



Neighbourhood House Survey 2025 Report

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Executive summary

This report summarises the responses of the 2025 Neighbourhood House Annual Survey ('Survey'). The Survey is a reporting requirement for Victorian neighbourhood houses funded by Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) under the Neighbourhood Houses Coordination Program. It was administered by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) on behalf of DFFH.

The 2025 Survey was administered from February to March 2026 for the reporting period of the calendar year 2025 and gathered data from 396 (99%) of the 400 Neighbourhood House Coordination Program currently funded Victorian Neighbourhood Houses.

The 2025 year was characterised by significant growth with an increase in participants, activity sessions and food relief provision. This occurred against a backdrop of tightening cost of living pressures in Victoria. Despite this increased demand, staffing levels declined with a loss of over 200 employees. Total income also declined, however median incomes were higher reflecting the funding variability typically observed from year to year.

The contribution of community members through volunteering increased significantly, in part associated with the expansion of food relief provision. Support provided by Neighbourhood Houses to other community groups rebounded after a decline in 2024.

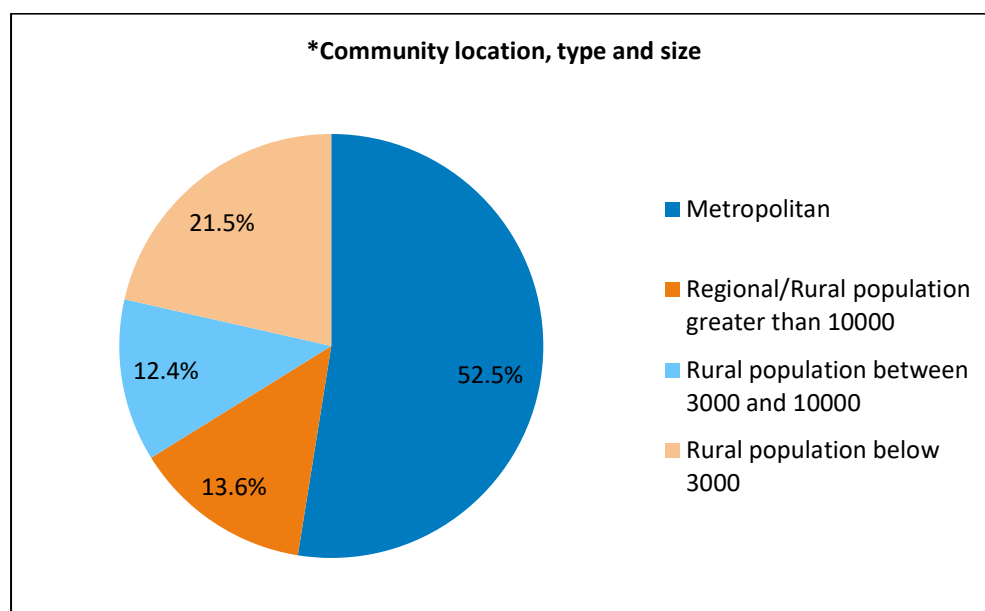
The roll out of round five of the Victorian Government's Power Saving Bonus scheme was supported by around 250 Neighbourhood Houses assisting over 14,400 Victorians to access the payment.

Victoria's Neighbourhood Houses continue to provide real value, generating between \$10.30 and \$22.03 for each dollar of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding, depending on which components are included.

Neighbourhood houses profile

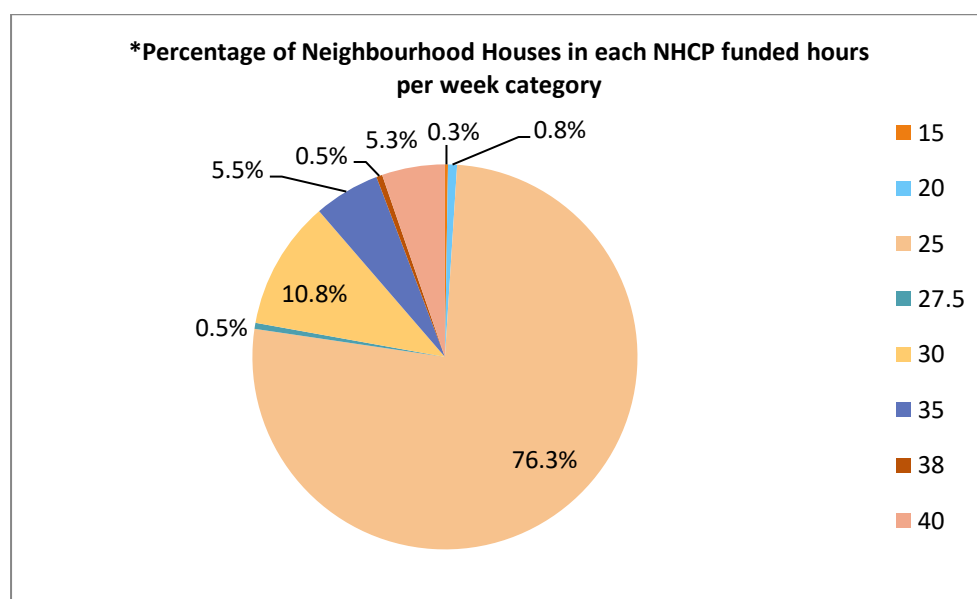
Neighbourhood Houses are relatively evenly distributed between rural and metropolitan areas as per the chart below. Data are based on 2025 respondent self-classification. Distribution remained virtually unchanged compared to 2024.

Figure 1 - Community location, type and size



The introduction of a minimum 25 hours per week Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding in 2018 has the vast majority of Neighbourhood Houses at that funding level, with just four Neighbourhood Houses at less than 25 hours per week. The overall state average is just under 27 hrs per week.

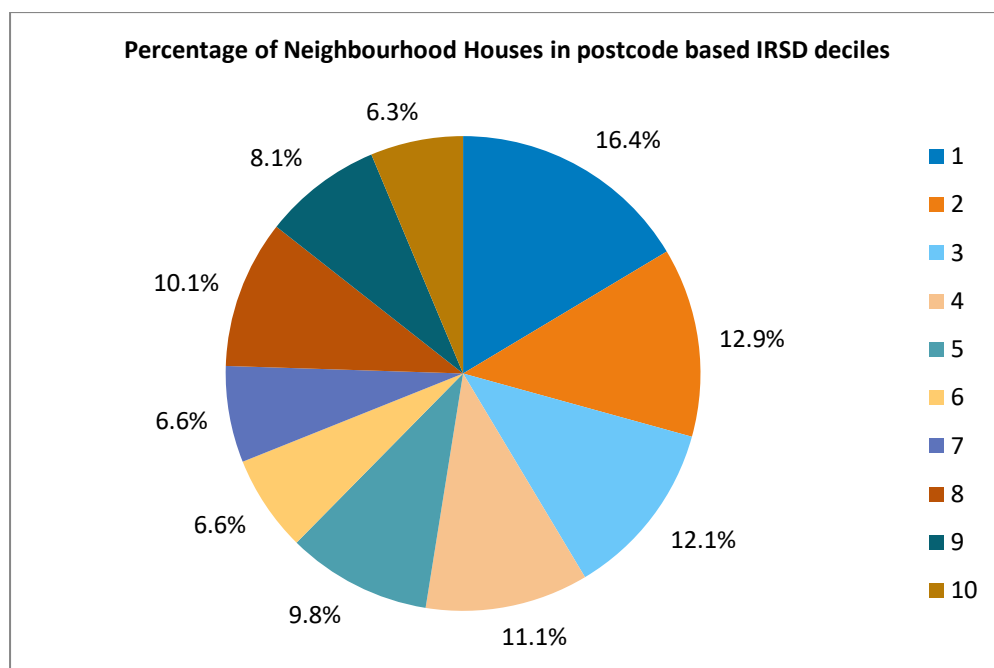
Figure 2- Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses by weekly NHCP funded hours.



Neighbourhood Houses are distributed across communities with diverse levels of disadvantage or advantage. However, based on the state ranking of the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

Index of Relative Disadvantage (IRSD), the majority (59%) are in disadvantaged postcodes. The decile with the highest percentage of Neighbourhood Houses (16.1%) is the most disadvantaged.

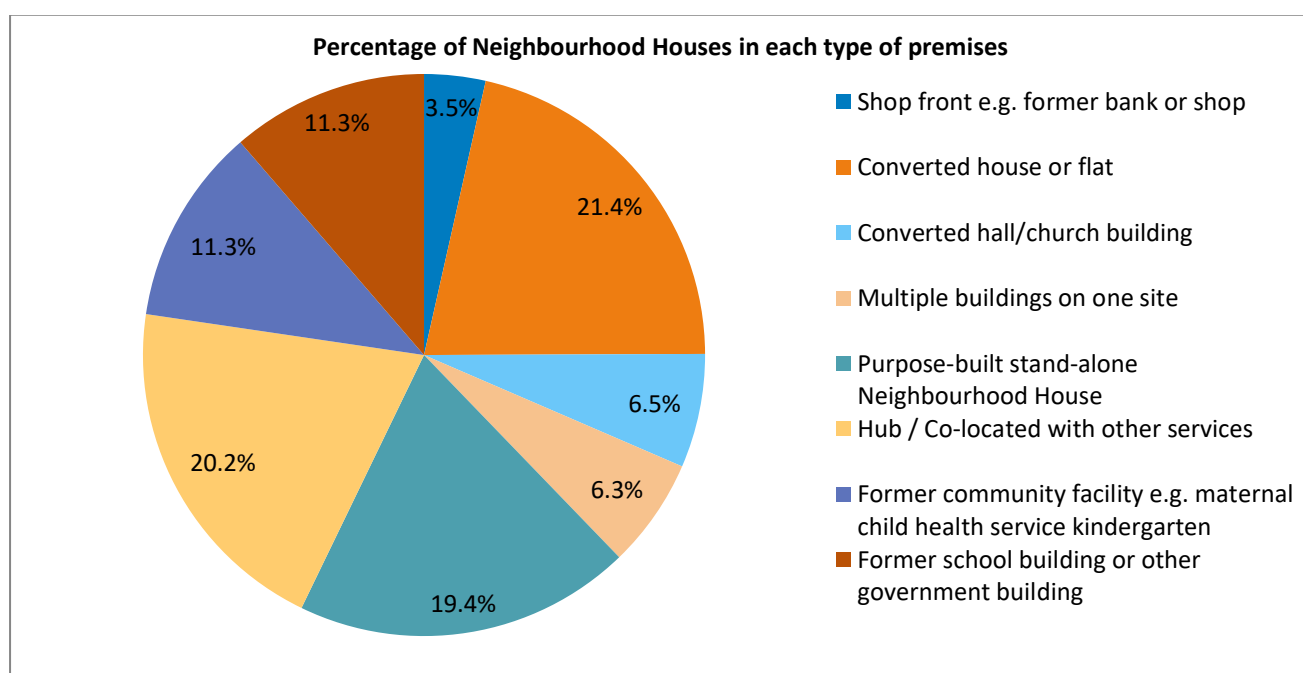
Figure 3 - Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses in postcode-based IRSD deciles



Neighbourhood Houses in postcodes with lower IRSD deciles can be more constrained in their capacity to raise revenue from within their communities. Further, they are more likely to have community members experiencing financial hardship and relying on food relief and other supports from their Neighbourhood House.

Revenue and capacity to deliver activities are also affected by the diverse types of physical premises of Neighbourhood Houses.

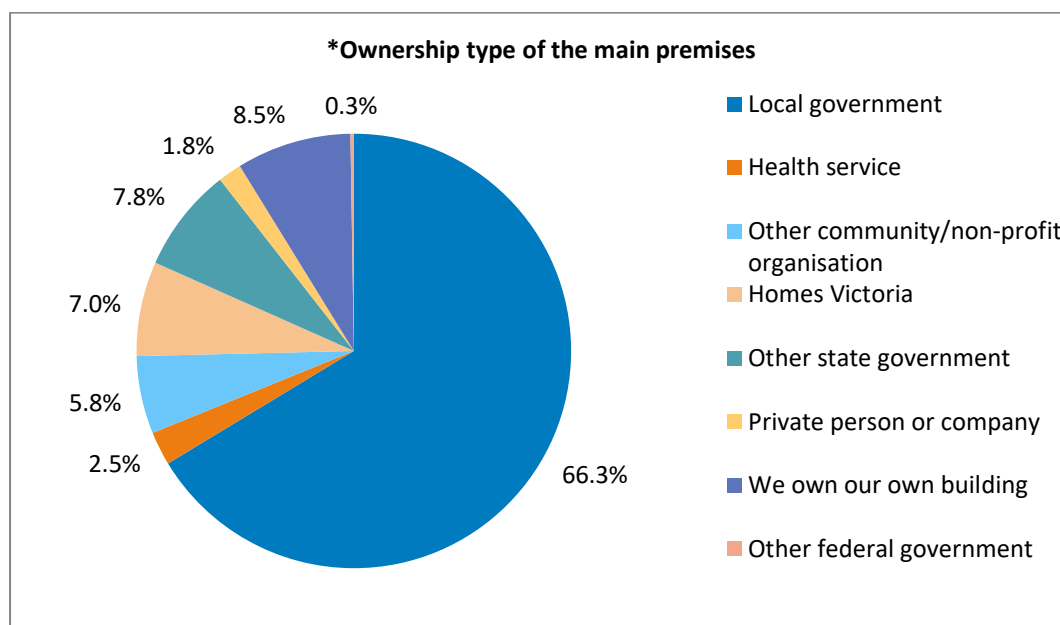
Figure 4 Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses in each type of premises



Converted houses, shopfronts and converted halls are more likely to constrain program options and/or group sizes.

Local government is a major partner providing two thirds of Neighbourhood Houses' premises while 8.5% own their own building.

Figure 5 Ownership type of the main premises



Neighbourhood Houses are governed under varying arrangements, however 80% are independent Incorporated Associations. Direct community input has been shown to boost performance across a number of metrics.

Table 1 - Comparison of governance structure types 2025 to 2024

Governance structure	Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses 2025	Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses 2024
Incorporated Association	80%	81%
Council managed with NO advisory committee/steering group	5%	5%
Governed by an incorporated Neighbourhood House	4%	3%
Auspecting arrangement with other organisation with advisory committee/steering group	4%	4%
Auspecting arrangement with other organisation with NO advisory committee/steering group	3%	3%
Council managed with advisory committee/steering group	3%	2%
Company Limited by Guarantee	1%	1%
Co-operative	1%	1%
Indigenous Corporation	1%	1%

Involving communities through committee of management roles is part of the community development practice of Neighbourhood Houses, providing local leadership and development opportunities. Some 2,569 committee members provided 11,593 hours of governance time each month in 353 Neighbourhood Houses. These Neighbourhood Houses average 7 people on their committee undertaking 33 hours of monthly governance activity. This is a slight decrease in average committee numbers (-0.2) while average monthly hours worked also decreased by 1.4 hours per committee member.

Participation

Levels of attendance reached a record high in 2025 with 190,146 visits to a Neighbourhood House each week. This was a 6% increase on 2024 with the median increasing by 4%. However, the change is not uniform with medians decreasing in some community types despite the increase in total participation. This indicates a significant increase in participation for a minority of Neighbourhood Houses in such circumstances with a decrease for others.

Table 3 - Change in weekly visits by community type from 2024 to 2025

Community type	2025		2024		Total percentage change 2024 to 2025	Median percentage change 2024 to 2025
	Total	Median	Total	Median		
Weekly visits - Metropolitan	143,081	498.5	135,288	509	6%	-2%
Weekly visits - Regional/Rural population greater than 10,000	18,178	274.5	16,767	260	8%	6%
Weekly visits - Rural population between 3,000 and 10,000	16,236	230	14,884	243	9%	-5%
Weekly visits - Rural population below 3,000	12,651	120	11,727	106	8%	13%
Total weekly visits	190,146	311	178,665	300	6%	4%

The total weekly number of participants in Neighbourhood House managed activities also increased to 117,685, up 5.4% from 2024 despite the median only increasing from 192 to 193. The number of participants in Neighbourhood House managed activities excludes those who may be attending an activity run at a Neighbourhood House by and for another organisation or group. The proportion of Neighbourhood House attendees that participated in Neighbourhood House managed activities decreased by 0.6% to 61.9%.

Participant numbers for programs delivered exclusively online decreased by 58% to 1,993 following a 27% increase in 2024. While this represents less than 2% of total participation in Neighbourhood House activities, it remains a volatile statistic with 3,141 weekly participants in 2024 and 2,475 in 2023.

In 2025, the median number of hours Neighbourhood Houses were in use was unchanged at 50 per week, as were median staffed and open at 33 hrs per week and median weeks open at 48 weeks.



Pictured: Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place smoking ceremony at Coonara Community House.
Photo 1 - Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place smoking ceremony at Coonara Community House

Volunteering

The counting of volunteers in Neighbourhood Houses was changed in 2024 to better capture the full extent of volunteering. Community members volunteer regularly at Neighbourhood Houses as well as periodically, for example at seasonal events or on an ad hoc basis.

As in 2024 the total number of volunteers over the year were captured, regardless of the basis of their volunteering, rather than a number in an average week. This is complemented by the number of hours volunteered in an average week to illustrate the intensity of volunteering.

The number of people volunteering at a Neighbourhood House increased by over 11% in 2025 to 13,089 with a median of 21 volunteers.

Table 4 – Comparison of volunteer numbers and hours contributed from 2024-2025.

Measure	Total 2025	Median 2025	Total 2024	Median 2024
Total number of volunteers	13,089	21	11,733	20
Volunteer hours contributed per week	34,205	51	31,375	48

There was a 9% increase in the total number of hours volunteered weekly compared to 2024. A total of 34,205 hours per week were volunteered with median of 51 hours per week.

The 394 Neighbourhood Houses that had volunteers averaged 86 volunteer hours per week, up from 80 hours in 2024. The difference between the median and average is indicative of a significant variation in volunteer hours contributed between Neighbourhood Houses.

Neighbourhood Houses providing an increased amount of food relief compared to 2024 accounted for almost half of the additional volunteered hours.

These 2025 increases come on the back of significant increases in 2024 and continue to defy the

the broader volunteering trend in Victoria where volunteering within formal structures such as community organisations is in decline¹.

Support for community groups

A 12% increase in the number of community groups using a room in Neighbourhood Houses each month in 2025 represents a substantial reversal in the decline experienced in 2024. In all, 4,206 groups were provided with use of 377 Neighbourhood Houses' premises, with a median of 7 groups per Neighbourhood House.

Additionally, 318 Neighbourhood Houses supported 2,250 community groups in other ways, an 8% increase on 2024. The median number of groups supported was four.

Neighbourhood Houses reported auspicing a greater number of groups compared to 2024 increasing from 919 to 969 groups auspiced in 2025. The changes in types of groups auspiced are significant, though may represent groups being recategorised e.g. a group of people with disability that meet to do art and craft together may have been allocated as a disability group in one year and as a recreation group in another year. Less likely to be a reallocation issue is a significant decline in First Nations groups.

Table 5 below shows a breakdown of the types of community groups auspiced by neighbourhood houses.

Table 5 - Number by types of auspiced community groups

Type of group auspiced	Group Total 2025	Neighbourhood House Count 2025	Group Total 2024	Neighbourhood House Count 2025
Recreation or leisure group(s), including art, craft, etc	273	95	234	83
Health / Physical activity group(s)	137	40	137	49
CALD group(s)	94	47	79	42
Self-help group(s)	85	49	80	46
Men's/women's/community shed	64	50	38	36
Playgroup or other children's activities	61	43	55	42
Mental health group(s)	33	26	49	34
U3A / Senior Citizens	33	27	31	24
Disability group(s)	31	28	41	28
First Nations group(s)	17	15	32	10
LGBTIQ+ groups	9	9	11	10
Child Care	8	5	4	4
Other	124	62	128	70

¹ [2025 State of Volunteering Report. Volunteering Victoria \(2025\)](#)

Total Responses	969	196	919	200
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It should be noted that the term 'auspice' usually implies the Neighbourhood House takes on the role of a legal entity for those groups, accepting responsibility for finances and other legal functions. It is anticipated that not all of the groups auspiced by the 196 Neighbourhood Houses that reported auspicing undertake financial transactions or other potential risk exposed activity.

Programs and activities

Neighbourhood Houses deliver a wide range of programs and activities including programs that have a longer-term outcome such as adult learning or fitness programs, and activities that regularly meet a want or need such as recreational activities. Programs and activities may be one off, regular or periodic.

In total, 438,162 sessions of activities were delivered in 2025, a 5.3% (n=22,080) increase on the 416,082 sessions delivered in 2024.

Notably, the average reported number of 'Social connection, recreational' and 'Health / exercise' activities sessions increased significantly, together accounting for an additional 14,751 sessions.

Other notable increases included Community Choirs/Music/Theatre, up by 2,366 sessions, English as an additional language up by 1,887 sessions, Environmental sustainability projects / groups up by 1,651 sessions and Life Skills programs & courses up 1,495 sessions.

The largest reductions included Seniors groups, down 1,819 sessions (which may, at least in part, have been recategorised as health or social connection sessions) and Alternative to School programs declines by 1,012 sessions reflecting a continuing downward trend for this activity type.

Table 6 below shows total sessions delivered across all program types compared to 2024.

Table 6 - Comparison of total sessions by program type: 2025 to 2024

Program type	2025	2024	Change 2024 to 2025
Social connection, recreational (e.g. art & craft, cards and book clubs etc.)	79,713	72,855	9.4%
Health / exercise activities (e.g. walking, healthy eating, yoga, strength exercise etc.)	74,886	66,992	11.8%
Pre-accredited/non-accredited adult education & training	39,750	40,176	-1.1%
English as an additional language (EAL) training / English conversation	23,097	21,210	8.9%
Computer training / digital literacy	17,543	18,326	-4.3%
Childcare	17,364	16,622	4.5%
Children's activities (5-12)	15,019	15,632	-3.9%
Life Skills programs & courses	13,014	11,519	13.0%
Play Groups	11,431	11,171	2.3%
Programs for people with disability	10,925	10,072	8.5%
Community Lunches / Social Eating Groups	10,790	10,619	1.6%
Senior's Groups (60+)	10,784	12,603	-14.4%
Accredited vocational education & training	10,730	10,564	1.6%

Environmental sustainability projects / groups	10,259	8,608	19.2%
Community Choirs/Music/Theatre	9,255	6,889	34.3%
Children's activities (under 5)	7,492	7,878	-4.9%
Family Support Programs	6,583	7,271	-9.5%
Outside School Hours Care / holiday programs	6,583	5,909	11.4%
Self help groups	6,533	6,935	-5.8%
Community Transport (trips and outings)	5,480	5,090	7.7%
Youth Groups (13-25)	5,013	5,488	-8.7%
Literacy & numeracy training	4,901	4,205	16.6%
Languages Other Than English	4,852	4,942	-1.8%
Personal Counselling Programs	4,466	2,994	49.2%
Community Events/Festivals/Markets	4,287	3,112	37.8%
CALD cultural activities	3,467	3,834	-9.6%
Homework clubs	3,359	2,400	40.0%
Volunteer training	3,087	3,457	-10.7%
Programs for carers	2,656	2,077	27.9%
Community Newspaper / magazine / newsletter	2,548	1,961	29.9%
Alternative to School programs (VCE VM, etc.)	2,165	3,177	-31.9%
Parenting courses / groups	1,882	1,904	-1.2%
Community Safety	1,647	747	120.5%
Neuro diverse community activities	1,299	1,591	-18.4%
LGBTIQ+ community activities	1,082	805	34.4%
Early childhood development programs (e.g. early literacy, language development)	1,074	1,640	-34.5%
First Nations health, social and emotional wellbeing, healing	852	969	-12.1%
First Nations cultural strengthening, connection to country, connection to community	833	964	-13.6%
Disaster/emergency preparedness/recovery	453	1,291	-64.9%
First Nations cultural practice/activities	359	626	-42.6%
First Nations cultural immersion/training	199	318	-37.4%
Reconciliation programs	155	160	-3.1%
First Nations employment programs	137	198	-30.8%
First Nations educational support programs	128	232	-44.8%
First Nations leadership programs	30	49	-38.8%

While a 120% increase in community safety sessions was reported, there was a corresponding decrease in Disaster/emergency preparedness/recovery suggesting a recategorisation at least in part. However, community safety can also include scam avoidance training and other activities unrelated to disasters.



Pictured: Community Knitters Group at Central Ringwood Community Centre
2- Community Knitters Group at Central Ringwood Community Centre

Services

Neighbourhood Houses provided 5,242 services in 2025, down 7% from 5,620 in 2024. There was an average of 13.2 services per Neighbourhood House, one less than 2024.

Whereas programs and activities are conducted with groups, services are generally provided to individuals to meet a functional need.

Three new service types were added in 2025 for providers of HACC PYP, Registered aged care, and Registered NDIS services.

Notable increases included reception for hub or other services, co-working spaces, individual tutoring, and long-term food security (e.g. food co-op).

There was a notable reduction in waste reduction/recycling, visitor/tourist information, and grant writing support.

Table 7 – Number and percentage of NHs providing services by type

Service Type	2025		2024	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Room hire	356	89%	356	91%
Referral (both formal & informal)	334	84%	329	82%
Public computer / internet access	282	71%	290	77%
Gardening groups/clubs/activities	277	70%	269	66%
Community consultation	272	68%	273	67%
Food relief - (e.g. food parcels, breakfast clubs, food bank, etc.)	268	67%	263	63%
Community advocacy	264	66%	263	65%
Library service / book swap	253	64%	250	66%
Community Information / Citizens Advisory Bureau	230	58%	218	55%
Auspice other community groups	218	55%	220	58%
Charity collection point/service	214	54%	215	52%
Coworking space	212	53%	200	52%

Individual advocacy (e.g. to service providers, government agencies etc.)	174	44%	180	42%
Reception for hub / other services	167	42%	141	41%
Emergency preparedness/Community resilience	166	42%	161	35%
Waste reduction / recycling (batteries, phones etc.)	165	41%	183	39%
Material relief - non food items (e.g. clothing, cash, bill payments, public transport cards, fuel cards, food vouchers etc.)	162	41%	167	41%
Resume services	149	37%	143	38%
Training/employment pathway support	148	37%	145	38%
Grant writing support	138	35%	150	38%
Visitor / tourist information	110	28%	125	28%
Tutoring for individuals	107	27%	95	29%
Employment services	102	26%	96	28%
Health services	98	25%	94	22%
Food security - long term (e.g. food co-op)	91	23%	79	21%
Centrelink	73	18%	68	16%
Childcare	73	18%	72	20%
Family violence services	71	18%	61	13%
Justice of the Peace	69	17%	61	14%
Tax Help	63	16%	62	16%
Financial counselling	61	15%	60	14%
Volunteer skillsbank / Volunteer matching	61	15%	66	17%
Maternal and Child Health checks / immunisations	53	13%	54	12%
Tool library / equipment hire	50	13%	42	10%
NILS / loan schemes	38	10%	44	13%
Toy Library	31	8%	28	6%
HACC PYP service provider	24	6%	N/A	N/A
Registered aged care service provider	24	6%	N/A	N/A
Home services (e.g. lawnmowing, home repairs, gardening)	20	5%	25	4%
L2P / driving instruction	19	5%	21	N/A
Registered NDIS service provider	17	4%	N/A	N/A
First Nations cultural advice	12	3%	13	5%
VicRoads services	10	3%	7	4%
V/line tickets / services	9	2%	11	3%
First Nations housing support	6	2%	8	2%
First Nations legal support	4	1%	7	2%
First Nations Business Development	2	1%	5	2%
Other - Please specify	63	16%	49	15%

Food and material relief

Emergency relief provision remained at greatly elevated levels in 2025. The number of

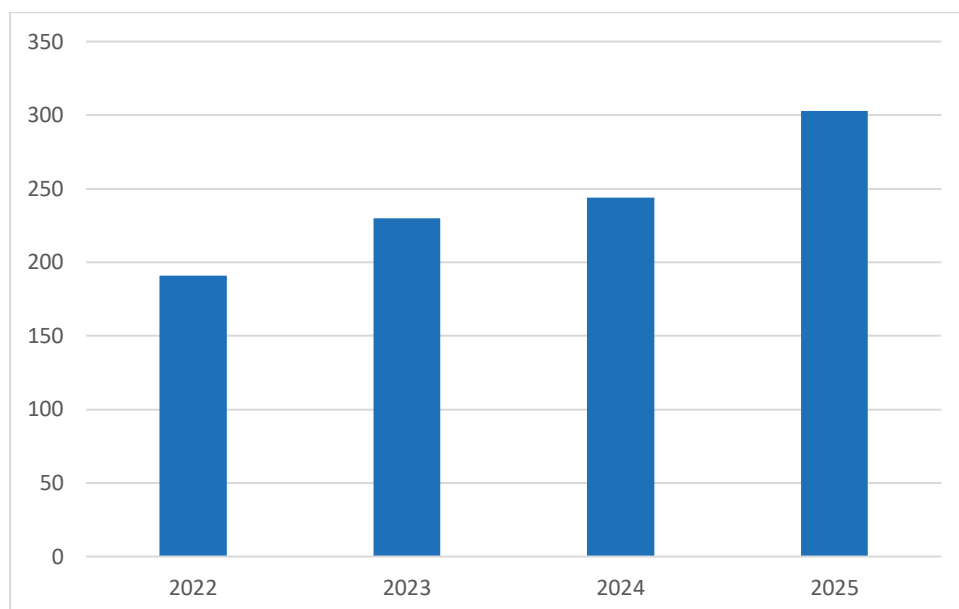
Neighbourhood Houses reporting food relief provision increased marginally from 256 in 2024 to 258 in 2025.

However, the volume of food relief provided increased by 24% in 2025, an increase of 59 tonnes per month, in part supported by Victorian Government food relief grants. Overall, the sector provided 303 tonnes of food per month, compared to 244 tonnes in 2024.

The proportion of food relief locally sourced by Neighbourhood Houses (through arrangements with non-food relief suppliers including local retailers and organisations, as well as through community gardens and donations from individuals) remains high at 33% (34% in 2024). Neighbourhood Houses managed the logistical and managerial workload associated with coordinating an average of 3.6 food sources.

Foodbank remains the single largest supplier of food, accounting for 43% of all food relief.

Figure 6 - Tonnes of food relief provided per month -2022 to 2025



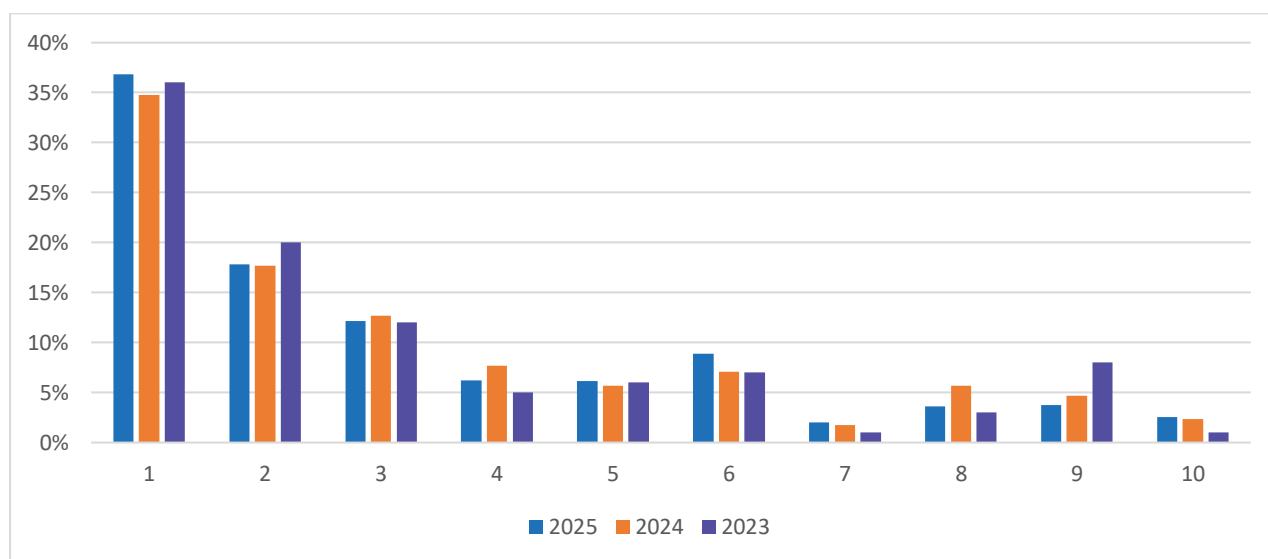
The food relief effort remained targeted with 55% (54% in 2024) of food by weight provided by Neighbourhood Houses in postcodes in the lowest quintile of the SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage for Victoria (representing greatest disadvantage). Overall, 79% of food by weight was distributed by Neighbourhood Houses in the lower five deciles, unchanged from 2024. Food relief volumes increased across all IRSD deciles except for the eighth decile which decreased. The fifth to seventh and tenth deciles saw the highest increases proportionally, each increasing between 28% to 38%, from relatively low 2024 volumes. This is consistent with data showing that more household are turning to food relief for the first time in the face of escalating cost of living pressures².

² [Families turn to food relief charities for the first time amid cost-of-living crisis - ABC News](#)



Pictured: food relief work at Duke Street Community House.
Photo 3 - food relief work at Duke Street Community House.

Figure 7 - Proportion of food relief (kg) by Neighbourhood House postcode based IRSD decile for Victoria, 2023 to 2025



The number of Neighbourhood Houses providing other forms of material relief increased by six in 2025 to 161, or 40% of Neighbourhood Houses. The number of Neighbourhood Houses providing food vouchers increased by 13 to 63, those distributing clothing increased by ten to 105, with six additional Neighbourhood Houses assisting with emergency accommodation.

The amount of material relief provided increased to \$233,389 per month, a 12% increase on 2024 with clothing provision effectively accounting for the entirety of the increase. Unlike other categories, clothing provision relies on an estimation of the value of clothing provided³. Provision of personal care and hygiene items remained the most common form of support

³ Neighbourhood Houses are asked to price new clothing at retail value and second-hand clothing at opportunity shop value.

provided, while clothing accounted for the greatest proportion in dollar terms.

Table 8 - Monthly material relief provision

Relief type	2025		2024	
	Response Total	Number of Neighbourhood Houses	Response Total	Number of Neighbourhood Houses
Clothing (sale or estimated resale value)	\$110,203	105	\$70,600	95
Personal care and hygiene items	\$49,623	122	\$46,716	118
Food vouchers	\$30,962	63	\$31,196	50
Bill payments	\$20,979	16	\$18,227	18
Cash/prepaid or gift card	\$11,272	47	\$12,802	43
Fuel vouchers	\$8,294	38	\$13,937	40
Emergency accommodation	\$5,036	15	\$6,791	9
Public transport cards	\$2,056	15	\$8,783	17
Total	\$233,389	161	\$209,052	155

Disaster Response

The number of Neighbourhood Houses providing a disaster response declined, from ninety-five Neighbourhood Houses providing services in response to an emergency or disaster in 2024 to 70 in 2025. Fewer events triggering the joint Commonwealth and State Governments' Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) occurred in 2025⁴, at eight events down from ten in 2024, five of which were storms. The variability in scale, impact and location all affect the number and type of Neighbourhood House responses.

Table 9 - Number of Neighbourhood Houses by type of support provided during or post disaster, 2023 to 2025

Types of support provided during or post disaster	2025	2024	2023
Use of NH facilities for respite or safety	42	60	27
Referrals	32	38	52
Food relief	31	35	50
Advocacy	26	31	47
Use of NH facilities for emergency services	19	20	22
Provision of counselling services	12	16	16
Storage or distribution of clothing or other essentials	9	19	25
Fundraising	8	7	10
Hosting relief agencies onsite	6	9	21
Feeding emergency service personnel	3	8	7
Other	16	29	24
Total Responses	70	95	90

⁴ <https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/find-a-disaster/australian-disasters#>

Referrals

Neighbourhood Houses are active in referring community members to a broad range of services and agencies to meet the diverse needs of individuals. Referrals may be formal or informal.

In an average month, 389 Neighbourhood Houses reported making 10,581 referrals, up from 10,315 in 2024. The median of ten monthly referrals has remained constant over 4 years.

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is a process whereby people are connected to supports or services to address non-clinical factors that impact health and wellbeing⁵. Examples include connecting someone to a walking group to improve fitness or to a recreational group to improve social connections.

The number of Neighbourhood Houses that participated in social prescribing initiatives increased, though there was a continued decline in Neighbourhood Houses managing social prescribing projects in 2025. Conversely, the number of Neighbourhood Houses represented in the remaining 2 categories increased compared to 2024.

In all, 150 Neighbourhood Houses indicated they were involved in a social prescription project or initiative, up from 139 in 2024. Significantly, 10% of Neighbourhood Houses were unsure of their social prescribing status, suggesting potential uncertainty surrounding types or source of referrals.

Table 10 below compares Neighbourhood Houses by the types of involvement in social prescribing from 2024 to 2025.

Table 10 - Percentage and number of Neighbourhood Houses by type of social prescribing involvement 2024 and 2025

Type of involvement	2025		2024	
	Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses	Number of Neighbourhood Houses	Percentage of Neighbourhood Houses	Number of Neighbourhood Houses
Managing a social prescribing project / partnership	5%	19	7%	26
Non-leading partner in a social prescribing project	10%	39	8%	32
People are prescribed to us by a social prescribing project	23%	92	20%	81

The number of referrals increased from 2024 by 13% to 1,422 social prescription referrals in an average month.

The following table outlines the sources of referrals and shows that while community health services remain the most common source of referrals, other referral pathways have changed in significance. Referrals from other community organisations increased significantly while GPs/GP clinics/medical centres as well as NDIS providers declined slightly. Referral pathways will be influenced by the design of any social prescribing activity and the participating services.

⁵ <https://content.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/2025-11/social-prescribing-in-the-australian-context.pdf>

Table 11 - Number of Neighbourhood Houses by social prescribing referral source type

Social prescribing referral source type	2025	2024	2023
Community Health Service	104	88	78
Other Community organisations	94	72	57
A link worker / navigator / community connector	86	79	60
GPs / GP clinics / medical centres	81	83	67
Allied health professionals (e.g., psychologists, physiotherapists etc.)	75	70	62
NDIS providers	75	76	57
Local Government	63	62	48
Maternal and Child Health services	55	50	47
Hospital	28	25	24
Other	23	23	18

Community organisations and local governments as referrers may in some cases fall outside the accepted definition of social prescribing, though some such organisations have been active in social prescribing. It is unclear to what extent these referrals may come via a link worker.

Enterprises

The number of Neighbourhood Houses that ran a social enterprise increased from 85 in 2024 to 93 in 2025. These serve different purposes such as fundraising, providing training positions for accredited training students, providing volunteering opportunities, and even providing grants to community groups. Importantly, 46% of Neighbourhood Houses with enterprises provide paid employment for community members, up from 40% in 2024.

Thirty Neighbourhood Houses run multiple enterprises, down from 37 in 2024. Despite the reduction in Neighbourhood Houses with enterprises the total number of enterprises increased from 146 in 2024 to 152 in 2025 enterprises. Newspapers and the other category accounted for most of the increased enterprises.

Table 12 - Number of social enterprises by type

Enterprises	2025	2024	2023
Op Shop	35	35	29
Café	25	25	25
Catering Service	16	17	24
Art / craft shop	12	13	11
Repair cafe/shop	10	10	6
Newspaper	8	3	8
Nursery	7	8	5
Book shop	5	5	7
Mechanic shop	0	1	1
Other	34	29	30
Total Responses	152	146	146

The total reported enterprise income from 79 Neighbourhood Houses declined by 9% from 2024 to \$4,505,836. The average income reduced from \$73,010 in 2024 to \$57,036 in 2025, while the

median income was \$800 lower at \$24,005.



Pictured: The Common Bean Café Social Enterprise at Banksia Gardens Community Services.
Photo 4 - The Common Bean Café Social Enterprise at Banksia Gardens Community Services

Staff

Overall, there were 5,598 employee or contractor roles within Neighbourhood Houses in 2025, down by 4% from 5,826 in 2024. The decrease was predominantly in casual/fixed term positions, down 25%, while ongoing positions decreased marginally by 2%. Table 13 shows the change in proportion of workforce by employment type, with the decline in casual and fixed term staff reflected in the increased proportion of workers in other categories.

Table 13 - Percentage of total employees and contractors by employment type

Basis of employment	2025	2024	2023
Full-time staff	7.9%	7.4%	7.8%
Part-time staff	34.6%	34.0%	34.9%
Tutors - casual or sessional	29.8%	27.8%	29.9%
Casual/ fixed term project staff	13.1%	16.9%	12.3%
Contractors	14.6%	13.9%	15.1%

The proportion of Neighbourhood Houses reporting one or more full-time employees remained steady at 25%, down from 28% in 2023. For 18% of respondents, total employment was less than one full time equivalent position, up from 17% in 2024.

Projects and Partnerships

Neighbourhood Houses reported involvement in 7,136 partnerships, both formal and informal, up 5% on 2024. The median number of partnerships was steady at twelve.

Neighbourhood Houses also manage or participate in a wide range of projects. They managed 2,496 projects, up by 25 projects on 2024. The median number of projects managed increased from

four to five indicating a reduced variability in project numbers across the sector. Projects managed by other organisations decreased by 13 to 1,315 compared to 2024 while the median number remained steady at three. The proportion of Neighbourhood Houses managing or participating in projects remained steady.

Neighbourhood Houses made 3,076 funding applications (median = 6), up almost 2% from 2024.

Income

Neighbourhood House gross income from all sources declined by 6% from 2024 to \$266 million, while median income increased by 3.6% to \$303,614, broadly in line with wage⁶ and inflation⁷ changes.

Income for childcare declined 3.6% with three fewer providers compared to last while on the other hand, total kinder income declined by 15%. Learn Local income declined by 2% while accredited training income declined by 13% following a 10% decline in the preceding report period.

Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Compliance

There are two measures included in the survey that contribute to Neighbourhood House Coordination Program performance reporting, both of which were exceeded for the 398 Neighbourhood Houses reporting in 2025.

Measures include:

- Open hours equal to funded coordination hours
- Two activity hours for every one funded coordination hour

Table 14 below shows the weekly target and the reported outcome. The target figure is based on the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program requirements listed above. Outcomes are based on hours in each category for an average week.

Table 14 - Compliance targets and outcomes

Performance Measure	Target	Outcome
Open hours per week	10,718.5	13,343
Activity hours per week	21,437	55,509

In addition to the open hours reported here which are based on open hours where paid staff are present, another 1,181 open hours were recorded where volunteers are opening the Neighbourhood Houses with no paid staff available. This creates a total of 14,525 open hours.

⁶ [National Minimum Wage Order 2024 | Fair Work Commission](#)

⁷ [Consumer Price Index, Australia, June Quarter 2025 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)



Pictured: Mooroopna Mural Project at Mooroopna Education and Activity Centre.

Photo 5 - Mooroopna Mural Project at Mooroopna Education and Activity Centre

Value for communities

NHVic has undertaken analysis of the respondent data and applied various methods to determine some of the value of some of the respondents' activities.

As evidenced above, there is wide diversity in both the range and mix of activities undertaken by Neighbourhood Houses. This prohibits the opportunity for comprehensive Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis. Consequently, the method used by NHVic employs the application of various methods developed by others to value different activities where appropriate and possible.

Most activities were not formally evaluated due to the absence of existing methods in the literature and the costs associated with undertaking a SROI study for the diversity of activities. Therefore, the following analysis excludes activities likely to provide significant returns to individuals and the Victorian economy such as homework clubs, English language tutoring etc.

The value calculations used here draw on SROI work undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics (2018, 2020) among others. Additional sources use a mixture of measures to determine the value of activities or part thereof. Methods for calculation are detailed at [Appendix A](#).

The NHVic ROI calculation for the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program includes valuation of the following outputs/outcomes:

- Increased connection and inclusion in the community
- Increased broader social engagement
- Volunteers' increased connection and inclusion in the community
- Food relief
- Material relief
- Room use or hire
- Social enterprise sales
- Fee-for-service activities provided

- Use of services e.g., ICT equipment use, community lunches, Tax Help
- Auspicing other community groups
- The value of Victorian Government Power Saving Bonuses obtained through Neighbourhood Houses

These activities are selected as they are most directly attributable to the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding i.e., they are activities that are enabled through the coordination work undertaken in Neighbourhood Houses and are not activities resulting from directly funded, stand-alone funding streams.

The proportion of Neighbourhood House participants indicating a community connection benefit was previously updated to an average 68% based on the 2024 Neighbourhood House Participants Survey. For 2025, it has been discounted to 62% to exclude potential infrequent visitors at the rate they were identified in the Participants Survey.

The value of food relief increased significantly based on an increased volume and a higher SROI valuation based on a 2024 Foodbank report⁸.

Table 15 below shows the following value for these measures for 398 Neighbourhood House respondents:

Table 15 - NHVic determined community value provided in 2025 by NHCP survey measure.

Answer options	Response Total
Community connection	\$233,394,455
Food relief	\$147,037,428
Material relief	\$2,860,040
Room use/hire value	\$33,887,190
Social enterprise goods and services provided	\$4,505,836
Fee-for-service activities	\$16,076,050
Selected services provided	\$10,552,021
Auspicing other organisations	\$612,854
Power Saving Bonus	\$1,440,700
Total	\$450,366,574

Using the input value of total Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding for the 2025 calendar year for survey respondents, the above activities produce a value to community of \$10.30 for each dollar of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding.

Additional activities were provided that were consistent with Neighbourhood House Coordination Program aims⁹, including supporting lifelong learning opportunities for people to improve their access to training and employment pathways as well as identification of partners and funding sources to meet community needs. Consequently, other activities undertaken by Neighbourhood Houses can also be valued and included in a ROI calculation, including:

- Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) and Vocational Education programs delivered through Neighbourhood Houses were valued at \$387,487,555.
- Be Connected digital literacy program valued at \$ \$4,392,558.
- Early Childhood Education and Care was valued at \$ \$28,446,378.
- Kinder programs were valued at \$ \$7,186,841.

⁸ https://www.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Foodbank-Australia-SROI-2024-Full-Report_WEBSITE.pdf

⁹ [Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Guidelines. DFFH \(2025\)](#)

Volunteering is treated by economists as an input in ROI processes where the value of the volunteer work contributes to the outcome being measured. From a Neighbourhood House perspective, volunteering is considered an outcome. The Victorian Government's Volunteering Strategy considers 'volunteering as a vital part of delivering the Victorian Government's priorities to build strong and resilient communities'¹⁰. The value of their labour contributes to the community by increasing the outputs and outcomes of Neighbourhood Houses. The value of labour provided by volunteers in 2025 was \$ \$85,768,187.

If all these activities are included, the value to the community generated per dollar of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding was \$22.03.

It is important to note that direct comparisons of community value generated between years is not possible due to changing inclusions from year to year. New information also can affect ROI as was the case with the proportion of participants included in the community connection calculations and food relief due to new information.



Pictured: Scones Together community initiative by Park Orchards Community House & Learning Centre.
Photo 6 - Scones Together community initiative by Park Orchards Community House & Learning Centre.

¹⁰ [Victorian Volunteer Strategy 2022-2027. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Victorian Government \(2025\)](#)

Appendix A: Community Value Calculation Methods

Social Connection

In 2018, Deloitte Access Economics produced a report¹¹ that determined a monetary value for the community connection work of Morwell Neighbourhood House. The method, detailed in Appendix C of the report, uses existing research to calculate the contribution of community connection to a Quality-Adjusted-Life-Year (QALY). Deloitte's methodology uses the baseline of the Value of Statistical Life Year set by the Department of Premier and Cabinet¹²

Different methods have been used to estimate the number of people who may potentially obtain social connection benefits. The 2018 report assumed that 50% of the annual unique visitors to the neighbourhood house were one off or infrequent for the purpose of their calculations.

A subsequent Deloitte report¹³ assumed that only new participants obtained social connection benefits. This assumption effectively discounts the importance of maintaining connections over the life course. Analysis from the Neighbourhood House Participants Survey 2017¹⁴ and the broader social isolation and loneliness literature¹⁵ identify the value of maintaining social connections. Pioneering research in 2024 showed that restricting social connection and other behaviours associated with maintaining psychological health in healthy participants resulted in a rapid decline in mental wellbeing with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety¹⁶.

The 2017 Neighbourhood House Participants Survey respondents clearly distinguished between the two distinct benefits used by Deloitte - "meet new people/make friends" and "spend time with other people". The first benefit implies creating or expanding social networks through the Neighbourhood House whereas the latter implies maintaining existing social connections within the Neighbourhood House. Where both benefits were selected, the implication is that relationships are in a formative, or expansion stage, or they have a connection in the Neighbourhood House but want to make more.

A 2024 survey of over 28,800 Neighbourhood House participants across Victoria clarified that 91.2% of Neighbourhood House participants attend regularly and 64% have been attending for more than a year. The data also show that the proportion of participants reporting social connection benefits increases with both attendance frequency and duration.

Consequently, to exclude irregular or one-off visitors, this report assumes number of regular participants is 91.2% of weekly participants in Neighbourhood House run activities. The result is

¹¹ [Social impact analysis Morwell Neighbourhood House Final report. Deloitte Access Economics \(May 2018\).](#)

¹² See page 2, disability-adjusted life years (DALY)'What is burden of disease?' Australian Burden of Disease Report 2024. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (November 2024), and 'Value of statistical life guidance note' Guidance on Assessing Impacts. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (February 2026).

¹³ [Estimating the social impact of Gippsland's Neighbourhood Houses Neighbourhood Houses Gippsland network Final report. Deloitte Access Economics \(July 2020\).](#)

¹⁴ [Social isolation and loneliness - a neighbourhood house perspective. Neighbourhood Houses Victoria \(2020\).](#)

¹⁵ [Social connection as a critical factor for mental and physical health](#)

¹⁶ [A pilot study examining whether restricting and resuming specific actions systematically changes symptoms of depression and anxiety. A series of N-of-1 trials. Titov, Dear, Nielssen et al \(2024\).](#)

then multiplied by the percentage of participants that identified “meeting new people/making friends” and/or “spending time with others” as benefits of attending their neighbourhood house based on each Neighbourhood House’s 2024 Participants Survey¹⁷.

The dollar values are expressed in 2025 equivalents, i.e. QUALY value of \$253,000¹⁸, which is consistent with Deloitte’s method.

The value of a Neighbourhood House’s increased social connection is calculated using this formula:

91.2% of participants in activities X percentage of people identifying a social connection benefit X 1 QALY (\$253,000) X contribution of social connection to a QALY (3.84%) X the extent to which contribution of social connection to a QALY can be attributed to attending the Neighbourhood House (28.57%).

It should be noted that 28% of the infrequent attendees excluded in this calculation reported receiving a connection benefit from attending their Neighbourhood House in the 2024 participant survey. Research has shown that even attending a one-off community event can reduce loneliness for over 6 months after the event¹⁹.

Deloitte further calculated the value of increased connection through increased participation in the broader community due to participation at the Neighbourhood House using the formula above for 10% of the participants. The 2024 Neighbourhood House Participant survey established that 15% of participants had attended for 1 year or less and reported being more involved in community activities or groups outside the Neighbourhood House as a result of their attendance at their Neighbourhood House. Consequently, this report applies the above formula to 15% of the discounted participants in activities.

Volunteering

Volunteering value is based on the replacement cost of volunteers’ labour. This is valued at \$48.16 per hour derived from the State of Volunteering Report’s replacement cost calculator²⁰ for volunteers aged 55-64.

The formula for calculating the community value of volunteering is:

Number of volunteer hours undertaken X volunteer hourly replacement rate

This is a conservative valuation. Replacement cost figure allows for some aging of Neighbourhood House volunteer population which averaged 50 years of age in 2012²¹. The replacement cost for a 50-year-old is 11% greater (\$53.82) than the figure used here.

¹⁷ Where a Neighbourhood House’s participant data are absent or unreliable due to sample size, an average of Neighbourhood Houses in similar sized communities with similar incomes is used. Income is a proxy for volume of activities delivered through a Neighbourhood House.

¹⁸ [‘Value of statistical life guidance note’ Guidance on Assessing Impacts. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(November 2024\).](#)

¹⁹ [Addressing loneliness through a scalable neighbourhood connection campaign: an evaluation of Neighbour Day using an Australian population-based control and causal propensity score-based approaches - ScienceDirect](#)

²⁰ [Volunteer Replacement Cost Calculator. State of Volunteering in Victoria \(2025\).](#)

²¹ Neighbourhood Houses Survey 2012

In addition, the valuation does not include the contribution to the economy and taxation from participating in volunteering, e.g. cost of travel to the place of volunteering.

Food and material relief

Food and groceries

The value to community of emergency food relief is based on work undertaken by Think Impact in 2024 for Foodbank Australia. Their social return on investment analysis determined that food relief was valued at an average \$43 per kilogram of food. This valuation included the value of improved social connection accounting for 6% of the value per kg of food. Because the value of social connection is included separately in this report, the \$43 is discounted by 6% to \$40.40.

The formula for calculating the community value of food and groceries is:

$$\text{Number of Kgs distributed for an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)} \times \$40.40$$

Food vouchers

The community value of providing food vouchers is based on the dollar value of vouchers given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from accessing food such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula for calculating the community value of food vouchers is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of food vouchers distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Cash/prepaid or gift cards

The community value of providing cash/prepaid gift cards is based on the dollar value of cash or gift cards given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from items purchased such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, added value to the economy, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of cash/prepaid or gift cards is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of cash/prepaid or gift cards distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Fuel Vouchers

The community value of providing fuel vouchers is based on the dollar value of vouchers given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from increased access to transport or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for transport such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of fuel vouchers is:

$$\text{Total \$ value of fuel vouchers distributed in an average month} \times 12 \text{ (months)}$$

Bill payments

The community value of providing bill payments is based on the dollar value of bills paid by the Neighbourhood House for individuals in need. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from increased access to services for which bills were paid or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for bills such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of bill payments is:

Total \$ value of participants' bills paid in an average month X 12 (months)

Public transport cards

The community value of providing public transport cards is based on the dollar value of public transport cards given out. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from increased access to transport or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for transport such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of public transport cards is:

Total \$ value of public transport cards distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Clothing

The community value of providing clothing is based on the dollar value of clothing given out. New clothing is valued at replacement cost whereas second-hand clothing is based on resale value such as in an opportunity shop. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from increased access to clothing such as improved confidence and sense of wellbeing or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for clothing such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of clothing is:

Total \$ value of clothing distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Personal hygiene items

The community value of providing personal hygiene items is based on the dollar value of personal hygiene items distributed. This is a conservative valuation as it does not include the additional benefits derived from increased access to personal hygiene items such as improved confidence and sense of wellbeing or the alternative use of funds that would otherwise have been used for personal hygiene items such as improved health and wellbeing, improved school performance for children, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of personal hygiene items is:

Total \$ value of personal hygiene items distributed in an average month X 12 (months)

Services

Except for school breakfast clubs, service valuations in this section do not include additional benefits from the service such as improved health, job prospects or employment nor the auspiced community groups' outcomes. This is due to the absence of appropriate research that quantifies these benefits.

Facilities usage

The community value of facilities usage is based on the number of hours of facilities use by external groups and organisations per month and the cost of hiring an equivalent space locally as determined by each Neighbourhood House. This figure reflects value provided to the community rather than income received as rooms and facilities are often made available to community groups at heavily discounted rates or gratis. The value also does not include the additional benefits to community of the room use activity e.g. improved health, improved access to information or services, reduced cost of services etc., relative to the activity type provided.

The formula used for calculating the community value of facilities usage is:

Total number of hours of room hire in an average month x 12 months X cost per hour of local equivalent.

Internet/computer usage

The community value of internet/computer usage is based on the number of hours of internet or computer use by individuals in an average month. This is benchmarked to the cost of a commercially available equivalent i.e. internet kiosk regardless of whether a commercial alternative is available. Note that free Wi-Fi is not an equivalent as there is no support or equipment made available. Commercial rates from \$3-\$5²² have been benchmarked. A \$2 lower rate has been used to account for the variation in the equipment and software provided. The rate does not include non-market benefits such as family connection, benefits from accessing or managing government services, etc.

The formula used for calculating the community value of internet/computer use is:

Total number of hours of internet/computer in average month x 12 months X \$2

Resume assistance

The community value of resume assistance is based on the cost of a resume service for a fee. The fee was benchmarked at the median price of \$50 on airtasker.com²³. The value was discounted to \$30 to account for the fact that Neighbourhood Houses may provide a participant with assistance in developing a resume rather than creating a full resume as a service.

²² <https://www.facebook.com/dsinternet512/?rf=710935435612179>

<https://www.facebook.com/galaxysonicgaming>

²³ <https://www.airtasker.com/writing/resume-writing/>

The formula used for calculating the community value of resume assistance is:

Total number of resumes assisted with in an average month X 12 (months) x \$30

Tax help

The community value of Tax Help usage is based on the cost of the cheapest commercial tax service found online²⁴ at \$100 per tax return. This is a conservative valuation as many tax help clients have multiple and/or complex returns which attract additional fees at commercial tax service providers.

The formula used for calculating the community value of Tax Help is:

Total number of tax returns lodged in 2025 x \$100

Auspicing other organisations

The community value of auspicing other organisations is based on the cost of purchasing public liability cover which groups would have to take out if they were not covered by the Neighbourhood House under auspicing arrangements. The price is benchmarked at \$632.46 for annual cover provided by Local Community Insurance Services²⁵

The formula used for calculating the community value of auspicing other organisations is:

Total number of organisations auspiced in 2025 x \$632.46

Community lunch, frozen or other meals

The community value of offering community lunch, frozen or other meals is based on the cost of purchasing a meal commercially, which has been benchmarked at \$10 per meal. This is benchmarked based on the prices quoted by ING, and numbeo.com²⁶ ranging from \$13 to \$25. It is discounted to \$10 per meal to account for regional price variation.

While many meals provided at community lunches are likely to be a form of food relief, participants may attend community lunches for other reasons such as for company or a lack of cooking skills. Because we are unable to distinguish between the two, meals provided are not valued as food relief.

The formula used for calculating the community value of community lunches, frozen/other meals is:

Total number of individual meals served/provided in an average month x 12 months x \$10

School aged breakfast clubs

The value to community of food provided through school breakfast clubs is based on work

²⁴ www.taxtoday.com.au/information/fees/

²⁵ <https://www.localcommunityinsurance.com.au/>

²⁶ <https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/in/Melbourne> , <https://blog.ing.com.au/money-matters/saving/dust-off-your-lunch-boxes/#article-1811>,

undertaken by Foodbank in Australia²⁷. Their social return on investment analysis determined that school breakfast clubs were valued at an average \$110 per kilogram of food in 2014 dollars. This valuation included the value of:

- Improved physical health (children)
- Better performance at school (students)

Foodbank's 2024 report did not cover school breakfast clubs in Victoria. Analysis of the 2014 detailed report allows for adjustment to 2024 dollars for each component. Allowing for inflation and the increased value of a statistical life, we calculate the ROI is \$40.85 in 2024 dollars. The formula used for calculating the community value of school aged breakfast programs is:

Total number of individual breakfasts served/provided in an average month x 10 months x \$40.85

Fee-for-service activities

The value to community of fee-for-service activities is based on the actual fees paid for activities undertaken by community members where the activity was not subsidised by grants or third parties other than NDIS.

Many Neighbourhood House activities are provided at low cost and therefore the value is conservative as it is likely less than the replacement value if the activity was undertaken with a commercial or for-profit provider.

The formula used for calculating the fee-for-service activities is:

Total value of fee-for-service activities from the period covered by the applicable annual report

Government subsidised Adult Community Education

The value to community for Adult Community Education (ACE) is based on an analysis of the Allen Consulting Group's 2008 report, 'The Economic Benefit of Investment in Adult and Community Education in Victoria'²⁸ commissioned by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE). While there have been significant subsequent structural changes that have occurred in the VET sector nationally, the work is most relevant because it examines the Victorian ACE sector specifically and includes pre-accredited as well as accredited training. The analysis discounts the value of pre-accredited compared to accredited training by estimating a proportional certificate equivalence.

Its use to estimate community value is also adopted because it is conservative in that it does not;

- include the significant known non-market benefits such as improved health, reduced criminality and welfare dependency, etc. estimated to be equal in value to the market benefits;

²⁷ [Hunger in the classroom Foodbank Report 2015. Foodbank Australia \(May 2015\).](#)

²⁸ [The Economic Benefit of Investment in Adult Community Education in Victoria Report to the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Adult, Community and Further Education Board. The Allen Consulting Group \(February 2008\).](#)

- include 36.3% of student contact hours to account for those with no market benefit;
- include the direct contribution of ACE provision to the economy (direct and induced economic impact of provider expenditure and wages);
- include the benefits provided to community from \$10.09 additional tax revenues from increased income and gross state product for each dollar invested by the Victorian government in ACE;
- account for the increased focus on delivery of pre-accredited training with market benefits since 2008; and lastly
- account for tighter targeting of vocational training to industry demand.

This report effectively values two principal community benefits at \$17.23 for each dollar of government funding. It is the value created over a 25-year timeframe from the learning provided. This rate is comparable with other work conducted locally and internationally. From a single year of state government investment of \$36.7 million, the report models:

Future income – \$202 million

Increased gross state product – 2.13 times the income effect - \$202 million x 2.13 = \$430.26 million

Total \$632.26 million / \$36.7 million state government funding = \$17.23

By comparison, a 2017 study from the University of Adelaide's South Australian Centre for Economic Studies²⁹ showed a return on investment for Certificate I foundation courses averaging just 34 student contact hours at \$6.50 for each dollar of funding. However, the average student contact hours rate of \$43.70 was about 4.8 times the value of \$9.10 ACFE rate, so equates to over \$31 return on investment for the same volume of activity if conducted as pre-accredited in Victoria. The study also only included the benefit of increased income and Victorian transition rates to Certificate III and above for Learn Local students, with the corresponding higher income earning potential, are much higher³⁰ than those in the South Australian study.

Work that includes a more comprehensive range of non-market benefits values Government subsidised Adult Community Education at much higher rates. A New Zealand analysis from PricewaterhouseCoopers³¹ valued ACE returns, including a range of non-market benefits, up to \$72 for each \$1 invested. While the comparisons differ substantially in many ways, all add significant value because they focus on disadvantaged learners.

Any potential overstatement of community value due to the changes in the structure of ACE since 2008 are more than compensated for by the value of other benefits not included in the calculation.

The formula used for calculating the community value of Government subsidised Adult Community Education programs is:

Total \$ value of government student contact hour subsidies in 2024 X 17.23

Be Connected

²⁹ South Australian Centre for Economic Studies. The Economic and Social Impact of the Adult Community Education (ACE) Sector. University of Adelaide; 2016.

³⁰ [Participation, training outcomes and patterns in the Victorian pre-accredited sector Final Report. Deloitte Access Economics \(October 2017\).](#)

³¹ PricewaterhouseCoopers Economic Evaluation of Adult and Community Education Outcomes New Zealand, June 2008

In 2020, Swinburne University of Technology's Centre for Social Impact released a social impact assessment of the Australian Government's Be Connected program. The report³² found that the program provides \$4.01 for every dollar invested. Grant funding to providers accounted for 17% of the program costs with significant investment attributed to the support infrastructure while the value was generated through outcomes from providers. \$13.2 million distributed to providers contributed to \$305.7 million in value. In effect, every dollar received by providers resulted in \$23.11 of value created. However, the report includes value for social connection which is valued elsewhere in this report. After removing the social connection value, each dollar provided produced \$6.33 of value in digital capacity.

The method used here assumes that the proportion of government funding distributed to providers is consistent with the period covered by the report. It should be noted that the return on investment is likely greater now as costs associated with establishing and maintaining the infrastructure are lower than in the initial period covered by the report.

The formula used for calculating the community value of Be Connected is:

Total \$ value of Be Connected funding received in 2024 X 6.326

Childcare

While there is research that suggests significant benefit from childcare for some cohorts within the community³³, there is inadequate research to determine the value to community of occasional childcare beyond the actual value of the service for the broader population.

The formula used for calculating the community value of childcare is:

Total \$ value of government subsidies + parent fees in 2024 X 1

Four-year-old Kinder

The community value of four-year-old Kinder is based on a 2019 PricewaterhouseCoopers study³⁴ which valued early childhood education in the year-before-school. It calculated a \$2 benefit for each dollar of costs.

The formula used for calculating the community value of four-year-old kinder is:

Total \$ value of government subsidies + parent fees in 2024 X 2

Social enterprises

The community value of running social enterprises is based on the value of sales from goods and services through Neighbourhood House-run community enterprises in the most recent applicable

³² [Improving the digital inclusion of older Australians: The social impact of Be Connected. Swinburne University \(June 2020\)](#)

³³ [Literature review of the impact of early childhood education and care on learning and development: working paper. AIHW \(2015\).](#)

³⁴ [A Smart Investment for a Smarter Australia: Economic analysis of universal early childhood education in the year before school. PricewaterhouseCoopers \(June 2019\).](#)

financial reporting period. This reflects the market value of the goods and services provided. It does not include additional value generated such as avoided landfill, value of training and work experience, economic multipliers, or the value of services or activities any profits support.

Total \$ value of social enterprise sales from the period covered by the applicable annual report

Community value relative to inputs

Community value for every \$1 of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) funding

Shows the total calculable community value from the organisation for each dollar of NHCP funding received in 2024. The NHCP provides the platform to develop and attract funding for the various activities the organisation undertakes.

The formula used for calculating the community value for each dollar of NHCP is:

Total community value/ total NHCP funding for the reported year