

# Annual Report 2016



## Vision

Our community enjoys a greater quality of life due to the education and support services that we provide.

## Mission

To empower and strengthen our community by offering a diverse set of programs in adult education, children's services, social activities, and support services.

## Strategic Objectives

Increase independence, overcome disadvantage and social exclusion, break the cycle of poverty.

## Key Focus Areas

- Education
- Children's Services
- Community
- Venue Hire



**the Bridge is a responsive, community focused organisation. We offer a welcoming and supportive learning environment, vibrant childcare centres, and a range of modern facilities for hire.**

**Whether it's basic English literacy, making a start with computers, developing their artistic talents or getting more involved in their community, the Bridge exists to help each and every person to move forward.**

# Chairperson's Message



I am proud to provide this report as the first Chairperson of the Bridge. It would be an understatement to write that it has been an exciting year of change and growth as the Preston & Thornbury Neighbourhood Houses were merged, binding two strong, yet unique identities into one new organisation.

Throughout 2016 the merger was a significant undertaking for the Board, our staff and volunteers. However, all this work has positioned the Bridge for a sustainable future and enables us to continue to provide key services to some of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in the community.

On behalf of the board, we thank all staff and volunteers for their ongoing commitment and work and especially single out our tireless Executive Officer, Chris Lombardo.

I look forward to a successful year ahead, where we will continue to grow the services we deliver to our local community.

# A New Organisational Structure

Bringing two different businesses together is never a simple task but with the commitment, good faith and tenacity of the management team and our Board we undertook crucial changes.

These changes saw the Bridge steered by a single Board of Governance, driven by one Executive Officer and supported by the tireless efforts of our team of management and an incredible staff.

Catriona Herz, the newly appointed Business Manager, led her Administration team to successfully integrate the operations of two organisations into one.

This involved training new and existing staff across both sites and hands-on coordination of the logistics involved in the physical move as well as moving all IT solutions to the cloud.

# A New Name. A Big Step Forward

The idea of the bridge is one of an enduring support system, a solid and sustaining structure that provides a way to connect, empower and unify people.

It's a platform from which people can credibly overcome their own challenges and begin moving forward. The Bridge represents a coming together of people to forge connections and build a stronger community.

When drawing on the history and shared vision of both Houses we were encouraged by the many facets that both organisations had in common. The key fact was that for over 30 years both Neighbourhood Houses have worked to empower and strengthen their community, and at their core, were both providing an opportunity for people to participate and learn in a welcoming and supportive environment. Our new brand name reflects a strong organisation, one that is credible and progressive.

## Growth In All Areas Since 2015

<b>1830+</b> people through the doors of our venues every week	<b>45%</b> growth in engagement in Bridge programs	<b>63</b> partnerships, an increase of 24%
<b>39</b> paid staff, an increase of 58%	<b>63</b> volunteer positions, contributing over 8460 volunteer hours	<b>220%</b> increase in volunteer hours

“

Without a doubt the key achievement of 2016 was our successful transition from two separate, and well established Neighbourhood Houses, into a single and strong organisation, now known as ‘the Bridge’.

”

# Education

**Boyd Maplestone was appointed to the role of Training Manager and facilitated considerable growth in education services.**

Boyd maintained and strengthened existing partnerships, whilst forging new ones, with Melbourne Polytechnic, PRACE, Spectrum MRC, Nothern Support Services, Educational Institute, Northern Indo-Chinese community, and Rotary Preston.

Although only funded to deliver 16052 ACFE hours, we successfully delivered 18792. This represents growth of over 160% in Pre-Accredited delivery in 2 years. From 2015, we delivered an 80% increase in Art & Craft hours, 90% increase in Computer/IT class hours, and 40% increase in Health & Wellbeing.

## In 2016 :

87	Programs
875	Separate Enrolments
447	Individual Learners
9	Cancellations; 1% cancellation rate
3000	Hours delivered off-site; 320% increase on 2015



# Children's Services

**Lamia Dib was appointed to the position of Children's Services Manager. Under her strong leadership our Occasional Child Care and Three-Year-Old Kindergarten programmes have thrived.**

Both of our Occasional Care centres are licensed with the Department of Human services and provide a unique service to local families.

Occasional Care allows parents and carers to study, work, attend appointments, exercise or simply take a break. What it means for the children is that they benefit from educational experiences in a safe, nurturing, community setting.

## In 2016 :

39240	Childcare contact hours, an increase of 90% from 2015
80+	Children cared for during an average week at the Bridge – Preston
129+	Children per week cared for at the Bridge – Thornbury
9	Outstanding qualified staff with a retention rate of 82% over 5 years



# Community

**The last 12 months have seen some exciting developments in the Bridge Community Development programs and projects.**

Facilitated by the appointment of Cate Thompson as Community Development & Events Manager, we saw strong uptake of new Community Development programs designed to engage our most vulnerable community members.

A key element of this success has been development of our Laneway Lunch programme, which now extends to include Laneway Activities and Laneway Clubs - specifically for the Laneway cohort, our most challenging cohort to engage. In the last year, participation in Laneway Lunches grew by 55%, we served 2860 healthy meals and volunteers contributed 8460 hours, an increase of 220% on 2015.

Our community events - The Makers Market, Magic Show, Twilight Cinemas, Aboriginal Art Exhibition, and Seniors Week - have enabled us to reach further out to our community than ever before.

Not only have we developed strong partnerships and networking opportunities for future growth, we've been able to

provide external community development and training programs to groups who would not normally engage with us. From the Aboriginal Art Show grew iPad workshops. Exercise and English classes were developed for the Indo-Chinese community, and iPad classes for Preston Rotary.

The Laneway Cooking Club was formed thanks to a grant from Preston Connected Community. This was a great success allowing participants to learn to prepare healthy foods on a budget. Students celebrated their achievements with a graduation ceremony attended by Councillor Steph Amir.

We are very grateful to everyone involved with our work in the community, and would like to especially mention the wonderful effort of the volunteer market committee.

## In 2016 :

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 27   | Community events, a 300% increase on 2015                                    |
| 2860 | Healthy meals cooked and served to our community members                     |
| 6    | Twilight cinemas, presented with Friends of Mayer Park and McGrath Northcote |
| 5    | Thornbury Art & Craft Markets, supporting local entrepreneurs                |

## Venue Hire

**Over the course of a week more than 41 community groups, Not-for-Profits and local business run ongoing activities and programs from our many spaces in both Preston and Thornbury.**

These partnerships serve as a vital link for participants to engage with the Bridge, creating valuable pathways and greater community engagement. The Bridge is available to the local community 7 days a week from 8am until 9pm.

“ 1000+ guests a week come through the doors ”

# Financials

The Bridge finished the 2016 financial year in a sound position.

Members are welcome to view the full audited statements at our registered office at 218 High Street Preston. Please make an appointment with the Executive Officer

Accounting Period:  
January 1 2016 to December 31 2016

Income	\$1,146,424
Expenditure	\$1,072,305
Surplus	\$74,119

## PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INC.

### STATEMENT BY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2016

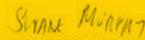
The committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 of the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Management Committee of the Preston Neighbourhood House Inc.:

- The accompanying Income Statement and Cash Flow Statement are drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the result and cash flow of the Preston Neighbourhood House Inc. for the year ended 31 December 2016;
- The accompanying Balance sheet and Statement of Changes in Equity is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs for the Preston Neighbourhood House Inc. as at 31 December 2016, and
- At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Preston Neighbourhood House Inc. is able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Management Committee and is signed for and behalf of the Committee by:

Name: John Sheen Signature:  Date: 7/3/17  
(Chair)  
Preston Neighbourhood House Inc.

Name:  Signature:  Date: 7/3/17  
(Treasurer)  
Preston Neighbourhood House Inc.

# Executive Officer's Statement

**In a year that saw two established organisations become one, the team at the Bridge were afforded both a challenge and an opportunity. To explore and define what Community Development means to us right now. The answer was clarified with the work that lay ahead; in working alongside our diverse Darebin community, facilitating, supporting and empowering them with the skills they required to flourish.**

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**Collectively, in both Thornbury and Preston, we sought to bring about positive change in an increasingly demanding social environment.**

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We achieved this by building on what we have done for over 30 years. With great pride, the team is proactive in engaging our community. We are well organised and well-resourced and, by not resting on our laurels, we create programs that meet their intrinsic needs. That is what gets us out of bed in the morning. From the many targeted education programs to support of self-help groups, encouraging

growth within the arts and our many free Community events, the Bridge manages to touch the lives of many. It is a great privilege and a serious responsibility to be in a position to make a meaningful difference in anyone's life and therein lies the essence of Community Development at the Bridge.

It is important to thank all those who worked so hard during 2016; our visionary Board of Management, especially the Chair – John Sheen and the incredible staff at both houses. The Bridge area managers; Cat, Boyd, Cate and Lamia were all new to their roles at the start of the year. It was a true “baptism of fire” and they all rose to the occasion. To Annabelle Morgan for selflessly volunteering in the position of manager of Thornbury Women's Neighbourhood House and in so doing, ensured the continuation of this valuable community asset.

Thank you to our many volunteers without whom we could not operate and special thanks to the many students, families and children who make up the wonderful “melting-pot” that is the Bridge. To Good Business Matters; Simon, Cliff and the team for great insight and inspiration formulating the creation of the new brand; “the Bridge”.

It is a privilege and an inspiration to be part of this vibrant organisation. There is so much to look forward to in 2017; an emerging art-hub in Thornbury, a social-enterprise café in Preston and many new programs and events reflecting our community needs.

**Chris Lombardo – Executive Officer**

# Key People

## Our Board

**John Sheen**  
Chair

**Eugene Wallis**  
Vice-Chair

**Shane Murphy**  
Treasurer

**Ana Ibanez**  
Secretary

**Faye Sakaris**

**Nagia Centurion,**

**Annabelle Morgan**

**Robyn Sheen**

## Senior Management

**Chris Lombardo**  
Executive Officer

**Catriona Herz**  
Business Manager

**Boyd Maplestone**  
Training Manager

**Cate Thompson**  
Community Events Manager

**Lamia Dib**  
Children's Services Manager



# Anne MacMillan's Story

After more than 5 years out of the work to support my children through high school, it was time to reconnect with the workforce. How? Where? It was daunting! I had all these questions and many more, but felt too chicken to admit them out loud.

Walking past the Preston Neighbourhood House I decided to investigate their brochures, that is when I discovered Step Up To Work. This sounded like what I was looking for. A course that would guide me back to the working life I had set aside.

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**I signed up for the course with three others and started a journey of rediscovery, self evaluation, reawakening and a major boost to my confidence.**

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The course covered several streams; the practical; resume, job application, breaking down ads and on-line applications. Professional development; managing stress, communication, relationship building, teamwork and cooperation. Interview Preparation:



learning interview techniques and participating in real life practice and finally the project; as a group we held an event celebrating volunteers. With the responsibility of planning, sourcing, production and delivery of all components of this function. We worked as a team utilising everything we had learnt in the SUTW program. It was a huge success and very satisfying.

I then commenced a volunteering role at PNH in office administration. It was wonderful being back in an office and reactivating my brain. PNH is such a welcoming and friendly place and it was great to be part of it all. Out of the blue, after a few months of volunteering, I was offered a part time administration role working between both sites at Preston & Thornbury. I now work five days a week in the Thornbury office and cannot believe how much I have learned and grown in these few short months.

**I would not have believed when I called into Preston Neighbourhood House early in 2016, and enrolled in a Step Up To Work program that it would get me to where I am today.**

## Thank you for your support

State Government – Department of Education & Training  
State Government – Department of Health and Human Services  
Darebin Council  
Inner North Community Foundation  
Victorian Women's Trust  
Preston Rotary  
Preston Connected Community  
Lord Mayor's Charity Foundation – Feed Melbourne  
McGrath Northcote  
Fareshare  
Liquorland Store Managers  
Bunnings Northland  
Thornbury Bakehouse  
Juicy Online Media

## Partners

Melbourne Polytechnic  
PRACE  
Darebin N.H Network  
NENHN  
Spectrum MRC  
Northern Support Service

## Contact details

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