



the centre

connecting community in north & west melbourne inc. 58 errol street north melbourne

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www.centre.org.au

annual report 2008/09



FROM THE CHAIR

The year 2008/09 was a busy and challenging one for the Committee of Management.

The committee consisted of Alice Bluer, Lorna Hannan, Gary Hansen, Gary Heard, Sally O'Dwyer, Mary Tomsic, Ray Walters, Ann Wilkinson and Sally-Anne Wilkinson. Two further people, Alex Abernethy and John Murphy, joined us during the year on an interim basis until the AGM. Unfortunately, Ray Walters had to resign during the year, but the remainder continued as an involved and committed team with extremely good attendance at meetings. My thanks go to all for their experience, assistance and enthusiasm. As Chair, it has been inspiring to have such a group with whom to work, and has made my job very easy.

We also instituted formal executive meetings this year. Mary Tomsic (Secretary), Sally-Anne Wilkinson (Treasurer) and I met with Thea Bates mid-way between monthly Committee of Management meetings. This enabled the business of The Centre to be monitored and important matters to be reported to the other committee members whenever necessary without having to delay important decisions until a committee meeting.

I refer you to Thea's report for details of the year's activities. However, I wish to indicate that, since the end of the financial year, changes beyond our control have required much creativity and lateral thinking. The next year will see further changes but we are all very excited by an organisation which is on the move.

I wish now on behalf of the Committee of Management to thank a number of key groups and individuals.

First of all the staff under the leadership of Thea Bates. We have an incredibly dedicated and passionate group, who continually amaze with their creativity. A very large part of the secret is their teamwork. I wish to record here that in a demanding year the staff remained strong and loyal and at no point flagged in their energy and application. We owe them tremendous thanks.

I also want to record here that without our volunteers (around 300 of them this year, including Spring Fling 2008) our organisation could not function. We offer them a huge vote of thanks for the multiplicity of things they do and for their ongoing support and dedication. Their contribution in terms of time and talent means that we have weeks, days and hours and unbelievable skills at our disposal. We could not do it without you, the volunteer team.

We also wish to record our thanks to the City of Melbourne, ACFE and other funding bodies for their support, which has always been very much appreciated. We regret that this level of support will be less in 2009/10 but we acknowledge the foundations that council funding has given The Centre in the past decade.

And finally I wish to thank The Centre team, in particular Dianne Schmidtke, Ainslee Smith, Linden Smith, Celeste O'Keefe, Peina Aditiani and Kristie Walker, for managing the arrangements for this AGM and the fundraising party that will follow. They have been ably assisted by a number of volunteers. These sorts of occasions don't just happen – thanks to you all.

Ann Wilkinson

Chair
Committee of Management

Committee of Management as at 30 June 2009

Ann Wilkinson (Chair)
Mary Tomsic (Secretary)
Sally-Anne Wilkinson (Treasurer)
Lorna Hannan
Alice Bluer
Gary Hansen
Gary Heard
Sally O'Dwyer
Ray Walters

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The aim of this report is to provide our community and all stakeholders with information about our programs, services and initiatives from July 2008 to June 2009.

This report highlights some of the new directions undertaken by The Centre in the last financial year, and the significant increase in participation by an increasingly diverse cross-section of the community, as we live up to our name 'connecting community in North and West Melbourne'. It also provides a glimpse into our future.

A key highlight of the year was Spring Fling Street Festival 2008, with over 14,000 participants, as the festival made its much-heralded return to Errol Street. The day started out overcast, but as the festivities got underway no-one cared. Stages at each end of Errol Street showcased many local artists and talent. The street was filled with delicious aromas from stalls and local restaurants; artworks and performances thrilled children and adults alike. We celebrated Home Turf directly outside The Centre, where symbolically the North Melbourne Football Club demonstrated its commitment to 'stay south', and we applauded the FreeZa Battle of the Bands in the Arts House. In 2009 The Centre's AGM sits right in the middle of Spring Fling 09 Fundraising Week, during which partnerships, tastes and treats of North and West Melbourne are being 'unwrapped' in readiness for next year back on the street!

A key structural change to The Centre was the establishment of a Community Engagement and Partnerships Unit (CEPU) led by Dianne Schmidtke. Within this unit now sit programs including Global Homework, volunteers, the North and West Melbourne News, Centre Adventures and all our courses. Added to this has been the strengthening role of building partnerships within and across the whole community. I refer you to Di's section of this report for more about the CEPU. Di has an incredible capacity and energy for bringing people together and creating extraordinary outcomes. Thank you, Di. For the first time a staffing position was dedicated to looking after our numerous volunteers. Linden Smith happily accepted



the challenge and managed to recruit and train many new volunteers during the year, particularly for the News and the Homework Program, and keep around 300 people on the books. These wonderful people make all our programs work and we estimate that, if they were paid, their financial contribution to the local area would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. We estimated the Homework Program tutors' contribution alone was worth over \$85,000 per annum!

Another change in emphasis this year was The Centre Adventure Program led by Ainslee Smith. Ainslee brought a fresh and invigorating approach to our social inclusion program, with her passion for cooking and sharing her love of adventure with a constantly changing group of participants. They have explored, tasted, talked and tried things never before considered, made new friendships and discovered new ways of seeing the world.

The Global Homework Program continued to go from strength to strength. Sadly we bade farewell to the Coordinator, Miriam Manne, at the end of 2008. I want to thank Miriam for her dedication to the Homework Club and her massive contribution to building this program. In term 1 this year Celeste O'Keefe became the Global Homework Program Leader. Celeste has built on Miriam's work and is taking the program into a partnership with the North Melbourne Football Club Learning and Life Centre (LLC). In 2010 she will work across two campuses, catering for all year levels from grade 4 to year 12. We are extremely proud of this program and look forward to working with the LLC. The North Melbourne Library will continue to be a partner, and we thank them for their ongoing commitment.

Central to our 'new view' has been a strengthened partnership with local traders and business people, including the establishment of a Breakfast Event series. The first was held in May 2009. Eugene Arocca, CEO of the North Melbourne Football Club, was welcomed by breakfasters at Errol's Cafe as he outlined the footy club's commitment to being part

of the local community. The next breakfast was scheduled for 14 October at The Leveson hotel, with Christine Nixon, as Chair of the Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, to speak about community-building in Victoria's bushfire-ravaged areas.

In 2008/09 the North and West Melbourne News went through a transition phase with a new structure to accommodate many new volunteers and to cope with Janet Graham's decision to step aside. Janet had been the backbone of the News for nearly nine years, so we appreciate the struggle this decision has been for her. I want to thank Janet for her dedication, commitment, spectacular proofreading and sleepless nights. Allan Hood stepped into the new role of Production Coordinator, supported by new Content Coordinators Jennifer Boyce and Tom Kramer. From production to delivery around 60 volunteers make this wonderful community newspaper happen. A huge thanks go to Helen Lew Ton and her crew of delivery people.

The Committee of Management is another team of dedicated volunteers whom most people never see or are aware of. They meet every second month, with the executive meeting in alternate months. The committee has the responsibility to govern The Centre – what it delivers, for whom and at what cost – and for monitoring how well it is travelling. I want to thank the committee, especially Ann Wilkinson as Chair, for their time, energy and commitment to The Centre and to us as a staff team. They have been amazing.

A group of people who seldom get acknowledged are the tutors of our courses and the many participants with whom they regularly work. This is because most of us seldom see them. Yet they are an essential part of our 'learning centre' function, and they keep coming back for more every year! Thank you, everyone. Tell us more of what you want.

Then there is the team of dedicated staff of The Centre who make each day a delight to come to work. I want to acknowledge their enormous contribution and their commitment to the organisation and to

the local community. Without exception they all give one hundred and fifty per cent! A huge thank-you to everyone.

On a less cheerful note, the year ahead will not be quite so straightforward as The Centre's multi-year Funding and Services Agreement (FASA) with the City of Melbourne ceased on 30 June 2009. The Centre applied in April for recurrent funding under the City of Melbourne's new Community Services Funding Application (CSFA) process. However, on 1 July 2009, the City of Melbourne advised The Centre that it would, as a consequence of a change in the municipal boundary (and thus extra organisations competing for funds), reduce its core funding to The Centre by around \$200,000 or 70% within two years. Reductions became effective immediately. Given that this was on the first day of the new financial year, and we already had in place programs, courses and contracted teachers for terms 3 and 4 of 2009, this reduction presented, and still presents, a major financial challenge. If we are not successful in attracting new partners, then we will certainly have to shrink. Worst case scenario is that we cannot run the 2010 Spring Fling Street Festival. However, we remain optimistic that this will not happen.

We are strategically positioning ourselves and planning for a new and different future. We invite ideas and contributions from interested parties, which will then be considered in the context of our strategic plan. We will still have a neighbourhood house function, we will still have a learning centre function, but new approaches and new resources will be found to connect and support people. This time next year we are likely to look very different, but we will remain the force for connection in our community. That much is guaranteed.

Thea Bates
Director

FROM THE TREASURER

The 2008/09 financial year saw The Centre return a small surplus of \$1,847 from an annual income of \$532,157, a stable result in line with budgeted projections and which consolidates The Centre's financial health going forward.

Both income and expenditure for the year were around 30% higher than for the previous year, mainly reflecting the impact of successfully delivering the biennial Spring Fling Street Festival during the year (2008/09 was a 'delivery' year for the festival, following the 'development' year in 2007/08).

The Centre again achieved compelling community outcomes and had significant outreach, all on a budget of just over \$500,000. Furthermore, the figures as reported do not take into account the enormous contribution and value of our volunteers, without whom many of the programs and activities, the Spring Fling Street Festival, the Global Homework Program, the North and West Melbourne News and more would be not possible. The goodwill of our volunteers is invaluable and provides tremendous support to The Centre's purpose, well beyond the scope of finite dollars.

At the end of the year, The Centre held net assets of \$83,221, slightly higher than those for the previous year. Net assets are split between a 'cash reserve' of \$30,895 (available for general use) and specific-purposes reserves of \$52,326, which are invested in fixed and other assets and a community development reserve (and therefore not available for other purposes). These reserves provide responsible buffers which offer some safeguard against short-term financial fluctuations and uncertainty.

The leading contributors to The Centre's funding for the year were government and other grants, which constituted just under 90% of total income, with around two-thirds of income provided by the City of Melbourne, for both operating and project purposes.

Our existing operational funding and service agreement with the City of Melbourne ceased on 30 June 2009 and The Centre applied in April 2009 for renewed recurrent funding under the City of Melbourne's new Community Services Funding Application (CSFA) process. On 1 July 2009, the City of Melbourne advised The Centre that it would, as a consequence of a change in

municipal boundaries, reduce its core funding to us by around \$200,000 or 70% within two years, with reductions effective immediately. This reduction clearly presents a major financial challenge of immediate and ongoing concern and places The Centre's program at risk.

We are presently evaluating all reasonable options going forward and intend in principle to protect current service levels by seeking alternative funding to offset the reduced support from the City of Melbourne. However, without offsetting income from alternative sources, The Centre is likely to require a significant restructure and down-sizing of its operations. The financial effects of funding and any organisational changes

are outside the scope of this report but will be discussed in detail in the 2009/10 annual report.

In closing, I wish to thank Robert Pisano, the Centre's Accountant, and Thea Bates, The Centre's Director, for their continued support. I also thank all the dedicated staff at The Centre and our incredible volunteers for their commitment and goodwill. Finally, I thank all individuals and organisations alike who believe in and support our programs and endeavours. The year ahead will be challenging and we intend to meet these challenges head-on.

Sally-Anne Wilkinson
Treasurer, Committee of Management

The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc. Summary financial report for the year ended 30 June 2009

Important Notice

Information used in this summary financial report is extracted from the full financial report of The Centre: Connecting Community in North & West Melbourne Inc. ('The Centre') for the year ended 30 June 2009.

The information shown is for summary purposes only. For a complete understanding of the financial performance, financial position and activities of The Centre, the full financial report should be referred to. The full financial report also includes a full description of the accounting policies adopted by The Centre, and explanatory notes to the financial statements.

The full financial report, including the independent auditor's report, is available free of charge via download at www.centre.org.au, or on request from The Centre by calling 03-9328 1126 or emailing finance@centre.org.au.

Summary income statement for the year ended 30 June 2009

	2009	2008
Income		
Government and other grants	468,449	376,582
All other income	63,708	37,692
Total income	532,157	414,274
Expenditure		
Employee costs	259,191	257,536
All other expenses	271,119	157,286
Total expenditure	530,310	414,822
Net result for the year	1,847	(548)

Summary balance sheet as at 30 June 2009

	2009	2008
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	166,659	214,218
Equipment	48,191	24,587
All other assets	9,718	4,235
Total assets	224,568	243,040
Liabilities		
Loans and borrowings	12,004	-
Payables	46,209	49,902
Provisions	29,907	33,356
Income received in advance	53,227	78,408
Total liabilities	141,347	161,666
Net assets	83,221	81,374
Equity		
Reserves	52,326	46,487
Retained earnings	30,895	34,887
Total equity	83,221	81,374

Summary statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2009

	Retained earnings	Reserves	Total
Balance at 1 July 2007	37,617	44,305	81,922
Net result for the year	(548)	(548)	-
Amount transferred (to) from reserves	(2,182)	2,182	-
Balance at 30 June 2008	34,887	46,487	81,374
Net result for the year	1,847	1,847	-
Amount transferred (to) from reserves	(5,839)	5,839	-
Balance at 30 June 2009	30,895	52,326	83,221

Summary cash flow statement for the year ended 30 June 2009

	2009	2008
Cash flows from all activities		
Receipts from government and other grants	440,041	387,844
All other receipts	71,605	37,032
Total payments	(559,205)	(387,921)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held	(47,559)	36,955
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	214,218	177,263
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	166,659	214,218

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS UNIT

The Community Engagement and Partnerships Unit (CEPU) was developed to support growing local community needs.

The unit includes Volunteer Coordination, the Global Homework Program, The Centre Adventure Program and the North and West Melbourne News. Courses at The Centre, in local hired premises, and those provided to local services are all part of the CEPU. The development of events to support the North and West Melbourne Precinct Association and the local business and not-for-profit communities has been an exciting project.

The Volunteer Coordinator, Linden Smith, has continued to develop protocols, procedures and position descriptions for volunteers. Legislative changes have impacted on volunteer management, the mandatory implementation of working-with-children checks and the necessity for police checks.

The growing program and changes to the structure of the North and West Melbourne News team have heightened the importance of recruitment and maintenance of volunteers.

The Centre Adventure Program added an important dynamic to the programs offered, with many opportunities for people to develop skills and learn about their own city and surrounds while making connections with others. This is important when there are so many in our community experiencing social isolation. This program teaches the participants to care for and support each other in a positive, empowering way.

In early 2009, the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) invited The Centre to present about the work of engaging diverse cultural groups at their annual conference. The presentation, entitled Jumping and Jiving, demonstrated frameworks which included community engagement, social inclusion and solution-focused practice, to name a few. It utilised Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data in program development and delivery.

The training package was presented to neighbourhood houses and learning centres in Ballarat and surrounding areas and a further presentation will be delivered to the Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs (CHAOS) network in the outer-eastern suburbs in October 2009.

The Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) board supports The Centre with funding for education and training for a broad range of Victorians over compulsory school-leaving age with a special focus on people who have had limited access to education. The programs run with this funding have been:

- Start Here at Ozanam House and PC Free at Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation. These are programs designed to help people who are experiencing homelessness to develop their computer and career development skills.
- At Regina Coeli (Macaulay Community Services for Women), Communication Pathways continued to provide participants with opportunities through drama to develop their communication, personal and career development skills.
- In partnership with Living Music, Writing to Rhythm is for young men and women who are over 16 from cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and not attending school. This course is designed to develop written and spoken English skills through music. The participants recorded a CD and performed at Spring Fling 2008 and at The Centre's community end-of-year party.

The North Melbourne Rotary Club generously provided funding for drums to implement the Holyoake Drumbeat Program. This program is suited to young people and uses drumming as a vehicle for learning skills concentrating on self-esteem, self-confidence, conflict resolution and negotiation skills.

Brickworks is a self-run program for budding local artists to meet and share their skills. An exhibition entitled Works in Progress was held in Adult Learners Week 2009. Another exhibition was planned to be held at the Docklands Hub in August 2009 with

works exploring the environmental impact of human behaviour.

The suite of courses offered provide opportunities to local people to engage with each other while learning new skills, enhancing wellbeing and creating a healthy and connected local community.

In consultation with some local businesses, the CEPU created a Breakfast Event series which brought local businesses, services and not-for-profit organisations to meet at the breakfast table. The first breakfast was held on 13 May 2009. The event was held upstairs at Errol's Café and was a sell-out with 65 people in attendance. The guest speaker was Eugene Arocca, CEO of the North Melbourne Football Club, who talked about the club and the development of the Arden Street complex with its anticipated benefits to the local community.

Evaluation of the event demonstrated that all in attendance were satisfied with the event and there was strong support for ongoing events. Further events were planned for 14 October 2009, with Christine Nixon presenting about her work as Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority, and for 24 February 2010, a showcase of local fashion designers called Fashion Never Sleeps.

The Community Engagement Unit continues to develop programs and events to enhance relationships and skill-building to benefit all in the North and West Melbourne area. Please see below for individual staff and program reports.

Dianne Schmidtke

Community Engagement and Partnerships Manager



Global Homework Program

What a year of change The Centre's Global Homework Program saw in 2008/09, and who could have imagined the direction it would be taking as the new financial year approached?

Following the retirement of inaugural Coordinator Miriam Manne at the end of 2008, I was appointed Homework Program Leader in February 2009. The amalgam of skills gained from working in child protection, teaching and as a rowing coach proved invaluable in helping me adjust to this exciting new role and embrace the unexpected challenges that emerged.

Since the beginning of 2009 the Homework Program has been running two afternoons a week, catering for years 6 to 10 on Tuesdays and years 4 to 6 on Wednesdays. The first two terms were extremely successful, with an average attendance of 60 children (out of 100 enrolled) from backgrounds as diverse as Anglo-Australian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Somalian, Sudanese and Ethiopian. However, the program would not have been possible without the 60 volunteer tutors who assisted in its facilitation. Many new students enrolled from schools in North Melbourne, Flemington, Maribyrnong, Ascot Vale, South Yarra, Broadmeadows and Essendon, and we had a corresponding influx of volunteers ranging from university students to retired principals.

There has been positive response from parents in terms of completion of home-

work, as well as from the volunteer tutors. There were, however, some suggestions that the program could do more, such as establishing an advisory committee with parental involvement. In addition to the core objective of seeing homework completed, the program adopted a more holistic approach by incorporating activities that explored relationship-building between adult tutors and children, tapped into their creativity and developed their sense of community. Activities included making fridge magnets, with proceeds being donated to the Bushfire Appeal, making badges with children's and tutors' names on them, producing articles and drawings for the North and West Melbourne News, educational games such as categories, as well as a very successful healthy-eating competition, with prizes provided by News on Errol.

To secure the Homework Program's sustainability, funding submissions were made to the City of Melbourne Community Grants scheme and Woolworths Healthy Living Grants but were unsuccessful. Attempts were made to seek funding through School Focused Youth Services (SFYS) to begin an alternative night for upper secondary students but were also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, plans were in place to open up Tuesdays to year 10-12 students in term 3. A second application for SFYS funding will be made by 30 October 2009.

The Homework Program has been the recipient of Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) funding for the past few years, and during 2009 has been part of a pilot

program through CMY. Resulting from the pilot, the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has allocated funding of \$6.5 million over three years to homework programs, which will be supported and delivered by CMY.

We hope that in the new financial year partnerships with other homework programs, local schools, funding bodies and other organisations will continue to develop, enabling the implementation of broader plans for the Global Homework Program in the future.

Celeste O'Keefe

Global Homework Program Leader

North and West Melbourne News

Reaching its 31st year of production during 2008/09, the North and West Melbourne News once again issued four 20-page editions with the help of myriad volunteers, support from The Centre and funding from the City of Melbourne.

The September 2008 edition flew the Spring Fling 2008 banner on the front page, and in December we wrote about the part the News played in the festival's Portrait of our Community, with a selection of stunning photographic portraits of festival-goers by Ponch Hawkes, other photos by News regular Jim Weatherill, and comments and sketches by visitors. Also of special interest in the December issue was Kylie McShane's comprehensive round-up of local businesses offering a wondrous assortment of goods suitable for Christmas gifts; the number of outlets and the range of wares proved to be amazing.

In March, in common with the whole of Victoria, the News was touched by, and reflected on, the tragedy of the Black Saturday bushfires. A disaster of this magnitude has long-felt ramifications – including some positive ones – and in June 2009 Shalome Knoll, accompanied by photographer David Apostol, reported on the heart-warming work of a small local company, Theatre Attack, in bringing theatre workshops to children in the dev-



Homework Program

Photo: Jim Weatherill

astated rural communities of Marysville and Strathewen. Also in that edition, we reprinted Lort Smith veterinarian Sasha Herbert's evocative account of the response to the extensive trauma suffered by wildlife and companion animals.

Succession planning for the News continued at a leisurely pace throughout the year, with Alex Abernethy gradually assembling components for the planned operations manual. Earlier this year it was decided that the coordinating function should be split into two main roles: Content or Copy Coordinator, responsible for managing content, overseeing section editors and for overall editing; and Production Coordinator, responsible for all aspects of layout and getting the newspaper ready for press. Allan Hood, with nearly five years experience as a dedicated layout/production volunteer, put his hand up for the latter position, and Jennifer Boyce and Tom Kramer took on the role of Content Coordinator jointly. Linden Smith's position as The Centre's coordinator of volunteers was expanded to include recruitment and management of News volunteers.

Dubbed the 'transition edition', June 2009 also saw a new team of section editors inducted, the first time that almost every section had its own leader. Sodany Chea was waiting in the wings ready to take over Youth & Education from Glenys Crawford, who had to step down. A special mention of Glenys's great contribution is timely here. For over four years Glenys had worked unstintingly to consolidate relationships with our local schools, never failing to bring an eclectic mix of news, achievements, pictures and articles – many created or written by the students themselves – to the wider community. During the year, Marleena Forward, Emma Jukic and Stacia Saunders also had to let go of their section editor roles as studies and work commitments took priority, although Stacia contributed to Sport & Health for one further edition from Queensland!

Rene Heeps and Allan Hood continued as the chief layout workers; we should all offer them our heartfelt thanks, for without their efforts the newspaper would not have been published. They received sporadic support during the year from transient volunteers, and in June 2009

welcomed new recruits Shannon Newley and Amanda Vandenberghe as layout trainees. At year's end the team of section editors comprised Rachael Chan, Janet Graham, Patricia Lew, Kylie McShane, Shannon Newley, Linden Smith and Amanda Vandenberghe. Our ever-reliable distribution coordinator, Helen Lew Ton, continued to rally her stalwart troop of footsloggers to ensure quarterly delivery of the paper to the vast majority of North and West Melbourne letterboxes. With all these committed volunteers, led by the new coordinating team of Allan, Jennifer and Tom, the future of the News looked assured.

Finally, our thanks go to all our contributors, both regular and occasional, as well as to our advertisers, and also to everyone who reads the North and West Melbourne News and, in doing so, feels a closer connection with their local community.

Janet Graham
Former Coordinator
North and West Melbourne News

and roll fundraiser to make this happen. Did you know they raised \$1100? "Thank you to everyone for your participation and kind words. They do validate what we are all about.

I hope to see you all on our next Adventure.

Ainslee Smith
Centre Adventure Program Leader



Creating Inspired Kids

Photo: Jim Weatherill

Centre Adventure Program

It's been full steam ahead for the Adventures this year so far and we are still going strong...

The new and ever-changing program has seen many fresh and fabulous participants join our regular adventurers. With each new friendship formed we have learnt new skills and interesting facts upon the way.

The lunches have provided an opportunity for local people to experience new tastes and cultural differences that surround us in our community. As the Program Leader, I love to cook and share my dishes with the adventurers in our group and am always open to suggestions on what country we should try next, or lunch ideas for our bus trips.

One of our participants said after a recent trip: "Someone has asked how we can attend a trip for such a reasonable price without it costing us more to attend. The simple answer is that Ainslee and her volunteers raised the money from their soup

The Centre Staff

Thea Bates	.....	Director
Dianne Schmidtke	.....	Community Engagement and Partnerships Manager
Robert Pisano	.....	Finance and IT Manager
Linden Smith	.....	Community Engagement Coordinator
Sandra Curro	.....	Administration/Reception
Celeste O'Keefe	.....	Global Homework Program Leader
Ainslee Smith	.....	Centre Adventure Program Leader
Cathy Mitchell	.....	Administration/Reception
Vijay Ishami	.....	Community Development Worker
Peina Aditiani	.....	Administration Worker

Program Tutors

Miriam Manne	Mike Cole
Nona Cameron	Mark Gunther
Carmen Beaumont	Michelle Fiddian
Sally O'Dwyer	Katie de Araujo
Stephen Wright	Shyamala Benakovic
Davia McMillan	Peter Finch
Nada Borovec	Heiko Rudolph
Amy McDonald	Jandi Paramanathan
Andrew McSweeney	Michael Long
Diana Francavilla	

SPRING FLING STREET FESTIVAL 2008

The Centre's volunteer program is moving onward and upward this year, with major changes to all volunteer programs.

We have 289 volunteers working with us currently on a range of jobs from homework tutors to editors and art class coordinators.

The North and West Melbourne News has seen a major reshuffle, as Janet Graham, long-term Coordinator and all-rounder, decided to step back and take on a less time-consuming role. Tom Kramer and Jennifer Boyce have stepped in as News Content Coordinators, and Allan Hood as Production Coordinator. Together with a host of new writers and section editors, distributors and layout specialists, the team continues to ensure our favourite paper arrives in our letterboxes four times a year.

The Homework Program also saw a change of coordinators early in 2009, with Celeste O'Keefe stepping in to keep the program moving and shaking. We have continued support from our tutors, old and new, who keep the wheels of Homework Club turning.

Spring Fling 2008 was a grand success and relied on more than 100 volunteers who helped out in the lead-up to the event, as well as on the day. It was great to have their assistance, as an event like Spring Fling could never exist without the support of volunteers rolling out astroturf, directing traffic, painting banners, hanging artwork and managing the community stage and performers, to mention just some of the jobs. Their help was essential in making the day a success and it was fabulous to see the community spirit as everyone pitched in to get the job done. We look forward to seeing you all again next year for the 2010 street festival!

A great big thank-you to all our volunteers; without you we simply could not continue to do what we do. The time and effort you contribute, and the benefit to the North and West Melbourne community, are beyond measure. Thank you from everyone at The Centre and all those who have benefited from your hard work.

Linden Smith

Community Engagement Coordinator

In 2008 Spring Fling was given a breath of fresh air: a new design, a new dedicated team and the return to an old and favoured location on Errol Street.

Fourteen thousand people attended the five-hour street festival and were pampered with local fashion, music, flavours, activities, stalls and, of course, the dog show.

Ponch Hawkes and the North and West Melbourne News captured a portrait of our community. Tom Rippon worked as an artist-in-residence with six community groups to develop wire representations of their totems and icons. Stallholders showed off, shared their skills and sold their goods. Artists rocked on stages and the North Melbourne Football Club rolled out over 200 square metres of real grass in the middle of Errol Street. We sat, kicked the footy, ate and caught up. That's really what it is about. A little time, a little space and friends to share it with.

The City of Melbourne, North Melbourne Football Club, Rotary Club of North Melbourne, North and West Melbourne Precinct Association, Yarra Trams, Commerce Press, The Melbourne Times and Turner Hire supported Spring Fling Street Festival 2008 with a view to long-term partnerships. Hundreds of volunteers, community groups and traders provided the reason and means to make it happen.

Spring Fling now has a new model which sees the introduction of the biennial street festival and a fundraising week of promotional activities in the alternate year. This enables us to keep the momentum and explore and share the best of North and West Melbourne. Sunday 26 October 2008. Bottle it, and if you live, work or play in North and West Melbourne be part of the next one and the one after that!

Kristie Walker

Director

Tenth Street Group



Peacock Dance at Spring Fling 2008

Photo: Angela Bailey

Thank You to Volunteers

The Centre is in the luxurious position of having too many volunteers to mention individually in this report. At the end of June 2009, there were around three hundred on the books. We take this opportunity to thank each and every one for their contribution and generosity to the community of North and West Melbourne.