

# 2022 Annual Report



# Chair & CEO REPORT

**It is an absolute privilege to be writing our first report together.**

After eight years, the brilliant Carole Fabian stepped out of the role of Chair and into the Treasurer role in December 2021. We have both known Carole for over 15 years and have watched her work tirelessly for our community both at Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS), in community sport, in community radio and her myriad of other personal and professional projects. We thank Carole for her work past, present and future.

As in most facets of life, this year has been about finding and establishing 'the new normal'. We've come to accept that the pandemic is not going away any time soon, and that we need to find new ways of connecting and achieving outcomes. We're proud of how our people have met these challenges and continued to grow our programs, engage with different parts of the community and continue to be leaders in our spaces – youth, justice, gender, environment and employment. All of our programs 'bounced back' as soon as we opened our doors and are back to our 'pre-locked down' capacity.

In February 2022, Deputy CEO Jaime de Loma-Orsio Ricon took a six months sabbatical in Spain. After a 'very 2022' departure involving positive COVID tests and cancelled flights, Jaime and his family made it to Catalonia in one piece, where Jaime continued work remotely on the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement and continued to support Gina with the day-to-day management of Banksia. Samantha Donaldson stepped into the Deputy CEO role, which she performed with her usual diligence, thoughtfulness and distinction. Thank you, Sam.

We've continued to have productive relationships with all levels of government. We've hosted numerous ministerial visits and continued our partnerships across departments in education, justice, housing and women. We also continue our great relationship with Hume City Council and loved having new Hume CEO Sheena Frost join us for the Good People Act Now (GPAN) Graduation in March. At one point, Sheena aptly observed "there are just so many smart people in this room!" Too right, Sheena.

**We have also expanded our philanthropic and charitable funding sources.**



After particularly glowing A Current Affair coverage, we've received generous and much-needed donations for our Community Pantry. We continue to receive donations from Foodbank, and are currently preparing food packages for more than 100 families per week.

Additionally, we have continued our relationship with CSL Behring, winners of the 2021 Robert Kumar Community Award. CSL Behring's work in Broadmeadows exemplifies much of what we strive for at Banksia – being leaders in their field and working towards big-picture solutions while remaining connected to and making a big impact in our local community. We are very much looking forward to continuing working together.

This year we have experienced big changes on the Board of Governance. We have bid farewell to longstanding members Jon Shields and Royce De Sousa – both of whom served on the Board for much of the last decade. Jon brought considerable expertise and passion for place management and the residents on the estate. Royce served as the World's No.1 Treasurer (subjectively determined) and steered a steady financial ship with aplomb. We thank them both for their considerable efforts and wish them the very best for their next adventures.

We also bid farewell to newer Board members Venetia Taylor and Peter Ewer who joined the Board in 2019. Luckily for us, Peter hasn't gone too far and has taken up a role in the Youth Justice and Community Support team, where he is employing his considerable expertise and experience in justice.

We'd like to also acknowledge the brilliant work of other Board members – Joanne Bliss, Ed David, Carole Fabian, Marina Labib and King Ng who continue to contribute to Banksia's direction and ground the Board in Banksia's overarching purposes.

## **Julijana Todorovic and Gina Dougall**

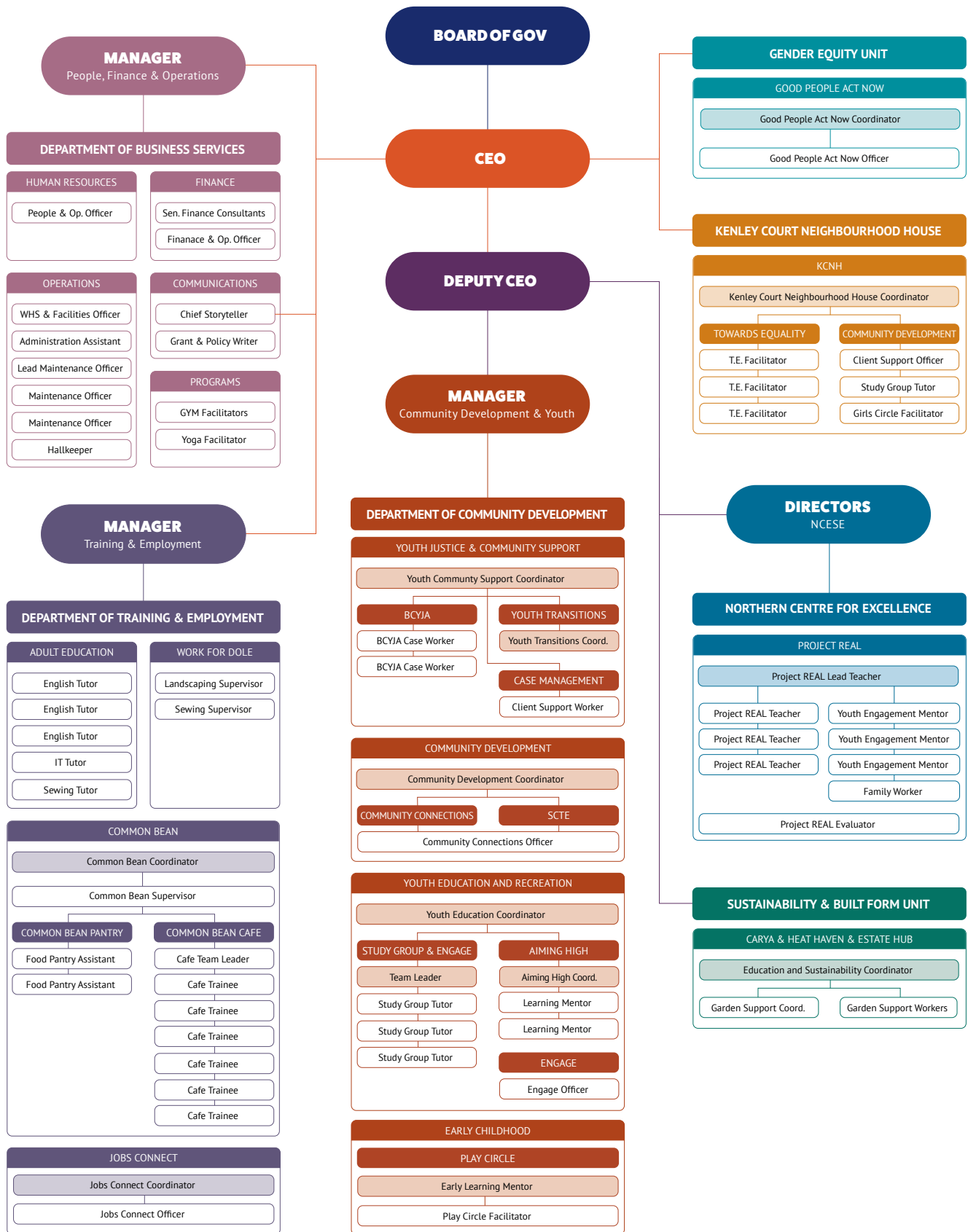
CHAIR AND CEO

### **Celebrating 20 years leading BGCS**

This year marks 20 years of service for our CEO Gina Dougall. Through her leadership, BGCS has grown from a staff of two people to now over 60. Gina has overseen many innovative and impactful initiatives at BGCS in this time, and we're grateful to celebrate this wonderful milestone!



# ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



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**Banksia Gardens Community Services acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we provide our services. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and express our hope for reconciliation, justice and the recognition of the ongoing living culture of all Aboriginal people.**

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# 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.

# 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.

## BOARD OF GOVERNANCE



**CAROLE FABIAN**  
Treasurer  
April – June



**JOANNE BLISS**  
Secretary



**JULIJANA  
TODOROVIC**  
Chairperson



**ROYCE DESOUSA**  
Treasurer  
June – April



**ED DAVID**



**KING NG**



**MARINA LABIB**



**PETER EWER**

## PATRONS & AMBASSADORS



**ROBERT KUMAR**  
Patron



**HELEN  
PATSIKATHEODOROU**  
Patron



**FR BOB MAGUIRE**  
Patron



**TA TUPOU**  
Ambassador



**ABDI ADEN**  
Ambassador

# Program HIGHLIGHTS

## The Aiming High VCE Support Program (Aiming High)

Aiming High is a VCE support, mentoring and development program catering for students in the wider Hume area. The program offers students wellbeing support and tutoring with specialised Learning Mentors in weekly sessions. Aiming High provides leadership and personal development skills for students and opportunities to gain volunteer experience in the community. There is a strong focus on supporting students to transition into further education.

- In 2021, seven students received an ATAR score above 90.
- Two students were named dux of their respective schools.
- All students from the 2021 cohort are engaged in further education in 2022.
- Dedicated, weekly Learning Mentors (for Maths, Sciences and English) are consistent at ratio of 1:3 and 'Sessional' Learning Mentors were engaged to offer support in a wider variety of subjects as required (Literature, Business Management, Legal Studies and Physical Education).
- Individualised Wellbeing Plans developed and maintained with each student (including 1:1 wellbeing check-in every three weeks).
- Monthly workshops on a topic of student choice. Topics included: wellbeing, time management, applying to early-access programs, mindfulness and VTAC submissions.
- Three-hour, subject-specific study sessions during the holidays for English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Maths and Psychology. These sessions were attended by over 40 students.
- Two-day leadership development training completed by 18 students.
- Nine students completed an 'Introduction to Community Development Certificate' which included introductory workshops (child safety, positive engagement), four coaching sessions and eight hours volunteering in one of BGCS' programs.
- Opportunity for participants to gain volunteer experience supervising Banksia Gardens' School Holiday Program (eight students).
- Two Aiming High students were joint-winners of the Eurydice Dixon Gender Equality Champions Award. One of these students was then invited to speak at Hume City Council's Refugee Week event.





## Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance (BCYJA)

The BCYJA is a partnership project funded by Youth Crime Prevention Grants from the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The program supports young people 10 to 24 years old who are involved with the justice system or at risk of justice involvement. Young people are supported by developing and pursuing case plan goals, engaging in pro-social activities and through referrals to specialist supports.

- 73 young people provided with individual support.
- 242 young people engaged in pro-social activities.
- 30 of the 54 people to exit the program did so after completing their case plan goals.

## 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.

### Highlights 2021–2022:

- Secured program funding for 2021–2022 from Department of Jobs & Precincts.
- 1078 recorded interactions supporting individuals and families with housing, health, financial, legal and social needs.
- Hosted three school holiday Family Fun Days at the housing estate including barbeques, community consultation and children's activities.
- Hosted a Winter Family Fun Day for 125 community members including a free gozleme stand, face painting, art activities and DPV Health pop-up vaccination clinic.
- Established Banksia Gardens Estate residents' afternoon tea. The group meets fortnightly to socialise and discuss current and emerging issues affecting residents of the housing estate.

- Housing Estate families prioritised for all BGCS school holiday programming, with fees waived for participants.
- Three Housing Estate residents employed at BGCS.
- Established a Youth Circle group which provides peer support and pro-social activities weekly for young female and gender diverse people aged 13–17 years.
- Worked with the BGCS Environmental and Sustainability department's BEGAH Project to install 15 garden beds at Banksia Gardens Housing Estate including three communal beds in Fir Close and eight individual beds in residents' private gardens.
- Hosted two community cat desexing events in partnership with Maneki Neko Cat Rescue and Westside Community Desexing clinic. Over 40 cats and kittens were desexed, vaccinated and microchipped across both events at no cost to community members.





## Engage! Youth Program

Engage! is a new BGCS youth engagement program that integrates and expands our youth development, youth participation and youth activation. The program is built around the principle of collaborative design with youth, and gives platforms for young people to express themselves, showcase their talents and advocate for their interests.

### Highlights this year include:

- Over 300 student engagements across Terms 1 & 2.
- Increased engagement in existing BGCS youth programs, initiating additional skill-building and recreational opportunities for young people in Broadmeadows and the broader Hume community.
- New and exciting programs such as collaborations with K1 Kingdom Boxing and Artsbus providing opportunities in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths), health and fitness.
- The Iftar and Youth Showcase dinner had over 200 guests attend, most of whom were young people engaged with Banksia Gardens and their families.
- The establishment of the Banksia Education Advisory Student Team, a group of young leaders who are improving their leadership skills and helping to identify local concerns, passions and priorities. As well as celebrating their achievements in a leadership training program graduation, the students also created a film showcasing youth engagement at BGCS.

## Environment and Sustainability

BGCS environment and sustainability areas of work have focused on climate change adaptation activities in the local community. These include the work of the youth-led action group CARYA (Climate Adaptation Requires Youth Action), and the transformation of BGCS premises and the Banksia Gardens Estate through gardening and community engagement.

### Highlights 2021–2022:

- Delivered the 10-week CARYA training in 2021 with 13 participants – the second time the training has been delivered.
- Collaborated with a team of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute to develop a prototype Circular Economy Board Game to engage and educate the community on circular economy.
- Established an Environment and Sustainability Working Group that reports directly to the Executive Management team.
- Introduced a waste management system to capture organic waste across the organisation and divert it into our compost system in the community gardens.



- Introduced gardening activities as a regular part of the Study Group suite of activities.
- Transformed a central space in the Banksia Gardens Estate (public housing) into a community square as a space for communal workshops like bicycle repair and gardening.
- Identified six garden spaces for climate adaptation, food resilience and beautifying our environment. We started transforming three of those spaces:
  - The Banksia Community Square
  - The Heat Haven
  - The Food Forest

**A regular action group of 16 CARYA trainees continued to develop, achieving a number of actions:**

- Hosted a circular economy workshop for the public in conjunction with Circular Economy Victoria, Victoria University and Hume City Council.
- Participated in the Craigieburn Festival by invitation of Hume City Council.
- Presented at North West Communities for Climate Action online schools summit.
- Presented at the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund's "Season of Giving".
- Organised to co-host a screening of "Regenerating Australia" with Hume Climate Action Network (HCAN), combined with a panel discussion, community stalls and a sustainable and socially-responsible dinner.





## Gender Equity

For many years, Banksia Gardens Community Services has been a local pioneer in the push for gender equality and ending violence against women through its Good People Act Now (GPAN) project. In 2019, BGCS made gender equity an organisational key priority area, establishing a gender equity working group to help drive this change across all of the organisation's operations. In 2021–2022, we have also delivered the Towards Equality 2020 and Beyond program for three different ethnic groups, and the youth empowerment group Girls Circle.

### Highlights 2021–2022:

- The Hon Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence visited BGCS to announce statewide funding, including funding for the GPAN Project.
- Six staff completed Women's Health Victoria training, focusing on Gender Equity in the Workplace.
- BGCS was a finalist for Melbourne Women's Fund Signature Grant for GPAN School Hubs Project.
- Two staff completed Intersectional Approaches to Violence Prevention workshop series.
- Gender Equity Coordinator attended national STOP Domestic Violence conference.
- BGCS' Gender Equity Working Group wrote a submission to the Australian Government regarding Maternity Leave Act Review.
- Gina Dougall was keynote speaker at the launch of Building a Respectful Community strategy 2022–2026.
- BGCS hosted International Women's Day Luncheon for staff and volunteers.
- GPAN hosted its ninth annual training suite.
- GPAN hosted three 'Respectful Relationships' workshops with Fitzroy Football Club which led to agreements to deliver workshops in schools in 2023.
- GPAN's fourth annual Trivia Night hosted 110 guests.
- Two young people were awarded the annual Eurydice Dixon Gender Equality Champions Award.
- GPAN raised over \$6,000 in an EOFY fundraising campaign.
- A Youth resource, developed with partner organisations DPV Health and Department of Education and Training, to be launched in 2023.
- Towards Equality 2020 and Beyond Project supported a total of 95 women, delivered more than 125 sessions, partnered with 20 organisations, and organised more than 15 excursions, events, and celebrations – see Kenley Court Neighbourhood House for further details.
- Helen Patsikatheodorou announced as BGCS' first female patron.



## Kenley Court Neighbourhood House (2021–2022)

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

Over the course of the last year, KCNH continued running its regular programs to support children with their homework and academic studies, empower girls and teenagers, provide food parcels to those in need and assist newly-arrived migrants and refugee families. In addition to the regular programs and services KCNH offered, we managed to expand our scope of work to help empower women and fight domestic violence.

### Highlights 2021–2022:

- KCNH coordinated seven programs supporting around 150 people on a weekly basis.
- Towards Equality 2020 and Beyond Project supported a total of 95 women, delivered more than 125 sessions, partnered with 20 organisations, and organised more than 15 excursions, events, and celebrations.
- “Udaan – Sky’s the limit” published by the Oorja women’s group showcasing their achievements in English, Punjabi and Hindi languages.
- El Amal Women’s Group performed in the Hume City Council Refugee Week and won the Refugee Event Encouragement Award.

- KCNH in partnership with DPV Health organised a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic for the local community.
- KCNH Study Group Program assisted 21 students (6–12 years old) with their homework and academic studies, organised three excursions that accommodated 60 students, and supported five parents in various ways.
- The Girls Circle program supported 13 girls and facilitated four excursions for more than 30 girls.
- The Food Relief Service, in partnership with Northpoint Centre, distributed around 3500 food parcels.
- More than 75 people have been supported through the Client Support Program.



## School Holiday Program

The School Holiday Program engages young people and families in the Broadmeadows and Hume area in dynamic and immersive experiences and activities to develop skills, increase engagement and help build self-confidence.

Twenty-one different activities were carried out across the areas of STEAM (STEM & Arts), outdoor education, sports and exercise, and community engagement. These holiday activities involved over thirty-five students across multiple days.

Some examples of activities include excursions to the NGV, ACMI, Melbourne Museum, Splash Water Park and Gravity Worx. Activities located at Banksia Gardens included circus performance workshops, art and film showings, improv rap and singing classes, and Artsbus workshops.

Community engagement events over the year include Family Fun Days, Community Dinners and a Banksia Gardens Estate Working Bee. These community engagement events reached over 120 children, young people and families.



## Project REAL

Project REAL works with students referred by local primary schools who are at very high risk of disengagement from schooling. Typically, these students experience very significant challenges with emotion regulation, socialisation skills, and executive functions including task focus and attention deficits. Project REAL is part of the Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement.

Our 2022 student group is our sixth cohort, and despite the challenges of the pandemic, has produced very positive outcomes for school, students and families.

### Highlights of this year include:

- An Outer Urban Project & Project REAL art exhibition.
- Project REAL portable classroom makeover.
- Consultations, critical support and professional learning for education support staff in NCESE partner schools.
- Three students successfully transitioned back to their mainstream school.
- Six students, their families and schools were intensively supported.
- Created five new care teams for students and their families.
- Created and enhanced our partnership with DPV Health and Royal Children's Hospital to streamline and fast-track care for the most vulnerable children in our partner schools.

## Study Group

Study Group is an after-school program featuring academic support, creative arts activities, sports, play-based learning and other enriching group activities. We cater for Prep to Year 12 students from the local community and extend our support to regional Victorian students in our Friday online sessions.

### Highlights from 2021–2022 include:

- 49 volunteers involved.
- 200 students registered.
- 40 student average per session in 2022.
- 41 online study support sessions delivered to students in the Broadmeadows area and Regional Victoria in Terms 3 & 4 2021.
- Despite COVID restrictions, 14 face-to-face sessions delivered in Terms 3 & 4 2021.
- 34 face-to-face sessions delivered in Terms 1 & 2 2022.
- 17 online study support sessions delivered to students in the Broadmeadows area and Regional Victoria in Terms 1 & 2 2022.
- Gardening/sustainability and boxing activities introduced.



## Social Cohesion Through Education Program

The Social Cohesion Through Education (SCTE) program 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.

### Highlights from 2021–2022 include:

- Successfully secured four more years of funding from the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET).
- Worked with Hume Central Secondary College on a winning entry at the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC) film awards in the Youth category.
- Engaged on-site with five primary and secondary schools in Hume, including new partnerships with the Collingwood Language School, Broadmeadows campus; and Hume Central Secondary College, Town Park and Blair St campuses.
- Filmed a new 'Human After All' film in collaboration with Meadows Primary School Grade 1/2 students.
- Participated in large-scale Harmony Week events at Bethal Primary School (150 students) and Hume Central Secondary College (350 students).
- Harmony Week 'Everyone Belongs' online art prize received 150 entries from primary and secondary school students in the City of Hume.
- Conducted weekly lunch-time art group at Hume Central Secondary School, Dimboola Road campus.
- Conducted fortnightly 'Art & Wellbeing' group at Hume Central, Blair St campus flexible learning setting.
- Conducted weekly 'Mindful Meadows' Mindfulness and Social and Emotional Learning program at Meadows Primary School.





## Training and Employment Dept

The Training and Employment Department supports people to learn valuable skills for employment, further education or social connection. The department consists of ACFE adult education classes, Job Connect, computer refurbishment, Work for the Dole, the Community Pantry and the Common Bean Cafe.

### Highlights 2021–2022:

- Won the 2021 Victorian Leadership Award for best Learn Local Leadership
- Engaged with more than 1100 participants to build their employability skills and encourage their move to employment or further study.
- Delivered over 49,000 student contact hours.
- Offered 6 classes online, including English, citizenship and more.
- Provided nearly 1200 refurbished computers to the community at no or very low cost.
- Learner Engagement A-Frame Programs (LEAP) secured for delivery of specific short intensive training courses such as Tailor It, MyGov, Be Handy, Australian Workplace, and Intro to Hospitality.
- Partnered with more than 13 local school community hubs to deliver adult training courses for the schools' communities.
- Secured funding for the local jobs recovery project "Job Connect" to help unemployed local residents to find work.
- As part of Job Connect, in the first six months of operation we had 20 clients. Of these clients, we had five employment outcomes, including three for Banksia Gardens Estate residents, and one volunteer outcome.
- Provided approximately 7000 material aid packages (food, household items) to the local community.
- Held two community markets in partnership with Foodbank, providing fresh produce and groceries to several hundred locals, and operated a pop-up op shop as part of the market.
- Hosted a community Iftar dinner to celebrate the month of Ramadan with 150 local people.



## Youth Transition Support Program (YTSP)

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

BGCS ran programs for over 45 students within local schools – Collingwood English Language School, Kangan TAFE, and Hume Central Secondary College.

### Highlights include:

- Nine employment outcomes and eight education outcomes.
- Established and co-facilitated a weekly Girls Group throughout Semester 1 2022 (9 Sessions), continuing in Semester 2.
- One YTSP participant presented at Hume City Council's Refugee Week event.
- Co-facilitated weekly sessions in Collingwood English Language School boys class consisting of informative learning, sports and promotion of local, extracurricular activities.
- Managed two interns from the Brotherhood of St Laurence 'Kick Start' Program.
- One YTSP participant completed Good People Act Now (GPAN) training.
- Supported Victorian Council of Social Services' COVID Listening Tour Event at BGCS: seven YTSP participants attended and shared their experiences of the pandemic, their thoughts on its impact and their future needs.





# Profile JINA

JONATHAN CHEE, CHIEF STORYTELLER

**There's not enough talk about climate challenges, and definitely not enough action. CARYA participant and young climate leader Jina talks planet, passion and sustaining climate activism.**

Growing up in Werribee, Jina's family were not interested in sustainability or anything to do with the environment. "It's just not really in their interests," she says of her brothers and parents. When Jina decided to change her diet and become a pescetarian, her family interrogated her about it.

"Why are you doing this?" "Is it for animal cruelty?" "Why don't you want to eat meat?" Facing the onslaught of questions, Jina tried to downplay it by not disclosing her reasons and instead saying that she just didn't like the taste of meat. She experienced similar things with her peers, who she says had always known her as 'a normal omnivore'.

"This was my first time acting on my climate passion, and I was really intimidated by all the questions. I would say, 'No, no, no, I'm not doing it for all that [sustainability and animal cruelty]', when inside I'd be saying, 'Obviously! I don't want to eat animals and cause them pain.'"

Jina got involved in a variety of environment events, and once managed to convince her mum to join her for a day of cleaning up St Kilda beach. "I'm only doing this for you," her mum said to Jina, reinforcing Jina's feelings of loneliness and isolation.

It was only when Jina graduated from high school and moved into a sharehouse that she started to explore supporting "the green side of the economy" by buying sustainable household goods. She showed her housemates some of her prized sustainable products such as bowls made from coconut shells and portable cutlery sets. In turn, Jina's housemates, Dilini and Hansani, related that they were part of BGCS' Climate Adaptation Requires Youth Action (CARYA) program – which intrigued her as she hadn't known interest groups like that existed.

For Jina, joining the CARYA team was unlike any community she had ever been part of, despite her having long-held sustainability passions.

**"The fact that I could talk about sustainability with somebody and have them consider it and think about it, expand on it – that was a whole new experience. I had never expected that from anybody."**

For Jina, a memorable part of going to CARYA for the first time was the welcoming environment and feelings of mutual support. "These people aren't afraid to talk about their ideas and beliefs, and no one is in judgement. And every one is very inclusive and welcoming, especially Edgar and Taryn [CARYA's facilitators], and they were very supportive in whatever we believed was most important."

While many of Melbourne's residents were hopeful that lockdowns were a thing of the past, 2021 proved to be even more disrupted than 2020. One of the core parts of the CARYA program is community projects undertaken by the young participants, and these community projects were regularly postponed or cancelled because of the various lockdowns.

"It was really hard for everyone in CARYA," Jina recalls. In addition, Jina's university studies increased in intensity, and around that time she also moved house. Combined with her increasingly busy schedule and the lows associated with lockdowns, Jina found it harder and harder to remain connected and motivated in the CARYA program. She felt guilty if she missed a CARYA meeting. She would think "I've got too much going on in my life!" and "I haven't been doing as well as I used to," which culminated in her feeling sad that she had "let this so-nice community go for a long time."

Jina doesn't know what the turning point was, but she recalls realising one day that "it's okay to be down". She also felt a burgeoning admiration for activists she encountered who seemed better able to balance their activism and their mental health. This also marked a shift in her own expectations, as she came to ask herself a different question: "What can I do now with the knowledge that I have, and the experience of the ups and downs that I've had?"

Despite a full-time internship as part of her university studies, Jina is still a motivated CARYA member and values the community. "Until I could find a community to join, it felt daunting to think, 'Oh, I have to start something by myself!' and you might be discouraged that you're so alone. So finding a group who's already invested into it, and knowledgeable in that area and who can teach you and expose you to more things, is a very, very big advantage."

As for how she balances herself and staves off the burnout she experienced at the end of 2021, Jina has some strategies. "Always keep time for family. And keep time for you to connect to the root of what you're passionate about."

**"Don't feel too guilty about missing out on the things that you were once very active in, because if you're very passionate, you will always find a way back."**





# Community CONNECTIONS

PAUL ATKINSON, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



## **Sue was 13 when the Banksia Gardens Housing Estate was built 44 years ago.**

She remembers because she was dating a boy that moved in to them when they were newly constructed. They were built using the Radburn design, a 'pedestrian-friendly' residential housing concept where homes face onto a shared green space. The design was not faithfully implemented, with roads cutting through the public gardens in the centre. The grounds feature some beautiful established gums but any of the original gardens have been reduced to grass in the intervening decades.

There's a lot to like about living at the Estate. It's a short walk from the Broadmeadows shopping precinct and trainline, next door to the TAFE and just up the hill from the parklands flanking Yuroke Creek which feeds into Moonee Ponds Creek. Since moving to Jacana as an infant, Sue has spent most of her 57 years in Broadmeadows or nearby and she knows the reputation of the area. The Estate isn't always an easy place to live, but as a proud Broady girl, the area is special to her. She remembers riding her push bike around the streets as a kid and riding horses at the long-departed stables. "It's a good area. We've had trouble in Broady but to me it's just another area to live. I like to live where I was brought up."

Sue moved into the Banksia Gardens Housing Estate 18 years ago and says it has changed a lot in that time. "When I arrived," Sue said, "it was quiet and there were a few families. But my neighbours have changed a lot. Next to my house is a transitional property and there have been quite a few people in and out over the years."

## **While people all around Melbourne endured the drudgery of multiple lockdowns, the pandemic magnified the experience of social and economic disadvantage for residents living in public housing and particularly those on the Estate.**

With many (non-essential) government workers stationed at home all non-urgent maintenance work was put on hold and properties were left vacant. With nowhere else to go, opportunistic young people gathered in some of the vacant properties to socialise and desperate people came to squat in others. Rubbish began to pile up in public areas and spray paint tags as well as a few racist symbols stared down from the broken windows above.

In partnership with DPV Health, we door-knocked the estate as part of the COVID-19 High Risk Accommodation Response program which was met with a mixed response. While some residents preferred their privacy, many elderly residents and those from CALD backgrounds were frightened and confused about the uncertainty of these unprecedented events, welcoming the company (however brief) and health information explained clearly. Despite this mixed response, it was an effective way to keep in touch with residents and support their emerging needs.

It was during this time we started our revitalisation work on the estate in partnership with BGCS' Environment and Sustainability team.





Previously, we had increased our presence on the estate by hosting BBQ events and activities for kids during the school holidays and other activities such as pop-up bike workshops and a regular gardening group. The revitalisation efforts reminded us of the importance of being physically present on the estate and engaging with residents face-to-face.

Digging up the grass to make way for new native gardens and laying the groundwork for new shipping container workshops, we received some exasperated yet understandable feedback from residents:

“Our houses are falling apart and the government is spending money on creating mud pits!”

As residents started to see the project come to life, we began receiving more positive reviews and offers to chip in and help with the work. Sue was torn. She shared these same concerns about where the money should be spent and prioritised. Eventually, seeing this new initiative progress gave her a push to get involved and she became one of the inaugural and most active members of a new resident's group set up to work collaboratively with the Community Connections team and speak to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing about issues in the estate and ways to improve them.

Like many other residents, one of Sue's main bugbears is motorbike riding. Loud, and dangerous to other residents, the motorbikes in various states of repair are ridden all over the place: “nearly every night and weekend,” Sue said, “the kids were riding them around with no respect for people's safety.” But she isn't just worried about someone else getting hurt, she's worried about the riders themselves.

“I'm worried about them because they are going to get hurt by someone or some people, the bikes aren't registered and the way they ride, doing monos and that, they're going to flip.” Sue understands why the young people are out there on the bikes and rather than see them punished, she would like them to have alternatives. They need interesting things to do and places to be able to socialise safely.

The bikes aren't the only problem. Although Sue says her house is fine, this isn't true for all residents and the public infrastructure is tired and broken. When asked what she wants Community Connections to do and how we've been helpful, she points to the advocacy work. “The photos you take and stuff like that and yeah getting stuck into them [the Department] sometimes.” Sue was also grateful for the opportunity to speak directly to decision makers and she thinks this will make the biggest difference. “They've got to start turning up to meetings to listen to us instead of everything through [BGCS worker] Melodie all the time.” The need for community consultation and resident voice to be included at all levels of public decision making around the estate is crucial because as Sue tells us.

**“They don't live in these flats so they don't know what's going on. They should live in it for a week and I reckon they would last a night.”**

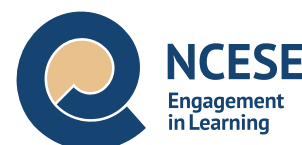
I asked Sue about ‘community’ on the estate and she paused “some residents fight all the time and others keep to themselves. I tend to just say hello to the people I know.” Sue might be happier pottering in her garden out the back – taking advantage of the increased privacy the new fences offer – or crocheting her way through the colder months, but she can see value in building new connections.

In 2022–2023 the Community Connections program will continue to advocate for the needs of people living at Banksia Gardens Housing Estate and provide support to residents facing acute challenges. It is a dynamic and complex place with plenty of strengths but also complex challenges. Making a difference is a long term prospect that requires continued consultation and engagement with residents, and the commitment and courage of those that live there to stay involved.

# NCESE

*Northern Centre for Excellence  
in School Engagement*

DR ERIC DOMMERS, CO-DIRECTOR, NCESE



**The Northern Centre of Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE) is a collaborative network of BGCS and 16 local schools – 15 primary and one secondary. This network aims to build capacity to develop and implement school and community programs that support school engagement for all, including and especially our most vulnerable students.**

## School dis-engagement

Broadmeadows is one of Victoria's most disadvantaged suburbs, with many of our students at risk of poor educational outcomes. Hume City Council reports that about 12% of 15 to 24 year olds in Hume City were disengaged with employment and education, compared to 7.5% in greater Melbourne: that is almost twice the levels of student disengagement than in other regions.

Similarly, in 2018 the Commonwealth Government measured school readiness scores for 5 year olds across Australia. The scores for our area show that our 5–6 year olds – who are just in their very first year of schooling – have roughly twice the level of risk (21.5%) for educational vulnerability (not doing well at school), compared to the Victorian average level (10.1%).

Our schools also have high levels of students with complex needs – these students may have low levels of school attendance, task and grade completion, and are at more 'at risk' of being involved in 'behavioural incidents'.

Recent interviews with our school principals highlight concerns about the increasing number of students who display poor social and emotional skills, and have less resilience – particularly since the COVID lockdowns in 2020–2021.

The collective aim of the NCESE is to improve student engagement rates for all students – but particularly for 'high needs' students. While there is no magic fix, the research shows that certain programs can make a difference. The key tools we offer at the NCESE include:

- **Project REAL** – a flexible learning program for students who struggle to learn and adapt in mainstream classrooms
- **Professional development modules** for our NCESE schools in trauma-informed education
- The **'Building Blocks for Student Engagement'**, an evidence-based framework for 'what works' in supporting student engagement in schooling
- **Sharing learning from our NCESE schools** who have been working hard to build student engagement in schools for over a decade, and who have on the ground knowledge of what works at their schools.

## **School engagement factors: 'feeling safe, making friends, being supported to learn'**

Although the research tells us that the two main pathways to school disengagement are an experience of trauma, and the experience of high levels of social and economic disadvantage – it is also true that there are many protective factors for student engagement in schooling. These include: having friends at school; feeling safe at school; having a strong relationship with a school staff member or teacher; having after-hours schools programs; a school culture that focuses on social and emotional literacy skills; having an inclusive approach to pedagogy that recognises student trauma and disadvantage; building student voice and agency; and having high cultural expectations of students and staff.

## **Staff health & wellbeing**

Having school staff who are skilled, confident and 'on the same page' has always been important, but post-COVID, we have seen that staff exhaustion levels are pretty high. Last year, the NCESE trialled a program that has been running very successfully in America, England, Spain and the Netherlands.

The 'CARE' program teaches social and emotional learning (SEL) and mindfulness to school staff. The demand from our NCESE schools was very high, with most schools sending 1–2 staff each. It was also very, very successful – with excellent participation and feedback, so we are going to run it again in Term 4 and also in 2023.

## **Is the NCESE working?**

At this stage, the evidence suggests that the NCESE is on the right path – local schools continue to experience a need for support in the area of engagement, and they have all signed up to the NCESE again. Our Building Blocks engagement framework is proving to be popular, and is not only backed by strong research evidence, but has gained support from a range of key sources. Project REAL helps us to build our skills in student engagement, and this in turn helps us to reach out to schools. Our professional development workshops remain popular, and our principals are reporting high levels of interest, skill and success in their engagement endeavours. So far, so good!



# Robert Kumar Community AWARD WINNER

JONATHAN CHEE, CHIEF STORYTELLER

The Robert Kumar Community Award was established in honour of BGCS patron Robert Kumar, former Deputy Chief Magistrate of Victoria who served as head of the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court for 25 years, and introduced innovative initiatives at the court such as Koori Court and the Criminal Diversion Program.

**The award this year goes to DPV Health Paediatrician Dr Lyndal Peake.**

**"I've got over 300 children on my books in out-of-home care, and I'm possibly one of the only ones who knows their long-term story," Dr Lyndal Peake says to me over Zoom.**

In Victoria, around 10,300 children and young people live in out-of-home care (OoHC) at any one time. If they're fortunate, they'll have come into the care of somebody like DPV Health Paediatrician, Dr Lyndal Peake. "That long term history is just invaluable to help care for these kids."

The evidence suggests that the early years are pivotal for a range of long term health, social and employment outcomes, which places many of our vulnerable children and young people in OoHC in a highly disadvantaged position. Community health, and paediatric care in particular, is therefore especially important in areas such as Broadmeadows, although what paediatrics in this setting entails might surprise some.

Paediatric appointments in community health are 'not typical medicine', according to Lyndal; they are at the intersection of parents with their own significant issues, the child protection system, health issues and experiences of trauma. The goal, Lyndal says, is "stability, stability, stability".





Lyndal sketches a picture of a patient who came into her care when they were 18 months old. The child had been in an excellent foster care placement since they were 10 months old, and at the age of four-and-a-half Child Protection wanted to move the child to live with siblings they had never met – with eleven days notice. The foster care placement had offered long-term stability and high quality care to the child, and knowing their history, Lyndal advocated to the minister, appeared in court and advocated for the child to stay in their foster care placement. The result? At the current age of eight years, the child is thriving.

For Lyndal, writing support letters, appeal letters, calling schools, filling in NDIS forms and Centrelink forms, attending care meetings and making court appearances on behalf of her patients is part of what it takes to do her job properly, though much of those tasks takes place outside working hours. Having some shared clients, we at BGCS are aware of the extraordinary care that Lyndal provides to some of our most vulnerable children and their families.

We are also well aware of the complexities of some of these cases, and the many service systems that children in these scenarios often need to interact with. Our Project REAL students and their families have benefited enormously from Lyndal's direct support, and have also been beneficiaries of the team of paediatric fellows that she oversees.

In fact, Lyndal was instrumental in helping to set up the paediatric fellowships at DPV Health through the Royal Children's Hospital. This arrangement sees two paediatric fellows based in the community in Hume two days a week, seeing around one hundred patients a year – under the supervision of Lyndal and her colleagues Teresa Lazzaro and Sue Kermond.

This support at the community level is critical for the children and families supported by programs and services such as Project REAL: without this specialist support, many of the parents become disenfranchised – something that Lyndal has seen happen before.

**"They've got schools telling them that they need this, this and this, and the parents say 'Nup, no one can help us' because they've had a really poor experience and not been able to get longitudinal care."**

Having started her own paediatric training through a paediatric fellowship with the Royal Children's Hospital, and having completed a three-year specialisation in community health and a Master's in Public Health, Lyndal's work straddles many of the systems and challenges in our community. This work intersects with poverty, domestic violence, child protection, low levels of health literacy, fear of formal services, and refugee health. While this work is hard, and certainly not as financially rewarding as private practice, there are other rewards:

"The other people that are out there working in this space: there are a lot of people with a lot of goodwill. You're part of the community. Yes, we see lots of patients, but you get to build up services and supports, and be part of the community."

And while the volume of advocacy letters, assessment reports and care meetings never dwindle, the patients themselves are clearly part of the reward for Lyndal.

**"The patients are generally just the most salt-of-the-earth, thankful people. The people who come to us are generally so incredibly thankful for you giving them time. It's a two-way thing: they feel I'm giving something, but in fact, they're giving me a whole lot back as well."**

# Gender Equity REPORT

GEORGIA RANSOME, GENDER EQUITY COORDINATOR

## Are we doing enough?

Gender equity and women's rights entered the mainstream media globally in 2017 with the #MeToo movement. From global political forums to chats around the family dinner table, it seems that these conversations have continued to build momentum, garner support and draw out those who are opposed to feminist views.

In June 2022, The US Supreme Court overturned Roe v Wade. For fifty years, the Roe v Wade ruling has given Americans the right to access abortions. The ability to make health and medical decisions for one's own self is a human right. In a controversial move, that right has now been taken from the hands of American people.

When this decision was announced, many people looked inward, to their own nation, and the risks to their own rights.

Are we doing enough? If women can be stripped of their rights in the USA, can it happen here? Are women's rights protected in Australia? Are we making proactive moves toward gender equality and a nation free from gender-based violence?

In 16 years, Australia has fallen from 15th to 43rd in the Global Gender Gap Index. As a nation, we rank poorly in economic participation, political empowerment and health. While just across the sea, our neighbours in New Zealand, are ranking fourth.

In Hume, we have the second highest rates of gender-based violence in metropolitan Melbourne and the second lowest percentage of women who feel safe walking in their neighbourhood at night.

While women are disproportionately negatively affected by gender inequality, it's important to remember the negative impact this has on everyone. In Australia, men and boys are three times more likely to commit suicide than women. The pressure to live up to masculine stereotypes is detrimental to men's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

If you or someone you know needs help, call Lifeline on 13 11 14

**At BGCS, we have been focusing on Hume, to create a thriving, safe and equal community that is free from violence.**

BGCS' Gender Equity Working Group (GEWG) continues to work toward creating an equal workplace and advocating for partner organisations to follow suit. Each year, as part of Week Without Violence, we ask all our staff members and volunteers to share their perspective on equality and respect as it pertains to the culture at BGCS through a survey. We use the results to continue to improve our practice, ensuring that all staff members and volunteers feel respected and safe at work.

**"It allowed me to perform my duties and responsibilities instead of leaving most of the parenting duties to Marian"** Michael Mansour





One such improvement is the overhaul of the organisation's parental leave policy. Kenley Court Neighbourhood House Coordinator Michael Mansour was the first BGCS employee to benefit from the changes we made to this policy. BGCS' new leave arrangements allowed Michael the opportunity to spend more time and connect with his daughter which was an "amazing experience". Marian received the support she needed as a new mother, which is especially important because she doesn't have any relatives in Australia to lean on. Access to six weeks leave, instead of five days, allowed Michael and Marian to visit their family in Egypt and introduce them to the new addition to the family, Hannah.

For its ninth consecutive year, the Good People Act Now (GPAN) Project was on the ground, working with young people to elevate their voices as advocates for gender equity and the prevention of violence against women and family violence. In 2021, we partnered with Fitzroy Football Club, taking their leadership group and under 19s through workshops on respectful relationships, the prevention of violence against women and how to be an active bystander. In recent years, GPAN has built a reputation for its unique, peer-led respectful relationships work. Minister Gabrielle Williams recognised this work and committed two years of funding to ensure GPAN can continue to create cultural change in Hume.

From July 2021, BGCS started coordinating the Towards Equality 2020 and Beyond Project, which aims to build the capacity of three local grassroots women's groups to understand and advocate for the promotion of gender equality and prevention of violence against women. The three women's groups are Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria (Nepalese community), Oorja Foundation (Indian community) and El Amal Women's Group (women from Arabic-speaking background). We are delighted to announce that due to the project's success, it has been re-funded by Communities for Children for another two years.

Girls Circle continues to flourish. Girls Circle and Towards Equality and Beyond both tap into wider community groups, ensuring that the message of gender equality and a community free from violence is reaching everyone. These groups empower girls and women to use their voices and offer a safe and comfortable space to seek social support.

### Are we doing enough?

At BGCS, we continue to learn and reflect, and each year our practice improves and expands. But I know, together with the community of Hume, we can do so much more.

A very special thank you must be extended to Emily Sporik, former Gender Equity Officer. Emily and I met in 2018 when she began as a volunteer for the GPAN Project. We began our roles as Gender Equity Coordinator and Officer together in January 2020. Over two and a half years, Emily and I worked closely together to push the gender equity agenda at Banksia Gardens. Through the lows the global pandemic brought us, to the highs of the many successes, Emily was a fierce gender equity advocate and a supportive colleague and friend.

### Support Services

#### THE ORANGE DOOR

1800 319 353

Support for users and experiencers of violence

#### 1800 RESPECT

(1800 737 732)

24/7 online counselling

#### SAFE STEPS

1800 015 188

Family violence support

#### QLIFE 1800 184 527

Anonymous and free LGBTI peer support

#### DJIRRA 1800 105 303

Support for Aboriginal women

#### MEN'S REFERRAL

SERVICE 1300 789 978

Support for men who use family violence





## Profile **MERYAM**

JONATHAN CHEE, CHIEF STORYTELLER

**Calling people out on sexist jokes can be confronting and intimidating, especially when you have to be at school with them day in and day out, but ignoring those comments and other gender inequalities was never an option considered by the joint winner of the 2022 Eurydice Dixon Gender Equality Champions Award (EDGECA), Maryam Hanani.**

Maryam arrived in Australia in 2018 at the age of 13. While originally from Iraq, Maryam's family moved to Jordan for a number of years. Maryam dreamed about coming to Australia, a place that people in Jordan talked about as a "paradise".

"When I arrived in Australia, it was really something!" she recalls. The houses were different, heating was different, and the streets were conspicuously clean. "Simply walking in the streets and seeing there's barely any rubbish, it's so clean, that was really something else."

Another thing she noticed, walking the streets of her new home in Australia, was how quiet it was compared to her experience in Jordan and Iraq. "When you walk in the street in the Middle East, there are a lot of people on the street, there are children playing in the neighbourhood, you see a lot of faces. Here in Australia it's sooo quiet."

School, too, was different. Aside from having to study many fewer subjects, Maryam also noticed that there was a much more even representation of male and female students in her classes in Australia. Back in Jordan, she was in what was previously an all-girls school, and the females outnumbered the males twenty to three, but now in her classes at Roxburgh College the gender split of students is about even.

While Maryam says that she experienced sexism in school in Jordan, such as jokes made about women's roles being in the kitchen, she had hoped that there wouldn't be any sexism or gender stereotyping in Australia. "To be honest, when I first arrived [in Australia] I thought there was no sexism. But then you live here for a while and you feel it."

Despite a disappointing level of gender equality, Maryam still values the education system in Australia for providing opportunities for women to see pathways other than "getting married, having children, cleaning and being a housewife". While not necessarily opposed to any of those choices, Maryam advocates for education, opportunity and greater choice for women, particularly for women who come from cultures with strong gender stereotypes and "old mindsets", such as those she witnesses in some of the older generations of her family.

Maryam's grandmother, for instance, is the family matriarch and "controls everything, despite being a female," according to Maryam. "But even this strong woman who holds the family together, she has this internalised misogyny in her." Maryam explains that her grandmother favours her grandsons and wants more boys born into the family, and makes comments that women are not supposed to work as they should instead be housewives. "She is a strong female," Maryam says, "but because of how that mindset was forced into her as a child, she is conflicted." Despite holding and expressing these views at times, Maryam's grandmother is very supportive of Maryam having a job, studying and being independent.

Somewhere between Maryam's position and her grandmother's, Maryam's mother exists and is caught in between old mindsets and new. Like grandma, Maryam's mother supports Maryam to study, to have a job, to pursue further education and "achieve great things in life". Yet, Maryam's mother herself "wants to do things but she believes she can't and she's at home continuing her role as housewife because that's what she was told when she was young."

**"I don't blame them, because that's what they grew up believing in. And because that's what they grew up believing in, that's what they feel they need us children to grow up believing in."**

Maryam's advice for young people in similar situations, caught between competing beliefs, is to educate themselves. "Say I never went to school in Australia, I would never know what there is for women other than getting married, giving birth to children, cleaning the house." By educating themselves, the young people will be able to express their ideas, and stand up for themselves and say that gender inequality is wrong.

While it might take time, Maryam says, "your family will want you to be your happiest, and if they recognise that you being your happiest is by you becoming equal to a man in their eyes, they will give you that." Or they will try, Maryam later adds.

Winning the EDGECA award is humbling for Maryam, as she feels she hasn't "done anything big"; but she also feels more motivated now to step up and speak out more loudly on gender equality issues. "It's a great opportunity," she says, "it gets you out and doing things instead of just thinking, 'I hope the world is going to change and somebody is going to establish gender equality.'"

Maryam's acceptance speech at the EDGECA award night clearly made an impact on people in the audience, as she was subsequently invited to speak at a Hume City Council Refugee Week event, and has been invited to another event in December. This increased exposure is something that means a lot to Maryam, as she hopes it will encourage others to take similar action. "If I point out that a joke is sexist, that's just one person. If I give a speech, there are a number of people who listened to me, who I left an impression on, a number of people that I gave courage to that they can take into their daily life. And if somebody makes a sexist joke, they might point it out instead of maybe keeping it to themselves."

The mere existence of the EDGECA award is something of value in itself, according to Maryam, as it gives people a goal and encourages them to take action. For the winners, the recognition and the profile of the award can also help them to champion the cause more broadly, and perhaps see their actions in a new light.

**"It gets you thinking, 'I can do this', and you start doing things, you start speaking out, you start leaving an impression on people, you start making change."**

# WPI

JONATHAN CHEE, CHIEF STORYTELLER  
& WPI COORDINATOR

**Renowned internationally for their project-based learning and study-abroad program, Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), a university in Massachusetts, USA, has been operating their Melbourne Project Center for 25 years. BGCS has been working with WPI for over a decade, and became the local coordinating agency for WPI's Melbourne Project Center in 2016.**

In October, the time difference between Melbourne, Australia and Worcester in Massachusetts in the USA is 14 hours. During March, that difference is a mere 12 hours. Why do I know this? For two years, cohorts of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) students who would ordinarily make the trek from Massachusetts to Melbourne to complete their third year projects have been Zooming in at all hours of the day and night in order to undertake their projects remotely.

In February 2022, after our official deadline had passed, we abandoned hope of students finally coming to conduct their projects in person on Melbourne soil. Then, the former federal government announced plans to resume international inbound travel: Fortress Australia was opening up.





**Cue excited phone calls across time zones, many emails and meetings, and a jubilant group of 24 WPI students committing to do whatever it takes to get to Melbourne for the March–May term.**

Add long hours of wading through the Department of Home Affairs' website, the American Department of Immigration website, and the Victorian government's travel restrictions. Multiply that by several international jurisdictions, the Omicron wave sweeping Australia, and planning contingencies for international travel – and you get an idea of how I spent some of my time February to May.

Due to the “after the siren” announcement from the Feds, we did lose about a week from the usual seven weeks of term in travel and jetlag. Coupled with the inevitable contracting of COVID by WPI students on arrival in Australia and the subsequent juggling of roommates and isolation (remember compulsory isolation for close contacts?), it was certainly a term unlike any other.

COVID and other things notwithstanding, the whole cohort of WPI teams managed to complete some fine work and make some valuable contributions to BGCS and the other organisations working with WPI teams in Melbourne that term. Teams worked with Port Phillip Ecocentre, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Gender and Disaster Australia, and Red Cross Emergency Services Victoria.

It is also worth pausing and highlighting an aspect of the WPI experience in that term that speaks to some of the injustices and inequities that have abounded throughout this pandemic. Two students from WPI, non-US citizens, were unable to participate in the Melbourne experience because their countries do not hold the same privileged status that Australia accords the US.

Little media attention over the last two years has touched on inequities faced by poor/developing nations in accessing medical supplies, personal protective equipment, vaccines and so on.

These same forces extend to international travel and the myriad impacts on trade, development and, as in our case, educational opportunities. BGCS hosted a team in this situation, and it was a sombre reminder of these injustices. My thanks to you, Elitumaini, for continuing to contribute so remarkably despite being unable to be here with the rest of the team.

For BGCS, the WPI relationship has continued to be very valuable – over Zoom and in person. BGCS' Northern Centre for Excellence in School Engagement (NCESE) hosted WPI teams with some excellent results: the establishment of the CARE Program (a first of its kind in Australia), and introductions to many prestigious institutions such as Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence and others who are doing important work of particular relevance to the NCESE partner schools.

In other areas, the March-May term featured a team working with Edgar Caballero Aspe on developing a circular economy board game inspired by BGCS and its surrounds. BGCS has ambitions to do more in the environment and sustainability space, and this educational and engagement tool is an exciting initiative to that end.

The BGCS-WPI relationship also offers BGCS and other Melbourne-based organisations opportunities to share ideas and resources, and to collaborate, network and learn from each other. As BGCS' interests and services span many areas, we are particularly interested in projects that explore topics of gender equity, community development, and environment and sustainability. In addition, we benefit from WPI projects that relate to business processes and volunteering.

As we look to the coming year, WPI's Melbourne Project Center will celebrate 25 years of operation. It's a wonderful milestone, and an opportunity to look at the legacy of the many WPI teams who have contributed to organisations big and small across Melbourne in the last quarter of a century. BGCS is honoured to play a role in continuing this valuable tradition and in helping to further its impact for the Melbourne community.



# Profile DASH

JONATHAN CHEE, CHIEF STORYTELLER

**In 2019, Dash was at work repairing shipping containers when a huge bolt of electricity entered his left hand from a high-voltage cable, shot up his arm and sent him flying through the air. "There have been a few issues since then," he says drily.**

Dash moves his weight from side to side as he stands in the classroom at Banksia Gardens Community Services, gently moving as he talks about the work accident and life since. "The sparky hadn't put the cap on a high-voltage cable, and I happened to be the first to use it." Dash is remarkably even-toned as he recounts the events. "There are lots of things I can't do anymore, so I have to find new things," he states. "Pretty simple, really."

As part of his workforce retraining and broader rehabilitation, Dash has completed two IT courses at Banksia Gardens, and has enrolled to do a third. He's also in the middle of doing a basic bookkeeping course elsewhere. This is all part of his plan to move into self-employment, "so that I'm armed with enough tools to start my own business."

Dash is glowing in his praise of Banksia Gardens IT tutor Usama al Ogidi, who has taught the two courses that Dash has done. "Usama really knows his stuff, and I'm getting what I need, so I'll be back for more!" The two men share engineering backgrounds – Usama in robotics and Dash in electronics – and have bonded over conversations about their experiences.

"We've had some interesting chats about where it's gone [the field of engineering], the laws of thermodynamics and all that sort of stuff."

While it's clear that Dash is getting a lot out of the courses at Banksia Gardens and that he appreciates his tutor accommodating his various needs, there's something else that attracts him to the place.

**"It's an eclectic mix of courses here, and there's so much more than just courses. This is basically a genuine community centre that offers so much back to the community. It's unbelievable what you do here."**

Dash steps towards his chair and gingerly lowers himself into it, pausing for a moment before shuffling towards the backrest. We continue talking as Dash shifts his weight around, contracting and extending his left leg, eventually standing back up again. "While rehabilitating, I needed quite a lot. I was quite needy – physically, emotionally, mentally. I've required a lot of services to stand here today."

"I'm in a society that I feel indebted to," he pauses for a moment before adding emphatically, "in a good way. So I'd like to give back in any way I can."

It's almost time for Dash to join Usama in computer class, before a quick drive back to Greensborough for an afternoon of bookkeeping study. "It's not the closest [to me], but this place is...there's more energy here, more depth, and I think that's what helps me to be around, that's what's drawn me here."

As we walk to the computer room where other students have sat down at their machines, Dash adds, "These are the sorts of places that have helped me." He looks around the room, "These are the sorts of places that I'd like to give back to."

# How you can HELP

## Volunteering

Banksia Gardens Community Services believes that the best way to create a stronger and better community is to help each other. This means volunteers are central to what we do. If you would like to support the community by offering your time, skills and knowledge, please get in touch. There are a number of ways that individuals, groups and companies can help.

## Individual, corporate and philanthropic support

### Workplace giving

Regular tax deductible donations have a powerful impact on the lives of our community. A donation of as little as \$50.00 can help us provide food for our Study Group program or our Community Pantry. These two programs alone support 300 families a week.

### Corporate volunteering

We can provide a structured volunteer program for your staff that provides a range of activities so they can get either hands-on experience or provide skilled support.

## Pro bono work

Support through pro bono work is critical for both operational and efficient service provision. If you have skills or expertise that you would like to share, we would be happy to discuss opportunities.

## Financial sponsorship

You can choose to fund one or all of the programs at Banksia Gardens Community Services. For example, specific investment could fund a program such as Aiming High for a year – supporting 30 aspirational young people to pursue their academic and career goals.

## Financial investment

Broad financial investment allows the organisation to consider where best to use the funds. We are currently aiming to secure approximately \$600,000 in broad financial support.

## Board member position

We are always interested in speaking with people who have the skills, time and energy to join our Board of Governance. Good governance is essential to us excelling as an organisation.

Donations can be made through our online platform:  
[HTTPS://BANKSIAGARDENS.ORG.AU/DONATE/](https://banksiagardens.org.au/donate/)

## To discuss volunteering, donations, and other supports, please contact:

JONATHAN CHEE  
CHIEF STORYTELLER  
0410 343 191

GINA DOUGALL  
CEO  
0402 163 739





# FINANCIALS

*For The year ended 30 June 2022*

## Board of Governance Report 2022

Your Board of Governance members submit the financial report of Banksia Gardens Community Services for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

### BOARD OF GOVERNANCE MEMBERS

Julijana Todorovic  
Joanne Bliss

Carole Fabian  
Royce DeSousa

Ed David  
Marina Labib

Peter Ewer  
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:

- i. The rights and interests of the Association's users;
- ii. The rights and interests of the Association's members;
- iii. The rights, interests, health, safety, and wellbeing of the Association's workforce;
- iv. 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:

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

### SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

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

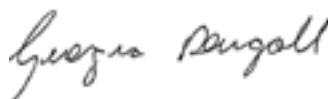
### OPERATING RESULT

The surplus for the 2022 financial year, after all depreciation and amortisation, amounted to \$163,147 (prior year \$259,017).

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

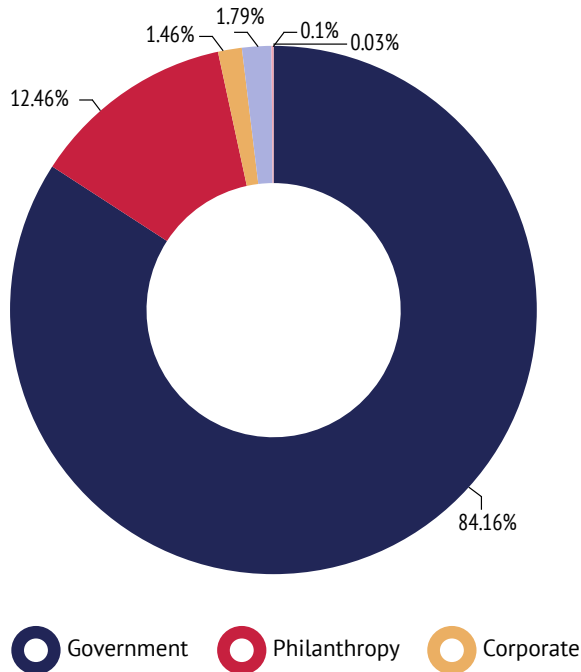


Julijana Todorovic, Chairperson  
4 October 2022

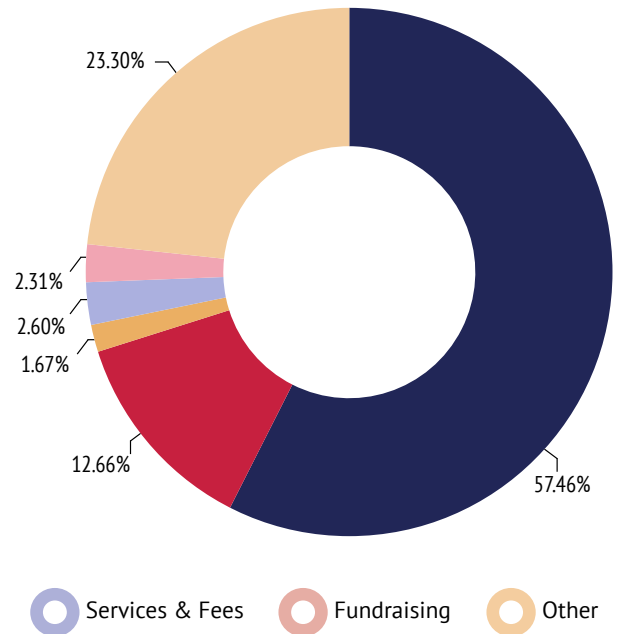


Gina Dougall, CEO

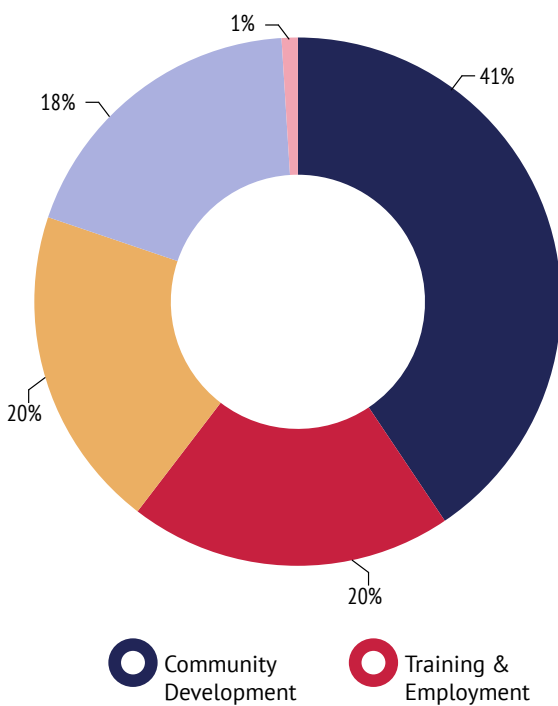
### WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2021-2022



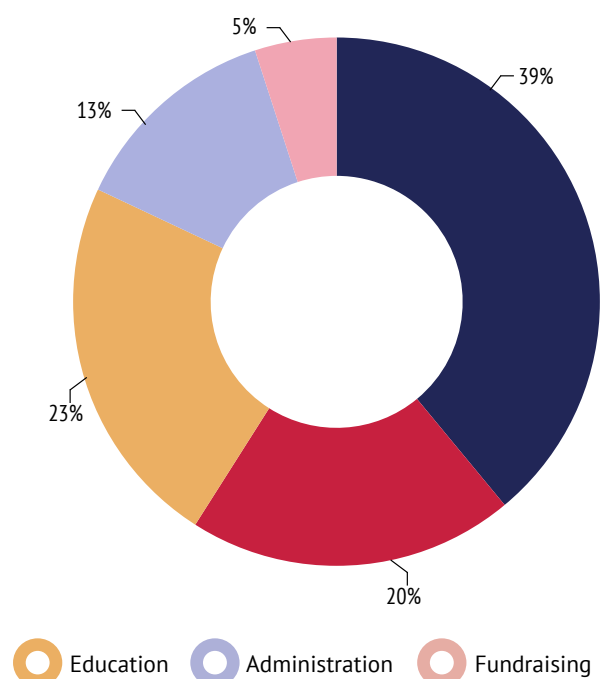
### WHERE OUR FUNDING CAME FROM 2020-2021



### HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2021-2022



### HOW OUR FUNDS WERE SPENT 2020-2021



# FINANCIALS

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	NOTE	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	4	3,891,765	2,992,810
Finance income		4,154	5,069
Government support - JobKeeper and Cash Flow Boost		-	779,000
Other income		13,800	29,577
Donations		69,305	80,578
Employee benefits expense		(3,095,935)	(3,014,784)
Depreciation		(19,136)	(44,130)
Change in fair value of financial assets		(2,561)	-
Catering		(36,131)	(20,597)
Contractors		(89,181)	(103,082)
Grants paid		(302,168)	(276,843)
Administrative expenses		(147,856)	(75,197)
Marketing expenses		(1,648)	(1,100)
Occupancy costs		(89,202)	(58,838)
Other expenses		(30,546)	(31,116)
Finance expenses		(1,513)	(2,330)
<b>Profit for the year</b>		163,147	259,017
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		163,147	259,017



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	NOTE	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	1,365,080	2,136,494
Trade and other receivables	6	92,636	71,948
Other financial assets	7	997,439	-
Other assets		1,214	2,484
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>2,456,369</b>	<b>2,210,926</b>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Trade and other receivables	6	52,049	-
Property, plant and equipment	8	129,517	112,976
Right-of-use assets	9	312	468
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>181,878</b>	<b>113,444</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>2,638,247</b>	<b>2,324,370</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	367,485	324,900
Lease liabilities	9	156	156
Employee benefits	12	449,262	419,258
Other financial liabilities	11	372,125	293,800
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,189,028</b>	<b>1,038,114</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liabilities	9	156	312
Employee benefits	12	67,410	67,438
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>67,566</b>	<b>67,750</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>1,256,594</b>	<b>1,105,864</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,381,653</b>	<b>1,218,506</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained earnings		1,381,653	1,218,506
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>1,381,653</b>	<b>1,218,506</b>

# FINANCIALS

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
<b>2022</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July 2021</b>	1,218,506	1,218,506
Profit for the year	163,147	163,147
<b>Balance at 30 June 2022</b>	<b>1,381,653</b>	<b>1,381,653</b>
<b>2021</b>		
<b>Balance at 1 July 2020</b>	959,489	959,489
Profit for the year	259,017	259,017
<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>1,218,506</b>	<b>1,218,506</b>

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

	NOTE	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Receipts from customers		4,314,983	4,441,041
Payments to suppliers and employees		(4,054,717)	(3,720,870)
Interest received		4,154	5,069
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	18	264,420	725,240
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(35,677)	(21,881)
Purchase of financial assets		(1,000,000)	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		(1,035,677)	(21,881)
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:</b>			
Payment of finance lease liabilities		(156)	(156)
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities		(156)	(156)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		(771,413) 2,136,493	703,203 1,433,291
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	5	1,365,080	2,136,494



# AUDITOR'S REPORT

LDAssurance

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

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Melbourne Victoria 3000  
TELEPHONE +61 3 9988 2090  
[www.ldassurance.com.au](http://www.ldassurance.com.au)  
ABN 89 146 147 202

## 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 2022, 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 then 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 2022 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and 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 in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures 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 30<sup>th</sup> day of September 2022  
330 Collins Street, Melbourne.

# THANK *You!*

## Community partners/ individuals

100 Story Building  
Adrienne Smith  
Anna Kuch  
Anna van Dijk  
Arabic Welfare  
Australian Friendly Turkish Women's Group  
Berry Street  
Brite  
Broadmeadows Basketball Association  
(Broadmeadows Broncos)  
Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Centre for Multicultural Youth  
Communities for Children (Uniting Vic.Tas)  
Conservation Volunteers Australia  
Debra Hosking  
DPV Health – major community partner  
Eco Justice Hub, Jesuit Social Services  
EKOL School of Arts  
Faye Bussau  
Fernando Ianni  
Fitzroy Football Club  
Foodbank Victoria  
Jesuit Social Services  
Joane Russel  
Maria Peters  
Melbourne Victory Football Club  
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria  
North West Neighbourhood House Network  
Northern Community Legal Centre  
Northpoint Centre  
Outer Urban Projects  
Peter Streker  
Philip 'Yung Phily' Pandongan

Reclink Australia  
Royal Children's Hospital  
Save the Children  
Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre  
Sunbury Cobaw Community Health  
Tibetan Buddhist Society  
Victorian Black Sea Cultural Association  
Women's Health in the North

## Philanthropy partners/ supporters

Alcohol and Drug Foundation  
Australian Communities Foundation  
BB and A Miller Fund  
Collier Charitable Fund  
CREATE Foundation  
Danks Trust  
Father Bob Maguire Foundation  
Fiona and Frank Leith Trust  
Fowler Paine Foundation  
Helen Macpherson Smith Trust  
Jack Brockhoff Foundation  
Justin Breheny  
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation  
Newsboys Foundation  
Ray and Margaret Wilson Foundation  
RE Ross Trust  
Readings Foundation  
The Kimberley Foundation

## Corporate partners/supporters

Melbourne Airport – major corporate sponsor  
CSL Behring Australia  
Janus Henderson Investors  
Norwest Group





## Education partners/supporters

Bethal Primary School  
 Broadmeadows Primary School  
 Broadmeadows Valley Primary School  
 Collingwood English Language School  
 Coolaroo South Primary School  
 Dallas Brooks Community Primary School  
 Gateway School  
 Gladstone Park Primary School  
 Gladstone Views Primary School  
 Glenroy West Primary School  
 Greenvale Primary School  
 Holy Child Primary School  
 Hume Central Secondary College  
 Hume Central Secondary College  
 Hume Valley School  
 Ilim College  
 Kangan Institute  
 Kensington Community and Child Care Services  
 Kolbe College  
 La Trobe University  
 Meadow Heights Primary School  
 Meadows Primary School  
 Melbourne Polytechnic  
 Monash University  
 Mount Ridley College  
 Northern Schools Early Years Cluster  
 RMIT University  
 Roxburgh College  
 Roxburgh Homestead Primary School  
 Roxburgh Park Primary School  
 Roxburgh Rise Primary School  
 University of Melbourne  
 Victoria University  
 Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA)

## Government

ACFE Board  
 Australian Government Department of Industry,  
 Science, Energy and Resources  
 Australian Government Department of Social  
 Services  
 Broadmeadows Magistrates Court  
 Centrelink  
 Cr Jarrod Bell  
 Hume City Council  
 Hume Library Services  
 Hume Volunteer Gateway  
 Maria Vamvakinou MP  
 Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and  
 Coordination  
 Ros Spence MP  
 Senator Lidia Thorpe  
 Sheena Watt MP  
 Victoria Police – Broadmeadows  
 Victorian Department of Department of Education  
 and Training  
 Victorian Department of Families, Fairness &  
 Housing  
 Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions  
 Victorian Department of Justice and Community  
 Safety  
 Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet

## Contact

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