



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a fabulous network we belong to! We are privileged to be so well regarded, even though this can often mean higher expectations and more work. This past year, we have begun implementing the direction from our Strategic Framework 2018 – 2023. There was a strong community development focus at Conference 2018, demonstrating Achieving, Belonging, Celebrating and Doing as reflected in the Framework.

We have had a year of big changes for the NHT office and the NHT Board with many new faces, starting with the changeover in custodianship of NHT. After serving eleven years at NHT's helm, John Hooper moved on to become the new CEO at No interest Loans Scheme (Nils), increasing our bond to Nils and promoting the strong connections we share. In May we welcomed Tracey Tasker to the CEO role and she has taken to it like a duck to water – visiting many Houses and meeting many of you within her first three months of her stewardship! We look forward to many years of continued growth and passionate service under Tracey's diligent leadership.

Thanks go to our committed NHT staff and volunteers - Jonathan, Karen, Louise, Fiona, Peter and Nicole. With Nicole and John moving on, Fiona had a baptism by fire, coping with the changes along with finalising our Literacy Fund. Praises go to our NHT staff and volunteers for managing huge changes and continuing to deliver for NHT.

The NHT Board welcomed six new faces this year including Gary Barnes (Manager Fingal Valley), Trish O'Duffy (Manager St Helens), Melinda Reed (Okines President), Kerry James (Assistant Manager Warrane-Mornington), Julie Milnes (Ulverstone Vice-President) and Tracy Eddington-Mackay (Manager Burnie). Gary willingly took on the Treasurer role – no mean feat given the circumstances of change and we thank him profusely for his many hours of extra work. Continued appreciation goes to the standing NHT Board Regional Reps who stayed including Michael Higgins, Kristy Leishman and Nettie Burr. Matthew Williamson resigned early in 2019 and we thank him for his generous input to a number of projects. We also appointed two Youth Representatives this year, Tyler Birch and Zac McKean, providing them with the opportunity for governance experience and the Board with a unique chance to experience community through a youth vantage point. A huge thank you to everyone for giving up your time so willingly to assist the network.

We thank our many supporters over the year, including Aurora Energy, Hazell Bros, Nils Network Tas, Quartz Consulting and the Tasmanian Community Fund. We value and appreciate the bi-partisan support from our Tasmanian politicians.

It is obvious again this year that when we work and support each other as a network of Houses we achieve so much for our communities.

— Kate Beer

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

I joined the Neighbourhood House family in May this year and hence began my journey as the next custodian of the network.

In three short months I have focused on getting to know the NHT team, the Board and the staff, volunteers and managers in the network. Connecting with our key stakeholders and understanding these relationships have also been priorities.

My admiration and respect for the network grows daily as I watch in awe at how Houses change people's lives. Our community development approach is underpinned by the values of kindness, respect and gratitude and the stories of hope, change and connection are real.

I have felt universally welcomed and thank everyone for their generosity and support. In particular thanks to the NHT team (Jonathan, Karen, Louise, Peter and Fiona) and the Board for the continued hard work and acceptance of change.

I have been fortunate to be involved in several key pieces of work in these first three months including:

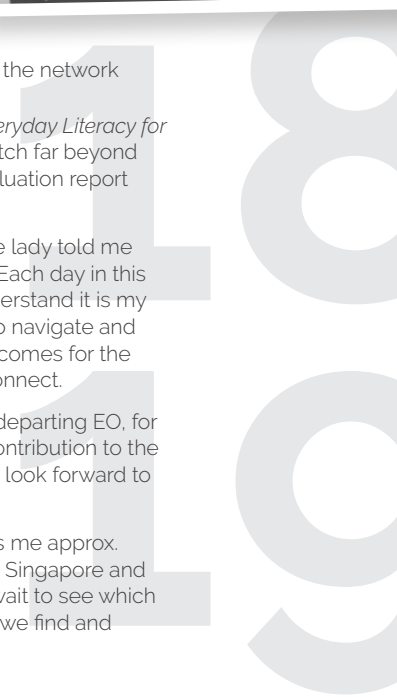
- Finalising the Tasmanian Government and Neighbourhood Houses *Shared Commitment to Collaboration: A protocol for working together for the benefit of local communities.*
- Supporting the implementation of the Infrastructure Audit Project.
- Building our understanding of the tools the network needs to be better leaders.
- Understanding the outcomes of the *Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program*. These stretch far beyond literacy and numeracy and the final evaluation report promises to be a fascinating read.

Defining the role of CEO can be hard; a wise lady told me recently that the role shouldn't be defined. Each day in this role so far has been different and I now understand it is my job (with the support and grace of others) to navigate and manage each day focusing on the best outcomes for the network and the people we support to reconnect.

I would like to acknowledge John Hooper, departing EO, for his leadership, passion and extraordinary contribution to the organisation and the sector more broadly. I look forward to building on his legacy

My journey today (as I write this report) sees me approx. 30,000 feet in the air somewhere between Singapore and Heathrow airports – on my return I cannot wait to see which paths I travel with this new family and what we find and explore together along the way.

— Tracey Tasker



## CONFERENCE 2018

The NHT State Conference 2018 ran over three days from 26th–28th September in Hobart, at the Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel. The theme of the conference was *Community: Creating the Future*.

The conference was attended by 185 Neighbourhood House staff, volunteers and supporters from across the State, with over 33 communities represented - from King Island to Geeveston, St Helens to Zeehan.

Tim Costello delivered the keynote speech, sharing experiences, knowledge and ideas from his role as Chief Advocate at World Vision Australia, Chair of Community Council of Australia and chief advocate of the Thriving Communities Partnership. Being a passionate voice for social justice issues, Tim shared insights into what works locally to engage and empower local community. You can revisit Tim's talk via the NHT YouTube channel.

Governor Kate Warner hosted an event for 150 conference delegates at Government House on the Wednesday evening to thank and celebrate the work of Neighbourhood Houses.

A range of workshops, discussions and activities were offered over the three days including:

- 🏠 Making videos with phones
- 🏠 Food security and community gardening
- 🏠 Social media
- 🏠 Financial reporting
- 🏠 Self care
- 🏠 Domestic violence awareness
- 🏠 'How to's' of running great Houses
- 🏠 Learnings and inspirations from the world Community Development Conference

NHT thanks the supporters of the 2018 Conference: Aurora Energy, Nils Network Tasmania, Wellways, Macquarie Point Development Corporation and the Tasmanian Government.

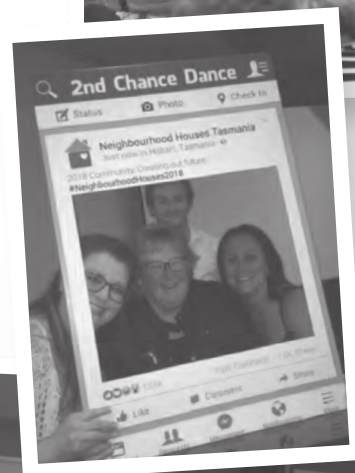
🏠 How amazing is the work that takes place around Tasmania in Neighbourhood Houses!

🏠 OMG – this changed my outlook.

🏠 Let us be inspired by everyday people. We are surrounded by inspiration.

🏠 I think in our own way we do the work that many others are already doing – we just don't realise we are world movers and shakers.

🏠 Tim Costello's speech gave me a vision of 'Hope' to our world at present. It made me go back to the point of why I wanted to work at a Neighbourhood House.





## NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE WEEK 2019

Neighbourhood House Week was celebrated from 6th to 12th May 2019. The theme for the Week was "Bringing People Together - from your neighbourhood to your nation" which reflected the core drive of all Neighbourhood Houses and united the 1,000 Neighbourhood Houses across Australia in celebration.

Here in Tasmania each House held their own events to bring volunteers, community and staff together in Neighbourhood House Week with activities ranging from lunches to displays and demonstrations. A major coordinated event was held on Wednesday 8th at high noon - NHT and Houses blew bubbles simultaneously to represent unity of purpose and the hope generated by working together as communities, whilst having some fun!

The core business of Neighbourhood Houses is community development which is, at its heart, about people coming together around a common issue or opportunity and then working together to do something about it. This is worth celebrating - from the neighbourhood to the nation!

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES: THE EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF TASMANIA'S NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE NETWORK

Neighbourhood Houses have collected feedback and information from participants and partner organisations. Neighbourhood Houses use a Results Based Accountability model of measuring outcomes. Our data responds to the three primary questions asked under this model; *How much did we do, How well did we do it and Is anyone better off?*

Information gathered from participants who responded to these feedback opportunities includes the following highlights:

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

- 🏠 **1,504** partnerships across the Network
- 🏠 **1,526** volunteers across the Network

Data sourced from responses to participant and partner survey of 33 Houses.



## FAREWELL FROM JOHN (PAST EO)

2018-19 was my last year as EO, and the NHT conference was (in hindsight) the perfect note to finish on. It celebrated community, community development, the great individual journeys that many House staff and volunteers had been on, we railed against injustice, shed a few tears (well I did as usual) and had lots of fun. To me that sums up Houses and my ride as EO over eleven years.

Thank you to the staff, the Board and all the Houses who were so so generous with their words and gifts at my various farewells. Thanks for the honour and privilege of working with you for eleven years, and I do love that my new role at NILS means that connection goes on. And remember Margaret Mead always -

*Never doubt that a small, thoughtful group of committed citizens can change the world. . . indeed it's the only thing that ever has.*

### HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

- 🏠 **73%** of participants would come back to do the activity again
- 🏠 **76%** of participants would recommend the activity to others
- 🏠 **90%** of partners reported that the House was a constructive and reliable partner
- 🏠 **83%** of partners reported that the House assisted them to connect with and work in the local community

### IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

- 🏠 **70%** of participants report increased connection with others in their community
- 🏠 **51%** of participants feel more confident
- 🏠 **67%** of participants increased knowledge of services & support



Data sourced from responses to participant and partner survey of 31 Houses.



## NHT HUB

### EVERYDAY LITERACY FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

This year sees the end of the Everyday Literacy for Local Communities Program, funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF). This program has delivered significant literacy and numeracy outcomes for the community and the House network over its 10 year lifespan by supporting a wide range of projects developed by individual Houses to address their local community needs.

The investment of the initial 10 year funding pool leaves a perpetual fund for the network in the NHT Hub and the ongoing investment funds. Moving forward NHT and the Board will explore how to continue the legacy of this program, maintaining a focus on literacy and numeracy as these remain priority issues for Tasmanians.


Evaluation findings will be shared with the network, TCF and key stakeholders later in 2019.

We thank TCF for their support and acknowledge the courage of both the TCF Board and the NHT Board in the development and implementation of this innovative, long term program.

#### Case studies:


##### 1. St Helens Neighbourhood House

*Language Rules Project* was designed to address the low oral communication skills that caused difficulties for many in the community. The project aimed to develop participant's communication skills thereby improving their ability to successfully express themselves in appropriate contexts.

 The LR project has just made me feel better, I can communicate and understand others better and this has enabled me to become a happy confident person that knows I can achieve any goals I set my mind too.

##### 2. Gagebrook Community Centre

*Taste Buds – Learn, Laugh, Cook Project* aimed to address local socio-economic disadvantage and residents' susceptibility to chronic diseases by focusing on food literacy. The project supported adults and young adults to improve their literacy and food habits through a program of practical cooking that focused on healthy eating and nutrition on a limited budget.

 Self-confidence in literacy is easy to see in skills such as cooking. However, seeing participants' self-confidence grow within a group/community is far more rewarding and telling. Social skills, personal interaction, self-acceptance, self-worth, these are the areas we see participants advancing in daily.

##### 3. Geeveston Community Centre

*Literacy for Life Project* employed a Literacy Co-ordinator to address a range of literacy areas that participants were experiencing difficulty with including general, computer and financial literacy. This was achieved through workshops and one on one sessions.

One unemployed participant worked with the Literacy Co-ordinator to develop a few different resumes which highlighted their skills and work experience.

 Within a couple of days, I was contacted by Huon Valley Works to apply for a job as the ... Supervisor. I had an interview, got the job and have been working as a supervisor for the Project since late 2018.

4. A woman in her 80's who has never been able to read is now starting to read after her involvement in a House literacy program.

5. Literacy program used to assist migrants to prepare for their citizenship test.

### AURORA – OUR ONGOING PARTNERSHIP

Aurora Energy are long term supporters of the network providing invaluable resources for our annual Conference and seeking our input through the Vulnerable Customers Stakeholders Group. In addition this year we have celebrated cost savings generated from the solar panels funded and fitted by Aurora Energy at the NHT Hub. In combination with the installation of insulation and energy efficient heat pumps (through the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme) NHT has saved 56% off our annual power bill compared to 12 months prior. As discussed with Aurora Energy CEO Rebecca Kardos, reducing our power bills allows us to instead invest those funds in supporting the work of the Houses. A fantastic outcome. We look forward to continuing to work with Aurora Energy and fostering new opportunities for the network.



## HAZELL BROS – NHT CAR PARK

As part of Hazell Bros community participation and engagement TasCon provided a donation of civil resources to NHT to complete construction of our carpark. These works were critical to get council approval for occupancy.

We are incredibly grateful to Hazell Bros for their support – the car park is fantastic!



## OFFICE SPACE AND MEETING ROOMS

NHT rents office space to tenants Avidity Training and Development and Driver Mentor Training Tasmania. This has been a positive arrangement, sharing work space with likeminded community based organisations.

Our training rooms were used by a variety of groups during the year, hosting a range of events including the Southern Regional meetings, NHT Board Meetings, John Hooper's farewell, community development training, Men's Sheds Association meetings and much more. The space is user friendly and welcoming and NHT welcomes having the spaces used.

The NHT Hub is actively seeking new tenants for available office space. Please get in touch with NHT for more information.



## TRAINING THE NETWORK

### FOOD SECURITY, SEED SAVINGS & PRACTICAL FOOD GROWING SKILLS

After positive feedback from Michael and Sonia Cook's workshop at the 2018 Conference, NHT organised six regional workshops, (with three workshops run on each of the two topics) that were held across February and March. The workshops were hosted at Devonport Community House, Northern Suburbs Community Centre and at an independent site in Howrah.

Topics covered in the training included food security, food nutrition, seed banks, propagating and composting.

These workshops were heavily subsidised, with the trainers offering their services at a discount rate in recognition of the great work Houses do, and NHT further subsidising the cost through a Skills Tasmania funded project.

### MAKING VIDEOS ON PORTABLE DEVICES

After positive feedback from his 2018 Conference workshop NHT organised three regional workshops with David Pyefinch that were held in May. The workshops were hosted at East Devonport Community House, Northern Suburbs Community Centre and Okines Community House at Dodges Ferry. The workshops were 'how to's' on making short form stories for the web using quick and simple methods.

These workshops were heavily subsidised by NHT through a Skills Tasmania funded project.

### GOVERNANCE TRAINING

Governance training is provided by NHT to House Boards. Over the year several Houses have taken up the opportunity for training to be held in-House. This training can now be supported by the *Handbook for Neighbourhood House Boards* that was developed by NHT and distributed to all Houses in May. This resource was made possible through TCF and Skills Tasmania grants.



## PROJECTS

### EATING WITH FRIENDS

The first 'official' EWF group started in 2000. There are currently thirty-four EWF groups around Tasmania, all offering regular lunches for their local communities. Twenty-four of these groups are hosted within a Neighbourhood House, with volunteer groups and other community organisations hosting the other ten groups. Groups operate on a cost recovery basis.

The success of the EWF Project is underpinned by the significant contribution of volunteers who organise, support and run EWF activities at a local community level.

An annual survey of all groups is conducted. Feedback from this year's survey indicates there are approximately 200 volunteers and 1,000 happy participants involved across the calendar year. That's a lot of meals being prepared!

Here is a recent reflection from a House board member about their EWF program:

🏠 The EWF Program has been such a joy to be involved with, participant numbers higher than ever. The smiling happy faces and social interaction is so rewarding to see. Comments like "thank you for a beautiful meal", "please put me down for next week" ... clearly every Tuesday at noon is a highlight to our regulars' week. All also look forward throughout the year to our special events programs such as Easter, Xmas in July & Melbourne Cup. The camaraderie amongst the hardworking team is wonderful. Often before service the team will break out into song with great harmonies. On reflection, this is a special program.



### NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME

Thirty Neighbourhood Houses took part in this year's National Simultaneous Storytime event held on Wednesday 22nd May. This year's NSS book was *Alpacas With Maracas*.

As well as the NSS book, NHT also sent out 1187 extra books to the 30 participating Houses so the children attending House story events each received a new quality book to take home. There was also the extra treat of a House-branded library bag to take the book home in.

NHT was able to provide the extra books as gifts to participating children thanks to the support and funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund.

Some quotes from parents:

- 🏠 Wow! This is so cool getting a free book.
- 🏠 That is so lovely of them giving us books and they are beautiful books' we feel special.
- 🏠 Bags are a great idea and a book.
- 🏠 I loved listening to the story, it's a fun book.
- 🏠 I read the story in my Baby Bugs Playgroup and 22 attended, including dads.





## ADVOCACY

### BUDGET SUBMISSION

NHT developed a Budget Submission that focussed on three key network needs: the stable ongoing funding of NHT as the peak, the urgent infrastructure needs of Derwent Valley Community House and the need for ERO to be added to the previous funding increase. We also developed with the Board and the network calls for action on core community issues: housing; transport; access to training and the critical lack of community based mental health supports. A copy of our 2019-20 Budget Priority Statement can be found at

[www.nht.org.au/resources](http://www.nht.org.au/resources)

### STATE BUDGET

NHT and the network were effective in their advocacy for increased funding to the peak body. In May the Tasmanian State Government announced that NHT would receive an additional **\$45,000** per annum to support our strategic activities.

This funding will enable us to:

- 🏠 Continue to support community led governance.
- 🏠 Continue to develop resources, tools and templates for members Houses.
- 🏠 Embed and coordinate reporting on outcomes.
- 🏠 Represent the network in policy and consultations with government and other agencies.

This was very welcome news; NHT had not received an increase in core funding since 2010.

### ANHCA

The Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (ANHCA) is the national peak body for Neighbourhood Houses and Centres. ANHCA represents over 1000 Neighbourhood Houses, Community Houses, Learning Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Community Centres across Australia which are member organisations of their state peak bodies.

Tracey Tasker, NHT CEO is a member of the ANHCA Board and national data working group, Michael Higgins, Manager of Geeveston Neighbourhood House and NHT Vice President is the ANHCA Treasurer, Board member and on the DGR working group and NHT volunteer Peter Scott provides secretariat assistance to the ANHCA Board.

Over the last twelve months ANHCA has secured and auspiced several grants programs aimed at increasing the capacity of Houses/Centres. In addition, ANHCA has identified several strategic priorities and the key tasks required to achieve these including pursuing PBI status and collecting and collating data from state peaks to refresh the national infographic). ANHCA is working closely with the Local Community Services Association (NSW peak body) to facilitate the International Federation of



Settlement & Neighbourhood Centre Conference (IFS) Sydney 2020 SOCIAL JUSTICE - *ancient lands, new promise* to be held from 12 - 14 August 2020.

Collectively ANHCA and the peaks have advocated at a national level on issues of importance including the Raise the Rate campaign.

ANHCA continues to provide invaluable peer support to state peaks and there is a renewed commitment to work together to find and strengthen our national voice.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

NHT has utilised its core Peak Body Grant and four other grants in 2018-2019 to employ 3.1 FTE whose focus is on supporting the boards, staff and volunteers of our Member Houses to do their work for their communities.

We have seen a healthy yet challenging year. Some key outcomes to highlight include:

- 🏠 Directly distributed – **\$148,683** in funding to Member Houses, primarily through Everyday Literacy and Eating with Friends.
- 🏠 We have also distributed Security grants of **\$74,905.50** passed onto houses in the first round of security grants.

This year also saw the end of the 10-year cycle of the Literacy Future Fund.

I would like to thank Nicole Green and Fiona O'Keefe for their work as Finance Officer and John Hooper as EO and Tracey Tasker as CEO - their support in the role is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank Stuart Barry for his astute investment advice. Fiona joined us in March after Nicole left us to work in her own business and with John leaving us and Tracey starting in May it has been a challenging yet exciting time for NHT. I myself only started in Treasurer role in Feb/March.

We also received some good news in May with NHT Peak body now also securing additional funding of **\$45,000** a year to support strategic activities moving forward. While houses have received a number of increases over the previous ten years, NHT head office has largely missed out. This very welcome news will help to maintain the valuable support that NHT provides to the network.

Our full audited financial report for 2018-19 can be found at [www.nht.org.au](http://www.nht.org.au).

– Gary Barnes

## OUR PERFORMANCE SURVEY

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

During the two snapshot weeks NHT staff worked **3.1** FTE hours, and were in direct contact with **25** Houses. Over the two weeks **166** service interactions were recorded via email, phone, meetings and other types of contact

Approximately **15%** of staff time was spent in face to face meetings with House staff and volunteers. **72%** of staff time used was directly with Houses, and **28%** involved working with external organisations.

Highlights of NHT activities include:

- 🏠 producing major documents to support the work of Houses:
  - 🏠 Managers Operations Manual
  - 🏠 Handbook for Neighbourhood House Boards
  - 🏠 Volunteer induction tools
- 🏠 Applied for five grants with success in four of them
- 🏠 Represented the network in **17** networks, forums and partnerships
- 🏠 **18** training sessions in three regions
- 🏠 Review of NH Outcomes reporting framework
- 🏠 With the lobbying support from Houses, we gained an increase in NHT core funding.

### HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

The response to our annual survey was significantly down on previous years (total of 35 respondents). On average **70%** of respondents are aware of the various NHT resources. **35%** had used and were satisfied with those resources.

Financial management support again had the highest level of awareness, reported at **88%**. Volunteer induction resources, governance training and the Community Development Toolkit also showed a high level of awareness amongst respondents. The NHT policy and procedure templates were the most used resource.

Respondents agreed that NHT supports them in these areas:

- 🏠 governance training (**72%**)
- 🏠 management of the organisation (**77%**)
- 🏠 have benefitted from industrial relations support through NHT group purchase (**57%**)

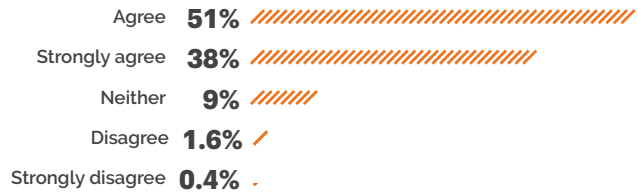
NHT resource tools had the following impact:

- 🏠 **77%** agree that they have a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of board and manager
- 🏠 **77%** appreciate the support received to maintain policies and procedures
- 🏠 **70%** have clearer understanding of delegations between board and manager
- 🏠 **72%** appreciate the Strategic Planning tools

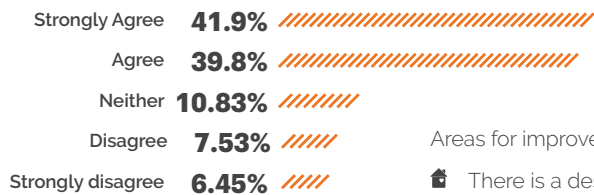
The general level of satisfaction with NHT is high. However, commentary in the feedback suggests NHT can improve in extending support beyond the Managers of Houses, and that more support could be extended specifically to House boards.

### IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

*"Our House is better off because of the work NHT does"*



*"I feel confident to contact NHT"*



Areas for improvement:

- 🏠 There is a desire to review and explore new options for some of our 'Group Purchase' arrangements.
- 🏠 A desire to see greater face to face involvement at Houses by NHT staff remains.
- 🏠 Respondents indicated that NHT could do more to satisfy their expectations with over **20%** expressing they were unhappy with the level of support provided.

### BOARD ATTENDANCE

	Attendances
Kate Beer	7/7
Michael Higgins	6/7
Eddie Rodgers	1/1
Matthew Williamson	3/3
Gary Barnes	6/6
Nettie Burr	3/7
Tracey Carter	0/1
Tracy Edington-Mackay	4/4
Cate Clark	0/1
Melinda Reed	4/6
Trish O'Duffy	3/6
Graham Ryan	1/1
Kristy Leishman	5/7
Kerryn James	3/6
Julie Milnes	4/5

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge all feedback and appreciate the time taken to provide it to us. We recognise that the methodology of this survey means that it may not accurately reflect the true sentiments of the whole Network. We are committed to working more closely with the Network and key stakeholders to strengthen the methodology to ensure we continue to improve in as many areas as we can.

- 🏠 I'd like to see NHT develop a Board Recruitment Tool and conduct Board evaluations.
- 🏠 Please extend more support beyond the managers.
- 🏠 I would like to hear more from NHT around meetings etc attended representing the network etc, and also the NHT Board decisions.
- 🏠 I always feel I receive a warm and respectful response.
- 🏠 NHT staff are knowledgeable, helpful and honest – happy to find out if they don't know something.
- 🏠 Regional meetings have improved dramatically with more open and honest discussion and information sharing.

Thanks to our sponsors



www.nht.org.au | nht@nht.org.au | (03) 6228 6515  
 16b Elmsleigh Road, Derwent Park TAS 7009  
 facebook.com/neighbourhoodhouses