

Annual Report 2020-2021

# IMP ACT REP ORT

**Our Mission**

**Or**



Our Vision is of fair, thriving, sustainable communities that instil hope, embrace diversity, promote safety, and in which all people feel a sense of belonging.

**What We Do**

**03**



Kyabra is a community-based organisation committed to strengthening individual, family and community life. Established in 1976 as Sunnybank Family Support, Kyabra continues to provide support and training to thousands of individuals, families and community groups on the south side of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.





## **Diversity and Sustainability**

Seek and develop a diverse range of opportunities to pursue and achieve our goals and priorities.

## **Strengthening Our Community**

Deliver services that enable the development of strengths and capabilities.

## **Excellence in Practice**

Strive for excellence in practice and systems in everything we do.

### **Who uses our services?**

Individuals and families accessing services at Kyabra are often on very low incomes and experience social inequality for reasons such as disability, ethnicity, mental health issues and homelessness.

### **Our activities and services include:**

- Support for NDIS participants
- Community Finance
- Mental Health Support
- Foster and Kinship Care
- Support for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence
- Housing and Homelessness Support
- Early Years and Parenting Support
- Lighthouse Resources - Training and Bookshop
- Community Computer Services

### **Social Business**

Through its social business, Kyabra endeavours to achieve its broader vision for a fair society by incorporating positive social outcomes in all activities.

Whether through supporting professional development in the sector through Lighthouse Resources, supporting traineeships or looking for different opportunities for community members to contribute, we strive to fulfil our vision for a fairer and more inclusive society.

# President's Statement

# 06

# President's Statement 2020-2021

## Lori Rubenstein



When I wrote my 2020 President's Statement, like many others, I did not recognise the full scope, duration and cumulative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the devastating economic impacts and the disruptions to the social interactions so important to our wellbeing, are now evident and they continue to unfold. There is no escaping the fact that this pandemic is much more than a health crisis – it is a socio-economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human rights crisis. It affects all of us - as individuals, as families, communities and societies.

**We have been brought to our knees – by a microscopic virus. The pandemic has demonstrated the fragility of our world. It has laid bare risks we have ignored for decades: inadequate health systems; gaps in social protection; structural inequalities; environmental degradation; the climate crisis.**

United Nations 2020

Even before the pandemic, however, inequalities in Australia were undermining the life chances and opportunities for far too many of our children and young people. COVID-19 has exacerbated these inequalities. Millions of parents who were already struggling with economic instability, lack of affordable housing and childcare, and meeting their family's basic needs, now must try to cope with social isolation, home schooling, their children's disengagement from education, mental health growing concerns, (especially among adolescents) and an uncertain future for themselves and their children.

It is important that we do not lose sight of the massive consequences of these pressures for the health and development of all children and young people, but particularly our most vulnerable. While we need to acknowledge that the negative repercussions of the pandemic are still unfolding, we must not lose heart. The challenge is immense but so too are the resources we can marshal to address it. For example, Deloitte Economics put it this way:





“The economic challenges of COVID-19 are deep and broad, but we have the opportunity to use these challenges to fast-track positive investments that will ultimately deliver better social outcomes. That way, when we do get to the other side of the proverbial bridge, we can be confident that, not only did we successfully address the social impacts, but we took advantage of the impetus to change the way we deliver social services across our nation. And maybe this will change our collective understanding of how we, as individuals and society, contribute to building a better future.”

When I asked members of the Kyabra Board what I should focus on in my 2021 statement, there was a quick and unanimous response: RESILIENCE. Generally, we think of resilience as the ability of people and systems to persist, adapt or transform in the face of change, to recover quickly from difficulties or the capacity to bounce back from negative experiences and disturbances. In the case of COVID-19, it may be less about “bouncing back” and more about “bouncing forward” so that we can create a new normal, one that gives all Australian children, young people and families a chance to thrive.

I think we can feel optimistic about the collective commitment, innovation and steadfastness of organisations like Kyabra to learn from this unprecedented challenge and make necessary changes for the future. As one commentator put it: “This is a moment in time for all of us to stretch the limits of our abilities and the boundaries of our creative capacities.”

# CEO's Report

09

# CEO's Report 2020-2021

**David O'Toole**



On the back of our initial COVID-19 response last year, Kyabra has continued to provide continuity across all of our services. Working from home and greater utilisation of technology has provided the opportunity for us to be adaptable, but also to look at where this can provide improved efficiencies for both staff and community members in an ongoing way.

An ongoing commitment to good governance and practice requires quality systems and processes, and the structures to support them. As a result, we continue to excel in governance, financial and management practices which are consistently confirmed through a range of external audit processes.

There were a number of significant achievements this year. Kyabra transitioned to the SCHADS Award with full Transitional Pay Equity Order rates implementation. In addition, we maintained some additional conditions from our Collective Agreement.

We purchased, renovated and moved to new premises in Nambour and continue to develop our presence in the region. The Sunshine Coast Services are now fully integrated with the Kyabra Management Structure and we are looking forward to further work with our sector colleagues in addressing poverty, homelessness and domestic and family violence in the region.

Part of building community has always involved community events. The past year saw these events delivered in different ways. For some time, Murri Kids in the Park has been an event celebrating indigenous children's day with a large number of kindergarten, pre-school and child care centres. Last year, Kyabra put together and delivered indigenous focussed activity packs to more than thirty local centres, so that the opportunity to celebrate indigenous culture and children was not missed.

The end of year gathering for children and young people in care and their families went ahead and was conducted outdoors with all of the necessary precautions.





This year, we had to make the very difficult decision to cease operations at Kyabra Early Years Place. Unfortunately, this service was no longer viable to continue. As indicated in a QUT evaluation, this service achieved amazing outcomes for children and families over many years. It will be remembered with great fondness by all who contributed and participated.

NDIS participants, in particular, were greatly affected by COVID-19. Despite this, we were pleased that we could maintain a high level of service delivery and support. These flexible approaches were also reflected in all areas of service delivery.

In our Housing and Homelessness Services, community members continue to experience the worst impacts of economic stress with the high cost of rent and lack of affordable housing. Kyabra's Board supported the QCOS Town of Nowhere Campaign financially and practically to lobby for improved responses. We congratulate the Queensland Government's significantly increased commitment to social and affordable housing which will benefit many Queensland families and children.

On a sad note, we saw the passing of State Member of Parliament Duncan Pegg. Duncan was a long-time supporter of Kyabra and we shared a vision for social justice and building community. It reminds us that there are so many people in our communities that share such a vision. We are privileged to work alongside community members, politicians, public servants and other colleagues to work towards a fairer and safer community.

# **Town of Nowhere Campaign**

# **12**



In the past year, Kyabra experienced unprecedented demand from community members seeking safe and affordable housing. Across both Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, we saw vulnerable individuals, families and children being unable to access safe and affordable accommodation. This was evident across all of our Homelessness and Domestic and Family Violence Services.

The Queensland Council of Social Services co-ordinated a Social Housing Campaign to raise awareness of the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. The Town of Nowhere Campaign was financially and practically supported by Kyabra and eleven other community organisations across Queensland.

The Campaign hoped to raise awareness and utilised various strategies to make Queenslanders aware of this ever-deepening crisis. The numbers spoke for themselves:

**47,036 Queenslanders have nowhere safe and secure to live.  
This includes 26,397 families.**

**The Queensland State Government subsequently committed \$2.9B  
towards social housing.**

This was a great first step in addressing this critical need and a wonderful investment for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Kyabra was committed to supporting this investment and in the collaboration of the Sector and the Queensland Government to address homelessness.



# Kyabra's Homestay program

14



Please note: Names have been changed to protect identity. Image is indicative only.

Amy and Dan connected with Kyabra's Homestay program in July 2020. At the time of joining the program, the family were seeking support to address the maintenance concerns they had within their property.

Amy, Dan and their seven children (ages 1 through 19) were residing in a private rental that they had been able to successfully maintain for over two years.

The family were unfortunately issued a Notice to Leave - Without Grounds in September 2020, as their landlord wished to sell the property. The Notice to Leave expired in November 2020. The family attended a QCAT hearing in January 2021 with the support of their case worker, at which time they were issued a Warrant of Possession, expiring in April 2021. With the support of their caseworker, the family applied for over 50 private rental properties, all within and below their affordability and all of which were unsuccessful. Throughout this time, the family's case worker contacted a multitude of Real Estate Agents who all stated that they did not have any properties available that would suit the family's needs.

Amy and Dan unfortunately experienced difficulty with their real estate agent, including threats of police involvement and immediate eviction and entry into the property without due notice. The agent was not willing to provide a positive tenant reference for the family but was unable to elaborate on the reason for this. All of this contributed to the family not being accepted for other private rental properties which placed a high level of distress on them. Due to the family's clear barriers to accessing the private rental market, they were approved for social housing.

As the Warrant of Possession date neared, the family were still unable to secure alternative housing, so were put forward for one of Kyabra's available properties. The family were successful in securing Kyabra's transitional accommodation and remain housed in the property at this time. The family continue to apply for multiple private rental properties per week. Dan has been able to obtain a full time job meaning that the family are now able to afford a wider range of properties. They are consistently working with their case worker and continue to reach for their goal of finding a safe, secure place for their family to live.

**1327**  
Financial  
resilience  
interventions of  
30 minutes or  
more  
**551 Clients**

# Financial Resilience

One intervention by Kyabra will stop a vulnerable family spiralling into poverty. This year we provided 1327 financial resilience interventions such as a financial conversation, bill support, an ER voucher, information or referral or a NILS loan (551 clients).



# Homelessness and Housing Support

A five month Kyabra supported accommodation placement will lead to secure long term tenancies. This year 267 clients were provided with 11,598 nights of supported accommodation and are no longer homeless or at risk of homelessness.



**2020/21**

Clients	Nights	Program
84	4838	Supported Accommodation
111	4787	SAS – Runcorn
72	1973	DFV Shelter
267	11598	

**568**  
attended  
courses or  
child care  
sessions



# Parent and Children Support

Kyabra provides groups and sessions to help families with parenting. 283 parents or caregivers attended one of 24 parenting courses, 285 Children attended a child care session or a playgroup.

# Foster and Kinship Care

## 233

foster and kinship carers that have been supported to provide 26,231 safe days of care for 144 children

Kyabra is working with Foster Carers, Kinship Carers and birth families to support vulnerable children. Kyabra has recruited 233 foster and kinship carers and has supported these carers to provide 26,231 safe days of care for 144 children at risk of harm.

Funded by



# NDIS

Kyabra provides a range of flexible, individualised services aimed at assisting people with disabilities, and their carers, to work towards identified goals through the National Disability Insurance Scheme - NDIS. This year we have provided Support Coordination and Direct Support Services to 315 Participants.

Funded by



## 173

Participants received direct support from our Support Worker Services

## 206

Participants received Supports Coordination services

# Reconciliation Action Plan

# 18





Kyabra acknowledges and respects the significance of place, cultures, rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the communities we work. We aim to support social justices owed to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by enhancing resources and identifying local strengths to promote successes.

Over the past year, we continued to develop our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people and organisations. Despite COVID-19 restrictions we were able to celebrate cultural events and days of significance throughout the year.

In celebration of indigenous children's day, we distributed activity packs to over thirty kindergartens and pre-schools. In lieu of having our regular Murri Kids in the Park event, these packs were another way of celebrating and promoting indigenous culture. We maintained our connection with the Murri School and look to further develop this partnership in the coming year.

We were privileged to host an online discussion with Aunty Heather Casledine and David Allinson from Reconciliation Queensland around the Close the Gap Report.





We had participants from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast who heard of the strong COVID-19 responses led by indigenous communities around the nation.

In May, we hosted an event at Richlands on National Sorry Day. Shane Cox from Black Feather Psychology facilitated a discussion with Aunty Janet Blair to discuss the National Apology and the Stolen Generation. This event was very well received and represented a small step towards healing and reconciliation.

Sunshine Coast Staff benefited from a day of cultural training and experience provided by TriballLink which is a family owned and operated Aboriginal business operating in the Sunshine Coast region.

# **Board of Directors**

# **21**



## Lori Rubenstein

### President

For over 25 years, Lori has worked with governments and NGOs in the United States, Australia and Singapore. During this time she has conducted social research and evaluation in education, employment, health (including mental health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health), housing, early intervention, juvenile justice, disabilities and family policy. She has provided government agencies with policy and strategic advice on these issues.

She continues to facilitate strategic planning with advocacy and service agencies and to evaluate the outcomes and impact of policy and program investments.

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## Samira Taras

### Secretary

Samira is a Community Development Practitioner with a strong passion and commitment to social justice, community capacity building and social inclusion of marginalised families and communities.

She is inspired by Kyabra's integrity, vision and integrated model of practice. Samira has worked in various roles with a wide range of people and portfolios since 1994, and she is delighted to contribute her knowledge and experience in Community Development, Social Work and cross-cultural communication to the community through Kyabra.

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## Cathy Didlick

### Treasurer

Cathy is Kyabra's Treasurer and Board Member. Cathy is a practising accountant with many years of experience. She is also a CPA and a Chartered Tax Adviser. Her experience enables her to assist the Board to continue to serve the community and achieve Kyabra's goals.

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## Leighton Smith

### Board Member

Leighton is a senior real estate lawyer at one of Australia's largest law firms. He manages significant commercial transactions on a day to day basis and has a considerable advisory and transactional practice. Before commencing his legal career, Leighton was part of the Kyabra team working as a Family Support Worker.

He brings with him an understanding of Kyabra's organisational values and an appreciation for its community-focussed objectives.



## Amanda Hall

### Board Member

Amanda has been connected with Kyabra Community Association over several years as a local community member, workshop participant, past employee and Board Member. As a practising Social Worker she continues to be impressed by the innovation and forward thinking that Kyabra offers the community services field and the sense of belonging that Kyabrians provide our community. In holding a position on the Executive Board she hopes to use her insight as a community services practitioner to support her fellow Board Members, Kyabrians and the pursuit of the Kyabra vision.

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## Nick Martin

### Board Member

With a passion for supporting vulnerable people and developing robust communities, Nick has pursued a career in the profit for purpose sector. Nick's unique skill-set has allowed him to gain extensive experience as a consultant in business development and strategic design, using innovative ways to create sustainability in the not-for-profit sector. Through project management, work-shopping and presenting to large groups, Nick support's organisations in a variety of areas, such as culture- building, change management, innovative service delivery, revenue stream development- based on customers needs and wants. Nick enjoys working with people and their customers/clients to determine their pain points in finding a solution. He enjoys the development of new ventures and promise a passionate group of people can bring to their community. Nick has had a connection with Kyabra for many years and believes in the strength-based approach and values that Kyabra embodies. Nick is excited to support Kyabra in continuing as a leader delivering sustainable services to the most vulnerable in the community.

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