

# THE FUTURE ESTONIAN HOUSE IN MELBOURNE WORKING GROUP

Final Report

January 2022



# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	9
2.2	Approach .....	9
2.3	Key Limitations.....	11
<b>3</b>	<b>Background .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	12
3.2	The Estonian Community in Melbourne .....	12
3.3	Estonian House in Melbourne .....	12
3.4	Estonian Communities and Houses Around the World .....	13
3.5	The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Survey of the Estonian Diaspora.....	14
<b>4</b>	<b>The Consultation Process.....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	16
4.2	Survey of Individuals and Families.....	16
4.2.1	Introduction.....	16
4.2.2	Responses Received.....	16
4.2.3	Summary of Responses Received .....	16
4.2.4	Key Limitations.....	18
4.3	Survey of Estonian Community Groups .....	18
4.3.1	Introduction.....	18
4.3.2	Survey Responses Received.....	19
4.3.3	Summary of Responses Received .....	19
4.4	Meetings with Estonian Community Groups .....	19
4.4.1	Introduction.....	19
4.4.2	Feedback from the <i>Ugala</i> male university fraternity .....	19
4.4.3	Feedback from Executive Committee of the Estonian House Co-operative .....	20
4.4.4	Feedback from Community Group meetings -April & May 2021 .....	21
4.4.5	Key Limitations.....	25
4.5	Estonian Community Feedback .....	25
4.5.1	Introduction.....	25
4.5.2	Summary of Community Meeting Feedback .....	26
4.5.3	Email and paper mail .....	26
4.6	Additional Needs – Wet Bar and Archive.....	27
4.7	Building Compliance.....	27

4.8	Other Ethnic Communities in Australia .....	27
4.8.1	Introduction .....	27
4.8.2	Melbourne Lithuanian Community .....	28
4.8.3	Melbourne Latvian Community .....	28
4.8.4	Melbourne Hungarian Community .....	29
4.8.5	Melbourne Polish Community .....	29
4.8.6	Melbourne Danish Community .....	29
4.8.7	Ethnic Communities in Geelong .....	30
4.8.8	Sydney Lithuanian Community .....	30
4.8.9	Canberra Lithuanian Community .....	30
4.8.10	Summary of Other Ethnic Communities in Australia .....	31
4.9	Other Estonian Houses and Communities in Australia .....	31
4.9.1	Introduction .....	31
4.9.2	Brisbane .....	31
4.9.3	Sydney .....	31
4.9.4	Canberra .....	32
4.9.5	Tasmania .....	32
4.9.6	Adelaide .....	32
4.9.7	Perth .....	33
4.9.8	Northern Territory .....	34
4.9.9	Summary of Other Estonian Houses and Communities in Australia .....	34
4.9.10	Additional - Honorary Consul for Estonia in Melbourne’s anecdotal observations .....	34
<b>5</b>	<b>Solution Options.....</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	35
5.2	Identify Options.....	35
5.3	Conduct SWOT Analysis .....	36
5.4	Develop a Decision-Making Matrix.....	37
5.5	Use the Decision-Making Matrix to Score Each Option .....	38
5.6	Findings.....	40
<b>6</b>	<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Attachments.....</b>	<b>41</b>
7.1	Attachment 1 – Estonian Community and House in Melbourne .....	41
7.2	Attachment 2 – Map of home postcodes of current financial members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne .....	43
7.3	Attachment 3 – WG Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – September 2021.....	44
7.4	Attachment 4 – WG Seven (7) Guiding Questions .....	46
7.5	Attachment 5 – Meeting with Under 45s – Meeting Invitation .....	47

7.6	Attachment 6 – Meeting with Estonian House Co-op shareholders – Meeting Invitation .....	48
7.7	Attachment 7 – Individuals and Families Survey Form.....	49
7.8	Attachment 8 – Individuals and Families Survey – Respondents’ home postcodes .	53
7.9	Attachment 9 – Community Groups Survey Form .....	54
7.10	Attachment 10 – Community Group Meetings Feedback – April and May 2021 ....	60
7.11	Attachment 11 - Final Community Consultation Meeting – September 2021 – Meeting Agenda .....	71
7.12	Attachment 12 - Final Community Consultation Meeting – September 2021 – Meeting Notes .....	72
7.13	Attachment 13 - Lithuanian House in Melbourne.....	75
7.14	Attachment 14 – Perth Estonian Community Summer School Holiday camp .....	76
7.15	Attachment 15 - SWOT - Solution Option 1 – No Change .....	77
7.16	Attachment 16 - SWOT - Solution Option 2 – Cosmetic Refresh of Existing House	78
7.17	Attachment 17 - SWOT - Solution Option 3 – Sell and Buy an Existing Property ..	79
7.18	Attachment 18 - SWOT - Solution Option 4 – Sell and Lease an Existing Property	80
7.19	Attachment 19 - SWOT - Solution Option 5 – Sell and hire existing venues per rehearsal/meeting/event.....	81
7.20	Attachment 20 – Additional References .....	82

# 1 Executive Summary

In late 2018 with a view to the future, the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne (*Kodu*) decided that they needed to plot a path forward which ensured that the Estonian House in Melbourne remained the important community hub that it had been to date.

Therefore, these committees considered it important to plan for the future Estonian House in Melbourne by

- Reviewing current and future requirements, and
- Identifying options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

As a result, the committees jointly commissioned a Working Group (WG) in early 2019 to report on the following :

1. The broad requirements of a building that would support the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025.
2. Whether the existing building supports the needs of the Estonian community in Melbourne through to 2025.
3. Solution options that would meet the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025
4. How each option could be implemented including in terms of how it would be managed, operated and maintained.

Noting that the WG was to provide recommendations only, to the Executive Committee and shareholders of the Estonian House Co-operative who have the authority and responsibility to progress any recommendations in consultation with the Executive Committee and members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*).

The WG planned and implemented the following approach albeit with some small changes and within a near three (3) year period from March 2019 through to December 2021. The extended time period was due to the impact of Covid-19 including the strict restrictions in Victoria, combined with WG members' availability.

1. Gather and document information about
  - the historical background of the Estonian community and Estonian House in Melbourne. and
  - current day Estonian diaspora communities outside of Australia and their local "houses".
2. Consult
  - members of the Estonian community in Melbourne – in a number of ways
  - leaders of other Estonian communities in Australia to find out more about their local Estonian Houses
  - leaders and members of other ethnic communities in Australia to find out how they were continuing to maintain a community centre distant from their mother or fatherland.
  - by encouraging feedback to be provided by email or paper mail addressed to WG specific email and paper mail addresses
3. Identify Key Solution Options
4. Assess Key Solution Options
5. Recommend one or more Solution Options
6. Maintain clear communications with the Estonian community in Melbourne via multiple channels throughout the process.

Details of the work undertaken its results and relevant key limitations are documented in the following sections and attachments of this report.

**Key findings required to be reported upon by the WG are as follows:**

**1. The broad requirements of a building that would support the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025.**

- An Estonian House should exist in Melbourne within 5-10 km of the CBD with clear “Estonian House” signage and ample nearby free parking on weekends
- The interior of the current building is outdated, has an inflexible floor plan and is so large that it can be viewed as unwelcoming; so, when considering the future Estonian House in Melbourne it should be a smaller, well lit, more contemporary.
- Meetings/rehearsal space
  - Improved natural and artificial light
  - The largest floor space requirements identified for meetings/rehearsals was for a 200sqm e.g., 10m x 20m folk dance rehearsal space
  - Furniture, catering facilities and equipment and toilet facilities similar to the existing “upstairs hall” along with
    - a working dishwashing machine
    - a lockable mini bar
    - more storage cupboards, filing cabinets, bookshelves, and display cabinet/s
    - a white board and non-permanent markers
    - upgraded audio/visual facilities including electronic equipment and WiFi access
    - a regularly tuned upright acoustic piano
    - a disabled toilet
    - fully functioning heating and cooling systems
    - improved all abilities access (including for children’s prams)
- Functions/events space
  - Floor space, furniture, catering facilities and equipment and toilet facilities similar to the existing “upstairs hall” for the annual Mother’s Day, Midsummer and August Independence Day events along with all the items listed above for meetings/rehearsals spaces above
    - Excepting
      - the whiteboard
      - more storage cupboards, filing cabinets and display cabinet/s
    - Along with
      - improved children’s play spaces, toys, and storage cupboards
      - a Parents’ Room
      - a regularly tuned grand acoustic piano
  - Floor space, furniture, bar and catering facilities and equipment similar to the existing “downstairs hall” for the annual February Independence Day and Christmas Party events along with the improvements suggested above for the smaller “upstairs hall” sized space.
- Space is also required for storage of the Melbourne Estonian community archive – however, the space and weight bearing requirements of this archive are yet to be defined.
- Large events are held every 2-3 years, being the Melbourne Baltic Festival and *Eesti Päevad* when the bulk of the current Estonian House is used. Therefore, means would need to be found to accommodate such event obligations in keeping with the suggestions made above.
- A base assumption is that the future Estonian House in Melbourne will comply with all relevant building regulations.

## **2. Whether the existing building supports the needs of the Estonian community in Melbourne through to 2025.**

As described in response to point 1 above, the existing Estonian House has more space than required for current meetings, rehearsals, and functions/events with the exception of the Melbourne Baltic Festival and *Eesti Päevad*. With the Melbourne Baltic Festival being hosted by each of the three (3) Melbourne Baltic communities in turn ; so once every three (3) years by the Estonian community in Melbourne and *Eesti Päevad* having traditionally been held every 2-3 years between the three cities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney; so hosted by the Estonian community in Melbourne every 6-9 years.

The two key spaces used by members of the Estonian community in Melbourne are the upstairs and downstairs halls including furniture, catering facilities and equipment, bar and toilet facilities.

While the two (2) halls can accommodate meetings, rehearsals and functions/events, feedback was received about the outdated interior of the building with numerous improvements suggested for the future Estonian House in Melbourne as described above, along with

- an easily accessible outdoor area for both young and old, with tables, umbrellas, lawn, shade, BBQ and play equipment, and
- consideration being given, subject to financial analysis of a paid part-time Manager being engaged.

## **3. Solution options that would meet the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025**

The WG identified the following five (5) viable options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne :

1. Do nothing to the current house
2. Undertake a cosmetic refresh of the current house
3. Sell the current house and buy an existing property
4. Sell the current house and lease an existing property
5. Sell the current house and hire existing venue/s per meeting/rehearsal/event

Each option was firstly assessed in term of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs).

This was followed by each option being assessed with respect to a number of aspects, each of which was weighted and scored according to its importance, with key assumptions noted.

With the result being that the “top 2” options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne in order of priority are:

1. Sell the current house and lease an existing property
2. Sell the current house and buy an existing property

Clearly indicating that the sale of the current Estonian House in Melbourne is considered to be the best Next Step in preparation for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

With the WG recommending that the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) embark on the Next Steps by working together in a timely manner to:

1. Engage legal advice for the purposes of reviewing and gaining an understanding of their respective organisation’s legal obligations
2. Pursue one or both of the top two (2) options in more detail:
3. Halt the decline in the number of active shareholders and members of their respective organisations; leading to an increase in volunteers willing and able to assist with the operation of the Estonian House in Melbourne and the Estonian Society in Melbourne.

## **4. How each option could be implemented including in terms of how it would be managed, operated and maintained.**

Given that the result of the “top 2” options are different – leasing or owning a property; in turn how the resulting property will be managed, operated and maintained will be determined by whether the building is leased or owned.

Therefore, given the difference in the potential result, the extended time period that the WG has undertaken its activities and WG members' availability, the definition of how the resulting property is to be managed, operated and maintained will be left to others to determine; potentially by learning from the experiences of other ethnic communities in Australia including those contacted by the Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group.



## **2 The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In late 2018 with a view to the future, the Executive Committee of the Estonian House Co-operative decided that it needed to plot a path forward, which ensured that the Estonian House in Melbourne remained the important community hub that it had been to date.

It became apparent at the outset, that the seriousness of the task would need the input of the Estonian Society of Melbourne (*Kodu*), since a key purpose of the Co-operative is to maintain Estonian House as a venue for events and activities organised by ‘the Society’. Therefore, the Executive Committees of both the Co-operative and the Society would need to work collaboratively to plan for the future Estonian House in Melbourne by

- Reviewing current and future requirements, and
- Identifying options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

As a result, the committees jointly commissioned a Working Group to undertake these tasks. An Expression of Interest (EOI) was released, seeking applications from interested members of the Estonian community in Melbourne to join the Working Group. In early 2019, a Working Group (WG) of six (6) members was selected from amongst the applications received. WG member biographies may be viewed by scrolling down this web page – <https://estonia.org.au/communities/melbourne>

The first meeting of the Working Group was held in early March 2019. Regular meetings continued to be held until December 2021; initially as in person meetings, then with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, as online meetings.

Building upon the above goals of the two committees, the purpose of the Working Group was defined as being :

To report on the following :

1. The broad requirements of a building that would support the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025.
2. Whether the existing building supports the needs of the Estonian community in Melbourne through to 2025.
3. Solution options that would meet the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025
4. How each option could be implemented including in terms of how it would be managed, operated and maintained.

In addition, it is worth noting that the Working Group is responsible for providing recommendations only. The Executive Committee and shareholders of the Estonian House Co-operative have the authority and responsibility to progress any recommendations in consultation with the Executive Committee and members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*).

Summary information about the general activities of the WG and its relationship to the Estonian House Co-operative maybe found in the most recent September 2021 version of FAQs (Frequent Asked Questions) included as Attachment 3.

### **2.2 Approach**

From the outset, Working Group (WG) members agreed that their work would be undertaken in a consultative, step wise and transparent manner with conflicts of interest declared where relevant.

It was also agreed that there would be no formal role assigned per WG member. Instead, the roles of meeting chairperson, minute taker and communications updater would be rotated amongst members.

The high-level approach defined in early 2019 was as follows

1. Gather and document background information about
  - the Estonian community in Melbourne, the Estonian House in Melbourne. and
  - Estonian diaspora communities and their local “houses” outside of Australia

2. Consult

- members of the Estonian community in Melbourne – in a number of ways
- leaders of other Estonian communities in Australia to find out more about their local Estonian Houses
- leaders of other ethnic communities in Melbourne to find out how they were continuing to maintain a community centre distant from their mother or father land.
- by encouraging feedback to be provided by mail or paper mail addressed to WG specific email and paper mail addresses

3. Identify Key Solution Options

4. Assess Key Solution Options

5. Recommend one or more Solution Options

6. Maintain clear communications with the Estonian community in Melbourne via multiple channels throughout the process

This high-level approach was implemented as planned albeit with some changes and within a near three (3) year period from March 2019 through to December 2021. The extended time period was due to the impact of Covid-19 including the strict restrictions in Victoria, combined with WG members' availability.

Background information was collected as planned and is included in a following section

Consultations were planned and conducted via the following means

- An Individuals and Families survey – available both online and in paper form
- A Groups Survey – a paper survey circulated to the leaders of the Estonian community groups in Melbourne that belong to the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*)
- Community consultations
  - Meetings with leaders and members of active Estonian community groups in Melbourne
  - A public online meeting
  - In person, online, telephone and email discussions with
    - leaders of other Estonian communities in Australia
    - leaders of other ethnic communities in Melbourne
- Ongoing invitations encouraging feedback to be provided by email or paper mail addressed to WG specific email and paper mail addresses

Solution options were identified and assessed using the following series of recognised tools:

- Brainstorming
- SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- Decision Making Matrix (to score Options)
- Ranking of Scores to identify the “top” options

Communications took the following forms:

1. Initially via Meeting Summaries provided to the two commissioning committees
2. Once established, via a web page on the [estonia.org.au](http://estonia.org.au) website; with updates posted after each WG meeting along with an updated list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
3. Via Facebook groups – with updates posted after each WG meeting.
  - a. *Eestlased Melbourneis* which has more than 2,500 members
  - b. *Eestlased Austraalias* which has more than 18,000 members.

Noting that

- each of these Facebook groups includes a variety of people – with different levels of interest, from Australia and overseas, Estonian, and non-Estonian backgrounds.

- There is a stark contrast between the membership of these groups and the Estonian Society in Melbourne's financial membership of 125 in 2019.
- Printed handouts circulated at events held at Estonian House  
e.g., A handout was provided at the 2019 Mother's Day event.
- Verbal updates provided at events held at Estonian House  
e.g., A verbal update was provided at the February 2021 Independence Day event.
- Summaries provided in the electronic and print copies of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) *Teateleht* newsletter.

The following sections describe how this approach was implemented and the results of doing so.

As an early step, the WG defined a list of key seven (7) questions which helped them to focus on addressing the defined purpose of the WG. Refer to Attachment 4 for this list of guiding questions.

### **2.3 Key Limitations**

As with all undertakings, there have been a number of limitations on the activities undertaken by the WG, including

1. That the work documented in this report was undertaken by a group of six (6) volunteers who were able to contribute subject to other commitments during the course of the near three years from March 2019 to January 2022.
2. The ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on WG members and the people that the WG were seeking to engage with - including public and personal health risks, various restrictions including lockdowns, bans and limits on public gatherings and individuals' varying views of the future.
3. As agreed during a phone meeting with the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Estonian House Co-operative on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2020:
  - The WG was initiated in pre-Covid-19 times, and its terms of reference have not been changed to be those of "The Future Estonian House in Melbourne during Covid-19 times"
  - WG members do not have the skills to forecast how Covid-19 may impact on the activities of the local Estonian community, especially since some groups may not meet for nearly 2 years (March 2020 – early 2022) during which time group members may develop other interests, find alternative groups and will most certainly be 2 years older.
  - The WG (and Executive Committees) have no control over external Covid-19 related factors such as :
    - Government requirements e.g., number of persons per square metres
    - Insurance policy conditions regarding Covid-19 e.g., proof of vaccination, age of event attendees etc
    - Local council by-laws, and
    - Community members' personal choices e.g., attending indoor events.

## **3 Background**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Prior to embarking on any community consultations, the WG considered it important to firstly familiarise itself with background information.

Two particular aspects of background information were considered important

1. the Estonian community in Melbourne, the Estonian House in Melbourne. and
2. Estonian diaspora communities and their local “houses” outside of Australia

During 2020, part way through the WG’s activities, the Estonian Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Culture launched an online questionnaire to gain a better understanding of the experiences, identities, needs and expectations of Estonians abroad and Estonian diaspora communities. -As noted in a following section, no mention of Estonian Houses was made during a virtual forum held in late November 2021 to review the initial survey results. The final survey results are scheduled to be issued in January 2022.

The Background information collected and collated by the WG is documented in the following sections and Attachment 1.

### **3.2 The Estonian Community in Melbourne**

It may be safely assumed that people from the region recognised as Estonia, have been arriving in Australia since the time of early European settlement. However, Estonian language, culture and traditions were not formally celebrated in Melbourne until the Estonian Society in Melbourne was established in 1914, although ceasing activity six years later in 1920.

The Estonian Society in Melbourne was revived in 1938, with the Society being named *Kodu* (“Home”); a name which continues to the present day.

The later influx of post World War II arrivals heralded a new era for Estonian communities in Australia, including an increase in the number of financial members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*).

In more recent years, from 2004 through to 2018, the Estonian Society had an average of 230 financial members. In 2019 this dropped to 125 financial members.

A map of the home postcodes of the members from 2019 is included as Attachment 2.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 census identified that approximately 1300 people in Victoria report themselves as having one or more parents from Estonia. Admittedly this pool of people included temporary visa holders such as backpackers.

A booklet documenting the history of the Estonian community in Melbourne from 1914-2014 is available via this link - <https://estonia.org.au/files/EstonianSocietyMelbourne1914-2014.pdf>

The annual reports of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) and other Estonian societies in Australia which are members of the Council of Estonian Societies in Australia may be found via this link - <https://estonia.org.au/aes/>

### **3.3 Estonian House in Melbourne**

In early December 1951, the Estonian Society of Melbourne registered the Estonian House Co-operative as a separate not for profit entity. The purpose of the Estonian House Co-operative was to find a building that could become a home for the Estonian Society of Melbourne. The money required to purchase a building was raised via a combination of community fundraising events and the sale of membership shares in the Estonian House Co-operative.

In early 1955, the Co-operative purchased a single fronted shop and residence at 67 Sydney Road, Coburg. After many months of painstaking volunteer work by community members, the building was officially opened as the Melbourne Estonian House on 4 December 1955. Due to its size, the building was limited to hosting only small-scale community events, with larger events being held in hired halls.

In January 1970, a decision was made to search for larger premises which could accommodate the needs of the local community and in anticipation of the Estonian Society in Melbourne hosting the bi-annual Estonian Festival in Australia at the end of 1972.

In early July 1971, the Co-operative purchased the former Marco Polo cinema building at 41-45 Melville Road, West Brunswick. The purchase was funded by a combination of the sale of the Sydney Rd property, community fundraising events and the sale of additional membership shares in the Estonian House Co-operative. During the next 18 months, countless hours of voluntary labour led to the former cinema being totally refurbished in readiness for the official Opening Ceremony in late 1972.

Since 1972, Estonian House in Melville Road has operated as the focal point for local Estonian cultural events, including commemorative and celebratory functions, folk dancing and choir rehearsals and concerts, drama rehearsals and plays, the Estonian language school, handicraft club, library, and scout and girl guide troops. This variety of events and group activities has enabled members of the Estonian community in Melbourne to maintain and develop their knowledge and experience of Estonian language, culture and traditions.

Since the early 2000s, the frequency of, participation in, and attendance at functions, rehearsals, meetings and classes at the Estonian House in Melbourne has gradually decreased to the point where the building is now booked for Estonian House community events on only three (3) weekends a year and for monthly meeting and rehearsal days i.e., the last Sunday of the month.

The decreasing attendances at Estonian House is due to a combination of factors including the opening up of Estonia's borders, the widespread use of the internet and the shifting demographic profile of the Estonian community in Melbourne – from the generation of post World War II arrivals to their Australian born children and grandchildren and recently arrived temporary and permanent Estonian immigrants.

The Estonian House Co-operative Ltd operates

- subject to Co-operatives National Law (Victoria), and
- as a registered charity as Estonian Co Op Ltd - <https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/68791490bf37d7ad3654d250ad54a0ea#overview>

### **3.4 Estonian Communities and Houses Around the World**

The online blog titled *Estonia – Paradise of the North* authored by Estonian-Australian Tania Lestla includes an entry dated 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014 that lists Estonian Houses around the world - <https://estonia-paradise-of-the-north.blogspot.com/2014/08/estonian-houses-around-world.html>

Based on this slightly dated list and more recent internet searches, it is worth noting that

- Australia has three (3) Estonian Houses – in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide
- The USA has four (4) Estonian Houses – in New York, New Jersey, Chicago and Los Angeles
- Canada has two (2) Estonian Houses – in Toronto and Vancouver
- England has two (2) Estonian Houses – in London and Leicester (the correct link for the Leicester Estonian House is - <https://www.sites.google.com/view/leicesterieestimaja> )
- Finland, Sweden, and Germany all have one (1) Estonian House – in Helsinki, Stockholm, and Berlin respectively.

Based on this information it may be argued that per capita, Estonian community members in Australia might be well provided for by the three (3) Estonian Houses located in the south eastern states of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia; taking into account travel distances of course, but at the same time they are not much different to those in the USA or Canada.

Also worth noting is that active Estonian communities operate in a number of places around the world including in Australia, without having a dedicated Estonian House –as per some of the Estonian communities listed on this website - <http://www.vabaestisona.com/index.php/organisatsioonid.html> and described in later sections on this document.

The following last paragraph of one of the entries on the History page of the Los Angeles Estonian community website <https://www.eestiselts.com/history> describes another Estonian community “abroad” that is facing similar challenges to those of the Estonian community in Melbourne :

*The community is still intact. Realistically, the groups and organizations here today will carry on as long as they can. But one cannot help but wonder about the future of a choir with 18 members on a good Friday evening. What critical mass is needed to keep it going? And at what point will rent at the Latvian church be too expensive to justify a Sunday service for 16 people? There are often musicians and theater groups on tour in North America, but it is hard to invite them to Los Angeles when the event might draw only 60 people, tops. And can we ever get more new people to run the organizations that remain? Time will tell. The community has passed its suggested expiration date, but it's still fresh enough, so it's not about to be tossed out.*

*Till then, we remember the days of an Estonian House full of people, hazy with cigarette smoke, colored chandelier lights,*

### **3.5 The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Survey of the Estonian Diaspora**

During 2020, the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Culture launched an online questionnaire to gain a better understanding of the experiences, identities, needs and expectations of Estonians abroad and Estonian diaspora communities. - <https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90353558/a8e0cb9ad494>.

The results of the questionnaire which closed on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, will be reported upon in January 2022. The report will include a comprehensive description of Estonians and Estonian communities abroad and provide policy recommendations to Estonian state institutions about how to best support Estonians abroad.

More information about the survey may be found here : <https://newyork.mfa.ee/estonian-diaspora-survey-questionnaire-remains-open-until-20th-october-2021/>

Following the closure of the survey in late October 2021, the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a virtual forum on Saturday, 27 November 2021 to discuss the life of Estonian foreign communities and to make sense of global Estonianness (sic). <https://www.err.ee/1608415544/video-virtuaalfoorum-eestlastele-ule-maailma>

The agenda for the near 2 hour long forum was :

1. An initial report of the results of the survey of the Estonian diaspora mentioned above,
2. Discussion of why the well-being of Estonians living abroad is important to the Estonian state and
3. A panel discussion between representatives from Estonian communities in USA, Sweden and Czech Republic.

With key discussion points being :

- That the survey had received approximately 4000 responses.
- The results of the survey remain on track to be released in January 2022.
- There was no mention during the forum of Estonian Houses.
- In response to the survey
  - The three (3) main reasons for Estonians abroad not wanting to return to Estonia to live were – To see the world, make new friends and experiences (sic) (46%), an improved quality of life (36%) and professional development (34%)
  - The four (4) main Estonian themed events that Estonians abroad had attended during the past two (2) years, were – the February Independence Day (61%), Midsummer (55%), Christmas (48%) and the August Independence Day (36%)

- The three (3) main reasons for Estonians abroad not joining Estonian themed organisations were – have not heard of one in my area (38%), don't feel the need (34%), don't have enough time (26%)
- The main thing that Estonians abroad miss by being away from Estonia – is the food (34%).

A recording of the forum may be viewed via the link above.

## **4 The Consultation Process**

### **4.1 Introduction**

As described above, the WG made a commitment to take a consultative approach to seeking input from people who identified themselves as members of the Estonian community in Melbourne via number of means including online, paper, paper mail, email or in person.

How this was done in compliance with Covid-19 regulations is described in the following sections.

### **4.2 Survey of Individuals and Families**

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

An anonymous survey of individuals and families was developed and made available in February 2020

- as an online form on the [www.estonia.org.au](http://www.estonia.org.au) website
- as a paper survey form
  - distributed at the February 2020 Independence Day Commemoration held at Estonian House
  - mailed along with a copy of the current Frequent Asked Questions (and answers) and a stamped self-addressed envelope for the return of the completed survey form to
    - the forty-nine (49) financial members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (Kodu) who receive communications via paper mail
    - the twenty-nine (29) shareholders of the Estonian House in Melbourne Co-operative who receive communications via paper mail

Refer to Attachment 7 for a copy of the Individuals and Families survey form.

#### **4.2.2 Responses Received**

A total of seventy-one (71) valid survey responses were received between 22 February 2020 and 10 September 2021.

The majority of these surveys were entered directly online by the respondents, with the following paper based surveys entered online by a WG member :

- Eighteen (18) valid surveys were completed at the February 2020 Estonian Independence Day event
- Eight (8) valid surveys were returned of the forty-nine (49) surveys paper mailed to paper mail recipients of *Teateleht*.
- Six (6) valid surveys were returned of the twenty-nine (29) surveys mailed out to Co-op members. Five (5) surveys were returned as undeliverable.

So, a total of thirty-two (32) valid paper-based responses were received.

It must be noted that some of the recipients of the paper-based surveys may have already completed the survey online.

In addition, the WG considers it worth noting that such a relatively low response rate may be a “sign of the times” regarding the role of Estonian House. In the past, members of the Estonian community in Melbourne shared a near singular focus, of which Estonian House was a key part. Whereas now for good reasons the Estonian community in Australia and Melbourne is far more diverse and therefore holds a far greater diversity of viewpoints and opinions, potentially also regarding the role of the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

#### **4.2.3 Summary of Responses Received**

Responses to the survey indicate that :

- The majority of family members are aged from their mid 30s to older than 80 years of age
- The majority of respondents live east of the Tullamarine Freeway – stretching from the northeast through to south-eastern suburbs (Refer to Attachment 8 for a map of survey respondents’ postcodes)



- The frequency with which people visit Estonian House for one reason or another is approximately :

- 2/5 of people come once a week, fortnight or month
- 1/5 of people come once every 2-3 months, and
- 1/4 of people come once every 6-12 months.

The remainder of survey respondents indicated that they did not go to Estonian House at all or did not answer the related survey question.

- Most people who visited Estonian House for meetings or rehearsals came to attend folk dancing rehearsals, with small numbers of people also coming for language classes, choir rehearsals and handcraft group meetings. Some respondents are members of more than one of these groups.
- Regarding attendance at commemorations and celebrations, respondents mainly attended the following events in decreasing order of popularity
  - Christmas
  - February Independence Day
  - Mid-summer
  - Mothers' Day

Some people attended more than one of these events per year.

- In addition to the events currently presented at Estonian House, people were mainly interested in also coming to Estonian House for
  - Performances by visiting Estonian artists
  - Talks or presentations on Estonian themes
  - A Eurovision party, or
  - Film Nights

Regarding Estonian film nights, it is worth noting that Estonian films are available via online channels such as [www.netikino.ee](http://www.netikino.ee) while at the same time acknowledging that mainstream cinemas remain well patronised despite a wide variety of home-based video streaming services being available.

- People travelled to Estonian House mainly by car (60%) and public transport or taxi (33%)
- The three key reasons that people came to Estonian House were
  1. To access Estonian culture
  2. To have a sense of belonging to a community, and
  3. To meet people with common interests
- Whilst there were reasons to come to Estonian House, some people were also disinclined to come for the following key reasons :
  1. Not having enough time to do so
  2. A perceived lack of interesting events.
  3. Poor health, and
  4. The location of Estonian House
- General Comments provided in free form text were grouped into the following main themes :
  - The Building
    - A strong indication that there is a need to retain an Estonian House in Melbourne
    - The current Estonian House is too big and unattractive; a smaller facility holds more appeal to those who commented on this
  - The Activities
    - The preservation of Estonian culture through song, dance, language, and handcrafts is considered to be very important
    - Estonian House is seen to provide a direct link back to Estonia
    - Estonian House is a good meeting place for members of the Estonian community
    - The programs and events need greater promotion
    - Estonian cooking classes were suggested as a community activity
  - Membership
    - The membership is aging and declining in numbers

- More young members are needed to reinvigorate and energise the activities in and around Estonian House

#### **4.2.4 Key Limitations**

The following key limitations of the Individuals and Families Survey must be noted :

1. The relatively low response rate to the Individuals and Families survey. The gap between the number of survey responses received and the number of people attempted to be engaged in person, via email, paper mail and Facebook updates must be acknowledged, leading to the possible deduction that relatively few members of the Estonian community in Melbourne are actively (or even actually) interested in the future Estonian House in Melbourne. In no way is this observation intended to either criticise or minimise the feedback that was received.
2. The age profile of respondents to the Individuals and Families survey may not be truly representative of the Future – the future of people who identify themselves as members of the Estonian community in Melbourne,
3. A noticeable number of respondents to the Individuals and Families survey noted that while they had an interest in the future Estonian House in Melbourne that they did not in fact go to Estonian House any more due to one or more factors of which advanced age and ill health were two (2) main factors.
4. Regarding the postcode maps of respondents to the Individuals and Families survey and members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne, these maps are considered to be of limited use when planning the future Estonian House for the following reasons:
  - The relatively small sample sizes
  - The potential that younger generations of the Estonian community in Melbourne may not be living in some or many of these suburbs, including for reasons of affordability.
  - Anecdotally, members of the WG have heard that a number of more recent arrivals are living along the High St Northcote to Preston/Reservoir corridor
  - Residential mobility trends which lead to people increasingly moving between countries, states, cities and suburbs. Therefore, the residential addresses of members of the Melbourne Estonian community at any point in time may be of less relevance now and into the future, than has been the case in prior times.

### **4.3 Survey of Estonian Community Groups**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

In March 2020, a survey was developed and emailed to the leaders of the following nine (9) Estonian community groups belonging to the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) :

1. Estonian Society in Melbourne (Kodu) Executive Committee
2. Children's Folk dancing
3. Ladies Folk dancing (*Sügislilled*)
4. Adults' Folk dancing (*Eiderattad*)
5. Handcrafts
6. Choir
7. Scouts
8. Estonian language class
9. Children's play group (*Lastering*)

The WG decided to contact the leaders of each group, rather than individual group members since it considered it best to engage the leaders who as such may have a vested interest in the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

Refer to Attachment 9 for a copy of the Groups Survey.

#### **4.3.2 Survey Responses Received**

Four (4) responses were received to the nine (9) group surveys sent out in March 2020. All of these responses were provided in mid to late May 2020 and in simple free form text, not in response to the survey questions as such :

1. Language Class and *Lastering* – summary response is that neither of these groups rely on Estonian House as such; they can meet anywhere.
2. Handcrafts Group – 8 members, 4 active, 1 member in 36 – 50 age group, remaining members in 65 year old + age groups. Functions tend to be part of *Eesti Päevad*. Annual membership = \$7. No real plans to increase membership.
3. Ladies' folk dancing group – Given the impact of Covid-19 they were unsure if this group will continue to exist.

#### **4.3.3 Summary of Responses Received**

WG members were genuinely surprised at such a low response rate from group leaders who it might be assumed would have the most interest in Estonian House as a base for their activities. The low response rate was despite WG member Bernadette Pilli having followed up with Group leaders via email and in some cases also by phone.

Given the unexpectedly poor response rate, the WG decided that it would be best to meet with community group members in person. However, this was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions until 2021, when meetings were held in mid-April and late May.

### **4.4 Meetings with Estonian Community Groups**

#### **4.4.1 Introduction**

As described in the Approach section above, in early 2019 the WG planned to hold a number of public consultation meetings.

While the impact of Covid-19 restrictions seriously limited this during 2020, the WG persevered with planning multiple meetings during 2021. The meetings planned and held were with members of the *Kodu* Executive Committee, Choir, Handcraft group, Ladies' folk dancing group and the adult mixed folk dancing group. The feedback provided to the WG by these groups is summarised in sections below and detailed in the relevant Attachments.

Meetings were also scheduled with "Under 45s" and the shareholders of the Estonian House Co-operative. However, neither of these meetings were held. Both meetings were cancelled because of an apparent near complete absence of interest by people invited to these meetings. The key indicator being that nil and only two RSVPs were received for these two (2) meetings respectively (with the 2 RSVPs received to the Co-Op meeting being from relatives of WG members). The impact of meeting invitees' Covid-19 related concerns cannot be accurately assessed.

The invitation to the Under 45s meeting can be found as Attachment 5.

The invitation to the Estonian House Co-operative meeting can be found as Attachment 6. This invitation was both emailed and paper mailed (along with a stamped self-addressed return envelope to those shareholders who receive their Co-op communications via paper mail).

#### **4.4.2 Feedback from the *Ugala* male university fraternity**

A request for a meeting with members of the male university fraternity *Ugala* was met with the following response :

*You are probably not aware that Ugala will stop using its room (s) and we will send all our valuable material to Estonia. Thus, Ugala, as an organization, will no longer be one of the users of the Estonian House. We also do not see an opportunity for Ugala to be able to organise fraternity meetings in the Estonian House in the future. The future of Estonian House will be decided by other organisations and all members.*

#### **4.4.3 Feedback from Executive Committee of the Estonian House Co-operative**

In lieu of a meeting with Co-operative shareholders, a phone meeting was held with the Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Estonian House Co-operative with the agenda based on the Group Survey referred to above and included as Attachment 9.

- a) Shareholder age groups
  - Data not captured in shareholder info.
- b) Shareholders' home postcodes
  - Captured in shareholder data – possibly doubles-up with the postcodes provided in the responses to the Individuals and Families survey and those of members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*)
- c) Membership fees (including for funding events)
  - Members are shareholders. No additional fees are charged.
  - Events are the annual AGM and annual working bee. Consolidated revenue covers the cost of these events e.g., catering.
  - Consolidated revenue comprises money raised from share sales, interest on term deposits and primarily rent of the hall to other community groups (\$700 standard fee, \$200 for shareholder personal events, shareholder wakes are free). Annual maintenance costs can be up to \$40,000.
  - The Executive Committee meets monthly.
- d) Active members
  - Shareholders are expected to attend Estonian House at least once a year in order to be considered active members. So, attendance at the AGM or Working Bee provides this opportunity
- e) Space and Amenity requirements
  - Exec Committee meetings – usually about 6 people - tea and coffee facilities and toilets
  - AGM – usually about 20 people - tea and coffee facilities and toilets
- f) Transport to/from meetings/events
  - 100% by car
- g) Meetings – some, none or all held at Estonian House
  - All held at Estonian House
- h) Functions in addition to meetings
  - As above, possibly shareholder personal functions. If for example the future Estonian House was smaller, then shareholders would have access to a smaller space for their personal functions.
  - Historically, during the 1950s and 1960s, the Co-operative held events as fundraisers.
  - Following the demise of the Melbourne Estonian community's RSL (Returned Services League) like organisation, the Co-operative assumed responsibility for holding the annual Võidupüha event. Since the mid 1990s, this event has merged with the annual "Mid-summer" event held by the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) in late June/early July.
  - During the 2000s, there has been no need for the Co-operative to hold fundraising events.
- i) Membership Plans – 2020-2022, 2023-2025, 2026+
  - No share float is currently planned. If a share float was to occur it would be more to attract active members than for financial reasons.
  - A share float did occur in 2010 in a bid to increase active membership, resulting in 25 additional shareholders. Voting is 1 vote per shareholder (not 1 vote per share).
  - The link between an increased number of Co-op members and an increased interest in Estonian House is considered to be tenuous.

- Peoples' motivations to become Co-op members are various and not necessarily linked to them wishing to be active members.

j) General Comments

- Nil additional at this stage

#### **4.4.4 Feedback from Community Group meetings -April & May 2021**

Two (2) groups' meetings were held.

The first meeting on 11th April, 2021 was attended by WG members and representatives from the following four (4) groups :

1. Executive Committee of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*)
2. Ladies Folk dancing (*Sügislilled*)
3. Handcrafts and
4. Choir

The second meeting held on 23rd May, 2021 was attended by members of the WG and the adult mixed folk dancing group (*Eiderattad*).

In summary the feedback from the April and May meetings regarding groups' needs of the future Estonian House in Melbourne were identified as the following :

Item	Feedback	Comments
Members per age group	<i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee – male and female, mostly 60 + years old Choir – male and female, most members 40+ years old, some in their 20s Handcraft Group – Female only, all 60+ years of age Ladies' folk dancing - Female only, all 60+ years of age Adult mixed folk dancing – male and female, 17 members in 2020, no age specifics provided	Most group members are 60 years or older and predominantly female.
Membership numbers	<i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee – 9 Choir – 11 active members Handcraft Group – 6 active Ladies' folk dancing - 10 Adult mixed folk dancing – as above, 17 in 2020	1. 2- 3 people are members of more than one of these groups. 2. Overall, membership numbers are decreasing.
Membership fees	<i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee – nil – only the standard \$25 annual <i>Kodu</i> membership fee Choir - nil Handcraft Group - \$7 per year to cover the cost of coffee, tea and biscuits served during meetings. Ladies' folk dancing - nil Adult mixed folk dancing - nil	The Choir, Handcraft Group and Ladies' folk dancing groups all request money as required from the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee.
Meeting Frequency & Location	All of the following groups meet or rehearse monthly at Estonian House on the same Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee</li> <li>• Choir</li> <li>• Handcraft Group</li> <li>• Ladies' folk dancing</li> <li>• Adult mixed folk dancing</li> </ul>	1. The meetings and rehearsals were all scheduled for the same day per month in order to accommodate people who are members of more than one group. 2. As of May 2021, the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee has met monthly on Monday nights via Zoom. This is expected to continue once Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted.

Item	Feedback	Comments
Transport to Meetings/Rehearsals	Nearly 100% of groups' members travel by car, with only one (1) member of the Handcrafts group traveling to Estonian House by public transport.	These results may be due to a number of factors including meetings and rehearsals being held on a Sunday when the public transport timetable is limited and that there tends to be ample on-street parking available on Sundays.
Location of the future Estonian House in Melbourne	The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing group noted a preference for the Future Estonian House in Melbourne to be located within 5-10km of the Melbourne CBD with good public transport links and free street parking available on weekends. While at the same time understanding that there may need to be a trade-off between location and ease of parking nearby i.e. "better" locations may have more restricted parking.	
Meeting/Rehearsal Room Size	The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir and Handcraft Group all agreed that their floor space requirements would be adequately addressed by the floor space requirements of the two (2) folk dancing groups. The Ladies' folk dancing group identified a need for approximately 200 sqm of rehearsal space e.g. 20m x 10m. The mixed adult folk dancing group did not specify the size of a rehearsal floor space.	
Meeting/Rehearsal Room Furniture	The collective needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing groups is as follows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modular tables that can be set out in different configurations including a 4 metre length table.</li> <li>• 15-20 chairs</li> <li>• Space for 4 filing cabinets</li> <li>• 2 large floor to ceiling open bookshelves</li> <li>• 1-2 m wide floor to ceiling locked cupboard</li> <li>• Grand acoustic piano (tuned regularly)</li> <li>• Upright acoustic piano (tuned regularly)</li> <li>• Modular tables that can be moved into different configurations.</li> <li>• Improved natural and artificial lighting</li> <li>• Storage Space for Handcrafts Archive</li> </ul> No rehearsal room needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.	
Meeting/Rehearsal Catering	The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing groups require catering arrangements as per the existing upstairs kitchen including working dishwasher and possibly a locked mini bar. No rehearsal catering needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.	

Item	Feedback	Comments
Meeting/Rehearsal Room Equipment	<p>The collective needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing groups are as follows.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CD player</li> <li>2. DVD player</li> <li>3. Internet/Wi-Fi access</li> <li>4. Laptop computer</li> <li>5. Data Projector</li> <li>6. Projection screen that is wall/ceiling mounted i.e., not on a stand.</li> <li>7. Good speaker system including microphones</li> <li>8. Large screen TV/monitor</li> <li>9. Assorted cables to connect laptop to data projector and other devices.</li> <li>10. Wall mounted whiteboard (and non-permanent markers)</li> <li>11. Secure storage for all the above</li> <li>12. Fully working and effective heating and cooling system</li> </ol> <p>It was assumed that these needs were shared by the Language Classes – specially to maintain and attract higher numbers of students.</p> <p>No rehearsal room equipment needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.</p>	<p>Groups would like to provide their members with 21<sup>st</sup> century standard amenities – as a means of maintaining and possibly even growing their memberships – specially to attract younger members.</p> <p>Skills training is essential for the successful use of such equipment, options discussed included.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group/s recruiting members who have suitable existing skills</li> <li>2. Training session/s being conducted for 2-3 members/group to learn how to setup and operate equipment</li> <li>3. Providing laminated instruction sheets that are stored with the equipment</li> </ol> <p>It was agreed that since most current equipment is “plug and play” it should not be too difficult to operate especially if training and clear instruction sheets are made available.</p>

Item	Feedback	Comments
Functions/Exhibitions	<p>The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir and Ladies' folk dancing groups need the following events to be accommodated :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. February Independence Day (approx. 70 people) – as per existing downstairs hall, stage and kitchen, toilets etc</li> <li>2. Mother's Day – as per upstairs hall including disabled access and toilets</li> <li>3. Jaanipäev (Mid-summer in June/July) - as per upstairs hall including disabled access and toilets</li> <li>4. August Independence Day - as per upstairs hall including disabled access and toilets</li> <li>5. Christmas – as per downstairs hall plus children's play corner w/equipment and toys.</li> </ol> <p>In addition,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every three (3) years – The Baltic Festival when all spaces in the existing Estonian House are used, including as change rooms; leaving very little space for rehearsals/warmups, so these need to be very tightly scheduled.</li> <li>• Every few years - <i>Eesti Päevad</i> –Space requirements depend on the types of functions scheduled. e.g., During EP, the Handcrafts Group requires a minimum of 30 sqm of exhibition space, including wall hanging space. The layout of the current building presents challenges the exhibition of handcrafts during EP – access to the balcony and meeting rooms limits display space.</li> <li>• Specific to the choir – They perform at additional incidental performances e.g., choral festivals and International Estonian Festivals</li> <li>• Specific to the Handicrafts group, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the future Estonian House would need to provide improved ample natural light, and</li> <li>○ the group has prepared displays and demonstrations at special events such as Open House Melbourne</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The mixed adult folk dancing group did not identify any functions, but did make the following comments :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they feel that they are sometimes an afterthought tacked on to an occasion</li> <li>• the community seems to want/expect the same old dances performed in the same old ways</li> </ul>
Function/Exhibition equipment	<p>The collective needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing groups are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the function/exhibition space is different/separate to the space used for meetings/rehearsals, then an additional set of the equipment identified for meetings/rehearsals above needs to be installed in the functions/exhibition space, so that the equipment does not need to be moved and risk being damaged.</li> <li>• Kitchenware and facilities as per the existing upstairs &amp; downstairs kitchens</li> <li>• Handcrafts specific – locked glass display case as mentioned above</li> </ul> <p>No function equipment needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.</p>	<p>Assumptions about the existing kitchenware are that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the majority of kitchenware is owned by Co-op</li> <li>• Kathmandu Cottage owns some and</li> <li>• the pie warmer is owned by <i>Kodu</i></li> </ul>



Item	Feedback	Comments
Outdoor space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A nice outdoor seating area and safe play space with equipment for children</li> <li>2. BBQ facilities</li> </ol>	
Other Estonian Houses	The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing group noted that the Estonian Houses in Adelaide and Sydney are smaller and a lot brighter in terms of both natural and artificial light.	
All abilities/disabled access	<p>The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing group noted that in terms of all abilities/disabled access the current situation needs to be improved upon.</p> <p>The future Estonian House in Melbourne needs to provide ready access to all areas of the building to people with permanent or temporary disabilities and families with prams.</p> <p>No all abilities/disabled needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.</p>	
Family friendliness	<p>The <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee, Choir, Handcraft group and Ladies' folk dancing group noted that in order for the current building to have greater appeal to families with younger children, the following need to be provided</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A dedicated Parents Room is preferred over having the baby change table in the disabled toilets which are difficult to access with a pram.</li> <li>2. An Indoor play area with equipment and toys (possibly donated by community members). If a secure dedicated space, then equipment could be kept set up. If not a dedicated space, then storage space would need to be provided to store the equipment and toys.</li> </ol> <p>No family friendly needs were identified by the mixed adult folk dancing group.</p>	

The combined detailed feedback from these two meetings is included as Attachment 10.

#### **4.4.5 Key Limitations**

Key limitations related to the meetings with community groups include :

1. Community groups and their members represent only certain parts of the Estonian community in Melbourne. Nevertheless, they are assumed to comprise interested and active members of the local Estonian community.
2. Many people who attend events at Estonian House are not members of any formal group, nor possibly financial members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) or shareholders of the Estonian House Co-op.

### **4.5 Estonian Community Feedback**

#### **4.5.1 Introduction**

Despite the stringent Covid-19 lockdown regulations in Victoria, the WG considered it important to conduct at least one public consultation meeting ("community forum").

So an online community meeting was scheduled and held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2021. As with all communications, information about the meeting was circulated beforehand via the regular WG communications channels.

The agenda for the community consultation meeting is included as Attachment 11.

As described in an earlier section, during the course of its activities, the WG repeatedly encouraged members of the Estonian community in Melbourne to provide feedback via email or paper mail; including prompts to do so in all communications issued via the various communications channels.

#### **4.5.2 Summary of Community Meeting Feedback**

Please find following a summary of the outcomes of the online public meeting held on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2021. For more details refer to Attachment 12.

- Most attendees were happy with the current location of Estonian House.
- A very small number of attendees were satisfied with the facilities currently available
- Otherwise, meeting attendees felt that Estonian House is looking very tired, that there is a lack of natural light, that the current layout is inflexible and provides limited access to people with prams and/or (temporary or permanent) disabilities.
- The access discussion led to further discussion of the need for an elevator and more flexible spaces, with larger spaces being able to be partitioned off by screens or sliding walls.
- It seems that the upstairs meeting rooms are under utilised; with access possibly being one cause of this.
- With a view to the future, it was emphasised that there is a need for the building to cater for families with young children by providing indoor/outdoor play spaces; play equipment and toys with storage space.
- There was general agreement and enthusiasm for an easily accessible outdoor area for both young and old, with tables, umbrellas, lawn, shade, BBQ and play equipment.
- There is a need for electronic/digital facilities to be provided, including digital projectors, projection screens, internet/Wi-Fi access and sound systems.
- It was suggested that a designated shared co-working/hot desking space be provided for people visiting from close and further afield.
- Given the dwindling number of volunteers willing to take responsibility for the management of Estonian House in Melbourne, it was suggested that a paid Manager be engaged to fulfil these responsibilities.
- Given the discussion about development, concern was voiced about how such works would be funded. Discussion ensued about renting the street front shops and caretaker's residence at commercial rates. It was generally agreed that financial analysis was required.
- It was generally agreed that a dedicated space was required for the future Estonian House in Melbourne, including clear external signage on the building declaring it as "Estonian House"
- Based on the suggestion by some attendees that the current Estonian House is too large and too expensive to maintain for the current community, alternative options were discussed. These included leasing a smaller existing building and hiring larger venues for larger events or even sharing premises with another aligned ethnic group like the Lithuanians. Regardless of which of these options might be pursued, clear signage on the building was regarded as very important.
- There was some concern about the apparent small number of people interested in attending events at Estonian House and whether redevelopment would or would not attract more people to attend events. The question was asked - *Is there actually a community who wants to come together?*
- The Melbourne Lithuanian House, the redeveloped Croatian House and Adelaide Estonian House were all considered good reference points for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

#### **4.5.3 Email and paper mail**

##### **4.5.3.1 Introduction**

As described in an earlier section, the WG considered it important to offer members of the Estonian community in Melbourne the opportunity to provide feedback via email or paper.

Therefore, a WG specific email address was setup ([mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au)) and a WG member's home address provided as the postal address for the WG.

During the course of its activities, the WG repeatedly encouraged members of the Estonian community in Melbourne to provide feedback via email or paper mail; including prompts to do so in all communications issued via the various communications channels.

#### **4.5.3.2 Feedback received**

During the course of the near three (3) years that the WG undertook its work, it received two (2) email messages. They each included different sets of ideas as summarised below :

##### Email message 1

Email message 1 proposed

- that “born here” and new arrivals should be the key decision-makers regarding the future Estonian House in Melbourne. However, these comments seem to overlook that the Estonian House Co-operative Executive Committee and shareholders are the only people empowered to make decisions regarding the future Estonian House in Melbourne.
- that it didn’t really matter where Estonian House was located, instead that the emphasis needed to be placed on the activities held at Estonian House and that these activities depended on strong leadership.
- to “give the old house a go” by updating its interiors to be less Estonian and therefore more appealing to a wider variety of hirers.

Email message 2 emphasised the importance of Estonian House as a base for Estonian themed activities and events that helped people to gain insights into Estonian traditions.

### **4.6 Additional Needs – Wet Bar and Archive**

It should be noted that the future Estonian House in Melbourne needs to include at least one wet bar area and space for the archive of materials related to the Estonian community in Melbourne.

During the course of the WG’s activities, no-one was available to assist the WG with defining the specifics of these two (2) areas, including the weight bearing requirement of archive materials.

Therefore, the specifics of these two (2) areas remain to be defined.

### **4.7 Building Compliance**

From the outset of its activities, the WG has made the key assumption that the people responsible for governing, managing and operating the future Estonian House in Melbourne will ensure that the building is, and remains compliant with all relevant building regulations; to the degree that they are directly responsible for the building.

### **4.8 Other Ethnic Communities in Australia**

#### **4.8.1 Introduction**

The WG considered it important to gain insights from the experiences of other ethnic communities in Australia about how they were continuing to maintain a community centre distant from their mother or father land.

Therefore, a public meeting was planned to be held with leaders of such communities in Melbourne describing their community’s experiences.

Sample communities to be contacted would be Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Hungarian – all Melbourne based communities of countries that had previously been behind the Iron Curtain.

The WG observed that the experiences of some other ethnic communities may possibly be influenced by organised religion, including Catholicism in the Lithuanian and Polish communities

However, due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 regulations, no public meeting was held with leaders of other ethnic communities in Melbourne.

Instead, the majority of consultation with leaders and members of other ethnic communities was undertaken by WG member Lembit Marder who is the Honorary Consul for Estonia in Melbourne. The results of these email, phone and in person discussions are documented in the following sections along with the results of basic internet searches.

During the WG’s series of discussions regarding other ethnic communities, one idea raised was that that of the Melbourne Estonian community sharing a facility with another “aligned” ethnic community. Understanding that the Latvian and Lithuanian communities might be the most likely candidates for such an arrangement. Leaders of both these communities were contacted and a site visit made to the Lithuanian House in Errol St North Melbourne (November 2021).

#### **4.8.2 Melbourne Lithuanian Community**

The Melbourne Lithuanian community has noted a steady decline in attendances. Their sizeable house in North Melbourne comprises a variety of spaces – a theatre, hall, bar/bistro area, library and meeting rooms. In addition, the building includes a commercial café/restaurant space facing directly on to Errol Street. This space with rental expectations of \$70,000 pa. has been vacant since the beginning of 2020. A new tenant is currently being sought.

Based on discussions with leaders of the Melbourne Lithuanian community, there are no immediate plans to make any major changes, although there is an ongoing concern about falling attendances and the lack of involvement by younger Lithuanians in organising events.

Upon members of the WG visiting Lithuanian House and speaking to the President of the society it quickly became evident that the House is of a similar style and age to the existing Estonian House in Melbourne, offering little change in atmosphere and broader appeal. Also, the building has limited rental availability since it is already hired out quite often to a variety of groups e.g., opera rehearsals and performances, as a TV show and movie set.

Refer to Attachment 13 for a summary description of spaces at Melbourne Lithuanian House.

Additional information of possible interest regarding the regular use of Lithuanian House can be found on the Lithuanian Club in Melbourne website - <https://www.lithuanianclub.com/>

Based upon additional information provided by a member of the Lithuanian community in Melbourne

- The weekly Sunday 12pm lunches are catered by a rotating roster of Lithuanian community organisations and private individuals. The private individuals are needed to make up for the lack of organisations able/available to take on the food preparation responsibilities. The lunches are priced at \$15 per plate, with 2-3 different options available depending on the day. Drinks are bought separately from the bar.
- A member of the Lithuanian Club in Melbourne is paid a stipend to manage the bar, weekly lunch bookings and the hiring of the bar area and hall.
- The bar area and/or hall may be hired via the bar manager, with the hirer opting whether or not to include the bar in the hire. There is potential for the hirer arranging their own catering. If a private function were to be held at the same time as the weekly Sunday lunch, then the catered lunch may be ordered for the private function held in part of the bar or hall. The hirer may also bring along their own decorations, snack, and celebratory food e.g., birthday cake. Overall, hiring arrangements seem to be accommodating and flexible.
- A Lithuanian “Pensioners Club” operates in Melbourne.
- Lithuanians seeking retirement/aged care options tend to consider the Latvian retirement village in Wantirna and the option of relocating to Sydney to a Lithuanian oriented retirement village.

More information about the Latvian retirement village in Wantirna is available via this link - <https://estonia.org.au/activities/retirement>

Historical information regarding the Lithuanian retirement village in Sydney is available here - <https://www.slic.org.au/Community/sydlithwomen.htm>

#### **4.8.3 Melbourne Latvian Community**

Despite a steady decline in numbers over previous years, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the Melbourne Latvian community’s activities. Younger people have become more involved as both organisers and attendees. The Melbourne Latvian community has continued to maintain a number of key activities, particularly those involving children, camps, dancing, singing, and language. This has enabled their culture and the level of interest to be maintained across a number of generations, as people age.

In addition, a café (Café Riga) operates at Latvian House on Saturdays from 10.30am to 3.30pm (while children attend the Melbourne Latvian primary and high schools) and before and after events at Latvian House.

View more information via this link - <https://www.latvianhousemelbourne.com.au/en/cafe/>

The Melbourne Latvian community is financially stable, so they see no need to make any major changes to their current house in Elwood.

More information may be found via these links

<https://laaj.org.au/en/organizations/melbourne-latvian-house/>

<https://www.latvianhousemelbourne.com.au/>

#### **4.8.4 Melbourne Hungarian Community**

The Melbourne Hungarian community has also noted a steady decline in attendances, particularly by the younger generations. They have a church and hall with consulate premises in North Fitzroy and a large, well equipped community centre in the City of Knox.

There are currently no immediate plans to make any major changes to these parcels of real estate.

More information can be found about the Church building via this link -

<https://www.churchesaustralia.org/list-of-churches/denominations/other-denominations/directory/1692-st-lukeand%2339%3Bs-hungarian-reformed-church>

More information may be found about the community centre via this link -

<http://www.hungariancentre.org.au/>

Prior to Covid-19, the Melbourne Hungarian community had an active program and reasonably successful language and culture program staffed by volunteer teachers who travelled to Australia from Hungary.

#### **4.8.5 Melbourne Polish Community**

The Melbourne Polish community and its associated organisations is vast. These organisations include senior citizen clubs, scouts, sports, dancing etc. The scale of their organisations is overwhelmingly different to any of the Baltic communities in Melbourne, including the Melbourne Estonian community.

Without doubt, the sheer number of people helps to maintain a highly enviable level of community energy and enthusiasm.

Additional information may be found via this link - <https://www.polishcommunity.org.au/en/>

#### **4.8.6 Melbourne Danish Community**

One “house” that was repeatedly mentioned during WG discussions as an inviting contemporary space was Denmark House in Melbourne – the home of the Melbourne Danish Club Dannebrog and the officially listed office for both the Danish and Swedish Honorary Consuls in Melbourne.

Denmark House is a leased space located on level 3, 428 Little Bourke St in the Melbourne CBD of contemporary “Danish design”, including a bar area, office, restaurant/function area, commercial kitchen and ladies and men’s toilets.

Denmark House is managed by a hospitality professional, whose responsibilities include hiring the chef and sous chef who prepare a menu of Danish specialities as agreed with the Board. The kitchen does not operate independently of the Club. Weekday lunches and dinners are open to both members and non-members of the Danish Club. Member only events are also held on a regular basis.

As per the Denmark House website, Denmark House is financially supported by the Dannebrog Foundation, which as a Discretionary Investment Trust, manages the funds generated in 2009 by the sale of the former Denmark House in Beaconsfield Parade, Middle Park. As per the information available on the Danes in Australia website <http://www.danesinaustralia.com/the-people-behind.html> the Dannebrog Foundation also supports “deserving projects” which strengthen the relationship between Denmark and Australia.

More information is available via these links :

The current Denmark House and Danish Club - <https://denmarkhouse.com.au/>

The Danish Club – “Then and Now” (video) <https://mailchi.mp/e311b35e0648/denmarkhouse-tv-danish-club-then-now?e=706257b221>

The Dannebrog Foundation

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/bd6604f2-38af-e811-a963-000d3ad24077/profile>

<https://www.charityguide.com.au/charity/51529677597/the-trustee-for-dannebrog-foundation>

<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=51529677597>

#### **4.8.7 Ethnic Communities in Geelong**

Per WG member Ain Utt who lives in Geelong

- the German *Karneval* society in Geelong does not own a dedicated “house”, instead opting to hire local venues per event including a Neighbourhood House. A video of the *Karneval* 66<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2021 can be viewed via this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSbbNOZ2Crg>
- the Polish community is based in White Eagle House in Breakwater. The House is decorated with Polish themed decorations and operates a restaurant which has been commercially contracted out and is open to members and non-members. The building also houses poker machines. The Board responsible for managing the House employs a hospitality consultant who advises them on management, operations and training needs. A member of the Geelong Polish community has advised Ain that the club’s Polish national costumes and Polish language materials have been placed in storage.

This is the link to the White Eagle House website - <https://www.whiteaglehouse.com.au/>

The following ethnic clubs also operate in Geelong :

- a Croatian Club. However, no further details are known regarding this Club. This is the link to the club’s website - <http://croatianclubgeelong.com.au/> and Facebook site - <https://www.facebook.com/ahdgeelong/>
- an Italian Club. However, no further details are known regarding this Club. This is the link to the club’s website - <http://clubitalia.com.au/>

#### **4.8.8 Sydney Lithuanian Community**

A Baltic community in Australia that has recently made a decision to sell its House and move to smaller premises, is the Sydney Lithuanian community.

Per the Sydney Lithuanian club’s website, since 1950 the club has been located in a number of different buildings in the Bankstown area – some rented, some purchased and some purpose built <https://www.lithuanianclub.org.au/index.php/about-us>

In 2006 the club moved to a “newly fitted out boutique Club” which was subsequently sold in late 2021, with settlement scheduled for April 2022 after which time the club will “relocate to smaller and more affordable premises as the current ones are excessive to the community’s needs”. <https://www.lithuanianclub.org.au/index.php/upcoming-events/sale-of-club-s-premises>

#### **4.8.9 Canberra Lithuanian Community**

A decades long example of a Baltic community in Australia having sold its House and leased smaller premises – is that of the Canberra Lithuanian community.

As per the following information included on the About Us page on their web site, the Canberra Lithuanian community seems to have much in common with the Melbourne Estonian community :

- The first Lithuanians arrived in Canberra in 1948.
- Every year since that date, the Committee organises traditional Lithuanian Celebrations/Commemorations in addition to other events.
- In 1963 Canberra Lithuanians built a Lithuanian Club.
- During the 1970s, Canberra Lithuanians were very active participants in the protest movement against then Prime Minister G. Whitlam's de jure recognition of Lithuania’s occupation by the Soviet Union.
- In 1984, Canberra Lithuanians hosted the very successful Australian Lithuanian Days' Festival.
- By 1999, plagued by ever diminishing revenue as attendance fell, the Club had to close its doors and was sold.
- The funds realised from the sale of the Club are controlled by the Committee of the Canberra Lithuanian Community, which is an incorporated body.



- The Community currently has more than 120 members and rents small premises, which house a Lithuanian library and in which the Community gets together for smaller functions. For commemorations and other larger scale functions the Community hires halls from other clubs.
- Traditional functions continue to be held and local artists or those from the larger communities are invited to perform at them. In addition, the Committee supports Lithuanian activities not only in Australia, but also in Lithuania.
- The number of original Canberra Lithuanians has continued to steadily dwindle.
- Most of the sub-groups of the Community have ceased to exist, nevertheless, Canberra Lithuanians are still very active in organising social events. Currently, the only sub-group is Židiny's comprising former Lithuanian scouts.

More information can be found via this link -

<https://sites.google.com/view/lithuaniancommunityact/home>

#### **4.8.10 Summary of Other Ethnic Communities in Australia**

Based on the WG's limited research, other ethnic communities in Australia's have made one of the following two (2) decisions regarding their "house" or community centre :

1. No Planned Changes
2. Changes Have Been Made.

Communities with No Planned Changes include the Melbourne Lithuanian, Latvian, Hungarian and Polish communities and the Polish community in Geelong, all of which are assumed to own their buildings.

Communities where Changes Have Been Made include the Melbourne Danish community, the Geelong German community, Sydney Lithuanian and Canberra Lithuanian communities. The Changes Made by these communities range from the Melbourne Danish and Canberra Lithuanian communities which have sold their buildings and now lease premises funded by the sale proceeds through to the Geelong German community which sold its premises many years ago and has hired venues per event since then. It is unknown whether the Sydney Lithuanian community is looking to buy or lease their next premises.

### **4.9 Other Estonian Houses and Communities in Australia**

#### **4.9.1 Introduction**

It was considered important to find out what Estonian communities in other Australian states, territories and capital cities were doing with regards to their "Estonian House". WG member Lembit Marder led these consultations.

#### **4.9.2 Brisbane**

There is no Estonian house in Brisbane. As has occurred for many years, major commemorative Estonian events are held at the Latvian Hall in Brisbane.

There is an active children's play group and associated language classes in Brisbane. As children grow older new families are sought to join the play group and language classes.

More information about the Brisbane Estonian community is available via this link -

<https://estonia.org.au/communities/brisbane>

There is also an *Eestlased Queenslandis* Facebook group which has more than 3,200 members.

#### **4.9.3 Sydney**

The Sydney Estonian House is the Estonian House of longest standing in Australia.

The Sydney Estonian community is relatively large and reasonably active, with regular cultural events and activities being held at Estonian House. Nevertheless, some people consider the current location and limited size of the hall to hinder larger attendances.

Earlier this century, the Estonian House Co-operative in Sydney was beset by internal feuds and management issues leading to concerted efforts being made in 2016 to bring about major change.

According to recent discussions with members of the Sydney Estonian community including a past chairperson of the Sydney Estonian House Cooperative Society Limited, approximately five (5) years ago, the following three (3) key options were identified for the future Estonian House in Sydney :

1. Fix up the existing house
2. Sell and move elsewhere
3. Redevelop the existing site

Options 1 and 2 are relatively self-explanatory, but it is worth noting that Option 3 comprised the following key steps :

1. The Estonian House Co-op hands the site over to a developer
2. Developer demolishes the existing property
3. Developer builds a multi-functional, multi-storey building which includes retail spaces, residences, function and meeting rooms.
4. The Estonian House Co-op is not “out of pocket” because the developer assumes responsibility for the development. However, the Build process may take up to (2) years to complete. Therefore, the Sydney Estonian community would need to make alternative arrangements for an Estonian community hub during this time.
5. At the completion of the Build, the Estonian House Co-op assumes ownership of a brand new set of facilities at no direct financial cost to the community.
6. The developer makes their profit by selling off the residences, retail spaces etc in the building.

Task forces were assembled to investigate and report upon each of the three (3) options. Shortly after the three (3) reports were submitted, the membership of the Estonian House Co-op Board changed, resulting in Option 1 being chosen, with it is understood to have an approximate budget of \$100,000. Planning of the “fix up” is currently in progress, subject to planning and building regulations related to the existing building.

More information is available via the following links –

<https://www.sydneyeestiselts.org.au/>

<https://www.sydneyeestiselts.org.au/co-operative/> (although some of his information may be outdated)

There is also an *Eestlased Sydneys* Facebook group which has more than 3,500 members.

#### **4.9.4 Canberra**

There is no Estonian House in Canberra.

There is an *Estonians in Canberra* Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/262183384541/>

#### **4.9.5 Tasmania**

There is no Estonian House in Hobart, so members of the Tasmanian Estonian community usually get together at each other’s houses a few times a year to commemorate major Estonian events.

There is an *Eestlased Tasmania* Facebook group -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1384740348427967/>

#### **4.9.6 Adelaide**

The Adelaide Estonian House is well situated in North Adelaide and is governed by the Board of the Our Home Co-operative Society Limited.

The Chairperson of this Board was invited to the WG meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2020, when they provided the WG with the following information regarding the Co-operative and the future plans for the Estonian House in Adelaide :

- There were 25 attendees at the Co-op’s AGM held on 8/11/2020.
- Co-op membership exceeds 300 people who are broadly dispersed throughout Australia.



- The current Co-op functions in a similar way to that of the Melbourne Estonian House Co-operative. The Co-operative rules may be viewed via this link - <https://adelaide.eesti.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Our-Home-Co-op-Society-Rules.pdf>
- Financially, the Adelaide House Co-op is well off after the recent change from a profit to not for profit organisation. As a result, some significant Land Tax refunds have been received.
- However, the current business model in place in Adelaide is not sustainable owing to a shortage of volunteers and reducing numbers of people with an Estonian heritage.
- The Co-op is in the process of establishing a steering committee of individuals and stakeholders to determine the future of the Estonian House in Adelaide.
- It is expected that “everything will be on the table” and that the final report will be due within 5 years.

In addition, WG members gathered the following information specific to the operation of the bar at the Estonian House in Melbourne.

The Adelaide Estonian community is most fortunate to have two weekly events organised :

1. A “Feel the Love” Friday night drinks and snacks session, and
2. Late Sunday afternoon shashlik BBQ and drinks.

Both of these events are personally organised by Tom Sarapuu who also acts as the barman for both events. Tom’s enthusiasm certainly encourages and enhances attendance at these events which are open to Estonians and non-Estonians alike, including people with Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, and Ukrainian backgrounds.

The bar is stocked with a variety of Estonian beers and spirits imported by Tom Sarapuu.

In Tom’s own words, the weekly Friday night “Feel the Love” sessions would not be as popular as it is if it were limited to Estonians only. Its success is attributed to the appeal it holds to the wider community, particularly like-minded ethnic groups and its casual “drop in” style.

There is a private Facebook group for *Eestlased Adelaideis* which has more than 1,100 members <https://www.facebook.com/groups/305263146218183/>.

#### **4.9.7 Perth**

The Perth Estonian community (and more broadly in Western Australia) is quite large, comprising mainly younger Estonian tourists/travellers and backpackers.

The Perth Estonian community has not had an Estonian House for many years. When it was sold some time back, shareholders were repaid the value of their shares.

The Estonian Honorary Consul in Perth, Anu Van Hattem is very gracious in providing her home as a space for major Estonian celebrations in Perth, including Independence celebrations and at Christmastime.

Members of the Perth Estonian community also

- Participate in the annual “World of Food” festival organised by the Western Australian Consular Corps, where Estonian food is offered and prepared by volunteers. This event is well attended by younger Estonians.
- Operate the “Blini” pancake café in the Perth suburb of Victoria Park; offering Estonian style pancakes (inspired by the “Kompressor” café in Tallinn). This is a popular meeting spot, although somewhat small for larger groups. More information about the Blini café can be found via this link - <https://www.sbs.com.au/food/article/2021/10/25/estonian-pancakes-are-best-both-worlds>
- Meet regularly as an active Perth Estonian mother and children’s group (*Perthi Emmed*). As with all such groups, their membership changes as the children grow up.
- Organise and participate in a West Coast style Sõrve summer school holiday camp. Refer to Attachment 14 for more information about the camp planned for January 2022.
- Socialise informally amongst themselves; especially younger more recent arrivals who arrange card nights and pub get togethers. Attendance at these events is far smaller than at events formerly held at the Perth Estonian House.

Facebook groups exist for the Estonian communities in Perth, Broome and the above mentioned Perthi Emmed <https://estonia.org.au/communities/facebook>

#### **4.9.8 Northern Territory**

There is no Estonian House in the Northern Territory.

Nevertheless, there are

- The Estonian-Australian Association of the Northern Territory (EAANT) founded in June 2020 - <https://eaant.com.au/home> and
- Facebook groups for Estonians in Alice Springs and Darwin - <https://estonia.org.au/communities/facebook>

The President of EAANT is also the current Secretary of the Australian Council of Estonian Societies (Austraalia Eesti Seltside Liit).

#### **4.9.9 Summary of Other Estonian Houses and Communities in Australia**

Active Estonian communities exist in all Australian states, territories and capital cities, although the type, frequency and scale of activities may differ.

The only dedicated Estonian Houses in Australia are in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Therefore, active Estonian communities seemingly exist whether or not there is a local dedicated “house”. It can be assumed that peoples’ increasing familiarity with, and dependence upon electronic communications enables these situations.

In terms of the other two (2) dedicated Estonian House in Australia :

- Sydney Estonian House – following five (5) years of discussion and deliberations, a decision was made relatively recently to update the existing building; it is understood with a budget of \$100,000.
- Adelaide Estonian House – a group is currently considering the future of this building with a decision expected to be made in about five (5) years’ time.

#### **4.9.10 Additional - Honorary Consul for Estonia in Melbourne’s anecdotal observations**

Based on discussion with people seeking consular services in Melbourne, Honorary Consul for Estonia in Melbourne and WG member Lembit Marder notes the following :

- The internet and specifically social media along with inexpensive and increasing air travel have removed previous barriers to all forms of communication.
- Younger Estonians
  - prefer to socialise amongst themselves in their own informal ways.
  - are primarily here to mix and experience Australia and Australians.
  - generally, consider Melbourne Estonian House to look and feel “old world” and therefore it has little or no appeal to them.

## **5 Solution Options**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The following process was applied to identify, score and rank Options in order of priority.

1. Identify Options
2. Conduct a SWOT analysis of each Option (identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
3. Develop a Decision-Making matrix for scoring each Option
4. Use the Decision-Making matrix to score each Option, noting key assumptions
5. Review the scored Options to determine the Findings.

### **5.2 Identify Options**

During the course of a series of weekly online meetings from October to early December 2021, WG members identified and assessed the following list of options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne :

1. Do nothing to the current house
2. Undertake a cosmetic refresh of the current house
3. Sell the current house and buy an existing property
4. Sell the current house and lease an existing property
5. Sell the current house and hire existing venue/s per meeting/rehearsal/event
6. Undertake a major redevelopment of the current Melville Road site. whereby the site would be handed over to a developer, who demolishes the existing building subject to building regulations, builds a replacement multi-functional building over a period of years which includes “Estonian House” spaces at no cost to the Estonian House Co-operative
7. Sell the current house and build a new property.

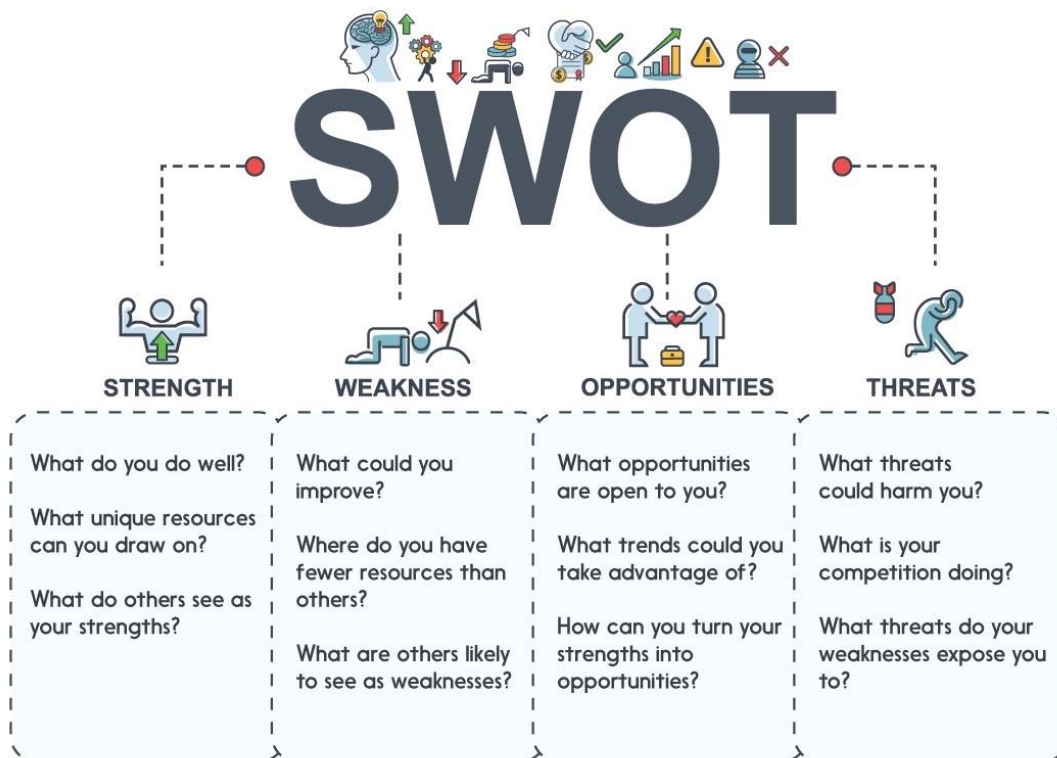
After some discussion, options 6 and 7 were eliminated as viable options; not to be examined any further. These options were eliminated for the following main reasons :

- Large scale complex, long term projects
- Current inadequate cash reserves
- Challenges gaining Co-op shareholder agreement e.g., risk management, consensus
- Lack of qualified and committed personnel within the community – severely limited availability of people (including community volunteers) with suitable skills willing/able to commit to facilitating a complex, mid to long term projects, including the need to make a combination of long lasting and timely decisions.

Each of the remaining five (5) options was discussed in detail and assessed according to its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs),

### 5.3 Conduct SWOT Analysis

The following diagram illustrates the method used to describe the SWOTs of each option :



The SWOT descriptions are included as Attachments 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19.

## 5.4 Develop a Decision-Making Matrix

The following decision-making matrix was developed on the basis of

- the research conducted by the WG
- the experience and results of the SWOT analysis, and
- WG members' professional and personal experience

to assess each of the five (5) Options; with the higher the Total Weighted Score, the “better” the Option.

Effect	Aspect	Weighting	Score 1-5	Weighted Score Weighting x Score
Impact on Estonian Community	Equity available to the succeeding community organisation e.g., new Co-op, <i>Kodu</i>	10%		
	Likely to meet the needs of the Estonian Community	20%		
	Access to Venue during work(s)	10%		
	Potential overall positive impact on Estonian Community	25%		
	Likelihood of improving ambience of venue	15%		
	Ease of marketing venue to 3rd party for generating income	20%		
Effort Required	Availability of people resources internally to affect Option	40%		
	Capability of people to implement	20%		
	Financial resources available to effect option	20%		
	Time to complete project	20%		
Risk	Technical Risk (Design, Construct, Complete)	30%		
	Financial Risk	10%		
	Management Risk	60%		
Total Weighted Score				

Notes:

1. The WG agreed the weighting (5) of each Aspect by consensus.
2. Each Aspect is scored between 1 and 5, where
  - 1 = Very Low - Least attractive
  - 3 = Moderate
  - 5 = Very High – Most attractive

## 5.5 Use the Decision-Making Matrix to Score Each Option

The decision making matrix in the form of a spreadsheet was used to score each of the five (5) Options as follows :

Aspect		Weighting	Do Nothing, continuing to operate as is, Score (1 to 5)		Cosmetic refresh of current house, Score (1 to 5)		Sell house and BUY an Existing Property, Score (1 to 5)		Sell house and LEASE an Existing Property, Score (1 to 5)		Sell house and HIRE an existing venue per event, Score (1 to 5)	
			Weighting x Score =		Weighting x Score =		Weighting x Score =		Weighting x Score =		Weighting x Score =	
Impact on Estonian Community	Cash released to Estonian Community	10%	1	0.1	1	0.1	3	0.3	4	0.4	5	0.5
	Likely to meet the needs of the Estonian Community	20%	2	0.4	3	0.6	4	0.8	5	1	4	0.8
	Access to Venue during work(s)	10%	5	0.5	3	0.3	3	0.3	4	0.4	4	0.4
	Potential overall positive impact on Estonian Community	25%	1	0.25	2	0.5	5	1.25	5	1.25	3	0.75
	Likelihood of improving ambience of venue	15%	1	0.15	3	0.45	4	0.6	5	0.75	3	0.45
	Ease of marketing venue to 3rd party for generating income	20%	2	0.4	3	0.6	4	0.8	5	1	0	0
Total Impact			1.80		2.55		4.05		4.80		2.90	
Effort Required	Availability of people resources internally to affect Option	40%	2	0.8	2	0.8	2	0.8	3	1.2	3	1.2
	Capability of people to implement	20%	2	0.4	2	0.4	2	0.4	3	0.6	2	0.4
	Financial resources available to affect option	20%	1	0.2	1	0.2	3	0.6	3	0.6	3	0.6
	Time to complete project	20%	5	1	3	0.6	3	0.6	4	0.8	0	0
Total Effort			2.40		2.00		2.40		3.20		2.20	
Risk	Technical Risk (Design, Construct, Complete)	30%	0	0	3	0.9	2	0.6	3	0.9	3	0.9
	Financial risk to Estonian Community	10%	3	0.3	1	0.1	3	0.3	3	0.3	4	0.4
	Management Risk	60%	2	1.2	3	1.8	3	1.8	3	1.8	3	1.8
Total Risk Rating			1.50		2.80		2.70		3.00		3.10	
Total Weighted Score			5.70		7.35		9.15		11.00		8.20	

The key assumptions made when scoring each Option are as follows :

OPTION	ASSUMPTIONS MADE
<b>Option 1 - Do Nothing, continue to operate as is</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Estonian House Co-op Exec Committee continues to operate</li> <li>○ The Estonian House Co-op Exec Committee and shareholders take the needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee and members into account</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2 - Undertake a cosmetic refresh of the current house</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Estonian House Co-op Exec Committee continues to operate</li> <li>○ The Estonian House Co-op Exec Committee and shareholders take the needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee and members into account</li> <li>○ Up to \$100,000 is available to be spent on a 'cosmetic refresh' given the constraints of the existing building e.g., heritage overlay</li> </ul>
<b>Option 3 - Sell the current house and buy an existing property</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proceeds from the sale of the existing house could fully fund the acquisition of a new property</li> <li>○ Surplus funds will be given or transferred to a company, fund, authority, or institution determined by the Co-op shareholders at or before the winding up or dissolution of the Co-operative in accordance with the relevant Co-operative rules.</li> <li>○ Qualified and committed personnel within the community – availability of people (including community volunteers) with suitable skills willing/able to commit to a complex, mid to long term project, including the need to make a combination of long lasting and timely decisions.</li> <li>○ The Estonian House Co-op Exec Committee and shareholders take the needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee and members into account</li> </ul>
<b>Option 4 Sell the current house and lease an existing property</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proceeds from the sale of the existing house could fully fund the long-term leasing of a new property</li> <li>○ Surplus funds will be given or transferred to a company, fund, authority or institution determined by the Co-op shareholders at or before the winding up or dissolution of the Co-operative in accordance with the relevant Co-operative rules.</li> <li>○ Qualified and committed personnel within the community – availability of people (including community volunteers) with suitable skills willing/able to commit to a complex, mid to long term project, including the need to make a combination of long lasting and timely decisions.</li> <li>○ The needs of the <i>Kodu</i> Exec Committee and members are taken into account</li> </ul>
<b>Option 5 - Sell the current house and hire existing venue/s per meeting/rehearsal/event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Surplus funds will be given or transferred to a company, fund, authority, or institution determined by the Co-op shareholders at or before the winding up or dissolution of the Co-operative in accordance with the relevant Co-operative rules.</li> <li>○ The <i>Kodu</i> Executive Committee is responsible for                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ hiring venues for rehearsals, meeting and events, and</li> <li>○ all associated management and administration e.g., insurance, licenses,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **5.6 Findings**

As a result of the process described in the preceding sections, the “Top Three (3)” scoring Options in order of priority are

3. Sell the current house and lease an existing property = 11.00
4. Sell the current house and buy an existing property = 9.15
5. Sell the current house and hire existing venue/s per meeting/rehearsal/event = 8.20

Clearly indicating that the sale of the current Estonian House in Melbourne is considered to be the best Next Step in preparation for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

## **6 Recommendations**

Based on the information gathered and analysis conducted from March 2019 through to December 2021, it is recommended that the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and the Estonian Society in Melbourne (*Kodu*) work together in a timely manner to :

1. Engage legal advice for the purposes of reviewing and gaining an understanding of their respective organisation’s legal obligations
2. Pursue one or both of the following top two (2) options in more detail :
  - i. Sell the current house and lease an existing property
  - ii. Sell the current house and buy an existing property
3. Halt the decline in the number of active shareholders and members of their respective organisations; leading to an increase in volunteers willing and able to assist with the operation of the Estonian House in Melbourne and the Estonian Society in Melbourne.



## **7 Attachments**

### **7.1 Attachment 1 – Estonian Community and House in Melbourne**

#### **Background - Estonians in Australia**

It can be safely assumed that people from the region recognised as Estonia have been arriving in Australia since the time of early European settlement. However, Estonian language, culture and traditions were not formally celebrated in Australia until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the Estonian Society of Sydney and Estonian Society in Melbourne were established in 1912 and 1914 respectively.

By 1924, nearly 200 Estonians were formally recorded as living in Australia. By 1929, this number had increased to nearly 900.

The greatest influx of Estonian immigrants occurred between 1947 and 1955, when an additional 5329 people arrived, with the vast majority being assisted refugees seeking a safe haven far from war ravaged Europe.

After settling into their new lives in Australia, the post-World War II arrivals joined and expanded upon the local Estonian Societies' community groups which included sports clubs, folk dancing groups, men's, women's and mixed choirs, drama clubs, Estonian cultural/language schools, art and craft clubs, libraries, scout and girl guide troops and church congregations. These varied and highly active groups provided members of the immigrant community with the opportunity to socialise with fellow Estonians, perpetuate and promote key aspects of Estonian language, culture, and traditions in Australia.

#### **The Estonian Society in Melbourne**

On 8 February 1914, during the first meeting of the Estonian Society in Melbourne, a draft constitution was approved with the purpose of the Society being *"to assemble Estonians in Melbourne and its environs for the common mutual spiritual and mutual support"*.

Unfortunately, this initial version of the early Estonian Society in Melbourne ceased activity six years later in 1920, remaining inactive for the next 18 years.

In 1938, the revival of the Estonian Society in Melbourne included the Society being named "Kodu" ("Home"); a name which continues to the present day.

As described above, the influx of post-World War II arrivals heralded a new era for Estonian communities in Australia, including an increase in the membership of the Estonian Society in Melbourne.

#### **The Estonian House in Melbourne**

On 22 June 1951, decisions made at the Estonian Society of Melbourne AGM resulted in the Estonian House Co-operative being registered as a separate not for profit entity in December 1951. The purpose of the Estonian House Co-operative was to find a building that could become a home for the Estonian Society of Melbourne. As communicated (in Estonian) by the inaugural meeting of the Co-operative in February 1952, *"The house will be our oceanic continent's beacon to show the way, to carry and develop all the noble and beautiful things that Estonians have to offer to their fellow citizens and to pass their rich cultural origins on to their future generations"*

The money required to purchase a building was raised via a combination of community fundraising events and the sale of membership shares in the Estonian House Co-operative. Since the Co-operative is a not-for-profit organisation, the monetary value of each membership share does not change; it stays the same as when originally purchased. Following the conversion to decimal currency on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1966 the value of each of these membership shares was simply converted to the equivalent value in decimal currency.

#### **The Estonian House in Melbourne – Sydney Road, Coburg**

In early 1955, the Co-operative purchased a single fronted shop and residence at 67 Sydney Road, Coburg. After many months of painstaking volunteer work by community members, the building was officially opened as the Melbourne Estonian House on 4 December 1955.

The Melbourne Estonian House in Coburg truly did become the “home” (Kodu) of the Estonian community in Melbourne, with the building humming with near constant use by the various community groups. Due to its size, the building was limited to hosting only small-scale community events, with larger events being held in halls specifically rented for the occasion.

#### **The Estonian House in Melbourne – Melville Road, West Brunswick**

In January 1970, a decision was made to search for larger premises which could accommodate the needs of the local community and in anticipation of the Estonian Society in Melbourne hosting the bi-annual Estonian Festival in Australia at the end of 1972.

In early July 1971, the Co-operative purchased the former Marco Polo cinema building at 41-43 Melville Road, West Brunswick. The money required to purchase the building was raised from the sale of the Sydney Road property, community fundraising events and the sale of additional membership shares in the Estonian House Co-operative. Since the Co-operative is a not-for-profit organisation, the monetary value of each membership share does not change; it stays the same as when originally purchased.

During the next 18 months, thanks to countless hours of voluntary labour, the former cinema was totally refurbished to include function spaces, meeting rooms, offices and kitchens whilst retaining key internal architectural features. Indeed, the scale and the transformation of the building was such, that during the Opening Ceremony in 1972 it was described as being on par with any Estonian House in the world.

Since 1972, in accordance with its historic intention, Estonian House in Melville Road has operated as the focal point for local Estonian cultural events, including commemorative and celebratory functions, folk dancing and choir rehearsals and concerts, drama rehearsals and plays, the Estonian language school, handicraft club, library, and scout and girl guide troops. This variety of activities has enabled members of the Estonian community in Melbourne to maintain their knowledge and experience of Estonian language, culture, and traditions.

In August 1991, the country of Estonia restored its independence, leading to the gradual easing of travel restrictions to and from Estonia. As a result, members of the Estonian diaspora including those in Australia, were able to gain direct access to their Estonian language, culture, and traditions. Access which up until then, had primarily been provided by functions, rehearsals, meetings, and classes held at their local Estonian House.

Since the early 2000s, the frequency of, participation in and attendance at functions, rehearsals, meetings and classes at the Estonian House in Melbourne has gradually decreased. This is due to a combination of factors including the easing of travel restrictions, the increasingly widespread use of the internet and the shifting demographic profile of the local Estonian community – from the generation of post-World War II arrivals to their Australian born children and grandchildren and recently arrived temporary and permanent Estonian immigrants.

#### **The Estonian House in Melbourne – Looking to the Future**

As we enter the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne wish to ensure Estonian House in Melbourne remains the important community hub that it has been to date.

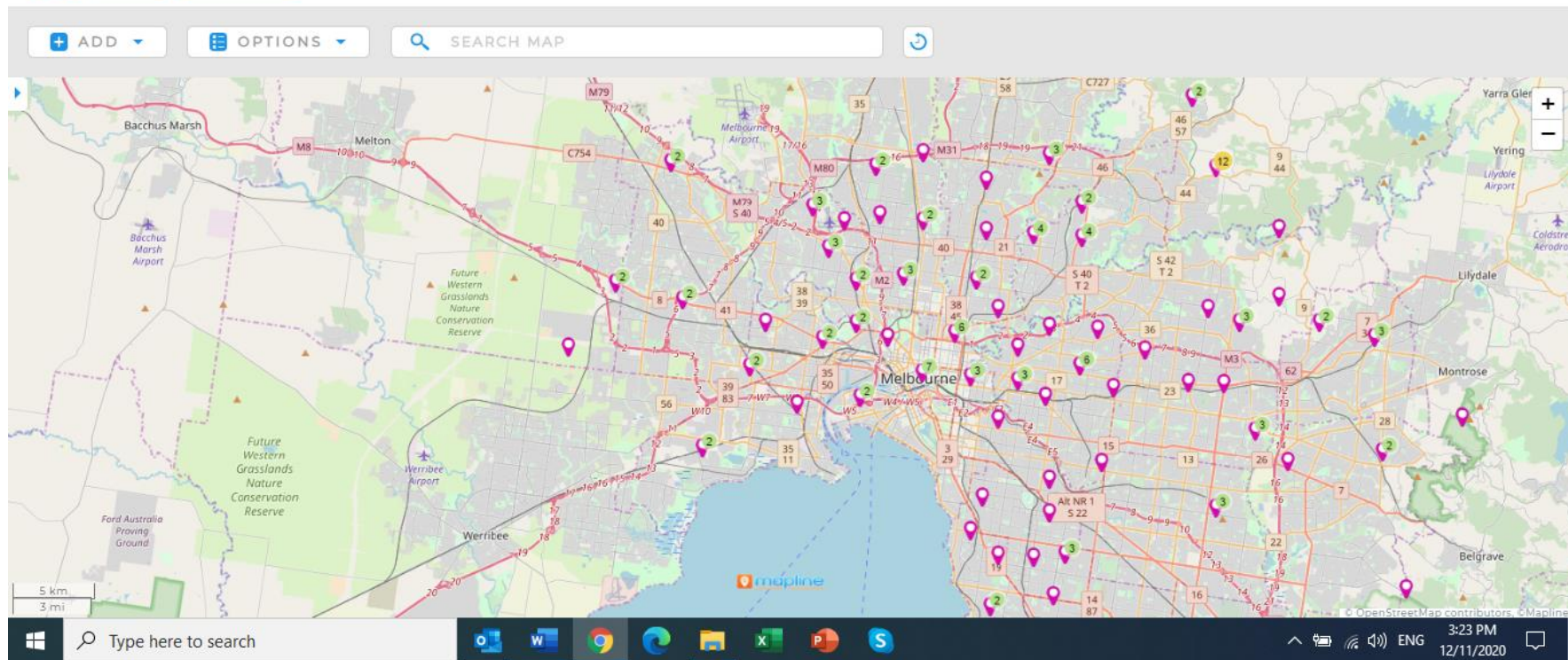
Therefore, these committees consider it important to plan for the future Estonian House by

- Reviewing current and future requirements
- Identifying options for the future Estonian House in Melbourne, and
- Proposing a recommended solution for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

These activities have been scheduled to extend from early 2020 into 2021, as the Estonian community in Melbourne nears the key milestones of

- 70 years since the inaugural meeting of the Estonian House Co-operative in 1952
- 50 years since the current Estonian House was opened in 1972, and
- 30 years since Estonia restored its independence.

## 7.2 Attachment 2 – Map of home postcodes of current financial members of the Estonian Society in Melbourne



Note : This map include the home postcodes only of those members with home postcodes in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

### **7.3 Attachment 3 – WG Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – September 2021**

#### **Why do we need to review the needs of the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

The Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne wish to determine whether an Estonian House in Melbourne is still relevant as a community hub.

Therefore, these committees consider it important to plan for the future Estonian House by identifying

- The broad requirements of a building that would support the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025.
- Whether the existing building supports the needs of the Estonian community in Melbourne through to 2025.
- Options that would meet the needs of the Estonian Community in Melbourne through to 2025
- How each option would be implemented including in terms of how it would be managed, operated, and maintained.

These activities are scheduled to extend from early 2020 through to the end of 2021, as the Estonian community in Melbourne nears the key milestones of

- 70 years since the inaugural meeting of the Estonian House Co-operative in 1952
- 50 years since the current Estonian House was opened in 1972, and
- 30 years since Estonia regained her independence, easing communications and travel restrictions to and from Estonia.

#### **Who is leading these planning activities?**

The planning activities are being led by a Working Group jointly commissioned by the two Executive Committees. The Working Group which meets monthly comprises - Imbi Knappstein, Lembit Marder, Kersti Nõgeste, Michael Payne, Bernadette Pilli and Ain Utt. Working Group member biographies may be viewed by scrolling down the webpage displayed via this link - [Working Group member biographies](#)

The Working Group may be contacted via email : [mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au) or paper mail addressed c/- PO Box 6042 Collingwood North VIC 3066.

#### **How were the members of the Working Group selected?**

The members of the Working Group were jointly selected by the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne based on applications received in response to an advertised Expression of Interest.

#### **Who can comment on the needs of the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

Comments are welcome from all people who identify themselves as a member of the Estonian community in Melbourne, regardless of their level of involvement in Estonian community groups in Melbourne or attendance at formal events held at the current Estonian House in Melbourne.

#### **How are members of the Estonian community in Melbourne be able to comment on the needs of the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

As the Working Group's activities draw closer to their planned completion at the end of 2021, community members are able to comment either via email addressed to [mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au) or - paper mail addressed c/- PO Box 6042 Collingwood North VIC 3066.

### **How will the Working Group formulate the solution options?**

The Working Group will define the solution options in response to the following key questions :

1. What are the current space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?
2. Does the current Estonian House meet the current space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?
3. How frequently does the Estonian community in Melbourne currently use Estonian House in Melbourne?
4. Looking to the future, what are the space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?
5. Looking to the future, is a dedicated venue required to host Estonian activities in Melbourne?
6. Looking to the future, if a dedicated venue IS required in Melbourne, are the facilities and size of the current Estonian House appropriate?
7. Looking to the future, if a dedicated hall IS NOT required in Melbourne, what type of venue and related arrangements are required?

### **What options do we have regarding the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

In basic terms, there are probably two key options – “stay” or “go”. However, there are potentially many versions of both of these – how we might “stay” and where we might “go”.

Therefore, the Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne are being very careful not to go straight into “solution mode”. Instead, they wish to start by gathering community requirements before defining options. The Executive Committees want the solution to meet current community requirements along with those forecast for the future.

**The property value of Estonian House must have increased a lot since it was bought in the early 1970s, can members of the Estonian House Co-operative vote to sell it and share the profits of the sale amongst themselves?**

No, this is not an option because under Victorian state law, the Estonian House Co-operative is designated as a non-distributing co-operative which must abide by a set of rules that mandate “a non-distributing co-operative is prohibited from distributing any surplus to members”.

**Once solution options have been proposed by the Working Group, who will decide which option is the best?**

The Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne will determine the appropriate approvers and approval process based on the range of solution options. The Working Group will not be making any decisions. The role of the Working Group is to define solution options only.

### **How do I stay up to date with the Working Group’s activities and progress?**

Working Group updates are included in “Teateleht” (the Estonian Society in Melbourne’s member newsletter), on the Melbourne page of the [estonia.org.au](http://estonia.org.au) website [Estonian community in Melbourne](#) and Facebook groups related to the Estonian community in Australia and Melbourne specifically [Link to Facebook groups](#)

## 7.4 Attachment 4 – WG Seven (7) Guiding Questions

<p>It is the responsibility of the Working Group to provide recommendations only.</p> <p>The Executives of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) and the Estonian House Co-operative have the authority and responsibility to progress the recommendations along with the members of their organisations.</p>		
<b>CURRENT NEEDS 2021 - 2022</b>		
No.	Key Question	Response
1	What are the current space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?	List ....
2	Does the current Estonian House meet the current space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?	YES/NO Comments
3	How frequently does the Estonian community in Melbourne currently use Estonian House in Melbourne?	Describe frequency
<b>FUTURE NEEDS 2023 - 2025</b>		
No.	Key Question	Response
4	Looking to the future, what are the space/building requirements of the Estonian community in Melbourne?	List requirements in terms of size facilities location other aspects
5	Looking to the future, is a dedicated venue required to host Estonian activities in Melbourne?	YES/NO Comments
6a	Looking to the future, if a dedicated venue IS required in Melbourne, are the facilities and size of the current Estonian House appropriate?	<p>YES/NO Comments</p> <p><i>If Yes, then the WG’s work ends here and the Executives of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) and the Estonian House Co-operative will work together to decide how the current Estonian House in Melbourne is to be used and managed.</i></p> <p><i>If No, then state the reasons list the requirements for an alternative dedicated venue, including size facilities location other aspects</i></p> <p><i>The Executives of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) and the Estonian House Co-operative will consider the recommendations and decide how best to proceed.</i></p>
6b	Looking to the future, if a dedicated hall IS NOT required in Melbourne, what type of venue and related arrangements are required?	<p>Comments</p> <p><i>recommend the requirements for a non -dedicated venue, including size facilities location other aspects</i></p> <p><i>The Executives of the Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) and the Estonian House Co-operative will consider the requirements and decide how best to proceed.</i></p>

## **7.5 Attachment 5 – Meeting with Under 45s – Meeting Invitation**

*Excerpt from Teateleht May 2021*

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **THE FUTURE OF ESTONIAN HOUSE CONSULTATIONS**

As you will be aware, the Executives of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) commissioned a Working Group in early 2019 to draft recommendations for the future Estonian House in Melbourne. The key reason for the two lead organisations doing so, was to ensure that Estonian House in Melbourne remains the important community hub that it has been to date.

The Working Group’s recommendations are to be based on a review of the current and future requirements of an Estonian House in Melbourne.

To date, the Working Group has received responses to an anonymous survey of individuals and families and is now in the process of meeting with Estonian community groups to collect and document their requirements for the future Estonian House in Melbourne. The next two groups having the opportunity to share their ideas are:

1. EIDERATTAD FOLK DANCING GROUP, which will take place on the 23rd of May at 2:00pm., in the upstairs hall. Present members are strongly urged to attend. Past members and others who are interested in joining the group would be also welcomed.

2. UNDER 45'S GROUP which will take place on the 30th of May at 2:00pm. This is for young community members, who may not belong to any particular organised group, to come together over a drink, to discuss their specific needs of a future Estonian House in Melbourne. Regardless of where you were born, whether or not you speak the language, drink vodka, eat pirukad. We are keen to catch up with those who are between 18 to mid 40’s to come along and share ideas. Anyone interested in this consultation please contact:

Anneli Lill: 0406 771 358; anneli\_lill@yahoo.com or

Aeron Heffernan: 0466 789 830; aeron.heffernan@gmail.com



## **7.6 Attachment 6 – Meeting with Estonian House Co-op shareholders – Meeting Invitation**

Hello/”Tere”

This message is addressed to you as a shareholder of the Melbourne Estonian House Co-operative.

As you may be aware, the Executives of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”) commissioned a Working Group in early 2019 to draft recommendations for the future Estonian House in Melbourne. The key reason for the two lead organisations doing so, was to ensure that Estonian House in Melbourne remains the important community hub that it has been to date.

The Working Group’s recommendations are to be based on a review of the current and future requirements of an Estonian House in Melbourne.

To date, the Working Group has received responses to an anonymous survey of individuals and families and is now in the process of meeting with Estonian community groups to collect and document their requirements for the future Estonian House in Melbourne.

**Therefore, the purpose of this letter is to invite you to the following meeting at which shareholders of the Melbourne Estonian House Co-operative will be asked to share their ideas for the future Estonian House in Melbourne**

**at 2pm for 2.30pm (with an expected finish time of 4pm)**

**on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2021**

**at Melbourne Estonian House, 43 Melville Rd, West Brunswick VIC 3055**

Coffee, tea and biscuits will be provided on arrival

**Please RSVP by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2021** via email to [mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au)

*or by mail to*

*The Future Estonian House Working Group c/- 40A Dight St Collingwood VIC 3066*

*using the enclosed self-addressed envelope*

The meeting will be held in accordance with the Estonian House COVID safe plan.

Your attendance at this meeting will ensure that the Working Group takes shareholders’ ideas into account when preparing the recommendations to be presented to the Executives of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society in Melbourne (“Kodu”).

In preparation for the meeting which will be conducted according to a clear agenda, you may choose to read through the enclosed background information about Estonian House and the Frequently Asked Questions prepared by the Working Group.

In addition, if you have not as yet completed the survey of individuals and families, you may wish to do so either online ([via estonia.org.au/communities/Melbourne](http://via.estonia.org.au/communities/Melbourne)) or by requesting a paper copy of the survey to be sent to you. A summary of the survey responses received to date may be viewed online via the same page as above.

In addition to the meetings with Estonian community groups, two public consultative meetings will also be held later in 2021 (at dates yet to be determined). Information regarding these public meetings will be included in the Working Group’s Updates posted online at [Future Estonian House Working Group Update](#)

Please send any questions or comments regarding the meeting to be held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June via email to [mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au) or by mail to the Future Estonian House Working Group c/- 40A Dight St Collingwood VIC 3066.

We very much look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas on June the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Yours sincerely

The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group



## **7.7 Attachment 7 – Individuals and Families Survey Form**

### **Background**

The Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne wish to determine whether an Estonian House in Melbourne is still relevant as a community hub.

Therefore, these committees consider it important to plan for the future Estonian House by

- Reviewing current and future requirements
- Identifying options, and
- Identifying a recommended option.

These activities are scheduled to extend from early 2020 into 2021, as the Estonian community in Melbourne nears the key milestones of

- 70 years since the inaugural meeting of the Estonian House Co-operative in 1952
- 50 years since the current Estonian House was opened in 1972, and
- 30 years since Estonia regained her independence, easing communications and travel restrictions to and from Estonia.

### **The Working Group**

The activities listed above is being led by a Working Group jointly commissioned by the two Executive Committees.

### **Surveying Community Requirements**

As a first step, the Working Group is gathering the current and future requirements of community members, including via this anonymous survey to be completed by individuals and families.

The survey is limited to those members of the Estonian community who have lived within a 480km radius of Melbourne at some time between the years of 2016 and 2020. (The 480 km radius extends to Kingston SA, Mildura VIC, Griffith NSW, and Bermagui NSW.)

So, please take time to complete and return this survey in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope.

### **Demographic Information**

1. What age are you/how many family members are in each of the following age groups?

- 0 - 1 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 - 5 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 - 10 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 – 17 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 18 - 25 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 26 – 35 Years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 – 50 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 51 – 60 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 61 – 70 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 71 – 79 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 80 years of age or older = \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please list the post codes of your/your family members' homes.

- |      |     |
|------|-----|
| i.   | ii. |
| iii. | iv. |
| v.   | vi. |

PTO

### **Visiting Estonian House in Melbourne**

3. What is the most often you/a family member go to Estonian House (please circle one option) ?

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Once every 2 months
- Once every 3 months
- Once every 6 months
- Once every 12 months
- Not at all

4. When you or your family members go to Estonian House are they going there to attend regular meetings, rehearsals or classes? (Please circle one) - Yes/No

- If Yes, which group meetings, rehearsals or classes do you/they attend? (Please select all that apply)
  - Folk dancing rehearsals – adult group
  - Folk dancing rehearsals – women's group
  - Folk dancing rehearsals – children's group
  - Käsitöö Ring (Handcrafts Group) meetings
  - Scout meetings
  - Eesti Päevad 2020 committee meetings
  - Choir rehearsals
  - University fraternity meetings
  - Lastering (Children's' Playgroup) play dates
  - Estonian language classes
  - Other – please list
    - i.
    - ii.
    - iii.

5. When you or your family members go to Estonian House are you/they going to attend commemorative or celebratory functions? (Please circle one) Yes/No

- If Yes, which of the following functions do you/they attend? (Please select all that apply)
  - February - Vabariigi Aastapäev (Independence Day) commemoration
  - March - Melbourne Eesti Ühing (The Estonian Society of Melbourne) Annual General Meeting
  - May – Emadepäev (Mothers' Day) celebration
  - June - Jaanipäev (Midsummer) celebration
  - December – Jõulupuu (Christmas) celebration
  - Other – please list
    - i.
    - ii.
    - iii.
    - iv.

6. How do you or your family members travel to/fro Estonian House? (Please select all that apply)
- a) By car (and require parking close by)
  - b) By motorcycle/moped (and require parking close by)
  - c) By taxi or shared car service e.g., Uber
  - d) By public transport
    - i. Train
    - ii. Tram
    - iii. Bus
  - e) By bicycle
  - f) By walking
7. What attracts you/your family members to go to Estonian House?
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
8. What sorts of classes or functions would encourage you or your family members to go to Estonian House more frequently? (Please select all that apply)
- Darts Club/Darts Nights – Yes/No
  - Estonian themed Trivia Nights – Yes/No
  - Film Club/Nights – Yes/No
  - Eurovision Party – Yes/No
  - Performances by visiting Estonian performers – Yes/No
  - Estonian themed presentations e.g., travel, art, literature – Yes/No
  - Other – 1
  - Other – 2
  - Other – 3
9. What discourages you or your family members from going to Estonian House?
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
10. In recent years, have you visited Estonian or other community houses/centres/clubs in Australia or elsewhere that were great meeting places - why they were so good?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Please add any other comments you or your family members wish to make regarding their current or future requirements of an Estonian House in Melbourne.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

If you would like to receive a response to any questions or concerns you have, please include the question or concern and your email or paper mail address below :

---

---

---

---

---

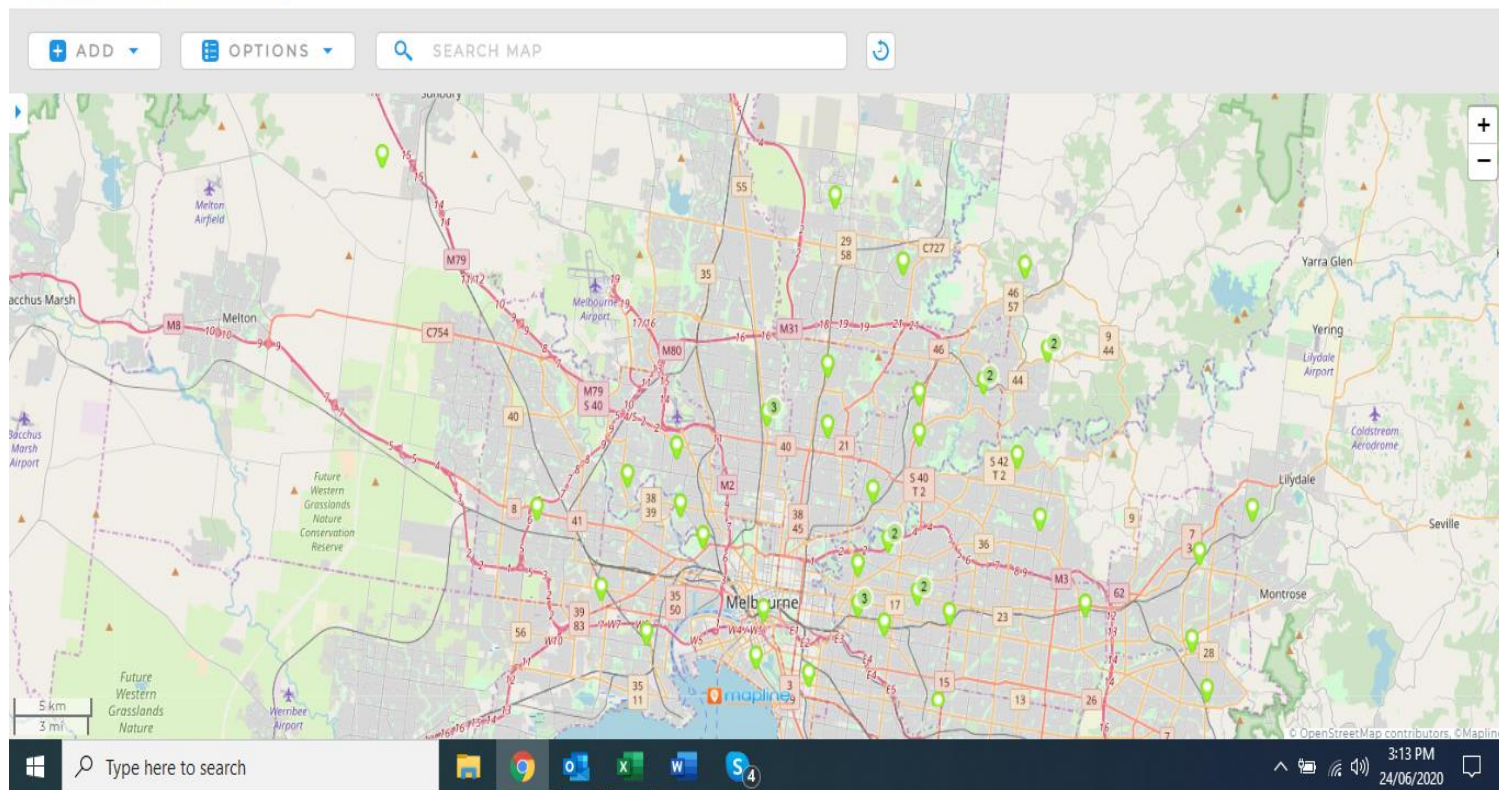
---

---

---

Additional queries and feedback may be submitted to the Working Group via email :  
[mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au)

## 7.8 Attachment 8 – Individuals and Families Survey – Respondents' home postcodes



## **7.9 Attachment 9 – Community Groups Survey Form**

### **Background**

The Executive Committees of the Estonian House Co-operative and Estonian Society of Melbourne wish to determine whether an Estonian House in Melbourne is still relevant as a community hub.

Therefore, these committees consider it important to plan for the future Estonian House by

- Reviewing current and future requirements
- Identifying options, and
- Identifying a recommended option.

These activities are scheduled to extend from early 2020 into 2021, as the Estonian community in Melbourne nears the key milestones of

- 70 years since the inaugural meeting of the Estonian House Co-operative in 1952
- 50 years since the current Estonian House was opened in 1972, and
- 30 years since Estonia regained her independence, easing communications and travel restrictions to and from Estonia.

### **The Working Group**

The activities listed above are being led by a Working Group jointly commissioned by the two Executive Committees.

### **Surveying Community Requirements**

As a first step, the Working Group is gathering the current and future requirements of community members, including via this survey of groups in the Estonian community of Melbourne.

Understanding that Covid-19 related restrictions may limit contact with group members, please take whatever steps are possible to consult your group members when completing the survey on their behalf.

It would be appreciated if you could return the completed survey by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope

Additional queries and feedback may be submitted to the Working Group via email : [mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au)

### **GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS**

**What is the name of your group? =**

**What are the 3 main objectives of your group?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**How many members do you have in each of the following age ranges?**

- 0-1 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 2-5 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 6-10 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 – 17 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 18-25 years age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 26 – 35 Years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 36 – 50 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 50 – 60 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 61 – 70 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 71 – 79 years of age = \_\_\_\_\_
- 80 years of age or older = \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list the post codes of your members' home addresses.**

- |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| i.    | ii.   | iii.  |
| iv.   | v.    | vi.   |
| vii.  | viii. | ix    |
| x.    | xi.   | xii.  |
| xiii. | xiv.  | xv    |
| xvi.  | xvii. | xviii |

**Do you charge a membership fee? Yes/No**

- **If Yes**, how much is the annual membership fee?
  - i. Adults (18 years of age and older) = \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Children (0-17 years of age) = \_\_\_\_\_
- **If No** – how do you fund your group's activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How many members would you consider to be active (not passive/inactive)?**

- Adults (18 years of age and older) = \_\_\_\_\_
- Children (0-17 years of age) = \_\_\_\_\_

**GROUP MEETINGS, REHEARSALS OR CLASSES**

**How often does your group meet? Please choose one**

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- Every 2 months
- Every 3 months
- Every 6 months
- Every 12 months

**How much space and what facilities does your group need to hold its meetings/rehearsals/classes? – please circle all that apply**

- Amount of floor space in square metres =
- Number of tables =
- Number of chairs =
- Kitchenette facilities i.e., kitchen sink, tea and coffee making, a microwave, small refrigerator, crockery, and cutlery for up to 12 people
- Wifi access
- CD player
- DVD player
- TV/monitor – large size
- Secure storage e.g., cupboards, wardrobes – style/type and size required =
- Other equipment required for meetings –

---

---

---

**In terms of getting to/fro your group's meetings, rehearsals, or classes, how many of your members generally travel**

- g) By car (and require parking close by) - \_\_\_\_\_
- h) By motorcycle/moped (and require parking close by) - \_\_\_\_\_
- i) By taxi or shared car service e.g., Uber - \_\_\_\_\_
- j) By public transport
  - a. Train - \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Tram - \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Bus - \_\_\_\_\_
- k) By bicycle - \_\_\_\_\_
- l) By walking - \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you hold your meetings, rehearsals, or classes at the Melbourne Estonian House? (Please choose one) Always, Sometimes or Never**

- If you **Always** hold your meetings, rehearsals, or classes at Melbourne Estonian House. What are the 4 key reasons for doing so?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.



- If you **Sometimes** hold your meetings, rehearsals or classes at Melbourne Estonian House what are the 4 key reasons for doing so?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
- If you **Never** hold your meetings, rehearsals or classes at Melbourne Estonian House what are the 4 key reasons for not doing so?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.

### Functions

**In addition to meetings, rehearsals or classes does your group hold functions open to members and guests? Yes/No (if your answer is No, then please proceed to Question 12)**

- If Yes
  - i. How many functions do you hold per year?
  - ii. How many people attend these functions?
  - iii. Do you charge a fee for attending your group's functions – Yes/No
    - If Yes, generally how is the fee for (please insert either an exact figure or a range i.e. minimum fee- highest fee)
      - a. Adult members (18 years of age and older) =
      - b. Adult non-members (18 years of age and older) =
      - c. Child members (0-17 years of age) =
      - d. Child non-members (0-17 years of age) =
    - If No – how do you fund your group's functions?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - iv. Do your functions require a performance space? Yes/No
    - If Yes, how big does this space need to be – in square metres - \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. Do your functions require male and female changing rooms for performers? Yes/No
    - If yes, to accommodate how many performers?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Female    \_\_\_\_\_ Male
  - vi. Do your functions require a dance floor? Yes/No
  - vii. Do your functions require any of the following (please select all that apply)?
    - Dishwasher
    - BBQ
    - Outdoor seating area – if so, for how many people - \_\_\_\_\_
    - Microphone, amplifier, and speakers
    - Projection screen
    - Wifi access
    - CD player
    - DVD player

- TV/monitor – large size
- viii. Do your group's functions require full kitchen facilities i.e., stove tops, ovens, kitchen sinks, large refrigerator/freezer, baking trays, platters, catering quantities of crockery and cutlery? Yes/No
  - If Yes, how many days a year do you need full kitchen facilities?
- If (you answered Yes to Question 11, do you hold your group functions at Estonian House – Always/Sometimes/Never
  - If you **Always** hold your functions at Melbourne Estonian House. What are the 4 key reasons for doing so?
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.
  - If you **Sometimes** hold your functions at Melbourne Estonian House what are the 4 key reasons for doing so?
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.
  - If you **Never** hold your functions at Melbourne Estonian House what are the 4 key reasons for not doing so?
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.

### **Membership Plans**

2. What are the 4 key ways you plan to maintain or grow the membership of your group
  - a) Between the years of 2020 – 2022 ?
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.
  - b) Between the years of 2023 – 2025
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.
  - c) From the year 2026 onwards?
    - 1.
    - 2.
    - 3.
    - 4.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

Please add any other comments your group wishes to make regarding your requirements of an Estonian House in Melbourne.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Additional queries and feedback may be submitted to the Working Group via email:  
[mem@estonia.org.au](mailto:mem@estonia.org.au)

### 7.10 Attachment 10 – Community Group Meetings Feedback – April and May 2021

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Name of Group</b>					Eiderattad
<b>Meeting Date</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2021 11 members present plus Leo & Matti K as observers
<b>Group Vision Statement</b>	To coordinate the Estonian community in Victoria in their pursuit of the preservation and advancement of Estonian culture and heritage	To uphold the Kodu Exec Committee Vision statement in terms of “Estonian singing traditions”	To uphold the Kodu Exec Committee Vision in terms of handmade arts and crafts.	To uphold the Kodu Exec Committee Vision in terms of “Estonian folk dancing traditions”	
<b>Group’s key objectives</b>			1. To promote traditional Estonian craft 2. To share handcrafts knowledge and skills 3. To exhibit and promote Estonian craft within and outside of the Estonian community in Melbourne		1. To folkdance 2. To socialise 3. To keep in touch with the community
<b>Members per age group</b>	Male & Female members Majority 60+ years One member in their 30s	Male and Female members Some members in their 20s, most 40+ years of age	Female All members 60+ years of age	Female All members 60+ years of age	17 members in total (as at 2020)
	Comments 2-3 people belong to more than 1 of these groups				
<b>Membership numbers</b>	9	11 active	6 active	10	17 (as at 2020)

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
	Comments 1. As above, 2-3 people belong to more than 1 of these groups 2. Membership numbers are decreasing				
<b>Member's home postcodes</b>					Preston, Essendon, Ivanhoe, Reservoir, Greensborough, Montmorency, Eltham, Diamond Creek, Royal Melbourne Hospital
	Note: Most respondents to the online individual & Family survey live east of the Tullamarine Freeway – stretching from the north east through to south eastern suburbs The WG has also heard that several newer arrivals are living in the High St Northcote to Reservoir corridor				
<b>Membership fees</b>	No fees to join Exec Committee – Membership to join Kodu = \$25/year	None charged – request funding from Kodu as required	\$7/year to cover cost of tea and coffee etc at meetings.  Request additional funding from Kodu as required	None charged – request funding from Kodu as required	Nil <i>What would your group do if you have all you need - membership increase, money, venue, teachers?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organise events, which could take a different shape and form:</li> <li>- Community dance sessions, inviting people to join with no prior experience, just for the enjoyment of the activity</li> <li>- Composite dance lessons with other Baltic communities, sharing of traditional dances</li> <li>- Cabaret, with diverse acts</li> </ul> Spring Ball

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Meeting Frequency &amp; Location</b>	<p>Monthly on Sundays at Estonian House</p> <p>As of May 2021, will be Monday night Zoom meetings (esp. to allow members who are in the paid workforce to attend more easily)</p>	<p>Monthly on Sundays at Estonian House</p> <p>Scheduled to coincide on the same day as Handcrafts and folk dancing</p>	<p>Monthly on Sundays at Estonian House</p> <p>Meetings held to enable social interaction focused on a key aspect of Estonian culture and for the opportunity for the Estonian language to be spoken and heard.</p> <p>Scheduled to coincide on the same day as Choir and folk dancing.</p> <p>No Zoom meetings of Melbourne group for the past year</p> <p>Some Melbourne members have joined the Sydney Estonian Handcraft Group's Zoom meetings</p>	<p>Monthly on Sundays at Estonian House</p> <p>Scheduled to coincide on the same day as Handcrafts and Choir</p>	<p><b><i>Frequency of rehearsals not recorded at the meeting</i></b></p> <p>Estonian House – used because available</p>
	<p>Comments</p> <p>All 4 groups have been scheduled to meet monthly on the same Sunday due to overlapping memberships.</p>				
<b>Meeting/Rehearsal Room Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 sqm of floor space</li> <li>• 4 metre length of table space</li> <li>• 12 chairs</li> <li>• Space for 4 filing cabinets</li> <li>• 2 large floor to ceiling open bookshelves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floor space that meets folk dancing group's requirements will meet those of Choir rehearsals.</li> <li>• 1-2 m wide floor to ceiling locked cupboard</li> <li>• 15+ chairs</li> <li>• Grand acoustic piano (tuned regularly)</li> <li>• Upright acoustic piano (tuned regularly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 sqm meeting room</li> <li>• Modular tables that can be moved into different configurations.</li> <li>• GOOD NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING</li> <li>• Storage Space for Handcrafts Archive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total floor area approx. 200 sqm i.e., 20m x 10m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Table;</li> <li>• 20 chairs;</li> <li>• kitchenette</li> </ul>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Discussion ensued about Disabled access.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The current need for people to enter via the side entrance and bar is not welcoming. Also, people need to exit this way to walk around to the front of the building to gain step free access to the disabled toilet in the foyer.</li> <li>2. Current situation would need to be improved upon.</li> <li>3. The current chairlift seems cumbersome, and people may lack confidence or the operating skills to use it safely. Serious consideration needs to be given to providing people with access to a lift – even if retro fitted.</li> <li>4. Access issues faced by people who are permanently or temporarily disabled are shared by people who are trying to access the hall with prams.</li> </ol> <p>In addition, for the building to have greater appeal to families with younger children –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. A dedicated Parents Room is preferred over having the baby change table in the disabled toilets – that are difficult to access with a pram.</li> </ol> <p>Indoor play area with equipment and toys (possibly donated by community members). If a secure dedicated space, then equipment could be kept set up. If not a dedicated space, then storage space would need to be provided to store the equipment and toys.</p>				
<b>Meeting/Rehearsal Catering</b>	As per existing upstairs kitchen including working dishwasher and possibly a locked mini bar.				<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Meeting/Rehearsal Room Equipment</b>	<p>Meeting room needs in common amongst all 4 groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CD player</li> <li>2. DVD player</li> <li>3. Internet/Wi-Fi access</li> <li>4. Laptop computer</li> <li>5. Data Projector</li> <li>6. Projection screen that is wall/ceiling mounted i.e., not on a stand.</li> <li>7. Good speaker system</li> <li>8. Large screen TV/monitor</li> <li>9. Assorted cables to connect laptop to data projector and other devices.</li> <li>10. Wall mounted whiteboard (and non-permanent markers)</li> <li>11. Secure storage for all the above</li> <li>12. Fully working and effective heating and cooling system</li> </ol> <p>Noted that that these needs are shared by the Language Classes – specially to maintain and attract higher numbers of students.</p> <p>Groups would like to provide their members with 21<sup>st</sup> century standard amenities – as a means of maintaining and possibly even growing their memberships – specially to attract younger members.</p> <p>Skills training is essential for the successful use of such equipment, options discussed included.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group/s recruiting members who have suitable existing skills</li> <li>2. Training session/s being conducted for 2-3 members/group to learn how to setup and operate equipment</li> <li>3. Providing laminated instruction sheets that are stored with the equipment</li> <li>4. Agreed that most current equipment is designed to be “plug and play” so should not be too difficult to operate especially if training and clear instruction sheets are made available.</li> </ol> <p>Funding of such equipment was also discussed.</p> <p>ACTION: Kodu Exec Committee to review further in terms of possible funding models in co-operation with groups.</p>				<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>
<b>Transport to Meetings/Rehearsals</b>	Car	Car	Majority by car – 1 by tram	Car	100% of members travel by car



*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Functions/Exhibitions</b>	1. February Independence Day (approx. 70 ppl) – as per existing downstairs hall, stage and kitchen, toilets etc 2. Mother's Day – as per upstairs hall incl disabled access and toilets 3. Jaanipäev (Mid-summer in June/July) - as per upstairs hall incl disabled access and toilets 4. August Independence Day - as per upstairs hall incl disabled access and toilets 5. Xmas – as per downstairs hall plus children's play corner w/equipment and toys- 6. Baltic Festival – once every 3 years – entire building is used, a lot of rooms as change rooms, leaving very little space for rehearsals/warmups. Rehearsal/warm up spaces need to be tightly scheduled. 7. Eesti Päevad – once every few years. Space needs depend on functions. Handcrafts Group requires a minimum of 30 sqm of exhibition space, including wall hanging space. Current building presents problems w/layout e.g., if Handcrafts exhibited in upstairs hall and audience members need access to balcony seating. Note: current plans for EP 2022 indicate that the current Estonian House will be suitable for all/most planned activities/functions.				<b><i>None identified at the meeting</i></b>
<b>Functions/Exhibitions cont.</b>		Some additional incidental performances e.g., choral festivals and International Estonian Festivals	1. Very little/no wall exhibition space for hanging displays of any sort. 2. Current wall displays are very static – not changed for years at a time. 3. A locked glass display case would allow Handcrafts Group to have a rolling series of changing exhibitions, not necessarily linked to a function – and as a means of promoting the group to a broader audience. 4. Handcrafts group has prepared displays and demonstrations at special events such as Open House Melbourne		<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Function/Exhibition equipment</b>	All groups have same basic needs. Kitchenware and facilities as per existing upstairs & downstairs kitchen (majority of kitchenware owned by Co-op, Kathmandu Cottage owns some, pie warmer owned by Kodu). Handcrafts specific – locked glass display case as above				<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>
<b>Function/Exhibition equipment cont.</b>	Comments – as per meeting room equipment needs i.e., a separate set of equipment, so that equipment does not need to be moved around. 1. CD player 2. DVD player 3. Internet/Wi-Fi access 4. Laptop computer 5. Data Projector 6. Projection screen that is wall/ceiling mounted i.e., not on a stand. 7. Good speaker system 8. Large screen TV/monitor 9. Assorted cables to connect laptop to data projector and other devices. 10. Wall mounted whiteboard (and non-permanent markers) – possibly enclosed in a wall mounted cupboard. 11. Secure storage for all the above Plus Microphone/s				<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>
<b>Outdoor space</b>	1. Would be great to have a nice outdoor seating and safe play space and equipment for children 2. BBQ				<b><i>None identified during the meeting</i></b>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
<b>Membership plans</b>	Improve digital presence i.e., Facebook and other forms of social media e.g., Instagram for handcrafts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain core nucleus group.</li> <li>2. Consider reaching out to other Melbourne based non-Estonian groups with common interest e.g., other Baltic handcrafts groups or choirs – to encourage activity and exchange of ideas.</li> <li>3. Consider building closer links with Estonian groups with the same interest/s based in other Australian cities (and even overseas?)</li> </ol> <p>Have “Taster Events/Days” e.g., handcrafts demonstration/workshop</p>			<p>2020 – 2022: To advertise in the Teateleht throughout</p> <p>2022 - None beyond that</p> <p><i>Who will be dancing and teaching in 5 years?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most of the group were optimistic about ongoing commitment.</li> <li>- Teaching – was not discussed, glossed over</li> </ul>
<b>Other Estonian Houses</b>			Estonian Houses in Sydney and Adelaide are smaller and a lot brighter (natural and artificial lighting)		<i>Refer to end of answer to question below about what a good Eiderattad looks like.</i>
<b>General Comments</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Location of the Future Estonian House in Melbourne – preferably within 5-10km of city centre with good public transport links and available weekend parking. Understood that there may be a trade-off between location and ease of parking nearby i.e., “better” locations may have more restricted parking.</li> <li>2) Possibly parking is more of an issue when attending meetings, than functions.</li> </ol>				<p><i>What does Estonian House feel like to you when you walk in the doors for a <u>practice</u>?</i></p> <p><i>How much does the actual building influence this?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nostalgia</li> <li>- Memories of growing up and having free reign</li> <li>- Respect for these who have gone before them</li> <li>- A sense of belonging</li> <li>- Memories of grandparents</li> <li>- Raison d’être</li> </ul>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
General Comments cont.					<p><i>What does Estonian House feel like to you when you walk in the doors for a <u>performance</u>? What vibe does it give you personally?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Diminishing audiences give and empty feeling.</li> <li>- Who really cares if the group performs or not</li> <li>- Why put in the effort to practice and maintain costumes</li> <li>- Feel that they are sometime an afterthought tacked onto an occasion.</li> </ul>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
General Comments cont.					<p><i>What does a 'good' Eiderattad look like? Is there another community/social groups that they know of that work well, if so why etc. Is it their building or the people?</i></p> <p>1) A good Eiderattad has purpose and energy and a sense of responsibility and belonging. Something that is lagging at the moment with relocation of members and some members taking on the added responsibilities of their young families</p> <p>2) A single building where rehearsals and performances can take place; entrances and exits, spatial concepts are all part of rehearsals. Sydney, Adelaide, Latvians and Lithuanians and Finns have this.</p>
General Comments cont.					<p><i>Would rental restrict the group's activities?</i></p> <p>- Commitment would be less likely if a different venue was sought. Not so much paying rental but the atmosphere wouldn't be the same in a different location.</p>

*The Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group – Final Report – January 2022*

Topic / Group	Kodu Exec Committee	Choir	Handcrafts	Ladies Folk Dancing	Folk Dancing
General Comments cont.					<p><i>Should you take into consideration of what others in the community want of you, not just what you want, but also to anticipate what *others* would want, or not want.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community seems to want, expects same old dances, performed in the same old way. Slotted into, tacked onto, regular events such as Independence Day, Jaanipäev, Christmas, Eesti Päevad,</li> <li>- Newer members of the community aren't interested in pursuing traditional activities. They have come here to start new Australian life.</li> <li>- Difficult to be something for everyone.</li> </ul>

## **7.11 Attachment 11 - Final Community Consultation Meeting – September 2021 – Meeting Agenda**

**Date & Time:** Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, 4pm

**Location:** online via Zoom

**Chairperson:** Kersti Nõgiste **Scribes:** Bernadette Pilli & Ain Utt **Zoom host:** Imbi Knappstein

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. Review the purpose of the Future Estonian House in Melbourne Working Group:**

**3. The purpose of this meeting is to seek responses from members of the Estonian community Melbourne to the following questions:**

**A. What do you think would be the best location for the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

**B. If you could design the Estonian House in Melbourne to meet the needs of you, your family and friends into the future, what would it include in terms of?**

- a) Function/performance/exhibition spaces
- b) Meeting Spaces
- c) Family/Play spaces
  - Indoors
  - Outdoors
- d) Other outdoor space/s
- e) Anything else?

**C. Can you recommend any other Estonian Houses or ethnic community centres that are examples of what you'd like the Estonian community to have in Melbourne?**

**D. Do you have any comments about how the future Estonian House in Melbourne might be best managed, operated or maintained?**

**E. Having talked through what the future Estonian House in Melbourne might be, do you think that the Estonian community in Melbourne actually needs a dedicated building?**

### **4. Would you like to join the Working Group to help complete its work by the end of 2021?**

This would involve

- Actively participating in meetings every few weeks (most probably held online)
- Accepting responsibility for completing and reporting on action items, and
- Communicating with fellow Working Group members outside of meetings (mostly via email, and sometimes via phone).

### **5. Meeting Closed**

## **7.12 Attachment 12 - Final Community Consultation Meeting – September 2021 – Meeting Notes**

### **CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

#### **Community Members and Shareholders**

#### **Zoom Consultation – September 2021**

**Attendance:** 25 community members

As per the agenda included as the previous Attachment, the purpose of this meeting was to seek responses from members of the Estonian community to a series of questions.

The meeting which was held online was attended by five (5) WG members and twenty-five (25) members of the community.

#### **A. What would be the best location for the future Estonian House in Melbourne?**

Most attendees were happy with the current location of Estonian House. The CBD would also be suitable however, this was assumed by a number of meeting attendees to be a relatively expensive option. There was one suggestion of relocating further out of the city whilst still on public transport lines. It was felt that regardless of location, it is Important that there is access to public transport and car parking.

#### **B. If you could design the Estonian House in Melbourne to meet the needs of you, your family, and friends into the future, what would it include?**

#### **RETAIN:**

A very small number of attendees were satisfied with what is already available. The minority of this group expressed an interest in re-opening the library and having archive access.

#### **PLAY FACILITIES:**

With a generational change of active community members, it was emphasised that there is a need for the building to cater for families with young children by providing indoor/outdoor play spaces; play equipment and toys with storage space; childcare supervisors hired for events to encourage young families to attend.

#### **OUTDOOR AREA:**

General agreement and enthusiasm for an easily accessed outdoor area for both young and old, with tables, umbrellas, lawn, shade, BBQ and play equipment.

#### **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT**

Meeting attendees agreed on a need for electronic/digital facilities to be provided, including digital projectors, projection screens, internet/Wi-Fi access and sound systems. It was also suggested that a designated shared co-working/hot desking space be provided for people visiting from close and far afield.

#### **REDEVELOPMENT OF INTERIOR SPACE:**

It was felt that Estonian House is looking very tired, that there is lack of natural light and that the current layout is inflexible and provides limited access to people with prams and/or (temporary or permanent) disabilities e.g. the main hall and upstairs mezzanine, balcony and meeting rooms. . Also, it seems that the upstairs meeting rooms are underutilised; with access possibly being one cause of this. This led to further discussion of the need for an elevator and more flexible spaces, with larger spaces being able to be partitioned off by the use of screens or sliding walls.



**COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:**

Will current groups remain intact as we go forward, given dwindling numbers at present? A need for people who want to participate and be involved. Will redevelopment grow the community?

**C. Is there any other Estonian Houses or ethnic community centres that are examples of what you'd like the Estonian community to have in Melbourne?**

Three other centres were cited by the group as attractive developments:

**LITHUANIAN HOUSE**

A multi-functional space; good location, close to the city. An active restaurant space usually leased out to commercial hospitality business, brings in a source of income; a good place to catch up with friends without having to wait for an event. Looks tired, but a great space.

**ADELAIDE ESTONIAN HOUSE**

Easily accessed bar, separate to hall and meeting rooms. Regular bar nights open to public, not just Estonians, run by volunteers, brings in a source of revenue. Close to the city; outdoor area.

**CROATIAN CLUB**

A large space which has recently undergone a well-designed renovation, blended contemporary style yet retains the cultural identity.

**D. Comments about how the future Estonian House in Melbourne might be best managed, operated or maintained?**

**EMPLOY MANAGER**

To take over bookings, maintenance, hiring tradesmen, webpage. Time to stop relying on volunteers.

**FINANCIAL**

Who pays for revamping, where does the money come from? Need to redevelop existing spaces: current caretaker's residence and shopfront, Taara shop. Rent these spaces on the commercial market. Present hall rentals cover some general maintenance costs. Grants for community organisations are available, but difficult to attain.

Financial analysis needs to be undertaken. Commercial aspects need to be explored to open up ways to move forward.

**E. Does Melbourne actually need a dedicated building?**

The community finds itself in an emotional situation. A deep-seated love for the place. People have been a part of the community and attended events for decades. For some families for three generations.

Members are worried - where will community meet if not in a dedicated space? It was felt that without a dedicated space there will be no community. Community would disband. Suggestions for a community hub for song and dance celebrations. However, considering the number of members who are willing to commit to joining committees, becoming involved in the various activity groups and supporting events, is there actually a community who want to come together? People recognised that here is a community, however it's too much work to organise events and then cleaning up. A small group do all the work.

**ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS:**

Lease a smaller venue which is readily available for community use. Hire larger venue for big events. Several people felt that rental will not be as warm and inviting as own place. Having the name Estonian House displayed on the front of building is very important.

Alternatively have a rental agreement with the Lithuanians to share their venue, which is in North Melbourne, not too far from West Brunswick. However, would Estonians attend Lithuanian House if they aren't attending events at Melville Road?

Some attendees feel it is time to sell the Estonian House premises, as it is too expensive to maintain for such a small number of people. Do we sell the Melville Road property and buy another, tailored to suit the community's changing needs?

### **7.13 Attachment 13 - Lithuanian House in Melbourne**

A summary of the key spaces at Lithuanian House in Errol St, North Melbourne – per information provided by the President of the Lithuanian Society during a site visit by WG members Kersti Nõgeste and Lembit Marder on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021:

1. Concert Hall/Auditorium
  - a. Fixed seating for 300 – approx. 200 seats downstairs and 100 in the upstairs balcony.
  - b. Stage a good size, small side “wings”, 2 connected change rooms i.e., need to walk through one change room to access the other.
2. Bar room
  - a. used for lunches, fund raising events including small band and general socialising.
  - b. When visited, setup with table seating for 44 people – at a mix of 8 seat and 4 seat tables.
  - c. Full size billiard/snooker table in corner
  - d. Full bar setup
3. Ball room
  - a. Fits up to 200 people seated at tables
  - b. Direct access to small street at back of Lithuanian House providing easy access for equipment to be brought in/out
4. Downstairs commercial kitchen – 2 joined rooms, fully fitted out
5. Ladies and men’s toilets downstairs (disabled toilet was not confirmed, however its assumed to be there)
6. Library/Chapel room
7. Upstairs (no lift)
  - a. 2 large landings. One landing had 2 tables setup with 6 and 8 chairs respectively.
  - b. Small kitchenette – kitchen sink and taps, water urn is main appliance
  - c. 3 meeting rooms
    - i. Room 1 - Largest room, accessed from landing and via “internal” glass doors from Room 2 – approx. 12m x 7m – large windows facing Errol St. This room is hired out on a regular basis.
    - ii. Room 2– next to room 1 – accessed from landing and from Room 1 via “internal” glass doors. Approx. 7m x 5.5m, again with windows facing Errol St. Currently setup as a kindergarten type area with child sized furniture and child focused wall decorations
    - iii. Room 3 – Locked at time of visit, accessed from landing. Same size as Room 2, approx. 7m x 5.5m, again with windows facing Errol St. This is the least used room.
8. Access to Concert Hall/Auditorium balcony
9. Projection Room (assumed, as it was locked)
10. Ground floor street front shop/restaurant area
  - a. Large glass windows facing directly onto Errol St
  - b. Café/restaurant seating area approx. 14m wide x 9m deep, including relatively large, fixed fittings – long marble top servery bar, refrigerators, dish washing and other service areas.
  - c. Very high ceilings
  - d. Slightly worn, in need of cosmetic refurbishment
  - e. Commercial kitchen accessed via a door from the open area
  - f. Men’s, women’s, and disabled toilets
  - g. Small mezzanine level office space
  - h. 2 fixed support pillars towards either end of the space – limiting options to use the space.

## 7.14 Attachment 14 – Perth Estonian Community Summer School Holiday camp

**Eestlased Perthis**  
Viktoria Saar · December 13 at 11:51 PM · 🌐

Tere õhtust!

Mulle on nüüd mitu korda mainitud, et kohalike eestlaste lastevanemate tegemistest pole kuskil kuulda ning grupis "Eestlased Perthis" otsingus ka välja ei tule. Meil on aastaid siin Perthis tegutsenud väikestele inimestele ning nende vanematele mõeldud mängugrupp. Hetkeseisuga käime koos esmaspäeviti, uuest aastast kaalume mängupäeva reede peale üle viimist.

Facebookis leiab meid sellest grupist - kõik kes on vähegi lapsevanemadega seotud, on väga teretulnud nii virtuaalsesse kui ka reaalsesse mängugruppi.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1390208591226442> ja hetkeseisuga on meil selles ligemale 100 lapsevanemat.

Jaanuaris korraldan Eesti perede suvepäevad (7.-9.01.22) Kerem Adventure Camp'is (Outback Splashi kõrval), kuhu on hetkeseisuga tulemas 70-80 inimest.

Kavas on teha eestiteemaline aardejaht/orienteerumine, lastesõbralik disko, kinoõhtu, Eesti toitudega kaetud ühislaud, pannkoogihommik, maha pidada üks võrkpalli- ja korvpalliturniir, sisustada aega basseinimängude, murumängude ning meisterdamise pärastlõunaga.

Pluss kavatsen luua ametliku mittetulundusliku organisatsiooni, et järgmiste aastaste ürituste jaoks vahendeid taotleda. 30.01 oli ühe projekti tähtaeg (projekti kirjutasin valmis), aga kahjuks polnud sobivat ametlikku organisatsiooni, mille alt selliste ürituste läbiviimiseks toetust taotleda 😊

Kuulmiseni!

Viktoria

Good evening!

I have been mentioned several times now that the activities of local Estonian parents are nowhere to be heard and in the group "Eestlased Perthis" is not found either. We've had a playgroup here in Perth for years for small people and their parents. With the current situation we go together on Mondays, from the new year we will consider changing the game day to Friday.

You can find us in this group on Facebook - anyone who is at least connected to parenting is very welcome to both a virtual and real playgroup.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1390208591226442> and with the current situation, we have 100 parents in it.

In January I will organize summer days for Estonian families (7th). -9.01.22) at Kerem Adventure Camp (next to Outback Splash), where 70-80 people are coming with the current situation.

The plan is to do an Estonian treasure hunt/orientation, a child-friendly disco, a movie night, a public table covered with Estonian food, a pancake morning, a volleyball and basketball tournament, to spend time with pool games, lawn games and crafts with the astrologer lunch.

Plus I intend to create an official nonprofit organization to apply for funds for events like this. 30.01 was the deadline for one project (I finished writing the project), but unfortunately there was no suitable official organization from which to apply for a grant to conduct such events 😊

I've heard it!

Victory

## 7.15 Attachment 15 - SWOT - Solution Option 1 – No Change

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep people happy</li> <li>• Maintain nostalgia amongst Estonian community</li> <li>• No community change management required</li> <li>• Variety of rooms available for different purpose</li> <li>• Visible façade</li> <li>• Accessibility by public transport</li> <li>• Car parking available</li> <li>• No internal resources (e.g., people) required for major decisions</li> <li>• Minimal and known financial costs and overheads</li> <li>• No moving costs</li> <li>• Income generation from two street side shops / spaces</li> <li>• Known venue – e.g., Brunswick City Council – available</li> <li>• Established partnerships with hirers (e.g. Nepalese Community)</li> <li>• Local LGA community resource</li> <li>• Features and benefits of the current House has appeal</li> <li>• Good documentation / drawings package available for existing facilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing / tired building</li> <li>• Resources require for House management</li> <li>• Volunteer pool diminishing and require resources to manage</li> <li>• More pay-for-services required for maintenance, bookings</li> <li>• Low use by Estonian Community</li> <li>• Maintenance, insurance, cleaning and operating costs are increasing</li> <li>• Static cash flow</li> <li>• House has no street or advertising profile</li> <li>• Facility design, disability access/facilities and layout unsuitable for current &amp; future community</li> <li>• Not family friendly for children</li> <li>• Changing target demographics may not suit current House location</li> <li>• Lack of social media / visibility investment</li> <li>• Board is ageing and may be untenable without replacements</li> <li>• Co-operative unable to recruit new Board members which may make Board untenable</li> <li>• Low number of new community members</li> <li>• Inactive shareholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valuable House location for collateral in lending activities</li> <li>• Maintain and extend external relationships</li> <li>• Increase hall hiring to current partnerships</li> <li>• Develop market for more potential hirers</li> <li>• Increase social media visibility and currency</li> <li>• Increased pool of Estonians with residency or working visas provide more potential facility usage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological - Virtual Meetings replace many Estonian gatherings</li> <li>• Parking rules change</li> <li>• Accelerated climate elements increase House maintenance costs</li> <li>• Increased costs of operating House</li> <li>• Co-operative membership decreases</li> <li>• Board folding</li> <li>• Other competitors in the local area</li> <li>• Change to regulations and compliance requirements impact building</li> <li>• Income decreases leading to potential insolvency</li> <li>• Decreasing finances to fund major repairs</li> <li>• Inability to market the House to its fullest ability</li> <li>• Loss of key management personnel</li> </ul>

## 7.16 Attachment 16 - SWOT - Solution Option 2 – Cosmetic Refresh of Existing House

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep people happy</li> <li>• Maintain nostalgia amongst Estonian community</li> <li>• Spectrum of development options available</li> <li>• Allows creation of spaces and facilities better suited to Estonian Community requirements and to potential House hirers</li> <li>• Retention of visible façade</li> <li>• Accessibility by public transport</li> <li>• Car parking availability</li> <li>• Income increased through more attractive and functional space</li> <li>• Enhanced local Community resource</li> <li>• Disability access and child facilities needs addressed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerated ageing / tired building increases maintenance and then development costs</li> <li>• Increase resources required for management of House</li> <li>• Co-operative continuing to lose members</li> <li>• Location of Estonian House relative to where Estonians reside</li> <li>• Difficulty in accessing funds to redevelop</li> <li>• Increased insurance costs and operating expenses</li> <li>• Reducing number of new / future community members</li> <li>• Inability to implement Co-operative Board succession planning results in Co-operative House Board folds</li> <li>• Shareholders remain inactive</li> <li>• Reduced internal and external resources (people) to make major decisions</li> <li>• Impact of development program on House financial health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Financial costs incurred including hire / lease alternate facility for community</li> <li>◦ Unavailability of House to community &amp; hirers</li> <li>◦ Loss of income (Hiring of House and shops)</li> <li>◦ Demographic shift</li> <li>◦ Reduced Estonian House presence in the market to users (Council, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Inadequate immediate access to skilled decision makers</li> <li>• Skills and resources to develop a viable business plan</li> <li>• Co-op shareholder decision making prolongs development time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in equity</li> <li>• Maintain and develop external relationships e.g., Council, new hirers, weddings etc.</li> <li>• Attract more, and younger members of the Estonian Community</li> <li>• Increase in cash flow due to higher House hiring price</li> <li>• Increase in range of potential House hirers</li> <li>• Redeveloped House is more marketable and easier to promote</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking rules change</li> <li>• Other competitors entering the local market area</li> <li>• Revenue forecasts not being attained</li> <li>• Increased cost of building compliance</li> <li>• Inability to market the House to its fullest potential</li> <li>• Loss of key management personnel</li> <li>• Many decisions required - potential conflict</li> <li>• Not able to obtain adequate finance resulting in reduced financial attraction for hirers</li> <li>• Loss of income during building works</li> <li>• Estonian Community dissipates during building works</li> <li>• Structural issues, concrete cancer, asbestos etc.</li> <li>• Over-run of construction time &amp; costs</li> <li>• Potential impact of heritage overlay</li> <li>• Loss of existing hirers</li> </ul>

## **7.17 Attachment 17 - SWOT - Solution Option 3 – Sell and Buy an Existing Property**

### ***Strengths***

- Greater financial flexibility due to better cash reserves
- Building meets forecast requirements
- Modern contemporary facility
- Wider choice of locations to suit target demographic
- Potential for greater appeal to younger members
- Improved public transport access
- Revived sense of community pride

### ***Weaknesses***

- Management required
- Recent lack of volunteers to manage
- Pay for professional and transactional services required
- Continued low usage by Estonian Community
- Rising cleaning, insurance, maintenance and operating costs
- Co-operative unable to recruit new Board members which may make Board untenable
- Board failing to attract new / future community members
- Shareholders are inactive
- Resources require to engage real estate agents, search, evaluate, decide, transact, refurbish, and move may not be available
- Complex and timely decision making

### ***Opportunities***

- Potential for increased attendance and use by the Estonian Community
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Enhanced awareness of the Estonian Community
- Attracting more hirers

### ***Threats***

- Undetected building faults
- Introduction of Council mandated curfews
- Loss of key personnel
- Technological threat - Virtual Meetings replace face-to-face events

## **7.18 Attachment 18 - SWOT - Solution Option 4 – Sell and Lease an Existing Property**

<p><b><i>Strengths</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater financial flexibility due to better cash reserves</li> <li>• Building meets forecast requirements</li> <li>• Modern contemporary facility</li> <li>• Wider choice of locations to suit target demographic</li> <li>• Potential for greater appeal to younger members</li> <li>• Improved public transport access</li> <li>• Revived sense of community pride</li> <li>• Low risk, smaller financial commitment</li> <li>• Building owner responsible for compliance and maintenance</li> <li>• Reduced workload for Co-operative Board</li> <li>• Provides good short-, medium- and long-term solution</li> <li>• Reduced needs for volunteer involvement</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Weaknesses</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of leased property</li> <li>• Recent lack of volunteers to manage</li> <li>• Pay for professional and transactional services required</li> <li>• Continued low usage by Estonian Community</li> <li>• Cleaning &amp; Insurance Costs</li> <li>• Operating expenses</li> <li>• Co-operative unable to recruit new Board members which may make Board untenable</li> <li>• Board failing to attract new / future community members</li> <li>• Shareholders are inactive</li> <li>• Resources require to engage real estate agents, search, evaluate, decide, transact, refurbish, and move may not be available</li> <li>• Complex and timely decision making</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Opportunities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for increased attendance and use by the Estonian Community</li> <li>• Reduced maintenance and ongoing costs</li> <li>• Enhanced awareness of the Estonian Community</li> <li>• Attracting more hirers</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Threats</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lease extension unable to be negotiated</li> <li>• Introduction of Council mandated curfews</li> <li>• Loss of key personnel</li> <li>• Technological threat - Virtual Meetings replace face-to-face events</li> </ul>



### **7.19 Attachment 19 - SWOT - Solution Option 5 – Sell and hire existing venues per rehearsal/meeting/event**

#### ***Strengths***

- Greater financial flexibility
- Facility is chosen to meet event requirements
- Wider choice of modern contemporary facilities and suitable locations
- Greater flexibility in event arrangement
- Potential for greater appeal to younger members
- Improved public transport access
- Smaller financial commitment
- Estonian groups not responsible for compliance and maintenance of hired spaces
- No Co-operative Board required

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Group leaders need resources and expertise to find facilities and request funding
- Kodu Board responsible finding event specific facilities and arranging the events
- Loss of Community hub
- Separate storage facility required for archive, memorabilia etc.
- No fixed external and visible Estonian decoration or naming of venue(s)

#### ***Opportunities***

- Potential for increased attendance and use by the Estonian Community
- Location can better suit target demographic
- Develop relationship with facility owner resulting in lower costs

#### ***Threats***

- Poor planning results in unpopular events
- Pool of resources less available to select and evaluate hiring venues
- Technological threat – Virtual Meetings replace many users needs
- Events do not break even financially
- Venue not available
- Venue costs increase

## **7.20 Attachment 20 – Additional References**

1. Additional historical information regarding post WWII Estonian migration to Australia may be found in the book titled *Bonegilla Beginnings* authored by Ann Tünder-Smith.  
<http://bonegillasbeginnings.com/index.html>
2. The Australian Government Department of Home Affairs *Estonia-born Community Information Summary* issued in 2018 including 2016 census data is available via this link -  
<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/mca/files/2016-cis-estonia.PDF>
3. Commercial property lawyer - Jeremy Brand - <https://www.brandpartners.com.au/jeremy-brand/>
  - Contact made via Tammie Moorhouse (daughter of Karin Areng) who also works as a lawyer at Brand Partners. <https://www.brandpartners.com.au/tammie-moorhouse/>
4. If choosing to compare the numbers of recent arrivals from the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania it was important to recognise that Australia offers reciprocal working arrangements to people from Estonia, but not Latvia or Lithuania.  
<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/getting-a-visa/visa-listing/work-holiday-417/first-working-holiday-417#Eligibility>
5. Should the Estonian House Co-operative need to be “wound up”, then it is important that it be done in such a way that the organisation “finishes well”, with possible reference to the Community Directors’ “Finishing Well” online seminar attended by some Working Group members in late August 2020.