

GRAHAM HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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Our Mission

Graham House Community Centre provides a high quality inclusive service that responds to the needs of individuals with empathy and dignity.

Our Vision

Graham House Community Centre aims to achieve our Mission by promoting the principals of social justice: access, equality and equality of opportunity and participation.

Our goal is to provide services that:

- Accord respect and dignity to clients
- Empower clients to achieve maximum independence and self-determination
- Are committed to quality
- Are responsive, flexible and innovative
- Are collaborative
- Involve individuals, groups and organisations in finding community responses to client needs
- Meet the highest standards of ethics and accountability
- Value workers and volunteers for their unique contributions; and create an environment to allow them to develop their personal and professional potential

About Us

Graham House Community Centre receives funding from Government Departments and other various sources to provide services to both the local community and throughout the South Burnett.

An elected Management Committee ensures Graham House Community Centre develops as a community organization that is efficiently and effectively managed and one which operates in a manner consistent with the principles of a community based organisation.

OUR HISTORY

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

In 1912, the building located at 21 Taylor Street East, Murgon was originally built as a residence for a partner of Stock and Station Agents, Munro & Smith. This home was one of the earlier ones to be built in Murgon, the first home having been built in 1902.

PRIVATE HOSPITAL

In 1922, a local nursing sister, Miss Annie Meddleton bought the residence. Following some extensions and renovations to the building, she turned it into a private hospital. It was named "Graham Hospital", Graham having been her mother's maiden name.

Many babies of the Murgon District were born in the Graham House Hospital. The Hospital closed in 1938 and was used as a boarding house for several years.

METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME

For many years the Queensland Methodist Church ran two Children's Homes in Brisbane, the Queen Alexandra Home at Coorparoo for girls and the Margaret Marr Home at Wynnum for boys. Both were 'not for profit' homes with very tight budgets. The children were unable to be cared for by their families, for various reasons, but small monetary support came from most families.

In December 1941, after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, there was chaos in Brisbane with the 'invasion' of American troops and Australia at war against Japan. Rationing was introduced and air raid shelters were dug in back yards because of threats of invasion. Queensland State Children's Department recommended that the Children's Homes be evacuated to a "Home" somewhere in the country in case of emergency. The evacuation occurred within two months of Pearl Harbour.

METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME CONT.

Matron Meddleton, a Murgon Methodist Church member, made her former Graham House Hospital building in Murgon, available by rental, to the Queensland Methodist Church to house the evacuated Queen Alexandra Home girls. At the same time, the Margaret Marr Home boys went to a former private hospital building in Proston near Murgon.

With no Secondary Education available in Murgon, the older 'Home' girls who passed Scholarship in Murgon had to return to Brisbane to continue their education. During 1944, the District Inspector of Schools in the Murgon area, suggested that the Methodist Church consider establishing a Student Hostel in Murgon at Graham House.

METHODIST STUDENT HOSTEL

In August 1945, after the end of the World War II, the Queen Alexandra Home girls, who had been residing at Graham House, were returned to Brisbane.

The Queensland Methodist Church, following the suggestion of the School Inspector, purchased the Graham House building and grounds from Matron Meddleton in a "generous offer amounting to 1100 pounds.

OUR HISTORY CONT..

METHODIST STUDENT HOSTEL CONTINUED..

Plans and alterations went on in late 1946 making the building suitable for a hostel for students. On 1st February 1947, twenty three students signed in as the first boarders of 'Murgon Methodist Hostel' also known as 'Graham House'.

The hostel closed at the end of 1971.

ACCOMMODATION

In 1981, after the closure of the Student Hostel, the building and grounds were sold to Hu-Metal who made the pipes for the Boondooma to Tarong water pipeline. Their employees were accommodated at Graham House. Following the completion of this contract, the building was left empty.

In 1984, the building and grounds were bought by Mr Cherry who converted the building into flats.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

In 1989, the building became Graham House Community Centre.



GRAHAM HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



On Saturday 26th October 2019 Graham House Community Centre celebrated its 30th Birthday in conjunction with the opening of the centre. Family members of the late Ruby Crane who was the Co Founder and first Manager of Graham House Community Centre from 1989 to 2009 officially opened a Rose Garden dedicated to Ruby.

Kathy Baker & Enid Barford were presented a small gift and Certificate of Appreciation for their dedication to Graham House Community Centre.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a year?! As I wrote my report last year I could never have envisaged what would occur in the next 12 months. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has provided many challenges for all of us. Graham House Community Centre has not been immune to these challenges.

Following our Grand Opening in October 2019 the organisation continued to face the challenge of adjusting to working under the one roof. There were a number of positives of the new building. However, there were also a few teething issues. Most notably was the acoustics within the activities room and main staff working area. After complaints from staff and community groups the Management Committee commissioned an acoustic engineer to investigate solutions. The outcome was the installation of new ceiling tiles within these areas. The results were immediately noticeable. The area's are now much more user friendly allowing group activities to be undertaken a lot more effectively.

Another challenge the building presented was a much higher electricity usage than the previous one. The committee decided to investigate the option of solar power to help reduce this cost. The result was the installation of a new 31.5kW solar system. The ongoing savings from this system will allow the organisation to remain sustainable despite the higher electricity usage.

Our biggest challenge came with the onset of COVID-19 restrictions in late February. A whole new language and approach was required by staff and volunteers. Social distancing became the new catch phrase and adjustments had to be made for staff and volunteers to protect them and our community. As Graham House was considered an essential service we were required to remain open during this time. Although a number of staff were able to work from home over this period there were also those staff that needed to remain within the office. All staff had to undertake appropriate COVID training and also adjust to assisting customers while observing social distancing. This was an unprecedented time in not only the history of Graham House but also the world. The staff and volunteers performed incredibly well during this period. It was made more challenging by the rapidly changing protocols and directions. The Management Committee also had to stay abreast of the changing protocols to ensure staff and volunteers remained safe. With the introduction of gathering limits the committee was forced to conduct meetings via Skype. This presented a number of challenges however, we maintained our meeting schedule and continued to move the organisation forward. A number of plans that the committee intended to put into practice this year needed to be put on hold due to the pandemic. However, despite the challenges we have faced the organisation has continued to support the community. There are a number of exciting projects on the committees radar and we look forward to sharing those in next years report.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all staff, volunteers and clients for their understanding not only during the initial stages of this pandemic but also as it continues and evolves. It is hard to know where we will be in another 12 months. However, one thing is for sure Graham House Community centre will be here to support our community.

Curtis Mikan
President

MANAGER'S REPORT

What a year?! As I write this report I am sitting in our new building. It's been a long time coming but we are finally here and loving it. My time is usually occupied with seemingly insignificant or routine tasks but this is a snapshot of the major things which have happened this past year.

The New Building

We moved in and opened for business on Tuesday 13th August 2019. A big thank you to all the staff and volunteers who helped pack, move things, unpack and sort everything out. The bulk of it was done on the Thursday and Friday before our new doors opened. It was a huge effort and only possible because everyone pulled together. On 10th September, the building was officially opened by Minister Coralee O'Rourke. Cherbourg Mayor Arnold Murray gave a Welcome to Country, Cr Kathy Duff spoke on behalf of council and Curtis participated on behalf of Graham House. The accolades for Graham House were glowing and a real credit to all our staff and volunteers. The move has allowed all our teams to operate under the same roof for the first time in about ten years. This is another exciting change which has greatly enhanced our effectiveness through being able to collaborate and communicate more easily and streamline processes. One of the things that I enjoy most is seeing people across the various teams working together, supporting each other and merging as the Graham House Team.

Another benefit of the new building is state-of the art security. We haven't had a break-in since we moved although the alarms have gone off a couple of times. One morning the fire brigade arrived after they were told we had a fire but nothing was amiss. Maybe the ghost from the old building has moved in here too! Incidentally, our building is apparently the envy of many Community Centres across the region! So we are grateful to the Department of Communities for investing in Graham House this way.

The Hall

One of my major tasks this year was to sort through 30 years of bits and pieces which had been stored in the hall when the old building was demolished. There were resources left over from previous programs, handwritten records from pre-computer days and all the furniture from the old building.

Kathy Baker kindly donated hours of her time to help me decide what to keep, what to dump, what to shred, and what to give away. Finally we finished and plans are now underway to use the hall as a meeting place again.

I'd like to thank the Murgon Men's Shed for allowing us to add a lot of our things to their garage sale in October. The blokes very kindly collected it all from the hall, set it up and then took the unsaleable left-overs to the dump. I'd also like to thank the staff who attended on the day to man the stall.

Community Involvement

Throughout the year, we have continued to participate in community events like RUOK? Day and network meetings related to domestic violence, Murgon Business Association and community support network. We've worked with other agencies to increase our community's access to a wide range of services by auspicing the Suicide Prevention group, hosting an expo for families of people who abuse substances and renting rooms out to various visiting services.

MANAGER'S REPORT CONT.

Drought Support

Towards the end of 2019, drought support became a major focus for the community. Graham House took a key role providing drought support but we were only able to do this as a result of the generosity of others who donated funds, goods and even a ute. I would like to thank Baconfest, Murgon Rotary Club, Stretton Gardens, Barambah Shed Men and Huston Nissan for their generous support.

COVID 19

With the use of a Nissan ute from Huston's Nissan and a team of volunteers, we were all set to start an outreach drought support program when COVID 19 struck. COVID 19 put a stop to many of our activities although we were able to keep the centre open. I had to quickly master new skills like participating in skype and zoom meetings, writing a pandemic policy and developing a business continuity plan.

Staff news

On a brighter note, we were pleased to host a Community Services student, Amber Thompson, for two months while she did her student placement. Amber worked with the Building Futures Together team and was a great help while we were understaffed on that team.

Unfortunately two of our most experienced administration staff unexpectedly went on extended sick leave this year. Nikki Lahiff has done a fantastic job of figuring out what needs to be done in the financial department to keep us operating in the black and legally.

The audit for this AGM is a testament to her skill, hard work and willingness to step into the Senior Finance Officer role. Thanks too, to Amanda Hiron who has gone many extra miles and taken on new challenges to keep our administration services functioning so well.

There isn't time to mention everyone and their achievements by name but I continually feel privileged to work with such a dedicated, skilled group of people. And, not only are they great workers, they make it fun!

Thank you everyone.

Chris Withers-Mayne

About Us

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Acknowledgement Of Country

We acknowledge the Wakka Wakka people as the Traditional Owners & Custodians of this land where we meet.

We acknowledge past, present and emerging Elders.



OUR TEAM

Management Committee

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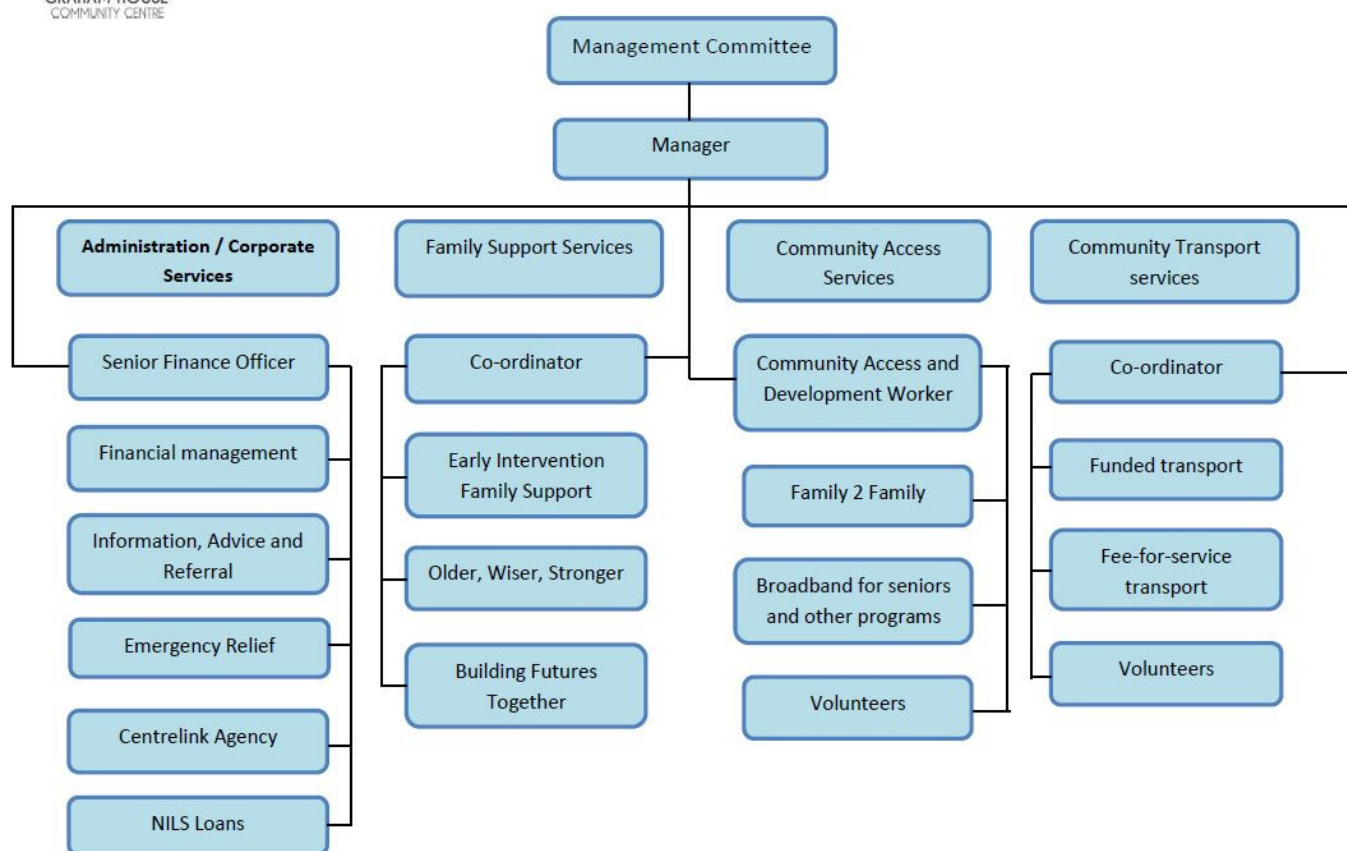
Staff



Our Organisational Structure



GRAHAM HOUSE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



OUR VOLUNTEERS

As a not-for-profit, we rely on our volunteers to help us support the delivery of our expanding services to the most vulnerable in our community.

The Graham House Community Centre volunteers are our greatest resource. They bring skills, ideas and experiences. They are helpful, friendly and reliable and we could not function without them - they make our diverse team complete.



Volunteers - Years of Service

5 Years Service

*Vince Galovic *Daryl Muler *Denise Parr *Peter Phipps *Les Smith

7 Years Service

*Julie Hunter *Ian Cocks *Peter Schuh

8 Years Service

*Willy Mickan

10 Years Service

*John Flegg *Gail Fredericks *Reg Tucker

12 Years Service

*Mary Mitchell

9 Years Service

*Cecily Porter *Ron Thorne

11 Years Service

*Ivan Fels *Tom Reilly *Lance Ricks

17 Years Service

*Mary Ducey

Centre Programs

Older Wiser Stronger Program

Funded by: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

The purpose of the Older Wiser Stronger (OWS) service is to provide individual counselling and a behaviour change program 'Stop the Cycle' to men aged over the age of 17 years who have used Domestic and Family Violence in their intimate relationships.

Older Wiser Stronger Program - Good News Story

One of our men, who has recently completed the program, discussed how he had opened up conversation regarding men's emotional health within a group of men suffering grief and loss after a friends suicide.

He stated he was able to help these men understand and provide opportunity for these men to better deal with their underlying feelings he stated that some of the material he had learnt during the time in program had been key to his capabilities to discuss these issues openly with other men.



Building Futures Together

The Building Futures Together is an intensive family support program aimed at supporting families in developing skills and abilities to care safely for and develop positive relationships with their children.

The purpose of Building Futures Together is to increase access to family intervention services for families of children and young people under the age of 18 years subject to ongoing child protection statutory intervention where the child or young person is living in an out-of-home placement or in the family home.

Individuals and families involved in this program require direct referral from the Department of Child Safety.

Building Futures Together - Good News Story

Since 2016 this family has been with BFT. When BFT began to work with this family they did not have stable housing, they were virtually squatting. Both parents had a very long history of drug use, domestic violence, and mental health issues. During their time with BFT the parents both 'fell off the wagon' regarding their drug use. They didn't realise that they had an addiction. However, eventually with the continued support of BFT they were able to recognise that their drug use had a negative impact on the family. Even though the family had been through a lot due to the parent's drug use, the children were still able to maintain a close relationship with their parents. In the past two years the parents became aware of themselves and their situation.

The father was the one who began to initiate change in the family. The father could not see his family hurt any longer and he didn't want to see the kids in foster care. Today this family has been able to achieve the case goal plans set by the department. They were able to get their children back from care. The family now own their own home. Their parents are now planning on getting married. They have been able to maintain their sobriety, and are now 2 years free from ICE. The father has stated to BFT, "don't you believe these bastards that tell you that they can't give up". This family has been very successful in turning their lives around, and although they have been provided a lot of support from BFT and other services the parents have been the people who have made this happen.

Emergency Relief

Emergency Relief is available to help people deal with an immediate financial crisis situation in a way that maintains the dignity of the individual and encourages self-reliance.

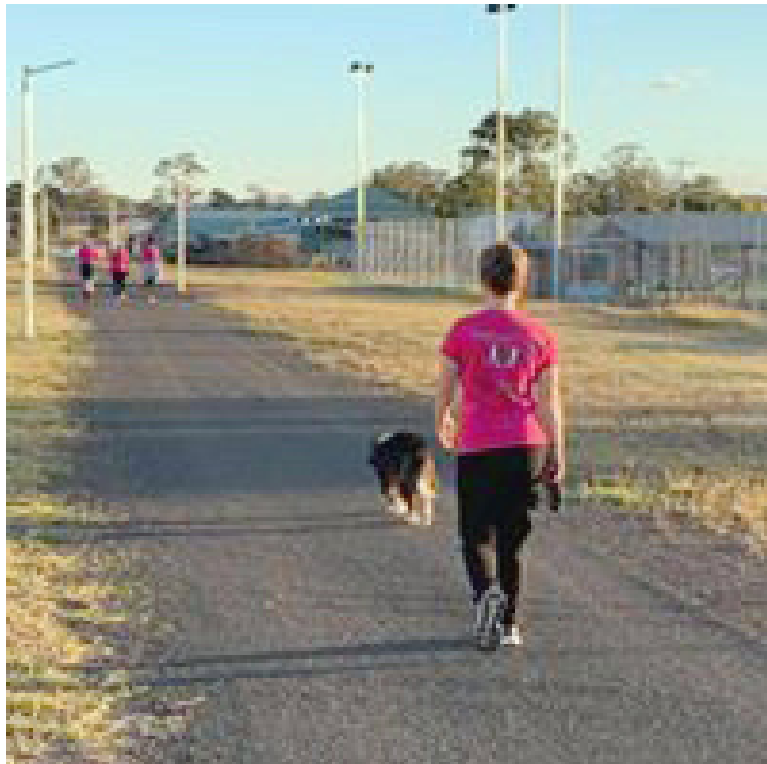
Emergency Relief assistance can be in the form of:

- vouchers of a fixed value (for example, food, transport or chemist)
- part-payment of an outstanding account (for example, rent / accommodation, utility account)
- budgeting assistance
- information, advocacy and referrals

Emergency Relief - Good News Story

Graham House received an enquiry from a lady seeking assistance to relieve financial hardship. The lady disclosed that her husband had passed away leaving her with a large debt to cover the cost of his funeral expenses. The client disclosed that her late husband suffered from a medical condition and had cancelled his funeral cover without her knowledge.

Graham House staff contacted the funeral home to confirm that client had been left with a large debt and was currently making assist a lady whose husband passed away and she was unable to afford to pay for the funeral. We assisted in a payment towards the costs allowing her to decrease her fortnightly payments and having more money spare towards groceries for herself. This improved her mental state, and she was very grateful for the assistance.



Family Support Services

Working with Parents and Carers while facilitating the Circle of Security Program

The Circle of Security is a relationship based early intervention program designed to enhance the attachment between parents and children

The aim of the program is for parents and carers to:

- Become aware of their child's needs
- Understand how children communicate needs through their behaviour
- Expand parenting choices
- Strengthen relationships with children

When using COSP with parents, we are inviting caregivers to be vulnerable and to think about times when they struggled. Discussions throughout the program about emotions and what this was like for parents and carers as they grew up helps them to understand what children are asking and managing their emotions and increasing their confidence to manage difficult situations when they arise. There is a few aha moments when the parents realise what they struggled with emotionally when they were young, they continue to struggle as parents. When parents change the way they respond to their child's needs for care and confidence, a struggling child can be transformed.

Parents are asked to put some changes in place during the week and during the next sessions parents and carers talk about the changes in their child's behaviour, big or small because someone is available and listening to them. Rather than using punitive measures, the Circle of Security program aimed to address the reasons behind children's challenging behaviours and implement a more constructive approach.

Much of the time facilitating Circle of Security Parenting focuses on the building of relationships and when parents share their stories, they are inviting us to join them in their lives, to know more about who they are in relationships.

The lesson I have learnt over the past 6 years is when the focus is on changing the child, the outcomes are not as successful but when parents change, children tend to respond.

Bake on a Budget



Christmas Luncheon + Carols



Christmas Appeal



Denim Day



Community Garden



Official Opening - New Building



NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATION



PINK BREAKFAST



Great Bra Wall



R U OK Day



GRAHAM HOUSE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF SERVICE



20 years ago Graham House branched into Community Transport. In its first year of operation the service provided 180 clients with 1539 Trips.

Fast forward to 2019 and the service provided assistance to 812 clients, 6870 trips and 2859 Brokered Transport assistance. The service first commenced with one vehicle and today has 12 vehicles which are housed throughout the South Burnett + Kilkivan.

Community Transport is a service that provides non acute, non emergency medical type transport for clients who have a short non acute medical condition or a frailty that prevents them from using conventional private or public transport.

Social Support is also available providing support to accomplish simple tasks like shopping, going to the airport or simply visiting a friend.

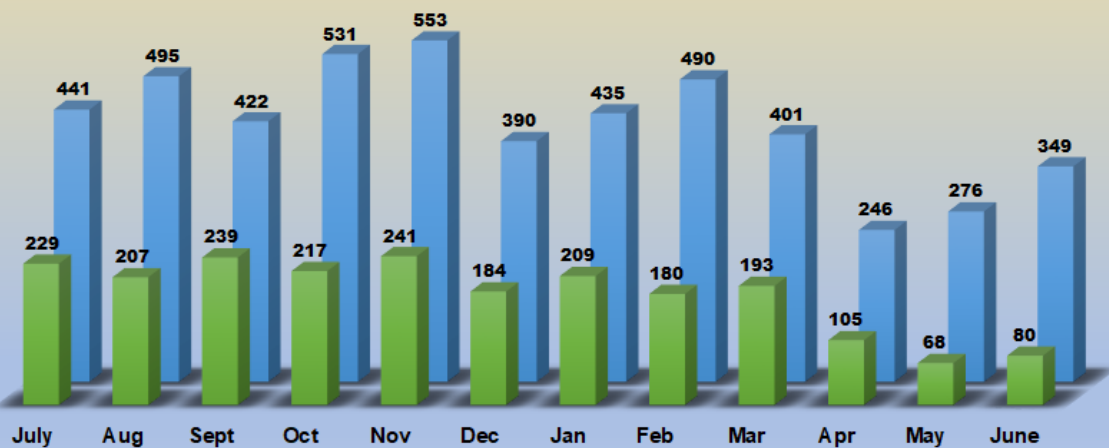
This service would not be possible though without the dedication and commitment of the volunteers who drive the vehicles. Graham House currently has over 50 active volunteers who assist with the transport services.



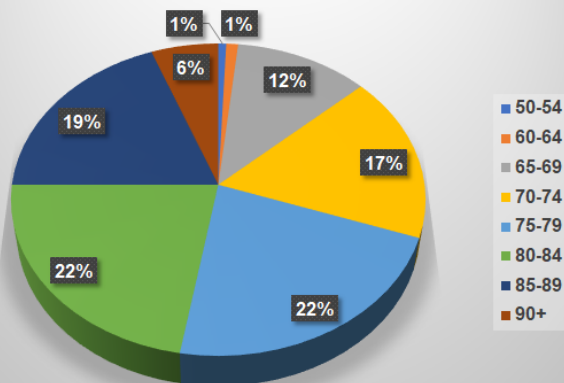
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Number of Trips 2019/2020 Financial Year

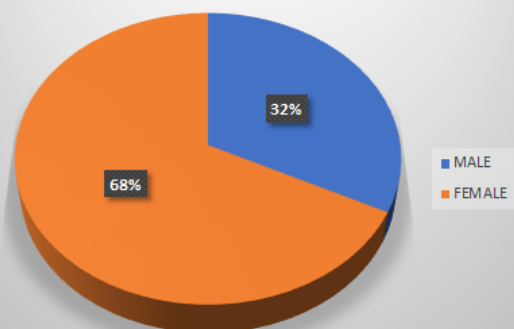
■ Clients under 65 years old ■ Clients over 65 years old



NUMBER OF CLIENTS BY AGE GROUP CHSP FUNDED



CLIENTS BY GENDER CHSP FUNDED



**AFTER 20 YEARS OF
OPERATION**

OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT:

- Accord respect and dignity to clients
- Empower clients to achieve maximum independence and self determination
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- Are collaborative
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- Value workers and volunteers for their unique contributions; and create an environment to allow them to develop their personal and professional potential.

Wondai Vehicle Launch



The Year that was..

2019/2020 has been a year of ups and downs.

We started the financial year by packing up the Macalister Street office and preparing for the move into the new building. The next few months were getting use to our new work home and unpacking boxes! 2020 started off with excitement as we planned to celebrate our 20th year of providing Community transport in the South Burnett; we were lucky to have our celebration function on the 20th February as not long after that the world changed and we were faced with COVID 19 and the restrictions that followed. Our transport service quickly slowed as many hospital, specialist and GP visits were cancelled and many of our volunteers withdrew their service to keep themselves safe from the virus. One good thing through this period of lock down was that we remained connected with our clients by making daily welfare checks by phone. The clients really enjoyed the contact and conversation.