



Annual Report

2020-21

FOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES



Our Vision

Create endless opportunities for all.

Our Mission

Focal empowers a life of choice by listening and working alongside you towards your goals.

Our Values

- We listen and empower
- It's about you and your dreams
- We deliver what you need and want
- Real community connection
- We go where you want and need
- We provide a safe platform to nurture growth

Our People

Board of Directors

Our dedicated Board attend up to 16 meetings each year. They volunteer their time and expertise to help guide the organisation. We thank the Focal Board members of 2020-21 for their contributions. This year, amongst other activities, the Board participated in risk management meetings and carried out strategic planning initiatives.

- **Patrick Albina** | Chairperson
- **Sophie McCleary** | Secretary
- **Sally Preston** | Treasurer
- **Naomi Meade** | Board Member
- **Andrew Clark** | Board Member
- **Sharon Wang** | Board Member

Executive Leadership Team



Mickael Blanc
Chief Executive
Officer



Kevan Curtis
Operations
Manager



Toni Schaumberg
Human Resources
Manager



Patricia Hitchenor
Support Coordination
Manager



Kerri Siebenhausen
Service Manager



Heidi Crittenden
Service Manager



Tara Singh
Service Manager

Message from the Chairperson

Patrick Albina

How we do our job is just as important, if not more important, than what we do.

Every time the AGM comes around, it is always tempting to start with a commentary of business growth and achievements. However, our organisation is about people. At heart, Focal is about the sharing of a human experience with our clients, with our team and with the wider community. The way in which we do this is what sets us apart, because *how* we do our job is just as important, if not more important, than what we do in our jobs.

In the last few years we have had to navigate unprecedented challenges. We have experienced growth of character and have had to make some tough decisions involving many robust discussions. Throughout these times, the Board has been very intentional in adopting a people-centric approach to ensure the ongoing delivery of client services and the general wellbeing of Focal staff. We have seen this come to fruition in the following ways:

Executive Leadership Team

We have recruited a HR Manager, an Operations Manager and a Financial Controller to support the CEO and to also support, develop and grow our staff. Importantly, this provides capacity for our CEO to focus on more strategic matters.

Board Support

The Board members have made every effort to be present and offer our support and expertise when needed.



Wellbeing

We are acutely aware of the dangers of employee burn-out. We understand the emotional and physical toll that is experienced in this sector, therefore we have supported the organisation to ensure that we retain a balance between growth and employee wellbeing.

Focal Culture

We have continued to strengthen our organisational culture, as is evident through the leadership program delivered by external coach Cliff Morgan.

Despite the challenges that accompany the pandemic, through the efforts of our team we have continued to expand into new areas. We have recently celebrated the opening of our Mount Ommaney Hub (albeit a belated celebration due to multiple lockdowns imposed by the Queensland Government). We also established a foothold in the Gold Coast region. We will continue to identify and leverage new opportunities, in a measured manner to safeguard the continued quality of our services.

It is often said that "tough times never last, but tough people do." On behalf of all the Board members, I would like to thank the entire Focal team for their efforts and the way in which you represent the Focal values.

Patrick Albina

**“Tough times
never last, but
tough people do.”**



Horizons Strategy 2025

After a period of rapid growth, the overarching focus of our new plan is excellence. Excellence will place Focal as the best service provider and position us as a trusted partner for people with a disability, their families, current and future employees.

Supported by the community, the Board and Executive Leadership Team considered future priorities and defined goals for the year ahead which support the Horizons 2025 strategy. The areas of focus for 2021-22 are:

Community Hubs & Local Connections

Continue engaging with local communities through the co-design of new services for our clients. Build new relationships with local organisations within our sector and beyond.

Employer of Choice

Attract, retain and enable staff development and career progression for all employees. Bolstering our senior leadership team to ensure that Focal has capable, determine and dedicated leaders to guide us through our next stage of growth.

Advocacy

Combat stigmas associated with disability within the community.

NDIS in Action

Support the community to navigate the forever changing NDIS environment.

Increase Footprint

Extend our presence to new locations in South East Queensland where needs are identified. In particular on the Gold Coast and surrounding areas to grow our community and increasing our service offerings where our clients want it the most. This includes respite, activity groups, and supported independent living.



Message from the CEO

Mickael Blanc

We have effectively increased our community impact during these challenging times.

Throughout the last year Focal continued to deliver on its mandate of growth with quality. While lockdowns have had an ongoing effect on clients, carers and employees, Focal has delivered all essential services with limited impact on all stakeholders. Through a number of initiatives by the Queensland Government and the Australian Government, Focal invested in the professional development of our workforce. By enabling our staff, we have effectively increased our community impact during these challenging times.

With the ever-present global pandemic, the impact on our group services has been an ongoing factor. The role of these groups in strengthening connections and building friendships is more important than ever. We continue to closely monitor local developments with a view to minimise risk and the effect on our services.

Despite the constant uncertainties in our current environment, Focal saw systemic change with the implementation of a Learning Management System (LMS) and a HRMS system. Both systems are improving the quality of our workforce by recruiting the right people, and providing accessible, on-demand training for staff. Focal employees now enjoy free access to more than 85,000 online courses for personal and professional development.



To support our growth we shifted our focus to workforce development. Specifically, the team received additional HR resources, new management capacity, and a newly appointed operations manager.

On another note, the Mt Ommaney Hub opened in early 2021, and demonstrates our community engagement outside of the Ipswich region. With the launch of re-designed services local clients now have more choice and control.



So what is next?

Focal continue to reinforce service delivery capacity, which will be achieved by onboarding new support workers. We expect to recruit over 60 new workers this year, and create a dedicated team to support clients with more complex needs.

We have also been invited to support an increasing number of diverse clients on the Gold Coast. Focal's commitment of providing services in the community will be cemented further as we explore opening smaller offices to facilitate our communications with clients locally.

The Focal Support Coordination Team has matured considerably and will soon have a team of over 15 dedicated members to support NDIS-funded clients who reside throughout SEQ . Team capacity will increase with the addition of experienced mental health staff so that support coordination can be provided for those with complex needs and dual diagnosis.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the tenacity and resilience of all Focal staff, in particular our support workers who have adapted to change and tirelessly risen to the challenge ensuring each client receives the services they desired.

Michael Blanc

Operations

With new opportunities come new challenges, with that came the need to prepare and perfect operationally so that Focal can continue to respond to the needs of the community.

For Focal to be recognised as a leading provider who sets the benchmark for delivery excellence, we must maintain efficient internal processes and build a strong team. Operational improvements focused on four foundational aspects:



Implemented new service delivery data system giving greater operational visibility



Strengthened policies and procedures to respond to changing environment



Recognised employee skill sets and professional development



Leadership team is responsive and accessible for clients, families and community

Staying up to speed with the latest technology and industry best-practice is important, as it ensures our clients benefit from the best systems and services.

Human Resources

At Focal, we recognise that our success is underpinned by the quality of partnerships formed between our client's and our team members.

A major project has been the implementation of a new online recruitment and on boarding system. The system provides managers with more control and visibility of the recruitment process and will speed up the process overall, which is good news for our clients.

This year we have also worked to expand our recruitment channels and networks to promote our employer brand across South East Queensland.

Guided by our goal to become a recognised 'employer of choice', Focal will focus on creating great work experiences for our people. These are characterised by:

- Opportunities for progression
- Easy access to staff development and training
- Meaningful work
- An inclusive, healthy and connected working environment



Streamlined recruitment

↑ **30%**

Increase in workforce

Our organisation complies with the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 for the period 2020-21.

Community Hubs

Focal now operates three community hubs in the areas of North Ipswich, Booval and Mount Ommaney and with a space on the Gold Coast on the horizon.

These locations were selected to facilitate community access and provide a safe environment for socialising and growth.

- **Booval Hub** opened on the 5th November 2020
- **Mt Ommaney Hub** has been operating since early 2021, and the official opening occurred on the 5th October 2021 after being postponed due to lockdown restrictions
- **North Ipswich (Canning St) Hub** was refurbished in early 2021 and is now jointly occupied by our Horizons group. The space provides the same great services for clients with more complex needs.



Booval



Booval



Mt Ommaney

Canning Street



Before

North Ipswich



After

Support Coordination

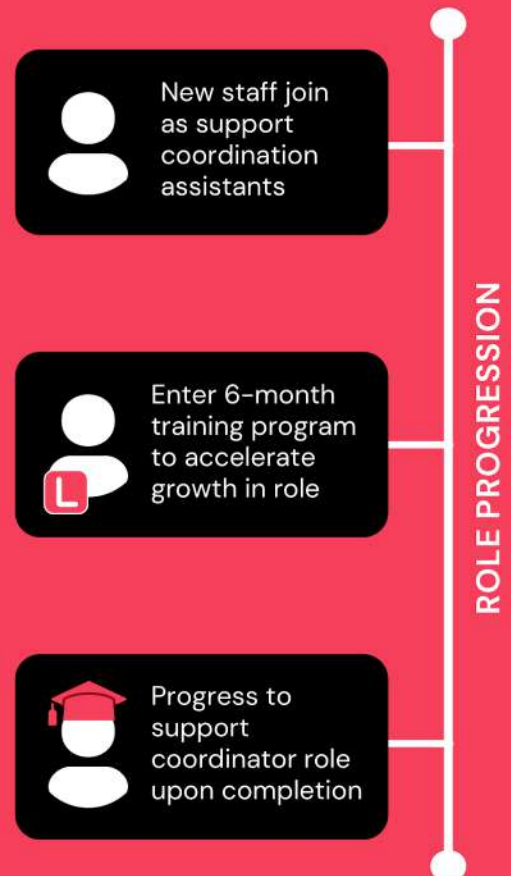
The support coordination team has seen significant growth over 2020-21 in both service delivery and team resources, under the leadership of their new Support Coordination Manager Patty Hitchenor.

We have introduced a new and improved onboarding training program that's already delivering benefits to our new starters and clients. New staff join the team as support coordination assistants, and progress through a structured 6-month competency-based training program.

Once the standards and expectations have been met, staff are promoted into the role of support coordinator. The program has proven to be a very successful platform to create stability and nurturing staff retention.

To respond to client and community needs we now have team members stationed on the Gold Coast since May 2021. We expect to replicate this setting to support Brisbane's northside in the year ahead.

Word of mouth has been key to increasing our client base as a respected provider of support coordination services.



Our team continues to be client focused and deliver quality services whilst achieving targets and goals. Referral sources have grown through networking with NDIS, Child Safety, Office of Public Guardian, and external service providers.

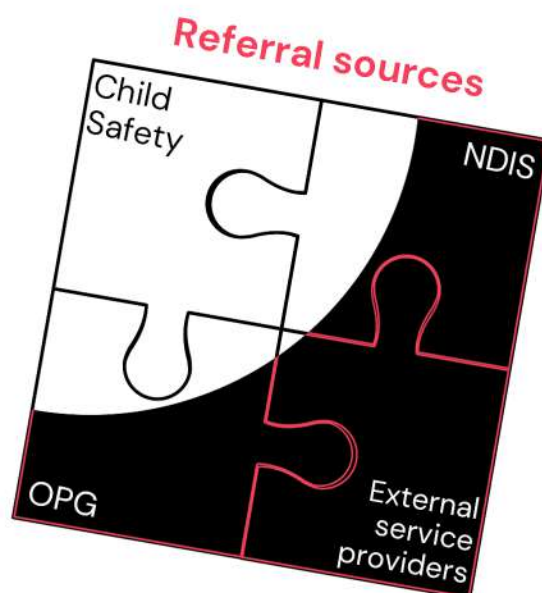
The team work to their individual strengths and skill set, whether that be working with children and adults or working in housing and aged care. New NDIS funded clients are carefully matched to a support coordinator by their team leader.

As a collective group, we are working hard on marketing strategies to reach even more communities across South East Queensland including the Gold Coast, Brisbane North and South, and regional areas.



3 Support coordination sites

11 City council zones serviced



over
300
families supported

Service Delivery

Since the inception of the NDIS, Focal has continuously been called to deliver services outside of the Ipswich and Brisbane area. Local synergies with community leaders and like-minded organisations has been key to making a difference.

As such, a working group has been established on the Gold Coast to actively nurture our connections and develop new services.

Following the growth trend in new clients joining the organisation comes the added benefit of additional members joining our team.

Structurally, level 2 and 3 service support staff were introduced to assist. In addition, Focal introduced for 2 senior support workers to be on standby for shift management when challenges arose. This additional layer of support ensures we maintain continuity of client support and mitigate the risk of shift cancellations.

Improving internal collaboration has also been a key focus. Building stronger connections across the organisation has been a key driver of efficient working practices and has greatly increased communication.



Additional staff welcomed to meet increasing demand for our services



Working group established to nurture community connections



Service delivery goals and targets aligned to ensure efficient work processes



Re-designed induction & orientation includes support, training & mentoring new team members



Maintaining continuity of support and mitigating risk of shift cancellation

Group Services

Children and Young People

After School and Holiday Support

After School and School Holiday Support is delivered in two school based settings as well as a variety of community venues. This service is designed for school aged children and young people with a disability.

In particular this year School Holiday Support included incursions with sessions from Ocean Stars Marine Education, Urban Reptiles, Barnyard Babies and a visit from the local firefighters. All were a great success. We frequently seek feedback and ideas from our current clients and families and continue to adapt this service as needs and wants are highlighted.

FAB Focal Clubs

The FAB Focal Clubs are for young persons 13 and up who have a disability. The purpose of this club is to develop everyday life skills, build friendships and have fun.

We are pleased to announce that FAB Social and School Holiday Club is in the progress of expansion. We are currently taking expression of interests from families who are local to Mount Ommaney and the Centenary suburbs.

After School Care

Interactive, age suitable activities that develop social skills, life skills and fine motor skills,

- Ipswich
- Sunnybank



Holiday Support

All the fun of After School Care but with the variety of added incursions and excursions.

- Ipswich
- Sunnybank
- Out and about



FAB School Holiday Club

- In the Ipswich community
- During school holidays

FAB Social Club

- In the Ipswich community
- During school term



Group Services

All Ages

We have a growing range of group services for all ages that promote friendship and connection. Each service has a strong focus on participation and enjoyment. There truly is something for everyone. Every group service is flexible and centred around what clients want to do.

After redesigning some of the group services, and the addition of a new and exciting groups to offer the community.

This year saw the launch of three major life-skills and development groups appear at Focal.

TRIAL

Fashion Forward

The group will involve making fashionable items from recycled goods, creating a label, hair, beauty plus more.



TRIAL

Friday Night Fever

This group provides an opportunity to meet socially each fortnight to sing karaoke, and dance the night away.



NEW

Photography and Editing

What makes this group a little special is easily it brings people together through a shared passion of observing life through a lens, and capturing it for posterity. This year the group produced their own photographic portfolio. A collection of the photographs were framed and displayed at the official launch of the Mount Ommaney hub.



NEW

Filming and Post Production

This year the group wrote, produced, filmed and edited a unique short film specifically for the 'Focus on Ability' film festival, which received early acclamation. Everyone learnt how to edit on iMac's, frame compositions and storyboard for short films. This year the group were educated on the safety and potential dangers of social media.



NEW

Game On

This group was created out of the Mt Ommaney Hub and has been such a hit with fellow gamers, it is looking at expanding to two days per week and we are now in the early stages of planning one at the Canning St Hub.



NEW

Lifeskills

Quickly becoming a favourite, the lifeskills group is now at capacity. With new flavours and recipes each week there is so much opportunity to cook and taste the delights food from around the world.



Art Cookie

This group has grown in size and never fails to produce many masterpieces. Some of our talented artists won prizes for their creations at the Ipswich Show!



Social Group

These originally started when we were in the height of the pandemic and have continued to be popular as they were a big hit. Similar to Stepping Out, this is a leisure styled group.



Dance Troupe

Focal has dance enthusiastic staff who guide clients through self-expression and choreographed activities. The group showcases their talent at community events where they are invited to perform locally including the Focal Christmas party.



Creative Crafters

In this group environment, clients explore skills development through DIY activities and woodwork. In a socially inclusive environment facilitating connections, the group works on many projects throughout the year whilst sharing the food they prepare.



Fish and Tips

This successful group is still running much to the delight of our clients. They never fail to get a fish or two and love sharing snaps of their catch on our Facebook page.



Stepping Out Men's and Ladies

This is all about community access, recreational fun and new experiences. Our clients have continued to be out and about visiting different places throughout Ipswich and Brisbane area.



Respite

In September 2021, we launched our respite service in partnership with Mt Ommaney Hotel Apartments, co-located with the new community hub. Our focus is on the needs and desires of individuals, and as such this service is best described as a getaway experience. The lush green environment, swimming pool and tennis court contributes to reinforcing the fun and relaxing atmosphere of a holiday.

The time away is more than just a break from normal routine, it is an adventure! From personal check-in at the hotel front desk to the fully prepared delicious and healthy meals, and a restful night in a fresh environment, this is a complete holiday experience. Each morning starts with a big breakfast at the hotel dining room, and then the fun begins.

After a day out exploring, our guests retire to their rooms once again for a relaxing dinner and movie before settling down for the night. Each stay is designed to feature the best of what SEQ has to offer at the time. This might include a footy grand final game, trip to the Ekka, or the latest performance showing at QPAC.

We are open for business for Focal clients to come and experience their own mini getaway, and will begin accepting expressions of interest from the greater community throughout in the year ahead.



Aged Care

Our Aged Care Services cater for those who have received approval from the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) and a referral from My Aged Care. Focal supports the provision of both Low and High Home Care Packages.

These services are delivered in a new and transparent model with no hidden fees. Focal provides support throughout Greater Brisbane and the Ipswich region. Focal's aged care services assist with personal care, clinical care, in-home support, wellness and community activities.

Message from the Treasurer

Sally Preston

This year proved to be financially successful for Focal, notwithstanding the many challenges presented by COVID-19. Overall, the Board is very pleased to be expanding the reach of our services across South East Queensland so that more people can become part of our Focal community. Of note this year we:

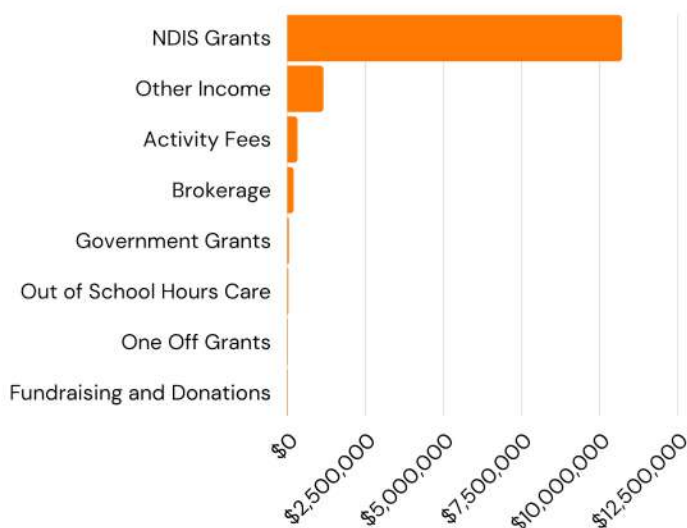
- Expanded our team in anticipation of further growth within Focal as we expand our reach across South East Queensland and into new service lines
- Given back to our dedicated employees through Christmas gift vouchers for their hard work during a very difficult year
- Increased our total income excluding JobKeeper by approximately 28.49%

The Board continues to ensure that our financial position aligns with our risk appetite statement and risk profile, including by provisioning for large expenses, such as rent payments on our community hubs, so that we can give comfort around business sustainability to our clients and our employees.

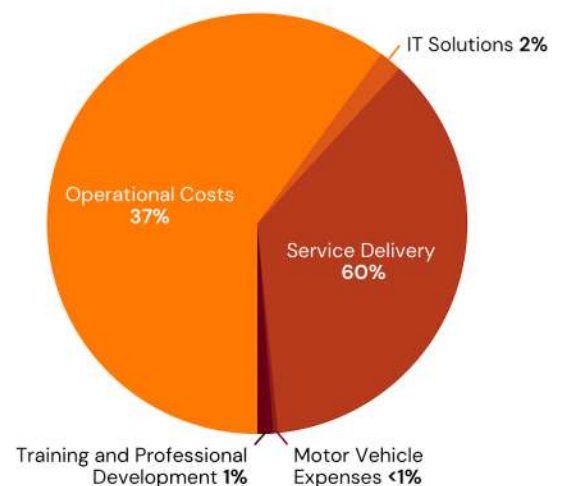
All NDIS prepayments have been reimbursed. According provisions have also been made to support the transition of long service leave to QLeave. We are excited to re-invest our success in FY2020-21 into various aspects of the business.

Sally Preston

Income



Expenditure





Acknowledgements

We thank all of our clients, families, friends, staff, volunteers, Board members and partners who make everything we do so special.

Focal Community Service

6 Canning St, North Ipswich QLD 4305

07 3812 2014

admin@focal.org.au

www.focal.org.au

