

"Community is the spirit, the guiding light, whereby people come together to fulfill a purpose, to help others fulfill their purpose, and to take care of one another."

E: reception@wonthaggi neighbourhoodcentre.com

W: www.wonthaggi neighbourhoodcentre.com



For updates follow us on Facebook
at Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre

MANAGER MOVING ON

After three years at the helm of the Neighbourhood Centre, Manager Leslie Adams has decided to leave the role. Leslie was appointed to the role at a testing time following the sudden passing of the previous Manager Iain Ritchie. Her previous knowledge of the Centre together with her desire to serve community, her ability to relate with people from various backgrounds and her calm approach were widely recognized and appreciated. Under Leslie's leadership the Centre continued to be a hub for activity that focused on building connections and providing a space where people would feel welcome and supported.

Leslie's willingness to listen and ability to engage empathetically with a broad range of people enabled her to effectively offer support and guidance that was genuinely valued by the many that were the beneficiaries of her time and care.

Managing a busy Neighbourhood Centre is a challenging role that requires multiple skills. Leslie was practiced at balancing the various demands upon her time and at drawing upon the specific experience and expertise required to appropriately respond in a range of circumstances.

One of the highlights during her tenure at Mitchell House were the celebrations associated with the 40th birthday of the Centre in February 2024. The celebrations culminated in a successful community gathering in Apex Park.

Leslie played a leading role in the recent process of developing a new Strategic Plan for the Centre that will provide direction over the next five year period. Her knowledge of the local community and willingness to connect effectively with many stakeholders contributed

significantly to the outcome that was presented to members at the recent AGM.

Leslie has recruited a number of volunteers during her time at the Centre and appreciated their willingness to learn and in turn to make a valued contribution to the operation of the Centre.

Leslie will depart from Mitchell House in December this year. There is no doubt that she will be missed by staff, volunteers, and the many community members who regularly drop into Mitchell House during any particular week for a variety of reasons.

In Leslie's own words; "Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre is an integral part of the Bass Coast Community and as well as working with committed staff and volunteers, I have had opportunities to link in and work with a range of wonderful community organisations across our shire. I am pleased that we have been able to continue the work of making a tangible difference in our community... I feel very lucky to have worked with skilled and committed staff and volunteers as well as those who make up the WNC community more broadly."



AGM REPORT

Twenty-two members and supporters of WNC gathered for the Annual General Meeting conducted on September 25 at Mitchell House. In her President's report Helen Searle focussed initially upon the principles of the Neighbourhood House sector and how WNC had sought to action these over previous year. Helen also pointed out that these will remain the focus going forward and continue to inform the action plans to emerge from the Strategic Plan. Helen expressed thanks for the support of local organisations especially Bass Coast Shire Council. Staff and volunteers were also acknowledged and thanked for their valuable contributions over the previous year. Helen presented the Annual Report prepared by the Manager and detailing the varied activity of the Centre over the previous year.



Retiring Treasurer, Diana Holmberg presented the Strategic Plan that will guide the Centre's approach over the next five year period. Diana explained that the next step would be the development of an action plan which would detail the implementation of the strategies over the subsequent years of operation. Copies of the Plan are available on the website or at Mitchell House for anyone interested.

It was decided that fees for membership and participation in group activities would remain unchanged through to the end of the 2026-2027 financial year. This represents WNC's commitment to continue to provide an excellent community service at minimum cost for members. A new Committee of Management was installed for the 2025-2026 year with the following members endorsed by the meeting:

Helen Searle, Jill McAdam, Di McCurry, David Taylor, Grant Watson, Vicki Tierney.

At the initial meeting of the new Committee the following roles were agreed:

President: Helen; Vice President: Di ; Secretary: Grant; Treasurer: Jill

The meeting concluded with an interesting presentation from guest Catherine Watson about the Westernport Woodlands and the work being undertaken to conserve this valuable environmental resource.

New Committee of Management member Vicki Tierney

After involvement with WNC over the previous year Vicki Tierney agreed to accept nomination for a position on the Committee at the recent AGM. Here Vicki shares something of her experience and reasons for committing herself to the work of this governing group...

My background is in small business, having owned and run several in the Eastern Suburbs/Yarra Valley.

There was a huge gap in my life over a year ago, so I decided to volunteer here at Mitchell House.

It has been the most rewarding experience, being able to help and give back. I have also made some great contacts and friendships, starting up an art group, which is one of my passions.

Nominating for the Committee of Management seemed to be a natural progression for me. I have previous experience of governance activity having been the Victorian Chairperson of The Independent Cooling Experts 3 years running, working in conjunction with VACC.

I believe I have something to offer this Committee and look forward to facilitating change.



From the Manager...

So, after three and a bit years as Manager of the Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre I am finishing up. It's been a wonderful ride full of people, groups and events. EVERY day is busy and different. And how great is it to have a job where I get to catch up with old friends and make new ones?

My highlights? There are way too many to list! But the times we are living in call for us to reach out to those in need, to provide a helping hand and to assist people where we can. I have loved being able to work with the individuals and community groups who are passionate about making this particular community the best it can be. These people and groups front up every day to make it so.

I leave at a time when communities are struggling with food insecurity, lack of affordable housing and (often) less than adequate access to timely and quality health care for themselves and their families. Here at WNC we are seeing a real shift in the type of help we're being asked to provide. We see the increasing need for very practical assistance, and as with other groups in our community, we have ever diminishing resources. As I write, Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria are campaigning for an increase in funding in order to continue supporting our local communities. If you haven't yet had the opportunity to sign one of our postcards of support, pop into Mitchell House and ask for one at the front counter.

So, as my time at Mitchell House comes to a close, I would once more like to acknowledge our volunteers – the committee members, the front desk people, the learner driver mentors, the group facilitators, our gardeners, the amazingly talented chefs cooking up a storm in the kitchen and everyone else that helps to keep this world turning. The next person to sit at this desk will be the lucky recipient of the collective skill, talent and passion of these wonderful, wonderful people.

THANK YOU one and all.

Leslie

From the President...

Following our manager Leslie Adams' decision to resign for her position the committee of management took the opportunity to carefully consider the timing of its future need to merge the manager and administrative positions back into one role. The funding we receive from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing is not sufficient to employ two staff as an ongoing arrangement. Hence the committee has decided to restructure causing the administrative role to become redundant.

As most of you will know Josie Charles is currently employed in the administrative role. After much deliberation Josie has decided not to put herself forward for the manager role so it is now being advertised externally. Sadly that means we will lose Leslie on the 19th December and Josie once the new manager has settled in. This is going to be a big change for everyone. Josie has done a fantastic job introducing processes to streamline the financial tasks of WNC, manage the Centre on Mondays and Wednesdays and carry out many other tasks. We will all miss seeing and working with Leslie and Josie.

You will have an opportunity to thank Leslie and say good-bye on Tuesday 16th December at 2 pm. Hope you can come along. See you then.

Cheers, Helen Searle

"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."

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Our Annual Christmas Lunch is planned for December 10th from 12:30pm at Mitchell House. Please phone 56723731 or drop in to

Reception to book your place. **Bookings are essential!**



Please join us for an afternoon tea to Farewell our departing Manager, Leslie Adams and Admin Officer Josie Charles and to thank them for the wonderful contribution they have each made to the Wonthaggi Neighbourhood Centre .

Please note that WNC at Mitchell house will be closed over the Christmas/New Year period between Friday December 19th and Tuesday 27th January