

2020 *impact* REPORT

RENEWING HOPE • BUILDING RESILIENCE
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY



Strength in times of change

Change and challenge has defined the last 12 months for all of us. Organisationally, change has seen Outback Futures extend our support and care into new regions in Central West and North West Queensland. For our outback communities,

many continue to face the challenges of a long hard drought, and some continue the journey of recovery from February 2019's devastating floods. Layered over all of this are the changes and challenges of COVID-19. Our established Stay With Me telehealth platform ensured our support of our outback communities remained consistent throughout the COVID-19 restrictions, as we journeyed alongside our clients, deepened community connections and stepped into new opportunities to navigate COVID-19 together.

We are greatly encouraged to see the ways our outback communities are proactively engaging with our team and having courageous and honest conversations. We're seeing subtle but significant shifts in attitudes around mental health and wellbeing, and this energises us for the journey ahead.

We continue to invite others to share this journey with us, and have strengthened partnerships with funding bodies, donors

and community supporters. Our work is made possible with generous financial and in-kind support from like-minded people and organisations who are committed to seeing positive long-term change in mental health and wellbeing outcomes for Queensland's remotest residents. We are thankful that even in the face of economic uncertainty, our supporters have prioritised funding to support our outback.

Relationships are key to who we are as an organisation, and the trusted relationships we have with our clients and communities are possible because of the commitment and dedication of our staff team. We have seen significant growth in our team in response to deeper engagement with our communities, and our people are passionate about supporting and caring for our outback family. It is our joy and privilege to walk alongside kids, adults, families and whole bush communities, and we look forward to the journey ahead.



Peter Whip, Chairperson



Selena Gomersall, CEO



CREATING LONG TERM CHANGE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES IN OUR OUTBACK COMMUNITIES, THROUGH:

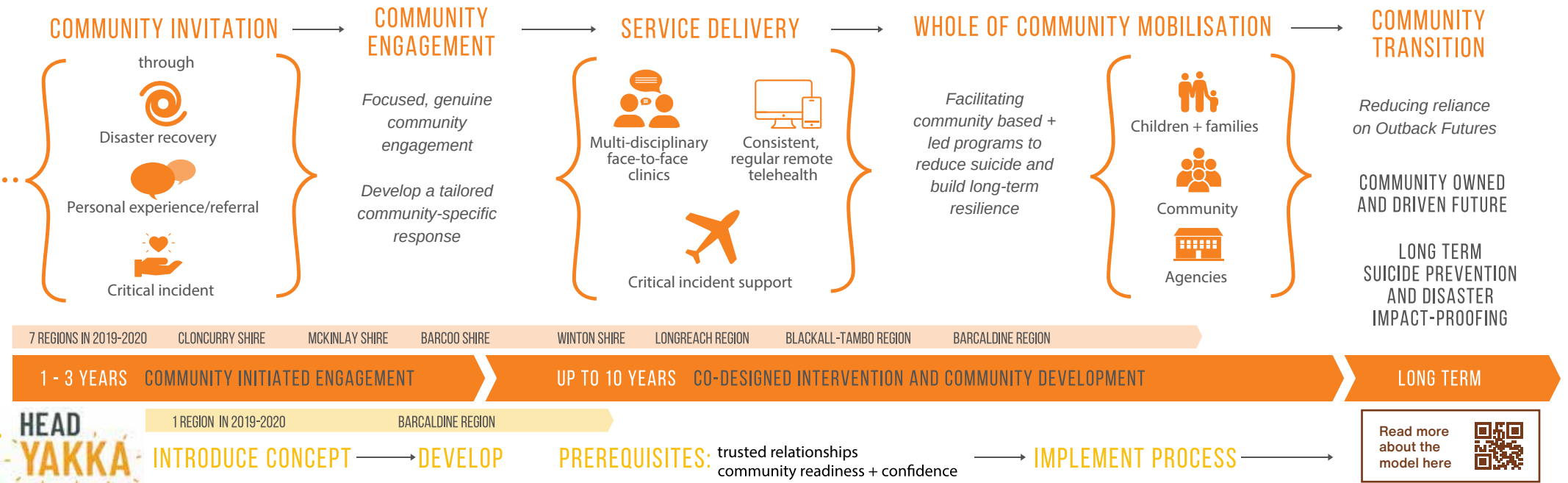
COMMUNITY FACILITATION MODEL

A unique, long term primary prevention approach to suicide prevention and mental health for rural and remote communities, with child and family focus, seeking whole of community change.



HEAD YAKKA

Co-designed with council, community and stakeholders to facilitate greater understanding, confidence and advocacy for their own and each other's long term mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Not a stand alone model, HEAD YAKKA is developed in conjunction with the Community Facilitation Model.



community ENGAGEMENT

Often the spotlight shines on our clinical delivery because this is easy to quantify. However, our Community Facilitation Model encompasses a whole of community approach to mental health and wellbeing, so many of our activities and outcomes are harder to quantify, but essential to generating long term change.

It's difficult to report on things like meeting over coffee with a mayor, facilitating a community forum, playing an impromptu game of netball with teen girls, or checking in with teachers after running a professional development workshop. Even when our team is not visiting a community, we remain connected – it may be a phone call to a parent whose child is needing support, working with community leaders to organise upcoming community wellbeing workshops, or following up with a client who didn't check in for their last appointment.

These intentional points of connection, combined with our clinical deliverables, are creating individual and community transformation.



“People in the bush talk about a gap between what support services are needed, and what's available. Accessibility is a big issue for us. Now, people are talking about Outback Futures filling that gap, with flexible, responsive, consistent and accessible services that are delivering support and care in ways that meet the needs of our communities.”

Peter Whip, Chairperson

clinical SUPPORT

Stay With Me
video-phone connect

3,445  total appointments

443  total Stay With Me clients

Face-to-Face
clinical support in our communities

833  hrs of face-to-face support

156k  kilometres travelled

9  community clinics

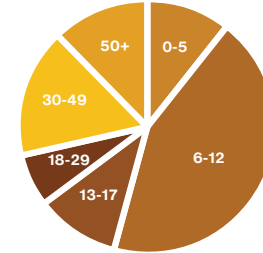
2  critical incident response and support

 Find out more about how we're connecting with our outback communities

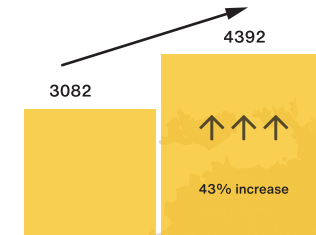


WE CONNECTED WITH **600 CLIENTS**
ACROSS **7 REGIONS**

WITH PEOPLE
OF **ALL AGES**



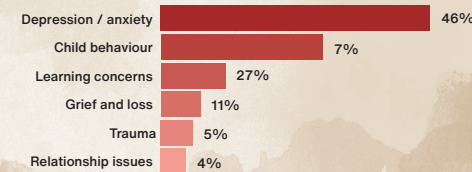
DELIVERED
43% MORE
APPOINTMENTS



TO PROVIDE THE
SUPPORT PEOPLE
NEEDED



WE SUPPORTED
165 NEW CLIENTS



“We take it as normal that it takes a long time to access things, or it takes a lot of money to access things, or it takes a lot of travel to access things. And it doesn't have to be that way because of what Outback Futures offers.”

“I'm in a very different space than I was this time last year.”

Throughout COVID-19 restrictions we stayed connected with Casey, a Longreach small business owner and Outback Futures client.



OUR CARE AND SUPPORT CONTINUED DURING COVID-19

Throughout COVID-19 restrictions, we maintained connection with our clients across all our outback communities through our established Stay With Me video-phone connect service. In fact, our number of connection points increased on the same period last year:

1650
appointments

2019 FEB - JUNE

2437
appointments

2020 FEB - JUNE

INCREASE OF 787
APPOINTMENTS

“Outback Futures offers programs that regularly support the wellbeing and emotional development of students in many therapy areas and this is hard to come by in rural and remote areas who are impacted at the least, by the tyranny of distance.”

Sharon Mac Donnell
Principal, Tambo State School



“I was facing depression, anxiety, and dyslexia,” shares Dave*, who was managing an outback Queensland property when he connected with Outback Futures.

Conversations with his counsellor revealed Dave was socially isolating himself because of the fear and shame he felt around his very low literacy level, undiagnosed learning challenges, and the associated sense of failure. Through Dave's courage to ask for help, and his determination to make changes, his life has been transformed.

“The Outback Futures team gave me the ability to believe in myself, and that I could do what I thought was impossible with regards to reading and writing,” says Dave.

“Once the Outback Futures team worked out what it was that I needed, a lot of the work they did for me was over the phone,” shares Dave. “They provided learning support for my writing, and counselling for my depression and anxiety.”

“For me that was great,” Dave says. “It let me do what I needed to do in the safety of my own home. If I was to pick up those same services in town, I would have had to travel five hours one way. And men are very hard to get off their property at any time.”

“The thing I'd like people to know, especially if you're a male, is it's okay to seek help.”

*name has been changed to respect this family's privacy

 [Read more of Dave's story](#)



HEAD YAKKA

“I know of lives that have been saved and marriages that are still together because of this initiative and it doesn't get better than that. We are seeing real, living examples of positive intervention and outcomes with momentum that is going to have a lifelong impact.”

-- Steven Boxall, CEO Barcaldine Regional Council (2018-2020)



The first year

WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUTBACK MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The HEAD YAKKA initiative was developed following almost three years of community engagement around issues of mental health in the Barcaldine Region. In 2019 Outback Futures, Barcaldine Regional Council and University of Southern Queensland launched HEAD YAKKA in Barcaldine Region.

HEAD YAKKA community forums have created energy and enthusiasm, and generated locally led and owned HEAD YAKKA activities – from a community notice board and suggestion box in one town, to a community organised wellbeing event in another town.

Barcaldine Regional Council's commitment to the initiative means HEAD YAKKA is being woven throughout their organisation, from staff wellbeing workshops to HEAD YAKKA tips and tools in staff communications. HEAD YAKKA is becoming part of the vernacular in Barcaldine Region, creating an easy and safe way for people to reference mental health and wellbeing in their everyday conversations. We will hear people say, “I had a HEAD YAKKA conversation at work today” or “she's doing some HEAD YAKKA work.” It's these subtle, yet significant shifts in a community that are building towards long term change.

EVALUATION

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) has been working with Outback Futures to develop baseline data for the first 12 months of HEAD YAKKA in the Barcaldine region. We have also developed an Origins of HEAD YAKKA paper which speaks to the journey of the initiative and the social determinant / guiding collective impact understandings. We are looking forward to developing further measures and learnings from upcoming community focus groups and young people wellbeing surveys.

 [Find out more about HEAD YAKKA now](#)



Initial Community Consultations

76 community leaders participated in round table and community forums.

Mental Health Service Support

21% increase in engagement with Outback Futures mental health service support across the Barcaldine Region

Community owned & led initiatives

150+ people engaged with community events focusing on mental health and wellbeing. Following one event...

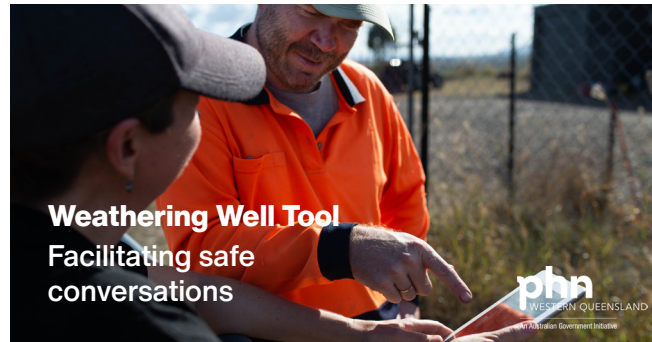
80% felt an increased sense of safety in discussing mental health

82% experienced personal wellbeing improvement

98% keen to engage a friend or neighbour with HEAD YAKKA

strategic initiatives

IN OUR COMMUNITIES



The new Weathering Well Tool is an innovative digital mental health and wellbeing tool designed to help people in outback communities have easy and safe conversations about mental health and wellbeing. The tool is designed around a conversation, using language that rural communities can connect with.

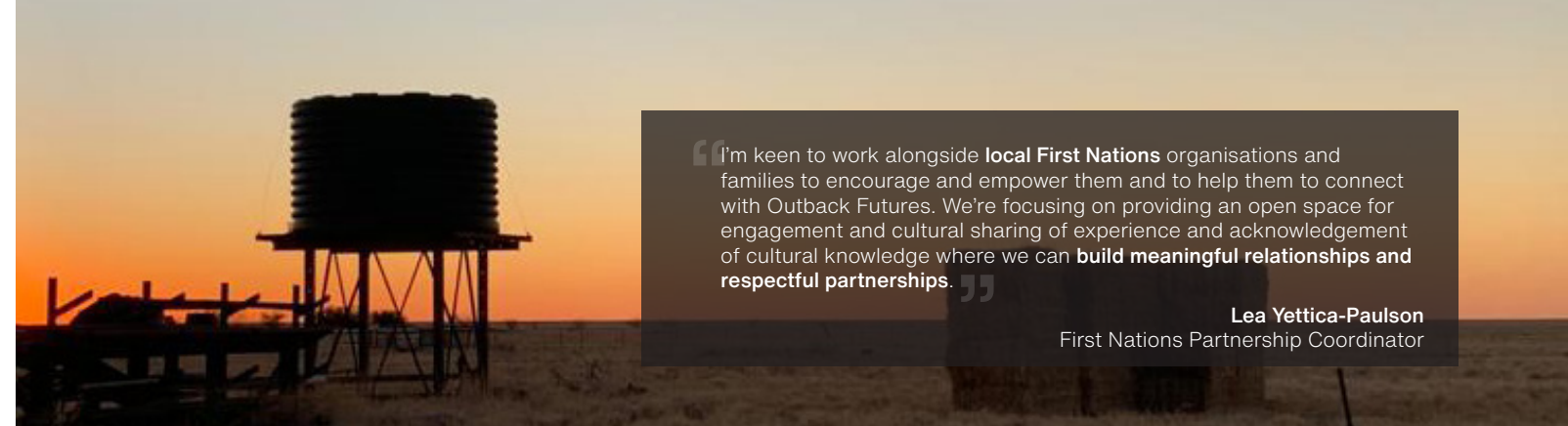
The Weathering Well Tool has been adapted from the digital mental health and substance use tool for indigenous Australians called “Stay Strong”. Western Queensland Primary Health Network (WQPHN) in collaboration with the Menzies School of Health Research and the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network initiated the development of the Weathering Well App via a development advisory group, of which Outback Futures was a part. The roll out of this initiative is part of the federal government’s drought response program and has been specifically designed for farming communities.

One of the strengths of Weathering Well is it is not a self-led tool. Rather, it is designed around shared conversations with a trained facilitator, and incorporates a level of accountability. The use of the Weathering Well Tool is not limited to counsellors and psychologists, which means it will be more widely accessible in communities through trained and trusted local advocates.

With the launch of the Weathering Well Tool this year, our region team leaders and some of our clinical team have received facilitator training, and have started using the Weathering Well Tool as they connect with people in our communities. There has also been a process of training and equipping Rural Financial Counsellors to use the tool in their unique on-property contexts. Ongoing, our team will also play a role in training other community facilitators and encouraging the use of Weathering Well as an effective tool in helping people have safe and positive conversations about mental health and wellbeing.



This year we formalised our commitment to intentional and meaningful engagement with our First Nations friends and communities with the appointment of Lea Yettica-Paulson, our First Nations Partnership Coordinator. Outback Futures’ journey alongside First Nations people is grounded in our organisational values of relationship, collaboration, authenticity and self-efficacy, and we are building on existing relationships to explore new invitations and opportunities to sit with people and have a yarn. We continue to provide our First Nations team members with a voice to help educate and equip our whole team to ensure our First Nations connections are built on a foundation of respect; and we are looking forward to growing opportunities to engage with First Nations kids, families and communities across our outback.



“I’m keen to work alongside **local First Nations** organisations and families to encourage and empower them and to help them to connect with Outback Futures. We’re focusing on providing an open space for engagement and cultural sharing of experience and acknowledgement of cultural knowledge where we can **build meaningful relationships and respectful partnerships**.”

Lea Yettica-Paulson
First Nations Partnership Coordinator

advocating

FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

We continue to pursue opportunities to contribute our clinical and community perspectives to conversations, discussions and collaborations around rural and remote mental health and wellbeing.



CENTRAL WEST RURAL WELLNESS NETWORK

Our team has contributed to local collaborations such as CWRWN (Central West Rural Wellness Network).



NATIONAL RURAL AND REMOTE MENTAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

CEO Selena Gomersall and Clinical Director Tracey Cronin attended the National Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium in Adelaide.



NORTH QUEENSLAND LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY RECOVERY AGENCY

Selena advocated for our Community Facilitation Model and the unique needs of our remote Queensland communities with local, state and federal levels of government, capturing the attention of NQLIRA (North Queensland Livestock Industry Recovery Agency) and other key government groups.



Read more of Lea’s heart for our First Nations



TASK FORCES AND FORUMS

Selena was invited to participate in national mental health initiatives, including Major General Stephen Day’s National Drought Task Force, and the Prime Minister’s National Suicide Prevention Forum in Canberra.



AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS DROUGHT RESILIENCE PROGRAM

We participated in Australian Red Cross Drought Resilience Program stakeholder round table meetings.



WESTERN QUEENSLAND PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK

We continue to contribute as a member of the WQPHN (Western Queensland Primary Health Network) clinical council.



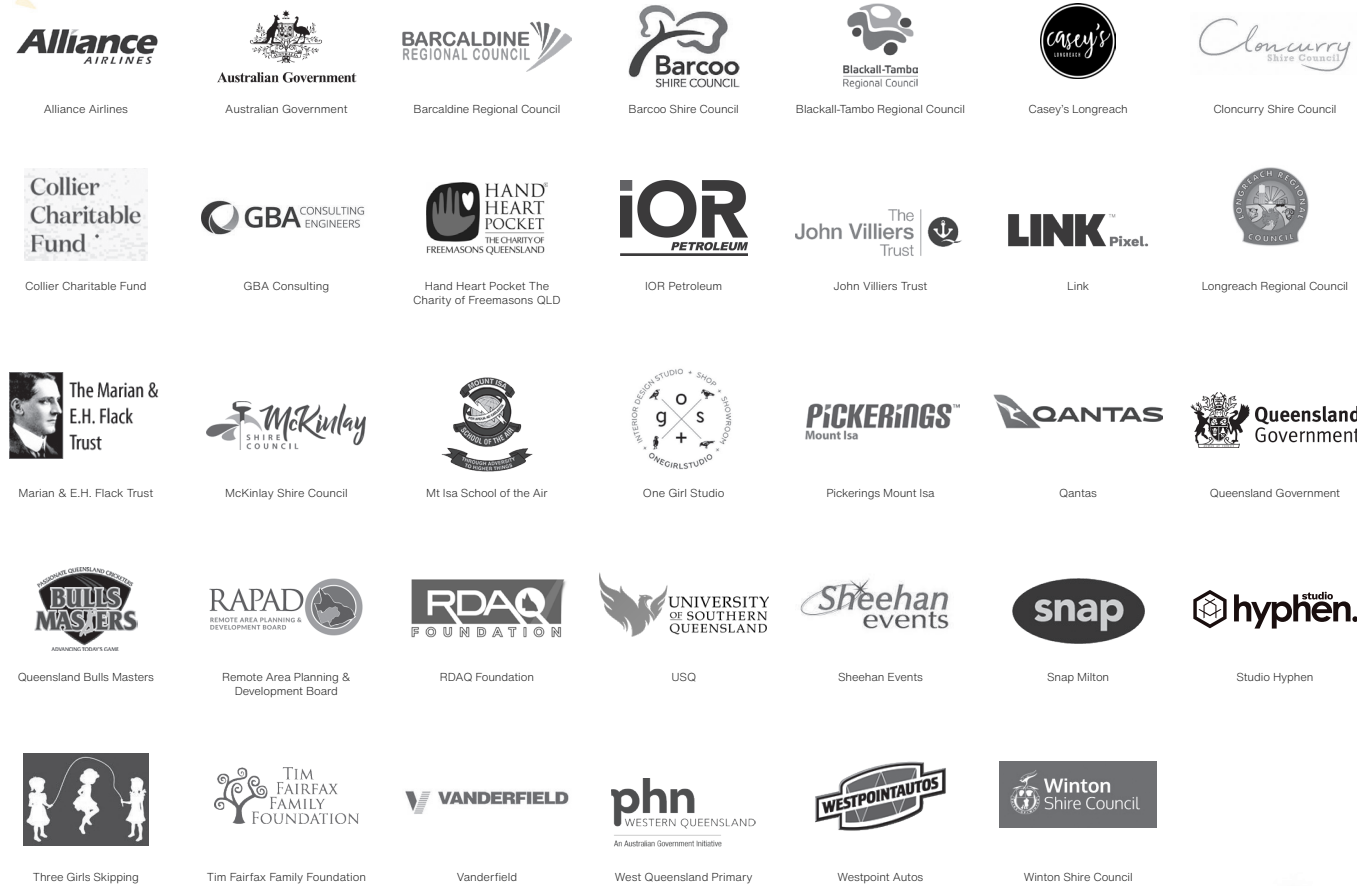
MENTAL HEALTH ROUND TABLES

We have continued to support our communities and their experience of service provision and mental health through sharing at mental health round tables in Central West and North West Queensland, and at the North West Queensland flood recovery summit.

our partners

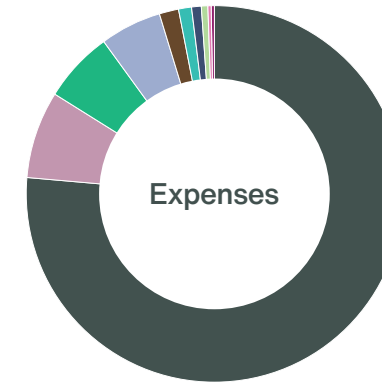
We are thankful for our diverse group of generous partners who work together with us to create positive mental health and wellbeing outcomes for our outback communities. From philanthropic trusts and foundations, to government funders, corporate sponsors and individual donors, we are thankful for

our growing base of financial and in-kind supporters who, even with the challenges we all faced in 2019-2020, have remained committed to our outback communities and us as an organisation. Alongside the generous giving of individual donors, we are thankful for the opportunity to partner with these organisations:



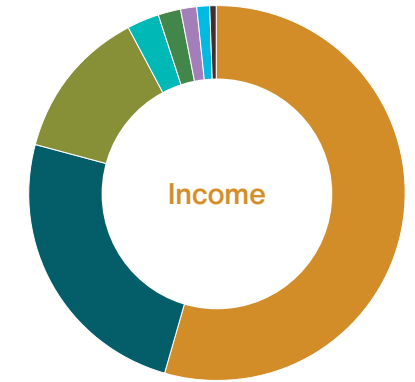
our financials

 [Read our 2019/2020 Financial Report](#)



2019-2020 Expenses

Employee expenses	76.3%	\$1,430,006
Travel expenses	7.3%	\$136,811
Office expenses	6.0%	\$113,226
Clinical expenses	5.5%	\$102,789
IT expenses	1.4%	\$26,483
Communications & fundraising	1.3%	\$24,522
Other	0.8%	\$15,611
Consultants	0.6%	\$11,000
Fees and insurance	0.4%	\$7,437
Banking and finance	0.4%	\$7,075
Total	(100%)	\$1,874,960



2019-2020 Income

Philanthropic gifts & grants	54.5%	\$1,176,103
Government grants	24.9%	\$538,235
General donations	13.0%	\$280,837
Corporate sponsorship	2.8%	\$61,500
Fee for service	1.9%	\$41,093
Events	1.4%	\$29,314
In-kind	1.2%	\$25,407
Miscellaneous	0.3%	\$6,815
Total	(100%)	\$2,159,304

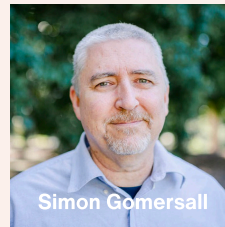
growing our capacity



Brent Sweeney

2019-2020 brought significant opportunities to deepen and strengthen our existing relationships, and invitations to engage with new communities. These opportunities, coupled with committed financial support from our partners, has resulted in significant organisational growth. Our team grew from 36 to 47 people as we extended our capacity across all areas of our organisation – from our clinical teams of psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and learning and literacy specialists, to our community engagement teams who help us stay connected with our communities; from our finance, IT and business development people to our executive team.

We are thankful to our Board of Directors for providing continued governance and direction as we step into exciting new opportunities and navigate organisational change. We are deeply grateful to founding director and past Board Chairperson Simon



Simon Gomersall

Gomersall, who finished his tenure on the board at the end of 2019, for his many years faithfully shepherding Outback Futures along untrod paths. Simon's wisdom, faith and passion for our outback communities laid a solid organisational foundation on which we now stand.

Our leadership capacity was expanded with Brent Sweeney appointed as Chief Operations Officer (COO). Brent is working alongside our CEO Selena Gomersall and CFO Rhys Tregenza, positioning our executive team to harness strategic opportunities and lead us forward with passion and purpose.

Our team is excited about the opportunities ahead as we work to renew hope, build resilience, and strengthen community.



We thank our Creator God for in Him we live and move and have our being.

Outback Futures acknowledges the traditional owners of the country on which we work and live and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

Our thanks to Agi Davis Photography for the images throughout this report. agidavisphotography.com.au

We invite you to partner with us to bring about long lasting, positive changes in mental health and wellbeing.

outbackfutures.org.au/donate

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