

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21



"God's Eye" by Nick Xanthis

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Melbourne, Australia

# MISSION & CONTENTS

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*As a way of experiencing and showing God's love, Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre aims to benefit residents of Clayton and surrounding areas through providing:*

- educational, recreational and welfare programs to foster learning, personal wellbeing and social connectedness*
- community development opportunities for individuals, groups, and organisations to collaboratively address needs in the local area*
- opportunities for volunteers to improve their skills and support their local community*

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Committee of Governance has met on four occasions (electronically via Zoom) this year and has worked together very effectively. There has been good attendance at all meetings. Dixon House has been well served by the Committee which was elected at the AGM meeting last November.

<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Vaughan Smith	<b>MEMBERS</b>	Margaret Boccabella
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	Vacant		Alison Bunting
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Rajesh Arja		Milroy De Vos
<b>TREASURER</b>	Ian Wilding		

The Vicar of All Saints, Charlie Fletcher and our Manager attended all Committee meetings during the year in a non-voting capacity. They continued to provide a valuable link with the parish and the operational aspects of Dixon House.

2020-21 has been a very different, in many ways challenging year, for Dixon House with the lockdowns imposed by the Government to battle the coronavirus. This has meant significant curtailment of what services could be offered as well as a very quick development of delivery of some on-line programs. The reduced program has given us time to consider future developments and consolidate existing courses that we offer so that we can reopen strongly when the Government allows us to. I would like to acknowledge the important work that Emergency Relief continue to do throughout the year in providing much needed support for those struggling in the local community in the form of food relief, vouchers, and Christmas hamper distributions.

Work has slowly continued on our strategic plan and consideration is being given to new programs which meet the needs of the Clayton community. Of critical importance after the lockdowns is addressing social isolation in the local area and encouraging people to again develop social contacts. Such activities as the Community Lunch are planned to recommence as soon as this can be achieved in a Covid-safe way. We are fortunate to be in a financially sound position when we reopen due to Governmental financial support and Job Keeper helping to maintain our existing staffing levels.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I wish to thank our Finance Officer Naomi for applying for all available governmental support during the pandemic. My gratitude goes towards our Treasurer Ian as well, for his excellent guidance to the Committee of Governance as well as Naomi. I must also thank our Manager, Winston, for all the work he has done in maintaining our current reduced program as well exploring future developments at Dixon House. His efforts over the past several years in improving IT systems and processes has enabled staff to smoothly transition to working from home. Special thanks must be given to our paid staff and volunteers who have continued to support us during the lockdown period and who have developed online resources in support of the most suitable programs.

It must be noted that the agenda of the Committee of Governance includes a section related to Health and Safety. Any issues resulting to health and safety concerns are raised as appropriate. Of particular importance in this climate is ensuring that staff and volunteers can adequately work from home without any safety concerns. Anyone can raise issues of concern about OHS and these should be addressed to the Manager (Winston Chee), directly with any member of the Committee, or myself.

Finally, Dixon House has come through the pandemic in good shape financially although we have lost many active members who have previously supported the organisation. A strong member drive is needed in 2022 to rebuild our member base and hopefully expand the Committee of Governance in its work. This will be a critical task in the new year and I seek support from all members.

***Vaughan Smith - President - Dixon House Committee of Governance***



# TREASURER'S REPORT

The financial year 2020-2021 has, as is well known, been a disrupted year. Providing activities has been severely affected by the necessity to comply with the restrictions imposed in the attempts to arrest the spread of the Coronavirus. Fortunately, funding and support from various organisations and individuals has continued and is acknowledged with appreciation. Moreover, and most importantly, the financial support from the Australian Government and the Victorian State Government has compensated for reduced income and there has been no need to limit the development of online programs because of financial constraints. Indeed, similar to the situation that I reported a year ago, at year's end the balance sheet showed an operating surplus of \$28,511 increasing the equity (nett assets) to \$84,329 as at 30 June 2021.

The strong financial position means that Dixon House is well placed to resume its' full commitment to its' Mission Statement by again providing a full range of on-site and on-line activities to benefit the local community as we move from pandemic to endemic conditions with the coronavirus.

The annual accounts for the 2020-2021 financial year have been audited by Mr. Garry Andrews CPA, who has confirmed that they represent a true and fair view of the transactions for the year ended 30 June 2021.

Our banking continues to be managed via the Westpac Banking Corporation, with security processes for managing the inflow and outflow of cash and with two signatories required for all transactions. We are paying most of our bills via online and a Visa debit card and use cheques only where it is not feasible to pay online. Our major programs including staff salaries were funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, City of Monash, All Saints partnership and community fund-raising and by the above-mentioned government support. For the 2021-2022 financial year, we are expecting a deficit of the order of \$6,000 but forward projections are, manifestly, somewhat tenuous as, when on-site operations are resumed at Dixon House, compliance with the government health regulations may necessitate additional costs (e.g. cleaning) and it is difficult to know how many people will feel confident to return to be involved in the programs offered.

It is my role as Treasurer to provide oversight to financial matters and I would like to thank the Committee of Governance and the Dixon House Manager for their ongoing support. A special thanks to Ms Naomi Lim, Finance Officer, who has again done an exemplary job, in managing the finances of Dixon House, reporting all transactions and producing the final financial reports for the year ended 30 June 2021.

***Ian Wilding - Treasurer - Dixon House Committee of Governance***

# AUDITOR'S REPORT

## AUDITOR'S REPORT – YEAR 2020-2021

FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND ALL MEMBERS OF DIXON HOUSE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC. INCORPORATION NUMBER A0058595N AND  
ABN 86648041219.

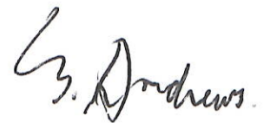
I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE AUDITED THE BOOKS OF DIXON HOUSE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC. FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2021.

DURING THE AUDIT THE FINANCE OFFICER AND BOOKKEEPER, NAOMI  
LIM, PROVIDED ALL DOCUMENTATION INCLUDING THE FINAL ACCOUNTS,  
PROFIT AND LOSS AND BALANCE SHEET ALONG WITH ATTACHMENTS,  
QUERIES RAISED WHERE ANSWERED BY NAOMI LIM, ON ALL OCASSIONS,  
TO MY COMPLETE SATISFACTION. I FOUND THE RECORDS IN GOOD ORDER  
AND UP TO DATE AND NO CHANGES WERE REQUIRED.

BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED AND SIGHTED I CERTIFY THAT THE  
PREPARED AND PRESENTED REPORTS, SHOWING A **PROFIT OF \$ 28,510.65**  
FOR THE YEAR REFLECT A TRUE AND FAIR VIEW OF ALL THE  
TRANSACTIONS, THIS HAS BEEN ANOTHER DIFFICULT YEAR WITH LOCK  
DOWNS, UNCERTAINTIES AND RESTRICTIONS DUE TO THE COVID-19 VIRUS,  
GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES, PRINCIPALLY JOBKEEPER, CONTRIBUTED TO A  
STRONG OUTCOME, THE EQUITY AS AT BALANCE SHEET DATE IS  
\$84,328.69. DIXON HOUSE, 2 DIXON STREET, CLAYTON, VIC. 3168. IN  
ADDITION, NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OR MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION  
SINCE BALANCE DATE.

DATED; 25 OCTOBER 2021.

SIGNED:



GARRY ANDREWS  
CPA, TAX AGENT

Phone; 9584 9871  
0409834618

BUSINESS ADDRESS.  
1 HIGHAM STREET  
CHELTENHAM VIC 3192.

Profit and Loss		
Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre Inc.		
1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021		
Income	30 Jun 2021	30 Jun 2020
Annual Membership fees	125	240
Bank Interest Received	42	116
Donations - All Saints Church	6,882	4,776
Donations - Individuals (All Saints Church)	609	824
Donations - Individuals	1,323	977
Donations - Individuals (Community Lunch)	-	1,075
Donations - Individuals (Expression Through Art)	-	1,050
Donations - Toorak Op Shop (Dixon House component)	2,534	7,000
Funding - Anglicare (Emergency Relief Administration)	4,550	4,200
Funding - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	86,909	82,634
Grants - City of Monash (Connecting Clayton Project)	8,600	-
Grants - City of Monash (Volunteer Management)	-	10,000
Grants - Dept of Home Affairs (Fostering Integration)	-	46,147
Grants - Dept of Social Services (Volunteer Equipment)	-	5,000
Grants - Good Things Foundation (Be Connected)	1,757	363
Grants - Melbourne Anglican Benevolent Foundation (Homework Club)	6,237	10,650
Grants - Others	50	-
Other Revenue - Hall Hire & Others	1,630	2,900
Pandemic Support - ATO Cash Flow Boost	16,228	10,000
Pandemic Support - Department of Jobs Business Support Fund	15,000	10,000
Pandemic Support - Jobkeeper Scheme	77,850	24,000
Programs - Art Class Fees	1,035	1,780
Programs - Computer Class Fees	888	995
Programs - Craft and Friendship Group Donations	230	385
Programs - English Class Fees	3,103	7,475
Programs - Sewing Class Fees	120	240
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>235,701</b>	<b>232,827</b>

<b>Less Operating Expenses</b>		
Accounting Software - Xero	1,081	1,080
Bad Debts	320	-
Bank Fees	81	102
Depreciation Office Equipment	135	224
Event Expenses	200	339
Fees - Auditor	200	200
Fees - Membership for Professional Organisations	866	650
IT - Computer Hardware	193	84
IT - Webhosting & Software	640	154
Jobkeeper Top-up Payments	43,158	12,785
Miscellaneous Expenses	48	87
Office - Cleaning	2,160	1,717
Office - Equipment and Printing	3,304	5,916
Office - Refreshments	302	169
Office - Stationery	898	629
Office - Telephone Expense	394	-
Programs - Art Group Materials	202	310
Programs - Community Lunch Expenses	-	469
Programs - English Books	69	21
Programs - English Stationery	234	-
Programs - Fostering Integration Expenses	-	15,121
Programs - Homework Club Program Needs and Equipment	129	56
Programs - Homework Club Refreshments	131	99
Programs - Sewing and Craft Class Expenses	-	3
Publicity & Signs	67	-
Rent Paid to All Saints Anglican Church	7,200	7,410
Staff - Admin ER Support	4,054	4,155
Staff - Admin Officer	25,927	27,397
Staff - Adult Education Co-ordinator	27,566	20,262
Staff - Annual Leave	2,872	3,083
Staff - Art Teacher	1,411	2,380
Staff - Computer Class Tutor	560	557
Staff - Coordinator	60,702	44,562
Staff - English Tutor	-	1,694
Staff - Fostering Integration Officer	-	16,653
Staff - Homework Club Coordinator	8,023	9,245
Staff - Long Service Leave	- 4,459	6,959
Staff - Marketing and Promotions Officer	720	-
Staff - Portable Long Service Leave Levy	2,076	2,235
Staff - Super Contribution	12,244	12,836
Staff - Travel Expenses	-	130
Staff - Volunteer Management Coordinator	-	8,892
Staff - Work Cover Insurance	3,079	2,527
Staff and Volunteers Training	220	-
Working with Children and Police Check	186	245
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>207,191</b>	<b>211,438</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>28,511</b>	<b>21,389</b>

Balance Sheet		
Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre Inc.		
As at 30 June 2021		
	30 Jun 2021	30 Jun 2020
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Bank</b>		
Billing Account	144	144
Comm Solutions Cash Reserve	130,324	87,314
Comm Solutions Cheque Account	1,137	1,694
Petty Cash Community Lunch	301	78
Petty Cash General	81	113
Westpac Debit Card Account	532	531
<b>Total Bank</b>	<b>132,520</b>	<b>89,874</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Accounts Receivable	444	320
Other Receivables	90	18,000
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>18,320</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Office Equipment	3,960	3,960
Accumulated Depreciation	- 3,758	- 3,623
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>133,256</b>	<b>108,531</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accrued Liability	2,492	5,514
Deferred Income	7,700	7,212
Other Payables	-	160
PAYG Withholdings Payable	7,844	8,640
Provision for Annual Leave	17,033	14,161
Superannuation Payable	4,198	2,907
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>39,268</b>	<b>38,594</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provision for Long Service Leave	9,659	14,118
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>9,659</b>	<b>14,118</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>48,927</b>	<b>52,713</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>84,329</b>	<b>55,818</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Current Year Earnings	28,511	21,389
Retained Earnings	55,818	34,429
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>84,329</b>	<b>55,818</b>

*Financial reports prepared by Naomi Lim - Finance Officer*



## **A Year of Lockdowns**

I would like to first of all acknowledge what an incredibly tough year it has been for everyone, without exception, including staff, volunteers, participants, members, and other stakeholders. My hope is that a return to full normality will occur without too much delay. It may interest you to know that 2020-21 saw Melbourne endure three lockdowns (no.2,3,4) totalling 111 days, affecting over 17 out of 40 weeks when Dixon House was supposed to be open. Although this equated to less than half the time, like most Melbournians, my memory is automatically skewed towards the lockdown periods, with very little recollection of the times in between. Nevertheless, a lot did happen, both in and out of lockdown, which hopefully we can capture in the rest of the report.

## **Connecting Clayton to the World Project**

The start of the financial year also signalled the commencement of a new three-year project funded by the City of Monash. The aim of the project is to involve international students in running workshops at Dixon House in order to provide them with invaluable experience as well as the opportunity to connect with the local community. It would also open up the local community to some new and free workshop options, in addition to fostering a greater understanding about international students. Due to the pandemic, lockdowns, and border closures, as well as additional pressures facing international students such as online study, the inability to visit family, and concerns about their home country, we found it difficult to engage relevant candidates for our project. Thankfully, after much effort in networking and promoting the project, we engaged two international students from Cambodia to run our first series of workshops. The "Stepping Up" communication skills series spanned four sessions and covered such topics as understanding self, understanding others, body language, confidence, and positive thinking. All who attended expressed how much they learned and were keen to apply these lessons to their lives. Thankfully we were able to conduct three out of four sessions in person, with only one session occurring online during lockdown. 2021-22 roared off to a good start with the addition of several international students who were keen to participate. We look forward to reporting next year about these new workshops as well as the addition of an interview style video project called "Student Journeys", showcasing international students from different countries recounting their journey from their home country to Australia.

# MANAGER'S REPORT

## **Staff Movements**

We were sad to see our English Coordinator Roslyn Brown retire in Term 1 2021 after energetically and faithfully serving in her role for over seven years. During her time, volunteers and students from a myriad of backgrounds eagerly attended Dixon House on a weekly basis to teach and learn English; a rewarding experience whether it was the former or the latter. She will be greatly missed by staff, volunteers, students and all at Dixon House who had the pleasure of working with her. Replacing Roslyn is English teacher Wayne Lim, who has worked many years locally and abroad and has done several stints at Dixon House filling in for Roslyn as well as teaching an IELTS short course.

## **I.T. Infrastructure**

Our efforts over the past several years in digitizing enrolments, volunteer recruitment, training, and document access among other things, enabled a fairly smooth transition to remote working and program delivery. Staff were able to access information necessary to perform their duties without physical access to the office during lockdowns. Reverend Charlie Fletcher's efforts saw the All Saints site transition to NBN which enabled Dixon House to have a much faster internet connection from late 2020. This upgrade meant that we were able to replace our very dated PABX system from 20+ years ago to a new VOIP phone system which enables checking voicemail remotely and updating settings from anywhere.

## **Thank You**

I would like to express my gratitude towards staff and volunteers for being adaptable and maintaining their motivation in what has been a challenging financial year. I also want to thank all our participants for their patience in dealing with all the changes due to the lockdowns. I also want to thank the Committee of Governance for their ongoing support and for being such a great team to work with. The last page of this report outlines our major supporters and donors, however, I do want to make a special mention of Nicola Templeton, Fiona Langton, and the Melbourne Anglican Foundation for their continuing support of our Homework Club which is having a great impact on the kids we work with. I hope that you enjoy reading the rest of this report which highlights the good work that has been done in the different program areas over the course of the year.

**Winston Chee - Manager - Dixon House Neighbourhood Centre**

## Expression through Art

It would be remiss not to begin this report without mentioning Covid pandemic's continued influence and impact on our weekly art sessions. It changed the structure, direction, and planned projects of the art program, including operational aspects to accommodate social distancing, cleaning, disinfecting and more disinfecting. Despite these changes and protocols, the group was happy to connect, to be together and to be creating and experiencing a small respite from what was happening out in the world.

In 2020, participants focused on finishing their individual 'Positive Affirmation' artworks. They each chose a statement which they felt they needed to be reminded of during this challenging time. Statements such as, "Today I Choose Joy", "Today is going to be Awesome" and "Happy Thoughts". These works were framed and taken home at the end of the year, hopefully serving their desired purpose. To end the year with something festive, the group produced some Christmas cards and coloured baubles for gifting, which were bright and cheery.

At the beginning of 2021, despite hoping otherwise, it was clear the pandemic was here for a while. The group was presented with a couple of directions for new art projects to commence the year. They opted for a project where they were to direct their attention to our collection of art reference material and take creative licence to re-interpret a favourite piece of art in their own style. They selected from art books and magazines, from our collection of photos taken at exhibitions they attended organised through Dixon House in 2016/17, or from a collection of online images and so their year of creative art expression began. Each person chose the size and shape of canvas they wished to work on, and we discussed and experimented with which art medium would be best suited to the outcome they wanted to achieve and to their abilities. The results so far are most impressive, and include abstract, modernist, landscape, and nature images. The range and style of works are as diverse as our lovely creative group.



"Birds"  
by Carol Laing



"Happy Thoughts"  
by Nejmeah Barbar

# CREATIVE PROGRAMS



Dance, Love, Sing, Live"  
by Lynne McKenzie



"Today I Choose"  
by Quentin Fricke

## Expression Through Art Program (continued)

Although ongoing closures have interrupted creative process time and again, our group continues resiliently with much shared enthusiasm and positivity despite these setbacks and I along with the rest of the group, can't wait to see the rest of these finished works in a new year that allows for ongoing regular creative expression.

**Helen Plesar - Expression Through Art Tutor**



## Craft and Friendship Group

This has been a very disrupted year for the group only being able to meet between lockdowns. Our core group has remained the same keeping in touch with each other by phone. They are all looking forward to the new year when we can hopefully get together. Most have kept up with their knitting and other crafts.

**Dianne Payne & Gwen Clark - Craft and Friendship Group Facilitators**



## Sewing Class

Due to the multiple lockdowns as well as some terms not having any enrolments, the sewing class operated for several sessions in Term 2 2021. There were two new beginner students, one who worked on a simple long sleeve top and the other a cook's apron. Although it was only for a short time, the students were excited to learn new skills which they were able to apply practically.

**Liliana Dardengo - Sewing Class Tutor**



# ENGLISH PROGRAMS

Thanks to a huge commitment from tutors, staff, and students, Dixon House continued to provide the opportunity for students to progress in their English via online learning. The Wednesday morning group continued with a whole group session, followed by breakout rooms in smaller groups or as one-to-one sessions. A number of one-to-one tutoring lessons were initiated, supported and continued in an online format. Several new volunteer tutors were trained online, some of whom were never seen face-to-face! Naturally, training needed to be adapted for the ongoing lockdown context.

The LACE group thrived, though small in number, with significant learnings in pronunciation and vocabulary building. Expertise using the features of Zoom continued to develop as the weeks went by, though the limitations also became apparent. Writing development proved one of the most difficult features to enact, being very time-consuming, beyond normal volunteer hours. Though the work was draining, it was also rewarding for each individual participant. The highlight of 2020 was actually gathering face-to-face, outdoors, at Karkarook Park, for a Covid-safe picnic in December, which was the first in-person meeting between most of the group.

Hopes were high for face-to-face lessons to resume in 2021, but hopes were soon dashed by the next lockdown. Most students continued, though of course numbers were still impacted by the impossibility of travel to Australia by international students or new migrants, as well as Covid concerns and lockdown pressures. Some students who did not continue landed gainful employment.

***Roslyn Brown - English Coordinator (to February 2021)***



I would also like to thank the commitment from our tutors, staff and students. The tutors and students handled the year reasonably well in relation to the challenges of the lockdowns. In March, 2021 we had a training session inhouse for our tutors and a Zoom training session for a new tutor. Tutors also contributed valuable training and ideas in all their respective program areas. During lockdowns, the English programs reverted to Zoom. Even though it was challenging to transition, it was handled quite well by the students and tutors. The highlight of the year was the cultural excursion to the Melbourne Immigration museum with students and tutors at the end of Term 1. It was an opportunity for all to learn about the city's rich history involving many cultural backgrounds.

Many of our tutors have been with Dixon House for years and we greatly appreciate their contribution. Many of our students have also been able to journey with us for some time, even through lockdowns.

***Wayne Lim - English Coordinator (from February 2021)***



# HOMework CLUB



After six months on Zoom in the second half of 2020, our Homework Club was in demand in 2021 as improved COVID-19 conditions enabled us to welcome five new students to our face-to-face sessions. Continued funding from Melbourne Anglican Foundation ensured that students from migrant and refugee backgrounds and/or low socio-economic backgrounds could still access homework help from our team of volunteer tutors. They now had opportunities to make real-life social connections that was missing with learning online through weekly physical games and other group activities.

New COVID-safe procedures and practices had to be determined and adopted for the in-person program, affecting how the sessions were ran and taught, and requiring us to readily switch to online learning during snap lockdowns. Initially, we had concerns with how to teach effectively with social distancing, whether or not we could provide snacks, and if we could still have shared use of teaching resources and intermingle during physical activity. But, once clarified, we made good use of the large hall and ample rooms available in Dixon House to safely teach and learn.

With student numbers now totalling nine, recruiting sufficient volunteer tutors for one-to-one tuition continued to be a challenge. However, working in pairs suited the students as they enjoyed making new friends and learning with their peers. Having more younger students with additional needs also required a rethink of how we conducted group activities and created motivating learning experiences. Furthermore, splitting whole-group activities into two groups enabled greater interaction for students, and allowed tutors to develop their small group facilitation skills. We are thoroughly grateful for the knowledgeable, patient and attentive tutors who choose to educate our mix of students in 2020/21, and thus support their parents indirectly through the pandemic. Two tutors from 2020 were vital in maintaining the program in 2021, with one being shortlisted by the Centre for Multicultural Youths in the annual MY Education Award for the Most Outstanding Volunteer – Metropolitan category.

***Oanh Lam - Homework Club Coordinator***



This year has continued with the now all too familiar service delivery challenges, that make the COVID 19 pandemic such a defining global event. Anglicare staff and community support volunteers have worked tirelessly to enable our Emergency Relief Services to remain open during each respective lockdown, with trained volunteers available for online phone access through our centralised 1800 number, and providing care to isolated clients with little or no income within the new environment at Dixon House. Anglicare is in the process of developing a comprehensive Emergency Relief (ER) Training program designed to support our network of new and emerging volunteers in providing critical financial assistance, community food relief, information, advocacy and referral, to meet the increasing demand from some of the most disadvantaged families who come for help from Dixon House.

This year our volunteer team contributed an estimated 3,400 hours of time and outreach support, and we gratefully acknowledge the invaluable work they do to help people in our local community. As more of our clients come to see us with increasingly complex financial issues due to no fault unemployment, disability, pay day loans and credit cards debt, we have embraced the opportunity to extend our support at Dixon House where ever possible , and as a result are trialling the integration of Financial Counselling volunteers with Emergency Relief.

Now that we can offer support through our very own qualified financial counsellor, we are able to help clients:

- Understand their options, if unable to meet debt repayments and pay bills
- Understand which debts are priorities
- Develop budgets and money management plans
- Access grants or concessions
- Negotiate with banks and creditors regarding payments plans and other financial hardship options
- Access dispute resolution services
- Understand their rights and access legal help.

## Case Study

James and Allison were referred online to our Emergency Relief Program at Dixon House, after having travelled from South Australia to be with their eight year old daughter after major heart surgery at The Royal Children's Hospital. The family was already under severe financial stress when just before leaving, their car transmission blew up, forcing them to make do with an old work vehicle, which they were trying to sell because they could not afford the running costs. The family also had an electricity bill of \$3,000 that they were trying to pay off, but had also lodged a dispute with the energy provider, which was rejected.

When they first arrived in Melbourne, the family stayed at Ronald McDonald House but had to go into quarantine after one of them contacted COVID. When they came out of recovery, there was no accommodation available at Ronald McDonald House, so they were forced to sleep in their car for two days until alternative accommodation was found near the hospital.

James is a carpenter and a sole trader, but had to stop work after a recent motor bike accident which delayed his return to work. James has been unable to fulfil his job search requirements due to being in Melbourne with his daughter, and after receiving one Jobseeker payment, was notified that his payments were suspended until further notice. **(continue on next page)**

# EMERGENCY RELIEF

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Our volunteers managed to secure a week's temporary accommodation through Unison Housing, and after receiving a letter from the hospital to exempt James from the Jobseeker requirements, were able to negotiate with Centrelink for an emergency one-off payment while his benefits were being reinstated. Financial Counselling was discussed as an option for James and Allison to pursue when they returned home to help resolve their ongoing energy bill dispute. Our dedicated volunteers provided them with \$100 e-vouchers that enabled the family to get much needed shopping, and helped with \$80 petrol vouchers for James to drive to Point Cook the following morning for a job interview for casual labour work. Our volunteer team then encouraged the family to return to Dixon House for further assistance if there were any delays in receiving their special emergency payment.

## **Quick Statistics for the Financial Year**

- Total numbers of Emergency Relief assistance provided – 1,797
- Average value of assistance provided – \$44.70
- Total value of assistance provided – \$80,375

***Suzanne Keil - Emergency Relief Services Coordinator - Anglicare Victoria***

# ADMINISTRATION AND RECEPTION

I have been volunteering at Dixon House on a Monday and Wednesday in the Reception and Administration role since May 2019. My day may include setting up the classroom for activities, helping students enroll for their classes, registering clients for Emergency Relief, and fielding enquiries in person, via telephone, and through emails. The experience has been very rewarding and fulfilling. I have learned new computer skills and I feel that I am contributing to the community. Reception is an important role because it is usually the first contact people have with Dixon House, so first impression are important. The administration function is a diverse one where I get to learn many skills along the way and it is also fundamental in ensuring the smooth running of different programs and the general operations of Dixon House.

***Christine Hill - Administration and Reception Volunteer***

A special mention should also be made of Delrine Gay who has faithfully served as the Thursday Receptionist for many years. She is an integral part of the Emergency Relief operations, as the initial person helping clients who attend to receive support. ***(Dixon House Manager)***

The aim of these classes is to give people with little to no computer skills the ability to use a computer comfortably and safely without further assistance. Clients' general knowledge of computers when beginning ranged from not knowing the on-off button to writing a basic letter on Word. By the end of the session, clients could successfully advise me on the basic functions of a computer as well as effectively use search engines through internet browsers (Google Chrome/Microsoft Edge). For those whose main method of communication was email, the sessions taught them how to organise, write (formal/informal), and add documents to emails. Overall, clients left feeling more comfortable and less unsure about using computers.

For one client whom I saw on a more regular basis, they successfully left with a greater knowledge of Microsoft Office and Google Programs (Word/Docs, Excel/Sheets, PowerPoint/Slides). By the end of the sessions, the client was also able to recognise and correct their own mistakes without input. In addition to this they could create suitable and presentable layouts of documents, also without assistance. For this client these computer sessions were vital to their professional growth as many companies use either Microsoft Office or Google Programs, if not something similar. The basic understanding gained by the client will allow them in future to adapt easily to the companies' preferred systems.

***Bianca Yunus - Computer Tutor***



It's been four years that I have been with Dixon House. When I came here four years ago, I was not exposed to Australian culture and community. However interactions at Dixon House greatly helped me understand and assimilate with the local community. Huge thanks to Winston who has always encouraged and supported me and everyone at Dixon House.

It has been a privilege to be a part of Dixon House. I get to learn more about this community's colourful history and bring unheard stories to life. It was the perfect way to utilise my skills and keep myself busy while looking for a job in the IT sector. Since joining Dixon House, I have had the chance to brush up on my IT skills and collaborate with a brilliant group of volunteers which has been very stimulating. My advice to anyone thinking about volunteering is to jump right in! There's immense satisfaction in giving back to your local community. Being an IT tutor I got a chance to share my knowledge with the students who come here to learn computer skills such as online shopping, paying online bills, how to secure online details, and basic skills like Microsoft Office and Microsoft Excel. It is always good to be able to share your knowledge and in return you can refine your skills and gain confidence and feel a sense of accomplishment.

Lastly, it has been a great journey for me to be a part of a Dixon House and I am looking forward to continuing helping out where I am able.

***Bhumika Patel - Computer Tutor***

# OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

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- Melbourne Anglican Foundation
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- Department of Social Services
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- Good Things Foundation
- Churches and Organisations supporting Emergency Relief
- Individual Donors