



Koonung Cottage Community House Inc

Annual Report

2022-2023



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Our Mission

Koonung Cottage Community House provides a safe, welcoming environment to respond to the social and learning needs of our community and promote a sense of belonging.

Our Vision

To be a vibrant, connected and inclusive community.



Statement of Child Safety

Everyone attending Koonung Cottage Community House, both participants and house hirers, is required to observe child safe principles, and use appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Our Programs

At Koonung Cottage Community House, we offer a variety of programs, workshops and community events for all ages, including social activities, creative pursuits, health and wellbeing and children's programs.



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Minutes from the 2022 AGM

KOONUNG COTTAGE COMMUNITY HOUSE INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES 7 November, 2022

MEETING OPENED: 10.36am in the front room at Koonung Cottage and via Zoom

WELCOME: Elissa Nguyen welcomed all present and thanked them for coming, special welcome to our local member for Box Hill, Paul Hamer.

PRESENT: Guests: Paul Hamer MP, Maureen McLaughlin – CHAOS, Elissa Nguyen, Erica Johnson, Cathy Fyffe, Marina Shah, Claire Taylor, Margaret Robinson, Khim Yeah, Carolyn Shaw, Claire Pattison, Gabby Marsh, Helen Gigliuto, Sue Scamporlino, Chris Skelton, Deb White, Mary Ferns, Rhonda Menz, Janet Fricke, Margaret Brewster, Judy Shevlin
Via Zoom Viona Lowenthal, Neroli Mitchell, Leann Hart, Paul Hamer MP

APOLOGIES: Lyn Wakeman, Jennifer Schoof (City of Whitehorse), Gail Till, Usha Nathoo, Ana Divitaris, Sabrina Pumpa, Bruce Pumpa, Annette Clemens, Barbara Timms, Wendy Brenchley, Nicole McQuade, Ann Aliamo, Sylvia Cuttress, Val Wood, Frances Davies, Colleen Ryan, Margaret Thompson, Maureen Jordan, Denise McNeil, Alfreda Psarsologos, Carolyn Lee, Dianne Voyer, Jenny Moffat, Lyn Flynn, Trish DeCata, William Thom, Marika Siannos
Gwen Wright, Maria Loxton, Robert Sledge, Teresa Keenan, Joan Viney, Bev Harding Margaret Amor, Joyce Wilson, Julie Shaw, Judy Galley, Julie Cope, Margaret Stott, Jan Wilson, Jill Richards, Vince Scamporlino, Ray Summers, Orysia, Adrian Anderson,

Moved: Claire Taylor,
apologies be received.
Carried.

Seconded: Margaret Robinson, that the

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The minutes were distributed via hard copy and also available on screen for those on Zoom.

The following changes to last year's Minutes were made:

-Cathy Fyffe noted that her service should be 20 years not 21.

-Maureen McLaughlin noted that she was the Networker not a Committee Member.

Moved: Margaret Robinson,
Carried.

Seconded: Claire Taylor

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:

Nil

Minutes cont.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Elissa Nguyen presented her report, copies of which were distributed to those present and displayed on screen

Moved: Elissa Nguyen,
report be accepted.
Carried.

Seconded: Marina Shah, that the Chair's

TREASURER'S REPORT

Erica Johnson presented her report, copies of which were distributed to those present and displayed on screen

Moved: Erica Johnson

Seconded: Helen Gigliuto, that the

Treasurers report be accepted.
Carried.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

Carolyn Shaw presented her report, copies of which were distributed to those present and displayed on screen.

Moved: Carolyn Shaw,
Manager's report be accepted.
Carried.

Seconded: Margaret Brewster, that the

ELECTION COMMITTEE OF GOVERNANCE:

Maureen McLaughlin, in her role as CHAOS networker, took the chair and declared all positions vacant before reading nominations.

NOMINEE

Cathy Fyffe
Debra White
Elissa Nguyen
Erica Johnson
Usha Nathoo
Ruth Lawson
Christine Skelton
Leann Hart

NOMINATOR

Neville Holt
Janet Fricke
Sue Scamporlino
Elizabeth Bell
Helen Gigliuto
Ann Alaimo
Carolyn Lee
Gabby Marsh

SECONDER

Bryan Fitzgerald
Elissa Nguyen
Annette Clemens
Jane Main
Ray Summers
Barbara Timms
Alfreda Psarologos
Sandya Hettiarachchi

The nominations equalled the number required on the Committee so Maureen declared the nominees elected.



Minutes cont.

Auditor

Carla Eldridge & Associates was nominated as the Auditor.

Moved: Claire Taylor Seconded: Margaret Robinson, that Carla Eldridge & Associates continue as Auditor.

Carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Elissa Nguyen thanks outgoing committee members Jodie Hughes and Neroli Mitchell and welcomes new members Christine Skelton, Leann Hart and Deb White.

Maureen McLaughin acknowledged and congratulated Koonung Cottage on the work they had done throughout the pandemic to keep people connected.

As there was no further business the meeting was declared closed at 11.07am.

Chairperson's Report

After the last few years where COVID dominated the landscape, we are definitely in a post pandemic, but living with COVID world. While we've had some amazing achievements in the past, it's time we started to look forward to a future of Koonung Cottage Community House and of course, and how living in this world effects the organisation and our surrounding community. The committee, along with management continually review our strategic plan and policies, that help us define our aims to ensure that we remain relevant and responsive, to deliver programs and outcomes to our local and wider community, to grow, while keeping the lessons learned in an ever-changing era.

One positive aspect of the pandemic (if you can call it that) has been a heightened awareness of the affects that loneliness has on people, even when surrounded by others. Governments and academics have been researching and looking at ways to combat isolation and loneliness and the importance of social connections. Where one in four people regularly report feeling lonely, neighbourhood houses are in a prime position to help combat these feelings by doing what we have always done – to be a place where people come together to connect, that is inclusive, friendly and welcoming for all. Our Chatty Cafe/Coffee Club is a great example of people coming together, just for a social get together chat over a cuppa, where they feel part of the community.

There's no doubt that the past few years have seen a drop in the number of participants, there's a lot of various reasons why this is so. We've been working on ways to bring our participation rates back to what they were pre-covid, and then some!

It's important that we keep reaching out to those people who may want to return but may feel reluctant to do so, and to new people, many who may not be aware of who we are and what we do.

You'll by now no doubt be aware that one of the resolutions we have planned to bring before the membership today is to change the name of Koonung Cottage Community House to Blackburn North Neighbourhood House.

While there are several reasons behind this change, the overwhelming one is that we need to be able to extend our reach to beyond our immediate area. We've always held classes or workshops at other venues, even as far away as the Brickworks in Burwood and council 'activation pods' around Whitehorse. Of course, we also need people to be able to find us and be able to identify who we are and what we do – and not disregard us because they don't know what suburb 'Koonung' is in their google search results!

Chairperson's Report cont.

We've had a couple of people query if Koonung is an indigenous name. We certainly would not want to disrespect the traditional owners of the land where we are situated by disregarding the name. We did some research as well as inquire with the Whitehorse Historical Society and the answer is.... Well, there isn't one - nobody knows for sure. The thinking is that it's a derivative of the word "Koorung that means 'muddy waters'. It's certainly not as clear-cut a place-name like Nunawading or Maribyrnong. While the organisation name may change on forms and websites, I'm sure that many will always refer to it as 'the cottage'.

The committee, along with the staff, are confident that this name change will help us broaden our horizons, and place ourselves to an area that's bigger than the area surrounding Koonung Road, while also more succinctly explain to people what it is we do.

The second resolution we're presenting to you is a change in the wording of our constitution. It's been sometime since we've reviewed this. The details of the proposed new wording are in the notes attached to the Notice of meeting. This change will ensure that the wording of our purpose remains relevant to any potential funders and will assist us in applying for what's known as DGR status – or Deductible Gift Recipient. Basically, this means that the organisation will be able to use donations or apply for philanthropic grants we currently are ineligible for. It also means that if you decide to donate, you will be able to claim your donation in your tax return. Other changes are simply to update the language of other clauses and bring them more into line with our current policies.

These two changes are required to be brought forth as special resolutions and are to be voted on by the membership here today.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank Carolyn, the manager, along with Claire and Gabby for the work and passion they put in to Koonung Cottage can't be understated.

Our childcare staff, Gabby, Sandy and Angel are as busy as ever with full sessions with little bodies playing and learning.

Our tutors and volunteers play a massive role and we would not be the community we are without them, thanks to all.

Chairperson's Report cont.

A big thankyou to Whitehorse City Council and the Department of Family, Fairness and Housing for their ongoing funding and support, to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria for their support and assistance, and to Maureen, our incredible neighbourhood house networker for her all round awesomeness.

Thankyou to the committee, particularly outgoing members Erica Johnstone, who has been part of the committee for the past ten years and most recently our spreadsheet master and Treasurer, and Lea Hart for her input as committee member and office volunteer.

Lastly, thank you to all of you who attend and support Koonung. Without you it wouldn't be the warm, welcoming, inclusive and vibrant place it is.

Elissa Nguyen
CHAIR



Treasurer's Report

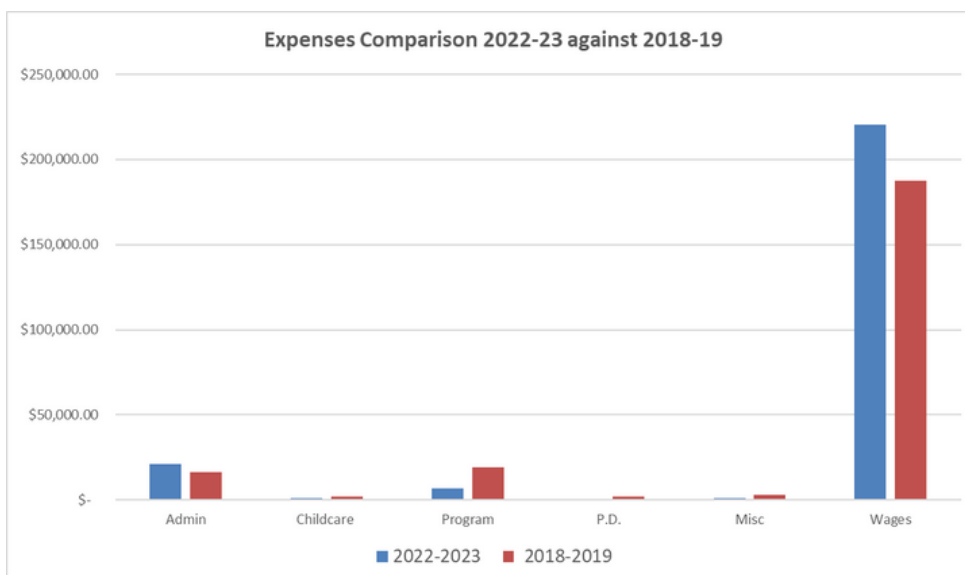
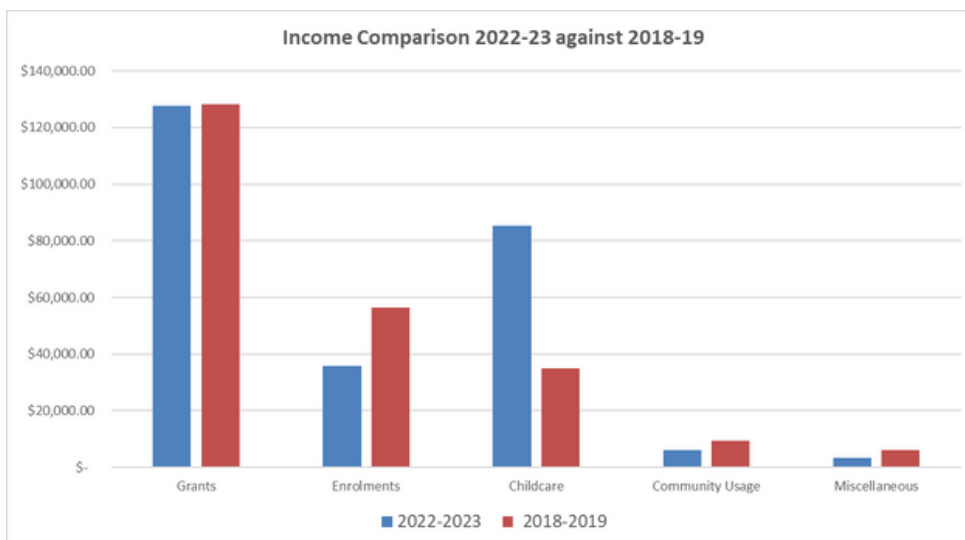
Koonung Cottage Community House Inc's retained earnings of \$302,733.25 put us in a good financial position for the future.

The financial accounts have been audited by Karla Eldridge and the audit report is included.

We acknowledge the regular financial support of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and Whitehorse City Council.

I would like to thank our accountant Nicky Albert for her work and advice during the year.

Erica Johnson
TREASURER



Manager's Report

It's been a year of rebuilding. We have restructured and repackaged classes and activities and we have offered workshops and new activities. We have continued to push Koonung Cottage Community House to the local community - thanks to ongoing brochure mail drops, social media and personal recommendations. Finally, in Term 2, I felt a buzz in the air as we started to translate all those telephone enquiries and casual visits into people regularly attending classes and activities. It's wonderful to see the reinvigoration that takes place in the groups when new people join in. It's also reassuring to hear the positive feedback from those newbies about our program.

Interestingly, as I reviewed our highlights for the year, I have discovered they all included food!

Term 3

In collaboration with the Whitehorse Community Houses, we celebrated Women's Week in September with a number of indulgent activities. The highlight of these was a Koonung Cottage organised **High Tea** held at the bowling club.

Term 4

Once again we participated in **GetOnline Week** which is an annual event to encourage and support Australians to 'get online' and build their digital literacy - this basically means to try something new online. So we did.

We started this week with our Aussie Backyard Birdcount, using the app to record the different birds we spotted. I'm not sure if we made good citizen scientists as there were a couple of questions over the birds we identified and I hope we didn't skew the data too much! Over the week, groups were given the opportunity to try something new online that related to their particular interest, for example the craft group was introduced to Pinterest and a plethora of patterns was discovered and added to individual's 'to do' list.

To conclude the week, Eastern Community Legal Centre shared information on how to spot and avoid scams and protect personal information while online. Naturally, this was followed by a delicious afternoon tea and opportunity to chat and further explore scams.

To acknowledge **Seniors Month** in October, we held an Open Morning. Newcomers joined Annette in Strength Training before getting to know one another over morning tea. We had demonstrations of Creative Drawing with Jack and Chris, Woodturning from Ian, Roger and Graeme, Ikebana from Usha and Crochet from Lea. Our fabulous crew of helpers from Onemda helped serve a delicious morning tea which was provided by Home Instead.

We celebrated another great year at the **Christmas party** which we held here at Koonung. Approx 60 people attended, a little down on pre COVID numbers but higher than we had anticipated. A huge thank you to our barista, Jordan, from Home Instead, who provided the catering and kept the coffee flowing and to the wonderful team from Onemda who took and delivered orders.

Manager's Report cont.

Term 1

Our tastebuds enjoyed a delightful journey around the globe as we caught up over a cuppa with friends for **Harmony Day**. We also learned to recreate some of the tasty offerings, thanks to some wonderful cooking demonstrations from Usha - Aloo Fry (Indian Potato Fry) and Matilde - Pão de queijo (Brazilian Cheese Bread).

Term 2

In May we celebrated **Neighbourhood House Week** in style with a delicious pancake breakfast. As always, the success of the event was a team effort between staff, committee and community members who did their bit to help make sure everyone was well fed and welcomed.

Each year we offer the child care mums a - **Mums Night In** - an opportunity to meet each other in a social setting over a fun craft activity and supper.

Over tea and scones at the bowling club, we hosted a **Biggest Morning Tea** in May. We raised an incredible \$741. Julie generously shared her personal story with cancer and the importance of fundraising. Thank you to a number of people who donated items, especially Ray who donated some of his own paintings. These in turn were raffled or auctioned off. What a fantastic result!

'**Go Wild**' was the theme of this year's annual community craft exhibition. A menagerie of knitted, crocheted, drawn and painted wild creatures was created for display at the Nunawading branch of the Whitehorse Manningham Library throughout July. Our displays are always met with great enthusiasm and feedback from the staff at the library. Please put your thinking cap on for an exciting theme for next year.

Workshops

We ran a number of creative workshops on weeknights and at the weekends throughout the year. These included card making, basket weaving, origami, soapmaking, resin and paper Christmas craft. These were all run by volunteers who simply have a passion for their particular craft and felt comfortable enough to share their skills with others. A HUGE thank you to these volunteers without whom these sessions could not run.

Child Care

Child Care had another great year. Families continue to spread the word of our service throughout the community which is the best endorsement we can hope for. In years gone by, these recommendations would come about as parents dropped children at school and chatted. These days it seems to be via a community page on Facebook.

Manager's Report cont.

This last year, coming out of COVID isolation, has seen a new cohort of children. Some of these children have needed to rediscover how to learn to play in a childcare environment. We are so pleased to see their natural development has led them along the right path with a little assistance and encouragement from our staff.

Both last year and this year, we have had a couple of children who have required additional care due to personal circumstances. This has placed extra strain onto our little team who nonetheless embraced the challenges this presented with positive outcomes. Thanks go to Gabby, Sandy and Angel for their ongoing commitment to our little people.

Partnerships

Koonung Woodturners Guild – have been based at Koonung Cottage since inception in 1994. The 'Woodies' as they are affectionately known, strictly speaking are a 'house hirer'. However, they use the house at least 3 times a week and are always happy to be involved in our shenanigans and we consider them as part of the family.

Eastern Food Rescue – At the end of last year we partnered with a newly formed group to offer fortnightly free food markets at the Cottage, as a way of reducing food waste (from supermarkets) to landfill as well as saving locals money on the grocery bills. Queues of people halfway down the street was a great talking point and it was disappointing in April when EFR found their own venue.

We have since reverted to offering what we can offer inhouse. We have twice weekly drops of bread from Harvest Bakery in Balwyn and people have returned to donating their own surplus goods – lemons, household goods and books . . . lots and lots of books.

Onemda (an organisation providing learning and therapeutic development for people with a disability) – We continued our partnership with Onemda as part of their outreach program. A wonderful bunch of humans has been diligently attending to the garden and back yard each month through the last year. Separate groups have assisted us with their hospitality skills – making tea and coffees and serving food at our Open Day and our Christmas party. We love catching up with these folk each visit and we thank them for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Blackburn Men's Walk and Talk - In a joint initiative with local resident, Richard Kaser, and with funding from the Australia Post Community Grants program, we were able to establish Blackburn Men's Walk and Talk. The walking group is designed to help improve physical and mental wellbeing by providing opportunities for meaningful connection with others and spending time in nature. Twice a month, group members now follow a 5km circuit passing through Blackburn Sanctuary and Blackburn Creeklands before returning to Blackburn Village where most men enjoy coffee together. There are now 12 walkers regularly each fortnight.

Manager's Report cont.

Umbrella Dementia Café - Koonung Café is a social group for families, couples and individuals experiencing dementia. Koonung Café first opened in March 2018 thanks to a joint partnership and its associated funding. It now meets afternoons every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. The afternoon tea and café activities are tailored to the interests of each member. Koonung Café welcomes 6 couples and 4 volunteers every fortnight.

Power Saving Bonus – Each round of the PSB provided a payment of \$250 for Victorian households to ease cost-of-living pressures and encourage Victorians to compare their household energy prices and save money. This fabulous formal outreach program was initiated by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) in partnership with Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand (GSANZ) and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA). A huge THANK YOU to NHVic for this initiative and for the resources and support they provided for this program. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Paul Hamer (our local state MP) who supported this initiative with letterbox campaigns advertising both the bonus and the local neighbourhood houses that were assisting residents with their claim. We have assisted over 101 people claim in total \$25,250.00. Approximately half of these people were connected already with the house and the others were new faces. Even better, some of those new faces have joined some of our other activities.

House Hire

In Term 2, we also started to see house hirers return - we are well on the way to returning to our place as Blackburn North's premier children's party destination! Long term community groups have also returned – Cootamundra Walk Advisory Committee and Whitehorse Friends for Reconciliation. Living Way Christian Network use the house every Sunday morning and Social Butterfly Community Connections use the house regularly for their sausage sizzle with karaoke or moonlight cinema evenings.

A sincere thank you to the BRILLIANT team of people I work with: the program/marketing /admin team of Claire and Gabby; the Child Care team of Gabby, Sandy and Angel; the Committee of Governance; our regular tutors; new volunteers and long term volunteers.

Thank you also to the team at the bowling club for always making us so welcome. We would be lost without access to this space. Special thanks to the mentors that I lean on from time to time. AND thank you to everyone here - our enthusiastic and loyal participants. It is my pleasure and privilege to work with you all.

Carolyn Shaw
MANAGER



Highlights - Term 3, 2022



**\$250
POWER
SAVING
BONUS**



We can help you
compare energy deals
and claim your **\$250**
Power Saving Bonus.



Highlights - Term 4, 2022



Coiled Basket Workshop
with Jenny



TUESDAYS, 15 AND 22 NOVEMBER 2022
7.00-9.00PM

This is a fun, hands on workshop for beginners which will be held over two weeks. Using materials that you may have at home or can be easily sourced, you will learn how to apply various techniques to create your own individual basket. Everyone will take home a beautiful basket at the end of the second night. Light supper provided. Materials details provided on enrolment.

\$40 PER PERSON

To register: <https://www.trybooking.com/CCAIG>
or call Koornung Cottage.



get online week
17-23 Oct 2022

ONLINE SECURITY & AVOIDING SCAMS

Join us for a FREE presentation and afternoon tea where you will learn how to identify and avoid scams and get tips on how to protect your personal information online. presented by Eastern Community Legal Centre

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2022
1.00-2.30PM
BLACKBURN NORTH BOWLING CLUB

LIMITED PLACES - BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL
RSVP BY FRIDAY 14TH OCTOBER
PH. 9878 6632 OR
ADMIN@KOORNUNGOTTAGE.ORG.AU

birdlife AUSTRALIA

Join us in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Be a part of the nation's largest citizen science event.

Where: Meet at the playground in Cootamundra Walk
When: Monday, 17 October @ 10.00am
BYO coffee and chair, morning tea provided.

Come and chat to us if you would like more info or to learn how you can participate independently.



Highlights - Term 1, 2023



Accessing Support for Older People

Are you caring for an older person?

Or do you need help finding and accessing the right supports as you age?



We invite you to join us for a free information session to help you learn what supports and services are available to older people and how



Highlights - Term 2, 2023



What people say....

"I love to come to Koonung Cottage because of the people that will stop and talk and listen to me."

"Everyone is so friendly."

"Inclusive of all, welcoming and relaxed."

"It doesn't matter how depressed I am when I arrive, I always leave with a smile on my face."

"We've always been made to feel welcome and we have enjoyed the strength training and the comradeship over coffee together afterwards."
