



2021 Annual Report

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



It seems so long ago we were free of the lockdowns that now epitomise normal life and changed the way we all work and interact. In this harsh economic environment FOCUS Connect has been engaged in a year of change, review, consolidation and building solid foundations following the turbulence of 2020.

While many Not for Profits have faltered, FOCUS Connect has seen an opportunity for a new beginning, with a realignment of the executive team presenting opportunities to establish a new culture and values. In the midst of this organisational optimisation, rapidly evolving Government directives around COVID-19 continue to add complexity, challenges to services and additional risks for the organisation. With many staff working from home for extended periods it has been challenging to collaborate, induct new staff and build further team affinity. All staff have taken this head on, ensuring our community remains supported and increasing the levels of service delivery

Several office moves have occurred and in early 2022 our new Head Office in Chamberlain St will be ready for occupation. To lessen the impact on our nomadic staff, an IT move to Office365 in the Cloud introduced agility and new working opportunities via Microsoft Teams.

While these challenges have been insurmountable for many in our market, everyone at FOCUS Connect has delivered exceptional performance with numerous industry benchmarks telling us we are in the elite club of growing our business in the Not For Profit Sector in spite of COVID-19. This is a result we can be proud of, and shows the strength of leadership and teamwork taking FOCUS Connect into 2022 in an enviable position whilst a number of competitors were seriously impacted.

I congratulate the Board, members, executive team and staff who all pulled together ensuring that FOCUS Connect continues to be an organisation focussed on putting our clients and the community front and centre in everything we do.

In light of this I wanted to highlight a few of the positive results that the Board, members and staff have achieved in 2021:

- Restructuring the lines of business and implementing shared services so our assets are better utilised and leveraged across the business to achieve improved outcomes for our clients.
- COVID-19 has had a profound effect on the community and FOCUS Connect has adapted our services to better align with this shift.
- In 2021 FOCUS Connect also firmly recognised the value of our staff and have made a commitment to provide opportunities for further education to help up-skill the teams and drive us into high value services.
- The Chamberlain St fit out has been awarded via tender and the design which had significant staff input will be a showcase and springboard for our growing business.
- Expansion of the Mens Shed for our disability clients offering a unique opportunity to collaborate with the Mens Shed members and create some great memories and family treasures

I look forward with great confidence to 2022 knowing that our team at FOCUS Connect will continue to drive great outcomes for the community, stakeholders and staff, continuing to be the standard to which other not-for-profits are measured.



Board

Darren Byrnes
Chairperson

Jorge Montano
Company Secretary

Michael Oetsch
Treasurer

Treasurer's Report

The financial year of 2021 has continued to present challenges to the Australian business environment, our local communities and the health sector at large. Despite these challenges, FOCUS Connect has thrived in what is our strongest financial and operational performance in the organisation's long history.

Our overall surplus for 2021 was \$1.05m which is almost three times the amount reported in 2020 (2020: \$353k) and eleven times more than 2019 (\$92k). This has been largely due to the exceptional leadership and guidance at the organisation's helm from Lee-Ann and Alex. In what has been a disaster year for many not-for-profit organisations, FOCUS Connect has not only survived but truly thrived during this period.

In 2021 the Board of Directors, along with executive management, have achieved the following financial results:

- Further increases in revenue and surplus growth;
- Significantly increased net assets;
- Improved efficiency in the use of assets;
- Funding provided for the acquisition of the organisation's new head office;
- Reduction in current liabilities;
- Generating reserves to fund key strategic developments from 2022.

Results Summary

The audited financial statements reveal an increase in total revenue to \$7.99 million (2020: \$5.97 million). This increase is largely attributed to growth across each service division, along with significant growth realised and expected to continue within our Aged Care Services Division. Employee benefits expenditure slightly rose from 2020 which is a fantastic result considering the substantial increase to our revenue and surplus. Program costs rose significantly this year which is in line with revenue increases and represents a continued and growing ability to help those in our community.

Financial Focus Moving Forward

We expect that revenue growth will level out in 2022 considering the significant growth realised in 2021. Continued improvements to operational efficiency, asset utilisation and a focus on core growth sectors will



leverage FOCUS Connect to become a leading provider of Aged Care, Disability and Community Services in our community.

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 that:

- 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.

Our Business Partners

We would like to thank Kelly + Partners Chartered Accountants for seeing to the preparation of the 2021 audit and for providing financial assistance to our organisation throughout the year.

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 for all of your hard work throughout the years and in particular for standing by us in these challenging and disruptive times. We look forward to partnering with you into the future and delivering you a contemporary new head office in the 2022 financial year.

Thank you for your support throughout yet another momentous year. We are proud to lead FOCUS Connect and deliver a strong result for 2021. 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.



CEO Joint Report



The Aged, Disability and Community based work of FOCUS Connect has been more critical than ever over the past year due to the adverse effects and isolation of COVID-19 experienced by our vulnerable clients and the local communities in Campbelltown- Macarthur and the new growing services of South-West Sydney.

Our core purpose of supporting our clients and their communities during times of crisis has motivated our staff to exceed expectations delivering a strong FOCUS and sense of direction throughout the year in the face of adverse changing working conditions.

At the start of the financial year as we emerged from our first lockdown of 2020, we achieved a quick recovery through re-mobilising our staff to return back to the office in a COVID safe manner. Building on the new culture born out of management changes in 2020 we continued to address past inefficiencies and achieve ongoing growth with the services we provide to our clients across all programs and initiatives.

Despite the unexpected ongoing impacts of COVID-19, which continue to interrupt normal services we achieved substantial growth well above budget forecasts, developed a new leadership with consolidated service delivery structure, introduced new systems and processes according to international standards and best industry practice verified these by passing several external audits. We bolstered our workforce with new professional talent and the recognition of our excellent services has meant an overall expansion of our workforce to keep pace with accelerating business growth and expansion.

It is a testament to the solid foundations implemented and hardworking staff that we report further improvement to the sound financial position of FOCUS Connect with an above budget surplus in 2020-2021.

To service the new areas of greater South-West and Northern Sydney we achieved a major milestone with the opening of our new premises in Wetherill Park at the start of the financial year. Our Wetherill Park facility is our first service located outside of the Macarthur-Campbelltown Region and provides the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) to Aged Care clients across the two large

regions of Greater South-West Sydney and Northern Sydney covering the areas from Fairfield to Hornsby.

Looking ahead to 2022 and beyond, FOCUS Connect is strategically positioning itself taking full advantage of its geographical locations to expand the volume of our services across a wide range of whole of life services (Aged Care, Disabilities and Community Services) in the new growth areas driven by Government and population shifts in the newly emerging airport, suburbs, homes, workplaces, families, and communities across Greater South-West Sydney.

We are pleased to present our Annual Report for 2020-2021.

We would like to thank Mr Darren Byrnes, Chairman of the Board, for his passion, dedication and practical advice; and Michael Oestch, Treasurer, and Jorge Montano, Company Secretary, for their prudence, guidance, and support throughout the year.

We would like to make special mention of the support provided by Dr Mike Freeland, Federal Member for Macarthur and Deputy Chair of Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport, and Greg Warren, State Member for Campbelltown and Shadow Minister for Local Government, Shadow Minister for Veterans, and Shadow Minister for Western Sydney. Throughout the year, and over many years, both Greg and Mike have been great advocates, lobbying and securing funding for FOCUS Connect's whole of life services and championing the profile of FOCUS Connect.

Furthermore, we would like to recognise the achievements and contributions from all our stakeholders, funding bodies, community partners, volunteers and talented staff who have contributed to the amazing results for our vulnerable clients and their local communities during the turbulent and challenging year that was 2020-2021.



Alexander Maniquis
Chief Executive Officer, Operations



Lee-Ann Jones
Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Services

Corporate Services



FOCUS Connect's Corporate Services unit provides the underlying core infrastructure to the organisation that enables the delivery of front-line services to our clients. The unit provides shared services covering Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, Information & Communication Technology, Procurement, Assets and Buildings Management, Front-Office (Reception) and other Back-Office Administration functions.

In 2021, with the pandemic entering its second year, Corporate Services has further evolved to provide timely and critical business advisory services across our Aged Care, Disability Services and Community Services Divisions in an environment of constant change.

A core role of Corporate Services is to deliver governance, reporting and analysis to establish baselines across the business which deliver insight around revenue, business development, expenses, legislative and funding body requirements, market and risk factors. As a result of this visibility, FOCUS Connect is able to make better informed business decisions that allow the teams to achieve further efficiencies, business expansion and maintain a healthy financial position with controlled risk.

In early 2022 the project work done by the team will see FOCUS Connect move into a new Head Office in Chamberlain Street, Campbelltown which will be a showcase for the entire organisation positioning us as a leading Not for Profit in the region.

A major initiative of Corporate Services in 2021 was the migration of the organisation's IT to the cloud including the introduction of the Microsoft Office365 suite of applications including Microsoft Teams. As a result, FOCUS Connect is flexible utilising technology and being independent of physical location.

Throughout the harsh Public Health Orders of Winter 2021, FOCUS Connect transitioned to an entirely online Head Office presence to provide support to the rest of the organisation and enhance the collaboration of staff and clients in spite of the isolation of working from home. Through this technology innovation, staff were able to support their clients online in a COVID safe manner and FOCUS Connect's leadership was able to effectively provide support to all staff.

Through the leadership and support provided by Corporate Services Division, FOCUS Connect has come out of both the 2020 and 2021 lockdown in a much stronger and more resilient position than before.



Lee-Ann Jones

Chief Executive Officer, Corporate Services

COVID-19 Report

In July 2020 we emerged from the first lockdown of March - June 2020 with newly developed operational and risk management skills. We achieved continuity of services in a seamless and COVID-19 safe manner through a mix of online and in-person delivery for our clients.

As COVID-19 persisted into 2021, a new COVID-19 Delta variant swept throughout Metro Sydney and resulted in the harsh Winter -2021 lockdown at the end of the financial year.

The Winter 2021 lockdown saw FOCUS Connect step up to the plate. Lessons learnt from the 2020 lockdown were leveraged advantageously to support our clients and local communities.

Corporate Services and our outsourced IT partner, RODIN, achieved a successful upgrade of our data and communication network platforms to the cloud. Despite the stay-at-home orders, and harsher restrictions imposed across South-West Sydney, the new technology allowed our staff to collaborate, and support each other during these challenging times, and increase our service levels to clients who are presenting with more complex needs.

Our staff were trained and briefed daily with the ever-changing COVID-19 safety protocols and restrictions. They were more than equipped with practice frameworks and (PPE), in line with multiple health advice and guidelines across the three levels of government and our various funding bodies and community partners.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 in its second year, FOCUS Connect provided an agile and innovative response in which the best results and outcomes in the history of the organisation were achieved across all domains (financial health, operations, governance frameworks and client outcomes).

FOCUS Connect on the Move

Head Office – 3 Chamberlain Street

In early 2022 FOCUS Connect is relocating to our new Head Office premises at 3 Chamberlain Street Campbelltown in what will be a fully refurbished modern, stand alone building. These premises are purpose built for our organisation to enhance services and support for our Community.

FOCUS Connect purchased 3 Chamberlain Street Campbelltown in September 2020 to accommodate expansion in our corporate functions and whole of life services. Designed by Villa + Villa Architect and project Managed by FTA Projects Pty Ltd the two-storey building is currently undergoing refurbishment and fit-out. On completion in January 2022 it will offer an internal floor space area of 564 square metres with parking for 12 vehicles.



On the ground floor, our Head Office will boast a welcoming reception area, client interview rooms, an open plan office area for our Community Services staff, and large meeting and training rooms with pleasantly designed rooms for staff facilities. The top floor will host our Corporate Services and Disability office teams, as well as a breakout veranda and large staff break room. The entire premises will present a modern and fresh design with secured access.

FOCUS Connect's investment in our 'forever home' reflects our commitment to our employees and our local community. It is a mark of confidence in our bright future supporting Campbelltown- Macarthur and Greater South-West Sydney. Having the flexibility to design and build our own facility ensures that FOCUS Connect brings our vision of a modern inclusive workplace and community space to reality providing a bright open layout that encourages creativity, learning and collaboration.

Wetherill Park Office

In August 2020, FOCUS Connect expanded and opened our first office outside the Macarthur region in Wetherill Park. This move was to support a growth in service to Aged Care Clients across Greater South-West Sydney Region and as far as the Northern Sydney Region.

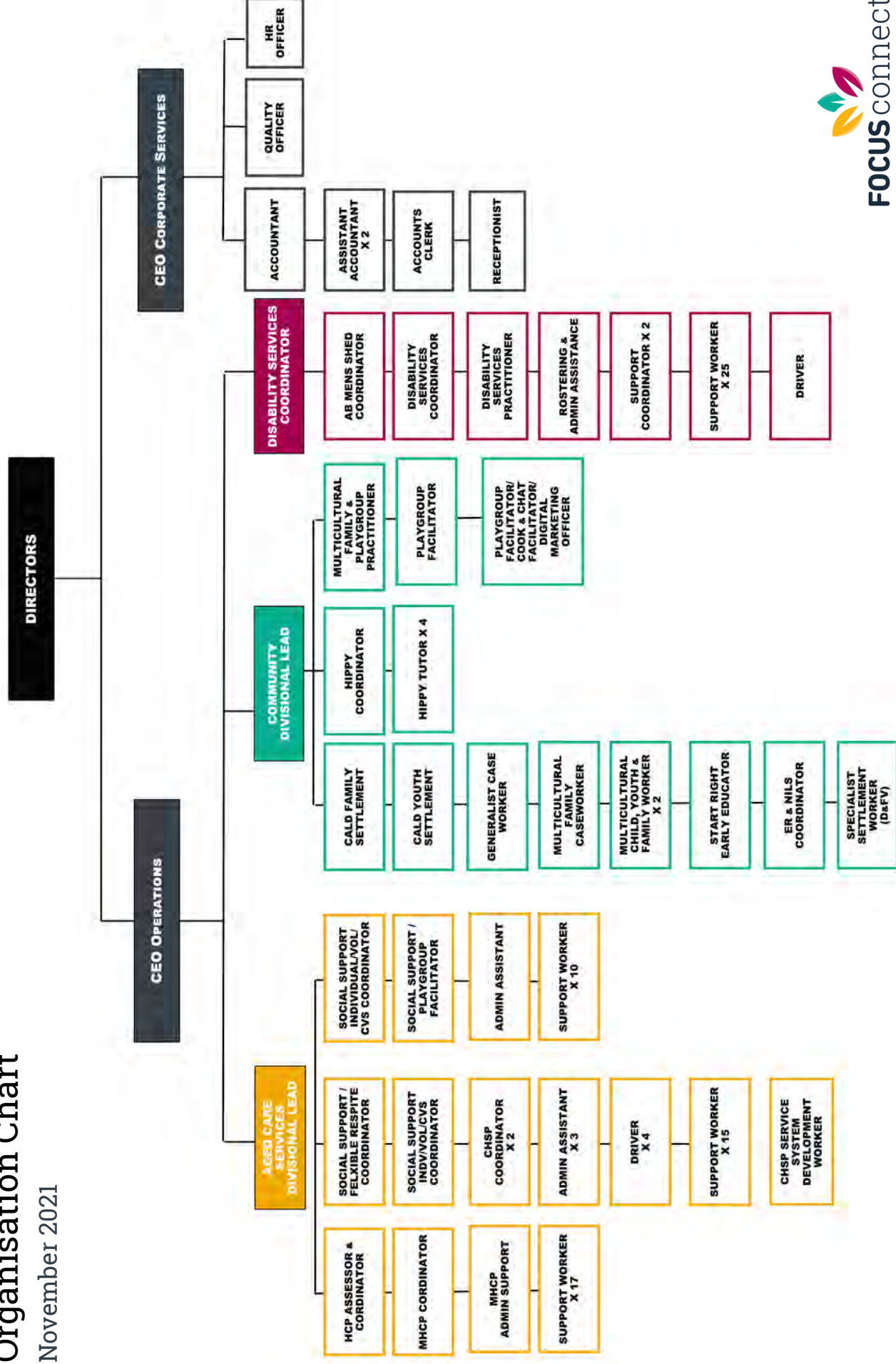
Blue House – painted in Feb 2021

Our community centre building in Dumaresq Street Campbelltown, affectionately known as 'The Blue House' was both repaired and repainted, internally and externally. This building houses our social cooking programs which bring people of diverse communities together, and our HIPPY program which supports our young children and their families in preparation for school. We have had many happy group activities held on these premises. We wish to acknowledge and thank the NSW State Government under the Community Building Partnership for their grant of \$15,900 to enable this project.



Organisation Chart

November 2021



Staff

Abul Akot
Adriana La Spina
Aisbeth Martinez
Alexander Maniquis
Amanda Heather
Amber Dunn
Ana Carmichael
Andrew McGlinchy
Ann Tibbles
Anna Faizi Sobbi
Antonietta Bugge
Antonio Dominguez
Barunaya Shnan
Betty De Arrascue
Bevan Nicholas
Bhagawati Thapa Subedi
Briannan Reil
Bridget Sharpe
Brie-Anna Byrnes
Caitlin Manganaro
Carolina Andrade
Carolina Trindade
Catalina De Santis
Cecilia Vera
Christiane Ibrahim
Christine Rickert
Clara Luisa Gomez Velutini
Colmenares
Cristian Lita
Dalia Attalla
Darren Stevens
David Bowmer
David Romero
Deborah Giacomini
Dewak Ram
Diego Molina
Dolma Dolma
Elizabeth Greenep
Emily Kaudeer
Eufemia Romero
Farisha Sayed
Fatin Al Rawi
Francisco Vargas
Georgia Mossman
Hamdia Khan
Harry Ram
Hira Fareed
Houssam Halabi
Isabel Cristina Molina Arboleda
Isabel Williamson
Ivania Joya

Jacqueline Lobo
Jason Mills
Jeremy Travers
Ji Jan
Jo-Ann Fletcher
Joan Obuchowski
Joanne Narvais
Jodi-Lee Charnock
John Spring
Josefina Garcia
Joseph Nwosa
Judith Seeney
Justin Lloyd
Kasak Aldalmi
Kaylee Thompson
Kazhal Muhamad
Kim Postill
Kit Lam
Kulvinder Kaur
Kwannet Uadhao
Kylie Anable Gausden
Kylie Richardson
Laila Al Sattouf
Laura Dixon
Lee-Ann Jones
Leonie Nixon
Lilieta Teupa
Linda Vasquez
Linh Thi Pham
Lisa Harrison
Lorena Munoz
Lorraine Babu
Mandy Luong
Mangal Jagtap
Marcela Fernandez
Marco Iglesias
Maria Cristina Villena
Maria Decker
Maria Jose Gonzalez
Maria Mourraille
Marie Jeanne Bunga Mbenza
Mary Smolcic
Maureen Lonergan
Maya Almandarawi
Menuka Dhungana
Michelle Arenas
Nafiza Buksh
Nanhwa Chong
Neeven Shmoael
Onoribel Veronica Perez Aranguren
Owen Mossman

Penelope Allie
Peter Lonergan
Phouthone Mitthoumphone
Phouvanh Meuansanith
Pina Tauilili Sio
Rajju Maharjan
Renica Adam
Robert Janossy
Robert Scorsone
Roksana Chowdhury
Rosemarie Finianos
Ross Haydon
Roxanne Jimenez
Rubita Shrestha
Rudaba Tonni
Safinaz Halabi
Samija Avdic
Samuel Arenas
Sana Al Ahmar
Sandra Urbina Huezo
Sannaa Tawaddross
Sawsan Wahba
Sharon Hooper
Shila Thomas
Sidrah Hammad
Stephanie Wiley
Steven Ngo
Sue Gordon
Suha Al Zuhiri
Susan Chalker
Sweta Limbu
Sylvia Oilvares
Tania Sharmin
Tanya Fung
Tashi Tashi
Teneale Conciatore
Themie Bekiaris
Thi Nguyen
Thomas Jones
Tiffany Jenart
Tracey Button
Ugochukwu Okika
Valentina De Lucia
Vanessa Klein
Veronica Sanchez
Wafa Jabarin
Wafaa Hovey
William Pownall
Wing Leung
Xiaoying Zhang
Xuehui (Sheffy) Zheng
Yvonne Welathanthirige Perera



Volunteers

Abilene Mary Barnes
 Alejandra (Maria) Mourraille
 Amal Shijar
 Amparo Asfoura
 Annie Wang
 Carolyn Wright
 Cecilia Bare
 Colin Hardy
 Colleen Mary Malone
 Emma Cayna
 Eufrasia Kehagias
 Fida Mohamad
 Francine Thomson
 Harry Ram
 Hoh Tin
 Imad Klaif Shahad
 Joanne Narvais
 Josefina Nowland
 Justina Suana
 Latvia Veamatahau
 Leonor Diaz
 Linh Pham
 Ljubisa (Lee) Zebic
 Luz Maria Mateo
 Marlene Agoo
 Mary Templeman
 May Suzette Jacquin
 Melon Wallie
 Mikaela Zhang
 Monique Moutia
 Pamela Lawther
 Pedro Munoz
 Phill Potbury
 Renald Francois
 Robert Scorsone
 Sawsan Wahba
 Shanti Srinivasa
 Shila Thomas
 Ted Kelada
 Thi Nho Tran
 Thi Son Trinh
 Veronica Sanchez
 Wafaa Hamadi
 Wafaa Hovey
 Yoli Villahermosa
 Yves Irakoze



Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is an entry level support service based on the philosophy of empowering and supporting older people to be more independent at home and in the community. The CHSP enhances quality of life and helps prevent an untimely earlier admission of clients into long-term residential care.

The CHSP assists clients to learn or re-learn their daily social and life skills. Where re-skilling is not adequate and appropriate for client's needs, the CHSP program has a focus on minimising a client's daily functional losses through providing supports in the areas that are required in their daily life.

Our CHSP program provides Home and Community based supports through the following:

Personal Care – assistance with showering, self-care, hygiene and grooming

Flexible Respite Care – care for our clients while the client and their carer have a break from each other

Domestic Assistance – assistance with basic chores around the household

Transport – community transport to attend appointments and social/ recreational opportunities

Social Support Groups – based on linguistically diverse and culturally relevant groups where clients have the opportunity to be part of a huge range of activities like Tai Chi, playing cards, walks, picnics, barbecues, day-trips, cooking groups, art classes, and playing with our life-like artificial intelligence (AI) cats and dogs.

FOCUS Connect advocates for clients who require longer term or higher level supports to receive a Home Care Package through the Home Care Packages (HCP) Program based on reassessment of their support needs



Highlights

Throughout the 2020 / 2021 COVID-19 lockdowns we delivered **humanitarian packages**, made up of essential groceries, cleaning products and small gifts, to our clients. Phone call wellbeing checks were undertaken with all clients to assess their current situation and to reduce their social isolation during lockdown. *Pictured at left is one of our lovely clients with her 'virtual morning tea-cup'*

Distribution of **vaccination information** (in community languages) and the Medication Consent Brochure produced by OPAN (Older Persons Advocacy Network) to our consumers

Chinese New Year, Easter, & Philippines Independence Day **Celebrations**

Seniors Dementia Group **bird hotel** building project

Home Care Package Program (HCP)

The Home Care Package (HCP) program is designed to provide a higher level of support for clients who initially receive interim services from the entry level CHSP Program. Based on the principles of Consumer/ Client Directed Care, the HCP program keeps clients at the centre of decision making and provides them with more individual choice and control about the type of care and support they receive in their own homes. Our HCP program involves a broad range of expertise and services including:

Domestic assistance
Transport
Personal care
Social support
Home modifications and maintenance
Clinical care
Purchase of essential household goods and appliances

Four levels of home care packages are provided to clients:

Level 1 supports clients with basic care needs
Level 2 supports clients with low level care needs
Level 3 supports clients with intermediate care needs
Level 4 supports clients with high level care needs



Photos (opposite page)

Top: Vietnamese Group Easter Hat Parade

Middle: Filipino Group Easter Hat Parade

Bottom: Filipino Group celebrating of
Philippines Independence Day 2021

Photos (this page)

Above: Chinese Group celebrating Chinese
New Year, 12th February

Left: Seniors (Dementia) Group Bird Hotel

Below: Seniors Group companion pets project





Community Visitor Scheme (CVS)

The CVS program seeks to alleviate social and cultural isolation and improve quality of life through **meaningful friendships and companionships**. With another year of restrictions and lockdowns, CVS has played a critical role in supporting connection and relationships. Participants and volunteer visitors are language-matched to facilitate communication and relationship building.

During the lengthy periods where face-to-face visits were not possible, volunteers used **alternative ways of keeping in touch** such as virtual phone visits via Skype, Zoom, FaceTime, and WhatsApp.

Additional funding allowed for staff, recipients and volunteers to undertake telephone and technology skills development and infection control **training**, and the purchase of 10 iPads and Personal Protective Equipment.

Individual Social Support (ISS)

Individual Social Support provides one on one support for clients to live independently in their home. Our program aims to support clients to remain independent and connected to their local community.

ISS provides home visiting, check-ins through phone and online means and outings such as shopping, walks and coffee through our dedicated companion volunteers.

During the two lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, ISS played a vital role with reaching out to isolated clients in a COVID safe manner through regular phone and online check-ins.



Volunteer Program

Besides our talented paid employees, FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services Division is made up of dedicated volunteers who boost our operational capacity to provide more services and amazing experiences to our Aged Care clients.

Our volunteers engage with clients across a number of our programs such as Individual Social Support and our 15 Social Support Groups. During the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 our volunteers hit the ground running with phone call check-ins and grocery/ essential item deliveries to our Aged Care clients.

During National Volunteer Week in May 2021, Aged Care Services Division celebrated the contribution of its volunteers with a formal Volunteer Awards event at the Ambervale Hotel. Each of our amazing volunteers received a certificate of appreciation and a gift card.



Wetherill Park

At the start of the financial year 2020-2021, for the very first time in our 38-year history, FOCUS Connect, established a new office outside of the Macarthur Campbelltown Region. This was achieved through growth funding received from the Federal Department of Health to support Aged Care clients with accessing an expanded Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) in the priority regions of South-West Sydney and Northern Sydney.

Our successful commencement of operations at Wetherill Park involved sourcing and setting up the new premises, hiring and orientating new staff, signing up new Aged Care Clients, establishing new services and forging new links with community partners and stakeholders.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 during the start-up phase of our Wetherill Park Office, FOCUS Connect is now a provider of quality Aged Care services throughout the regions of Northern Sydney, Campbelltown-Macarthur, and the rest of Greater South-West Sydney.



Wetherill Park
Team





we moved!



Social Support Group - CHSP Northern Sydney Region

Throughout 2020/2021, the Social Support Group of Hornsby engaged in a variety of **presentations and activities** centred around physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. These included Crime Prevention with Senior Constable Colin Mitchell; Arthritis Awareness; Diabetes Awareness; Falls Injury Prevention; Healthy Brain, Healthy Life; Medicine Management; Oral Health Care; Healthy Bone & Osteoporosis; Dementia Awareness (Regis Aged Care); and the Stepping On Program. We received very positive feedback that the presentations assisted participants to make positive changes to their personal circumstance. *Medicine Management* was a favourite as everyone learned something new to assist in making better decisions about personal health.

Our Seniors celebrated **Seniors Week** joining with Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Community Transport for a Mexican Fiesta.. They spent the day dancing to the Mariachi band, indulging in burritos and non-alcoholic sangria, singing, playing games and hitting the traditional piñata with other seniors from the CHSP - Northern Sydney Region.

The Social Support Group embraced technology this year, learning with **Be Connected**, an Australian government initiative designed to increase the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians. Our seniors enthusiastically stayed connected with families, friends and with the group itself in the midst of the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 lockdowns.

Photos opposite (Clockwise from top left): Excursion to Bahai Temple; Harmony Day (Hornsby); Seniors Week Mexican Fiesta (Hornsby); NSW Seniors Festival Expo; participating in cognitive games; visit to Newport Arms Hotel; Crime Prevention presentation (Hornsby); Spanish Support Group.







Enhanced Quality and Clinical Governance Frameworks

FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services are enhancing their Quality and Clinical Governance frameworks to support and guide everyone with delivering quality services. The enhanced Quality and Clinical Governance Frameworks will equip FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services to achieve organic business growth with new clients across Metro Sydney and the South-West Sydney growth corridor.

The improvements to FOCUS Connect Aged Care Service's Quality and Clinical Governance framework recognise and address the recommendations and findings from the recent Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety to create a safer and better aged care sector across Australia.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality Technology

This year, FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services researched and trialled the use of AI technology and applications to enhance the delivery of Social Support Group activities. FOCUS Connect purchased robotic AI cats and dogs with life like facial and body movements and reactions based on voice recognition and 'bark' technology. AI cats and dogs provide companionship and encourage the participation of our Aged Care clients with daily activities which in turn improves their health, wellbeing, and lifestyles.



In 2022 and beyond, FOCUS Connect Aged Care Services will utilise virtual reality smart goggles to provide our Aged Care clients with safe simulated visual experiences such as being on an African safari, climbing a mountain, watching a sporting match or just chilling and relaxing at the beach.

Simulated experiences have proven to be just as beneficial as 'real life' experiences without the risk factors and challenges for the elderly, including mobility issues and not being able to access holiday destinations, recreational activities and visual experiences as they use to in their youth.



Airds-Bradbury Mens Shed

During the 2020/21 financial year, the Men's Shed underwent significant changes in leadership and membership and continued developing as an inclusive and welcoming environment with a strong relationship forming between our participants and members.

The first Men's Shed Fete Day, held on the 29th of May 2021, was a huge success, raising over \$800. This was achieved with the help of several volunteers and their donation of time and products, and proved to be a wonderful opportunity for the Men's Shed community come together. A great range of Men's Shed wares were available for sale, including chopping boards, tables, phone holders, hundreds of records donated by a happy customer, and our popular rocking horses. Tea and scones, baked fresh on the day, along with cakes, homemade chilli jam, and tomato relish were also on sale. The barbecue and an amazing atmosphere of friendship and warmth ensured everyone had a happy day.

During the past 3 months there has been a steady increase in member numbers, with 5 new registrations per month and a pleasing increase in the number of returning members.

Men's Shed also experienced a growth in the number of NDIS participants and enquiries. There are plans to expand our program to ensure a diverse community presence from the Aged Care and Disability sectors as well as more youth and veterans coming together to learn invaluable skills and build friendships. The Men's Shed is now 'the place to be' for participants and the camaraderie and bonds forming between them is astounding. A true testament to inclusion and diversity.

Photos opposite (Clockwise from top left): Serving sausage sandwiches at Bunnings; fundraiser bbq at Bunnings; a six string lap guitar proudly built at the men's shed; fresh produce from the garden; Men's Shed renovations to extend the kitchen and dining facilities; new deck as part of the renovations; Men's Shed chillies; the Men's Shed truck proudly sponsored by our local member.





Individual Services

The Individual Services program has seen many participants achieve their goals of autonomy and social connection this year.

NDIS participant, Ian has developed his confidence in interacting with his peers and making decisions about how he would like to be supported to achieve his goals. Ian is now able to advocate for himself. He also regularly utilises FOCUS Connect's industrial kitchen to create meals that meet his sensory needs.

There has been excellent cooperation and strategic planning for individuals with challenging behaviours. The disability team have worked closely with allied health clinicians including Behaviour Support Practitioners and Occupational Therapists to best support participants with challenging behaviours. These relationships have also facilitated greater support for front line staff in managing challenging behaviours.

Our work with allied health professionals has also been beneficial to a client who experienced challenging circumstances at home. His support worker and Disability Services Divisional Lead, Antonietta, engaged with a multidisciplinary team to review his medication and support arrangements. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the client's overall health and functioning. Despite the long road ahead, he and his clinical support team have built a strong foundation for long term success in his mental health recovery journey.

Overall, the team has provided person centred support that has seen many participants reach milestone goals and built meaningful connections. The Disability Services Division looks forward to offering tailored, diverse services to help engage participants with their mainstream supports and the local community.

Primrose Cottage

Primrose Cottage is a boutique provider of Supported Independent Living (SIL) – ‘forever home’ and Short-Term Accommodation (STA) – ‘respite services’ under the NDIS Scheme.

Primrose Cottage is more than a house made up of bricks and mortar, it provides a ‘home away from home’ where the needs, interests and passions of the participants is embedded into the foundations. Our person-centred approach means that we tailor supports that focus on the individual’s abilities and interests and what they can do to pursue their interests and achieve their goals.

Primrose Cottage provides a vast range of activities for participants to enjoy such as community outings and home-based activities like arts and craft, team building activities, and gourmet pizza cooking classes with home grown herbs and a pizza oven from Primrose Cottage’s Sensory Garden.

Primrose Cottage provides social and life skills training opportunities where the learning experience is based on engaging participants with fun activities. Participants have been able to learn or relearn skills in personal care housework, shopping, communication, cooking, taking public transport, caring for a pet and their rights as consumers.





Community Access

Our popular Community Access program focuses on engaging people of all backgrounds and abilities to create connections and build meaningful relationships.

The **Cooking Program** has gained popularity with participants wanting to learn about food, nutrition, health, and teamwork. Participants have learnt invaluable domestic skills whilst creating a variety of dishes which they have then attempted at home for their families and loved ones.

Our **wood fire pizza oven** is very popular with the Community Access group and on more than one occasion, participants and staff alike have enjoyed their own pizzas and socialising. Pizza days are an excellent way for the group to have fun and engage in team building.

Our participants have been working hard and **getting creative at the Men's Shed**. They have enjoyed learning new skills, creating amazing things and making new friends.

In October 2020, the Community Access group hosted the **Tune In Mental Health Awareness** morning tea. Participants made freshly baked scones, coffee and tea for the Aged Care coffee group. Everyone enjoyed a relaxing morning of calm music, colouring and sharing of relaxation strategies. Participants debriefed over their experience of being in lockdown and how they managed to stay positive throughout the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Photos opposite (Clockwise from top left): Participants enjoying bushwalking; Tune in Mental Health Awareness Morning Tea; busy days in the Men's Shed; Wood fire pizza oven at Primrose Cottage.



Support Coordination

Our Support Coordination program has grown exponentially in 2020 and continuing in 2021. In January 2021, FOCUS Connect welcomed Support Coordinator, Laura Dixon to the team. Laura is continuously working to build positive relationships with participants and network with the wider community. Both Rubita and Laura have assisted participants to achieve the goals outlined in their plans:

Laura achieved phenomenal outcomes with the participants she supports. More recently, a 59 year old male participant with a Cerebrovascular Accident (stroke), Diabetes and Hypertension who became homeless earlier this year. He had no informal supports to assist him which left him feeling isolated and reluctant to receive help with supports in the community. Laura built rapport with the participant and liaised with the Department of Housing, Link2home, NDIS planner and his Allied Health Therapists to help him find suitable housing and have an NDIS plan that met his current circumstances. The participant now has a place to call home. Laura was able to liaise with the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) and Mission Australia, so he was able to furnish his new home. He is working with his Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist and Speech Therapist to increase his independence. He now feels more comfortable to receive support and assistance in his home and in the community to achieve his goals.

Rubita's client originally presented with strong feelings of isolation, loneliness, was suicidal at times, alcoholic and lacked social connectedness with others. He was very hesitant to access support through his NDIS funds, he felt judged and was not confident. Rubita encouraged her client and his plan nominee and slowly introduced supports one by one. Starting with counselling and preparation and delivery of meals, followed in a few months with personal domestic assistance and occupational therapy service. Through his OT service Rubita was successful in getting him much needed AT equipment, including a recliner chair, and then earlier this year a scooter. The client now sees an Exercise Physiologist weekly and swims after each session. His sister reported he is a different person now, he has started to trust people, goes out in his scooter and is engaged in community. We hope our client will further utilise his NDIS funds and continue to be a more confident and independent individual.



Enhanced Quality and Safeguard Frameworks

Throughout the year the Disability Services Division enhanced and strengthened its Quality and Safeguard frameworks. We developed and delivered staff training modules to up-skill our front-line workforce on the new and amended policies, procedures, and practices that comprise the enhanced Disability Service Division's Quality and Safeguard Frameworks.

FOCUS Connect supports and recognises the importance of the current "Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability" to promote a more inclusive society that supports people with a disability to be independent and live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. FOCUS Connect looks forward to the final report and recommendations to be delivered by the Federal Government by 29 September 2023. We anticipate this will provide opportunities for the Disability sector and the NDIS to make further improvements to service delivery and the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Frameworks.



Child & Parenting Program (CAPP)



From left: Kasak (Playgroup Facilitator), Nafiza (Multicultural Family & Playgroup Practitioner) and Sidrah (Playgroup Facilitator)

Highlights

Playgroup celebrated National Families Week, Christmas, end of year, 'Eid in the park, Easter Hat parade.

Our Facilitator Kasak completed 10 years of employment at Focus Connect.

Local hero, and Australian of the Year, [Rosemary Kariuki](#) (advocate for migrant and refugee woman) facilitated a group discussion about domestic violence with our families at a special [NAIDOC Week](#) event held at Koala Playgroup.

CAPP are collaborating with TAFE Campbelltown to run a [Preparing for Work & Introduction to Computers](#) course at Playgroup. Campbelltown Council are providing CAPP with a training room for the course.

Key Statistics

- 34 families received case work
- 76 sessions of playgroup
- 15 families registered at our Yasmin Playgroup (Campbelltown)
- 20 families registered at our Koala Playgroup (Minto)
- 2 Focus on Family Wellbeing parenting programs (23 families)



Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI)



Highlights

The **Grow Fit** program was very popular. Families travelled from Oran Park, Spring Farm, Mt Annan, Camden, Kearns, Eaglevale, Claymore & Campbelltown for the opportunity of engagement.



Pre-lockdown activities that were popular:

Mother's Day Picnic at Eaglevale
Duck Pond
Symbio Wildlife Park
Little Crocs
Play Maze Narellan
Eaglevale Leisure Centre
Swimming Day
Bulli Beach Picnic Birthday Party
Narellan Movies

Key Statistics

102 Playgroup participants
205 Case management clients
134 Positive Parenting clients

Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)

The HIPPY program builds upon family strengths so families can provide children with the necessary skills and confidence to begin school with a positive attitude towards learning.

HIPPY:

- provides children with a structured education-focused early learning program at home
- improves children's preparedness for school and strengthens school participation
- gives parents and carers the confidence and skills to create a positive home learning environment
- supports employment and training pathways for HIPPY Coordinators Home Tutors and parents.
- strengthens communities

Highlights

Twenty families in the 2019/20 cohort graduated in Dec 2020 under COVID restrictions. A surprise visit from [Paint the Town Read Mascot McReadie](#) was the highlight for the children.

Collaborating with other sections of FOCUS Connect to [celebrate](#) Easter, International Women's Day and National Families Week.

Partnering with The Smith Family to deliver their [Let's Read](#) and [Let's Count](#) programs to families. Let's Read provides disadvantaged parents and carers with reading books and support to encourage them to have fun reading with their young children. Let's Count is an early mathematics program for children aged three to five. The program supports parents to develop their children's maths skills by noticing, exploring, and talking about numbers, counting, measurement and patterns in their daily lives.



Collaborating with FOCUS Connect's Aged Care Services to deliver the **GrandPals** project which encourages the development of meaningful connections between young children and older adults.



Key Statistics

30 families in the Age 4 programs
30 home visits
25 families in the Age 5 programs
15 home visits
900 home packs delivered (Age 4)
375 home packs delivered (Age 5)
1275 tutor home visits

Start Right

The Start Right Program builds numeracy and literacy skills in children aged 0-3 years and empowers parents with confidence and tools to help children learn at home.



Throughout the COVID-19 2020 and 2021 restrictions the Start Right Program continued to operate with a pivot to online delivery.

Weekly Facebook storytimes and home delivered education packs kept the children engaged. The packs included information for the parents/carers about the importance of early years learning and the benefits of learning through play and a variety of activities for the children

Other activities throughout the year included a visit to the beach where the children explored rock pools and searched for shells, sorting and counting them afterwards.





CALD Family Settlement

Settlement Services successfully maintained connection and engagement with our clients throughout the lengthy COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021

Highlights

Macarthur Multicultural & Aboriginal Women's Coffee Club (MMACC)

- In April, FOCUS Connect and NSW Police, in collaboration with other key local organisations, launched Macarthur Multicultural & Aboriginal Women's Coffee Club, an educational and recreational program for women. Regular meetings provide an opportunity for women to learn how to protect themselves from domestic and external violence.

Multicultural Women's Art Group - The beautiful aprons created by the group featured in the collaborative Looking Back Looking Forward Textile exhibition at Campbelltown Arts Centre. In creating their work, the women considered how the past impacts them, how it informs their view of the future, and how it influences and informs their work.

OneStep Walk and Talk - On 30th of May 2021, 32 FOCUS Connect SET clients joined with OneStep for a Walk and Talk event at Balmoral. OneStep walks provide an opportunity for people who live locally and people with refugee experience to meet for a walk and talk to build empathy and understanding and strengthen community.

From Home to Here, My Journey in Clay - FOCUS Connect, in partnership with Campbelltown Arts Centre, offered ten workshops for migrants and refugees of all ages. Sixty five participants came together to make tiles that reflected their story and their journey to Australia.



Photos

Top left: Multicultural Women's Art Group at the 'Looking back Looking Forward' textile Exhibition at the Campbelltown Arts Centre, March 2021

Top right: Picnic

Right: OneStep Walk at Balmoral, 30 May 2021.

Below left: Launch of the Macarthur Multicultural & Aboriginal Women's Coffee Club, 22 April 2021.

Below right: Participants and their tiles for the 'From Home to Here, My Journey in Clay' exhibition.





Youth Settlement

The FOCUS Connect Youth Settlement program supports Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people who have lived in Australia for less than five years.

Highlights

The FOCUS Connect Youth Settlement program supports Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people who have lived in Australia for less than five years.

Individual Support - Youth Settlement adapted practice and procedures to safely ensure continuing individual support for all referrals.

Tutoring - Four qualified teachers volunteer each week to support students either face-to-face or digitally. Classes are held at FOCUS Connect's main office, at Campbelltown library, and digitally when appropriate.

eYouthChat@FocusConnect - this successful program continues to offer newly arrived young people diverse workshops and provides information about internal and external programs and services available to them in the Macarthur area.

SIF Driving Program - we provided 168 hours of driving lessons, assisting young people to obtain their licence.

End of 2020 Celebration - Sixteen participants enjoyed a fun night out bowling and playing Laser Tag at Kingpin @Macarthur Square. It was lovely to see them smile and have fun together face to face.

International Women Day March - SETS Youth Group had the opportunity to gather, eat and celebrate IWD by sharing their views and acknowledging the struggles and achievements of women from all walks of life. They displayed signs with positive messages in English, Arabic, Spanish, and French.

Youth Week 2021 - Forty participants attended the SSI/NSP Youth Week event at Guildford County Soccer and Recreation Club. They experienced live performance, games, youth-led panel discussion, the launch of our "Youth Speak" video, and more!. Shaimaa Alhamad, one of our Focus Connect clients, participated in the panel. Each panelist showed great courage and vulnerability discussing the challenges they have faced over the past year and their hopes for the future.

Movie outing - SETS Youth had an outing to the movies to celebrate Youth Week 2021. 15 young people enjoyed watching Tom and Jerry at Dumaresq Cinema.

Refugee Week - To celebrate Refugee Week in June, FOCUS Connect launched the *My Journey to Australia Project*, a series of videos featuring interviews with three SET young people Hala, Yves and Shaimaa. Created by Ivania Joya, FOCUS Connect Youth Settlement Worker, to allow young people to share their story about their journey to Australia.

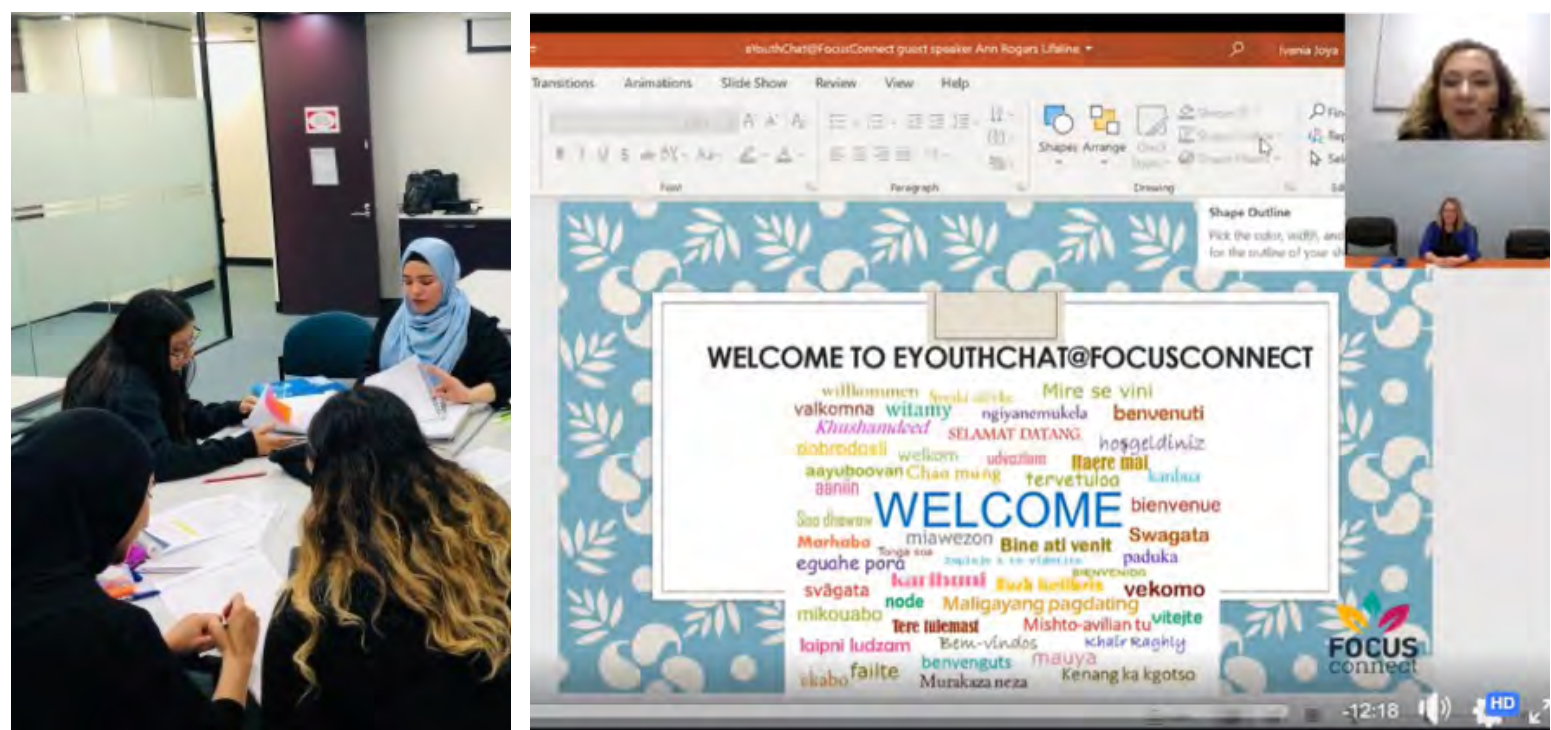
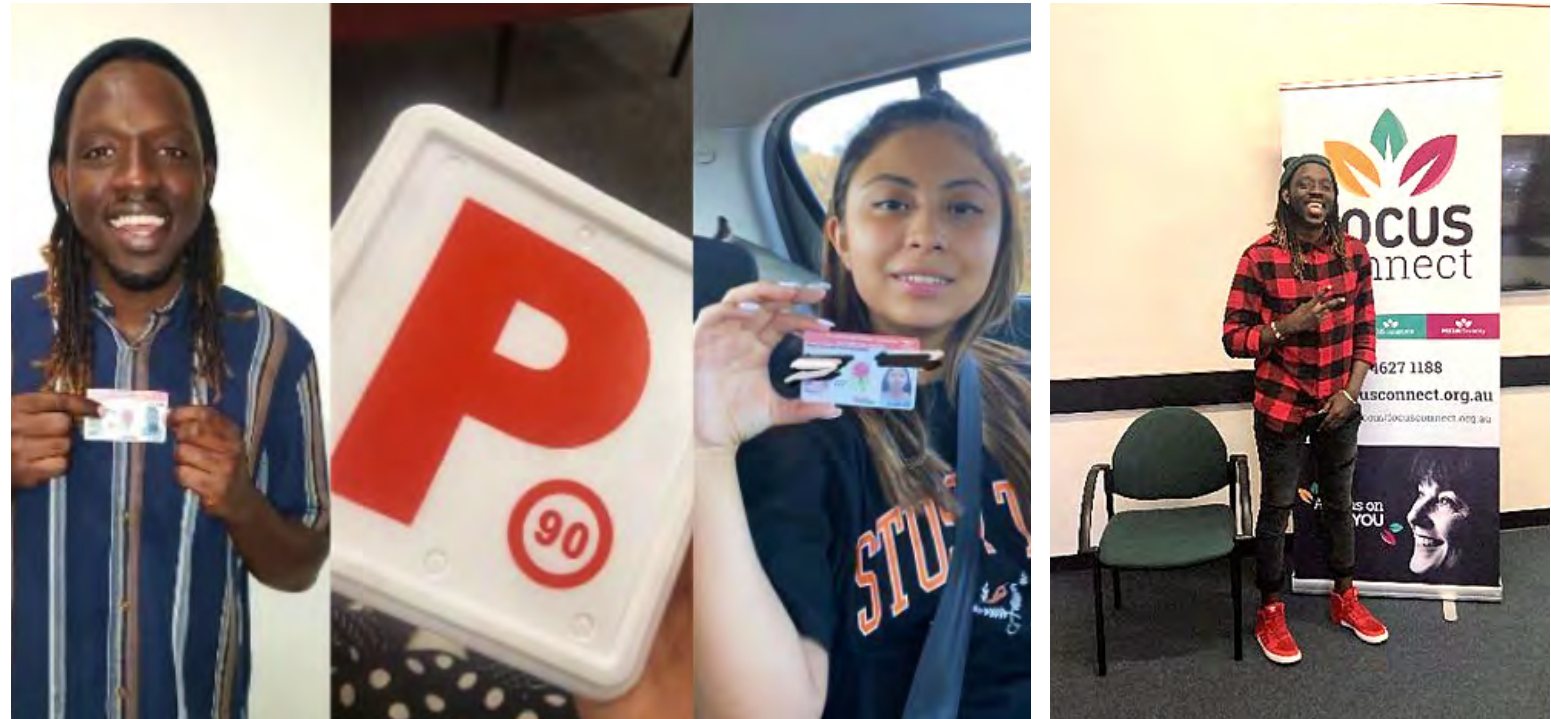
Refugee Week food donation - teacher, Derek Wales and students from Ambarvale High organised a food donation as part of their Refugee Week Project. Eight FOCUS Connect clients and their families received this valuable support.

Ivania Joya, FOCUS Connect Youth Settlement Worker, was nominated for the 2020 NSW Youth Worker Award in the CALD category.

Key Statistics

31 Education/Tutoring sessions / 116 attendees
4 Employability sessions / 56 attendees
17 Sport/Recreational sessions / 91 attendees
7 Life Skills sessions / 67 attendees
5 Mentoring sessions / 53 attendees
14 Youth Settlement groups / 189 attendees
112 SIF Driving sessions /16 attendees and 168 hours of driving lessons
Total sessions/attendees: 190 sessions / 588 attendees





Photos (opposite page)

Clockwise from top left: Refugee Week food donation; International Women's Day (IWD) outing; Youth Week stand; Youth Week panel; girls at the Youth Week event; Youth Week outing to the movies.

Photos (this page)

Top left: Successful participants in the SIF Driving Program
 Top right: Yves presenting his refugee journey at Refugee Week
 Middle left: Tutoring session
 Middle right: eYouthChat @ Focus Connect session
 Bottom left: End of 2020 Celebration Bowling and Laser Tag

Volunteer Program

FOCUS Connect's operational capacity to support more clients is enhanced by the efforts, contributions, and goodwill of our volunteers across the Community, Disability and Aged Care Services Divisions. Throughout the year our volunteers assisted with the following programs and services:

- Playgroup sessions – Community Services
- Community Access – Disability Services
- Social Support Groups – Aged Care Services
- Individual Social Support – Aged Care Services
- Phone well-being checks and delivery of groceries & essential items – Aged Care Services
- Students and interns on placement across FOCUS Connect both in the back office and front-line

There are success stories over the years about volunteers transitioning to paid work and long-term careers in both Head Office and front-line positions at FOCUS Connect. This year there was a special focus on establishing key stakeholder relationships with educational providers in the Aged Care and Disability Services sector such as Capital Careers, Ultimo TAFE, NCA National College and Stride Learning. As a result, positive results were achieved with students and interns successfully completing their placements and being able to gain paid employment at FOCUS Connect.

FOCUS Connect is addressing the current chronic labour shortage across the Human Services Industry by creating its own talent pool of volunteers, students, and interns. The talent pool includes bilingual volunteers and students to further strengthen links with our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients and communities.

Moving forward, FOCUS Connect will strengthen its Volunteer Management Program by adopting the principles, values and practices of the 'National Standards for Volunteer Involvement' to provide sound practice frameworks and assist with attracting, managing, and retaining volunteers.



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 Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand and NSW Fair Trading. NILS was a vital program to support individuals from the adverse effects of the two COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020 and 2021

Key Statistics

Enquiries 553
Appointments 296
Assessments 156
96% of submitted assessments approved

Emergency Relief

FOCUS Connect's Material Assistance/Emergency Relief Program provides financial assistance to marginally disadvantaged residents in the Macarthur region. This year services were extended to the Illawarra.

Key Statistics

Total 1607 enquiries

Illawarra
129 appointments
125 clients assessed

Macarthur
465 appointments
404 clients assessed





www.focusconnect.org.au

3 Cordeaux Street
Campbelltown, NSW 2560

Phone 02 4627 1188

Email info@focusconnect.org.au