



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

**communities
atwork**



To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways



Integrity | Respect for all | Progressive Quality and Innovation | Sustainability



To be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardships, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive and social change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Communities at Work acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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A photograph showing several people, mostly young adults and one older woman, working together in what appears to be a community service or charity shop. They are wearing matching black polo shirts with orange stripes on the sleeves and a small logo. One woman in a pink sweater is smiling at the camera. The background shows shelves of clothes and a counter area.

OUR ORGANISATION

CANBERRA'S LARGEST COMMUNITY ORGANISATION





BOARD CHAIR ALAN GREENSLADE

The year in review was, again, anything but a normal year, with much of our lives affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities at Work has been proud to play a leading role in supporting the ACT community throughout the pandemic. As Canberra's largest not-for-profit community organisation, we have an important role in protecting and supporting Canberra's most vulnerable. This is at the heart of what we do.

Throughout 2020–2021 we kept our children's services open during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, supporting families who couldn't work from home. We also assisted families by freezing fees across our children's services to help maintain access to crucial early childhood education and care services for their children in difficult times.

In response to the circumstances of this year, we have also expanded and adapted our support services, including expanding community food pantries, providing an improved experience for our clients. We also partnered with the ACT Government and several community organisations to provide food hampers to vulnerable Canberrans during the pandemic.

It has also been a time of strengthening our working with others, and there are many examples in this report. They include new partnerships with community service providers such as Orange Sky, Roundabout and Legal Aid ACT. We have also increased our community development work through initiatives that encourage long term connections, including working with Capital Estate Developments and residents of the emerging community of Denman Prospect.

It was also a pleasure to see our plans for Galilee School come to fruition. We welcomed our first students into the Galilee Senior Secondary College at the start of 2021, which will provide opportunities for students struggling in mainstream schools to attain their Year 12 certificate. We are also undertaking major capital works at the school to support its growth and expand the learning and recreational opportunities for students.

Our commitment to quality continues to underpin much of what we do. It is encouraging that our delivery of high-quality services to the region and attention to training and development continues to be recognised, including at the ACT Training Awards. For the third year running, Communities at Work has been the ACT Large Employer of the Year.

Reflecting this commitment to excellence in training and development, we have joined with the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia and other organisations in a national recruitment campaign encouraging access to training for individuals interested in working in the sector.

All that Communities at Work achieves could not be possible without the many people who contribute to our work, not the least our amazing employees and wonderful volunteers, led by our CEO Lee Maiden.

I would also like to thank my Board colleagues for their professionalism, skills and passion in guiding our contributions to the Canberra community. I would particularly like to acknowledge our Board Deputy Chair, Brian Babington, who became a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2021 Queen's Birthday honours for his work in supporting vulnerable children.

Finally, we are grateful for the substantial support that we receive from the Australian and ACT Governments, businesses, community organisations, sporting groups, schools and individuals.

I look forward to Communities at Work continuing to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ALAN GREENSLADE".



MEET OUR BOARD

Communities at Work is a public company limited by guarantee and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

Alan Greenslade | Chair

Alan has extensive experience in leading financial management and governance roles in the public and private sector, including the Department of Finance.

Dr Brian Babington AM | Deputy Chair

Brian has been the CEO of Families Australia since 2005 and played a leading role in developing Australia's first ever plan to address child abuse and neglect.

Andrew Snaidero | Treasurer

Andrew has been partner of Hardwickes since 2013, with vast experience in finance, auditing, reporting and governance.

Karen Curtis | Director

Karen was the inaugural CEO of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), and has strong governance, change management, service delivery, regulatory policy, representational and media advocacy skills.

Bernice Ellis | Director

Bernice is a partner in a national law firm, specialising in commercial litigation and insolvency. She has a background in tax and commerce, and is a board member of a Canberra disability support-service provider.

John Runko | Director

John is CEO of the Independent Property Group and has been involved in most facets of the property industry in Canberra over the past 30 years.

James Selkirk | Director

James is a qualified Chartered Accountant with over 20 years' experience and is currently the Chief Financial Officer at Canberra Data Centres.

Joanne Garrison | Director

Joanne has led and influenced significant education reforms in her many and various roles within the ACT Education Directorate, and currently works for the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER LEE MAIDEN

As I look back on my previous report, the reflections were the difficult times we had endured with bushfires, storms and the early stages of the pandemic. The last twelve months have been less traumatic particularly as the ACT did not have to endure the strict lockdowns and restrictions. However, for many vulnerable people in our community life became a whole lot harder. If there was ever a time we needed to step up and support our community it was in 2020–2021, and we were ready, willing and able.

This support included, amongst many other things, our transport drivers' continuing service throughout the year to ensure clients could still get to their medical appointments.

Due to the impact of the previous year on those vulnerable in our community we anticipated an increased demand for food and support. In preparation we relocated our pantries to larger spaces at both Gungahlin and Tuggeranong, to ensure we were prepared. The relocation allowed us to support more clients with a wider range of options including extra precooked meals, a better variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, larger supplies of food and a comfortable and respectful area to provide crisis support for clients.

It was so wonderful to see 2021 start in a much better way than the bushfires of 2020. To celebrate the wonderful commitment of our educators during the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020, we presented them with certificates of appreciation along with a letter from Minister Berry who also acknowledged their commitment. It was important that we say a big thank you to all our staff, and we did so with a delicious box of KOKO Black chocolates for them all.

There were also many great achievements during 2020– 2021 one of which was the opening of the senior secondary campus of the Galilee School in February 2021. This campus is initially supporting Year 11 students who started with us in 2021 and will then give us the capacity to deliver Year 12 in 2022.

We undertook a strategic review of our HR functions which resulted in enhanced provision of HR services. We also decided to change the name to the People, Culture and Wellness team to better reflect the functions required to support the organisation.

We undertook our first Disability audit when mandated reforms in the Disability Sector required Communities at Work to apply to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to re-register as an NDIS provider. This was a welcome opportunity to ensure we provided the best services for our clients.

We had a successful Christmas appeal in 2020 due to the incredible generosity of the Canberra community. There were more than 1000 hampers handed out during December and 1100 people receiving gifts to put under their trees. We received many gift cards and those left over went towards purchasing school uniforms and supplies.

With all of the events of the past few years, testing us all at every level, our resilience and commitment to providing the Canberra community with the care and respect they deserve did not relent. Year after year I commend all of our staff and volunteers for the hard work and loyalty and this year is no different, thank you to you all. The Board have also given more than ever before and I thank them so much for their contribution and commitment.

I am proud of what Communities at Work has achieved, and I sincerely thank everyone who has been involved in the incredibly important work we do.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee Maiden".

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN | 2019–2022



PURPOSE

Communities at Work's purpose is to be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardship, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive social change.



MISSION

To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways.



VALUES

INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest standards of integrity in all our actions.

RESPECT FOR ALL

We respect everyone, and value difference and diversity.

PROGRESSIVE

We are adaptive and agile in pursuing the mission of Communities@Work, with a proactive approach to change and progress.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

We are committed to excellent service delivery, underpinned by continuous quality improvement.

SUSTAINABILITY

We ensure our services are relevant and appropriate as we build our capacity for a sustainable future.

Our Strategic GOALS

Strategies to ACHIEVE the Goals

SUCCESS Measures



Our Clients and Services

Expand our footprint with increased services that reach a wider section of the community.

Create positive social impact in our community and measure how social change has occurred.

We will participate in research and activities that guide the development and evaluation of programs to ensure our client journey is efficient, seamless, appropriate and positive.

We will focus on positive social change with ideas and actions that are driven by everyday life issues.

Feedback from clients indicates life changing outcomes have resulted from their interaction with our organisation.



Our People

Attract, develop and retain people who contribute to the organisation's exceptional culture.

Our people are engaged and passionate about what we do and those we serve and demonstrate exceptional practice.

We will develop a workforce strategy to help meet desired goals, maintain long-term success and prepare for the future of our workforce.

We will measure and improve our employee satisfaction and clearly demonstrate our values to staff and volunteers.

We have a high retention of employees and positive feedback from satisfaction surveys.



Organisational Excellence

To secure a prudent and profitable financial base to adapt to market changes and reinvest to improve the lives of people in the community.

To exceed all standards set in the quality and regulatory frameworks that underpin our operations.

We will identify and pursue business and enterprise development opportunities and make sound financial decisions.

We will continue to roll out our internal audit process across the organisation.

We will engage and collaborate with the community, the sector and government to better serve the region and our clients.

We have made a positive contribution to the community and have evidence to demonstrate the impact.



WHAT WE DO

Communities at Work is the largest provider of children's services in the ACT and the largest not-for-profit organisation in the region, with a proud 43 year history. We provide a range of complementary community services and pride ourselves on the positive contribution we make to the lives of members of our community.

We employ 669 employees across six program areas, engage 97 self-employed Family Day Care and In-Home Educators and harness the passionate commitment of more than 100 volunteers to help us carry out our mission of enriching the lives of people in our community in life changing ways.



CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We are recognised as a leader within the early education and care sector, committed to providing quality education for children. We do this through 12 Early Education and Care centres, 17 Out of School Hours Care services, 13 School Holiday Programs and 97 Family Day Care and In-Home Care educators.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR SERVICES

We provide community transport, support coordination, in-home services for seniors and recreational and skills development programs for seniors and people living with disability. This allows them to stay socially engaged and enables them to access health services and participate in community activities so they maintain their independence and wellbeing.

GALILEE SCHOOL

We run a registered, independent secondary school designed specifically for disengaged and vulnerable young people in Years 7-12 who have yet to succeed in mainstream schooling. We support students to re-engage with their education, families and community, transition into the workforce or further study, find a sense of purpose.

CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Our registered training organisation specialises in delivering a nationally recognised Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, a Certificate III in Business Administration and ongoing professional development for the education and care sector.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERING

We provide essential community support such as food, clothing and accommodation to vulnerable and disadvantaged people. We have two community pantries, a clothing program, a pre-loved clothing store and seven transitional housing sites.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We partner with communities, individuals, agencies, local government and business to implement a range of community-inspired initiatives to develop more connected communities.



PROGRAM SNAPSHOTS





4,354 CHILDREN

ATTENDED OUR 17 OUT
OF SCHOOL HOURS
CARE SERVICES

1,086 CHILDREN

ATTENDED OUR 12
EARLY EDUCATION
AND CARE CENTRES

524 CHILDREN

ATTENDED OUR FAMILY
DAY CARE & IN-HOME
CARE SERVICES

3,594 CHILDREN

ATTENDED OUR 12
SCHOOL HOLIDAY
PROGRAMS

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

As the largest provider of children's services in the ACT, Communities at Work is a recognised leader, committed to providing the highest quality education and care through Early Education and Care centres, Out of School Hours Care services (OSHC), School Holiday Programs and Family Day Care and In-Home Care services.

Improving Our Services

Throughout 2020–2021 we kept all our children's services open during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions to provide education and care for children, supporting families who couldn't work from home. We updated staffroom spaces, provided lunches and morning teas and celebrated our educational teams to boost morale.

Recognising Excellence

Our families recognised the valuable work of our educators and coordination team with numerous nominations at the 2020 Family Day Care Excellence Awards. We were very proud when two of our educators won the ACT Regional Awards, while another was nominated for the NSW Local Business Awards for her advocacy work in her local Googong community.

Training Our Team

Our educators participated in a wide range of professional development sessions, which enabled them to broaden their knowledge, reflect on professional practices and create professional dialogue. For instance, our entire team at Abacus engaged in a social-emotional learning program called Conscious Discipline, while educators at Ngunnawal learnt carpentry skills and team-building strategies in a Pallet to Play workshop to identify and build appropriate educational resources. Our Children's Services Educational Leaders met monthly to share successes and challenges and create a professional network of leaders of our practice and pedagogy.



AWARD-WINNING EDUCATORS

A passionate focus on relationships, personal touches, and diverse and innovative play-based learning programs is the reason why two of Communities at Work's Family Day Care educators, Ayesha Durrani and Deborah Blomeley, won the Regional Educator Awards at the 2020 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards, and another educator, Skye Cabrera, was named as a finalist in the NSW Local Business Awards.

Our educators go above and beyond to create tailored and engaging programs for the children in their care, and are always looking for new learning opportunities. They credit part of their business success to the partnership with Communities at Work's Family Day Coordination Unit team, who support almost 100 educators in the operations of their family day care business.

Supporting Our Community

Supporting people in need is a significant value we instil in the children in our care, and we actively encourage them to develop and lead community activities to broaden their awareness and global citizenry.

For instance, OSHC children, families and staff collected gifts and food for our Christmas Appeal and community pantries, made animals toys for the RSPCA, learned to knit squares to make warm blankets for the homeless, and held numerous charity fundraisers throughout the year, such as Red Nose Day (where four OSCH services together raised \$1,900).

We provided early education and care to vulnerable families through the Children's Services Program (Emergency Care) and through partnering with the ACT Government to deliver the Three-Year-Old Initiative.

Our educators frequently role-model our values of respect and integrity through their charity work. One Family Day Care educator raised money for disadvantaged First Nations children and their families, while others coordinated donations for our Christmas Appeal and pantries, teaching children about the importance of making a difference in our community.

Improving Mental Wellbeing

A large focus of our OSCH programming was on creating resources and spaces to improve the mental wellbeing of our children. Wellbeing mascots Kirk the Koala and Quinton the Quokka were a huge success. These stuffed toys visited our OSCH services and taught children about emotional recognition and coping strategies, while our new mindfulness and wellbeing rooms, with sensory resources and soft furnishings, provided children with a safe and quiet space to rest, relax and regulate their emotions.

Many of our educators were also able to better assist children needing additional support through training around trauma, anxiety and mental wellbeing.



IMPROVING SAFETY PROCESSES

As part of our improvements to first aid processes within our OSCH services to enhance the wellbeing provided to children, we introduced high visibility first aid vests for our OSCH first aid officers. By having our designated First Aid Officers more visible, the children can more easily identify who to approach to receive care for little incidents that need immediate yet minor attention.

We also set up designated "First Aid Stations" to help children feel supported and comforted when they are more seriously injured or ill. These areas provide the children with the care and attention they need, as well as a safe place to rest until their family arrives. We even 'enlisted' our wellbeing mascot Kirk the Koala to show the children how to perform CPR.



9,569 CHILDREN 45 EDUCATORS

**IN TOTAL ATTENDED OUR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**AND UP TO 180 CHILDREN ATTENDED
PLAYGROUPS EACH WEEK**

524 CHILDREN

**FROM 301 FAMILIES
ACCESSED FAMILY
DAY CARE**

11 CHILDREN

**ACCESSED
IN-HOME CARE**

97 EDUCATORS

**PROVIDED FAMILY DAY CARE
& 11 EDUCATORS PROVIDED
IN-HOME CARE**



BUILDING OUR OWN RECYCLED RESOURCES

Our Ngunnawal Child Care and Education Centre educators drilled, sawed and nailed their way through an inspiring building workshop run by Aaron Knudsen and his Canberra-based Pallet to Play program. Along with picking up new skills, our educators had fun exploring ways to use reclaimed and recycled resources to create amazing early childhood learning environments. They were tickled pink with their finished products – a mud kitchen stove and sink and a wooden boat – and so were our families, who gave us lovely feedback, impressed with how the children extended their learning through these new items.

Connecting with our Community

We provided a variety of opportunities for children to connect with their local community and develop a sense of belonging, including:

PUBLIC SONG AND DANCE PERFORMANCES



To build children's confidence in public

INTERGENERATIONAL PEN PAL PROGRAM



To enhance social connections

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL EVENTS



To build school relationships

WORK EXPERIENCE FOR SENIOR COLLEGE STUDENTS



To create career paths

SPORTS CLINICS WITH THE ACT BRUMBIES



To encourage physical exercise

BREEDING TADPOLES WITH ICON WATER



To learn about healthy water catchments

ACT LIBRARIES MYSTERY BOX DELIVERIES



To encourage reading and writing

OUTINGS AROUND THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY



To enhance a sense of belonging

"WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE" WORKSHOP



To learn how the body works

Becoming More Sustainable

We developed sustainability plans for our centres, encouraged children to adopt the sustainable practices they learned at both our centres and home and expanded their learning through hands-on engagement in awareness days like Clean Up Days and World Environment Day.

All our OSHC services took part in our Youth Advisory Board's Sustainability Challenge to 'build our future' using recycled materials collected from families and local businesses – a fun way to learn about sustainability. We encouraged our families to continue to bring recyclable materials into services for children to fuel their imaginations and create wonderful projects using material which will otherwise go wasted.

Our kitchen and outdoor playgroups taught children to care for their environment through practical on-site engagement. In the kitchen playgroup, children learned to grow vegetables, herbs and bush Tucker at the Erindale Community Garden and used the fresh produce to make their morning teas. Each week our outdoor playgroup explored Canberra's nature sites, developing children's love and respect for the outdoors.

Celebrating All Cultures

To create a sense of belonging and respect for the many diverse cultures of our children, staff and families, we shared each other's cultures through celebrations of key cultural events, music, song, dance, food, art, stories, games and costumes. The children also enjoyed sharing family photos and stories.

Our playgroups engaged in learning about First Nations' culture through weaving, gardening, animal tracks, art, music, dance, storytelling, bush Tucker workshops and visits to Reconciliation Place and the First Nations exhibition at the National Museum of Australia.

GALILEE SCHOOL

Our school is a registered, independent secondary school designed specifically for disengaged and vulnerable young people who have yet to succeed in mainstream schooling. We support them to re-engage with their education and community, transition into the workforce or further study, and find a sense of purpose.

Expanding Our Services

In February 2021, we opened our Senior Secondary College, with our first cohort of 20 Year 11 students, enabling young people to continue on their pathways of success within the school and attain their ACT Senior Secondary (Year 12) Certificate.

The College forms part of our major capital works building program across both campuses, thanks to grant funding from the Australian and ACT Governments.

Innovative Education

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, we transitioned teaching and student support to our Remote Learning and Support Model incorporating Zoom and Google Classrooms lessons, weekly deliveries of learning packs and folders of activities, online boot camps, and one-on-one Learning Coaches. This allowed us to continue providing flexible, responsive and individualised teaching support.

Other successful learning initiatives included the Rainbow Paws Reading Dawgz program, 'This is Canberra' weekly excursions to places of interest, a graffiti street art project at Weston Skatepark, and 'Student Led' Classes for leadership development.

Career Development

We offered students a variety of opportunities to prepare them to transition into the workforce or further study. These included barista and customer service skills at CIT, Building and Construction Industry White Card and Asbestos Awareness training with CIT, work experience across Canberra, and the Australian Training Company's 'Women in Construction Pathways' program.

Promoting Mental Wellbeing

Given the life challenges faced by our students, strengthening their mental wellbeing was a very strong focus of our school. Initiatives included once-a-term Gratitude Week, weekly 'shared meals' with staff and students to give students a sense of belonging and friendship, once a term 'phone free weeks' to promote positive engagement with technology, physical activity, healthier relationships, and programs such as Love Bites, The Push-Up Challenge and It's Your Move.

We also launched our quarterly 'In The Know' information sessions for parents and carers to better understand and deal with contemporary challenges affecting young people today.

ENHANCING READING SKILLS WITH DAWGZ

Through a collaborative partnership with the animal charity Rainbow Paws, Galilee School developed a new program to increase student engagement in reading, where students read aloud to trained therapy dogs in quiet and welcoming surroundings. The Reading Dawgz program led to increased student attendance at English classes and improved their reading skills and self-confidence, while encouraging a life-long affection for animals. Due to the program's popularity and a Federal Government grant, the program now has four dogs (Tilly, Seeker, Robbie and Dougal) and has expanded from one to three mornings a week.



A close-up photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue zip-up hoodie and a necklace with a small pendant. Her hands are visible, holding a large tray filled with various fruits like grapes, orange slices, and berries.

22 STUDENTS

GRADUATED FROM YEAR 10 IN 2020,
OUR HIGHEST GRADUATING COHORT

2019

40 TOTAL
ENROLMENTS

2020

55 TOTAL
ENROLMENTS

2021

69 TOTAL
ENROLMENTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our community development program has a focus on connecting communities, which they do in a variety of ways. By bringing community together it encourages long term meaningful connections to take place, and in many ways the program opens the door for our organisation to form new partnerships within our community and expand on our positive social impact.

Connecting Community

We partnered with the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate to support those living in Housing ACT Aged Person Units and helped them stay connected during COVID-19. We brought some colour and joy to residents through garden beautification projects at each complex, as well as by giving residents pots of flowers for their own gardens. We also worked closely with residents to do some placemaking, enabling them to create spaces that they could better utilise and enjoy. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach for creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

We continued to support the Tuggeranong Valley Women's Neighbourhood Group as they settled into a new meeting space and gained more independence.

We also supported our Communities at Work community, whether by hosting a morning tea for staff during Reconciliation Week, helping in the community pantries during lockdown, assisting in collecting and sorting Christmas donations, or assembling gift bags for community festivals to promote our Children's Services.

Helping New Community Groups

A key part of this program is to work closely with community to help them develop and implement their ideas. This year, for instance, we supported the development of the Tuggeranong Repair Café, Pay What You Can Afford Yoga classes, and a mountain bike riders' group.

We also worked with Capital Estate Developments (CED) and residents of the new and emerging community of Denman Prospect, focusing on building their connections to community and their new environment. We assisted CED to distribute Welcome Packs, and assisted residents to develop community playgroups, a Community Action Group and a community mowing group.

It's The Little Things

It's not always the bigger initiatives that count the most. Our community development team provide richness to what we do within Communities at Work, often through simple actions which bring joy to people's lives, such as adding beautifully wrapped mystery books, plant cuttings or recipes to our pantry clients' shopping bags, or calling residents of Aged Persons Units to check in with them and lend a hand where needed.



INFUSION – CONVERSATIONS THAT COUNT

One of our most exciting initiatives this year was the launch of our mobile morning tea van '*Infusion – Conversations that Count*'. This initiative has given the program capacity to be out in the community more, hearing and capturing community ideas and feedback on what is important to people in their local areas and sharing information on activities, events and programs. Just as importantly, we were able to create an informal and relaxing environment where neighbourhoods came together to chat over a simple morning tea.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHARED INFORMATION AT INFUSION

52% COLLABORATION,
27% STORYTELLING & 22% FEEDBACK

**13 INFUSION MOBILE
MORNING TEAS**

AT SIX SITES THROUGHOUT
TUGGERANONG

**96 VISITS
& 21 DOGS**

AN AVERAGE OF 7.4 PEOPLE
ATTENDED EACH MORNING TEA



BEST DRESSED STORE

7,500 ITEMS OF CLOTHING

RECYCLED AND SAVED FROM LANDFILL

*STORE ONLY OPEN FOR 7 MONTHS DUE TO COVID-19

CRISIS SUPPORT

2,379 TIMES

690 INDIVIDUALS OR
GROUPS HELPED

WHAT OUR CLOTHES ARE USED FOR

83%

INTERVIEWS

10%

STARTING
A JOB

2%

COURT
APPEARANCES

5%

OTHER
(FUNERALS, EVENTS
AND GRADUATIONS)

REACH HOME PROGRAM

**PROVIDED 11,728 NIGHTS
OF ACCOMMODATION**

TO 43 ADULTS AND CHILDREN
FACING HOMELESSNESS

283

HOME VISITS

AND COMMUNITY VISITS TO
OUR REACH HOME CLIENTS

SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERING

This program provides essential community support such as food, clothing and accommodation to vulnerable and disadvantaged people. We do this through our two community pantries, a clothing program, a pre-loved clothing store for quality work wear, and a transitional housing program for people facing or likely to face homelessness.

Community Pantries

To expand our services to clients, we developed new partnerships with Legal Aid ACT, mobile laundry service Orange Sky, and preloved children's clothing provider Roundabout. We also welcomed two chefs to our team to cook nutritious meals for our children's centres and community pantries.

In partnership with the Federal Government, we provided a range of bushfire relief support to those affected by the 2020 bushfires and raised awareness of our support services, resulting in a 25% increase in government and community partner enquiries and engagement with our programs and external supports.

Best Dressed Store and Clothing

Thanks to the support of South.Point in Greenway, the Best Dressed Store was able to operate out of the shopping centre, providing the public and clients easy access to its quality preloved work wear and accessories. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and relocation to a smaller retail space, the shop only operated for seven months, reducing its donation intake, sales, and ability to help those in need.

Luckily, our clothing program was still able to supply clothes to vulnerable people during COVID-19 lockdown.

Volunteers

Our committed team of 115 volunteers generously donated their time and energy all year round to help us deliver important services to the community through seven programs across our organisation. The relationships they forged with our clients was important to all involved, and the familiar faces and expectations made accessing support much easier for clients. Unfortunately, during COVID-19 lockdown, volunteering had to be suspended due to government restrictions and safety concerns for volunteers and clients.

Accommodation

Through our Reach Home program, we provide medium-term transitional housing and case management to individuals and families who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. We meet weekly with families to support and assist them in accessing long term housing solutions. Last year we helped 100% of families meet their long term housing goals.

During COVID-19 lockdown, we supported these families to access the community pantry and Canberra Relief Network food supplies, and suspended their subsidised rent.

411

Christmas hampers given to visitors through our Christmas Caves

2,634

Canberra Relief Network food hampers given to people in need during COVID-19

87 PALLETS OF FOOD

delivered by Foodbank to our pantries between November 2020 – June 2021

**6,033
TIMES**

people accessed our pantries

SENIORS AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Our Disability and Seniors services enabled clients to improve their life skills, learn new skills, maintain their independence, and stay connected to their family, friends, and community. Our programs resulted in better health outcomes, fewer hospitalisations, reduced carer stress, increased independence, and reduced premature admission to residential care.

Community Engagement

Our seniors enjoyed diverse and engaging activities, including exercise, music, arts and crafts, armchair travel, cultural-themed days, virtual visits to the Tokyo Olympics and more. From local picnics to café and landmark visits, there were plenty of COVID-safe excursions, and the extension of our intergenerational program at our Ngunnawal centre kept our seniors connected and engaged. Our community transport enabled clients and carers to get to medical appointments, essential shopping and social activities they may otherwise not have gotten to, ensuring they stayed connected to their community.

Sustainability

Our disability clients learned about sustainability practices through planning an outdoor garden and growing seasonal vegetables that they harvested for cooking. They also had fun participating in our Youth Advisory Board's Sustainability Challenge, winning second prize by using recycled materials to create a model of what sustainability meant to them and why it was important to nurture the land and waterways.

Skill Development

With the help of staff, our disability clients created mosaic pieces to beautify their new outdoor courtyard, and later created a stunning Sorry Day artwork to remind everyone to live, play and work together in harmony. Our Southern Hub disability clients also launched their Small Talk Café project, with one of our Adults Group clients using his barista skills to run a workshop to train other clients.

Independence

Our In-Home Services allowed seniors to maintain their independence by providing assistance with domestic and personal care tasks and with individual social support. Our support coordination team helped clients to implement their NDIS plans to make the most of their funding, navigate My Aged Care and link clients to relevant services that supported them to remain independent in their own homes. Our World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Expo and Forum, supported by the Office for Seniors & Veterans and COTA, proved a success with the event promoting awareness of this abuse, and encouraging seniors to connect to available support that can help them be more independent and free of abuse.



FOSTERING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

After our Disability Programs Southern Hub received a donation of a coffee machine and some beans, Michael (Mikey), a client from the Adults Group, developed a plan to establish a 'Small Talk Café' for the Hub. He volunteered to be the first one to do the barista role and, in conjunction with staff, ran a workshop for his fellow group members on how to make a coffee using the machine.

The cafe has become a scheduled activity for the Adults and Young Adults clients and operates through gold coin donations. The project has been a wonderful team-building opportunity as well as providing Michael, as leader of the project, with valuable leadership and team management skills.



22,230 TRIPS

TO DRIVE 1,149 PEOPLE
TO MEDICAL AND SOCIAL
APPOINTMENTS

4,560 HRS

OF GROUP BASED SOCIAL
SUPPORT TO 134 CLIENTS
(NOTE: this is much lower than usual
due to the impact of COVID-19)

5,465 HRS

OF DOMESTIC
ASSISTANCE TO
156 CLIENTS

2,012 HRS

OF INDIVIDUAL
SOCIAL SUPPORT
TO 201 CLIENTS

152 HRS

OF PERSONAL
CARE TO ONE
CLIENT

952 HRS

OF SUPPORT
COORDINATION
TO 66 CLIENTS



CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION

The Centre of Professional Learning and Education is Communities at Work's own Registered Training Organisation (RTO 88148) that delivers high-quality vocational education and training.

While we primarily offer the Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, we also deliver a Certificate III in Business Administration, aimed at upskilling both our educators and people working in other areas to apply a broad range of administrative competencies in varied work contexts.

Registered with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), our RTO's passionate team of trainers and assessors specialises in supporting individuals to achieve our nationally recognised qualifications. Our professional development training programs and workshops enhance the capacity of our early childhood services in providing quality care and education that aligns with the National Quality Standards for the benefit of all children and their families. Delivering these to other early childhood services in the Canberra community further maximises our impact in the sector by upskilling the workforce.

Several of our professional development workshops, conducted in partnership with other organisations, are focused on arming professionals in the children's services and

community sectors, on significant issues beyond early childhood settings too, such as mental health, gender diversity and indigenous training.

Our win in the ACT Training Awards 2021, for the third year in a row, demonstrates our RTO's commitment, innovation and achievements in the ACT's Vocational Education and Training sector, alongside our organisation's continued investment in organisational excellence and career development from a holistic perspective.

National Recruitment Campaign

In response to a widespread workforce crisis in the early childhood education and care sector, Communities at Work partnered with the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) and 15 other organisations in a national recruitment campaign, 'Big Roles in Little Lives'. The RTO played a key role in the campaign, leading to positive outcomes not only for the organisation in recruiting Certificate III trainees for our Early Education and Care centres, but also by offering alternative employment to COVID-19 displaced workers from other industries such as hospitality and retail. We created significant awareness and encouraged individuals to consider education and care careers in the ACT, evidenced by the heavy volume of 'expressions of interest' received over two months.

ENROLLED 9 EMPLOYEES

IN OUR NEW CERTIFICATE III IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

46 STUDENTS **36 STUDENTS**

COMPLETED THEIR COURSES

ENROLLED INTO COURSES

INVESTED 2.31%

OF OUR ORGANISATION'S ANNUAL PAYROLL ON TRAINING

515 PARTICIPANTS

BOOKED INTO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING



STRATEGIC GOAL 1 **OUR CLIENTS** **AND SERVICES**





Our Clients and Services

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Expand our footprint with increased services that reach a wider section of the community.

Create positive social impact in our community and measure how social change has occurred.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

We will participate in research and activities that guide the development and evaluation of programs to ensure our client journey is efficient, seamless, appropriate and positive.

We will focus on positive social change with ideas and actions that are driven by everyday issues.

SUCCESS MEASURES

Feedback from clients indicates life changing outcomes have resulted from their interaction with our organisation.

OVERVIEW

Communities at Work is committed to creating positive social change within our community, through expanding our footprint and engaging in measurable social impact activities. During 2020-21, we actively expanded our service offerings, programs and partnerships to better support vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

In the ACT, since COVID-19 the number of people living in poverty has increased from around 30,000 to just over 38,000 people (including approximately 9,000 children)*. When the Australian Government's Coronavirus Supplement was removed, the ACT's poverty rate rose from 5.2% (8.6% pre-COVID) to 9.0%. The number of people receiving income support while looking for work is still 33% above the pre-COVID level.

In anticipation of increased demand our community pantries might receive due to the negative impacts of COVID-19, we expanded our Tuggeranong and Gungahlin community pantries by 100%. This enabled the accommodation of COVID-safe practices and provided improved services to our clients.

In 2021, we also expanded Galilee School's service offering. For over 20 years, the School has delivered learning for disengaged and vulnerable people in Years 7-10 who have struggled with mainstream schooling. However, many of their Year 10 students were not thriving once they moved into mainstream senior colleges. Galilee School saw the need for an alternative college environment and opened its Senior Secondary School for Year 11 and 12 students, creating an alternative pathway for students to achieve their ACT Senior Secondary Certificate.

*ACTCOSS. *Factsheet: Poverty and COVID-19 in the ACT*. October 2021. <https://www.actcooss.org.au/publications/advocacy-publications/factsheet-poverty-and-covid-19-act>

PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Expanded Galilee School to include a Senior Secondary College to enable vulnerable students to achieve their Year 12 Certificates. We welcomed our first cohort of 20 Year 11 students in February 2021.
- Engaged in major construction work and ongoing projects on Galilee School's Kambah and Holder campuses to expand the learning and recreational opportunities for students.
- Launched our Sustainability Action Plan and Paperless Policy in September 2020, created by our Youth Advisory Board.
- Increased our Northern Hub Disability Program centre, which introduced greater flexibility and options for clients.
- Beautified the Northern and Southern Disability Hub outdoor spaces through a major garden project, which enhanced clients' organisational and team-building skills.
- Extended our successful intergenerational program to provide greater opportunities for social interactions between our Ngunnawal seniors and children from Little Penguins Early Education Centre.
- Partnered with Capital Estate Developments to construct a community centre at Denman Prospect, opening in early 2022, to provide key community facilities to residents in the Molonglo Valley. This will be the first purpose-built facility to be used by a community organisation from day one.
- Launched our fourth Reconciliation Action Plan in November 2020 to guide our steps towards Reconciliation.
- Expanded our community pantries and client support spaces in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin in January 2021, with both moving into a larger, more accessible space. This was in response to anticipated increased demand due to COVID-19.
- Partnered with Legal Aid ACT, mobile laundry service Orange Sky, and preloved children's clothing provider Roundabout, to expand our service offerings to the community.
- Launched Infusion: Conversation that Count, a mobile morning tea initiative, in April 2021, to engage with and connect the Canberra community within their own suburbs.
- Developed a set of information flyers and explainer videos to raise awareness of our community support services, resulting in a 25% increase in government and community partner enquiries and program engagement.
- Hired two chefs to cook 100 meals a week for pantry clients and for our early education centres ensuring client access to regular nutritious food.
- Partnered with the ACT Government and local street artists on a community graffiti project at the Weston Skate Park, which provided Galilee School students with opportunities for mentoring and artistic skill development.

SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE OPENS

After more than two years of planning and effort, we excitedly commenced our Galilee School Senior Secondary College, extending the school's scope of registration to include Years 11 and 12 and welcoming our first cohort of 20 Year 11 students in February 2021. We plan to open up to Year 12 students in 2022.

As the only Special Assistance School in the Canberra region, we have been filling a unique niche by supporting the learning of vulnerable young teenagers who struggle in mainstream school environments. With the opening of our College we can now help these young people achieve their Year 12 Certificate.

Our Year 11 Hospitality students applied their new skills in preparing food for various school and organisation-wide events throughout the year, while our Year 11 Construction students built magazine racks, toolboxes, mallets and jewellery boxes, and created and painted food truck facades for our Holder Campus Stage

2 Official Opening Ceremony.



ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Investing in Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Supporting staff to engage in professional development, workshops and opportunities to improve staff mental health and to equip staff to better support clients.
- Engaging with R U OK? Day.
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing activities and programs for our clients and students.
- Creating mindfulness rooms in our OSHC services.

Committing to Diversity and Inclusivity

- Participating in National Week of Deaf People, International Women's Day, Eid, Diwali, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, NAIDOC Week, Persian New Year, and more.
- Engaging in professional development on gender diversity.



ENABLING WELLBEING CONVERSATIONS



Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) children love when Kirk the Koala and Quinton the Quokka come to visit. These eagerly anticipated wellbeing toy mascots travel across our 14 school sites and 17 services and are a very popular and effective resource for teaching children about emotional recognition and what they can do when they're feeling down, unhappy or angry. The children excitedly involve the mascots in their everyday activities, record the experiences in a photo journal that travels with the mascots, and even build letterboxes and write letters to the mascots about what's going on in their lives and how they are feeling.

Most importantly, Kirk and Quinton provide opportunities for our educators to start conversations with children, parents, and the wider school community about how we take care of our wellbeing and how we can support others to do so. These conversations also guide the educators in planning their programs to best support children's needs.

LEARNING GRATITUDE

Strengthening the mental wellbeing of our students at Galilee School is a very important focus. One of our popular initiatives is Gratitude Week, held each term, where students participate in a range of activities to help them identify and appreciate all the big and small things in their lives. Students and educators jointly engage in journaling, games, artwork and sharing meals together. This initiative has enhanced the students' mental wellbeing and stimulated positive behaviour.



Supporting Community Through COVID-19

- Operating the community pantries and clothing program during the COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Operating community transport, with adjustments during lockdown, throughout the year.
- Developing a Remote Learning Model for Galilee School students to keep them connected to the school during lockdown.
- Partnering with ACT Government and community organisations in the Canberra Relief Network to provide food hampers to vulnerable Canberrans during COVID-19.
- Hosting weekly Zoom meetings for seniors during lockdown to maintain social connections.

Having Amaroo OHSC open for essential workers such as Steve and I during this ACT-wide Covid-19 lockdown is an absolute lifesaver for us, as we do not have any family that lives in Canberra. If we didn't have access to the program, we would be really stuck. So we want to send our thanks for being so supportive of us as we continue to need to work, as well as taking such good care of our son, including his additional needs.

(Clare, Parent at Amaroo OHSC)



EXPRESSING INDIVIDUALITY

With the support of his mother, one little boy at our OHSC service wrote and illustrated a book about his favorite gumboots, titled My Pink Boots, to dispel the belief amongst children that pink is a colour only girls wear. His book was a wonderful opportunity to start discussions about diversity and personal choice and is now proudly displayed at our service and the school.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

During the National Week of Deaf People, our children's services sites engaged in activities that increased their awareness about and understanding of deaf people. The children at our Palmerston Out of School Hours Care, for instance, spent the week learning Auslan sign language, including how to sign their names, sign important and common words and complete Auslan find-a-words. Some even challenged themselves to create a story that they later told through sign language!

Not to be outdone, 12 of our educators participated in our Registered Training Organisation's Auslan Sign Language workshop, run by All Areas Speech Pathology via Zoom. Our educators learnt the basics of sign language and how to use this to communicate more effectively with young children and children with additional needs.



COMMITTING TO SUSTAINABILITY

IMPROVING OUR SUSTAINABILITY

Organised community plant swaps

Took playgroup children for weekly outdoor nature excursions

Established flower beds for 'Floriade in the Community' project

Encouraged clothing recycling through our Best Dressed Store

Held garden beautification projects at aged person complexes

Launched our organisation's Sustainability Action Plan

Planted vegetables and herbs to cook our own food

Ran a recycling Sustainability Challenge for our OSCH students and disability clients

Recycled our materials for craft activities and renovations

Taught children about recycling water

Participated in environmental awareness programs

Developed sustainability plans for our children's centres and services

Improved our disability hub outdoor spaces with planned gardens

Used our food waste to feed chickens at our children's centres

Set up educational sustainability stations to promote student learning

Switched our fleet cars to hybrids

Participated in awareness days like Clean Up Australia, World Bee Day



SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

Our employees strongly believe in the benefits of an environmentally sustainable work environment and are passionate about improving sustainability in Communities at Work.

Members of our Youth Advisory Board developed a Sustainability Action Plan and Paperless Policy for Communities at Work which is tackling waste management, energy efficiency, paper reduction, and food waste. They also ensured the plan had an education and training component to encourage staff to adopt best practice.

OUTCOMES

Staff adopted more environmentally-friendly work practices.

Children learned how to grow, harvest and create their own meals from our vegetable gardens.

Children developed a respect for the outdoors through nature excursions and strengthened their resilience and mental wellbeing.

Seniors made new friendships with neighbours through our community garden projects.

Students began to adopt sustainable practices at home from lessons learnt at our services and centres.

We reduced our average car fleet emissions rating from 185 to 143.

7,500 pre-loved items of clothing were diverted from landfill.

SUSTAINABILITY RECYCLING CHALLENGE

Our Out of School Hours Care services and disability clients took up our Youth Advisory Board's Sustainability Challenge to build a model representing "our sustainable future" made entirely of recycled materials collected from families and local businesses. While the children had a lot of fun creating their competition entries, they also importantly learnt about sustainable practices. Our Palmerston OSCHC took the first prize for their "sustainable city." Our Disability Team came in second with their "sustainable living farm", while Ngunnawal OSCHC came in third with their "giving tree" made of recycled materials.



12345



Wiradjuri Echoes

Children and educators at our Early Education and Care centres enjoyed visits from Wiradjuri Echoes, who shared their music and culture

COMMUNITIES AT WORK ARE PROUD TO BE WORKING ON NGUNNAWAL COUNTRY

Committing to Reconciliation

Our employees, students, children and clients engaged in a wide variety of initiatives and activities to build their awareness and connections to our land.

Launched our fourth Reconciliation Action Plan in November 2020.

Embedded the Acknowledgement of Country into our digital marketing materials.

Performed a daily Acknowledgement of Country across our Children's Services.

Incorporated bush tucker into our vegetable gardens.

Erected flag poles to display Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at both Galilee School campuses.





Dreamtime Snake

Gordon OSHC, in collaboration with the school, repainted the school's Dreamtime snake, which wraps around the school grounds, to strengthen their connections with the community, school and land, and expand their knowledge about Aboriginal culture

Raised money for disadvantaged First Nations children and families.

Participated in community awareness events such as NAIDOC in the North and Sea of Hands.

Took Galilee School students to visit Gulan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation.

Learned how to use Indigenous plants in medicine and cooking.

Engaged in yarning circles, artwork, weaving, music, dance and storytelling.

Attended professional development workshops on Ngunnawal culture and language.

Created meaningful Sorry Day artwork on healing for the Stolen Generations.

Created reflective cultural spaces, indoor and outdoor, to celebrate and learn about First Nations culture.

Organised playgroup excursions to Reconciliation Place, Gurbur Dhaura and the First Nations exhibition.

Enriching the Lives of the Vulnerable

- Collaborating with a diverse range of community members across Canberra to collect donations for our annual Christmas Appeal, enabling us to assist even more people in need.
- Partnered with the high profile sporting team ACT Brumbies, as their 2020 Major Charity Partner, tapping into their vast membership base to raise awareness of our community services and encourage greater business support.
- Encouraging the children and clients in our programs to share our mission to help those less fortunate. Together we are contributing to the work of many charities and community organisations, and making a positive impact on the vulnerable.
- Partnering with the Australian Training Company in its 'Women in Construction Pathways' program, to provide Galilee School students access to trade careers they may not otherwise have had.



POSITIVE NURTURING

I can't thank you enough for what you've done for us, for our son. When he started coming to your centre he was a beautiful boy, living inside himself as if he was watching everything from inside a crystal box. Little by little you taught him how to express himself and he started his first steps towards being the amazing chatterbox he is today.

I still remember his first sentence "I have friends", and then he also started to show affection. He learned how to show feeling as well, not only words. Nobody can tell exactly what happened, but I know you were exactly what he needed. You took our little boy out of that crystal box and for that we're forever grateful.

(Parent, Greenway Child Care and Education Centre)

DISABILITY GARDEN BEAUTIFICATION

A major project this year for our disability clients in both the Northern and Southern Hubs was the upgrade and beautification of their outdoor garden spaces. In Stage 1, the Young Adults group planned the design, chose their flowers, budgeted costs, sought donations of tyres and then purchased, painted and planted. In Stage 2, we involved the clients in a mosaic project where, with the help of staff, they created mosaic pieces to beautify the walls of their new courtyard. In Stage 3, they beautified the rest of their courtyard by making and painting pot planters. Our Southern Hub clients even planted and created a vertical garden.

The results were amazing and an excellent example of our focus on independent skill-building in group-based environments. The finished work celebrated the talents, effort, skills and fun that each client had in creating their pieces and provided a colourful and happy space to relax in. Thanks to Microsoft Canberra who provided volunteers for over two days at our Northern Hub to assist in creating vegetable boxes and sanding back outdoor tables and chairs to help create a beautiful and safe outdoor garden space for our disability clients.



CHRISTMAS APPEAL – A REAL COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Through our annual Christmas Appeal we collaborated with a wide cross-section of individuals, community organisations, schools, businesses and government departments across Canberra to collect and distribute donations of food and gifts for people in need.

OVER 70

community and government organisations hosted Giving Trees. That's almost double last year's figure!

WE RAISED \$8,800

through website donations
during December 2020.

WE GAVE OUT 1,006 FOOD HAMPERS

during December thanks to the
generous support of our community.

WE HELPED MORE THAN 1,100 PEOPLE

collect gifts for their Christmas tree.

2,815 DONATED CANS AND OTHER FOOD ITEMS

collected by Department of Finance with their
CANstruction fundraiser.

1,655 HOURS SPENT BY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

during December sorting food, gifts &
clothing whilst providing crisis support to
vulnerable clients.

WE HELPED SANTA AND HIS HELPERS DELIVER CHRISTMAS APPEAL DONATIONS

by joining forces with Gungahlin Village,
Canberra Metro Operations and the
ACT Community Services Minister.



Supporting our Charity Partners

We encouraged the children and clients in our programs to share our mission to help those less fortunate in our community. Together, we contributed to the work of many charities and community organisations, making a positive impact on our fellow Canberra. Some examples:

Share the Dignity	Donated items to assist women experiencing homelessness and domestic violence (Galilee School)
Red Nose Day	Fundraiser (four OSHC services collectively raised \$1,900 and were named the Number 1 donator for Australia for 2020)
RSPCA	Made animal toys to engage and stimulate the shelter dogs at RSPCA (OSH)
Leukemia Foundation	Fundraiser for World's Greatest Shave (OSH)
Domestic Animal Service	Played and walked the dogs at the service to assist staff in socialisation (Galilee School)
The Homeless	Knitted blankets for those experiencing homelessness during winter (OSH staff, children and families)
Community Pantries	Collected donations for our community pantries (Children's Services families and staff)
Open Arms	Created felt poppies for ANZAC Day wreaths (Seniors)
Canberra Hospital	Knitted blankets to distribute to patients (OSH children, families and staff)
Hands Across Canberra	Participated in the Hands Across Canberra Giving Day appeal, which collectively raised \$640,000 from 60 local charities (whole organisation)
Act for Peace	Participated in the food ration challenge fundraiser, raising over \$4,000 and shining the light on the injustice of life in refugee camps (Galilee School)
Lids4Kids	Collected plastic bottle lids to make prosthetic hands for child amputees. One centre collected 13,173 plastic lids! (Children's Services staff, families and supporters)

KNITTING BLANKETS FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



The children at our Mt Rogers Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) thoughtfully turned their newly acquired knitting skills to a worthy cause by knitting warm blankets for the homeless and others in need in their local community. The children had a lot of fun learning how to knit and loved creating the squares and sewing them together. Even the families and our educators enthusiastically joined in the project, bringing in their own knitted squares to add to the blankets.

"The children find it so relaxing," says OSHC Program Coordinator, Michelle Evans. "And it fits into the wellbeing practices we have at the service as it's a great mindfulness technique. It's been an awesome journey. And it's really exciting to see the number of children that now know how to knit. It's a lifelong skill".

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE

Our Community Development team have continued to work closely with Capital Estate Developments and residents of the new and emerging community of Denman Prospect to build community connections to each other, help them activate their ideas, and develop platforms where they can connect and discuss what's important to them.

We have guided the Denman Prospect community to establish a playgroup, which meets weekly, and a Residents Advisory Group, which has now become a community-led Community Action Group. This group of proactive community members meet monthly to advocate and work on initiatives for their community, such as a website and a volunteer mowing project.

Our work in Denman Prospect has brought countless people together as neighbours and friends connected through community. We have also mentored several 'community champions' to organise groups, initiatives, and projects for themselves using local connections and resources.

We were thrilled when Denman Prospect was nominated as a national finalist for 'Best Masterplanned Community' in the 2020 Property Council of Australia's Innovation & Excellence Awards.



Building and Empowering Community

- Continuing to support the Denman Prospect community with facilities and resources to enable residents develop their ideas and build their emerging community's connections, capacity and resilience.
- Supporting SEE-Change Tuggeranong to set up and run a monthly repair café - where people bring their broken items to be fixed by volunteer repairers. This popular initiative also helps to keep broken items out of landfills.
- Assisting yoga teacher Negar Ghasimi to set up and run an ongoing series of gentle yoga classes to help people de-stress, get out of the house or just make new social connections.
- Working with a 'community champion' to establish a group for beginner mountain bike riders. The group now has 390 members who are forming new social connections through their common interest.
- Using our online platform Ideascale (Engage Canberra) to capture ideas from community members and empower them to build their local communities.

Enabling Independence and Social Connections

- Providing opportunities for seniors to share each other's cultures and travel experiences through themed activities.
- Organising excursions around Canberra to encourage seniors to get back out into their community.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of seniors through balance and strength sessions.
- Maintaining seniors' independence through our in-home program and coordination support.

OUTCOMES

These services result in better health outcomes, fewer hospitalisations, less carer stress, a return to employment or independence, and reduced incidence of premature admission to residential care.



A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Catharine had worked for many years in a supported role at a government department, but when COVID-19 hit last year and early onset dementia began, she decided it was time to retire. After years of working, she wanted to get back into the community, re-engage in her hobbies and create new friendships.

Catharine's supported living home approached our support coordination team to assist Catharine to achieve her goals. We prompted an early NDIS review to obtain additional funding for her desired activities. With help from her coordinator, Catharine now attends a group activity called 'Sharing Places', volunteers at Vinnies one day a week and goes to the gym three times a week – all with the support of friendly support workers. She has also engaged in speech pathology, and a full occupational therapist assessment, and is keen to also start exercise physiology. She is delighted with the support Communities at Work provided to her, giving her a new lease of life.

What Our Clients Say About Us

RESPONSIVE CARING
QUALITY FAMILIAR
ABOVE AND BEYOND EXCITING
SUPPORTIVE WARM
POSITIVE IMPACT
AFFORDABLE FAMILY
SAFE ACCESSIBLE
RESPONSIBLE LIKEABLE
FUN SIGNIFICANT
TRUSTWORTHY INNOVATIVE

90%

of respondents have consistently rated our school holiday programs positively
(Client Survey, July 2020–2021)

**OVER
90%**

of respondents believe that Communities at Work has a positive impact in the local community
(Employee Survey, 2020)

PROFESSIONAL AND CARING DRIVERS

After being injured in a car accident at a young age, Denise says she gets nervous about travelling on the road but was completely at ease from her first trip with Communities at Work transport drivers.

"I realised as we were getting near my destination I thought 'I really don't want this journey to end'. I got out of the car feeling I've been touched by an angel. There was such a feeling of safety and care that I didn't hesitate to book after that," says Denise.

"I'm just filled with gratitude and forever grateful that not only is it a service provided to those who are eligible to use it, but it's the care, they're always professional, the vehicles are beautiful and clean, and there's never an issue. They have a way about them that is professional, caring and compassionate. They're beautiful people."

(Denise, Seniors Client, on our community transport service)





STRATEGIC GOAL 2

OUR PEOPLE





Our People

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

Attract, develop and retain people who contribute to the organisation's exceptional culture.

Our people are engaged and passionate about what we do and those we serve and demonstrate exceptional practice.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

We will develop a workforce strategy to help meet desired goals, maintain long-term success and prepare for the future of our workforce.

We will measure and improve our employee satisfaction and clearly demonstrate our values to staff and volunteers.

SUCCESS MEASURES

We have a high retention of employees and positive feedback from satisfaction surveys.

OVERVIEW

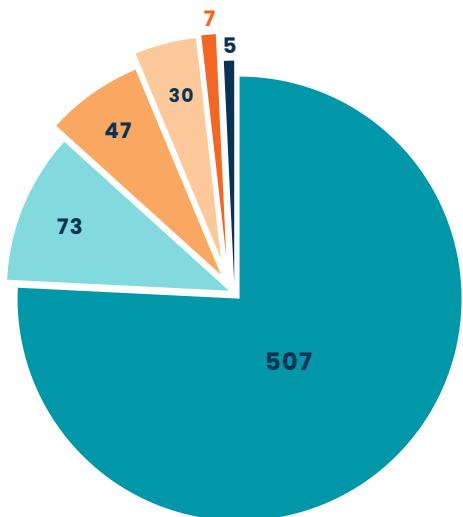
People are vital to Communities at Work. Without our people we would not be able to serve the community in the extensive ways we currently do. In 2020–2021, during the peak of an industry-wide staffing shortage, Communities at Work employees and volunteers ensured we continued to be the largest provider of children's and community services in the ACT, 'stepping up' to increase our services to the vulnerable and those that need a hand. Our employees also volunteered to work in different areas of the organisation as needed, ensuring continuity of service.

Acknowledging the value and importance of our staff has been central to the planning and strategic directions to the organisation. In late 2020, our Executive Team undertook an extensive external review by *Parbery Consulting* of the human resource function. This resulted in an expansion of the team, renamed *People, Culture and Wellness*, a renewed focus on positive workplace culture, and the appointment of a new Director and team members. These exciting changes have helped to continue building a positive and responsive culture within the organisation.

We are also undertaking extensive strategic planning on the future directions of our organisation. This will result in a Workforce Strategic Plan which will continue building values and trust, recognise the current and future employee experience, develop leadership for tomorrow, improve efficiency and effectiveness and protect and enhance the special culture which forms the basis of our organisation.

Our organisation is dedicated to supporting the learning and development of our employees to improve outcomes for our clients. In 2021, Communities at Work won the ACT Large Employer of the Year at the ACT Training Awards for the third consecutive year. This award recognises a large organisation with a demonstrated commitment to training its employees and encouraging and assisting them in their employment-related development.

OUR WORKFORCE



EMPLOYEE BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM AREA

- Children's Services
- Seniors & Disability
- Organisational Support
- Galilee School
- Social Programs
- CPLW

STAFF BREAKDOWN

We have 669 employees
and 115 volunteers.



Since the People, Culture and Wellness team commenced in January 2021, we have:

**LIFTED THE PROFILE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
POSITIVE CULTURE IN THE ORGANISATION.**



**CONDUCTED SEVERAL
WORK HEALTH AND
SAFETY AUDITS**



**RECRUITED AND ONBOARDED OVER
170 NEW EMPLOYEES**



**ISSUED A NEW STAFF
COMMUNICATION NEWSLETTER**
(called People@Work)

**RE-WROTE THE STAFF
CODE OF CONDUCT
AND OTHER POLICIES.**

PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Restructured the human resources team, with a renewed focus on positive workplace culture.
- Undertook extensive strategic planning on the future directions of our organisation, which will result in a Workforce Strategic Plan.
- Began implementing a Human Resources Information System to assist managers in developing ongoing professional development and training plans for their staff and improving employee productivity.
- Won the 2021 ACT Training Awards for the third year in a row as the ACT Large Employer of the Year, demonstrating our organisational excellence.
- Presented staff with gifts and certificates to acknowledge their work during COVID-19.
- Recruited 18 trainees for our Ascend Program to build our future educators workforce.
- Delivered professional development workshops to over 167 participants.
- Introduced ad-hoc pop-up workshops (new in 2021) to response to employee developmental interests and needs.
- Generated 161 Expressions of Interest for our User-Choice Funded Traineeships.
- Introduced the online Learning Management System (PeopleStreme) for all employees to raise awareness on workplace-related topics.
- Built and launched a new employee intranet to enhance internal communication.
- Developed a Volunteer Statement to ensure we follow national best practice in managing our volunteers and improving their overall experience with us.

WINNER
2019 | 2020 | 2021

ACT LARGE
EMPLOYER OF
THE YEAR

ACT TRAINING
AWARDS 2021



We became the three-time winner of the Large Employer of the Year Award at the 2021 ACT Training Awards. The ACT Large Employer of the Year award recognises a large organisation with a demonstrated commitment to training its employees and encouraging and assisting them in their employment-related development. We are very proud to receive this recognition and congratulate all our employees who have made this achievement possible!

"We are proud and humbled to be acknowledged once again for this achievement. Our win reflects how dedicated Communities at Work are in supporting the learning of our own and investing in the skills of our employees. The CPLE team are honoured to play a part in facilitating the learning journey of many within the organisation and look forward to continuing to offer opportunities to nurture and extend the amazing capabilities of our own."

(Carla Scalia, RTO Manager)

ACCESSIBLE TRAINING FOR ALL AGES

Katherine completed her Certificate III through Ascend at age 63. "I felt a great sense of achievement in completing the Certificate III in Childcare. It has been many years since I have done any studies, so I had quite some doubt in my abilities in doing this. My confidence as a mature student at age 63 was "will I be good enough?" However, my instructors and fellow students were very encouraging and didn't treat me any differently. Any challenges that I incurred along the way have contributed to making me stronger and more determined to finish the course. The continued support and friendship from my fellow workers were lovely, and I always felt comfortable and like I was part of a family."

(Katherine Guillessier, Ascend Program graduate)



**ALONG WITH EXPANDING PERSONAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE,
MANY OF OUR EMPLOYEES FOUND THEIR TRAINING HAS HELPED
IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH CLIENTS.**

THE AUSLAN SIGNING COURSE

The Auslan Signing course provided our disability educators with a new way of communicating with their clients, some of whom learn and understand signs better than verbal communication.

THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE TRAINING

The Trauma-Informed Care training supported the relationships that educators have with vulnerable families. The training provided an understanding of trauma, the underlying issues, and the ongoing impacts on the lives of families and young children. This allowed employees to work closely with families toward positive outcomes for children and better understand and support child behaviour.

THE ACCIDENTAL COUNSELLOR TRAINING

The Accidental Counsellor training, run in partnership with Lifeline, provided employees with vital skills to more sensitively read a conversation and understand people's behaviour, achieving a better outcome for both staff and clients.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Attracting new employees by offering nationally recognised qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care (Certificate III and Diploma) and empowering individuals to earn while they learn.
- Offering a Certificate III in Business Administration to upskill our staff in administrative competencies.
- Collaborating with external organisations to deliver additional learning opportunities for our employees.
- Supporting employees to undertake external training or facilitated workshops on site.
- Acknowledging and thanking staff on special days through the year with gift packs, morning teas and awards dinners to show they are valued.
- Increasing the range of employee benefits offered to add further value to their employment package.
- Engaging employees through monthly newsletter, The Monthly Wrap, which includes a monthly video update from the CEO.
- Seeking feedback from staff through our annual staff satisfaction survey to implement continual workplace improvement.



IMPROVING EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION

We engaged Dialog Information Technology to help create a Sharepoint employee intranet to replace our GoogleSites intranet, following the ICT migration from a Google environment to a Microsoft environment.

Through discovery workshops and ongoing engagement and feedback processes, Dialog worked with our Intranet Champions, a group consisting of almost 40 employees from across our organisation, to build a site that is engaging, easy to access, and easy for employees to find the information they need.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Communities at Work is committed to building a culture that supports and encourages the sharing of knowledge and experience among employees. Within our Children's Services, and in line with our Strategic Plan, we established an Educational Leader Network

Group. These professional educational leaders, based at each Children's Service, are responsible for the effective leadership and capacity building of educators through various means. The monthly meetings allow leaders to share their experiences from the field, work on sector and organisational initiatives, and develop and implement continuous quality improvement strategies.

Appreciating our Volunteers

We are so proud of our 115 committed team of volunteers and their dedication to our organisation and the Canberra community. Without them we wouldn't be able to do what we do.

Our volunteers generously donate their time and energy all year round to help us deliver important services to the community to enrich people's lives. As a small token of our appreciation we presented our volunteers with sustainable lunch box gifts during Volunteer Week.

Some of the ways our volunteers assist our organisation



LOOKING AFTER OUR PEOPLE



I had my pick of volunteer options, but when I was researching options, I was really impressed with what Communities at Work did in community, how proud they are of what they do, and I wanted to be around like-minded people. They really look after their people. Their values align with mine. I've made friends through my volunteering and it's filled a place in my schedule and in my heart.

(Andrea, volunteer)



Acknowledging Employees

Communities at Work is proud to have a workforce of passionate, experienced and knowledgeable employees. We value and are continually grateful for their hard work and dedication to our mission, purpose and values, and for creating positive change in the Canberra community. Here are some of the ways we expressed our gratitude over the past twelve months.



We presented staff and key supporters with chocolate boxes and appreciation certificates to acknowledge their amazing work and professionalism during COVID-19 and their unwavering commitment to remain on the frontline to support our community.



We celebrated, acknowledged and thanked our staff on special days throughout the year with lovely gift packs and special morning teas and lunches. Many families also sent in beautiful feedback, gifts and cards to show their appreciation.



Our Family Day Care coordination team held an end of year professional dinner trivia night for the educators to thank and acknowledge all of their hard work and contribution to the service.



Increasing Employee Benefits

We are continually improving benefits for employees. In the past year, we:



Added massages and physiotherapy to our active lifestyle benefit



Introduced paid parental leave for employees



Offered free financial wellness checks from select providers



Introduced discounts on Microsoft 365 Home Office programs and on home cleaning services



Changed to a new EAP provider, which provided employees with a better quality and confidential counselling support service, particularly through COVID-19



Upgraded and improved staffrooms at some of our children's services centres to create more relaxing and welcoming spaces

DEDICATED AND LOYAL EMPLOYEES

“

I have been so lucky to have worked for twenty years in such an amazing organisation and especially with the wonderful team that I work closely with in the Family Day Care and In-Home Care area. They are like a second family. This makes it very easy to come to work every day. I have seen many changes over this period, and no doubt will have many more ahead of me before I finish working with the organisation.

Every day is different in Family Day Care and In-Home Care, which keeps my job very interesting. I also have the opportunity from time to time to attend special playgroups, awards/presentation nights and other functions, which get me out of the office and helps put a face to a name of our lovely educators and children.

(Karen Connell, Family Day Care Coordination Unit)

”





STRATEGIC GOAL 3 ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE





Organisational Excellence

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

To secure a prudent and profitable financial base to adapt to market changes and reinvest to improve the lives of people in the community.

To exceed all standards set in the quality and regulatory frameworks that underpin our operations.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

We will identify and pursue business and enterprise development opportunities and make sound financial decisions.

We will continue to roll out our internal audit process across the organisation.

We will engage and collaborate with the community, the sector and government to better serve the region and our clients.

SUCCESS MEASURES

We have made a positive contribution to the community and have evidence to demonstrate the impact.

OVERVIEW

Communities at Work are committed to improving organisational excellence in order to drive better outcomes for our people and clients. During the 2020–2021 financial year, we continued to help Canberra’s most vulnerable through the COVID-19 pandemic with minimal disruption of services through our ongoing commitment to maintain a prudent and profitable financial base to reinvest back into the community. This was possible thanks to strategic collaborations with local government and community organisations.

During the past year, we continued with an internal audit program, first implemented in 2019, to ensure quality improvement in our Children’s Services. In 2021, all seven of our OSHC services that were assessed increased their National Quality Standard (NQS) ratings by the Children’s Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

Furthermore, our Family Day Care and In-Home Care service achieved an overall rating of Exceeding NQS. In fact, we are the only Family Day Care service in Canberra that currently has an ‘exceeding’ average across the National

Quality Framework. Engaging in external auditing and rating processes ensures we are continually improving outcomes for our clients.

Communities at Work are actively collaborating and engaging with other organisations in order to address workforce shortages across the early childhood sector. As a member of the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA), we recently partnered with other early childhood providers in a ‘Big Roles in Little Lives’ workforce campaign. The first stage of the campaign resulted in 18 excellent candidates enrolling as trainee educators. These ongoing efforts will ensure that families continue to receive quality early learning and care.

To better align with and communicate our mission, purpose, and values, and assist with driving our strategic plan, Communities at Work commenced an exciting strategic brand refresh project in 2020 which will improve client outcomes and employee recruitment and retention. We will begin releasing the refreshed brand strategy and visual identity (which includes the new logo used in this report) from late 2021.

PROJECTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established a COVID-19 taskforce of senior executives to effectively deliver government and internal support measures to assist our workforce and clients through lockdowns.
- Updated most of our fleet to hybrid cars, saving \$11,000 in petrol in just six months and reducing our emissions rating from 185 to 143.
- Successfully passed an ICT audit review of the safety of our ICT systems and networks by ensuring our vendors and managers were compliant with our data security and access requirements.
- Participated in the Big Roles in Little Lives recruitment campaign with the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) and 15 other organisations in response to a widespread workforce crisis in the early childhood education sector.
- Partnered with other Canberra childcare organisations, through the Children First Alliance, to encourage further government investment in the training and professional development of educators.
- Organised a disability sector forum to encourage NDIS providers, advocates and politicians to discuss NDIS issues in the ACT that may lead to improved conditions for our clients.
- Partnered with the ACT Government to hold an inaugural World Elder Abuse Awareness Day expo and panel discussion to raise awareness of services available in this sector.
- Refreshed our website and restructured the navigation to help our users find information about our services more easily and so improve their customer journey. We also launched Blog and Instagram platforms to reach wider audiences in our community.
- Commenced a strategic brand refresh in order to improve employee recruitment and retention and outcomes for our clients.

BIG ROLES IN LITTLE LIVES

“ I am gaining an abundance of knowledge through this training that allows me to understand Early Childhood Education on a deeper level and implement my own pedagogy in the classroom and share my knowledge and passion with both children and fellow educators. I can be a better educator because I know why it is so important to do what we do and why certain documents and frameworks are in place. I now do things with more mindfulness and purpose.

The opportunities and benefits Communities at Work offer during and after training is unique from other training facilities I have seen, so I wanted to give myself the best opportunity to grow and become successful in this industry.

I feel that Communities at Work is the best organisation to help me achieve my goals. ”

(An Tran, Ascend Trainee, recruited from the Big Roles in Little Lives Campaign)





Delivering Excellence in Service

We are honoured to be recognised and acknowledged by our clients and industry for our excellence in training development, business practices and service delivery. These recognitions include:



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

100% of our assessed OSHC services had improved their quality ratings



FAMILY DAY CARE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Two educators won the 2020 ACT Regional Awards.



LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

A Family Day Care educator was a finalist for the 2020 NSW Local Business Awards.



VOLUNTEERING ACT AWARDS

Nominated in the Volunteer Team of the Year category at the Volunteering ACT Awards.



EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AWARD

Galilee School won the 2020 Excellence in Student Engagement Award from the Careers Advisors Association of NSW & ACT Inc.

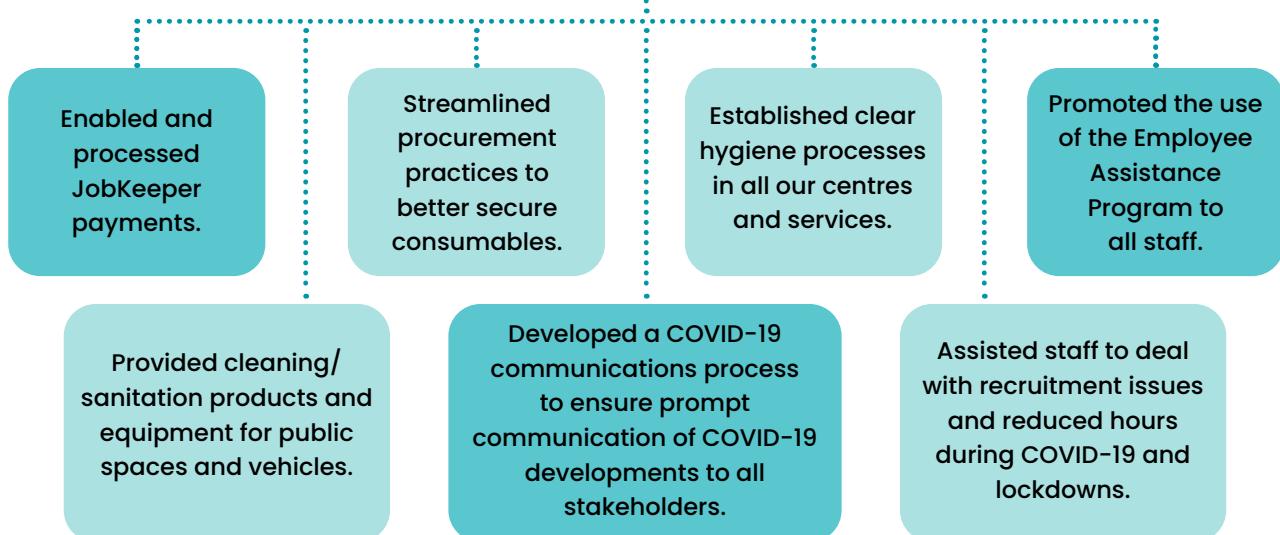


KINDICARE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Abacus Child Care and Education Centre was an ACT top ten finalist in the inaugural 2021 KindiCare Excellence Awards.

Delivering Excellent COVID-19 Processes

We established a COVID-19 taskforce of senior representatives across our organisation to implement government and internal support measures to assist our workforce, clients and community during COVID-19.



65 PEOPLE
ATTENDED THE WEAAD EXPO
(INCLUDING STALLHOLDERS AND PANELISTS)



4.6 OUT OF 5
ATTENDEES SAID THEY WERE LIKELY TO PASS
ON INFORMATION TO THEIR NETWORKS



4.3 OUT OF 5
ATTENDEES RATED THE EXPO AS HELPFUL

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

We proudly partnered with the Office for Seniors and Veterans – ACT Government Community Services Directorate to hold an inaugural World Elder Abuse Awareness Day expo and panel discussion to spread awareness around this important topic and to help attendees identify services that can help.

An insightful panel discussion, facilitated by COTA and opened by Assistant Minister Emma Davidson, featured panelists from Australian Federal Police, ACT Human Rights Commission, ACT Disability Aged and Carer Advocacy Service, Relationships Australia Canberra & Region, and Public Trustee and Guardian.

Attending organisations advised that they found the expo and panel discussion extremely helpful, both in the information collected and the valuable contacts made, that enabled them to improve their referral services to their clients.



Communities@W

OUR SUPPORTERS

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THANK YOU!

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support we have received from our many valued community supporters, some of whom are listed below. Together, we are making a genuine difference in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community.

- ACT Block Grant Authority Inc
- ACT Government - ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- ACT Government - Education Directorate
- ACT Government - Community Services Directorate
- ACT Government - Health
- ACT Sexual Health Clinic
- Aldi - Weston, Belconnen, Kippax, Gungahlin, Amaroo
- All Homes
- Amanda Horn Pty Ltd
- Ainslie Group
- Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Institute of Sport
- Australian National University
- Beaumont Tiles
- Bradley Allen Love Lawyers
- Bunnings Warehouse
- Burns Club
- Calwell Shopping Centre
- Canberra Baptist Church
- Canberra Relief Network
- Canberra Toyota
- CCS Group Canberra
- CDC Data Centres
- Coles - Gungahlin
- Commonwealth Bank - Gungahlin
- Cooleman Court
- Country Valley
- Country Women's Association of Gunghalin
- Daana – Indian Restaurant
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Social Services
- Embroiders' Guild ACT
- Ernst & Young
- Face2Face Recruitment
- Families Australia
- FoodBank
- Grill'd - Woden
- Gungahlin Marketplace
- Gungahlin Village
- Hands Across Canberra
- Hardwickes
- Hip Pocket Workwear
- Icon Water
- Impact Church
- Katy Gallagher
- Koomarri
- KPMG
- Lakespeare & Co
- Leidos
- Lifeline Canberra
- Lions Foundation
- Lutton Tuggeranong
- MensLink
- Mills Oakley
- Morgans Group
- National Disability Services
- OzHarvest
- Parberry Consulting
- PWC
- Qirx
- Rainbow Paws
- Second Bite
- Services Australia
- Share the Dignity
- South.Point
- St Andrews Canberra
- The Green Shed
- The Property Collective
- The Snow Foundation
- The Treasury
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Westpac
- Wilde & Woppard Lawyers
- Woolworths - Dunlop

HOW OUR SUPPORTERS HELP US

GRANTS
FUNDRAISERS
FOOD DONATIONS
SUBSIDISED ADVERTISING
FREE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE
SUBSIDISED MOTOR VEHICLE COSTS

WORKING BEES
SUBSIDISED RENT
CLOTHING DRIVES
SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION
CHRISTMAS APPEAL DONATIONS
DISCOUNTED STAFF BENEFITS

SUPPORTER STORIES



ACT BRUMBIES

As the 2020 Major Charity Partner of the ACT Brumbies, Communities at Work partnered with the high profile sporting team, tapping into its vast membership base to raise greater awareness of our community services. In turn, our mutual partnership allowed the Brumbies to strengthen their connection with the Canberra community at the grassroots and assist in making a difference. During the year the Brumbies visited our community pantries, helped sort donations, distributed food hampers, packed gifts for our Christmas Caves, hosted a Giving Tree, promoted our work on their social media, and ran fun rugby clinics for our OSHC services, school holiday programs and disability centres.

COOLEMAN COURT

Cooleman Court Shopping Centre decided to minimise their 2020 Christmas decorations and use the savings to support Communities at Work and OzHarvest with our work to help vulnerable Canberrans. They set up a fundraising appeal on their website and invited their customers to make a financial donation, matching \$1 for \$1 of their customers' donations. Thanks to their customers we received a \$4,708.50 donation. And that's on top of the 645 gifts and 30 trolley loads of food the shopping centre donated at Christmas!

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

As the flagship charity for the Department of Finance, Communities at Work was honoured to receive financial and in kind donations to stock our community pantries. With COVID-19 ruling out overseas travel, staff adopted a 'Round the World' theme for their 2020 CANstruction. Fourteen teams constructed amazing structures out of 2,815 cans, packets and boxes of food, ranging from the NASA space shuttle, Stonehenge, Niagara Falls, the MCG, Great Wall of China, the Vatican, Eiffel Tower and Big Ben.

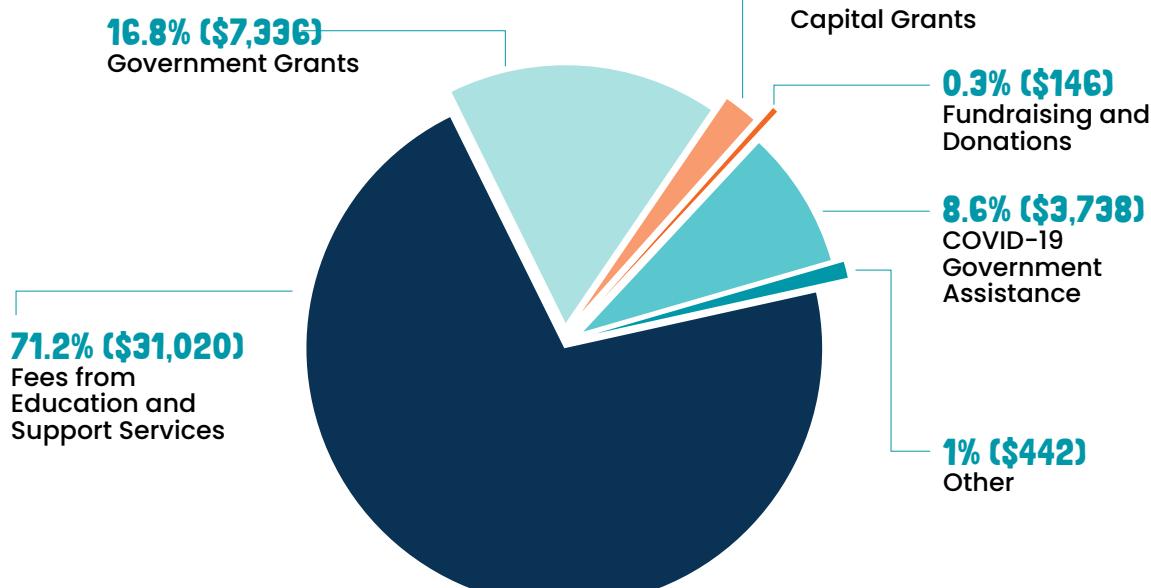
But their generosity didn't stop there. The Department also hosted a Giving Tree and ran an online Trivia Night for all employees, with the money raised helping to buy gifts, Christmas food and fresh food vouchers for our Christmas Appeal.



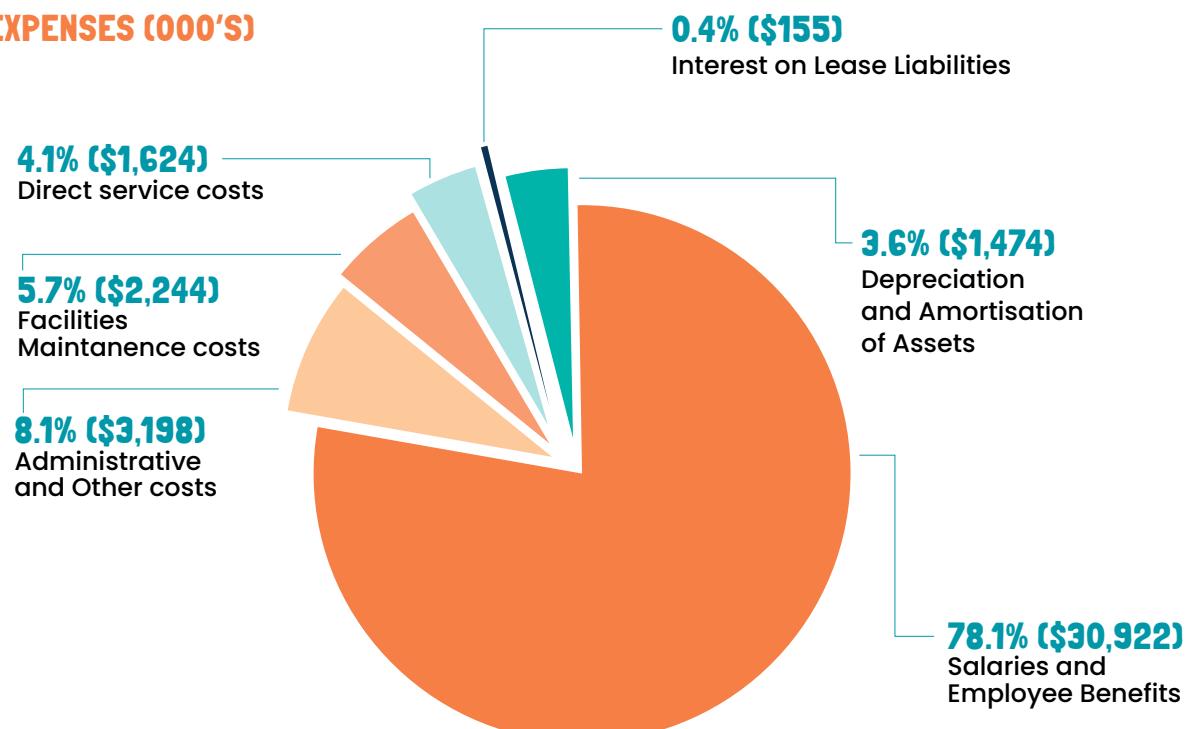
OUR FINANCIALS

The major change to our revenue streams came in the form of government assistance during the onset of COVID-19 and the “free childcare” period in place at that time. On a percentage basis, expenses were broadly in line with previous years.

REVENUE (000'S)



EXPENSES (000'S)



Full financial statements can be viewed on our website at commsatwork.org

GET INVOLVED!



commsatwork.org/get-involved



admin@commsatwork.org



(02) 6293 6500

FUNDRAISE

Fundraise by organising an activity through your business, work or school.



DONATE

Donate with a tax deductible donation and help us make a difference.



Communities at Work supports over 20,000 people in the Canberra community every year.

Together, we can make an even bigger impact on the lives of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, low income families, those experiencing homelessness, women and children fleeing domestic violence, people unexpectedly experiencing hardship, at-risk youth, people with disabilities and seniors.

Every little bit helps.



VOLUNTEER

Volunteer and share your skills, experience and time, while doing and feeling good.



SPONSOR

Sponsor us financially or through in-kind support with goods and services.



PARTNER

Partner with us and enhance your reputation, build stakeholder loyalty and closely connect with the community.



CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Donate food or gifts or host a Giving Tree to ensure families won't miss out at Christmas.

communities atwork

(02) 6293 6500
COMMSATWORK.ORG

