



Our Vision

Strengthening Communities
Reducing Disadvantage
Transforming Lives

Our Mission

Banksia Gardens Community Services will be a leader in education, training and community engagement programs in Hume City and the northern suburbs.

Our services will provide opportunities, particularly for those experiencing disadvantage and poverty, that lead to further education and employment pathways, enhance wellbeing and transform lives.

Banksia Gardens Community Services will also focus on social justice advocacy and give voice to those in our community who suffer injustice.

Our Values

Respect

We genuinely acknowledge and respect each other's individual values, beliefs, efforts, ideas and cultural and religious backgrounds.

Integrity

We maintain high standards of integrity, are ethical, honest and conscientious in our approach to work. We acknowledge and assume responsibility for our own actions and personal behaviour and we are entitled to expect the same of others.

Inclusion

We collaborate with the aim of empowering each other to be the best that we can, to connect communities, celebrate diversity and give voice to those suffering injustice.

Responsiveness

We are proactive and act flexibly to empower our community when responding to community needs.

Gender Equity

We believe gender equity is fundamental in creating a just society. We will cultivate an equal work environment and will be a leader in gender equity as a means of achieving a thriving, safe community that is free from violence.

Environmental Sustainability

We actively support the principles of environmental sustainability, both locally and globally.

Human Rights

We boldly support human rights both locally and globally, and aim to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found.

Board of Governance



Carole Fabian
Chairperson



Royce DeSousa
Treasurer



Joanne Bliss
Secretary



Peter Ewer



Julijana Todorovic



Ed David



Venetia Taylor



King Ng



Marina Labib



Jon Shields

Patrons and Ambassadors



Robert Kumar
Patron



Helen
Patsikatheodorou
Patron



Fr Bob Maguire
Patron



Ta Tupou
Ambassador



Abdi Aden
Ambassador

THE FUTURE OF ADULT COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN VICTORIA 2020–25

THE
EDUCATION
STATE
VICTORIA
Education
and Training
Government

The future of adult
community education

#ACE2025

Adult community
education changes lives

ACE2025

The Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas
with Gina Dougall

Chair and Chief

As we write this, we are in the midst of Melbourne's fifth pandemic lockdown. Just like this time last year, we are again struggling through the challenges of lost jobs, cancelled events, learning and working from home (if we can!), not being able to see friends and family, and hardest of all, fear and uncertainty. Several times over the last 12 months, Banksia Gardens has had to close its physical doors, and suspend or modify many of its programs, losing income and precious connection with so many members of our community.

We have managed, however, to also keep many programs and services going – we have gone on-line, we meet people one-on-one in parks, we telephone, we Zoom. Over the last year, as restrictions lifted, changed, came back again, our amazing staff have learned to do the dance of the 2020's – the 'pivot'. When our community needs us more than ever, we find a way to stay connected and keep offering support. We help feed people through a hugely expanded food parcel program. We help students continue to learn through study groups and Project Real.

Our GPANers are ready to go on-line with gusto. Our case workers and justice team have made sure they are there for those who need them. In fact we have been able to add to our services by responding specifically to the pandemic. Earlier this year we supported residents of a nearby social housing block when they were locked down (at a time when the rest of us weren't), and we became a vaccination hub so that members of our community could come somewhere familiar to do their part in protecting us all.

In and out, open and shut, backwards and forwards. Somehow we made it through another year, and yet the pandemic we thought we had finally beaten is not going away just yet.

Despite the challenges, Banksia Gardens is in a strong financial position, and we are optimistic about our future. We have received acknowledgement and additional State Government funding for some of our key programs, and welcomed different ministers to our centre, during those times when we were able to open up again. Our staff have become expert at ensuring that we are Covid safe at all times, regardless of where we are in the lock-down/open-up cycle, and we want to pay tribute especially to our Workplace Health and Safety Committee, and our Safety Officer, Christie Sinclair, for the meticulous attention to detail in this space.

Lockdowns have been key to containing the virus, and we have no quarrel with them being used as an important public health tool. It's well documented, however, that people who were disadvantaged before the pandemic, are far more negatively impacted now. People who depend on casual work, jobs in retail, services and hospitality, people who have to travel to work and who simply can't work from home, people with limited access to technology, and with pre-existing health conditions, are all at far greater risk through lockdowns. It is such people who are particularly relying on services like Banksia Gardens to support them through these waves of crisis.

One thing the pandemic has shown us is the strength of our connection with each other. Yes, we can infect each other easily, but the way out is also communal – all of us doing our bit to keep each other safe and to get vaccinated. And for Banksia Gardens, it is our partnerships that keep us going and make us so much more effective. We thank, in particular, our neighbours DPV Health for working with us on the public health front; Melbourne Airport who have given us so much valuable support; and the Tibetan Buddhist Society who have made our expanded work in distributing food parcels possible.

Thanks once again to our incredible team – all the staff, Board members, volunteers, teachers, students, participants and families. Your passion, commitment and optimism, even in the toughest of times, is inspiring.

Carole Fabian, Chairperson

Gina Dougall, CEO

Deputy Chief

Jaime de Loma-Osorio Ricon, Deputy CEO

Mantra n.

1. *a word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation, originally in Hinduism and Buddhism*
2. *A Vedic hymn*
3. *A statement or slogan repeated frequently [Sanskrit, = instrument of thought, from 'man' = 'think']*

There was a moment recently when my family learned that my mother-in-law, who has been trying to get back from the UK for months, had her flight cancelled and her return postponed by several months (again). My daughter Marisa was crying, we were all upset. Another setback, another delay, another few months apart.

None of that scene would have been remotely unique for any of the billions of people living on this planet. It's also true that my family is, compared to a vast majority of the planet's population, relatively comfortable and privileged. Neither of those truths diminish the grief or the suffering that my daughter experienced: all of them are true and valid.

Over the course of the pandemic, I think we have all moved through various thought experiments, justifications and debates to help cope with the extraordinary challenges and feelings triggered by the pandemic. We have probably also experienced the full gamut of emotions of the human condition as well. With all that's happened in this financial year, I have settled on my mantra:

The world is tough right now, be kind to yourself.

Without a doubt, the work undertaken by the entire staff at Banksia Gardens Community Services throughout this year is something that I'm incredibly proud of. The quality of program and service delivery has increased, which has been a peculiar side-benefit of the pandemic. We have, through necessity, had to stop and rethink our programs, reconfigure our spaces and identify the critical elements of each program – and keep the spirit of the program and organisation intact in everything we do. We've responded to the needs of the community as best we can, and shown a great deal of flexibility and adaptability.

Despite having accomplished so much, I still feel like we haven't done as much as we would have liked. An example is our various groups and associations who called Banksia home prior to the pandemic, such as our Turkish ladies' group, the sewing groups, yoga classes and playgroups. We have maintained relationships with many of them, but we wish we could have done more.

I return to my mantra: the world is tough right now, be kind to yourself.

I've been talking with teachers and principals in our networks recently, and there's an emerging trend, anecdotally, about a particular category of people who have been hit hard in ways that we're yet to understand: those people transitioning from one stage of life to another. This has come up mainly in the context of school-age children: remember those 'first day of school' and 'first day of high school' memories?

They are such milestone periods in life, and our children and young people who started primary school and secondary school in 2020 seem to be really struggling right now. It's a similar thing

for those kids aged around eleven, on the cusp of puberty, where the world opens up somewhat and they have more freedom...or did, before the pandemic rolled in. Sport and activities, hanging out with friends, social interactions: they are important for us all, and particularly critical at that entry to adolescence.

For those moving into adolescence, the world as we've known it over the last year has simply not been enough. For our kids and young people in those transition years who also happen to come from backgrounds of high adversity, this has been a terrible time and the adversity has been amplified.

The world is tough right now, be kind to yourself.

The interconnectedness that technology brings has facilitated so many things this year. The majority of our programs and services have gone online, and we've been able to support our community in critical ways. Technology has also facilitated international collaboration like never before: we've worked with three teams of university students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the USA, two of whom helped us investigate education practices in the US that are of deep relevance to Project REAL and the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE), and the remaining team built an online induction platform for Banksia that captures its spirit and operations in a way that I didn't think possible without visiting us. We also negotiated the delivery of the CARE program by its American creators – the first time it has been delivered in Australia – which has been highly successful. Lots of the problems we face are universal: disengagement, structural disadvantage and so on. The current world allows us to focus on hotbeds of activity and learn from leaders in the field.

Through technology we get to commune with these like-minded people from around the globe like never before, to share our solutions and learn from each other. There are so many upsides to technology, and of course, the highly interconnected nature of this technology has certainly blurred the line between work and life for most of us, cooped up as we have been for so much of this year within the four walls of our home. Work has become so pervasive that it is hard to switch off and disconnect.

The world is tough right now, be kind to yourself.

As we sit and ponder what the next year will bring, it is worthwhile reflecting on some of the positive things that have come out of this chaotic year. Throughout the turmoil of the various lockdowns, time and again we have experienced moments and expressions of deep gratitude from program participants and people being supported by our services. Kids who have terribly complex home lives. Parents and the elderly who have come to us, week in and week out for food support. Adults learning English to become employed. The list goes on. We have all been stretched so much by this experience, and I hope that we can all take a moment to reflect on the strength within each of us, and the strength of us collectively.

The world is tough right now, be kind to yourself.





Project Highlights

Gender Equity

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. Gender equity is a BGCS organisational key priority area, establishing a Gender Equity Working Group to help drive this change across all of the organisation's operations.

- Annual Trivia Night online with 40 guests.
- Two young people were awarded with the Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award.
- GPAN connected with eleven social media influencers to engage online.
- New partnership with Fitzroy Football Club to roll out a respectful relationships workshops for players and staff.
- GPAN Youth Action Group attended March4Justice.
- GPAN was a named partner of 'IWD Naarm/Melbourne' Campaign for 2021.
- Partnered with BSL to run a workshop on 'challenging gender stereotypes' at Hume Central Secondary College.
- Partnered with DPV health and Baseline Youth Services to deliver 'gendered experiences' workshops to young people in Whittlesea.
- Two staff completed HOW2 training with Rainbow Health Victoria to create a more inclusive and safer workplace for members of LGBTIQ+ community.
- Amended BGCS' parental leave policy to become equitable for all parents.
- Leadership team went through three tiers of family violence and gender equity training.
- 15 students completed placements with a mix of online and face-to-face work.

Sustainability

BGCS made environment one of its core values in 2019. In 2021, the focus for this area has been CARYA, a youth-led action group, and a citizen science initiative.

- The CARYA training concluded with 16 participants (89% retention) from eight different local government areas.
- At least 50 per cent of CARYA participants continue to engage the adaptation actions after training.
- CARYA influenced BGCS's sustainability work with a community-based climate adaptation initiative: a 'Heat Haven' and a climate and activation hub.
- 124 people were engaged in our citizen science and

- bee hotel program.
- 23 bee hotels were built and installed for ecosystem improvement in Jacana Wetlands and the area surrounding the Banksia Gardens Grasslands.
- Citizen science and bee hotel program offered the following activities:
 - Wildlife monitoring walks
 - Information session about native pollinators
 - Five workshops to build bee hotels

Northern Centre for Excellence in School

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

- One co-authored book chapter on school community engagement.
- Delivery of 30 training sessions in NCESE schools on 'The Impact of Trauma on Learning & Development'; 'Social and Emotional Learning'; 'Executive Functions'; 'De-escalation Strategies'.
- Collaboration with Social Ventures Australia/Evidence for Learning on linking the NCESE Building Blocks to the international evidence base.
- Working with Worcester Polytechnic Institute on two projects: 'Trauma-informed education in the USA', and 'Effective practice in USA Flexible Learning Options/Alternative Learning'.
- Supporting 12 NCESE schools with access to Berry Street Training for up to four staff per school.
- Working with Project REAL to develop and deliver tier three coaching services for NCESE schools.
- Conduct of Australia's first CARE training program, in collaboration with USA-based CREATE organisation.

Project REAL

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.

- Intensively supported 11 students, as well as their

respective families and schools.

- Five students transitioned back to their schools; we introduced six new students into the program.
- Continued to support past students and families despite lockdown, as they continued their transition into their original school.
- Operated our inaugural Project REAL Camp.
- Conducted twenty excursions.
- Hosted regular family morning teas and excursions to build bonds between families and strengthen friendships between students.
- Supported an additional ten schools with secondary consultations, coaching and program development.

Aiming High

The Aiming High VCE Support Program (Aiming High) is a support program providing tutoring and enriching experiences for aspirational students in Broadmeadows and neighbouring areas.

- 95% of students in the Aiming High program. received their first preference for university study.
- We maintained an average ratio of one tutor for every three students for our sessions.
- The retention rate of the program was 90%.
- One student scored a 50 for Further Mathematics (the highest score possible).
- Three students achieved in the 90s range for their ATAR.

Study Group

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.

- Delivered 116 sessions
- Supported over 300 students
- 21 volunteers involved



Project Highlights

Training and Employment

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

- Winner of the 2020 Multicultural Awards for best Vocational Education and Training pre-accredited community-based training (Victorian Multicultural Commission).
- Enhancement of existing relationships with local industries, agencies and employers, in addition to establishment of new partnerships with employers such as Nestle and GKC.
- Engagement with more than 800 participants to build their employability skills and encourage them to move to employment or further study.
- Delivery of more than 38,000 student contact hours.
- Offered 28 classes online, including Computers, English, Sewing and more.
- Provided nearly 800 refurbished computers to the community for free or at a very low cost.
- Provided approximately 3600 material aid packages (food, household items) to learners and the local community.
- Learner Engagement A-Frame Programs (LEAP) secured for delivery of specific short training courses such as Tailor It, MyGov, be handy, environment sustainability and Australian workplace.
- Delivery of courses in 9 school community hubs.
- Secured funding for the Industry Contextualise Training to enhance the literacy and numeracy for low skilled workers in the food manufacturing and building and construction industry.

Kenley Court Neighbourhood House

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 migrants, KCNH connects and empowers people through various community development programs and services.

- Kenley coordinated and delivered a total of eight programs over the course of the year, supporting around 200 people every week
- More than 4500 food parcels have been distributed to Hume residents
- 20 students participated in the Study Group Program

- 12 girls supported through the Girls Circle program.
- We facilitated 10 excursions, catering for over one hundred young people
- More than 120 people were supported through the Client Support Program.
- More than 25 newly-arrived migrants and refugees benefited from various adult education classes including English Courses, English for Citizenship and English for Driving.
- After years of negotiations with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department awarded an ongoing contract to BGCS to oversee and manage Kenley Court and Dixie Court Neighbourhood Houses.

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.

- 300 + staff and students engaged with during Harmony Week 2021.
- Four new SCTE programs being delivered to partner schools.
- One new SCTE local partner school.

Youth Transitions

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

- Supported almost fifty young people in the program with transition supports that cover such areas as employment, training and education, housing and more.
- Coordinated and mentored the youth representatives at the Community Safety Forum (Craigieburn) in December, hosted by the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Four of our participants participated in the forum, two of those presented, and one produced multimedia content for the event.
- Facilitated two excursions: one to the cinema and one to

Melbourne Zoo. All excursions involved workshops relating to employment or life skills.

Youth Justice

Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance supports young people aged 10-24 years who are involved with the justice system, or at risk of becoming involved. BCYJA is a partnership between Banksia Gardens Community Services, Jesuit Social Services, Headspace and other local services in Hume.

- Four years of operation of the BCYJA program.
- 306 young people received individual case managed support (Guided 178, Managed 91, Intensive 37).
- Strong partnerships with specialist services.
- Collaborations with mainstream and flexible education providers to support school re-engagement.

Community Connections

Community Connections provides support and advocacy for people in Broadmeadows and the surrounding suburbs, with a focus on the nearby Banksia Gardens Estate and public housing tenants.

- Provided four family fun days on the estate (BBQs, art, activities for children).
- Established a community garden on the Banksia Gardens Estate.
- Supported families supported with health, financial, legal, and housing needs.
- Provided regular youth activities during lockdown at various restriction levels.

Holiday Program

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.

- Twenty-four STEAM (STEM + Art) activities and fun packs developed and distributed to the community.
- Produced and distributed fourteen worksheet packs.
- Compiled and delivered three stationary packs.
- Total number of Children benefitted: thirty-one.



Robert Kumar Community Award

Written by Jonathan Chee, Chief Storyteller

Recipient of the 2021 Robert Kumar Award Community Award for outstanding contribution to the Hume community:

CSL Behring

The organisation CSL has become a household name in Australia since the pandemic began, but not many people know that their contributions to the community began well before 2020. CSL Behring, a part of CSL, operates a manufacturing facility on Camp Road in Broadmeadows.

Early on in the pandemic, CSL Behring Senior Legal Counsel Ainslee Minihan was at home working on a substantial document that would help pave the way for the AstraZeneca vaccine being available to millions of Australians. This whole operation involved a very complex medicine, layers of legal considerations and a tight timeframe. And then her phone rang.

"Can you help us with how to collect registration forms legally, now that we're all working remotely?" I asked, not realising the enormous suite of operations CSL was undertaking at the time. Without missing a beat, Ainslee added that to her to-do list.

After several phone calls back and forth, and an email thread twenty-six emails deep, I took Ainslee and her colleague Carissa Apps' advice back to BGCS leadership, and we deployed their advice across our services to move online. This critical work is something that we have relied on for every subsequent lockdown, and is but one of the ways in which CSL Behring has supported BGCS.

The willingness of Ainslee and her team to support Banksia is remarkable, especially considering the gargantuan effort the organisation was undertaking to investigate possible vaccines with the University of Queensland, and ultimately to manufacture the AstraZeneca vaccine in Australia. At a time when many Australians were barely beginning to come to grips with what COVID-19 was, the CSL Behring team were already investigating the vaccine solutions that will help us emerge from this pandemic.

During this pandemic period in Australia the name CSL appeared in the media more times than any other company in Australia, yet prior to 2020 not many people outside the medical industry would have been familiar with CSL. Some might assume that CSL was some biotech start-up, conjured at the eleventh hour to help deliver us in our hour of need. They might be surprised to learn that it was in fact the Australian government that established CSL back in 1916, opening the Broadmeadows facility in 1994 around the same time the company was privatised. They might be even more surprised to understand the company's contributions to the community through their employment practices and community initiatives.

Back in 2015 when CSL Behring launched their Community Grants, Banksia's Aiming High VCE Support Program was the inaugural recipient. That same year, Patrick Castauro, CSL's Director of Sustainability and Social Impact, organised for the Aiming High students to go on a tour of the facilities and meet with a range of people working at the site in Broadmeadows. They could've got the interns or graduates to do the whole thing. Instead, there was a thoughtful selection of professionals (some very senior!) on hand to meet students and answer questions and to welcome them into their world.

What was the impact of that tour on the Aiming High students? To find out, I call Tamanna, a young woman from Afghanistan. She arrived in Australia in 2013 in year 10, and joined Aiming High in 2015. She went on that very first trip to CSL Behring. Did she remember anything from that day?

"Yes, I do," she says. "There was a female scientist from

Switzerland that spoke to us. Hearing from her let me know that women could work in science, that they could be well-credentialed and sought after for their experience. I had plans of working in science somehow, and this was the first step into that world."

Tamanna has a dream of one day returning to Afghanistan to build a hospital. Having recently graduated with an honours degree in civil engineering from RMIT University, she is getting closer to realising that dream.

While Banksia has also benefited through a subsequent community grant and pro bono legal and governance support, there's another important, and slightly less visible way in which CSL Behring has made an impact on the community: through diversity and inclusion.

Tricia Stewart, CSL Behring Broadmeadows Senior Vice President and General Manager, has worked in science for forty-two years, twenty-one of which have been with CSL, and has seen this first hand. "When I started my degree in chemistry there were five females in the class and a hundred males, so that is certainly changing. In my time at CSL, I've had many challenging and exciting opportunities, equal to anyone else in the organisation. I think CSL has been very strong in supporting diversity for a long time."

So, what might the future hold for this household name? By 2026, CSL will have two world-class manufacturing facilities in Hume, with a new vaccine facility in Tullamarine currently being planned. The proximity of the facilities is rare in Australia, and indeed globally, says new CSL Behring Broadmeadows Manufacturing and Site Head Andrew Hodder. "To have them both in the same precinct is a unique opportunity, so it warrants us to think about how we can give back and add value to the Hume region."

One exciting initiative that speaks to the ambition and commitment of CSL's community work was recently announced. CSL Behring Broadmeadows has signed a four-year partnership with the LaTrobe University-led In2science Program to support STEM education programs in schools in Hume and across the state.

The vision, Andrew says, is to have university students and CSL Behring staff "provide those educational journeys and life experiences to inspire the next generation of future scientists, right here in the local area". Reflecting on the enormous amount of work the entire CSL team has undertaken over this pandemic period, it seems truly remarkable that the CSL team have continued their engagement in community initiatives and conversations without faltering.

While I wouldn't have ordinarily thought that a community services organisation and a global biotherapies company had much in common, Ainslee articulated a sentiment common to us both: "When I think about where I am, it wasn't just all me. Other people have helped me along the way. There are a couple of people who have helped me tremendously, and I think if those people hadn't helped me, I probably wouldn't be where I am today".

We at BGCS are grateful for the big things and the small things that CSL Behring has contributed to the community, and for all their help along the way.

Gender Equity

Georgia Ransome, Gender Equity Coordinator

Every year for the last seven years, Good People Act Now (GPAN) has delivered its innovative youth-led prevention of violence against women training. Over 250 young people have participated in the program and taken up countless conversations and steered action on gender equity in their social and professional circles across the region. It's been an incredible grassroots effort.

In January of 2021, the funding for GPAN finished and there was no further funding confirmed. The lack of funding came at a pivotal time in GPAN's program and threatened to derail the central feature of GPAN – its training.

What happened after GPAN's funding ceased is testimony to the organisation's commitment to gender equity more broadly. Supported by the Board of Governance, our CEO Gina Dougall decided that GPAN training would go ahead as scheduled and that she and others would lobby hard to make sure this important primary prevention program continued.

The project completed its eighth consecutive year of training, forged working relationships with the Mayor of Hume, Joseph Haweil and Member for Calwell, Maria Vamvakinou, partnered with the Brotherhood of St Lawrence and Fitzroy Football Club to deliver gender equity workshops to a number of community groups and continued to engage a record high number of volunteers.

In June, we received the news that GPAN would, for the first time, receive multi-year funding from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination. Many people can vouch for all the happy tears shed after that phone call was received. We're in a privileged position in that we get to see the real differences this program makes in our community, and we're so excited to see GPAN continue to develop and become a leader in this space.

For anybody with a passing interest in gender equity, the pandemic has provided more evidence (if any was needed) of the imbalance in our society that favours men. BGCS's work in the space of gender equity has in fact accelerated over the last year, with progress driven particularly by three key areas: through GPAN, BGCS's Gender Equity Working Group, and a focus on gender equity for all staff and placement students.

Now in its second year, Banksia Gardens' Gender Equity

Working Group (GEWG) continues to support BGCS as a leader in creating a safe and equal community. Some of our work is internally focused, such as doing the groundwork for the Board to make our parental leave policy equitable or committing to upskill at least 20 staff members and volunteers annually through external workshops run by partner organisations such as Women's Health in the North. Other areas of focus for the working group are more external, such as taking over a gender equality project promoting gender equality in four key local communities: Iraqi, Syrian, Indian and Nepalese. The foundations for BGCS' five year Gender Equity Action Plan has been developed by the GEWG this year, and will also be overseen by this group once it has been finalised.

Over the last year, a key focus of our work has been the provision and facilitation of family violence-related training and development for staff and placement students across the organisation. For some staff this was an introduction to the field. For others it provided the opportunity to refine their knowledge and deepen their skills. While COVID-19-related restrictions have made it difficult to fulfil our aims of taking on more placement students than previous years, we continue to offer placement students a meaningful experience and are confident that they leave BGCS with knowledge and tools to support gender equity as they pursue careers in community development.

Every day, GPANers are consistently challenging norms and stereotypes and are forging a path toward equality. We know this is difficult and are frequently reminded that we have a long way to go, but the collective strength of the GPAN team is where the magic is – supporting one another and relying on the safety net of the team is what gives us all the courage to continue fighting to make a difference. It is exciting to see this spread to the GEWG, and we look forward to seeing how it will move and shape BGCS in the future.

The voices of Banksia Gardens and the Greater Hume community are vital to continue improving our practice, and we encourage anyone who is interested to get involved.

Thank you to all the GPAN team: Emily Sporik, Georgia Barnes, Alissa Dess, Chloe Falzon, Dary Money, Donnia Rafihi, Tiarnie Gilbert, Lauren Shelley, Louise D'Amico, Renee Leader, Rachelle Walker, Abigail Masters, Alixandra Colafella, Christopher Arnold, Aria Nanai, Bodhi Sweeny, James Drake, Teish Russell, Nicola Gregoric, Natalie Cook, Bree Dodd, Tash Giusti and Emily Matthews.



The community and sense of belonging
I found throughout GPAN training is
something I cherish deeply. ~ Chloe Falzon

Sustainability

Edgar Caballero Aspe, Education and Sustainability Coordinator

Would you open your house to anybody? That was a question implicit in a discussion we had this year when talking to a local farmer about an excursion to his farm for our Climate Adaptation Requires Youth Action (CARYA) program, and his answer was a firm “no vegetarians or vegans allowed”.

While some people might be surprised or dismayed by this response, it is a good example of where values collide, of some of the challenges facing us as we work to adapt to a changing climate, and where we need to remain open and committed to dialogue. These are important considerations for all the environment and sustainability initiatives at BGCS, of which CARYA is but one. The encounter with the farmer is also a useful launching point for discussions about how we think about the environment, sustainability and a changing climate.

At Banksia, like many other organisations, we are progressing our thinking to acknowledge the overlaps between ‘environmental justice’ and social justice, and are seeing them more and more as two aspects of the same problem.

When the farmer said “no vegetarians or vegans allowed”, a number of values collided. The farmer had previously suffered attacks to his farm, allegedly by vegans, and understandably was not keen to extend the welcome in case it invited more attacks. Should we go ahead with the excursion, and not have the one vegetarian come along? Should we admonish the farmer for not being inclusive? Should we despair at the gap (or animosity) between different sections of our society?

Along with environmental sustainability, inclusion is a key value of BGCS therefore we couldn’t exclude any participants. We felt it was our responsibility to keep the conversation open, to respect others, and to be clear (to ourselves and others) what our values are, and particularly in relation to inclusion. We explained our position, our sympathy for his trauma and our desire to work together to meet the needs of all parties; we also respected his decision not to respond to any of those offerings. Values can be just words in the cloud, ephemeral; how we act reflects our values.

The exchange with the farmer may not have resulted in the CARYA team visiting the farm, but we hope that it opened the door for a conversation in the future. It was a rich learning experience for all of the CARYA team – staff

and participants – that relates to an underlying rationale for how we are trying to approach topics of environment and sustainability broadly at BGCS.

CARYA uses a framework adapted from the action competence approach, which emphasises critical thinking and learning through experience, fosters the integration of different fields of knowledge and skills, and cultivates individual or collective action. By helping to connect these different kinds of knowledge and perspectives from areas such as social justice, gender equity, indigenous rights and other fields, our young people are better able to see the connections between the challenges, and potentially also the solutions. The interaction with the farmer can then be understood as an opportunity to develop a different perspective, which may usher in solutions that influence people like the farmer and meet the needs of more members of the community.

Two workshops that resonated strongly with the CARYA participants also explored different perspectives: one was on gender equity (conducted in conjunction with BGCS’s very own Good People Act Now/GPAN team) and the other was on First Nations People, Racism and Climate led by Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin and Gunnai-Gunditjmara woman and Victorian Greens Senator Lidia Thorpe. Our climate and environment challenges have resulted from complex human, inequitable social systems, and solutions need to understand and work with that complexity.

While CARYA is a prominent initiative under the banner of environment and sustainability, there are other initiatives under the environment and sustainability banner that have operated this financial year, including a citizen science program, bee hotels and the establishment of a sustainability working group at BGCS. We have also been working on an ambitious plan to create a heat haven, food forest, climate and activation hub between BGCS and the Banksia Gardens Estate, funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Fund and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, which will get underway in the next financial year.

Our citizen science and bee hotels have been important tools as we have learnt to capture data on local wildlife, and to track changes in the ecosystem around our Centre. They have also been of high educational value, involving many participants from across BGCS programs, and from a range of sections of the local community. Our work on changing waste management at BGCS has also been far-reaching. Instead of generating waste that is sent to landfill, we aim to keep the energy and nutrients stored in this ‘waste’ (well, of the

organic material variety), and transform it into organic waste that will help us grow trees that will capture carbon, provide food, absorb heat, create comfortable spaces and so on. We hope this will eventually become somewhat of a virtuous cycle with waste management, and have similar knock-on effects for those who visit our Centre and come into contact with these ideas and processes. The means by which we achieve these goals are just as important as the ends.

Ten years ago we were building the literal foundations of our two beautiful classrooms with a range of sustainable materials, features and concepts. It was built to act as an eco demonstration centre, with its passive solar for heating, bamboo floors, double glazing and more. It’s still a wonderful asset to the community, and we’re looking forward to continuing to provide opportunities for the community to be involved in these initiatives: to experience the climate-friendly practices, to gain insights and skills, to learn to adapt to a climate that is already changing, and to contribute to a better climate future for us all.



Northern Centre for Excellence

Eric Dommers, NCESE Co-Director

It's not that often that you get a 100 per cent recommendation rate for anything, even less so when the respondents are a group of 23 school teachers and principals weary from a year of pandemic-induced chaos. Yet, that is what happened in 2021 after 12 hours of online training delivered by the American organisation CREATE about their Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE) program – the first time this training has been delivered in Australia.

With its focus on developing social and emotional awareness and resilience, the CARE program has been sorely needed as this pandemic has unfolded. Our teachers, principals, students and families have all been deeply impacted by the pandemic, and it has made the sharp edge of disadvantage even sharper. The various responses we have all seen from our school communities have been so admirable, heroic even. The pandemic has also, perhaps, enabled schools to become more aware of the lives of their most vulnerable students, while health and wellbeing has become a more pressing topic, and the disengagement of students, families and staff has become a very real concern for all. For all the turmoil and chaos it has created, COVID-19 has also made the work of the NCESE even more relevant.

The NCESE as a formal collective is still relatively new, but has benefitted from many years of work with our partner schools and BGCS – particularly through Project REAL. Project REAL is the engine room of the NCESE: it is our Flexible Learning Option (in Department of Education parlance!) where we work intensively with a small number of referred students and their families. It is the common site that brought so many of our schools together five years ago, and its operations have evolved significantly over the last eighteen months with the formalisation of the NCESE. Project REAL is a place where research and theory meet practice, where we refine our student re-engagement model based on the local and international research of what works best to increase student participation and success in schooling. In the last year our Project REAL staff have developed more of a coaching modality with schools, and this very practical learning is now flowing into our work with our NCESE partner schools.

What the NCESE brings to the table is the evidence base for different interventions. Where Project REAL might focus on the micro level of working with a specific student, the NCESE works at a meso level to help the school build

capacity to cater for that type of cohort ('Tier 3 students') more generally, which ultimately helps school engagement for all students. A rising tide lifts all boats, as they say.

Fundamental to this work is the development of what we call the Building Blocks for School Engagement, which arose from our reviews of the engagement and disengagement literature. The Building Blocks act as a guide to schools on critical factors that contribute to school engagement. We are really pleased to have worked with Social Ventures/Evidence for Learning this year, which has reviewed the international evidence base of the NCESE Building Blocks and found them to be very well supported. This is important because it enables our NCESE schools to feel confident in using the Building Blocks to help them review their own engagement approaches and practices, and to help them build new programs and approaches that support high risk students.

In the coming years, part of the NCESE's role will be to explore the various ways in which schools have increased student engagement, and to distil these lessons for use by other schools. In time, the NCESE will contribute to the overall body of knowledge for the benefit of all schools or organisations working in areas of economic disadvantage to help build school engagement.

In addition to reviewing the literature on school engagement, we have also collaborated with two project teams from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, a university based in Massachusetts, USA, to undertake some original research and investigations. Our 2020 project team focused on the state of trauma-informed education in the USA. This was a really valuable project that led to our collaboration with the CREATE organisation, and other partnerships. The 2021 team focused on the operations of Flexible Learning Options like Project REAL, and has also led to some strong connections with schools in the US, and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Despite our long-running lockdowns, the NCESE team has continued to develop and deliver our own training modules, and maintained a community of practice teachers and educators featuring the Berry Street Education Model and Restorative Justice, as well as a separate community of practice for school leadership (principals, assistant principals and leadership/wellbeing teams).

Having the CARE program delivered to our NCESE network was not only something of a coup, it was also very timely for its focus on cultivating resilience and self-care. The work

of getting our NCESE CARE training participants and our American colleagues in a virtual learning space speaks to a lot of groundwork that has been done in building strong collaborative partnerships over the past year. CREATE, the organisation behind the CARE program, has been working in this school engagement space for over a decade and is extremely well credentialled. The fact that they agreed to deliver the training and have promised further training is a big vote of confidence for the NCESE. What CREATE saw in the NCESE is a strong alliance of schools, BGCS and the Department of Education, a successful Project REAL, and solid evidence bases.

Many of the problems of school disengagement are not unique to Broadmeadows, Melbourne or even Australia. What the NCESE is doing is bringing some of the best knowledge and practice on school engagement from around the world to our partner schools. Through delivering training, deploying the lessons through the demonstration ground that is Project REAL, and by making that learning REAL for our schools, we are helping schools and students across the region. It's a magnificent collective to be involved in.





Project REAL

Seral Fehmi, Lead Teacher

The mum was deep in shock when I spoke to her on the phone: it was, after all, the first camp that her child had been on, and the first time the child had slept on their own, in their own bed, in eleven years. For her, it was almost like a miracle. “How did this happen?” she asked.

To say that it all happened simply because we wanted it to would be to ignore the meticulous groundwork done by all the Project REAL team in the lead up to the camp. It would also ignore all the work that we have done to build up strong relationships with all of the Project REAL students, helping them to develop their social and emotional literacy, their ability to self-regulate, and a whole heap of other things that are invisible to the untrained eye. It just seems like magic, but there is a science as well as an art to it.

At the beginning of term 2, 2021, Project REAL went on their first ever school camp. It’s a significant event to look back on for all those involved in the actual camp, and it’s also a good illustration of some of the key areas of work at Project REAL. Three out of the five students who went on the camp had never been on a school camp before. Most of the students are eleven years old, and it’s quite unusual for kids that age to have never been on camp before. School camp seems such an innocuous thing, but when you scratch a little deeper into the reasons why some kids miss out on camp, it tells you quite a lot about the students and families we work with at Project REAL. For some students, there’s so much else going on at school and home that taking a camp registration form home and remembering to give it to mum or dad just doesn’t happen.

For some families, school camp is something they simply can’t afford. On top of that, often with our kids, the students and their families have had so many issues with school (again, conflict at school with either peers, teachers etc) that they think it’s just not going to work, so they don’t participate. Some students just don’t have strong enough relationships with their peers or teachers for them to feel safe enough to go.

For many of our students, it’s a mixture of all of the above reasons (and sometimes more!) and years of unsuccessful engagements with school, with each conflict or adverse experience building on the last. Behaviours, beliefs and neural pathways are steadily reinforced, so that things become quite entrenched for the student, family and school. It might sometimes feel like it’s fate, and that you can’t do anything about it.

But, to say this would be to ignore the many episodes that a trained eye would identify as moments for kids and their families where a different choice could have been made. This is not to say that kids and their families are to blame- far from it- but to give context to behaviour, and to illuminate why Project REAL’s model includes family work, rather than just working with the kids. Ultimately, it is about making interventions at a systemic level that then empowers families and kids. After all, the things that we focus on at Project REAL, for instance attachment and regulation, social and emotional learning, etc are supportive measures for people at all ages and stages of life.

On the last day of camp, things were becoming increasingly challenging. The students’ behaviour was getting more and more antagonistic as they became more and more heightened. Nobody likes good things to end, and these kids didn’t have successful ways to be able to deal with the yucky emotions that they were experiencing, so little conflicts kept erupting and by midmorning the staff understandably wanted to just pack it all in and put an end to everybody’s misery. To end the camp there, like that, would have been understandable, but it would have done a disservice to the kids. They were feeling all sorts of emotions that they couldn’t process well, and needed help regulating themselves and dealing with their emotions. Leaving when everybody was feeling terrible would also reinforce the message that despite all the achievements and wonderful experiences they had had, good things go bad and my behaviour is to blame.

We persevered with our plan and did a short closing circle, which is a ritual that we close every school day with. We helped them process their emotions, and the tone of the rest of the day was markedly better. From this experience, the students and their respective families had some important experiences of success, perhaps ones that may be transformative in the long term. These are experiences that we continue to draw from and build upon with the students and their families.

Seeing the gratitude of these kids is special. One student at camp was crying with gratitude, saying that he couldn’t believe that anybody would do something like this for him. “You’re such kind people,” he said. This kind of work is not easy, and credit needs to go to the entire Project REAL team, the staff at Banksia and the schools in the NCESE. But most of all, credit needs to go to the brave young kids and their families for opening up at an incredibly vulnerable time.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Jonathan Chee, Chief Storyteller

What sort of work can be done remotely, like really remotely? Remote, like 16,781km-away remote. That's the distance between the Massachusetts home of WPI and Melbourne. With international borders closed, WPI's Melbourne Project Center remotely conducted a full year of projects (twelve in all) with Melbourne-based organisations. As the local coordinating agency of WPI projects in Melbourne, we were curious to see how these remote projects might pan out.

BGCS' first foray into the remote WPI projects was with the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE). We took advantage of the fact that there is plenty of work in school engagement that has been done in the US that is of interest to the NCESE, so we asked our first WPI team of Gaby Mazzoni, Katelyn Wheeler and Tyler Jones to do some exploratory investigations into the state of trauma-informed education in the US. This first project connected us with a range of practitioners, educators, academics and even legislators working in this space. As detailed in the NCESE section of this report, one of the connections made during this project led to the delivery of the CARE program to our NCESE schools. This is the first time that the CARE program has been delivered in Australia, and the reception from our partner schools has been glowing. One of the CARE program participants said of the CARE training that 'CARE fuels my desire to make things better and help improve my and others wellbeing', an important sentiment for us all.

Our second NCESE project narrowed its focus to explore best practice in the US of what are called Flexible Learning Options (FLOs) and school re-engagement strategies. This is of direct interest to our partner schools in the NCESE and of course to our very own FLO, Project REAL. This WPI team consisting of Mickaela Gunnison, Tyler Lizotte, Trevor Shradly and Emily Toala was similarly industrious, completing a sound literature review, conducting interviews and even convening a workshop with the NCESE and some of the interviewees in the US. As a result of this project we have developed some valuable connections with like-minded educators at FLO-equivalents in the US, and also with the Massachusetts Department of Education, particularly their Drop-Out Prevention and Re-Engagement Specialist.

Sitting in the workshop on FLOs at the end of the term with the WPI team, educators and Department of Education representatives from Massachusetts, two

things became quite apparent. Not long into the workshop, heads on screen started nodding and shaking largely in unison as people spoke, and the chat function would light up with phrases like "same" and "us too". Despite the geographical distance, there was so much in common: the challenges, the passion, the common aspiration to improve the outcomes for our most disadvantaged children and young people. The second thing that became apparent was that the remote way of working in this era has opened opportunities for collaboration that weren't previously feasible, and therefore the capacity to share solutions to common problems has increased significantly.

A challenge for BGCS during this time of pandemic has been the dispersion of our workforce. We were not set up to do remote work: the majority of our work has traditionally been done face-to-face, and we bear all the hallmarks of a place-based organisation. Many of our processes and much of our infrastructure is based at our home in Pearcedale Parade. Much of our organisational culture is transferred through the transactions that happen casually in offices, walking through the community garden, packing up tables in the hall after School Holiday Program and the like. How then, does one help orient new workers, placement students and volunteers into the organisation in a world of remote work? Enter our third WPI project.

Our third WPI team looked at our existing induction process, researched the critical elements of successful induction processes ONBOARDING?, and dived deep into 'Banksia culture' to try to capture the magic and then translate it into a new online induction process. Working closely with Human Resources Manager Samantha Donaldson and Chief Storyteller Jonathan Chee, WPI students Nicole Conill, Nisha Goel, Emma Mungovan, and Sam Pitkowsky did an exceptional job of helping us create an online induction platform.

There were some major hurdles, of course: interviewing people; incorporating all the material that we wanted in an induction; getting a real feel for the spirit and culture of the organisation; and, of course, dealing with the technical aspects of creating an online platform for an organisation that is so place-based. There was also the matter of editing ten video interviews, scripting and animating eleven instructional guides, and making adjustments according to user testing of the platform. We're extremely pleased with the deliverables from the team, which have already been implemented, and although it was a relatively short period of intense productivity, we feel that it will help BGCS maintain

a strong common vision and culture for years to come.

Beyond the wonderful work conducted with BGCS, WPI teams worked with a diverse range of organisations in Melbourne over this period including the Red Cross, Emergency Services Foundation, Beyond Zero Emissions, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and Port Phillip Ecocentre. From interviewing scores of volunteers and volunteer coordinators with the Emergency Services Foundation, to partnership and program evaluation for strategic planning, to co-creating an online platform for young people, there's been a great diversity of projects undertaken by WPI teams.

The work undertaken by WPI teams is often of high value to the host organisations, as it has been for BGCS. As with the increased ease of collaborating with counterparts overseas, collaborating across Melbourne and Victoria has become easier too – we're just not quite used to it yet. These opportunities are part of the magic of participating in the WPI network, locally and globally. We appreciate the connections with other organisations in Melbourne, and hope to learn from the achievements of others and to contribute to solutions sought by people the world over.



Aiming High

Marie Spyros, Aiming High Coordinator

Imagine, for a moment, that you're in year 12 and you get an email in the evening from school: the school is closed tomorrow, classes will be remote. Some of your textbooks are still in your locker, so is your art folio and the notes for your chemistry class that you've been diligently taking. You don't know when you'll be back in the classroom, and typing out your question about a maths exercise takes so much longer than discussing it face-to-face.

Goodness knows when your teacher will be able to read the email and respond anyway! Your whole family is working and studying from home now, so accessing a device for your schoolwork is a daily scheduling task. Maybe you can use your phone for some classes, but it's less than ideal. That was school in 2020 for many students, and the impacts on the graduating class of 2020 are yet to be fully understood.

Like all Aiming High students, they started the year motivated and driven, but as the world literally changed around them, the obstacles and distractions – urgent, important, threatening – cropped up and never really left. Was a school assessment really that important, if one of my parents no longer had a job and I could still pick up shifts at the supermarket? What of distressed younger siblings who were grappling with online learning, but having to share or ration access to a device or internet? What if someone in the family got sick? Or died?

Year 12 is
challenging
at the best of
times.

When COVID cases soared into the high hundreds by the end of July, it was clear that things weren't going to change anytime soon. At some point in the second semester of 2020, it felt like we were driving a bus full of students on their VCE journey, and we had no idea when the trip was going to end. Trying to navigate, checking in to see that the passengers were all ok, trying to anticipate what was around every corner and over every hill...

Year 12 is challenging at the best of times. For the year 12s of 2020, we hope it's not an experience that permanently scars them. Still, we take some solace in the fact that through the Aiming High Program, we offered some significant protective factors against disengagement from education. Social contact, checking

in, formal and informal support through tutors and peers – these are all valuable elements of the program that kept the students coming back, particularly when year 12 teachers were snowed under and understandably hard to reach.

Seeing what was happening in schools, with sudden shutdowns, teachers not being able to keep up with switching to online learning in addition to their regular load, we made the decision to ensure students had time to connect, talk about their day or their studies, and to get some of the normal interactions that a 17, 18-year-old would get, but was so sorely lacking because of lockdowns. Looking back on it, the connection we prioritised felt akin to first aid that you apply because you can see what's happening and you're trying to stop it getting worse. It's the first aid that you apply the best that you can when you're driving the metaphorical bus and need to keep one eye on the road.

Could we have pushed the students on more? Spurred them to greater heights? Who knows? Despite everything, our students still had considerable success. What has been intriguing over this financial year is observing the differences that have emerged in the cohort of 2021.

In many ways, this financial year has been a tale of two halves. Unlike some other programs at Banksia, Aiming High has a distinct, close-knit cohort that we support for the duration of the academic year. What it also means is that over a financial year we see how one cohort ends their VCE journey and see another group get underway.

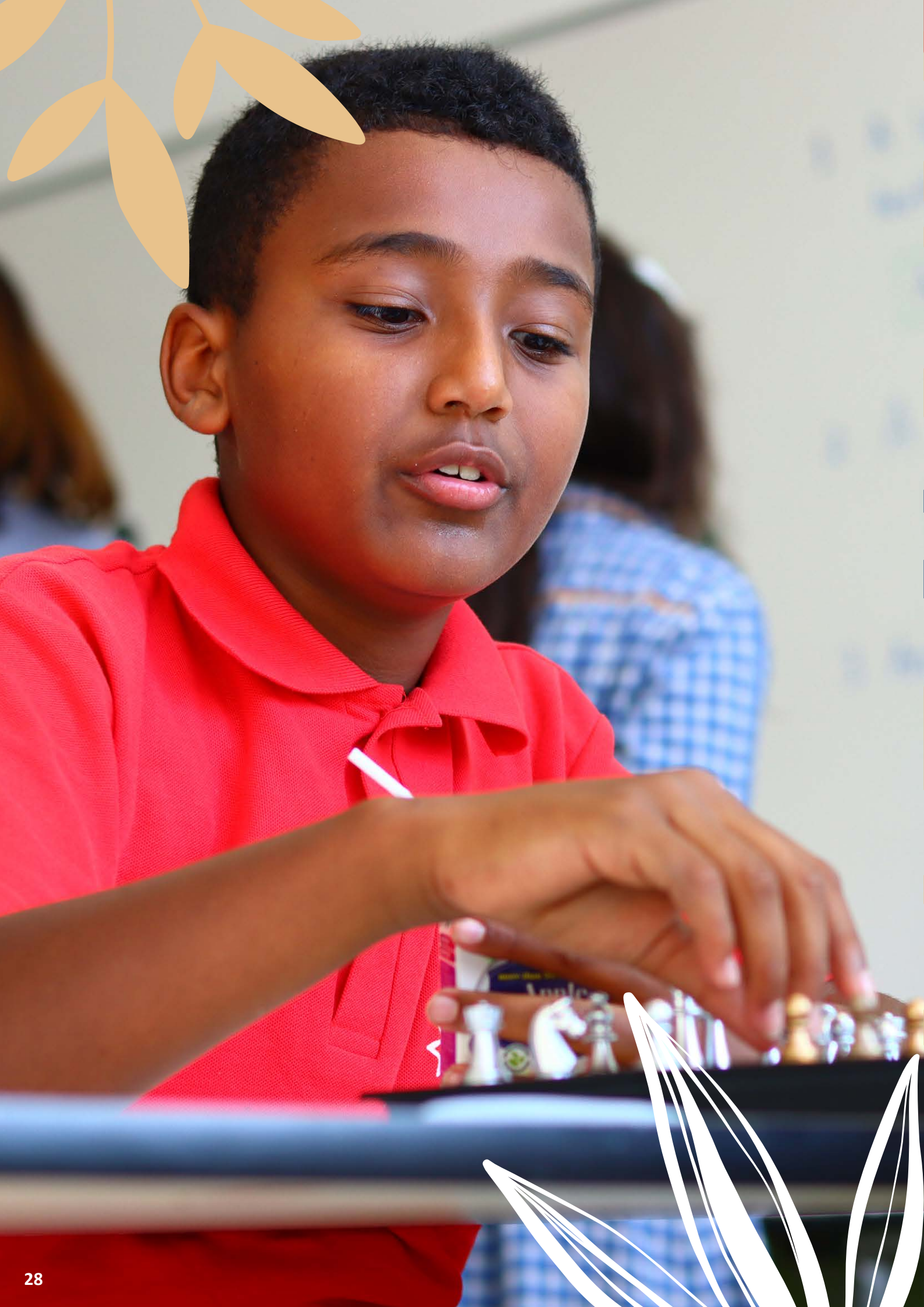
Like the year 12s of last year, 2021's cohort entered the year driven and wanting to do well. A key difference is that many of the students seem to feel like they missed a year and are somehow behind: many report they felt like they dropped the ball in 2020 and are not very proud. Compared to some other students in other parts of the country whose lives were less disrupted last year, trailing behind those peers is an understandable perception on their part.

2021's cohort are also more willing to choose things like mindfulness activities over, say games, when given the opportunity for a break from their studies. It's a curious trend, driven perhaps by observing the year 12s run the gauntlet that was 2020, and they're instinctively choosing 'practical' over 'fun'.

As the Aiming High Program Coordinator, after hitting the finishing line with the students at the end of the academic year in 2020, I've had a chance to take a break and reflect. In 2021 I was fortunate to take part in the CARE teacher training delivered through the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement. The focus is on self-care and some of the messages are quite simple, like the old metaphor of putting your oxygen mask first before you help somebody else with theirs, but nonetheless profound in their impact.

I have also noticed a kind of compassion in myself and in the students that I don't think was there in quite the same way last year; perhaps it was just a different quality of compassion. Last year, compassion was simply a practical part of first aid, of getting our young people to the finish line. This year, compassion has been part of the journey: compassion for self and compassion for others. It is a compassion that is deeply humanising, and it is a hard-learned lesson from 2020 that will stand us all in good stead.





Study Group

Edgar Caballero Aspe, Education and Sustainability Coordinator

If you were a parent of a school-aged child in 2020, or had friends who were parents, you would likely be familiar with the stories of remote schooling. It was common to be overloaded with homework, barely have any opportunities to ask for help or clarification, feeling grief at the loss of social connections and going stir crazy cooped up at home – and that was just the parents!

None of this was the fault of schools or teachers, they had an impossibly difficult job and deserve the utmost appreciation for their efforts. It is probably fair to say that the school experience in Melbourne in 2020 was pretty miserable for students, families and teachers alike.

So where does an out of school hours study support program fit in such a dystopian landscape? We really didn't know. While it felt a bit weird to be comparatively slow out of the blocks when it came to moving our programs online, pausing to observe, connect and plan proved to be the right steps to take.

In pausing to observe, we saw a rush of organisations filling the internet with content and activities. There was just so much stuff that sometimes the problem moved from scarcity to overabundance and making a choice (after trying to digest the latest health news and advice) just seemed too hard.

What we also observed in our community was that there were some families for whom there were needs of a more urgent nature than their children learning the times table or writing essays. In last year's annual report we spoke of the work we did early in the pandemic of identifying community needs, and finding that the support most needed included accessing food support, health services and technology. The provisions of food and technology support continued regularly this year, often spiking with every wave of reductions to Jobkeeper until its eventual cessation.

As we planned out the resumption of our suite of Study Group services, this time in the digital world, we knew we wanted to offer something that was true to the spirit and principles of real-life Study Group, even if it manifested completely differently.

What we have discovered in the attempt to launch online service delivery is that mindfully creating space for

humour, connection, interaction and creativity in every session makes a world of difference, especially when we're all confined to our personal 5km radius.

With the success of the online version of Study Group came an award, the Centre for Multicultural Youth's [MY Award for Out of School Hours Learning Support Program of the Year](#). The enthusiasm for the program from young people and their families has meant that we have kept one day a week as an online version, even when restrictions eased. This has helped us cater for a range of students and families who need our support but are not able to come to the centre.

The online model of the program also provoked some reflections for us: when all of Victoria is in lockdown, the proximity of the child and family has no bearing on whether they would benefit from participating in the online Study Group. In fact, many of the regional towns and centres lack the same sorts of supports offered in the metropolitan region. So, supported by an Australian Communities Foundation grant, in 2021 we have extended support to vulnerable young people in regional areas to favourable reception.

Having developed the infrastructure of policies, processes and the practice of running Study Group online once a week has meant that every dip back into lockdown, we've seamlessly transitioned back online without missing a beat. Considering how many lockdowns we've had, the support that we've been able to provide the community has been as regular as the changes to restrictions – but far more fun, and with far more smiles on our screens.

None of this work would have been possible without the contributions of all our Study Group team – staff, volunteers and placement students – or without the support of our wonderful funders Newsboys Foundation, The Kimberley Foundation, Melbourne Airport and Australian Communities Foundation. Together, we have done a power of good work, and together we can be proud.

Holiday Program

Edgar Caballero Aspe, Education and Sustainability Coordinator

This year felt like a year without holidays for just about everybody, I'm sure. While the School Holiday Program was of course interrupted by lockdowns, our team rallied in different ways as restrictions increased, then decreased and then increased again over the course of the year. Over the year, we also had conversations with colleagues across the organisation to discuss the needs we were observing in the community.

When restrictions were stringent, we connected with our regular participants and sent out different packs for use at home: fun art packs, STEAM (STEM + art!) education and exploration packs, books, toys and activity sheets. Many of those support packs and materials were provided by the wonderful team at the Father Bob Maguire Foundation, particularly the STEAM packs, and we are indebted to them for providing so much for us to distribute to the community.

As restrictions marched on, some of the conversations we had with colleagues centred on what we were seeing in the community. Many of the children and families in public housing were particularly impacted, and the decrease in opportunities for the young people to engage face-to-face had noticeable effects. No school, no sport, no public spaces to gather in. In discussion with colleagues from our Study Group, Youth Justice Alliance and Project REAL, we started rethinking what the School Holiday Program might provide, how it operated and who it might target.

Over forty years ago our organisation grew out of the combined efforts of a group of residents on the Banksia Gardens Estate and one of the early initiatives was for after-school activities. This was followed sometime later by activities in the school holiday programs. After some consultation and trialling, the School Holiday Program has gone back, in some ways, to the origins of Banksia Gardens Community Services.

We have decided to put a greater emphasis on engaging the young people in public housing, by consulting them more, offering activities that they have identified as of interest to them, and changing the scheduling to accommodate the needs of this particular cohort. What this looks like in practice is a range of activities that are either structured or semi-structured, a healthy range of activities that are designed for all levels, and some activities that can be drop-in (and out, and back in) for participants.

Although we are redesigning the program to respond particularly to the needs of young people in public housing, the program is also open for referrals for people outside public housing. To support this cohort of higher-needs participants, we have brought in specialist team members to staff the program. Altogether, it is a highly responsive program designed to better support some of the most vulnerable young people and their families in the region.

The pandemic has presented problems and challenges across all facets of society. In rethinking our School Holiday Program, we are coordinating with some of our specialist workers to respond to needs that have emerged in the community over the past year. The pandemic has required us to move out of the 'business as usual' mode. While some of the activities might look a bit different on the surface, our aim for the program is still the same: to provide support to some of the most vulnerable young people in Hume.



Youth Justice

Paul Atkinson, Youth Justice Coordinator

After adjusting the brakes, adding a bell and mending a puncture, the young man wheeled the bike over to the bike owner's mum. They were both a bit shy, given the recent clashes between their families and the judgements they had each made about each other, but ultimately the mother was grateful, the young man was proud and a five-year-old was able to ride again. It was a moment of literal and metaphorical repair, afforded by the bike program we set up in Banksia's car park during the summer holidays. The young man wasn't just fixing bikes he was teaching others how to do the basics, and in this way, it was also a reminder of the important human need to demonstrate self-efficacy and feel useful.

When we talk about the young people who come into conflict with the community and into contact with police, it is easy to decry the youth and see them as an isolated issue devoid of context. The truth is both more complicated and more uncomfortable. Many of the young people that the Alliance supports sit at the intersections of disadvantage and exclusion, and their current behaviours and attitudes are shaped by their experience. Violence in the home and other adverse childhood experiences typically form the backdrop for our young people, with institutional failures and intergenerational unemployment often rounding out the picture. When we start to work with young people we are also confronted by rigid gender stereotypes, a low sense of self worth and a pessimistic view of the future. These are some of the overlapping categories that frame the experience of many of our young clients.

The impacts of the pandemic cannot be understated for the young people we work with. We've seen young people suffer job losses, disengage with online learning, struggle with additional time in homes that aren't always safe, and struggle to find safe places to hang out with friends. Statistically the picture in Hume is grim, with unemployment rising to nearly 25% and local schools reporting record levels of disengagement. The lockdowns have disrupted everyone's plans, but for people already experiencing social exclusion and disadvantage the loss of routine and protective elements has been a serious blow.

The staple tools of our work were of course impacted by pandemic restrictions. Case management by phone limits our ability to build rapport and online groups are a clunky alternative to meeting in real life. Drop-in support

and pilots of new programs were all affected. We kept the Alliance Hub open as much as possible but with recurring lockdowns it was hard to provide the consistent rhythm that young people need. Despite this, we were always there in person for urgent support and through all the challenges, we continued to offer a safe, non-judgmental service to highly vulnerable young people. We supported them and their families to navigate crises, access specialist services, transition to new schools and work on the life goals that will set them up for success.

We have continued to explore new ways to stay connected with young people and to support their transition to adulthood. We piloted REFLECT (Regulating, Emotions, for Learning, Empowering, Counselling and Trauma) as an online group program in partnership with Headspace, supplementing the online sessions with face-to-face sessions in the Alliance Hub whenever we had the chance. The program covers topics such as anger, anger management techniques, communication styles and included a celebration for the young people at the end of the program. We will continue exploring ways to refine this program and also explore how individual elements of the program might be used in both group and case work processes.

The Courts remained largely online and the backlog of cases has delayed some young people from getting on with their lives. In previous years, the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court has been an important location for us – we went there to build relationships with magistrates, legal counsel and prosecutors, but this year we've been locked out by lockdown. The ramifications of these changes have also been significant for some of our young people. To the extent that deterrence works, it needs to be timely, particularly for teenagers. Pending cases can be a barrier for planning and a significant stress for young people. Many of these impacts are not necessarily easy to see, but, like the intersections of disadvantage mentioned earlier, they frame the experience of our young people.

Despite the challenges, we have also seen success – young people re-engaging with education, finding work, developing social and emotional skills and helping each other. Some of the highlights have included a group of young people who have started attending The Gateway School together at Banksia and who have urged each other to maintain attendance after the disruptions of COVID.

This year was the fourth year of the Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance and on the back of another

successful year it has been extended for a fifth year. We will continue providing opportunities for our young people, supporting them and advocating for them. It is often the case that when you're given something to do, and you're able to demonstrate your skills in a meaningful way, moments of repair can go a long way. Just ask our young bike mechanic.



Lal Rin Fel 'LC'

Case Study, BCYJA Project

LC grew up in Sunshine and left home at 17 because of family issues, which left him homeless. After moving around homeless shelters in the CBD and starting to get involved with the police LC moved to Broadmeadows where he has been couchsurfing ever since. LC is no stranger to Banksia Gardens, having featured in the 2018 Annual Report for his work in the Workskill Program.

When LC came into the BGCS' Alliance Hub looking for housing support, Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance (BCYJA) Case Manager Channa De Silva supported him with a housing application. Channa identified that LC would be a good fit for the Kangan Youth Foyer which provides student accommodation for homeless young people, with wrap-around support and access to further education, training and employment opportunities. The Foyer did not have vacancies at the time, but keen to get his foot in the door LC submitted his readiness forms in March. Channa helped enrol LC in an English course and Electrotechnology course, with a referral to Kangan Reconnect to make sure he had educational support to give him the best shot of succeeding at Kangan.

While waiting for a spot to open up at the Foyer and in between lockdowns, our fabulous Arts & Community Engagement Officer Melodie Radatti ran a mural project with graffiti artist Seb (Outer Urban Projects) to create murals on the Banksia Gardens Estate. LC took part in the street art techniques workshop, displaying such natural talent that everyone thought he'd done this before! LC designed and created the soccer pitch mural, and now says that when he walks past with his mates he loves showing them the mural and tells them "look this is what we did, I did this one. Reflecting on the mural project and working alongside other young people LC says:

"What I've learned from doing that, is to have confidence in yourself. It teaches you to have confidence. Before I didn't really want to talk to no one. I'd rather be by myself but doing that makes me open up more and build up my confidence around other people."

After seeing LC's commitment to the mural project, Melodie was able to provide some paid work for him graffiti-proofing the murals and other street art to ensure their enjoyment by residents for years to come.

A few months later the Foyer announced that it had

vacancies and with LC's proactive application he was ready to go. After interviews and a site visit to check out the studio accommodation, LC is now just waiting for the official news confirming his application. LC is committed to becoming a qualified electrician, securing stable employment and using this security to reconnect and provide for his child in NSW.

Looking back at everything that's happened in his life, LC's advice to young people who may find themselves in a similar situation is to keep "believing in yourself and asking for help. I know it's hard but ask for help. That's what I'd recommend to everyone else. That's the first step...I've learnt that the hard way". He also said that "If they needed help I would recommend this place [Banksia Gardens] to them for sure, anything with housing or anything they need they can come here and get the help they need."

I really like the hub.
Everytime I come
here I feel welcome,
anything that I need is
here if it s providable.
And the thing I like
is that I can drop in
anytime I want.



Community Connections

Paul Atkinson, Youth Justice Coordinator

The walking school bus: it's a staple of many primary schools and can be seen most school days if you happen to be in the right spot at the right time. Simple activities like walking school buses can be powerful ways to provide important support in an unthreatening, empowering way, and demonstrate valuable community development principles.

School in 2020 was hard for everyone, particularly those starting school for the first time or entering high school. After the second lockdown began in Melbourne, attendance at school for kids on the Banksia Gardens Estate slumped significantly and was a concern for parents, teachers and the broader community.

For one of the year seven students living on the estate, the disrupted year had started to seriously derail her education. As our teacher colleagues at Project REAL and the NCESE will attest, this sort of disengagement from school can have serious long-term consequences, so we wanted to do whatever we could to help get things back on track as quickly as possible.

After some discussions with the student's father, we started walking her to school three days a week. This little bit of extra support and encouragement did the trick, and she started engaging with school again. Curiously though, we noticed other kids tagging along on the walk to school and noticed other families struggling with the morning routine and motivating their kids to get up and ready in time. So we decided to ramp it up and soon it was a walking school bus. We kept the walking bus going during term three, meeting the needs of several families on the estate with children attending the local primary school. We encouraged parents to join in and after a couple of months we scaled back our involvement. For some kids this intervention stuck and the habit supported their engagement with school.

This walking school bus example illustrates our approach to working with the community. Where possible, we respond to community needs and through our response we create connections between residents to our service and other residents. The response itself doesn't need to be permanent for the work to be effective, and while the walking school bus is on hold for now, it is ready to go again if the need arises.

Through these interventions we build relationships that allow people to come to us when things go wrong or

when their lives become complicated. In this way our work can be responsive (even reactive) and at the same time preventative.

The environment at the Alliance Hub is a physical space where both preventative and restorative work happens, particularly with our local young people. During the periods when we haven't been in lockdown, we have prioritised creating a welcoming space for young people at the Alliance Hub where people can come to hang out, play games and eat toasties. This engagement can then transition to help with schoolwork or resume writing or conversations about mental health or homelife which in turn can lead to other useful interventions.

Another focus this year was providing activities during the school holidays that targeted the young people with the least to do and the least safe and supportive home lives. We also started a quarterly estate BBQ with local resident volunteers, and featured sports activities, arts and crafts and bike repairs. These activities were an opportunity to change the nature of public space and when the sun was shining we would engage with 50 to 80 residents in a single day. Doing this allows us to better understand the community and their needs and to provide the opportunity to respond and allow some of the shy new residents an opportunity to get to know their neighbours.

As the Spring of 2020 approached, a group of residents expressed interest in gardening on the estate and after a few meetings and discussions with the Department of Housing, we were able to set up a section of open space in the heart of the estate and turn it into a trial community garden. We ordered cypress pine sleepers and soil, and with a working bee on the estate, we started transforming the plot from grass to edibles. People came from all corners of the estate to lend a hand and while the young kids decorated the pavement with chalk the older ones helped the adults assemble the wood and shovel the dirt. The first crop was herbs and then as summer rolled in, the garden produced tomatoes, zucchini and pumpkin. The citrus trees we planted were so popular that some of them were re-homed. The zealous lawnmowers took out fig trees and the rosemary we planted but the feijoa and apricot trees look set for the long haul.

During March and April, local young people worked with professional street artist Seb Francz to design, develop and paint five colourful murals at various locations on the Banksia Gardens Estate. The mural project provided regular opportunities for young people to engage, socialise and express themselves in a safe, non-judgmental space. It also

encouraged civic participation from a group who are regularly disengaged from school and excluded from other social opportunities.

Residents of the estate were consulted throughout the planning and design process, fostering a sense of ownership and community pride. Visually, the project has significantly enhanced the public amenity of the estate and provided a colourful blueprint for alternative ways to effectively manage tagging and graffiti in the area.

The kids now walk to school past colourful murals and a wonderful community garden. Each of these elements are vehicles for engagement, empowerment and connection. The community garden itself is a focal point in the estate and the start of bigger plans to continue improving the look and feel of the communal space. As we look forward to the pandemic winding up we are also gearing up to start on a new project to expand the gardens and continue to transform the shared space and provide more opportunities for connection.



Social Cohesion through Education

Naomi Brouwer and Melodie Radatti, SCTE Coordinators

The stalls set up outside the hall at Bethal Primary School are decked out in decorations, signs and flags representing various countries around the world. It's term four in 2020, and the school community is finally back together in the one place and ready to celebrate Harmony Day.

A line of kids snakes from a table where there are three boxes of 'mystery sweets'. The child at the head of the line gets their turn, is handed a sweet that is a delicacy from somewhere in the world along with a little piece of paper with the name of the sweet, where it's from and a little bit about the culture. As kids do, there's swapping and sharing, exclaiming and pointing as different kids excitedly describe the sweet and the culture it stems from.

In many ways, the pandemic has been a time-compressed experiment where we've seen what happens when communities are working together, when there's a strong social fabric, and when there's not. That sense of togetherness, of some sort of cohesion: we've seen examples of it big and small, in traditional media and social media, touted by politicians left, right and centre. We've also seen examples where there's been a lack of cohesion, and the disastrous ramifications it can have on community and society. We know it when we see it, and we can see what happens when we don't have it.

The work we do through SCTE is about building the knowledge, capacity and experiences of our young people to help them understand themselves and others better. In a nutshell, the lessons we imbue within our activities foster the cohesion that society and communities need to thrive – or sometimes just survive, when extreme factors like the pandemic are at play. When the wind is blowing the right way, it's about thriving, and when the squalls begin, the crew pull together to weather the storm or move out of harm's way.

Pre-COVID, our activities were exclusively at schools, face-to-face. Workshops, art programs, sports sessions, and events were our key vehicles for creating space and opportunities for students. So, how then does a suite of activities designed to nurture these skills and experiences in schools work when schools are closed for large swathes of time? We achieved this by using the tools we teach – listening, being mindful of ourselves and others, empathising, building strong relationships, and working collaboratively. Oh, and Zoom.

Well, part of it was Zoom. When we weren't able to go into schools, we created an art competition, "Postcards from Lockdown", drawing entries from a range of schools in the region. The messages are insightful: the pain and sadness are as clear as the hope and pragmatism displayed. We also conducted online programs for Hume Central Secondary College students, and that was an excellent way to stay connected with them. In fact, feedback from the school indicated that for some of the students, the SCTE online sessions were the only school activities they were engaging with.

We also plotted and planned with teachers and wellbeing coordinators, listening to what they were seeing on the ground, responding to their needs and the needs of their students. It was so exciting when we were finally able to go back into schools in fourth term! The work we have undertaken has taken many forms: mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) workshops, creative arts, play-based learning, hip hop workshops and two large Harmony Day events. We worked with hip hop artist Yung Philly and Hume Central Secondary College students to create a song, with the process of creating the song becoming the subject of a film the students shot. The film was entered in the youth category of the Multicultural Film Festival 2021 and has been shortlisted as a finalist. We've also started a bigger, more ambitious project for another Human After All film project documenting the process of intergenerational exchange between students and local elders that will be completed in the next financial year.

All these initiatives are tailored to individuals and cohorts at our different partner schools. The methods may be different, but the underlying drivers are the same: instilling the values of inclusion, harmony, peace and empowerment. The need for these values and attributes is perhaps clearer now than at any time in recent history. Exposure to these values and messages in these formative years helps students become comfortable and fluent in this language.

When we're on the outer, when we're not part of the group, we're on our own. When we exclude others for whatever reason, maybe they barrack for the other team, maybe they look different, maybe they have different opinions or values, we weaken the bond and the resilience of the community in general. What then is the glue that coheres us, and makes us stronger? Respect, understanding of self, empathy, listening, inclusion and making space for others, even when they're different, being able to coexist even when there are conflicting values.

To the students and staff of Bethal Primary School, Ilim College, Hume Central Secondary College, The Gateway School, Roxburgh College and Meadows Primary School, thank you all for working on this important mission, particularly at a time of great upheaval, stress and uncertainty.





Youth Transitions

Tash Alabakov, Youth Pathways Coordinator

It's 10am on a weekday, and the recorded voice message says that the enquiries phone line is now closed as the office's capacity to respond to enquiries has been reached. Thank you, please try again at a later date.

You try to call your university, and are immediately placed on hold in a queue. You get to talk to somebody after twenty minutes, and they put you in another queue to a different department. You are bounced around and are finally told to email your enquiry. What might have taken a relatively quick visit to an office drags on for days and sometimes weeks.

It was the year of unprecedented use of 'unprecedented'. Long queues, long delays: they were common experiences for many of us this year. What did the experience look like for young people, particularly for new migrants and refugees? Theirs is a story that didn't get much attention in the media, so it's worth sharing. After all, the delays weren't anybody's fault – but 'unprecedented demand' often means that those with the least opportunities or means to navigate the system, like young Ejaz Hussein, get left behind.

Ejaz is originally from Afghanistan and joined YTSP when he was completing high school. Ejaz pitched us ideas about teaching music to children, offered his help with multimedia projects, asked how he could donate to refugees in Yemen, and talked about the unfairness of the price of feminine hygiene products and what could be done to make them accessible for free to young women. Ejaz and many of his peers are embarking on life in Australia, and have so much to offer the community; we will all miss out if these young people are not helped to establish themselves in their new home.

The YTSP supports young new migrants and refugees as they try to make their way through the doors of Australian education institutions, volunteer roles and into employment. With many of those doors closed because of lockdown, things have been a little trickier. The hands-on or 'real life' experiences were particularly difficult to facilitate – work 'tasters', volunteering, networking with employees and building connections were planned, promoted and cancelled as restrictions came and went. We also provided help with a range of other supports, such as housing, material support (particularly for educational requirements and referrals to support services), all of which were impacted by the fast-changing landscape of COVID restrictions.

Technology has been a challenge for many of the YTSP participants, but in ways that you might not expect. Most of us took some time to get used to things like unmuting ourselves, or muting ourselves, at the appropriate time with video calls, attaching/accessing digital files or collaborating online. We even got used to the Zoom-fatigue and headaches, and learned to pace ourselves in the digital world. Most of us at least got to do it in our native language!

Many of our support systems, and enrolment systems are challenging – doubly so when they are all online, and enquiries are all conducted remotely. This is where some of the challenges of technology were felt most acutely by many of our young people. Oftentimes, their applications are not straightforward: visa statuses, home or income statuses, work or education history, many of these often require those extra couple of questions that are mostly much quicker when able to be asked in person. And our young people are able to convey their questions and answers so much more quickly and easily verbally. So, many, many hours of support this year have been helping with administration that has been made more difficult by going online.

Another aspect of this tech fallout is found in study environments. So much of the support that our young people, indeed all of us, need and get come through informal interactions. A quick question to clarify with the teacher; asking a peer or classmate about an assignment; hearing about a job opportunity in conversation while hanging out with friends. As a result, quite a few of our cohort have dropped out of multi-year qualifications and are choosing things that are shorter, face-to-face, and more manageable for them. These are sensible choices, but it's hard not to wonder what doors this might close for these young people, even if only in the short term, and what it will mean for this generation of migrants and refugees.

With all the challenges, there have still been many stories of success and achievement which are all the more incredible given the circumstances. Most young people are still active and getting involved in events and initiatives that they feel are important, furthering their education and moving into employment, albeit at a slower pace. We can't forget about these young people: they are there, knocking on the door and wanting to contribute.

Najat

Case Study, Youth Transitions and Kenley Court Neighbourhood House

Originally from Ethiopia, Najat arrived in Australia in 2019 as a refugee. Najat has been a participant in the Youth Transition Support Program (YTSP) and has also volunteered at Kenley Court Neighbourhood House throughout the pandemic. With support from BGCS since 2019, Najat is now employed through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Youth Employment Program as an administration assistant and is undertaking a Bachelor of Youth Work at RMIT University.

The only time last year that Najat didn't catch a train to volunteer at Kenley Court Neighbourhood House was when she was cooped up in an enforced lockdown at her home in the North Melbourne public housing towers.

Every other Thursday Najat was there helping with the Food Bank program, handing out food, helping with the administration of the program and communicating with the seventy-odd families the program supported each week. "I love building relationships with people," she says, pointing to the years of aid work she did when living in Egypt, work which she started at the tender age of fourteen.

Despite her years of experience, command of four languages and skills as a community development worker, when she arrived in Australia she says she felt hopeless. "I didn't have anybody to ask questions, I had no relationships to help with employment and no local experience". She heard about Banksia through a friend and visited soon after.

Najat was eligible for the YTSP, and was initially supported in the program through Georgina Wheeler and then through Tash Alabakov. Najat completed year eleven but was not sure about doing year twelve despite her ambitions to study at university. When she found out through YTSP that there were pathways to university through TAFE, Najat decided to enrol in a Certificate IV in Community Services, which she successfully completed, and is currently studying a Bachelor of Youth Work.

"When I arrived in Australia, I didn't know how to do anything, I didn't understand the system," Najat says. While Najat received support in areas such as applying for a tax file number, getting a driver's license, navigating the education system and applying for jobs, she also jumped at the opportunity to volunteer and give back to the community. Through her experience volunteering at Kenley Court Neighbourhood House, she has developed

a strong working relationship with Kenley Court's Manager Michael Mansour, who has also been able to provide a range of informal support to Najat.

Reflecting on her support from Tash and Michael, Najat feels that they have been instrumental in her progress in Australia. "They were with me during my worst times. Because of them, I am here today: they encouraged me, they helped me to get a job and to do my course". When Najat was offered a job through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – a job Tash helped her apply for, and Michael acted as a referee – the very first people she told were Tash and Michael. "I hadn't even told my family yet!" Najat says.

Najat's story is one of hope and determination, and of the barriers that many in our community face. "When I came to Australia I felt hopeless. I didn't understand the system here and the lack of information affected me so much. I applied for so many jobs, got rejected from so many jobs. But Tash and Michael encouraged me, sent me jobs, and told me about opportunities." Najat has become part of Kenley's Advisory Group, while continuing to study, work and volunteer.

Najat wants to continue making a difference in the community and supporting people of all ages and backgrounds facing disadvantage. Reflecting on the impact of the support she has received from staff and programs at BGCS, Najat says, "If you go to Banksia, they will put you in the right direction. They will help you with building your career and achieving your dreams. If you fall, they can help you stand."

They were with me
during my worst times.
Because of them, I
am here today: they
encouraged me, they
helped me to get a job
and to do my course.



Kenley Court NH

Michael Mansour, Kenley Court Neighbourhood House Coordinator

After six months of mostly online interactions, it seemed a good idea to have an exciting offering for a first in-person activity for our Youth Connect Leadership program, so we put on a 'learn to skateboard' session. Given the incredible excitement from the young people, we probably could have put on a session dedicated to painting the external walls of our building and it still would have been a great success. They did enjoy skateboarding though!

After the skateboarding finished, we all sat around in the park talking and soon an hour and a half had passed. It had been so long since any of us had had the opportunity to hang out in a group, and even though we had been in touch remotely over the long second lockdown in Melbourne, there seemed like so much to catch up on.

Many of the young people had changed – taller, more mature, a fact that creeps up on you when interactions are limited to the phone or video calls. As we sat around in the park, a number of the young people talked a lot about things that they've never opened up about in our program – their personal lives, their journey to Australia, things that perhaps they haven't had the space to talk with others about over the last half a year. I think we were all relieved to be able to gather together.

Kenley Court Neighbourhood House is in a pocket of Meadow Heights with a high proportion of new migrants and refugees, and a large proportion of the people we support are from these CALD backgrounds. While a range of our programs like Study Group, Girls Circle and our Adult Education classes moved online, our Food Support Program and some case management continued face-to-face for the entire year.

A lot of informal community support is done through the Food Support Program, as we have used that channel to find out about the needs of community members, and met them ourselves or referred them on to partners. Sometimes the help might be as simple as helping bridge the gap between generations, like helping parents mediate their children's use of Tik Tok, acclimatising them to Australian social norms and so on.

One interesting thing about our experience with face-to-face programs is that even when restrictions have eased, we kept strict protocols in place – density limits, temperature checks and social distancing – and there wasn't a hint of any dissatisfaction. We have worked hard with the community and our partners to provide advice about COVID, so there has been strong buy-in from our service users. Just as well for us as the demand for food support over the year amounted to us supporting an average of seventy five households each week.

There have been disruptions to some of our programs, services and groups by the various lockdowns, but we and our participants moved very swiftly back online when needed. More than fifty welfare checks were conducted by phone to our local families to check on their wellbeing during lockdowns and to support them as needs arose. An area of activity that has not been as easy to maintain has been with the community garden. The garden has traditionally been supported by volunteers, crews from the Department of Justice and Work for the Dole programs, all of which have stopped since the pandemic began. Some things will simply take time to re-establish.

Our various social groups, such as the Turkish Women's Group, El Amaal Women's Group, and the Senior Iraqi/Syrian Men's Group have been affected in different ways. Some of the groups with senior members have paused their meetings, while others have been able to connect online or by phone and then meet in person between lockdowns.

As Kenley is a real home for community and social groups, it has also been wonderful to see these different groups get involved in information sessions and pre-accredited training that we've been able to facilitate, and look at other ways of supporting themselves and their communities.

We're also very excited about some groundwork that we have done this year to start a prevention of violence against women program that targets adults specifically and reaches different elements of our multicultural community. In the new year we will have programs for Arabic-speaking communities, the Indian community and the Nepalese community, helping to expand the message of gender equality into those groups.

It has been such a challenging year for everybody, but we take pride in having supported the community through the entire period. The community knew we were still here for them, even during lockdowns, and that we hadn't shut the doors. If they needed anything, they were able to turn to us. We are grateful to all of our supporters, funders, partners and volunteers for helping us stay connected and support the community.

It was so
empowering
and so
interesting.



Study Group

Thank you so much for working really hard for our kids.

~ Parent

KCNH Study Group Program continued its success in supporting the young people in our community with their homework and academic progress, as well as expanding their social, emotional, and recreational skills. We delivered a total of 40 sessions targeting more than 20 students (6-12 years old). Our activities were designed using four main themes: wellbeing, social and emotional intelligence, cultural competence and the nature around us. In addition to the sessions, we distributed 42 care and activity packs to students and their families, helped with six high school enrolments, and referred 13 participants or their parents to additional services at BGCS. When not in lockdown, we also organised four excursions.



Client Support

Thanks so much for your support and all the work you did. It really helped me a lot.

~ Student

The Client Support Program has provided critical support for families connected to KCNH this year. Despite limitations imposed by lockdowns, the program supported around 120 people, including some of the most vulnerable families in our community, and comprising mainly newly arrived refugees. The type of support included filling out forms, assisting with their educational pathways, providing general advice, referring and connecting them to other programs and local service providers. Some examples of this work includes:

- Organising and delivering an Electricity Saving workshop for eight people whom we assisted with their \$250 Power Bonus Application forms.
- Assisting six people with their Australian citizenship application forms
- Referring four women to the sewing course delivered by BGCS
- Supporting people in booking their medical appointments and organising for interpreting support.



Girls Circle

I wanted to be more social, and the girls circle is a place where you can meet new people, outside of school.

~ Participant

The Girls' Circle program provided a safe space for twelve girls (aged 10-14 years old) from diverse cultural backgrounds to come together, socialize and discuss relevant topics around gender equality, respectful relationships and personal development. We delivered more than 40 sessions this year, exploring topics such as mental health and wellbeing, self-care techniques, exploring goals, educational pathways, healthy relationships, puberty and inspirational women around the world. The program created a safe space for the girls to ask questions and inquire about sensitive topics they didn't have other avenues to discuss. Some of the girls felt that they couldn't talk with their mothers/parents about such topics saying, "I'm too embarrassed and can't ask her some questions". The Girls Circle gave them that opportunity. The program also empowers the girls to actively design, plan and deliver some activities in the program, helping to improve their confidence, leadership and public speaking skills.





Training and Employment

Rana Tbaileh, Manager Training and Employment

As 2020 came to a merciful end, we were notified that our Department of Adult Education and Training had won an award from the Victorian Multicultural Commission to be presented by the Premier himself (via Zoom, of course). We appreciate the recognition, and want to acknowledge the various individuals, groups and organisations who have supported us for contributing to an incredible community effort. While our department is predominantly about training and education, it is the community connections, support and care that Banksia is known for.

BGCS provides opportunities for individuals who are experiencing disadvantage and poverty, and we have a strong focus on social justice and advocacy. The Adult Education and Training team, like most others at Banksia, help hundreds of CALD participants to strengthen their links to the community. Through our specific programs adults participate in vocational training to improve their communication skills and enhance their quality of life through the acquisition of important skills and knowledge.

As the pandemic continued into this year, our adult training services took on a very different look and feel from previous years. All programs expanded to incorporate a range of IT skill sets. Tutors developed new and engaging ways of delivering training, and the heavy reliance on technology to facilitate remote learning took us away from the familiar territory of the traditional classroom, and into people's lounge rooms via Zoom.

Our classes and training became a gateway for other support provided by BGCS. Many of our learners are on low incomes, and many lost jobs that were casual positions in non-essential services. As such, there was a huge demand on our Food Support Program from our learners, and of course our computer refurbishment program became critical for providing very low cost or free computers to help our learners (and their families) stay connected to their education.

We had one mother in our English as an Additional Language class with three school-aged children. Her husband had been in casual employment and lost his job when restrictions came in, and they didn't have a computer, internet access or much money for food. We supplied a laptop to the mother for a highly subsidised price, and loaned her children two computers to access their remote learning and connect with school. We also

helped with a mobile data device so she and her family could connect to their classes straight away. Our learner has been a regular client of our Food Support Program, and is grateful for the support that she and her family have been given. She has never missed a class, and has been able to use the computer and her new computer skills to connect with her children's school, access telehealth appointments and stay connected with her supports in the community during lockdowns. People might not think of English classes or work skills training as being essential community support, but this is what being part of BGCS means.

The future of jobs and career pathways is less certain than it was two years ago. Indeed, the job opportunities that have come up this year have been scarce, and the demand high. What is clear is that good communication skills will always be helpful, regardless of the situation, and that basic IT skills will become increasingly important for work and life more generally. We feel confident that our courses and training are providing solid foundations in this regard for our learners, and will support them if they choose to go into further education and training or into the workforce.

The pandemic drove home very clearly the importance of community, the value of collective action and the importance of investment in quality education and social services capable of keeping us healthy and productive.

We are grateful to our supporters, partners and funding bodies for reaching out to offer their time and support through this tumultuous year. It is also important to acknowledge all the great work that has been done by our Learn Local sector. A measure of the strength and integrity of an organisation's relationships is how they hold up under duress, and we can all be very proud of the work that has been done this year.

During the pandemic, Banksia Gardens responded to emerging community needs. Following are highlights of some of the programs and initiatives:

28 ONLINE CLASSES

28 classes covering nine different programs: Computers, Citizenship, English as an Additional Language, Sewing.

FLEXIBLE TRAINING DELIVERY

Training was delivered in a range of formats which included work-shop, class-based, over mobile phone and Whatsapp. A number of customised videos were developed to address targeted needs of learners.

ZOOM TRAINING

We offered Zoom training at no cost, with many community members attending the training to help with their learning.

MATERIAL AID

Provided about 3,600 packages of material aid to the local community. Families were supported by providing them with required and cultural appropriate material aid.

SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS and REFUGEES

Provided support to asylum seekers and refugees, through material aid, online learning programs, welfare checks and community dinners. Programs and services were offered to asylum seekers at no cost.

IT AID

Provided close to 800 refurbished laptops/PC's to the local community for free or at very low cost. Thank you to the Hume City Council for supporting us and making this possible.



Covid Support

Jonathan Chee, Chief Storyteller

DPV Health Partnership

Our nearest neighbour, DPV Health, has been an extraordinary partner throughout this pandemic. Sometimes the actions of a good partner are not visible to the public, like when we had DPV Health's expert medical eyes reviewing the medical elements of our draft Pandemic policy, or helping to provide hand sanitiser and other products when they were in short supply.

Other activities are more visible, like working in collaboration with us on the Youth Engagement Response Team (YERT) Program to engage and support high-risk young people (primarily from the Banksia Gardens Estate), setting up testing sites at our Centre and later also having vaccination stations in our hall so community members could come to a familiar and comfortable place for those critical services. We have also worked together to establish a special healthcare intake process specifically for BGCS clients, helping to identify and fast-track appointments for urgent and vulnerable community members.

The work we have done together has not just been on our premises. DPV Health and BGCS worked together on the Victorian Government's High Risk Accommodation Response (HRAR) Program to support and engage people living in public housing. This program was established to prevent, prepare and respond early to COVID infections, and has been an important part of the responses and prevention of COVID in public housing in the Broadmeadows region throughout the year.

The Common Bean Cafe

Our home of the Common Bean Cafe, DPV Health's Broadmeadows clinic, had to be redeployed by DPV Health to expand their triage space. The Cafe has been closed for 12 months, but we are in discussions to re-open our beloved social enterprise cafe at a new location.

Computer Refurbishment

BGCS provided almost 800 refurbished computers to the local community for free or at very low cost. Many of these machines were donated by our wonderful partners Hume City Council, Holy Child Primary School and Roxburgh College. These computers have been vital for helping our community stay connected to education, employment and support networks.

Policies and Online Services

It wouldn't be a COVID-response without some mention of going online. As part of our move to online delivery, we developed and endorsed a policy specifically for the delivery of online and remote programs and services. The new policy covered aspects of child safety, privacy and general implementation of new technology in service delivery at the organisation. Service delivery wasn't the online policy we developed or amended. A new Working from Home policy was developed and endorsed, and our Workplace Health and Safety policy was updated. Another significant piece of infrastructure work was the migration of the organisation's files and documents into the cloud for remote access and collaboration.

Working Groups

There were a number of working groups across the organisation that helped steer our COVID responses in a number of ways:

- The IT Working Group looked at technology needs in both the organisation and the community, helping to secure and distribute computers, developing and refining the Online Service Delivery Policy, assessing IT skills and infrastructure at BGCS and more.
- WHS Committee reviewed the Workplace Health and Safety Policy, developed a Working from Home policy, and had oversight of the many requirements (and subsequent changes) of COVIDsafe plans.
- The Needs Assessment Working Group coordinated our collection of information about community needs, partly through surveying with our participants and clients and through collaboration with partner organisations.

Food Bank

What started out as a low-key support to a handful of people, mainly as extra support for some of our learners in our adult education and training programs who were experiencing significant poverty, became a steady flow every week when the pandemic hit. In this financial year, the Food Bank Program at BGCS supplied 3,600 packages of material aid (food and essential household items) to the community, with an additional 4,500 packages distributed via the same program at Kenley Court Neighbourhood House.

With the program supporting several hundred people a week across both sites, it was clear to us there was significant community need that would not abate soon, so we decided to upgrade the program by undergoing significant infrastructure changes. We purchased commercial refrigerators and freezers, repurposed the area that was previously used for cleaning storage, tiled the floors, painted the walls, installed shelves, new lighting and double doors. We now routinely supply food support to three hundred people a week across both the BGCS and Kenley Court sites.

Safety Officer and Protocols

The work required to maintain COVID safe practices and keep up with mandated requirements (density limits, check-ins, safety plans, QR Codes and more) was significant. We appointed a COVID Safety Officer who helped oversee and implement this work across the organisation, and helped review and update protocols and procedures when restrictions changed.

Special Thanks

Many of the initiatives detailed here do not have dedicated funding, and yet were critical for our ability to support the community through this incredibly challenging year. Our special thanks to the Kimberley Foundation, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Hume City Council and the Federal Australian Government for establishing and providing COVID-specific funds.



Financial Report

2020-2021



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 2021, 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 2021 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

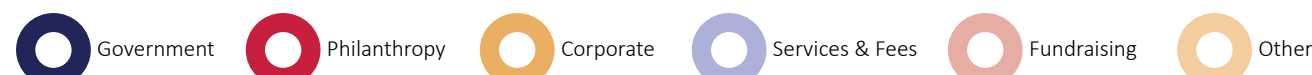
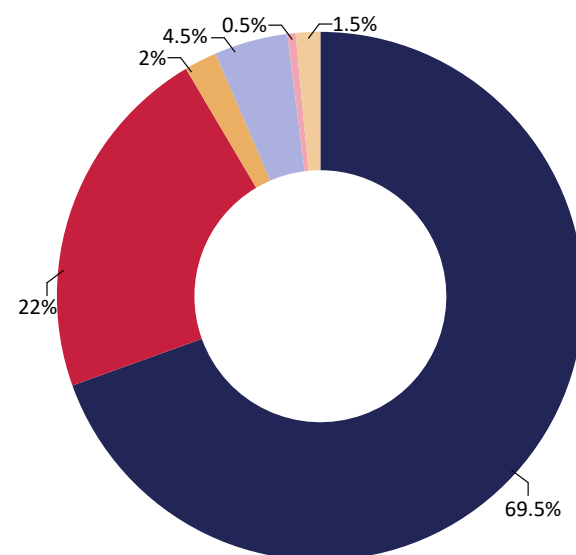
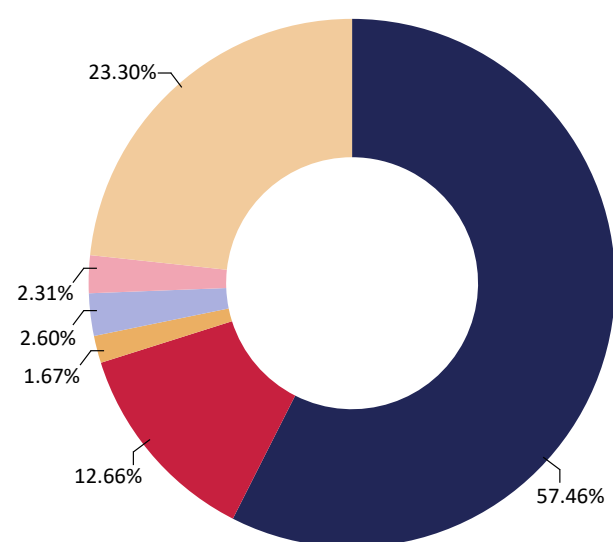
Dated this 18th day of October 2021
330 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

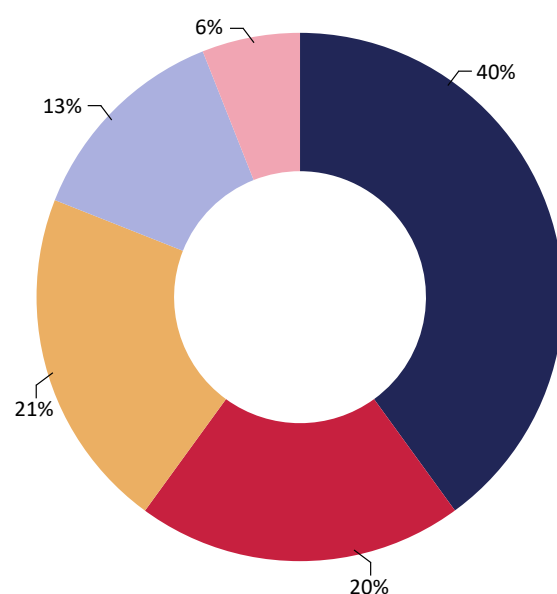
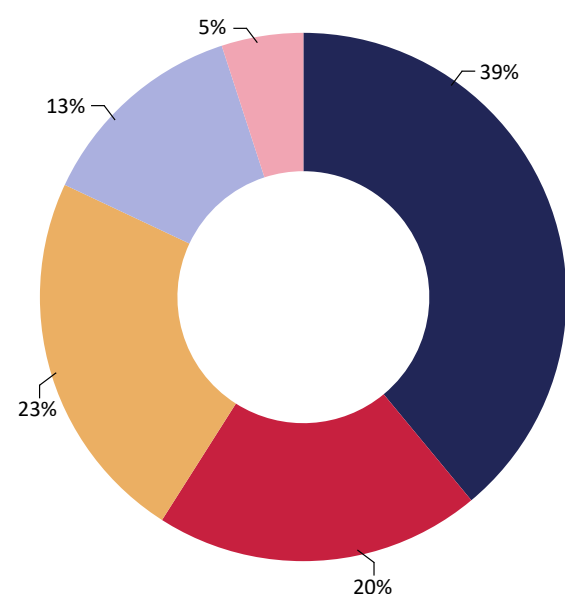
WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2020-2021

WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2019-2020



HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2020-2021

HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2019-2020



Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

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 2021.

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE MEMBERS

Carole Fabian	Julijana Todorovic	Ed David	Jon Shields	Peter Ewer
Joanne Bliss	Royce DeSousa	Venetia Taylor	Marina Labib	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 2021 financial year after all depreciation and amortisation amounted to \$259,017 (prior year \$488,391).

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

Carole Fabian
Carole Fabian, Chairperson
18 October 2021

Gina Dougall
Gina Dougall, CEO

Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	NOTE	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue	4	2,992,810	3,212,375
Finance income		5,069	1,987
Government support- JobKeeper and Cash Flow Boost		779,000	446,000
Other income	4	29,577	-
Donations		80,578	35,246
Employee benefits expense		(3,014,784)	(2,591,124)
Depreciation		(44,130)	(29,343)
Cost of sales		(400,522)	(373,880)
Administrative expenses		(75,197)	(93,819)
Marketing expenses		(1,100)	(14,418)
Occupancy costs		(58,838)	(67,316)
Other expenses		(31,116)	(35,195)
Finance expenses		(2,330)	(2,122)
Profit for the year		259,017	488,391
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		259,017	488,391

Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	NOTE	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2,136,494	1,433,291
Trade and other receivables	6	71,948	306,032
Other assets	8	2,484	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,210,926	1,739,323
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	112,976	135,225
Right-of-use assets	9	468	624
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		113,444	135,849
TOTAL ASSETS		2,324,370	1,875,172
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	324,900	268,171
Lease liabilities	9	156	156
Employee benefits	12	419,258	339,033
Other financial liabilities	11	293,800	244,439
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,038,114	851,799
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	9	312	468
Employee benefits	12	67,438	63,416
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		67,750	63,884
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,105,864	915,683
NET ASSETS		1,218,506	959,489
EQUITY			
Retained earnings		1,218,506	959,489
TOTAL EQUITY		1,218,506	959,489

Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
2021		
Balance at 1 July 2020	959,489	959,489
Profit for the year	259,017	259,017
Balance at 30 June 2021	<u>1,218,506</u>	<u>1,218,506</u>
2020		
Balance at 1 July 2019	471,098	471,098
Profit for the year	488,391	488,391
Balance at 30 June 2020	<u>959,489</u>	<u>959,489</u>

Financial Reports

for year ended 30 June 2021

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	NOTE	2021 \$	2020 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:			
Receipts from customers		4,446,110	3,654,424
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,720,870)	(3,340,570)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	16	<u>725,240</u>	<u>313,854</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(21,881)	(19,696)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>(21,881)</u>	<u>(19,696)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:			
Payment of finance lease liabilities		(156)	(156)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		<u>(156)</u>	<u>(156)</u>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		703,203	294,002
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		<u>1,433,291</u>	<u>1,139,289</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5	<u>2,136,494</u>	<u>1,433,291</u>



Thank You!

Community

100 Story Building
Adrienne Smith
AFL Victoria
Alin Mikhale
Andrew Lew
Anglicare
Anna van Dijk
Anna Kuch
Arabic Welfare
Australian Children's Music Foundation
Australian Friendly Turkish Women's Group
Berry Street Childhood Institute
Better Place Australia
Brotherhood of St Laurence
Broadmeadows Basketball Association (Broncos)
Conservation Volunteers Australia
Centre for Multicultural Youth
Christie McIntosh
Community Stars
Conservation Volunteers Australia
DPV Health
Dr Susie Burke
Eco Justice Hub, Justice Social Services
EKOL School of Arts
Faye Bussau
Fernando Ianni
Fitzroy Football Club
Maria Peters
HeadSpace Glenroy
Jesuit Social Services
Joane Russel
Uniting
Melbourne City Mission- Parent Support
Melbourne Victory Football Club
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
North West Neighbourhood House Network
Northern Community Legal Centre
Outer Urban Projects
Peter Streker
Reclink Australia

Rob Capron
Royal Children's Hospital
Save the Children
Sebastian Sardina
Shane French
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
Sunbury Cobaw Community Health
Tibetan Buddhist Society
Uncle David Wandin
Victorian Black Sea Cultural Association
Victorian Multicultural Commission
Women's Climate Justice Collective
Women's Health in the North
Workskil
Wurundjeri Woiwurung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

Philanthropy

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
Australian Communities Foundation
Danks Trust
Fiona and Frank Leith Trust
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Justin Breheny
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
Newsboys Foundation
Ray and Margaret Wilson Foundation
RE Ross Trust
The Collier Charitable Fund
The Kimberley Foundation

Corporate

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

Education

Bethal Primary School
Broadmeadows Primary School
Broadmeadows Valley Primary School
Coolaroo South Primary School
Craigieburn South Primary School
Dallas Brooks Community Primary School
Gateway School
Gladstone Park Primary School
Gladstone Views Primary School
Gladstone Park Secondary School
Glenroy West Primary 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
LaTrobe University
Meadow Heights Primary School
Meadows Primary School
Melbourne Polytechnic
Melbourne University
Monash University
Mount Ridley College
RMIT University
Roxburgh College
Roxburgh Homestead Primary School
Roxburgh Park Primary School
Roxburgh Rise Primary School
Victoria University
Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA)

Government

ACFE Board
Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources
Australian Government Department of Health and Human Services
Australian Government Department of Social Services
Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety
Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
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 Library Services
Hume Volunteer Gateway
Maria Vamvakinou MP
Ros Spence MP
Senator Lidia Thorpe
Sheena Watt MP



ABN 54 264 568 661 Telephone 9309 8531
71-81 Pearcedale Parade, Broadmeadows VIC 3047
PO Box 341, Dallas VIC 3047
admin@banksiagardens.org.au www.banksiagardens.org.au

Editor: Jonathan Chee
Design: Samantha Donaldson