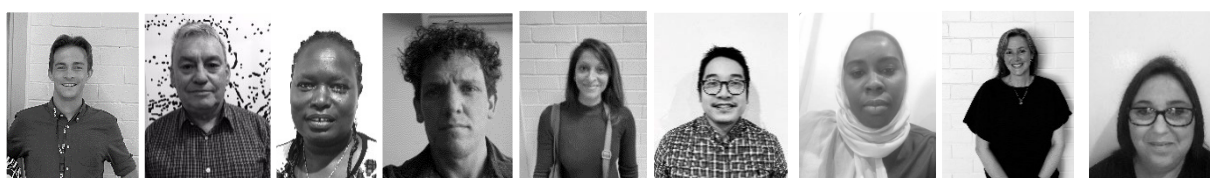
| | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Caitlin | Cooking Teacher (Feb 2022) | Matt | Jobs Mentor (Mar 2022) |
| Lynette | Reconnect Case Worker (Feb 2022) | Ralph | Reconnect Case Worker (Aug 2021) |
| Lucy | Jobs Mentor (Mar 2022) | Suad | Childcare Educator (Jul 2022) |
| Mahsan | EAL Teacher (Jul 2022) | Xi | EAL Teacher (Apr 2022) |



Left to right: Angie, Barney, Bronwyn, Caitlin, Cate, Clara, Emma, Eveline, Faduma



Hannah, Kaushika, Kellie, Lauren, Lou, Lucy, Lynette, Mahsan, Mark



Matt, Neil, Nyankiir, Peter, Raveen, Ralph, Remah, Rita, Rosa



Rose, Suad, Sema, Tracy, Vijaya, Wendy, Xi. Not pictured: Michelle.

And we farewelled quite a few staff, some of whom had been with us for many years, and all of whom were valuable members of our team. We wish them well on their next adventure:

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Jenny | EAL Teacher | Danny | Community Development Worker |
| Nancy | EAL Teacher | Joeline | Jobs Mentor |
| Gulsen | EAL Teacher | Susan | EAL Teacher |
| Annette | EAL Teacher | Vida | EAL Teacher |
| Penny | Jobs Mentor | Gerry | EAL Teacher |
| Heyad | EAL Teacher | | |

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work of our university student placement. They play a key role in keeping our reception open on Thursday and Fridays, helping out with food relief, and supporting community members. Thanks to the following students:

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|
| Carmen | Social Work Student (Aug 2021) | John | Social Worker Student (Feb 2022) |
| Charlie | Social Work Student (Jan 2022) | Kama | Social Work Student (Jun 2022) |
| Chris | Social Work Student (Jun 2022) | Naod | Social Work Student (Jul 2021) |
| Huma | Community Services Student (Jul 2022) | | |

Professional Development

Staff opted in for the annual first aid training session in Oct 2021.

We trialled a staff yoga class to practice our Zen during the pandemic, but unfortunately it hampered by lockdowns, so was short lived (between August and November 2021).



We like to invest in our team by holding a whole team professional development session each year, and this financial year (August 2021) we participated in *Mahana's* Culturally Responsive Capacity Building, a session organised by *Network West*.



Mahana Culture delivered this virtual training session to team members that opted in. This introductory course nurtured cultural awareness and provided tools to start a reflective, culturally aware practice that can be used well after the training day finished. This was a great opportunity to continue to develop our cultural intelligence (CQ), at all levels. <https://mahanaculture.com/>

Partners + Funders

Ascot Vale Office of Housing
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Brumby's
Built
Bunnings
cohealth
Community Collective
Consumer Policy Research Centre
Cultivating Community
Deakin University
Deloitte
Djirri Djirri
Foodbank
Garden of St Erth
Good Shepherd

Kensington Childcare Next Door
Mad Mex
Meals With Impact
Melbourne Playback Theatre Company
Melbourne Zoo
Moonee Valley City Council
Moonee Valley Legal Service
National Gallery of Victoria
Share the Dignity
Staff Australia
The Huddle
Victoria Racing Club
Victoria University
Werribee Zoo

Adult Community and Further Education Board
Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP)
Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations
Department of Education and Training
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Immigration and Citizenship

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Melbourne Airport Grant
Moonee Valley City Council
Skills for Education and Employment
Skills First