

# 2020 Annual Report



*Since 1978, St Francis Social Services has worked to uphold the intrinsic dignity of each person by providing support and advocacy to empower the most disadvantaged and marginalised in our community.*

## **Our Values:**

### **WELCOME**

We provide an environment where people feel valued, wanted and important, regardless of gender, faith, race or social circumstance. We greet clients with warmth, engagement and an open heart.

### **RESPECT**

We uphold the intrinsic dignity and equality of each person by valuing the experience and wisdom of our clients, colleagues and volunteers in everything we do. We honour the uniqueness of each person, their stories, their personal experience and their truth.

### **CONNECT**

We encourage connection that is heartfelt and meaningful. By recognising the importance of connection to community, place and self, we make impactful connections with each other, those we work with, our partners and supporters.

### **EMPOWER**

We empower marginalised and vulnerable people by creating opportunities for individuals to build on their own resilience and resourcefulness. We speak with and advocate for those we work with.

To find out more about our work and how you can contribute, please visit our website:  
<https://www.stfrancis.org.au/>

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*Start by doing what's necessary;  
then do what's possible; and suddenly  
you are doing the impossible.*

St Francis of Assisi

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



*A bit of ancient history doesn't hurt.*

In late January of this year 2020, I marked the beginning of my 40th year of close association with the then Come In Centre – now Centre 360. I had been appointed parish priest of St Francis of Assisi Parish, Paddington and took up the appointment in January 1981.

I met up with David Leary who was employed part-time by two De La Salle brothers who ran the CIC, a service assisting young people through a night drop-in centre which provided shelter from the street as well as food. Within a few weeks the brothers informed me that they would not be able to continue. David was still keen to carry on the service, as was I. So, we plodded along.

After a short while an advisory group was set up comprising people who helped as volunteers. I called it St Francis Welfare Committee – a ministry of the parish. We took over management of a \$6,000 grant which was enough for a small wage for David and additional part time assistance.

In 1984 we applied for the Commonwealth Employment Scheme Grant – a one-year pilot project to provide employment opportunities. We hit the jackpot. The grant by the first Hawke government enabled St Francis Welfare to employ an administrator and two counsellors and, spread over the year, six part-time work experience young people to work with their peers. At the end of the “pilot” year the NSW Government funded the continuation of the project with four positions. This funding continues to this day and has recently been extended for another 5 years.

Changes came: no more night drop-in centre, but more counselling and legal assistance, meals every weekday from midday, activities and programs, a Young Mothers' Group. The work was in good shape and the workers better trained - just in time for the ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic which hit

our young clients particularly hard. Many deaths and funerals. A new corporate entity called St Francis Social Services (SFSS) was established at this time.

Twelve years ago, SFSS took over the management of the House of Welcome (HoW), a service for refugees and asylum seekers. Five years ago, we commenced management of the Greenlight Movement (GLM), a learn to drive program for young disadvantaged people.

The challenges we faced at the beginning of the financial year were very different to those confronting us by June 2020. At Centre 360 we were in the planning stages of the Targeted Early Intervention Program introduced by the NSW Government with new funding agreements to be negotiated. At HoW, the constantly changing government policy towards refugees and asylum seekers and the general reduction of government assistance created a difficult environment. The GLM was under review due to difficulties in getting ongoing commercial sponsorship. By the end of the financial year much of the country had been or was in lockdown. Staff were working remotely and providing our regular services was increasingly difficult. GLM had been suspended and the majority of our staff were being supported by Jobkeeper.

I am proud of the Board, staff and volunteers and what they have been able to achieve in this extraordinary year. Our ability to continue to remain open and provide a full range of services has been a significant achievement. I thank them all for their commitment to the work of SFSS, inspired as we are by the life of St Francis of Assisi. I welcome new Board member, Rev Geoff Dornan from the St Ives Uniting Church and Soheyla Gholamshahi, the new Executive Manager at Centre 360.

**Fr Nick Lucas**  
**Chair, St Francis Social Services**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

*St Francis Social Services and House of Welcome continued their work with the marginalised, with our doors remaining open and welcoming.*



St Francis Social Services' vision for a society that recognises the dignity, equality, human rights and humanity of all people has never been more unified, evident or strong.

This financial year has presented enormous challenges for charitable organisations; and in our case, the team has worked hard to respond quickly and adapt our service provision to the changing landscape around us. Firstly, to the impacts of the prolonged drought, followed by bushfires and then the extraordinary global pandemic.

In 2019, the House of Welcome (HoW) also dealt with the changes to government guidelines regarding the Status Resolution Support Services for people seeking asylum, which placed people at higher risk of homelessness and financial hardship.

Despite these obstacles, Centre 360 and the HoW continued their work with the marginalised, with our doors remaining open and welcoming. We had to adopt appropriate health safety measures and use new means to connect with people, however, we remained open, a result for which we should all be very proud.

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service entered into a new five-year contract agreement with the Department of Communities and Justice to deliver therapeutic services to the communities of Bayside, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra local government areas. This is in no small part due to the exceptional reputation we have in this space, further enhanced by our response to the coronavirus lockdown. The transition from face-to-face service to online delivery of care was readily embraced by clients and staff. The transition to using technology for service delivery was seamless and efficient.

The HoW maintained its work with refugees and people seeking asylum, providing food, housing, medical, financial and wellbeing support. While the demand during this year

for our services increased by 110%, the amazing team of volunteers and staff worked tirelessly to provide a constant level of provisions to assist people who had experienced job and housing losses due to the economic impacts of COVID-19. The Transition Housing Program continued to provide vital accommodation for adults and families seeking asylum; the Employment Program assisted clients with job opportunities; and the "Truth be Told" speakers provided an educational dimension that schools, organisations and local governments have accessed and valued.

The Social Catering Enterprise, an education and employment pathway project for clients which operates from the HoW, continued to be generously supported by small business, corporations, schools and education offices, as well as members of the public, for which we are truly grateful.

The support from donors, corporate sponsors, supporters, church groups, parishes, schools, and members of the public has been inspirational. The generous level of giving has enabled the HoW and Centre 360 to feed, house, counsel and provide emergency, financial and medical assistance to our regular clients when they needed it most.

As I wind up my time here at St Francis Social Services, I leave sincerely grateful and proud of the work that is carried out by our volunteers and staff. Their generosity, skills and commitment enable us to serve children, adults and families who are in desperate need of our dedication and attention.

To our Board and the Franciscan Provincial Council, I thank you for your ongoing support and assistance. It is this collaboration and solidarity that enables us to make a difference and bring hope to where there is despair.

**Maurizio Vespa**  
**CEO, St Francis Social Services**

# WHAT WE DO

We provide a suite of practical services for:

- ▶ **Disadvantaged young people and their families**
- ▶ **Individuals and families seeking asylum**

## Centre 360

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service is committed to providing a host of professional and accessible service options for vulnerable 12–24-year-olds and their families.



## House of Welcome

House of Welcome (HoW) is passionate about providing opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum that enable their self-determination, empowerment and participation in the community.



*Thanks so much for the ongoing support and showing my boys consistency and care! I have witnessed them both grow up into young men since you have been involved helping them ....*

*I cannot thank you enough for the help over the last year and a half!*

**Carmel, a mother of 2 teenage boys**

Activities provided by Centre 360 and House of Welcome.

Services include:

**Employment** 

**Casework** 

**Foodbank** 

**Catering** 


**Housing** 

**Community Connection Activities** 

**Health Clinic** 

**Counselling and therapeutic groups** 

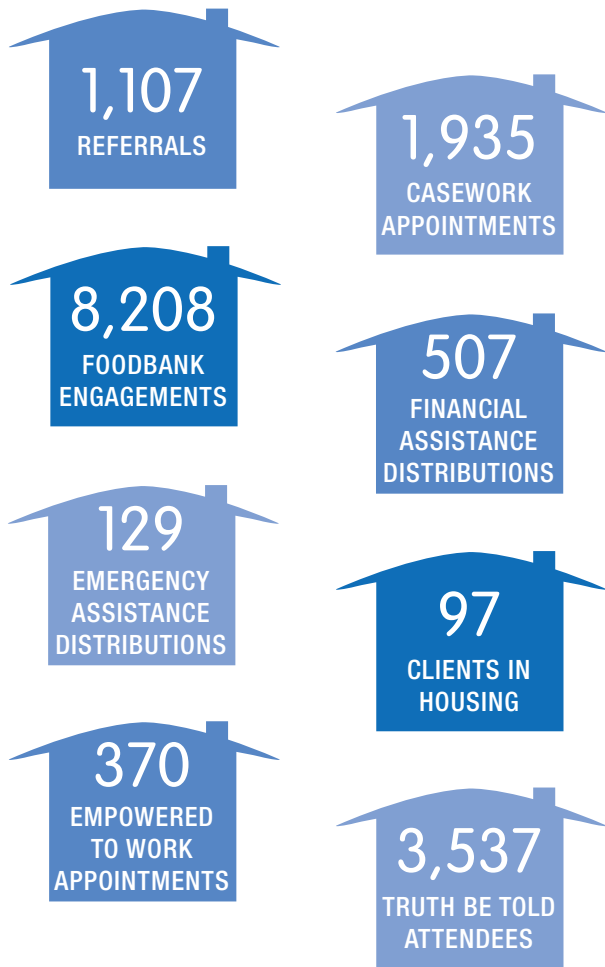
**Mentoring** 

**Parenting Programs** 

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



In the 2019 – 2020 financial year, the House of Welcome faced unprecedented demand on its services due to COVID-19, pivoting from a drop-in service to an emergency relief agency.



**Foodbank referrals increased  
(March – June 2020)**



**Financial Assistance  
referrals increased**



**Emergency Assistance  
referrals increased  
(March – May 2020)**



**Centre 360**  
Youth and Family Service



*Counselling helps me deal with things that I didn't know how to deal with before.*

Zara\* aged 16

Understanding that young people are the most reluctant Australians to seek professional assistance for mental health issues, Centre 360 Youth and Family Service has designed a holistic service offering that ensures maximum flexibility in responding to the specific needs of disadvantaged young people aged between 12 - 24 and their families.

*Coming to sessions and being greeted enthusiastically made me feel good.*

Sam\* aged 13

# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The St Francis Social Services (SFSS) Aboriginal Community Engagement Committee meetings over the course of 2019-2020 resulted in the successful endorsement of the initial "Reflect" phase of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Reflect RAP outlines steps for the preparation of successive RAPs to drive an organisation's contribution to reconciliation. As part of SFSS, Centre 360 intends to have further discussions with Reconciliation Australia about how SFSS can fulfil its obligations under its current RAP and move to other RAP phases. Centre management plans to facilitate a meaningful process to implement the action plan via the following projects:

## A) Aboriginal project

In conjunction with SFSS Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and in partnership with HoW, the 'Aboriginal Project' is one of the complementary projects under RAP to ensure the implementation of RAP directives in a meaningful way. This project aims to further develop Centre 360 networks by engaging in Aboriginal initiatives such as the Uluru Statement from the Heart and arranging events around NAIDOC week and other occasions to recognise Australia's Indigenous communities. This provides the Centre with an opportunity to connect with diverse stakeholders to strengthen the Centre's future RAP.

## B) Jarjum Aboriginal Primary School Redfern

The Jarjum College in Redfern educates urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not participating in mainstream primary schools. Centre 360 counsellors have partnered with the College and regularly meet with the Principal to provide mental health and wellbeing support to students and their families to help them successfully prepare for high school.



## C) Aboriginal specific targeted intake

In line with Centre 360's strategic directions, management has designed and implemented a specific targeted client intake process to increase young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client access to the centre services. This successful strategy has increased the provision of mental health and wellbeing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, who comprise 6.53% of total clients.



## EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS:

As part of funding commitments, staff at Centre 360 are running a series of early intervention and prevention programs that include:

### A) Tuning in to Teens

Tuning in to Teens is a specialised face-to-face, six session parenting program with focus on emotions, designed to assist parents to establish stronger relationships with their teenage children.

Centre 360 adolescent counsellors provide parents with a greater understanding of their teen's emotional experiences by teaching specific skills to increase empathy and connection with young people. The March 2020 Tuning in to Teens program, in collaboration with Headspace, held sessions in term 3 of 2019 with 10 participants involved in the program. In 2020 the program was suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. With additional investment, the parenting programs will continue with plans to run four programs in the 2020-21 financial year.

### B) Circle of Security

The Circle of Security Parenting Group (COS-P) is an evidence-based, structured eight-week group program, with two hourly group sessions each week, that aims to strengthen the ability of parents to observe and improve their caregiving skills. COS-P does this by providing a compassionate environment to reflect on challenges parents face and increase their understanding of their children's emotional needs.

Centre 360 ran the sessions in October and November of 2019, with 10 parents participating in the program. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restriction, the group programs were put on hold until the end of the year.

### C) HSF Mentoring Program

Scholarships and mentoring services, which are part of the Centre 360's intervention and prevention program, are awarded to clients through the Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) program. Centre 360 counsellors refer eligible students, based on need and potential. The scholarships assist with educational opportunities and practical support such as course fees, laptops and transport. The mentoring program connects recipients with volunteers from Herbert Smith Freehills, a world leading professional legal services business, with the aim of building confidence and broadening social skills. This year 10 clients participated in the program and, with the spread of COVID-19 in the last quarter of the financial year, an online program was developed.

### D) STRIVE

The Strive program was designed in collaboration with schools with early intervention support to keep students engaged with education. The program offers programs to assist with the increasing numbers of students who are experiencing mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, complex family situations, academic stress and social and peer difficulties. Centre 360 counsellors ran this program in term 3 and 4 in 2019 at Rose Bay Secondary College where identified students were encouraged to develop their social skills and resilience.

## PRINCIPALS' SYMPOSIUM

In collaboration with Waverley Council, Randwick Council, School Link and Department of Education Network Facilitator, the Principal's Symposium was held in 2019. This program supports the transition to high school for targeted students. Centre 360 counsellors, presenting at the symposium, put a spotlight on some of the emerging issues facing youth in the area. It was also an opportunity for staff to facilitate stronger working relationships with the schools and other service providers in the area.

## ART THERAPY WORKSHOP

This project is funded through a small community grant from Woollahra Council and facilitates face-to-face Art Psychotherapy, Sand Tray Therapy and Play Therapy designed for a diverse and vulnerable group of young people living within Woollahra Council Local Government (LGA). As a well-established youth and family service provider, Centre 360 delivers long-term therapeutic treatments for vulnerable young people suffering from complex PTSD and early stage eating disorders.

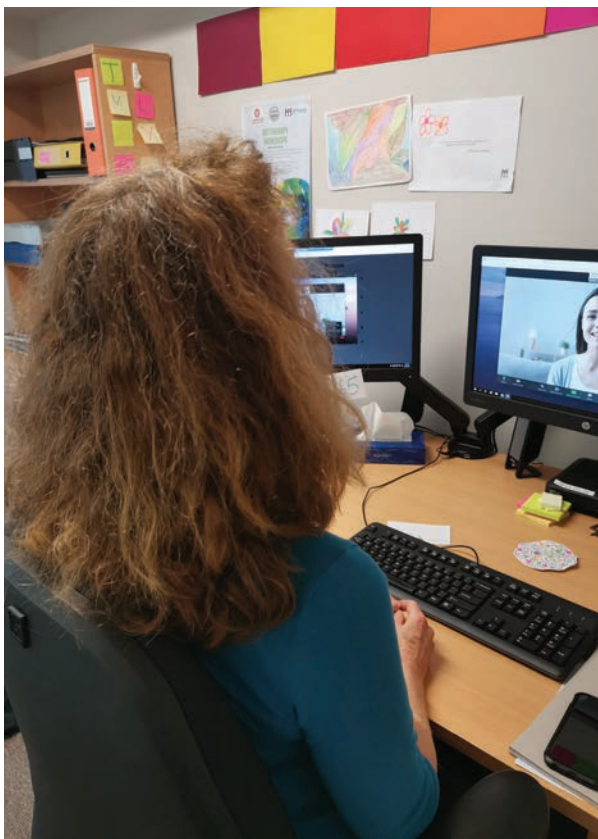


# KEEPING CONNECTED PROJECT

After successfully securing two grants, Centre 360 was able to deliver two valuable projects which assisted vulnerable clients to overcome communication barriers and other practical restrictions, as well as stress-related issues arising during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May-June 2020, both the City of Sydney Council and Waverley Council granted funds to Centre 360 to bring the 'Keeping Connected' project to life. These projects have encouraged clients to maintain their connections to the Centre's therapeutic services, access to their education and links to their community.

Eligible clients, referred by the Centre's counsellors, received communication equipment such as laptops, mobile phones, tablets and credits to access internet and data to improve access to education and engagement with family, friends and support networks.



## CENTRE 360 NETWORKS

Networks and inter-agency connections are essential for the successful operation of Centre 360. For this reason, staff are encouraged to participate in events and meetings in order to better support young people in the service area and streamline activities. Each month management and counsellors participate interagency meetings including the Eastern Sydney Youth Services Network, Headspace Consortium (Bondi Junction), La Perouse Land Council, Woollahra Youth Networks, UTS Knowledge Bites, Uluru from the Heart initiatives, CSNet/ DEX weekly meetings, CEO/DCJ Forum for SSESNS District Targeted Earlier Intervention, FAMS. In adapting to the new restrictions and pressures emerging from the lockdown, these meetings have moved online. But connections with local service providers have remained stronger and more essential than ever, with an increase in referrals and rapidly changing delivery methods during the pandemic.



## HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

*Nick\*, a 14 year old student at St Mary's Cathedral College, has a wide range of interests and talents. He enjoys studying forensic science and maths, and is a skilled OZ tag player. He also produces music, is a keen photographer and spends time planning his future property management enterprise. Nick spoke at the Annual HSF Awards Nights and expressed his gratitude for this opportunity provided by HSF and Centre 360.*



Good evening and a big welcome to our family and friends here tonight, staff from Herbert Smith Freehills, Centre 360 staff, and our awesome mentors and fellow mentees.

Firstly, I would like to say I am so grateful to Simone Connell of Centre 360 for choosing me to participate in this program. This, of course, would not have been possible without the generous support and scholarship provided by the HSF group. So a huge thank you to HSF.

Tonight I would like to share with you my experience in being part of this program made possible by Centre 360 staff and the HSF group.

Being involved in this program has helped me, not only to be comfortable with myself but with others as well. This program has helped me be more confident in myself and with others, has helped me to communicate with my family better and has helped me with setting goals and achieving those goals.

Working with the HSF mentors has helped me realise what it's truly like in the workforce, and that you get out of life what you put in.

The program provided by HSF has been lots of fun and totally enjoyable, and has also been very humbling for me to see how busy lawyers are still willing to take time out of their personal lives to benefit teenagers like myself and the other mentees.

I would like to say a big thank you to the organisers Anna, Jasmine, Angelique, Paula and Etheon. Herbert Smith Freehills and Centre 360 for offering this program and more than anything, thank you for choosing me.

To many of you, the funds may not be a big deal but for me, it is a huge deal. Even more than the scholarship money, the experience of being with the great people I have met through all of this is something I will always remember and be grateful for.

Thank you all and I really hope we all cross paths again down the line.



In 2014, St Francis Social Services managed the Greenlight Youth Driver mentoring program which operated from the Bondi Youth Accommodation Program. The program empowered young people by providing them with the skills that transformed their lives. Sadly, due to challenges in funding, the program was closed at the end of December 2019.

During the five years that the Greenlight Movement (GLM) had been operating, over 600 young people accessed the program, 83 young drivers successfully obtained their licence, and over 10,000 hours of supervised driving was provided by our mentors during this time.

The Greenlight Movement owes its success to the committed mentors who volunteered their time and skills. SFSS is grateful to our GLM program coordinators Alleric Mitchel and Sam Alfonso who provided highly professional induction and mentoring training along with supervision support.

A special thank you must go to Peter H, Phylli G, Greg T, Robert E and Robert F who kindly provided several years of service and mentorship. We also thank the generosity of Sandra G, whose donation enabled SFSS to extend the GLM program a further six months to help a group of young people achieve their goal.

On behalf of all the young people and St Francis Social Services, we are sincerely grateful to our donors and mentors.

*The House of Welcome exists to welcome, shelter and empower people seeking asylum and refugees regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, nationality or religion. We provide support that nurtures hope and dignity, advocates for justice and promotes self-reliance.*



Since launching in 2017, the GP clinic has become a key part of the casework program at House of Welcome. The service supports clients who do not have a Medicare card and would otherwise find it very difficult to get support. Dr Doria has been able to negotiate appointments, free of charge with pathologists, physiotherapists and child psychologists. One group of clients that have formed very trusting relationships with Dr Doria are the single men who have come from Nauru and Manus, or who have had experiences in onshore detention centres. Some of these men present with acute mental health needs, and have been traditionally reluctant to meet with medical staff. Engaging with this cohort has been a great achievement for the program. Currently the service is closed due to the COVID-19 crisis and reviews are being undertaken to determine the feasibility of reopening a face-to-face service.

Even in normal times, people seeking asylum are among the most vulnerable in our community as they are unable to access social security benefits to help them live independently. COVID-19 exacerbated this already challenging situation and from March 2020, the pandemic exposed refugees and people seeking asylum to increased financial insecurity and social destitution.

Prior to COVID, HoW operated a drop in service and delivered a suite of community development programs. The bustling energy of the place came to a sudden halt with the restrictions imposed in March 2020. The catering service has been in progress since 2018, and due to its ongoing growth and success, we sought funding to build a commercial kitchen to meet the demand of the business. The kitchen is due to be completed in March 2021.

HoW was adaptive and pragmatic in its response to the extraordinary circumstances. During the shutdown, essential services remained open, adapting the way financial, food and housing support was delivered.



## DENTAL CLINIC

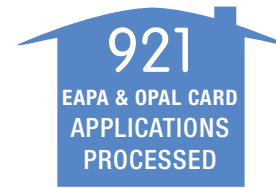


The long waiting list for public care and the costs of private services make dental care unobtainable for most refugees and asylum seekers.

Through the generosity of Dr Jalal Khan we were able to provide a free dental clinic to clients of the NSW Refugee Health Service (RHS) and HoW. His mobile dental van was set up for two weeks during the October school holidays at HoW and during this time dental hygienists and other dentists donated their time and saw 58 clients with 102 occasions of service.

A key component to the success of the “pop up” service was the contribution of volunteers and staff from both RHS and HoW who called and texted clients to organise appointments and pack dental “show bags” with dental products and nutritious food.

## DROP-IN SUPPORT



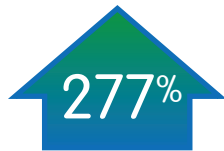
*(EAPA – electricity vouchers)*

Volunteers play a critical role at the centre, providing daily support across a range of services, as well as delivering activities and social connections. After a short hiatus at the beginning of COVID, the service was able to set up an amazing team of volunteers who delivered requests and applications remotely.



## CASEWORK

Casework Appointments increased by in the peak of COVID.



1935 CASEWORK APPOINTMENTS

700 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTIONS

*Honestly, the supports from House of Welcome felt like a lifeline while I was drowning in the ocean. I felt empowered because I held onto the hope that my situation will now improve and that I was finally welcome here.* **Casework client**

The restrictive Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) criteria continued to have a significant impact on the needs of existing and new clients, with a 52% increase in referrals compared to last financial year. To address the immediate needs of all clients, the casework team increased delivery of appointments by 50%, particularly in housing, financial assistance and food security where the need was greatest.

The emergency living package provided 700 financial assistance payments to assist clients with rental payments, crisis accommodation, medications, Opal card and communications expenses and school needs.

## EMPLOYMENT



85 NEW EMPLOYMENT CLIENTS

370 INDIVIDUALISED JOB READY APPOINTMENTS WITH VOLUNTEERS

The 2019-2020 financial year posed new challenges for HoW, with COVID-19 leading to job losses and increased financial insecurity. The pandemic brought with it less support than ever for people seeking asylum as Federal Government Jobseeker and Jobkeeper payments do not extend to this vulnerable group.

While there have been challenges in preparing people for work, nothing hit harder than the pandemic as people on temporary visas often work in casual jobs in sectors like hospitality, retail and manufacturing – the very first jobs to go in a health crisis.

## Truth Be Told

2019 saw the launch of the 'Truth Be Told' program, where participants from the House of Welcome employment program, ETW, are trained and mentored by the Refugee Council of Australia to enhance their storytelling skills. This professional and creative guidance has empowered our clients to tell their stories and strengthen community bonds.

As a result of 'Truth be Told' sessions over 92% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that their understanding of why people seek asylum increased, over 89% said they had an increased awareness of Australian refugee and asylum seeker policies and over 78% said they had increased knowledge to talk to friends and peers about people seeking asylum and the challenges they face.



## Empowered to Work

At the end of January, 2020, the Empowered to Work (ETW) program was in the process of transitioning to a specialised employment service for clients. People seeking asylum were supported by volunteers and staff to look for work and apply for jobs. As part of ETW, volunteers and staff fielded 370 appointments, with 85 new clients, which they supported to find new employment opportunities.

During March and April, close to 70% of HoW clients lost their jobs, largely following massive lay-offs in the casual workforce. HoW maintained contact with clients, and during the peak of the pandemic very few people were able to secure employment. HoW was able to expand its financial assistance program to provide a small financial safety net for clients.

*Our employment program is expert at managing moving landscapes but nothing hit harder than COVID-19. Almost overnight my team and I witnessed the unravelling of people's hard-won employment and livelihoods.*

**Leonie Dyer – Employment Coordinator**



## CATERING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

181  
CATERING  
ORDERS

9,440  
SATISFIED  
CUSTOMERS

*12 clients participated in the enterprise*

HoW Catering was launched in 2018 as a way to build sustainable entry pathways to the workplace. To scale-up and amplify the successful program, the 2019 Resilience Appeal was launched to fund an on-site commercial kitchen, due for completion in March 2021. We thank our generous donors who helped us turn the commercial kitchen into a reality and build strong, transferable training and experience for our cooks, delivery drivers and catering service staff. For them, this program is a lifeline.

During the lockdown period in the second half of the financial year, orders slowed considerably. It's anticipated the new commercial kitchen will increase the number of catering orders by 100%.

*100% of clients agree or strongly agree that the job training gave them the skills, training & confidence to seek employment as a chef and in the hospitality industry.*

*We wanted to use a social enterprise for our catering and know the wonderful House of Welcome have been doing this for some time. We were blown away with the quality of the food and the very warm and efficient service by all the team.*

**Effie, HoW catering customer**



### Our trailblazing chefs

**Meet Aliyeh and Menani who now have the confidence to continue in a career in food and catering thanks to the HoW catering program.**

*Why did you decide to participate in the HoW Catering program?*

**Aliyeh:** I started volunteering for community lunches and then once the program was launched, I was invited to join it and I happily agreed as I enjoy cooking.

**Menani:** I love food. I also started volunteering for community lunches and earlier this year like Aliyeh was invited to join the catering program.

*What type of work did you experience on the program?*

**Both:** Everything. We shopped for ingredients, prepped the food, cooked, delivered and served.

*What did you get out of the program?*

**Aliyeh:** I learnt to cook dishes from various cultural backgrounds: Afghani, Pakistani, Arabic and so on.

**Menani:** I became more confident and learnt new skills, I learnt how to present and serve the food. As we get to do everything it's great to see the process from beginning to the end: from shopping to serving customers.

*Have you experienced any challenges during the program?*

**Aliyeh:** Delivery can be challenging as sometimes I have to drive a long distance, there is traffic and parking to find. I also must look after the food I am delivering to make sure it's the same quality as when it left the kitchen.

**Menani:** When I had to serve the food to customers for the very first time and this was initially a challenge. I worked in the kitchen before, but never had to face customers.

*Do you have any memorable experience/s you would like to share?*

**Both:** We appreciate how friendships develop in the kitchen and how we learnt to work as a team and manage the time, so we can deliver orders to our customers on time.

## HOUSING



In 2019 HoW undertook a review of the Housing project. The program has experienced a number of challenges over the last 12-months, in particular supporting clients with acute mental health issues. There is recognition that the support for clients who are part of the Legacy Caseload, require a more intensive model of support. The temporary protection arrangements for this cohort, as well as those coming from Manus Island and Nauru create a significant risk of serious and ongoing mental health issues.

The Welcome Start Transitional Housing Project provided a structured transitional program for people seeking asylum, particularly for those who have no access to traditional government and non-government support. The program continues to focus on assisting individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness and isolation, or have high vulnerabilities such as survivors of domestic violence and poor mental health.



Welcome Start Transitional Housing Project has been developed to integrate the HoW services to provide a holistic person-centred approach to deliver an intensive casework model that can be implemented as part of a program that includes safe and secure housing, an initial period of financial and food security assistance (if eligible) and access to a weekly employment program.

### 90% of clients agreed or strongly agreed

- ▶ They felt safe, comfortable and secure in the property
- ▶ They have increased knowledge of the Australian occupancy process
- ▶ They felt very satisfied with the House of Welcome housing program

**78%** of clients agreed or strongly agreed they were easily able to connect to other support and local services.

**88%** of clients agreed or strongly agreed that the property met their needs.

## FOODBANK

With the generous contribution of over 72 foodbank partners, HoW was able to provide food supplies to its community. Over the course of the year, HoW supplied food to 8,208 individual recipients. With the food rationing in supermarkets, HoW was creative in sourcing as many food items as possible to meet the growing demand. As an essential service, the foodbank remained open with a skeleton staff distributing food basics.



*Though things have changed at the House of Welcome (hand sanitiser, gloves and face masks are now a big part of my job) the principle of foodbank – to provide essential grocery items to people in need – remains the same. During this time of coronavirus when social distancing has become the new normal, vulnerable groups like people seeking asylum are in greater need of assistance than ever. Hearing stories every week from people who have lost their jobs, who can no longer afford to pay rent, has made me realise how seriously this virus has affected their lives. It's an honour for me to do my little bit to help at HoW's foodbank.*

**Emi, Drop In volunteer**



# WOMEN'S CREATIVE HUB



The creative hub is an inclusive and empowering space for women from asylum-seeking and refugee backgrounds with the opportunity to engage socially through social activities and workshops. HoW is proud to partner with Enactus Macquarie, Community Migrant Resource Centre, and Auburn Community Centre on the creative hub services which include workshops, catering, volunteer program and an online shopping platform.

*I love the hub's friendly environment and the way we work together to strengthen our community and set us on the path to be successful entrepreneurs.*

**Sawson, Creative Hub client**

For more information: <https://www.womenscreativehub.com/>

## Flavours of Auburn

Flavours of Auburn is a community enterprise which connects people, communities and cultures through a shared love for food. This project is a partnership between Cumberland City Council, the Auburn Small Community Organisation Network (ASCON), House of Welcome and local Auburn businesses. Client cooks from HoW have delivered cooking classes showcasing culinary delights from Pakistan, Iran and Sudan.



## Volunteers



Volunteers are one of the most precious resources we have at HoW; without volunteers we wouldn't be able to run our service or activities. During the shutdown period HoW remained open as an essential service – adapting the way financial, food and housing security could be delivered across this period. HoW has acutely felt the absence of volunteers at the service. We've had volunteers assisting us remotely with logistics, and client services. As restrictions start to ease, we have a few familiar faces returning back to the centre helping out with foodbank delivery and drop-in requests.

# STORIES OF WELCOME

## Adnan\* reflects on his journey, hope and his faith.

*As I reflect on my journey, the House of Welcome has been a house of love and hope. When I was in the worst situation of my life, the House of Welcome gave me hope to live. I was too hopeless and devastated but the House of Welcome, which I call the house of love and hope, changed my life positively. I was in Australia with a protection visa for more than seven and a half years, I didn't get any help from any organisation. I always worked by myself, I remember I was jobless because I didn't have an ID as I had lost it. I lived in my car for over two and a half months. I tried to get help from other organisations but no one returned my calls. Then after two years, when I lost my job because of coronavirus, I felt completely hopeless.*

*When I talked with the House of Welcome, I couldn't believe they wanted to help. But they did. For me, here in Australia, it seemed impossible, House of Welcome wanted to help me. It was like a dream, but they did. They changed my feelings and mind to be positive and optimistic. I have to say a big thanks to the House of Welcome, or to me it is the house of hope. When I applied for my visa, the process was too long – seven and a half years. I was unmotivated, and also, I had a lot of trauma and nightmares from the past. I thought nowhere is safe for me, even my home country. I had a negative feeling about all the people around me. I thought if I die it is safer than if I stay alive. But I believe that God is always with me. He doesn't let me fall down in my life, and the House of Welcome was there to help.*

*The House of Welcome wanted to help me, it was like a dream, but they did. They changed my feelings and mind to be positive and optimistic. I have to say big thanks to the House of Welcome or to me is the house of hope.*

## Javid\* contemplates the importance of safety, security and stability.

*What does safety mean to me? It means I feel safe without anyone able to harm me. Before we came to Leeton, Ruth (Caseworker) and the House of Welcome team introduced us to the Mayor and helped to arrange the move (transition) to Leeton. The Mayor is someone who has allowed us to trust him by welcoming us to the community.*

*Before we moved to Leeton, we stayed in Granville in an over-crowded house with 11 men. This placed my daughter at significant risk of harm. Our family was referred to the House of Welcome by another service provider. They arranged accommodation for my family which provided us a safe place.*

*We accessed the HoW foodbank, financial assistance, and casework and employment program. Our caseworker was so caring, helpful and understanding. She provided us with good advice when needed and spoke a similar dialect which made it easier to communicate. Having a common language made us feel safe and secure as our basic needs were met. We felt heard, understood and valued by our caseworker.*

*The Welcome Start Transitional Housing Program provided us with safe accommodation. This stability allowed us to build our English and employability skills. The community is important to us. When we have a good income, we are able to contribute back to the community by contributing to organisations such as House of Welcome and other service providers to help others in need.*

*With the support from House of Welcome, I have become more confident to advocate on behalf of my family and feel confident to access support independently when needed.*

*We felt heard, understood and valued by our caseworker.*



**Mary\* finds the right support to help her achieve her goals.**

For many years I was a primary school teacher in Iran and enjoyed a successful career working with young children and teaching at my local school. When I came to Australia, I was disappointed to discover my degree and qualifications were not recognised and I could not continue to do the work I loved.

After careful consideration I decided I would enrol in TAFE to study aged care – a job where my caring and nurturing skills would be called on again. I joined the Empowered to Work program to seek advice on how to find a part-time job while studying and to assist me to become job-ready. It was only through this program that I was able to connect with an after-school care program where I work each afternoon. Once again, I am able to care for children, providing meals, facilitating playtime and helping them with their homework. It's a relief to be able to study and work and this would not have happened without the guidance from the Empowered to Work program and TAFE NSW. I miss my students in Tehran, but I feel like I have a new career pathway and I am grateful for the assistance in achieving this goal.



*"I miss my students in Tehran, but I feel like I have a new career pathway and I am grateful for the assistance in achieving this goal."*

\*Names have been changed for privacy reasons



# THANK YOU!

## *A special thanks to our donors and supporters*

### **GRANTORS AND FOUNDATIONS**

Australian Antigonish Co-Operative Development Ltd  
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Buck Foundation  
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney  
Colliers Charitable Fund  
Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Aus & PNG  
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### **PARTNERS**

Addison Rd Community Centre  
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Auburn Asian Welfare Centre  
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Addison Rd Community Centre  
Asylum Seekers Centre  
Australian Online Giving Foundation Benevity Community  
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Baronia Park Uniting Care  
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City of Parramatta  
Community Migrant Resource Centre  
Craig Foster  
Cumberland City Council  
Dandelion Support Network  
Delany College  
Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia  
and the Solomon Islands  
Dr Jalal Khan & the Dental Truck  
ENACTUS Macquarie University  
Gift of Bread  
Glebe Youth Service  
Granville Rotary

Henry Davis & York  
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House of Sadaqa  
Investing for Charity  
North Sydney Community Centre  
NSW Refugee Health  
Hunter's Hill Rotary Club  
Jesuit Refugee Service Australia  
Josephite Action Group  
King Wood & Mallesons  
Ku-ring-gai Council  
John and Elizabeth Lee  
Life Without Barriers  
Loreto Normanhurst  
Loreto Sisters  
Marist Sisters  
Marvelous Building Group  
Mary Immaculate Parish, Waverly  
Mater Hospital  
Mt St Benedict College, Pennant Hills  
Mums for Refugees  
Newleaf St George Community Housing  
NSW Humanitarian Hub  
Our Lady of Consolation Aged Care  
PACE Macquarie University  
Parramatta City Council  
Presentation Sisters  
Refugee Council of Australia  
Settlement Services International  
Share the Dignity  
Sisters of Mercy Parramatta  
Sisters of St Joseph

St Bernadette's Parish  
St Clare Region of the Secular Franciscan Order  
St Joan of Arc Catholic Parish Haberfield  
St Mary Queen of Heaven, Georges Hall  
St Patrick's Cathedral, Parramatta  
St Patrick's College, Strathfield  
Street Smart  
Sydney Alliance  
Sydney Water  
The Foodbank NSW  
The Generous and The Grateful  
OzHarvest  
The Sisters of the Little Company of Mary  
Trustees of the Sisters of Saint Dominic  
Trustees of The Marist Brothers Seven Hills  
Ursuline Community  
Wahroonga Rotary

### **C360 SPECIFIC DONORS**

Hebert Smith Freehills  
St Francis Parish, Paddington  
St Vincent de Paul Paddington  
St Vincent de Paul Edgecliff  
The Lewis Foundation

### **C360 SPECIFIC PARTNERS**

City of Sydney  
Waverley Council  
Woollahra Council  
NSW Department of Communities & Justice

***A big Thank You to the 80 parishes, schools, community groups and individuals that ran food drives for us this year.***

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

St Francis Social Services

As at 30 June 2020

<b>Assets</b>	<b>30 Jun 2020</b>	<b>30 Jun 2019</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,374,392	1,268,145
Trade and other receivables	200,708	26,944
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,575,100</b>	<b>1,295,089</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Investments	182,303	221,702
Property, plant and equipment	107,802	75,772
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>290,105</b>	<b>297,479</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,865,205</b>	<b>1,592,568</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	670,346	174,618
Provisions	92,576	68,501
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>762,922</b>	<b>243,119</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	22,082	5,690
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>22,082</b>	<b>5,690</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>785,004</b>	<b>248,809</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>1,080,201</b>	<b>1,343,760</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	789,201	1,343,760
Reserve	282,000	
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>1,080,201</b>	<b>1,343,760</b>

Independently audited by Pascoe Whittle Chartered Accountants  
[www.pascoewhittle.com.au](http://www.pascoewhittle.com.au)

# STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

St Francis Social Services

As at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Income</b>		
Church Body Donations	303,700	329,373
Donations	814,140	805,101
Fundraising Income	445	33,177
Government Grants	735,562	601,316
Non-Government Grants	186,359	300,379
Operation Activities	161,451	209,986
Other Income	90,434	157,910
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2,292,091</b>	<b>2,437,241</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Building Maintenance	269,903	283,270
Client Support Services	259,890	263,507
Financial Costs	114,578	59,589
General Expenses	69,900	40,972
Greenlight Movement Expenses	1,350	25,511
Insurance	15,149	16,583
IT Costs	108,896	103,554
Membership Fees	6,895	2,532
Motor Vehicle Expenses	37,155	67,424
Staff Costs	1,667,014	1,776,043
Volunteer Costs	4,920	14,727
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,555,649</b>	<b>2,653,712</b>
<b>Current Year Profit/(Loss) Before Income Tax</b>	<b>(263,559)</b>	<b>(216,471)</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>	<b>(263,559)</b>	<b>(216,471)</b>

Independently audited by Pascoe Whittle Chartered Accountants  
[www.pascoewhittle.com.au](http://www.pascoewhittle.com.au)

# OUR PEOPLE

## Board of Directors

### Fr Nick Lucas OFM (Chair)

Nick Lucas is a Franciscan friar, a priest who also has qualifications in Social Work. He is the founder of St Francis Social Services.

### Peter Hennessy (Company secretary)

Peter Hennessy is a lawyer and on the board of projects conducted by the Sisters of Charity and has also served on the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

### Carol Dettmann

Carol is the publisher at Chapter & Verse, specialising in Fine Art photography books. A dual American/Australian citizen, she is committed to refugee support.

### Sr Libby Rogerson

Libby is a Loreto sister, and coordinator of the Loreto Sisters JPIC. In addition to her service on the Board of St Francis Social Services, she also sits on the Boards of Jesuit Social Services and CentaCare (Wilcannia-Forbes).

### Anna Coroneo

Anna holds Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and Bachelor of Commerce degrees from the University of New South Wales and is a Senior Associate in the Corporate team at Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF).

### Laurie Ferguson

Laurie holds a Bachelor of Economics and a Master of Arts from Sydney University. He served as the NSW MP for Granville (1984 – 1990), and later Federal Member for Reid and Werriwa (1990-2016).

### Renee Dal Santo

Renee is a Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of New South Wales. She is a Divisional Finance Manager at the GPT Group.

### Rev Geoff Dornan

Rev Geoff Dornan is a 'Minister of the Word' at St Ives Uniting Church. He has held the position of Director of International Programs, Africa and Asia for the Uniting Church's international aid organisation.

### Fr Paul Ghanem OFM

Paul Ghanem is a Franciscan friar and the Parish Priest of St Francis of Assisi Paddington and St Joseph's Edgecliff.

## Staff

*St Francis Social Services achieves outcomes through the support of dedicated staff members and over 100 volunteers, without whom, none of this would be possible.*

### Centre 360

Christopher Stretton, Etheon Parkes, Gary Stocks, Jesse Wynhausen, Katherine Fallows, Lyndell Weaver, Monique Phipps, Paula Parmakellis, Sarah Bays, Simone Connell, Soheyla Gholamshahi

### House of Welcome

Anne Moran, Georgia Holloway, Jae-Ann Maher, Larissa Dulat, Maryanne Sneddon, Miriam Pellicano, Rui Franco Olim, Ruth Lesmana, Siobhan Raffan, Soroush Shahbazifar, Suma Pillai, Tatiana Halay

### St Francis Social Services

Gary Stocks, Maurizio Vespa, Sara Lubowitz

### GLM

Alleric Mitchell-Avezard, Samuel Alfonso

### NAPSA

Andrea Watkins

*In the 2019-20 financial year, our generous volunteers continued to bring a strong community spirit and a deep commitment to transforming the lives of our clients. We are grateful for their ongoing contribution, particularly at this challenging time.*

### MANAGEMENT TEAM DURING REPORTING PERIOD

**Maurizio Vespa, CEO, St Francis Social Services**

**Peter Hennessy, Company Secretary**



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Our services operate at a time of great uncertainty and need.**

**To help us support even more vulnerable people:**

- ▶ **Donate to the Emergency Relief Package to assist with the foodbank, emergency financial assistance for medications, accommodation and crisis support.**
- ▶ **Donate food items to the House of Welcome foodbank**
- ▶ **Register to volunteer by emailing [s.pillai@houseofwelcome.com.au](mailto:s.pillai@houseofwelcome.com.au)**
- ▶ **Leave a bequest in your will**
- ▶ **Follow the House of Welcome on Facebook to stay updated.**

*All donations above \$2 are tax deductible.*

To donate:

St Francis Social Services: <https://www.stfrancis.org.au/make-donation-st-francis-social-services>

Centre 360: <https://www.stfrancis.org.au/centre-360/make-donation-centre-360-youth-and-family-service>

House of Welcome: <https://www.stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome/make-donation-house-welcome>

**<https://www.stfrancis.org.au>**







St Francis Social Services  
 461– 463 Oxford St  
 PO Box 39 PADDINGTON NSW 2021  
 Ph: 02 9331 2691  
 Email: [enquiries@stfrancis.org.au](mailto:enquiries@stfrancis.org.au)  
 Website: [stfrancis.org.au](http://stfrancis.org.au)

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service  
 461– 463 Oxford St PADDINGTON NSW 2021  
 PO Box 39  
 Ph: 02 9331 2691  
 Freecall: 1800 249 740  
 Email: [enquiries@stfrancis.org.au](mailto:enquiries@stfrancis.org.au)  
 Website: [stfrancis.org.au/centre-360](http://stfrancis.org.au/centre-360)



The House of Welcome  
 197 The Trongate  
 PO Box 10 GRANVILLE NSW 2142  
 Ph: 02 9727 9290  
 Email: [office@houseofwelcome.com.au](mailto:office@houseofwelcome.com.au)  
 Website: [stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome](http://stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome)



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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

*St Francis Social Services would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which St Francis Social Services operates. We pay our respect to them, their customs, their culture, to elders past and present and to their emerging leaders.*

