



Ross House
Association
annual report 2018-2019



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Chairperson's Report

This is a significant period in Ross House's proud history, as we strive to foster relationships of mutual interest and benefit to enable the sustainability of the 'House'. With the celebration of Ross House's past, in the form of our 30th Anniversary in 2017, the focus of the Ross House Committee of Management over the last year has very much been on the future. The Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (compiled as a result of consultation with the Ross House Community) has been the basis for the Committee's work towards financial stability into the future.

It is essential to mention here the importance of the work the staff have contributed by supporting the committee with the provision of information and research that has been fundamental in implementing all aspects of the Strategic Plan. This includes much in the way of legal clarifications and investigation, that underpin the Committee's endeavours.

The staff has been a strong team in performing the operations of Ross House and in addressing not only maintenance issues promptly but generally keeping the 'House' running efficiently. Particularly notable in this last year is the completed Accessible Toilet Project on the ground floor and the continuing work in addressing the impacts brought about by the neighbouring Melbourne Metro Rail Project, particularly with the Town Hall Station next door.

We have also seen a review of membership and tenancy matters to highlight any gaps in existing information and compliance with tenancy agreements. This review has ensured that Ross House remains a home for small community groups.

All this has taken place under the leadership of our General Manager, Michael Griffiths. I thank Michael and all the staff in their individual roles for their hard work throughout 2018-2019.

We have welcomed appointed members Richard Caven and Maggie Maguire to the Committee, whose input has been invaluable. I thank all committee members for their unstinting contributions of time and expertise over the past year.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of all our tenants who are the reason Ross House exists. We all work away quietly in our tenant spaces, on our individual social justice causes, in order to better the circumstances of those who are disadvantaged. Whether your focus is environment, disability, chronic illness, housing, supporting groups or the work of any of the other diverse organisations amongst our tenants and members, I congratulate you all on behalf of the committee for your achievements during the past year.

You are individually and collectively what makes Ross House the unique place it is, a place to be proud to be part of.

I commend the General Manager's Report and the Annual Report to you.

Christine McAuslan



General Manager's Report



There has been a lot going on in Ross House this year, as we begin to implement our community developed five-year Strategic Plan. Some of the changes have been obvious but many others have been happening quietly in the background.

The ground level toilet facilities were completely refurbished this year, providing both a male and female toilet, complete with showers and a fully accessible DDA compliant disability bathroom; the facilities were officially opened on May 1st, 2019. This project was co-funded by a City of Melbourne Community Services Grant (\$20,000) and a Melbourne Stronger Communities Grant (\$10,000), provided by the Federal Government through the office of Adam Bandt, Federal Member for Melbourne. This funding provided much needed assistance in completing the \$115,000 refurbishment to the ground level toilet facilities.

This year we also renewed the lease of our fantastic shop front café, Dukes Coffee Roasters, for a further seven-years and the basement licence for the City of Melbourne's innovative and pioneering Degraeves Street Recycling Facility, for another three-years. These commercial agreements provide much needed funds to help us sustain Ross House.

We have also progressed substantially in our understanding around the possibility of developing levels above Ross House. Special thanks must be made to John Carey from Minter Ellison, Anita Brady from Anita Brady Heritage, Colleen Peterson from Ratio Consultants and Chris Goss from Orbit Solutions, who have worked pro-bono with us over the year, providing hours of advice and support as we work with Heritage Victoria. There is still much more work to do however and we will keep the Community informed of any major plans.

The Melbourne Metro Rail Project has had significant impacts on Ross House already. Both Staff and Committee continue to fight for the interests of Ross House as plans for the precinct are developed. A close working relationship has been established with representatives from neighbouring buildings and local businesses, as we push to keep Flinders Lane accessible and liveable.

This year two new Appointed Committee Members joined the RHA Committee of Management; Richard Caven and Maggie Maguire have both lent their time and expertise in assisting the Committee plan for the future. I would also like to thank Amy Lasslett and Mike McEvoy for their support and assistance with the award-winning Voices At The Table (VATT) program, it's a fantastic initiative and RHA was proud to be involved.

If you've been following our energy graphs in the Ross House Newsletter, you may have seen a recent reduction in energy usage for the building. This has come about after we received a Sustainability Victoria - Better Commercial Buildings Grant (\$30,000) to contribute towards sustainability upgrades. After a detailed analysis and report, which was reviewed by our Green Focus Working Party, we elected to install Variable Speed Drives on our air conditioning fans, resulting in more than a 20% reduction in electricity usage; a fantastic result for the building and environment.

This year Rebecca May joined the Ross House staff team in the Membership & Tenancy Officer position. Rebecca has made an impressive impact during the year, achieving significant changes within a short amount of time and she should be congratulated. I would also like to extend thanks to all the staff for the noticeable improvements that have been achieved around Ross House this year.



You may have also met our two new front desk casuals. Ruby James-Strawhan and Julia Pecoraro joined the Ross House staff team this year and have quickly proved themselves highly capable and both bring bright friendly personalities to the Ross House front desk!

Whilst it has been a busy year for the Staff and Committee, I want to thank all the Members and Tenants of the Association, as it is the work that goes on within Ross House, in social and environmental justice, which is most important.

Michael Griffiths

Ross House Association Committee and Staff 2018-2019

COMMITTEE

Chairperson

Christine McAuslan

Collective of Self Help Groups

Vice Chairperson

Valerie Elliott

(from March 2019)

Handknitters Guild

David Martin

(until March 2019)

Asbestoswise

Treasurer

Keith Bettles

U3A Melbourne City

Secretary

Alba Chliakhtine

ABRISA

Members

Charles Brass

(until November 2018)

Futures Foundation

STAFF

Michael Griffiths

General Manager

Rebecca May

Membership & Tenancy Officer

Nazzareno Marchionda

Facility Manager

Amber Moore

Development Program Manager

Richard Caven

Appointed

De Grebner

TreeProject

Michael Griffiths

Ex-officio

Colin Hiscoe

(from November 2018 - March 2019)

Reinforce

Maggie Maguire

(from May 2019)

Appointed

Nazzareno Marchionda

Appointed Staff Representative

Scot Muirden

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Foundation

Dr. Heidi Nicholl

(from May 2019)

Appointed

Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane

Information & Administration Officer

Junxia Xu

Finance Officer

Casual staff

Stephanie East

Patti Gerkens

Ruby James-Strawhan

Greta McMahon

Lucie McMahon

Julia Pecorano

Mrs Tangamalar is one of 1,676 women in Tamil Nadu, India that Assisi Aid Projects supported last year. The 'When Every Woman Thrives' project supports single women, who face discrimination in Indian society, and find it difficult to earn an income to support their family. Through membership of support groups facilitated by our local partner, Integrated Development Trust, women access literacy and financial management training, join savings clubs, receive legal advice to aid access to government support schemes, and can access small loans to start businesses to generate an income. With a loan of just \$207 Mrs Tangamalar established a tapioca farm, which in the first year repaid the loan and generated a good return, which she intends to use to support the education of her three children. Assisi Aid Projects is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to deliver this project. www.assisi.org.au

Photo © Chloe Reynolds



Brain Injury Matters

Brain Injury Matters (BIM) is a self-advocacy and community education organisation run by and for people with acquired brain injury (ABI). We aim to raise the voice of people living with ABI, of which there are about 800,000 in Australia. We also provide peer support, raise community awareness about ABI, inform local, state and national bodies around relevant issues, try to alleviate the isolation and marginalisation experienced by people living with ABI, and generally work to end the discrimination of all people with disability.

We have been part of the Ross House community for 25 years.

In March 2019, we launched the ABI Wise App; the first App of its kind in the world, made by people with brain injury for people with brain injury.

This has been a long-term project for BIM, building on our previous projects that have aimed to decrease the isolation that many people with ABI face upon leaving hospital or rehab.

This App is for all mobile devices and contains a lot of information about how to live well with a brain injury or stroke. It features weekly tips, from people who know best, on how to make your brain injury work for you, not against you. There are also personal stories of ABI, guided meditations, important ABI dates and useful contacts and organisations.

We made this App to share the hard-earned wisdom of people with ABI, to decrease the isolation that is so common, and to improve the lives of all people living with ABI everywhere.

ABI Wise was developed in partnership with ABI peer support groups and networks across Victoria, including A Bright Idea in Mornington, Ballarat Stroke Support Group, Compass Clubhouse in Thornbury, Everywoman: Supporting Women with ABI in Bendigo, Geelong ABI Clubhouse, Life's Appreciation Group in Doveton and United Brains. We also received a lot of project support from SARU, of which we are most appreciative. Additionally, we partnered with Leadership Plus and Brain Injury Australia to launch this App.

Our thanks to the many, many people who have contributed to this App along the way. We also acknowledge that it is the work of the Self Advocates who have come before us that has paved the way for such an App to be created.

We have already had over 2000 downloads from across the world, and as we have discovered, people without brain injury have also been benefiting from and enjoying the ABI Wise App.

www.braininjurymatters.org



ABI Wise App Launch
Photo © Brain Injury Matters



Photo © National Council of Women of Victoria

National Council of Women of Victoria Inc.

On the 31st August 2018, NCWV's *My Vote My Voice* was held in the Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament of Victoria, with the 2018 theme: Diversity in Community Organisations. There were 64 students from 13 schools, with 25 of those in attendance, making three-minute presentations. The League of Women Voters of Victoria (LWV) again funded student catering, for which we thank them.

Schools attending were: Al Siraat College, Epping; Lowther Hall Girls; Fintona Girls; Geelong College; Oberon High School, Geelong; MLC; Mullauna Secondary College, Nunawading; Ivanhoe Girls; Westall Secondary College; Melbourne Girls College, Richmond; St Monica's, Epping; and University High School.

Ms Tina Hosseini, Chair of Red Cross Youth Advisory Commission, addressed us in the Queen's Hall. She was a past *My Vote My Voice* keynote speaker when she was Youth Commissioner for the Multicultural Commission.

Ms Penny Scott, Adviser Workforce Branch Victorian Public Sector Commission, spoke on her experiences as a Wiradjuri woman, researcher, and employment lawyer focused on workplace diversity. Both speakers provided insights into diversity in organisations through their own experiences.

Student speakers presented on the theme using a variety of contexts. Evaluations were completed by panel members: Hon Samantha Dunn MLC; Barbara Abley AM, Geelong's first female Mayor; Cr Cuc Lam, Mayor of Maribyrnong; with Dr Deborah Towns as Adjudicator. Deciding awards was a very difficult task!

www.ncwvic.org.au



Melbourne Esperanto Association

In January, seven members of the Melbourne Esperanto Association travelled to Adelaide to participate in (and in some cases help organise) the 2019 Australian Esperanto congress and summerschool. Held every year, the congress is organised to bring together new and existing speakers of the international language, Esperanto. Esperanto was developed in the late 1800s by L. L. Zamenhof to be an easy-to-learn bridging language for those keen to communicate internationally, and has now grown to have clubs and speakers around the globe.

Every year the Australian congress attracts not only new learners from the local area, but Esperantists from other countries who come to experience our local culture and surrounds. This year's guests were treated with a trip to the Cleland Wildlife Park to interact with native Australian birds and animals, and an excursion to Mt Lofty lookout to view Adelaide from a different perspective.

During the congress there were also three levels of Esperanto classes, workshops on art and music, lectures in Esperanto about a range of topics (including the history of electronic music, folding bicycles, indigenous languages, Iceland, and world flags to name but a few), and a guided tour through the Adelaide Art Gallery.

The congress was held in the beautiful Seymour College between 4-13th of January and also featured a concert by Melbourne based Esperanto synth-pop group EKDE TIAM.

Next years congress will be held in January 2020 in Auckland, New Zealand - but if you're curious about the language and can't wait, the Melbourne Esperanto Association meets every Monday night at Ross House from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and has a wide range of free resources to help you become an international citizen!

www.esperanto.com.au



Photo © Melbourne Esperanto Association

Climate and Health Alliance

Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) is widely recognised as the national peak body and leading non-government (NGO) organisation working on climate change and health in Australia. Over 30 organisations - national professional associations (representing practitioners of public health, medicine, nursing, midwifery, health promotion, psychology, social work, and rural health), along with unions, peak health bodies, healthcare service providers, leading research and academic institutions, and health consumer networks – are members of CAHA.

Core initiatives for CAHA in 2018-19 were leading the *Our Climate Our Health* campaign for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being, particularly in the lead up to the federal election, and growing and supporting the Australian and New Zealand network of *Green and Healthy Hospitals*. Both programs have secured widespread support

and seen rapid growth in the participation and engagement of organisations and individuals in advocating for policy and taking steps to reduce the carbon and environmental footprint of healthcare.

In September 2018 CAHA hosted a Climate and Health Symposium at Ross House, where approximately 60 attendees gathered to discuss issues of climate and health in Australia. Attendees represented the health sector, local and state government, professional and industrial associations, not-for-profit organisations, as well as research, academia, environmental organisations and civil society. The Symposium created opportunities for collaboration and to share challenges, successes and opportunities surrounding climate change and health, and to generate momentum to help accelerate coordinated and effective action.

www.caha.org.au



Milly Burgess (CAHA staff) and Emma Keech (CAHA Volunteer) at the Climate Strike in March 2019.
Photo © Climate and Health Alliance

Sustainable Living Foundation

The National Sustainable Living Festival brings the vital message of sustainability to the forefront of our nation's consciousness. Now in its 20th year, the Festival has become Australia's largest event of its type addressing current sustainability and climate change issues. The feature event of the Festival is the three-day Big Weekend, held in Melbourne CBD, which curates bold and cutting edge content with presentations by international, national and local thought leaders.

This year, the Festival led with the theme 'Disruption' and put the spotlight on the disruptions for sustainability happening right now all around the world, including the explosion in clean energy uptake, the surge of urban agriculture, the growth of regenerative farming and the breakthroughs in zero waste.

A feature event of the Big Weekend is the 'Festival Great Debate', which invites movers and shakers to present a case from their insights and action strategies. This year's Great Debate topic was 'Last Chance Disruption', which asked the debate panel: what's the best game plan for large-scale rapid change, and where can this level of action come from – our parliament, corporate boardrooms or on the streets?

One of the biggest disrupters in the climate movement currently is Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old student from Sweden, who began her weekly Climate School Strike outside the Swedish Parliament and has since ignited worldwide student strikes in many countries around the world. Greta is now a major figure in the Climate Movement and taking her message to world leaders and global institutions. The Festival was honoured to be able to cross live to Greta's strike action outside the Swedish Parliament and have her take part in the 2019 Great Debate.

www.slfonline.org.au



Greta Thunberg live via Sweden
for the Great Debate event.
Photo © Julian Meehan

Housing for the Aged Action Group

This year, Housing for the Aged Action Group joined a nationwide 18-month pilot project, run by Council on the Ageing Australia, called the Aged Care Systems Navigator. It is developing and testing different models to support vulnerable people to access the aged care system; there are 62 trials being delivered across the country. Our information hub here at Ross House is targeting people at risk of homelessness, and is one of the only ones providing face-to-face information and support.

We have a team of volunteers who can explain the complex aged care system to older people and assist them to register with My Aged Care. Some of these volunteers are bilingual and can also conduct home visits if a person is unable to use the phone or come into the office for an appointment. We started this new project in March 2019, and so far, have assisted 31 people and conducted 26 home visits. Often our clients are non-English speaking, many are over 80 years old, some are from refugee backgrounds or have limited education, and some are dealing with the stresses of insecure housing or elder abuse. Many people need more information and support after registration, because follow up is often needed.

As well as this project, we are continuing to provide support to people aged 50 years and older, who are at risk of homelessness, to find long term secure and affordable housing. Being "at risk" includes living in expensive private rental, as well as living in inappropriate housing like sheds, caravans or overcrowded homes. Our work also includes providing information to workers, who may have clients at risk of homelessness or living in retirement housing.

www.oldertenants.org.au



HAAG volunteer Eileen, is an Aged Care Service Navigator. Photo © Guruswami Perumwal

Emerge Australia

Emerge Australia is a national organisation providing information, support and advocacy for people living with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). ME/CFS is estimated to affect up to 250,000 Australians. Around 25% of people with the condition are so unwell that they are housebound or bedbound. The condition currently has no cure. While there have been some recent advances in our understanding of the biomedical basis of ME/CFS, undertaking more research is critical to finding effective diagnostics and treatments.

Understandably then, EmERGE Australia was over the moon when they found out that the collaborative team which they are a key part of, had been successful in winning \$1 million of competitive grant funding from philanthropic trust the Mason Foundation, to establish the first Australian ME/CFS biobank and patient registry.

Dr Heidi Nicholl, CEO of EmERGE Australia commented "We're just so pleased to be a part of this landmark project which will help biomedical researchers advance our understanding of this highly debilitating condition."

The biobank and patient registry will be led by EmERGE Australia in partnership with La Trobe University. A number of other Australian researchers are collaborators on the project along with patient organisation Solve ME/CFS Initiative (SMCI) in the US and the UK ME Biobank (UKMEB), making this a truly global project. The patient registry will utilise the latest technology available, enabling patients to register and track their symptoms via an app.

EmERGE Australia is absolutely thrilled to be a part of this initiative and are immensely grateful for this much-needed funding from the Mason Foundation for establishing the Biobank and for supporting further biomedical research.

www.emerge.org.au





Advocacy for Oromia

We have had another busy year! We have held many interesting sessions at our regular meetings at Ross House: five information sessions on mental health, three information sessions on preventing violence against women, two community consultations, two sessions on healthy eating, and ten peace education sessions.

Throughout the year, we held two Irreechaa-Oromo (thanksgiving) celebrations, where more than 500 community members attended and enjoyed the days. We also ran six home-based Oromo postnatal cares, called Shanan, at the homes of six Oromo. The meaning of Shanan refers to the cultural ritual and celebration of Oromo postnatal care on the fifth day after giving birth.

The aim of Shanan is to provide care for both mother and baby. The goal is to increase lactation and maintain the mother's health – thereby improving baby's health. Most importantly, the main goals for mothers is to improve their recovery from post-birth changes, maintain and improve lifetime health, and protect mothers' bodies during the vulnerable post-birth period. The objective is to support women both materially and morally, but more so about providing psychological and emotional support.

The principles of Shanan can be said to ensure the mother's body is warm and protected without applying excessive force, that the mother consumes nutritious food and gets enough rest. After birth, mothers need to keep their bodies warm to allow perspiration, ensuring that wastes in their body can be discharged. Some of the prohibited actions include lifting heavy objects, strenuous exercise, and excessive strain on joints from regular house chores.

The attendance is mainly by invitation, based on previous connections and relationships, however interested mums are welcome to attend an event. Children and male groups also attend events, but are not involved in the duty. While children attend in order to observe and learn the practice, males attend the event to show their solidarity with the father and to express their happiness to the family.

While the primary focus of the Shanan cultural practice is to help new mothers in adapting and recovering from post-birth in a psycho-social model, it plays a significant role in promoting mental health, increasing connections and socialisation. It is pre-eminently about creating and providing a supportive environment in which a woman, her baby and the wider family can begin their new life together. It has been passed down through generations, based on the wisdom of women, by women, and for women, in relation to how to care for post-birth mothers based on personal postnatal experiences.

Advocacy for Oromia work with Australian-Oromos to change lives for the better and we can't run these significant events without the support of Ross House. We appreciate the constant maintenance and upgrading of facilities and proudly call the space, the Oromo House, where we feel at home – for this we wish to thank Ross House and its staff for always being so helpful and friendly.

www.advocacy4oromia.org

Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation

Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation (AMIDA) enlisted Award Winning Filmmaker, Lawrence Johnston (Eternity, Fallout), to create the content for their exciting new project *Opening Doors - Renting for All*.

The project was created in Ross House with the inception of the idea by AMIDA'S Pauline Williams, in the creation of a website campaign exploring the world of renting and the disability sector. The project is funded by The Department of Health and Human Services and is being created in conjunction with The Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV), with the aim of breaking down discrimination between those with a disability and the real estate world.

Participants from a number of disability groups in Ross House, including SARU, VATT, Reinforce, Positive Powerful Parents, Rainbow Rights and Brain Injury Matters (among many others from other organisations outside of Ross House), took part in the project.

40 Videos were filmed in the Hayden Raysmith Room at Ross House that form the body of informative material for the *Opening Doors - Renting for All* website, which is also accompanied by a 20-page booklet for use by people with a disability, as well as Real Estate Agents.

The website celebrates the importance of home, space and our belongings as we embark on moving house and living in a new place. It will be an informative resource which covers the various practical aspects of looking for somewhere to live. It also explores the importance of disclosing your disability and other areas such as the necessity of living in a safe environment.

The official *Opening Doors* website and booklet launch will take place on International Day of People with Disability, 3rd December 2019.

www.amida.org.au



Aussie Hands Foundation

My name is Areeb. I am 27 years old and have a congenital left-hand deficiency with no left wrist, hand or fingers. My family consists of Mum, Dad and my younger sister. I had a very positive upbringing with friends and family to support me. My difference was never discussed or seen as an issue and I was expected, by everyone, to do everything and was not allowed to use my hand as an excuse.

I am currently working as an auditor at Pricewaterhouse-Coopers in Southbank, where I have been since graduating seven years ago; I graduated the top of my class from RMIT. I work in an office environment and I meet new people daily, as my role involves client work.

I'm a huge fan of travelling and was lucky enough to be sent on a secondment to Philadelphia, United States, between 2016 and 2018.

I love sports including AFL (Essendon), NFL (Philadelphia Eagles), but cricket was my sport of choice to play when growing up.

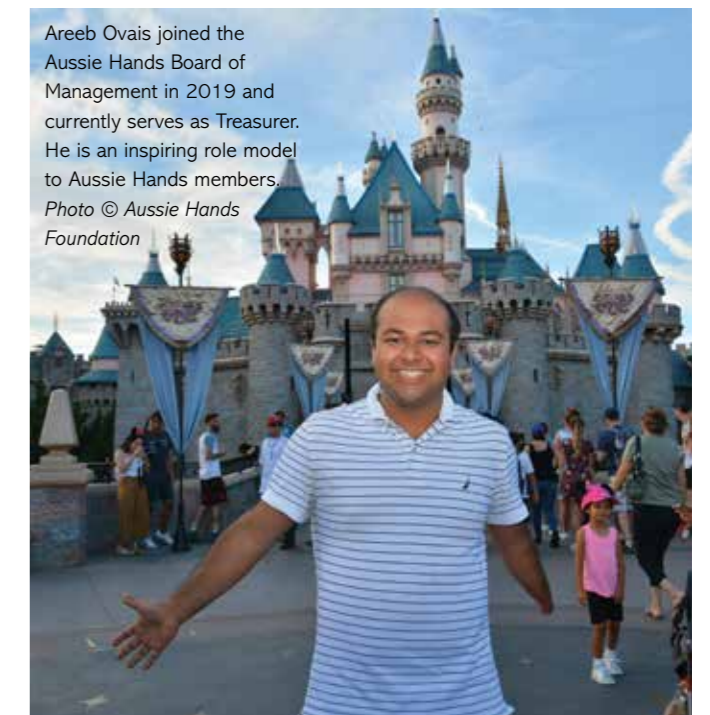
I was fortunate not to have any issues with bullying throughout my schooling, higher education or at work. A funny story was when my Mum once told me that if anyone did pick on me when I was growing up, I could just scare them with my hand, which I thought was quite funny.

For me, my imagination has been the only restriction in being able to do things and I'm not that imaginative! Some things which intrigue people is my touch-typing ability on a keyboard, tying shoelaces and cutting steak to eat.

I'm proud of my achievements to date, however there is so much more exploring and discovering left for me to do in the world. I'm involved with Aussie Hands as it enables me to be involved in something I wish I had exposure to when I was younger.

As my best friend says, "If anyone asks about your disability, in your mind think don't dis-my-ability." I'm hoping that by sharing my experiences, I can inspire others to achieve their potential.

www.aussiehands.org



Areeb Ovais joined the Aussie Hands Board of Management in 2019 and currently serves as Treasurer. He is an inspiring role model to Aussie Hands members.
Photo © Aussie Hands Foundation

Deafblind Victoria

Deafblind Victoria (DBV) was set up about 12 years ago with the support of the Self-Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU). DBV is a self-advocacy group and run by people who are deafblind. The committee has four Project Officers: Heather Lawson, Michelle Stephens, Trudy Ryall and Paola Avila, and Project Manager, Ntannis Davi.

The aim is to educate and raise awareness about deafblindness and teach organisations and communities about the barriers deafblind people face. DBV advocates for equal accessibility and meeting the communication needs of deafblind people.

This includes making sure the deafblind community have their rights met within their own local communities and lobbying to government about social inclusion within government organisations. DBV also reinforces that social inclusion is important by working with deafblind communities, Victorian communities, local councils, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, disability provider organisations, information technology organisations, transport, education, recreation, emergency services, research and legal organisations.

Over the past year, DBV achieved many outcomes:

- Monthly peer group meetings were held: a regular get-together to learn from each other's self-advocacy experiences with deafblindness; to develop advocacy and self-advocacy skills; and to invite monthly guest speakers such as Travellers Aid, Melbourne City Council, Ambulance Victoria and others.
- This year was the first time to have a partnership project, with Deafblind Australia and Able Australia, to celebrate and campaign during Deafblind Awareness Week; a celebration of Helen Keller, a famous person with deafblindness. Around the world, we celebrate her life in the week of her birthday (27th June) each year. Over 80 people attended the event this year.
- We ran Deafblind World workshops and provided training to Ross House tenants, Melbourne City Council, Travellers Aid, Auslan participants and more.
- We created new postcards for advertising Deafblind World training, which will be sent out to organisations.
- DBV received ILC NDIS funds to provide capacity building and training on how to develop better skills in your work environment and professional development opportunities for teams to work more efficiently.
- DBV are working towards launching a new DBV website and social media presence in 2020.

www.deafblindvictoria.com



Community Music Victoria

March 2019 saw the launch of a new drop in choir from Community Music Victoria for the Flinders Lane Community; *Flinders Lane Community Voices*. Thursday lunchtimes never sounded so good! Based in Ross House, this singing group was established to be as accessible and open to absolutely anyone as possible. It's about relieving the stresses of life and having fun in a way that connects people and brings communities together.



Run by experienced singing facilitators, Sarah Mandie and John Howard, *Flinders Lane Community Voices* offers anyone living, working or visiting Flinders Lane a wonderful way to break up their day. The focus is on songs that are easy to learn, wholesome and hearty; this free lunchtime treat guarantees nourishment for singers of all skill levels and experience.

Flinders Lane Community Voices is funded by the City of Melbourne.

www.cmvic.org.au

Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group Inc.

We have had a very productive and informative year. Our membership currently stands at 105 and our interesting speakers throughout the year have helped us to understand our condition of osteoporosis more fully.

We had a presentation by Nginder Kaur, the Advice and Educating Officer, from the Office of Public Advocate telling us about Advanced Care Planning, which is helpful to everyone. Dr Nicki Hodyl from 'Vertex Health' explained how she is putting together a website for the Endocrine Society, including a sheet on Osteoporosis, after being reviewed by several specialists. Brigitte Lalor told us about laser treatment for pain relief, Prof. Hylton Menz, Podiatrist and Researcher, gave an excellent presentation called 'Preventing Falls from the Ground Up' and Prof. Gordon Lynch spoke on 'Ageing Healthily with Good Bone and Muscle Strength'.

Our members help our cause by doing interviews about their condition with research groups and our member newsletter continues to provide helpful information about osteoporosis from within Australia but overseas as well.

We had two outings during the year; one being a visit to the Baker IDI Research Institute where we learnt how too much salt in our diet can deplete the quality of our bones, and our second outing was our Annual Luncheon at the 'Angliss' restaurant, which is always very enjoyable.

We wish to thank the staff at Ross House for their help over the past twelve months. Our meetings are held at Ross House, in the Hayden Raysmith room, on the 3rd Tuesday in February, April, June, August and October.

Human Rights Arts and Film Festival

The 2019 Human Rights Arts and Film Festival (HRAFF) kicked off with the rousing, upbeat and inspiring film 2040. Structured as a visual letter to his 4-year-old daughter, Director Damon Gameau explores what the future could look like if we accepted the best solutions to issues regarding the climate, economics, technology, civil society and agriculture and sustainability. The film was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Malinda Wink (Good Pitch Australia) and featuring director Damon Gameau, Katerina Gaita (CEO of Climate for Change) and Dr. Amanda Cahill (CEO of The Next Economy).

One of our key objectives of marketing and communications this year was to expand the influence and reach of the organisation, particularly through online channels. This year we leveraged our social media following to spread educational content and current affairs during the course of the year. We had over 23 million reach in our content and over 2 million through publicity.

We have driven this by primarily moving from a print marketing strategy to a digital strategy. This has seen us create a strong human rights community of online activists that can be harnessed. Our strategic messaging heavily tied into the news-cycle and election, including hashtags #storieshatmatter #changethenarrative and #hraff2019. We focused our messaging on creating empathy and being a part of the movement to bring positive change.

www.hraff.org.au



Photo © Human Rights Arts and Film Festival

Tenant Members

Ablelink

Provides computer access and internet training for people with deafblindness.

ABRISA Brazilian Association

Promotes Brazilian culture and provides information about Australia for immigrants.

Advocacy for Oromia

Enables and empowers Oromo people.

AMIDA

Action for more independence and dignity in housing for people with disabilities.

Asbestoswise

Provides information and support services to asbestos victims and the wider community.

Assisi Aid Projects

Supports sustainable development work in southern India.

Aussie Hands Foundation

Supports children and adults who have been born with a hand difference or who have an acquired hand injury.

Australia China Friendship Society

Fosters friendship between Australian and Chinese people.

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

Champions the rights of people with a disability in Australia.

Beyond Zero Emissions

An internationally recognised climate solutions think tank.

Blind Citizens Australia

Achieving equity and equality through empowerment, promoting positive community attitudes and striving for high quality and accessible services which meet our needs.

Brain Injury Matters

Self advocacy for people with acquired brain injury.

Care Leavers Australasia Network

A support, advocacy, research and training group for people who grew up in Australia's orphanages, Children's Homes and in foster care.

Care With Me

Supporting children and/or families who are dealing with foster care and whom come from a Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

Casal Catala de Victoria

Promotes the customs and language of Catalonia.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Foundation

Assist people affected by Charles Bonnet Syndrome (including significant others) and raise awareness about this condition.

Christina Noble Children's Foundation

Assisting children in need with education, medical care, social opportunities and job placement in Vietnam and Mongolia.

Climate and Health Alliance

Advocates for public policy that will promote and protect human health in order to prevent further global warming.

Collective of Self Help Groups

A network of self-help and social action groups, made up of and controlled by people who are directly affected by a particular issue.

Community Music Victoria

Developing, facilitating and servicing music making among Victorian communities.

Deafblind Victoria

Increasing community awareness and understanding of the experience of deafblindness and advocating to improve quality of life, of those who are deafblind.

Disability Discrimination Legal Service

Working to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities and empower them.

Disability Resources Centre

Providing individual advocacy for adults with a disability, free of charge, throughout greater metropolitan Melbourne.

Disabled WinterSport Australia

Providing opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy winter sports and to enjoy the magnificent environment that is Australia's Snowy Mountains with fellow skiers.

Emerge Australia

Advocates for, educates about, and provides information on, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) more commonly known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).

Exit Victoria

Engages in advocating for law reform and supporting end of life rights through political and direct action.

Federation of Spanish Speaking Seniors

Offering friendship and support to members representing twenty-one Spanish speaking countries.

Friends for Good

Raising awareness of loneliness as a significant issue in the community and addressing gaps in services to foster a greater sense of connection and wellbeing for individuals and communities.

Hand Knit & Crochet Guild

Utilising the art and craft of hand knitting to promote community involvement, advocacy and self help.

Housing for the Aged Action Group

Working towards the alleviation of housing related poverty for older Australians.

Human Rights Arts & Film Festival

Explores diverse and inspiring human stories through the mediums of film, art, music and forums.

Live and Learn Environmental Education

Develops and implements projects and programs for teachers, schools and communities in the field of environmental and developmental education.

Public Transport Users' Association

Representing passengers on all forms of public transport.

Reinforce

A self help group educating people about the rights and needs of people with an intellectual disability.

Retina Australia

Assisting people who need to come to terms with the personal and social impact of gradually becoming blind.

RISE: Refugees, Survivors and Ex-Detainees

Run by refugees, RISE provides mutual aid, support and training and advocates for better government policy for refugees.

SARU (Self Advocacy Resource Unit)

The SARU drop in centre provides resources and self-advocacy support for people with a disability.

Shakti Migrant & Refugee Women's Support Group Melbourne

Providing culturally-competent domestic violence intervention and support services to women and children victims of domestic violence of Asian, African and Middle Eastern origins.

Slavic Welfare Association

Supporting refugees, migrants and other Slavic associations in their settlement process in Australia.

Spina Bifida Foundation of Victoria

Aims to improve the life chances of people with Spina Bifida through practical programs and activities.

STAR - Victorian Action on Intellectual Disability

Advocates for the rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families.

Thai Information and Welfare Association

Providing culturally appropriate information, welfare and referral services to the Thai community in Victoria.

The East West Foundation Australia

Aims to provide health, education and social justice for people of the Kaddapakkam and surrounding regions in Tamil Nadu, India.

The Sunflower Foundation

Aims to educate and empower as many girls as possible in the developing world, seeding hope and opportunity where there was none.

The Victorian Drama League

Supports its members, comprising community theatre groups, play reading groups, theatre societies and amateur actors.

Timorese Association of Victoria

Preserves Timorese cultural identity and promotes and develops social and cultural activities in Australia.

TreeProject

Growing, planting and caring for trees in the city, bush-land and on farms.

Union of Australian Women

Networking with women's groups, community and union organisations on issues concerning women.

Woor-Dungin Inc

Aims to enable Indigenous organisations to achieve self-determination and access the resources and support needed to address issues affecting their communities.

Tenant Associate Members

Australia for UNHCR

Raises funds to support the work of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Economic Indicator Services

Advocates and campaigns for a shift in taxation away from the disadvantaged to those who can most afford it.

Mac Advice

Provides consultancy advice, information and training on computer systems and programs.

SHINE for Kids

Assists children and young people with a relative in the criminal justice system.

Commercial Tenants

Dukes Coffee Roasters

A collaboration between like-minded individuals involved in the sourcing, roasting and brewing of high-end specialty coffee. Dukes believe in and support local producers and craftsmen.

City of Melbourne – Degraes Street Recycling Facility

Changing the waste and amenity culture in the café precinct around Degraes St, and providing food waste, cardboard and commingled recycling.

Occasional Tenants

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

Transforming the lives of Indigenous children by focusing on literacy and numeracy education.

Animal Active Australia

An activist and advocacy group for all animals with a strong focus on the rights of urban Australian native animals and companion animals.

AUSOM (Apple Users Society of Melbourne)

Provides help for Apple computer users.

Australian Federation of International Students

Aims to bridge the gap between international students and members of the Australian community.

Blueprint for Free Speech

Provides a free online library of research about freedom of expression laws around the globe.

Community Social Development International

Works with approved international organisations (initially India) assisting disadvantaged communities in developing countries bring about positive change in their lives.

Futures Foundation

Promotes greater interest in, and understanding of, the future.

Indo-China Ethnic Chinese Association

Assists members with advice and referral for a range of issues associated with settlement in Australia.

Kenya Community Victoria

Kenya Community Victoria promotes active participation of the Kenyan Diaspora in Victorian society.

Lawyers for Animals

Dedicated to improving the welfare of animals through education and law.

Lotus Group Projects

A self-help group for people with acquired brain injuries, their carers and supporters.

Melbourne Esperanto Association

Promotes and teaches the international language Esperanto.

Open Food Network

Advising and advocating for community food enterprises.

Post Polio Victoria

Advocates for people who have had or continue to be affected by Polio.

Public Interest Library Foundation

Supports and promotes all the principles of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through providing accessible, free repository of information of public interest.

River Basin Management Society

A representative body for professionals working with land, water and natural resource management in Australia.

Society of Women Writers Victoria Inc

Support and community for women writers in Victoria.

Southern Rivers Community Services

Assists people of refugee background, mainly from West Africa, settle in Australia by helping them find employment opportunities for their social and economic independence.

The Sunflower Foundation

Aims to educate and empower as many girls as possible in the developing world, seeding hope and opportunity where there was none.

United Brains

A network of self-help, self-advocacy and support groups for people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) throughout Victoria.

Members (non-tenants)

Action Research Issues Association
Aussie Services Africa
CALXA Australia (*Associate Member*)
Climate for Change
Counsellors Victoria Inc (*Associate Member*)
Deaf Victoria
Disability Advocacy Victoria
Interchange
Melbourne Campaigners' Network (*Associate Member*)
Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group
Narcolepsy and Overwhelming Daytime
Sleep Society NODSS
National Council of Women of Victoria
Non Profit Training (*Associate Member*)
Outer Urban Projects
Seniors Financial and Literacy Discussion Group
Slavery Links Australia
Stabilise (*Associate Member*)
Sustainable Living Foundation

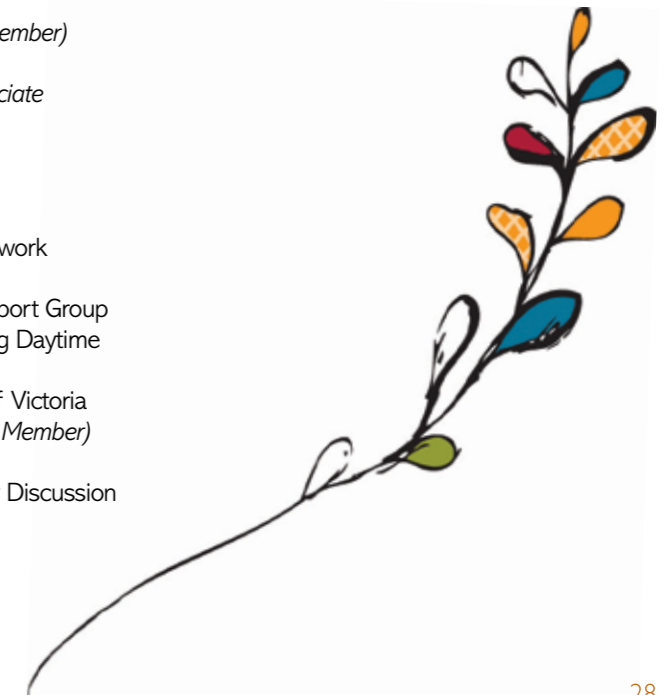
The Big Issue Classroom (*Associate Member*)
Timorese Association of Victoria
U3A Melbourne City (University of the Third Age)
Understanding Literature Group

Moves in

Human Rights Arts & Film Festival
Emerge Australia

Moves out

Asbestoswise
Care With Me
Christina Noble Children's Foundation
The Sunflower Foundation
Timorese Association of Victoria



The financial result for 2018-2019 was significantly higher than budgeted. Operating revenue increased by 6.5% to \$1,136,816 and income was buoyed by grants totalling \$56,616. Room hire, however, remained static. Expenditure decreased, as this year we didn't have the expenses of the Community Consultation project and the Ross House 30 year celebrations. We still have significant legal and professional costs associated with the MMRA project, but costs have been contained by the concerted efforts of the Ross House staff and also by deferring some capital works.

It is clear that our current reliance on members, tenants and casual room hire cannot sustain the operation and maintenance of our Heritage building and business model. Clearly some form of external funding is required, as has been identified in the RHA Strategic Plan 2018-2023. The staff and committee have identified and are continuing to pursue a number of possibilities in this respect.

Keith Bettles
RHA Treasurer

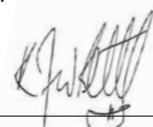
The committee members submit the financial reports of RHA Inc and the Ross House Trust for the financial year ended 30 June 2019. The principal activity of the Association during the financial year was to manage RHA for small community organisations who are working towards a just and environmentally sustainable society. No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year. The names of the committee members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

- Christine McAuslan
- Valerie Elliott
- Alba Chliakhtine
- Keith Bettles
- De Grebner
- Scot Muirden
- Richard Caven
- Maggie Maguire OAM
- Dr Heidi Nicholl
- Nazzareno Marchionda

Signed in accordance with a resolution
of the Committee:



Christine McAuslan
Chairperson



Keith Bettles
Treasurer

Ross House Association Incorporated

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank & On Hand	814,297	786,187
Trade Debtors	25,440	13,475
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	5,000	5,000
	20,440	8,475
Sundry Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	-	5,375
Account Receivable	-	-
	834,737	800,037
Non-current Assets		
Land	15,840,000	5,550,000
Buildings	2,950,000	2,950,000
Less accumulated amortisation	(442,500)	(368,750)
Furniture & Equipment	238,159	227,471
Less accumulated depreciation	(171,619)	(157,958)
Capital Work	282,953	262,785
Less accumulated depreciation	(193,150)	(154,625)
Electronic Equipment	137,751	114,595
Less accumulated depreciation	(68,106)	(41,189)
Ground Floor Toilet	121,725	-
Less accumulated depreciation	(1,450)	-
HVAC VSD	54,200	-
Less accumulated depreciation	(1,129)	-
HVAC	801,516	801,516
Less accumulated depreciation	(222,373)	(182,297)
Website	71,954	71,479
Less accumulated depreciation	(27,663)	(3,931)
	19,370,268	9,069,096
TOTAL ASSETS	20,205,005	9,869,133

Balance Sheet cont.

As at 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors & Accruals	58,465	66,409
Income in Advance	14,001	14,457
Grant in Advance	20,000	20,000
Rent in Advance	261	430
Staff Leave Provisions	73,047	59,379
Superannuation Provision	8,963	7,325
	174,737	168,000
Non- Current Liabilities		
Right of Indemnity-Ross House Trust	18,347,500	8,131,250
Staff Leave Provisions - L.S.L.	21,305	17,727
	18,368,805	8,148,977
TOTAL LIABILITIES	18,543,542	8,316,977
NET ASSETS	1,661,463	1,552,156
Equity		
Emergency Reserve	400,000	400,000
Retained Earnings	1,261,463	1,152,156
	1,661,463	1,552,156



Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Income		
Lease Income	769,129	702,727
Car Park	52,048	48,420
Facilities Hire	277,868	279,933
Equipment Hire	27,396	21,835
Sales-Equipment Keys & Stationery	1,795	2,439
Interest Received	10,893	8,846
Insurance & Other Reimbursements	408	539
Membership Subscription	7,650	7,673
Other Income	785	1,623
Refund	(12,156)	(6,108)
Donations & Donations in Kind	1,000	-
Grants Received		
- Ground Floor Toilet Upgrade	30,000	-
- HVAC VSD	25,000	-
Reimbursements	1,616	-
TOTAL INCOME	1,193,432	1,067,927
Less expenditure		
Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Wages	390,255	413,826
Superannuation	38,186	46,993
Workcover Premiums	2,320	2,118
Provision for Staff Leave	17,247	8,240
Staff Selection	226	-
Staff Training	2,380	6,063
	450,614	477,240
Property and Equipment Costs		
Building Expenses	200,134	191,693
Utilities & Services	88,556	79,464
Cleaning	74,716	64,739
Other property & Equipment	175,843	141,266
	539,249	477,162

Income Statement cont.

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Operating Costs		
Amenities	371	1,123
Advertising and Promotion	2,755	1,794
Audit fees	1,950	2,796
Bad Debts Expenses	-	4,821
Bank Charges	217	349
Bookkeeping & Accounting fees	680	490
Community Consultation Project	-	53,044
Computer & Software Support	20,584	8,479
Consultants fees	22,400	20,627
Annual report & AGM	4,390	4,945
Events	4,859	2,928
Legal fees	6,922	1,532
Telephone	12,758	10,409
Printing & Design	846	777
RHA Admin Support & COM Exp	1,319	13
Stationery & Office Supplies	5,799	4,151
Sub. Membership & Library	1,547	1,991
Sundry Expenses	4,491	4,466
30 Years at Ross House	-	11,522
Website	2,090	258
	93,978	136,515
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,083,841	1,090,917
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	109,591	(22,990)

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Balance as at 1 July 2018	1,152,156	1,175,146
Depreciation Written		
Back from Prior Years	-	-
Profit (Loss) attributable		
to members	109,591	(22,990)
Prior Year Adjustment	(284)	-
Balance as at 30 June 2019	1,261,463	1,152,156



Ross House Trust

Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Trust Funds		
Accumulated Profits (Losses)		
Brought Forward	(368,750)	(295,000)
Loss This Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Asset Revaluation Reserve	18,790,000	8,500,000
Total Trust Funds	18,347,500	8,131,250

Profit and Loss Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Expenditure		
Depreciation - Buildings	73,750	73,750
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)

Statement of Appropriations

For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Accumulated Profits (Losses)		
Brought Forward	(368,750)	(295,000)
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Accumulated Loss	(442,500)	(368,750)
Accumulated Loss	(442,500)	(368,750)

The above financial statements are an abridged version of the financial statements of Ross House Association Inc and the Ross House Trust as audited by J L Collyer and Partners and deemed to a) give a true view of the financial position of Ross House Association Inc and the Ross House Trust as at 30 June 2019 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with appropriate accounting policies; and b) comply with appropriate Australian Accounting Standards. The complete financial statements are available on request from Ross House Association and are published on www.rosshouse.org.au.

Acknowledgements

Thank you for helping us grow

Thank you to the Committee and to subcommittee members, the hours you give are deeply appreciated. A special thank you to our members, tenants, supporters and partners, including:

- Deb Carveth (Community Music Victoria, Colin Hiscoe (Reinforce), Vanessa Petrie (Beyond Zero Emissions), Colleen Tarrant (Deafblind Victoria) and Hayden Raysmith AM for their contributions to the Ross House short video
- City of Melbourne - especially staff from the 1200 Buildings Program, Engineering Services and Social Investment branches
- Degraes Street Recycling Facility team
- Maddocks
- National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
- City Switch
- Justice Connect – NFP Law
- Sustainability Victoria
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science
- Adam Bandt MP
- Rob McLeod from the Office of Adam Bandt, Federal Member for Melbourne
- The Right Honorable Lord Mayor Sally Capp
- Non-Profit Training
- Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
- Jo Evans
- John Carey from MinterEllison
- Anita Brady from Anita Brady Heritage
- Colleen Peterson from Ratio Consultants Pty Ltd
- Chris Goss from Orbit Solutions Pty Ltd
- To all those members and tenants who contributed ideas and time throughout the year

Ross House would not exist today without the establishment funding provided by the following original donors:

- The R E Ross Trust
- The Danks Trust
- The E B Myer Charitable Fund
- The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- The Lance Reichstein Foundation
- Sidney Myer Fund
- The Oliver-Affleck Fund
- The Percy Baxter Charitable Trust
- The Scobie and Claire MacKinnon Trust
- The Stegley Foundation
- The W.C.F. Thomas Charitable Trust
- The William Buckland Foundation
- The William Paxton Charitable Trust
- The Victorian State Government



A huge congratulations to Live & Learn Vanuatu, Ser-Thiac and the Nakau Programme for receiving one of the United Nation's most prestigious awards for their efforts towards ecosystem protection and climate resilience. The Loru Vanuatu Carbon Project was awarded the Equator Award in a ceremony held in New York City. Amongst the 800 competitors of 2019 UN prestigious award, Ser-Thiac is among the 22 Winners of this year's Equator Prize.
Photo © Live & Learn - Nakau



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