

A Short History of Alkira

1955 - 1999



WITH A 2026 FOREWORD
BY DIANNE BASSETT



Alkira

A Happy Place In The Sun

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“As you read this book, I hope you feel their spirit, the families who began it all, and the legacy that continues through every person who finds support, dignity, and belonging at Alkira. Their courage lit the path. We continue to walk it.”

DIANNE BASSETT

It is fitting to reflect that, when clearing a storeroom after many years, a journal was discovered containing the minutes of the very first meeting. Within its pages lay the recorded beginnings of what would become Alkira – an Indigenous word meaning “place in the sun.” It is a name that speaks not only to hope, but to the vision those early families held for their children: a future of dignity, opportunity, and belonging.



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This is a story born from determination, love, and an unshakable belief in the rights of every child.

Alkira began not as an institution, but as a collective voice – one formed in 1954 by a small group of families who refused to accept that their children, people with intellectual disabilities, should be denied something as fundamental as education, opportunity, and inclusion. At a time when support was limited and government recognition was scarce, these families came together with a shared purpose: to be seen and heard.

In **1951**, two small groups of parents – the Helping Hand Association and the Spastic Children's Society of Victoria – were formed, united by a common goal. Meeting in people's homes and relying on sheer determination, these families worked tirelessly to raise awareness and funds. Raffles, card nights, cake stalls, and the efforts of dedicated ladies' auxiliaries became vital lifelines, each event contributing to a growing movement for change.

In **1954**, these groups joined forces, strengthening their advocacy and resolve. With the support of the wider community, including the generous contributions of the Vealls (Electrics) Social Club – who provided much-needed funds and equipment—their vision began to take clearer shape.

By **1955**, their advocacy bore fruit. The Alkira Training Centre at Thurston Street, Box Hill was officially opened on **18 June 1955**, marking a significant milestone in securing educational opportunities for their children. What began as a small, determined effort steadily grew, evolving over the years into Alkira as it is known today – a community, a support network, and a lasting testament to what can be achieved when people stand together for a just cause.

It is important to remember that the foundations of Alkira were built on courage. The courage to question, to challenge, and to imagine a better future. That legacy continues to shape its path today.

As you read these pages, you are invited to reflect on the strength of those families and the progress their efforts made possible. Their story is not only part of Alkira's history – it is part of a broader journey toward inclusion, equity, and recognition for people with intellectual disabilities everywhere.

May this history honour their voices, their struggles, and their enduring impact.

DIANNE BASSETT

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1955-1999

Compiled 1999

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**Front Cover Photograph Left to Right: Rodney Keegan,
Maria Piatek, Bernadette Mahoney, Debbie McDonough,
Geoffrey Flowerday.**

Foreword

This history was commenced by Mr. Noel McVilly, General Manager of Alkira from 1981 to 1995, but was not completed due to his untimely death. The task has been completed by a Committee from the Board of Management, and in particular the work done by Mr. Warwick Robinson, Mr. Neil Race, Mr. Jack Boldiston and Mr. Cliff Jacobs must be acknowledged.

It has not been possible to include all the material collected by Noel, but some photographs and newspaper cuttings have been included.

Part 1 was written by Mr. Alf Race, M.B.E., for whom Noel had the utmost respect and admiration, it covers the years 1955 – 85. Part 2 has been produced by extracting the significant items from the President of The Board of Management Annual Reports. Part 3 records the invaluable contributions made by Alkira's Auxiliaries and some other significant contributions.



Heaven's Very Special Child

A meeting was held quite far from earth
"It's time again for another birth"
Said the Angels to the Lord above,
"This special child will need much love"

His progress may seem very slow
Accomplishment he may not show,
And he'll require extra care
From the folk he meets way down there.

He may not run, or laugh or play
His thoughts may seem quite far away,
In many ways he won't adapt
And he'll be known as Handicapped.

So let's be careful where he's sent
We want his life to be content,
Please Lord, find the parents who
Will do, a special job for you.

They will not realise it straight away
That leading role they are asked to play,
But with this child sent from above
Comes stronger faith and richer love.

And soon they'll know the privilege given
In caring for this gift from Heaven,
Their precious charge so meek and mild
Is Heaven's "Very Special Child".

Ian M. Clayton
Supervisor
"Aikira News"
August 1978

A letter from President, Mr. A. Race, to parents in 1959:



President, Mr. Alf Race.
*Author Alkira History
Part 1 and President for
20 years, 1956-1976.*

Shall we look back to just 8 years ago? If so, we shall recall that no organisation for the training of our children, was in existence in these districts.

Then in 1951 a small number of parents grouped to form a branch of "The Helping Hand". Immediately these people established a classroom in a church hall, and training of our children began. This training was carried out entirely by the parents who were rostered for duty. The class was open for three days each week.

Also in 1951 another group of parents formed a branch of the "Spastic Children's Society in Victoria". Due to transport difficulties these parents tackled the problem by engaging a trained Sister to visit the homes. This resulted in the children receiving training one day each week.

These efforts were not entirely satisfactory for the child's training and afforded only a small measure of relief to the mothers. But it was a start and, constantly in the minds of these parents was the dream of a "Properly equipped Training Centre" staffed by trained personnel.

To realise this dream, both groups were putting money aside for a building project. Until 1954 this dream did not appear much nearer to becoming a reality, but in June of that year these two groups of parents were brought together and discussed the problems. Very soon these far-seeing and courageous parents made the decision to disband their respective groups and form a new association with the object "To build and maintain a Training Centre". Thus in October 1954, at a public meeting "The Box Hill and Districts Retarded and Spastic Children's Association" came into being.

This new Association was helped and encouraged tremendously by generously minded ladies who formed the auxiliaries, by people, who did not have children needing the use of the centre joining the committee, and by the Box Hill City Council who donated £500 together with occupancy of land in Thurston Street.

Very quickly this young, energetic Association commenced the building and now hard work really began in earnest. To eke out our funds, voluntary labour was necessary, parents, friends and committee members answered the call and sweated and toiled Saturday after Saturday, Public Holidays and over the Christmas Period, with the good ladies always keeping the men energetic with cups of tea and meals. For six months these sacrifices were made to give the maximum help in building this Centre as cheaply and as quickly as possible. As a result, in July, 1955 another school was born.

This school was christened "ALKIRA" an Aboriginal name meaning "Bright and Sunny". The late Mr. Crosbie Morrison suggested this name. At the official opening the Croydon Golf Club and Vealls Social Club donated between them £750 which enabled the centre to be equipped with tables and chairs.

Shall we now ask ourselves a question? What prompted these parents and generous friends to build "Alkira" as it stands today? Was it Love of their children? We think so. BUT more than that we think it was love of all including Your children. For what other reason would a handful of people make such tremendous sacrifices to build a school catering for 60 children.

Now Dear Parents you have the honour of helping to maintain "Alkira", helping to keep Alkira "Bright and Sunny". Will your love for these children inspire you to greater efforts.

WE THINK SO.

Again Dear Parents

Do you know? That some parents are waiting to have their children enrolled at Alkira?

Do you know? That the majority of ladies who began work with the Auxiliaries in the early days are still working hard for us.

Do you know? That a number of our friends are still working hard on your committee. Seven members of our committee of 13 are non-parents.

Do you know? That a number of the original parents are still working hard on our committee.

Do you Realise? That sometimes good and generous people feel tempted to withdraw their help, when 100% support is not forthcoming from parents.

The above story on the growth of Alkira has been sent to you firstly because many people have indicated an interest in this history, and secondly because we wanted you to know, how small is the sacrifice we are asking you, for the menfolk to attend the working bee on next Saturday 2nd August.

REMEMBER? Saturday after Saturday; Public Holidays; the Christmas Period.

We want you men to be at the centre this Saturday just ONE day in 12 months, so do not let football or anything come before the children.

Mr. E. Perkins, whose energy seems limitless, when it comes to Alkira, has spent a great deal of time dividing the necessary works into different, categories so that as soon as you report, work according to your capabilities will be ready for you. Materials have to be purchased in advance so please do not ignore our plea.

For those who can, please report at 9 a.m. others will be welcome if they come straight after work. Please telephone Mr. E. Perkins WX 5542 if you require further details.

ARE YOU PREPARED TO KEEP ALKIRA "SUNNY AND BRIGHT"?

A. Race, President,
Box Hill and District Retarded and
Spastic Childrens Association

NEW ASSOCIATION FORMED

FOR RETARDED AND SPASTIC CHILDREN

In order to co-ordinate the work for retarded and spastic children in Box Hill, a new association was formed at a meeting last week.

The meeting, held at the home of Cr. L. R. McCredden, Stanley street, Box Hill, was well attended and representative. It is intended to make use of a building proposed to be erected on a block of land in Surrey Park granted by Box Hill City Council for the purpose of a training centre.

This centre should go far towards meeting the great need of local retarded and spastic children, as transport is one of the great problems of a training centre. The City Council and Cr. McCredden are to be greatly commended for this worthwhile contribution to the development of these handicapped children.

Office-bearers of the association elected are: President, Cr. L. R. McCredden; honorary secretary, Mrs. A. Kirkwood; honorary treasurer, Mr. E. G. Cuthbert; medical advisor, Cr. Dr. W. A. Kemp; committee, Mesdames Bertram and Godward, Messrs. Taylor, Race, Bludon, Cox and Godward.

Request

The Mayor of Box Hill (Cr. L. R. McCredden) has made a request for 100 people prepared to run house parties in their homes to raise £10 each towards the equipment and furnishings of the new training centre for spastic and retarded children in Thurston-st., Box Hill.

People interested in the Centre can observe progress made so far by inspecting the building operations in Thurston-st., Box Hill, which is off Carrington-rd., in portion of Surrey Park.

This week, Mr. McCredden made an appeal for assistance at the working bee which is held every Saturday.

It is hoped to have the centre open about April.

Cost of the building is expected to be about \$10,000.

Some Government help

towards the cost of the Centre has been promised.

The Centre will be a boon to parents of retarded and spastic children and trained teachers will help teach children to read and write and to do a wide range of hand-crafts.

The Mayor of Box Hill (Cr. L. R. McCredden) tells me that the National Fitness Council play Centre at Box Hill was a great success during the school holidays.

The centre was organised by the National Fitness Council with the co-operation of the Box Hill Council which helped in defraying the cost.

Many children had a grand time with the trained play leaders and were

disappointed when the centre finished last Friday. Mothers were particularly pleased with the deal.

More than 160 children attended the centre.

HELP NEEDED

Energetic Cr. McCredden has taken a particularly active part in the scheme and can be seen every Saturday working at the working bees.

He said that everyone could help in the construction of the building whether they were handymen, building tradesmen or just plain unskilled workers.

The Box Hill Junior Chamber of Commerce is arranging to supply some labor on the building.

At present floors are going down and there is much painting, puttying and other odd jobs to be done.

By being built with voluntary labor, cost is being kept to a minimum.





PART 1.

Alkira: The First 30 Years 1955 - 1985

as narrated by Alfred Race 1985

Alkira Training Centre was officially opened on 18th June, 1955. Before looking at the history of Alkira, it may be well to look back at the development of facilities for the mentally handicapped in Victoria. Up to the end of World War II, the fate of the handicapped child was one of the neglected areas in the education system of this State. Outside institutional care, no provision was made for training and welfare of these children. The government of the day was not interested in this problem, and did nothing to help provide facilities for training to the maximum of learning ability.

In the late 1940s, a group of about 6 parents, mainly in the Brighton area, banded together to help one another and prove that these children were educable. They met in one another's homes, and in turn relieved the mothers so that they had time for relaxation and pleasures. Other parents heard of this project and joined. Soon the numbers became too many for a home, and they progressed to church halls and other buildings.

This movement continued to grow, and in 1948, the Helping Hand Association (HHA) was born. Regular meetings were held in the church hall of the Methodist Church in Millswyn Street, South Yarra (Melways

Box Hill Centre for Retarded Children Open

December 11th 1953 - Reporter

£2000 SUBSCRIBED FOR CENTRE

COUNCIL GIVES LAND AND £500

Nearly £2,000 was donated at the public meeting and film show held in the Box Hill Town Hall on Thursday, November 19, by the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association.

This public meeting was held to launch an appeal for £5,000 to help build a training centre for retarded and spastic children in Surrey Park, Box Hill, early in the new year. The speakers were Dr. Cunningham Dax, Director of Mental Hygiene, Mr. E. A. Shepherd, Minister for Education, Mr. R. J. Gray, M.L.A., Mr. Albert Bailey, M.L.C., the Mayor of Box Hill, Mr. Fagham, and Dr. L. R. McCredden, president of the association.

All speakers highly commended the project and were enthusiastic regarding the merits of the proposed special training centre, which would facilitate training and observation of the requirements of these handicapped children and, in the words of Mr. Shepherd, Minister for Education, "help those who cannot help themselves."

Of the amount subscribed, £500 was donated by the Box Hill City Council as well as the site for the proposed centre which will front Thurston street.

Subscriptions were as follows—Box Hill City Council, £200; Box Hill South Square Dance Club, £200; Eastern District Group-Spastic Children's Society, £179/3/3; Brighton Contributing Group (Mrs.

C. Thomson), £155; No. 1 Auxiliary Willandra (Mrs. H. E. Gray), £120; Mr. W. Duffly, £100; Wayne and Boland Walters, £80; Eastern District Group Spastic Children's Society (Hawthorn Town Hall Revue by Mr. Egan and associates), £70; Firebugs Club, South Box Hill, £66/2/6; Mr. W. S. Cox, £50; Victorian Helping Hand Association Camberwell-Box Hill Branch Ladies' Auxiliary, each £50; Box Hill Mayoral Square Dance Committee, £38/13/2; Box Hill South Pre-School Centre, £33/16/-; Box Hill Pre-School Association, £30; St. Peter's Box Hill Free Kindergarten, £21/3/6; Florence Road Pre-School Centre, £21/2/8; V.H.H.A. (Mr. Ronald's Musical Evening), £20/6/-; Mr. Wm. Blyth, Dr. A. W. Keamp, each £10/10/-; Result of drink stall, £9/2/6; Mr. L. W. L. Driver, Box Hill South Pre-School Mothers' Club, Mr. E. C. Livermore, Mr. R. J. Gray, M.L.A., Mr. J. H. Bindon, each £5/5/-; Master John Bindon, Miss D. Fraser, Mr. W. C. McCormick, each £5; Mr. T. Keane, £3/3/-; Mr. J. Leight, £2/13/7; Round Up Magazine, Mr. and Mrs. Lobb, each £2/2/-; Miss G. Led. Mr. Hughes, Mr. C. Massoud, each £2; Mr. K. A. Rawson, Mr. H. G. Bottoms, each £1/1/-; Mr. H. R. Wessborough, Mr. L. Buck, Mr. Shepherd, M.L.A., Keith Christie, Mr. A. L. Martin, Mr. J. L. Priestley, Mr. Willard, each £1; Mrs. Corrie, Miss Thomas, each 10/-; Friends of Mrs. Lee, 5/-.

Progressive total, £1,824.
Any further donations will be thankfully acknowledged.

The new training centre for mentally retarded and spastic children in Thurston Street, Box Hill, was opened on Saturday by the chairman of the Mental Hygiene Authority (Dr. Cunningham Dax)

Its name, Alkira, chosen by the naturalist Mr. Crosbie Morrison, is an aboriginal Arunta word for "a bright and sunny place."

The building, which will eventually accommodate 80 children, stands on a large block of land given by the Box Hill Council. There is enough room for expansion.

It consists of a central administrative section—kitchen and offices—with two spacious classrooms on either side. The long diningroom is situated behind this section. Off one of the classrooms is the craft room.

The cost of the centre is estimated between £18,000 and £20,000, of which £7,700 has been given by the State Government.

Much of the furniture had still to be paid for when the official opening began. On its conclusion, however, word had come from the social club at Veall's, the electrical

firm that the cost—£200—would be underwritten by them.

Croydon Golf Club had paid the £250 for the diningroom furniture. The Willandra auxiliary bought the piano and Venetian blinds.

Work is due to begin at the centre in two weeks under the direction (Mrs. A. Kirkwood). Mrs. J. E. Martin will be the sister in charge. There will also be three qualified teachers and other helpers.

Children who cannot use public transport will be taken to and from their homes by taxi. Other children will travel on local buses under adult supervision.

Dr. Dax stressed the importance of fostering a sense of companionship in afflicted children.

At the training centre they would make friends, many of them for the first time, and develop a sense of companionship which would help some of them in their progress towards recovery.

He mentioned that eight people were to be trained under the State's Infant Welfare department especially for the kind of work that would be necessary in this and other similar centres.

- Herald



Map 58 A2). Parents in other suburbs, hearing about the success of this project, soon combined to form groups, and branches of the HHA were established at Brighton, Coburg, Footscray, Ivanhoe, Northcote and Prahran.

About the same time, independent groups had been formed in Oakleigh and East Kew. And so it was that the Camberwell branch of the HHA was formed in August 1951. Among those present at the original meeting were Mr. and Mrs Cuthbert, Mr and Mrs Bindon, Mr. and Mrs. Race, Mrs Walters, Mrs. Evans and Mrs Bloomer. A few months later, Mrs. Herbert, Mr. and Mrs Moore and Mrs Lee started to attend the meetings, and whilst the average attendance was about twenty, these are some of the names that will be recognised by those reading this document.

In February 1952, a training centre was opened in the hall of the Methodist Church in Warrigal Rd. This was to be operated for three days per week and to be manned by voluntary staff. As this training centre was on the Box Hill side of Warrigal Rd., it was decided to change the name of the Association to the Camberwell/Box Hill Branch of the HHA.

Early in 1953 it was decided to approach both the Box Hill and Camberwell Councils to ask if they had land available for us to build a training centre. Camberwell Council replied that they had no such land available. Box Hill Council, however, stated that they had land available in Thurston Street which may be suitable for our requirements. They did say that this land had already been promised to the Eastern District Group of the Spastic Children's Association and asked if would be possible for a training centre to be built with facilities to suit both groups.

On Thursday, 29th July 1953, a meeting was held at the home of Councillor L.R. McCreddan to investigate the possibility of starting a training centre for mentally retarded and spastic children. Present at this meeting were representatives of the Camberwell/Box Hill branch of the HHA, and the Eastern District Group of the Spastic Children's Association. After much discussion it was agreed that a new association be formed to be known as the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association, and that those present at the meeting would form the interim committee.

Councillor McCreddan was appointed Chairman, and Mrs. Kirkwood appointed Secretary and Mr. Cuthbert, Treasurer. At this stage the HHA decided to continue operating the training centre at Warrigal Rd until the Box Hill premises were available. As there were little or no subsidies

available to assist financing the new building in Box Hill, the Box Hill Association decided to hold a public meeting in the Town Hall in November 1953 to launch a public appeal.

At this meeting, a sum of £4,000 was raised. At about the same time, a letter was received from Mrs. Gray advising that the Willandra Auxiliary would in future work for the Box Hill Association.

In May 1954, the first constitution for the new association was approved, and in October final plans for the building finalised and the new building started. Also in 1954, we saw the establishment of the Victorian Council for the Mentally Retarded (VCMR) which was to be the co-ordinating body for all associations working for the mentally retarded in Victoria. The formation of this Council was one of the most progressive steps taken so far. It meant that where previously charitable organisations were pursuing individual approaches towards a common end, that is the training and care of mentally handicapped children and adults, now all these organisations and any future ones would have a common meeting place.

Individual efforts would be co-ordinated, problems made easier by collective knowledge, and above all, rights of these children would be presented to the government with one voice; a voice made infinitely stronger by the logic of collective thinking.

With many centres applying for financial assistance, the Government of Victoria finally advised late in 1954 that a Capital Grant Subsidy would be available towards the cost of building training centres. In early 1955 we received a letter from the Premier, Mr. John Cain Snr., that the sum of £14,400 would be available for this purpose, based on the estimated cost of the Box Hill Centre of £18,000. In May 1955 the Camberwell/Box Hill branch of the HHA was disbanded and all moneys held by this association transferred to the Box Hill Retarded and Spastic Children's Association (BHRSCA). Teaching staff also transferred to the new association.

And so it was that on 18th June 1955, the training centre at Thurston Street Box Hill was officially opened. One of the guests at this opening was Mr. Crosbie Morrison, who had been asked to provide a name for the training centre. After seeing the centre he stated it to be a bright and sunny place, and chose the aboriginal name "Alkira".

A fete was held in conjunction with the opening, and raised the sum of £300.6.9.

On 12th July 1955 Alkira started operations, with 19 pupils attending. Advice was received from the Mental Health Authority that a maintenance subsidy would be available on the basis of four pounds per year per pupil. Also that transport to and from the Centre would be fully subsidised. The staff appointed to train the young people attending was Mrs. Kirkwood - Supervisor, Sister Martin, with Mrs. Lee, Mrs. Price, Mrs. Priestly and Miss Willeton attending part time.

At the first annual meeting of the Association, held on 16th September 1955, the following officers were elected:

President	Councillor L.R. McCreddan
Vice President(s)	Mr. Cook Mr. Cuthbert Mr. Race
Treasurer	Mr. George Cree
Committee	Mr. Perkins Mr. Rooks Mr. Wiggins Mrs. Boldiston Mrs. Dickins Mrs. Bertram Mrs. Gray Mrs. Martin Mrs. Wright

"The Truth About the Mentally Retarded"

Alkira President Speaks to Businessmen

CENTURIES old fear of the retarded has broken many marriages and caused untold sufferings to parents and families, President of the Alkira Association, Mr. Alf Race, told members of the Box Hill Club at their luncheon this week.

But a more enlightened attitude was developing and if every businessman present would speak to six others about the basis of retardation and the help that could be given to these children, they would be doing a service to the community.

"Retarded people are not mentally ill," Mr. Race said, "but confusion had to have particular reasons, such as that in a number of cases the birth of a retarded child has broken a marriage. It is the father who leaves!"

The mentally retarded child was not ill and was not insane.

The topic meant what it said—mentally "staggered up" or "held back." There was a great range of intelligence in any group of people. These children were simply at the lower end of the range. Einstein was at the upper end.

"Most forms of mental retardation in new-born babies are of unknown cause. Therefore they are at present unpredictable and unpreventable. With further research a number may be prevented."

"Accidents can cause a child, born normal, to become retarded. We read of these people in reports of claims for damages after car smash-ups."

CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE
It was important to realize that anyone could become retarded mentally as the result of certain physical accidents, he said.

Things such as meningitis or encephalitis could damage the brain and cause mental retardation.

The so-called "miracle" when a heart which had stopped was reactivated could leave a retarded condition.

Of the mentally retarded child it could truly be said: "There but for the grace of God, goes my child, or myself."

"Almost no mentally retarded condition is inheritable," Mr. Race said. "It is obvious that no blame and no stigma should touch the families of these children."

Yet, through ignorance and fear, other people forced a continual punishment on their parents, brothers and sisters. Older children were advised it might be risky to marry into such families. Marital curiosity could cause hate and disruption in family groups.

The speaker said it was essential that children be prevented from using jerring terms and be made to realize that this could happen to anyone.

MODERN OUTLOOK
"The whole community should have the same healthy outlook of modern doctors and educators," he added.

To help both children and parents Alkira had been established 14 years ago by local people and now had 90 pupils aged 4 to 46 years at the centre.

A forward step was now being taken to the establishment of a sheltered workshop.

Box Hill Jaycees were undertaking a survey of local people and now had 90 pupils aged 4 to 46 years at the centre.

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important but the satisfaction was and the community would benefit by the use of a formerly untapped labour force.

The centre would be used in the early stages but later a workshop centering to factory legislation and with the full approval of all authorities, would be built.

In the meantime Alkira continued to fill the needs of the children, to attend a day school at 46 and at the same time enjoy parental care and affection, and to enjoy the companionship of children of their own parental age.

NEW LEARNING
Until a year ago it had been thought that retarded children could be trained to do handwork only by the play method, but this view was now changed.

As a result of a survey of the 1,190 children attending 37 centres in Victoria, the Mental Hygiene Authority had suggested more advanced training.

This consists of number work, according to the ability of the child to learn to count to 10 or perhaps 30, and word recognition, both of which would be of value in the sheltered workshop.

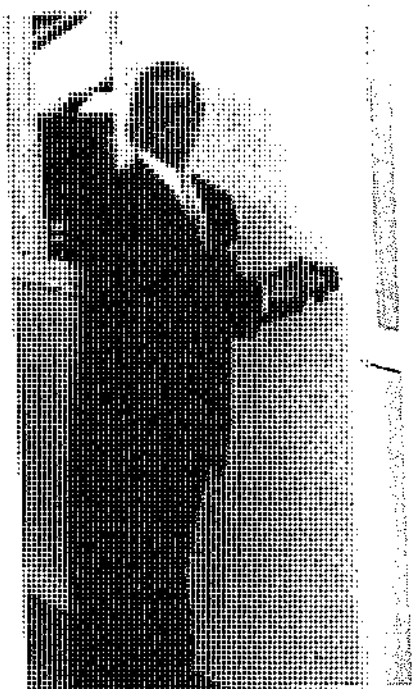
Children are taught to recognize the name "Box Hill," the destination on a train or bus and "red" or "green" on public toilets.

"When some one comes along and prints Romeo and Juliet or His and Hers on the door—but we can't cover all eventualities," said Mr. Race. Several of those who laughed admitted later this was one they had not thought of and would not willingly perpetrate again.

Twelve former adults are now in the 36th stage of workshop training at Alkira. There are 12 more in the initial stages and 24 about to begin. It is expected that 48 to 46 will eventually be working in the shop.

Mr. Colin Cathcart thanked Mr. Race for his rational approach to a little understood problem which would lead to acceptance and understanding for both parent and child.

"The speaker has opened up a new world to me," said Chairman for the Day, Mr. Stan Shepherd, "I'm now to pass on to you as I can."



In April, 1955, the sheltered workshop was officially opened by Dr. Cunningham Dax.

Friday, 17th March, 1961
- Box Hill Reporter

There was no nomination for Secretary, but at a meeting held in December 1955, Mr. Bert Gray was appointed Secretary of the Association. In January 1956, due to delay in receiving subsidies it was necessary for us to have the bank grant an overdraft of £2,000. Around the same time, we were advised by the Mental Health Authority that they had found it necessary to set a limit of £140 per child per year for transport costs, and it was then decided to purchase a fourteen passenger bus to save on our taxi costs.

In August 1956 we were advised by the Education Department that school dental services had been extended to cover the day training centres. By this time we had 55 trainees attending Alkira. In December 1956 Mrs. Kirkwood resigned as Supervisor, and Councillor McCreddan resigned from the committee. At a subsequent general meeting, Mr. A. Race was appointed Acting President.

At the beginning of the school year in 1957, Miss Souter was appointed supervisor of the day training centre.

Due to the number of applications for admission it was decided in early 1958 that plans be drawn up for an extension to be used for a post school training group. This extension was planned and opened in September 1959, to enable us to better cater for the 70 trainees now attending.

Early in 1959, Mr. Harry Holmes joined the staff as bus driver and one of the extra teaching staff joining us in 1960 was Miss Ingram. In 1960 the teachers in day training centres in Victoria formed a teachers' association. This was a step in the right direction. It enabled teachers in country areas to meet with city teachers and discuss problems and learn the latest methods being used. Bearing in mind that training facilities for these specialised teachers were very limited, and only a very small number could be trained at any one time.

From this association, and the Victorian Council for the Retarded, a wages board was formed for the teachers of mentally handicapped children. They were charged with bringing uniformity in wages, working conditions, leave allowances, sick leave entitlement etc. It took some time to arrive at a reasonable determination and the first one was not completed until mid 1965.

Early in 1961, Alkira decided that it was time they established a 'sheltered workshop', and it was agreed that sketch plans be drawn up. In October

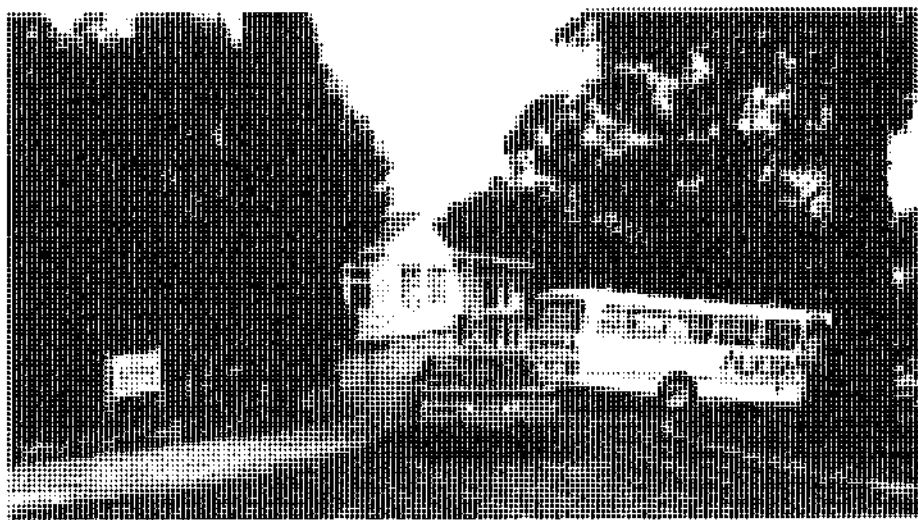
1962, Mr. Ern Martin was appointed to the staff to commence the organisation of a sheltered workshop and the plans were approved in August 1962.

1962 was also the year that we organised the first Christmas stamps appeal. This, of course, is still being done each year. Alkira has always been fortunate in the support we have had from the public. In 1960, two blocks of land at Belgrave were donated to the Association by the Perkins family. In 1964 we were left a property in Severn Street in the will of Mrs. Pettard, and another bequest was a property in Glendale Street. These bequests allowed us to purchase the property at 70 Churchill Street which was considered to be suitable for future use as a hostel.

At the Committee meeting held in February, 1965, a record of appreciation was made in the Minutes for the services rendered by Mr. A. E. Perkins, who had passed away 23rd January, 1965. In April, 1965, the sheltered workshop was officially opened by Dr. Cunningham Dax and this gave some relief in space, as the number of trainees attending had increased to 119. This, however was to be a temporary relief for in the next five years the attendance continued to rise to 133. An appreciation dinner was held at the Centre in August 1967 for those persons and organisations who had assisted Alkira.

In February 1968 plans were completed for the residential, to be built at 70 Churchill Street and a contract signed for the building. Also in 1968 two new auxiliaries were started, namely the Alkira men's auxiliary and the Willandra Juniors auxiliary.





1968 became a crisis year for all centres in Victoria as they came to realise that Government subsidies were not keeping pace with increased costs. They were all becoming concerned about the lack of acceptance of the responsibility in the operation and maintenance of the handicapped children's centres by the Government. The centres continually had to plan for extension, with extensions to buildings and increased staff.

Since the formation of the Teachers' Wages Board, staff salaries had increased by some 300% whilst maintenance subsidies had only increased by 12.5%. The financial report for the year ending 1968 showed that Alkira had incurred a loss of \$17,000 and the budget for 1969 predicted a loss of a further \$20,000. All centres were at this stage contacting their local Members of Parliament, expressing concern that no action was being taken by the Government to improve the financial situation of all centres.

In December, 1968, a bi-election was being held for the Liberal seat of Dandenong. Mr. Alan Lind, a high school teacher, who had been instrumental in establishing the Mildura centre, and who, when transferred to Dandenong High School was the driving force in establishing the Dandenong centre, was standing as a Labor candidate.

The main plank in his policy was the lack of financial assistance to services for the mentally handicapped. So strong was his campaign that in the week between Christmas and New Year, Sir Henry Bolte advised that the Government would pay all staff salaries and all transport costs.

'ALKIRA' FEELS THE PINCH

Box Hill's training centre and sheltered workshop for retarded and spastic children faces a financial crisis.

The centre, called Alkira, has this year suffered a deficit of \$8,434.

It is the first deficit the centre has suffered since it was started 15 years ago.

The president (Mr. A. Race) told the annual meeting of Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association, which runs the centre, that the board of management was greatly concerned over the deficit and the rising costs.

The meeting was told that during the past two years, the running costs of the centre had increased from \$51,000 to \$85,000. And the budget estimates for next year had forecast a further increase of about \$10,000, he said.

Mr. Race said the main increases had resulted from higher transport charges and higher staff salaries.

The association's hostel in Perkins House in Churchill St., opened last year, is also running at a loss.

In addition, donations

from Alkira's well-wishers had been \$1500 lower than the previous year, he said.

Alkira's troubles are partly due to the fact that it has lost some of its supporters with the establishment of a similar centre at Nunawading and another one planned for Baiwyn, the meeting was told.

Alkira, however, has 118 on its rolls, 53 of them in the workshop. Five children attend its kindergarten and six are in the nursery.

The centre's training school is staffed by 10 specially trained teachers and the children's transport needs are catered for by a bus and 10 taxis.

Parents of children attending the centre pay only a nominal transport charge.

Economies

Mr. Race told the largely-attended meeting that if Alkira was to continue its highly laudable work, it would be necessary to

effect economies and increase income.

Towards that end, the centre has appointed its first finance committee. The two-member committee, entrusted with the highly onerous task of introducing economies, comprises Mr. John Ingoldby, who is the centre's public relations officer, and Box Hill Jaycee Brian Van Twest, who is a cost accountant.

Public help

At the annual meeting Mr and Mrs Race were presented with life governorships of Alkira for their devoted services to the association. Mr Race has been president of the association for 13 consecutive years.

Mr Race made an impassioned plea for everyone concerned with the public to come to the aid of an organisation which, he said, was fulfilling a real need in the community.

Besides the loss of patronage, resulting from similar new centres in nearby areas, Alkira's new hostel has also been a drain in its resources.

COSTS SPIRAL ALARMS BOARD

1969

This would apply, of course, only to approved staff and approved transports. No non teaching staff were included in this. There was also no provision made for subsidising long service leave, sick leave payments and emergency staff salaries and no workers compensation payments were included although it may have been considered that these were all part of salary entitlements. Nevertheless, the subsidy was considered a major breakthrough, and centres were again able to breathe freely and plan future developments and improvements.

In December, 1968 Mrs McBain was appointed supervisor of the Hostel, and the official opening of the Hostel took place in March, 1969 by the Honorable William Wentworth, Federal Minister for Health and Community Services. The Hostel was named Perkins House in honour of Eric Perkins and the wonderful work he did for Alkira.

September 1969 saw the first Riversdale Golf Club Charity Day for Alkira, and they subsequently decided that this would be the first of five annual charity days to raise money for the future extensions in residential facilities.

The Victorian Council for the Retarded together with many of the parents were at this stage becoming very concerned at what would happen to their children if they became orphans, especially if they had no brothers or sisters, or direct relations. It was with this in mind therefore in 1970 the Victorian Council set up the Orphans' Trust Fund which would ensure someone would be responsible for the orphans' well being when that time came.

In 1971, the Alkira Younger Set was formed and in December, 1971 Mrs Lee retired as supervisor of the training centre. Mrs Lee had been associated with Alkira since it first commenced in 1955.

In 1972 two important decisions were made. The first was that we should draw up a new constitution and to seek incorporation for Alkira. The second was the decision to purchase 68 Churchill Street, the adjoining property to our existing Hostel. This building to be used for future extension to the Hostel, and the final purchase of this property went through in November, 1972.

Under Section 61 of the Education Act (Vic), the Education Department in Victoria had denied responsibility for the education and training of

\$120,000 WORKS PLAN FOR HOSTEL

'Overcrowded' is claim

The Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association last week announced plans for \$120,000 extensions to its hostel.

The 14-bed hostel in Churchill St., known as Perkin's House, was the first of its kind in Victoria when it was established two and a half years ago.

The president of the association, Mr Alf Race, who made the announcement at the association's annual meeting, said the hostel had been crowded during the past 12 months. "It has often been overcrowded," he said.

Mr Race recalled that the hostel had opened with no permanent residents. It now had eight permanent residents and the other six beds were constantly in demand during emergencies, such as sickness in various families, he said.

The proposed extensions will double the hostel's present accommodation. The association estimates the demand for permanent residents at the hostel will more than double in the next three years.

The association will have to raise \$50,000 to qualify for a \$70,000 subsidy from the Government.

"We have to raise our share of the money with

in the next two years with the help of our auxiliaries, the parents and the local service clubs," he told the Gazette this week.

Extensions now in progress to the association's Alkira (training centre and sheltered workshop in Thurston St. are expected to be completed by the end of this month.

Mr Race told the meeting that the extension would enable an increase in the enrolment at the workshop from 57 to 72.

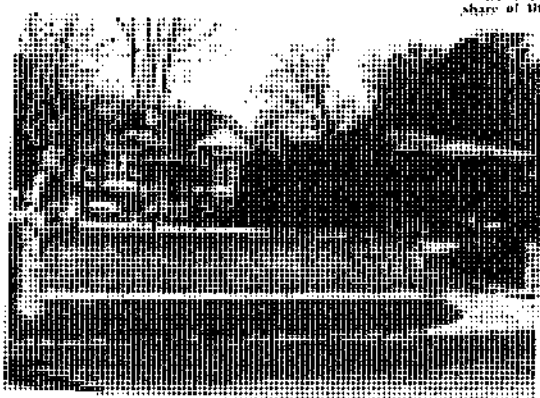
Enrolment is 130

Alkira began with only 13 children. The total enrolment now at the training centre and the workshop is 130, representing an area extending from Traralgon to Auburn and from Doncaster to Burwood.

Mr Race, who has been president of the association for the past 13 years, threatened about three years ago that Alkira might close down because of lack of funds.

"But everyone concerned has put their shoulders to the wheel and we are at last out of the red," Mr Race told the Gazette. Alkira, however, has still some immediate problems to overcome. According to the centre supervisor, Mrs Marjorie Lente, one of the most urgent is to acquire the services of a speech therapist.

"We also need a play ground, but I wouldn't comment on that," she said.



mentally handicapped children. However in 1973, a statement was made by the Premier, Mr Hamer as follows:

"Section 61 of the Education Act (Vic) has been abolished. The Education Department will accept responsibility for educating hundreds of children in the IQ range of 35-50 and the moderately retarded who have previously been regarded as ineducable. Special funds and programs will be set up for the retarded including the setting up of Australia's first training college for teachers of mentally and physically handicapped."

This left the way open for committees to transfer their skills sections to the Education Department but this was a voluntary decision which each committee of management had to make. It did, however, give the opportunity for each committee of management to give greater attention to the training of older people in their care as adult units were still to be their responsibility.

During 1973, a special committee of Alkira drew up a new constitution and it was decided to seek incorporation. This was subsequently granted and the first meeting of the Committee of Management after incorporation was held in September, 1973.

Also during 1973, architects were proceeding with the plans and specifications for the extension to the hostel to be erected on the land at 68 Churchill Street. With the establishment of Day Training Centres, the lot of mothers was made easier during the day, when the handicapped child was attending the centre. Not only was she given time to attend to the many tasks in the home, to go shopping etc., she also had the satisfaction of knowing that her child was being well cared for during this time.

It was realised, however, that the relief was only for about 30 hours per week, during normal school years and the Victorian Council, therefore, had many meetings with the Government to overcome the problem and in 1974 the home help for parents of handicapped children was introduced. This was a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week service available to parents at a very nominal hourly rate. Home helpers were given a specialised training course training them in the care and management of these children. When they completed the course they were available to go into the home.

In November, 1974, we were advised by the Department of Social Security that our adult unit no longer met the criteria necessary to be classified a

ALKIRA NEAR BUST: NOW IT'S BOOMING \$28,292 surplus

Four years ago, Alkira Spastic Children's Training Centre in Box Hill was on the verge of closing down, but now it's booming.

For the first time since its inception, the centre recorded a surplus of \$28,292 for the year ending June 30.

Also, for the first time since Alkira's workshop was established in 1965, the income from the past financial year exceeded the wages bill.

Workshop manager, Mr Ernest Martin told Alkira's annual meeting that the workshop currently did work for 16 different firms and that the production of its speciality the chain

saw sharpener, had had to be doubled to satisfy demand.

Mr Martin said his workforce totalled 63 young people. With the workshop extensions completed last year, it could be increased to 72. He said it would not be long before the workshop reached "saturation point" making it necessary to look elsewhere for work space.

Good health

Supervisor Mrs Marjorie Lenné said that besides the 63 in the workshop, 67 children were on the school roll. She said the children's health during the past year had been generally very good.

Hostel sub-committee chairman Mrs Norma Allum said that plans for the extensions to the hostel prepared by a firm of architects experienced in planning day training centres and hostels for the handicapped had been submitted to Box Hill Council along with an application for a building permit.

The hostel, in Chur-

hill St., now has nine permanent and two long-term residents.

President of the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association, Mr A. Race, said the association's main project now was the extensions to the hostel.

"This will be a costly scheme, but as it is so necessary, I'm sure we can count on the full financial support of all to enable this work to be done," he said.

He said that among those who had pledged financial support were members of the Riversdale Golf Club.

Two veteran helpers of Alkira have been awarded life membership certificates. Mr Les Gilbert has been made a life member of the association and Mrs B. Addison of the Willandra auxiliary.

Mr Gilbert was on the association's board of management for 12 years, and Mrs Gilbert, during her 31 years with the Willandra auxiliary, was twice its president.

sheltered workshop. It was therefore to be known as an activity therapy centre.

In 1976 Alkira purchased No. 4, 8 and 10 Thurston Street with the thought of future development of Alkira in this area, and to help finance these purchases, it was decided that they would sell the house in Glendale Street and two blocks of land in Belgrave which had been bequeathed to the Association some years ago.

In August, 1977, the Commonwealth subsidy for the building of the hostel extension was approved, and the job commenced. In December, 1977, it was agreed to appoint Mr. Jim Blair as a full time administrator. He was to start in March, 1978.

At this stage, Alkira was becoming desperate for additional space. There was a waiting list of 25 for the adult unit and it had been anticipated that if the Committee of Management could purchase No.6 Thurston Street and No.2 Kintore Crescent together with the three properties now owned, these would have created a good block of land on which to build an annex to the existing adult unit. This plan was thwarted however, as the owners of these further two houses had no wish to sell. The properties at 4, 8 and 10 Thurston Street were therefore subsequently sold in 1979.

As this was the first time Alkira had been in the position of having a large waiting list, it was felt that the matter of extra space for the acceptance of more trainees was of prime importance, and with this in mind an investigation was made for space close to Thurston Street. A suitable building at 22 Cambridge Street was under construction and in mid-1978 Alkira took an option on this building for rental.

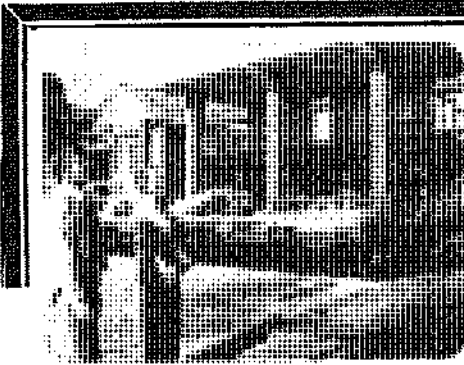
April, 1978 saw the completion of the extensions to the hostel and five residents were moved in. The new hostel building was named 'Riversdale' in recognition of the work done by members of the Riversdale Golf Club in raising a large part of the cost on their charity days over the past five years.

In October, 1978, the Committee of Management discussed with personnel from the Education Department, the possibility of them taking over the Junior School. After a great deal of discussion, the Education Department finally advised late in 1979 that they would take full responsibility for the Junior School as from January, 1981. Also late in 1978 it was decided to rent the building at 22 Cambridge Street and operate this as an annex to

Easterly

By **MAY O'SULLIVAN**

BOARD of management members Russell Grady and Norma Alton outside Alkira



An oasis of happiness

Brings hope to the retarded

THE problems of looking after mentally retarded people are immense, but are doubly so when the patient is epileptic as well.

Most people imagine that caring for these severely handicapped people is depressing.

But as soon as you walk through the doors of the Alkira complex in Box Hill any fears of a dark, gloomy, institution disappear.

The first impression is one of light and cheery with the loudest sounds being the laughter of children or the chorus of a popular song.

"As a matter of fact the staff get very tired of hearing that working here must be very depressing," said Joan Richards, the public relations officer at Alkira.

"Quite the opposite is true, Alkira is one of the happiest, most satisfying places anyone could wish to work in."

The whole atmosphere is being summed up in the name of the Aboriginal word Alkira — a happy place in the sun.

The only leprosy nursing when we visited the complex last week was the sun.

The Alkira complex consists of a training centre and sheltered workshop in Thurston St., Box Hill, and a residential hostel in Churchill St. Mount Albert.

There are 124 patients ranging from three to 85. The hostel, which was opened in 1969, was the first of its kind in Victoria.

Demand for accommodation has been so great that further extensions have recently been completed.

It now accommodates 27 more "children" as the staff at Alkira like to call their charges.

The hostel mainly caters for young people whose mothers have died or who have reached an age where they are no longer able to be looked after at home.

Some beds are kept for parent relief to let the parents go on a holiday knowing that their retarded child is well looked after.

The new extensions include a games room and hydrotherapy pool.

"Some people may see



WORKERS repair damaged telephones for Telecom at Alkira's sheltered workshop.

the pool as an extravagance, but most of our people only have limited mobility or land, whereas the moment they hit the water there's as mobile as any normal person," said Mrs Norma Alton, a member of the board of management.

The total cost of the extensions including the pool and the furnishing was 1,900,000.

The Government provided 820,000 while the rest came from generous people, mainly from the area surrounding Alkira.

"Thanks to the generosity of the people of this area we have not had to go to the banks for a loan," said Mrs Alton.

The training centre was opened in 1967 with 115 school-age children.

In 1969 the centre was expanded to include post school-age children, with the sheltered workshop opening in 1974.

The teaching staff at the training centre see their role as one of developing the children's intel-

lect and creative abilities to a degree where they are independent in domestic activities.

The curriculum includes handicapped sport and games. The older children have hobbies and run a library and school bank.

The sheltered workshop complex is in several levels. Basic skills taught include drilling, spray painting and packaging. Not all those who attend the complex are able to work.

"A lot of people in here have crushed ego," said Mrs Dulcie Deane, a supervisor in the workshop.

"Being able to perform a task that a normal person takes for granted is a wonderful confidence booster."

One of the workshop's happier characters is Egan, 61, who takes great delight in being the best at holding shoelaces.

"We were starting that with it but she told the administrator that she was

most happy when she was working," said Mrs Deane.

"One of the most attractive aspects of working is the social side of it. Most people seem to think that handicapped people have different needs from them. That's not really true."

"Construction and social interaction are very important to handicapped people. They like to feel needed like everyone else."

The cost of running Alkira is enormous. The Government provides 82 per cent. But the other 18 per cent, which usually means about 200,000, has to be raised by the institution.

So far, Alkira has been able to keep its doors open to all who need help, but more needs each year make it increasingly difficult.

Anyone who would like to help either with cash or making one of the auxiliaries, can contact the centre at 27 Thurston St., Box Hill, or phone 22-1553.

May 23, 1978 - Sun

the adult unit in Thurston Street until we could build a larger centre. This annex would cater for most of the young people on the waiting list, and it was opened in April, 1979.

This building also provided Alkira with much needed administration area, as no government subsidy was available for rented premises, the Committee of Management still recognised the need to build a training centre to provide for their present and future requirement and to this end, started planning for a building on land in Ashted Road, which had become available.

Together with representatives from the Mental Retardation Division, planning continued for almost two years before advice was received from the Mental Retardation Division that the project had become too costly, and they did not have the funds to provide the subsidy. The project was eventually dropped and the land sold.

In October, 1980, in conjunction with the Mental Retardation Division, Alkira established an independent training unit in a house in Station Street Box Hill. The purpose of this unit was to train the more able people to look after themselves, to plan their meals and to travel each day to the Centre by public transport, all of this to be accomplished with a co-resident who provided minimum supervision. This unit continued for three (3) years and was of great benefit for some of the trainees, but due to the difficulties of obtaining reliable co-residents it finally closed in April, 1983.

In July, 1980, Alkira appointed its first recreation officer. The object being to plan recreation for the trainees in the evenings and weekends, with particular attention to those living in the hostel.

In February, 1981, the administrator, Mr. Jim Blair resigned and in March, 1981 Mr. Noel McVilly took over this position. Since the formation of the association, the official name had been the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association and the Committee of Management finally decided that this name should be shortened. At a general meeting held in April 1982, it was resolved that the association would become known as Alkira Centre - Box Hill.

Now that the junior school was being administered by the (State) Education Department, and they would be building new premises away from Thurston Street, the Committee of Management decided to have a new look at redeveloping the site in Thurston Street to cater for their total future

requirements. Sketch plans were produced late in 1983 and the new Mental Retardation Division gave the green light to this proposal.

There was, however, a great deal of discussion on the amount of subsidy which would be available, but this was all cleared up by mid-1984 and approval given to proceed with plans and specifications. The next stage was to get building permits and an agreed lease tenure on the land in Thurston Street and whilst there was much discussion on these points, all was cleared up by early 1985 and demolition work commenced in May of that year.

Whilst there were further hitches in the building program, Alkira in their 30th year are near to the position of having a well designed modern training centre which the Committee of Management believe will be equal to any in the State.

FINANCE:

Like most of the organisations caring for the handicapped, Alkira has received some financial assistance from the Government in the form of subsidies. This assistance has however been only a percentage of the total operating costs. The total operating costs of the Alkira Training Centre and the Alkira Residential over the past 30 years has been \$7,250,000 and the Government contribution has been approximately 67% of this total, leaving Alkira to provide \$2,250,000 over this period.

This task would not have been possible without the wonderful support of the public and particularly the support of the auxiliaries and those people and organisations whose regular contributions over the past 30 years has helped to keep Alkira in a sound financial position.



PART 2.

Recent History 1981-1999

In preparing this section of the history of Alkira much of the information has been gleaned from the Annual Reports of Presidents and papers prepared by the then General Manager, Mr Noel McVilly who was appointed to Alkira in March, 1981.

Mr McVilly was immediately facing a number of problems. His predecessor had left Alkira six weeks earlier so there was no handover period. Alkira was sited in a number of locations; Thurston Street, and Cambridge Street, Box Hill; as well as Churchill Street, Mont Albert.

The Victorian Education Department had just assumed responsibility for the school section but Alkira premises were still being occupied by school pupils and Alkira was providing and co-ordinating transport for them.

Another immediate problem was the flooring in the Riversdale section of the hostel. After many months of negotiation between Alkira, the architects and the builder a mutually acceptable solution was reached and the flooring faults were rectified.

Also, in 1981 Mrs Jo McBain who had been Hostel supervisor for 13 years retired. Jo and her husband, Jim, had lived at the Hostel during the period

and a replacement had to be found. Mrs J Hill was appointed to the position which she held until 1985.

In 1979 a half hectare (1 1/4 acre) block in Ashted Street, Box Hill had been purchased with the intention of building an annexe so that more clients could be provided for there, as well as at Thurston street. Little progress was made and in April, 1982 the Committee of Management decided to sell the Ashted Street property. The funds from the sale were to be invested for re-developing the existing premises in Thurston Street. Discussions on this were held with the Mental Retardation Division which was having difficulty obtaining funds from the Treasury. Teachers wages had increased so that any funds which became available would have to be reallocated to meet the increase in salaries.

Hence plans for the future were blocked because of the uncertainty of funding. Plans to re-develop Thurston Street however were kept and in 1983 Alkira made an application to the State Government for a Capital Grant. The Government required that Alkira would assist with the building costs on a 4:1 ratio and with the funds from Ashted Street available, approval to proceed was given.

In 1983 another significant event took place when the Alkira Opportunity Shop came into being at 22 Cambridge Street thanks to the co-operation of Mrs Doris Bailey and Mrs Helen D'Elton.

A sad loss during 1983 was the passing of Mrs Dorothy Lee, who had worked tirelessly for mentally handicapped children for more than 30 years. She and her husband had been foundation members of the Camberwell Branch of the Victorian Helping Hand Association. In 1960 Mrs Lee was appointed supervisor of Alkira and retained the position until 1971. On retirement she remained active in the Mothers' Auxiliary. Her dedication and wonderful record of service helped make Alkira what it has become.

Plans for the development of Thurston Street remained on hold but in 1984 information was received that the Department of Education pupils would move to a new Special Development School early in 1985. Thanks to the assistance from the local member for Box Hill, Mrs Margaret Ray, Alkira was advised that the Minister of Health had given top priority to our redevelopment project for financial year 1984/85.

Architects were appointed and planning proceeded so that everything could be ready to go as soon as the school moved out and the promised funds

became available. News was received that the level of funding would not be as much as was hoped for and Alkira would have to provide the shortfall. This would be a significant drain on Alkira's financial resources. Further, the Thurston Street land was owned by the Box Hill Council but no formal documents existed showing Alkira's standing as a tenant. The council had simply made the land available at no cost. The council eventually agreed to a 30 year lease at a peppercorn rental.

Residential accommodation remained a matter of concern and the establishment of another residential was considered, however it was assessed that running costs, based on current subsidy levels were prohibitive, so the idea was shelved.

It was during this time that the untimely death of the President, Mr Russ Craig occurred in January. He had contributed 15 invaluable years to the Board of Management, 6 as President. His death was a sad loss to the Alkira Community.

In April, 1985 a notice was sent out to bring the Alkira Community up to date with progress on the Thurston Street development. There were a number of problems. At various times the Box Hill Council wanted to change the terms of the lease, alter the cost basis of construction, even a change of site was proposed. Negotiations continued for many months and an enormous amount of work was put in by the President of the Board, the General Manager, the Treasurer and Mrs Margaret Ray, MLA. Eventually sanity prevailed and Council approval for the development was given. The council had eventually agreed to the sale of the land rather than a lease to Alkira and the ultimate price of \$275,000 for a prime piece of real estate has turned out to be a real bargain.

During 1985 funding by both the Commonwealth and State Governments towards Alkira's operating costs remained low and left a considerable amount to be raised in various ways. Income from investments, support from the various Auxiliaries and other benefactors was of great assistance to the efficient running of the organisation.

During the reconstruction of Thurston Street some clients were moved to a temporary annexe in Station Street, Box Hill. This was provided by Box Hill Council at no cost and was greatly appreciated.

The building at Thurston Street ran into further problems due to a section of the original building being built on the site of an old tip. Fortunately the

\$1m facelift for Alkira

ALKIRA Training Centre has received a \$1 million capital funding grant for renovations.

The grant, from the Health Commission's Mental Retardation Division, will also finance reconstruction of Alkira's new school.

Alkira has occupied its Thurston St, Box Hill, site since July, 1955, rent-free.

"Over the 30 years a lot of our buildings have been jerry-built," Alkira general manager Mr Noel McVilly said.

"The school was originally built for children, and tends to meander all over the place. It occupies the northern section of Alkira, and we'll be demolishing it to build a school more suited to be used by 100 or more adults.

"The rest of the buildings will be refurbished. They are all pretty dilapidated. The layout of the rooms is OK, but it all needs bringing into the 1980s."

It took Alkira three years to get the Government 4 to 1 subsidy, and the centre must now find 20 per cent of the cost of alterations.

Planning permits for the work, including landscaping, have been approved.

Tenders for the project closed on February 22, but a contract was not signed because Alkira was not the owner of its land until recently.

After two months' discussions with Box Hill Council, Alkira now has tenure of the land for 30 years at a peppercorn rent. A peppercorn rent is usually \$1 a year.

Suggestions by Box Hill Council that Alkira shift to a location in Station St were rejected by Alkira because to do so would



The present-day face of the Alkira centre.

have meant the loss of its grant.

A non-profit organisation registered under the Hospitals and Charities Act, Alkira would have had to reapply for a grant and wait a similar time before an allocation of money, Mr McVilly said.

Advantages

Box Hill Council and Alkira saw advantages in relocating in Station St, but potential loss of the grant was the main factor in Alkira's decision.

Town clerk Mr Ian Port said: "We are disappointed at the inflexibility of the Health Commission, and in particular the Mental Retardation Division.

"However, council has decided to offer Alkira the Thurston St land at a peppercorn rent per year."

It was originally proposed that Alkira buy the site, which it had occupied free for 30 years, but Mr McVilly said it would be impossible to raise the finance.

"Under the Local Government Act, 30 years is the longest period for which we can rent this land," Mr McVilly said.

"But for the past 30 years it's been a 'permissive occupancy'.

"I am very, very relieved and happy that the issue is now settled, and most grateful to Box Hill Council for its decision. Now we can get on with the improvements to Alkira.

"I'm aiming to consolidate and provide a satisfying and meaningful service.

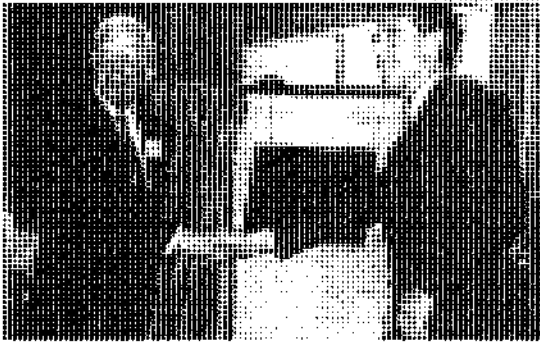
"I want to get the Alkira Training Centre on one site. We have a unit over the road in Cambridge St, about 200 metres away, but a barrier is a barrier, especially where our type of service is concerned."

Youth focus

THE federal member for Chisholm, Mrs Helen Mayer (Labor), has been elected chairperson of the Government's new Co-ordinating Committee on Youth Affairs.

The committee, made up of representatives from other major government committees, will act as a focus for the collection of information on youth policies, Mrs Mayer said.

State Government after considerable negotiation, provided additional funding and allowed the whole section to be demolished and rebuilt. This provided a substantial brick and concrete structure which would be relatively maintenance free for many years. The building also incorporated a large basement which would prove to be a real bonus.



During the rebuilding programme it became apparent that Alkira had been using the wrong address. Everything referred to 37 Thurston Street which should have been 3-7 Thurston Street, so the change to 3 Thurston Street was made at that time.

1986 saw the concentration on the development of the Thurston Street premises and planning for the official opening. This was performed by the Honourable John Cain MP, Premier of Victoria on Sunday 12th October, 1986.

The assistance provided by the staff and trainees, particularly Wayne Robinson and Marie Miller who made presentations to the Premier and Mrs Cain was appreciated by all who attended the opening.

Because of additional work that had to be carried out on the footpaths and vehicle crossovers required by Box Hill Council, Alkira's contribution to the project grew to \$280,000. This was before new furniture and equipment required for the centre had been purchased.



At this time several regular residents of the hostel moved out which meant that full use of the facilities was not being made, but this was considered to be a short term happening.

A happy place in the sun

By HELEN GRIMAUX

The centre was built in recognition of the special needs of society's vulnerable people, and it is always a moving sight when such people are gathered together.

At the same time, it is also painfully obvious that people with special needs can get lost in the hurly-burly of normal life.

Alkira is a compromise — a gathering place where people with certain capabilities reach for their potentials. Its motto, Dignity and Purpose.



ABOVE: John Conway, left, and Stephen Miller assemble a garden bench in the carpentry workshop.

RIGHT: Lydia Donnemoser adds the finishing touches to the glaze on a pottery mug in the Alkira pottery class.



Wednesday, November 23, 1988 - Progress Press

The General Manager proposed that an Alkira motto, "Dignity and Purpose" be adopted and this was endorsed by the Board of Management. So as well as being "A Happy Place in the Sun" the organisation had an ideal for which to strive.

In 1987 the benefits of the new Thurston Street premises became apparent; the space and facilities being fully used by staff and trainees. New equipment, a forklift and woodwork machinery (courtesy of the Rotary Club of Balwyn) introduced new dimensions in vocational training. Greater emphasis was placed on independence training so that the clients could achieve the maximum potential allowed by their individual abilities.

Work was also proceeding at the Hostel. Perkins House was recarpeted following the installation of an external freezer and cool rooms. The latter was funded by the Bindon Family Estate. Two of the long term residents of the Hostel moved to alternative living situations and their progress was carefully monitored by Alkira staff.

At this time the Mothers Auxiliary and Men's Auxiliary which had provided large sums of money over many years were disbanded. The two Auxiliaries amalgamated and the "Alkira Box Hill, Parents and Friends Auxiliary," came into being. Its continued support has been of great assistance to Alkira which by now had ownership of its own Hostel and Training Centre. During the year four more clients moved on to employment in the community and another transferred to a sheltered workshop. This allowed several new clients and their families to join the Alkira community. They were duly welcomed.

November, 1988 saw the first occasion (and hopefully the last) when the Training Centre had to close due to industrial action. It was unfortunate that clients were deprived of the services of the staff members but negotiations between the State Government and the relevant union produced a quick and satisfactory resolution. The State Government introduced a new system of funding early in 1989, similar to that of the Commonwealth Government. Alkira was then funded by an annual grant and expenses had to be kept within this limit or be supplemented by Alkira resources. Savings had to be made through efficient management and a second computer was purchased to enable the administration staff to cope with the increased accounting and reporting workload.

An old Ten Year Plan for Services was replaced by the Neilsen Report which became the basis for a Three Year State Plan for Funding and Service Agreements. Previous State Government Acts under which Alkira had operated were superseded by the Association Incorporation Act 1988 and Alkira was given three years in which to adjust to this act. This would

mean a new Constitution had to be prepared to comply with the Act. This was expected to be ready in early 1990.

During 1990 there were prolonged negotiations on the financial management of the Hostel and the Training Centre. Further reductions in Government funding, particularly in transport subsidies meant that the Board of Management had to consider further methods of containing expenditure. It became necessary to increase clients' fees or reduce the level of services. This also impacted on planning for the future, in particular the services which would be required by the elderly clients, some of whom would need nursing home care in the near future. Every effort was made to channel any excess funds into the Alkira building fund to cater for future needs.

The Training Centre was operating at full strength of 106 clients, many of whom took part in the Victorian Special Olympics in May. Several of our clients were selected in the Victorian team and attended a training camp at Wodonga at the end of June, 1990. The Australian Special Olympics were to be held in Melbourne at the end of the year.

Mrs Suzanne Clynch, Training Centre Supervisor resigned during the year but agreed to stay on in a part time role. Her services were invaluable and she did an excellent job when the General Manager was away for several months following an accident. She was ably supported through this time by Mrs Claudette Himbury and Mr Don Moores

Mr Geoff Nelson took over from Mrs Clynch with the new title of Training Centre Supervisor.

Mrs Pat Grenness and her staff continued to provide excellent service for the clients at the hostel even though conditions were not ideal. Repeated requests to Government departments to subsidise additional staff were unsuccessful. There were a number of improvements made during the year including a ramp for wheel chair access, a new dishwasher, refurbishment of the kitchen and a paved covered outdoor area with barbecue facilities. These were all completed with help from the Willandra Junior Auxiliary and the Parents and Friends Auxiliary.

Well into 1991 funding arrangements with the State Government had not been finalised and this caused some programmes to be curtailed at the Training Centre and a reduction in staff numbers. However Alkira's primary

aim of providing quality services was maintained despite the budget restraints. Management tried to maintain the level of investments and was dependant on support from the auxiliaries and the community.

Some concern had been felt because of State and Commonwealth Acts which appeared to require a "Separation of Services", that would prevent Alkira operating both a Training Centre and a Residential as was done at the time. The Board of Management relentlessly pursued approval to maintain the current method of operation of both facilities. This could have been achieved by amending the management structure into two committees; a Day Services Committee and a Residential Services Committee to work with the current Executive, Policy and Planning and Fund Raising Committees. This modified structure was introduced on 1st July, 1991.

The new constitution had been prepared and was presented to the 1991 Annual General Meeting. Registration of this constitution was required by 14th May, 1992. It was also decided to change the name of the Training Centre to the Adult Training Support Service, (ATSS).

The courtyard at the rear of the centre was partially enclosed by a pergola adjacent to the barbecue, thanks to the Parents and Friends Auxiliary. This became a very popular area particularly during the warmer months or inclement weather. The dining room was refurnished with new tables and chairs courtesy of the Willandra and Willandra Junior Auxiliaries.

The Alkira Band continued to entertain at various locations and its performance improved steadily thanks to new instruments provided by the Board of Management.

The Hostel (Residential) Manager, Mrs Pat Grenness retired on 4th July, 1991 after fourteen years of dedicated service. The Board wished her a long and happy retirement.

The opportunity was taken to restructure the staffing of the hostel to conform with the Disability Services Act. Alkira had been fortunate to gain the services of Mrs Joy Boodle as Hostel Manager and two Assistant Managers were introduced in charge of the shifts servicing the hostel clients. Mrs Boodle's appointment and the reorganisation ensured the homelike and caring atmosphere at the hostel.

A group of ladies who regularly attended and cooked cakes, biscuits and other tempting treats for the residents were worthy of special mention.

From July, 1992, funding arrangements for Alkira were again changed. The Commonwealth Government would directly fund employment services and the State Government would fund training, and, with funds provided by the Commonwealth, the residential services. It appeared likely there would be cuts to funding for the Adult Training Support Service, but the present level of funding would be maintained for the hostel and administration.

The proposed, "Separation of Services" did not eventuate and Alkira continued to operate as a registered dual service.

Alkira had also been involved in discussions with the State Government department (Community Services Victoria), on the provision of more appropriate services for the more elderly clients. Advice was received that some funds had been set aside for an investigation to begin in July, 1992.

Ms Diane Fitzmaurice was appointed to the position of Manager of the Adult Training Support Service in March, 1992 following the resignation of Mr Geoff Nelson. Ms Fitzmaurice brought considerable qualifications and experience to the position and had the full support of the Board of Management to introduce changes to the daily routines to improve the quality of services for the Alkira clients. The authorised ceiling of 105 clients would be maintained. One of the clients, after a successful trial gained a full time position with Waverley Helpmates.

The changes to staffing introduced by Mrs Boodle at the Hostel proved to be most successful and a much better level of liaison and cooperation was achieved between the Hostel and the ATSS. Regular visits by both staffs improved the service to clients.

A review of the Hostel was carried out by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and by Community Services Victoria to determine whether Alkira complied with the Disability Services Act 1986. The result was an extremely good and encouraging report and the Board of Management decided to work to further improve the level of accommodation for clients.

With help from the Willandra Junior Auxiliary, fixed partitions were fitted to Perkins House bedrooms, carpet was laid in Riversdale and chests of drawers provided in all bedrooms. Clients of course were delighted with the improvements.

1993 again saw a number of variations to Government Funding. Firstly a severe cut and then an even greater increase. Thanks to the efforts of the excellent Treasurer, Mr Peter Harrison, and the support of the auxiliaries, Alkira remained a viable financial organisation.

Some of the problems of the more senior clients were alleviated by the purchase of a new mini bus, thanks to the support of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Willandra and Willandra Junior Auxiliaries, the Sydney Myer Fund and the Rotary Club of Balwyn. This bus allowed Alkira to support programmes to access community options for the more elderly clients. An older persons social and community support service funded by the Government and supported by the Box Hill Council was established and seven of the older clients used it with great success. The program was kept under review by the ATSS Manager and the Hostel Manager with the President of the Parents and Friends Auxiliary.

Mr Sid Squires and Mr Trevor Weatherly retired from the Board of Management and were succeeded by Mr Neil Race, son of former President, Mr Alf Race, and Mr Mervyn Reese whose son had attended Alkira for 16 years.

Further retirements from the Board took place in 1994 when Mr John Fowler, Mr Ian Mathieson and Ms Janet Murphy left after much valuable service. Mr Warwick Robinson was appointed to fill a casual vacancy.

The Government advised of yet another funding cut in financial year 1994/95 and so further stress was placed on fund raising and administration. Further to this the programme for older persons mentioned above had not proved as successful as was hoped and so this was again under review by the General Manager, Mr Noel McVilly.

One exciting project in 1994 was the conversion of the Hostel swimming pool into a recreation/ social room. This proved to be a most valuable acquisition to all sections of the Alkira Community and all were most grateful to the co ordinator Mr Mervyn Reese and the Parents and Friends Auxiliary which donated \$10,000 to this project.

The Board of Management approved the purchase of an Alkira badge with the same design as the letterhead. These became available to all and are worn with pride.

5 set for Perth

FIVE trainees from Box Hill's Alkira Centre will represent Victoria in the Special Olympics National Games in Perth in November.

They are John Ritchie and Barry Jones in swimming, John Conway and Debbie Simpson in athletics and Paul D'Elton in tennis.

Swimming coach Diana Setchell said the aim was to win and have fun.

"Our motto is: 'let me win but if I cannot win let me be brave in my attempt'."

RIGHT: Coach Diana Setchell (centre) and Alkira's team of Special Olympians, (clockwise from rear left) Barry Jones, Debbie Simpson, Paul D'Elton, John Conway and John Ritchie. Picture: BRAD WILSON.



A floral tribute

WHEN an influenza epidemic hit residents of Alkira Hostel recently, manager Joy Boodle did not think twice about taking on night duties to help staff and residents.

And last week the residents showed their appreciation when they chipped in and bought her flowers.

The hostel, for intellectually disabled people, has 28 permanent residents and four respite care places.

Mrs Boodle said she had been involved in disabled services for 16 years and for the past two years with Alkira.

One of the Alkira residents, John, said all the residents were grateful for Mrs Boodle's help during the epidemic.

He said that as the resident representative at board meetings, he was pleased to present Mrs Boodle with the flowers.

Alkira was opened in 1955 and the Perkins Hostel took its first residents 25 years ago.



JOY Boodle with her flowers, and the residents of Alkira who bought them for her.

415MG004

The ATSS continued to function most efficiently, and the services of Ms Diane Fitzmaurice, Mrs Margaret Thatcher and Mr Frank Langayroux was worthy of special mention. The new funding system required that clients must attend the centre for 30 hours per week, of which 22 must be devoted to structured programmes. This placed a heavy work load on all staff members and required changes to transport schedules and working hours.

Training programmes were increased from 65 in the previous year to 82. Each client had their own Individual Programme Plan (IPP). The Government also required more detailed reporting, quarterly returns of trainee programme hours and attendance patterns. These reports were required to allow the Department of Health and Community Services to assess our funding levels but it did mean a significant increase in staff work.

In 1994 a number of computer software programmes were acquired and these proved to be most popular with clients. Sixteen Clients were involved with the design of pictures, games and word processing. An Open Day at the centre proved to be most popular with parents and families.

In the same year the opportunity was taken by three staff members to organise a five day camp at Lake Eildon for fifteen clients. All took part in bush walking, boating and some even tried water skiing.

One client, John Bateman, received a medal for five years service to "Meals on Wheels". Five clients were involved with this activity. Five attended Neighbourhood House for craft work and three others assisted with tasks at Box Hill Hospital. The Alkira Band continued its activities with improving performances in the outside community.

In the Regional Games for State selection 24 clients competed in swimming and 25 competed in track and field events. In the State Games we had 11 competitors in Swimming and 8 in Track and Field. After these games 5 clients were selected to represent Victoria in the National Special Olympics in Perth, Western Australia from 29 November to 5 December, 1994. John Ritchie and Barry Jones were selected for swimming, Debbie Simpson and John Conway for Track and Field and Paul D'Elton for Tennis. Staff member Diana Setchell was appointed Aquatics Coach. All travelled to Perth by courtesy of funds provided by the Willandra Junior and the Parents and Friends Auxiliaries.

The Board took the opportunity during 1994 to purchase a property at 10 Serpentine Street, Mont Albert. This property, immediately behind Perkins House would be used to cater for the needs of the senior clients. Mr Merv Reese and Mr Les Woods worked to bring the property up to a satisfactory standard for its proposed purpose.

Early in 1995 Mr Keith Collins was appointed to fill an casual vacancy on the Board of Management.

On 17th February, Mr Noel McVilly retired after 14 years of dedicated service to Alkira as General Manager.

Mr Ray Cranwell, a well credentialed administrator from the Goulburn Valley Centre for the Intellectually Handicapped in Shepparton was appointed to replace Mr McVilly. The new General manager settled in quickly and contributed to Alkira's continued successful performance.

During the year a Ministerial Task Force was set up by Mr Michael John, Minister for Community Services to consult with Alkira and similar agencies to obtain their views on the current status and the future directions of the State's Intellectual Disability Services. Alkira made written and verbal presentations to the task force which made 82 recommendations to the Minister and would become the basis of a new State Plan.

The Board also decided to become involved in another Departmental funded project - the Alkira Residential Options Project. This would provide the opportunity to assess the future accommodation needs of the Alkira Community. An implementation committee was set up to oversee this important project.

A Senior Persons Programme was set up to cater for the older and less active clients. This began to operate in the new Serpentine Street property.

The Senior Management team of Mr Ray Cranwell, Ms Diane Fitzmaurice and Mrs Joy Boodle continued to achieve the objectives of the organisation through staff and volunteers.

The pool room project at Riversdale was completed and officially named the Merv Reese room.

The Willandra Junior Auxiliary made sure at Christmas that orphans at the Residential were not forgotten, with each receiving a substantial present and goodies for their New Years Eve party. A television set and video recorder for the Merv Reese room was also provided.

For a change, advice was received from the State government that there would be no cuts in funding for the financial year.

Without doubt the highlight of 1995 was an eight day trip to Tasmania for twenty clients. Mr Noel McVilly was one of the chaperones and acted as tour guide, bus driver, lead singer and early morning tea maker for the lady chaperones, Mrs Joy Boodle and Mrs Peggy Saunders. This was a wonderful experience for all involved.

In 1996 the Board of Management welcomed back Mr Jack Boldiston to fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Mrs Cynthia Jacobs. Mr Boldiston was a Board member from 1957 to 1978 and was appointed a Life Governor in 1975. Mrs Jacobs contributed to the Alkira organisation in many ways for a period of 25 years. Her contribution was gratefully acknowledged

Alkira was entering an exciting new phase of residential growth and improvement with the receipt of Government recurrent funding of over half a million dollars to enable the Residential Development Project to proceed. These funds would allow the appropriate staffing of houses and units. Non recurring funding would be used to establish Alkira's two proposed properties, furnish them and provide vehicles to transport the residents.

The Senior Persons Programme had now been in operation for more than a year and had proved highly successful. Fourteen clients enjoyed the more relaxed activities. This number was expected to increase markedly in the future.

During the year each client's Individual Programme Plan (IPP) was reviewed. This huge task showed an outstanding result with 90% of programme requests and objectives being met.

Visitors to the Centre were impressed with the variety of client's artwork on display and Alkira had joined in an art project at NADRASCA with a view to having clients' works exhibited and on sale at the Community Art Centre.

New Box Hill homes bought for disabled

ALKIRA Adult Training and Support Service in Box Hill has bought two properties in Box Hill to provide supported accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities.

The service received a \$563,000 grant from the Department of Human Services in March last year to buy the properties, to house nine residents from its 34-bed hostel in Mont Albert. Building at the Box Hill South property started last week with completion due in May.

Another house in Box Hill North is about to be refurbished and five residents are expected to move in in April.

Alkira general manager Ray Cranwell said the houses were the first part of a three-stage redevelopment program, which aims to move people

into smaller supported accommodation houses.

"We felt it was in the interests of the residents, particularly the older ones, that they had somewhere smaller with a quieter atmosphere," Mr Cranwell said.

"This will provide more privacy and a higher staff ratio.

"It also provides them with the opportunity to learn household domestic skills and become involved in a lot more things than they have the chance to now."

Youth and Community Services Minister Denis Napthine recently visited the centre to view the facilities and programs it offers to more than 100 people. These focus on developing skills in the areas of literacy and numeracy, self-help and job training.

2 WHITEHORSE GAZETTE February 12, 1997

Unit cost funding was introduced for Alkira's Residential Service in 1997. This is a much fairer system and should reduce the operating deficit.

A major achievement was the completion of the first Alkira house in Gracefield Drive, Box Hill North and five residents moved from the Hostel to their new home. Another home in Merton Street, Box Hill, to house four more residents was to be completed shortly after. In January, 1997 The Minister for Youth and Community Services, Dr Dennis Napthine visited the Churchill Street Hostel and expressed keen interest in our Residential Development Project and the future plans to expand our services.

Dr Napthine had also launched an exciting programme, "Future for Young Adults", to help students eighteen years and over with disabilities to move from school to Adult Education and Training Services. As a result of this programme the Department of Community Services had approved Alkira to offer nine students full time placement in our Adult Training and Support Service. This brought the number of full time positions to 106. The new clients settled in well and enjoyed the programmes provided.

During the year the Board of Management approved the provision of 24 hour, 7 days per week personal accident insurance for all clients attending the centre, at a cost of \$1635. The Board also decided that all Alkira vehicles be fitted with seat belts and that they be used by all persons unless they had a medical certificate stating that they were unable to use them.

Following the resignation of Mrs Joy Boodle, Alkira welcomed the arrival of Mrs Donna Campbell as Residential Services Manager in April, 1997. Mrs Boodle served Alkira often beyond the call of duty and left with the good wishes from all for better health and a long and happy retirement. Mrs Campbell brought to Alkira a wealth of experience in the disability field which proved to be an asset for the future.

On 5th May, 1998 Dr Dennis Naphthine officially opened Alkira's first two houses at Gracefield Drive and Merton Street. The Board of Management was looking forward to the construction of two further residences at Vermont Street, Blackburn South and Shady Grove, Nunawading. Both of these will be unit developments which will house two groups of three permanent residents and staff sleepover facilities as well as respite facilities for two at Vermont Street. This will provide twelve permanent and two respite beds.

An annexe to accommodate the Futures for Young Adults Programme was also established in Carrington Road.

The Board also introduced plans for further development of the residential facilities at "Riversdale" and "Perkins" houses as part of Stage 3 of the Residential Development Project.

The Alkira Community was saddened during the year by the passing of Mr Wally D'Elton, President of the Parents and Friends Auxiliary. Our sympathies went to the family.

On a more cheerful note the Board of Management initiated a Perpetual trophy at the Box Hill Golf Club in recognition of the ongoing support of the Club.

The future for the Alkira community looks to be sound with new Residential Services being established and the Training and Support and Recreation Services functioning well.



PART 3.

The Auxiliaries

A history of an organisation such as Alkira would not be complete without some tribute to the wonderful support provided financially and in many other ways over the years. Three of these auxiliaries remain in operation.

The Willandra Auxiliary started in 1953, The Willandra Junior Auxiliary was established in 1967 and The Alkira Parents and Friends auxiliary commenced in 1988. The Parents and Friends was formed by the amalgamation of the Alkira Men's Auxiliary and the Alkira Mothers' Auxiliary in 1988.

THE ALKIRA MEN'S AUXILIARY

The Men's Auxiliary was formed in 1968. Some of the names from the inaugural meeting would be familiar to those reading this history. Mr Arthur Collinson was the first Minute Secretary and Treasurer. Arthur retired from the Board of Management in 1999. This Auxiliary raised money by running barbeques, dinner dances, collection tins, bottle drives and many other activities. Maintenance work was also undertaken together with assistance with the Annual Fete. Mr Jack Boldiston, Vice Chairman of the Board of Management presided and at the time of writing is again serving on the Board. These activities continued for twenty years during which more than \$55,000 was raised but sadly because of dwindling numbers it was decided to disband and combine with the Alkira Mother's Auxiliary in June, 1988.

THE ALKIRA MOTHER'S AUXILIARY

With the opening of the Training Centre in June 1955, the Mothers' Auxilliary came into being. Mrs Florence Thompson was the inaugural President, Mrs Neil Boldiston, the Secretary and Mrs Beryl Perkins the Treasurer.

The Auxiliary became active in raising funds to provide amenities for Alkira clients and £100 was raised in the first year. Lectures were given in Box Hill Schools on the work being done at Alkira. Pamphlets and collection envelopes were distributed together with donation tins and these proved to be highly effective.

Cabarets were held annually at Balwyn or Wattle Park, Park Orchards Chalet and Mitcham. An annual fete was also held on the car park (or inside if it rained) at Alkira. These were also great fundraisers, especially the Spinning Wheel run by Les and Viv Gilbert. Les also played Santa Claus at the clients' Christmas Parties and as a reward for his contribution to Alkira, Les was awarded Life Governorship in 1973. Work continued until the amalgamation with the Men's Auxiliary in 1988.

Alkira Auxiliary raised \$7000

"Alkira" Mother's Auxiliary raised \$7000 during the past year.

This was contained in the annual report presented at the 15th anniversary meeting held recently.

The Auxiliary expressed its appreciation to local business firms and organisations for their generous support during the year and also to those people who gave their time and talents to the organising of functions.

Plans are under way for a local "1970 Gowd of the Year" to be held in the Box Hill Town Hall on Friday, September 18th, at 8 p.m.

Office bearers elected for the year are president, Mrs. M. Craig, senior vice president, Mrs. D. Elton, junior vice-president, Mrs. N. Johnstone, honorary secretary, Mrs. D. Squires, assistant honorary secretary, Mrs. M. Smith.

5th August, 1970

THE ALKIRA PARENTS AND FRIENDS AUXILIARY

On 4th July, 1988 the inauguration of the Alkira Box Hill Parents and Friends Auxiliary took place with Mr. Ken Pantlin chairing the meeting. This came about with the amalgamation of the Men's and Mother's Auxiliaries. All monies from both Auxiliaries were transferred to the Board of Management who then advanced \$1000 working capital to the new Auxiliary. The executive committee was elected with Mr Wally D'Elton as President, Mrs Jean Nichol and Mr Bill Nicholls as Vice Presidents, Mrs Pat Slattery as Treasurer and Mrs Colleen Reese as Secretary. Mrs Helen D'Elton and Mrs Doris Bailey remained as convenors of the Opportunity Shop, a position they held until 1998. It was decided that the new Auxiliary would meet on the first Monday of each month, and annual subscriptions to be \$3 single and \$5 family.

Fund Raising activities for the first year were a fete held in October which raised \$6236.47, a stall at the Bi-centennial Fair held at Surrey Park and organised by the Apex Club of Box Hill, an end of year BBQ and several raffles. The opportunity shop brought in \$9824.13 that year.

In following years, Fashion Parades / Luncheons were held at the home of Mr and Mrs Slattery and several theatre luncheons were held, together with various demonstrations. Dr Johansen took responsibility for collection tins which were placed in shops, business premises and homes.

In May 1990, it was decided that the Auxiliary could no longer be responsible for the organisation of the Annual Fete due to the increasing age and declining health of members, and in October that year a Mini Fete was organised by the Alkira Centre with the assistance of Auxiliary members who were able to contribute. This arrangement continued until 1993 when the last Alkira Fete was held. After this time, fund raising activities were reduced as numbers decreased and with the lack of success in persuading more parents to become involved.

In June 1998 the President, Mr Wally D'Elton passed away, having held that position for ten years and at the annual meeting in July that year Mr Arthur De Groot was elected President with Mrs Julia Simpson as Vice President. The following year Mrs Pat Slattery resigned from the position of Treasurer which she had held for eleven years and Mrs Corrie De Groot was elected to take her place. A committee of seven members was elected to run the Opportunity Shop.

Fund raising activities are now restricted to the Opportunity Shop, two stalls held in the Box Hill Mall, two major raffles and a Fashion Parade each year.

WILLANDRA AUXILIARY

This auxiliary was formed in 1953 from a group of ladies who attended Strathcona Girls Grammar School and had worked together for charities during World War 2. Among the group was Mrs Dorothy Gray who lived in Willandra Avenue, Canterbury. She formed the auxiliary and dedicated their work to support Alkira. Mrs Gray also served on the Alkira Board of Management from 1955 to 1957 and 1962 to 1980.



The Auxiliary consisted of 8-14 working members together with others who subscribed and were known as "Silent Members".

The Auxiliary raised money by having an opportunity table at their meetings, running card evenings, street stalls, factory visits, picture days and nights. Service of members has been recognised by eight members being made Life Governors of Alkira. Mrs Gray was one Life Governor and was further recognised by the Board of Management when the main dining room was named the Dorothy Gray Room. Mrs Gray retired in 1993 after 40 year service, nearly all of it as President. Only Mrs Gray and one other of the original group remain.

The Auxiliary continues to operate under the leadership of Mrs Margaret Robinson who took over as Secretary in 1991 and president in 1993. The Auxiliary has raised close to \$100,000 for Alkira including the following items :

Table Tennis Tables,
Day beds,
Computers,
Stereo equipment,
Air conditioning of bus (part),
Table, chairs and blinds in the canteen (with Willandra Junior Auxiliary)
Holiday Trailer.

WILLANDRA JUNIOR AUXILIARY

This auxiliary was formed on 11th October, 1968 when Mrs Boyce, a member of the Willandra Auxiliary suggested to her daughters, Mrs Helen Lane and Mrs Lorraine McKenzie that they should get together and form a committee of friends with like interests and become a younger element of the Willandra Auxiliary. Hence the Junior Auxiliary began operation under the presidency of Mrs Lane.

The Auxiliary has been successful by running a wide variety of functions and has raised in excess of \$100,000 in its thirty years of operation. Six members of the Auxiliary have had their efforts recognised by the Board of Management by the award of Life Governorships. One of these ladies, Mrs Joan Richard also served on the Board of Management from 1978 to 1988.

THE ALKIRA YOUNGER SET

In 1970 a group of brothers and sisters of Alkira clients and friends of those brothers and sisters, because of their mutual interest got together and formed the Alkira Younger Set.

The first committee consisted of Patricia Hirons, (President), Glenda Squires (Secretary), and Marcus Bromley, (Treasurer), Wendy Squires, Tom Steele, Wayne Hulbert, Bernadette Dixon, Paul Slattery, Margaret Hirons, Peter Nyga, Margaret Veitch, Diane Nicholls, Damien O'Riley, Helen Burns and Heather Anderson. (Apologies to anyone whose name has been omitted).

In the initial years all meetings were held at the Hirons' house in Whitehorse Road, Mont Albert, where some very enjoyable times were had when discussing fundraising matters. Many thanks are due to Mr. and Mrs. Keith Hirons for their valuable support at that time.

Over the fourteen years of its existence, the Alkira Younger Set raised thousands of dollars, which in turn was given to Alkira by way of sponsorship of clients, purchase of equipment or direct cash donation. This money was raised through the conducting of theatre nights, progressive dinners, wine tastings and bottlings, chicken and champagne nights, dinner dances, bingo nights, delivering pamphlets and holding a stall at the annual Alkira fete.

After Patricia Hiron, Tom Steele became President until 1975/76 when Kerry Harrison took over the reins. From that time until its unfortunate folding in 1984 Kerry single handedly ran the Alkira Younger Set, during which period Kerry was well supported by the Harrison, McCrimmon, Kerrigan, Montgomery, Chesterfield, Kirstjens and Gordon families.

The efforts of all these people, in particular Kerry Harrison, should not be forgotten.

BURWOOD PARENTS' COMMITTEE

Another group which has supported Alkira was the Burwood Parents' Committee. This group had formerly supported other organisations but in 1967 turned its attention to Alkira. Crazy Whist nights were held on a Saturday night each month in different peoples' homes. One of the players, Mrs. Vera Hawkins, opened her home on Saturday afternoons for many years for fund raising activities.

The then Burwood Congregational Church made their hall available for morning coffee functions, fashion parades and the annual November "Discards and Treasures". Many people supported this group until it was disbanded in 1988. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.

Contributions From Auxiliaries And Support Organisations

(Rounded to nearest 100)

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>DONATIONS</u> \$
• Alkira Mothers Auxiliary	1955-89	235300
Willandra Auxiliary	1955-98	92100
• Alkira Ladies Auxiliary	1956-73	8600
A.J. Vealls Social Club	1956-70	16100
Box Hill and District Kennel Club	1962-98	29180
• Alkira Mens Auxiliary	1968-88	55000
Burwood Parents Committee	1967-95	42600
Box Hill Golf Club	1967-98	53300
Willandra Junior Auxiliary	1967-98	100180
Riversdale Golf Club	1969-77	29300
Box Hill City Art Group	1970-89	9300
• Alkira Parents and Friends Auxiliary	1989-98	89400
		<u>\$760360</u>

The combined efforts of our 'in house' auxiliaries from 1955 to 1998 (43 years) has resulted in excess of \$388,000 being handed to Alkira.

The above figures do not include funds received from the Annual Christmas Seal Appeal which commenced in 1963 and was organised and coordinated by Mr and Mrs Jack Boldiston. They organised the appeal with the assistance of volunteers until 1977 when Mr. and Mrs. Squires, who had been on the seals sub committee, took over. Dorothy and Sid continued in his role until 1987.

It must have been an extremely difficult task in the old days when envelopes had to be handwritten or typed by volunteers from names in the telephone directory. As Mr. Boldiston explained they used to get parents and committee members to come in for 'lick and stick' nights to get everything ready for posting. It is understood that mail outs of 30,000 were not uncommon. In fact in 1970 35,223 letters were posted which resulted in the sum of \$7,000 profit being made.

In 1988 the Squires retired from doing the Seals and the task was taken on by the administrative staff. The names of 1987 donors were entered in the recently acquired computer and at the appropriate time address labels could be printed and attached to envelopes. This, of course, made the seals a much easier task each year. There were some hiccups early, however thanks to Mrs. Claudette Hirnbury the system has been refined and improved with the advent of the upgrade of the computer system to the stage where it is now a smooth operation.

Overall since the seals appeal was conceived by Mr. Boldiston carried on by the Squires and finally by the Alkira administration, a net amount of around \$250,000 has been raised. This represents an average in excess of \$7000 a year for the past 35 years, a terrific effort by all those who have been involved.

All the funds above are in addition to regular donors, bequests and trusts, service clubs, lodges and donations 'In memoriam'. Alkira has been very fortunate, financially in this regard and over the years several million dollars has been received.

“Down Memory Lane”

CUTTINGS, NEWS AND HUMOUR 1957-1980

I Wonder.

I wonder how many of us were present at the opening of “Alkira” Training Centre. It was July, 1955, and excitement, pride and maybe even triumph were probably in the hearts of those people responsible for this new centre (about 18 parents and approximately the same number of generous minded auxiliary ladies).

I wonder also whether a little fear nagged at their hearts, as they wandered through this new building, beautiful to behold, but completely devoid of any furnishing. These people knew the necessity of tables, chairs, etc., but where, oh where, would the money come from.

Alkira News – April, 1972

I wonder if this fear was dispelled when the Centre was christened “Alkira”, for this was an aboriginal name meaning “A Place in the Sun”. We were indebted to the late Mr. Crosbie Morrison, who suggested the name.

If any anxiety still remained, it must have been completely dispelled later in the day, when Mrs. Nora Steele (who was President of Vealls Electrics Social Club) approached the Committee, congratulated them on this achievement, and then said, “Vealls Social Club will be most pleased to donate £1,000 towards equipping the Centre.” Furthermore, Mrs. Steele stated that she would bring to the attention of V.S.C. members, the existence and problems of Alkira and see what other help they could give.

I wonder?!! No, not now, *I KNOW* that when this announcement was made to the gathering, that the hearts of all leapt for joy, and everyone present breathed a prayer of thanks for the generosity of this Social Club.

We all know from that time on our link with Vealls Social Club grew stronger and stronger. On many, many occasions, when our resources were down to zero, a most generous cheque would arrive from this wonderful club, and we would breathe a sigh of relief. Financially, Vealls Social Club donations add up to £21,000, a really stupendous effort, which should

make their members justifiably proud, and which makes our Association so humbly thankful.

Fortunately Vealls Social Club did not allow their interest in us to begin and end with their cheques, they kept in constant touch with us, and often donated equipment, etc., when it was badly needed, also they paid for the damage caused by vandals on one occasion.

Many of the members of Vealls Social Club have been to our Annual Meetings, and seen through the Centre, so we consider this club an integral part of our make up, and it is difficult to express our appreciation in mere words. To their members, Alkira Centre and Workshop is open at all times.

Because the support we have had from Vealls Social Club has been so outstanding, and because we know the amount of work entailed in raising such a vast sum of money, the Association has bestowed "Life Governor Certificates" to two of their members, namely, Mrs. Nora Steele, and Mr. Ray Goldsmith.

Members of Vealls Social Club, we want you to know that through your arduous work and zeal, to our children, to us and everyone connected with our work, **YOU** have made "ALKIRA" glow "Sunny and Bright".

Our sincere thanks.

Observations Of A Bus Driver On A Bus For Handicapped People

ALKIRA NEWS – DECEMBER, 1979

I shall start with my first pick-up, Michael. Rather plump, dieting madly (tongue in cheek), avid Hawthorn supporter, loves girls, so he says. When his team wins, he gets on the bus, resplendent in his Hawthorn jumper, "Good morning Mrs. Buslady, same Mr. Doolan, how are you?" We ask the same, "Fit as a bull" is his reply. When his team loses, no Hawthorn jumper, glum face, has a sore back, football is never mentioned. Then on to Pat, very quiet, love to know what goes on behind those shy eyes, never has had much to say, but enjoys all the fun which goes on in the bus, has started to come out of her shell a bit lately. Now that her street is made, we pick her up at the door, I think she is very pleased about that, I know her mother is.

Next we pick up Wally and Jan. Jan is always beautifully dressed, very polite, rather sensitive, laughs at everything, make me feel like Danny Kaye or someone when she laughs at my rather corny jokes. Her parents are lovely people, she is rather slack about going to work – who wouldn't be for \$4 a week! Now comes Wally, a different kettle of fish, wouldn't stay home if he was dying, has still got his first pay packet, rather sensitive, barracks for the Tigers, the same as me. I always get a handshake and a kiss when they win, feels like I have been kissed by a sloppy old retriever dog. It is rather hard to keep the peace between him and Michael during the footy season, especially when Hawthorn lose. One learns to become very diplomatic on these occasions.

Then on to Frank, a spastic man, really nice fellow, must be very frustrating for him being physically handicapped, he enjoys a joke, always picks me up when I do a bit of leg pulling, can't fool him much, loves dancing and music and a pot of beer, tells me he goes to the Manhattan Disco now and then.

Junith and Des are our next pick-ups. Junith waits with Des at his place. Junith is slightly deaf, a real chatterbox, rather bossy, very industrious, knits and crochets beautifully. She does a lot for her numerous nephews and nieces, seems to be always going to weddings and christenings. We get to see all the photos, devout Salvationists, nice shy sensitive girl. Then

dear old Des, such a wonderful sense of humour, it's a wonder with him being so handicapped. His dear old Mum used to walk over to Mitcham Post Office every morning, rain hail or shine. I really feel for the mums, mainly, and dad who do this every day, year in and year out, but now thank goodness, we pick Des up and drop him off at the door. He is known fondly on the bus as "cheeky chops", makes out he doesn't like being called that, rather a good mimic, dogs, cats, chooks. Funny little bloke, never complains, very well liked by all.

Lyn is next. Lovely looking girl, mother dresses her beautifully and picks her up by car every day. Lyn's mother and father are French, so we rib her about, if her mother doesn't pick her up, who is taking her home, and that she won't be getting any snails or frogs legs for tea. She gets very indignant, I don't know what her mother thinks of us. Mrs. E. brings the dog with her and it just about wags it's tail off when it sees Lyn.

Next to get on is Andrew, a Chinese boy, lovely parents, nice family, a sister and two brothers that I know of, strong silent type Andrew, with emphasis on the strong! Rather have him for a friend than an enemy. His speech is rather limited, but one can certainly get what he means by his actions, very helpful boy. I think you could teach Andrew just about anything practical, in fact, if you are doing anything, he is sometimes a jump ahead of you in his thinking, but he can be as stubborn as a mule, likes his own way at times. Leon is a new one, haven't had much to do with him yet, only on one day a week, seems rather good with his hands. A couple of things he has made are beautiful. Bruce gets on outside his house. We drop him off at the corner of his street and Surrey Road. Rather a quiet boy on the bus, never been any trouble, only time he says anything is when he is getting off the bus every afternoon, like, "I am hungry", or, "I like sausages and eggs for tea" and other things which I can't quite catch.

Franca is Australian/Italian, very nice parents, has two sisters – twins. Mother brings her every morning and afternoon. Franca makes out she is annoyed when I say hello and goodbye in Italian. Next are Gwenda and Shane. Gwenda is a quiet affectionate little girl, doesn't say much, she has very nice parents too. Shane's mother and father are lovely people. I am happy to say Shane has quietened down a lot in the past 12 months, always says "Good morning" and "Goodbye", apart from that, nothing.

Wayne gets on at Middleborough and Springfield Roads, very quiet boy, likes girls, seems to enjoy himself. Max and Peter, both nice boys, Max

takes a keen interest in sports cars, hot rods and motor bikes as we drive along, also ratbag drivers. Peter likes girls and sport, quite a good athlete Peter, he is like Frank, enjoys the leg pulling and jokes.

Pauline is next, a really nice family. Pauline is a nice little girl, has never been one ounce of trouble on the bus, has started to call me cheeky-chops, used to propose to me nearly every week, but I guess she has got over that. She has noticed me getting balder and greyer as time goes on. Frances is fairly new, has taken a little time to settle down, her favourite trick of a morning was to get on the toilet just as we came around the corner. We had to go in and drag her out a few times, however, I gave her a good talking to, and it seems to have worked wonders, she is much more prompt of a morning.

Gwenda and Ken are next, Gwenda and Ken are nearly always on time. Gwenda is rather a shrewd type, she enters just about every competition that is going on in the area, and wins quite a fair share of prizes. Ken is rather quiet, is a keen Fitzroy supporter. His mother keeps him beautifully dressed, a very keen fisherman. His father tells me he always catches the biggest fish (have yet to see any!) I think they have a weekender down Geelong way somewhere. He is rather a cynical type. Marie Jones and I have started the bus singing the "Chums Song" as soon as everyone gets on, but he won't be in it, when I ask him about joining in, he scoffs at the idea. By the way, Wally conducts, he knows all the words and does an excellent job of conducting. We have tried to get the hostel to sing it without much success I'm afraid.

Another thing that happened one morning, one of the mums gave us a bag of ladies hats, so at every stop I put on a fresh one, all different styles, you can well imagine the uproar in the bus. I think that was the most fun we have ever had, even Mrs. Jones still laughs about it.

* * * * *

Letter From A Parent

Dear Mr. Clayton,

Yesterday Jackie attended the new Cerebral Palsy Clinic at the Queen Victorian Hospital where several doctors and physiotherapists from other hospitals were also in attendance.

I had told them Jackie attended Alkira, and discovered that no-one knew where it was, or what went on there, so I said Dr. X could possibly explain better than I, as he visited the children there.

To my delight, when asked what Alkira was like, he said, "Well, it's been there a long time, so it's old, it's been added on to from time to time, so it's like a rabbit warren, doors everywhere, but in my opinion, it's a child's Utopia! He went on to say, "The children are loved and cared for in such a way, that they lack for nothing in that area, and if I was able to have one wish granted it would be that all Institutions, Schools, Organisations and Centres that care for these children would copy Alkira's example."

He went on to explain that with Alkira, "the child came first", pointing out that although Nadrasca covers the area we live in, they would not accept Jacky because she required "Intensive Care", but that Alkira, when approached by the hospital had agreed at once. He also referred to another little girl as one more example of Alkira's policy, "the child comes first."

It was so spontaneous. He never paused for the right words and it was obvious he really felt that way about Alkira and I could see that the visitors were impressed.

The physiotherapists were amazed that Marion had gone into the hospital to learn the exercises Jackie does, so that she could do physiotherapy at Alkira as well, and Jackie's own physiotherapist feels that any progress Jackie makes is due to Marion's dedicated efforts.

I felt ten feet tall as I listened to what Dr. X said, and so happy that he so obviously approves of Alkira and its wonderful staff, and felt I simply must pass it on to all of you.

"A Parent"
1978

Alkira News

August, 1972

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**Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic
Children's Association**

Vol. 2 No. 21

August, 1972

How Old Is Alkira?

This year we are holding our 18th Annual Meeting, but many of the people who combined to start the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association, were already working together as the Camberwell – Box Hill Branch of The Helping Hand Association as early as 1951.

On 13th August, 1951 at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Chapman a total of 17 people met to commence this important work. Amongst those present were Mr. and Mrs. Race, Mr. and Mrs. Cuthbert, Mrs. Evans and Mrs. Bloomer. Other names to join this group were Herbert, Lee, Moore, Thomson, Balcombe, Rodgers and Boldiston.

I agree that the Centre known as "Alkira" is now 18 years old, but it would not surprise me if a small band of early hardworking parents are quietly counting this as their 21st year of service to mentally handicapped children – and who would dare deny them a "Happy Birthday" for a job well done?



PART 4.

The Board of Management

The Board the of Management at the time of compiling this history is:

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT as at 30th June, 1999

President	Mr. M. Reese J.P.	
Sr. Vice-President	Mr. W. Robinson	
Vice-President	Mr. C. Jacobs	
Treasurer	Mr. P. Harrison, B.Bus(Accy), F.C.A., A.A.S.A	
Secretary	Mr. R. Cranwell	
Members	Mr. J. Boldiston	Mr. N. Race
	Mr. K. Collins	Mr. D. Ridley
	Mr. C. Jacobs	Mr. E. Robinson
	Mr. K. Pantlin	Mr. R. Walker

The Board operates several committees and all members have some committee involvement.

The Committees are:

Executive Committee

President
Senior Vice President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary (Staff – non voting)

Role: To take urgent decisions which cannot wait until the next regular Board meeting.

Policy and Planning Committee

Role: For new projects, future planning and new policy requirements.

Day Services Committee

Role: Detailed management reporting for the function of the ATSS, Transport, Senior Persons' Service and Future for Young Adults. There is a client representative on this committee.

Residential Service Committee

Role: Detailed management reporting on the operations of the Residential Service. There is a client (resident) representative on this committee.

Residential Redevelopment Project Committee

Role: Specifically established to oversee the setting up of the new residential housing and to make recommendations to the Board through the Policy and Planning Committee concerning the redevelopment of Alkira Residential Services.

Clients' Committee

This committee consists of 13 elected representatives from the ATSS. A new chairperson is selected for each meeting. The Committee's role is to ensure that any matter causing concern to clients is taken as far as the Board of Management if required. The committee elects a representative to the Day Services Committee and another to the Recreation Committee.

Recreation Committee

This committee was instituted in 1999 and consists of a Board of Management member as chairperson, the General Manager, the Recreation

Officer, a clients' representative and a representative from the parents and carers. The role of the committee is to consider the effectiveness of the recreation programme, receive the report of the Recreation Officer at a bi-monthly meeting and prepare a report for the Board of Management.

It would be almost impossible for the Board to function effectively without the Committee system because of the huge amount of detail which needs to be considered and acted upon. It also means that all Board members have some involvement in issues of detail.

The Chairman of each committee reports directly to the Board and makes recommendations to the Board for decision. The corporate structure is most effective because Alkira is a business venture and needs to be run that way. In this regard Alkira has been fortunate in having roughly a 50:50 mix of clients' parents and non-parents on the Board throughout the years with the common aim of maintaining a viable organisation providing quality services to the intellectually handicapped clients. The mix of parents and non-parents has led to logical rather than emotional decision making.

Note:

In Noel McVilly's farewell message in the 1994 Annual Report he paid tribute to the Board of Management. He stated that he was very fortunate to have had such a knowledgeable and supportive Board who were prepared to stand up and be counted. In the 14 years he was employed at Alkira he worked closely with three (3) Presidents:

Mr. Russ Craig	1981-85,
Mr. Ken Pantlin	1985-92,
Mr. Des. Ridley	1992-95

as well as the Treasurer throughout the entire time Mr. Peter Harrison, and enjoyed a tremendous rapport with all of them.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES 1999

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:	M. Reese C. Jacobs P. Harrison W. Robinson
POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE:	W. Robinson C. Jacobs M. Reese K. Pantlin R. Cranwell *
DAY SERVICES COMMITTEE:	C. Jacobs T. Robinson R. Walker D. Fitzmaurice * R. Cranwell * P. Van Leeuwen •
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE:	J. Boldiston K. Collins D. Ridley J. Jones ▲ D. Campbell * R. Cranwell * E. Curtain •
RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT:	R. Cranwell * J. Boldiston M. Reese K. Collins D. Campbell *
RECREATION SERVICE COMMITTEE :	D. Ridley H. Hillam * R. Cranwell * J. Simpson ▲ A. Moore •

* = Staff

• = Clients

▲ = Carer Representative

LIST OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT

PRESIDENTS:

Mr. L. R. McCredden	1955-1956
Mr. A. Race	1956-1976
Mr. J. Ingoldby	1976-1979
Mr. R. Craig	1979-1985
Mr. K. Pantlin	1985-1992
Mr. D. Ridley	1992-1997
Mr. M. Reese	1997 –

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION STAFF:

	Mr. G. Cree	1955-1961
	Mr. A. Reid	1961-1971
	Mrs. B. Perkins	1971-1978
Administrator :	Mr. J. Blair	1978-1981
	Mr. N. McVilly	1981-1984

GENERAL MANAGERS:

	Mr. N. McVilly	1984-1995
	Mr. R. Cranwell	1995 –

SUPERVISORS:

TRAINING CENTRE

Mrs. Kirkwood	1955-1956
Miss. Souter	1957-1960
Mrs. Lee	1960-1971
Mrs. Lenne	1971-1973
Mr. I. Clayton	1973-1980
Miss. G. Carpenter	1980-1981

ACTIVITY THERAPY CENTRE

Mr. E. Martin	1962-1979
Mr. D. Durbridge	1979-1981
Miss. G. Carpenter	1981-1982
Mr. B. Allford	1982-1986
Mrs. S. Clynch	1986-1989
Mr. G. Nelson	1989-1990

ADULT TRAINING & SUPPORT SERVICE MANAGERS:

Mr. G. Nelson	1990-1992
Ms. D. Fitzmaurice	1992 –

HOSTEL SUPERVISORS:

Mrs. J. McBain	1968-1981
Mrs. J. Hill	1981-1985
Mrs. P. Grenness	1985-1990

HOSTEL MANAGERS:

Mrs. P. Grenness	1990-1991
Mrs. J. Boodle	1991-1995

RESIDENTIAL SERVICE MANAGERS:

Mrs. J. Boodle	1995-1996
Mrs. A. Harris	1996-1997 (Acting)
Mrs. D. Campbell	1997 –

Minutes of the Victorian Helping Hand Association

In Part 1 "The First Thirty Years", Mr. Race mentions the Camberwell Branch of the Helping Hand Association. During the time Noel McVilly was researching material he found amongst other things the minute book of the Camberwell Branch, which subsequently became the Camberwell – Box Hill Branch of the Helping Hand Association. This he found to be a very interesting document and highlights the problems that had to be overcome to get the organisation up and running.

Rather than go into great detail of the contents, bits and pieces have been selected and will include direct quotations from the minutes in chronological order. It is hoped that the reader finds them interesting. Some of the names, which are mentioned, are still associated with Alkira 48 years later.

The first meeting of the Camberwell Branch of the HHA was held on the 13th August, 1951 and the full record of that meeting is appended together with extracts from the minutes of subsequent meetings right through until the Camberwell – Box Hill Branch of the Victorian Helping Hand Association was disbanded in May, 1955.

Victorian Helping Hand Association

First Meeting of Camberwell Branch – 13th August, 1951, at the residence of Mr. H.C Chapman. Provisional Chairman – Mr. E Cuthbert.

Mr. Cuthbert explained the aims of the Association also the meeting of the Oakleigh Group with the H.H.A.

Election of Officers

President – Moved Mr. Bindon Seconded Mr. Lukins that Mr. E. Cuthbert be appointed. Secretary – Moved Mr. Lukins Seconded Mrs. Walters that Mr. H.C Chapman be appointed also to take over as provisional Treasurer.

Delegates to Combined Meeting

Second meeting with Oakleigh Group. Moved Mr. Bindon Seconded Mr. Lukins that President and Secretary attend as Camberwell Representatives.

Executive Officers

Moved Mr. Race Seconded Mr. Lukins that provisional executive committee of 4 be the appointed until new constitution drawn up for period not exceeding 6 months. Mr. Lukins and Mr. Race volunteered to accept executive office.

Public Meeting

Moved Mr. Lukins Seconded Mrs. Race that a public meeting be called of all interested persons in Camberwell and surrounding districts in conjunction with following persons.

Mr. L.G Norman	W. Fulton Minister of Health
Mr. Whately	
Mr. Cameron	Red Cross Representative
Mayor of Camberwell	Mr. Doube
Dr. Catarinich	

Friday evening suggested as a suitable night. Suggested that this Branch register as being recorded with the Camberwell Council's list of charitable organisations. Mr. Kirkham suggested that collection tins be placed with local trades-people to raise funds for this Branch.

Grant of Land

Possibility of grant of land from the Camberwell Council to be investigated.

Advertising

Local picture theatres to be contacted re slides to advertise the public meeting. Mr. Bindon's offer of slide time for one week at the Rialto and Regent Theatres Box Hill was accepted with great thanks (Reilly advertising to be contacted).

General Meeting

Moved Mr. Race Seconded Mr. Lukins that general meeting be held on last Friday each month – the next meeting to be 28th September at a place to be arranged.

Present

Mrs. Race, Cuthbert, Bindon, Houten, Walters, Holloway, Evans, Bloomer, Chapman Mr. Race, Cuthbert, Bindon, Houten, Lukins, Walsh, Kirkham, Chapman.

Funds

£10 grant was received from the parent body of the Association

Meeting closed at 9:50p.m.

Signature E.G Cuthbert

Camberwell Branch Meeting 28th September, 1951 At the residence of Mr. H.C Chapman

Pamphlets - Mr. Bindon suggested that printed circulars or pamphlets, such as previously used for parent body, be obtained but with particulars of Camberwell Branch executive committee printed in lieu of general executive. These leaflets to be distributed to Doctors, Ministers, Headmasters, Dentists, Health Officers, and such in Camberwell and surrounding districts advertising our aims and asking for contacts with parents of retarded children. Secretary to inquire re costs of printing.

Meeting Place – Mr. Lukins mentioned that Mr. Loy was inquiring re use of Church of Christ Hall, Gardiner. Inquiries to be made concerning Salvation Army Hall Burke Road, Camberwell. Moved Mrs. Evans Seconded Mr. Lukins that regular meeting night be fourth Friday in each month.

School – Secretary wrote to Mr. Jeffrey of Presbyterian Church Camberwell, seeking possibility of hall for our Camberwell Branch School. Mr. Jeffrey's reply was to the effect that the Board of Management of this Church considered that Board of Health regulations would not permit such a school, because of lack of proper amenities.

Publicity – Suggested that contact be made with Miss Trehwella of Montague School, Dr. Oliphant of Anzac House, Doctor Francis of Box Hill and Dr. Hartnett of Camberwell giving particulars of school to be passed on to possible parents with children likely to attend. Mr. Cuthbert to see Miss Sweetland of Box Hill Red Cross Auxiliary and Education Dept. also to be advised of our activities.

Mr. Bindon's previous offer of slide time at Box Hill theatre, to be used.

School – Moved Mrs. Kirkwood Seconded Mrs. Glynn that school be opened on 12th February, 1952 and be held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday each week from 9:30am – 2:30pm – carried.

Mrs. Chapman, Cuthbert and Kirkwood to be in attendance on opening day.

Equipment – Moved Mrs. Evans Seconded Mrs. Glynn that purchases be made of any equipment needed apart from anything obtained from South Yarra School or made by a member. Mr. Bindon donated £1 towards these costs.

Secretary to arrange for interview with Town Clerk Camberwell to place our case before him and if possible obtain use of a committee room for our general meeting.

Collection Tins – Mr. Lukins to obtain 24 suitable tins and Mr. Race to have labels printed, then these tins to be placed with trades people and elsewhere as a means of increasing the funds of the Camberwell Branch.

***V.H.H.A Camberwell Branch General Meeting 23^d November, 1951
Cloak Room – Camberwell Town Hall***

Public Meeting – The purpose of the meeting being arranged by Mr. Norman MLA and the Mayor of Camberwell for 6th December was explained. To be held in the Auxiliary Room and members of Parliament and Auxiliary Groups to be invited.

Suggested that we contact the Gould St. Girls group in Mont Albert and Younger Set organisations in the various districts to enlist aid for our Branch Funds.

School – After discussion re obtaining suitable school hall – Mrs. McCarthy and Mrs. Kirkwood agreed to approach the Minister of Church of Christ Aird Street, Camberwell. Also suggested that Girl Guides Hall Faversham Road, Canterbury. Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of England Churches at Burwood be investigated as possible locations for a school.

***V.H.H.A. Camberwell Branch Meeting 25th January, 1952
Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall***

Mayor's Remarks – Mr. Kinnear spoke briefly of his activities to develop Council interest in Social Service activities and suggested that we supply definite information re School, location, no. of Children, Teaching Staff,

expenses to run the school and any other useful information to him for use in discussion before the Camberwell Council.

School – Secretary reported on his activities in obtaining a suitable Hall and of success in obtaining cooperation of Methodist Minister and Trustees of Warrigal Road, Burwood. Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mrs. Glynn that these activities be approved – Carried.

***V.H.H.A. - Camberwell Branch Meeting 25th July, 1952
Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall***

Visit – Mrs. Chapman reported on visit of Dr. Dax to the Burwood Centre. Dr. Dax has since commented that Camberwell Branch had the best centre.

Subscription Rate – Discussion re ten shillings and sixpence yearly subscription – opinion expressed that this amount would probably deter people from joining.

Collection - Usual collection at this meeting resulted in thirteen shillings and sixpence being donated.

Accounts – Moved Mrs. Gilbert, Seconded Mrs. Evans following accounts be passed for payment – carried unanimously

July	11 – Printing	£ 1.10.0	
	10 – Ruled Cards	5.6	
	18 – Kerosene	2 . 5.0	
	24 – Salaries	24.19.0	
	24 – Affiliation Fee	2 . 2.0	
	24 – Stamps	13.6	
		<u>£ 31.15.0</u>	Total

Educational Committee- President advised that Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were elected to the new Educational Committee of the Association – matters relating to staffing and methods of training would be fully considered by this committee.

***V.H.H.A. Camberwell Branch Meeting 26th September,
1952 Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall***

Subscriptions – Members were reminded of conditions of membership. Full members 10/6 p.a. Associate Members 3/6 p.a. Associate members not permitted to vote on Policy, Election of Officers or Finance matters.

Xmas Party – Mothers attending Training Centre making private arrangements to hold a Xmas Party for the Parents of Scholars attending the Centre and their children who attend.

School Period – Mrs. Chapman advised that Centre operating Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week since 22nd September.

Staff – Moved Mrs. Chapman, Seconded Mrs. Walters that Mrs. Rosenberg be obtained as additional staff for one day weekly preferably on Mondays.

***Minutes of Camberwell Branch Meeting of Victorian Helping Hand
Association - Held at Camberwell Town Hall on 24th October, 1952***

General Business: The Secretary said that a position had arisen during the last few months regarding the manner in which the Camberwell Centre is being run, and pointed out that there is a policy which must be followed.

Mrs. Chapman advised that it had come to her notice that some parents wanted children removed and that Mrs. Kirkwood had refused to teach certain of them. She felt that as it is the policy of the Association that every child should be treated as any other rather than be removed from the Centre, this matter should be brought up at once because the parents of these children did not feel that they should be excluded. Mothers should give their reasons for wanting these children dismissed.

Mrs. Kirkwood: "When there was nobody else to teach I more or less did my best never thinking I would ever be a teacher. When new staff was needed instead of getting someone else I was asked to go on with it. I don't know who suggested it or why but I was very honoured."

I understand that the Centre is being run for the benefit of the children and we mustn't lose sight of that fact. In any institution you have to have a certain amount of efficiency if you are going to do any good.

Parents of sub normal children know what trouble they are and Mothers do need relief. We should do best good for the most children. Everybody has said that Camberwell is the best Centre – the Mothers are the reason.

Mrs. Cuthbert suggested that perhaps children could be admitted on a trial basis before being permanently admitted to the Centre. She also said that if the Mothers pulled their weight it would simplify matters.

Mr. Allen: "I know nothing of what goes on in the Centre, but I feel that the wrong attitude has been taken. All of these children have the right to be taught and it is not for you or me to say that they haven't, but we have not the right to ask the Mothers to look after them. Unfortunately, with a lot of parents it is not possible for a mother to be there because of other children in the family. It is also difficult for the Father. I feel that if it is not possible for the Mothers to go on training these difficult children then we should go further and arrange for someone specially trained to teach these children. I agree to a limited degree with Mrs. Kirkwood. We are training these children for a life as near normal as possible but we won't get anywhere by criticism or by saying it is impossible to do this or that. This is the only place in Victoria where these children can be trained. We must force the issue to have them taught by trained personnel. It is not the responsibility of the Education Department but the responsibility of the State to provide trained personnel to train these children and mothers and to give any incidental assistance. It is a big problem and one which can only be faced together."

Mr. Glassborow pointed out that at the present moment the problem of these children lies not with the Government Institutions or the State Education Department but in the hands of the parents whose duty it is to see that they are trained.

"We have a definite outlook on this problem. We know that the State will not look after these children except at such places as the Kew Cottages etc.. We are working as parents – working hard for long hours – striving to run this Organization. We are handling at the present time a quarter of the number of children that the state is handling for training. For training – I use this word instead of education – we must realise several things. The first is that the children we handle are those who are excluded by their capacity or their incapacity from taking advantage of special educational facilities provided by the State. We believe from the figures quoted by Authorities that there is something like 14,000 of these children of school

age. In determining what we are going to do with them we have to determine their needs. What are their needs? Most important of all is for them to be understood – to be part of a community. We must develop these children to their utmost capacity within the limits of their natural ability. This means that we must accept several facts as cardinal!”.

“Most important thing, other than the outline I have given you, is that it is accepted by people more knowledgeable in this problem than we are, that these children will not absorb normal education. We must not blind ourselves to the fact that they will not be able to do the things that a normal child will do, and have to give them something which is as close to normal as possible. Just how are we going to do that? We have spent a lot of time on this problem, some have spent years. We have corresponded with various organisations overseas over the years following all their developments closely, and are closely watching all Centres. There are a number of good points in each Centre and although it appears that Camberwell has got the best Centre, maybe it is, but I know ways that Camberwell has not got the best Centre. It is not perfect nor is any other Centre perfect. What we have to do to get perfection is to know where we are going and what can be done about this problem. We have established the following as a principle of the direction in which the training will go:

1. Establishment of Branches.
2. Establishment of a school age group at each Centre.
3. Standard training system throughout the Centres.
4. Establishment of Post School groups and Employment Centres.
5. Development of Parents’ education to enable them to reap the benefit from the Association set-up.
6. Establishment of Clinics.
7. Establishment of a village or hostels in the metropolitan area to provide accommodation for those children who are unable to go through the other Groups”.

“It is our intention to take every child that is possible to take. We believe that there will be a few children that we cannot handle. It is our intention as we develop our system more thoroughly to develop each child to its utmost capacity starting when they are youngsters, taking them through school age and providing them with post school training and then employment or occupation as the case may be”.

Camberwell Branch Meeting 23rd January, 1953
Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall

18 members present (13 ladies, 5 men)

President reported a meeting of Council. New Branch formed at Coburg. Apparently opposition being raised by other Charitable bodies to the entrance of our organisation into the public appeal field but Mr. Glassborow had hopes that this could be overcome.

The conditions of Subsidy for Day Centres for Mentally Retarded Children were read and discussed. Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mrs. Walters that an application for subsidy as from 1st February 1952 be made for this Branch – Carried.

Camberwell Branch Meeting 27th February, 1953
Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall

A letter from Ladies Auxiliary was read. A recommendation concerning the withdrawal of the supervision from the Burwood Centre was ruled out of order – this matter to be first referred to the committee of management, before reporting to the Branch. Moved Mr. Race, Seconded Mr. Bindon.

Branch Name – A resolution from the executive committee, that the name of the Branch be altered to Camberwell – Box Hill Branch was brought forward. Moved Mr. Race, Seconded Mr. Bidon that this be effected – Carried.

Child Psychologist – A resolution from the executive committee, that this Branch takes immediate steps to obtain a fully qualified and experienced child psychologist at a salary around £1500 per annum for the direction and control of the Burwood training centre was discussed. Moved Mrs. Gilbert, Seconded Mr. Chapman that this be carried into effect – Carried.

Camberwell – Box Hill Branch Meeting 27th March, 1953

Auxiliary Room – Camberwell Town Hall

Psychologist – Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mr. Race that this matter be

deferred until at least 12 months salary available – Carried. Branch delegates to Council, to bring up this matter at Council meeting with view to full time employment between the Branches.

Mr. Glassborow who was visiting commented on the proposal and spoke re possibility of obtaining Miss. M. Hay as Director of Training.

Finance – Treasurer reported that

Cash in Bank = £502/17/0 Cash in Hand = £5

As a result of a dance arranged by Mrs. Thompson a sum of £235 had been added to Branch Funds. Letter of thanks to be sent to Mrs. Thompson.

***Camberwell – Box Hill Branch 22nd May, 1953
Auxiliary Room, Camberwell***

Following recommendation from the Executive committee was read out by President –

That Committee of management be abolished and management of the Centre be handed to the Ladies Auxiliary. Moved Mr. Race, Seconded Mr. Bindon.

Discussion took place – Mr. Allan stressed the fact that such a course would not be in line with the Association's ideas of Branch management. Mr. Race as mover of the motion, considered that money raising should be the main aim of the Ladies Auxiliary but as they were also attending at the Centre, he thought they could better direct the school activities.

Mr. Bindon spoke in favour of the Mothers' Auxiliary running the school. An Amendment that 3 ladies from the Auxiliary be appointed was put forward. Moved Mr. Allan, Seconded Mr. Lee.

After further discussion the original motion was withdrawn and the following motion submitted. Moved Mr. Allan, Seconded Mr. Lee that the management of the training centre through the executive committee be vested in 3 ladies appointed by the Ladies Auxiliary – these 3 ladies to automatically become members of the executive committee. The motion was carried.

Pensions – Parents attention drawn to fact that subject to conditions laid down for retarded children 16 years and over.

Annual Meeting of Association on 13 July brought to notice of members. A meeting of Parents, with Post School age children, is to be held on 29th May.

Financial Statement by Treasurer indicated a surplus of £574 available in Funds.

Mr. Allan remarked on the action at the Centre recently when certain of the scholars were taken out of their classrooms and sent into the main hall, as being contrary to the policy of the Association in providing help and education for all children attending the Centre.

Mr. Bindon spoke re the desirability of better grouping of the children.

Mr. Cuthbert spoke of the lack of staff, rooms and finance.

It was decided to request Dr. Phillips at Travancore to send out a team to test the children at the Centre. Moved Mr. Hunt, Seconded Mrs. Bloomer – Carried.

Moved Mrs. Taylor, Seconded Mr. Allan that a donation of £10/10/- be made to the building fund of Warrigal Road Methodist Church, Burwood – Carried.

***Camberwell – Box Hill Branch – Annual Meeting
held 26th June, 1953 – Auxiliary Room – Camberwell***

Present: 18 members

Land – Moved by Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mr. Race that the Box Hill council be asked for a grant of land for the erection of a school.

Transport – Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mrs. Priestly that the churches in the district be contacted and advised that transport is needed to take the children to and from the training centre in the hope that some retired men may offer their services. The matter of arranging a roster to be left in the hands of the executive committee.

The meeting closed at 10:50pm.

***Camberwell – Box Hill Branch – Executive Meeting
held 2nd July, 1953 – Mr. Cuthberts home Box Hill***

Applications re Ian Hughes and Douglas Bryans to attend centre considered. Two groups of three members to interview parents of children and report on suitability of children.

***Camberwell – Box Hill Branch – Executive Meeting
Held 21st July, 1953 – at Freeman St. Balwyn***

Present – Messers. Cuthbert, Allan, Bindon, Race.
Mrs. Bindon, Ware.

Minutes – of previous executive meeting read and confirmed.

Business – Secretary to invite Mrs. Glassborow to attend next general meeting. Agreed to have telephone book entry for Camberwell – Box Hill Branch, WJ3243.

Ian Hughes and Douglas Bryans both considered suitable to attend centre and parents had been advised that they could attend for 6 months trial. Leah Williams considered to be unmanageable at centre. Mrs. Bindon suggested that we call for a report from members of staff on this subject.

Discussion held re block of land in Box Hill – G. McCreddan to address meeting on 24th July. Decided that members of the staff are under direction of executive committee. At next executive meeting all members of staff to be invited so that this point may be made clear.

***Camberwell – Box Hill Branch – Meeting held
24th July, 1953 at Auxiliary Room Camberwell Town Hall***

Present – 22 Members

G. McCreddan spoke on the proposition that he organise the building of a backward children's centre in Box Hill to serve the mentally retarded and spastic children in the district. G. McCreddan stated that the Spastic group had withdrawn from their central council in order to participate in this plan and suggested that this may be necessary in our case.

Treasurer reported a credit balance of £528.

Debts outstanding from proposed Donald Peers show were stated at £245.

Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mrs. Lee that the Association write to Donald Peers and give full details of what his failure to come out had meant to this association and failing the council taking this action this branch to take it upon itself to do so.

Moved Mr. Bindon, Seconded Mrs. Lee, that £245 in debts be reluctantly paid by the association.

Mr. Glassborow spoke and suggested that before any moves were made that Dr. Phillips, Dr. Cunningham or Dr. Collins be contacted regarding the mixing of Mentally Retarded and Spastic children.

After full discussion - was Moved by Mr. Hunt, Seconded Mr. Bindon that a committee of four wait upon G. McCreddan and members of the Spastic children and discuss the matter further.

Mr. Cuthbert reported on the meeting of this committee with G. McCreddan and the Spastic group. An association has been formed to erect and maintain a centre in Box Hill – the name of the association is to be The Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association. It was moved by Mrs. Lee, Seconded Mrs. Hodge that this branch accept affiliation of Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association and join with them to work for the erection of a centre on the block of land donated by the Box Hill Council.

***Minutes of Executive Meeting held 21st August, 1953
at home of Mrs. Lee – Glen Iris***

The case of Leah William's attendance at the centre was discussed. Mrs. Lee and Mrs. Kirkwood offered to see Mrs. Williams and advise her of the decision of the meeting that a Leah was unable to learn at present, that she send Leah only one day per week – Thursday. Secretary to advise Mrs. Thompson of this decision.

Branch to endeavour to establish a minding staff for this one day per week. Ladies executive to endeavour to arrange roster and if further assistants

required. Secretary to be notified so that he may contact church organisations.

First Aid Equipment – Folding bed – pillow and blankets. Mrs. Bindon to provide bed. 2 Blankets Mr. Allan to arrange. Hot water bottle, First Aid Kit – Mrs. Bindon to arrange. Bed to be repaired.

Association of all organisations dealing with Mentally Retarded Children was discussed. Branch to be represented by Mr. Bindon. Mrs. Kirkwood to see that attendance roll is completed each day.

***Minutes of Executive Meeting held at home of
Mr. Cuthbert on 24th November, 1953***

Present – Mr. Cuthbert, Allan, Race, Bindon
Mrs. Taylor, Ware, Bindon

Supervisor – Mrs. Cuthbert reported that Mrs. Williams was at present working and requires a permanent position with salary of £850 to £950 per year. It was decided that Camberwell Branch could not entertain this idea. General Secretary to be contacted re approach to Mr. Sheppard to see if the department would employ Mrs. Williams to direct training in the Association.

Moved Mrs. Allan Seconded Mrs. Ware that Mrs. Kirkwood be given control of centre for period of 6 months on following terms:-

1. Complete direction of training
2. Work program to be submitted to executive before beginning of new year
3. Any requirements re shortage of staff or equipment to be made to Executive
4. Any recommendation re suitability of children be made to Executive
5. Salary to be £2/5/0 per day, from 1st December.

***Minutes of Meeting of Camberwell – Box Hill Branch of V.H.H.A
held in Auxiliary Room, Camberwell Town Hall on Friday
28th May, 1954***

Present – 19 members

Mr. Cuthbert thanked the ladies for their effort in scrubbing out the school. It was moved Mr. Bindon Seconded Mr. Allan that the secretary write to the Council for Mentally Retarded Children requesting them to apply to the government to supply one teacher to each centre, this teacher to be paid for by the government. Also to point out to this Council that this branch views with concern that reports indicate that most of the business, seems to be done by the committee and not by a general meeting.

***Report of Annual Meeting of Camberwell – Box Hill Branch of
Helping Hand Association for Sub-Normal Children, held in
Auxiliary Room of Town Hall on Friday 25th June, 1954***

Annual Meeting of Helping Hand Council

The president reported that about £12,000 had been raised during May for the appeal in the name of the Victorian Council for Mentally Retarded Children. The Helping Hand Association would receive 25%, each branch receiving perhaps £300 or £400.

A few points arose for discussion. One was a letter from a lady asking that some speakers be sent down to assist in an inaugural meeting at Terang.

There was considerable discussion whether the Helping Hand Association should continue with the policy of starting new branches or whether it should be referred to the Victorian Council for Mentally Retarded Children. A motion was put and carried that the matter should be referred to the Victorian Council. There was also a communication from a lady who desired to leave some property in her will to the Helping Hand Association. It was agreed that this should also be passed on to Victorian Council. This is an indication that possibly the Victorian Council for Mentally Retarded Children is the one which is likely to become the controlling and guiding body for all associations working for mentally retarded children. An indication was given that the council for the Helping Hand Association would possibly become redundant with the formation of this new council.

***Minutes of Executive Committee held at home of
Mrs. Cuthbert on 29th June, 1954***

It was recommended that we advise General Meeting that as accommodation was limited at the centre, that the advert re centre not be inserted in local papers.

Discussion was held on acceptance of Cheryl Boldiston to the centre and her subsequent deferment by Mrs. Kirkwood. It was decided that we accept recommendation that she cannot attend at present and that we review matter in 6 months. Mr. Cuthbert and Mr. Race to interview the parents and explain the situation.

Future Procedure for admission Centre:

- No children under 5 years
- No children unless Toilet Trained
- Interview with parents before Committee Meeting but matter to be discussed by Committee before entry accepted.

***Minutes of Meeting held in Auxiliary Room
Camberwell Town Hall on 27th Friday August , 1954***

Mr. Cuthbert reported that the sum of £587 had been received from the May Appeal and discussion was held as to the advisability of making a donation from this sum towards the building of the Box Hill Centre. It was moved Mr. Race Seconded Mrs. Ware that the sum of £200 be donated to the Box Hill Retarded and Spastic Children's Association and this branch to reconsider this matter within 2 months to see if a further donation could be made available to this Association. It was moved Mr. Balcombe Seconded Mrs. Evans that the sum of £155 received from Mrs. Thompson be passed on to the Box Hill Association.

***Minutes of General Meeting held at the Auxiliary Room
Camberwell Town Hall on 25th February, 1955***

The Treasurer reported a cash balance of £1200.

Mr. Cuthbert reported that the Box Hill centre would be opened 28th May.

The Centre is to be operated by the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association and that the Helping Hand Association would have no say in the running of the centre. Mr. Cuthbert stated that it would therefore be necessary to decide what was to become of the Camberwell-Box Hill Branch and the centre at present being operated.

***Special Meeting of Camberwell – Box Hill Branch V.H.H.A held
At the Auxiliary Room Camberwell Town Hall on Friday 11th March, 1955***

Mr. Cuthbert gave the opening address explaining that this special meeting was being held to discuss the future of this branch as it had been made evident by the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association that we would not be able to operate as a branch in the new centre at Box Hill.

Mr. Cuthbert explained that three courses were available to this branch – to continue the centre at Burwood, to close the centre at Burwood and still operate as a branch of the V.H.H.A. without any jurisdiction over the training of our children or to cease to be a branch of the V.H.H.A. and to join with Box Hill Association.

Mr. Cuthbert welcomed the representatives of the V.H.H.A. Central Council. Mr. Byrne President and Mr. McNamara Secretary. Mr. Byrne spoke on the attitude of the central council which he stated would be that as long as we were working for the good of the mentally retarded children of this district the central council would endorse any moves we made and stated that if we ceased to be a branch of the Association we would still be welcomed at the monthly meeting of the council to discuss our problems.

Mr. Byrne then presented a cheque of £190.19.2 to this branch being our share of the distribution of Association funds. Mr. Byrne's remarks were supported by Mr. McNamara who gave to us the original aims of the Association and explained how these aims, had in the main been used by the Government.

The subject was then thrown open for general discussions and the matter of the funds of this branch was raised. Mr. Byrne stated that the V.H.H.A.

was not interested in obtaining the funds of this branch and subject to the approval of the Charities commission we were at liberty to transfer these to the Box Hill Association if we so wished.

It was then moved by Mrs. Kirkwood Seconded Mrs. Lee. That the Camberwell – Box Hill branch of the V.H.H.A. disband at the discretion of the executive officers and that an immediate approach be made to the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association for membership of all members of this branch and that the executive officer report back at the next meeting of the branch. This was carried unanimously.

It was moved Mr. Race Seconded Mrs. Cuthbert that the Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Children's Association be asked to accept executive members of this branch as members of this branch as members of its executive with the exception of Mr. Bindon who expressed his unwillingness to serve on this committee.

***Minutes of Meeting of Camberwell – Box Hill Branch held
28th March, 1955 at Auxiliary Room Camberwell Town Hall***

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed in the motion of Mrs. Herberte Seconded Mrs. Lee.

Business arising out of minutes – Mr. Cuthbert reported that the Box Hill and District Retard and Spastic Children's Association had agreed to accept the members of this branch as members of their association and the members of our executive as members of their executive. Mr. Cuthbert also reported that the transfer of our funds to the Box Hill Association would be favourably considered by the Charities Commission this application would, however, need to be made through the Central Council.

Mr. Cuthbert also reported that a transport scheme was to be arranged by the Box Hill Association and that they had agreed to employ the members of our staff.

It was moved Mr. Race Seconded Mrs. Kirkwood that the Burwood Centre be closed on the 12th May. Carried unanimously.

It was agreed that the Secretary should notify the Burwood Methodist Church Officers of this decision and advise them that the shed at present used for storage be left there for their use.

It was also agreed that the Secretary notify the General Secretary.

It was moved Mrs. Evans Seconded Mrs. Bloomer that a token of appreciation for past services be obtained and presented to Mr. and Mrs. Harris on their retirement from the Burwood Methodist Church this was left to Mrs. Lee to arrange.

Life Governors:

The following people have been appointed as Life Governors since Alkira commenced in 1955.

Cr. L. R. McCredden	1955	Mr. S. Squires	1980
Mr. E. G. Cuthbert	1955	Mrs. D. Squires	1980
Mr. N. E. Rooks	1955	Mr. A. E. Jones	1980
Mrs. N. Steele	1958	Mrs. J. Jones	1980
Mr. R. G. Goldsmith	1958	Mr. R. Bryans	1981
Mr. E. Hughes	1959	Mrs. J. Bryans	1981
Mr. H. E. Gray	1960	Mrs. D. Ramus	1982
Mr. G. Cree	1961	Mr. W. D'Elton	1984
Mr. R. E. Cook	1963	Mr. R. L. Craig	1984
Mrs. N. Boldiston	1964	Mrs. D. Bailey	1986
Mrs. B. J. Perkins	1964	Mrs. M. Scott	1987
Miss M. Bartlett	1965	Mrs. J. Richard	1988
Mrs. D. W. Gray	1965	Mr. K. R. Pantlin	1988
Mrs. E. Churchley	1966	Mrs. O. Wiley	1989
Miss M. Roberts	1967	Mr. P. S. Harrison	1989
Mrs. M. Donald	1968	Mrs. P. Slattery	1991
Mr. A. Race	1969	Mr. A. Collinson	1991
Mrs. L. Race	1969	Mrs. H. D'Elton	1992
Mr. W. G. Donald	1970	Mr. C. Jacobs	1992
Mrs. M. J. Wilton	1971	Mrs. C. Reese	1993
Mr. H. G. Jones	1971	Mrs. J. Jones	1993
Mr. J. W. Rees	1971	Mr. D. Ridley	1993
Mr. J. W. Boldiston	1975	Mr. M. Reese	1995
Mrs. P. Howard	1976	Mrs. M. Ridley	1997
Mr. W. J. Nicholls	1977	Mrs. E. Pantlin	1997
Mr. R. L. Gilbert	1973	Mrs. G. Butler	1998
Mr. W. J. M. Bailey	1973	Mrs. N. Cain	1998
Mrs. B. Addison	1973	Mrs. B. Dixon	1998
Mrs. L. Boyce	1974	Mrs. E. Edmonds	1998
Mr. E. Donaldson	1974	Mrs. B. Hattam	1998
Mrs. M. Craig	1978	Mrs. H. Lane	1998
Mrs. N. D. Allum	1978	Mrs. J. Simpson	1999
Mr. J. Ingoldby	1979	Mrs. P. Neale	2000

Chronological List of Important Milestones

Late 1940's	Brighton Group formed.
1948	Helping Hand Association (H.H.A.) instituted.
August, 1951	Camberwell Branch of H.H.A. formed.
February, 1952	Training Centre Methodist Church Warrigal Road opened.
Early 1953	Box Hill Council made land available for a Training Centre.
29 th July, 1953	Box Hill and District Retarded and Spastic Childrens' Association (B.H.R.S.C.A.) formed.
Early 1954	Willandra Auxiliary pledged support for the Association.
May, 1954	First Constitution approved.
Late 1954	Capital Grant Subsidy approved by State Government
Early 1955	Premier Mr. J. Cain Snr. Made £14,400 available to the centre.
May, 1955	Camberwell/Box Hill Branch of H.H.A. disbanded. All funds transferred to B.H.R.S.C.A.
12 th June, 1955	Alkira commenced operating with 19 clients attending.
18 th June, 1955	Training Centre at Thurston Street Box Hill officially opened and named Alkira by Crosbie Morrison.
16 th September, 1955	First Annual meeting of Association held.
August, 1956	Government Dental Services extended to cover Training Centre.
December, 1956	Mr. A. Race appointed Acting President.
Early 1958	Extension to Centre planned for a Post School Training Group.
September, 1959	Extension opened, 70 clients now attending.

Early 1960	Day Training Centres teachers formed their own association which lead to a Wages Board.
Early 1961	Alkira decided to establish a Sheltered Workshop.
August, 1962	Plans for Sheltered Workshop approved.
December, 1962	First Christmas Seals Appeal.
April, 1965	Sheltered Workshop officially opened by Dr. C. Dax. Attendance had risen to 133.
February, 1968	Plans completed for a residential at 70 Churchill Street, Mont Albert.
Mid 1968	Mens' and Willandra Juniors Auxiliaries formed.
December, 1968	Government improved funding arrangements. Mrs. J. McBain appointed Supervisor of Hostel.
March, 1969	Official Opening of Hostel named "Perkins House" in honour of work done by Mr. A. E. Perkins.
September, 1969	First Riversdale Golf Club Charity Day for Alkira.
1972	New Constitution to be drawn up and incorporation of Alkira sought.
November, 1972	Purchase of 68 Churchill Street finalised for future extension of the hostel.
September, 1973	New Constitution approved and incorporation granted. First meeting of the Committee of Management.
1973	Home Help for parents of handicapped children introduced.
November, 1974	Sheltered Workshop became an Activity Therapy Centre.
1976	Alkira purchased 4, 8 and 10 Thurston Street (sold in 1979).
August, 1977	Subsidy for extension of hostel approved.
December, 1977	Mr. J. Blair appointed as Administrator
April, 1978	Extension of hostel completed and named "Riversdale".

April, 1979	Annex to Training Centre at 22 Cambridge Street opened.
July, 1980	First Recreation Officer appointed.
October, 1980	Independent Training Unit established in Station Street, Box Hill.
February, 1981	Mr. J. Blair resigned. Mr. N. McVilly appointed as Administrator.
February, 1981	Mrs. J. McBain retired as Hostel Supervisor. Mrs. J. Hill appointed as Hostel Supervisor.
April, 1982	Box Hill and District Retarded Spastic Childrens' Association name changed to "Alkira Centre - Box Hill".
April, 1983	Independent Unit in Station Street closed
1983	Alkira Opportunity Shop opened at 22 Cambridge Street.
Late 1983	Plans produced for redevelopment of Thurston Street.
Mid 1984	Approval given to proceed with redevelopment
Early 1985	Go ahead received for redevelopment.
March, 1985	Demolition work commenced at Thurston Street. Some clients moved to temporary annex in Station Street.
1985	Thurston Street changed from 3 - 7 to just 3 Thurston Street.
12 October, 1986	The redevelopment of the centre officially opened by Premier Mr. J. Cain.
1986	Alkira motto "Dignity and Purpose" adopted.
1987	"Perkins House" re-carpeted, and cool rooms installed.
1988	Mothers and Men's Auxiliaries amalgamated to become Alkira Parents and Friends Auxiliary.
November, 1988	Centre closed for short period due to industrial action.

1988	Changes to government policy necessitated the production of a new Constitution.
June, 1990	Special Olympics training at Wodonga.
July, 1991	"Separation of Services" required a change to the managerial structure.
4th July, 1991	Mrs. P. Grenness retired as Hostel Manager and Mrs. J. Boodle appointed.
14th May, 1992	New Constitution registered. Training Centre became Adult Training Support Service (ATSS).
March, 1992	Ms D. Fitzmaurice appointed Manager of ATSS.
1 July 1992	"Separation of Services" did not eventuate and dual service continued to operate.
1994	Individual Performance Programmes (IPP) introduced.
1994	Alkira badge introduced.
1994	Hostel swimming pool converted to a recreation room entitled the Merv Reese Room.
1994	Property 20 Serpentine Street, Mont Albert purchased.
November/ December, 1994	Special Olympics in Perth
1995	Five day camp for clients at Lake Eildon.
17th February, 1995	Mr. N. McVilly retired as General Manager.
1995	Mr. R. Cranwell appointed General Manager.
1995	Senior Persons' Programme introduced.
1995	20 clients and chaperones have 8-day tour of Tasmania.
1996	Funding for Residential Redevelopment project provided by Victorian government.
1997	Unit Cost Funding for Residential Service introduced.
January, 1997	Dr. D. Napthine visited Churchill Street residential

- 1997** Future for Young Adults (FYA) programme launched.
- 1997** Houses at Gracefield Drive and Merton Street acquired.
- April, 1997** Mrs. J. Boodle retired as Hostel Manager. Mrs. D. Campbell appointed as Hostel Manager.
- 5th May, 1998** Dr. D. Naphine officially opened new houses. Two further residences at Vermont Street and Shady Grove planned.
- 1998** Annex for FYA programme established in Cambridge Street.
- 1999** Plans for redevelopment of “Perkins” and “Riversdale” introduced.

Alkira Centre - Box Hill Inc.

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