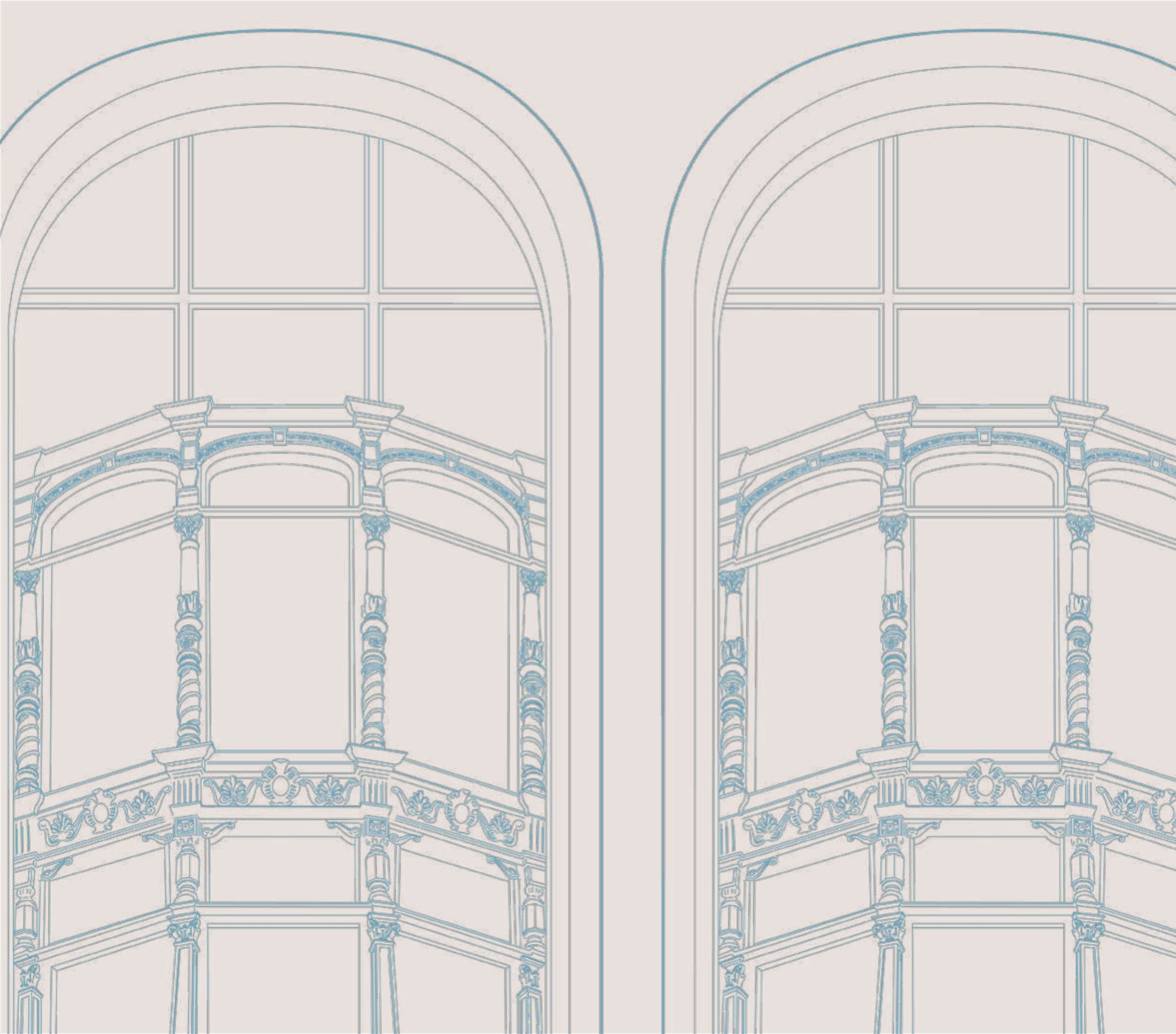


2022



2023

ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL REPORT



Contents

- 3** Chairperson's & CEO's Report

- 6** Ross House Association Committee and Staff 2022-23

- 8** Members' Stories

- 20** Members and Tenants 2022-23

- 24** Financial Reports

- 32** Acknowledgements

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 respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation the traditional owners of the land on which Ross House is located. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne VIC 3000
03 9650 1599
rosshouse@rosshouse.org.au
www.rosshouse.org.au
ABN 98 304 224 784

Chairperson's & CEO's Reports



Chairperson's Report



"I believe Ross House can be a small but shining light in continuing its approach as an alternative and unique model in a fraught world."

The Ross House financial year of 2022-2023 has had its share of ups and downs in many ways. Particularly in respect to the continued efforts to fulfil the objectives of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, specifically regarding the lease of the ground floor to ensure the future viability of Ross House.

The decision to commercialise the ground floor, prompted some contention among some members, leading to a call for a Special General Meeting (SGM). The lease was put on hold for three months, and an SGM was held in October 2022, and the resulting membership vote allowed the commercial lease to proceed.

It is fair to say that this past year's events have not come without its consequences. Stress levels have been high at times for staff and committee members. In light of the challenges and in recognition of his leadership role the General Manager's title was changed to Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Over the pandemic era including this last year our finances were affected considerably. Under the leadership of CEO Michael Griffiths, the Ross House staff, along with the Risk Management and Finance sub-committee continued to make extraordinary efforts to identify and successfully implement cost saving measures as appropriate. With the resignation of the Membership and Tenancy Officer in late 2022, the CEO took on much of that role to abate costs until such time staff roles could be re-examined. At the end of the financial year, this work has kept us holding steady as you will see in both the Treasurer and CEO Annual Reports.

After over a decade on the Ross House Committee, the last six as Chairperson, it is time to hand over the baton. I have learnt much on this journey, including the role of group dynamics and the part that plays on a committee (a particular interest of mine). I have witnessed, dedication, commitment and passion for what Ross House does and what it stands for, and the willingness to give up so much time and effort by committee members.

It has been a real privilege to be on the committee. My participation has always been based on values I share with many in the Ross House Community. These include a strong belief in social justice and the role Ross House, and its community plays in supporting that ideal. I have worked hard to create a better working dynamic and environment on the Committee which has enabled respectful discussion, ensuring everyone has a say. During my time I have been involved in the Community Development, Membership and Tenancy sub-committees at various stages and have introduced 'Reflections' (committee updates etc.) in the 'In the House' newsletter. Being heavily involved in the rewrite of the Constitution and Enterprise Bargaining Agreements has also been part of my role.

I believe Ross House can be a small but shining light in continuing its approach as an alternative and unique model in a fraught world. Or it may choose to conform to another model in the future. Much of that in my personal view, will be dependent on the participation of tenants and members, particularly by representation on the Committee.

Lastly, a highlight has been the ability to engage with the CEO, staff over these years, and work closely with them as a team in order to achieve the results that benefit Ross House. I thank them for the respectful and professional approach they take and importantly the commitment they have shown to Ross House. It has been a real pleasure to work with them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine McAuslan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine McAuslan



CEO's Report



"I would like to thank all the staff for working through this year in what has often been challenging circumstances. Many of the staff have been in their roles for years and a fantastic work culture has developed."

The recovery from the pandemic continued this year as we looked to address higher than usual vacancies at Ross House caused by changes to the workplace dynamic, with many organisations opting to increase work from home arrangements. All vacant tenancy spaces have now been filled on levels 1-4 and there are even some organisations on a waiting list for tenancy space. Meeting room usage has continued its recovery; however, demand is still significantly behind pre-pandemic levels.

Financially the organisation again managed a positive organisational cash flow of \$9,473 when discounting for depreciation. However, cash in the bank dropped from \$1.2M to \$907,000 as a number of significant tenancy fit-outs were carried out to create more suitable spaces for existing and new tenants.

An RHA Special General Meeting was held this year in October 2022. There have been concerns from some members of the community since the RHA Committee elected to pursue a commercial tenant for the ground floor of Ross House, as a strategy to address issues with financial sustainability. Whilst the pandemic put on hold signing a tenant for the space, efforts resumed early in 2022. As RHA got closer to an agreement however, an SGM was called by 8 RHA members to put the decision to a general member vote. Whilst this was a difficult time for staff, committee, and the community, in the end the RHA membership voted to pursue a commercial tenant for the ground floor of Ross House and negotiations resumed in early 2023. There have been some delays due to egress rights and the extent of landlord works, however we expect a lease to be signed and fit-out works to commence early 2024.

Electricity usage at Ross House continues to reduce following LED upgrades to lighting in the previous financial year. Compared to 2018-2019, the last complete year before the pandemic, where usage was 269,017kWh, this year we used 143,723.02kWh, a 47% reduction. For a longer-term comparison, in 2009 before RHA commenced efforts to improve sustainability at Ross House, we consumed 526,687kWh during the year.

RHA Chairperson Christine McAuslan has decided to step down this year from the role after 6-years. Christine was elected Deputy Chairperson in 2013, stepping into the Chairpersons role 4-years later in 2017. Christine and I have worked very closely over these last 10-years, through some difficult times in the height of the pandemic and in working through disagreements on both the committee and in the community over the best way to tackle Ross House's financial sustainability. I thank her for her support and friendship over these many years.

There were some staffing changes this year with Membership & Tenancy Officer Rebecca May deciding to move on to pursue her passion in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Rebecca worked during one of the most difficult times as the M&T Officer due to the upheavals created by the pandemic and I would like to thank her for her dedication and professionalism during her time at Ross House. Katie Stadtfeld-Cunnane also returned from maternity leave in January 2023, with the staff and community equally delighted to see her back on the front desk. Ruby James Strawhan, who had been filling in for Katie on maternity leave has moved into a new role as Engagement and Communications Officer. We look forward to Ruby bringing her expertise and passion to this exciting new role.

With the SGM behind us, we hope that RHA can now move forward with long-term improvement plans for the building. The pandemic has changed the way we work and there are new requirements for office and meeting room space for all sizes of organisations. RHA will also have a new Chairperson as we start the next chapter for Ross House. I would like to thank all the staff for working through this year in what has often been challenging circumstances. Many of the staff have been in their roles for years and a fantastic work culture has developed. The Committee has also been under significant pressure this year and I thank everyone who has volunteered their time to see Ross House prosper. Thank you also to the Members and Tenants of Ross House, who strive each and every day to improve the lives of those around us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Griffiths'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Michael Griffiths



Ross House Association Committee & Staff 2022-23



Ross House Association Committee & Staff 2022-23

Committee | Officers

Chairperson | Christine McAuslan
Collective of Self-Help Groups

Treasurer | Keith Bettles
U3A Melbourne City (Until November 2022)

Treasurer | Alba Chliakhtine
Abrisa (From November 2022)

Secretary | Scot Muirden
Charles Bonnett Syndrome Foundation

Committee | Members

Keith Bettles (U3A Melbourne City)
Ordinary Member (From November 2022)

Denise Boyd (Star)
Ordinary Member (From November 2022)

Greg Ferrington (DRC)
Ordinary Member (From November 2022)

Ntennis Davi (DBV)
Ordinary Member (Until November 2022)

Margaret O'Loughlin (HAAG)
Ordinary Member (Until November 2022)

Richard Caven
Appointed (Until November 2022)

Maggie Maguire
Appointed (Until November 2022)

De Grebner (Ex Tree Project)
Appointed

Michael Griffiths
Ex-officio

Nazzareno Marchionda
Appointed Staff Representative

Staff

Michael Griffiths
CEO

Rebecca May
Membership & Tenancy Officer (Until October 2022)

Nazzareno Marchionda
Facility Manager

Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane
Information & Administration Officer

Ruby James-Strawhan
Information & Administration Officer

Carol Franklin
Information & Administration Officer

Junxia Xu
Finance Officer



Members' Stories



Phil and Chris from Victorian Forest Alliance



Advocacy for Oromia

Advocacy for Oromia (A4O) exists to improve the settlement process and advance the wellbeing of Australian-Oromos. This year, seven Oromo asylum seekers who received letters of support from A4O have had their political asylum applications accepted and received permanent residence permits. This is a very exciting outcome of our support because it has given hope to those who had an uncertain life. We have also assisted 12 households in their power bonus saving application and have received \$250 from the Victorian government. We also assisted those who are not familiar with Centrelink online services such as setting up MyGov and reporting income statements online.



A4O organised two important cultural events: Irreecha Birraa held on 2 October 2022 and Irreechaa Arfaasaa held on May 20, 2023. Oromo Indigeneity is rooted in a connection to land and nature, and all that the Earth gives to us. With this in mind, we ran the Oromo Thanksgiving events as they open up opportunities for the Oromo community to thank Waaqaa (God), to come together adorned with their culture and for the new generation living abroad to grow up learning about the Oromo culture. Furthermore, it enables community members to come together and connect, which plays a major role in community mental wellbeing, safety, and life. It also allows the Oromo culture to play a role in developing a multicultural Australian system.

Another aspect of the work carried out through A4O during this year is the engagement initiated with actors such as HWPL to promote a culture of peace in the world. Thus, for the first time, peace education training was given to 16 members of the Oromo community. In addition, Melbourne's Oromo youth proudly participated in the first ever multi-cultural peace festival on 11 March 2023. On this day, they made other communities aware of the peaceful culture that the Oromo have been preserving for many years. They also highlighted the harm being done to the Oromo people due to the lack of peace in Oromia. The young Oromo expressed their hope that lasting peace can be established if the Oromo people form alliances with peacekeepers around the world alongside their individual efforts to establish peace. We participated in the peace rally held in Melbourne on 27 May 2023 and conveyed a message to all parties to help each other to make peace.

The other two major events we held here at the Ross House were the Oromo Martyrs Day held on April 15 and the 50th anniversary of the Oromo Liberation Front held on 23 July. The Martyrs Day is a day to remember Oromo martyrs and renew our vows to the Oromo heroes who made unrivalled sacrifices for peace, freedom, and humanity. The 50th anniversary of the founding of the OLF is the day when the Oromo nationalists founded OLF in 1973. Because of this organisation, the Oromo people are fighting for

the return of peace and freedom. These events have special meaning for the Oromo community who have fled their homeland for political reasons and settled in Australia as they are strongly linked to the history of the Oromo liberation struggle. For this reason, both the Oromo Heroes Day and the commemoration of the founding of the OLF are a time to reflect on the past, consider what they are going through, and anticipate the future.

Advocacy for Oromia was established as a self-help group in 2014 with the purpose of enabling and empowering Oromo people, by providing accurate and timely information, referral and direct case support that help them make better choices to create the kind of future they wish to live. A4O will continue to be involved in facilitating and organizing impactful activities, cultural and historic events in the future. We would also like to thank those who contributed to the success of our events.



ANTaR Victoria's focus this financial year continues to be based on the themes of voice, truth and treaty; particularly in the context of Victoria but also in the lead-up to the referendum.



Advocacy & Campaigns

Voice to Parliament

ANTaR Victoria played a significant advocacy role in the lead up to the Referendum. We were successful in obtaining a grant from the City of Melbourne which enabled us to employ a part-time campaign manager, Tom Ponissi. We supported 10 Local Reconciliation Groups with their campaign efforts in their local communities by linking them to training and campaign resources. Together with the Victorian Council of Churches, and after an initial meeting between ANTaR Vic and the Heads of Churches in December, we facilitated monthly meetings for the Ecumenical Network Group – First Nations Matters which was a space for Christian Church groups to share information and resources, including those with a theological framework, around the Voice to Parliament. We held a successful virtual event on Understanding the Voice with guest presenter Jade Ritchie. ANTaR Victoria members and subscribers were mobilised into action through links to training, resources and events. We also enjoyed being active members of the Allies for Uluru working group.

Education & Engagement

Our joint forum in the Melbourne CBD with Reconciliation Victoria in November featured representations from the Voice campaign as well as the FPAV and the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

ANTaR Victoria attended a number of key events which supported and celebrated First Nations Peoples. This included Share the Spirit at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, NAIDOC week events and the National Reconciliation Week breakfast hosted by Reconciliation Victoria. Staff and volunteers enjoyed being involved in these events and engaging in meaningful conversations with others.

Our social media team continues to share informative articles, reports and event information. Our regular e-news updates, proves to be a popular and meaningful way to engage with our membership and subscriber base. We also updated our website this year, the information presented in a user friendly and logical manner for all to access.

Other areas of advocacy

We have continued to promote the treaty and truth-telling processes within Victoria through our support of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria (FPAV) and the Yoorrook Justice Commission. After the second election of representatives for the FPAV the next stages in treaty making in Victoria are the establishment of the Treaty Authority followed by negotiation of state-wide and Traditional Owner treaties. The Yoorrook Justice Commission has focused on the historical and present day iniquities of the child protection and justice systems. Along with key state-wide First Nation organisations such as the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, ANTaR Vic promoted the call for closing the gap in child protection and incarceration rates.

Assisi Aid Projects: Beneficiary Case Study

Assisi Aid Projects, with the help of its partners in India, Nepal and Indonesia, continues to strive towards life-changing economic and social impact for women and their communities in the Asia-Pacific region, by providing women with small business loans, business training and support, so that they can start their own businesses, earn an income, and support their families.



Ms Kasthuri

In Tamil Nadu, India, the children's project tackles gender inequality at its roots. Children, and especially girls, in rural Tamil Nadu, have few opportunities for quality education, personal development, and future employment. The project supports over eight hundred children to access quality education, develop leadership skills, and learn how to advocate for their rights. Each of the project villages runs a study centre, children's club, Children's Parliament, and parents' group, facilitated by implementing partner Integrated Development Trust.

Kasthuri has been an active member of the Children's Project Parent Group in her village of Ganabathipuram for six years, and her two children are studying at the study centre. Before her involvement in the project, Kasthuri said that she had frequent quarrels with her husband. As part of the project, both parents received training in parenting skills, and monthly meetings offered a platform for open discussions, which Kasthuri says have helped improve her relationship with both her husband and children. The training also helped create a better understanding of the benefits of education. Kasthuri and her husband have now expressed interest in supporting their children's education and sharing the required tasks.

Kasthuri was further supported to help her children's education through a project business loan, allowing her to buy two goats and begin goat rearing. She now has six goats and says, "I am confident that through this business I will be able to increase the family income and support the education of the children".



Ms Kasthuri

Brain Injury Matters

The financial year 2022/2023 has been a big one for Brain Injury Matters! One of the many achievements, amongst a busy time of successful projects, has been the ongoing growth of our Peer Support Groups.



In May 2023 The Bendigo Neighbourhood Hub PSG had their first catch up.

The importance of the ABI peer support groups cannot be understated. Often, those living with an ABI can feel somewhat isolated, and may have difficulty maintaining meaningful contact with others. Many have changes in relationships, and yearn to connect with others with similar life experiences.

Each year the member survey conducted by BIM communicates the need for regular and accessible peer support groups. Everyone at BIM; the Committee of Management, staff, volunteers and fellow members, all work extremely hard to provide and run the valuable PSGs.

BIM now offers 10 peer support groups in total. 5 of which span the Melbourne metro area, 3 in regional areas, 1 online and an additional online coffee morning catch-up each Monday morning.

If you would like more information please contact the Brain Injury Matters office at office@braininjurymatters.org.



The East Metro PSG - Ringwood enjoying a BBQ at the park.



Women's Peer Support Group - Ross House, Melbourne

On the first Monday in June 2023, ten women met for the first time at Ross House. To celebrate we shared a delicious chocolate mousse cake with coffee and had a good chat.

“As proud facilitator of the Gisborne Peer Support Group, and attendee of other groups, I can attest to the positive benefits of being involved with the groups. The connections, friendships, hints and tips shared, tears and laughter, are absolutely life-changing and life-affirming, and are so very important to our overall wellbeing and participation in society.”

- Carol Franklin

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)

Taking a systems approach to sustainable healthcare

The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), in partnership with leading healthcare stakeholders, have run annual events focusing on environmentally sustainable healthcare since 2012 (excluding 2020).



In 2022, CAHA partnered with Hunter New England Local Health District to bring the 11th annual Greening the Healthcare Sector Forum to Awabakal country (Newcastle) for the first time. We welcomed 120 people to the Hunter Medical Research Institute, as well as 220 people online.

After a challenging two years of pandemic and natural disasters, this Forum inspired healthcare providers to make positive changes towards a more sustainable healthcare system. With the theme, driving systems change for sustainable healthcare, we aimed to answer three big questions:

- How do we measure sustainability in healthcare?
- What is happening right now in sustainable healthcare?
- What is the big picture of sustainable healthcare in Australia?

To answer these sizeable questions, the Forum showcased outstanding examples of sustainable healthcare in action, and highlighted current research and policy to support the transition to net zero, sustainable healthcare. It also provided an opportunity for connection, knowledge sharing, learning, and upskilling.

CAHA aimed to ensure the Forum was relevant for a wide range of people working in or connected with the health sector in Australia. The Forum brought together health and aged care sustainability champions, leadership and executive, government representatives, students, researchers and suppliers from across Australia and New Zealand. Together, attendees explored the big issues and solutions to fostering a healthy, sustainable future for people and the planet.



The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)



It was important to walk the talk at the Forum. To minimise the forum's environmental footprint:

- Attendees could join online instead of travelling to the venue
- Attendees were provided with information about how to reach the venue via active and public transport
- Carbon emissions associated with the Forum (approximately 15 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) were offset using Greenfleet
- Vegetarian/vegan catering was provided
- Compostable and bamboo service ware was provided
- Attendees were encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles and coffee cups
- Tickets and Forum program were all available electronically for attendees

CAHA also gifted presenters and facilitators with an assortment of products from Bush Balm Social Enterprise, run by Purple House (a member of our sustainable healthcare network). Purple House is an innovative Indigenous-owned and operated health service based in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. This dynamic social enterprise provides employment opportunities for patients and their families, and no cost bush medicine for Purple House patients year round.

As our CEO Roland Sapsford finished the day by saying, this is just the beginning of the work we have to do. There is lots more to do in our hospitals and health services, and in our institutions where decisions are made. We can go further together! For more information, head to caha.org.au/resilience.



Disability Discrimination Legal Service

Disability Discrimination Legal Service (DDLS) was thrilled to expand its services to women with disabilities at the beginning of this year.



Previously, DDLS was funded to provide general discrimination services to people with disabilities in Victoria.

With project funding from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, we now have a four-year project designed specifically to assist women with disabilities who have been sexually harassed or discriminated against in the workplace.

DDLS is very happy to provide information and workshops on our new service to interested parties.



Retina Australia

Retina Australia is a national, charitable organisation with a mission to support people affected by inherited retinal diseases. Through our independent research grants program, our aim is to accelerate medical research into early detection, discovering preventions, and advancing better treatments, with the hope of progression towards unlocking cures for inherited retinal diseases. As a membership organisation, we also provide information about inherited retinal diseases, including guides for support and assistance, and offer support through peer-to-peer social groups, phone assistance and referrals.



retinaaustralia.com.au

2022-2023 has been an exciting year for Retina Australia with many new developments. In October 2022 we welcomed our inaugural Chief Executive Officer, Julia Hall. Organisational foundations were established immediately thereafter, with a new vision, mission and values confirmed alongside a new Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

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 2 recipients:

Dr Anai Gonzalez-Cordero (Children's Medical Research Institute, Sydney – *Establishing novel AAV gene editing for Usher Syndrome*

Dr Adrian Cioanca (John Curtin School of Medical Research, Canberra – *Using RNA silencing to tackle neuroinflammation in retinal degeneration.*



In addition to supporting medical research developments, another focus for Retina Australia was to improve and increase the provision of information and communications about inherited retinal disease to our community. Key developments included:

- We launched a new bi-annual newsletter, The Retina Reporter, in December 2022.
- In April 2023, we were excited to launch our new website, rebranded and upgraded for functionality, and designed and certified for global accessibility standards (www.retinaaustralia.com.au).
- In May 2023 we launched our new e-newsletter, The Retina Insider.
- We also hosted two webinars providing the latest in research into inherited retinal disease. These included updates from clinical trials, genetic testing and gene therapies, and an update on the latest developments in bionic eye research.

We would like to thank Ross House for assisting in our office restructure which has supported our ongoing tenancy.



Schizy Inc

Schizy Inc (pronounced 'skitzzy ink') continues to deliver bold and innovative projects around mental health that champion lived experience through the arts.



Schizy Inc photos by Darren Gill



Over the last year, Schizy Inc supported around 150 diverse creatives with complex mental health such as schizophrenia, bipolar, depression and other complex trauma. Ongoing programs include SiDAS Studio at Abbotsford Convent providing vocational pathways for visual artists and writers, nature based healing and creative activities, and a performing arts collective based at Ross House.

Schizy Inc's major event 'Mojo Festival of Arts', celebrates World Schizophrenia Day in May each year and involves four months of creative development at Ross House and SiDAS in the lead up to a public outcome. This year, Mojo featured two events - an exhibition of 120 artworks at St Heliers St Gallery at Abbotsford Convent and a performing arts event at Trades Hall, Carlton, featuring 40 artists performing exciting new theatre, stand up comedy, music and dance. In October 2023, Schizy Inc is proud to present the inaugural Lived Experience Innovation Forum at Ross House, highlighting leadership in social impact enterprise beyond the mental health system.

Schizy Inc is grateful for support from Creative Victoria, Creative Australia, Department of Social Services, City of Melbourne Arts. We thank Ross House for warmly supporting Schizy Inc to do what we do, all our workshop facilitators, mentors, Schizy Inc Committee and most of all our fabulous Lived Experience community of artists, dreamers and renegades.



Travellers Aid

During the 2022-23 year, we have continued to extend our reach to support more people who face barriers to access. Travellers Aid service hubs at Flinders Street and Southern Cross Stations in Melbourne and at Seymour and Ballarat Stations in regional Victoria offer a range of services to support people transiting through the stations.



Ballarat November 2022 - Photo by Dylan Buckee

travellersaid.org.au

We also offer connection assistance at major events as well as public transport service disruptions. The uptake of our services has grown with more people becoming aware of our offering, thanks in part, to strong partnerships with other organisations who have seen the value of inclusion; both in a financial sense and most importantly, in the enriching of our community.

The awakening of access and inclusion within Victorian business holds positive change as individuals and organisations look to improve their understanding of disability, access, and inclusion. We have been pleased to be able to review and grow our training opportunities, providing organisations with education and awareness to better serve people with disability. This awareness and training enables our participants to deliver their services or products more effectively.

Travellers Aid Operations Manager Maria Groner says "This can provide deep insights and understanding; a lightbulb moment for individuals and groups that sparks the passion and compassion required to make a change in their sphere of influence. It also provides ongoing connections between businesses and people with disability for future engagement when designing and reviewing access and inclusion strategies."

Contact us to find out more or to book a group training session.

Call (03) 9654 2600
Email info@travellersaid.org.au
Website www.travellersaid.org.au



Joel and Phillip at FSS 2023



Photo by Dylan Buckee



Victorian Forest Alliance

An epic year for the Victorian Forest Alliance!

It's been an incredible 12 months for the Victorian Forest Alliance and for our campaign to protect native forests from logging. In May 2023 the Daniel Andrews government announced they would bring forward the transition out of native forest logging from 2000 to January 1, 2024. This is a monumental achievement and the result of decades of hard-fought campaigning from so many people and groups over the years. Citizen science and community led legal action were particularly impactful, and a key part of getting this result.



What we got up to

Our citizen science program kicked off from July 2022 with wildlife surveys on Gunnai Kurnai Country in Gippsland, working with Gippsland Environment Group to survey for endangered greater gliders. Since then we've collaborated with so many of our fantastic members to support surveying efforts across the state, including with Save the Little Dargo, FoE Melbourne, VNPA, Friends of Mt Stirling, Wildlife of the Central Highlands, Wombat ForestCare, Gippsland Environment Group and so many more. We've protected over 1,500ha of forests scheduled for logging through our surveying efforts over the past 12 months. We got some awesome media stories up in Yahoo, ABC, and local regional papers on our findings.

We also ran a jam-packed state election campaign with a big launch party in September 2022. We made protecting native forests and a rapid end to logging a key state election issue. Together with our members we letterboxed more than 100,000 homes, ran stalls at local markets, handed out flyers at train stations, had hundreds of conversations at local community events, got postcards signed, dropped banners, put up posters, attended candidates forums, handed out flyers at pre-poll - and so much more! Thank you so much to everyone who got involved.

We supported and helped coordinate joint letters from environment groups, and human rights organisations to oppose draconian anti-protest laws, which came into effect earlier in the year. A number of our members have done fantastic work opposing these laws.

In November, we worked with Lawyers for Forests to launch our legal guide for community groups - a practical how to guide on taking legal action to protect forests. We held a fantastic event at Flagstaff Gardens, where we heard from lawyers and citizen scientists on how to use legal action and citizen science to halt logging.

victorianforestalliance.org.au

We also co-published the 'Victoria's Forest Carbon' report with The Tree Projects, authored by Dr. Jen Sanger. The report exposed the hidden carbon emissions of native forest logging, showing that ending native forest logging would save 3 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year! The Age published an article about the report, and we held a number of info sessions with Jen and brought copies of the report to candidates forums to present to state election candidates, to spread the word about the importance of protecting forests for climate.

We supported and worked with our members to run rallies, host events, and several of our members celebrated some fantastic wins in court, including Warburton Environment, Gippsland Environment Group, Environment East Gippsland, and Kinglake Friends of the Forest. We're beyond proud of them, and what we were all able to achieve this year.



Members & Tenants 2022-23



Members & Tenants 2022-23

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

Promote Brazilian culture and provides information about Australia for immigrants.

Advocacy for Oromia Association

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.

Assisi Aid Projects

Support sustainable development work in southern India.

Australia China Friendship Society

Foster friendship between Australian and Chinese people.

Australia for UNHCR

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

Beyond Zero Emissions

An internationally recognised climate solutions think tank.

Blind Citizens Australia

National representative organisation of people who are blind or vision impaired.

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

Promote the customs and language of Catalonia.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Foundation

Assist people affected by Charles Bonnet Syndrome 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.

Deafblind Victoria

Increase community awareness and understanding of the experience of Deafblindness and advocate 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

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

Disabled Wintersport Australia

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

Elder Rights Advocacy

Support older people, their families and representatives in Victoria to address issues related to Commonwealth funded aged care services.

Exit Victoria

Advocate 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

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

IndianCare

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

Mixed Nuts Media

A unique not-for-profit media, arts and training organisation, run by and for people with a psychiatric disability.

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

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



Members & Tenants 2022-23

Tenant Members

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

Assist 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)

Support Victorian self-advocacy groups that are run by and for people with an intellectual 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.

Slavic Welfare Association

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

STAR - Victorian Action on Intellectual Disability

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

Thirrili

Provide crucial supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suffering grief, loss, and trauma due to the loss of a loved one through suicide and other critical incidents.

TreeProject

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

Victorian Drama League, The

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

Woor-Dungin

Aim 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

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

Mac Advice

Provide 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.

Members (Non-Tenants)

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.

Apple Users Society of Melbourne

Australia's largest and most active Apple User Group, established in 1980.

Blueprint for Free Speech

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

Deaf Victoria

Advocate on behalf of deaf and hard of hearing Victorians to increase access to services and to educate the wider community on how to work, play and study with Deaf and hard of hearing people.

East West Foundation Australia, The

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



Members & Tenants 2022-23

Members (Non-Tenants)

Federation of Spanish Speaking Senior Citizens

Support and advice for senior Spanish speaking citizens.

Forget Me Not Foundation

In place for construction of reprieve housing for homicide survivors.

Futures Foundation

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

Humanists Australia

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

Indo-China Ethnic Chinese Association

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

Lotus Group Projects Inc

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

Melbourne Esperanto Association

Promote and teach the international language Esperanto.

Narcolepsy and Overwhelming Daytime Sleep Society

Support group set up to help people with sleep disorders.

National Council of Women of Victoria

Encourage the participation of women in all aspects of community life.

Open Food Network

Advise and advocate for community food enterprises.

Post Polio Victoria

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

Public Interest Library Foundation

Support and promote all the principles of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by providing accessible, free repository of information of public interest.

Slavery Links Australia

Work to promote recognition of slavery and action by decision makers.

Sustainable Living Foundation

Facilitates projects based on the rapid adoption of ways of living that will sustain the community of life locally and globally.

Southern Rivers Community Services

Assist 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.

Timorese Association of Victoria

Promoting East Timorese culture to the wider community of Australia by developing social and cultural activities where the sharing of culture is possible.

Travellers Aid

Empowering people with travel related challenges to connect, engage and participate within their communities through the use of public transport.

U3A Melbourne City

Provide learning and social opportunities to members aged 50+ who are retired or working part-time.

Victoria Forest Alliance

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

Associate Members

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

CALXA Australia

Counsellors Victoria Inc

Non Profit Training

River Basin Management Society, The

Society of Women Writers Victoria Inc

Understanding Literature Group

Moved Out

Animal Law Institute

Australia for UNHCR

Beyond Zero Emissions

Permanent Care and Adoptive Families

Moved In

Elder Rights Advocacy

Mixed Nuts Media

Thirrili



Financial Reports 2022-23



Treasurer's Report

The challenges of sustainability for Ross House continued in 2022/23 with a drop in our reserves of \$300k due to capital works expenses. Some of the impact was absorbed by careful management of staff allocations. We were able to absorb for a period of 2 years the work of two people. This enabled us to save approximately \$180k.



The financial result for 2022-2023 presented a small operating surplus of \$9.5k. Cash in bank reduced by 300k due to capital works (\$1.2M to \$907k).



Annual Income increased by 5.3% from \$886k to \$933k for the 2023 period.



Loss reported of \$240k including accounting for depreciation (non-cash item) to the value of \$249k.

2023/2024 – Expectations

We do expect a more comfortable financial position for Ross House Association over the next few years. Upon completion of the commercialisation strategy for the ground floor, we should be able to derive an income from late 2024. This commercialisation strategy will generate \$4.2M in revenue over the next 10 years for Ross House.

In addition, we are currently at 100% rental occupancy for tenancy spaces at Ross House over levels 1-4. The creation of a new multi-year lease has also enabled RHA to move away from an annual renewal of all leases, to safer and more secure lease arrangements. These multi-year leases also protect the Association when undertaking tenancy capital works as part of lease negotiations.

Note: 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 2023. 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
Keith Bettles
Alba Chliakhtine
Scot Muirden

Denise Boyd
Greg Ferrington
De Grebner
Ntennis Davi

Margaret O'Loughlin
Richard Caven
Maggie Maguire
Nazzeno Marchionda

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Committee:

Christine McAuslan | Chairperson

Alba Chliakhtine | Treasurer



Ross House Association Incorporated

Balance Sheet: As at 30 June 2023

Assets

Current Assets

	2023	2022
Cash at Bank & On Hand	907,727	1,204,524
Trade Debtors	2,013	5,939
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	(5,000)	(5,000)
	(2,987)	939
Sundry Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	-	-
Adjustment	-	-
	904,740	1,205,463

Total Assets

2023	2022
26,415,973	26,692,950

Non-Current Assets

	2023	2022
Land	22,180,000	22,180,000
Buildings	2,960,000	2,960,000
Less accumulated amortisation	(737,750)	(663,750)
Furniture & Equipment	531,135	333,204
Less accumulated depreciation	(269,188)	(232,418)
Capital Work	323,273	322,255
Less accumulated depreciation	(277,820)	(256,709)
Electronic Equipment	355,782	281,441
Less accumulated depreciation	(210,733)	(161,856)
Main Lift	169,611	169,611
Less accumulated depreciation	(26,855)	(18,374)
Ground Floor Toilet	121,725	121,725
Less accumulated depreciation	(71,028)	(53,633)
HVAC VSD	56,700	56,700
Less accumulated depreciation	(12,459)	(9,624)
HVAC	801,516	801,516
Less accumulated depreciation	(382,676)	(342,601)
Website	71,954	71,954
Less accumulated depreciation	(71,954)	(71,954)
	25,511,233	25,487,487



Ross House Association Incorporated

Balance Sheet: As at 30 June 2023

Liabilities

Current Liabilities	2023	2022
Trade Creditors & Accruals	29,666	77,162
Income in Advance	15,804	15,754
Grant in Advance	-	66
Rent in Advance	1,811	1,779
Staff Leave Provisions	86,221	75,264
Superannuation Provision	12,700	11,189

146,202 **181,214**

Non-Current Liabilities	2023	2022
Right of Indemnity-Ross House Trust	24,402,250	24,476,250
Staff Leave Provisions - L.S.L.	34,734	36,627

24,436,984 **24,512,877**

Total	2023	2022
Liabilities	24,583,186	24,694,091

Equity

	2023	2022
Emergency Reserve	400,000	400,000
Retained Earnings	1,432,787	1,598,859

1,832,787 **1,998,859**

Net	2023	2022
Assets	1,832,787	1,998,859



Ross House Association Incorporated

Income Statement: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Income

	2023	2022	Less Expenditure	2023	2022
Lease Income	666,855	712,252	Operating Expenses		
Car Park	35,963	38,860	Salaries & Wages	390,939	359,779
Facilities Hire	213,116	166,530	Superannuation	42,811	35,712
Equipment Hire	16,132	12,876	Workcover Premiums	1,893	1,018
Sales-Equipment Keys & Stationery	503	301	Provision for Staff Leave	9,064	(5,752)
Interest Received	8,253	2,998	Staff Selection	-	-
Insurance & Other Reimbursements	6,959	5,277	Staff Training	5,480	-
Membership Subscription	5,922	6,120		450,187	390,757
Other Income	16	30	Property and Equipment Costs		
Hardship Contingency Fund Transactions	(15,808)	(52,667)	Building Expenses	188,347	171,700
Refund	(8,052)	(28,777)	Utilities & Services	53,638	50,166
Grants Received			Cleaning	86,363	55,619
Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund	-	12,000	Other property & Equipment	213,452	198,261
DSS DBV Projects	3,282	4,991		541,800	475,746
Powering Community Program	-	6,000			
Total Income	933,141	886,791			



Ross House Association Incorporated

Income Statement: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Less Expenditure cont...	2023	2022
Operating Costs		
Annual Report & AGM	3,788	3,600
Amenities	338	392
Advertising and Promotion	425	-
Audit fees	3,424	3,129
Bad Debts Expenses	-	-
Bank Charges	98	96
Bookkeeping & Accounting fees	690	720
Community Development Events	1,393	-
Computer & Software Support	27,875	20,720
Committee Expense & Training	521	-
Consultants fees	22,773	19,000
Legal fees	15,395	1,500
Postage, Courier Charges/Freight	1,586	1,960
Telephone & Internet	13,635	14,004
Stationery & Office Supplies	4,752	4,838
Sub. Membership & Library	1,238	1,199
Sundry Expenses	3,473	6,697
Website	5,822	6,887
	107,226	84,742

Total Expenditure	2023	2022
	1,099,213	951,245

Profit (Loss) For the Year	2023	2022
	(166,072)	(64,454)



Ross House Association Incorporated

Statement of Changes of Equity: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Balance as at 1 July 2022	1,598,859	1,663,313
Profit (Loss) attributable to members	(166,072)	(64,454)
Balance as at 30 June 2023	1,432,787	1,598,859

Ross House Trust Balance Sheet: As at 30 June 2023

Trust Funds	2023	2022
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(663,750)	(590,000)
Loss This Year	(74,000)	(73,750)
Asset Revaluation Reserve	25,140,000	25,140,000
Total Trust Funds	24,402,250	24,476,250

Statement of Changes of Equity: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Opening Balance	24,476,250	18,200,000
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(74,000)	(73,750)
Increase in Asset Revaluation Reserve	-	6,350,000
Closing Balance	24,402,250	24,476,250

Profit and Loss Statement: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

Expenditure	2023	2022
Depreciation - Buildings	74,000	73,750
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(74,000)	(73,750)



Ross House Association Incorporated

Reconciliation of Undistributed Income: For the Year Ended 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(663,750)	(590,000)
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(74,000)	(73,750)
Accumulated Loss	(737,750)	(663,750)



Acknowledgements



Acknowledgements 2022-23

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
Victoria Sorbera – City of Melbourne
Derek Mortimer – DF Mortimer & Associates
Hayden Raysmith – RHA Founding Member
Richard Caven – Ex RHA Appointed Member
Maggie Maguire – Ex RHA Appointed Member
The Australian Government Department of Social Services
Paul Ellis – Maddocks
Chong Ming Goh – Maddocks
National Trust of Victoria
Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
City Switch
Justice Connect – NFP Law
Non Profit Training

Thanks to all those members and tenants who contributed ideas and time throughout the year.

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

The R E Ross Trust
The Danks Trust
The E B Myer Charitable Fund
The Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
The Ian Potter Foundation
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





ROSS HOUSE
ASSOCIATION

rosshouse.org.au