



*A Place to Belong since 1971*



**2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**

# OUR CEO

## Welcome to the Open House 2019/20 Annual Report!

Wow! What a year! A year that no one could have ever predicted or imagined. As is often said in a game of soccer, it's a game of two halves. The first half is unrecognisable from the second. And that is clearly the case for our last financial year.

### **First Half**

The year started so positively with many highlights that you will read about later in this report, a report with more pages than ever before, just to accommodate the many great stories. But before moving on, I want to mention just two.

Firstly, the Whittlesea Show; it was the 160th year of the show, a year that Clubwork received a prize for the 'Most Successful Group', and what is more, one of our participants received first prize as well as "Most Successful Exhibitor" for his Mosaic table.

Another highlight is the Open House Beehive project that has captured the imagination of everyone involved. There was a real buzz (no pun intended) when the young people were able to harvest the first batch of honey. There are many more great stories that I hope you will enjoy as you read through this report.

### **Second Half**

Then the year 2020 arrived. It was a year that as a child seemed so far away, a futuristic year with flying cars and kids travelling to school on hoverboards as in the film 'Back to the Future'.

It was a year that in my head had always represented perfection.

2020 started as a year with so many hopes but then the world was hit by a virus and we all know what has happened since.

*Open House acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Open House stands, and we pay our respects to elders both past and present. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples there today.*



The theme I came up with for this year was; **Connected** which has turned out to be more important for the Open House family than ever anticipated.

When the pandemic hit, it meant changing the way we worked overnight. We had to stop all face to face programs but thanks to the creativity of the Open House team, we found ways to stay connected to everyone in the Open House family and also managed to reconnect with many past participants. Open House has been providing people with a place to belong since 1971 and yes, we may be physically separated at this time, but we will never stop supporting our people. The main reason for this is that since its inception, many hundreds of caring people have invested in the work in many ways like volunteering, praying and giving financially.

A special mention has to go out to Staff, for without their dedication we would not have been able to achieve what we have this year. My gratitude also extends to all board members, both past and present, and former CEO's George Farrington and Ross Oldmeadow. For the past 49 years Open House has been served by these dedicated individuals with love and care, and I thank them for their leadership and wise stewardship of God's work.

Therefore, we can look to our 50th year and beyond with real hope and optimism.

**PAUL BURGESS**

# OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

On Monday the 23rd of March, due to Government recommendations in response to COVID-19, Open House made the difficult decision to temporarily close its office and all onsite programs. This meant that all staff would transition to working remotely from home for the immediate future.

Whilst our office may have been closed and all onsite programs temporarily suspended, it didn't mean our commitment to **caring for our community** and **being a place to belong** would.

One of the key pieces of Open House's response to COVID-19 was to ensure that our community was being cared for practically.

This was done through a number of different ways including;

- *Regular phone calls*
- *Letters of support and encouragement*

Open House's programs also transitioned to an online implementation model that would allow us to keep our community engaged until we could resume "normal" onsite operations.

This online model included;

- **Youth Workshop Mentoring Program** conducting online trivia nights and cooking classes.
- **Friday Drop-In** moving to an online Drop-On evening.
- **Playgroup** moving its regular mornings to an interactive zoom meeting for its members.

The core mission of Open House has not changed since its inception in 1971; **To be a place to belong for all people and to tackle social isolation.**

For many, COVID-19 has heightened feelings of being socially isolated, but Open House is proud to be able to still be here for our community during this period.

**We are still here at this time, so if you, or anyone you know, needs any practical help, please don't hesitate to let us know.**

Open House will continue to be a place to belong and we look forward to resuming onsite activities once it is appropriate to do so.



*Please note: This photo was taken Pre-COVID-19*

# OUR CHAIRMAN



Welcome to the Open House Annual report for 2020!

At the time of writing this report many organisations are learning how to manage remote models of service delivery and planning for what the world might demand of us in 2021. Our world has been forever changed by the pandemic of 2020 and in this fast-changing context, the work of Open House continues to be a source of stability, encouragement and friendship for our participants and the local community we serve. I acknowledge the dedication and clear leadership of our CEO, Paul Burgess and long serving faithful contribution of Open House staff and volunteers. As is my way, I extend my thanks to their partners and families who provide up front and behind the scenes support, thank you for your very important contribution.

In last year's report I expressed the hope that we might consider "new ways of expressing the Open House mission and help participants repair broken relationships and experience stronger family connections". Little did I expect that "new ways" would include closed facilities, remote assistance, home visits, (when allowed), virtual programs and even the provision of computer tablets with built in sim cards in order to maintain online connections in a locked down environment. It is comforting to know that in this difficult context the work of Open House continues.

It's difficult to gauge the challenge ahead, as our community is thrust deeper into financial recession; most likely we can expect dire need and fractured relationships as a consequence of rising poverty and unemployment. The need for the work of Open House and its message of love and belonging will be needed just as much, if not more than it was 50 years ago during the 1970's recession. Just as our founding director George Farrington gathered a group of committed Christians around the work at that time, I trust that once again the underpinning message of Matthew 25: 34-40 will encourage us to continue to enact God's message of love and hope in what for many will be a despairing and lonely society.

The Open House staff have commenced planning for our 50th birthday celebration, it is indeed a fantastic testimony to the faithful support and financial contributions of many supporters for over half a century, what an amazing story of God's provision and guidance. I hope that we will be able to celebrate in person during 2021. Please look out for invitations and opportunities to celebrate this significant event in the year ahead.

I again wish to thank our Open House Board members (past and present) for their contribution and sound stewardship over many years. To our broad range of faithful supporters - thank you for the various ways you support the Open House mission whether in prayer, in-kind or financially.

I trust the pages that follow will again inform you of the activities and relationships built over the past year and remind you of the need for your support in the future.

**DR. GEORGE GIULIANI**

# OUR BOARD

*Open House is governed by a board of trustees that meet regularly to oversee the work and to assist the CEO in the setting and implementation of the strategic plan.*

## **Dr. George Giuliani | Chairman**

**Qualifications:** *Doctor of Social Work and Clinical Family Therapist*

**Experience:** *Over 35 years' management experience in welfare, employment and training services.*

Currently in private practice specialising in clinical supervision and welfare sector consulting George brings a rich history of the origins and ethos of Open House - George and his partner Julie were early volunteers at the drop-in and live in centre (Ivanhoe). George brings skills in organisational management as well as a detailed knowledge of the local and national service system.

## **Phillip Sporton | Deputy Chair**

**Qualifications:** *Bachelor of Applied Science (Applied Electronics)*

**Experience:** *More than 35 Years in Telecommunications, Utilities and Consulting, including a number of C Level appointments across Australia and Asia.*

As a former Executive Director of Telstra, Phill brings a wealth of management skills and expertise from his work in the corporate sector, and cares about those who are disadvantaged.

## **Reverend Melanie Moore**

**Qualifications:** *Bachelor of Ministries*

**Experience:** *Hospital Chaplain, Former Staff Member.*

Having worked at Open House between 1990 and 2000, and currently working as a hospital chaplain, Rev Melanie brings valuable experience and insight, and has a heart to see people grow holistically.



## **Rex Anderson**

**Qualifications:** *Retail Financial Trading Certificate*

**Experience:** *33 Years in the Banking Industry.*

Rex was the former Administration & Finance Manager at Open House (for over 9 years) and brings first-hand insight and vision to the operations of Open House.

## **Oscar Ruiz**

**Qualification:** *Diploma of Management, Associate Diploma of Electronic Engineering.*

**Experience:** *Former Managing Director of Axicor Pty Ltd, Former Client Solutions Executive (IBM).*

Oscar brings substantial managerial, computer and personnel skills to the board, and wants to see people's lives continue to be positively impacted.

# OUR BOARD

**THE OPEN HOUSE BOARD  
IS PROUD TO WELCOME  
ITS NEWEST MEMBER**



## **Rosalind Look**

**Qualifications:** *Bachelors of Law and Economics*

**Experience:** *Over 25 years of experience in equities investments, both in Australia and the Asian Region.*

Former executive at Morgan Stanley in the Institutional Equity Division based in Hong Kong. Rosalind brings finance and investment expertise with a passion of giving back to the community.

## **Tom Macdonald**

**Qualifications:** *Diploma in Physical Education, Higher Diploma of Teaching*

**Experience:** *Over 45 years of Secondary Teaching.*

With over 10 years volunteering in the Youth Workshop Mentoring Program at Open House, Tom brings a wealth of educational and practical experience to the board at Open House.

## **Caroline Quinn**

**Qualifications:** *Bachelor of Commerce with Honours*

**Experience:** *Over 20 years' experience in business and human resources across a range of sectors.*

As a former Director of Human Resources at Telstra, and with over 20 year's of experience in business and human resources. Caroline brings insight and empathy to Open House.

## **Barry Gunning**

**Qualifications:** *Certificate of Emergency Management*

**Experience:** *Former Corporate Services Manager in the Department of Human Service.*

Having worked in the public sector for over 40 years, mostly within emergency and corporate, Barry brings strong management and governance to the board here at Open House.

## **PRIVILEGE AND CHALLENGE**

The Board consider themselves privileged to be entrusted with the leadership of the work of Open House. The challenge is always with us to carry out our mission and provide meaningful and effective support to those in need.

We are grateful that this challenge is supported by many – enabling us to complete another year of bringing hope to children, young people and adults in need.

# OUR VISION

*To Tackle social isolation head-on through creative programs and activities for all ages, giving people a place to belong.*

# VALUES

- *We respect each person, their social, racial and religious beliefs and treat them with dignity.*
- *We value each person as unique and loved by God.*
- *We value, share with and support people unconditionally.*

# MISSION

To live out **Matthew 25:34-40** & **Matthew 28:18-20**

**To give long-term friendship and support to children, young people and adults in our community, particularly those who are disadvantaged or socially isolated.**

**To provide a place with a relaxed environment where people are welcomed, encouraged to feel they belong, are cared for and supported.**

**To give opportunities to people to express themselves and encouragement if they wish, to make positive changes to their lives**

# STRATEGIC PLAN



## 1. Growing People

With a talented team we seek to offer opportunities for holistic growth to all people who come within the community of Open House - participants and their families, staff, volunteers & board members.

## 2. Growing Supportive Relationships and Networks

Seeking to strengthen and develop good connections and supportive relationships with the wider community - agencies, churches, supporters, philanthropic trusts, business houses, schools, community groups, service clubs and government departments.

## 3. Growing Successful Programs

Seeking to be at the cutting edge in developing and delivering quality programs and activities in areas of identified needs, which are effective and engaging of people to help them grow.

## 4. Enhancing Accountability and Governance

To strengthen policies and procedures, reporting and communications to enable sufficient finance, good stewardship and good governance.

## 5. Financial Sustainability of the Organisation

Regularly review and update our fund-raising strategy, keeping it relevant while being aware of current trends. While also looking at avenues to attract new sources of income including the development of social enterprises.

## 6. Developing Facilities/Assets

To continue to develop and furnish our Macleod site so that we have the facilities and resources to enable us to deliver programs to help people grow. Also investigate the viability of potential satellite options in other disadvantaged communities.





# OUR NEW STAFF

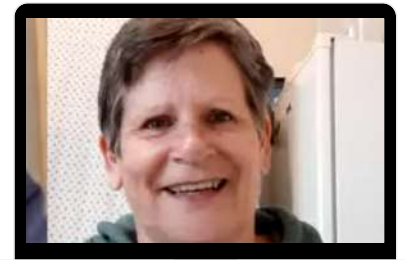


## **Nathan Turner** | *Adele Trainee*

In 2015 Nathan found himself in the Banyule Volunteer Centre looking for an opportunity to give back to the community. While given many organisations to choose from, Open House was the one that spoke to him the most. Having enjoyed his five years of volunteering he has now started the Adele Traineeship. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) Degree.

## **Wendy Barlow** | *Clubwork Support Worker*

After volunteering for Four years in the Tuesday Craft group and Wednesday Clubwork, Wendy was asked to fill in for Harmony for a year whilst she was on maternity leave. Wendy has worked in different areas of Aged Care for many years and has love for all people and has been a great fit to the Open House Staff Team



# VOLUNTEERS

Open House is proud to have over 60 volunteers who faithfully serve both the people of Open House and the wider community.

We are blessed with dedicated people, from the board all the way through to those who work with some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

There is always an opportunity to get involved with the work of Open House.



To get involved with the life changing work of Open House and to use your skills and time to support the community of Open House please come in and visit, or email Open House at: **[office@openhousecic.org.au](mailto:office@openhousecic.org.au)**



# PLACEMENT STUDENTS

*In the past year we have had a number of students studying youth work or community services do their placement hours at Open House.*

*At Open House they are given practical experience in our programs that assists them in putting into practice all the theory and training they are learning.*

**Lita Ansell** | *Community Services Student*

"Overall my placement at Open House was an amazing experience where I got to learn so many new skills. The way that all the staff and volunteers interact with the community is incredible. Each interaction is done with dignity and respect towards the person."

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**Muna Kasim** | *Youth Work Student*

"My experience at Open House was amazing! Being able to join in different programs and run my own activities gave me a little bit of the experience I need in the future and gave me the opportunity to put my studies into practice. Even going fishing... but that encouraged me to get over my own biases and helped me grow and become more resilient to my job."

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**Robyn Krell** | *Community Services Student*

"Overall, being on placement at Open House taught me that everyone should be treated with respect. It also showed me that having a place to belong within the community and being able to empower participants is so important. No one deserves to feel left out or alone."

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**Tameka Martens** | *Community Services Student*

"My experience at Open House was amazing to say the least! All the staff were so very welcoming and very helpful. Seeing the trust and bond between everyone at Open House made me notice the positive energy in the organisation. I wish I had more time to spend with Open House but I am so glad I found them!"



# PLAY GROUP

In February 2020, Playgroup's wonderful Harmony went on maternity leave and gave birth to her second child. This meant that Open House's incredible Ann-Marie Fife and Naomi Kop took over the running of Playgroup.

"I took over the play group in February this year while Harmony went on maternity leave. It's so much fun to see children and their parents at Playgroup every Tuesday morning.

We have very dedicated volunteers who are a great support to the mums and their children. We have built some special relationships with families and it's amazing to see children developing each week. The children love music time, free play and story time. It is wonderful to have a great indoor and outdoor area at Open House for the children to use, as well as lots of toys.

Then Covid started, and we could no longer have Playgroup at Open House.

After meeting with the volunteers, we decided to try an online Playgroup through Zoom so that we could stay connected with families and create a fun atmosphere for the children and their parents.

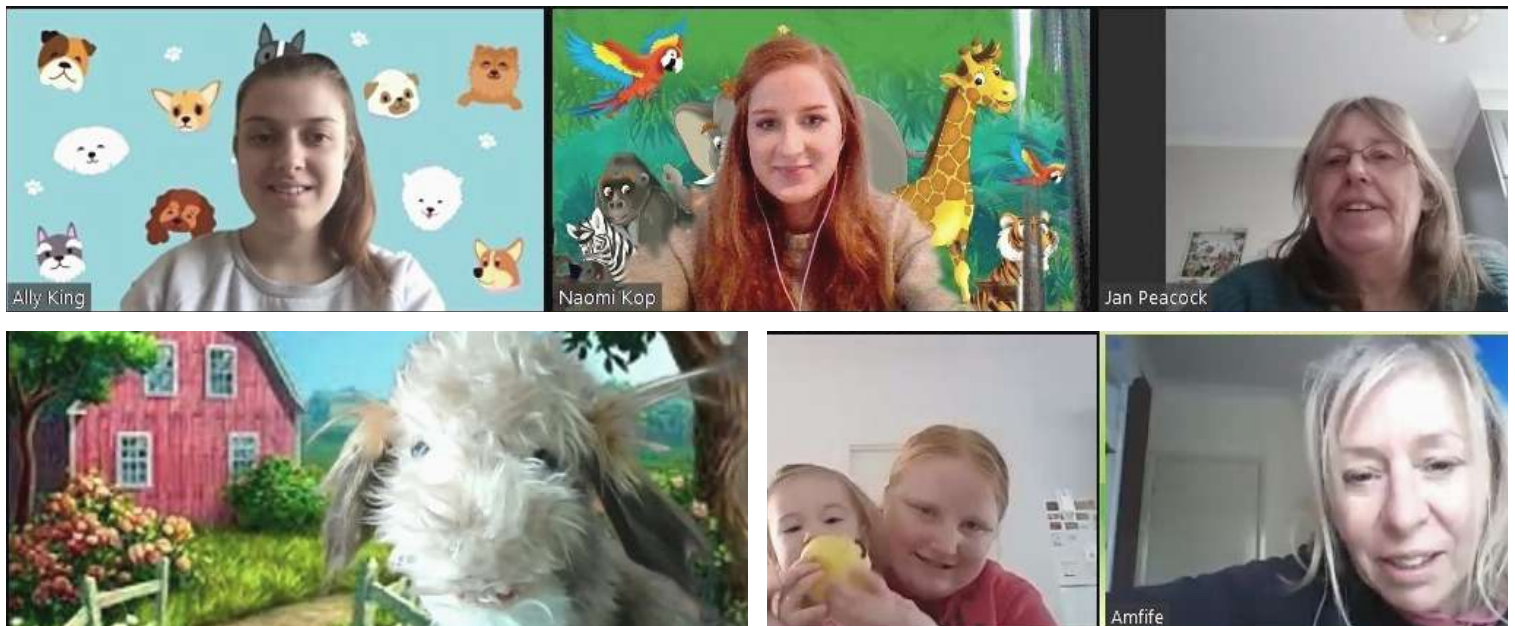
Our online Playgroup includes a weekly theme, such as Sport, Craft, Music, Favourite Toy and bring your Pet to mention a few.

We also have music time, a puppet show, craft time and story time. The children love our dog puppet called Roger, and all the different adventures he gets up to every week.

It has been wonderful to be able to continue to see the volunteers, and the Playgroup mums and their children.

I am very thankful for our volunteers; Jan, Ally and Britney, for journeying with Playgroup through this difficult Covid season."

- **Ann-Marie Fife** | *Pastoral Care Support Worker*



# YOUTH PROGRAMS

I always love this time of the year as we reflect on what we have achieved over the past year and look at the amazing memories we have created.

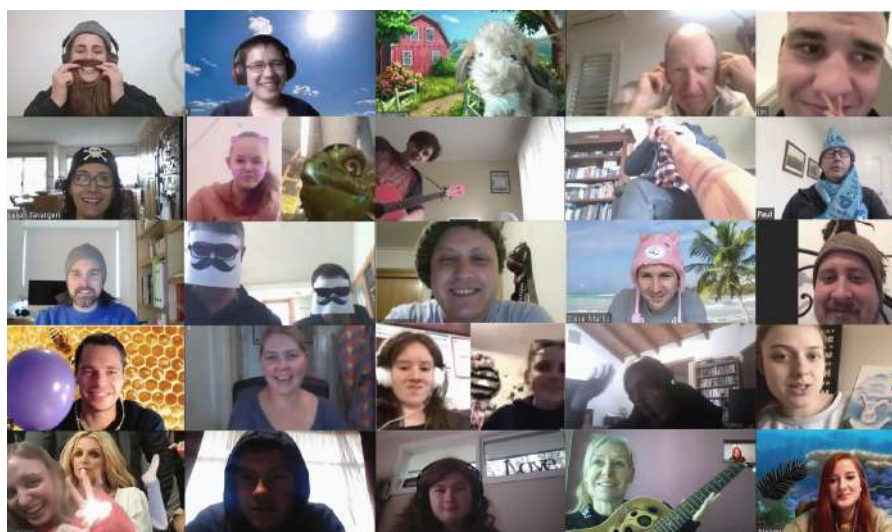
I'm finding it even more meaningful as I write this report during the COVID-19 2.0 lockdown, as the pictures jog my memory of the fantastic times we have had together, creating friendships with our team, participants and Open House family!

There have been so many growth opportunities and highlights in all our Youth programs and we have witnessed team and participant bonds develop. We have welcomed back older and past participants to share insight into their journeys and lives, and we have been able to make a real difference in the lives of not only our young people, but their families as well.

I hope you enjoy reading through some of our program updates and seeing the joy on our participant's faces.

We want to take this time to thank each and every one of you for your continued prayers and support throughout 2019-20.

**Steve Marks** | Youth Manager



*Our Youth Team Catching-Up via Zoom during Lockdown*



# YOUTH WORKSHOP MENTORING PROGRAM



Our YWMP continues to be a popular program amongst local schools and within the community, as a program that is ongoing and supports students at risk of disengaging from education. The flexible structure, practical hands on learning, friendly team and fun adventure activities make it a sought-after program by students.

There were many highlights, adventures and achievements during the second half of 2019 from trips to Hanging Rock, Blue Lakes, BMX parks, street art experiences, fishing adventures, paintballing, Chadstone scavenger hunt, Royal Melbourne Show, trips to The Hub at Northland, bowling and laser tag as well as trying their hands at some new activities such as clay sculpting (which, to our surprise, was a real hit) and cooking some delicious creations.

One of our very exciting projects we have shared about was our beehive project, which has been hugely successful. Brian (our long-term volunteer and local bee expert) suggested we transfer our beehive from a vertical hive into a horizontal hive. There are many additional benefits of a horizontal hive, including learning the skills required to make a horizontal hive, which our participants agreed to assist with.

Whilst our team and participants were hard at work creating a new home for the bees, our bees were hard at work making honey! We harvested our first batch of pure organic Open House Honey in December 2019.

A highlight amongst many was having our young people decide to take on a project for Backpacks 4 Kids Victoria. This involved putting together emergency baby packs for those fleeing domestic violence. We had a generous donation from a parent of one of our participants, as well as wonderful contributions from each of our participants to make up 8 packs. We managed to complete almost 8 packs comprising of essentials items for babies under toddler age. To make up for the more costly baby cream - that we were yet to purchase - we decided to get creative and think sustainably by making beeswax food wraps (from our own Open House bees) to sell in order to finish these packs. We worked through the stages of making and purifying the wax to undertake this project. COVID-19 hit just before we had the chance to trial our beeswax wrap making techniques, but we look forward to continuing this project when we return!

We are so grateful to all those people who have helped Open House along the way with our bee project and look forward to plenty more honey and learning experiences in the future.

# HORIZONS



Open House in partnership with WILD (Bush Adventure Therapy - a service within EACH) and healthAbility (School Focused Youth Services) successfully delivered a 20-week program to 10 participants across Term 3 & 4 in 2019.

The program's focus was to assist year 9 & 10 students from Bundoora and Greensborough College who were struggling with school engagement, family challenges, mental health and social relationships.

Part of the program was based at Open House, where the participants learnt a range of new skills in the workshop whilst making joey frames, bat and possum boxes for the Joey & Bat Sanctuary in West Heidelberg. We also enjoyed sharing in the joy of harvesting plenty of honey from our hard-working bees and the process of bottling and selling the honey. The highlight for many of the participants was making our own pizza (entirely from scratch) and sharing it together in the backyard at Open House.



It was a real privilege to be partnering with WILD and be able to take these participants on some fantastic outdoor adventures - adventures many of these participants have never had the opportunity to try. We were able to raft and/or river sled down the Yarra River multiple times, test our skills and ability abseiling in Warrandyte and go caving in Britannia Creek Caves. Our final adventure was to hike up to Sugarloaf Peak, through Wells Cave in Cathedral Range State Park. This certainly stretched and challenged many of the participants, but we were so proud of the effort everyone put into conquering their fears and we witnessed such growth in so many of the participants. We celebrated our achievements with the famous Buxton Burger for lunch on the way back to Melbourne!



# YOUTH DROP OUT & SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

## YOUTH DROP-OUT

If the young people aren't coming to you, then you go to them! We found the onsite Friday night youth program was quietening and decided to trial a youth outreach program at Malahang Reserve, where Open House already had a strong presence. Almost immediately the young people appreciated it, with one participant saying there is nothing to do at the park and that it was good Open House came down. We were able to meet some new participants and connect with those who we knew from Backyard Sports and other onsite programs during the week.

A highlight was possibly when a Banyule Council event was cancelled and was left with a large order of Subway sandwiches and cookies. After a phone call we were able to share this with the participants at the park - imagine throwing a chip to a flock of seagulls. Jokes aside, we then transitioned online during Covid restrictions and had some great games of Scribble.io (like Pictionary) and playing with our virtual backgrounds. Throughout this unusual time, we were impressed with the dedication of our volunteers who continued to show up online and build into the lives of the participants and other team members.

**Tim Womersley** | *Youth Worker*

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## SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

This past year we have many new and returning School Holiday Program goers. We've seen themes such as 'Who Dares Wins', 'Summer Cooking', 'Explosion Day' and many more fun themes. We've ventured on outings to Edendale Farm, some incredible playgrounds and parks, a trip to the zoo, indoor play centres and a crowd favourite laser tag.

With returning School Holiday Program goers, we have seen some brimming from ear to ear when reunited again after a school term in-between. New School Holiday Program goers have been welcomed in with open arms. Bonds are strengthened throughout the program, and from one holiday to the next, good friendships are formed.

For some, this time is a chance to simply be a kid, a chance to forget about the troubles of daily life. For some, it is an opportunity to develop confidence and also teamwork and friendship building skills. A game of basketball, we have noticed, unites younger and bigger kids, teaches them how to share and include one another, and also how to enjoy each other's company through the simplest of activities!

Who knew skipping rope jumping, running through sprinklers on a warm day and making orange juice slushies would prove to be such hits even to this day!

The SHP moves these young people away from technology to enjoying the wonderful interactional activities, that bring even more joy and excitement to their lives!

**Naomi Kop** | *Youth Worker*

# SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE DURING COVID-19

2020 bought many challenges and trials for us all, but I know that often God is preparing us through these trials for what he has in store for the future. Connection is so important during this time and there is such high potential for negative mental health issues to arise. In light of this, the Youth Team were committed to staying connected with those people we support.

Working with some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable students did pose some issues, in particular access to computers / devices and internet, however our team worked through a range of issues with families, schools and other organisations in order to continue to support our participants.

During the pandemic we have seen such creativity come to life, been able to share openly and honestly with each other and been able to support one another in so many different ways. With restrictions enforced, we found ourselves regularly online video-chatting with all the groups, in lieu of face to face program time. These catch ups consisted of meeting family members (pets included), guitar playing and singing, showing latest creative project work, long conversations and a number of quizzes and Kahoot games. In each of the online video sessions we would focus on two key areas;

- 1) Checking in to see how everyone was going.
- 2) Asking how we could support / help anyone.

It was from regularly asking these questions that truly enabled us to make a difference in our young people's lives!

One participant in particular no longer had access to his aide for his Certificate II course in Building & Construction. He was struggling to keep up with all the requirements for his remote school learning. The idea soon floated that Open House could provide online tutoring for this participant, as we already had a great relationship with him.

After some discussions, we arranged to help this participant twice a week with his TAFE homework. The weekly online sessions were a real help to him and his mother, who had tried to help herself but found the bond he had with the Open House staff really kept him motivated. Below is a quote from the participant's mother in an email she wrote to us:

"Thanks so very (much) for all your support you have given Peter (not real name). He is extremely appreciative. Peter is looking forward to working with you both more in the future. The bond you two have with Peter has shined through COVID-19 even more so than his aides at high school. Peter even noticed it..."

We have certainly seen hardships and struggles through COVID-19, but being able to adapt and be a source of stability to our participants has been very rewarding. I am so proud of how our team have amended their programs and responsibilities, despite adversity, in order to continue to build relationships and support our participants and their families. We have continued to provide high quality connection and programs which will hopefully enable us to transition smoothly back to face to face programs when we are able to.





# CLUBWORK



If someone said to me “Wendy, next year at this time, you will be working from home”, I would’ve scoffed at them. How things can change in the blink of a moment!

Thinking back on the second half of 2019 made me aware of how we can take things for granted.

Having the freedom and opportunities to do and go wherever our hearts desire has changed significantly. But one thing that hasn’t changed is our love and support to all those who access our services.

We give thanks for the amazing trips and fellowships we shared as a group. These include the annual Diamond Valley Singers performance, Pancake Parlour at Northland, Hogans Hotel in Wallan, the Tulip Festival at Silvan, coming together for our annual footy day at Open House, the annual Whittlesea Show, and last, but not least, our exquisite Christmas breakup lunch, celebrated at the Gallery Function room at the Old England Hotel.

We also farewelled Harmony who was going on maternity leave to prepare for the birth of her second child. Annika Linda Cook was born 6/2/20 weighing 2.51kg, a beautiful little sister for big brother Jaxon. Congratulations Harmony, Aaron and Jaxon, God is good!

The start of the pandemic in March 2020 changed our lives!

Today, we give thanks that we can remain connected with each other through technology. Open House raised much needed funds to help purchase electronic devices to distribute to the Clubwork participants.

These devices will enable participants to meet and fellowship each week as a group. It’s going to be very exciting to visually see every person.

I would also like to express my thanks and gratitude to the amazing contribution of the Clubwork volunteers. These volunteers have continued to stay connected and support myself and Wendy Barlow, each other, as well as the participants. Your work has not gone unnoticed!

Also, a big THANK YOU to Paul Burgess and all the staff who continue to encourage and support Wendy and myself during this COVID period.

**Wendy Farrington** | *Clubwork Manager*



# BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Last year, we had lots of great times at Bible Fellowship.

It is such a blessing to have George and Muriel continue to support this amazing ministry that they started nearly 50 years ago.

For the last couple of years, we have extended the time of Bible Fellowship to include having lunch together. After lunch we sing and do a Bible study. The lunch was suggested by George Farrington and has brought the group closer together.

Bible Fellowship also went out on a number of outings including; Bowling, Singing at Strathallan Aged Care and a visit to Leigh Conkie, a local wood sculpture in Eltham.

We have many dedicated and faithful volunteers who have been involved in Bible Fellowship for many years. The volunteers provide diverse Bible studies and reflections to challenge us and help us to grow in the Christian faith.

We also have Open House staff and ministers from different Churches lead some of our Bible studies. Our participants love hearing from church ministers.

Our end of year highlight is always going to Pam and David Woods for a superb Christmas lunch. This is very special for Bible Fellowship participants, many of whom have no family to celebrate with at Christmas time.

Sadly, most of our participants are older and have been in lock down for many months. Many have been unable to leave their place of residence.

Myself and our faithful volunteers have been keeping connected to the Bible Fellowship participants through phone contact and letters. We have been mailing out a weekly letter to all the participants which includes a Bible study.

Please pray for our Bible Fellowship volunteers and participants during this time. They need to stay connected with Open House more than ever.

**Ann-Marie Fife** | *Pastoral Care Support Worker*



# COMMUNITY GARDEN

## **Past:**

As usual, the Garden Team have been keen and committed to the beautification of Open House. Although each season brings its own challenges, the satisfaction of growing, harvesting, utilising and sharing the veggies are reward enough to do it again and again.

The Welcome Centre programs have enjoyed the many different fruits and vegetables grown, as have the team and staff. The team have enjoyed our research outings to nurseries, parks and gardens for inspiration, and also to unite us as a team.

Recycling has added to our sustainability; worm farming, composting and recycling waste products are some methods used, and inspire team and participants to practise the same.

## **Present:**

The Garden group has temporarily closed until further notice, which has disappointed our team. We have sent some seeds and soil to each member to grow seedlings to plant out when we return. Maintenance and upkeep are continuing, whilst our fruit and vegetables are growing happily, as are the weeds. (I think we are better at growing the latter). Most of the work is performed by me with help from other staff members.

Connection to our team through phone calls is well received and keeps us feeling united. Everyone is committed to returning when restrictions are lifted.

## **Future:**

Whilst the immediate future is uncertain, the garden beds, orchard, beehive and lawns still need constant attention, this will be tasked to the staff and will not include any team until further notice.

The focus for the future will be keeping the team united, staying connected with our community networks and working to our Continuity plan.

We will be seeking advice from garden experts on keeping our plants healthy.

**Brett Ross** | *Site Manager/Pastoral Care Support Worker*



# TUESDAY MEAL & FOOD DELIVERY

Tuesday Meal is such a blessing for our participants who have been attending for many years. We have amazing volunteers who cook a delicious meal each week.

Last year we had up to 20 people attending Tuesday Meal, including volunteers and staff. Tuesday evenings are such fun nights where everyone gets to see each other, talk about the week they had and spend time connecting. For some of our attendees, Tuesday nights are their only point of connection with Open House during the week.

Whenever someone has a birthday, we sing happy birthday, organise a card, make cake for them and celebrate them, because everyone deserves to be cared about and celebrated.

One of the biggest annual highlights of the Tuesday Meal is our Christmas breakup, in which our attendees are given a lavish dinner and get to celebrate the Christmas season together. Our generous volunteers all contribute to make the meal very special.

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With our Tuesday Meal having to temporarily shut due to COVID-19, Open House pivoted quickly to working in partnership with some incredible local businesses and churches to ensure our people weren't forgotten.

These businesses included **Miss Marie Cafe** in Rosanna. After Paul, our CEO, saw a notice in the window, Open House contacted the manager of Miss Marie Cafe, Abish. For the next month we were able to pick up and deliver approximately 20 meals a week, to some of our Tuesday Meal participants, as well as other families and individuals that Open House supports.

It is great that the community can come together to help those in need during this pandemic.

Open House also partnered with **UniHill Church** in response to the Covid crisis by supplying Open House with One Boxes.

Each box consists of fresh fruit and vegetables, milk, and bread. This box of essential items is a blessing to the people who are struggling and another way that Open House - with the support of the wider community - can support our participants at this time.

**Ann-Marie Fife** | Pastoral Care Support Worker



# MALAHANG RESERVE

## BIKE HUT

### **Past:**

The Bike Hut continued to provide bikes and scooters to hundreds of participants who use them for recreation, and for commuting to school and work. Thanks to donations from many community members including the Banyule Transfer Station.

During the second term of the year we closed the Bike Hut due to the looming pandemic and asked our volunteers to take a break. During that time, we kept in contact with team via the phone and with cards.

Value Adding: With the support of the Pastoral Care Team, we were able to introduce our Mala-Matters activity where we provided light meals in the afternoon and also fresh bread from Brumby's Bakery. This event provided a community atmosphere and encouraged many families to attend the Thursday activities.

### **Present:**

The Banyule City Council provided us with procedures, banners and hand sanitisers. We were preparing to reopen when the second stage restrictions hit us. Prior to that we were preparing to maintain bicycles from Open House and arrange pick up from the Bike Hut by arrangement. We managed to open for a few weeks without working on bikes in June and were well received by the locals.

### **Future:**

The Team are raring to go as soon as the current situation improves, but the interaction will be different, we will maintain the bikes off-site and only do minor repairs at the Bike Hut. Team will have individual toolboxes and PPE will need to be worn. We are looking forward to engaging with the participants that have been loyal to Open House and serve them as we have been for the past ten years.

The Banyule City Council have indicated that an expansion to the Bike Hut facilities are being reviewed, which will broaden our operation and provide a safer space to work in.

**Brett Ross** | *Clubwork Manager*



# BACKYARD SPORTS

Sports in the park...There is nothing better than seeing a child staring at the game you're involved in, approaching their family and inviting them to join in.

Despite there being some amazing equipment at Malahang Reserve, we often notice that the children just want to be a part of a game with others. Our presence at the park is growing and the hive of activity around the Bike Hut is attractive to park goers. In the last financial year, we wanted to try some new sports and offer participants something different. We tried badminton, four-square, vortex throwing and a mixture of soccer plus volleyball played on the basketball court using a lowered net. No matter the weather we had participants there, some new and some regulars. Adding to the sports, Banyule Council would often have their DJ decks at the park, providing smooth soundtracks while playing sports. The music really adds to the atmosphere of the park and attracts many people to the area. The DJ's also let the young people do some karaoke and freestyle singing which often comes with a lot of laughs and expression!

This past financial year also saw Banyule Council improve the facilities at the park, including re-surfacing the car park, updating the basketball backboards and building an enclosed six-a-side soccer court. This was a great addition to the park boosted by the Melbourne City FC who ran free weekly soccer clinics. Once Covid hit, we were limited to contacting some participants by phone or social media. There was a glimmer of light when restrictions were lifted in June. We resumed the program for a few weeks and noticed the park was quite busy, almost as if everyone was rediscovering it again! We hope to reach new people in the community once the restrictions lift.

**Tim Womersley** | Youth Worker



*Proudly Supported by*



Community Bank  
Heidelberg and East Ivanhoe



# PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

What an interesting twelve months it has been at Open House!

When I wrote last year's partnership update I was talking about all the incredible events Open House had put on, such as our first ever *Signature Evening* and *Run 4 Open House*, and who at that time could have predicted where we would be in 2020!

But as we have seen throughout this Annual Report, Open House has been able to pivot and adapt quickly in light of COVID-19, and this includes in our partnerships as well.

At the onset of COVID-19 there was a lot of uncertainty about what funding for Open House would look like with everything changing around us, but what didn't change was all of our incredible and faithful supporters. Support continued to come in, allowing us to be there for our community members during those uncertain early days of this global pandemic.

And whilst all in-person events had to be cancelled due to the restrictions - including this year's signature evening - Open House was still able to achieve another first in its nearly Fifty-year history.

Open House held its first ever **An (online) Evening with Open House**, to help raise funds to purchase tablets for our Clubwork participants to connect with one another.

This evening brought our community together Online and through their generous support, **raised over \$4,000** which allowed us to purchase the devices we needed. The impact these devices have had on our Clubwork participant's mental health cannot be overstated.

Whilst at the time of writing a lot of things seems uncertain, I am certain that **Open House will continue to be a place to belong** because of our incredible, generous and faithful supporters.

**Thank you sincerely for partnering with Open House** over the last twelve months, both financially and through prayer. I cannot wait to celebrate the incredible milestone that is Open House's 50th Anniversary next year and to see the life changing work of Open House carry on long into the future.

**Jordan Wakelin** | *Relationships Manager*



# FINANCIALS

The majority of Open House's operating costs are the staff wages and other expenses related to the cost of running programs and also the upkeep of the Open House Macleod site.

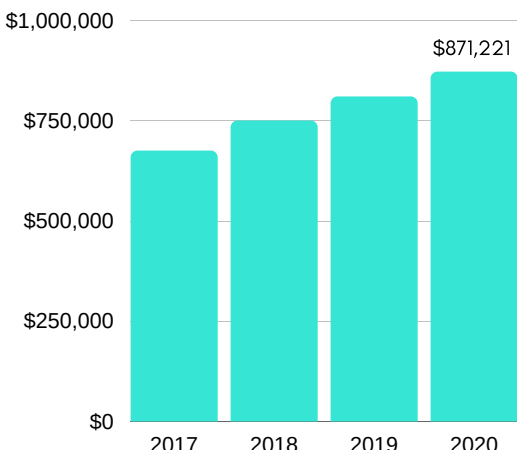
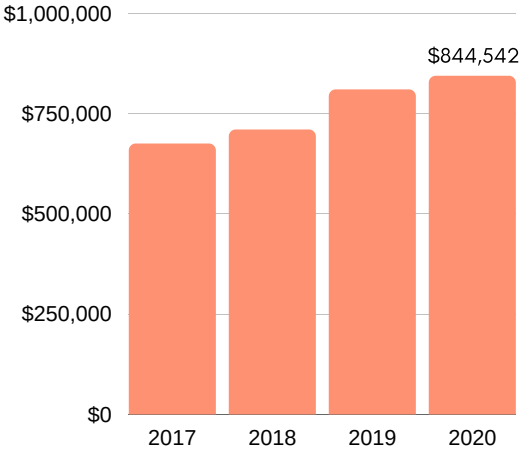
Over the past twelve months Open House has recorded an overall income increase of **5.9%**

It is also important to acknowledge that Volunteers are the life blood of Open House, and we are proud to have **over 60 incredible volunteers** who volunteer the same amount per year as **5 Full-Time Equivalent Staff**.

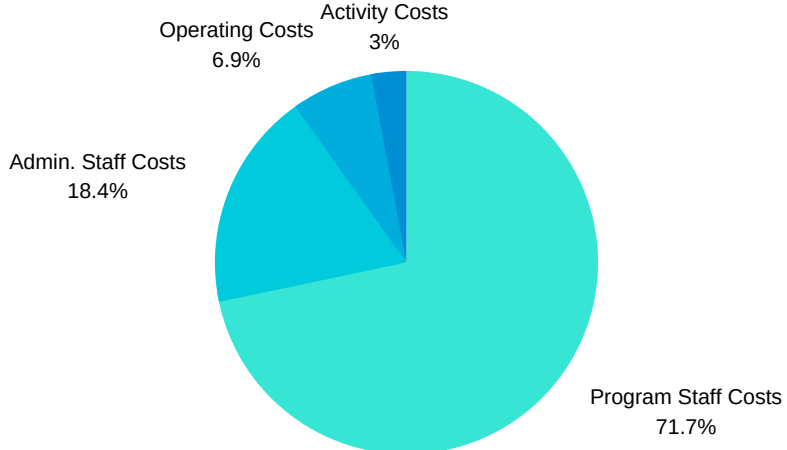
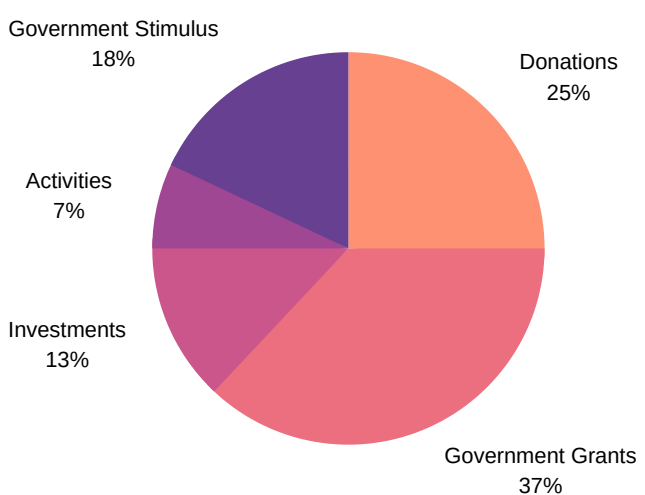
It is because of these Volunteers that Open House is able to provide the vulnerable members of community with care, support and **a place to belong**.

For Open House's full **Audited Financials**, please visit the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profit Commissions website at: [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

## TOTAL INCOME & EXPENSES



## OPERATING INCOME & EXPENSES





# HIRE



We are now hiring out our Coffee Cart for your next event which also includes a barista.

We are also continuing to hire out our 12-Seater Bus.

For more information (including prices) on either Coffee Cart or Bus Hire please contact our office on: **(03) 9450 7600** or email: **office@openhousecic.org.au**

# LEAVE A LEGACY

Here at Open House, we see firsthand how extraordinarily difficult life is for a lot of people.

Open House's ability to help is to a large extent based on our very loyal supporters who have been with us since 1971.

In continuing the work of Open House and sustaining it in years to come, we would like to warmly remind our compassionate supporters and friends of our initiative called: **LEAVE A LEGACY.**

Leaving a gift in your will, but not before taking care of your loved ones first.

Your gift will change many a life at Open House and make a lasting difference.

For more information on how you can leave a legacy please contact:  
**David Woods on (03) 9450 7600**

# OUR SUPPORTERS

## CHURCHES AND AFFILIATED GROUPS

Anglican Men's Society - Bill Brady Organisation

The Salvation Army

Banyule Network of Churches

St. James' Ivanhoe

Fairfield Trust - The Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ

St. Johns' Diamond Creek

Gresswell Uniting Church

St. John The Beloved Liberal Catholic Church

Planetshakers

St. Katherine's St. Helena

Rosanna Baptist Church

The Order of St John of Jerusalem

Rosanna Uniting Church

UniHill Church

Uniting Church Ivanhoe & Heidelberg

## PHILANTHROPIC ORGANISATIONS

Gospel Resource

Heidelberg Court Fund

Inger Rice Foundation

Bendigo Bank Community Enterprise Foundation

Iris & Ken Baldwin Foundation

Bendigo Bank Heidelberg/East Ivanhoe Community Bank Branches

Newsboys Foundation

Sandi Foundation

Soroptimist International of Deakin University

William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Fund

## BUSINESS & COMMUNITY GROUPS

BrillantFIT

Macleod Village Traders (Little Free Libraries)

Bunnings Northland

Miss Marie's Cafe

Diamond Valley Singers

Mr. Macleod Cafe

ARM - Architectural Services

Mr. Martin Cafe

Banyule City Council

Miles Real Estate - Ivanhoe and Rosanna

Grill'd Northland

Morrison Kleeman Real Estate - Eltham

# WAYS TO PARTNER WITH OPEN HOUSE

## DIRECT DEPOSIT

**Account Name** - Open House Christian Involvement Centres  
**BSB** - 633 000  
**Account Number** - 155054588

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## CREDIT CARD

To give via credit card please go to:  
**[www.openhousecic.org.au/donate](http://www.openhousecic.org.au/donate)**

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## CHEQUE

Please make all cheques out to  
**Open House Christian Involvement Centres**  
*67-71 Strathallan Road, Macleod VIC 3085*

**Please Note:** All Donations over \$2 are Tax Deductible

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## JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

Open House is proud to keep our community and supporters up to date with our monthly emails full of encouraging, uplifting stories and updates.

To join our email list, please email **[office@openhousecic.org.au](mailto:office@openhousecic.org.au)** or call the office on **(03) 9450 7600**

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## LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Never miss a thing at Open House and hear all about great events and opportunities by liking and following us on Facebook at:  
**[www.facebook.com/openhousecic](http://www.facebook.com/openhousecic)**





*A Place to Belong since 1971*



(03) 9450 7600



67-71 Strathallan Road, Macleod VIC 3085



office@openhousevic.org.au



www.openhousevic.org.au



/openhousevic



Registered  
NDIS Provider

**Open House is a ChildSafe Organisation**