

Annual Report 2017



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
- Business Development

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. We exist to help every person move forward, whether it's basic English literacy, making a start with computers, developing artistic talents or getting more involved in the community.

Chairperson's message



They say that “success breeds success” and I think in 2017, the Bridge demonstrated that this is true.

The Bridge continues to develop its reputation as a forward-thinking, innovative not-for-profit in the City of Darebin and surrounding areas. This is a result of the extraordinary effort of staff and volunteers to meet the needs of our community.

I am immensely proud to be the Chairperson of the Bridge and to have seen the organisation mature over the last few years from the Preston Neighbourhood House into a multi-site, multi-service, community organisation. I wish to personally thank the other members of the board for their guidance and support as well as Executive Officer Chris Lombardo for the commitment, passion and drive she brings to the role.

I can already see that 2018 will be another outstanding year for the Bridge, where we will continue to provide quality services that our community deserves.

Education

Education has grown again in 2017, with a record number of enrolments and students. Our ACFE funding increased to 20,042 hours and we successfully delivered 22,360. This represents growth of over 19% in pre-accredited delivery after a record year last year.

There has been an increase in student enrolment to 1,042 (the first time over 1,000) and enrolled students to 523. With the development of a new Arts Hub in Thornbury we have doubled the amount of pottery classes offered to eight, with around 75-85 enrolments a term.

We have continued to maintain a number of partnerships with organisations including Melbourne Polytechnic, VACCA, VELS, Your Community Health, Northern Support Services, PRACE and Education Institute.

In 2017 :

| | |
|-------|---|
| 120 | Programs, a 28% increase from 2016 |
| 1,042 | Separate enrolments, a 19% increase from 2016 |
| 523 | Individual learners, a 17% increase from 2016 |



Children's Services

Both Preston and Thornbury had amazing success with including children and their families in multiple gatherings and special events throughout 2017.

Some of the highlights were a Mother's Day morning tea, Father's Day breakfast, Red Nose Day disco party, and an end-of-year grand celebration that accommodated more than 300 people.

The Children's Services educators are committed to continually improving their skills and striving to provide the best quality care for the children and their families. They attended many training sessions throughout 2017, including Child Safe Standards, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and Level 2 First Aid.

In 2017 :

| | |
|--------|---|
| 45,480 | Childcare contact hours, a 16% increase from 2016 |
| 130 | Children cared for during an average week at the Bridge Preston |
| 40 | Children per week cared for at the Bridge Thornbury |
| 11 | Outstanding qualified staff |



Community

The Bridge continues to engage the community across a wide variety of suburbs in the north, which is demonstrated by continued engagement in a number of community and social activities, as well as the development of new activities and programs such as the Thornbury open day and pilot program Tiered, Training & Transition (TTT).

Laneway Lunches increased its engagement with the community in 2017, with up to 60 people being fed a week. Our Laneway Lunches activities continue to be a success and include programs such as the Introduction to Cooking course.

We streamlined a number of our processes in 2017, including volunteer recruitment, Laneways Lunches coordination (front and back of house) and Makers Market Thornbury coordination to ensure we have sustainable processes and can accommodate any future growth.

We have seen growth in the number of stallholders at our quarterly Makers Market in Thornbury, with between 20 to 30 stalls an event and stall space expanding to outdoor areas. Approximately 2,000 people attended

the six Twilight Cinema events in Thornbury in 2017.

We conducted a very successful open day at our Thornbury site in July, with more than 130 people attending and participating in a variety of workshops. The mayor, many councillors, local residents and businesses attended.

During 2017 the TTT program was developed to increase the likelihood of students with learning needs or disabilities gaining employment. This program commenced in February 2018 and is integrated into our new social enterprise café – Moon Rabbit.

In 2017 :

| | |
|--------|--|
| 78 | Volunteers recruited and supported |
| 10,880 | Volunteer hours contributed |
| 3,130 | Healthy meals cooked and served to our community members |
| 130 | Thornbury open-day attendees |
| 6 | Twilight Cinemas, presented with Friends of Mayer Park and McGrath Northcote |
| 4 | Thornbury Makers Markets, supporting local entrepreneurs |

Venue hire

Over the course of a week more than 50 community groups, not-for-profits and local businesses run ongoing activities and programs from our many spaces in 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.

“ 1,800 guests a week come through the doors ”

Snapshot



Makers Market Thornbury expanded in 2017, with stalls extending to the outdoor area.



We cooked and served 2,860 healthy meals through our Laneway Lunch program in 2017.



The Bridge Preston transformed into an art gallery in December, curated by our kinder kids for their end-of-year celebration. The theme was "Every child is an artist".

Financials

The Bridge finished the 2017 financial year in a sound position.

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

Accounting Period:
1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Income | \$1,207,293 |
| Expenditure | \$1,042,663 |
| Surplus | \$164,630 |

THE BRIDGE

STATEMENT BY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017

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 Bridge

- 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 Bridge for the year ended 31 December 2017;
- 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 Bridge as at 31 December 2017, and
- At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that The Bridge 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: 6/3/18
(Chair)
The Bridge

Name: Shane Mueren Signature:  Date: 6/3/18
(Treasurer)
The Bridge

Executive Officer's statement

It gives me great pride to reflect on the outstanding achievements at the Bridge in what was another stellar year.

The Bridge continued to experience rapid growth in 2017, with record enrolments and outcomes through all areas of the business. Without the dedication and professionalism of Boyd Maplestone, Catriona Herz, Cate Thompson, Lamia Dib and their incredible staff and volunteers, it wouldn't have been possible.

Much of 2017 was devoted to upgrading our infrastructure. In order to improve our environmental sustainability, we installed large solar systems at Preston and Thornbury. In response to increased demand for our ceramics classes, we fast-tracked a plan to create an arts hub at the Leinster Grove Community Centre in Thornbury. We converted a superfluous computer lab into an art space – installing plumbing, upgrading electricals, relocating furniture and equipment and investing in a brand new \$12K kiln. Our art classes now cater to more than 90 people a week.

The success of our Laneway Lunches program in Preston meant a kitchen update was in order. With funds from Preston Connected Community and City of Darebin we installed a commercial dishwasher, larger oven and cooktop and updated fridge and freezers.

In Thornbury we installed four split-system heating and cooling units, provided

by City of Darebin, which ensured that everyone can enjoy a more comfortable space to work and learn in, with significant savings in energy consumption, too.

In the second half of 2017 we began redeveloping the front garden at Preston – made possible by the Bridge board – to create a beautiful space for staff, students and eventually customers of our new café, Moon Rabbit. Construction of café infrastructure also commenced in 2017 and was completed early in 2018.

Through a grant from the Department of Education and Training – ACFE board, we began development and recruitment for a disability-employment program, Tiered Training & Transition (TTT). This exciting project will see students begin training at our café. Thanks to a grant from Inner North Community Foundation, a Bridge business engagement officer will work with local businesses to accept the TTT students once they are ready to enter work placements. The pilot will finish in late 2018 but TTT is set to become part of our ongoing training delivery.

The Bridge is all about 'lifelong learning', and we enjoy support from many organisations to help us make it happen. We would like to thank McGrath Northcote, Northway Honda, Northcote Bakeshop, Preston Connected Community, Inner North Community Foundation, Bunnings Northland, GoGet, Foodbank, City of Darebin, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Human Services and the Bridge board of management, led by the chair, John Sheen.

Chris Lombardo – Executive Officer

Key people

Our board

John Sheen
Chair

Clifford Moss
Vice-chair

Shane Murphy
Treasurer

Ana Ibanez
Secretary

Nagia Centurion

Robyn Sheen

Bo Li

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



Carol White's story

Carol White, a student at the Bridge for nearly 20 years, was awarded **Outstanding Learner at the inaugural North East Neighbourhood House Network Awards in November 2017.**

Carol spoke about courses she'd participated in at the Bridge – including Introduction to Cooking, Social Knitting and Mobile Devices – that helped her build confidence and overcome social isolation to meet new people and learn new skills.

“

It is important to keep up to date with technology so you can communicate with people in your community and not be socially isolated.

”

Carol started attending dressmaking classes at the Bridge almost 20 years ago, and has taken up general sewing and knitting, too, where she has learned to make scarves, fingerless gloves, beanies, cardigans, a skirt and a coat. “I have developed my numeracy skills through understanding patterns and repetitive patterns,” she says.



She has enrolled in a number of other courses at the Bridge, too, including technology and cooking courses. “It is important to keep up to date with technology so you can communicate with people in your community and not be socially isolated,” she says.

Recently Carol joined the Bridge's Introduction to Cooking class and learned how to cook “the perfect poached egg”.

In digital literacy courses, Carol has learned how to send email, use the internet and photograph her loyalty cards instead of carrying them around.

She says attending courses “gets you out of your flat to be with positive people” and that if you “face your fears... you can grow”. She loves practical classes such as cooking that can be “used for everyday living to run a household” and help her “not be left out or socially isolated and connect with people and the rest of the community”.

Carol now encourages friends and family to attend the Bridge. Her brother has followed in her footsteps and enrolled in the Introduction to Cooking class.

Thank you for your support

Bunnings Northland
City of Darebin
GoGet
Inner North Community Foundation
Foodbank
McGrath Northcote
Northcote Bakeshop
Northway Honda
Office of David Feeney MP
Preston Connected Community
Victorian Government – Department of Education & Training
Victorian Government – Department of Health and Human Services

Partners

Darebin Neighbourhood House Network
Education Institute
Melbourne Polytechnic
North East Neighbourhood House Network
Northern Support Service
PRACE
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Your Community Health

Contact details

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