



Okines Community House Inc

2024-25 Annual Report



2024/25 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Christine Woodcock

My second year as President of Okines Community House has been exciting and extremely rewarding. I believe we have worked incredibly well together to resolve the challenges put to us and are now moving forward in a very positive fashion.

Towards the end of 2024 our Manager for over 20 years, Natalie Siggins, had a fall and during her recovery, decided to resign. I would like to acknowledge Nat's contribution in guiding Okines Community House from a tiny community organisation to the thriving House we have today.

Thanks, too, to Nelle Degrassi for stepping in to the Manager role at such short notice and for her contribution at a very difficult time.

Lissa Villeneuve joined us early in January 2025 as Manager of Okines Community House. What a breath of fresh air! Lissa has achieved some incredible milestones since January, some of which are gaining funding for a variety of new and innovative programs, building renovations and engaging a wonderful staff team.

I would like to express my thanks to the current members of the Board who have always been very supportive and given additional time when needed. A five-year strategic plan has been developed with the support of staff, volunteers and the Board and I am excited to see this plan evolve and guide Okines Community House into the future.

At the 2024 AGM the following Board members were elected

Christine Woodcock	President
Sharon Phelps	Secretary/Vice President
Martin Bishop	Treasurer
Bill Thomas	Public Officer
Colm O'Shiel	Member
Lucy McLelland	Member
Will Kingston	Member
Janet Vail	Member

Following the 2024 AGM we also welcomed Alison McCrindle to the Okines Community House Board.

Sadly, work and travel commitments mean that Janet Vail is unable to continue with the Board. Your contribution has been most appreciated Janet and we wish you well. Your enthusiasm and intellectual input at Board meetings has been most appreciated.

On behalf of myself and the entire Board our thoughts go out to our Co-op Co-ordinator Jill Vaughan who lost both her husband and her father-in-law within a few short weeks. We have all been thinking of you Jill and we send our collective love.

My position as President this year has been exciting and full of positivity. I can see Okines Community House going from strength to strength under the leadership of Lissa and her wonderful team. All areas of Okines are now supported by dedicated staff and volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who has organised events, volunteered in any capacity, participated in activities or utilized the services of the House. Okines could not function without our volunteers and we have a wonderful crew. Thank you all sincerely for your contribution. Without you, Okines would not be able to start to meet the needs of this amazing community. You are all so appreciated.

2024/25 TREASURER'S REPORT

By Martin Bishop

It is a great privilege to present the audited financial statement for the financial year ending 30 June 2025 for Okines Community House Inc.

The 2025 Financial Statement have been prepared and audited by our appointed auditor, Mr Michael Ian Derbyshire of Bentleys Tasmania Audit Pty Ltd.

The Financial Statement has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as of 30 June 2025, and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date

The team at Okines Community House are working diligently to ensure that the organisations costs are managed within budgetary constraints and that services are well provided to our community.

Totals for each area are as follows,

	Income	Expenses	Profit/Loss
Okines House and Garden	\$412,545.36	\$411,098.66	\$1,446.70
Okines Food Coop	\$129,505.85	\$120,423.84	\$9,082.01
Okines Film Society	\$3,618.66	\$1,892.36	\$1,726.30
Okines Bike Shed	\$4,263.91	\$1,270.16	\$2,993.75
	\$549,933.78	\$534,685.02	\$15,248.76

The financial year achieved an operating surplus of \$15,248.76.

With Nett Assets of \$172,294.93 which is up from last year (\$145,201.61).

Well done to the team!

2024-25 Manager's Report

by Lissa Villeneuve

Reflections

I was fortunate to start in the role of Manager with Okines Community House in January 2025. It has been wonderful getting to know so many of the people who have helped to create this amazing community space over the last 25 years! It is so joyful to see students checking on the chickens, parents with young children running through the outdoor play space, our regular social groups laughing and chatting while they knit, paint, weave, dance, sing and play cards. We are so lucky to have such a vibrant community hub in the Southern Beaches, and I am so grateful to everyone who has contributed over the years and those who continue to give so much...we literally couldn't do it without you!

We have also been working to create consistency and efficiency for community members using Okines. We want to ensure that we lead with kindness, openness, and competence in all our interactions and hope that community members can feel that when they visit. We always welcome feedback and discussion, so please let us know how we are going and add your thoughts and ideas to our dreams and ideas boards in the House.

Acknowledgements

In the past year Okines said goodbye to Nat Siggins, who coordinated the House from its very beginnings. A huge thank you to her for all of her hard work and dedication over 25 years! Nelle Degrassi also finished up in her most recent stint as Assistant Manager. Nelle was responsible for many fantastic events and activities over her time here and stepped up to take on management of the House while Nat was on extended leave this year. Nelle provided stability, increased collaboration, and made sure that everyone felt valued and supported. One of our co-founders (and Nelle's mum), Kerry Degrassi passed away this year as well. Her dedication to the Southern Beaches community was inspiring and has enabled so many incredible initiatives to be realised. Vale Kerry! Finally, Michelle Freeman, who spent a year as project officer, and many will remember for her helpful nature, also finished up this year.

With these changes, we have welcomed some new staff members - Jess Payne (Events and Engagement Coordinator) and Maura Bedloe (Connection and Admin Officer). They have joined our well-established team, which includes Donna and Janet in the Garden, Carlos and Jill in the Co-op, and Kylie in the House. All of this change has been quite a lot in a short time, and I thank everyone for their patience and support as we all settled into our roles and new team dynamics. I also want to express my gratitude to the Board (Christine, Marty, Bill, Colm, Will, Lucy, Janet, Alison and Sharon) who have provided so much support to me over the past 6 months. They are so passionate about creating a welcoming space

that meets the needs of the Southern Beaches community and go above and beyond to steer the strategic direction of the organisation as well as getting their hands dirty supporting events, managing the IT capability, covering the House when staff are away, and so much more. We really do have the most excellent and joyous team here at Okines!

I also want to thank the Tasmanian Government for their continued support for Neighbourhood Houses and following through on their election commitment to fund two days a week for Community Connectors in each house. Having worked in many community organisations over the years, I can't overstate how important it is for long-term planning and capacity to have ongoing core funding secured to support our operations.

Achievements

- Attracted grant funding of approximately \$35,000 for a variety of projects and events, including: Mental Health First Aid Training, trialing a Community Pantry pop-up in Primrose Sands, capturing stories of the past 25 years from some key Okines Community members, and expanding the undercover area in the Garden.
- Fabulous celebration of the 25th anniversary of Okines Community House! There was dancing, laughter, feasting, connecting with palawa stories, honouring community members who have helped create Okines, an audio-visual installation of stories from the past 25 years, and sharing dreams for our future. A huge thanks to all of the amazing staff and volunteers who made it such a joyous celebration and to 2A4 and Sorell Council for funding to help make it all possible.
- Supported more than 20 community members to access interest-free loans through the NILS program.
- Provided emergency food relief and food assistance to about 200 people each month.
- Another stellar Lantern Parade with reports that nearly 1000 people attended and hugely positive feedback from everyone! This year, we partnered with South East Arts to run a series of workshops in the lead up to the event with adults and students and also hosted a light installation competition for the first time.
- We hosted a lovely Volunteer Morning Tea to celebrate our incredible volunteers. Lissa prepared a beautiful spread of home-made veggie sausage rolls, dips, tarts, cakes, etc and Jess made cards and distributed bubbles as a small token of our appreciation for everything that our volunteers do.
- The team has done a lot of work in bringing our systems, processes and procedures up to date and making improvements to our efficiency and consistency in the services that we offer to our community. There is still work to be done and we will continue to refine and improve things over the next year.
- Communications have been improved and collaboration between all the areas of Okines is increasing and enabling a more cohesive team environment for all.

Food Co-op

Reflections

- Friday Coffee Shop is growing in popularity as a regular part of the Co-op community connection. Open Mic day is particularly successful at involving people with each other and introducing them to the co-op. Thanks to Brendan Fuller for this great initiative.
- Carlos began as paid volunteer manager for 10hrs/fortnight – this task expanded to Cashier Roster Manager with an extra 10hrs/fortnight funded by the Food Co-op in May 2025. He is able to run the co-op alone for an extended time if and when required. His funding from the House ceased at end of June 2025. (to be trial funded from the Co-op from August 2025)
- Gaylene started regular weekly Job Seeker hours as a Tuesday assistant and is now a primary cashier
- I have noticed more local people wandering past, asking about the Co-op and the Community Garden and giving positive feedback. There is still a need for better promotion of what Okines offers though.
- Management of volunteers is still a significant part of our admin time. This needs addressing and refining, in collaboration with the rest of the Hub.

Acknowledgements

- With Nelle Degrassi as acting manager in 2024, the sense of working together as a team grew with her positive support and communication. This continues apace in 2025 with the new House staff team and Lissa Villeneuve as manager.
- Many thanks to Marty for his tireless and patient assistance with any IT and banking issues we have had to deal with.
- Thanks to our occasional bakers who stepped up for the many events held this year.
- Thanks as always to all our regular volunteers, without whom we could not operate.

Achievements

- Good cash takings at the Small Town Markets days in 2024 with Cuppa-and-Bite in the Garden Kitchen
- New memberships, sales and takings continued to improve throughout the year – need for more space for display and storage is becoming a priority. In May 2025 we submitted an application for a 2nd extension to the co-op shed as part of a larger grant application from the House.
- Overall membership numbers have grown by around 35%, with new people joining as some drop away, but there are significantly more members shopping more regularly and frequently than in previous years.
- Monthly sales averages rose from around \$8,000 to \$10,000

Bike Repair Shed

Reflections

We continue the inclusive student education program. This provides opportunities for inter-generational and cultural learning and connections. Community and individual connections remain a core focus.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to our substantive volunteers, John, Glenn, Dave, Paul and recently Janet. They give valuable input and a respectful approach to all of our clients.

Achievements

- Completed clean up of old bikes unable to be fixed
- Continuation of networking and communication with the wider community regarding bike care and rider safety
- Implementing and monitoring OH&S issues and compliance
- 342 donated bikes fixed and rehomed
- 290 bike repairs completed
- 3 quality bikes donated to Dodges Ferry Primary School

Garden

Reflections

Our DIGnity program has been successful for many years and not only brings joy to our nursing home visitors but also to increasing numbers of our local elderly folk. Local community members join us and find great comfort in companionship, conversation, inclusion and the friendships they make.

We always welcome locals to attend workshops in the garden, and it is always extremely satisfying and rewarding to be able to share knowledge and information and encourage and inspire others to start their own vegie gardens or expand on their existing plots at home.

Acknowledgements

We would be at a loss to achieve what is constantly required for the upkeep of our Garden without our dedicated team of volunteers. We value their input, suggestions, requirements and support them with encouragement and advice and ensure they know how special they are to us. Staff at Okines have been supportive and are always there for us, which is a nice change, we know we can go to each other and express ourselves to be heard without

judgement. The working environment has definitely changed for the better which, to us, is a great relief.

We would also like to thank all of the amazing local businesses who donate to the garden as well as generous donations from the community. In particular, we'd like to thank:

- Dodges Bakery for coffee grounds, eggshells
- Toranius Timber for donation of sawdust
- Imbee from Primrose Sands for horse manure
- Katrina from Richmond for horse manure
- Ron from Primrose Sands for Garden Plant trolley
- Ray for supply of pigeon manure

Achievements

Many weeks were spent on completing OHS measures to address safety issues in and around our Garden, making it safer for volunteers and visiting community members.

The ongoing success of our Garden Tucker program is significant for all who attend. This creates opportunities for people to gain new skills as we work together to address many necessary requirements for the garden that we otherwise don't get time to do. Garden Tucker is always an enjoyable day together with music and food supplied. The feedback we receive from people about their sense of accomplishment warms the heart.

The ongoing education, teaching of skills and sharing of information, that we offer our volunteers and community members on the three days we are in the garden is very rewarding.

Film Society

Reflections

Dodges Ferry Film Society is a volunteer-run Okines activity formed in 2017. We are a member of the Tasmanian Federation of Film Societies, screening films for DFFS members every third Saturday of the month, February to December. After starting out at Okines, then spending several years at the General Purpose Room at Dodges Ferry Primary School, we moved back to Okines in August 2024. Members enjoy meeting over a drink and sharing food prepared in the Okines kitchen, then watch the film together in the Terrapin room. In October 2024 we used savings to purchase and install a pull-down screen in the Terrapin, making set up much easier.

Looking ahead:

- Keep screening an eclectic mix of films and list all past films on the web page.
- Simpler member admin (Outlook contacts or Okines MailChimp).
- Simpler fit-for-purpose DFFS terms of reference/procedures (not a sub-committee - Okines membership tie-in.)
- Refresh our routines, keep film nights sustainable and engaging.
- More comfortable seating for the Terrapin.

Achievements

- 40 financial members and dedicated Flickster volunteers (Jen, Jan, Melinda, Jennifer, Ali, Mara).
- Selected, licensed, promoted and screened 11 films (1 GP Room, 10 Okines Terrapin): The Castle, Blinded by the Light, Cousins, The Year of Living Dangerously, Bullet Train, Love Actually, Nomadland, Peanut Butter Falcon, Aftersun, Satellite Boy, Last Film Show.
- Welcomed a total of 271 people to the screenings (230 annual members, 41 casual members.)
- Connected with a community of 610 Facebook followers, 76 Instagram followers.
- Purchased and installed a pull-down screen in the Terrapin used for a variety of Okines events.
- Set up a dedicated films@okinescommunityhouse.org.au email account (thanks Marty, Melinda and Jan).
- Updated co-signatories to the Okines/DFFS Bendigo Bank account to add Marty, Christine and Lissa along with DFFS volunteers Jan and Melinda.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Okines board and staff for all your support!

Repair Cafe

Reflections

- 4 repair cafes were held in the 2024-25 financial year. One for each season: spring, summer, autumn and winter. The goal of each repair café is to repair items therefore reducing the amount going to landfill (waste) and upskilling attendees
- Okines Repair Café (ORC) has joined the International Repair Café movement – of which there are 2,500 Repair Cafes worldwide! It's pleasing to see there are now 6 repair cafes in Tasmania. Check out our Okines Repair Café page www.repaircafe.org
- If you'd like to contact us or volunteer - ORC now has its own Gmail account: okinesrepaircafe@gmail.com.

Acknowledgements

- We need to acknowledge the tremendously dedicated and hardworking ORC volunteer management committee: Chris Bennett, Virginia Allanby, Judy Mills, Deb Peacock and Jenny Dudgeon along with the team of local volunteer repairers who share their skills and expertise to help repair, mend, or innovate saving many items from landfill. It's wonderful to have the ongoing support of the Okines Bike Shed team and Okines Community House Board and staff.
- The Eastside Repair Café (ERC) personnel from the Warrane Community House: mentored and encouraged the first pop up ORC and continued to assist with the establishment of the ORC. We farewell two wonderful ERC general repairers - Arthur Edwards and Dave Mead, both of whom have attended every ORC and mentored and encouraged the ORC committee and volunteer repairers. We have really appreciated their time, expertise, energy and generosity.

Achievements

- Attendees invited to bring along hard to recycle items that the ORC committee will deliver to the Sorell Council's hard to recycle wall at the Council chambers, a charity or service organisation. Items collected were - old reading glasses, pill blister packaging & old x-rays.
- A free, give away items table – clean, functional items donated by ORC committee
- It has been terrific to demonstrate special sustainability skills at each ORC. The featured sustainability skill shares have been:
 - Weaving household items using recycled t shirts with Gwen Egg.
 - Making sourdough and sharing sourdough starters with Margaret Steadman.
 - How to sharpen a chainsaw with Brian Bennett.
- An example of the repair café's impact from September 2024:

Type of Repair	Numbers
• Darning/Sewing	7
• Boots	1
• Sharpening	16
• IT/Computer/phone assistance	3
• Mechanical	1
• Jewellery	9
• Bikes	8
• Unable to be repaired	3
Successful Repairs	45
New Skills Learnt	6 people
Weight saved from Landfill	459.57 kg
Repair Time volunteered	6 hrs & 5 minutes