



2020 Annual Report

We make a difference in people's lives

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Thank you to our Partners

ABI Road Tour	Haven Home Safe
Anglicare Victoria	Intereach Loddon LAC
5 Angry Men	La Trobe University Bendigo
Annie North Inc	Laura Hogan – OT Supervision – Centre for Disability Studies University of Sydney
Arena Theatre	Living with a Disability Research Centre- La Trobe University
Bendigo & District Aboriginal Cooperative	Make a Change Australia Jumbleads
Bendigo Art Gallery	Marcus Turnbull – TurnCode Productions
Bendigo Community Health Services	Matching Pets to People
Bendigo Health	Mental Health Victoria
Bendigo Health- Community Care Support Carer Support	Murray PHN
Bendigo Health Older Persons Mental Health	National Disability Services
Bendigo Health Psychiatric Services	NDIA Planners
Bendigo Psychology	Peace Choir
Bendigo TAFE	Possability
Bendigo Tech School	Regional Arts Victoria
Bendigo Venues & Events	Simon Brown Greaves- FBG Group
Catholic Care Sandhurst	Simon Harvest
Choice Voices Choir	Sunraysia Residential Services
City of Greater Bendigo	Tamara Marwood- Director Create Business
Consumer Participation Group	The Angel Fund
Creative Victoria	The Cube, Wodonga
Dementia Australia	Z Fit Studios
Department of Health and Human Services	
Dr. Gary LaVigna - Institute for Applied Behaviour Analysis	

Agenda

*Forty-First Annual General Meeting:
6.30pm Monday 30 November 2020*

**Venue: Training Room |
First Floor 48 Mundy Street**

1. Acknowledgement of Country
2. Welcome
3. Notice of Meeting
4. Apologies
5. Confirm Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
6. Reports:
Presentation of Reports
(a) President and CEO Report
(b) Audited Financial Report
(c) All other reports are presented in the Annual Report
7. Reception | adoption of Reports and audited Statement of Accounts
8. Election for the vacancies on the Board of Management
9. Election of Auditor for the year ending 30th June 2021
10. General Business (of which 7 days notice has been given)
11. Meeting Close

The logo consists of a dark blue, textured rectangular shape with a rough, hand-painted edge. Inside this shape, the words "Life. Choice. Community." are written in a white, bold, sans-serif font, stacked vertically.

**Life. Choice.
Community.**

Minutes

Minutes of the Fortieth Annual General Meeting

Boardroom | 48 Mundy Street Bendigo

Monday 25th November 2019

Meeting Commenced: 8.00pm

Present: Ross Baring, Dru Marsh, Alison Maclaren, Jessie Wade, Chris Bigby, Ian McLean Shelley Moore, Neil Sing

Minute Taker: Terri Mackay

Acknowledgement of Country:

Read by Ian McLean

Notice of Meeting:

Read by Dru Marsh

Apologies: Nil

Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Motion: That the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting be confirmed

Moved by Ross Baring

Seconded by Jessie Wade Carried

Reports:

The following reports were addressed verbally in addition to being presented in the Annual Report

-

President & CEO Report – Ross Baring | Ian McLean

Read by Ross Baring | Ian McLean

Treasurer Report – Alison Maclaren

Read by Alison Maclaren

Written stories and data are presented in the Annual Report as a snap shot of the year

Motion: That all reports be received as presented in the Annual Report

Moved by Ross Baring

Seconded by Dru Marsh Carried

Motion: That the audited Statement of Accounts be received

Moved by Ross Baring

Seconded by Dru Marsh Carried

Election of Committee Members:

5 Positions Vacant

Nominees

Nil

Election of Auditor:

One nomination received for Auditor of Golden City Support Services Accounts for the 2019|2020 financial year being AFS & Associates Pty Ltd

Moved by Ross Baring

Seconded by Jessie Wade Carried

General Business:

Nil received

Meeting Closed: 8.45pm

President and CEO

In reporting on strategic events from last year COVID-19 dominates the landscape and our response demanded the majority of our attention and energy from February 2020 to the present day. Our COVID planning allowed us to equip and lead our staff, as well as bring awareness to the wider service sector. We feel fortunate not to have had COVID enter our services but it wasn't luck it was the diligence and commitment of our staff who implemented our plans, adjusted the way we work at very short notice and self-isolated when being tested or if they were a close contact of someone with COVID-19. GCSS staff have kept the people we support front of mind and shown a strength of character in the face of a complex and real threat.

Prior to the onset of COVID we had, in late January 2020, implemented a new organisational structure. A structure that would create a foundation for GCSS for the next 5 years by: being more agile; focused on our 'customers', support of our staff and the quality of their work; and being affordable in line with the design and constraints of the NDIA. The new structure has been well and truly tested in these COVID times and has proved a sound model. Five positions finished up at the end of January 2020 and we thank Kerri Hicks, Jo Zeman and Trevor Cox for their contribution to GCSS over many years.

The NDIA is continually changing the design and pricing structure of the NDIS; bringing uncertainty and risk to our work and capacity to provide our services. We were pleased to participate in the Roundtable discussions with David Cullen, Chief Economist for NDIA, on the pricing review, SIL review and be part of the Victorian DHHS, NDIS Implementation Taskforce, Participant Needs and Mainstream Interface working group. However in June 2020 the NDIA seems to have adopted a methodology of implementing unilateral change, monitoring the impact on providers and making changes as cracks and market failure appear. This is not a strategy that recognises the value of service providers, and instead creates real uncertainty and provides an environment where skills and investments, not yet understood as essential by the NDIA, but critical to the standard of service in the sector, will be lost.

Thank you

Ross Baring retired from the GCSS Board in October 2020 after 12 years of Board membership, nine of those as President. We thank Ross for his extensive contribution to GCSS.

We acknowledge and thank all GCSS staff for their individual contribution this year.

We would like to thank the members of the Board for their tireless efforts and expertise in steering GCSS during a truly unique and challenging year.

Thank you to our Retiring Board Member

Ross Baring retired from the Board of GCSS on 5th October 2020. Ross has been a Board member for twelve years, nine of those years as President and Chair of the Board.

It is over eighteen years ago that GCSS first met Ross, Wynne and their son, Richard; as we began to set up to support Richard into a better life.

Ross was first voted onto the Board at the November 2008 Annual General Meeting and later as President in December 2011.

Ross brought his skill and experience from first-hand advocacy for Richard, his legal career, and experience in the mining industry on company boards.

Ross has always shown an interest and concern for the welfare of all GCSS staff and he has given guidance and support to the CEO and Senior Managers.

Ross' keen interest and support of the arts has included a commitment to CreateAbility.

Ross has had an unwavering commitment to quality support services and has not shied away from the difficult and often complex situations that have arisen, including reforms in each of the three service areas of GCSS, three restructures of our organisation and striving to implement best practice. Ross has been a keen supporter for the implementation of Person-Centred Active Support; firstly through our interactions with Prof. Jim Mansell, Tizard Centre, University of Kent; and



then Prof. Chris Bigby, Living with Disability Research Centre, La Trobe University.

The detail of Ross' contributions over the past 12 years is too extensive to list: in fact it is appropriate to simply observe that Ross has been a key contributor to all that we have achieved together. In recognition of Ross' contribution the GCSS Board has proudly made Ross a Life Governor of GCSS

From all of us at GCSS thank you Ross for your extensive contribution and we wish you and Richard all the very best.

Around Our Agency

Customer Service

At Golden City Support Services we have long held the view that access to disability services should not be a 'lottery', with some people with disabilities and their families seen as more deserving to receive services than others but rather it should be a "right" to expect and receive appropriate services to meet your needs so you can be a contributing member of your community; especially in a country as prosperous as Australia.

The Customer Service Team at GCSS, is currently made up of six staff; Andrew, Georgia, Maddy, Mandla, Michelle and Norman. The team has years of experience in the disability sector. Some of the team are drawn from the ranks of our support staff, whilst others have a lived experience of disability and customer service experience from outside this sector.

The team are very clear on their role and that is to define and explain our service offerings to current and potential customers. Help customers identify if we are the right agency to provide support, work with our rostering and operations teams to assess if we will have the capacity to provide the quality service we know our customers expect and support and evidence customer experience when required

For all of us, 2020 has been an extraordinary year. It has brought out fears and anxieties; for our families, our communities and ourselves. Those with disabilities, those recovering from mental illness and those ageing in our community have been amongst the most vulnerable groups as this pandemic has swept across us.

Our Customer Service Team has had to rapidly adjust as part of a broader community that is living with this pandemic. We have also been there to provide support and adjust services as the pandemic has unfolded and impacted on those we support.

As centre based services were suspended, as community activities for all of us were severely restricted from the first Victorian State of Emergency onwards and as our Customer Service Team rapidly moved to working from home with all the personal and staying connected issues that brings; it was crucially important that our team stayed connected with and focused on the needs of those we support and their families.

Early this year our team were looking to carefully grow our services. We recognised we had more people wanting our services than we had capacity to provide; but we found ways of carefully expanding and growing our services without compromising quality. Then came the requirement to reduce worker mobility in response to the pandemic and that coupled with being prepared to have staff available to meet a pandemic outbreak meant that we had to effectively turn away new services and not look to expand current services. Our Customer Service Team, just as they were celebrating providing some incredible supports to new customers and expand other services had to refocus on those services we were currently providing, albeit often heavily modified under the restrictions.

Our Customer Service Team have demonstrated a capacity to "pivot with our customers" to the challenges and demands those we support face.



Support Coordination

GCSS Support Coordination has continued to expand and develop and now consists of 5 full time and 4 part time team members providing both general and specialist support coordination.

The last 12 months has seen a continuing focus on development of expertise in the areas of mental health, complex supports, justice, housing and disability.

The team have increased their knowledge of mainstream and NDIS specific supports and resources available by research and peer support. All team members have completed a 2 day support coordination training course and regularly attend webinars and seminars presented by sector relevant groups to expand their knowledge of support options. Professional supervision was also introduced this year as a resource for the team.

The 12 months to 30th June 2020 brought many challenges, one of which was the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, the team

had to rethink how the support coordination role could best support participants through the pandemic generally and the lockdown specifically. Support looked different for each participant, but generally included regular participant welfare checks, working with providers and allied health therapists to reimagine what support could look like for each participant, sourcing appropriate technology to allow family contact and contact with the support networks to continue, providing continuing up to date advice on government directives and use of PPE, and organising how everything was to be paid for within the participant budget, including a review if the level of funding available became an issue. This was on top of the regular tasks a support coordinator is responsible for such as collating outcome reports, attending planning meetings, eight week reviews, setting up service agreements, implementing new plans and assistance with achieving identified goals. The ability to communicate clearly, negotiate in a considerate way with providers, and empathise with all has never been more relevant.

There have been many challenges, some of which are; the lack of available social housing for all participants but especially for those with a psycho-social diagnosis, inconsistent plans, plans without appropriate levels of funding to mitigate risk or achieve the stated goals, the lack of availability of allied health and behaviour support specialists, the lack of choice of quality support providers, and inconsistent responses to queries by the NDIS hotline and planners.

Pam, Kirstie, Rozita, Joe, Katie, Shelley H, and Yvonne, thoughtfully led, engaged and supported by Tammy, are to be commended for their dedication to the achievement of a good outcome for participants, their relentless enthusiasm, and their determination to adapt and adjust in a year that has brought

constant challenges and change like no other, all the while keeping the participant they are supporting at the centre of their work. Shane has provided the team with valuable financial guidance and support. We welcome Sarah, who has recently joined the team, and give thanks and best wishes to Frederikke, Mel and Eric who moved on to other roles during the year.

Reception and Management Support

The people at Reception are the face and voice of GCSS. In this year of the COVID-19 pandemic there was more emphasis on being the voice. The team were able to adapt monitoring the phones and their other duties to an out of office environment for a period of time. The level of phone calls from participants who had become anxious due to the uncertainty of a world with COVID increased and the team found themselves providing more invaluable reassurance and phone support than they usually would. This year we welcomed Amelia to the team, joining Tania at the front desk to create a warm and welcoming environment.

Terri has continued to support the CEO and the executive management team as well as supporting the reception team. She has been invaluable monitoring and discharging the PPE during the COVID period, in addition to her other work, in what has been one of the busiest years.

Financial Intermediary / Plan Management

The GCSS Financial Intermediary/Plan Management service has rapidly grown over the past 12 months.

This was achieved by introducing Luminary software to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Luminary has allowed us to move from supporting under 50 participants at the beginning of the financial year to over 150 at the end, ensuring statements are issued in a timely



manner at the end of the month, payments are made to providers within 3 days of receipt and information is readily available to clients and families when requested.

The focus over the next 12 months will be on launching the participant portal for even more timely access to information, providing access for providers to upload invoices to the portal and establishing a regular newsletter.

The introduction of Luminary has allowed Kate and Elly to concentrate on trying to ensure the support from the Plan Manager becomes a smooth and effortless part of a participant's NDIS experience and they have shown a high level of commitment and determination to achieve this.

People and Culture

An organisation is defined by its culture. It is culture; our attitudes, our values and our perceptions and the way we ultimately act that will have the greatest impact on shaping the way we provide support and the quality of the outcomes those we support achieve. An underlying tenant at Golden City Support

Services is that we will only grow services at the rate at which we can recruit and maintain support staff who are aligned with our culture and who can learn to consistently apply our practice framework.

Our support staff rely on the skill and leadership provided by their Practice Leaders and Practice Coaches to help develop and maintain skill in the often complex work we do. In turn our support staff and their front line leaders rely on a broad range of roles across the agency to support the frontline work we do. Specialists and expertise in rostering, support coordination, finance, plan management, customer service, human resources, information communications technology, and leadership; all need to come together with common purpose.

In 2020, as tragic and demanding as the global pandemic has been, it has offered an insight into the culture of GCSS. Staff across the agency, from the essential role of support work to specialist functions, have truly been focused on maintaining a quality service.

It, of course, has been far from easy; working in uncertain times where the risks of transmission of disease are all too real. Our staff have had to not only focus on work but meet the challenges themselves of living in families and in communities that were being disrupted by sudden changes to the norm. This year our People and Culture Advisor, Reanna, implemented a range of mental health wellbeing measures supported by initiatives facilitated by our Community Development Officer, John and others. We actively promoted, and our staff sought support from, our free and confidential professional external counselling service, an integral part of our Employee Assistance Programme. Reanna also supported and guided staff to resources that could assist to negotiate issues that arose due to the pandemic.

We found new ways to recruit staff in 2020. Building on our strength of a well-developed face-to-face recruitment, induction and probation programme, we reengineered the process to be online. Our Communications Officer, Catherine and our ICT staff David and Alex worked with Reanna to develop and implement a robust online recruitment and induction system, much of which we will probably keep beyond the pandemic.

Finance Team

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown was a major disrupter which issued challenges for the Finance Team this year. We transitioned to working from home and adapted checks and processes to accommodate this. The silver lining is this will give us the ability to work efficiently and flexibly in the future.

COVID required quoted services to be renegotiated as group supports transitioning to on line or 1:1 supports, SIL residents remained at home during the day, short term accommodation only allowed 2 participants at a time, and other in home and community access supports across the NDIS, CHSP and Mental Health sectors were reimaged to suit a COVID environment. Processes were reconfigured to adjust for the introduction of COVID pricing by the NDIA, additional grants from the federal Department of Health and the acquisition of PPE, along with the additional reporting and administrative requirements were required. PPE became an additional expense not previously budgeted for.

A \$50,000 assistance payment from the federal government was useful for the additional out of pocket administrative costs incurred. The NDIA provided a cash flow assistance advance of \$1,015,179 to ensure cash flow was adequate to pay creditors and staff while new funding streams were

negotiated. This advance will be recouped in six instalments from October 2020.

Software changes this year included the transition from the MicRoster rostering system to ProSIMS, which allowed us to have information in one place, and the introduction of software to assist with the efficiency of STA claiming. In the next 12 months we plan to build on this progress by integrating these systems further and utilising Power BI for quicker data analysis.

The State government introduced the Long Service Benefit Portability regulations from January 1 2020, for community service workers providing NDIS services which requires us to remit any entitlements for long service leave to a state run regulatory authority.

We have had the opportunity to be involved in the NDIS national reference group for the Disability Support Worker pricing model. We were able to contribute our real life experiences to those creating the pricing methodology for the NDIA.

The challenges for the next financial year will be managing the SIL funding which eliminated funding for all non-face-to-face support from 1 July 2020. It funded such essential components, as team meetings, practice leadership, practice coaching and report writing essential components for active support, Positive Behaviour Support etc. Funding was reduced to include participant facing rostered support only. There is insufficient funding provided in participants core supports to allocate to non-face-to-face supports that were defunded through SIL. The NDIS used the attendant care pricing model to fund SIL supports which has different (lower) costing assumptions to that required for support provided in a SIL environment. The NDIS intend to introduce a new SIL funding model before the end of the 2021 financial year but until then GCSS will need to operate

on a level of funding significantly less than previous years.

The NDIS have also introduced a new model for funding group supports which is required to be implemented by the end of the 2021 financial year. The finance team will need to build and test the sustainability of the new funding model, which introduces change to how non-face-to-face and infrastructure supports are quoted and funded.

It is testament to the experience and fortitude of the team of Shane, Elly, Rob, Michelle and Punit that they have been able recognise the issues, interact with the NDIS to provide solutions and adapt and change processes quickly and efficiently. They have ensured the cash flow has been well managed and that all revenue and expenditure is accounted for accurately and within the regulations. Their experience and commitment are an invaluable asset to the organisation and I appreciate the high level of support they provide to me.

Workforce Planning and Rostering

In March we successfully transitioned from a dedicated rostering program to our comprehensive CRM system, ProSIMS. To maintain the levels of functionality that GCSS require we supplemented the CRM system with bespoke tools developed for the unique needs of our organisation and the industry. In collaboration with our Information Communication Technology team and a local company, TurnCode Productions, we designed a set of systems, collectively known as Customer Central, which allow the team to have a fully holistic view of operations and make real time changes. This proved to be instrumental throughout the pandemic in managing our rosters, with staff teams reduced by up to 20% at times due to the need for COVID-19 testing and isolation. The success of these systems was evident, with no cancellations to the services we offer and only

needing to reduce to base level staffing on rare occasions.

The suite of systems has also allowed us to report accurately within 48hrs of shift completion to our finance team. This gives our finance team the information they need before billing customers accurately and appropriately, which allows our customers to know exactly where their funds are going.

The fluid nature of the pandemic meant our workforce was required to constantly adapt to a changing landscape. This included changes to workforce mobility, with government regulations requiring staff to limit the number of locations they work across. Thanks to this preparation we were in a good place to make these changes rapidly and without any impact to our customers or staff hours.

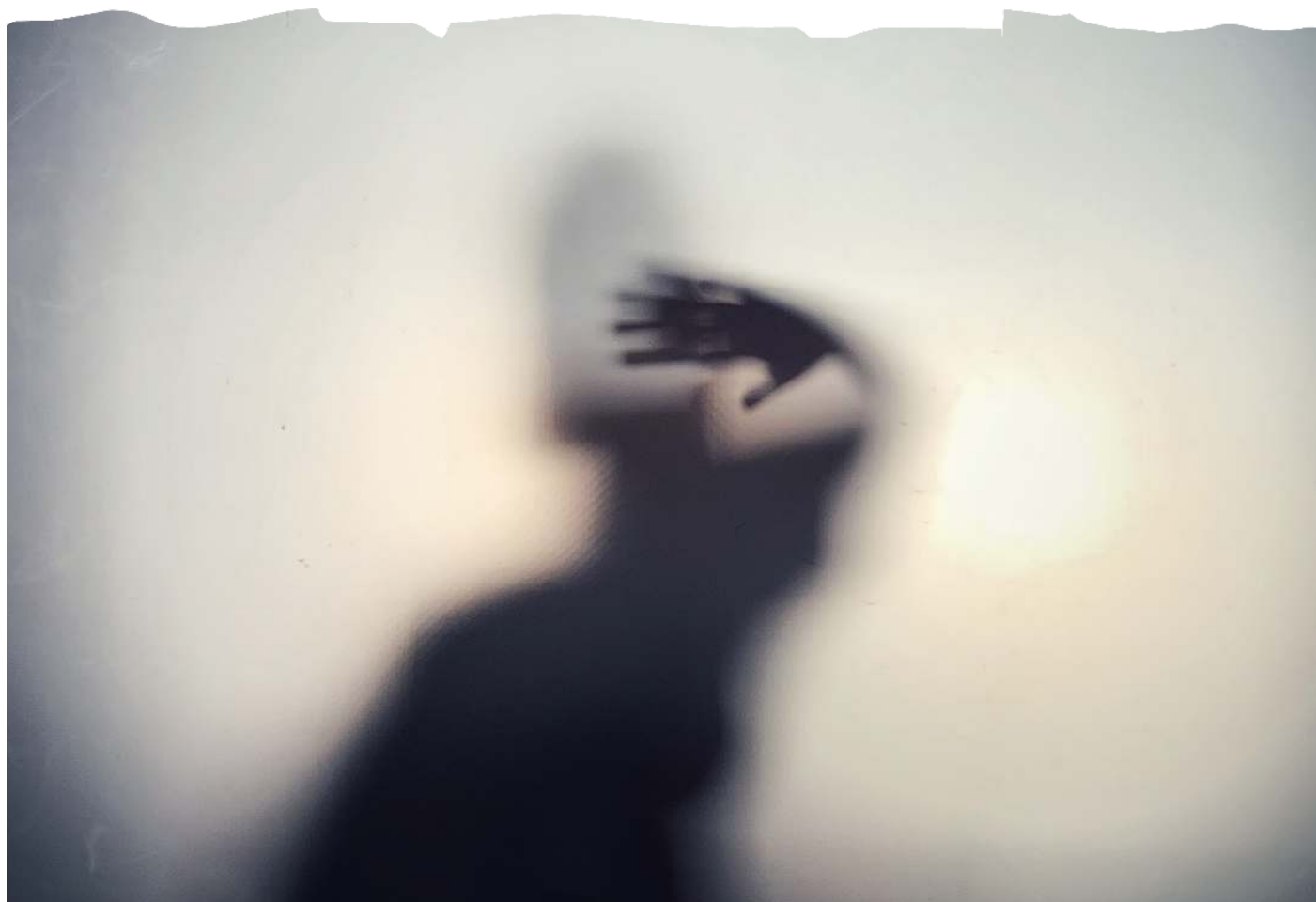
CreateA

(the new public face of CreateAbility)

This year COVID-19 has resulted in major disruption to our plans. We have not been able to run groups in face-to-face settings since March (apart from a brief window in July). Planned performances have been cancelled and there is not yet a clear pathway back to our usual activities. Despite this we have found ways to stay connected to our participants and continue developing as an arts company.

We established a reference group with members from our participants, partnering organisations and interested individuals. This group has been instrumental in keeping our work focused on what is important over this time. The new brand was part of a process of building a strong image and increasing our profile as an arts company. We have recently completed the development of a website that is a part of this focus on our future.

Video meetings via Zoom have been one way that groups have been able to connect.



CreateA's performance ensemble meet weekly on Zoom and the choirs, Choice Voices and Peace Choir, hold their rehearsals on Zoom. Choice Voices was awarded a grant from City of Greater Bendigo to respond to COVID-19. This project looks at multiple ways to keep choir members connected including producing short video interviews with choir members that can be shared on social media. All of this has forced us to advocate for our participants to have better access to technology. We have been surprised by how much skill people have shown in being able to use and navigate their devices.

Our theatre work is particularly challenged by the impact of COVID-19. Indoor events with audiences may not return for some time. We are thinking about how we create new work and how we present it to audiences taking this into account. Regional Arts Victoria has assisted us with a grant to research the possibilities that augmented reality may provide. This has given us the opportunity to develop new partnerships with Bendigo Tech School and Arena Theatre.

Challenges and restrictions have had the positive effect of prompting us to use technology in innovative ways and in ways that give us greater human connection.

Creative Links

Our way of working in Creative Links has also had to change this year. Currently the sessions we run are on Zoom. Some participants have assistance in their home to participate in this format. The focus of the program has not changed and, in fact, has become more relevant. Having meaningful, planned activity in daily routines is essential to maintaining quality of life when life has been disrupted and so many things are uncertain. This is something extremely valuable that Creative Links offers.

Communication, engagement in activities and social interaction are the key elements of this program. While social interaction on-line on screens is not the same as face-to-face it does fulfil a need. The benefit of daily social interactions is widely recognised as supporting our mental and physical health. In Creative Links participants learn to have those exchanges between each other and not only with staff.

We look forward to next year when we can return to some form of in-person work but we will be retaining the learning from this year in promoting the technological literacy of participants and building better ways to communicate and engage.

Infrastructure

Our infrastructure underpins the delivery of our services. Providing services across the region in group and individual homes and respite facilities. Providing a fleet of some 35 vehicles to support access to the community. Olivia, with the support of many of our partners ensures this infrastructure is maintained and available to use.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

In any given year the demands on maintaining and constantly improving our ICT infrastructure and services is considerable. It takes highly expert internal support from David and Alex who make up our dedicated ICT Team.

In 2020 we implemented further ICT security measures based on the Australian Signals Directorate Essential Eight. We implemented the collaborative communications platform, Microsoft Teams and expanded our systems and digital workflows. Steadily progressing these initiatives through 2020.



Due to the pandemic our ICT Team were confronted with the unexpected requirement to set up remote working in a very short period of time; so we could all stay connected. The rollout of over 40 home offices, the connectedness through video conferencing and a platform able to support staff to meet across the agency was operational within weeks back in March 2020. This was an incredible and enduring achievement.

Operations

To ensure we could viably continue into the future, a review to streamline our business operations, services and processes saw changes implemented to our organisational structure, which was put to the test throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.

We made considerable organisational changes to the structure of our service delivery departments at the beginning of this year. The changes, by design, allowed for more collaboration and at the same time quicker decision making and direction. The changes

were very timely as the structure proved ideal for working through this pandemic.

Practice Team

Throughout Golden City Support Services restructure our team of Practice Coaches have been a pillar of support and guidance for our Practice Leaders. Expanding their skills and expertise in our practice framework and wider responsibilities. With a commitment to exceptional service delivery, continued staff development and dedication to Positive Behaviour Support, two of GCSS' Practice Coaches are undergoing a six-month training course by the prestigious Institute of Applied Behaviour Analysis (IABA). This advanced, competency-based training practicum is appropriate for psychologists, behavioural consultants, resource specialists and other qualified professionals charged with assessing individuals who exhibit severe and challenging behaviour and with designing positive behaviour support plans based on a functional analysis of behaviour.

The Practice Team were agile in adapting our training programs to online platforms. Base Training was the first program to be tailored, inducting all our new staff which enabled our recruitment of staff to continue. As the year progressed this was fine-tuned and broadened to include refresher training for our experienced staff. Challenges included coordinating and modifying a mixture of delivery methods, presenters and materials and supporting staff with varying levels of technical understanding to access and contribute to the sessions. The new 'break out' sessions have been seen as very positive allowing experienced staff to give practical examples and drill into the content.

Looking forward, the Practice Team plans to build on its expertise base to become more multi-disciplinary. Besides their skills and knowledge in leadership and coaching, the current team is a mixture of Behavioural Practitioners and an Occupational Therapist who all work closely with our Community Development Officer. In the near future we will be able to include the expertise of an experienced Mental Health professional and will be seeking out others with relevant skills to contribute to the team.

Practice Leadership

Our Practice Leaders have led a mixture of teams to provide supports in 12 supported accommodation settings, three respite settings and a variety of supports in the community or in private homes. While some community supports were unable to continue under the directions of Victoria's Health Minister, all other supports continued, if modified.

All teams moved online to meet and support each other creating networks that could share and collaborate. While this was unusual to all at the start, it very quickly became the way we operated as staff and their leaders adopted the new use of technology. For some, who



tended to provide supports often in isolation, it meant a level of connectedness they had never experienced under our past model.

Our Practice Leaders continued to lead the way, side by side with their teams throughout the year; coaching, mentoring and supporting them with whatever came their way. There was a lot of information to digest, and at times conflicting or confusing information to replay and work through with their teams. Those teams were also supporting people through a very uncertain and, at times, scary period.

Mental Health Services and CHSP Ageing Support

Our mental health services and supports to our ageing population have continued throughout the year and have been a vital support for a vulnerable group of people who could have become quite isolated, in some instances we introduced extra service to ensure this would not happen and that people remained connected.

Mental Health Services

The HOME mental health program has secured two more years of funding from Bendigo Health.

The HOME program is a mental health based psychosocial program for people with a diagnosed low prevalence mental health condition who are seeking to develop their skills and confidence to live independently in the community. Regular referrals are from Bendigo Health Adult Mental Health Team and the Youth Team.

The Murray PHN funded Psychosocial Program (CoS/ETA) has an additional 12 months funding. This program has successfully supported participants applying for NDIS support funding.

The Mental Health Social Outreach Group continues to meet weekly at venues around Bendigo and has remained operating with alternative formats during the COVID restrictions. Most participants have funding through the NDIS.

GCSS staff accessed Mental Health Awareness Training (2019) through Mental Health Victoria and our Mental Health Manager, Andrew McSwain has participated in Mental Health Victoria working groups.

GCSS auspice the Mental Health Consumer Participation Group funded through DHHS Victoria. This year the group:

- Made submission to the Victorian Mental Health Royal Commission
- Provided feedback to focus group survey conducted by Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group
- Made submission to Productivity Commission report on the financial cost of mental health
- Reviewed policy and practice guidelines submitted by local mental health services

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

GCSS has been one of the few services to provide continual outreach support to older participants over the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. Our group programs moved to an

in-home, outreach model of support over the periods of social restrictions. During COVID-19 restrictions the Older Persons program provided additional support to carers of our older participants and made regular welfare check phone calls and home visits.

This year the CHSP sector has been focused on implementing a prescribed re-ablement approach to support that focuses on the strength and engagement of those we support. We also participated in the review of the Older Persons Intake, Assessment and Planning Tools and carers have received a simplified support plan.

Communications

Communications strategy this past year necessarily focused around communication with our customers and staff in regard to the pandemic. The Golden City Support Services website and our internal intranet “Flo” provided rolling information for our staff and customers. The Customer Service Team are dedicated to communication with our customers and our Rostering Team and human resources more broadly developed and maintained appropriate communication strategies to support our staff in uncertain times.

Communication internally goes much deeper. It goes to how we redesigned the dissemination of information and gathered for meetings and shared experiences using platforms such as Microsoft Teams. Communication is also about having the right documentation and the right information, in a controlled and managed way readily available for those that need the information. This year saw fast changing information come to us that needed analysis and contextual dissemination, much of it around remaining operationally COVID Safe. Thanks to Catherine in the role of Communications Coordinator and Amelia in the new role of Records and Data Assistant.

A Thank You to Our Staff Teams

To all of our staff teams, we thank you for your passion, resilience and unwavering support through what has been a year unlike any we have experienced before. There are too many of you to name, but we have a lot to be proud of, our achievements would not have been possible without your commendable contribution.



Values and Mission Statement

Enhance the Quality of Life of the People We Support

Golden City Support Services began in 1979 to enable people with disabilities to live in and be part of their own communities, in residential neighbourhoods, in a home similar to other people, with the opportunity to develop their own independence, personal ambitions, personal relationships and abilities.



We implement support practices that work



We are a purposeful organisation with committed staff



We do what we say



We work locally within communities



We make it easy for individuals and families to use and understand our services



We work for social change

Funding Sources

Golden City Support Services recognises the following main source of funds in the 2019-2020 financial year

Direct Funding

Bendigo Health Care Group
Commonwealth Department of Health
Department of Health and Human Services – Victoria
Murray PHN
NDIS Participants through the National Disability Insurance Agency

Requests to provide services funded through:

Bendigo Health Care Group
City of Greater Bendigo
Regional Arts Victoria
The Angel Fund
Villa Maria

Life. Choice.
Community.

Golden City
SUPPORT
SERVICES



First Floor
48 Mundy Street
Bendigo, Victoria 3550
Phone 03 5434 2777
Email enquiry@gcss.org.au
Web www.gcss.org.au



Registered
NDIS
Provider

My Aged Care
Supported by the Australian
Government Department of
Health



createAbility



Consumer
Participation
Group



Projects we support