

Ross House
Association
Annual Report





247-251

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Ross House Association acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Throughout the 2021-2022 financial year, the Ross House Committee of Management continued to focus on the need to sustain Ross House well into the future. As far back as 2015, we recognised that Ross House would not be able to continue as we had been, given the need to balance the upkeep and maintenance of our heritage building and also to continue to offer affordable rents and support our tenants.

There is no doubt that maintaining our building is a constant and costly exercise. There are many issues that we've had to deal with over the past year that are covered in the General Manager's Report. Our staff team are continually addressing the need for repairs and updates to keep the building viable. Much of this goes on behind the scenes and is not necessarily recognised by tenants as they go about their own work.

The Covid pandemic has increased the concerns the committee has about the continuing viability of the 'House'. The Membership and Tenancy role was arguably the hardest it has ever been with unprecedented demand for juggling the changes and needs requested by tenants due to the consequences of the pandemic. We've seen offices remaining empty, meeting rooms vacant, and requests for downsizing office spaces all contributing to further reducing income.

We also have the additional problem of competition from the many empty office spaces now available in Melbourne's CBD. Most of those spaces are now offered at much reduced rentals in a very competitive arena in which Ross House simply does not have the resources to compete. Meanwhile budget and financial reports show how imperative it is that we act to address the longevity of Ross House.

For these reasons we have continued to explore the leasing of the ground floor to gain the income that is required to not just keep Ross House afloat but to provide improved amenities including AV equipment, accessibility, community spaces and updated kitchenettes. Additional income would also provide funding for promotional campaigns and community development initiatives. This is nothing new, as Ross House has a history of leasing space commercially to financially support the rents and facilities offered to tenants.

As the 2021/2022 financial year drew to a close, we received an offer from the Barman & Larder Group for the leasing of the Ground Floor for their 'Melbourne Winery' concept to bring a restaurant and winery version of an existing family run rural winery to the city. This opening offer requires a lengthy process of negotiation before signing off on a lease. Over June, the committee received letters from some of the members expressing concerns regarding this commercial offer. The committee started to respond to those queries and concerns, prior to the end of the financial year.

The staff team have done an excellent job under the leadership of our General Manager, Michael Griffiths, in continuing to provide the services and information required over yet another year in which the Pandemic has stymied what was previously taken as 'normal'. I also thank the Committee members for staying the course and for all the time and effort contributed to Ross House over the last year despite the demands of their personal and work lives.

I commend this report to you.

Christine McAuslan



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

2022 has been another challenging year for Ross House Association as we adapted to changing work environments and a different style of workplace brought on by the pandemic. Despite the removal of most forms of government financial assistance, we managed to maintain a positive operational cashflow. This can mostly be attributed to a reduction in expenses. Despite the cutting of costs however, there have been a number of positive changes brought to Ross House this year. We have also continued to develop our plans for the ground floor as we look to financially secure Ross House for the future.

Early in the 2021-2022 financial year, Melbourne went into lockdown for the fifth and sixth times in July and then August to October 2021. Staff returned to the office in late November 2021, with two staff in the Ross House office and the rest working from home. We had expected most groups to return to Ross House over the summer in 2021 and into 2022, however as we all know, working from home has become a permanent feature of life in Australia and around the world. This led to changing demand for office space as organisations adjusted their workplaces to suit new requirements.

Most of the business support had stopped following the end of the sixth lockdown, however Business Victoria released a further round of their Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund. We had applied initially and were rejected based on an issue with their online application form as they didn't expect Incorporated Associations to apply. However, after working with Ellen Sandell, Greens Members for Melbourne, we managed to have the form changed for all applicants throughout Victoria and received the grant early in the new year.

Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane went on maternity leave in January 2022, to look after baby Ollie and Ruby James-Strawhan, who had been working as a casual, took on the Information and Administration Officer position for a 12-months period. Ruby has done a fantastic job,

making the transition seamless for Members and the Association alike. We also welcomed Carol Franklin as our new front desk casual.

This year we developed a series of adverts that ran on 3CR, promoting Ross House, tenancy spaces, and meeting rooms. They sounded great and I hope some community members got to hear them. To provide more options for our tenants, we also developed a multi-year lease, allowing tenants to have more long-term security, rather than every lease being up for renewal on the financial year. We still have that option however, for those groups that prefer the flexibility, but now tenants have a choice on how they want to set up their lease with RHA.

In 2021 Deafblind Victoria (DBV) and Ross House Association (RHA) partnered to deliver the Deafblind Connect project under the Department of Social Services' Social and Community Participation Grant 2020-21. At that time DBV was not incorporated and as such was not eligible to apply directly. However, by partnering with RHA, DBV were successful in receiving a \$50,000 grant to deliver the project, aiming to build the capacity of the Deafblind Community. The project established a pilot program at Ross House called Deafblind Connect, open every Thursday for deafblind people to drop in and make connections with each other & the wider community. This project was so successful that it has been extended and is still running.

One of the more challenging aspects of this year has been finding a long-term solution to the Associations finances through leasing the ground floor of Ross House. Staff worked with the City of Melbourne, not-for-profit groups and international charities before the RHA Committee settled on a commercial tenant as the best way to secure the long-term future of the Association. This process is still on-going, and we hope to have a resolution by the end of 2022 that will meet the long-term needs of Ross House.

Thank you to everyone who continued to call Ross House home again this year, we especially enjoyed seeing meeting rooms full again after many years of disruptions. Thank you also to staff who have adapted to the demands of a changing work environment. I want to say a special thank you to RHA Chairperson Christine McAuslan, who has had to put in many hours of volunteer work this year and to the rest of the RHA Committee who have navigated challenging issues. Hayden Raysmith has also assisted us greatly this year, always answering the call when we reach out. There is still work to be done, however we are looking forward to a rejuvenated and vibrant Ross House, as we move to secure a solid financial footing that will take this heritage community building of ours well into the next decade.

Michael Griffiths



ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE AND STAFF 2021-2022

COMMITTEE

Chairperson
Christine McAuslan
Collective of Self-Help Groups

Deputy Chairperson
Ntennis Davi
Deafblind Victoria

Treasurer
Keith Bettles
U3A Melbourne City

Secretary
Scot Muirden
Charles Bonnett Syndrome Foundation

MEMBERS

De Grebner
Appointed

Maggie Maguire
Appointed

Michael Griffiths
Ex-officio

Nazzareno Marchionda
Appointed Staff Representative

Richard Caven
Appointed

Margaret O'Loughlin (March 2022)
Appointed
Housing For the Aged Action Group

STAFF

Michael Griffiths
General Manager

Rebecca May
Membership & Tenancy Officer

Nazzareno Marchionda
Facility Manager

Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane
Information & Administration Officer

Ruby James-Strawhan
Information & Administration Officer

Junxia Xu
Finance Officer

Casual staff

Patti Gerken
Ella Marchionda
Carol Franklin

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



MEMBERS' STORIES



Travellers Aid wheelchair hire at events across Victoria.
Photo © Travellers Aid Australia

Assisi Aid Projects

Assisi Aid Projects, with the help of its partner, Integrated Development Trust in India, continues to challenge and address the gender inequality and discrimination faced by women and children. In Tamil Nadu, the children's project works with over eight hundred children across thirty villages to provide them with skills and opportunities, preparing them for their future. Assisi and its partner provide quality education and essential life skills to children in scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in rural Tamil Nadu, children who have traditionally been excluded from education.

Mrs Reeta (as pictured), an alumna of the Children's Project, attended the evening study centres in her village of Katiyambandal, from the ages of 10 to 16. During this time, she was appointed Prime Minister of the Children's Parliament activity. The project empowers young people in rural villages to develop confidence in their abilities. Mrs Reeta's progression in the program throughout her schooling years allowed her to develop leadership and public speaking skills. Utilising these skills, Mrs Reeta participated in her local Panchayat village council and was eventually elected President. Her position is positively impacting the status of women in her community and helping address gender inequality faced by women in Katiyambandal and surrounding villages.

With the support of generous donors, Assisi Aid Projects has been able to provide essential livelihood development opportunities to support 832 children over the last year and will continue supporting these communities into the future. The number of girls taking up leadership roles in the Children's Parliament has steadily increased and Assisi is very grateful to Mrs Reeta for the inspiration she provides to future generations.

assisi.org.au



Mrs Reeta is one of many women involved with Assisi Aid Projects through her participation in the Children's Project. She is an influential woman in her community and Assisi is extremely proud of her success.
Photo © Assisi Aid Projects

Australia China Friendship Society

In 2021, the Australia China Friendship Society (ACFS) Victorian Branch turned seventy years old. The ACFS was established in 1951 to foster friendship and understanding between the people of Australia and the people of China, and to encourage diplomatic ties between Australia and China, which eventuated in 1972.

Our activities have included organising and conducting specialist tours to China, public discussions and forums on many aspects of China, sharing experiences and knowledge of China, fostering people-to-people contacts between Australia and China, meeting Chinese delegations and visitors to share cultural events, and helping to develop an interest in Chinese affairs and culture amongst Australian people through social activities and networking. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and restrictions, our social meetings for two years were limited. However, we did manage to conduct one yum cha lunch at a nearby Flinders Lane Chinese restaurant, where we listened to special guest Bridget Barker relate her experiences while studying at Tsinghua University in Beijing as a Schwarzman Scholar.

Over the seventy years that the ACFS has been operating, we've occupied several offices within Melbourne. We came to Ross House in the 1980s as one of the early tenants. The Hayden Ray-Smith Room at Ross House has been a great venue for conducting our annual general meetings, where we have a guest

speaker and afterwards enjoy a shared meal contributed by our members. We have also held in-house gatherings such as the tea tasting afternoon, led by resident tea-expert and our Vice President, LIU Ren Di (Tower). We are incredibly grateful for the generous support of Ross House and wish for a long and fruitful partnership.

Looking forward, we are excited to mark our 70th/71st Anniversary in 2022 with a long-awaited celebration.

acfs.org.au



Maurice and Eunice are two of our founding members. Both are over 100 years old and still enjoying a fruitful and purposeful life. For many years Maurice and Eunice taught Classics and English at Nanjing University, as part of the people-to-people exchanges. They also taught for several years at Hong Kong's Lingnan University and remain in contact with some of the students after over two decades.
Photo © ACFS

National Council of Women Victoria

The My Vote, My Voice (MVMV) initiative was launched after research found that young people were disengaged with the democratic process. We hope that students who attend MVMV events will go on to better grasp the intricacies of our democratic system and will become more engaged along the way. Since beginning in 2014, 22 schools have participated - some returning multiple times, with a total of 285 students having attended.

These events have successfully raised students' awareness of the rights and responsibilities of voting, gender issues in local and state governments, lack of diversity in local organisations and councils, attitudes of young people to voting, and when women and First Nations people were able to vote. They have also given a voice to students to discuss what they think future parliaments and councils should look like and the actions they want to occur.

The theme of our 2022 MVMV event was The Role of Treaty in Achieving Reconciliation. It commenced in Queen's Hall, where Fiona Patten, leader of the Reason Party, welcomed us. We then moved into the Legislative Council Chamber, where NCWV President Ronniel Milliken, welcomed guests, panel members, teachers, and students. She then introduced our keynote speaker, Leanne Miller, member for the Northeast Region, Proud Dhulanyagen Ulupna of the Yorta Yorta people, and Elected Member of the First Peoples' Assembly.

Leanne Miller is an experienced director with a history of working in government, non-government, and social organisations and is skilled in governance and leadership in non-profit organisations, corporate social responsibility, program evaluation, conflict resolution and culture change. She is a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Social Equity and works as Principal Adviser, Indigenous Workforce Development at RMIT University and Project Manager Koorie Women Mean Business.



Alumnus Pam Hammond, with Firbank Grammar.
Photo © NCWV

Leanne's family has a strong and long-standing commitment to Indigenous affairs. Her grandmother, Geraldine Briggs, and her mother, Frances Mathysen, are highly respected Aboriginal leaders. Leanne spoke about the Victorian direction related to Treaty, which has been, and continues to be, an ongoing collaborative process.

We then opened the floor to speakers from; Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar, Bayside P-12 College, Williamstown Campus, Kingswood College, MacRobertson HS, Elwood College, Blackburn HS, and Star of the Sea College, Gardenvale. All speakers contributed well researched, confident, inspiring, and passionate presentations, with different perspectives taken by each school. Several groups had also interviewed Aboriginal people about their views on Treaty. Schools also brought students as observers, some parents attended, and many NCWV members and their guests. A recording of the event is available on request.

ncwvic.org.au

NCWV and attendees at the 2022 My Vote My Voice event
Photo © NCWV



ANTaR Victoria

This financial year, 2021/22, ANTaR Vic has focused on rebuilding the organisation after two difficult COVID-19 'infested' years. We launched our strategic plan at a successful AGM/Joint Reconciliation Forum with Reconciliation Victoria, and then developed our operational plan. The Strategic Plan focuses on Uncle Richard Frankland's concept of Tomorrow Australia.

What is "Tomorrow Australia"? It's about;

- a. A home for all of us without forgetting the truth of the past
- b. Changing the lens on our past by;
 - i. realizing that what we now call 'Australia' does not lose a history, but gains one if we found it on respect and justice for the First Nations
 - ii. changing terminology, i.e., to include 'battles' not just massacres
 - iii. moving from the deficit of trauma to the positives of resistance and resilience when First Nations peoples manage and overcome their trauma

It's about changing the nation to become an honourable, respectful, and inclusive nation that faces its past and treasures its peoples. A new cultural tapestry. It means truth, treaty, self-determination, agency, and voice. It means changing our national symbols to reflect our aspiration to be grounded in our First Nations culture and heritage by;

- 1. Changing the flag
- 2. Changing the Anthem
- 3. Changing the date
- 4. Changing the culture

And thereby beginning to change the nation.

The Operational Plan builds on these themes, particularly in the context of the treaty and truth telling processes in Victoria. Meetings with the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria and the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission were requested and held to ensure

ANTaR Vic's accountability and inform our advocacy. We also sought meetings with civil society peaks and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. An initial meeting was held with the Executive Officers for the Victorian Council of Churches and Faith Communities Victoria, and we hope to further develop that partnership during the next financial year.

The main public activity for ANTaR Vic, over the last financial year, was the 25th Anniversary Event, where we launched our Tomorrow Australia Campaign. Speakers at the event included Co-Chair Uncle Richard Frankland; Andy Gargett, CEO of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria; Commissioner Sue Anne Hunter from the Yoo-rrook Justice Commission; and Bonnie Dukakis, Deputy Executive from the Koori Youth Council. Richard's band also performed songs from his recent No More Sugar, No More Tea review.

The First Peoples Assembly of Victoria had a major success with the passing of the Treaty Authority and Other Treaty Elements Bill 2022, which creates the Treaty umpire and establishes the next processes towards treaty making at the state and Traditional Owner level. The Bill received bi-partisan support. In terms of our advocacy, ANTaR Vic wrote, and encouraged civil society groups to write, letters to encourage the Opposition to support the Bill.

antarvictoria.org.au

Audience at ANTaR
Victoria 25th Anniversary
Celebration, Richmond
Town Hall, 10 July 2022.
Photo © ANTaR Inc





Advocacy for Oromia

The past two years have been difficult for our community and have also been a major challenge for us, Advocacy for Oromia, as an organisation. The introduction of online meetings caused an unexpected breakdown of our culture of physical contact and was a serious problem for members of our community. We know that we are not yet completely out of the pandemic stress, but it is being eased to some extent. Thus, it is good to look back and to reflect on it.

One of the methods used by Advocacy for Oromia and the Team during the pandemic was focussing on Oromo strengths. Oromo strengths refers to strengths which create a sense of positive community identity and fulfilling interactions among Oromo community. Oromo strengths are the Oromo resources

that make Oromo life deeply satisfying and fulfilling. For example, we celebrated Oromo Thanksgiving, Irreecha, online with family and encouraged each family to share their experiences, so that no one felt isolated. This also made it easier for everyone to share up-to-date information and help each other. We also used Oromo professionals to ensure the community received accurate and relevant information in their own languages.

One of the biggest problems we faced during the pandemic was a lack of accurate information, especially information that was specifically relevant to the Oromo community. It was a difficult time until the Australian government began to prepare and disseminate accurate information on the subject. We

had a lot of trouble getting professionally translated and accurate information. Our volunteers have played a significant role in supporting the community to obtain proper information by improving their digital literacy. The emergency grant from the government to make this work a success has also helped us to strengthen our capacity. In particular, the grant given to us through the government on this issue has helped us to provide accurate and up-to-date information to our community. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Victorian Government, who have been and are still working tirelessly to minimize the pandemic problem and improve the hopes of the entire community.

Since the easing of the pandemic, we have celebrated two main events together. We

have successfully celebrated the Irreecha Arfaasaa in June and the Irreecha Birraa in early October. Our community members were very happy to see us come together to celebrate these festivals face to face; children, youth, the elderly, and mothers have expressed their delight. We are proud of our achievements so far, but there is so much more exploring and discovering left for us to do in the future. We are really grateful for our community, staff, and volunteers who have made all this possible while working from home. We appreciate the constant support of Ross House, and we proudly call the space 'The Oromo House', because it's a place where we feel at home. For this, we wish to thank Ross House and its staff for always being so helpful and friendly.

advocacy4oromia.org

Schizy Inc.

Schizy Inc. acknowledges the land of the Kulin Nations and the Wurundjeri Country on which we work. We recognise the many ongoing traumas that First Nations People experience, as well as respect a strong unbroken connection to Ancestors, Country, Elders past and present, and an optimistic life-filled voice for the future.

Schizy Inc are all people with diverse complex mental health realities like schizophrenia. We're the only consistent, disability-led, arts and access advocacy organisation in Australia for people with lived or living experience of the psychiatric system. Schizy Inc are a happy, optimistic bunch who like having fun and we defy the stereotype presented by the old-fashioned medical patriarchy. Think dogs in parks and cats in sunny spots... That's us!

Since 2008, the Schizy Inc. network of volunteers and allies have been producing innovative community arts projects and events that empower people, especially those in the public mental health system. We also support the arts sector to be more inclusive of artists, audiences, and workers who identify with complex trauma and neurodivergence. We do it because we believe that wounded people have a deep right to reclaim their stories back from the medical model and express themselves and their identity in ways that celebrate unique creativity and survivalism.

Our news this year - we're in the Ross House Annual Report for a start! In late 2021, while everyone else was locking doors and bunkering down in covid restrictions, we typically did things differently and moved into our very own office at Ross House. It was a fabulous experience to become 'homeful'! We finally have a space to call our own, to meet, and to store all our important belongings and hopes.

The momentum has continued, and in early 2022 we received a Creative Victoria Creative Ventures grant to establish Victoria's first lived experience led art studio for visual artists and writers with complex mental health realities. This studio has been one of our big dreams since our very first arts events all those years ago, to fill an intrinsic need for safe cultural gathering spaces (thanks NDIS for destroying them all). Even without much support from academia or government, we are so proud to be leading the way by being creative, resourceful and most of all, persistent.

There is no one else doing what Schizy Inc do. Like we say, 'We're doing what the government can't, and won't'.

www.schizy.org

Schizy Inc members at their new dedicated art space at Abbotsford Covent Photo © Schizy Inc



Blind Citizens Australia

Over 2021-2022, Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) launched the BCA Hugh Jeffrey Scholarship. This scholarship aims to provide financial assistance to increase opportunities available to people who are blind or vision impaired and wish to pursue tertiary and further education.

As the national representative organisation for people who are blind or vision impaired, BCA is strongly committed to ensuring people who are blind or vision impaired have opportunities to develop skills that will equip them to contribute to the social, economic, and cultural life of Australian communities.

Since August 2021, BCA has held three rounds of scholarship offerings and has awarded 14 students who are blind or vision impaired with scholarships of \$5,000. Recipients of the scholarship are currently studying in a diverse range of courses, including music, law, science, education, and medicine.

One recipient described the scholarship as being "about more than just funding: it's about joining a community of like-minded people in similar situations to myself. Funding can help me afford what I need for access, but a community can show me the right direction to take the funding for success".

These scholarships have supported students to pursue their studies without financial stress. "The BCA Hugh Jeffrey scholarship has assisted me practically

by way of purchasing a much-needed new MacBook Pro laptop for my university studies," said one of the students.

We hope that by continuing to offer this financial assistance, we can encourage and support people who are blind or vision impaired to pursue higher education and raise awareness about the valuable contributions and unique perspectives that people who are blind or vision impaired offer to education and training.

bca.org.au

Retina Australia

Over the past year, Retina Australia was delighted to continue our support of the very best research projects in Australia with \$120,000 awarded to 3 recipients:

- Associate Professor Penny Allen (Centre for Eye Research Australia, Melbourne) - Improving real-world mobility and assessing long-term safety outcomes with a retinal prosthesis ("Bionic Eye")
- Dr Rabab Rashwan (Lions Eye Institute, Perth) - Neuroprotective effect of SAHA in Retinitis Pigmentosa. Do time and frequency matter?
- Associate Professor Guei-Sheung (Rick) Liu (Centre for Eye Research Australia, Melbourne) -RNA base editing strategies

We are excited to report that one of our 2021 grant recipient teams, led by Associate Professor Heather Mack, have recently had their research on Participant perspectives on ocular gene therapy in Australia published in the journal Nature Gene Therapy.

In June, we were pleased to host a webinar for our members where we heard the results of two other 2021 grant recipients, Dr Alex Hewitt and Dr Fred Chen, who discussed the power of gene therapy and the search for disease causing mutations in families with retinitis pigmentosa.

We are also incredibly happy to announce that our Chairman, Leighton Boyd, and Company Secretary, Rosemary Boyd, have both been recognised in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Leighton has been appointed a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia (General Division) in recognition of his "significant service to people who are blind or have low vision", and Rosemary has been appointed the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) (General Division) in recognition of her "service to people who are blind or have low vision".

We would like to congratulate both Leighton and Rosemary on this well-earned recognition and thank them for their huge contribution to Retina Australia and the blind and low vision community.

retinaaustralia.com.au



Retina Chairman Leighton Boyd, and Company Secretary Rosemary Boyd
Photo © Retina Australia

ABC Friends Victoria

During 2021/2022, ABC Friends Victoria's focus was very much on the Federal Election and the potential impacts to the ABC if the Coalition Government were to remain in power. When the six-week election campaign was formally launched in April, ABC Friends Victoria materials and planning were already in place.

To concentrate resources, we decided to focus on six marginal seats in Victoria – Casey, Chisholm, Corangamite, Deakin, Dunkley, and Higgins. These seats were seen to be marginal enough for our pro-ABC messages to influence voters, as well as being manageable enough for us to run an effective seat-specific campaign. We later added McEwan to this list at the urging of our members.

Our campaign was waged through two key areas: on the ground efforts by our local volunteer groups, and work by our central office on social media and e-news. These areas were designed to support and reinforce each other. Our local group members engaged in a variety of activities such as letter boxing, letter writing, attending candidate forums, train station handouts, meeting with candidates, holding banners on bridges, and talking to people wherever and whenever possible. A major rally was held in front of the office of Senator David Van, an anti-ABC LNP member, at which Mark Dreyfus, now Attorney General, committed the (subsequent) government to support the ABC.

Our social media was focused on the election, including the policy positions of the major parties and the past performance of the then government. We moved our regular fortnightly member and support e-news to weekly. Other communication materials included corflutes, posters, flyers, stickers, banners, and magnetic signs on cars.

Throughout the campaign, we also kept close contact with allied organisations such as the ABC Alumni, Get Up, the Australia Institute and the Media and Entertainment Arts Alliance (MEAA).

While it is always difficult to assess the impact of a community group or issue in a campaign, we believe that the strategy of choosing a limited number of selected seats assisted us in being targeted and effective. It was easier to implement in seats where we had an existing (or nearby) active ABC Friends Victoria Group.

Feedback suggests that there were many things that our members liked about the campaign, particularly the magnetic car signs, mobile billboards, ABCFV pens, banners on bridges, flyers in Mandarin, how to vote/score cards, and the capacity to print seat-specific materials locally.

Members also enjoyed meeting other ABCFV volunteers and working with them on a common cause. There was general agreement that the best impact was achieved when actually talking to people – at train stations, stalls, at polling stations, and when people noticed a corflute or magnetic car sign.

www.abcfriendsvic.org.au



Rally on April 23, 2022. Photo © ABC Friends Victoria



Campaigning on Bell St on May 3, 2022. Photo © ABC Friends Victoria

TreeProject

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

TreeProject is based on bringing urban and rural communities together to foster the link to restore damaged ecosystems across Victoria. Trained volunteer growers 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.

By growing, distributing, and planting healthy indigenous seedlings, it's our mission to improve biodiversity in ecosystems around Victoria. TreeProject provides

opportunities for volunteers to support landholders, Landcare groups and individuals conducting revegetation projects and provide effective educational tools and support for the community to propagate healthy indigenous seedlings for revegetation and restoration projects.

Landholders are advised on an appropriate mix of indigenous species for their area in a collaborative partnership. Growers are then trained, to propagate from seed and to care for seedlings until mature enough to plant. Planting volunteers receive on the job training by a revegetation supervisor on our many planting days. TreeProject volunteers at our depot are serious about recycling and reuse, they wash the forestry tubes and prepare the kits that contain all the growing materials for each new season.

In the last twelve months, we have had over 2,000 people volunteer in different capacities, allowing us to sow 141,000 seedlings for landholders and Landcare groups and plant over 40,000 of these seedlings during our 44 planting days out in the country.

TreeProject plantings provide benefits to the ecology of landscapes in many areas. These include protection of remnant vegetation, improved biodiversity, improved habitat, contribution to wildlife corridors and soil protection. For example, in the Yarra Ranges, TreeProject provides approximately 30,000 seedlings which are planted as part of landscape plans approved by the local council. These aim to build and improve habitat corridors. They also connect to water stream restoration plantings organised by Melbourne Water.



TreeProject volunteers at a Yarra Junction planting during July 2022.
Photo © Treeproject

Travellers Aid Australia

Travellers Aid Australia is a registered charity and a certified social enterprise that has supported the journeys of Victorians for more than one hundred years. Throughout 2022, our sites at Southern Cross, Flinders Street, and Seymour Stations have continued to provide a range of services in support of our mission: To enable everyday journeys.

The ways in which we can help are varied and largely free of cost for our service users. But achieving our mission sounds simpler than it is. Thanks to our dedicated team of staff and volunteers we have been able to provide the following services: Connection Assistance using our buggies, personal care for people with disabilities, Companion Service, hot showers, crisis travel assistance, access to internet, mobility equipment hire, and luggage storage.

Our expertise and reputation have made us a partner of choice for events and organisations committed to providing positive travel experiences for all. Travellers Aid continues to build relationships with the City of Melbourne, Yarra Trams, V/Line, Moomba, Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, and the Australian Open Tennis. We hope to extend this partnership in 2023 to other event organisers who are committed to being more inclusive and welcoming of people who experience barriers around accessibility. We also promote inclusion and participation through a range of community and industry training programs, as well as training our own workforce.

Being a Ross House member has allowed Travellers Aid to access a wonderful space in which to facilitate much of this work. As we emerge from the early years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to keep communities connected by extending our service to more people in more regions. In doing so, Travellers Aid will continue to build on a long and rich history of empowering people with travel related challenges to connect, engage, and participate within their communities through the use of public transport.

travellersaid.org.au



Working with event organisers to improve access and participation.
Photo © Travellers Aid Australia

Society of Women Writers

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. Marked annually on March 8th, International Women's Day (IWD) is one of the most important days of the year to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about women's equality, lobby for accelerated gender parity, and to fundraise for female-focused charities. As a Society, we have been supporting established and emerging writers for over fifty years, and events such as these are just one of the ways in which we provide opportunities for like-minded individuals to come together in a supportive environment to discuss their own writing and those of others they admire.

Fifty years is a significant milestone, although IWD trumps our tally of years. The first IWD was celebrated on 19th March 1911. Like many organisations, IWD has had its highs and lows, but from the turn of the century, and the reaching of its centenary, it has started to gain momentum again.

The world has witnessed a significant change and attitudinal shift in both women's and society's thoughts about women's equality and emancipation. Many from a younger generation may feel that 'all the battles have been won

for women' while many feminists from the 1970s know only too well the longevity and ingrained complexity of patriarchy. With more women in the boardroom, greater equality in legislative rights, and an increased critical mass of women's visibility as impressive role models in every aspect of life, one could think that women have gained true equality.

The unfortunate fact is that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts. Women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics. And globally, women's education, health, and the violence against them is worse than that of men. However, great improvements have been made. We do have female astronauts and prime ministers. School girls are welcomed into university, women can work and have a family. Women have real choices. And we do have women writers making the shortlist for notable literary prizes, sometimes in greater numbers than men.

Despite all of these advances, I think people are aware that there is still a long way to go for women to achieve full equality, to live free from discrimination, harassment, and abuse, and not be subject to any bias.

swwwic.org.au

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

Established by Oromo volunteers to enable and empower the disadvantaged Oromo people in Victoria.

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.

Animal Law Institute

Protect animals through the Australian legal system.

ANTaR Victoria

A grassroots organisation campaigning for justice in solidarity with Australia's First Peoples.

Australia for UNHCR

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

Assisi Aid Projects

Supports sustainable development work in southern India.

Australia China Friendship Society

Fosters friendship between Australian and Chinese people.

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.

Casal Catala de Victoria

Promotes the customs and language of Catalonia.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Foundation

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

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 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).

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.

Hand Knit & Crochet Guild

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

IndianCare

Advocates for the welfare and wellbeing needs of people of South Asian origin living in Victoria.

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

Delivering peer support, therapeutic programs and advocacy for permanent care, kinship care and adoptive families in Victoria.

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.

Schizy Inc

An artist collective and advocacy organisation led by, and for, creatives with lived/ living experiences of diverse mental health realities such as schizophrenia.

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.

TreeProject

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

Victorian Drama League

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

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**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.

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 – Degrares Street Recycling Facility

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

OCCASIONAL TENANTS**Aboriginal Literacy Foundation**

Works 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.

Blueprint for Free Speech

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

East West Foundation Australia

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

Futures Foundation

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

Humanists Australia

Educates Australians about Humanism, supporting diverse and inclusive Humanist communities around Australia.

Indo-China Ethnic Chinese Association

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

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)

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.

Sunflower Foundation, The

Advocacy and funding for the education and empowerment of girls and young women, with a view to gender equality and sustainable economic development.

United Brains

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

Victoria Forest Alliance

Brings together more than 30 existing and well-established grassroots forest groups actively protecting native forests across Victoria

MEMBERS (NON-TENANTS)

Able Australia
Apple Users Society of Melbourne AUSOM
CALXA Australia (Associate Member)
Counsellors Victoria Inc (Associate Member)
Deaf Victoria
Narcolepsy and Overwhelming Daytime Sleep Society
NODSS
National Council of Women of Victoria NCWV
Non Profit Training (Associate Member)
Senior Financial Literacy Discussion Group
Slavery Links Australia
Sustainable Living Foundation
Timorese Association of Victoria
Travellers Aid
U3A Melbourne City
Understanding Literature Group (Associate Member)

MOVED OUT

Community Music Victoria
Emerge Australia
Shakti Migrant & Refugee Women's Support Group
Melbourne
United Brains

MOVED IN

ANTaR Victoria
IndianCare
Permanent Care and Adoptive Families
Schizy Inc.



Treasurer's Report

Once again, it's my duty and pleasure to present the treasurer's report for the past financial year. This is the tenth time that I have presented the Treasurer's report on behalf of the Committee of Management and will be my last. We've seen many changes over the past ten years, both within the Association and the fabric of the Ross House building, and it's been my privilege to have been part of the management team throughout that time.

As expected, the financial result for 2021-2022 was significantly lower than the previous year. Our total revenue decreased by 20% to \$886,791. Although we did receive some governmental assistance during the year, it was significantly less than last year - \$22,991 compared with the previous year's \$203,206.

At the same time, our expenditure increased by 5.4% to \$951,245. This increase was largely due to the cost of re-opening of access to the building, including increased security, cleaning, and utilities. These costs have been contained by the concerted efforts of the Ross House staff, and also by limiting expenditure to the essentials; improving security for Ross House users, OH&S, and Covid prevention items only.

We had expected to see our income streams returning to acceptable levels around March 2022. This, sadly, did not materialise as we couldn't have anticipated the effect that 'working

from home' would have. We also experienced a significant reduction in rental income as a result of external market pressures.

This leads us to the issue of on-going funding for the Association. We understand and recognise that the choice of a commercial tenant for the ground floor of our building has been a divisive issue within the membership.

The fact is, Ross House Association does not own the land and buildings where 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 are paid. It's also important to note that, under the terms of the R H Ross Trust, the land and buildings are not able to be sold.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Ross House staff and my fellow members of the Finance and Risk Management Subcommittees over the years for their support and for their continuing efforts in making improvements to the facilities and ambience of the building for the members, tenants, and users. I'd also like to thank them for achieving this year's result and look forward to improving fortune for us all in the future.

The committee members submit the financial reports of RHA Inc and the Ross House Trust for the financial year ended 30 June 2022. 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
Ntannis Davi
Keith Bettles

Scot Muirden
De Grebner
Maggie Maguire

Nazzareno Marchionda
Richard Caven
Margaret O'Loughlin

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 2022

	2022	2021
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank & On Hand	1,204,524	1,314,194
Trade Debtors	5,939	5,067
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	(5,000)	(5,000)
	939	67
Sundry Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	-	-
Adjustment	-	31
	1,205,463	1,314,292
Non-current Assets		
Land	22,180,000	15,840,000
Buildings	2,960,000	2,950,000
Less accumulated amortisation	(663,750)	(590,000)
Furniture & Equipment	333,204	293,821
Less accumulated depreciation	(232,418)	(206,154)
Capital Work	322,255	306,205
Less accumulated depreciation	(256,709)	(236,222)
Electronic Equipment	281,441	180,324
Less accumulated depreciation	(161,856)	(131,152)
Main lift	169,611	169,611
Less accumulated depreciation	(18,374)	(9,894)
Ground Floor Toilet	121,725	121,725
Less accumulated depreciation	(53,633)	(36,239)
HVAC VSD	56,700	56,700
Less accumulated depreciation	(9,624)	(6,789)
HVAC	801,516	801,516
Less accumulated depreciation	(342,601)	(302,525)
Website	71,954	71,954
Less accumulated depreciation	71,954	(71,936)
	25,487,487	19,200,945
TOTAL ASSETS	26,692,950	20,515,237

Balance Sheet cont. As at 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors & Accruals	77,162	67,311
Income in Advance	15,754	15,058
Grant in Advance	66	27,249
Rent in Advance	1,779	13,488
Staff Leave Provisions	75,264	89,698
Superannuation Provision	11,189	11,176
	181,214	223,980
Non- Current Liabilities		
Right of Indemnity-Ross House Trust	24,476,250	18,200,000
Staff Leave Provisions - L.S.L.	36,627	27,944
	24,512,877	18,227,944
TOTAL LIABILITIES	24,694,091	18,451,924
NET ASSETS	1,998,859	2,063,313
Equity		
Emergency Reserve	400,000	400,000
Retained Earnings	1,598,859	1,663,313
	1,998,859	2,063,313

Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Income		
Lease Income	712,252	705,943
Car Park	38,860	36,920
Facilities Hire	166,530	156,255
Equipment Hire	12,876	13,768
Sales-Equipment Keys & Stationery	301	1,115
Interest Received	2,998	2,104
Insurance & Other Reimbursements	5,277	5,247
Membership Subscription	6,120	6,120
Other Income	30	-
Hardship Contingency Fund Transactions	(52,667)	-
Refund	(28,777)	(23,200)
Grants Received		
- Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund	12,000	-
- DSS DBV Projects	4,991	-
- Powering Community Program	6,000	-
- Victorian Business Grant	-	20,000
Cash Flow Boost	-	48,956
Job Keeper Wage Subsidy	-	134,250
TOTAL INCOME	886,791	1,107,478
Less expenditure		
Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Wages	359,779	329,331
Superannuation	35,712	32,983
Workcover Premiums	1,018	2,223
Provision for Staff Leave	(5,752)	20,947
Staff Selection	-	-
Staff Training	-	-
	390,757	385,484

Income Statement cont.
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Property and Equipment Costs		
Building Expenses	171,700	169,687
Utilities & Services	50,166	48,245
Cleaning	55,619	43,323
Other property & Equipment	198,261	187,070
	475,746	448,325
Operating Costs		
Annual report & AGM	3,600	2,655
Amenities	392	356
Advertising and Promotion	-	-
Audit fees	3,129	2,776
Bad Debts Expenses	-	-
Bank Charges	96	84
Bookkeeping & Accounting fees	720	780
Computer & Software Support	20,720	22,025
Consultants fees	19,00	7,920
Legal fees	1,500	-
Postage, Courier Charges/Freight	14,004	2,050
Telephone & internet	4,838	13,766
Stationery & Office Supplies	4,838	4,401
Strategic Plan Implementation	-	-
Sub. Membership & Library	1,199	1,793
Sundry Expenses	6,697	4,466
Website	6,887	5,389
	84,742	68,461
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	951,245	902,270
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	(64,454)	205,208

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Balance as at 1 July 2022	1,663,313	1,458,105
Profit (Loss) attributable to members	(64,454)	205,208
Balance as at 30 June 2022	1,598,859	1,663,313

ROSS HOUSE TRUST

Balance Sheet
As at 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Trust Funds		
Accumulated Profits (Losses)		
Brought Forward	(590,000)	(516,250)
Loss This Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Asset Revaluation Reserve	25,140,000	18,790,000
Total Trust Funds	24,476,250	18,200,000

Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Opening Balance	18,200,000	18,273,750
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Increase in Asset Revaluation Reserve	6,350,000	-
Closing Balance	24,476,250	18,200,000

Profit and Loss Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Expenditure		
Depreciation - Buildings	73,750	73,750
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)

Statement of Appropriations
For the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022	2021
Accumulated Profits (Losses)		
Brought Forward	(590,000)	(516,250)
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(73,750)	(73,750)
Accumulated Loss	(663,750)	(590,000)

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 2022 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 thanks to our members, tenants, supporters, and partners, including:

Ellen Sandell – Greens State MP for Melbourne
Michelle James – City of Melbourne
Vickie Feretopoulos – City of Melbourne
Hayden Raysmith – RHA Founding Member
The Australian Government Department of Social Services
Maddocks
National Trust of Victoria
Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
City Switch
Justice Connect – NFP Law

Thanks to all those members and tenants who contributed ideas and time through 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
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



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