

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses

Annual Report



25





ON THE COVER:
PLACE Listening Tour





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Our Thanks



Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses acknowledges the traditional owners of the country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to them, their cultures, and to the elders past and present.

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses thanks our membership neighbourhood houses, including their committees of management, staff, volunteers and managers for their ongoing commitment to our organisation.

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood House gratefully acknowledges the support and advocacy of our peak body, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, for their dedication to our sector.

Finally, Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses appreciates the contribution and commitment of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing in funding both our network and our membership houses, and the support provided by our liaison officers.

Corporate Information



Board of Governance – June 30, 2025

President: Vicki Coltman

Secretary: Lana De Kort

Treasurer: Leah Phillips

General Members: Sarah Bingle, Malcolm Sanders

Our members

- Ballan Neighbourhood House, man. Sarah Bingle
- Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre, man. Vicki Coltman
- Ballarat East Neighbourhood House, man. Sarah Greenwood Smith
- Ballarat North Neighbourhood House, man. Kristen Sheriden
- Clunes Neighbourhood House, man. Lana De Kort
- Creswick Neighbourhood Centre, man. Chrissy Austin
- Darley Neighbourhood House, man. Amber Gordon
- Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre, co-ord. Kate Moran
- Haddon Community Learning Centre, man. Rick Bushell
- Laurels Education and Training, man. Kylie Reeve
- Meredith Community Centre, man. Leah Phillips
- Pyrenees Community House, man. Malcolm Sanders
- Trentham Neighbourhood Centre, man. Richard Goodman
- Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre, man. Manya Ferwerda



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

The Pride Yarnbombing Project, supported by Ballarat North Neighbourhood House, added a splash of colour to a much loved feature tree at Creswick Neighbourhood House!



About us



Strategic Purpose

To develop, enhance and represent the extraordinary value and effect of the Neighbourhood Houses of the Central Highlands region, supporting connection, resilience and advocacy for the benefit of our members and our communities.

Our Values

We Support

We amplify our practice, our organisations and our sector through collaborative relationships - sharing resources, skills, peer support, philosophy, information, projects and more. Our collective talent and experience benefits each and every one of us when and where we need it.

We are Dynamic

We embrace a shared culture of change, understanding that as our unique communities evolve and fluctuate so must we. We inspire forward thinking, creative and innovative responses, at a local level and through initiatives that strengthen and represent the valuable role of Neighbourhood Houses across the region.

We are Accountable

We strive for integrity, longevity and success of the Neighbourhood House sector on behalf of our communities, promoting transparency, good practice, and respectful collaboration between management and governance in the stewardship of our organisations.

Our Goals



Goal 1 a good practice organisation.

Goal 2 collaborative support for members to deliver the NHCP.

Goal 3 promote and develop understanding of the neighbourhood house sector, its purpose, and value.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT
Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre Manager Vicki Coltman with learners and volunteers joined the PLACE Listening Tour in May.



Sustainable Development Goals



Through our work as an organisation, or indirectly through support and collaboration for our member neighbourhood houses, CHANH contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Member Insight:

"Understanding this very vibrant and complex sector has been a great challenge, and also a thrilling ride. In a phase of rebirth and renewal Pyrenees Community House faces many challenges, reconnecting with the community it serves, ensuring it remains accessible and relevant. During this time I've been so grateful to Jane and members of the CHANH network for the incredible support they have given me while I have been finding my feet. The Network of extraordinary houses run by a diverse group of the most capable and inspirational people have provided an endless source of information and helpful advice."

Malcolm Sanders, Pyrenees Community House

Manager's Report



Our year began with momentum and purpose, as we turned our attention to planning for the year ahead. Drawing on the rich insights gathered through member consultations and surveys, we shaped a clear and confident path forward — one grounded in the real needs, aspirations, and strengths of our members. This planning phase set the tone for a year of connection, creativity, and shared commitment across the network.

While face-to-face connection remained challenging, we embraced flexibility — shifting online when needed and reimagining initiatives to keep momentum strong. One such adaptation was the creation of template newsletter articles to help members share the stories and principles underpinning the neighbourhood house sector, to promote understanding and reduce misinformation.

We launched the Aboriginal Action Community of Practice, an informal online space meeting once per term. These gatherings have been rich with insight, reflection, and shared learning, supporting managers to embed cultural safety and advance reconciliation in meaningful ways.



Jane Grimwood

We launched the Aboriginal Action Community of Practice, an informal online space meeting once per term. These gatherings have been rich with insight, reflection, and shared learning, supporting managers to embed cultural safety and advance reconciliation in meaningful ways.

In late 2024, we hosted an online forum with VMIA, offering members a practical and engaging exploration of insurance scenarios. The session was not only informative but energising, leading to the creation of new resources that demystify insurance and auspicing for our members.

2025 began with a Manager's Lunch in Ballarat, a warm and lively gathering that set a collaborative tone for the year. These moments of connection — whether in person or online — have been vital in sustaining our shared work and spirit.

Manager Report (cont'd)



The CHANH Governance Materials Pack, offering guidance and templates for managers and committees, underwent a full review, with updates for clarity and usability. New documents were added, drawing on insights from VMIA, the Aboriginal Action CoP, and Child Safety initiatives – resources that reflect the evolving needs and strengths of our members.

We finalised the ACFE Deep Costing Tool, designed to help members unpack the financial realities of delivering ACFE programs. With expert input from NHVic's David Perry, the tool was fine-tuned and shared with the broader sector. Alongside this, we gathered stories and data from members – particularly in rural areas – about the impacts of recent ACFE program changes, and used this to advocate directly to the ACFE Board.

This year also saw significant governance work undertaken by the network, including the development of the CHANH Rules of Association and the achievement of charity status. I was pleased to support this work operationally, particularly in member engagement and coordination. Further detail on this important milestone is included in the President's Report.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Ballarat East Neighbourhood House led an exciting collaboration between four neighbourhood houses to support skills development and local connections between community groups across the Ballarat Community.



Manager Report (cont'd)



Our stakeholder engagement efforts were wide-ranging and energising:

- Partnered with Playgroups Victoria to support new playgroup resources for neighbourhood houses.
- Collaborated with ChildSafe Australia to develop a Committee Briefing webinar tailored to NH governance.
- Supported the City of Ballarat Social Inclusion Team in promoting their state-funded initiative and the Ballarat Community Directory.
- Worked with networks to propose new evaluation questions for the NHCP Annual Survey, aiming to better capture the role and impact of networks.
- Participated in PLACE Australia's national listening tour, hosting a regional gathering in Creswick with NHVic CEO Keir Paterson and PLACE representatives to explore the unique challenges and strengths of rural neighbourhood houses.

Throughout the year, I've had the privilege of meeting with neighbourhood house managers and committee members to support them through emerging challenges and change. As the needs of our communities have grown, so too has the commitment of neighbourhood houses to step up — local champions for individuals and communities.

Change is an ever present companion, with many member organisations working through organisational restructure, staffing changes, and revisioning strategy and direction — work that can at times be exciting, but is often challenging and confronting as well.

What stands out most is the pride and passion that continues to shine through the work. Whether it's the laughter shared at a community lunch, the pride in a new program taking root, or the quiet satisfaction of a committee finding its rhythm — there is a deep sense of purpose and connection that fuels everything our members do. It is this joy, grounded in community and care, that sustains us through complexity and change.

Our members are, and continue to be, our greatest inspiration.

Year in Numbers



INCOME \$5,062,284

VALUE \$21,106,194



VALUE INCLUDES:

Improved quality of life through social connection: **\$5,464,431**

Volunteer contributions: **\$1,884,212**

Emergency relief provided: **\$1,726,234**

Services provided: **\$2,743,711**

Adult Community Education: **\$9,054,959**

Social enterprise goods & services: **\$232,647**

Fee for service activities:
\$368,167

Facilities use or hire:
\$2,164,596

Auspicing other organisations:
\$17,076

Community lunch, frozen or other meals:
\$172,440

EMPLOYMENT VALUE:

**43.5
FTE JOBS**

This community value equates to:
\$4.17 for every \$1 of income

\$13.99 for every \$1 of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding

Over \$715.08 for every hour the neighbourhood houses are in use

Emergency relief value includes
\$1,091,348
in food and groceries

President's Report



During the 2024–25 financial year, the organisation underwent a governance restructure and comprehensive organisational review. Additionally, new managers joined the network following the departure of several long-serving house managers.

A major focus of the year was the development of the CHANH Rules of Association. While our primary goal was to achieve charity status, the process also offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on our governance and membership structures. We engaged extensively with members to explore the implications of structural change and to co-design a new purpose statement. With support from Justice Connect, we ensured our Rules aligned with the Charities Act and reflected our organisational values. The new Rules were adopted in March, and we were delighted to receive confirmation of our charity status from the ACNC shortly after.

Our ongoing collaboration with NHVic's Area Support Manager initiative continued to evolve and plays an important role for the Board in addressing psychosocial hazards for our Network Manager. With the Network Manager role subcontracted to NHVic, we contributed feedback to strengthen contracting processes and clarify roles. We look forward to this initiative continuing to enhance efficiency and wellbeing across the network sector.



Vicki Coltman

In the 2024–25 Annual Plan and Budget, we placed a renewed focus on sharing knowledge and resources across the region. The care and consideration behind this work reflects our commitment to being a highly collaborative network — one where members are deeply invested in the insights and learnings drawn from creative practice in every community where a neighbourhood house can be found.

We also undertook a review of the Risk Register, with a particular focus on relationships and boundaries. This led to the development of new policy requirements to guide our work with members, stakeholders, and the broader community — strengthening our foundations for safe, ethical, and effective practice.



Over the course of the year, our membership changed as we farewelled Danny Liversidge, DNC Manager and CHANH Secretary, Joan Coker, long-time manager of Haddon Community Learning Centre, locum managers Mary Francis at Ballan Neighbourhood House and Meg Stewart at Pyrenees Community House. We welcomed Rick Bushell in the role at Haddon, and Malcolm Sanders as manager of the PCH, Kate Moran as DNC Coordinator, and Sarah Bingle at Ballan. Fresh ideas, energy and experience is always a wonderful thing!

The adoption of the new Rules also marked a shift in our governance structure – from a full representative committee to a small but effective Board. This change has allowed us to streamline decision-making while continuing to centre member voices. To support this, we introduced Member Meeting Days, creating space for stronger communication, deeper exploration of practice, and meaningful connection between houses. began with an end, as we farewelled and started a new chapter for our network.

The Board also experienced several changes in membership throughout the year as house commitments challenged managers. To Kristen Sheridan, Renae Knight, Danny Liversidge and Lana de Kort thank you for your time and commitment to the Board and support of the network this year. I would like to thank Leah Phillips in her role as Treasurer who supported the Network Manager to deliver financial advice and oversight throughout the year.

Finally, as we committed resources to a full review of our organisational policies in light of the structural changes, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming year, to ensure our governance, operations, and collective knowledge are well-supported and future-ready.

Member Insight:

“Jane and the CHANH network have been instrumental in offering immense support as we at the Creswick Neighbourhood Centre commence developing our Reconciliation Action Plan. While we pride ourselves in being inclusive and welcoming, developing a RAP to formalise this commitment has been quite the task for the small organisation we are. Establishing a community of practice has been incredibly worthwhile and provided an opportunity to share ideas, ask questions and seek support from other houses. We could not have progressed as far as we have without Jane’s support and assistance – this shows the power of a network!”

Chrissy Austin, Creswick Neighbourhood Centre



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

The Living and Ageing Well initiative was an incredible partnership between Central Highlands Health, Western Vic PHN and Clunes Neighbourhood House, leading to recognition and support for the valuable role neighbourhood houses play across Hepburn Shire.

Treasurer's Report



It gives me great pleasure in presenting the Treasurer's Report for the 2024-25 Financial Year for the CHANH Network.

The 2024-2025 financial year marked the final year of the CHANH Spending Plan, a strategic initiative designed to responsibly reduce the network's financial reserves and reinvest those funds directly into programs and activities that benefit our members. Over the course of the plan, we have focused on providing training subsidies, capacity-building opportunities, and support for strategic initiatives — including assistance for members developing Reconciliation Action Plans and implementing Child Safety Standards.

As we move forward, the network's dedication to supporting member needs remains unwavering. However, with the conclusion of the Spending Plan, we will see a gradual reduction in expenditure in the coming year. This adjustment reflects a return to a more sustainable operating budget, ensuring that we maintain adequate reserves while continuing to provide value and support to the members of CHANH as well as ensuring Jane has the resources required for her position.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

With support from Dja Dja Wurrung traditional owners, Creswick Neighbourhood Centre renamed their lovely community hall 'Wayapurra' – a place to Meet Up.



Treasurer's Report



Our employment arrangement with NHVic has also continued to strengthen. This partnership has brought enhanced financial scrutiny, improved transparency in costings, and the inclusion of our network's feedback in key financial processes. These developments have allowed us to fine-tune our operating model, ensuring that our Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) funding is used as effectively and efficiently as possible. We thank Keir and the staff of NHVic who continue to work to improve this arrangement ensuring that it meets the needs of CHANH, Jane and NHVic.

Looking ahead, our financial strategy will continue to evolve in response to changing circumstances — much as many of our members have had to adapt in recent years. We are now in a strong financial position, with the insight, systems, and governance structures in place to manage our resources. Our ongoing focus will be on monitoring and moderating expenditure, ensuring that our funding is used strategically to deliver the greatest benefit to our network and our communities.

In summary, the 2024–2025 year has reinforced our commitment to responsible financial management, strategic investment, and transparent decision-making. As we transition beyond the Spending Plan, CHANH remains financially stable, future-focused, and well-prepared to meet the evolving needs of our members.

I take this opportunity to thank Jane for her continued dedication to CHANH, the fellow board members as well as the greater membership of our Network.

Member Insight:

"Getting together with other neighbourhood house managers has been incredibly helpful in my first year as a manager. Having the chance to share experiences, ask questions, and learn from people who've already faced similar challenges has made a huge difference. These conversations have given me practical ideas, fresh perspectives, and a real sense of support."

Amber Gordon, Darley Neighbourhood House

Profit and Loss

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses For the year ended 30 June 2025

2025

Trading Income

DHHS Funded Networker	72,240.48
Interest Income	1,875.84
Total Trading Income	74,116.32

Gross Profit

74,116.32

Operating Expenses

Accounting & Bookkeeping	840.00
Annual Leave Expense	4,490.16
Bank Fees	1.20
Catering Expenses	1,436.07
Executive Allowances	1,406.36
General Expenses	(793.00)
Meeting Expenses	911.84
Member Conference Subsidy	3,500.00
Memberships - Affiliations	851.00
Networker Travel	951.72
Portable Long Service Leave	36.04
Printing & Stationery	194.90
Professional Developments & Training	169.10
Rent	1,500.00
Strategic Projects Other	1,675.00
Subscriptions & Software	1,793.63
Sundry Expenses	415.62
Superannuation	287.76
Support Management	62,591.34
Telephone & Internet	788.96
Wages and Salaries	2,502.22
Workcover	366.87
Total Operating Expenses	85,916.79

Net Profit

(11,800.47)

Balance Sheet

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses As at 30 June 2025

30 JUNE 2025

Assets

Bank

Central Highlands Association of NH	4,424.31
CHANH Debit Card	310.90
CHANH Savings Account	5,009.92
CHANH Term Deposit	47,983.44
Total Bank	57,728.57

Current Assets

Accounts Receivable	212.85
Total Current Assets	212.85

Fixed Assets

Office Equipment	1,252.05
Total Fixed Assets	1,252.05

Total Assets	59,193.47
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Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	7,338.41
GST	(1,760.91)
LSL Liability Prior to Portable	2,416.16
PAYG Withholdings Payable	194.00
Provision for Annual Leave	1,459.87
Superannuation Payable	287.76
Total Current Liabilities	9,935.29

Total Liabilities	9,935.29
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Net Assets	49,258.18
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Equity

Current Year Earnings	(11,800.47)
Retained Earnings	61,058.65
Total Equity	49,258.18



**Central Highlands Association of
Neighbourhood Houses**

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