



BALLARAT NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2022



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# From the Chair

As our communities slowly and cautiously begin to emerge from an extraordinarily disrupted couple of years, I feel it's a good time to reflect on how we managed as a committee and how we hope to ensure that we continue to deliver positive outcomes to those communities.



It is a somewhat unusual situation for multiple Neighbourhood Houses to share a Committee of Management. This initially happened when the Ballarat, and the Wendouree Neighbourhood Centres, were both experiencing difficulty attracting committee members. At the time it was thought that it would be more easily achievable to share a committee.

More recently, when funding was offered for a new Neighbourhood House in Ballarat East, the same shared Committee of Management submitted a successful application to undertake the management of this House too.

The past few years have seen The Committee go through a solid phase of renewal, recruitment, capacity building. Some long standing members of the committee have moved on and I would like to thank them for the tremendous work they have done. There have also been some community members who have come and gone but who also served to enrich us with their participation. I also thank them for their work.

We now seem to have entered a relatively stable phase of membership which has been particularly beneficial over the last couple of years. We are blessed to have an amazing breadth and diversity of skills and experience. I thank the current Committee members for their ongoing dedication and the remarkable value they bring to the table for our communities.

To some extent I think we are still learning how to maximise the opportunities that a shared Committee of Management structure presents, particularly when the three Neighbourhood Houses are within a comparatively small geographic area. From a committee perspective we have been able to save a large amount of duplicated work by sharing virtually all governance and policy documentation across the houses. This, in turn, has led to working closely with our three Managers to ensure this documentation is rigid enough to provide strong guidance frameworks, yet flexible enough to allow each of the Houses to remain unique and highly relevant to their own communities.

Our shared governance model has also enfranchised a strong connection between the Houses at an operational level. There is high level of skill sharing, resource sharing, and support between the houses which allows them to be even more flexible in the ways they function and, again, work more effectively to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

# Chair's Report - continued

A few words on each of our Houses. It is for the Managers to tell their own stories in detail but I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for the exceptional efforts they put into their work and the people they support. We are especially fortunate to have three such dynamic and dedicated leaders for each of our Houses.

The Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre is the mothership of our group. Executive Officer Vicki Coltman and her amazing team somehow managed to navigate the Global Pandemic without ever fully surrendering and closing for business. Already the Centre is on track and rebuilding its programs and reconnecting with its community cohorts. We look forward to positive and productive 2022 for this House,

The Ballarat East Neighbourhood Centre is the youngest and therefore smallest of our charges. Sarah Greenwood-Smith took on the role of Manager in the early part of the Global Pandemic which must have seemed like a bad idea at the time. Despite this, Sarah managed to keep alive the new connections the House had been building with the community. Sarah even oversaw the relocation of the House to a new home at Barkley Square where it is already growing again and looks set to prosper and blossom during 2022.

The Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre certainly had the most tumultuous of times during the Global Pandemic era. Manager Manya Ferwerda was beset by problems the other Houses did not have to navigate. The nature of the Wendouree facility made course delivery within health compliance requirements practically impossible. Likewise additional health concerns within the Wendouree community had a devastating effect on the ability to work with community groups. This ultimately resulted in a significant loss of funding to the Centre, As a result of this, The Committee had no choice other than to instigate a complete restructure in order to ensure the ongoing viability of The Centre. This was a painful and difficult path for everyone involved but it did allow The House to survive. Thankfully the Centre has already lurched back into life with renewed vigor and is successfully reconnecting with the communities. The Wendouree House is due to move to a new facility in the next year and based on how far it has come since the restructure already, there is plenty of reason to be optimistic for a strong 2022 both for the House and the Wendouree communities.

A final word of thanks to the communities and participants we serve. The staff, the managers, the community groups and their leaders, the volunteers, the tutors, the outworkers, the clients, the patrons, my fellow committee members, and, of course, the three levels of government who provide the funding for much of our work and projects.

You are all what make the Neighbourhood Houses and help build the communities that benefit from them.

Glen Crompton

# Our Vision

resilient connected neighbourhoods

# Our Mission

to enrich our community by providing opportunities to connect participate and learn



# Our Values

We take a person-centred approach to:

- Equity: creating opportunities with fairness and consideration of each individual's needs.
- Empowerment: Enhancing individuals' capacity to have control of their own lives.
- Inclusion: Embracing diversity in a respectful, safe and welcoming environment.
- Collaboration: Working together to achieve common goals.

# Our Commitment to the SDGs

Our activities and programs address 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goal targets

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere (1.1)
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture (2.1.2)
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (3.4)
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (4.3, 4.3.1, 4.4, 4.4.1, 4.5, 4.5.1, 4.6, 4.6.1, 4.7, 4.7.1)
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (5.1, 5.1.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.5.2)
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (8.3, 8.5, 8.6)
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries (10.2, 10.3)
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (11.7)
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (12.3, 12.5)
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (16.1, 16.7)
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (Technology 17.8)

**Note:** many of the SDG's overlap, for example Goal 1 End Poverty and Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre work with unemployed job seekers to help them find meaningful work. This will help them earn a decent living and improve their living conditions, moving them above the poverty line.





# Committee of Management as at 31st December 2021

Thank you to the members of our Committee of Management for your work and dedication to the organisation during 2021. Your ongoing support and advice is greatly appreciated.

To Jim who stepped off the committee last year, we wish you all the best in the future.

**Chair** Glen Crompton

**Secretary** Lisa Buckland

**Treasurer** Jane Jens

**General Members** Cameron Duthie  
Bradley Smith  
Annie de Jong  
John Horley  
Alan Labas  
Emily Brumby

**Executive Officer/ Public Officer** Vicki Coltman

**Committee Members who resigned during 2021** Jim Thomson 16/06/2021



# From the EO



Each year brings new challenges and opportunities, this year was no different with the pandemic continuing to impact our lives in many ways. As always, the BNC team put community first, responding to client needs and looking at ways to break down barriers causing social isolation and loneliness.

Our work focused on supporting the most vulnerable learners and unemployed clients with a range of employment services, adult education, and volunteer opportunities in the Centre. New services were added and we engaged hundreds of people from across the region in our community development activities.

We started the year in February by singing happy 40th birthday to ourselves and worked with the Redan community to hold our first Kite Festival. We helped at the inaugural Integra Lucas Garden Expo, celebrated Harmony Week with our annual party and ran morning teas and lunches when permitted. When lunches stopped, we partnered with the Salvation Army and Soup Bus to produce meals for their food programs, ensuring those who most needed help were supported and connected to other services.

Late in 2020, we joined the Spotlight on Sebastopol Reference Group looking at a range of community initiatives for Sebastopol. During 2021 we continued this work and developed up several proposals for projects which will see millions of dollars invested into this suburb. BNC is leading the delivery of several of these projects including a community newsletter, a history project, several pieces of public art and a large community garden. These projects are now well underway with anticipated completion dates in late 2023.

The Social Enterprise once again struggled to operate in a covid impacted environment but was fortunately helped by Department of Education funding. Late in the year, we were fortunate to obtain three years of grant funding from The Potter Foundation.

Securing this funding allowed us to offer long term contracts to staff and will help us rebuild profitability in the Social Enterprise by further developing the business model for the project.

Finally, a huge thank you to staff, volunteers and Committee of Management members for your ongoing commitment and dedication to our community. Everyday you demonstrate how together we can achieve amazing things.

Vicki Coltman





# Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre 2021 Reflection

We kicked off the year with our 40th birthday celebration, classes resumed and community lunches restarted. However 2021 was another COVID impacted year, especially in term 3 when restrictions closed the Centre for the first time. As always we made the most of the situation, producing free meals for local charities to distribute and finding new ways to support our community members and clients.

Several politicians dropped in to hear about our programs and speak to the volunteers, including the Member for Western Metropolitan Cesar Melhem MLC, the Member for Ripon Louise Staley MP, and the Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle MP launched the Spotlight on Sebastopol Project from the Centre.

On reflection, the past two years continue to be a great challenge for so many in our community. Despite this they have also given us new opportunities to grow our work and build on our programs.

## In 2021 we had:

- 450+ visitors to the Centre every week
- 6 volunteer roles including in the garden, office, social enterprise & classes
- 100+ organisational supporters, partners and sponsors of our programs
- 58 different organisations used the facility for meetings, training and activities
- Community groups used a room in the Centre 273 times



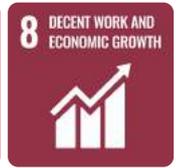
**97**  
volunteers

**3618**  
volunteer  
hours

**18757**  
visitors



# Jobs Victoria Work & Learning Centre



The Ballarat WLC continued as a referral point for other employment services and Centrelink during 2021. COVID safe measures kept staff and clients Covid free, helping the WLC team to support our most disadvantaged job seekers with increased face to face client services as the year progressed.

Overall we had another good year, achieving most of our June 2023 targets by July 2021 and achieving decent work outcomes for our clients.

## 2021 Achievements:

- Total active clients in system 597 \*
- Total number of employment placements 343\*
- Clients unemployed for >12 months (at intake) 32%
- Employment placements retained for 4 weeks 74%
- Employment placements retained for 26 weeks 45%
- Number of non-accredited training placements 96 ( 89% completion)
- Number of accredited training placements 27 (56% completion)
- Collaborated on 3 Industry nights with 45 participants



\* since contract commenced 1st July 2019

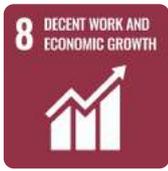


**125**  
new  
clients

**159**  
employment  
placements

**123**  
training  
placements





# Learn Local Adult Education

After the success of our 2020 education program, we started 2021 with a strong bank of 50 courses designed to help learners improve their literacy and numeracy. By April, we were on track to deliver our initial allocation of 14,060 training hours and successfully applied, and received an additional 4300 training hours in May.

Our focus for many years has been on practical skills based training to build employability skills and pathways into employment and education. In 2021, we added more practical courses including Knitting for Beginners, Prepare for IELTS, Intermediate Sewing and Literacy through Art. In addition, we are constantly reviewing our courses, taking feedback from tutors, learners and staff to ensure courses are relevant and meeting learner needs.

As always with everyone working together to make this happen, it was truly a team effort we are proud of.

Overall we achieved

- 100% of our initial allocation of training hours
- 91% of total allocated hours or 16723 of 18358 hours (due to term 3 closure)\*
- 102 courses were delivered from a bank of 39 unique courses
- 587 enrolments for 326 unique learners
- Learners identified as 69% women, 4% gender neutral, 13% with a disability, 40% over 50 and 2% ATSI
- 25% of learners were born overseas, coming from 36 different countries



**91%**  
**hours**  
**delivered\***

**16723**  
**student**  
**contact**  
**hours\***

**587**  
**course**  
**enrolments**



# Our Kitchen Social Enterprise



The start of 2021 showed great promise for the Social Enterprise to rebuild after the impact from the 2020 closure. Lunches resumed, volunteers returned and there was a sense of relief as life started to look a little more 'normal'. Unfortunately by the end of term 1 it was apparent, the year would once again be Covid interrupted.

Building on the free food program from 2020, we quickly returned to providing free meals to the community. This year we worked with the Soup Bus and local Salvation Army who distributed the meals, ensuring those seeking help also had access to other services and wellbeing support.

Our volunteers and job seekers continued their training, with many of them using this work experience to help them find employment.

The social enterprise team led by Chef David achieved:

- 10 Community lunches, averaging 55 people attending each lunch
- 5700 free meals for the Salvos & kilos of soup for the Soup Bus
- 7200kg of food was rescued from landfill
- 5000kg of food donated to community members
- 3 year funding from The Potter Foundation



**7200kg  
rescued**

**5700  
free meals**

**5000kg  
donated**





# Community Development

We continued to support Delacombe and Sebastopol communities with place based events and activities designed to connect and encourage participation. In 2021 we:

- Celebrated our 40th birthday
- Convened the Delacombe Chair's Forum
- Coordinated the Delacombe Children's Week Art Competition (275 participants)
- Delivered community events including a harmony week celebration, Redan Kite Festival, International Women's Day, and Department of Justice Safety Forum (1800+ attendees)
- Held several working bees in the Community Garden
- Collaborated on the Redan History Forum
- Supported 16 students completing their Certificate and Bachelor degree placement requirements
- Assisted with the Kidsafe 'Safe Seats, Safe Kids' program (73 participants)
- Conducted weekly welfare checks on 119 Ballarat District Community Support Register participants, making 4500+ calls
- Applied for 41 grants, with a 76% success rate
- Created 4 community murals for the Hub
- Helped 33 people apply for their power savings bonus
- Made the finals in 5 sector awards - always a bridesmaid!



**4500+**  
welfare  
checks

**1800+**  
activity  
participants

**16**  
placement  
students



# From the Treasurer



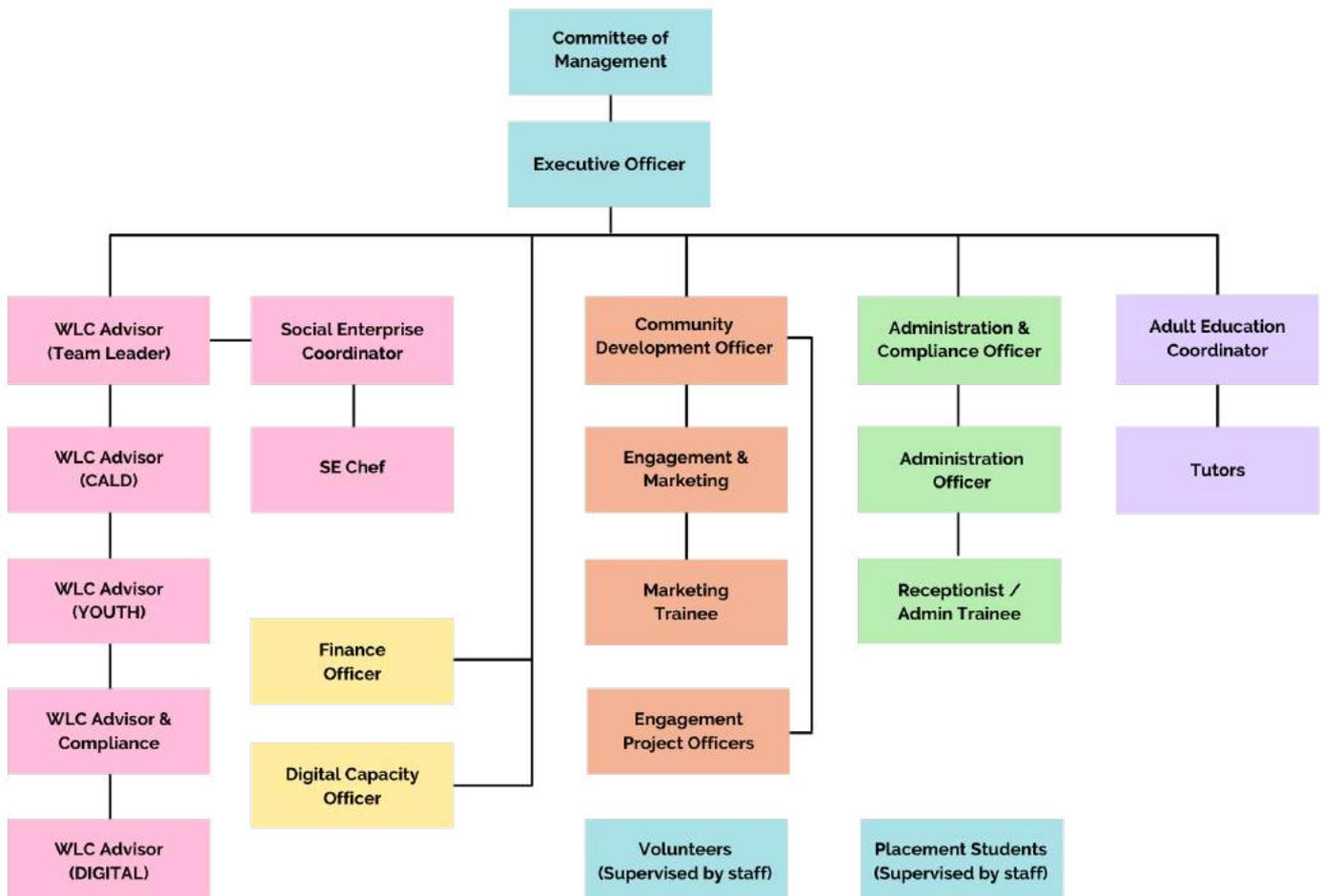
For the 2021 year, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre had a net surplus of \$84,305 compared to \$118,599 in 2020. This resulted in increase of total member's funds to \$368,144.

Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre received \$206,448 in ACFE Grants, \$647,837 in Government Grants and \$151,300 in Job Keeper Subsidy. In summary, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre is delivering more programs and reaching more people in the community as demonstrated by the strong growth in 2021 year.

A full copy of the 2021 Financial Statements can be downloaded from the Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre website or contact the Executive Officer for a copy.

Jane Jens

## Organisational Chart





# Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre Partners and Networks

**A very special thank you to our major funding partners for their continued support.**

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Education & Training
- Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions
- Jobs Victoria & Working for Victoria
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Phoenix P12 Community College
- City of Ballarat & Regional Development Victoria

**Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre staff convene the following networks:**

- Delacombe Chairs Forum
- Jobs Victoria Work & Learning Centre Local Advisory Panel
- Connecting Sebastopol

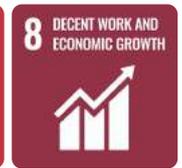
**Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre staff are members of the following networks:**

- Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses Committee
- Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Board
- City of Ballarat Safety Committee
- Social Inclusion Network
- Food Access Network
- Ballarat Youth Services Network
- Spotlight on Sebastopol Committee
- BRMC Education & Employment Working Group
- DET South Western Victoria Regional Engagement Forum
- Volunteer Coordinators Network
- CORE Alliance
- Australian Learning Communities Network
- Work & Learning Centre Network
- Social Enterprise Victoria Network

To support our community we rely on many people and organisations to help us with not only the big things but also the little things our community needs. Last year was no exception and we are grateful to everyone who helps us to support our community.



# Education for everyone: Ruth\*



Ruth first came to the Centre in mid-2020, her marriage had failed and she had moved back to Ballarat to live with her elderly mother. At first Ruth was feeling very lost and not sure which way to go as she had no qualifications and didn't know what she would like to do.

Being aged in her early 50's Ruth felt her options were limited. We suggested she do a careers quiz to help her figure out what her work preferences would be. The quiz revealed Ruth would love to assist other people, so they investigated a pathway into Community Services.

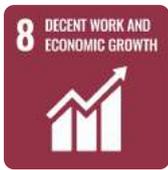
Ruth commenced a 'Prepare to Study' course as well as a 'Writing Community Letters' course. She found these very challenging and felt quite frustrated that she wasn't doing as well as she hoped. After discussing this with staff, she changed her learning experience, looking at the writing course as an exercise in learning how to compose written articles as preparation for further studies. This helped Ruth focus on the 'Prepare to Study' course which she did enjoy.

Ruth then applied to do a Community Services course at TAFE and completed the LLN Exam. After a nervous wait she was thrilled to be accepted. In the first couple of months of the course, Ruth really struggled. She was loving the course and enjoying the content but was finding the research and writing of assignments very challenging. During that time, she kept weekly appointments with the BNC team, who helped to give her some tips on good research practice as well as keeping her written work clear and concise. We encouraged her to keep going and looked at ways to build her confidence.

Ruth embraced all the advice and assistance she received. She worked diligently, putting in 110% in long hours of study. It was very exciting to hear that Ruth received excellent results on her first assignment and it was very gratifying to see the transformation. On touching base with her later we found Ruth has gone from strength to strength and is at the point of completing work placement.

To see a client, go from a broken, defeated soul to a confident, enthusiastic and competent person makes what we do all the more worthwhile. \* name changed





## A Dream Job: Sun\*

Sun first became a client of the Work & Learning Centre in 2018. Initial discussions with her regarding career goals and training were always centred around Sun's love of cars and working with tools. Through many discussions and lockdowns in 2020 we managed for Sun to meet with the local TAFE to look at what a pre-apprenticeship in the construction industry may look like, this interested Sun and she commenced her Pre-Apprenticeship.

However halfway through the course Sun became homeless and was dealing with some Mental Health issues and was unable to complete the course. Contact with her through this time was sporadic. In early 2021 we reconnected with Sun, she had found cheaper accommodation 30 minutes out of Ballarat and was working casually in a local bar.

We started work to update her resume and from this she gained more casual work at a camp, however due to the constant lockdowns of 2021 these businesses were forced to close. When they reopened, Full time & Part time staff were always allocated the limited shifts. Sun would call her Advisor extremely stressed about her finances and was determined now to enter a workforce that was more secure and fulfilling as a career.

Her first successful application for an interview was with a Battery store, this interview went well and she received great feedback from the HR Manager. However, the owner held concerns about her being female, even though she clearly demonstrated her physical ability in lifting batteries and her knowledge of cars but as the saying goes 'one door closes another will open'.

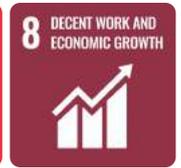
A local City Council only 20 minutes from her new residence had advertised for a Civil Construction Apprenticeship, this is what she really wanted and everything she had hoped for in a career, so with fingers crossed we helped her apply and after 2 interviews Sun was offered the position!

Sun was so excited to be established working full-time hours in a job which offers her long-term career prospects, qualifications and stability.

\* name changed & photos not related to story



# Job Success: Mary & Peter\*



Peter and Mary (husband and wife) became clients of the Jobs Victoria Work and Learning Centre in February 2021. Peter's sister Nancy recommended they visit the centre to talk to a Workforce Development Advisor who was helping her find employment. Nancy had been a client since 2016 and had completed several adult education courses to build her employment skills.

Both Peter and Mary were well qualified in care work and were seeking work in that industry. Mary had been a carer of their six children for several years and was aiming to re-enter the workforce. Peter had recently finished a job and was keen to find another.

Both Peter and Mary had out of date resumes which did not present their skills and experience in the best way. The Workforce Development Advisor re-formatted their resumes and worked individually with each of them to assist them with interview skills and applying for jobs.

Immediately both Peter and Mary got interviews with several organisations, and eventually both of them were offered work with a local support organisation. Nancy was also able to obtain a position with the same organisation.

In the process, Workforce Development Advisors also assisted all three clients to complete their NDIS Worker Screening Check which enabled them to commence employment immediately.

\* name changed and photos not related to story





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