

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**A community where
everyone can participate
and belong**



Strengthening
Communities

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2026

VISION

A community where everyone can participate and belong

PURPOSE

We work with local communities to ensure the support, connection and care people need throughout their lives

VALUES

Integrity · Respect
Valuing people · Excellence
Innovation · Partnership



EMPOWERED PEOPLE

People are connected to their communities through support, care and new opportunities

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Delivering care in community transport
- > Facilitating volunteering and skills pathways
- > Connecting people with employment and training



STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Local communities and organisations are effective and influential

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Growing volunteering locally and across Australia
- > Establishing place-based collaboration that supports local communities
- > Supporting organisations to improve their governance, planning and practice



EQUITABLE SYSTEMS

Policy and systems change in ways that improve people's lives

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Convening local networks to drive positive change
- > Advocating for policy, systems and funding reform
- > Building community capacity to advocate and engage with government



INNOVATIVE GROWTH

We continue to develop as a sustainable and effective organisation

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- > Piloting and evaluating innovative service models
- > Developing our practice in collaboration and system change
- > Maintaining strong governance, financial and management systems

WHAT WE DO



COMMUNITY
TRANSPORT



AGED CARE



VOLUNTEERING



EMPLOYMENT



PLACE-BASED
COLLABORATION



EARLY
CHILDHOOD

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members, Friends, Funders and Supporters, Wominjeka

Across Australia for decades the work undertaken by the diverse and rapidly evolving Not-for-Profit [NFP] sector forms the backbone of society, goes some distance in addressing the challenges of equity, equality and wellbeing, and plays an increasingly important role enhancing economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. However, for decades, both sustainability and scalability of these NFPs continue to be threatened, and much of the energy and resources usually utilised in providing services to the vulnerable communities that we serve is expended on diversifying income sources, workforce planning, and increasing capacity, capability and nimbleness to respond to changes in the operating environment.

In that context, It is my privilege, to present EV Strengthening Communities, previously known as Eastern Volunteers, Annual Report for 2022-23 and it is with great pleasure, that I reflect on the extraordinary journey EV has been through.

EV continues to serve two distinct consumer groups:

- Individuals of all abilities that seek services, participation in community, education and employment
- Community organisations, businesses and government bodies across Australia that seek support to achieve results for their consumers or communities,

and provides community transport and volunteering support services, and is a Local Jobs Program provider seeking solutions to employment. We strive to empower community groups, organisations and communities to deliver the right service to their constituents and leave no one behind. The evolution of EV within a rapidly changing environment required that we re-visit and re-fresh our Purpose.

Earlier this year the Board embarked on a review of EV's purpose and over the next six months it was able to complete this exercise. This required active engagement with diverse parties including management, stakeholders, clients, competitors, funders, volunteers, and the Board, and I wish to acknowledge Daniel Scoullar and Kate Simpson of Social Change Projects for facilitating this process that led to pronouncing EV's strategic pillars and priorities, to operationalise and implement its strategic plans going forward.

The Board endorsed EV's strategic priorities to 2026 as:

- *Empowered People*: People are connected to their communities through support, care and new opportunities.
- *Stronger Communities*: Local communities and organisations are effective and influential.
- *Equitable Systems*: Policies and systems change in ways that improve people's lives.
- *Innovative Growth*: EV continues to develop as a sustainable and effective organisation,



RANJIT GAJENDRA

FROM THE CHAIR

These priorities will impact and influence the communities we work with and guide EV's activities, interventions, projects and programs into ensure people are meaningfully engaged in their communities. This means businesses, local government, and community organisations are supported to achieve their consumer results; people and organisations are supported through policy and by systems which address equity issues; and EV is a sustainable social business.

A tradition we cherish at EV is that the members of our Board are generous in volunteering their time and their expertise, are transparent in their governance, and fully engage with the broad range of activities. It is really important that we continue to have a clear differentiation between the Board's governance role and that of the role of management. This close relationship, respect, trust and collaboration that we have nurtured between the Board and management is fundamental not only to the confidence of staff, internal and external stakeholders, funding bodies, and potential partner organisations, but also for the Board to fulfill all it's obligations.

EV is diversifying its activities, is recruiting specialist staff to manage these initiatives, and recognises the changing nature of Governance, from one that is altogether compliance - driven to being purposeful, and continues to seek re-alignment of the skills and expertise available within the Board, acknowledging that the scope and breadth of the Board's skillset too has to increase.

I was asked recently to comment on the important happening in the last twelve months.

Australians have had their say in a referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia in the Constitution through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. It's been quite a while since we held a referendum - the last was over 20 years ago in 1999. As a Nation we now know the result of the Voice referendum but the impact of the result and outcome of this important process will not be known, perhaps for some generations to come. EV is fully committed to equity, respect and equality in all its activities and everything we do. We value our work with our First nations colleagues and their communities.

Finally allow me to acknowledge and thank my colleagues on the Board, Natalie Thomas, Sue Edmonds, Raju Adhikari, Sarah-Jane Terril, and Tracey Blythe who left the Board in July to pursue a different lifestyle; the dynamic senior management team led by Viv Cunningham Smith the CEO and includes Charles Cox, Marnie O'Loughlin and Dr Shona Bass, the exceptional staff, and hundreds of volunteers who make our work possible, for their continued commitment to EV. A special thank you to Sue Edmonds on the Finance Committee, and for Tracey Blythe and Sarah Jane Terrill for serving as the Secretary.

As we celebrate another year our purpose 'work with local communities to ensure the support, connections and care people need throughout their lives' and our values of integrity, respect, valuing people, excellence, innovation and partnership guides EV Strengthening Communities' next phase of development, and we are excited at the opportunities this presents.

FROM THE CEO

2022-2023 has been a year of diversification and innovation for EV. We have completed the rebranding from the beloved Eastern Volunteers to EV as the parent brand to reflect the diverse programs we now offer. It was important to retain our history but recognise our future. Our parent brand EV Strengthening Communities is the link between all of our programs. We are there to strengthen through empowerment, supporting stronger communities, supporting equitable systems and through innovative growth. The pillars of EV Board's strategic plan.

It was also important to message our sub brands so people actually knew what we provided. Hence we have EV Community Transport, EV Volunteering, EV Consulting, EV Employment and very shortly EV Early Years Management.

The impacts of COVID and the declining volunteering rate continue to impact our services and we were disappointed to see the lack of investment in the Victorian Volunteering Strategy by the Andrews Government, given our community services rely on volunteer workforces more and more to deliver needed programs to communities. We continue to feel the loss of Commonwealth funding for our Volunteer Resource Services in the services we can no longer provide in the face of growing demand. EV will continue its advocacy role to seek adequate place based support for volunteering in Victoria.

Our groundbreaking research into the two sides of volunteering- what will bring people back to volunteering and how will we get organisations to change their thinking about volunteering opportunities was completed by Dr Shona Bass. This research has the capacity to influence how we message in the changing world of future volunteering.

We continued to provide consulting services in the early years and through the strategic planning process Board approved the move to become an Early Years Manager. We look forward to reporting on this in our next Annual Report. We continued to strengthen communities through our governance support to volunteer Boards throughout the region. We also assisted organisations with their strategic and risk management planning. Our consulting services are an important component of our commitment to strengthen communities.

This commitment is now beyond just the metropolitan region of Melbourne. We covered 11 local government areas with our services this year and our move to be a registrable body allows us now to take our work nationally.



**VIVIENNE CUNNINGHAM-
SMITH**

A huge thankyou to all our partners, funders and supporters who we worked with in 2022-2023.

It takes collective action and commitment to achieve what we do.

FROM THE CEO

I am surrounded by a dedicated and committed team of managers and staff who are both paid and volunteer. During the year we said goodbye to Manager of Volunteer Services Lee Barker and reframed this department to Community and Economic Engagement. We welcomed Dr Shona Bass into the new Manager role. We welcomed Lee back into the role of Business Development Co-Ordinator for our community transport services. We also farewelled Manager Consulting Wayne Aitken. [refer Consulting Page]. I thank them for their work and commitment to EV.

We continued to navigate the changing pathways of aged care reform in our community transport services and look forward to actually being able to understand the new funding formula so we can plan for the 2025 aged care system reform. I stepped down from the national community transport peak Board [ACTA] but remained Chair of the VicTas Community Transport Association. Through this work EV continued to advocate for recognition of the role of community transport in Victoria.

Our Local Jobs program excelled in being able to strategically bring together local business, training institutions, local government and job service providers to develop innovative solutions to local employment. This is an exciting project in its infancy and we look forward to its outcomes to 2026 for this region.

We were successful in attracting funding for a pilot to work with Tourism businesses to open up employment opportunities for people experiencing disability. This work will be reported on next year but the intersection with Local Jobs has allowed us to branch out into this work. This work is of course a natural extension of the work we have been doing on inclusive volunteering in the VMA5 activity.

In keeping with our changing face we adopted a new website to reflect who we are. I must thank Shona Bass and Charles Cox for driving this project and About Today for their expertise. Our new website will enable us to expand our services nationally and utilise technology to bring efficiencies to the way we do business.

This is an exciting time for EV and I look forward to the coming year with new services and new horizons. I thank everyone who has contributed to the work of EV this year. Without the people who give of their time, expertise and commitment we would not be able to achieve what we do.

I would like to thank our Board who continue to provide solid and committed leadership for the organisation. Their support and trust throughout the year has been critical as we expand and diversify. Our new strategic plan provides a challenging and dynamic pathway for EV over the next 3 years. Thank you to Daniel Scoullar and Kate Simpson of Social Change Projects for guiding us in the development of the strategy and for taking the time to understand who we are.

I commend our work to you. I hope you enjoy reading about the accomplishments teams achieved in the year.



**EQUITABLE
SYSTEMS**

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Local Jobs – Women in Welding

The Women in Welding Program was developed in a partnership including Melbourne Polytechnic, Local Jobs NEMER, SYC (Workforce Australia Provider) and the lead proponent, the Empowered Women in Trades Program (EWIT). The program was funded through the Local Jobs Local Recovery Fund and was delivered in an expedited timeframe (4 months from initial concept pitch to program delivery, outcomes and acquittal reporting completion) to meet tight deadlines placed on the funding due to the delay in the release of funding.



DR SHONA BASS

The program aimed to promote a pathway to high-value growth sector roles for a cohort that has historically had few opportunities to enter the sector. The welding skillset was prioritised as it is required across a range of skilled manufacturing specialisations, can be learnt to a moderate proficiency quite quickly, and there is significant demand in the labour market. The roles are also more likely to be suitable for Women with care responsibilities, or who have less transport freedom, as they are often based at individual sites, rather than being travel based. Melbourne Polytechnic designed a short course in consultation with our team and a range of industry experts that we brought into the conversation. The EWIT also provided life/career coaching delivered by a specialised career coach who has worked in trades herself.

The program pilot was successful – with both a range of positive immediate outcomes, as well as learnings for future intakes. Of the 8 who commenced the 3-week program, 7 completed, 4 are in employment in the sector and 1 has commenced a pre-apprenticeship in a related industry. These results are exceptional, especially when considering the vast range of barriers facing participants currently participating in Workforce Australia Provider Services.

-1 participant could not gain immediate employment due to upcoming surgery – once she had the surgery, she was able to gain employment in the field quickly

-1 participant was unable to attend a week of the course due to COVID – once she returned, she was able to spend extra hours to catch up, and gained employment immediately after completion of the course

-1 participant faced substantial barriers to employment (sleeping rough, victim of domestic violence and more) and whilst she is not in direct employment – she was able to be supported through the course – and it was noted by her Employment Coach that it is the first time they have seen her stick at something for more than a couple of days.

We are hoping to extend the pilot into an ongoing program when the next round of Local Recovery Funding is released in 2023/24.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Volunteer Management Activity 5 [VMA 5] – 3 forums

The first year of the VMA eastern metro project was about listening and learning to our community and organisations through attending multiple network events, volunteer expos and the 3 forums that were run focusing on the priority groups. The shared lived experiences from individuals alongside experienced professionals in the sector in an open and safe setting allowed for vibrant conversations focusing on the barriers to volunteering for those individuals with disabilities, new migrants and our First Nations people. These stories then fed in to the VMA Eastern metro volunteering strategy and the knowledge learnt was shared across both the region and the state through speaking at Special Interest Groups for Volunteering Victoria and at network meetings and sharing the recordings of the forums for other VMA consortiums to learn from and formed a base of knowledge for their programs.

The relationship between EV and our consortium partners of Boroondara Volunteer Resource Service, Interchange Outer East, Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place, Migrant Information Centre East Melbourne and the Council of Councils East continues to strengthen and grow as we work together to diversify volunteering across the region.

EV's reach continues to grow and working closely together with BVRC, MVRC and Volunteer for Knox 3 Volunteer expos were attended with the opportunity to speak with over 100 community organisations and over 700 community members attended these events to learn more about volunteering.



VMA5 – Youth | Mullum Mullum | Disability | New Migrants

Over 400 new migrants (through various programs in partnership with AMEP, AMES and library groups) heard about how volunteering can support them in settlement into their new country and local community.

Relationships continue to be built and strengthened with Disability Support organisations including Interchange Outer East, Knoxbrooke, Burke and Beyond and OC Connections to support their participants into volunteer opportunities and educate the volunteer leaders on how to provide an accessible safe space for them and their support workers and provide meaningful engaging opportunities.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Local Jobs: Himilo/SPARK Workshop

There was a focus on facilitating community connection between major employer (Spark Consortium and Subcontractors) and utilising the Local Jobs programs flexible funding to facilitate inclusive employment and recruitment skills workshops bridging gaps between employers and the Somalian community – 36 candidates attended, 10+ SPARK recruitment staff, 15 Candidates shortlisted for roles with several to be hired in new financial year post temporary pause on recruitment due to external circumstances.



Local Jobs – Care Sector Retrenchment Support

The Local Jobs Team worked with Whitehorse City Council, the Inner Metro LJ Team and the DJSIR Local Employment Transition Team0 to support workers impacted by their decision to exit the delivery of care services. Whilst Whitehorse was initially sceptical about partnering with our team due to the nature of our support being ‘too good to be true’ - we developed a close working relationship with their HR and care sector teams and provided a range of direct and referred support for impacted staff.

The highlight of these supports was the coordination of the Whitehorse Home and Care Services Retrenchment Employment Expo – an expo coordinated by our team, featuring 20 employers (including all employers who were taking on Whitehorse’s clients), EV Volunteering Support, Financial supports, Services Australia, Training Institutions/TAFES and more. The event also had several information sessions, including one hosted by Brad Byrne on Workforce Australia supports for Retrenched Workers that was attended by over 50 participants. Overall, over 100 impacted staff attended, with many providing feedback that it was far more beneficial than they thought it may be, and the Whitehorse HR team reporting back that they had been providing reference checks for weeks after from connections made at the event!

Whilst we do not have exact numbers for this activity - we are confident we provided substantial support – for staff impacted by retrenchment activities, for the organisations looking to deliver services in the region, and perhaps most importantly, for the clients of Whitehorse’s Care Service – for whom staff shortages/loss of staff from the sector would result in a reduction in delivery of essential care services.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Local Jobs – Diecraft Retrenchment Support

The Local Jobs team worked with Diecraft Mouldings to support advanced manufacturing staff impacted by the closure of their Reservoir site. The site closure impacted 45 roles, and initial assistance was provided through information sessions and surveys to establish what staff wanted to do next. When the results of the survey showed an overwhelming preference to stay in the industry, we connected with AMTIL (the peak body) to coordinate 'speed dating' sessions with Diecraft employees to facilitate connections with employment opportunities. These sessions provided great outcomes with 42 roles on offer across 5 employers and 35 staff impacted by the retrenchment activities attending. All staff attending received at least one employment offer, with many receiving multiple, and they were able to take advantage of site visits and workplace tours prior to deciding on their employer of choice. Other employees (especially those not in core manufacturing roles) were supported individually with tailored pathways depending on their preferences. Over 90% of staff were pathed directly into ongoing employment, with the remaining 2 staff members choosing to take a career break and travel prior to deciding their next steps.

Local Jobs – Growing Glen Park Program

Through the Local Recovery Fund – Glen Park was able to develop a comprehensive set of resources to support delivery of its 'Hungry 4 Success' Program. The program had been running with skeleton funding to support the lead employer Glad Group. The funding provided through the Local Recovery Fund allowed for a larger than standard intake (20 participants) and for the program material to be developed, and shared with the Department and other regions so the program can be run in other states as Glad Group is a national business.

Manningham Volunteer Resource Service [MVRS] Community Outreach

MVRS hosted a stall supported by volunteers at Pines Shopping Centre on Wed 25th Jan and again on during National Volunteer Mon 15th May 2023 week to promote and share information about MVRS, engaging with the community at a grass roots level. MVRS were out in community at least once a month, including Doncaster Westfield, Doncaster Library and Saturday markets.

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COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Manningham Youth Employment Pathways Program [MYEPP] Youth Employment Expo

MYEPP hosted a Youth Employment Expo on 12 October 2022 at Manningham Civic Centre between 1:30pm–7:00 pm. This event involved 295 attendees, 40 exhibitors and 2 successful workshops. Over 100 roles were advertised.



VMA5 strategy – Advocate Collaborate Celebrate Educate [ACCE]

The VMA Eastern Metro Volunteering Strategy was launched in July 2023. The 4 pillars of the strategy of Advocate, Collaborate, Celebrate and Educate was shared with volunteer leaders from across the region and we will continue to collaborate and advocate for inclusive participation in community for all. Educating our wider community about the benefits of volunteering as well as our volunteer leaders in best practice and ensure to celebrate our successes.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Manningham Volunteer Resource Service [MVRs] Workshops

MVRs ran a range of workshops for VIO's such as 'Recruitment, Retention and Re-engagement of volunteers', 'Benefits of volunteering' and 'Becoming an organization of choice' with 104 volunteers and organisations utilising volunteers participating.

MVRs Communities of Practice

MVRs created a Communities of Practice working group, quarterly meetings were held in Manningham. Across the meetings 44 organisations participated and shared information and encouraging collaboration and open up opportunities for creativity and innovation between organisations.

MYEPP Micro-volunteering

MYEPP was successfully utilised to trial and encourage Micro – Volunteering for young people. 3 young people had ongoing varied volunteer experiences with EV including a remote one-month project over the Christmas holidays, opportunities to support the Yarn about Volunteering and other events, general administration tasks and share lived experience with organisations.



Central Volunteer Bank

The Central Volunteer Bank (CVB) was born as an innovative solution to the defunding of our volunteer resource service. We continue to support organisations seeking volunteers and volunteers looking for opportunities through our weekly callout distributed to 800-900 people interested in volunteer opportunities across Melbourne. The CVB has continued to allow us to strengthen communities and the people in them to make an impact in their backyards.



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

Local Jobs – Breaking Systemic Barriers to Participation – Learn Local Providers



**EQUITABLE
SYSTEMS**

There had been substantial confusion for Workforce Australia providers trying to refer participants to courses run by Learn Local Providers (mostly community/neighbourhood houses). Despite public releases from the department that these courses were fundable – providers would not refer in as their internal compliance teams deemed them a duplication of service, and as such, did not meet the guidelines of utilising government funding.

Providers previously would have few ways of escalating these barriers, and as such across the state we saw Learn Local providers being under-utilised by Workforce Australia providers, despite the programs being extremely well suited for the bulk of participants (namely those experiencing barriers to employment such as lack of confidence, disability, lack of engagement and more).

We worked closely with one provider, several staff members from DEWR state office, a representative from a Learn Local Provider (Glen Park CEO Heidi Butler-Moore) and the DEWR National Office across multiple meetings to unpack these challenges – identify the point at which a miscommunication was being made, and correctly identify the method to draw funding for these courses moving forward. As such multiple providers are now working closely with Learn Local's in our region – and participants are now able to participate in a broader range of employment support courses.

Whilst this seems like a relatively simple process in retrospect – it relied heavily on the provider being willing to 'air its dirty laundry' – which it had no obligation – and the department being willing to explore in depth its funding arrangements and deliver a clear judgement – where they prefer to stick to shades of grey. The work and insights provided by Glen Park CEO Heidi Butler-Moore were also greatly beneficial to reaching an outcome.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

This was the first full year that we delivered services without being limited by COVID restrictions. Some programs opened slowly and some not at all, so our services remained a bit different to pre-COVID levels.

Our dedicated drivers also came back to the service in the post-COVID world, but some had sadly elected to not return, re-evaluating their own circumstance. Other impacts on the health sector and changes to the volunteering landscape in general have meant that our pool of volunteers did not reach the levels we would have liked to be able to deliver the scope of services needed in the community.

Nevertheless, it was a year of fantastic results for our clients, getting to a wide range of appointments and services with the care and support of our drivers in newly branded cars that called out our “care to get you there” mantra.



MARNIE O'LOUGHLIN

EV Community Transport entered in to partnerships with a range of organisations and most notably with the State Government Department of Transport to deliver two programs that are specifically targeted at building stronger community connections.

EV launched the Upper Yarra Transport Trial to help address the inherent issues of the region that are experienced by the transport disadvantaged. EV looked for innovative ways to use existing transport options that help connect people to the services they need, such as shopping and medical appointments. The solution being trialed is entirely community based, where residents who are travelling for their own purpose can share a spare seat in their car to help other members of the community meet their transport needs. While this currently operated as a pre-booked service, the intent is to develop an on demand style service where the community itself delivers a self sustaining transport solution.

EV Community Transport continues to build strong relationships with other community organisations in the aged care and disability sectors, delivering their transport requirements under the Home Care Package and NDIS models. The year has seen EV grow the number of Package Provider partnerships significantly as our reputation as a reliable and trusted partner in the Aged Care and Disability space grows.

EV Community Transport was excited to successfully tender for Community Transport Services for Manningham City Council. The coming year will see EV deliver services to the residents of Manningham through the existing bus programs, some one to one transport services, a schedule of resident outings to places of interest and provides EV the opportunity to extend its services deeper into Manningham to support its residents in other ways.

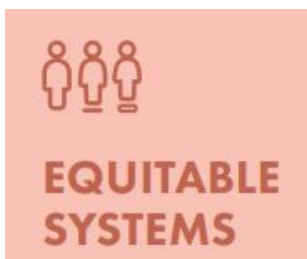


COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

EV has used a scheduling tool called RouteMatch to underpin service delivery for the past 9 years. With an eye looking forward to the impacts of Aged Care Reforms and changes to the sector, it was clear that this software package would not be fit for purpose. As a result, EV went to the market to understand the tools that were available that would meet both current and future needs provided by a vendor that understood the idiosyncrasies of the community transport sector and the aged care reform landscape. The product chosen has been Trips, provided by software company CareMaster. Although the system will not go live until the second half of 2023, the solution promises to be both innovative and scalable and a product that will support the growth and change of our organisation and the sector.

EV, with the support of the Department of Transport, purchased a fully electric Renault Kangoo deliver van. The purchase was part of a program where the department funded purchase of electric vehicles in a community transport setting to understand how their use impacted services.

EV will use this vehicle to partner with other organisation to make deep impacts in community that assist transport vulnerable people. The data collected through the use of the electric vehicle will be reported back to the Department of Transport to be included in their research. Specifically, the van will support the community by providing food delivery and collection for Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) and Feed One Feed All (FOFA), as well as being used for our own services.



CORPORATE SERVICES

While not specifically a service delivery arm of EV, Corporate Services has nevertheless lent its support to community groups, other Not-For-Profit organisations and to businesses through the provision of our quality meeting and co-working spaces. With a soft launch in 2021, the fit out of the meeting rooms and the first floor spaces has attracted some interest and proven the concept that the spaces have use in the community. We continue our long term partnership with Campbell Page and have also built a partnership with AGA to use meeting rooms and hot desks for their team. Additionally, we are looking forward to having a Disability Disco Dating service use our large room to run events on weekends. As well as these community and NFP groups, we have local businesses using the spaces including Hutchison Legal, who use the meeting spaces and Stratifom who use the desk spaces on an ad hoc basis. In the coming year we will be marketing these services more intensely to grow our reach and support of the community at all levels.



CHARLES COX

EV experienced an interesting event in late November, 2022 – we were the subject of a cyber attack. This sort of thing would not normally be an event that one would take the time to highlight in an annual report, but while the event was serious, the robust nature of the security and controls that we have in place meant that there was no significant impact from the attack, no loss of data, and no interruption to systems. It is a credit to the systems, the people and the processes in place that this event did not create issues for the organisation, its clients and its partners. Through the excellent support of Proactive Technology Partners and through the brilliant adaptability of our teams, we have maintained security of information and continuity of business. Further to that, we have taken the opportunity to learn even more from this event and take additional steps to secure information and systems. As this experience showed, we were excellent before, we are even better now.

The year has seen the implementation of Salesforce as our chosen CRM platform. It's fair to say that we are still feeling our way on the capability that the platform provides, but Salesforce is an extremely powerful tool with capability that is only limited by imagination (and money!!). The capability provided by Salesforce will support all external facing commercial relationships and some key partnerships as well as having the added benefit of streamlining grant management processes. The implementation's success does depend on more than just a new system, but also some changes to the way we do things internally. With growth of partnerships due to the changes in the Aged Care space, the collaboration needs of the Local Jobs program, and the increased complexity of Grant Management, the salesforce implementation is a key pillar to information management into the future.



CONSULTING SERVICES

Wayne joined the consulting team in 2020 just prior to COVID lockdowns and was tasked with developing a business case for consulting services. Prior to Wayne's arrival consulting services had been delivered within the existing EV programs of Volunteering and Corporate Services. We wanted to test the viability of a consulting department.

Unfortunately this work took over 2 years to complete given the lockdowns and Wayne could only complete the work in February of 2023. The business case determined that without significant investment a Consulting Department would not be financially viable for EV. Board determined therefore to finish up the program in June 2023.

Between 2020 and 2023 however Wayne managed a range of consulting services for EV. This work in the last year remained focused on transitioning kindergartens to Early Years Managers, delivering governance health checks to community Boards to ensure they were meeting their legal and regulatory responsibilities and conducting a range of governance and early years workshops.

We said goodbye to Wayne and Lisa Rich in June of this year. We thank them for the significant contribution they have made to EV. and community organisations in this region.

We also said goodbye to a number of Associate Consultants - Kasturi Rangan, Kathy Walker Katherine Cape and Shona Bass. We thank them for their trust in EV and the expertise they shared with us and our customers.

EV continues to offer its consulting services through its existing departments.



WAYNE AITKEN



Governance
Support for
Volunteer Boards /
CoM's.

Providing Inclusive
Workplaces for
employees and
volunteers

Be the organisation
of choice for
volunteers

Governance
Workshops for
Chairs, Secretaries
and Directors

Troubleshooting for
organisations
experiencing
difficulties

Early Years
consulting

STRENGTHENING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROFESSIONALS

In 2018 we reached out to the incomparable Viv Cunningham-Smith to enquire about the possibility of Eastern Volunteers taking a Deakin social work student on placement. Social work placements are long, at least 500 hours or approximately 65 days in total. They require supervision by a qualified social worker with at least 2 years post qualifying experience – this includes 1.5 hours formal supervision weekly. It requires meeting with university staff, completion of frankly onerous documentation.....and a load of positivity, professionalism and support.

We hit the jackpot with Viv. She was enthusiastic from my initial email, we couldn't believe our luck that Viv was a social worker of such longstanding experience, and since that first placement we have gone on to place each trimester at EV. Our strong students have been thrilled with the huge range of opportunities available to learn and practice. Our weaker students have been thankful for the care, support and confidence building they have received. I have been grateful for the cheery "sure thing, send me a CV and let's see if we can make this work for everyone" response I get from Viv and Marnie every time my email hits their desks.

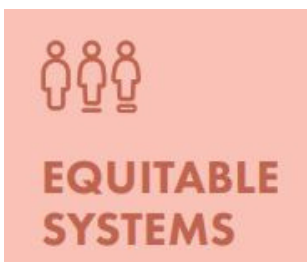
It's impossible to overestimate how important this relationship is to our social work placement team. Community engagement and development is the cornerstone of our practice, and the sheer range of students who have managed to develop their skills, put learning into practice and move into the field with a stronger sense of connection, is inspiring to me.

On behalf of my students and colleagues I would like to say thank you to EV for continuing to work in partnership with us, and particular thanks to Viv, Marnie and the teams for all you have contributed.

With thanks,

Tara

Tara Jarvis-Scott and Jacqui O'Leary
Social Work Professional Placement Coordinators
School of Health and Social Development
Deakin University



EV BOARD



Ranjit Gajendra
Chair



Tracey Blythe
Secretary from
November 2022/
Resigned 27 June
2023



Sarah-Jane Terill
Appointed
December 2022/
Secretary from 14
July 2023



Sue Edmonds
Treasurer



Dr Raju Adhikari
appointed
December 2022



Natalie Thomas



Strengthening Communities

**1/36 New St
Ringwood. 3134**

**ABN 18 339 532 185
ABRN: 664 586 752**

