

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Supporting our Community





# Mission, Vision and Values

## Who We Are

Sandybeach Centre is a not for profit community co-operative centre that provides programs and services to the local Bayside community and beyond. The centre's staff and volunteers deliver adult education services, social support, connection programs and exercise/lifestyle programs. We also provide access to our facilities for community groups and local small businesses.

## Mission

Sandybeach Centre is an inclusive organisation providing programs and services that enrich the quality of life for our diverse community.

## Vision

Sandybeach will be the place to meet, connect, learn and have fun.

## Values

Respect, Integrity and Honesty, Care, Collaborative and Inclusive.

**Acknowledgment of Country:** We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Bunurong and Boowurrung people of the Kulin Nations who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we connect, create and play.



# Our Board

## 2024-2025



### Chairperson

Rajah Ramanathan

### Deputy Chairperson

Peter Bean

### Finance Director

Vacant

### Secretary

Vacant

### General Members

Sue Coburn, Hilary Buxton, Ian Cochrane



# CEO and Board Chair Report



It is our pleasure to present the combined CEO and Chairperson report for 2025.

Like the previous year, 2025 continued to present significant challenges for the community sector. Rising cost of living pressures, reduced government funding and increasing employment costs created a difficult financial environment and resulted in a disappointing financial outcome for the Centre.

Despite these challenges, the resilience and dedication of our staff, volunteers and supporters ensured Sandybeach Centre continued to thrive as we entered our 43rd year of operation. Our team remained focused on delivering programs and services that support the wellbeing and connection of our community.

Due to our financial position, we were unable to implement the strategic plan developed with The Green Boat. Instead, the Board and management prioritised careful financial management and cash flow oversight. As conditions continued to tighten, the difficult decision was made, following consultation with members, to sell our building. While this was a painful decision, the successful sale and lease back arrangement ensures Sandybeach will continue operating from 2 Sims Street while strengthening the organisation's long term financial sustainability.

Throughout the year it was wonderful to see the Centre full of activity, with many familiar faces returning to programs, events and social gatherings. Highlights included Neighbourhood House Week, Bayside Seniors Festival events, Volunteer celebrations, Readings by Sandybeach Writers and regular Carers lunches.

We were also proud to see the Intergenerational Program (PADSIP), delivered in partnership with RMIT and Sandringham College, recognised nationally with the Australian Institute of Intergenerational Practice Young Persons Program Award.

We extend our sincere thanks to Community Bank Sandringham and the Community Enterprise Foundation Bendigo Bank for their ongoing support of our transport program, including the generous funding of a new EV bus. Their commitment continues to make a significant difference to our community.

Our partnership with Village Zero also saw the Sandy Eco Expo expand, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability alongside practical initiatives including solar panels, air conditioning upgrades and additional battery storage.

The Centre continues to celebrate creativity through exhibitions of artwork by participants of all abilities, which have been warmly received by the community and help showcase the inclusive spirit of Sandybeach Centre.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers and Board members. We also warmly welcomed Ian Cochrane to the Board this year and appreciate the insight and experience he brings.

We remain deeply grateful to our supporters, funders, donors, local neighbourhood houses and Bayside Council for their ongoing collaboration and commitment to strengthening our community.

While 2025 brought significant challenges, we are confident the steps taken this year have positioned Sandybeach for greater stability and sustainability. As we move into 2026, we look forward to strengthening our foundation and continuing our mission as a welcoming and vibrant community hub for Bayside and surrounding municipalities.

Chris Hill – CEO

Rajah Ramanathan – Chairperson

# Strategic Plan

## 2021-2025 Update

### Growth

Increased joint ventures and collaborations with other local community hubs e.g. Neighbourhood House Week, Intergenerational program with Swinburne, Sandringham College and the Sandringham Lions Club.

Continued to develop our partnership with Sandy Traders on events and promotions.

Continued to support new residents in the New Street Estate and other areas.

Paused implementation of the business plan developed with The Green Boat, with projects expected to recommence in 2026 to renew and refresh the building's function.

### Quality

Continued monitoring, reductions in participant incidents with various mitigation strategies.

Working from home continued to assist with family and other requirement opportunities.

Maintained quality review and risk assessment processes across all program areas.

Reviewed all programs to meet community needs and engaged with participants to assist with design.

### Relevance

Continued participation with other local services and providers e.g. Bayside Cluster Group, Sandbelt group, Community Development Network, Community House Network Southern, 88.3 Southern FM and Bayside Council.

Strengthened our marketing via increased social media and measured engagement.

Ensured alignment of activities with current Health and Wellbeing initiatives of Bayside council and internal research.

### Sustainability

Partnered with Village Zero to deliver the community wide Sandy Eco Expo and expand environmental partnerships, engaging community members in reducing environmental impact.

Continued to support and promote environmentally sustainable practices across the centre to reduce waste.

Developing a new Business Plan approach to suit business model for the next Strategic Plan.

# Serving our Community

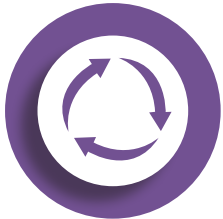
## The Statistics



### 619 HOURS OVER 65'S

**OUTPUT:** 421 enrolments

**OUTCOME:** Continued to enhance the quality of life for seniors, including vulnerable members of our community, through social support, connection and a range of activities



### 1075 HOURS ALL ABILITIES PROGRAM

**OUTPUT:** 231 attendances at programs from individuals with various disabilities

**OUTCOME:** Supported the development of independence, daily living and lifestyle skills, along with social support and connection



### 433 HOURS LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

**OUTPUT:** Hours delivered increased by 100%

**OUTCOME:** Increased participation in physical and mental health activities, supporting improved social connection



### 134 HOURS COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

**OUTPUT:** 15% increase in program development and improvement

**OUTCOME:** Developed a plan to support the sustainability of Sandybeach and to improve and evaluate programs to better meet community needs and expectations



### 9920 HOURS ADULT EDUCATION (ACFE)

**OUTPUT:** Enrolments declined from 2024, with over 100 participants

**OUTCOME:** Supported participants to engage in learning and build foundations for future education, volunteering and employment



### 6554 HOURS VOLUNTEER

**OUTPUT:** Increased by 20%

**OUTCOME:** Enriched the lives of volunteers and participants, creating 55 opportunities for engagement and connection



### 3650+ HOURS CARERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

**OUTPUT:** 146 carers supported (up 46%)

**OUTCOME:** Reduced isolation and strengthened community connections through both structured and respite engagement



### 827 TRANSPORT HOURS

**OUTPUT:** 18,839 km travelled (up 5%), with 773 trips for the year (up 100%).

**OUTCOME:** Over 2,990 people accessed our programs, supporting improved independence and carer respite



# Seniors (REACH) Events

## Curious Seniors Go Digital

Digital Playground for Curious Seniors was a highly successful Get Online Week event, giving older adults a fun and hands on introduction to the digital world in a welcoming and supportive setting. Hosted at Sandybeach Centre, the event attracted around 40 participants aged 50 plus including many who were new to digital learning.

Participants rotated through interactive stations exploring virtual reality, digital games and music, an introduction to AI, digital dance and musical memories. The afternoon also included practical information on online safety and an introduction to the Be Connected learning platform, with clear pathways into ongoing digital skills programs at Sandybeach.

The event showcased strong collaboration across Sandybeach teams, volunteers and community partners. Participant feedback reflected high levels of engagement, confidence and enjoyment with many inspired to continue their digital learning journey.



## Celebrating Connection During Seniors Festival

Sandybeach Centre delivered another highly successful Seniors Festival Month, presenting five free Friday afternoon events as part of the Bayside Healthy Ageing Festival and the Victorian Seniors Festival. With additional funding from Bayside Council and sponsorship from Aveo, the program welcomed 233 participants across the five events, with many attending Sandybeach for the first time.

The festival featured a diverse line up of live music tributes, theatrical performances and an Armchair Travel adventure, all enjoyed with afternoon tea in a warm and social setting. Performers included Glenn Douglas, Peter Sullivan and Friends, Issi Dye, The Sonantinas and local explorer Annie Inglis.

Strong attendance and positive feedback reinforced the value of shared cultural experiences in supporting wellbeing, inclusion and community connection for older adults.





# Seniors (REACH) 2025 Highlights

**Sandybeach Presents:** We launched Sandybeach Presents, a new monthly Friday afternoon program featuring a vibrant mix of local musical entertainers. With individual tickets sold per event, the program offered flexible and accessible attendance. It proved highly popular, attracting strong community interest and 188 bookings across eight events.

**Movement and Music for Seniors:** Through our ongoing partnership with Bayside Council Arts and Culture, we continued this innovative dance therapy program for seniors with age related health challenges, including dementia. The program welcomed both independent participants and those attending with a carer or support worker.

**Young at Heart:** This well established weekly group continued to build meaningful social connection in a small, supportive setting through shared stories, ideas and plenty of humour. Participants also connected with local young people through our PADSIP program.

**Strength and Balance:** With a home cooked social lunch included, this popular strength training and falls prevention program continued to attract new participants and reached full capacity towards year end.

**Intergenerational Program:** In Term 3, we partnered with Swinburne University's PADSIP team and Sandringham College to deliver another successful program. Seniors and Year 12 students worked together on digital storytelling projects, supported by Sandringham Lions volunteers who provided a weekly lunch.

**Sandybeach Carers Support Group:** Now an established program, monthly activities were generally full to capacity. We also partnered with Bayside Council to combine two carer programs for an additional lunch event. Funding from Carers Victoria supported our Care for Carers Week event and our end of year celebration.

**Music Alive:** Continued as our most popular REACH program, delivering a strong line up of local entertainers each week.

**Seniors Month:** Sandybeach Centre delivered five free Friday events as part of the Bayside Healthy Ageing and Victorian Seniors Festivals. Supported by Bayside Council and Aveo, 233 guests enjoyed live music, performances and Armchair Travel with afternoon tea, strengthening wellbeing and community connection, with many attending Sandybeach for the first time.



# Carer Support 2025 Highlights

## Supporting Connection and Wellbeing

Sandybeach Carers supports a diverse community of carers from Bayside and surrounding local government areas. Many carers come from multicultural backgrounds or identify as LGBTQIA+. Participants commonly provide long term care for adult children with disability or mental health conditions, ageing parents or multiple family members with complex needs, often over many years.

Before joining the program, carers reported high levels of fatigue, grief and loss, social isolation and limited opportunities for respite or self-care. Many had struggled to find a local, face-to-face support group that felt welcoming and manageable alongside their caring responsibilities.

Supported by the Victorian Support for Carers program, Sandybeach Carers has steadily grown into a highly valued program, attended by up to 30 carers each month. It delivers regular activities that prioritise social connection and wellbeing, including shared lunches, facilitated walks, information sessions, creative activities and popular onsite massage days. Carers report feeling less isolated and stressed, valuing peer connection, compassionate facilitation and dedicated time away from their caring role.





# All Abilities (STEP) 2025 Highlights

We continued to deliver Learn Local educational programs for people with disabilities and we recognise that for many participants, coming to Sandybeach is an important part of their lives. Sandybeach provides an accepting and welcoming environment where participants can keep learning, share interests and take part in meaningful activities.

**Skills for Life:** A new Monday program was introduced with a focus on practical numeracy, literacy and everyday living skills. This program supports participants to maintain independence, build confidence and apply their skills in real life situations.

**Cook, Share, Connect:** This program continued to promote independent cooking skills and the preparation of healthy meals from scratch, tailored to individual dietary needs and preferences. A highlight was the annual High Tea where students invited friends and family to join them to proudly showcase their cooking and hosting skills.



**Art in Action:** STEP art students participated in the Around the Table exhibition at Bayley House, gaining valuable experience exhibiting in a professional gallery. One participant, Rhys, sold his artwork which brought great pride and joy. Due to strong demand in the art program, an additional Thursday class was introduced.

**Fun and Friends Social Group:** Introduced as a trial social program in 2025, Fun and Friends has been warmly received. Participants enjoyed the small group format and the opportunity to have a say in how the group was run, including planning local outings and activities.

**Expression and Movement:** This program continued to attract strong participation, supporting physical wellbeing, creativity and self expression through movement. Participants also took part in centre activities including the Digital Playground event held for Get Online Week plus joint BBQs and musical events with Senior REACH participants, further strengthening social connection and community participation.



# Driven by Kindness

## Meet Tony McKenna

I am the REACH Department Bus Co-ordinator, Bus Driver, Support Worker and the general go to person when something needs to get done. I started at Sandybeach Centre in July 2014 as a volunteer and casual driver and have progressed from there.

I was born and educated in Brisbane. After finishing high school I joined the Army and attended the Officer College at Duntroon in Canberra. I graduated at the end of 1972 and was commissioned as an artillery officer. I then spent four years in Brisbane and a further year in Perth across a number of postings before deciding it was time for a career change. At the age of 26 and holding the rank of Captain I resigned my commission and looked for a new direction.

Over the next eight years I worked in several roles with BP Australia in Western Australia while living in Merredin, Albany and Perth before being transferred to Melbourne. After 15 years with BP I moved on and spent the next five years at Lockwood mainly as Customer Service Manager. I then spent 15 years as Marketing Services Manager at Grand Battery Technologies in Dingley before taking early retirement in 2013. After six months I got restless and that's when I came to Sandybeach.

I've found the past 11 and a half years at Sandybeach incredibly rewarding and enjoyable. My role allows me to work closely with a wide range of people across several programs run by the centre. I especially enjoy driving the buses as it gives me the chance to interact with our clients and really get to know them. Everyone has an interesting background and a story to tell.



And finally Sandybeach is lucky to have such great staff and a wonderful group of volunteers who work tirelessly to provide professional service to our clients. It's reassuring to know there is always someone ready to step up when needed.





# Community Partnerships 2025

## Supporting each other to support the community

Community partnerships continued to play a vital role in extending our reach and enriching our Seniors and Carers programs this year.

We worked closely with **Aveo Retirement Living** to deliver successful offsite programs within their communities, giving Aveo residents access to Sandybeach activities while also providing our participants with enjoyable outings and opportunities to tour Aveo facilities. Aveo also generously sponsored one of our most popular Seniors Festival events, an Issi Dye performance which attracted a large audience and included a delicious afternoon tea.

In partnership with **Bayside Council**, we brought together Council's Carers Corner group and our Sandybeach Carers for a shared social lunch at the **Sandringham Hotel**, supported by Council. We also collaborated with **Bayside Libraries** to help deliver our Digital Playground for Curious Seniors event. Staff strengthened their skills through dementia focused training at the Independent Living Centre in Sandringham. During Seniors Month, we worked with Bayside Council's Arts and Culture team to deliver a special movement and music therapy session for seniors at the Brighton Town Hall.

Our Intergenerational Program was delivered in partnership with **Swinburne University's** PADSIP team, **Sandringham College** students and teachers and **Sandringham Lions Club** volunteers, who generously supported the program and provided lunch, along with sponsorship from **Community Bank Sandringham**.

We would also like to thank **WD Rose Funerals, Marshall White Real Estate Sandringham** and **Hodges Sandringham** for their valued support in 2025 with marketing and the printing of our course guides.





# Capturing Moments



Michelle and Ruth  
enjoying our new EV bus



Stepping Out with Our  
Sandybeach Carers Group



Spooky Tunes at Sandybeach  
Halloween Live Music



Celebrating the Music of Elvis



A Great Game of Mahjong  
at Sandybeach



Creating in Pen and Ink  
Art Class with Heidi



Rina Keeping Active at  
Strength and Balance



Learning and Connecting  
at our BeConnected Event



# Capturing Moments



Peter Sullivan Entertaining the crowd at Music Alive



Community Bank Sandringham supporting us with our new EV Bus



Sally and her Mum enjoying the garden



Chris delivering our BayCISS Festive Food Drive donations



Exploring iPad apps together at our Be Connected Get Online event



Some well deserved pampering at Carers Massages



Jenny celebrating Halloween at Sandybeach Presents Live Music



A little mischief from the naughty elves at Mahjong Christmas Party



# Sandybeach Student Art Gallery



Art by Rebecca Nielsen



Art by Rita Faelli



Art by Anne Hammon



Art by Veronica Marshall



Art by Wendy Loughton



Art by Dawn Cole



# All Abilities Art Gallery



Art by Shirley



Art by Nicole



Art by Trevor



Art by Shirley



Art by Reece



Art by Trevor

# Our Supporters and Funding Partners

We thank the following people, organisations and Government departments who in 2025 provided support to Sandybeach Centre through in-kind contributions, donations and grants. This support has enabled Sandybeach to better meet the needs of our local community. We sincerely appreciate your support.

- AVEO
- BayCISS
- Bayside City Council
- Bendigo Bank - Foundation
- Brad Rowsell MP
- Brighton Recreation Centre
- Castlefield Community Centre
- Cheltenham Community Centre
- City of Kingston
- Community Bank Sandringham
- David Lewis
- Department of Families Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services
- Department Jobs Skills Industry and Regions
- Hodges Sandringham
- Hampton Community Centre
- Highett Neighbourhood Community House
- Lions Club Sandringham
- Marshall White Real Estate Sandringham
- Sandringham Lions Club
- Sandringham Secondary College
- Sandy Street Art Project
- Sandy Traders
- Southern Star Coaches
- Swinburne University
- Tim Wilson MP
- Village Zero
- WD Rose Funerals
- Zoe Daniels MP

