

GRAHAM HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

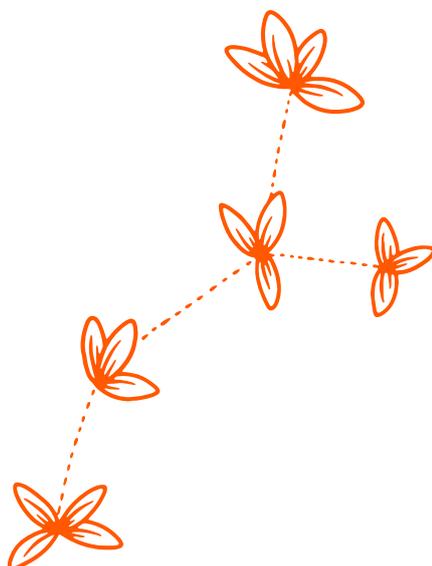
# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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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 organisation 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.



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This year I have the pleasure to present the President's Report. It's hard to believe the AGM has rolled around again so quickly. Following on from the challenges of 2020, not to be outdone, 2021 also has thrown us some curve balls, despite this the Board along with staff and volunteers have maintained an exceptional level of professionalism and integrity.

This year we have expanded our services to include a satellite office at Cherbourg to provide our services including the Centrelink agency. We have continued to Auspice groups in the community such as Rockin our Abilities, and South Burnett Peer Support group. We have completed our auspice with the South Burnett Suicide Prevention Working Group who are now incorporated and wish them all the best with continuing their invaluable work in the community.

As part of our ongoing commitment to the environment, Graham House has installed solar panels on our building and staff have continued to collect cans for the Containers for Change program. We have utilised our Hall, with newly installed air conditioning to develop the Family 2 Family program by accepting pre loved clothing and homewares previously destined for landfill for the community members to access.

We have undertaken a review of our administration team and have expanded our staff to include a trainee and those returning to the workforce. The administration team is a vital link in the ongoing provision of all the services offered by our Centre. Our transport fleet has also grown, with the inclusion of a 12 seater bus to accommodate our very popular monthly social trips to address social isolation which has health effects equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day or consuming 6 alcoholic drinks a day.

Our ongoing responsibility to investing in the community has lead us on an exciting adventure to commence our first, of what we hope many social enterprises, by opening a brand new clothing store in the coming months in the township of Murgon.

Graham House has achieved many milestones this year and I'm excited to see what we can achieve in 2022.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to my fellow Board members, staff, volunteers and businesses for their ongoing support to continue to provide high quality inclusive service that responds to the needs of individuals and the community with empathy and dignity.

Dellese Heit

# MANAGER'S REPORT

I suppose we say it every year, but hasn't the year flown! And what a year it's been! Let me tell you about some of the highlights from my point of view ...

## **Centrelink**

In October 2020, Services Australia closed its service centre in Cherbourg and invited us to open an agency similar to the agency we operate at our centre in Murgon. It is open five days a week so we were able to employ Erica Watson as our lead Centrelink Agent for Cherbourg. Erica works from Murgon three afternoons per week and Amanda Hiron covers Cherbourg on those afternoons. Several of us regularly work from Cherbourg one or more shifts per week so that Erica and Amanda are not on their own in the office. Thanks to DataWave, we have remote access to our computer system and work can carry on as usual while we are in Cherbourg.

## **Staff News**

Towards the end of 2020 we lost long-term staff members Nikita Vaeagi and Sharon Ferguson. For a few months we struggled on with several volunteers and staff members backfilling and doing extra hours. My thanks to everyone who so willingly helped cover Reception and undertake other duties outside their normal roles. Special thanks to Carrie Pound, Helein Cook, Kathy Dora, Lauren Ryan, Nikki Lahiff and Amanda Hiron. We couldn't have done it without you.

This period prompted the management team and Board to undertake a review of our Administration team with the result that we made some quite significant changes. In January 2021 we employed Kimberley Kunde as full-time receptionist. With her expertise and enthusiasm, Kimberley has improved the quality of the service we provide at the front counter and relieved much of the stress other staff were under.

At this time Amanda Hiron very capably took on the bulk of our Emergency Relief and NILS work to enable Nikki and Lauren to focus on their core responsibilities. Jess Jones came on board as a trainee in the Transport team and she has been a great asset.

Our Family Services team has been fully staffed for a year now with Karis Ross and Michelle O'Connell joining Elizabeth Kennell in BFT. Their skill and commitment have enabled the team to achieve many innovative and positive outcomes for families in the South Burnett.

## **GH Clothing Co**

When Target announced that it was closing its Murgon store, we realised that this would have a major impact on our community and our local businesses. Our Board decided to explore the idea of opening a clothes store to fill the gap. After months of planning, Kristy Watson was employed as our Store Manager and preparations are well underway for opening GH Clothing Co at 75-77 Lamb St.

GH Clothing Co will hopefully provide the Murgon, Cherbourg and surrounding communities with the option to buy clothes locally, provide employment and training opportunities and contribute to the stability of the local business economy. The business model we will operate under is a social enterprise model which requires that all our profits go back into the community. Besides providing employment through the shop, I am hoping we will be able to increase the services we offer to the more vulnerable members of our community.

# MANAGER'S REPORT CONT.

## **Family 2 Family**

During the last year we have also re-opened our second-hand outlet, Family 2 Family in February. It is housed in the hall on Pearson St. and we bought a shipping container for extra storage. Donations have been coming in regularly and we have been able to assist many families with clothes, Manchester, crockery, toys, beds, mattresses and many other items. A team of volunteers man the shop, displaying the stock, washing donations and serving customers. Thanks also to Jean and John Moore who did the initial set up.

## **Auspicing Local Groups**

Another service which we have been able to provide is helping community groups who are small or just getting established to operate without the expense and effort required to become an incorporated body. We are pleased to have been able to support the South Burnett Peer Support Group, South Burnett Suicide Prevention Working Party and Rockin' Our Abilities this year. Each of these groups provides a valuable service to the community.

## **Special Events**

In April this year, I was privileged to attend the Governor's Function at the Kingaroy Town Hall on behalf of Graham House.

Also in April, the whole workgroup visited the Ration Shed in Cherbourg. Uncle Eric Law gave us a wonderful tour, entertaining us as well as sharing his vast knowledge and experience. This was an invaluable experience in terms of making us more aware of the richness of our local diverse community and the issues facing our Indigenous neighbours.

So, on behalf of the leadership team, thank you for your support of Graham House this year. We look forward to continuing to contribute to the well-being of the South Burnett community in the coming year.



# About Us

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



## 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

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



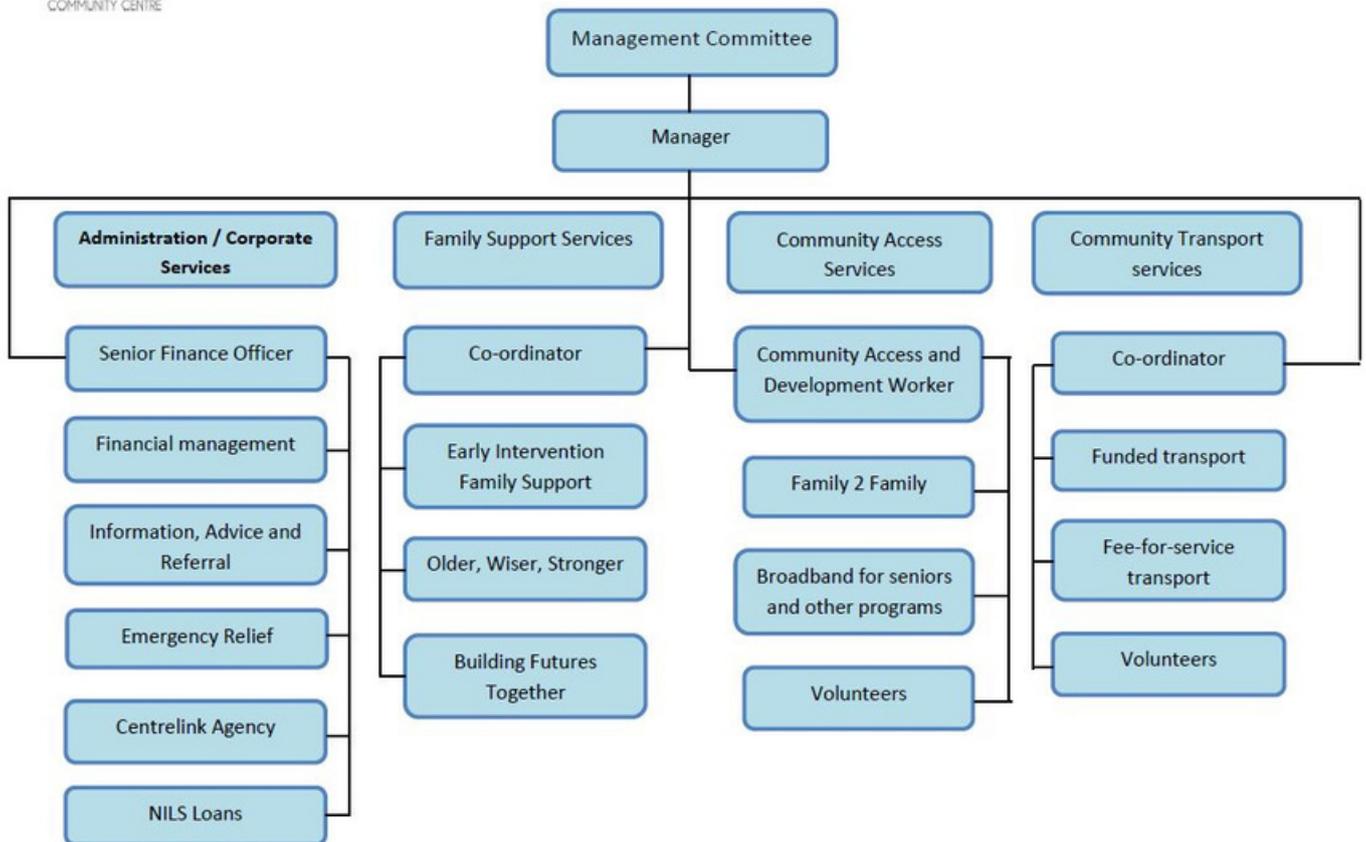
## Staff



# 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.

National Volunteers Week 2021



**HELEIN**

What I like most about Volunteering with Graham House Community Centre is being able to help people.

I volunteer as a Community Transport Driver and also in Administration.

I assist people in getting them to their medical appointments.

I also like being able to get people out of their homes socially as many of the people I transport are socially isolated.



[www.grahamhouse.org.au](http://www.grahamhouse.org.au)

National Volunteers Week 2021



**IVAN**

"Driving was my life - Diesel is in my veins!" I have met some very interesting people over the years and have heard some good stories.



[www.grahamhouse.org.au](http://www.grahamhouse.org.au)

National Volunteers Week 2021



**JON**

"I enjoy working at Graham House Community Centre as it gives me a sense of being part of a community and has allowed me to make new friends."



[www.grahamhouse.org.au](http://www.grahamhouse.org.au)

## Volunteers - Years of Service

### 5 Years Service

\*Jill McKiggan

### 6 Years of Service

\*Vince Galovic, Daryl Muller, Linda + Robert Olsen, Peter Phipps, Les Smith

### 10 Years of Service

\*Cecily Porter \*Ron Thorne

### 11 Years Service

\*John Flegg \*Gail Fredericks \*Reg Tucker

### 13 Years Service

\*Mary Mitchell

### 12 Years Service

\*Ivan Fels \*Tom Reilly

### 18 Years Service

\*Mary Ducey

## Volunteers - Retired from Service

The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers "Terri Guillemets"

Shirley Abbott - 9 years of service

Ian Cocks - 8 years of service

Joy Gowland - 4 years of service

Greg Hodges - 3 years of service

Gay Holmes Brown - 6 months of service

Karen Munday - 4 months of service

Denise Parr - 6 years of service

Lance Ricks - 11 years of service

Gloria Wilson-Quinn - 15 months of service

Julie Hunter - 8 years of service

Chris Jordin - 2 years of service

Colleen Lorenz - 5 years of service

Linda Mollenhauer - 3 years of service

Jean & John Moore - 8 months of service

John Papworth - 3 years of service

Ilja Ponsaing - 12 years of service

Peter Schuh - 8 years of service

# 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.

Our Men's Behaviour Change Program facilitated and supported 16 men through to the completion of the program during this year. A further 7 men attended and completed most of the core elements of the program, but were unable to complete the course (work or moving out of area). Over 90% of these men haven't had any more breaches of their DVO's over this period. Some feedback we have received from some of these men include:

- 'I can't thank Pam and Simon enough for explaining certain issues and giving me a new understanding of myself and my actions'
- 'To challenge yourself and get back to the owning your own shit, is challenging, deep and in some cases painfully hard, Pam and Simon gently guide you down this road with absolute conviction and realism'
- 'Hi Pam and Simon, I work full time these days and I was promoted to 2nd in charge, my parole ended 2 weeks ago but would still be great to keep in touch, cheers'

Some of our challenges this year included

- The delivery of program due to Covid restrictions
- Inconsistent venue availability
- Unable to have face to face contact with clients
- The resulting wait list (up to 6months)



# Building Futures Together

Funded by: Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disability Services.

Staff: Elizabeth Kennell, Karis Ross, and Michelle O'Connell.

The purpose of Building Futures Together is to support clients of the Department of Communities (Child Safety) where ongoing intervention with a family is required by Child Safety Services. This means working with either families who have signed an "Intervention with Parental Agreement (IPA)" or families who are about to be re-unified with their children who have been in care. Throughout the year BFT has worked with 22 families involving 86 children, 31 of whom are Aboriginal.

Many of the families with whom BFT work are affected by disability in both parents and children. Undiagnosed parents have often not received the support they needed, resulting in layers of disadvantage such as long-term unemployment, homelessness, problematic substance use, mental health challenges and domestic violence. Many parents are overwhelmed by their past trauma and current circumstances, causing them to lose focus on the needs of their children. Unfortunately, the children subsequently suffer neglect and abuse from parents who do not have the personal resources to ensure the needs of their children are met, or to manage the difficult life challenges they face.

The most common issues faced by the children with disabilities are delayed speech development, autistic spectrum disorder, ADHD and learning difficulties. Children's development is also affected by neglect and adverse childhood experiences. In the last year, BFT have facilitated applications for NDIS funding for 15 children.

BFT work with families to develop their capacity for parenting and address the obstacles which prevent the family from moving forwards. These obstacles consist of both systemic issues (e.g., lack of housing, lack of access to health professionals, living in isolated areas without transport), socio-economic and personal (e.g., trauma, problematic substance use, mental health, chronic health conditions, a need for parenting education). BFT support and assist families to negotiate government systems such as Child Safety, Housing, Human Services, Justice, NDIS and Medical. BFT support the family to understand family dynamics, develop routines and maintain boundaries, and build their capacity both in parenting and in personal development and self-care.

Our work is often highly rewarding and exciting. For example, we helped a mother with 5 children, two of whom had significant disabilities and were not connected to services of any kind. BFT supported the family with NDIS applications and linked the children to NDIS funded services and therapists. Respite care was sourced by BFT for the school holidays. BFT liaised with schools, NDIS Plan Coordinator and therapists to identify needs of the children and organise suitable responses. Long term problematic behaviour patterns were resolved through work with an Occupational Therapist.

## Building Futures Together Story continued...

When the mother obtained a home of her own, BFT supported her to develop routines, making cue card charts and chore charts with visual cues. BFT discussed parenting strategies for both the children with disabilities and the other children. BFT provided recipe books and worked on planning easy to prepare, nutritious meals. The mother completed Graham House Community Centre's Circle of Security Group. BFT also assisted the mother to understand her own history of trauma and how this was impacting on her current life and parenting decisions.

The parents of a teenager came to the notice of the Department of Child Safety because of domestic violence and the teenager's failure to attend school or engage in any form of education. The parents were in constant conflict. The teenager mostly stayed in his room playing computer games, had no regular friends and was shy and very anxious. The young man was reluctant to leave the home or show any interest in social activities. BFT worked with the young person to complete an online First aid training session and later go on to attend and complete CPR training. He surprised himself and his family when he was able to attend, complete and gain a certificate for his first aid and CPR. BFT supported the family to enroll the teenager in a TAFE course in another area where he continues to live part of the week and attend Tafe 3 days per week. The young man experienced a transformation, becoming open and interactive and having many future options opened up for him.

Another young mum was assisted to obtain her driver's license. It took 9 months for her to gain confidence and skills while driving but she passed her driving test with flying colors. This has made a positive impact on this mum who is now able to attend appointments, visit her children more often, and help with working towards reunification.



## 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

"I have been working with a client extensively over the last few months. This client had over 15 contracts signed up at one time with Radio Rentals. This client was not receiving any money into her account at all after all her Centrepays were paid. Radio Rentals were not receiving their full payment as there was no money left to take.

With the client's permission I assisted her in accepting some items for \$1.00 each at the end of the contract. This client also agreed to return some items to Radio Rentals. I asked the client to take photos of the items to ensure they were in good condition before returning to Radio Rentals. The items were in good condition and with regular contact with Radio Rentals and the client the items were able to be returned with the return fee waived (could be upwards of \$1000.00/per item). The client purchased these contracts with her partner at the time and had put her into financial stress. I spoke to Legal Aide for some advice on the clients situation and they advised they could assist. When speaking with the client she decided not to go ahead with legal aide.

Radio Rentals advised that the client was approx \$700.00 in arrears, which they were taking out over several fortnights. At the time of talking to the client she had only 2 payments (of arrears) left and then she would only be paying \$195.72 per fortnight until her contracts are finished.

In email correspondence with Radio Rentals I raised the issues of how the client was able to sign up to many contracts, client on Disability Pension, were they able to pursue her ex-partner for the monies.

The client decided not to continue and was happy with the results.

Extensive time put into assistance with this client."

## Family Support Services

Funded By: Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

Family Support Services aim to reduce harm or risk of harm to children and young people, prevent crisis or problems within families from arising or escalating and stabilise or maintain family wellbeing. Family Support Services will:

- Improve the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and their families
- Build the capacity of families to care for and protect their children
- Provide linkages to local support services and community groups that enable families to access the resources they need to build their capacity, solve problems and make positive choices/changes
- Prevent entry or re-entry to the statutory child protection system

The Family Support worker provides centre based and in-home family support under a case management framework.

During the year, 1016 hours have been spent assisting 92 families 54 cases have been closed because of the majority of their identified needs being met.

## Circle of Security Parenting Program

At times all parents feel lost or without a clue about what our child might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you. The Circle of Security® Parenting™ program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

Using the COSP™ model developed by the Circle of Security originators, our trained Facilitators work with parents and caregivers to help them to:

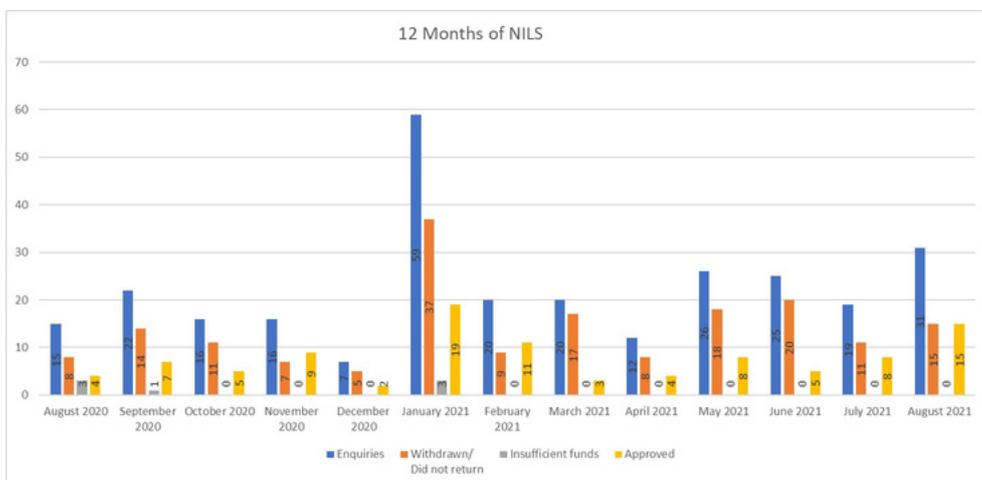
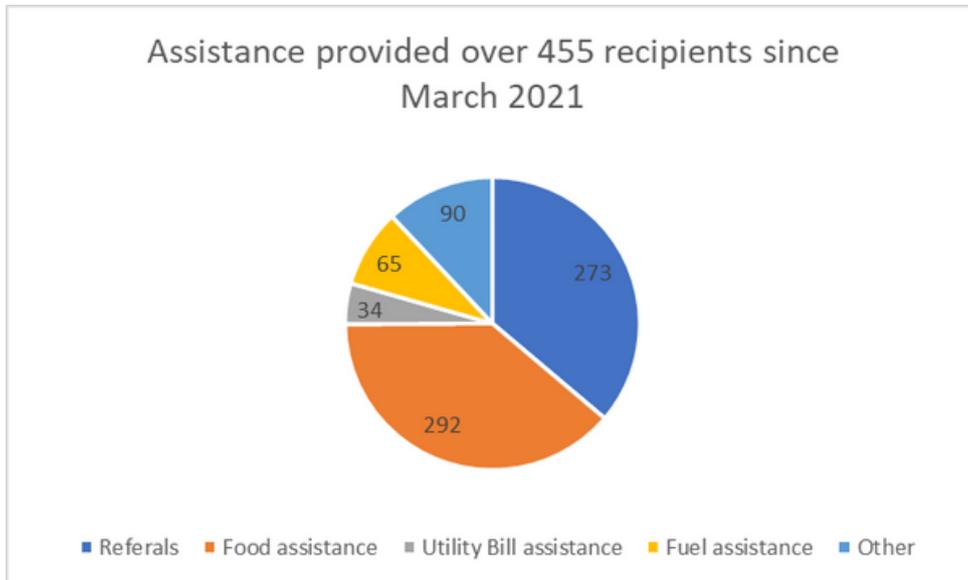
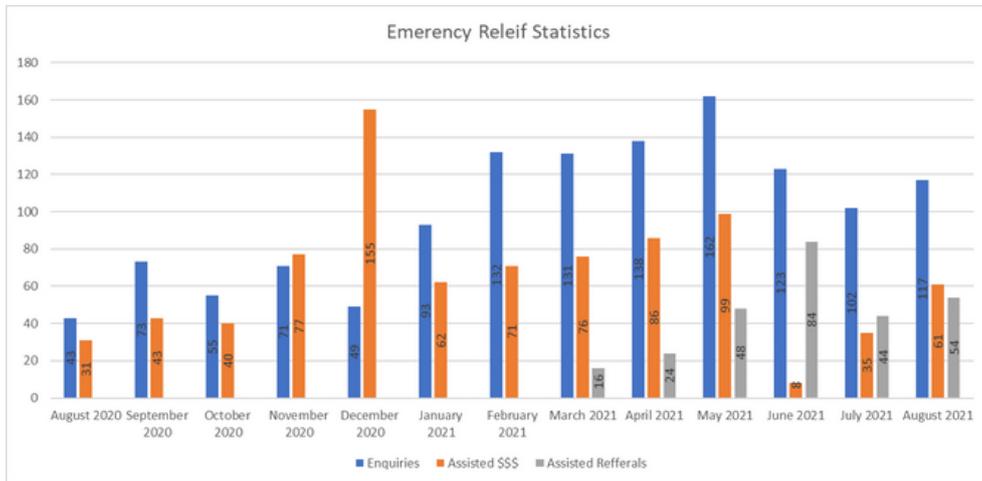
- Understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- Support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of their child's self esteem
- Honour the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure

There were 18 parents and carers who attended the Circle of Security Parenting program or one on one sessions during 2020 and 2021. Graham House have the group program available each school term this makes it more assessable for parents and carers while the children are at school. The numbers are up on last year even with only 3 groups due to covid19.

The feedback we received has been very positive and the scoring has shown us that they have learnt a lot about themselves and how they are able to connect with their children and where their struggles are when parenting and putting boundaries into place.



# Centre Statistics



# COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

2020-2021 has been a challenging year, with the everchanging world causing disruption to Service delivery. Once the COVID restrictions were lifted and 'normal' activities resumed in the latter part of 2020, the Transport Service embarked on a new venture, introducing Group Social Activities to combat the loneliness and isolation many of our clients experienced during the COVID restrictions.

Our first trip was in September 2020 travelling to Toowoomba to view the Carnival Gardens and Cobb & Co Museum with 10 clients participating in our inaugural trip. In October we travelled to Rainbow Beach and Tin Can Bay, which was a popular destination as some clients had not been to the beach for over 30 years, so to have a walk on the sand brought a smile to many faces. The final trip for this year was to Torbanlea to Bamboo Land, which saw the boots filled with plants on the return journey.

In 2021 we purchased a 12-seater Transit Bus to use for these trips, it provides easy access and comfortable travel. We produced a booklet outlining our planned trips for 2021 and distributed these to new and old clients as well as other service providers, medical and information Centres. Each month the response grows with our largest group numbering 33.

Clients who have participated in this program have formed new friendships, explored new places and are looking forward to the next exciting destination.



# Community Transport Social Trips



# THE FIGURES

671

CLIENTS  
ASSISTED

616976

KILOMETERS  
TRAVELLED

9394

TRIPS  
COMPLETED

# Biggest Morning Tea



Graham House Community Centre held a Biggest Morning Tea on Thursday 27th May 2021 to raise funds for cancer research.

The Murgon Hospital Auxiliary raised \$135 through a Raffle which will allow them to purchase a special bell to put on dementia patient's chairs.

Graham House Community Centre raised \$145 for the centre to go towards running future events.

\$339 was donated to the Queensland Cancer Council.

Special thanks to Murgon Bakery + The Coffee Bar for your donation to our event.

# Graham House Christmas Appeal



The Graham House Community Centre assisted a total of 173 families with Christmas Hampers in 2020.

This was a collaboration with Salvation Army

The following businesses were supported: Murgon Fruit Mart, Top of the Town Meats, Andersons Fruit Mart, Little Butcher, Murgon IGA, Woolworths - Kingaroy, Coles Gympie

# Community Garden



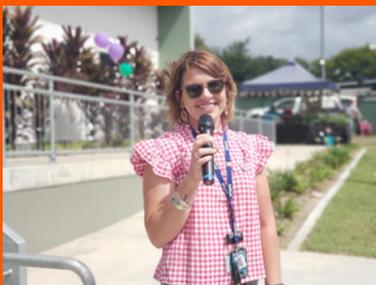
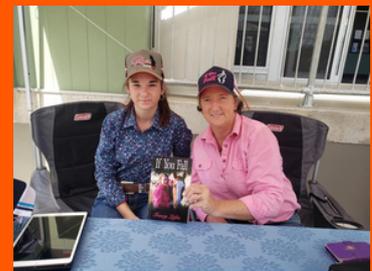
The Community Garden Project is held every Monday throughout the year. The volunteers work tirelessly to ensure the garden is maintained and fresh fruit + vegetables are produced throughout the year. Special thanks to Murgon Mens Shed for assisting us in building new garden beds.

# Goomeri Pumpkin Festival



Graham House Staff and their children participated in the Goomeri Pumpkin Festival in May 2021. The parade showcased Graham House Community Transport vehicles and provided great exposure to the wider community. The children of Graham House staff often enjoy participating in events that Graham House are involved in and proudly walked in the parade.

# International Women's Day



In March Graham House Community Centre held their first ever Market Emporium to celebrate International Women's Day. The event was held in our front gardens in Murgon and showcased women in small business. Guest Speakers for the day were: Cr. Kathy Duff, Elizabeth Kennell & Tracey Litfin

# Opening of Cherbourg Centrelink Agent

In late 2020 Graham House received notification through Centrelink that the Centrelink office at Cherbourg would be closing permanently and a Rural Centrelink Agent would replace the existing service.

As Graham House Community Centre already are a Rural Centrelink Agent for Murgon it seemed logical that we would tender for the role in Cherbourg.

Graham House Community Centre were successful in their tender and took over the existing Centrelink building in November 2020.

As a result of this it allowed Graham House to employ a full time staff member who's primary role would be a Rural Centrelink Agent.

The office is open from Monday - Friday from 9am to 4pm and offers customers the opportunity to undertake their Centrelink business without having to travel to the nearest Centrelink office which is Kingaroy.

Graham House Community Centre also offer community the opportunity to be able to access our No Interest Loan Scheme as well as Emergency Relief Services through the Cherbourg office.

Graham House Community Centre thank the Cherbourg Community for allowing us to provide our services on community and look forward to continuing to support community into 2022.



# The year that was..

