



# Peppercorn

BRINGING THE HAWKESBURY TOGETHER

Celebrating 20 Years

**2021 Annual Report**





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Peppercorn Services Inc. acknowledges the Darug nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which our organisation operates. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and economic connections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the Land and Seas. We acknowledge that the dispossession of Country and the disruption to family relationships have resulted in a breakdown of social networks.

Peppercorn is committed to working in ways that support and empower Aboriginal people and their families and communities.

# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgement Of Country</b> .....	2
Contents.....	3
<b>Our Purpose</b> .....	4
<b>Chairperson's Report</b> .....	6
<b>Treasurer's Report</b> .....	8
<b>Audited Financial Report</b> .....	9
Our Funders .....	10
Statement of Comprehensive Income .....	11
Statement of Financial Position .....	12
Statement of Changes In Equity .....	13
Statement of Cash Flows .....	14
<b>Neera and Russell's Story</b> .....	16
<b>Executive Officer's Report</b> .....	18
<b>Children and Family Services</b> .....	20
Living In Communities-“LINCS” .....	20
Forgotten Valley Mobile Preschools.....	20
Family Support.....	21
<b>Community Aged Care Services</b> .....	22
Social Support and Meals .....	22
Lawn and Garden Maintenance .....	23
Community Transport.....	24
<b>Community Resilience Projects</b> .....	25
Flood Recovery Support Service .....	25
StreetConnect .....	26
SoDa: Hawkesbury Social Dance.....	27
Blokes of Tomorrow .....	28
<b>Our Board</b> .....	30
<b>Our People</b> .....	31
<b>Peppercorn's 20 Year Celebration</b> .....	33



## OUR PURPOSE

**To enrich lives  
through connections,  
partnerships and  
opportunities.**



***Peppercorn Strategy Planning February 2021***

*(L-R: Meagan Ang, Cheryl Feeney, Sharon Fisher, Rob Ewin, Dianne Pausey, Kate Tye, Mary Kinnon, Angela Maguire, John Baker, Khriste Toledo, Jessica Innes, Helen Colagiuri, Meigan Williams)*

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

We began our year on a great note, with the selection and appointment of Jessica Innes as our Executive Officer. Jess brings to us significant knowledge and experience in the social sector and is a highly motivated and driven leader. She also knows us well, having grown up in the Hawkesbury and still lives locally with her young family. Jess's positive impact in our community and her leadership contributions to Peppercorn have been outstanding over the past 12 months. Jess quickly stepped up and successfully navigated our responses during the flood in March and has since capably steered us through the COVID second wave challenges. She has also overseen an extensive review of our Governance processes, procedures and practices as well as our Human Resource processes and procedures. Thank you, Jessica, we are most grateful to have you as the leader of our business.

On behalf of our Board, I acknowledge the dedication and efforts of our Peppercorn team through another challenging year. While many of our core activities were placed on hold, our staff have had to adapt to working differently, with many working from home, and being asked to undertake tasks and activities outside of their normal duties, often at short notice. Thank you all for your hard work and persistence and for remaining focused on our clients and our community. We value you all, greatly.

At the time of writing, we are again reviewing and re-setting our Peppercorn Strategic Plan. It is essential that Peppercorn remains responsive and resilient to the constantly changing needs in our broader society and in our local community. We must resist the temptation to keep doing things the way we've always done them, just because we've always done them that way.

Constantly changing social and community needs are creating new opportunities for us in providing Disability Support Services, in providing In Home Aged Care Support Services, in how we deliver our Transport Services, and in how we deliver our Child and Family Services. In addition, we have significant regulatory change to accommodate arising from the recent Royal Commission into Aged Care and the current Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. We have also had to respond to substantial upgrading of childcare accreditation standards in Preschools by The Department of Education and we are currently assessing the implications of new accreditation guidelines for Community Transport operators, being phased in by Transport for NSW.

There is a lot of change to be considered, but there are also new opportunities for Peppercorn to take the lead on. We are hoping to have our new strategic plan finalised in the coming weeks.

The majority of our Board meetings have been held on Zoom this year. I thank our Board members for their contributions, their commitment and for their attendance at our monthly meetings. I extend a warm welcome to Mary Kinnon, who has joined our Board as Treasurer. As you will read in this Annual Report, we are in a strong financial position, despite the many curve balls we have had to deal with over the past 12 months. I know that Mary will ensure we maintain that position.

Finally, it is both a pleasure and privilege to be a member of the Peppercorn Board. I thank my fellow Board members for electing me as Board Chair and for your support and efforts over the past 12 months. Congratulations and thank you to Jessica and our wonderful Peppercorn team on your exemplary efforts and achievements in a most challenging and unpredictable year. I'm looking forward to working with you all again in the coming year.



**Rob Ewin**  
Chairperson  
Peppercorn Board of Governance

# TREASURER'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to present my first Treasurer's Report for the year ending 30th June 2021. Unexpected events, a second Covid lockdown and major flooding placed significant uncertainties and challenges on Peppercorn Services. Jessica Innes and her team, despite these adverse conditions, have shown great resilience in maintaining the organisations flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances.

Our income surplus of \$328,631 is the result of Peppercorn receiving Job Keeper \$564,950 and an ATO cash flow boost of \$50,000, with the expended funds used to maintain where possible the Fee Free care program at our pre-schools and other community programs.

Our Balance Sheet remains strong with a current ratio of 2.94 and with an operating cash flow ratio of 43% the organisation is doing a good job of managing its expenses.

Our annual accounts are audited by H.G. Khouri & Associates and are prepared in line with the Australian Charities and Not-For Profit Commission (ACNC) and are reported in the following pages.



**Mary Kinnon**  
Treasurer  
Peppercorn Board of Governance





# AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT

The Audited Financial Accounts of Peppercorn Services Incorporated for the financial year 2020-2021 are reported in the following pages.

Peppercorn's financial management systems operate in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and meet the reporting requirements of the relevant funding bodies. The chart of accounts is based on the Australian Government approved National Standard Chart of Accounts for reporting by not-for-profit organisations and is compliant with the guidelines set down by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC).

Peppercorn undertakes a strict financial auditing process utilising the expertise of HG Khouri & Associates, Certified Practicing Accountants. The audit is conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, which require that the auditors comply with ethical requirements and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement. The audit involves procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report.

Procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement and include the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. The audit also evaluates the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The Audited Financial Report is supplied to our funders and is lodged with the ACNC. An extract from the Audited Financial Statements is provided in this report. A copy of the complete Audited Financial Report including Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021 is available on request.

## OUR FUNDERS

Children and Family Services	<b>NSW Department of Communities and Justice</b> Targeted Early Intervention
	<b>NSW Department of Education</b> Forgotten Valley Mobile Preschools – Wisemans Ferry and South Maroota
	<b>Commonwealth Department of Social Services</b> LINCS Volunteer Family Support
Community Aged Care Services	<b>Department of Health: Commonwealth Home Support Program</b> Community Transport Lawns and Garden Maintenance Meals Social Groups Individual Support Dietetics
	<b>Commonwealth Department of Social Services</b> Community Visitors Scheme
Transport Services	<b>Transport for NSW</b> Access for people who are transport disadvantaged
	<b>NSW Health</b> Health Related Transport
Community Development and Recovery Services	<b>Wentworth Healthcare Limited</b> Blokes of Tomorrow
	<b>Resilience NSW</b> Flood Recovery Support Service Street Connect SoDa Hawkesbury Social Dance Events
	<b>Hawkesbury City Council</b> Person Centred Emergency Planning Learner Driver Program Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre

*Funding for Peppercorn Services Inc. has been provided by the Australian Government, the NSW Government and Hawkesbury City Council. The material contained in this report does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian or NSW Governments, or of Hawkesbury City Council.*

Peppercorn Services Inc.

ABN 34 611 224 255

# STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

for the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue	2	3,366,312	2,836,774
Employee expenses		(2,096,209)	(1,904,033)
Depreciation & impairment losses		(68,923)	(62,986)
Contractor expenses		(255,632)	(272,052)
Occupancy & Utilities		(178,376)	(167,465)
Insurance		(83,482)	(65,491)
Program expenses		(85,716)	(50,506)
Motor Vehicle		(71,806)	(73,007)
Communication & IT expenses		(75,618)	(95,128)
Other expenses		(121,919)	(82,784)
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the year</b>	3	<u>328,631</u>	<u>63,322</u>
<b>Other comprehensive Income after Income tax:</b>			
<b>Other comprehensive Income for the year, net of tax</b>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total comprehensive Income for the year</b>		<u>328,631</u>	<u>63,322</u>
Total comprehensive Income attributable to members of the entity		<u>328,631</u>	<u>63,322</u>

*A copy of the complete Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 is available on request.*



Peppercorn Services Inc.

ABN 34 611 224 255

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

for the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	5	2,519,710	1,890,895
Trade and other receivables	6	168,555	69,023
Deposits		177	177
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,688,442	1,960,095
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	7	151,927	187,973
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		151,927	187,973
TOTAL ASSETS		2,840,369	2,148,068
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	8	128,350	133,012
Employee benefits	9	95,262	79,732
Current tax liabilities	10	32,450	11,677
Unspent grant funds	11	82,634	297,581
Funds held for future service delivery	11	572,966	26,946
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		911,662	548,948
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Employee Benefits	9	160,500	159,544
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		160,500	159,544
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,072,162	708,492
NET ASSETS		1,768,207	1,439,576
<b>EQUITY</b>			
General reserves	12	583,377	583,377
Retained earnings		1,184,830	856,199
TOTAL EQUITY		1,768,207	1,439,576

A copy of the complete Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 is available on request.

Peppercorn Services Inc.

ABN 34 611 224 255

# STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

for the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Retained Earnings \$	Financial Assets Reserve \$	General Reserves \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>	792,877		583,377	1,376,254
<b>Comprehensive Income</b>				
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	63,322			63,322
Other comprehensive Income for the year				
<b>Total comprehensive Income</b>	63,322			63,322
Transfers to Reserves				
<b>Balance at 30 June 2020</b>	856,199		583,377	1,439,576
<b>Comprehensive Income</b>				
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	328,631			328,631
Other comprehensive Income for the year				
<b>Total comprehensive Income</b>	328,631			328,631
Transfers to Reserves				
<b>Balance at 30 June 2021</b>	1,184,830		583,377	1,768,207

*A copy of the complete Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 is available on request.*

Peppercorn Services Inc.

ABN 34 611 224 255

# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Cash receipts in course of operations		3,621,276	3,067,260
Cash payments in course of operations		(2,968,693)	(2,661,530)
		652,583	405,730
Interest received		9,109	23,857
<b>Net Cash generated from operating activities</b>	13	661,692	429,587
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Purchase of property, plant & equipment		(32,877)	(11,681)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant & equipment		0	0
		(32,877)	(11,681)
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		628,815	417,906
Cash at the beginning of the period		1,890,895	1,472,989
<b>Cash at the end of the period</b>	5	2,519,710	1,890,895
<b>RECONCILIATION OF CASH</b>			
Cash		1,133	1,109
Short term deposits		1,177,945	1,198,136
Cash at Bank		1,340,632	691,650
		2,519,710	1,890,895

*A copy of the complete Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 is available on request.*





***Community Transport bus being escorted by Fire and Rescue to assist residents impacted by flood***



***Peppercorn transport bus awaits NSW SES barge to pick up people crossing the river and collecting essential supplies***



***Peppercorn team joined with local agencies at the North Richmond flood evacuation centre***

# NEERA AND RUSSELL'S STORY

Prior to the flood on 21 March 2021, Neera and Russell were residents of the Windsor Riverside Caravan Park, situated on the Hawkesbury River, a little over five kilometres from Windsor. Residents were able to travel to Windsor via a bus service, which regularly stopped at the front of the caravan park.

Neera is a collector of St George Illawarra NRL memorabilia and had lived at the park for almost ten years. Her van was on a site close to the water's edge and kept a much-loved cat named Nina. "Life at the van park was quiet" Neera said. "It was quite restrictive as you couldn't make personal touches to your van or do any major work."

For over five years Russell lived in a van in the middle of the park with his dog, Boof. Russell also kept a number of blue tongue lizards and bearded dragons in large, safe habitats he had built that enabled them to roam.

Although Neera and Russell kept mostly to themselves, they had formed good friendships with some of the other long-term residents of the park. One couple had even giving Russell a female blue tongue lizard.

Neera explained "When the flood was happening, I didn't know what to do because I hadn't experienced a flood before". She added "Together Russell and I were listening to the news but we didn't expect the flood to be as quick as it was, or to go as high as it got. We didn't realise we had to get out until a resident went around telling everyone the river was going to flood and we had to get out. Evacuation was voluntary, so we decided to stay to protect our belongings until the SES mandated us to evacuate to higher ground."

Neera lost all of her possessions, including her NRL memorabilia, but she was grateful her cat, which had been her highest priority, had survived. Fortunately, Russell was able to save all of his possessions, including his much-loved Boof and his lizards. However, major damage to the park's common areas resulted in a public health order temporarily closing the park.

Peppercorn Community Transport stepped in to assist residents of the park as they gathered their pets and most precious belongings before heading, by boat then bus, to the evacuation centre at the Richmond Club.







Russell was particularly grateful to George, a driver with Peppercorn Community Transport, who understood Russell's concerns about not having food for the lizards and organised to collect some live crickets for the 'blueys' and meal worms for the bearded dragons on the way to the evacuation centre.

Neera said "After the evacuation of the van park we went to Richmond Club first and felt it would be best if we stayed together", with Russell adding "We really didn't want to leave the Hawkesbury. It's been our

home for so long, so it seemed sensible for us to pool our resources together".

The Public Health Order prevented Russell from returning to his van and Neera also required a new place to live, so for a period of time they stayed in temporary accommodation in Castle Hill until suitable longer-term accommodation could be found. Peppercorn's Flood Recovery Support Service assisted Russell and Neera with housing applications and, with the help of their friends from the caravan park and Peppercorn, they moved into a home in South Windsor. Neera's Peppercorn Recovery Support Worker, Trish, even got in touch with St George Leagues Club and a new membership and gift pack was sent to Neera's new home.

Russell later said "thanks to Peppercorn for getting us this place – it has turned us around. It's a lot better, but with this whole lockdown it's been tricky. But as my mate says, seeing what you have gone through, you always land on your bloody feet. We have Sam and Charlie up the road and every now and then we'll go out to the van park because we still have friends out there, but we haven't been able to do that because of the lockdown". Neera added "Although we moved, we still feel connected. The van park was its own little community, but there are more resources on this side and we are less likely to be cut off if it floods again. We'll continue to stay connected with the people from the van park as we like to support one another as a community".





# EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

As Peppercorn surpasses its 20<sup>th</sup> year of providing services to the Hawkesbury community, I am privileged to have been appointed Executive Officer and being entrusted to lead the organisation through its next chapter. Experiences over the past year have shown us to be an agile and responsive organisation, as too is the exceptional community we support. Insights into the future tell us we need to be vigilant and ready to meet the diverse and forever changing challenges that lie ahead.

Something that has inspired us all over the last year has been the way the Hawkesbury community supports one another in adverse times. There are countless stories of community members looking after one another, especially during testing times. Whether it be a neighbour who drops off essential supplies, the person behind a facemask who asks how you are or if you need assistance, or the volunteers who assist in the middle of a flood evacuation. The Hawkesbury is, indeed, a wonderful, supportive and close-knit community.

Despite the impact of COVID-19 and the necessity to adapt and modify services accordingly, Peppercorn's performance has remained on track and we have seen some areas of significant growth. We now offer Support Coordination under the National Disability Insurance Scheme and we've expanded our Commonwealth Home Support Service to increase senior transport services and commenced provision of dietetic services for seniors. In partnership with Hawkesbury City Council and the University of Sydney, we've implemented a Person-Centred Emergency Planning program to assist residents of the Hawkesbury to prepare for natural disasters and other emergencies. Grants were gratefully received from Resilience NSW for both our Flood Recovery Support Service and Hawkesbury Social Dances (SoDa).

In developing our strategy, from October 2020 through to February 2021, Peppercorn met with numerous local community members to listen to how they would like to see Peppercorn support them in future. My appreciation extends to everyone who provided feedback and guidance in forming our new purpose statement: *Enriching lives through connection, partnerships and opportunities*. Our focus on Peppercorn's purpose will shape our strategic plan due to be released in November 2021.

Not more than a week after our birthday celebrations, the Hawkesbury was impacted by yet another flood, however this time the impact on the region was significant with the loss of homes and prolonged disruption. I am extremely proud of our volunteers and staff who played an integral part in supporting those who were impacted by the floods. Whether it was providing transport, coordinating client medications, advocating for disability accessible temporary accommodation or simply having a conversation with a resident in an evacuation centre, everyone stepped up and

responded as needed. Our advocacy to improve the recovery journey for people displaced by floods resulted in Peppercorn providing intensive case management for many, including more than 80 residents who had been living at the Windsor Riverside Van Park. Our work to prepare and plan with the community for future adverse situations will remain our focus over the coming months.

This year, our Board and leadership team are continuing to review our services to align our strategy, systems and operations with consideration given to the reforms in the mobile preschools, community transport and community aged care. Narrowing our focus is a necessary for us to be able to meet the changing needs of the community, while remaining relevant and viable into the future.

Many wonderful things were achieved in what proved to be a challenging and unpredictable year thanks to the hard work of Peppercorn staff and volunteers who have worked incredibly hard to meet the needs of our clients. I am grateful to each of you for your hard work and contributions, all of which are testament to your resilience, values and dedication to the community. Thank you everyone for all you have achieved, for supporting one another and everything you continue to do for the Hawkesbury community.

I would also like to thank Peppercorn's Board for their commitment to the governance, management and strategic direction of our organisation and to all of the Board members for their unfailing support.

During the year ahead I look forward to leading Peppercorn Services to further strengthen and broaden its strategies to ensure our services are robust, vibrant and best able to adapt to meet the changing needs of the Hawkesbury community.



**Jessica Innes**  
Executive Officer



# CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

## LIVING IN COMMUNITIES - LINCS



During COVID-19 we observed an increase in communication and referrals from Hawkesbury Community Health. Due to COVID-19 restrictions home visits were limited however Peppercorn worked to ensure LINC families were able to continue accessing Activity Craft Packs, Walks & Talks and zoom sessions were arranged with volunteers.



Approximately half of the families participating in LINC have elected to participate in a parenting workshop, supported playgroup or other family support offered with Peppercorn.

## FORGOTTEN VALLEY MOBILE PRESCHOOLS



At preschool, we encourage learning experiences that extend on the children's interests, sharing ideas and exploring. Messy mud play, sensory shaving cream, recycled cardboard box cubbies and lots of experimenting continue to provide children with enjoyable experiences which heighten their imagination, creativity and investigating skills.



Educators have made significant improvements to the education curriculum, with new formats for children's portfolios and more regular reviews of their progress against the Early Years Learning Framework. We continue to advocate for improved internet access to be able to expand on our educational tools and resources, however this is, regrettably, an ongoing infrastructure concern for the region as a whole.





Our preschools have also been challenged with requirements of the National Quality Framework as we have been unsuccessful in recruiting suitably qualified Educators to some of those rural areas where our preschools operate.

The March flood required our preschools to close for a short term due to our Educators and several families being unable to access the centre until the flood water subsided.

## FAMILY SUPPORT



As a result of COVID-19 and flood, there has been a significant need for family support. In March, our family centre at South Windsor became the established Recovery Centre for the region which saw, for the first time, many families and their children present to our doors for assistance.



Our service received wonderful, positive feedback and a family kindly donated their unique painting, which now hangs in our centre, as a thank you.



*Mums and Bubs Graduation, March 2021*

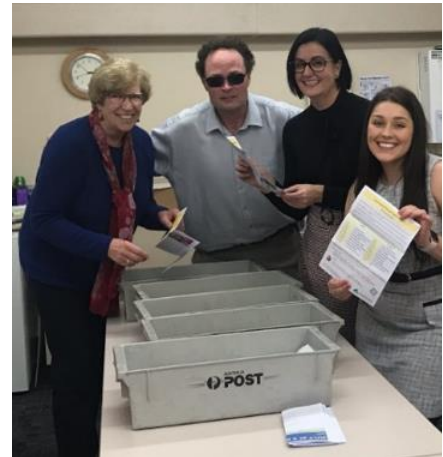
Again, due to COVID-19, for the majority of the year our playgroups were not able to run in person and were therefore offered online. Our team provided telephone support to families and delivered community activity craft packs while also providing online reading of books through social media. We look forward to play groups returning to normal and to welcoming everyone back.

# COMMUNITY AGED CARE SERVICES

## SOCIAL SUPPORT AND MEALS

The bushfires, floods and COVID-19 were a challenging time, especially for our clients who live independently. In light of those challenges we have worked even harder to proactively adapt and maintain social connections across the community.

During COVID-19 our clients appreciated fresh boxes of produce that we were able to provide with the support of a number of local businesses.



The connection we have with clients would not be possible without our amazing volunteers. As COVID-19 spread through our community, our volunteers teamed up to call clients to ensure they were safe and to offer assistance with groceries if required.

From September 2020, when restrictions began to ease, our activities were reignited and we were fortunate to have a Christmas celebration with our clients. A sincere appreciation to Good360 for the special and generous gifts they provided.



The Social Connections Team experienced a significant change during early 2021, with the appointments of Chantelle Jary and Rayne Young to the team. Together they have worked to update the newsletter, develop new programs and offer dietetic services with Rayna who is an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

While our outings have been limited throughout the year, we still managed to visit Sydney Zoo, The Gardens at East Gosford, Balmoral Beach and enjoy St Patrick's Day celebrations. Outings continue to be popular, with our clients enjoying the chance to explore the Greater Sydney area and the opportunity of new experiences.

We would like to thank our dedicated and caring volunteers for all their help this year. As COVID-19 eases in 2022 we look forward to offering a diverse and full range of new and interesting programs.







*Food Explorers 2021*



## LAWN AND GARDEN MAINTENANCE

This year was a bumper year for Peppercorn's Lawn and Garden service. The overall warm and wet weather ensured plenty of work for our contractors.

Over the course of the year, the program supported 495 clients across the Hawkesbury, Penrith and Blue Mountains local government areas with clients generally receiving 11 garden services each over the year, from 2 only up to 16 per household.

Besides lawn maintenance Peppercorn offers special cleanups including pressure washing paths, gutters cleared for single story dwellings and new client major works to prepare for ongoing maintenance.

## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Despite the rollercoaster of challenges we worked through, our community transport didn't stop providing its services. Although we continued to operate, due to COVID-19 our services were required to reduce passenger loads in our vehicles to just 25%.

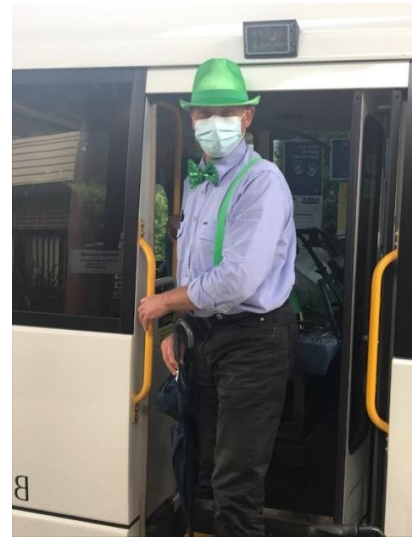
Nevertheless, we delivered 10,499 trips and travelled 258,088 kilometres throughout our local area and beyond. When permitted we continued to deliver social and meal outings.

We acknowledge the dedication and support of our transport volunteers and drivers, all of whom adapted to the changing environment and took each day as it came. We are grateful for your care and compassion that enables our residents to safely travel when and where they need.

We are also thankful to Hawkesbury Living Cancer Trust, Windsor Toyota and Specsavers Richmond for their donations that enable us to provide fee relief for people undergoing oncology treatment and for renal dialysis patients across the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. Thank you to each donor for your support in delivering these important support services to our local community.

The March floods divided the Hawkesbury by water, however our preplanning vehicle placement enabled us to assist the community on both sides of the flood plain. We worked to support the efforts to move residents and essentials workers such as doctors, nurses and pathologists across the Hawkesbury as well as medical supplies, medications, pets, food and other requirements. We ran regular services from North Richmond Community Centre down to the barges at the water's edge to get residents to urgent medical appointments and reconnected families and those who needed support.

COVID-19 meant we had to deliver our transport services quite differently and we had to dedicate sanitisation cleaning to each vehicle after use each day. We invested in intensive training on stopping the spread of COVID-19 and our drivers are well equipped with facemasks, disinfectant and hand sanitizer, continuing to work hard to keep our clients safe.



# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECTS

## FLOOD RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICE

The March 2021 floods had a devastating impact on many residents across the Hawkesbury, the Nepean and Hills regions. Peppercorn assisted those living in flood impacted homes to access support services, accommodation, counselling, financial support and essential supplies both during and after the flood.

Many residents of the Windsor Riverside Caravan Park were caught off guard and were impacted by the devastation left behind. In response, Peppercorn advocated for and assisted residents with their immediate and medium-term needs, specifically accommodation, replacing essentials, access to counselling and legal aid to navigate legal issues associated with the loss of their homes.

One of the concerns for residents was the displacement of their community and not being able to get in touch with one another. Having heard the residents' concerns, Peppercorn held a resident's lunch at the Masonic Hall in Windsor in May. The lunch, which was attended by agencies from across the Hawkesbury, provided residents with the opportunity to reconnect with one another and obtain information, advice and support.

Fourteen weeks after the flood, Peppercorn's Flood Recovery Service was continuing to actively support 73 residents, of which 44 benefited from our collaboration and networking with local housing providers and were offered long-term accommodation to begin their recovery journey. Our involvement with those residents went beyond their immediate housing needs and included assistance with removalists, refurbishing, access to transport, access to legal aid, counselling and advocacy.

Our work supporting flood impacted residents continues as we shift our focus to the medium to long term recovery support needs of the community. In doing so, we will continue to offer support to residents to develop an emergency plan to ensure they are better prepared and able to minimise the impact of future floods.

We sincerely thank all the agencies that partnered with the Peppercorn Flood Recovery Support Service to provide responsive and coordinated support to those impacted by floods, including:

- Resilience NSW
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Hawkesbury City Council
- NSW Housing: Nepean Blue Mountains
- Hawkesbury's Helping Hands
- GIVIT
- Goods360
- Legal Aid
- Link Wentworth Housing
- Infrastructure NSW
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District Mental Health service
- The Friendship Centre Counselling Service





## STREETCONNECT

StreetConnect aims to effect change through a community-led, assets-based community development approach by applying co-design principals with school students as researchers, learners and leaders. Its objective is to build stronger, more resilient communities that will be better connected, better prepared and recover more quickly from disasters.

In partnership with the StreetConnect working group, Peppercorn received funding from Resilience NSW to auspice phase two of the StreetConnect project.

The work of StreetConnect was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as students were transitioned to home schooling due to local school shutdowns. Opportunities to connect with the local community via face-to-face interactions also ceased for a period of time following advice from the local health authorities. The StreetConnect Working Group moved to fortnightly Zoom meetings as they collaborated on strategies in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the challenges of the flood, fires and the pandemic, the working group was able to progress with initiatives to engage and connect community, namely:

- The establishment, in partnership with Hawkesbury City Council, of the 'Hawkesbury Good Neighbour card' which was developed in hard and soft copy as a tool to help neighbours to connect and support one another
- An online forum which was established for resilience projects across the Hawkesbury to share information, network and collaborate, particularly where similar objectives were sought with regards to emergency preparedness and community connection
- Re-engagement of locally held community conversations

As StreetConnect draws to an end, The University of Sydney will complete their final action which comprises researching outlining key learnings and reporting on the challenges and outcomes of the project.



## **SODA: HAWKESBURY SOCIAL DANCE**

The SoDa (Social & Dance) project was funded by Resilience NSW in May 2021 under the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (BCRRF). The concept for the submission was born from collaboration with members of the community who had been impacted by bushfires and their ideas to foster connection, support social recovery and build community resilience across bushfire impacted areas of the Hawkesbury.

Dance has been central to community and celebration of life throughout history. Through movement and social connection, energy and wellbeing are generated. Dance bridges the gap and allows people of all ages and from all walks of life come together for the same reason: for social interaction that enables them to enjoy themselves and to feel good. Dance is a mindfulness practice: through focusing on movement, all worries, and troubles fade away in that moment. This can be deeply healing over time. SoDa aims to bring people in socially isolated and challenged by geographical distance, back to music and social dancing as a vehicle to community wellbeing; where people can come together, connect with each other and to get the support they need to recover; and where people have fun and leave events feeling better than when they arrived.

SoDa explores community-led social engagement opportunities with rural communities of the Hawkesbury and focuses on connecting through social gathering, partner dancing and access to psychological support. The project has an advisory group, comprising key stakeholders and bushfire affected community members, which was established to inform the development of the project and determine how it will evolve over time.

During COVID-19, events ran online. When restrictions allow, SoDa events will be hosted in local community halls of Colo Heights, Bilpin, St Albans and Richmond.

# BLOKES OF TOMORROW

## BLOKES OF TOMORROW



*Tomorrow Man facilitator Matt with  
RUOK Hawkesbury Ambassador Chief Inspector Garry Sims*

Blokes of Tomorrow was a short-term project funded by Wentworth Healthcare Limited to offer men to attend workshops facilitated by Tomorrow Man with the aim of connecting, talking and breaking down the stigma associated with mental health. The project ran workshops in St Albans, Bilpin, Blaxland's Ridge and Richmond with 79 men from across the Hawkesbury attending. Feedback from all participants was outstanding with significant interest in more workshops being held on a routine basis, so we will be looking into how we can make this happen in the future.

We are grateful to Tomorrow Man and Chief Inspector Garry Sims for their help in bringing this program into the rural communities of the Hawkesbury.



*Blokes of Tomorrow Blaxland's Ridge*





*Blokes of Tomorrow Bilpin*



*Blokes of Tomorrow St Albans*

# OUR BOARD

Board Members as of June 30, 2021



**Rob Ewin**  
Chair  
Community Representative



**Clr. Emma-Jane Garrow**  
Hawkesbury City Council  
Councilor Representative



**Angela Maguire**  
Vice Chair  
Chair Audit and Risk  
Subcommittee  
Community Representative



**Cheryl Feeney**  
Hawkesbury District Health  
Service Representative



**Mary Kinnon**  
Treasurer  
Community Representative



**Kate Tye**  
Wentworth Primary Health  
Network Representative



**Meagan Ang**  
Secretary  
Public Officer  
Hawkesbury City Council  
Representative



**John Baker**  
Community Representative



**Amy Bond**  
Hawkesbury City Council  
Representative



**Helen Colagiuri**  
Community Representative



# OUR PEOPLE

Peppercorn is committed to creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. We know this will position us to deliver the highest possible services to our clients.

Peppercorn considers people to be our most important Asset. As we continue to grow our operations, we remain committed to investing in our people.

10

Board Members

19

Volunteers

43

Current Employees



**Over 40,000 paid hours worked**

**Over 3,400 volunteer hours worked**

**335 years of combined service**

## Significant Milestones with Us

Wendy Weibye - 35 years

Kevin Ewer - 25 years

Sharon Fisher - 10 years

John Irving - 10 years

Gail Pausey – 5 years



***RUOK? Day September 2020***





## PEPPERCORN'S 20 YEAR CELEBRATION





# Peppercorn

BRINGING THE HAWKESBURY TOGETHER

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