

NHT and the Network of Houses acknowledge the traditional owners of this land — their ancestors and elders.

ACTING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to open this Acting President's report by giving a heartfelt thankyou to Kate Beer, who was the NHT President for the majority of the 2019/20 financial year. Kate resigned from the Board in May, and I assumed the position of Acting President for the final 6 weeks to June 30. Kate was a highly valued member of the NHT Board for over 10 years and was instrumental in representing the network through many changes and successes over that time. I am sure all past and present members of the NHT board would join me in thanking Kate for her dedication and commitment to the work of Houses and NHT.

A major highlight of the year was Conference 2019, drawing people together for 3 days of networking, sharing and learning. Details about the conference are further in this annual report. One aspect I would like to highlight is the launch of the Tasmanian Government and Neighbourhood Houses Protocol document *Shared Commitment to Collaboration: A protocol for working together for the benefit of local communities*, by Minister for Human Services, Roger Jaensch. As a network we should be very proud of this document as it is recognition by government of our community development approach, and the importance of other agencies partnering with Houses at a local level to support local communities.

And then came COVID-19! The impact of this global pandemic hit hard at community level, and the work of Houses was tipped on its head as there were closures and lockdown. This was new territory for everyone and, not surprisingly, Houses rose to the challenges of these new circumstances with creative ideas and innovative responses on how to support their communities. It has been hard, and at times confronting, but we should be proud as a network of the work we have done in this unprecedented time. Community development can be seemingly slow and messy at times, but it also proves adaptive and effective when communities can pull together rapid responses to support each other, as we have seen.

The trust and belief in the work of Houses was demonstrated by the Government's increased investment in Houses of a one-off \$20K payment in April so Houses could respond to the needs of their individual communities under COVID-19 impacts. We thank them for that recognition.

I would like to highlight the importance of the regional meetings that Houses have on a regular basis throughout the year, allowing us to come together to support one another and share concerns and ideas. Never have these been more important – even if they have had to happen over Zoom! There is strength in unity – and together we are a network to be celebrated!

A big thankyou to all NHT Board members for their time and commitment over this financial year.

— Michael Higgins

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

It is difficult to write a report that captures the last 12 months; to find the right words to describe what we have experienced. The world shifted a little on Monday 16 March and we have been working through the impacts of this shift ever since.

While working through the challenges of COVID-19 is something to celebrate; highlighting the other achievements of the Neighbourhood House Program is critically important. We have been busier than ever; learning new ways of working and adapting to the different ways we need to go about our work and life more broadly. It feels like we have learnt a new language this year, terms we've not used before like: pivot, PPE, social distancing, restrictions and JobKeeper. It's been a year of change and new experiences, hard work and uncertainty.

Many of the highlights from this year are captured further on in this report; we should be very proud of the work we've done and what we've delivered with our communities. I'd like to focus on the unexpected gifts from this year that reflect what's most important, including:

- *Network Zoom sessions: for many of us being able to connect with each other (virtually) has been invaluable. We have used these opportunities to celebrate, share, discuss and make decisions.*
- *Developing the NHT values: articulating these will help to refine our organisational culture and embed values based leadership.*
- *Building and strengthening relationships: the gifts of working with new stakeholders and working differently with existing stakeholders have been extraordinary.*

In developing the NHT values, the NHT Team and Board have thought deeply about what defines our organisation and what we do. Our values are the guiding principles for our work, they are:

- **Collaboration:** we work together for a common purpose.
- **Leadership:** we encourage, resource and support members and communities to shape a better future for everyone.
- **Accountability:** we are transparent in our actions, focus on improvement, take time to reflect and deliver on our commitments.
- **Respect:** we are fair, just and honest and treat people with kindness.

It seems fitting that I am writing this report on the first day of spring for 2020. As the late Robin Williams said 'Spring is nature's way of saying, *lets party!*'. As we emerge from another Tassie winter and from the challenges of 2020, we need to celebrate and feel proud of these last 12 months.

I acknowledge this year has been hard and tiring; the amount of change and relentlessness of the challenges have been tough. The work you do every day in 35 communities across Tasmania is deeply appreciated. Thank you.

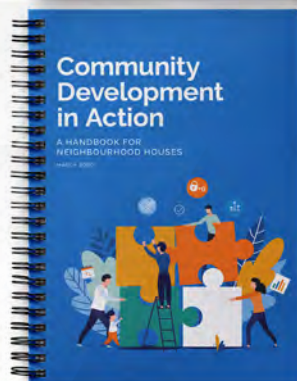
— Tracey Tasker

RESOURCES

GOVERNANCE VIDEOS

The *Handbook for Neighbourhood House Boards* was launched last year. To support the content of the Handbook, six short videos were professionally developed by David Pyefinch and Gabby Hills. The videos are available on the NHT website, and cover the topics of:

1. the role of the board
2. the purpose of a house
3. governance and management
4. board roles
5. financial reporting
6. strategic planning



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION: A HANDBOOK FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

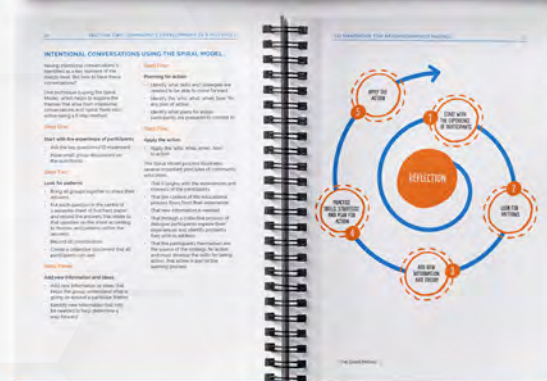
This new resource was made available to Houses in May 2020. The aim of the Handbook is to provide an information resource to help support the community development work of Neighbourhood Houses. It is for House managers, staff, volunteers, board members, and anyone in the community that wants to find out about some current ideas and key elements involved in community development. The development of this Handbook was supported by a Skills Tasmania grant.

CD training

To support the ongoing strengthening and understanding of community development within Houses NHT invited Tina Lathouras and Peter Westoby from Queensland to present three regional community development workshops on the spiral model in July 2019. They had previously presented this training to House managers in Queensland, and Tina presented on the Spiral Model at the World Community Development Conference in Ireland in 2018. Peter was also a keynote speaker at the World CD Conference.

CD video

While in Tasmania to co-present the Spiral Model workshops, Peter sat down at the NHT office and had a chat about community development. The conversation was filmed and is available as a 10 minute video on the NHT website.



ART FROM THE HEART

In late 2019 the Tasmanian Association of Recreational Artists Inc (TARA) generously provided funding to encourage the artistic endeavours of Neighbourhood House communities, wanting to promote and enrich community involvement in art. And so the Art from the Heart project came about. TARA asked NHT to set up an application process. The funds were allocated in **\$500** amounts and distributed in March.

A big thank you to TARA for making this funding available and supporting local communities to get creative through participation in art activities.



NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE WEEK: 8-15 MAY 2020


#TOGETHERWEARETHEANSWER

Neighbourhood House Week 2020 was not a regular one, with events around the network cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions. This included the planned celebrations to be held at the NHT Hub. Instead, NHT held a virtual cuppa for the network on Thursday 14th May, with Houses connecting online to celebrate their fantastic work throughout the year. Ryk Goddard, from ABC Radio Hobart, was our surprise online guest who led us through an original Covid-inspired dance routine, complete with toilet paper hoarding moves.

EATING WITH FRIENDS

There are currently thirty-three EWF groups operating around Tasmania. Twenty-four of these groups are hosted by Neighbourhood Houses, with volunteers and other community organisations hosting the other nine. Groups operate on a cost recovery basis. The ongoing success of the EWF concept is underpinned by the significant commitment and contribution of volunteers.

The annual survey of EWF groups, conducted in February 2020, indicated there were approximately **170** volunteers and **900** participants involved across all groups during 2019.

 You can sit next to a total stranger and you end up chatting away like you have known them all your life.

COVID-19

Monday 16 March brought huge change for NHT and the Network as we worked through how to continue our work and comply with the public health messages about COVID-19. The majority of Houses became 'open by appointment' only and redeveloped their programs and activities to be delivered virtually. During this time NHT worked hard to stay connected with our Members; we facilitated **26** Network video conference sessions and provided over **40** updates from the Premier. During this time NHT collected information, stories and resources from the Network and our key stakeholders to be placed in a time capsule (to be opened in 2022).



CONFERENCE 2019

The annual state conference for the Neighbourhood House network was held in Devonport at the new paranple convention centre 25–27 September 2019.

Conference attendance numbers:

Wednesday: 188

Thursday: 185

Friday: 150

Total individual registrations = 218

Full conference registrations = 155

Cormac Russell was the conference keynote presenter, who travelled from Ireland to share his experience and understanding of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). Cormac is managing director of Nurture Development and a faculty member of the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago. Over the past 20 years Cormac has worked in over 30 countries around the world, training communities, agencies, NGOs and governments in ABCD and other strengths based approaches. He came to Devonport and ran two plenary sessions over two days of the conference.

Nicole Battle is the CEO of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and president of the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (ANHCA). She presented an overview of the role of ANHCA, and a national view of the potential power of the national House network. After all, there are more Neighbourhood houses across Australia than there are McDonald stores!

Five '*stories from the frontline*' were shared over the 3 days of conference, with eight Houses recounting projects, activities and training they had been involved with over the year.

Five workshop sessions were held, with the topics being:

- 🏠 Grant writing
- 🏠 Governance
- 🏠 Facilitation
- 🏠 Gardening & food security
- 🏠 Harrassment and bullying



ATTENDEES

- Volunteer at a House
- Volunteer Board Member at a Neighbourhood House
- Administration or Project staff at a House
- Worker from outside the NH network
- Manager of a House



WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID

- 🏠 Cormac's sessions were a fantastic way to actively involve the large group in more than just listening. Walking the talk is challenging... we now need to model strength based process and language in the way NHT and the network work together so that we more readily apply that in our communities. From what's wrong to what's strong, from doing to/for to doing with/by.
- 🏠 Some really simple tips and tools to apply in my everyday work.
- 🏠 We thought Cormac was a brilliant speaker and had a lot of interesting information to share but the length of time he spoke for was just too much.
- 🏠 Stories from other houses are inspirational.
- 🏠 The organisers should be congratulated for a job well done.



Conference asset map



Bright Stars dance troupe entertaining us at conference dinner

MEASURING NHT'S OUTCOMES

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

NHT staff collected data on the contacts and work we completed during two snapshot weeks across the reporting year. Across our 3.4 FTE (including volunteer contribution) the following summary is provided:

- 🏠 Contact directly with **24** Houses, as well as **22** contacts with the network.
- 🏠 Community Development Handbook produced
- 🏠 **3** Spiral method CD training sessions
- 🏠 **26** Network video conference sessions with the network in response to COVID 19 (from March – June).
- 🏠 Over **40** COVID-19 Premier Updates.
- 🏠 **7** Governance and CD training videos
- 🏠 Governance training for **5** Houses
- 🏠 Support for **2** student interns to develop a response to implementing new Accounting Standards
- 🏠 **7** regional meetings in the North
- 🏠 **7** regional meetings in the South
- 🏠 **5** regional meetings in NW
- 🏠 **31** e-newsletters have been distributed.
 - **320** e-newsletter subscribers (at 30 June)
 - **56%** of these are highly engaged and often open and click emails

WHY DO WE SURVEY?

In July NHT undertook our annual Member survey for 2019/20 which provides feedback on how satisfied House staff and volunteers are with the support we provide. We also wanted to know how we can better serve our Members in the future.

The survey was done by independent consultant, Leah Galvin. We had **43** responses to the survey.

WHY DID MEMBERS ENGAGE WITH US?

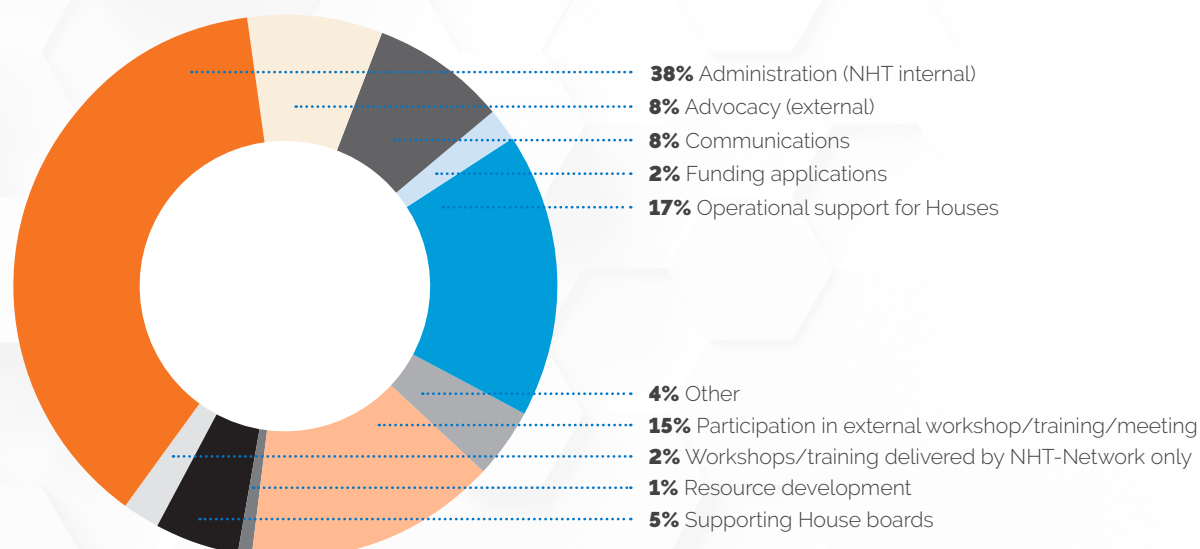
The most common reasons the network contacted NHT by phone or other means was to discuss issues around:

- 🏠 Management and staff support
- 🏠 Outcomes reporting
- 🏠 Governance issues

People visited the NHT website for:

- Community development tools ////////
- Operational management tools ////////
- Governance tools ////////
- Policies and procedures ////////

FOCUS OF NHT WORK IN SNAPSHOT WEEKS



HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?








Of the **43** responses to the NHT Member Survey:

- 58%** said they contacted NHT for specific issues
 - 81%** were likely to recommend NHT as a result of their interaction





IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Generally, people were happy with their experience of interacting with NHT.

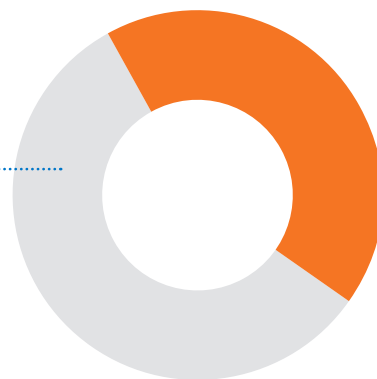
Some comments that came from respondents:

-  Made me feel less alone and isolated during COVID.
-  I understand my board role better and how we work as a network to support one another, especially during COVID.
-  No difference, as NHT doesn't seem to support staff who are not managers.
-  As president of [a] board we enjoy all our interactions with the NHT. Their support and advice is invaluable.
-  Made me aware of some procedures.
-  Connecting with NHT has made me feel comfortable in my role, has given me knowledge directly when I have inquired, has given me opportunities to liaise with my peers within the network itself.
-  It is good to see what other Houses are doing so that I can consider altering my practices to be more efficient.

Areas to work on:

-  Listen to the network, consult us.
-  Communication roles of our regional reps — think we need to be reminded of their role and responsibility, as if my memory serves they represent all Houses at a board level.
-  Listen to Community House concerns and respond to the assistance they request.
-  I would like NHT to advocate for employees rights.

Contacted NHT directly for advice about a specific issue



WHAT ELSE DID WE LEARN?

We didn't reach the number of responses we wanted. The timing of the survey collided with end of financial year, outcomes reporting and other priorities. In addition, the survey has been impacted by COVID-19 and we need to keep this in mind when exploring the details.

We need to repeat the same survey questions for the next few years to help us establish an accurate benchmark. It would be beneficial to know the role of respondents i.e. Manager, Staff, Volunteer or Board Member as this influences their response.

Whilst the survey is linked to NHT's outcome reporting (and compliance), surveying our Members more regularly could be an effective way to consult and gather information over time.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Our priorities for the next 12 months include reviewing and updating the 2018-2021 NHT Strategic Plan and the NHT Communication Strategy April 2019.

The information from the results of this Member survey helps us with these priorities.

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 all Members. We are committed to working more closely with Members and key stakeholders to strengthen the methodology to ensure we continue to improve in as many areas as we can.

A PROTOCOL FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Also at the conference the Minister for Human Services, Roger Jaensch, launched the Tasmanian Government and Neighbourhood Houses Protocol document *Shared Commitment to Collaboration: A protocol for working together for the benefit of local communities*. This signed agreement outlines how the Government and Houses will work together to build and strengthen local partnerships to ensure activities and programs are accessible to everyone, adapted to meet the needs of local communities, and integrated so that resources are best targeted to people and places that need them. It recognises the importance of the partnership process, and validates the role of Neighbourhood Houses in community consultation and engagement. This Protocol will operate for five years and will be reviewed in line with the *Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework 2018-2023*.



BOARD ATTENDANCE

Attendances

Kate Beer	5/6
Michael Higgins	5/6
Tracy Edington-Mackay	5/6
Julie Milnes	5/6
Lynette (Nettie) Burr	4/6
Gary Barnes	6/6
Kristy Leishman	5/6
Melinda Reed	6/6
Jeddah Barwick	2/2
Trish O'Duffy	5/6
Kerryn James	2/3

TREASURER'S REPORT

NHT has utilised its core Peak Body Grant and four other grants in 2019-2020 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 approx. **\$82,000** in funding to Member Houses, primarily through Security Upgrades, Eating with Friends and Art from the Heart grants.

We have also received further funding from the Department to employ a program officer for Governance and through the CIP program some funds to employ a Program Officer.

I would like to thank Fiona O'Keefe and Rachel Watson for their work as Finance Officer 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.

Our full audited financial report for 2019-2020 can be found at www.nht.org.au.

– Gary Barnes



Thanks to our sponsors