

Annual Report 2022



RYE COMMUNITY
HOUSE



Rye Community House Inc

ABN 68 360 898 929

Board Members

Amber Earles President

Bryce Patterson Vice President

Helen Murphy Secretary

John Knowles Treasurer from November 2021 Resigned Feb 2022

Debra Allen Treasurer from February 2022

Christopher Greig

Haylee Hazelwood

Sarah Dyer

Staff

Marg D'Arcy House Manager

Heather Miles Office Manager

Lindy Carter Coordinator, Resigned December 2022

Selenia Prestiani Educator, Resigned September 2022

Jessica Downey Educator, Playgroup facilitator and Coordinator

Kirsti Mulcahy Educator

Georgia Trotter Educator

Tegan Armstrong Educator

Deb Coffey Project Worker Reduce, Repair, Reuse, Recycle,

President's Report

This past year it has been great to come out of the COVID lockdowns of the previous two years. We have enjoyed a full year of uninterrupted classes and childcare which has been wonderful.

Highlights from the past year include:

- Regular, engaging email updates about what's on at Rye Community House;
- upgrading our website to be more user-friendly; displaying classes and allowing online bookings;
- launching our coworking facility;
- upgrading our business management software;
- securing funding for a coffee cart that will provide training opportunities to people marginalised from the mainstream labour force;
- providing much-needed food aid to vulnerable members of our community via our partnership with Oz Harvest;
- securing funding from local and state government as well as philanthropy for an upgrade to our childcare facility which will take place in 2023; and,
- the Art Show which brought together a broad cross-section of the local community to see the work of our artists, young and old.

These exciting initiatives were only possible with the dedication of our staff. Firstly, thanks must go to Marg D'Arcy, House Manager, and Heather Miles, Office Manager, who have dedicated their energy to continually improving what Rye Community House has to offer. Thanks must also go to the childcare staff who continued to dedicate themselves to providing the best quality care to our children after two challenging years. Particular thanks must go to Lindy Carter who finished up as Childcare Coordinator after 18 years with Rye Community House for all her years of service and the love and care she showed many families over that time.

During 2022, with the help of our new Treasurer Deb Allen, we made significant improvements to our accounting practice. This year has included many corrections to the accounts from prior years to improve accuracy. While this has resulted in a small loss of \$5,839 for the year, Rye Community House remains in a very sound financial position with \$162,519 in equity.

I would also like to thank our ongoing funders, the Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Thanks also to our special projects' funders. In the second half of 2022 Rye Community House ran an extensive fundraising campaign in support of its childcare upgrade project. We thank the following for their generous support of the initiative:

- Mornington Peninsula Shire
- Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
- Southern Peninsula Community Fund
- R.E. Ross Trust
- Rye RSL
- Rye Lions
- Underground Wines

Thanks to Bendigo Bank Community Bank Southern Peninsula for their support of our Art Show and to those local organisations that supported the raffle:

- Vins Bins
- Peninsula Hot Springs
- Searoad Ferries
- Penni Ave
- Escape Brewery
- Melbourne Racing Club
- Carole Foster, artist
- Rye Hotel

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow board members who, over the course of 2022, went above and beyond in their voluntary capacity as always.

In 2023, we look forward to continuing our work in pursuit of our three strategic goals to:

- Increase Community Engagement and Awareness within Rye and surrounding suburbs;
- Increase the number and quality of activities that are delivered through Rye Community House;
- Prepare Rye Community House for the future.



Allie with her painted bags at the Art Show

Manager's Report

The last financial year saw the reopening of the House and the opportunity to once again develop a full calendar of activities. However, like many other organisations, we noticed that people were at first hesitant to get fully involved in activities with the spectre of COVID still present.

Childcare

During 2022, we had a number of staff changes with Lindy Carter first reducing her days and finally resigning from her position as coordinator. Lindy had been with us for 17 years in different roles and her warm and caring approach was greatly valued by families. We have been fortunate that Jess, who took on some of the coordinator role, in 2022 was able to step into the 5 day position and Tegan and Kirsty were able to take on permanent part time positions ensuring we have continuity in the program.

The Community Childcare Association was engaged to do a review of our program in late 2021 and while it found that *the service demonstrated strong values and commitment to supporting families*, it also found that *the service must look at the bathroom design and explore extending the space*.

In response, the House has embarked on a major fundraising campaign to upgrade the facilities and make the centre more comfortable for staff, children and families. As noted in the President's report, there was a positive response from community organisations which has enabled us to work with the Council to develop plans for an upgrade to happen over 2023.

During 2022, we also changed the name of our centre to Rye Community Childcare, a name which better reflects the connection to the Community House.

Volunteers



The Community House cannot function without volunteers – they help with fundraising, community lunches, the food program, childcare, facilitating activities, gardening and administrative support. We have a long list of volunteers to thank, but particular thanks go to those who volunteer on a regular basis.

- Barbara regularly does odd jobs for us, including cleaning up the garden and brightens up our entrance with quirky furniture as well as facilitating the life drawing class.
- Marilyn who regularly staffs the office on Thursdays, Hazel and Martine who regularly support the food program on Mondays,
- Denise Potter who coordinated our annual Art Show and facilitates Art with Easels and Drama.
- Hazel, Martine and Tess who supported the Food Program on Mondays
- The House is fortunate to have people who volunteer to provide classes, some of whom, like Maggie Copley who supports the Genealogy sessions, have been long time volunteers. Rod Lawler brings the elements of tai chi, helping people develop balance and strength and started the Djembe Drumming circle, Marita brings much joy through singing to Musical Mondays, Denise Potter provides Drama and Art with Easels, Norberto who commenced sharing his knowledge of Spanish this year and John Boast who shares his knowledge of upholstery.
- Adrienne who helped us with delivering soft plastics for recycling until the scheme came to a halt
- Special mention this year goes to the Boomerang Bags mob, facilitated by Wendy de Wolde who made a special effort to produce 300 bags for a Rotary convention held on the Peninsula and who regularly bring in funds while helping to reduce landfill, by selling our bags at venues throughout Rye.

Heather and I are always impressed by the response when we put out a call for volunteers for one-off activities and events. We could not function without the support of the members of the Board who put in hours not just for the Board meetings and sub committees but

supporting events, helping out with IT, advocating for the House with Government and other funders, arranging fundraising, staffing sausage sizzles, and generally keeping the House sustainable and on track. Their support for myself and the staff is invaluable.

Events and Activities

This year we introduced community lunches on a regular basis, on the first Tuesday of the month. Heather Miles, our Office Manager takes on organising the menu and the volunteers who help. Numbers attending continue to grow and we ended the year with a successful end of year lunch with over 30 attending and the Musical Mondays group leading us in some Christmas songs.



The growth in the number of people regularly attending our weekly free food program, is an indication of the increasing pressure on individuals and families to balance their household budget and keep food on the table.



Denise Potter who curated our major Art Show

We organised two art shows, one particularly focused on life drawing, to showcase the work of the people attending the life drawing class as well as our Annual Art Show. The Annual Art Show exceeded expectations with over 200 works on display and more than 250 people attending over the weekend. It was particularly good to have the involvement of the Rye Primary School, with the choir performing at the opening and a display of children's artwork from both the school and the Rye Pre School as well as our own children's work from childcare. Thanks to Heartbreak Trail who performed in the courtyard, Bendigo Bank Southern Peninsula Community Bank who provided financial support and all of those who contributed prizes to the raffle. who are listed in the President's report.



Heartbreak Trail performing at the opening of the Art Show

This year we also had some smaller events – a forum on climate change with Climate Action and a forum on the *Uluru Statement From the Heart* facilitated by Dianne Macdonald from the Southern Women's Action Network First Nations working group. During Law Week, we worked with Southern Peninsula Community Legal Centre to provide a forum on wills and powers of attorney as well as free legal advice from the Law Street Coffee Van.

The House also continued to support work to prevent and reduce COVID, hosting two vaccination clinics for Peninsula Health.

Projects

Coworking



We completed the establishment of our coworking space, a project we had started in 2021. With support of a grant from the Mornington Peninsula Shire we are now making people aware of its availability and so far, the response has been positive, With holiday makers, in particular, finding the space welcoming and comfortable.

We will continue to promote the venue and look forward to it being fully utilised in the near future.

Reduce Reuse Repair Recycle



Our first waste audit

The purpose of the project is to look at how we reduce waste and landfill within the House and in the community. The project was supported with a grant from Mornington Peninsula Shire and to date we have:

- Conducted audits of our waste management procedures within the house. As a result of the audit, we have changed our procedures and are educating our volunteers and staff about the correct use of our recycling bins. We commenced acting as a collection centre for soft plastics, however, had to stop when the soft plastic recycling facility was put on hold.
- Held a forum for volunteers and staff on recycling and reduction of waste
- Introduced new bins for childcare to help educate the children about the appropriate means of disposing of waste
- Planned two community forums to be held in 2023
- Commenced investigating the potential for revitalising the Repair Café concept at the House.

The Coffee Connection

Again, with support from Mornington Peninsula Shire, we commenced a project to build a mobile coffee cart to provide an avenue of training for barista and hospitality courses, in conjunction with Advance Community College. The primary purpose is to support people marginalised from the mainstream labour force or disadvantaged job seekers who are trying to find a way into the workforce. The training will allow them to build confidence and develop new skills in a warm and friendly environment. The coffee cart will be utilised to enhance the hospitality the House - providing access to coffee mornings, encouraging people to come through the door to see the activities we offer, to help break down isolation and create more community connections.

Seawinds Men's Shed have taken on the task of building the cart and we look forward to implementing it early in 2023. We'd like to thank Rattray and Walker and Bunnings for their help with the materials for the cart.

Regular Activities

The choice of activities provided through the centre continues to grow with new classes in:

Conversational Spanish

Meditation for adults

Meditation for children

Life Drawing

This year we also said goodbye to people who have contributed to the House over many years.

- Tricia Lee (and her husband Dennis), who has been an integral part of the house for decades. Tricia facilitated *Great Art Expectations*, and

Coral Robinson who facilitated *Men in the Kitchen* for a number of years, with the program being well known across the Peninsula.

Although it was with great sadness we saw them depart, we wish them well in the next stage of life and thank them for the many happy memories that they have left behind.

Be Connected, a program to support digital literacy continues to be in demand. Lyn Thayer handed over to Heather Miles during the year and we moved to one-on-one support to enable the provision of more focused support at the level that is required.

Others who continue to facilitate classes are:

- Beatrice Manoukian, who shares her expertise and years of knowledge through *Awash with Watercolours* and has also provided one off workshops
- Laura Hallsworth, whose Yoga classes have a loyal following and is always ready to hop in and help
- Liz Hewett, who shares her knowledge and love of the French language
- Janet Lecke, who supports beginner artists and others who want to develop their skills in *Drawing for Beginners*
- Michelle Fortuna, who offers *Meditation for Adults and Children*

Finally, thank you to the staff who keep this place going. Heather Miles, our Office Manager who is always willing to take on new processes and procedures and provides a warm and welcoming front of house for all our members and participants. George, Jessica, Kate, Kirsty, Lindy and Tegan who have worked together over the year to provide a nurturing and safe environment for our families and children in Childcare. Deb Coffey who has taken on the challenge of the *Reduce, Repair, Reuse, Recycle Project* and had the unenviable task of going through our various bins.

Marg D'Arcy





From left to right: Deb Allen, Hayley Hazelwood, Helen Murphy, Bryce Patterson, Amber Earles, Marg D'Arcy, Heather Miles and Chris Greig