



# 2023

## ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2023 Snapshot



**719**  
Members

**4,626**  
Friends

**1085**  
Supporters

**34**  
Baptisms



**282**  
Youth  
Reached

**66**  
Next steps  
on Youth  
Camp

**8**  
Young Adult  
Small Groups

**102**  
Young Adults  
Serving



**7.5k**  
Hours  
Watched

**17k**  
Livestream  
Views

**28.6k**  
Views



**+94%**  
Social  
Engagement

Looking back on 2023, I am so thankful to God that we have a strong and vibrant God fearing and God honouring community, seeking His will every day. Stepping into the role of Chair of Church Council in the second half of 2023, I have felt the very clear calling from God to be wise, careful and considerate in all that we do, our work is far from finished.

The NewHope Council is served by 7 nominated members plus two staff members. In 2023 we welcomed four new faces to Church Council, and whilst it is naturally sad to say thank you and farewell to those retiring Council members, the Council's breadth of skills, energy and passion to serve NewHope has never felt so strong.

We have faced many challenges this year, including how best to manage NewHope's financial limitations. God continues to provide and show the path forward, but we need to continually lean into these challenges and be sure that we are doing His will as He would want us to.

In December 2023, we held a significant Strategy Planning day with strong input from everyone present. There is still a great deal of work to finalise our refreshed strategy, but I am excited at how this will help to inform and direct us as we consider the core focus areas for NewHope in the future. The themes of depth and breadth of quality relationships with the strengthening of NewHope's community by deepening each individual's connection to our Lord and Savior were exciting and I am looking forward to seeing how this will impact our community in the future.

I feel incredibly blessed to be in this position to serve NewHope as Chair of Church Council and for the opportunities that lie ahead of us. Our community at NewHope is special, with so much to be thankful for and with many opportunities that lie before us. Praise God for his wonderful blessing in 2023!

**Tristan Ellett**

Chair of Church Council



Dear NewHope Members and Supporters,

Greetings in Jesus, and heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support throughout the year.

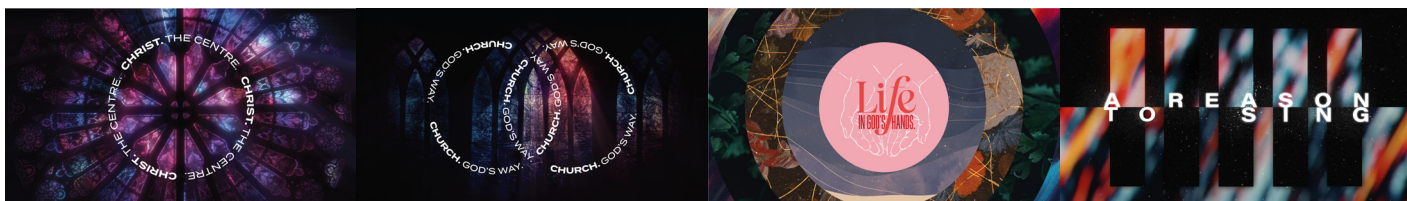
It feels to me, as if we turned an important corner in 2023. There is a road Janet and I sometimes drive towards the coast. After a long boring run, through kilometres of 'nothing', the car goes gently around a corner, and suddenly, there is the ocean! It changes the feel of our travels.

Something like that happened as we advanced through 2023, and by year's end we were sensing God's pleasure in so many beautiful ways. Below you will read about some of these joys and blessings (mingled still with struggles and losses, for these are always a part of our earthly lives). Give God thanks, and lift your eyes up to see his bounty. Fix your heart on the vast ocean of our Father's kindness, and give Him praise.

Your commitment is key to the growth, blessing and fruitfulness that we are celebrating today. Read this annual report with a full heart and a prayerful passion to see and celebrate more of the Lord at work in our midst.

### **Preaching, Worship and Prayer Ministries 2023:**

- In 2023 we delved into four powerful teaching series. Many of us will be able to celebrate moments of insight, renewal, healing, dedication and blessing as you take time to revisit these themes.
  - Christ. The Centre (Ephesians 1-3)
  - Church. God's Way (Ephesians 4-6)
  - Life in God's Hands
  - A Reason to Sing
- A strong emphasis on prayer before and after our Sunday worship gatherings (and through the week), fosters a vital atmosphere of engagement and an outbursting of God's Kingdom all around us.
- Communion, testimony, stewardship and service were special focuses during the year.



## Ministry Highlights and Challenges:

- Nearly all our ministries experienced gradual growth with increasingly consistent attendance through the year. We welcomed many new faces.
- The Leaders Launch and the 'Listening and Discernment Night' proved to be successful, providing valuable input for the leadership of the church.
- A decade of faithful ministry in our Farsi language congregation. Congratulations!
- Senior Staff engagement with youth camp in April – we had a great time!
- Sale of the Medical Centre for strategic development.
- Addressing historic abuse considerations with care and diligence.
- Strengthened giving through a renewed focus on stewardship.
- Three Family Forums were held in 2023, addressing: Indigenous Reconciliation (8 May), Climate (8 Aug), and Sexuality (22 Nov). We appreciate Leigh Cameron and Karen Naylor for facilitating these critical conversations. (There is a fuller report below.)
- My Annual leave late in 2023 coincided with challenging events at NewHope, including the sudden loss of our dear friend Chris Koh and the tragic accident in the church car park involving young Khat Siam. The team did a wonderful job guiding and supporting during this difficult period. And our prayers continue to be with these dear families.

## Pastoral and Strategic Work:

- Significant pastoral work took centre stage in 2023, with several large funerals, an increase in pastoral counselling and mental health care, ministry to our seniors and growth in client needs presenting through NewHope Community Care.
- Our leadership development pathways continue to yield great fruit. We have seen this in 2023 as young leaders at NewHope step up to take on new responsibilities, and many seasoned leaders continue to flourish in ministry roles beyond NewHope.
- Council & Management Strategy Day fostered great conversations and excellent strategic planning. The Council is attentive to strong governance, a renewal of our strategy (post COVID) and forward looking succession planning.

## Leadership & Staff Changes:

- Church Council transitions with Chris Meyers concluding as Chair, succeeded by Tristan Ellett. Andrew Gale concluded as Finance Director, succeeded by Craig Neilson. Murray Baird and Liza Somers stepped off the Council, and Steve Stavridis, Monique Jaksic and Brett Rice were appointed by members.
- Significant pastoral ministry changes occurred. Alicia's role change led to the appointment of Bec Burley as Kids Ministry Pastor. Katrina's departure late in the year (to become Senior Pastor at Ashburton) resulted in numerous changes and a

team restructure, which saw several of our pastors take up different ministry roles and responsibilities.

- Ongoing compliance and external supervision obligations were met with diligence.

## **Wider Work:**

- Active involvement in the Whitehorse Churches Network, including participation in two excellent multi-church Prayer Weeks and volunteer involvement at 'The Space' in Forest Hill Chase.
- Continued support for the Baptist Union through various associations and partnerships.
- AND, I am constantly humbled by the enormous individual contributions of NewHope people in personal volunteer ministry well beyond our structures. One of our people rises early every morning to lead an online international bible study in Arabic. Another chairs the board of an organisation that provides life changing saving medical intervention to thousands every year. Someone else engages in leading academic research bringing the values and heart of Jesus into mainstream university life.
- This is God's good news, the kingdom from heaven, present in our midst. Thank you for your inspiring service!

## **Personal Highlights:**

- Janet and I enjoyed our leave. We had a wonderful time in Canada. We greatly appreciate the support and love of our family and friends.
- Growth in my own journey of 30 minutes a day with Jesus – especially intercession. I have a quarterly spiritual retreat day and I walk faithfully with a peer support group.

**A huge thank you to all our supporters!** Thank you for your giving, volunteering, praying, and engaging with the ministries of NewHope. What a privilege to share in this work together! And to all my colleagues on Council and the Staff Team, you are precious people! And I thank God for you, each one.

As we reflect on 2023, we celebrate the milestones, we learn from our stumbles, and we look forward to the ocean of opportunities ahead. Your dedication and support undergird our shared ministry, and I am eager to continue our journey together in the coming year.

Abundant Blessings,

**Allan Demond**  
Senior Pastor

Letter from

ACTING FINANCE DIRECTOR | Surette Southwood

Andrew Gale concluded as Finance Director at our Annual General Meeting in June 2023, and Surette stepped in to act in the role for the remainder of the year.

We were delighted to announce the Church Council appointment of Craig Neilson in the role of Finance Director in November 2023. This appointment will be voted on by members at the NHBC AGM in May 2024.

We are so grateful to the NewHope family who have responded so generously, and 2023 was indeed a year of stabilising the giving in all our different funds over the life of the church, although we are yet to reach pre-COVID giving levels of 2019. In 2023, the team consistently communicated to the congregation in NewHope News as well as during worship services how we are travelling towards our giving target. The target was the approved budget amount plus the amount to breach the gap to get to a breakeven position for our NewHope Local (Ministry) Fund.

NewHope Fund	2019 Giving	2023 Budget	2023 Target	2023 Actual	% of '23 Target
Local (Ministry)	\$1,908,739	\$1,617,196	\$1,803,196	\$1,657,129	92
Global (Mission)	\$102,010	\$76,291	\$76,291	\$79,709	104
Tax Deductible	\$752,629	\$637,467	\$637,467	\$647,845	102

As displayed over many years, the staff team operated within their allocated budgets and the team adhered to the delegation of authority as signed off by the Church Council.

The continuation of increased interest rates by the Reserve Bank obviously impacted our cash flow greatly; however, it did not exceed our expected budgeted amounts. Once again, we met all loan repayment requirements from a capital reduction perspective as well.

Throughout the entire year, we did not have to access any funds from our reserves held with Bendigo Bank, which was certainly not the case for 2022, 2021 and 2020.

The Finance Team provides monthly reports on all NewHope entities to the Church Council. These reports cover all the operational income and expenses compared to the members approved budgets, position of assets and liabilities including property loans with Bendigo Bank, cash position, flag timing differences, track the giving against budget, as well as target and respond to special reporting requirements on request.



The 2023 financials for all NewHope entities will be audited once again by RDL ACCOUNTANTS in March 2024, to be presented to our members at the AGM in May 2024. The detailed financial statements will be available on our website after the AGM. You are always welcome to request detailed statements by emailing [surette.southwood@newhope.net.au](mailto:surette.southwood@newhope.net.au)

Visit the giving page on our website ([newhope.net.au/give](https://newhope.net.au/give)) to familiarise yourself with all the possible giving opportunities at NewHope, how to give and some frequently asked questions.

**Surette Southwood**  
Acting Finance Director

# 2023 Strategic Themes

## 1. Foster Unity

Our individual commitments: Be with Jesus. Be with each other.

Our corporate goals: to clarify and elevate what unites us as the body of Christ and to listen and learn from each other's diverse stories.

## 2. Strengthen Impact

Our individual commitments: Become like Jesus. Love like Jesus. Be with my colleagues, our neighbours, and other churches. Make more followers.

Our corporate goals: to clarify and sharpen the focus of NewHope's core ministries, to better leverage our physical and organisational assets, to invest further in our wider societal and global focus.

## 3. Facilitate Engagement

Our individual commitments: Become a visible expression of the person and love of Christ. Become a valued partner in service to God's mission.

Our corporate goals: To clarify pathways into service, small group involvement, and stewardship. To continue engaging with members' voices.

These strategic themes formed our planning and focus for 2023. Visit [newhope.net.au/mission](https://newhope.net.au/mission) to see more information on our 2024 themes.

## BAPTISMS AND MEMBERSHIP

### Additions to Membership Roll during 2023

Baptisms: 34

Transfers In: 1

Profession: 1

Other: 13

### Reductions to Membership Roll during 2023

Transfers Out: 2

Resigned: 14

Reserve Roll: 62

Deaths: 9

**Total Members on 31 December 2023: 719**

# NewHope Family Forums

In 2023 NewHope held three Family Forums. These events were designed to make space for learning, sharing and discovering perspectives on issues that matter.

The three forums in 2023 were:

- 8 May – Indigenous Reconciliation
- 8 August – Climate Change
- 22 November – Sexuality

## **Why did we do this and where did the idea come from?**

People have asked for opportunities to talk together as a NewHope family about tough topics. It is important to explore how our Christian faith intersects with contemporary issues, but it can be hard to open up and have good conversations on contentious topics. Good people of deep faith hold very different views on important topics. The objective of the Family Forums was to provide a safe place to explore these differences and grow in our understanding and fellowship together. The idea has emerged from the Church Council's desire to facilitate robust faith and church unity, and the journey Council members themselves have been on together as we discover, discern and decide.

## **Big Picture Outcomes**

While each forum had slightly more specific outcomes, the big picture outcomes were:

1. Explore the topic through different perspectives and lenses.
2. Build capacity for NewHope members to have important conversations and work through challenging topics.
3. Grow in our discipleship to Jesus.

While there have been learnings along the way, overall we believe we achieved these outcomes.

We recognise that individuals brought their own expectations about outcomes to different forums. We are aware that for some people, these forums didn't meet their specific expectations.

## **Attendance at the Forums**

The forums were open to participants in the NewHope family.

Around 80 NewHopers attended the first two (Indigenous Reconciliation and Climate Change). Over 120 people attended the third on Sexuality.

## Expert Contributions to the Forums

We had a diverse range of contributors across the forums. They included:

1. Indigenous Reconciliation:
  - a. **Professor Anne Pattel-Gray:** Professor of Indigenous Studies and inaugural Head of the School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Divinity. She is a descendant of the Bidjara / Kari Kari people of Queensland and a celebrated Aboriginal leader.
  - b. **Dr Anthony Dillon:** Postdoctoral Fellow, Indigenous Thriving Program, Australian Catholic University. Anthony identifies as both Aboriginal and Australian.
  - c. **Rev Canon Glenn Loughrey:** Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's Educator and Advocate for Recognition of First People's. Glenn is a Wiradjuri man.
  - d. **Brian Wicks:** Head of Gooch House MS at St John's Grammar School in Adelaide. Brian has been working on the ground to create deep connections with Indigenous Australians for 30 years.
2. Climate
  - a. **Dr Mick Pope:** Professor of Environmental Theology at Missional University
  - b. **Tony Rinaduo:** World Vision's Forest Maker
  - c. **Dirk Visser:** Senior Lecturer at Monash Sustainable Development Institute
  - d. **Greg Hewson:** Tearfund, Head of the Australia Program
3. Sexuality
  - a. **Sarah Fountas:** Christian Counsellor
  - b. **Dr Ben Edsall:** Senior Research Fellow at ACU, Biblical and Early Christian Studies

## Forum Facilitators

We are very grateful to Karen Naylor and Leigh Cameron for the work they put into developing and facilitating each of the forums. We thank them for their wisdom and skilful contributions.

## What Next?

Family Forums are part of our Strategy Themes for 2024.

Our goal is to continue to make space for safe conversations about important current issues, building on our 2023 learnings.

# Ministries

## WORSHIP | Tim

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2023 was a great year in worship ministry. We are blessed at NewHope to have so many wonderfully skilled musicians who bring all of their passion and talents and serve the church. We have together experienced many encouraging times of gathered corporate worship throughout the year. We eagerly look forward to 2024 as we continue to worship a good and faithful God in spirit and in truth more and more.

It is a gift that we get to share in many dynamic moments of worship. Particular highlights of the year include our services over the Easter weekend. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services were particularly powerful experiences. Contrasting heavily with the overflow of joy and colour at our Christmas services.

In October, we had a worship night at one of our evening services, which was dedicated to songs that members of our team have written together. We heard stories and inspiration from scripture that had brought these songs to life and we got to hear them and sing them together for the first time. This was a really enjoyable night and exciting to see that so many of our team are using their creativity for the glory of God. I'm sure we'll be singing these songs in our services throughout the year, and I'm sure more will be written and shared with our community.



A final highlight of the year that not many people would know about is the bridge building team night that we had mid-year. And no, that is not a metaphor. We had a night full of laughs, dessert, and coffee as we did a team building activity of building bridges out of PVC glue and paddle pop sticks.



## SUNDAY PRAYER TEAM | Paula & Jen

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At the beginning of 2023 we set about growing our prayer team and over the last 12 months we have grown substantially with now 30 team members across all services eager to serve our NewHope community. With the Prayer Team ready at the front of the platform after each service to welcome the congregation to come and seek Jesus together, we have seen a big shift in the prayer culture of NewHope.

During this prayer time, we have also had the incredible privilege of leading people to receive the gift of salvation, which we acknowledge is the greatest of all miracles. On average we would have 20 folk receiving prayer after a service.

We give praise to God for the growth in the number of folk wanting to receive prayer for healing or breakthrough in difficult life circumstances. We have witnessed many physical healings, emotional healings and spiritual healings. Our God is just wonderful.



Pre-Service Prayer gatherings commenced in 2023, before the morning and evening services. These have been a wonderful time of prayer as we intentionally invite the Presence of the Holy Spirit to come into our services and for God's will to be done.

Prayer United was a 12 hour overnight prayer event; eighty to one hundred people from NewHope and many of our surrounding churches gathered to worship Jesus and minister to His heart. It was such an amazing time and space to reflect on and worship our God. One of the attendees commented that "it was my best experience with the Lord".

We press on with great anticipation and expectancy to see God continue to move and grow us in 2024 in this Prayer Ministry space. It is an honour to serve, to cover our leadership team, our church services and people in prayer. To Him be the glory and honour forever. Amen.

# PRAYER MINISTRY | Lynette

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NewHope Prayer Ministry is a ministry to the heart, a time set aside to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal, heal and begin restoring what has been lost or stolen. It is a safe place to bring to Light the deepest and often never before spoken about hurts and fears. It's a place for those struggling to feel the presence of God to encounter Jesus in the lonely places of their lives.

In 2023 we had a team of 22 faithful members who either ministered to clients or covered the ministries with prayer over each two hour appointment. Over the year we had around 220 appointments with people in Melbourne, interstate and overseas, many via Zoom but almost half requested face to face appointments at NewHope. This has been somewhat challenging to organise but did not hinder God's plans for those He had drawn to ministry.

Each ministry is uniquely led by the Holy Spirit as He alone sees the hearts of His children. He meets them in the dark places and brings His Light and Love to lead them out. We see faces change from despair and shame to hope and life, a lightness of heart and spirit. All Glory to our Saviour, Lord and King, Jesus!

# WEDNESDAY PRAYER | John & Jenny

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This group of Pray-ers meet on Zoom every Wednesday evening from 7-8pm.

Our prayers are focused on our Church and families, our missionaries and current world events. This is preceded by a short time of praise and thanksgiving. There is a usual attendance of 12 people on Zoom, but we would welcome many more to join us to strengthen our prayers - we are very aware of the power of prayer.

We cherish our time together and have seen many answers to our prayers. We praise God for His faithfulness as we bring NewHope before Him each week.

## PASTORAL CARE | Lance

2023 presented a diverse range of pastoral needs and opportunities across NewHope. The pastoral team at NewHope facilitated 12 funerals across the year as well as responding to pastoral requests received through the website, church reception and the NewHope community. Rosemary Castles continued her excellent leadership of the pastoral carers team, focusing on providing ongoing care to all 80+ year old NewHopers as well as other individuals requiring specific ongoing pastoral support.

One fruitful initiative pioneered during the year was a partnership between the NewHope Young Adults Ministry Groups and the pastoral care network. Several young adult groups provided large quantities of pre-prepared meals, which were distributed through the pastoral care network by both young adults themselves as well as our existing team. This initiative proved to be a great success, with both young adults and those receiving the support reporting deep joy in the opportunity to serve and connect with one another.

*Being with and learning in a small group is incredible, but serving our community together is an even greater way that we can demonstrate the love of Jesus. With our leaders Jeremy, Phil, and Tam, our small group cooked over 40 meals, which were to be delivered to the older and wiser members of our community as a way to reciprocate their service and fellowship to our church over many years. 2 Corinthians 9:6 - "whoever sows generously will reap generously" - Cam Roper*



## CONNECT TEAM | Tam

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We have had a great year within the Connect Team.

A number of new team members have joined the existing teams, which has been fantastic. We have a few families who choose to come and serve together - an incredible way of passing on the joy and ownership of serving our community to the next generation.

We have continued to provide support to the operational functions within Sunday services such as helping new people find their way around the building and facilitating communion, engagement cards and offering collections.

An amazing initiative we were able to support this year was giving the Year 6 kids from Kids Church a taste of serving in various ministries. It was very special to see the kids grow in confidence greeting people as they arrived for our worship services.

It is a privilege and joy to work within such a great intergenerational team with a heart to welcome and connect with all who come through our doors here at NewHope.

## ALPHA | Phil

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2023 was another huge year for Alpha at NewHope

In April, the Chinese congregation ran their own Alpha Course with the aroma of amazing food drifting across the building during the 11am services, 23 people participated in this course, and we saw six baptisms as an outcome of the course.

In May 2023, Jen Pittendrigh & Phil Gaudion hosted Alpha on Zoom with 6 participants and lots of fantastic discussion, challenge to read the bible, pray & 'let Jesus in'. This group of people are mostly from outside of NewHope - one of the attendees of the course made a decision to follow Jesus, which was an answer to prayer for our team.

From April through June our Shift Youth engaged in Alpha with around 60 participants and 18 leaders having discussions after viewing the video series each week.

Then in May & June around 20 of our young adults embarked on an Alpha Course also, with that number increasing to around 40 on the evening of exploring the Holy Spirit.

In Term 3 around 30 Grade 6 children did Alpha as part of their Grade 6 to Shift Youth transition - led by some of our young adults Rhys Gould & Hannah Thek.



## NEWHOPE GROUPS | Lance

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2023 was a year of growth within the Groups ministries of NewHope as many people found a home within the church and were connected with a NewHope Group. Approximately 90 people new to NewHope were placed in contact with a NewHope group and began attending as Groups grew and new Groups formed. Many of these connections were facilitated through Ross Adams' diligent follow up of newcomers and consolidation of newcomer processes such as the Connect Lounge on Sundays.

The Big Group Nights in March were a strong and effective launch to the year. Many groups gathered together to view inspiring testimonies of God's work in the lives of people around the world, share food and be encouraged by the presence of other groups. This season was a catalyst for new groups to form and people looking for a group to attend and make connections with others already in a group.

Significant investment was made into further developing the health of groups and group leaders throughout 2023. Leaders were invited to read Pete Greig's book 'How to Hear God', monthly leader emails were distributed, one on one meetings with leaders were facilitated, and a series of leaders meetings were hosted across the year. A group leader covenant was developed and refined across the year with consultation and feedback received to strengthen the covenant between leaders and the pastoral team. The work of developing a covenant is intended to serve the ongoing health and growth of the ministry for an extended period to come.

## AWE AND WONDER | Hannah

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Awe & Wonder events have been spaces of deep encouragement, intergenerational connections, and joy-filled community throughout 2023.

We celebrated in May at our Mother's Day breakfast. At this event, we were inspired by the stories of Mark Balla, a committed advocate for global causes impacting the lives of school girls and their families in India through Operation Toilets.

We gathered again in August to be encouraged by the teaching of the BUV's Head of Ordination Beth Jackson. She explored the stories of women in the bible who met Jesus and led us in conversations as we reflected on our own experiences of transformative encounters.



# MEN'S MINISTRY | Tim

The NewHope Men's ministry sparked back into life in 2023. It has been some years since this ministry had people invest time, effort, and intentionality into it. A planning group was formed and is made up of around 10 volunteers who are committed to seeing the ministry thrive and flourish. The new planning team has a real desire and heart for the ministry to be a place where men can feel confident to connect with other men and also be a great front door for those who are new to the church.

Last year, we held three great events that were well attended and enjoyed by all. Two social nights and the grand final breakfast. The breakfast was a real highlight, we had over 100 men come and join in a meal together, share stories, a few games, and we were encouraged to hear some stories from current AFL footballer and NewHoper Ollie Dempsey and a message from Mark Purser, chaplain at the Essendon Football Club.

The new year fills us with anticipation and excitement as this ministry continues to grow. We are especially looking forward to starting a yearly Men's Retreat, which will happen in March.



## NEWHOPE GLOBAL | Surette

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NewHope Global launched on 15 February with a dinner for all NewHopers.

- We acknowledged all our Global partners present and listened to video messages from in-country Global Partners.
- We farewelled Nik & Sarah Matthews, who concluded their work with YWAM and moved to Tasmania. You can find their farewell message at [newhope.net.au/nick-and-sarah](https://newhope.net.au/nick-and-sarah).
- Surette interviewed the team from Baptist Mission Australia: Executive Director Scott Pilgrim, Chair Beth Jackson and VIC State Leader Geoff Maddock
- We heard from Rosanna Seah who compiles our monthly Global Prayer Notes (stories, challenges and mission highlights). If you want to be added to this list of recipients, visit [newhope.net.au/global](https://newhope.net.au/global).
- Allan interviewed Dean Rompis from Helping Hands
- Allan updated us on the work of Baptist World Aid and their work in Nepal, which we support with the NewHope Christmas Offering on an annual basis.
- Surette presented some giving opportunities for NewHope Global
- Some then joined the global launch of Baptist Mission Australia facilitated by the NHBC tech team streamed across the globe, and others prayed for our Global partners to finish our evening.

### Our 2023 NewHope Global Partners

- Dean & Sarah Rompis, (Helping Hands)
- Ben Everard, (Operation Mobilisation)
- Danny & Beth Hunt (Baptist Mission Australia)
- Marcus & Michelle Rice (Wycliff)
- Muana & Villy (Baptist Mission Australia)
- Phil & Carol Short (SIM)
- Richard Beaumont (Entrust) - concluded December 2023 in his role as CEO.
- Simon & Joy Longden (Pioneers)

This year also saw the renewal of our two-year partnership agreements with all our Global partners.

Ben Everard blessed us with a wonderful message which you can find at: [newhope.net.au/global](https://newhope.net.au/global)

We interviewed Tori Allen and Vinitha Rodwell to explore how past mission experiences impacted their lives now... years later. View this at [newhope.net.au/global](https://newhope.net.au/global). These testimonies were shared as NewHope Stories in Sunday worship services.

We supported Baptist Mission Australia with their initiatives [Walk the World](#) and [Alongsiders](#).

Giving to NewHope Global met the annual budget which enabled us to fund our Global Partners without having to borrow from the Ministry Fund. Praise God, and thank you for your generosity.

Muana and Villy as well as Marcus and Michelle were in Australia on furlough. We had the opportunity to connect them with several small groups over that time and also hear from them in our worship services morning and evening.

We started with 20 expressions of interest in the intergenerational exposure trip to Thailand over the mid-year holidays for 2024. We now have six confirmed participants.

### **Our 2023 Denominational Partners**

- Focus Nepal, Baptist World Aid Australia (Allan Demond, Board Director and Vice-Chair)
- Focus Thailand, Baptist Mission Australia (Surette Southwood, Board Director and Vice-Chair)

### **Our 2023 Congregational Opportunities**

- Focus Iran, Persian Congregation (Sam Farbod)
- Focus China, Chinese Congregation (Edmund Hu)
- Focus Refugees & EAL, NewHope Community Care (Katrina Lambert)
- Focus Child Sponsorships, Kids Church, Fathers Day emphasis (Bec Burley)

Once again our Christmas offering went to the work of Baptist Work Aid in Nepal, and \$3,894 was given. We also received the following message in mid-December from BWA:

*“Funds received from NewHope Baptist Church in the last financial year amounted to a total of \$71,070, with \$3,100 of it going directly to your Partnership with Nepal.”*

The church’s work is always intercultural, international and expansive. God’s good news is for every tongue and every nation (Revelation 5:9). Giving to NewHope Global enables us to do exactly that. Can I ask you to consider also giving to NewHope Global prayerfully? Visit [newhope.net.au/global](http://newhope.net.au/global) to organise your giving.

How can your small group get involved in supporting a Global Partner in prayer, financial giving & connection to NewHope? Email [surette.southwood@newhope.net.au](mailto:surette.southwood@newhope.net.au) to explore this.

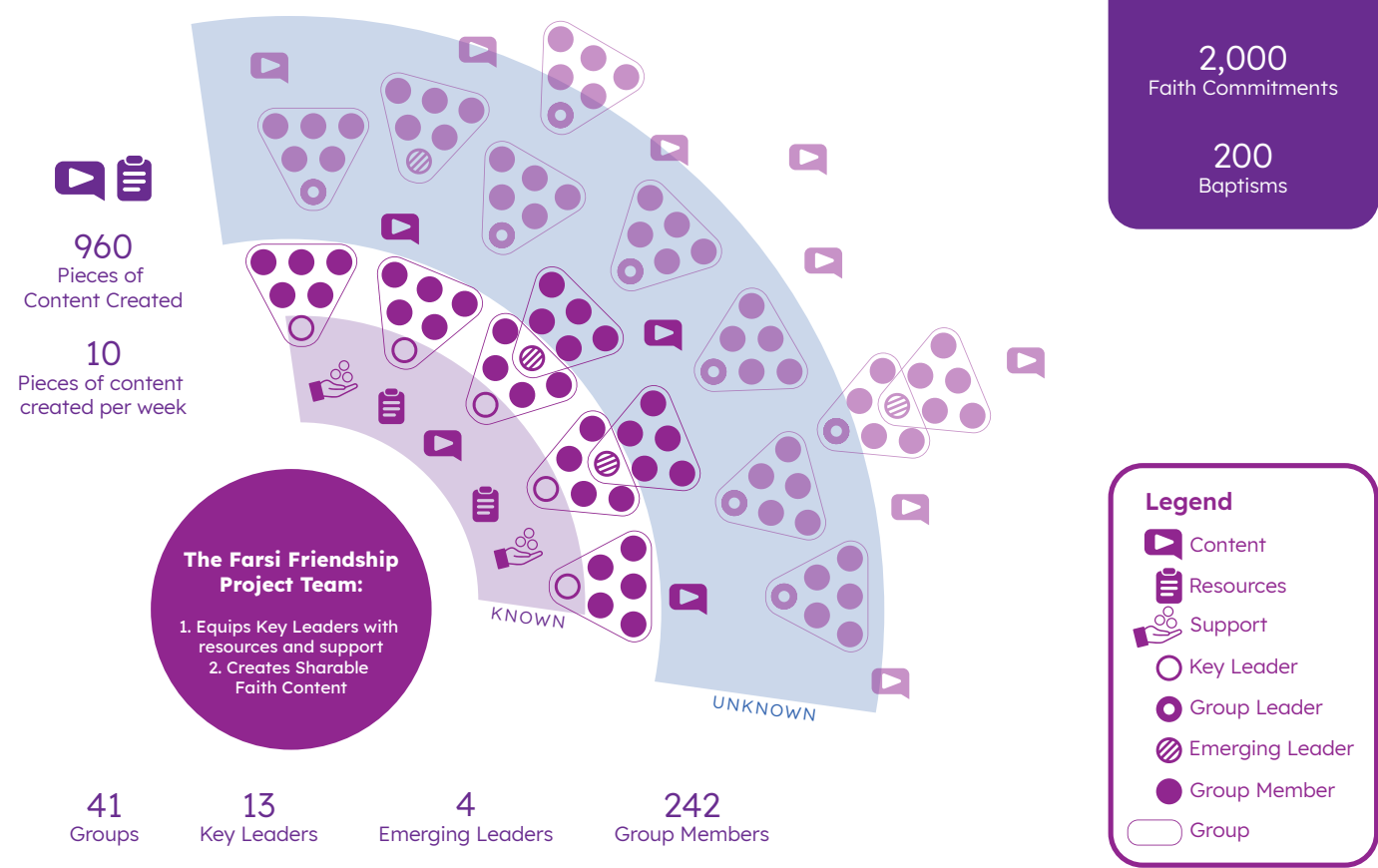
# FARSI FRIENDSHIP PROJECT | Sam

2023 has been an incredible year of growth and development for the Farsi Friendship Project. Sam Farbod’s role shifted in October to elevate his passion and focus in the FFP space. The team (comprising of Sam, Majid, Marjan and several volunteers), seeks to equips Key Leaders with resources and support, and create sharable faith content. The nature of ministering to people in the Middle East; where Christians are persecuted, means that it is difficult to know exactly how far our content is travelling. Our heart it to continue equipping our 13 key leaders, so they can develop and grow others in their network.

With over 960 pieces of content created, we know that 5000 people have been reached and 2000 faith commitments have been made, through our group network. It’s with faith that we trust God in the unknown to do an incredible work in the lives of so many more.

## Farsi Friendship Project Dec 2023

Since March 2022



# Multicultural Outreach

## FARSI CONGREGATION | Sam

In 2023, we witnessed an increasing number of newcomers who joined our Farsi community. Many of them are travelling long distances to join us and participate in Sunday services, small groups and also social gatherings. We celebrated six baptisms and two child dedications during 2023. During the year, we continued to publish daily podcasts and regular content that was received by around 220 audiences. In 2023, we also started two new online small groups.

The Farsi Friendship Project was very fruitful throughout the year, we heard many testimonies from people inside Iran about how our messages helped them to find true peace, hope and freedom in Jesus Christ. One of the testimonies which we received was related to the leader of an underground church community inside Iran. She explained that in the past, she was very selfish and did not care about other people's feelings and needs. While she was a high ranked manager in her workplace, she treated everyone disrespectfully and aggressively. Everyone, even her siblings and relatives, had been trying to avoid her, and this

made her more irritated and hateful. One night, while she was in her bed, a sudden deep pain in her chest woke her up. Later, when she found herself in hospital, while in the bed surrounded by nurses, she was very afraid, and was thinking this is the end of her life. Eventually after a few hours, when she felt better, she called her only sister and asked her to come and stay beside her. That night in the hospital, after her pain was settled and she was lying in bed, her sister asked her to listen to a message which she had received from a friend. The message was about "true peace and freedom" and was speaking about burdens that only God could take away from us. She believes God used that sudden pain to provide an opportunity for her to listen to that message and learn about His love for her. Now, as mentioned, she leads a group of around 16 people in an underground church. She believes that she has found true peace and freedom in her life, and she wants to share these with others as long as she lives. We received many testimonies of the transformed lives of people who have entrusted their lives to Jesus.





## CHINESE CONGREGATION | Edmund

As I mark my second anniversary as the Pastor leading the Chinese congregation and reflect on seventeen-plus years since joining on day one, I am grateful for the faithful team of leaders and volunteers who join me in remembering and celebrating God's goodness. Looking back at 2023, I am humbled and thankful for the remarkable year we've experienced. Despite the challenges posed by the departure of our Service Pastor, Christine Chew, at the end of August, God amazingly provided all the resources we needed. Siew Yee Leong was appointed as the new Praise and Worship leader for the Chinese ministry. Our congregation grew from an average of 66 in 2022 to 82 people in 2023, with 98% attending onsite. From March to June, we successfully ran the Chinese Alpha program with a team of 15 leaders and volunteers. 23 people participated in the Chinese Alpha courses, and five accepted Christ. We organised combined baptism services with the English congregation on May 28th and July 23rd, respectively. Once again, we had a fantastic family camp from June 10th to 12th, with 97 participants. Three brothers accepted Christ, while many others were encouraged to grow closer in their relationships with Christ.



I am excited to announce with effect from January 2024, James Tong, our pastoral intern, has been appointed as the part time Outreach and Connection Pastor to help and support the existing leadership team. I am thankful for all who have contributed to the success and growth of the Chinese Congregation, and I give all glory and honour to God. As we look ahead to the coming year, I am confident that God will continue to lead and provide for us as we passionately pursue His mission and vision. Thank you, God, for all the challenges, fruits and blessings in 2023.

# Generations

## NEWHOPE KIDS | Bec & Ellie

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2023 was a year of change and growth in our Kids Ministry. Bec Burley, was employed as the new Kids Pastor, and many new families were welcomed to our 9am and 11am services across a range of age groups.

We focused a lot on our wonderful volunteer team throughout the year, with the goal of empowering them and encouraging them to grow their skills in the Kids Ministry space. We wouldn't have a program without them, and we thank them for all of their hard work during the year.

Another focus was facilitating connection and community between NewHope families outside of Kids Church. We saw the Mezzanine space opened up as a place of connection for families after the 9am service, with many coming along to join in with morning tea and develop stronger connections together. We began introducing family services during the holidays, which were aimed at encouraging intergenerational worship and connecting families during the services. We were really encouraged to see some of our Kids Church families initiating and running events outside of Church for the Kids Church community, such as the Easter Family Camp, a visit to Eltham miniature railway and a BBQ at Edenvale Farm. Thank you to all of the parents involved in creating a warm and welcoming Kids Church community!

In July, we ran a very successful Winter Party, in conjunction with the NewHope mainly music and Playspace Ministries, for our preschoolers, which saw an array of people from both within and outside of NewHope attend and engage with our Church community. This was a wonderful morning of Melody Time, crafts, face painting and a delicious BBQ.

In October, we ran a Pyjama Jam event for the Senior Kids Church children. It was a fun afternoon of games and dinner and we watched a movie together. To quote the direct words of many children 'We liked EVERYTHING!'.



It has been wonderful to see our children grow in their understanding of God's word and see the links between how Jesus can help them in their daily lives through prayer and the Holy Spirit.

# PLAYSPACE | Andrew

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2023 was a busy, but a blessing of a year for Playspace, beginning with the welcoming of Andrew into the Coordinator role. Major and minor changes were implemented to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and patrons, and God blessed the ministry when a popular online blog promoted Playspace which brought in a large number of new patrons. Playspace averages about 40 patrons per day now, and blesses parents and children alike with a safe place to play, enjoy the great cafe food and Christian atmosphere.

The addition of a second Melody Time, now held twice a week, has drawn a large crowd of children and parents. Parents are keen to bring their children to experience the benefits of interactive live music, which aids in developing communication skills and emotional wellbeing in children.

At Christmas the Playspace team organised a big Christmas event, offering parents and children a Christian Christmas celebration with live music, crafts and free snacks among other things. We figured kids could see Santa and elves anywhere, so we wanted to really bring the message of Christ’s birth to families, starting with a big inflatable Nativity scene! Parents and children posed for photos and kids petted the nativity animals and it was a hit. We had live music with Christian carols with actions so kids (and parents) could join in the fun. We had the biggest number of patrons in a day that Playspace has possibly ever had, and everyone had a great time, and patrons even gave Christmas gifts to staff!

We look forward to what God has in store for Playspace in 2024.

# MAINLY MUSIC | Angela

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*“Thank you so much for introducing our family to God. Through Mainly Music, we have been introduced to three different services including Sunday Kids Church, Chinese Church Service & English class”*  
*- mainly music parent.*

In the early months of 2023, mainly music Playgroup has witnessed a heartening surge in attendance, with over 50% of families hailing from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The inclusive atmosphere has proven especially valuable for those who recently migrated to Australia, providing them with a warm community to connect with. The playgroups serve as a delightful introduction for the younger generation to learn about God through worship and praise, fostering a sense of spirituality from an early age. We’ve even incorporated the beautiful practice of praying before meals into our children’s routine.

A remarkable transformation unfolded when a devoted mother, initially attending the playgroup, embraced the role of a family leader. Inspired by this experience, she enthusiastically introduced her child to the Sunday Kids Church and committed herself to deepening her understanding of God through regular attendance at the English Service.

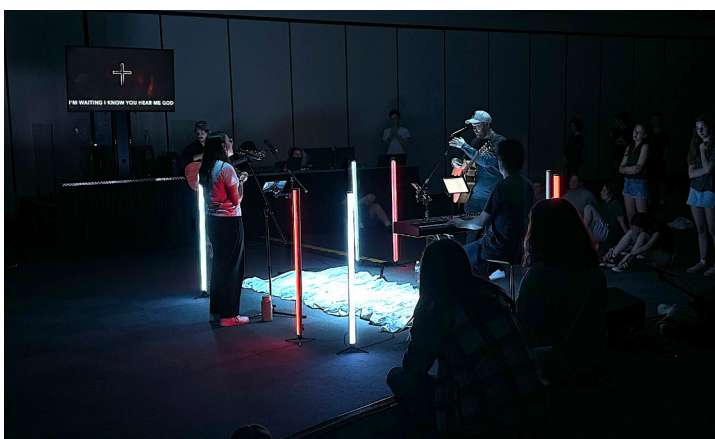
The year 2023 welcomed two dedicated volunteers with educational backgrounds into the Monday group, enhancing the overall experience. We were privileged to welcome Yang Yang as our mainly music Assistant in April 2023, who has been pivotal in communicating with Mandarin speaking families. She has linked many families with the Chinese Church, Kids Church, Playspace and NewHope Preschool. mainly music Playgroups are not just a starting point for those unfamiliar with church life; they serve as a gateway, seamlessly connecting individuals to other ministry programs. The inclusive and welcoming nature of mainly music has truly created a tapestry of connection and growth within our community.



## SHIFT YOUTH | Adam

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2023 started with some staff transitions in the youth space, as we thanked Tim Spencer for his time serving as Youth Pastor, and welcomed Hannah Freeman to the Youth staff team. It has been amazing to still have Tim Spencer involved with our Youth Band in his Worship Pastor capacity, and continue to invest in the next generation of worship and media leaders. With our incredible team of 54 youth leaders, we focussed our teaching and discipleship on worship in term 1, youth alpha (senior high) and foundations (junior high) in term 2, mission in term 3 and finishing with hearing from God in term 4. Our vision continues to be seeing Jesus impact the hearts of a generation.



One of our key focus area for Shift in 2023 was strengthening the critical transitions in youth ministry. For our grade 6s entering, we've been continually tweaking the program year on year, to help cater for needs of the current cohort. This year the Grade 6s transitioned to youth at the end of term 2, completed Youth Alpha in term 3 and had the opportunity to join an on-ramp to serving program in term 4. This has created a great sense of community in the cohort and given young people opportunity to see what serving the Kingdom looks like. Our 2022 graduates had an opportunity to join EXPAND, a six month leadership and discipleship formation program, that served as an extended training for new young leaders coming into youth ministry. With an array of relevant topics, guest speakers and retreat, EXPAND was an excellent way to engage and equip this cohort.

Potentially our most critical transition, is one that doesn't align with any major schooling change. Over some time we have seen a trend that those who transition well in year 9 (from junior high to senior high), are more likely to stay engaged with their faith community. This trend has led us to developing our junior high and senior high program over years, and this year experimenting with new ways of fostering engagement and community in our year 9s. Massive thanks to our incredible year 9 leaders for continuing to develop and invest in this transition.



In aligning with NewHope's 2023 strategic themes of Impact, Unity and Engagement, Shift Youth put an emphases on involvement with church life and community beyond our Friday night program. Our Youth Takeover Service and other celebration services created great opportunities to invite new young people to attend the evening service. State Youth Games also remains an incredible place for youth, young adults and parents to build community and have fun. These opportunities joining the likes of Youth Camp, Year 7 Camp, Youth Band Workshops and 12 youth baptisms, are highlights of the year.

*Shift Youth reached 282 people in 2023  
19 newcomers have become regulars  
66 next steps on Youth Camp (including 15 first time faith commitments, and  
27 recommitments)*

## **NEWHOPE OLDER ADULTS** | Lance

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Prime Timers is a Group for Older Adults at NewHope. They meet at 10.30am on the first Monday of each month. The average attendance is 35 to 40 enthusiastic Seniors who enjoy a tasty morning tea followed by a guest speaker who brings something of their "Story" and highlights of their life or interests or ministry.

This is always a good time to learn something of the invited guest. During 2023 the guests included - Lance Blythe (who is the Pastor to Seniors at NewHope), Andy Vance, Philip Simpson, Noddy Sharma, David Cummings, Richard Beaumont, Bob Boucher, Max Meyers, Bruce McEwen, Cathy De Witt and Pastor Allan Demond. Prime Timers enjoy catching up with old and new friends and sharing the company of their peers.

# NEWHOPE YOUNG ADULTS | Hannah

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Throughout 2023 the young adults of NewHope were engaged across many of the ministries of NewHope. A hospitality and pastoral care initiative enabled young adult small groups to prepare meals for the pastoral care ministries of the church. Over 100 meals were prepared and distributed through this process with really positive feedback received from both the groups who participated and those who received meals.

Our Young Adults Retreat in March had 106 attenders to the Mornington Peninsula over the weekend. Across 3 sessions, Lance Blythe presented a series called “Gospel is...” responding to real questions which young adults have asked about faith and the gospel. The sessions involved interactive question and response times, small group discussion, worship and testimonies. The weekend was highlighted by energised participation within the sessions, extended times of social connection and a significant time of prayer which concluded the weekend.

Throughout 2023 the young adult planning team coordinated excellent events including social events such as mini-golf, trivia and a Christmas celebration as well as content driven events such as Alpha and a Combined event with One Community and St Alfreds young adults focused on discipleship. Over 30 young adults attended Alpha in term 2 with a significant move of the Holy Spirit in prayer during the Encounter Night. A special shout out to members of the planning team - Hannah, Laura, Jared, Sigourney, Tom, Ally, Damien and Sienna.

The Young Professionals initiative hosted some great social dinners across the year with Michael Pittendrigh and Fiona Roper sharing some of their experiences of faith and life at our 2 Young Professional lunches. Sunrise prayer became a monthly event through 2023 as Young Adults gathered at a local McDonalds at 6am on a Friday each month to pray together.

There was a healthy and engaged participation of young adults at the 5pm service with many young adults participating in and leading aspects of worship throughout 2023. Baptisms were consistent throughout the year and new young adults found their way into small groups and into community.

*Young Adults volunteering at NewHope: 102*  
*Young Adult Baptisms: 5*  
*Young Adult Groups (Dec 2023): 8*

# Social Enterprises And Organisations

## NEWHOPE COMMUNITY CENTRE EVENTS | Angela

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What an incredible journey 2023 was for Events at our NewHope Community Centre! With Events' income surpassing expectations by over 30%, it's safe to say we exceeded our wildest dreams. God's grace brought a flood of inquiries, tours, and bookings, totalling over 300 external events ranging from graduations to international chess tournaments!

Our building and services have been showered with compliments, and the positive feedback keeps pouring in. Repeated bookings and new inquiries are a testament to the outstanding experiences we provide.

In 2023, we welcomed 11 new clients, including schools, a chess tournament, an exercise group, a globally broadcasted music concert, sport chaplaincy, a medical conference, and a musical festival. Our diverse offerings have left a lasting impression, and clients are consistently surprised by the vast resources and room options.

While we bid farewell to loved ones in memorial services, we've also shared compassion and sympathy, creating a supportive community. Safety and security measures have been top-notch, ensuring a secure environment for both clients and the building.

Balancing internal ministries with increasing external demands, we've continued to support various programs and initiatives. As we step into 2024, we eagerly anticipate the divine connections that God will forge between NewHope Community Centre Events and the local community. Here's to another year of growth, success, and building meaningful connections!



*"We were so encouraged by the kindness & care of your teams and the way you went above and beyond"*

*- Tearfund*

## MIDDLE GROUND CAFÉ | Eva

With the main aim of the café being to both serve the community and support NewHope's ministries through the gift of hospitality, 2023 has been a year of relative normality with the absence of Covid restrictions. We were able to faithfully serve our community each week, making around 18,000 coffees, 7,000 lunches and providing catering for around 92 external events during 2023. The café catered for all of our regular external events, as well as weddings, funerals, and special one-off functions. Graduations, formals and valedictory dinners were enjoyed by many of our local schools, with these functions ramping up during the months of October through to December. We continue to support groups such as mainly music, Playspace, Whitehorse Churches Care, Prime Timers, Chat & Choose, and Awe & Wonder to name a few.

The café operates with a small staff team, relying tremendously on our volunteers. We give thanks for their provision, their various skills and gifts, and their precious time. Without them, we would find it impossible to provide the high standard of service that we strive for.

We are very pleased to announce that Middle Ground Café was named Whitehorse City Council's 5 Star Food Safe nominee for December 2023. We received a perfect 100% score during a recent inspection a testament to the efforts of our staff and volunteers.

As we look ahead to 2024 as a Social Enterprise, we are excited to continue empowering people seeking to learn new skills, gain confidence, meet new people and practise their communication skills. We will continue upskilling people living with a disability, as well as helping folks rejoin the workforce.



## NEWHOPE COMMUNITY CARE | Katrina

<b>RELIEF CENTRE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operates 10am - 2pm Monday to Thursday</li> <li>Form relationships, establish trust, triage needs</li> <li>No. of Clients in 2023 = 200+</li> <li>Client visits = 471</li> <li>\$8000+ of grocery cards distributed</li> </ul>
<b>FOOD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Pantry</li> <li>Food Parcels to other Organisations (Police, Whitehorse Council, Jubilee Housing)</li> <li>Monthly Food Swaps (neighbours sharing the abundance of their gardens)</li> <li>Christmas is Giving (\$3,000+)</li> <li>Community Food Pantry (outside on Springfield Road)</li> </ul>
<b>ASYLUM SEEKER &amp; REFUGEES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for the Farsi Congregation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly Food Vouchers</li> <li>Farsi Food Pantry staples</li> <li>1 Day a week for Pastor Sam Farbod</li> <li>Tools for Work Project (Bunnings Vouchers)</li> </ul> </li> <li>House of Hope Project (3 Dale Court) with Baptcare</li> </ul>
<b>ENGLISH CLASSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn English at NewHope</li> <li>English and the Bible</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY MENTORING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COACH Program</li> <li>Kids Hope at Kerrimuir Primary School</li> </ul>
<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flourish Course at NewHope &amp; WCC Hub</li> <li>Mental Health Support with NewHope Medical/Total Wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>MENTAL HEALTH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flourish Course at NewHope &amp; WCC Hub</li> <li>Mental Health Support with NewHope Medical</li> </ul>
<b>WHITEHORSE CHURCHES CARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allan Demond chairs the board of WCC</li> <li>NHCC is engaged with the Whitehorse Community Meals Network through a fortnightly meal in Mitcham</li> <li>NewHope maintains healthy volunteer involvement in the Forest Hill Chase Community Space</li> <li>The NHCC team participates in the Whitehorse Food Relief Network along with other churches, Whitehorse City Council, Foodbank Victoria and other local providers.</li> <li>We are involved in preparing to launch a Community Meal for the residents of the social housing around Luckie Street, Nunawading.</li> </ul>



NewHope Community Care seeks to be a gift to the community, to make a difference in the lives of local people by offering care so people might experience something of God's love for them.

This is why we do what we do. We work to provide relief care, developmental care and advocacy care to all people experiencing need, particularly the marginalised, oppressed, hungry, hurting and frightened. We encourage and empower people to transform their lives with new and ongoing hope.

Below are some reflections from different aspects of Community Care's work.

## Food Pantry | Hannah

NewHope's Food Pantry continues to be a source of food, material relief and connection for those experiencing hardship in our community.

Volunteers put together hampers of food and other essentials. Most of these items are donated from members of our NewHope community or purchased from Food Bank Victoria. This year, we also had generous contributions from the Everyday Independence team, Bread of Life Melbourne, and Evangelical Community Church Box Hill. We could not meet such widespread and diverse need without this support!

Food packs are distributed primarily to visitors of our Relief Centre, and also to other organisations including Jubilee Housing.



## Food Swap | Hannah

The NewHope Food Swap met monthly in 2023. This ministry is a great connection point with the broader community and has blessed many through great conversations, sharing of homegrown produce, and opportunities to learn from one another. This ministry has also inspired the creation of a 'NewHope Community Cupboard'; a space where food sharing can continue throughout the month. This initiative is supported by a local food rescue charity, Food Filled, who help us by sourcing fresh produce to share with our community.

**Kids Hope | Pauline**

Kids Hope is a program which connects a local church with a local primary school and trains volunteer mentors to go into the school for one hour once a week and mentor one child who is in need. If children are valued and have self esteem, they learn better and make friends more easily.

2023 saw our Kids Hope team with 10 mentors and 12 different students engaged in the program for most of the year. During the year, some students left the school and some mentors left the program, leaving us in January 2024 with 9 students continuing in the program and 7 mentors. A number of prospective volunteers responded to the December ‘Serve in Kids Hope initiative’ and are being trained in the early months of 2024.

Our partner school, Kerrimuir Primary, continues to have students who would benefit from Kids Hope. If you are interested in more information or volunteering please contact either Viv or Pete Siede.

**Mental Health Support | Hannah**

Managing mental health is a growing challenge for many in our community. In 2023, NewHope Community Care hosted a Managing Anxiety workshop led by NewHoper and registered Clinical Counsellor Donna Pasco. This event was a great space for young people aged 18-25 to come together to learn effective strategies for reducing anxiety and managing stress, and explore ways to experience deep inner peace and contentment. Topics included: psychoeducation, the stress response, processing emotions, calming and grounding techniques to reduce anxiety, challenging limiting core beliefs, choosing values and strengths, self-worth and identity.

Our Relief Care Centre has also been an ongoing connection point for many needing access to health services. This year, our Mental Health Support program has enabled six people to engage with appropriate care from professional Psychologists, Counsellors, and Social Workers.

**Relief Care | Phil**

In 2023, NewHope Community Care served 471 visits for food parcels to the Relief Care Desk to just over 200 individual clients (a 35% increase up from 148 individuals in 2022). We connected with 46 new people that had never visited NewHope before. We gave away over \$8000 worth of Grocery Only Gift Cards. We also made 23 assisted visits to the Eastern Emergency Relief Network, helping people with white goods and

furniture and in most cases helped them get their goods delivered to their home. This is a vital service that helps people experiencing homelessness get a new start, or a family suffering from a domestic violence situation to quickly relocate in a safe house, or to help an aged or disabled pensioner with needs that their finances can't cover.

Providing Relief Care in these ways is an extraordinary opening to conversations about life, faith, and shows our heart and care for people in a very practical way. In 2023, Robyn Stokes and Simone Nardella volunteered to cover 2 separate weekdays at the desk to help our staff team meet the demands of those who presented at the Relief Care desk. Both Robyn & Simone made outstanding contributions in their volunteer roles, offering a kind, caring, listening ear, practical food parcel support, referrals to NewHope Medical and other support services, and hospitality (often giving out Free "Pay It Forward" Coffees from the Middle Ground Café (that anyone can purchase)).

## **Learn English at NewHope | Marilyn**

Friday morning English classes continued for a second year in 2023 and in this year there was much to celebrate.

At the end of 2022 an average of 30 students attended English classes, however, by the end of 2023 this had increased to more than 60. Attendance had doubled! God was clearly at work.

An extra beginner class was added during the year to cope with large numbers of older Chinese students who spoke very little English. God had already provided a new teacher for this group and more bi-lingual assistants joined to help explain instructions and difficult language.

The steady growth in numbers happened without any specific advertising. Students invited their friends to join and on most Fridays, new students were welcomed. This meant that we ran six English classes each week using three different rooms. Friday mornings from 9.30-11.30 were very happy times for everyone involved. Our teachers and assistants enjoyed spending the morning with each other and the students. Through a team WhatsApp group, a weekly prayer letter helped us pray for each other, our students and for God to impact their lives.

We continued to offer optional Easy English Bible Study classes from 11.30-1.00. The response in 2023 was quite amazing. Average attendances increased from 7 to 25 as we added a new class aimed at students with very low levels of English. This class was offered as a bi-lingual English and Chinese class with teachers fluent in

both languages, and it was a huge success. Students told us they liked the picture story format with simple English and Chinese words for each picture, as well as the Bible passage printed in Chinese. Some students said they were reading the stories to their grandchildren! Praise God for this unexpected outcome.

The higher level Easy English Bible Study also grew with very consistent attendances and much interest in the Bible passages studied. Two faithful teachers prepare for this class, keen to answer questions and help students discuss their responses.

Our connection with the NewHope Chinese congregation continued to grow and we praise God for this. Several students attended the Chinese Alpha course and we celebrated four baptisms during the year, three in a 9.00am combined Chinese/English baptismal service. These students encouraged others in their English class to come to Bible Study and also Sunday church. Some started bringing their children to Kids Church.

In September a very dear student who had attended English and Bible Study classes on Sundays for many years, but who dropped out during Covid, contacted our Bible Study leader Swee Lau. Phillip told her he wanted to be baptised. Swee learned that Phillip, an older Chinese man, was in palliative care in Box Hill hospital. Through our Chinese pastor, Swee organised for Phillip to be interviewed and then baptised the next day, in front of his wife and family. Philip passed away two days later, at peace in the knowledge he was joining his Saviour.

Our team members often comment that we may never know where the ripples of this ministry end up. Sometimes students move homes, return to China, stop coming for various reasons. Our aim is to bless our local community in whatever way we can. If students only benefit by learning some English, that's fine. We hope, however, that when a student comes to Learn English @ NewHope, just like for Phillip, it will be the first step towards meeting Jesus.



# NEWHOPE MEDICAL LTD. | Tony

The 27th of April 2023 was a day of celebration of God’s goodness, when, after extensive negotiations, an agreement was signed for the transfer of the NewHope Medical Practice to Total Wellbeing, effective from 1st August 2023. The transition is taking place from that date until 31st January 2024, thereafter Total Wellbeing assumes full ownership of the Practice. This will ensure the holistic medical and counselling care and love extended by NewHope Medical to the community can continue.

A special thank you to Denise Forsyth for returning in January as part-time Practice Manager, and for ably managing the handover process.

Further good news was the granting in July of DGR status to NewHope Medical Ltd as a Health Promotion Charity.

In the meantime, the practice has continued to operate successfully:

- Patient numbers have grown a further 6% from 4318 in January to 4570 in the six months to the end of July.
- Reaccreditation was achieved in March 2023
- Associated patient survey - rated a solid 99% in patient satisfaction

In May we received a Government grant for Improving General Practice. This enabled us to undergo some remodelling and rearrangement of the treatment room and nursing area plus purchasing equipment related to infection prevention. This is in preparation for an expansion of the medical procedures to be offered.

Some personnel changes in 2023:

- Registered Nurses - Mary Gionta left the role in May; Pik Chuen Yau completed a short contract from June until September.
- GPs - at the end of June, we farewelled Dr Jae Mie Teh who relocated to be with her family in West Australia after 2 years with the practice. 2 doctors from Total Wellbeing began working from the NHM rooms in July as part of an early integration, and members of the NHM mental health team relocated to the TWB site.
- Reception - Liz Broadbent left NewHope Medical after 5 years with the practice and more than 5 years with NHCC. We would like to acknowledge her long-term contribution to serving our community both through NHCC and NHM.
- Board – Lufee Wong resigned from the Board effective from end 2023. Our thanks go to Lufee for her wisdom and contribution to the Board’s proceedings



# NEWHOPE BAPTIST PRESCHOOL INC. | Lance & Andrea

2023 was a year of renewal within NewHope Baptist Preschool. Melissa Adam concluded her role as Director of the Preschool in December 2022 after a very successful and stable period of leadership. God’s presence was clearly evident through the search process for a new Director of the Preschool. Leadership prayed for a leader who would be able to continue the faith filled culture and presence of the Preschool in the community, which Melissa had stewarded so well through her leadership.

Andrea Simons was appointed Director of NewHope Baptist Preschool in January 2023 with her role officially commencing in March. Andrea co-pastors Hillsong’s Melbourne East Campus with her husband Dale. Andrea has actively worked to continue to invest in the relationship between the Preschool and church, the Christian culture within the Preschool and ensure ongoing development of the educational programs. The year presented a number of staff transitions and reappointments as much loved staff concluded their roles to move into exciting new opportunities in their careers and life. By the end of the year the majority of the staff team had been appointed within the previous 24 months.



The Free Kindergarten program announced by the Victorian State government for 3 and 4 year old programs has seen an increase in participation in Kindergarten programs across the state. Our Preschool has also experienced strong interest with enrolments reaching 100% capacity across all programs.

We continue to thank God for the opportunity to be a living presence in the local community through early childhood education. The staff and culture of the Preschool carry the values of NewHope and the desire to cultivate a culture and framework of Christian principles through every aspect of the educational program. Through the changes of 2023 we see God’s hand continuing to bless and lead the Preschool and its presence in the local community of Blackburn North.

2023 was a strong year for Blackburn NewHope Football Club. The success of the Matildas at the Women’s World Cup drove strong participation and interest in the club across the year. The club experienced a stabilisation of participation and a strengthening women’s and girl’s programs during the 2023 season. The clubroom redevelopment project continued to develop and will likely commence during the 2024 year after securing funding from Federal, State and Local Governments.

The club has grown significantly over the past decade and consequently it has become increasingly difficult for NewHope to sustain leadership over the club under the terms of the model in place. Lance Blythe had been required to fulfil the role as President of the club over the 2022/23 seasons. The NewHope Church Council determined that a new governance model was required for the sustainability of the club and appropriate focusing of resources within the church. Significant work was invested into the governance of the club during the year to enable BNFC to move towards a self governed model and exist outside the leadership of NewHope. This model was unanimously supported by invested volunteers of the club. A successful meeting was hosted in December 2023 to accept a new constitution and elect new volunteer committee members to the roles required under the new constitution. NewHope is in the process of gradually reducing the infrastructure supporting the club as the new governance model is implemented and new systems are introduced by the elected committee members.

With the establishment of the new constitution a chapter of NewHope’s story concludes. Participants of NewHope helped to establish the club and over many years a strong relationship between club and church has occurred. While NewHope’s formal oversight of the club has now officially concluded, the church and club will remain in relationship into the future and the DNA that has formed at the club is deeply held within the new leadership. NewHope members continue to participate in the club and its leadership. We wish to thank everyone in the NewHope church community who has played, volunteered and invested into the community of Blackburn NewHope Football Club over the decades of its existence. The club is in a healthy position and is well positioned to grow and thrive in line with the opportunities before it for many years into the future.

# Enabling Infrastructure

## **FACILITIES** | Michael

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2023 was a busy year. Regular essential maintenance was carried out to support NewHope ministries and external events throughout the year, and to keep our building safe and compliant. During 2023, in addition to day-to-day maintenance, a number of projects were undertaken.

Many of these projects were completed with assistance from a team of wonderful volunteers who play a key role in assisting with the upkeep of our amazing facility!

## **IT SERVICES** | Isaac

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2023 marked another year of essentials for IT services at NewHope.

Ongoing maintenance of network infrastructure included nothing out of the ordinary. We commenced some overdue tasks such as working to replace UPS batteries around the building and get automatic updates working on our network devices.

A review of many online accounts for old, outdated and abandoned logins was completed along with an ongoing update to the on-boarding and off-boarding procedure for staff and key team members. This will serve to keep unnecessary access to files, documents and emails even more limited and up-to-date going forward.

The transitions of IT services for both NewHope Medical and Blackburn NewHope Football Club aligned last year. All services provided to NHM have now either been fully transferred or have otherwise been discontinued. Various tasks remain in-progress for BNFC but the project will be completed in 2024.

# NEWHOPE COMMUNICATIONS | Alicia

In 2023, Communications at NewHope continued to position itself as a ministry that supports the vision of our church and engages our mission.

There were shifts in our team as Jazz Coughlin finished her role as social media coordinator and both Alicia Demond and Kent Pittendrigh Smith saw changes in their roles and increased time dedicated to Comms. This has allowed us to utilise more videos in the social media space and see a significant increase in engagement.

We continued to partner with many NewHope ministries to support event advertising, website updates, social media scheduling, print media and much more. Three church-wide campaigns that had Comms support in 2023 were the ‘Together A Generous People’ campaign, which aimed to close the giving gap through the months of August and September, the ‘A Reason to Sing’ Spotify playlist, compiled of songs submitted from NewHopers, and the ‘Serving in 2024’ project, which saw several people sign up to serve at NewHope for the first time.

We continued to work behind the scenes to make updates and improvements to systems like the website and Planning Center for efficiency and ease of use. We also made several important policy updates, including a new ‘Online Communities’ policy to strengthen safe ministry at NewHope.

We look forward to even more opportunities to strengthen Communications at NewHope in the new year to come.

## Video Production | Kent & Phil

In 2023, our video production team had another amazing year, playing a vital role in supporting the ministries of NewHope and highlighting the remarkable works of God. Throughout the year, we were privileged to share a number of inspiring stories, ranging from the impactful efforts of Whitehorse Churches Care and Summer Missions to the works of our Farsi community, testimonies of God’s love and stories of hope emanating from NewHope Community Care.

Each story resonated with the profound impact of faith and the transformative power of God’s love. These narratives not only reflected the vibrancy of our community but also served as a testament to the meaningful connections fostered through the ministries of NewHope.

# OFFICE MANAGEMENT AND RECEPTION | Liane

In 2023, we faced a significant challenge when our Office Manager, Liane Viljoen, was on extended sick leave. During this period, we were fortunate to witness the remarkable commitment and dedication of volunteers who stepped up to ensure the seamless functioning of our reception area. Their invaluable contribution allowed us to maintain service and support for the diverse array of individuals who interact with NewHope on a daily basis.

The Office Management team plays an indispensable role in sustaining the operations of NewHope. Their responsibilities encompass a wide spectrum of tasks and activities, including:

- **Administrative Efficiency:** Handling stationery orders, managing archives, and responding to website requests to ensure the efficient functioning of our administrative processes.
- **Facility Maintenance:** From dishwashing to mopping and tending to the greenery by watering the plants, they uphold the physical wellbeing of NewHope.
- **Client Engagement:** Conducting building tours for potential clients interested in hosting events within our premises and booking sessions for prayer ministry, providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
- **Logistics and Outreach:** Collecting mail at the Kerrimuir post office, filling water jugs for church council meetings, and running reports to keep everything organised and operational.
- **Reporting and Documentation:** Maintaining accurate records, filling out annual reporting for the Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), and overseeing various reporting tasks critical to NewHope’s accountability.
- **Supporting Our Community:** Above all, the core function of the Office Management team is to provide unwavering support to all visitors, staff, and volunteers, ensuring that their needs are met and their experiences at NewHope are positive and fulfilling.

The remarkable dedication of our volunteers and their tireless efforts during Liane’s absence exemplify the strength and resilience of our community. Their unwavering commitment to ensuring that NewHope continues to be a welcoming and vibrant place for all who enter is truly commendable. We extend our deepest gratitude to these individuals who embody the spirit of service and compassion, making NewHope a place of solace, support, and connection for our diverse community.



# FINANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT | Sanette

The Finance Team at NewHope consist of Sanette Wood and Jono Hill. Jono joined the team in January 2023 and brought a wealth of valuable experience and skills. Together we service all financial and payroll needs of NewHope Baptist Church, NewHope Medical, NewHope Baptist Preschool, NewHope Community Care, Middle Ground Café, Blackburn NewHope Football Club and NewHope Custodian.

NewHope Baptist Church experienced a positive trend in giving throughout 2023, reaching 92% compared to the targeted budget. Global Mission Giving surpassed expectations at 104% against the budget. Events had a highly successful year, featuring an international chess tournament and musical concerts, ending the year nearly \$60,000 above budget for the Events team. The NewHope Finance team remains committed to supporting the Football Club during its transition period.

NewHope Community Care celebrated a highly successful June appeal, exceeding the budget by \$9,000. The House of Hope, previously under an in-kind agreement with Baptcare, has now returned to the ownership of NewHope Baptist Church and will soon be rented out.

Middle Ground Café faced challenges with a leak in the walls during the closure in 2022 but received an insurance claim for loss of income in 2023. The

café also received a boost in income at the beginning of the year due to an international chess tournament.

NewHope Baptist Preschool initially faced slow funding as we navigated free kindergarten funding, but this was corrected by the end of the first term. With a new hut purchased by the parent committee fundraising efforts and a successful year under the new Director in 2023, the preschool is thriving. The preschool’s financial health largely depends on student enrolments, and they were mostly at capacity during 2023.

Contributions to the Tax Deductible fund remained robust at 102% to the budget. After the Medical Centre achieved the status of a Health Promotion Charity (backdated to 2018), we transferred \$322,100 from unallocated Tax Deductible Funds to the Medical Centre. This fund also helped repay \$279,600 to the loan from NewHope Baptist Church and reduced the loan between NewHope Community Care and the Baptist Church.

Our risk team consist of Adam Southwood and Sanette Wood. We are actively engaged in a monthly review assessing high-level risks, analysing potential threats and vulnerabilities and reporting any significant changes to the executive team.

# HUMAN RESOURCES | Surette

Professional Pastoral Supervision is required for ministry leaders at NewHope. In 2023 we engaged with Partners in Ministry to partner with us to achieve this. Other members of our staff team have engaged pastoral supervisors from other service providers but are accredited with the Baptist Union of Victoria.

*People enter into ministry in response to a gracious call from God and the Church. It is this call that requires Pastoral Leaders to carry out their responsibilities in a faithful, professional and accountable manner. As Scripture says: “See to it that you fulfil the ministry that you have received from the Lord” (Col 4:17). Pastoral Leaders have been given a significant role within the life of the church. They are called upon to exercise leadership in its worship, preaching, mission, pastoral care and training; they also serve as Christ’s representatives in the world (Matt 28:18-20). As Pastoral Leaders live out their call to ministry in positions of power and influence, they will seek to express the love and character of Christ in all their relationships. The call to serve as an example of Christian faith and living is an essential part of the Pastoral vocation (1 Peter 5:3, 1 Timothy 4:12-16).*

We celebrated the births of:

- Ellie Lewtas, daughter of Mirands & Ben Lewtas
- Zachary Steven, son of Megan & Craig Steven, brother to Melody

The staff from Middle Ground Café transferred from NHBC to NHCC as the Café was repositioned as a Social Enterprise.

As at 31 December 2022 the **full time staff equivalent** for the entities were:

NewHope Baptist Church	20.55 (2022) > 16.10 (2023)
NewHope Community Care Inc.	2.32 (2022) > 4.39 (2023)
NewHope Medical Ltd.	2.15 (2022) > 1.61 (2023)
NewHope Baptist Preschool Inc.	4.01 (2022) > 4.75 (2023)

NewHope Staff Members concluding their roles in 2023:

### **NHBC**

- Rachel Allsop (Groups)
- Ellie Riley (Jnr. Kids)
- Christine Chew (Chinese Worship)
- Maryam Babaali (Farsi - Comms)
- Katrina Lambert (Associate Pastor - 2 days)

### **NHCC**

- Katrina Lambert (Director - 3 days)

### **NHBPS**

- Melissa Adam (Director & Teacher)
- Miranda Lee (Acting Director & Teacher)
- Clare Gooding
- Catherine Bezemer (Teacher)
- Joanne Belousof

### **NHMed**

- Mary Gionta (Nurse)
- Pik Yau (Nurse - now employed by Total Wellbeing)
- Liz Broadbent (Receptionist)
- Genine Schumann (Receptionist - now employed by Total Wellbeing)
- Veronica Chai (Receptionist - now employed by Total Wellbeing)

NewHope Staff Members commencing in 2023:

### **NHBC**

- Bec Burley (Kids Ministry)
- Jono Hill (Finance)
- Andrew Bykovec (Playspace)
- Yang Yang (mainly music)

### **NHCC**

- Concetta Rizzuto (Middle Ground Cafe - casual cook)

### **NHMed**

- Pik Yau (Nurse)

## **NHBPS**

- Andrea Simons (Director & Teacher)
- Joanne Belousof (Educator)
- Joanna Yang (Educator)
- Kristine Yiang (Teacher)
- Tianyi Zhu (Teacher)
- Ting Ting Luo (Educator)
- Yang Yang (Educator)
- Sophie Lam Tseung Lung (Educator)
- Li Zhang (Educator)
- Velisia Tejakusuma (Teacher)
- Miranda Lau (Educator)



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