



**Neighbourhood Houses
Tasmania**

Making a difference for our communities

.....
The evidence of the impact
of Tasmania's Neighbourhood
House Network
.....

MAY 2018

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Context: Neighbourhood Houses

Neighbourhood Houses (Houses) are places where people come together in order to support their local community and make a significant difference in people's lives. They are run by the community, for the community and offer a wide range of programs and activities for local people. Houses are the warm and generous heart of their communities.

Our network has created a two minute video "[We Reconnect the Disconnected](#)" which distills the essence of what Houses are all about.

The 35 Houses (the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania network) form the largest community development infrastructure in Tasmania, with the most regionally diverse footprint of any non-government community service network in the state.

Houses work from a community development framework, which enables individuals and groups of people to make changes in their community on issues that affect them.

Community development is an inclusive, fair and responsive approach to creating solutions within communities. It encourages active participation, consultation and involvement from the broad community in the development, design, delivery and evaluation of projects.

Each House in the network is an independently incorporated association with a volunteer committee providing governance, and is managed on a day-to-day basis by a small number of staff and many volunteers.

Houses are funded under the Tasmanian Government's Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework 2013-18. Some Houses also receive funding through Commonwealth Government programs as well as from a range of grant programs.

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania (NHT) is the peak body that supports Houses to work within the community development framework to achieve outcomes with and in their communities.



NETWORK

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Phoenix | 23 West Moonah |
| 2 Burnie | 24 Warrane |
| 3 Ulverstone | Mornington |
| 4 Devonport | 25 Pittwater |
| 5 East Devonport | 26 Dowsing Point |
| 6 Beaconsfield | 27 Karadi |
| 7 George Town | 28 Goodwood |
| 8 Dorset | 29 Rokeby |
| 9 St Helens | 30 Clarendon Vale |
| 10 Fingal Valley | 31 Okines |
| 11 Starting Point | 32 Dunalley Tasman |
| 12 Rocherlea (NSCC) | 33 Maranoa Heights |
| 13 Mowbray (NSCC) | 34 West Winds |
| 14 Tresca | 35 Geeveston |
| 15 Deloraine | |
| 16 Rosebery | |
| 17 Zeehan | |
| 18 Derwent Valley | |
| 19 Bridgewater (JRS) | |
| 20 Gagebrook (JRS) | |
| 21 Risdon Vale | |
| 22 Bucaan | |

Measuring outcomes: why and how?

Being clear about the desired result or outcome and then working out what needs to happen to improve things within communities is a logical way to determine a course of action. Mostly, this happens intuitively, but there are increasing demands to be effective, efficient and accountable, and changes to the reporting required by funders are moving us towards a more structured way of doing this.

Across Australia Neighbourhood Houses are moving towards focusing on outcomes and some are adopting the Results Based Accountability™ (RBA) method of planning and performance, along with reporting. NHT has drawn on this work with a view towards being consistent with other states and territories. In addition, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has introduced an Outcomes Framework and the 2015-2018 Funding Agreements between DHHS and Houses requires reporting using the RBA approach.

RBA is an approach, a system and a framework for action to achieve outcomes. RBA is based on articulating the desired outcomes and then designing actions and activity to achieve them, while managing and monitoring

performance along the way. This sounds logical, and it is—in theory. The reality is that implementing a focus on measuring outcomes is a change management project and it involves a centralised point of coordination, cultural shifts, training, coaching, resource development and information management.

Collecting information about progress provides a basis for planning and evidence-based continuous improvement for each House and their respective communities. It is a way of honestly measuring and then telling our communities, our staff and volunteers, and supporters, how much we're doing, how well we're doing it and if anyone is better off. Many places across Australia and the world are showing the benefits of using the RBA approach to get the best results in communities. In addition, the data provides a Tasmania-wide picture about activities, areas of priority and what Houses are trying to achieve within their communities.

We believe that this report, demonstrates the incredible impact of Neighbourhood Houses. Not across one community, or a local government area, but across a whole state. We are excited by the evidence and we hope you will be too.



Our outcomes journey

NHT has continued to support Houses in the second year of the implementation of the RBA reporting framework. Great progress has been made to develop expertise and undertake tasks that enable reporting on the outcomes achieved in and with communities. Staff, committee members and volunteers have stepped up to the challenge; learning new skills, surveying participants and partners and gathering data and information to enable a better understanding of the outcomes of their work. Houses are starting to be able to demonstrate those outcomes to others. Some Houses are saying that they are starting to use their data for planning, as well as improvement and for advocacy at the local level.

The data that we now have is a rich source of information about why people come to Houses, how they experience it when they do, and how communities are strengthened in ways that can change lives. The state-wide story is critical for lobbying for Network-wide resources whether for grant funding applications, maintaining or increasing funding from governments, or to engage partner organisations who are able to see the incredible value in the work Houses do.

Our data also tells us about the key role of volunteers across our Network and informs us on the progress of collaborative work with our partner organisations.

While we have come a long way, it is not always plain sailing. Time and resource scarcity within Houses can create a tension between gathering and analysing data, or actively assisting and supporting people. Another issue we have is that what we are trying to measure is slippery—how do you define and measure a strong and resilient community?

So, congratulations to those House coordinators, staff, volunteers and committee members who have successfully included survey design, data gathering, measurement and evaluation, along with analysis into their already expansive set of tasks and skills. No mean feat!

NHT also acknowledges the extensive support and the collaboration of the Department of Health and Human Services in this process.



The Results-Based Accountability Approach

There are a range of desired outcomes for the Tasmanian population that the network of Houses can contribute to but cannot achieve alone. These are the BIG areas for improvement—called Population Outcomes—like unemployment rates, school retention, crime rates, and a range of health indicators. For example: Houses can support people in a range of ways to be job-ready which may have an impact on unemployment rates, but Houses cannot be held accountable for reducing high unemployment.

Houses can, however, be accountable for the difference they make for the community members who participate in activities and programs, or who make contact with a House for whatever reason. Houses are therefore accountable for their performance, known as Performance Outcomes.

To demonstrate performance Houses will respond to 3 key questions under the RBA framework:

1. How much do we do?
2. How well do we do it?
3. Is anyone better off because of it?

How much do we do?

Activity reporting shows how much we are doing, that our doors are open, things are happening, and people are engaging with us.

How well do we do it?

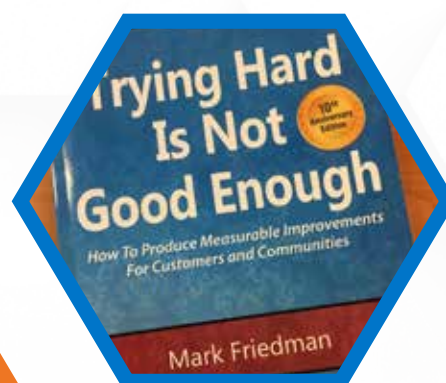
Full year counting **of consultations and working with partners** shows that we are doing things well—and being responsive to community, being inclusive, and collaborative.

Is anyone better off?

Evaluating, measuring and reporting on outcomes demonstrates that we are making a difference—that people and communities are better off because of the work we do.

This report summarises some of the great outcomes that have been achieved across the network of Houses, through a compilation of activity data and outcomes data. This report then presents the outcomes that have been achieved against each of the four Goal Areas of the Neighbourhood Houses Strategic Framework 2013-18. These Goal Areas are:

1. Build Community
2. Support People and Families
3. Enhance Participation Choices
4. Local Governance and Management



SECTION ONE

Activity data – How much did we do?

Summary

Activity data demonstrates that Houses offer a range of activities and opportunities for assistance that people and volunteers engage with.

Houses are required to collect two snapshot weeks of activity data per annum. Over the snapshot weeks Houses count every episode of contact by a community member or a volunteer with an activity occurring at the House or that the House is associated with.

The data is not a client headcount, nor is it a time and motion study. The data set captures a representative sample of the quantum and types of activities that occur in Houses and is extrapolated across the Network and year to provide annual estimates. The data shows where most contact with activity is made by community members and it shows where volunteers interact with House activities.

Houses also count:

- the number of partner organisations that they have worked with during the reporting year
- the number and type of consultations undertaken with their communities
- the number of registered volunteers associated with the House.

This data demonstrates that Houses do not work alone and that they are responsive to the needs of their communities.

Houses use this or other formats to collect their activity data all year and Houses use this data in regular reports to their Management Committees.

NOTE – the number of Contacts is not a headcount of people through the door, but is a count of the number of times people participate or make contact with a House activity. For example 1 person may visit the House 4 times during the snapshot week—that is counted as 4 contacts.



How many contacts were made?

Community members made 32,483 contacts with 33 Houses during the two census weeks in 2016-17. Based on this data up to 779,592 contacts occurred across the Network over the full year (a 57% increase on 2015-16's 445,336 contacts, which would be attributable to a combination of increased demand, and improved data collection by Houses this year).



Based on the census data, on average:



492 contacts were made by community members at each House, each week



23,624 contacts at each House for the full year 2016-17



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY DATA 2016-17
(with 2015-16 data where available):



VOLUNTEERS

1,411 people volunteered
across the network

266,904 hours/year
(189,608 in the previous year)

168 hours on average
per week per House
(120 in the previous year)

4.4 full time equivalents
(approximately) per House
(3 in the previous year)

\$6.6 million value
added to the network
(at SCHADS Community Services
Employee Level 1 Grade 1 pay rate)

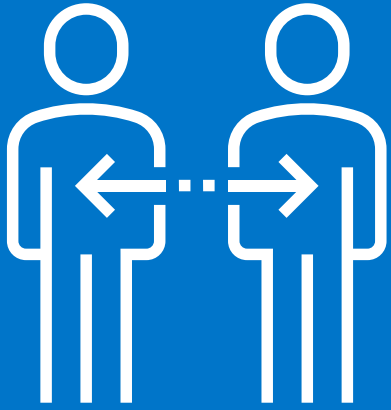


CONTACTS

779,592
over the year
(445,336 in the previous year)

492 average
per week
per House
(281 in the previous year)

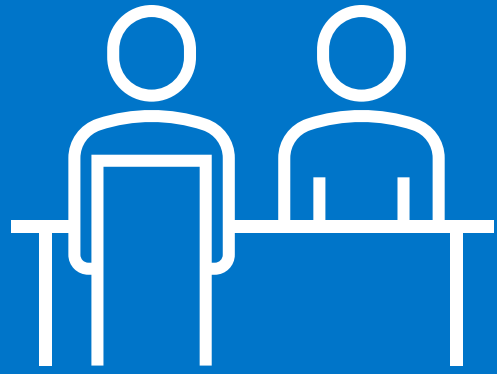




PARTNERS

39

on average
per House
(27 in the previous year)



CONSULTATIONS

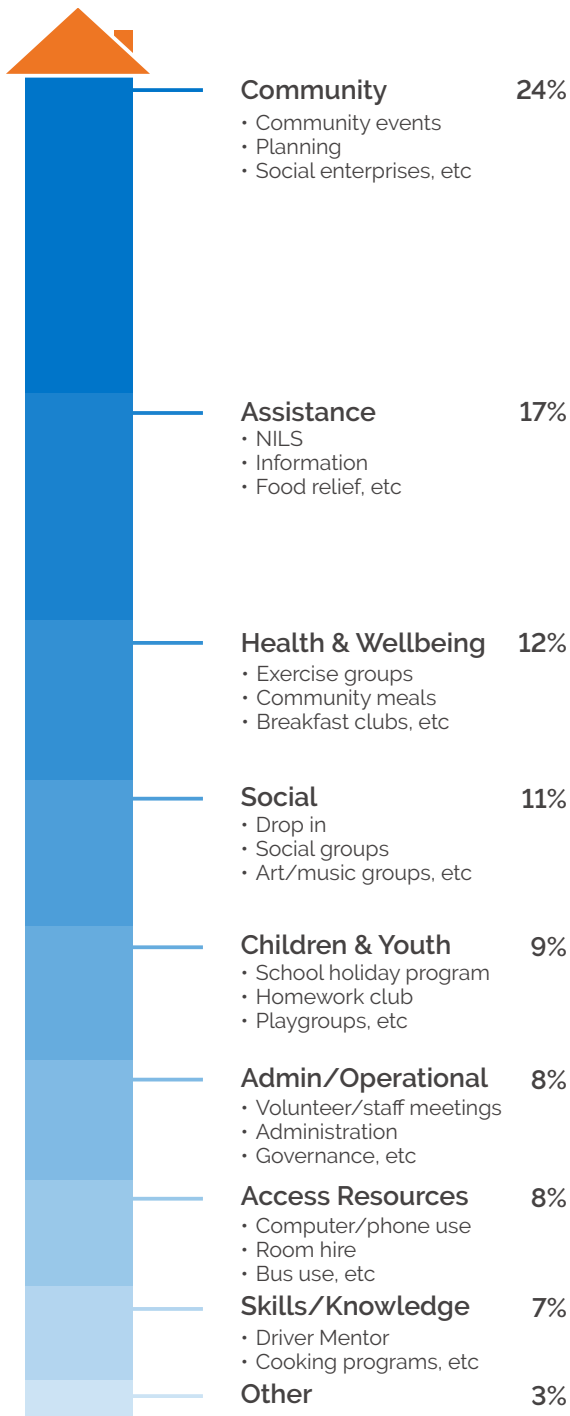
12

consultations
on average per
House per year
(8 in the previous year)

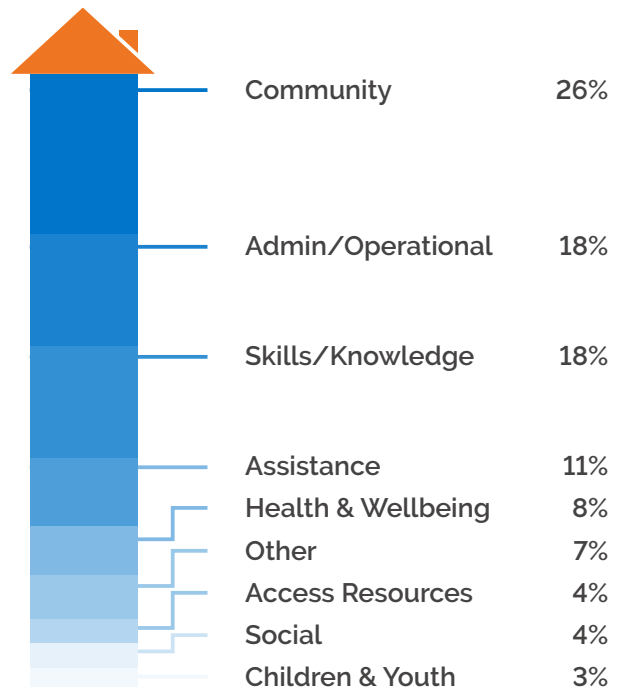


Why do people make contact with Houses?

RANGE OF ACTIVITIES ACCESSED ACROSS THE NETWORK



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT BY RANGE OF ACTIVITIES



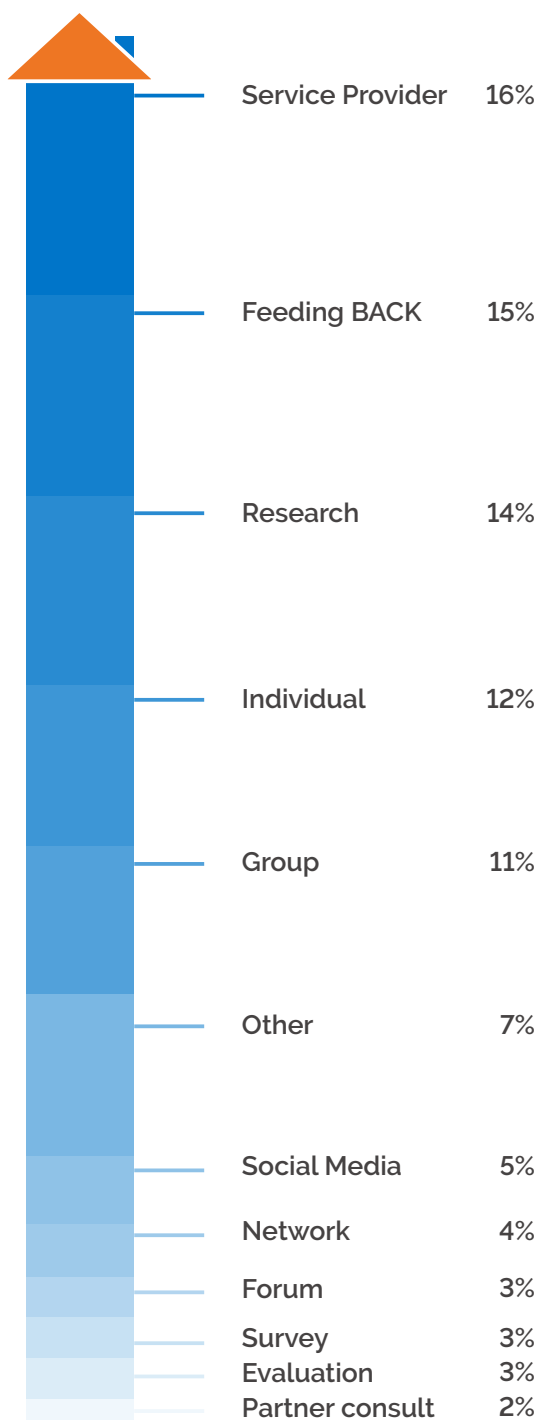
We know that our volunteers:

Numbered approximately **1,411 people** (an average of 39 volunteers per House)

Contributed **11,121 hours** across the Network during the 2016-17 census weeks – which equates to 266,904 hours across the Network over the year.

Contributed an average of 168 hours per week at each House – that's the equivalent of **4.4** full time workers (based on a 38 hour week) and at SCHADS Community Services Employee Level 1, Grade 1 pay rate this equates to a **\$6.6 million** value-add to the Network's resources.

CONSULTATION ACTIVITY ACROSS THE NETWORK



Partners

Houses do not work alone—on average each House had 39 partner organisations that actively collaborated to help achieve a range of mutual objectives. For this data set, partners are defined as any public, private or community sector entity that is collaboratively working with a House in order to support the achievement of the House's goals. Partner organisations included schools, community service providers, Government departments, Councils, local businesses and training providers.

Consultation

Consultation is a fundamental ingredient to determining the priorities of a community and vital to our community development work. For this data set, consultation is defined as the process of determining the needs and priorities of the community.

Houses regularly consulted with communities during 2016-17 through a range of methods, which included:

- group discussions/consultations
- surveys of participants and partners
- individual feedback
- engaging with local networks
- social media

Houses on average undertook 12 consultations each during 2016-17, a total of 366 across the Network.

SECTION TWO

How well did we do it?

These measures aim to demonstrate the extent to which Houses are designing and offering quality, relevant, inclusive and fit-for-purpose activities that are "hitting the mark" with their communities.

Houses are required to report to DHHS on two Priority Areas for their community over the financial year. To determine how well they are doing, Houses then choose the one or two most important and relevant measures from this list depending on the Priority Area they are reporting on. These results are a compilation of data gathered through surveys, interviews and participation registers submitted by 31 Houses, against all Priority Areas.

"HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?" MEASURE

90% of participants completed the program/service/activity (programs)

80% of partners report improved collaborative practice

94% of programs were completed on time and as planned

Data compiled from reports by 31 Houses as at October 2017.

95%

of participants reported satisfaction with the design/content of programs

96%

of partners/organisations reported satisfaction with the way the program was run

98%

of partners reported satisfaction with their relationship/interaction with the House

97%

of participants reported their engagement with the House provided information and support relevant to their situation

87%

of participants (per activity) were from target or priority groups

SECTION THREE

Is anyone better off?

The outcomes data shows that communities and people are better off because of the Neighbourhood House Network.

As a sample of the work that is happening, each House reported on two Priority Areas for their community (unless otherwise negotiated with DHHS). Houses chose measures that were most relevant to the Priority Area to report against.

The Priority Areas selected by Houses to evaluate and report on included:

- community infrastructure (sheds, transport, gardens, social enterprise)
- promotion of a positive community through events
- connecting community to services
- food security
- strengthening relationships
- parenting skills
- social inclusion
- life skills
- social and recreational activities
- education and training opportunities
- driver mentoring
- job readiness
- volunteering
- governance/Board knowledge and skills
- decision making and accountability, and
- strategic planning for the community and House.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS



11,643 responses

to questions/surveys/interviews were received by all Houses. That is a lot of people providing a lot of feedback

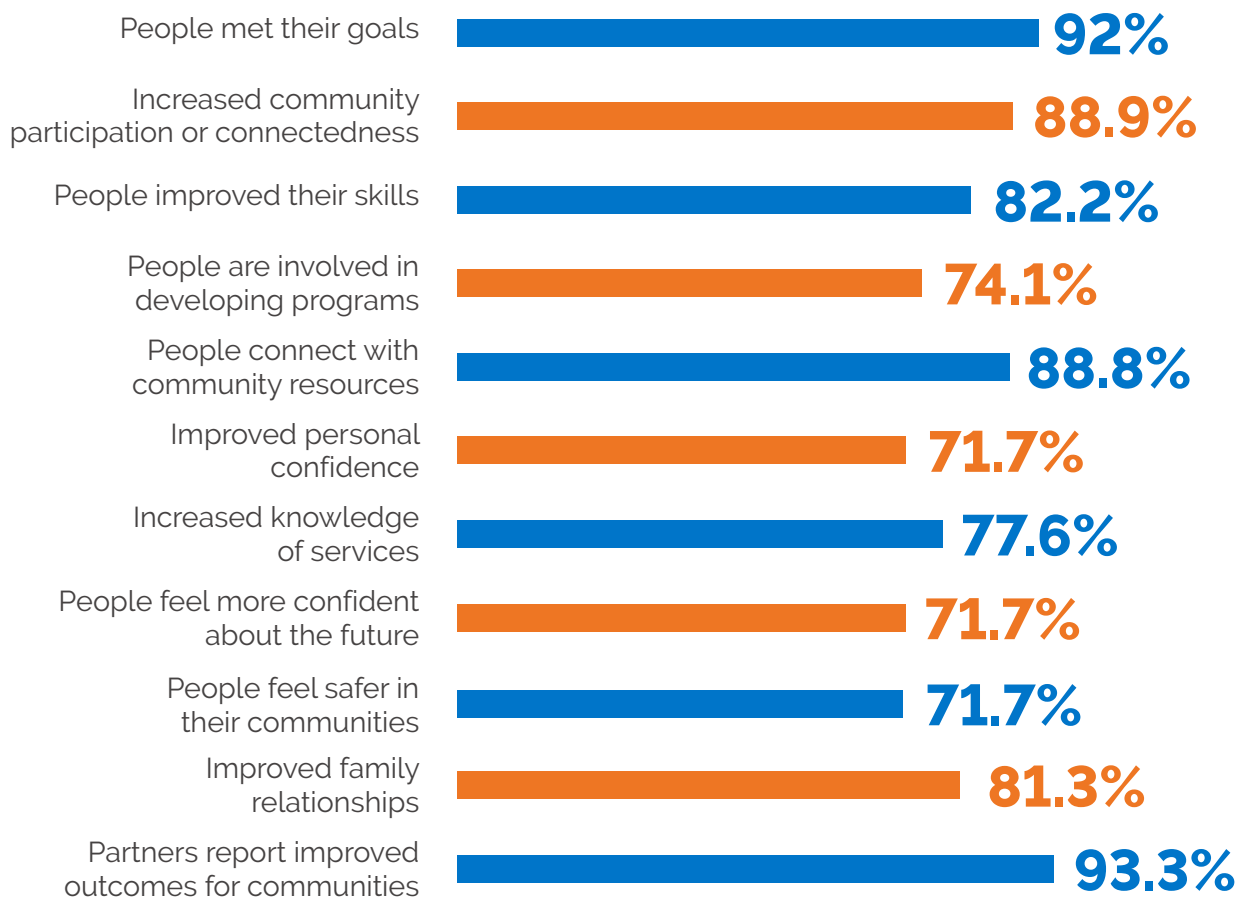


9,071 of these (77.9%) were positive

A sample of what was measured includes:

- 28 Houses measured if coming to a Neighbourhood House increased participation in community activities —with **88.9% of responses saying YES.**
- 21 Houses measured whether people have gained or consolidated skills and knowledge through their participation at a House, with **82.2% saying YES.** This was from a sample of over 3,000 people across the state.

2016/17 PERCENTAGES OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES



Data sourced from 11 643 responses to participant and partner surveys of 31 Houses.

Our Outcomes data above shows the amazing differences that Houses make in their communities:

- **increased participation**
- **improved confidence**
- **increased knowledge**
- **increased skill**
- **improved connection to community**

Reporting against the goals of the **Neighbourhood House Strategic Framework** 2013-2018



Houses are funded to work with their community on 4 Goal Areas under the Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework 2013-2018. These Goal Areas are:

- 1. Build Community**
- 2. Support People and Families**
- 3. Enhance Participation Choices**
- 4. Local Governance and Management**

The following section contains some collected data under each Goal Area, and then shares a story or two as examples of the outcomes achieved for individuals.

Goal One

Build community

15 Houses (44%) chose to report on a Priority Area that contributes to building community.

Typical activities used to achieve this outcome were related to community infrastructure (sheds, transport, gardens, social enterprise), promotion of a positive community through events, and by connecting community to services.



People met their goals



91%

People increased their participation in community



88%

Participants developed skills



81%

Participants increased their personal confidence



59%

People feel safer



81%

Partner organisations report that Houses contribute to positive outcomes



95%

A big contribution

WEST WINDS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Miss F is a young, local woman with a mild disability. She has been involved with the House for many years as her parents are both active volunteers here. Miss F—along with a friend—has taken on DJ roles for our Underage Rages each term. DJ Madz and DJ Batz, with support from us have managed to develop a certain style which is a huge hit with the younger kids. They dance, play games, win prizes and as each Under Age Rage has a theme, the kids are encouraged to dress up and then win prizes for the best outfit. Woodbridge School are very supportive of our dances for the kids as there are few formal opportunities to socialise in a safe, fun environment. As a result, many parents have come onboard to assist with “supervising” with one mum now offering her services to run costume making workshops with the kids. Miss F is now designing the posters for the events, and the girls are choosing their own themes, games, music and food which we sell.

As a result, 129 kids have attended the four events and they all have such a good time they would like it to happen more frequently. More parents have come along to assist and become engaged with the project. Miss F enjoyed working with the kids so much, we asked her if she would be interested in assisting at our onsite child care centre.

Now, one year on, she works every Tuesday and Thursday as a relief child care assistant over the lunch time breaks. She is thoroughly enjoying her work, the little kids love having a young person to play with and Miss F has paid work to assist her with gaining skills and experience.

More than a shed

ROSEBERY COMMUNITY HOUSE

Meeting members of the Shed has created a sense of community. Having joined the Shed has also led me to become part of the board at the Community House. I've been given the opportunity to connect with the community in a way that wouldn't have happened otherwise. I'm enjoying being part of something and seeing it grow.



A short story that says a lot about potential

ROKEBY NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Phillip is 37 years old, and is on a Disability Support Pension.

When Phillip first came to the House in 2015 he was nervous and had confidence issues that affected his speech.

Due to getting involved with the volunteer programs at the House, Phillip has improved confidence and his speech has improved. He has completed a TAFE Tasmania course, and various other courses including a cooking certificate, First Aid, Dangerous Chemicals and Needles Hazards training, and Safe Food Handling.

Phillip has now started his own program, with 3 volunteers working under him. His team prepares meals and hands out food to disadvantaged community members every Tuesday night.



Goal Two

Support people and their families

27 Houses (79%) chose to report on a Priority Area that contributes to supporting people and their families.

Typical activities used to achieve this outcome were related to food security, strengthening relationships, parenting skills, social inclusion, life skills, assistance, and social and recreational activities.



People met their goals



96%

People increased their participation in community



84%

Participants developed skills



85%

Participants increased their personal confidence



90%

Partner organisations report that Houses contribute to positive outcomes



100%

Eating with Friends: a participant's story

DELORAINÉ HOUSE

I love Eating with Friends. It's lovely, I like to socialise with people that I wouldn't normally get to socialise with. The people radiate niceness. I like coming and talking with people who find it hard to make friends. Sometimes I accompany people so that they have the confidence to come along and enjoy. I like supporting people in the community. I love the food. It's delicious. I like doing things at the House and I feel comfortable coming here. I've been coming to the House for the last ten years and it has helped me to gain the confidence to get involved with other programs and activities. I recently enrolled in an Art class and walking in the door gave me heart palpitations but I pushed through. I don't think I would have been able to do that without gaining the confidence by attending things at the House.

I feel quite socially included by coming here because I spent a lot of time on my own and find it hard to come out to things like this and leave the safety of my own home. It's been beneficial for me. Being isolated before has shown me that the longer I stayed in my house the harder it was to come out and interact with the community. Eating with Friends helps me to keep coming out and keep interacting positively with my community. The House is the one place where I felt that I could really get involved. I felt welcomed and not judged, so I could keep coming back. Without programs like Eating with Friends I think I might still be just sitting at home in my house, but I'm not. I'm doing things like learning how to do art.

Volunteering makes a difference to the volunteer too!

DEVONPORT COMMUNITY HOUSE

A community member who was feeling lonely and due to a change in her circumstances was at a loss of how to fill in her time so she approached the Community House to see if there was any voluntary work she could be involved with. Initially she gave one afternoon a week volunteering in the Food Shed and a few weeks later was asked if she would like to volunteer an extra afternoon in the Food Shed as she showed initiative and was very keen to work as well as really enjoying meeting and interacting with other people. After eight months of volunteering in the Food Shed, an administration position for a few hours a week became available at the Community House and she was asked if she would like to work in this position. Administration/office work is something that she had always wanted to do so she gladly accepted the position and two months later a few hours a week of work turned into three days a week and now this year she is undertaking study in Certificate III in Community Services. So by initially seeking voluntary work in the Food Shed this lady has now had her life transformed and is busy with three days employment per week, still volunteers in the Food Shed one day a week along with studying. She now has more purpose and meaning all thanks to the Food Shed.

“ Her life now has more purpose and meaning all thanks to the Food Shed.”



Justine: Breaking down the barriers

BUCAAN COMMUNITY HOUSE

A local young single mum enrolled in our Garden to Plate program. Justine (not her real name) had lots to deal with, including mental ill health, lack of support from family or friends, no access to transport, as well as having to meet Centrelink's activity requirements.

Justine enrolled at the suggestion of her job network provider and they included her participation as part of her work for the dole obligations. The Garden to Plate program was a ten week program held at the House in partnership with TAFE, the LINC and Drysdale. The program included the awarding of a Certificate I in Horticulture, and a Certificate II in Food Preparation.

Justine found someone she could talk with at the Community House. She was very worried about undertaking the program due to her low level literacy and broke down a couple of times when talking with staff about her fear of failure, and her belief that she would not be able to complete the course. Justine explained that she had not done well in school and did not mix well with others. Justine stated she had never gardened and was not a good cook and that she did not like vegetables or fancy food. She also had issues with transport, which made things even harder. She was full of self-doubt and the barriers seemed too much to get over.

However, to her credit, Justine fully participated in and completed the course with flying colours and worked hard to contribute to the Garden 2 Plate book. Through her participation, Justine stated that she was cooking more at home, that her meals were more nutritious and her family was trying food they had never eaten before.

“ Justine says that she has never felt so confident and is feeling healthier and is more active. The future looks much brighter for Justine and her family.”

And there is more to Justine's life-changing story. After she completed the course Justine became an active volunteer in the community garden, signed up to the food co-op, and maintained relationships with other participants. With support from the House, Justine got a step up loan for a car, commenced casual employment cleaning, and enrolled in the TAFE Certificate III in Individual Support specialising in disability. Justine also now grows her own veggies.

Justine says that she has never felt so confident and is feeling healthier and is more active. The future looks much brighter for Justine and her family.



Crafting a future

NORTHERN SUBURBS COMMUNITY CENTRE

One of our participants is a lady from Bhutan who came to Tasmania under refugee status. She has been in Australia for about seven years. She became connected to the Community Centre through our Ladies' Multicultural Craft Group that we ran in the past, and has since transitioned into our literacy programs, mainly our 'conversational English and life skills' one.

When joining us, her desire was to strengthen her English skills to be better able to communicate her needs to those in the wider community. She also liked the fact that the Community Centre offered a wide range of activities and has recently expressed an interest in doing cooking and knitting.

A key reason for coming was to improve her understanding when doing her shopping. She said this had improved dramatically and she now feels happier and more comfortable while shopping. She is also using the English names and spellings of many of the ingredients she uses in cooking.

She also gets fulfilment from gardening and has been learning about planting and sowing times in Tasmania, as well as treatments for fungi and insects.

Since starting with us she has gained Australian citizenship. She is an elder in her community and has invited many of her friends to join us in our programs. She has expressed an interest in continuing to work on her English and hopes that she may study Aged Care in the future.



Digging for DIGnity

OKINES / DUNALLEY

DIGnity is a wellbeing project that enables health workers, artists and researchers to work alongside community members, garden coordinators and volunteers to create a safe and inclusive gardening space. Our aim is to provide an environment for people to feel safe, welcome and able to participate with other members of the community (particularly people who have lost the confidence or their physical or cognitive capacity) to garden. The team includes an Occupational Therapist, mental health counsellor, fibre artist and social researcher/RN, who are liaising closely with local service providers, GPs, carer organisations and community groups.

Simple changes have been made to the garden to make it safer and more welcoming for people with wheelchairs and walkers. Firmer paths and better access to the House, plus raised couches and chairs in the garden sitting area.

The DIGnity program is a pilot project with potential to be used in other Gardens and Houses around Tasmania.



Risdon Vale Heart

RISDON VALE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

We have partnered with Uniting Aged Well and the Heart Foundation to assist our local aged community members. This program for seniors in Risdon Vale is an initiative embracing the Heart Foundation's Heart Moves program. The program provides gentle physical activity that is safe for people with stable long-term health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or obesity, and is run by an accredited exercise professional that has been trained as a Heart Moves facilitator. The initiative provides older people with regular, consistent and affordable access to an exercise program relevant to them and incorporates a health and wellbeing component, including healthy lunches. It's great to see 16 people in their 80's getting together to exercise and have fun, lots of laughs, throwing the ball, moving all their limbs and working to get better mobility. It has provided a social network for them to build friendships and interests, build their health knowledge and learn to listen to their bodies as a preventative health measure in managing their chronic conditions.

“ It's inclusive for the young and the old, it provides fun activities, it provides a friendly atmosphere for everyone. It brings people together where friendships are formed and provide assistance and help for those whom don't know where to turn or where to start. Thank you Risdon Vale Community Centre and all the staff.”



Affordable access

DORSET COMMUNITY HOUSE

Our community garden and vegetable sales have doubled since the previous year, proving that we are meeting a need in Dorset for fresh, local, affordable produce.

One customer who buys vegetables weekly reported that because she bought her vegetables at the Dorset Community House that she has a more secure future health wise and financially. It is better quality produce than the alternatives. It is also more affordable. Buying her vegetables at the DCH has improved her quality of life due to better health because of eating more vegetables. She expressed her genuine gratitude for the availability of fresh, affordable produce.



Finding her feet

ULVERSTONE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

We have been working closely with one of the teenagers from our Youth Group who we will call Izzy. We met Izzy as a disengaged youth with various problems including troubles at school including physically fighting with other teens. Izzy is a very outspoken, loud and demanding 13-year-old, although very driven and we found the outspoken behaviour came from trying to be a leader.

Izzy started attending the House for our Youth Group and whilst at school she participated in our Outreach Program each Wednesday through the lunch hour during term.

During her time with the Youth Group, Izzy formed close relationships with our Youth Worker and YFCC Social Worker, learning to manage her moods, stay calmer and direct her behaviour towards more positive activities.

Izzy became involved in organising and running fundraising BBQs with one event raising money for the local Youth Shelter. Izzy also organised various aspects of the Youth Group and most recently was awarded a scholarship to attend a Youth Conference in Launceston which empowered Izzy to reach new heights.

After the conference Izzy's mum came to the House and couldn't thank the House enough for what we had done for her. Izzy's mum explained that Izzy's behaviours at home and school had changed dramatically from a loud, demanding and disagreeable youth, to an empowered, driven youth with goals in life and their home life was now more settled and enjoyable.

Another major achievement for Izzy is that she has taken a lead role in a House based cafe. Through partnering with the High School, we were able to have some of the disengaged teens spend every Thursday at the Neighbourhood House which started second term 2017, which included Izzy. The students would come with a teacher and volunteer doing various duties around the House and complete school work. Thursdays were busy at UNH, with 30-40 people attending various classes and services. Izzy and her class mates decided to create a mini café and offer toasted sandwiches, muffins, milk shakes and other various café snacks to anyone at the House for a nominal price.

The café was a big hit with Izzy and the students making 30 plus lunches each Thursday. This included taking orders, preparing the lunches, serving and taking payments, budgeting and planning for the weeks ahead to give variety to those using the café. Izzy took a lead role in this project and excelled. She created menus, asked customers feedback and adjusted menus to what customers wanted, planned shopping needs in advance and encouraged and supported other classmates. The youth running the coffee shop chose to donate their profits to a local mother in need of equipment for her disabled child.

We find at UNH that the more time we can spend with people the bigger positive impact we can have on their lives. Izzy's story highlights what Houses achieve via working with people both through our programs and through the individual time we spend with people.



Goal Three

Enhance participation choices



13 Houses in total (38%) chose to report on a Priority Area that contributes to enhancing participation choices.

Typical activities used to achieve this outcome were related to education and training opportunities, driver mentoring, job readiness, and volunteering.

People met their goals



96%

People increased their participation in community



89%

Participants developed skills



85%

Participants increased their personal confidence



82%

Partner organisations report that Houses contribute to positive outcomes



93%

Paying it forward: the ripple effect

WEST MOONAH COMMUNITY HOUSE

A refugee arrived in Tasmania a few years ago, and undertook the Learner Driver Program through the House and passed his L1 Test. His two elder brothers assisted him to do his practical hours on the road and he subsequently passed his Provisional Test, enabling him to undertake a full time apprenticeship.

Upon getting a full drivers licence he was able to then help other members of his family. He assisted his mother and father to be able to learn the road rules and they passed their test on-line. The other relatives (7 in total) were referred by him into the Learner Driver Program at the House and subsequently passed. They all now have their licences and apart from his wife, who is house-bound with small children, the rest have either full or part time work.

In addition to helping his relatives, he then set out to assist a further eleven members of the refugee community to be able to do their practical hours of driving after attending the Program in subsequent years. Each of those eleven persons passed their Provisional Test and all are working in the community, either on farms, in aged care facilities and other worthwhile occupations. In regards to gender support, he has assisted five women from his own family and an additional six women from the refugee community, enabling them to get work and participate in the community.

He is buying his own house and in addition to working full time he has a part time job and is applying for more work.

He, his wife and two sisters have assisted at the House in an interpreting role with Literacy classes for older members of the community. Being able to take the L1 class run by the House and successfully pass the test was the catalyst for him to be able to broaden his whole outlook and career path.

Following his success at getting his licence and being in Australia for 4 years, he undertook training in Citizenship classes at the House with his wife as well. He and his wife finished the course and went to the Immigration Department and passed the Citizenship test. He then trained some of his family members with support from the tutor, who also passed. Other members of his family and those others he assisted with practical driver training hours also undertook citizenship training successfully at the House.

He and his family continue to support new refugees to Tasmania to assist them in joining the Tasmanian community and to refer them to the various services and courses, including those conducted at the House. He continues to seek support and guidance from the House, and tutors others on a variety of matters including the preparation of a resume, job application letters, PowerPoint presentations, aspects of the Tasmanian laws, writing his family story, etc.

“ He and his family continue to support new refugees to Tasmania to assist them in joining the Tasmanian community.”



Dreams can come true

DERWENT VALLEY COMMUNITY HOUSE

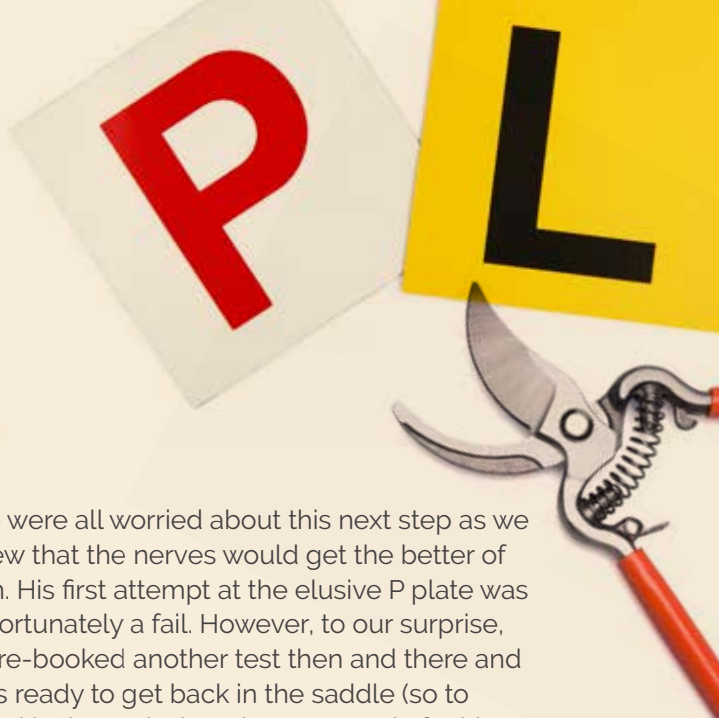
A young man came to the House for literacy help and from there it was identified that he would like to sit for his Learners licence, he'd like to obtain his drivers licence and he would love to get a job in gardening. We also happened to be offering Horticulture Certificate I and II courses from the House and asked him if he would be interested in joining in with these classes with literacy assistance; so began the journey for Nathan.

Nathan passed his Learner Licence Assistance L1 test on the first go and practically flew out of the building he was so excited. He now was in ownership of his Learner Licence and ready to get on the road. Nathan joined the Drive Time program (for which he qualified) and was matched up with a wonderfully suitable mentor and he began driving that week. He also began attending classes for the Horticulture Certificate.

This was not easy for Nathan. Sitting in a classroom was very difficult for him and his level of literacy was such that he needed a great deal of assistance. The House was able to offer that assistance to him and each week the classes became a little easier and he used to chat away about the classes to his driver mentor. They had a wonderful rapport and she was just brilliant with him.

We watched Nathan's confidence grow a little bit each week and before too long he started talking about when he had his licence he was going to get a job. His language and attitude actually changed from "Maybe/If" to "I am/When". It was wonderful to watch his growth.

Nathan's 50 hours of driving was coming to an end and unfortunately his mentor had to suddenly leave and we all thought Nathan would fall in a heap. However, his new found confidence enabled him to be matched with another mentor immediately and he set off again as if nothing had happened. This may seem insignificant, but this was a really major step for Nathan to take in his life. He does not let people in very often and struggles socially, so we were just over the moon. His driving sessions started up again and he was ready to sit for his P's.



We were all worried about this next step as we knew that the nerves would get the better of him. His first attempt at the elusive P plate was unfortunately a fail. However, to our surprise, he re-booked another test then and there and was ready to get back in the saddle (so to speak). Six weeks later he went again for his P's. He was very nervous and we were once again very worried, and unfortunately he did not pass. We had a good talk to him and we all took him out for a drive so that he got used to going out with different people. He re-booked again and said to me on the morning of the test – "I am going to pass this time, it is time!". And he passed. You have never seen so many excited people as we were at the Community House that day, as we all felt that we had played a part in helping Nathan get his licence.

He very proudly bought a car and bought it in to show all of us. His long awaited station wagon that he could take up bush and sleep in the back. He was just so happy.

During the Christmas break he applied for several jobs and was lucky enough to find permanent full time employment with a gardening firm who just love Nathan and we could not be happier. Nathan told me that his dreams had come true.

“Nathan has a job, and a car, and money, and confidence—and a healthier ego. And the end of the story is that he also passed his Horticulture Certificate I and II courses. Nathan is just one of the many who have been through our Drive Time program. Not only did we make a difference to his life—but he made a difference to ours!

Achieving paid employment

ZEEHAN NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Over the past two years Annie has been unemployed and attending meetings with her designated employment group (Max Employment) at the House.

Eighteen months ago Annie had to complete 'Work for the Dole' for 25 hours per week. Max Employment approached us to see if Annie could do this at the House, but we could not offer the hours required.

Annie continued to come to the House when she attended her appointments and she told me a little more about herself and how she desired to work with children. She said she was not finding the Museum project where she had been placed beneficial at all.

So once again I approached Max Employment and offered 15 hours for Annie and explained how I felt it would be more beneficial and she was going to gain skills that she would most likely be able to use in the future (even though she wasn't getting the 25 hours a week).

“ I have watched Annie go from a shy 20 year old who could barely speak to the children to someone who feels confident conversing with the parents and assisting with children's activities.”

This time they agreed and Annie has now been assisting us at Kids Club and Playgroup for over 12 months. During this time we have been able to offer Annie first aid training and also safe food handling. Annie does more than her 15 hours during the school holiday program and now assists with filing and other office duties when I need a hand.

Recently Annie called me and said she was not available at Playgroup however would be at Kids Club in the afternoon. I went to remind her that I need to sign off on her hours so she would need to make them up, but she told me she had started paid casual employment at the school as a teacher's assistant!

During this time I have watched Annie go from a shy 20 year old who could barely speak to the children to someone who feels confident conversing with the parents and assisting with children's activities. Annie is still a shy person and most likely always will be, however I believe that the House and Max Employment working together has given Annie the opportunity to start a career working with children that she may never have had the opportunity to achieve.



Shaun's story: got there in the end!

JORDAN RIVER SERVICE

Shaun tells of his history of ill-health that has stopped him in his tracks in terms of getting a driving licence and participating in community. He suffered from seizures and the accompanying anxiety made him feel isolated and left him with zero confidence.

To his credit, Shaun kept trying. He hated having to rely on others for transport and was quite embarrassed when his daughter got her drivers licence before he did.

Shaun was determined, so at 37 years old he finally sat the knowledge test for his L's at the Community Centre and passed. He was then referred to the Top Gear Program which was run out of the Community Centre.

An application form later and Shaun was matched with a Driver Mentor straight away—same day!

Shaun was knocked for six when he failed the practical test for his P's a couple of times. He talks of the failure putting him into a downhill spiral with depression which would last up to six weeks at a time. His confidence was low and he would not drive during these periods. After he hit a real low, it took about three months to get his mental health back on track because he knew he could drive and was good at it, so it was very hard for him to comprehend that he kept failing.

Shaun's strength was his determination because each time he had to start from scratch to build everything back up again, but he did it!

Shaun coped with setbacks and challenges and was eventually matched with Harry as his mentor. This was a good match as the continued support resulted in Shaun getting his drivers licence in March 2017. Shaun now has gained confidence as well as independence and he is making good use of it. Shaun says: "After I passed I re-opened my little business running a pet stall and within two weeks I had expanded tenfold and within four weeks my business had doubled. I now do fifty percent of my business entailing home deliveries, pickups and dropoffs of pets. As far as I am concerned I am leading a whole new life.



I have struggled with anxiety all of my adult life which had been a huge contributing factor in failing my test each time, but the confidence I attained through gaining my licence just grew and my business and myself have thrived and have never been better, which is all thanks to the wonderful support, understanding and patience of the Top Gear Programme and its team, and my family and friends."

Go Shaun!





It takes courage to get back on your feet and to tell your story

STARTING POINT

A community member tells the story of how an accident as a pedestrian ended their career as a lawyer. The loss of career created a social abyss and was a savage blow, creating the lapse of a driver's licence and "much worse, completely lost nerve about driving, social interaction and ability to cope with life generally".

This person heard of the driver mentoring scheme run through the local House, and duly met the coordinator, signed some forms and expected to hear nothing. Any scepticism vanished when the mentoring sessions began and a caring, non-authoritarian mentor supported this person to get back firstly their courage, and then their confidence.

A Shed out the back

BEACONSFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Over six years ago a group of men decided to start a men's shed group. Their aim was to eventually gain a men's shed. They didn't have any projects to work on or suitable equipment as a group. They started doing small projects under the veranda. BH bought a container for the men to store tools and equipment. We were successful with 3 grants which bought the tools for the program. Overtime others would visit the House and take an interest in what was happening. Women started asking if they would be able to learn how to make small items and do things when we get a shed. Momentum was growing and BH started researching and moving towards a shed with support from West Tamar Council. A survey went out and support for the shed is evident. A steering committee was formed. This included two representatives from the men's group, 1 Child and Family Centre, 1 Council, 2 Beaconsfield House, 1 community garden member and 1 community member. After several meetings consensus was reached as to the design and use of the community shed. We envisage that in the near future, we will have plans drawn up and sent to Council.

“ I can truly relate that I am completely chuffed and grateful to all those involved in assisting me back to what used to be a normal every day activity. Goodwill is not lying about to be scooped up in handfuls, but when it happens it can be the beginning of an all new life change. Many thanks to all concerned and may you have many more successes.”



The story of a journey

GECO

P is in his mid 30's, comes from a family of long-term unemployed, with both parents at home on disability support benefits. He left school at Grade 10 and cared for his grandfather for a number of years.

While volunteering at the Neighbourhood House, he expressed an interest in learning how to subtract better so that he could calculate his darts scores much quicker.

From this beginning, we discussed his interest in having his own business and we started applying numeracy to the business realm.

P's confidence has increased this year and he is an extremely active volunteer. Regular weekly study sessions have seen his numeracy become much stronger. The clincher for me came when he said. "I don't just have to guess at the supermarket anymore."

Extending from this, we have looked at particular numeracy skills using BBC Skillswise resources and homework. The next step will be an online computer course through TasTAFE and possibly some Grade 11 and 12 material with the view of possibly completing Year 12.

Outside of studies, last year he was introduced to the Volunteer Fire Brigade and he has made a new set of friends as well as learned many new skills. Added to this, in May/June P gained six months paid work which has further boosted his self-esteem.



Kayla's good news story

BURNIE COMMUNITY HOUSE



Over the past few months I have overcome many obstacles I've had trouble dealing with in the past, and all credit goes to the wonderful people who are associated with the Burnie Community House.

Before becoming a part of the kitchen and the team up at the house, I suffered severely from anxiety. Not wanting to participate in any social activities, not wanting to put myself out in to the world or associate with anything outside of my own comfort zone.

On my own merits, I chose to participate and volunteer my time working at the house as a kitchen hand, and I'm so happy that I did. Being a part of the Community House family has changed me a hell of a lot as a person and has given me so much more confidence to put my best foot forward and find my place in the world. Although, I could not have done it without the encouragement and fantastic support from Tracy, Shandel and the team I work with. They are so welcoming, accepting, kind, supportive, encouraging, professional and considerate.

Being involved with such a fantastic bunch of people has changed many aspects of my life and without them I'd still be stuck in the same rut I was many months ago. I've become less anxious and more confident, I have found a career path that I am committed to and enjoy, I have made lifelong friends that I'm very thankful for and most importantly I feel like I finally belong.

This experience has become one I hope to be a part of for many more days, months, even years to come. I appreciate each and every one of the wonderful people at the Community House, also including regular customers, for accepting me and making me become the more confident person I am today.



Sharing cultures

TRESCA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Asali and her husband relocated to Exeter from Pakistan several years ago. Asali was lonely and unsure where to go or how to make connections locally. The doctors surgery staff sent her to Tresca where she offered to run cooking classes which she continues to do so every fortnight. She enjoys her time here so much she has increased her volunteering to include cooking for both community lunches and centre functions, working in the op-shop and most recently has joined the Management Committee.

Not only has Asali made many friends and connections with the community, the community has benefitted from her too, learning about different foods and increasing their understanding and awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

Bread at home to Eating with Friends

FINGAL VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

We have a volunteer on Wednesdays who home delivers bread. This has highlighted some vulnerable people in our community, an example being an aged husband and wife, where the wife is terminally ill and in and out of hospital care.

The volunteer now calls in each Wednesday when delivering the bread, stops for a chat and a cuppa. The husband has found this quite valuable and supportive and has looks forward to it each week.

We also have another client that lives alone in her 80's that we visit weekly with bread deliveries. This lady has a medical condition that limits her mobility. Each Eating with Friends function we have a volunteer from FVNH call and pick her up in the community car and bring her to EWF and then return her home afterwards.

She appears to enjoy the outing each time. We often provide transport for this client to many appointments or even just some time away from home, with the volunteers and drivers being quite fond of her as well.



The wide open road

GEORGE TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

Jane, other than having a terminal illness, is a typical teenage girl who wants to do all those things that everyone else her age does like driving a car. We offered tutoring lessons for Jane, using the West Moonah Community Centre tutoring and tools. Jane would attend weekly tutoring sessions. After the 6th tutoring lesson I believed Jane was making great progress and she was encouraged to do a practice test online. Jane did not pass this test.

After 2 additional tutoring lessons Jane was again encouraged to sit her Learners test. Jane passed and was beside herself that she would be able to drive. Jane's mother and family were equally excited! Jane got to get out on the open road and experience driving just like all the other kids.



From dropping in to reaching out

MARANOVA HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTRE

A community member experiencing anxiety and depression commenced visiting the Community Centre daily to give her a focus in life and to assist her progress to wellness. She connected with mental health support facilitators at the Centre, introducing her to staff and volunteers.

She says she found it "a safe place" and she was able to drop in often and leave as she desired (such as when too many people were present). Seeing her support facilitators locally decreased her anxiety and stress about driving into the city for appointments. She joins other community members and volunteers in a cup of coffee and chat at the Centre and has gradually become more social and interactive, recently engaging in an art therapy group. She has progressed to being a volunteer and has assisted community members with computer training, assisting in the kitchen and general duties. She is now reaching out to others with anxiety and depression to assist them to a healthier life and is encouraging them to engage locally in the Community Centre.



Food for the soul

CLARENDON VALE
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

SOUL food has many stories to tell, ranging from bringing the community together and supporting each other through hard times to creating a non-threatening space where local disengaged and isolated community members can start to engage with others.

The impacts of the program were seen when a gentleman in his 50s moved into the Clarendon Vale area. He came into the Neighbourhood Centre SOUL program after receiving a flier in his mail box. Initially he was very reluctant to sit with and engage with others until one of the SOUL volunteer approached him and started a conversation. After a few weeks the gentleman started to attend the Centre during the day and would use the computers, help himself to a coffee, join in other programs and gradually started to access other support services.

After a few months of attending regularly he approached a staff member and engaged in a conversation around SOUL food. The gentleman noted that he no longer felt as though he should attend the SOUL program. While talking through his reasonings the gentleman explained that when he first accessed the program he was new to the area, was malnourished, knew no one and had a range of issues. The staff member asked why that would stop him from attending and he responded with "well, I now know a range of people in the area, access the Centre frequently, I'm no longer malnourished and today I will be going and spending \$70 on groceries". He was extremely thankful for what SOUL and the volunteers had brought to his life. After some reassurance he agreed to continue to attend SOUL and has since encouraged others to attend.



Goal Four

Local governance and management

3 Houses (9%) chose to report on a Priority Area that contributes to local governance and management.

Typical activities used to achieve this outcome were related to governance knowledge and skills, volunteer board skills, decision making and accountability, strategic planning for community and House, etc.



People met their goals



90%

Participants developed skills



75%

Participants increased their personal confidence



100%

Working together for good governance

MIDWAY POINT NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES

We hope that other Houses can learn from our experience, and take heart that from hard times good things happen. This story is based on honest reflections from the recently retired Midway Point Neighbourhood House manager.

Historically the committee was a typical community board. A mixture of very capable people together with those who were the backbone volunteers of the House.

They had always relied on the leadership of the co-ordinator and took very little active role in governance.....lovely people, always reliable to fix, wash up, cook, clean or any practical job you can name, but everything from insurance to grants management, from submissions to finance, policies, procedures etc, they saw as the work of the co-ordinator and had little input.

The House had grown over the years from opening three days a week with a coordinator, book-keeper and child carer, to being open every day and some evenings with ten staff.

Operationally for the community the House ran exceptionally well and the community were very engaged.

However, a "hands-off" Committee, which had limited understanding of their roles and responsibilities, together with an overworked coordinator who named that finances were not her strength, but who later said, "my own insecurities made me unable to scream for help" was a guaranteed recipe for disaster when things went wrong.

Sourcing an efficient book keeper was difficult. One was finally found who was efficient but struggled to keep track of the complicated multiple income streams of the House whose grants now totalled approximately \$500 000 per annum.

Despite repeated requests reports for actual expenditure against budget weren't provided for each grant and program and this resulted in severe overspending.

However, it must be noted that not only internal processes failed but no auditor or funding body picked up the issues for a long time, until an external funding body raised a query.

This series of events has resulted in huge loss of funding and staff and the House had to rebuild with firm governance foundations in place.

There were lessons learnt we'd like to share.

- Committee members need a good understanding of roles and responsibilities and mechanisms to ensure policy is implemented.
- The Committee needs to ensure that each member who has an executive or other specific role is fulfilling that role and reporting regularly to the Committee at meetings.
- The Committee needs to regularly check the workload of staff and volunteers and support or obtain support where necessary.
- The finance officer needs to be responsive to the needs of the Committee and the staff. Reports need to include a simple budget versus actual report for each grant to enable good management and informed decision-making, not reams of paper from bookkeeper via the MYOB accounting programme.
- Everyone on the committee is responsible for the finances...if you don't understand it say so!
- An 'us versus them' relationship developed between staff and committee – we are now much better at communicating and working together as one.

While it's been hard we feel that these governance changes have been very beneficial to the Neighbourhood House staff and Committee but most importantly our work with the community...we are looking forward to the future, in our newly renovated building, with great hope.

The outcomes data shows that Tasmanian communities and people are better off because of the Neighbourhood House Network.

APPENDIX 1

Measure	Times measured*	Positive responses	Total responses	Success rate
People met their goals	14	616	663	92.9%
People increased their connectedness and participation in community	28	687	800	88.9%
Participants developed skills	21	3,354	4,078	82.2%
People are involved in developing programs and activities	4	40	54	74.1%
People connect with community resources	7	341	384	88.8%
Participants increased their personal confidence	7	519	724	71.7%
Participants feel more confident about the future	3	422	544	77.6%
Participants increased their knowledge of services available	5	641	902	71.1%
People report that they feel safer	3	2,658	3,268	81.3%
Participants report improvements in family relationships	1	42	45	93.3%
Partners report that Houses contribute to positive outcomes	17	173	181	95.6%
Total participant responses	—	9,071	11,643	77.9%

*Note – many Houses chose more than one measure across their Priority Areas

And there is more to tell ...

The comments, reflections and observations of staff, volunteers, partner organisations along with participants are essential in telling the outcomes story. Houses have contributed case studies, people's stories, observations, quotes from participants and feedback and comments of partners. All are also a fundamental part of reporting on outcomes. We could write a book, but here is just a sample.



Participants said:

“ Thanks to GeCo, what started out as weekly Scrabble games has turned into a whole network of support services and help from really great people! I don't know what I'd do without GeCo!”

“ People need people. Everyone needs help. It happens here.”

“ Being new to the neighbourhood SOUL food helped us make friends and access help we wouldn't usually use.”

Clarendon Vale

“ They have found about other Youth centres (The Junction YFCC), places to visit and engage with other youth members i.e.; skate park and playground in Penguin and they have also been to a youth homeless shelter in Devonport. They have said that going to these places and engaging with other services has given them an insight into how others live and how the world can be a tough place and that with family and support they can have better outcomes.”

Ulverstone

“ It was amazing! Teacher was fantastic, being with other people was great.”

“ I got a job just after I got my 'Ps'!”

Starting Point

“ Goodwill is not lying about to be scooped up in handfuls, but when it happens it can be the beginning of an all new life change.”

Starting Point

Staff and volunteers observed:

“ Mr X’s world opened up considerably, meeting a diverse range of people, performing different tasks, and flourishing at them! It took 3 months for him to smile. By the end of the project Mr X had changed—more confident, developed social skills, made new friends and became at ease with the busy House environment. Through his participation he conquered many debilitating challenges that profoundly affected his life.”

East Devonport

“ Two of the fathers from the focus group (in their 30s) now sit on the Centre’s Management Committee. They have welcomed the opportunity to take a more active role in contributing to their local area and the home/environment they’re creating to raise their children in. This project is not only meeting objectives but also contributing to improved governance and scope of the Community Centre as a whole.”

Goodwood

“ We do so much at the House and our activities are so well attended. I have volunteers now approaching me wanting to work with us and the community and we are having to look for new volunteer activities to keep them all busy.”

West Winds

“ Sometimes it’s the only time they get to be around other people.”

Zeehan

Challenges and learnings include:

“ Funding! We have applied for multiple grants; its very difficult to find grants that are ongoing or that will fund activities that have proven they work.”

Bucaan—and many Houses

“ Learning to take time occurred here. We all need to learn to slow down and to take time. Take time to listen. To get to know. To hear what others actually are saying. To understand. We may all be time poor, but slowing down will actually save time in the end.”

Derwent Valley

Partners said:

“ Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre is a staple in this community, providing outreach to those less fortunate but also to individuals who volunteer at a local level, giving them a sense of belonging. WMNC operates as a true Neighbourhood Centre—having their doors open to their community without bias. They are always willing to address issues and concerns in a positive manner and aim to meet community need. They are forward looking and always willing to be involved in projects which have a positive impact not just on people who physically access their neighbourhood centre, but also the broader community.”

“ The School Principal reported that feedback from all staff and some of the parents indicated that the THRIVE Mentoring Program is seen as a positive contribution to school culture and is seen as an integral part of the school curriculum.”

St Helens

Conclusions

Tasmania's 33 State Government funded Neighbourhood Houses, along with NHT and our funding body DHHS, have been on a journey. A journey to collectively measure the impact Neighbourhood Houses have on their communities.

Using our place based community development approach Neighbourhood Houses embarked on using a Results Based Accountability™ methodology to measure that impact, asking the essential question – *is anyone better off?*

Over 2 years 33 different volunteer lead management committees, 33 different manager/coordinators, NHT and DHHS worked towards using common measures and data collection. Whether in a regionally isolated community like Zeehan or Fingal, or a House in a low socio-economic (but incredibly strong!) community like Risdon Vale or East Devonport everyone worked on collecting activity data and participant outcomes through the same process. It's not been easy but we're getting there thanks to gritted teeth and hard work by all.

Thanks to all the House managers and coordinators, the staff and volunteers for all the work and for believing with us that the effort is worth it. It's important to acknowledge the amazing work over these two years of two people — Jo White from NHT and Alison Keable from DHHS — the outcomes reporting dynamic duo.

“ Never doubt that a thoughtful group of committed citizens can change the world... indeed it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead

We are two years into our data collection and we can now demonstrate that because of the place based community development model of these 33 Neighbourhood Houses individuals, families and communities are better off.

This has been a big change in reporting and Neighbourhood House staff and volunteers would much rather be working with their communities than recording activity and collating statistics. However we all know that we need to measure our work and our impact, to be accountable for the funding we receive, and more importantly to be accountable to our communities. It's also worth noting how the process of measuring outcomes has assisted a number of Houses to realise when programs or projects weren't effective and change direction. That's a great outcome from measuring outcomes.

We've also collated many of the stories and case studies provided by Houses in their reporting. These are important as they paint the picture behind the data on what Houses actually do that generates these great outcomes.

The stories and the data together prove that the network of Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania improves people's participation and confidence, builds up skills and knowledge, makes people feel safer, improves family relationships, provides information and links people to services and resources.

We believe that we have, through this report, demonstrated the incredible impact of Neighbourhood Houses. Not across one community, or a local government area, but across a whole state. We are excited by the evidence and we hope you have been too.



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