



Annual Report 2023

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Agenda

Held at UniSC, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie on Tuesday 28th November 2023.

Meeting Open:

Acknowledgement of Country:

Present:

Apologies:

Acceptance of new association members:

Previous Minutes:

Minutes of Special General Meeting:

Presidents & General Managers Report:

Treasurers Report:

Appointment of Auditor for 2023-2024:

Election Board Members 2023-2024:

Presentation from CAI Services

Close of Meeting:

Refreshments:

2022 Annual General Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of

Community Action Inc

Held at the University of Sunshine Coast Gympie Campus on Tuesday the 22nd of November 2022 at 12:30pm

Meeting Open: Ruth Tidswell opened the meeting at 12.45pm and welcomed Mayor Glen Hartwig and Member for Gympie Tony Perrett.

Welcome to Country: Russell Bennet performed the welcome to country

Present: See attached list

Apologies: Vish Forward, Lilian Fox (Dept Home Affairs), Liz Wild (DJAG), Paula Manuel (DCHDC), Ann Rigbye, Rae Gate, Andrea Matthews, Berni Wright, Andy Nethercott

Acceptance of new Association Members: It was moved by Kelly McCabe and seconded by Pam Parkinson that all new memberships be accepted. **CARRIED.**

Previous Minutes: The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting of Community Action held on the 23rd of November at the University of the Sunshine Coast were presented.

It was moved by Jeff Davies and seconded by Kelly McCabe that the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting of Community Action be accepted as a true and correct record of proceedings. **CARRIED.**

President's Report: Jeff Davies presented the President's report. Jeff reported that Community Action has faced challenges this year, especially the ongoing effects of COVID and related mental health and homelessness issues. There has been unprecedented demand on services. Jeff thanked staff and board members for their hard work and capacity to continue to deliver high quality services. Jeff thanked the funding bodies and noted that these are crucial partnerships for ongoing work and thanked the leadership team and finance for their dedication.

It was moved by Jeff Davies and seconded by Angeline Medland that the President's report be accepted. **CARRIED**

Treasurer's Report: Abbie Grant-Taylor presented the Treasurer's report and Audited Financial Statements of Community Action. Abbie commented that this past year has been one of the most complex years that staff have faced and thanked staff for the work they have carried out despite the difficulties. Abbie thanked Kelly (Finance Officer) for her support in the finance area and thanked Judy for work carried out in quality and compliance. More and more we're trying to make funds spread further, doing more with less, with no increase in funding provided. The next few years will be challenging, but we strive to do the best we can with what we have.

It was moved by Abbie Grant-Taylor and seconded by Steve Brown that the Treasurer's Report and Audited Financial Statements for Community Action for 2021-2022 be accepted. **CARRIED.**

Election of Office Bearers and Board Members for 2022-2023: Ruth Tidswell declared all positions vacant and the following nominations for Community Action Inc were read:

Position	Name of Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
President	Jeff Davies	Rae Gâté	Abbie Grant-Taylor
Vice President	Rae Gâté	Abbie Grant-Taylor	Jeff Davies
Secretary	Andrew Nethercott	Abbie Grant-Taylor	Rae Gâté
Treasurer	Abbie Grant-Taylor	Rae Gâté	Jeff Davies
Committee Member	Stephen Brown	Abbie Grant-Taylor	Jeff Davies
Committee Member	Angeline Medland	Abbie Grant-Taylor	Rae Gâté
Committee Member	Sharji Joseph	Rae Gâté	Abbie Grant-Taylor

It was moved by Ruth Tidswell and seconded by Talia van Gils that all nominations be accepted. **CARRIED.**

Appointment of Auditor for 2022-2023: It was moved by Abbie Grant-Taylor and seconded by Kelly McCabe that Brown, Macaulay and Warren be appointed as Auditors for Community Action for the 2022-2023 financial year. **CARRIED.**

General Manager Report: Ruth Tidswell presented the General Manager's report and Annual Report. Ruth invited members to have a look at the display of hands made by staff to express their views of the past year.

Ruth reported that ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and the impact of three flood events, together with the rising cost of living and state-wide housing crisis, has increased need for service and complexity of need. Survive and thrive has been our theme for 21-22. We have continued to provide essential supports to the most vulnerable in our community. Key highlights:

- COVID-19: our COVID Safe plan has been updated 27 times and a vaccination policy was implemented.
- Floods: staff ensured that service delivery continued and some staff volunteered at evacuation centres.
- Additional funding: ER funds for flood recovery were distributed by FLARP staff who attended the recovery centre. Additional GRDFVS enhancement funding enabled recruitment of an additional DFV specialist child and youth counsellor and brokerage funds. Additional housing funds were received for IHRF and LHAP programs. IHRF targets families experiencing or at risk of homelessness and LHAP targets people in short-term accommodation or unsustainable housing.
- Trauma Awareness Training: Delivered by BlueKnot to develop a trauma sensitive lens for service delivery.
- Help to Home initiative: delivering up to 50 additional headlease properties.

Ruth noted key highlights from each service area:

- Head office: ensures finance, WHS, quality, compliance and reporting etc are managed diligently.
- Housing Service: enquiries for housing are at an all-time high. We have had very high occupancy rate (95% or higher) throughout the year. Staff have distributed Rapid Relief packs and sleeping rough packs to people in need. The hard working team continually meets the needs of tenants.
- Youth Service: there has been an increase in need for crisis housing, greater need for intensive support and an increase in emergency relief presentations. The team is looking forward to the return of Dr Kit from extended leave. The service supported PHN to host vaccination clinics, participated in NAIDOC family fun day and hosted an annual Christmas celebration for clients. The data does not identify the complexity of need presented by clients. Ruth commended staff for their adaptability and flexibility during difficult times.
- Erin House: staff are relentless in their dedication to women and children experiencing DFV. They provide a welcoming space for clients. Maria and Barny retired this year after 20 years of dedication to the role.
- GRDFVS: consistently huge demand for service. We lead an integrated service system response focussing on prevention and early intervention through collaboration with other services and community campaigns.
- FLARP: have assisted clients with more than \$530,000 of debt waivers. FLARP supports the SPER program and has assisted 30 clients to clear SPER debts through participation in the program. The program assisted with the distribution emergency relief for flood recovery. Mel retired from the position of Co-ordinator.
- MINS: supports the settlement of migrants into Australia, working across the Gympie and Noosa communities.
- Emergency Relief: delivers services in partnership with Gympie Community Place and Tin Can Bay Community Church.

Ruth thanked staff for their investment, contribution and dedication to their roles and thanked the board members for their investment of time and expertise.

It was moved by Ruth Tidswell and seconded by Murray Benton that the Annual Report be accepted. **CARRIED.**

Presentation of gifts and thanks to the Board on behalf of the staff and membership.

Invitation for comment to the Annual Report:

- Murray Benton acknowledged Ruth as General Manager and on behalf of staff expressed appreciation for the work carried out at the senior staff level. Ruth acknowledged the work of Operations Manager, Andrea Matthews for her support and assistance.
- Tony Perrett MP acknowledged the work carried out by Community Action. He expressed concern that issues such as DFV and homelessness are getting worse but is thankful that Community Action exists in our community as a referral point. Tony expressed willingness to help out wherever he can at a state or federal level wherever possible. Ruth reiterated that working together in collaboration is key.

Meeting Close: 1.40pm

Funding Acknowledgements



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services

- Emergency Relief Program



Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs

Department of Home Affairs

- Multicultural Information Network Service



Queensland
Government

Department of Communities, Housing & Digital Economy

- Community Rent Scheme (Housing Service)
- Specialist Homelessness Service (Youth Service)
- Lease agreements on Department owned properties for Community housing & crisis housing (Housing Service, Youth Service & Erin House)
- Immediate Housing Response for Families Program
- Local Housing Action Plan program
- Emergency Relief Program

Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

- Financial Literacy Program



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Office for Women and Violence Prevention/ Department of Justice & Attorney General

- GRDFVS
- Erin House
- QLD DFSV Enhancement 2022-25
- Children's DV Counselling (Commonwealth National Partnership Enhancement)



Gympie Regional Council

- Pensioner Units Program (Housing Service)

Country to Coast, Qld

- Youth Health Clinic
- Little Beginnings

Our Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision

Community Action is a not-for-profit organisation that has a vision for a socially and culturally safe, inclusive, thriving community that embraces diversity.



Our Mission

Our mission is to work together with the community to provide services that are responsive to the needs of the community.

Our Values

- Respect & Compassion
- Collaboration & Innovation
- Integrity & Accountability
- Equity & Diversity
- Commitment & Investment



Community Action Overview

Registered Charity with the ACNC
Endorsed as a Public Benevolent Institution
Registered Tier 3 Community Housing Provider
Endorsed by the ATO with Deductible Gift Recipient status,
GST concessions, FBT exemption and Income Tax exemption

Our programs are based in Gympie and service the Gympie Local Government Area with a very small portion of work based outside of the region in Kingaroy.

The four key strategic priority areas that drive the direction of our business include:

- Service Delivery
- Governance and Administration
- Growth and Sustainability
- Workplace Culture and Values

We provide service through seven key program areas:



Board of Management



PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD
Jeff Davies



VICE PRESIDENT
Rae Gâté



TREASURER
Abbie Grant Taylor



SECRETARY
Andy Nethercott



BOARD MEMBER
Angeline Medland



BOARD MEMBER
Stephen Brown



BOARD MEMBER
Sharji Joseph

Management Team



GENERAL MANAGER
Ruth Tidswell



**QUALITY & COMPLIANCE
MANAGER**
Judy Brauer



**GYMPIE REGION
DOMESTIC & FAMILY
VIOLENCE SERVICE
MANAGER**
Talia van Gils



**YOUTH SERVICE
MANAGER**
Jo Ostergaard



OPERATIONS MANAGER
Andrea Matthews



ERIN HOUSE MANAGER
Bernadette Wright



**HOUSING SERVICES
MANAGER**
Renee Nielsen

President & General Managers Report

The story of Community Action for 2022–2023 makes for an interesting read.

The story of Community Action began with the merger of three local services in 2011, the Cooloola Youth Service Inc, Erin House Inc and Cooloola Community Housing Association Inc. Since that time Community Action has continued to grow and develop with the addition and expansion of services to meet the support needs of the Gympie community, including extra domestic and family violence services for women and children, financial counselling, emergency relief and multicultural settlement services. Community Action assists some of the most vulnerable individuals in the community and we are extremely proud of the work we do and the contribution we make to improving people's lives.

The values that contribute to the success of Community Action are courtesy, compassion, collaboration and a "can do" attitude. These values are at the heart of our governance, management, and service delivery.

Even though 2022 – 2023 has been a demanding year it has been a highly productive year with a great many successes to acknowledge and celebrate.

The key achievements this year from the perspective of the Board and management are:

- Revision of the organisation's Constitution in line with legislation and changes to the model rules, which was endorsed at a Special General Meeting on 4th April 2023 and approved by the Office of Fair-Trading on 5th May 2023.
- Renewal of the contracts for Erin House and the Gympie Region Domestic and Family Violence Service with the Department of Justice and Attorney General for another five-year term.
- Renewal of the Youth Service's Specialist Housing Service contract with the Department of Housing for another five-year term and contracts for the Youth Wellbeing – GP Access and Little Beginnings programs with Country to Coast QLD for a further twelve-months.
- Renewal of the Housing Service Community Rent Scheme contract with the Department of Housing for a further two-year period.
- Completion of the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) Maintenance audit for Gympie Region Domestic and Family Violence Service, Erin House and the Financial Literacy and Resilience Program, which identified no non-conformities and recertification was granted until December 2024.
- Completion of the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) compliance audit, which identified the Housing Service complied with all performance outcomes under the National Regulatory Code for all 148 community housing properties (21 owned and 127 managed on behalf of the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy).
- Completion of a review of the Youth Service for the Department of Communities Housing and Digital Economy in December 2022.
- Receipt of financial assistance from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund to assist with the repair of a Housing Service unit which was damaged in the 2022 flood events.

- Contribution to a suite of videos produced by the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) aimed at assisting Boards and Management Committees across the non-government sector better understand their role and responsibilities in terms of governance. These videos are available on the Community Door website and as a playlist on YouTube.
- Implementation of additional employee health and wellbeing strategies to support staff to have effective self-care plans in place to assist them develop effective self-care plans to maintain their resilience on a personal level and in the workplace. This also ensures the organisation complies with the Workplace Health & Safety Queensland Psychosocial Code of Practice.
- Establishment of an agreement with UniSC to support an honour's student research project. The focus of the research project is investigating affordable housing models that would be appropriate and effective in the Gympie Region.
- Development of a partnership with the Gympie and District Sustainability Alliance to work together to improve the energy efficiency of the community housing in our region by seeking sponsorship to implement a range of energy saving measures such as installation of rooftop solar, replacement of inefficient water systems with modern energy efficient systems, and insulating buildings.
- Purchase a new building to accommodate the Housing Service and with a view to develop the property to provide an office for the management and administration team. This was one of our strategic objectives.
- Commitment of resources to provide face-to-face cultural awareness training for Board members and staff in November 2023, which was another one of our strategic objectives.
- Supported the staff initiative to purchase a Christmas gift for the children residing in our Housing Service properties. The Housing Service staff delivered the gifts to 105 children prior to closing for Christmas and reported that the parents and children were extremely appreciative of the gesture.

This year we were very pleased to receive additional emergency relief funding from both the Commonwealth and State governments, as the number of people in our community facing financial distress has increased markedly due to the rising cost of living. With the extra funds we were able to provide greater assistance to some individuals and extend the reach of the service within the community. People who access the emergency relief service are always extremely grateful. This support not only helps to alleviate the financial crisis, it gives them a renewed sense of hope and connection with the community because others care about their situation and are willing to help.

We received additional funding from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (now the Department of Housing) for the Immediate Housing Response for Families program for additional brokerage support and an additional support worker. This additional funding was most welcome as the demand for this support was overwhelming. The additional funding enabled the program to extend the much-needed assistance to more families facing homelessness. We have certainly exceeded the performance benchmarks for this program.

We also received additional funding from the Department Justice and Attorney General to enhance direct service delivery to support the safety needs of women and children. This funding was allocated to the salary costs associated with meeting the increased service demand and to client related costs such as, installation of CCTV and provision of personal safety devices to enable women to remain at home when safe to do so, payment of transport and petrol costs to assist women access safe accommodation and payment of motel and hotel expenses when refuge accommodation is unavailable or not an appropriate support option.

We wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Board and management, to acknowledge and commend the dedication and hard work of the staff, who have capably responded to the high demand for service that has persisted throughout the year. The complexity of the support needs of people accessing our services have been exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing and pressures associated with the increasing cost of living. These issues have certainly increased the vulnerability of our clients.

The Managers of the organisation deserve a special mention as they go above and beyond to ensure that their service is well coordinated and responsive to the needs of clients, and that their staff receive quality support and supervision and find their work fulfilling. Managers strive to work together to progress the organisation's strategic objectives and ensure all compliance and contractual obligations are met to a high standard. This year we celebrated Renee Nielsen's permanent appointment as Housing Service Manager and welcomed Jo Ostergaard into the Acting Youth Service Manager role, after she stepped into the role following Murray Benton's resignation in April to take up a Community Housing Capacity Lead role with Q Shelter. Our Senior Finance Officer, Kelly McCabe, also deserves a special mention because keeping on top of Community Actions finances is a very big task and Kelly makes sure our bills get paid, the bookkeeping is in order, budgets tally and staff are happy because their wages always get paid on time.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank our funding partners for their ongoing financial support, because without the funding we receive from both State and Commonwealth Government Departments it would not be possible to do the important work we do. We also wish to acknowledge the importance of the relationship we have with our various contract officers.

We wish to acknowledge the support we receive from other service providers and the strong working relationship we have with them and sincerely thank everyone who has donated and supported Community Action during the year.

In closing, we wish to thank the members of the Board for their investment and contribution throughout the year as their knowledge, expertise, and commitment has been invaluable. We are extremely fortunate to have the calibre of people we have on our Board, particularly given the level of accountability and responsibility required in governing an organisation as diverse as Community Action. The organisation is certainly well positioned moving into 2023 -2024 with strong governance support from the Board combined with effective management and a committed, capable group of staff, we look forward to sharing more success stories next year.

Jeff Davies
President

Ruth Tidswell
General Manager

Operations Manager Report

Our story began in 2011 and includes chapters that focus on the birth of Community Action Inc, the growth and enhancement of services, advocacy for our clients, health & wellbeing strategies, the COVID years, resilience, and hopes for the future. The story is one of grit, determination, heartbreak, joy, and strength.

As I reflect on the year that was, I carry a mixture of pride and awe. This is a year that has pushed us individually and globally in many ways as we bear witness to layers of human sorrow, a global housing crisis, increasing numbers and severity of domestic & family violence, new waves of racism and discrimination, wars, natural disasters, increasing use of legal and illegal substances, mental and physical health issues, educational inequalities, and many more human rights challenges.

I think our staff continue to show up every day at a time when our clients and community need us most. We are faced with more and more barriers as a service provider, tighter resources, and more and more demand. So how do we look after ourselves and others in this challenging environment.

I was recently researching "The Zone of Fabulousness" by Vikki Reynolds and came across an extract from her book that stated the following "The Zone of Fabulousness is a frame to consider how we are centering persons, enacting collective ethics, and fostering collective sustainability while working in contexts of social injustice, mean-spirited politics, and oppression. How are we centering persons? How are we enacting connection; being collaborative, creative, messy, and imperfect? What is going on for workers in terms of 'vicariously traumatic experiences' might be better understood as acts of resistance and reasonable responses to politically desperate situations, and not symptoms of mental unwellness. I am humbled by community workers, who – despite struggling to do justice in harsh contexts of exploitation, oppression, and being brokenhearted – are able to show up, shoulder each other up, and hold other people at the centre: that is the Zone of Fabulousness" (Reynolds 2019).

So, this year in my role as Operations Manager I want to honour our CAI Zone of Fabulousness:

Showing up – some days just showing up takes bravery

Speaking up – reaching out for support and compassion, it's very difficult to be vulnerable

Offering someone a cup of tea

Providing a listening ear, without judgement or question

Home baked goodies

Celebrating each other's holiday plans

Holding a person's grief in your heart as your own

Thanking you for your work

Taking a walk together

Giving someone a compliment

An early mark

Running late and knowing you will be understood

Being family friendly

Sharing recipes

A lift to pick up your car

Taking out the rubbish

Cleaning the dishes

Asking if you can help

Bringing in chocolates

Sharing morning tea

Working on a project together

Belly laughing

Being safe to make mistakes

Supporting each other through the highs and lows

Respecting our individual differences

Recognising that it takes a village to do this work

Andrea Matthews
Operations Manager

Quality & Compliance Manager Report

The quote “*Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer*” by Rick Pitino, captures the essence of the quality and compliance theme in Community Action’s story.

Community Action’s quality framework sits at the core of all aspects of our work, it is overarching and encompasses our policy and procedures, standards and accreditation, management framework and practice framework.

Policy & Procedure: Our policy and procedures are reviewed on a triennial basis or sooner where required. They are reviewed in line with legislation and other regulatory requirements. A key focus has been to reduce the number of policies through consolidation while maintaining the integrity of the content.

Standards & Accreditation:

- Community Action undertook our maintenance audit against the Human Services Quality Framework in July 2023 with no non-conformity. We received positive feedback and a number of audit recommendations to consider as part of our continuous improvement process.
- We remain registered as a Tier 3 Community Housing provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing. We completed our compliance audit in February 2023 with no non-compliance and a couple of recommendations.
- We undertake an annual self-assessment against the ACNC Governance Standards and remain compliant.

Management Frameworks: Our management frameworks include risk management, workplace health and safety, human resource management, compliance and reporting. Key themes dominating 2022–2023 were psychosocial health and wellbeing and human resources:

- The implementation of the ‘Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice’ including 14 hazard areas has challenged our thinking around management of psychosocial risk. We have implemented an Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy focusing on self-care including our Take 30 initiative offering staff half an hour of leave each month to focus on self. Following staff feedback, we have extended this to provide choice of half an hour each month or one day per year. Staff have also participated in the development of individual self-care plans. In the helping industry, we make a lot of withdrawals from our wellbeing balance sheet simply because we have empathy for others. If our withdrawals outweigh our deposits, then we risk becoming unwell and unproductive. Our self-care plans focus on our well-doing – what we are doing to look out for and take care of ourselves. We will focus more training and development in this area in 2024.

- We have invested in the implementation of the human resources module of our Sentrient online compliance system. This has entailed a transfer of our paper-based HR files into the online system where managers and staff can access HR records and training records at their fingertips. The system also includes the generation of all documents and forms. For example, a new staff member is given access to the system through which they can access and sign their employment contract, position description, code of conduct etc. A comprehensive online library is available containing organisational documents and other key information. We are building our forms library where staff will complete forms such as leave applications, hazard reports, media consents and so forth.

Practice Framework:

- **Human Rights** - We are committed to fostering a workplace environment that is consistent with human rights – free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully, and have equal opportunity. The Human Rights Act (Qld) 2019 is important to our organisation because it protects the rights of vulnerable community members. We support a human rights culture within our organisation, and across communities in Queensland.
- **Diversity & Inclusion** - We recognise, respect, promote and celebrate the value of diversity and adopt and implement inclusive policies and strategies which advance diversity as a positive influence across the organisation. We:
 - Acknowledge and respect the traditional owners of the land – Indigenous Australians.
 - Recognise and value the multicultural nature of Australian society and our community.
 - Promote and encourage a diverse and inclusive work environment by fostering an environment of mutual learning, respect, dignity, openness to other cultures and an appreciation of difference and other perspectives.
 - Attract and retain a board of management whose composition reflects a diversity of backgrounds, knowledge, experience and abilities.
 - Seek to ensure that business practices, systems and processes do not prevent people from diverse backgrounds having equality of opportunity within the organisation and as far as is reasonably practicable, provide culturally appropriate support services for Australian Indigenous and cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients.
 - Educate staff so that they are capable of responding sensitively, sympathetically and justly in any context.
 - Attempt to redress any unfair, discriminatory or illegal practices.
 - Promote activities which celebrate the diversity of our community.
- **Domestic & Family Violence** - We recognise that domestic and family violence is a gendered issue, and that gender inequality is a predominate cause and consequence of domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence can have lifelong impacts on children and young people who witness and experience violence and significantly impact the relationships between parent, child and community. We operate from a framework that:
 - Understands the dynamics of gender, power and control
 - Understands the impacts on children and young people
 - Is culturally safe
 - Is risk focused
 - Is informed by trauma frameworks and attachment theories

- **Child Protection** - We are a child friendly organisation, committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people from harm and all forms of abuse including physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation. Our child protection framework is founded on the international human rights treaty on children's rights – the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. We have adopted a strengths-based approach to uphold these rights. We are sensitive to cultural diversity while recognising that the child's right to be protected from harm is paramount. We acknowledge the vulnerability of children who enter our services and believe that every child/young person has the right to feel safe and to be protected from all forms of harm.
- **Trauma Informed Practice** - We recognise that trauma is an almost universal experience across our client groups and the need to address it is essential for growth and recovery. Our approach recognises and acknowledges trauma and its prevalence, alongside awareness and sensitivity to its dynamics, in all aspects of service delivery. Our framework is strengths-based which embraces a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible, and is founded on the following principles:
 - Safety
 - Trustworthiness
 - Choice
 - Collaboration
 - Empowerment
 - Respect for diversity

Judy Brauer
Quality & Compliance Manager



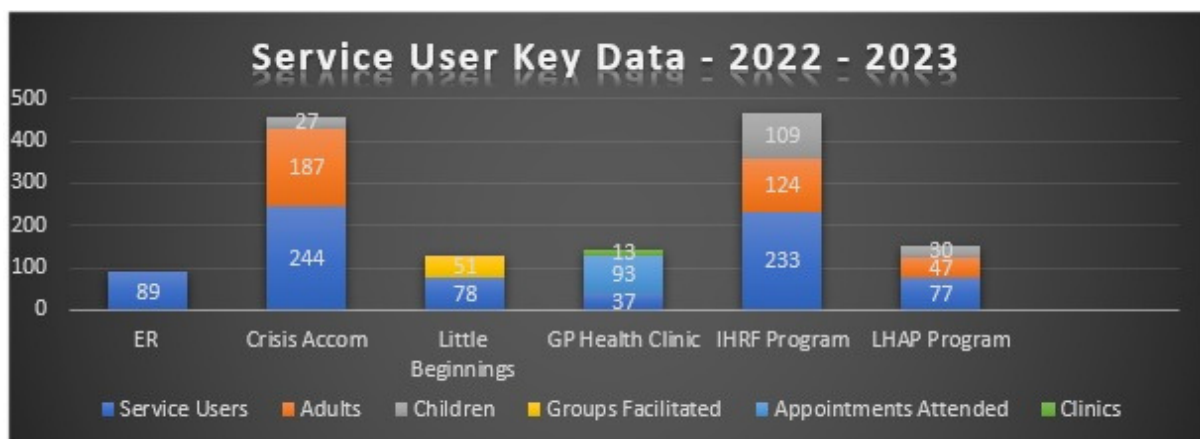
Youth Service Report

The theme of our story for 2022-2023 has been adapting the service to meet the support needs of the community and adjusting to the changes within our team. Our story is one of flexibility, adaptability, and adjustment. We proudly bid farewell to some of our main characters and welcomed new staff to join in the next chapters of our story. We have continued to rise to the challenges and at the heart of this story is our passion for quality service and client care.

This year has been quite a rollercoaster ride! Our region has experienced significant hardship with the cost of living staggeringly high and significant rent rises which have increased the pressure on families and young people who were already living week to week. The need to support families experiencing homelessness resulted in the Department of Housing implementing the Immediate Housing Response for Families program in July 2022. Whilst this has been a complex program to deliver, to an overwhelming number of families in need, staff have capably worked alongside families to find some amazing outcomes.

We continue to play an active role in supporting the Gympie Recovery Accommodation Park by providing case management support to clients through the Local Housing Action Plan (LHAP) program. Providing support to the first LHAP in Queensland is a role that we are extremely proud of. There have been many successful client and housing outcomes in this program.

The Youth Service continues to provide crisis accommodation, emergency relief, Little Beginnings-pregnancy support program and the GP Health Clinic. These programs continue to be highly sought after, and our amazing Youth Service team continue to shape and evolve these programs to best fit the needs of the Gympie community.



As the year draws to a close the Youth Service team has reflected on the many changes that have taken place throughout 2022-2023, and the complexities those changes have presented to an ever-evolving team. As a team we collectively rose to the challenges with positivity and a shared sense of purpose.

Our Key Achievements:

- Managing the continuing development and additional funding of the IHRF program 2023/2024.
- Maintaining and strengthening key networks and attending stakeholder meetings within the Gympie community.
- Recruiting four new staff members across the Youth Service and the Immediate Housing Response for Families program.
- Creating and implementing the Senior Support Worker Role.
- Facilitating our annual client Christmas party at Play Back in Gympie. Our Christmas parties are always a resounding success for many clients across Little Beginnings and the Crisis Accommodation Program.
- Welcoming back our GP from extended leave.
- Welcoming the return of Jess and Maree from Parental Leave back into a shared Administration-Reception role.
- Ensuring the Youth Service continues to deliver all programs to the highest standard whilst going through a period of change which included the resignation of Murray Benton, which resulted in the appointment of the new Acting Manager – Jo Ostergaard and Acting Senior Support Worker – Ashley Albury. We thank Murray for his passion and dedication to the Youth Service and the wider Gympie community.

Thank you to the CAI teams and Board of Management for their continued support and we look forward to another great year ahead.

Jo Ostergaard
Acting Youth Service Manager



Erin House Report

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style. — Maya Angelou

2022 – 2023 continues to tell the story of the crucial importance of empowering women to best assist their journey of recovery and healing, and that of their children, from domestic and family violence.

We work from an empowerment model

The empowerment model focuses on giving women the authority and freedom to make decisions and take action, and promoting and supporting their ability to do so.

We know that perpetrators use tactics, including coercive control to keep their partners afraid of them yet trapped in the relationship. Isolating them from family and friends, physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse, intimidation, and having them believe that they are worthless, unskilled, a bad parent, and incapable of anything. This cuts deep, the person's sense of worth and identity is damaged.

Our working practice of empowerment

Recognises and strengthens our clients' abilities. We always work collaboratively with them, so they gain the confidence and self-worth to achieve their goals. Understanding this principle with our consensus team approach here at Erin House ensures that we don't create dependencies and our women are gaining the independence and freedom to build their lives without dominance and abuse.

Empowering our families (women and children) to try another way, concentrate on themselves, plan for a future, educate, role model, inspire, rally around, encourage, applaud, laugh, play, progress, develop and hundreds of positive steps along the way brings great meaning to this work – and bravo for a staff team (Sue, Kerry, Dette, Kristy, Alicia and Prue) who are incredibly resourceful, courageous and innovative.

Our families inspire us. They are so much more than numbers on a page and we want the very best for them.

Statistics for Community Action Erin House 2022 – 2023

83 women and 181 children were accommodated during the reporting period.

The total bed nights for the reporting year were 6,328.

Cultural Diversity of the accommodated client group

During the reporting period 7% of our clients identified as Indigenous, 7.5% were originally from China, 4% of clients were from the Philippines, 9% were from the Ukraine and 79.5% of our clients were born in Australia.

Centre Based Support - non accommodated clients

We have continued to see a high number of women and children who need direct support and case management. This year we had 181 women who were primary clients and received a substantial number of support periods. The assistance provided included safety planning, counselling, assistance with understanding legislation and support to apply for Protection Orders, practical assistance and advice around home safety, personal safety, safe phones, and referrals to other community support services (this could include medical, legal, educational, and social wellbeing and development). This group does not include casual clients who contacted our service on the Women's Information line. The majority of women accessing the Women's Information line were homeless and not experiencing domestic violence and were assisted as a one off and referred to appropriate services.

Assistance to leave the Gympie Area

There have been times throughout the year when we have been able to assist single women and women with their accompanying children to leave the area due to the extreme violence and extremely high risk. We take the advice and recommendation from police in such circumstances.

Safe Phones

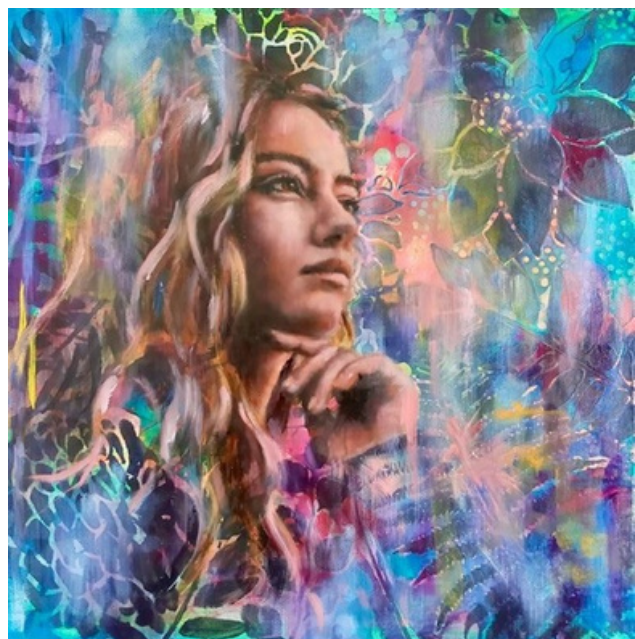
Erin House distributed 25 Safe Phones for centre-based clients, which included providing education regarding safety planning around technology and keeping safe on social media.

Safety Upgrades

There has been an increased demand for security upgrades in client's homes. This includes attending to risk management and safety planning support. This year we successfully completed security upgrades on the homes of 75 women. Inevitably the housing crisis has significantly impacted our client group who are desperate to find secure affordable housing.

We wish to acknowledge the professional support from our entire Community Action team, our board of management and the generosity of our Gympie Community who have supported us throughout the year and extend our heartfelt thanks.

Bernadette Wright
Erin House Manager



Gympie Region Domestic & Family Violence Service Report



Surfing the Changes

Our story this year in Gympie Region Domestic & Family Violence Service (GRDFVS) is a cautionary little tale about being careful what you wish for (with a hint of Chinese proverb about the dangers of living in interesting times). 2022-2023 has been a year of massive change in the Domestic & Family Violence Sector, with the Women's Safety & Justice Taskforce, subsequent changes to legislation and government policy, the Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Response to Domestic & Family Violence and changes to both our own and other agencies service expectations from both our funding provider and our community.

It has felt like surfing a series of huge waves – so exciting to see important changes to systems that will help keep women and children safe, but so scary trying to keep your balance down the huge face of that wave and avoid a wipe-out!

In 2022-23 we received:

- 318 police referrals
- 89 Adult referrals from other community support agencies
- 203 Enquiries (seeking support for self or other)

We provided support to:

- 591 women who received an intake interview including risk assessment and safety planning
- 112 child clients
- 718 women attending court as aggrieved or respondent in an application for a Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO)

Some of the changes we have surfed have included:

Changes in legislation to the Queensland Domestic & Family Violence Protection Act 2012 and to the Criminal Code and a raft of other legislation –We have needed to understand all of these changes and the way that new legislation plays out in court in order to support women to seek protection or redress through courts. During 2022-2023 Magistrate Callaghan congratulated GRDFVS for the quality of the legal documentation we support women to provide for Protection Order applications and hearings.

Changes in the way our funding providers require us to identify and assess risk - In 2023, we supported Common Risk and Safety Framework training for 40 attendees in our region so that the agencies we collaborate with can use this tool to assess risk and to understand the risk assessments we share with them. GRDFVS piloted the use of the CRASF level 2 and 3 tools at our high risk meeting as part of the review of Domestic Violence Cross Agency Monitoring procedures across the district.

Changes in the expectations our funding body and other agencies have about the way we will work together to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence in our region - As part of our funding, we receive a small amount to facilitate an Integrated Service System, so that agencies work well together to prevent and respond to DFV risk.

We convene Gympie-Cooloola Partnership Against DFV and participate in high-risk cross agency case coordination with this funding - In 2022-2023 we worked closely with the Qld Police Service Vulnerable Persons Unit in the Wide Bay Burnett District (which includes Gympie) to support changes in the way we manage high-risk cases together. This work continues and it is worth noting that agencies such as QPS, Health and the Courts have received significant funding increases to improve DFV service delivery, but that specialist DFV services have not yet received any increase to core funding or additional funding. This can make it difficult to participate in new initiatives when demand has already exceeded our capacity to provide service.

Changes to the way we are able to deliver our service - In 2022-2023 both the number of new clients and the complexity of the service response required to support their safety have rather overwhelmed us. We are currently redesigning our service to be able to calibrate our support in accordance with the vulnerability and risks of our clients.

Some Key Successes:

- Our community awareness work, including the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls 2022 and the Domestic Violence Protection Week 2023. I think our Lantern Vigil was our most moving and successful yet, and the film with children's voices about their experience of DFV is a powerful advocacy and awareness tool.
- Delivering Safe & Together Training in Gympie in partnership with Child Safety to 40 workers, supporting domestic violence informed practice across our region.
- Successfully recruiting two very skilled new Child & Youth Counsellors and building a strong practice for children recovering from trauma.
- Successfully advocating the funding of a state-wide Court Support forum for DFV court workers, to be held in November; and of course,
- Providing excellent and safe support to women and children in crisis and moving heaven and earth to get DVPOs, police responses, accommodation, safe phones and home safety upgrades to keep women and children in our community safe.
- The most important changes we navigate continue to be the changes we are able to support women and children make in their lives to live free of abuse and fear.

Testimonial from previous client

"It has been over 2 years since I sat in your office, wondering what I was doing there, to begin with. I remember you gently introduced me to the coercive control wheel, then over time the pennies dropped one by one, and I managed to escape that toxic relationship.

I have made you a little video to express my great appreciation and gratitude to you. You had a truly wonderful impact on my life for which I will be eternally grateful." Email from previous client received Oct 2023.

Talia van Gils
GRDFVS Manager



Housing Service Report

The Housing Service story of 2022-23 focuses on themes of collaboration, commitment and community. As we reflect on the past year, we draw inspiration from the multitude of achievements, no matter how small, that have collectively fostered a resounding positive impact on our dedicated staff, our tenants and the broader community that we are a part of.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Housing Service team for their continued support and commitment. The team work incredibly hard to support, assist and empower our tenants and clients to achieve positive outcomes and are an asset to the community and Community Action.

This year we made a commitment to enhance our relationships with local services and organisations. As part of this effort, we reconfigured our office layout to create an additional workspace available for use by other providers. This initiative has opened doors for collaborative ventures, cementing our connections with various services and professionals in our community. These connections have not only enhanced our service delivery but have also nurtured a more robust and interwoven support network for our tenants and individuals seeking assistance at our office.

In December 2022, the Housing Service was the appreciative recipient of a generous \$500 grant from Street Smart Australia. We used this grant to purchase 5 Sleeping Rough Packs, which have proven invaluable in assisting individuals facing homelessness in our community. In the subsequent month, January 2023, we were fortunate enough to receive a substantial grant of \$14,431.20 from the Community Benefit Fund. This grant came at a crucial time as one of our Long Term Owned properties had experienced significant flood damage in the February 2022 floods. With the aid of this grant, we were able to complete essential repairs including replacing kitchen cabinets, the oven and bathroom vanity.

Our compliance audit by the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) this year resulted in meeting all requirements, allowing us to maintain our Tier 3 Community Housing Provider status. Additionally, the Wadell Rd complex successfully passed its triennial maintenance inspection conducted by the QLD Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) in March 2023. The Fire Station Chief appreciated our commitment to tenant safety and commended the safety measures implemented within the complex.

Amidst the challenges of rising living expenses, increased rental prices, and limited housing availability, we've supported our tenants and individuals seeking help by providing vital assistance, including:

- 38 sleeping rough packs,
- \$2800 in Coles, Woolworths, and fuel cards, and
- 70 food buckets generously donated by the Rapid Relief Team.

Additionally, we've supplied snack packs and toiletry packs donated by the Rapid Relief Team.



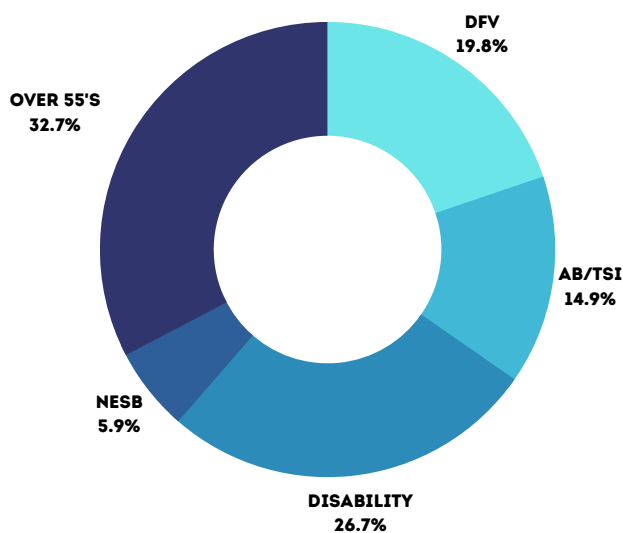
“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.” – Henry Ford

We extend our sincere thanks to the Rapid Relief Team for their generous donations, making a real difference to those in need in our community. Our appreciation also goes out to the Department of Housing, community partners, and local support services for their ongoing support in providing crucial services. A significant thank you to our contractors and lessors for their dedicated work in maintaining our properties, ensuring safe and welcoming homes for our tenants.

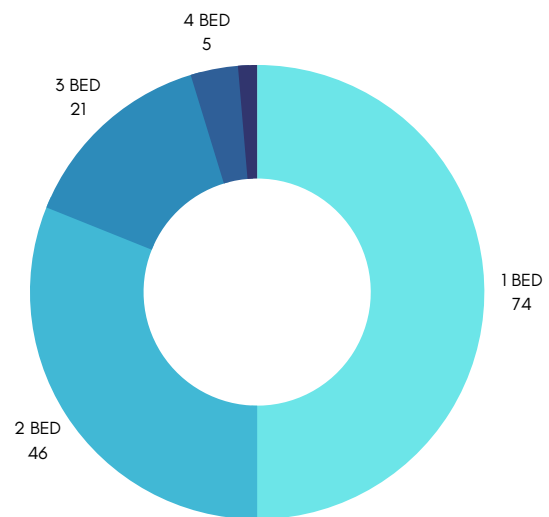
Looking ahead, our commitment to the welfare of our tenants and the broader community remains unwavering. We're grateful for the progress achieved in the past year and eagerly anticipate continued collaboration and impactful initiatives to foster a more supportive and resilient environment for all.

Renee Nielsen
Housing Service Manager

TENANT DEMOGRAPHIC



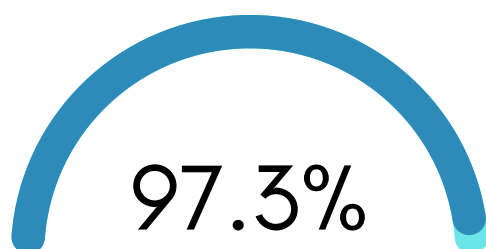
141 TENANCIES



230 individuals housed in 2022/23



OCCUPANCY RATE



118 males



112 females



Multicultural Information Network Service Report

CHANGE, NEW DIRECTION, REPLACE, DEFERENCE, VARIATION, REVOLUTION, AMEND, ADJUST all key words in the story of Multicultural Information Network service (MINS) for 2022–2023.

Another year over and as the words above suggest it's been a year of change. During this year change has also brought us together as work colleagues, community, business and clients to help navigate the challenges of change.

Multicultural Information Network Service is funded by the Department of Home Affairs to provide settlement services to migrants in their first five years to the Gympie region. The objective of MINS is to help migrants settle into and become part of our local community, as well as linking them to appropriate support and services. This includes linking migrants with warm referrals, employment, services such as Services Australia, TAFE, Police and Health, and helping them complete documentation and obtain their licenses.

Throughout the year, MINS has continually focused on supporting the needs of migrant people within our community. COVID-19 certainly had a significant impact on the migrant community as it changed the settlement landscape for everyone, including families, communities, and our service approach. MINS responded as an essential service provider and reengaged with communities confronted with widespread closure of other services and programs. We adapted by providing blended service delivery modes across client support and group work programs.

The Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program sector development and service planning has focused on social inclusion, which underpins program decisions relating to language acquisition education pathways, employment opportunity supports and the development of educational tools and resources. All of which are vital to settling in Australia.

Our partnership with Gympie and Noosa Adult Migrant English Program classes has assisted in creating and connecting groups of Brazilian, Ukrainian, Iranian, Malaysian, Russian and French migrants. This has helped the participants develop their social skills, such as joining the gym as an opportunity to bring migrants together who face isolation, mental health, and cultural difficulties. This collaboration has been highly successful and rewarding as migrants come together to form strong friendships.

MINS is always seeking to improve. This year, our focus has been, settling clients/families from:

1. War in Ukraine
2. Migrant DV
3. Migrant isolation
4. Families torn apart from restrictions in their country and much more

Moreover, actively restoring migrant lives with the small things we take for granted such as learning to swim, driving, and engaging in Australian greeting conversations, which builds their confidence and helps them to interact and be more active in the community. Sometimes change only comes from being at the precipice of a challenging situation, which is often the case for migrants. Fortunately, MINS is there to stand by its clients in times of need, supporting and providing the resources necessary for clients to make positive choices.

Reflecting on our achievements this year makes me proud to be the MINS Coordinator and to be part of helping migrants within our community.

Below is a graph that represents the demographics of the clients assisted by MINS in 2022 – 2023.

Kupa Ngaira
MINS Coordinator



Some of the highlights of the year included citizenships, cultural recognition events, employment, Adult Migrant English Program, group sessions and more.



MINS is about enriching the lives of all cultures of Gympie and Noosa.

Financial Literacy & Resilience Program Report

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away (Mary St) was a program called FLARP that provided support and financial assistance to clients experiencing personal, family, relationship and financial issues. The aim of the program is to assist clients in improving their health, wellbeing and connection with family and community. The service focuses on early intervention strategies and provides free and confidential services. In 2022-2023 the characters in this story have changed as we supported the Coordinator Danni to follow her dreams as a DFV Practitioner and watched Jules step into the program, complete her studies to become a fully qualified Financial Counsellor and embrace the role with enthusiasm and determination.

This year we have had challenges with successfully recruiting a second worker in the program. This creates high service demand on one worker and limitations on what can be reasonably achieved. Despite this, the service has maintained high client numbers, debt waivers and a positive connection to community services and networks. Client feedback is always positive, and Jules has developed a strong relationship with her clients, ensuring they feel safe, respected and supported.

This year 120 clients were supported. Of this number 34% of clients were impacted by domestic and family violence, 10% were flood impacted and a total of \$241,714.88 debts were waived. 69 occasions of emergency relief (ER) were provided, and people were assisted with a range of items, such as motor vehicle costs, medical fees, utilities, and housing related costs. ER allows clients to continue to access employment/employment options, medical support often for chronic or terminal conditions and maintaining basic utilities such as power, water, and shelter. It is very clear that the rising cost of living is having an impact on clients throughout the program and many individuals and families are experiencing a rise in personal debt, just to cover essential costs. A major area of concern is the buy now, pay later schemes as people end up paying far more in the schemes than they realise, as small amounts come out of their accounts regularly and often add up to a large sum.

We were fortunate to be able to attend the Financial Counselling Association of Queensland (FCAQ) Conference in July, which provides both the opportunity to network with peers and obtain further professional development. Further to this Jules linked with CAI Youth Service to help deliver ER and budget management support to young people accessing the service and often provides outreach to tenants at the Gympie Recovery Accommodation Park (GRAP).

As we move forward we are thankful for our well-connected community as holistic care for our clients is key to successful and sustainable outcomes. We plan to continue to meet the needs of our clients, provide advocacy work on financial systems and increase our outreach and group activities.

Andrea Matthews
Operations Manager

Emergency Relief Program Report

The underlying theme of this year's story for the Emergency Relief Service is a deep appreciation for the working relationship we have with our partners in providing this vital support service to the Gympie community.

Emergency relief is an extremely important support service to have available in our community as it helps to alleviate the distress and suffering experienced by people facing financial hardship.

Community Action receives funding from both Commonwealth and State government departments and can provide emergency relief in various locations by collaborating with other service providers. We have had a formal partnership with Gympie Community Place and Tin Can Bay Community Church since 2015 and worked with them informally for several years prior to that time. The success of the emergency relief program in our community is due to the strong working relationship we have with each of these services.

Gympie Community Place provides a weekly emergency relief service to individuals over twenty-five years of age once a week by appointment and primarily offers bill payment for essential items such as rent or utilities. This year Gympie Community Place assisted 479 people and distributed a total \$82,000 funds.

The Tin Can Bay Community Church, prior to ceasing its relief service at the end of June 2023, provided an emergency relief service twice a week and primarily assisted people with food and fuel vouchers, and some payment of utility bills. The Tin Can Bay Community Church had to discontinue the service because they were unable to find replacement volunteers following the retirement of the two women who had graciously volunteered their time and capably run the service since it was established. On behalf of Community Action Board members and staff, I would like to sincerely thank the Tin Can Community Church for their contributions throughout the years and thank the volunteers for their dedication to their community over such a long period of time.

Fortunately, the Rainbow Beach Community Centre have agreed to enter into a partnership agreement with Community Action and will be providing emergency relief support at the Community Centre on one afternoon a week and one morning a week at the Tin Can Bay Library. The service will begin as soon as we have completed the policies and procedures and provided the necessary training for the volunteers.

This year Tin Can Bay Community Church assisted 381 people and distributed a total of \$32,362.74 funds.

Community Action also provides emergency relief through our Youth Service Resource program which is available each weekday to people under 25 years of age. This year the Youth Service provided 786 occasions of emergency relief support to 1283 people, disturbing a total of \$105, 426.40 funds.

This year we received additional funding from both the Commonwealth and State governments, which was greatly appreciated as there are more people in the community who are struggling to cope with the rising cost of living pressures and are facing financial hardship. Emergency relief can assist people to navigate their way through a financial crisis and emerge with dignity and a reinforced sense of community.

Ruth Tidwell
General Manager

Financial Statements

Community Action Inc

ABN: 90 632 272 097

Income statement

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Income		
Interest Received	8,846.09	16,281.18
Revenue	6,414,165.28	4,664,195.01
	6,423,011.37	4,680,476.19
Expenses		
Administration expenses	340,951.41	386,053.36
Auditors' remuneration	8,300.00	8,300.00
Bad and doubtful debt expenses	7,412.91	10,550.72
Client expenses	909,610.48	329,904.34
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	22,250.44	28,836.09
Employee benefits expenses	3,048,586.64	2,765,655.98
Insurance	103,977.48	150,771.73
Interest Paid	163.79	2,713.53
Motor Vehicle Expenses	20,957.06	19,814.17
Repairs & Maintenance	35,523.29	34,221.84
Tenancy & Property Expenses	913,930.52	861,458.71
Unspent Grant	49,799.42	39,722.24
Unspent Grant Repaid	746,857.56	-
	6,208,321.00	4,638,002.71
Net profit	214,690.37	42,473.48
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	980,008.05	990,812.38
Transfer To Reserves	(189,391.08)	(53,277.81)
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	1,005,307.34	980,008.05

FULL FINANCIALS – To view a full copy of the Community Action Audited Financial Statements as at 30th June 2023, please visit:
www.communityactiongympie.com.au/annual-reports/

Community Action Inc

ABN: 90 632 272 097

Balance sheet

For the year ended 30 June 2023

	<i>Note</i>	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	3,083,117.40	1,956,329.19
Trade and other receivables	4	54,086.15	31,126.62
Other current assets	6	73,743.59	68,186.45
Total current assets		<u>3,210,947.14</u>	<u>2,055,642.26</u>
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	3,054,553.49	3,065,145.14
Total non-current assets		<u>3,054,553.49</u>	<u>3,065,145.14</u>
Total assets		<u>6,265,500.63</u>	<u>5,120,787.40</u>
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	1,092,897.77	175,333.91
Leave Provisions		851,718.85	858,760.01
Other current liabilities	9	64,926.39	48,912.76
Total current liabilities		<u>2,009,543.01</u>	<u>1,083,006.68</u>
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	8	2,328,955.20	2,328,955.20
Total non-current liabilities		<u>2,328,955.20</u>	<u>2,328,955.20</u>
Total liabilities		<u>4,338,498.21</u>	<u>3,411,961.88</u>
Net assets		<u>1,927,002.42</u>	<u>1,708,825.52</u>
Members' funds			
Reserves		921,695.08	728,817.47
Retained earnings		1,005,307.34	980,008.05
Total members' funds		<u>1,927,002.42</u>	<u>1,708,825.52</u>