

2022
Annual Report



Capital Region Community Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Capital Region - the lands on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to the elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region. CRCS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, waters, and the community.

Love oddisey by Margy Duke

'Love drives humanity. On this journey a swirling of fullness is the landscape we travel upon and through. As a moth is drawn to a flame, we as humans are drawn to LOVE.'

Our Vision

Inclusive, connected communities within the Capital Region

Our Purpose

Empowering people to live their best life through building and connecting communities; delivering relevant, person-centred services; and providing choice and opportunity.

Our Values

- We are ethical
- We are accountable
- We are inclusive
- We are respectful
- We are optimistic
- We are innovative

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Message from our Chair

Peter Henss

From the outset, and on behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge the breath-taking resilience of our community and the complete dedication of all CRCS employees to supporting our community over what has been another incredibly challenging year of navigating life in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. I think it is safe to say that every person within the CRCS family has dug deep over the past 12 months to ensure services continued and disruptions arising from lockdowns, health orders and illness have been kept to an absolute minimum. This speaks to the unwavering commitment of CRCS and its steadfast resolve to support people within our communities through this watershed time in human history.

As I prepare this report, I can't help but be reminded by the news coverage of the passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, who epitomises the definition of community service. In April this year, the CRCS Family lost Emmalea, who was a much-valued member of our organisation and played a pivotal role in setting up the new CRCS Connect service, always providing support to the community with enthusiasm and a positive outlook. The Board's thoughts are with Emmalea's family.

Throughout the year our support services continued to assist our valued Aged Care, Transport, Families, NDIS and Youth participants; and our Education and Care services remained open in support of families who couldn't work from home. We acknowledge our front-line workers for persevering through the worst of the pandemic so services could continue and those working behind the scenes who supported them and the business in their work.

CRCS has proudly partnered with other organisations over the past 12 months to deliver a range of supports and services including the Northside Quarantine Hub (Northside); Westfield Belconnen Youth Space (Westfield, AFP, Transport Canberra); Workplace Injury Prevention Training (Ergosmart); Playgroups (Westfield); the Good Start in Life Program (University of Canberra); Nature Lab (CIT) and so many more.

CRCS has grown its presence in the Capital Region over 2021-2022 and we have welcomed new teams at the Cooma Public and Cooma North Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) programs, and Early Autism Education. With such a large footprint to cover, what better way to facilitate new transport services than in a 42-seater custom-built coach? Congratulations to Graham and the team for successfully procuring this welcome and environmentally friendly addition! We are looking forward to sharing some exciting new plans and services over the coming year.



Thank you to everyone who have taken the time to provide feedback to CRCS over the past year. Feedback from participants, their families, the community and our employees is critical in driving improvements across our full suite of services and supports. CRCS Connect function was a direct result of participant and employee feedback, with the team focussed on supporting people to connect to the right services, supports and teams in order to meet all of their needs.

CRCS also commenced working with SOULAB on a social impact framework to drive further improvements and outcomes for our valued participants. On the subject of feedback and evaluation, the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) was commissioned to complete a board evaluation of the CRCS board and this provided some opportunities for continual improvement so that we can continue to provide good governance and strategic direction.

Also on strategic direction matters, our achievements against our Strategic Plan are well on track. Goal 1 (engage and connect with communities across Capital Region) has an impressive upturn of connections, engagements and growth opportunities. Goal 2 (provide high quality services) shows over 90% improvement for meeting expectations and a massive 80% of participants are likely to recommend CRCS to others. Goal 3 (strengthen our innovative and collaborative capacity) has an increased number of identified initiatives that aim to achieve greater social impact. Goal 4 (inclusive, responsible as an organisation) has seen 5 strategic working groups established with a total of 34 employees involved in these groups with new ones (e.g. technology working group) planned.

Organisations such as CRCS are the beating heart of communities as they often support the most vulnerable and in need, but without the support of our partners it is work we couldn't do. Therefore, on behalf of the CRCS Board and the Executive Team, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to local and state governments in the ACT and NSW and the Commonwealth government, and other community sector and commercial organisations for their enduring support and commitment to supporting people of all backgrounds, ages and cultures within our communities.



The ability to rise to the challenges of the past year, all the while embracing change and growth, has been critical to the success of CRCS over the past 12 months. This is in no small part because of the positive and dedicated leadership provided by our CEO, Mandy Green and the Executive team comprised of Karyn Ferraris, Jenelle Tinham and Allison Sullings. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank everyone in the CRCS family who all work very hard to ensure we achieve our Vision, Purpose and Strategic goals. I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their tireless work over the past year including Chris Ermacora, Carolyn McPherson, Michael Pamphilon, Peter Humphries and Catherine McCarthy. Being part of the Board is a very special role to fulfil within this incredible organisation and the Capital Region. We look forward to continuing the work that the Board does over the coming year and continue to support the excellent labour being undertaken by CRCS in our communities.

Beyond the business, our employees and volunteers continue to do more than required in our communities participating in community events such as the Volunteering Expo and ACT Careers Expo; taking up roles on working groups both within CRCS and across the Capital Region and organising or contributing to Giving Tree hampers, GIVIT, the Canberra Day Appeal and the 10/10 project now in its 10th year. On a personal note, I participated in the mid-year 10-10 project and really enjoyed getting my hands dirty, helping a participant with their garden in Charnwood. I will never forget the gratitude extended and appreciative look on the homeowners face as we delivered a massive transformation to their yard. It was also a wonderful opportunity to spend time with some of our wonderful CRCS employees and volunteers on the day and one I would thoroughly recommend to everyone to participate in or contribute to. I sense it is the deep connection to community and helping people that drives our employees and volunteers because they understand better than most the truly incredible difference it makes in people's lives.

Peter Henss
Chair



Message from our CEO

Mandy Green

CRCS has had another amazing year of success, opportunities for improvement, growth and connection. As an organisation, we remained optimistic and sought to make connections, collaborate and innovate our services through challenging times. Navigating the 2021/2022 Covid lockdowns and restrictions was a significant challenge for the community sector and communities across Australia. Our organisation, as with many others, had to navigate lockdowns, border closures and public health orders, which created challenges to delivering our high-quality services to our community. When the ACT locked down on 12 August 2021, CRCS transitioned seamlessly to an online environment and I would like to congratulate the Business and Infrastructure Team for leading this successful transition. I would like to thank and make special mention of our Education and Care, Aged Care and Transport teams who continued to deliver high-quality face-to-face support to children, families and older Canberrans through one of the most difficult times we have faced as an organisation and a community.

Despite the disruption and complexity of working through Covid challenges, CRCS continued to progress our strategic goals and achieve great outcomes for individuals, families, communities and our people.

CRCS Connect went live with a new centralised intake model for CRCS on 21 July 2021 with Emmalea Klaassen our first Connection Specialist. CRCS was deeply saddened to lose Emmalea in April 2022. Our deepest condolences remain for Emmalea's family and friends. Emmalea was such a delightful person with a ready smile and such optimism. Emmalea worked with our participants and employees in an empathetic and caring manner to reach the best outcomes for everyone. Emmalea is greatly missed by all of us at CRCS.

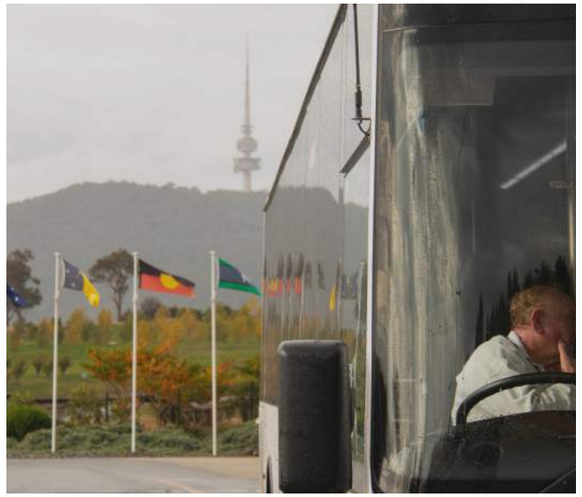
We were delighted to welcome Cooma Primary and Cooma North Primary Outside School Hours Care Programs to CRCS in January 2022. The CRCS Education and Care Team must be congratulated for their work on the tender, approvals for NSW and establishing the services so efficiently.

We were also delighted to welcome the Early Autism Education program to CRCS in October 2021. Early Autism Education is a contemporary educational and skill development program for children and young people living with autism spectrum disorder. Early Autism Education specialises in providing individualised home-based early development programs to teach language, communication, play, social, and cognitive skills to provide solid foundations for school and life.

In May 2022 we received delivery of our new 42 seater accessible coach. To say we were all very excited is an understatement! The purchase of a coach to complement our Community Transport service has been a dream of CRCS Community Transport Manager Graham McKerchar for years. A lot of hard work and planning went into making this dream a reality and we are excited to now be able to deliver a cost effective and accessible service for our community, community partners and CRCS services.

In March 2022, CRCS was privileged to take part in the Hands Across Canberra HAC – Canberra Day Appeal which encouraged Canberrans to 'give where they live' and donate to the Appeal, whether giving to participating organisations directly or to HAC and raise much-needed funds for the community sector. CRCS would like to thank Hands Across Canberra and the Canberra Community for donations received which went towards our 10/10 programs in April and December 2022.

Thanks to our generous partners including Housing ACT, Westpac and Hands Across Canberra, CRCS was able to undertake the 10/10 program in April 2022. The 10/10 program was disrupted in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid restrictions, so the team of committed employees and volunteers were relieved and excited to be able to undertake the program this year – so excited they have decided that we will run two 10/10 programs this year to make up for the last two years!



Over the past 12 months, CRCS has been focussed on implementing a number of IT projects across CRCS to improve the user experience for employees and participants of CRCS. We have made some excellent progress towards our digital transformation goals with the implementation of ELMO HR, SharePoint online, MSTeams, QMAP and CRCS HQ. We also commenced work towards a new CRCS website, which we hope to have finalised in late 2022.

In May 2022, the Board, Executive and Program Managers had an opportunity to review and update our Strategic Plan. Given the unexpected disruption to our plan brought by the pandemic, CRCS still made significant progress towards our goals. The opportunity to review and update the plan was welcome, as the pandemic had changed some of our actions, made some areas more important and other areas less relevant as we as an organisation like many communities readjust to what life is like now and into the future.

There are so many people, services and projects that we at CRCS are proud of and I encourage you to read on through the Annual Report to learn about them!



In closing, I would like to thank the employees and volunteers of CRCS who make our organisation exceptional – without you CRCS does not exist. A huge thank you to the Board for their excellent governance and support to me and CRCS. Thank you to the Executive Team who are passionate about CRCS and work very hard to ensure we achieve our Vision, Purpose and Strategic goals.

Congratulations to our 2021 All Star Award winners who model our organisation's values, vision and purpose (see page 24).

Mandy Green
CEO



Treasurers Report

Carolyn McPherson

It is my absolute pleasure as Treasurer of Capital Region Community Services (CRCS), to present the 2021-2022 annual accounts to our members.

The 2021-2022 financial year continued to see challenges across the organisation as CRCS continued to work and provide a unified response across all business areas which was somewhat challenging during the lockdown period from August to October 2021. My thanks again to our CEO, CFO, and the Executive Team for their direction, their ongoing support to the organisation, their employees, their participants and all their families.

The organisation recorded a surplus for 2021-2022 of $384,863, a $664,504 decrease from the prior year surplus of $1,049,367. There was a marginal decline in income during the year of $277,422 (-1.8%) while expenditure increased by $387,082 (2.7%).

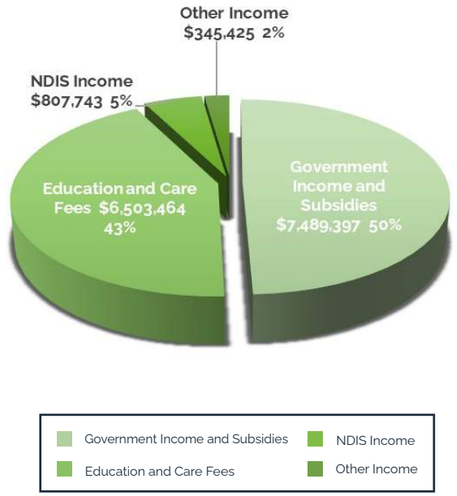
The key financial management opportunity for the coming financial year of the Board and Management will be to consolidate the efforts of recent years and implement a financial investment strategy that is within the investment risk appetite to be determined by the Board. This strategy should aim to grow and develop our services across all business areas, by identifying and capitalising on opportunities as they arise, properly supporting the needs of our people and investing in our infrastructure to ensure it can meet the needs of our communities.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the CEO, Mandy Green, CFO Karyn Ferraris, the Executive Leadership Team, Board Chair Peter Henss and my colleagues on the CRCS Board.

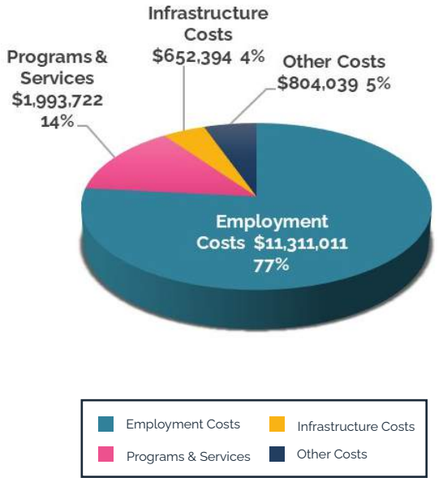
Carolyn McPherson
Treasurer

Financials at a Glance

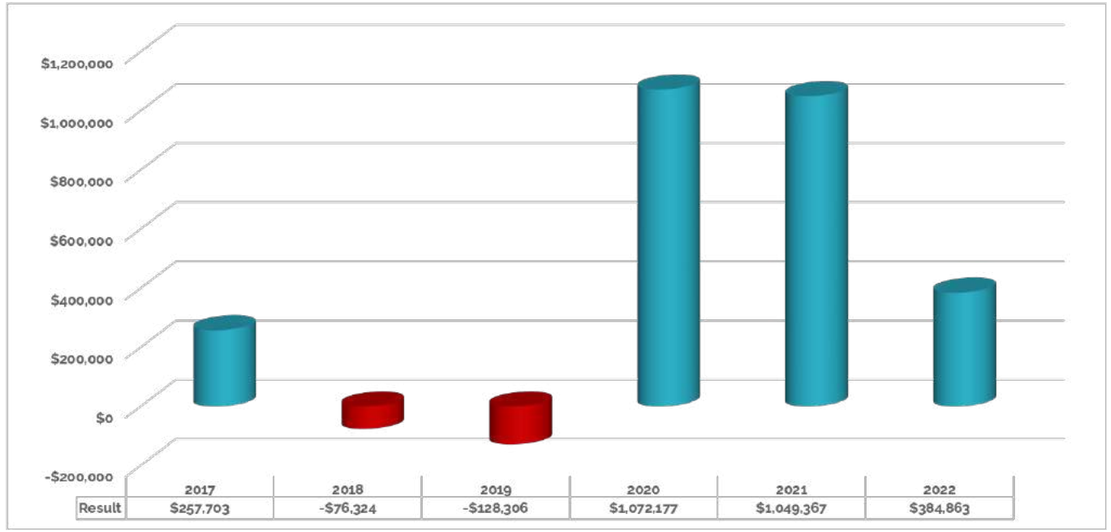
Income Sources 2021- 2022



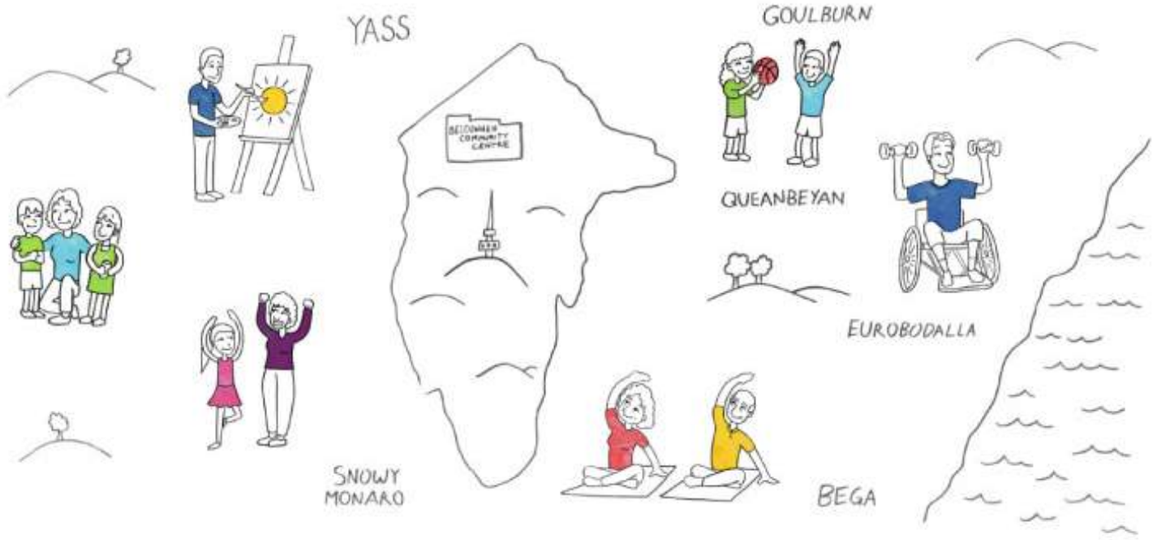
Expenditure 2021-2022



Financial Results 2017-2022



	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Result	$257,703	-$76,324	-$128,306	$1,072,177	$1,049,367	$384,863



About CRCS

Since 1975, Capital Region Community Services (CRCS) has provided a wide range of high quality, integrated and inclusive programs and services to individuals, families, children and young people in the Belconnen and wider Capital Region.

CRCS works with community members, local organisations and businesses to develop responsive programs, services and activities that support self-determination, and reduce social isolation, placing community at the heart of everything we do.

CRCS Strategic Intent 2020 - 2030

Engage and connect with communities in the Capital Region.

Provide high quality services, placing people and the community at the heart of everything we do.

Strengthen our innovative and collaborative capacity to achieve greater social impact.

Be inclusive, responsible and exceptional as an organisation and an employer.

Statistical Snapshot

In the year 2021-2022 Capital Region Community Services provided:

AGED CARE AND NDIS SUPPORT

2,938 Hours
of Social Support

1,286 Hours
of Personal Care

6,561 Hours
of Domestic Assistance

540 Hours
of Flexible Respite

2,836 Hours
of Home Maintenance

590 Hours
of CHSP Social Group Programs

268 Participants
in the NDIS Support Connection Program

EDUCATION AND CARE

405 Children
received care and education at our Early Childhood Centres.

Belconnen ECC	Bruce ECC	Bruce Ridge ECC	Ginninderra ECC
87 Children	109 Children	112 Children	97 Children

435 Children
were part of our OSHC Program

Florey	Charnwood	Cooma	Cooma North
185 Children	174 Children	48 Children	28 Children

TRANSPORT

23,940
Passenger Trips Provided

784 Participants Assited
in Transport Programs

294,538 Km Travelled
That's 7.3 times around the world

FAMILIES

114
Playgroups

24
Psycho-education Groups

40 Families
in Family Case Management

20 Families
in Intensive Family Foundations

Our People

The CRCS Family

All Star Awards

The All Star Awards is an annual prize-giving event which recognises exceptional employees and their contribution to CRCS. Awards themes are based on CRCS's core values, with special recognition awards from the Executive Team. Congratulations to our CRCS family members who won the 2021 All Star Awards!

Respect — *Felicity Henss*

Leadership — *Anna Tewson*

Optimism — *Masia Ermacora*

Accountability — *Sarah Helmers*

Ethics — *Julie Gorell*

Innovation — *CRCS Transport Team*

Inspiring Volunteers — *CRCS Transport Volunteers*

Inclusion — *CRCS Families Team*

Executive Award Recipients:

- *Lyne Bowman*
- *Sandra Sheehy-Cox*
- *Inoeg Nugraha*
- *Nikki Avila*
- *Skyla McClelland*
- *Katyani Pandey*

Funny Awards:

- ***Walking Wikipedia:*** *Felicity Henss*
- ***Rookie of the Year:*** *Cristina Ocampo*
- ***Bright Light:*** *Jessica Johnson*
- ***Buzz Lightyear:*** *Graham McKerchar*
- ***Songbird:*** *Nicole Warren*
- ***Kookaburra:*** *Dominique Henss*










Volunteer & Employee Highlight

Meet Helen

Helen is one of one of the amazing CRCS Family members. This year, after more than 28 years supporting our community both as an employee and a volunteer, Helen has retired to explore different activities, enjoy some “me” time and spend time with her family. We are sad to see Helen go, but we also are incredibly grateful for her enormous contributions and commitment to CRCS. Stories like Helen’s are what make our community so special, and we are very proud to share a bit of her journey with us.

Helen moved to Canberra in 1993. One day she saw an ad in the paper looking for volunteers for Belconnen Community Services (BCS). She visited the centre to learn more about this volunteering opportunity and never looked back! She remembers BCS and her first impression of the Belconnen Community Centre: “It was a vibrant, buzzing place with a great café”, Helen said.

Helen then started as a volunteer at Chandler Street being involved in many jobs such as driving, running groups in the Belconnen Community Centre like the Best Club and Strokes Club, and assisting with shopping for people in the community who needed it.



She has very fond memories from all her years at BCS (later CRCS) and remembers how employees communicated and worked together with volunteers as one happy family.

As time went by, Helen got involved in more ways. She started running disability groups such as bowling, exercise, crafts and even running computing classes. She finds it funny how much she learnt by running these programs and is very proud of the friendships she built with the community members who accessed them. Additionally, Helen volunteered for Home Assistance. Visiting homes of community members to assist with cooking and encourage good shopping habits and healthy eating. She helped many single mothers who needed a hand at home.

After approximately 12 years of volunteering, Helen started working at BCS in a permanent part-time Driver role within the Transport area. All workers and volunteers in Transport greatly impact the lives of people who access this service. Their work goes way beyond driving. They provide a door-to-door service - taking them from doctors’ appointments to shopping and more, and making sure they are safe at all times. Helen found that all the clients were different and came from various places, circumstances, financial capacities and personal needs. This is why she decided to take a person-centred approach, tailoring the service to her cleints’ individual needs and always finding something positive to make their days better.

Helen attributes Graham (her boss) as one of the reasons for her long stay at CRCS. “He has always been there for a chat, and helped me into the tech world and has been very supportive in every way”, she said.

When she looks back, she remembers the good times she had at BCS and CRCS and how fulfilling it has been. What she likes the most about her volunteer work was getting to meet and help so many people in the community.

From everyone at CRCS, we would like to thank Helen for her commitment and passion to help our community, and we wish her all the best in the future. She will always be a valued member of the CRCS Family!

CRCS Strategic Working Groups

The CRCS Strategic Working Groups have had a busy year, taking steps to help CRCS meet our goal to be inclusive, responsible and exceptional as an organisation and employer.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency Committee

plays a vital role in the review and development of the new CRCS Reconciliation Action Plan with a focus on ensuring the plan is embedded in the day-to-day practices of the organisation across the Capital Region.

This year we formed a new group of team members across programs including Education and Care, Youth and Community Development.



Our conversations this year focused heavily on the change from Belconnen Community Services to Capital Region Community Services and what this would mean for the Reconciliation Action Plan. We had a strong focus on the need to ensure that the Plan will reflect and be inclusive of the wider Capital Region. We want people to feel a connection and belonging to the Plan in whatever community they are in. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID and lockdown did see the work of the committee reduce in light of competing priorities however we have set the tone and work for 2022!

The Rainbow Working Group

The Rainbow Working Group continued their work in making CRCS a safe and welcoming place for LGBTIQA+ community members. Positive feedback was received by visitors, participants, employees and prospective employees about the feeling of inclusion that the various pride stickers, welcome signage and flags provided in our common spaces. The group again marked important dates, such as SpringOUT Pride Festival with activities where employees shared reflections on the progress flag, celebrated Wear it Purple Day with an interactive online morning tea, and shared resources with employees to encourage allyship on International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia.

CRCS employees were also given the option of having their personal pronouns included in their email signatures, and the working group has also begun the process of giving employees the option to have pronouns displayed on name badges. The group applied for a Capital of Equality Grant which allowed our Early Education and Care Centres to purchase inclusive educator tools and toys.



In addition to high visibility initiatives, the group also reviewed CRCS policy documents, requested form amendments and provided advice on inclusive language use and answer options for new documents being created. CRCS employees have been proactive in asking the Rainbow Working Group for advice on how to be more socially conscious in their practice or to help clarify terminology or commonly used acronyms.

The Sustainability Working Group actively supports and promotes sustainable and responsible practices in the delivery of our services and supports to the community.

In 2021/2022 the group implemented the Sustainability Policy and Procedure and a dedicated sub-web within the new employee intranet to promote sustainability across CRCS. Practical solutions such as water saving tapware, lighting sensors and a change to PlanetArk paper supported savings in water and electricity usage and green printing. Regular sustainability tips were communicated to employees on topics including biodiversity, shoe recycling, sustainable gift wrapping and events and recycling options for produce stickers and soft plastics. Employees participated in events including "Get Your Green On", the "SustainabiliTEA" morning tea and learned about biodiversity and bees at the "World Bee Day" talk held by a local bee-keeper.



The Sustainability Working Group counts among its achievements for 2021/2022:
•resource recovery certificate from Closing the Loop for Belconnen Community Centre which has recycled a total of 7.5kg of toner cartridges.
•implementation of the ACT Container Deposit Scheme turning eligible containers into funds to support 10/10 and the CRCS Giving Tree.
•Business Recycling Program accreditation for Belconnen Early Childhood Centre, Bruce Early Childhood Centre and Ginninderra Early Childhood Centre.

The Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Working Group helps CRCS to foster inclusive work practices, celebrate diversity and deliver culturally responsive and relevant services.

In the last financial year, the group focused on bringing inclusion and celebration of diversity to the fore of our everyday work. We:

• collaborated to create a calendar that highlights different dates of cultural and religious relevance for people all around the world. This way, whenever possible, the marketing team have been able to acknowledge these dates through social media posts and encourage the community to learn more about these celebrations.
• discussed and explored the impacts of COVID, lockdowns and travel restrictions on our ability to practice culture, visit home countries and see family.
• considered ways to better include employees whose work conditions don't allow them to attend events and meetings.
• found how to use events as an opportunity for teaching and learning as well as celebration. The team started to coordinate the first potluck lunch event hosted by the CDI Group at the Belconnen Youth Centre.
• additionally, members of the CDI Working group who could speak a different language collaborated to create an official Acknowledgement of Country video with a contextually specific message around diversity and respect.

We are very grateful to the members of the group for their continued commitment and passion for diversity and inclusion!

The Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Working Group

The Mental Health and Well-being Working Group has enjoyed a year of connecting employees to a wide range of well-being events and initiatives through the weekly Well-being Wednesday communications.

The dedicated working group has shared a plethora of helpful tips, information and events to support employees working remotely, mobilely and in-office over the past 12 months and while the world adjusts to the new COVID-normal.

Employee feedback has been hugely encouraging with virtual and in-person events such as the Virtual Valentines in February and Soup and Solstice in June; helping employees to connect with each other.

Over winter we discovered just what a talented bunch of people work at CRCS as we explored the well-being benefits of crafty pursuits through the Cool and Crafty series. We found that amongst our CRCS family we have embroiderers, cross-stitchers, French polishers, sewers, yarn artists, painters and so much more.

Wednesday emails have proven to be a very positive way of communicating on a variety of annual events listed by World Health Organisation, Healthier Work ACT government and NSW Health.















CRCS Stories

From our Centres, Programs, and Community

10/10 Project Day 2022

Two and a half years in the making, a pandemic, and a historic first-off postponement due to wet weather, the 10/10 Working Group made up of representatives of CRCS, Housing ACT and Westpac were determined that nothing was going to stop this year's 10/10 Project from going ahead on April 29th 2022.

Coming into 2022, there was a real sense that we needed the 10/10 Project to go ahead more than ever before. The 10/10 Project was seen by some as a symbol of normality returning to CRCS. That somehow by us getting out there again, even though we remained incredibly focused on COVID-19 safe work practices and planning, everything was going to be okay. Our passion project was back on track and we were going to have the opportunity again to have a significant impact on the lives of those registered to participate in the project.



34 volunteers from CRCS, Housing ACT, Westpac, and community members rolled up their sleeves and worked together as we tended to the yards and gardens of the six properties that were registered for this year's project. We are all looking forward to a second 10/10 Project day scheduled for December 8th and can't wait to get out there again!

CRCS Connect

During the 2021 -2022 year, we welcomed a new CRCS Connection Service to Capital Region Community Services. The service is a newly established intake unit called CRCS Connect. The Connection Specialist who is employed in this service effectively engages, triages and assesses participants engaging with CRCS and refers them to the appropriate service/program, or if required an external service.

The Connection Specialist is essentially the 'face' and first point of contact for CRCS and strives to build a positive rapport with a wide range of individuals and stakeholders in the community. This person works as part of a multidisciplinary team, inclusive of Aged Care, Disability, Family Support, Transport and Youth Support. The intake service aims to support participants with a 'no wrong door' approach when accessing CRCS services.



Hands Across Canberra Giving Day

On March 9th 2022, Capital Region Community services had the opportunity to be part of the Hands Across Canberra Giving Day. This is the Capital Region's largest fundraising drive where for 48 hours the first $5,000 donated to participating charities are matched. This year we applied to this appeal to raise donations for the 10/10 Project, the annual community initiative that helps Canberrans in need with free basic gardening and a helping hand.



Leading to this day, the Marketing Team ran a social media campaign to encourage the community to support CRCS with a donation. We additionally participated in different challenges that Hands Up For Canberra set up for the day to win extra cash prizes. All the efforts on this campaign were greatly appreciated, and thanks to the support of the community and employees, CRCS raised enough funds to support the 10/10 Project in 2022.

Arrival of the CRCS New Coach

Sometimes dreams really do come true. It started with a conversation a number of years ago about how amazing it would be if CRCS had a bus that we could use to support the diverse transport needs of our organisation and community.

On the 4th May 2022 the dream came to fruition when members of the CRCS Transport Team caught first glimpse of the brand new 45-seat accessible coach as it made its way down the Federal Highway towards its new Canberra home. CRCS has also achieved its bus operator accreditation in the ACT to deliver a tours/charters service and is also working towards its Bus Operator Accreditation In NSW.



The CRCS Coach will be used to connect our community to excursions and tours, support the transport needs of CRCS Programs and also provides an affordable transport option for our broader community with the coach to be available for group booking 7 days a week.

Now that we have our hands on the coach, and in the words of a popular children's song, it's time for CRCS to make "the wheels on the bus go round and round" and put this incredible resource to use.

COVID Connections Education & Care

Last year the impact of COVID and the lockdown meant that many children and families were unable to attend our Education and Care Programs. We needed a solution to continue to connect with families and support them in balancing working from home while educating and caring for their children.

CRCS is fortunate enough to have amazing educators who display so much innovation and creativity and enjoy working collaboratively. Given the inability of many children to attend in person, our educators took their wonderful connections with families online or in a way that ensured we were complying with Public Health Orders.

CRCS educators worked tirelessly to connect with children and families through technology. Some of these great initiatives included:

- story times set daily with children and families at home. Many of the suggestions for the stories came from children and families
- art sessions-online, knitting sessions and music sessions set up through our Community Care Programs
- scavenger hunts-completed at home
- discos on the MSTeams platform
- group conversations
- sharing stories and photos via Storypark
- connect with children and families that are quite often in isolation.

A successful connection with families was also the distribution of gift bags to families. Educators took the time to make bags filled with art and craft materials which families then collected from the front door of our programs in a contact-less way. This allowed families to have engaging experiences at home with their children.





Bruce ECC Spoonville

Spoonville is a global initiative that started during the pandemic to support the mental health of communities all around the world. During the lockdown of 2021, Bruce ECC decided to join this movement and create their very own Spoonville at their centre, so the community could drive or walk by to see the display and add their own spoon creations.

The first resident of our spoon village was Spoonderella, a lovely but very lonely spoony character that brought many smiles to the children and parents who saw her, and that also encouraged more members of the community to create and contribute more spoony characters to the village, and made our Bruce ECC Spoonville a very happy place!





Father's Day at Belconnen ECC

To celebrate the important role that different paternal figures play in the lives, education, and development of children in our community, the Belconnen ECC held a family day at the centre, inviting parents, grandparents and relatives to spend a fun Friday afternoon with the children .

Families had a fantastic time engaging in play, and crafty activities, creating happy memories with their little ones. it was great to see so many smiles on the faces of the children and parents who were part of this celebration.



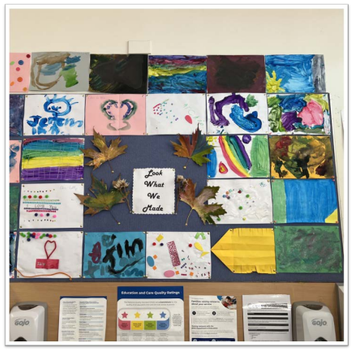


Cooma North OSHC First Year

This year, CRCS opened an Out of School Hours Care service (OSHC) at Cooma North Public School, in the regional town of Cooma. Establishing a brand new high quality children's service is such an exciting adventure for professionals passionate about education and care. Providing one in the beautiful regional town of Cooma has been particularly rewarding.

Built on our belief in the importance of a stimulating and playful leisure program, we have used the combined skills, experience and expertise of our educators to develop and implement a dynamic and inclusive program. We have wholeheartedly invested in collaborative relationships with families, children and the local community, and we treasure our partnerships and rich relationships. When parents wander in, pull up a chair and share stories late on a Friday afternoon the sense of connection is incredibly rewarding.

Educators and children share a love of outdoor active play and we connect through group games, which are often filled with raucous laughter and a sense of camaraderie. We make good use of our expansive environment and the children indulge daily in their passion for outdoor exploration, cartwheels, spontaneous dancing, hanging upside down and finding hidden treasure.



The children's voices are loud and strong within our program. Their ownership of it has helped to strengthen their sense of belonging and build their self -esteem. They are assertive, articulate and they have embraced the fact they can express their ideas, frustrations and perspectives in a safe and supportive environment. We celebrate the children's uniqueness, value their contributions and encourage and respect their opinions. They are not afraid to be fierce, vulnerable and reflective. They test our theories, challenge our ways our thinking and make us proud every day. There is NEVER a dull moment.

Cooma North children are artists, complex thinkers, explorers, creative dancers, lovers of music, board game enthusiasts, cubby-building experts and express themselves in unique and wonderful ways. They have a tendency to lose themselves in creative and imaginative play and we often become spectators in awe of their problem solving and social skills. Our rich and diverse creative arts program provides the children with the opportunity to immerse themselves in open-ended projects that are driven by their creative instincts and flights of fantasy. The children are the creators of weird and whacky menu items like noodles with strawberries - and for ALL of this we are truly grateful. The children steer the ship and we feel thrilled and privileged to be along for the ride. It's the start of a wonderful journey and we invite you to join us any time you like. You won't be disappointed.

Children's voices:
Isabelle (7 years old)" I like OSHC because we have good afternoon tea and we can go outside and play skittles and tennis".

Jeremiah (5 years) I like playing with the dice and counting and reading the books at OSHC. I really like playing frustration and Lego".

Lockdown and Florey OSHC Program

Painting and designing have always been children's favourite activities, but during lockdown, we decided to do something different, always thinking about the safety of our children and their families. We organised a Tie Dye activity to decorate face-masks that children could wear later.

During the lockdown, children stayed connected through MSTeams meetings. Children were provided opportunities to chat with their peers who were also isolated at home. We arranged online meetings so they could stay connected and we used the Storypark community platform to share recipes with instructions so that children can try to make a smoothie at home.

We shared links for mindfulness and relaxation activities for children as meditating could improve their mental well-being during lockdown organised a virtual online session with CRCS youth programs for families and children in lock-down and at the program.

We took part in Giving Tree 2021, asking families and schools for donations. Our educators volunteered and supported by helping to pack the Giving Tree hampers following all the COVID guidelines.

2021 CRCS Giving TREE

During the last term of 2021, CRCS promoted the return of the Giving Tree appeal. This time, given that the Capital Region was going through a lockdown; the collection of donations for the Christmas hampers was done mostly online. We set up a fundraising page to collect funds to buy food and gifts for individuals and families that needed it the most and we also asked the community to drop off donations of gifts and food at the Belconnen Community Centre.

Thanks to the generosity of community members and local organisations that supported the appeal in various ways, we were able to collect enough donations to make the past holiday season a little bit brighter, delivering hope and happiness in the form of 106 Christmas hampers.



CRCS would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following organisations:
- Bunnings Warehouse Australia
- Share the Dignity
- Radford College
- Commonwealth Bank
- GUILD
- National Disability Services
- GIVIT

Youth Week 2022

A Gender Agenda (AGA) reached out to CRCS Youth Team to collaborate and facilitate an event for Youth Week 2022.

Based on young people's feedback for more art-based activities and a goal to provide these activities in a central location in Canberra, CRCS and AGA agreed that a community event that consisted of an art competition, an art activity and an art exhibition based on the Inner North Canberra area would gain the interest of young people residing in Canberra.

The art activity provided a way to create engagement for young people from different walks of life to positively interact with one another. Because of this, young people gained increased social connection and a sense of belonging among their community and peers.

During Youth Week, the Belconnen Community Gallery hosted an exhibition in which all the art displayed, was created by the talented young people who entered their art into the Youth Week competition. Additionally, the mural that young people created collaboratively during the art activity, was presented to the community.



Wear it Purple Day 2021

Marking Wear it Purple (WIP) is now an annual tradition for CRCS, with the Rainbow Working Group hosting initiatives for employees. WIP is a global movement created in response to the staggering number of young people from all over the world who were taking their own lives following bullying and harassment because of their sexuality or gender identity. We wear purple, loudly and proudly to show LGBTIQA+ young people that we see them, we appreciate them, and that they can feel very proud of who they are.

Canberra went into a second COVID-19 lockdown just before WIP, but CRCS employees didn't let that stop them from showing their solidarity! An all employee interactive online morning tea was hosted by the Rainbow Working Group complete with purple trivia, a competition for "the purpliest person", purple prizes and a surprise at-home purple scavenger hunt. Throughout the day, the all-employees MSTeams chat was constantly updated with selfies of people in their purple outfits, as well as messages of support and appreciation. The day was a huge success with magnificent feedback received from employees and requests for future WIP celebrations to take place!



Involve Online Groups

To keep our community connected during lock-down, the Involve Team developed a series of fun and engaging online activities for seniors. They organised online activities for their participants such as arts and crafts, ukulele lessons and music, sign language classes and more.

To foster connection with different groups in the community, Involve extended an invitation to CRCS employees, participants, children in Early Childhood Centres and members of the community regardless their age and location to join these online sessions delivered several times a week through MSTeams.

This initiative had a great response and Involve participants were thrilled with the new guests. It was heart-warming to see young children singing to the tunes of the Ukulele and employees sharing their crochet projects with the seniors, coming together as a community in times of isolation.





Respite Event and Recovery Grants

In 2021, the ACT made $100,000 available in the form of Respite and Recovery grants aimed to support the well-being and resilience of people with disabilities and their families in the ACT.

Capital Region Community Services was invited to be one of the community partners for this initiative. Participating organisations helped by accepting applications for an eligibility check and processing, supporting participants to access these funds where eligible. This respite scheme was so successful that the grant was extended two more times before finally closing for good in December 2021. In total, the Respite Effect and Recovery Grants supported 816 people with disability and family-carers in the Capital Region.

CRCS takes pride in having been part of this wonderful initiative that helped relieve some of the many challenges members of our community living with a disability were facing during the pandemic – offering supports such as meals, respite, cleaning and funding for hobbies or recreational activities.

Family Education

Family Education provides psycho-education groups, community playgroups, targeted playgroups, and community connection groups. Family Education has grown exponentially over 2021-2022, with the addition of more groups reaching more participants throughout the community. In July 2021, Family Education was providing 8 groups each week. This has increased to 14 groups each week, facilitated by our amazing Family Education Practitioners and Group Facilitator.

Ngunnawal Playgroup has grown from commencement in February 2022, and now has a steady attendance of up to 15 families. Holt Playgroup enjoys either the local park or our playroom set-up at the Holt Community Hub. Our playgroups are attended by parents, carers, and/or grandparents, with a wide range of cultures meeting each week. We have provided 114 playgroups across the four terms.



Psycho-education groups continue to be well attended. Family Education has provided 15 Circle of Security Parenting groups, and 7 Tuning into Kids groups. These groups are a mix of CRCS-run and partnerships with Child and Family Centres. Additionally, we have partnered with Child and Family Centres to provide Koori Playgroup, Young Parent's Group, Koori Girl's Group, and Strong Women's Group.

Family Support

2021-2022 has been a big year for Family Support, and we are very proud of the case management model that our Practitioners are providing to the ACT community. Family Support was not an active program at the beginning of the financial year and had no employees or participants. From this, Family Support now has two permanent Practitioners, an evidence-based assessment and review tool, and has provided case management support to approximately 40 families.

Family Support has supported families in a wide range of ways including support for people experiencing family violence; drug and alcohol abuse; instability in housing; child protection issues; financial concerns; mental health issues; NDIS applications; emergency childcare applications; parenting support; sourcing and referring to relevant services; providing brokerage support; liaising with Roundabout for resources; attending appointments with participants; chairing case conferences; transitioning to employment; applying for financial support, and much more.

CRCS Families would not have achieved so much growth and practice development without the unwavering commitment and support of the Supervisory Senior Practitioner. She provides reflective practice supervision to seven individual employees, completes a thorough intake assessment with each potential participant for Family Support and Family Foundations, and manages case loads for the teams. She is a primary support for the Program Manager, and represents CRCS Families at a range of meetings and forums. This is a vital position for CRCS Families and has been a major factor in the steep trajectory of growth the programs have experienced in 2021-2022.

Paddys Park Play Day – Kite Flying

To support the emerging communities in the newly established district of Ginninderry, the CRCS Community Development team has been working in collaboration with Riverview Projects to facilitate community outreach events at the local park.

Two “Paddy’s Park Play Day” events took place and were wonderfully received by the growing community. Each event provided opportunities for over 200 residents to meet their neighbours, extend their social networks and participate in activities designed to foster skill development and promote belonging. Residents also enjoyed learning about the diverse range of CRCS programs and services that are available to them, and meeting some of our program employees.

Events were also attended by other local services and volunteers to ensure residents of these new suburbs were aware of nearby supports should they need them. In addition to building connections and awareness of local supports, the ultimate goal of these events are for the residents to participate in the planning and delivery so they are equipped with the skill and connections required to own and run their own community initiatives in the future.







Holt Micro-Forest Community Planting Days

CRCS are honoured to be supporting the work of the Holt Community Micro-Forest Group in their grass-roots mission to plant a sustainable micro-forest and food forest garden in their suburb. This passionate community group got in touch with CRCS in 2021 to sponsor a grant application which would allow them to undertake some of the work required to turn an empty area of green space in their suburb into a dense pocket of vegetation. Since then, CRCS has continued to work closely with the Holt Micro-Forest through sponsorship of additional grants, organisational and administrative support, as well as organising extra hands for community planting events in May and serving tea and coffee to volunteers. The micro-forest project is well underway having now undergone comprehensive earthworks to sustainably channel water, enriched soil and over 1,500 native plants with more to come.

CRCS also sponsored the Holt Community Micro-Forest Group’s application for an allocation of Floriade bulbs and eagerly helped volunteers with planting so the group could further brighten their local community and host events when the bulbs emerged in spring.







Belconnen Sports and Recreation Summer Expo

As part of a local initiative to support community members to engage in social sports, CRCS collaborated with Northside Community Service to deliver the Belconnen Sports and Recreation Summer Expo.

The event boasted over 30 stalls, performances, activities, and was formally attended by Andrew Leigh, the Federal Member for Fenner. The expo provided community members with an opportunity to come together and learn about the various local sporting and recreation groups running in their area. The event also allowed residents to try their hand at a range of the activities offered by the groups without any associated costs or commitment to join, which had been identified by local families as a common barrier to participating in social sport activities.

The expo was attended by over 500 community members, 200 of which signed up to a sport or expressed interest in joining!

Silver is Gold COTA Expo

CRCS always looks forward to participating in events where we have the opportunity to promote our services.

This year we attended the Silver is Gold Seniors Expo. Our team was delighted to engage with the community on both the inside CRCS stall where we displayed our varied offers in services available for seniors in the Capital Region and the outdoors stall in which we displayed our brand new CRCS coach, making its first public debut.

We took this opportunity to launch our new service of tours and excursions aimed at seniors to live exciting experiences, explore Australia and make new friends. We received a positive response from the expo attendees, who were very interested in the upcoming trips and even had the opportunity to hop on the coach for a look.





Belconnen Community Gallery Exhibitions

The CRCS Belconnen Community Gallery brought some treasured colour back into the Belconnen Community Centre after the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many cancelled exhibitions. The Gallery not only offers local emerging artists and community groups an affordable opportunity to showcase their works in a professional gallery space, it also allows CRCS programs to host a range of social exhibitions too.

The CRCS Involve Program for older Canberrans celebrated Seniors Week by putting on a showcase in the Belconnen Community Gallery. The exhibition included works made by program participants that ranged from repurposed milk bottle planters through to the most delicate hand-painted pottery, and everything imaginable in between!

The CRCS Youth Program also showcased projects, with the Bungee Youth Resilience Program hosting an end of semester exhibition displaying the works they had created in the group.

The Gallery also hosted a Youth Week exhibition which celebrated young people's contribution to Canberra. CRCS and A Gender Agenda held a competition where young people could submit a design to be magnified and transferred onto canvases which would then become a collaborative piece painted by young people at a Youth Week event. The Gallery showcased both the large collaborative mural and all artworks submitted to the competition and demonstrated just how talented our local young people are.











THANK YOU!

To all our Community, Government and Business Partners that have supported CRCS throughout the year.



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