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**Dorset  
Community House**

# **Dorset Community House Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

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**#heartofdorset**



## **Dorset Community House Board of Directors**

**Guy Jetson, President**  
**Pat Young, Vice President**  
**Jo Kerr**  
**Geoff Saville**  
**Patience Hailey**  
**Ross Watson, Public Officer**  
**Michelle Shaw**  
**Sam Hunt, Treasurer**  
**Denise Young**

## **Dorset Community House Staff**

**Jen Barron, House Manager**  
**Zoe Bennett, Activities, Program & Events Coordinator**  
**Katarzyna Lagodzka, Activities, Program & Events  
Coordinator**  
**Catherine Bennett, Playgroup Coordinator**  
**Deb Tarling, Admin & Finance Officer & Cleaner**  
**Mark Hayes, Garden Coordinator**



# What an annus mirabilis

**Guy Jetson**

**President, Dorset Community Association**

When starting to write my annual report the term 'Annus Horribilis' came to my mind as once used by Queen Elizabeth II. Which I then thought I should Google just to clarify the meaning. I now know that the literal meaning is 'horrible year,' but more importantly I learnt that the opposite is 'annus mirabilis' which means 'wonderful year.' This made me focus



**In the grand scheme of things, it has been a wonderful year.**

on the positive. In the grand scheme of things, it has been a wonderful year.

At a Board level, we had some tough times. With a number of resignations during the year, we were also able to recruit new members which I am sure has put us on a solid base for future years. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Board Members who resigned during the course of the year. While not wanting to dwell on the issues the Board faced during the year, it certainly wasn't our finest hour and to that end I accept responsibility as President and hope as a Board we learn and improve going forward.

I would also like to acknowledge Kate Cliff who stepped into the role of Acting Manager when needed by the House. Acting in a position provides its own set of challenges and Kate was able to steady the ship for an extended period.

## President's Report

The Board took the courageous step of advertising for a replacement Acting Manager. Enter Jen Barron. Jen, who has a close connection to our community, brought a depth of experience and knowledge to the House. Jen has quickly begun to move the House forward in the community and increased its presence as a key service provider.



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Thanks to Jen

and her team it was quickly established the House would be a leader in supporting those most in need in our community. An opportunity was identified to tap into Loaves and Fishes providing a regular source of nutritious food to our community. Examples such as this do not happen without an engaged staff and willing volunteers. Polliwog Playgroup moved on-line which has continued - worth watching Catherine on Talk Like a Pirate Day! Our transport service adapted and ensured that access to medical services was provided during COVID-19.

It was also heartening to note that when our garden shed was burgled the disappointment was quickly surpassed by community generosity and support to replenish tools and equipment.

It is appropriate that in this Annual Report that I note the service and dedication of Vicki Knight. In conjunction with Vicki, the Board made the difficult decision to formally end Vicki's employment with the Dorset Community House during the year. I was privileged to commence my

role as President with Vicki as Coordinator. It is difficult to articulate Vicki's contribution to the House. During her tenure, Vicki's name was synonymous with Dorset Community House. I soon learnt that Vicki



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has an amazing ability to be compassionate and kind, measured with firm and strong leadership. Her respected profile and presence in both the Dorset

Community and Neighbourhood House Tasmania Network is a true measure of her hard work and dedication over a long period. I was recently reminded of Vicki's ability to give others a chance where they may have not otherwise had opportunity. Thank you Vicki.

So, some may call 2020 an 'annus horribilis' but I think it has truly been a wonderful year at Dorset Community House.





# Finance Report

**Sam Hunt**

**Treasurer, Dorset Community Association**

The 2020 financial year has had its challenges with many businesses feeling the economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and while not immune the Dorset Community House has come through the year in great shape. For the year ended 30 June 2020, the House's audited result shows a net profit of \$21,782.

The main drivers of this result are:

1. An increase in our funding revenue, contributions and fundraising revenues;
2. A decrease in our wage cost for the 2019/20 year; and
3. A decrease in expenditure (when compared to our income) which can be attributed the restrictions we faced during COVID-19 that limited our programme deliveries to online avenues.



**Additional financial support of \$20,000 was provided by the Tasmanian Government to assist the team in switching their service delivery methods.**

With the physical distancing measures that were introduced to limit the spread

of COVID-19, the House had to be quick on its feet and the staff rallied to take the House online which enabled them to keep the virtual door open to the community. Additional financial support of \$20,000 was provided by the Tasmanian Government to assist the team in switching

## Finance Report

their service delivery methods and to provide the additional services now required to meet the ever changing needs of the community during this unprecedented time.

Going forward the House is in a good financial position with cash reserves of just under \$150,000 that will assist in funding our future strategic plans and enable us to support our community for years to come.

I know the team are working hard in the background to deliver more services to our community in the coming year and I am really looking forward to seeing the fruits of their labour.

## NILs Report

Dorset Community House is partnered with the NILs network, and together we help members of our community access No Interest Loans. We do this by assisting them with the forms, and by gathering information about the clients' financial situation on behalf of NILs.

During the COVID-19 lockdown we continued to provide the service, but with some minor adjustments. We conducted most of our appointments via telephone, with clients emailing their information to us. We have even held appointments outside, at the bench in the front garden, to make it safer for clients and staff.

We conducted 25 NILs appointments pre-COVID-19 lockdown (23 March 2020), and 22 NILs appointments during, and after lockdown.



# Manager's Report

## Jen Barron Manager

I commenced working at the House on the 25th of February and my report will focus on the activity of the House since that time. Within a month of commencing work, Tasmania went into lockdown due to the



COVID-19 pandemic. But before we did, there was one great face-to-face event at the House for International Women's Day – each for equal.

Following this, the team made radical changes to our delivery model so that we could continue to meet the needs of the community. The significant actions during this time included:

- Appointing Zoe as Activities Programme and Events Coordinator who had the skill set to deliver programming online.
- Moving our Newsletter to an application that allows us to send the majority of newsletters via email and the remainder by post.
- Rationalising our Facebook pages and driving members of the community to engage on the Dorset Community House page.
- Building our website.
- Securing a relationship with Loaves and Fishes to bring much



## Manager's Report

needed food relief to our community of a regular basis.

- Ensuring Eating with Friends was delivered from the House.
- Checking in with Volunteers regularly over the phone and creating phone trees to keep the community connected.

Necessary property upgrades happened during this time including:

- Installation of a new child safe gate.
- New keys cut for the front/back door.
- Installation of a new glass door on the office.
- Conversion of the Bric-A-Brac space to an Emergency Relief area.
- Installation of a new emergency alarm in case evacuation is needed.
- Updating our security alarm to include the shed.
- Moved our data management systems to the Cloud.

The need for shower and laundry facilities was identified and we are waiting for Housing to move forward with this project in full but in the meantime have purchased a washing machine and dryer for House and community use.



**As a team we have developed a draft strategic plan that was shared with the Board.**

**We are ready to move forward when we have input from the community.**

As a team we have

- Worked on many grant applications and been highly successful.
- Had regular team meetings, daily communications on messenger and morning meetings when necessary.
- Developed a draft strategic plan that was shared with the Board

## Manager's Report

and we are ready to move forward when we have input from the community.

- Expanded the Dorset Wellbeing Network that now has more than 70 service providers engaged.

As lockdown measures started to ease we developed our COVID-19 plan and felt very confident that we were able to put all measures required into place to ensure that the House and therefore our team and community remain COVID-19 safe.

It has been a very busy time as the following reports from the team indicate. I would like to thank the Board for placing their trust in me to lead the team and to the staff and volunteer team for their dedication and commitment to the House being the #heartofDorset.

## Eating with Friends Report

Most people came from Scottsdale, Bridport, Branxholm and Derby. People carpool and some transport is provided by our Community Transport Services.

- July 2019 - Weldborough Pub - 23 people
- August 2019 – Bunker, Bridport - 33 people
- September 2019 – Lilydale - 28 people
- October 2019 - Northbourne Hall Seniors Week – 27 people catered by Seventh Day Adventist Church
- November 2019 - Dorset Community House – 32 people plus 6 House members for Christmas Dinner
- Feb 2020 - Ringarooma - 19 people catered by Ringarooma Heritage Group
- March 2020 - Derby Pub – 27 people
- May 2020 – Delivery Model because of COVID-19 - 33 meals
- June 2020 – Delivery Model because of COVID-19 – 36 meals



# Polliwog Playgroup Report

**Catherine Bennett**

**Polliwog Playgroup Coordinator**

Polliwog Playgroup has undergone some incredible changes over the past year, as has the Community House itself and we continue to adapt and change in accordance to the challenges that are placed in front of us. We have an incredible team, dedicated and flexible whilst maintaining a sense of fun and commitment to serving the community.



**We have 25 families registered with a total of 35 children, but they have not all been there at the same time, we average between 8-12 children at most sessions.**

The year began as most years with sessions operating inside and outside, with COVID-19 looming

in the background and on our minds. We began to undertake the social distancing measures that were recommended in late February-March and then came Lock Down, when we were required to adapt to the challenges of connecting with the community without leaving the room!

Thanks to Jen our newly appointed manager, she inspired us to enter the world of Social Media! Jen gave us the tools to take the House out to the wide expanse of the internet, allowing us to extend our services to the community that really needed support at a most crucial time of a unprecedented pandemic.

## Playgroup Report

At first, I was rather nervous and sensitive to ridicule, performing on such an expansive platform, but with encouragement and support, the task became much easier and rather fun! We were able to provide entertainment and offer craft ideas for children, I especially focused the craft on recycled materials one would find around the home, or offered alternative suggestions to appeal to everyone and to avoid burdening and already cash strapped families to buy expensive craft supplies. As for the stories it was a joy to do as I really have a passion for children's literature. We decided to continue the story reading online as we discovered, we not only targeted young children, but we also appealed to adults with the stories, we get quite a few people watching every week! Appears that many people still enjoy children's stories too!



The next step was reopening the House and Play Group, we discussed the measures we would put in place in order to comply with government guidelines, regular cleaning and wiping down of equipment, separate craft supplies and purchasing appropriate toys that will allow us the freedom to clean and maintain this regime. In all honesty, I rather appreciate the cleaning protocols we have in place, it allows confidence that the equipment is at an acceptable clean standard. I'm willing to put in the extra work to ensure the equipment is suitable to use for the next session.

We returned to face to face sessions with our families much to everyone's delight, myself included. I have to admit I was terribly nervous that we were covering all of the possibilities and we would get everyone on board with the new changes. Thankfully, all of the families embraced the changes and are very helpful, joining in and cleaning

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the equipment and ensuring the standards are adhered to.

Reading stories online has taken on a new aspect, now we have a live audience and anything can happen, and it has! Apparently that is an appealing aspect of our online posts - the interactions of the children. We also have a new Polliwog Play Group logo, (polliwog means tadpole) in collaboration with Graphic Designer Saffron, Jen and myself, we came up with the design.

In conclusion, I have witnessed shift and change in culture within the House and wider community and we as an organisation with support, have embraced it and made a much greater asset to the community extending our abilities to help the people of Dorset in this unprecedented time. I am privileged to continue to be a part of Dorset Community House.





# Programme Report

**Zoe Bennett**

## **Activities, Programme & Events Coordinator**

Since March 2020 the Programme, Activities and Events at the Dorset Community House has undertaken a format change. Since the COVID-19 restrictions, programmes have turned from a face-to-face format to an online format. This allowed us to provide programmes not only to our regular participants but to people all over Dorset and beyond. This included two school Holiday Programmes, Biggest Morning Tea and Neighbourhood House Week Quiz Night.

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around \$17,000 in funds. These funds have gone to projects, upgrades and resources for the House. These include the Garden Enhancement Project, the Laundry and Shower Project, The Loaves and Fishes Room Upgrades, Sports Equipment and Audio-Visual Equipment.

Since April this year we have partnered with Loaves and Fishes Tasmania to provide food relief to the community with weekly deliveries of supplies. From April to June this year alone we have given food to 968 people around Dorset. As restrictions continue to ease we look forward to more activities, programmes and events coming back to the Community House and new ones we can bring in the future.



# Garden Report

**Mark Hayes**

**Garden Coordinator**

- Late 2019 - Planting and harvesting our spring/summer vegetables including corn, tomatoes, zucchini, lettuce, passion fruit etc.
- Utilising our workshop space during winter months, building of raised garden beds and other items for the Community House/Garden.



**With new garden volunteers coming onboard, we are looking at different courses we may be able to host including grafting, seed saving and general gardening type events.**

- Maintain the Community Garden and the grounds to a clean and tidy state.
- During the peak of the pandemic we received some funding that enabled us to provide staples such as our fresh Moore's produce to the community for a period. We have now gone back to giving away Loaves and Fishes but selling our Garden and Moore's vegetables in our fridge.
- We have for this financial year purchased 2170 kilograms of vegetables from Moore's, Justin Clarke and Young's veg shed.
- Repurposing a garage into a bric-a-brac style space and then again into our current "food shed" for Loaves and Fishes.

## Garden Report

- Due to applying for a grant and successfully receiving it we are currently working on installing a polly tunnel to extend our growing season and for the garden volunteers to have a safe dry working space in the winter. The groundwork has been done and a volunteer has built one at his home and we will be replicating this on site in the near future.
- Continually working on growing our volunteer base for inside the House and also outside in the garden. We have successfully gained quite a few new Volunteers.
- Preparing grounds for the upcoming growing season by turning the soil adding compost that we have created onsite.
- Filling the hot house with several types of seedlings in preparation for the upcoming season.
- We have been in talks with a group that would like to install a seed library out the front of the House. This library is currently being painted ready for installation on the front fence of the House right next to the letter box for easy access.
- We had someone break into our workshop and garden shed early in July, stealing around \$2,000 in tools and equipment. Insurance covered the replacement of tools, but we had to cover the excess and installation of an alarm. Thanks to some generous local business and individuals we were able to recover these costs. We have now purchased replacement tools and installed an extra sensor for the alarm system.
- Firewood- we are happy to say that we secured funding for \$1,000 from the Premier's discretionary fund. This firewood is to be given out to people in need for a donation to fuel costs.





## 2019 Northbourne Christmas Lunch Report

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The Dorset Community House annually hosts a traditional Christmas lunch at the Don Dickenson Community Centre, Northbourne Park, and 2019 was no exception.

The lunch was held on Christmas Day, it was open to anyone to come along, but aimed at supporting those in our community who are alone at Christmas, or would not have had a proper Christmas lunch due to age, disability, or financial disadvantage. There is was no cost to those attending, but donations were welcomed from those who wished to give. The meal was planned, prepared, and cooked by volunteers from the DCH Staff and Board.

The 2019 Christmas Lunch was a great success, the event was well attended with 41 meals served, and 3 takeaway meals were delivered. Our wonderful chef cooked a second meal, which was served in the Function Room at DCH, for the volunteers who helped on the day.

We were fortunate to have the support of local businesses and individuals who donated food, time, and talents. The following people were thanked for their generosity, Ted Whelan (McLennan's Butchery) and Roxanne French (Eastside Motors) for the donation of turkey and ham. Lucille Chorley for the donation of Christmas Puddings, Kate Cliff for the donation of fresh fruit pavlovas, Geoff Marks for his awesome culinary talents and for covering the cost of the volunteer dinner, and, all the volunteers who gave freely of their time.

The previous year's Christmas Lunch donation of \$260 was used to cover all out-of-pocket costs for the meal at Northbourne. A total of \$360.00 was donated on the day, and this money has been banked to fund the next Northbourne Christmas Lunch.

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**Debra Tarling**  
**Admin & Finance Officer**



# Transport Report

**Pat Young**

**Transport Volunteer**

We service the whole of the Dorset Area from Gladstone, Tomahawk, Bridport, Winnaleah and Scottsdale. We support Aminya Daycare/ Childcare and LGH/NESM hospitals. We are not restricted on who

we can transport from the aged to unemployed, young people, wheelchair clients, church groups etc.

**In 2019/2020 I have worked with 10 Volunteer drivers and we currently have 6 drivers who are actively driving, including myself.**

## Current Transport Prices

- Gladstone to Scottsdale \$20 to Launceston \$50
- Winnaleah to Scottsdale \$15 to Launceston \$35
- Ringarooma to Scottsdale \$15 to Launceston \$30
- Tomahawk to Scottsdale \$25 to Launceston \$50
- Bridport to Scottsdale \$12 to Launceston \$25
- Local \$7
- Lilydale \$15
- Scottsdale to Launceston \$18
- Airport \$30 p/p

Carers are transported for free, if they have an appointment then they pay too. There has been no change to these prices for 4 years.



# Transport Finance Report

**Debra Tarling**  
**Admin & Finance Officer**

Due to COVID-19, the 2019-2020 financial year was unlike any other financial year in the history of the Community House. The two Community House vehicles were not as active as in previous years during the lockdown period of April, May and June, the vehicles were used, on average, 75% less than during the rest of the year.



**During the year, the vehicles:**

- **Travelled a total of 42,109 kilometres**
- **Transported a total of 590 people (351 people to social events and 239 people to medical appointments)**

| <b>Account</b>                       | <b>Revenue</b> | <b>Expense</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Total income for both motor vehicles | \$7,141.50     |                |
| Fuel and Oil                         |                | \$4,926.83     |
| Vehicle Insurance                    |                | \$6,234.81     |
| Vehicle Registration                 |                | \$1,388.30     |
| Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance      |                | \$2,003.70     |
| Transport Expenditure                |                | \$1,455.62     |
|                                      |                |                |
| <b>Totals</b>                        | \$7,141.50     | \$16,009.26    |

## Transport Report

The difference between the transport revenue and the transport expenses is  $-\$8,867.76$ .

All information contained within this report has been taken from the Transport Log Sheets (filled out by volunteer drivers), and account information recorded in Xero.



## Volunteers Report

The Community House relies on Volunteers to function and without them what we are able to do would be reduced. Our Board are all Volunteers and some of these Board Members also provide other Volunteering functions for the House which is really appreciated. We have regular Volunteers for transport, Loaves and Fishes, admin and the garden.

Before COVID-19, we had approximately 16 Volunteers (excluding the Board) and post COVID-19 we have added 13 Volunteers. However, some of our regular Volunteers prior to the COVID-19 lockdown no longer come to the House for various reasons.

We have been struggling to hold on to regular, skilled admin Volunteers but the ones we do have are excellent. There is still a short fall in this area. We continue to recruit Volunteers and expect the number of Volunteers we have will increase.

