



2021/22



CatholicCare
Social Services

Annual Report





Table of contents.

We're with you.....	4
Statistics	5
From the Bishop.....	6
Chair's Report.....	7
Executive Director's Report.....	8
Deputy Director's Report.....	9
Corporate Governance.....	9
Our Advisory Council.....	10
Our Environmental, Social & Governance Commitments	12
Families & Individuals.....	21
Refugees & Migrants.....	33
Local Business.....	43
First Nations People	45

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 are deeply committed to ensuring equity and accessibility to these essential services regardless of where in our region people choose to live.

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 500,000km² 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 the Darling Downs
- » First Nations People
- » All religious and spiritual beliefs
- » All relationships and family structures

Supporting families at the pressure points over their lifespan

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.



Those we've Helped:

2113

Individual counselling sessions delivered

670

Families assisted through mediation



Staff Members' Country of Origin

Migrants

11

Indigenous

3

Staff Members



Male

Female

Total

15 + 37 = 52

47

Toowoomba

1

Roma

4

St George

Staff Distribution

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.



The CatholicCare Senior Leadership Team



From the Bishop

Bishop Robert McGuckin

“Empowering individuals, families, and communities to overcome the challenges of life.”

Looking back over the last year, the consistent message that we have heard from our communities across the Darling Downs and out to the border, is one of challenge, change and stress.

As we settled into a world of Covid normal, our society has learned to adjust and adapt in response to government directives and health concerns, making the work of CatholicCare Social Services even more vital as people required support to cope.

Council and their ongoing commitment and dedication to the organisation, thank the outgoing Chair, Andrea Frost, and welcome Damian Bell to this role.

I pray that God will bless all involved in this increasingly necessary work: pastoral ministry to empower individuals, families, and communities to overcome the challenges of life.

I remain very grateful for the extraordinary work of the staff at CatholicCare, knowing that for many they provide much needed hope and light in times of crisis and struggle.

Likewise, I would like to highlight the work of the CatholicCare Advisory



Work Together

Working together to seek feedback, consult and collaborate with stakeholders.



Transform

Transform models of service delivery to be fit for purpose and financially viable, especially in smaller towns.



Outcomes Focused

Service delivery being outcome focussed with impact identified and communicated.



Excellence

Being explicit in our planning and deliberate in our pursuit of excellence.

Strategic Commitment



Chair's Report

Damian Bell

CatholicCare Social Services has continued to strengthen its focus on our four Strategic Pillars, with particular emphasis being given to **Transform** and the development of appropriate and relevant service models in south west Queensland, with the increasing needs of these communities.

We have been particularly proud of the secondary settlement work we have delivered in partnership with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and the Balonne Shire Council, encouraging refugees from the South Sudanese and Congolese communities to consider moving west to St George and its surrounding townships.

The mental health support and coordination work funded by the Primary Health Network (PHN) has continued to grow thanks to the skill of staff in finding place-based responses to local needs of individuals and the communities.

CatholicCare has spent the last year **Working Together** and investing in its stakeholders, including governments at all levels, local communities, for profit and not-for-profit organisations and of course, our clients. We have worked to grow our partnerships with both state and federal governments, with new programs being funded in our TRAMS and YUMBIN services in response to the needs of our diverse refugee and First Nations communities.

The Executive Director took on the volunteer role of President of the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce in November 2022, enabling CatholicCare to grow its support of local businesses – in recognition that small businesses are the backbone of healthy regional

towns and communities. This partnership has been strengthened by CatholicCare's sponsorship of the Future Leaders mentoring program with the Chamber, as well as the Future Leader of the Year Award for the 2021 Business Excellence Awards.

Our Risk Committee has concentrated on **Excellence**, increasing our governance skills, deepening our understanding of the risks the organisation carries and developing high quality mitigation strategies – and providing oversight as the agency navigated another year with Covid-19 as a backdrop to much of the broader social changes. The new reporting systems developed by the ICT team, including use of integrated Microsoft Power BI dashboards, has allowed the Advisory Council to have access to stakeholder feedback in real time, which makes for better strategic decision-making.

As CatholicCare's profile has increased in the Darling Downs and south west Queensland, there have been increased opportunities to contribute to our **Outcomes Focused** strategic pillar. As a member of both the Regional Development Australia DDSWQ Board and the Toowoomba Regional Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee, the Executive Director has been able to raise issues of concern from the various communities with whom we engage, and we have seen some real outcomes and improvements.

Finally, the launch of our Business Resilience Centre (BRC) in January 2022, has seen CatholicCare move to establish a social enterprise that is designed to grow our fee for service income that will provide alternative funding sources for other programs where there are gaps in current service delivery.

As an organisation, we have embraced the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Framework in recognition of the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social concerns against the backdrop of changing community needs and expectations and this will continue to influence and inform our operations into the foreseeable future.

On behalf of the CatholicCare Advisory Council, I would like to thank all the staff across each of our teams, acknowledging their commitment to clients and community, their ability to rise to whatever challenge is in front of them and to continue to go the extra mile for each other.

Our new Business Resilience Centre is designed to grow our fee for service income and provide alternative funding sources for programs where there are gaps in current service delivery.



Executive Director's Report

Kate Venables

What a year it has been – another twelve months has gone by, and we have strengthened our services, developed new and innovative ways to work with community and made sure we took care of each other along the way!

Each team has had some remarkable achievements that I would like to highlight:

Our core counselling service has delivered more sessions across a variety of models, had new staff join the team, strengthened our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offering through the new BRC, and clocked up more than 10,000 kilometres in delivering face-to-face support in Stanthorpe, Dalby, Goondiwindi, and Inglewood.

The Family Relationship Centre (FRC) has continued to increase the skill set of the team through some amazing professional development and our patronage and guidance of FLPN (Family Law Pathways Network), finetuned services to clients that keep children at the centre of their work, delivered lectures at conferences, and increased the number of locally-based family law firms providing pro-bono work to our clients.

Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Service (TRAMS) has continued to keep up with the ever-increasing demands of the refugees in our region, despite shrinking funding and an apathetic government response.

Our Kurdish Kurmanji community in Toowoomba has flourished, in no

small part due to the work of the TRAMS staff and our interpreting team, which was recognised by the state government with a small project called Group Toowoomba. We have also begun a Diverse Qld Workforce (DQW) project, opening opportunities for local employers to access a new recruitment pool and worked in partnership with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and Balonne Shire Council to support interested clients in exploring moving from Toowoomba to south west Queensland.

Our south west Queensland team has been bolstered by a unique subcontracting model using the skills and connections of four strong community leaders spread across the south west, resulting in increased PHN funding and increased support to clients throughout the vast region they call home.

The YUMBIN team has continued to commit to walking alongside First Nations people in our Darling Downs community with the ongoing work of Murri Court, the ever-popular WHADDUP youth group, the highly successful Youth Bail Support team and the establishment of a wonderful new program called CHOICE (Creating Hope, Opportunity, Inclusion, Choice and Empowerment).

CatholicCare Social Services was invited to participate in the establishment of an endowed indigenous scholarship with the University of Southern Queensland, so through our Whaddup Youth Group and Which Way School Holiday program, we contributed \$3,000 as a demonstration of our commitment to First Nations youth.

With the arrival of Deputy Director in charge of our Corporate Services, Zoe Locke has ensured our systems have continued to develop with successful ISO 9001 and cyber security audits, the use of Microsoft Power BI reporting and refurbishment of the reception area.

Our determination to 'Care for the Carer', has seen us work on staff appreciation in the shape of an annual staff forum, baked goodies supplied by the leadership team, birthday leave, an extra 'Gifted' day at Easter, recognition of 'Values Champions' and a secondment project that has already seen a dozen staff spend a number of days at a wide variety of businesses to learn more about our community.

I am delighted to say that the efforts we put into caring for our staff and volunteers are recognised with our annual staff survey results showing 82 per cent of staff are 'Highly Engaged' in the organization, with 98 per cent indicating social engagement, 95 per cent happy with management, and 92 per cent happy with their work life balance.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the CatholicCare Leadership Team, who are integral to the growing success of CatholicCare in achieving our Strategic Plan, delivering on our mission, and making work such a great place to be!



Deputy Director's Report

Zoe Locke

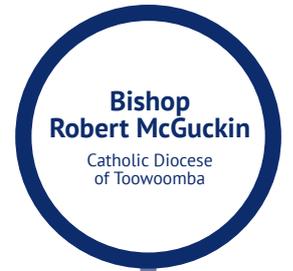
What an amazing opportunity it has been over the last year to really bring together and consolidate all the fantastic work of our Corporate Services Team. Our information and communications technology (ICT), admin, payroll, finance, human resources (HR), and marketing teams are the backbone of the organisation.

Over the last year we have focused on streamlining our processes to ensure we have great systems supporting our client-facing staff. Our counselling clients can book services online and we have automated some

of our Family Relationships Centre (FRC) administration processes.

We can now more accurately report and check our finance, payroll and HR data through the Microsoft Power BI dashboard and other systems that have been put in place.

Finally, we have been able to run some fantastic events supporting our volunteers, recognising our clients' milestones, and sharing important messages with the communities that we deliver services to.



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 2021/22 CatholicCare Social Services has:

- » strengthened strategic partnerships to support service delivery
- » committed to building ongoing workforce capability and the development of workplace culture.

These initiatives led to the development of new programs and increased accessibility to:

- » counselling and education services
- » refugee and migrant support services
- » family support services.

CatholicCare's Advisory Council initiated extensive community consultation with the following organisations to identify service gaps and any unmet needs within the community:

- » Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- » Queensland Health (Division of Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services)
- » Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network (PHN)
- » Education Queensland
- » TAFE Queensland
- » Toowoomba Regional Council
- » Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce
- » Toowoomba International Multicultural Society
- » Refugee Talent
- » Heritage Bank
- » University of Southern Queensland.

Our Advisory Council



Ms Ariane de Rooy
Deputy Chair

Appointed as Member in May 2020, Appointed as Deputy Chairperson in May 2022

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

She has direct experience in a range of industries including not for profit organisations, health, government, oil and gas, infrastructure, hospitality and sport in Australia, the UK and SE Asia.

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.



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.



Ms Wendy Agar
Member

Wendy has served on the CatholicCare Social Services Board since 2018. 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.

With a personal purpose of 'creating change for good' Wendy Agar is passionate about making a difference in our communities.

Her strong cross secretarial background includes leadership experience in education, agriculture, banking and regional development. It is this broad skill set, combined with her strategic and purposeful leadership and a drive to innovate and collaborate, that has allowed her to transform Toowoomba's Sunrise Way Rehab. Named the 2018 national OPTUS 'Not For Profit Business of the Year', Sunrise Way is supporting stronger and healthier communities through helping individuals impacted by addiction to rebuild their lives.



Ms Carla Canning
Member

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

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

Carla holds a Bachelor in Human Services (Counselling) and has pursued post-graduate studies relating to drugs and alcohol, a Certification for Nicotine Addiction and Smoking Cessation and a Cert IV Training & Assessment.

Throughout 2019 and 2020 Carla was selected as a fellow in the Australian Mental Health Leaders' Fellowship where her project was awarded the coveted Jackie Crowe Memorial Prize.



Mr Vince Hede
Member

Appointed as Member in September 2020

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 CatholicCare's Family Relationship Centre.

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

He was born and raised in Toowoomba and has strong ties to the local community.



Julia Payne
Member

Appointed as Member in February 2022

Julia holds the position of Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Information Services at the Diocese of Toowoomba Catholic Schools Office.

Her role is responsible for Toowoomba Catholic Schools strategic and operational financial, infrastructure and information services including school finance support, risk management, facilities development, ICT technical and system support and maintenance and the Toowoomba Catholic Schools' fleet of vehicles.



Dr Lachlan Rathie
Member

Dr Lachlan Rathie joined the Council in late 2018. He 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 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 Council.

Our Environmental, Social & Governance Commitments

For the second year in a row, CatholicCare has included reporting 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



Environmental

Commitment

- » We will reduce use of natural resources in our operations wherever possible.
- » We will ensure recycling bins are in place in all of our offices and encourage staff to place all recycling materials in them.
- » We will have all of our office locations fitted with quick boil systems.
- » We will dispose of all obsolete IT equipment through e-waste recycling program and/or through supporting local vulnerable communities to access technology.
- » We will move to have predominantly fuel-efficient vehicles in our fleet by 2025.
- » We will no longer allow single use plastics to be purchased for use in the organisation.
- » We will transition the majority of sites to use LED lighting.
- » We will undertake a number of actions to reduce paper waste and transition to digital options.
- » We will consolidate the number of our publications, grouping related info together where possible.

Achievement

- » We're continuing to reduce the use of natural resources in our operations, wherever possible lights and air cons are left off.
- » We are in the process of getting large sliding windows put in our main office area to reduce the need for air cons during the warmer months.
- » We've added some inside plants to our main office area in attempt to clean the air, boost mood, concentration and reduce stress and fatigue.
- » We're putting security screens on some practitioners' rooms to assist with air flow again reducing the need for air cons.
- » We have reusable bottles and recycling bins, separating bottles from other recyclables in our offices with signs encouraging staff to place all recycling materials in them.
- » We now have two worm farms to prevent our staff kitchen waste ending up in landfill and to enrich our garden soil.
- » We have turned off our hot water dispensers and have added timers to our outside taps.
- » We have implemented significant ongoing education with staff regarding reducing our environmental footprint.
- » We no longer allow single use plastics to be purchased for use in the organisation.
- » We have transitioned the majority of our sites to use LED lighting.
- » We have consolidated the number of our publications, grouping related info together where possible to save on resources and now use TAPT business cards.
- » We have undertaken external training to reduce our footprint.
- » We support vulnerable communities through donating our obsolete IT equipment.

ONGOING Commitment

- » We are working to reduce our energy and waste bills.
- » We will continue to move to have fuel-efficient vehicles in our fleet by 2025.
- » We no longer allow single use plastics to be purchased for use in the organisation.
- » We will continue to undertake a number of actions to reduce paper waste and transition to digital options.
- » We have consolidated the number of our publications, grouping related info together where possible to save on resources.
- » We will continue to review and reduce our environmental footprint.
- » We will dispose of all obsolete IT equipment through e-waste recycling programs and/or through supporting local vulnerable communities to access technology.

GRI Standard

- » Use of fuel and electricity (302-1)
- » Carbon emissions (305-1, 2, 4)
- » Waste disposal (306-2)
- » Environmental credentials of suppliers (308-1)

UN SDG



Social



Commitment

- » We will contribute to increase social equality through the activities we undertake.
- » 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.
- » We are committed to regularly review all policies to ensure appropriateness and compliance with the Human Rights Act.
- » We support the rights of First Nations People to retain their customs and institutions.
- » We undertake a commitment to support First Nations People to educate young people to more deeply connect to culture and country.
- » We consider local and First Nations businesses first before seeking to fill supply needs from businesses outside our region of operation.

Achievement

Our staffing diversity is:

- » 11/52 CALD (21% CALD).
- » 3/52 ATSI (6%).
- » Compliance with the Human Rights Act and reviewed and improved a number of our policies.
- » Supporting staff through a Domestic Violence Leave Policy.
- » Allowing staff to give back to the community in work time, through a new Volunteer Process.
- » Undertaking our Reconciliation Action Plan.

ONGOING Commitment

We will contribute to increase social equality through the activities we undertake

- » We are committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusion.
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GRI Standard

- » Diversity of board and staff (405-1)
- » Rights of First Nations People (411.1)
- » Human Rights (412-1)
- » Local Supplier Spend (204-1)

UN SDG



Caring for the Carer

Annual Staff Forum - 2021

In September we had our Annual Staff Forum focusing on the theme of Justice.

We were fortunate to have some amazing speakers. **Adair Donaldson from Donaldson Law**, once more challenged his audience to remember that to Be Human means being respectful, responsible and reputable - and that our young people are part of the solution!

We learnt more about the Ezidi culture with a presentation from **QPASTT** who specialise in supporting survivors of torture and trauma, their families and communities, and had lots of laughs at people's attempts to speak Kurdish Kurmanji.

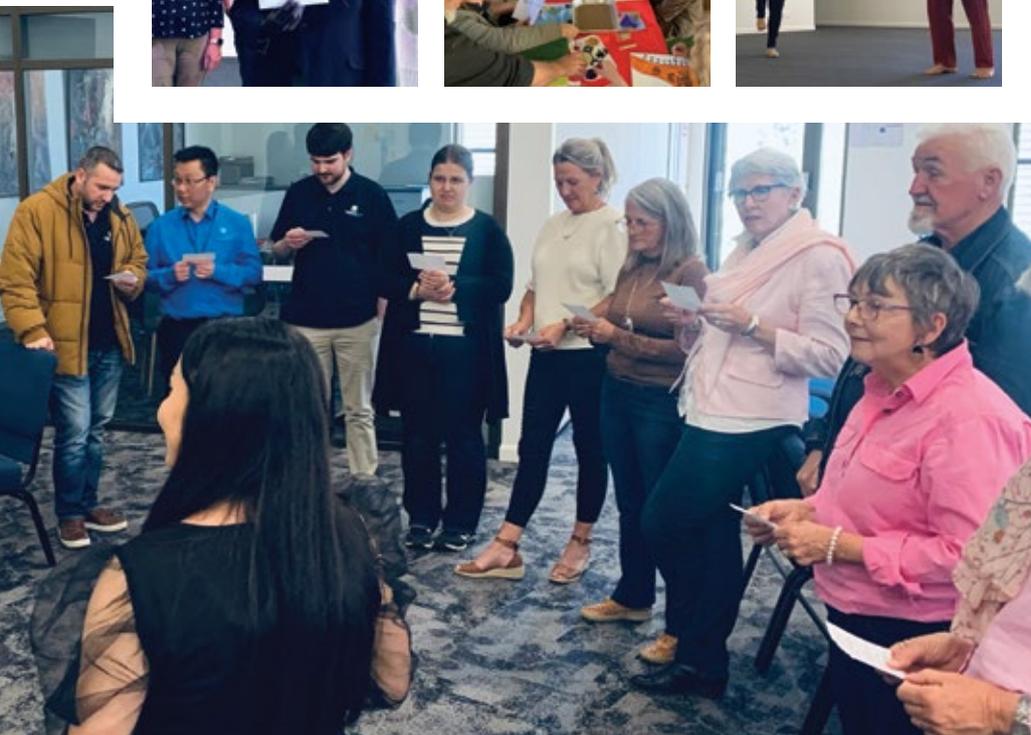
Our next 2 presenters were our own staff and they reminded us of

value of team (**Gayle** and her Tree of Life Training) and how to tap into our artistic side and learn more about First Nations culture and art and how to tell our story (thanks **Gavin**).

We had an EQ (Emotional Intelligence Quotient) workshop where we unpacked our inner critic and affirmed our inner coach with **Ush Dhanak from EQ Academy**.

And the final presenter was none other than **Tarzan (aka Mark)** who shared about his journey, the miracle moments and reminded us that justice is always within our reach (if only we dare!).

Some spectacular catering thanks to **Hello Dearest**, the **Second Shot** van and **Darling Fresh Smoked Haus** made our time even more enjoyable!



Reception Area Upgrade

Our reception refurbishment was completed in December 2021. The decision to refit the foyer was based on safety, comfort and aesthetics, ensuring we could manage the reality of infectious diseases, enable better client movement and provide a more comfortable and attractive waiting area. Additionally, we added additional sound-proofing, some new spaces for technology, a new exit door and replaced the frosted glass in the training room with a solid wall.

Disruption to clients was minimised as we were able to move to online services, with staff and clients flexing around the build. We further offset the inconvenience by halting client fees for all of the major government funded services during the off-site work.



Before



After



A huge thank you to Black Mortar and Lavish Constructions and their work redesigning and rebuilding our reception area to be a more welcoming and inviting space for our clients and stakeholders.

Governance

Commitment

- » We will advocate to government for increased assistance for vulnerable groups across the region.
- » We will publish a Corporate Governance statement annually which includes details of committee/ council structure.
- » We will maintain a Code of Conduct and set high standards for staff around ethical behaviour.
- » We will ensure relevant staff will complete annual competency training and continue professional and leadership development.
- » We will invest in our commitment to ensure the highest possible standards for securing client data.

Achievement

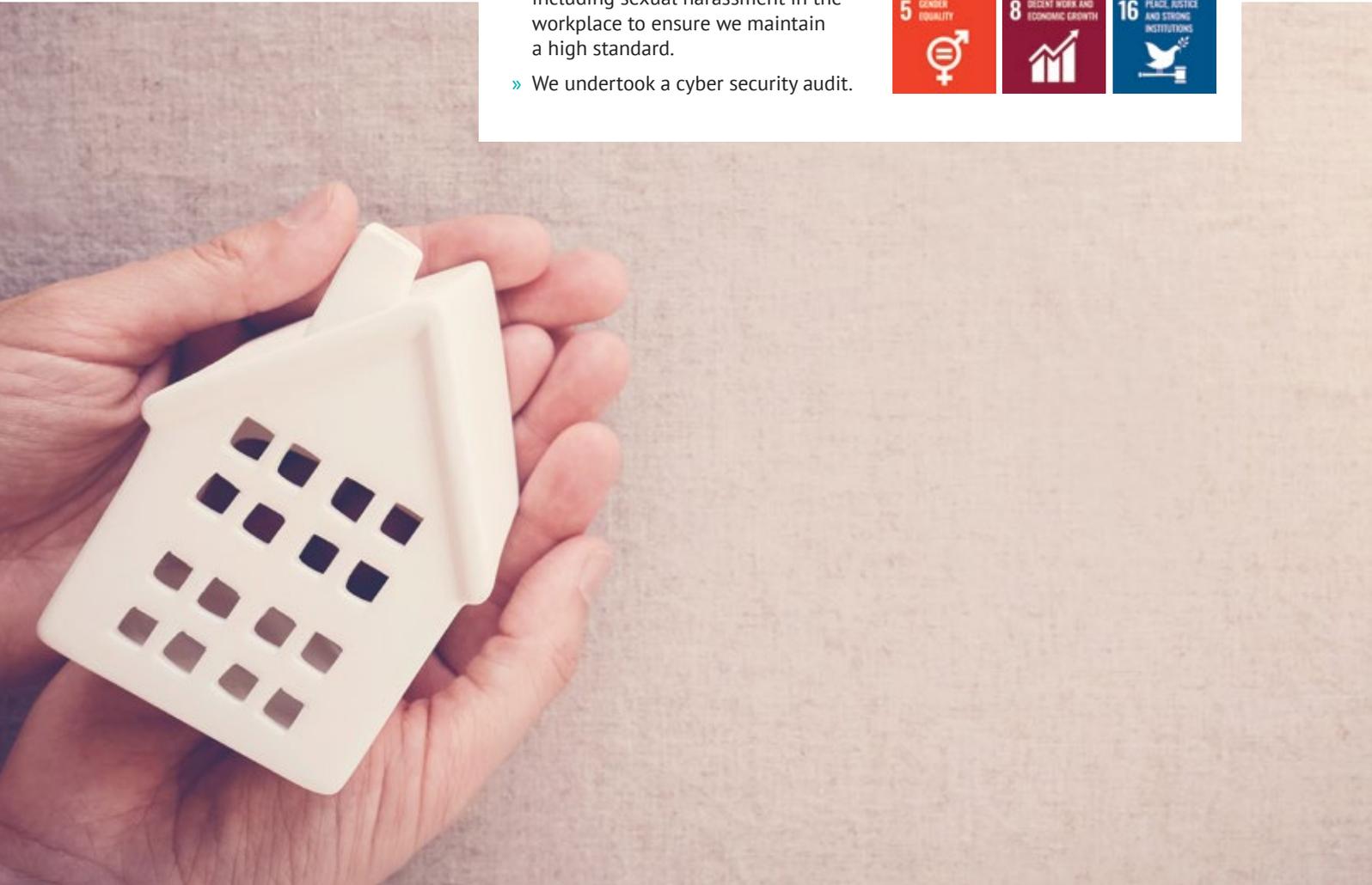
- » We have reviewed our structure and now have an executive leadership team focusing on strategy.
- » We have Risk and Finance Committees.
- » We have moved our staff mandatory training to an online video to provide flexibility and ease of access.
- » We have a sponsorship commitment to the community and provide free counselling support to a number of local organisations.
- » We have advocated with local and federal government and through peak body agencies for our clients.
- » We have a skills-based Council.
- » We have reviewed a number of key policies and procedures including sexual harassment in the workplace to ensure we maintain a high standard.
- » We undertook a cyber security audit.

- » We reviewed our code of conduct and staff contracts.
- » We ran an emerging leaders program.
- » We ran staff wellness sessions.
- » During the 21/22 financial year, staff undertook 509 hours of Professional Development training, and an additional 243 of Mandatory training. Total staff training for 21/22 was 752 hours.

GRI Standard

- » Government Assistance (201-4)
- » Employee Training (404-1)
- » Client Privacy (418-1)

UN SDG





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

The Department of Home Affairs provide funding for:

- » SETS (Settlement Engagement Transition Support)

The Department of Health via Western QLD PHN funding for:

- » National Psychosocial Support (NPS)
- » Community Service Facilitation

Attorney General's Department

- » Family Law Pathways Network

State Government Funding

Department of Small Business, Employment and Training:

- » Diverse Queensland Workforce (DQW)

Department of Children, Youth Justice & Multicultural Affairs provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- » Youth Bail Support Service
- » Facilitated Regional Migration
- » Refugee Health Partnership

Department of Justice and Attorney General provides funding for CatholicCare Social Services:

- » Community Justice Service Group

Other Funding

Scanlan Foundation:

- » Community Grant

Donations

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

Partnerships and Collaboration

Throughout 2021/22, CatholicCare Social Services partnered with or worked collaboratively with a number of organisations and individuals, including:

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

Connecting South West Queensland

National Psychosocial Support (NPS) Brokerage Funding

RECEIVED 1 JUNE 2022
ONE MONTH OF STATISTICS

29

Number of referrals from
General Practitioners

45

Number of services
provided to clients

Through the National Psychological Support Brokerage Program, we have been able to support mental health services to those on a Mental Health Treatment plan. This vital service provides support to clients with no access to NDIS in need of short-term mental health support.

“Our amazing little boy who wouldn’t/couldn’t speak is now playing UNO with the support offered from CatholicCare and becoming very competitive. He laughs and jokes with the therapeutic support lady and now I have a job to stop him from talking and trying to cheat with the whole family. We can’t thank CatholicCare enough for bringing our boy back to us.”

—
Mother of a child receiving support through the NPS Brokerage Funding from WQPHN.

Community Service Facilitation – Making a Difference for Regional and Remote Areas

Throughout 2021-22, we have been working to develop services to assist small communities to access health services, and facilitate community engagement. We continually research new health service provisions and report on gaps in services to connect communities with health services.

Community feedback

From community members around gaps in health services in southwest Qld - 419 responses received.

Outcomes from information gathered from Our Community Service Facilitation Program:

- » Thallon community received \$20,000 in funding to support Mental and Physical Health and Wellbeing for aged and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities.
- » Mums and Bubs group established in Mitchell with funding from Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and CatholicCare Social Services.
- » Funding for 12 months from CatholicCare Social Services. Newsletters printed for community members who have no access to internet/data in Thallon, Dirranbandi and Bollon communities. These communities struggle with isolation and have an ageing community.
- » Local internet job sites updated to allow printouts.
- » Applications to RADF for creative workshops in small, isolated communities.
- » All data gathered is reported to Western Queensland Primary Health Network (PHN) with the hope and ability to connect funding opportunities with needs in southwest Queensland.





Families & Individuals



We know at times we all need some additional support, especially when adjustments may be needed because of:

- » separation or new relationships
- » the move to parenthood
- » dealing with career changes or living locations
- » natural disasters or retirement.

CatholicCare provides a range of services designed to empower families to strengthen relationships or to assist families through separation and other challenging times. We pride ourselves on our ability to make connections at the point of family or community disconnection.

In 2021/22 CatholicCare increased its outreach to Stanthorpe and Dalby while continuing to service southwest Queensland's needs through online

and face-to-face mediation and counselling options.

We increased our networking with other social service providers in the Darling Downs region and established partnerships with the University of Southern Queensland, Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre, Stanthorpe and Myall Youth and Community Network Centre, Dalby.

CatholicCare provided significant Critical Incident Responses to the community as needed and ran workshops for businesses on Emotional Intelligence and Kindness in the Workplace.

COVID 19 Response

Many adaptations continued to be made in 2021/22 with regards to sessions being offered online and an increase in online and telephone counselling appointments being made available to clients.



Family Relationship Centre

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

Through the Family Relationship Centre (FRC), located at CatholicCare, 502 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba City, 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 generate options for improvement.

We recognise each family is unique. Our highly skilled Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (mediators) 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 FRC staff come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures, so we can work with all families in ways that are tailored to their needs.

We're embracing technology to improve accessibility

We have improved our Information and Communications Technology (ICT) capabilities with a view to making our mediation services more flexible, responsive, and accessible for clients.

We presented at the National Mediation Conference

In September 2021 two staff members presented virtually at the National Mediation Conference. The presentation was titled "Transcending parental conflict: the successful combination of lawyers and children's voices in Family Dispute Resolution (FDR)".

Understanding the benefits &/or risks of parenting apps

We participated in a research project with the Australian National University (ANU) inviting consenting clients to provide feedback about their experiences with parenting apps. The findings from this study will help separated parents and family law professionals (including judges) to better understand the benefits and/or risks of these apps.

“ Really loved hearing how FDR programs and solicitors are working together for the best outcomes for parents and their children. That's the way to go! Great work. ”

“

The FDR program was “wonderful to talk with this morning and one of the most welcoming professionals that I’ve had the opportunity to work with.”

Our mediator “was great to talk to, I felt at ease answering questions and they kept me on track, which is hard to do when discussing family issues.”

Our mediator “was such a great listener and I felt very supported and comfortable speaking about hard topics.”

“Well handled and very professional.”

Really happy with the outcomes and ease of it all.

”

Legally Assisted Family Dispute Resolution (mediation)

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 mediation session available to vulnerable clients.

These relationships with family law professionals have grown to the point that we now have Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) in place with 13 private law firms in Toowoomba and Dalby.

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 sessions 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 child.

In 2021/22 CatholicCare participated in a research project with the University of Southern Queensland to measure the impact of our legally assisted mediation work (including referrals to legal advice and LA-FDR). The report is expected in the next financial year.

134

free parenting legal advice sessions through partnering with community and private family lawyers

OUR MOU PARTNERS

We currently have 13 MOUs in place with community and private legal firms regarding legally assisted FDR options for clients. Two new MOUs were signed in 2021/22 with RedHill Legal and Family Centred Law.

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

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
Parenting

Kennedy Spanner Lawyers
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Briese Lawyers
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Best Wilson Buckley Family Law
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Edgar & Wood Solicitors
Dalby
Parenting

Donaldson Law
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Dean Kath Kohler Solicitors
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Hede Byrne & Hall Lawyers
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Wonderley & Hall
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

MacDonald Law
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Clewett Lawyers
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

RedHill Legal
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Family Centred Law
Toowoomba
Parenting and property

Mediation

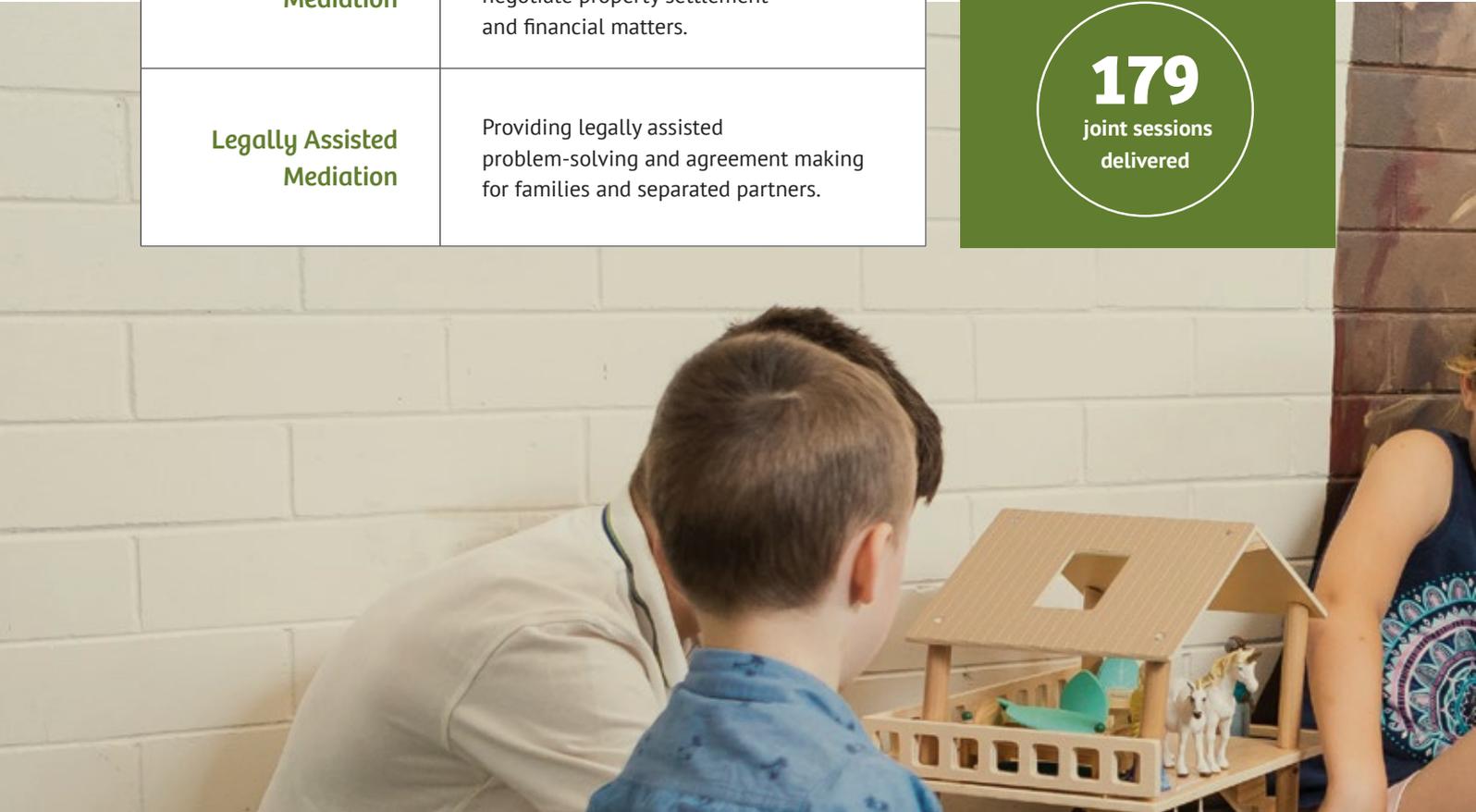
MEDIATION SERVICES OFFERED	
Parenting Mediation	Supporting separated parents to discuss the future needs of their children.
Child inclusive Mediation (CIFDR)	Enabling a child's voice to be heard through the separation process.
Legally Assisted Child Inclusive Mediation (LACIFDR)	Enabling a child's voice 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.

916
clients

640
parenting mediation sessions

21
property mediation sessions

179
joint sessions delivered



Impacts of child inclusive mediation

Following a Child Inclusive mediation joint session, the lawyer involved provided the following feedback:

“That was my first child inclusive conference through your service today, and I found it incredibly useful. How wonderful for the parents to be given that kind of warm feedback in relation to the children and their views. Even better that the parents both heard the children today!”

“**Mediators are welcoming and respectful.**”

“You helped me talk to my Dad”

Team members were recently inspired when they met with a former client who shared her experience with CI Mediation. The young lady explained that the opportunity to participate in this mediation literally transformed her relationship with her father. Heading on a path to estrangement, the session enabled her to regain a positive relationship with her Dad. They are currently living together.



Rural Family Dispute Resolution (mediation)

CatholicCare Social Services provides property mediation, mediation, and dispute resolution services to rural families across southwest Queensland who are managing conflict and developing parenting plans.

In 2021/22 significant networking was undertaken in the region with the focus on sharing information to increase community awareness of RFDR and other services and to increase and improve collaboration.

CatholicCare participated in the following networking groups:

- » Dalby Chamber of Commerce
- » St George Interagency meeting
- » Suicide Prevention Network for southwest QLD PHN
- » Combined Community Services
- » Balonne Shire Council Community Advisory Network
- » South West Hospital and Health
- » Dalby Interagency meeting
- » Roma Interagency meeting
- » Warwick Interagency meeting
- » Stanthorpe Interagency meeting.

Encouraging feedback was received from one of our MOU lawyers following a property joint session regarding one of our mediator's contributions:

"Your communication was clear and empathic and assisted the parties to remain calm."





DEMAND CONTINUES TO GROW

PROPERTY INTAKES



PROPERTY JOINT SESSIONS





**Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK**

**TOOWOOMBA
AND SOUTH
WEST QLD**

CatholicCare is the auspicing organisation for the Toowoomba and South West Queensland Family Law Pathways Network (FLPN). 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 three years connecting local practitioners and facilitating training and professional development in the areas of mental health, domestic and family violence, trauma, stress management, and communication with clients.

Regular electronic newsletters, bi-monthly steering committee meetings and use of social media has increased awareness in the family law sector about local and national services, networking events, and opportunities for training.

The FLPN facilitated high quality and relevant training and networking events both online and in person in 2021/22. Many events were held but there were two stand outs.

Feedback from attendees who responded to our survey included:

“This was a valuable experience in terms of content and networking. The informal nature allowed conversations to flow naturally and knowledge to be shared. It was a great reminder of the important work being done and the need to educate up and coming professionals to work in this space with awareness.”

“Very well organised.”

First Nations Family Law Conference: 23 May 2022

Presentations:

- » Vicky Yarrow and Helena Wright from the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and Madeline Lea from Refocus on **“Delegated Authority – “Our Children Our Way”**
- » A/Magistrate Kay Ryan on **“The Role of the Murri Court: Does it make a difference?”**
- » Cameron Callope on **“From homeless to Harvard: Insights into early adverse childhood experiences, trauma, and the journey towards healing.”**
- » Charlie Rowe from Carbal Medical Services on the **“Strong Fathers, Strong Families program.”**

Family Law Symposium: 22 March 2022

Special guest speaker,
Prof. Bruce Smyth, Australian
National University.

Presentations:

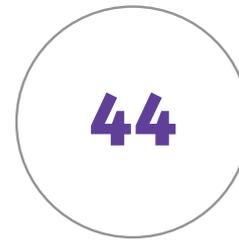
- » Clarissa Rayward on
“**Collaborative Practice:
Working Together to Better
Support Separated Families.**”
- » Domestic Violence Action Centre
on “**How to Effectively Safety
Plan with Children, Victims
and Perpetrators.**”
- » Professor Bruce Smyth on
“**Smartphone Apps for Separated
Parents: Can they Reduce
Conflict?**” (based on a research
project by Prof. Bruce Smyth,
Prof. Jason Payne, Dr Genevieve
Heard, Dr Glenn Althor and
Michelle Irving)
- » Professor Rachael Field and Neal
Wood on “**Ethical Family Dispute
Resolution: A Practice in Search
of a Theory.**”
- » Jon Graham on “**Parenting
Co-ordination: The Missing Link
in Making Arrangements Work?**”
- » Melanie Schroder on “**Mental
Health Check In: Recognising
and Understanding the Impact of
Working with Separated Families.**”

ATTENDEES

CONFERENCE



SYMPOSIUM



FEEDBACK

“Thank you so much
for another fabulous
event.”

“Awesome day – useful
and thoroughly enjoyed
it. Well done!”

“This was one of the best one-day symposiums I’ve
attended since the formation of the FLPN: super-
interesting topics, great speakers, great attendance,
very engaging audience, and well organised.”

“Great event from registration through to the end
– a lot of valuable and useful content!”

Law Ball

Representatives from our
Family Relationship Centre
attended the Law Ball
to continue to build our
network and support from
our region’s Law Community.



Counselling

Providing extra support for when life doesn't go according to plan.

CatholicCare provides 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 easily 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 ethical counselling services to assist with:

- » forming new relationships
- » overcoming relationship difficulties
- » complex grief in families
- » couple separations
- » parenting support
- » conflict coaching.

Other incidents we may be called on to deal with include suicide and its effect on the community and tragic accidents and their flow on effect to families and the community. We have attended mass redundancies and mental health days, providing high level support and personalised counselling.

Increasingly, the Family Court has been referring couples to CatholicCare for coaching with inter-family communication. We work with families at all levels with the goal of supporting effective and respectful communication from parent to parent, child to parent, and sibling to sibling. We also partner with schools to provide early short-term intervention for children when local services are at capacity.

Relationship Coaching Cafe

The roll-out of our Relationship Coaching Cafe pilot received great feedback. This will continue in 2023 with a review occurring in March/April.

“John runs one of the best counselling services I have ever had the opportunity of using. His comments and advice are always well thought out and constructed. He really is an asset to your organisation. Thank you.”

“Excellent knowledge which helps me a lot with my daughters.

—

Really happy with the outcomes and ease of it all.

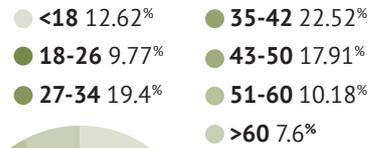
—

I never thought I would use counselling, but it was dead set amazing and more than I expected.

”

Who are we seeing?

AGE RANGES



Why are they seeing us?

25% family and relationships

20% separations and family breakdown

0% drought

0% work issues

17% post separation parenting

20% co-parenting

2.86% parenting

2.86% preparation for family dispute resolution

12.28% other (combination of emotional/behavioural/social issues)

COUNSELLING SERVICES AVAILABLE

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



“ She is everything I have ever needed in a therapy setting. I feel extremely grateful for our appointment today. Thank you.”



Empowering families

The SPARK (Separated Parents Are Raising Kids) program has been designed specifically for separated parents who want the best for their children.

This 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.

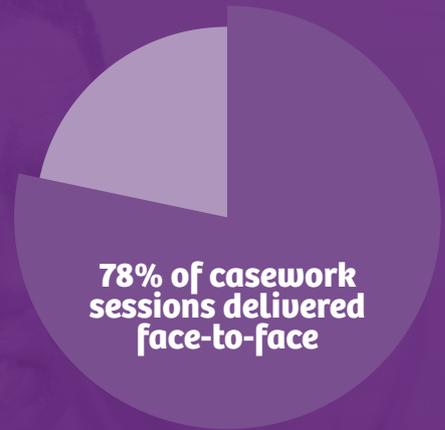
SPARK focuses on communication skills, conflict management, the court

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 Family Court process.

SPARK is being offered in person and online weekly, which will continue for the remainder of 2022.





CatholicCare
proudly support
Toowoomba's
CALD
(Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
community

Refugees & Migrants

CatholicCare has been welcoming and supporting refugee resettlement in Toowoomba since 2004. Our Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Service (TRAMS) has developed strong engagement with the broader Toowoomba community with a large volunteer base and extensive partnerships in place to support new arrivals in a safe environment.

We work with people on eligible visas, usually former refugees, who have been in Australia for more than six months and less than five years. We work closely with government departments, businesses, and other service providers to develop local solutions to issues around settlement.

Our program supports refugees and migrants through the transition to life in Toowoomba. Once settled we assist them to become self-reliant and empowered to navigate Australian systems and understand our way of life, while always being culturally sensitive.

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

TRAMS focuses on fostering social participation, economic wellbeing, independence, personal wellbeing, and community connectedness.

Services 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
- » working with local organisations to develop greater cultural skills.

Our Covid-19 response

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic required TRAMS clients wanting to access services to be able to complete forms online, upload documents, and navigate internet search engines. All these processes are difficult for people when English is not their first language and digital literacy is not strong. Our response has been to offer digital literacy classes and one-on-one training during casework sessions to help build our client's capability in navigating the digital landscape.

Top 5 issues for 2022

31%

Citizenship and other issues related to migration

A total of 282 TRAMS clients became eligible to apply for Australian citizenship from July 2021 to June 2022, upon meeting the requirement of living in Australia for four years.

17%

Legal

For example, registering a birth and referral to an immigration lawyer.

14%

Housing

For example, reporting maintenance, people needing to move to a new property, issues with bond or rent.

11%

Financial and general household management

For example, understanding correspondence from Centrelink and responding to and paying bills, plus crisis support.

8%

Physical health

For example, making emergency dental appointments, changing to a new GP, understanding health systems, appointments, letters, and forms.

1329

one-on-one and group sessions delivered

1220

casework sessions delivered

459

clients engaged in TRAMS

1009

referrals to other programs

English conversation classes

Weekly English conversation classes recommenced in 2021/22 with approximately 16 students participating each week. The program has progressed by aiming for one-to-one or close to one-to-one teacher/student ratios. This enables our TRAMS volunteer tutors to build a special rapport with their students and the English program can then be tailored to meet their needs. The classes provide a safe, relaxed, and enjoyable place for our students to meet with kind, helpful people while developing their English skills.



Queensland Road Rules course

Fifteen women completed this course which was offered in English and Kurdish Kurmanji. Most of the women who participated had limited literacy in their first language and were unable to use Learn to Drive materials published in English.

Due to their circumstances, most of these women also had limited access to someone to help them practice driving. Not having a licence is a significant disadvantage for these women, some of whom are single mothers.

The classes offer the real possibility of working toward a driver's licence, which will increase the capacity for both the woman and her family to attend work and education, connect socially, access health appointments, and attend to family and household management needs. Feedback from

participants indicated that they increased their understanding of give-way rules, parking signs, what to do in an accident, road signs, roundabouts etc.

CatholicCare Social Service's partnership with the charity YouBelong Australia and their learner driver mentor program means that each woman who completes the theory course is then offered the opportunity to be referred into their program to continue driving practise with a driving mentor.

“

I feel more confident to drive and practice.

—
We would not know how to read them (parking signs) if you did not teach us.

”

Skillsets for Successful Tenancy course

This accredited course is delivered through the Tenancy Skills Institute of Queensland. For our TRAMS clients, Skillsets for Successful Tenancy is delivered in language to ensure accessibility. Housing remains a priority issue for our clients due to low rental property availability. This course provides clients with an opportunity to learn about their rights and the responsibilities of renting in Australia and provides the advantage of receiving a certificate, which is recognised by property managers and can increase our client's chances of success with rental applications.

Business and community support

TRAMS continues to be a key contact point for professionals and organisations seeking information about supporting new arrivals in the Toowoomba region. Staff frequently field phone calls and emails with questions regarding support options for clients and for insight into best practice for working with new arrivals.

One service provider recently remarked that were amazed by the amount and quality of support a mutual client had received.

Occasionally members of the public in Toowoomba will also reach out to the TRAMS program seeking information or support for newly arrived neighbours or acquaintances. TRAMS has a reputation for being a reliable source of information in the Toowoomba region.

Support for single parent families

Almost 1 in 6 casework sessions at TRAMS are in support of families with single parents, primarily single mothers. These families face additional vulnerability as they negotiate the complexities of settling in a new country away from familiar systems and support networks.

In the past 12 months, TRAMS staff have walked with these women and their families to assist as they:

- » Manage day to day tasks (e.g. navigating appointments at the hospital, school enrolments, paying bills, reading and understanding mail) and growing confidence that they are able to learn to do more tasks independently for themselves and their children.
- » Access additional support in times of financial stress (e.g. support to negotiate payment plans or connect with services to provide crisis support).
- » Connect themselves and their children to mentoring support and meaningful community engagement.

Key groups that TRAMS supported in 2021/22 were from the following communities:

- Iraq (69%)
- Syria (17%)
- DR Congo (5%)
- Afghanistan (3%)
- Other i.e., South Sudan, Eritrea (6%)



Trauma informed support

TRAMS staff link with specialist services to support and manage the ongoing impacts of trauma. We worked sensitively to create safe spaces where women felt they could talk openly and honestly and reach out for support in times of distress. Referrals to relevant other local services have been key.

Financial support

TRAMS staff assist clients to access additional support in times of financial stress (e.g. to negotiate payment plans or connect with services to provide crisis support).

Mentoring support

TRAMS staff work with clients to connect them and their children to mentoring support and meaningful community engagement. One mother who has navigated significant times of isolation and stress, recently said to her caseworker **"I am strong"**.



Providing help and hope

A TRAMS client was in a particularly vulnerable situation due to a change in her visa status. This put her at significant risk of deportation. Staff from all parts of CatholicCare Social Services worked together to link her with legal support and necessary documentation. While this complex process was being navigated, the client also faced significant financial stress impacting on housing security and meeting basic everyday needs. These were navigated through the tireless effort of her caseworker and the generous support of St Vincent de Paul. The client is now celebrating her new visa and looking forward with hope.

Becoming confident

When Sarah (not her real name), first attended TRAMS, she sat with limited eye contact, communicating quietly and reliant on the interpreter.

Initially, Sarah required significant support to navigate living in Australia as a single mother with two young children (e.g. managing rental responsibilities, attending medical appointments). As she did not have a licence, she walked from her home to meet with her settlement worker.

TRAMS staff have recently seen less of Sarah as she now has a licence, work, and manages most tasks independently. She recently called CatholicCare for assistance and had the confidence to ask directly for a settlement worker by name and proceeded to explain her situation fully in English and articulate her request for help.

Sarah had done what she could to resolve the situation and required a small amount of help to finalise it.

Citizenship support

For many newly arrived migrants, securing Australian Citizenship is highly sort after. Most 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. The New Aussies program prepares clients to lodge their Citizenship application and provides volunteers to assist with completing the paperwork.

Gaining Independence

A TRAMS settlement worker received a call from a long-term client who was concerned about a message he had received from a business regarding an outstanding payment. This vulnerable client had previously required significant casework support and came to Australia with no English.

He went on to explain in English the steps he had taken already to pay the outstanding amount, the amount paid, and his request for the caseworker to call the business to clarify the situation.

After following up with the business, the settlement worker called him back to confirm that there was a delay in the funds being transferred from the bank but that the client had already done everything that was needed.

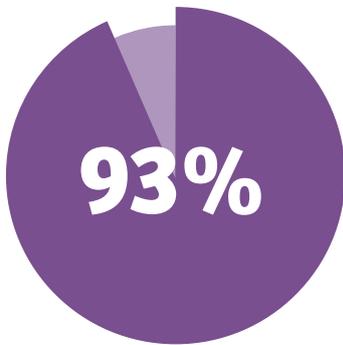
TRAMS staff celebrated with the client the significant growth he had shown to communicate in English with TRAMS staff and to resolve this issue.

Language support and interpreting service

Language support and interpreting services continue to be provided to TRAMS clients and the business community. This has allowed employers to safely train new arrivals, resolving labour shortages, and providing our newest residents with stable employment within the local community.

In the past year, our interpreters have supported businesses and organisations locally, state-wide and interstate in a variety of industries including health, employment, disability, government, education, and community services.

Our TRAMS program has continued to develop and train local professional interpreters to ensure the newest Toowoomba residents have access to all services.



Our interpreting team was able to deliver 93 per cent of interpreting casework sessions required in the following languages:

- » 593 in Kurdish Kurmanji
- » 283 in Arabic
- » 48 in Kinyarwanda/Swahili
- » 12 in Farsi/Persian
- » 9 in Dinka

Languages supported in 2021/22

- » Kurdish Kurmanji
- » Arabic
- » Dinka
- » Persian
- » Swahili
- » Kinyarwanda

5
interpreters

Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) engaged with our interpreters to support community engagement of the roll out of the restructuring of the TRC parking fee processes. Interpreters supported TRC traffic management staff to communicate the new ways of payments to local businesses in the city precinct that cater to the multicultural community. CatholicCare also supported having the parking messages translated as audio messages into Kurdish Kurmanji and Arabic on the TRC website.

Diverse Queensland Workforce program

This program is designed to assist migrants, refugees, and international students into employment. The program targets work ready migrants or refugees who are unemployed or under-employed. The program is delivered at no cost to participants. CatholicCare Social Services is one of three organisations delivering the program in Toowoomba.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work program

This program provides training to people who are under-utilised or under-employed through targeted programs delivered by community organisations with not-for-profit objectives, in partnership with training providers.





Queensland Government funded programs

In 2021/22 CatholicCare Social Services was accepted into two programs funded by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training:

» Diverse Queensland Workforce (DQW) – Bridge to Work Program

In the DQW program we were funded to work with 20 participants who were unemployed and from refugee or migrant backgrounds and support them into employment. The program was so successful that the funding was increased to support up to 28

participants by the close of November 2022. Since the beginning of the program in 2022, 60 per cent of the DQW participants were supported into employment and two participants successfully obtained a Cert 1 in Workplace Skills.

DQW in action in Toowoomba

During the middle of 2022 CatholicCare saw its first DQW participant secure employment at a large-scale commercial business making products. Since then, seven more participants have been assisted through the HR process and into full-time secure employment at this business!

Initially, the DQW program coordinator organised a site visit for all participants to see firsthand various aspects of the production chain in action. The factory manager provided a comprehensive tour of all areas over several factories. Participants were able to view staff at work in the production and packaging of plain and specialty items.

Over the following days, the DQW program coordinator assisted all

interested participants to complete job applications at this business. Over the following weeks, the coordinator liaised with Human Resources (HR) to shortlist possible candidates and then attended the job interviews with suitable participants.

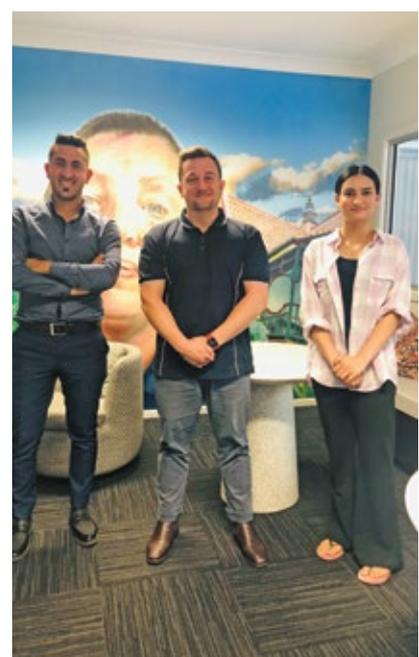
The HR division at the business and the DQW program coordinator continue to work together to assist suitable participants into employment.

Future directions

CatholicCare Social Services will grow the provision for training and employment to more unemployed refugee background people by strengthening the Diverse Queensland Workforce Program, which is currently in its second round of funding.

We will seek to access more employers hoping to meet their workforce shortages with significant support in the engagement, interviewing and onboarding of potential employees through the DQW program co-ordinator.

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program will access a wider range of not-for-profit organisations, agencies and businesses in 2023 that will support Cert 1 Business Traineeships. Our goal is to develop strong partnerships with a variety of placement sites that will ensure we have a range of partner organisations to make the SQW program sustainable and ongoing.



Group Toowoomba refugee health advisory group

CatholicCare Social Service's Group Toowoomba (GT) refugee health advisory group is made up of four consultants from the Yazidi Community and built on the model of the G11 (Refugee Health, Mater Hospital) in response to the Queensland Refugee Health and Wellbeing Policy and Action Plan (2017-2020) (Queensland Refugee Health Policy). This policy included an action to "sustain and expand existing structures for community engagement... to reflect new communities".

GT was initially funded by the Queensland Government and functions as a bridge between the local Yazidi community and health services to address the significant complexities experienced by the community in relation to health and challenges of health professionals striving to provide the highest quality service to vulnerable client groups.

Following are examples of the impact and work of GT since its commencement in August 2021:

- » Compilation of "Health Perspectives of the Yazidi Community in Toowoomba" Report (2021), including identification of 6 priority areas.
- » Information from community interviews conducted to compile the Health Perspectives report was also used to inform:
 - Planning for the next Queensland Refugee Health and Wellbeing Policy and Action Plan (QLD Refugee Health Policy).
 - "Communication for Health Professions" subject taught at QUT by Associate Professor, Kate Murray. Feedback from the Yazidi community will be incorporated into this class. This class reaches approximately 1000 students from a range of health professions (e.g. psychologists, social workers, optometrists, paramedics).
 - Professional development provided by CatholicCare to staff at Toowoomba Hospital about the local Yazidi community.
- » Dissemination of relevant information regarding Covid-19 to the local Yazidi community.
- » Support to develop culturally appropriate, accessible, and relevant health information resources.
- » Increased health literacy of GT members to ensure ongoing robust conversations with community and health services. Examples of topics: emergency department processes and procedures, Covid-19, "The Effects of Trauma on the Mind and Body" (Delivered by QPASTT).

Group Toowoomba provides a safe space for the local Yazidi community to have a voice about health.

Group Toowoomba case study

Death, dying and life-limiting illness are extremely sensitive but important topics when considering cultural sensitivity, and these were quickly identified by GT as a key issue of concern for the community.

Since then, GT has been involved in ongoing conversations with health staff who work in palliative and cancer care about these issues.

The information exchange is two-way as GT members learn about how these things are managed in Australia, while also providing feedback about community perspectives and answering questions from the staff relating to their work with the Yazidi community.

In June this year, members of GT had the opportunity to tour the Toowoomba Hospice as part of this information exchange.

Kurdish Kurmanji on top

In the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census, Kurdish Kurmanji was officially recognised as the most spoken language in Toowoomba, after English!

This is a real indication of the numbers from the Yazidi community, originally from Iraq and Syria, who are settling here through the humanitarian settlement program, or choosing to relocate here from other settlement locations interstate.

TRAMS staff played a major part in the Census registration process of the CALD communities, to ensure that a true picture of settlement of multicultural communities was captured.



Leith Lethbridge Scholarship

The Leith Lethbridge Scholarship was established to assist migrants newly arrived in the Toowoomba region to access support to settle in Toowoomba. The award provides 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.

Scholarship recipients are selected from the newest cohort of refugees and migrants being settled in Toowoomba.

This year's Leith Lethbridge Scholarship recipient, Mahmood Heliqi, has started studying at USQ on a pathway to one day become a dentist.



Response to the Afghan Crisis

As was widely broadcast at the time, in August 2021, the capital city of Afghanistan fell to the Taliban. In collaboration with Mission Australia, CatholicCare Social Service's TRAMS staff worked with the local Afghan community in Toowoomba to navigate what was a deeply distressing and difficult time.

The response included co-facilitation of six group sessions that allowed women from the local Afghan community to meet, share information and support, and voice their concerns.

Sessions included meeting with Federal Member Garth Hamilton, a session about self-care facilitated by one of CatholicCare's counselling team, and support for referral to free legal services for visa questions and applications for family members still in Afghanistan.

We're with you

Call 1300 477 433





600
Volunteer
Hours

26
Local
Volunteers

Our Volunteers

Volunteers, through their time and generosity, help to build strong communities and we 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.

CatholicCare acknowledges our volunteer's dedication and faithful service over many years and the amazing difference they have made to the lives of Toowoomba's newest residents.



Here are some of our fantastic volunteer tutors for the weekly English classes at CatholicCare TRAMS.

Volunteer Sally (centre) is the English class co-ordinator. She works with volunteers Lisa and Beth to plan activities and provide general support to the numerous volunteer tutors attending the English classes. Sally has volunteered at TRAMS for many years and finds it such a rewarding experience.

'It is great to see the students so happy to see their volunteer tutor each week'
'TRAMS provides a safe and inviting place for our students. We laugh a lot!'
'The tutors get as much out of the English classes as the students do!'



Local Business

BRC/ Local business – resilience is the focus

Over the last twelve months, CatholicCare has continued to grow its connectivity and support networks with local businesses across Toowoomba and the Darling Downs.

This was enhanced by our increasing involvement with Toowoomba's Chamber of Commerce and the opportunities it provided to engage with businesses in formal and informal settings.

Business At Dusk

We partnered with BEST employment as hosts of the February Business At Dusk.





Congratulations to the finalists for the Future Leaders Award at the FocusHR Business Excellence Awards presented by Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce.

Supporting our Future Leaders

We encourage and enable our CatholicCare Senior Leadership team to engage with up-and-coming business leader and play a part in supporting their development through our ongoing partnership with Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce.

In 2021-22 we sponsored the Future Leaders Mentoring Program and the Future Leaders Award at the 2021 Business Excellence Awards.



We were proud to sponsor the Future Leaders Mentoring Program for 2021.

Introducing the

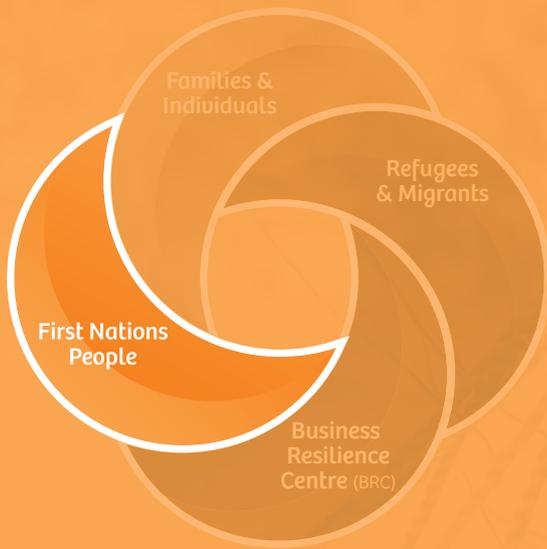


The Business Resilience Centre (BRC) has been developed as a mechanism to our ongoing desire to contribute to the resilience and wellbeing of local small, medium and large businesses. Its creation will enable us to respond to local need in the business community and then generate an income stream to support our response to community demand without having to rely on government funding.

Based on our quadrant service offering, the BRC will provide services and programs that continue to focus on our Mission to empower families and communities, eventually developing and delivering services across each of our Teams (Counselling, FRC, TRAMS and YUMBIN) for local businesses to purchase on a needs-basis. The BRC is being developed thoughtfully and sustainably to scaffold in such a way that will allow for future growth and new innovations.

So watch this space...





First Nations People

Yumbin means “together/all of us” and is the name given to CatholicCare Social Service’s First Nations People team, which has built up strong relationships with many sectors and is trusted within the community.

Yumbin focus on assisting youth and adults through the justice system and supporting those in the Murri Court system to make changes in their lives. We also empower young people through our youth programs, encouraging them to strive to become future community leaders.

Our staff undertake cultural awareness training every year and we offer

opportunities for personal and professional development to our First Nations volunteers.

Staff celebrate significant dates on the First Nations calendar such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, National Sorry Day and National Close the Gap Day.

In 2022, the Yumbin team, with the support of CatholicCare’s counselling

team and Aunty Glenda Humes Elder Community Justice Group, worked in consultation with Reconciliation Australia, to develop CatholicCare’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).



Murri Court Community Justice Group

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, 196 clients have been sentenced. Out of the 196 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 Health 715 checks completed as part of their bail conditions.

Yumbin can arrange referrals for Murri Court clients to counselling services, indigenous support groups, and indigenous health services. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we continued to successfully run Murri Court via phone and online, and this can continue into the future if needed.

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”.

A respected person on the Murri Court said “It is an honour and a privilege

392

referrals to Murri Court since August 2016

43

referrals to Murri Court in 2021/22

372

sessions with clients including court support and cultural meetings with elders





“Murri Court has changed my life in such a big way. I was caught in a bubble that I didn’t think I could get out of. I now have job and have learned through counselling how to control myself with confrontation.”

“I have learned a lot through Murri Court. How to look after myself and my family and how to control my alcohol consumption. I want to thank the Murri Court for allowing me to come through and get the help I needed.”

“I didn’t think that I would ever be drug free in this lifetime. Murri Court has helped me to do that and provided me with so much support.”

21

referrals to Lives Lived Well for drug and alcohol counselling

9

people participating in Deadly Sistas Women’s Group

14

males referred to Carbal Medical Services for the Strong Father’s men’s group

Youth Bail Support Program

CatholicCare’s Youth Bail Support (YBS) program works with other agencies to help prevent crime and act early in connecting with young people and supporting them to make healthy choices, promote good behaviour, and work towards 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 a Learner Driver’s License.

The Youth Bail Support program continues to receive positive feedback from the Toowoomba Youth Justice Centre about the work it is doing. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we continued to successfully run YBS via phone and online and this can continue into the future if needed.



CASE STUDY

CHANGING LIVES

A young girl who was homeless and going through the justice system was referred to YBS. We supported her with meals, accommodation, clothing, basic needs and with her court matters. By the time she left the

YBS program she had moved interstate, obtained a job working at Tullamarine Airport and is living independently. She stated that without the help of CatholicCare and the YBS program she wouldn’t have been able to change her life.



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 to 17 years. Covid-19 has presented a very challenging and trying time for our groups. Contact restrictions have made our sessions limited due to unpredictable attendance numbers and volunteer support.

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.





18-19

average number
of youths per
session

11

number of
volunteers

589

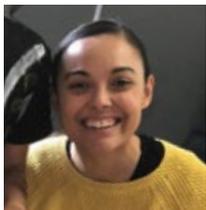
total attendance
through 2021/22

Whaddup Youth Group activities in 2021/22 included:

- » Establishing and maintenance of our Worm Farm
- » Creating and designing Scarecrow for Competition "Multuggerah" Overall Winner Toowoomba Royal Show 2022
- » Tie dying of Rainbow Serpent for the NAIDOC community march 2022
- » Planting and maintenance of Australian Native Plants
- » Creating Diamond Art designs
- » Crafting Clay Christmas ornaments for Murri Christmas in July celebrations
- » Creating Mother's Day blackboard quotes using cricut machine
- » Making Easter felt baskets for teachers, family and friends filled with eggs
- » Participating in Outdoor sporting activities eg: touch footy, handball, tag
- » Learning about Aboriginal art and the meaning of symbols
- » Making Metal Impressart Jewelry
- » Learning to Shake a Leg through youtube
- » Celebrating National Dance Day
- » Celebrating National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Children's Day
- » Celebrating National Reconciliation Week - Creating Clay Christmas tree decorations acknowledging cultural symbols & stories
- » Acknowledging National Close the Gap
- » NAIDOC Week Celebration – "Murri Christmas in July" Pizza Day where clay Christmas decorations were displayed on the Christmas tree
- » Enjoying BBQ's
- » Celebrating Christmas with an outing at Gelatissimo
- » Creating Recycled tin and sticker pencil holders
- » Handmaking felt purses/satchels
- » Cleaning of hub area inside and outside
- » Singing along and dancing in the aisles at The Sapphires evening at The Empire Theatre

Acknowledging our volunteers

We are so thankful for the time and support provided by our volunteers. They are all greatly appreciated and very important to our indigenous youth programs. Thank you!



**Tia McKenna,
2022 Toowoomba NAIDOC
Tertiary Aspirations Award**

A Whaddup attendee from 2005 and volunteer for both Whaddup and Which Way for the past four years, proud Mandandanji woman Tia McKenna is giving back to young people within the community and sharing her personal experiences. Tia is a valuable, compassionate, and caring volunteer who was awarded the 2022 Toowoomba NAIDOC Tertiary Aspirations Award.

In addition to volunteering, Tia works as a Patient Transport Officer with the Queensland Ambulance Service.

A mother of two, Tia has a strong interest in pursuing a career in education and graduated from Tafe Queensland's Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP) in December 2021 with a Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Tia was awarded the Hendrick Fourmile Scholarship in recognition of her studies.



**Shakarna Roma-Johnson,
Toowoomba NAIDOC
Youth of the Year Award 2022**

Whaddup participant Shakarna Roma-Johnson has been recognised with many awards over the years, but this year she was named the Toowoomba NAIDOC Youth of the Year at the 2022 Awards.

Shakarna embraces her Indigenous heritage and strives to inspire others to learn about culture through her art. Previously in care, Shakarna spent a period of her life living away from her family, but through hard work and taking every opportunity to grow, she has achieved her goal of enlisting in the Australian Army.



**Jannali Suey,
Toowoomba NAIDOC
Senior Education Award 2022**

Whaddup participant and 2022 school captain for Wilsonton State High School, Jannali is a strong voice for other Indigenous students.

Jannali was awarded the Toowoomba NAIDOC Senior Education Award for her dedication to the region, including helping to implement culturally safe and appropriate events and school projects while encouraging all students to become the best versions of themselves. In the future, Jannali hopes to study education, law, or medicine, while continuing to pave the way for emerging First Nations people.





NAIDOC Week

- » Inhouse "Murri Christmas in July" staff & volunteer lunch where all their Christmas decorations were displayed on our Christmas Tree
- » "Murri Christmas in July" display at the Toowoomba Court House and the UniSQ
- » Basketball Queensland State League QSL1 Indigenous Round
- » Awards Dinner
- » Kulilia Kindergarten Cent Sale
- » Queensland Police flag raising and morning tea
- » Stall holder for local Community Day
- » Created banners "Get Up Stand Up Show Up" for NAIDOC community celebrations and march.

Which Way School Holiday Program

For three days every school holidays, children aged from 8 to 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 opportunity to grow through literacy and self-expression with traditional practices, visual art, craft, music, dance, storytelling, and multi-media.

We have continued in our purposes:

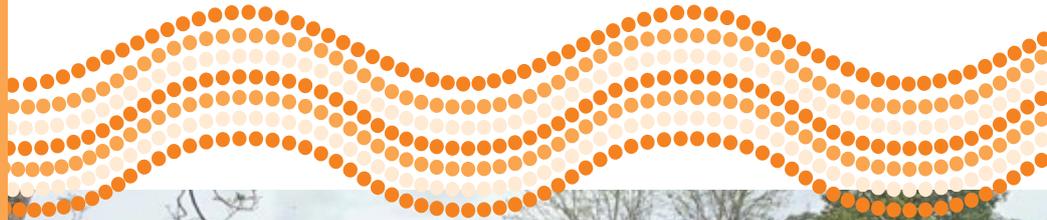
- » To create more socially and culturally aware leaders and young people who will pave the way towards a brighter future.
- » To engage, inspire and empower indigenous youth to grow proud and resilient, to pursue active and valued roles in the community.
- » To develop leaders and powerful voices through nurturing meaningful connection to kin, culture, community, country, and opportunity.
- » To ensure that all voices are heard, valued, and recognised in consultation with key people such as elders, young people, community representatives and families.

- » To provide knowledge, communication skills and trust building skills to young people and their leaders.
- » For all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a strong sense of belonging and identity to family, community, culture, and country.
- » To provide experiences that pass on cultural knowledge and information to create a sense of belonging and express themselves as individual and community representatives.

Covid-19 has presented a very challenging and trying time for Which Way. Contact restrictions have made our activities limited due to unpredictable attendance numbers and volunteer support.

Connection to people and culture

“Which Way provides the platform and opportunity for young people in care who are separated from their siblings to come together during the school holidays to spend time with one another. Family is extremely important for our young people’s well-being.”

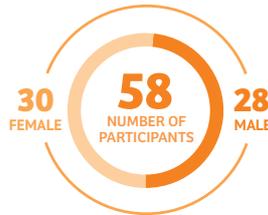


JUNE/JULY 2022



- » Emerge Cafe High Tea, created and designed wood signs, wood clock with traditional cultural art, jewelry making.
- » Hop on, Hop off local park tour: Japanese gardens with sporting activities, USQ Gumbi Gumbi Gardens meaning of native trees and they can benefit, Picnic Point with Dr Mark Copeland with the Battle of Meerwah and pastel crayon artwork of Meerwah.
- » Australian Outback Spectacular.

SEPTEMBER 2022



- » Edwards Equine Therapy x 2 sessions.
- » Murphy's Creek Escape x 2 sessions, archery, high rope, giant swing, eco friendly pool and BBQ lunch.
- » QCCC and TribalLink Camp Mapleton.

CHRISTMAS 2021/22



- » Supercamp Basketball Camp Australia 5 day Camp.
- » Murphy's Creek Escape - BBQ, hike, giant swing, archery and swimming eco friendly swimming pool.

Future Plans

- » **18th January 2023:** Australian Skateboarding Community Initiative "Songline Skateboarding" workshop.
- » **7th - 11th January 2023:** Supercamp Basketball Australia Camp.



EASTER 2022

- » Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and Wildlife Hospital.







