



2020 Annual
General Report



Who We Are

Greenacres is one of the largest disability service providers in the Illawarra. For over 65 years, we have been committed to supporting people with disability to achieve their dreams.

We are a trusted name in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven with a reputation for innovation, flexibility and quality support and every week we provide training, employment opportunities, respite and life and leisure programs to over 600 people with a disability.

Vision and Purpose

We Imagine: Every person with disability creating their own positive future

We Will: Support people with a disability to transform their ideas and goals into experiences and achievements

We Believe in: Respect | Empathy | Fairness | Integrity

Business Objective

To be a sustainable, quality focused and values driven organisation which is responsive to the needs and goals of people with disability.



Our Board



Greg Parrish Chairperson (2020) and Company Secretary; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee 2020; Member of the Property and Investment Committee 2020; Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019; Appointed to Greenacres Board May 2013; Chief Operations Manager for the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong; Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Stephen Dawson Deputy Chairperson (2020); Chairperson of the Property and Investment Committee 2020; Member of the NDIS Safeguards Committee 2020. Appointed to Greenacres Board May 2008; Principal, Dawson Lawyers and Wollongong Conveyancing Services; Director Illawarra Diggers, Aged and Community Care Limited.



Richard Young Director; Member of the Property and Investment Committee 2020; Ex Officer of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019; Acting Chairperson 2019. Appointed to Greenacres Board in August 1992. Life Member. Retired Property Consultant, Fellow of the Australian Property Institute (Retired); Chairperson of Wollongong Ex Services Club.



Trish Donaldson Director; Chairperson of the NDIS Safeguards Committee 2020; Member of the Governance Committee 2020; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019; Appointed to Greenacres Board in October 2009. Retired Manager, Community Housing and Disability Support Services.



Isla Bowen Director; Member of the NDIS Safeguards Committee 2020; Appointed to Greenacres Board April 1993. Life Member. Deputy Chairperson, former Honorary Fellow - University of Wollongong, Health and Behavioural Sciences. Vice President of the University of Wollongong Social Club.



Chris Burrows Director; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee 2020; Member of the Governance Committee 2020. Member of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019. Appointed to Greenacres Board as an Alternate Director June 2016. Appointed as a Director February 2018. Manager, People and Culture CEnet; Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors; Member of the Australian Computer Society; Member of the Australian Human Resources Institute.



Sonia Minutillo Director and Treasurer; Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee 2020; Member of the Audit and Risk Committee 2019. Appointed to Greenacres Board June 2016. Director, Investigation and Reporting - Information and Privacy Commission NSW.



Trish McClure Chairperson Governance Committee 2020; Appointed to Greenacres Board as a Director October 2019. Alternate Director November 2018. Former Chair Carers NSW, Former Director Interchange Illawarra. Director Rural and Regional Planning & Development, Transport for NSW; Director RDA Illawarra.



John Bilboe Alternate Director; Past Director 1975 - 1986; President of Greenacres 1986 - 1990; Reappointed to Greenacres Board in 2003; Appointed to Greenacres Board as an Alternate Director November 2018 and retired in November 2019. Life Member.



From the CEO

Chris Christodoulou

Financial year 2019/20 will be marked by one phrase “COVID-19”.

July 2019 began with another successful M2M Challenge. It also saw the departure of one of our key M2M coordinators Tammie Dron (Quality, Risk and WHS Manager) who moved on to bigger and better things with Big Fat Smile.

We also started the financial year with our own smile when the Fair Work Commission handed down its long-awaited decision on supported wages. The new system still needs to be trialled.

During the year the NDIA announced new pricing from 1 July 2020. This pricing will reduce by 1.5% each year until 2024. In addition, the NDIA have changed the structure of the pricing. This will mean Greenacres, like other organisations, will need to reshape the way we do things to ensure we remain sustainable.

Our organisation was tracking very well against our budget until COVID-19 hit. Greenacres was unprepared for this disaster. We came together to develop a Response Plan which guided the organisation through these troubled times. Putting the safety and wellbeing of our participants and staff first was our number one priority.

We reached a formal agreement with our staff about taking leave as we closed-down services. Our Agreement with staff was highly regarded in the industry. It was better than the Fair Work changes introduced by the Federal Government but much fairer to our employees.

The closure of services meant millions of dollars in lost income. Had it not been for the Federal Government's JobKeeper Scheme we may have had

to make some employees redundant. Our ADE was the big winner during these troubled times. We had an upsurge of work in body bags and cold storage packs. With the help of Jobkeeper the ADE had a great financial result.

COVID-19 forced us to innovate and use online supports for those participants who were able to embrace the technology.

As you will see from our financial results, thanks to JobKeeper and a substantial donation, we made a very healthy surplus in 2019/20. I would like to make special mention of the Human Resources and Finance Teams who had to administer JobKeeper.

Also, special mention to our new WHS Officer Simone Newhouse who has guided our organisation on how to respond to COVID-19 in a way which allowed us to reopen many programs as COVID-19 dissipated.

During the financial year we received a number of sizable donations from The Estate of the Late Michael Lawless and a very big donation from The Estate of Alan Shepherd. Both these donations will be used to improve facilities at our ADE and in the community.

As you look through the Annual Report you will see many highlights and achievements, none of which would be possible without our dedicated and professional staff.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board of Greenacres for their tireless and professional work in what has been another challenging year. Special mention to our new Chair Greg Parrish for his guidance, support, and leadership.



Message from the Chairperson

Greg Parrish

The 2019/20 Annual Report highlights both the professionalism and resilience of our organisation as it navigated a perfect storm of the continued NDIS implementation along with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

I am honoured to have been appointed to the position of Chairperson after the last AGM in November 2019. During 2020 the Board reviewed its operations with the addition of several sub committees to assist the work of the Board in our increasing governance, compliance and oversight obligations. The current sub committees of the Board include:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Governance Committee
- Property and Investment Committee, and
- NDIS Safeguards Committee

On behalf of the Board I would like to sincerely thank Isla Bowen and Trish Donaldson who are retiring from the Board this year. Trish and Isla's contribution to Greenacres as Directors over many years cannot be underestimated. We acknowledge and thank them for their tireless hours of volunteering and offering up their expertise to make a difference to people with a disability and their families. We wish Isla and Trish all the best for the future. The Board has undertaken a skills analysis to determine the type of new directors that might come onto the Board to build on the legacy being left by Isla and Trish.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created much uncertainty and disruption for Greenacres, and I want to thank the Staff and Management Team for the way they responded to ensure participants and each other were kept safe. I also want to thank staff for responding in the way they did when we made the difficult decision to shut down services.

Whilst we have navigated two significant disruptions by way of the introduction of the NDIS and then COVID-19 we are confronted yet again with further major adjustments. New NDIS pricing structures will come into place in 2020/21 and will challenge Greenacres

and many other disability organisations. The NDIS pricing regime has been deliberately structured, in our view, to cause inefficient organisations to exit the market. We are very fortunate at Greenacres to have a balance sheet which gives us resilience to cover any costs to implement the necessary changes. As a result, during 2020/21 we will review the way we are structured to ensure we can efficiently and confidently continue to be a leader in the provision of quality disability supports in the region.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Greenacres many community supporters, most of who are listed in the Annual Report. Without this valuable community support Greenacres would not be able to carry out many of our positive initiatives.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank our staff and management who have done an outstanding job in a very difficult environment. Their passion, dedication, innovation and resilience is acknowledged and deeply appreciated by the Board.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Board members:

- Richard Young
- Isla Bowen
- Trish Donaldson
- Chris Burrows
- Sonia Minutillo
- Stephen Dawson
- Trish McClure

The work of the Board is often unseen and this year in particular we have been met with many challenges and many long hours of work. The Directors of Greenacres are volunteers and their passion and commitment to those with a disability and their families and careers has been outstanding. All of us at Greenacres look forward to continuing our work to imagine a positive future for all those with a disability.

Greenacres' Response to COVID-19

This year more than any other, Greenacres needed to respond to extraordinary events outside our control. We did so with a collective demonstration of commitment, determination and resilience.

In December 2019 our region was hit by the bushfire crisis, in February we had significant floods and then the COVID-19 pandemic hit our region with six confirmed cases in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven by 18 March 2020. Reality had set in. We, like every other organisation, would need to respond accordingly.

ORGANISATIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

The Board of Greenacres adopted an overall COVID 19 Response Plan to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 to our participants, workforce and the organisation as a whole. Due to the serious health risks associated with the pandemic, WHS was our primary concern so by the end of March most supported employees were taking extended leave so they could remain safe in their own homes, and we made the difficult decision to cease all CLL and ASK services and go into temporary shutdown.

WORKFORCE RESPONSE

As part of the temporary shutdown, all affected permanent staff were provided with the Greenacres COVID-19 Special Arrangements Agreement. This agreement ensured that while all affected CLL and ASK staff were required to take leave, they were also being provided with job security during the pandemic.

ESTABLISHING NEW WHS PROCEDURES

COVID-19 and the Federal and NSW Governments response to it, triggered a significant response by Greenacres Management and staff. We put in place:

- increased hygiene and sanitising standards across the whole organisation,
- social distancing requirements,
- working from home arrangements, and
- new protocols to deal with the workplace response should there have been a positive COVID-19 employee or participant

COVID-19 FINANCE AND HR TEAM RESPONSE

Intensive work was undertaken by our Finance Team to establish our eligibility for JobKeeper. Eligibility for JobKeeper was critical for the organisation financially and helped Greenacres to retain its total workforce during the pandemic. In the period from 30 March to 30 June, Greenacres received JobKeeper payments to the value of \$3.6 million.

The HR team implemented the COVID-19 Staff Agreement and dealt with the complex administration of the Jobkeeper scheme. This involved identifying every eligible staff member and supported employee across the organisation who wanted JobKeeper and adapting our payroll systems accordingly.

During this same period, the ADE experienced an increase in demand for specific process and production work. The HR Team coordinated the reallocation of staff who may have been stood down in ASK and CLL programs to the ADE.

COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSE

During the COVID-19 pandemic our Communications Team reviewed the Greenacres Crisis Communications Plan and updated it to cover the COVID-19 pandemic.

We communicated COVID-19 Coronavirus Health and Safety information, plus regular organisational and program updates to participants, families, staff and external stakeholders. We provided information and documentation through a range of channels including:

- Greenacres Intranet News page
- Greenacres social media channels and website
- Email communications and TEAMS meetings
- Phone contact and SMS messaging (and)
- Individualised direct mail communications

EVERYONE PLAYED THEIR PART

Every single person in Greenacres played a significant role during our critical response to COVID-19 whether it be our cleaners, staff, managers or our Board. It was truly a team effort.

Greenacres Snapshot

STAFF STATS

260

184 76

82 102 76
FULL TIME PART TIME CASUAL

Participant Breakdown

ADE 224

ASK 293

CLL 336



SUPPORTED EMPLOYEES

89 137

FULL TIME 36
PART TIME 188
TOTAL 224

GREENACRES OPERATES IN 19 SITES FROM CORRIMAL IN THE NORTH DOWN TO NOWRA IN THE SOUTH.

JOBKEEPER

180 STAFF

172 SUPPORTED EMPLOYEES

Key Events



July 2019

The fifth M2M Challenge had over 1000 participants and raised more than \$70,000

August 2019

Outsider Artists Exhibition held at Project Contemporary Artspace

September 2019

Greenacres is officially registered as a NDIS Provider by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (the NDIS Commission)

October 2019

The Kickstart Skilled n Social program for younger high school students begins with three participants

November 2019

Opening of the new Outsider Artists studio in Ralph Black Drive using funds raised from the M2M Challenge

December 2019

The Greenacres Board elects Greg Parrish as new Chairperson

January 2020

Huge fans installed in Buildings 2 and 3 of Greenacres Enterprises thanks to a grant from Local Federal MP, Sharon Bird's Stronger Communities Program

February 2020

Greenacres appoints our first Compliance & Risk Officer

March 2020

Greenacres reaches an agreement with staff to take leave due to temporary closure of services as a result of COVID-19

April 2020

The HR team successfully transfer 180 staff and 172 supported employees to the JobKeeper payment

May 2020

Audit results with the ADE achieving high levels of compliance in all areas.

June 2020

Greenacres re-opens services with strict COVID-19 protocols in place.

NDIS Audit Results

In April 2020, Greenacres ADE underwent mandatory external auditing against the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) and ISO 9001 (Quality Management System Requirements). Once again, we achieved a high level of compliance in all areas sampled. Some of the noteworthy observations made by the auditors during this review were:

- ✓ Continued to maintain a well-implemented integrated management system based on the requirements of the NSDS & AS/NZS ISO 9001:2016. A high level of compliance with the requirements of NSDS was evidenced in 2020 in all areas sampled.
- ✓ Commitment to increased opportunities for participation through employment with Greenacres, working together to provide a good culture for inclusion and ensuring employees were involved and informed.
- ✓ While some areas of production were down due to COVID-19, other areas had been ramped up significantly. Supported employees who were able to be at work were very busy in those production areas.

- ✓ Positive feedback from supported employees about Greenacres' staff and management, their willingness to make time to meet with employees as required, understanding and supporting their goals and being involved in Individual Plan reviews and NDIS pre-planning meetings with family and staff.
- ✓ Greenacres provided national leadership by its involvement in the supported wage submissions to the Fair Work Commission and refinement of the wages tool including being involved in a national trial for four months resulting in the Commission's decision for a new system of determining wages that will protect the jobs of supported employees.

This audit result was achieved because of the hard work, dedication, empathy, integrity and professionalism of every single member of the Greenacres team.



Community Connect



FRIENDSHIPS KEEP STRONG THROUGH SEPARATION

March 2020 should have been a joyful first birthday for our Community Connect program but instead of celebrating together, our Community Connect volunteers said goodbye to their friends in aged care as both Greenacres and the Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care went into COVID-19 lockdown.

For the 12 months prior to COVID-19 our group of six volunteers had not only been learning new skills and completing certificates in vocational pathways with the WEA, they had been developing deep friendships with residents and staff at Diggers.

Residents dressed in their Sunday best eagerly looked forward to our volunteers visits each Monday, and even visited Greenacres for a special morning tea hosted by our 'Community Connectors' in November 2019.

According to Greenacres Disability Support Worker, Leonie Way, who supervises Community Connect, everybody involved with the program felt the separation keenly.

"Age and underlying health conditions meant the residents were particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and had to go into a strict lockdown with no visitors," Leonie said.

"Everybody was really missing each other so we came up with the idea of having a weekly Zoom session instead."

Leonie said that the Greenacres volunteers have been using the Zoom sessions to interview the residents about their lives.

"We are using the interviews to create memory books for the residents with photos and colouring-in pictures by our volunteers," Leonie said.

"It is going to be an exciting day when we can present them with their memory books in person."

GARDENS HAVE NEVER LOOKED BETTER AT GREENACRES

You don't usually associate a tranquil rainforest sanctuary with a factory, but when the IRT Community Connect gardening crew could no longer go to IRT sites due to COVID-19, they started an ambitious plan to transform Greenacres Industries at Ralph Black Drive.

For months the team of seven Community Connect volunteers have been using their skills to design and define garden beds, planting them with bird attracting Australian natives like grevilleas, kangaroo paws and lilly-pillys.

They have already cleared previously overgrown areas, built compost bins out of recycled pallets, propagated hundreds of plants and grown over 50 seedlings for their vegetable patch.

The next stage of their plans will be to build a pathway that will follow the line of the creek at the back of the block and into the line of trees. Here they want to create what they describe as a rainforest sanctuary – a safe place to relax, enjoy nature or even have a picnic.

It didn't take long for the Ralph Black Drive gardens to be noticed by the CLL Team who wanted the Greenacres green thumbs to get to work on some CLL centres with tired-looking and overgrown garden beds. High Street and Preston Place centres have already been given a garden make-over with more CLL centres waiting for their turn.



A Year Like No Other

Like all Australian businesses, Greenacres Industries entered the 2020 financial year completely unaware of the significant challenges that lay ahead.

While we were focused on developing new business, addressing the ongoing challenges in the Fair Work Commission, and developing strategies to integrate the new funding model, we suddenly found we were in the midst of a global pandemic.

The well-being and safety of all of our employees was our utmost priority and we encouraged the majority of our supported workers to stay safe at home during the COVID-19 lockdown period.

At the same time there was a significant increase in demand for the body bags we manufacture on site and other essential work needed to continue.

Our staff responded to the pandemic challenge with enormous flexibility, patience and dedication. Disability Support Officers kept communication lines open and created new ways of staying in touch to they could continue to support our supported employees at home. Production staff completely rearranged the floorspace in a short space of time and organised work processes to accommodate the new production demands.

Industries staff also guided and trained disability support workers from from CLL and the ASK group who pitched in at the ADE while their own Greenacres services were temporarily closed.

Our body bag business grew substantially from the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in new customers in most states in Australia and the potential for further growth in this area.

Our E-waste business which had been expanding rapidly in the first part of the financial year, had to be placed on hold for a few months but by the end of June we started to see new opportunities for this part of our business.



We were able to secure a Temporary Viability Support Grant from the Federal Government to assist us to transition and grow into the new NDIS environment. This has enabled us to purchase a new truck and other equipment needing replacement; provide funding to renovate our Building Two bathrooms, and allowed us to purchase equipment to expand our E-waste business and provide new streams of employment.

With the help of a Stronger Community Grant we were able to install Big Ass roof fans in buildings Two and Three to improve the comfort levels in these buildings during the summer heat.



Keeping Connected with Zoom



When COVID-19 hit, 23-year-old Kickstart Careers participant, Caitlin Carson, knew she would not be back in the Kickstart Centre for a long time. With both herself and family members having health conditions, home was definitely the safest place to be.

Initially Caitlin believed it would be months before she could chat, have fun and learn with her friends again but like millions of people around the world she has been able to stay socially connected through the video conferencing platform Zoom.

During the COVID-19 closure, close to 80 supported employees and around 30 Kickstart participants joined in one-hour long Zoom sessions throughout each week.

As well as keeping everyone socially connected, the sessions were also used to continue training and development. During the COVID-19 temporary shutdown period, Greenacres Learning and Development Coordinator Lisa Hocking created six activity books which were posted every fortnight to over 300 participants. Topics included Caring for Yourself, Personal Boundaries, Work Health and Safety, Online Safety and Returning to Work Under COVID-19 Restrictions.

“In the end we decided to use Zoom because it was free, easy to install, everyone can be on the screen at the same time and the ability to share screens made it great to use for training and playing interactive games,” Lisa said.

“As well as having participants join in from home, we also set up screens in either the Kickstart Centre or Building Two kitchen so that groups of supported employees who were working at the ADE that day could join in the sessions too.”

For participants like Caitlin, Zoom has been an essential support allowing for continued learning, social connection and ongoing encouragement and support from staff.

SNAPSHOT



CLL Staff Rise to the Challenge

Enjoying the community is at the heart of all of Greenacres' Community Life and Leisure programs. Trampolining, Zumba, line dancing, eating out, shopping or seeing a show – every day a fleet of vehicles would leave the CLL centres taking hundreds of participants out into the local community.

That is until March 2020. When COVID-19 took hold in Australia, Greenacres swiftly made the decision to temporarily cease all social and centre-based services including the 16 CLL centres across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven. The health and safety of participants, their families, and staff was the number one priority.

When centres started cautiously reopening from the middle of May with strict COVID-19 protocols in place, staff realised that many of the regular activities' participants had enjoyed were either no longer available or not safe.

The enthusiastic and resourceful CLL team were up for the challenge. Can't do a Zumba class? Greenacre Rd Centre transformed a room into a workout and dance space. Choir cancelled? Preston Place utilised the singing talents of a support worker to start their own choir. No ten-Pin bowling? Rayleigh Drive got out the tools and built their own bean bag cornhole table.

Shopping centre trips were swapped for coastal walks, cafes for outdoor picnics and staff got creative with cooking lessons, singing and dancing sessions, and art and craft projects.

Ceramics lessons which were previously held at the Harmony centre in Kanahooka moved to the new Outsider Artist studio in Ralph Black Drive, North Wollongong and participation in all art based activities grew to 124 participants each week.

By the end of June this year, the majority of CLL participants were back to being supported at their centre, albeit for less days for the time being. While there are currently more centre-based activities, both participants and staff have said they are having fun with the new activities and feel more like a family than ever before.

This year's unprecedented COVID crisis highlighted once again the team spirit, adaptability, ingenuity, and kindness of our CLL staff.

CLL SNAPSHOT



Five Years of Luck for the M2M Challenge



For the fifth straight year, participants in the 2019 M2M Challenge woke up to a perfect winter's morning complete with a cloudless blue sky, a gentle breeze and plenty of sunshine.

The great weather combined with the friendly atmosphere, the challenging course and the opportunity to enjoy a part of Wollongong usually only accessible by car has made the M2M Challenge one of the region's most popular events.

While a familiar face to the M2M Challenge, first time winner Claire Rayner, was the first woman across the line with a time of 59.34, a young newcomer, teenager Daniel Hungerford was the first male over the line with a time of 56.27. Incredibly, the second female across the line was Celeste Carolan who at 11-years-old was still in primary school at the time!

While the top runners were coming in under the hour, the majority of the 1000 participants went at a slower pace, taking time to soak up the stunning views and enjoy the atmosphere.

The short course which skipped the thigh-busting walk up Mt Keira, allowed people of differing fitness levels and abilities to enjoy the event and it was great to see so many Greenacres participants stepping over the finish line.

The 2019 M2M Challenge raised over \$70,000 which assisted in creating an innovative art space at Ralph Black Drive North Wollongong for our growing Outsider Artists program.

Like previous years, the event would not happen without the hard work of the Greenacres M2M Challenge team, the many volunteers who ensured the event ran smoothly; our generous sponsors; the communities of Mt Keira and Mt Kembla; the first aid and emergency services; the people who participated, and everybody who generously donated.



Mitchell Sparks a Name Change

The catalyst for Enterprise Social changing its name to Greenacres Skilled n Social this financial year was 24-year-old participant, Mitchell Mauro.

Initially Enterprise Social was created to provide social and capacity building opportunities for employees of Greenacres Enterprises - hence the name - but then along came Mitchell.

He was the first participant to join the program who didn't work at Greenacres. Happy in his role at Woolworths in Kiama, Mitchell just wanted to make new friends and go out socially on weekends.

"The first activity I tried was the Friday night group where we just chilled out at the Kickstart Centre and watched movies and ate take-away together," Mitchell said.

"I had a really good night and made lots of friends straight away like Scott, Nigel, West, Terry and Linda."

"I enjoyed meeting up with them regularly so then I started the Sunday Sessions group as well where we meet up at a different cafe or restaurant for lunch."

NDIS Activity and Support Coordinator Aaron Trott, said the decision to change the name of the program was made when the team realised that the desire for social connection extended well beyond the ADE.

"The name Greenacres Skilled n Social is a better reflection of the program because it can be accessed by anyone with a NDIS plan not just employees at Greenacres Enterprises," Aaron said.

"We decided on Skilled n Social because activities can be purely social like the Sunday Sessions and Friday night group Mitch enjoys or they can be an opportunity to learn new skills like cooking, art, photography, basketball or even sailing on Sydney Harbour."

"Mitchell and the participants that followed him have shown there is definitely a need for this kind of service and we plan to grow Greenacres Skilled n Social in the next financial year."



SKILLED N SOCIAL SNAPSHOT

12 REGULAR PROGRAMS

146 PARTICIPANTS IN JUNE 2019 ▶ 193 PARTICIPANTS IN JUNE 2020

32% INCREASE IN 12 MONTHS



Kickstart Makes a Difference

An important part of the Kickstart SLES experience is working on projects which make a difference in the local community.

As a team, the Kickstart participants decide on a cause, organise a fundraising event and then personally present their donation to the organisation they are supporting.

At Christmas time, the group worked hard to make a special surprise for sick kids in Wollongong Hospital's Children's Ward.

They came up with the idea of a Pyjama Party fundraiser during one of their fortnightly participant-led meetings and set themselves the goal of raising enough money to buy 30 presents for kids aged 5 to 10-years-old and a Distraction Box filled with games and craft for teenagers.

Not only was the Pyjama Party they organised in the Kickstart Centre a fun night for the 30 participants who attended, the Kickstart crew raised an impressive \$435 from ticket fees and extra donations.

Kickstart Careers participant, Eliza Warner said she was very proud of what they had achieved and it was a wonderful feeling to give the presents to the kids.

"A group of us went shopping for the presents which was fun," Eliza said. "I tried to remember what I liked playing with most when I was a little girl."

"It felt good to give the kids their presents when we went to the hospital, everyone was so happy."

As well as giving sick children a special surprise, by raising the money and coordinating the gifts, the participants succeeded in working as a team and improved their planning, organisation and leadership skills.

When the Kickstart Careers participants returned in late January after the summer break, many were feeling anxious and concerned about how our native

animals were surviving after the devastating bushfires.

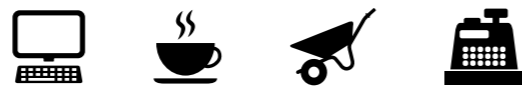
Wanting to help, they organised yet another project using their weekly art class to build and decorate feeding boxes for birds and animals. They then approached local businesses for donations of building materials and fruit to go in the boxes and then gave the donations to wildlife charities.

KICKSTART SNAPSHOT

89 OVERALL KICKSTART PARTICIPANTS

KICKSTART PARTICIPANTS IN THE SCHOOL LEAVER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT (SLES) PROGRAM: **22**

12 KICKSTART FOR LIFE PARTICIPANTS IN THE SCHOOL STUDENT WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM



PARTICIPANTS WHO HAD WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES: **26**

2 PARTICIPANTS TRANSITIONED TO PAID EMPLOYMENT



Kickstart Skilled n Social

We may have been originally established as a school for young children but it had been more than 45 years since we've had a participant as young as 12-years-old in our Greenacres family.

That all changed on Monday, 14 October 2019 when we welcomed 12-year-olds Javier, Kai and James for the inaugural session of Kickstart Skilled n Social.

A new direction for Greenacres, the Kickstart Skilled n Social program has been developed for younger school students who want to make new friends, learn important life skills, increase their independence and most importantly, have fun.

The original trio were quickly joined by six more friends with the group meeting up on a Monday afternoon for a basketball session with Illawarra Hawks star Tim Coenraad followed by a cooking class in the Kickstart Kitchen, and on a Saturday for a lunch-time cooking class followed by a fun activity of their choosing in the afternoon.

Like all of Greenacres social support programs, when COVID-19 hit, Kickstart Skilled n Social had to cease all sessions for over two months and drastically change the activities when sessions started again towards the end of the financial year.

According to NDIS Activity and Support Officer Aaron Trott, after isolating at home for many months, the participants adapted very well to the changes in the program and the new safety requirements.

"Initially after COVID-19, we couldn't return to some of our regular activities like basketball because of the new safety protocols," Aaron said.

"The Kickstart Skilled n Social team were amazing, coming up with the idea of creating passports for each participant, and learning about a different country each week by exploring their culture and learning to cook traditional dishes."

"We realised just how important the Kickstart Skilled n Social program was to our young participants when we saw how happy the kids were to be back in the Kickstart centre and together once again."





Kickstart's Unique Work Experience

When you love animals like Kickstart Careers participants Sean McKay and Ethan Cable spending time with the horses at North Terrace Equestrian Centre in Dapto is so much more than just work experience – it is a dream come true.

Ethan immediately established a rapport with the horses, impressing staff at the centre with his gentle, caring and patient approach to the animals.

Sean said he enjoyed being with the horses so much that he didn't even mind that raking up their manure was part of the work experience.

"I also got to feed them their favourite food which is apples, groom them and give them lots of pats," Sean said.

"The work was lots and lots of fun, I liked it so much that now I want to get my own horse - I would call him Prince and ride him in competitions."

Senior Coordinator of the Kickstart Careers program, Arjah McGrath, said one of the main aims of the School Leaver Employment Support (SLES) program

was to support participants like Ethan and Sean to achieve their goals by offering tailored work experience opportunities.

"The North Terrace Equestrian Centre was the perfect work experience for Sean and Ethan because they both said they wanted to work with animals," Arjah said.

"When they returned to the Kickstart Centre after their experience, they were excited and energised and you could see that they were proud of what they had achieved."

"Kickstart Careers is about learning work and life skills in the safety of the Kickstart Centre and then applying those skills in supported work experience both at Greenacres and out in the community," Arjah said.

"Unfortunately, when COVID-19 hit we had to cease all of our work experience activities for many months but the Kickstart team are now working hard to create new opportunities for the 2020-21 financial year."



Outsider Artists Have Space to Thrive

Like any other artist, 21-year-old Annie Liang loves the creative process of bringing the vision in her mind alive on the canvas. Unlike other artists though, being 100 percent vision impaired means that she will never get to see what she creates.

Annie embodies the underpinning belief of the Greenacres Outsider Artists which is that with the right support, materials and techniques everybody has the ability to create art.

She replaces everything that the eyes would do with her heightened sense of touch and the results are beautiful – paintings that are full of colour and texture and very uniquely Annie.

Annie is a Greenacres Kickstart Careers participant and now thanks in part to the money raised at the 2019 M2M Challenge, she only has to walk a few metres from the Kickstart Centre to get to the new Outsider Artists art studio for her weekly lesson.

More than 120 people with disability attend the Greenacres Outsider Artists program each week under the guidance of professional artist and qualified art therapist, Victoria Velozo.

Victoria said that even though she exhibits her own art internationally, nothing in her personal career has ever compared to supporting a person with disability to express themselves artistically.

"It has been amazing for me to work with Annie, to see how she uses touch and texture in place of her sight has been inspiring," Victoria said.

"By using tape to make guidelines that she can feel and using textured materials to make collages, Annie has found her own way of personal expression."

Annie's work was just one of many artworks on display at the Outsider Artists Exhibition held from 22 August to 1 September at Project Contemporary Artspace in Keira Street, Wollongong.

Once again, the exhibition impressed hundreds of visitors who were amazed by the quality and the variety of the art on display and, to the delight of the artists themselves, many of the artworks were sold in the first few hours of opening.

The Outsider Artists studio opened in November 2019. Being located next to the Greenacres premises in Ralph Black Drive North Wollongong means it can be utilised by artists from across the organisation including Greenacres Enterprises, Kickstart Careers, Skilled n Social and most Community Life and Leisure centres.

The space is not only big enough to accommodate a larger number of artists but also allows them to discover a broader range of artistic techniques including sculpture, ceramics, mosaics and textiles.



Financial Performance at a Glance

The COVID-19 pandemic and the financial year that was.

The position we set ourselves at the end of last year to recover from the previous two years of losses took an enormous effort by Greenacres Management and Staff to achieve.

We had budgeted for a good surplus and notwithstanding a reduction in income of up to 85% from late March due to COVID-19 our budget remained on track and resulted in a profit equalling 5% return on our Equity.

It must be noted that the Australian Government's JobKeeper scheme played a major role in offsetting the 85% revenue loss from late March.

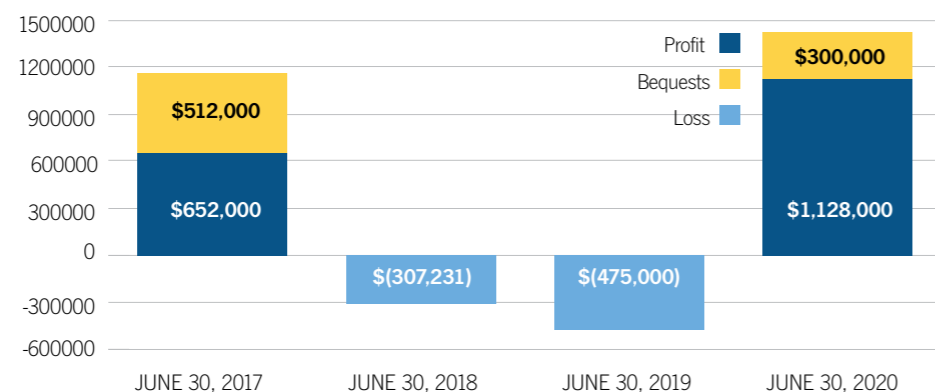
Our profit was also assisted by a significant donation from the deceased estate of Life Member Alan Shepherd.

This year's profit gives us an average operating profit over the last four years of \$250k per year.

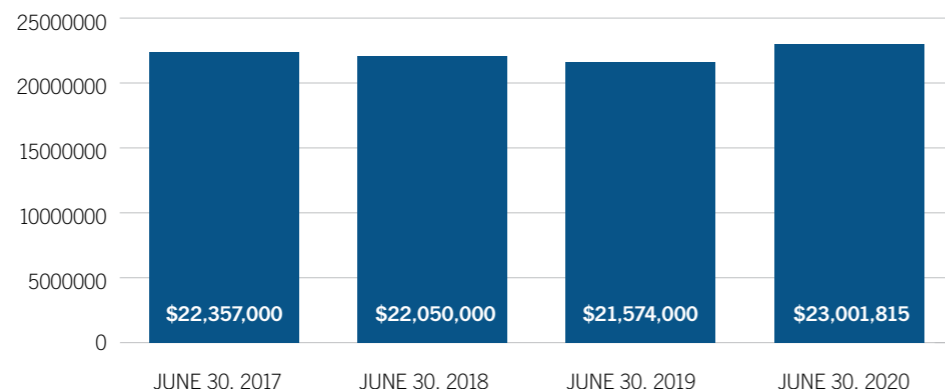
We are now well and truly entrenched in the NDIS environment. We have again this year invested significantly into our information and technology areas of the business by developing new software called QUEST X that we believe will set a benchmark in the industry.

The NDIA has made significant changes to the NDIS pricing for providers from July 2020. With the additional challenges of the ongoing pandemic, the new financial year will be far from easy but as our history shows we are very good at adapting to changing environments. With new efficiencies, innovation and hard work we will continue to provide the best of support to our participants.

Profit/Loss



Net Assets/Equity



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