



2019

Annual Report

North Melbourne
Language & Learning



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Our Mission

To give adult residents of North Melbourne the language and learning needed to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Our Vision

NMLL will be North Melbourne's leading centre for the CALD Community, recognised for enriching and empowering the lives of the people it serves.



Chair Report

Committee of Management 2019

Chair

Mark O'Neil

Members

Catharine O'Grady (Vice-Chair)

David Lansley (Treasurer)

Catherine Lander (Secretary)

Tim Conboy

Sarah Alexander

As I sit at home in splendid isolation, necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions, reflecting on the 2019 performance of North Melbourne Language & Learning (NMLL), I am struck by memories of the smiling, joyful faces of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and how much I miss the vibrant, colourful atmosphere of our modest neighbourhood house. In 2019 of course, we had yet to experience pandemic lockdown, physical distancing or the need for a steady supply of hand sanitiser.

It is my pleasure and honour once again to report on the activities and successes of another year at NMLL.

With the Committee of Management membership and NMLL management stable throughout the whole year, we were able to concentrate on updating and streamlining policies and supporting the NMLL team as they built credible three year strategic and operational plans.

The Committee is, as always, extremely grateful for the love and dedication shown by our admin staff, teachers, community development staff and volunteers to the running of the organisation. You are its heart and soul. How you do what you do within the straining, limited budgets under which we operate is little short of miraculous. It is the Committee's privilege to support the work of an organisation that contributes so much to building the social capital of our community. Each and every person who participates in an NMLL program is imbued with not only the specific skills contained in that program, but also with a living connection to other people in the community. So, to our students: we admire your eagerness to learn that brings you through our doors and into our classrooms. Thank you for being open to learning new things, being open to other cultures and for embracing unfamiliar customs. **Thank you for choosing NMLL as the place to make life-changing decisions to integrate with local communities and as the place for improving your own work prospects. We applaud you all, teachers, students, staff and volunteers. You are NMLL.**

To the wider community: come and join us. Enrol in a class, volunteer at, or participate in, an event or just plain come along and see what we do.

None of the great work that happens at NMLL would be possible without the involvement of our sponsors and funding organisations and the financial support they provide.

You are all crucial to our provision of critical services to our community. We are also grateful for the work and support of our Accountant, Robert Pisano who has supported NMLL for many years now and is integral to NMLL's financial management.

All of this activity is managed by Cliff Rundle, NMLL's General Manager, who is the glue that keeps everything together but also the oil that allows it all to run smoothly. It is his hard work behind the scenes on the inside that gives NMLL its peaceful, efficient air on the outside. It is a rare skill to make running a complex organisation in an uncertain not-for-profit environment appear as simple as he does.

Whatever your part in supporting or running our wonderful neighbourhood house, thank you.

So, on behalf of the Committee of Management of North Melbourne Language and Learning Inc., it is my privilege and pleasure to share with you the Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 2019.

Peace, love and joy to you all.

MARK O'NEIL

Chair



General Manager Report

It is a pleasure and privilege to contribute to NMLL's 2019 annual report.

This is my fourth report. Each year there are so many activities, events and stories it is hard to capture the essence of it all and do justice to the collective effort. It's no easier on this occasion.

2019 was a pivotal year, when the many activities coalesced around the 2019- 2021 Strategic Plan and extraordinary progress was made aligning and balancing the internal and external components of NMLL's mission.

There are many threads and layers to NMLL's work. The following brushes the surface.

Governance

The Committee of Management (CoM) had a busy year overseeing the Strategic Plan and an extensive review of policies and governance systems. Although small, NMLL is complex and highly regulated, a consequence of nearly a dozen funding streams and multiple training compliance regimes. These reviews better

aligned organisational priorities, business growth, resourcing and operations.

In turn, the Finance and Risk Management subcommittee (FaRM) broadened the scope of the Risk Management Plan to embrace the whole business, rather than the requirements of particular contracts.

The Committee of Management, with the assistance of pro bono lawyers Clayton Utz, commenced an application for DGR charitable status. If successful, this revision will open access to additional funding streams able to resource the important engagement and advocacy work of the community development team.

Leadership and Strategy

The 2019- 2021 Strategic Plan is the strength behind much of NMLL's work, evident in the enhanced internal alignment, the stronger external adaption and the advocacy work implemented throughout 2019.

Ongoing whole of staff consultations lead to the development and refinement of the Engagement, Education and Employment Pathways flow chart. These discussions produced clearer pathways for students progressing from their starting point to completion of the EAL 3 course and progression to employment and further education, where appropriate. The dialogue also identified gaps in the pathways which were subsequently addressed with new tailored pre-accredited courses.





Several NMLL staff also assumed a stronger external leadership and advocacy role, as per the Strategic Plan, evidenced by NMLL's leadership of the local NAC network; participation in the ACFE Summit discussions contributing to the Ministerial Statement about the pivotal importance of ACE in Victoria's education system; participation in the Executive Committee of ACEVic, the peak body for Victorian LLOs; joining the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) and representations to local government and politicians.

All of these activities were important in raising awareness of local issues and proposing redress. These activities also enhanced NMLL's profile in the local area and in the sector as a progressive, informed can-do organisation.

Education & Compliance

The Education area has dealt with many changes over the last 12 months, as outlined in Sam Navarria's report. Aside from embedding the EAL courses, the changes were intended to address expressed needs of the communities, develop individual self-confidence and strength, improve the quality of education and build pathways to education and employment.

Also significant is the further integration of education and community development activities. The Education and Compliance Report cites two ground-breaking activities that sparked the interest of the ACE peak body, ACEVic, Melbourne Polytechnic and brought invitations to present at several state-wide conferences.

Every five years NMLL has to engage in an intensive re-registration audit to be approved to operate as an RTO. NMLL's audit is expected in mid-2020. Preparation commenced in 2019 with the review of organisational policies and a rigorous trial audit. This confirmed NMLL's strengths and weaknesses and identified areas for improvement. Progressive improvements have been made but the level of resourcing required is a constant and considerable challenge for a small organisation. Completion of the re-registration audit will provide a solid base for the next stage of the Strategic Plan.

Community Development

Loretta Asquini's report outlines the many areas of activity undertaken by the CD (Community Development) Team.

From a management perspective, there were several important developments. Firstly, the CD Team strengthened its practice model through a series of internal discussions. These discussions were clarifying for all participants and highlighted the common purpose of CD and adult education. In turn this built understanding, assisted with internal alignment, pathways development and joint projects. The final rendering is a refined self-explanatory model which, I believe, enables funding organisations and others to grasp how CD empowers local communities and is a catalyst for social change.

NMLL also invited several services addressing local need to operate on a rotating basis from NMLL's offices. These services include the WorkNow JVEN, a work search and placement service: a monthly legal clinic offered by Inner Melbourne Community Legal (IMCL); a monthly visit by the multi-cultural services officer (MSO) from the local Centrelink office and a monthly visit from the City of Melbourne's local Community Engagement partner. Each of these services were promoted through NMLL's activities and classes and linked with NMLL education and CD services. For example: **EAL 2 and 3 students were encouraged to undertake additional job application and interview preparation training and to sign up with the JVEN. As a result 12 people, mostly current or past students, gained employment.** Others participated in interviews or selection processes for the first time.



NMLL also hosted a new Homework Club which was generously resourced by The Centre, a nearby LLO and member of the INC. The Homework Club provided a wonderful, fun and very useful support for up to 15 children in years 4-10 and proved very popular. I am very grateful to Tom Seddon, Frances Macmillan and all the volunteers who participated. It was a great success and in 2020 NMLL will seek to resource and grow the initiative to meet demand.

Administration

All staff are ably supported by the small Administration Team lead by Marie Toga and Manatosh Chakma. In a small complex RTO/LLO/Neighbourhood House dealing with diverse CALD communities, the range of the administrative obligations and tasks are mindboggling. From the complexities of attendance uploads, assessment management to fixing data projectors, they have it covered. NMML is blessed to have this skilful, effective, helpful and ever-smiling duo.

I'd also like to acknowledge the over and above commitment of two long term contractors. Firstly Carlo Carabella, NMML's ITC contractor, who has patiently educated me and more importantly assisted NMML build the foundations of an ITC system that will support future growth. Secondly, Robert Pisano, NMML's accountant, who over many years, has advised and guided NMML to a reasonable financial position. Thank you both.

To finalise, I'd like to acknowledge and thank everyone for their contribution.

As the Chairman has noted, the NMML staff do a wonderful job and are dedicated professionals. Thank you to the members of Committee of Management for your commitment, guidance and support. To the generous volunteers who contribute in so many ways, thank you, NMML would not be the same without you.

NMML is a special place and does good work. There is much to do and I'm looking forward to working with you and the communities for the next 12 months.

CLIFF RUNDLE

General Manager



Community Development Report

A connected and
empowered
community



Working to engage the local community

The community development (CD) program works with adults from the socially and culturally diverse communities in the inner North-West of Melbourne. The focus for the 2019 CD program continues from 2018 priorities which have been:

- Employment support and pathways
- Volunteering
- Intercultural celebrations and workshops
- Skill recognition and development
- Co-design practice underpinning CD programs and activities

In addition to the above areas, NMLL CD team have focused on:

- Working to further integrate CD and Education activities to provide participants with a broader range of experiences to support concrete learning and employment outcomes
- Building relationships with key community groups in the local community to ensure activities delivered are relevant, complementary and collaborative
- Engaging in more advocacy for and with our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, including those communities living in public housing in the inner north west of Melbourne

The highlights for 2019 are outlined in the following sections

Intercultural celebrations and workshop program and events

NMLL provides yearly opportunities for intercultural exchange and learning to occur through intercultural celebrations and workshops as well as a range of other community activities and events. 2019 highlights include:

Connected Cultures-Empowered Communities (CC-EC) is an employment pathways program that places value on traditional skills in cooking, and arts and crafts and aimed at engaging culturally diverse community members who experience multiple barriers to employment and education opportunities. Participants are trained to develop and deliver public workshops based on their unique cultural traditions, providing an important medium for learning and respectful understanding across cultures.

Eleven women enrolled in the program with three paid to present cooking demonstrations at 'The Village Festival.' Two women prepared for a public cooking workshop, five women completed the Service Stars program following the CC-EC course, six women enrolled to undertake their Safe Food Handling Certificate.





Through this, NMLL supported students to practise their English literacy skills through telling their own story, practise and participate in public speaking and build their self-confidence.

Volunteer events - NMLL volunteers participated in a series of morning teas to celebrate their contribution during National Volunteer Week. In addition, volunteer experiences were collected and posted onto the NMLL Facebook page. 20 volunteers participated in a special professional development session focusing on the settlement experience of new migrants.

End of Year Celebration - 60 students, committee members and staff celebrated NMLL students' achievements with shared lunch.

Cherry Picking Excursion - 92 community members embarked on this popular annual event where people gathered to meet and spend time with other people from the CALD communities in North Melbourne.

'The Story Harvest' event, held during Cultural Diversity Week, showcased films produced during the Stories without Borders Project. This event showcased the participation of 84 people from 23 different cultural backgrounds, speaking 22 different languages, and aged 11 – 86 years of age.

NMLL students participated in the '**Words Nourish Neighbours**' program. Six NMLL students participated in two storytelling workshops and follow-up mentor sessions with the lead artist, to prepare for presenting to an audience of 100 people. NMLL supported students to practice their English literacy skills through telling their own story, participating in public speaking and building their self-confidence. This was a seminal experience for all NMLL students who took part. Participation also provided valuable exposure for NMLL at a large event – showcasing and promoting the work of NMLL to a broader community audience.

Vibrant and diverse volunteer program

NMLL's Volunteer Program is an important feature of all NMLL activities, whether supporting our students or learners in the English classes or supporting the community development team to deliver cultural and community activities and events. The NMLL volunteer program focuses on supporting and engaging the CALD communities.

In 2019, our community were able to continue to participate as volunteers in the following ways:

- Classroom Support Volunteers
- Community Development Support Volunteers
 - Volunteer Program and CD Cultural Events
- Administration Support Volunteers

In summary, in 2019:

- 29 volunteers actively participated in the NMLL volunteer program per term
- Volunteers contributed 2,455 hours or \$102,423 of value to NMLL community programs
- Approximately 50% of volunteers were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)



In 2019, NMLL expanded the Administration Support Volunteer opportunities in response to expressed community need for more office-based practical work experience to support people's job prospects, as well as to support their English practice.

The Administration Support Volunteer Role has been effective in supporting the Administration team and has already achieved employment outcomes for some volunteers:

"...with just over 3 months (of volunteering) with NMLL, it has been a pleasant and invaluable experience. I'm immensely grateful to get the opportunity to volunteer at NMLL. It helped me get work experience necessary to gain employment in Australia. Everyone in NMLL was considerate of me being new to the working environment in Australia and patiently guided me through my experience here. As an Admin assistant, I could learn new skills and computer software (packages) which helped me in getting a job."

Administration Support Volunteer May 2019.



Men's Engagement

Following on from the work NMLL commenced in 2018, in 2019 NMLL continued to engage with and meet with men from the local community to deliver on key priority issues identified. Two sessions were delivered which focused on access to employment and housing. As a result of this preliminary work, NMLL was successful in securing a grant for the Men's Talk program. This program was scheduled to commence in 2020, however it is postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak and restrictions imposed.

Community Development and Education Integration

During 2019, CD and Education activities and curriculum were centred on four themes:

- Australia – our land
- Pathways to employment and education
- Health and wellbeing
- Multiculturalism

The integrated approach to NMLL activities provides participants with a range of opportunities and experiences. This approach supports their English learning, employment and volunteer prospects as well as building confidence to participate in all aspects of social and community life. The success of this integrated approach was highlighted through student participation in the 'Portage Project' a community development collaboration between Arts House and NMLL, to strengthen community connections between the culturally and economically diverse communities living in Inner North Melbourne as part of the five-year Refuge Project. This experiential learning excursion provided students with hands-on activities involving English literacy, numeracy, and team work. Eighteen students attended a raft building workshop (students and teachers reporting this activity as a 2019 highlight). Thirteen NMLL students secured paid casual work experience as gallery attendants at the Portage exhibition.

Another successful example of this integrated approach is the 'Volunteering: A pathway to Employment' course successfully delivered for the first time in 2019. The course was developed as a result of expressed community needs from a 2018 community development project. The course aims to enhance employment outcomes for CALD community members through networking and volunteering. The course was highly successful. Eighteen people enrolled in this course, thirteen participants secured employment opportunities either during or directly following the completion of the course, three participants secured volunteer positions and all participants completed updated resumes and cover letters for future employment applications. The majority of participants reported a significant increase in knowledge and confidence to research and apply for volunteer and paid employment roles.



LORETTA ASQUINI

Community Development Coordinator

Education & Compliance Report



2019 has been a year of opportunity


We have seen the full implementation of the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Framework; the continuing collaboration between Education and Community Development (CD); a greater focus on numeracy and literacy, including digital literacy; and the evolution of a delivery model cognisant of the skills and knowledge people need for improved participation in employment and further education. As with every year, the attention to compliance remains a focus and a challenge facing small to medium sized organisations like NMLL.

After numerous years delivering the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE), NMLL took the opportunity to amend its scope and adopt the nationally accredited EAL Framework, and specifically Course in Initial EAL, Course in EAL, and Certificates 1, 2 and 3 in EAL (Access). After some teething problems that were addressed with professional development and a suite of readymade assessment tasks, the implementation ran smoothly and the delivery of this new suite of courses settled well with teachers, administration staff and students. The EAL Framework has a range and flexibility that gives staff and students a broad choice of units of study borrowed from other curriculum frameworks. **This greater choice enriches the educational experience that we provide to better respond to student need.** The next step for NMLL is to add to its scope of delivery other specific qualifications which are part of the EAL Framework.

The collaboration between Education and the CD arm of NMLL has seen productive activity and results. Along with the annual themes that are agreed upon between the two units, there have been two other programs and a major cross sector engagement activity worth reporting. The thematic approach relates to areas of interest and significance such as agency knowledge and engagement, opportunity for volunteering, health and leisure, study options and employment, all within the logic of the education and vocational training and employment engagement model of NMLL. The collaboration between Education and CD was prominent in capacity building projects such as Effective Volunteering in the English Language Classroom and in Volunteering: a Pathway to Employment. These two programs, following due review, are worth offering again to the community of North Melbourne and surrounds. A third area of note was a cross-sectoral, community based activity in Refuge, a community building and awareness rising project managed by Arts House, focusing on climate change and global warming in which students from Certificate 1 and Certificate 2 in EAL, their teacher and other staff participated. The teacher and I had the pleasure of presenting this project based approach at a professional development day at Victoria University, and the presentation was received with great interest from practitioners and managers across the adult education sector.



This project based approach to training went well beyond the classroom and presented education and logistic challenges to staff and students who engaged with a network of health, environment and Arts House on a theme central to our times.



The world has changed dramatically since the pen and paper approach to developing basic literacy skills, and although these skills are still at the centre of education, it is digital literacy that is becoming more and more a necessary skill area for our students and the whole of society.

Literacy in the broadest sense, which includes the area of working with numbers, graphs, and maps, usually separated under its own category of numeracy, has always been part and parcel of the work that teachers do with students whose level of English language proficiency ranges from no proficiency at all through to intermediate. Literacy and numeracy have become more prominent in the eyes of policy makers, politicians and educators. This year we have reviewed our pre training assessment of students to be more specific in the areas of numeracy and digital literacy, and we hope to prosecute those areas with greater attention and specificity in the following year. The world has changed dramatically since the pen and paper approach to developing basic literacy skills, and although these skills are still at the centre of education, it is digital literacy that is becoming more and more a necessary skill area for our students and the whole of society. **We have much to do in the digital literacy space, because it is this ‘new’ literacy that is pervasive and is required to allow access to knowledge and participation in societies and communities both local and global.** Without it, the world of experience and action, of opportunities is limited and successful engagement and participation in all facets of society suffers. This aspect of education will require greater resourcing and will receive greater attention.

Student teachers

This year, like every year, we have had student teachers on practicum at NMLL. The University of Melbourne and Victoria University entrust NMLL to provide the right environment for their post graduate students in the Diploma and Masters degrees who are completing their specialist teacher training at NMLL.

The relationship with universities recognises that our staff are not only highly qualified, holding specialist post graduate diplomas, masters degrees and PhDs, but are also highly experienced, skilled and resourceful to provide guidance, support, mentoring and supervision to teachers in training. They do a highly specialised job with diligence, expertise and dedication to prepare new specialist teachers for the adult education workforce. NMLL is held in high esteem.

The programs that we run in education are funded by the State and the Federal governments and these include the Victorian Department of Education and Training with the accredited Skills First programs, and the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) pre accredited programs. Federally, we are funded by the Department of Home Affairs to deliver through a partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). Regardless of funding source, all students participate in the education and community engagement programs of NMLL. We apply a practical inclusive approach to all students, whether they are enrolled in employment focused programs such as the one offered in the last quarter of this year in partnership with Service Stars preparing people for hospitality employment



in large community events, or training using Apps, or approaching government and private agencies, or successful settlement. There are different contracts that govern each funding source, and the accountability and contractual compliance can be quite taxing.

I am most grateful to the teachers, volunteers, CD colleagues, and the administration staff – the unsung heroes – that make the education delivery one that continues to reinvent and reshape itself to respond to the needs of communities that are part of NMLL.

SAM NAVARRIA

Education and Compliance Coordinator



Financial Report

For the year ended 31 December 2019

Summary of results

	2019	2018
Income	676,914	755,700
Expenditure	675,754	755,425
Net surplus for year	1,160	275
Cash held at end year	278,286	179,191
Other short-term assets	72,822	109,966
Long-term fixed assets	169,000	192,937
Total liabilities	203,901	167,047
Net assets at end year	316,207	315,047



Note: Summary figures used in this report are extracted from the full annual financial accounts of North Melbourne Language & Learning (NMLL) for the year ended 31 December 2019. The full accounts provide more details on the financial performance and position of NMLL, including a description of the accounting policies adopted, explanatory notes, and the independent auditor's report.

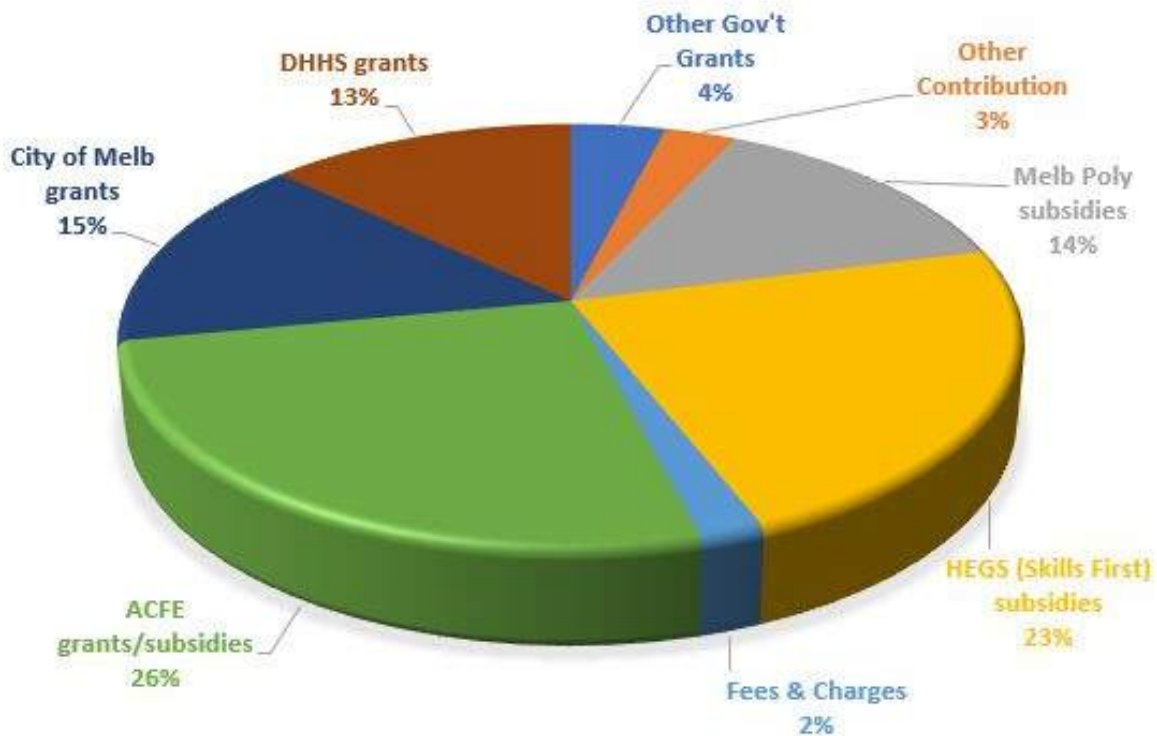
Treasurer Report

North Melbourne Language & Learning (NMLL) recorded income for the year of \$676,900 and incurred expenditure of \$675,760, resulting in a small annual surplus of \$1,160. This is the fourth year in a row that NMLL has achieved an operating surplus, and represents a good outcome in a challenging operating environment.

Income was lower than the previous year mainly due to reductions in some government grants relating to one-off projects. In response to this reduced income, expenditure was also partly reduced and carefully controlled overall, kept similar or lower in most categories compared to spending in 2018. This allowed NMLL to continue to offer a range of education and community development programs to meet the varied and changing needs of our community.

Net assets at the end of the year totalled \$316,207, of which \$169,000 was in long-term physical assets (including building improvements). The balance of \$147,207 effectively comprised the working capital required to support NMLL's ongoing operations.

Main sources of income



The main sources of income in 2019 were:

- Adult Community & Further Education (ACFE) funding for pre-accredited courses and community learning and capacity-building programs/projects
- Skills First program funding to support delivery of accredited English courses
- Melbourne Polytechnic funding for AMEP classes for migrants and refugees
- City of Melbourne community services funding for neighbourhood house activities and community development programs
- Department of Health and Human Services funding for neighbourhood house coordination
- Victorian Multicultural Commission funding for both the Micro Business and Stories without Borders projects
- City of Moonee Valley grant funding for Connected Cultures project and Micro Business program support
- All other sources, including small grants from other government sources, and earned revenue such as student fees and bank interest

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 virus, 2020 will be an extremely challenging year. We have actively sought to limit the potential impact on our income, including through accessing the government assistance available to NMLL, while continuing to provide as many programs for our students and the community as possible. The commitment, support and goodwill of our funding partners, our loyal and dedicated staff, and our volunteers, here been critical in meeting the extraordinary challenges that NMLL has faced. [What we have achieved would not have been possible without your exceptional commitment. We look forward to working together to realise our aim of helping our participants achieve life-changing outcomes at this especially difficult time.](#)

Thanks & Acknowledgements

A sincere thank you to all our supporters from the North Melbourne community and beyond. Your contribution makes an immeasurable difference to the lives of many.





North Melbourne
Language & Learning

www.nmll.org.au

P: 03 9326 7447

enquiries@nmll.org.au

North Melbourne Language & Learning
Ground Floor, 33 Alfred Street, North Melbourne
Victoria, 3051