

KEEP OUR DOORS OPEN

BACK THE CAMPAIGN TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF OUR SECTOR

Imagine every neighbourhood in Victoria thriving — where people of all ages and backgrounds can access support, build skills, find connection, and belong. Neighbourhood Houses are the heart of these communities — offering vital services, education, and a welcoming place for everyone.

But right now, Neighbourhood Houses are at breaking point. Nearly half of all Houses in Victoria have recorded a loss for two years running. The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) no longer covers the true cost of employing a manager for the funded hours (let alone other operational costs!), and inadequate funding has become the number one wellbeing issue identified by managers across the state.

Years of underfunding mean too many Houses are operating with limited staff and stretched resources — despite growing demand and a rise in complex safety issues, including mental health crises and instances of violence. Houses are being forced to cut open hours, reduce programs, or fundraise just to turn on the lights.

Unless government acts, more doors will close — and communities will lose trusted, safe and inclusive spaces they rely on every day.

Our Campaign Ask

In the 2026 Victorian Budget, we call on the State Government to increase the NHCP hourly rate by 25% (an additional \$11.7M annually). This increase is the minimum required to restore funding to sustainable levels.





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Why it matters

Neighbourhood Houses are the heart of our communities. With restored funding, we can continue to:

- Keep our doors open for the most vulnerable
- Provide pathways into jobs and lifelong learning
- Deliver emergency food and material relief
- Support volunteers and strengthen social connection
- Build safer, healthier, more resilient communities

The Bottom Line

Neighbourhood Houses deliver enormous social and economic value. But with the NHCP rate 20% lower than a decade ago, open hours have dropped to their lowest level in 10 years.

It's simple: without sustainable funding, our doors will close. With fair funding, we will continue to be the safe, welcoming places every Victorian community needs.

By the Numbers

- **\$230 million lost:** In 2024–25, communities lost \$230 million in benefit when activity funds were diverted to basic operating costs.
- **45–46%:** Almost half of Neighbourhood Houses ran at a loss in the last two years.
- **Fundraising for basics:** Neighbourhood Houses are now forced to fundraise and hold sausage sizzles just to pay for basics like phones, internet, and electricity.

Without fair funding, we risk losing:

- **183,000** weekly visits to Neighbourhood Houses
- **5,900** jobs and **12,000** volunteers supported
- **\$921 million** in measurable community value — a **\$11.02** return on every \$1 invested
- Ran over **426,000** group activity sessions and provided **10,400** referrals
- Provided over **244** tons of food relief monthly
- Supported over **5,945** other community groups