

Annual Report 2023



RYE COMMUNITY
HOUSE



Rye Community House Inc

ABN 68 360 898 929

Board Members

Amber Earles President Resigned April 2023

Christopher Greig Vice President

Helen Murphy Secretary resigned August 2023

Gareth James Secretary from September 2023

Debra Allen Treasurer

Haylee Hazelwood

Sarah Dyer resigned July 2023

Glenn Kruthoff President from June 2023

Chris Samartzis from November 2023

Marlene Fox from December 2023

Staff

Marg D'Arcy House Manager

Heather Miles Office Manager resigned October 2023

Dale-Allison Newman Coffee Cart Project Worker and Admin

Marilyn Merrifield Admin

Jessica Downey Coordinator

Kirsti Mulcahy Education Leader

Tegan Armstrong Educator

Rachael Wood Educator

President's Report

2023 marked the first full year with no statewide lockdowns and the House returned to full strength. Led expertly by Marg D'Arcy, the staff and volunteer team completed a successful year of growth and new programming that has belied the trend of many community houses around Victoria. As the new President, I want to extend a huge thank you to the efforts of outgoing President Amber Earles, and former Board Secretary Helen Murphy for all their efforts over many years to provide the House with a stable and sustainable organisation. Their efforts have been invaluable, and we celebrate all that they have achieved in the success of the House in 2023.

Our childcare staff, led ably by Jess Downie, have seen an increase in child numbers during 2023, but more importantly a strengthening of the culture and community of the families that call Rye Community Child Care home. In 2024 the renovation of the Childcare space will begin, and we must thank again Amber, Marg and Jess for their efforts in bringing the project to fruition with the council.

Our volunteer base has also grown to over 40 during 2023, something we are incredibly proud of! Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the House, and we could not be the successful organisation that we are without them. Perhaps more exciting is the diversity of our volunteers with ages ranging from 18 to 70+.

Our strategic plan set in 2021 has continued strong with new programming being pioneered in 2023. This includes the Rye Coffee Connection with 24 people completing their barista training, with 4 of them going on to obtain employment as a result. In addition, the Repair Café was launched with a growing number of both participants and volunteers every month. The Rye Co-working space and morning breakfast programs are two more examples of new initiatives that began or expanded during the year.

Our recognition within the community continues to increase despite delaying the Arts Show in 2023 due to the possible beginning of works to the child-care space. The repair



3



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café, breakfast clubs and the new Coffee Connection program has continued to attract people to and through the House.

A number of local businesses and organisations were instrumental this year in supporting the house financially including Rosebud and Rye Rotary Club (\$9,000), Mornington Peninsula Shire for the Seniors Week Activities (\$300), Southern Peninsula Community Foundation for the coffee cart (\$10,000), and Bunnings who donated \$300 toward the Repair Café, coffee cart and new couches. We want to thank all our financial supports this year who have been a significant part of our success.

Financially, Rye Community House finished the year in great shape with a surplus of \$10,745. This surplus has taken the assets in our Balance Sheet to \$273,312 which I am pleased to report sees Total Equity standing at \$173,264. These funds will be very useful as we look to continue investment into our programming, improving our infrastructure, and to support new income streams.

Thanks must go to our main funders and supporters for helping Rye Community House meet and exceed its goals in 2023. The Department of Families Fairness and Housing and Mornington Peninsula Shire provide core annual funding to Rye Community House which enables us to employ Marg and her team. Thanks also goes to those that have supported the new Coffee Connections program which includes the Men's Shed, Southern Peninsula Community Foundation, and Bunnings.

I would like to thank my fellow board members who, over the course of 2023, have gone above and beyond in their voluntary capacity and provide a renewed level of energy and support. It is a pleasure to work alongside you all and to learn from each and every one of you. I look forward to working with you over the course of 2024 to take Rye Community House to the next level.

Glenn Kruthoff



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Barb and James tidying our front yard



Be Connected High Tea



Djembe Drumming Workshop



Table painted by Beatrice Manoukian

Manager's Report

2023 has been a period of stabilization with some new people joining the House, Dale-Alison Newman took on the role of project worker for Rye Coffee Connection, despite the funding for the project finishing we have been able to keep her on in a joint role sharing the Office Manager role with Marilyn Merrifield and maintaining a role in continuing to develop Rye Coffee Connection. Heather Miles left the organisation in October, we miss her welcoming personality and recognise her role in building up the Community Lunch and helping us all understand Clevero, our new office management system and we wish her well in her future endeavors.

Rye Community Childcare



RYE COMMUNITY
CHILD CARE



We were very fortunate to have a stable team in 2023 who are continuing through to 2024. Jessica Downie has been the coordinator with Kirsty Mulcahy taking on the Education Lead role. Tegan Schmitter and Rachael Wood are part time educational assistants. The team all work very well together and have created a warm and welcoming space for our families.

We introduced Story park which provides an effective way to communicate with families, keeping them in touch with what their children have been doing during the day to link activities at the centre with what's happening at home.

We were successful in attracting funding to upgrade the childcare, particularly the bathroom, and we thank the community groups who also contributed to our fundraising. In response to this the Council agreed to put in extra money so we can also redesign the childcare space to create an alcove for sleeping and increase our licensed space from 14 - 16. Thanks to Rye Rotary we were able to purchase new equipment which the children have loved.

We held an end of year gathering for the children and families with face painting, songs from our Musical Mondays group and a bbq lunch.

Volunteers



The Community House cannot function without volunteers – they help with fundraising, community lunches, the food program, childcare, facilitating activities, gardening and administrative support. Our volunteer group keeps on growing, so that we do reflect the local community. This year we had a lunch at the Kitchen to say thank you to those volunteers.

- 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.
- Hazel, Martine, Tess and Dominique regularly support the food program on Mondays,
- Denise Potter who coordinated our annual Art Show and facilitates Art with Easels and Drama.

- Hazel, Martine, Monique and Tess who support the Food Program on Mondays with Hazel collecting from Woolworths and OZ Harvest delivering every week.
- James is a new addition to our band of volunteers bringing joy to all with his development of our front garden and helping childcare plant out their garden.
- We have a new band of volunteers now who provide the expertise for the Repair Café, with a range of skills from electrical repairs to bikes and gluing and upholstery.
- The Coffee Cart volunteers like Erica who use their newly acquired skills to deliver first class coffee and are always available for a chat.

We were fortunate this year in receiving a grant for volunteering with support from Zoe Mckenzie. MP Member for Flinders. We provided first aid training for volunteers so we now have an increased number of people in the House who are qualified first aiders.



Events and Activities

Our community lunches continued with a couple having particular themes. We recognised Seniors Week with a musical lunch and poetry readings and had an amazing demonstration of spoon playing from Philomena.

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.

We continued our one off events with a Community Shindig with music from Heartbreak Trail and a workshop on The Voice Referendum.



Projects

Coworking

The coworking space has proved to be quite popular over the holiday period, being used by campers and holiday makers.

Southern Peninsula Repair Café



One of the questions I have most often been asked is 'are you starting the Repair Café again'. So this year with the help of the Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair grant from Mornington Peninsula Shire the Repair Café was restarted. A call out for volunteers was made through the local paper and our social media , Bunnings supported us with a voucher to purchase some basic equipment and we had our first Café in July and have had one every month since on the First Sunday of the month. We've had a steady stream of articles to repair with comments from those who have brought items to repair including:

Wonderful, and I learnt how to do it myself next time

... was very helpful and showed us how to use our binoculars properly

Rye Coffee Connection

Again, with support from Mornington Peninsula Shire, we commenced a project to build a mobile coffee cart to provide a space for Advance College to provide training an accredited and pre-accredited Hospitality Essentials Course. The cart has two functions: to provide the space for the HE course and to provide a focus to bring people together and create opportunities for increased social connection. The cart has achieved our expectations with many of our members making a special effort to come for a coffee and a chat, whether or not they are coming to a class. The Rye Coffee Connection has also supported the development of relationships with some of the hospitality businesses across the Peninsula and we love that we are able to source ethically

produced coffee from Common Folk and recycle our coffee grounds in the compost that James is using in our garden. Children from Rey Primary helped us with the design of the Rye Coffee Connection logo.



We continued to connect across the community with a number of community groups utilising our space, including the Historical Society and Grandmothers for Refugees. Brotherhood of St Laurence/NDIS utilised the coworking space to enable them to better connect with locals and EMJay Dance school joined us this year, providing classes in the evening and toddlers classes during the day which some of the children from our childcare space attend, providing them with an even more affordable experience.

CHAMPS (Community Houses Across Mornington Peninsula) has provided a forum for sharing of ideas and recognising that we are all dealing with the same challenges.

Finally, I would like to thank the people that I am fortunate enough to work with every day – the volunteers, facilitators and the staff. Dale and Marilyn who help to keep me sane. Thank you to the board who provide me and the team with support, working quietly behind the scenes to make sure we are sustainable and particularly, Glenn as President, for taking time to meet with us on a regular basis and for his genuine interest in and support for all aspects of the House.

Marg D'Arcy

