

Hope Connect



2019/2020

Annual Report Book

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Service Profile

Mission Statement

We, the members of Hope Connect, motivated by the love and compassion of Jesus for all people and as part of Telopea Christian Centre, will endeavour to meet the enduring and changing needs of families and individuals within our community with a holistic approach to service that considers emotional, physical, social, financial and spiritual needs.

Hope Connect Inc is a not for profit incorporated organization established in Telopea since 1974 as a service of Telopea Church of Christ and a welfare partnership project of Fresh Hope Engage and is predominantly supported by Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Here is an overview of the support we provided for the financial year 2019 -20.

Targeted Earlier Intervention Program (Families & Youth (0-17 years)) DCJ funded 12 week program

- Individual support plans
- Advice & support
- Counselling
- Parenting programs
- Information, referral, advocacy and liaison with other services.
- Home and community visits
- Experienced and skilled family case workers

The Intensive Family Preservation Program DCJ funded & referred 6 month program

This program is for families who need a more extensive level of support and offers all of the services outlined in the Targeted Earlier Intervention program, plus an on-call element.

Playgroup (Play & Grow)

This is a supported playgroup for parents and carers. Children are engaged in fun activities with singing, craft, indoor and outdoor play areas. It is a fun environment for the children and a great opportunity to meet other parents and carers in the local area, and exposure to parenting strategies.

Parenting Education Programs

We regularly run evidenced based parenting groups on topics that are relevant to local families and teens. The sessions are typically 6-8 weeks, practically focused, and aimed at all learning levels. Single session topics are also offered throughout the year as needed.

Youth Projects (12-17 years)

We have a range of opportunities for teens, including counselling, youth work, afternoon groups and school holiday activities. Elevate is a youth program that runs during school terms, for kids in years 5 - 10 at school.

No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS®)

The No Interest Loan scheme operates once a week to offer loans for essential goods and services up to \$1500, including whitegoods, homewares, health care and study needs.

Material Aid

Practical support is available in the form of food parcels, food vouchers, electricity, gas and water vouchers.

Telopea Shed

A volunteer led program open to the community with a fully equipped workshop offering maintenance, small projects and DIY. Telopea Shed provides an opportunity to make friendships, repair broken household items, create and learn new skills with tea, coffee and lunch provided.

The Hope Connect Team

Management Committee

President

Tom Cummins

Treasurer

John Dickins

Secretary

Kelly Aguirre

Public Officer

Sue Banks

General Committee

Phil Ravesteyn, Gail Saxby

Staff

Business Manager

Simon Brailey

Family Support Manager

Stephanie Fett

Child & Family Workers

Kate Pederson, Helen Williams, Libera Milic, Libby Packer, Stephanie Harrison, Jessica Ferreria (casual)

Groups Worker

Fiona McIvor

Playgroup (Play & Grow)

Libera Milic, Stephanie Harrison

Elevate Youth

Adam Squires

Material Aid

Libby Packer, Lynton Kallmier (casual)

No Interest Loan Scheme

Melinda Parker

Telopea Shed Co-ordinator

Bruce Pederson

Accounts & Payroll Officer

Alex Yelkapally

Office Co-ordinator

Kristy Peatling

Students & Volunteers

Students

Rabia Shaikh, Jessica Ferreria, Sarah Favretti

Volunteers

Alex Sloss, John Dickins, Ray Cheal, Gail Saxby, Julie Crawford, Rob Troup, Alex Kibret, Jill McKay, Eila Laukkanan, Samantha Charles, Joshua Ravesteyn, Tracy Corbett, Radhiga Dey



The Staff Christmas Party included Putt Putt golf and a banquet dinner – a great way to celebrate the year!

President Report

Tom Cummins

This has been a year like no other. COVID-19 will not be forgotten for a long time. Hope Connect staff have led the way in our community, showing commitment and dedication to continue serving our local community when many others concluded it was too hard or not worth the extra effort and risk to do so. You really get to see the true nature of things when they are under stress and pressure. What a privilege it has been to see the real character of Hope Connect staff through this health crisis, as they have been lovingly determined to continue serving the families they support.

On behalf of the management committee, I offer a huge thanks to all our staff for their resilience, courage and resolve that has been on constant display during this time. With a desire to ensure we keep our staff and clients safe during this season, there have been endless new processes and procedures that our managers and staff have implemented... on top of everything else they do. It has been a humbling experience to see the dedication of Simon and Steph as they lead such a great team, through such trying times.

In this season, the difficulties experienced in many families has increased with the added stress and challenges that COVID-19 has brought with it. The personal lives of our staff and volunteers have similarly been impacted, yet they rise above to serve others. I praise God for them and the ongoing support Hope Connect has received from our advocates, which has enabled us to continue with this much needed service in our community.

This year we completed a review of and renewed our Vision...

‘To love our neighbours’

As well as reviewing our Goals, Beliefs, Values and Expectations, we also reviewed and updated our Mission... Hope Connect is motivated by the love and compassion of Jesus for all people, serving as a ministry of Telopea Church of Christ, we will endeavour to meet the enduring and changing needs of individuals and families within our community to assist healthy wellbeing.

All of the management committee and staff have participated in Safe Church training and Hope Connect has signed up to the National Redress Scheme. Both of these programs are something we plan to stay engaged with as we seek to support safety and wellbeing without exception.

After a huge year of tidying up our business administration systems, improving processes, establishing new operating procedures and competently leading the team, Simon Brailey has generously given us a long lead time before finishing up in September 2020.

Simon was only joining on staff ‘for a year or maybe two’, but he has now competently served as Business Manager for circa 5 years. In that time, he has assisted greatly to transform Hope Connect into an organisation that operates at a standard well above its league. On behalf of the Management Committee, I thank Simon for his years of faithful service and am very pleased to see Simon nominating to re-join the Management Committee, so we can retain his rich knowledge and experience within the organisation.

I thank all of the Management Committee for their wise and prayerful guidance of Hope Connect and I thank Steph and all the staff for being so awesome and faithful in their service of our community. With a big year behind us, we will continue to love our neighbours, as we prepare for the Telopea Redevelopment challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

Business Manager

Simon Brailey

Reflecting on the last year the word that keeps coming to mind is unprecedented. There have been many Zoom meetings with staff and management committee. Who even knew that COVID was a word before this year! The rate of change during March and April in particular was enormous and felt like years of change squished into weeks. My personal thanks to the team for the way they have worked together during this time in continuing to meet the enduring and changing needs of individuals and families within our community to assist healthy wellbeing.

Earlier in the financial year we undertook a governance review with Justice Connect, who provide free legal help to community organisations. This “spring clean” indicated a high level of governance, whilst also providing some feedback on areas for improvement that we have been diligently addressing. We have continued to engage with the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) reforms and I’m delighted to report with our auspice partner Fresh Hope Engage we were able to secure a five-year funding contract with Department of Communities and Justice.

May I encourage you to read the other reports that follow that convey some of the hope and connection that Hope Connect provides in our community. There are incredible stories of hope and connection through Material Aid, NILS, Telopea Shed, and the variety of groups we have run during the year. One highlight was our innovative Construction Zone project, which paved the way to partnering in a successful consortium bid to receive Commonwealth Funding to deliver Take The Lead which will contribute to reducing violence against women and their children.

Hope Connect is very grateful for the support, cooperation and collaboration from other organisations and services. I would like to acknowledge and thank a number of key organisations.

- NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- Fresh Hope Engage, the welfare division of Churches of Christ Community Care in NSW
- City of Parramatta Council – Community Capacity Building Team
- Hume Housing
- Parramatta Leagues Club
- NSW Office of Fair Trading and Good Shepherd Microfinance without whom NILS® couldn’t operate.

Our team has been very stable this past year with Jessica Ferreria, a past student, capably filling in with the team for a couple of months. More recently we have welcomed Fiona McIvor to our team to help deliver some of the Take The Lead groups in the coming financial year.

Thanks go to our Management Committee who have adapted to the changing landscape of the last 12 months through utilising Zoom meetings and increased agility in reviewing policies whilst still maintaining their duty of care and other good governance practices. Gail Saxby has been a great addition to the committee bring a wealth of knowledge about our community history. There have been a number of additional items also included in the year’s agenda with the review of our Vision, entry into the National Redress Scheme and additional policies to navigate COVID-19 pandemic to name a few.

After 5 years of leading Hope Connect, I am stepping down to have more time with my own family as we approach the birth of our fourth child. The privilege of serving Hope Connect during this time has given me the opportunity to build deeper relationships with the team, learn new governance skills whilst gaining more broader leadership experience. More importantly I have developed more compassion, empathy and become less judgmental which my wife will attest to being the biggest impacts on me.

A big thank you to my wife, Shanna who has journeyed with me through this season, and my immediate and extended family who have supported us in so many ways, without whom I could not have undertaken this role. It has been a team effort! I want to acknowledge and honour our President, Tom Cummins for his support, availability and listening ear over my time in this role. I have deeply valued his wisdom, encouragement and challenges during this time.

Family Support Manager

Stephanie Fett

What a year!! Covid-19 has brought us so many more challenges than we were ready for, however I am proud to say that we have met those challenges and have remained open throughout and available to work with the community even if it's just been by phone at some points in time.

I am happy to report we are back running all services including groups in the new 2020 financial year... we have missed the smiling faces of our families, especially the children and youth.

During the 2020 financial year, as well as support of our families within our case management, material aide, NILS and groups, we have also focused on the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) reforms for our Child Youth and Family Support program (CYFS); Domestic Violence support and service delivery; service delivery during the Covid-19 pandemic; student placements; youth focused programs and practices; community development and staff development.

TEI reform

Family Support has gone under a major program transformation in that DCJ have rolled out Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) for the Child Youth and Family Support program (CYFS), that now replaces our CYFS. This has required new systems to be implemented, new forms and a new reporting system, however the commitment to support children, youth and families remains.

One of the reforms has required us to introduce Outcome Measurements. The aim of this reform is to provide accountability and to improve resource provision to NSW. The Hope Connect Family Support team took the more difficult path and chose to tailor the tools in outcome measurement, so that they meet the needs of our community and maintain our focus on trauma informed service delivery. In order to achieve this, we have put in many hours and worked with a NCOSS consultant, learnt from others in forums and webinars, recruited the support of our students and brought our knowledge together to develop family friendly tools that ensure we hear our family's voices and meet the DCJ reporting requirements.

In addition, many resources have been put into developing and preparing for a new reporting system – the Data Exchange (DEX), the renegotiation of our contract with DCJ and the development of Program Logics.



Family Support staff had a workshop to tailor Outcome Measurement Tools to our community that we work with.

Domestic Violence

17 % of our families within a 12-month period, have disclosed family and domestic violence (FDV) and this sadly is a growing statistic in the work that we do. This past year we have attended several trainings including the *True Colours* program, *Our Watch* and the City of Parramatta Council Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan, to better equip our staff and became more involved in regional forums.

We were successful in being granted the City of Parramatta Council Preventing Violence Against Women funding which enabled us to run the **“Construction Zone”**. This is a program that aims to challenge gender stereotypes by equipping women to learn home maintenance skills and to discuss relevant issues over some morning tea. The Commonwealth **Change the Story** paper identifies gender stereotypes as being a driver for FDV so the challenging of entrenched gender stereotypes is an important step in preventing FDV. A partnership between Kate, our Family Support Worker, and Bruce, our Telopea Shed Co-ordinator, saw an effective program being developed and delivered, with different skill sets being brought together for the benefit of the women in our community.

Following this, we went on to be successful as part of a consortium, in being granted Commonwealth funding, under the National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children. We are a part of a consortium delivering these programs with and Cumberland Women's Health Centre, City of Parramatta Council and Boronia Multicultural Service. Together we are running a community-led initiative called "**Take The Lead**".

The funding is focused on early intervention which means anyone is eligible for the groups. Our part in this is to deliver 3 different programs twice a year over 2 years, the Construction Zone, a parenting program and a youth relationships program. So far, we have been attending the **Our Watch** Training, in consultations with the consortium partners, and the setting up of the Reference Group, to ensure community-led participation. Covid-19 has caused delays in starting the program delivery, which has now started in August 2020.

Students

We continue to be committed to partnering with the local universities to offer placements. This year we have had the privilege of having two Masters in Social Work students work alongside the team, from July-November 2019. The students were both from diverse cultural backgrounds and brought their skills and culture to our practise. The students assisted in groups and case-management and developed an updated FDV resource for the team to utilise in their work.

Community Collaboration

Being good neighbours is an important part of our mission, in responding to the changing needs of the community.

We have worked closely with Hume Housing in delivering the CDAT project. It has been my pleasure to be on the interview panel for the recruitment of the Hume Housing Community Cohesion Officer. We have partnered with Department of Health High St centre, to deliver youth orientated programs, drug and alcohol training for the local youth workers, the CDAT project and the Flu Vaccine and Covid-19 testing day.

We are a strong member of the Telopea Connections, an interagency that brings together services such as DANC, the library, YMCA, Hume Housing, Department of Housing and volunteers that work in the Telopea area. It has been really encouraging to see this group grow and now includes the Police domestic violence and multicultural liaison officers.

We are an active member of the local CDAT group, which is a local chapter of the Australian Drug Foundation, that works to educate and prevent damage to the community in the area of drug and alcohol use. Each year we are provided with a grant to run a local project, this year we ran another education and meal event plus a training event for workers in the community.

Hope Connect has partnered strongly with City of Parramatta Council in working with the Community Capacity Building Officer for Family and Domestic Violence, which resulted in a family movie evening. The involvement of the Council's Community Place Development Officer for Telopea, saw improvement in engagement of services in the Telopea area. As a result, we saw increased donations to our food pantry for those who were affected by Covid-19 due to awareness raising by the Council. We are also thankful to Cornerstone Church at Rhodes for their donations to the pantry during Covid-19. The Bikers Hand, the Lions Club and Mobile Minders have also been generous in donating goods to put a smile on our families faces over the year and we are truly thankful.

Our working relationship with local Community Services Centres of DCJ remains strong, with referrals continuing to flow and case management collaboration being valued by our Family Support team. We have presented at the DCJ all of staff team meeting, to highlight our services, which was met with appreciation and enthusiasm. DCJ and the Department of Education ran an Expo that saw the two government bodies come together to learn of the community services in the region. This was also a valuable opportunity to highlight our service and develop further the collaboration with schools and DCJ. Interestingly we have seen increased access into the schools and referrals have followed. This is an encouraging development for our Family Support team, as so many of the families we work with have young people attending the local schools.

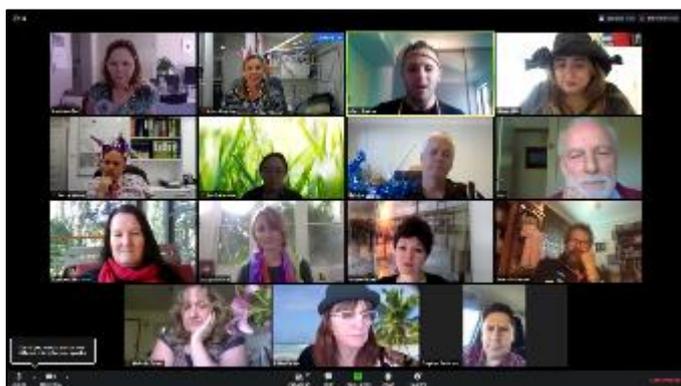
I serve on the Parramatta Holroyd Family Support Service Management Committee, who run a similar service to ours. This has been a great opportunity to share knowledge and learn. To enhance my learning further I have completed the ACWA Community Leadership Course. This nine-month course sponsored by Hope Connect, offered intensive learning workshops, coaching sessions and the opportunity to learn alongside other community service leaders.

Lastly, we have partnered with Uniting to offer a NDIS outreach clinic to the community. This has increased access for many people in the community who were struggling to navigate the system. Unfortunately, this service is no longer running due to Covid-19 restrictions, however we are exploring options to recommence this valuable service.

Staff

We have celebrated Helen and Kate's 15th Year employment anniversary this year. This is testimony to their commitment and passion to serve families and young people in the community and reflects well on Hope Connect as a positive employer. We now have 3 staff members who have reached over 15 years of service which is a valuable asset to the organization and to the community.

All of our team have worked extremely hard, and have pulled together to deliver skilled and responsive support to the community, I am a very proud family support manager!



Celebrating Kate's 15-year anniversary via Zoom!



Helen & Kate about to go on a home visit – following Covid 19 protocols

Parenting Education

Kate Pederson

The Construction Zone – Term 3 and Term 4, 2019

This was a new group running for the first time in Term 3 and Term 4 in 2019. The program is designed for women with the goals of learning new construction and house maintenance skills. The course seeks to challenge stereotypes around women's roles in community.

The group ran for 10 weeks and had 11 participants. The women were very committed to return each week. On occasions that some couldn't attend, they organised to drop in on a Shed community open day or arrive early the following week to catch up on their projects.

The women each worked on a small project (tool box & Mallet) to take home at the end of the course and were able to build confidence and skills in using machinery and tools. The course also covered practising some skills in doing fix it jobs around the house, such as:

- * Fixing a gyprock wall hole
- * Changing washers
- * Building fly screen frames and replacing fly wire
- * Fixing toilet cistern problems
- * Practised halving joints
- * Became familiar with using power tools

Each week also included a morning tea together and a 'tool box talk time'. Conversations explored gender fairness, challenging stereotypes, empowerment and supporting each other.

Some feedback from the women included:

- "Being creative like this has been really refreshing and rejuvenating"
- "I'm definitely attempting home repairs. I never would have previously"
- "I feel relief. During the week this is the only space I have for me."
- "We didn't know each other but had fun together "
- "We are not trying to impress each other. Just learning together"
- "I didn't feel judged" "I felt encouraged"
- A challenge was - "my negative self talk, but this changed as I was encouraged by other participants"
- "I've found out my hobby – wood work, and that has let me think positively about life"

Of the participants, 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident making basic home repairs & using tool and 90% of the participants strongly agreed that discussions expanded their ideas of women's potential.



True Colours – Term 1, 2020

The aim of this group was to provide information and support to women who have gone through Family & Domestic Violence, or are currently in the process of leaving a Domestic Violent relationship.

Unfortunately, due to COVID19 Lockdown, the group was only able to complete 4 weeks of an 8 Week course. The age range of women was around mid- Twentys – Mid-Fortys. We had 6 participants who started the course.

The course covered topics such as; Children's experience of Domestic Violence, Recognising the Harm of Violence, Honouring Resistance, Safety Planning, The Giving, Taking and Receiving of Dignity, The Law and Domestic & Family Violence,

Two women stated that being among other women who have experienced family violence made them feel less shame and decreased self-blame. "It could happen to any-one".

Some comments from participants.

What did you discover about yourself?

"I am a good and strong mother."

"You are allowed to feel whatever it is you are feeling, it takes time."

"I am the only one who can make a decision for my children's sake."

"Strength is fighting for what's good for my children."

How will you keep the messages you heard with you?

"I will try remember when I look at my baby, we deserve better"

"Remind myself; be kind to your-self, you are doing the best that you can"



Mother's Day Gift for group participants
donated by Mobile Minds

Youth Projects

No More Junk In Da Trunk – Term 1, 2020

The intention for this program was a youth focused group, ranging from ages between 12-17 years of age to help support their mental health through the use of physical exercise. This program was made possible by the Parramatta Club grant.

The program ran in term 1 and will run in term 3 of 2020 for a duration of seven weeks. We wanted a group where the young people could come together to share their lives and be heard; especially when hard times hit home, creating a safe, creative and fun space for that to happen.

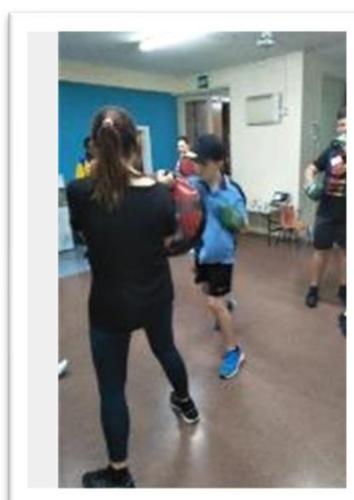
During the program we covered different topics each week from bullying to depression. We had a professional trainer, Pete Petrou who come in and delivered some wonderful skills in box exercise and weights and simple exercises and stretches that the youth could do at home.

We were able to bring in some expertise from around the community contributing their knowledge and skills. One week we had Jazzie Quinn who was the DANC, and now Hume youth program officer who joined us and spoke on 'Peer Pressure and Bullying'. Another week a local GP, Dr Cathy Casey came and spoke on Depression including how to notice it and where to get help.

From Hope Connect we had Stephanie Fett, who spoke on healthy relationships and some other great topics were covered. As a reward for participating for the 7 weeks the youth were rewarded with a new pair of sports shoes, which they were very happy about!

One highlight of this course was the friendship support that evolved with some of the youth, as well as an understanding that with the discipline of doing exercise and a few simple ideas of eating correctly, everyone could become a little healthier mentally and physically. Some youth continued to exercise after the course and continued with drinking smoothies instead of junk food after school.

The highlights shared from Sarah, our student, were that some of the kids continued their exercise post the group and also asked her for smoothie recipes - especially the boys from last group! It has also been great to have Pete, a male, be able to connect to some of the boys during exercise and share some of his story!



Supported Playgroup (Play & Grow)

Libera Milic & Stephanie Harrison

Once a week on a Thursday morning, during the school term, our supported playgroup offers a welcoming, safe and inclusive space for families from our local community. In collaboration with our families, we work towards providing a fun and stimulating learning environment for children as well as their parent/caregiver.

Play & Grow is a nurturing environment where parents/caregivers encourage one another in comradery and we have witnessed families build supportive connections which continue outside of playgroup. At Play & Grow, we provide our families with relevant and up to date information relating to parenting, support services and programs running within the community, to promote continuity beyond the playgroup space.

During the year we celebrated a number different events, such as, Chinese New Year, R U Ok Day, Father's and Special Men in your life day, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander day and Eid ul Adha day.

Play and Grow has experienced a great deal of change over the last 12 months. We had multiple families transitioning to primary school at the end of 2019. As a result of this we identified a need to implement a school readiness program during Term 4, 2019. This program gave parents education around preparing their children for school. The children also completed practical activities each week and at the end of the year we had a Graduation Ceremony where we farewelled these families. We also implemented achievement awards for children highlighting and supporting new skills learned at playgroup.

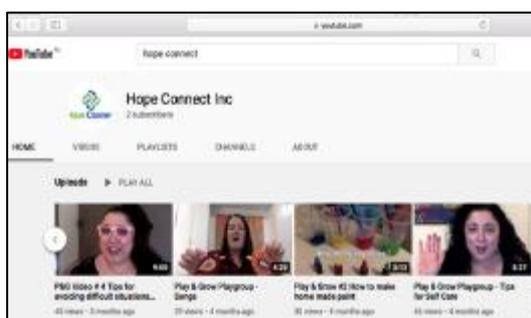


During term 2, 2020, COVID-19 restrictions resulted in Play & Grow adapting the delivery of the program.

- Parenting education was delivered via YouTube. Each fortnight the videos we produced were uploaded on the Hope Connect Inc channel for viewing.
- We put together and mailed out activity packs to provide families with educational learning activities that could be done in the home to maintain connection and decrease isolation.
- We regularly emailed newsletters to keep parents up to date with important information
- We made phone calls to check in and support our families, and to gain feedback.

With the restrictions easing we spent significant time planning for a return to the park in Term 3, with the aim to return back onsite.

In collaboration with group participants, we will continue to work towards implementing a program which reflects the needs of participants while being consistent with our group objectives.



Parent Education was delivered via YouTube during Covid 19 restrictions



Christmas Party at the water park!

NILS[®] (No Interest Loan Scheme)

Melinda Parker

This past year at Hope Connect we have provided over 40 NILS loans for 58 products to help clients on low incomes buy a range of things that would be hard for them to afford otherwise; without using loan providers that charge very high interest rates. We are able to help people get a loan with no fees, no interest and that is within their budget to pay off over 12 months.

These things range from:

- a large TV for an elderly gentleman who is the primary carer for his wife;
- a guitar for a someone who wants to busk to bring in some extra cash;
- a number of refrigerators which also come at half price through a wonderful scheme in NSW run by the Department of the Environment;
- a washing machine and TV for a single dad trying to set up home to see his kids more often;
- computers for students;
- dental help;

Some clients are just out of prison working for a fresh start in life. Some are people living on a very tight budget for years who come back for another loan each year to improve their home and quality of life. The majority of people are on New Start, Job Seeker or Disability pension.

Our loan providers have told us we get a lot of unique clients. Part of my job is to advocate for those who maybe seem more out of the box than usual. For example, I had a client who lives off the grid totally with a solar powered electricity supply. It took a photo of his set up and some conversation to convince the loan provider he was eligible. Many of our clients find it difficult to gather all their documents. Sometimes getting a budget sorted out isn't easy. I do my best to work through these challenges with them, however some do get too daunted and give up. We continue to work on streamlining the documentation aspect of NILS. COVID has added the extra challenge of doing things over the phone, rather than face to face.

It is a privilege to serve people who are usually excluded from society's normal financial provision This was the vision of Good Shepherd sisters in 1981 and NILS is part of reaching that vision. The founders of GSM say don't say "it won't work" but say "what if it **will** work"? The vast majority of our clients pay the loans back in full.

A NILS loan is a collaboration between our wonderful office manager Kristy who is usually the first point of call, Centrelink, NAB and the Loan Providers – Hills Community Aid whose staff are wonderful to work with and a mine of information with their years of experience.

We also refer people to Step Up for larger loans, or to talk with someone about how to get their budget sorted better or encourage them to join in at the Telopea Shed. I continue to learn where other sources of funds are for people with their various needs. Sometimes I learn a lot from our clients who are skilled at managing life on a very tight budget. Sometimes if people are ineligible for a NILS loan we are able to assist them with our Material Aid.



Material Aid

Libby Packer

This last financial year has been quite different because of COVID19. The first half of the year was busy and as per usual. However, after January, we were faced with something we had never experienced before. A Pandemic. We were then having to wipe down surfaces, social distance and sometimes wear masks. During April and through to June the way we delivered Material Aid changed, we decided not to have face to face sessions with clients but instead passed paperwork through the office window allowing assistance to be provide with appropriate safety precautions. We decided we could safely continue to be available for the local community as people were in need, especially before they received any government subsidies. We were able to help those who had lost employment because of COVID19 and also immigrants who didn't receive any benefit from Centrelink but who had lost their employment.

We helped people in the local community and neighbouring suburbs with material aid, throughout the financial year it was accessed over 360 times, distributing 316 food vouchers and 113 food parcels. We also provided 45 EAPA vouchers for electricity and gas to people. These vouchers are provided through our continued relationship with NSW Department of Trade and Investment and Sydney Water.

Our partnership with Wesley Mission means they provide grocery store cards to help with the demand that presents in Telopea and surrounding areas which is immensely beneficial to our community. A highlight was the change this helped facilitate in a gentleman who came in to receive Material Aid and was struggling with his mental health; his family had left him and he had lost his job. We were able to help him by making some referrals, listen to his story, and give him help with transport costs and his electricity bill. He was then able to gain employment and this encouraged him immensely and gave him a sense of accomplishment and pride.

We are so very thankful to organizations like Carlingford Uniting Church, Carlingford Lions Club and also members of Telopea Church of Christ who provide us with food. With the Lions Club's financial donation, we were able to buy some beautiful, warm, blankets which were distributed out to people in the community when we had those very, cold nights.

Cornerstone Church in Rhodes donated around 100 food parcels during the height of COVID19. Gordon Bromhead from Telopea Church of Christ volunteered to deliver them to us each week. The food parcels were full of practical items, such as toilet paper, tissues, tinned food, plus a variety of 'treats' such as biscuits, which made each food parcel more than just a food parcel to those who received them.

We also received 50 food parcels from Hillsong. City of Parramatta Council assisted with some advertising asking for donations because of COVID19 and people from the community received donations like school snacks, nappies and personal hygiene items.

At Christmas, we also received donations of hampers and gifts from the Tree of Joy program of Ryde Rotary & Carlingford Rotary, Joshua Wellness Practice, Impact Health & Fitness and food hampers from The Bikers Hand. Thank-you so much to everyone for all of their contributions.



Elevate Youth

Adam Squires

What a great year it has been for Elevate Youth! We are a group for young people in school years 5 to 10 that runs on a Friday night during school terms. Each night has a theme that is based around food, dress ups or challenges. A general night involves time for the youth to interact with one another, games, an input talk, small group discussions and everyone's favourite... food! As of late Elevate has been different due to COVID19 restrictions; with content and interactions occurring online. This has included YouTube videos, Instagram posts, and enjoying FUSE on Zoom.

Over the past year we saw our numbers increase to around 25 youth whom attend on a typical Friday night. Elevate is run by a dedicated team of 7 leaders.

A highlight we have had was in October 2019, three of our youth attend the annual Drastic Camp in the spring school holidays. In this week they had the opportunity to connect with the wider Fresh Hope Youth NSW youth movement and grow in their faith. Another highlight at the beginning of 2020 saw the group expand to include those in year 10 at high school.

We are looking forward to where we move over the next 12 months, and the hopeful resumption of our gathered meetings once more!

Telopea Shed

Bruce Pederson

It is great to report that despite the struggles in the shed space due to Covid we seem to have gained significant traction since reopening. Overall attendance is up with most of our new members coming from the local area. The philosophy behind 'sheds' is to provide a safe place for attenders to both engage in practical projects and connect in the shed community through healthy relationships. Anecdotal observations in the shed space show we are growing in these areas. The shed is a fun place to be.

Highlights

- **Construction Zone** – This was run with funds from a Preventing Violence Against Women grant from the City of Parramatta Council. The group ran across Term 3 and Term 4 in 2019. The program has mixture of woodwork projects and house maintenance skill development. "Toolbox Talks" at break time is a discussion amongst the participants that challenge gender stereotypes. It has been wonderful to team with the family support staff in this program. Kate has been an asset in the workshop space (thanks Kate!)
- **Wednesday Shed Times** - The Covid restrictions have meant a reduction in the hours of operation on Wednesdays. We now open between 9am and 12. The reduced hours have worked in our favour with attendees finding the time frame more manageable.
- **Community Projects** - shed members from time to time are engaged in repairing furniture and equipment as a community service. Thanks to all the shed members for their generous service.
- **Donations** - The sheds survival depends on generous donations of material and machinery. This has been a great year for donations.
- **Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre** - We have been developing some strong links with the DANC. They are a good referral for us to the community.
- **Volunteers** - As our conduit to the faith community thank you Ray, Alex and John for your solid support for the shed. You are an absolute asset to us.

A shed space is only as good as its members, their commitment to each other and its overall purpose. A very special thank you in this regard goes to all of our members.

There are encouraging signs for growth ahead.

Staff & Volunteer Training

- *CCWT: Managing Challenging Behaviors*: Kate Pederson & Kristy Peatling
- *CCWT - Community Leadership Course*: Stephanie Fett
- *Emergency Australia - Provide First Aid 001 & 003 (includes CPR)*: Simon Brailey, Kate Pederson, Libera Milic, Kristy Peatling, Libby Packer, Helen Williams, Melinda Parker, Bruce Pederson, Adam Squires, Alex Sloss, John Dickins
- *Compass: A Therapeutic Treasure Box*: Libera Milic
- *Jesuit Refuge Service - Women Seeking Asylum and DFV (awareness and response training for workers)*: Helen Williams
- *Good Shepherd Microfinance Annual Conference*: Melinda Parker
- *CCWT: Unravelling Poly Addictions – Addressing Substance Dependency and Behavioural Addictions*: Libby Packer
- *AFEI – Running Effective Meetings*: Stephanie Fett & Kristy Peatling
- *Western Sydney Health Service: Essential Youth Healthcare Skills*: Libby Packer
- *Employment Law for Not-for-profits Webinar by Justice Connect*: Simon Brailey
- *Data Governance Webinar*: Simon Brailey
- *Introduction to Vicarious Trauma E-Learning Module by Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia*: Libera Milic & Stephanie Fett
- *Working Through Exhaustion, Burnout, and Compassion Fatigue by Lisa Dion*: Kate Pederson, Stephanie Fett, Libera Milic, Melinda Parker, Helen Williams, Stephanie Harrison, Libby Packer
- *Regulating through the daily challenges of Corona Virus by Lisa Dion*: Kate Pederson, Helen Williams, Libera Milic & Stephanie Fett
- *Creating Safe Spaces Workshop by Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT*: Simon Brailey, Stephanie Fett, Kate Pederson, Kristy Peatling, Stephanie Harrison, Libby Packer, Adam Squires, Alex Kibret, Eila Laukkanan, Gail Saxby, Jillian McKay, John Dickins, Joshua Ravesteyn, Julie Crawford, Kelly Aguirre, Phil Ravesteyn, Rob Troup, Samantha Charles, Sue Banks, Tom Cummins, Tracy Corbett
- *'Our watch' training*: Helen Williams, Stephanie Fett, Bruce Pederson and Kate Pederson
- *CDAT: Connecting People and Communities of ATSI Cultures and CALD populations*: Libby Packer
- *CDAT: A Look at Alcohol Intake and Mental Health during the year 2020*: Libby Packer

Established Partners

- DCJ - Parramatta and Auburn office
- Hume Social Housing
- Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre
- City of Parramatta Council
- Wesley Mission
- Uniting Care NDIS
- High Street Youth Services
- Hills Community Aid
- Mobile Minders
- Parramatta Holroyd Family Service
- Mobile Minders
- Pathways Community
- Good Shepherd Microfinance
- Wesley Specialist Accommodation Service
- Rosie's Place
- YMCA Street Gym
- Boronia Multicultural Service
- University of Western Sydney
- Cumberland Women's Health
- Parramatta Leagues Club
- CDAT
- Lions Club – Carlingford/Dundas
- Rotary Clubs – North Rocks & Ryde
- Telopea Connections

Financial Contributors

Hope Connect wishes to acknowledge the invaluable assistance during 2019-2020 from the following funding bodies and donors:

- **Teloepa Church of Christ**
- **NSW Department of Communities and Justice** – Family Support program; Material Aid program worker salary
- **Fresh Hope Engage** – our auspicing body for DCJ programs and Teloepa Shed
- **NSW Fair Trading** – NILS® program – worker salaries
- **Good Shepherd Microfinance** – NILS®
- **Sydney Water** – account assistance vouchers for clients in Material Aid program
- **NSW Department of Industry and Investment** – account assistance vouchers for payment of power bills for clients in Material Aid program
- **City of Parramatta Council (Community Capacity Building Grant)** – Preventing Violence Against Women grant for the Construction Zone group
- **Parramatta Leagues Club** – Parramatta Clubs Grant to run mental health and fitness group for young people, and Staff & Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- **CommBank Staff Foundation Community Grant** – for material aid, Teloepa Shed & IT Server upgrade
- **Department of Social Services** – Community-led project to prevent violence against women and their children: a collaboration with Cumberland Women’s Health Centre, Boronia Multicultural Service & City of Parramatta Council
- **Lions Club of Carlingford-Dundas** – Donations to Material Aid program
- **Carlingford Uniting Church** – Donations to Material Aid program
- **Wesley Mission** – Material Aid grocery vouchers and brokerage
- **Rotary Clubs – North Rocks and Ryde** – Christmas gifts for children of clients through the Tree of Joy program
- **Joshua Wellness Practice** – Christmas Food donations and gifts for clients
- **Impact Health and Fitness** – Christmas Food donations and gifts for clients
- **The Bikers Hand** – Christmas Food Hamper donations for clients
- **Hillsong** – donation of food hampers to our Material Aid program
- **Sydney Young Nak Presbyterian Church** – donation to our Family Support program
- **Cornerstone Church Rhodes** – donation of food hampers to Material Aid program
- A number of private individuals who gave generous financial and material donations to the work of Hope Connect

Donations

Hope Connect Inc and Fresh Hope Engage both have Deductible Gift Recipient Status (DGR). This means that financial supporters of their work can claim financial gifts as a tax deduction.

You can make financial donations to any of our projects, just put the project name in the reference section.

Some projects you can donate to are: Material Aid, Parenting Groups, Christmas Hampers

Our bank details are: BSB: 082 186 Account Number: 04609 8955

Auditor's Report



SDJ Audit Pty Ltd t/a SDJA
ABN: 11 624 245 334
P: PO Box 324
West Pennant Hills NSW 2125
M: 0428 074 081
E: simon@sdja.com.au
W: www.sdja.com.au

14 September 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The following snapshot of financial information has been produced from the audited financial statements of Hope Connect Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2020. We issued our signed, unqualified audit report on 9 September 2020.

A copy of the full financial report is available on request.

Yours faithfully,

SDJA
SDJA

Simon Joyce

Simon Joyce
Director

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income (as at 30th June 2020)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Income		
Grant income	604,443	594,284
Donations	47,927	39,568
TCC administration income	27,876	22,140
Interest income	6,816	10,131
Dividend income	66	127
COVID-19 Stimulus	122,499	-
Sundry income	2,289	2,267
Total revenue	811,916	668,517
Expenses		
Administration expenses	(14,203)	(13,797)
Client assistance, program and materials	(55,576)	(59,424)
Depreciation	(36,348)	(20,625)
Employee benefits expense	(614,364)	(501,320)
Office expenses	(35,670)	(38,137)
Finance expenses	(3,588)	-
Rent	(520)	(21,206)
Other expenses	(41,465)	(52,344)
Total expenses	(801,734)	(706,853)
Net profit/(loss) for the year	10,182	(38,336)
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit/(loss) after income tax	10,182	(38,336)
Other comprehensive income		
Revaluation of shares at fair value	(545)	(102)
Total comprehensive income/(loss)	9,637	(38,438)

Statement of Financial Position (as at 30th June 2020)

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current		
Cash and cash equivalents	534,796	568,126
Trade and other receivables	69,838	5,205
Other assets	2,407	1,931
Current assets	607,041	575,262
Non-current		
Investments at fair value	1,264	1,809
Property, plant and equipment	128,237	31,381
Non-current assets	129,501	33,190
Total assets	736,542	608,452
Liabilities		
Current		
Trade and other payables	74,546	48,891
Employee benefits	99,186	85,223
Borrowings	-	4,037
Other liabilities	18,416	25,309
Current liabilities	192,148	163,460
Non-current		
Employee benefits	21,889	15,823
Other liabilities	83,699	-
Non-current liabilities	105,588	15,823
Total liabilities	297,736	179,283
Net assets	438,806	429,169
Equity		
Reserves	29,360	23,031
Retained earnings	409,446	406,138
Total equity	438,806	429,169

HOPE CONNECT INC
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Held at Telopea Christian Centre

23rd October 2019

The meeting was opened at 7.15pm

Welcome to Hope Connect Inc Annual General Meeting.

PRESENT: Tom Cummins, Simon Brailey, Phil Ravesteyn, Steph Fett, John Chapman, Kelly Aguirre, Gail Saxby

APOLOGIES: John Dickins, Sue Banks

The President reminded the meeting that only Committee members of Hope Connect could vote.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion for acceptance of the Minutes of 17th October 2018 Annual General Meeting, contained in the 2019 AGM report booklet be accepted as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

Moved: Tom Cummins

Seconded: Kelly Aguirre

Carried: Yes

ANNUAL REPORTS OF HOPE CONNECT ACTIVITIES

Management Committee are thankful for the effort of the team and contributors to the service and AGM report. Phil reflected Hope Connect as a well aligned service, thanks to Steph, Simon and the team.

Tom thanked Steph and advised he is encouraged that Steph is leading the service well. The management committee can see this, especially as evidenced by young people feedback from RAGE program.

Discussed missed opportunity for grant application.

Phil discussed outcome of Refresh program and development of self-reflection following course. It is a goal to run this course again, including consideration of the need to provide child minding.

Discussion of youth projects feeding into community development

Steph reflected that she is really proud of her team, their ability and willingness for collaboration, outcomes, following program guidelines, trying new ideas. Acknowledged Simon's support and great opportunity for the grant to refresh downstairs, which provided positive momentum.

Strengths external relationships including FACS, visibility and understanding of Hope Connect service, connection and opportunities with staff, invitations to collaborate and service exposure.

The relationship with Hume and DANC has had significant impact this year, building on strengths, supporting the community in context of redevelopment and confidence in our service.

Motion for acceptance of the Annual Reports of Hope Connect activities in the 2019 AGM report booklet.

Moved: John Chapman

Seconded: Phil Ravesteyn

Carried: Yes

FINANCIAL REPORT

The President Tom presented the Auditors Financial Report for 2018/19.

Supplementary Notes to the Auditors Report 2018/19

- 1) The Auditor's report is a consolidation of finances from all Hope Connect programs. These are; Child, Youth and Family Support (CYFS), Intensive Family Preservation Program (IFPP), Hope Connect Material Aid (HCMA), No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) and Telopea Shed (previously The HuB). Grants and donations for one program cannot and are not used in any other program.
- 2) The consolidated Profit and Loss statement from the Auditor shows a deficit of \$38,438. This principally arises as a result of the following:
 - a. CYFS in deficit ~\$18,000 due to planned additional expenditure on staff expenses.
 - b. IFPP in deficit ~\$12,000 due to planned additional expenditure on program costs and staff expenses using some funds (\$4,500) carried over with permission from FACS from last year and further additional expenditure on program costs and staff expenses.
 - c. NILS being surplus ~\$4,000 due to a negative expense arising from recognising reduced hours on the NILS program of staff and shifting their leave provisions out of the NILS program and having a gap between when a NILS worker ended employment and another commenced employment.
 - d. Telopea Shed in deficit ~\$9,000, however underlying this were donations mobilised through the Vision Fund by Telopea Christian Centre for Telopea Shed in:
 - June 2019 of ~\$16,000 that will be spent in 2019/20 or subsequent years; and
 - June 2018 of ~ \$13,000 that was spent in this financial year 2018/19.
 - e. Hope Connect Material Aide being in deficit ~ \$6,000 due to expenditure of a generous donation from a prior financial year.

Motion for acceptance of the financial report:

Moved: Tom Cummins
Seconded: John Chapman
Carried: Yes

APPOINTMENT OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2019-2020

The following committee members for the coming year are all re-standing with the approval of Telopea Church of Christ elders:

Kelly Aguirre
Tom Cummins
Phil Ravesteyn
John Dickins
Sue Banks

The following people are standing to join the committee with the approval of Telopea Church of Christ elders at their meeting held on 14th October 2019, in accordance with clause 3b of the Hope Connect Inc Constitution:

Gail Saxby

Management Committee formally appreciated John Chapman for his service.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2019-20

Simon took the chair for election of office bearers.

Nominations received for:

President - Tom Cummins
Vice President -
Secretary - Kelly Aguirre
Treasurer - John Dickins
Public Officer - Sue Banks

SDJA as auditor for 2019-2020:

Motion for acceptance of the office bearers:

Moved: Tom Cummins
Seconded: Kelly Aguirre
Carried: Yes

Tom Cummins resumed the chair.

The meeting was closed at 7.45 pm.

Statement of Principles

1. **Biblical Foundation**

Consistent with the beliefs of the Telopea Christian Centre, and in accordance with the Christian Scriptures, the activities of Hope Connect are based upon the following principles:

- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; no-one is ever complete outside of a living, faithful relationship with him.
- Jesus Christ calls upon all people to respond to him in love and obedience.
- Jesus Christ calls upon all who follow him to endeavour to meet the needs of those about them even if this requires self-sacrifice.
- Religion that God accepts as pure and faultless necessarily involves caring for 'orphans and widows' (i.e. disadvantaged people) in their distress.
- All people having been created by God are valuable and care should be provided for those who find themselves in a situation of distress.
- God has set mankind in families with the intention that they should form the basic unit of society.

Therefore staff of Hope Connect will endeavour to:

- Identify needs of families, the individuals within them and the groups they form
- Meet specific needs without discrimination
- Make the best use of our resources to provide high quality care, programs and services
- Demonstrate the same concern for human work displayed by Jesus
- Show a concern for privacy, independence and dignity for all people
- Promote a non-judgemental acceptance of people as unique individuals
- Respect, preserve and strengthen family relationships where they exist and assist people in building community
- Encourage people to establish a living faith in Jesus Christ

2. **Positive Working Environment**

We in Hope Connect will create a supportive working environment that encourages personal growth and development and that provides job satisfaction, self-esteem and a fair reward for all members of the Hope Connect team. Our duties will be undertaken with Christ-like care and concern and through our behaviour credit and honour will be brought upon the Christian organisation we represent.

3. **User, Church and Community Involvement**

We in Hope Connect will encourage the active participation of the users in the management of the programs and services we provide. We will promote awareness of our activities in both the church and the wider community and ensure mechanisms exist whereby interested parties can learn more and become actively involved in these programs.

4. **Place of Hope Connect in the Community**

We in Hope Connect, recognising that we are unable to meet all the needs of our community, will remain aware of the activities of complementary services in our area and seek to build a co-operative spirit with them. We will avoid unnecessary duplication of services and ensure that our services are well integrated with those otherwise available in the community.

5. **Financial Integrity**

We in Hope Connect seek to provide high quality programs in an efficient, effective and caring manner, with financial integrity and sound business practices.

6. **Responsiveness**

We in Hope Connect will seek to remain aware of the changing social needs of our community and will respond in appropriate ways to each new situation, developing and modifying services to maintain relevance. We will regularly review our services and methods to ensure they are meeting current needs.