

2026 Annual Report



Details of activities and finances in the previous financial year
Presented at the Annual General Meeting, Wednesday 28 October, 2026



Table of Contents

1. Minutes of AGM 2025
2. President's Report 2026
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Presentation of the Auditors Financial Report 2026
5. Director's Report 2026
6. Community Garden Management Committee Report 2026

BALWYN

COMMUNITY CENTRE

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held at Balwyn Community Centre Tuesday 28th October 2025

The meeting was opened by Gillian Seery at 11.10am.

ATTENDEES

Meghna Yadav	Ros Kilgour
Gillian Seery	James Zhao
Eric Chua	Rosalie Whalen
Cathy Tumblety	Kathy Roberts
Barbara Jones	James Zhao
Geraldine Fortuin	Caddy Purdy
Bill Oldman	Marg Gear
Leigh Ackland	John Portelli
Susan Cott	

STAFF

Kate Ferguson	Georgie Bell
Christine Gibbins	Gayle Clarke
Linda James	

APOLOGIES

Chris Hepworth, Marj Miller, Mary Barbuto, Philip Derham, Judy Rose, Dina Bereznicki, Sue Gray, Graeme Brennan, Liz McLeish, Lesley Rule, Deb Austin, Lynette Giddings, Vera Polgar, Marios Kyriakou, Jan Wallace, Rosemary Martin, Jill Smithson, Linda Munden, Ann Leembruggen, Tim Wilkinson, Robert Turner, Judith Dunstone, Ingrid David, Marie-Claire Staub, Javad Macsood, Katelyn Stanyer, Mary Bolger, Lily Kovacevic

Welcome by the President of Balwyn Community Centre

President, Gillian Seery welcomed everyone to Balwyn Community Centre and thanked everyone for attending the AGM this year.

1. Confirm the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held Tuesday 22nd October 2024.

Confirmation of the 2024 minutes:

Moved:	Cathy Tumblety
Seconded:	Geraldine Fortuin

2. President's Report 2025

Gillian presented the President's report for 2024-25 on behalf of the Balwyn Community Centre Board of Governance.

Key points:

- Centre has been very busy during financial year July 2025 – June 2025
- Gordon Sonnenberg's Wetlands Art Show held raising proceeds for Worawa Aboriginal College in Healesville
- Childcare busy led by Gayle Clark
- New outdoor play equipment provided by Boroondara council was installed
- 5-year lease renewed this year with Boroondara Council
- Outlined Board duties and thanked members
- New Strategic Plan drafted
- Acknowledged Board members including new members Eric Chua and Kathy Roberts.
- Presented Megna with gift to acknowledge her role as Treasurer
- Presented Marg Gear with gift to acknowledge her role in the Community Garden and Board
- Acknowledged Christine as Community Engagement Co-ordinator
- Acknowledged Deb Austin's retirement as Director of Centre after 15 years
- Acknowledged new Director Kate Ferguson, beginning new chapter for the centre

Gillian then handed over to Eric to present the Treasurer's report.

3. Treasurer's report

Eric Chua presented Treasurer's Financial Report for year ended 30th June 2025.

Key points:

- Reported that 2024-25 has been strong due to revenue from Childcare, Classes and Room Hire
- Balance sheet health and positive cash flow.
- Thanked council for their ongoing support and Megna for her service and hand over

Moved: Bill Oldman

Seconded: Cathy Tumblety

4. Director's report

Kate Ferguson presented Director's report for 2025.

Key Points:

- Acknowledged office staff for
- Acknowledged the wonderful childcare team for providing a safe and nurturing environment children
- Acknowledged our talented tutors
- Thanked Board members for their voluntary contribution to the Centre
- Highlighted new programs and workshops held during the year.
- Thanked the Community Garden Management committee and the Boroondara council for their ongoing support

5. Garden Report

Leigh Ackland on behalf of Chris Hepworth and the Garden Committee, presented the Garden Report for 2024-25.

Key Points:

- Thanked Deb Austin for her support of the Community Garden and Christine in her new role in the Community Garden.
- Announced 3 new committee members – Jenny Zhao, Greg Fegan, Sue Ewart
- Thanked Marg Gear for being the Garden's representative on the Board for several years
- Thanked Chris Hepworth for writing report and her role as previous Manager
- Two working bees were held. A great time for gardeners to work together
- QR code put on notice board for public to learn about the gardens
- Safety considerations added to handbook thanks to Ros Kilgour
- Rat baits checked and restocked
- Fruit fly has been an issue and gardeners advised how to deal with it

Gillian Seery then handed over to Linda James who declared all Board positions open.

Six nominations were received. They were Gillian Seery, Eric Chua, Sue Gray, Geraldine Fortuin, Catherine Tumblety, Kathy Roberts, Megna Yadav

As there were sufficient nominations to fill positions, all nominees were declared elected, and the new Board were thanked for governing the organisation for the next year.

Executive positions will be decided at the Board of Governance meeting to be held in the November meeting.

Duties for Returning Officer were completed, therefore Linda handed over to Gillian to complete the business of the AGM.

Barbara Jones mentioned Tuesday Bridge no longer running however, Thursday and Saturday continuing. Numbers are struggling at times.

Solo group has disbanded. It was running off site.

Meeting declared closed by Gillian at 11.35am.

President's Report 2025–2026

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which Balwyn Community Centre operates, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung People of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise their enduring connection to Country and community. As a community centre, we value the role that connection, belonging and participation play in creating a vibrant, inclusive and welcoming place for all.

On behalf of the Board of Governance, I am pleased to present the President's Report for the year ending 30 June 2026.

The past year has been one of transition, renewal and continued community engagement. Balwyn Community Centre remains a place where people of all ages can learn, connect, create and participate, and I am proud of all that has been achieved during the year.

A significant milestone was the leadership transition from Deb Austin to Kate Ferguson as Director. On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge Deb's long-standing contribution to the Centre and thank her for her dedication and leadership over many years. We were delighted to welcome Kate to the role and have appreciated the energy, professionalism and fresh perspective she has brought to the organisation.

Throughout the year, the Centre continued to offer a diverse range of educational, recreational and wellbeing programs. Existing classes remained well supported, while new opportunities were introduced in response to participant feedback. Creative arts programs, language classes, games groups and wellness activities all contributed to the strong sense of community that exists within the Centre.

Community connection remains at the heart of everything we do. The annual Coat Drive, community exhibitions, Seniors and Mental Health Month events and local community initiatives all contributed to strengthening connections across our community during the year.

The Board comprising, myself, Cathy, Geraldine, Eric, Meghna, Sue, Kathy, and new member Janette, has focused strongly on ensuring the Centre's long-term sustainability and governance throughout the year. Significant work was undertaken reviewing strategic priorities, strengthening policies and procedures, implementing governance improvements and progressing a comprehensive review of our Strategic Plan. Board members completed government mandated child-safe training, and Council provided training on governance and succession planning. The Board also held a workshop to improve risk management practices, compliance and organisational oversight.

We also invested in improved systems, including the implementation of SharePoint and Social Planet, which will support more efficient administration, record management and service delivery.

Our Childcare Service remains an important part of the Centre's operations. While enrolment levels continued to reflect challenges being experienced across the sector, Gail and her team have continued to focus on maintaining high-quality care for local families.

Financially, the Centre experienced some challenges but remains in a sound position. While some costs were higher than previous years, strong participation in classes, room hire, tennis court bookings and ongoing support from the City of Boroondara helped maintain financial stability. Careful management of resources and ongoing oversight by the Board have ensured the Centre remains sustainable.

The Community Garden continues to be a valued asset, promoting sustainability, community participation and social connection. Governance arrangements and committee responsibilities were reviewed to support the garden's ongoing success.

We were pleased to have the continued support of the City of Boroondara through funding, including the Triennial Funding Agreement signed in June 2026, and facilitation of Board training. We appreciate their recognition of the important role neighbourhood houses play in strengthening local communities.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. My sincere thanks also go to our Director, staff, tutors, childcare educators, volunteers, Community Garden participants, members and all those who contribute to making Balwyn Community Centre such a welcoming and vibrant place.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning, fostering community connection and ensuring Balwyn Community Centre continues to thrive as an inclusive and valued community hub.

Gillian Seery
President
Balwyn Community Centre Inc.

Treasurer's Report 2025-2026

The 2026 Financial Year has been a challenging period with the instability in the childcare sector, rising costs and an ever-changing economic environment.

The Australian childcare abuse scandals in 2025 have had a huge impact on the number of children attending childcare with a decline in new enrolments and renewals resulting in significantly less income than previous years. However, the revenue generated from classes, function centre, room hire and the tennis courts were higher than the 2025 Financial Year which has helped to offset some of the loss in income from the childcare. We have also continued to receive support from the City of Boroondara with the operating funding enabling us to keep on delivering various quality programs and services to the community.

The higher expenses are primarily due to staffing costs including the retirement of our previous director, an increase in pay for childcare staff and tutors to meet industry standards as well as superannuation expenses in line with the change of the superannuation guarantee percentage rate. Operating costs including cleaning, repairs & maintenance and IT services have all risen over the year.

There has also been upgrades and improvements undertaken in the centre including new equipment for various classes and staff as well as the implementation of new online software systems to provide efficiency and streamline services.

Despite the negative cashflow from the relatively higher expenses to income for the year, the Balwyn Community Centre is still in a comfortable financial position with assets being proportionately larger than liabilities in the Balance Sheet and an overall reduction in liabilities with lower provisions for employee entitlements.

Thank you to our devoted members, staff, tutors, volunteers and committee, the City of Boroondara and the local community for your continued support.

Eric Chua
Treasurer
Balwyn Community Centre Inc.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.

ABN 83 627 187 593

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

CONTENTS

	Page No.
Statement of Profit or Loss	2
Statement of Comprehensive Income	3
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Changes in Equity	5
Statement of Cash Flows	6
Notes to the Financial Statements	7
Director's Declaration	12
Independent Reviewer's Report	13

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026	2025
		\$	\$
Revenue		1,104,902	1,086,297
Gross profit		1,104,902	1,086,297
Accounting and Audit		(17,172)	(15,905)
Depreciation expenses		(1,594)	(3,689)
Office Staff		(381,644)	(269,835)
Creche		(364,861)	(327,388)
Staff Costs		(124,442)	(90,233)
Tutors		(202,582)	(187,015)
Other expenses		(120,927)	(85,675)
Profit before income tax		(108,320)	106,557
Income tax expense		-	-
Profit for the year		(108,320)	106,557
Profit attributable to member of the entity		(108,320)	106,557

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026	2025
		\$	\$
Profit for the year		(108,320)	106,557
Other comprehensive income:			
Prior year adjustments not processed		24,303	45,071
Total other comprehensive income for the year		24,303	45,071
Total comprehensive income for the year		(84,017)	151,628
Total comprehensive income attributable to member of the entity		(84,017)	151,628

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026	2025
		\$	\$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	599,588	712,139
Trade and other receivables	3	9,866	6,060
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>609,454</u>	<u>718,199</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	4	5,845	1,152
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>5,845</u>	<u>1,152</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u><u>615,299</u></u>	<u><u>719,351</u></u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	5	18,956	23,567
Income in advance	6	65,344	48,763
Provisions	7	70,196	112,984
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>154,496</u>	<u>185,314</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	7	34,487	23,704
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>34,487</u>	<u>23,704</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u><u>188,982</u></u>	<u><u>209,017</u></u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>426,317</u></u>	<u><u>510,334</u></u>
EQUITY			
Programs Reserve		25,000	25,000
Retained earnings		401,317	485,334
TOTAL EQUITY		<u><u>426,317</u></u>	<u><u>510,334</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Programs Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2024	25,000	333,706	358,706
Comprehensive income			
Profit for the year	-	106,557	106,557
Recognition of provisions	-	45,071	45,071
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the member of the entity		151,628	151,628
Balance at 30 June 2025	25,000	485,334	510,334
Balance at 1 July 2025	25,000	485,334	510,334
Comprehensive income			
Profit for the year	-	(108,320)	(108,320)
Prior year adjustments not processed	-	24,303	24,303
Transfer to / from reserves	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to the member of the entity	-	(84,017)	(84,017)
Balance at 30 June 2026	25,000	401,317	426,317

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	Note	2026 \$	2025 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from customers		1,084,974	1,082,529
Payments to suppliers & employees		(1,207,360)	(925,907)
Interest received		16,122	8,635
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	8	(106,264)	165,257
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of plant & equipment		(6,287)	-
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(6,287)	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(112,551)	165,257
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		712,139	546,882
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	8	599,588	712,139

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

These statements should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The directors have determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that these are special purpose because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. The financial statements are therefore special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in order to meet the needs of the members.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the significant accounting policies disclosed below, which the directors have determined are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise.

The financial statements have been prepared on a accrual basis and are based on historical costs unless stated otherwise in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

(a) Property, Plant and Equipment

All property, plant and equipment except for freehold land and buildings are initially measured at cost and are depreciated over their useful lives to the association.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, including buildings and capitalised lease assets but excluding freehold land, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

(b) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

(c) Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors

Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors include amounts due from members and donors. Those expected to be collected within 12 months are classified as current.

(d) Impairment of Assets

At the end of the reporting period the entity reviews the carrying value of its assets and if an indications exists that the assets have been impaired then the asset will be written down to the recoverable amount.

(e) Employee Benefits

Provisions is made for the association's liability for employee benefits and are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

(f) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash Equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call with banks and short term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(g) Revenue and other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration receivable.

The association receives assets from the government and other parties for nil or nominal consideration in order to further its objectives. The association recognises income equal to the carrying value of the asset.

Operating grants, donations and bequests are assessed to determine whether the contract is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15. If the contract and obligations are enforceable and specific then revenue is recognised as the performance obligations are met. If the contract and obligations are not enforceable or specific the revenue is recognised in the profit and loss.

(h) Leases

Leases below market terms and conditions (commonly known as peppercorn leases) are accounted for at cost as allowed under the standard. The lease from Boroondara commenced on 1 April 2025 until 31 March 2030 with a cost of \$1.00.

(i) Trade and Other Payables

Trade and Other Payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability and is normally paid within one months of recognition.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
2. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash at bank	221,297	349,284
Term Deposit	378,241	362,759
Petty cash	50	97
	<u>599,588</u>	<u>712,139</u>
3. TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
CURRENT		
Trade debtors	9,866	6,060
	<u>9,866</u>	<u>6,060</u>
4. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Leasehold Improvements at Cost	49,759	49,759
Less accumulated amortisation	<u>(49,759)</u>	<u>(49,759)</u>
	-	-
Plant and equipment at Cost	106,707	100,420
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>(100,862)</u>	<u>(99,268)</u>
	5,845	1,152
Total property, plant and equipment	<u>5,845</u>	<u>1,152</u>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
5. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Other creditors	18,956	23,567
	<u>18,956</u>	<u>23,567</u>
6. INCOME IN ADVANCE		
Fees in advance	65,344	48,763
	<u>65,344</u>	<u>48,763</u>
7. PROVISIONS		
CURRENT		
Aggregate Employee entitlements	70,196	112,984
	<u>70,196</u>	<u>112,984</u>
NON-CURRENT		
Aggregate Employee entitlements	34,487	23,704
	<u>34,487</u>	<u>23,704</u>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.
ABN 83 627 187 593

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

	2026	2025
	\$	\$
8. CASH FLOW INFORMATION		
(a) Reconciliation of cash		
Cash at bank	221,297	349,284
Term deposit	378,241	362,759
Petty cash	50	97
	<u>599,588</u>	<u>712,139</u>
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with profit after income tax		
Profit after income tax	(108,320)	106,557
Non-cash flows in profit:		
Depreciation	1,594	3,689
Prior year adjustments not processed	24,303	45,071
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
Decrease (Increase) in Current Receivables	(3,806)	4,867
Increase (Decrease) in Creditors and Accruals	16,581	10,743
Increase (Decrease) in Other Creditors	(4,611)	7,107
Increase (Decrease) in Provisions	(32,005)	(12,777)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	<u>(106,264)</u>	<u>165,257</u>

These notes should be read in conjunction with the attached compilation report.

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE DECLARATION

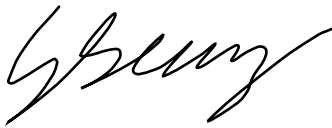
The directors have determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In accordance with a resolution of the directors of Balwyn Community Centre Inc, the directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2026, the statement of profit or loss for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes presents fairly the associations financial position as at 30 June 2026 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements;
2. In the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.
3. (a) The association has kept such accounting records that correctly record and explain the transactions and financial position of the company.

(b) The association has kept its accounting records in such a manner that would enable true and fair accounts of the association to be prepared from time to time.

**Board
Member**



Gillian Seery
President
October 2026



Eric Chua
Treasurer

INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PRACTITIONER'S REVIEW REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BALWYN COMMUNITY CENTRE INC.

Report on the Financial Statements

I have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Balwyn Community Centre Inc., which comprise the Assets and Liabilities Statement as at 30 June, 2026, and the Income and Expenditure statement for the year then ended, Cash Flow Statement and Statement of Changes in Equity, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Assurance practitioner's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express a conclusion on the accompanying financial statements. I conducted my review in accordance with Standard on Review Engagements ASRE 2400, *Review of a Financial Report Performed by an Assurance Practitioner Who is Not the Auditor of the Entity*. ASRE 2400 requires me to conclude whether anything has come to my attention that causes me to believe that the financial statements, taken as a whole, are not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. This Standard also requires me to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of financial statements in accordance with ASRE 2400 is a limited assurance engagement. The assurance practitioner performs procedures, primarily consisting of making enquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less than those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Accordingly, I do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

In Association:

Abacus Professional Group Pty Ltd

- Certified Practising Accountants – K Jenkins & Assoc. Pty Ltd G Philp & Assoc. Pty Ltd
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

Conclusion

Based on my review, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that these financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Balwyn Community Centre Inc. as at 30 June, 2026, and of its financial performance for the year then ended, in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Balwyn Community Centre Inc. meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



Jason Mark Lyster CA

26 October 2026

Blackburn VIC 3130

In Association:

Abacus Professional Group Pty Ltd

- Certified Practising Accountants – K Jenkins & Assoc. Pty Ltd G Philp & Assoc. Pty Ltd
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

Director's Report

2025/26 has been another strong year for the Centre, with a string of sparkling highlights. Balwyn Community Centre is a vibrant and energetic organisation that is owned by and focused on our local community. Across our classes and workshops, our social groups, our community garden, and our childcare centre, we've helped people to connect, grow, and thrive.

As a Neighbourhood House, we put the community at the centre of everything we do. We operate on a set of sector principles including community ownership, community participation, empowerment, access and equity, lifelong learning, advocacy, and social action.

Our language, art, and exercise classes continue to engage our members and keep us active physically, mentally, and creatively. New classes last year included barre, tai chi for falls prevention, oil painting, pastels (extended to a full term, from initial short courses), additional watercolour and chair yoga classes, and new beginners classes for French, German, and Italian.

We had an increased focus on low and no-cost programming last year, increasing our regular social groups to include canasta and a walking group. We've been able to hold a series of free workshops for our members around gardening, food, and mental health, with topics including Introduction to Sourdough, Everyday Mindfulness, Eat well & Age well, and Getting Started with Organic Gardening.

Our gallery upstairs hosted the Before I Turn 100 exhibition from Boroondara Council and the A Year in the Life of Boroondara photography exhibition from Camberwell Camera Club before being launched as a community gallery, showcasing vibrant work from our talented art students. Fresh pieces are on display each quarter.

We hosted our first Community Garage Sale in November, as part of the Garage Sale Trail, with over 20 stallholders and hundreds of visitors coming through and making it a great day. We've also had many new visitors come in through events for Seniors Month, Women's Health Week, Men's Health Week, and Neighbourhood House Week.

Our Childcare team have also had a good year, with our numbers of enrolled children growing after an initial dip with some disruptions to the wider childcare sector. Our team of nine qualified educators, led by Gayle, work tirelessly to support our youngest members to develop and grow.

There has been a lot of work happening behind the scenes this year to work towards our strategic vision of creating a vibrant Centre with broad community engagement, strong governance, management, and finances, and well-supported people.

The Board of Governance have completed our latest strategic plan, a document that will guide our thinking and planning through the next three years. The Board have also undertaken training in risk management to put us in the most secure position over the coming years. The Board of Governance, led by President Gillian Seery, do great work in steering the Centre and we thank them for all of their hard work.

In the office, we've transitioned all of our classes and groups (around 75 per week!) and our membership database from a series of spreadsheets into a software platform specifically designed for Neighbourhood Houses called Social Planet. This has been a big piece of work but sets us up to be more agile and responsive in the future and to continue to grow.

Thanks also to our team of dedicated teaching staff and to all of our regular volunteers, group coordinators, and to the Garden Management Committee.

I would also like to extend thanks and recognition to Georgia Lukacs-Rotow, Caddy Purdy, and the Community Development team at the City of Boroondara, who provide us with some funding and support, and to Cr Shima Ibuki who has been a strong supporter of our Centre.

I look forward to more amazing highlights in 2027.

Kate Ferguson

Centre Director

Balwyn Community Centre Community Garden

Annual Report 2026

The Balwyn Community Centre Community Garden continued to thrive throughout 2026 as a productive, well-maintained and welcoming community asset. Gardeners demonstrated a strong commitment to cultivating their plots, supporting one another, and contributing to the broader community environment. The year was characterised by active governance, policy review, environmental improvements, volunteer participation, and the successful induction of new gardeners.

Governance and Committee Activities

The Garden Committee met three times throughout the year, with meetings were held in March, May and October, Garden reports were provided to the Board in March and June.

The Garden Committee meetings focused on operational activities in the garden, auditing of plot utilisation, review of the Garden Policy and Gardeners Handbook and coordination of maintenance activities. The committee maintained a strong focus on effective management, sustainability and ensuring equitable access to garden plots.

During the year both the Community Garden Policy and the Gardeners Handbook were reviewed and updated. Amendments clarified plot allocation processes, provided guidance on pest management, and improved consistency in garden operations. The committee is also proposing a future policy change, to expanding the eligibility radius for new applicants from 3 km to 4 km in response to declining waitlist numbers.

The committee acknowledged the outstanding contribution of long-serving committee member Chris Hepworth, who stepped down from committee duties after more than 20 years of service while continuing as a gardener. Her extensive knowledge and dedication have been invaluable to the garden community.

Garden Participation and Plot Management

Throughout 2026 the garden remained highly valued by members and the local community. At the beginning of the year all plots were allocated and there was a waiting list of six prospective gardeners. During the year several long-term gardeners retired and some plots became available, allowing new gardeners to be inducted and allocated plots. By October, the waiting list had reduced to one applicant, reflecting a period of transition within the garden community.

The committee conducted regular audits of plot utilisation and maintenance standards. Where gardens were significantly underutilised, gardeners were contacted and given the opportunity to

improve their plots. In some cases, plots were relinquished and reallocated to people on the waiting list. This process ensured that garden space remained productive and available to active participants. Garden audits conducted during the year found that the majority of plots were well maintained and actively cultivated.

The committee also continued to support accessibility within the garden, with raised garden beds being prioritised for gardeners who require them for health or mobility reasons.

Environmental Sustainability and Maintenance

The Community Garden maintained a strong focus on environmentally responsible practices. One of the most significant decisions during 2026 was the transition from second-generation rodenticides to a first-generation baiting system. This change was implemented to reduce the risk of secondary poisoning to native wildlife, particularly owls and other birds of prey. To ensure continued effectiveness, the number of bait stations was increased, and baiting frequency was adjusted accordingly.

Infrastructure improvements undertaken during the year included installation of new hoses, repairs to the central tank water tap, replacement of leaking taps, and raising of the central seat. The committee also discussed improvements such as enhanced communication boards within the garden and plot identification signage. These projects contribute to creating a safer, more functional and welcoming environment.

While low mains water pressure remains an unresolved issue following the redevelopment of the centre, tank water supplies continued to provide acceptable water pressure for the majority of gardeners and no significant concerns were reported.

Community Engagement and Volunteer Contributions

Community participation remained a cornerstone of the garden's success. The May working bee was well attended, with members completing a range of maintenance tasks and sharing morning tea together afterwards. Planning commenced for the November working bee, supported by comprehensive task lists developed by committee members to ensure ongoing maintenance and improvement of the site.

Informal gardeners' meetings were established during the year, providing an opportunity to meet other gardeners, share knowledge, produce, seedlings and morning tea. This has been facilitated by the establishment of a gardeners WhatsApp group, and utilisation of the new whiteboard attached to the shed.

The committee continued to encourage volunteer involvement and recruitment of new committee members to assist with governance and practical garden activities. Newsletters were used to communicate opportunities for participation, working bee dates and important garden updates.

The Balwyn Community Centre Community Garden continues to provide a vibrant space where people can grow food, share knowledge, build friendships and contribute positively to the local environment. The committee thanks all gardeners, volunteers, Balwyn Community Centre staff and Board members for their ongoing support and commitment throughout 2026.

Dated: 21-Oct-2026