

**ANNUAL REPORT
2020 - 2021**



**Portland WorkSkills
Incorporated**

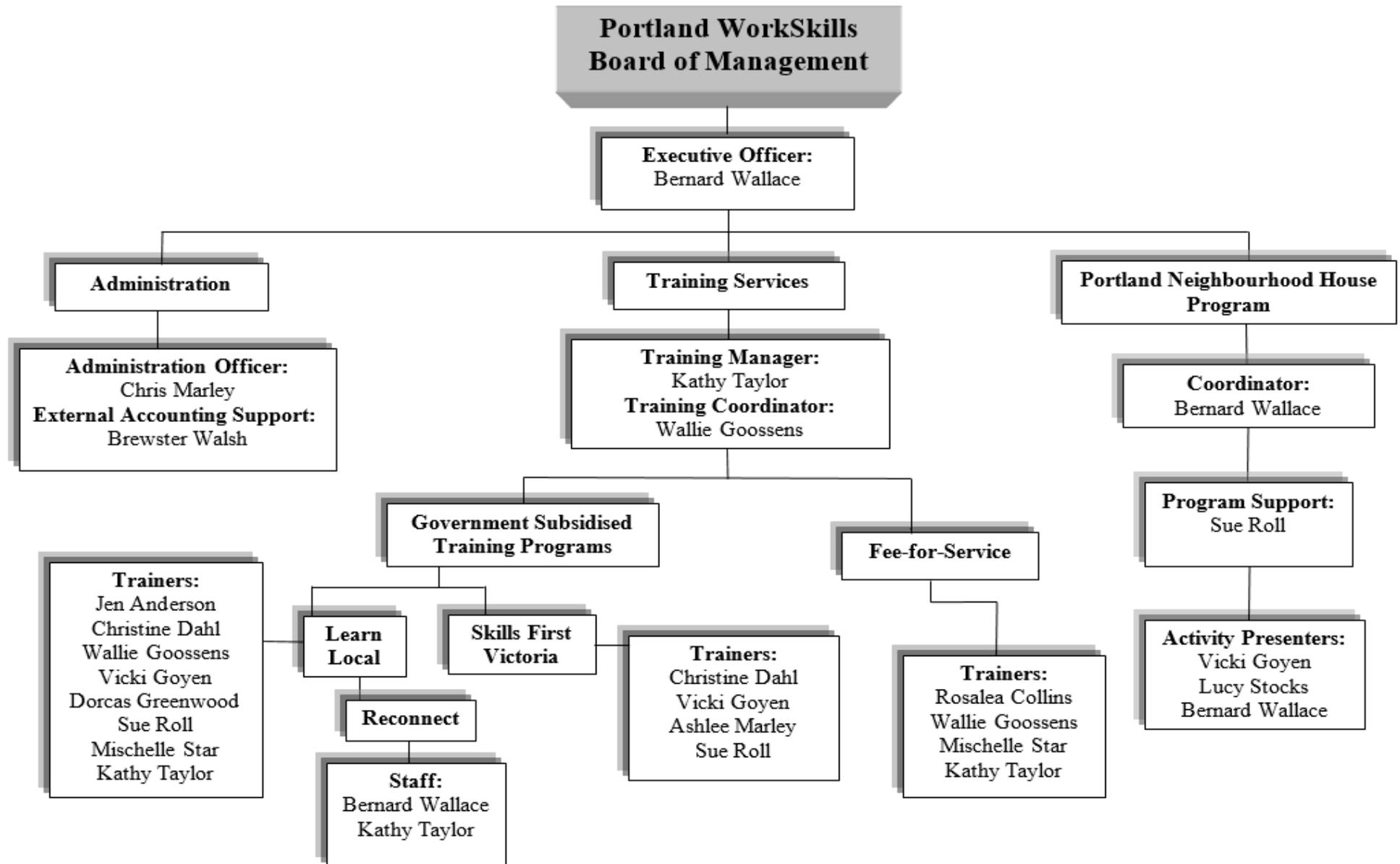
Reg. No. A0019147P

Shop 14 Pioneer Plaza Portland

Telephone (03) 5523 1645

**email: admin@workskillsemployment.com.au
website: www.workskillsemployment.com.au**

**Portland WorkSkills – Organisation Structure
As at 30/6/2021**



Portland WorkSkills Incorporated - The Organisation

Portland WorkSkills is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation providing training and education services, and delivering community-development projects. Established in 1989, the organisation is guided by a representative and experienced community-based board of management.

Over time, WorkSkills has delivered a range of different services and programs in response to community needs and in accordance with its organisational statement and objectives.

WorkSkills meets the diverse needs of district learners through its quality education and training courses. WorkSkills also assists jobseekers upgrade their skills and gain sustainable employment.

The organisation operates in Portland and its district. Over time, WorkSkills has delivered a range of programs and services including Australian Government labour market and training programs.

Today, it supplies a mix of training and education programs and services to learners and jobseekers, and to business and industry.

As a Registered Training Organisation, WorkSkills supplies training services to individuals, business and industry. WorkSkills delivers training supported by the Victorian Government through the Skills First and Learn Local programs.



As well, the organisation also delivers a range of user-pays or fee-for-service training.



It also delivers the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program in Portland, offering an array of programs, recreational activities and personal and skill development possibilities to our community.



Portland WorkSkills is located in Pioneer Plaza in the heart of Portland, close to substantial parking, Woolworths, KHub, the Post Office, the main bus stop and the central business district generally. WorkSkills occupies five buildings in the Plaza. The organisation also has a presence in South Portland by way of the Waratah Centre.

WorkSkills makes substantial contributions to the district economy by virtue of the external contracts it wins and by being a substantial employer in its own right. The organisation is very much a part of the community, employing and buying locally.

Portland WorkSkills supports initiatives that enhance skills and learning, and initiatives with the potential to generate sustainable employment and economic development for Portland and its district.

Portland WorkSkills - Organisational Statement

Portland WorkSkills exists to provide high quality training, education and employment services to the community, particularly the disadvantaged and unemployed jobseekers, in order to assist them find employment and enhance their quality of life.

Portland WorkSkills - Organisational Objectives

1. To attract and deliver Commonwealth and State employment, training and education services to Portland and its region.
2. To attract and deliver an appropriate range of employment, training and education services to Portland and its region.
3. To deliver quality employment, training and education services to the community.
4. To ensure that our service delivery is as inclusive as possible.
5. To further develop the organisation by undertaking appropriate general fee-for-service training and enterprise activities.
6. To support selected social and economic initiatives in our community that may create opportunities for our learners, participants, jobseekers and other stakeholders.
7. To use resources generated by the organisation to continually improve our services, procedures and infrastructure.
8. To operate in a manner that not only complies with all relevant legislation and contractual obligations but is also actively fair, honest and reasonable.

WorkSkills Board of Management 2020/2021

- Michael Hunter (Chairperson)
- Carmen Scott (Deputy Chairperson)
- Trevor Hornby (Treasurer)
- Bernard Wallace (Secretary/Public Officer)
- Jan Chilman
- Tony Fleming
- Margaret Herbertson
- Heather Mutch
- John Sealey OAM (Resigned from board on 23/9/2020)

WorkSkills and its Community

In addition to delivering its core training and employment services during 2020/2021, WorkSkills continued to play a significant role in the life of its community. Our community capacity building involvements, memberships and linkages included:

- Maintaining effective partnerships with organisations including Axis Employment, Brophy Family & Youth Services, BUPA, DHHS Residential Services, Glenelg Shire Council (Aged & Disability Services), GenU, Heywood Rural Health, Home@Scope, Kyeema Support Services, Kurrajong, Matchworks, Portland Secondary College, OCTEC, Portland Bay School, Seaview House, Southern Grampians Adult Education, South West TAFE, WDEA Works and local schools and kindergartens, various sporting organisations, community organisations and small businesses.
- Operated WorkSkills Education, Training & General Support Fund for benefit of disadvantaged participants or learners.
- Supported the Glenelg Shire's involvement in the 2021 Victorian Heritage Festival with a history walk tour, 'A block of Bentinck Street', and a history talk, 'Stories of the streets'.
- Member of South West Network of Neighbourhood Houses.
- Partner in South West Reconnect project, with South West Institute of TAFE and Southern Grampians Adult Education.
- Partner in Western Learn Local Quality Project.
- Supporter of Promoting Portland.
- Member of Glenelg Shire Council's Volunteering and Wellbeing Advisory Committee.
- Portland Tourist Association member.
- Partner agency, Southern Grampians & Glenelg Primary Care Partnership.
- Promoted a range of community-based organisations and their activities through the 'Community & Recreation Activities' section of our term program.

Chairperson's Report

Michael Hunter

I am pleased to present the WorkSkills Annual Report, for the year ending 30 June 2021. This was another challenging and testing year for the organisation. The upcoming year looks much the same.

As an organisation that delivers face-to-face services to people, our operations were seriously impacted upon by COVID-19. There was no part of the organisation that was not disrupted. Where possible, we transitioned back and forth into various forms of remote and flexible learning for most of our learners. In some programs and services this was not possible.

Nevertheless, as the individual program and service reports indicate, we were still productive. Portland WorkSkills continued to be a significant provider of training and education services within our region. The organisation delivered a substantial and varied range of government-supported training services, maintained its Registered Training Organisation capacity and delivered a large number of employment-focused Fee-for-Service courses. We continued our successful delivery of the Portland Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.

As usual, WorkSkills took part in various community development initiatives and supported or assisted community-based groups develop their capacity. Kindly refer to the 'WorkSkills and its Community' section of this report.

Portland WorkSkills Incorporated met key performance and budgetary targets in 2020/2021. Despite the troubled times, we achieved a solid turnover, a pleasing surplus and delivered value for money to service-purchasers and service-users. As usual, we made improvements to our infrastructure, including reroofing Shop 12 and 13 in our Pioneer Plaza complex and new blinds at the Waratah Centre in South Portland, making the building more functional. We also acquired a state-of-the art photocopier/printer.

The WorkSkills Board of Management and I strongly thank our staff for their ongoing commitment and productivity in what continues to be a most turbulent and challenging operational environment. As well, we thank community and external stakeholders for continuing to strongly support our organisation.

I also thank my fellow board members for their contributions to the effective operation of the organisation over another successful year. Board member John Sealey OAM resigned in September, after 25 years of service. We thank John for contributing to the success of WorkSkills during his time on the board.

The future, however, presents Portland WorkSkills and similar community-based organisations with a range of significant challenges.

Executive Officer's Report

Bernard Wallace

Overview

Portland WorkSkills Incorporated completed another challenging but generally successful year of operations. The COVID-19 pandemic made the delivery of training difficult at all levels. Nevertheless, we effectively delivered a suite of services and programs, albeit in very different forms. Much was achieved for learners, jobseekers, service-purchasers, the community and the organisation. Financially, we achieved a solid surplus in a tough operating environment.

Operational and organisational highlights:

- Maintained our standing as a quality provider of Vocational Education and Training (VET), and pre-accredited and general training. This saw pleasing employment outcomes for nationally-recognised VET course graduates and further training outcomes for other learners.
- Maintained Registered Training Organisation status with the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority.



- Successful in maintaining a Skills First 2021 contract, enabling us to continue delivering Victorian Government subsidised training to eligible learners.
- Again presented a diverse and well-received series of history walks and talks through the Neighbourhood House program.
- Our well-attended annual graduation event was held in April, with Glenelg Shire Mayor Councillor Anita Rank presenting certificates to our VET graduates and presenting Learner of the Year Awards to Kasey Scott (Certificate IV in Ageing Support & Certificate IV Disability) and Donna Murray (Certificate IV Disability).



The Glenelg Shire Mayor, Councillor Anita Rank is flanked by Kasey Scott and Donna Murray, the 2020 Learners of the Year. The award was shared between the two students.

Programs & Services

Overview

Our core activity is accredited and general training. In 2020/2021, WorkSkills delivered some 38,975 Student Contact Hours. Some 31,779 Student Contact Hours were delivered through government subsidised training programs—Skills First nationally-recognised training and Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Learn Local pre-accredited training. Some 7,196 hours of training were delivered on a fee-for-service basis.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on all areas of our training delivery and will continue to do so. During lockdowns we went to remote and flexible training delivery for all learners where possible. For Certificate III and IV learners, this involved a combination of learner packs, online interactive training sessions, phone follow-ups and internet communication. Lead trainer Suzanne Roll played a key part in establishing our robust and successful online learning setup. Our model was functional, maintaining training momentum and learner retention. Where possible, there was a limited return to the training room. The various lockdowns made it difficult for learners to undertake the mandatory practical placements essential to the completion of their qualifications. But, this was achieved between lockdowns and extending some courses into 2021.

Learn Local Pre-Accredited training was also delivered remotely, but with an emphasis on hard copy learner packs being posted out and work requirements posted back, supported by telephone calls or emails. Fee-for-service training such as First Aid and CPR—where delivery was possible—involved a mix of hardcopy workbook, online testing and short, sharp training room sessions to assess skills; a robust and functional model which will serve us well in the future.

To ensure that all members of the community have access to training and education, WorkSkills made use of its Education, Training & General Support Fund to assist financially disadvantaged learners and participants. Likewise, a combination of day and evening classes were offered to ensure learning opportunities were widely accessible.





Over the training year, 25 accredited certificates for full qualifications and 40 statements of attainment were issued to learners. Certificates were presented at our annual graduation event held in April. Glenelg Shire Mayor Councillor Anita Rank presented certificates to our VET graduates and presented Learner of the Year Awards to Kasey Scott (Certificate IV in Ageing Support & Certificate IV Disability) and Donna Murray (Certificate IV Disability). Both learners produced consistently high quality work, demonstrated great motivation, strongly supported fellow-learners and worked systematically to improve their skills and knowledge. Both undertook very successful practical placements and were successful in gaining ongoing employment in their chosen fields.

Donna Murray and Kasey Scott proudly show that they stand behind the Portland WorkSkills' ethos of 'Skills for All'.

A great deal of staff professional development was undertaken in 2020-2021. Lockdowns permitting, training staff undertook training as a group from time-to-time in general fields such as Reasonable Adjustments in Training Delivery and Assessment, Principles of Assessment, Rules of Evidence, the Skills First VET Contract and suchlike. Most staff training, however, was online and customised to meet the skills needs of individual trainers and training coordination and management staff. Various staff undertook First Aid and/or CPR to maintain currency of First Aid skills.

Some 615 clients (169 males and 446 females) took up training with WorkSkills in this training year, with 715 enrolments. Our programs and services included:

1. Skills First nationally-recognised training

This Victorian Government subsidised training is aimed at enabling eligible people to ‘upskill’ by obtaining nationally-recognised qualifications; qualifications which will open up employment or advancement opportunities. This category of training is our core business.

We delivered a range of nationally recognised qualifications during 2020/2021. These included Certificate III in Individual Support, Certificate IV in Ageing Support and Certificate IV in Disability. We also delivered the Certificates in General Education for Adults (Introductory, Certificate I, Certificate II and Certificate III).

Collaborative learning is effective learning!



Nationally recognised courses involve a combination of face-to-face training in a classroom setting and a considerable amount of off-site work and study. These courses also require lengthy work placements in relevant industries and the demonstration of key skills, knowledge and attitudes. Such courses also reflect industry input to maintain relevancy and focus.



Our courses were well taken up, a response to the quality training we deliver and the pleasing employment outcomes achieved by our graduates.

Our 2020 learners, despite the challenges of COVID-19, had really pleasing completion rates and employment outcomes. Despite periodic and extended lockdowns, retention was very good. Some 25 learners in Certificate III in Individual Support, Certificate IV in Ageing Support and Certificate IV in Disability completed their qualification and 23 gained employment in their preferred field. The trainer for all three qualifications was Suzanne Roll.

Practical skills being applied in the classroom.

Over the training year, 25 nationally recognised Certificates for full qualifications and 40 Statements of Attainment for units achieved were issued.



Students who completed Certificate IV in Ageing Support in 2020 were keen to celebrate their achievements and be 'in the frame'.



Ageing Support and Disability students demonstrate practical skills in class.

2. Adult, Community & Further Education ‘Learn Local’ pre-accredited training

Through the South Western Victoria Engagement, Participation and Inclusion Division of the Department of Education and Training, the Victorian Government provided funding to Portland WorkSkills to deliver ‘Learn Local’ pre-accredited education and training. Courses are designed to meet learners’ needs and to support them return to study, improve literacy and numeracy skills, broaden their employment options and learn new skills. The disruption caused by COVID-19 and the various lockdowns made it very difficult to successfully deliver this program.

This funding to ‘Learn Local’ organisations such as Portland WorkSkills is limited to the delivery of pre-accredited training including adult literacy and numeracy, employment skills, vocational programs and digital literacy courses.

As usual, we acknowledged Adult Learners Week through our Learn Local program. The 2020 theme was ‘Renew You’. With COVID-19 in mind, the focus was on recovery, re-skilling and reconnecting. We promoted the theme by way of a well-received display in the windows of several buildings in our Pioneer Plaza training complex.

There were some 100 enrolments in courses such as Computers 101, Computers the Next Step, Tablets & Smartphones, English as an Additional Language, Excel Basics, Barista Basics, Café Skills, Study Skills, Literacy & Numeracy Capers, Alternative & Augmentative Communication, Literacy & Numeracy Consolidation, Career Development, Introduction to Hospitality & Tourism, and New Horizons - Introduction to Community Services. Nearly 100% of pre-accredited learners successfully completed their courses.



Students in Literacy & Numeracy Capers explore learning through practical application and craft activities.



Literacy & Numeracy Capers students learning through practical application and craft activities.

3. Skills First Reconnect

The *Skills First Reconnect* program was delivered in our region by South West Institute of TAFE in partnership with Southern Grampians Adult Education and Portland WorkSkills. It was a State Government Department of Education and Training initiative aimed at providing extra support and assistance to high-needs learners to enable them to engage with and succeed in education and training. Our role was, where required, to provide a range of pre-accredited programs such as literacy and numeracy, study skills, basic computer skills and suchlike to clients referred to us by TAFE project staff. Other agencies supply specialist support services such as health, and personal and relationship supports. The main aim of the program was to support high-needs learners in taking up employment-focused courses with TAFE.

We strongly promoted the program through our term programs and other promotional initiatives, and offered a range of suitable bridging courses. However, the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the various lockdowns made it difficult to successfully deliver this niche program.

4. Fee-for-Service training

Fee-for-service training is delivered on a fully user-pays basis, as not all training is subsidised by the Victorian Government. Likewise, as the Victorian Training Guarantee focuses on upskilling, not all learners are eligible for State Government Higher Education & Skills Group-subsidised training and must fully pay for their nationally recognised training. Most clients in the fee-for-service category were undertaking short courses such as CPR, First Aid, Responsible Service of Alcohol and suchlike.

Demand for fee-for-service short courses continued but, due to the impact of COVID-19, we were unable to meet this demand for an extended period of time. When we were able to deliver training, class sizes were substantially reduced due to social distancing arrangements. This remains an ongoing challenge. We delivered some 150 fee-for-service courses, including 65 First Aid and 69 CPR courses, 2 Food Handlers courses, 8 Responsible Service of Alcohol courses, and 2 Assist Clients with Medication courses.

Fee-for-service clients came from big and small businesses, local community-based organisations, industry groups and school students. Industry-focused courses were accessed by workers and jobseekers aiming to improve their skills and advancement prospects.

Day and evening courses were offered, ensuring learning opportunities were widely available. Where necessary, training was delivered from a range of community venues and workplaces including Heywood Rural Health, Portland Bay School, Heywood District Secondary School, Portland Primary School and at medical and allied-health practices. This enhanced access to our training services.

Some 609 fee-for-service clients (670 enrolments) undertook training with us this year, gaining qualifications, statements of attainment, industry-recognised certificates or key skills for the workplace.

5. Neighbourhood House Program

The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program is a Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (formerly Department of Health and Human Services) initiative. It aims to support the provision of community development programs and activities leading to a range of community strengthening outcomes. This program has been delivered by Portland WorkSkills since 2012. Service provision takes place out of our Pioneer Plaza complex and the Waratah Centre in South Portland. The program has some 300 members. WorkSkills is an active member of the South West Neighbourhood House Network.

Disruption caused by COVID-19 and the various lockdowns made it difficult to successfully deliver this program as it very much involves people coming through the doors to access services. Usually we have a number of volunteers supporting the delivery of activities, classes and services across the organisation, coordinated and managed through the Neighbourhood House program. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 greatly limited volunteer opportunities within the organisation and will continue to do so.

Services, courses and initiatives were promoted via our programs. Offerings included Colour and Craft, Friday Crafters, Crochet Group, History talks, walks and workshops, and more. The Kidsafe Victoria-Neighbourhood Houses Victoria-Victorian Government Free Child Car Restraints Fitting and Safety Check program conducted at the Waratah Centre was well taken up. Unfortunately, a variety of

courses, activities and services were offered but had to be cancelled due to lockdowns. In 2020/2021, some 18 programs were run or courses delivered and there were some 76 enrolments.



Some amazing crafts were produced by the Creative Crafts g.

Phone and through-the-door support and effective referral to relevant support services was provided. Our 'Portland Local Services Guide' and the 'Portland Youth Referral Guide' were widely distributed by email, our website and from a distribution point in Pioneer Plaza. The guides are useful in these troubled times and were well received. Day-to-day Neighbourhood House services were delivered from our Pioneer Plaza complex and the Waratah Centre—our premises in Waratah Crescent, South Portland. A number of user-groups are based at the Waratah Centre including the Friday Sewers, Seaside Stitchers and the Wattle Hill Creek CWA. Their activities were regularly disrupted by lockdowns and restrictions.

6. Neighbourhood House Program - community development initiatives

The Portland Neighbourhood House Program supports leisure and recreational programs and activities delivered by community groups by strongly publicising them in our widely distributed term programs and through our Pioneer Plaza training complex. Our term programs promote some twenty organisations delivering over 35 activities in Portland and its district.

Organisations promoted included the Julia Street Creative Space, Portland Men's Shed, Portland District U3A, Portland Arts Centre, the Great South West Walk, 3RPC-FM Community Radio, Promoting Portland Maritime Heritage, Portland Community Centre, Portland YMCA, Portland District Health Services, Friday Sewing Group, Wattle Hill Creek CWA, St John Ambulance, Portland Field Naturalists Club, Portland Community Garden, Portland Women in Business, Portland Young Professionals Network and the Portland Library.

We also routinely distributed the *Seniors Newspaper* via a pick-up point in front of Shop 14, Pioneer Plaza. We also photocopied the Portland Harbour Probus Club newsletter each month.

In between lockdowns, the Neighbourhood House presented several history talks including ‘The story of the streets’, an outline of the origins and history of Portland’s street names. The Neighbourhood House service also delivered free community guided walk tours including ‘Highlights of the Ploughed Field’ and ‘A block of Bentinck Street’. Talks and walks, within the constraints of social distancing, were well taken up. They provided considerable positive publicity for the Neighbourhood House program in particular and for WorkSkills in general.



The National Trust Heritage Festival 2021 was celebrated in April.

We also produced and promoted a self-guided ‘COVID Exercise’ Historic Inns and Hotels walk tour, with a map showing the locations of Portland’s 20 or so inns or hotels over time. On the other side of the map was a commentary with three points of historic information for each site. The tour could be broken down into sections and covered during separate walks. The map and commentary could be posted, emailed or collected from a pick-up point. The initiative was well received locally and from outside Portland. We were contacted by ABC South West, which led to a long and productive interview. The Portland Observer also published the map, a picture and good editorial about the walk. More than 100 copies have been distributed. The Committee for Portland converted part of the walk into the Portland Pubs And Laneways Podcast Tour, produced by Storytowns.

Our Historic Inns and Hotels Walk Tour was revamped into The Portland Pubs and Laneways Podcast Tour by the Committee for Portland.



Our interactive Facebook activity, ‘In search of Doctor Vaughan’, resumed later in the year and again attracted a great deal of community interest and involvement. Doctor Berkeley Vaughan (1906-2000) was a fascinating Portland personality; doctor, Portland Medical Officer, author, medical missionary, pilot, commentator and more. Many people shared recollections, anecdotes and memories of having been cared for by him. This community-strengthening initiative concluded after 12 episodes. Many people took part, making comment and contributing to the project.



The Neighbourhood House Program undertook another initiative, a 12-segment ‘Do you remember...?’ series. It featured the 1970 Royal Visit, the 1985 Royal Visit/Proclamation of the City of Portland, Everett Products or ‘The Needle Factory’ and other events or organisations. We posted a short commentary plus two or three photos. People commented about their experiences and added photos and suchlike.

The ‘Do you remember....?’ series used eye-catching images on Facebook to engage members of the community in the discussion.

We continued to make available the interpretive brochures and self-guided walk tour brochures we have published over the years. They include *A Self Guided Tour of the Old Portland Cemetery*, *Cape Nelson*, *In the footsteps of Mary MacKillop*, *Walk Portland’s Pride - Fawthrop Lagoon*, *Portland Inns and Hotels self-guided walk* and *Waterways of the Wannan*.



WorkSkills is a member of the Portland Tourist Association and our visitor publications and walk tours effectively promote Portland and its region to visitors.