



# Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2017





Port Melbourne Neighbourhood Centre

# Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2017

**Respondents:** 377 respondents representing approximately 95 per cent of all Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria. This includes 370 of the 375 Neighbourhood Houses receiving Victorian Government funding through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP), and seven of the estimated 35 Neighbourhood Houses not receiving any funding through NHCP. It is worth noting that the overall number of respondents is slightly less than the 382 respondents in 2016.

## Key highlights

- **Record number of community members visited Victorian Neighbourhood Houses:** A record 190,520 Victorians visited their Neighbourhood House in an average week. Over the last five years, participation in Neighbourhood Houses has increased by 24 per cent.
- **Provision of Victorian community infrastructure:** Communities made use of their Neighbourhood Houses for an average of 54.6 hours per week. This is the equivalent of approximately eight hours per day over seven days. Neighbourhood Houses provided use of rooms and space to more than 3,916 community groups and additional support to more than 2,449 other community groups across Victoria.
- **Volunteering opportunities:** The number of people choosing to volunteer at a Neighbourhood House significantly increased over the last six years. Since 2012, the number of volunteers has grown by a remarkable 33 per cent. In 2017, more than 6,654 Victorians contributed an average of 71 volunteer hours per Neighbourhood House each week. This was a 4.5 per cent annual increase on 2016 figures, with a total financial value in excess of \$27.7 million.
- **Neighbourhood Houses leverage \$5.02 for every \$1.00 in funding:** For every dollar the Victorian Government invested in the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, Neighbourhood Houses leveraged a further \$5.02 in 2017. This represents a decrease of more than 9 per cent on the 2016 Neighbourhood Survey figures (\$5.47), however it does not factor in additional in-kind support.
- **Neighbourhood House income:** The total reported income decreased by 5 per cent to \$157.6 million. The median income was \$216,828 and average income was \$417,955 in 2017 (\$434,950 in 2016).
- **Value-adding beyond compliance:** Neighbourhood Houses delivered 216 per cent against the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding 'opening hours' requirements.
- **Partnerships:** Neighbourhood Houses had 3,539 active partnerships in an average month. There has been a 25 per cent increase in the number of partnerships brokered within the sector over the last five years.
- **Workforce:** In 2017 the Neighbourhood House sector employed Victorians in more than 5,280 positions across the state.

# Distribution of Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria

Approximately 50 per cent of Victorian Neighbourhood Houses are situated in rural or regional communities.

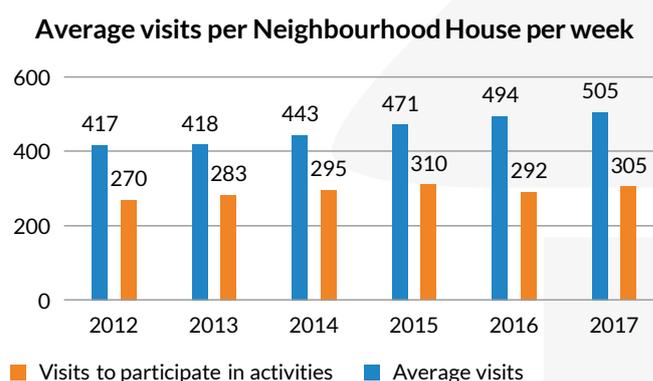
Community Location	Neighbourhood Houses	
	Percentage	Number
Metropolitan	51%	193
Regional/Rural: population greater than 10,000	13%	49
Rural: population between 3,000 and 10,000	14%	52
Rural: population below 3,000	22%	83

All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Participants

Record numbers of Victorians made use of the community infrastructure of a Neighbourhood House in 2017. There were a total of 190,520 visits in an average week. More than 66 per cent (or more than 114,981) of these Victorians participated in programmed activities.

The table below illustrates how participation rates have consistently increased over the preceding five years. This represents a 21 per cent increase since 2012.



## Programs

Programs categorised as 'health and wellbeing courses' accounted for the greatest proportion of Neighbourhood House activity in 2017. This remains consistent with the 2016 Neighbourhood House Survey results.

Top 15 program areas as % of total program activity			
Program area	2012	2016	2017
Health and wellbeing courses (e.g. walking, yoga, exercise, social connection, recreational etc.)	11%	17%	17%
Pre-accredited/Non-accredited adult education & training	n/a	9%	9%
Art & Craft	8%	9%	9%
Accredited vocational education & training	14%	5%	7%

Top 15 program areas as % of total program activity			
Program area	2012	2016	2017
Computer training/digital literacy	8%	6%	6%
Childcare	8%	5%	6%
English as a second language (ESL) training/English conversation*	3%	5%	5%
Children's activities (5-12)	n/a	5%	4%
Senior's Groups (60+)	n/a	3%	4%
Life Skills programs & courses	n/a	3%	3%
Self-help groups	n/a	3%	3%
Children's activities (under 5)	n/a	2%	3%
Play Groups	n/a	3%	3%
Community Lunches/Social Eating Groups	2%	2%	2%
Alternative to school programs (VCAL, etc.)	1%	2%	2%

\*English as a Second Language (ESL) used in the survey will be changed to English as an alternative language (EAL) in the next survey to reflect current terminology

Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses delivering activities determined by specific groups			
Program/activity type	2012	2016	2017
Determined by senior Victorians (60+)	71%	78%	80%
Determined by people with a disability	55%	55%	55%
Determined by men aged 45-64	49%	51%	51%
Determined by people with mental health issues	40%	48%	46%
Determined by young people (13-25)	40%	43%	43%
Determined by single parents	23%	26%	25%
Determined by public housing tenants	18%	23%	23%
Delivered in community languages	17%	17%	21%
Determined by Aborigines and/or Torres Strait Islanders	8%	12%	13%
Determined by teenaged parents	10%	9%	9%
Determined by gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender people	5%	10%	14%
Refugees/Asylum Seekers	n/a	n/a	16%

The participation of potentially vulnerable groups who are actively involved in program planning has remained stable. Although it is worth noting that participation of people who speak a language other than English and of those identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual and or/transgender in planning their activities have both increased by 4 per cent.

# Neighbourhood House infrastructure

The number of Neighbourhood Houses providing community gardens has increased to 58 per cent from around 46 per cent over the last five years. Also of note is that there has been a corresponding increase in the number of community kitchens. Recent research has identified the role of community gardens and healthy food in imparting social benefits. (Egli et al. 2016).

Neighbourhood Houses across the state look different. They could be, to name just two, a free-standing house in a residential street or an office located in a shopping centre. Because of this, the type of infrastructure that Neighbourhood Houses have access to also varies; from kitchens, gardens, classrooms, lounge areas and communal gathering places, each Neighbourhood House is unique.

Annual Comparison of Available Infrastructure (%)			
Available Infrastructure	2012	2016	2017
Informal space to hang out and meet people	n/a	76%	80%
Community Kitchens	43%	61%	66%
Community/social enterprise (e.g. café, catering, op shop, etc.)	15%	26%	31%
Community gardens	41%	57%	58%
Information and Communication Technology training rooms/Computer lab	72%	76%	79%

## Services

Overall the number of services available at Neighbourhood Houses increased in 2017. The table below outlines services delivered from 2014 to 2017.

There have been notable increases in:

- Library service/book swaps (20%);
- Community Advocacy (16%);
- Reception for hubs/other services (15%);
- Community consultation (14%);
- Gardening groups/clubs/activities (14%);
- Grant writing support (13%);
- Food security (12%);
- Community Information/Citizens Advisory Bureau (11%);
- Referral (both formal & informal) (11%);
- Resume services (11%);

Room hire continues to be a significant form of fundraising for Neighbourhood Houses, with 97 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses offering it as a service. The funds raised from room hire assist with the capacity of the Neighbourhood House to develop and run targeted activities based on community need. Room hire is also often provided at heavily discounted rates to other community organisations and groups.

Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses offering services by service type

Examples of Services provided	2012	2016	2017
Auspice other community organisations	52%	58%	60%
Centrelink	13%	14%	13%
Child care	37%	35%	34%
Community advocacy	50%	61%	66%
Community consultation	58%	70%	76%
Community Information/Citizens Advice Bureau	51%	63%	68%
Disaster relief & recovery (bushfire, floods, etc.)	15%	19%	19%
Emergency relief (breakfast clubs, food bank, etc.)	24%	34%	36%
Employment services	15%	27%	28%
Financial counselling	14%	18%	18%
Food security (e.g. food co-op)	14%	27%	30%
Gardening groups/clubs/activities	n/a	72%	75%
Grant writing support	33%	47%	50%
Home services (e.g. lawn mowing, home repairs etc)	n/a	6%	6%
Library service/book swap	40%	62%	66%
Maternal and Child Health checks/immunisations	14%	18%	18%
NILS/loan schemes	12%	10%	11%
Public computer/internet access	76%	86%	87%
Reception for hub/other services	34%	45%	49%
Referral (both formal & informal)	78%	88%	91%
Resume services	34%	45%	49%
Room hire	93%	96%	97%
Tax Help	33%	25%	27%
Tool library/equipment hire	15%	17%	17%
Toy Library	n/a	10%	10%
Tutoring for individuals	n/a	n/a	27%
VicRoads	2%	3%	4%
Visitor/tourist information	24%	31%	35%
Volunteer skills bank/Volunteer matching	16%	25%	28%



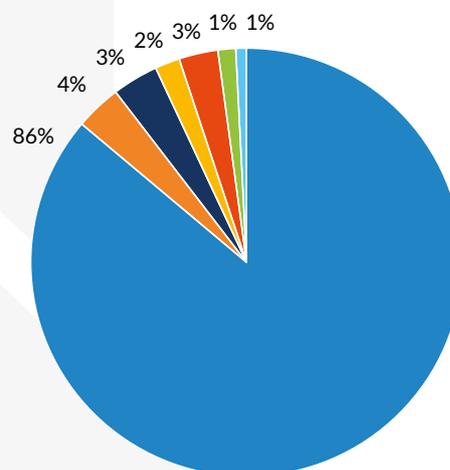
*Trentham Neighbourhood Centre 'Cool Country Ukes'*

# Governance structure

In 2017, the governance structures of Neighbourhood Houses included:

- 86 per cent incorporated associations with committee/board
- 7 per cent council managed.
- 5 per cent auspiced by another organisation
- 2 per cent are cooperatives or companies limited by guarantee.

- Incorporated Association with Committee of Governance/Board of Management
- Council managed with Advisory committee/Steering group (e.g. Friends of...)
- Council managed and operated
- Auspicing arrangement with other organisation with Advisory committee/Steering group
- Auspiced arrangement with other organisation (NGO, health organisation, Network, etc.)
- Co-operative
- Company limited by guarantee



# Committees

In Victoria 2,796 people, (2,897 in 2016) served on Neighbourhood House governance committees. The average committee had eight members, and this has been a consistent position for the last six years.

Committees contributed 33 hours of their time to committee business each month. In 2017 more than 138,540 (146,300 in 2016) hours of voluntary governance work were provided.<sup>1</sup> This is the equivalent of 70 people working full-time on governance for Victorian communities over 12 months.

# Income

In 2017, the income of Neighbourhood Houses decreased by 5 per cent to \$157.6 million from \$165.3 million in 2016.

Although the total gross income and average gross income has declined, median gross income has increased (see table below). This suggests that declining income has predominately impacted Houses with larger gross incomes.

	Total Gross Income	Average Gross Income	Median Gross Income
2016	\$165,280,869	\$433,808	\$207,510
2017	\$157,569,136	\$417,955	\$216,828

## Income sources

- 98 per cent of survey respondents received NHCP funding.
- 96 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses derived self-generated income<sup>2</sup> to a reported value of \$48 million. This is an increase of \$0.1 million compared to the 2016 Neighbourhood House Survey.
- The Victorian Government provided \$45.4 million<sup>3</sup> to Neighbourhood Houses to deliver state government programs and services, and over \$26 million for the NHCP (\$71.4 9million in total in 2016).
- 83 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses reported receiving local government funding in 2017. This is a slight increase from 2016 (82 per cent). However, for Neighbourhood Houses that received this support, the total value of more than \$13.5 million is a decrease on the \$14.3 million<sup>4</sup> reported in 2016.
- The median funding from local government increased in 2017 to \$24,205 (\$23,102 in 2016).
- 41 per cent of Victorian Neighbourhood Houses received an aggregated total of \$18.2 million (\$24.6 million) in federal government funding (39 per cent in 2016).
- 12 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses attracted a total of over \$576,000 through corporate sponsorship. This is a 20 per cent increase in the value of corporate sponsorship since 2016.
- The number of Neighbourhood Houses that reported receiving philanthropic grants in 2017 decreased from 57 (2016) to 47 (2017). However, the total value of the grants increased to \$1.69 million from \$1.58 million in 2016.

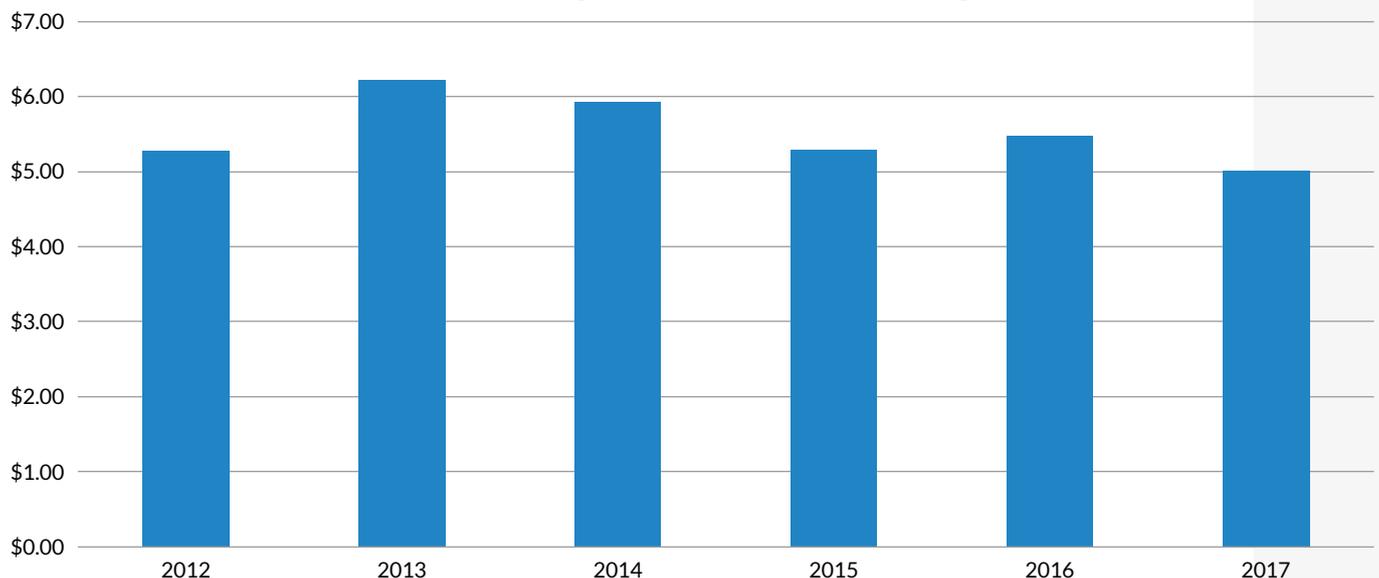
Neighbourhood Houses worked on 2,173 applications for grants to support their community development work.

## Income leveraging

For every dollar invested in Neighbourhood Houses through the Victorian Government’s Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, Victorian Neighbourhood Houses leveraged an additional \$5.02. This is a decrease of 8 per cent from 2016 (\$5.47). The decrease reflects the reduction in total and average gross incomes.

If Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Funding is divided by the number of visits to the Neighbourhood Houses in receipt of this funding, the cost of a visit is \$2.73.

Income leveraged for every \$1 of NHCP funding

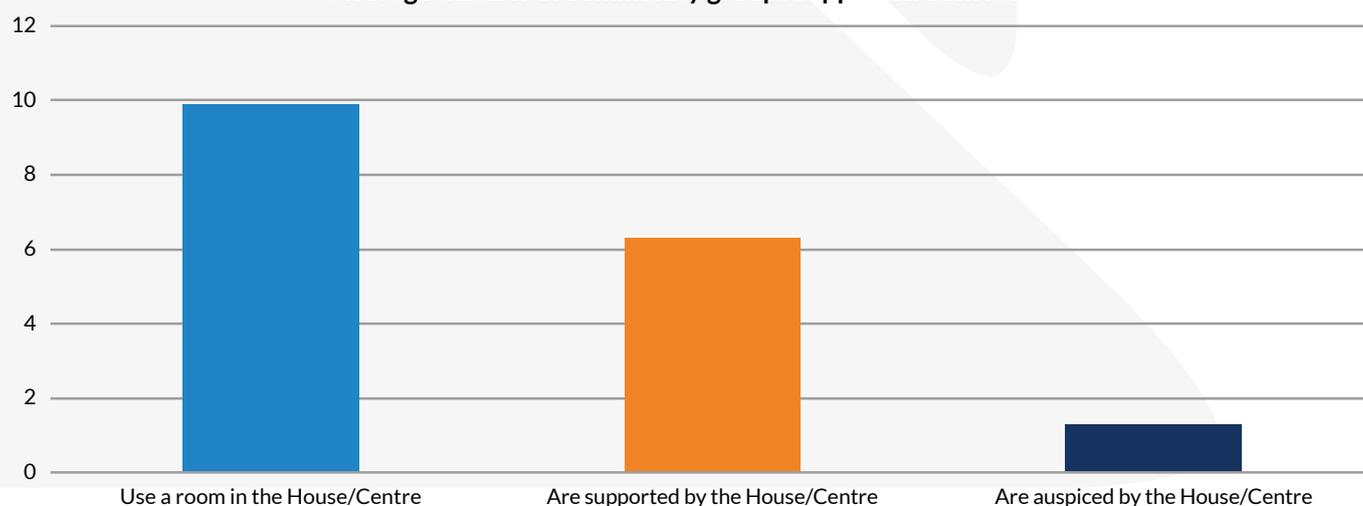


## Support for community groups

In 2017, over 3,916 (3,767 in 2016) 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 2,449 groups (2,419 in 2016) each month. The Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2015 report provided details on the range of support provided. The promotion of activities and events was the most common, followed by 'providing use of facilities/services and support for organising activities/events.

In 2017, 49 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses auspiced more than 500 community groups.

\* Average number of community groups supported each month



## Volunteers

The last six years has seen an increase in the number of hours people chose to volunteer at a Neighbourhood House. In statistical terms this represents a 47 per cent increase since 2012.

- There was a very slight decline in volunteer numbers in 2017, following successive increases since 2012. This is likely due to a lower number of survey respondents. In 2017, more than 6,650 people (6,700 in 2016) volunteered at their Neighbourhood House each week. However, the average remained steady; more than 17 volunteers per Neighbourhood House each week.
- There has been a 47 per cent increase in volunteer hours since 2012. Average weekly volunteer hours increased from 68 (2016) to 71 hours (2017).
- The conservative<sup>5</sup> estimated economic value of this voluntary contribution is more than \$27.7 million per year, representing an impressive \$3.2 million increase since 2016.
- Victorian Neighbourhood Houses provided student/volunteer work experience placements for more than 1,349 people (1,240 in 2016) in 2017.
- Approximately half of all Neighbourhood Houses (49 per cent) supported Mutual Obligation<sup>6</sup> placements. They were responsible for supporting 1,070 people (1,328 in 2016) to meet their mutual obligation requirements.
- In 2017, just over 16 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses hosted approximately 1,661 people fulfilling community corrections orders (2002 in 2016).

# Adding value to investment in Neighbourhood Houses

The average Neighbourhood House (2017):

- a) was open with paid staff for 34.9 hours per week (34.8 in 2016).
- b) Was in use for 54.6 hours in a seven-day week or 7.8 hours daily over a seven day week.

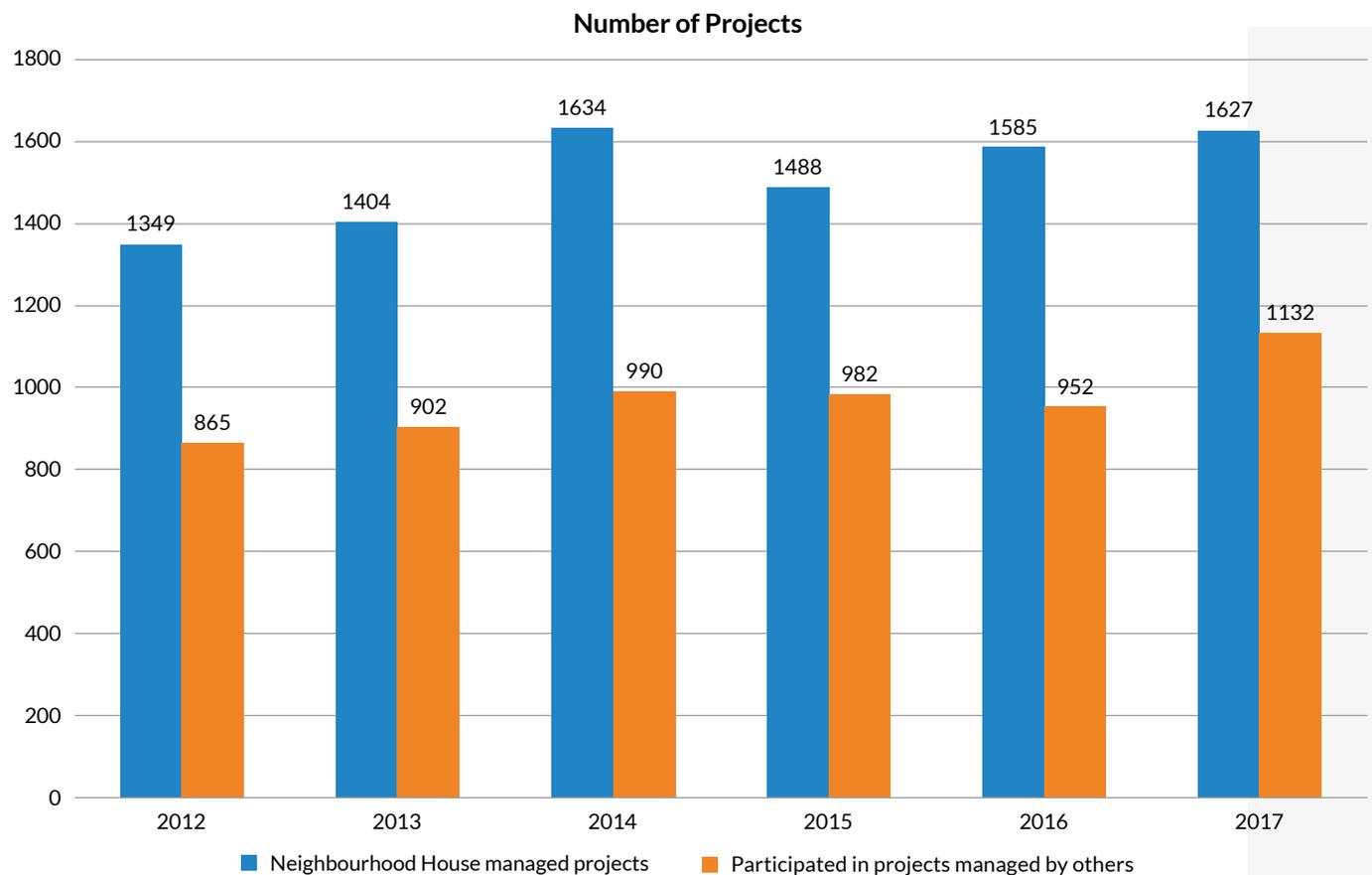
*The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) guidelines require Neighbourhood Houses 'to be open for at least as many hours as the NHCP provides coordination funding ...'.*

Neighbourhood Houses funded through the NHCP delivered an average 194 per cent on the contractual requirements highlighted above.

On average, Neighbourhood Houses' NHCP funding provides for 24.9 hours of coordination funding per week. However, they are actually open with paid staff for 34.9 hours a week, with an additional 13 hours a week of outreach work. The 2017 Neighbourhood House survey shows that volunteer support provided a further 5.5 'opening hours'. The net result for 2017 was that Neighbourhood Houses delivered 216 per cent against their Neighbourhood House Coordination Program contractual obligations.

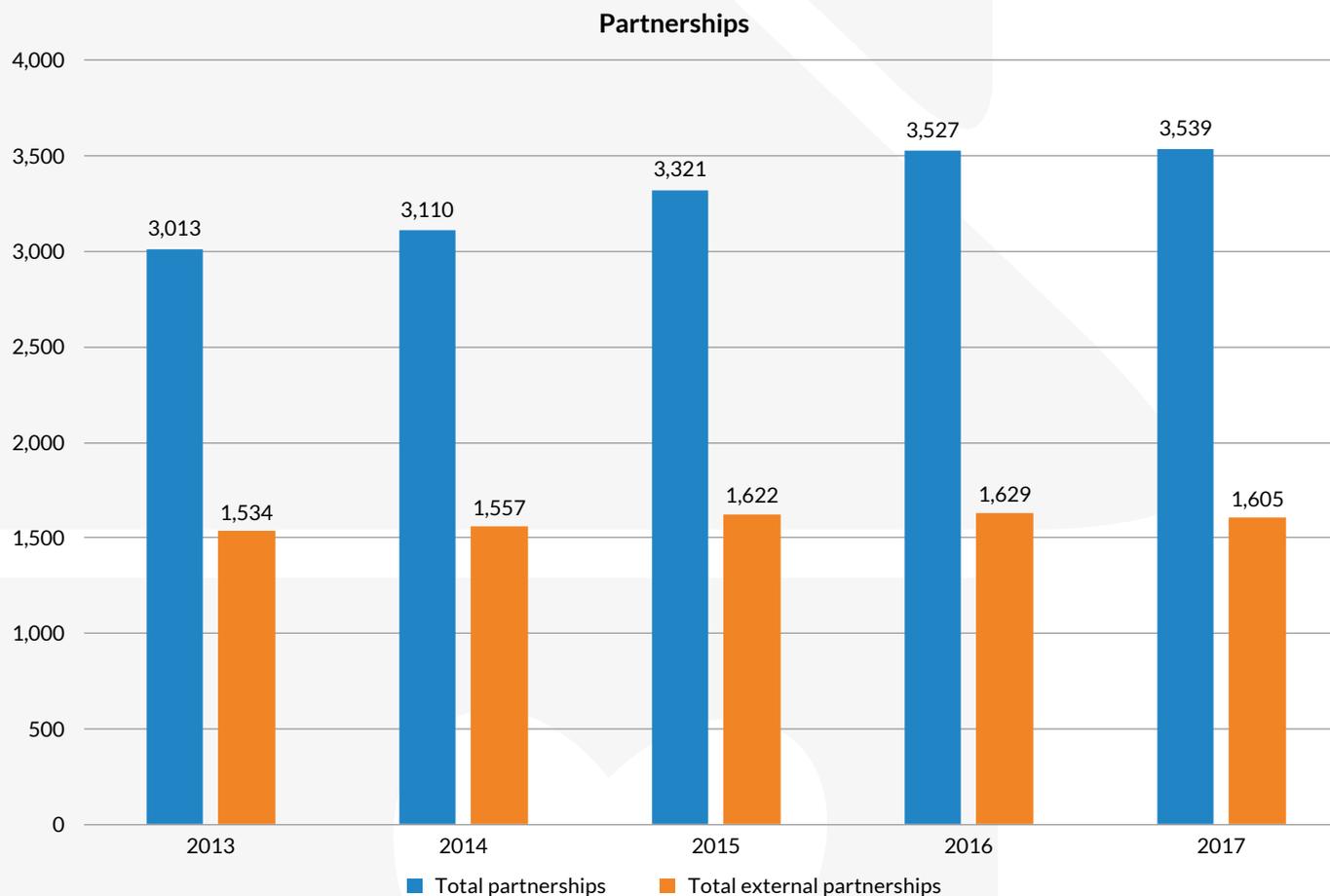
For every \$1 invested by the Victorian Government via the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, Neighbourhood Houses leveraged a further \$5.02.

Neighbourhood Houses managed 1,627 projects in 2017. This is an average of just over four per Neighbourhood House. They also participated in an additional 1,132 projects managed by other organisations.



# Partnerships

In 2017 there were a reported 3,539 active partnerships in Neighbourhood Houses in an average month (3,527), an average of 9.4 regular partnerships per Neighbourhood House per month.<sup>7</sup> Since 2013 there has been a 17 per cent increase in active partnerships.<sup>8</sup> Just under 91 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses were represented on a total of 1,605 external groups (1,629 in 2016). This is an average of 4.3 external groups per Neighbourhood House. The Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2016 report provides a more comprehensive insight into the types of partnerships Neighbourhood House are involved in.



# Workforce

In 2017, Neighbourhood Houses employed a total of 5,282 staff<sup>9</sup> and engaged 733 contractors. Casual or sessional tutors made up the majority of employees 45 per cent (46 per cent in 2016) followed by part-time staff 37 per cent (35 per cent in 2016). Full-time workers account for only seven per cent of the workforce.

The paid workforce delivered a total of 62,246 hours per week (64,000 in 2016) across the state.

The majority of Neighbourhood Houses (58 per cent) provided up to 100 hours per week of paid employment, with six providing more than 500 hours. The median weekly hours of employment is 84.

## Six-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 notable increases and decreases in some areas.

Trends 2012 – 2017			
Examples of Services provided	2012	2017	% change
Participants per week	153,800	190,520	24%
Volunteers per week	4,988	6,654	33%
Volunteer hours worked per week	17,926	26,667	49%
Local government financial contributions	\$10,550,431	\$13,580,602	29%
Partnerships	2,841	3,539	25%
Participants in programmed activities per week	100,182	114,987	15%
Community / social enterprise (e.g. café, catering, op shop, etc.)	55	115	109%
Registered ACFE providers	213	209	-2%
Registered Training Organisations	71	43	-39%
Licensed Childcare providers	133	120	-10%

## Endnotes

1. Assumes 12 meetings annually for the 92 per cent of respondents that have a committee.
2. Self-generated income includes such things as course and activity fees, room hire, fundraising, bank interest etc.
3. Victorian Government funding may include such things as VET, Learn Local, childcare, HACC program funding etc.
4. This does not include in-kind contributions such as subsidised rent, maintenance etc. Local government owns 63 per cent of Neighbourhood House premises
5. This figure reflects a value of \$20 per hour. The Institute of Community Directors website provides an argument for valuing volunteers at about \$40 per hour using ABS data <http://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/?articleId=1622>
6. Where people do voluntary work as an approved activity as part of their Mutual Obligation requirement to receive some types of income support through Centrelink.
7. On average 99 per cent of Neighbourhood Houses support partnerships in any given month
8. There is no corresponding data for 2012, as this question was first introduced in this form in 2013.
9. This figure reflects the total number of positions. Some individuals, particularly tutors, are employed by more than one Neighbourhood House occupying more than one position.

## References

- Egli V, Oliver M and 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*.

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# Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2017

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