



# Partners for Change

2022



**Neighbourhood Houses**  
The Heart of Our Community

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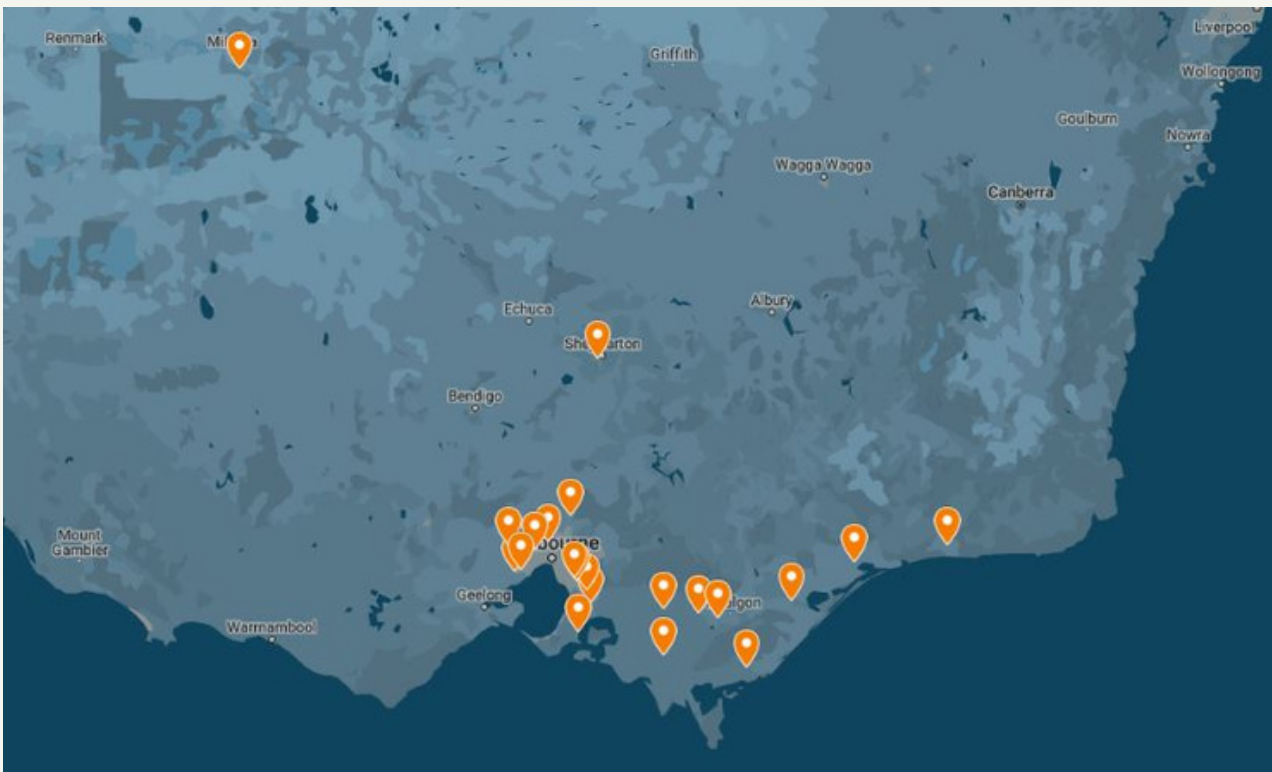




# Project context

This report has been prepared by grant recipient Neighbourhood Houses Victoria Incorporated (NHVic) as part of the official reporting for the Partners for Change project. The project was funded and guided by the Department of Health between 29 March 2022 - 30 June 2022, with some program supported activities rolling into July. The project built on an engagement approach to address broader public health priorities. In partnership with health organisations, Neighbourhood and Community, Houses and Centres (NCHCs) used the funding to coordinate six community events at each NCHC with targeted participation from a range of health providers.

Participating Neighbourhood and Community, Houses and Centres are mapped out below:



# Introduction

## BACKGROUND

As part of the Partners for Change project, participating Neighbourhood and Community, Houses and Centres were expected to coordinate six events by 30 June (with some potential events rolling into the month of July) including:

- Food
- Community members
- Health providers

The overall aim of the project was to:

- Engage with local communities about COVID-19 vaccination
- Provide improved access to wellbeing information
- Re-establish social connection to community
- Establish enduring relationships through referral pathways between NCHCs and their local public health units and/or community health networks

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

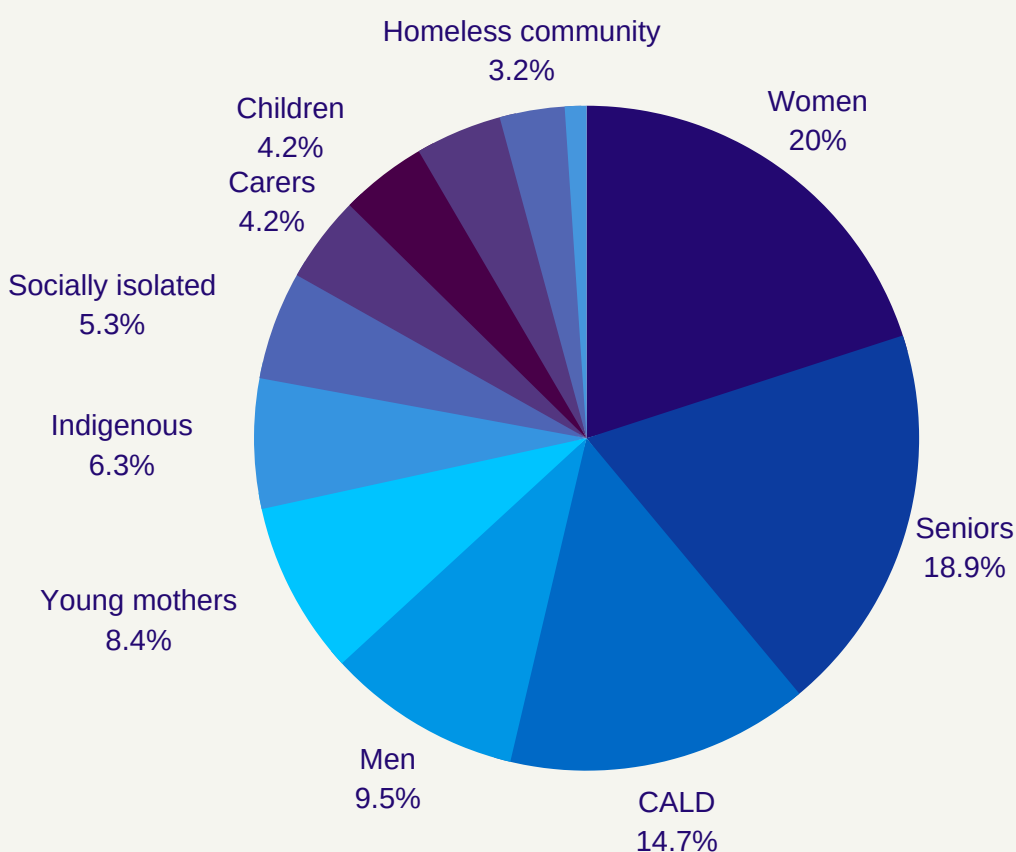
The purpose of this report is to build an overview of the reach of the project and a more in depth understanding of its impact on local communities. The program's impact will be demonstrated through six case studies from NCHCs located in rural, regional, and metro Victoria.





# Outcomes summary

## TARGET GROUPS



5773

Participant experiences

126

Community events

Resulting from the Partners for Change project, NCHCs have successfully delivered 126 events including food, health, and community members in 21 across the state. Collectively, these events have attracted over 5,775 community members. Majority of these community members identify with either one or more of the following groups or cohorts: CALD, women, men, seniors, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, young mothers, socially isolated and/or disconnected, children, homeless community members. In addition to events targeting either one or more of these cohorts, 28% of the events were open to the general public and broader community.

# 100%

Said YES when we asked if new partnerships emerged as a result of Partners for Change supported activities.

**“We have made a connection with our local pharmacy which will enable us to keep doing health related events. We will also try and host annual hearing checks here”**

Leongatha Community House

**“We plan to continue these partnerships for future projects and events and are grateful for the networking opportunities that took place at our community events.”**

Balla Balla Community Centre

As part of these events, NCHCs successfully partnered up with local public health units, professionals, specialists, and community health networks. The purpose of these partnerships was to raise awareness about health and available health supports services in local communities, and to establish enduring relationships through referral pathways between NCHCs and their local public health units and/or community health networks.

Based on a survey that was sent to all participating NCHCs, 100% responded 'yes' when asked if new partnerships emerged as a result of Partners for Change supported activities. Many of these partnerships will live on as a legacy of the project and bring enduring benefits to community members across rural, regional, and metro Victoria.



# 5773

# Big Mob Cook Up

Healthy and delicious  
community meals

Community members gathered around the table at Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association to enjoy an Aboriginal fused lunch and information from Peninsula Health staff.



# Additional outcomes

Additional outcomes for the program have included the distribution of free rapid antigen tests (RATs) and facemasks to a selection of NCHCs holding larger events as part of the program. The distribution was arranged by the Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Program team with assistance from NHVic's support worker for the Partners for Change project. The NCHCs who received RATs and facemasks distributed these among community members attending the following events:

# 1

## **Balla Balla Community Centre, 3rd June 2022**

The Community Clothes Swap and Healthy Eating event at Balla Balla focused on bringing the community together for a common solution to environmental issues that impact our long term health and wellbeing. People brought clothing and swapped for something else. Hearing Australia was doing free hearing checks and Terry White Chemist did free blood pressure checks. Music and healthy food was provided to the 100-150 people in attendance.

# 2

## **Springvale Neighbourhood House, 7th June 2022**

The Biggest Morning Tea to support Cancer Council was held at the Springvale Town Hall Supper Room for community groups, students and special guests of SNH. Traditional scones as well as cultural foods were available and shared among community members. Two health speakers attended the event, and films about men's mental health video and skin cancer and prevention were on display.

# 3

## **Dallas Neighbourhood House, 14 June 2022**

The Soul Soup program engaged over 100 community members and connected them with community and health services, in particular early years services. Families and children were the primary target audience for this event. Each participating health organisation was provided an information stall with a children's activity designed to occupy children whilst parents talked with service providers.

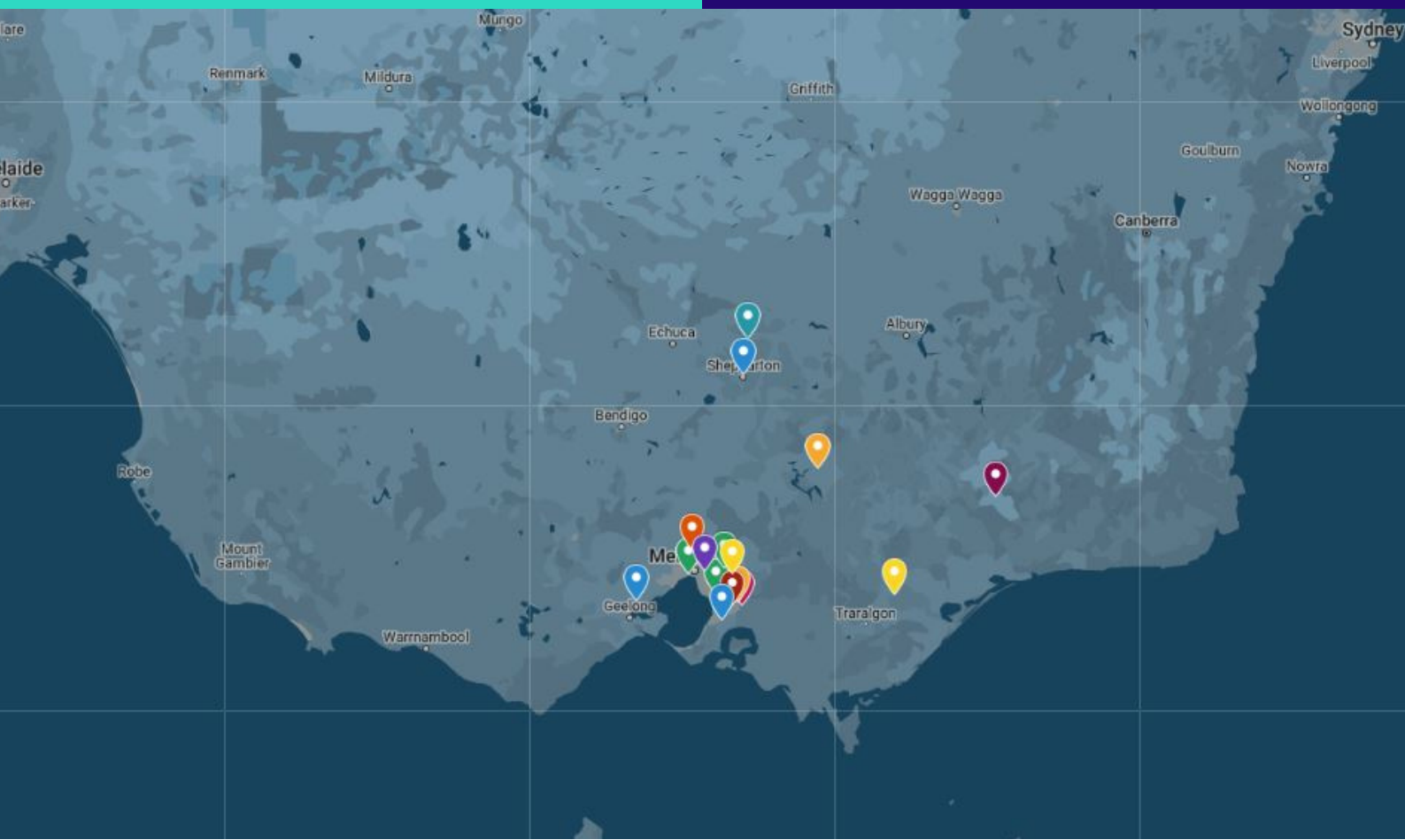


# Additional outcomes

Furthermore, a distribution of Enchanted Forest merchandise to NCHCs who are registered childcare providers was arranged by the Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccination Program team in liaison with NHVic. 17 NCHCs who are registered childcare providers received a variety of colouring books, pencils, stress balls, and fidget spinners. The spread of these NCHCs covers metro, regional and rural Victoria, and the products have been shared with children in these areas through programs and other activities.

**"Our centre was lucky enough to receive some colouring books, pencils and fidget spinners! We are very grateful and delivery was perfect timing as the colouring books are a perfect addition to our NAIDOC program this week!"**

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre



# Hampton Park Community House

## Family Health Information Session, May 11th 2022

### What We Did

We collaborated with KOMAK and Water Wells project to bring together health professionals and women of the CALD community. Engaged health professionals focused on women's health. We also had a dietitian and nurses presenting at the Arthur Wren Hall. The purpose of this session was for CALD women to come in and ask questions relating to health in an environment where they feel safe.

### Who was Involved?

We had one member from the KOMAK group, two nurses from Monash Health Dietitian, and a women's health specialist from water wells project.



"I always get confused about what to make for school lunch for my children, the doctor showed picture and helped me understand better" (Naz, new arrival from Afghanistan)



## Impact

Many of the women from the CALD communities are not able to visit health professionals due to not being able to drive, and also because of the family culture. Commonly, the women are accompanied by a male member (husband, brother or father), resulting in the women not being able to freely express their concerns or ask questions. Women's health is a big taboo to speak about outside your home in Afghan cultures. The women who attended this session were able to ask questions with no hesitation. Questions included were about mental health, pregnancy, physical health, and sexual health.

## Looking to the Future

We hope to continue our partnerships with current partners and will continue to collaborate with more partners to deliver health-focused programs for the women of our community. By providing this kind of sessions we will have women in our communities well informed about health-related matters. This will also get rid of any misinformation that gets spread amongst CALD community members. COVID19 was an example of misinformation spread around vaccinations. For example, that taking COVID19 vaccination will stop you from having a baby, or suffer from bone problems.



# Balla Balla Community Centre

Healthy Hearty Community Winter Dinner, 23 June 2022

## What We Did

We held a Healthy, Hearty Winter Dinner on a cold Thursday evening. The dinner menu was: White Bean Tuscan Soup, Veggie Pot Pie, Warm salad with beetroot, sweet potato, spinach, kale and feta with an awesome dressing, Gluten free rolls, and Pear Cake. We invited Journey Bound - a Ukulele ensemble to provide entertainment. We were pleased to have 45 community members attend this event.

## Who was Involved?

The health providers that we invited included BreastScreen Vic, Diabetes Vic Life Program and EACH mental health & Wellbeing hub. Providers were given a display table each for brochures, information, and laptop/tablets for community members to visit and chat with them. Providers were included in our catering and also dined with community members as a further opportunity to foster engagement.



"The highlight of the evening was a treasured volunteer's new Balla Balla anthem (Balla Balla, Balla Balla, Hooray Hooray, Thank You!) – Journey Bound accompanied the singing and each table sang "thank-you" in another language and everyone participated in the singing and a couple of tables insisting on two or three turns. The evening concluded with us being guided through some Bollywood moves and a few new dance steps as well." - Balla Balla Community Centre



## Impact

Representatives from BreastScreen Vic, EACH, and Diabetes Vic Life program have asked to be invited along to any of our future community events we hold. They advised us that the opportunity to engage with community members during our event was meaningful and relevant. Gracy and Liezl from BreastScreen Vic were able to assist with Breast Screen bookings at the event and also advise those who enquired if they were up to date with their screenings. Luke (Diabetes Life program representative) was able to promote healthy lifestyle and healthy eating choices and distributed many delicious healthy recipes to community members. Tracy from EACH was able to speak about the importance of our mental health and wellbeing. Many were not aware that this free service is available to all Victorians.

## Looking to the Future

We have had a great opportunity to network with BreastScreen Vic, Diabetes Vic and EACH Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub. They have all mentioned that they would be pleased to be invited to any future events we may run.

We were so pleased to be able to provide community events with professional and engaging health providers in attendance. Our community members appreciated being able to speak to providers and were able to take information brochures for their family and friends.





# Mooroopna Education and Activity Centre (MEAC)

Community lunch, 24 May 2022

## What We Did

Connecting for Health - Partners for Change program was a great opportunity for MEAC. An example of one of our health and food talks was to have JK speak about her Schizophrenia journey and to give our community members an insight into someone living with a psychiatric disorder. JK was eloquent, insightful, and very brave.

## Who was Involved?

JK is a professional woman who worked as a registered nurse until her health /mental health stopped her from being able to practise. She is hopeful that one day she will be well enough to go back to her chosen profession. JK was able to work this year as a registered nurse helping with the COVID testing site. We had WellWays join us for this talk and to provide resources on the day and ongoing for those living with mental health issues.

## The impact

JK was able to give our community members an in-depth analysis of the difficulties and the joys of living with schizophrenia. JK was able to normalise this complex issue in a way that was easy to understand and to associate with. JK took away people's fears and uncertainties about schizophrenia and made it less intimidating.

"JK was amazing and she is our semi-mild superhero. JK ability to speak about her affliction and the effect it has had on her life was so engaging and left you having some knowledge of what that is like for her or anyone with schizophrenia" - MEAC

## Looking to the Future

MEAC continues to work with JK as well as other health providers as a result of the program. One of these health providers is WellWays. Wellways is a support service for people with mental health issues who need community care. They work with individuals, families, and the community to help them imagine and achieve better lives.

Image below shows JK speaking about her Schizophrenia journey. Nutritious and delicious meals were being served to community members. 60 people + participated. Healthy roast chicken with steamed vegetables, fresh fruit and vanilla yoghurt served for sweets



# Iramoo Community Centre

Skin Awareness talk and lunch, 25 July 2022

## What We Did

We connected with the Cancer Council Victoria to have a speaker come out and provide information on skin awareness and ways to reduce UV damage to the skin. We also provided a lunch at the end of the session for participants to connect and share their thoughts on what they had learned.

## Who was Involved?

We had Mark from Cancer Council Victoria come out to the centre and provided a very informative talk and PowerPoint presentation on skin awareness and ways we can reduce our risk. Topics covered included UV safety, early detection, and the importance of regularly checking your skin to spot any changes that may develop.



"I always thought the UV rays were linked to the heat from the sun only. I did not realise UV rays is present all year round, even on cooler days" - Community member



## The Impact

Most skin cancers are caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV rays are an invisible kind of radiation that comes from the sun. It can also damage skin cells. Our skin awareness session educated the community on the impact UV rays can have on their skin, reminded them that UV rays is important all year round (not just in summer), types of skin protection products available, the importance of having skin checks regularly, and what to look out for (melanoma's - skin changes). We hope this session improved the knowledge of the community and decreased the chances of skin cancers, eye damage, premature aging, and other skin damage.

## Looking to the Future

This talk was extremely beneficial. Due to lockdowns in Melbourne. Over the past 2.5years community members have not been able to continue with their regular health checks and have avoided going out. The Cancer Council Victoria has reminded community members of the importance of looking after their skin, early intervention, and having regular health checks. We will look to strengthen our partnerships with Mark from Cancer Council Victoria to run more educational sessions at the centre and invite the community to participate. We hope this will reduce their risk of skin cancer and provide them with the confidence and knowledge to look after their own health and wellbeing.





# First Aid Training

Iramoo Community Centre, 11 July 2022

**"I enjoyed learning about being able to save a life in many different cases, i.e. stroke, heart attacks, snake bite and choking" - Lynne**



# Moe Neighbourhood House

Free hearing screening , 2 June 2022

## What We Did

On the 2nd June 2022, Hearing Australia came to Moe Neighbourhood House to talk to the community members about the importance of regularly getting your hearing checked and enjoy a Devonshire Tea. This was one of six Community Lunch Health Session that were delivered as part of the Partners for Change program.

## Who was Involved?

Hearing Australia's local advisor spoke about hearing and health issues that could be affecting your hearing to the community members of Moe and surrounding areas. Hearing Australia provided free hearing screening on the day as well.

Moe Neighbourhood House staff and volunteers put on a delicious Devonshire Tea for all the community members that joined us for the talk.

Latrobe Valley Express came along to capture the day as well and featured us in the local paper.



"This was a fantastic opportunity for Moe Neighbourhood House to be known to the local community as a place to access important information in a in-formal, comfortable way. We had several new faces, plus our cherished regulars who came to join us over the course of the six weeks to learn about new health topics." - Abbe Moriarty (Manager)



## The Impact

We had a terrific turn out with 18 community members coming in to listen to the talk and enjoy lunch. Eight hearing checks were provided on the day which resulted in three community members seeking further hearing checks from an audiologist. A highlight was speaking with someone after the event who had been putting off going to get their hearing checked but they are regular to the Neighbourhood House so felt comfortable to do it with us. They now have hearing aids and feels more confident in conversations with others.

## Looking to the Future

The hearing screenings that were provided are very important as it indicates to people who may need to further investigate their hearing with an audiologist. Having Hearing Australia present at the Moe Neighbourhood House meant that even if a community member didn't feel confident to get their hearing checked that day, it starts a conversation and notifies them where they can go/who to call to do the screening when they are ready.

Hearing Australia will continue to come back to Moe Neighbourhood House every few months to provide free hearing screening tests for community members.



# Wyndham Park Community Centre

Health Lunch – Talking Hearing Health , 24 May 2022

## What We Did

We held a two-course meal and hosted a talk from Paul De Boer about hearing health and different hearing aids available. We were able to give people the opportunity to have a free hearing check during the event which may be unavailable to them normally.

## Who was Involved?

We had Paul De Boer from Hearing Australia come to our community centre with his hearing bus. Paul has worked with Hearing Australia to assist people suffering with hearing loss. As most of our participants were more elderly, this was a great opportunity to help an age-relevant group who are more vulnerable to hearing loss.



"After the prolonged periods of isolation, having the opportunity for our community to come together again was the greatest connection for health" - Wyndham Park Community Centre



## The Impact

By the end of the events, our participants looked livelier and happier. The opportunity to have social connections was great for the overall mental health of everyone, especially after the long time spent separated from others during the lockdowns. Everyone also gained a greater awareness and understanding of certain health topics which may be commonly heard of but poorly understood. Some preliminary hearing checks were conducted on-site thanks to Paul De Boer and his hearing bus. Several people learnt of their decline in hearing and were recommended to receive further help. If not for the checks, those who are affected by hearing loss may miss the opportunity to seek help quickly and may experience a rapid decline in quality of life.

## Looking to the Future

Paul has organised to come to our centre occasionally with his hearing bus to conduct more hearing tests. This will ensure that our community will have more opportunities to test their hearing and more frequently. Recently, our Bicultural Community Support Officer (Waan) worked with Paul to help our Karen community receive free hearing tests which they may not have known about prior to Waan's involvement.

We were also able to create a stronger connection with the social prescribing team at IPC Health. They have since referred a handful of their clients to our activities and programs to improve their mental health.

