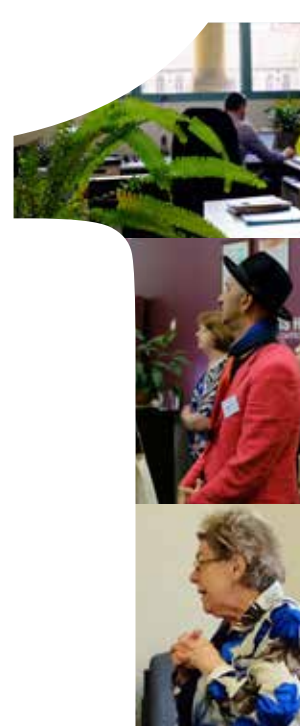
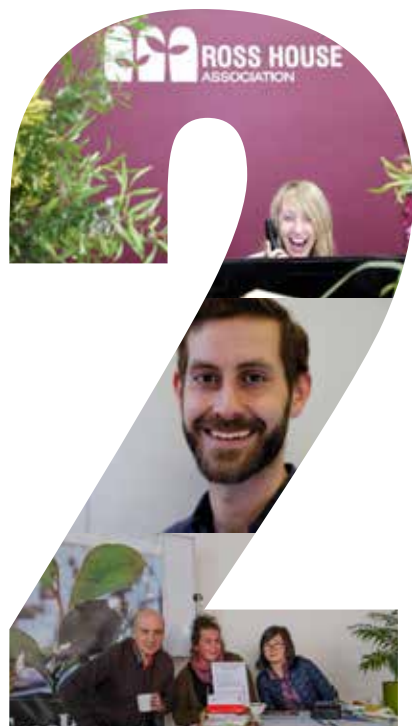
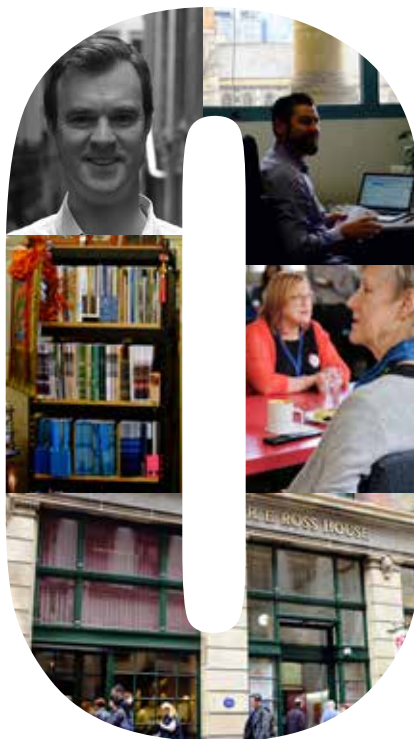


# Ross House Association

## Annual Report



# R. E. ROSS HOUSE

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## Ross House: Providing a Home to Independent Community and Advocacy Groups Since 1987



### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As the last year has slowly unfolded, there have been many of us confronted in diverse ways by the continued changes to our lives. For most, those changes have been very challenging, not only to us as individuals and the communities we belong to, but also for the organisations we rely on.



This is why I am so pleased to report, despite another year of coping with all the ramifications of COVID 19, Ross House still remains viable. This situation is based on numerous factors and strategies that have been actioned. These measures ensured expenditures were kept as low as possible at a time when the House was mostly closed and income was consequently reduced. The Risk Management and Finance sub-committee are to be congratulated for their dedicated efforts, as are the General Manager, Michael Griffiths and staff members for contributing to ideas and implementing any required actions. This does mean however, that as a committee, we can only proceed with care and caution as the long-term implications of the pandemic and the effects on Ross House pan out.

Late in 2020, in order to ensure there were no gaps or problems in the system with staff working remotely, the Committee decided to run a 360-degree consultation. This was to give all the staff the opportunity for their individual reflections on the way things were being managed. The results were very pleasing, affirming our General Manager's running of the operational aspects of Ross House, while leading and supporting the staff team during a difficult time. Having staff who work well as a team has been a beneficial and notable aspect over another year, when the ability to work together has added so much to keeping the operations of Ross House running as smoothly as possible.

The RHA Committee has continued to meet regularly over Zoom. I thank the members for their time and contributions, volunteered at a time when they are juggling their own work and life changes, due to lockdown restrictions.

As members of the Ross House community, we all have a role to play in ensuring Ross House continues to be in a position to offer its values and its philosophical spirit, as we eventually are able to return to some measure of normality.

We thank all our supporters who have continued to be part of the Ross House community over the last year and welcome new members and tenants who have joined our community at this time. As you will see in the General Manager's Report there have been many achievements during 2020-2021, not the least being sustaining Ross House over this period.

I commend the Annual Report to you.

Christine McAuslan



## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

2021 has been a tremendously challenging year for Ross House Association as well as for our Members & Tenants. Due to workplace restrictions, most of us have been working at home for a majority of the year. Even when workers were permitted to return to the office at the start of 2021, there were often reduced numbers of staff actually coming into the offices at Ross House. Likewise, it has been difficult for community groups to keep up regular use of the meeting room facilities, with most people moving online.

The year started with the onset of Melbourne's second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, leading to a long 4-month shutdown and stay at home orders for the vast majority of Ross House Members & Tenants. RHA worked with tenants suffering financial stressors, applying rent relief so they could maintain their tenancy and operations. Unfortunately however, a number of tenants decided to move out of Ross House as funds dried up or fundraising events could no longer be held.

The lockdown also saw income from meeting rooms reduced to very low levels. The introduction of both JobKeeper and CashFlow Boost provided a significant injection of funds. Ross House Association received just over \$180,000 in support from the Federal Government as well as receiving \$20,000 in grant funding from the Victorian Government. The \$205,000 surplus for the year indicates that Ross House was able to manage its expenditure and income to break even, with the additional Government funds providing a much-needed buffer for the 2021-2022 year.

In order to address the ongoing health issues around the pandemic, we introduced cleaning kits, QR Codes, signage, remote entry control, room capacity restrictions, helped tenants and meeting room users with their COVIDSafe Plans, provided regular updates on new restrictions to the Membership and remodelled the reception area. New air-conditioning dampers have also been installed in each plant room to increase fresh airflow by 40%-80%. This will assist in greatly improving the air-quality at Ross House.

One of the good news stories of this year was RHA partnering with DeafBlind Victoria (DBV) to successfully apply for the

Australian Government's Information, Linkages and Capacity Building - Social and Community Participation 2020-21 Grant. This grant was for \$49,907 and has allowed DBV to commence a fantastic capacity building program for the deafblind community at Ross House. This collaboration is a trial project for RHA and if successful, the Association will be in a position to offer partnerships with other small member organisations to enable them to apply for funding which is otherwise restricted.

To support our Members and facility users in this new world of Zoom video conferencing, we have installed a Modena HUB video conferencing system in the Jenny Florence Meeting Room on level 3. This allows you to link your Zoom session to cameras and speakers in the room so external participants can see and hear everyone in the meeting. It has had some successful use this year, but post restrictions we are hoping this becomes a well-used, useful feature for meeting room users, who may have staff or participants joining in from home.

Ross House staff have also worked extremely well together this year. A decision was made early on in the pandemic not to rehire for the Development Program Manager position, this was the right decision as it has saved the costs of a full-time staff position. However, it has also meant that the extra workload has been picked up by the remaining staff. Despite the many uncertainties this year and often unsuitable home environments for work, staff have performed extremely well in their roles.

The Committee and staff have also worked very closely this year to manage the difficulties presented by the pandemic,

allowing RHA to come through the year in good shape and able to face the challenges of 2021-2022. I would like to thank both the staff and the Committee for their support this year.

To every RHA Member who has stuck by Ross House during this difficult year, when tenancies and meeting rooms have been inaccessible due to stay at home orders, thank you. Your support will enable Ross House to bounce back from this global crisis to look more like the vibrant community we all know and love.

Michael Griffiths



## ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE AND STAFF 2020-2021

### Committee

#### Chairperson

**Christine McAuslan**

Collective of Self-Help Groups

#### Deputy Chairperson

**Dr. Heidi Nicholl**

Emerge Australia (until April 2021)

#### Deputy Chairperson

**Ntannis Davi**

Deafblind Victoria (from April 2021)

#### Treasurer

**Keith Bettles**

U3A Melbourne City

#### Secretary

**Scot Muirden**

Charles Bonnett Syndrome Foundation

#### Members

**Alba Chliakhtine**

ABRISA

**Cynthia Pilli**

STAR Victoria Inc (until April 2021)

**De Grebner**

Appointed

**Maggie Maguire**

Appointed

**Michael Griffiths**

Ex-officio

**Mohamed Nabe**

Southern Rivers Community Services

**Nazzareno Marchionda**

Appointed Staff Representative

**Ntannis Davi**

Deafblind Victoria (until April 2021)

**Richard Caven**

Appointed

**Valerie Elliott**

Handknitters Guild

### Staff

**Michael Griffiths**

General Manager

**Rebecca May**

Membership & Tenancy Officer

**Nazzareno Marchionda**

Facility Manager

**Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane**

Information & Administration Officer

**Junxia Xu**

Finance Officer

### Casual staff

**Patti Gerkens**

**Ruby James-Strawhan**

**Ella Marchionda**

**Nina Marchionda**



*A parent helps her daughter put on a mask as she prepares to join COVID-safe activities in our Children's Project, Assisi Aid Projects. Photo © Integrated Development Trust 2020/21*



## TREEPROJECT

With Ross House as our base for many years, TreeProject, since 1989, has facilitated the growing and planting of more than 2 million trees into the Victorian Landscape through volunteer and community-based initiatives.

We thrive on getting urban and rural communities together to foster that link to restore damaged ecosystems across Victoria. Trained volunteers contribute their time and hard work to propagate and care for seedlings of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses in their own backyards, which are then planted out on landholder's land by additional volunteers.

The current 2020/2021 distribution has seen volunteer growers grow 90k seedlings for landholders and landcare groups. Many of these seedlings will be directed to bushfire affected areas and to support the koala population, wildlife corridors and windbreaks. We have coordinated 20 planting days out in the country to plant the seedlings and have welcomed back many volunteers and introduced many new volunteers to planting. Corporate groups have enjoyed volunteering at these planting days as well. Covid lockdowns have impacted the planting season but nevertheless we are

very pleased with the season's efforts and outcomes. This has been one of the larger distributions TreeProject has facilitated for a number of years.

One of the highlights of the year was welcoming the news that Dr Margaret Frances McLeod, TreeProject's Co-Founder, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal on 17th June 2021. She was recognised for service to conservation and the environment. We continue to do the work started by our dedicated originator and first president, to continue the vision and commitment that was made more than 30 years ago when she stood up and pledged to plant a million trees.

[treeproject.org.au](http://treeproject.org.au)

*TreeProject planting day in Dixon's Creek, part of the beautiful Yarra Valley in Victoria. Photo © Treeproject*





*A large, electric-powered yellow digger and its control panel.*  
Photo © BZE



## BEYOND ZERO EMISSIONS

At Beyond Zero Emissions (BZE), we're working hard to accelerate the transition to a zero-emissions Australia.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, last year we released our most ambitious and successful work to date: the Million Jobs Plan. This groundbreaking report detailed more than one million new, secure, well-paying jobs, rebuilding our economy and securing a strong future for all Australians.

Meetings with federal government officials followed, as did public support from some of Australia's most influential leaders in business and politics including former Macquarie Bank Chairman Kevin McCann, First State Super CEO Deanne Stewart, Atlassian co-founder and co-CEO Mike Cannon-Brookes, and architect of the Paris Climate Agreement Christiana Figueres.

The Million Jobs Plan was Australia's most widely covered plan to rebuild our economy and create clean jobs attracting nearly 1,000 media mentions.

Our latest project, Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts, demonstrates how an abundance of renewable energy is an opportunity for Australia to offer fixed, low-cost energy to onshore manufacturers and build the industry well into the future.

We released two focused reports demonstrating the enormous potential of Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts. Through detailed independent economic modelling for two Precincts in Gladstone and the Hunter Valley, we showed that these two hubs alone could create 45,000 new ongoing jobs and an extra \$13 billion in annual revenue. We connected with local industries in these regions and gained major support for Precincts, launching the Hunter Valley chapter with a sold-out event at the Hunter Innovation Festival!

Our talented and hardworking team continue to build closer ties with investors and industries to repower our manufacturing, energy, and exports sectors, accelerating Australia beyond zero emissions.

[bze.org.au](https://bze.org.au)

## HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG) is a member-based community organisation that has been around since 1983 and has been part of the Ross House community since 1991. We assist people who are aged 50 years+ to obtain housing, and we work towards our vision for 'a society where older people have secure, safe & affordable housing'. Our commitment to social justice and elevating the voices of older people mean that face-to-face discussions have been very important for our older members and clients. Since COVID-19, we have had to do things differently.

We have been mastering the art of online and "hybrid" ways of connecting with our members. In November 2020, we were excited to hold our first ever online Annual General Meeting.

Before the meeting, we asked our members what prevents them from joining online meetings and offered assistance to people who may be unfamiliar with Zoom or not own a smart phone. Luckily, even with a landline, you can still join the meeting and it was great to see a number of people dialing in. We had 55 people attend the meeting, 27 members, 8 non-members and 18 staff.

In May we were excited to have our first face-to-face meeting of members since February last year, a long 15 months of only meeting via Zoom. As this seems to happen a lot now during "COVID normal", plans had to change last minute due to a sudden announcement on the day of a new snap lockdown

in Victoria, which made some members reluctant to come into the city. Despite this, we had 13 members and 5 staff join us at Ross House, and for the first time, we also had an additional 18 people join via zoom – our first "hybrid" meeting – 36 people in total!

We are always talking to our members about how to keep them engaged and involved, despite the lockdowns. Our volunteers have spent many hours ringing every member to see how they are going, and we have surveyed them and asked questions in meetings. People are clearly missing the opportunity to catch up face-to-face at Ross House, and are missing the outdoor activities and social interactions. Although everyone is managing to keep busy and using various strategies to stay connected, there are still feelings of isolation. Meeting online does give people who have trouble leaving the house, or who live far from the city, the opportunity to participate.

*oldertenants.org.au*



*HAAG volunteers and staff enjoying an end of year celebration via Zoom.  
Photo © HAAG*



*The Vic sings team for Amberley online. Photo © CMVic*

## COMMUNITY MUSIC VICTORIA

In response to the many lockdowns in late 2020 and throughout 2021, Community Music Victoria (CMVic) continued to innovate its programs with online and hybrid delivery. This included the popular Flinders Lane Community Voices (FLCV), which continued to run as an online 'drop in' lunchtime choir on Zoom - demonstrating techniques to share music in fun and inclusive ways.

Our annual singing camp, Amberley Online, held in October 2020 included the use of breakout rooms with Zoom to make the introductory session more personal, and support the learning of multi-part harmony for the Big Sing. In total, 172 people Zoomed in to experience the wide range of activities in the 9 different workshops and sessions on offer. Singers and singing leaders of all levels and experience participated, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

CMVic started new projects to build music leaders' capacity to run groups online. This included regular Leaders' Live Lounges; to share issues and learnings, and Music Software Workshops (MSW); practical workshops on a range of technology for leading music online.

*cmvic.org.au*

## DEAFBLIND VICTORIA

For the past 20 years, the Deafblind community has made a home at Ross House. On the third floor, Ablelink helped deafblind people learn braille and develop digital literacy. Deafblind Victoria (DBV), a community group run by and for Deafblind people, held peer support events and activities such as the colourful yarn bombing in Flinders Lane that was installed for Deafblind Awareness Week in 2021. For people who can neither see nor hear, these programs have provided a precious opportunity for social connection. Some travel to Ross House by train from regional Victoria, coming without a support worker or guide dog, having memorised the route.

When Able Australia announced that they would close Ablelink in 2020, the Deafblind community were distressed. DBV had been building capacity as an organisation and were keen to keep the space alive by managing it themselves, with deafblind peers sharing skills and supporting each other. However, as an unincorporated group, DBV couldn't apply directly for funds. Ross House Association agreed to partner with DBV to support them in achieving this vision, and was able to secure a \$50,000 grant.

It has been exciting to watch the space evolve as deafblind people shape the layout and facilities for their own needs, with partitions that facilitate movement around the room by "tracking" with touch, accessible computer terminals with electronic braille displays, tables for tactile sign language communication, a matte black wall to reduce glare, and other innovations. When lockdowns allow it, a drop-in program runs on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Visitors access information, have lunch, share news and skills and most importantly, gain support. Auslan students also volunteer and gain experience there, helping address a chronic shortage of support workers and interpreters skilled in deafblindness.

Lockdowns have hit the Deafblind community hard, and Covid-prevention methods like social distancing, QR codes and Zoom meetings are difficult for tactile communicators. Social isolation has been exacerbated and access to support has been reduced. Through this crisis, the project has proven invaluable in keeping the community connected. Participants take pride in supporting peers and sharing the skills and knowledge that they have developed through years at Ross House and a lifetime of experience.

[deafblindvictoria.com](http://deafblindvictoria.com)



*Jasper Cleland reads braille sign  
with yarn bombing for DBAW 2021  
Photo © DBV*



*Daryl Harrison shows Gina Pontelandolfo  
his new IrisVision device May 2021  
Photo © DBV*



*Nala, a client of the Animal Law Institute  
Photo © The Animal Law Institute*

## THE ANIMAL LAW INSTITUTE

In early 2021, the Animal Law Institute established an Anti-Puppy Farm Legal Clinic to help Victorians take legal action against breeders who are producing and selling unhealthy animals.

The Clinic is a response to the rise in the number of people buying animals for companionship during Covid, particularly during periods of lockdown. With this rising demand for pets, breeders can charge higher prices to make a quick profit and may even do so at the expense of an animal's health, or the health of the animal's offspring.

Our Clinic is providing free preliminary legal advice to Victorians who have purchased animals from breeders, and later discovered their new pet is suffering from a health condition not disclosed prior to purchase. People in this situation may have a legal right under Australian Consumer Law to obtain a refund of their purchase price; reimbursement of past and/or future veterinary expenses; or an exchange of the animal.

Many of our clients this year have spent thousands of dollars in veterinary care, in an effort to save their pet's life. It is devastating to know that so many people purchase seemingly healthy animals, and then go through the heartache of treating a sick pet or even saying goodbye, shortly after purchase. Victoria has arguably the strongest anti-puppy farming legislation in Australia today, and yet poor breeding practices are still rife across our state.

The Animal Law Institute looks forward to continuing to deliver our Clinic service in 2021/2022 to clients who have fallen victim to puppy farmers. We send our best wishes to the Ross House community and look forward to seeing everyone back in the office soon.

[ali.org.au](http://ali.org.au)

## POSITIVE POWERFUL PARENTS

Positive Powerful Parents (PPP) is a self advocacy group run by and for parents with intellectual disability. Often parents with an intellectual disability become involved with child protection. PPP is a safe place where parents can come together to talk about their experiences and share information.

Earlier this year PPP was excited to move into their own office on the 1st floor at Ross House. PPP would like to say thank you to SARU for being great roommates!

PPP has an ILC project called the Parents Rights Network - Parents Helping Parents (PRN). The PRN is hoping to develop a network of self advocacy groups for parents with intellectual disability across Australia.

The PRN has a Facebook group for parents with disability, this group has over 50 members from across Australia and holds regular online events.

A recent peer led online event was a brainstorming session that collected information from parents and self advocates. The information collected will inform 3 animation resources that PPP are developing as part of the PRN project.

[positivepowerfulparents.com.au](http://positivepowerfulparents.com.au)



*Opening of new office at Ross House  
Photo © PPP*

## ABRISA

Ranielson started his career with ABRISA in 2019 and in 2021 became our treasurer. Ranielson has, from day one, displayed a high level of professionalism towards the Association. More importantly, Ranielson was eager to learn about legislation and undertook any type of free or subsidised training from Justice Connect offered in the space of accountancy, governance and tax, delivered at Ross House. As a typical student, Ranielson was a cleaner at the beginning of his tenure with ABRISA.

With great effort and determination and the experience gained from volunteer work, Ranielson became a casual accountant for a small business. He then progressed to a not-for-profit organisation working two days per week. His contribution to the organisation was so impressive that soon after he was offered a part-time position. His visa status now enables him to work 40 hours a week. Within a month he was offered a permanent position and promoted to the role of Financial Accountant.

Everyone at ABRISA watched his success with great interest, as this reinforced our vision to support new arrivals and their

desire to reach a professional role within a short period of time. Most importantly, we admired the connection Ranielson made with the not-for-profit sector. Today Ranielson works for St Kilda Community Housing.

[abrisa.org.au](http://abrisa.org.au)



Ranielson Santana  
Photo © ABRISA

## WOOR-DUNGIN

2020/2021 has been a difficult year for Woor-dungin. Normally we would be out in Aboriginal communities mentoring and training staff and working alongside them as they seek philanthropic funding and pro bono support for their projects.

There were no meetings on Country or in the office this year, but some long-standing work came to fruition. Our multi-year project with RMIT brought results with the passing of legislation on Spent Convictions in the Victorian Parliament on 18 March 2021. This means that a “criminal record” will not mean a lifetime of unemployment. Events of the past will no longer be reported by police in a “Police Check”. We are not done yet, as we seek to make it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of historic and irrelevant criminal records.

Secondly, we nominated the late Auntie Frances Bond, one of our founders, to join the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll. The induction ceremony occurred during one of the periods of free movement in the state on 29 April 2021.

[woor-dungin.com.au](http://woor-dungin.com.au)

Auntie Frances Bond  
Photo © Woor-Dungin

## ASSISI AID PROJECTS

Mercy is the Project Coordinator for Assisi Aid Project's partner, Integrated Development Trust (IDT), in India. Her work focuses on implementing Assisi's Single Women's project, and she is also the Secretary of the Velicham Federation of Women's Groups.

Recently, Mercy shared with Assisi an overview of her experience, gained throughout 31 years of social work, including 11 years working in Assisi's projects. "In this patriarchal society, I see it as an achievement that this project has created an equal opportunity for single women like me to participate equally with men. Being a single woman, I am happy to organise other single women in this project. The training from this project helped women take leadership."

Mercy spoke of the project's strength in supporting people in Tamil Nadu communities, and in particular vulnerable women. "We have helped single women and widows to access a lot of Government welfare schemes. Additionally, the program helps people with disabilities to access Government assistance, become beneficiaries of the program and provides opportunities to start small businesses so that they can improve their livelihoods."

Mercy has helped co-ordinate the project's activities as Assisi simultaneously continues to respond to COVID-19. IDT staff have been working tirelessly to ensure participants' safety by "creating a lot of awareness on wearing a mask (and) adhering to social distancing."

Supported by generous donors, Assisi has provided food and essential items to over 2500 families impacted by the first COVID lock down in June 2020. In response to India's second COVID wave in 2021, Assisi has continued to work closely with IDT to provide another relief distribution to support participants as they face ongoing food insecurity and loss of income.

[assisi.org.au](http://assisi.org.au)



Mercy (right) checks the temperature of recipients during relief distribution  
Photo © Integrated Development Trust 2020/21

## ABC FRIENDS VICTORIA

ABC Friends Victoria was delighted to be accepted for membership of Ross House Association in April 2021, and COVID restrictions have made us a stop/start office ever since. However, gifts of furniture and equipment from other tenants have been very helpful and we have felt very welcome in the Ross House community. We look forward to learning more about our Ross House neighbours and working together.

ABC Friends is a membership-based organisation dedicated to supporting and advocating for the ABC. We run events, promotions and campaigns. Our regular newsletter is produced every 2-3 weeks and emailed to the 8,200 members and supporters on our mailing list.

Our current goal is to influence the next federal election in favour of the ABC. We want to help people who support the ABC to get elected, and we want to ensure that people who do not support the ABC are not elected.

On May 8, ABC Friends Victoria co-hosted a public rally in the Hawthorn Town Hall to launch Victoria's campaign to fight for the future of the ABC. Over 400 people filled the hall to capacity and the event was livestreamed and recorded. The rally was held on budget eve in the Kooyong electorate of Treasurer Josh Frydenberg MP and hosted by an alliance of GetUp, ABC Alumni, the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and ABC Friends – a coalition of nonpartisan concerned organisations. Speakers included Tosca Lloyd from GetUp, Prof. Ed Davis from ABC Friends, Karen Percy from MEAA and Jim Middleton from ABC Alumni. MC for the evening was Prof Andrea Hull, former Chair of the ABC Advisory Council.

[abcfriendsvic.org.au](http://abcfriendsvic.org.au)

*ABC Friends Victoria co-host a public rally in Hawthorn Town Hall. Photo © ABC Friends Victoria*



*COSHG workshop,  
Maryborough March 2021  
Photo © COSHG*



## COLLECTIVE OF SELF HELP GROUPS

In March 2021, Collective of Self Help Groups (COSHG) took advantage of a break between lockdowns and travel restrictions and travelled to Maryborough in the Central Goldfields. The intention of this trip was to hold a workshop for groups that had been in the planning for some time.

Unfortunately, like so many organisations that work in the community sector, our normal mode of working was turned upside down (as a result of COVID-19) and this trip had undergone several postponements as we sought to complete a program of rural workshops.

We did extensive promotion of the event and through local networks procured a radio interview and a lengthy article in the local paper. This workshop proved to be a success with much information gained by all and included attendees who travelled from Bendigo. On the day, we covered a range of topics that were priorities for attendees and their groups.

With two fairly new workers at COSHG, this was also an opportunity for them to get first-hand experience of the inclusive way COSHG runs workshops, with an emphasis on sharing information and experience between participants.

Importantly, down the track participants have reached out and contacted us for assistance with various issues that have since arisen.

Meanwhile, we have continued to contact groups to see how they are faring when their members are no longer able to meet together while restrictions continue. In 2020 we set up an online, ongoing survey for groups to enable COSHG to better understand the implications of how groups are able to maintain connectedness.

[coshg.org.au](http://coshg.org.au)

## CLIMATE AND HEALTH ALLIANCE

Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) is a coalition of health groups whose mission is to build a powerful health sector movement for climate action and sustainable healthcare. We have a small team of 9 staff, most of whom work part-time, and we deliver several ambitious programs and campaigns: advocating for policy to address the climate-health emergency, communicating the health impacts of climate change, and greening the healthcare sector.

A big focus for CAHA in 2020-2021 was our Rewrite the Future project which brought together 100+ health leaders and other allies in an innovative series of workshops to develop a set of narrative scenarios for possible alternative futures for Australia to 2030. We then developed an ambitious policy agenda as the roadmap to the preferred future: Our Island Home (see below).

Another big project was Real Urgent and Now (R.U.N)- we produced a Guide to Communicating the Health Impacts of

Climate Change. The RUN guide recognises nurses, doctors and other health professionals as the most trusted people in society to talk about the health impacts of climate change and was the outcome from collaboration with five of our member organisations, along with government and academic partners.

In March 2021 CAHA led a delegation of more than 30 health leaders to Parliament House in Canberra. The delegation met with 33 MPs and Senators to highlight the importance

of a National Strategy on Climate and Health in Australia. The group consisted of many health professionals, including two former Chief Health Officers - gaining media attention from AAP, The Guardian, RenewEconomy, RN Breakfast and more.

Like so many others, we haven't spent much time in our office in Ross House over the last year! We do check-in as a group daily however, and look forward to when we can return.

[caha.org.au](http://caha.org.au)



*Our Island Home' scenario, part of the Australia in 2030: Possible Alternative Futures publication. Photo © Karen Alsop*



*On 16th March 2021, we took over 30 health leaders to Parliament House to deliver a unanimous message: It's time for a national strategy on climate, health and well-being. Photo © Remy Shergill*

## MEMBERS AND TENANTS 2020-2021

### TENANT MEMBERS

#### **ABC Friends Victoria**

Support the maintenance and advancement of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to fulfil its role as an independent and comprehensive national public broadcaster.

#### **ABRISA Brazilian Association**

Promotes Brazilian culture and provides information about Australia for immigrants.

#### **Advocacy for Oromia**

Enables and empowers Oromo people.

#### **Animal Law Institute**

Protect animals through the Australian legal system.

#### **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.

#### **Beyond Zero Emissions**

An internationally recognised climate solutions think tank.

#### **Brain Injury Matters**

Self advocacy for people with acquired brain injury.

#### **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.

#### **Climate and Health Alliance**

Advocate 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 Victorians**

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).

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **STAR - Victorian Action on Intellectual Disability**

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

#### **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 Victorian Drama League**

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

#### **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**

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

### **Able Australia/Ablelink**

Provides computer access and internet training for people with deaf blindness.

### **AMIDA**

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

### **AMIDA Project VATT (Voice at the Table)**

Work to increase the presence of people with cognitive disabilities in organisations at a local, state and national level.

### **AMIDA Project PPP (Positive Powerful Parents)**

A Self Advocacy Group run by and for parents with intellectual disability.

### **Australia for UNHCR**

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

### **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.

### **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.

### **Economic Indicator Services**

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

### **Exit Victoria**

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

### **Housing for the Aged Action Group**

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

### **Live and Learn Environmental Education**

Promoting environmental and developmental education in schools and communities through training forums on computer systems and programs.

### **Mac Advice**

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



## 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

The purpose of this program is to change the waste and amenity culture in the café precinct around Degraes St, and provide food waste, cardboard and commingled recycling.

## OCCASIONAL TENANTS

### Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

The Aboriginal Literacy Foundation seeks to transform 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.

### 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.

### 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

The River Basin Management Society (RBMS) is 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.

### Spina Bifida Foundation of Victoria

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

### 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)

CALXA Australia (Associate Member)  
Climate for Change  
Counsellors Victoria Inc (Associate Member)  
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)  
Seniors Financial and Literacy Discussion Group  
SHINE for Kids  
Slavery Links Australia  
Sustainable Living Foundation  
U3A Melbourne City  
Understanding Literature Group

## MOVED OUT

Able Australia/Ablelink  
Aussie Hands Foundation  
Friends for Good  
Live and Learn Environmental Education  
The East West Foundation of Australia  
Union of Australian Women

## MOVED IN

AMIDA Project VATT (Voice at the Table)  
AMIDA Project PPP (Positive Powerful Parents)  
Animal Law Institute  
ABC Friends Victoria

## FINANCIAL REPORTS 2020-2021

### Treasurer's Report

The past financial year once again presented both management and staff with major challenges. The double dose of Covid-19 and the resultant State Government Health regulations severely affected our income stream particularly with respect to facilities hire.

The financial result for 2020-2021 was, nevertheless, significantly higher than budgeted. Total revenue decreased by 8.4% to \$1,107,478 but income was supported by grants totalling \$20,000 from the Victorian Government and Federal Government assistance via JobKeeper of \$134,250 and cash-flow Boost of \$48,956. Expenditure decreased by 11% to \$902,270. Costs have been contained by the concerted efforts of the Ross House staff and also by limiting capital expenditure to improving security for Ross House users, OH&S and Covid prevention items only. We still expect significant legal and professional costs associated with the MMRA project and increased operational costs when we are able to re-open Ross House on a permanent basis.

As mentioned earlier, we experienced a downturn in our normal operating income of 19%. We do not expect to see our income streams returning to acceptable levels until at least March 2022. We have, however, sufficient cash reserves to enable us to continue operations, despite reduced income levels and the impost of additional costs upon re-opening, through to the end of the current financial year.

I again wish to emphasise that the Ross House Association does not own the land and buildings wherein we reside. The association acts as trustee for the Ross House Trust and transfers an amount equal to the depreciation on the buildings every year to a separate Trust Account from which, repairs to the external fabric of the building, as required, are paid. Please note that under the terms of the Ross House Trust Deed the land and buildings are not able to be sold.

Attention should be drawn to the auditor's notes in the full financial statements, specifically Note 1(f).

The committee members submit the financial reports of RHA Inc and the Ross House Trust for the financial year ended 30 June 2021. 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  
Dr. Heidi Nicholl  
Ntannis Davi  
Keith Bettles  
Scot Muirden

Richard Caven  
Valerie Elliott  
Dabessa Gemelal  
De Grebner  
Maggie Maguire

Nazzareno Marchionda  
Mohamed Nabe  
Cynthia Pilli

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 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at Bank & On Hand	1,314,194	910,798
Trade Debtors	5,067	(704)
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	5,000	5,000
	<b>67</b>	<b>(5,704)</b>
Sundry Debtors	-	176
Prepayments	-	-
Adjustment	31	31
	<b>1,314,292</b>	<b>905,301</b>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Land	15,840,000	15,840,000
Buildings	2,950,000	2,950,000
Less accumulated amortisation	(590,000)	(516,250)
Furniture & Equipment	293,821	267,725
Less accumulated depreciation	(206,154)	(187,054)
Capital Work	306,205	291,905
Less accumulated depreciation	(236,222)	(218,972)
Electronic Equipment	180,324	162,073
Less accumulated depreciation	(131,152)	(100,143)
Main lift	169,611	169,611
Less accumulated depreciation	(9,894)	(1,413)
Ground Floor Toilet	121,725	121,725
Less accumulated depreciation	(36,239)	(18,844)
HVAC VSD	56,700	56,700
Less accumulated depreciation	(6,789)	(3,954)
HVAC	801,516	801,516
Less accumulated depreciation	(302,525)	(262,449)
Website	71,954	71,954
Less accumulated depreciation	(71,936)	(51,408)
	<b>19,200,945</b>	<b>19,372,722</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>20,515,237</b>	<b>20,278,023</b>

### Balance Sheet cont.

As at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade Creditors & Accruals	67,311	25,429
Income in Advance	15,058	14,859
Grant in Advance	27,249	-
Rent in Advance	13,488	-
Staff Leave Provisions	89,698	74,563
Superannuation Provision	11,176	9,185
	<b>223,980</b>	<b>124,036</b>
<b>Non- Current Liabilities</b>		
Right of Indemnity-Ross House Trust	18,200,000	18,273,750
Staff Leave Provisions - L.S.L.	27,944	22,132
	<b>18,227,944</b>	<b>18,295,882</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>18,451,924</b>	<b>18,419,918</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>2,063,313</b>	<b>1,858,105</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Emergency Reserve	400,000	400,000
Retained Earnings	1,663,313	1,458,105
<b>Balance 30th June 2021</b>	<b>2,063,313</b>	<b>1,858,105</b>

## Income Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Income</b>		
Lease Income	705,943	781,013
Car Park	36,920	40,661
Facilities Hire	156,255	263,310
Equipment Hire	13,768	26,643
Sales-Equipment Keys & Stationery	1,115	2,365
Interest Received	2,104	6,336
Insurance & Other Reimbursements	5,247	401
Membership Subscription	6,120	6,970
Other Income	-	573
Refund - Meeting Room Bookings	(23,200)	(28,044)
Donations & Donations in Kind	-	-
Grants Received		
- HVAC VSD	-	1,250
- Equal Access Communities Grant	-	40,000
- Victorian Business Grant	20,000	-
Cash Flow Boost	48,956	37,348
Job Keeper Wage Subsidy	134,250	30,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,107,478</b>	<b>1,208,826</b>

## Less expenditure

### Operating Expenses

Salaries & Wages	329,331	398,165
Superannuation	32,983	36,855
Workcover Premiums	2,223	2,663
Provision for Staff Leave	20,947	2,344
Staff Selection	-	130
Staff Training	-	-
	<b>385,484</b>	<b>440,157</b>

## Income Statement cont.

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Property and Equipment Costs</b>		
Building Expenses	169,687	171,818
Utilities & Services	48,245	56,672
Cleaning	43,323	66,816
Other property & Equipment	187,070	197,818
	<b>448,325</b>	<b>493,124</b>

### Operating Costs

Annual report & AGM	2,655	4,929
Amenities	356	154
Advertising and Promotion	-	-
Audit fees	2,776	2,570
Bad Debts Expenses	-	-
Bank Charges	84	98
Bookkeeping & Accounting fees	780	735
Computer & Software Support	22,025	29,596
Consultants fees	7,920	548
Contingencies	-	2,027
Discounts	-	33
Events	-	3,367
Legal fees	-	5,014
Postage, Courier Charges/Freight	2,050	770
Telephone & internet	13,766	11,704
Printing & Design	-	1,197
RHA Admin Support & COM Exp	-	1,176
Stationery & Office Supplies	4,401	2,905
Strategic Plan Implementation	-	1,500
Sub. Membership & Library	1,793	1,386
Sundry Expenses	4,466	2,447
Website	5,389	6,747
	<b>68,461</b>	<b>78,903</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>902,270</b>	<b>1,012,184</b>
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<b>PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>205,208</b>	<b>196,642</b>
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**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
Balance as at 1 July 2020	1,458,105	1,261,463
Profit (Loss) attributable to members	205,208	196,642
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>1,663,313</b>	<b>1,458,105</b>

**ROSS HOUSE TRUST**

**Balance Sheet**  
As at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Trust Funds</b>		
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(516,250)	(442,500)
Loss This Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Asset Revaluation Reserve	18,790,000	18,790,000
<b>Total Trust Funds</b>	<b>18,200,000</b>	<b>18,273,750</b>

**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
Opening Balance	18,273,750	18,347,500
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Increase in Asset Revaluation Reserve	-	-
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>18,200,000</b>	<b>18,273,750</b>

**Profit and Loss Statement**  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Depreciation - Buildings	73,750	73,750
<b>Surplus/(Loss) for Year</b>	<b>(73,750)</b>	<b>(73,750)</b>

**Statement of Appropriations**  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(516,250)	(442,500)
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
<b>Accumulated Loss</b>	<b>(590,000)</b>	<b>(516,250)</b>

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 2021 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](http://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:

City of Melbourne - especially staff from the Engineering Services and Social Investment branches  
The Australian Government Department of Social Services  
Degrares Street Recycling Facility team  
Maddocks  
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)  
City Switch  
Justice Connect – NFP Law  
Sustainability Victoria  
The Right Honorable Lord Mayor Sally Capp  
Non Profit Training  
Hunt & Hunt Lawyers

To all those members and tenants who contributed ideas, time and who spoke at events 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



[rosshouse.org.au](http://rosshouse.org.au)