



Annual Report

2021-22

Endless opportunities for all.

Our Purpose, Our Passion

For almost 50 years, we have been part of our community, working alongside people with disabilities and their families.

Vision

Our vision is to create endless opportunities for all.

Values

Our values are at the centre of everything we do. At Focal we act with the following values in mind, every single day.

Mission

Our purpose is to empower a life of choice by listening and working alongside you towards your goals.

We listen and empower

It's about you and your dreams

We deliver what you want and need

Real community connection

We go where you want and need

We provide a safe platform to nurture growth

Our Board

The Board of Focal are accountable for the performance of our organisation. The Board's work is underpinned by meaningful engagement with our community, instilling a culture that supports our purpose. Directors attend up to 16 meetings each year. They volunteer their time and expertise to help guide the organisation.

Our Directors



Patrick Albina

Chairperson



Sophie McCleary

Secretary



Zane Ali

Treasurer



Andrew Clark



Naomi Meade



Brianna Barry



Rob Newman



Jillian Fox

Message from the Chairperson

If I could summarise the outcomes of 2022 in one word, I would choose 'Foundations'. With the upheaval created in the previous years due to some significant events such as COVID-19 and flooding, the Board believed that it was necessary to reflect inwards, acknowledge the team's extraordinary efforts throughout the disruptions, and take the opportunity to envision the way ahead by asking ourselves, "What does the future Focal look like?"

Our conversations led us back to the theme of foundations, providing us with the following principles that guided us in our strategy, decision making and future planning. I would like to share with you some of the main points that have defined our deliberations in 2022.

Doing the Simple Things Better

Focal already does many things well, however it is often said that "good is the enemy of great". The Board recognised that there are many things we are good at, however, to become great, we identified a need to reinvest in our 'back-of-house' management systems such as HR, rostering, and accounts.

2022 was a year of evaluating our internal management systems to identify ways of modernising them and enable ourselves to reduce duplication, minimise errors and better integrate the various activities that we perform on a day-to-day basis. Investing in our 'back-of-house' is a work-in-progress, and we hope that we will be able to implement new systems in 2023.

Re-energise

The Board has been acutely aware and appreciative of the extraordinary efforts that our staff make every day. The passion of our staff in supporting our clients is clearly evident in the relationships and the rapport that has been created with our clients. We recognise that the industry we work in is a 'heart & soul' sector, which requires emotional investment, energy and loads of compassion, and that over time, this takes a toll. This year, our approach was to reduce growth to allow our team to consolidate and re-energise.

New People, New Ideas

As planned and announced during the year, we have expanded the Board to help consolidate, build and project forward to help envision Focal's future. In June 2022, the Board was very pleased to welcome Jillian Fox, Brianna Barry, Zane Ali, and Rob Newman. Each of our new Directors brings deep experience, expertise, and diverse perspectives to Focal, and we look forward to their advice, counsel, and commitment to Focal's governance.

“ The passion of our staff in supporting our clients is clearly evident.

A Warm Welcome our New CEO

More recently, we have seen new leadership with outgoing CEO, Mickael Blanc embarking upon a new adventure. After 6 years at the helm of Focal, Mickael played an integral part in navigating Focal's journey as it transitioned into the emerging NDIS sector, through COVID-19 and the more recent flooding events. During this time Mickael worked closely with all to ensure that the organisation remained true to its core values of listening and empowering our clients to achieve their goals, through real community connection.

Replacing Mickael is our wonderful new CEO, Elaine De Vos, who has already made a significant impact with the Focal staff and our clients. Elaine has been a CEO for over twenty years and has significant experience of working in the NDIS sector both at a Government level and as a CEO in the NFP sector.

The Board has great confidence in Elaine's leadership, with her passion, commitment, and determination clearly evident in the short time that she has been with us. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm Focal welcome to Elaine as she steers Focal in new and exciting directions.

Charles Darwin famously said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." We are experiencing unprecedented times of change, and there is no doubt that adapting to this change will be challenging and it will require considerable heart & soul, but this is what we are great at.



With new people come new ideas, new energy, and great opportunity. With this new leadership and fresh energy, Focal now has the foundations with which to forge new pathways and explore new opportunities. We have an excellent team at the helm as we embark upon that journey.

Patrick Albina

Message from the CEO

I had the opportunity to join this amazing organisation in July 2022 when Mickael Blanc, the previous CEO, resigned to pursue another career opportunity. I have been welcomed into the Focal family with open arms and feel honoured to be part of the future growth of Focal while providing a number of vital services for our wonderful clients.

We have an amazing team of staff here at Focal and I would like to thank each and every one of you for your dedication and team effort through another difficult year of COVID and natural disasters.

Focal will continue to focus on the services provided from our Ipswich, Booval and Mount Ommaney Hubs and also continue to explore additional opportunities for our future growth.

Congratulations to the Film group with an amazing achievement when they were awarded "Highly Commended Film" after they entered the "Focus on Ability" Short Film Awards. It is so wonderful to see our clients demonstrating the skills that they have attained through one of our many group activities.

We will continue to expand the group activities available for our clients in our various Community Hubs and also in the wider community. We are already in discussion with Ipswich Basketball and Ipswich Circus looking at new and exciting programs that will be developed to be accessible for our clients. I look forward to sharing details of these new activities with you all as they come to fruition at the beginning of 2023.

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.

Another achievement that I want to recognise is that of our Support Coordination team who were recognised for their dedication and contribution to their clients by placing as finalists at the 2021 Brisbane Disability Staff Recognition Awards. The team were mentioned in the "Best Support Coordination Team and Leadership" award categories. The Support Coordination team recognised that there was need in the market for clients that did not receive Support Coordination as part of their NDIS plan and initiated the industry's first NDIS Connection Packages. Well done!

Watch this space – It is such an exciting time for Focal as we move into the future with Focal Forward, there will be many exciting changes that will form the foundation of our future sustainability as we mark our fiftieth year in 2023.

Elaine DeVos



Message from the Treasurer

First and foremost, we would like to take a moment to say thank you to our members, funders, stakeholders and supporters for their unwavering dedication to our organisation through yet another particularly tough year.

For more than 48 years, Focal has been dedicated to helping create endless opportunities for all, advocating for change, empowering a life of choice by listening and working alongside those living with disabilities, and their families to achieve their goals.

The 2021-22 financial year has been a challenging one for Focal with a continued profound impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic as we experienced temporary closure of our Hubs, increase costs of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and reduced services through the end of 2021 and early 2022 as we responded to continued lockdowns and evolving mandatory Government requirements. Service impacts continued more recently due to severe weather events and floods effecting South-East Queensland and many of our consumers.

Despite these challenges, Focal finished the 2021-22 financial year with a sound financial performance and a strong financial position.

Focal achieved total Revenue of \$13.2 million (6.2% increase on 2020-21) and a Net Surplus of \$581 thousand (4.80% surplus margin) which included an additional grant of \$346 thousand from the NDIA to assist with the continuity of service to the consumers we serve through the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Furthermore, Focal strengthened its Balance Sheet with Net Assets of \$4.3 million (15.7% increase on 2020-21) and strong liquidity with a current asset ratio of 3.65.

This strong financial performance and position was the foundation of Focal being able to provide further critical services and support operational initiatives for the ongoing viability of the organisation for the short- and long-term future. Specifically, some of these initiatives included:

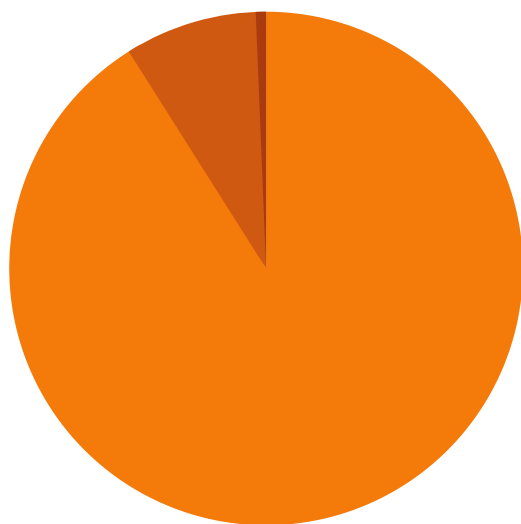
- Purchasing 3 additional cars to be able to provide additional transport options to the community;
- Opening the My Ommaney Hub to expand services and support into the Brisbane South area;
- Expanded into short-term accommodation (respite) services at our Mt Ommaney Hub;
- Increased our NDIS income and expanded service offering resulting in a 12.1% uplift compared to 2020-21; and
- Appointment of a Financial Controller to strengthen the financial governance and commercial astuteness of the organisation.

The 2021-22 financial results posture the organisation in a strong position to navigate a forever changing and complex environment, and to take advantages of opportunities as we look reinvest our 2021-22 success into the future, to expand our services and support to those consumers we are here serve. Once again, thank you to all those that have supported us throughout the year.

Zane Ali

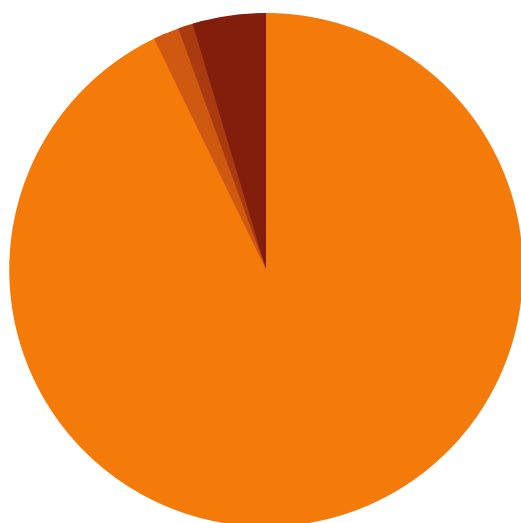


Finances



Income

- 91% - NDIS Revenue
- 8.3% - Service provision fees
- 0.6% - Other income



Expenses

- 92.8% - Employee expenses
- 1.6% - Rental expenses
- 0.9% - Depreciation
- 4.6% - Other expenses

Our Services

Focal recognises that every person is unique and therefore has different support needs. With this in mind, we ensure that those we support can access a range of individualised services to meet their support needs at every life stage.



**Support
Coordination**



**Respite and
Accommodation**



**Group
Activities**



**Children and
Young People**

Support Coordination

The 2021-22 financial year was successful for the support coordination team. There was significant growth in the number of participants supported by the team as professional reputation was enhanced within the industry for the level of service provided at Focal,

In May, the team were recognised for exceptional service at the Brisbane Disability Staff Recognition Awards, as nominees for the Best Team Award. The significant and positive impact made internally and externally by Support Coordination Manager, Patty Hitchenor was also celebrated with her Leadership Award nomination.

This recognition comes from the team's focus on delivering high quality services and achieving their goals. We have managed to build and sustain trusting relationships within the industry, enabling us to deliver a wide variety of support options to suit the needs of participants.

Supporting participants throughout South East Queensland, the team has been very successful in finding housing and securing funding. Demonstrating such strengths saw Focal become a NDIS preferred provider for supporting participants to urgently transition out of hospital.

We introduced a new and exclusive service within the industry with NDIS Connection Packages. The packages allows participants that do not have support coordination included in their plan to access the service directly.

For these participants, having an NDIS Connection Package enables them to build their capacity to understand their plan, learn how to manage their allocated funding and make informed decisions when implementing required supports.

This has been a game changer within the industry and has allowed the support coordination team to assist even more NDIS participants requiring their services.

Efforts were also focused on developing stronger relationships externally which allowed us to market our services to a wider network. This included the service launch of our NDIS Connection Packages in March to external service providers, which established new industry connections and resulted in a wave of new requests for service.

Within the first two months we had over 10 participants utilising these services. It also created a pathway for Plan Managers and our Support Coordination team to work together to assist all people with disabilities within the NDIS framework.



Respite and Accommodation

What a great year it has been at the Mount Ommaney Hub. In November 2021 the team launched respite services operating from the co-located Mount Ommaney Hotel Apartments which has since gone from strength to strength. Our respite service is offered as a short holiday experience for people with disability, whilst also giving their families a much-needed break.

After a successful trial phase, this service received high demand from clients and their families. As word spreads, so too are bookings for this one-of-a-kind offering. We expect to see continued growth in our respite and accommodation service over the coming year.

Each stay is tailored to guests interests. We provide a range of activity options and day trip destinations including:

- River cruises
- Sensory friendly stays
- Whale watching
- Performing arts shows
- Sunshine Coast / Gold Coast adventures

We would like to thank the Mount Ommaney team for their unwavering commitment to the clients and always making each visitor feel welcome at the hub.



Group Activities

6 Group activities added

5 Group activities expanded

24 Group activities offered

Enhance

This group focuses on social and life skills development such as budgeting, community outings, public transport training, staying active and shopping. The group encourages friendships through physical activities such as bowling, swimming and field trips.

A large part of its growth in popularity can be attributed to members' having a say in the choice of activities. It has been wonderful to see clients consciously aim to hit their weekly activity goals.

Sew It Social

Sew It Social is a new initiative we are working to get off the ground to bring likeminded individuals together. Sewing seems to be a somewhat lost art and is a fantastic skill to have plus it presents a perfect outlet to unleash one's creativity.

Friday Night Fever

An evening filled with music and dancing is always fun but its taken up another notch when participants get to dress up for themed nights. Halloween proved particularly popular this year.

Friday Night Fever is a mixed group so it is a great opportunity for participants to socialise and have mingle with people they wouldn't usually see.



Social Club

Born during COVID-19 to create a safe space to maintain social connections, this group continues to attract interest. Members have the option to go swimming or remain at the hub to enjoy various social and art focused centre-based activities. Looking ahead, the group is likely to expand to a full day session so participants have the option of an extended day.

Art Cookies

This group is for those who love working with their hands. Participants share lots of smiles creating amazing art projects together ranging from cute lanterns, mosaics, modern art to CD mobiles. Sharing life stories and celebrating birthdays are just an added bonus! Due to the group being at capacity, it is looking to expand again.

Creative Crafters

Participants of different skills levels work together in a safe but busy and friendly workshop. Members put forward ideas for different projects to plan, design, budget, purchase and create. Materials used include wood, leather, and metal to a name a few.

Fish and Tips

Sitting on a river bank with a fishing rod in hand is the perfect way to relax. Members have their secret locations to catch dinner and share a quiet laugh (so they don't spook the fish). Flood events and damaged river banks around Ipswich prevented the group from using the most favoured spot in Kholo Gardens but this allowed adventures to Bribie Island, The Spit in Southport and Wivenhoe Dam - all of which were highlights of the year.

Lifeskills

Lifeskills is important capacity building activity which has returned with force after being put on hold due to COVID-19. It's a great platform for socialising whilst helping clients acquire essential cooking skills that last a lifetime. The lifeskills group has been a major success and due to growing demand, is sure to see more offerings in the coming year.



Film

During the year, our talented filmmakers entered the "Focus on Ability" Short Film Awards and were awarded "Highly Commended Film" which . The film group have really been creative over the past twelve months and have tested the waters in various genres and styles of filmmaking. Whether it's fiction or documentary, there is no challenge too great for this group. Each member continues to develop their skills, dexterity and social skills, watching them blossom and express themselves has been awe-inspiring.

Dance Troupe

This dynamic group have a passion for a variety of dance styles. It's a great way to have fun, keep fit, hone motor coordination skills and enhance communication skills. Dance Troupe made a special appearance at Carers QLD and will be performing at Focal's upcoming Christmas party.



Horizons

Despite disruptions to services and supports this past year due to COVID-19 including a relocation to the main building at the North Ipswich Hub, the group has had an exciting year. Apart from learning life skills that support their individual goals, clients have also gained important social and communication skills.

Horizons group members have been choosing to engage with the community in a wide variety of activities including outings to the movies, bowling, animal parks, as well as capacity building activities such as grocery shopping, cooking and learning about healthy food choices. To provide balance, centre-based activities saw group members let their hair down with discos and express their creativity through art and craft activities.

New Horizons

We have been working closely with Western Suburbs Special School in Durack over the past eight months exploring opportunities to provide support for students transitioning out of school. Six students have been regularly accessing Mount Ommaney Hub on Thursdays in a bid to familiarise them with staff and the hub.

This model has worked exceptionally well with most of these young men now regularly accessing one-on-one support at Mount Ommaney Hub between 3 and 5 days per week. The positive feedback from the school faculty and family members has been most encouraging and will certainly shape our plans for the coming year.

A special mention and a massive thanks to the team leaders, support staff and our wonderful clients for their great work. We couldn't do this without you all.

Children and Young People

After School and School Holiday Activities

Both our Ipswich and Sunnybank groups have had a great year! With lots of changes and challenges both Ipswich and Sunnybank are working towards One Focal! We are creating new ideas and opportunities for our young people to be more involved in the One Focal initiative. This years programs have seen farm animals, movie days, urban reptiles, water and sensory play and lots of laughs!

We would like to thank our partners – Ipswich Special School and Sunnybank Special School who continue to support the delivery of our after school and school holiday centre-based services. We couldn't do this without them.

Teen All Stars

Teen All Stars commenced in April 2022 and has been steadily growing since. The social aspect of this group opens up opportunities for young people to form connections and great friendships, whilst also learning key life skills along the way.

Operating twice weekly, the group offers an active session of sports and games at local parks during winter and swimming in summer. With the second weekly session based indoors where the group get the chance to build their cooking and life skills.

FAB Clubs

The FAB School Holiday Club and FAB Social Club are as the name says FABulous, many friendships formed and many adventures shared over the years.

The FAB Clubs have become a very popular addition, providing an outlet for ongoing connections between the school holidays, school terms and even after the school journey has finished.



Acknowledgements

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

We extend a special acknowledgement to our amazing crew of support workers. They all go above and beyond to ensure the clients are safe, engaged and having a great time. The services we provide would not be possible without these amazing people.

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