



the centre

connecting community in north & west melbourne inc. 58 errol street north melbourne
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www.centre.org.au

annual report 2007/08



chair's report june 2008

The year 2007/08 was an active one for the Committee of Management.

The Committee was fortunate to have a very strong membership, drawn from the North and West Melbourne community. It comprised Jillian Ball, Angela Bitaxis, Martin Brennan, David Brunt, Lorna Hannan, Gary Heard, Michael Long, Anita Paganoni, Mary Tomsic and Ann Wilkinson.

Gary Hansen, Ray Walters and Sally-Anne Wilkinson joined the Committee at the start of 2007/08. Unfortunately, Jillian Ball, Angela Bitaxis, David Brunt and Anita Paganoni had to resign during the year, but the remainder continued as a very committed team. We thank all these people for their valued experience and assistance.

Early in the year the Director, Tania Phillips, gave notice of her resignation. The Committee wishes to acknowledge the huge contribution Tania made to the development of The Centre over her eight-year tenure. She was farewelled on 19 June 2008 at a happy party, attended by staff, volunteers, committee members and users of The Centre. We were very grateful for Tania's long notice, giving us some months to get used to her departure and to recruit her successor.

The process of recruitment of a new Director involved a review of the position, carried out by members of the Committee of Management – Martin Brennan, Angela Bitaxis, Mary Tomsic and Ann Wilkinson. The selection panel consisted of Mary Tomsic and Ann Wilkinson, together with Lynda Ford from the City of Melbourne. Six applications were received and three applicants were interviewed in May.

The panel agreed unanimously that Thea Bates was the most suitable applicant for the position. She was seen as the

best fit for The Centre because of her style of management in conjunction with her broad-ranging community development background and her demonstrated experience in engaging with stakeholders. Thea commenced as Director on 24 June 2008.

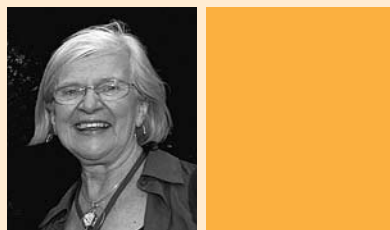
Once again the Committee of Management wishes to thank the staff for their dedication, commitment and passion. They are an amazing group who work extremely well together as a team. The committee has enjoyed the times when they attend committee meetings, to keep us abreast of the day-to-day work, and to keep us well-briefed on The Centre's finances.

As the year drew to a close, excitement was mounting as planning for the October Spring Fling started. We appointed two Festival Directors, Kristie Walker and Tam Pay of Tenth Street Group, and they were hard at work as the financial year came to a close. At the end of May we received notification that we were successful in our Triennial Funding application for Spring Fling for 2009-2011. Finally we wish to thank the City of Melbourne for all their support.

The Committee looks forward to another year of working with all who make up the community of North and West Melbourne, and the challenges and opportunities which that is sure to bring.

Ann Wilkinson

Chair, Committee of Management



director's report

I am pleased to present this report and to acknowledge the contributions of many people who are connected by and through their association with The Centre.

The format of this report is a departure from the past, for two reasons. The first is that I had been the Director for only the final week of the reporting year, and secondly, to share with members and readers what we stand for, and our priorities for the years 2007 to 2010. The year was one of consolidation and evaluation. We undertook to review Spring Fling, the *North and West Melbourne News* and the Homelessness Action Group and put into action our strategic plan.

One of the aspects of this organisation and the community it serves is that there is always a story! This year the big story was about change. Staff came and went (some of us came back) and, in March, Tania Phillips, the previous Director, announced her intention to leave in June, giving us plenty of time to plan for the future. I am very grateful to Tania for her handover, as it meant I could 'hit the ground running' as we geared up for Spring Fling 2008.

The decision to rest Spring Fling in 2007 afforded us the opportunity to review the festival and approach the City of Melbourne with a new model. Council has since approved funding within its new Triennial Funding Program to 2011. Meanwhile, the 2008 festival was gearing up for an ambitious return to Errol Street. Kristie Walker and Tam Pay of local company Tenth Street Group were engaged in April to produce and direct Spring Fling Street Festival 2008. We will have to wait until next year's Annual Report to hear how it went.

The *DREAM* Volunteer program's story continued to develop, offering diverse opportunities to young people, students,



retired people, people from refugee backgrounds, academics and people who have experience of homelessness. We acknowledge the tutors in the Homework Club, producers and deliverers of the *North and West Melbourne News*, bus drivers and providers of afternoon teas and community lunches. Volunteers' contributions also include roles on various committees including the HAG (Homelessness Action Group) and of course the Committee of Management of The Centre. I want to express my profound thanks to you all. The quantum of community benefit you provide is actually beyond measure.

The story about the *North and West Melbourne News* continues to be impressive. The *News* turned 30 this year and its story is told later in this report by Janet Graham. Janet deserves special thanks for her massive contribution as she prepares to step back after eight years of dedication and countless sleepless nights. Janet has offered, in the transition period, to steer the paper through two or three more issues, giving her the opportunity to transfer her skills and knowledge.

There is a story about the Homework Club and how it began about four years ago in the upstairs room at the library. I sincerely want to thank Miriam Manne for her total devotion to the hundreds of children, scores of volunteer tutors, and their after-school learning support program. We also acknowledge the staff at the North Melbourne Library, who are our program partners, the School Focused Youth Service, City of Melbourne, Doxa Youth Foundation and the Rotary Club of North Melbourne, for giving us funding support over the years. My goal has consistently been to see the Homework Program sustainably funded, and we are nearly there, having been accepted in the new Western Region Refugee Pilot Education Program.

The story of learning and community education at The Centre continued to evolve. In our new-look brochure,

innovative courses included eBay Tricks From a Woman Who Knows, Song Writing, Flowers @ Home, as well as the time-tested ACFE-funded pre-vocational courses, health and wellbeing and fun, food and creative arts. We continued to see full classes and extensive waiting lists. I want to acknowledge all the tutors, who consistently provide quality opportunities, and thank them for their involvement in The Centre. We look forward to ongoing work together.

I want to personally thank all the members of the Committee of Management for their dedication and commitment to overseeing The Centre. Each person has brought a unique set of skills and experiences, which has enabled us to stay grounded, informed and connected. I particularly want to thank Martin Brennan for his dedicated service to The Centre over many years. I know Tania would want me to acknowledge his support during her time, particularly in earlier days of funding uncertainty. Martin will not be re-nominating for the Committee at the 2008 Annual General Meeting. We will miss him, but we know he is still around.

I want to acknowledge and thank my colleagues, Dianne Schmidtke, Robert Pisano, Linden Smith, Vijay Ishami, Peina Aditiani, Beck Linton, Sandra Curro, Ainslee Smith and Cathy Mitchell, as well as Kristie Walker and Tam Pay of Tenth Street Group, who, as a team, have taken The Centre into this next year with an extraordinary commitment. We have just held Spring Fling Street Festival 2008 on Errol Street, and it has been an incredible journey. We are considering fundraising and community-building options for 2009, to keep up enthusiasm and strengthen so many new relationships and partnerships. We went for bronze in 2008, to learn and develop. We'll aim for silver in 2010 and gold in 2012.

This approach reflects the intention of The Centre as a whole. We are currently reviewing the Constitution,

the structure of the organisation, many of the activities and programs and the way we do business. We are bulging at the seams and are finding creative ways to accommodate aspects of our program. We want to strengthen our relationships with the North Melbourne Football Club, the Rotary Club of North Melbourne, the North & West Melbourne Precinct Association, the North & West Melbourne Association and community groups such as the Hotham History Project, Sustainability Street and the new Arty Farty Institute (yes, that's its name!). There are many more deserving of mention, who will be acknowledged in the 2008/09 annual report.

Finally, I must acknowledge our funding bodies, the City of Melbourne, the Department of Planning and Community Development and ACFE. They underpin and support all that we do.

I am so impressed by this Centre and all the services it offers. We have nothing like this where I live and it would be a wonderful model of community organization to export.

Dr Lesley Shore, Sympatico
Toronto, Canada

Thea Bates
Director



treasurer's report & financial statements 2007-08

I joined the Committee of Management just as the full-year financial results were being tabulated, so I come to the role of treasurer with limited knowledge of The Centre's financial history but with confidence in its current financial position and its solid planning and management.

The 2007/08 financial year saw The Centre return a balanced result (small deficit of \$548) from an annual income of over \$414,274. This result was in line with budget expectations and stabilises The Centre's sound financial health. It allowed The Centre to prudently and successfully deliver the programs and objectives highlighted throughout this annual report.

The overall level of income and expenditure for the year was slightly lower than for the previous year, though indicative of ongoing operations. In the previous year, we had one-off proceeds from a consultancy pilot project, a windfall from an insurance payout for bus damage, plus we delivered a community festival. In 2007/08 by comparison none of those events occurred or was anticipated.

As in previous years, the majority of our funding this year was provided by the City of Melbourne. Our existing funding and service agreement has been extended to June 2009, after which a new agreement – still to be negotiated – will come into place. We can't call as yet what will happen with our funding beyond this point but we are confident of continued support and a sustained positive relationship with the City of Melbourne.

At the end of the year, The Centre held net assets of \$81,374, a level similar to that for the previous year. This is made up of:

- Unrestricted funds or 'cash reserve' of \$34,887, available for general use;
- Specific purposes reserves of \$46,487, which are invested in fixed assets and a community development reserve and therefore not available for other purposes.

These reserves provide responsible (but not ample) buffers which partially safeguard the organisation against short-term financial fluctuations and uncertainty.

As indicated above and discussed in detail throughout this annual report, much has been achieved on a budget of just over \$400,000. This is all thanks to The Centre's sound financial planning and the dedication and goodwill of its staff, volunteers and others involved with The Centre. Next year promises more financial activity, with significant structural changes and program enhancements, not to mention the headline event of the Spring Fling Street Festival 2008.

In closing, I wish to thank Robert Pisano, The Centre's accountant and finance manager, for his financial counsel and clarity, and Thea Bates, The Centre's

director, for her support. I also wish to thank my predecessor, Angela Bitaxis, who was treasurer for most of the financial year.

I finally wish to thank the City of Melbourne for its strong and continued commitment to The Centre and its belief in our programs and endeavours connecting the members of the North and West Melbourne community.

Sally-Anne Wilkinson
Treasurer, Committee of Management

The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc. Summary financial report

Information used in this summary financial report is extracted from the full financial report of The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc. ("The Centre") for the year ended 30 June 2008.

For a full understanding of the financial performance, financial position and activities of The Centre, the full financial report should be referred to. The full financial report also includes a full description of the accounting policies adopted by The Centre, and explanatory notes to the financial statements.

The full financial report, including the independent auditor's report, is available free of charge on request from The Centre by calling 03 9328 1126 or emailing finance@centre.org.au.

Summary income statement for the year ended 30 June 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
Income		
City of Melbourne grants	300,686	313,071
All other grants	75,896	85,196
All other income	37,692	89,399
Total income	414,274	487,666
Total expenditure	414,822	443,102
Net result for the year	(548)	44,564

Summary balance sheet as at 30 June 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	214,218	177,263
Equipment	24,587	22,405
All other assets	4,235	3,765
Total assets	243,040	203,433
Liabilities		
Payables	49,902	58,763
Provisions	33,356	20,548
Income received in advance	78,408	42,200
Total liabilities	161,666	121,511
Net assets	81,374	81,922
Equity		
Reserves	46,487	44,305
Retained earnings	34,887	37,617
Total equity	81,374	81,922

Summary statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2008

	Retained earnings \$	Reserves \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 July 2006	22,616	14,742	37,358
Net result for the year	44,564		44,564
Amount transferred (to) from reserves	(29,563)	29,563	
Balance at 30 June 2007	37,617	44,305	81,922
Net result for the year	(548)		(548)
Amount transferred (to) from reserves	(2,182)	2,182	
Balance at 30 June 2008	34,887	46,487	81,374

Summary cash flow statement for the year ended 30 June 2008

	2008 \$	2007 \$
Cash flows from all activities		
Receipts from government and other grants	387,844	389,004
All other receipts	37,032	85,502
Total payments	(387,921)	(438,648)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held	36,955	35,858
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	177,263	141,405
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	214,218	177,263

homework program

The Homework Club commenced in 2004 with a handful of keen students, a couple of volunteer tutors and the Coordinator, Miriam Manne.

It commenced one day per week for two hours for students in grades 4-6. Miriam Manne has capably coordinated the program since its inception. Miriam's invaluable knowledge of the education system comes from her many years as a teacher in primary schools. She demonstrates an uncanny ability to know not only every child's and tutor's name but also their interests and abilities. Miriam creates a quiet, calm environment to enable the best educational support outcomes for the students who attend. The program is for students from grades 4-6 on Wednesdays and 6-8 on Tuesdays. The transitional program offers invaluable support to students as they begin the transition to secondary education.

The library setting provides the basis for a great model of learning. Students have access to all resources, which include an extensive range of books and quality information technology. The North Melbourne Library is a significant partner in the program, providing the venue and staff to respond to enquiries of both students and tutors. The library provides a sense of community connectedness and encourages lifelong learning.

In 2006, with feedback from students and their families, a second night commenced and gave those students graduating from year 6 the opportunity to continue with support for their homework. Although there wasn't funding for the implementation of the second Homework Club, The Centre commenced in good faith and in 2007 the North Melbourne Rotary Club provided financial support and introduced us to the Doxa Youth Foundation.

During this reporting period 168 students attended from incredibly diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Students are from Africa, Asia and Europe. Some students have experienced exile from their home country.

There are 79 enrolled volunteer tutors. Tutors are recruited from a range of places including the North Melbourne Library, internet-based volunteer noticeboards, the Victorian Catholic University, Melbourne University, Victoria University and the local community.

Volunteer tutors come with a diverse range of educational and professional backgrounds. A vast majority are currently attending university and, surprisingly, very few are studying education; many of the tutors are currently students studying information technology. Some of the tutors are overseas students, bringing a wealth of cultural information and a second language. The age of the tutors ranges from 14 years to over 60.

The Homework Program gives the opportunity for local year 11 students to complete their community services program by assisting with tutoring. This experience provides the opportunity to encourage active volunteering in the community.

End-of-term celebrations are a highlight for tutors and students. The end of 2007 celebration included a debate that was organised by two tutors who worked with each team of students to practise their written and spoken English. The topic was "There is no community in North Melbourne". The teams presented well-researched, insightful arguments for and against the topic. The tutors had arranged for literature and cash prizes for the winning team.

A logo competition was introduced into Homework Club during term 2, to encourage the students who attend to 'make their mark' on the club by creating the branding logo. A voucher from Borders is the prize provided by The Centre and some consolation prizes are donated by the North Melbourne Football Club. The winning logo will be implemented in 2009.



Students have access to all resources, which include an extensive range of books and quality information technology.

homework program

future directions

The Homework Club was invited to be one of the five programs in Western Metropolitan region to be a part of the Statewide OSHLSP pilot project. Our program was chosen because of the way in which it is structured, particularly in terms of demonstrating best-practice principles of homework support programs.

In supporting this framework, our program will continue to advocate for an Education Department funding model, whilst continually improving and developing a model of best practice.

- Development of a broader program to include students from years 9 & 10.
- Develop mechanisms for feedback and evaluation with all key stakeholders, especially parents and students.
- Continue to foster good working relationships with local schools through the principals and staff.
- Gain funding for a health promotion program called 'Brainfruit'.
- Continue to develop relationship with North Melbourne Football Club to encourage players to continue to tutor at the Homework Club.
- To provide secondary consultation and support and tutor training to other local homework programs.

The Doxa website says:

"Doxa is a Greek word meaning greatness, which recognises that each individual is important and that the community has a responsibility to ensure that every young person is given an opportunity to develop their full potential."

The founder of Doxa, Fr Joe Giacobbe, advocated on behalf of the program and Doxa sponsored the Homework Program during 2008. School Focused Youth Services have regularly provided program funding and enabled the expansion of the program. The program remains free of charge to students and their families.

Homework Club holds many benefits for those involved. The families find it very supportive. They are particularly impressed by the fact that the tutors are able to work with the children at the appropriate educational level. Parents have reflected that they are unsure how to ensure that their children are working to the best of their ability at their level. Parents from non-English speaking backgrounds also say they appreciate the support of the tutors in assisting with homework in English. Families also say that they would never have accessed the library if they didn't bring their children to the club. It has enhanced the whole families' use of libraries' resources. We are very fortunate to have this program in our community!

Dr Bernadette Summers, PhD
Principal, St Michael's Catholic
Primary School

Dianne Schmitke
Manager
Community Engagement Unit



nwmn report

With 2008 came a significant milestone for the North and West Melbourne News: the newspaper reached its 30th year of continuous production.

In April the News celebrated this achievement with a party at Errol's Cafe Bakehouse, hosted by The Centre management and staff. Current members of the production, writing and delivery teams were joined by councillors and representatives from the City of Melbourne. Historic memorabilia and editions of the News, old and new, were on display to spark memories among the guests, and Peina Aditioni presented a video of iconic News moments and images.

The cover of the September 2007 edition and an in-depth feature by Shalome Knoll revealed the talents of local artist Terry Matassoni. The editorial team made a commitment at that time to try to profile a local artist in each edition. With the arrival of section editor Kylie McShane before the June 2008 edition, this commitment became much easier to fulfil and the strength of the Arts & Entertainment section was assured.

Who could forget Jim Weatherill's 'Faces of Errol Street' collage on the front page of our March 2008 issue? This edition also welcomed Emma Jukic as section editor for Politics & Environment, and Marleena Forward joined the team as Travel & Food section editor in June. That was the edition that celebrated another wonderful milestone for the community – the sesquicentenary of North Melbourne Primary School. Glenys Crawford continued her amazing contribution in coordinating the Youth & Education section; she has built a great relationship with local schools, and students are now eager to write their own stories about matters dear to their hearts.

The News thus ended the year with a strong list of section editors. However, at the beginning of 2008 Jillian Ball's career

the next step...

(from The Centre's Strategic Plan 2007-2010)

strategic priority one – growing our capacity

- *Build excellence in community development, social action and community cultural development*

strategic priority two – program development

- *Strengthen and expand our community development, social action and community cultural development programs*

strategic priority three – community connections, alliances and image

- *Expand, diversify and strengthen The Centre's community and organisational linkages and profile*

strategic priority four – spaces and places

- *Protect and expand premises, spaces and places that underscore and reinforce the strategic directions of The Centre*

strategic priority five – sustainability

- *Consolidate and grow our funding base, governance framework and staffing resources*

our flagship programs for 2009

- Global Homework Program – engaging children in after-school learning and support.
- *What's On?* Courses and classes for all ages
- DREAM Volunteer Program
- Spring Fling Community Festival
- *North and West Melbourne News*
- Centre Adventure Program for fun and friendship
- Drop-In for information and support



took her interstate and she reluctantly relinquished her role as History editor.

At the 30-year party I announced my decision to step down as coordinator of the *News* at the end of December. To help smooth the transition, Alex Abernethy offered to write an operations manual detailing the whole process of creating an edition of *NWMN* from start to finish. When completed, this manual may well inspire a redistribution of roles and a broader sharing of responsibilities.

An increasingly problematic aspect of production is page layout – not because of the task itself, but because of the difficulty in recruiting, training and keeping volunteers. It seems that the era when journalism and design students – or indeed anyone with an interest in print media – were keen to get some hands-on experience is past. People sometimes volunteer for one or two editions and then they are gone, making continuity very hard to manage.

The onus of maintaining continuity in the layout process thus falls heavily on the few. Once again, it was largely the efforts of Rene Heeps and Allan Hood that kept production rolling.

This will be my last annual report as coordinator of *NWMN*. I would like to thank all our volunteers – the writers, photographers, section editors, layout workers and distributors (whose names appear elsewhere in this report) – and also the 'stringers' who regularly submit updates from the local organisations that provide such valuable services to the people of North and West Melbourne.

I would also like to thank Thea Bates and Centre staff members for their support, particularly in the fledgling exercise to facilitate succession planning and sustainability for the *NWMN*. We are also most grateful to the City of Melbourne for its generous grant, allocated via The Centre, which allows the *News* to produce four editions a year. Thanks, too, to our advertisers, most of whom

we know support the *News* as a community gesture rather than in an expectation of generating profit, and at the same time contribute to the variety and content of the paper.

I would like to thank all our volunteers – the writers, photographers, section editors, layout workers and distributors

Janet Graham

Coordinator,
North and West Melbourne News



acknowledgements

Committee of Management

Ann Wilkinson Chair
Martin Brennan Vice Chair
Angela Bitaxis Treasurer / Public Officer
Mary Tomsic Secretary
Anita Paganoni
Gary Heard
David Brunt
Lorna Hannan.....
Michael Long.....
Jillian Ball.....

Staff

Tania Phillips Director (to 23 June 08)
Thea Bates Director (from 24 June 08)
– Community Consultant (2007)
– Strategic & Community Development Manager (Nov 07-June 08)
Dianne Schmidtke Manager, Community Engagement Unit
Robert Pisano Finance & IT Manager
Salvador Nuñez Community Development Manager (to Oct 07)
Peina Aditiani..... Administration Worker (casual)
Linden Smith Administration Worker (from Jan 08)
Beck Linton Administration worker (to Jan 08)

Program Tutors 2007/08

Jandy Paramanathan
Stephen Wright
Heiko Rudolph
Michael Long
Mike Cole
Tamara Poetsma
Naomi Martin
Katie Macaulay / de Araujo
Miriam Manne
James Kane (Doutta Galla Community Health)
Steven Lindsay
Peter Finch
Megan Schmidtke
Nada Borevec

Course brochures

Aaron Giles pro-bono graphic designer

Volunteers

Alan Ashley
Alba Gatto
Alex Abernethy
Alex Gout
Allan Hood
Allan Martin
Amanda Fitzgerald
Amelia Neilsen
Angela Williams
Ann Brady
Anthony Johnson
Bella Ellwood-Clayton
Ben Leong
Beth Stevenson
Bill Cook
Bill Zammit
Brad Collins
Brian White
Brendan Ferrari
Caleb Heard
Carol Lowe
Carolyn Fyfe
Cath Rouse
Catherine King
Cathy Mitchell
Cecilia Chong
Charmaine O'Brien
Chenhong Xu
Chien Tan
Christian Ankur
Christine Chandra
David Apostol
David Carlton
Deborah Wilson
Denys Harraway
Dianne Schmidtke
Dora Puglisi
Elizabeth Lopocsi
Emma Jukic
Gabby Stannus
Georgia Wilkins
Georgina Connelly
Giuseppina Ranellone
Glenys Crawford
Helen Lew Ton
Helen Michell
Jacqueline Qiu
Jan Clarke
Jan Lacey
Janet Graham
Jayden Lawlor
Jennifer Blackman
Jenny Cook
Jillian Ball
Jim Brady
Jim Weatherill
Jimmy Vost
Joanne Allen
Jocelyn Sellers
John Hanley
John Patterson
Josephine Ng
June Pearson
Jyden Lawlor
Kah Horng Chia
Kane Richardson
Karen Lawrie
Karl Hessian
Kathleen McPherson
Katrina Kincade-Sharkey
Kay Oke
Kaye Oddie
Kaylene Ferrari
Keziah Gillam
Kitsa Zelos
Kylie McShane
Laura Robson
Lauren Smith
Laurence Angwin
Leanne Yeung
Linnet Hunter
Lucy Bracey
Madeleine Scully
Maggie McCormick
Margot Anders
Marleena Forward
Martin Brennan
Mary Tomsic
Michael Hearn
Michael Long
Mick Girdwood
Nadia Warner
Nancye Hawkins
Nancye Nankervis
Nicky Capriolo
Nicole Taylor
Oscar Lopez
Pat Lightfoot
Patricia Harwood
Patricia Ng
Paula Ferrari
Peina Aditiani
Peta Glaister
Pompilia Calginari
Rene Heeps
Ria Strong
Rob Oke
Robyn Phelan
Roger Parris
Rohan Davis
Sachiko Kubota
Sally Hearn
Sandy Ogilvie
Scott Bonanno
Shalome Knoll
Shanny Sena
Stephen Jasper
Steven Lindsay
Sun Chi
Tamsin Moran
Tara Peters
Tayalan Umabadhi
Ting Chen
Troy Snow
Val Kozlowski
Victoria Amy
Victoria Sasongko