



**THE
WESTSIDER**

the voice
of the west

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022–2023**

THE WESTSIDER NEWSPAPER

PROGRAM MANAGER REPORT

The Westsider, a monthly community newspaper, operates as a not-for-profit entity under the banner of Inner West Community Media Incorporated, functioning successfully within a community partnership funding framework with assistance from Local Impact.

As a 100% independent publication, we serve as a dedicated platform for community journalism and the inclusion of public submissions. Our mission is to be an accessible, relevant advocate for the people, places, organisations and activities of Melbourne's inner west. We seek to nurture a cycle of awareness, engagement, interaction and participation within the local community.

Founded in 2014 by myself, with seed funding from community media entrepreneur Joel Cohen, The Westsider provided upskilling for long-term unemployed people while fostering valuable social networks.

Today, the paper continues to advocate for the people, places, stories, and events that collectively define our unique and diverse community.

Nevertheless, 2022 was a difficult year: people were coming out of the lockdown blues, volunteer engagement was hard to attract and people were suffering from financial stress. Asking the community for stories and time was challenging. Our core team struggled through and we kept on going. So successful were our collective efforts they were recognised by the Community News Association of Victoria Awards 2022, achieving:

- First place - Best Design & Layout
- Second place - Best Feature Article
- Second place - Best Community Newspaper.

In contrast, 2023 has been wonderful. With the appointment in March of Barbara Heggen, an ABC podcast producer, journalist and local resident to the role of Editor came a new energy. Having a seasoned professional meant we had credibility and brought a new level of professionalism.

We have a whole new group of invested writers who are delightful and it's given the team so much joy.

Furthermore, we have overseen:

- Our largest ever papers at 36 pages.
- The launch of a partnership with RMIT Journalism Department through which The Westsider received six investigative journalism students as part of their studies.
- A Maribyrnong Elevate Business Grant awarded to the paper.
- The signing up of new partners in Footscray Community Arts, Bad Writer's Club, Community Bike Hub and McManus Lawyers.
- The signing up of eight new regular writers.
- The delivery of 20 branded newspaper stands thanks to a grant from Tim Watts MP.
- Our launch on TikTok thanks to a RMIT marketing student and Westsider volunteer.

Looking ahead, for us it's not about growth but sustainability. The funding of a new website means we can provide an accessible online paper. We have marketing students ready to deliver a digital strategy; investigative journalists preparing their stories; our first food and drink guide to be published over summer; the first ever 44-page December/January double issue; the exploration of multimedia stories.

If we continue to be the trusted voice of the community, volunteers will come and join us and trust us to publish their stories.

Kelly Kayne
Founder and Volunteer Manager



**THE
WESTSIDER**

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Photo: Vicky Palmieri



228

STORIES
WRITTEN



51000

PAGE
VIEWS



82500

PAPERS
PRINTED



88

WRITERS
ENGAGED



871

VOLUNTEER
HOURS



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Local Impact's purpose is to grow community ideas through participation, support and connection in Melbourne's inner west.

localimpact.org.au