


ANNUAL REPORT 2020





We focus on
getting people the
support they need
when they need it

We focus on
tailoring services
for individual
requirements,
supporting
families, parents,
youth, people
living with a
disability, the
aged, and carers

We focus on you,
so you can focus
on what matters

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Board and Chairperson's Report



Mr Darren Byrnes
Chairperson



Mr Jorge Montano
Company Secretary



Mr Michael Oetsch
Treasurer

2020 was a year of dramatic change within FOCUS Connect, coupled with COVID-19 overlays, changed working arrangements, and risks to the organisation.

While some embrace change and others resist it, the response from the Board and Senior Management was clear, we will not shy away from our responsibility to act under good governance with public money and meet our organisation's mission.

I congratulate the Board, members and staff who had the courage to stand up, sometimes under substantial criticism, to ensure FOCUS Connect could put clients, community and staff first. Through all this adversity and substantial change, FOCUS Connect moved further forward in 2020 than at any time in its history. With better governance and management, removal of nepotism, and restructuring, FOCUS Connect is emerging with a solid foundation and poised to accelerate growth in our exceptional services.

In light of this, I wish to highlight some of the positive results that Board members and staff achieved in 2020:

- Restructuring leadership, removing single reporting lines to the Board and aligning two C level positions, one focusing on service delivery, the other on the infrastructure supporting client activities
- Restructuring the lines of business (Aged Care, Community Engagement and Disability). This has provided significant improvement in efficiency and service delivery.



- Relocation of our Queen St office to Cordeaux St, at considerable cost savings, as an interim step after the purchase of a new Head Office in Chamberlain St which will be ready for occupation in the coming months. This building allows our staff to work and collaborate better, provides a strong statement around FOCUS Connect's growth, and additional parking for our growing bus fleet
- Expansion of our Aged Care services into the Northern Sydney region and greater South Western Sydney region based out of our leased Wetherill Park offices, allowing FOCUS Connect to help the community on a wider level. Disability Services were also recently introduced to these regions
- Substantial improvements in efficiencies through organisational streamlining, reducing our overheads and redirecting funding resources directly to the benefit of the wider community and clients. This also brought us in line with funding requirements improving our capacity where we were not meeting industry benchmarks and funding body expectations
- A more structured relationship between the Board and Senior Management establishing segregation of duties and control to effectively leverage Board skills to assist and guide management decision making

I look forward with optimism and confidence to 2021 as FOCUS Connect quickly emerges as a shining star driving great outcomes for the community and staff.

Improvements in overall business performance will elevate the reputation of FOCUS Connect providing the recognition it and its hard-working staff deserve as a regional leader in not-for-profit services.

CHAIRPERSON

AND THE BOARD





Treasurer's Report

2020 was a momentous year for both FOCUS Connect and the broader economy. Despite the challenges we faced, FOCUS Connect delivered strong financial results resulting in another successful year with record growth.

Our overall surplus for 2020 was \$353k which is almost four times the amount reported in 2019 (2019: \$92k). This was largely due to the procurement of a number of new grants which allow us to expand our services into Fairfield and North Sydney as well as Board and management focus to remove past inefficiencies as an organisation to reduce unnecessary expenditures.

In 2020 the Board of Directors, along with executive management, have achieved the following financial results:

- Avoided the need for JobKeeper stimulus through strong year-on-year revenue
- Further increased cash reserves
- Reduced financial liabilities
- Increased net assets
- Identified key financial areas to continue improving into 2021
- Substantially improved efficiency allowing delivery of services to more clients in the community



Results Summary

The audited financial statements reveal a small increase in total revenue to \$5.97 million (2019: \$5.89 million). This increase is largely attributed to growth within our disability services and new service contracts which will enable FOCUS Connect to expand into new communities. Due to COVID-19, some of our services were unable to be delivered before year-end which otherwise would have led to even higher revenue. This deferred income will likely be captured in the 2021 results. Employee benefits expenditure was slightly higher than in 2019, while finance costs and other expense were lower. The revaluation of land and buildings resulted in a total comprehensive income of \$73k.

Financial Focus Moving Forward

We expect that revenue growth will continue into 2021 with restructuring improvements in the aged care team likely to assist future growth. Overhead expenditure has been and will continue to be a focus for the organisation moving forward so that we can remain competitive in an increasingly competitive not-for-profit business environment where block funding services are being replaced by fee-for-service models.

Governance

As a registered non-profit organisation and public company limited by guarantee, FOCUS Connect operates within a very specific legal and regulatory framework. To ensure that the organisation has adequate controls and safeguards in place, the Board of Directors meet on a monthly basis to discuss and evaluate compliance with service-specific legislation.

As part of this compliance, the financial position of FOCUS Connect is closely monitored. Each month, the Chief Corporate Services Officer presents the monthly results to the Board so that we can ensure that:



- Financial performance closely reflects monthly and YTD budgets
- Overhead costs are in line with funding requirements
- Legal and regulatory frameworks are operated within
- Strategic issues are identified and accounted for
- The organisation continues as a going concern
- Conflicts of interest and related party transactions are managed
- The Board has full transparency

Our Business Partners

We would like to thank Kelly + Partners Chartered Accountants for supporting us through another year. Kelly + Partners have been external auditors for FOCUS Connect for over a decade and we thank you for your services throughout this time. The Board are in the process of reviewing the risk and compliance procedures for FOCUS Connect and are currently deliberating on audit requirements for the 2021 financial year.

We would like to thank our funding bodies for continuing to support FOCUS Connect.

Lastly, we would like to thank our dedicated staff for being on the frontline to deliver such important services to our community. Our employment base continues to grow which is a promising sign of strong demand for our services and a representation of the valued work you provide.

Thank you for your support throughout such a monumental year. We are proud to lead FOCUS Connect to a continued position of strength so that future challenges can be met with confidence and clarity.

MICHAEL OETSCH
TREASURER





Joint Statement



Alexander Maniquis
Chief Operations Officer

Lee-Ann Jones
Chief Corporate Services Officer

The 2019 – 2020 financial year brought with it immense challenges in the form of drought, bushfires, floods, internal governance, a significant restructure of staff and assets, and COVID-19. Our Board worked closely with the Chiefs, staff, volunteers, clients, members and participants to overcome these challenges with resilience and innovation, exceeding all expectations through positive reform and change.

FOCUS Connect achieved growth well above forecast, and tough beneficial transformation in 2019 -2020 by strengthening our governance frameworks and operational efficiencies and maintaining best practice and sound financial management. This resulted in an operating surplus that exceeded the previous year by 383% and significant improvements in the number and quality of services delivered to clients.

Throughout 2019-2020, and even during the height of the COVID-19 period, FOCUS Connect witnessed a significant increase in revenue compared to the previous year. This was achieved through a 101% increase in Aged Care funding which allowed FOCUS Connect to expand our delivery of Aged Care services in Greater South Western Sydney and Northern Sydney out of our new Wetherill Park facility.



FOCUS Connect's Disability initiative resulted in a 24% increase in fee-for-service revenue for our Disability Services due to new business initiatives that delivered operational efficiencies.

It was pleasing that FOCUS Connect was ineligible for the Federal Government's Job Keeper subsidy payments due to expansion of operating activities and outstanding performance above previous years.

In spite of increased unemployment levels and the economic downturn due to COVID-19, FOCUS Connect went against this trend and on average, recruited 5 to 10 extra front-line staff per month allowing us to meet the increased demand for our highly regarded services. All staff were supported throughout COVID-19 with job security and flexibility, supervision and resources.

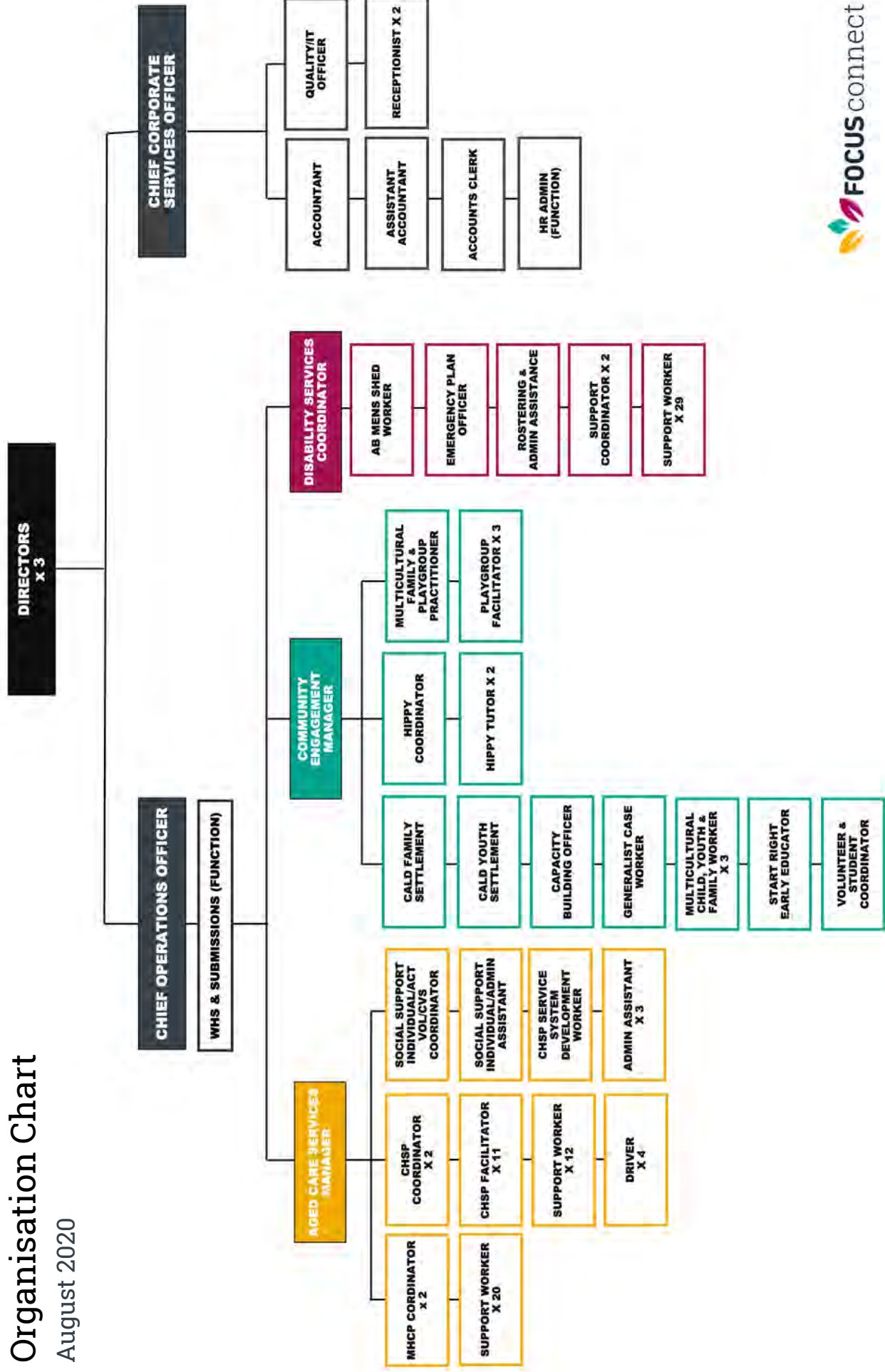
It is with great pleasure we report the sound financial position of FOCUS Connect with a \$353k surplus position in 2019-2020. Furthermore, the restructure and redistribution of \$102k of top-heavy and back-office resources towards the direct delivery of frontline services to vulnerable members of our community ensured that FOCUS Connect continued to meet the unexpected challenges and pressures experienced by our clients, their families and local communities.

We are pleased to present our Annual report for 2019-2020. Further, we would like to thank our stakeholders, funders, community partners, and our Chairman, Board of Directors, staff and volunteers. The amazing outcomes we achieved despite the overwhelming challenges of 2019-2020 are the result of all your collaborative efforts.



Organisation Chart

August 2020



Corporate Services

Corporate Services supports our front line operations through the multiple organisation-wide functions of finance & accounting, payroll & rostering, human resources, assets management, purchasing & quality management, performance management & reporting, office administration, liaison with stakeholders and community partners, contract management and funding acquittals.

Lee-Ann and Corporate Services maintained FOCUS Connect's physical presence at Head Office throughout the height of COVID-19 in 2020, which in turn provided reassurance and continuity to FOCUS Connect's frontline staff and our community.

The business intelligence, forecasts, and strategic direction provided by Corporate Services allowed FOCUS Connect to prosper and maintain a healthy financial outlook throughout 2019 -2020 and beyond.

COVID-19 Safe Practices

During the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards, FOCUS Connect continued to provide services in a COVID-19 safe manner utilising a mix of innovative online client engagement and face-to-face contact.

We had a rotation of staff working from home and continued to maintain our Head Office and office-based frontline operations with skeleton staff arrangements. Our staff were trained in COVID-19 safety protocols and provided with adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the latest advice and announcements set by the NSW and Federal Governments. and followed newly developed COVID-19 safe guidelines and risk management frameworks.

Frontline staff kept their finger on the pulse of our community and identified the challenges and increased vulnerabilities faced by our clients, consumers, participants and members because of the adverse effects of COVID-19 social isolation measures. As a result, FOCUS Connect successfully adapted to the changing needs of our community during these challenging times.

Board

Mr Darren Byrnes
Chairperson

Mr Jorge Montano
Company Secretary

Mr Michael Oetsch
Treasurer

Dr Alfred Colvin
*Previous Chairperson
to 27/04/2020*

Ms Makeleta Felila
Director
29/07/2019 to 08/01/2020

Ms Laura Maquinez
Director
13/03/2019 to 04/05/2020

Mrs Meg Villena
Director
13/03/2019 to 04/05/2020

Staff

Abul Akot
Adriana La Spina
Aisbeth Martinez
Alexander Maniquis
Amanda Heather
Amit Shrestha
Ana Carmichael
Ana Casal
Andrew McGlinchy
Ann Tibbles
Anthony Mansour
Antonieta Racó
Antonio Dominguez
Ashwini Birmal
Barunaya Shnan
Bevan Nicholas
Bimla Raman
Bridget Sharpe
Brie-Anna Byrnes
Caitleen Sheehan
Caitlin Manganaro
Carolina Andrade
Catalina De Santis
Cecilia Vera
Christiane Ibrahim
Christine Rickert
Craig Went
Cristian Lita
Dalia Attalla
Darren Stevens
David Romero
Debbie Giacomini
Dolma Dolma
Elizabeth Greenep
Emily Kaudeer
Eufemia Romero
Evelyn Arouture
Farisha Sayed
Fatin Al Rawi
Georgia Mossman
Gloria Rueda Marin
Gordon Au
Grace Kim
Hamdia Khan
Harry Ram
Hellen Sheil
Houssam Halabi
Isabel Cristina Molina Arboleda
Isabel Williamson
Ivania Joya
Jacqueline Lobo
Janelle Strong

Jason Mills
Jazmin Sheil
Jeremy Travers
Joan Obuchowski
Jo-Ann Fletcher
Joanne Narvais
Jobert Villamthanam Joseph
Jodi-Lee Charnock
Josefina Garcia
Judith Seeney
Karin Vasquez
Kasak Aldalmi
Kaylee Thompson
Ken Kibet Jepkemoi
Kim Postill
Kit Lam
Kristy-Lea Cooper
Kwannet Uadhao
Kylie Anable-Gausden
Kylie Richardson
Laila Al-Sattouf
Latasha Bell
Lee-Ann Jones
Leonie Nixon
Lilieta Teaupa
Linda Vasquez
Linh Thi Pham
Lisa Harrison
Lorena Munoz
Lorraine Babu
Magdalini Chatzopoulou
Marcela Fernandez
Marco Iglesias
Maria Cristina Villena
Maria Jose Gonzalez
Martina Pagin
Mary Smolcic
Maureen Lonergan
Melvia Bong
Michelle Arenas
Mona Tadros
Nafiza Buksh
Nanhwa Chong
Natalie Hiddlestone
Onoribel Veronica Perez
Orinthia Slingerland
Owen Mossman
Penelope Allie
Peter Lonergan
Phouvanh Meuananith
Pina Tauilili Sio
Renica Adam

Volunteers

Richie Milford
Rina Sharma
Rubita Shrestha
Safinaz Halabi
Samija Avdic
Samuel Arenas
Sana Al-Ahmar
Sandra Patino Sanchez
Sandra Stonham
Sandra Urbina-Huezo
Sannaa Tawaddross
Shila Thomas
Sidrah Hammad
Sony Makaju
Stephanie Wiley
Sue Gordon
Susan Kelly
Tania Sharmin
Teneale Conciatore
Thecla Kaseke
Themie Bekiaris
Thi Nguyen
Thomas Dreyer
Thomas Jones
Tiffany Jenart
Tinotenda Madzivadondo
Tracey Button
Tuainekore Maraeara
Valentina De Lucia
Vanessa Klein
Veronica Sanchez
Wafa Jabarin
Wafaa Hovey
Wing Leung
Xuehui (Sheffy) Zheng
Yacqueline Castro
Yolander Maraeara
Yoon Kim
Yvonn Herrera

Abilene Mary Barnes
Alejandra Mourraille
Amal Shijar
Amparo Asfoura
Ana Mabilangan
Annie Wang
Avril Munoz
Behroz Gouniai
Belinda Anne Curry
Bimla Raman
Bradley Simpson
Carolyn Wright
Cecilia Bare
Clifford Pollett
Colin Hardy
Colleen May Malone
Concetta Corte
David Joya
Emma Cayna
Eufasia (Ging) Kehagias
Eufasia Kehagias
Eun Kyoung Cho
Fida Mohamad
Gary John Calleja
Hana Assoum
Harry Ram (Driver)
Herminiano Manual
Hoh Tin
Imad Klaif Shahad
James Sutcliff
Jan Williams
Jane Dominguez
Jelyn Singh
Joanne Narvais
Josefina Nowland
Joselina Stinson
Joshua Surnan
Juan Neira
Kim Hoa Nguyen
Lativia Veamatahau
Leonor Diaz
Linh Pham
Ljubisa (Lee) Zebic (Driver)
Louis Toro (Driver)
Louise Molland
Luz Maria Mateo

Lynda Ruth Dench
Maria Iglesias
Maria Jose Gonzalez
Marietta Parale
Marlene Agoo
Mary Templeman
May Suzette Jacquin
Melon Wallie
Mercelita Manual
Michelle Tandy
Mina Hussain Haidary
Mona Banoub
Monique Moutia
Nadia Elassal
Nouhad Hamod
Olga Fernandez
Olga Raievska
Olga Souza
Pamela Lawther
Pamela Marion Parker
Pedro Munoz
Phillip Potbury
Renald Francois
Robert Scorsone
Sawsan Wahba
Seema Vij
Shila Thomas (Driver)
Tashi Tashi
Ted Kelada
Thi Nho Tran
Thi Son Trinh
Wafaa Hamdi
Wafaa Hovey
William Sullivan
Xiaoying (Mikaela) Zhang
Yolanda Villahermosa
Yves Irakoze

Students on Placement

Abul Aklot
Janelle Maree Strong
Kara Colleen Richards
Sarah Jane Addison
Victoria Haritos



Highlights



Volunteer appreciation ceremonies and outings



Continuity of services through COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions



Care package deliveries, well-being check-ins, and grocery shopping for clients in response to COVID-19



Plans developed for new Aged Care Services in Greater South Western Sydney and Northern Sydney in the Financial Year of 2020/21 through a 101% increase in Federal funding



Special celebrations and social activities, including Seniors Week



Volunteer and worker training opportunities

Aged Care Services



Home Care Packages

Key Facts



52 Clients



7,104.5 hours

*care and support
delivered by Focus
Connect workers*



1,062 hours

*care and support
from contractors*

We provide coordinated care and support to help our clients live safely and independently in their own home for as long as they can. Working together we achieve the best outcomes and respect their choices.

During COVID-19 restrictions we have continued to care for and support our clients. We focused on delivering education and information to help them to stay safe, healthy and aware. We supplied our support workers with personal protective equipment and provided training. Together with other Programs in Aged Care at FOCUS Connect our clients received care packs to let them know we were thinking of them and support them in their isolation.

Success Story

A Focus Connect support worker learned that one of our clients enjoyed fishing. Our Support Worker now takes the client on regular fishing trips where both have developed a strong connection, sense of purpose and a common interest in enjoying the great outdoors



Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)

The CVS program alleviates social and cultural isolation, through meaningful friendships and companionship aimed at improving quality of life. Participants and volunteer visitors are language-matched to facilitate communication and relationship building. The strength of our visitor client relationships was critical in ensuring continuity and stability through COVID-19 restrictions.

Key Facts

- ✓ 40 participants fortnightly
- ✓ 15 volunteers
- ✓ Secured funding to facilitate phone/virtual services



Clockwise from top: Acknowledgment and appreciation day for CVS visitors; Care package delivery for Home Service participants; Yoga therapy classes for CVS visitors.



Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

Key Facts

- ✓ 150 participants weekly
- ✓ 9927 participants year
- ✓ 30 volunteers
- ✓ Innovative and different ways of engaging and supporting clients in a COVID-19 safe manner

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) supports older Australians to remain in their own homes as long as possible. At Focus Connect we facilitate Social Support Groups and provide flexible respite, domestic assistance and personal care.

Highlights

In the most recent Aged Care Safety Commission audit, we achieved the highest possible result, making us one of only two service providers in the region to do so

We delivered care packages with essential items such as face masks, hand sanitiser, toilet paper and other consumables, together with colouring and word search books and pencils

Domestic Assistance and Personal Care

This year particularly, Domestic Assistance and Personal Care were much-needed services in South West Sydney. A successful funding submission allowed us to grow our services in the area. We currently provide services for 214 consumers, helping them to remain at home for as long as possible.



Social Support Groups

This year has provided challenges for us to ensure our participants remained connected and engaged. Activities and programs such as Stepping on Program (Falls Prevention), Seniors Rights Information Sessions (Wills, Guardianship, Power of Attorney), Gentle Exercises, and Brain Gym helped reduce isolation and enhance wellbeing.

Before COVID-19 restrictions, our Multicultural Support Groups actively participated in social activities, and during the COVID-19 restrictions continued to maintain connection remotely and in smaller groups





Seniors Week

On Monday, 10 February 2020 FOCUS Connect celebrated Seniors Week.

Seniors reminisced and spoke about sometimes being defined by all the things they are "Not".

The event featured a reading of Erin Hanson's poem, a toast to celebrate being a senior and included morning tea, a lunch prepared by the Coffee Room members, interactive Valentines Day puzzles and Uruguayan folk dancing by FOCUS Connect Social Support Group members.

NOT by Erin Hanson

You are not your age,
nor the size of clothes you wear
You are not a weight,
or the colour of your hair.
You are not your name,
or the dimples in your cheeks.
You are all the books you read,
and all the words you speak.
You are your croaky morning voice,
and the smiles you try to hide.
You're the sweetness in your laughter,
and every tear you've cried
You're the songs you sing so loudly
when you know you're all alone
You're the places that you've been to,
and the one that you call home
You're the things that you believe in,
and the people whom you love
You're the photos in your bedroom
and the future you dream of
You're made of so much beauty,
but it seems that you forgot
When you decided that you were defined
by all the things you're not.



Social Support Individual (SSI)

Key Facts

✓ 60+ participants
weekly

✓ 53 Volunteers

Social support services meet the needs of elderly people and their carers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds by providing volunteer companions to assist within the home and community.

This year, with a focus on reducing feelings of isolation, we delivered care packages, hampers and information packs; provided iPads for clients to use at home to connect with family and friends and improve their technology skills; arranged social events and connections; and undertook phone check-in services.



Top: Good Fellas Information session - How to deal with Depression, January 2020

Bottom: Multicultural Social Support outing to Wollongong - the last outing for a dearest client of almost 15 years, RIP Mrs Darinka Rutonski



Volunteers

Volunteers play an instrumental role in our clients' lives. We value and respect our volunteers and invest in them with regular training and social activities. This year they have worked tirelessly to keep our clients connected, safe and healthy.



Top: In November 2019, Community Visitors volunteers enjoyed lunch and a tour of the new FOCUS Connect office.

Bottom left: Herminiano Manual, Mercelita Manual, Shila Thomas, Mikaela Zhang, Eun Cho Kyoung and Annie Wang representing the Aged Day Care Team at the Gift of Time event at Campbelltown Council, December 2019 Bottom right: NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards 2019, Robert Scorsone and Sawsan Wahba representing the Aged Day Care Team



Highlights



24% growth in revenue due to increased referrals



Service continuity during restructure and COVID-19 restrictions



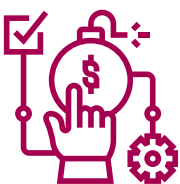
Social and life-skill training opportunities created for Participants during COVID-19 restrictions



Expansion of Disability frontline workforce through huge recruitment drive in response to growing demands for Disability Services



Newly created position of Senior Practitioner to drive best practice



Restructure of staff reporting lines, operations, policy and practice to improve efficiencies and enhance positive client outcomes

Disability Services



Individual Services

During the unprecedented COVID-19 restrictions, Individual Services was an essential service and a lifeline for people with disabilities. Upon the outbreak of COVID-19 individual support was integral to the mental health and wellbeing for the majority of Participants who experience social isolation. Frequent communication with Participants allowed FOCUS Connect to maintain a sense of community and positive relationships with Participants during the pandemic.

While most industries suffered, FOCUS Connect hit the ground running with strict infection controls and staff training to deliver quality and safe support to our Participants. Social and community outings were replaced with social and emotional support to Participants, ensuring people with disabilities maintain a sense of stability, routine and most importantly connectedness. Meditation, exercise and social interaction were goals that were identified by our Participants. These were met by FOCUS Connect staff determined to uphold our commitment to quality service. Participants receiving in-home services also had more time and opportunity to learn new skills such as cooking, cleaning, and arts and crafts.



A FOCUS Connect Participant took advantage of her time in lockdown to learn new recipes and engage in conversations with support staff to improve her English skills. Saba has increased confidence in her speaking skills and would like to pursue an English Course at TAFE.

A second FOCUS Connect Participant showed positivity and resilience and was adamant to maintain her exercise routine at home when her regular hydrotherapy sessions were cancelled. FOCUS Connect staff took the initiative to liaise with the Participant's physical therapists to practice her home-based exercise therapy program. With restrictions on social activities and venues, support workers assisted her with exercises at home and at her local park. The team were overwhelmed to hear her positive feedback on the support she received.



Community Access

The Airds Bradbury Men's Shed is a longstanding, popular community access activity for FOCUS Connect Participants. The Men's Shed welcomes males of all ages to the Community Access Programme. With the help of Men's Shed volunteers, the Participants enjoy gardening, woodwork and metalwork. Both volunteers and staff relish BBQ lunches of sausage sandwiches. FOCUS Connect is the only provider in the local area to offer the opportunity for people with disabilities to access the facilities at a minimal cost.

Participants are encouraged to interact with new people and create new friendships. Many have worked on their own special projects. A FOCUS Connect Participant has recently built his own bike with the assistance of the Men's Shed volunteers. Aleksander has also learnt to repair his scooter and made many wooden photo frames for family and friends.

Staff and Participants created handmade serving boards for the Christmas in July 2020 festivities. During a time of isolation and uncertainty, the Men's Shed members and volunteers maintained a sense of comradery and community with shared interests and passions for building and gardening.



This year the FOCUS Connect cooking program saw more Participants than ever before. Participants prepared and shared dishes from different cuisines, learnt about health and nutrition and built on their skills as they shopped for ingredients and followed step-by-step recipes. On more than one occasion, Participants recreated the recipes at home for their families and carers.

During the lockdown period, the Community Access programme remained open with our amazing staff diligently following infection control measures.

The team created their own fun with centre-based activities and held their very own disco, karaoke party, and Easter egg hunt, as well as succeeding at their first attempt at tie-dye t-shirts.



Primrose Cottage

Primrose Cottage is known for quality care and respite services to many in the Macarthur region. Residents attend Primrose as a means of relaxation and fun, with the cottage as a safe environment for them to explore interests and learn to be more self-reliant and independent away from their families. Staff often take Participants out in the community or do home-based activities such as baking and gardening.



The Sensory Garden, officially opened in November 2019, is a fully accessible outdoor area with a sitting area and large wood fire oven; a place for refuge and relaxation. Respite participants have learnt to garden and use fresh ingredients from the garden to create homemade dishes with their friends and staff.

We achieved a milestone with the opening of our first Supported Independent Living (SIL) “permanent forever home” for NDIS Participants at Primrose Cottage in May 2020 during the height of COVID-19.



Since moving into SIL, our first Participant's complex behaviours have been effectively managed by trained and skilled staff. The Disability team take a multidisciplinary approach to help our Participant achieve her goals using a comprehensive in-house training package developed and delivered by Antonietta Raco, Senior Practitioner. Our frontline staff provide a home where the SIL Participant is able to learn new skills and improve on showering, dressing and personal care. Since moving into Primrose Cottage our Participant's communication, eating behaviours and performance of daily routines have significantly improved, she has taken responsibility for feeding and caring for the Primrose Cottage resident hen, and she has developed a sense of pride and ownership of the Cottage as her home.



Support Coordination

FOCUS Connect's Support Coordination team continuously strive to connect NDIS participants with supports tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Our Support Coordinators adopt a holistic, person-centred approach to ensuring Participants achieve their goals as well as live quality lives beyond their disability.



Success Story

A FOCUS Connect participant suffered a spinal cord injury in 2010. He lost sensation and function below his navel including his bilateral legs and hips and experienced severe sciatica nerve pain. As a result of his disability and reduced mobility, the Participant had limited functioning and access in his home and the community. This resulted in him spending most of his time at home becoming socially isolated, frustrated and reclusive. He had previously enjoyed participating in meaningful community and social activities including going to church, attending the local Leagues club, dancing, going out for dinners with his partner, visiting family and friends, and shopping. Complex home modifications were required for him to maintain his independence and complete daily routines. Our Support Coordinator liaised with Occupational Therapists, NDIS planners, builders and the Participant until the home modifications were approved. The installation and implementation of a lift and access ramps changed our Participant's outlook and attitude. On a recent visit, the Support Coordination team observed that he is happy, confident and finally ready to go out and explore his interests. With his increased capacity, our Participant now practices choice and control by self-managing his NDIS plan.

Success Story

A 67-year-old male Participant with quadriplegia, autonomic dysreflexia and prostate cancer has limited bilateral upper limb strength, grasp, grip and forward and lateral reach. He can't access essential items when home alone and he is unable to transfer and mobilise independently due to limited capability with weight bearing through his legs. He lives alone and is fully supported through the utilisation of his NDIS funds.

The Participant is a different man now. He feels confident, independent and fully supported to mobilise around his home and in the community. To improve his health and mobility, the Participant regularly attends hydrotherapy and physiotherapy. As a result of advocacy by our Support Coordinator, he received his new power wheelchair in October 2019. During the same plan period, he received a hospital-grade bed, mattress and other mobility-related assistive technologies. Working with a multidisciplinary team including his Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist and his daughter we have increased his core supports from 1:1 ratio to 2:1 ratio to accommodate his higher intensity manual handling support needs.

Disability Employment Services (DES)

FOCUS Connect's Disability Employment Services (DES) helps individuals with a Disability to achieve a long-term education and career path to attain a sustainable career and not just a job. Our DES Consultant empowers her clients to create their own job applications, enrol in courses to gain qualifications, reorganise their daily routine and collaborates closely with other services and employers. In March 2020 to June 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 lockdown, our DES continued to provide a COVID-19 safe service from the office, supporting clients to stay employed and finding work for new clients, even though job losses were being experienced across Australia. Our DES received the highest industry recognition in Australia as a 5-star service provider due to our success rate and the high volume of clients gaining and retaining new qualifications and work.

Airds Bradbury Men's Shed

Under the auspices of FOCUS Connect, Airds Bradbury Men's Shed is a member of the Australian Men's Shed Association.

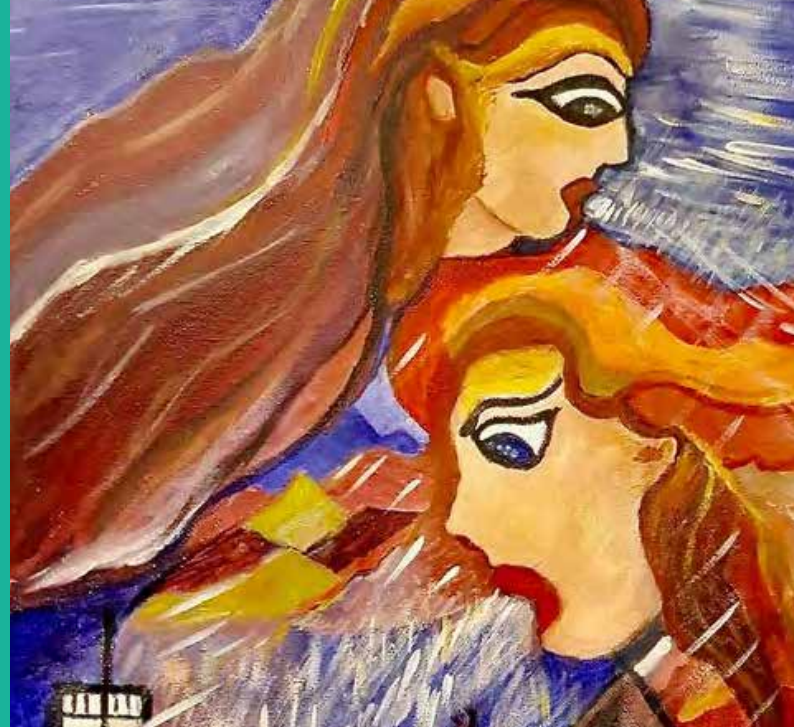
Our Men's Shed works to improve men's health and wellbeing by providing a safe space for men of all ages to share their skills and provide peer support to each other. The Men's Shed is fortunate to have Brad, an in-house counsellor, who volunteers his time to provide wellbeing sessions, strategies and advice for our Men's Shed members.

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis, the Men's Shed closed down for COVID-19 safety reasons. We maintained contact, checked-in with members and were able to bounce back and reopen in June 2020 once government regulation allowed us to do so.

Our Men's Shed is a large complex, often described as a village, with a wide range of tools and machinery, that provides opportunities for our men to run their own projects with metal, wood, leather, mechanics, agriculture and market gardens.

We thank and acknowledge our community partner NSW Communities & Justice (Reiby Youth Justice Centre) for their ongoing support in providing the land and facilities for Aird's Bradbury Men's Shed continuing success.





Highlights



Innovative continuity of services through online client engagement through the COVID-19 period



Diverse range of whole of life services and programs for children, young people, adults and families



Flexible response to meet the increase in domestic violence, unemployment and financial crises of clients through COVID-19



Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) services aimed at reducing domestic violence and child abuse through parenting programs, casework, intake and referral services



Children and Parents Program (CAPP)

Key Facts

✓ **5-20 participants**
weekly

✓ **30 families**
case management

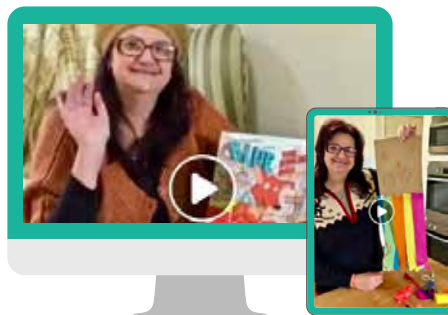
✓ **2 Volunteers**

The Children and Parents Programs (CAPP) build the capacity of local families and empower parents to be better teachers for their children by providing them with skills to engage with their children.



Playgroups

Our Campbelltown Playgroups were disrupted by the COVID-19 restrictions in early 2020. We rose to the occasion by maintaining contact with families online and providing video storytelling and craft activities via Facebook.



The FOCUS Connect Playgroup team came together and enjoyed a party to celebrate Christmas 2019.





Start Right

The Start Right Program builds numeracy and literacy skills in children aged 0-3 years and empowers parents with confidence and tools to help their children learn at home. In late 2019, our playgroups enjoyed many stimulating activities including making and playing with play-dough and celebrating Melbourne Cup by creating fancy hats. We successfully met the challenge of COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 by providing stories and craft instruction online via video and sending home weekly activity packs to families. We utilised Facebook, email, calls and text messaging to maintain connection with families.



Key Facts

✓ 46 participants

✓ 4 Locations
Airds
Campbelltown
Macquarie Fields
Minto



Key Facts

✓ 60 participants

✓ Successful funding for 3 more years

Cook and Chat

Funded by the Scanlon Foundation, the Cook and Chat program brings people together to learn, interact, converse and communicate in English to develop literacy skills and fluency while linking into other supports and opportunities over the kitchen table.

This year, with COVID-19 restrictions, the Cook and Chat group successfully utilised Facebook Live to meet, interact, share recipes and cook together.

Our Cook and Chat group catered for the FOCUS Connect International Women's Day celebrations in March 2020 and were the official caterers for the Sensory Garden Open Day in November 2019, sourcing many of their ingredients from our Sensory garden.



ParentsNext

ParentsNext is a program for those who have received a Parenting Payment for more than 6 months in a row, haven't earned any income in the previous 6 months, with a child under 6, and who live in a Targeted or Intensive Stream location. This year our Participants remained engaged in the program despite being granted an exemption as a result of bushfire and COVID-19 measures. A group of ParentsNext participants adapted and used new online technology in order to finish their studies during the COVID-19 lockdown. They formed a special bond with each other in the process, and now meet online outside of the course. Participants also maintained connection through cultural activities.

Key Facts

✓ 39 participants



Key Facts

✓ 507 appointments

✓ 353 clients assessed

Key Facts

✓ 261 appointments

✓ 157 assessed

✓ 157 clients assessed

✓ 86% loan approval rate



Financial Wellbeing

Emergency Relief

FOCUS Connect's Material Assistance/Emergency Relief Program provides financial assistance to marginally disadvantaged residents of the Macarthur region. This year we assisted people affected by the 2019/2020 bushfires in the Wollondilly and Wingecarribee area. In doing so, FOCUS Connect staff made new links with other services in Wollondilly and Wingecarribee. These new networks will support our work in the emergency relief sector.

No Interest Loans (NILS)



Funded by Good Shepherd Microfinance and the NSW Dept of Fair Trading, the NILS program assists low-income earners to secure loans for purchasing essential goods and services.

This year FOCUS Connect completed loans in excess of \$132,000, up 30% on last financial year's figure.

During one quarter we maintained our target of 18 or more loans per month - a first achievement.

Volunteers

Our volunteer and student placement initiatives ensure effective recruitment, management and retainment of committed and dedicated volunteers and students. This year, streamlined recruitment, training and other engagement opportunities have contributed to higher standards in quality of work.

Volunteers and students engaged in workshops and social activities, including "Being an effective Volunteer" a course offered in partnership with TAFE NSW; a first aid course; the Campbelltown Gift of Time ceremony; and the end of year picnic



Key Facts

✓ 30 volunteers

Gambling Harm Minimisation



Funded by the Office of Responsible Gambling, and offered in partnership with Camden Council, FOCUS Connect launched the Gambling Harm Minimisation project which promotes greater public awareness of problem gambling in the community through provision of information and support via phone, online, and education sessions and referrals to counselling and gambling services.

Settlement

Family

Key Facts

- ✓ **103 individual clients**
- ✓ **39 education and training sessions**
206 attendees
- ✓ **17 family and social support sessions**
180 attendees
- ✓ **4 group-based activity sessions**
86 attendees
- ✓ **2 advocacy sessions**
40 attendees
- ✓ **1 transport session**
11 attendees
- ✓ **4 Volunteers**

CALD Family Settlement program addresses the needs of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds towards improved safety, health, education and social life.



Top: FOCUS Connect's Family Settlement worker engaged Year 8 students at Ambervale High School's Multicultural Day in an activity that helped them learn about the path many refugees take to become Australian Citizens.



Middle: Migrant women attended a fee-free eight week TAFE NSW sewing course delivered at FOCUS Connect. The classes help the women learn new skills and find pathways in to employment..



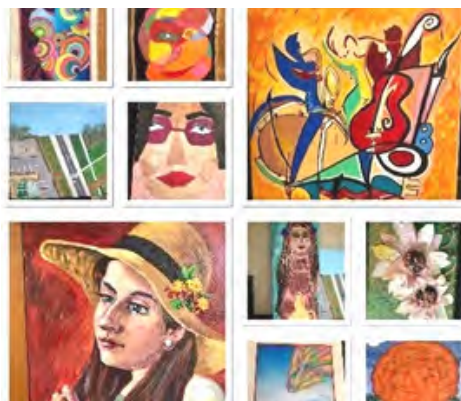
Below: A Manly day trip helped families learn how to navigate public transport, use the OPAL card and experience travel in Sydney.



Settlement Case Worker

Settlement Case Worker, Sana Al-Ahmer maintained settlement support for recent immigrants throughout COVID restrictions by utilising online forums and apps. Casework continued via phone, messaging, email and social media. Prior to COVID restrictions, cultural and educational events were popular

Top: The Multicultural Women's Art Group continued their projects at home and online during COVID restrictions using Whats App and Facebook



Middle: Weekly English Conversation classes with volunteer Colleen coniuves to be popular, however they ceased during COVID restrictions



Below: Refugee Welcome Dinner held at St Patricks College



Key Facts



105 casework clients



500+ participants



15 volunteers





Youth

Facilitated by Ivania Joya, the Youth Settlement Program provides opportunities for young people, aged 12-24 who have migrated to Australia in the past five years, to build their capacity, make social connections, and acquire skills and knowledge to assist them in their settlement journey.

Top: During COVID restrictions Youth Settlement maintained engagement and education using online forums - eYouth Chat and eTutoring offering weekly session with guest speakers and opportunity for feedback and interaction on relevant topics.



Middle: This year the HYPE Youth program included sessions with Police, TAFE, Family Planning NSW, Cricket NSW, and Headspace at Campbelltown Performing Arts High School.



Below: The Cooking with Kulcha program remained active and participated in numerous activities including preparing food for Headspace's art project meeting.



Key Facts

- ✓ **67 individual clients**
- ✓ **29 education and tutoring sessions**
53 attendees
- ✓ **11 employability sessions**
65 attendees
- ✓ **17 sport & recreation sessions**
91 attendees
- ✓ **13 life skills sessions**
71 attendees
- ✓ **5 mentoring sessions**
25 attendees
- ✓ **17 youth settlement groups**
91 attendees
- ✓ **4 Volunteers**



Multicultural Child, Youth and Family Support

MCYF successfully supported 44 vulnerable CALD families experiencing issues such as financial difficulties, domestic violence, parental difficulties, relationship issues, lack of employment, mental health issues, cultural barriers, poverty and housing issues using a person-centred, strengths-based approach.

Key Facts

- ✓ 47 participants
- ✓ 2 Volunteers
- ✓ 4 Students

HIPPY

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) continued to provide a structured education-focused program to build the capacity and skills of parents and prepare children for school. Tutors delivered regular packs and instruction to parents and provided opportunities to meet in parks for playdates to reduce isolation.



Key Facts

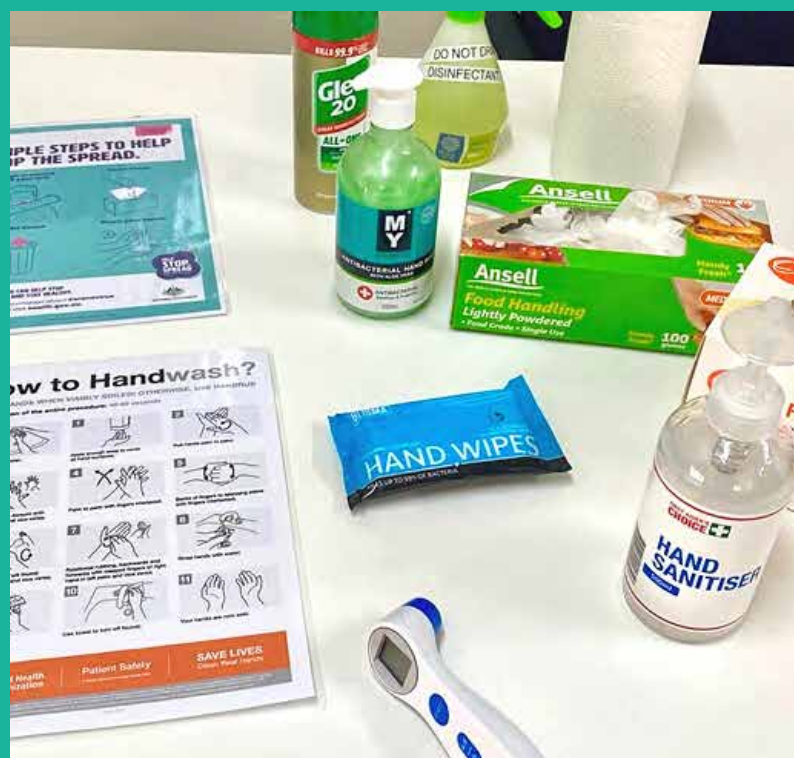
- ✓ 15 participants weekly
- ✓ 2 volunteers
- ✓ 8 students



Little Bookworm Playgroup

One of this year's highlights was the Christmas toy and food hamper deliveries for our vulnerable families in need. Seventy food hampers and one hundred toy hamper were delivered door to door in partnership with Claymore Child and Family Connect, Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed, Bradbury Tavern and Hillsong Church





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