



# Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2018

**Neighbourhood houses Victoria Inc**

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## Respondents

315 respondents representing approximately 83% of all neighbourhood houses in Victoria. This includes 310 neighbourhood houses receiving State Government funding through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) and 5 of the estimated 35 neighbourhood houses not receiving any funding through NHCP.

It is worth noting that the overall number of respondents is less than previous years due to the survey no longer being a part of houses' compulsory DHHS reporting requirements. For comparative purposes the data is extrapolated to 380 neighbourhood houses based on historical completion rates.

## Key highlights

- **Record number of community members visited Victorian neighbourhood houses:** Victorians continue to visit their neighbourhood house, in an average week, in record numbers, up to 201,400 visits from 190,520 in 2017. This is on average, over 530 visits per house per week which is an increase of 25 visits per house per week since 2017.
- **Creating community value:** Over \$126 million in increased quality of life through fostering relationship building and maintenance and providing a stepping stone to social participation
- **Volunteering worth in excess of \$51.9 million:** Since 2012 the number of volunteers has increased by a remarkable 30%. In 2018 more than 6,500 (2017: 6,654) Victorians contributed an average of 69 volunteer hours per neighbourhood house each week.
- **Provision of Victorian community infrastructure:** Communities made use of their neighbourhood houses for an average of 55 hours per week. This is the equivalent of approximately 8 hours per day over 7 days. Neighbourhood houses provided use of rooms and space to more than 3,667 (2017: 3,916) community groups and additional support to more than 2,332 (2017: 2,449) other community groups across Victoria.
- **Partnerships:** Neighbourhood houses had 3,689 (2017: 3,539) active partnerships in an average month. There has been a 30% increase in the number of partnerships brokered within the sector since 2012.

# Distribution of neighbourhood houses across Victoria

The distribution of the number of respondents varied in 2018 compared to previous years. Only 75% of houses located in rural communities with a population below 3,000 responded to the survey, while the metro, regional/rural: population greater than 10,000 and rural: population between 3,000 and 10,000 responded at 85%, 84% and 87% respectively.

The decline in smaller rural respondents may be due to the lower incomes of these houses which in turn translates to having less staff time to complete a survey which is was not compulsory. The median income of a house in rural: population below 3,000 is around \$122,807 while metro Houses have the highest median income of around \$367,315.

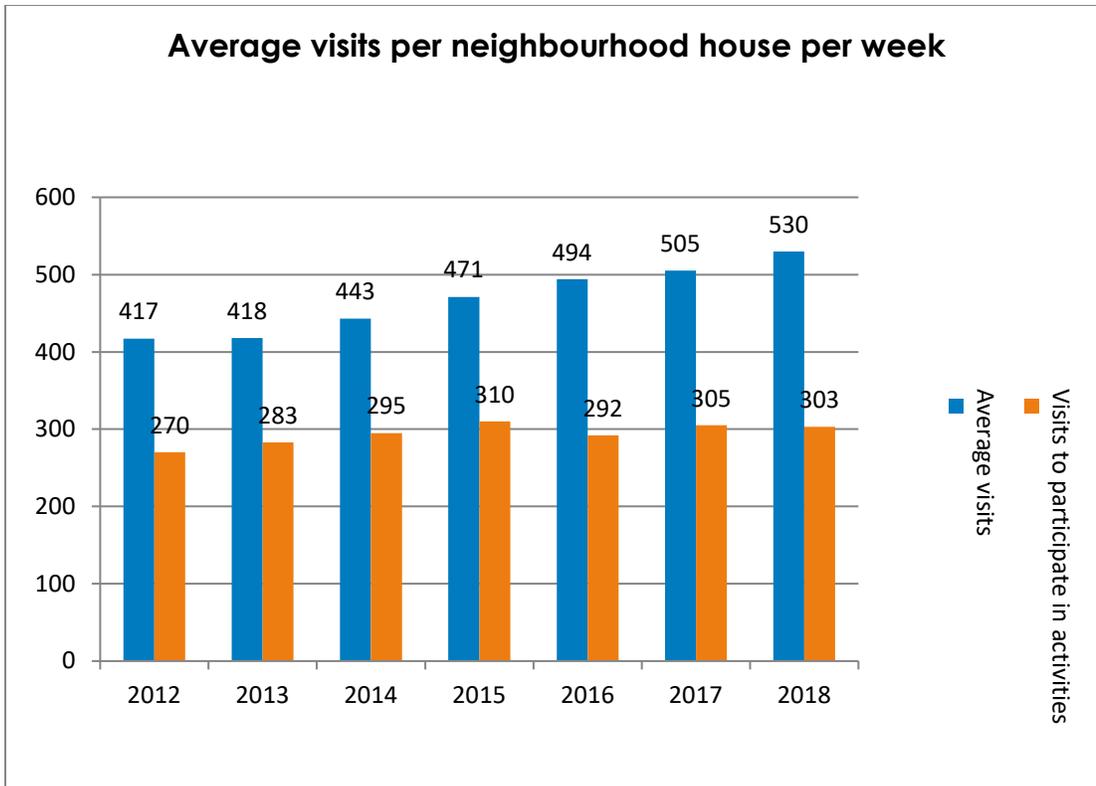
Community location	Neighbourhood houses			
	% 2017	Number	% 2018	Number
Metropolitan	51%	193	52%	164
Regional/Rural: population greater than 10,000	13%	49	13%	41
Rural: population between 3,000 and 10,000	14%	52	14%	45
Rural: population below 3,000	22%	83	20%	62

*All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.*

## Participation

There was a total of 201,400 visits in an average week to a neighbourhood house in 2018. More than 57% (115,140) of these Victorians participated in programmed activities.

The table below illustrates how participation has consistently increased over the last seven years. This represents a 27% increase since 2012.



In 2018, Deloitte Access Economics produced a report attaching a monetary value to the work of Morwell Neighbourhood House, including the value of providing community connections. To achieve this, they assumed that 50% of the annual unique visitors to the neighbourhood house were one off or infrequent for the purpose of their calculations. Appendix C of their report outlines the detail on their method.

Because programmed activities are group activities run over a period of time and therefore not attended in a one-off or infrequent way, using the number of participants per week in programmed activities figure above in place of an estimation of the percentage of participants that are not infrequent or one off, allows for a conservative calculation of the value of social connections for the 315, 2018 survey respondents.

The number of weekly participants in programmed activity is multiplied by the 57% of participants identifying meeting new people/making friends and/or spending time with others as benefits of attending their neighbourhood house based on the 2017 Participants Survey. In that survey, the two reported benefits used in the Deloitte calculations are most strongly associated with participants who identified programmed activities as their reason for attending including, social and support groups, job training and support and other courses and classes.

The use of the participants in programmed activities as the basis for the calculation is conservative as it uses a typical weekly attendance figure. The actual total number of participants in programmed activities over a year will be greater as new people participate in activities. In addition, it does not include volunteers, 62% of whom report a social connection/participation benefit state-wide, nor does it include regular informal attendance i.e. drop ins where relationships are also built and maintained.

The \$ Values below are expressed in 2019 equivalents i.e. CPI added to the Quality Adjusted Life Year value, which is consistent with Deloitte's method.

Using the Morwell Neighbourhood House report descriptors and the above variation to the Deloitte assumptions and method, the value of the contribution of 315 neighbourhood houses to the community in increased quality of life is over \$126 million comprising:

- \$115,171,800 through fostering relationship building and maintenance
- \$11,517,200 through providing a stepping stone to social participation

## Programs

In 2018 there were increases in programs determined by people with a disability, people with mental health issues and refugees/asylum seekers.

There was a considerable drop in programs determined by gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender people in 2018 (8%) compared to 2017 (14%). This is possibly related to community campaigning prior to the postal survey on marriage equality which took place in December 2017. Participation is still above 2012 levels.

There was a 7% decline in programs determined by young people (13-25). However, further analysis shows that neighbourhood houses with programs determined by young people in 2017 were overrepresented in neighbourhood houses that did not complete the 2018 survey. Despite this anomaly, there appears to be a net decline in activities determined by this cohort.

Programs determined by other cohorts have remained relatively stable since 2017.

Percentage of Neighbourhood houses delivering activities determined by specific groups			
Program/activity type	2012	2017	2018
Determined by senior Victorians (60+)	71%	80%	80%
Determined by people with a disability	55%	55%	56%
Determined by men aged 45-64	49%	51%	49%
Determined by people with mental health issues	40%	46%	48%
Determined by young people (13-25)	40%	43%	36%
Determined by single parents	23%	25%	24%
Determined by public housing tenants	18%	23%	20%
Delivered in community languages	17%	21%	20%
Determined by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People	8%	13%	11%
Determined by teenaged parents	10%	9%	7%
Determined by gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender people	5%	14%	8%
Refugees/Asylum Seekers	n/a	16%	17%

## Neighbourhood house infrastructure

The most notable change in infrastructure occurs in Men's Shed/Community Shed, with a 12% reduction since 2017. However, this could be directly attributed to the lower number of rural houses that completed the survey in 2018, considering that in 2017, the largest group of men's shed/community sheds (37%) were situated in houses located in rural areas with a population below 3,000 followed by metropolitan Houses with 34%.

Informal space to hang out and meet people and community gardens have increased by 3% while community/social enterprise has decreased by 3%.

Annual Comparison of Available Infrastructure (%)			
Available Infrastructure	2012	2017	2018
Informal space to hang out and meet people	n/a	80%	83%
Community Kitchens	43%	66%	68%
Community/social enterprise (e.g. café, catering, op shop, etc.)	15%	31%	28%
Community gardens	41%	58%	61%
Information and Communication Technology training rooms/Computer lab	72%	79%	78%
Men's Shed / Community Shed	30%	30%	18%
Public Computer / internet access / kiosk	72%	87%	85%
Playground	46%	48%	50%
Community bus / car	15%	16%	15%
Child care rooms / facilities	44%	42%	45%
Photocopier / printer / fax	97%	98%	98%
Public telephone access	36%	41%	41%
Small meeting / activity rooms (20 or less people)	97%	100%	99%
Large meeting / activity room (20+ people)	76%	83%	84%
Hall	31%	43%	46%

## Services

Tutoring for Individuals has increased by 8%. This increase in one-to-one tutoring is supported by evidence from the Digital Literacy in neighbourhood houses survey<sup>ii</sup>. Houses appear to be moving away from classroom-based information technology courses to one-on-one device support as cohort's needs change.

There have also been increases in employment services (5%), emergency relief (3%), and food security (3%). These changes occur in the context of demonstrably inadequate income support for people on Commonwealth allowances, stagnant wage growth and droughts. Library/Book swap (3%) disaster relief & recovery (3%) and gardening groups (3%) also increased. There was a 4% decrease in Grant Writing support.

Percentage of Neighbourhood houses offering services by service type			
Examples of Services provided	2012	2017	2018
Auspice other community organisations	52%	60%	61%
Centrelink	13%	13%	12%
Child care	37%	34%	35%
Community advocacy	50%	66%	66%
Community consultation	58%	76%	77%
Community Information/Citizens Advice Bureau	51%	68%	67%
Disaster relief & recovery (bushfire, floods, etc.)	15%	19%	22%
Emergency relief (breakfast clubs, food bank, etc.)	24%	36%	39%
Employment services	15%	28%	33%
Financial counselling	14%	18%	17%
Food security (e.g. food co-op)	14%	30%	33%
Gardening groups/clubs/activities	n/a	75%	78%
Grant writing support	33%	50%	46%

Home services (e.g. lawn mowing, home repairs etc)	n/a	6%	5%
Library service/book swap	40%	66%	69%
Maternal and Child Health checks/immunisations	14%	18%	18%
NILS/loan schemes	12%	11%	9%
Public computer/internet access	76%	87%	86%
Reception for hub/other services	34%	49%	51%
Referral (both formal & informal)	78%	91%	92%
Resume services	34%	49%	49%
Room hire	93%	97%	97%
Tax Help	33%	27%	28%
Tool library/equipment hire	15%	17%	17%
Toy Library	n/a	10%	10%
Tutoring for individuals	n/a	27%	35%
VicRoads	2%	4%	4%
Visitor/tourist information	24%	35%	36%
Volunteer skills bank/Volunteer matching	16%	28%	28%

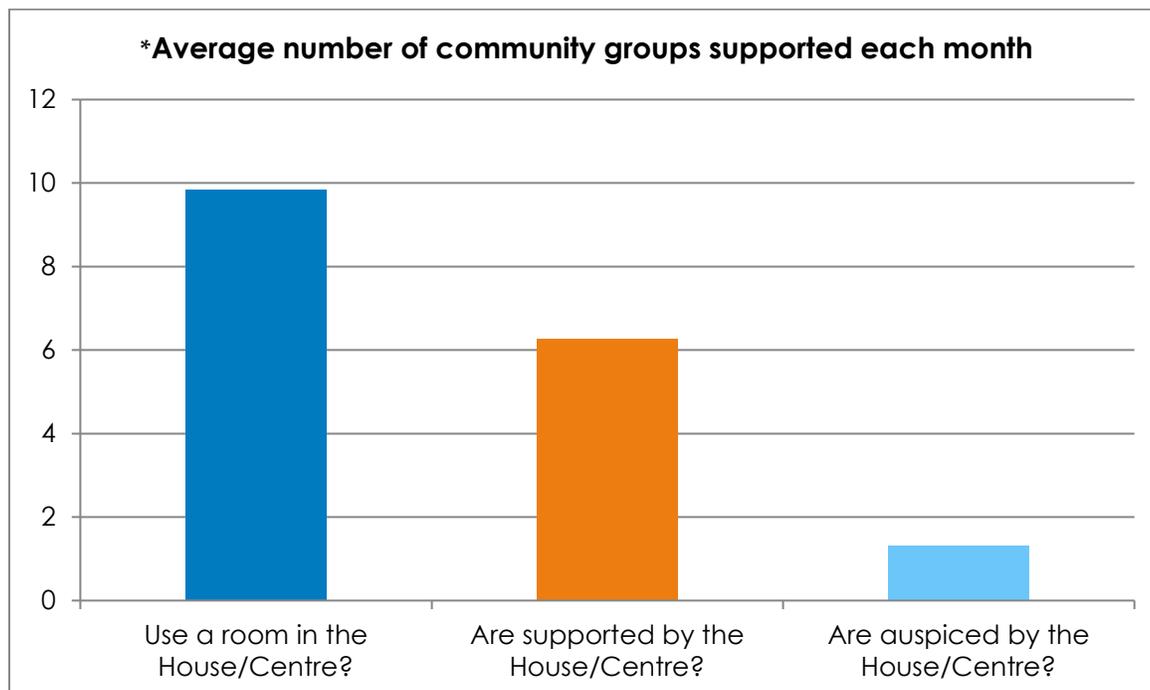
## Committees

In Victoria, approximately 2,746 people, (2017: 2,796) served on neighbourhood house governance committees. The average committee had 8 members and this has been a consistent position for the past 6 years.

Committees contributed 31 hours of their time to committee business each month. In 2018 more than 130,177 (2017:138,540) hours of voluntary governance work was provided<sup>iii</sup>. This is the equivalent of 66 people working full time on governance for Victorian communities over 12 months.

## Support for community groups

In 2018, approximately 3,742 (2017: 3,916) community groups and organisations made use of their neighbourhood house in an average month. This represents just under 10 groups per neighbourhood house per month. Beyond this, support was provided to 2,381 groups (2017:2,449) each month. Almost 500 community groups were auspiced at neighbourhood houses in 2018.

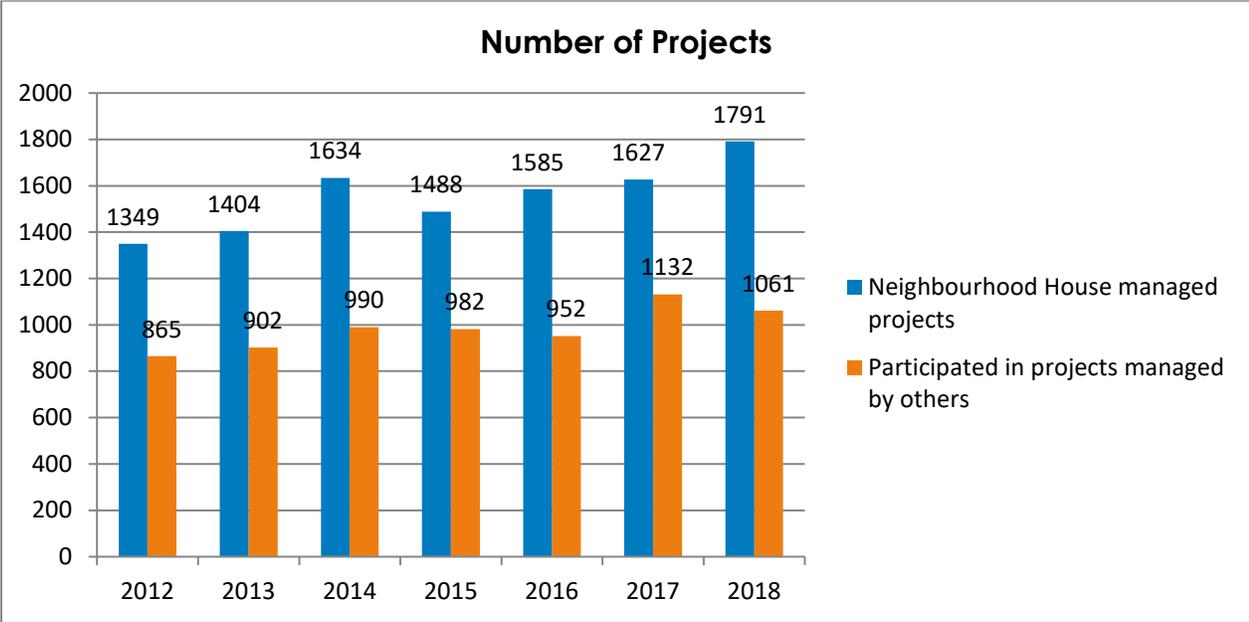


## Volunteers

- There was another slight decline in volunteer numbers in 2018. In 2018, more than 6,540 (2017:6,650) people volunteered at their neighbourhood house each week. However, the average remained steady; more than 17 volunteers per neighbourhood house each week.
- Over 26,000 hours of voluntary work were undertaken each week in 2018 averaging 71 hours per neighbourhood house. Totalling 1,245,690 volunteer hours for the year, the estimated economic value of this work is more than \$51.9 million.

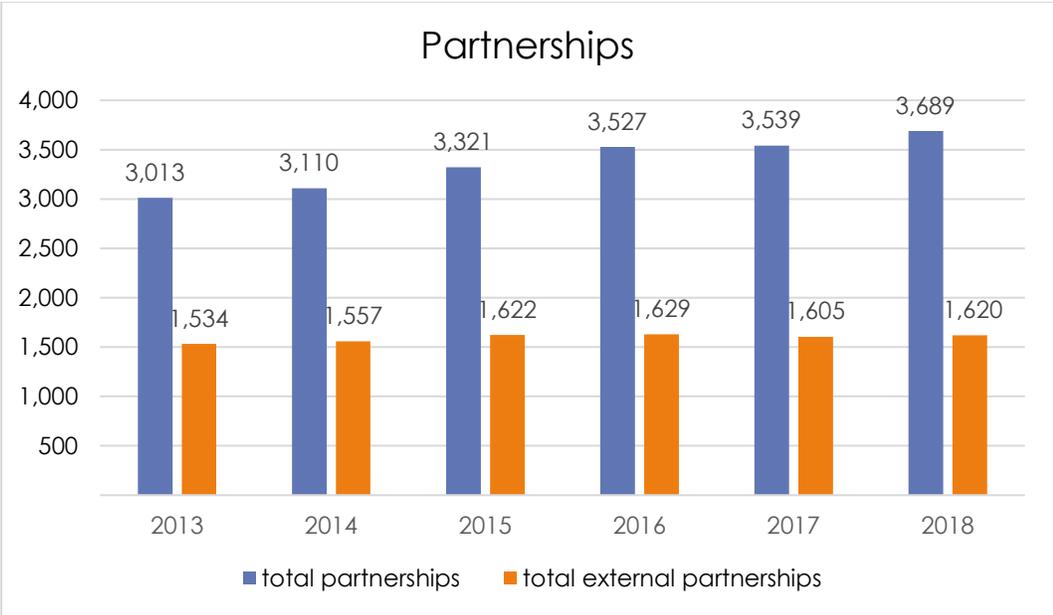
# Projects

Neighbourhood houses managed 1,791 projects in 2018. This is an average of just over 4.5 per neighbourhood house. They also participated in an additional 1,061 projects managed by other organisations.



# Partnerships

In 2018 there were a reported 3,689 active partnerships in neighbourhood houses in an average month (2017: 3,539), an average of just under ten regular partnerships per neighbourhood house per month. Since 2013 there has been a 22% increase in active partnerships.<sup>iv</sup> Just under 91% of neighbourhood houses were represented on a total of 1,620 external groups (2017:1,605). This is an average of 4.3 external groups per neighbourhood house.



# Workforce

In 2018, neighbourhood houses employed an average of one full-time staff member, accounting for just over 7% of the total workforce. As in 2017, the majority of the workforce is made up of casual or sessional tutors (42%) followed by part-time staff (38%).

## Seven year trends

Many measures have remained relatively stable since 2012, such as the number of people serving on committees. Other areas, such as reported income have shown fluctuations over time. As the table below shows, there has been some notable increases in some areas.

Trends 2012 – 2018				
Examples of services provided	2012	2017	2018	% change 2012-2018
Participants per week	153,800	190,520	201,400	24%
Volunteers per week	4,988	6,654	6,546	33%
Volunteer hours worked per	17,926	26,667	26,336	49%
Partnerships	2,841	3,539	3,689	30%
Participants in programmed	100,182	114,987	115,140	15%

## Adapting to local need

While neighbourhood houses across Victoria have much in common, their responsiveness to the types of communities in which they are located creates some measurable differences. This is true for several community types. With neighbourhood houses distributed almost equally between Metropolitan Melbourne and Rural Victoria, an analysis from this perspective reveals some notable differences.

### Types of premises

Rural Houses (15.1%) are more likely than metro Houses (6.2%) to own their own building, while metro House premises are more likely to be owned by Local Government (76.5%) than rural House premises (53.4%).

	Metro response percent	Rural response percent
Local Government	76.5%	53.4%
Health service	0.6%	4.8%
Other community/non-profit organisation (including church or religious organisation)	5.6%	4.8%
Office of Housing	6.2%	11.0%
Other state government	4.9%	10.3%
Private person or company	0.0%	0.7%
We own our own building	6.2%	15.1%

### Delivery determined by groups

Programs delivered in community languages are much more prevalent in metro houses (32.5%) than rural houses (6.9%), as are programs determined by refugees/asylum seekers, metro (25.8%) and rural (6.9%). However, programs determined by LGBTI people are more common in rural houses (12.4%) than metro houses (4.3%), as are programs determined by Aboriginal and or/Torres Strait Islanders (rural 12.4%, metro 9.8%) and single parents (rural 31%, metro 18%).

	<b>Metro response percent</b>	<b>Rural response percent</b>
Delivered in community languages	32.5%	6.9%
Determined by young people (13-25)	34.4%	40.0%
Determined by Aboriginal and or/Torres Strait Islanders	9.8%	12.4%
Determined by teenaged parents	6.1%	8.3%
Determined by men aged 45-64	49.1%	50.3%
Determined by senior Victorians (60+)	80.4%	54.1%
Determined by gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex and/or transgender people	4.3%	12.4%
Determined by people with disability	62.0%	52.4%
Determined by people with mental health issues	49.1%	49.0%
Determined by single parents	17.8%	31.0%
Determined by public housing tenants	20.9%	19.3%
Determined by refugees/asylum seekers	25.8%	6.9%
None of the above	4.3%	9.0%

### **Available services**

Houses in rural areas are far more likely to offer other vital services than metro Houses, such as Centrelink, Community Information/Citizens Advisory Bureau, disaster relief & recovery and NILS/loan schemes.

Metro Houses are more likely than rural Houses to offer child care and maternal and child health checks/immunisations.

Referrals (both formal & informal), room hire, toy library and volunteer skillsbank/volunteer matching are offered at similar rates in both rural and metro Houses.

	<b>Metro response percent</b>	<b>Rural response percent</b>
Auspice other community organisations	53.7%	68.9%
Centrelink	4.9%	19.6%
Child care	45.7%	23.6%
Community advocacy	59.1%	73.0%
Community consultation	75.0%	79.1%
Community Information / Citizens Advisory Bureau	59.1%	75.0%
Disaster relief & recovery (bushfire, floods, etc.)	9.8%	34.5%
Emergency relief (e.g. food parcels, breakfast clubs, food bank, food vouchers, etc.)	34.1%	45.3%
Employment services	24.4%	42.6%
Financial counselling	14.0%	19.6%
Food security (e.g. food co-op)	29.3%	37.2%
Gardening groups/clubs/activities	75.6%	81.1%
Grant writing support	37.8%	55.4%
Home services (e.g. lawnmowing, home repairs, gardening)	3.0%	7.4%
Library service / book swap	65.9%	73.0%
Maternal and Child Health checks / immunisations	22.0%	12.8%
NILS / loan schemes	3.0%	16.2%
Public computer / internet access	76.8%	95.3%
Reception for hub / other services	45.1%	57.4%
Referral (both formal & informal)	90.9%	92.6%
Resume services	32.9%	66.9%
Room hire	97.0%	97.3%
Tax Help	20.7%	35.8%
Tool library / equipment hire	8.5%	26.4%
Toy Library	9.1%	10.8%
Tutoring for individuals	29.3%	41.2%
VicRoads	2.4%	4.7%
Visitor / tourist information	19.5%	53.4%
Volunteer skillsbank / Volunteer matching	27.4%	28.4%

## References

Deloitte Access Economics. (2018). *Social impact analysis Morwell Neighbourhood house*. Retrieved from [http://www.morwellnh.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MNH\\_Social-Impact-Analysis\\_May-2018\\_.pdf](http://www.morwellnh.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MNH_Social-Impact-Analysis_May-2018_.pdf)

Egli, V., Oliver, M. & Tautolo, E. (2016), *The development of a model of community garden benefits to wellbeing*, Elsevier BV. Accessed online 4 May 2018. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335516300249>

Hickman, P. (2010). *Neighbourhood Infrastructure, 'Third Places' and Patterns of Social Interaction*.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> The hourly rate of \$41.72 is based on ABS data from May 2017 to May 2018 <https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/help/valuing-volunteer-labour>

<sup>ii</sup> NHVic/Australia Post *Digital Literacy in Neighbourhood houses Survey 2018* – unpublished.

<sup>iii</sup> Assumes 12 meetings annually for the 92% of respondents that have a Committee.

<sup>iv</sup> There are no corresponding data for 2012 as this question was first introduced in this form in 2013.