



LOUIS JOEL
ARTS & COMMUNITY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Hobsons Bay
Community Advancement
Co-operative Ltd

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways where our Centre is located, the Boonwurrung/Bunurong people and pay respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise the sorrow of the Stolen Generations and for the people who are still finding their way back home. We witness the strength, resilience and pride of First Nations peoples as demonstrated through cultural practices including storytelling, art, dance and music and their care for country and communities.



Our Vision

We believe communities in Hobsons Bay will be interconnected, vibrant, resilient and will express their creativity and culture through the arts.

Our Purpose

Through partnerships with Council, artists and the community, we deliver a vibrant arts and cultural program that supports community wellbeing. We are committed to providing an accessible and inclusive space – including a public gallery – with an environment for connection, creative exploration, experimentation, presentation and opportunities for social enterprise.

Our History

The Louis Joel Arts & Community Centre is on the site of the old Altona Hospital which was closed by the then State Government in 1996. The community rallied to form the Hobsons Bay Community Advancement Co-operative Ltd who purchased the hospital and redeveloped the site to house a community centre, art gallery and activity rooms. Named after Dr Louis Joel, first doctor at the Altona Hospital, the Louis Joel Arts & Community Centre was opened in November 2005.



Our Values

We operate in accordance with four key values that define all aspects of our work and our approach (RECS). We demonstrate these values in our work with each other, the way in which we work with the community, and the way in which we govern our organisation.

RESPECT

We honour the rights, privacy, dignity and diversity of our community and recognise the intrinsic value of every person.

ENTERPRISE

We seek to enhance the social and economic wellbeing of communities through embracing opportunities to collaborate and grow.

COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS

We connect our community and through those connections, create a sense of belonging and increased wellbeing.

SUSTAINABILITY

Our operations encompass all aspects of environmental and business sustainability to ensure long-term viability as a community asset and the preservation of the natural environment which we govern our organisation.



Board of Management and Staff

2022-2023

Chair	Catherine Curtain
Deputy Chair	James Bush
Secretary	Rini Ismail
Treasurer	Tanya Tran <i>(resigned August 2023)</i> Noirin McKeon <i>(commenced August 2023)</i>
Members	Kaylene O'Shea Carol Franklyn Laura Mondon Grace Pham <i>(resigned May 2023)</i> Maree Duffield OAM <i>(resigned September 2022)</i>
Manager	Karen Ingram
Admin & Engagement	Lyn Hunt <i>(resigned February 2023)</i> Zoe Stephens <i>(commenced April 2023)</i>
Community & Cultural Development	Danielle Whelan
Gallery Producer	Madeline Frohlich
Accountant	Steven Xiang <i>(commenced December 2022, resigned June 2023)</i>
Bookkeeper	Lilik Kurnia <i>(commenced June 2023)</i>

Funding bodies, corporate sponsors and partners

Hobsons Bay Community Advancement Co-operative Ltd would like to thank the following funding bodies for their financial support, corporations for their valued sponsorship, Local, State and Federal Government departments for project grants and partnerships:

Hobsons Bay City Council

Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH)

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

Victorian State Government

Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic)

Network West

Hobsons Bay Community Fund

Bendigo Bank

Bunnings Altona

Australian Communities Foundation

Sidney Myer Fund

Altona City Rotary Club

Lions Club of Altona

ExxonMobil

Compass Real Estate

Jas Stephens Real Estate

Message from the Chair

Change, Challenge and embracing the Mystery.

Art comes from where things are felt, not known, not understood.

"There's a point between things where science and art connect, but, beyond that, everything is one big unknown mystery...anything is possible."

The Seven Skins of Esther Wilding,
by Holly Ringland



Writing my message this year, I've reflected on the many, many challenges we've faced in FY 22-23 - the hours spent searching for solutions and some sleepless nights - as well as the many satisfying experiences of working for something meaningful with our terrific band of Board members, staff, volunteers, and users of the Louis Joel Arts & Community Centre (**LJAC, the Centre**). I've enjoyed many aspects of the year, but the opportunities to experience the feelings which come with being present at our art exhibition openings have been the most pleasurable for me.

My top four this year have been:

- 'Wall of Wings', by the Overwintering Project – a global collaboration to save migratory birds,
- 'Little Spirits', by Gordon Lescinsky – I was inspired by the innovation of this one,
- 'Growing Pains', by GenZine – here, I was moved by the energy of youth, and
- 'Wetlands from the Clouds', by James Henry – the colour and texture in the birds' eye views of the wetlands were astounding.

It is a mystery how the simple act of turning up to the Centre at 6:30pm on a Friday for an exhibition opening can change into

a transformative journey of emotion and connection. I love it! I hope for this feeling for all our community. We had twenty-two exhibitions in FY22-23 and these attracted more than 2,000 members of the community, 900 of whom attended the openings over the whole year. We exhibited works from more than 300 artists, including on our new Emerging Artists wall and, in the Hobsons Bay Arts Society exhibitions, the works of children from 6 local Primary Schools. We sold creations from more than 40 artists in our shop. In addition, catering to all ages and welcoming all genders, we had some 3,000 people attend programs at the Centre over the year. This Centre can nourish your spirit and I encourage more people to partake of that nourishment.

Community consultation

Many people think that the Centre is owned and run by Hobsons Bay City Council. It's not. The old Altona District Hospital closed its doors on 28 November 1996. The community came together to fight the State Government to keep it in community hands, and it was given to **Hobsons Bay Community Advancement Co-operative (HBCAC)**, a committee of hard-working volunteers who worked on continuing to offer community services in the old hospital

building. But they didn't know what it would become. It was a mystery which unfolded as the years went by.

Twenty-seven years later, the future calls to us again. Hobsons Bay Endoscopy Hospital closed in March and Melbourne Pathology is in the process of moving out to occupy new premises in Pier Street. Although the Board had been in dialogue with the anchor tenant about lease renewal since last year, it came as a terrible surprise to lose the tenant and the sub-tenants in June. Revenue from the tenancy has contributed about half of the running costs of the Centre for the last 20 years. That's a big hole for the Board to fill!

Working on its strategy to fill the hole and continue the programs of the Louis Joel Arts & Community Centre, the Board has engaged New World Arts to engage the Altona community in a consultation about the future of LJAC, in a project entitled, "Your Centre, Your Voice", which will culminate in a community meeting on Sunday 26 November. The Board eagerly awaits the outcome of the consultation and will carefully consider the voice of the community in its future plans.

Contributions from Board members

The community should be very proud, as am I, of the outstanding Board of volunteer Directors who contribute to the strategy and the running of the Co-operative. Our local community is full of talented and committed individuals and I am enormously grateful to those who step forward to offer their time and talents to the task of solving the many challenges faced by the Co-operative. As BOM Chair this year, I have benefitted greatly from the enthusiastic support and hard work of each one of my Board members and I'd personally like to thank them. We created a new page on the website this year to recognise **Our Board Members** and the contributions they make.

We've been working on our ambitious creative endeavours by planning new events to demonstrate that we have a clear and visible strategy so that we can attract government funding from all levels of government to create

career pathways for Hobsons Bay residents as well as opportunities for community participation in the arts.

This year, we've had three talented Treasurers overseeing a transition of a finance system that was well out of date, a process which also included the employment and induction of three Bookkeepers and the resignation of one and the completion of one short-term contract! For a small, not-for-profit organisation, this has been an enormous challenge. We are nearly through it, and we will all be so glad to successfully reach the other side. My thanks to each and every one of those who have been involved with this process and the other issues which occupied the time of our Finance Sub-committee.

The Board's Future Directions Sub-committee oversaw an excellent tender process to appoint a new property manager to manage our lease negotiations. Although our anchor tenant and sub-tenants did not renew their leases with us, our property manager continues to work with us to identify potential new tenants.

Our Governance Sub-committee has worked with energy and dedication on the human resources tasks for LJAC. The Co-operative now employs one fulltime staff member (the Centre Manager) and five part-time staff, soon to be six, as we move to a Sunday opening of the Louis Joel Gallery. As well as the foundational governance documents and processes, including the Risk Management Framework, the Governance Sub-committee keeps a watchful eye on changing legislation affecting the Co-operative in order to update the Centre's policies. This year there were changes to Working with Children laws, superannuation, award rates of pay, and several other pieces of legislation which affected us. Next year, like every other business in Australia, we will undergo a review of our processes which protect the privacy of users of the Centre.

The Board, through its Strategic Relationships & Fundraising Sub-committee, with the assistance of the Centre Manager, continued to work on constructive relationships with all our stakeholders to build on the reputation



the Centre and the Louis Joel Gallery currently enjoys, as a valuable arts and cultural destination in Melbourne’s West.

Our new Technology Sub-committee had an ambitious agenda this year to uplift the business systems of the Centre which were creating inefficiencies through continued failures. Thanks to their efforts, the Centre has implemented a new, improved room booking system through which the public can book the rooms at the Centre. The other big improvement has been the EPOS platform which has enabled the efficient processing of transactions which go straight through to the new finance system. Congratulations to the Tech SC team for some great achievements which have made an enormous difference to the staff!

As well as being not-for-profit, the Co-operative is a registered charity, regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (**ACNC**) and is registered as a Deductible Gift Recipient (**DGR**) under the Register of Cultural Organisations (**ROCO**). We installed a new QUEST tap screen at reception this year and welcome any donations into our Public Fund.

My thanks to all Board members, and to those others who are seconded to our Sub-committees, for their continued interest and

efforts. You are to be congratulated on the work that has been completed in FY 22-23 and the outcomes which have been achieved, which is, by any measure, amazing!

Adding some colour and creativity

I also want to thank our Centre Manager – Karen Ingram – for her continuing efforts, enthusiasm and determination to come to grips with the challenge of creating a vibrant community and arts destination as she brings together artists and community members. Passing her first anniversary this year, she has implemented many innovations and enjoyed success with many of her initiatives. One of my favourites has been to become a fringe venue for the Willy Lit Fest – a great achievement!

I also want to acknowledge and thank our wonderful administrative employees: Danielle Whelan (Community and Cultural Development Officer), Zoe Stephens (Administration and Engagement Officer), Madeline Frohlich (Gallery Producer), Lilik Kurnia (Bookkeeper) and Amanda Neville (Community Facilitator). If it was possible, I

believe I have seen their commitment to the organisation and the community grow this year under Karen's management and guidance, and that has been gratifying to witness. Altona and Hobsons Bay are very lucky to have such a cohesive and talented team.

Thanks to our supporters!

The Board is grateful for the donations from all of its supporters. Remember that donations are tax deductible under our DGR status. Look out for our Christmas and EOFY campaigns if you'd like to support us!

Hobsons Bay City Council has again been our major supporter, through Neighbourhood House funding, projects grants, and through a new avenue of arts funding, which the Board is thrilled to receive. The Council has previously formalised its intention to position Hobsons Bay as a centre of cultural excellence and innovation by building a strong and inspiring creative sector and providing diverse opportunities and experiences for participation in the arts, reinforcing the positive benefits to all the community in vibrancy and liveability. LJAC is part of that cultural infrastructure.

This year, LJAC hosted and several of us participated in one of Council's workshops

to contribute to the review of its Creative City Arts and Culture Plan for 2023 – 27 and we look forward to seeing the new Strategy soon. The Co-operative is very grateful for the constructive relationship we have with Janet Dawes, HBCC's Manager, Arts, Culture and Community, and her team and look forward to working together to deliver inspiring arts projects and attractive culture projects to the Hobsons Bay community.

In addition to support from Council, for many years, the Co-operative and the Centre have indeed been fortunate to benefit from our ongoing partnership with the private sector in Hobsons Bay. ExxonMobil again donated funds to LJAC programs, including the monthly Repair Café which has been so successful in preventing repairable items from being dumped in landfill. We are very grateful for the support and look forward to an ongoing collaboration on artistic projects with them as well as other private sector organisations of Hobsons Bay.



Photo by Altona Beach Photography

We also benefit from being part of the State of Victoria and receive funding as a Neighbourhood House. We continue to explore opportunities to work with Creative Victoria on an arts project to advance the future economic prosperity and social wellbeing of the Victorian community.

Finally, on a national level, we have benefitted from grants from the Hon Tim Watts, MP, Federal Member for Gellibrand, and the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs and thank him for his ongoing support and interest in the programs we deliver to the community.

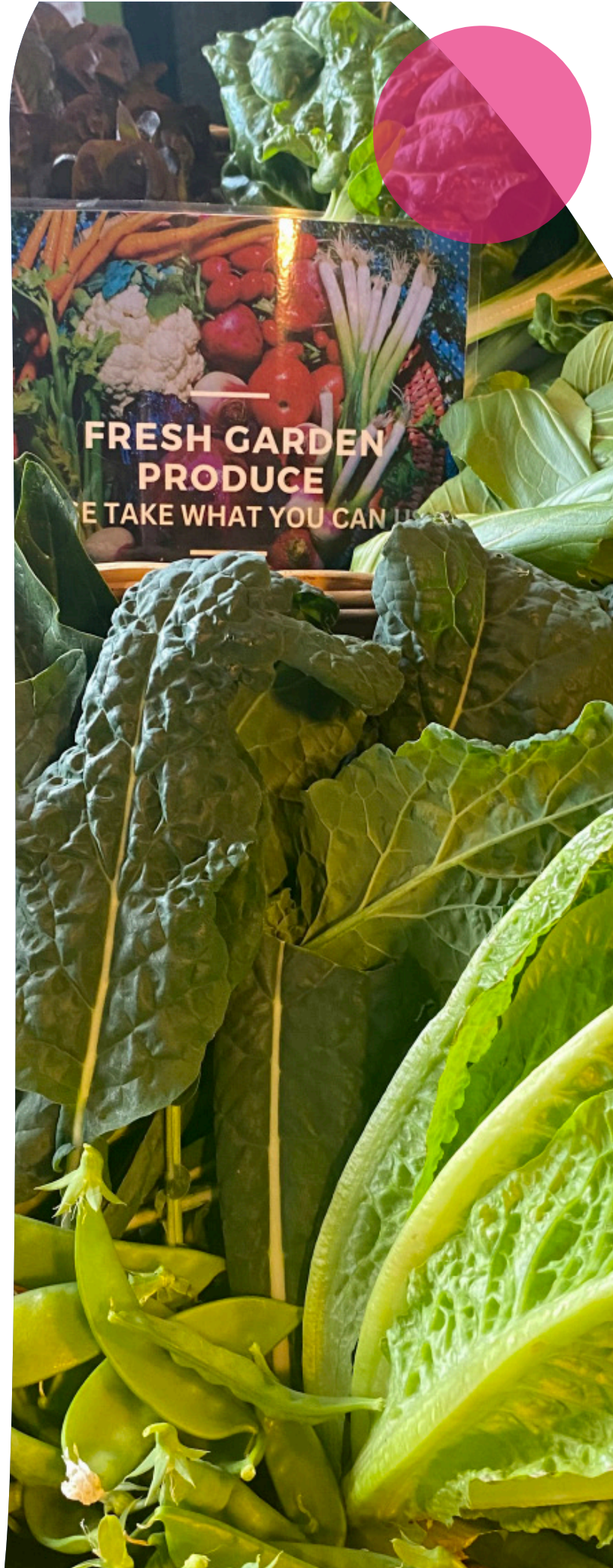
Thanks to our volunteers!

All of us who volunteer at LJAC hope that our contribution will make a difference - to the wellbeing of the organisation and to the wellbeing of the community through participation in the arts. This year, we have once again benefitted from the contributions of volunteers at all levels: from working on the BOM to working in the garden, from setting strategy to tackling building maintenance tasks. Every contribution is valuable and greatly appreciated.

Catherine Curtain
BOM Chair
HBCAC

Sustainability Statement

Louis Joel Arts & Community is committed to improving our environmental performance and demonstrating good environmental practice across all our operations. Our commitment requires us to develop greener solutions that repair and regenerate both natural and social capital, while maintaining community wellbeing.



Message from the Centre Manager

Have I mentioned how much I love my role as Centre Manager of Louis Joel Arts & Community? What a thrill to work where I get to see the literal horizon, where the sky meets the sea, and then the metaphorical horizon beckoning with endless possibilities every day. Working within a creative and connected community setting inspires me to do my best, and to bring my team along to marvel, enjoy and support each other, as we build upon the strengths of the people and places around us. Every day brings something new, where I can be surprised by the quiet gentleness of the Centre as much as the vibrant energy of the many classes, projects, exhibitions and gatherings.

You may have noticed we embraced some favourite colours of the rainbow with our new branding, which was undertaken late 2022. Our sweeping palette of pink, purple and blue came together in our vibrant icon. This weave of colourful threads represents connection, creativity, community and collective across the spectrum of arts – music, visual, performance, and literature.

The past year has brought multiple opportunities for me as Centre Manager, which has grown the activities in a multitude of ways. I have been able to meet my goal of introducing more music, storytelling and literature into our programming in the following ways;

- Welcoming With One Voice Choir which fills the centre with wonderful songs every Friday afternoon
- Exploring complex emotions with seasonal Writing through Grief sessions, and more creative writing workshops
- Partnering with the Willy Lit Fest to hold five author talks in the Louis Joel Gallery



- Encouraging live music performances at our Exhibition launches which included DramaWerkz performing from their original production at LJAC Showcase Event, Bart Willoughby performing at the launch of The Colour & Sound of My Totem, and singer, songwriters and musicians at the GenZine launch

Other highlights of the year can be read throughout this report about our fabulous students on placement, our volunteers, InterGen, Fridays by the Bay, Little Spirits Exhibition, Louis Joel Gallery and programs that support and care for the environment. As you will begin to see, our staff, volunteers and community participants overlap and intertwine so much of what we do at the Centre.

Another of my goals of the year was to enable a strong and supportive team to bring their best to the Centre and all that happens within it and beyond it. We welcomed Zoe into the team in April and have also welcomed the professionalism she blends with kindness and willingness to step up to support our systems, regulars to the Centre, our operations, and people.

Danielle supports me, our volunteers and so much of our programming through her

dedication and care for everything that sits beneath the sustainability banner; our edible garden and leading the extremely popular Repair Café every month and her initiative in applying for grants that keeps LJAC thriving.

Madeline continues to bring thoughtfulness, care, creativity, and intelligence to the constant run of exhibitions to include quality artist liaison, developing the Emerging Artist Gallery and program, and initiating Folks Like Us – a fortnightly group to support and celebrate the Rainbow Community in the west. It's incredible to think that our exhibitions had been turning over every two weeks, and after some reflection we decided to move exhibitions to mostly three-week seasons, to provide more exposure for exhibiting artists in the gallery and more time for art-lovers to communicate to other art-lovers the "must see" happenings at the Louis Joel Gallery.

At the start of 2023, we have been fortunate to have Amanda join our team as she has developed the wonderful program to fill hearts and minds, Fridays by the Bay. We all benefit from her creativity and capacity to bring new ideas to a reality; I could brainstorm with her all day.

We have also undertaken significant changes behind the scenes that would not be visible to all. I am delighted we have managed to update our venue booking system, aiming for a user-friendly experience for hirers and staff. After our first month live, we are already seeing the benefits, and I want to thank Danielle and Zoe for their commitment in seeing this through. It required additional work and brainpower to get it happening and I am confident the effort will be worth the reward. We have also implemented new systems for our finance and point of sale, to improve our record-keeping as well as the most valuable commodity, time! The past few months has seen so much effort from our bookkeeper Lilik, since she commenced in June and I am extremely grateful to our Treasurer Noirin as well as our Tech Sub-committee who have supported these many changes. Oh! and a big shout out to our newly introduced a "tap and go" donation point, which can be seen in our foyer. We have made it so easy to make tax deductible donations from \$2 - \$50. :)

I am pleased to continue and strengthen the long-standing partnership LJAC has with Hobsons Bay Art Society (HBAS). As we recognise the changes in our community, the financial pressures felt by so many, individuals, families and community organisations, the continued offering of HBAS to the creative community of Hobsons Bay is immeasurable. I am pleased to have collaborated with them on an agreement that will take us to 2026.

As you might expect, a community centre cannot embark on what is needed alone, which is why we seek and receive vital and meaningful support from Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC), through their Community Development team, and Arts, Culture and Heritage programs, Eco-Development team, Community Support, Community Learning and Community Grants. While resources are vitally important, so is the spirit of collaboration which LJAC enjoys and appreciates.

There is another project close to my heart which sprang from the wave of sentiment the community expressed to me at the closure and removal of the Altona Pier. This had to be a community art project in the making and I am grateful to the community members who led me in that direction, particularly artist, Ceardai Demelza. The Altona Pier Revue has been made possible by the sponsorship from Exxon-Mobil which enabled a series of workshops to take place where artists and writers facilitated a prolific output, the final one to take place in February in celebration of our first summer with new Altona Pier. Look out for the exhibition in April 2024 supported by Sweeney Real Estate and HBCC. A special thanks to Altona traders, Silvios Pizza for workshop catering and Borgs Cakes for creating two cakes in the changing shapes of the Altona Pier. They were outstanding!

After gauging interest from the community, and with my previous experience I had a strong feeling that the introduction of a controversially named "Death Café" would go well at LJAC. Since February 2023 I have facilitated eight monthly conversations over cups of tea and cake, inspired by the topic of death, that rarely gets a run inside homes, friendship groups or families. Once my creative expression in

cake has broken the ice, people soon get to know they are in a supported space, where judgement is left at the door, so we can freely enquire and discuss the practical and not-so-practical aspects of death and dying. Bringing the Death Café to Altona has been a rewarding experience for all who attend, each one of them is unique. Look out for Death Cafes at LJAC in our 2024 programs.

I must also acknowledge the private, community and arts sectors who have extended themselves to me and LJAC to participate in a range of networks. I look forward to the future as a member of the Arts West Alliance, Altona Village Traders, Hobsons Bay Inter-Agency Network Custodians and continued partnerships with HBAS, U3A and reciprocal support from the Rotary Club of Altona City and Lions Club of Altona and other movers and shakers across Melbourne's west.

None of what happens at Louis Joel Arts & Community is possible without the custodianship of the past and present members of the Board of Management (BOM). I am personally very grateful for generosity of time and expertise they provide LJAC and therefore the community. I acknowledge each and every Board member for their support, vision and guidance shown to me in my first eighteen months as Centre Manager.

While I relish each day as it comes, I look forward to what will be next and aim to prioritise community, connection and creativity and collaboration. And care.

Karen Ingram
Centre Manager



Photo by Altona Beach Photography

The Finance Report

The Board is pleased to introduce Nóirín McKeon as its new Treasurer effective 22 August 2023. Nóirín has over 25 years of experience in operations and governance roles in the financial services sector. A proud resident of Hobsons Bay since 2005, Nóirín has a deep admiration for creative talent and appreciates the role that the arts can play in supporting community wellbeing.

She is delighted to have this opportunity to partner with her colleagues on the Board in collectively pursuing its purpose and realising its vision. Nóirín presents the Finance Report this year for the first time.



2023 Financial year

The Co-operative experienced an extended period of disruption to the occupancy of its Centre from March 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As reported last year, the Centre re-opened in the final quarter of the 2021 calendar year but full occupancy was only reached by June 2022.

The 2023 financial year saw a continuation in the recovery with the Co-operative's income significantly exceeding pre-pandemic levels. The Board is heartened by the progress of the Centre Manager and her team in identifying new income sources and in delivering additional programs for the benefit of the community.

The Co-operative returned a net profit of \$35,546 for the year (2022: net loss \$15,546) as the growth in total revenue outweighed the increase in costs incurred in carrying out the Co-operative's primary activities. The principal asset is the Co-operative's property located in Sargood Street, Altona which the Board conservatively records at its June 2017 market valuation of \$3m. Cash resources remain healthy at \$193,046 (2022: \$223,202). The Co-operative is almost debt-free having repaid all but \$3,259 of its mortgage facility

from cash flows generated from its operations (2022: \$3,959).

There were several changes in the resourcing of the Co-operative during the year relevant to the preparation of this Finance Report. Turnover in the Bookkeeper and Treasurer roles both during and after the end of the financial year presented challenges through the resulting loss of continuity. The new appointees, as of June and August 2023 respectively, have been industrious in familiarising themselves with the operations of the Co-operative and its financial records. They have facilitated the External Auditor in the successful completion of his work and are implementing changes to operating processes to streamline the production of timely reports for the Board and relevant sub-committees.

Looking to the future

The head lease of the Co-operative's major tenancy expired on 15 August 2023 and the parties to the lease agreement mutually agreed to terminate the lease without renewal. The Board is actively researching alternative uses of the vacated space consistent with the mission, values and strategic objectives of the Co-operative. In that regard, community

consultation will take place in November, including a community meeting to be hosted at the Louis Joel Centre with tours of the vacant space.

The financial records of the Co-operative will be maintained on a new cloud-based hosted solution (Xero, 'the new system') from 1 July 2023. Access to the legacy accounting system (Reckon) will be maintained to enable the Co-operative to meet its record keeping obligations for data prior to and relating to the 2023 financial year. Connections between the new system and banking and taxation authorities are already in place at the date of this report. During the 2024 financial year, the Treasurer and Bookkeeper also plan to integrate the point of sale, donation and room reservation applications with the new system to further streamline the Co-operative's operating and accounting processes.

The Treasurer supported by the Finance and Governance sub-committees will continue to work to ensure the Co-operative's financial governance is consistent with best practice for Not-for-Profit entities. In conjunction with the Co-operative's Bookkeeper and the Centre Manager's Team, the Treasurer is committed to the continuous improvement of operating and accounting processes and procedures.

Extracts from Financial Report - FY2023

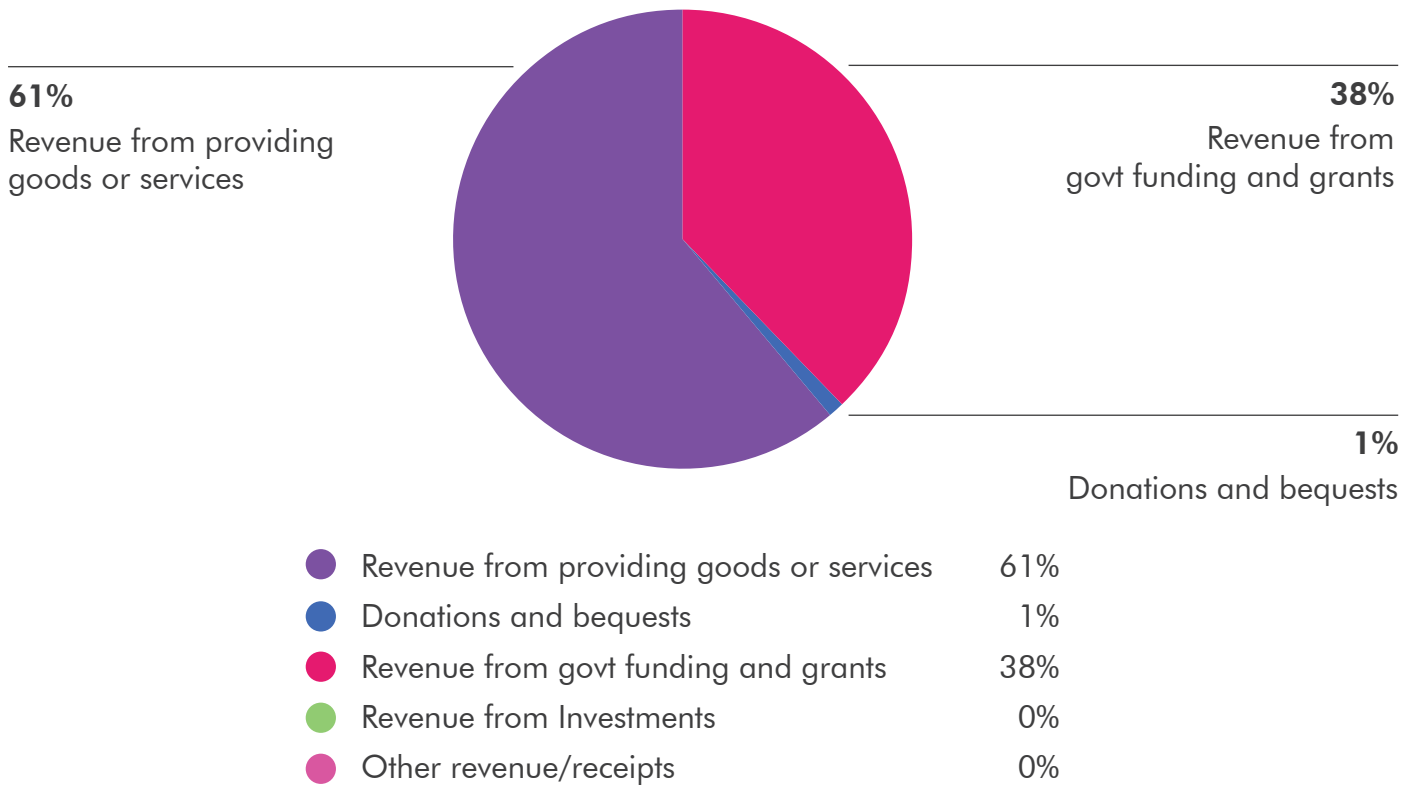
The full text of the audited financial statements for the Co-operative are available from the website of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (click: [Hobson Bay Community Advancement Co-Operative Ltd | ACNC](#)).

A summary of key points appears below.

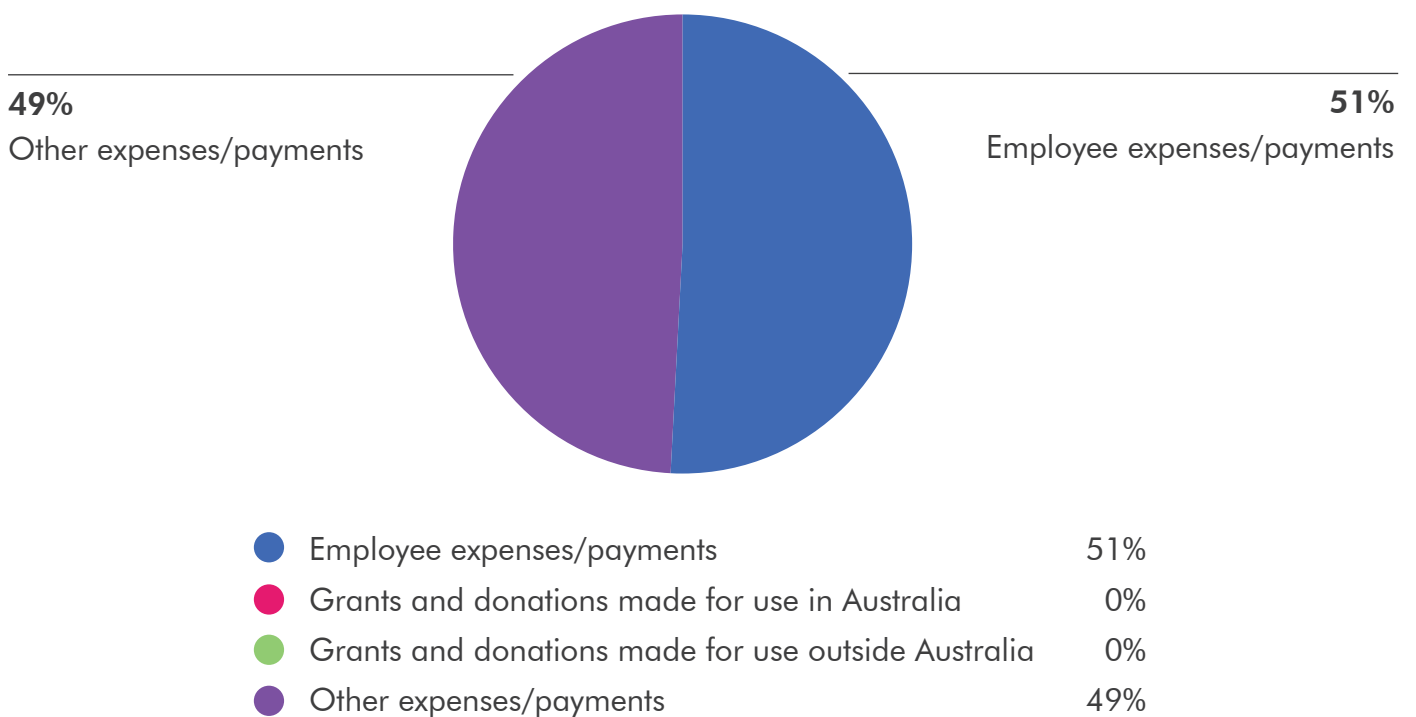
Income and Expenses

Income Statement Summary	
Revenue /Receipts	2023
Revenue from Government funding and grants	\$214,963.00
Donations and bequests	\$4,491.00
Revenue from providing goods or services	\$352,430.00
Revenue from investments	\$22.00
Other revenue/receipts	\$ -
Total revenue/receipts	\$571,906.00
Other income (for example gains)	\$ -
Total income/receipts	\$571,906.00
Expenses/Payments	
Employee expenses/payments	\$276,204.00
Grants and donations made for use in Australia	\$ -
Grants and donations made for use outside Australia	\$ -
Other expenses/payments	\$260,156.00
Total expenses/payments	\$536,360.00
Net surplus/(deficit)	\$35,546.00
Balance Sheet Extract	
Total assets	\$3,327,699.00
Total liabilities	\$72,234.00
Net assets/liabilities	\$3,255,465.00
Description of charity assets and liabilities:	
As at 30 June 2023 our charity had a current cash balance of \$193,046 (2022: \$223,202) and Property and Equipment having a net book value of \$3,106,183 (2022: \$3,118,263).	

2023 Revenue / Receipts



2023 Expenses / Payments



Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of the Centre and we are fortunate to have a committed and talented group of volunteers who support all aspects of Louis Joel Arts & Community.

Our Board of Management is made up of volunteers whose knowledge and expertise across areas such as governance, finance, strategic planning, and information technology ensure the sustainability and positive strategic direction of the organisation.

The Garden Gurus manage the Centre's ornamental gardens and have worked hard over the past year to create a garden that blooms year-round to welcome visitors. Ian, Desma, Bill, Dawn and Kaylene have planted, weeded, watered and mulched their way through the year, while also actively raising funds through events such as Bunnings Barbecues to keep the gardens looking spectacular. Ian and Bill also provide invaluable support with general repairs and improvements around the Centre.

It has been a pleasure to welcome a new group of volunteers over the past year through the Plant, Grow, Eat, Connect project, which has seen the renewal of our edible community garden. A big welcome and thank you to Ranya, Alkira, Cindy, Cheryl, Krisana, Diane and Marie. Our wicking beds are bursting at the seams with summer season veggies that will increase access to fresh food for community members over the coming months. Almost all the seedlings planted out this year have been raised from seed by our edible garden volunteers with a special shoutout to Cheryl who nurtured many of them. Our edible garden volunteers have great ideas for how to continue to enhance the productiveness of the edible garden and we're excited to see these plans come to fruition.

Saturday afternoons once a month, our repair café volunteers share their weekends with the community to provide a free repair service for a diverse range of broken household items. From utilitarian items such as toasters, lamps and portable stoves, to rarer items such as mid-century stereos, reel-to-reel players and hand-made toys, we thank these volunteers for their passion and persistence, and for sharing their expertise with the community. Over the past

year, volunteers Mikel, Terry, Graeme, Dovey, Ian, Maureen, Dorothy, James, Mandy, Franz, Richard and Mandy have contributed 244 hours as fixers or support volunteers; repairing over 150 items and diverting close to half a tonne from landfill and e-waste streams. Recently, we have welcomed new volunteers Can, Maria, Leon, Steven and Sien to the program and we are excited to be able to repair more things for community members each month, as well as adding computers to the list of things people are able to bring in for repair.

This year we farewelled Marlene and Graeme after their many years contributing across different programs as volunteers. While sad to see them go, we welcome Cheryl who has adeptly taken on the role of program facilitator for the Kings of the Kitchen program. Each week Cheryl supports the group to come together in the kitchen for a social cooking session followed by a shared meal.

The Boys Only Barbecue program is supported by volunteers, Des and Paul whose commitment to providing a safe and welcoming space for men to come together and connect has seen the numbers of men attending for a fortnightly lunch grow steadily over the past year.

Thank you to all those who have contributed to the Centre as a volunteer over the past year. There is still room for more people to lend a hand to the Centre and our programs, so if you have skills, interests and some hours to spare, please be in touch with one of our team.



InterGen Program

What started with a brainstorming conversation with Emma-Lou around August 2022, developed into an unstoppable flow of ideas to address the impacts of ageism – for both older people and younger people. “InterGen” was developed with to increase understanding and empathy for older and younger generations. In November 2022, we exceeded our goal of participant numbers, resulting in ten older people, and ten younger people. Our star students on placement, Emma-Lou, Max and Emosi planned and facilitated activities to bring the two cohorts together. Feedback from participants included;

“Young people want to be noticed and we didn’t realise older people do notice them and want to leave a better world for them.”

“Personally, I think before I did the program and didn’t really empathise with older generations of people and their different cultural experiences. I had a tendency to view them through the generalised viewpoint that they all have problematic political views and therefore there would not be a commonality between myself and older generations of people and their different cultural experiences.



Through the program and being given a chance to actually talk with people of different cultural experiences I found that we actually had a lot in common in our core beliefs despite growing up in a different setting to the older generations. Therefore, I was able to empathise with them better.”

“Being part of the program grew my confidence in facilitating conversations and activities, it felt really good.”

In 2023, we started hearing from the older cohort who participated in 2022, as they were keen to do something like this again. While the idea had full support, we needed the people power to coordinate and recruit participants. That’s around the time when Jeremy & Joanne joined us for their student placements. The groundwork was done, however it appeared to be a lot easier to recruit older people than it was to recruit younger people i.e. aged 18 – 25. After some time reviewing and researching the options, I agreed with the idea to host a series of events or workshops, whereby perspectives from the cohorts could be presented, where it could be open for all, without the requirement or expectation to commit to an ongoing program.

Enter GenZine. This incredible group of young people had produced four “Zines” (a small magazine, limited print run, independently produced) each with a theme that encompassed gender equity. The crew from GenZine were interested and willing to host their first workshop for LJAC InterGen, their first time including an older cohort. Participant feedback was really positive, and while I hope we can present this or similar into the future, I’ve noted that more food will be required!

The follow-up workshop was presented by Altona U3A, thanks to our strengthened partnership, and the proposal was a conversation to pick up on the themes raised in the book by Alison “Generation F’d”. While a younger cohort was short on numbers, there examples, quotes, and table-based activities inspired interesting and deep thinking and discussion. As one participant later said, “I’ve been thinking about that conversation all week!”

Currently we are seeking funding to continue with the aims of InterGen program and facilitate meaningful engagement between older and younger generations to reduce ageism in our community, and beyond, and improve social cohesion more broadly.

Fridays by the Bay

Amanda Neville

I began facilitating a new social activity program, Fridays by the Bay early 2023, and would like to thank Hobsons Bay City Council for funding and supporting this important work. What began as a weekly program for six months has now been extended until June 2024, as a fortnightly program to increase community connections and is focused on arts and wellbeing. Fridays by the Bay is open to Hobsons Bay residents aged under 65 and First Nations people aged under 50 years who are experiencing social isolation and/or social barriers to community participation.

The group welcomes new members to enjoy an activity followed by a shared meal as well as planned outings to galleries, gardens or other places of interest.

Participants in the group are vulnerable, they often suffer from one or more illnesses or conditions, and have challenging life circumstances. Challenges include chronic health problems, mental health, social isolation, food security, cost of living, mobility, navigation of services and so on.

It is important for people to have a space where they can feel safe to express themselves, discuss what is going on for them, to meet and learn about others. Activities such as art and craft enable people to talk and to become familiar with one another. We have created a good platform for asking people questions about other interests they might have, which informs programming in future sessions.

As pictures can speak louder than words, I produced a booklet for participants which captured memories of the first six months of the Fridays by the Bay. They really appreciated the reminder of what they had achieved, for themselves and as a group.



Student Placement at LJAC

The LJAC team and regulars to the Centre have reaped the awards from the partnership with tertiary institutions such as Melbourne Polytechnic and Victoria University (VU) through the student placements for Diploma of Community Services and more recently, Bachelor of Social Work. The students who have worked between 400 – 500 hours at the Centre, supporting our programs such as Fridays by the Bay, Chatty Café, Chit Chat Tuesdays, Boys Own BBQ as well as individuals who require additional support. In return, the students complete their learning goals while increasing their understanding of our organisation and putting their community development and social work theory into practice.

As the Centre Manager, I have welcomed the additional support by qualified social workers and educators at VU who provided clinical supervision of our students and regular contact with me as the workplace supervisor. Feedback from program participants, our team, stakeholders, VU and the students themselves have been so positive, with all involved really making a difference to life at LJAC and therefore the community as a whole.

Thank you to Emma-Lou, Max, Emosi, Charlize, Joanne and Jeremy for your efforts in engaging, promoting, facilitating, planning, evaluation and troubleshooting, as well your creativity and bringing your values based practice to LJAC. Some highlights, include:

- Fridays By the Bay, promoting and recruiting participants as well as supporting the weekly program with meal preparation, participation in activities alongside participants, supporting the group on excursions to the Ian Potter Gallery and Scienceworks. (Charlize, Jeremy & Joanne)
- InterGen program pilot, developing project plan, activities, gathering materials, recruiting twenty participants, from younger and older demographic, facilitating weekly workshops, and creating a positive and unforgettable experiences for the two cohorts, with the aim of reducing ageism in our community. (Emma-Lou, Emosi & Max)



- Literature review of social prescribing programs and evaluation of Link to Wellness, presentation to LJAC team and Hobsons Bay City Council community development coordinator. (Jeremy & Joanne)
- Creation of Community Services guide for Melbourne's west which has been well received by stakeholders, which will be part of ongoing placements at LJAC. (Jeremy)
- Increasing attendance of Chatty Café through 1:1 and group engagement, supporting diverse participants to increase their connection with others. (Charlize, Jeremy & Joanne)
- Supporting women in the community in the creation and development of Chit Chat Tuesdays, through listening to craft messaging for promotional tools, activities as required. (Charlize & Joanne)
- Preparation and cooking fortnightly Boys Own BBQ, supporting long-time volunteers, and witnessing a significant growth in participants. (Jeremy)
- Kickstarting the InterGen project in 2023, overcoming challenges and recommending other ways to recruit participants and engage with stakeholders and supporting the facilitation of two events. (Jeremy & Joanne)

Overall, our students undertaking their diploma and bachelor placements provided valuable support and assistance to the LJAC team, through their effective engagement with regulars, visitors and facilitators. We welcomed their ideas for programs and general improvements and the all-round good vibes they brought to the Centre, every day. I look forward to a continued partnership with VU with two more students expected to join us in 2024.

Link to Wellness

Social prescribing at LJAC

Social prescribing programs are suitable for people who have social, physical, and/or mental health needs that are impacting on daily life. Participants must be willing to connect with and maintain social connections and want to improve their overall wellbeing.



One of the aims of social prescribing is to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of people to prevent escalation of potentially complex health risks and avoidable emergency department presentations. There are various models in practice, particularly in United Kingdom, which has seen positive outcomes. Link Workers can help connect people who are experiencing isolation and loneliness with community groups and support for example, arts and creative activities, outdoor activities, or volunteering.

Over the past few years, including the peak and recovery periods of the pandemic, LJAC managed Link to Wellness at the Centre as well as Walker Close Community Centre in Altona North. This initiative was made possible with the support of initial funders ANCHA and then Hobsons Bay City Council.

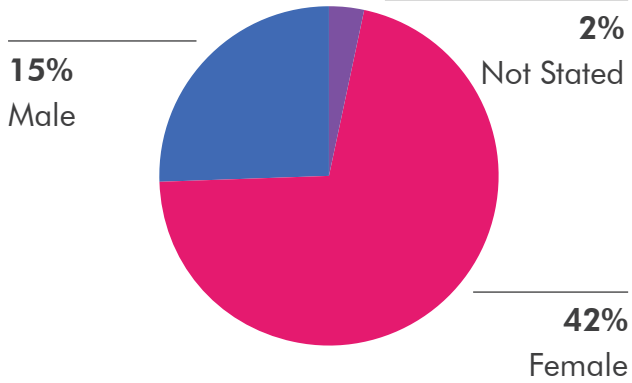
The circumstances for referral to the program included relationship breakups, housing insecurity, difficulty finding what they are looking for, being new to the area, social anxiety, and loneliness. During the time of this project, the Link Worker saw 59 participants.



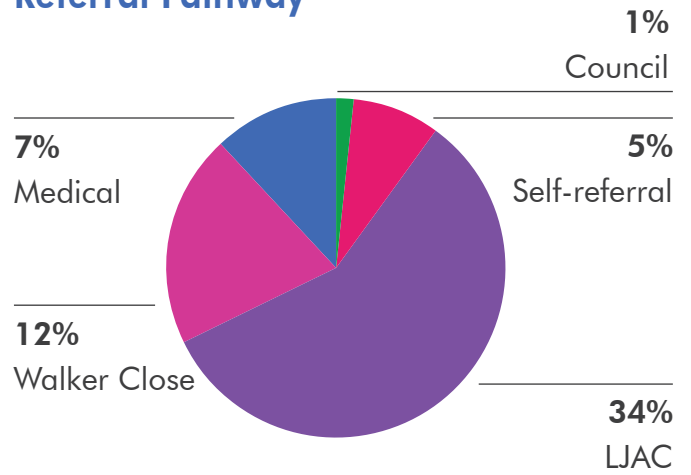
Due to the limits of short-term funding of programs with longer-term consequences, Link to Wellness finished up in May 2023. The pause on the work has provided a period of reflection, evaluation and engaging with stakeholders with the aim of seeking sustainable funding and delivery to enable good practice outcomes for our communities. In the time we had, our Link Worker made a difference to the lives of many participants.

“I would not have known about the services and activities that are available if it weren’t for this program.”

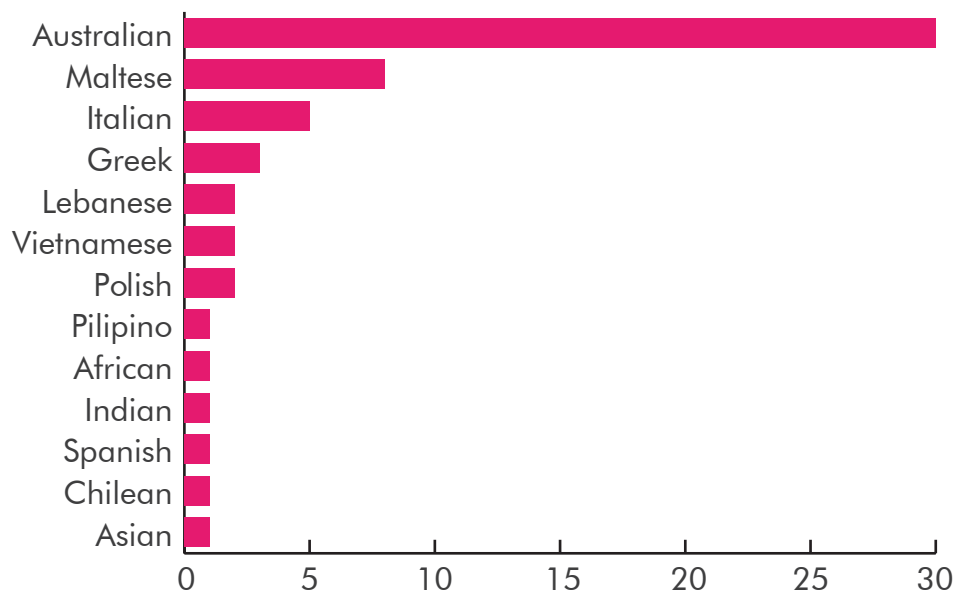
Gender



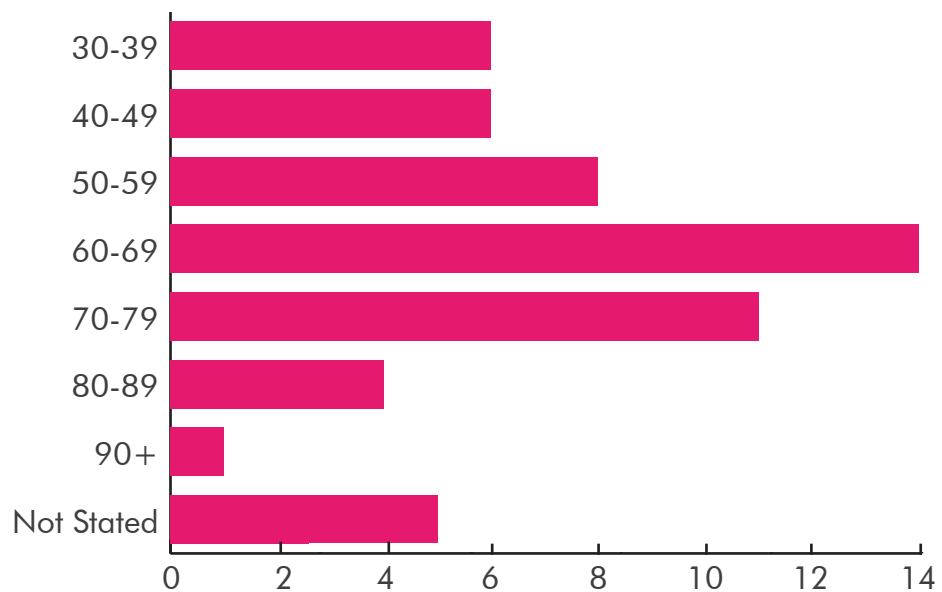
Referral Pathway



Ethnicity



Ages





Louis Joel Gallery

*Madeline Frohlich,
Gallery Producer*

There have been many highlights since I commenced at Louis Joel Gallery in August 2022, and it's probably wise to narrow them down. I've selected two group shows which I was fortunate to coordinate and curate, working alongside local and international artists. 'Cracking the Code' the theme of International Women's Day 2023 and the name of our exhibition. 'Express Yourself' was our exhibition featured throughout Midsumma 2023.

Group shows at Louis Joel Gallery (LJG) are an opportunity to engage with a range of artists – from emerging talent to those with more gallery experience. We invite people who have not previously connected with LJG, view their work, and begin dialogue about ways they could connect with us or use our space. These events start things happening – which facilitate people in their creative practice and connect them to one another.

For the exhibition "Express Yourself" many artists told me they were really pleased to be connected not only with us, but with each other. Coming after a period of lockdowns and social distancing many working in the arts have found their practices, careers, and communities disrupted. Many of the emerging talents in this exhibition completed art school or training during the pandemic and hadn't had much of an opportunity to connect with other like-minded artists.

I applied this learning to the "Cracking the Code" launch prep – and made sure the install day enabled an opportunity for the artists to meet each other and socialise. We had a fun time installing the exhibition, chatting about the different ethics and practices in the room. An important aspect of this show was that the artists were linked together by their response to the 'Cracking the Code' theme – they were all artists who broke with tradition and innovated



in their respective fields. The panel discussion, facilitated by Karen on the night of the launch, also acted as a stage to bring the conversations between these different artists to our audience.

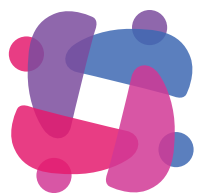
In these ways – group exhibitions at LJC equip artists with connections, skills and confidence to support their careers.

From these experiences, we have now introduced Louis Joel Emerging Artist Gallery, which features first time exhibitors for one month. Each artist

is supported in creating their artist statement, encouraged to price and sell their work and afforded an opportunity to assist with exhibition installations and de-installs.

Going forward, LJC aims to increase the platform for creatives via artist and author talks, film and audio, and we are actively seeking support via sponsorship or in-kind capacity building to enrich the experience of exhibitors, as well as the wider community, by increasing access to more audiences.





**LOUIS JOEL
GALLERY**



"Little Spirits"

Artist: Gordon Lecsinsky

Words by Gallery Producer, Madeline Frohlich.

Gordon was one of the first artists who I began working with when starting in the Gallery. I was excited by the theme of the exhibition, which was a hyper-local celebration of wetlands and grassland ecologies. His vision was that the Gallery would take on the air of a chapel, with lightboxes harking to stained glass. We began to plan the logistics and execution of these ideas which included managing the cords and cables that would power the exhibition.

Over many months, Gordon reported on the progress of his work – first in finalising his digital drawings, then making prototypes of the illuminated lightboxes and finally showing me his final designs mounted to the lightboxes. I suggested a powerpoint to demonstrate his influences and artistic process to provide insights into what I saw as an experimental and creative engagement with technology. I also requested Gordon to provide individual blurbs on the animals and plants featured in each of the work. Suspecting that the show would be popular among local visitors and understanding Gordon's wealth of knowledge I proposed a series of postcards of his drawings would allow attendees to purchase and take home a part of the show with them.

While I was confident the "Little Spirits" exhibition would find resonance with the Altona community, the powerful response to the show was even greater than I had anticipated. Many attendees

returned multiple times: sometimes bringing guests, sometimes returning just to sit in quiet thought in the gallery space. Several outdoors walking groups, twitchers, and wetlands enthusiasts visited the space over the course of the exhibition. Word of the show attracted those with an interest in ecology as well as those interested in digital art. Gordon's artist talk and the 'Silent Night' after dark gallery showing offered our audience multiple ways to engage with the work. And, while Gordon had assumed that the lightboxes would be unsaleable – four purchasers ending up buying the original mounted lightbox works at the exhibition launch, in addition to the several dozen smaller postcard designs sold throughout the exhibition. Gordon was able to deliver each lightbox personally and install them within the purchaser's homes – one of the many benefits of having a truly local artist.

"Little Spirits" also received an unprecedented response through our audience feedback box, which reflects the resonance of this exhibition with the public. Some audience feedback included:

"The expression of our local land - a unique display from an artist that loves our community."

"I was excited by the innovative use of light boxes for the display. The textures of the spirit creatures were beautiful to me. I appreciated the little stories which accompanies each piece - that made the work more accessible and more interesting"

"Gordon's interpretation of the creatures and living entities of our local environment are awe inspiring. The art helps us understand just how important each element is and draws attention to threats to our habitat i.e. foxes, habitat loss. Be like the ant! Courageous and ever ready to protect!!"



Donations

Louis Joel Arts & Community raises funds to help deliver quality programs and projects to the community of Hobsons Bay.

We are partly funded to deliver those program. However, that funding only goes part way to covering the expenses of delivering low-cost programs to those in the community who may not otherwise have access to them. It is for this reason we ask for your support. Every dollar donated to the "Hobsons Bay Community Arts Activities Fund" is expended on the delivery of our programs with the focus on making them as low cost as possible for those in our community who would most benefit from them. Please consider supporting our programs and community.

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Methods of payment:

- In the Centre, 5 Sargood Street, Altona VIC 3018 – tap your debit card on the Donation point in the foyer. Amounts between \$2 - \$50 accepted.
- Direct deposit / bank transfer

BSB: 013 456

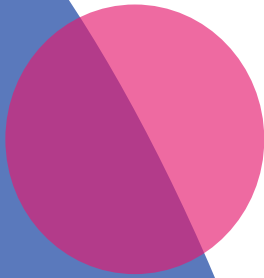
Account Number: 232621885

Account Name: Hobsons Bay Community Advancement Co-operative Ltd

Reference: Your Name

- Cheques can be made out to Hobsons Bay Community Advancement Co-operative Ltd and dropped in or posted to, Louis Joel Arts & Community, 5 Sargood Street, Altona VIC 3018

"DONATION" will appear on your bank statement for taxation purposes, or if you require a tax receipt, please email admin@ljac.com.au with your name, date of transaction and amount of donation. Note that to claim tax deductibility this financial year (2023-2024) your donation must be received by us by 30 June 2024. Your name only will be acknowledged in the Annual Report for your donation. If you would like to keep your donation confidential, please advise admin@ljac.com.au



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