



**Dorset
Community House**

Dorset Community House Annual Report 2021-2022

#heartofdorset



Dorset Community House Board of Directors

Patience Hailey, President

Pat Young, Vice President

Ross Watson, Treasurer

Geoff Saville, Public Officer

Jo Kerr

Denise Young

Dorset Community House Staff

Naomi Buster, Manager

Deb Tarling, Finance Officer

Mark Hayes, Garden Officer

Zoe Bennett, Programs Officer

Catherine Bennett, Playgroup Officer



President's Report

Patience Hailey

President, Dorset Community Association

Progress and change have defined the past year; we have not stagnated, nor have we hibernated here at the Dorset Community House. We serve the Northeast community as a force that supports and receives; like an abutment serves to hold a bridge or a truss, we provide strength and structure for responding to this community's needs, providing programs, and effecting progress building capacity.

We continue to meet the diverse needs of our community and its people. Our efforts have been to reduce isolation and promote belonging by delivering programs that foster personal and group supports, community connections, and learning opportunities. This is done by using a community development paradigm.

Our House has been fostering cooperative working relationships with other houses. In particular, we have developed a strong connection with the neighbourhood houses of Fingal and St Helens in our cluster group. This has enabled us to benefit from shared resources and support. We actively seek to collaborate and network with other agencies and organisations who are also committed to community development. Naomi has worked hard to establish Dorset House as a space where the community can come to make connections with services and receive support in person or by referral.





The Board is constantly working in the background to make certain that the House is functioning in line with its purpose by ensuring it is effective and achieves what it sets out to do. It is our job to focus on the big picture. We have invested time in developing a strategic plan. This ensures that the activities of the House fit within the strategic framework for Tasmanian neighbourhood houses. It also helps us as a board, to focus on what is important and necessary for Dorset Community House to function well.

As a board, we review and help to develop policies and procedures to support and guide the house operations. We have updated the constitution to be sure we are able to function in a way that is suitable for the 21st century. We support staff and volunteers working to deliver outcomes 'on the ground'. Another of the ways we have served in the past year was to find a suitable replacement for the role of manager in October last year. We also work alongside the manager to ensure that funding agreement commitments are met.

Naomi has outperformed our expectations and she has used her wealth of community development experience to benefit Dorset. She has successfully secured some impressive grants which will aid the House greatly over the coming years. The other staff have all worked tirelessly and we are ever grateful for their dedication. The support of our volunteers has been invaluable and is much appreciated. We are proud of the house and its efforts in supporting this community through another year.

It is a privilege and honour to serve you all.

Patience Hailey
President – Dorset Community Association



Finance Report

Ross Watson

Treasurer, Dorset Community Association

The year ended 30 June 2022 has been one of learning the inner workings of the House and in particular the funding thereof as well as the recording of the financial activity via Xero the online accounting system used. In addition, trying to keep up with the enthusiasm of Naomi for new projects and their financial impact has given me a few sleepless nights.

The audited financial statements for 2022 reflect a loss of \$33,178. This is better than the budgeted figure but ultimately unsustainable going forward. The Board and Naomi has been conscious of the need to control spending while seeking new funding avenues.

The initial 2023 draft Budget reflected a further small loss for the year. However, the recently announced Cost of Living Adjustment of an additional \$50,000 grant covering the 2023 and 2024 years has been welcome news.

You may note that the Association changed Auditors for the 2022 year. Crowe wrote to the Board early in the year advising of a significant price increase to undertake the 2022 audit due to cost pressures and the timing of our audit requirements. The Board took the opportunity to seek alternative Auditors using the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania preferred providers list and ultimately appointed ALA Partners to the role.

Lastly, but not least, thanks Deb for helping me understand Xero better, Naomi for her leadership and all the team at Dorset House working to provide outstanding services to the Dorset community.

NILS Report

We have assisted with 35 No Interest Loans (NILS) this year and have an average of about 3 NILS meetings and/or conversations with community members per week. Some of the items purchased using NILS loans the past year were heat pumps, car repairs, laptops and even a bike. NILS has now introduced second hand car loans up to \$5000 and bond loans/rent in advance. These loans continue to help people avoid debt and loan shark traps, enabling them to access basic material needs with independence and dignity.



Manager's Report

Naomi Buster
Manger

It has been quite a journey for me to take on the role of Manager of the Dorset Community House in October 2021, starting on one day per week and gradually learning about the House, the community and the wonderful team of staff and volunteers we have! I am very glad I came into the role after some experience working in the Dorset community through roles in education and after having lived in the community for nearly a year.

However, I am aware I still have much to learn about people, opportunities and the community sector in Tasmania. I hope that I will continue to offer the skills I bring in project and people management, funding applications and leadership to this role for a long time into the future. I am very grateful for the patience and guidance of the Dorset Community House Board members, staff, volunteers and Dorset Community members.

2021-2022 has been a year of consolidating the focus on the Neighbourhood House Tasmania goals to **Connect Community, Support People, Create Opportunity** and Develop **Local Leadership** and on our Priority Areas of **young people** and **remote communities**. To ensure we are doing this in the most effective way possible, we have been consulting with the local community and analysing local data for the Dorset area. In this way we have been able to evaluate our programs and to find new and innovative ways to meet community needs and secure additional funding to support people in Dorset.

Priority Area One - Young People

Dorset Community House worked with Anna Lovitt from Community Mojo to collect data from 575 young people and community members to identify the highest priority needs for young people in the area. From this research we identified 6 recommendations for the Dorset area. It is hoped that these recommendations will guide the work of anyone working with young people in the area and support funding applications for additional resources for the community.

Manager's Report

The Dorset Community House continues to demonstrate leadership in the community through coordinating the Dorset Wellbeing Network, that brings together service providers funded to work in Dorset. We have now also started an early year's children's network in partnership with Building Blocks called Thriving Kids Dorset and the Dorset/Break O'Day Youth Services Working Group. We look forward to working collaboratively to advocate for further resourcing and investment in the Northeast corner.

As well as running community events and school holiday program activities at the House we have continued to expand our community partnerships. The Dorset Community House has participated and promoted services at many community events over the past year. Some of these included: the Dorset Wellness Walk (300+ people), Ringarooma Show (600+ people), Winnaleah Show x 2 (600+ people), and the Dorset Youth Live! wellbeing day that we coordinated (80 people).

While it has been a year of much learning, I can honestly say, there is nowhere else I would rather be. I am looking forward with much anticipation to what the dedicated and growing team at Dorset Community House will deliver in the next year.

Priority Area Two - Remote Areas

The Out and About program was a well-loved and much needed program in the remote areas of Dorset, that received regular positive feedback from across parents, school staff and the general community. In 2021 Out and About had 8 events based in Pioneer, Winnaleah and Gladstone. A movie night was held in December for the last Out and About of 2021, but did not have funding in 2022.

The Out and About Program was about increasing awareness of DCH and services in the more remote areas of Dorset where families have less access to resources and support systems. It also provided healthy snacks and outdoor fun activities for families.

After much community consultation, we would like to announce that a new project for the remote areas of Dorset has been funded. The Dorset Kids Connect project will use the findings of the Out and About program and identified needs of the community to offer a one day per week remote 'satellite' of the Dorset Community House with a focus on children, families and nutrition.



Program Report

Zoe Bennett

Program Officer

'Growth and development' was the theme for Activities, Programs and Events the past year. After saying farewell to Jen, the Dorset House staff team found ourselves without a manger for a few weeks. It was a test, but with the help of other staff members we kept the house open and serving the community until we welcomed Naomi. In 2021-2022 we continued our focus on young people and outreach.

In Term 4 of 2021 we hosted fortnightly after school hang outs. The highlight of the hang outs was the 'Youth Choice Night' where the youth got to pick what they did and what they ate. We want to give a big shout out to our volunteer Jacob, for supporting the program! We also undertook four school holiday programs, consisting of in-house activities and excursions.

In 2022 we focused on an in-school model of engagement and support as well as school holiday activities and events. In Semester One Zoe visited Scottsdale High School and Winnaleah District High School each week during the term to engage with youth and support the school. Our School Holiday Programs had varied attendance but high connection-value with young people. In particular, the Dorset Youth Live! Wellbeing built strong connections with the Scottsdale Library and local youth band, whom we continue to partner with.

Share the Dignity

We continue to partner with Share the Dignity in aiding the community with sanitary products. Our pink box in the toilets are used by the public. We have received several donations of sanitary products throughout the year. We look forward to continuing to partnering with them in the future.





Playgroup Report

Catherine Bennett

Playgroup Co-ordinator

Polliwog Playgroup has enjoyed many adventurous sessions at the Community House in the 2021-22 year. We have approximately 20 families registered and average 8-10 children each session. We have even recorded 23 children on one occasion. We were fortunate to have had a sunny day and the session was outside for such a large group.

We have a wide and varied age group who attend the playgroup, from babies to young children, therefore we offer a variety of activities according to their development. Our online recorded sessions have been very well received, with an average of 25 views and on a few occasions, we have had over 100 views according to the theme of the day. The positive public response is encouraging.

We have celebrated many occasions at the playgroup. Some of these include; school start, Valentine's Day, Easter, National Simultaneous Story Time, International Day of Peace and Neighbourhood House Week. We continue to be conscious of hygiene and ensure equipment is cleaned regularly and adequate ventilation is offered. Playgroup sessions are conducted outdoors whenever the weather allows it.

I am very grateful to the staff and committee supporting Polliwog Playgroup and look forward to the coming year.





Garden Report

Mark Hayes

Garden and Volunteer Officer

As spring takes hold the garden is a hive of activity (bees included). The volunteers and community members are busily preparing the ground and garden beds for spring/summer crops. Seedlings and other assorted plants are for sale at affordable prices in the nursery beside the house.

The seed library is a fantastic addition to the garden and house and is available to any community members that may want to select some free seeds to grow at home. We would welcome any keen gardeners that may want to be a part of the community garden to get in touch with us at the House.



Affordable Fruit and Vegetables

In the past year, 1365 kg of vegetables have passed through our fridge. These vegetables were purchased by the House and resold at affordable prices to assist the community. This total does not include garden grown or donated produce such as corn, tomatoes, potatoes, silver beet and many other nutritious contributions.



Transport Report

Naomi Buster, Manager

Deb Tarling, Finance Officer

Community Transport was essential in the past year for supporting people with non-emergency medical transport and to reduce isolation. Both the Dorset Rover and Ractis were in use, however the Ractis was unavailable for transport for 3 months of year due to a broken windscreen and delays with getting a replacement. Pat Young retired as Transport Coordinator (Volunteer Position) at the end of the year, however continued to provide support with handover and training.

During the year, the vehicles travelled a total of 49539 kilometres and transported a total of 776 people. 426 people were transported to social events and 350 people to medical appointments. The total amount raised in money donated to running the two vehicles, was \$11,960.50

Total Expenditure:

Total amount spent on fuel and oil \$6,716.69

Total amount spent on vehicle insurance \$2,768.24

Total amount spent on vehicle registration \$1,373.02

Total amount spent on vehicle repairs and maintenance \$2,795.75

Total amount spent on general transport expenditure \$1,547.53

The difference between the transport revenue and the transport expenses was -\$3,240.73. The biggest challenge to continuing to provide transport is recruitment of volunteers and rising fuel costs.





Eating With Friends

The Eating with Friends social meals has continued to provide friendship and connection for many people in the community. A group of between 20-50 people met monthly for affordable two course meals at a range of locations across Dorset including Lord's Hotel Scottsdale, Kendalls Hotel Scottsdale, the Ringarooma Hub, Loud Iron Cafe in Scottsdale and others. For Neighborhood House Week, the group met for high tea at the Dorset Community House and were hosted by the House and volunteers.

Pat Young is the *Eating with Friends Coordinator* (voluntary) and organises each of the meals, negotiates affordable rates, takes attendance and makes bookings. Pat also transports isolated community members to and from the social events and ensures events are accessible for all. Eating with Friends is the event that many older people in Dorset look forward to each month. Eating with Friends meals have provided a place for consultation with the community, promotion of Dorset House training and events, and referrals for community members who need them.



Volunteer Report

Mark Hayes

Garden and Volunteer Officer

Dorset Community House had 30 volunteers that help run the house and projects at the end of the year. These volunteers fulfil roles within the board, driving, reception, garden and program support. Volunteers are essential to the running of the Dorset Community House and needed to provide all the reportable services of the House. All volunteers give generously of their time and are an important part of the House team.

The House receives over 100 hours of volunteer time each week that all contribute to the support we are able to offer back to the community. It is important to regularly recruit new volunteers as some move on to other roles or retirement and as new opportunities become available. We note that volunteer recruitment has been more challenging in the years after COVID-19 and are working to find new and creative ways to promote volunteer opportunities within the community.



Emergency Food Relief

As the cost of living rose, we had more requests for food relief and saw and heard of more families going hungry in the community. We actively worked to meet this need and have been heartened by the support of many generous community members who worked with us. We also instigated volunteer cooking of 'freezer meals' to fill the gap when we ran out of pre-cooked meals.

The Loaves and Fishes deliveries were reduced to fortnightly during the past year, which has created challenges with storage and with fluctuations in availability and need. In the past year we have received 3,302kg of Vegetables, 1,255kg of Fruit, 2,945kg of Meals, 90kg of Eggs, 38kg of Milk and 699kg of other grocery items. Our Emergency Relief Pantry has been a staple support offered by House over the past year and has been supplied by donations of the Dorset community.



Visiting Service Providers

Australian Children's Foundation, Baptcare, Yemaya Women's Support, Positive Solutions, Aboriginal Cultural Connections, Emerge Allied Health, Launceston Community Legal Centre, Anglicare Financial Counselling, Anglicare Housing Connect, Diabetes Tasmania, St Giles, Women's Legal Service, Legal Literacy, Maxima, and APM Employment.