



BANKSIA GARDENS
COMMUNITY SERVICES'

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Chair *and* Chief

There has been a steady stream of memes and tweets declaring that 2020 should be cancelled. Given the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the idea has its appeal – however, here at Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS), the show goes on, regardless of the almost overwhelming challenges. In fact, when our community is faced with growing threats to its health, income, employment, and social connections, our people need us and each other more than ever. Our team, to the very best of its abilities, has stepped up to help keep those important connections alive, even in this new age of social distancing and self-isolation.

This annual report covers the period July 2019 to June 2020, so we have much positive work to look back on from the months before COVID-19 struck. We celebrated our fortieth birthday. We commenced our important work in embedding gender equity in all our policies and programs. Our many innovative programs – the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement and Project REAL, Good People Act Now, the Youth Justice Alliance to name just a few – grew in maturity and effectiveness. We took a giant stride in our environmental work.

We began to feel the impact of forces beyond our control as early as December, when the Banksia Gardens break-up party was cancelled due to extreme heat. Then came January, with devastating bushfires to our north and east.

We wept for the people, the animals and the land that were irreparably harmed, while we gasped through the smoky pall that hung over our city. By March, the awful pandemic had started to sink its claws into our community, changing the way we live, work and interact.

The Banksia Gardens team has worked extremely hard to support the most vulnerable in our community within some tight parameters. We've had to suspend some face-to-face programs, and keep the doors shut, but activity has continued on-line, outside, and indoors under new social distancing and highly sanitised conditions. We have delivered food parcels, advocacy, advice, study support, and friendship at one of the toughest and loneliest times for so many people. Our workers have been creative, dedicated and tireless in adapting to these challenges.

At this critical time, we have also strengthened relationships with many of our supporters, particularly with our nearest neighbour DPV Health. We have worked with DPV Health on a number of health, wellbeing and gender equity initiatives in recent years, and were pleased to sign a Memorandum of Understanding in February to work more closely in a range of ways. One important initiative that emerged immediately was the Youth Engagement Response Team, to connect with a cohort of young people from Banksia Gardens Estate who had very little engagement with school and increasing forays into anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. The program has been very successful in engaging the cohort, providing support to their families and care-givers, and bringing additional relevant services to help support complex needs.

The pandemic will change the way we live and work for a very long time to come. From a leadership perspective, there will be a lot of work to do to recalibrate our financial foundations, and steer a future course that is sustainable and meets our most important objectives. We are delighted that our Board of Governance remains strong, diverse and committed to Banksia Gardens' values and purpose, and particularly that we have been able to attract some new members with a wealth of talent, experience and enthusiasm. The past year will certainly be one that we won't forget for a long time, but far from wanting to cancel it, we hope to keep building upon the new strengths we have found within ourselves. Even under extraordinary conditions, we continue our mission to transform lives, and strengthen communities.

Carole Fabian, Chairperson

Gina Dougall, CEO

DEPUTY CHIEF

Jaime de Loma-Osorio Ricon, Deputy CEO

I don't think that it is formally written into our position descriptions, but a big part of our jobs at BGCS is to worry about children and young people, and about our community at large. Of course, we don't get paid for the worrying part per se, but for the programs, activities and initiatives we put in place to address those worries.

The 2019-2020 financial year has been a period in which our concern list has grown significantly. In the first half, we spent a lot of time with a group of local young people, on the young side of young (12-14), who unfortunately were getting into a lot of trouble as a result of severe disengagement from education and other community supports. How do you fill 30 hours per week when you don't see school as a place where you belong, when staying home is not really an option, and when you don't have money? Put together 10-15 young people in the same situation, and the answer is not pretty!

Literally as we were trying to put together a program to address this local 'disengagement outbreak' the world was thrown into turmoil by COVID-19 and Melbourne was subjected to several lockdowns... you all know the story.

Of course, disengagement in itself is a major focus of our work with schools through the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE). A major milestone this year was employing Dr Eric Dommers as the NCESE Co-Director. This was significant not only because of Eric's calibre but also because it represented the first time in our organisation's history that we have been able to employ someone to spend most of their time thinking deeply about our community's most wicked problems. Of course many of my colleagues at BGCS have brilliant brains, but for many of us a lot of the thinking happens as a by-product of doing, a bit like when Daniel LaRusso finds the universal applicability of Mr Miyagi's famous 'wax on, wax off' routine in Karate Kid. Eric's appointment was definitely an inspired choice and it has been wonderfully stimulating for myself and many other colleagues: 'Arigato, sensei Dommers!!'

The lockdowns and pandemic in themselves significantly contributed to our list of worries. Added to the possibility of being infected, or of infecting our elderly relatives, we inevitably had to fear the possibility of infecting our clients and our colleagues. Also, how would these lockdowns, and the ensuing economic recession, affect an already highly vulnerable community? How does

one do community work in the context of working from home, social distancing and mask wearing, when physical presence, physical contact and facial expressions are such important tools of our trade? For the children and young people growing up in households where suffering and stress are the norm, how are they going to be affected by this? In fact, how does one do any work at all when looking after one's own family requires so much effort?

Finally, a less immediate worry, but one that has been at the back of my mind during this whole time as one of my favourite pastimes is playing with other people's babies: How is this new paradigm going to affect children currently growing up in this world, when by default every person outside their family is automatically seen as potentially dangerous?

I am afraid that if you are looking for big answers to these deep and important questions, you are in the wrong place. What I am here to explain is that in the typical Banksia fashion, for the last few months we have been chipping away at some of these issues, combining our practical tools and approaches with our increased capacity for more general thinking. During this time, our workforce's commitment and productivity have been nothing short of heroic, and I also believe that our Board and leadership team have responded to everyone's circumstances with flexibility and compassion.

Many of the practical ways in which we have responded to the different manifestations of this crisis are definitely here to stay. For instance, my colleagues in the newly established Workplace Health and Safety Committee have done a stellar job at dynamically responding to each stage of the public health restrictions and overseeing the implementation of the BGCS COVID-19 safe plan, they should all be thanked and congratulated for keeping us safe! Similarly, the online versions of many of our regular face-to-face programs (e.g. Aiming High, GPAN, Study Groups, Learn Local courses) have proven so popular that we can't really conceive a future without them, at least as extensions of our face-to-face work. Our ambition is to find suitable online alternatives to some of the programs that have been on hold for too long now, such as the weekly lunches held by the Turkish Women's Group, or our sewing and knitting groups.

The circumstances are radically different, but our determination to build a future of radical inclusion is only getting stronger!



ROBERT KUMAR COMMUNITY AWARD

**Recipient of the 2020 Robert Kumar Community Award for
outstanding contribution to the Hume community:**

VAL KARAITIANA

The camera floats gently above buildings and playgrounds, hovering over the grounds of Dallas Brooks Community Primary School (DBCPS), on the wings of a high-tech drone. Showing classrooms, climbing equipment, the oval and bright shapes of colourful shade cloth, viewers of the video are treated to a flying overview of the school. As the drone finishes its tour from fifty feet in the sky, it slowly pulls up higher into the air. Buildings shrink, shapes and patterns blur until other images become apparent – the school in the centre of a neighbourhood.

The big picture is never out of the conversation for long, with Val Karaitiana, Principal at DBCPS, whether that is at the scale of connecting with schools around the world through a partnership with Microsoft, running the Northern Schools Early Years Cluster of eleven playgroups, or developing a model for schools to become community hubs in addition to providers of education.

“It takes a village to raise a child”, Val says as we discuss the community hub that delivers programs and services for families of the school and nearby neighbours. “I’m not by myself. It’s about the culture: the organisational culture, the learning culture.” The picture of the school that I’m getting is broader than what I think of when I think of a primary school, and quite different from the one that Val arrived at

as a Physical Education teacher back in 1990. Now, there are classes and activities for adults, as well as playgroups offered through DBCPS’s community hub, and, during the pandemic lockdowns, food parcels and IT support too. Part of the inspiration for this model came from a tour of Kent in England, where Val was able to see how schools in their disadvantaged areas operated:

“They bring the childcare centres on site, [and] bring the adult education on site”. The result, she says, is that employment opportunities for parents increase as they become more skilled, they start valuing the education that they’re getting, and they start valuing the education of their children. “Every parent wants their child to do well,” Val says, but she has found that some parents don’t know how best to support their children.

“Our whole philosophy is that you’ve got the child in the center, and everything we do is about the child being in the center. The question is “how can we keep them safe and comfortable and how can we help the family to help with their education?”

Metaphorically, it feels like Val has been creating a village at DBCPS to help raise a whole lot of children. A significant component of that village, aside from the infrastructure, is to create an organisational culture

that welcomes, engages and supports families. The professional development agenda for her staff over the coming year includes school-wide trauma informed education. “It’s about understanding poverty as well as behaviour, and how to connect with students across our school” Val said. Along with professional development and a wellbeing team consisting of allied health professionals, the school also engages local community leaders regularly to guide the school and its families. Imams make visits, and, during Ramadan, the school halls become prayer halls. “We’re about 96% EAL (English as a second language), with most of the families coming from the Middle East; if the kids went to mosques to pray, they’d miss a lot of school.”

The approach is equal parts of accommodating cultural needs, strategic engagement and pragmatism. When asked about this, Val said: “I don’t believe you’re just here teaching a child, you’re actually communicating with the whole family to make a partnership.” The benefit of this philosophy is something Val has seen first-hand, many times. The school cleaner’s daughter was a student who Val taught in grade six, and she’s currently studying for her PhD: “So they can do it, if you believe in them”.

“In the end, we’re trying to teach our students that even though they’re disadvantaged and they live in a microcosm, we’re global citizens with global problems- which is why all that connectedness with community hubs, networks starts with the organisational culture.”

When I ask Val about what she hopes the school might be like in 10 or 15 years’ time, she’s both emphatic and pragmatic. “I hope to see that the community hub is operating, and actually with more programs doing something different. I don’t want to see it the same as now, because society changes all the time, and depending on what cohorts of families are living in the area in 10 or 15 years, there’ll be different needs. I just go by the community and kind of morph the organisational culture in.”

Jonathan Chee,
Chief Storyteller



NORTHERN CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE in SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Eric Dommers,
NCESE Co-Director

The Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE) is a formal collective aimed at building capacity to develop and implement school and community programs that support school engagement for all, including and especially – our most vulnerable students.

The NCESE consists of BGCS, 15 primary schools, one secondary school, and the Victorian Department of Education and Training, and is an ambitious but logical extension of Project REAL. Its collaborative and co-design approach flows from the partners' shared understanding of the deep roots of early disengagement in trauma and structural disadvantage, and of its catastrophic consequences in health, wellbeing, and educational outcomes.

The work of the NCESE is driven primarily out of BGCS, and our team may be small, but it's great: Jaime – our Deputy CEO and NCESE Co-Director, regularly runs workshops about trauma for local schools, and is a much loved, charismatic figure; Seral Fehmi – our brilliant and tireless Lead Teacher for Project Real; and Seral's amazing team – Beth, Frazer, and Claire who have all worked with Project REAL for several years now – plus Claudia as the Project REAL family worker, and Fessoom Moynihan, who has taken on the evaluation role.

The NCESE commenced its work in February this year, with the immediate aim of developing and running professional development workshops about responding to the needs of students 'at risk of disengagement' for school leaders and staff. By late March we were already heading into COVID-19 restrictions and at the start of the second term most students and school staff were working from home. Despite our restricted physical access, we were trialling our first distance learning Zoom workshops by May with Meadows Primary School (MPS). Led by Principal Anthony Potesta, the school has been doing great work in trauma-informed education for a few years. Anthony had agreed that his MPS leadership team would sit through our first four trial professional development workshops for NCESE schools, and give us feedback on what worked, and what should be modified.

Although I am the new kid on the (NCESE) block, I was entrusted with running the first of our trial workshops for schools. My workshop was called 'Pathways to Disengagement', and I hoped to make a good impression and get us off to a decent start with our friendly school 'guinea pigs'. Unfortunately, however, I had over-prepared; I had too many slides and I was almost guilty of causing 'death by powerpoint' for our patient audience at Meadows PS, when Anthony Potesta suddenly piped up and said "That slide, the one about the Building Blocks for Student Engagement – that's fantastic! That's the meat and potatoes of the whole workshop – you have to make that the centrepiece of all the NCESE work".

And so we did and although it is early days, and we are still restricted by coronavirus impacts on schools, we have been receiving great feedback from our schools, our academic 'critical friends', and our philanthropic and funding partners (including the Victorian Department of Education and Training) about our Building Blocks for Student Engagement. For the record, Anthony Potesta helped run the first of our NCESE Principal workshops, and did a great job!

In our recent second NCESE Principals workshop, Deb Hosking from Broadmeadows Primary School took the leadership baton from Anthony – and so what I can now say, is that our NCESE team includes not only our wonderful BGCS team, but also our NCESE principals – which is exactly what we had been hoping for.

PS. For the record, Jaime and Seral's workshops went over very well, and our huge thanks to Jono – who orchestrated, backed us up, and endured our trial ZOOM workshops – a great BGCS team effort.

PROJECT REAL

Seral Fehmi,
Project REAL Lead Teacher

Project REAL is a re-engagement program for 9-12 year-olds who have disengaged from mainstream education. It aims to support children, their families and schools to develop skills that foster positive school engagement.

From community projects to group projects, to one-on-one learning (onsite and remotely), this year we have done it all! The highlights of our year are our students and the collaborative relationships that have been built between our students and their families and partnership schools, as we worked together to share strategies and create inclusive environments and practices.

Key areas of work for Project REAL during 2019–2020:

- Activities – Excursions to the beach, art workshops, wetlands nature education, adventure playgrounds, indoor obstacle courses, swimming lessons. The more our students are in tune with their bodies, the better they can learn to identify their emotions and physical states that allow them to self-regulate.
- Personal development – Learning about the brain, our bodies, and our emotions. Learning how to problem solve, make things right when we have made a mistake, and about our strengths and our values. Developing our student's self-identity and worth has brought many smiles to many faces, including their teachers, parents and of course their own.
- Family – Working with our families to empower them and assure them they are doing a fantastic job despite the challenges they have faced. We became their learning partner, their coach and biggest fan, as we worked through new approaches and ways of thinking about caring for children who have gone through so much.
- Collaboration – Sharing strategies and collaborating with our partner schools has opened up new and exciting opportunities, as we learn from each other while we work towards creating learning programs and approaches that engage and target the most disengaged.



step inside *and* MEET COBE



It's the first coronavirus lockdown and stay-at-home orders are in place. All of a sudden Cobe can't go to Project REAL and see his friends or teachers who have been part of his life for almost a year now. When I say 'part of his life', I mean it quite literally. For the first three months after joining Project REAL, we made visits to Cobe's house most days and were on the phone to his parents constantly to try to get him to come to school. Some days there were tears, some days frustration, and other days resentment as this was not what Cobe wanted! Nobody blamed him for feeling that way: Coby had not attended school regularly for almost a semester, and when he was referred to us his attendance rate had only been at 20 per cent. At age 11, he simply wasn't used to going to school.

But we continued to show up, and his family never gave up. They worked with us and continued to encourage Cobe. Eventually, we got to a stage where we saw Cobe most days, and with a smile on his face. So, when the order to lockdown came in March, it was a blow to the routine that we'd helped Cobe build up over so many months. We made plans to move all our students to remote learning, but we were worried that this style of interaction might see Cobe's engagement fall away.

But the most amazing thing happened. Cobe started working at home independently, and he even started getting his brother and mum involved. They worked on maths and art together and this was a very proud moment for Cobe, his parents and us! Even better, for the first time in a long time, Cobe's parents had some real praise for him about his attitude and schoolwork, and that meant the world to him.

Fast forward to the end of lockdown, and Cobe was back at school settling in. Then, a second lockdown was imposed in Broadmeadows and other 'hotspots'. With a careful COVID-safe plan we were able to get our kids onsite every day. Cobe was back and was ready to learn, more than he had ever been. He did not miss a day and his engagement and progress were out of this world!

He worked and progressed at a rate that we had not seen before: giving everything a go, taking on a leadership role with his peers, helping them regulate and making them feel included. Cobe

focused on maths and reengaged via Zoom with his teacher from his home school, and even began completing classwork set by his teacher. All this from a kid who had said that he "hated school". Cobe's transformation has brought tears of joy to our staff as we reflect on the anxious student we enrolled just under a year ago. This was the kid who barely attended to start with, and when he did show up, couldn't even walk inside our classroom for weeks. We spent most of Cobe's first few visits in the foyer, chatting with him and slowly building up a relationship. In those early days, we would get about an hour with Cobe before he would want to go home again. So, to see him asking to come to school despite government-imposed restrictions and a global pandemic was quite a transformation!

We are overwhelmed with joy and so proud of Cobe. We are grateful to his family for developing an allegiance with Project REAL to support Cobe and get him to where he is today. We want to leave the last word to Cobe, to sum up how he's feeling about school nowadays:

Project REAL has helped me set boundaries, and limits for my children, and has taught me not to feel guilty and that it's ok to say no. I've learnt how to communicate with my children and how to really listen and really understand what they are feeling. This makes me feel listened to, validated, more confident, calm and peaceful.

~ Project REAL parent

I used to hate school and now I like it. I actually love this school. It is so good because of the teachers and the students. I like the teachers because they are nice and careable.

“

Two guiding questions: How do we ensure the online safety of these kids, who are some of the most vulnerable kids around? And, how do we make an online study group a good experience for the participants?



STUDY GROUP

Edgar Caballero Aspe,
Education and Sustainability Coordinator

Study Group provides a suite of activities to support the academic, social, physical and creative development of primary and secondary students outside of school hours.

On any given Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday afternoon during school term over the last 15 years, our centre has bustled with the energy, noise and spirit of throngs of children and young people. Homework and academic support, sports and sweat, arts, craft and music: for the first half of this financial year that's what we revelled in through the broad suite of offerings in the Study Group Program.

Distant rumblings from across the globe started to be heard in Australia in February and March. As those sounds got louder on our TVs and radios, the noise that emanated from Study Group gradually diminished. It became more and more clear that nobody would be operating in the same way as they had before, and as the schools in Victoria closed early for first term holidays, so too did Study Group.

We could not offer what we offered before, and we didn't even really know if trying to offer some sort of online substitute was the most pressing need that our families and young people faced. It turns out that it wasn't. We harnessed all of our team to contact our families to see how they were faring and what they needed. What we heard back surprised us – access to technology, referrals to health services and food parcels were common. And so, for a time, we shifted from providing educational support to providing essential services.

Throughout the initial lockdown, we always had the re-opening of an online version in mind, but there were many hurdles and challenges to achieving this. Chief among our considerations were two guiding questions: “how do we ensure the online safety of these kids, who are some of the most vulnerable kids around?” and “how do we make an online Study Group a good experience for the participants?”

We were used to providing nourishment of body, mind and creative soul when children visited the program, and now we were stuck in front of screens,

separated by fibre cables, micro lags in interaction and the inevitable repeating of “you're on mute”.

Despite these challenges, we trialled a range of new programs and platforms. We developed a set of activities that reflect our philosophy of providing a broad range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with, including a mindfulness club, a creative club, one-on-one tutoring, sports activities, a joker room for fun and games and BOTS (Banksia Online Teamwork Studio), a play-based learning development program.

We're very proud of the innovation, quality and child-safe approach we developed in this online environment. Some of these online activities have worked so well that we anticipate they will likely continue and grow even after we can resume face-to-face programming.

The effort to support these students and families goes beyond our organisation. To our funders Kimberly and Newsboys Foundations and Melbourne Airport who trusted us to diverge from our usual activities, and to the ever generous Tibetan Buddhist Society for continuing to provide food support to our families, we thank you for your support as we collectively weathered the storm. And of course, we are so grateful for our kind volunteers with their invaluable help to our families: you are all so fun, creative and ready for any challenge!

When we reflect back on this period in years to come, there will be a couple of things that will be memorable. The first is the incredible group effort it took to care for our young people and families, and the organisation-wide effort to provide the framework to deliver programs to vulnerable children in a changing world.

What will be indelible for many of us is the incredible privilege of being trusted to step virtually into the homes and personal lives of our students and families, and witnessing the young people leaning into their screens, faces looming close as they peer in and strain to hear over the cacophony of a full house of kids in lockdown!

Aiming High VCE SUPPORT

Marie Spyros,
Aiming High Coordinator

Aiming High is a support program providing tutoring and enriching experiences for aspirational students in Broadmeadows and neighbouring areas.

“You’re on mute!” “Try logging off and coming back in again.” “Can you see the little microphone down the bottom? How about the arrow next to it? Click on that...” “Can you all hear me?” “Hang on, I’ll call you to explain it...”

This year, our Aiming High VCE Support Program has moved steadily from tutoring in person in the lovely Hume library spaces, into a very cosy online format. We have had our issues but now everyone in the group can move into a breakout room for small group work and share their screen. Together, we have learned a fresh way of working in our new online community.

Our 26 students have been undertaking their VCE this year in very challenging conditions. Some have struggled with not having a laptop to attend their classes. Others are still really worried about what is going to happen with their ATAR scores. Many come from large, lively families and have the responsibility of helping their younger siblings with their online learning. Some cannot find a quiet place to study and miss the library spaces.

We have helped the young people in our program with some of these issues. Members of our team worked together to find a generous donor to buy three laptops for three of our students, we provided advice to students on self-care and how the ATAR will work this year. But other issues are not in our control. We can’t build another storey on someone’s house or send their younger siblings back to school.

Aiming High has just been doing its best to help our young people to stay motivated. We shifted the focus this year as we learnt more about what was needed from us. For example, we had fewer academic workshops during lockdown. What did increase were the games and social chats at the start of each session before settling in to tutoring. This half hour was one of the best parts of my

working week as it was a time for laughter and healthy competition as well as a fair amount of ribbing and banter. We all missed the days before the pandemic but we continued to aim high and to accept the ‘new normal’ for our little community.

Program highlights:

Amongst Aiming High’s 2019 cohort:

- Three quarters were year 12 students, and all attained their VCE.
- 91 per cent of year 12 participants received their first preference of university course, with the others receiving their second preference.
- There was definitely academic brilliance in this year’s cohort, with two students achieving ATAR scores in the 90s, and another five students in the 80s.

In 2020, Aiming High transitioned to working online:

- Students were able to seek assistance with their subjects throughout the entire online learning period, with the exception of one cancelled session.
- Three students in need were supplied with new laptops for their VCE studies and further studies at university.
- Tutors were provided in almost every subject from Accounting, to Maths and Literature.
- Four new tutors were recruited into the program, one of whom is an Aiming High alumnus. Three of the new tutors are recent VCE graduates the participants easily connected with.
- Assistance with scholarship applications for university was provided for students.
- Online workshops were completed during the school holidays on a range of topics, including applying for scholarships, time management and VCE English.

“My students can approach me and say ‘I don’t understand’ without judgement, and receive personalised, one-on-one tutoring. It is a space where the student is encouraged to ask questions and engage in an open discussion. As Albert Einstein once said, “I never teach my pupils, I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.”

~ Andi, AH Tutor



Bashir (student) and Chun (tutor) have been working together in Aiming High VCE Support Program for the past two years. Bashir's dream is to become a surgeon and Chun's is to become a secondary school teacher.

Aiming High VCE SUPPORT THE TWO OF US

BASHIR

I first spoke to Chun about a maths question at Aiming High (AH) last year. She explained it very simply and I knew that I had the answer. At the time, I was in Year 11 and I was studying Methods but I didn't have much time with the teacher. When I found that Chun knew her stuff I wasn't stressed anymore. Chun has a PhD in maths but it's not about having a PhD. It's her explanation. She explains very simply. A lot of teachers know the content, but they can't explain it.

The way Chun and I interact is that I go to her with my hard questions – with the easy questions I ask the teacher! I explain the theory that I know to her and she remembers it and makes the connections. Chun prompts me to answer the question and make the link so that I can learn it myself; a concept I can use for other hard questions.

Chun's personality is inspiring and I will miss that next year. She's a person you can feel calm with in her presence. She doesn't make you feel pressure. She makes you feel confident.

AH has been different this year. Last year we had a good time together and that is harder to achieve online but I still get the same amount of help. We play games which are interactive and fun and it's a good break to have after school to relax.

In the future, I want to study medicine and become a brain or heart surgeon. It's the most wanted job in the world so I thought 'Why not?'. Wherever you go, doctors are needed. In Australia, I have the opportunity to do it and I want to take the opportunity.

Being a doctor, you have a human interaction with the patient. If you see a person who is ill and you see them grow from their pain and you took part in that journey, that would be very good to be a part of.

CHUN

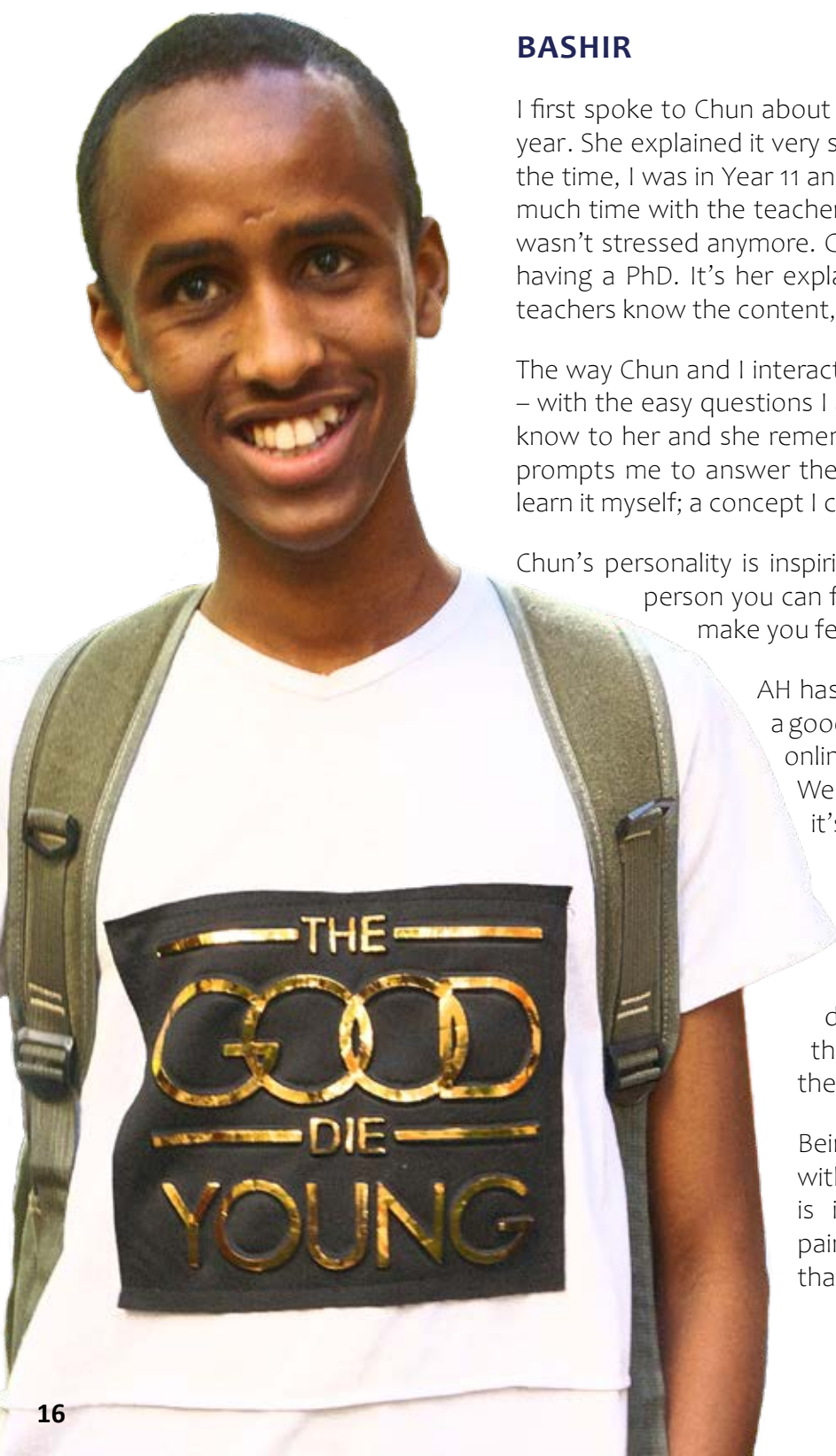
I remember meeting Bashir quite well. One day last year I noticed a new face. He wanted to ask a maths question and I sat with him. From the conversation I could tell that Bashir is full of ambition and he knows the value of the education he is receiving compared to what he has had in the past.

I've learnt a lot from Bashir. He is probably the only one who asks me questions about Specialist Maths and uni maths, which is hard. To be honest I don't remember it all that well and I wasn't that sharp with it. I noticed that Bashir is very smart himself. A lot of the time we have a conversation and he will get the answer. I realised I should ask him questions because he can get the answer himself.

Every student is special in some way. I find Bashir inspiring because he is very focussed and I can trust him to make progress himself and tell me when he doesn't understand. Sometimes he will take on the role of the teacher to explain to other students and he enjoys this. He takes on a lot of responsibility and has many roles in his school. He likes to take on a challenge which is a great quality.

It's been a challenging year for everyone and for Aiming High as well. The participants have adapted so well and quickly. I really appreciate that it's been a smooth transition: the students and staff feel safe and comfortable and have avoided frustration and stress, without too much change at once.

Ever since high school I wanted to be a teacher. When I moved to Australia, I didn't think I could cope with the students because of the language and culture being so different. Over the last couple of years, some of the students needed me and appreciated my help so I found where my value is. Bashir is one who has shown appreciation. I feel so touched and now I've built up my confidence.



LONDON, BERLIN, BEIJING AND... BROADMEADOWS

Jonathan Chee,
Chief Storyteller and WPI Coordinator

Celebrating the decade-long relationship between BGCS and American university Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Imagine being a university student at a renowned university in Massachusetts, USA, where every student is encouraged to study abroad as part of their degree. You look down the list of project centres that the university has: it spans fifty centres on six continents. Costa Rica, Venice, London, Cape Town, Beijing and Berlin are just some of the places you can go to for your project. You cast your eyes a little further down the list and you catch "Broadmeadows".

Where even is that? To be fair, Broadmeadows isn't on the list, but Melbourne, Australia has been a fixture on the list for almost a quarter of a century. So, what is the connection between an American research university focused on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and Broadmeadows? Well, the connection is us.

A little over ten years ago, our Deputy CEO Jaime was sitting in a lecture as part of his Master of Engineering. A visiting professor from the USA was giving a talk that day about how their university has been doing project-based learning at the university for (at that time) around thirty-five years. The university, Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), had developed a philosophy in the 1970s to broaden the skills and outlook of their STEM-focused students and required them to do a lot of project-based work. In short, they wanted their very technical graduates to be able to understand 'problems' in their social context and learn to develop solutions that met human needs, not just technical ones.

After a short discussion post-lecture and some emails back and forth, Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS) was assigned its first team of WPI students in January 2010 to work on a project entitled "Community Environmental Empowerment". In the 10 years since then,

we have had 11 subsequent teams come to do projects at BGCS support science and technology education, and to do a huge amount of work on our award-winning Good People Act Now (GPAN) and Aiming High VCE Support programs.

With such an established and fruitful relationship, BGCS became the local coordinating agency to support WPI's Melbourne Project Center five years ago. As part of this role, we help secure 12 projects a year with organisations such as Museums Victoria, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, CERES, Brotherhood of St Laurence, and Port Phillip Ecocentre. For the very first time, WPI will have eighteen projects in Melbourne during the 2020 calendar year, a reflection of the university's ambitious goal to support the majority of undergraduate students to complete their project-based learning component overseas.

One of the benefits of this partnership is that we develop new relationships with organisations, some like us and some very different. Undoubtedly one of the most powerful and rewarding aspects is to have the student teams come and work with us for an intense seven-week period. The students bring incredible energy, fresh insight, and plenty of different perspectives to problems that may have been stumping us for some time. Every single time we host a project, the staff involved are inevitably afforded an opportunity to reflect on our programs and practice and benefit from the rich exchange that we participate in with the student team and their advisors. On top of that, we really get to super-charge our programs in a way that we simply wouldn't be able to do on our own.

We look forward to continuing to do more work with WPI through the Melbourne Project Center, and reflecting on the impact and legacy of such wonderful projects as we inch towards the celebration of twenty-five years of WPI in Melbourne.

HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Edgar Caballero Aspe,
Education and Sustainability Coordinator

The school holiday program is a youth development program for young people in the Broadmeadows region to experience leisure and creative activities, to develop skills, and build social capital.

In the four years I have been running the School Holiday Program, I have never had to cancel a single session. Sure, we've had to change our plans due to extreme weather conditions on a couple of occasions, but in January's bushfire season this year I cancelled not one, but two days. Australians were reeling from the devastating fires that wreaked such terrible havoc across our landscape, but it never occurred to me that I would be forced to cancel an entire holiday's worth of the program not long after. While the impact of climate change is visible on our landscape, it is affecting the most vulnerable in ways we can't clearly see.

The goal of providing the School Holiday Program is to provide affordable options for some of our most vulnerable children and families. It is designed to provide opportunities to experience leisure and creative activities, and to develop skills. We have kayaked in a swimming pool, investigated the lifeforms by the beach, and explored urban places that they have never been to. While these programs are often designed to expand the experiences of these young people, the side benefits are that many new bonds are developed and social connections and cohesion are formed.

In spring 2019 we decided to take the logistically more challenging option of taking a group of the younger children (as well as a healthy handful of parents) into the city to see a production of 91-Storey Treehouse at the Arts Centre. Can you imagine the look on the children's faces as the train pulled closer to the highrise buildings of the city? Or the excitement of crossing over the Yarra River, many of them for the very first time? With the sights and sounds of the city as the prelude, walking into the Arts Centre was a spectacular main show – and the show hadn't even started! It is days like these that inspire us and remind us of the importance of providing these experiences for children (and their families) in our community.

It is hard to know what our School Holiday Program looks like in a post-coronavirus world. Social distancing and other measures will dictate many operational features and likely have an impact on the number of children we can have in the program. We have developed our capacity to deliver

some activities and experiences online, but we hope that we are never forced to provide a program that consists solely of remote programming. There is so much to learn and experience from being out in the world.



“

It's been a great pick-me-up each week and I've really valued being able to keep in touch with everyone through the year.

~ GPAN volunteer



GENDER EQUITY

Georgia Ransome,
Gender Equity Coordinator

For many years, BGCS has been a local pioneer in the push for gender equality and ending violence against women through its Good People Act Now (GPAN) project. In 2019, BGCS made gender equity an organisational key priority area, establishing a gender equity working group to help drive this change across all of the organisation's operations.

Some significant results of this work this year include the installation of a family room for breastfeeding mothers, a menstruation station, an all staff Workplace Equality and Respect survey, staff training opportunities, and a gender audit of all 43 of the organisation's policies. As we strive to create a more equitable workplace and community, we encourage all staff, volunteers and members of the Banksia Gardens and wider Hume community to join us in this journey.

The GPAN and Enhanced Pathways projects have continued strongly this year. Having been involved with GPAN since 2017, I was overjoyed when I was offered the role to coordinate the project in 2020. That excitement quickly developed into nerves at the thought of the shoes I would need to fill. However, as the year began, it didn't take long for my perfectionism to kick into high gear and GPAN's year seemed mapped out to be bigger and better than ever before. Everything was falling into place, the volunteers, new and old, were highly engaged and then a global pandemic brought everything to an immediate standstill.

My anxious mind, which always veers toward disaster mode, was convinced in a matter of days that for the first time since its inception in 2014, GPAN training would be cancelled and there would be no volunteer team to lead actions in the Hume community throughout the year.

However, GPAN is much bigger than just the person who leads it and although COVID-19 has been a huge factor in feelings of isolation, in true GPAN form, the group pulled together to create that 'family feeling' and thrived in these unprecedented times. Though we have not been as active in the community this year, the GPAN group continues to go from strength to strength; with high levels of online engagement at our fortnightly meetings, spreading our message of gender equity, continually developing our knowledge and skills with guest speakers and busily preparing for world domination in 2021! In previous years,

the GPAN youth action group has met fortnightly for two hours each Wednesday to share a meal, support one another, discuss ideas and plan actions in the community. This year, our fortnightly meetings looked a little different. We met virtually and competed for who had the most delicious dinner at home (usually Nicola with a bowl of pasta) and our focus on the professional development of the young people continued, but what has not changed is the support and kindness shared between members.

"It's been a great pick-me-up each week and I've really valued being able to keep in touch with everyone through the year" – GPAN volunteer

The GPAN project prides itself on being authentically youth-led, so to Abbey, Ailish, Alixandra, Aria, Ayana, Bodhi, Bree, Channa, Chloe, Christopher, James, Louise, Monica, Natalie, Nicola, Renee, Teish, Than and Ujjeshaa - thank you for making the project what it is. And a big thank you to GPAN's co-facilitator, Emily Sporik.

Adding to this year's many complexities, BGCS was venturing into new territory. In order to strengthen the next generation of workers and their capacity to eradicate gendered violence, BGCS had committed to taking on more placement students than in previous years. As universities and TAFEs began to remove their students due to COVID-19 restrictions, it seemed that our goal was out of reach. However, as we have proved during these difficult times, we successfully adjusted to create a new normal, hosting placement students remotely to achieve our common goals.

Program highlights:

- A Trivia Night & Art Showcase was hosted for more than 100 guests, raising over \$1,000.
- Two young people were awarded with the Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award including a \$500 scholarship for each winner to further their personal or professional development.
- The first GPAN Hub at Hume Central Secondary College was set up, assisting the students to complete a number of actions including a year level assembly and school poster campaign.
- GPAN became a key partner in the Your Story, Your Lens project led by DPV Health, delivering Gender Equity workshops to local young people.

EURYDICE DIXON AWARD WINNERS

ARIA *and* AJ

This award was created in 2018 in response to the murder of young Melbourne woman, Eurydice Dixon, at the hands of a young Broadmeadows man. The GPAN team named this award to honour Eurydice's memory and celebrate the work of young people in Hume who are actively working to create respectful and equal communities.

As part of GPAN's 2019 end of year celebration, the youth action group awarded two young people with the Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award.

The recipients, Aria Nanai and Aj Brennan, are two young women who took part in the first GPAN Hub at Hume Central Secondary College. Aria and Aj gave up their lunchtimes at school to gain skills and knowledge around gender equity, respectful relationships and being an active bystander. They then went on to lead actions in the school to influence their peers including hosting a year level assembly.

Aria was drawn to GPAN by the "passionate GPAN crew" who visited Hume Central Secondary College in Term 1, 2019 to spruik the upcoming GPAN Hub. She was already interested in the promotion of gender equity and knowing the GPAN Hub would help her to assist her fellow students and her community, she jumped at the opportunity to be part of the student-led team.

Aj was keen to join the GPAN Hub because the assembly the GPAN team hosted at her school the previous year had really stuck with her. She was excited that other students were interested in advocating for an equitable school community. Aj recognised the discrimination and harassment against her fellow female students and was

angered by the lack of bystander action from teachers and school staff. Being a part of the GPAN Hub allowed her to hone her skills and knowledge and enabled her to influence her family and peers.

Aj believes that being an advocate for gender equity is one way you can improve the world and leave it in a better way than you found it. Aria and Aj used the \$500 scholarship that accompanies the award to further their development, Aria as a musician and Aj as an aspiring director.

“ GPAN made me feel like even though I was a girl from a poor area, people believed in me and thought that I could succeed in my dreams.

~ Aj Brennan

Winning this award has taught me to really push myself and inspired me to really strive for the best. It's shown me what I am capable of and encouraged me to pursue my dreams!

~ Aria Nanai

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Edgar Caballero Aspe,
Education and Sustainability Coordinator

BGCS made environment one of its core values in 2019. In 2020, the focus for this area has been CARYA, a youth-led action group, and a citizen science initiative.

In so many ways, this year has been a tale of two halves. The global pandemic has been all-absorbing, and time itself has taken on a weird new dimension such that everything pre-coronavirus is a jumbled blur with barely any chronology: all we can tell for certain is that it was before lockdown. Even the terrible summer of bushfires that we experienced is beaten back in our memory – or at least it is for those who were lucky enough not to have suffered the effects of the fires up close.

But if we wind the clocks of our memory back to those fires, many of us might recall having the notion that the catastrophic future prophesied by some had crashed into our present, and that the millions of climate change protestors who had been striking across the globe just a couple of months earlier were probably right. Remember the global climate strikes for school? Our young people have been expressing a demand with a clear goal and voice: we need to re-create our way of living so we don't suffer the inevitable consequences of climate change.

While there have been some impactful actions on the environmental front at the organisation, in February the staff and Board of Governance of Banksia Gardens Community Services voted to make climate action and sustainability one of the strategic priorities for the organisation over the next five years.

Early in the year we hosted a team of STEM students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the USA for seven weeks, and they helped us to develop the framework and training for our CARYA program. The menacing dark haze on the horizon and the wafts of smoke in the air would have been quite a backdrop for these students to be working on a ten-week program of theory, workshops and field trips on reducing our impact on the environment and adapting to the changing climate.

Less than a month later, we hosted a Clean Up Australia Day event at nearby Jacana Wetlands as part of our

Citizen Science Project and bee hotel programs. Together with participants from the Young Muslims Network of Australia and Banksia staff, volunteers and other community members, we cleared almost eighty kilograms of hard-to-reach rubbish, and tiny pieces of dangerous plastic from the home of birds, frogs, microorganisms, and many other species we are connected to. With the area clear of rubbish, we were able to identify and count all the non-human inhabitants of the wetlands, promote a healthy environment and increase pollination with bee hotels.

With the foundations of a climate-focused citizen science project coming together and the launch of CARYA scheduled for April, the global pandemic hit the pause button for all of us. Because of the restrictions imposed on social gatherings and movement, we had to rethink the delivery of CARYA and the citizen science program. Can you do climate adaptation education and nature observation over the internet? The field trips and workshops are central tenets of the program that we will absolutely engage in if possible, but, like our training was intended to train participants to do, we have been adapting CARYA to the (social) climate by incorporating some online components and contingencies.

The ambition for the organisation is to provide more opportunities for staff and community to participate in climate action and training, to establish programs that address sustainability topics such as food security, gardening, waste reduction and energy, and to embed the principles of climate action into all of the programs, operations and policies of the organisation.

The pandemic has thrown a spanner in the works of most human activity across the planet. It has demonstrated that we have an incredible capacity to change our behaviour and adapt to change forced upon us. Young and mature, all together we are resourceful and ingenious enough to survive and enrich our living experience by implementing creative changes to how we interact with the environment.





SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH EDUCATION

Natasha Alabakov,
Youth Pathways Coordinator

Social Cohesion Through Education (SCTE) enhances social cohesion and community resilience by creating spaces and activities in school settings for young people to develop tolerance, respect and an appreciation for diversity in society.

SCTE has been led for three years by the calm, collected, creative brain of Naomi Brouwer. Her level head and enthusiasm around building creative spaces, and willingness to explore the often farfetched ideas of her trusty support facilitator, Tash Alabakov, has fashioned a program that sticks true to its nature: encouraging cohesion. Building these creative spaces and activities affords a safe space for critical thinking, team building and self-reflection, and encourages the innate abilities of young people to tap into their wacky imagination to express their culture, values and skills.

2019 saw the production of another documentary in the 'Human After All' series, featuring the behind-the-scenes skills of Amelia Ducker and starring BGCS's very own Marmush and Fessoom Moynihan. They share their story of being adopted into a family in Australia and growing up with their experience around racism.

This film was screened for students at Hume Central Secondary College, Ilim College (boys' campus) and Dallas Primary School. The documentary was followed by Q & A sessions with Marmush and Fessoom around themes of racism and diversity, plus activities which captured young people's stories, including puppet making and personal collages inspired by the film and the students' backgrounds and values. Other SCTE activities included weekly sport and Art Hive sessions at Bethal Primary School (BPS). The Boys and the Girls groups at Hume Central Secondary College continued, in addition to the female only lunchtime sport program.

Following the popularity of the Hume Central Boys Group program, a similar Girls Group was established in late 2019 for girls at risk of disengaging from school, having trouble managing friendship groups and/or experiencing depression and anxiety. A highlight for the new group this year was the excursion to Second Chance Animal Rescue where students met the fabulous, friendly team who work tirelessly to support animals in need. The students

also met some of the animals, which they photographed and created portraits, played with and patted. They also made a small donation to assist future rescue work. As early 2020 got underway, Naomi, who had grown a tiny human inside her, had to pass on the lead baton to the capable Melodie, with Tash still alongside, in order to welcome a beautiful little boy into a very strange world.

Lockdown measures and online learning has meant disruption in communication with other partner schools, forcing the organisation to find new ways of connecting with students. While some other school programs have hit pause, the Boys and Girls groups have been successfully running online since March, with the close support of the Hume Central Wellbeing Team - shout out to Tom Hurle and Michael Marwal! Albeit in smaller targeted groups, the building and retaining of relationships has continued during a time of significant uncertainty.

The sessions have provided a nonjudgemental space for young people to express and reflect on how remote learning and lockdown feels for them. They provide connection for those who may have been experiencing feelings of isolation prior to the lockdown, which have been exacerbated by the restrictions. The program responds to the current needs of the group, and this overwhelmingly centres around wellbeing, both physical and mental. We unpack issues like overuse of screen time, lack of exercise, sleep and routine, and its effects, while allowing space for humour and relaxed creativity, drawing, online group pictictionary games, and teaching new IT skills. An example is the design program Canva which was used by participants to create works for the SCTE 'Life in Lockdown' postcard art prize initiative.

Social cohesion is not possible when families in the local community are struggling to meet their basic needs. With the onset of COVID-19 and subsequent restrictions, SCTE joined forces with a BGCS COVID-19 Community Needs Assessment program team to help gauge the needs of vulnerable local families and provide assistance with food, medical care, access to technology and educational support. We are confident that as the broader SCTE program continues, we will continue to adapt to the presenting needs of our community and our young people as we take on the challenge to think outside the box with our responsiveness and projects.

Youth TRANSITIONS

Natasha Alabakov,
Youth Pathways Coordinator

Youth Transitions Support Program (YTSP) supports young people of refugee and migrant background aged 15-25 years to build their skills and participate in education, employment and sport. The program places a strong focus on workplace readiness, access to employment and vocational opportunities, and creating strong social connections.

I took over the reins of the YTSP at the beginning of 2020, after the phenomenal groundwork by Georgina Wheeler, who has been with the program since its establishment in 2017. As I was transitioning into the role it was clear that Georgina had established very strong connections with participants and staff and they all expressed sincere sadness when they learned she was moving on to new adventures overseas. Although a little out of my comfort zone with the high bar that Georgina had set, she was always supportive and reassured me I'd do a great job!

YTSP continues to engage and support young people aged 15 – 25 from recently arrived refugee and migrant backgrounds. Building strong connections with this cohort is a small team of coaches from Banksia Gardens Community Services, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Hume City Council, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, the Centre for Multicultural Youth and Arabic Welfare.

With more than 200 young people shared in our caseload, our goal is to help young people grow their employability skills, support them into study and volunteer opportunities and help them to widen their social network and build confidence through conversational English classes and sport and recreation activities. To do this we focus on participants' strengths and aspirations rather than their limitations and barriers; this focus is a hallmark of Advantaged Thinking, the framework that drives our program.

COVID-19 has been a jolt to the YTSP program but thankfully we have been able to continue to support our participants remotely. They too are adjusting and have had to navigate education courses moving to online, dealing with being in and out of lockdown at home and on campus, and have become familiar with the job keeper/seeker requirements and barriers. Concurrently we have all upped our IT game- or have mentored each other in

various virtual platforms and processes...cue repeated google searches of 'Why is my audio not working?' Lockdown 1.0 was a scramble to find resources and information, and to fast-track an understanding of what this meant for our personal and working lives. Participants were worried, some gave up on study/job searching to focus on their families, the harder to reach became still harder to reach, and many expressed deep thankfulness for the personal check in even when not requiring immediate support. It was more about touching base and letting participants know support was available for them if needed. Issues supported during this time shifted slightly and centered around assignment tutoring, IT support, tenancy issues, and with services overwhelmed online, tracking the answers down by speaking to a real human, which took time and some extra sleuthing!

Lockdown 2.0 hit but this time there was more familiarity, although there was a shared deflation at being in this position again. There was also an improved ability to empathise – as the song goes: 'We're all in this together'. Once we swallowed that lump in the throat, we all recognised we had the tools at hand and were better prepared to go into battle once again, this time donning our most fashionable homemade masks. We were registering new young people into the program and within the space of two weeks had three participants enrolled in RMIT and two who had landed new jobs.

Positivity was booming with other coaches who enjoyed similar success, and coaches had renewed enthusiasm around connectedness with participants in their online programs. With ideas for new programs being dreamt up, there was more willingness to jump into the unknown and try new things to see what gained traction. Similarly with participants, they were back to being focused on their pathways, becoming familiar with course options suited to their interests and skill levels, and job opportunities available in a state that saw more job loss than gain – they were curious and willing to follow up again.

It was with this mutual understanding and adaption of both participants and coaches to this 'new world' that gave me hope and motivated me to help others when the bleakness of a pandemic with no real end in sight reared its head. We will persevere through this and come out hopefully better equipped and more resilient than before, and these are skills that will last a lifetime.

Program highlights:

- Hospitality training for five participants was facilitated in the Common Bean Café.
- Weekly job support/study group sessions were conducted with support from Northern Buddies for two hours each week for up to eight participants.
- A workplace taster and dinner was hosted for a group of 13 participants at Cinema Nova.
- Three participants were supported to successfully enrol at RMIT and two participants secured jobs at the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.
- Conducted one-on-one study support sessions each week for up to four participants.
- Conducted daily one-on-one support sessions with participants.
- Three online pathways sessions were run in collaboration with Kangan Institute.



THE COMMON BEAN cafe

Hansani



The Common Bean Cafe was established to provide a space for young people to gain work experience and develop their skills and confidence required in finding work. This is my experience of becoming involved in the café.

It's 8:00am, chairs and tables are being put out and soon the aroma of coffee will fill the foyer of DPV Health at 42-48 Coleraine Street, Broadmeadows. Welcome to the Common Bean Cafe!

One of the best parts of working in the cafe is the elderly patients attending the clinic who come in and share their life stories, experiences and have a conversation about their day. Sometimes they bring their knitting or art materials.

The children from the Banksia Gardens Estate love to make people aware of their presence, at times they can be a bit chaotic. Some of the kids often do not eat regularly and I've found that asking them to have a seat and serving them hot chocolate can change the dynamic. Sometimes we even play board games. This has built trust between me and those children who need someone to be kind to them and not reject them just because they are showing up in a way that is noisy or provocative. This has taught me a lot about working with children and developing the skills to connect with them and understand them without judgement. This is why every day is a different experience – it's like the sea, each wave is different but contains its own beauty and story.

As a young person, finding work is extremely difficult since many businesses are not open to hiring someone with no experience, despite the young person's commitment to learning or their passion. For young people this can mean struggles with mental health, financial difficulties, and, at times, the risk of homelessness – which I faced at one time. From my experience, unemployment means being unable to be independent and to provide for oneself. It means a lack of confidence and belief in oneself: you don't

know how long it may take until you find work, and the constant worry of not being able to support oneself is highly damaging.

Working as a barista in the Common Bean Cafe was my first work experience, and my first paid placement after year 12. At the cafe I learned to make my first coffee and served my first customers. Through this internship, I learnt how to work in hospitality, and developed soft skills required to work in other industries. I learnt the basic skills of operating a cafe such as customer service, cleaning, making coffee, food preparation, teamwork and so much more. I was given continuous support in developing my skills and eventually was given a leadership role. As part of my role as a manager, I was able to train other young adults taking part in the program. Through training new people, I developed the ability to teach hospitality skills and to provide further support as a mentor.

As a shy individual, I learnt how to communicate more effectively by meeting many people every day with different backgrounds, skills, and experiences. I was able to develop a professional network as well as make friends and be part of my workplace 'family'. These skills also transferred into my private life where I was able to socialise more and develop my own circle of friends who shared similar interests with me.

Working here provides a beginning for young people who want to build a successful life for themselves, whatever that success means to them. It is a foundation for building new skills, confidence and self-esteem in a safe and supportive environment. By striving for their goals these young people act as role models, demonstrating to others that even though their lives may be difficult, they are not alone and support and encouragement can help them to aim higher and go after more success. The value of the Common Bean Cafe transcends far beyond its tangible aspects.

I am very thankful for this social enterprise as it allowed me to develop myself not only professionally, but also as a person. Despite my initial struggles, I feel that without the Common Bean Cafe I may not be where I am today. I know this program will help so many young people who, like me, are dealing with their own unique struggles.

~ Hansani Patabendige

BROADMEADOWS COMMUNITY YOUTH JUSTICE ALLIANCE

Abdullah Lary,
BCYJA Coordinator

Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance (BCYJA) is a partnership project which works with local young people between the ages of 10 and 24 at risk of becoming involved with the justice system.

As the British singer-songwriter and former Spice Girl, Melanie C once said “It’s just the beginning it’s not the end, things will never be the same again”. This is an accurate description of living and working during the coronavirus pandemic.

As for the BCYJA, I recall having great concerns at the start of the year as the ‘crisis’ unfolded and the imminent reality of working remotely from home was approaching. The biggest question was how would a program that is predominately client facing, with a key feature of co-located agencies, run predominantly remotely? Well, to answer that question, very well in fact.

The BCYJA team quickly adapted to the change, developing tailored operational plans and trialling them earlier in the year, and set a series of key processes in motion that would be invaluable to the continuing success in later months. Another contributing factor for the successful integration was that all of our partner agencies and key referrers were also converting to remote work processes.

Thus, we said ‘good bye’ to the old face-to-face meetings and ‘hello’ to new and improved video conferencing and remote style engagement. The new quickly became the norm and I was blown away to see the Alliance team’s work productivity and processes maintain (some even improve) while working from home. Despite the major change in service delivery, participant engagement remained unchanged and the team continued to receive referrals throughout the year. The program engaged with close to 80 participants during this financial year, 23 of whom engaged during the lockdown/isolation period.

A case in point: a young woman with complex needs and a colourful offending history was referred to BCYJA, who pre-lockdown appeared to be veering towards a bad path. Because of the lockdown restrictions, her caseworker had to change the engagement method, such as where and how they met. Meetings formally held inside the office either became walks outside or online meetings that she could attend from the safety and comfort of her

own home. Despite the reduced physical contact, some amazing outcomes were achieved, including linking the client with appropriate mental and physical health supports and engagement in education. Her caseworker reports the participant’s confidence and self-sufficiency has improved. This is just one example of the many clients who responded positively to the change in the way we worked.

When we do eventually ‘go back to normal’ I do not foresee the team returning to conventional meetings, as video conferencing has really been an amazing experience and proved to be an efficient process. Personally, I quite like the social distancing rules as it gives me the perfect excuse to avoid shaking hands with people. You see, I could never guess the right firmness I should grasp someone’s hand, how many shakes is appropriate or when to let go (a nightmare and awkward exchange each time). The fact that I am also an awkward hugger does not help, so yes, there are some benefits of social distancing for people like me!

However, the biggest reflection for me personally (and I believe for many) has been the blessings that come from working from home. While having work processes and productivity maintained, being close to family has been both an invaluable and privileged experience. For me it’s just the beginning it’s not the end, things will never be the same again, but in a positive sense.

Program highlights:

- The program engaged with close to 80 participants during this financial year, of which 23 were new engagements during the lockdown/isolation period.
- The Alliance team have supported over 160 participants through court outreach and advocacy.
- Over 40 participants successfully linked to educational pathways.
- Over 100 referrals made to employment, mental health and other specialist services.
- The Thursday drop-in and Jiu-Jitsu program (when active) regularly hosted up to 10 participants.
- The Alliance team established a newly developed REFLECT program in collaboration with Headspace, targeting emotional regulation and has been tailored to an online forum.



ADULT EDUCATION

Rana Tbaileh
Manager Training and Employment

Adult Education and Training supports people to learn valuable skills for employment, further education or social connection.

The memories of 2020 will be dominated primarily by the global coronavirus pandemic. The impact of the pandemic has, of course, been felt across the entire Training and Employment Department and beyond: staff, students, government and business partners alike have had to struggle through the many changes to the way we live our lives.

We really appreciate the decisions made by the Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board to support business continuity, to provide some measure of funding assurance and to allow us to focus on our organisation and the services we provide during this most uncertain of times. I would also like to say thank you to everyone in our community for your goodwill and cooperation in these difficult circumstances. As you will see below, this crisis has drawn our community closer together in many ways.

More than half a year of “business as usual” and achievements prior to the pandemic need to be acknowledged, as well as the enormous effort to respond to the challenges the pandemic posed.

Program highlights:

- Co-design of an industry contextualised, pre-accredited training resource. The curriculum and delivery methodology for the resource was designed and documented to enable application to different contexts and used by providers across the Learn Local sector.
- Development of a new A-Frame Program, comprising a course plan, planning guide, facilitation guide, teacher workbook, learner workbook and assessment tools.
- Development and delivery of “Creating Pathways to Employment in Broadmeadows”. This pre-accredited work experience taster was part of the CSL Behring scholarship project, which also featured custom support for participants to access employment or further education.
- Enhancement of existing relationships with local industries, agencies and employers, also in addition

to establishment of new partnerships with employers such as Nestle.

Key numbers and milestones include:

- Engagement with more than 1,210 participants to build their employability skills and encourage them to move to employment or further study.
- Delivery of more than 45,000 student contact hours.
- Delivery of CSL Behring “WorkConnect Program Scholarship: Creating Pathways to Employment” in Broadmeadows. Of the 25 program participants, 21 were placed directly into employment, two were referred to Reconnect and free TAFE courses, and two receiving further support.
- Learner Engagement A-Frame Programs (LEAP) secured for delivery of specific short training courses such as Tailor It, MyGov and Australian workplace .
- Delivery of courses in 13 school community hubs.
- 110 participants supported in the Work Skills Program. Of these, 44 per cent are now in full or part-time employment, a further 14 per cent are enrolled in TAFE, and 16 per cent are engaged in volunteer work.

“When the coronavirus crisis hit, my students were very sad and they kept asking when they could come back to class. Some of them were frustrated because they lost their jobs. It was somewhat difficult to shift them to online and virtual platforms, however, BGCS gave us support, training and the tools to provide this type of transition for the learners. Students soon adjusted to learning online, and many enjoyed the new experience.

~ Mathew, English Tutor

and TRAINING

FOOD RELIEF

The program provides assistance in the form of food parcels, material aid, and other assistance for families and individuals experiencing difficulties. BGCS provides this relief as a response that is non-judgmental, culturally sensitive and non-discriminatory.

Initially, this program was designed to assist participants in our adult learning classes (ACFE learners) but when the coronavirus pandemic started in March, we expanded our service to other community members seeking assistance, including asylum seekers and refugees. The program used to run once a week for 15 beneficiaries, but since March we have been operating four times a week, supporting 60 families.

IT REFURB

Partly a Work Skills Program to develop IT and engineering skills, this program was originally designed to provide high quality, affordable computers to the community and divert used computer parts from landfill. With the unprecedented push towards remote work and learning, this program was inundated with requests for computers and we ran out of supplies several times.

Many thanks to Hume City Council and Melbourne Airport for providing desktops and laptops for refurbishment. Since March alone, we have refurbished and distributed over 200 computers to the community.

WORK SKILLS

Now in its eighth year of delivery, Work Skills covers a diverse range of activities aimed at re-engaging unemployed people 18–65 years of age. The program provides high-quality, flexible training to eligible unemployed people and caters for the increasing demand for general employability skills as well as communication skills in a vocationally-oriented environment.

Our Work Skills activities are hands-on workshops in small class sizes. This model of training ensures that participants receive plenty of one-on-one instruction in a practical environment that mirrors professional settings, enabling participants to move confidently from training into new professional roles after program completion. Our dedicated team work closely with government, businesses, jobactive providers and training organisations across the region to change lives, families and communities through employment.

“I became a health awareness worker!! During this very unsettling time, everyone is learning new terms such as “social distancing”, “shelter-in-place”, and “flattening the curve”. Even native English speakers need to learn and practice these new terms in response to the pandemic, so I can’t imagine how difficult it must be for an English language learner to feel at ease with the amount of information we receive from daily news updates. While the restrictions are in place, I still provide opportunities for language learners to practice and understand what is happening in the world.

~ Jamil, English Tutor

“

It is in these uncertain times that I really feel the importance of our role as community workers, and the role of humanity.

~ Rana Tbaileh,
Manager Training and Employment



A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON VULNERABILITY, CRISIS AND COMMUNITY FROM RANA:

Late one night during the first coronavirus lockdown I received a phone call. It was from a lady in her 40s, a former student at BGCS who I knew. I could hear her voice shaking as she spoke to me. I could tell that she was agitated and worried.

“I’m so lonely. I have no family, no close friends. Nobody.”

We had all been living in lockdown for some weeks. She told me how isolated and vulnerable she felt. She told me about how her health was deteriorating, and that her doctor had referred her for surgery. As the conversation unfolded, she revealed that she in fact was due to have surgery the following day, and the doctor had instructed that somebody had to attend the hospital to take her home, and somebody had to stay with her at night to look after her.

“I have no one,” she said. She cried and cried.

Can you imagine the loneliness of living by yourself in lockdown, and then feeling like you had nobody to turn to when you’re sick? That week in particular, I was dealing with a serious family issue of my own. What was I to do? How could I help this lady? After checking with my CEO, I calmly

asked the woman what time the surgery was.

“8:30 am”, she replied.

“Be ready by 7:30 am, and I’ll pick you up. When we are done at the hospital, you’ll come to my place and I’ll look after you.”

She couldn’t believe it. “Are you serious?” she kept asking.

And that is what I did. I accompanied her to the hospital and waited until she woke from surgery. I talked to the doctor and asked him to provide a carer certificate for me – I didn’t want any trouble with the law on my drive home!

I felt so proud of helping this lady. It is in these uncertain times that I really feel the importance of our role as community workers, and the importance of humanity. It really matters to be there for one another. People have turned up at BGCS for so many things. People are telling their families and friends to come to us as they see how we help and provide support, and they value it.

Despite this threatening pandemic we are able to make our services available to everyone who needs us, no matter what.



step inside *and* MEET RICARD

One of the joys of working in adult education is meeting extraordinary people with incredible stories. This is doubly so when working in an area like Broadmeadows, with its rich culture of migrants over the decades. Some learners come to us to develop their skills to gain employment, others to be able to develop English language skills to settle into their new Australian home. Some students come to us with a passion to make the community better.

Ricard is one of our English learners, and has been learning with BGCS since fourth term in 2019. His aim in enrolling was to improve his English skills in order to communicate better. Originally from Iraq, Ricard worked as a chef in his family's restaurant there for many years.

In August 2014, he and his family were forced to flee their hometown, leaving everything they knew behind them. After a year in northern Iraq, they travelled to Jordan where they obtained a Humanitarian Visa and moved to Australia in September 2016.

Early this year, Ricard was employed as a chef at Free to Feed, a non-profit social enterprise that offers the Brave Meals Program, an employment program for refugees and migrants to maintain community connections and keep people from suffering social isolation. When coronavirus measures prevented Free to Feed from running their refugee

support program, stopping wasn't an option that Ricard wanted to take. They had to find a way to continue providing support that Brave Meals provided.

Replacing the organisation's usual face-to-face workshops and events which were cancelled under COVID-19 restrictions, Free to Feed's cohort of refugee participants continued generating an income by cooking take-home and home-delivered meals for the wider community.

The incredible chef enrolled in first term this year, but when the restrictions came into place, he enrolled in our online English class. Ricard says he and his family are enjoying life in Australia, and that coronavirus restrictions will not stop him from learning and improving his skills.

His advice during isolation to his community is to keep positive, stay safe, keep healthy and embrace your hobbies.

“ Me and my family really enjoy our lives in Australia. The coronavirus will not stop me learning, it is just another challenge.

~ Ricard

FAMILY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Nicole Blyth,
FLP Coordinator

The Family Learning Partnership (FLP) at Holy Child Primary School (HCPS) supports parental involvement and engagement in their child's learning, thereby increasing learning outcomes for both parents and children.

If only providing a child with a laptop was enough to ensure remote learning accessibility and success. It isn't. When schools closed in March and ceased face-to-face teaching, the immediate focus for HCPS, as for any school, was to get learning online and to make its delivery in this remote learning space as accessible for children and families as possible.

The role of the FLP is to support parental engagement in their child's learning to enhance and improve learning outcomes. This engagement usually takes the form of activities such as involving parents as helpers in class and on excursions, pop-up educational workshops, school tours and transition programs. With the introduction of pandemic restrictions, the usual method of engaging with parents went out the window, as did the education delivery model that the school community was used to. We only really began to understand the barriers families were facing with online learning when we paused to ask them.

The FLP team worked with school staff to design and disseminate a school-wide survey to assess the needs of families. Being the multicultural school community that we are, we had the survey translated into three community languages and we also developed an introductory video in the three languages to accompany the survey. Our families responded to the survey in English, Chaldean, Assyrian and Vietnamese to tell us about their experience of remote learning and what they needed to make it more accessible for them.

The most common challenge was technology: internet access was one part of that challenge, for many more it was access to devices that created the challenge. Many families had four people sharing one device, which was simply unsustainable. Financially, some people were managing with a coronavirus supplement from Centrelink, whilst others needed to access additional

food support to feed their family.

To keep the children engaged in their online learning and connected to their peers and school community, we assisted in navigating and accessing these new online learning platforms. Additionally, we also provided guidance on how to manage home life with all its additional challenges in lockdown. We shared this information with our families through a range of videos and other media, and had the resources translated for greater access.

Whilst so much has changed since restrictions were imposed, it is clear there will be more fluctuations to come and continuing to assist parents in supporting their children's education is as important as ever.

Our thanks goes to ACFE for the flexibility of project delivery that the FLP affords. This has afforded us with the opportunity to respond quickly and meaningfully to continue to meet the learning needs of the HCPS community at this challenging and unprecedented time.

Program highlights:

- Delivery of a range of training programs including a Principal-led school tour of Penola College, Excursion Information, Parent Helper in the Classroom, and School Learning walks.
- Delivery of pop-up educational workshops for families on topics such as using online communication tools between families and teachers.
- Co-design and delivery of Kindergarten to Prep School Transition Program for HCPS; and co-design and distribution of a school-wide family survey of remote learning needs (technology and wellbeing).
- Design of visual educational documents for families in response to remote learning needs, including topics such as "How to hotspot your phone"
- Delivery of video tutorials for families on a range of topics such as how to log into a Google Meet, how to support your child submitting work in Google Classroom, how to make a no sew face mask, and providing a healthy home learning routine

“

...the usual method of engaging with parents went out the window. We only began to understand the barriers families were facing with online learning when we paused to ask them.



KENLEY COURT NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

Michael Mansour,

Kenley Court Neighbourhood House Coordinator

Kenley Court Neighbourhood House (KCNH) is operated by BGCS and is located in Meadow Heights. With a diverse local population and a large portion of refugees and new arrivals, KCNH connects and empowers people through various community development programs and services.

When the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, what stories will we tell about it? I've been pondering this question as I've looked back over the year just gone. In writing this report, I want our story to be a story of hope and support for all those who are in need and for all those who are lonely.

Over the course of the year, Kenley Court Neighbourhood House (KCNH) has assisted hundreds of families, and we have created a sense of community for many newly arrived refugees who have no one. KCNH has become a family that keeps growing and welcomes new members every week. We have supported young people through their studies, empowered girls to become leaders, assisted newly arrived refugees with their daily needs and settlement, and offered the space for community groups to meet and connect. We have built relationships with local schools and service providers, organised excursions and events for hundreds of people.

There was a moment during the first lockdown that really demonstrated the value of KCNH to me, and the importance of such places to our community's most vulnerable people during desperate times.

In April of this year, it was clear that everybody was going to have to restrict their movements, impacting on employment, income and the ability to literally put bread on the table. More and more people were out of work, and more and more people were turning to food support services such as our Foodbank Program. As the restrictions kept rolling in, food support programs in our area started closing meaning more people were turning up at KCNH desperate for food support. Who would feed these people?

We worked quickly to adapt our safety procedures and decided to continue operating the program. I must admit that I worried every single Thursday I went to coordinate the program, especially when the numbers of

families accessing this service increased by 40 per cent to reach 100 families every week. I feel lucky to have listened to some podcasts on Ancient Faith Radio at the beginning of the pandemic which inspired me to look at things differently and helped me to use the crisis as an opportunity for growth and development instead of despair. On a professional level, I felt Kenley had a big role to play in supporting our local families and communities during this crisis. I hope that others are able to look beyond the feelings of anxiety and despair, as they may discover opportunities for creativity and growth.

Some of our programs and services such as Study Group, Client Support and Girls Circle were able to transition to an online/remote format. Other programs, such as Client Support and Foodbank continued to operate under our COVID safe plan. In addition to the support provided in response to the pandemic restrictions, we also undertook a broad needs assessment of all the participants (and their families) in the Study Group, Girls Circle, Client Support and Foodbank Program. This report provides a snapshot of our program's highlights and achievements, all of which are made possible by our many funders, local partners, and volunteers.

KCNH highlights

- 10 ongoing programs delivered, supporting 225 people every single week of the year.
- In partnership with Northpoint Centre, more than 4250 food parcels distributed to Hume residents, with an average of 85 food parcels each week.
- 135 clients were supported through the Client Support Program: the majority of the recipients were newly arrived refugees.
- 25 students participated in the Study Group Program to learn, socialise, pursue interests and experience various recreational activities.
- Two school holidays excursions were coordinated as part of the Study Group program.
- 40 sessions of the Youth Connect Leadership Program (in partnership with Save the Children).
- Two families were supported to successfully access COVID-19 Technology and Access Support Grants to support remote learning.

GIRLS CIRCLE

The Girls Circle Program empowers girls from various backgrounds and cultures by helping build their social network, interpersonal skills and confidence as well as tackling isolation. This year we had 15 regular participants in the program, with some highlights including a family BBQ Day, participation in the Week without Violence campaign to end violence against women and girls, and a workshop with Headspace on supporting mental health.

Despite the lockdown restrictions, Girls Circle quickly moved online and many participants reported their strong appreciation for the continued activities and connection.



My daughter got so happy when she saw your name on the phone ringing...she was bored and didn't know what to do...when you called she got really excited to know she will joining the Girls Circle Program online.

~ A Girls Circle parent

FOOD BANK

The Foodbank Program has seen some of the biggest increases in demand of any program or service at KCNH and has continued to operate throughout the coronavirus lockdown. We worked with our partners to provide other material goods in addition to food, and also conducted needs assessments with 30 of our regulars, resulting in a range of referrals to other services.

YOUTH CONNECT

In partnership with Save the Children, we delivered 40 sessions of the Youth Connect Leadership Program to empower 12 young people aged 14–18 years. The program aimed to give these participants from refugee backgrounds the skills, knowledge and understanding to become active participants and peer leaders in their community. One of the wonderful outcomes of this program was five of the program participants leading a ‘messages of hope’ workshop to a group of 25 students at the Collingwood English Language School to promote a sense of belonging and being valued as a young Australian.

STUDY GROUP

The KCNH Study Group has established a solid operational foundation and attracted a regular group of participants over the year. This foundation enables us to understand our learners as people, which allows us to support them better academically and, sometimes, in other ways too.

An example of ‘extracurricular’ support was our involvement with a year seven student who had been suspended in term 1, 2020. The student had accidentally broken a glass door at school, and this was deemed intentional by one of the teachers. As a result, the student was suspended and informed that the school would be seeking payment from the student’s mother for the damages. We were able to establish that the incident was in fact an accident, and to liaise with the mother (whose English skills are very low, and who was also not in a financial position to pay for the damages in any case) and the school principal to drop the suspension and waive the repair bill.

LIVE *and* LEARN

It has been an interesting year in the life of Live and Learn, our settlement support program for young people co-delivered with Save the Children. In addition to the after-school program at KCNH, we added a new outreach component this year to target Kangan Institute and Collingwood Language school by providing the students and their families fun and educational activities specifically designed for their settlement and transition needs. In all, we facilitated 27 sessions for 25 regular participants, as well as reaching another 60 students through five outreach sessions at Kangan Institute and Collingwood Language School.

One highlight of the program was a family day excursion to Luna Park to celebrate and acknowledge the young people’s participation and achievements, and to help build social connections between children and families in the community. With a strong attendance of 42 people, it was an amazing experience for a lot of families as it was their first time visiting Luna Park and St Kilda beach. They all felt a sense of community which they have missed since arriving in Australia, and many new friendships among the families have been formed.

SOCIAL GROUPS

KCNH is home to many active social and cultural groups. Some groups, such as the Vietnamese Women’s Group and the Senior Iraqi/Syrian Men’s Group focus particularly on social connection. El Amal Women’s Group also features information sessions and workshops for Arabic speaking women on topics such as the Australian legal system, immunisation, family violence, financial planning and computer skills. Similarly, the Northern Turkish Women’s Group also features a mixture of social and informative, and this year also capitalised on a pre-accredited technology course delivered through BGCS.

KCNH also provides a safe space for the Bhutanese Nepali Ethnic School of Melbourne (BNESM) that educates young people (4–12 years) from their communities to learn more about their culture, history and language. During COVID-19 we were able to assist BNESM by printing and organising 30 home packs so they could continue their activities and learn remotely.

CLIENT SUPPORT

The program supported a total of 135 clients with the majority of the recipients being newly arrived refugees. 80 people received general client support, 32 attended four pre-accredited adult education classes and 23 people have been referred to other services, including DPV Health and Banksia Gardens Community Services. The most common types of support included employment support, support filling out forms and accessing educational pathways, and IT support for families to assist their children with remote learning.

We also provided four pre-accredited courses: English for Driving, Technology and Digital Literacy Class and two English for Citizenship classes. We had some great results from students attending these classes, including five people passing their learner permit knowledge tests and the hazard tests, and five people passing the Australian Citizenship test. While it may seem trivial to some, our cohort of technology students were able to surf the internet, access their myGov app, Family Plus app, upload documents and use computers – increasingly important skills in an age of social distancing and remote work.



“

What I like about this centre is that I can come at anytime and know that I will get the support I need.

~ A newly arrived refugee



2019-2020 Financial REPORT

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BANKSIA GARDENS COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial report of Banksia Gardens Community Services ('the Association'), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and responsible persons' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Banksia Gardens Community Services, has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- ii. complying with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described as in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012* and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Board for the Financial Report

The Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*. The Board's responsibility also includes such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Board is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board either intends to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Board are responsible to overseeing the Association's financial reporting process

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

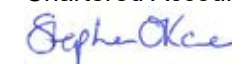
Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Board.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation

We communicate with the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

LDAssurance
Chartered Accountants



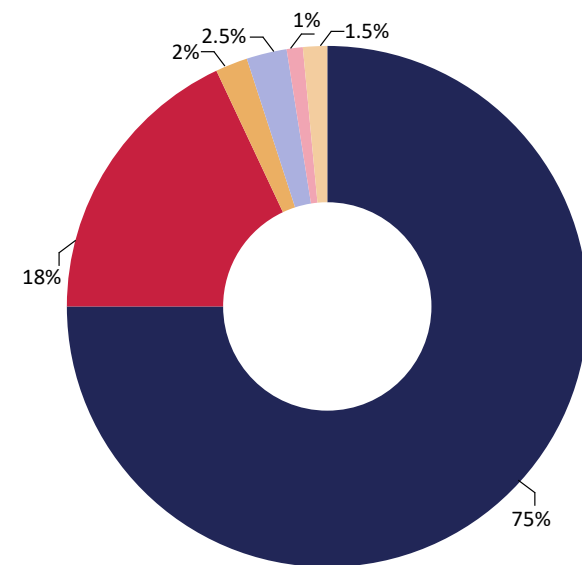
Stephen O'Kane
Partner

Dated this 14th day of October 2020
250 Collins Street, Melbourne.

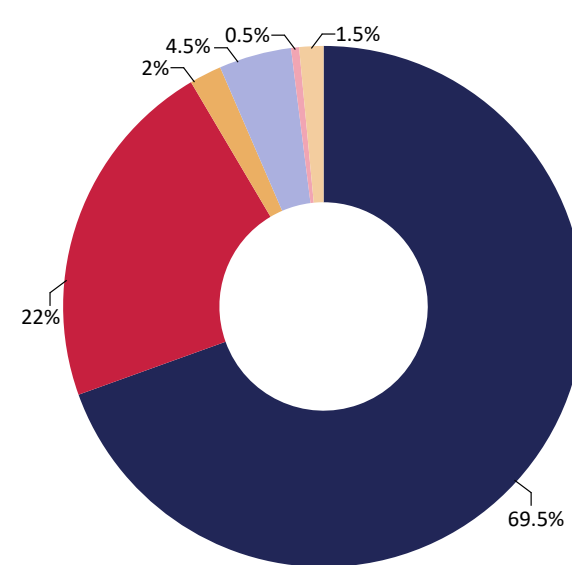
Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2020

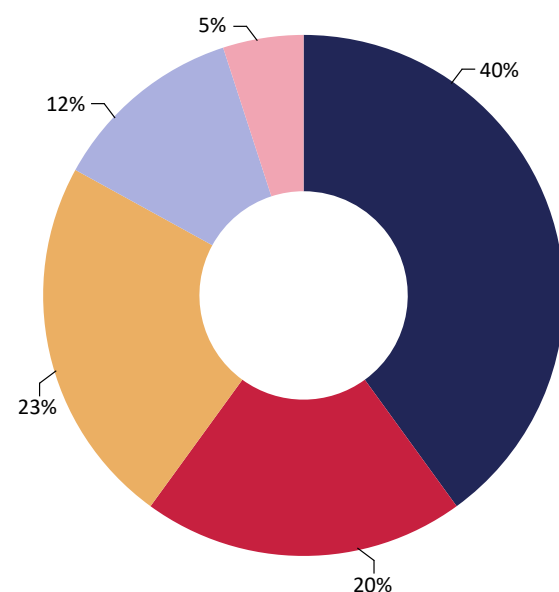
WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2019-2020



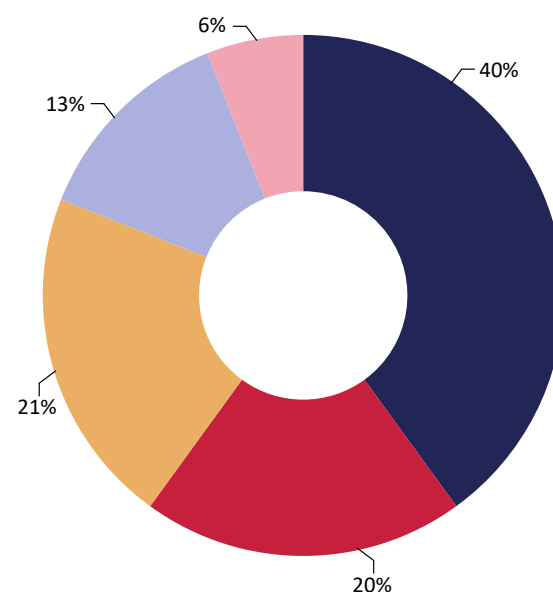
WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2018-2019



HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2019-2020



HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2018-2019



Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2020

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE REPORT

Your Board of Governance members submit the financial report of Banksia Gardens Community Services for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE MEMBERS

Carole Fabian	Julijana Todorovic	Ed David	Jon Shields	Peter Ewer
Joanne Bliss	Royce DeSousa	Venetia Taylor	Emily Sporik	King Ng

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

To respond to the cultural, social, educational and recreational needs of the community. The Banksia Gardens' Board of Governance will work to encourage social diversity, access and inclusion, community participation, and consumer participation in the operations of the Association.

The Board will take into account not only the mission and maintenance of the Association but also:

- The rights and interests of the Association's users;
- The rights and interests of the Association's members;
- The rights, interests, health, safety, and wellbeing of the Association's workforce;
- The interests of the general public; and Human Rights locally and globally.

The Board should ensure that the Association works actively to preserve the environmental sustainability of the planet:

- In its own practice;
- As a participant in a community of practice;
- and as a participant in the Australian social discourse.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

OPERATING RESULT

The surplus for the 2020 financial year after all depreciation and amortisation amounted to \$488,391 (prior year \$2,778).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the members of the Board.

Carole Fabian

Carole Fabian, Chairperson
13 October 2020

Gina Dougall

Gina Dougall, CEO

Financial REPORTS

for year ended 30 JUNE 2020

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	NOTE	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue	5	3,212,375	2,724,501
Finance income	6	1,987	4,589
Other income	5	481,246	89,681
Employee benefits expense	7	(2,591,124)	(2,232,547)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(29,343)	(34,032)
Cost of sales		(373,880)	(388,480)
Administrative expenses		(93,819)	(77,953)
Marketing expenses		(14,418)	(3,829)
Occupancy costs		(67,316)	(65,304)
Other expenses		(35,195)	(11,445)
Finance expenses	6	(2,122)	(2,403)
Profit before income tax		488,391	2,778
Income tax expense		-	-
Profit for the year		488,391	2,778
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		488,391	2,778



Financial REPORTS

for year ended 30 JUNE 2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	NOTE	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	8	1,433,291	1,139,290
Trade and other receivables	9	306,032	210,481
Other assets	11	-	15,284
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,739,323	1,365,055
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	10	135,225	144,716
Right-of-use assets	12	624	208
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		135,849	144,924
TOTAL ASSETS		1,875,172	1,509,979
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	13	268,171	221,298
Lease liabilities	12	156	208
Employee benefits	15	339,033	291,641
Other financial liabilities	14	244,439	447,087
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		851,799	960,234
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	12	468	-
Employee benefits	15	63,416	78,646
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		63,884	78,646
TOTAL LIABILITIES		915,683	1,038,880
NET ASSETS		959,489	471,099
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		959,489	471,099
TOTAL EQUITY		959,489	471,099

Financial REPORTS

for year ended 30 JUNE 2020

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
2020		
Balance at 1 July 2019	471,099	471,099
Profit for the year	488,391	488,391
Balance at 30 June 2020	959,490	959,490
2019		
Balance at 1 July 2018	468,321	468,321
Profit for the year	2,778	2,778
Balance at 30 June 2019	471,099	471,099

Financial REPORTS

for year ended 30 JUNE 2020

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	NOTE	2020 \$	2019 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers		3,654,424	3,170,416
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,340,570)	(2,873,158)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	19	313,854	297,258
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(19,696)	(14,106)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(19,696)	(14,106)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
Payment of finance lease liabilities		(156)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(156)	-
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		294,002	283,152
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,139,289	856,137
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	8	1,433,291	1,139,289



**\$150,000 secured
in COVID-19
specific funding**

**160 food parcels
provided to families
each week**

**47 programs
pre-COVID-19
19 programs post**

**21 essential
staff issued
work permits**



**79% BGCS
staff on
JobKeeper**

**staff transitioned
to online platforms
to work from home**

**PANDEMIC PLAN and
policies developed
to keep us safe**

**ADULT education
transitioned to
online learning**

Mathew

Thank YOU!

COMMUNITY

Abdi Aden
Adrienne Smith
AFL Victoria
Alin Mikhale
Andrew Lew
Anglicare
At Work Australia
Australian Children's Music Foundation
Australian Friendly Turkish Women's Group
Berry Street Childhood Institute
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Conservation Volunteers Australia
Centre for Multicultural Youth
DPV Health
EKOL School of Arts
Faye Bussau
Fernando Ianni
Fr Bob Maguire FMC
Maria Peters
HeadSpace
Jesuit Social Services
UnitingCare Lentara
Melbourne City Mission- Parent Support
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
North West Neighbourhood House Network
Northern Community Legal Centre
Outer Urban Projects
Peter Streker
Penny Evans
Rebecca Skelton
Rob Capron
Robert Kumar
Royal Children's Hospital
Save the Children
Seamus Carr
Sebastian Sardina

Sunbury Community Health
Ta Tupou
Tibetan Buddhist Society
VICSEG New Futures
Victorian Black Sea Cultural Association
Volunteers and work placement students
Women's Health in the North
Workskil

PHILANTHROPY

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
Australian Communities Foundation
Equity Trustees – E.C. White Trust
Gandel Philanthropy
Helen MacPherson Smith Trust
Impact 100
Justin Breheny
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Pam Baker Fund
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation – Thrive
Melbourne Women's Fund
Musculoskeletal Australia
Newsboys Foundation
Ray and Margaret Wilson Foundation
RE Ross Trust
Readings Foundation
The Collier Charitable Fund
The Kimberley Foundation
Victorian Women's Trust – Prue Myer Sub-fund
William Buckland Foundation

CORPORATE

Melbourne Airport – Major corporate sponsor
Commonwealth Bank
CSL Behring Australia
Westpac

EDUCATION

Bethal Primary School
Broadmeadows Primary School
Broadmeadows Valley Primary School
Coolaroo South Primary School
Craigieburn South Primary School
Dallas Brooks Primary School
Gateway School
Gladstone Park Primary School
Gladstone Views Primary School
Gladstone Park Secondary School
Good Samaritan Primary School
Greenvale Primary School
Holy Child Primary School
Hume Central Secondary College
Hume Valley School
Ilim College

Kangan Institute
Kolbe College
Meadow Heights Primary School
Meadows Primary School
Melbourne Polytechnic
Mount Ridley College
RMIT University
Roxburgh College
Roxburgh Homestead Primary School
Roxburgh Park Primary School
Roxburgh Rise Primary School
Sunbury Heights Primary School
Victoria University
Willmott Park Primary School
Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA)

GOVERNMENT

ACFE Board
Australian Government Department of Families, Housing and Community Services
Australian Government Department of Health and Human Services
Australian Government Department of Social Services
Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Victorian Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety
Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Victorian Department of Education and Training
Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet
Broadmeadows Magistrates Court
Victoria Police- Broadmeadows
Centrelink
Frank McGuire MP
Hume City Council
Hume City Council Youth Services
Hume Library Services
Hume Volunteer Gateway
Maria Vamvakinou MP





Banksia Gardens
Community Services

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PO Box 341, Dallas VIC 3047

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