

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS
ASSOCIATION OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21

Annual Report prepared by Jane Grimwood, Network Manager

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CHANH ABN 96 376 374 241

Cover : Detail from the Ballarat Wellbeing Scripts 'Happier Healthier Lifestyle' Poster

About CHANH

MISSION

To support the sustainability, development and growth of our members.

VISION

A strong, collaborative Neighbourhood House Network

GOALS

Governance and Management

"We will facilitate quality governance and management by providing advocacy, advice and assistance."

Advice and Support on Service Development

"We will be strong and responsive community development organisations."

Professional Development and Resources

"We will be agile, responsive and skilled by engaging in learning."

Capacity Building and Linkages

"We will actively engage with each other and community organisations."

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

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT - JUNE 31, 2021

Lyn Plummer	Ballan and District Community House
Vicki Coltman	Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
(President)	
Kate Owen	Ballarat East Neighbourhood House
██████████	Ballarat North Neighbourhood House
Pauline Ball	Beaufort Community House and Learning Centre
Lana De Kort	Clunes Neighbourhood House
Kim Gilliott	Creswick Neighbourhood Centre
(Vice President)	
Renae Knight	Darley Neighbourhood Centre
Danny Liversidge	Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre
(Secretary)	
Joan Coker	Haddon Community Learning Centre
Leah Phillips	Meredith Community House
Kylie Reeve	Laurels Education and Training
Tania Sawyer	Trentham Neighbourhood Centre
(Treasurer)	
Manya Ferwerda	Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre
(on leave)	

*** Name redacted by request, Sept 2026

STAFF - JUNE 31, 2021

Jane Grimwood	Network Manager
Bernadine Gawalski	Digital Capacity Project Officer
Sandy Darrington	Acting Manager, Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre

Reflections on 2020-21

Psychology Today defines resilience as:

"that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes."

The resilience of our Network and our members has been at the forefront in the face of the disruption caused by the COVID19 Global Pandemic. For a great part of the year, Neighbourhood House doors were closed, programs ceased, capacity diminished and the future unforeseeable, and yet, our members fostered care, connection, adaptability and hope, amongst our network and in their communities.

In our first three months CHANH established the initiatives which would drive and govern our ability to support each other and our communities throughout the year:

1. Dedicated support for one and other, as safety and compliance measures impacted our organisations and the changing needs of our communities;
2. Our partnership with Health Futures Australia, connecting our Sector with General Practitioners across the region through the Wellbeing Scripts System Building Initiative;
3. Employed 14 new community engagement and digital capacity staff to work in 12 of our member organisations through Working for Victoria Program

Despite the adversity, and the uncertainties ahead, CHANH has strengthened relationships, extended reach, and found new ways to define our value and purpose- we are coming back stronger than ever.

Our gratitude and thanks go to Helen Powers, LETS Manager, and CHANH Secretary, who retired in March.

A warm welcome to Kylie Reeve as the new Manager of Laurels Education and Training, and Sarah Greenwood Smith as the Manager of Ballarat East Neighbourhood House.

We welcome Danny Liversidge of Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre to the role of CHANH Secretary in February, and thank Tania Sawyer from her transition from the Secretary position to the Treasure role at that same time.

Our ongoing thanks to Kim Gilliot and Vicki Coltman for thier support as Vice President and President respectively, throughout 2020-2021.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge all the staff that joined us over the 6 month period of the Working for Victoria program over 2020-21, and their tremendous contrttribution to our organisations and our communities.

Working in isolation and online provided both challenge and support for CHANH members as we adapted to the impact of COVID19 in our organisations.



A few words from our members



Being able to link what is happening at our grassroots level with a bigger and broader discussion about wellbeing has been invaluable. It's enhanced the relationships we've been forming locally and helped us highlight what is working in our community.

Lana De Kort

Manager, Clunes Neighbourhood House.



The CHANH Network has always supported Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre through communication and advice, but this year being part of the Network was invaluable. It enabled us as a small organisation to employ an Acting Manager through the Network for a 5 month period while the Manager was having extended leave. The Acting Manager was able to be supported from Jane, our very experienced Networker.

Manya Ferwerda

Manager, Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre



Our CHANH Networker facilitated our Strategic Planning Day, bringing innovative concepts and planning processes that helped Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre CoM think out of the box. The process brought a new perspective of the forward looking role the Centre may play in the community.

Danny Liversidge

Manager, Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre



We have found the CHANH Network to be an invaluable support during 2020-2021. Knowing that we can call Jane for advice is fantastic, particularly in these challenging and isolating times. If she doesn't know the answer, she knows someone who will and is very happy to make the connection. The Working for Victoria program was an amazing boost- we progressed many important projects to help our community, which would otherwise have remained on our wish-list.

Sarah Greenwood Smith

Manager, Ballarat East Neighbourhood Centre

Presidents Review

Two years ago, could any of us have imagined the challenges and opportunities we would experience in 2020 and 2021? The onset of a global pandemic, the subsequent COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns, and the impact these would have on ourselves, our houses and our communities has been front of mind for all of us this year.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate the Network members for the fantastic way you all worked together this year. From the proactive way we supported each other to the new staff we introduced to our sector, I have no doubt our actions will have far reaching benefits for all us over the next few years.

Jane, our fabulous Network Manager, I thank you on behalf of all the members for the flexible way you adapted to our changing circumstances to support us. When the sector was facing significant operational barriers, you stepped up recruiting 14 new staff to work across our houses, ran our weekly meetings and continued to develop the Wellbeing Scripts Project.

Thank you to the Executive Committee members: Kim, Tanya, Danny and Manya. Your thoughtful reflection and knowledge of the sector makes my job much easier. It is great to know you are available to the members anytime we have a question or need help.

Finally, as I look around the sector, I am very pleased at the positive and proactive network we have built and am looking forward to another year as CHANH President.

Vicki Coltman
Executive Officer, Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre
CHANH President

Core Business

Neighbourhood House Networks value the benefit of support for our members. CHANH facilitated and contributed to Neighbourhood Houses through:

- Providing weekly (later fortnightly), online peer support Check Ins for Neighbourhood House Managers through the COVID19 Lockdowns
- Work with Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre to trial a design thinking approach to strategic plan development. Provided a draft Strategic Plan with strong positive feedback from the committee.
- Assistance to Creswick Neighbourhood Centre to refine Strategic Plan to meet key objectives in a pandemic environment.
- Contributing Strategic Plan consultation to inform Ballarat East Neighbourhood House development and direction
- Providing CHANH Induction to Trentham Neighbourhood Centre Chairperson
- Support for Wendouree Neighbourhood Centre structural transition, including employment of seconded Acting Manager by CHANH.
- Providing Fit2Work account for Police Checks and Working With Children Check monitoring
- Distribution of information on current grants opportunities to all members on a monthly basis
- Successfully advocating to change the Jobs for Victoria Guidelines to include parameters suitable for NHs
- Collaboration with Sports Central to pilot Neighbourhood House Walktober Event
- Collaboration with CORE to provide local webinars on the impact of the pandemic on gender inequity
- Connection with regional agencies to raise awareness on Neighbourhood Houses, including CAFS Gamblers Help Team, Central Highlands PCP Cross Sector Collaboration Group, Volunteering Ballarat, Ballarat Community Health- Social Connections Project and All In Project
- All operational requirements for the recruitment and employment of Working for Victoria Staff, including management of the CHANH Project Support Officer

Working for Victoria staff member, Leanne, at Trentham Neighbourhood Centre, supporting community engagement and wellbeing.



Highlight Initiative

Working for Victoria

One of the greatest achievements of 2020 was the collaboration of CHANH with 12 of our member houses and the Victorian Government to increase the capacity of our member organisations to adjust and respond to the impacts of COVID19.

In June 2020 CHANH entered into a short term partnership with the Working For Victoria program. Our goal was employ 14 people impacted by pandemic related unemployment for a six month period, investing in community engagement and digital capacity development at a local level. Originally intended to distribute funding to the individual partners, the role of CHANH changed when the members elected to centralise employment through CHANH, avoiding duplication and compliance responsibilities across the region.

CHANH Network Manager Jane Grimwood orchestrated the recruitment of 14 amazing people with a diverse range of experience and skills, designed and delivered a three week induction program for the 14 staff members, immersing them in the philosophies of community development and the Neighbourhood House Sector, and guided the new employees through a process to build familiarity with their worksites in their Neighbourhood House. The group met regularly online for peer support throughout their period of employment- cross pollinating their initiatives and projects with their experience and knowledge. Legacy Case Studies and How-To Guides are available on the CHANH website, receiving recognition from local politicians.

Approximately 1/3 of the WFV staff were employed in Neighbourhood Houses following the WFV program, and others went on to be successfully employed in related agencies elsewhere.

The \$381,680 grant was the largest single grant received by CHANH to date.

CHANH was the only Neighbourhood House Network to participate in the Working for Victoria Program.

Neighbourhood House staff and GPs developed new relationships and ways of working together as part of the Wellbeing Scripts System Building initiative, through Co-design Workshops facilitated by Dr Shelley Bowen of Health Futures Australia (in front)



Highlight Initiative

Wellbeing Scripts

As the state experienced restrictions and lockdowns throughout 2020-21 impacts of social connection for health and wellbeing came to the fore. CHANH was uniquely positioned to develop response to this need through the successful funding by the Australian Government to develop referral pathways between GPs and Neighbourhood Houses in June 2020.

In partnership with Health Futures Australia, the Wellbeing Scripts System Building (WSSB) initiative is a two year social innovation project to co-design prototype 'Light' Social Prescribing resources.

Utilising a deep theory of change approach, WSSB has engaged nine GPs across the region to work with Neighbourhood Houses in four different communities to creatively design referral systems for community based social connection.

Now at the mid-way point, WSSB has delivered an overview of Social Prescription, a Synthesis Paper on GP and NH perspectives of linking together, and a number of workshops at each location to ideate and design bespoke referral prototypes. Designs are finalised and provided to the community for testing - to be iterated and consolidated in the second half of the project.

The co-design work is also being supported by a communications campaign, with dedicated social media channels, presentations made to the University of Melbourne and the Australian Disease Management Association, and the first case study film in production.

Interest in Social Prescription is flourishing nation-wide, and through the development of WSSB, CHANH is well placed to add to this knowledge and practice in Australia, elevating Neighbourhood Houses in their integral role as hubs for community wellbeing and connection.

Treasurers Report

For the 2020-21 year, CHANH had a net loss of \$10,788 compared to net surplus of \$31,989 in 2019-20. This loss includes the donation of laptops to Neighbourhood Houses under the Working for Victoria Program, to the value of \$8,838.

Under the 2019 Spending Plan, CHANH aims to reduce retained earnings over a 5-year period, and the loss falls within the parameters of this Plan.

It is worth noting that in 2020-21 CHANH's income increased by 389% from 2019-20, receiving:

- Victorian Government Working for Victoria grant funding which resulted in 14 extra staff across the region for a period of 6 months, with one role extended by four months as the Digital Capacity Project
- Australian Government Chronic Disease Prevention grant funding for the Wellbeing Scripts Systems Building initiative (not including \$33,000 received just prior to the commencement of the financial year.)

The value of this funding and associated activities has both direct and indirect benefit for CHANH members. Rapid adaptations by CHANH at request of members ensured greater efficiency for program expenditure, in a number of cases, offset costs which might have otherwise impacted member neighbourhood houses. This meant CHANH absorbed some financial impacts.

The increased funding required CHANH to complete a Financial Audit and highlighted the need to adjust a few bookkeeping practices for improved financial management moving forwards.

Tania Sawyer
Manager, Trentham Neighbourhood Centre
CHANH Treasurer