

2024 2025

Annual Report



ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION



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Chairperson's & CEO's Reports

Image: Ross House Association Chairperson Colin Neave AM and CEO Michael Griffiths address the room at the 2024 RHA AGM in November.



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



ROSS HOUSE ASSOCIATION | ANNUAL REPORT

Chairperson's Report

As I reflect on the 2024–2025 financial year, I'm struck by what an extraordinarily productive period this was for Ross House. It was a privilege to serve as Chairperson during a year marked by major milestones that I believe have set the Association on a strong and sustainable path forward.

A significant achievement during the year was the opening of the Melbourne Winery on our ground floor in April 2025. Seeing this long-awaited project come to life after years of planning and negotiating by the Committee and staff was tremendously satisfying. This development has strengthened our financial outlook, creating opportunities for investment in improved facilities and services for our community over the years ahead. Congratulations to everyone who contributed to making this goal a reality. I'm hopeful the Melbourne Winery will thrive on the ground floor of Ross House.

A highlight of the year for me was participating in the development of our new 2025–2030 Strategic Plan. The bulk of the work was completed during the financial year, giving Ross House a clear roadmap for the next five years. I want to thank everyone who participated in the community consultation process in February and March and provided feedback through the online questionnaire. Your voices helped shape a plan grounded in our values and our community's needs that will guide our decision-making into the future. I would like to thank my fellow Committee members and RHA staff for their dedication to this strategic planning process and for their thoughtful work in re-articulating our organisational values.

I was also pleased to contribute to the ongoing application process for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status for the Ross House Trust. This is a complex but important endeavour that advanced considerably during the year and will strengthen our long-term capacity to attract philanthropic support.

The year also offered many memorable moments of connection. I enjoyed the Leadership Morning Teas, hosted by Heidi from our tenant organisation, Schizy Inc. I was invited to join a panel exploring leadership styles, and it was a wonderful opportunity to connect with some of the leaders from across our tenant organisations. We also came together to celebrate our community through events, including Disability Pride Month, the International Day of People with Disability, and Neurodiversity Celebration Week.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to Maggie Maguire and Denise Boyd for their contributions to the Committee of Management during the year. Maggie served across multiple tenures, guiding Ross House through times of significant change as an appointed member. Denise, who joined as Secretary at the November 2022 AGM, played an instrumental role in both the commercial lease negotiations and the development of our new organisational values. Their involvement has left a lasting impact.

Since joining the Committee, I have been impressed with the personal commitment of all its members, and I thank them for their contributions over the year. I would like to acknowledge our Treasurer Alba for her dedicated work managing our finances, and our minute Secretary Patti for providing succinct and accurate summaries of Committee proceedings.

We are fortunate at Ross House to have an outstanding group of staff members led effectively by Michael Griffiths. They demonstrate daily their strong personal commitment to the principles that guide the Ross House Association, and on behalf of the Committee, I thank them for the support they provide to our members and the wider community.



Colin Neave

Image: Ross House Chairperson – Colin Neave AM, stands in front of an olive tree. He is wearing a green and white checkered shirt and is smiling at the camera.

Looking ahead, I remain focused on strengthening governance by ensuring our Committee reflects a broad range of experiences and perspectives. Diversity of thought and lived experience leads to stronger decision-making, and I continue to seek potential candidates who can bring new insights and skills to the table. As my own contribution was always intended as a shorter-term commitment, succession planning remains an important focus, and I'm optimistic about finding the right people to continue this work.

As we move into the 2025–2026 financial year, we do so with a new Strategic Plan to guide us, a commercial tenant contributing to our financial stability, and a passionate community of member organisations. I am looking forward to what we will achieve together.

Image left: Colin and Katie from RHA, pose with a Schizy Inc committee member and artist Rohan Quayle, celebrating 2024 in style at our retro themed end of year party. Dressed up in 70's accessories they stand in front of a gold backdrop.

Image below: Auntie Jane stands in a bright red dress, holding up her art work titled Welcoming Everyone to Ross House.



This year we were excited to commission a piece of art from RHA community member Auntie Jane Rosengrave.

About the piece:
Ross House is a welcoming place for people with different disabilities from different cultures to visit with any problems they have. The hands represent the varied cultures and needs of people who seek assistance at Ross House. Sistergirls are depicted sitting in yarnning circles on the grass under the shade of trees, discussing their diverse health needs. On the left, is Auntie Jane's clan emblem from the Yorta Yorta tribe, the long-neck turtle. Auntie Jane Rosengrave, 2024



CEO's Report

This year we've seen improvements across the board in many different areas of the organisation. With the Melbourne Winery opening, a new 2025-2030 strategic plan, improved financial performance, increased meeting room usage, three staff celebrating 10-years of service, full occupancy and a number of great tenant events and programs throughout 2024-2025, it has been another great year for Ross House.

The Melbourne Winery opened in April 2025 after a delayed but intense fit-out process, bringing to fruition a key strategy that has been in development since before COVID. It was a challenging process for both the Facilities Manager and CEO, but the income from this commercial venture will significantly enhance the strength of the Association. There have, however, been disruptions and bumps along the way, so I thank everyone for their patience.

2025 saw the development of a new 5-year Strategic Plan. RHA Member Non Profit Training carried out an independent review of the previous strategic plan, before a comprehensive community consultation process was undertaken with surveys, written feedback and in-person drop-in sessions being carried out. We also developed a new values cover page to inform all our activities throughout the life of the plan. Thank you to everyone who provided valuable feedback and suggestions.

This year we celebrated three RHA staff members, Junxia, Katie & Nazzareno reaching the milestone of having been in their roles for over 10-years. Along with the CEO, RHA now has four of the six permanent staff members having been in their positions for over a decade, a remarkable feat for any organisation.

We've also had some success listing the Ross House meeting rooms on the online booking platforms TagVenue and Venue Now. Meeting room income has grown from around 80k during COVID, 120k post COVID to now 160k for the 2024-2025 financial year. This is also after reducing the number of meeting rooms from 10 to 6, following alterations on Ground Level and Level 1.

Despite challenges in office leasing in the Melbourne CBD, Ross House achieved full occupancy this year. Despite some tenants moving out, there has been steady interest in the offices at Ross House throughout the year. This is likely due to smaller charitable organisations moving away from boutique commercial office space to a more affordable option at Ross House, as reduced funding in the sector starts to have a material impact.

RHA's Equipment Grant also continued this year, with grants going to ANTaR, Hand Knit Crochet Guild, Schizy Inc. and Assisi Aid. The CEO worked with AMIDA to encourage the City of Melbourne to take action on recommendations in the Degraeves Street Access Audit 2019. RHA also supported tenants on a number of events and grants including Schitzzy Inc's Executive Leadership Community Afternoon Tea and COSHG & Lotus Group Projects International Day of People with Disability Event.

Our lawyers Maddocks, have also taken up the challenge of seeking an Act of Parliament to grant the Ross House Trust DGR status pro bono. The Ross House Trust now has its own ABN and is registered as a charity with the ACNC. The process could take up to 2-years and there is no guarantee of success, however, if the Trust is granted DGR status, it will create many more options for funding for Ross House. RHA is not eligible for DGR status as a PBI, as we do not directly work with people in need but instead support organisations that work with those people.

I would like to thank all staff members and committee & subcommittee members, particularly Maggie Maguire who assisted RHA as an appointed committee member for 5-years through a very challenging time. Thank you also to all RHA members and tenants for their support throughout the year. I'm looking forward to working with everyone through the rest of 2025 and into 2026.



Ross House CEO Michael Griffiths smiles at the camera. He stands in Royston Lane next to Ross House.



RHA Committee & Staff

Image: Ross House Association Staff Ruby James-Strawhan, Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane, and Juxia Xu smile for the camera at the 2024 RHA AGM.



Committee & Members 2024-25

Committee

Chairperson

Colin Neave
ABC Friends Victoria

Treasurer

Alba Chliakhtine
ABRISA Brazilian Association

Secretary

Denise Boyd (until August 29th 2025)
STAR

Members

Keith Bettles (U3A Melbourne City)

Ordinary Member (Until Nov 20th 2024)

Ally Scott (DRC)

Ordinary Member

Samantha Marsh (Blind Citizens Australia)

Ordinary Member (Until Nov 20th 2024)

De Grebner (Ex Tree Project)

Appointed (Until Nov 20th 2024)



Image: Celebrating 2024 at the Ross House Association end of year party. From the left Denise Boyd (RHA Secretary, STAR), Ruby (RHA Staff), Ally Scott (RHA Committee of Management, DRC).

Maggie Maguire AM

Appointed Member

Michael Griffiths

Ex-officio

Nazzareno Marchionda

Appointed Staff Representative

Staff 2024-25

Staff

Michael Griffiths

CEO

Nazzareno Marchionda

Facility Manager

Ruby James-Strawhan

Membership & Engagement Officer

Katie Stadtfeld Cunnane

Communications & Administration Officer

Carol Franklin

Information & Administration Officer

Junxia Xu

Finance Officer

Casual Staff

Julia Pecoraro
Isabella 'B' Nucifora
Olivia Muscat



Image: From the leftL Katie (RHA), Carol (RHA), Heidi (Schizy Inc), Colin (RHA Chairperson, ABC Friends), Ruby (RHA), Nazz (RHA), Michael (RHA CEO), Junxia (RHA).





Member & Tenant Stories

Image: Ross House's historic Flinders Lane display window featuring Ross House tenant Inclusion Australia. It shows their 'It's Doctor Time!' campaign, to encourage more people with intellectual disability to visit their GP for a yearly health check.



Australian China Friendship Society (ACFS)

On June 22, the Australia-China Friendship Society hosted a yum cha lunch with a presentation by Dr Fiona Swee-Lin Price at the Rainbow room of Ross House.

Dr Price, an award-winning trilingual (English, Mandarin, French) international and intercultural speaker, has a PhD in cross-cultural psychology, and has conducted training programs and lectures on cultural diversity issues in Australia, India, New Zealand and the USA.

Dr Price spoke on the topic "East Meets West", providing an insightful and entertaining historical overview of Anglo-Australian attitudes and approaches to Chinese people and culture, opportunities and benefits of a deeper understanding between the two cultures, and drawing from her own personal experience from being raised in a bi-national family.

Yum Cha included a wide variety of assorted foods, dumplings and fine green tea, including a new crop of bi Luo Chun. Originating from the Ming Dynasty, Bi Luo Chun ("Green Snail Spring" on account of its shape and colour) is grown in the Dongting mountain region near Lake Tai in Suzhou. Zhen Jun (1857 to 1918), author of the tea encyclopedia Cha Shuo, ranked it first among Chinese green teas.

The Australia-China Friendship Society hosted this event with recognition of our society's objective to cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure and to promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between people of Anglo-Australian and Chinese-Australian heritages.

The meeting also included a change to the Society's constitution which introduced a new category of lifetime membership.



Image: Dr Fiona Swee-Lin Price presents to a table of people. She stands next to a screen showing a presentation titled 'Cultural norms'.

acfs-vic.org



ANTaR Victoria

ANTaR Victoria has continued our work in supporting reconciliation and justice for First Nations people. For ANTaR Vic, reconciliation looks like Truth, Treaty, Voice and Closing the Gap.

During the last financial year and in partnership with Reconciliation Victoria, we continued to support the Local Reconciliation Group network in a variety of ways, including grants to enable them to engage their local community around the upcoming treaty. We hosted an online webinar focused on campaigning during the Federal election, and with Reconciliation Victoria we held a public forum with a focus on the treaty process. In addition, we are an active member of the ANTaR National Council, seeking to build the movement across Australia.

Our office continues to apply for grants to enable us to do our work. As many of you will appreciate, this is a time consuming but essential task for small community organisations such as ours. In addition, we continue to manage our online shop, whose top selling product is our now highly recognizable Acknowledgment of Country plaques. The office and our website continues to be a important touch point for people seeking to engage in the learning and work of reconciliation while our social media posts seek to amplify the voices, concerns, successes and challenges that First Nations people experience.

ANTaR Vic would like to thank Ross House for hosting us. Without affordable rent, our organisation would be without a base, so the support of Ross House and its community is very important to ANTaR Vic.

We are excited by the new era that Victoria is entering into. We have had powerful truth-telling through the Yoorrook process, we have an upcoming treaty which will provide a voice for First Nations people, and we hope that we see future progress in closing the gap.

We encourage people to support the work of ANTaR Vic through becoming members, purchasing products from our shop, especially an Acknowledgment of Country plaque, by attending events, inviting us to speak to your networks, and by having conversations in your workplaces, with your family and friends about what are not just First Nations issues, but issues for all Victorians.



Image: A person sits on another's shoulders above a crowd holding and Australian Aboriginal Flag sign above their head at a rally in Narrm.

antarvictoria.org.au

Assisi Aid Projects

At Assisi Aid Projects, we are committed to advancing gender equality and reducing poverty by supporting women's economic empowerment in rural communities across the Asia-Pacific.

We work in partnership with locally-led organisations to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for women farmers, artisans, livestock keepers, and traders; women who are often held back by social norms that dictate that a woman's place is at home, not in the economy. As women succeed, they often reinvest in their communities and support other women, creating a ripple effect of empowerment, economic growth, and social change.

Over the last year, we have worked with **11,366 people across India, Nepal and Indonesia** to achieve great things:

5,872
women have been supported to earn an income

5,702
people have been engaged in gender equality initiatives

877
children have received an education

assisi.org.au



Image: SWP Entrepreneurship Award recipients Mrs Sakunthala, Mrs Poongodi and Mrs Thangamma stand side by side in colourful saris. They hold up their award certificates.

We would like to introduce you to Mrs Sakunthala, Mrs Poongodi and Mrs Thangamma, three inspiring women who have won an entrepreneurship award for their successful rice shop in rural India. Starting their rice-shop in 2022, using an interest free business loan, Mrs Sakunthala, Mrs Poongodi and Mrs Thangamma have continued to work hard as a team and are now supplying rice bags to local families across their village. Their rice shop has been hailed as "one of the best business models within the project".



Brain Injury Matters

Despite a year of funding uncertainty, Brain Injury Matters (BIM) continued to thrive, driven by the dedication of our members and staff who ensured the life-changing benefits of peer support remained accessible to the ABI community across Victoria.

We farewelled the wonderful Peter Persson, whose legacy includes the establishment of our statewide peer support group network, an essential source of connection, confidence and capacity-building for people with ABI. Though no longer on staff, Peter remains a valued friend and advisor to BIM. We also said goodbye to Carol Franklin from our Committee of Management, though we're pleased to still see her regularly at Ross House.

This year, we welcomed Nat Linke to the Committee. With a background in healthcare and research, Nat is developing a page for the BIM website showcasing ABI relevant research projects and opportunities for our members. Nat and fellow Committee member Nia, also presented at the national Brain Injury Australia Conference in Adelaide, sharing powerful insights on BIM's peer support impact and co-design process in collaboration with the University of Melbourne. Their presentations were so well received, we invited them to present again at our 2024 AGM.

We were grateful to Aspire Learning, a fellow Ross House tenant, for a grant to design and print our new brochure—and we were thrilled with the final result! A team of third-year university students also joined us on placement, creating a video for International Day of People with Disability, celebrating our peer groups.

BIM members contributed valuable lived experience to consultations with Vic Health's Disability Liaison Officer program, Peter Mac, and Peninsula Health, helping improve mainstream services. We were also very excited to partner with a wonderful team from Monash Health on the "Precision TBI" research into the long-term impacts of intensive care after brain injury.

Our first webinar, hosted by Professor Libby Callaway on assistive technology, was a major success, boosting our enthusiasm to offer more webinars on ABI-relevant topics. A record number of members completed our Annual Needs Survey, identifying key issues such as social isolation, advocacy, and relationships. As we await news on longer-term funding, we remain focused on expanding our peer support network to reach even more communities.

Peer support and lived experience remain central to everything BIM does. Thanks to everyone, including our good friends at Ross House, for supporting BIM during another busy year!



Image: Members of BIM's Peer Support Group in Frankston gathered for a group photo in a park setting.

braininjurymatters.org

Inclusion Australia

In 2024-25 we celebrated our 70th year. Thank you to everyone who shared memories and stories with us from over the years. Here's to another 70 years of advocacy!

We introduced a fresh new look as part of our birthday. The Inclusion Australia website and eNews got an update, and the Our Voice committee got a great new logo. In August 2024 we launched 'It's Doctor Time'. The campaign encourages more people with an intellectual disability to see their GP for a yearly health check. It's Doctor Time! includes information and resources for people with intellectual disability, families, GPs and clinic staff, service providers and others. What special time of year will you choose to book your yearly health check?

The federal election was held in May 2025. Inclusion Australia is asking politicians to commit to a new working group. This group will help make sure all people with an intellectual disability get paid a fair wage. We call this group the Ministerial Implementation Working Group.

We want this group to give advice to the government on how to make the Disability Royal Commission Recommendation 7.31 happen. This Recommendation is about stopping the sub-minimum wages that are paid to people with an intellectual disability.

Inclusion Australia Policy Officer, Luke Nelson, who also works for VALID, went to The Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the UN in New York. Inclusion Australia CEO Catherine McAlpine was there too. Luke talked about artificial intelligence (AI) and how it impacts people with an intellectual disability.

inclusionaustralia.org.au

Luke said:

"I would have never thought I would speak at the UN. I have ticked a huge career moment off my bucket list! I will encourage people to speak up for the rest of my life. That is my job. That is what I will always do".



Image: Inclusion Australia Policy Officer, Luke Nelson giving his presentation at the UN.



Positive Powerful Parents (PPP)

PPP’s year has been very very very very busy!!!

We wrote books about our stories.

Went to Crown Casino for the Focus on Ability Film Festival Launch.

Retina Australia

Retina Australia is a national charitable organisation dedicated to supporting people affected by inherited retinal diseases (IRDs).

As the peak national membership body for those affected by IRDs, Retina Australia offers a comprehensive, evidence-based information platform on IRDs and other retinal dystrophies.

- We celebrated Global Day of Parents.
- We went to Queensland and ran an event called Connecting and Sharing Parent Voices.
- We also ran training for parents in Queensland about Running a Safe Group and Safe Story Sharing.
- We made lots of great art!
- We went to the USA to attend the Sundance Film Festival.
- We also continued to run our monthly Friday Friendship Groups in Melbourne and Gippsland as well as a National Online Parent Group Chat.



We won the Judges Choice Award at the Focus on Ability Film Festival for our short film ‘Compare the Parents’.

We facilitate peer support groups, provide enquiry assistance and connect individuals with professional and community support services.

We accelerate medical research development in IRDs through the funding of an annual Research Grants Program and contribute directly to research as committee advisors and project partners. We also communicate opportunities for individuals to participate in research projects and clinical trials to further promote research progress.



The 2024-25 financial year has been an exciting time at Retina Australia. We have invested \$120,000 into two new IRD medical research projects:

Therapies for currently untreatable autosomal recessive IRDs (Professor Robyn Jamieson, Children’s Medical Research Institute)

Advancing Usher syndrome type 1B gene therapy with split intein (Dr Jiang-Hui Wang, Centre for Eye Research Australia)

Top 10 Research Priorities for Inherited Retinal Disease report launch. From left: Carly Iles (Vision 2020 Australia), Julia Hall (Retina Australia), Tim James MP, Professor Robyn Jamieson (CMRI; The Children’s Hospital; University of Sydney), Dr Eden Robertson (UNSW Medicine & Health; CMRI).

We have also directly contributed to research as committee advisors and partners on projects including the Top 10 Research Priorities for Inherited Retinal Disease and The Geographic Atrophy Case for Action Report, We Can't Wait and See.

In addition, we have contributed as authors in peer reviewed research including “Dismantling barriers to research and clinical care for individuals with a vision impairment”, (Robertson et al, 2025), and “Navigating a hidden disability – Lived experiences and challenges of adults with early stage inherited retinal diseases”, (Bekir et al, 2025).

We would like to thank Ross House for providing our team with a home from which we can continue the important work of supporting our community.

The Geographic Atrophy Case for Action Report: ‘We Can’t Wait and See’ launch at Parliament House in Canberra.

Members of the Advisory Committee, from the left: Dr Amanda Ruth (Apellis Australia), Ms Libby Croker MP, Dr Kathy Chapman (MDFA), Dr David Gillespie MP, Ms Meryl Swanson MP, Chris Edwards (Vision Australia), Judy Hatswell (Sight For All), Julia Hall (Retina Australia), and Carly Iles (Vision 2020 Australia).



retinaaustralia.com.au

Providing information and support to our community has also continued to be a focus:

We have delivered monthly newsletters featuring blog articles on local and international IRD research projects, research insight articles and reports, calls for participation in studies and clinical trials, and provided awareness of Retina Australia’s campaigns and activities.

During the year we launched the Retina Australia Community Billboard, a collaboration with community organisations around the country providing a calendar of activities and events that promote learning, wellbeing, participation, and social engagement and connection for people living with low vision or blindness.

Society of Women Writers Victoria (SOWWV)

The Launch of Write On!

Friday, 21 February 2025, saw members of The Society of Women Writers Victoria gather in the Jenny Florence Room to launch our book on the history of the first fifty years of our Society (now fifty-five years old).

Researched and written by long-term members of the Society, this book, titled Write On!, was several years in the making, and we are delighted with the result. From the Society’s first days in 1970 as an independent branch of the Society of Women Writers, set up in 1925, it charts the early meetings in members’ homes to recent times. For those of us who are newer to the Society, it was fascinating to see how many well-known names in the literary world had been members over the years.

Write On! was launched by Hazel Edwards, the Society’s patron, and our celebration included brief talks from each of the writers and the editor about their approach to the project.

We also picked the winning ticket for the raffle of a beautiful handmade quilt, made and donated by one of our members, to help towards the production costs of the book. The winner was one of our wonderful writers, which seemed very fitting.



Our celebration was rounded off with a delicious selection of refreshments, organised by another of our members, and there was plenty of time to catch up with each other and, in some cases, meet members who can’t usually get to our Ross House meetings.

The following weekend we held two days of online literary events, including author talks and a variety of writing workshops, rounding off with a showcase of monologues written by our members and spoken by actors.

Lindsay Bamfield
President of The Society of Women Writers Victoria

Image: Members gather to launch SOWWV’s new book Write On. Eight women stand in a line smiling at the camera, two are holding up copies of the book.



Image: Organisation President, Lindsay Bamfield, and Hazel Edwards smile at the camera holding up the book Write On.

swwwvic.org.au



Travellers Aid

During the 2024–25 year, Travellers Aid continued to grow our reach, directly supporting over 90,000 people at festivals and events, Melbourne Airport Assist pilot, public transport disruptions and at our four service hubs in Melbourne and regional Victoria. As well as this vital service delivery, our team is passionate about creating change that starts at the very beginning of an idea.

Where barriers exist, whether in the environment, design, or infrastructure, our people step in to bridge the gap, creating accessibility and inclusion where it didn't exist before. Through our Disability Awareness Training programs, Travelling in the Shoes of Others and Accessibility Awareness Workshops, participants get to step into the lived realities of people with disability, fostering empathy, understanding and a deeper commitment to inclusive practices.

Developed and facilitated by people with disability, these workshops offer a safe and open space for participants to ask questions, challenge assumptions and explore practical ways to improve accessibility in their own roles.

"Got more than I thought [out of the training]. Gained a genuine perspective of the challenges faced [by people with disability]"



Image one: Participant at a Travellers Aid Accessibility Awareness Workshop wears black out glasses and uses a mobility cane.

Image two: Travelling in the Shoes of Others – disability awareness workshop. Facilitators and participants ride the tram.

"The wonderful facilitators made me feel empowered and provided a safe space to learn."



"The facilitation was excellent and the experience of getting out into the real world was so valuable."

Delivered to a diverse range of organisations, from transport providers to event managers and community groups, the training has proven to be a catalyst for change. Participants consistently report a shift in perspective, describing the experience as "eye-opening" and "transformative." These sessions go beyond compliance, inspiring genuine connection and long-term behavioural change not just with accessibility as an afterthought, but as a grounding value.

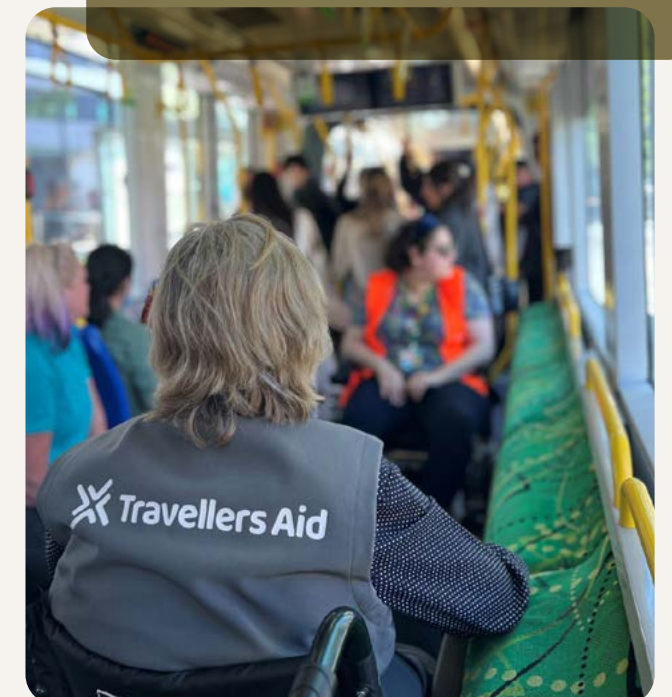
As a trusted social procurement supplier, Travellers Aid have the experience and reputation to guide organisations that want to ensure accessible design and interactions for every customer, better understand employees, and create more inclusive workplaces.

To learn more or book a training session, please contact us;
Phone: (03) 9654 2600
Email: training@travellersaid.org.au

Image three: Travelling in the Shoes of Others at Flinders Street Station.

Image four: Travelling in the Shoes of Others – disability awareness workshop. Facilitators and participants ride the tram.

"I would recommend it to all designers and engineers in order to perceive how people with a disability use space"



travellersaid.org.au



TreeProject

Over the last year, we witnessed the power of collaboration unfold across our community. At the centre of this story are landholders and growers, two groups whose unique roles come together to regenerate landscapes and restore balance to the land.

This year, 390 dedicated growers carefully raised 162,000 seedlings. At the same time, 86 landholders and Landcare groups opened their properties to restoration, offering trust, vision, and the commitment to nurture healthier landscapes for generations to come.

Landholders order plants directly through TreeProject, we source the seed through local seed banks, making it simple. We train volunteers to sow the seeds, germinating beautiful seedlings needed for large and small-scale restoration alike. TreeProject has a program dedicated to helping landholders plant their seedlings to protect native vegetation. Together, these partnerships ensured that every seedling grown had a meaningful place to call home.

The results reach far beyond planting trees. Growers and landholders together are creating wildlife corridors, protecting waterways and stock, rebuilding soil, and, very importantly, weaving stronger connections between people. Every planting is a reminder that restoration is not an individual task but a shared journey, one that flourishes when people and purpose come together.

TreeProject is grateful for the generosity of our sponsors, whose support allows us to provide seedlings, training, and on-the-ground assistance to communities across Victoria. Their contribution ensures we can keep growing stronger each year, for people, for wildlife, and for the land we all share.

In the synergy of growers and landholders, supported by trusted partners, we see renewal, resilience, and hope. If you would like to become a landholder, grow with us, or support our work as a sponsor, visit treeproject.org.au, and be part of the change.

Image: A large area of newly planted seedlings with a sign reading 'TreeProject 1st Day Seedlings, treeproject.org.au'. Each seedling is protected by a cardboard Tree Guard.

treeproject.org.au

Members & Tenants

Image: Aunty Jane Rosengrave (SARU member) and Mel (SARU staff) smile at the camera from their office at Ross House.



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 provide information about Australia for immigrants.

AMIDA

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

AMIDA - SARU (Self Advocacy Resource Unit)

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

AMIDA Project PPP (Positive Powerful Parents)

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

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.

ANTaR Victoria

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

Aspire Learning Resources

Specialise in the development of competency-based training and assessment resources for VET.

Assisi Aid Projects

Support sustainable development work in southern India.

Australia China Friendship Society

Foster friendship between Australian and Chinese people.

Blind Citizens Australia (BCA)

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

Brain Injury Matters (BIM)

Self advocacy for people with acquired brain injury.

Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN)

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.

Collective of Self Help Groups (COSHG)

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 (DBV)

Increase community awareness and understanding of the experience of Deafblindness and advocate to improve the quality of life of those who are deafblind.

Disability Discrimination Legal Service (DDLS)

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

Disability Resources Centre (Also Disability Rights and Culture)

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

Disabled Wintersport Australia (DWA)

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 (ERA)

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

Tenant Members

Hand Knit & Crochet Guild

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

Housing for the Aged Action Group (HAAG)

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

Inclusion Australia

The national voice for Australians with intellectual disability.

IndianCare

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

Lotus Group Projects Inc

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

Mixed Nuts Media

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

Public Transport Users Association (PTUA)

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.

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, bushland 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

Aboriginal Literacy Foundation

Seek to transform the lives of Indigenous children by focusing on literacy and numeracy education.

Economic Indicator Services

Advocates 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.



Members & Tenants 2024-5

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.

Degraves Street Recycling Facility

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

Melbourne Winery

Melbourne CBD's first urban winery, blending fine wines, events, and culinary exploration for a unique, immersive experience. In partnership with Scotchmans Hill, one of Australia's most respected names in winemaking, and certified by Sustainable Winegrowing Australia.

Members (Non-Tenants)

Apple Users Society of Melbourne

Provide help for Apple computer users.

Aussie Hands

Provide support, understanding and encouragement to individuals with a hand difference.

Blueprint for Free Speech

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

Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)

Australia's peak body on climate and health.

Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)

The national representative body for a network of independent disability advocacy organisations in Australia.

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 (TEWFA)

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

Federation of Spanish Speaking Senior Citizens

Support and advice for senior Spanish speaking citizens.

Filipino Community Council of Victoria (FCCVi)

The peak body for Filipino-Australian communities in Victoria. Supports and promotes the unity, growth, and development of the Filipino-Australian community and migrant Filipinos across the state.

Final Exit Victoria

Advocate for law reform and supporting end of life rights through political and direct action.

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.

Melbourne Esperanto Association

Promote and teach the international language Esperanto.

Narcolepsy and Overwhelming Daytime Sleep Society (NODSS)

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.

Members & Tenants 2024-5

Members (Non-Tenants)

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.

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.

Vegan Australia

Advocate for animal rights and campaign nationally for veganism.

Victoria Forest Alliance

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

Victoria Homicide Victims Group (Previously Forget Me Not Foundation)

Provides support and services to victims of crime who may be at risk of emotional and psychological harm due to a lack of support.

Associate Members

CALXA Australia

Non Profit Training

River Basin Management Society, The

Society of Women Writers Victoria Inc

Understanding Literature Group

Image: RHA community members celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Ross House. Chris (Reinforce), James (Reinforce), Jeff (COSHG), Lyn (Lotus Group Projects) and Heather (Positive Powerful Parents) pose for the camera with local police from the Community Outreach program.



Welcomed

- Filipino Community Council of Victoria as members
- Inclusion Australia as tenants
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia as a member



Said Goodbye To

- Thirrili
- Melbourne Esperanto Association
- Narcolepsy and Overwhelming Daytime Sleep Society



Image one: The Filipino Community Council of Victoria join the Ross House Community. They stand in the Ross House Stairwell under a sign that reads 'Ross House: The Community in Action'.

Image two: Housing for the Aged Action Group Banner reads Housing for the Aged Action group. Housing for Older People It's a Right Not a Privilege. HAAG 40 Years Strong.

Treasurer & Financial Reports

Image: Art and photography by Schizy Inc artists, a Ross House tenant, laid out on a table.



Treasurer's Report

The 2025 financial year closes with the implementation of one of our key strategic objectives – Future Sustainability: ensuring RHA is financially viable, with the opening of the Melbourne Winery on the ground floor of Ross House. This will enable us to continue to support the not for profit sector with an affordable presence in the City of Melbourne.

In addition, we have achieved a result better than expected despite delays in opening of the Melbourne Winery. We are pleased to report that all the building improvements projected in last year's report have been completed. Our Key financial achievements include:

- 1. Commercialisation project: Melbourne Winery opened April 2025
- 2. Office Rental continued to be at 97% occupancy or higher
- 3. Meeting Room Income better than budgeted with increased revenue from Tagvenue advertising

Capital improvements for the up and coming financial year includes:

Full refurbishment of the level 3 bathroom facilities in March and April 2026

Commencement of the Ross House Website Upgrade Project in May



Image: Sandy Jeffs of Schizy Inc addresses the room during a Ross House Association winter warmer event celebrating Disability Pride Month.

Treasurer's Report

Our Key result areas of 2025 financial year

- 1 Operational Surplus: \$77,136 excluding depreciation (\$201,894)
- 2 Profit(Loss): a Loss of \$124,758 when accounting for depreciation (\$201,894)
- 3 Income: \$1,212,737 in 2025 up from \$1,025,717 in 2024
- 4 Income from City of Melbourne Community Inclusion Grant of \$20k deferred to 2025-2026
- 5 Reserves: \$693,794

2025/2026 – Projections

- 1 Reserves are expected to get down to \$550k following completion of the level 3 bathroom refurbishment in 2026.
- 2 Reserves will return to \$1M by December 2028 due to increasing income from the commercial tenant.
- 3 By 2029 we will be in a position to start looking at major refurbishments to the Ross House building.

Alba Chliakhtine

*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 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.*



Ross House Association Incorporated

Balance sheet: As at 30 June 2025

Assets	2025	2024
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank & On Hand	691,123	820,141
Trade Debtors	1,659	31,835
Less Provision for Doubtful Debts	(5,000)	(5,000)
	(3,341)	26,835
Sundry Debtors	-	-
Prepayments	6,102	2,159
Adjustment	-	-
	693,794	849,135
Non-current Assets		
Land	22,180,000	22,180,000
Buildings	2,960,000	2,960,000
Less accumulated amortisation	(885,750)	(811,750)
Furniture & Equipment	622,782	597,015
Less accumulated depreciation	(378,754)	(323,882)
Capital Work	436,491	352,473
Less accumulated depreciation	(319,147)	(296,336)
Electronic Equipment	536,938	428,379
Less accumulated depreciation	(341,714)	(268,893)
Main Lift	169,611	169,611
Less accumulated depreciation	(43,816)	(35,336)
Ground Floor Toilet	121,725	121,725
Less accumulated depreciation	(121,725)	(121,725)
HVAC VSD	56,700	56,700
Less accumulated depreciation	(18,129)	(15,294)
HVAC	801,516	801,516
Less accumulated depreciation	(462,828)	(722,752)
Website	71,954	71,954
Less accumulated depreciation	(71,954)	(71,954)
	25,313,901	25,371,451
TOTAL ASSETS	26,007,695	26,220,586

Ross House Association Incorporated

Balance sheet: As at 30 June 2025

Liabilities	2025	2024
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors & Accruals	50,301	99,751
Income in Advance	21,797	21,933
Grant in Advance	20,000	14,000
Rent in Advance	22,282	4,499
Staff Leave Provisions	78,336	88,471
Superannuation Provision	15,956	14,798
Superannuation Liability	6,290	-
	214,962	243,452
Non-Current Liabilities		
Right of Indemnity – Ross House Trust	24,254,250	24,328,520
Staff Leave Provisions – L.S.L.	60,411	46,055
	24,314,661	24,374,305
TOTAL LIABILITIES	24,529,623	24,617,757
NET ASSETS	1,478,071	1,602,829
Equity		
Emergency Reserve	400,000	400,000
Retained Earnings	1,078,071	1,202,829
	1,478,071	1,602,829

Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2025

Income	2025	2024
Lease Income	826,255	712,859
Car Park	29,493	38,513
Facilities Hire	261,396	215,614
Equipment Hire	17,411	19,453
Sales–Equipment Keys & Stationery	149	489
Interest Received	25,908	22,967
Insurance & Other Reimbursements	33,978	16,222
Membership Subscription	6,603	5,751
Other Income	17,787	956
Hardship Contingency Fund Transactions		
Refund	(7,743)	(7,107)
Grants Received	1,500	–
TOTAL INCOME	1,212,737	1,025,717

Less Expenditure	2025	2024
Operating Expenses		
Salaries & Wages	482,722	418,883
Superannuation	56,671	48,268
Workcover Premiums	3,208	2,394
Provision for Staff Leave	4,221	13,571
Staff Training	2,991	847
	549,813	483,963

Income Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2025

Less Expenditure	2025	2024
Property and Equipment Costs		
Building Expenses	229,434	226,066
Utilities & Services	62,175	55,400
Cleaning	82,986	94,347
Depreciation	201,894	233,459
Other property & Equipment	66,568	59,494
	643,058	668,766
Operating Costs		
Annual Report & AGM	4,006	3,916
Amenities	1,561	311
Advertising and Promotion	5,970	1,745
Audit fees	3,056	3,099
Bank Charges	107	93
Bookkeeping & Accounting fees	630	665
Community Development Events	3,152	2,909
Computer & Software Support	26,809	25,400
Commision	45,837	–
Committee Expense & Training	4,769	4,538
Consultants fees	9,985	8,062
Grants Program	4,997	2,989
Legal fees	5,586	11,004
Postage, Courier Charges/Freight	1,731	1,660
Telephone & Internet	13,072	13,320
Stationery & Office Supplies	3,623	5,065
Sub. Membership & Library	907	2,145
Sundry Expenses	3,501	9,873
Website	5,333	6,152
	144,624	102,946
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,337,495	1,255,675
PROFIT (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	(124,758)	(229,958)

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Balance as at 1 July 2025	1,368,902	1,598,859
Profit (Loss) attributable to members	(124,758)	(229,957)
BALANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2025	1,244,144	1,368,902

Ross House Trust Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2025

Trust Funds	2025	2024
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(811,750)	(737,750)
Loss This Year	(74,000)	(74,000)
Asset Revaluation Reserve	25,140,000	25,140,000
TOTAL TRUST FUNDS	24,254,250	24,328,250

Image: Banner Making: Photo from Ross House Archives depicts a group of women making a banner advocating for Woman with Disabilities.



Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025	2024
Opening Balance	24,328,250	24,402,250
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(74,000)	(74,000)
Increase in Asset Revaluation Reserve	-	-
CLOSING BALANCE	24,254,250	24,328,250

Profit and Loss Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Expenditure	2025	2024
Depreciation - Buildings	74,000	74,000
SURPLUS/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	(74,000)	(74,000)

Reconciliation of Undistributed Income

For the year ended 30 June 2025

Trust Funds	2025	2024
Accumulated Profits (Losses) Brought Forward	(811,750)	(737,750)
Surplus/(Loss) for Year	(74,000)	(74,000)
ACCUMULATED LOSS	(885,750)	(811,750)

A History of ROSS HOUSE

247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne Victoria

1898 - 1900

Ross House began as a grand warehouse built for the wholesale importer Sargood, Butler, Nichol and Bowen Ltd. Designed by Flinders Lane to Flinders St.

1929

In 1929 the building was purchased by the Melbourne Electric Supply Company, which later became the The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (the S.E.C.). The building was then renamed 'Ryton House'.

The Flinders Street half of the building was later demolished to be replaced by Clements House.

1985

In April 1985, the Victorian Community Foundation purchased the Flinders Lane building from the SEC for \$600,000 using funds from the R.E. Trust. The building was renamed R.E. Ross House.

1988

Levels 2, 3 and 4 began under the management of Ed Benn, appointed by the VCF. The Common Equity Rental Housing Co-operative (CERH) took occupancy on the first floor in October 1988.

1990

In 1990 Ross House achieved full tenancy. Ross House Association organised its first Flinders Lane Festival to promote Ross House featuring city-based community organisations with stalls, information displays, and activities.

1991

A shared research area for the community was created on the ground level. This area was used for the first project for local recycling programs in Australia.

Acknowledgements

Image: A photo of a timeline of the Architectural and Social history of Ross House.

1998 - 2001

Between 1998 and 2001, ANZ Trustees considered selling Ross House due to anticipated major capital works. They asked the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) to take over the Trust, but BSL required deed changes allowing partial commercial leasing and the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable. The Ross House Association (RHA) opposed these changes, arguing they conflicted with the original intent of the Trust, and initiated legal action. As a result, BSL withdrew from negotiations in October 2001 and ended its lease in June 2002. In 2004, ANZ signed a 5-year management agreement directly with RHA.

2017

On October 11, 2017, Ross House Association celebrated the 30th anniversary of the opening of Ross House with a networking event in the Ross House Foyer.

2007 - 2011

In 2007, Ross House Association signed a 5-year management agreement with the City of Melbourne. The agreement included the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable.

2012

In 2012, Ross House Association signed a 5-year management agreement with the City of Melbourne. The agreement included the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable.

2013

In 2013, Ross House Association signed a 5-year management agreement with the City of Melbourne. The agreement included the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable.

2014

In 2014, Ross House Association signed a 5-year management agreement with the City of Melbourne. The agreement included the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable.

2015

In 2015, Ross House Association signed a 5-year management agreement with the City of Melbourne. The agreement included the right to sell the building if costs became unmanageable.

Acknowledgements 2024-5

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:

Matthew D'Angelo
Maddocks

Michael Nicolazzo
Maddocks

Sherilynn Ding
Maddocks

The Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Paul Ellis
Maddocks

Chong Ming Goh
Maddocks

National Trust of Victoria

Hunt & Hunt Lawyers

City of Melbourne

City Switch

Justice Connect
NFP Law

Non Profit Training

Astoria Industries

Teags Humm Design



Image: Rainbow Rights peer leader Cameron Bloomfield and service dog Rocket pose for a photo in the Ross House Foyer.



Acknowledgements 2024-5

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

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

Image: Heidi (Schizy Inc) and Nia (BIM) pose for the camera after presenting at the RHA Welcome Back Brunch in Celebration of Neurodiversity Celebration Week in March.



Image one: Members of the Filipino Community Council of Victoria posing in front of Ross House Reception with Ross House Association staff Carole and Nazz.



Image two: A member of the Victorian Drama League, a Ross House tenant, sits for a photo in their library, which holds several thousand titles including full-length plays, one-act plays, Australian and international works across various genres and styles



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

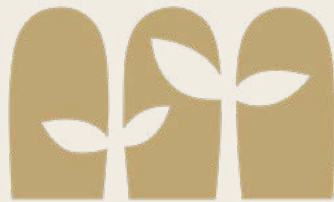


Image three: Ross House members and tenants celebrating 2024 at our 70's themed end of year event 'retrospect' and enjoying a retro themed lunch. The room is decorated with red, orange and yellow streamers and lanterns, and a gold wall hanging.



Image four: Artwork by Auntie Jane Rosengrove: Welcoming Everyone To Ross House.

Painting on a vibrant turquoise background showing Ross House as a multi-story building, each floor a different colour, tan with maroon dots, green with pink dots, blue with orange dots, peach with green dots, brown with white dots, a red entrance door. The building is surrounded by circles and 'c' shaped symbols depicting sistergirls yarning, hands in peach and dark brown depicting diversity, and on the left a large colourful dot painted long-neck turtle.



ROSS HOUSE
ASSOCIATION

rosshouse.org.au