Sussex Neighbourhood House

Annual Report

2025–2026



A community hub for lifelong learning, connection and belonging

Sussex Neighbourhood House

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Purpose

Sussex Neighbourhood House Incorporated is a public institution which has the charitable purposes of advancing social and public welfare by;

1. Advancing mental health and preventing social isolation;
2. Providing a physical location where it supports individuals to undertake activities, or work on projects, in the company of others.

Vision

Our community's heart, where everyone belongs.

Mission

Sussex Neighbourhood House provides a relevant hub that supports, engages, connects, and excites our community through lifelong learning, social activities and by responding to community needs.



Choir members Julie & Jan



A happy Scallywag on the eas



The secret side of the garden

Acknowledgement of Country

Sussex Neighbourhood House is located on the land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as custodians of the land and waters on which we operate and respect their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

Statement of Inclusion

Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone: principles which empower, foster harmony, and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

Leadership report



Kristina Didelis &
Felicity Leahy

We stand on the shoulders of giants who have shaped the organisation into a vibrant place for learning, sharing, connecting and growing

As Chair and General Manager, we are incredibly proud to be presenting this annual report to you. Our collaboration on this leadership report is reflective of our working relationship, which is based on respect and a healthy mixture of both enthusiasm and pragmatism.

It has been a year of significant change and achievement at Sussex Neighbourhood House, and it is fitting that our theme in presenting this year's Annual Report is: *"Let us celebrate together,"* because there is so much to celebrate.

As a new Chair and a new General Manager, there has been much to learn, and our heartfelt thanks go to the many people who have helped to make this transition smooth. The welcome and support we have received from staff and volunteers have been invaluable and make these roles a joy. We stand on the shoulders of giants who have shaped the organisation into a vibrant place for learning, sharing, connecting and growing.

Leadership report

Change is inevitable - both challenging and rewarding. Together as Chair and General Manager, we have learned and shared a great deal, working productively and joyfully so Sussex Neighbourhood House can operate effectively and continue to serve the needs of our community.

There is so much to be proud of – top highlights that you will read about further in this annual report include:

The organisation is in a great position. Our amazing volunteers, including our Committee of Governance, are critical in making this happen. Our Committee of Governance has a combination of significant experience and many new faces. We successfully recruited four new committee members in April, and the welcome addition of a youth representative ensures a contribution for the next generation along with a fresh perspective. The Committee has focused on good governance practices such as our Strategic Plan, Risk Reviews, Policy Reviews, and our financial management.

We have so many wonderful humans that come in and help in so many ways to make our programs and activities diverse and accessible, and our organisation safe, viable and effective.

Our Community Garden gets more beautiful every day. Our volunteer gardeners not only tend the garden, but they also welcome people as they wander through it. They share their knowledge generously which engages many curious passers-by. A space that once was a patch of grass is now a thriving garden and a place of engagement (and the seats made from recycled pallets really are comfy!). With passion and ingenuity, the garden keeps expanding and growing, and it was a pleasure to celebrate this with a Garden Party in March, along with the unveiling of our Peace Pole in partnership with the Pascoe Vale Branch of Rotary.

In June, we adopted an **Action Plan** for our Strategic Plan, which has the following three pillars: community connection, partnerships, and people & processes. The Action Plan turns aspiration into action, and we are implementing it every day. The Action Plan will also be used as a reporting tool so that we can track our progress over the life of the 4-year plan (2026-2029).

Our Impact and Value Report *(prepared by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria)* shows that we delivered over $5.8M in value for our community. This equates to $8.08 of value for every $1 invested. This shows the multiplying power of investing in Neighbourhood Houses.



The Really Comfy Chair

We have so many wonderful humans that come in and help in so many ways to make our programs and activities diverse and accessible and our organisation safe, viable and effective

Leadership report

The *Pascoe Vale Food Collective* turned five in March and continues to provide an excellent sustainable service of fabulous dried goods and cleaning products. Each month the Collective holds a distribution day which is a joy to be a part of. As you get your BYO containers filled with great produce at affordable prices by friendly volunteers, you can browse the share table of local produce or share a cuppa with the crew.

> Every day something that happens at Sussex Neighbourhood House reminds you of the unlimited potential of people coming together to help each other out

As we move forward with implementing the **Strategic Plan**, our key mission is to achieve operational best practice and continue to serve the community.

We have actively participated in the statewide advocacy campaign that seeks to secure increased funding for the 400 Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria.

Our staff continues to provide quality courses across a diverse program. In addition to our office and program coordination team, we have nearly 30 tutors and contractors who support our students to learn and grow.

Our community, volunteers, and partners (who are all AMAZING): we could not operate without you. Many of our programs are community- or volunteer-led, which keeps them accessible and responsive to the needs of the community.

Our Winter Solstice celebration held in June brought many of our partners and volunteers together, and it was great to see connections start and strengthen.

It's not always easy though, and there are many challenges we face each day. We sadly marked the passing of Vic Issell, former Manager. Vic led the organisation at a critical time, as we transitioned from our old facility at Sussex Street to our new facility here at Prospect Street.

The challenge of opportunity is ever present; we have so many great ideas that come through the door - we can't possibly achieve them all (and we hate saying no)! But with limited resources (of time and money), we must be careful of what and how we prioritise.

The challenge of growing and changing community needs with stagnant funding sources is always pushing us to ask tough questions and to think creatively.

However, at the end of the day, it is the power of community and kindness to make real impacts for people that keeps us going. Every day, something that happens at Sussex Neighbourhood House reminds you of the unlimited potential of people coming together to help each other out. In the global context of war, uncertainty, and individualism, Neighbourhood Houses put their money where their mouth is and acts for the benefit of the community with care and kindness.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of that. We're looking forward to another year of learning, connecting, growing, and sharing.

Kristina Didelis | Chairperson

Felicity Leahy | General Manager

Our strategic plan
2026–2029

Strengthening connections, supporting our people, and sustaining our future



Our pillars

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- Build, connect and support community inclusiveness, involvement, trust, and cooperation.
- Review our understanding of the community and reflect this in everything we do.
- Engage the community by identifying existing and new intentional offerings.
- Build awareness of our identity and offerings.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

PARTNERSHIPS

- Improve community spirit, cohesion, and wellbeing by working collaboratively.
- Strengthen current offerings and further develop contemporary programs.
- Activate facility/room access.
- Support the Neighbourhood House sector.
- Connect and build in local networks.

PARTNERSHIPS

PEOPLE & PROCESSES

- Support people and culture, good governance and ensure the resources, systems and processes required are in place to sustain operations.
- Prioritise employee, volunteer and participant wellbeing and a positive place-based culture.
- Recruit, train, and succession plan for a skilled staff, volunteer, and governance board teams.
- Ensure financial sustainability.

PEOPLE & PROCESSES

Our foundations

OUR PURPOSE

Connect community to advance mental wellbeing and prevent social isolation.

OUR MISSION

To provide a hub that connects, creates, and supports our community through lifelong learning, social activities and by responding to community needs.

OUR VISION

Our community's heart, where everyone belongs

Real Impact, Real Value

INCOME

$720,408

What we received to keep the House running

VALUE

$5,821,782

The social, economic, and community value generated through our people, programs, and partnerships

Where the value comes from



$2,530,194

Improved quality of life through social connection



$490,461

Volunteer contributions



$714,028

Services provided



$2,082,799

Adult Community Education

Every $1 invested creates...

$8.08

for every $1 of income

$35.66

for every $1 of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding

$1,263.96

for every hour the neighbourhood house is in use

9.4 FTE jobs

including 6.8 direct and 2.6 indirect Full Time Equivalent positions

Service value includes

$480
Computer / internet use

$556,824
Facilities use or hire

$632
Auspicing other organisations

$156,092
Fee for service activities

$4,300
Power Saving Bonus

This is based on data provided through the Neighbourhood House Survey 2025, calculated using Deloitte Access Economics report

Our Volunteers



PEOPLE & PROCESSES

Our volunteers bring their time, skills, and energy to help us thrive. Their passion and commitment strengthen our programs, support our community, and ensure that we can keep doing what we do best

148 volunteers

187 hours per week

9,163 hours a year

4.8 full-time staff equivalent

Where our volunteers make an impact

17 **Office reception & admin**

Keeping our front desk friendly and running smoothly, guiding visitors as they come in.

53 **Program facilitation & support**

Sharing skills, leading activities, and supporting participants across a wide range of programs.

14 **Committee of Governance**

Providing leadership, strategic guidance, and oversight to support our mission.

24 **Students & placements**

Bringing fresh energy and perspectives through placements, projects, and learning opportunities.

29 **Pascoe Vale Repair Cafe**

Helping repair items, sharing skills, and building a more sustainable community.

41 **Pascoe Vale Food Collective**

Sorting, packing, and distributing pantry items to our local area.

Cheryl & Peter

Growing community together

We have to give a special thank you to Peter and Cheryl for the extraordinary time, care, and energy they give to SNH.

They have become a beautiful part of our front-of-house welcome. They greet people warmly, encourage curious passers-by to come in and have a look, and help make our garden and entrance feel like an extension of the community within.



Volunteer Spotlights

PEOPLE & PROCESSES



Cheryl Adams

There is Always Room

Cheryl first found SNH in 2018 through the Skylarks Choir, drawn to the smaller group after years of singing and travelling with larger groups. What she found was a welcoming House and a strong sense of community that kept drawing her back.

In 2024, a call for Community Garden volunteers gave the self-described "somewhat obsessive gardener" a new way to become involved. Working alongside Rob, Peter, John, and Jeanette, Cheryl has helped transform and expand the garden through plenty of experimentation, shared labour, creativity, and good humour.

For Cheryl, though, the garden is as much about people as plants. Neighbours and passers-by stop to talk, children discover playful additions, community members contribute ideas and plants, and everyone brings something different to the space.

Her years working in allied health shaped a belief she sees reflected at SNH: that people flourish when they are genuinely welcomed, valued, and included.

> There is always room for everyone if we all just move over a bit.

It's what keeps Cheryl returning each week for what she calls a wholesome dose of "community".

Peter Adams

Purpose in the Things that Need Doing



Peter's connection with SNH began years ago, while principal of Pascoe Vale North Primary School and looking for ways to connect the school with its wider community. In retirement, that relationship has evolved into something much more hands-on.

Today, Peter can be found tending the community garden, tackling jobs around the House, or puzzling over the latest challenge at the Repair Café. His curiosity about how things work began in childhood and continues to serve him well. From rewiring an expensive battery-powered motor to spending three months restoring a set of 1960s toy phones identical to ones he had as a child.

Not every contribution comes with such a satisfying reveal. In fact, Peter takes pride in the work nobody notices: the small repair already completed, the garden tended, the little job that makes the House work better.

After a busy career in education, volunteering has given Peter another way to provide community service while connecting with people he might otherwise never meet.

> I can sit and think "Yep, I did that."

For Peter, SNH offers something fundamental: service to his community with purpose.

Our Participation

A year of learning, making & connecting



Participation Numbers

Rings from the centre out:

TERM 3 2025
669

TERM 4 2025
633

TERM 1 2026
597

TERM 2 2026
631

What the colours show

- Social & Community Engagement programs
- Music & Movement programs
- Creative Arts programs
- Workshops & Holiday Programs
- Language programs
- Digital programs

What participants told us

Survey responses represent 54% of our term programs

- **98%** program satisfaction
- **96%** tutor satisfaction
- **85%** increase in social connections
- **88%** experienced a sense of belonging
- **94%** increased mental health & wellbeing

Our Programs

A year of learning, making & connecting

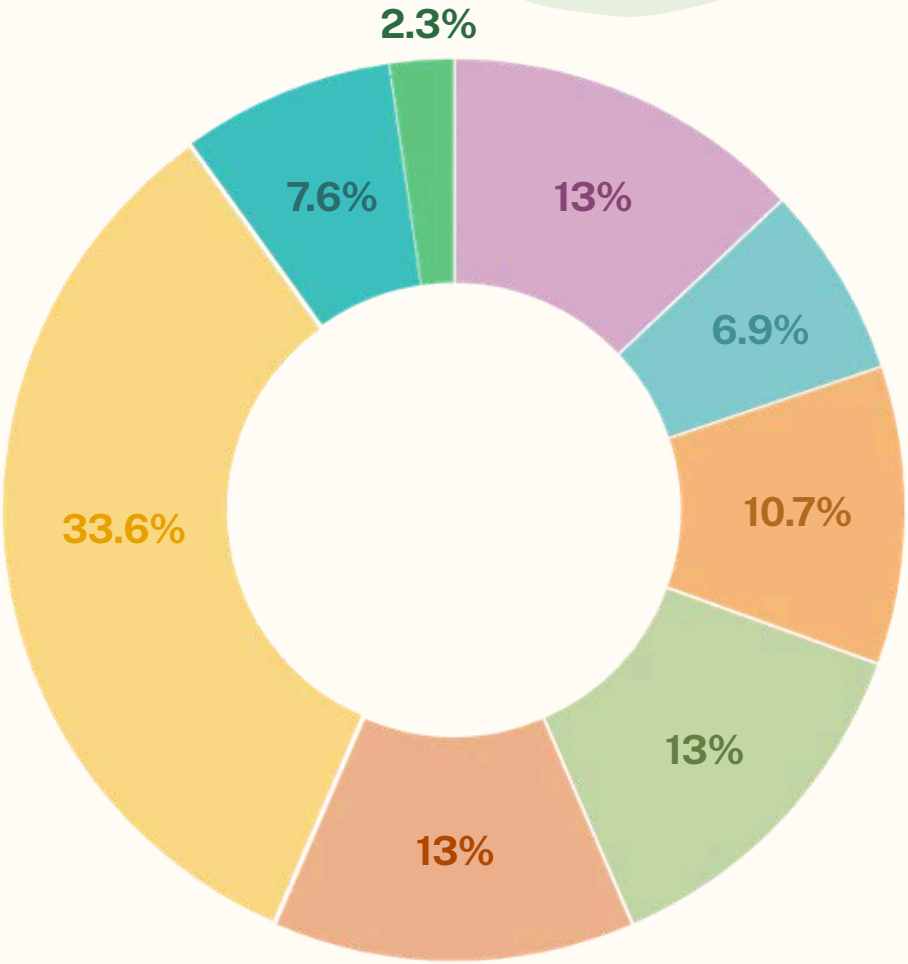
COMMUNITY CONNECTION

From language and creative arts to digital skills, music, movement, and community connection, our programs reflect what matters to our community. 131 programs were delivered in the 2025-2026 FY, each one an opportunity for people to learn, create, belong, and try something new.

131 programs delivered



Little Artists dedicated to their craft



Program Categories

17 Social & Community Engagement programs

17 Music & Movement programs

17 Creative Arts programs

14 Language programs

9 Digital programs

44 Workshops & Holiday programs

10 Events run by us

3 Our Local Initiatives

Program Highlights

Learning Beyond the Classroom

PARTNERSHIPS

Two ACFE-funded projects (Adult Community and Further Education) brought English and digital learning closer to everyday life

ACFE: Family Learning Partnership

Right Time, Right Place, Right Person

Over two years, our Family Learning Partnership helped us better understand why people come to English classes, what gets in the way, and what helps them keep coming back. Through conversations with students, tutors, and schools, we learned that good English programs are about more than what happens in the classroom. Where classes are held, when they run, who teaches them, and whether people feel comfortable and connected all make a difference.

3	2	30+
new programs	partner schools	new learners

We put those learnings into practice, expanding our English classes into family-friendly locations in Hume. Three new programs alongside two schools reached more than 30 new learners, including a women-only class to support mothers. Learners told us they were more confident using English in everyday life, connecting with others, and engaging with their children's schools and teachers.

Along the way, we strengthened relationships with local schools and developed a practical model for how we work with schools, tutors, and learners to shape future English programs. These relationships and learnings will continue to guide how we make English learning accessible and relevant to the people taking part.



City learning at Cook's Cottage for our English students

ACFE: Just in Time

Learning Within Reach

Taking English and digital skills training into a hospital setting gave us the opportunity to work with a group of essential workers who are often overlooked when it comes to workplace learning. The Just in Time project supported domestic, cleaning, and catering staff to build their confidence communicating at work, with learning shaped around the situations they encounter every day.

As the classes progressed, staff working across different roles and shifts had the chance to talk, learn together, and get to know colleagues they would usually only see in passing. For people whose working days are busy and task-focused, the classes became a rare space to slow down, practice, and connect.

The learning also found its way outside the classroom. One participant began practicing with colleagues in staff rooms and break areas, sharing what he had learned with people who couldn't always make it to class. By the end of the program, participants were keen to keep learning and told us they would welcome longer or further training.

Learners told us they were more confident using English in everyday life, connecting with others, and engaging with their children's schools and teachers.

Learning by the numbers

Across all of our English and digital skills programs

445	13,438
total enrolments	total student hours

Program Highlights
Youth Fest

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Making Their Mark

Youth Fest 2025 brought art and gaming together across two September school holiday sessions.

After a term spent sharing ideas and developing a mural design, Youth Artspace participants led the courtyard's transformation, joined by other local youth. Together, sixteen young people helped paint the artwork, expressing connection, community, and growth through a design that reflects the House and the people who use it.

Meanwhile, our computer lab became a gaming arcade, with twelve young people enjoying gaming together and joining friendly tournaments. Both groups came together over a shared lunch.

Working together and seeing the finished artwork stood out in participants' feedback. The result is a shared space shaped by young people's ideas, with their collective creativity now a permanent part of the House.

VICTORIAN YOUTH FEST



Participant Spotlight

Eden Courtis
Welcome As You Are

Eden first came to Youth Artspace in 2023 after a friend encouraged her to join. She was looking for something simple but important: a place she could spend time creating art without having to worry about school.

Three years later, Eden has become a much-loved part of the Youth Artspace community. She's an exceptionally talented young artist whose creativity we have had the privilege of watching grow. From imaginative projects such as her diorama to the concept designs she's contributed to our murals, Eden brings a distinctive creative voice to the space.

Youth Artspace has given her more than somewhere to make art. Eden says the friendships, encouragement, and freedom from judgement have helped her become more confident in herself and connecting with others.

> "There is no judgement from anyone, and you are free to express yourself. Everyone is very welcoming and inclusive"

Eden also attends SNH's online Homework Club, where individual support helps her work through challenging topics and strengthen her understanding.

When asked what young people need from community spaces, Eden's answer wasn't complicated: somewhere safe for them to hang out and be themselves. Perhaps with some art supplies, good company, a cup of tea, and biscuits from the cupboard.

Program Highlights

Connecting with Our Next Generation

Pascoe Vale Girls College

PARTNERSHIPS

Our partnership with Pascoe Vale Girls College (PVGC) gave students opportunities to explore issues that matter to them and contribute to life at the House.

A highlight was the student-led Civic Engagement Program, facilitated by Ciri Stanek, a Victoria University placement student. Meeting fortnightly at SNH, students explored racism, gender equality, and global humanitarian concerns with community members and guest speakers. This included Activist Sophia Uniacke, Advocate Bridie Johnstone from Live4Life, and local MP Anthony Cianflone to provide political insight. A lively Q&A with Anthony brought their questions about government and community priorities directly to their local representative. Students valued hearing the guest speaker's experiences, discussing different issues, and sharing their passions. They reported a stronger understanding of advocacy, activism, and politics, and felt more confident sharing their own views.

> I personally saw their understanding and confidence grow over the sessions, and they all came up with wonderful projects and ideas

-Ciri Stanek
Victoria University placement student and program facilitator

PVGC students also took part in the Get Online Week Lunch & Learn and garden excursions, while VCE Music students performed at our Garden Party for Harmony Week. Our Skylarks Choir welcomed the College's choir for a combined singing session, and Vocational Major students gained work experience by supporting our Scallywags Playgroup and Creative Movement and Dance programs. Across these activities, students shared their skills, learnt alongside others, and took an active role in their local community.



Program Highlights

Gaming Bugs

A place to be completely yourself

COMMUNITY CONNECTION | PEOPLE & PROCESSES

Gaming Bugs is a neuroaffirming space for girls in Grades 3-6 who love gaming. Each week they play, connect, and build confidence in a relaxed, supportive environment built for them.



Volunteer facilitator, Sarah

Facilitator Spotlight

Sarah Gregorio

Gaming Bugs began with Cleo.

Sarah could see how much her daughter would benefit from a social space built around the things she loved. Somewhere she could connect with other neurodivergent girls without having to edit herself, mask, or fit somebody else's idea of what socialising should look like. She knew Cleo couldn't be the only one who needed it.

What began as a loose idea shared with SNH quickly became Gaming Bugs. Sarah has since created something remarkable: a space shaped not simply for the girls, but around who they actually are.

Each week, the Bugs arrive and choose how they want to spend their time. They might game together, play independently, use the available consoles, chat, or simply hang out. Shoes can come off. Fidgets and sensory toys are always available. Snowflake, the group's weighted emotional support cat, makes a weekly appearance. At the heart of it is how well Sarah knows the girls. She takes the time to understand each of them individually, and what they need to feel at ease in the space.

The group's values – **kind**, **respect**, **safe**, **fun** – were agreed together, giving the girls ownership of the space rather than a list of behaviours they are expected to perform.

And that sense of safety is visible. During a conversation for Disability Awareness Week, Sarah spoke briefly about celebrating hidden disability. Without prompting, the girls began happily sharing their own diagnoses with one another – with pride. For Sarah, it was a moment that showed Gaming Bugs had become what she hoped it could be.

For Cleo, the reason the girls feel so comfortable is simpler:

> Because of mum. She is cool and makes sure she gets to know everyone." - *Cleo*

Sarah may have created Gaming Bugs because Cleo was her "why", but its circle of influence has grown. Girls have formed friendships, become more confident in showing who they are, and found social connection where it may have been difficult to find elsewhere.

Since the 2025 pilot

66 enrolments

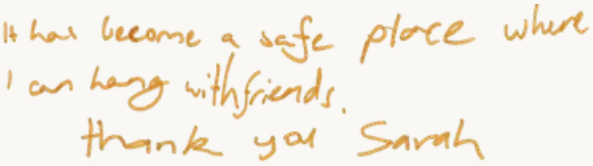
36 sessions

38 total hours

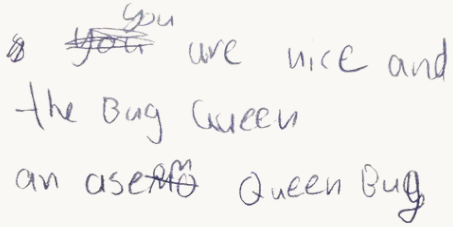


The girls in session: featuring Snowflake

What the Bugs say



"It has become a safe place where I can hang with friends. Thank you, Sarah."



"You are nice and the Bug Queen. An awesome Queen Bug."

Program Highlights

Ideas That Bring Us Together

Social & Community Engagement

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

PARTNERSHIPS

PEOPLE & PROCESSES

A passion for gardening, enthusiasm for walking, and an idea for a shared lunch inspired three new ways for people to connect at SNH.

Robert Seamons led the Therapeutic Horticulture program, co-designed with staff and inspired by his time at Kevin Heinze Grow, to support him in sharing his gardening knowledge and experience. Through practical activities exploring plants' textures and scents, he introduced participants to gardening as a way to connect while learning. His experience shaped an approach that prioritised asking people what support they need and giving them time to feel comfortable.

Michelle Richmond, local and now SNH volunteer, brought plans and enthusiasm to establishing a Walking Group. Weekly walks through local parks and creek trails offered gentle exercise and good company, with participants taking ownership of where to meet and walk each week.

Social work placement students, Zoe Sawatijw and Kirrily Snape, conceived and ran the Harvest Soup Lunches, giving people a relaxed introduction to the House over a warm meal. Conversation starters invited people to share what they valued about SNH and how they wanted to contribute. One participant found his role choosing the music for the day, while newcomers stayed to enjoy a pottery class. Feedback highlighted the atmosphere as a favourite part: people came for soup and found reasons to return.



Participant Spotlights

Mel, Hannah, Marie & Belle

A Home Away from Home

When Mel & Hannah arrive at SNH each week, they aren't just arriving for a clay class. Over the past two years, the House has become somewhere familiar. A place filled with people they know, friendships they value, and plenty of opportunities for a joke along the way.

Small Objects in Clay is still eagerly anticipated. Mel is currently painting a clay penguin and loves making bowls to give to friends. Hannah gravitates toward household pieces, with her latest project being a toothbrush holder, and her bowls have become popular enough that friends now put in orders. Both describe the class in much the same way: happy, warm, and inclusive, with a feeling of belonging they haven't necessarily found in other spaces.

Their connection to SNH extends well beyond the clay table. Mel and Hannah chat and joke with staff and participants at the House, share lunch and conversation in the Hub before class, celebrate birthdays with cake and small gifts, and warmly welcome others into the fold. Hannah's signature move is giving unsuspecting friends "bunny ears" and has made its way into the weekly ritual.

Their support workers, Marie and Belle, have watched those connections grow. They've seen the confidence that comes from being known and welcomed, friendships that continue through school-holiday movie afternoons and cooking sessions, and skills learned through clay carrying into other parts of life. Together, the four have become part of the fabric of SNH. There is an ease in the way they move through the House now: stopping to talk, sharing food, making people laugh, and making themselves at home. SNH isn't just somewhere they come to participate; it's somewhere they know they belong.

Auspice Report
Pascoe Vale Food Collective

Good Food, Shared Purpose

PARTNERSHIPS



Thoughtful shopping is a community effort at the Pascoe Vale Food Collective (PVFC). Auspiced by SNH and run by volunteers, the Collective sources ethical grocery and cleaning products in bulk, helping residents of Pascoe Vale and surrounding suburbs access good quality products while reducing waste.

Each month, members and visitors bring their containers to fill, with clean jars and paper bags available to make it easier for everyone to take part. Distribution days also offer time to chat, share ideas, and get to know the people behind the purchases.

This year marked the Collective's fifth birthday, celebrated with cake, reflections, and children's colouring activities created especially for the occasion. PVFC also supported the wider community through a $200 donation to Hope Street Cafe, a nearby volunteer-run soup kitchen providing a free weekly meal. A food swap was trialled on distribution days, offering another opportunity to share, although declining participation saw it conclude.



Pumpkin seeds

Proudly Australian grown from Northeast Victoria's Ovens Valley. Prepared with minimal processing to preserve their rich, nutty flavour



Raw honey

From an award-winning local producer within 20kms of Pascoe Vale



Mixed herb salt

100% organically grown herbs from a Pascoe Vale garden-combining parsley, rosemary, thyme, chives, basil, oregano, and sage with the added flavours of celery, onion, and garlic

The Year in Numbers

12 monthly distribution days

317 shops

39 members also volunteer each month

53 members

Auspice Report

Pascoe Vale Food Collective

Locally sourced & sustainably minded

Careful sourcing remains central to the Collective's approach. Pumpkin seeds come from Victoria's Ovens Valley, honey from hives within 20 kilometres of Pascoe Vale, and organically grown herbs from a local garden. Honey and herb suppliers refill the Collective's glass jars, while bulk purchases of hand and bodywash, and dishwashing liquid help reduce plastic packaging.

Most members contribute as volunteers, sharing the work of keeping the Collective running. For Sarah, that involvement has become a family experience:

"I love chatting with members and volunteers, suggesting new products that have become favourites, and especially bringing my daughter along. She loves coming to help and being part of it too!"

-Sarah

These everyday contributions make the Collective a place where people can shop with care and feel part of their community.





Food swap tables

Reducing plastic packaging



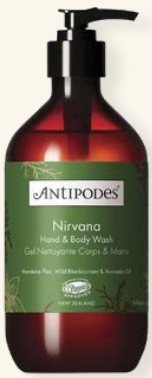
Supermarket equivalent
500ml bottles (46g each)

Hand & Bodywash Liquid

84 Litres sold

7.7kg of plastic avoided

168 plastic bottles not used!



Supermarket equivalent
500ml bottles (46g each)

Hand & Bodywash Liquid

55 Litres sold

5kg of plastic avoided

110 plastic bottles not used!

Community Facility Utilisation

PARTNERSHIPS

Our spaces continued to support a mix of community programs, services, and private gatherings, with established regular hirers maintaining consistent use of the facility throughout the year.

Growth was strongest in organisational hire, particularly among not-for-profit and health-related organisations seeking space to deliver community, health, and wellbeing services. Organisational hire hours almost doubled, reflecting increased use of the House by these services.

Private bookings declined, with spaces hired for birthday parties, family gatherings, and religious activities. The Pool Hall and Community Hub were among our most frequently used spaces due their capacity to accommodate a range of uses.

Together, these bookings extend the House's role beyond our own programs, giving locals and organisations space to gather, deliver services, and contribute to community life.

Most used spaces



Puglia Social Club, using the space for weekly lunches and dinners for over a decade

Hours by user type

174
Private
Birthday parties, family gatherings, and religious activities

232
Organisational
Not-for-profits, health & wellbeing services

4531
Regular
Established hirers with consistent use throughout the year





Princess event run by "It's My Party"
photo courtesy of Bianca from It's My Party

Total use of our spaces

4,937
total hours*

18,481
total attendees*

79
total events & groups*

*Not including SNH use

Sustainability

COMMUNITY CONNECTION PARTNERSHIPS



48
2-week e-bike loans



400+
10c containers recycled with KARI



450+ kg
aluminium coffee pods recycled



150+
reusable shopping bags collected



30,000+
plastic bottle lids collected + sorted



5,000+
plastic bread tags collected, sorted, and sent to Aussie Bread tags for Wheelchairs before the nationwide program wrap-up



250+
odd plastic containers collected











Pascoe Vale Repair Cafe

Our numbers since 2022

41	1,749	1,387	220	176	8.6
months open	repair requests	fixed items	not fixed items	advice given	average monthly repairers

79%
success rate

Events

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

PARTNERSHIPS

PEOPLE & PROCESSES



4
main events run by SNH

13
other events run or supported

555
SNH event attendees

Our Main Events

Coming together to celebrate, connect, and give thanks

4 December 2025

End of Year Celebration

Art displays and performances across our music, movement, and dance programs gave participants of all ages the chance to share their achievements with family, friends and neighbours. The afternoon also welcomed our new manager, Felicity Leahy, and saw Cr Katerine Theodosis accept our community's campaign postcards for improved Neighbourhood House funding.



19 March 2026

Harmony Week Garden Party & Peace Pole Unveiling

Celebrating cultural diversity through music, shared food, and the unveiling of a permanent Peace Pole in our garden. Funded by the Rotary Club of Pascoe Vale, with guidance from Deborah and Bruno D'Aprano, the pole carries the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" as a lasting expression of our community's hopes for peace and understanding.



14 May 2026

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

During Neighbourhood House Week, we thanked volunteers who collectively contribute 187 hours to SNH each week with a lunch provided by the Puglia Club, and funding from Ray White Pascoe Vale. Volunteers shared what giving their time meant to them: confidence, purpose, friendship, connection, and fun.



25 June 2026

Winter Solstice Celebrating Partnerships

Our Winter Solstice celebration brought local organisations and neighbours together over creative activities, games, and warm bowls of soup. Visitors discovered local services and tried everything from weaving and henna to clay, while community partners formed new relationships and strengthened existing ones. Placement students facilitated a "Feedback Fire" activity which invited visitors to share what neighbourhood houses meant to them, adding their voices to an afternoon centred on community connection.



Tutor & Volunteer Spotlight

Elnaz & Naz Nourizadeh

A Community in Common

Elnaz came to SNH in 2023 believing that strong communities are essential to a healthy society and saw neighbourhood houses at being at the heart of them. Through five weekly clay classes, she has since created spaces where people of different ages and abilities can feel safe, express themselves, and discover what they are capable of creating.

At the heart of Elnaz's teaching is a gift for noticing those on the margins – someone who may want to join but doesn't quite know how – and gently opening a path for them.

When her sister Naz arrived in Australia, Elnaz recognised that same importance of finding community and knew SNH could offer somewhere safe and welcoming.

Naz soon found her own place here, volunteering at reception, where her warmth, patience, administration experience, and natural ease with people made her a valued part of the House. She enjoyed meeting people, sharing small conversations, and helping wherever she could. "It makes me feel useful," Naz says. The role gave her opportunities to practice English, build friendships, and feel more connected as she found her way in Australia. In July, Naz's volunteering chapter came to a close when she found employment, but her connection with SNH and the people she met here remains.

Over time, SNH has become one more part of life the sisters share. After decades apart, they now have mutual friends, familiar faces, and experiences here in common.

> After living apart for more than 20 years, I feel like it has brought me closer to my sister again. - *Naz*

For Elnaz too, there is something special in seeing family within the same community. And when Naz watches her sister teaching, there is pride - in Elnaz's creativity, her talent, and the way she uses both to make room for others.



Elnaz in one of her clay classes



Elnaz & Naz



Our panel discussions about volunteering at the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch
L to R: Jan Bowles, Felicity Leahy, Naz Nourizadeh, Colin Lenton

More Community Moments

Sharing skills, making memories, and saying farewell

18 August 2025

Fresh Start Monday

A free wellbeing morning combined practical sleep advice from Pharmacy 777, gentle Pilates with Bec from Contrology Garage Pilates, and a sensory tour of the community garden. A cuppa and conversation rounded out the morning, giving participants time to connect with each other and the facilitators.

18 September 2025

Joe's Farewell

More than 40 people gathered to farewell Joe Cassar, General Manager as he retired. We thanked him for four years of leadership, care, and commitment to SNH. The Glenroy Scottish Country Dancing group marked the occasion with bagpipes and dancing, while the Puglia Club presented a commemorative plaque recognising the relationships he helped build.

5 October 2025

Senior's Month Repair Cafe

A special Senior's Month edition of our Repair Cafe paired community repairs with a free morning tea and a pop-up Pilates session. Visitors could bring something to mend, try gentle movement, or enjoy a cuppa with neighbours and our volunteer repairers.

15 October 2025

Get Online Week: Lunch & Learn

Year 9 students from Pascoe Vale Girls College paired with community members aged over 50 for one-on-one digital support over a shared lunch. Alongside practical help with apps, photos, and video calling, the afternoon created an exchange of knowledge and perspectives, with students bringing patience and encouragement, and participants bringing curiosity and a willingness to learn.

5 October 2025

Skylarks Choir @ Fed Square

The Sussex Skylarks took to the stage at Federation Square as part of the Senior's Festival, performing before a large crowd. It was a special opportunity to share their love of singing beyond the House and take part in a wider celebration of older people's contributions.



Joe's farewell & commemorative plaque from the Puglia Social Club



Lunch & Learn mentors and participants

More Community Moments

Celebrating contributuions and supporting our community

15 October 2025

Annual General Meeting 2025

Our 2025 AGM brought members, partners, and friends together to reflect on the year and introduce our Strategic Plan for 2026-2029. We honoured Claire Martin's retirement after 20 years of service, from office volunteer to Chairperson, with the naming of the *Claire Martin Room* in recognition of her lasting contribution.



15 October 2025

Merri-bek City Council

Merri-bek Community Awards

SNH received a High Commendation for the Environmental Sustainability Achievement Award at the 2025 Merri-bek Community Awards, with volunteers representing the House. The recognition celebrated the collective work behind our garden, recycling initiatives, Repair Cafe, Food Collective, and local sustainability partnerships.



5 October 2025

VICTORIA State Government | Families, Fairness and Housing

Children's Week: Play Your Way

Play Your Way offered children a free afternoon of gardening, craft, LEGO, gaming, and a collaborative tree mural with opportunities to explore the Merri-bek Toy Library. Children were encouraged to choose what interested them, reflecting the Children's Week focus on their rights to play, learn, and express themselves.





15 October 2025

VICTORIA State Government | Energy, Environment and Climate Action

Power Saving Bonus Visit

A visit from the Minister for Energy, Lily D'Ambrosio, and Pascoe Vale's Anthony Cianflone MP highlighted SNH's work helping local households access the Power Saving Bonus. Conversations with community members demonstrated the value of personal assistance with applications and energy bills, including identifying missed concessions and further savings.



Our Other Events

Building connections and raising our collective voice

27 March 2026

Chatty Cafe Advocacy Visit

SNH hosted a visit from Ged Kearney MP with Chatty Cafe Australia representatives Vicki and Fiona, giving participants the opportunity to show how regular conversation and a welcoming place has made a difference in their lives. The visit highlighted the role of Chatty Cafe in building friendships and belonging, alongside the discussion of its Social Prescribing pilot.



28 May 2026

Skylarks Choir Open Day

The Sussex Skylarks opened their doors for an afternoon of singing, shared food, and conversation, inviting people of all experience levels to try the choir for free. The invitation reflected the group's welcoming approach, where enjoyment and participation matter more than perfection.

7 June 2026

Repairer & Committee Lunch

In July as part of onboarding four new Committee of Governance (CoG) members, we held a shared lunch between the CoG and our Repair Café volunteers. Two different volunteer groups, with different skills and purposes but both with the same drive to building a connected, stronger more sustainable community.

18 February 2026

Keep Our Doors Open Campaign

Our community added its voice to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria's Keep Our Doors Open campaign, calling for a 25% increase in core funding. A postcard station in the hub invited people to share what SNH meant to them, bringing personal experiences of belonging, learning, and support into the case for sustainable funding.

In February 2026, SNH staff, committee members, and volunteers joined the 400 neighbourhood houses from across Victoria on the steps on Parliament to advocate for sustainable funding. The campaign brought together more than 80,000 community postcards statewide, with Anthony Cianflone MP joining us in support.



Community Partnerships

- Amplify
- Aussie Breadtags for Wheelchairs
- Balam Balam Place
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Brunswick Neighbourhood House
- Brunswick Private Hospital
- Cargocycles
- Celebrating & Conserving Cultures
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Chatty Cafe Australia
- Contrology Garage Pilates
- Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action
- Essendon Keilor College
- Familitta
- Fawkner Neighbourhood House
- Fire Rescue Victoria
- GleeGivers
- Gentry Gardening Services
- Glenroy Art Group
- Glenroy Neighbourhood House
- Glenroy Scottish Country Dance Group
- Glenroy West Primary School
- Hearing Australia
- Holstep Health
- Housing Choices Australia
- Inner North Community Foundation
- Justice Connect
- Kalkallo Community Centre
- KARI Foundation
- Kevin Heinze Grow
- Lids4Kids
- Pascoe Vale Hand Spinners & Weavers
- Pascoe Vale Primary School
- Project Pair Up
- Puglia Social Club
- Melbourne University
- Merri Community Shed
- Merri-bek City Council
- Merri-bek Early Years Management
- Merri-bek Toy Library
- Mickleham South Community Centre
- Mind Australia
- Neighourhood Houses Victoria
- Nelson Alexander
- Nespresso Recycling Program
- North West Neighbourhood House Network
- Northcote High School
- Northern College of the Arts & Technology
- Newlands & East Coburg Neighbourhood Houses
- North West Fiji Seniors Club Inc.
- Pascoe Vale Girls College
- Puglia Social Club
- Pharmacy 777 Pascoe Vale
- Poppy's Cafe
- Recycle4Change



Some of the lovely ladies from the Puglia Social Club

- Reynard Street Neighbourhood House
- Rotary - Pascoe Vale Branch
- Roti-Shoti by Pooja
- SpacetoCo
- Social Planet
- St Dominic's School
- Strathmore Secondary College
- Victoria Police
- Victoria University
- Wotama - Photography by Julia Schenk
- Writing Days
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek

Funders & Supporters

We are deeply grateful for all our funders, partners, and community organisations whose support enables us to provide accessible programs, welcoming spaces, and opportunities for connection across our community.

We sincerely thank Merri-bek City Council for its continued support of the House. This year, improvements to the Pool Hall included a renovated kitchen, refinished floors freshly painted walls, creating a more functional and welcoming space for participants and community hirers. We also thank Council's Zero Carbon Merri-bek team for funding the continued sustainable operation of our partnered E-bike Library Program.

We greatly appreciate the support, advice and advocacy work of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, particularly their tremendous efforts in campaigning for funding, and the Northwest Neighbourhood House Network.

We'd also like to warmly thank Pascoe Vale Rotary, Pascoe Vale Spinners & Weavers, and Puglia Social Club for their generosity and continued support. These valued local relationships strengthen our work and reflect the community spirit at the heart of SNH.

We would like to thank all our funders and donors for making possible the numerous programs and activities we provide to the local community:

Our staff

General Manager
Felicity Leahy

Administration Officer
Huma Mittro

Administration Support
Edom Abebe

Finance Officer
Alfina Astuto

Community Development & Programs Coordinator
Jodie Swan

Information, Communications & Administration Officer
Rachel Currao

Cleaner & Caretaker
Anthony Vento



From the familiar faces in our office, we'd like to thank all of you - tutors, volunteers, partners, and participants - for making Sussex Neighbourhood House the thriving and welcoming community it is

Our program tutors

Art Connect
Emily Fewkes

Computer Classes
Dinusha Perrera, Uzma Rubab

Drawing & Watercolour
Ted Dansey

Homework Club
Alec Swainston, Ciri Stanek, Sienna Izzard, Ayaan Aali

Let's Shoot, Let's Animate, Chess Club, Code Club, Video Games Club
Cosmo Polke

Polish Cooking
Jolanta Slodyczka

Tai Chi
Averil Lewis

Civic Engagement
Ciri Stanek

Creative Movement
Simone Litchfield, Emily Fewkes, Tiffeny Yong

Dungeons & Dragons
Nikolas Dart, Cosmo Polke

Keyboard for Kids
Isaiah Semertzidis

Little Artists
Michelle Giaccotto

Scallywags Playgroup
Rose Van Herk, Melissa Barber

Writing Workshops
Lou Smith, Suzanne Hermanoczki

Clay Art
Elnaz Nourizadeh

Crochet
Fran Goodwin

English Classes
Dinusha Perera, Carol Aljawabra, Masooma Nagu, Shazia Khattak, Urszula Barwik-Dove, Uzma Rubab, Marzia Niaz, Naymar Sheikh

Mat Pilates
Bec Turney

Sewing & Pattern Making
Janette Bowles

Yoga
Simone Litchfield, Melisa Chabierski, Georgia Kartens

Clay Art Support
Michelle Giaccotto, Tiffeny Yong

Diwali Cooking
Pooja Sharma

Gardening Classes
Kim Northmore

Knitting
Christine Hill

Mixed Media
Tiffeny Yong, Michelle Giaccotto

Skylarks Choir & Ukulele
Phil Hudson

Youth Artspacee
Scarlet Sykes-Hesterman, Gretel Tobin, Jake Brown

Our volunteers

The people we couldn't do without

Book Club & Family History
Janette Bowles

Code Club
Prateek Jampani

Gaming Bugs
Lead: Sarah Gregorio
Support: Naz Nourizadeh

Get Online Week Digital Mentors
Pascoe Vale Girls Yr 9 students: Betul, Fatina, Arissa, Nick, Mariam, Dani

Office Volunteers
Victoria Bamford, Jeanette Branch, Carol Courtis, Helen Delaney, Glenda Fehring, Tamara Haddad, Christine Hill, Christine Hunt, Jenny Jhoty, Christine Nagel, Naz Nourizadeh, Rosa Rustom

Resident Painter
John Whittam

Scallywags Playgroup
Liz Blyth, Pascoe Vale Girls students: Mariam, Anzish, Lamise, Hazel

Scone Making
Helen Carr

School Holiday Programs
Cheryl Adams, Sarah Gregorio, Vicki Petropoulos, Robert Seamons, Kirrily Snape, Zoe Sawatijw

Scottish Country Dance
Jeanette Branch, Jenny Jhoty

Walking Group
Michelle Richmond

Chatty Café
Carmel Aparo, Li Lin

Craft Circle
Mary Scanlon

English Conversation
Carol Courtis, Jenny Jhoty, Ambi Kaur, Shu Sun See

Homework Club
Nikolas Dart, George Kazantzidis, Aida Sabet

Library Curator
Nishamuddin Kuruvattu Padinhare Purayil

Pascoe Vale Food Collective
Sylvia Lo Piccolo, Joanna Sarmiento, Joanne Dietrich Penny Sekeris, Belinda Johnson, Christine Hill, Sarah Turpin-Nolan, Jenny MacDonald, Keira Mason-Hill, Karin Burgess, Fiona Adams, Claire Fraser, Victoria Dale, Rebecca Lee, Erica Managh, Marika Wong, Jeanette Williamson, Yvonne Bese, Susan Quinn, Teresa Lin, Kerry Ogbourne, Rosanna Di Grazia, Ashley Van Raaphorst, Paul Sutton, Jean Black, Bec Drake, Anne Richardson, Kate Brook, Alex Stefos, Tess Murton, Lucy Gionfriddo, Rod Callander, Kristy Lee Tyrrell, Silvia Lo Nigro, Angela Borrelli, Nia Everson, Chris Giomataris, Gerrard Jenner, Roy Black, Annie Whitelock

Youth Men's Group Program Development
Andrew Pritchard

Work Experience Students
Sofia Giaccotto, Poppy Giaccotto, Grace Kingstone, Arley Latif, Dante Scurry

Chess Social Club
Peter Leverett

Creative Movement & Dance
Li Lin, Pascoe Vale Girls students: Reema, Sarab, Serene, Tabarak

Garden Curators
Cheryl Adams, Peter Adams, Jeanette Branch, John Giddens, Robert Seamons

Little Artists
Maria Oddo, Poppy Giaccotto

Pascoe Vale Repair Café
Peter Adams, Catherine Berryman, Elaine Brook, Lyn C, Manar Chelebi, Lou Collodetti, Carol Courtis, Kate de Wit, Frank Deserio, Louis Ericson, Satya Gunnam, Jenny Jhoty, Adi Kakarala, Anand Kakarala, Glenn McIntosh, Emma Mountjoy, John Muser, Glenn Newman, Caroline Nott, Bev O'Donohue, Eril Pickford, Meredith Poyner, Nicole Pudney, Margaret Riley, Leanda Smith, Julie Underwood, Moya White, Ian Williams, Sascha Williams



Student placements and volunteers coming together to prep for the Harvest Soup Lunch
L to R: Dante, Kate, Alessandra, Kirrily, Zoe

Student Placement
Emily Fewkes, Kate Reece Paglinawan, Ciri Stanek, Kirrily Snape, Zoe Sawatijw

Clay Class Supports
Caterina Carbone, Nikolas Dart, Gloria Dellora, Naz Nourizadeh, Kate Reece-Paglinawan, Molly Taylor-Banks

Excel Guru
Elizabeth Cleland

Garden Party VCE Music Performances
Pascoe Vale Girls students: Kistra, Nina, Vivian, Chloe

Makers, Menders & Basketry
Anne Newton

Peace Pole Initiative
Deb & Bruno D'Aprano

Puzzle Club
Amanda Hutton, Neroli Marke-Hutton, Robert Hutton

Sustainability Collections
Vicki Petropoulos

Tech Help Café
Tony Murphy



Work Placement students Poppy & Sofia Giaccotto

Committee of Governance

The volunteers overseeing the governance of our organisation:



Kristina Didelis
Chairperson
Since Oct 2024



Angela Collier-Gioulekas
Secretary
Since Aug 2019



Colin Lenton
Treasurer
Since Oct 2025



Daniel Brugaletta
Committee Member
Since Oct 2024



Petras Harvie
Committee Member
Since Oct 2025



Jane Nixon
Committee Member
Since Oct 2025



Dot Norbury
Committee Member
Since Apr 2026



Amanda Thomas
Committee Member
Since Apr 2026



Olivia Ephraim
Committee Member
Since Apr 2026



Nic Portaro
Committee Member
Since Apr 2026



Felicity Leahy
Ex Officio
Since Nov 2025



Joe Cassar
Ex Officio
Retired Sep 2025



Roxanne Strauss
Committee Member
Resigned Mar 2026



Jalaja Balakrishna
Committee Member
Resigned Feb 2026



Natalie Ginn
Committee Member
Resigned Jun 2026



727
volunteer hours contributed

Acknowledgements

- Australian Gnostic Association of Melbourne
- Australian Turkish Melodies of Peace Inc
- Baby Sensory Victoria
- Brunswick East Safe Streets
- Brunswick Neighbourhood House
- Brunswick Private Hospital
- Department of Education, Respectful Relationship Hume Merri-bek Area
- Celebrating & Conserving Cultures
- EdConnect Australia
- Eunoia Counselling
- Holstep health – Carer Gateway
- Maela Support Services Pty Ltd
- Merri-bek City Council
- Merri-bek Maternal and Child Health
- Merri-bek Toy Library
- Mind Australia
- Migrant Resource Centre North-West Region Inc
- Millat Foundation Australia Inc.
- Nelson Alexander
- North West Fiji Seniors Club
- Plumbstruct Industries
- The Salvation Army
- West African Muslim Community Inc.



Vale Vic

Vale Vic Issell, former Manager and longtime friend of Sussex Neighbourhood House who sadly passed away 18th August 2026.

Vic was Manager of Sussex Neighbourhood House for 5 years from 2015- 2020. Vic navigated the organisation through significant change, including the move from Sussex St to our current location in Prospect Street.

A fierce advocate and a skilled practitioner for strong and connected communities that spanned his whole career, Vic continued to stay in touch with many of the Sussex community, attending our Garden Party earlier this year even though his health was failing. Vic is remembered for his kindness, generosity and support to many individuals and organisations, including establishing John Whittam as our artist in residence, and supporting the Pascoe Vale Food Collective when they first established.

Our deepest condolences to Vic's family at his passing and our gratitude for his contributions to the Sussex Neighbourhood House and the Pascoe Vale community.

Treasurer's report



Colin Lenton & Felicity Leahy presenting at our *Harmony Week Garden Party & Peace Pole Unveiling*

I am pleased to present this year's Treasurer's Report, along with the financial reports audited for the year ending June 30, 2026. It's a year we can all be proud of. We have successfully navigated significant changes, continued to deliver a diverse and busy program for the community, and achieved a strong finance performance.
We started the year with a budget that anticipated a loss of $106,063 and yet finished the year with a loss of only $33,538. The key contributing factor to achieving this result was by achieving significantly more income than budgeted in grants, slightly more income than budgeted through room hire, and by careful and diligent management of all expenditure.

Our total income for the financial year was $763,894. Our two largest grant sources are Merri-bek Council and the State Government. From Merri-bek Council we received funding of $65,223, for our activities and a further $30,547 as a facility grant that enabled the refurbishment of the pool hall kitchen. There are two main streams of grants received from the State Government. The first is the Neighbourhood House Co-ordination Program (NHCP) funding of $165,922, which supports the engagement of staff to plan and deliver programs. The second is the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) funding of $185,420, which enables us to deliver a range of courses (such as English as a Second Language). We also received $51,774 of ACFE funding as income in advance, which has been carried forward to the 2026/2027 budget. Without these sources of income, we could not operate as we do.

Treasurer's report

Operating income received totalled $261,991, the two main sources came from room hire of $103,692, which was another strong performance for the year and program and course fees totalled $158,299. We continue to keep our programs and course fees to a minimum (to maximise accessibility for our community) but to also ensure that we can recover costs and operate sustainably.

Once again, our biggest expenses for the year were staff salaries and wages at $518,337, superannuation of $61,537 and subcontractors of $55,709.

This year the Committee of Governance (CoG) decided to further invest in our future and make a $40,000 contribution to the Sussex Neighbourhood House Fund that is held and invested soundly and ethically with the Inner North Community Foundation. This is the second year we have contributed to the fund (last year we contributed $20,000). As the Sussex Neighbourhood House fund grows so does our financially sustainable future for generations of House users to come as the funds can be redrawn in the future to support the House. Donations from individuals and a local business have also contributed to our Fund which demonstrates both trust in, and recognition of the value of our work.

We have finished the financial year in a very strong position with total assets of $426,335, the largest item being cash in bank of $361,147. We have fixed (non-current) assets of $60,315 and liabilities of $155,654 . We are fortunate to have these cash funds, and our financial management strategy includes maximizing income from interest.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow Committee of Governance (CoG) members who welcomed me onto the Committee and into the Sussex Neighbourhood House 12 months ago. Whilst I have significant financial experience in both profit and not for profit social services, a Neighbourhood House was a new thing for me. It's been both a steep learning curve and an honor to be able to be a part of and contribute to the Sussex Neighbourhood House that delivers so much for its community.

Finally, special thanks to the staff for their commitment to the community and for their professional service. To Alfina Astuto, our wonderful and knowledgeable bookkeeper, and Felicity Leahy, our General Manager who also joined the organisation this year – we've been on the learning curve together.

Keep up the great work.

Colin Lenton | Treasurer



Our Committee of Governance in action

Sussex Neighbourhood House Fund

We've partnered with the Inner North Community Foundation (INCF) to establish the Sussex Neighbourhood House Fund, a long-term fund designed to support our work well into the future.

This partnership helps ensure there will always be a place in Pascoe Vale where people can share, learn, enjoy, grow and feel part of something bigger.

How it works

The Inner North Community Foundation's model is simple and effective:

- Your donation goes into the Sussex Neighbourhood House Fund held with the Foundation
- All donations are pooled and ethically invested, with a focus on preserving and growing the capital over time
- Investment earnings are granted back to Sussex Neighbourhood House each year, supporting programs and community activities on an ongoing basis
- The capital base is protected, so your generosity continues to benefit the community well into the future

Be part of Sussex Neighbourhood House's future

By supporting the Sussex Neighbourhood House Fund, you help make sure there will always be a place in Pascoe Vale where people can share, learn, enjoy, grow and feel part of something bigger.

Donations of $2 or more made through INCF's DGR-endorsed Community Charity Trust are generally tax-deductible.

Special thanks to those who have supported the fund: Kira Stephenson, Ray White Pascoe Vale and Elizabeth Cleland

Find out more about the Fund and how to support it via the INCF website below.

INNER NORTH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC

ABN 45 620 743 392

SPECIAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392

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SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your committee members present the special purpose financial report on the entity for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

Committee of Governance Members

The names of committee of governance members at the date of this report are:

Kristina Didelis	Chairperson
Vacant	Deputy Chairperson
Angela Collier-Gioulekas	Secretary
Colin Lenton	Treasurer
Daniel Brugaletta	Ordinary Member
Jane Nixon	Ordinary Member
Petras Harvie	Ordinary Member
Dot Norbury	Ordinary Member
Amanda Thomas	Ordinary Member
Olivia Ephraim	Ordinary Member
Nic Portaro	Ordinary Member

Principle Activities

Sussex Neighbourhood House is a community hub committed to providing lifelong learning through social activities that are inclusive, accessible and sustainable for the local community. We offer a range of activities suitable for all ages and abilities.

Significant Changes

No significant changes in the nature of the entity's activity occurred during the financial year.

Operating Results

The deficit for the year attributable to the entity amounted to $33,358 (2025: $733 - deficit).

After Balance Date Events

No matter has evolved since 30 June 2026 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect:
(a) the entity's operations in future financial years, or
(b) the results of those operations in future financial years, or
(c) the entity's state of affairs in future financial years.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee.

Chairperson _____
Kristina Didelis

Treasurer C. Lenton
Colin Lenton

Dated this 24th **day of** September 2026

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
INCOME		
Grant Funding Income		
Local Government Grants	65,223	66,280
State Government Grants - NHCP	165,922	160,534
State Government Grants - ACFE	185,420	158,803
State Government Grants - Other	-	22,500
Other Grants	74,109	29,220
	490,674	**437,337**
Operating Income		
Program/ Course Fees Income	158,299	156,092
Facility Room Hire Income	103,692	104,771
	261,991	**260,863**
Other Income		
Interest Received	7,430	17,951
Donations	3,509	3,412
Other Income	290	845
	11,229	**22,208**
TOTAL INCOME	**763,894**	**720,408**
EXPENDITURE		
Administrative & Operating Expenses		
Administration Fees	1,000	1,856
Assets write offs	783	480
Audit and Bookkeeping Fees	2,875	2,775
Bad Debts	-	1,630
Bank Fees and Charges	3,975	1,352
Board Meeting Expenses	1,098	2,040
Cleaning	6,428	5,629
Computer and IT Services	11,936	17,642
Depreciation	13,544	8,235
Donations Paid	40,000	20,000
Insurance	1,058	876
Membership Fees & Permits	1,743	1,977
Postage, Advertising & Delivery	776	770
Photocopier and Printing	3,198	3,025
Rent	1,193	627
Repairs and maintenance	5,845	1,187
Telephone & Internet	2,393	2,904
Utilities - Electricity, Gas and Water	7,169	7,473
	105,014	80,478

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Employee Related Expenses		
Salaries & Wages	518,337	484,180
Superannuation	61,537	55,785
Annual leave and Long Service Leave Expenses	1,131	7,133
Payroll Expenses	78	540
Portable Long Service Benefits Scheme Levies	8,335	7,877
Recruitment	23,486	639
Staff Gifts and Amenities	2,355	2,235
Training and Development	430	110
WorkCover	10,834	9,724
	626,523	568,223
Program Expenses		
Program Fees - Event Costs	4,689	2,590
Program Fees - Materials	4,681	7,116
Program Fees - Subcontractors	55,709	59,768
Program Fees - Volunteer Expenses	816	2,966
	65,895	72,440
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**797,432**	**721,141**
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	**(33,538)**	**(733)**

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	**(33,538)**	**(733)**
Other Comprehensive Income for the Year	-	-
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION	**(33,538)**	**(733)**

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at Bank	361,147	384,974
Cash on Hand	116	116
Accounts Receivable	457	1,200
Other Receivables	2,664	36,623
Prepayments	1,636	517
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	**366,020**	**423,430**
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Computer Equipment	55,260	43,245
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(31,495)	(24,276)
	23,765	18,969
Furniture and Equipment	1,160	-
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(242)	-
	918	-
Leasehold Imrprovements	41,716	-
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(6,084)	-
	35,632	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	**60,315**	**18,969**
TOTAL ASSETS	**426,335**	**442,399**
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	8,215	14,586
Sundry Payables	15,230	15,407
ATO GST Payable	17,481	11,462
ATO PAYGW Payable	5,820	5,270
Fees Received in Advance	671	2,193
Funds under Auspice Arrangements	8,721	7,871
Grants Received in Advance	65,494	48,500
Provision for Annual Leave	27,255	26,750
Provision for Long Service Leave	6,767	6,141
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	**155,654**	**138,180**
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**155,654**	**138,180**
NET ASSETS	**270,681**	**304,219**
EQUITY		
Accumulated Funds	270,681	304,219
	270,681	**304,219**

The Statement of Financial Position is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Accumulated Members Funds $	Total $
Balance as at 1 July 2024	**304,952**	**304,952**
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	(733)	(733)
Balance as at 30 June 2025	**304,219**	**304,219**
Surplus/ (Deficit) attributable to the Association	(33,538)	(33,538)
Balance as at 30 June 2026	**270,681**	**270,681**

The Statement of Changes in Equity is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 $	2025 $
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from grant funding		525,376	401,144
Receipts from customers		277,463	260,540
Receipts from other sources		3,799	4,257
Payments to suppliers and employees		(783,004)	(711,219)
Interest received		7,430	17,951
Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities	(i)	**31,064**	**(27,327)**
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(54,891)	(14,796)
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		**(54,891)**	**(14,796)**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		(23,827)	(42,123)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		385,090	427,213
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	(ii)	**361,263**	**385,090**

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
NOTES TO THE STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026 $	2025 $
Note (i). Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities		
Net surplus for the year	(33,538)	(733)
Non-cash flow item: depreciation	13,544	8,235
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	34,702	(36,193)
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	(1,119)	(517)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	22	(5,432)
Increase/(decrease) in income received in advance	15,472	(323)
Increase/(decrease) in funds under Auspice arrangements	850	503
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	1,131	7,133
	31,064	**(27,327)**
Note (ii). Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year		
Cash on hand	361,147	384,974
Cash at bank	116	116
	361,263	**385,090**

The Statement of Cash Flows is to be read in conjunction with the audit report and the notes to the financial statements.

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report includes the financial statements and notes of Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc, an incorporated association, which is incorporated in Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis of preparation

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act* 2012 and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act* 2012. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and also a not-for-profit association.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the company in the preparation of the general purpose financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting Policies

a. Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Plant and Equipment

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis less depreciation and impairment losses.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by directors to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets' employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in determining recoverable amounts.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the company and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the income statement during tha financial period in which they are incurred.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Committee commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The asset's residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted, if appropriate, at each balance date.

An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains and losses are included in the income statement.

b. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities on the balance sheet.

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies *(continued)*

c. Revenue

Grants are recognised at fair value where there is reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and all grant conditions will be met. Grants relating to expense items are recognised as income over the periods necessary to match the grant to the costs they are compensating.

Grants received for specific programs are recognised as income only to the extent of work completed on those projects when the terms of the grants stipulate that any unexpended funds are to be returned to the sponsor if the program is not completed. In those circumstances the funds attributable to work still to be completed are carried forward as grants income deferred.

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised at the point of delivery as this corresponds to the transfer of significant risks and rewards of ownership of the goods and the cessation of all involvement in those goods.

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

Revenue from the rendering of a service is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customers.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

d. Income Tax

By virtue of its aims as set out in the constitution, the Association qualifies as an organisation specifically exempt from income tax under Section 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act* 1997.

e. Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

f. Employment Entitlements

Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee benefits that are expected to be settled within one year have been measured at the amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Contributions are made by the association to employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

g. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

h. Related Party Transactions

The Committee Members act in an honorary capacity and are not paid for their services as Committee Members.

There were no transactions with related parties during the 2026 year.

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee, the financial report as set out on pages 2 to 8, satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:

1 a. comply with Australian Accounting Standards applicable to the association; and

b. give a true and fair view of the financial position of Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc as at 30 June 2026 and its performance for the year ended on that date.

2 At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This declaration is signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2022.

Chairperson _____
Kristina Didelis

Treasurer _____
Colin Lenton

Dated: 24/9/2026

TOWARDS A VISION SHARED

Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd

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SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
A.B.N. 45 620 743 392
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2026, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2026 and of its performance for the year ended; and

ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

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Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.

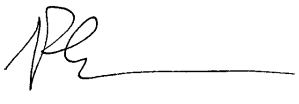
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.

Auditor: Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen **ASIC Registration Number: 421448**

Address: **Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd, 127 Paisley Street, FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011**



Signature:

Date: **24 September 2026**

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ABN 33 614 161 796

KD

KRISTINA DIDELIS

SUSSEX NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC
ABN 45 620 743 392
CERTIFICATE BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

I, **Angela ~~Collier-Gioulekas~~** and I, **Colin Lenton** certify that:

(a) We are members of the committee of governance of Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc.

(b) We attended the annual general meeting of the association held on 21 October 2026.

(c) We are authorised by the attached resolution of the committee to sign this certificate.

(d) This annual statement was submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.

Chairperson _____
Kristina Didelis

Treasurer C. Lenton
Colin Lenton

Dated this 24th **day of** October 2026



Contact Us

03 9354 2210

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7 Prospect Street, Pascoe Vale 3044

Sussex Neighbourhood House