



CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Annual Report 2019-20



CONNECTING LIVES

CONTENTS

Accepting challenges for over 40 years	2
Chair's Report	4
CEO's Report	6
On a mission	8
Bright spots	10
A strong business	12
A bright business	14
Our people	16
Home Services	18
Housing Services	20
Youth Services	22
Disability Support	24
In the news	26
COVID challenge	32
Star projects	36
Above and beyond	38
Great partners	40
Our board	42
Leadership team	44
Financial highlights	46



WITHIN EVERY CHALLENGE ARE
OPPORTUNITIES



VISION

1976

28-year-old Des Orr was young, passionate and forward thinking. He had a vision, and importantly a solution.

GUMPTION

1980

HHelp was born. Help Handicapped People Enter Life Project was a solution-focused group based on self-help for people with a disability. Funding was tight but community support was mounting.

BREAKTHROUGH

1981

Des and his small but dedicated team convinced Australia Post to feature the HHelp logo on the limited edition front cover for International Year of the Disabled. Channel 10 then celebrated their 21st birthday with a telethon that raised \$60K for HHelp.

GROWING UP

1986

Moved into the gardeners' cottage at 46 Hill Street thanks to Toowoomba Regional Council. Our first real office space.

1991

Start with two staff, volunteers and eight houses.

MOMENTUM

1994

Began the Home Assist Secure service.

1995

Government investors took notice. We became a legitimate service provider rather than a social group and employed a manager and staff.

2003

Changed our name to ASSERT Services to reflect our expanded services across Accommodation, Support Services, Education, Respite and Training.

2005

Became the first Queensland disability support organisation to be certified against Queensland's new disability standards.

2009

Offered long term community housing.

FUSION

2013

Merged with Toowoomba Community Housing Service to deliver housing and home services including Home Assist Secure, maintenance and modifications. Stronger. Better. Together.

REVOLUTION

2015

Began a top-to-bottom re-think of who we are, what we do and how we do it, led by incoming chief executive Penny Hamilton.

Launched our bright new selves, YellowBridge QLD, with a new vision, mission, values and energy.

Became a public company limited by guarantee.

2016

Launched our first social enterprise, Collectables with Minister Coralee O'Rourke.

Achieved recertification of quality standards at the highest international level.

Named Community Group of the Year at the Business Excellence Awards.

2017

Strengthened our partnership program and merged with The Haven, which provides supported accommodation for young people.

2018

Nominated for Community Group of the Year in Queensland Community Awards.

Expanded regional footprint in to 13 towns throughout the Darling Downs and Lockyer Valley.

Purchased 829 Ruthven Street and commenced renovations on our first whole-of-organisation office premises.

CONSOLIDATION

2019

Adopted a revised Corporate Strategic Plan to reflect business growth and maturity.

2020

Moved into new administration centre, YB Central.

Maintained services and business continuity during COVID-19.

Completed first purpose-built housing project for people with a disability.

Initiated campaign to end youth homelessness.



ACCEPTING CHALLENGES FOR OVER 40 YEARS

WELCOME

Chair Report - Carolyn Brown

It has been a year like no other.

There is no doubt that this year has been defined by the three C's: **Coronavirus, Change and Challenge.**

How quickly our world and lives can change and who could have predicted the raft of challenges that we faced. Terms such as 'social distancing' and 'community transmission' entered our collective lexicon and transformed our behaviour overnight. Our State's chief health officer appeared on our television screens more than any other time in my living memory. We pumped sanitiser into our hands dozens of times each day. We swapped handshakes for elbow bumps. We stayed away and stayed home. If we didn't know what immunology was before, or what an immunologist did, we sure do now. On a side note, I hope it inspires a generation of young people to study science and join the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) professions.

The Big C, COVID-19, has indeed drawn a line in the sand. There was BC, Before Coronavirus, and there will be AC, After Coronavirus. The antics of COVID-19 are still being played out throughout Australia and across the globe. We will not know the true impact of this pandemic for many years to come. An approved vaccine is still many months away, if not years, and people, communities and businesses are feeling rattled and bewildered.

But we soldier on.

I am immensely proud of YellowBridge's response to the pandemic. As soon as we understood the extent of the situation, the Board and Senior Leadership Team acted swiftly, calmly and deliberately. Our purpose was always crystal clear - protect the health and safety of our staff and clients, maintain our essential services, and ensure business continuity. **Challenge accepted.**

As the saying goes, 'Necessity is the mother of invention'. Instead of reducing, removing, retreating and resigning, we put aside convention and conventional thinking and

invented novel ways of keeping as many of our staff as possible employed, reaching out to our vulnerable clients, maintaining services in a safe way and helping each other stay connected, focused and positive. It was a test of our emotional and mental resilience, but we squared-up to the challenges and we did not waiver. **Challenge accepted.**

It is testament to our amazing staff who deliver high quality services every day of the year to more than 5500 people. That adds up to more than 140,000 hours each year, or 400 hours every day, that we assist those in need. It is a huge contribution to our community's wellbeing and I commend our staff on their role in this significant endeavour. **Challenge accepted.**

Making good and doing good are hard to beat. Perhaps that is why so many of our staff report high satisfaction with their job. In the annual staff satisfaction survey, 99 percent said they were satisfied or higher. Investing in our staff continued to be a key priority so we can provide a highly skilled and diverse staff to meet the individual needs of our many clients. **Challenge accepted.**



CAROLYN WITH ANNA FALCONER AT THE OPENING OF YB CENTRAL, 12 DECEMBER 2019

YELLOWBRIDGE MAKES A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY, AND WE ARE HERE TO STAY.

YellowBridge makes a significant contribution to the local economy, and we are here to stay. It was an extremely proud moment when we officially opened our new administration centre, YB Central. We now have a place for everyone. Then we turned the sod and watched with anticipation as our first purpose-built accommodation for people with a disability rose out of the ground. Our eternal thanks to Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland for the grant that made it possible and to Enabled Living for constructing four thoughtfully designed units. And after many years of making do, we commenced the long-awaited renovation of the Hill Street building to create a modern, functional, and attractive hub for our disability program. **Challenge accepted.**

I acknowledge the support of the Australian and Queensland governments for their continuing

investment and confidence in YellowBridge, which allows us to do our important community work. We are very aware of the responsibility of being a not-for-profit organisation largely funded by public money. Where possible, we have searched and sourced support and additional funding from other means to extend our services and initiatives. We sincerely acknowledge the generosity of our partners and community who continually support our ideas and projects. These efforts attracted additional funds of almost \$1 million and delivered business efficiency savings of \$165,000. **Challenge accepted.**

It has been a privilege to serve a fifth term as Chair of the Board and be part of the many successes, and challenges, over the past 12 months. I offer my deepest gratitude to the staff of YellowBridge who live the YB values every day and did not shy away from the challenges we

faced. Navigating the high seas of COVID-19 was not easy, and we could not have done it without the decisive, determined and composed leadership from our Chief Executive Officer. Penny's contribution to YellowBridge over the past five years has been immense. She has expertly steered us on a transformational journey with cheer, charisma and compassion for our staff, clients and partners. It will not be easy to say goodbye when she retires in November 2020, but we are determined to carry on her legacy and embrace the future and the opportunities with her indelible spirit of positivity, collaboration and joy.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.

AND HELLO

CEO Report - Penny Hamilton

Like the rest of the world, it has been the COVID-19 pandemic that has presented the biggest challenges for YellowBridge this year.

We know we are better together, but we could not be together. No handshakes, no hugs, no gatherings, no travel, no sense of normalcy, and the toughest of all, no face to face contact with our clients. For our organisation who puts our clients at the heart of everything we do this was an immense challenge.

But our staff accepted the challenge, and I am immensely proud of them. YellowBridge was responsible for supporting a recognised vulnerable cohort during the pandemic – homeless youth, seniors, people with a disability and social housing tenants. We were on the front line ensuring all our clients received services and support coupled with the highest measure of COVID safety during these troubling times. We re-organised, planned, social-distanced, became experts in hand washing, travelled solo, cleaned all hard surfaces, Zoomed, listened, spent many hours on the phone, cared for clients and encouraged each other to make the best of a hard situation.

I acknowledge the Australian Government for Job Keeper and Job Seeker which kept our business in good health. I pay tribute to our Board of Directors and Senior Management Team who spent many hours working on our Business Continuity and Recovery plans. I applaud our clients for staying home, adapting to the changes, and cooperating with our staff to keep everyone safe. It is with immense gratitude that I thank our staff for all they did to support our clients at a time when they needed it the most. No one has ever done this before, but you took it in your stride, braved the front line, reset your priorities, and

delivered services that were above and beyond. You are, and always will be, an awesome team.

Pandemic aside, during 2019-20 YellowBridge has experienced success and growth in all areas of our business and the demand for our services across housing, home services, disability support and youth continues to increase.

As we enter our fourth year under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, YellowBridge acknowledges the life-changing opportunities it is providing our clients and the expected challenges that are associated with any significant national reform. Like our fellow providers, the demand for our services is outweighing the supply with the major limiting factor being access to skilled workers. However, we are committed to the aims of the NDIS and are determined to see it work for the benefit of our clients and their families. This year, we provided 119,505 hours of support to 80 clients. We expanded our groups program and commenced renovations at our Hill Street centre. Despite a temporary closure during COVID, our boutique op shop Collectables continues to provide skill and training opportunities for our clients.

Ageing at home and living independently is important to many people as they grow older. YellowBridge is honoured to support our seniors' independence through our Home Services program. The team managed a client base of over 5,000 clients and delivered over 20,000 hours of service including 629 home modifications and 5,152 yard services. Our delivery of Home

Care Packages doubled over the year and we surpassed our target of 3,000 hours of service delivery. The demand for HCP is strong and this growth is expected to continue over the coming years. During Queensland Seniors Week, we launched *Wise Humans of the Downs*, a book that shares the life experiences of 30 seniors in collaboration with St Mary's College. It was an inspiring project supported by the Queensland government's age-friendly grants program. Soon after, the team took the popular Banter seniors events on the road. Although the program was interrupted by COVID it will be back as soon as it is safe to do so.

Social and economic changes have created pressures on our housing system with some members of our community unable to access a place to live. Fortunately, through our Housing Program and dedicated team, we managed 174 properties and accommodated 437 people. However, demand continues to outweigh the supply of affordable housing and this is an ongoing concern. We continued to play a lead role as Co-Chair and partner of the Toowoomba Housing Hub, a consortium of housing providers which provides a streamlined one-stop-shop for clients. We also initiated and partnered with the Department of Housing and Public Works to make available additional houses and to deliver COVID-19 Clean Buckets to tenants across Toowoomba. This provided eight additional families with a safe place to live and delivered good information and products to 350 tenants to assist them in protecting themselves and their families during the pandemic.

Our Youth Services team supported 20 young people at The Haven and helped a further 13 young people sustain their independent tenancies through mobile support. Our learner driver program got 12 young people on the road and four with their drivers' licence. Through the generous support of Suncorp, we upgraded the outdoor space at The Haven and residents now have a vegetable garden, chicken coup, rainwater tank and game court to enjoy. These improvements have provided significant wellbeing and sustainability benefits for our young



PENNY CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF YB CENTRAL WITH 150 GUESTS

I AM ENORMOUSLY PROUD OF WHAT WE DO FOR OTHERS AND WHAT WE HAVE ALL ACHIEVED TOGETHER.

people. YellowBridge also took the lead in a cross services project to end youth homelessness in Toowoomba by 2024. It is our aim to house every young person every night. In a step in the right direction, we have secured two additional houses for youth experiencing homelessness.

YellowBridge was responsible for managing \$12.1 million of public funds across four different service areas and we take this responsibility seriously. Our Business Services team worked diligently to balance the demands of quality service delivery and ongoing investment while delivering a financially sustainable business. The transformation of the former Skate City into YB Central to house the YellowBridge team was a long-term vision and highlight of 2019-20. We adore our space, we are grateful to be together and we love to share YB Central with our community. COVID-19 resulted in many changes to our business operations including a three-month lockdown whilst continuing essential front-line services, increased supply of goods to deliver heightened infection

control for staff, remote IT access and business dealings at arm's length. Our Business Services team accepted the challenge and delivered admirably.

In a business like ours the safety and wellbeing of our staff and clients is paramount. There is no doubt our workplace presents some significant risks with 133 staff operating across four locations (in the community and often remotely and solo), 24/7 responsibility, a fleet of 27 vehicles covering over 487,000 kms annually and supporting a client group with diverse needs. It is only right that our Safe and Well Program takes a high profile in our everyday business. This year, our focus was on creating a mentally healthy and thriving work environment, which stood us in good stead when the pandemic surfaced as a real threat.

It is with immense pride, some sadness and no regrets that I close on my final CEO Report for YellowBridge before my official retirement in November 2020. I feel extremely privileged to be given the opportunity to work with an

organisation that gives so much back to our community, every minute of every day. It was an honour to take the company on the YellowBridge journey from its inception to where we are today. I am enormously proud of what we do for others and what we have all achieved together. There is so much I love about YellowBridge.

An organisation is only as good as the people who do the work and YellowBridge has an awesome staff. I sincerely thank our staff for all you have done and will continue to do and for the many things you have taught me – it has been a privilege to be in your company every day. I love how you place our clients at the heart of everything you do. You know that there will never be enough time in a day, or enough resources to make everything perfect for the people you support ... but what you do is make it better. I love how you look for the best in all situations and all people and I admire the way you stand up for justice and fairness.

Thank you to everyone. YellowBridge will be forever in my heart.

VISION

**CONNECTING LIVES AND
FINDING BRIGHT POSSIBILITIES**

MISSION

**WORKING TOGETHER TO HELP
LIVES SHINE**

ON A MISSION

VALUES



WE PLACE PEOPLE FIRST

Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. They are our purpose and our reason. We dream of bright futures for them. We are determined to do whatever we can to help them lead proud and rewarding lives. This mission invigorates us.



WE ARE HONOURABLE

We have a strong moral compass that guides us. We act with integrity and honesty. Our instinct is to stand up for justice and fairness. We do the right thing even when no one is looking. If we say we will do something, we do it.



WE FIND THE JOY

We search for the best in all situations and all people. When faced with challenges, we find a positive way through. We make the time to listen, understand and help each other. Little acts of kindness is what we like to do. We have cheerful attitudes and big hearts.



WE AIM HIGH

We are proud of what we do for others. We believe it is important and makes a difference. This is what drives us to be diligent, reliable and accountable so we can achieve excellent outcomes that matter. When times demand, we are bold and have the courage to think differently.



WE ARE BETTER, TOGETHER

Our diversity is our strength. We work together to achieve our common goal. We appreciate, respect and uplift each other. We say thank you. No one is left on the sideline. Every one is part of the solution. We are one team.



**NEVILLE PREECE AND DECLAN
TRAISE AT THE LAUNCH
OF WISE HUMANS OF THE
DOWNS, AUGUST 2019**

BRIGHT SPOTS

This year's highlights



A STRONG BUSINESS

We believe a strong business needs effective leadership, good governance, high standards and a solid plan for the future.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

We received more than \$975,000 in additional funds through grants and donations. This helps us to enhance our services and pursue special projects and initiatives that benefit our clients and community. Our Home Services program benefited from the majority of this extra funding with a \$107,000 grant to run the Banter Roadshow for Seniors, a Commonwealth Home Support Programme grant to expand services (\$127,000) and secured CHSP funding for the next financial year (\$507,000). Our Housing Program was the recipient of a \$70,000 Community Rent Scheme grant to provide additional affordable housing and Business Services secured a \$20,000 NDIS readiness grant to implement a new customer relationship management system that will be used for staff training. We continue to invest in our Partnership Business Model and look for ways to develop and improve how we provide our services and projects in conjunction with like-minded businesses and organisations. We have more than 50 partners who provide small or large contributions through in-kind or financial arrangements. Every partnership is important to us and we are deeply grateful for the community's support.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMS

We completed 562 continuous improvement items to uphold our high standards in business process and service delivery. We maintained certification across three standards: ISO 9001 Quality Management System; Human Services Quality Framework (Queensland Government); and National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (Australian Government). We completed the Stage 1 audit for National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Framework and transitioned to the national Aged Care Quality Standards for our work in Home Care. We trained 12 internal auditors who are part of our Quality Management Team which works across all standards to ensure we meet our clients' needs at the highest standard.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

All our service programs operated in a financially break-even or better position. This is the first time that all programs in the same year delivered their outcomes within their allocated budgets. While we continue to rely on government funding as our major funding source, we secured more than \$975,000 in additional funds including grants, donations

and opportunities. A review of business efficiency resulted in a 1.5% improvement, which led to savings of \$165,000. We developed and implemented a Business Continuity Plan during COVID-19, which included a risk assessment on our financial sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Environmental Committee undertook an environmental assessment of the organisation's carbon footprint. They identified six key areas for attention - electricity, fuel, gas, waste, paper and water - and developed targets for each. Activities during the year focused on increasing awareness amongst staff of how they can reduce their environmental impact; reducing green waste through onsite composting; reducing waste by increasing recycling and providing suitable bins to encourage this; and recognising World Environment Day. We remain registered for the Container Refund Scheme, which gives people the option to recycle their bottles and cans at participating recycling centres and donate their refund to YellowBridge. We also made significant reductions in printing and paper usage - colour printing by 50 percent, black and white



printing by 30 percent and office paper use by 30 percent.



LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

We believe strongly in taking initiative and advocating on behalf of issues and causes that reflect our organisation's values and benefits those in need in our community. Homelessness continued to be a key focus for us this year. We remained the Co-Chair of the Queensland-first Toowoomba Housing Hub and were the lead advocate on a campaign to end youth homelessness in Toowoomba by 2024. Disabilities was also an area of determined effort. We helped to establish Butterfly Hands, a support and advocacy organisation for the Deaf community in the Toowoomba region. And we advocated on behalf of disability clients with ageing parents for improved outcomes on their NDIS plans to support their independence. COVID-19 presented unique challenges for our clients. We successfully advocated for

\$139,000 in additional funds to support our youth, seniors and housing clients. We are committed to lending our voice and experience to matters of official importance and therefore provided input to white papers released from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, affordable housing and disability housing shortage.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mental wellbeing was the main focus of our workplace health and safety program. We partnered with Strive Occupational Rehabilitation to support staff with mental health and returning to work. This was offered in addition to our Employee Assistance Program that offers free and confidential access to a trained psychologist through our partnership with J P Smith HR & Recruitment.

The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and clients is paramount. Approximately 40 percent of staff work remotely, providing care and support to clients in a residential or community setting. Many of them work solo and with a roster that includes night work. Work commenced on a new campaign, Work Safe. Home Safe, that will

reinforce the importance of safety in the workplace. The campaign will be ready to rollout in late 2020 and complements the Queensland Government messaging on the same topic.

Staff participated in 150 training events that spanned topics such as medication management, manual handling, mindfulness, mental health, first aid, counselling, hoist training, infection control, return to work rehabilitation and cross-cultural awareness. They also participated in and supported various community events such as Toowoomba Christmas Wonderland, R U OK Day, Movember, Hike for Homeless, Homeless for a Night Sleepout, Safe Work Month and the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Grand Parade where we won first prize in the Community Section.



A BRIGHT BUSINESS

People, partnerships and positivity are at the heart of who we are and what we do.



BRIGHT FUTURES

Our Bright Futures Program includes special projects that provide opportunities and experiences above-and-beyond our core services and programs. Wherever possible, we have partnered with like-minded businesses because we know **we are better, together.**

COLLECTABLES

A boutique op shop that works as a social enterprise. It provides work and training opportunities for people with a disability - *with Foundation Partner Toowoomba Toyota*

THE WORKSHOP

Provides men and women with a disability the opportunity to learn manual arts skills and build friendships. Some of their creations are then displayed or sold in Collectables.

POSEY OF KINDNESS

Two yellow posies are distributed to people in need in the local community each week as a random act of kindness - *with community partner The Luxe Bloom*

YELLOW BUCKET APPEAL

Hampers filled with gourmet foods and gifts for people who need extra support to make their Christmas special - *with community partner McConachie Stedman Accountants*

NO BOUNDARIES MAIL RUN

A group of YellowBridge clients collect and deliver the mail for a number of local businesses - *with participating businesses*

LETTERBOX DELIVERY

Clients assist with mail sorting and delivery - *with community partner Darling Downs Pamphlet Distributors*

YOUTH DRIVING PROGRAM

Helps the residents at The Haven to complete their 100 hours of supervised driving for their driver's licence - *with partners Complete Driving School, Golden Harvest Shell Service Station, Toowoomba Toyota, volunteer mentor drivers*

MICRO SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

YellowBridge provides seed funding to support a number of micro social enterprises that are operated by clients. These include:

- Love Jessie (Jessie-Leigh makes beautiful scented candles in upcycled glassware)
- Upcycled Electronics (Malcolm repairs electronics for re-sale)
- Jo Jo Bells (Jo designs and makes bespoke gift cards, sewing and crafts)
- Woodlands Creations (Geoffrey makes and renovates timber furniture and accessories)
- Ben's Shop (Ben turns recycled pallet timber into bespoke creations)
- Kerrod @ Wildash (Kerrod makes one off pieces of furniture and homewares)
- A Happy Face Creations (Adit upcycles second-hand jewellery, fabric and timber)
- Frank's Artworks (Frank creates unique artworks with pencil, pen and paper and woodburnt pieces)

PARTNERSHIPS

One of our core values is that we are better together. We firmly believe that working together in partnership with government, business and community is the best way to do business and create lasting benefit. Our Partnership Business Model challenges and inspires us to find new ways of working with others to achieve better outcomes. We were excited to work with Hand Heart Pocket to build our first custom-built unit for people with a disability. We were proud

to renew our Exclusive Vehicle Partnership with Toowoomba Toyota and welcome back McConachie Stedman for the fourth year as our major partner for the Yellow Bucket Appeal. It gave us great pleasure to be chosen by Suncorp for the second year as the beneficiary of their Brighter Futures Community Giving program. All our partners and supporters are important to us and help us bring joy and assistance to our community.

Major Partners



McConachie Stedman

Toowoomba Toyota
Beyond Your Expectations!



OUR PEOPLE

Our staff is the foundation of our organisation. Their dedication, skill and compassion underpin our organisation's continued growth and success.



After much hard work and anticipation, the day finally arrived when we moved into our new integrated administration premises at 879 Ruthven Street. YB Central was officially opened on 12 December with 150 guests. Finding the right property to accommodate a mixture of office-based employees and a yard maintenance team with machinery fleet was not easy, however the former Skate City complex offered the right combination of desired features.

Bringing staff together in a single location had been on our wish list for the past three years. Our 133 staff were spread across different locations and rarely got the opportunity to connect and work alongside each other. Bringing everyone together has had enormous benefits and helped us to be more efficient and collaborative. It has also allowed us to deliver a more streamlined process to our clients and service partners.

Our staff is the most important part of our organisation's continued growth and success. Improved collaboration and understanding helps to achieve a cohesive and connected staff. Our staff numbers

remained steady with only a 1.5 percent increase. We value the diversity amongst our staff with 15 percent from culturally diverse backgrounds such as South Sudan, Republic of Congo, Nepal, Philippines, India, Colombia and Papua New Guinea.

Staff morale and satisfaction remained high, which makes us very proud. In their annual reviews, 99 percent of staff rated their job 7/10 (satisfied) or higher, with 80 percent rating it 8/10 (very satisfied) or higher and 58 percent giving it a score of 9/10 (extremely satisfied) or higher. This gives us confidence that we are providing the right support and opportunities for our staff to enjoy and excel in their work.

The impact of COVID-19 was felt across our staff and forced us to make significant changes to our normal operations. We closed our main office at the end of March following the advice of Government and all office staff transitioned to working from home. Front-line workers in disability support, home services, yard maintenance, housing and youth services continued to help clients in the community but under stricter hygiene and social-

distancing requirements. Due to reduced demand for disability support during the coronavirus lockdown, 31 casual support workers were stood down but we made a commitment to re-employ these staff once the crisis diminishes and the need for our disability support returns to normal. Despite the uncertainty and upheaval caused by the lockdown, our staff remained positive and determined to make the best of very challenging circumstances. In a lovely gesture of team spirit and compassion, staff who remained employed during the lockdown organised care packages for staff who had work hours reduced or were stood down.

The quarterly all-staff event, YB Day, continued to be a highlight on the staff calendar and the one opportunity for all staff to gather together and participate in a whole-of-staff experience.

Our staff proved once again how generous they are, contributing a total of \$21,000 through our workplace giving program to fund special and one-off initiatives that help our clients and community.

133
STAFF (31 FULL TIME,
81 PART TIME, 21 CASUAL)

64%
FEMALE

36%
MALE

4.77
AVERAGE YEARS' SERVICE

99%
STAFF SATISFIED OR
HIGHER WITH THEIR JOB

115
CONTRACTORS

1.5%
INCREASE IN STAFF

20%
DECREASE IN
CONTRACTORS

11%
STAFF TURNOVER

15%
STAFF FROM CULTURALLY
DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS

CELEBRATING DEDICATED SERVICE

20 YEARS
Mark Eelkema

15 YEARS
Donita Bellette

5 YEARS
Darna Bradshaw
Penny Hamilton
Allen Clarke
Adrian Bonica
Robert Walker
Sue Whitehead

HOME SERVICES

Demand for home services was as strong as ever taking into consideration the impacts of the drought and the COVID-19 pandemic on our four programs.

Home Assist Secure delivered 10,185 services to 2,247 clients including 608 new clients. In response to COVID-19, the Queensland Government invested \$10 million in the Seniors Accessibility Assistance Stimulus program through Home Assist Secure providers such as YellowBridge. This provided eligible seniors with grants of up to \$5,000 to conduct critical home maintenance, repairs and upgrades. We received 552 applications for grants through the program.

The Yard Maintenance program expanded its range of subsidised services to include external window cleaning and gutter cleaning. They delivered 5,152 services and welcomed 684 new clients compared to 387 last year. The program now has 1,881 active clients.

The number of home modifications completed increased by 33 percent with a total of 629 projects.

Since being approved to deliver the government-funded Home Care Packages, we have gradually increased our clientele to 21 and delivered 3,089 hours of support, surpassing our target of 3,000 hours. We are committed to growing this service by expanding our staff and partner network.

In August during Queensland Seniors Week, we launched *Wise Humans of the Downs*, which chronicles the life experiences of 30 seniors from across the Darling Downs. We collaborated with St Mary's College for the special book that was supported by the Queensland Government. It was a great initiative and we hope the book inspires its readers to have more profound conversations with others, especially older people.

Then in February, our popular Banter seniors event series hit the road. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Australian Government Department of Health to expand the initiative to more towns in our region. The roadshow program included 15 events across nine townships for seniors over 60 years. The free events included gentle yoga, painting and flower arranging and are a great opportunity for participants to learn something new, have an enjoyable social outing, and meet new friends to combat social isolation. Unfortunately, only five events were delivered before the roadshow was forced to postpone due to COVID-19 restrictions. The remaining events will be delivered in 2021.

COVID-19 was particularly challenging for our senior clients who faced home isolation during the lockdown period. Many organisations, like us who look after the elderly and vulnerable, were forced to adapt quickly to maintain essential services and create new ones. The directive from the Federal government that people over 70 years of age should self-isolate at home prompted us to find ways to help our senior clients stay home and keep safe. We introduced a shopping service that included buying groceries and medication and delivering it to their doorstep. Throughout the lockdown, we completed 105 shopping trips.

We also established a friendly phone chat service for lonely or isolated seniors identified through our client database. These people received a regular call from our team to check they were okay and have a friendly chat. We made a total of 711 calls.

1,310
NEW CLIENTS

5,431
TOTAL CLIENTS

15,966
NUMBER OF SERVICES

20,261
HOURS OF SERVICES

629
MODIFICATIONS COMPLETED

90
CONTRACTORS AND PARTNERS

13
SERVICE AREAS

100%
CLIENTS RATED SERVICES AS GOOD OR GREAT



30 seniors share life experiences in new book

Peter Mackie was born on Melbourne Cup Day in 1932 so his parents named him after the winning horse, Peter Pan, beginning a lifetime love of horse racing.

It is just one of the anecdotes that Mr Mackie shares in a new book, *Wise Humans of the Downs*, that chronicles the life experiences of 30 seniors from across the Darling Downs.

The book, which was launched during Queensland Seniors Weeks, was a special project by YellowBridge QLD in partnership with St Mary's College to uncover, record and celebrate the lived experiences and stories of people aged over 60 years.

"Everyone has something interesting, meaningful, heart-

breaking or inspiring to say," YellowBridge General Manager Home Services Maria Sloane said. "Especially older members of our community with their intriguing tales from a time and place that is very different to now."

"It is fascinating to hear other people's experiences and how they managed life's triumphs and tragedies - we wanted to help share their wisdom and tales," Mrs Sloane said.

"We believe that everyone has a story to tell. The ordinary is just as important as the extraordinary and they help us to have more compassion, empathy and appreciation for others."

Twenty-four students from the College volunteered to join the project and spend time with an older participant to listen to and record stories from their life.

St Mary's College Assistant Principal Identity Paul Grealy said the students

enjoyed interviewing their senior partner and were excited to be part of a published book.

"We had students from years 9 to 12 jump at the chance to meet and interview the senior participants including a few St Mary's Old Boys," Mr Grealy said.

"It was a special opportunity for them to connect with an older person who they are not related to and have an interesting discussion about their life," he said.

"The College has a proud history of providing experiences for our students that cultivate compassion, community service, justice and courage. Experiences like being part of this project are invaluable to developing responsible and caring young men."

The project was supported by the Queensland Government with funding under the *Advancing Queensland: an age-friendly community 2018-19 grants program*.

HOUSING SERVICES

Access to affordable housing in the Toowoomba region continues to be a pressing issue and any available properties are in high demand.

Our number of properties increased from 164 to 174, which allowed us to assist 437 people with accommodation this year.

Two of our new properties have come from the Department of Housing and Public Works to enable us to run the SPiN Program. The Program is a share house program run in conjunction with The Haven, Mission Australia, YouTurn Youth Support and Red Cross. YellowBridge provides the property management while the other parties provide case management support to the program participants. This program was introduced due to the realisation that the private rental market is often out of reach for single young people and there is often a requirement for them to share accommodation with others. The program allows them to utilise their support agency to help them develop the required skills to be a competent sharer, while giving them the chance to build a good rental history so we can provide them with a positive rental reference when they exit the program.

As was the case in previous years, demand for affordable housing in the region continued to outweigh availability. The Toowoomba Housing Hub, which opened in September 2018, has worked well in providing a central point to assist people with housing enquiries. The Hub specialises in assisting people experiencing housing stress, homelessness and other support needs using a multi-disciplinary team of experienced assessment staff and a system of client intake and assessment.

We are proud to continue our involvement with this initiative and offer our staff to fill shifts on a regular basis.

When COVID-19 struck, our focus turned to supporting our tenants and obtaining additional properties to meet the demand. We were forced to cancel all internal property inspections, which limited our opportunity to communicate directly with tenants. As a solution, we initiated a weekly email update to keep tenants informed of the COVID-19 situation and our response.

The pandemic had unanticipated impacts on the price of general cleaning supplies and products. In some cases, cleaning supplies became hard to find or had increased in price since the pandemic began. We partnered with the Queensland Government's Department of Housing and Public Works to prepare almost 300 COVID-19 cleaning buckets for tenants in social housing properties, including our own tenants. The buckets were filled with essential cleaning supplies to help tenants keep their homes virus-free.

Our Housing staff proved their commitment to raising awareness for housing by participating in a number of community fundraisers and events including National Homelessness Week, Hike for Homeless and Homeless for a Night Sleepout. Senior staff also attended the National Housing Conference in Darwin.

174

PROPERTIES MANAGED

10

NEW PROPERTIES

63

NEW TENANCY AGREEMENTS

437

PEOPLE ACCOMMODATED

260

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

56

HOUSEHOLDS TRANSITIONED TO LONG-TERM HOUSING



Coronavirus is not welcome here

YellowBridge QLD helped local residents keep an unwelcome visitor out of their homes.

Together with our co-funder the Queensland Government's Department of Housing and Public Works, we prepared almost 300 COVID-19 cleaning bucket packs for tenants who live in social housing properties.

The buckets were filled with essential cleaning supplies such as soap, detergent, disinfectant, and reusable cloths to help tenants keep their homes virus-free.

"If there is one thing we have learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is that coronavirus does not like clean hands or surfaces," YellowBridge Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said.

"The public messages about personal hygiene and disinfecting high-touch surfaces have been heard loud and clear and we are helping our tenants to apply that advice in their homes," Ms Hamilton said.

"In some cases, cleaning supplies have been hard to find or have increased in price since the pandemic began so our COVID-19 clean bucket packs will help our tenants enormously."

Many of our tenants are on a low or fixed income which does not

leave much surplus money for extra cleaning supplies or to cover price increases.

"A bucket full of cleaning products may not seem like a big deal to most people, but it is a huge help for those who are experiencing tough times," Ms Hamilton said.

"At YellowBridge, we never underestimate the power of a simple gesture of help and kindness. Every day, we witness the positive impact these have on people in need."

The initiative was supported with funding by the Queensland Government's Department of Housing and Public Works who praised the idea and was keen to help distribute as many buckets as possible to those in most need.

YOUTH SERVICES

The Haven is Toowoomba's long-standing residential facility for young people experiencing homelessness and is the signature initiative of our Youth Services Program.

This year, the 24-hour facility accommodated 20 young people (an increase of 25 percent) and provided 169 hours of mobile support to help 13 external clients sustain their independent tenancies.

The intensive support service is focused on helping young people complete their education, find employment or training and successfully move into independent living arrangements. Five young people graduated from high school in 2019 – a proud moment for everyone.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the biggest challenge for our youth services this year. The Haven went into lockdown for five weeks during March and April. The Department of Housing and Public Works provided \$5000 to fund a second staff member during the day to help young people when their school and training studies went online.

Despite the pandemic, there were many bright spots throughout the year and offers of support from our loyal supporters and partners.

The successful Learner Driver Program continued thanks to a \$4680 grant from the Department of Communities and the ongoing support of project partners Complete Driving School (discounted driving lessons), Golden Harvest Roadhouse (free fuel) and volunteer mentor drivers. Four young people achieved their driver's licence as a result.

The outside grounds have been improved thanks to corporate and staff donations from Suncorp (\$16,515 plus staff volunteer time) and Gus Hamilton (\$1000). Young people had access to in-home counselling services through the Butterfly Effect Program,

funded by a Commonwealth Bank community grant (\$10,000). New beds were purchased for each bedroom with a \$2290 grant from Toowoomba and District Masonic Council and Ecstra Foundation provided \$10,000 to purchase three laptops and six iPads for mobile support clients to remain connected to their community.

The annual trip to Stradbroke Island is a highlight amongst residents and it was made possible again through a donation from the George Family. Christmas is always a special day with gifts and festive food funded by donations from the Toowoomba and Districts Masonic Council and Jenny Godwin.

We also collaborated with YouTurn, Mission Australia and Red Cross to open two three-bedroom share houses which can accommodate up to six young people as well as dedicated case management. This was supported by the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Housing Service Centre.

Many local people, businesses and government have provided invaluable financial and in-kind assistance to The Haven. They are:

- Department of Communities
- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Commonwealth Bank
- Complete Driving School
- Ecstra Foundation
- Golden Harvest Roadhouse
- Gus Hamilton
- Ironbark Timber Supplies
- Jenny Godwin
- Suncorp
- The George Family
- Toowoomba & District Masonic Council
- Toowoomba Rotary Club
- YellowBridge staff giving program

20

YOUNG PEOPLE ACCOMMODATED

13

YOUNG PEOPLE RECEIVED MOBILE SUPPORT

365

DAYS OF SUPPORT PROVIDED

310

HOURS OF MOBILE SUPPORT PROVIDED

6

STAFF EMPLOYED

4

LEARNER DRIVER PROGRAM GRADUATES

5

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

\$46K

DONATIONS AND GRANTS RECEIVED



Support you can bank on

When young people first arrive at The Haven, many of them are experiencing the recent impacts of childhood trauma, grief or distress.

The Haven is often the first home they experience that is safe, supportive and stable and offers them a place to heal, connect and belong.

Part of the benefit of being located on a tranquil, rural block is that there is plenty of outdoor space for young people to use. However, over the years, this space had become tired and uninspiring and Haven staff were keen to change that.

We were thrilled when south-west Suncorp staff chose to support The Haven for another 12 months.

Through a combination of payroll giving, staff fundraising and a \$10,000 corporate donation, Suncorp contributed \$16,515 this year as part of their Brighter Futures program. Their staff also volunteered their time at two sausage sizzle events at Bunnings.

Suncorp's support helped us establish the *Healthy Soul, Healthy Life* program for our young residents.

The funds were used to install eight self-watering vegetable and herb

gardens, purchase new outdoor furniture for the pergola, upgrade the existing chicken coop and nesting boxes, install a rainwater tank and commence construction of a multi-use, mini basketball court.

These improvements greatly enhanced the aesthetics and functionality of the outdoor areas. Our young people also learned how to grow their own vegetables and herbs in the new gardens, prepare nutritious meals using freshly harvested food and eggs, care for a family of hens, develop good environmental habits and practice personal wellness.

The outcomes and impacts of this initiative are significant and will benefit the young people for many years to come. As a result of Suncorp's financial support and volunteer contribution, we now have the resources for garden education, improved healthy cooking education and a new dedicated space for physical activity, socialisation and relaxation.

DISABILITY SUPPORT

After much anticipation, the first sod was turned on our first purpose-built accommodation for people with a disability.

We will own one of the four units thanks to a generous \$450,000 donation from Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland. The project was completed in May 2020 but the official opening has been postponed until August 2020 due to COVID-19.

Overall, the pandemic caused significant disruption to the disability support team and services. The government restrictions meant a dramatic decrease in services, which forced us to stand-down 31 support workers leaving us with a team of just 49 staff. Only eight of these staff were able to be reinstated through Job Keeper. The Groups Program was suspended during this time because we could not meet the physical distancing or group number requirements. Our boutique op shop Collectables was also temporarily closed. The suspension and decrease in services were keenly felt by clients who did not understand the situation or were very social and missed their regular routine.

Amongst the challenges of COVID-19 there were silver linings. In an effort to keep clients engaged and connected during the lockdown, our support workers initiated daily online catch-ups using Zoom. The Groups program used Zoom as well for craft, cooking and a monthly disco, which was very popular with clients and their families.

We were acutely mindful of the mental health toll during this time. We instigated a phone chat system to keep in touch with vulnerable clients and provided cooked meals and baked goods for those who could not easily or safely do their shopping.

Aside from the preoccupations of COVID-19 in the latter part of the year, we made good progress in other areas. We assisted several clients to access external advocacy to support their reviews with the National Disability Insurance Agency resulting in some positive outcomes. At a management level, we were focused on advocacy and influence at a state level and this led to the formation of a Supported Living Vacancy Management Working Group. We commenced the long-anticipated renovation of our Hill Street day centre, which will vastly improve the amenity and function of this site. And we were selected to be part of a Melbourne Disability Institute research program to assess the impact of our Collectables and Microsocial Enterprise program. The findings prove the value and importance of these programs for our clients and the wider community.

We completed the transition to the new NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework and successfully completed the Stage One Audit.

In January, 10 of our clients enjoyed a trip of a lifetime on their first cruise holiday after months of planning and fundraising by our staff.

80

CLIENTS SUPPORTED

119,505

HOURS OF CLIENT SUPPORT

22,822

HOURS INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

13,487

HOURS GROUP SUPPORT

24/7

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

1,152

DISABILITY GROUP ACTIVITIES

1

BOUTIQUE OP SHOP

82

STAFF



New home for young stroke victim

Cathy Hall had no option but to live in a nursing home for elderly people after a stroke in 2017 left her with a brain injury that affected her speech and movement.

Despite her determination to stay positive throughout her ongoing recovery, her living situation took a toll on her mental and emotional health.

But that has now changed. The former Highfields State School teacher is the proud new tenant in our purpose-built unit for people with a disability.

YellowBridge owns and manages the unit thanks to a \$450,000 donation from Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland.

YellowBridge QLD Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said it was exciting to finally see Cathy in her

own place that was more suitable for someone of her age and abilities.

"We are in the midst of a disability housing crisis on the Darling Downs, where people with disabilities, like Cathy who is young and wants to live independently or those with ageing parents, have no-where to go," Penny said.

"We know of 40 people in this position. While many have the means to buy or rent their own place, there is simply no suitable housing for them in the region," she said.

"A few will never have the means to pay for a place to live."

"Having access to appropriate housing is an important part of the equation for improving the overall quality of life of people with disabilities."

The three-bedroom property is part of a four-unit complex built by Enabled Living and designed with disability-friendly features including wide entrances, flat surfaces, low benches and wheelchair accessible bathrooms.

The units are designed to accommodate two people with a disability and a carer.

Hand Heart Pocket Chief Executive Officer, Gary Mark, said the local Freemasons were vocal supporters of YellowBridge QLD, due to its proven record of supporting more than 5,000 people in the local region to lead more meaningful and connected lives each year.

"Our purpose is to provide sustainable support that delivers positive outcomes; to provide a hand up to communities, charities and individuals that have limited access to other funding sources," Mr Mark said.

"Alleviating the stress on people like Cathy through the provision of innovative purpose-built housing aligns with our values of equipping people to lead better lives," he said.

"We are delighted to have partnered with YellowBridge QLD on this important initiative and know it will be a catalyst for changing the landscape of disability housing in the region."

IN THE NEWS



A NEW ERA FOR OLD SKATING RINK

YellowBridge QLD has created a central operations hub at its new premises in the former Skate City complex at 879 Ruthven Street.

The not-for-profit organisation employs 130 staff and assists more than 6000 people every year with services across disability support, housing, youth homelessness and aged care.

YellowBridge QLD chief executive officer Penny Hamilton said bringing staff together in a single location had been on their wish list for the past three years.

Finding the right property to accommodate a mixture of office-based employees and a lawn mowing team with machinery fleets had not been easy.

“We have more than 130 staff who currently work in different locations and rarely get the opportunity to connect and work alongside each other,” Ms Hamilton said.

“Bringing everyone together will have enormous benefits and help us to be more efficient and collaborative,” she said.

“BRINGING EVERYONE TOGETHER WILL HAVE ENORMOUS BENEFITS AND HELP US TO BE MORE EFFICIENT AND COLLABORATIVE.”

“It will also help us to deliver a more streamlined process to our clients and service partners.

“We are very excited to be finally in our new home that has been the site of many happy and memorable experiences for local people. Nearly everyone we speak to has a story or memory about skating at the venue.”

YellowBridge is proud that the successful renovation project involved local contractors, tradesmen and suppliers.

The renovation was designed by Aspect Architects and completed by Lavish Constructions with the help of many Toowoomba sub-contractors.

“We are a Toowoomba-based organisation and it was very important to us that we used local trades and suppliers for this project,” Ms Hamilton said.

Known as YB Central, the building retains many of the

former skating rink’s unique features such as the sunken skating rink, exposed structural steel frame and signwriting.

The open plan office area also features a giant wall mural created by Toowoomba visual artist Bronte Naylor.

“We’ve created a fun, relaxed and vibrant workplace that suits our style, size and needs,” Ms Hamilton said.

We’re happy we could retain some of the former building’s character and history in the process.”

YellowBridge will continue to use its community centre at 46 Hill Street as a designated disability support day centre and its boutique op shop Collectables will remain at 2 Station Street. The Haven, which provides accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness, will also continue to operate in its present location.



SOD TURNS ON PURPOSE BUILT HOUSING

The first sod has been turned on a purpose-built accommodation complex which will help more people with disabilities have access to appropriate housing on the Darling Downs.

The single-storey complex, located in Centenary Heights, will include four fully customised units which will meet individual needs, include assistive technology, and help empower residents to lead more independent lives.

One of the three-bedroom units will be owned by YellowBridge QLD thanks to a generous donation from Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland.

YellowBridge received \$450,000 from the Masonic charity to construct and manage the unit which will accommodate two people with disabilities and a carer.

YellowBridge QLD Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said it was exciting to finally see construction commence after 12 months of planning and building approvals.

“We are in the midst of a disability housing crisis on the Darling Downs, where people with disabilities,

“HAVING ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE HOUSING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EQUATION FOR IMPROVING THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.”

especially those whose ageing parents can no longer look after them, have no-where to go,” Penny said.

“We know of 40 people in this position. While many have the means to buy or rent their own place, there is simply no suitable housing for them in the region,” she said.

“A few will never have the means to pay for a place to live.”

“Having access to appropriate housing is an important part of the equation for improving the overall quality of life of people with disabilities.”

Hand Heart Pocket Chief Executive Officer, Gary Mark, said the local Freemasons were vocal supporters of YellowBridge QLD, due to its proven record of supporting more than 4,000 people to lead more meaningful and connected lives each year.

“Our purpose is to provide sustainable support that delivers positive outcomes; to provide a hand up to communities, charities and individuals that have limited access to other funding sources,” Mr Mark said.

“Alleviating the stress on ageing parents who care for their disabled children - through the provision of innovative purpose-built housing - aligns with our values of equipping people to lead better lives,” he said.

“We are delighted to partner with YellowBridge QLD on this important initiative and know it will be a catalyst for changing the landscape of disability housing in the region.”

The units are being built by local construction firm, Enabled Living, which specialises in custom-built housing for people with a disability.



YELLOW BUCKETS DELIVER CHRISTMAS JOY

Hundreds of yellow buckets mean something special for local charity YellowBridge QLD.

This year, YellowBridge QLD will celebrate its 5th Yellow Bucket Christmas Appeal, which fills 300 yellow buckets with special Christmas food and gifts them to local people who need some festive joy.

“Christmas is meant to be a special time of the year filled with love and happiness,” said Penny Hamilton, YellowBridge QLD chief executive officer.

“Sadly, this is not the case for some people who will spend Christmas alone or are unable to afford extra special food to make it a memorable day for them and their family,” she said.

“With the help of our staff and supporters, we aim to fill and deliver 300 buckets with edible joy.”

The majority of the Christmas food and products are donated by YellowBridge staff, partners and suppliers who have embraced the annual appeal and the opportunity to ‘give back’ to others in their local community.

“WITH THE HELP OF OUR STAFF AND SUPPORTERS, WE AIM TO FILL AND DELIVER 300 BUCKETS WITH EDIBLE JOY.”

The emphasis is on Christmas food that is gourmet or special rather than staple food items, which are covered so well by other Christmas appeal initiatives in the region.

Recipients are chosen based on their known need. YellowBridge staff then deliver the hampers prior to Christmas Day to people who either live alone, have a disability or need to know that someone cares. They are also distributed to people nominated by YellowBridge’s peer organisations in the housing, disability, youth and aged services sectors.

“It is a true collaboration between us, our partners and our like-minded industry peers to deliver these beautiful buckets of joy to people at this special time of year,” Ms Hamilton said.

Toowoomba accounting firm, McConachie Stedman, is the Appeal’s major sponsor for the fourth year and their support helps with the costs of running the initiative.

“It gives me great pride to see the generosity of our staff and clients who embraced the Appeal last year, filling over 30 buckets. Fingers crossed we can match or better that again this year, helping YellowBridge with their target of 300 buckets,” Director Amanda Roberts said.

“I was very fortunate to be involved behind the scenes with the Appeal last year and was overwhelmed by the generosity of people who donated their time or Christmas goodies to bring joy to those who otherwise may not have felt the Christmas spirit,” Mrs Roberts said.

“I also had the privilege to deliver some of these buckets and witness the sheer joy from those who unexpectedly received them. ‘Buckets of Joy’ is such an appropriate name for them, as that is definitely what they are.”

“I’d encourage everyone to donate some Christmas goodies towards the Appeal this year, knowing the joy that these will bring.”



A PERFECT MATCH

Loved-up couples are not the only ones feeling Cupid’s touch this Valentine’s Day.

Two Toowoomba not-for-profit organisations have updated their relationship status and announced they are in an official partnership.

Toowoomba Friendlies Pharmacy in Mylne Street and community organisation YellowBridge QLD will work together over the next 12 months after YellowBridge was chosen as the pharmacy’s Community Group of Choice for 2020.

“We are over the moon, to be honest,” YellowBridge Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said.

“It means a lot to us that a local business like Friendlies, which has been a wonderful supporter of the local community for many years, has chosen to support us this year,” Ms Hamilton said.

“IT MEANS A LOT TO US THAT A LOCAL BUSINESS LIKE FRIENDLIES, WHICH HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL SUPPORTER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY FOR MANY YEARS, HAS CHOSEN TO SUPPORT US THIS YEAR.”

“It’s a great feeling to have the support of a local business who recognises and appreciates the important work we do in the community.”

Friendlies’ staff will host fundraisers throughout the year with all proceeds donated to YellowBridge.

They will also don YellowBridge’s ‘We find the joy’ yellow tee shirts and wear them in-store every Friday to promote the partnership.

In return, YellowBridge staff will run pop-up information sessions at Friendlies’ pharmacy at 8 Mylne Street to help older customers learn more about its range of

senior services including yard maintenance, home modifications and in-home care.

Friendlies Pharmacist in Charge Victoria Schultz said YellowBridge ticked all the right boxes to be its Community Group of Choice.

“The partnership is an excellent match of two local not-for-profit businesses who share similar values and community spirit,” Ms Schultz said.

“It makes our staff very proud to be able to give back to our local community, especially to an organisation like YellowBridge that does so much for many people like our senior customers.”



HEALTHY FOOD AND CARE PACKAGES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Young people experiencing homelessness in Toowoomba have been offered a help line to combat the pressures inflicted by the coronavirus and its fallout.

The combined Rotary Clubs of Toowoomba donated \$6000 to YellowBridge QLD and Emerge to help its young people access essential items and healthy meals.

“Every night in Toowoomba, there are around 140 young people who are living on our streets,” YellowBridge Chief Executive Officer Penny Hamilton said.

“Because of their living situation, they are more vulnerable to poor health and nutrition, which is of added concern during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Ms Hamilton said.

“And to make things worse, those who did have employment in the hospitality industry have lost their jobs because of the shutdowns.”

“It has caused a perfect storm scenario where vulnerable young people are now more vulnerable than ever, so we are extremely grateful to Rotary for recognising this and providing financial support.”

The Toowoomba Rotary donation was used to prepare care packages containing essential personal products and hygiene supplies all purchased from local businesses.

“Youth is one of Rotary’s core focus areas so we are very proud that the Toowoomba Rotary clubs have come together to collectively support our local youth in this way,” Assistant District Governor Syd Owen said.

“We believe it’s essential to help our community’s young people and one of the best ways we can do that is by supporting the community organisations, like Emerge, who are already helping youth on the frontline,” he said.

Trained youth workers personally delivered the care packages to those in most need and used the exchange as an opportunity to check the health and welfare of recipients.

It also enabled 100 youth to receive nutritious meals through Emerge’s social enterprise café in Station Street, Emerge Café, which employs and supports

“WE ARE VERY PROUD THAT THE TOOWOOMBA ROTARY CLUBS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO COLLECTIVELY SUPPORT OUR LOCAL YOUTH...”

young people experiencing homelessness.

“Youth homelessness is a community issue. We can only make a difference if our local businesses, community organisations and government services work together,” Ms Hamilton said.

“If we can help young people who are experiencing tough situations today stay healthy, stay connected and stay positive then we are helping to create a community that is more resilient, productive and harmonious for the future,” she said.

“We think that is worth our time, effort and resources and we’re glad that compassionate people like Toowoomba Rotary agree.”



NEW ADVOCATE FOR DEAF COMMUNITY

Tackling social isolation and lack of employment opportunities are the top priorities for Toowoomba’s first advocacy group for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Butterfly Hands was launched on 27 November by founding President Megan Telford and 50 supporters from the Deaf community across the Toowoomba region.

“As Deaf people, we are often overlooked and struggle to access opportunities such as employment,” Ms Telford said.

“It can be challenging to navigate places and systems that are designed for hearing people. Our local Deaf community is largely hidden and we want to do something about that,” she said.

“Butterfly Hands represents hope, ambition and action. We want to make a real and meaningful difference for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

“Many deaf people have the skills and ability to be contributing

“BUTTERFLY HANDS REPRESENTS HOPE, AMBITION AND ACTION. WE WANT TO MAKE A REAL AND MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING.”

members of our society, they just lack the opportunities to do so.”

The group received \$95,000 through the National Disability Insurance Scheme’s Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Grant program. It is the first grant of its type and size for the Toowoomba deaf community.

The grant will be used to formalise the advocacy group, improve community and employment opportunities and provide skills for deaf people.

Toowoomba not-for-profit organisation, YellowBridge QLD, assisted with the grant application and has been supporting Butterfly Hands to develop and implement its plans.

YellowBridge CEO Penny Hamilton said her own experience with

deaf grandparents was part of the reason why they wanted to help Butterfly Hands succeed.

“Our Deaf community is facing significant challenges and this is leading to many of them experiencing isolation and exclusion,” Ms Hamilton said.

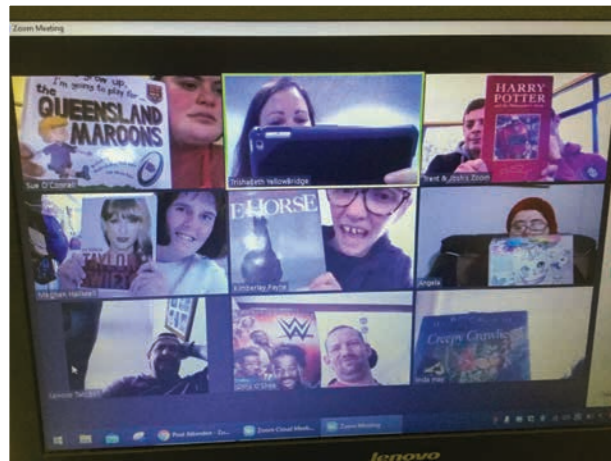
“A lack of meaningful employment and adequate support services means they are often financially and socially vulnerable,” she said.

“Part of our role as a leading disability support organisation is to advocate on behalf of people with a disability and open doors to more opportunities.”

There are approximately 100 deaf people who live on the Darling Downs and it is estimated that 50 percent of them have minimal social connections.

COVID CHALLENGE

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown was strange and challenging, but from the hardship emerged many moments of compassion and generosity.



ZOOM GATHERINGS

Our Disability clients were disappointed when their weekly group activities had to be put on hold. Luckily, our support workers got creative and launched daily catch-ups via online social platform Zoom. They enjoyed parties, competitions, show and tell, and even a disco.



COVID CLEAN

We packed and delivered 300 cleaning buckets to tenants who live in our social housing properties. They were filled with essential cleaning supplies such as soap, detergent, disinfectant and reusable cloths to help tenants keep their homes virus-free. It was supported by the Department of Housing and Public Works.



SHOPPING SERVICE

Many of our senior clients self-isolated at home during the lockdown and beyond. To help them avoid a risky trip to the shops, we offered a shopping service where we picked up their essential groceries and medications and delivered them contactless to their front door. The service was very well received.



SPECIAL DELIVERY

Disability support workers Peter and Sameera cooked up a storm as part of our COVID-19 special response for our clients who live alone. They made a soup, stew, curry and cupcakes to let our clients know that we were thinking of them.



CARE CALLS

Our Disability Support and Home Services teams made hundreds of calls during lockdown to keep in touch with clients isolated at home. Dee even dressed as the Easter bunny to help lift the spirits of clients over the Easter period when they were missing their friends and family.



CARE PACKS

Our Home Services team decided to give-back to our Home Care clients and use the management fee we receive for administering this program to create lovely gift care packs. A little 'pick me up' to spread cheer while our senior clients dealt with the impacts of COVID-19.



HAMPER HELPERS

During the lockdown, some staff had to be stood down because the demand for our services decreased. It was hard to see them lose their income so our staff with ongoing jobs contributed to hampers filled with fresh fruit, vegetables and meat to help their colleagues in need.



The work that YB is undertaking throughout these uncertain times is critical. The work you are doing is of immense importance. We need to keep our front-line services resourced, connected and supported. I sincerely thank you all for doing your part and making this work.

CEO PENNY HAMILTON'S MESSAGE TO STAFF DURING PEAK OF COVID LOCKDOWN



OUR PLAN

The coronavirus pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption and uncertainty for communities and businesses worldwide.

From day one, YellowBridge QLD has been working diligently to manage the changes and challenges so we can protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our clients and staff. That has, and continues to be, our number one priority.

We have prepared a comprehensive Recovery Plan. It outlines our approach for business continuity and risk management over the next 12 months. It is detailed and specific because we take our business recovery seriously - our clients, staff, programs and services depend on it.

OUR APPROACH

PREVENTION

Identifies and manages the likelihood and/or effects of risk associated with an incident (Research and Risk Management Plan)

PREPAREDNESS

Identifies and prioritises the key activities of a business that may be adversely affected by any disruptions (Business Impact Analysis)

RESPONSE

Outlines immediate actions taken to respond to an incident in terms of containment, control and minimising impacts (Incident Response Plan)

RECOVERY

Outlines actions taken to recover from an incident in order to minimise disruption and recovery time (Recovery Plan)

OUR GOALS

- Prevent an outbreak of COVID-19 and manage infection prevention controls
- Provide capable staff and expertise in safe working environments
- Communicate effectively to all stakeholders
- Manage safe and appropriate access, environments and social isolation
- Ensure good governance and compliance

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to adhering to the public health rules of the Queensland Government. These include:

- Physical distancing
- Four square metres per person indoors
- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory hygiene
- Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection
- If unwell or showing symptoms, do not attend work

Our actions will be guided by the Australian and Queensland government road maps and will comply with existing legislation including workplace relations and health and safety.

STAR PROJECTS

These special projects spread love and joy wherever they go.



COLLECTABLES

Our boutique op shop celebrated its fourth birthday in June.

The community's response to the social enterprise continues to warm our hearts. We held more pop-up shops and garage sales throughout the year, which has helped raise greater awareness and attract new customers.

We are heartened by the number of donated items that we receive from local groups and individuals. In particular, the Tall Timbers Quilting Group in Highfields regularly donate beautiful handmade rugs, bags and accessories.

These donations help us to stay viable and achieve our main goal of supporting our clients with a disability to learn retail skills, build confidence and receive work experience.

Collectables also stocks handmade products designed and crafted by our micro social enterprises, which are run by our clients with a disability.

Foundation Partner



YELLOW BUCKET APPEAL

The 5th Yellow Bucket Appeal was a great success with 407 buckets filled with gourmet Christmas goodies.

The majority of the Christmas food and products are donated by YellowBridge staff, partners and suppliers who have embraced the annual appeal and the opportunity to 'give back' to others in their local community.

The emphasis is on Christmas food that is gourmet or special rather than staple food items, which are covered so well by other Christmas appeal initiatives in the region.

Recipients are chosen based on their known need. YellowBridge staff then deliver the hampers prior to Christmas Day to people who either live alone, have a disability or need to know that someone cares. They are also distributed to people nominated by YellowBridge's peer organisations in the housing, disability, youth and aged services sectors.

"It is a true collaboration between us, our partners and our like-minded industry peers to deliver these beautiful buckets of joy to people at this special time of year," YellowBridge CEO Penny Hamilton said.

Major Partner



POSEY OF KINDNESS

We have continued to spread kindness by gifting yellow posies to people in our community each week. So far, we have distributed more than 400 posies to strangers and those we know need a kind gesture.

It was inspired by the Random Acts of Kindness movement and we have now made it our own.

Each week, one of our clients and their disability support workers collect the two yellow posies from The Luxe Bloom who covers half of the flower costs.

They then distribute one posy to a person in known need and the other to a stranger in the community. So, if you find a yellow posy on your doorstep or handed to you in the street, it may just be a gift from us.

Our enduring thanks to Amanda from The Luxe Bloom at Highfields who skilfully prepares the bouquets for us.

Exclusive Partner



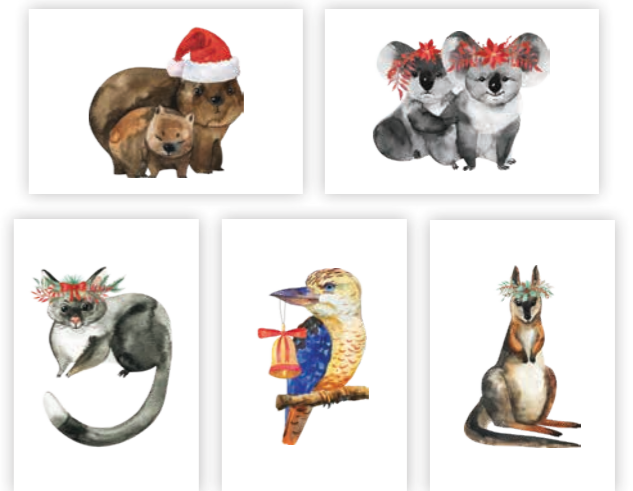
CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARDS

Our Christmas card series always surprises. Last year, our front card designs were based on paintings by our talented staff.

This year we opted for an Australia theme featuring our favourite native animals with festive decorations.

The result was five beautiful cards printed on superior art card and packaged into a card set for sale through our boutique op shop, Collectables.

We were delighted to share the cards with our corporate partners who pre-ordered the cards to use as their corporate Christmas cards for clients and customers.



ABOVE AND BEYOND

We take our work seriously and always look for opportunities to join in and give back. We strive to be a strong, positive voice and always add value.



SPONSORSHIP

Butterfly Hands
 Festival of Magic (Lions Club of Toowoomba)
 Hike for Homeless
 Homeless for a Night Sleepout
 Jeans for Genes Day
 Movember
 RUOK Day
 Seniors Movie Morning Teas
 Toowoomba Business disABILITY Awards
 Toowoomba Refugee and Migrant Support (TRAMS)

EXHIBITOR/PARTICIPANT

Building Business Responses Post COVID-19
 Clinical Care and Quality Care in Home Care
 Coaching Your Team Through Crisis and Building Resilience
 Disability Action Week
 Disability Support Conference (Sydney)
 Emerge Community Markets
 For Purpose Conference AICD
 Human Rights Act
 Managing Mental Health in the Workplace
 Mental Health Week
 National Homeless Prevention Week
 National Housing Conference (Darwin)
 National Seniors Week Expo
 NDS CEO Conference (Sydney)
 Redesigning the System to Reduce Youth Homelessness
 Regional Employment Expo
 Safe Work Month
 Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers Grand Parade
 Toowoomba Christmas Winter Wonderland
 World Environment Day

PRESENTATIONS

AICD Regional Panel of NFPs
 Butterfly Hands' members and Deaf community
 Chartered Accountants Australia and NZ Regional Committee
 Commonwealth Bank
 Oak Tree Retirement Village
 Referring Clinicians Toowoomba
 Rotary Clubs of Toowoomba
 Suncorp
 Toowoomba Central Discount Drug Store
 Toowoomba Stroke Association

COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Aged Care Provider Network
 Commonwealth Bank - Be the Change
 Jobs Taskforce Roundtable
 QShelter regional representative
 Skilling Queenslanders for Work (Regional panel)
 SPiN Working Group
 Toowoomba Disability Service Provider Networking Meeting
 Toowoomba Housing Hub (Co-Chair)
 Youth Homelessness Roundtable

FORMAL RESPONSES

REGIONAL

Toowoomba Regional Council, Access and Equity Policy

STATE

CCIQ, Impact of COVID-19 on business
 NDS, Annual QLD survey
 QCROSS, Annual priorities for the social sector
 QCROSS, Impact of COVID-19 on business

NATIONAL

ACID, Directors Sentiment Annual Index
 AICD, Impact of COVID-19 on business and governance
 Australia Bureau of Statistics, Annual Activity Survey
 Australian Institute of Management (AIM), Leadership trends
 CSIRO, Impact of COVID-19
 Department of Health, Continuity of Support Program
 Department of Health, Home Care Packages demand
 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs on Homelessness in Australia
 Melbourne Disability Institute, Social enterprises
 NDIA, Provider satisfaction and sentiment survey
 NDIS, Pricing Review
 NDS, Impact of COVID-19 on services
 NDS, Purpose of the national body survey
 NDS, Zero Tolerance Resources
 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

GREAT PARTNERS

Our growing partner network is very important to us. We are stronger and better because of the tremendous support from our corporate partners and supporters.

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



MAJOR PARTNERS



CONTINUING PARTNERS



GENEROUS PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

- A G Rigging and Steel
 - Bunnings
 - Chloe Corcoran
 - Combined Rotary Clubs of Toowoomba
 - Commonwealth Bank
 - Complete Driving School
 - CUA
 - Ecstra Foundation
 - Geoffrey Runge
 - Golden Harvest Roadhouse
 - Good Samaritan Op Shop
 - Graham Gordon
 - Gus Hamilton
 - Heritage Bank
 - Highlands Christian School
 - Holistic Hospitality
 - Ironbark Timber Supplies
 - Jason Kehl
 - Jenny Godwin
 - John Lines
 - Melbourne Disability Institute
 - Mick Payne and Family
 - Peacehaven Botanic Park
 - St Anne's Anglican Church Highfields
 - Tall Timbers Quilting Group
 - The George Family
 - The Parisi Family
 - The Right Mind Bootcamp
 - The Springs Garden World
 - Toowoomba & Districts Masonic Council
 - Toowoomba Central Discount Drug Store
 - Toowoomba Regional Council
 - Troy and Lisa Markey
 - Workcover
 - YellowBridge staff through workplace giving
- Plus, everyone who donated to the Yellow Bucket Appeal and Collectables**

Every care has been taken to include everyone who has supported our initiatives through financial donations or in-kind support. If we have missed anyone, we sincerely apologise.

OUR BOARD



CAROLYN BROWN
CHAIR
Director of Time Made



LISA KING
DIRECTOR
Director of Crunch Practice Solutions



TIM MCGOWAN
DIRECTOR
Legal Counsel for FKG Group



GEOFFREY JORDAN
SECRETARY
Principal of Century 21 Marsden Realty



CAMERON STEVENSON
TREASURER
Director of Acumen Accounting



TOM HAYDOCK
DIRECTOR
Director of Lavish Constructions

OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



PENNY HAMILTON CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Penny Hamilton has more than 30 years' experience working with regional and rural communities. Her professional life has spanned multiple disciplines including social sciences, agriculture, rural education, environment and the business of not for profits. Penny has undertaken the Senior Managers Program through the Melbourne University School of Business and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She holds Bachelor and Master degrees in Agricultural Science, regularly pursues professional development and is a keen student of life-long learning in both corporate and personal areas. In 2015, she was appointed Chief Executive Officer of then Assert Services and has since revolutionised the current day YellowBridge QLD including a full rebrand, strategic overhaul and significant partnerships. In 2016 under Penny's leadership, the organisation was awarded Community Group of the Year at the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards. Penny is as comfortable shoulder to shoulder with staff on the frontline as she is in the corporate boardroom. She is a highly skilled leader with a penchant for collaboration, innovation, strategy and governance. Penny has a passion for advocacy and leadership on key community issues particularly youth homelessness and inclusion for people who are Deaf.



ADRIAN BONICA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Adrian is a qualified accountant and financial manager with over 20 years' experience in providing commercial business, advisory and accounting expertise to various sectors including health, hospitality, agriculture and retail. He began his managerial career with Carlton & United Breweries in the early 1990's, then formalised his commercial acumen which led to a professional accounting career and local small business ownership. He holds a Bachelor of Science, a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting/Law), a Graduate Diploma of Chartered Accounting and is currently undertaking a Master of Business Administration. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Adrian's strong belief in social justice has driven his involvement in the Not for Profit sector as well as sitting on the boards of other local charity organisations.



MARIA SLOANE GENERAL MANAGER HOME SERVICES & HOUSING

Maria has a broad range of experience within the agricultural, health, aged care and government sectors. She joined YellowBridge QLD in 2010 and leads the Home Services and Housing programs, which assist more than 4500 people every year. She is an experienced manager and in 2014 was named Manager of the Year at the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards.



JODIE COLLINS GENERAL MANAGER DISABILITY SUPPORT

Jodie has extensive experience in the community services sector with professional roles in aged care, allied health, training, disability management, and lifestyle and leisure coordination. She commenced her career as an Enrolled Nurse in Dalby and holds Diplomas in Community Services Management and Leisure and Health. Jodie completed the Advanced Leadership Program with Women in Leadership Australia and is currently undertaking a Master of Business Administration. She joined YellowBridge QLD in 2015 to lead the organisation's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



SANDY JENKINSON SENIOR ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

Sandy is an experienced and skilled administrator. She has spent more than 30 years working in a variety of local, state and national organisations including Pony Club South Australia, community psychology and diabetes clinics, RSPCA Queensland and Medicare Local Mental Health. Sandy joined YellowBridge QLD in 2015 where she leads the corporate administration team and provides assistance to the Chief Executive Officer.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

	Year end 30 June 2020	Year end 30 June 2019
Revenue	12,124,167	10,737,729
Expenses	11,285,021	10,502,780
Surplus/(deficit)	839,146	234,949

BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY

	Year end 30 June 2020	Year end 30 June 2019
ASSETS		
Cash and Equivalents	2,114,000	1,308,135
Total Assets	7,339,761	4,989,579
LIABILITIES		
Employee benefits	719,257	549,044
Unspent Funding	376,920	656,320
Total Liabilities	3,087,549	1,911,188
EQUITY	4,252,212	3,078,391

For the full audited financial statements for 2019/20 please visit our website or contact Adrian Bonica at AdrianB@yellowbridgeqld.com.au

YELLOWBRIDGE QLD

Toowoomba main office
879 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba
PO Box 3126, Toowoomba QLD 4350

P 1300 882 764
F 07 4638 4462
E connect@yellowbridgeqld.com.au
W www.yellowbridgeqld.com.au

© 2020, YellowBridge QLD

The Copyright Act 1968 permits fair dealing for study, research, news reporting, criticism or review. Selected passages, tables or diagrams may be reproduced for such purposes provided acknowledgement of the source is included.

Major extracts of the entire document may not be reproduced by any process without written permission of the Chief Executive Officer, YellowBridge QLD.

Further copies may be obtained from contacting YellowBridge QLD. To view an electronic version visit www.yellowbridgeqld.com.au

Produced by Wishbone Communications
Images by Wishbone Communications, Salt Studios, staff and partners

