



Pathways to the future

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024





# Mission, Vision and Values

## Who we are

Sandybeach Centre is a not for profit community co-operative centre that provides programs and services to the local Bayside community and beyond. The centre's staff and volunteers deliver adult education services, social support and connection programs and exercise/lifestyle programs. We also provide access to our facilities for community groups and local small businesses.

## Mission

Sandybeach Centre is an inclusive organisation providing programs and services that enrich the quality of life for our diverse community.

## Vision

Sandybeach will be the place to meet, connect, learn and have fun.

## Values

Respect, Integrity and Honesty, Care, Collaborative and Inclusive.

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Bunurong and Boowurrung people of the Kulin Nations who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we connect, create and play.



# Our Board



(L-R) Sue Coburn, Stephen Hay, Paula Appelhans, Cameron Gregson, Rajah Ramanathan, Peter Bean, Hilary Buxton Absent: Ian Cochrane

## CHAIRPERSON

Rajah Ramanathan

## DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Peter Bean

## FINANCE DIRECTOR

Stephen Hay (Retired June 2024)

## SECRETARY

Paula Appelhans (Retired December 2024)

## GENERAL MEMBERS

Cameron Gregson (Retired October 2024), Sue Coburn, Hilary Buxton, Ian Cochrane (Joined December 2024)



# CEO and Board Chair Report

## March 2024



It is our great pleasure to provide the combined CEO and Chairperson report for the year 2024.

2024 continued the flavour of the previous year with further challenges and change. A year of frustration compounded by the impacts of cost of living pressures, funding and employment cost increases and reduction in funding across the sector.

However, as in the tradition of Sandybeach the energy and buzz continued as we moved into our 42nd year of operation. The partnership with The Green Boat to explore the current needs and future state for the centre whilst momentarily deferred, shows a strong commitment to our strategic goals of strength and sustainability. This led to some re-organisation in our staffing structure to set the foundation for our future.

Again, it was such a pleasure to see so many familiar faces return to the centre programs, to celebrate, surround the centre with lots of laughter and supportive conversations.

Community Bank Sandringham and Community Enterprise Foundation Bendigo Bank continue their incredible and unwavering support of our transport program and provision of a massive funding of a new EV Bus. We thank Matthew Gallop and his Board for the unwavering support. (See article on page 9)

During the year we continued our participation in a wide variety of community events including a Volunteer Celebratory Dinner, Neighbourhood House Week, Bayside Seniors Festival, R U OK Day and Carers lunches and lots more. The incredible Intergenerational project called PADSIP, in conjunction with RMIT and Sandringham College won the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice - 2024 Young Persons Program.

Our partnership with Village Zero saw the inaugural Sandy Eco Expo which we look forward to continuing to make it ever bigger and better in 2025. This ensures our strong commitment to sustainability and being an integral and inclusive part of the Sandringham community. Combine this with solar panels, upgrade to our inefficient air-conditioners and added extra battery storage in our quest to contribute to a cleaner environment and reduce our operating costs as an organisation.

We love the displays of all great artworks from our participants and have received so much positive feedback from our broader community about the impact this has had in communicating what we do as an organisation and making people feel welcome.

The ongoing success of the centre would not have happened without the extraordinary commitment from our wonderful and dedicated staff, stoic and generous volunteers and commitment of our Board members. We were sorry to farewell directors Stephen Hay, Cameron Gregson and Paula Applehans whose contributions were instrumental in guiding us from the shadows into the light during a particularly challenging year. We are humbled and grateful to work alongside such a committed, dedicated, and passionate team, helping our community thrive.

We are confident that we have turned the financial page and that 2025 will see us embark on a journey that will provide greater stability, growth and enable us to build a stronger foundation as we commence the path that will enable us to become a benchmark for the provision of integrated community services and achieve our aim to become the de-facto 'key community destination' for all of Bayside's residents.

We would like to thank our network of local neighbourhood houses for their continued support and will continue to seek ways for improving the collaborative efforts with our peers. By working together and advocating for the needs of our community, these partnerships will further strengthen our reach and impact and will broaden the scope of support we collectively can provide. We beseech you to join us.

We extend our sincere gratitude to our valued supporters, funders and donors for their generosity and commitment. A special thank you to Bayside Council for their ongoing collaboration and support.

As we professed last year, we have remained resilient and the message remains that Together, united in hope and strengthened by spirit, we will create a better community built on a foundation of compassion, kindness, integrity and care for each other, in harmony, spirit and ethos.

We look forward to embracing the opportunities ahead in 2025.

Chris Hill CEO and  
Rajah Ramanathan - Chairperson



# Strategic Plan

## 2021-2025 Update

### Growth

- Increased joint ventures and collaborations with other local community hubs e.g. Neighbourhood House Week, Intergenerational programs with Swinburne and Sandringham Secondary College.
- Continued work with Hampton East (Berendale) School.
- Developed our partnership with Sandy Traders on events and promotions.
- Continued support of Brighton Activation Group to support new residents in the New Street Estate.
- Developed Business plan from consultancy work with The Green Boat – start projects to renew/refresh building function.

### Quality

- Continued monitoring and showed reduced incidents with mitigation strategies.
- Working from home continued to assist with family and other requirement opportunities.
- Maintained quality review and risk assessment processes across all program areas.
- Reviewed all programs to meet community needs and engaged with participants to assist with design.

### Relevance

- Continued participation with other local services and providers e.g. Bayside Cluster Group, Sandbelt Group, Community Development Network, Community House Network Southern and Bayside Council.
- Strengthened our marketing via increased social media and measured engagement.
- Ensured alignment of activities with current Health and Wellbeing initiatives of Bayside council and internal research.

### Sustainability

- Partnered with Village Zero to launch the inaugural Sandy Eco Expo, strengthening environmental partnerships and engaging the community in sustainable practices to reduce our collective impact.
- Supported local environmental initiatives and implemented waste reduction activities at the centre.
- Completed operational restructure to align with our business model for the next Strategic Plan.



# Serving our Community

## The Statistics

694

**OVER 65'S HOURS**

**OUTPUT:** 486 enrolments

**OUTCOME:** Continue to enhance the quality of life for a seniors including vulnerable members of our community via social support, connection and other activities

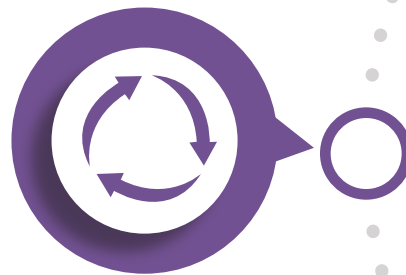


1075

**ALL ABILITIES PROGRAM HOURS**

**OUTPUT:** 310 attendances at programs from individuals with various disabilities

**OUTCOME:** Developing independence, living and lifestyle skills plus social support and connection



189

**LIFESTYLE PROGRAM HOURS**

**OUTPUT:** 265 individuals involved in programs including health, exercise and the arts

**OUTCOME:** Increasing physical and mental health activities, whilst improving social connection



105

**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS**

**OUTPUT:** 105 consultation about developing and improving our programs

**OUTCOME:** Development of plan for sustainability of Sandybeach and improving/evaluating our programs to best meet community needs and expectations





# 24196 ADULT EDUCATION HOURS

**OUTPUT:** From 362 enrolments

**OUTCOME:** Assist participants to engage in learning and set foundations for future learning, volunteering and learning



# 5833 VOLUNTEER HOURS

**OUTPUT:** From 45 individuals

**OUTCOME:** Enriching their own lives and those of participants, whilst expanding opportunities for engagement and connection



# 2000 CARERS SUPPORT PROGRAM HOURS

**OUTPUT:** 100 carers supported

**OUTCOME:** Reducing isolation and community connections via both structure and informal engagement



# 864 TRANSPORT HOURS

**OUTPUT:** 18,116 km – equivalent to 397 trips this year

**OUTCOME:** Access to our programs and improve independence



## Amazing Boost to our Transport Program

This year, the Community Enterprise Foundation of Bendigo Bank fully funded the purchase, branding, and connection of our electric bus. This is the second largest funded community project for the foundation. We're grateful to Matthew Gallop, Cait Eves from Community Bank Sandringham and Katrina Knight from the Community Enterprise Foundation - Bendigo Bank for their ongoing support. The bus supports our commitment to sustainability and reducing environmental impact, enabling us to transport over 3,000 people each year to our programs and excursions.

At Sandybeach, we know the journey is just as important as the destination. For seniors and vulnerable community members, our bus helps reduce social isolation by offering shared experiences and access to programs that promote physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The service also bridges the gap for those in Bayside without reliable transport, ensuring they can participate in activities that support their overall health.



## Powering a Greener Future

In our continuing commitment to sustainability, Sandybeach Centre has embraced many eco-friendly initiatives. We continue to generate power via our 54 solar panels and 3 storage batteries, which have made a significant impact on our running costs. This has contributed to substantial savings in the operation of our new EV bus, which strongly aligns with our vision for a greener future.

We were grateful for the opportunity to host the first Village Zero Sandy Eco Expo with over 40 partner groups and organisations. The major driver Village Zero co-ordinated an engaging day with hundreds of people attending the centre on the 11 May to learn about and participate in workshops regarding reuse, reduce, recycle and repurpose. Through the latter part of the year we had hosted days with the Council supported Roving Repair workshops and Share and Swap Group, contributing to our efforts to be more environmentally conscious.

Committed to environmental responsibility, we aim to serve our community while fostering long-term sustainability. Our strong ties with Village Zero and all the partner groups, Council, Share and Swap and Repair workshops continues to enhance our involvement in environmental initiatives. Looking ahead, we are excited to host another large Sandy Eco Expo in 2025.





# Empowering All Abilities

## Celebrating Success Stories and Personal Growth

This year we have continued to build on the success of our popular All Abilities programs. Our person centred approach ensures we support each individual in exploring their goals, needs and interests. One of our many success stories is highlighted in this interview with Matthew Harrington.

### How did you first hear about Sandybeach Centre?

I first connected with Sandybeach years ago when I was at school. I came here for cooking classes while attending St James College.

### What programs are you currently participating in?

I'm currently in Art in Action with Heidi, she's a fantastic teacher.

### How has coming to Sandybeach helped you?

The staff and participants are incredibly supportive especially during difficult times and they celebrate happy moments with me too.

### What have you learned?

I've gained confidence and developed many new skills and techniques. Through art I've noticed improvements in my fine motor skills and my ability to focus on tasks. I enjoy creating intricate artwork with a touch of humour.

### What do you enjoy outside of Sandybeach?

I love staying active, going to the gym and playing All Abilities Cricket. I also enjoy visiting interesting places like the warship in Williamstown, watching action films like Fast and Furious and seeing comedy shows including David Strassman.

### Do you have a favourite memory from Sandybeach?

There are too many to choose from!

### What are your future goals?

- Move out of home
- Travel overseas independently - it would be amazing to build the confidence to do that
- Attend the Avalon Airshow
- Continue growing my independence



# REACH and Carer Support

## 2024 Highlights

- **Garden Lunch Club:** A new respite program for REACH and STEP participants, combining independent living skills, arts, crafts and gardening. Lunch preparation was included and the program bridged into afternoon activities, allowing participants to enjoy a full day at the centre.
- **Connections: Music and Movement for Wellbeing:** With a grant from Bayside Council, we trialled this dance therapy program for seniors with age-related health challenges, including dementia. Based on our learnings, we partnered with Bayside Council's Arts and Culture team to develop an ongoing program tailored to individual needs. Open to both independent participants and those attending with a carer or support worker.
- **Intergenerational Program:** In Term 3, we partnered with Swinburne University's PADSIP team and Sandringham College for another successful program. Seniors and Year 12 students collaborated on Digital Storytelling projects under the theme Turning Points, supported by Sandringham Lions volunteers, who provided a weekly lunch.
- **Young at Heart:** Now running year round, this program fosters intergenerational engagement through storytelling and social activities, acting as a feeder program for PADSIP.
- **Sandybeach Carers Support Group:** Membership grew significantly, with carers increasingly seeing Sandybeach as their key support provider. A grant from Carers Victoria funded two additional events: Massages for Carers (now a regular offering) and a special end of year celebration.
- **Strength Training:** Now includes a home cooked lunch, creating a social aspect after exercise. The program's long time leader, Angel Parker, sadly passed away in July 2024 after 30 years of dedication to Sandybeach Centre.
- **Music Alive:** Continues as our most popular REACH program, delivering fantastic entertainment every week.
- **Seniors Month:** Record attendance this year, with two of our four events selling out: Jazz Beats & Sweet Treats with the Sullivan Family Trio and The Carpenters Tribute Band. A total of 166 additional seniors joined us, many visiting for the first time.



Afternoon Tea Dance



Massages for Carers



Seniors Month



## A Pathway to a Brighter Future with REACH

Our REACH Social Support Groups, funded by the Commonwealth Home Support Program, help older adults with age-related health conditions stay connected. We offer a variety of activities tailored to participants' needs and abilities, with many programs also providing much needed respite for carers.

Ruth shares how Sandybeach Centre supported her through challenging times while caring for her husband, helping her find strength, hope and a reason to keep going each day.

### How long have you been attending Sandybeach Centre?

I've been attending Sandybeach for seven years since 2018. Now I attend three programs across two days a week.

### What programs are you currently attending?

I attend Young at Heart, Music Alive and Friday Social Club. I have also been involved in several PADSIP (Intergenerational) programs, which run for one term each year.

### What first brought you to the Centre?

I was caring for my husband Frank, who had dementia and he started attending a Sandybeach music program to give me some respite from my caring role. He enjoyed the program so much.

Due to the demands of my caring role, I was feeling really isolated and needed company and a reason to get out of the house, so I decided to come along to the music program with him. We both loved the music.

### How has Sandybeach Centre helped you reach your goals and overcome challenges?

Since joining Sandybeach programs, I feel stronger and more confident. It's helped me come out of my shell, express myself better and positively impact my relationships. My kids now see the real me and call me strong.

### Do you have a significant event you remember at Sandybeach?

Not one single event, but I am really enjoying the Young at Heart program led by Lisa Smith. This program stimulates my brain and helps me feel connected to others and the wider world. The group is so supportive of each other.

### What is your favourite thing about Sandybeach Centre?

I'm grateful for the amazing staff and volunteers, especially Angel Parker, who passed away in 2024. She made me feel truly cared for and will always be my 'angel.' Also, Tony, our bus driver, who is kind and patient.

I love the variety of programs I attend, each offering something special, from music and stimulating conversations to new friendships with wonderful people.



# Capturing Moments



All Abilities Expressive Arts



Music Alive



Roving Repairs



All Abilities Garden Club



Social Club



Kingston Services Expo



Massage for Carers



Music Alive



Social Club



# Capturing Moments



Chris on the grill



Brad Rosewell MP Auctioning Painting



Ross Guenther, Andrea Lees & Harry Mullany



Valentine's Day Special Live Music Event



Sandy the Christmas Bear



Andrea and Elana



Massages for Carers



Trevor & Andrea at the Eco Expo



Afternoon Tea Dance



# Our Supporters and Funding Partners

We thank the following people, organisations and Government departments who in 2024 provided support to Sandybeach Centre through in-kind contributions, donations and grants. This support has enabled Sandybeach to better meet the needs of our local community. We sincerely appreciate your support.

- BayCISS
- Bayside Council
- Bendigo Bank – Foundation
- Brad Rowswell MP
- Brighton Recreation Centre
- Castlefield Community Centre
- Cheltenham Community Centre
- City of Kingston
- Community Bank Sandringham
- David Lewis
- Department of Families Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services
- Department Jobs Skills Industry and Regions
- Hampton Community Centre
- Highett Neighbourhood Community House
- Lions Club Sandringham
- Marshall White Real Estate Sandringham
- Sandringham Lions Club
- Sandringham Secondary College
- Sandy Street Art Project
- Sandy Traders
- Southern Star Coaches
- Swinburne University
- Village Zero
- Zoe Daniels MP

# Our Rental Groups

- Bayside Seido Karate
- First Step Solutions
- Share and Swap
- Village Zero





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Centre

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