

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

#### **AGM OCTOBER 2021**

The 2021 President's report is again a mixture of highs and lows.

During the last three months of 2020, PNH operated without a co-ordinator but with the Executive of the Committee - Marg Jucker, Gemma Tobshall, Di Kolomeitz and Debra Sheard - and the volunteer co-ordinator, Rita Burleigh, we were able to keep things running smoothly. During this time we also had committee member, Roy Johnson assemble new book cases in the Parkview Room and construct a counter at our office window. Barry Burleigh painted the wall in our entrance a bright, welcoming yellow, and we applied a colourful PNH logo on the foyer access door to the Hall.

In early December, the Committee spent a day at Scotchman's Hill Winery working on an updated Strategic Plan with external consultants. This Strategic Plan was further formalised and can be found on our website.

On the 17th December 2020, we had our Christmas party in the area outside Parks Hall. Although very restricted by Covid-19 regulations and rain, members all enjoyed the day.

On 11th January 2021, Nateesha Thomassen joined PNH as our new co-ordinator, and on the 18th January, the house opened for all our planned programs. Nateesha and the office volunteers were overwhelmed by the rush of members wanting to renew their membership and get on with their activities in what we hoped would be a better year.

By this time, a group of committee members and other volunteers had also retrieved our books from storage in Geelong and over the next few weeks, volunteer Hetty, and her able assistant, Mary, set up our library in the Parkview Room.

In March, 53 of our members enjoyed a day trip to the South Melbourne market. Many of us enjoyed a Happy Hour in April and an enthusiastic group participated in a trivia night organised by Jenny Macaulay in May. Also in May, Federal Member Libby Coker was our guest, joining the Committee for morning tea and a discussion about facilities.

There were many interruptions throughout 2021 with further Covid lockdowns, which severely restricted activities and resulted in Nateesha working from home.

As mentioned in the August newsletter to members, things were changing in the committee. Jenny Macaulay decided to retire after more than 10 years as a committee member, but will still remain in her role as a tutor. Roy Johnson and Debra Sheard retired, as they were moving with their partners to the other side of the bay. Robyn Hope also retired after 10 years on the committee, and Veronica Noonan, who generously filled in as volunteer co-ordinator while Rita was on sick leave, also retired.

On the 20th August, Nateesha resigned as our co-ordinator to take up a position at Grovedale. While with us, Nateesha was able to finalise our Strategic Plan and put together an action plan in order to achieve our strategic goals. She also wrote a procedure to assist our office volunteers in streamlining their work in the PNH office.

Although 2021 has been severely disrupted with the Covid lockdowns, Nateesha with help from Committee Secretary Di, was able to successfully apply for some grants. From that grant assistance, I would like to thank:

COGG for painting the hall and dry cleaning the curtains.

COGG for funding our Governance training, strategic planning and purchase of small equipment.

I would also like to thank DHHS for annually funding the employment of staff for PNH.

The Committee of Management have now employed Rob Sztogryn in the role of caretaker co-ordinator, and he began work at PNH on the 6<sup>th</sup> September. We also have a new part-time office assistant, Kate Hayes, who started with us on the 20<sup>th</sup> September. Kate works four hours per day, Monday to Thursday.

I wish to say a huge 'thank you' to all our tutors, facilitators and our office volunteers. They are truly a most valued part of our organisation, and without them, we would not function as we do.

Thank you also to our 500+ members for their support through all these Covid interruptions. The lockdowns have meant proposed outings have been cancelled, some classes moved to Zoom and some deferred until the mandatory wearing of masks is removed.

Thank you to each of our committee members for their tireless work during the year, sometimes struggling with the technology of Zoom meetings, but always working to ensure best governance, updating policies and procedures, and ensuring PNH meets its compliance and reporting commitments.

A special thanks to Di and Gemma whose help and support have been invaluable.

I look forward to watching PNH continue to prosper and hope that everyone stays safe and well in these rather odd times.

Marg Jucker

President, Portarlington Neighbourhood House.