

# SUDBURY HOUSE



2018 AGM

## Executive Managers Report

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we operate our services on the land of the traditional custodians of this land, the Wadjuk Noongar people on behalf of all associated with Sudbury Community House Association Incorporated, I pay respect to elders' past, present and future. Our services span across the two buildings, right next door to each other – one for the Care and Development Centre, and one for the community activities. We are one organisation, that offer education and care places, and community activities. This structure offers more opportunities for local people to learn, get support and information, and connect with each other. Change has been a theme for this year. As always, it has been another memorable year working with people who teach me so much about tolerance, hope and inspiration. Sudbury Community House is a place for everyone.

Since we opened our doors in 1986, we have welcomed everyone in our community and that remains true to this day. From newcomers to those living on a low income, to people of every faith and racialized group, to every age and gender, we have always been a place for people to come together in a welcoming environment.

Although our belief that everyone is welcome has remained steadfast over the years, those beliefs aren't always reflected by society at large. A divisive, anxious, and at times violent reality has surfaced as of late and so we want to take a moment to remind you that we are glad you are here. It is our diverse group of participants, volunteers, and staff that enable Sudbury House to face challenges with creative solutions and improve our neighbourhood for all those who live here. Our diversity is our strength.

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# Place of Choice

# People Place Purpose

Virginia Aden

Chairperson Report

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Neighbourhood Houses started in the 1970s as grass roots organisations that were focused on addressing disadvantage for marginalised groups of women. Neighbourhood Houses were often set up in residential houses in suburban streets in an era when people commonly walked places in their neighbourhood and communicated face to face or via the telephone and letters.

People relied on the radio, television or newspaper to find out what was happening in the world when the home computer was unheard of. It was a time when there were less women in the workforce. The technological revolution has changed how we work, learn, communicate, shop, manage finances, receive news and interact with the world. The pace of life has increased with the constant access to information and there are endless opportunities, more choices and possibilities.

Sudbury Community House Assn. Inc. is a well-established, highly successful and highly regarded educational and social hub. It has excellent partnerships and relationships with the wider community and Government. It meets many of the needs of the community and is accessible and inclusive to all groups and has a great sense of community.

It is also very welcoming and easily accessible to disability groups. It is very appealing to a wide variety of groups. It is equally as welcoming with its community garden and very functional indoor area as well as playground. We are very fortunate to have both spaces available to the wider community.

So, Sudbury House needs to reassess: Why are we here? Who are we here for? What are we trying to achieve and what is the best way to do that? We intend to capitalise on the new tools that are available and connect with people in new ways. In addition to our strong focus on communities, we need to ensure that Sudbury House remains viable. There are no easy answers to ensuring financial viability.

Many Neighbourhood Houses have worked hard to increase the number of income streams to reduce the exposure from cuts to one area, however, this has also increased the burden of multiple compliance requirements. There is a push from funding bodies to collaborate, shared services models are favourable.

The word "merger" has been floated but at this stage most Houses prefer independence. Sudbury House is looking beyond traditional funding sources, opportunities to partner with businesses and philanthropic funding that have not been maximised. We have explored alternative business models and new funding sources that don't compromise values for the sake of extra money.

Some of the projects that we have done over the years are:

- Structural and Functional Review - 2012
- Sudbury House - "The Journey" 2013
- Income Generation and Sustainability – Presentation 2015
- Organisational Development Plan 2016
- Review of Management Structure of Community Services and Care and Development Centre – 2017
- Maintaining a positive workplace culture and a welcoming and inclusive practice
- Providing an integrated and coordinated service which provides pathways for residents to achieve individual goals within a safe and supportive environment
- Sudbury Community House Assn. Inc – Health Check 2017
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The health check related to the following key operational areas:

- ❖ Governance & Leadership
- ❖ Strategic Planning & Management
- ❖ Service Delivery & Quality of Service
- ❖ Legal Representation & Understanding
- ❖ Financial Management
- ❖ Human Resources Management
- ❖ Information Systems Security
- ❖ Asset Management

The past year has seen great achievements in which we have delivered on our Statement of Purpose and worked with many others to achieve our Vision of being 'A place of Community; a place of belonging; being and becoming where people feel safe and free to develop and grow, which values and includes each member'. The year has again been one of change, both in the external environment in which we operate and within both our Centres. Our Board and staff have demonstrated flexibility and adopted a positive approach in responding to an Organisational Restructure as well as significant changes to our external relationships and sources of funding.

We have continued to work in partnership with other Service Providers and Government bodies and have welcomed the opportunity to form new relationships, particularly with Peedac and the many Organisations we are getting to know in the City of Stirling.

A major challenge has always been to stretch our dollar as far as it can go, and this continues this year. With a number of Programs receiving little or no funding, we experience continued frustration at the uncertainty of funding to key programs which are highly valued by the Community, but which are not financially supported. Funding models of the new Empowering Communities Program create challenges for how we budget and monitor spending.

We are learning through this opportunity which puts us in a good position for the future of our other funded programs. Our primary source of funding, under the Community and Neighbourhood Development Services Program continues to be extended under short term variations of contracts and are subject to significant review over the coming year. We have just heard that our Service Agreement has been extended to March 2019 with a possibility of another three-month extension.

None of what we have achieved this year would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our Staff, Volunteers and Board, along with the individuals and organisations that support us. The ability within the Organisation for people to work together as a team has added considerable value to every Program offered.

I extend my appreciation for this combined contribution from everyone involved at Sudbury House – it is my experience that the Organisation’s culture and integrity is valued by the people who work here, and we remain committed to its success. Communities are made stronger by this working together to achieve a common goal. I would also like to thank our members and the people who use our services for their trust and their support of the Centre.

I would like to particularly thank our wonderful local member, Janine Freeman who is always willing to advocate on our behalf, to provide advice as well as attend many local functions. This she does despite her very busy schedule and we are fortunate to have someone with her integrity supporting the community services in the Mirrabooka area.

The year ahead will again be one of change. We hope to further consolidate gains made in the last few years, look to diversify our income through other funding sources and private donations, and of course will continue to provide an inclusive Community Centre which values and includes each member.

Here’s a snapshot of our top three performers.

#### Tree of Life

The Tree of Life Program is a collaboration between Sudbury House, Wadjak Northside Aboriginal Centre, and The Smith Family. The weekly workshops are run by Aboriginal teachers and mentors at the Wadjak Northside Resource Centre for primary school-aged Aboriginal children who are not living with their immediate family. The main focus of the workshops is to help maintain cultural connections for the kids and to keep them strong and resilient. Sudbury House auspices the grant for the Tree of Life Program and helps to build capacity of the staff at Wadjak and ensure policies and procedures are up to date. We also assist with data collection and reporting with the view to strengthening the capacity of the Wadjak resource Centre. Originally funded from July 2017 to June 2019, the Tree of Life program is currently being evaluated for a potential funding extension to June 2020.

English Conversation Classes

English conversation class has been running at Sudbury House for over 20 years. The group welcomes women with limited English skills to develop their conversation skills as well as learn more about life in Australia and learn how to access local resources. The first half of the allocated time is spent conversing, sharing, and learning basic grammar. After the morning tea break, there is often a guest speaker, or activity that builds on the knowledge and confidence of the women, so they have more skills to manage their lives in Australia. An important and integral part of the English Conversation Group is the Creche offered by Sudbury House to care for the children of the group participants. This caring and supportive component of the program significantly enhances the ability for participants to focus on building their knowledge, confidence and skills.

Certificate II in Leadership Course

As part of the Sudbury Community House principle of community collaboration and partnership, South Metropolitan TAFE and Women's Health and Family Services (WHFS) operate a Certificate II in Leadership, Life Skills and Transition Program, which has been running for over 3 years. The Certificate II qualification offers a good transition to more advanced studies, entering the workforce, and becoming actively involved in the community. The Certificate II program provides participants with basic leadership skills that are applicable to a range of industries and career groups. Students learn about occupational health and safety, computer and office skills (how to chair meetings, and prepare agendas and take minutes), how to develop and implement a project, and working in a team environment. This program greatly contributes to the close and expanding relationship with WHFS and strengthens the Sudbury Community House strategy of being an inter-agency hub in Mirrabooka.

Sudbury House Care and Development Centre

Our children have become involved with their community attending many community events over the past year and with each exchange comes new language, topics of discussion and growth opportunities. Just to name a few in the past six months, the educators and children have participated in the Harmony Day, Lake Gwelup Aboriginal Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC week celebrations providing opportunity to connect with other people and learn from those exchanges.

We have had a big focus on literacy and language with the children attending the National Simultaneous Reading event held at the Mirrabooka Square, trips to the library and recently celebrating Children's Book Week. To immerse a child in language through verbal interaction, reading and every day engagement supports their acquisition of language and literacy skills, stimulates the connections of neurons within the brain and sets them up to be competent lifelong learners.

Recently the children participated in a collaborative community initiative project with the students of Certificate II in the Leadership Program. As part of the Certificate II Leadership studies, students were required to undertake a community-based project. It involved connecting residents of Servite Village (Aged Care Facility) and the children attending Sudbury House Care and Development Centre. This event enabled an inter-generational connection between the residents, children and the students of the Cert II Leadership Program. The residents of the Servite Aged Care Facility enjoyed a high Tea and multicultural presentation of each student's "My Story, My Journey" with their respective support staff. The Kindy children helped bake Anzac cookies and presented them to the residents that attended the High Tea. They also entertained the residents with some songs that they had practiced for the event.

Changes to the National Quality Framework

Following a review of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (NQF), some changes have been agreed across the states. Changes to the legislation came into effect on 1 October 2017, with a revised National Quality Standard (NQS) being introduced on 1 February 2018. Changes include some streamlining such as the reduction of the number of standards from 18 to 15 and the number of individual elements from 58 to 40. These changes will reduce some of the administrative concerns but will not impact the standard of education and care for children.

In June this year we had a visit from the Education and Care Regulatory Unit to conduct our assessment and rating against the 7 National Quality Standards (NQS). We were one of the first Early Childhood Education and Care Centres to be assessed under the revised version of the National Quality Standards. We have received feedback that the centre was found to be meeting the National Quality Standard in 38 of 40 elements over 7 Quality Areas. After much reflection we continue to improve in our practices and work towards 40/40 when next assessed.

This past year has seen many new connections made with our local community of early childhood specialists. We have worked hard to foster reciprocal, collaborative relationships with the Department of Child Protection and Family Support, Aboriginal Child Health Team, Community Links and Networks WA, Child and Adolescent Community Health, Family Inclusion Network WA and other likeminded organisations to improve access for children and their families into Education and Care and supportive, integrated, solution focused outcomes for our most vulnerable children, with regards to health, safety and child development. In other words, supporting our community to gain a sense of belonging, being and becoming.

The inclusion of children and their families who are from disadvantaged, CALD or newly settled migrant and refugee families has also been a priority for the Care and Development Centre this year. Staff have attended local community meetings and accessed training to gain further understanding of these groups and how we can better support their inclusion within our education and care community.

Professional learning and development

Sudbury House invests time, resources and funds to ensure we have skilled staff and quality leaders; this also promotes good outcomes for children and families and contributes to positive staff retention results. With the assistance of the Australian Government's Long Day Care Professional Development Program funding we were able to deliver substantial, targeted training over and above mandatory training requirements.

This funding contract ended on 30 June 2017. Our strategy was to continue to engage consultants to deliver a range of learning and development programs. Our professional team attend training across a range of subjects on a regular basis, which supports the provision of high-quality care for all children. The staff at our Care and Development Centre (early years team) recently enjoyed a fantastic motivational workshop. 'Finding the Strength Within' presented by Jackie Goodsman & Vicki Hodgson.

The workshop was a great way to start the New Year and supported the educators in their professional journey. Through discussion and fun collaborative activities, the educators were able to practice deep critical reflective thinking to identify individual and shared team strengths. They applied their critical reflection to develop a deeper understanding of the revised National Quality Standards which was introduced in February 2018. The team were able to discuss and plan beautiful environments for children and families which will create strong positive connections to inspire play and learning.

The other training staff completed were –

- ‡ Circle of Security
- ‡ Guiding children’s Behaviour Through Attachments
- ‡ Supporting children’s Self - Regulation
- ‡ Trauma Informed Practice
- ‡ Drug and Alcohol - Impact on children and Families
- ‡ Cultural competence
- ‡ Reflective Practice
- ‡ Person Centred Approach
- ‡ Changes to the Privacy Act
- ‡

Changes to the market for child care

There is considerable flux in the market affecting provision and cost of early childhood education and care. Historically, not-for-profit child care services have had available to them low cost or no cost leases from local governments, but there is now increased pressure from all landlords, including local governments, to seek commercial rent.

There has also been a spike in supply of child care places as property developers have entered the market, with average utilisation in the sector across Australia now reported as being around 80%.

According to the Australian Government’s Early Childhood and Child Care Summary Report released in September 2016, there has been an increase of 13% in the number of long day care services since 2012, while there has been an increase in the reported number of vacancies of 49% over that same period.

The pattern of demand has also shifted as new parents access government funded paid parental leave of up to 18 weeks, in addition to any paid parental leave from their workplace. This means new parents, can stay on parental leave longer, so the average age of children entering child care is older.

There has also been a marked change in working patterns, with more flexible working arrangements and the use of unpaid carers (for example, grandparents) that has meant that demand for child care across each day of the week is quite variable, for example notably lower on Fridays in certain areas of the Sydney metropolitan region. Sudbury House is continuing to monitor the changes in the market and looking for opportunities to be responsive and flexible for families.

The beginning of 2018 we saw a decline in families taking up education and care places, this trend was not isolated to our service but one that affected services all over Western Australia. From the second half of the year we have had a slow increase in occupancy to now sit around 60% and see this continuing to climb as the year progresses.

We have made some improvements to our facilities which provides capacity to continue to grow our valuable, quality education and care service into the future and look forward to continuing to serve the community of Mirrabooka and surrounding neighbourhoods for another 30 years.

We have another challenging but exciting year ahead. We're working in sectors with a lot of uncertainty, and that also means there's lots of opportunity. Things may be different to what we expect now, but if we're helping children and families to access the services that they need to thrive, we will always have a place.

Virginia Aden, Executive Manager – October 2018

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