

POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE



Social
Futures

ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020





Social
Futures



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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.

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
programs and services



Delivered by

322
staff

Including **8.7%** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce



Across **19** regional service centres

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*

* Data unavailable for Clubhouse program

Our footprint



- Services delivered by Social Futures
- Services delivered by subcontractors

3,597 

young people supported
through **6** youth programs

85 

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



Who we are

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

Inclusion:

valuing diversity, connection, belonging and social justice for all

Learning:

improving our knowledge and understanding

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.

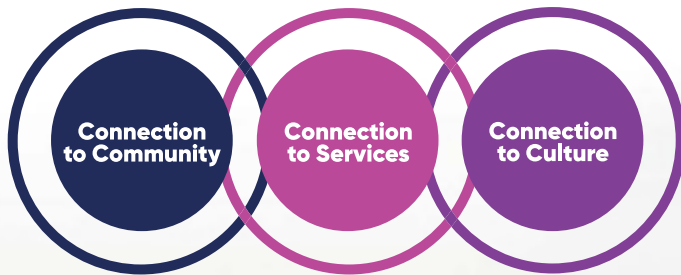


Strong, connected communities

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

What we offer

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



CEO and Board message



CEO
Tony Davies



Chair
Pat Grier, AM

What a year it's been. I don't think anyone could have foreseen the huge upheaval and changes we have faced at both the local and international level this year, from the unprecedented summer bushfire season to the shock of a global pandemic.

As an organisation, we were privileged to be able to continue to offer outstanding support and service delivery to all our participants and communities through the crises.

We supported more than 20,000 participants on their journey to inclusion, wellbeing and independence; as well as thousands of others through workshops, events, education and community capacity-building projects.

We also undertook important advocacy and sector leadership on key social issues affecting our regions. These include access to housing, ensuring children and young people get the best possible opportunities, working to advance reconciliation and pushing for real action on poverty in regional Australia.

Highlights of the year

Going above and beyond

The thing that impressed us most this year was the sheer courage and resilience of our staff and participants. We are in awe of their determination and dedication in the face of the challenges and devastation brought about by drought, bushfires and the impacts of COVID-19.

While our hard-working support staff swung into action to transition the majority of our staff to working remotely from home, a number of our frontline teams were out in the streets prioritising the needs of some of our most vulnerable community members.

With the lockdown underway and the full risks of the pandemic not yet known, our specialist homelessness staff significantly increased their outreach work, connecting with people sleeping rough and supporting them into temporary accommodation to help keep them safe from COVID-19. We could not be more proud of their compassion, their commitment and their efforts.

Future fit

This year we embedded a major organisational restructure to support an even stronger focus on service excellence, evidence-based practice, the customer experience and ensuring all our staff have the tools and training to deliver consistently high-quality services.

We have also made significant progress on our Digital Transformation Project, designed to ensure our systems are future fit and resilient, and that our service delivery is built on evidence backed by data. Our new Client Management System will provide comprehensive and consistent outcome measurement. This year we transitioned over half our eligible programs onto the system, migrating 9,500 clients, 3,000 families and 55,000 case notes from legacy databases.

Central Coast LAC contract

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.

Reconciliation Action Plan

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 our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce increase to 8.7 per cent. However, there is still 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. Among the exciting new goals is a commitment to further increasing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to at least 15 per cent.

Farewells and welcomes

We welcomed two exceptional new Board Members: former Deputy Secretary for Disability NSW, Chris Leach, and Indigenous engagement professional and Ngemba woman, Trish Oxford. They both bring a wealth of experience, sector knowledge and networks. We are privileged to have them providing their strategic guidance and support.

We farewelled one of our Executives, Anita Mansfield, who joined us in 2012 to manage our Family Referral Service. As Executive Manager Community, Family and Youth branch, she managed its growth to over 100 employees and helped establish new programs such as Connecting Home and Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind. She left a strong legacy and will be greatly missed.

While we said goodbye to one Executive we welcomed another. Tanya Miller joined us to lead the Organisation Excellence Branch, bringing adaptive leadership, mentoring and organisational development expertise. She has played a huge role in embedding our new organisational structure. Upon Anita's departure, Tanya ably stepped up to lead the Community, Family and Youth Branch as well.

Our achievements over the year are due to our extraordinarily talented, creative and passionate team. Our deep thanks go to staff, the Board, supporters, and collaborators in the sector for their perseverance and dedication. As always, our heartfelt thanks go to our participants who have shared their lives with us and allowed us to walk beside them on their journey towards inclusion, wellbeing and independence.

Aiming for excellence

We have built a strong and resilient organisation and this year we embedded a new organisational structure to ensure we are ready to meet the challenges of the future.

At the heart of the changes is an even stronger focus on organisational excellence, evidence-based practice, the customer experience and ensuring all staff have the tools and training to deliver consistently high-quality services.

Seamless customer experience

Our new organisational structure includes additional resources to work towards our goal of providing a consistent, seamless and positive experience for all our participants and stakeholders accessing Social Futures services.

Strengthened relationships and partnerships

We resourced a stronger Relationships and Contract Management Team to manage partnerships with our funders and support a culture of collaboration and performance measurement that underpins service delivery excellence.

Digital transformation

This year saw huge progress on the implementation of our Digital Transformation Program to ensure that our information and communication technologies can support our growth now and into the future. This included upgrades to our staff intranet and internal communication tools, learning management system, payroll and HR management, and the rollout of improved video conferencing capability to all staff to support the transition to working from home due to COVID-19.

Communities of practice

We established a number of new Communities of Practice, bringing together staff from across the organisation to collaborate as part of our commitment to better connect, share knowledge and support one another.



Practice excellence

This year we provided a number of tools and resources to support our staff :

- professional supervision model embedded
- reflective practice and yarning circles
- formal learning and development program
- a strong and accessible practice framework that underpins our service delivery



The person is at the centre, connected to people around them.

We are active in holding hope; building capacity; being curious; valuing culture.

Our relationships are collaborative, connected and respectful.

Our practice is evidence based with a focus on safety.

Our three values encompass all we do- integrity, learning and inclusion in our thinking, language and action.

Measuring our impact

We are committed to providing accountability and efficiency in our service delivery.

This year we delivered several new systems to develop our capacity to measure our impact and improve how we work in communities.

Our new system will help us to identify needs and design data-driven programs. By providing better tools to our workers we are supporting them to spend more time with participants and less time on administration.

Integrated client management

We rolled out an industry-leading Client Management System that provides a single integrated platform for managing our participant data, case notes and reporting.

Over half of our programs were migrated from a raft of individual legacy systems onto the new consolidated platform, with the remaining eligible programs to follow in the coming months. By 2021 all our services will be able to provide integrated, consistent and comprehensive data collection and performance monitoring.

Where possible, the system has been integrated with funder platforms to provide automated outcomes-based reporting.

We were also selected to undertake a pilot program with the NSW Department of Financial Services and Innovation, as the only organisation with the technical capability to test automated location-based system-to-system integration of reporting.

Outcomes Star

This year we also embedded the Outcomes Star into our service delivery model. The Outcomes Star tool, which will be integrated with the new Client Management System, supports a person-centred, strengths-based and collaborative framework for assessing where participants are at and identifying their goals. Importantly it provides an evidence-based tool for measuring change at the individual and program level.



Rising to the challenges



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.

Building relationships in remote communities

Social Futures, along with the Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF), distributed one thousand \$50 vouchers to students and their families impacted by the devastating fire season, thanks to a grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal.

With strong connections with the diverse communities across the region, including in remote or disadvantaged areas, we were able to ensure the vouchers reached the families that needed them most. We worked with 35 local schools alongside our family and children programs like Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind and the Family Referral Service to identify students in need and distribute the vouchers.

Putting participants first

While most of our services moved online during the pandemic, for some of our participants, digital delivery was not initially possible.

Many young people we work with, particularly in remote areas, did not have phones or internet access. Our staff quickly responded, providing mobile phones and data packs to vulnerable young people to ensure they could stay in touch and continue to be supported on their journey to independence and wellbeing.

Innovating

As an innovation organisation, we were pleased to be part of a new Telepractice collaborative venture to support children and families across Australia.

Social Futures is one of several leading NGOs joining with Karitane and the Parenting Research Centre on a collaboration that will advance effective Telepractice service delivery. Through COVID-19 there has been an increase in families experiencing a range of significant hardships and greatly reduced face-to-face support. Virtual services can break down barriers and ensure families across Australia receive critical support.

Service continuity

Across our Murrumbidgee and Western service areas, drought was at emergency levels in many communities during the year. In Northern NSW, fires resulted in some of our offices temporarily closing.

To support staff and participants in affected communities during this critical time, we implemented four new strategies for our NDIS Local Area Coordination Services:

- extending plan review timeframes so that participants were contacted at the earliest possible opportunity with the option of a planning meeting at any time
- two-tiered implementation meetings – immediately by phone when a plan is approved, with a follow up appointment next time the participant travels to town
- regular monitoring of plan use to make contact early if the participant was not keeping up with their supports and activities
- R U OK? conversations where participants and family members were encouraged to link with local recovery information, mental health support and community organisations supporting drought or fire-affected families.

As a result of our responsiveness and maintaining strong connections, no plans lapsed due to the crises and all participants and families received the extra support they needed.

Embracing change

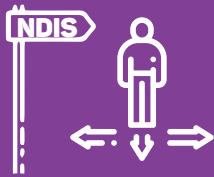
While it has undoubtedly been a challenging time, we have seen some positives in embracing new technologies. While online forums, teleconferences and telehealth have existed for a long time, the lockdown has required many workers and community members to try these platforms for the first time and see the benefits of being able to connect with services, expertise and peers remotely.

As an organisation and a sector we don't see the goal as eventually 'going back to how things were' but rather embracing a new way of working that retains what we have learnt through this experience to become more inclusive, effective and connected.



Disability inclusion

Social Futures works with people with disability, their families and carers to:



Help them access and understand the NDIS

Connect with community supports and services



Put their NDIS plans into action

Work towards making communities more inclusive and welcoming of people with disability



11,199 participants supported through our disability inclusion programs

Disability inclusion staff:

23% with disability

11% care for someone with disability



NDIS Local Area Coordination

Social Futures has been delivering Local Area Coordination (LAC) services as a partner in the community for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) since it first rolled out in 2016.

This year we delivered Local Area Coordination services across more than 80 per cent of regional NSW – in Northern, Western and Far West NSW – both directly and through our subcontractors Mid Coast Communities on the Mid North Coast and Intereach in Murrumbidgee.

In May 2020 we also began preparing to deliver services on the Central Coast from 1 July 2020.

Our Local Area Coordinators assist eligible participants to join the NDIS, prepare individual plans and support their implementation.

2019–20 NDIS LAC snapshot

2,478 first plans submitted



8,721 plans reviewed

8,739 plans implemented



12.3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



733 wellbeing check calls made to vulnerable participants during COVID-19 pandemic

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.

Accessible beaches

Our Northern NSW team engaged with Surf Lifesaving Australia, Disabled Surf Association, individual surf clubs and people with lived experience of disability across the beaches of Northern NSW to make local beaches more accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

The team assessed the accessibility of all beaches in the region and linked clubs and services to disability awareness training, best practice examples of inclusion and community grants processes available to them.

They developed a Northern NSW Beach Accessibility Guide for use by families and professional supports – the first of its type in Northern NSW.

The Northern team worked closely with the Salt Life Saving Club in Kingscliff to apply for funding to purchase two accessible beach wheelchairs, improve their beach access track and construct an accessible beach-viewing platform.



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

Different on the Outside but Same on the Inside

Children and young people with disability are more likely than their peers to have poor mental health. Recent research suggests almost half of the mental health issues we see in teenagers with a disability is due to bullying.

This year we delivered a new program in Western NSW aimed at tackling bullying head-on.

Different on the Outside but the Same on the Inside is the brain child of Social Futures Local Area Coordinator, Prue McCarthy, who has Cerebral Palsy.

Different on the Outside but the Same on the Inside introduces children aged 8-11 to different types of disability, and uses activities and games to teach them empathy. The program offers the opportunity for children to interact directly with a person with disability and to ask open and honest questions.

"I had one teacher tell me about a student who was hearing-impaired but too embarrassed to wear his hearing aids. But after I presented, that student went up to his teacher and said 'I think that I might start wearing my hearing aids so I can learn more,'" explained Prue.

"I know I have done my job well when I see students write on the evaluation forms, 'people with disabilities can do anything they want to!'"



11



**Different on the Outside
but the Same on the Inside**
sessions delivered to **390**
students across **6** schools



Madeleine on the job at St Joseph's Nursing Home

Supporting employment goals

In primary school Madeleine dreamed of becoming a nurse. Now she's living her dream having secured a permanent role as an Assistant in Nursing at a nursing home in the Northern NSW town of Lismore.

It hasn't been an easy road for the 20-year-old. In primary school she was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism/Aspergers. She struggled with understanding social cues and maintaining friendships throughout her school years and was forced to move schools due to bullying.

"My autism is mild but the ADHD affected my ability to focus on schoolwork, plus the classroom environment could be a bit difficult due to my heightened sensitivity to noises and other distractions," explains Madeleine.

Madeleine joined the NDIS in 2017 and has been supported by Social Futures' Local Area Coordination service on her journey.

"Since leaving school at the end of 2018 I've put a plan manager in place and now make my own decisions about what supports I need with the assistance of my Social Futures Local Area Coordinator, Trudy," she says.

After finishing school she enrolled in a TAFE course to gain her Health Services Assistant in Aged and Acute Care Certificate. Her course included a week's work placement at St Joseph's Nursing Home, before graduating in December 2019.

"At the end of my placement the aged care manager asked if I would consider applying for a job there – and here I am!" she says.

Madeleine says social relationships remain her biggest struggle.

"I've got a social worker, a psychologist and a psychiatrist funded under my plan and the psychologist in particular has been really good at helping me with strategies to get through the social stuff."

"I'm aiming to work in my current role for a year, then study to become a registered nurse while continuing to work part-time.

"Midwifery was always the big aim, so I could work with babies. Working in remote areas would be pretty cool too."

Housing, homelessness and employment

Social Futures is a leading provider of homelessness and housing support services in Northern NSW. We work with adults, young people and families to provide:



- early intervention
- case management

- referrals
- outreach



- sector leadership, information sharing and capacity-building

- advocacy for better housing outcomes



We also provide employment services for people in social housing, supporting their access to education, training and employment, with the aim of gaining greater housing independence

3,126

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

Specialist Homelessness Services

Our Connecting Home program supports people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The program, funded by the NSW Government, provides case management and support from Tweed to Grafton. Connecting Home helps people maintain their tenancies or find new housing, and supports people with complex needs.

We also have a specialist Homeless Youth Assistance Program, Connecting You, which provides practical and emotional support for 12-15-year-olds who are at risk or experiencing homelessness. It helps them reconnect with family, friends, work, school and the community.

2019-20 Connecting Home snapshot



2,956 new participants supported



21.8% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

2019-20 Connecting You snapshot



36 new young people supported



16.7% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Working to halve street homelessness

As part of the NSW Government commitment to halve street homelessness across the state by 2025, we 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.

2019-20 Tweed Assertive Outreach snapshot

48 

rough sleepers supported through the Tweed Assertive Outreach program on their journey to secure stable housing

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.”

Northern NSW Flood Assistance Program

This year we wrapped up our Flood Assistance Program after three successful years.

Following the floods in March and April 2017, which devastated many Northern NSW communities, we delivered the Northern NSW Flood Assistance Program funded by the NSW Government. The program addressed the housing needs of some of the most vulnerable families experiencing homelessness due to the flood.

The 29 low-income families in the program over the three years were able to access affordable subsidised housing with our partner North Coast Community Housing (NCCH), headleasing private rental properties on behalf of flood-affected tenants. Social Futures workers also assisted the families in accessing mental health, NDIS and other services. At the end of the three years, the majority of families have been transitioned into stable ongoing accommodation.



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.

Opportunity Pathways

This year we embedded our new Opportunity Pathways program funded by the NSW Government. The program supports people in the Northern Rivers to access education, training and work opportunities to reach their employment and housing goals. It is designed to break the cycle of disadvantage for social housing recipients and reduce their reliance on government-funded social housing or Rent Choice subsidies.

The program offers flexible and tailored support, ranging from pre-employment training and help finding a job, to ongoing support in their first year of employment.

2019-20 Opportunity Pathways snapshot



134 participants supported



31.3% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



30 participants supported to undertake education and training



44 participants achieved paid employment



7 participants engaged in volunteer work

Building confidence

Byron Bay resident Charlotte* found out about Opportunity Pathways quite by chance.

Having just found accommodation after living rough in the town's sand dunes, Charlotte went to a round table of social services and community groups intending to share her knowledge and help others. It was there she connected with Social Futures and the program.

Finding accommodation was just the start for Charlotte. "It's not like when you get a roof over your head that all your problems are solved. My self-esteem and confidence was in a very different place to what it was before experiencing homelessness," she explains.

And it was through working with Lee, her Opportunity Pathways worker, over several months, that she began to build up those internal resources.

"The wrap-around support was so important to reassure me that I could move forward," Charlotte says.

Opportunity Pathways helped Charlotte get her academic transcripts together and she began to think about returning to work as a relief teacher.

"Between us we came up with loads of ideas, including becoming an online tutor," says Lee. "Social Futures was able to help out with a laptop for Charlotte."

"My role is to help people get ready to apply for work. That might be something as basic as a haircut or working on their resume. Then, we hit the road and visit places together where they might find a work opportunity. One of Charlotte's ideas was working in childcare," says Lee.

They found a trial placement with a childcare centre. For Charlotte, it was a daunting but huge first step. One of the nicest parts? "It was great getting a pay check," she says with a smile.

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



Families and children

We support children, young people and their families to reach their full potential, providing:



- family counselling and mediation
- psychological and mental health services

- therapeutic counselling and group work



- early intervention
- case management

- assessment and planning services
- intake and referrals



- outreach
- sector leadership, information sharing and capacity-building

2,191 children, young people and their families supported through **3** family and children programs

Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind

Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind is an early-intervention family mental health service operating in Lismore and Richmond Valley local government areas, funded by the Department of Social Services.

We promote wellbeing and resilience in children and young people who are at risk of developing or are showing early symptoms of mental ill health.

This year we began delivering The Parent Trail, a free creative art therapy group for parents wanting to improve their wellbeing and mental health. The ten-week program provides therapeutic early-intervention support for parents and their children and assists participants to explore challenges, build confidence in their parenting skills and talk to their families about mental health.

We also began delivering emotional resilience groups in schools. These offer a range of ways to explore feelings and emotions, with a focus on kindness, inclusion, building confidence, mindfulness, and identifying safe people and supports in young people's lives.

2019-20 Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind snapshot



236 children, young people and their families supported



17.8% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

Support through creative play

January was a stressful and confusing time for 11-year-old Tim* and his brother Ian*. A family dispute had seen them miss the first weeks of the school year and their mother, Jennifer*, was worried about them. Tim lives with anxiety and, although a good student, was not thriving socially in school and seemed to be struggling to keep on top of his mood at home.

Jennifer, who has her own experience with mental health challenges, was connected to Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind in late March.

At the same time, COVID-19 was radically changing the way Mijung Jarjums offered support to families. Face-to-face meetings were out and the challenge for program worker Sarah was to find ways to engage remotely. It was a crash course in telehealth. But the results were positive.

"For the first two months, my only interaction with Tim and his brother was through the computer," explains Sarah.

"I provided online counselling but we began by playing games such as a scavenger hunt around his home, which helped him build trust and engage with the conversation element of the sessions."

Sarah's engagement with the family saw improvements at home and within Tim. When Tim first started with Mijung Jarjums he rated his self-confidence as a one on the Outcome Star, used to measure participants' journeys. By the time Sarah and Tim's meetings concluded in July, his self-confidence was soaring with a score of five out of five!

Sarah wanted to ensure he stayed connected to supports and thought he might enjoy Social Futures' Clubhouse program.

"I know that kids who love video games and technology, but who are otherwise a bit socially anxious, just thrive in this setting."

Tim fitted straight in and has been a regular at the Clubhouse since COVID restrictions eased.

Tim's mum is pleased with how far he has come since Christmas. "He's able to deal with things a lot better," says Jennifer. "Conversations I had with Sarah have helped – I've been able to take a better approach when I'm talking to him and he's a lot happier to tell me about his day."

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



Family Referral Service

We deliver the Far North Coast Family Referral Service (FRS), part of a state-wide network providing support to children, young people and families around challenges and demands in everyday family life. Family Referral Services are a Keep Them Safe initiative funded by the NSW Government, and supports the Premier's Priority to protect our most vulnerable children. We provide intake and outreach services, including information, case coordination and referrals, to local services from Tweed Heads to Grafton.

Mental health was identified as a particular challenge for a number of regional and remote schools. This year we strengthened our partnership with Lismore Catholic Diocese, working alongside a number of additional schools in the region. We linked in a breakfast club for one of the schools and provided soft entry points for families into support.

We also provided specialist training to the Catholic Youth in Action Program to support 22 Youth Ministry Officers to provide safe and effective wellbeing checks for vulnerable older people.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, our FRS service experienced a significant increase in the number of referrals from police, education and NSW Health Child Wellbeing Units. As children and young people returned to school in June we also saw an increase in the number of referrals from schools for issues such as withdrawing from school and social interactions, anxiety and depression, technology addictions and risk-taking behaviours.

2019-20 Family Referral Service snapshot



1,879 participants from **535** new families supported



19.9% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



38% experiencing domestic and family violence

Elements Youth and Family Relationships

Elements Youth and Family Relationships program services the Northern Rivers providing free counselling and psycho-social support for 10-24-year-olds and their parents to build supportive family relationships. We also deliver the Healthy Relationships program to schools in the area. Funded by the Department of Social Services, the program challenges young people around gendered violence, sexism, respect and communication.

2019-20 Elements snapshot



76 new children, young people and their families supported



288 counselling sessions
9 group sessions



21% experiencing domestic or family violence



10.5% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



10.5% impacted by child protection issues



18.4% participants with disability



7.9% LGBTIQAP+ participants



77% participants have used knowledge, skills or strategies from the program

Young people

Social Futures youth services are tailored to meet the unique needs of young people. They are person-centred, strengths-based, and informed by evidence. Our no wrong-door approach, outreach in remote areas and collaboration with schools and other organisations means we are able to reach vulnerable young people wherever they live.

We provide:



- mental health
- alcohol and other drugs (AOD) support

- inclusion
- community engagement
- educational re-engagement



- housing and homelessness
- family skills
- family planning

- early offender intervention
- youth capacity-building



- outreach
- sector leadership, information sharing and capacity-building

3,597 young people supported through **6** youth programs

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. He was starting to come to the attention of the authorities for all the wrong reasons, and was at risk of making some poor choices.

The police referred him to the 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."

Outside of formal appointments, Jason regularly checked in with Todd, providing support and advice.

Todd's community stepped up as well. A family friend Sara, 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.

Todd said one day he'd like to have his own business. "I want to become a chef, with my own food truck!" he says.

"I was impressed with Todd," said Jason, "he had every reason to give up but he stuck with it and now he has a job, has started building his hours for his L plates and can help Sara out a bit more with the household finances. He's doing really well."

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. I'm feeling pretty proud."

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



Youth on Track

Youth on Track is an early-intervention program for 10-17-year-olds funded by the Department of Communities and Justice that identifies and responds to young people at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. We service Coffs Harbour and Clarence Valley local government areas.

2019-20 Youth on Track snapshot



40 young people supported



53% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



73% reduced or stabilised formal contact with police post referral



100% reduced their risk of re-offending at program completion



82% of high risk young people improved their education and employment risk factors



70% of high risk young people improved their family and community risk factors

Clubhouse

The Clubhouse is a safe, free, after-school drop-in program for young people aged 12-18. Delivered in Lismore, it offers members access to technology and mentors who nurture their creativity and assist them to gain skills and confidence in STEAM subjects (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths).

During lockdown we worked closely with the NSW Government to offer online sessions to keep vulnerable kids engaged. We also increased our engagement with young LGBTIQAP+ people, running 30 Mini Fruits sessions to create a sense of connection and community for this vulnerable group.

2019-20 Clubhouse snapshot



949 attendances with **200** young people supported



185 sessions delivered

Links to Learning

Links to Learning is funded by the NSW Government and administered by the Department of Education. It aims to increase life skills such as team-building, communication and conflict resolution in young people aged 13-15, and increase attendance and engagement in schooling. It provides inclusive learning opportunities and builds self-esteem via individual case management and workshops.

2019-20 Links to Learning snapshot



236 young people supported



77.1% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



18.2% participants with disability

Reconnect

Reconnect assists young people aged 12-18 who are at risk of homelessness. The program aims to stabilise their living situation and improve engagement with their families and services from Grafton to Tweed. The program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

During COVID-19 we continued to provide support, group work and case management over phone and video calls. To ensure remote access for all our disadvantaged participants, we supported them with a phone or internet connection to ensure they could stay connected during lockdown.

2019-20 Reconnect snapshot



174 young people and their families supported



9.2% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants

Getting it Together

Getting it Together helps people from Grafton to Tweed aged 12-25 find opportunities for positive change in relation to drug and alcohol use, building self-esteem and improving life skills through individual and family-focused interventions and group work. The program is funded by the NSW Government.

This year we significantly increased our engagement with Aboriginal young people through the work of the highly skilled team, half of which is made up of Aboriginal workers. The team was supported by culturally specific social media campaigns, and we also began delivering yarning circles in schools to provide a soft entry into our service and encourage engagement.

2019-20 Getting it Together snapshot



105 young people supported

38.1% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants

headspace

Social Futures delivers headspace in Lismore and Tweed Heads and outreach services in surrounding communities, providing early-intervention mental health services to 12-25 year-olds and promoting young people's wellbeing.

2019-20 headspace snapshot

Lismore



1,664 young people supported

3,522 occasions of service



21.4% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



24.6% LGBTIQAP+ young people

Tweed



1,178 young people supported

3,053 occasions of service



12.5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants



20.3% LGBTIQAP+ young people

Developing new skills for domestic and family violence support

When our headspace Lismore team noticed a rise in young people presenting due to experiencing or witnessing domestic and family violence, they teamed up with the Men and Family Centre to collaborate on a training package for headspace staff on gender-based violence.

The team also developed resources to start a support group for young women experiencing or witnessing domestic and family violence, co-facilitated with our in-house family therapist.

Culturally safe services

Both Lismore and Tweed headspace put in big efforts this year to boost engagement and connection with local Aboriginal young people and their communities.

The Lismore team recruited a new group facilitator with extensive experience working with Aboriginal communities to develop programs that focus on identity, culture and belonging.

We teamed up with Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Service to develop a program in the small town of Casino to engage Aboriginal youth in learning about physical health and fitness, relationship skills, and ideas about identity and culture.

We collaborated with the Broncos Indigenous Girls Academy, allowing us to participate in their cultural events and workshops with girls from local schools, providing a soft introduction to headspace and creating a warm referral pathway.

headspace Tweed delivered Youth Space Nights, designed and governed by young people with the support of Aboriginal workers and community. The empowering sessions are aimed at increasing connection between young people and provide a culturally safe space for them to identify issues, co-design services and solutions, and have their voices heard.



Health and wellbeing

Social Futures supports mental health and wellbeing across our suite of programs.

We also deliver specialised services in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and suicide postvention.

561

participants supported through 2 health and wellbeing programs



StandBy: Support After Suicide

We deliver StandBy: Support After Suicide on the NSW North Coast. The program is recognised as Australia’s leading suicide postvention program dedicated to assisting people and communities impacted by suicide. We provide a 24/7 free and confidential coordinated community crisis response service that supports the health and wellbeing of families, friends and associates bereaved by suicide. StandBy is a program of United Synergies, funded by the Australian Government.

This year we also developed a new resource aimed at providing advice and support around the impacts of suicide in LGBTIQAP+ communities.

2019-20 StandBy snapshot



237 individuals and families impacted by suicide supported



21.9% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander participants



40 workshops and projects aimed at building the capacity of community members and professionals to better understand significant grief and loss

Choices

Choices Reproductive and Sexual Health Clinic provides specialised, inclusive and professional health services to assist young people and adults make positive choices around their reproductive and sexual health. It is funded by Northern NSW Local Health District.

Many steps are taken to make the clinic accessible to people on low incomes. These include online bookings, translation services, no cancellation fees and free condoms. This year we also began providing discounted menstrual products.

We undertook a significant regional needs and services assessment, Future Choices.

This assessment provided valuable information about sexual and reproductive health needs in the region. This information was crucial to informing changes to clinic strategy and priorities into the year ahead.

We also delivered outreach engagement with young women at the rural Kyogle High School, providing reproductive health education.

2019-20 Choices snapshot



324 new clients supported

1,1096 client consultations



66.2% low income

40% Health Care Card holders



5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients



8% culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients

The meaning of Service

For more than 25 of the 40 years that Choices, Social Futures' reproductive and sexual health clinic, has been operating in Lismore and surrounding region, one face has been a constant: Nurse Andrea Brooks. With her retirement in April 2020 she reflects on her years of service.

"Someone I know was astounded that I would be in the same job for 25 years but as another friend explained, this is what we mean by 'service'," says Andrea.

Andrea joined Choices (formerly Lismore Family Planning) in 1993. While much has changed since then, including the name and location, Andrea says the core role of the clinic has not. "Our service centres around reproductive issues: contraception, pregnancy, and supporting pregnancy and termination choices," she explains.

Having completed her nursing and midwifery training in Canberra, Andrea came to the region in the 1980s. Some general nursing in Lismore hospitals followed, then she spent seven years as an independent midwife specialising in home births, before joining the Family Planning Service.

Many times over the years, Andrea has found her role extending beyond clinical practice. She spent hours organising lifts, talking to specialist clinics and facilitating financial support.

"Sometimes I was the only one people could talk to and I developed an advocacy role. Some women come to us who simply don't have money and don't even have transport."

Some aspects of the role have altered over the years. School visits used to be regular events, but as schools have developed their curricula on sex education, demand has faded. Andrea used to conduct blood test screening for HIV and other diseases, but that too has passed. Even the frequency of repeat pap testing has declined as new therapies have been introduced.

And, very recently, the clinic has begun to see more clients talk about gender transition and gender affirmation.

Even so, some things remain constant, says Andrea. "People come to us because they know they will get the right support and advice."



Andrea Brooks.

Strengthening communities and sector leadership

We are a regional leader and work alongside our partner organisations to strengthen and build capacity within the community and health sector by providing training, development and advocacy.

85

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



Regional transport

Transport is one of the many challenges faced by communities in regional and remote areas around Australia. Having access to a good transport system can lead to significant economic, social and environmental benefits. The Social Futures Transport Development Project is a regional initiative funded by Transport for NSW, focused on improving access to affordable transport options for residents of the Northern Rivers.

The Transport Development Project works with local transport providers, interest groups and local government to develop regional solutions.

Initiatives include managing the local public and community transport information website goingplaces.org.au, convening transport working groups and running transport promotion activities.

This year we brought together representatives from Northern Rivers transport providers, Transport for NSW, local government and health and community services for a regional forum to provide a more coordinated approach to transport in the region.

2019–20 goingplaces.org.au snapshot



38,012 page views

32,527 individual users

Northern Rivers Housing Forum

Social Futures' Northern Rivers Housing Forum provides a collaborative space for community and government organisations, academics and community members to identify local housing issues and needs. The forum works towards innovative and sustainable ways to address these issues.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit and the lockdown and restrictions began impacting employment and economic stability in our communities, many people in private rentals found themselves in rent arrears and at risk of homelessness. Despite the announced moratorium on evictions, most renters and community service workers were unsure of the rules, how they would be applied and where people could get support.

We hosted a tenancy law workshop with representatives from the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre and NSW Legal Aid. It was attended by 35 professionals from 13 local and state government organisations and non-government organisations.

The workshop provided a breakdown of the new and existing tenancy laws and regulations as well as an opportunity to explore referral and support options.

Community Aged Care Sector Support

Social Futures' Community Aged Care Sector Support program is funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program, designed to develop the home support service system.

We deliver the Northern Rivers Community of Practice Ageing, bringing service providers together to build capacity, cohesion and responsiveness in the aged care sector.

This year we teamed up with our StandBy: Support After Suicide service to deliver two specialised workshops for aged and palliative care workers. The workshops covered supporting clients, as well as their friends and family, to increase understanding of significant grief and loss.

Clarence Correctional Centre impacts study

With the announcement of a new 1,700-bed correctional centre set to open in Grafton, we were concerned about the capacity of the local community and social services to prepare for the likely increase in prisoners leaving the centre seeking support.

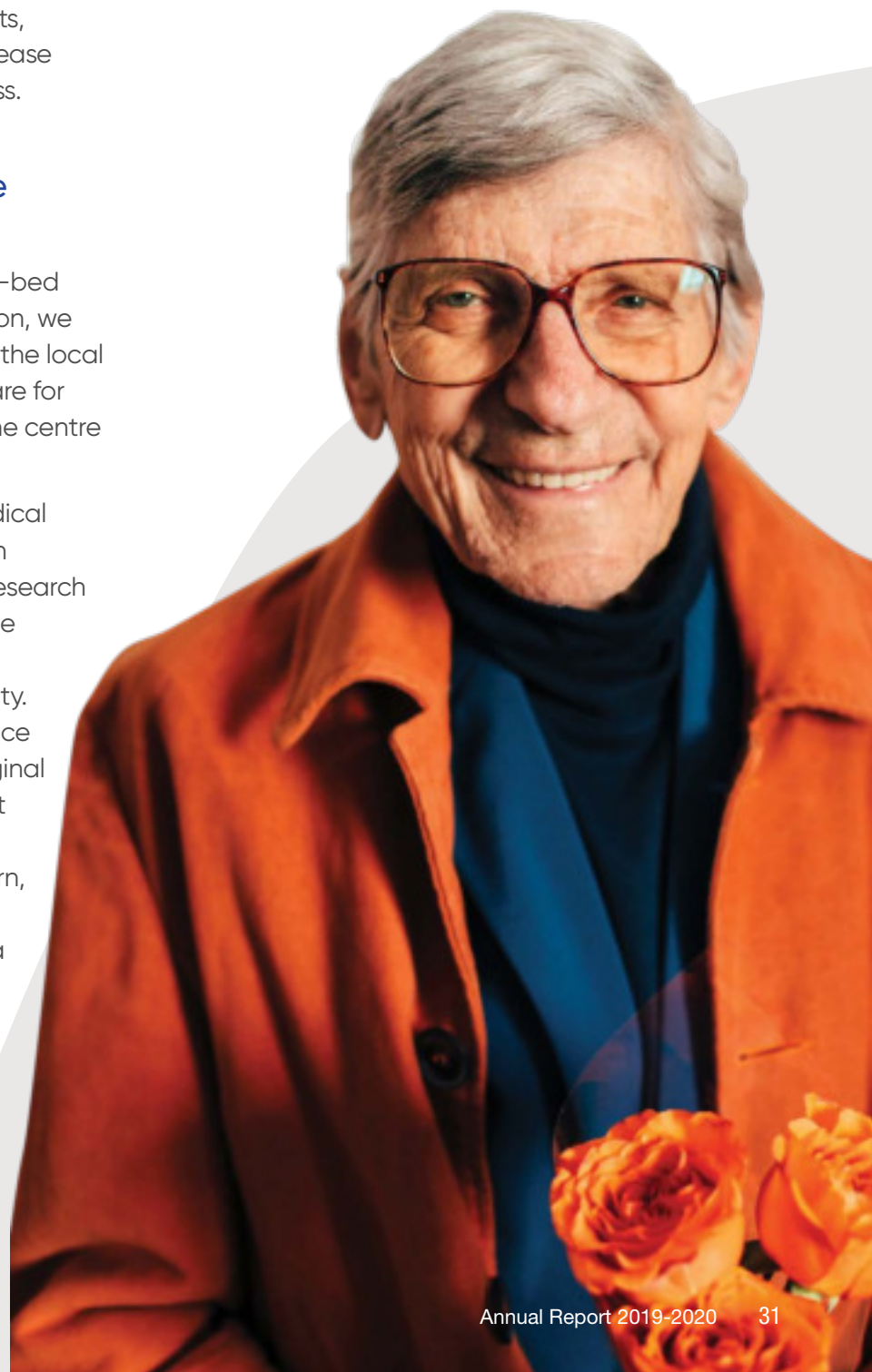
In collaboration with Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation, we engaged an independent consultant to undertake research into the existing capacity of local service providers and the likely impacts of the new correctional centre in the community. The study engaged 30 community service providers across housing, health, Aboriginal services and counselling and found that homelessness and community housing services were areas of particular concern, with some discharged inmates likely to present with complex needs, requiring a range of service supports.

The study also found while there were potential gaps, many providers felt the Correctional Centre presented an opportunity to increase cooperation among providers to meet the extra demand.

Dementia Carer Education Project

In consultation and collaboration with service providers, we deliver dementia care education and training to carers of people living with dementia, to support them in providing care at home.

It is empowering and supportive for carers to share their thoughts and coping strategies with other carers. When the pandemic hit and we were no longer able to hold in-person carers' sessions, we decided to create a booklet, 'Carers Sharing with Carers', in collaboration with the Northern NSW Local Health District Dementia Outreach Service, to share their ideas.



Better Chances Forum

Our Better Chances Forum supports improved outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families by bringing together sector professionals from the community, government, education and private sectors to share knowledge and collaborate.

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.

Community Hub

In 2020 we launched the Social Futures Community Hub, an online space for the community, health and human services sector to share information and connect. Workers and their organisations can share updates about their services, new projects and programs, grant opportunities, professional development opportunities and events.

2020 snapshot

community-hub.socialfutures.org.au



184 articles published since its launch in early 2020



950 monthly users across the first six months, with around **2,400** monthly page views



165 newsletter subscribers and **194** registered editorial contributors



Looking ahead

Supporting people with disability on the Central Coast

From July 2020, we started delivering Local Area Coordination services across the NSW Central Coast.

Through May and June our dedicated staff worked hard to set up two new office spaces, and recruit and on-board 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 laptops, phones, tablets, printers and other equipment they would need to hit the ground running.

We look forward to supporting the Central Coast community over the next three years.

Ballina Clubhouse

We are excited to be expanding our programs with a new dedicated youth service in the Northern NSW town of Ballina, opening in October 2020, with funding from the NSW Government. Ballina Clubhouse will be a free after-school drop-in program for young people aged 12-18, offering access to state-of-the-art equipment that supports them to explore science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) in a practical and engaging way. It also facilitates connections with industry mentors to gain skills, confidence and awareness of employment pathways.

Embedding customer participation in our culture

As an organisation, we know that we get the best outcomes from our programs and services when we include the people who use them in their design and planning.

That's why we are working with health and social services consultants, Beacon Strategies, to help us ensure the voice of customers informs how services are planned and delivered across the organisation.

Through this process we are seeking to further involve customers in our service planning, and embed customer participation as a core part of our organisational culture.

McKenzie Lofts

Northern NSW has some of the highest rates of homelessness and lowest rental affordability in Australia. For the past year, we have been developing our first affordable housing development project in the Northern NSW City of Lismore.

The project will provide 12 compact independent living units, including two accessible dwellings, built in four separate buildings.

The McKenzie Lofts project aims to:

- increase supply of affordable and appropriate housing stock into the market
- assist people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness to access affordable and appropriate housing
- demonstrate a viable and attractive mixed-tenancy model that can attract future impact investment to be scaled up and replicated in other locations as part of a broader solution to housing stress and homelessness.

Reconciliation

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.



8.7% of our workforce identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

4,598 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants supported across our footprint*

* Data unavailable for Clubhouse program

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our work with Aboriginal communities is guided by our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This year our first 2017-19 RAP came to an end with some major achievements:

- we consulted with Elders and commissioned Aboriginal artwork for use in our offices and communications . We also installed welcome messages in the local Aboriginal language in all of our offices
- we developed and implemented an Aboriginal Employment and Retention Strategy which has resulted in an increase in the number of staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to 8.7 percent. This included:
 - professional development and mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff
 - creation of identified positions in our NDIS LAC program to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and communities
 - identified student placement and traineeship positions
- annual cultural awareness training for staff
- introduced Acknowledgement of Country or other protocols at the commencement of meetings across the organisation.

Developing our new RAP

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.

Cultural engagement

This year our Northern NDIS Local Area Coordinators worked alongside our Reconciliation and Engagement Officer to undertake outreach at rural schools and increase connections to Aboriginal communities, including in Tabulam and Bonalbo.

Our staff reached out to NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner, Northcott, to collaborate on outreach and arrange ongoing fortnightly visits at local schools. This initiative has resulted in meetings being held on Country, more culturally appropriate engagement and rural participants accessing the NDIS with greater ease.

Stay Home, Stay Safe

During the initial COVID-19 lockdown we had to put many of our NDIS Local Area Coordination outreach services on hold. One of our community partners, Bunjum Aboriginal Corporation, expressed concerns that families were feeling isolated, were worried about being unable to access their service as a 'one stop shop' and were struggling with children being home from school.

In collaboration with Bunjum and Northcott ECEI, we developed an initiative to help keep Aboriginal families connected with our services and receive essential NDIS and community information during this national crisis.

The result was a co-designed project across mainstream, community and Aboriginal organisations that supported 150 Aboriginal families living across regional Northern and Western NSW, through 'Stay Home, Stay Safe' information and activity packs for kids.

After rolling out the Stay Home, Stay Safe packs in Northern NSW, we collaborated with services in our Western footprint including WINS Community Centre, Wellington; Cowra Child and Family Network; Centacare Bathurst; Birrang Enterprise, Orange; and Mission Australia, ECEI Partner Western NSW.



Financial snapshot

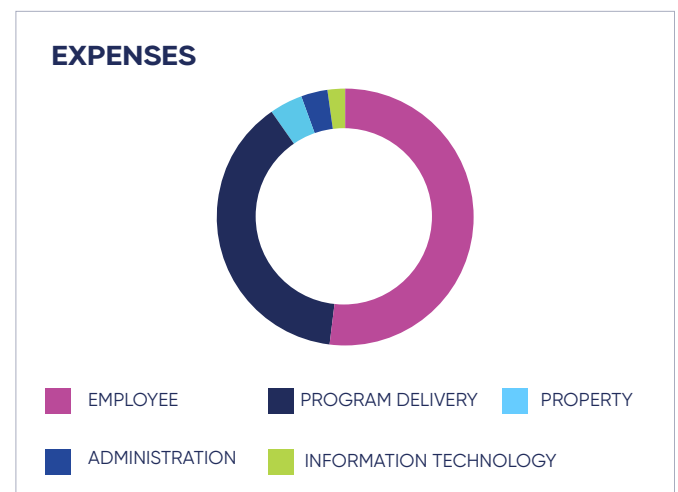
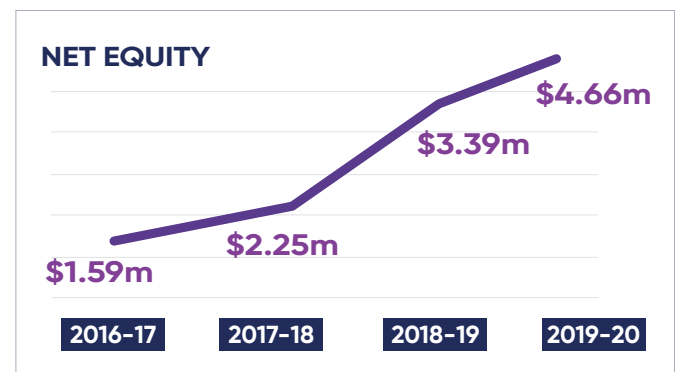
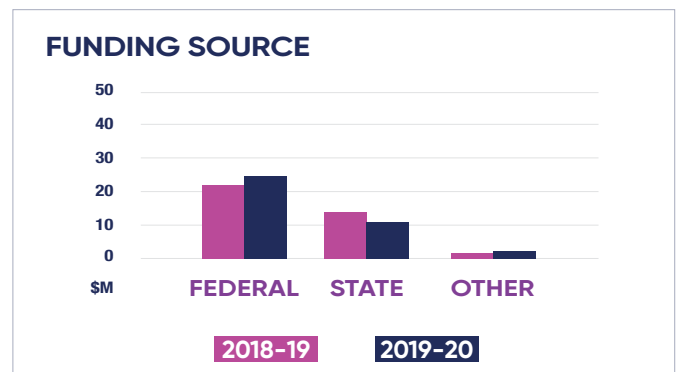
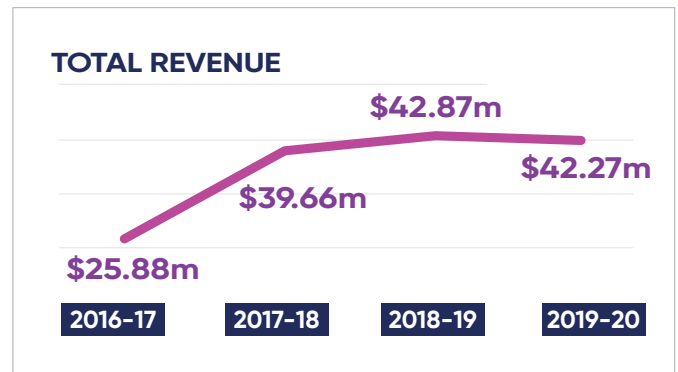
In a year that delivered many challenges, from the devastating impact of fire to the all-encompassing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Social Futures has continued to deliver our services and stand with our communities.

We have developed even stronger processes in response to the restrictions of COVID-19, to ensure continuity of service. This has been made possible by the dedicated efforts of our staff and the investment made in the current and previous years in our systems and processes.

Alongside meeting these challenges we have been able to deliver our best annual financial result at \$1.273 million, growing our net equity to \$4.665 million, and maintaining a strong liquidity position with a current ratio of 1.39. The increase in equity enables us to ensure our commitments are fully covered and provides confidence in our preparedness for future events.

With turnover having stabilised, we focused on bedding in the improvements of previous years and addressing the challenges of 2019-20.

Our financial position provides us the certainty that we can seek further opportunities to deliver positive social change.



Our people

Our work is built on the quality of our people and the relationships they create with others.

322 staff



Strong workplace culture

We strive to create a workplace culture where everyone:

- is passionate about their work
- has strong relationships with colleagues, service users and the community
- knows and can demonstrate their work is having a real and lasting impact
- takes opportunities to grow and develop
- is safe and supported

This year we began a workplace culture project designed to identify and develop the workplace behaviours, values and goals that will help us work even more cohesively towards our strategic goals, and achieve positive social change in our communities.

Capability framework

We developed and implemented a Capability Framework to support the development of role design, position description, recruitment, performance management, learning and development and strategic workforce planning.

Supporting staff through the tough times

We know that the many challenges faced by our communities this year also impacted our staff. The bushfires meant many of our staff had to be evacuated or needed time to prepare their land and houses. Sadly, a few of our staff lost their homes in the fires.

We were proud to support our staff during this difficult time with paid natural disaster leave, flexible working arrangements, access to counselling and regular wellbeing check-ins.

When COVID-19 hit, the needs of our staff as well as our participants were at the forefront of our minds. Following government advice, we swiftly moved to ensure we were providing a safe workplace. Within just two weeks we transitioned most of our staff to working from home, providing and tracking IT assets and processing over 270 Working from Home Agreements.

We developed a Flexible Working Toolkit to assist staff adjust to the new work arrangements. We also provided additional leave benefits to ensure support in the event of contracting COVID-19. We provided a dedicated intranet page with regular updates and bulletins about changes in the workplace as well as government messages.

Our Board

The Board is responsible for Social Futures' strategic direction, including oversight of program and service performance, and contractual and financial management.



Pat Grier, AM
Chair

Pat Grier has extensive experience in the health care sector as well as sales, marketing and general management. In 20 years as CEO of Ramsay Health Care he grew the organisation to become Australia's largest private hospital operator with more than 100 hospitals internationally and 30,000 staff. His early career included senior management roles at Reckitt & Colman and S.C. Johnson & Son as well as General Manager at Revlon Australia. He received the Member of the Order of Australia in 2010. Pat has previously served on a number of boards, including as Chairman of the Private Hospitals Association.



Keith Sloan
Treasurer

Keith brings more than 40 years experience in research, consulting and teaching in finance and economics. He was an Associate Professor in the Business School at Southern Cross University where he worked for over two decades. Keith is committed to working to redress inequalities in Australia and build stronger regional communities. He has more than 15 years' experience on listed, unlisted and not-for-profit boards. He is currently on the Board of the Australian School of Accounting and President of the Singapore Institute of Purchasing and Materials Management.



Karen Hazan
Deputy Chair

Karen Hazan is a director of Trenches McKenzie Cox Solicitors of Lismore. She is an accredited family law specialist and has experience in all areas of advocacy including employment law, mental health and criminal law as well as conveyancing, probate, wills and contested estates. She is dedicated to making a contribution to her community and supporting the work of organisations that provide quality services to people who find themselves socially or economically disadvantaged. Karen was previously a long-standing board member for Youth Connections North Coast Inc.



Leanne Coventry

Leanne has been in the financial services industry for more than 18 years. She has built strong relationships with a variety of Aboriginal companies, people and communities across eastern Australia. Leanne is passionate about financial education and has used her professional experience to provide practical support and opportunity to regional and remote Australia through her current role as Manager of Indigenous Business at Westpac. She was awarded one of the bank's Bicentennial Service Honours in 2017 for her ability to predict her customers' needs and find solutions every time.



Orit Ben-Harush

Orit brings extensive experience in research and digital communications. She spent a decade researching the internet, mobile phones and social media at Queensland University of Technology, where she completed her PhD. She has previous experience in marketing and most recently worked as a health program manager and data analyst at North Coast Primary Health Network. Orit is an expert in the role technology can play in shaping our lives and connecting communities. She is an active member in her local community where she has supported the development of activities for children and young people.



Penny Cox

Penny Cox has built a diverse career in sales and business management in the service and IT industries. She is Head of Sales and Account Management at Inlogik, a global leader in expense management solutions. She has provided business support to numerous government, corporate clients and over 100 not-for-profit organisations. Penny also has a background in communications and journalism. She brings valuable lived experience as a carer for people with mental illness and disability. She is an advocate for social justice and believes everyone deserves a fair chance in life.



Margarita Escartin

With a background in law, Margarita is an experienced Indigenous engagement and social performance practitioner who has worked in government-funded legal service, established a successful Indigenous law practice in a national firm and founded a consulting practice in Australia and internationally. Her pro-bono work for Indigenous communities has assisted them maximise economic participation outcomes from projects on traditional lands. More recently, Margarita has engaged in stakeholder management and the development and implementation of social and impact investment frameworks and programs.



Chris Leach

Chris has 39 years' experience in the disability sector at federal and state levels. He is a former Deputy Secretary for Disability in NSW. He has worked in senior roles in aged care, community care, corporate services, child protection and housing. Chris managed the transfer of NSW disability services to the NDIS and contributed to the development of the landmark Disability Services Act. He is also on the Board of the Northern Rivers Conservatorium of Music and previously served on several government boards, including the NSW Mental Health Advisory Board. He was awarded the Public Service Medal in the 2015 Australia Day Honours.



Kirstie McClean

Kirstie has more than 20 years' experience in marketing including strategy, branding, communications, and consumer behaviour. She has worked with major organisations including Fairfax Media, McDonald's Australia, Mercedes Benz UK and Royal Mail UK, as well as not-for-profits and local, state and federal governments in Australia. Kirstie currently provides marketing consultancy and teaches postgraduate and undergraduate programs in marketing and strategy at Southern Cross University. She previously spent eight years on a private hospital board.



Trish Oxford

Trish is focused on the economic development of Indigenous people, businesses and community, with senior roles in the private sector as well as more than 20 years' experience working in human services within state government, from frontline service provision to senior executive leadership. In 2018 after joining Westpac's prestigious Equilibrium Program she transitioned into the financial sector. Trish is a proud Ngemba woman, from Bourke, NSW. She has served on several boards from large not-for-profits to local sporting clubs.

Our Executive Leadership team

The Executive team provides operational management and implements Social Futures' strategic goals.



Tony Davies
Chief Executive Officer

Tony has over twenty years' experience in leadership roles in government, non-government and private enterprise. As a qualified lawyer he has strong advocacy skills. He is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has served on a number of boards including Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), Yfoundations and as President of the NSW Council of Social Services (NCOSS). He has served in a number of government advisory roles including NSW Social Innovation Council and the Ministerial Advisory Group on vulnerable children, youth and families.



Michael Carter
Chief Financial Officer; Executive Manager Support Services

With qualifications in accounting, marketing and management, Michael is an experienced Chief Financial Officer with a background in investment management, health, higher education and social services. He is respected for his ability to deliver in highly regulated environments and contribute to the realisation of strategic goals. Michael currently sits on the Northern NSW Local Health District Board, holds graduate membership of the AICD and is continuing studies in Governance.



David Thomson
Executive Manager Inclusion

David brings more than 30 years' leadership experience in education, retail, aged and community care, as well as extensive multi-site management, business development, and start-up business expertise. He has worked with people living in the South American Andes to Australia's Gold Coast. With a strong desire to see social justice for all, he thrives on providing the best possible customer experience and is privileged to help make Australia a place more inclusive of people with disability.



Katrina Luckie
Executive Manager Strategy and Engagement

Katrina is an experienced regional and community development professional with technical skills spanning project management, governance, business development, statistical analysis, research design, advocacy, sustainability and capacity-building. She is Chair of Summerland Credit Union and has held previous leadership roles with Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers and Northern Rivers Regional Development Board.



Tanya Miller
Executive Manager Organisational Excellence; Community, Family and Youth

An experienced human services Executive Manager, Tanya brings a wealth of knowledge in adaptive leadership, mentoring and coaching and organisational development. She has worked in social services for 30 years across not-for-profit, consultancy and government agencies in Australia and New Zealand. She has extensive experience in frontline, management and governance roles in the fields of mental health, disability, and child and family wellbeing.

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey over the past year.

To our participants, for the opportunity to walk beside you as you take bold steps towards your goals.

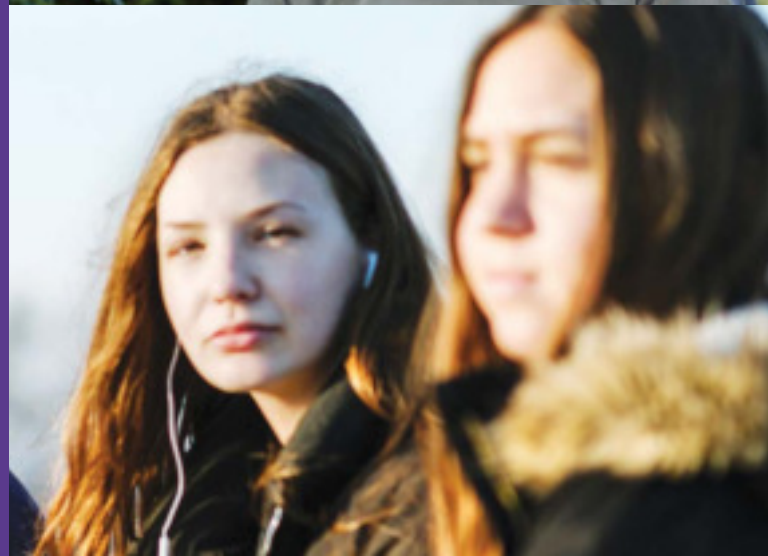
To our dedicated staff, for your care, dedication and passion in making Social Futures a regional leader in our sector and a voice for our communities.

To our community supporters, delivery partners and funders, thank you for investing in the important work that we do. Your commitment to Social Futures creates positive change in the lives of our participants and our communities each and every day.

Social Futures is grateful for the donations and in kind support we received throughout the year. As a not for profit organisation, the generosity of our supporters allows us to achieve that little bit extra for our communities.

We would like to acknowledge our major donors:

- Byron Bay Lighthouse Fun Run
- Mid North Coast Machinery Restoration Club Inc.
- Darren Sutton
- Hemp Foods Australia
- Woodlawn Parents and Friends' Association





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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.