



Chair's Report

The South Perth Learning Centre (**Centre**) has had a challenging Financial Year 2022-2023. When the borders opened after Covid, people understandably couldn't wait to travel, so our numbers declined. At the same time, costs have increased across the board.

The Centre had a managerial change. Danielle Desvaux who was the Centre Coordinator retired. We wish her well in her retirement. Didi Mudigdo was promoted to the role of Centre Coordinator. Pete Chuang was hired as the Arts and Culture Administrative Officer. As with any change, they have put their personal stamp on things and have been working very hard to make changes.

In this challenging environment, management, committee and our dedicated team of volunteers have been focusing on our future viability. We have looked outwards to see what other community Centres were doing and to make connections and engage with them.

The Centre hosted an afternoon tea for the regional representatives of the State's Link West Conference. Didi and Committee member Judy Genat attended the Conference and met members from Glyde-In and Kalamunda Learning Centre. We have visited both Community Centres, and they have visited us. We have a lot in common, for example we all started as childcare centres allowing mothers to socialize and develop skills.

We discovered that we face similar issues and challenges. We shared ideas on what works in each of our centres. We have agreed to work together where possible and to continue to share ideas for the longevity of all of us for our mutual advantage.

To this end, Didi conducted some computer courses financed by our Be Connected grant, at Kalamunda where they didn't have the expertise to do it themselves. This has enabled us to put new members against our Be Connected grant and added to our mailing list. Both Centres don't offer courses during term breaks, so they have agreed to publicise our talks during term breaks to their members.

Our networking was timely because after these meetings we learned that Atwell House in Melville had to close its doors due to insolvency. I stress we are **not** in this position, but it did confirm that our marketing sub-committee was focusing on the right direction to ensure we are better able to market our courses and maintain the long-term success of our Centre despite difficult times. It proved to us that we had not been 'asleep at the wheel' as the saying goes. Didi and Pete reached out to their teachers to help where possible. This has certainly engendered goodwill amongst the teachers and our Centre.

While on leave, Didi was proactive and visited a number of Learning Centres in Melbourne to compare what they offered and how they operated to contrast with what we offer and how we operate. It appears that they are predominantly funded by their Councils, which we are not, which give us more challenges.

Judy has developed a relationship with Tresillian Arts Centre in Nedlands. They introduced Judy to Richard

Gunning who delivered the highly successful, and sold out, talk on the *Introduction to the Art of Renaissance and the Story of Venice*. He will do another presentation at the Centre next year.

This year we hosted a Mahjong weekend competition. There were 96 competitors, and the winner was sent to play in the national competition in Brisbane. This was a highly successful event. We received positive feedback from the participants, and not only did it raise approximately \$2,000, but it was free publicity for us as we were mentioned in the media and subsequently increased our profile.

We recently hosted a UWA Internship focusing on information science through UWA McCusker Centre for Citizenship during our winter break. We advise McCusker what we require, and they choose the student to help us. The internship provides us with 100 hours of work for free. It was a great support for Didi.

We are focused on increasing the range of courses we offer and encouraging a new demographic to join us. The Centre needs to charge a fee for courses in order for them to be viable. However, larger organisations are now offering some of our courses for free. This obviously reduces our profitability because people can now attend for free what they used to have to pay for. This competition means we have to be more creative in the courses we offer to maintain and increase our membership. We are also focusing on increasing room rentals to ensure income for unused spaces.

We have continued with last year's decision to not to close the Centre down between terms. Hence, we offered new courses, talks, and movies during the term break to keep the Centre busy and earning money. This break we have had: *Write Your Life Story, Book of the Banned and Colour, Sense and Sensibility*.

Today I want to thank three of our Committee Members.

Anne Barnard has chosen to step down as Treasurer. Anne spent many hours ensuring that our financial systems were running smoothly and to prevent any anomalies arising as they had in the past. I personally would like to thank her for all the hours she has put into the Centre.

Our Secretary, Sarah Dunne, had to step down due to personal reasons. We were very sorry to see her go, and we wish her well.

Louise Woodward resigned during the year due to competing demands. Louise had been a great asset and specialized in Human Resource issues. The Centre is in a better place re HR issues due to her involvement and I wish her well in her career.

At today's meeting we have received nominations for the following 2-year tenure:

- Myself, Lisa Anstis as the Committee's Chair;
- Kaye Mulligan as Vice Chair;
- Janet Renner as Treasurer;
- General members: Anthony Armson
 - Denise Bird
 - Judy Genat
 - Sharon Huges

The second group are for positions that were a 2-year tenure but were vacated in the first year. We have received a nomination for the following position:

- Sandra Cook as Secretary

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank the Centre's amazing team of volunteers. Your constant efforts and commitment are integral to the Centre's success year-on-year. We would not survive without you.

Finally, I would like to thank Didi and Pete for appreciating the potentially difficult position the Centre could find itself in and for continually coming up with many mitigating strategies.

Lisa Anstis
Executive Committee Chair
South Perth Learning Centre Inc.