

# Annual Report 2019-20 snapshot

**20,674** 

people supported on their journey to inclusion, wellbeing and independence

As well as **1000s** 

of others through workshops, events, education and community capacity building projects

Through **19**  Delivered by **322** staff

programs and services

Including **8.7%**  Across **19** regional service centres

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce



- Services delivered by Social Futures
- Services delivered by subcontractors and alliance partners of Social Futures

**3,597** 

young people supported through **6** youth programs

**11,199** 

participants supported through our disability inclusion programs

**3,126** 

participants supported through **4** housing, homelessness and employment programs

**2,191** 

children, young people and their families supported through **3** family and children programs

**561** 

participants supported through **2** health and wellbeing programs

**4,598** 

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants supported across our footprint\*

**85** 

workshops, meetings and forums delivered through **3** community sector development programs

\* Data unavailable for Clubhouse program

# Who we are

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For more than 40 years we have been creating positive social change. As a regionally based community services provider we are experts in tailoring programs to fit our diverse local communities.

We are a regional leader and work alongside our partner organisations to strengthen and build capacity and collaboration within the community sector.

## Our vision

Thriving people, strong communities

## Our purpose

We work to achieve positive social change in our communities

## Our values

### Integrity:

acting fairly, honestly, openly and consistently

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### Inclusion:

valuing diversity, connection, belonging and social justice for all

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### Learning:

improving our knowledge and understanding

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## Our aim



### Inclusive participation

People with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, children and young people, older people, LGBTIQAP+ communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities participate in community life, work and education.



### Safe and affordable housing

Households have affordable and appropriate housing. We work with other stakeholders to reduce homelessness and to build more affordable and social housing in our communities.



### Healthy relationships

Individuals, young people, and families keep children and young people safe. We work with other services and the community to promote healthy relationships.



### Strong, connected communities

Our communities are strong and we work as a sector leader to develop well-connected regional services.

# What we offer

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Connection is at the heart of everything we do. It is by connecting our participants to their communities, to services and to culture that we support them to thrive.



Our focus on connection is supported by comprehensive wrap-around services and a network of strong referral pathways.

We have a diverse skills base and have developed a practice that is person-centred, culturally responsive, trauma-responsive and evidence-based.

Our capabilities include:

family counselling and mediation

psycho-social mental health services

youth wellbeing and mentoring

disability planning services

women's and reproductive health services

suicide and bereavement support

housing, tenancy and homelessness support

case management assessment and planning

workforce and sector development

centralised intake and referral contact centre (inbound and outbound)

State and Commonwealth Government integrated Client Management System

contract and consortium management

forum and workshop facilitation

community consultation and stakeholder engagement

19 service centre locations providing access for our regional communities plus outreach capability

# 2019-20 highlights

## Rising to the challenges

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This year we faced unprecedented challenges with drought, bushfires and the global pandemic all causing hardship and disruption in our communities.

Social Futures is proud of the resilience of our staff and participants. We have approached these challenges as an opportunity to reflect and learn. Through an innovative and customer-focused mindset we were able to provide continuous service delivery, adapting to the changing environment.

### Keeping the sector safely connected during COVID

When the pandemic hit we wanted to help other organisations in Northern NSW meet the challenges emerging from the crisis.

We created a fortnightly online meeting space through our existing Better Chances Forum where local services could connect, collaborate, learn and support each other.

More than 60 professionals from 30 organisations connected with these sessions between April and June. The sessions helped to break down barriers and raise awareness of additional resources and assistance available to support families. As a sector, we were able to rapidly identify emerging trends, such as an increase in child wellbeing reports, and find solutions together.

One challenge was the difficulty young people faced remaining engaged with education during lockdown. We recognised that teachers needed additional support, so we used our

online Community Hub to create a collaborative information pack for schools. The pack contained details of the local services and resources available to help them reach out and support their students and families.

### Embracing learning

While the pandemic presented many hurdles, it also provided an opportunity to build the capacity of our organisation. We are always seeking to share expertise and resources across the organisation and keep our diverse programs connected.

Our Links to Learning staff, who normally work in schools, applied their expertise in youth facilitation to the development of the first ever virtual 'Rent to Keep It' workshops in collaboration with the Connecting Home Youth team. The workshops provided information and support for young people to learn about securing and maintaining a private rental lease. Participants received a certificate of completion which helps to reassure prospective landlords that the young people understand their obligations and will make good tenants.

The sessions, along with the Rent Choice Youth subsidy and support from the Connecting Home Youth team, resulted in two participants moving into private rentals just two weeks after completing the course, freeing up much-needed temporary accommodation for new families to move in and start their own journeys to stable housing.

# Support for people with disability

## Delivering Local Area Coordination Services on the Central Coast

Social Futures has been a part of the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in our communities since the beginning. This year we were thrilled to be awarded the Local Area Coordination (LAC) service delivery contract for the Central Coast, alongside our existing footprint in Northern, Western and Far West NSW.

Through May and June 2020 our dedicated staff set up two new office spaces and recruited 55 new Central Coast Local Area Coordinators in time for the 1 July start date. Our ICT and Facilities staff pulled out all the stops to ensure the new staff were set up with the infrastructure, assets, laptops, phones, tablets, printers and other equipment they would need to hit the ground running.

We look forward to supporting the Central Coast community and becoming a part of the local fabric over the next three years.

## Connecting remote communities

This year Social Futures introduced an Australian first for the NDIS Local Area Coordination program: Mobile Office Outreach Vans. Affectionately known as MOOVs, the vans provide a purpose-fitted, wheelchair-accessible, office on the move!

For people living in small rural communities, accessing services can be a challenge and if you have a disability or limited transport options it can feel like mission impossible. The MOOVs allow us to meet people where they live – including Aboriginal communities – which may not have buildings or offices from which to operate.

The MOOVs also enable us to provide post-disaster recovery services in the event existing services are disrupted, and information and advice at community events across our service footprint.

## Building capacity in the health sector

This year we developed an ongoing partnership with University of Rural Health, which has seen our team deliver six tailored access and inclusion information sessions to 133 final-year allied health students to develop their understanding of the NDIS and LAC program.

### Allied health student outcomes



**85%** reported they significantly improved their knowledge of how to support someone with disability



**78%** reported an increased understanding of NDIS access requirements



**60%** reported an increased interest in working with people with disabilities



# Support for communities, families and young people

## Wrap-around servicing

Our communities benefit from our no-wrong-door approach, our accessibility and the diversity of services. This year we further developed our wrap-around service model, coordinating our Getting it Together, Youth on Track, and Homeless Youth Assistance Programs to provide a seamless uninterrupted service to young people struggling with interconnected issues of homelessness, AOD misuse, or at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

## Putting the pieces together

Late in 2019, 16-year old Todd\* found himself in a tough place. With no mother in the picture and a father in remand, he was without work or somewhere secure to live and starting to come to the attention of the authorities for all the wrong reasons.

The police referred him to our Coffs Harbour based Youth on Track program where program worker, Jason, began to help Todd find the support he needed.

"We helped him get his own Medicare card and navigate Centrelink," explains Jason. "People forget how stressful these things can be, especially if it's your first time."

Todd's community stepped up as well. A family friend took Todd in, giving him a roof over his head.

With Jason's help, Todd connected to an employment service operating in the region. He completed his Retail Certificate III and landed a full-time job in a café in his local town.

When Todd ticks off the progress he's made in the last 12 months, it's a good list. "So far, I've got a nice place to live, I'm saving a lot more than I used to and I've got my driver's licence. I'm starting to look for my own place soon. I'm feeling pretty proud."

*\*Name has been changed and stock image used to protect the participant's privacy.*

## Working to halve street homelessness

As part of the NSW Government commitment to halve street homelessness across the state by 2025, this year Social Futures began delivering Assertive Outreach services in Tweed in partnership with Momentum Collective and the Local Health District. The Tweed area has a high level of people sleeping rough, and the new service provides end-to-end outreach and post-placement support services to help sustain clients in housing long-term.

In March 2020 in response to COVID-19 our Connecting Home program rose to the challenge and contributed to a state wide community response to ensure that rough sleepers across our whole service footprint were supported during the pandemic.

"Housing change lives!" says Connecting Home worker Roberta Brooks. "Most of our rough sleepers had given up hope and cannot believe that this opportunity is for them.

It is so worthwhile to see a smile from people who did not believe that their chance to be housed would ever come."



# Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

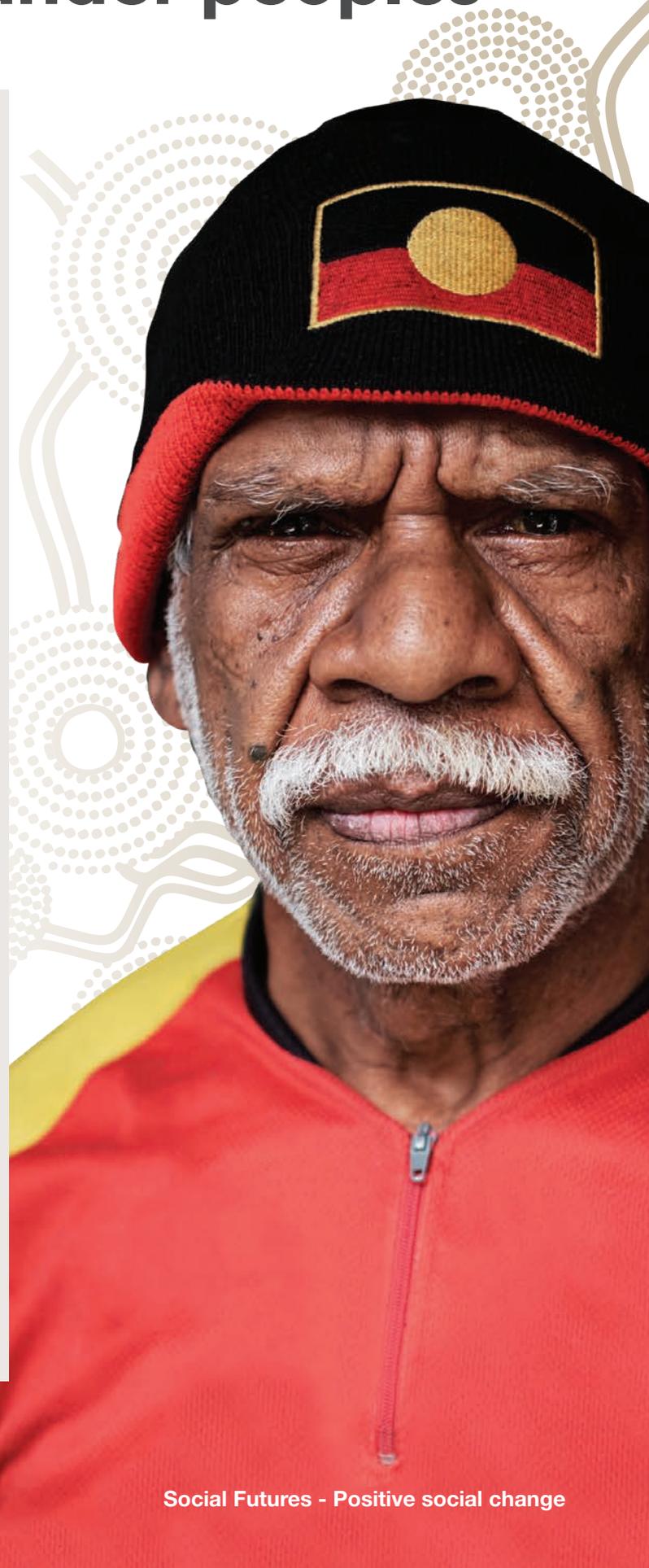
We are dedicated to breaking the cycle of disadvantage impacting generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Reconciliation is central in our work to achieve positive social change in regional Australia. We are proud of the work our staff do in communities to build relationships, strengthen understanding and ensure our services are welcoming and accessible to First Nations Australians.

## Reconciliation Action Plan

This year we wrapped up our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) with some major achievements under our belt including an Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy which saw an increase of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to 8.7 percent. But there is still so much work to do on our journey as an organisation committed to genuine reconciliation and justice. We have been developing our new RAP which we expect to be in place for 2021 with some exciting new goals including a commitment to further increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to at least 15 percent.

## Aboriginal worker strengthening days

This year we continued our delivery of Strengthening Days for Aboriginal family support and early childhood workers, through our Better Chances Forum, funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, YWCA Communities for Children, and Northcott. The Strengthening Days bring Aboriginal workers together to support each other, collaborate and inform the wider sector on how to better work alongside Aboriginal workers, organisations and communities to improve outcomes for children and families.





# Social Futures

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## POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE

Join us on



Ballina | Bathurst | Broken Hill | Byron Bay  
Coffs Harbour | Dubbo | Gosford | Grafton  
Lismore | Mullumbimby | Orange  
Tweed Heads | Wyong

**View the full Annual Report at [socialfutures.org.au](https://socialfutures.org.au)**



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.