

Annual Report 2022



We FOCUS

...on providing people with
the support they need when
they need it

...on tailoring services to
support individuals,
families, parents, youth,
people living with a disability
the aged, and carers

...on you
so you can focus
on what matters

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Chairperson's Report

2021- 2022 was another year peppered with sporadic COVID-19 and additional influenza impacts causing staff shortages and interrupting client service. FOCUS Connect staff embraced these impacts with resilience, commitment and adaptability, continuing to put our clients first, enabling FOCUS Connect to deliver excellent services across Aged Care, Disability and Community Services which is exemplary. This leadership and quality of care is displayed at all levels of the organisation from top down. It has exceeded all expectations and firmly shows the organisation culture and management are on track to further cement FOCUS Connect as a leader in Aged, Disability and Community services in Macarthur and beyond.

The new Federal government and associated industry adjustments have challenged FOCUS Connect and driven a number of strategic initiatives and changes. With Macarthur and Greater West acknowledged as the growth areas of Sydney, FOCUS Connect has firmly concentrated on building strategic goals and objectives, and through a combination of rationalisation around existing services and identification of emerging community needs FOCUS Connect is building the capability to address this rapidly evolving regional change.

In a year full of exceptional ongoing achievements, it is hard to isolate a just a few. Of note:

Completion of the fit out, occupation, and the official opening of the new Head Office in Chamberlain St represents a milestone for FOCUS Connect. We no longer rent space for head office staff and have secure overnight parking for the bus fleet.

While a charming heritage listed building, the Manse in Lithgow St was not suitable for the provision of Aged Care services due to increasing government safety requirements. This year the building was sold and the Aged Care team is now located in new rented offices in Ingleburn close to many clients and public transport.

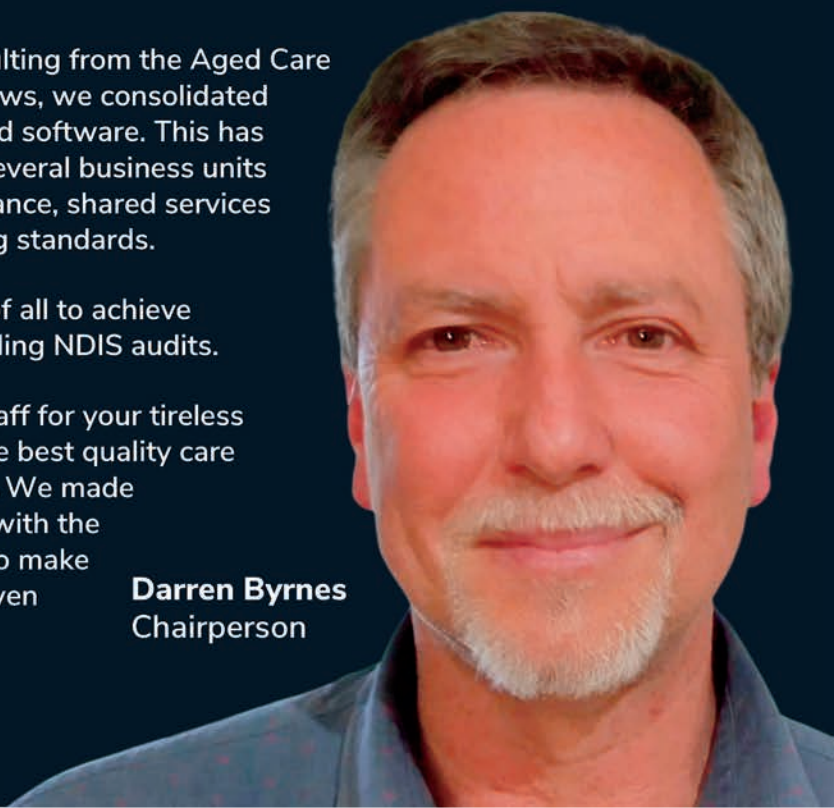
An advertising campaign involving radio, community events and bus signage delivered an increase in new clients for Aged Care and Disability and raised FOCUS Connect's profile in the community.

To prepare FOCUS Connect for changes resulting from the Aged Care Royal Commission and future Disability reviews, we consolidated several systems with Visual Care Cloud based software. This has substantially streamlined processes across several business units and delivered improved productivity, governance, shared services and better client care aligned to the emerging standards.

A special mention for the momentous work of all to achieve certification in both ISO 27001 and the gruelling NDIS audits.

I thank Board members, management and staff for your tireless efforts to ensure FOCUS Connect delivers the best quality care in the region across all areas of the business. We made extraordinary progress this year and I know with the momentum, energy, commitment and drive to make a difference to our community, 2023 holds even bigger success for FOCUS Connect.

Darren Byrnes
Chairperson



CEO Joint Report

FOCUS Connect's short and long-term objectives are to increase our capacity to support the community, ensure our long-term viability, strengthen our partnerships with the community and improve organisation quality, accountability, and governance.

Focus and purpose have always been at the heart of our organisation. We have ensured that we have a clear compass for decision-making in the face of challenges like COVID-19, weather events, inflation, labour shortages, and the ever-increasing risk management and compliance requirements. There have been many challenges, but as a community and organisation, we exited the financial year more robust than ever before.

Despite the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and climate challenges, we accomplished 100% continuity of services to all our clients and participants and achieved the following key milestone developments:



Technological advances

We successfully implemented Visualcare, a leading end-to-end care management software platform for our Aged Care and Disability Services. Visualcare has created efficiencies and helps us to save time with client bookings, rostering of staff, invoicing, client quotes, and service agreements.



Upgrading our Aged Care, Disability, and Community Services

We introduced new policies, procedures, systems, and best practices according to professional casework and clinical standards. We enhanced our frontline workforce & leadership with new skilled talent and introduced comprehensive training programs.



International Standard (ISO) 27001 Certification

In November 2021, we achieved full ISO 27001 certification, which recognises that FOCUS Connect has systems, processes, best practices, and infrastructure to protect and manage the sensitive commercial and client information of FOCUS Connect. In light of the considerable disruptions to society caused by data breaches of large corporate firms across Australia in 2022, ISO 27001 is an essential part of FOCUS Connect's data security management.



Aged Care Industry Reforms

In response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, the Australian Government and Aged Care Sector has responded by implementing comprehensive industry-wide reforms for all service providers across the country. FOCUS Connect fully supports the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission and the Aged Care Industry reforms. In response, FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services developed a new leadership team, improved the service delivery, introduced new systems, best practices, and implemented new training and development initiatives for staff.



New Aged Care Premises

The historical site 'The Manse' at 32 Lithgow Street Campbelltown was headquarters for our Aged Care Services from 2008 until 2022. Although The Manse is a beautiful historical residence, it was found not suitable for running our expanding Aged Care Service serving close to 400 clients. The Manse was sold in March 2022 and our Aged Care Operations were moved to an appropriate modern commercial premises at Suite 4/68 Oxford Road, Ingleburn.



New Financial Auditors

HLB Mann Judd were appointed in January 2022 as our new financial auditors. We thank the retiring auditors Kelly + Partners South-west Sydney for a decade of auditing services to FOCUS Connect.



New Head Office Premises

In September 2020, we purchased a run-down commercial premises at 3 Chamberlain Street Campbelltown with aspirations to remodel as our new Head Office. This would then accommodate the expanding Corporate Services and provide a home base for the whole-of-life services we provide. From 2020 to 2022, our Head Office was fully refurbished, modified, and renovated. Despite challenges caused by COVID-19 and the 2022 floods, we moved into our new Head Office premises in March 2022.

Our ultra-modern new Head Office has an internal floor space of 564 square metres. Our Head Office boasts a welcoming reception area, secure client interview rooms, an open plan office area for our Community Services team, and extensive meeting and training rooms with pleasantly designed staff facilities. The top floor hosts our Corporate Services and Disability Services Teams, the recently renovated breakout verandah, and the large staff break room. The entire premises presents a post-modern and fresh light design with secured access.

On Thursday, 3 November 2022, FOCUS Connect celebrated the official opening of our new Head Office premises at 3 Chamberlain Street Campbelltown with the support and presence of our two State Local Members of Parliament, Mr. Anoulack Chanthivong, Member for Macquarie Fields and Shadow Minister for Finance, and Shadow Minister for Industry and Trade; and Mr. Greg Warren, Member for Campbelltown and Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans, and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney.



We are pleased to present our Annual Report for 2021-2022.

We would especially like to thank our Board of Directors, Mr. Darren Byrnes, Chairman of the Board, outgoing Company Secretary Mr. Jorge Montano, outgoing Treasurer Mr. Michael Oetsch, incoming Treasurer Mrs. Naina Patel, incoming Company Secretary Mrs. Caroline MacPhail and incoming Director Mr. Brett Salmon for the time and professional service they have volunteered to provide FOCUS Connect. Their guidance, support and strategic foresight throughout the year is greatly appreciated.

Furthermore, we would like to celebrate and recognise the hard-work, achievements, and positive outcomes achieved by all our stakeholders including funders, community partners, and volunteers. We especially wish to recognise our staff for their efforts and innovation during this challenging, but very successful, 2021-2022.

We are confident that the transformative changes we have achieved will ensure we are even stronger and more uniquely placed to deliver on our purpose and keep leading the charge on the issues that really matter to our community, clients, participants, members, and staff.

Lee-Ann Jones

Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Services

Alexander Maniquis

Chief Executive Officer
Operations








Finance Report

The 2022 fiscal year was a strong year for both FOCUS Connect and the broader economy. FOCUS Connect has delivered a solid financial performance resulting in another successful year.

Our overall surplus for 2022 was \$929.6k a small decrease compared to the amount reported in 2021 (2021: \$1.05m). Contributing to this result is \$80.7k support in the operational requirements of the Airds-Bradbury Mens Shed in our local Community.

In 2022 the Board of Directors, along with executive management, have achieved the following financial results:





-  Further increases in revenue
-  Substantially improved efficiency allowing delivery of services to more clients in the community
-  Improved efficiency in use of assets
-  Commenced operations in the renovated modern head office at 3 Chamberlain Street Campbelltown
-  Reduction in current liabilities

Results Summary

The audited financial statements reveal a slight increase in total revenue to \$8.0m (2021: \$7.9m). This increase is attributed to the improved efficiency in the use of assets and growth across each service division. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, some of our services were unable to be delivered which otherwise would have led to even higher revenue. Program costs and promotions expenditure did increase which is in line with revenue increases and represents continued and growing ability to help those in our community and attracting further interest in the organisation. There was also a focus on staff training expenditure to support staff with their learning, growth and development.

Objectives

FOCUS Connect short-term and long-term objectives are to:

-  Increase our capacity to support the community
-  Ensure our long-term viability
-  Strengthen our partnerships with the community
-  Improve organisation quality, accountability, and governance

Financial Focus Moving Forward

We expect that 2023 will be a challenging year with the global economy experiencing increasing inflation and interest rates resulting in overall rising costs and increasing overhead expenditure. However, with healthy cash reserves built up from prior financial years will assist the organisation in overcoming this challenging year. There will be continued improvements to operational efficiency, asset utilisation and a focus on core growth sectors.

Governance

As a registered non-profit organisation and public company limited by guarantee, FOCUS Connect operates within a very specific legal and regulatory framework. To ensure that the organisation has adequate controls and safeguards in place, the Board of Directors meet on a monthly basis to discuss and evaluate compliance with service-specific legislation. As part of this compliance, the financial position of FOCUS Connect is closely monitored. Each month, the CEO Corporate Services presents the monthly results to the Board so that we can ensure:



Financial performance closely reflects monthly and YTD budgets



Overhead costs are in line with funding requirements



Legal and regulatory frameworks are operated within



Strategic issues are identified and accounted for



The organisation continues as a going concern

Business Partners

We would like to thank our new auditors HLB Mann Judd for seeing to the preparation of the 2022 Audit and Financial Statements. HLB Mann Judd have industry expertise in the Not for Profits organisations. Their audit approach ensures an intelligent, efficient, risk-based, and service-driven audit that generates insights and advances towards its definition of success. We would like to thank our funding bodies for their continued support of FOCUS Connect and the work we do within our community.

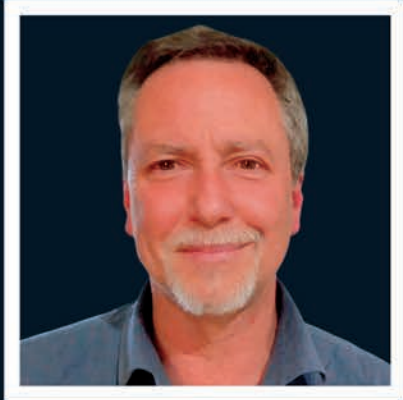
Lastly, we would like to thank our dedicated staff for continuing to go above and beyond for our clients and for the organisation. The value you provide to our community is outstanding and we thank you all for your demanding work throughout the years and in particular for standing by us in these challenging and disruptive times.

Thank you for your support throughout yet another momentous year. We are proud to lead FOCUS Connect and deliver a strong result for 2022. We are equally excited by the opportunities that present themselves for our organisation and the ability of our organisation to further support the broader community.

Naina Patel
Treasurer



Meet the Board

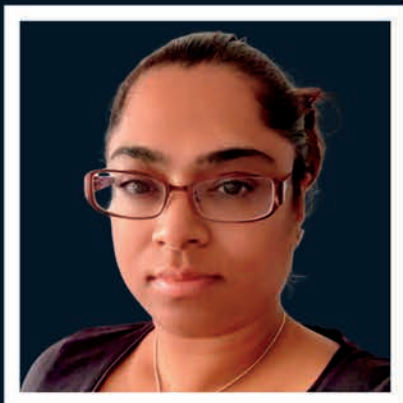


DARREN BYRNES

Master of Business and Technology Management , UNSW

Chairperson

Darren, a Director of FOCUS Connect since 2019, is currently proprietor and Director of an IT software company. He is an IT Executive with local and international experience across small to medium enterprises (SME's) and large global fortune 500 corporations in the areas of operations, sales, research and development, project management, marketing, and people management. He is passionate about improving the lives and social opportunities of the most vulnerable members in our Campbelltown and Greater South-West Sydney communities.



NAINA PATEL

Bachelor of Science (BSc) Hons, Economics and Management, International Certificate in risk management

Treasurer

Naina is currently a Strategy and Risk Advisor to an Australian financial regulatory agency. She is a certified risk professional with 15+ years' experience and expertise in governance, risk management and prudential regulation in the finance sector both locally and internationally. Naina is passionate about supporting and serving the community and has board management experience in the education sector.



CAROLINE MACPHAIL

Bachelor of Science (BSc) Hons, Business Administration and Ergonomics; Graduate of Australian Institute of Company Directors

Company Secretary

Caroline is an executive director with over 20 years experience in leadership and executive board roles. With a background in general management, Caroline has experience in leading cross-functional teams, financial oversight, strategy development and team culture. She is passionate about diversity and inclusion and supporting the local community.

Corporate Services Division







People & Culture...

"As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 2.7 billion people, or more than four out of five workers in the global workforce, have been affected by lockdowns and stay-at-home measures"

FOCUS Connect's priority in the pandemic response was ensuring the health and safety of workers and our clients. Now, as we emerge from this phase, we reflect and pride ourselves on our management during the crisis and confirm that we surpassed 'surviving' and are 'thriving'

In the Beginning...

The HR and Management Team focused on several critical and sometimes complex issues, including:

-  Purpose – integrating the well-being and contribution of our employees in FOCUS Connect's workforce and providing continued care and support to clients. Solutions were found in increased communication, changes in availability, teamed with flexibility to cover rosters and a deeper understanding of commitment to going the "extra mile"
-  Support – the pandemic response has highlighted how crucial it is to feel connected with others. Individual support, mental health and provisions to ensure work performance. FOCUS Connect's Employee Assistance Program was promoted and reminded staff of the support available. Reminders that we were providing staff with the tools and requirement that they needed to keep in touch with their team and minimum daily online meetings were encouraged.
-  Adaptability and potential – of what could be achieved by individuals and teams during the challenging times. In July 2021 a cloud-based system was introduced company wide – creating a working from anywhere capability. Exceptional possibility comes with some fear of change - Not only challenging with implementation, this impeccably-timed technology introduction required rapid re-skilling to ensure a continued flow of work and productivity. This innovation held employees to up-skill for seamless online meetings and for utilising their virtual workspace. Adoption of this learning mindset proved that our employees were dedicated to the changing landscape.
-  Uncertainty – rethink workplaces, policies, staffing levels, goal setting. We had to reconsider how we defined visibility in the workplace. A higher level of trust and honesty was delivered in a mutually respected employee/employer relationship.

Our Pandemic Response

Towards the End...

Our post-pandemic priorities for recovery and re-emergence were defined by the pandemic's impacts.

What the 'New Normal' looks like.

- ✓ **Threats of variants** – Relapse. In July 2022 an office outbreak was identified and immediate actions were taken. This included minimising the numbers of employees in the office and identifying those at risk of spreading the virus requiring them to work from home. This, teamed with protective measures ensured and sealed our quick recovery.
- ✓ **Re-engagement** – The opportunity for FOCUS Connect to redeploy the workforce has allowed flexibility in utilising the working from home facilities for some staff in a hybrid-type arrangement, and in other circumstances where they are required to be off-site or at home for other one-off commitments.
- ✓ **Acknowledgement** - 'Thank you' gifts from the Board and the CEOs for a job well done. Delivered to all staff in June 2022 for their hard work, support and endurance during the challenges of the pandemic. This was a gesture that all staff will remember and appreciate. It signified the commitment that upper management have towards staff and the dedication in improving the culture of our business.
- ✓ **Future goals** – a critical goal in post recovery is to pivot toward a more resilient workforce, shifting away from rigid thinking, routine and structure.

This change and culture improvement comes in many forms including building teams, encouraging flexibility, collaboration, and leading by example. Connection is certainly a factor to drive our workplace culture. "The way it's always been" mentality has no place in our redefined workplace or future.

Reflection may be the most important step post pandemic. It also involves bringing in perspectives from all levels for input on what comes next. When we reflect on what has worked and what has been missed in the crisis response, we, as a business become stronger. This strength flows into our development, including our strategic plan, enabling us to focus on engagement, culture and environment that naturally has our staff and members proud to be a part of FOCUS Connect.

Leisa Smith
Corporate Services

November 2022



Staff

Adrian Murphy
 Adriana La Spina
 Alexander Maniquis
 Alka Bansal
 Aluong Ayiik
 Amber Dunn
 Ana Carmichael
 Andrew Nicholson
 Ann Tibbles
 Anna Faizi-Sobbi
 Antonietta Bugge
 Antonio Dominguez
 April Thurston
 Ashish Regmi
 Bapu Brahmane
 Barunaya Shnan
 Betty De Arrascue
 Bhagawati Thapa Subedi
 Binod Neupane
 Bishna Khatri
 Blessing Warmate
 Briannan Reil
 Bridget Sharpe
 Brie-Anna Byrnes
 Bukola Ayibiowu
 Carolina Andrade
 Catalina De Santis
 Christiane Ibrahim
 Christine Rickert
 Cristian Lita
 Dalia Attalla
 Daniel Bell
 Darren Stevens
 David Bowmer
 David Romero
 Dewak Ram
 Elizabeth Greenep
 Elyza El Samman
 Eufemia Romero
 Eun Sun Choi
 Fatin Al Rawi
 Ferheen Khan
 Gyosim Chang
 Hardeep Singh
 Harpreet Kaur
 Harry Ram
 Heather Munyoro
 Hira Fareed
 Houssam Halabi
 Isabel Cristina Molina Arboleda
 Ivania Joya
 Jacqueline Lobo
 Jan Jerome

Jane Mariani
 Ji Jan
 Ji Son
 Jieyi Chen
 Jirada Muangnil
 Jo-Ann Fletcher
 Joanne Narvais
 Jodi-Lee Charnock
 John Spring
 Judith Brabrook
 Justin Lloyd
 Kasak Aldalmi
 Katelyn Kinsey
 Katherine Herrera
 Kelly Grasso
 Kelly McClutchie
 Kim Postill
 Kirti Verma
 Kit Lam
 Kwannet Uadhao
 Kylie Anable-Gausden
 Laila Al-Sattouf
 Laura Whitehouse
 Lee Zebic
 Lee-Ann Jones
 Leisa Smith
 Lilieta Teaupa
 Linh Thi Pham
 Lisa Harrison
 Lorraine Babu
 Luohui Yao
 Madhu Singh
 Mangal Jagtap
 Marcela Fernandez
 Marco Iglesias
 Maria Decker
 Maria Mourraile
 Maria Murphy
 Maria Cristina Villena
 Marie Jeanne Bunga Mbenza
 Mary Smolcic
 Matthew Joyce
 Maya Almandarawi
 Mi Jeong Lee
 Michelle Arenas
 Mijung Kim
 Milagro Acevedo
 Nafiza Buksh
 Nanhwa Chong
 Nantikhana Traeksuk
 Nikki Ali
 Onoribel Veronica P Aranguren
 Osamede Ikhinmwin
 Paula Reghenzani
 Pawan Batas
 Penelope Allie

Peter Lonergan
 Phouvanh Meuansanith
 Prachi Garg
 Renica Adam
 Robert Janossy
 Rochelle Bogie
 Roksana Chowdhury
 Rosemarie Finianos
 Ross Haydon
 Rowena Wilson
 Roxanne Jimenez
 Rubita Shrestha
 Rudaba Tonni
 Safinaz Halabi
 Samija Avdic
 Samuel Arenas
 Sana Al-Ahmar
 Sandra Urbina-Huezo
 Sannaa Tawaddross
 Sara Al Kufish
 Sawsan Wahba
 Shahana Ahsan
 Sharon Hooper
 Shila Thomas
 Sich Ly
 Sidrah Hammad
 Siwaporn Prapatsaro
 Sofia Bouyiotis
 Soyoung Lee
 Stephen O'Kane
 Suha Al-Zuhiri
 Susan Chalker
 Syeda Johora
 Tania Sharmin
 Tanya Fung
 Teneale Conciatore
 Thi Nguyen
 Thomas Jones
 Tiffany Jenart
 Tirupa Gohil
 Tracey Button
 Ugochukwu Okika
 Valentina De Lucia
 Vanessa Klein
 Veronica Sanchez
 Wafa Jabarin
 Wafaa Hovey
 William Pownall
 Wing Leung
 Xiaoying Zhang
 Xuehui Zheng
 Yan Huang
 Yongmi Park
 Young Zu Park
 Yvonne Welathanthirige Perera
 Zoe Parnell

Disability Services Division



FOCUS Connect Disability Services Division is a registered NDIS provider. We seek to provide quality individual and community access services to people living with a disability in the Macarthur region. Our participants range from 14 years to 65 years in age.

We encourage participants to make informed and independent choices that align with their goals, values and beliefs. To ensure quality assurance FOCUS Connect involve the participant, families and support workers in revision of goals and required outcomes and we provide ongoing staff training and support. FOCUS Connect Disability Services has protocols, policies, and procedures in place to ensure that all services are person-centred, inclusive of rights and dignity of the participant, and align with the participants goals, aspirations, beliefs, and values.

For the past two years Disability Services has experienced challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing restrictions and lockdowns; floods; rising cost of living; and we underwent changes in management. Despite these upheavals, Disability Services ensured our staff were safe and participants continued receiving excellent support.

Individual Services

Our individual support program offers both in home and community support.

A member from the Disability Management Team meets with the participant for an initial assessment and completes all required documentation. The Disability Management Team then discusses various individualised requirements for provision of supports, goals, and expectations and explain the expectations of FOCUS Connect through quality assurance.

Individual services are personalised for each participant to meet their specific needs and achieve their NDIS goals such as:



Personal Assistance - enabling Participants to complete their housework, daily tasks, cooking and meal preparation, and personal care routines like toileting, showering, and getting dressed at home.



Assistance/ transport - enabling Participants to attend school, catch up with friends, go shopping, attend medical and therapy appointments, and head off to work.



Building social life skills and independence - enabling Participants to learn how to buy groceries, catch public transport, cook healthy meals, and provide for their own personal care.

Community Access

Our Community Access offers a group community access program for people with a NDIS plan. It provides our participants with an opportunity to immerse themselves in a wide range of group activities that are centre and community based.

Our centre-based activities take place through the Monday cooking group, where Participants learn to cook their own meals and host parties for their friends and family, and our Men's Shed group on Tuesday and Thursday, where Participants gain skills to build their own bikes, belts, dog collars, coffee tables, etc.

Our community-based activities take place on Wednesday, and have included day trips to beaches, farms, NanTien Temple, barbecues, picnics, and down to the South Coast.

The community access program has been a wonderful opportunity for our participants to achieve their goal of accessing the community and socialising. This has improved their social skills and the ability to engage with the community.



To ensure quality assurance FOCUS Connect involves the participant, families and support workers through feedback, revision of goals and required outcomes as well as staff training and support. FOCUS Connect Disability services has protocols, policies, and procedure in place to ensure that all services are person-centred, inclusive of rights and dignity of the participant and aligns with the participants goals, aspirations, beliefs, and values.




Our aim is to provide quality support services to participants in the Macarthur Region in their home and out in the community. These services encourage participants to make informed and independent choices and to ensure their goals, values and beliefs are met.

The FOCUS Connect Disability Services Team takes their time and care to ensure all participants are not only happy with their support and provision of supports, but they are achieving their NDIS goals.



Support Coordination

FOCUS Connect's Support Coordination team works with participants to build their capacity. This includes, but is not limited to:

-  Understanding and using their NDIS plan to achieve their goals.
-  Connecting them with NDIS providers, community, mainstream and other government services.
-  Building their confidence and skills to use and coordinate their supports independently.

We provide support to NDIS participants, who have Support Coordination funded in their NDIS plans, aged from 6 years and up across the Sydney region.

Our Support Coordination team have a strong network and catalogue of resources to match their participants with the right providers and services.



A 21-year-old male participant with a Moderate Intellectual Disability and ADHD was hesitant to engage with supports. After finishing school, he struggled to engage with TAFE and a school leaver programs due to a lack of support and the environment he was in. He had no social support which meant he was isolated, acting up at home, and exhibiting undesirable behaviours. The participant expressed a love for the outdoors and motorbikes and a desire to make friends.

Our Support Coordinator, Laura, built rapport with the participant and his family and worked with an Occupational Therapist, Behaviour Support Practitioner and Psychologist to address his behaviours and identify the support he needed to engage in the community successfully. After engaging with a support worker one on one in the community, the participant and his family wanted more support to make friends. After searching for the right group program with 1:1 support, the participant joined the Men's Shed and a community access program. The participant has interacted with others in the program and made friends. His mum reported that he is excited to continue the program and his behaviours have stopped at home as well. With the right support the participant has achieved his goal of making friends.

Disability Service Reforms

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was established in April 2019 to respond to community concerns about widespread reports of violence, neglect, abuse, and exploitation of people with disability. The Commission aims to promote a more inclusive society that supports people with a disability to be independent and live free from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. A final report is scheduled to be delivered by 29 September 2023.

FOCUS Connect supports the initiatives and objectives of the Royal Commission. In response, we continue to implement improvement initiatives to enhance and ensure delivery of our Disability Services to participants in a high quality and safe manner. FOCUS Connect's Disability Services has developed a new leadership team with a streamlined service delivery structure. We replaced our old policies and procedures and implemented entirely new systems, forms, processes, and practices according to the current NDIS Quality and Safeguard Frameworks. Furthermore, we have enhanced our Disability Services workforce with new talent and introduced comprehensive training programs to up-skill our Support Workers and leadership team to meet the high standards set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Frameworks. As a result, we have received high levels of positive feedback from our participants about their experiences with FOCUS Connect and, in November 2022, we passed the rigorous NDIS full cycle audit with flying colours.

FOCUS Connect is proud of our comprehensive reforms and change management initiatives that have enhanced and revitalised our Disability Services systems, including:

- ✓ Adherence to workplace and work health and safety laws and regulations, and financial management requirements.
- ✓ Sound governance and management in all areas of service planning and development.
- ✓ Clear communication, support and direction to employees, participants, and stakeholders.
- ✓ Our range of methods to ensure active participation of people with a disability and their family, friends, carers and advocates in planning, delivery and review at individual, service related, and organisational levels.
- ✓ NDIS Code of Conduct to assist FOCUS Connect and our employees to meet requirements.
- ✓ Streamlined complaints & feedback system, and guidelines, to support participants and other concerned parties to make a complaint internally to FOCUS Connect and/ or externally the NDIS Commission.
- ✓ In-house incident management system and procedures to notify the NDIS Commission should a reportable incident take place.
- ✓ Worker requirements in place to ensure screening of all employees.
- ✓ Evidence-based practice.

Aged Care Services Division



Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS), a nationwide free service program funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, arranges volunteer social visits to older people living in a residential aged care facility or receiving a Home Care Package.

A CVS volunteer provides friendship and companionship to help socially isolated older people develop social connections. A CVS volunteer is carefully matched to each consumer to spend a few hours per fortnight together. Many of our FOCUS Connect volunteers go into the community and develop genuine friendships, quality of life and social connectedness.




FOCUS Connect CVS volunteers support residents in Whiddon Group Easton Park Nursing home in Glenfield and consumers through Home Care Packages in Macarthur Region.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented new restrictions on our volunteers, particularly those who regularly attended the Whiddon Group Easton Park. The NSW Government posed an 'essential visitors only' policy in residential aged care. As a result, our CVS volunteers were required to connect with elderly residents via zoom. Our home care volunteers also followed suit, conducting regular phone check-ins and zoom calls. During this time, the CVS program regularly sent humanitarian packages and 'small thought' gifts to consumers to ensure they were receiving essential household and food items. Our CVS program continues to provide much needed companionship, adding immeasurable value to seniors in our community.

Home Care Packages Program (HCP)

The government funded Home Care Package Program supports senior Australians (65 years and over with complex care needs) to live independently in their own homes. A consumer-directed care approach ensures the support meets people's assessed care needs within the limits of their individual home care budget and the scope of the Program.

FOCUS Connect supports consumers in: We provide:

 Campbelltown / Macarthur region

 Southwest Sydney

 Northern Sydney

Personal care & domestic Assistance

Social Support Individual

Meal Preparation

Brokerage (Allied Health)

Lawn and home maintenance and modifications

Goods and equipment

Partnerships

This year the Home Care Package Team networked with other / additional service providers to expand our areas of capabilities and support to offer our consumers. The Aged Care Divisional Lead and the Chief Executive Officer (Operations) recently engaged with Better Care Delivered (BCD) to provide clinical assessments and care for our Home Care Package consumers. BCD and FOCUS Connect Aged Care leadership team members have also partnered to lead a Clinical Governance Committee. We developed brokerage arrangements through Macarthur Disability Services (MDS) and Active Solutions Health (Allied Health services).

Strengthening our Team

The Home Care Package Coordinator commenced in January 2022 with the support of two Administration Support Officers. We identified the need for an Aged Care Liaison Officer to conduct internal Assessments and request for Home Care Package upgrades through My Aged Care. Our new Aged Care Liaison Officer commenced in June 2022.

Key Statistics

From January to August 2022 the Aged Care team delivered support to a total of 74 clients and welcomed 30 new Home Care Package consumers within this period.



all
smiles!



Outing to
Wollongong



Vietnamese
Group with
their
traditional
dress,
Ao dai



Luncheon



Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

The CHSP (Commonwealth Home Support Program) is for people aged over 65 years, or over 50 for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. It is an entry-level home support program that seeks to help elderly people live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. The main focus of the CHSP program is wellness and re-ablement, with a strong commitment to honouring the goals and preferences and choices of the consumer. FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services supports a diverse range of people, specialising in support to the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. We support consumers from twenty-two different backgrounds/ ethnicities and speak twenty different languages.

Despite the extended lockdowns during 2021/2022, FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services continued to run business as usual adapting to the government advice and new legislation. As an essential service we remained motivated and focused, continuing to provide in-home services to our consumers. The team engaged in weekly wellbeing checks and delivered monthly Humanitarian Care packages.



South West Sydney

FOCUS Connect is contracted to provide Personal Care, Domestic Assistance, In-Home respite care, Social Support Group, Social Support Individual and Transport in South West Sydney. This year, over 1900 boxes of hampers and care packages were delivered to our Macarthur consumers. The most significant achievement was reaching the KPI output hours for Domestic Assistance in the Southwest Sydney region in the face of a nationwide labour shortage in the Aged Care and Health sector. By the end of June 2022, the Southwest Sydney Macarthur Team had 73 consumers receiving domestic assistance, indicating a 139.22% increase compared to June 2021. Also during this period, the increased need for carer support saw FOCUS Connect increase their service hours for Flexible Respite and Social Support Individual. This provided carers respite from their duties where paid staff spent time with consumers in their own homes.

Northern Sydney

FOCUS Connect is contracted to provide Domestic Assistance, Personal Care and Social Support Group to the Northern Sydney region. On 29th June 2022, FOCUS Connect hosted its first Northern Sydney luncheon. This was an amazing opportunity to connect with Northern Sydney consumers and for the consumers to get to know each other. Our consumers enjoyed a bistro lunch, and shared their history, experiences, and knowledge of special skills such as bowling and crotchet. Staff also had the opportunity to get feedback on the services provided and discuss ideas and improvements with consumers. This was a day enjoyed by all and will be repeated.

Marketing Promotion & Events

Throughout 2022, FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Team achieved an intensive marketing and promotion campaign to promote our Aged Care Services and brand name throughout the local communities we serve in Sydney, and in the Aged Care Industry across Australia.



Aged Care Expo

FOCUS Connect participated in the Senior's Expo at the International Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, on Wednesday 30, March 2022 and Thursday 31, March 2022. We exhibited alongside other services across Australia's Aged Care Industry and promoted FOCUS Connect's Aged Care services and support to the thousands of people from across Australia who attended.

Radio Advertising

We launched an advertising campaign with our local radio station, Campbelltown 91.3. With a light, inspiring and motivational tone the commercials aimed to promote FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services to prospective Aged Care clients and encourage prospective Support Workers to seek work with FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services.



Aged Care Information Session

On Thursday, 19 May 2022 FOCUS Connect hosted an information session at the Campbelltown Catholic Club to inform our Aged Care Services clients about the changes to the Aged Care system and empower them to make the best use of services.

Aged Care Reform Luncheon

On Wednesday 25 May 2022 FOCUS Connect hosted a formal dress luncheon in the Grand Ballroom of the Campbelltown Catholic Club for clients and staff to inform them of the changes to the Aged Care system. It was one of our first large gatherings as a community since the emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020. We thank Dr. Mike Freelander, our Federal Member for Macarthur, for his support and attendance at the luncheon.



Bus Advertising

To raise awareness and enhance the profile of FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services across our local communities, we launched a marketing campaign on buses that provide public transport across South West Sydney. The bus wraps feature life size images and logos promoting FOCUS Connect's Aged Care and Disability Services.



Two Short Films

Over two days in May 2022 the Aged Care Team, along with staff from the Men's Shed and other FOCUS Connect services, participated in the creation of two professional short films. One promoting FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services as an employer of choice and seeking to attract prospective talent to work with us; and the other promoting FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services to prospective clients. We thank Rocket Productions for producing our commercial grade short films.



Aged Care Sector Reforms

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was established on 8 October 2018 to inquire about the quality and safety of aged care in Australia. The Commission found that the aged care system in general failed to meet the needs of its older, vulnerable, citizens.

The Royal Commission established 148 recommendations to significantly reform the aged care sector to ensure a higher quality of service to senior citizens, so they receive the services they deserve.










In response to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission, the Australian Government and Aged Care Sector has responded by implementing comprehensive industry wide reforms for all service providers across the country to uniformly address the exploitive and neglectful occurrences that our senior citizens receiving Aged Care services were experiencing across the nation.

FOCUS Connect supports the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission and the Aged Care Sector Reforms. In response, FOCUS Connect is working tirelessly to evolve and adapt to continue providing top of the line care for our clients and the local communities we serve.

In unison, FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services developed a new leadership team with a streamlined service delivery structure. We replaced our former policies and procedures with clinical grade systems and best practices according to new Aged Care Standards and the expectations of the Aged Care Sector reforms. We enhanced our Aged Care workforce with new talent and improved comprehensive training programs to up-skill our Support Workers and leadership team for the rigours and requirements of the new and revitalised Aged Care Sector.



FOCUS Connect is proud of our comprehensive reforms and change management initiatives that have enhanced and revitalised FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services, including:

-  Ongoing review of our Aged Care policies and procedures in line with the 8 new Aged Care Quality Standards
-  Achieving key milestones in our Continuous Improvement Plan
-  Implementing new intake and assessment procedures including Clinical assessments.
-  Recruitment of a Home Care Packages Coordinator with clinical qualifications and expertise to provide wholistic care and support to elderly people in their homes.
-  Establishment of the FOCUS Connect Clinical Governance Committee
-  Restructure of Aged Care Services to reflect the growing business and clinical demands of our home-based Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care Programs.
-  Implementation of Visualcare, an end- to-end care management platform for improved efficiency with back-office tasks such as client information records management, case notes, invoicing, client service agreements, generating quotes for services, rostering and other functions.
-  Training delivered to frontline and administration staff on Work Health & Safety and Incident Management.
-  Up-skilling and training of key personnel in Case Management, Wholistic Care, Dementia Care, and Leadership and Management, in line with the new Aged Care Quality Standards.

In 2023 FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services will continue to:

-  Train all staff on the new Aged Care Code of Conduct, Elder Abuse Awareness and Advanced (end of life) Care Planning.
-  Recruit clinical front-line staff (including Assistants In Nursing, Enrolled Nurses, and Registered Nurses) to deliver complex care.
-  Continue to expand our services to new clients across South-West Sydney and Northern Sydney regions.

Community Services Division



Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI)

The TEI program supports vulnerable Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) families with children aged 0-17 living in the Macarthur Region. The TEI program is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice and aims at decreasing the risk of children entering the Child Protection system, including Out-of-Home-Care system. It seeks to empower families to lead independent and meaningful lives, and ensures families have access to support in relation to childhood health and wellbeing.

Partner organisations who support us in providing this program include Campbelltown City Council, Camden City Council, St Andrews Public School, Land and Housing, Keenley's Funerals, WILMA Women's Health Centre, and Growfit.

FOCUS Connect supports the objectives of TEI through four areas: Intake and Assessment; Family Capacity Building; Parenting Programs; and Supported Playgroups.



Family Capacity Building / Intake and Assessment

Family Capacity Building targets CALD families with children in their care aged 0-17, who live in the Macarthur region. Families will work alongside a qualified caseworker to identify any family goals, needs or risk areas. The process is holistic, child-centred and strengths-based. The aim is to empower families to build their capacity and skills in areas that are specifically identified by the family or through assessments the caseworker has conducted.

Parenting Programs

Triple P is a free parenting program for all families with children 0-11 living in the Macarthur Area. The program provides practical answers to everyday parenting concerns, by teaching parents about strategies that are evidence-based and backed by research.

Supported Playgroups

Supported playgroups are for children aged 0-5 living in the Macarthur Area. The supported playgroups are run by qualified facilitators and are designed to help promote "Learning through Play" as well as helping to support the child's emotional, social, and motor skills development. There is a focus on supporting parents to build on their relationship with their child through play. Our facilitators also provide further information about childhood development, learning, and local services that support families in need.

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

The HIPPY program is funded by HIPPY Australia and targets families with children aged 4 and 5 living in Campbelltown. HIPPY is a free two-year home-based early childhood learning and parent program that empowers parents and carers as their child's first teacher. It is an early intervention program that supports families into employment, provides workshops, reduces isolation, and provides opportunity to form friendships and engage in local community. HIPPY uses structured materials and activities tailored for families to easily incorporate in to daily life.

HIPPY helps to strengthen communities and the social inclusion of parents/primary carers and children. HIPPY offers some parents/primary carers a supported pathway to employment, allowing them the opportunity to be employed and trained as HIPPY Home Tutors and/or Coordinators.

Sunnah's mum shared this lovely poem that Sunnah created by herself. Sunnah asked her mother what a poem was and as they looked at examples she wanted to create a poem all on her own. Mum is extremely proud of her child for coming up with such a beautiful poem and keenly aware of how much Sunnah has grown and learnt in their two years on the HIPPY program. Mum has limited English but she carefully wrote it down to share with us.

what is poem
Turtle burtle
like a murmaid
Turtle burtle
Flower beauty
Turtle burtle like a Jewellery
Turtle burtle
like a sunshine rainbow
Turtle burtle
like a pony beauty



Child & Parenting Program

The Child & Parenting Program targets CALD families living in the Macarthur area with children 0-17 and who may be socially isolated and/or of a low socio-economic background. It is funded by the Department of Social Services and is delivered through two key areas: supported playgroups and case management. Partner organisations who assist us in delivering this program include Campbelltown Police, South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (PHN), Campbelltown TAFE, SWS Local Health District, Legal Aid, Camden City Council, The Salvation Army, Centrelink.

Supported playgroups

For parents with children 0-5 years. Through structured play activities, supported by a qualified early childhood facilitator, children learn and develop literacy and numeracy skills in preparation for school. Parents are encouraged to build on their parent-child relationship through play activities and are provided with information relating to childhood health, safety and development, parenting education, and soft entry to other family support services. Yasmin Playgroup operates in Minto and Koala Playgroup is in Campbelltown

Case management

For CALD families with children 0-17 living in the Macarthur region. The qualified caseworker works alongside the family to address any goals, needs or risk areas. The caseworker makes suitable referrals to appropriate services and supports, and provides information and general advice in order to increase the family's capacity and skills in specific areas as identified by the family or the caseworker through holistic assessments.



Start Strong Pathways

Start Strong Pathways is delivered in a supported playgroup setting catering for parents with children aged 0-3 years living in the Macarthur area. The program is designed to support young children in gaining educational involvement through play-based activities, focusing on their individual goals, strengths, and developmental progress.

Funded by the NSW Department of Education, Start Strong Pathways supports children's early education, teaches families about the importance of early childhood education, facilitates social supports amongst parents, develops positive parent-child relationships, and supports pathways to preschool education.



Our children and parents absolutely loved their experience of Little Travel Adventures and their 'visit' to China, Ireland and Brazil. Little Travel Adventures is an Active, Educational and Multicultural entertainment incursion that provides a combination of music, dance, percussion instruments, props, imagination, and an interactive world map, to immerse the children in learning about the world around them.



No Interest Loans (NILS)

The NILS program assists low-income earners to secure low interest loans for the purchase of essential goods and services and is funded by our community partners the National Australia Bank and Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand. The NILS service is available to those over the age of 16. The scheme enables individuals and families to access fair, safe and transparent loans to purchase essential goods and services to the maximum value of \$2000. These loans do not incur any interest, fees, or charges, and are available to be paid back over 24 months. This year NILS assisted 286 clients.



This year NILS noted an increase in clients experiencing Domestic and Family Violence reaching out for support from our services. Recently, NILS assisted a client experiencing severe Domestic and Family Violence who had to relocate. Changes to the eligibility criteria for NILs allowed us to support this client by securing a Rental Bond and 2 weeks rent. This enabled our client to flee the relationship and secure safe accommodation. We were able to facilitate this within days of the client contacting our service.

Emergency Relief

The Emergency Relief program is funded by The Department of Social Services and is available to families and individuals experiencing an emergency or critical situation who require financial support. They may be experiencing financial crisis, risk of/or homelessness, domestic and family violence, employment issues, or unexpected financial costs. The service operates for those living in Macarthur, Wollondilly, and the Illawarra. This year there were 616 appointments in Macarthur and 143 appointments in the Illawarra.



From 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022, FOCUS Connect distributed financial assistance to those severely affected by the floods in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales. We reached out to the most devastated areas including Lismore, Ballina and provided assistance for food and clothing vouchers as well as referrals for government grants and further support from other community organisations. Over 50 clients were supported by this program.

Settlement Services

SETS Youth

SETS Youth targets eligible migrants and humanitarian VISA holders who have been in Australia for less than 5 years, and who are aged between 12 and 24 years, living in the Macarthur area. The aim of this program is to engage youth in activities and groups that decrease their social isolation, and increase their participation in the community, their wellbeing, and sense of belonging to their new community.

The youth program delivers settlement support and work to those individuals who meet the eligibility criteria detailed above. Services delivered include: Casework, orientation into Australia, education and awareness activities, information sessions, referrals, advocacy, youth settlement groups, tutoring and homework help, mentoring support groups, after school activities, school holiday activities, the HYPE program and social support groups.

SETS Family Worker

SETS Family Worker program targets eligible migrants and humanitarian VISA holders who have been in Australia for less than 5 years and who are living in the Macarthur area. The aim of this program is to increase self-esteem, increase community participation, improve participation in Australian life, increase access to appropriate mainstream services, and improve clients' advocacy skills.

The program achieves its aims through group work, education and skills sessions, information sessions, cultural groups/events, art groups, family workshops, orientation sessions, advocacy, referrals to mainstream services, access to relevant information regarding health, parenting, finances, law, settlement, and life skills.



on show at
Refugee
Week



Women's
Day
Event
(SETS DFV)



Refugee Week
Dinner

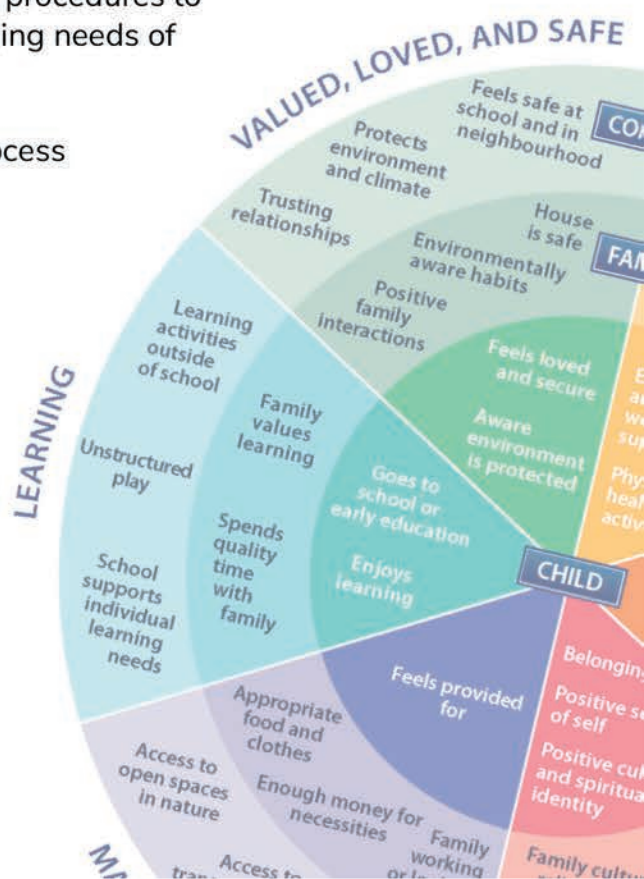
Improvements in Practice Standards

An unexpected outcome of the social isolation measures used to keep our communities safe from COVID-19 is the higher level of social disadvantage experienced by our clients resulting from increased rates of domestic violence, child abuse, unemployment, conflict, parenting issues, family breakdown, and alcohol and drug abuse.

In response to increasing complex demands from the community, FOCUS Connect's Community Services developed and implemented new policies, procedures, and practices. Staff also received comprehensive training to up-skill and equip them with the knowledge and resources to work with the increasingly complex needs of our clients and community.

FOCUS Connect is proud of the following reforms and change management initiatives achieved by our Community Services Division in the following areas of:

- ✓ Higher case note standards, including the development of a case note template to guide staff
- ✓ Structured monthly case review meetings to ensure every family is delivered a quality service
- ✓ Structured monthly individual and team supervision for all staff
- ✓ Review and development of new policies and procedures to ensure evidence-based practise for the changing needs of the community
- ✓ Refinement of the Intake and Assessment process with clients, including the development of a structured template
- ✓ Up-skilling and training of staff on 'The Common Approach', a newly researched evidence-based practise model
- ✓ Developing of new tools and resources to meet the changing needs of the community, including a Domestic and Family Violence Awareness short film
- ✓ Regular internal and external training for continued professional development



Airds-Bradbury Mens Shed

The FOCUS Connect Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed provides a safe and hospitable environment for Men's Shed members to participate in recreational and social activities, and have opportunities for creative outlet in mechanical, wood, metal, and leather work.

Men's Shed was adversely impacted by the NSW Stay-At-Home lockdown restrictions across South-West Sydney from June 2021 till the end of 2021. During this time, FOCUS Connect kept in contact with all our Men's Shed members through regular phone call wellbeing checks.

Due to the inability of our Men's Shed members to access the Men's Shed during the Stay- At-Home lockdown period and the damage caused by the storms and floods of March 2023 there was an abundance of mould, and overgrown weeds and lawn. This resulted in the gardens, buildings, pathways, windows, and the driveway being covered with debris throughout the broad-acre complex.

From April to August 2022, we commenced a huge revitalisation project of the FOCUS Connect Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed with a team of professional contractor maintenance personnel. Also, the Men's Shed members volunteered to assist with cleaning and maintaining the gardens, plants, and buildings. This has resulted in positive outcomes such as a clean, safe, supportive and brighter environment and enhanced relationships and improved wellbeing amongst the Men's Shed members. Also, we received an influx of new Men's Shed members.

The FOCUS Connect Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed facilitates collaboration, social engagement, creative freedom, and the initiative of members to support and assist each other. Further, FOCUS Connect Airds-Bradbury Men's Shed emphasises the values, culture, attitude, and commitment to continue improvement. It has the resilience to bounce back from any disaster and to enhance the lifestyle, health, and wellbeing of its members.





2022 highlights



our
new
head
office!



the
official
opening!



lights camera
action!





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