



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, connected citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead (American anthropologist and writer)

AGM OUTCOMES

The Annual General Meeting for the 2022-23 year was conducted on September 28 at Mitchell House with approximately 25 members present. The Annual Report presented included contributions from President Sylvia Davey, Centre Manager, Leslie Adams and each of the active groups associated with the Centre. Copies of the report were available for anyone interested. Additional copies are available on request from the reception desk.

Outgoing President Sylvia Davey reflected in her report on the challenging months following the untimely passing of Iain Ritchie in July 2022, the Centre Manager. For a considerable time the Centre depended heavily on the efforts of volunteers to keep Mitchell House open and programs running as normal as far as possible. Sylvia expressed the gratitude of the Committee for the efforts of these volunteers during this period.

The appointment of a new Manager in November was most welcome with Leslie Adams accepting the role. Sylvia thanked Leslie for her work in this position and also acknowledged the contribution of Melanie Mumford in her role co-ordinating the L2P program.

The many volunteers who contribute to the work of the Centre, members of the Committee of Management, the various funding bodies and other partnering organisations were also acknowledged and thanked.

Moving forward noted Sylvia, we will celebrate our achievements, and look forward with optimism to all the wonderful things that make the Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre such an important part of our community.

In her capacity as Acting Treasurer, Sylvia also tabled the annual finan-

cial report and audited statements that were accepted by the meeting. It was highlighted that data provided through the Victorian Neighbourhood House Survey 2022 showed that Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre had provided the equivalent of \$681,722 of value to the community for 2022 quite an achievement that is a source of considerable pride!

As is usual practice at our AGM all positions on the Committee of Management were declared vacant and nominations called for. This process proceeded without the need for elections and the new Committee for the 2023-24 year will be as follows:

President:	Helen Searle
Vice Pres:	To Be Determined
Secretary:	Grant Watson
Treasurer:	To Be Determined
Members:	Aisha Bux Sylvia Davey Diana Holmberg Sonika Pathania



FROM THE MANAGER...

Another busy few months have gone by and here we are already - in October! As you will know, we recently welcomed our new Administration Officer Josie Charles. Josie has immediately made a significant and positive difference to the daily operations of Mitchell House. We are so pleased that Josie has come on board to help us all share the load. Josie will be working four days per week (currently Mon- Thurs) so next time you visit Mitchell House make sure to say hi.

The Spring edition of the *Grapevine* is now available, copies have been emailed or posted to members and it can also be found on our website. If you prefer a hard copy call into Mitchell House and pick one up. A new addition to this term's program is the Bass Coast Parkinson's Support Group. It meets monthly and provides support for those living with this complex condition and their families and close friends. See the *Grapevine* for details of dates/times.

I want to give a big shout out to our amazing and professional band of volunteers. We recently gathered for our quarterly meeting to share experiences and discuss how we think things are going. The group shared their thoughts and ideas to improve and fine tune the way we work. Whether they are on the front desk, on a computer, in the kitchen, the garden or behind the scenes, the Centre simply could not function or provide our range of services without the dedication and commitment of these generous people. Each is a valued member of the WNC team. If you are interested in becoming part of this trusty crew of volunteers please call me to set up a time to discuss options.

As we head towards what I am hoping will be a lovely Bass Coast summer, please keep safe and well. 2024 approaches and with it the WNC 40th birthday celebrations. It's going to be a day to remember and we hope to see you all there!

Leslie Adams
Manager.



Profile: Josie Charles

In September Josie Charles accepted the offer to become the Neighbourhood Centre's new Administration Officer. Since her arrival Josie has been on a steep learning curve as she acquires knowledge of the Centre and how it all operates.

A quick and eager learner Josie has quickly established herself in the role and is already making a significant difference in the day to day operations at Mitchell House ensuring that the Centre is running like a well-oiled machine.

As the Administration Officer Josie is responsible for just about anything that helps the House and all its various activities run as smoothly as possible. The range of tasks that fall her way include book keeping and banking, reception duties and maintenance of the Centre website and Google business account. Josie is also available to Melanie Mumford and the very successful L2P program. The tasks in this area of her responsibility can include driving cars around to various locations and filling in for Melanie when she is not available.

Josie is pleased and happy to be here at WNC because it gives her an opportunity to meet her community, and contribute to that community in a meaningful way using her varied skills to support the activities at Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre. Working with volunteers and meeting participants has kept her busy remembering names and faces, but there is little doubt that she has quickly made a positive impression. Already there has been a notable difference in the efficiency of the operation of the Centre out of Mitchell House.

Josie has been resident in the local area since the beginning of the year, but has been a frequent weekend visitor for nearly 10 years making use of her holiday home that has now become a permanent abode. Josie enjoys walking along local beaches and through the nearby bushland. Gardening and cooking using her own and other locally grown produce are other passions.

We sincerely welcome Josie to the Centre and Mitchell House knowing that her presence, experience and skills will make a substantial contribution to the ongoing work of the WNC. Josie will be at Mitchell House four days each week (Mon – Thurs). Another friendly face with a desire to serve the community and make a difference!

FIX IT CAFÉ



The popular **FIXIT CAFÉ** continues to provide a valuable repair service for the local community. Members of the Men's Shed apply their skills each month and successfully fix most items that are presented. Electrical goods and clocks are readily accepted and a sharpening service for garden tools and kitchen knives is also available. From November there will also be a gentleman with knowledge of repairing mowers, if you have an old mower in your shed that requires attention it is possible that the Fixit Café could bring it back to life! Bookings are essential to avoid disappointment, please phone Mitchell House or drop in personally to register your repair request. The next Fixit Café will be held on 19th November.

The service is free but a donation to cover costs is welcomed.

The Community Survey conducted earlier in the year provided much important feedback for the Neighbourhood Centre to consider. There were 63 respondents and the majority of these were current WNC members. The thoughts and ideas submitted therefore, represent a useful window into the thinking of our membership on the operation of the Centre.

The vast majority of respondents noted that Mitchell House is a very welcoming and helpful place that is much valued by the local community. The overwhelmingly positive response served to affirm and encourage the Committee of Management, staff and volunteers of the Centre who collectively seek to ensure that WNC operates with integrity and provides a range of services that are appreciated by members of the community.

A number of ideas for future activities were suggested through the survey including Cooking classes, a range of craft activity, dancing and exercise classes and occasional guest speakers to name a few. These ideas are gratefully received and will be considered by the Committee and Manager going forward.

There were also suggestions regarding potential improvements at Mitchell House. These included better use of the outdoor area, increased toilet facilities and a remodeling of the reception area. Each of these needs have coincidentally been on the Committee's agenda for a while and actions to improve the Mitchell House facilities is already in process. The Committee of Management is grateful to all those who took opportunity to share their thoughts by responding to the survey.



REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP UPDATE

Our Group is excited to have been matched with a second Refugee family, due to arrive mid November. The family of mum, dad and three children between 6 and 12 years of age are a Syrian, Arabic speaking family. We have established contact with the family and they are very excited about joining our community in Wonthaggi.

If you would like to help and donate funds -

Donations - In person at Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House, 6 Murray Street, Wonthaggi.
Or by mail: PO Box 175 Wonthaggi 3995.

By direct deposit to the Bendigo Bank. Account name: Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House. BSB: 633 000. Account Number: 111 942 884 Ref BCRSG.

We also need household goods for the family. If you have possible items to contribute, please contact BCRSG by email: bcrsg2021@gmail.com

Our first sponsorship family - Lukman, Khadija and their four beautiful children are approaching the 12-month mark since their arrival in Australia. During this time we have walked alongside them as they settled into the Wonthaggi community. At the end of November the family will transition from the support we have provided through the CRISP program (Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot). We are now working with them, to ensure they feel comfortable and confident to make their own way within the wonderful community of Wonthaggi. Thanks to everyone involved.

The Multicultural Women's Group

This active group has been in full swing again this year. Membership has remained fairly stable, but the group is always open to new members from multicultural backgrounds, either new to Bass Coast or long-time residents, looking for community connection and friendship.

Activities have varied from information sessions on Australian citizenship, the NDIS, voting and the Referendum on The Voice, to a Thai Chi demonstration, a mosaic workshop at Bunnings, a visit to Gippsland Mushrooms, craft and games sessions, cooking, attending the International Women's Day Lunch at Phillip Island, gardening, visits to member's homes, a combined event with the Moe and Warragul Multicultural Friendship Groups and another market stall to help finance our excursions which include an overnight trip to the Yarra Ranges in September.

We also have days when we just meet over morning tea to talk and enjoy the company of others. The members of the group are very supportive of each other.

Our new meeting time is 11am-1pm on Thursdays, which seems to suit everybody better.

Janice Connor (Co-ordinator)



Housing Matters Bass Coast



The Homelessness Awareness Week event was successfully conducted by the group at Mitchell House on August 12th.

This awareness raising event invited members of the local community needing assistance to mingle in an atmosphere of music, food and information sharing. Local businesses contributed vouchers for the needy and the issues of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing on the Bass Coast were discussed. Attendees were asked to sign an 'Open Letter' outlining the various issues associated with the lack of affordable housing. The letter was formerly passed to local state member of parliament, Jordan Crugnale on September 5th.

Cr. Michael Whelan (Lord Mayor) addressed the gathering as did Jessica Harrison from HMBC. Our Local ALP member Jordan Crugnale attended, and other members of Homelessness Services.

Our band of volunteers kept the day running smoothly and the all day musical entertainment provided a great atmosphere. At the end of the day 5 lucky individuals won a \$100 Coles vouchers provided by the Rotary organisation.

HMBC members are currently supporting four women who are homeless who made themselves known to HMBC members during the event.

The HMBC group continues to be proactive in this space determined to assist people in need and advocate for more affordable housing in the local area. Interested persons are encouraged to contact the Group via email, new members are welcome. HousingMattersBC@gmail.com

"WNC is on the land of the Bunurong Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land where we gather to learn, work and play. We thank the elders past, present and emerging for their custodianship and their continuing connections to the land, sea and community."