



2021/22 ANNUAL REPORT



A Place to Belong since 1971

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends and Supporters of Open House,

Welcome to the Open House 2021-2022 Annual Report.

As I reflect on the last few years of turmoil and disruption, I am again heartened by the stable presence of 'A Place to Belong' – Open House.

As you browse through the stories and photos in this Report, I am certain that the ethos of belonging and friendship will shine through.

The previous year has been disrupted by Covid lockdowns and restrictions, and yet staff and volunteers have continued to show God's love through human friendships and radical caring.

I say radical because our programs and activities are not based on government entitlement or allocation; they are not time limited nor do they require the person to move on after their turn. Open House is a continuing home to all: no one is ineligible.

*All are welcome at
the banquet of friendship.*

I don't usually say much overtly in my annual letter about finance and giving, but I feel compelled to share some important financial information in the hope that it will assure our long term supporters of our good stewardship, and maybe encourage some who are considering financially supporting Open House to consider more deeply.

In the early stages of Covid, Open House was blessed by over \$300k of Government JobKeeper funds. Hence, our 2021 result showed a significant surplus.



Open House's Bus-Run Program that was launched in response to the needs of the community.

The Board took the decision that this blessing should be used to retain staff and to deliver programs and new initiatives for Open House participants struggling in Covid lockdowns and the aftermath impacts.

So, while some service providers bunkered down and banked their Jobkeeper funds, Open House applied our funds to the direct need at hand. This has resulted in a \$170k operating deficit for the 2021-22 financial year. The significant surplus in 2021 and corresponding deficit in 2022 are consistent with mission and objectives: focus on people and break even over time.

In 2022-23 we will continue with the new initiatives of the previous year, but it is a concern to the Board that this may result in a further deficit, particularly with economic volatility, the tightening of other grants, reduced personal giving and increasing costs.

To continue to operate as an independent Christian organisation we will need to increase our support base, in a time of economic downturn.



Open House's Bible Fellowship Program that started in the late 1970s, still runs to this very day.

Please be assured that the Board, staff and participants appreciate your continuing financial support. Likewise, if you are considering financially supporting Open House for the first time, or are a very appreciated longer-term supporter, our CEO Paul Burgess would be happy to arrange a visit to our programs and respond to any questions.

As always, thank you to our dedicated CEO Paul Burgess who, with the support of his wife Theresa and their boys, led Open House through another year with clear, diligent, and stable leadership during unimaginable uncertainty. Thank you to our staff and volunteers for your dedication and always going the extra kilometre; your work and support for participants is valued and evident in the many lives that are better for your contribution.

Last but not least, I extend my appreciation to the Open House Board for their responsible and courageous approach to governance and leadership. Together we trust that God will continue to lead and sustain this important work.



Dr. George Giuliani

Chairman of the Board

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

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Welcome to our 2022 Annual Report.

'Courageous' was the theme set at the start of 2021, when we were in the middle of a pandemic and Open House was about to celebrate 50 years of serving the community and giving people a place to belong. We knew the future would certainly look different, but we also knew that we could adapt to the changes forced upon us and our team would find a way for the work to continue. We decided in this period we would need to be courageous going forward.

In my closing statement of last year's Annual Report, I wrote: we will continue to be courageous going forward as we

*seek new ways
to give people
a place to belong.*

So, I feel obligated to report back with a summary of the new things we have started in the past year.

New Ventures:

- Whispers Social Enterprise Café
- Let's Get There Program
- Home Visitation Program
- Community Garden Club



Paul Burgess

Chief Executive Officer

After what has been a challenging and very disruptive couple of years in not only the life of Open House but also in the wider world, it was important to stop, take a step back from the details of the day-to-day operations and to focus on the big picture and the reason why Open House exists.

It would have been easy to just carry on doing what we had done in the past, but to remain effective we needed to stop and reassess. This was more important than ever due to the fact that Open House had just celebrated 50 years of operations, our founder had passed away, we were emerging from the Covid pandemic, and we had some new staff members join us.

In the past two years, we have had to significantly change the way we work, just so that our people can remain connected. The way we work going forward will never be the same as pre-Covid and we will continue to adapt to remain a place to belong in this new world.

That said, we need to remain true to the founder's vision and our principal purposes as set out in our constitution, not forgetting the vital element that helps to set Open House apart from many other welfare agencies. This is of course our Biblical mandate.

A small glimpse of the outcomes of this process will be found in the following pages.

I hope you enjoy reading about the life-changing work of Open House.



The Staff of Open House 2022

WHISPERS

— Social Enterprise Café —



In April 2022, Open House launched our brand new social enterprise café, Whispers, located in the Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, just across from Open House's original premises.

Whispers is all about empowering local community members to achieve their goals and improve their employment opportunities (and, of course, making an incredible cup of coffee).



Above all, the heart of Whispers is that every individual who walks through our doors, whether trainee or customer, knows that they are highly appreciated and valued, and that they have a place to belong.

Since opening, Whispers has:

- Served over 12,000 customers
- Established relationships with regular customers and developed a positive reputation within the community
- Created a network with other social enterprise cafes and community service organisation

At the start of 2022, Open House was approached by a local school and Victoria Police to help at-risk primary school students get to school.

For these children, some of whom are in prep, family circumstances meant that they were simply not attending school, and already falling behind.

This was the everyday reality for children like seven year old Grace (name changed). Grace loved school but had missed so much that she began to feel different to the other children.

However, being picked up for school every day has been life-changing for Grace, and she is now excelling in her school work. Her teachers could not believe the enormous change in Grace and many of the other children that Open House is helping to get to school safely each day.

Over the last three school terms this program has been operating daily with up to twenty students in our two buses.

The results of this project have been life changing.

"Because they catch the bus and get to school every day, they are able to receive services like speech therapy, which the school has been fighting for for the last two years."

Louise Oteri

Student Wellbeing Officer



HOME VISITATION PROGRAM

An important part of the Open House friendship model is to support our people.

This year we proudly launched a home visitation program, after identifying the needs of more and more people associated with Open House who are struggling with social isolation. Many of the people who use this program are finding it increasingly difficult to be able to go out, due mostly to health reasons, and this program has been a great way to stay connected.

Open House currently has 10 trained volunteers who have been carefully matched to participants.

The feedback that has been received has been overwhelmingly positive and many new friendships are beginning to develop. For a number of Open House participants, this program is often the highlight of their week.



The aim of the program is to develop positive friendships by visiting and staying in contact with people who are experiencing loneliness and isolation.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

After the Covid lockdowns the Community Garden needed a complete overhaul, but our dedicated team have been hard at work creating a place of engagement and respite for the community.

Site preparation began at the end of December in 2021; an initially slow process, most of the work involved clearing the site.

In April 2022 we hosted a working-bee that brought together members of the Banyule community, staff, and volunteers, moving six cubic metres of soil into the garden boxes in preparation for planting.

We now have a real community garden again! We have introduced new methods of composting and recycling and taken steps towards the garden becoming a fully organic and self-sustaining site.

With many new initiatives being headed up by the community garden team, there will be lots of exciting things to come.



Nathan Turner

Program Support Worker

TRAINEES AND PLACEMENTS

At Open House we love having students join us to complete their placement. Over the past year we have accommodated some truly incredible students.

"It was a very valuable experience, as Open House caters to a very diverse spectrum of demographics, specifically both youth and those at a more advanced stage of life.

Open House enabled me to support participants to engage in a very wide variety of activities; for their programs are very dynamic.

My experience at Open House has sufficiently toolled me to enter the Disability Support field and given me the confidence to do so."

- Stav
Placement Student



Paul McHugh receiving his Nationally Accredited Test and Tag certificate after successfully completing all assessment tasks.

Open House also hosts the Adele Trainee program, and this year's trainee, Taylah Skene, who was a former member of the Youth Workshop Mentoring Program (YWMP), has shared some thoughts from her time with us.



"When I was a participant in the Girls Tuesday YWMP, I received a ton of support and guidance from the staff here at Open House. And now, as Open House's new Adele Trainee in 2022, I have the opportunity to give back the same support and guidance I received in the Girls Program, to the girls who are now in the program.

Being a past participant, I have the ability to connect to the girls, as not long ago I was in their shoes. One thing you notice in others, but don't really see in yourself, is how far you've come as a person and how much you've grown and changed as a human being.

So far as the Adele Trainee, I've seen the girls go from being shy, to coming out of their shell. From not having many skills in certain activities, to gaining them here at Open House. Seeing the smiles on their faces after they achieve something, makes everything we do worth it."



Taylah Skene

Adele Trainee

YOUTH PROGRAMS

It has been so good being back face-to-face in our youth programs for the majority of the last 12 months, with so many of our participants having matured and grown. Whilst connecting online was great for a season and kept us in regular contact with our participants and volunteers, it just isn't the same as being together in person.

It certainly has been another interesting year in the Youth Team, with a mixture of online, hybrid and face-to-face activities, and the young people being cautious in their return to onsite programs. Our focus whilst running the programs online was to motivate and engage our youth through interesting and hands-on tasks.

In the following pages you will get a glimpse of what we have been up to in the past 12 months. Our young people have been exposed to some amazing experiences and opportunities whilst in our youth programs.

We hope that you enjoy finding out more about the adventures we have shared.



Steve Marks

Youth Programs Manager



A hydraulic robotic arm that was built via a Zoom session.



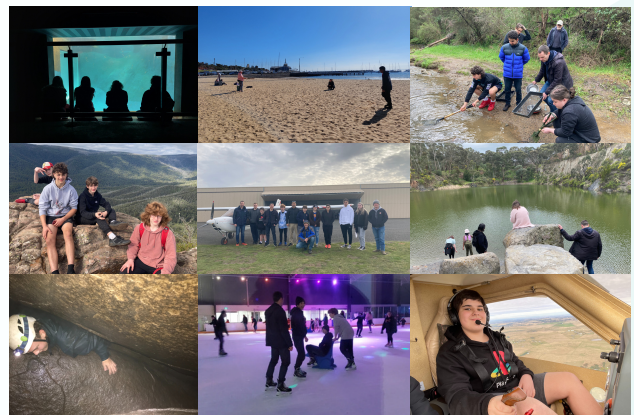
Once the program was back onsite, we started on several hands-on projects.



The YWMP participants also completed a number of restoration projects.



Some of the YWMP participants at Diamond Valley Baptist Church after completing some community-focused work.



The participants also got to enjoy a number of outings, that for many were real highlights, as they had not had the opportunity to visit some of these places

"This is amazing! I can't believe I'm doing this!"

These were the words of one of our youth participants as they went to Adventure Flight Training, and had the opportunity to fly a plane.

MALAHANG PROGRAMS

Our Malahang Programs consist of three components:

- Backyard Sports
- Bike Hut
- Coffee Cart

Part of the fun of the Malahang Programs is that you never know what to expect. So if you are ever free on a Thursday afternoon between 3:30–5:30pm, pop down and see what it is all about.

The good memories and friendships formed over the years keep bringing people back to Malahang.

BACKYARD SPORTS

The Backyard Sports program has been a mix of people in their twenties and teens (even some young primary students) taking part in games of basketball, football and more, all in a safe and positive environment.

It has been great to see how the older players accommodate the younger players and get them involved.



BIKE HUT

Over the past twelve months the Open House Bike Hut Program has restored and given away over 200 bikes!



COFFEE CART

With our Coffee Cart in high demand since coming out of lockdowns, we have attended numerous events including Malahang Festival, a 60th birthday celebration, serving the NorthEast Link workers, Macleod College's International Teachers Day celebration, as well as partnerships with churches and other networks in our local community.

We have seen a few young people successfully complete the Open House six-week Barista and Customer Service course. This has been an opportunity for our young people to up-skill in order to gain work in the hospitality industry, or simply enter the workforce.

We have seen real dedication in our participants as they have taken on this learning opportunity. It has been a joy to witness them serving others in their community. Every cup is warmly received, doing as much good for those serving as those receiving.



CLUBWORK

We have so much to be thankful for!

During the last twelve months, the Clubwork and Art & Craft programs have continued to meet like other programs: face-to-face, online or the hybrid model. Covid lockdowns continue in Aged Care facilities and Residential Support Units, and they will lock down without warning.

As a group we continued to operate the way we used to pre-Covid, but in a Covid safe format. We meet each week in the Welcome Centre Hall, instead of the café area, which allows us to socially distance and gives us better airflow. We also continue to wear masks and sanitise our hands on a regular basis.

Sadly, gone are the days when we would greet each other with a hug; now it is with our elbows. But on the rare occasion a hug might just accidentally slip in!

As our participants age, their mobility issues increase. Unfortunately, due to this, many of our participants began to struggle to get on and off our bus. To solve this many participants now arrive at Open House using dedicated transportation that is suitable for their specific needs.

These problems also affect our outings, as we cannot rely on other means of transport to arrive on time. So, we are looking at more diverse ways to hold events on site at Open House.

Throughout the year we continued to focus on the "Participant Goals," which is something that the participant would like to achieve during the year. Some goals are to learn how to cook certain things, another one was to learn how to play table tennis, another was to keep fit with gentle exercises or to complete a craft item and enter it in the annual Whittlesea Show.

The participants and their families are extremely grateful to the volunteers and staff for their ongoing love and support, which supports the families through knowing that there is someone who cares for them, and that they are not alone.

We look forward to the next twelve months as we welcome new participants, volunteers, and staff with many other exciting things on the horizon. Praise God!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Always be joyful, and never stop praying. Whatever happens, keep thanking God because of Jesus Christ. This is what God wants you to do.



Wendy Farrington

Clubwork Manager

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

It was great to be able to meet in person again just before Christmas, to do our singing, Bible studies and go on outings. Our themes for 2022 have been the character of God and the Family of God.

To get a better understanding of this program, we interviewed one of our participants:

1. How has Bible Fellowship helped you?

"I have met lots of amazing people and made many lifelong friendships. Bible Fellowship has taught me the principles of Christianity and brought me closer to God."

2. What does Bible Fellowship mean to you?

"Bible Fellowship is like an oasis in the desert. It gives me the opportunity to express myself. It is also a place of sanctuary and refuge."

-John Horton

Bible Fellowship Participant



TUESDAY MEAL

We were unable to meet during lockdowns in 2021, but our chef Paul made nutritious meals every Tuesday, and with the help of volunteers we were able to deliver them to our participants' doors. This helped remind them that they are not alone or forgotten.

At the end of 2021, people slowly returned to the Tuesday Meal program, and enjoyed a beautiful Christmas dinner that several former volunteers helped cook. This enabled them to catch up with the participants and a great time was had by all.

We are so thankful to Ivanhoe Grammar school for committing to cook for the Tuesday Meal program in 2022. Encouraging their students to serve their community is a great initiative from the school, and their students cook great healthy meals.



PASTORAL CARE

2021 was an especially challenging year for everyone, with Covid and all the lockdowns and restrictions. We did as much as we could to provide support for our volunteers and participants including Zoom sessions, phone calls, letters, cards, meals and emergency relief.



Ann-Marie Fife

Pastoral Care Support Worker

VOLUNTEERS

Open House is proud to have over 40 volunteers who faithfully give their time to serve both the people of Open House and the wider community.

Our volunteers range from our Board members, to those who work with some of the most vulnerable members of our community, to those who help out at Whispers Cafe.



"I have been volunteering at Open House since 1994, because it is a place where the love of Jesus is shared freely in deed and word. It's a place where we encourage and comfort one another."

Bill Hall

Bible Fellowship Volunteer

There is always an opportunity to get involved with Open House and our life-changing work. If you want to use your skills and time to support our local community, please enquire through our website or email Open House at: office@openhousecic.org.au

WHO WE SAID GOODBYE TO

Although we have so much to give thanks for, we were incredibly sad to say goodbye to a couple of our Open House family members.

Paul Green 1/12/1937 – 5/10/2021



Diane Murray 17/11/1953 – 2/5/2022

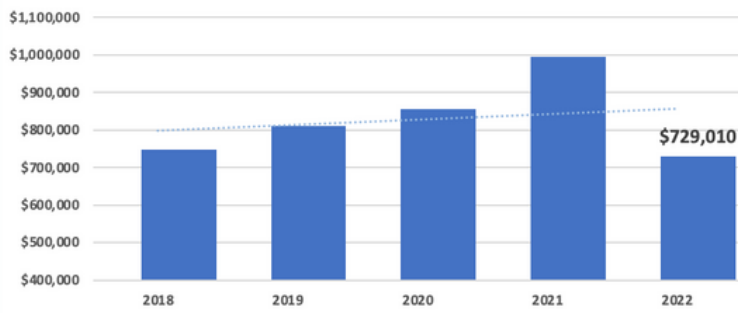


Both Paul and Diane had been attending Open House for many, many years, and both considered Open House a member of their family.

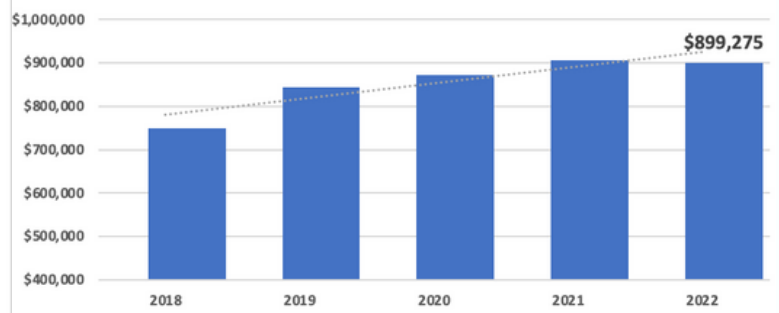
The death of our much-loved founder George Farrington, in July 2021, was a very significant loss to everyone. The participants' lives had been impacted by George over many decades. They saw him as their spiritual Father and mentor. We were not able to attend George's memorial service due to the Covid restrictions. However, the group watched the service online together when we were able to meet again in person and had a special afternoon tea with Muriel.

Financials

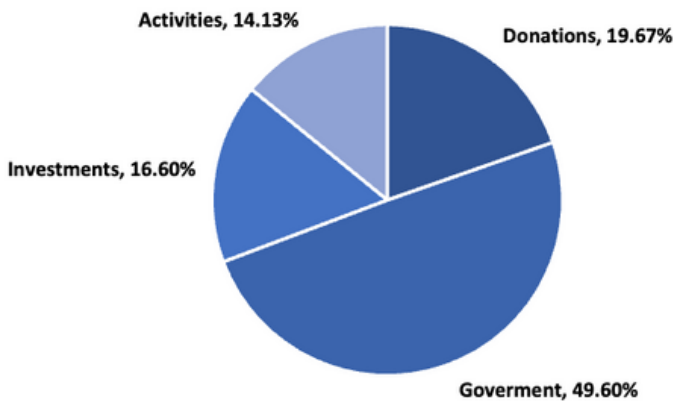
Operating Revenue



Operating Expenses



Operating Income



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

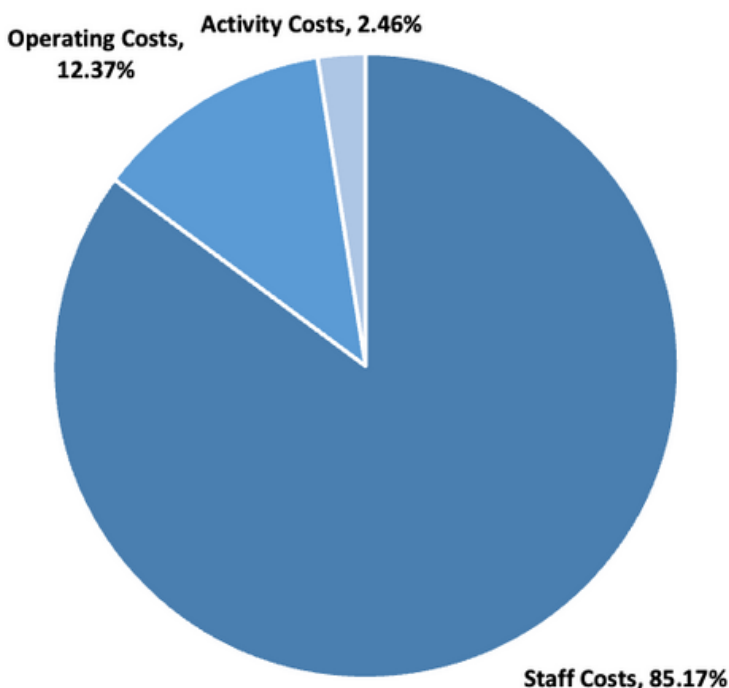
It is also important to acknowledge the valuable contribution that our volunteers make to Open House. Volunteers are the lifeblood of Open House, and we are proud to have volunteers who give their time selflessly to help us in our cause. Their contribution equated to the equivalent of two full time staff in 2022.

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

For a full set of our audited financials please visit the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website at www.acnc.gov.au

Should you wish to discuss any of our financials, please feel free to contact Peter Choma at: pchoma@openhousecic.org.au or call the office directly on **(03) 9450 7600**

Operating Expenses



Peter Choma

Operations Manager

WAYS TO PARTNER WITH OPEN HOUSE

DIRECT DEPOSIT

Account Name: Open House Christian
Involvement Centres

BSB: 633 000

Account Number: 155054588

CREDIT CARD

Please visit:

www.openhousecic.org.au/donate

or scan the QR Code below.



CHEQUE

Please make all cheques out to:

**Open House Christian Involvement
Centres**

67-71 Strathallan Road, Macleod VIC 3085

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

We are proud to keep our community and supporters up to date with our monthly emails of encouraging and uplifting stories and news.

If you would like to join our email list, please subscribe on our website

<https://www.openhousecic.org.au>



HIRE OUR COFFEE CART

We love our coffee here at Open House, and we have an incredible Coffee Cart that can be hired, along with a Barista. The Coffee Cart is a great addition to any event, and the funds raised through the hiring go back into supporting the life-changing work of Open House.

Please email or call the office for enquiries regarding hiring our Coffee Cart.

HIRE OUR HALL

We also hire out our hall space. Please contact us for more information.



OUR PARTNERS

As you can see below, we have a diverse range of partners who have committed their resources to support our mission. They share our vision and are determined to make the world a better place.

We sincerely thank all our partners for their generosity and ongoing support.

Adventure Flight Training
Anglican Men's Society
Anthony Carbines MP (Ivanhoe)
ARM - Architectural Services
Autoclinic Heidelberg
Banyule City Council
Banyule Network of Churches
Bendigo Bank Community Foundation
Bill Brady Organisation
Banyule & Nullimbik Youth Service Network
Charles Latrobe Secondary College
Concord School
Crittenden Wine
Diamond Valley College
EACH (WILD)
Edendale Farm
Eltham High School
Empower Church
Fairfield Trust - The Properties Corporation of the Churches of Christ
Gospel Resource
Greensborough College
Gresswell Uniting Church
Heidelberg Court Fund
Inger Rice Foundation
Iris & Ken Baldwin Foundation
Ivanhoe Grammar School
Kate Thwaites MP (Jagajaga)
Macleod College
Melbourne Polytechnic
Miles Real Estate - Ivanhoe and Rosanna
Miss Marie's Cafe
Montmorency College
Morrison Kleeman Real Estate - Eltham
Mr Macleod Cafe
Mr Martins Cafe
Nullimbik Shire Council
Olympic Villiage Primary School
Planetshakers
Plenty River College
Rosanna Baptist Church
Rosanna Uniting Church
Sandi Foundation
School Focus Youth Service
Shade Solutions
Sideshow Burgers
Sroptimist International of Deakin University
St George's East Ivanhoe
St James Ivanhoe
St John's Diamond Creek
St John The Beloved Liberal Catholic Church
St Katherine's St Helena
St Pius X Primary School
The Order of St John of Jerusalem
The SALT Foundation
The Salvation Army
Training Now Pty Ltd
Uni Hill Church
Uniting Church Ivanhoe & Heidelberg
Victoria Police
William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Fund



Jordan Wakelin

Relationships Manager

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Open House acknowledges the Wurundjeri people,
the traditional Owners of the land on which Open House operates, and
we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We thank them for sharing the land on which we live, work, and learn.



**Tackling social isolation and giving people a place
to belong since 1971.**

(03) 9450 7600

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TO BELONG SINCE 1971

