



# St Francis Social Services Annual Report 2021



# Acknowledgement of Country

St Francis Social Services acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which St Francis Social Services operates. We pay our respect to them, their customs, their culture, to elders past and present, and to their emerging leaders.

## Vision

Our vision is for a society in which there is full recognition of the dignity, equality, human rights and humanity of all people.

## Purpose

Since 1978, St Francis Social Services has worked to uphold the intrinsic dignity of each person by providing support and advocacy to empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised in our community.

## Values

### WELCOME

We provide an environment where people feel valued, wanted and important, regardless of gender, faith, race or social circumstance. We greet clients with warmth, engagement and an open heart.

### RESPECT

We uphold the intrinsic dignity and equality of each person by valuing the experience and wisdom of our clients, colleagues and volunteers in everything we do. We honour the uniqueness of each person, their stories, their personal experience and their truth.

### CONNECT

We encourage connection that is heartfelt and meaningful. By recognising the importance of connection to community, place and self, we make impactful connections with each other, those we work with, our partners and supporters.

### EMPOWER

We empower marginalised and vulnerable people by creating opportunities for individuals to build on their own resilience and resourcefulness. We speak with and advocate for those we work with.

### NAMES CHANGED

\* The names of people throughout this report have been changed to protect the identities of individuals.

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# What We Do

**We provide practical services for:**

- **Disadvantaged young people and their families**
- **Individuals and families seeking asylum**



## Centre 360

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service is committed to providing a host of professional and accessible service options for vulnerable 12–24-year-olds and their families.



## House of Welcome

House of Welcome (HoW) is passionate about providing opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum that enable their self-determination, empowerment and participation in the community.



## ACNC

St Francis Social Services is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission ABN 67 064 978 347.

All donations above \$2 are tax deductible

# Board of Directors

Fr Nick Lucas OFM , Chair  
Peter Hennessy, Company Secretary  
Carol Dettmann  
Sr Libby Rogerson  
Fr Anthoni Selvaraj, OFM

Anna Coroneo  
Chris Sidoti  
Laurie Ferguson  
Nicholas Carney  
Renee Dal Santo (until Dec 2021).

# Employee Listing 2020/2021

## ST FRANCIS SOCIAL SERVICES

Maurizio Vespa  
Peter Hennessy

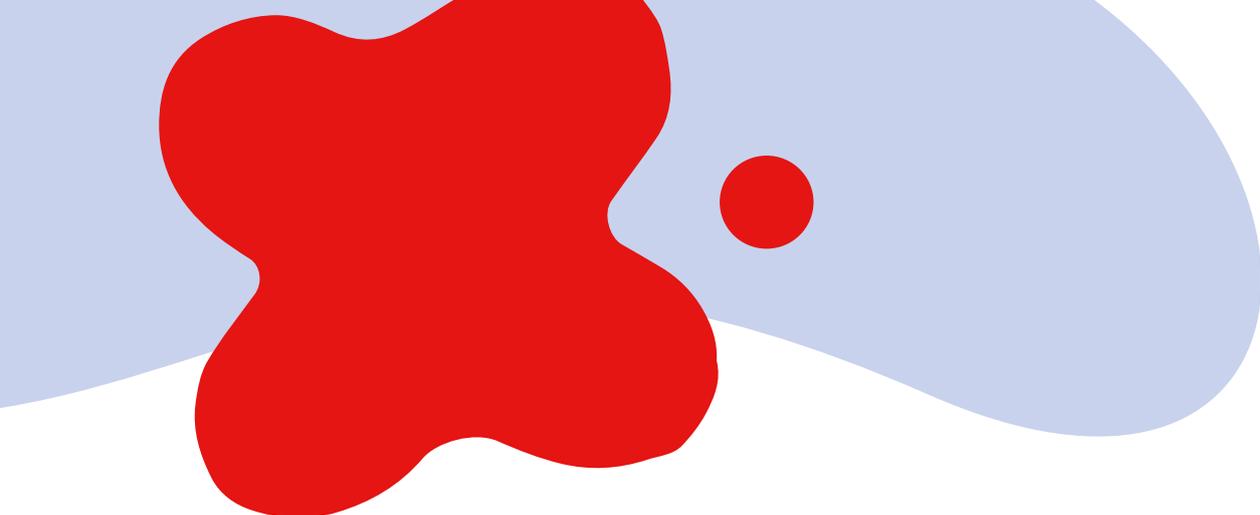
## CENTRE 360 YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICE

Charmaine Grey  
Etheon Parkes  
Gary Stocks  
Jesse Wynhausen  
Jessica Pietrasanta  
Katherine Fallows  
Masoumeh Gholamshahi  
Monique Phipps  
Natalie Femia  
Natalie Mackenzie  
Paula Parmakellis  
Sarah Bays  
Scarlett Harrod

## HOUSE OF WELCOME ASYLUM & REFUGEE SERVICE

Abbey McDonald  
Aliyeh Tooba  
Anne Moran  
Georgia Holloway  
Jae-Ann Maher  
Larissa Dulat  
Leonie Dyer  
Lucie Stevens  
Maryanne Sneddon  
Menani (trainee)  
Miriam Pellicano  
Ruth Lesmana  
Sayed Musavie  
Siobhan Raffan  
Suma Pillai  
Vachik Ohanesianghezjeljeh  
Andreina Lugo Moreno





# The Chair & CEO's Report

The year was overshadowed by the constant but differing challenges of COVID-19. The pandemic required great flexibility in order to continue providing services while complying with regularly changing medical advice. We relied on the directions of NSW Health in deciding on our service delivery.

Our offices in Paddington (Centre 360) and Granville (House of Welcome) were able to remain open for much of the year, with some periods of office closure. COVID-19 increased demand for all of our services. Social isolation brought about by COVID-19 resulted in increased anxiety and mental health concerns among our client groups in both services.

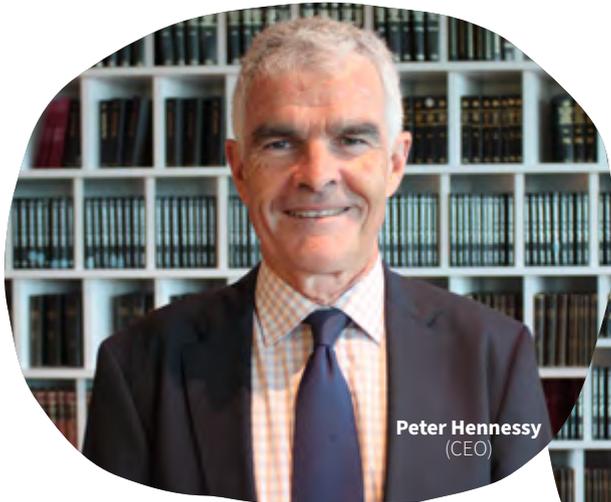
When we couldn't support clients face-to-face, our skilled and dedicated staff continued to provide services remotely via zoom, email, and phone. Some modifications to our services took place, for example our foodbank service moved to providing electronic supermarket vouchers rather than clients visiting our office to pick up food supplies. Most of our face-to-face counselling was delivered via telehealth.

The pandemic also brought financial challenges for St Francis Social Services. We were unable to hold a number of our regular fundraising events, but we received financial support from the Federal Government via Jobkeeper and many of our supporters and donors were very generous in their support. We had no reduction in our staff numbers during the year, but unfortunately, our asylum seeker clients at the House of Welcome were not

included in the COVID-19 safety net provided by Jobkeeper and Jobseeker. This resulted in an increased demand for financial assistance for rental payments, food purchases, and other necessities. Other agencies in this sector had similar experiences. In order to avert a significant increase in homelessness and social distress, the NSW Government in July 2020 stepped in and provided emergency relief to assist people seeking asylum. We were one of the agencies selected to manage these payments. This enabled us to provide financial assistance to our clients to pay for rent, and for other essentials throughout the financial year.

Despite the challenges, there were some significant achievements during the year. We built a commercial kitchen at the House of Welcome which provided the springboard to revive our social enterprise catering business (House of Welcome Catering). We employed a full-time chef, and despite the pandemic restrictions, have begun to grow the business. The catering business, in addition to a food service, also provides an opportunity as an employment pathway for our clients.

We were very fortunate during the year when two of our long-term religious congregation supporters gifted us home units to house refugees and asylum seekers. The Dominican Sisters gifted a unit in Strathfield, and the Little Company of Mary a unit in Campsie. We thank the two congregations for these very generous gifts to help the most disadvantaged in our community.



**Peter Hennessy**  
(CEO)



**Fr Nick Lucas**  
(Chair)

While the financial year was very challenging it also provided the opportunity to think about the range of services offered at Centre 360, and House of Welcome. At Centre 360 we are examining the programs we offer to a number of high schools in our area of operation (Bayside, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley, and Woollahra). At the House of Welcome we have further modified one of our core programs, housing, to focus on it as a transitional twelve month program. In addition to accommodation, the program focuses on providing intensive casework, as well as financial and food security, and access to an employment program.

We are also working to develop better measurements of our performance. At Centre 360 we have a structured measurement system linked to our funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. We are also working on ways to better measure the outcomes of our work at

the House of Welcome.

We were supported during the year by donors, corporate sponsors, church groups, parishes, schools, and the broader community. We could not operate without this support. We also have a very generous group of volunteers, and want to particularly acknowledge the long-term volunteer Br Joe Vassallo, who finished as a volunteer at the House of Welcome at the end of 2020.

We thank the Board and the Franciscan Provincial Council for their ongoing commitment to the work of St Francis Social Services. We also acknowledge the contribution of our former CEO Maurizio Vespa who resigned in July 2020.

– **Fr Nick Lucas (Chair)**

– **Peter Hennessy (CEO)**

## Contact Us

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W: [houseofwelcome.org.au](http://houseofwelcome.org.au)



**274**

**YOUNG  
PEOPLE  
accessed  
counselling**



**2236**

**COUNSELLING  
SESSIONS** were  
delivered face-to-face  
or online



**\$165,004**

distributed to 338  
individuals to support rent  
and maintain tenancies

# a Year in Review



**95**

PEOPLE per night  
in long-term  
accommodation



**141**

NEW CLIENTS  
assisted with job  
readiness and  
employment



# Centre 360

Youth and Family Service



We believe in  
young people  
until they believe  
in themselves.





# Programs

Centre 360 offers a holistic, creative and flexible approach to mental health support to ensure young people can access the help they need, when they need it. Our counselling service works with financially disadvantaged young people between 12 and 24 and their families.

Over the last financial year we have seen a rise in demand for adolescent mental health support as the pandemic has continued and restrictions have impacted young people's support structures. It has been a challenging year for mental health services as the mental health toll of the pandemic continues to rise. As a service we have navigated this demand by providing both face-to face and telehealth services.

## Counselling Support

At Centre 360 we have provided counselling to 274 young people and their families. We adopt a trauma informed and strengths-based approach, meaning our team of counsellors provide a safe space for young people to explore their difficulties, and focus on personal strengths and coping strategies.

This year our team has grown to include six Counsellors (part time and full time) from a range of disciplines, including Social Workers, Arts Therapists and Psychotherapists. Our strength as a service is our ability to be flexible in our approach, and work with young people for as long as they are needing support.



***Centre 360 saved me. I was really f\*\*\*\* up. It was one of the only places that I felt safe. It was always there.***

– Young person, aged 23

## School based counselling programs:

Our team of counsellors has provided an outreach program to three schools in our local area. This was borne out of a partnership approach with schools in recognising that accessing mental health support is often a barrier for young people, and services need to go directly where young people are. Our individual counselling provides much needed support to young people who would not be able to attend our service otherwise.

**Counsellors provided support one day per week in each of the following schools:**

- Redfern Jarjum College – supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not participating in mainstream primary schools.
- JJ Cahill Memorial High School
- Matraville Sports High School



**27**

FAMILIES received parenting support



**114**

NEW CLIENTS since January 2020 were referred to the service in a 6 month period



**15**

young people received MENTORING





# Group Programs

## 1 Tuning into Teens

We know that in order to have the best outcomes for young people, we need to support their parents and families too. As part of our commitment to holistic service provision, we provided the Tuning into Teens (TinT) program offering parents and carers therapeutic support, skills, and confidence to better manage family issues. This program was provided online during restrictions and supported parents throughout this challenging time.

## 2 STRIVE Group Program

The Strength Through Resilience, Identity, Validation and Empowerment (STRIVE) program was developed in response to schools reporting an increase in mental health issues affecting students. It is a preventative program that works with school teachers and student welfare staff to identify students who are at risk of experiencing mental health issues, and who may be at-risk of disengaging from education.

COVID-19 restrictions impacted our ability to provide this group program on site in schools; however, we were able to successfully run a program at Rose Bay Secondary College in Term 2 2021. As restrictions have lifted the demand for this program has increased dramatically and Centre 360 plans to roll out Strive to more schools in the next financial year.



***I am currently out of work and have been struggling for some time, but I actually think for me and my family this course has been life-changing, particularly for those parents needing a deeper more meaningful experience.***

***I discovered that I was not the only one going through many issues with my teen and this program helped me to realise several mistakes that I was making. The group shared a lot of situations that were good examples that helped me to understand my teenager better and was very useful for me.***

– Parent participant of Tuning into Teens Program

### 3 HSF Mentoring Program

Centre 360 believes strongly in the power of a positive mentoring relationship and the impact it can have on a young person's life. Every year, we team up with Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) to provide a scholarship and mentoring program to young people who are engaged with our service. This program supports young people to identify their strengths in reaching their educational and work goals. This year our program was delivered both face-to-face and online, and 15 young people successfully completed the program and received their scholarships.

*"HSF is the thing that I look forward to the most in my week....I'm always wondering what they will have in store. I've enjoyed meeting new people and how it has given me something to look forward to during lockdown"*

– Mentee aged 15 years

*"It was good exploring new and different experiences and events. I enjoyed spending time with my mentor and discussing different perspectives and listening to his experience of high school and going to university"*

– Mentee aged 17 years

### 4 Keeping Connected Program

After successfully securing two grants in the previous financial year, we have seen this program grow and provide a solution to overcoming barriers to engaging with mental health support. Thanks to the City of Sydney Council, and Waverley Council, this project provides practical support in the form of access to laptops, modems, phones, and financial payment of phone and internet bills to enable young people to remain connected. This results in them being able to receive ongoing counselling support from Centre 360, increases their access to education and online learning, as well as keeping them socially linked in with their community.

***Thank you so much to your entire service for this. It's been such a relief as I've had a few difficulties and it's been a burden financially, but this program has seriously helped so much just to even survive! It's really appreciated!***

– Veronica, 20

***Just wanted to thank you and Centre 360 for all the help and support. The counselling sessions have really helped me get out of some dark stages, cheers.***

– Robert, 21



## CASE STUDY:

# Lalita's Story

## Accessing Centre 360 support

Lalita is a 12-year-old Aboriginal girl from Gadigal Land who lives with her father and younger brother, with whom she experiences a close and loving relationship. Her relationship with her grandmother is less stable and she is estranged from her mother who lives with complex mental health concerns.

Lalita first accessed counselling from Centre 360 in her final years of primary school, continuing into her first year of high school at a prestigious single-sex college. She is highly engaged at school, a true academic with a quirky sense of humour. However, at the new school, Lalita feels she has no friends her own age and often avoids socialising with other students.

As counselling continued, Lalita decided to work on feeling more 'social' with other students, and with support, she began navigating and making sense of her relationships and experiences. She began feeling hopeful as she directed her own therapeutic journey.

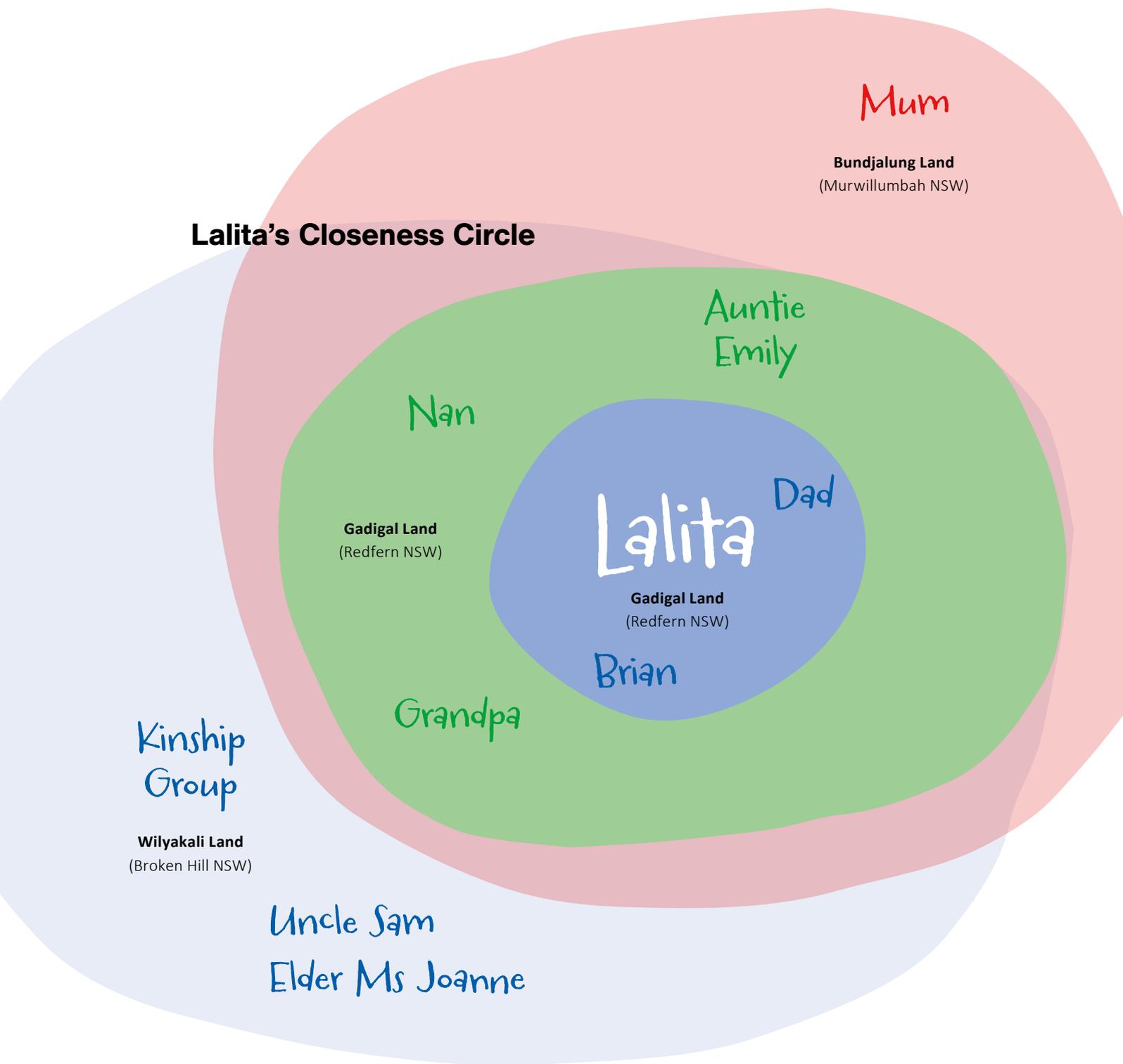
Soon, Lalita saw an improvement in her mood and began establishing friendships at college. She also reported improved connections with family, particularly her grandmother, and mother with whom she now has weekly contact. This made Lalita feel more acknowledged, connected, and appreciated.

## How we worked together

Working alongside Lalita, Lalita's counsellor began exploring a way of working together called interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) or IPT/A, for adolescents. This time-limited technique, derived from attachment therapy, considers the bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual circumstances of the individual. Exploring the complexities of interpersonal relationships is core to the practice technique. IPT/A also focuses on building a strong therapeutic alliance with the young person (YP) and highlights the importance of both the YP and therapist working collaboratively. It takes into consideration the YP's lived contexts and communication patterns, with particular focus on the YP's key relationships. Lastly, IPT/A attempts to evoke insights and strategies to improve communication patterns, whilst also supporting the YP to build better social networks and supports.

Lalita was invited to create a closeness circle (see image) as a helpful starting point to begin to explore her sense of cultural and spiritual individuality and the importance of the people in her life. IPT/A was used to help Lalita explore the goal of improving interpersonal functioning and communication patterns in her key relationships, as well as with her relationships at school.

As counselling continued, Lalita decided she wanted to work on practical ways to become more socially engaged at school and to be able to take up offers to 'hang out' with other students. Since commencing at the new school, Lalita noticed she was spending much less time with First Nations people her own age. Changing schools from a First Nations focused primary school (with both formal and informal connections to culture, social bonds, Aboriginal role models and spirituality) to a private girls' school, was a huge transition, and this had contributed to her significant sense of upheaval and feeling socially isolated.



Lalita collaborated with her counsellor to navigate and make sense of her relationships and experiences. The counsellor supported Lalita to grow her sense of confidence and hope. Soon Lalita reported feeling less anxious about attending school, an improvement in mood and then excitement about starting to establish friendships at the College.

Lalita also reported feeling a closer emotional connection with family members, in particular the female figures in her life. Lalita found the confidence

to have weekly phone calls with her mother and tried new ways of communicating with her grandmother. This helped Lalita feel more understood, connected and valued. At the end of the sessions, Lalita and her counsellor completed a collaborative artwork to celebrate Lalita's work and achievements in becoming more connected.





Journeying with  
people seeking  
asylum and  
refugees.

**IMPACT AREA:**

# Housing

**Provide safe and stable accommodation to clients, providing a foundation to pursue employment, legal and health needs, and mitigate against destitution for the most vulnerable**

## Welcome Start

Welcome Start Transitional Housing Program is a 12-month program providing intensive casework, housing support, access to secure and safe accommodation, financial support, and employment mentoring to enable independent financial and housing security for people from asylum seeking backgrounds.

A review of our housing program led House of Welcome to develop this model of intensive wraparound support for people seeking asylum, enabling their entry into the Australian labour force and building their financial capacity to secure and sustain private rental. The Welcome Start Transitional Housing Project enables the delivery of a co-designed case management plan for clients on the housing and financial assistance program.

The program continues to focus on assisting individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness, isolation, survivors of domestic violence and poor mental health, those with no income supports, and no access to traditional government and non-government supports such as emergency, social, public, and affordable housing.

## Lela's Story

### **What role has House of Welcome played in supporting you since your arrival in Australia?**

*House of Welcome gave me a lifeline. I was needing to exit crisis accommodation, and at a time when I didn't know what to do or where to start, they got myself and my newborn on our feet. Living in House of Welcome transitional accommodation has provided me with affordable accommodation and access to casework support. This 12-month period has allowed me to live in a safe home, given me time to plan and save for my future, and move towards independent living.*

### **What were some of the key challenges you have faced in building your new life?**

*As a single mum, the main challenge I face is how I can financially support myself and my child. Taking care of my finances is important for us to live a better life, but being separated from family, I don't have anyone to leave my child with while I work. Sourcing affordable housing is another challenging aspect when building a new life in Australia.*

### **What do you hope for in the future?**

*I do hope for a brighter future. I hope for a future where I have safety and permanency in Australia, am settled and able to provide for my child and fully support myself financially. I hope to be happier and healthier and enjoy seeing my little one grow and enjoy every other moment along the way.*



## Safe and stable housing during the pandemic

A large proportion of HoW clients lost their jobs as the pandemic continued throughout 2021. For people seeking asylum, with no access to job support or any kind of safety net, the need for housing assistance and rental support became acute. Many people seeking asylum accrued rental arrears of thousands of dollars with no ability to repay their debts. Frequently they were forced into overcrowded housing or faced eviction. Despite the moratorium on evictions, many people, including families, were evicted from their properties.

COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grants provided by Multicultural NSW, local Councils, and donors, enabled HoW to assist numerous clients to retain their housing. We are grateful for this support.

## The Women's Supported Accommodation Program

The Women's Supported Accommodation Program provides intensive casework, employment and housing support for women for a period of twelve to eighteen months, building pathways for women to transition from HoW accommodation into the private rental market.

The team at HoW became increasingly aware that women on temporary visas are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the context of the pandemic and have fewer opportunities to leave violence and safely access support. Women on temporary visas have very limited access to supported accommodation, with crisis services and refuges generally only providing accommodation for a few nights.

The Women's Supported Accommodation Program aims to build the capacity of participants to grow their financial independence and enter the private rental market. Once women have exited the program, places within the program are made available to new vulnerable clients seeking asylum who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.



**\$13,820**

DISTRIBUTED TO  
17 INDIVIDUALS TO  
PROVIDE ONGOING CRISIS  
ACCOMMODATION



**200**

APPLICATIONS FOR  
ENERGY ACCOUNTS PAYMENT  
ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST WITH  
UTILITY BILL COSTS



**14**

WOMEN AT  
RISK/who have  
experienced DFV in  
program, plus  
21 children



**20**

PROPERTIES MANAGED.  
90% OF OCCUPANTS  
strongly agree/agree  
they felt comfortable,  
safe and secure in  
the property



**90%**

OF OCCUPANTS  
VERY SATISFIED/  
satisfied with the  
Welcome Start  
Housing Program

**IMPACT AREA:**

# Casework

**Provide trauma informed casework to assist clients to access resources and community supports, and to build networks of referral**

## Casework

HoW clients reported feeling afraid of eviction, afraid of contracting the virus, and told us that they suffered from social isolation during the pandemic. Additionally, there was an increase in women referred to HoW experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV). The under-reporting of DFV and the lack of support available to women seeking asylum is of major concern.

In response to increasing need, HoW increased service delivery seven-fold to reduce the risks of homelessness, financial and food insecurity. The casework team increased their intensive casework support by 100%, delivering around 3,800 intensive casework support sessions to meet complex housing, homelessness, health, and financial assistance needs.

## Hundreds released from community detention with no supports

Hundreds of people who had been in offshore detention (Manus and Nauru) and on-shore alternative Places of Detention (hotels), including families with minors and people living with significant physical and mental health issues, were given just three weeks' notice before being exited to the community.

Once exited, people were not eligible for income support and had to obtain private rental accommodation. Many people, after years of being in offshore detention, faced acute barriers to finding work.

HoW worked alongside Status Resolution Support Services, Jesuit Refugee Service, Australian Red Cross, and Asylum Seekers Centre to provide a safety net for vulnerable clients, and with the assistance of Multicultural NSW funding, provided housing and income supports.



**71**

**clients with DFV background supported with INTENSIVE CASEWORK SUPPORT**



**527**

**INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED with intensive casework**

## Foodbank

Alongside services provided to mitigate against housing insecurity, financial stress and impacts of COVID-19, the need to provide emergency food relief to clients remained a key service across the year. HoW maintained a hybrid model of delivery with clients still coming to the service, home delivery services and vouchers/financial assistance for highly vulnerable clients.

With the support of over 60 generous parishes, individuals and school groups, items were donated to keep the service operating. This support was critical and HoW is grateful to all our partners and supporters who ensured food security remained front and centre for our clients.

The increase in demand for services saw HoW working with and securing additional supports from Addison Rd Community Centre, Foodbank NSW, OzHarvest, and COVID -19 emergency relief funding from Multicultural NSW, Cumberland City Council, City of Parramatta Council, and Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group.

Strict COVID-19 protocols and appointment systems were put in place to manage the flow and safety of clients, staff and volunteers.



## Dental clinic & Plate it Forward

In partnership with Dr Jalal Khan, oral health therapist and his team, HoW hosted a mobile dental clinic service. Seventy clients were able to access this critical service, with some clients attending multiple appointments. Dr Khan provided quality dental care and all clients received information about dental care and healthy eating, as well as packs containing advice sheets and dental hygiene products. Through our partnership with Plate it Forward, clients of the dental clinic also received 200 freshly cooked meals.



IMPACT AREA:

# Casework

## No financial safety net

The COVID-19 pandemic acutely impacted people seeking asylum. Many people were at an increased risk of experiencing financial hardship due to their over-representation in highly precarious casual work and their inability to access any support benefits. People seeking asylum and migrants on temporary visas are also much more likely to work in jobs without sick leave or other entitlements.

HoW was able to provide critical health supports to our clients, including access to GP services and medications for those without access to Medicare.

## Multicultural Legal Service

In March 2021, the Western Sydney Community Legal Centre Ltd. launched the Multicultural Legal Service. HoW became an official partner of the service, providing outreach services to clients at HoW in Granville.

Throughout the financial year, nineteen individuals were provided with legal support and advice at HoW. The Multicultural Legal Service has been highly effective in advocating for the rights of our clients and enabling their access to appropriate supports.



**\$12,644**

distributed to 129 individuals to PROVIDE MEDICATIONS and GP access for clients ineligible for MEDICARE





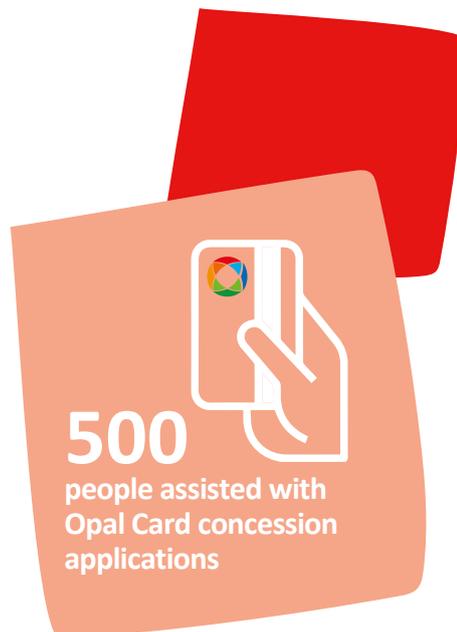
## Keeping people connected

Home schooling during the pandemic put an additional burden on families, especially families living without access to laptops and data. Thanks to a generous donation from the Sisters of St Joseph, HoW was able to distribute thirty laptops to assist with childrens' learning and education.

In addition, \$77,556 was distributed to support clients with phone top-ups and tele-communications to facilitate their access to education, family, services, legal and health supports.

## Transport support

Volunteers played a critical role in supporting clients to access transport throughout the year. Volunteers assisted clients, either through drop-in or remote support, to apply for and Opal Card top-ups. This also allowed clients to continue coming to HoW for appointments.



## IMPACT AREA:

# Employment

**Building employment confidence to empower clients to access labour markets through skill development, job ready foundational support and work experience**

## Truth be Told: Farina's Story

For almost 3 years, our team of Truth be Told speakers has shared their stories with groups large and small, in school classrooms and community halls, at House of Welcome and over Zoom. The small team of six speakers have reached thousands of school students, corporates, community members, local councillors, and congregations. Farina shares why it is important for her to share her experiences.

*I want to talk to the students about unfairness and injustice, and about human rights. I chose to be free, but I came by a dangerous way. If there had been another way, I would have taken it. I came by boat, 10 days on the ocean in a small boat to have my freedom and rights. I left my family and the people I care about, and I came alone. I was only a girl when I left, 24 years old. I had hope.*

*In Iran, I was arrested by the underground police after speaking the truth about our situation to a journalist. I was given electric shocks and lost days and nights. I don't know how long I was held and tortured. My family said I was gone for two weeks. My body was left outside the home after my family paid a large bill for my release.*

*I tell my story because I love Australia and the beautiful people. They need to know about the policies and the truth of the situation we face. I lost five years in offshore detention and another four here in community detention, because I had no safe way to leave the country where I was born. I'm still waiting for a solution.*

*I think it's important to speak so that people can think about it and understand me, and other people like me. Even though I left Nauru, it is nine years and I'm still not free. I want the community to know everything the Government is hiding and that what they are doing to us is unfair.*



**THREE**  
TRUTH BE TOLD  
PRESENTERS  
TRAINED

**13**

Presentations



**591**

Audience  
participants

## Empowered to Work

Empowered to Work is a program which assists clients to upskill for in-demand aged care and disability service roles, as well as parcel, food, and grocery delivery jobs.

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on employment for our participants, with our team witnessing the return of many clients who had previously exited the job ready program into employment.

Our volunteers responded by preparing clients for the reopening of businesses by conducting employment appointments over the phone and Zoom, and delivering workshop material online.

## Work and Welcome

Work and Welcome assists people seeking asylum and refugees by providing empowering work experiences and employment opportunities in supportive host organisations. By creating structured, short-term, paid job placements, the program addresses major barriers to finding work and assists people to prepare for long-term employment.

The Work and Welcome program continued to develop with five, 10-week work placements in two schools (St Patrick's College Strathfield, and Loreto Normanhurst). The schools continued to employ participants throughout the learning from home periods and school closures. Participants worked in administration roles, IT, and learning support.

**195**  
job ready  
employment  
appointments



*"My placement at Loreto Normanhurst, went above and beyond my expectations. The generosity of the staff through the Workplace Giving Program meant I could earn a wage, put food on the table and look after myself financially. I am grateful to the whole community for the opportunity".*

– Miri, participant

**IMPACT AREA:**

# Catering Social Enterprise

**Reduce barriers to the Australian labour force through a social enterprise model, combining impact and inspiring flavours to foster hope and positive change for asylum seekers and refugees**

## Catering Social Enterprise

The House of Welcome Catering Social Enterprise (HW Catering) is passionate about providing refugees and people seeking asylum with opportunities that grow their sense of agency, independence and opportunities to participate in the community. Using an evidence-based social impact model, the program generates opportunities to equip trainee client chefs with the skills, confidence and qualifications to secure employment.

HW Catering continued cautiously as the pandemic took its toll across the hospitality sector. Surprisingly, as we took stock of our position at the end of June, we were amazed to find our numbers had held. In fact, in the second half of the year, our income was twice that of 2020. We were able to engage two trainee client chefs and continue to service our loyal customer base with high quality food and excellent customer service.

As 2021 kicked off, our commercial kitchen renovations began. St Patrick's Cathedral in Parramatta generously enabled us to continue to cater functions, conferences, and cocktail parties from their kitchen, until our kitchen was completed in late April.

Our food is now prepared in our dedicated commercial kitchen, located onsite at the HoW in Granville, where we have increased capacity to train more trainee client chefs and prepare more delicious food.

## New Chef and Menus

The appointment of a new Head Chef in early May helped maximise the potential of the new commercial kitchen. The new chef led product development and by the end of June 2021, HW Catering launched a new menu to tantalise with new flavours and offerings.

During the past twelve months, HW Catering has catered for more than eighty-seven events, delivering to universities and schools, various councils, and several small and large businesses. We proudly served approximately 5,600 people, and our satisfaction ratings continue to average 5/5 in all areas of food and service.

With a return to pre-COVID-19 demand from our existing customers, along with a steadily growing customer base, we expect to provide even more employment opportunities for our clients from our vibrant new commercial kitchen.





## Aliyeh's Story

Aliyeh was supported when she decided to start volunteering in support of community lunches in late 2018. She soon identified that she wanted to convert her passion for cooking into a professional skill that could lead to financial independence. Her love of food had her joining HW Catering and commencing training to become a food service industry professional.

As part of her traineeship, Aliyeh completed a Food and Safety Supervisor's Certificate and continued to hone her practical skills training in the HW Catering kitchen at Granville. Her training involved shopping for ingredients, costing events, preparing food, cooking, enhancing her time management, delivery and food service. She also gave presentations to corporate businesses that HW Catering services regularly.

In early 2021 HW Catering revised its business model and committed to employing a Senior Client Chef on a permanent part-time basis. Aliyeh transitioned into this new role with higher duties seamlessly, and with great excitement and enthusiasm.

Her role at HW Catering was Aliyeh's first permanent employment opportunity since coming to Australia nine years earlier. Like so many people seeking asylum, Aliyeh needed to overcome huge barriers in securing employment. Her positive engagement with HW Catering shows that targeted approaches that combine on-the-job skills building and language acquisition deliver the best outcomes.

*"It was such an important time and I felt proud. The first time I received my chef jacket/uniform I felt proud and HW Catering has inspired me to want to be a chef and not just a cook. Working with Abbey [Head Chef] has inspired me to set goals to one day have my own little cafe. I have learned so much in catering and am excited to learn more skills and recipes for my future".*

- Aliyeh, Senior Head Chef



**IMPACT AREA:**

# Community Connections

**Deliver programs based on community identified needs to build connections, reduce social isolation, and increase sense of wellbeing**

## Volunteers

Volunteers are the beating heart of HoW, supporting the team and clients across all areas of the service.

Restrictions and the uncertainties of the pandemic had an impact, and as the shape of the situation evolved, some volunteers were set up to work remotely, supporting the team and others to deliver face-to-face services. As the demand for food security increased by 277% at the beginning of the pandemic, volunteers took on the mammoth logistical task of coordinating, delivering, organising appointments, and coming to the service to deliver limited face-to-face distributions. Across all our services, volunteers continued their commitment to HoW.

We remain grateful for the contributions our volunteers make, and remain in awe of their ongoing resilience.

## Cooking Classes

In partnership with the Cumberland City Council's Flavours of Auburn, HoW hosted an evening of Iranian cooking - showcasing the talents and cuisine of our catering chef, Aliyeh. Ten participants enjoyed a fun evening, learning not only how to cook a delicious meal but also hearing about the challenges refugees and people seeking asylum face.

Participants reported the evening as being 'flavoursome, friendly and fabulous' and 'a taste sensation'. This sold-out event reflects that food can be such a beautiful connection between communities.

## Josephite Action Group

Across two weekends, sixteen generous young people from the Josephite Action Group (JAG), and a few more mature helpers prepared the women's shared accommodation space for vulnerable women. These young volunteers were extraordinary. They prepared, cleaned, and painted, making bathrooms sparkle and bedrooms cosy. They put together new beds and mattresses in seven rooms, cleaned out the kitchen, removed the old fridge and set up the new one. Having a deep understanding of our welcoming ethos, they made this place a home for the new occupants.



**IMAGES:**

LEFT PAGE (above): A group of committed volunteers from the Josephite Action Group (below): Aliyeh running the 'Flavours of Auburn' Iranian cooking class.





## Taronga Zoo

Through the generosity of Taronga Zoo and Loreto Kirribilli, HoW was gifted eighty tickets for families and individuals to access a much-needed reprieve from the pandemic. For many clients, this was their first visit to the zoo, and the first time seeing Australian animals up close. Under a blue sky, our clients enjoyed quality family time that offered a welcome break from the big challenges they face. One adolescent client described the excursion as “absolutely amazing - such an incredible day”.

## Weekend Retreat at Port Hacking

In June 2021, volunteers from the Josephite Action Group hosted a retreat for HoW clients as a sign of hospitality and friendship. A total of eleven adults and eighteen children enjoyed a weekend of activities including bushwalking, games, dance, rock-climbing, and team-building exercises.

The retreat was held at the Youth Works Centre in Port Hacking, amid the beautiful scenery of the Royal National Park. The retreat provided a welcome break for families, and particularly for parents as they observed their children’s engagement in fun activities with enthusiastic volunteers. Many valuable bonds were formed during the retreat.

## Women’s Creative Hub

A range of workshops and activities were delivered at the Women’s Creative Hub. Among the activities, in support of Cumberland City Council, clients of the Hub made reusable bags out of old Council banners to reduce waste. The project supported the women to build skills and capacity, whilst contributing to sustainable outcomes for the Cumberland area.

## Christmas Drive

With a mammoth effort to overcome logistical difficulties related to COVID-19, HoW delivered Christmas presents to 202 children from eighty-nine families, living in forty-two different suburbs. The tremendous contribution and efforts of HoW volunteers made this magic undertaking possible.



***All the kids were tooooo happy. We really enjoyed our time, we loved the rock-climbing and we had a lot of fun dancing around the bonfire!***

– Parent attendee

IMPACT AREA:

# Advocacy

**Participate in advocacy activities to educate the community on refugee issues and to campaign for humane policy responses for forcibly displaced persons**

## Diocesan Journey: Walking with Refugees

The Diocesan Journey: Walking with Refugees and People Seeking Protection, is an initiative of the Diocese of Parramatta, and works within diocesan communities to support and promote the work of dedicated agencies, increase awareness of the refugee journey, and advocate for humane policies. HoW is proud to be a member of Diocesan Journey and works closely with parishes to organise food drives, table talks, and engagement, particularly around Migrant and Refugee Sunday.

## 150 Days of Action

As part of the Catholics for Refugees 150 Days of Action, HoW worked with parishes, schools, community members, the Justice and Peace Office (Archdiocese of Sydney), and Sisters of St Joseph to promote policy change for people seeking asylum. Successive policy changes have left many asylum seekers destitute, living in limbo and separated from family for years. Over 150 days, HoW participated in lobbying actions and vigils to demand a financial safety net for people seeking asylum, to end temporary protection visas, to create clear pathways to permanent residency, and to open corridors for family reunion.



## Parliamentary Enquiry

In August 2020, Executive Manager Miriam Pellicano gave evidence at the Parliamentary Inquiry on the NSW response to COVID-19. Miriam spoke about the exponential increase in demand on services during the pandemic, and increased levels of financial distress and housing insecurity, exacerbated by the exclusion of income support prior to and during the pandemic.

Through grants distributed by the NSW Government, HoW assisted 300-400 people per month with housing, medical, telecommunications, and food security.

## International Women's Day

The Rotary Club of Granville hosted an International Women's Day event recognising the invaluable work of women in our community. HoW's Executive Manager, Miriam Pellicano, was recognised for her contributions to Homelessness and Refugee Services at the celebration.

The Rotary Club of Granville worked with HoW to prepare and distribute food hampers to clients during COVID-19.



# Statement of Financial Position

St Francis Social Services  
As at 30 June 2021

	30 JUN 21	30 JUN 20
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,528,381	\$1,374,392
Trade and other receivables	\$201,169	\$200,708
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$1,729,550</b>	<b>\$1,575,100</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Investments	\$216,367	\$182,303
Property, plant and equipment	\$1,224,408	\$107,802
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>\$1,440,775</b>	<b>\$290,105</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,170,325</b>	<b>\$1,865,205</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	\$777,199	\$670,346
Provisions	\$92,540	\$92,576
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$869,739</b>	<b>\$762,922</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	\$26,696	\$22,082
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$26,696</b>	<b>\$22,082</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$896,435</b>	<b>\$785,004</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$2,273,890</b>	<b>\$1,080,201</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	\$901,890	\$798,201
Reserves	\$1,372,000	\$282,000
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$2,273,890</b>	<b>\$1,080,201</b>

# Statement of Comprehensive Income

St Francis Social Services  
For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
<b>INCOME</b>		
Church Body Donations	\$521,668	303,700
Donations	\$553,142	814,140
Fundraising Income	\$50,000	445
Government Grants	\$1,372,710	735,562
Non-Government Grants	\$150,167	186,359
Operating Activities	\$133,907	161,451
Other Income	\$143,499	90,434
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$2,925,093</b>	<b>2,292,091</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Building Maintenance	\$265,519	\$269,903
Client Support Services	\$497,321	\$259,890
Financial Costs	\$85,888	\$114,578
General Expenses	\$33,817	\$69,900
Greenlight Movement Expenses		\$1,350
Insurance	\$16,065	\$15,149
IT Costs	\$108,613	\$108,896
Membership Fees	\$4,539	\$6,895
Motor Vehicle Expenses	\$21,483	\$37,155
Staff Costs	\$1,733,653	\$1,667,014
Volunteer Costs	\$54,505	\$4,920
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$2,821,403</b>	<b>\$2,555,649</b>
Current Year Profit/(Loss) Before Income Tax	\$103,689	(\$263,559)
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>	<b>\$103,689</b>	<b>(\$263,559)</b>

Independently audited by Pascoe & Co Chartered Accountants  
www.pascoeco.com.au

# Thank you

## **We would like to thank the following grant providers and major supporters for your ongoing generosity:**

Brigidine Sisters Maroubra  
Buck Foundation  
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney  
Catholic Church Insurance Giving  
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta  
City of Parramatta COVID-19 Response Grants  
Cumberland City Council Community Grants  
Franciscan Friars  
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Aus & PNG  
Jenour Foundation  
Keady Family Trust  
Loreto Sisters  
Marian & E.H Flack Trust  
Marist Sisters  
Mary Ward International

Multicultural NSW  
Scully Foundation  
Sisters of the Good Samaritan Foundation  
St Clare Region of the Secular Franciscan Order  
Sydney Water Community Grants  
The Sisters of Charity Foundation  
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation  
VivCourt Trading  
Westpac  
Women NSW- NSW Govt  
NSW Department of Communities and Justice  
The Lewis Foundation  
Herbert Smith Freehills  
City of Sydney  
Waverley Council

**The Board of St Francis Social Services recognises the generous support of the many individual donors both large and small.**

## **We are also enormously grateful to our partners, who enable us to continue with our important work:**

Abu Hussein Fruit Market  
Addison Rd Community Centre  
Amelie Housing  
Anglican Church Toongabbie  
Astra Apartments  
Asylum Seeker Resource Centre  
Asylum Seekers Centre  
Auburn Asian Welfare Centre  
Auburn Centre for Community  
Australian Online Giving Foundation Benevity  
Community  
Australian Red Cross  
Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group  
Boronia Park Uniting Church  
Bourke Street Primary School  
Braidwood Rural Australians for Refugees  
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney  
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta

Catholic Education Foundation  
Cumberland City Council Flavours of Auburn  
Dandelion Support Network  
Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands  
Dr Jalal Khan & the Dental Truck  
ENACTUS Macquarie University  
Good Shephard Parish Plumpton  
Good Start Early Learning Centre  
Grill'd Parramatta  
Holy Cross Parish Granville  
Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School Carnes Hill  
Holy Spirit College Lakemba  
Holy Spirit Parish St Clair-Erskine Park  
Holy Trinity Church Dulwich Hill  
House of Sadaqa  
Investing for Charity  
James Ruse Agricultural High School Farm

## Partners continued

Jesuit Refugee Service Australia  
Josephite Action Group  
Khamsa Café Newtown  
Life Without Barriers  
Loreto Normanhurst  
Marist Sisters  
Marvelous Builders  
Mary Immaculate Parish, Waverly  
Mary Queen of the Family Parish Blacktown  
Mater Hospital  
Mt St Benedict College, Pennant Hills  
MTO Shahmaghsoudi  
Mums for Refugees  
Newleaf St George Community Housing  
North Sydney Community Centre  
NSW Refugee Health  
NSW Refugee Health Service  
Our Lady of Lourdes Seven Hills  
Our Lady of the Nativity Parish Lawson  
Our Lady of the Way Parish Emu Plains  
OzHarvest  
PACE Macquarie University  
Parliament on King  
Plate it Forward  
Plumpton Parish Community  
Presentation Sisters  
Quang Nguyen, Nguyễn Hồng, Stacey Truc  
Houshmand & community  
Refugee Advice and Casework Service  
Refugee Council of Australia  
Refugees Welcome  
Sacred Heart Primary Mt Druitt  
Services Australia Multicultural and  
Community Engagment Teams  
Settlement Services International  
Share the Dignity  
Sisters of Mercy Parramatta  
Sisters of St Joseph  
Sisters of the Little Company of Mary  
St Alban's Church Epping  
St Bernadette's Parish Castle Hill  
St Bernadette's Primary  
St Catherine of Sienna Catholic Primary School  
St Finbar Parish Glenbrook  
St Joan of Arc Catholic Parish Haberfield  
St Joseph's Catholic Parish  
St Joseph's Primary School Bombala  
St Madelaine Primary School  
St Mary Queen of Heaven Parish George's Hall  
St Michael's Catholic Primary School Lane Cove  
St Michael's Parish Lane Cove  
St Olivers Harris Park  
St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta  
St Patrick's Parish, Blacktown  
St Patrick's College, Strathfield  
St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Community  
Springwood  
Stanhope St Vincent de Paul Society conference  
Star of the Sea Parish Eden  
Sydney Alliance  
Sydney Shakti Temple  
Taronga Zoo  
The Foodbank NSW  
The Generous and The Grateful  
The Rotary Club of Granville  
The Rotary Club of Hunters Hill  
The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary  
Thread Together  
Trinity College  
Trustees of the Sisters of Saint Dominic  
Ursuline Community  
St Francis of Assisi Parish, Paddington  
St Joseph's Parish, Edgecliff  
Woolahra Council  
St Vincent de Paul, Paddington and Edgecliff  
Redfern Jarjum College  
Numerous individuals who made facemasks





To donate  
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SOCIAL SERVICES

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