



2020/21  
**Annual Report**

We're with you.





# We're with you.

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### Acknowledgement to Country

Today, we acknowledge all First Nations People of this land and celebrate their enduring connections to country. Let us sense the land beneath our feet, acknowledge to whom it belongs, and pay our respects to the Elders, past, present, and emerging. For we too are one in land, one in spirit, one in faith united in God's love.





# We're with you.

As the social services agency of the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba, CatholicCare provides a range of services to promote individual, family and community wellbeing.

From humble beginnings in 1983 of lunchtime counselling sessions conducted by volunteer workers, CatholicCare now employs approximately 50 staff and over 170 volunteers that service an area of nearly 500,000km<sup>2</sup> in Southwest Queensland.

CatholicCare supports all clients in an inclusive environment that welcomes diversity. CatholicCare is welcoming of and support/work with clients from:

- All cultural backgrounds including refugees, migrants and new settlers to Toowoomba
- First Nations People
- All religious and spiritual beliefs
- All relationships and family structures

## Supporting families at the pressure points over their lifespan

Our Services include:

- Family Support Program (Counselling, Education and Family Dispute Resolution)
- Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Service
- Employee Assistance Program and
- Mental Health Services (including Partners in Recovery)

## Our Team

Our staff are a diverse, eclectic group of caring individuals whose personal values align perfectly with CatholicCare's mission to 'empower individuals, families and communities'.

With a wide range of qualifications, expertise and life experience our staff have the perfect mix to go above and beyond a basic service and put great outcomes for our clients within an arm's reach.

## Vision

A community of kindness and justice reflecting Christ's mission.

## Mission

Our mission is to empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships.

## Values

Our values inform the way that our people relate to the community, to those we serve and to each other.

## New CatholicCare About Us Video

A picture tells a thousand words but a video really builds understanding!

We have a new emphasis on the four different client groups we support and created a video to help tell our story about all of the services we have available.

A big thank you to Treetops Media and dms CREATIVE for your help in producing the video.



Those we've Helped:

**2564**

Individual counselling sessions delivered

**823**

Families assisted through mediation

Migrants

**12**



Indigenous

**5**

Staff Members' Community Connections



Staff Distribution

Toowoomba

**40**

Roma

**3**

St George

**1**

## Staff Members



Male

**13**

Female

**32**

Total

**45**



# Behind the Scenes

## Annual Staff Forum 8-10 September 2020

Our highly successful all staff forum is focused on professional development, team building and broadening knowledge about local issues and opportunities.

### This year's program included:

- » Motivational guest speaker, Dean Clifford
- » A presentation about Inland Rail
- » Fire Training and Ergonomics Training
- » Cultural Heritage training and
- » The Staff and Advisory Board Dinner.

The forum was held across a number of sites, including St Bart's Anglican Church on Tuesday, Camp Cooby and Gummingurru on Wednesday, with teams choosing from a wide variety of activities on Thursday 10 Sept. The feedback from the Forum was overwhelmingly positive for each of the activities.



## STRENGTHENING OUR TEAM - In-House Leadership Program

We're focusing on growing new leaders and ensuring we have a high-quality succession plan for each CLT member.

Invitations to be part of this program in 2021 were extended to staff who excel in their performance of the technical skills of their role and also show clear alignment to our culture. The program commenced in February and will continue until November 2021.

### Topics include:

- #1 CatholicCare Story** - half day overview of all programs and strategic communication.
- #2 Governance** - half day Strategic focus with succession planning, role of Board, legal structure, Constitution and risk.
- #3 People Management** - Motivating people, having difficult conversations, communicating with your team.
- #4 Stakeholder Engagement and Partnering** - what partnering really is, cross sector partnering to solve complex challenges, simple frameworks for how to partner effectively.
- #5 Self-Care** - time management, stress management, knowing self.
- #6 Financial Literacy** - half day How to read balance sheet, CatholicCare reporting and Budget.

### Professional Development Program for everyone:

#### Topics include:

- » DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness) Behaviour Assessment.
- » Communication and Learning Styles.
- » Individual Contracts and Commitment.
- » Emotional Intelligence.
- » Reflective Practice.



ISO9001 renewal Audit  
successfully completed  
October 2020.

## Successful Staff Scholarship Applications

**Miranda Woodland** one of our FDRPs (mediators) has been successful with her 2021 Young Leaders Forum scholarship application at McKinsey Academy.

**Gavin Turnbull** one of the YBS (Youth Bail Support) Caseworkers has been accepted to do the Milparanga Leadership Program (part of the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation) to develop his leadership capabilities and lead robust conversations for powerful shifts across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander landscape.



## Toowoomba Chronicle's Top 100 Leaders

The Chronicle produces an annual list of local people who they determine are leaders in the community: "These are Toowoomba's most influential people, the men and women who make our city what it is today". CatholicCare's Executive Director, Kate Venables was named at #45 in 2021, up from number 50 in 2020.

## Employer of Choice Award

CatholicCare was shortlisted as a finalist for the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce's Employer of Choice category at the 2020 Focus HR Business Excellence Awards. Although we were not successful, the judges were very affirming about all that we do for staff. Overall it was a very positive experience and a great fun evening!



“ May we keep up our efforts to fulfil CatholicCare’s vision of a kind and just community... ”

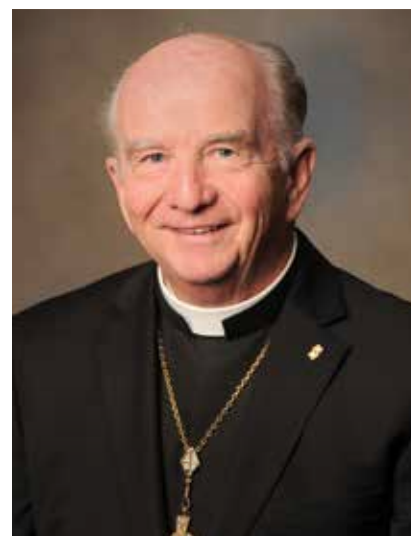
## From the Bishop

In welcoming this Annual Report, I would like to offer a special word of appreciation to everyone involved with CatholicCare for the way they have adapted to our ever-changing COVID-19 normal world. Our CatholicCare staff have done this while still providing wonderful service to thousands of people all across our Diocese.

We have seen some new and innovative responses to their clients embracing online as well as face to face supports, in so many areas of need – providing services to families and individuals, refugees and migrants, our First Nations People and local businesses.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to CatholicCare’s staff and volunteers and to the Board for their ongoing commitment and for their persevering efforts, day after day. This ongoing dedication is so important.

This Annual Report gives an outline of the services provided by CatholicCare over the past year: the people that are empowered, the hope that is given, the love that is experienced.



I pray for continued blessings in the time ahead. May we keep up our efforts to fulfil CatholicCare’s vision of a kind and just community, and may God bless the work of CatholicCare, those who undertake this work and the people and families who receive support and care.

Bp Robert

Bishop Robert McGuckin

“ Such connections saw us extend our reach into communities in the South West of the Diocese, laying the foundation for further expansion in the coming years. ”

## Chair’s Report

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Annual Report. This year has seen the CatholicCare team rise to meet the enormous challenges presented by the world-wide pandemic with the professionalism and commitment the organisation has become known for.

I thank Kate Venables, our highly capable Executive Director, and the entire CatholicCare team for their dedication and commitment to the individuals, families, migrants and refugees, First Nations Australians and local businesses who have once again trusted us to support them through the challenges of 2020-2021.

In line with our 2020-2023 strategic plan, Kate and her team have built stronger connections across health, education, business and all levels of government, which allowed us to deliver more targeted services to our clients. Such connections saw us extend our reach into communities in the South West of the Diocese, laying the foundation for further expansion in the coming years.

I acknowledge our former Chair, John Olive, who finished his term this year, for his leadership and vision and thank all board members for generously



giving of their time in guiding the future of the organisation. A future we can look forward to, knowing that if CatholicCare can continue to thrive during a year like the one that has just passed, anything is possible!

Andrea Frost

# Executive Director's Report



“ I am excited by the prospects of what we might achieve together in the coming year as our region continues to grow and flourish. ”

Looking back on the year that was, it is clear that we have learned to live with the impact of a pandemic that has profoundly changed our world. Although our vast region remained relatively untouched by the virus itself, we all adapted to new routines, expectations and changing guidelines, with CatholicCare an integral part of the support mechanisms set up throughout South West Queensland. In fact, there has been an 80% increase in demand for services from rural and remote clients with more than 2,270 family mediation or counselling sessions delivered via phone or video throughout 2020/21.

CatholicCare staff and volunteers have done an amazing job to continue delivering essential services to our clients with compassion and commitment, embracing new ideas and service delivery models as we transformed them to meet the changing needs of families and communities. Over the 2020/21 year we continued to push towards our strategic goals, working together with local government,

local businesses, agencies and our key stakeholders to produce outcomes that have real impact. The excellence of our work has been acknowledged by peers and stakeholders – and most importantly through feedback from the clients who we work to empower as they meet the challenges life throws at everyone.

Some of the highlights for the 2020/21 year include:

- » Delivering more than 2,462 mediation services to families across our region.
- » 2,564 Counselling sessions to families, individuals and local businesses.
- » Development of the CatholicCare in-house leadership program for our emerging leaders.
- » Being named as finalists for the Employer of Choice award in the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Focus HR Business Excellence Awards.

I am extremely grateful to all staff members, volunteers and managers of CatholicCare for your contributions

during this most difficult year. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the members of the CatholicCare Board, our donors, benefactors and our funding partners in both the state and federal governments - we could not have delivered our programs without their commitment and support. We have achieved so much together, and I am excited by the prospects of what we might achieve together in the coming year as our region continues to grow and flourish.

Kate Venables  
Executive Director

# Corporate Governance

CatholicCare Social Services is committed to delivering services that empower individuals, families and communities to meet the challenges of life and relationships while meeting the needs of our diverse community.

Throughout 2020/21, CatholicCare Social Services:

- » Strengthened strategic partnerships to support service delivery
- » Committed to building ongoing workforce capability and the development of workplace culture

This strengthened direction has led to the development of a number of new programs and increase in the accessibility of:

- » Counselling and Education services
- » Refugee and Migrant Support Services and
- » Family Support Services

CatholicCare's Board initiated extensive community consultation with a number of organisations including Commonwealth Department of Social Services Queensland Health (Division of Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services), Darling Downs and West Moreton PHN, Education Queensland, TAFE Qld, Toowoomba Regional Council, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce, Toowoomba International Multicultural Society, Refugee Talent, Heritage Bank and University of Southern Queensland, to identify service gaps and any unmet needs within the community.



The CatholicCare Senior Leadership Team

**Bishop Robert McGuckin**  
Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba

**CatholicCare  
Advisory Board**

**Executive Director**



# Our Advisory Board



**Dr Ken Auenell**

**Deputy Chair**

Ken's passion for the Educational sector is clearly reflected within an exceptional career that started in 1979. He is currently employed as Assistant Director of Formation and Identity for Toowoomba Catholic Education.

Over the course of his career, Ken has been the recipient of many awards namely, Excellence in Educational Leadership, Excellence in Educational Administration, and Outstanding Leadership in Education, Educational Writing and Research. Ken also recently held the role of President for SPELD Qld from 2014 – 2018.



**Ms Wendy Agar**

**Member**

Wendy has served on the CatholicCare Social Services Board since 2018 and currently holds the role of CEO at Magenta Community Services.

She holds a Diploma of Teaching (Primary), a Graduate Diploma of Human Resources Management, a diploma of tourism management and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company directors. She has extensive leadership experience across education, agriculture, banking and regional development sectors and was CEO of Toowoomba's Sunrise Way Rehab when it was named the 2018 national OPTUS 'Not For Profit Business of the Year'.



**Father Ray Crowley**

**Member**

Father Ray Crowley has served on the CatholicCare Social Services board since 2016. Originally a student of St Joseph's and St Mary's in Toowoomba, Father Ray was ordained in 1972 and served in Parishes in Warwick, South Toowoomba and Roma.

In 1982, Father Ray was entrusted to initiate the Counselling Departments in two of our Diocesan Colleges, building and supporting the departments of Counsellors and Chaplains across the Catholic Framework. Today Father Ray provides support to Chaplains in Catholic Education and has a wider involvement in the community, particularly facilitating groups for those affected by grief and walking with those who are dying.



**Mr Patrick Nunan**

**Member**

Pat has an accomplished legal career with extensive experience across personal injury, aviation and commercial litigation and is a qualified Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland and High Court of Australia.

He has a strong affiliation for community, dedicating more than 40 years of service to various Not for Profit organisations. His career experiences support invaluable contributions to corporate governance, breaking down isolation and providing a voice to communities, while supporting sustainability and development of organisational objectives.



**Mr Andrew Ward**

**Member**

Andrew is a respected accountant, specialising in finance and risk management. He is currently employed as a Senior Chartered Accountant for the Horizon Accounting Group. Andrew brings a wealth of financial expertise, not just on a local level but on an international level. He has international experience in

financial professionalism from 11 years of corporate finance experience within multiple industry-leading multibillion-dollar companies, across the banking and agricultural industries. Andrew is known for his knowledgeable financial insight and control and analysis skillset. His experience extends to risk management, policy development and evolving controls & efficiencies within businesses and organisations, making him a valuable talent to our CatholicCare board.



**Ms Carla Canning**

**Member**

Carla is an enthusiastic people-focused leader who has extensive experience in working within a not-for-profit organisation.

She currently works at Toowoomba Clubhouse, a registered NDIS provider of mental health services.

Carla holds a Certificate in Counselling (Drugs & Alcohol), a Bachelor in Human Services (Counselling), a Certification for Nicotine Addiction and Smoking Cessation and a Cert IV Training & Assessment.

Carla brings an abundance of experience in drug and alcohol rehabilitation, counselling, mentoring, project management, training design and delivery, event coordination, human resources and public speaking.



**Ms Ariane deRoy**

**Member**

Ariane is a versatile, commercially focused business advisor with extensive experience partnering with business leaders to achieve commercial and operational success.

Her experience extends to strategic reviews and planning, governance advisory, forecasting and budget management, management accounts, risk management, investment cases and contracts management. She is well known for her collaborative nature and providing fresh ideas.



**Dr Lachlan Rathie**

**Member**

Dr Lachlan Rathie currently works as Senior Staff Anaesthetist at the Toowoomba Base Hospital, and has spent the last ten years serving tenures as Departmental Director and Deputy Director as well as the Supervisor of Training.

Lachlan has a proven track record in providing high-quality services in regional areas within a cross cultural environment and strong leadership of multidisciplinary teams within a consultative environment.



**Mr Vince Hede**

**Member**

Vince joined the board in January 2021. He was born and raised in Toowoomba and has strong ties to the local community.

Vince is an Accredited Family Law Specialist and a Director of Hede Byrne & Hall Lawyers, with offices in Toowoomba, Roma and Warwick. He regularly deals in all areas of Family Law including parenting, property, domestic violence and child support matters. He is a strong advocate for Family Law dispute resolution services, such as those offered by Catholic Care's Family Relationships Centre.

Vince holds degrees in Law from QUT and Science (Human Movements) from UQ.

# Our Environmental, Social & Governance Commitments

For the first time, CatholicCare has included a new component in this year's Annual Review based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework for sustainability reporting. This work reflects our ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) commitment as a not-for-profit organisation to ensure our practices are both ethical and sustainable.

The GRI framework is used worldwide, which enables high level benchmarking with any other organisation using the same topics anywhere in the world.

We have selected the most relevant GRI topics and indicators, based on a consultation process with our stakeholders, that we have aligned with our values as well as the United Nations Sustainable Goals.

An Appendix with greater detail about each GRI indicator is available on our website [www.catholiccare.services](http://www.catholiccare.services)



|               | COMMITMENT   | GRI STANDARD  | UN SDG  |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| ENVIRONMENTAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Reduce use of natural resources in our operations wherever possible</li> <li>» Ensure recycling bins are in place in all of our offices and encourage staff to place all recycling materials in them</li> <li>» We will have all of our office locations fitted with quick boil systems</li> <li>» We will dispose of all obsolete IT equipment through e-waste recycling program and/or through supporting local vulnerable communities to access technology</li> <li>» We will commit to moving to 100% renewable energy by 2025</li> <li>» We will move to have predominantly fuel-efficient vehicles in our fleet by 2025</li> <li>» We will no longer allow single use plastics to be purchased for use in the organisation</li> <li>» We will transition the majority of sites to use LED lighting</li> <li>» We will undertake a number of actions to reduce paper waste and transition to digital options</li> <li>» We will consolidate the number of our publications, grouping related info together where possible</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Use of fuel and electricity (302-1)</li> <li>» Carbon emissions (305-1, 2, 4)</li> <li>» Waste disposal (306-2)</li> <li>» Environmental credentials of suppliers (308-1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</li> <li>6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</li> <li>7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY</li> <li>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</li> <li>13 CLIMATE ACTION</li> </ul> |
| SOCIAL        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» We will contribute to increase social equality through the activities we undertake</li> <li>» We are committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion. We embrace and encourage our employees' differences in age, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity, sexual preference, socio-economic status, and other characteristics that make our employees unique</li> <li>» We are committed to regularly review all policies to ensure appropriateness and compliance with the Human Rights Act</li> <li>» We support the rights of First Nations People to retain their customs and institutions</li> <li>» We undertake a commitment to support First Nations People to educate young people to more deeply connect to culture and country</li> <li>» We consider local and First Nations businesses first before seeking to fill supply needs from businesses outside our region of operation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Diversity of board and staff (405-1)</li> <li>» Rights of First Nations People (411-1)</li> <li>» Human Rights (412-1)</li> <li>» Local Supplier Spend (204-1)</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 GENDER EQUALITY</li> <li>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</li> <li>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</li> </ul>   |
| GOVERNANCE    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» We will advocate to government for increased assistance for vulnerable groups across the region</li> <li>» We will publish a Corporate Governance statement annually which includes details of committee/council structure</li> <li>» We will maintain a Code of Conduct and set high standards for staff around ethical behaviour</li> <li>» Relevant staff will complete annual competency training and continue professional and leadership development</li> <li>» We will invest in our commitment to ensure the highest possible standards for securing client data</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Government Assistance (201-4)</li> <li>» Employee Training (404-1)</li> <li>» Client Privacy (418-1)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 GENDER EQUALITY</li> <li>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</li> <li>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</li> </ul>   |



# Our Supporters

## Commonwealth Government Funding

CatholicCare has been successful in gaining status as an NDIS provider which enables us to deliver support coordination and counselling.

The Department of Social Services provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Family Relationship Centre
- Separated Parental Support
- Family and Relationship Services
- Which Way
- Rural Mediation Services

The Department of Home Affairs provide funding for:

- Settlement Grant Program & SETS (Settlement Engagement Transition Support)

The Department of Health via Western QLD PHN and Darling Downs & West Moreton PHN provide funding for:

- Psychosocial Support Program including Drought Counselling

## State Government Funding

The Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Youth Bail Support Service

The Department of Justice provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- Community Justice Service

## Donations

A number of generous donors provided much needed financial support for our TRAMS & WHADDUP programs.

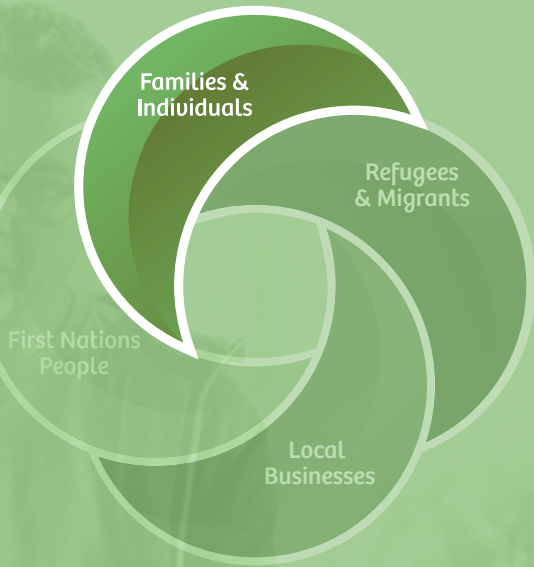
## Partnerships and Collaboration

Throughout 2020/21, CatholicCare Social Services partnered with or worked collaboratively with a number of organisations, including:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • David Lethbridge   | • TAFE Qld   |
| • Tenancy Skills   | • Education Queensland                                 |
| • RAILS (Refugee and Immigration Legal Service)                                  | • Community & Private Family Law Firms                 |
| • BEST Employment  | • Toowoomba International Multicultural Society (TIMS) |
| • Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce  | • Carbal   |
| • Catholic Agencies including: St Vincent's Hospital, Toowoomba Catholic Schools | • Goolburri  |
| • University of Southern Queensland  | • Lives Lived Well                                     |
|  | • Murri Court  |



# Families & individuals



## Supporting Families through the various pressure points of life.

We know at times we all need some additional support, especially at times where adjustments may be needed as a result of:

- » Separation or new relationships;
- » The move to parenthood;
- » Dealing with career changes or living locations; drought or retirement.

We provide a number of family and relationship services, designed to empower families to strengthen relationships or assist families through separation.

We pride ourselves on our ability to make connections at the point of family disconnection.

88

Referrals for pro-bono individual legal advice regarding children's matters

977

Face to Face Sessions



**Toowoomba Family & Relationship Centre**

**Supporting families through relationship breakdown, separation and co-parenting.**

Through the Toowoomba Family Relationship Centre, located at CatholicCare, we deliver personalised family and relationship services.

We work with separated or separating parents to develop a workable agreement for the future needs of their children. We support parents to discuss what is and isn't working in their agreements and to generate options for improvement.

We recognise each family is unique. Our highly skilled Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners get to know each family before bringing any separated couples together for mediation. Through this process, we can tailor our mediation to meet the individual needs of the family and make sure everyone feels safe and supported.

Our Family Relationship Centre staff come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures, so we are able to work with all families in ways that are tailored to their needs.

“ I went through CatholicCare Social Services & they have been amazing. ”

| MEDIATION SERVICES OFFERED                           |  |
|--|--|
| Parenting Mediation                                  | Supporting separated parents to discuss the future needs of their children.  |
| Child inclusive Mediation (CIFDR)                    | Enabling a child's voice to be heard through the separation process.   |
| Legally Assisted Child Inclusive Mediation (LACIFDR) | Enabling a child's voice to be heard through the separation process. With legally assisted problem-solving and agreement making for families and separated partners. |
| Property Mediation                                   | Supporting separated partners, with or without children, to negotiate property settlement and financial matters.   |
| Legally Assisted Mediation                           | Providing legally assisted problem-solving and agreement making for families and separated partners.   |

2,462  
Total sessions delivered

1,478  
Phone and Video Sessions

“She remembered our Birthday presents!”

Lucy, Liam and Jack (not their real names) are in primary school and live with Dad. They had been exposed to DV, erratic, inconsistent behaviour and parenting due to mum's drug misuse. The girls shared with us that they loved mum but feared overnights with her. They had also been let down by Mum on many occasions. She had promised to see them on their Birthdays and bring them presents but had not shown up. We brought lawyers into the process. Mum and her lawyer were pushing for the girls to live with her. Dad and his lawyer wanted drug tests and supervised contact at the Contact Centre. Worlds apart. When Mum's lawyer heard

the ordeal the children had experienced and their fear and disappointment, he was able to advise Mum that a slower approach would be best for the children. The GAMECHANGER was the combination of the voices of Lucy, Liam and Jack together with the advice from Mum's lawyer after this enlightenment. Mum was able to gain insight into the impacts upon the children and how best to repair and rebuild that relationship. We called the children a few weeks later and they reported that they had seen Mum and finally got their birthday presents, which had made them very happy.



85.3% of Joint Sessions to reach some form of agreement

131 Joint Sessions (including 20 LAFDR, 1 LACIFDR, 12 CIFDR)





### “Such a relief to have this finally sorted!”

Husband and Wife had been separated for 2 years but weren't able to resolve their property issues. The proceeds of sale of their joint property had been sitting in trust for 18 months, and the husband was going to have to file court proceedings shortly as the limitation period was approaching. The wife had not had independent legal advice and the husband had spent quite a lot with a solicitor trying to negotiate an outcome. The wife initiated FDR and accepted a referral for discounted fixed fee advice with one of our MOU lawyers.

The parties came to mediation without lawyers.

With the benefit of having had advice about entitlements, the parties were able to make informed decisions and resolve their long-running property dispute. While neither walked away with as much as they would have liked, both parties were enormously relieved to have finally reached a resolution. The FDR process allowed them to maintain control of their own outcomes, and saved both of them financially and emotionally.

# 19

Sessions with language and/or hearing interpreters completed

Group and Individual Pre-Mediation Information Sessions

# 640

Including Property Group PMI Property PMI

### “Can we make it a video call?”

A parent was unable to attend a face-to-face mediation due to worsening mobility issues. The Joint Session was conducted via video which allowed the parent to lay down and remain as comfortable as possible during the mediation. The parents were able to talk about their issues and make a parenting agreement that was in the best interests of the children.



Throughout 2020/21 there was a 80% increase in demand for services from rural and remote clients.

# 261

Intakes in 2019/2020 across FRC and RFDR

# 420

Intakes in 2020/2021 across FRC and RFDR

## Rural Family Dispute Resolution

Property Mediation, Mediation and Dispute Resolution services to families managing conflict and developing parenting plans across the Southwest Queensland region.

# 263

Individual intake sessions

Parenting  
243

/

Property  
20

# 69

joint sessions including 9 LAFDR, 1 LACIFDR, 8 CIFDR (46 Joint Sessions, 3 Property + 2 additional Joint Session)

# 42

referrals for pro-bono individual legal advice regarding children's matters

Joint sessions in 2019/2020

# 37

Joint sessions in 2020/2021

# 46

Intakes in 2019/2020

# 146

Intakes in 2020/2021

# 263

# 41%

Increase in demand for telephone / video intakes





“We are deeply committed to ensuring equity and accessibility of our services regardless of where in our region people choose to live.”

## Legally Assisted Family Dispute Resolution

**Our clients’ lack of legal advice was often inhibiting agreements in family law disputes, resulting in families (including children) unnecessarily experiencing the significant ill-effects of protracted parental conflict.**

Since 2017, CatholicCare has been committed to improving our working relationships with our private and community legal partners, with the aim of making individual legal advice and support during a Joint Family Dispute Resolution Session available to vulnerable clients.

These relationships with family law professionals have grown to the point that we now have MOUs in place with 12 private law firms in Toowoomba. These MOUs include a commitment from the

law firms to provide quality legal advice to our clients during the mediation process, a service that is generally delivered to our clients at no cost.

We have seen great value in having the option to provide clients this service. The decision to use lawyers in these Joint Sessions is based on an assessment where there is potentially a higher risk to the clients and/or the child and potentially a reduced ability of one client to be able to negotiate with the other. Without the support of lawyers in these session it is likely the case would have been deemed inappropriate to proceed, or there would have been no agreement or potentially a greater risk of harm to a client or a child.

143

**FREE PARENTING  
LEGAL ADVICE SESSIONS**

through partnering with community  
and private Family Lawyers

12

**FIXED FEE PROPERTY  
LEGAL ADVICE SESSIONS**

## MOU PARTNERS

We have 12 MOUs in place with community and private legal firms regarding LAFDR options for clients.

Our current MOU partners have either one or two MOUs for the future needs of children (parenting) and/or final property settlement (property).

**Our Current MOU partners are:**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – Legal Service**  
Parenting

**Kennedy Spanner**  
Parenting and Property

**Briese**  
Parenting and Property

**Best Wilson Buckley**  
Parenting and Property

**Edgar & Wood**  
Parenting

**Donaldson**  
Parenting and Property

**Dean Kath Kohler Solicitors**  
Parenting and Property

**Hede Byrne & Hall**  
Parenting and Property

**Wonderley & Hall**  
Parenting and Property

**MacDonald Law**  
Parenting and Property

**Clewett**  
Parenting and Property

**Murdoch Lawyers**  
Parenting





### Feedback from event attendees

“ I am extremely satisfied, with the quality and learning that I have taken from this event.

Excellent event with great facilitation and content.

This was one of the best events that I have been to. I work as a family lawyer in private practice, and I was concerned that it might not be 100% relevant for the work that I do. I was wrong about that. All speakers were interesting and easy to listen to. Well done to the host Miranda also!

”



### TOOWOOMBA AND SOUTH WEST QLD

CatholicCare is the auspicing organistaion for the Toowoomba and South West Queensland Family Law Pathways Network.

We coordinate cross-sector training, networking events and training opportunities for professionals and practitioners working with separated families.

The Network has been active in our region over the last 12 months connecting local practitioners and

facilitating training and professional development in the areas of Mental Health, Domestic & Family Violence, Trauma, Managing Stress, Communication with clients.

Regular electronic newsletters, bi-monthly Steering Committee meetings and use of socials has increased awareness in the Family Law sector about local and national services, networking events and opportunities for training.

### Family Law Pathways Network Events

- » **eSafety Women presentation on tech abuse.**  
[15 attendees in Toowoomba and 8 in St George]
- » **International Women's Day High Tea with Anne-Marie Rice.**  
Local practitioners and students came together to mark International Women's Day and to celebrate the achievements of women who work with separated families in our region.  
[35 attendees in Toowoomba]
- » **The Intersection of Family Law, Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence.**  
[Online and face to face event: 50 registered attendees]
- » **Family Law Symposium.** Topics: Predictable Miscommunication, Working with Families and Children with Trauma or Disrupted Attachment Histories, If We Had a Magic Wand to take to the Family Law System, Family Dispute Resolution and Technology, Shared Care and Family Law in the Context of FDV and COVID-19 & Managing Your Stress Cup.  
[Full day face to face event: 65 attendees]

### Conference Presentations

#### 2021 Child Inclusive Practice Forum

**400+ Audience**

We presented “**The Successful Combination of Lawyers and Hearing the Children's Voices in FDR**” at the 2021 Child Inclusive Practice Forum. We shared information about our LAFCIDR model and showcased how we engaged local lawyers to meet the needs of our clients.

The Child Inclusive Practice (CIP) Forum is a biennial event that brings together mediators, social workers, psychologists and counsellors that work to keep the best interests of children at the forefront of Family Dispute Resolution (mediation). The purpose of the Forum is to enrich the practice of these specialists through learning and networking. The event is organised by FRSA with assistance of the CIP network.

#### 2020 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference

**50+ Audience**

We presented on the topic of Child Inclusive Family Dispute Resolution at the 2020 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference.

The 2020 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference is a forum for professionals to connect, gain insight from industry experts and develop a greater understanding of mental health in children and adolescents from 3-19 years of age.

## 479

**attendees at local & online events**

### National Webinar Series

(collaboration between Project Officers across the Family Law Pathways Networks across Australia)

**Nathan Wallis** on Anxiety & Depression in Children and Adolescents.

**Jennifer McIntosh** on Child Inclusive and Developmentally Focused Dispute Resolution: Two evidence-based methods.

**Angela Lynch** on Reimagining just and safe outcomes for child and adult victims of domestic violence in the family law system in Australia.

**Kate Fitz-Gibbon & Jane Maree Maher** on the views on Australian Judicial Officers on DFV perpetrator interventions.

**Kinchela Boys** on Intergenerational trauma and the importance of families.

**Vincent Papaleo & Ben Jones** on Untested Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse and Personality Disorders in Family Law.

**Jess Hill** on Understanding Coercive Control.

**Zoe Rathus** on Parental Alienation in the Australian Family Law System.

**Anne-Marie Rice** on Court Based Family Dispute Resolution

**Heather Douglas** on Legal Systems Abuse and Coercive Control.

“ Great presentation! Your voices and sharing of experience from start to present is filled with passion, growth and collaboration. ”



## Counselling

Life doesn't always go according to plan.

We provide a safe environment where a highly trained therapist will listen and assist clients in dealing with their situation, whatever that may be.

Our services are highly accessible. Clients don't require a mental health plan and can attend sessions either face to face, by video or by phone.

We provide a range of family and relationship education programs and personalised, professional and ethically-based counselling services to assist with:

- » Forming new relationships
- » Overcoming relationship difficulties
- » Complex grief in families
- » Couple separations
- » Parenting support and
- » Conflict coaching.

# 852

Number of Counselling Clients

# 2,564

Number of Counselling Sessions



Sometimes we all need a little extra support.

**36%**  
Family & Relationships

**16%**  
Separations & family breakdown

**10%**  
Drought

**8%**  
Children & young people health & wellbeing

**31%**  
Work Issues

### "You've helped me find the strength I need"

Mary lives in a rural community 2 hours from Toowoomba and has no transport because of the abusive nature of her partnership. She was isolated, traumatised, threatened daily by her ex-partner and his family, and living in temporary accommodation with her son who is showing signs of behaviour typical of post trauma. She was a regular at the community food bank where she saw the SPARK® program being advertised in her location.

She attended all sessions of SPARK® and after a few counselling sessions, Mary was empowered to take on the process with a little more confidence and achieve an outcome which exposed the true nature of the abuse both mother and son had suffered. Her ex-partner is now serving a lengthy sentence in jail.

The son, now 6 years, has had several appointments with our child counsellor. After several sessions the son had to speak to a family report writer and was able to articulate his fears and gained confidence in his own being to such a degree that the mother attended a session recently to let us know how much their lives had changed for the better! Mary is now enrolled to complete her University degree in creative writing in Brisbane next year.

# 1,700

Face to Face Sessions

# 798

Phone/Video Sessions

“ This has given me an open door in front of me rather than a prison door. ”

#### COUNSELLING SERVICES AVAILABLE

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Individual Counselling</b>                       | Focusing on a range of needs including but not limited to: trauma, domestic violence, anxiety, self-esteem, drought, grief and loss, relationship concerns.        |
| <b>Couples Counselling</b>                          | Couples in a relationship encountering difficulties in areas including: communication, parenting, intimacy, connection, addictions, safety.                        |
| <b>Children's Counselling</b>                       | Support for children over the age of 5 for issues such as: parental separation; anxiety; trauma; issues around identity; or if the child is experiencing bullying. |
| <b>Family Therapy</b>                               | Supporting all individuals within a family structure to promote the overall emotional and mental health and wellbeing of all individuals.                          |
| <b>Individual Counselling for Separated Parents</b> | Service for individual parents experiencing separation.  |
| <b>Drought Counselling</b>                          | People living in drought-impacted areas in need of extra support for anxiety and depression.   |



# Quietly making a meaningful difference

» This year we have dealt with suicide and its effect on communities, tragic accidents, and their flow on effect to the families and the broader community, complex grief in families, couple separations, parenting support and conflict coaching. We have attended mass redundancies, and mental health days providing high level support and personalised counselling.

» Family separation is never easy and increasingly, The Family Court have been referring couples to CatholicCare for coaching with Inter-Family Communication.

We have been working with families at all levels with the goal of supporting effective and respectful communication.;

- parent to parent,
- child to parent and
- sibling to sibling

» 2020/21 has provided unprecedented challenges for our children, teens and young adults. We partnered with a number of schools to provide early short-term intervention for children where local services are at capacity.

114

Number of Clients attending at least 1 SPARK workshop

76

Total Number of SPARK Workshops provided

## Empowering Families through SPARK

**SPARK or Separated Parents Are Raising Kids has been designed specifically for separated parents who want the best for their children.**

The program acknowledges that many separated parents can struggle with communicating with the other parent around children's arrangements, how changeovers can be problematic, that 'buttons get pushed' and things can quickly escalate to highly charged arguments.

The program focuses on communication skills, conflict management, the court system, attachment parenting and blended family structures. There are seven modules and certificates are provided upon completion which is helpful if clients are going through the Court process.

“ I want to thank CatholicCare for being able to accommodate me and meet my needs so that I was able to attend and participate in the SPARK program. I came away with a few new things to apply to my situation. Thanks again! ”

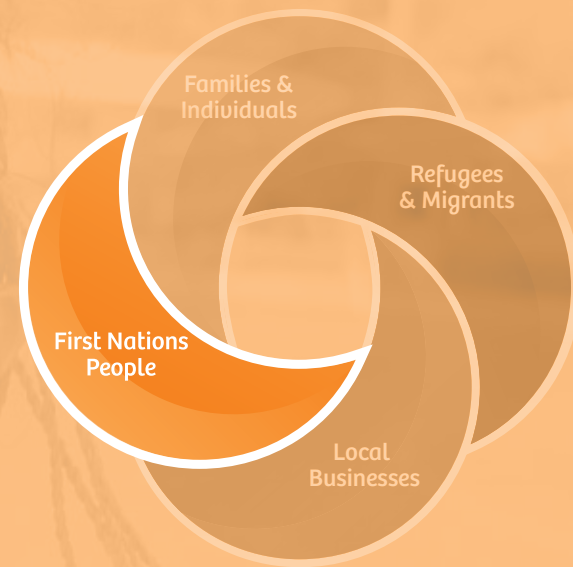
“ The courses were super informative, and I learnt a lot of useful information that I can use in parenting and other aspects of life. I am glad of the investment. ”

“ I have learned a lot and have been applying what I have learnt to positive effect. Thank you! ”

“ Thank you so much for this incredible course it has really helped me have a direction in this court battle. ”



# First Nations People



## "I've found somewhere I belong."

A young single mother of 4 was referred to Murri Court for driving offences. She suffers with depression and anxiety. She engaged in the Deadly Sista's Women's group as part of her Murri Court journey. On the day of sentencing the client told the Magistrate that attending the Women's group helped with her anxiety and she was getting it under control. She stated that without the support from the Murri Court Elders and the Women's group she would still be self-isolating and anxious.

## Community Justice Group/Murri Court

Murri Court is about supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Justice System. The objective of Murri Court is to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being incarcerated. Since the Toowoomba re-instatement of Murri Court in August 2016, 166 clients have been sentenced. Out of the 166 there have been 0 clients sent to jail.

The Murri Court process has supported these clients to become better parents,

reduce their drug or alcohol consumption and improve their health by having their Health 715 checks completed as part of their bail conditions.

A Respected Person on the Murri Court said "It is an honour and a privilege to serve on the Toowoomba Murri Court. We are providing hope to our people and supporting them to make better choices in their lives. Seeing the difference in them from when they enter Murri Court to when they exit is simply amazing."



## Our Reconciliation Action Plan

The Yumbin team, with the support of CatholicCare's Counselling team and Aunty Glenda Humes Elder Community Justice Group, have been working on CatholicCare's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) set to be launched in 2022.

Yumbin means together/all of us and is CatholicCare's First Nations People team. Our team has built up strong relationships with many sectors over the past 16 years and are trusted within the community.

Our team focuses on assisting youth and adults through the justice system and supporting those in the Murri Court System to make changes in their lives.

We work with young people and their families in the youth justice system and empower young people through

our youth programs, encouraging them to strive to become future leaders of our community.

We offer opportunities for personal and professional development for our First Nations volunteer mentors.

# 433

Number of referrals to Murri Court since August 2016

# 59

Referrals to Murri Court in 2020/21

# 84

Sessions with clients including court support and cultural meetings with Elders

# 25

Referrals to Lives Lived Well for drug and alcohol counselling

# 16

Number of people participating in Deadly Sistas

# 15

Males referred to Carbal Medical Services for the Strong Father's men's group



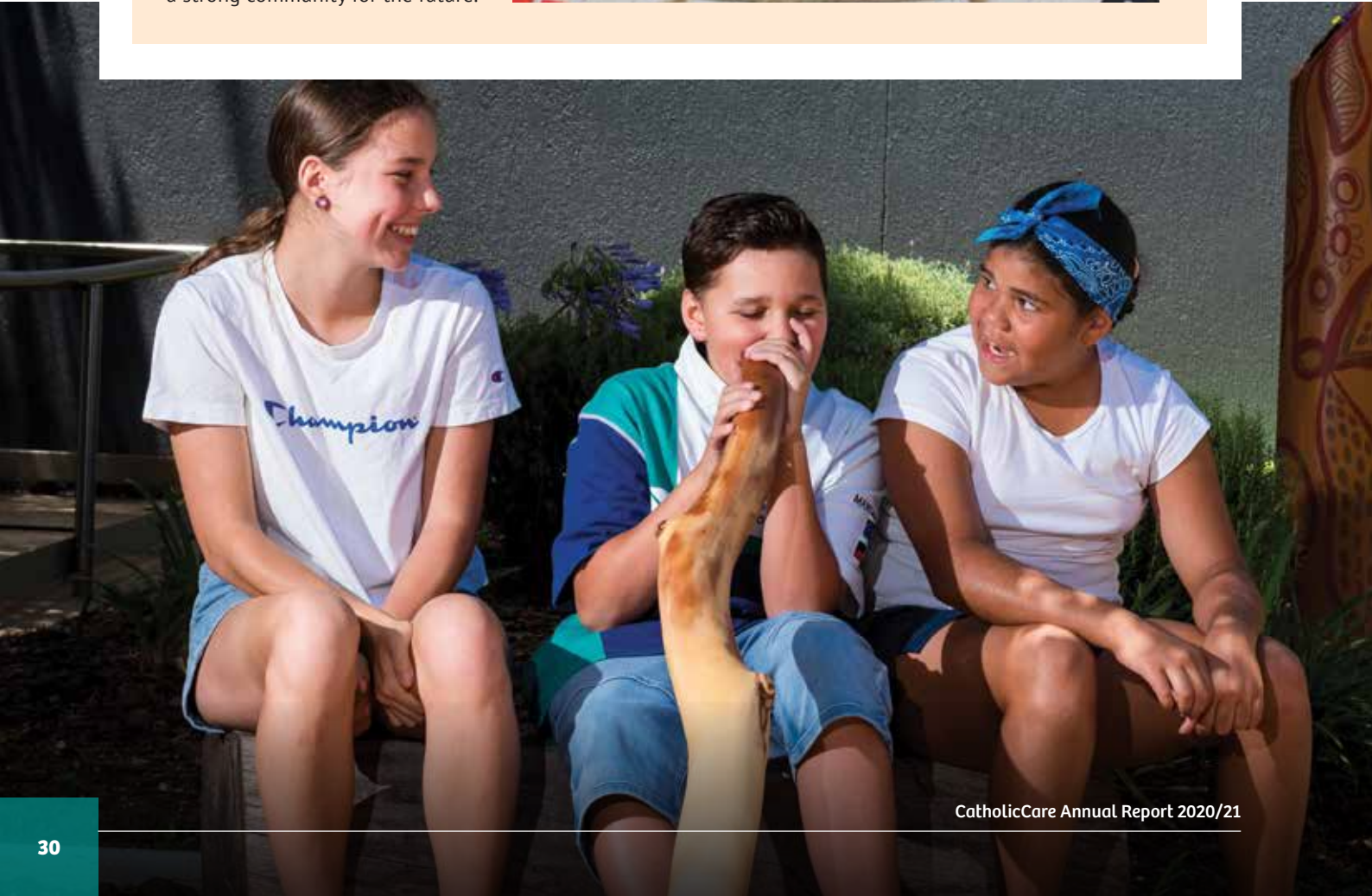
# Whaddup Youth Group

Whaddup is a youth program held in Toowoomba on Friday afternoons during school term. It is open to all First Nations youth aged 10-17 years.

Whaddup focuses on promoting cultural connection and encouraging young people to develop leadership skills.

We operate within a drug and alcohol-free environment and aim to reinforce healthy lifestyle choices and deter youth from risk-taking behaviours.

Elders, parents and volunteers promote social connectedness and play a valuable role in helping to shape relationships with the young people and build a strong community for the future.



## Whaddup Youth Group Activities Included:

- » Sorry Day: “Remembering the Empty Coolamons” exhibition
- » Close the Gap acknowledgement and understanding of Reconciliation Week
- » Easter craft activities
- » Cricut projects
- » Bush Tucker Garden
- » Vegetable and herb garden
- » Garden maintenance and weeding
- » Mother’s and Father’s Day gifts
- » Tie Dying
- » Woodwork signs
- » Jewellery making
- » Framed Photo Collage from Lake Cooby Camp
- » Arts and Crafts
- » Outdoor sporting activities
- » Learning of culture and dance through YouTube

18

Average number of youth per session

11

Number of Volunteers

393

Total attendance through 2020/21







## Which Way School Holiday program

8  
FEMALE

16  
NUMBER OF  
PARTICIPANTS

8  
MALE

### LAKE COOBY CAMP September 2020

- » The Male attendees created their own digeridoo and females created their own coolamon.
- » PCYC Queensland's Bicycle Safety program provided education for young people on vital road safety rules and road awareness to improve safe bicycle riding and reduce road trauma, injury and bicycle accidents in local communities, and teaches the importance of helmets. All participants received a free bike helmet that they added their own artwork to with paint pens.
- » Team Building exercises.

For 3 days every school holiday, children aged 8 – 17 from Toowoomba's diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities are invited to attend CatholicCare's Which Way school holiday program.

The Which Way program strives to connect indigenous young people to self, family, community, culture and country through developing their skills to imagine, learn, lead, communicate and collaborate. Participants have the opportunity to grow through literacy & self expression with traditional practices, visual art, craft, music, dance, storytelling & multi-media.

We have continued in our purposes:

- To create more socially and culturally aware leaders and young people that will pave the way towards a brighter future
- To engage, inspire and empower Indigenous youth to grow proud and resilient, to pursue active and valued roles in the community
- Develop leaders and powerful voices through nurturing meaningful connection to kin, culture, community, country and opportunity
- Ensuring that all voices are heard, valued and recognised in consultation with key people such as elders, young people, community reps and families
- Provide knowledge, communication skills and trust building skills to young people and their current leaders
- For all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to have a strong sense of belonging and identity to family, community, culture and country
- Provide experiences that passes on cultural knowledge and information to create a sense of belonging and express themselves as individual and community representatives

### SUPERCAMP AUSTRALIA & BURLEIGH HEADS January 2021

- » 5 Whaddup participants with 100% attendance were rewarded with Scholarships to attend Supercamp Basketball 5 day camp. Four out of participants received "All Star 5 Team" and "Most Valuable Player"
- » Jellurgal Aboriginal Cultural Centre - Burleigh Heads: Walkabout around the "Dreaming Mountain" where culturally significant sites have played an important

role in the lives of Aboriginal people. Met with a traditional custodian and heard the Dreamtime stories associated with the creation of Jellurgal.

- » Discovered facts about traditional life, bush tucker, fishing and hunting and learnt about the important ecological practices and connection to the land displayed by the Yugambeh speaking people for thousands of years.

12  
FEMALE

26  
NUMBER OF  
PARTICIPANTS

14  
MALE

### "I didn't know you'd be here!"

While on our Bunya Mountains excursion with Child Safety Toowoomba South and Child Safety South Burnett, one of our Which Way participants had caught up with one of their cousins and they had no idea that both of them were attending this excursion from different regions. The Which Way participant had not seen their cousin for some time. They hung out all day together and had the day to catch up and spend some family time together.

"Bringing Family Together and Keeping Family connected" might have been unintentional but always makes a heartfelt good news story seeing young people come together!







### Keeping it local.

Due to COVID it was identified that any out of town excursions were attracting limited participation due to households being wary of youth coming into contact with COVID while having elders and older family members living with them. Therefore we changed all excursions back to local and found that these excursions started booking out again.

12  
FEMALE

26  
NUMBER OF  
PARTICIPANTS

14  
MALE

### BRISBANE & BUNYA MOUNTAINS - EASTER 2021

#### Brisbane Tour:

- » Blackcard Cultural Tour Brisbane: Riverside and Parklands tour is the bush tucker trail which covers an abundance of native species, sharing ancient knowledge around the oldest and most nutritious food sources in the world. Exploring one of the largest and most exciting collections of Aboriginal public artworks and history of the local area.
- » Brisbane Art Gallery "Deadly Threads": viewed over 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander designed singlets, t-shirts, polo shirts, and jerseys, born from protests in the 1970s and evolving as permanent mainstays in wardrobes across Australia. We explored the origins and significance of the shirts and how they have become important symbols of identity,

celebration and unity. We learned about the regional companies and artists that have emerged as part of the flourishing Indigenous shirt business.

- » Southbank the Wheel of Brisbane: Audio system that provides an insight into the city's historical landmarks including the Botanical Gardens, Mount Coot-tha, the Goodwill Bridge and the Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

#### Bunya Mountains National Park:

- » The Bunya Mountains holds immense cultural sites and environmental significance led by the Bunya Rangers.
- » Cultural arts and craft stations provided by Child Safety Toowoomba South and South Burnett.

## NAIDOC Week

### SORRY DAY 2021 "REMEMBERING THE EMPTY COOLAMONS"

Our Clay coolamons began as an activity for Whaddup and turned into a broader activity for staff from Child Safety South and CatholicCare. These clay coolamons provided a focus for both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Australians to remember and honour the incredible resilience and survival of people of stolen generations, some

found their way back to their families, and some did not and never will. Over 50 little coolamons were created, these Coolamons were featured in the exhibitions held at Doolamai Designs and Toowoomba Court House during NAIDOC week. This exhibition was all about the stolen generation and cultural awareness for our youth.

### How We Took Part

- » Queens Park Community Day
- » Community Trivia Night
- » Toowoomba Mountaineers Indigenous Round
- » History of Meewah (Table Top Mountain) and Multuggerah with Dr Mark Copland - Exhibition to be held at St Vincents Hospital of the canvas pastel artworks of Meewah's story by all participants.
- » Toowoomba Court House "Remembering the Empty Coolamons" Exhibition.







### "I'm doin' alright"

A 17 year old was referred to the Youth Bail Support (YBS) program who had matters before the courts. At the time he was couch surfing and had issues with substances and family relationships. With the support of the YBS team, over a number of months he was able to secure accommodation, get part time work and complete his community service hours with the team. Since receiving support from YBS he has not committed any further crimes and has made positive changes in his life.

## Youth Bail Support

Our Youth Bail Support program works with other agencies to help prevent crime, & act early in reconnecting young people to make healthy choices, support good behaviour and a positive future.

We support young people on bail with:

- Accommodation
- Education
- Life Skills
- Restorative Justice
- Court support
- Cultural activities
- Employment
- Centrelink payments
- Obtaining Identification
- Obtaining Learner Driver's License

YBS has received positive feedback from Youth Justice about the work they are doing with young people. The Youth Bail Program - has had success with getting young people stable accommodation and job opportunities.

# 39

Number of referrals to Youth Bail Support

# 174

Number of sessions with young people

# Local Businesses



### Employee Assistance Program

We have traditionally supported schools and not-for-profit businesses in the social sector workplace with counselling, mediation and critical incident responses and now, in response to community need, we are making this affordable service available to the wider business community throughout our region.

Benefits of workplace Employee Assistance Programs or EAPs have been well-documented and include:

- Improved work performance and productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Increased staff retention
- Resolution of work-related problems

# 282

Instances of confidential short term counselling

Now, more than ever, it is important that all businesses and organisations have easy access to an affordable EAP program. The CatholicCare Employee Assistance Program follows a pay per use model and includes:

- Confidential, short-term counselling
- On-site critical incident response
- Workplace mediation services and
- Training to support psychological wellbeing in the workplace.

Onsite EAP service presentations for employees/staff.

# 22

Businesses utilising the CatholicCare EAP Service

# 16

Instances of Onsite Critical Incident Response

## Individual Counselling

There is a direct correlation between workplace productivity and mental health.

We provide proactive and preventative interventions that assist with identifying and resolving both work and personal problems that may adversely affect work performance and overall wellbeing. These sessions are delivered face-to-face, over the telephone or via video call.

Our counsellors cover a range of specialised areas including:

- Work related issues (including adjusting to change, bullying, trauma and managing conflict)
- Emotional stress, anxiety, conflict, tension and depression
- Separation, divorce or relationship difficulties

- Child and family issues
- Health and lifestyle issues (including drugs, alcohol and gambling)
- Financial and legal referral
- Grief and bereavement
- Personal trauma
- Conflict coaching

### "I can't handle this!"

A health professional utilised the short-term counselling support in her EAP to work through some challenges. She works in a high skill level position and felt that she could no longer manage her workload.

Her partner had recently been diagnosed with a terminal disease and she was struggling with a work situation where she felt subjected to unreasonable demands from her manager.

Support was centred around developing strategies to manage the challenges of both the manager and the diagnosis of her partner.

She was keen to try out these new management strategies and did so with a high level of efficiency. After six sessions she reported her profound gratitude and has tools that work for her. She believes she can now manage both situations and continue her work.

## Critical Incident Response

Critical Incidents are unplanned events that impact a team or individual. They can include robberies, fatalities, assault, major incidents or natural disasters.

Generally, CatholicCare expect to have a clinician on site within 1 hour of notification of a critical incident occurring (pending distance and safety of the site). Providing prompt support for impacted employees is vital to their emotional health and well-being and the ongoing recovery and functioning of the organisation.

CatholicCare provide multiple options for on-site support, including group debriefing and one-on-one counselling.

This year we have dealt with suicide and its effect on communities, tragic accidents and their flow on effect to the community and family. We have attended mass redundancies, and mental health days providing high level support and personalised counselling.

## Workplace Mediations

CatholicCare Mediation team support conflict resolution within a workplace.

Our trained mediators support the impacted parties to:

- focus on communication, including detailed conversations around trust and respect. The parties are supported to communicate in an honest, positive, and constructive way including how to have future difficult conversations

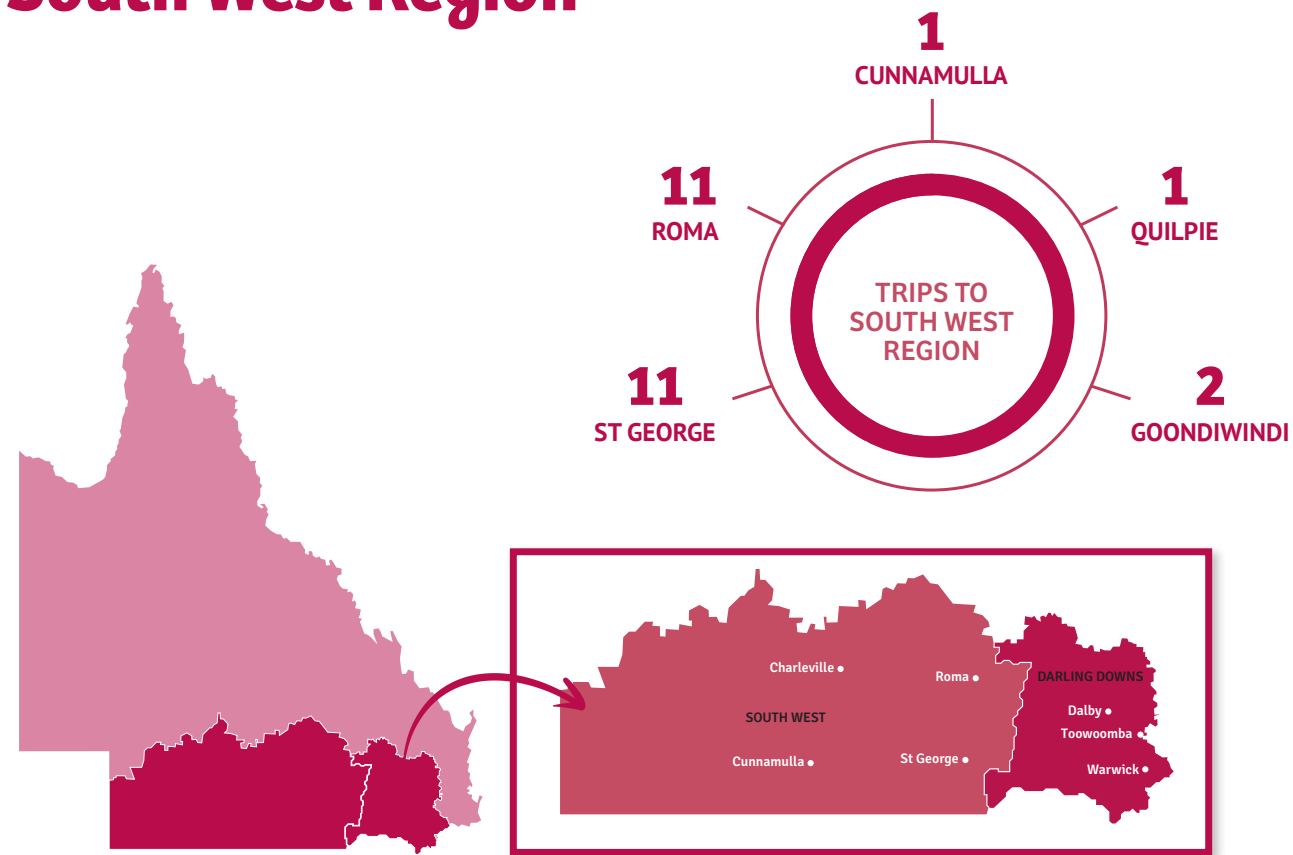
- discuss how they will put the past behind them and focus on a beneficial future working relationship
- develop strategies to resolve future conflicts
- clearly understand each other's roles in the workplace to increase transparency and reduce future conflict

CatholicCare mediators provide recommendations to management on:

- how the workplace can support the parties to implement their agreements from mediation
- reducing impact of the conflict between parties on staff and others (e.g. children if mediation is occurring in a school environment)



# Connecting in the South West Region



## VIRTUAL ROADTRIP - ENGAGING WITH LOCAL COUNCILS THROUGHOUT SOUTH WEST QLD

Improvements in technology have enabled us to rethink and transform our service delivery models. To help get the word out about the CatholicCare services and supports now available throughout the South West, we arranged a virtual roadtrip, utilising video calls and a pre-recorded, professionally produced video to speak with each of the local Councils throughout our region.



## Networking with Future Leaders

CatholicCare CLT members invited the finalists for the Future Leaders Award to join them for a special lunch at Encore's Restaurant. Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Vice President, Chris Black also attended.

The lunch provided a great networking opportunity and allowed the CatholicCare CLT to learn about each of the individual businesses and provide awareness around CatholicCare's EAP.

## 2020 FOCUS HR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Strong business underpins strong communities and CatholicCare continued with the sponsorship of the Future Leaders Award as part of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce's 2020 Focus HR Business Excellence Awards.

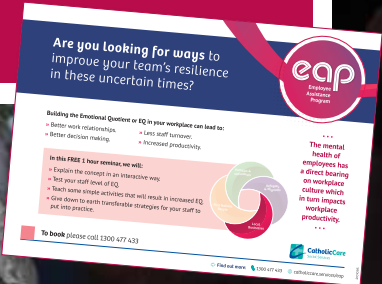
The Future Leaders Award 'recognises young business leaders who demonstrate outstanding entrepreneurial spirit, strategic direction and innovative ideas, whilst providing inspiration to a new generation of upcoming young business people (18-35 year of age) who have had significant success in their business'.



## BUSINESS@DUSK

CatholicCare partnered with Best Employment to jointly host the highly successful Business@Dusk event in February.

130 Chamber members attended and we were able to actively promote our EAP service. All attendees received a voucher to attend a complimentary 1 hour workshop on "Improving Your Team's Resilience in Uncertain Times".





## BUSINESS CONNECT

The Business Skills Connect program in partnership with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce aims to establish employment relationships with local business and uncover job vacancies for migrant job seekers. Following a brief pause during the pandemic the program has recommenced and is gaining traction.

## TALKIN' TOOWOOMBA

Following our Business@Dusk evening in February, we were invited to become part of the Talkin' Toowoomba podcast program. These 30 minute podcasts are produced monthly and provide another avenue to promote CatholicCare's programs in an informal and engaging manner to a whole new audience in Toowoomba.

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA DARLING DOWNS AND SOUTH WEST COMMITTEE

In 2020, CatholicCare's Executive Director, Kate Venables was selected as a member of the Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West Committee. This position supports CatholicCare's strategic push into South West Qld, as well as providing an opportunity to learn more about specific issues facing the region.

## USQ MBA PODCAST

CatholicCare's Executive Director, Kate Venables was invited to once again be part of USQ's MBA podcast, this time focusing on the benefits and value of data for an organisation.



## SOUTH WEST RURAL AND REGIONAL FORUM

The Regional Community Forums are an initiative of the Queensland Government's Office for Rural and Regional Queensland. The quarterly forums bring locals, regional stakeholders and government representatives together to discuss local priorities and opportunities to strengthen

regional economies and services, and consider what outcomes are most important to the community. CatholicCare's Executive Director, Kate Venables received an invitation to extend her membership on the Forum, which has been accepted.

## FACILITATED REGIONAL MIGRATION

### A Partnership with St George Chamber of Commerce & Balonne Shire Council

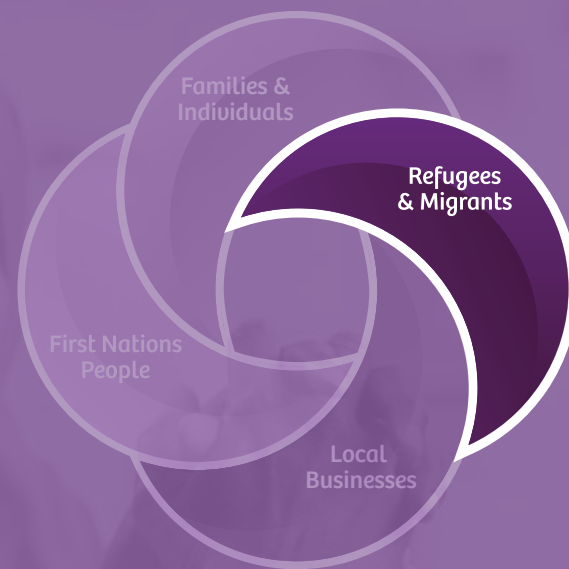
Following the success of our Partnership with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and the Business Connect pilot project in 2019/20, we partnered with Balonne Shire Council and the St George Chamber of Commerce to roll the model out into the South West, supporting their population migration program

via secondary refugee resettlement. The funding from the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs was approved in December 2020 and the program commenced in May 2021.





# Refugees & Migrants



CatholicCare has been welcoming and supporting refugee resettlement in Toowoomba since 2004. Our **Trams** program has developed strong engagement with the broader Toowoomba community with a large volunteer base and extensive partnerships in place in order to support our new arrivals in a safe environment.

We work with people on eligible visas, usually former refugees, who have been in Australia for more than 6 months and less than 5 years.

We work closely with Government departments, businesses, and other service providers to develop local solutions to local issues around settlement.

Our program provides refugees and migrants support through the smooth transition to life within Toowoomba and once settled assist in becoming more self-reliant and empowered to navigate Australian systems and

understand our way of life while still being culturally sensitive.

The Toowoomba community and service providers have stepped up to create a welcoming, safe and inclusive community through a holistic approach to settlement and recovery of the refugee population.

Our services focus on fostering social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing and community connectedness and include:

- Casework to learn how to navigate Australian systems;

- Referrals to other support organisations, businesses and services;
- Weekly English conversation classes
- Short courses on Digital Literacy, Road rules in Australia, and Skillsets for successful Tenancy delivered in language;
- Interpreting services, to both our clients and within the business community;
- TRAMS Homework Club delivered in partnership with several local schools;
- Working with local organisation.

## “Just checking in”

At the start of July checking in with the QLD COVID app became mandatory at shops and services across Toowoomba. For many newly arrived families accessing TRAMS was a challenging task to download the app, learn how to use it and why. TRAMS caseworkers spent time teaching clients. Within a few short weeks, clients were confidently showing caseworkers they knew how to check in themselves and their family members. This has allowed them to continue to safely interact in the community.

# 1,571

one on one and group sessions

# 1,249

casework sessions delivered

# 1,023

face-to-face casework sessions

## “A licence to drive”

A single mother set a personal goal to obtain her driver's license so she can transport her children more easily. She attended TRAMS “Road rule in Australia” class to build her confidence to drive in Australia. She failed her first practical driving test and went through the examiner's feedback with her case worker to learn and improve. She was successful on her second attempt and when she saw her caseworker, she was proud as she slid across the table the paper that said she had passed her driving test.

Her driver's license enables her to care for her family and set new goals for her future.

# 732

unique clients

# 193

sessions to register

# 423

new clients this year

# 51

intake and assessment sessions delivered to develop unique settlement case plans for families





### “A whole new perspective”

At the end of 2020 a new client accessed TRAMS support, we will call her Betty\* (not her real name). Betty’s family were worried about her mental health, isolation and mistrust of Australian services. Our skilled caseworkers worked with Betty on a number of case plan goals. The first step in the plan was to build trust with services, including TRAMS and opportunities to connection to community. Betty agreed to join one of TRAMS group programs. At the end of term Betty was laughing and smiling as she told her caseworker;

“We love coming to TRAMS. I want to attend all courses and groups that TRAMS offers into the future.”

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Citizenship/Migration            | 233 |
| Housing/Accommodation            | 177 |
| Financial & household management | 176 |
| Law/Legal                        | 112 |
| Physical health                  | 112 |
| Employment Readiness             | 85  |
| Education                        | 36  |
| English & communication skills   | 28  |

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Social support             | 27 |
| Youth                      | 15 |
| Mental Health              | 12 |
| Child Health               | 10 |
| Relationships              | 10 |
| Cultural needs             | 6  |
| Domestic & Family violence | 3  |
| Child protection           | 1  |

438

casework sessions delivered via telephone, email or video conference

38

casework session delivered out in the community

## Our Volunteers

Volunteers, through their time and generosity, help to build strong communities and we here at CatholicCare are so very grateful for their passionate support. Coming from many different backgrounds and age groups, from students to retirees, their role and impact on our clients is highly valued. Once restrictions eased at the start of 2021, we welcomed our wonderful volunteers back for a lovely Morning Tea and gave us an opportunity to farewell some of our retiring volunteers. CatholicCare acknowledges their dedication and faithful service over many years and the amazing difference they have made to the lives of Toowoomba’s newest residents.

**Heather Bonell** provided 15 years of service to new residents through the TRAMS program. Her most recent role was helping supervise the children while their parents were in classes and is a much-loved adopted grandma for many families.

**Barbara Walters** gave 12 years of service assisting new arrivals to learn English. Barbara’s gentle and wise approach built the skill and confidence of those she worked with so they could independently care for themselves and their families.

**Barb MacDiarmid** gave 13 years of service supervising children while their parents were in class. Under the expertise of Barb, Heather and our other amazing volunteers, children improved their English and social skills in a safe and supported space.

154

CLIENTS ATTENDED GROUP SESSIONS:

97

sessions for classes or short courses

66

delivered face-to-face

15

delivered via video conference or telephone

16

delivered out in the community with partners

“

Housing remains a hot topic due to the common request for help to secure safe stable housing and resolving rental based financial and maintenance concerns.

”



## Interpreting Support

Toowoomba is an increasingly diverse community both with the number of people born overseas and the number of ethnicities represented in Toowoomba. Language support and interpreting has become increasingly important

to both TRAMS clients and the local businesses community alike. Our TRAMS program has continued to develop and train local professional interpreters to ensure the newest Toowoomba residents have safe access to all services.

### UNDERSTANDING THE HEALTH ADVICE

Our skilled interpreters have worked hard this year to ensure Toowoomba's multicultural community has access to relevant up-to-date information on COVID hotspots and restrictions provided in their language. With the roll out of the COVID vaccine program, TRAMS inhouse interpreters have collaborated with Refugee Health Network and Darling Downs Health to translate information from the Queensland Government about the COVID vaccine program into Kurdish Kurmanji.

### INTERPRETING SUPPORT VITAL FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Our desire is to see all Toowoomba residents are able to access Toowoomba businesses and support services as needed. Throughout 2020/21, a range of sectors accessed our interpreting service including providers for domestic and family violence services, legal services, employment services, schools, disability services, health services (public and private) and allied health professionals.

### GROWING THE NUMBER OF INTERPRETERS

Four Kurdish Kurmanji interpreters gained NAATI recognition through our interpreter training program, which more than doubled the available qualified interpreters in this language in Queensland.

Our interpreting program has supported locals working in roles where language support was a key feature of their role. Professional development course delivered to 10 people working locally in informal language support roles.

### Sessions delivered in language:

# 618

delivered in Arabic

# 335

delivered in Kurdish Kurmanji

# 58

delivered in Arabic and Kurdish Kurmanji

# 22

delivered in Farsi/ Persian

# 6

delivered in Dari

# 10

delivered in Swahili/ Kinyarwanda

## The Leith Lethbridge Scholarship

The Leith Lethbridge Scholarship has been established to assist migrants newly arrived in the Toowoomba Region to access support to settle in Toowoomba. The award will provide up to \$1,000 for eligible expenses, that will enable the beneficiary to successfully settle in Australia.

This Scholarship is presented in memory of Leith Lethbridge who was a volunteer English Teacher at

TRAMS from Jan 2017 to late 2018. While Leith worked as a professional teacher for over 35 years, volunteering at TRAMS was a highlight for Leith. She was engaged and moved by the stories and lives of her students, and really wanted to help them establish their new lives in Australia. It is hoped that this scholarship can continue to support the successful settlement of those new to Australia.

The recipients are from the newest cohort being settled in Toowoomba:

**Tony Baba:** Tony had a successful business in Syria, working as a jeweller for 15 years. When the war started Tony had to flee leaving behind his home, his business and his tools. Tony arrived in 2018 and has begun to rebuild his life here. Tony established a new jewellery business (Baba's diamonds and gemstones) a few months after his arrival and has been saving to purchase new tools and build a customer base. Tony will use the Scholarship money to purchase one of the key tools he needs, a rhodium machine for plating jewellery.

**Kinda Flaha:** Kinda was resettled in Australia in 2018 and is working part-time as a teacher aid where she helps children who have experienced the challenges of war and displacement to receive an education. Kinda is looking to study education at university and is currently enrolled at USQ. She will use the scholarship to purchase a laptop to help her with her studies.

**Nisren Shamot:** Nisren and her family arrived in Australia as humanitarian entrants in 2017. She is working hard to build a new life and career for herself and her family. Nisren is starting study in business administration and will use the scholarship to purchase a laptop to help her with this goal.





# Citizenship Support



For many newly arrived migrants, securing Australian Citizenship is highly sort after. The majority of clients accessing TRAMS services have been forced to flee their home and family. Australian Citizenship represents security and belonging for their future and a safe and promising future for their children. This has led to the development of the "New Aussies" program. This program prepares clients to lodge their Citizenship application and provides volunteers to assist completing the paperwork.



# Impact of COVID Pandemic



The COVID pandemic continues to shape our world and many businesses and organisations have moved to online service delivery. This requires people to be able to complete forms online, upload documents, and navigate internet search engines. Simply attending the local shops now requires you register your visit via a QR code. All of these

processes are foreign and difficult for people accessing TRAMS services as English is not their first language and digital literacy is not strong. During 2020 many of TRAMS group programs were temporarily paused in response to COVID. In October 2020 TRAMS reinstated some group programs onsite with the assistance

of our amazing volunteers. In early 2021 TRAMS homework Club was able to resume in school. Our response has been to offer digital literacy classes and one-to-one training during casework to help build our client's capability in navigating the growing digital landscape.



# Supporting local businesses

CatholicCare's Interpreting Service has allowed one local employer to employ and safely train a large number of new arrivals, resolving a labour shortage for their business and providing stable employment within the local community.





**We're  
with you.**



