TACH™

NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE PROGRAM

Strategic Framework

2013–2018

Building the Heart of the Community

Tasmania
Explore the possibilities

Acknowledgements

The *Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework 2013-2018* has been redesigned to be a living document; a practical tool with relevant examples and useful resources. It's a celebration of the Program's success to date and a cornerstone for future growth.

Community and Neighbourhood Houses, (also known as Houses) exist at the heart of communities. Their role is challenging, rewarding and valuable, and this document supports their goals and growth.

This revised version of the framework was produced during 2011-2013, in partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, also known as 'the Department') and the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses (TACH), working in collaboration and consultation with Houses around the state. The intention was to retain the core elements, goals and objectives of the previous framework, while reflecting the reality of what has been, and can be, achieved by including examples of House activities and programs.

Thank you to the management committees, members, staff and volunteers of Houses throughout Tasmania who provided the many ideas and comments that are built into this Framework.

Thank you to the staff throughout the DHHS, especially in Disability and Community Services and the Community Partnership Teams who also made valuable contributions.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the people who worked to develop the prior versions of the Framework including the most recent *Neighbourhood Houses – Building Community – Strategic Framework 2008-2013*. Each version has built upon the previous work, and as a result of a consistent Framework Houses and the Program have achieved much in strengthening their communities.

This work commenced in 2001 with the release of the Strategic Framework 2002-2007. That Framework was further developed and consolidated in 2008, when the Department increased Neighbourhood House funding to $2.2 million. Along with the funding commitment from Government, the 2008-2013 Framework provided a solid foundation for the operation of Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania.

These successive Frameworks have supported the ongoing development and improvement of Houses. In this time, House achievements have established a belief and confidence in the network, their people and programs. Since inception, and strengthened via the Framework, Houses have continued to develop networks, improve programs and strengthen their communities.

The Department and TACH look forward to the continued growth of Houses and their community achievements across Tasmania.

Contents

Introduction
Foreword from the Minister for Human Services

Tasmania's Neighbourhood Houses are the warm and generous heart of their communities. They provide a vital and vibrant network to support individuals and families in need and embody the grassroots linkages to our community and family support systems. They provide a place for people to go and feel part of a community, a place where people are welcomed and a place where people can learn new skills, be part of a group and meet new friends, volunteer and give back to the community. They are the glue that holds these communities together.

Our Houses are reaching out, affirming our belief in their work and playing a large part to ensure that Tasmania benefits from an accessible Health and Human Services system for communities statewide. Our focus during the next five years is to consolidate our efforts through sustainable planning, relationships and infrastructure to ensure these communities are strengthened from the ground up.

The Neighbourhood House 2008-2013 Framework saw a strengthening of community consultation and planning mechanisms, development of house strategic plans, unified reporting and, most importantly, work to empower local communities.

In recognition of the enormous value of Tasmania's Neighbourhood Houses in the lives of Tasmanians, the Labor-Green Government has invested $2 million in 2012-13, and will invest an extra $2 million in 2013-14, and $2 million in 2014-15 into Neighbourhood Houses' infrastructure and capacity building in this term of government. We believe this in an excellent social and economic investment.

The review of the existing Framework demonstrated a commitment to continuous quality improvement for the benefit of the Tasmanian community by the Neighbourhood houses, their volunteers and staff of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Two strategies were used to review the existing Framework:

» a review of recent area and statewide reporting and planning documents and

» direct participation and feedback from Neighbourhood Houses through surveys, consultation workshops at the 2012 TACH State Conference, direct consultation at the Neighbourhood House regional meetings and an identified focus group of House representatives fondly called 'The Brains Trust', and discussions and interviews with other people who have been involved or engaged with a House in Tasmania.

As a result of this collaboration the new Strategic Framework:

» sets a clear strategic direction and vision for Tasmanian Houses

» gives real life examples and strategies that contribute to that vision

» explains the program goals and why they are crucial to communities

» outlines a Community Development Model defined by Houses and

» identifies the underpinning capacities required to make it happen.

In their 30 plus years operating here, Neighbourhood Houses continue to be the hearts of their communities, responding to support individuals and families in need and embodying the grassroots linkages to our community and family support system.

I applaud your existing achievement and know that the future is in good stead under the guidance of the House network, this program framework and the relationships, linkages and strategies it encapsulates.

Cassy OConnor MP
Minister for Human Services

Foreword from the TACH President

Tasmanian Association of Community Houses is very pleased to endorse the 2013–2018 version of the Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework. Just like the previous two versions the development of the Framework has been a great example of partnership between DHHS, TACH and Neighbourhood Houses. Thank you to the staff throughout the DHHS, especially in the Disability and Community Services.

The Strategic Framework was revised for this version, not to dilute, but to make it a more useful document for new committee members and coordinators about what the funded role of the Neighbourhood House is in their community.

Throughout the framework you are going to see the phrase 'community development' over and over again, and so you should. This is the core of how Neighbourhood Houses have been working in their local communities for more than 30 years – and importantly what DHHS funds us to do.

This may sound self-evident to us who work in Neighbourhood Houses but, whenever TACH meets with Neighbourhood Houses in other states, they are impressed that our funding is so clearly targeted at community development as our core business.

Over the last five years Neighbourhood Houses have been recognised much more for their grass-roots connections to their communities and that we are the largest network of place based community development organisations in Tasmania. This has put a lot of pressure on Houses as key organisations in their communities to "stretch themselves" more and more, particularly to take on more of a service delivery role. While that is important work, the core of what we are is community development – not service delivery – we are there to bring local people together to work on what they want to change or maintain in their community, and support them to do something about it (not do it for them).

Houses have taken great steps over the last five years, particularly in realising that it is not just what happens in the House that is important. There have been great projects and partnership with other organisations that have changed communities and provided great opportunities that the House has led or been part of – and none of that has just happened in the House.

We congratulate the State Government and DHHS for their continued support and focus on Neighbourhood Houses and, again, for their commitment to a clear framework that ties our funding, reporting and compliance to our core business of community development.

Thanks to all who have reworked the Strategic Framework and hope everyone who is a part of Neighbourhood Houses uses it as the 'touchstone' about what we are here to do.

Simon Paul

Simon Paul, TACH President

Overview
of the Neighbourhood House Program

"What a Neighbourhood House looks like"

Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres (Houses) have become integral to our community life. Houses can vary in focus and activities but there are some key areas and items in common. A House is a locally based community facility which:

» works to reduce social isolation in the local community and promote a sense of belonging and community spirit

» serves as a vital community resource through the provision of a range of programs and services using a community development model

» fosters family support, community advancement and adult learning opportunities

» is locally managed/governed by a voluntary committee/board which consists of representatives from local residents and community members and is a legally incorporated association

» provides an integrated range of services to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families.

The following characteristics are essential for the operation of a House:

» it operates with an 'open door' policy where all community members are welcomed and treated equally and with respect

» it increases life opportunities and pathways to enrich the quality of life in the local community by facilitating the social, cultural, learning and creative development of individuals and families in either an informal or formal atmosphere

» it provides information in a supportive and non-threatening environment which encourages self-help rather than dependency, and addresses the diverse needs of individuals and families

» it provides organisational linkages and liaison to other services to ensure House activities are relevant and appropriate within the context of the local service system

» it encourages cooperative working relationships with other Houses.

Framework
overview

The vision for the Neighbourhood House Program in Tasmania is summarised in this diagram.

Diagram 1 NHH Program Framework Visual Overview

Neighbourhood House Program Framework

TACH

Who are we?

Across Tasmania, there are 34 Neighbourhood Houses. 33 are funded by DHHS to be key community development facilitators in their communities.

What do we do?

We respond to community needs

We build community capacity

We represent community views

We facilitate delivery of community programs and/or services

Why are we here (our goals)?

Goal 1
Build Community

Goal 3
Enhance Choices

Goal 2
Support People and Their Families

Goal 4
Local Governance and Management

How do we do it?

We provide community information and referrals, develop and maintain partnerships and run community events
(Goal 1)

We provide opportunities for socialising, peer support education and skills development to strengthen individuals and families
(Goal 2)

We provide community access to services and/or programs that increase literacy, financial and employment skills, including employment assistance
(Goal 3)

We have a board or management committee elected from community representatives who oversee the management of the House using good governance practices
(Goal 4)

The Neighbourhood House Network

Neighbourhood Houses are located in 34 communities around the state (33 are state-funded), providing good coverage of higher need, regional and rural locations. The network is shown on the following maps.

Diagram 2 House Network Maps

Inset A — Central North

Burnie
Central Coast
Devonport

Dorset
St Helens

Eastern Shore

Rosebery
Zeehan

Fingal Valley

Inset B — South East

Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania

(funded under the Neighbourhood House Program as at July 2013)
(see insets for details for Central North Tasmania and South East Tasmania)

George Town

Beaconsfield

Tesca (Exeter)

Northern Suburbs (Rocherlea)
Ravenswood

Northern Suburbs (Mowbray)

Deloraine

Inset A
Neighbourhood Houses in Central North Tasmania
(funded under the Neighbourhood House Program as at July 2013)

Bridgewater
Gagebrook
Derwent Valley
Bucaan
Karadi
Goodwood
West Moonah
Risdonvale
Pittwater
Warrane
Mornington
Okines
Rokeby
Claredon Vale
Dunalley
Maranoa Heights
Geeveston
West Winds

Inset B
Neighbourhood Houses in South East Tasmania
(funded under the Neighbourhood House Program as at July 2013)

Neighbourhood House Program **Strategic Framework 2013-2018**
Department of Health and Human Services

House History

Social Beginnings

The first Neighbourhood House commenced operation in Tasmania in the late 1970s. The popularity and number of Houses increased as new communities established their own.

Originally Neighbourhood Houses provided services such as playgroup and child minding facilities, craft courses and a social meeting point. Houses were set up and continue to be operated by local community-based volunteer management committees.

Over time, the type of communities in which Houses are located has extended throughout Tasmania from broad acre public housing estates to rural and regional communities.

The needs of communities and the challenges faced by Houses in responding to these needs has also grown. The focus, however, has remained on community development – it is just that the people meeting around kitchen tables in the beginning didn't always use the language of 'community development'.

Houses for Communities

Recognising the benefit of community development and active grassroots engagement, in 2001 the Department funded a project officer to undertake the 'Neighbourhood House Refocus Project'. This work resulted in the 2002-2007 Framework. Under that guidance a more consistent program was developed, and the Government's ongoing funding commitment to the state-funded Houses was established.

During 2007, in consultation with the sector the Framework was revised to reflect the maturing focus of Houses and to ensure that the Framework content was still relevant.

In the 2008-09 additional funding of $700 000 was granted to the Neighbourhood House Program to provide for fulltime coordination hours.

In 2011 additional funding of $825 000 (or $25 000 per house) was granted to enable Houses to meet rising operational costs and maintain required levels of activity. This top-up funding was added to base funding levels, and evidenced the long term, capacity-building nature of Government investment in the program.

Including indexation and incremental payments for the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) in 2013–2014 the total program funding is $4.7 million across the 33 state-funded Houses and the sector peak body, the Tasmanian Association for Community Houses (TACH).

As part of the Premier's Jobs Package, additional capital improvement funding of $2 million for the 2012-13 financial year was announced in December 2012. This was followed in May 2013 by a Tasmanian Budget announcement of a further $2 million in 2013-14 and $2 million again in 2014-15. That means the program will benefit from a $6 million property upgrade program over three years. The Neighbourhood House Capital Investment Program (NHH CIP) is being managed by the DCS Capital and Planning Unit in consultation with TACH and Houses statewide.

The Neighbourhood House Program and this Strategic Framework represent a collaborative approach towards program development and management, supportive of the goals and principles underpinning the Partnership Agreement between DHHS, DPAC and the Community Sector Tasmania 2012-2015. Find the Agreement online at: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/business/community_sector_relations_unit/

> **More information on the program funding are in Appendix 1 and 2**

Houses with purpose

The Department funds the Neighbourhood House Program to enable each House and its people to be key local community development facilitators. Houses can spark and fuel community strengthening activities, maintaining a focus on community development by:

» responding to community needs

» representing community views

» delivering community programs and/or facilitating delivery of services

» building community capacity.

> **All of this means that the way Houses conduct their business is as important as the services they offer.**
>
> **House activity always strives to ensure members of the community feel welcomed, included, represented and have a say in what happens.**

In-House impact and Out-of-House impact

Ideally, the work done by Houses will have a positive impact on people using the House, as well as the broader community.

People volunteering or participating in a House's programs may find personal and social benefits to their engagement. This could range from increased self-confidence, new connections, new skills, new opportunities, to a sense of purpose and belonging, as well as enjoying the time spent there.

It is important to recognise that Houses also do work for people who may never come through the front door. For instance, many Houses work to make the community better places for everyone to live by:

» reducing place-based stigma through community events, along with using traditional and social media to combat negative perceptions

» advocating and challenging government departments and politicians on issues identified by their community

» increasing community cohesion by building bridges between groups and people

» promoting local areas as friendly and supportive places to live

» attracting services to an area.

> **A Neighbourhood House does not just focus on what happens within its four walls.**
>
> **Its also aims to create connections with other community groups, organisations and services to meet the needs of the community.**

Program
Strategic Framework

Defining our Community Development Model

There are as many definitions for community development as there are differences in communities. The concept joins the ideas of 'community' and 'development'. This combination signifies that the community takes the lead in its own development. Community development involves processes and ways of working which empower individuals and groups of people to make changes in their community, on issues that affect them.

> At its most simple— and powerful — community development is the act of people coming together, united by a concern or through an opportunity, within their local community and working together to deliver change. Along the way, the process of working together connects people and gives them a greater sense of purpose and meaning.

Why we use this approach

Houses bring people together to work on what is important for them and their community. Part of this bringing together is to facilitate personal and community development. This could be through developing social skills, making new connections, or working towards new options for work or study by participating in some aspect of a House's activity.

People engaging with Houses have experienced personal growth, which can lead on to new options and life choices, just by joining in. From new parenting and communication skills, to work-readiness competencies like confidence, organisational and administrative experience, engaging at a House can improve a person's employment options. Participants have also benefited on a personal level by expressing themselves in new ways, finding purpose through programs offered, or by getting

involved and assisting others. It's all part of the mix in the community development process.

Community development is not just service delivery; it is not a worker running a project for the community. It is drawing people together to unite and run with a **possibility**.

Community Development is not just about service delivery

One of the greatest challenges facing Neighbourhood Houses is the potential to get dragged into 'service delivery' rather than community development. At times, to build the capacity of the community a House may get grants and deliver a service, or collaborate with an organisation to deliver a needed service locally. This is OK if meeting identified community needs, but Houses must never forget their core function is community development. Houses are not intended to be proxy government service delivery outposts. Rather, our programs must engage and grow the skills, strengths and capacities of participants for their own, and their community's, benefit.

As one House coordinator said, 'if a project only keeps running because there is a paid worker to run that group/project/program, and we haven't been able to bring out potential volunteers to continue to drive that project, then why would we continue with it?' It is important to ask these kinds of questions, as discussed in the evaluation section on page 16.

Diagram 3 NHH Elements of Community Development

START

Consult – an ongoing process of gathering information by talking to the community

» what are the issues?

» what is needed?

» what do people think might help?

» seek feedback and evaluate information throughout and at the end of a project.

CONSULT

Consider – assess, review and reflect on the information gathered. Wonder about the options

» what do we think about what we have heard?

» which bits can we do, or contribute towards?

» what are the priorities and what can we realistically do?

» what resources are available and what resources do we need?

» are there members of the community wanting to actively participate?

» is this achievable?

CONSIDER

METHODS
Working Together
Learning and Reflecting
Active Participation
Political Awareness

VALUES
Equality Sustainability
Mutual Respect Social Justice

BUILDING TRUST
Trusting in the Community
Community trusting Houses

TAKE ACTION

Take Action – make a start

» enact the plan

» observe and seek feedback to reflect on what you are doing; notice what is happening alongside this or occurring because of this project?

» review and monitor the process during your project. Ask; 'Is it achieving our goals or are other things happening that we didn't expect?', 'How does this impact on our work?'

Time to consult again – and the cycle begins again

» report back to your community and ask, 'Where to from here? What next?'

PLAN

Plan – connecting concepts with reality, resources and budgets

» who needs to be involved?

» what are the resources needed (e.g. are council permits required, licenses, qualified people)?

» how long will it take?

» how will we do it?

» are there any costs involved?

» are there additional costs to skill base and time (e.g. might this involve grant submissions)?

» allocate roles; is a working party or sub-committee required?

Find more community development models, tools and examples on the TACH website: www.tach.asn.au

Our partners

Funding bodies, Individuals, Organisations, Other houses, Volunteers, Government Departments, Media, Educational Institutions

Our supporters

Funding bodies, General Community, Tutors/trainers, House Network, Government Departments, Local Councils, Volunteers, Our Committees

How we work with our partners

Two-way communication, Resource sharing, Value adding, Strategic planning, Group purchasing, Shared services, Joint projects, mutual respect, newsletters

Our supporters bring

Funding, In-kind and other support, Clients, Resources, Training, Networking, Advocacy, Education, Governance, Collective action

Our community

Elderly, Children, Families Young people, Indigenous, CALD people, General Community, Disabled & Marginalised, Unemployed, Socially isolated

Our services

Playgroups, Childcare/Occasional Care, Accredited courses, Adult education, Access to technology, Venue for meetings, Referral to services, Community garden, Centrelink help, Volunteer opportunities, Places to socialise and connect with others

How we evaluate our service

Community Consultation, Participation data, Anecdotal reports, Evidence of achievement, Financial statements, Repeat business, Strategic Plan indicators, Reporting back

Diagram 4 Houses and Community Development; How it all fits together

Many individuals, groups, agencies, government departments and businesses work to support and develop the Tasmanian community. This diagram recognises the extent of the relationships and the various roles all the members may play. The diagram places Houses at the centre to demonstrate the extent of working relationships needed to achieve community development and capacity-building outcomes for communities. Houses play an important grassroots networking and linking role, often enabling a conversation with their communities and facilitating solutions which are based on the relationships they have, or will make, to meet these needs.

The Neighbourhood House Program
Strategic Framework

What it is

This Strategic Framework is a guide for activity and operations across the funded organisations making up the Neighbourhood House program in Tasmania. It is a touchstone, a way to ground our efforts and give a platform for sharing good practice. Having a unified Framework means fairness and consistency across the program and allows the group to grow as a whole.

Why we need it

The role played by Houses is important to each local community, as well as the state as a whole. It underpins the Government's investment in Houses. Progress and achievements by each House builds towards a better Tasmania.

Our goals

The Neighbourhood House Program in Tasmania sets four goals. These are to:

1. **build community**
2. **support people and families**
3. **enhance participation choices**
4. **have local governance and management.**

Central to the goals is the idea of community development. Community development refers to both processes and outcomes – the doing and the result. It includes ways of working that make progress towards the goals and is community led.

What do Houses have to do?

Under the Strategic Framework and as specified in the Funding Agreements with DHHS, Houses have to:

» consult with their community on its concerns, issues and strengths

» develop a strategic plan based on that feedback, reflective of the four goal areas

» engage the community to work in capacity building ways on what is important to them

» report annually against the four goal areas detailing achievements and lessons learned

» maintain effective community-led management committees or boards of management.

Reporting resources and templates are available online from TACH
www.tach.asn.au
or the DHHS
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/neighbourhoodhouses

You can also ask your local Community Partnership Team.

WHY	WHAT FOR
We have a Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework to:	*The benefits of having the Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework are:*
support services which respond to community identified needs	» Houses have a guide that is agreed and shared, which outlines shared values, planning processes and the community development model and gives examples of ways to gather community input, identify community needs and other program aspects » commits to a robust and mutually respectful relationship between Neighbourhood Houses and the Department
focus the House Program on improving the wellbeing, independence and self-sufficiency of people, families and communities	» communities have improved wellbeing outcomes and make a positive influence on local health and social conditions » people have a say in what matters to them and what happens at an individual and community level » Houses engage their community in respectfully advocating for their community without fear or favour
enhance the contribution of Houses to community capacity building	» House programs and services are targeted at community identified needs, and designed to build community capacity » the unique community capacity building potential of Neighbourhood Houses is recognised, supported and respected by funding bodies and decision-makers
ensure the expectations for the House program are established, including the: » purpose of programs and services to be run from a House » agreed ways of working » allocation of program funding » required governance and management structure » the roles of TACH and the DHHS in supporting existing Houses are detailed, along with the methods for distributing funding	» Houses operate by clear and agreed principles » the program is consistent and fair » Houses have the capacity to deliver targeted programs and projects » House management committees can maintain their responsibilities to individual Houses and program as a whole » Houses know how to report on their work to the funding body (DHHS)

Make it local – Strategic Planning at your House

The purposes of Houses is expressed through the four program goals. Equally the program goals must be reflected in an individual House's strategic plan document.

While this Framework describes an overarching plan, not all Houses will offer the exact same programs, activities or ventures. This is because local decisions will be made by a House to prioritise its efforts towards the program goals, as relevant to and agreed by the House membership and local community.

A House's strategic plan is more than a 'wish list' for everything that might be achieved in an 'ideal world'. Instead, it is a balance between what is needed, wanted, supported, realistic and feasible and within available resources.

A multi-year strategic plan (e.g. your three-year strategic directions) will also translate to an annual work plan, a document to guide the House, its committee, staff and volunteers on what needs to happen when throughout the year. This ensures that activities, programs and projects remain focused on strengthening the community. Not every plan will take off straight away but, by being great places to go and to network, Houses can make their communities more connected, socially aware, stronger and accessible.

REMEMBER:

A well-balanced strategic direction document and its associated annual work plans will:

» **focus work on the goals**

» **match delivery of programs that support the House's mission and objectives**

» **help you remain on-track**

» **enable decision-making; know when to say 'Yes' to some things and 'No' to others**

» **be a guide for staff to base their work plans on**

» **fulfill funding requirements.**

The planning process

In preparing a House's strategic plan various things need to be balanced. Communities may express multiple and broad-reaching needs. Not every identified need may fit into 'what's possible right now'.

When determining priorities for action consider the following:

» requirements of the funding

» needs of the community

» capacity of the House and its members to deliver

> » E.g. how would the new idea fit within what we already do? Are there enough volunteers to run with this new idea? Do we need, and can we afford, to offer X and Y in one year?

REMEMBER:

» **link your strategic plan with your community consultation outcomes**

» **when planning think about your budget, your volunteers, time, other priorities, existing commitments, funding requirements (e.g. outcomes and reporting requirements)**

» **Houses are not always the direct provider of the services they coordinate or attract into their community; however, they do act as facilitators and enablers to get the community involved**

» **some projects are more possible by creating partnerships with other services or groups**

» **think how you will evaluate and review your work to inform your next cycle of planning.**

Make it count - Planning to Evaluate

It's all very well setting goals and objectives for what you're going to work on with your community, but how will you know if it is making a difference?

When setting up a project it is important to think about how you are going to evaluate that project or piece of work. Evaluation often considers questions like, 'what were the outcomes for the community and participants?', 'how do we know if anyone is better off?', 'is this worth repeating?', and 'how might we do things differently next time?'

Evaluating community development and its outcomes has long been a struggle. Community is a complex puzzle made of many pieces. For coordinators and committees the question is 'how can you know if the House's activities have changed your community'? The community may well have changed in a good way during a given project or process, but how can you with hand on heart say the House definitely 'caused' it. The simple answer is that often we cannot narrow down broad scale change to single events.

What we can do is evaluate honestly with participants. We can engage them in what the House offers and then try to gauge from them the impacts of a particular program. This will often require digging deeper into what people say about their experiences.

Houses can explore these questions with groups, individuals or participants, measuring different kinds of impact. Even just asking the questions; what worked well; what didn't work well, what would we do differently next time?, will start to give you some ideas of how, and in what ways, the work is impacting on people and the community.

Remember, the participants are your community; they are the experts in their own lives and are key to understanding what matters locally.

In addition to gathering participant feedback, some projects may be set-up using existing data to demonstrate the need, and sometimes to measure or track their impact. It is always difficult to attribute a particular House's impact directly on population data. This is because so many forces come into play in our communities and change occurs over a long time. The House can play a role in identifying and coordinating efforts towards change, including lobbying government around needs and gaps.

Table 1: Sample Neighbourhood House program evaluation questions

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
People: # participants from a CALD background # participants aged X-Y # participants who were men/women **Activities:** # people completed the program # people enrolled # people regularly attended # guest speakers/excursions or activities	% of people rating the program or activity highly on feedback forms % of people who said they felt welcomed and comfortable % of people who said the program was worthwhile % of people who said the venue was accessible % of people who enroll in another program
Is anyone better off?	
• #% people who said they felt the program helped them feel part of the community • #% people said they felt more confident • #% people said they now have greater awareness of available choices • #% people who learned a new skill • #% people who said the program gave practical skills they now use at home.	

Key: # = number, % = per cent
Adapted from the Local Community Services Association (NSW) Social Inclusion Program Evaluation Template

Evaluation tools and reporting

Evaluation is a valuable and important process that assists with insight into the work, its impact and reach, as well as participant responses.

At a minimum, each House, in each of its Service Delivery Reports to the DHHS, will provide a detailed evaluation on one area of work under each of the four goal areas each year (e.g. case studies).

Among the TACH network of 34 Houses across Tasmania, and the more than 1 000 Neighbourhood Houses across Australia, there are many accessible tools available to help with both formal and informal evaluations. Visit the TACH website – www.tach.asn.au – for some examples of Neighbourhood House evaluation resources and tools.

One of the difficulties in the past for Neighbourhood Houses was that everyone involved knew their work had a great impact on their community – often by having witnessed it firsthand. Some problems arose from not being able to demonstrate that impact very clearly on paper.

Evaluation is important to funding bodies, our communities and our own management, because it demonstrates that we are measured, reflective and thoughtful about our work and its aims. We all need to work at improving the evaluation and subsequent reporting of our work during the next five years.

A template for the Service Delivery Reporting to the DHHS and a checklist of all required DHHS reporting dates is published on the TACH website, Houses can also contact their CPT for current versions.

REMEMBER:

» **By having well-considered planning, backed by evaluation processes that measure the impact of projects and programs, Houses can work more effectively towards achieving program goals and building their community's capacity.**

» **Evaluation is important so you can measure if you achieved what you set out to do. It can involve gathering feedback from participants and stakeholders and analysing or comparing that feedback with why the project was started.**

» **Communities are complex. It can be hard to judge how or if one thing has affected another, which is why having a clear set of goals and purposes for a project that are linked to ways of measuring change, are essential in order to know if an activity, process or project makes a change.**

The Four Goals

The goals for the Neighbourhood House Program were determined during earlier Framework development processes and have been refined and updated as the program evolved. It is important to remember that these are broad themes and there is scope for local flexibility in how Houses work towards the goals.

The objectives and strategies that a House develops and implements to achieve the goals will be reflective of its community. This means the ways a particular House works to meet the program goals may differ from others. Houses will have their own goals arising from community consultation processes, in addition to the broad program goal themes. Diversity in programs and projects will arise because each community has a different makeup, its own unique needs, resources and priorities.

For example, some communities may have a majority mix of young families, others an aging population. Some Houses may enjoy a large volunteer base with many skills to share, while others may be more limited. This will affect a House's needs, planning and resources. These factors will also influence the objectives and strategies used by Houses to achieve the four program goals, and inform local House goals.

Remember, the examples provided here are just illustrative – they are descriptive of the process involved and not intended to be prescriptive.

Goal 1: Build Community

Build and support community networks of inclusiveness, involvement, trust and cooperation and develop community spirit, cohesion and wellbeing.

This goal requires multiple sectors of a community to develop ways of working together around a shared goal to increase the future ability, or the capacity of, a community to respond to a given issue, problem or opportunity.

While Houses are a key element in harnessing strengths and growing community capacity, change cannot occur in isolation. Effective community building needs support and collaboration from many players. This may include working with other Houses, service providers, local organisations, institutions and businesses, community groups and residents.

The Building Community goal is focused on the fundamental elements of a healthy and strong community. It strives to strengthen the practical connections of trust, cooperation and goodwill that support individual and community-level self-determination and resilience.

GOAL 1: BUILD COMMUNITY

Build and support community networks of inclusiveness, involvement, trust and cooperation and develop community spirit, cohesion and wellbeing.

Example Objectives

To create a more livable suburb; to develop links between community members and a culture of care

OR

The House is recognised by, and works collaboratively with, members of the community, including individuals, organisations, government agencies and local businesses on issues of community concern.

Bringing objectives to life (examples of strategies)

The House:

» recognises and reflects the diversity of people and communities

» reflects the needs and aspirations of people and communities

» develops and supports community networks, their cohesion and resilience, so that local people are aware of, able to contribute to and draw upon, the network of support in their community

» encourages a sense of community pride

» recognises and promotes the strengths and achievements of the community

» is in touch with, and responsive to, local community issues.

Activities to achieve objectives (examples)

» host or support community events and services that bring people together (e.g. of similar interests/needs)

» encourage people to become House members by hosting member days that show the benefits of belonging. Newsletters, websites and social media are good avenues to share this news

» develop or support community infrastructure (e.g. safe places, community gardens, etc.)

» share your pride in community – let others know there is a lot to be proud of through area advocacy, promotion and marketing

» partner with organisations to value-add to locally available services, or attract services that tackle a need identified by your community.

GOAL 1: BUILD COMMUNITY

Build and support community networks of inclusiveness, involvement, trust and cooperation and develop community spirit, cohesion and wellbeing.

Signs of success

Here are some examples of measurable progress factors:

» increased links, networks and working relationships with other programs and initiatives operating in the community

» more people from diverse backgrounds are involved in and supported by House programs and services

» improved community access for events supported or organised by the House: e.g. cultural, sport, recreational, environmental projects, programs and services

» improved support and publicity for community resources, assets, initiatives and achievements

» improved range, scope and quality of community information and resources

» increased use of the House by community organisations or other service providers.

It may be useful to keep track of these elements while planning, running and evaluating your work against this goal area. You can use a 'pre' and 'post' (e.g. before and after) evaluation process to help measure if people got what they wanted and/or if an activity met their expectations.

Getting pre and post measures mean you can indicate the changes. Changes might be 'up', as in improved access, or 'down', as in reduction in number of complaints. You can measure examples of things that have increased or decreased to evidence the impact of your work.

For example:

"Since we started a regular e-newsletter more people come back to the House each week to join in."

"Less negative news stories about our area have appeared since we begun generating positive news of our own and getting the media involved in that."

"Our Friday afternoon gatherings started out as a once-off celebration for our community garden. We're in a remote area with a diverse community mix. Because so many people enjoyed the chance to connect and unwind with other locals, making new friendships and connections, we've kept it on our calendar on a fortnightly basis and it has started to have a life if its own. More people have become interested in the gardening work as well."

Goal 1, case study 1:
Christmas in the East, Eastern Shore Community House

Devonport's Eastern Shore Community House is a story of community building over a number of years. The House identified a gap in their community and worked with community members and local government to address it.

In the beginning, the community in East Devonport felt they were ignored at Christmas time, but with hard work from the House things gradually changed leading to an overwhelmingly successful and inclusive Christmas in the East event involving 500 – 600 people in 2012. This ongoing event is also a story of partnerships with funding support from the Devonport City Council and collaborations with a number of other local organisations.

Over a number of years the House advocated with the Devonport Council for the East Devonport area to have its own Christmas decorations. The House also worked with local churches to build Christmas celebration events before in 2012 extending the celebrations to partner with more organisations and become more inclusive and attractive to community.

Christmas in the East is now a fully inclusive community supported celebration that brings the East Devonport community together in a special event. It celebrates Christmas in a variety of manners to suit people regardless of their faith or lack of faith and enables families and community to have fun without having to spend additional money at a difficult time of year. For next year they are planning a float in the town parade!

Goal 1, case study 2:
Momo Making and Chai Tea Day

This project brought together diverse community groups in a skills sharing way. Thirty people came together at Northern Suburbs Community Centre Mowbray on Friday 7 September 2012 including 5 members of the Bhutanese Kirat/Buddhist Association led by Nabin Gurung. Nabin was in the final months of his chef's apprenticeship and guided us through the very hands-on process of learning how to prepare and make momos (dumplings). What a great experience it was!

Nabin and his team had us chopping onions, dicing cabbages, peeling tomatoes, chopping chillies, garlic, ginger, coriander as we prepared the mixtures and the dipping sauces. There was lots of talking, listening, learning and laughter as the centre became a hive of well-organised activity. The wonderful cooking aromas wafting through the building certainly made us eager to try these new delicacies! After learning to fill and fold them, we steamed them for around 18 minutes.

The first batch came out and excitedly we all sat around the table to eat together, while washing them down with cups of hot milky Chai Tea that we also learned how to brew up with cinnamon, black tea, cloves, bay leaf, cardamom pods and brown sugar. Plenty of people went back for more, which we took to be a good indication they were enjoyed. The children certainly had empty plates too!

We thank Nabin and the team for their very professional tutoring and passion to share culture. Food is certainly one way we can all reach out and strengthen links, contributing to capacity building as we learn and share together.

The process of bringing people together helped us to remember our similarities and commonalities as people, which has helped us all to understand more about other's experiences and recognise what we each bring to the table. Our community will benefit from the people within it feeling more connected and confident about our ability to welcome new members into it.

Goal 1, case study 3:
Community Welcome Sign

A community welcome sign, developed with community engagement, was launched 16 May 2012 at Northern Suburbs Community Centre, Rocherlea. This story tells its background and development process.

It was four years ago, and young people from Rocherlea Primary School and Li-Lea Pad Early Childhood Centre described their suburb at Rocherlea as a place 'where friends, family and community matter'.

Young people were invited to enter a Northern Suburbs Community Centre competition on what it meant to live, play and be part of the Rocherlea community. There was great community spirit and pride that came out of the competition and finally after four years, the community will have something that welcomes people in that they can be very proud of.

The words and pencil drawn picture created by a young local girl named Bethany, feature on a vibrant community sign that has been placed on land at the Northern Suburbs Community Centre at Rocherlea.

The 'Welcome to Rocherlea' sign initiative had grown from an idea from members of the Rocherlea Residents Action Group who indicated that some people had trouble finding Rocherlea because there was no signs and the community is physically isolated. The group felt the sign would also give a sense of belonging and that we are not just another dot on the map.

Many communities have signs but ours is a community sign that has heart and is meaningful. It will also be a reminder to drivers that they are in a suburb and that there are children around. Congratulations to Bethany for her inspirational artwork!

The sign was funded through the Federal Government Community for Children's initiatives and supported by Northern Suburbs Community Centre.

Goal 2: Support People and Families

Build and support the personal skills, knowledge, abilities and resilience of people in the community, and develop the health and wellbeing of people and families.

Supporting people can mean bringing people together to reduce isolation or to gain new skills. Activities that strengthen relationships and grow interpersonal skill levels, or that work to keep people and families close and connected, can all work towards the community's benefit. The vision is strong people and connected families, communicating and working well together, strengthening their communities for brighter futures.

Houses which are sites for accessing Family Support Services as part of the Department's Gateway and Integrated Family Support Services (GW/IFSS) are required to ensure services align with the Family Support Services Operational Framework (DHHS, 2012).

If adjunct care is provided it must comply with all legal requirements, and guidelines as determined by the Department of Education Child Care Unit (www.childcare.tas.gov.au/).

GOAL 2: SUPPORT PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Build and support the personal skills, knowledge, abilities and resilience of people in the community, and develop the health and wellbeing of people and families.

Example Objectives

Improved health, wellbeing and resilience of people in the community, strengthened family relationships and stability and a reduction of isolation and loneliness

Bringing objectives to life (examples of strategies)

The House:

» contributes towards projects and programs which reduce isolation and loneliness

» provides opportunities to develop parenting and family life skills

» facilitates programs and projects that address health and wellbeing issues

» fosters inclusion within a safe environment.

Activities to achieve objectives (examples)

The Houses provides opportunities:

» to develop life skills through formal and informal courses and groups (e.g. parenting courses/family communication workshops; talking to your teenager sessions; new mother's groups; health tips sessions for boys and men, etc.)

» that facilitate access to activities relating to specific community issues

» for literacy and numeracy training

» to socialise, to be involved, for fun and for enjoyment and to reduce isolation

» which promote peer support and shared learning – community lunches, community gardens, etc.

» that provide access to information or facilitating access to activities relating to specific community issues (e.g. healthy living education, activities and support). E.g. Walking groups, peer support groups or others as below:

» **Regular**: Community lunches, cooked by volunteers and staff. E.g. Good opportunity to try different foods, learn how to cook with fresh food from the garden, socialise and enjoy a cheap healthy meal.

» **Seasonal**: Bus trips – organising regular bus trips to places of interest/events/activities – gives people who live in rural areas the chance to attend activities and events that may otherwise be inaccessible due to transport issues/ isolation/or simply not wishing to drive very far.

» **Annual**: Teddy Bears' Picnic. E.g. Local kinder and child care centre are invited to join our playgroup children for this event, fun and social day for all local children to mingle and make new friends.

GOAL 2: SUPPORT PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Build and support the personal skills, knowledge, abilities and resilience of people in the community, and develop the health and wellbeing of people and families.

Signs of success

Here are some examples of measurable success and progress factors:

» increased community engagement in programs and services (number of people, length of engagement with the House and its programs)

» feedback (good and bad) from users of programs and services

» increased number of people volunteering at a House following time as a participant

» improved family communication (or other objective) reported by participants

» limited or no leftovers from lunches

» consistent numbers of attendees

» feedback (good and bad) from users of programs and services

» regularly booking out bus trips/activities and constant requests for more.

It may be useful to keep track of these elements while planning, running and evaluating your work against this goal area. You can use a 'pre' and 'post' (e.g. before and after) evaluation process to help measure if people got what they wanted and/or if an activity met their expectations.

Getting pre and post measures mean you can indicate the changes. Changes might be 'up', as in improved access, or 'down', as in reduction in number of complaints. You can measure examples of things that have increased or decreased to evidence the impact of your work.

For example:

"More people with young families come to the House since our childcare program begun. Before, we had X weekly, now we have Y weekly."

"Less people are accessing emergency food vouchers since our Food Security and local produce distribution program began. Before the program we had X enquiries a week, now we have Y."

"People say the Wednesday XYX group is the highlight of their week, makes them feel less isolated and has introduced them to some new friends."

Goal 2, case study 1:
Supporting People with serious and complex mental Illness

Maranoa Heights Community Centre provides practical day-to-day support and volunteering opportunities for local people with complex mental illness who have limited options for social support.

Maranoa has been proactive in providing appropriate training for its staff and volunteers to understand and work with people attending the centre and has provided opportunities for staff and volunteers to access debriefing and counselling as required.

By partnering with organisations such as Anglicare, Relationships Australia and Mental Health Services, the House has harnessed the expertise of Mental Health workers who are now more engaged with the House and its community, with the House also functioning as a venue for fortnightly professionally facilitated support groups.

While Maranoa is also using the experience to strengthen local community and service networks and advocate around gaps in service with government, the House has been able to truly make itself welcoming and supportive for the people who use it – even if that is complex and challenging.

Goal 2, case study 2:
Partnership to support people and families

Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre and Clarence Plains Child and Family Centre partnerships

In 2009 the Tasmanian Government announced that Clarendon Vale was one of eight sites statewide where a Child and Family Centre (CFC) would be built. This was an exciting opportunity for the local community, being the biggest investment in community infrastructure into the area in decades. Part of the development meant a new Neighbourhood Centre would be built to replace the existing one, which was no longer meeting community needs. The CFC announcement initiated a chain of events that has resulted in an extremely strong partnership that has remained strong, being supported by a House committee willing to embrace partnerships to build community capacity.

At Clarendon Vale, our first approach was to ask the question, 'what does this new facility and its associated activities mean for us and the community?' We wanted to know, and we wanted to make the right decisions.

Our committee began by having many conversations with the community and stakeholders. This resulted in a shift in our strategic direction, namely, we reduced our work in the early years area and began to focus more on programs and activities with primary school age groups.

The CFC project began with a local enabling group (LEG) that supported its introduction into the community including; the design of its building, its community engagement strategy, and its vision for the local community. A number of our staff and committee joined the LEG and remain on it today, helping to guide the CFC's strategic direction and to monitor for new opportunities.

We have also welcomed one of the CFC's staff members onto our own Management Committee, creating a strong governance link between each organisation.

This has just been the start of our journey. The shared understanding of each other's strategic direction has created many opportunities with the partnership working closely together across a wide range of areas. We have collaborated in grant writing, lobbying, celebrating, hosting community forums, delivering training and creating regular sharing opportunities where we work together to better support people and their families.

Operationally, at the Neighbourhood Centre we transitioned our child care manager to become our children's services worker, expanding the role into a focus on primary school aged children. This has had flow on effects to create new partnerships with the likes of the PCYC. We still provide back-up care but it's now delivered from of the CFC building using our staff. There are also two playgroups operated by Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood Centre staff at the CFC.

It is not hard to see that by working together we have more chance of achieving the kinds of critical mass needed for the kinds of lasting community change each of our organisation is striving for. We will continue to build on our partnership and friendships building better outcomes for the community long into the future.

Goal 2, case study 3:
Linking people and families with health services

A young mother was living in a rural area with her 15-month-old baby, who she told us was regularly going blue. This was very frightening for the young mother, so she had taken the baby to the hospital. When she came to the Neighbourhood House she said that she was unable to gain assistance at the time, as apparently the baby was not actually turning blue while at the hospital. She felt scared for her baby, but also very unsure and isolated, unsure what to do next.

One day while visiting the House it became evident to the coordinator and staff that the baby's skin was indeed turning blue. The child also become very listless when this happened.

The House was able to support the mother to access health professionals and was asked to advocate and liaise with the Hospital on her behalf.

Because of this support to link in with health services, we learned that the baby required treatment from a heart specialist. The baby was subsequently successfully diagnosed and treated.

The intervention from the House was short, but made a dramatic difference to the young mother and her family. It shows how Houses, by being welcoming and inclusive places that people know they can ask questions, can help make to a real difference in people's day-to-day lives. With their grass roots community relationships, and links to health, education, business and groups, Houses can play a vital coordination and connecting service for their communities.

Goal 3: Enhance Participation Choices

Houses support and extend training and employment readiness opportunities, for individuals and/or groups, to improve economic independence.

This goal is about encouraging participation in formal and informal lifelong learning to develop and/or renew life and work preparedness skills. Activities under this goal often work to create pathways for people into further training and/or employment. Some Houses work to improve the levels of literacy and numeracy in their residents, others may focus on informal training opportunities, including skills and personal development through peer support networks, and some will partner with Registered Training Organisations (RTO) to provide a specific course of qualification in their community.

A pathway can include making the first steps with a person or group, not necessarily taking them to the end of the journey. For example, becoming involved in a House program could improve a person's confidence in group settings and make them more aware of the skills they do have. From here, they might be in a better position to access formal training that could lead to further engagement opportunities or employment.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE PARTICIPATION CHOICES

Houses support and extend training and employment readiness opportunities, for individuals and/or groups, to improve economic independence.

Example Objectives

The House works with local businesses and others in supporting employment and job training initiatives for local people.
OR
The House develops and structures its programs and activities in ways that enable participants to grow their confidence and skills.

Bringing objectives to life (examples of strategies)

The House:

» develops and supports the employment skills and resources of local people

» provides volunteer opportunities in which people can learn and grow transferable skills

» has programs to encourage people to recognise and develop their own skills and to share them with others

» works to combat known barriers to employment within communities (e.g. transport, literacy and numeracy, access issues around pre-employment education)

» promotes the value of the skills present in its community.

Activities to achieve objectives (examples)

» make links with business to provide resources, ideas, opportunities and support

» host or support competency-based training, short courses which develop job-readiness skills

» host or support informal or formal life skills activities

» support people to make job applications with use of House resources, such as telephones, computers or even coaching sessions in resume preparation and application writing

» mentoring, work experience and pre-work experience (e.g. confidence and skill building activities)

» 'not for profit' economic activities that develop new marketable skills.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE PARTICIPATION CHOICES

Houses support and extend training and employment readiness opportunities, for individuals and/or groups, to improve economic independence.

Signs of success

Here are some examples of measurable success and progress factors:

» more people participate in informal and formal learning opportunities

» more economic development, employment or job training initiatives are supported by the House

» more linkages are made with local businesses, organisations and resources as the House works to support employment and job training initiatives for local people

» more people get recognised qualifications and/or job readiness skills

» increased number and types of job readiness and competency-based training programs or services linked with, provided at, or hosted in, the area/at the House.

It may be useful to keep track of these elements while planning, running and evaluating your work against this goal area. You can use a 'pre' and 'post' (e.g. before and after) evaluation process to help measure if people got what they wanted and/or if an activity met their expectations.

Getting pre and post measures mean you can indicate the changes. Changes might be 'up', as in improved access, or 'down', as in reduction in number of complaints. You can measure examples of things that have increased or decreased to evidence the impact of your work.

For example:

"Local businesses now ask the House about its volunteers when they are looking for new staff."

"A group from the House now makes craft and food items to sell at the weekly local market."

"Since we partnered with ABC Training Organisation to run it from the House this year, less people complain about their difficulties in getting into town to do the XYZ course."

"This year we offered a wide mix of, and easy ways into, our volunteer roles and used these to give people a chance to become more involved once confidence was up. Our volunteer induction included some basic training applicable to the role so that everyone was supported to start safely".

Goal 3, case study 1:
Mother, House Member, Businesswoman, Mentor – Debbie's story

I first came in contact with Northern Suburbs Community Centre (NSCC) in 1995 when my daughter was a toddler. At the time I was living in Mayfield and did not know anybody else with children. I was very lonely and isolated and, when my parents went away on a six month trip, I knew I needed to do something.

A NSCC newsletter would appear in my letterbox and, after much nail biting, I took the plunge and enrolled in a 10 week course being held at Mowbray. By the end of the program I was enrolled in another course and had signed up my daughter for Take a Break Childcare – she really needed a break! I was making friends and becoming a part of a community. I joined the NSCC management committee and was secretary until I left in 1998 and moved away.

In 1999 I had a son! In 2000, my partner and I started a small business, an oyster farm on Bruny Island and a processing plant. There were lots of sharp learning curves and scary 'I am not cut out for this' moments in those early days. Eventually we stopped the processing side and unfortunately our partnership ended. I continued with the farm, as we also had another business partner.

I also started doing food festivals by myself. The food festivals have probably been one of the biggest achievements of my life, apart from my two beautiful kids of course.

Today I am proud to say I have sold oysters for six years at Festivale! Never in 1995 would I have believed myself capable of applying for, setting up and managing such a thing. However, I had changed and grown as a person since 1995.

I went to Polytechnic (TAFE) in 2009. When I got my first customer service assignment I thought 'No way can I do this, what have I got myself in for?' Doing one step at a time I finished with a Cert IV in Marketing and have one subject to go to complete a Cert IV in Business.

I was so lucky to get a job as a Small Business Consultant at Business and Employment. Again I was surprised when chosen for this position. In my interview I was asked about my connection to the Neighbourhood House from 1998. So I built on that experience, and I am now primary coordinator for the Women's Entrepreneur program.

I'm fortunate to have a job where I am paid to help people achieve their goals – and the service is free! I love having a job where you don't have to ask people for money! So if you want to start a little business or you already have one come and see me! If I hadn't attended Northern Suburbs Community Centre all those years ago I know I wouldn't be where I am now. I also believe in taking a chance – because it is amazing how often you achieve great things, and it is never as bad as you think!

Goal 3, case study 2:
Hilltop Seeds Social Enterprise

A social enterprise of Burnie Community House, Hilltop Seeds was launched at the 2013 TACH Awards at Aurora Stadium, Launceston.

Hilltop Seeds offers a range of seasonal starter packs, kid's packs, herb packs and other innovative companion plant boxing. All this activity stemmed from the House's interest in developing something new and innovative for its community and the people in it. All puns aside, in this case the project was supported by a seeding grant.

Burnie Community House was selected to participate in an exciting pilot program started in 2012 through TACH and funded by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, Skills Tasmania and Avidity Training.

Participants worked through units from Certificate IV in Business before developing a Business Plan and road map for the future of the business. It's not the typical business plan, as it also has social goals and benefits in its sights. Some of the social and community benefits already have included:

» creating new opportunities for people to gain new skills and experiences while participating in the management and delivery of an enterprise

» promoting and selling quality products to the public that ultimately improves the health and wellbeing of individuals and families in Tasmania.

» educating Tasmanians on the value of growing their own fresh produce

» supporting novice growers to embrace the joy of growing and eating fresh produce from their garden or small planting area.

The seeds are sold in eco boxes, with everything in the pack being reusable or compostable. Included are starter planter pots, enough seed raising mix and fertiliser for the two pots and practical easy to follow pictorial instructions so the grower has everything on hand to get started.

Each pack includes a variety of four vegetable seeds, suitable for growing during the season they were packaged. Before being included in a pack the seed varieties are trialled in Burnie Community House's community garden. As well as showcasing the plants this means everyone is able to learn from the work by observing, getting involved, or following the growing process at the Hilltop Seeds Blog, www.hilltopseeds.com.au/blog.html

Goal 4: Local Governance and Management

Neighbourhood Houses must be community operated organisations, governed by a management committee or board of management consisting of volunteers living or working in the local community.

Maintaining local governance is central to the Neighbourhood House philosophy, and is a requirement for state-funded Houses. It is by having a mix of local people on the board, consulting with the community, making management decisions and setting strategic directions, that Houses can be responsive and accountable to their community.

In addition to being a legal requirement for incorporated organisations, having a management committee is an important feature of the Neighbourhood House Program's focus on community development. Community led governance provides for input from a cross section of people, and ensures that broad perspectives are represented and well balanced within a House's priorities.

The development of new skills and capabilities among members of the governing committee is another important feature of this goal area.

Committee

The Management Committee is legally accountable to its membership base to endorse the strategic and policy framework of the organisation, ensure the financial viability of the legal entity, and ensure compliance with all legislative, statutory and contractual duties, obligations and requirements. As well as answering to its members, the management committee is accountable to external bodies or authorities with whom it has formal working relationships or funding and service agreements.
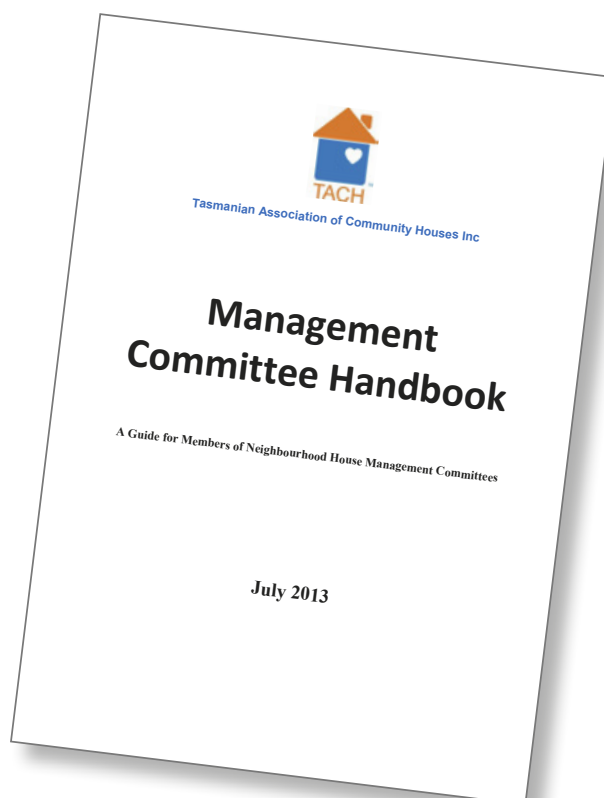
The Neighborhood House Program governance model is developmental, with the management committee working cooperatively and collaboratively with staff, volunteers, house participants and the wider community, generating a range of community connections, input and benefits.

Coordinator

Management functions are undertaken by the House coordinator or manager, who is employed by the management committee (or board of management.). The coordinator's role is shaped by the governing body and – while distinct from the governance role – is responsible to (a) advise and inform the governing body, and (b) to manage the operations, internal processes, and day-to-day affairs and activities of the organisation.

TACH Management Handbook

Detailed information and processes for management committee and coordinator roles and functions are outlined in the TACH Management Committee Handbook. Visit www.tach.asn.au

TACH
Tasmanian Association of Community Houses Inc

Management Committee Handbook

A Guide for Members of Neighbourhood House Management Committees

July 2013

GOAL 4: LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Neighbourhood Houses must be community operated organisations, governed by a management committee or board of management consisting of volunteers living or working in the local community. This form of governance legitimates the concept of community-operated organisations that are responsive and accountable to the local community.

Example Objectives

» ensures it has accountable and responsive management processes in place

» maintains a sustainable level of local resident involvement in its governance

» supports and strengthens the management and governance capacity of local residents

» identifies its current and future governance needs and makes plans to meet those needs

» offers a range of quality capacity building programs and services.

Bringing objectives to life (examples of strategies)

The House:

» refreshes and renews its committee by offering training and skills development to existing members, and has ways to identify potential new members from the community

» makes being a committee member attractive to House users by promoting the work and achievements of the committee

» runs its committee according to its constitution, and as required by law, by ensuring members are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and that procedures and checks are in place.

Activities to achieve objectives (examples)

» provide new committee members with an induction kit for your House. You might use the TACH Management Committee Handbook as a starting point

» set annual training on relevant topics for committee and potential committee members. Topics could include governance, financial management, strategic planning, etc.

» support and strengthen the implementation, organisational and resource management skills of volunteers and paid staff. This could become a process to refresh the committee

» have a process to help future board members learn about how the committee works before they nominate for the committee

» encourage people to move around the various volunteer roles at a House – e.g. Op Shop volunteer, to a Board representative, to community car driver, and back again in a few years.

» become a member of an Industrial Relations advice organisation so the committee can get advice when it needs it

» the committee ensures an annual Performance Appraisals is held with the coordinator, and that the Coordinator likewise conducts annual performance appraisals with all staff

» all policies and procedures for the House are reviewed, adapted and re-approved every three years (at minimum) by the committee

» the committee conducts its own reflective self-audit, and gathers feedback from staff on its performance each year

» the House 'budget vs. actual' is reviewed at every committee meeting.

GOAL 4: LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Neighbourhood Houses must be community operated organisations, governed by a management committee or board of management consisting of volunteers living or working in the local community. This form of governance legitimates the concept of community-operated organisations that are responsive and accountable to the local community.

Signs of success

Here are some examples of measurable success and progress factors:

» there are sufficient members on the management committee for it to be viable (e.g. a quorum)

» the committee's membership is representative and comprised of a diverse mix of community members (e.g. including those from institutions, organisations and businesses)

» community members have the capacity and necessary support to be actively involved in the governance of Neighbourhood Houses

» the House is governed in an accountable and responsive manner, based on high ethical standards

» House operations are continually improved via strong management processes

» employees are employed at a recognised award level and paid their legal entitlements for their demonstrated and recognised skills

» the House attracts new members who are recruited into its Management Committee

» service delivery and financial reporting to the Department is completed as required, demonstrating good management practices and accountability, including provision of an up-to-date version of the constitution or rules of association of the House

» all members of staff have the ability to acquire, or are in the process of obtaining, qualifications applicable to the position.

How you can measure, demonstrate and report on governance:

» as a result of strategy XYZ the House attracted new members who were recruited onto its Management Committee

» reporting to the Department is completed as required, demonstrating good management practices and accountability, including provision of an up-to-date version of the constitution or rules of association of the House

» all members of staff have the ability to acquire, or are in the process of obtaining, qualifications applicable to the position.

Goal 4, case study:
SandVille Neighbourhood House

There have been Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania that have gone through difficult times with governance, and it is important to learn from these experiences. There is one constant theme; Houses need to deal effectively with conflict and grievances when they arise. This is true for complaints that may come in from community members accessing the House, as sometimes this kind of feedback shows areas for improvement on how programs are run. The issue of unresolved grievances inside a House, particularly when it is between the coordinator and the committee, can have a serious impact on the House's ability to remain viable.

Dealing with conflict, or perceptions of someone not doing their job effectively, are some of the hardest things any committee or manager can face. But committees which have been through the wringer with such scenarios would all say the same thing; if you sense conflict or difficulty with staff or between yourselves and staff – deal with it! Pretending a problem is not there means that an often easily addressed issue may lead to much bigger problems down the line.

SandVille Neighbourhood House: a fictional example based on experiences of Neighbourhood House committees

The relationship between the coordinator and the committee at SandVille House had been going really well from the committee's perspective. The House was

engaging lots of new areas of the community and a lot of new programs had begun since the coordinator Mary had started three years earlier. In essence the committee had stopped asking questions some time ago, and just agreed with suggestions being put up by the coordinator. They also had not followed through on their role and checked in regularly with the coordinator about how she was going with the work.

It came to a head when the coordinator stormed out of a committee meeting when the President noted the committee hadn't received a coordinator's report for five months (three meetings). As Mary left, she declared that she had more than 100 hours of TOIL owing due to her workload.

So what did they do?

The President met with Mary the next day, who felt finally able to disclose her levels of stress with the work. Mary had wanted to appear she was coping with the increased workload she had taken on, but had been hoping the committee would notice and step in and help her, or say no to some of the many new opportunities that were coming to the House.

Following this discussion the committee agreed to Mary taking some immediate time off using TOIL, as well as organising a chance for her to debrief and have external supervision and counselling through Relationships Australia during this period. They were shocked and bit disheartened that their coordinator had gotten into such a hole and they had not picked up on it. The committee also received a phone call from another community organisation concerned about Mary as she had behaved rudely at a recent meeting when asked if the House could auspice a project, and they acknowledged this was very out of character.

At the suggestion of the coordinator on her return the committee organised a trusted external facilitator to lead a well-structured review meeting with the committee and all staff. They wanted to openly look at what had gone awry for the House, the coordinator and with the committee.

The session identified a number issues which all concerned could have done better with over the previous three years, but particularly:

» They hadn't conducted any staff appraisals for three years. To address this, two committee members held

meetings with all staff to enable the team to reflect on how they were going in meeting their current position descriptions, to identify any training that would help and to review and make recommendation for any necessary changes to the Position Descriptions.

» The committee had not had any governance training, so they arranged training in their roles and responsibilities as committee members, as well as in managing conflicts and grievances.

» The House had a strategic plan, but they hadn't been using it to base decisions on new opportunities or funding. From then on the House management assessed any new project or opportunity against their strategic plan and discussed with staff if there was the capacity to take it on, or what resources would be needed to enable it.

» The coordinator admitted that she lost perspective in her role, and had kept saying yes to things she shouldn't have agreed to. The committee negotiated an arrangement with Relationships Australia for some regular external supervision for staff.

» The President was only meeting with the coordinator at the Committee meetings. Since then they have organised regular meetings outside of meeting times in which the President has the clear role as Staff Liaison.

» The coordinator approached the organisation which had made the concerned complaint about her past behaviour. She acknowledged that there had been an issue, apologised, and this discussion lead to developing a feedback form to be distributed to other organisations and partners annually, giving the House a mechanism to monitor how it is viewed by those it interacts with.

Goal 4: Healthy House Checklist

With input from some House Management Committees TACH has developed a checklist to identify some key areas that will help keep your House governance healthy.

If your Neighbourhood House is working effectively, your Management Committee will be able to tick all the boxes on items such as:

☐ We are committed to and take an active leadership role in developing our community

☐ We develop, regularly update and follow our strategic plan and use it to guide our decisions

☐ We manage and track our financial position responsibly and frequently – we have a budget and our financial report always tracks our spending against our budget

☐ We have friendly and co-operative external relationships with a wide range of groups and organisations and seek regular feedback from them

☐ We seek out and welcome as many people from our community as possible

☐ We have codes of conduct and policies and procedures that guide our committee, staff, volunteers and users of the House

☐ We behave and communicate openly and respectfully with each other

☐ We have constructive, productive and supportive relationships with all who work in or use the House

☐ All Management Committee, staff and volunteers have up-to-date position descriptions

☐ There are clear, written definitions of delegated authority

☐ There are regular staff meetings

☐ There are regular staff appraisals which always involves discussion about the staff's current position description and any training needs.

☐ The President and the coordinator communicate regularly and have structured meeting times outside of committee meetings.

☐ We offer training and support to all our Management Committee, staff and volunteers to be able to do their best

☐ The governance of our House is principled, transparent, accountable and effective

☐ We have fun and enjoy our work and celebrate our achievements

Glossary of Terms

CPT/s Community Partnership Team/s: DHHS relationship and Funding Agreement managers for Houses and CSOs

CSL Community Support Levy – gambling tax from club and pub pokies returned to communities via DHHS service funding and grants programs

CSO/s Community Service Organisation/s

CSP Community Support Program – the business unit within DCS that is responsible for the Neighbourhood House Program

DCS Disability and Community Services, a business unit within Human Services

DHHS Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)

DoE Department of Education (Tasmania)

DPaC Department of Premier and Cabinet (Tasmania)

Framework Neighbourhood House Program Strategic Framework 2013-2018

FSS OP FW Family Support Services Operational Framework (DHHS, 2012)

GW/IFSS Gateways and Integrated Family Support Services; a single point of entry for family and disability support

Houses Neighbourhood House/s or Community House/s

Partnership Agreement
The formal collaboration agreement (2012) between the DHHS, DPaC and the Community Sector instilling a commitment towards working together to provide quality services to Tasmanians

RTO Registered Training Organisation; deliver a wide range of nationally accredited courses and skills training

SDR Service Delivery Reports; twice-annual reports detailing programs and projects against a House's plan and the program goals

MoU Memorandum of understanding, a formal written agreement between parties, detailing a shared understanding, morally binding only

Outcome Desired or intended effects from a strategy or program

TACH Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, the sector peak body for Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania

Legend Note and Hints

Sample documents and examples

More information is available

Appendix 1:
Funding and Program Relationship

Core funding

The DHHS through its Community Support Program (CSP) provides core funding to neighbourhood houses and the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses (TACH). Funding includes a component sourced from the Community Support Levy (CSL).

This framework and the associated Funding Agreements with Neighbourhood House organisations address the program and reporting requirements of that funding.

Additional / External Project funding

Individual Houses may also gain additional project or program funding from various bodies. This is a good idea. Gathering additional local support for your programs, resources and House demonstrates that a House has good connections and support from its community. The efforts contribute to the processes of community building and can get more people aware of or involved in a House's work.

Additional resources could be in the form of in-kind support, donations of goods or services, or additional project or specific resource funding. For example, Neighbourhood Houses have the option of pursuing other forms of funding, including private income through rental of premises or provision of child care.

Additional funding may require special reporting to the funding body or sponsor. This would be specified by them in the guidelines attached to the funding.

All projects must build on core NHH Program goals

The DHHS expects that all local programs and services run by or with Houses will align with the community building intent of the core funding.

Criteria for Program Funding: Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania

The previous (2008-2013) NHH Program Strategic Framework document described the assessment and eligibility criteria used to establish House funding levels (e.g. Category A or B level funding) and methods to identify communities of need in which Houses would be funded.

This funding criterion is reproduced in Appendix 2 for reference purposes, however, within the timeline of this 2013-2018 Program Framework, there is no budgetary capacity to extend the program to new Houses or communities. For this period, our focus remains on progress and evaluation against the four program goals.

Continuing House funding

As indicated by the current DHHS Funding Agreements with state-funded Houses, funding levels will be maintained for the 33 level A and B categorised Houses, with upwards adjustments made to include additional funds to accommodate the staggered implementation of the Equal Remuneration Order (ERO). The funding schedule in the Funding Agreement will reflect ERO changes as they become applicable.

Additionally announced in 2013, the Neighbourhood House network is also set to benefit from significant infrastructure investment through the Neighbourhood House Capital Investment Program, 2013-2016. The NHH CIP is being managed by Disability and Community Services in partnership with the TACH and member Houses statewide.

Should funded Houses seek to make any new business proposals or wish to expand or vary House service delivery, then that request is to be made formally to the Department via the Community Partnership Team managing the House's Funding Agreement.

Any further development would need to align with the strategic direction of the program and government priorities.

Appendix 2:
Applying the Funding Category Criteria

(Historical background; Defining House funding levels (A or B), reproduced from 2008-2013 Strategic Framework for reference purposes)

Applying the Funding Category Criteria

1. Identify and map the catchment area of the neighbourhood house (metropolitan or nonmetropolitan, see below, using Australian Bureau of Statistics collection districts boundaries)

2. Identify the index of socio-economic disadvantage of the catchment area compared to the Australian mean (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

3. Identify the population size of the catchment area and match to the population thresholds (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

4. Identify the degree of remoteness of the catchment area and match to the remoteness thresholds (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

5. Determine funding category

Catchment Area

The catchment area of an existing or a proposed Neighbourhood House is defined as falling into either a metropolitan area or a non-metropolitan area. A metropolitan area is one within the greater metropolitan area of Burnie, Ulverstone, Devonport, Launceston and Hobart. All other catchment areas are classified as non-metropolitan.

Metropolitan Area

In metropolitan areas, the catchment area is generally defined as the area within an approximate 1.5 kilometre radius of the existing or proposed neighbourhood house. The actual catchment boundary will be defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics census collection district

boundaries nearest to the radius of 1.5 kilometres. The catchment area may distort in one direction or another, or elongate depending on the pattern of settlement relative to the location of the Neighbourhood House or where a natural barrier like an estuary intervenes. In such cases, the overall catchment area should not be greater than approximately the area provided by a radius of 1.5 kilometres.

Existing Houses where the catchment was calculated on the basis of the metropolitan area definition are:

Bucaan Community House

Burnie Community House

Bridgewater Community Centre

Central Coast Community House

Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood House

Devonport Community House

Eastern Shore Community House

Gagebrook Community Centre

Goodwood Community Centre

Maranoa Heights Community Centre

Northern Suburbs Community Centre (Mowbray and Rocherlea)

Ravenswood Neighbourhood House

Risdon Vale Neighbourhood Centre

Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre

Warrane/Mornington Neighbourhood Centre

West Moonah Community House.

Non-Metropolitan Area

In non-metropolitan areas, the catchment area is defined as the area within an approximate 30 kilometre radius of the existing or proposed Neighbourhood House. The actual catchment boundary will be defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics census collection district

boundaries nearest to the radius of 30 kilometres. The catchment area may distort in one direction or another, or elongate depending on the pattern of settlement relative to the location of the Neighbourhood House or where a natural barrier like an estuary intervenes. In such cases, the overall catchment area should not be greater than approximately the area provided by a radius of 30 kilometres.

Existing Houses where the catchment is calculated on the basis of the non-metropolitan area definition are:

Beaconsfield Neighbourhood House

Deloraine House

Derwent Valley Community House

Dorset Community House

Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House

Fingal Valley Neighbourhood House

Geeveston Community Centre

George Town Neighbourhood House

Midway Point Neighbourhood Centre (because of the unique geography of the Point)

Okines Community House

Rosebery Neighbourhood Centre

St Helens Neighbourhood House

Tresca Community Centre

West Winds Community Centre

Zeehan Neighbourhood Centre.

Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA Index)

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA Index), developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, is an index of the disadvantages faced by communities compared to other communities. It is derived from indicators such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations.

The lower the index value, the more disadvantaged an area is compared with areas with a higher index value.

The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is useful for identifying areas of disadvantage for

allocation of services or funding of programs such as the Neighbourhood House program. For this reason, the major (but not sole) determinant of the funding category of a Neighbourhood House is the index value.

Many aspects of the socio-economic profile of a community cannot be measured directly but there are some variables that can be compared between communities to give an indication of the relative disadvantage facing one community compared to another. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage using data collected at each census.

As a funding threshold, communities with a SEIFA index value above the Australian mean of 1 000 will not be eligible for Neighbourhood House funding. Where a community has a score below 1 000, and thus is able to be considered for Neighbourhood House funding, further assessment for eligibility is based on population size and degree of remoteness of the community (see attached chart and below). Thus, a large population within the catchment may move a Neighbourhood House into funding category A, although its SEIFA index value is higher than another community with a small population where the neighbour house remains in funding category B. Similarly, and overlaid on population considerations, the degree of remoteness may make shift a Neighbourhood House from one category to another.

The variables used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to calculate the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage are:

» persons aged 15 and over with no qualifications (%)

» families with income less than $15 600 (%)

» families with offspring having parental income less than $15 600 (%)

» females (in labour force) unemployed (%)

» males (in labour force) unemployed (%)

» employed females classified as 'labourer and related workers' (%)

» employed males classified as 'labourer and related workers' (%)

» employed males classified as 'intermediate production and transport workers' (%)

» persons aged 15 and over who left school at or under 15 years of age (%)

» one parent families with dependent offspring only (%)

» households renting (government authority) (%)

» persons aged 15 and over separated or divorced (%)

» dwellings with no motor cars at dwelling (%)

» employed females classified as 'intermediate production and transport workers' (%)

» employed females classified as 'elementary clerical, sales and service workers' (%)

» employed males classified as 'tradespersons' (%)

» persons aged 15 and over who did not go to school (%)

» Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders (%)

» occupied private dwellings with two or more families (%)

» lacking fluency in English (%).

Population Thresholds

The minimum population threshold is 1 500 people. Below this threshold, a new stand-alone Neighbourhood House will not be funded, irrespective of other criteria. The attached chart shows the population thresholds that apply above 1 500 people. These population thresholds are linked to the SEIFA index value and the remoteness indicator.

In metropolitan areas, no new Neighbourhood House will be funded within a minimum 3 kilometre radius of an existing or proposed Neighbourhood House (or distance by road from the Neighbourhood House where a natural barrier like an estuary intervenes) if the combined catchment population of both houses is or would be less than 5 500.

In non-metropolitan areas, no new Neighbourhood House will be funded within a minimum 60 kilometre radius of an existing or proposed Neighbourhood House (or distance by road from the Neighbourhood House where a natural barrier like an estuary intervenes) if the combined catchment population of both houses is or would be less than 3 500.

Remoteness Thresholds

Many of the disadvantages that a community may face as a result of the degree of remoteness from a full range of services are arguably dealt with by the indicators used in the SEIFA index. However, a further, limited weighting is applied on the basis of remoteness for the purpose of Neighbourhood House funding categorisation (see attached chart). The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed an Australian index of remoteness that, in Tasmania, identifies four categories of remoteness. Greater Hobart is designated "Inner Regional", most of the rest of Tasmania is designated "Outer Regional", the west coast and the north east coastal strip around St Helens are designated "Remote" and Flinders, King and other Bass Strait Islands are designated "Very Remote".

Requirements for Establishing (state-funded) Neighbourhood Houses

» As an overriding principle, target funding of new Neighbourhood Houses to priority areas of highest need as defined by these criteria for funding.

» New category B houses will not be funded while there are any communities eligible for a category A House that do not yet have such a House.

» New Neighbourhood Houses must have a viable governing body, representative of a diversity of interests in the community, to be eligible for funding.

» New Neighbourhood Houses must provide an annual strategic plan and a report from a community consultation process in accordance with the program framework prior to being eligible for funding.

» The governing body (committee of management) must have not less than 10 active members with a quorum set at not less than 6 people, or numbers as defined by its constitution.

» To ensure diversity of representation and avoid conflicts of interest, not more than one other immediate family member of a person, or two representatives of any one group or organisation may be members of the governing body (committee of management) and/or staff at the same time.

» As far as practicable, new Neighbourhood Houses must be located geographically to best serve the spread of population in the catchment, except that where the majority of the population is located in one centre, the House will be located there.

SEIFA Index Table

SEIFA SCORE		> 1500 people	1500 to 1700	1700 to 2000	2000 to 2500	2500 to 3500	3500 to 5000	<5000
Below 700	Very Remote	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
	Remote	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
	Inner Regional	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
700-750	Very Remote	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
	Remote	X	B	A	A	A	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	B	B	A	A	A	A
	Inner Regional	X	B	B	A	A	A	A
750-800	Very Remote	X	B	B	A	A	A	A
	Remote	X	B	B	A	A	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	X	B	A	A	A	A
	Inner Regional	X	X	B	A	A	A	A
800-850	Very Remote	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
	Remote	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
	Inner Regional	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
850-900	Very Remote	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
	Remote	X	X	B	B	A	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	X	B	B	B	A	A
	Inner Regional	X	X	B	B	B	A	A
900-950	Very Remote	X	X	X	B	B	A	A
	Remote	X	X	X	B	B	A	A
	Outer Regional	X	X	X	B	B	B	A
	Inner Regional	X	X	X	B	B	B	A
950-1000	Very Remote	X	X	X	B	B	B	B
	Remote	X	X	X	B	B	B	B
	Outer Regional	X	X	X	B	B	B	B
	Inner Regional	X	X	X	B	B	B	B
Above 1000	Very Remote	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Remote	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Outer Regional	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Inner Regional	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

X = Not eligible for funding	B = Baseline funding (category B)	A = Higher needs funding (category A)

Notes

Notes

Neighbourhood House Program **Strategic Framework 2013-2018**
Department of Health and Human Services