

A safe, connected and just community

Reflect

Re-evaluate

Regenerate

Renew

Annual Report

OUR VISION

A safe, connected and just community.

OUR MISSION

To be a leader in building and fostering the capacity of our community to be inclusive, safe and connected.

OUR VALUES

Inclusion

We believe that inclusive and connected communities foster meaningful relationships and social networks and reinforce people's right to self-determination.

Safety

We uphold people's rights to enjoy places and spaces that are culturally safe, welcoming and respectful of diversity and difference.

Justice

We believe that access to social, legal, environmental and economic justice is a basic human right for all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

In the spirit of reconciliation Northside Connect Inc acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We achieve this through leadership, collaboration and facilitating access to resources, support and information.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*“In an ideal world, there would be no need for
Northside Connect.”*

In business, being busy is great. ‘Busy’ means transactions and transactions mean income.

In the not-for-profit sector, and in particular, the community services sector, being ‘busy’ is not great. It means the demand for essential services, from people who are vulnerable, is increasing.

Northside Connect has been exceptionally ‘busy’ this past 12 months. While we have been excited that the pandemic is largely at its end, we know its effects are continuing to be felt in our community on Brisbane’s northside. Accommodation is tough to secure. Cost of living pressures are hitting hard. It is difficult for people to afford the basics of living. That in turn leads to emotional stress and disharmony. We also know that domestic and family violence, despite the constructive steps taken by government to address it, remains a very real presence for our community.

As President of the Northside Connect Management Committee, I know our team of staff and volunteers have cohesively worked to address these demands. Their dedication to doing their best to assist people in need never ceases to amaze me. This dedication has come under increasingly trying circumstances. When the February floods ripped through our community, little did we realise the impacts they would bring. The ongoing closure of the Toombul shopping centre has revealed just how much our vulnerable clients came to rely on that space for services and simply somewhere to drop in. The sense of dislocation and closure has been keenly felt. Around Nundah, we know more people are sleeping

rough, and begging. These things are not said to make people feel bad or guilty: they are presented as an illustration of just how tough times are for some of us, as well as an indication of the challenges ahead of Northside Connect.

That is not to say the past 12 months have not been without times of success and joy. On the former, the gradual restoration of in-person services, along with the increasing effectiveness of virtual service delivery, has seen Northside Connect make the most of its finite resources. Our continuing collaboration with our Local, State and Federal Government representatives has also been a highlight. It is pleasing to see the doors to those representatives are always open to us as we continue to work with government to ensure Northside Connect resourcing is appropriate for the broad community we service.

In talking about successes, and joy, it is also time to talk about the great people of Northside Connect who make it all work. It all stems from the leadership of our Centre Coordinator Sharon Gingell, who balances the needs of staff, volunteers, Management Committee, clients and the community with aplomb and tremendous skill. I especially want to note the ongoing contribution of Eugene White, our long-serving (and we mean that in the best way) Solicitor who is gradually taking more of a back seat and whose legacy for Northside Connect will be considerable. Finally, I want to also note my colleagues on the Management Committee for their professionalism, thoroughness and support for each other and the team at Northside Connect.

It is not easy to find people willing to freely give of their time, so their dedication cannot be underestimated.

In an ideal world, there would be no need for Northside Connect. There would be no reason to provide community legal, domestic and family violence and social isolation services. Our world would function as a self-sufficient entity in which everyone had a helping hand, and no one felt marginalised or left behind. Reality tells us a different story, of course, and it is in that reality that Northside Connect will continue to work and strongly assert itself. We will continue to advocate for those who need it most and we will continue to advocate to government for support to be the best service provider possible. Yes, we will continue to be ‘busy’. At the same time, Northside Connect will continue to position itself as both community contributor and leader on Brisbane’s northside. I look forward to being part of that into the future, with all the Northside Connect team.

I commend the Northside Connect Annual Report to you.

Yours sincerely



Chris Irons, President




ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FUNDING

The Northside Connect Inc (NCI) would like to acknowledge funding from the following sources:

The Nundah Neighbourhood Centre Program receives funding from the Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy. The Brisbane North Community Legal Service is funded by Federal and State Government, distributed by the Attorney General of Qld under the National Partnership Agreement. The Domestic Violence and Family Support Program is funded through a combination of both Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy and Federal and State Government funding, distributed by the Attorney General of Qld. NCI also receive additional assistance through one off grants from Government and Philanthropic sources and generous donations from community members, local businesses and other organisations.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our local members, Councillor Adam Allan, Northgate Ward, Leanne Linard, State Member for Nudgee and Anika Wells, Federal Member for Lilley. At Northside Connect we are very fortunate to have passionate, committed local members who recognise the value of the work we do at Northside Connect and have given us their support over the year in serving our local community.



THANK YOU



THANK YOU

Thank you to Maïke Hale who continues to give us her time and design skills to the creative development of the Annual Report.

Maïke enjoys wearing different professional “hats” as a Social Worker, Career Counsellor, Educator and Graphic Designer with over 25 years’ experience in the Australian and Global Human Service Sector. In January this year, Maïke returned to Australian shores after 6.5 years immersing herself in professional and personal experiences in North China, Colombia and Canada.

After maintaining a long-distance relationship with Northside Connect during her time overseas, Maïke was happy to find that the ‘spark’ was still there, and thus the relationship of designing the annual report continues this year, and hopefully for many years to come.



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THANK YOU

*“The Northside Connect Inc Management Committee
for 2021-2022 includes these fabulous people.”*

President - Chris Irons

Chris Irons is the Director of independent strata consultancy Strata Solve, which helps clients untangle strata problems with tailored solutions. For over 5 years Chris was Queensland's Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management, the only role of its type in the world, and he has over 2 decades of experience in public sector policy development and leadership roles. Chris is also Director of the Board of Strata Community Association (Qld), another not-for-profit, which is the strata peak body.

A proud Nundah resident, Chris has been a member of Northside Connect's Management Committee for 5 years and has been President for 4 of those. Chris believes in the diversity of the community of which he is part, and can often be found at cafes, bars, barbers and other retailers in Brisbane's northern suburbs. He can also sometimes be found walking Ernest, the retired racing greyhound to which Chris is a human slave.

Treasurer – Wendy Clark

Wendy Clark has lived in and around Nundah since the 90s and joined the Management Committee as Treasurer in 2018. Wendy holds a Bachelor Degree in Management – Accounting and has worked in small to medium businesses in administration and finance for over 25 years as well as running her own bookkeeping service. Wendy's current role is working for a global software company managing administration staff and accountants in 9 countries.

Ordinary Members

Patricia McArthur

Patricia retired after spending her career working for the Queensland Courts, Office of State Coroner, Department of Justice and Attorney General and Victim Assist Queensland. Patricia is an active volunteer with the Nundah Community Support Group Inc offering her assistance with administrative support, event management and fundraising activities. Patricia has been on the Management Committee since 2011.

Michael Power

Michael Power joined the Committee of the Nundah Neighbourhood Centre and Community Legal Service at the end of 2016. Michael's experience as a social worker for over 25 years, including management and operational positions, in the areas of child protection, family law, family support, mental health and victims of crime contributes to the broader work of the committee. Michael is committed to supporting the creativity and contribution of the centre as part of the fabric of the local community.

Stephanie Ewert

Stephanie has been a solicitor for over 20 years, working in law firms and community legal centres. She is now Principal Lawyer and Director of her own firm, Whippet Legal. Stephanie is passionate about community organisations and grateful for the opportunity to contribute as a member of the management committee.

Jessica Cameron

A local Northgate resident, Jessica joined the management committee in late 2020. Jessica holds a Bachelors degree in Business, Human Resources and a Post Graduate Certificate in Information Technology alongside a diverse career across travel, transport and mining sectors. A passionate volunteer in a variety of previous roles, Jessica enjoys interacting and contributing to the local community.

Olivia Keppel

Olivia has a Bachelor of Social Work and has experience working in Intensive Family Support and the Domestic and Family Violence Sector. Olivia has previously facilitated community programs with Northside Connect and is looking forward to continuing her support as a member of the committee.

Matt Stevens

Matt has been a Northgate-Nundah local since 2010 and joined the committee in 2022. Matt has worked in the human services sphere for 13 years, in the areas of data analysis, stakeholder and community engagement, program operations, contract management and compliance, training and presenting. He is also experienced as a successful small business owner. Matt is keen to support positive outcomes for the clients and community of Northside Connect.



STAFF

Sharon Gingell - Coordinator

Sharon Gingell has been the Coordinator of Northside Connect since March 2012. She has over 27 years' experience in the Community Sector and has experience working in homelessness, family support, domestic violence and mental health. The Coordinator is responsible for the day to day operation, management and development of the Northside Connect Inc programs and activities.

Yolandi Beer – Principal and Family Law Solicitor

Yolandi commenced in the role of Family Law Solicitor in February 2019 at Northside Connect. Yolandi completed her law degree in 2013 and went on to complete her Graduate Diploma in Practical Legal Training in 2014 and has a wide range of experience in Family Law, Domestic Violence and Will and Estates matters. Yolandi is passionate about assisting vulnerable clients from all walks of life in Family Law and Domestic Violence issues and strongly believes there is no "one size fits all" approach to resolve legal matters. In addition to being the Family Law Solicitor Yolandi has also been in the Principal Solicitor role since July 2021. Yolandi now oversees the provision of legal information, advice and referral to members of the community through the Brisbane North Community Legal Service.

Eugene White – Generalist Solicitor

Eugene has been a Solicitor with the BNCLS since 2008 and from 2021 has undertaken generalist advice work and community legal education. He was admitted as a Solicitor in 1980 and has practiced primarily Brisbane and in generalist private practice litigation with various periods interstate and in corporate, public and community practice.

Lisa Berlin – Social Worker

Lisa has enjoyed a long career with the Neighbourhood Centre, commencing employment with the organisation shortly after receiving incorporation and funding. Lisa is highly regarded for her expertise in domestic

and family violence and is responsible for the development and delivery of a number of domestic violence programs including the Journey's Program and the Facilitator Training Program. The Social Worker provides individual and group programs and services through a centre based, counselling focused model of service delivery.

Kellie Darben – Finance Officer

Commencing as Finance Officer in 2013, Kellie's significant experience in financial management has been essential to the ongoing viability and management of the organisation. The Finance Officer provides financial administration services to the NCI and Secretariat support to the Management Committee of NCSGI. Kellie resigned from the role of Finance Officer in June 2022

Fatima Boorooni – Finance Worker

Fatima started working at NCI in July 2022 and has a Diploma of Accounting and over 5 years' experience in accounting. Fatima is responsible for all of the accounting responsibilities of NCI including account payable, receivable, payroll, reports, budgeting, Auditing etc. Fatima is really enjoying working in a community service role and has significant background experience working with non-profit organisations. She is a multi-cultural, bilingual woman, an efficient employee and supportive team member.

Kamal Kaur – Legal Services Administrator

Kamal started at the position of Legal Service Administrator in February 2022. Kamal has an overseas law degree and completed her Master of Laws degree from Victoria Law School (Melbourne). She has over seven years of experience working in the Community Legal sector and government sector. Kamal's role is to provide legal admin support to three clinics of Legal Service and manage a team of volunteer lawyers and law students.

THANK YOU



Wendy Cussen – Legal Services Administrator (casual)

Wendy Cussen was a previous employee of Northside Connect, returning to fill the temporary role of Legal Service Administrator from May 2021 to February 2022. The role included data entry, client file organisation, support for Principal Solicitor and Day Solicitor, volunteer coordination and the organisation of the weekly Evening Legal Service.

Jo Money – Intake and Reception Worker

As the Intake and Reception Worker at NCI, Jo is first point of contact for clients and community members seeking assistance including information and referral, legal assistance, domestic violence support and information about our programs and activities. Jo has worked as both a volunteer and paid staff since joining the organisation in 2012 and was previously in the role of Legal Administrator for 6 years.

Nicky Hickman – Legal Service Support Worker

Nicky has been in the role of the legal services support worker since November 2020 when the position was created through Covid 19 funding. Nicky is a final year Human Services student and previously completed her student placement at the centre. She works closely with the Family Law and Generalist solicitors in assisting clients with legal tasks and referral. This role finished in February 2022, when Covid 19 Funding ended.

Ana Leighton Quezada - Cleaner

Ana started with Northside Connect as a volunteer, then moved into the role of cleaner in 2020. Ana juggles cleaning the Centre along with her other jobs and spending time with her children and grandchildren.

FAREWELL TO JANCEY & KELLIE

This year we said farewell to two of our long-time staff, Jancey Grefstad who was with us for 13 years and Kellie Darben for almost 10 years. Both Jancey and Kellie were integral and valuable members of the Northside Connect community, contributing so much of their time with us.

Many would know Jancey from her time at the front desk, often being the first person people spoke to when seeking assistance. She always offered a friendly face, words of compassion and understanding and a depth of knowledge on what help was out there that is hard to replicate. Jancey is one of a kind and she will be keenly missed by all. Jancey also held the role of Legal Services Administrator for both the Domestic Violence Legal Clinic and the Generalist Legal Service. Jancey left Northside Connect to return home to New Zealand, to her family and other job opportunities.

Kellie held the role of Finance Manager at Northside Connect but brought so much more than her knowledge of budgets and numbers. Kellie worked tirelessly on many of the events we held, taking a lead role in the planning and delivery. We will remember her most for her passion for community and her drive to see the organisation well resourced and supported through fundraising and other activities. Kellie has moved on to another role and to spend more time with her family.

We wish to thank Kellie and Jancey for everything they gave to Northside Connect in their time with us, we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.





STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS

“We started 2022 with renewed hope, opening up the centre + starting many of our groups + activities”

THANK YOU

STUDENTS

Northside Connect has an ongoing commitment to hosting University students on placement so they can fulfill the practical requirements of their degree. At Northside Connect we aim to create an environment that fosters and encourages students to grow, build their confidence and develop new skills essential to their future careers. In return students contribute a lot to the work of Northside Connect, taking on a leadership role in various projects, helping to plan and run events, assisting with programs such as food relief and Journeys and developing resources for the community. Thank you to our students for 2021 – 22, we wish you all the best with your career in the community services sector.

Second Semester 2021

- Stephanie Tait – Bachelor of Human Services, Final Placement
- Teagan Reynolds – Bachelor of Human Services, Final Placement
- Chloe Myler – Bachelor of Human Services, First Placement

First Semester 2022

- Leah Ariss – Bachelor of Human Services, Final Placement
- Lilly Keen – Bachelor of Social Work, First Placement
- Tahlia Miller- Forrest - Business Administration Trainee

VOLUNTEERS

Neighbourhood Centre Volunteers

This year, we said goodbye to a number of our volunteers who, due to the ongoing impacts of Covid 19, made the difficult decision to finish up with NCI. We would like to acknowledge and thank these volunteers, many who have been with us for more years than we can count. We wish them all the best.

English Language Classes

- Sandra, Gary, Anthony & Olivia

Community Lunch

- Bill

Food Relief

- David, Ana & Eduardo

Community Garden

- John, Sue & Roger

After a tumultuous few years of uncertainty and groups being temporally closed in response to Covid restrictions, we started 2022 with a renewed hope that we could once again open up and recommence many of our groups and activities. To achieve this we put a call out for new volunteers with an interest in giving back to their community in a very real and practical way. We were very fortunate to have a number of people respond and once again have a fantastic group of committed and skilled volunteers. We welcome our new volunteers and thank them for their contribution to Northside Connect and the day to day delivery of services with the Nundah Neighbourhood Centre Program.

English Language Classes

- Margaret, Janet, Kimberley, Marian & Shannon

Citizenship Program

- Pat, Phil & Anthony

Food Relief

- Julia, Chris & Trish R

Garden/ Grounds

- Jeff, Ainya, Rachel & Bernie

Sewing Group

- Robyn, Nancy, Pauline, Shirley & Trish R

Yoga

- Carmel

Admin

- Trish M

Events

- Kym, Catherine, Natasha & Matthew
- 

STUDENTS & VOLUNTEERS



THANK YOU



VOLUNTEER PROFILES

Julia

My name is Julia and I am one of the friendly volunteers at Nundah Neighbourhood Centre, assisting in the food relief program weekly on Tuesdays. I decided to volunteer at the Neighbourhood Centre so that I could contribute to helping people in the community who need extra support for food, social interaction and a safe environment to meet other people and belong. I have been a volunteer at the centre for over one year now and during this time I have met some funny, interesting, quirky and charismatic characters, staff member's, clients and sometimes their furry friends too. While volunteering at the Neighbourhood Centre I have enjoyed meeting the other staff members, students, other volunteers and clients all of whom have diverse backgrounds. Some of the reasons I decided to stay as a volunteer at the Neighbourhood Centre are to meet new people, learn new skills, try something different, be involved in my local community and be an advocate for people who may feel marginalised in the community.

My role at the Neighbourhood Centre is to organise donated food into bags, filling them with a mix of fruit, vegetables, meat/non meat products, dairy products, bread/pastry/ cakes/ or tinned or dry food. I always delight in watching our clients reactions when they open their food bundles, and I enjoy having a friendly chat with those around, knowing I am making a difference by helping these men and women who come for support.

Chris

I retired from my work after 35 years as a senior manager in the retail world. I have worked with large teams of people to build their capabilities and watch them grow to further their career. I always wanted to volunteer and I came across the Nundah local news discussing the food relief program at Nundah Connect. I thought this would suit me. My volunteer role is in the food relief program and on Tuesday we sort through the food that has been donated. We then start to pack bags for our clients who have booked in to collect their goodies. I also have helped cook a lunch and clean up.

Working with the other volunteers; the ladies at the centre; and our clients, listening to them tell a story, having a laugh and sometimes offering some comfort is what I like most about volunteering at the Centre. One client said the other week that it was the best meal he has had because it was hot and on a plate. I like to see that these people are grateful for what they are given.

I feel that this is my time to give back and I go home every week feeling great to help out those in need.

OUR FOOD RELIEF VOLUNTEERS



"I have met some funny, quirky + charismatic characters, staff members, clients + furry friends too"



LEGAL SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Wednesday Evening Legal Service Volunteers

Thank you to the BNCLS dedicated volunteers - acknowledged individually hereunder - for their vital contribution, giving freely of their time often after a hard day of work or study.

We provided various Volunteers' Inductions and updates; plus the NCI hosted an end of year whole of Centre function for all volunteers, staff and Management Committee, combined with the AGM. Volunteers' advices retain their overall high quality with only occasional substantive clarification with clients and volunteers necessary.

We sadly had to say goodbye to some of our longstanding legal volunteers due to their increasing work and family commitments:

- Michael Burgess
- Melanie Thorley
- Calum Woods
- Josh Zande
- Tenayah Zande
- Aaron Ball
- Natalie Corica
- Ella Craig
- Francesca Da Silva
- John Davies
- Christopher Duplock
- Liz Katona
- Sacha Mackness
- Andrew Osbourne
- Graham Roberts
- Marie Sambanis
- Caleb Theunissen
- Daniel Trigger

*"Thank you to all the BNCLS dedicated volunteers
for offering their time to assist our community"*

THANK YOU

We thank them for offering their time to assist our community by their consistent years of volunteering.

One of our long-standing volunteer legal students Natalie Corica was admitted to the legal profession in July 2021 and Yolandi Beer, our Principal Solicitor was honoured to be her mover. We wish Natalie all the best with her career as a promising young lawyer.

CURRENT VOLUNTEERS

Lawyers:

- Aaron Ball
- Glenn Carthew
- Franco Ciottarello
- Manuel Oyson
- Cindy Philipp
- Andrew Osbourne
- Elijah Edwards
- Ellie Prior
- Liam Spargo
- Sam Cooper
- Lauren Gracie
- Marie Sambanis
- Victor Wong
- Jarryd Spence
- Daniel Trigger
- Melanie Thorley
- Darcy Walsh
- Caitlin Monaghan
- Claudia Esmonde
- Blake Sonda
- Halligan Quinn
- John Davies
- Natalie Corica
- Michael Burgess
- Josh Zande

- Sally Newman
- Graham Roberts
- Andrew Piper
- Liz Katona

Legal Students:

- Tanzih Ahmed
- Tamsin McAlister
- Summer Brady
- Timothy Rainbird
- Anita Antony
- Savannah Trafford
- Caolin Travers
- Emily Ballard
- Christina McKay
- Kirsten Burrey
- Gus Whittome
- Ethan Graham
- Michael Arkadieff
- Isla Kumail
- Annie-Jean Kemp
- Elizabeth Jordon
- Matt Stark
- Varshali Koshe
- Chelsea Bodimeade
- Emma Lukeji
- Mitchell Webster
- Loa Robinson
- Navdeep Singh
- Lizzie White
- Melissa Murchie
- Tenaya Miano
- Abby Maurenski
- Samantha Thomas
- Tahlia Davis
- Hannah Trotter
- Mahan Nouri

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Hello!

My name is Cindy and how lucky am I to make it into this annual report.

My career journey to The BNCLS has been like a 'plan for pirates'. Some of column A and some of column B and many bits in-between. I knew from a young age that I wanted to help people, but how I would do that I did not know. I credit wanting to 'help others' from having caring, kind, and compassionate parents.

My pathway first began in nursing over 25 years ago. Throughout these years I volunteered in different ways helping the aged, animals and underprivileged people. Halfway through my 25 years I wanted to expand my knowledge and experience and continue to help others. As a nurse, the law impacts on how we practice, and we are often confronted with patients that are either impacted by law or will at some point be needing legal advice/representation.

My life and career experience led me to integrate a law degree into my nursing skill set. During the degree, my legal placement was in a community legal centre. I knew immediately that this is where I wanted to end up.

Upon graduating, no positions existed within the community legal centres. I practiced in a few private law practices where I soon discovered that they were not the right fit for me. Throughout this time, I continued to volunteer and continued to share my knowledge and experience through teaching at certificate level to master's at university in nursing and law. As time went on, I decided that if all I could do to help people legally (in community legal centres) was through volunteering, then this is what I must do.

So, the search to increase my volunteering began and how lucky am I to have found BNCLS.



"If all I could do to help people with legal issues in a community legal centre, was through volunteering, then this is what I must do."

EVENTS

With big events like Nundah Festival being cancelled due to Covid 19, we held events on a much smaller scale, so we could still celebrate times like Christmas, raise awareness of issues such as domestic violence and fundraise for the organisation. We also contributed to the planning of Sorry Day 2022, but unfortunately this was also cancelled due to flooding at Kalinga Park.

AUGUST 2021

Homelessness Week

Held from 1st – 8th August, Northside Connect ran a clothing drive “Give the Gift of Warmth” alongside a social media campaign aimed at raising awareness of homelessness and its impacts.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Pop up clothing shop

Nundah Festival is a significant fundraiser for the organisation each year and with the 2021 festival being cancelled, we had to find other ways to bring in much needed funds. The pop-up clothing shop was a great way to do this and with the assistance of Populace Threads, an online recycled clothing store we held the event on the Sunday. Although we did not get as much foot traffic as we would of at the Festival it was still a very successful event.

Child Protection Week

The original plan was to hold a stall at the Nundah Festival; however this was cancelled and the organisation had to seek an alternative option. Instead NCI held a free movie morning at Toombul cinema, screening a child friendly movie with families from the local community were invited to attend.

Brisbane Festival

Brisbane Festival and Vulcana Women’s Circus to held a series of workshops for women who have experienced violence at Northside Connect. These workshops taught circus skills with the aim of giving women the opportunity

to learn new skills, build personal and physical strength and have some fun. 8 workshops were held and women of all ages and abilities attended.

OCTOBER 2021

Start by Believing Launch

During Sexual Violence Awareness Month in October the ‘Start by Believing All of Us’ video was launched at Northside Connect. Approximately sixty people attended the launch. A client of Northside Connect, with lived experience of Sexual Violence gave a powerful speech about the importance of being believed.

NOVEMBER 2021

30 year celebration

In November 2021, the organisation achieved 30 years of incorporation. Northside Connect Inc (NCI) formerly known as Nundah Community Support Group Inc (NCSGI) was started by a group of volunteers and was incorporated in November 1991. Since incorporation the Organisation has gone through many changes, continuing to evolve and adapt, but has always held on to our reason for being, to deliver services that respond to the needs of our local Nundah Community.

To celebrate this significant achievement, we held a dinner and invited volunteers past and present, students, community leaders, businesses, other community organisation’s and local government representatives to join us. The evening was also at trip down memory lane, with a photo display of the work of the organisation and those that had been a part of it in some way.





DECEMBER 2021

Christmas in the Village

Held in our carpark and working in partnership with Nundah Now Inc, Majestic Church, Rotary Nundah and Lions Nundah, the Nundah community celebrated Christmas with live music and entertainment, sausage sizzle a visit from Santa and presents for the children.

Pop up Christmas markets

In conjunction with The Plant Lounge we held a pop up Christmas Markets in our carpark. With a number of stalls, including one for our Sewing Group selling handmade goods, food and drinks it was a perfect night for some Christmas Shopping and catching up with the local community.

Client Christmas party

The end of year Christmas Party is an excellent opportunity to bring together our diverse community and client group, celebrate the achievements of the year. With a gourmet BBQ, entertainment and a visit from Santa, it's was a fantastic day for all.

MARCH 2021

International Women's Day

Northside Connect celebrated the diversity and achievements of women in the local community of Nundah and surrounds with an event at the centre. A self-care booklet and care package was created and handed out to the women who attended

MAY 2021

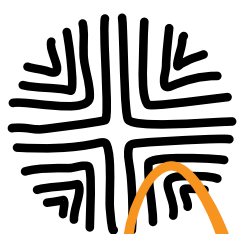
Trivia Night

In May 2022 our Trivia Night Fundraiser made a staggering \$6,085 for our Domestic Violence and Family Support Program. The evening was a great social event for all who attended and we thank our sponsors, staff, management committee and volunteers who made the night an outstanding success.

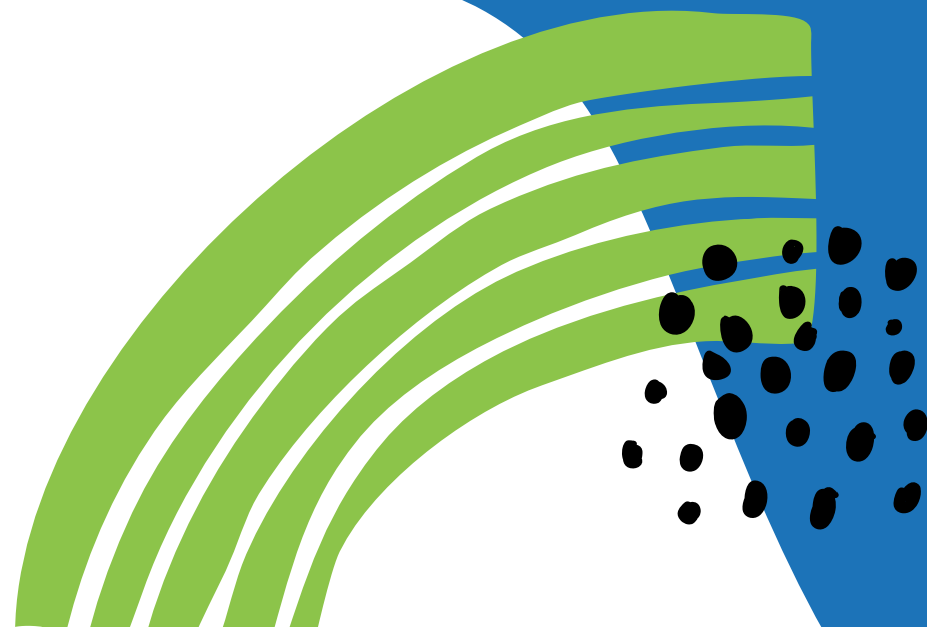
Injustice of Intimacy Podcast Launch

During Domestic and Family Violence Prevention month (May) we launched Series 2 of the Injustice of Intimacy podcasts about Coercive Control. Thank you to Leanne Linard MP for officially launching the second series and to the women who shared their stories and experiences of being involved in the project





NUNDAH NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE



SOCIAL INCLUSION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our social inclusion and community engagement activities continued to be challenged with covid restrictions, including lock downs throughout the second half of 2021. Being mindful that accessibility of services is a primary barrier to getting the help people can sometimes desperately need, we focused on creating opportunity to connect with community and provide services that are flexible and accessible.

Following the challenges of the end of 2021, we started 2022 with a renewed hope that we could return to "services as normal". This has been a slow process, marred by the resignation of most of our volunteers; people being required to be in isolation due to Covid; and the impacts of the February floods. However, we closed the financial year with most of our groups back up and running, and numbers slowly increasing. Our social inclusion and engagement activities throughout the year have included:

Community Garden

This year we saw renewed energy in our community garden. A very dedicated group of volunteers have been working hard to clean up the area, add new plants, nurture growth and engage more people through social media.

Sewing Group

Every Wednesday, the sewing group met to share skills and knowledge and help each other to make a range of items including clothes, linen items, Christmas decorations, bags and much more. All materials and resources for sewing groups are donated by our local community.

English as a Second Language classes

We continued to provide conversational English Classes twice a week to students where English was their second language. These classes open to anyone in the community wanting to improve their English conversation skills, with two ability levels offered. We also ran a 8 week project helping people where English is their second language to get prep for the Citizenship test

Yoga

Each week a group of community members gathered in the community meeting room for yoga classes led by our volunteer teacher Carmen. These classes offered people not just a form of gentle exercise suitable for all abilities but an opportunity to relax and recharge in a supportive and safe environment.

Community BBQ

After over 12 months of no community lunch (due to COVID restrictions) we started running a monthly BBQ that quickly turned into a weekly one. Community lunch has always been one of our most popular activities and we have loved bringing it back again.

Drop in support

With Covid restrictions still in place for much of 2021/22 the Centre continued to offer limited drop in support. Staff and volunteers offered emotional support for people going through challenging times due to COVID, floods or other personal crisis.



5429 TIMES

Information and referral was provided 5429 times on Emergency Relief; Housing; Domestic Violence support; Family support and counselling; Mental Health and Disability; and Social support activities and services.

1887 PEOPLE

Attended events and one off activities at the centre this past year.

600+ PEOPLE

On average over 600 people attended our weekly Groups and activities including front space drop in, sewing group, English as Second Language Classes, Yoga and sewing group.

People sought assistance for food and emergency relief through the following ways: (a) Fruit and veg hand out twice weekly; (b) St Vincent De Paul visiting service and (c) NNC Pantry.

500 KGS/MONTH

Food and groceries: on average 500 kgs of food relief provided per month.

95 MEALS/WEEK

Community lunch, frozen or other meals: based on providing 95 meals per month.

95 HRS/MONTH

Volunteer contributions: on average 95 volunteer hrs per week.

AMANI'S STORY

Amani a woman in her 50s, relocated to Brisbane shortly before the COVID19 pandemic. At the time of moving to Brisbane, she knew no one in the local area and due to ongoing lock downs and restrictions had almost no opportunity to make connections in the community.

During Covid, Northside Connect continued to run its weekly fruit and veg hand out and Amani often attended. In early 2022, Northside Connect recommenced its community lunch with a weekly BBQ, and Amani now comes regularly on a Tuesday to both activities. She shared her story with community worker Siobhan.

"I have been really lonely and struggling to afford groceries since moving to Brisbane. The handout means it tops up my cupboard at home so my groceries do not cost me as much. I am grateful too for the social connection as my anxiety and mental health got worse in isolation. Coming to Northside Connect has made me feel like I have a community and helps reduce my stress of life."

SOCIAL INCLUSION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Responding to the Brisbane Floods 2022

In the February 2022, many residents of North Brisbane were left devastated by the floods that hit the region, losing their homes and/or businesses. Many more lost power for many days or were flooded in due to roads and buildings being inundated with water. The loss of Toombul Shopping Centre a local service hub for many as well as a place of employment and socialisation has also hit the local community hard.

In response to this, Nundah Neighbourhood Centre started to receive not just calls for help but community members enquiring on what they could do for those people who were flood affected. Many people wanted to purchase items or cook food but were unsure what that should be. We have limited capacity to store food, especially fresh or cooked food so were turning people away and having to send them elsewhere. We identified that everyone's needs were different, and we needed a response which could be flexible and easily implemented eg some people would need specific food, nappies, cleaning products etc. We also received feedback from the local state member and other Northside Neighbourhood Centres that they were getting the same sorts of enquiries.

In response to the impact of the floods, Northside Connect contacted the office of our local state member, Leanne Linard Member for Nudgee, other Neighbourhood Centres, local businesses and other local community organisation to develop and implement a response to the immediate financial and other needs of people impacted by the floods in the North Brisbane area. It was identified that donations of gift cards for major retail outlets that could be given out was the ideal response.

So we put a call out to the broader community to donate vouchers, which would then be handed out to people requesting food or financial assistance through either Nundah or Zillmere Neighbourhood Centre.

The response was overwhelming with almost \$4,000 in vouchers being donated and distributed through both Nundah and Zillmere Neighbourhood Centres. Thank you to the people and businesses that donated vouchers including Leanne Linard, Member for Nudgee, Nundah Village Shopping Centre, North East Baptist Church and Boomerang Bags

We also made sure the community knew they could come to us for information and referral, to charge devices, use our phone and internet or just sit and have a cup of tea and chat to someone during this extremely distressing time. We did this through social media, word of mouth, holding a stall in the Nundah Village and attending a forum for Toombul Businesses.

The ability to set up and deliver this project quickly, with a short turnaround of 2 -3 weeks was made possible because of the relationships and connections Neighbourhood Centres have with their local community. Another key factor was having the trust of the people and businesses who donated to us, knowing that we would make sure the vouchers got to those people most in need, when they needed it most.

Being responsive to the immediate needs of the community in a collaborative and flexible way is key to the Neighbourhood Centre model and continued to be at the core of all that we do, even under the challenges posed by the floods.



SOCIAL INCLUSION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Emergency Relief

Requests for emergency relief continues to be a primary request with Covid, Brisbane floods and a housing crisis all contributing to individuals and families finding themselves in financial distress. The Northside Connect emergency relief program relies entirely on donations from others. When we have had to put the call out for items to restock our pantry, the community has responded time and time again. Donations of food, toiletries, clothing, linen and other items have come from a number of sources including:

- Oz Harvest who collect/deliver hundreds of kilos of donated food to the centre;
- St Vincent De Paul whose volunteers provide emergency relief vouchers and assistance from the Centre twice a week;
- Share the Dignity who provided a Pink Box that includes free sanitary items for women;
- JJ Richards for providing a recycling bin to dispose of all the boxes from food delivery;
- Bridgeman Baptist Community Church who donated 80 food hampers for families at Christmas time, as well as frozen meals and food hampers throughout the year;
- Other organisations/businesses including: Sai Baba Aarti Program Brisbane, Majestic Church, Boomerang Bags Nundah, Goodstart Early Learning Hendra, Penola Casa, North East Baptist Church, Nundah Village Shopping Centre, Leanne Linard Member for Nudgee, Fitstop Nundah, Nundah Community Health, Busy Bees Australia who all donated food and other items to our pantry; and
- Our local community who have fundraised for us, donated money, food, clothes, blankets, linen, small household items and much more in order to make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable community members.

Information and Referral

Information and referral services continued to be offered via phone, email and limited face to face, with requests for emergency relief, housing, domestic violence and social support being most prevalent. Providing information and referral services is not just about giving phone numbers and information about different services in the community, but also taking time to listen to people stories with an empathetic ear and acknowledge the issues and challenges they are facing. Everyday our staff, volunteers and students answer dozens of calls from people in sometimes desperate need for help and their patience and understanding with each and every phone call is making a real difference for people at a time when they are at their most vulnerable.

Collaborating with our community

We could not achieve all that we do without the assistance and input of many other community organisations. This year we had several partnerships and working relationships that supported the work of the Organisation. We would like to recognise and thank those organisations that we worked with to continue to deliver essential services, raise awareness and run events. These services have included:

- Kurbingui Youth and Family Services
- St Vincent De Paul
- Sandbag Association
- Noonga Reconciliation Group
- Northside Alliance of Neighbourhood Centre
- Nundah Now Inc
- Queensland Families and Communities Association
- Brisbane Festival







DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Counselling

Quote from a woman who has been attending counselling at NC:

'Moving into this area after enduring CPTSD for many years as well as living in an abusive marriage, it was profoundly healing and liberating to find highly professional, trauma-informed counselling at Northside Connect. The individual counselling offered, along with the Journeys program, truly helped me get back on my feet. I will be forever grateful.'

As with all programs over the past year, the counselling program was impacted by Covid, albeit less so than the previous year. Our previous experience provided for a well-practiced response to the lock downs including the utilisation of online resources like Zoom and Teams. For some women Zoom has become their preferred counselling option, particularly where there were transport constraints, or working from home, and for those who live a significant distance from NC.

The counselling service continues to be in high demand with few free or low fee services available for women where there is also specific knowledge and expertise in DFV. Due to the nature of the trauma, victim/survivors often benefit most from medium to long term counselling thus limiting availability for new clients. The counselling service at NC continues to prioritize in-house requests for counselling from NCs Domestic and Family Violence Legal service and tries to accept these referrals where possible. The service also works to accept as many referrals from QPS and Brisbane Domestic Violence Service.

Northside Alliance Against Domestic Violence (NAADV) and Northside Sexual Assault Action Network (NSAAN) 'Start By Believing All of Us' Project

Although both NSAAN and NAADV met partially via zoom over the past year there was a very active group of workers, including this worker, who came together to help organize a Sexual Violence Awareness Month (SVAM)

project. This project, 'Start by Believing All of Us', was a collaboration between NSAAN and NAADV and culminated in a short video of women creating a banner over 3 workshops at 3 different locations on the northside of Brisbane: WWILD, Northside Connect and Strong Women Talking. The theme of the banner and video was 'Start by Believing... all of us.' The video also includes voice overs from 3 women talking about their experiences of being believed or not when disclosing sexual violence.

On the 19th October the 'Start by Believing All of Us' video was launched at Northside Connect. Approximately sixty people attended the launch (the limit due to Covid restrictions). Hannah from WWILD, an active member of the working party, was the Emcee; an NC client with lived experience of Sexual Violence gave a powerful speech about the importance of being believed; Leanne Linard, who was unable to be there in person, provided a written speech read by this worker; and the video was played for all. Postcards of the banner were handed out. The backside of the postcards included contact numbers and websites of sexual violence resources and the QR code that linked to the video. The banner was hung and displayed outside along one of NC's walls and after the formalities people hung around for a light lunch, some live music and networking. Many people took photos of the banner and of themselves in front of the banner.

Quote from participant of this project:

'Working as part of a group of survivors designing and painting our segment of the banner, with its vivid, positive images and strong colours, was an uplifting experience - the polar opposite of the disempowerment that is the core of sexual assault. And the launch event held at Northside Connect at the end of the project affirmed and celebrated the women's personal capacity and sense of agency.'

The video can be accessed via YouTube by

STORY FROM THE JOURNEY'S PROGRAM



"I joined a Journeys group soon after leaving a very difficult relationship. Holding a set of new, safe, unshared house keys in my hand was so good it felt surreal, but I was so mentally and emotionally run down that the prospect of building a new life from scratch was really daunting.

The Journeys program supports women who have lived with intimate partner violence to safely come to grips with what has happened to them, working in the company of other women with similar experiences. We explored the nature of coercive control in relationships and how to identify warning signs of it emerging in any future situation.

Lisa and her coworkers created a really empowering environment where I was able to make sense of what had been a long, extremely confusing, disempowering and painful ordeal. Having the opportunity to take part in Journeys broke down the isolation I had felt for a long time. It enabled me to rebuild my confidence and life skills, and to start healing."

Journeys Group Program February 2022 – March 2022

The Journeys Program is a free, confidential group program for women who have experienced violence and/or other forms of abuse in their intimate relationships. The group is facilitated by 2 domestic violence support workers and combines therapeutic and educational components. The program works from a feminist framework and uses trauma informed and strength-based approaches to address issues such as: the impact of violence and abuse on women and children; safety for both women and children and women's personal strengths and resourcefulness. Northside Connect has been running the Journeys program since 2000. Due to Covid constraints about group meetings, and other commitments throughout the year NC was only able to offer one Journeys group program. The program was facilitated by this worker and Olivia Keppel, from Mary and Martha's refuge, and Lilly Keen, the social work student on placement at Northside Connect. This program ran from the 11 February 2022 – 25 March 2022.

Between Omicron Covid, the Brisbane floods, and a disruption in week 5, this Journeys program had some challenges. Taking place in the middle of Omicron Covid 19 meant many restrictions were put in place to maintain Covid Safe practices. This included strict limitations on the number of participants, requiring facilitators and participant to be double vaxed, requiring the wearing of masks for the duration of the group except when eating/drinking and adhering to social distancing guidelines and practices, no swapping of chairs or equipment and wipe down of chairs with disinfectant wipes after use.

Registrations closed after fifteen women to ensure the group remained within Covid guidelines. (In 'normal' times NC takes over 30 registrations.)

- One woman, who had very recently had cochlear implants, found it near impossible to understand speakers with masks on. We worked around this by asking whoever was speaking to remove the mask temporarily. Fortunately, halfway through the program the restrictions eased, no longer requiring mandatory wearing of masks.
- Two, possibly three women contracted Covid and had to miss out on a couple of weeks.
- Week 3 – Brisbane floods! The heavy rains began two days before and many Brisbanites were bunkering down. Facilitators made the call to hold group and 4 of the seven women were able to make it. One woman was badly affected by the flood, had to relocate temporarily and missed two consecutive weeks of group.
- Week 5 - was disrupted by 3 women entering the other side of the activities room. Although it was innocent (they were from Boomerang bags) there was, rightfully, an expectation that we were the only ones in the building. The noise of the key turning and others voices greatly upset the women, 2 of whom arrived at group on high alert for their safety. The women from Boomerang bags were asked to leave immediately however the damage had been done. After some grounding and conversation, the group eventually returned to a calm environment. Unfortunately, one of the women found the incident very triggering and chose not to return to group.

The small number of group participants lent itself to quite an intimate setting which meant that all of the women had ample opportunity to be heard. This was reflected in their evaluations where some of the women commented on enjoying the opportunity to talk in a small group setting.

SURVIVOR/VICTIM VOICE INVOLVED IN THE WWG

The Injustice of Intimacy Podcast – Series 2, Coercive Control

NC received funding from Legal Aid Qld Community Legal Education Collaboration Grant to create a second series of podcasts under 'The Injustice of Intimacy' banner. This series specifically focussed on Coercive Control in DFV relationships culminating in the development of 6 podcasts. Each podcast included a woman with lived experience where they told their story, focussing on a particular aspect of coercive control, and a worker explaining their organizational role and their response to that aspect of coercive control.

The 6 podcasts cover the following topics:

- Recognising coercive control in young people's relationships
- How systems are used to further perpetuate coercive control
- The impact of coercive control on mental health and wellbeing
- Coercive controlling behaviour and the impact on children.
- Financial abuse as a means of coercive control
- Finding support and assistance to rebuild and survive coercive control.

A very similar process to the first series was utilized in creating this second series of podcasts. This worker and the co-ordinator worked together to oversee the project from beginning to end. A working party, the WWG (Women's Working Group) was organized early on to develop the podcasts with the expertise of five women with lived experience and Emma Matthews, a worker from Kurbingui, to assist with inclusivity and cultural sensitivity regarding the experiences of DFV for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The inclusivity of an ATSI worker on the WWG was an important addition in this second series.

The WWG spent months on the development, organization and implementation of the podcasts and the launch. The WWG first met in July 2021 and continued meeting on a regular basis (sometimes face to face and

sometimes over zoom) throughout the year up until the launch on 18 May 2022. The dedication from this group of women was unwavering and they all remained actively involved in the project all the way through to the actual launch. Four of the women from the WWG also recorded a podcast.

The recording of the podcasts with Tide Productions took place at a studio in Kangaroo Point on the 24th, 25th and 26th November. Learning from the first series, it was decided to use a studio instead of trying to create a studio at NC.

The podcast launch took place at NC on the 18th May with approximately 50 people in attendance. The launch opened with an Acknowledgment from Aunty Cepha who also recorded an acknowledgment for the podcasts. Leanne Linnard officially launched the podcasts and spoke about Coercive Control and the QLD governments commitment to new legislation for coercive control.

All five women from the WWG with lived experience volunteered to be part of the panel for the launch. The two other women who recorded podcasts were also invited to take part in the launch and did so in different ways. One recited a very powerful personal poem she'd written about her experience of coercive control and the other contributed a painting created for the launch to demonstrate her journey of healing. The panel moderator was Emma from the WWG.

The social work student, Lilly, interviewed the women separately after the launch and gathered information for an anonymous qualitative evaluation of the project. The evaluation affirmed that the experience was important for all of them and they all felt a sense of cohesion in that their experiences were validated by others. Many of the women also relayed that they found the project had helped them to build and regain a sense of confidence.

"Although I was excited to have the opportunity to take part in the women's working group which created Series II of the Injustice of Intimacy podcasts, I wasn't sure that I'd able to contribute in any meaningful way to a type of project that was totally new to me. But the very supportive, collaborative way in which the whole group worked from the very beginning made it easier than I'd expected to join in and find small ways to contribute to the planning."

The objective of the podcasts was to raise awareness of the ways in which coercively controlling behaviours may be used to abuse an intimate partner, and to increase listeners' capacity to protect themselves. I knew first hand how confusing and deeply demoralizing this sort of abuse can be, so it was empowering to be able to put bad experience to good use in this way."

I was nervous in case someone who happened to identify me as a contributor to a podcast might think I was fraudulent and 'out' me to my ex, because my situation had been really well hidden from most people around me, who would not have dreamed that he was ever anything but sweet, funny, and nice."

But having experienced how destructive coercive control is to a target's general health and wellbeing, and knowing how deadly it can ultimately become, put my anxieties into perspective and made participation an easy decision."

Taking part in the panel discussion at the launch event was scary because I had a very long-standing habit of concealing my situation for fear of making it worse. But coercive control in intimate relationships has been very widespread, and successfully hiding in plain sight, for much too long. We urgently need to bring it to light and seriously address it community-wide."

SURVIVOR/VICTIM VOICES



"I have been involved in a number of activities at Northside Connect. This is an absolutely brilliant community centre, that has been totally invaluable. Without fail, everything that is organised and set up through the centre has been done, with genuine heart and compassion. Making everyone feel heard, seen and valuable. Which makes the world of difference when someone isn't in a good place.

The people that bring everything together are incredibly compassionate and deserving of support, as they give so much support and create safety to those who might not feel it on a day to day basis. Having been through the Journeys program whilst leaving a DV situation with small children. Having one on one counselling. I was able to acquire tools that lead me to change the trajectory of mine and my kids lives. For the better.

Forming healthier boundaries in my life, and gaining better understanding of my triggers I have been able to learn a great deal in a safe space that is made at Northside Connect. I was then lucky enough to be involved in the Coercive control Podcast. Knowing that Lisa was in the room to keep me feeling safe and grounded was particularly import and helpful. The things that I spoke about weren't the easier things to speak about. As through her time and experience I've been able to overcome so much more than I ever thought I'd be able to. In my mind, knowing that if just one person could hear what I'd had to say on the podcast, and intern would be safer or feel heard made it worthwhile doing."

Group Facilitator Training for Working with Women who Have Experienced DFV x2

The continued demand for the Group Facilitator Training for Women who Have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence saw two more 6 week training programs held over the past year. Broken to Brilliant, a charity run by DFV survivors, received funding for 8 women to participate in the training which was held in August and September 2021 and the second training, attended by a diverse range of workers was held in May/June 2022; nine women completed the second training. The trainings emulate a group process so participants experience a parallel to a Journeys group program while learning and enhancing facilitation skills specific to a DFV women's group. The experiential nature of the program requires each participant co-facilitate a part of a session with another participant, followed by a reflective process involving all participants to capture as much learning as possible participant facilitators.

The weekly topics covered are: group preparation and beginnings; building connections and a sense of belonging; leadership and co-facilitation roles in DFV groups; managing conflict and challenging group dynamics; diversity and intersectionality in groups and evaluating and finishing groups.

The purpose of developing and implementing these trainings is to skill the workforce so more groups like the Journeys programs become available to women in the community. Since the completion of the trainings several participants have made this worker aware that they have facilitated such groups. One of the organisations, Life Without Barriers, have held 3 groups for their clients based on this training and plan to continue to hold two more groups in the coming year.

"Coercive control can be a difficult concept to understand - both for those trapped in it and for outsiders. The next few pages shares a victim/survivor's experiences of coercive control"



EXCERPT FROM SUBMISSION TO THE WOMEN'S SAFETY AND JUSTICE TASKFORCE

“Coercive control is not something that you can feel or touch, so a lot of victims are unaware of this type of control”

I was in my relationship for 4.5 years. I managed to get out of the relationship around 2 years ago. If asked at the time I had left I would have said it had been going on since the first violent outbreak (1 year in). In reality it had started before the relationship had.

I wasn't aware that I was in a coercive controlled domestically violent relationship until I left and sought help from a professional. I was aware that I was in a violent relationship that I had been trying to leave for the last 3.5 years of our time together, and I knew there was always something non-visible preventing me from leaving (the threat of financial ruin, the threat or exposing a stockpile of ammunition he had apparently gathered against me from day one to my family, friends or bosses, the threat of taking my dog which was legally his but who I cared for, fed, walked, paid for etc. and so forth, the threat of following me, killing/harming me or any future partners and basically wasting my life living in fear if I were to leave etc.).

Coercive control is not something that you can feel or touch so a lot of victims are even unaware that this type of control / abuse is happening to them. If explained to friends or family it is usually followed up with, “well if he says things like that, why wouldn't you just leave?” or “I never pictured you to put up with something like that, you're usually such a strong person.”

This is probably true, such as in my case, I was an independent young woman, youngest of 6, the first to venture out of our small town, had lived on my own since I was 20, moved between 3 states not knowing anyone where I was moving to, had been in a management

role with the one company for 10 years and financially stable. I had found my voice as an adult and had always stood my ground in situations I was uncomfortable in or didn't agree with and could see and avoid situations I knew weren't good for me.


However, hearing this from people you look up to, family, friends, colleagues, police, just gives you one more hit to your confidence and strength (after many at home), which makes you question yourself, your situation, your sanity and plants just one more seed into the thought of “this isn't how I usually react to things, maybe he IS right that I'm crazy and it's all me”. You also lose a bit of confidence that you had in your support team and feel like you can't reach out again for help without the risk of people getting annoyed and judging you for not already leaving.

The coercive control started bit by bit from a week or two before we started dating. Making small comments about the people on my facebook or instagram, commenting that my exes from years ago were on there and only someone with no self-respect would have their exes on social media. I brushed this off for a month or two and thought “I'm still friends with them, I can have who I want in my life” but the comments became more frequent and more aggressive but always made sure never to say “you have to” but instead emphasizing my lack of morals, self-respect and like I was doing something wrong by having them on there until it eventually became easier to delete them and move on. That was his first victory. Then throughout the relationship the comments about my friends, the issues he had with them, how they make me look bad and bring me down socially as they aren't

respectable and how I degrade myself by hanging around people like that. “You don't want people to think you're like that do you?”, “I won't tell you who to hang around but it really shows a lack of self-respect associating with people like that”, “I don't know if I can be with someone who shows that little respect about themselves by being seen with people like that”. Careful never to say he forbade it but repeatedly made me question my self-respect and made it seem like it was him or them. If I did go out with them and he wasn't invited he would show up, follow me and make comments to let me know he was watching, call or message me repeatedly until it was so uncomfortable, I'd have to leave or give me a ridiculous / impossible time I'd have to be home by. If I were a minute late or even if I were early I knew I'd be walking into world war 3. There was no avoiding it which made it so hard and so unenjoyable that I eventually didn't bother anymore and eventually lost touch with my friends.

I went from visiting my family once every month or two at the most (in a different state) to maybe once or twice a year. It would have to be when he was able to take time off at the same time and I couldn't go alone otherwise I didn't care about him, didn't respect him and was obviously cheating on him with the exes from over 10 years earlier that I had to delete from social media.

We had to be in contact 24/7. I had to change my roster to reflect his as we both worked in the same location and if he started earlier I'd have to go with him and wait 3 hours to start work so he could keep an eye on me. If we took separate cars we would have to drive one directly in front of the other, while on the



phone to each other in silence as we drove 30 minutes - 1 hour home. If I tried to hang up to listen to music I was accused of calling someone. My days off or time with family / friends were spent constantly on the phone to him to keep tabs on where I was, what I was doing and who I was speaking to. There was absolutely no time apart.

We went halves in expenses, any left over he would ask for and spend. I was untrusting and nosey if I asked what it was for, but he made sure I never had a spare cent to go out with or have for myself. He racked up 40k worth of debt as his wage was spent on things I don't know of and he was secretly paying bills with the credit cards. After finding this out and trying to leave he said it was our debt and had already spoken to lawyers to confirm he could financially ruin me if I left or didn't pay it in full. Knowing I don't know much about that side of legal things he used this to create fear and trap me into the relationship.

He would swing wrenches, fists and objects at me and after connecting a few times the threat of doing it again was enough to stop me leaving for a very long time.

It is easier to reach out for help when you have the marks to prove the abuse, and I say easier as even getting help with marks or evidence is not an easy task, but it is much harder to reach out and receive help for coercive control without it just looking like you're whinging or bitching about their bad habits and not being taken seriously.

An example of this is when I had left the relationship and was couch surfing between friends and colleagues' houses and my friend had convinced me to go to the police after receiving text messages from my ex, two of which were stills of videos he had taken throughout the relationship without my knowledge of intimate times we had in our bedroom. He had set up his phone beforehand and recorded these private moments which he was then threatening to share with my family, friends and bosses at work. If I didn't tell him

where I was, who I was with or come home by midnight these would be forwarded on, my name dragged through the mud and my employment over as I'd be too embarrassed to stay.

I reluctantly went to the police station (after a few horrible experiences with police) after I'd seen they had anti domestic violence displays / posters all over the front of their station thinking this time I may get some help. Unfortunately, the officer at desk who I saw did nothing to assure me I was in the right, not crazy or even deserving of using his time. After explaining the situation to him he rolled his eyes and took my phone, started scrolling through my messages (even when asked not to go up too far as the photos were not something I wished others to see), looked at the photos at length and then read some messages.

As he was behind glass, I was unable to retrieve my phone back and all he said was something to the effect of, "he says you owe him money" (another lie to tie me into the relationship) " sort your money problems out before wasting our time". Just to be clear I owed him no money; he had actually drained any money I had before the relationship. The officer then took a call from my ex and said "its officer _____ from Stafford police, yeah she's in here making accusations again. I just told her to deal with the money she owes you before coming to us"

That one phone call:


1. Told my ex where I was therefore being able to work out who's place I was staying at therefor forcing me to pack up and move again.

2. Confirmed to my ex that he was in the right, what he was doing was right, that he had everyone fooled and, on his side, that I had nowhere to turn other than back to him, and that he was able to find me wherever I were to go.

3. Confirmed in my head that I was alone with nowhere to turn to police, that he was either a master manipulator with everyone wrapped around his finger and that maybe I was crazy for thinking his action were dangerous or not normal.

This was just one of many similar experiences I had when reaching out to the police even up until the final time before the temporary DVO was served. I was accused of wasting the police officers time by not having a DVO put on him earlier even though I had been trying for roughly 2 months to have one put in place.

After living in a relationship where you are coerced in to not keeping contact with friends, losing touch with family, changing jobs to suit them, becoming financially entwined and dependent on them, being fearful of going out due to being followed or accused of things if you do, being forced into certain things with the threat of repercussion and basically becoming trapped with the threat of what will happen if you leave, you lose all sense of yourself. You forget who you were or how you survived before the relationship. You live in fear of what damage they will do to your life, your belongings, your pets, family, friends, image, financial stability. You question your sanity and if people will believe you over this person who is so loving, caring, fun and understanding in social situations. You lose all self-confidence, and when you finally do get the courage to seek help and receive the treatment from police that I did, it solidifies the thought of what they have spent all of this time and effort making you fear and completely stops you from feeling safe to reach out again.



CASE STUDY

Rosie* who is in current legal proceedings for a property settlement and is now self-represented due to being unable to pay legal fees. The other party was a lawyer and supported by barristers. Rosie was very overwhelmed heading to the hearing. She was unaware she could apply to the Court for a Section 102NA order which we suggested to her. Section 102NA funding is given under a separate Legal Aid pathway to provide representation for self-represented people at hearing so that they do not cross-examine an abuser or be cross-examined by an abuser. The client rang for another appointment and let us know that she applied for the funding order and was granted a Mention by the Registrar and was then awarded the Order. This will substantially improve her experience at the hearing and make her feel less intimidated and more prepared. It is a good outcome for her.

* de-identified

BNCLS CLIENT FEEDBACK

"I would like to thank you for taking the time to explain all the things that I didn't understand and for providing me with genuinely useful advice and information relevant to my case. I'd also like to thank you for providing me with useful links and services that may be able to assist me with my case. Although we only had a short time together, considering I was receiving free legal advice (which I am incredibly grateful for). I wanted to let you know personally, that I feel you have gone above and beyond for me. You were never dismissive or condescending, you were happy to answer any question no matter how silly I was worried it would sound. You have provided me with enough resources that I am now feeling confident that If I do have to self represent at my hearings I will have enough knowledge and courage to do it by myself without overwhelming myself with fear. Thank you so much for meeting with me and being your natural down to earth honest self. It was incredibly refreshing and I wish there were more women in the world like you. Thank you again."

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & FAMILY LAW CLINIC

The Solicitor provides legal advice to women exclusively in the areas of domestic and/or family violence and family law. Men requiring assistance are provided legal advice by our generalist legal service.

The DV & FLC provides daytime appointments on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday from 9:30am – 4:00pm. This allows us to provide appointments during the times best available for women who have numerous family and life commitments. The appointments run for 90 minutes and this allows for sufficient time to advise client and assist in some legal tasks. The appointments are offered either over the phone or in person at our centre.

In the last financial year the DV & FLC provided a total of 196 advices which included a combination of face to face and phone advices providing over 300 hours of legal advice at no cost to our clients. Over 76% of these client appointments dealt with issues of domestic and/or family violence.

Legal Tasks

As part of our legal service we do continue to provide limited discreet legal tasks in some cases. The legal tasks are discrete limited assistance and includes but are not limited to applications for Domestic Violence Orders, writing affidavits, reviewing completed family law and domestic violence applications and orders etc. We had more capacity to do so within the Legal Support Worker role but seeing that this is such a much needed service we continue to try and offer this service as best we can while we are hopeful to have this again funded as a stand alone service.

COLLABORATIONS

HWL Ebsworth Secondment

In May 2022 we have partnered with HWL Ebsworth lawyers as part of their secondment program. The program offers an opportunity for law graduates to assist a community legal

service with their day-to-day operations to ensure maximum service delivery. This collaboration is invaluable opportunity for new law graduates to learn how the community sector operates but also is of great assistance to the community legal service to maximise service delivery. We thank Meg Evans and Mialily Park for their assistance in the last financial year. Their support to our legal service in both administrative duties and client management has been invaluable and much appreciated.

Podcast Project

BNCLS was fortunate to be part of the podcast project – series 2 – Coercive Control. Our Principal Lawyer, Yolandi Beer was interviewed as part of the series to put a legal lens on Coercive Control – Where the legal world is at and what is being proposed and how this will affect victims of Coercive Control and change their experience. BNCLS was also involved in ensuring all victims survivors were de-identified and that Northside Connect complied with all necessary requirements in all publications.

HOLISTIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Family Support Program and Counselling

The legal service continues to have a collaborative relationship with the Centre's Family Support Program (FSP) providing a range of services to women impacted by domestic and family violence. This holistic approach allows women to receive advice, information and support based on the current difficulties they are encountering. When appropriate, outside referral pathways are provided for a wide range of support services for additional assistance and we continue to build allies with networking partners in the appropriate support services and specialised community legal centres to best serve our clients where our funded services fall short.

CASE STUDY

Mary* contacted Brisbane North Community Legal Service for advice on how to respond to an application for a DVO that her step-son had applied for naming her estranged husband as the aggrieved party. Both she and her estranged husband were of a mature age, and she was struggling to understand the legal process as well as the technical aspects of using a computer. She was disputing that she was the aggressor of DFV in the relationship and stated that she had been subjected to years of emotional abuse and coercive control during the marriage which had been exacerbated by lock downs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mary's response to the courts was due during a lock down in the Greater Brisbane area which further complicated her access to services that could assist her.

Following her telephone legal advice appointment with the DFV specialist solicitor, Mary was referred to the Legal Services Support Worker to assist her in drafting her response. This was facilitated by phone over a three-hour appointment during which a draft affidavit was prepared, which was later reviewed by the DFV solicitor.

This was not something that Mary would have been able to complete on her own. She was not financially able to fund a private solicitor due to having limited funds on an aged pension and would not be eligible for Legal Aid

Assistance due to jointly owning a property.

As a result of the assistance she received, provided via the Covid-19 Legal Assistance Funding, she was able to access justice, submit a response to the DVO application in time





BRISBANE NORTH COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

The Brisbane North Community Legal Service continues to provide much needed legal assistance and support services for not only the local Nundah area but also to the broader Brisbane North communities.

During the last 12 months we have refined our internal processes to adapt to the ever-changing situation with Covid. Adapting our service delivery and working from home processes allowed us to seamlessly continue service delivery even through frequent snap lock downs in 2021 and beginning of 2022. We have now successfully implemented phone advice as an ongoing service delivery option.

Generalist Service (Day)

The daytime generalist legal service continues to assist clients in all legal matters from neighbourhood disputes to consumer matters in providing legal advice, information and referrals. The generalist legal service provides daytime appointments on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am – 4:00pm.

Rodger sought assistance from BNCLS in 2022 with regards to a child protection matter. The solicitor was able to facilitate and assist the client with a "warm referral" to take his matter further - Rodger said he "much appreciated" our work; it "really, really helped" him" and "I cannot thank you enough".*

**De-identified*

Feedback from BNCLS Client – Generalist Service

"I appreciate greatly the documents sent and the Solicitor Recommendations. I have spent much time reading the documents sent and have found them very helpful."

Evening Legal Service (Volunteers)

The Wednesday Evening Legal Service continues to operate over the phone and by appointment only. This assists us in better service delivery to clients with work commitments that are not able to attend a day-time service or in person after hours. Overall the three legal services the BNCLS provided 390 legal advice sessions to the community.

Community Legal Education

In addition to partake in the podcast project the BNCLS also offered the following Community Legal Education opportunities:

- UQ St John's College
- Session on Mandatory Vaccinations – NANC
- Young People and the Law – Mary Mackillop College, Craigsley SHS
- Legal Careers – Everton Park SHS
- Elder Law – Northside Community Session

GOODBYES AND WELCOMES

Jancey Grefstad

Jancey has been with the centre since 2008 being at front desk and in 2020 Jancey moved into the legal administrator position. Jancey went back home to NZ in mid-2021.

Wendy Cussen

Wendy backfilled as legal administrator from 2021 to January 2022. We thank Wendy for her role in backfilling the position and working hard especially during the ever-changing frequent lock downs.

Nicky Hickman

Due to the end of funding we had to sadly say goodbye to Nicky as Legal Support Worker. Even after Nicky finished her role as Legal Support Worker she did a short backfill for Joele Money at front desk. This just goes to show how Nicky is always happy to assist the centre wherever required and she did so with passion and enthusiasm. We wish Nicky all the best in her career in Human Services.

Sunita Collis

Sunita backfilled the family law and acting principal position while Yolandi Beer was on maternity leave from January to July 2022. We thank Sunita for her time and holding down the fort during her 6 month contract.

Kamal Kaur

We welcome Kamal as the new Legal Administrator. Kamal continue to assist the legal service in streamlining internal processes and managing the volunteers of the legal service.

Challenges and What's new

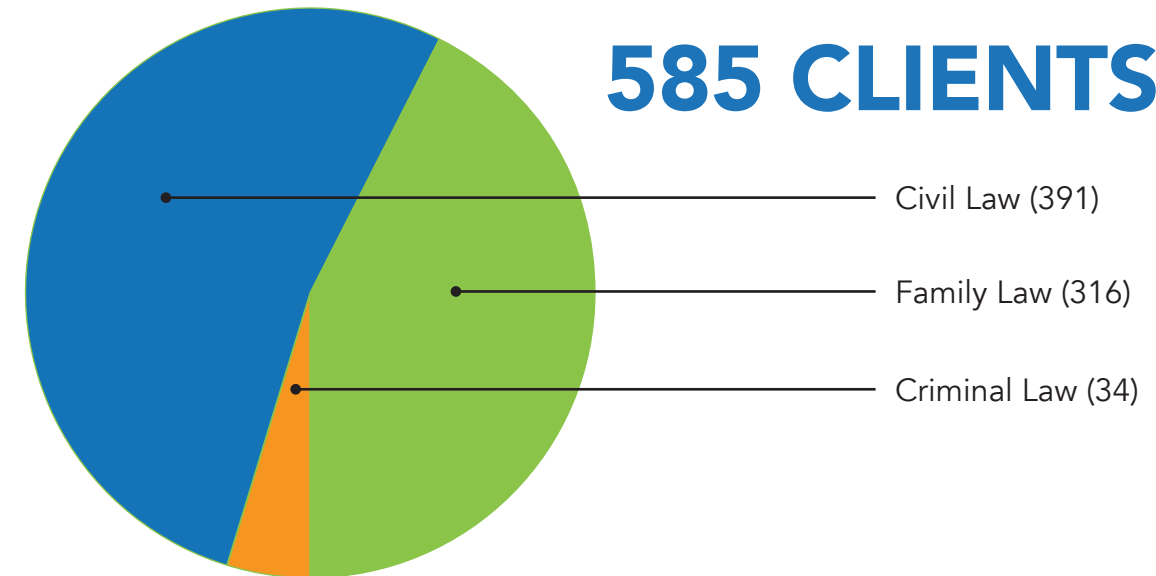
Some of the challenges were service delivery in a post-covid world. As in all organisations and workplaces we faced challenges on mask mandates, vaccination requirements and balancing our duty of service delivery to our clients and community. We had some staff shortage due to Covid and our Principal Lawyer unexpectedly going on maternity leave early. Through all the challenges Northside Connect and the Legal Service pulled through and ensured that safe and consistent service delivery was the forefront of all operational decisions made.

What's new?

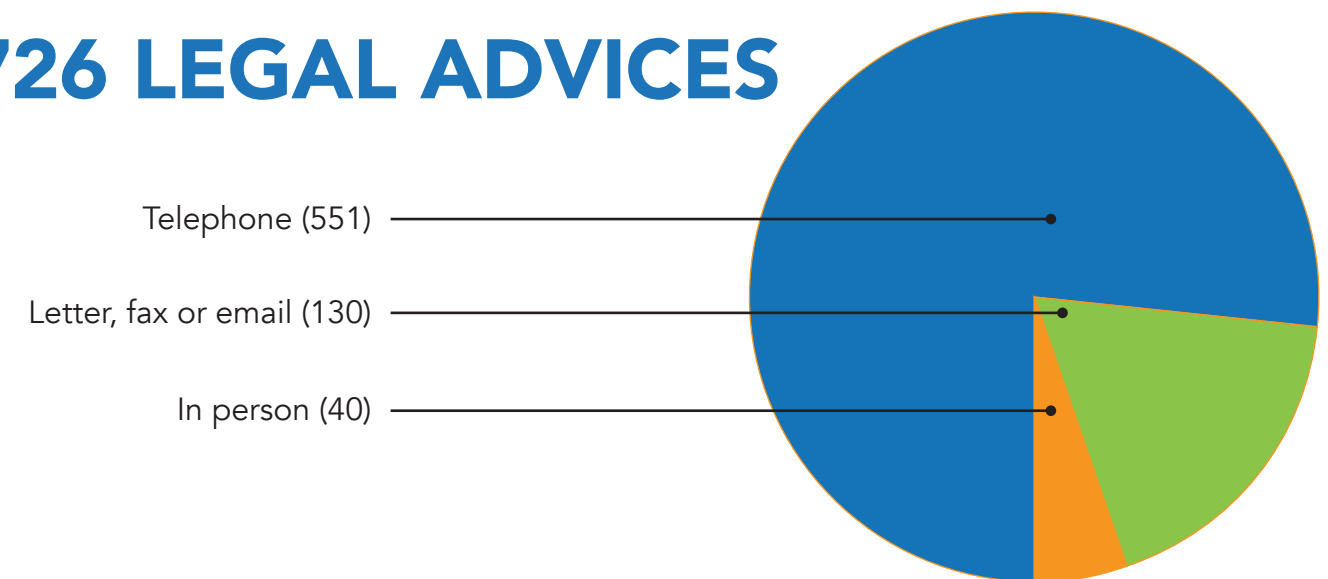
- We have implemented electronic intake sheets. This greatly assist our admin staff to free up time to answer more calls as they longer have to spend so much time in the intake process. This also makes it more convenient for clients to complete on any device. We do still offer alternative options for clients that do not have technological capabilities or facilities.
- BNCLS have evolved to now be almost completely paperless. The major move to paperless was brought on by Covid and to enable staff working from home when required. A lot of work has gone into ensuring that proper security measures were put in place like multi-factor identification login processes and other cyber security measures to ensure we maintain our high level of confidentiality and service delivery while avoiding putting barriers in place for clients to access services

STATISTICS

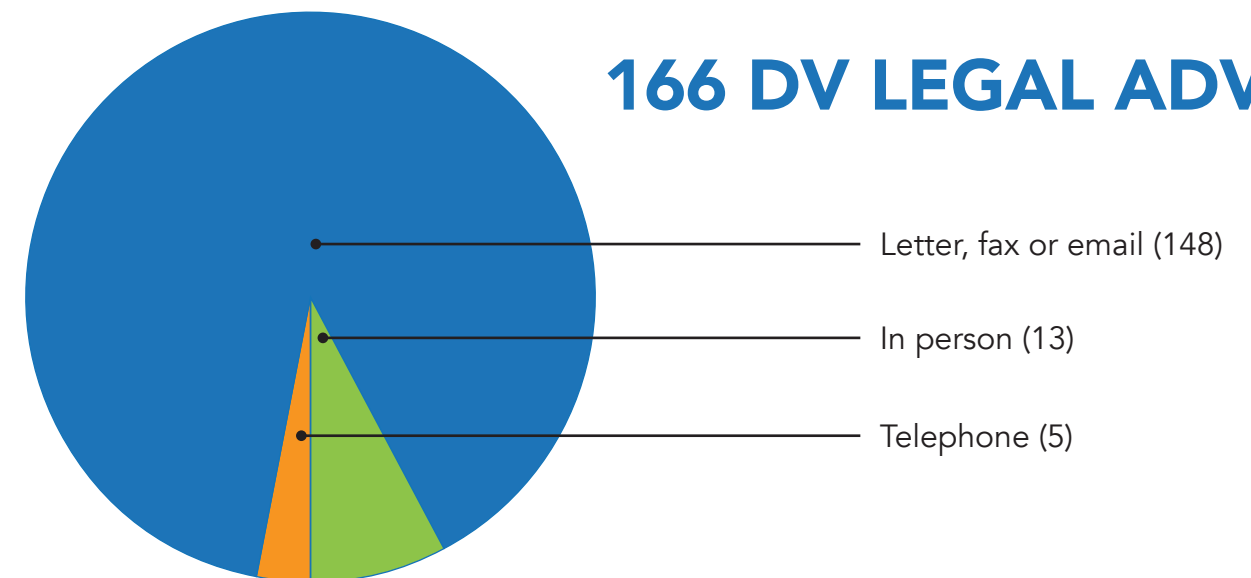
585 CLIENTS SEEN



726 LEGAL ADVICES



166 DV LEGAL ADVICES



FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report of the Treasurer

I have great pleasure in submitting the Audited Financial Report for Northside Connect for the year ending 30th June 2022. Our auditor, Arabon Audit & Assurance, has prepared the Incorporation's Financials for 2022 and in the opinion of the auditors the Financials are a true and correct record of Northside Connect's performance and they comply with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC) obligations.

I note for the interest of our members, the Northside Connect income for the 2021/22 year consisted of the following:

- Department of Justice and Attorney-General: \$293,005
- Department of Communities, Disability Service & Seniors: \$283,649
- Brisbane City Council: \$2,550
- Non – Grant related Revenue: \$26,000+

Total income for the year amounted to \$735,700, with expenses amounting to \$719,653 resulting in an overall profit for the organisation of \$16,046. We maintained budget and have a healthy cashflow moving into the new financial year.

Our Group Training facilitator workshops & Journeys Program revenue continues to improve each year raising over \$11,000. Unfortunately, no Nundah Festival in 2021 but our fundraising highlight was a trivia night at Devils Leagues raising over \$6000 which we are sure to repeat in 2023.

Day to day running expenses of \$32,000 were kept to budget. Improvements to the centre included new lighting, additional security cameras and functional folding tables.

I believe the organisation has and will continue to have a strong financial platform from which it can operate to provide the essential services required by our community.

I would like to acknowledge the staff and volunteers at Northside Connect for all their hard work and continued dedication.

Wendy Clark, Treasurer

THANK YOU

Acknowledgment of Sponsors, Donors & Supporters

- The Department of Communities, Disability & Seniors
- The Department of Justice & Attorney-General
- State Member for Nudgee Leanne Linard
- The Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust
- Brisbane City Council
- Councillor Adam Allan Northgate Ward
- Federal Member for Lilley Anika Wells
- Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust
- Loving Nundah
- Mozmo Creative
- Norris Motor Group
- Nundah Now Inc.
- Oz Harvest
- Rotary Club of Nundah
- Bridgeman Baptist Church
- The Majestic Church
- Micah Projects
- Act for Kids
- Grill'd Ascot
- Konstruct by Synergy
- Bespoke Family Lawyers
- Cloud Legal Online Conveyance
- Anika Wells
- Federal MP for Lilley
- Jephson Hotel Toowong
- Beta Electrical
- Bunnings
- Kedron Wavel RSL
- Norths Devils Rugby League
- The Plant Lounge
- Hachette Book Group
- All Inn Brewing Co
- Moira McDonald
- Chris Irons
- Marian Nolan
- Wendy Clark

Northside Connect

Provided \$674,613 in community value in 2021

This includes the value of:

Improved quality of life through social connection **\$297,592**

Volunteer contributions **\$245,320**

Services provided: **\$11,400**

Emergency relief value includes:

o Food and groceries: **\$120,300**

Services value includes:

o Community lunch, frozen or other meals: **\$11,400**

This community value equates to:

\$2.60 for every **\$1** of Queensland Government Neighbourhood Centre funding
or **\$158.73** for every **1 hour** the neighbourhood centre was in use.

These values are produced by Neighbourhood Centres Queensland based on data provided by Northside Connect in the 2021 Neighbourhood Centre Survey. Only a limited range of activities where a determinable valuation method exists are included. Data was collected from the Second Quarter of 2021 when no Stage 1 Lockdown Restrictions were in place. Additional data calculation support was provided by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

Employment

In 2021 **Northside Connect** provided 3.3 full time equivalent positions including 2.4 direct and 0.9 indirect positions.

Other community groups

Provided auspice arrangements for 1 community organisations in 2021 worth **\$632**