

# President's report to 2022 AGM

This seems to me to have been a year of, in large part, marking time waiting for the scourge of Covid to finally get out of the way of our lives. That said, we have not been totally passive, and some progress, modest as it may be, has been made.

On 12<sup>th</sup> October last year we had 1,414 members. The meeting notice for this October's monthly meeting went out to 1,240 recipients, a reduction of 12% in 12 months. I don't know how much the reduction is due to Covid and how much is just natural attrition, but I do look forward to the ultimate transformation of the club into something suited to a whole new post baby boomer, post pandemic culture, offering facilities and activities that can attract new members and strengthen our finances. That transformation is underway, and should gather pace as we put Covid behind us.

The financial deficit from ordinary activities for the year amounted to (\$39,410) compared to (\$23,700) for FY21. Income has been impacted by falling memberships, low interest on term deposits and other investments, and reduced raffle income etc from the monthly meetings. We are continuing to focus on reducing expenses where we are able to, such as Internet and telephone contracts. Further reductions will be made in the exorbitant cost of the office printer contract which ends in October, and changing power companies in the current financial year FY23. Owners Corporation fees are also continuing to rise and impact our financial position. You will find full financials in the Treasurer's report.

The big project for the year has no doubt been the ongoing transition away from Microsoft and to Google Workspace. The transition is now nearly complete, with some mopping up being done for members who still have data in Microsoft OneDrive. It turned out to be a much bigger task than I think anyone anticipated. A big thank you to Hugh Macdonald, Stephen Zuluaga, Harry Lewis, Stewart Gruneklee, Geoff Amor, Philip Lynch and the iHelp team.

As part of the transition our club online social forum has moved from Yammer to Google Spaces. There was a lot of to and fro discussion about which platform to use, but in the end the crowd decision was to use the Google platform because it requires no technical management. Thank you to Greg Eden, with support from Kevin Martin and Dennis Parsons, for setting up the groups within Spaces.

There has been an ongoing amount of work done in transforming the Moorabbin club rooms to make spaces more suited to a modern technology club, with the end objective of recruiting new, younger members. Needless to say that work has been hampered by lockdowns and related restrictions. Quite a number of people have contributed to the club rooms. Stephen Zuluaga has been a source of drive and energy in the physical work, with input from several others. As part of this the committee decided to change our modern brand name to Melbourne Creator's Collective, a name that is aligned with the younger generation's thinking.

Rob Brown represents us on the Owners' Corporation (O.C.) committee and also acts as facilities manager. Unfortunately there are a pair of problems concerning the property. One of the other owners is causing huge ructions. For some reason he, and he alone, believes the 3<sup>rd</sup> party property management service, which works on behalf of the O.C. is doing a bad job, and is seeking to have them replaced by an administrator. This involves VCAT hearings and all kinds of fuss and carry on. Meanwhile, some essential and potentially very expensive maintenance on our building cannot be tackled – the longer it's deferred the more it is likely to cost.

Several people help out with the AV systems and computer hardware, including Sean Clarke, Hugh Macdonald, Avon Fernando, and Chris Hayes.

The club website at melbpc.org.au is a dynamic entity, undergoing constant upgrades and changes. The web development team comprises David Hatton, Kelvin Cording, and John Swale, with Rob Brown providing liaison.

The Coder Dojo initiative, run by Hugh Macdonald, Avon Fernando, Michael Adams, and Stephen Zuluaga has been successful, with a number of kids turning up on Saturdays, accompanied by parents, to explore “coding” together. For a while it was conducted on Zoom.

At the other end of the age spectrum we have the BeConnected program, run by tutors Stewart Gruneklee and Geoff Amor, assisted by Steph Lancaster and Choy Lai. This provides non-member seniors with free advice on using computers and “devices” each Wednesday at Moorabbin. A small grant was secured, subject to documenting a certain number of completed “activities”. With about half the grant period elapsed, the team have documented about 150 activities out of the 300 required to meet the grant criteria. Like the Dojo, this program is seen as a community service as much as anything else, but certainly helps give the club visibility.

iHelp continues to be a service well-used by members, with some 55 members seeking assistance each month. Well over 300 members have been supported during 2022. During the past year the iHelp team has said goodbye to two of its longest-serving members, who had responded to enquiries week in week out ever since 2002 - Kevin Dempster and Leighton West. In addition to his member support role Leighton developed the iHelp web pages and served for many years as team Secretary. Mike Allison has recently resigned after a distinguished five years of service. He recently took over the iHelp website support role, as well as managing the Dial Help service. The iHelp team has welcomed a new member, Chris McKeown. In addition Geoff Amor and Phillip Lynch, who have been members of the Office 365 to Google Workspace Transition Team, have moved on to the iHelp team. By now all iHelp team members are available to answer requests relating to our new Google Workspace services.

Much of running a club like this involves mundane but necessary activities. In just the last couple of weeks Kevin Martin has volunteered his time and instrumentation to “Test and Tag” electrical equipment at Moorabbin. There is a statutory requirement that this be done every so many years, and had been overlooked. Thanks to Kevin we have saved a lot of money that would have been spent having it done by a paid contractor.

The Moorabbin front office is run by ever patient, ever obliging Malin Robertsson. On her days off Steph Lancaster and Bill Moss are the regular volunteers who keep the doors open.

Attendance at monthly general meetings via Zoom has been quite comparable to what we had with physical meetings, if anything a bit higher. That says something about what may evolve when the dangers of Covid are truly behind us. I have been reluctant to return to face to face meetings, simply due to the age profile of our membership, and potential vulnerabilities.

All in all we have handled the transition to online meetings well and remain in overall good shape. For that I would like to thank, without naming anyone lest I forget someone, all the SIG leaders, volunteers, iHelp team and committee members who have all contributed during the year.

Being president is an interesting experience for me. My whole career was in small companies, where I only interacted with very few people on a day to day basis. As president I have learned much more than ever before to identify, recognise and accept the differences between the people I work with, both in and

outside the committee, and to leverage those differences for best effect. The committee I have worked with has changed in membership a bit over these three years, though a strong and stable core has remained. There has been no dissension, no ego stoking, no disharmony. Stephen Zuluaga as Vice President has injected energy and enthusiasm into club transformation projects, as well as applying his skills in IT security to tighten our defences. Peter McConnachie as Treasurer has kept the finances in good order. Harry Lewis has contributed on many fronts including iHelp and the Google transition, and is also a dependable source of statistics and club data. Stewart Gruneklee helps keep us on course with processes, procedures, and The Rules, and drove the BeConnected initiative. Rob Brown has taken care of building/property matters and is our liaison with the contractor who maintains our CiviCRM database system, as well as guiding the web development team. Hugh Macdonald has been a major contributor to the Google transition as well as editing the newsletter. Peter Boin has worked quietly behind the scenes contributing his considerable programming/IT skills to developing the QR code attendance system. Last, but definitely not least, a special mention of Aidan Kelly. Aidan took on what I think must be the most demanding role, that of Club Secretary. It has definitely been a steep learning curve for him, but he has stood up, made his mistakes, regrouped and carried on, always with seeming good humour.

I am standing down as President, but have nominated as a regular committee member for 2022/23.



David Stonier-Gibson,

President 2021/22, Melbourne PC User Group

18<sup>th</sup> October 2022