

*"Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds"*  
- Former US President Bill Clinton

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

This year's AGM will be conducted on Thursday 25th September at Mitchell House from 2:00pm. All WNC members are warmly invited to attend this important gathering. This meeting provides opportunity to hear about all that has been happening under the Mitchell House roof throughout the previous year. Reports will be available from each of the various groups that operate and these will be augmented by reports from the President and Treasurer. This is an opportunity to celebrate the activity of the Centre and all that it achieves for the local community. A new Committee of Management will be installed and members are encouraged to consider nominating for positions on the governing body. We are particularly keen to find a new Treasurer! Nomination forms are available at Mitchell House or can be provided online by request via email.

Also at this meeting the Strategic Intentions of the WNC will be presented. Members will know from previous newsletters that the Committee of Management has been busy in recent months engaging with various stakeholders seeking feedback that will shape the new strategic plan that will guide our operations over the next five year period. From the many discussions held a range of ideas and suggestions have emerged that have now been worked into a document that provides detail of WNC's strategic intentions.

These intentions have been grouped under six main headings:

1. Advocacy and Social Action
2. Identifying and responding to local community needs and aspirations
3. Building social capital for individuals, groups, staff and Volunteers

4. Partnership and networking
5. Inclusion and access
6. Financial viability

Each of these points will be elaborated on during the AGM presentation and provide members with insight into the current and future intent of the Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre as we continue to seek to serve the local community in the best ways possible.

These strategic intentions will subsequently form the basis of an action plan that will seek to deliver a pathway towards the delivery of a range of services that will address identified community needs and continue to meet our primary aim...

*To provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where people can meet to learn and share ideas, friendship, skills and information and improve social health and well-being.*

WNC at Mitchell House plays an important role within our community and we are committed to ensuring that the service provided continues to be relevant and appreciated.



## FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRESIDENT...

I hope everyone is managing to stay warm enough this winter by finding comfortable places to avoid the cold winds and rain. WNC continues to provide a cosy environment for community members to attend groups and meals or gather information. The committee of management has been meeting regularly to attend to its usual responsibilities as well as to complete the new strategic plan. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the strategic planning consultations. Our aim is to have our strategic goals ready for the 25<sup>th</sup> September AGM and then to develop a comprehensive action plan that focuses our attention on meeting those goals.

With the AGM approaching I would encourage all WNC members to consider standing for the committee of management. Joining the committee enable members to learn and understand what's involved in keeping WNC afloat and to contribute to important decisions about the Centre. This year nominations need to be submitted to the secretary at least two weeks before the AGM. The committee will then decide at its first meeting who will hold the executive positions. The committee is particularly keen to talk with anyone who would be interested in being a future treasurer.

Please consider getting involved with the committee. Alternatively, you may have an interest in supporting a particular event or fund-raising idea. Let us know as there are many ways to contribute to WNC. The WNC volunteers continue to perform a fantastic role greeting and welcoming people to the Centre. Each shift is a different experience depending on which groups are running and who walks through the door. I've enjoyed getting to know some of the volunteers and appreciate their willingness to regularly turn up and manage whatever happens on their shift.

With another month of winter still to go keep warm and remember to come along to a Wednesday community lunch for warm hearty meal. See you at the AGM where you will get to hear about the amazing journey some local residents have been on to try and protect the Westernport woodlands.

*Helen Searle*

## ART GROUP MAKING THEIR MARK

The WNC Art Group comprises a welcoming number of women and men with a collective interest in artistic expression. Together they gather to work on a variety of creative projects including painting, sketching and colouring. As each works away on their individual projects they share in friendly conversation and enjoy an afternoon tea. Some examples of their work are below, some of which they sell to raise funds for the neighbourhood house. Group members are unanimous in their appreciation for the opportunity to share together in such a warm, friendly atmosphere gaining support from one another while finding ways to express their creative talents. The group meets weekly on a Thursday afternoon from 1:45 - 3:15pm. The group is very open to any body who might want to join in their weekly sessions, highly developed artistic skills are certainly not a prerequisite. If you are someone with a creative streak no matter your level of expertise, and who appreciates friendly company and conversation you would be made very welcome.



*Art Group regulars,  
Laney, Vicki and Milene*





## VOLUNTEERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE...

The operation of the Neighbourhood Centre depends on the participation of willing volunteers. The three women pictured here are among the many volunteers that ensure that Mitchell House remains a welcoming environment where people from the local community can gather to participate in a range of activities and enjoy the company and conversation that is available.

Sonia Drury on the left has been helping out on the reception desk for just over 12 months, Feh in the middle, joined the popular Multi-Cultural Women's Group back in 2016 and has recently begun voluntarily helping in the kitchen preparing the weekly community meals. Di on the right has lived in Wonthaggi for over 22 years and has generational links with the town that go back much further. Di and her husband Ray share a genuine desire to give back to the community they call home and involve themselves in voluntary activity that fulfils that desire. Di spends time on the reception desk at Mitchell House and is also a member of the Committee of Management. Our heartfelt thanks to Sonia, Feh and Di and all our other wonderful volunteers for their selfless contribution to the ongoing operation of WNC at Mitchell House!



## WHY VOLUNTEER?

People are motivated to volunteer for a number of reasons, to make a difference in the lives of others, to give back to their community, to help others less fortunate, to offer support where needed. Volunteers are such an important part of the fabric of community life. Our communities would be much poorer without their commitment and willingness to give of their time and themselves. In addition to contributing to others, volunteering often has a reciprocal positive effect on the life experience of the volunteer. Consider the reflection below provided by Sonia Drury one of our generous volunteers at Mitchell House...

*"Through my volunteering I have learned to appreciate the unique abilities and perspectives of others and also the value of a team. I have met many wonderful people, in many ways I feel I have received so much more than I could give. I am making new connections in the community. Volunteering has reduced my loneliness, I feel a renewed sense of purpose. My self-esteem has improved so much, I feel accepted for just being me. People at Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre, Mitchell House are warm, considerate, respectful and helpful. Everyone is approachable, welcoming, understanding, friendly, encouraging and most of all they listen. I feel this and see this every time I step into Mitchell House."*

**"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."**

## From the Manager...

As mentioned on our front page, preparations are well underway for the AGM in September. As the manager, one of lovely things I get to do is compile our Annual Report. Why I say 'lovely' is because we ask all of our regular groups to contribute their own accounts of how things have been for them over the past year and as I pull the Annual Report together, I get to be the first person to read those stories.

To me, an Annual General Meeting is not just 'another meeting'. The reports written by each group provide the colour and movement that bring the statistics, the meetings, the minutes and the financials to life. Sure it has an administrative, maybe even bureaucratic purpose; but it also tells the story of the past year in the life of an organisation. And, as organisations go, Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre at Mitchell House is a pretty interesting one.

The other thing that will animate this year's Annual General Meeting is the discussion around the development of our new strategic plan. It has been a real pleasure to listen to and speak with various people and groups in our community about a vision and direction for the next 5 years. The resulting strategic intentions, coupled with the care and concerns expressed by our communities ensure that our plans will reflect who we are and what we want for our future. Whilst we will have plenty to do and offer over these next five years, you can be sure that community – our communities, will always be at the centre of our work.

*Leslie*



## WONTHAGGI NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE 2024-25 AGM

**THURSDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER  
FROM 2:00PM AT  
MITCHELL HOUSE**

### **GUEST SPEAKER: CATHERINE WATSON**

Catherine was the recipient of the 2023 Bass Coast Shire Community Leaders' Award in recognition of her work with the Westernport Woodlands Group. Catherine is also the publisher and editor of the Bass Coast Post an online newsletter that invites contributions from locals about life and issues within the local community. Catherine will share of her experience working with a group of locals towards protecting the vulnerable native woodlands within the Bass Coast region.

