

# Neighbourhood Centres Queensland Annual Report 2022



**A Historic Year for the Sector**

## **About Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ)**

NCQ is the peak body for place-based Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland.

With over 143 Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) across the state, our sector represents the largest community-led infrastructure in Queensland. NCQ is here to grow our collective impact by increasing the resourcing, recognition, and relationships of Neighbourhood and Community Centres at the local, state, and national level. We collaborate with our members, partners and government to measure impact and build sector capacity for long-term community and social resilience.

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### **Front cover photograph**

People from our sector celebrating the State Budget win in 2022.

Photograph: Kirsty Heenan

Version 4. Last updated: 12.12.2022

# Contents

<b>About Neighbourhood Centres Queensland</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Chair's Report</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>CEO's Report</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Strategic Plan 2023–2025</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Project Highlights 2022</b>	<b>14</b>
2022 State Budget: Advocacy for Funding Uplift	14
2021 Sector Impact Report	18
Disaster Resilience Strategy 2023-2026	20
Media Attention	22
Stories of Impact	24
Local Community Heroes	25
Neighbourhood Centre Regional Networks	26
In-person Visits to Regional Neighbourhood Centres	27
Research Partnerships	28
Financial Resilience Program Partnership	29
<b>Celebrating Our People</b>	<b>30</b>
Our Board	30
Our Team	31
Our Members	32
<b>Thanking Our Supporters</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
Audited 2022 Annual Financial Accounts	Download
2021 Sector Impact Snapshot	Download



Neighbourhood Centres Queensland acknowledges the  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional  
custodians of Country; we pay our respects to their  
Elders, Ancestors, land and seas.

Sovereignty has never been ceded.

**It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.**

# About Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

NCQ is the peak body for place-based Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland.

With over 143 Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) across the state, our sector represents the largest community-led infrastructure in Queensland. NCQ is here to grow our collective impact by increasing the resourcing, recognition, and relationships of Neighbourhood and Community Centres at the local, state, and national level. We collaborate with our members, partners and government to measure impact and build sector capacity for long-term community and social resilience.

Our work in 2021 - 2022 was focused on five key areas:



## Communicating Sector Value

Highlighting the role and importance of Centres and advocating for additional resourcing.



## Demonstrating Sector Impact

Encouraging and supporting research on Centres to demonstrate their impact in communities.



## Growing Sector Capacity

Supporting our workforce through professional development, resource sharing, coordinated actions & more.



## Partnering for Community Outcomes

Building strategic partnerships across sectors to create better outcomes for Queensland communities.



## Influencing Policy for Systems Change

Advancing policy and place-based program design through collaborative processes and advocacy.

# Chair's Report

This will be my last report as Chair of NCQ and I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work and contributions of so many people and organisations that have made it possible for all of us, as a sector and as an organisation, to be where we are today.

The success, resources, visibility, level of leadership and influence that NCQ has today, was totally inconceivable when I wrote my first report in 2017. Back then, all we were hoping for was a bit of funding for a project worker and to secure a semi-regular meeting with the Department's relevant program manager.

Today, amongst the immense success we have achieved for the organisation and for the sector, I contemplate on all the Board Members, previous Chairs, allies, project workers and supporters that go all the way back to when our organisation was known as the Community Centres and Family Support Network Association Queensland (CCFSNAQ). You walked so we could run. Thank you!

The current board, including Louise Judge, Tanya Stevenson, Mel Hilditch, Alana Wahl, Val Edsall, Nicolette Ffrost, Caroline Cuckson and Fiona Hunt have done an incredible job of fighting for the sector, representing their regions and speaking for and on behalf of their organisations to highlight the strengths and challenges of the sector. From media engagements, meetings with Minister Enoch, participation in the Department's Repositioning Committee and more. Your time and contribution above your "day jobs" should be noted by all of us.

In the just over 2 years since we employed Em, they have made a significant impact and this is evident in the outcomes of the organisation this year. They have built an incredible team, and all have sacrificed a lot in the lead up to the budget.

I also want to acknowledge the partners and stakeholders NCQ works with to support our members. Our current relationship with the Department of Communities and Leeanne Enoch Minister for Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy has been incredibly constructive and in good faith. That does not mean we have agreed on everything or have shied away from difficult conversations.

I also want to thank all the peak bodies who supported and added a voice to the State Budget campaign, particularly Queensland Community Alliance and QCOS, who have for many years been great supporters of NCQ becoming the voice of the sector.

Following the State Budget announcement of extra funding and resources for Neighbourhood and Community Centres and NCQ, I have been contemplating the multiple touch points me and my family have had, both as clients and workers in the sector. The success of Neighbourhood Centres is deeply personal for me. As proud as I am of the work and achievements of the last little while, there is a persistent thought in my mind that unfortunately, all this recent success has directly or indirectly been a result of our communities, and society as a whole, suffering from a range of social, economic and environmental challenges; which have created the right conditions for "the powers that be" to see our sector as a credible and valuable asset in responding to said challenges.



The new uplift in funding has been long overdue and is immensely welcome, but we need to keep our eyes wide open that this extra funding is to 'catch up' - not to all of a sudden, be able to respond to the ever-increasing demand for people with complex lives who fall through the cracks.

We will continue to work with those most disadvantaged and provide them with the usual welcoming embrace and wrap-around support we are so good at offering. But let's keep it clear what we are contracted to do and what we do for our communities is totally different. What we do for our communities outside service agreements should be rooted in the traditions of community development and increasing the capacity of the community to address its own needs at the local level. Neighbourhood Centres should be spaces to challenge structures and political discourse, as much as places where individuals seek help.

Warm Regards,



**Tomas Passeggi**  
Chair  
Neighbourhood Centres Queensland



# CEO's Report

After a decade of struggle due to funding cuts and lack of recognition, 2022 marks a significant turning point for Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland. Our determination over so many years has led to the most significant investment in our sector since the 1970s.

This investment has come at a critical time, as communities around the state experience significant challenges with housing, cost of living, natural disasters, and social isolation after COVID-19. The sector's growing voice and recognition has laid an important foundation as we seek to increase our shared impact into 2023.

## **Participatory advocacy and Neighbourhood and Community Centre base funding increase**

The collective efforts of our sector, together with key stakeholders and supporters, has led to a historic win for Neighbourhood and Community Centre (NCC) funding in 2022. The participatory advocacy framework that we modelled throughout this campaign is a core part of our ongoing work together. It shows the power of respectful, engaging and coordinated approaches to grow our voice and influence as a sector.

## **Deepening our connections with Neighbourhood and Community Centres across Queensland**

From the Far West to Far North Queensland and Central Coast, it has been an absolute privilege to connect with Centres through in-person visits as COVID-19 restrictions have eased. In 2022, NCQ have also focused on reconnecting with, and in some cases revitalizing Neighbourhood Centre networks across Queensland. This has been complimented by increased opportunities for meaningful online, in-person and phone interactions with our members through our Stories of Impact interviews, participatory advocacy,

disaster resilience strategies and members-only Facebook group. The experiences, perspectives, and shared themes that we garner through regional network meetings, Centre visits and conversations are highly valuable and feed into broader state-level processes for policy influence.

In 2023 we are pleased to partner with Community Development Queensland to host an NCC-specific stream for the 2023 Community Development Conference in Moreton Bay. I hope to see many of you there, connecting with NCCs and Community Development workers across Queensland.

## **A voice for our sector**

The State Government budget announcement in June 2022 of new peaks funding for Neighbourhood Centres Queensland ensures that we can proactively plan and sustainably grow alongside our sector. We have built on our shared learnings and incorporated feedback from the sector to create our new strategic action plan for 2023-25, outlined in this annual report.

Leading on from the new peaks contract, in October 2022, NCQ received a formal invitation to join the Strategic Repositioning Committee for the Neighbourhood Centres sector. This is convened by the Department of Housing, Communities and Digital Economy and is comprised of a broad cross-section of Neighbourhood Centre representatives as well as key external stakeholders. The role of the committee is to "create and facilitate a contemporary NCC strategic framework to support the work of over 125 department-funded NCCs in Queensland and the broader NCC system". NCQ is actively engaging with our sector and stakeholders to build a strong, agreed purpose and evidence base for our sector.





The growing recognition of our sector is leading to further opportunities to increase understanding of the role and value of NCCs, with NCQ invited to join the State Human and Social Recovery Group in December 2022.

## National peak relationships

In 2022, NCQ has played an increasingly active role in The Australian Neighbourhood House and Communities Association, our national peak, and strengthened our relationships with our state peak equivalents across Australia. This includes being the incumbent Chair of ANHCA in 2022-23, speaking at the Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania conference, and visiting our NSW sister peak, Local Community Services Association. NCQ's deepening relationship with our fellow peaks offers exciting opportunities to connect the work and challenges of QLD NCCs with national efforts, shared learnings, and Federal-level advocacy

## Celebrating our team and Board

Most NCCs reading this report will have connected with one or more of our staff members throughout the year; Chris, Mel, Taylor, Jane, Geoff, Laurelle and Natasha. None of the work outlined in this report would be possible without the dedication, perseverance, and enthusiasm of this team.

The quality and volume of the work produced by our small team is truly outstanding. From 5am pre-media interview calls, to late-night report writing to get our Budget Asks over the line, to scaling our infrastructure and processes in line with our organisational growth - the commitment of our staff team to serving our members has been extraordinary. Similarly, the support and

strategic advice of our Board have steered us through a challenging and exciting year.

I want to especially acknowledge the contributions of three staff members whose project roles are coming to an end in 2022. Laurelle Muir and Natasha Odgers, our Disaster Resilience Co-Leads, have generously brought the breadth of their Emergency Management and community sector knowledge to co-create a landmark Disaster Resilience Strategy for our sector. Geoff Roberson, a passionate supporter of Neighbourhood Centres and long-term staff member of NCQ through the highs and lows of the past decade, is also finishing his role for the pilot project Regional Sector Development Officer for North Queensland. NCQ is continuing to craft participatory, sustainable models to facilitate meaningful state-wide representation and voice into the key issues affecting our sector, including disaster resilience. We thank our outgoing team members for their service to our sector and look forward to future collaborations.

Thank you to our staff, Board, members, partners, and supporters for their support, energy, and commitment throughout 2022. While our communities will continue to face challenging times in 2023, we have shown the power of working together to grow our positive impact in Queensland.

Warm Regards,

**Em James**

Chief Executive Officer

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

# Treasurer's Report

## FY 2021-2022

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland is grateful for the support and funding received in 2021-2022.

### Income

Income for Neighbourhood Centres Queensland for the financial year 2021 – 2022 was \$453,788. This represents a growing diversity of funding streams including collaborative funding arrangements with key partners.

### Expenditure

Total expenditure for the financial year ended June 2022 was \$558,990. Our most significant expenses related to employment costs, which increased 12% to \$396,053, reflecting the strategic investment of the Board in developing a core staffing profile for the organisation.

### Overall result

Overall, Neighbourhood Centres Queensland, delivered a net loss of \$105,202 for the financial year. This result was in-line with budget projections. Invested funds remain strong at \$252,291, a 8.4% reduction compared with the previous year.

The Board has continued to invest member's funds into the work of NCQ, building the organisational capacity through strategic investment in our people, systems and processes. This work positions NCQ with the foundations needed to continue advocating for our membership, developing further sector supports and bringing increased visibility and understanding of the role and value of neighbourhood and community centres in Queensland.

### Financial Stability

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland has ended the 2021 – 2022 financial year in a strong and sustainable financial position.

### Financial Report 2021-2022

The Financial Report 2021-2022 is provided as an appendix to this Annual Report.

Warm Regards,



**Louise Judge**

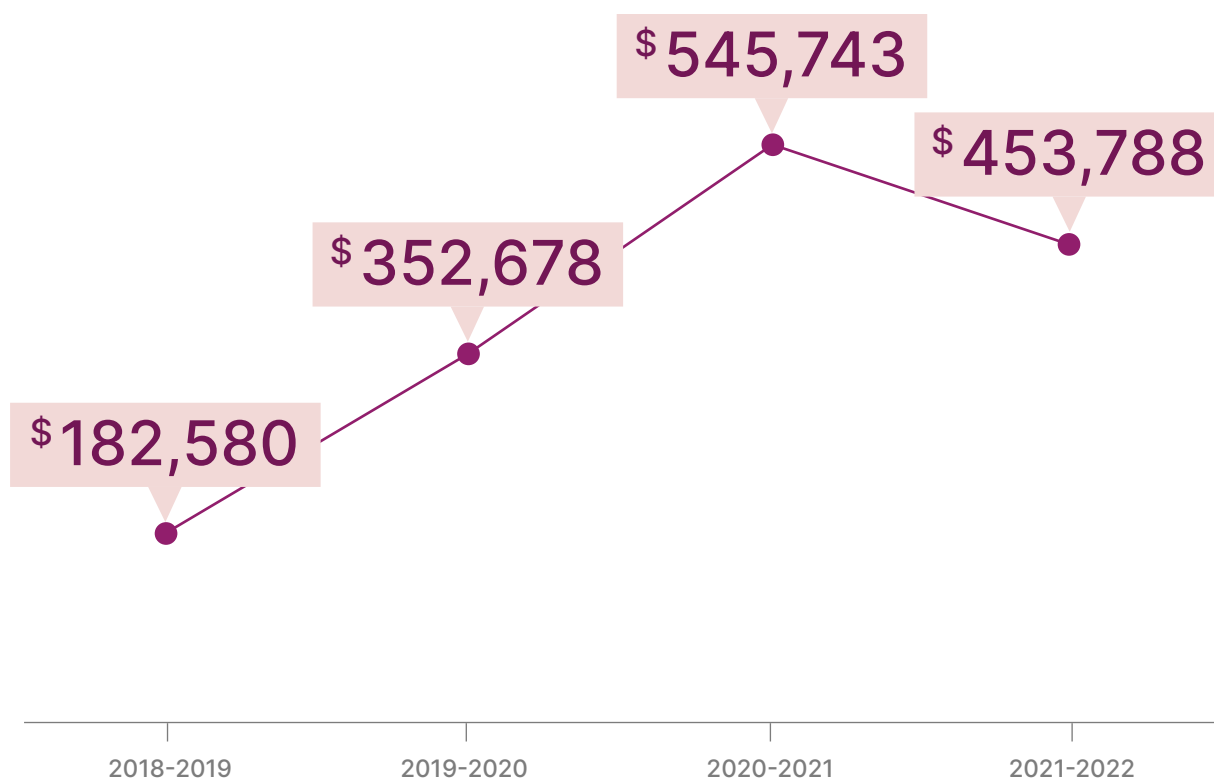
Treasurer

Neighbourhood Centres Queensland

## INCOME TREND

Annual income grew steadily from 2018/19 to 2020/21. Income leveled out in 2021/22 and is expected to increase significantly in 2022/23 underpinned by a significant boost to recurrent funding.

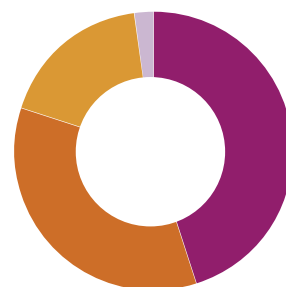
(Note: \$39,462 of the 2020-2021 is from the 'Boosting Cashflow for Employers' payment).



## TOTAL UNDERLYING INCOME

**\$453,788**

Project funding	(\$209,353)	46%
Recurrent funding	(\$155,872)	34%
Other income	(\$80,363)	18%
Membership fees	(\$8,200)	2%



## TOTAL UNDERLYING EXPENSES

**\$558,990**

Employment	(\$396,053)	71%
Administration	(\$84,248)	15%
Other	(\$78,688)	14%



# Strategic Plan 2023-2025



## OUR VISION

Place-based leadership for regenerative, equitable and inclusive communities

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## OUR PURPOSE

NCQ grows the collective impact of NCCs by increasing the recognition, resourcing and relationships of our sector at the regional, state and national level

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## OUR VALUES-DRIVEN APPROACH

Collaborative, courageous leadership

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## GOAL 1

### Advance Place-Based Leadership

#### STRATEGIES

- Support Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) to connect, guide, and inspire each other
- Evidence, develop and celebrate the place-based practice and community development expertise of our sector
- Identify NCC workforce challenges, strengths and priorities to co-create a workforce strategy

## GOAL 2

### Maximise Place-Based Investment

#### STRATEGIES

- Facilitate NCC input into program design and delivery
- Advocate for the role and value of NCCs as place-based social infrastructure
- Direct place-based funding to community-based organisations including NCCs

## GOAL 3

### Grow our robust, participatory and accountable peak body

#### STRATEGIES

- Foster a culture of curiosity, learning, and innovation
- Amplify the voices of our members to influence community, policy and funding outcomes
- Invest in Neighbourhood Centres Queensland's capability in order to deliver on our purpose and strategy

# 2022 State Budget Win: Advocacy for Funding Uplift

Throughout 2021-2022, NCQ worked closely with its member organisations to raise a strategic participatory advocacy campaign calling on the State Government to increase funding to our sector. In June, the government responded with a historic commitment. The base funding for all government-funded Centres was increased from a median of \$124,600 to a minimum baseline of \$230,000 per Centre, along with a host of other funding measures.

The 2022 State Budget Advocacy work involved many projects and activities over 2021-2022. The key activities we undertook with our members and supporters are outlined below.

## August 2021

### Submissions to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Loneliness and Social Isolation

NCQ, together with 53 Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs), lodged written submissions and 17 Centres participated in Public Briefings in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Mt Gravatt, Mt Isa, Townsville and Cairns. NCQ and State Peak bodies also lodged submissions arguing for the strategic placement of Centres to respond to the loneliness epidemic. This resulted in a significant increase in MPs' knowledge and understanding of the role and impact of NCCs.

## August — November 2021

### Co-development of the State Budget Asks and Strategic Partners reinforcing the Asks

Building on the Parliamentary Inquiry work, NCQ consulted with Neighbourhood Centres to develop five clear funding recommendations. NCQ also engaged with key stakeholders including QCOS, The Services Union, the Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA), Queensland Community Alliance and Volunteering Queensland through their submission writing processes to encourage them to support NCQ's calls for greater funding for Neighbourhood and Community Centres.

## December 2021

### Submission of State Budget Asks

NCQ formally submitted its State Budget Asks to Treasury in December 2021. The submission recommended funding in five key areas, and clearly communicated the need, the government investment required, and the community impact of such an investment. The full version of the Budget Asks is available here: <https://bit.ly/BudgetSubmission2022-23>.

## December 2021

### Rename of Peak Body and Launch of Website

NCQ renamed our organisation from Queensland Families and Communities Association (QFCA) to Neighbourhood Centres Queensland (NCQ) and launched a new website in December. This strengthened our identification as the peak body and the visibility of our sector.

## State Budget Asks →



### February 2022 Onwards

#### Meetings with State MPs

NCQ held meetings with over 20 State MPs and Neighbourhood and Community Centre representatives from Centres within their electorate. These MPs were from all sides of government. In these meetings we built relationships, developed MPs' understandings of the link between local Centres and the state-wide Neighbourhood Centre movement, identified the challenges and impacts of the current funding and the unprecedented increase in community needs due to COVID-19, the housing crisis and compounding disasters. We shared the Budget Asks and requested MP's support of the budget submission. All MPs we met with verbally supported our Asks.

### February 2022 Onwards

#### Stories of Impact

To compliment the powerful data in the 2021 Sector Impact Report, we began the 'Stories of Impact' project, documenting and sharing stories of how Centres have positively impacted the lives of people and their communities.

### March 2022

#### Floods Hit, Shifting Advocacy Focus and Reinforcing the Value of Neighbourhood Centres

Unfortunately, substantial flooding hit SEQ at the end of February and beginning of March. This again highlighted the critical role of NCCs in disaster recovery. NCQ developed sector resources, used our research to advocate for increased disaster relief to Centres, and started a members' support group.

### April 2022

#### 2021 Sector Impact Report

In April, we published the most comprehensive report on the impact of Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland yet, as well as providing participating Centres with individual Centre impact reports. This quantified our value and highlighted our impact as a sector and has been used to support funding requests. It revealed that together, Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland supported over 1.6 million people.

### April 2022

#### Letters Sent to State MPs from Members and NCQ

As soon as the Sector Impact Report was published, we provided an editable template letter along with information (the Sector Impact Snapshot and the 2022 State Budget Asks) for Centres to send to their local MP, formally asking the MP for support. Neighbourhood and Community Centres sent over 22 letters to MPs. To reinforce the message and ensure full coverage of MPs, NCQ sent both printed letters and emails to all 92 State MPs, highlighting the challenges facing Centres and requesting support for the Budget Asks.

### May 2022

#### Neighbourhood Centre Week Events and Media Release

In May, Neighbourhood Centres were supported to celebrate Neighbourhood Centre Week, and many held

events and used advocacy materials to promote the impact of Queensland's NCCs to their followers across their social media platforms. During Neighbourhood Centre Week, QCOSS and NCQ circulated a joint media release. This release highlighted the skyrocketing community demand and the inadequate funding. It called on the state government to increase funding to Centres. Committed representatives from Centres and NCQ spoke to media, with stories airing on Channel 7 News, ABC and published in print media.

#### May 2022

##### **Regular Meeting with the Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy**

As the budget announcement date came closer, NCQ held regular meetings with the Department, advocating for the Budget Asks and answering questions that arose.

#### May 2022

##### **Media Messaging**

In late May, NCQ held media messaging meetings with representatives from over 20 Centres, to ensure whatever happened in the State Budget outcome in 2022, we would be ready to speak up loudly for the sector and work hard to ensure funding would be delivered in 2023.

#### June 2022

##### **Media Attention**

In June we went to media again, securing more publicity during budget week.

#### 21 June 2022

##### **Budget Day**

On budget day, 21 June 2022, we celebrated a campaign win, with the State Government committing to increase base funding for all government-funded Centres from a median of \$124,600 to a minimum of \$230,000 per Centre. An additional \$20,000 per year was committed for NCCs in non-state-owned premises to pay rent and other upgrades. \$9 million was committed to upgrade existing funded NCCs' facilities, \$29 million was committed to construct 6 new Centres, \$9.3 million was committed to for 20 Community Connect workers, and a \$4 million community. New peaks funding has also been announced for NCQ.

On the day the outcome was announced, we celebrated with members across the state.

#### October 2022

##### **Funding Delivery**

In October 2022, the funding began to be delivered, backdated to 1 July.

#### **Contributors**

Em James, CEO

Melanie Maher, Sector Development Lead – Communications and Digital Engagement

Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead – Research, Policy and Networks

Taylor Bast, Sector Support - Communications

Fiona Hunt, NCQ Board Member

Tomas Passeggi, NCQ Chair

Sinead Canning and Tanya Chilcott from QCOSS

53 Representatives from Centres who were consulted on the Budget Asks Submission

20+ Representatives from Centres who emailed a letter to their State MP asking for support

9 Representatives from Centres who attended meetings with their local MP and NCQ

Representatives from 20 Centres who engaged in Media Messaging interviews, and shared their stories

7 Representatives from Centres who took media interviews



"At North Townsville Community Hub, we're a one funded worker model. This budget outcome means that I can say four words to my staff - 'Your Job Is Safe.' Which is amazing. It also means I can confidently say to my community that we will definitely be there for you in the when the next disaster hits because I'll have trained staff that I get to keep so that we are truly disaster prepared. It also means that for the 2,500 people that come through my doors every week, for food and mental health, and support, that I'll be able to keep doing that 5 days a week. Without this funding, I would have lost 3 part-time staff next week."



**Sandra Elton**  
Manager, North Townsville Community Hub

"For so long this important work has been underfunded and undervalued. Ever the optimist, I'm excited by the opportunity this delivers for all centres in Queensland and in turn Queensland communities. Thank you for your advocacy and resilience!"



**Bec Langdon**  
President, Community Plus+

"What a win for Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland – so many hours have been poured into advocacy work to increase the awareness and understanding of what we do and how we do it!! Neighbourhood Centres are unique places and this year that uniqueness was not only acknowledged, it was also celebrated. An amazing and historic outcome!!"



**Nicolette Ffrost**  
General Manager, The Neighbourhood Hub Mackay

"I can only imagine the relief Neighbourhood Centre Managers across the state must be feeling after the recent budget announcement. For too long we've been scrambling to keep the lights on, pay support staff, and cover other basic expenses so we can open our doors each day."



**Alana Wahl**  
Manager, Laidley Community Centre

# 2021 Sector Impact Report

NCQ's *Sector Impact Report* is Queensland's most comprehensive source of information about Neighbourhood and Community Centres. The 2021 Sector Impact report found that Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland supported over 1.6 million people in the year, and Centres also delivered \$4.81 in social value for every \$1 of investment by the Queensland Government.

Each year, the Sector Impact Report captures the key data and insights from the largest Queensland-wide survey of the Neighbourhood and Community Centre sector and summarises the community value and impact of Centres for the Financial Year.

The 2021 Sector Impact Report was published in 2022, and compiled data from 83 Centres who participated in the 2021 Sector Impact Survey, as well as other data sources. Along with a state-wide report, each Centre that participated in the survey received their own '2021 Impact Snapshot' report about their individual Centre's impact, which Centres can use for communications to funding bodies, grant applications, annual reports, reporting, AGMs, and advocacy.

The 2021 Sector Impact Report was used to advocate for increased recognition and funding for the sector in Queensland's State Budget and was a crucial component to securing increased funding for the sector. The reporting and research method used by the report has also been shared with QCOS's Research and Evaluation Network and with interstate Neighbourhood Centre peaks.

## Contributors

Authors: Chris Mundy with the NCQ team

Data Support: David Perry, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

The 83 Centres who participated in the Sector Impact Survey.

Download the report  
from the last survey! →

[bit.ly/2021SectorImpactReportv2](https://bit.ly/2021SectorImpactReportv2)



"It's been demonstrated that there is a massive cost-benefit to working through Neighbourhood Centres. The NCQ report and research around the investment into Neighbourhood Centres identifies a significant return on investment connected with economic and social impacts in communities."



**Chris Staines**, CEO, Encircle Community Services  
(Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, Encircle Redcliffe, Kallangur Neighbourhood Centre)

"When you look at the evidence that's provided, the number of volunteers we have and the level of support we provide, it's just extraordinary. The survey NCQ has provided over the last few years, validates what we do financially, for every dollar that the government puts in, we put in four dollars' worth of work."



**Michael Henning**,  
CEO, Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre

"The Sector Impact Report achieved what we previously thought was immeasurable- the value of Community Development. Having those figures has been amazing- I have quoted our dollar value more times than I can count- in interviews, speeches and often just in conversation as I am so proud."



**Miranda (MK) Woods**  
Coordinator, New Farm Neighbourhood Centre

"When you are involved in the grass roots operations of a Neighbourhood Centre, you just get on with the work; to then see this work quantified and equated in dollar terms in the Sector Impact Report has been a startling realisation of the significant value and incredibly far-reaching nature of our services."



**Jillian Warren**  
Centre Manager, Picabeen Community Centre

# Disaster Resilience Project

NCQ continues to work alongside Neighbourhood and Community Centres and communities to develop three disaster resilience strategies and supports. In 2022, we worked with and for Centres and their communities to implement the strategies, strengthen connections, provide resources and advocate for funding.

## Statewide Disaster Resilience Strategy

The Queensland Disaster Resilience Strategy is being developed with and for Neighbourhood and Community Centres of Queensland. The strategy offers a vision and pathway to strengthen Centres' ability to support their communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from the disasters that impact them, including bushfires, monsoons, drought and pandemics.

The statewide Disaster Resilience Strategy builds on the three foundational strategies: Monsoon, Drought and Bushfire. These strategies were developed in consultation with over 67 disaster affected communities. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and compounding disasters impacting communities, it was important to synthesise the foundational strategies into one practical strategy. The strategy will be launched in 2023.

Whilst developing the strategy, NCQ:

- Made a submission to the Queensland Government review into the SEQ flooding and rainfall event. A total of six recommendations were made, including the need for increased resourcing, reforms to standing arrangements, funding and recovery funding guidelines for Recovery, and better connection for NCCs with Councils and State Emergency Management system
- Distributed Covid-19, Flooding, Bushfire and Drought resources to support Centres
- Hosted a Queensland Neighbourhood and Community Centres Disaster Resilience Workshop with 13 Centres and other key stakeholders
- Secured a position on the State Human and Social Recovery Group
- Delivered \$100,000 in funding from ACF directly to Centres affected by flooding

## Bushfire Resilience Strategy Implementation

The first stage of implementation of the Qld Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Bushfire Resilience project was completed on 30 June 2022. 30 Centres involved in the project reported the following outcomes:

- Development of new relationships and strengthening of existing relationships, including participation in disaster networks such as Councils, HSRSGs and QFES
- Extension of communications to broader community members and partners to maximise Centres reach in times requiring public disaster messaging
- Building relationships with a range of organisations at the state and local level



- Hosting collaborative community preparedness events
- Enhanced communications material, including tailoring communications to vulnerable populations
- Distributed QFES Emergency Preparedness Kits
- Development of business continuity plans
- Training delivered to staff and volunteers.

## March 2022 Flood Recovery Work

While Neighbourhood and Community Centres worked tirelessly on the ground to support their communities throughout the February-March floods; NCQ worked to better resource and connect Centres while advocating for sector-wide funding and recognition they deserve.

In the week following the flood events, NCQ:

- Launched a private, members-only Facebook group for Centres to connect with each other, share resources and help each other respond to their community needs and interests
- Collected, created and shared disaster-focused information and referral resources for community members
- Conducted a survey to help us understand Neighbourhood and Community Centre's response to the flooding and their needs during this time. Alongside the online survey, two of our team members Geoff and Taylor phoned Centres across 97 flood-affected LGAs to gather as much data as possible. This information was used to advocate for increased funding to Centres
- Held weekly meetings with the Government, to advocate for flood recovery funding; and to actively communicate to the Department and Ministers the critical role of Neighbourhood and Community Centres in disasters and the need for Centres to be better resourced to support their communities in the coming months
- Met with State MPs in some flood-affected regions to discuss the impact of the floods on communities

## Contributors

Laurelle Muir, Disaster Resilience Co-Lead

Natasha Odgers, Disaster Resilience Co-Lead

Em James, CEO

Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead – Research, Policy and Networks

Melanie Maher, Sector Development Lead – Communications and Digital Engagement

Taylor Bast, Sector Support - Communications and Digital Engagement

Geoff Roberson, Sector Regional Development (North QLD)

Representatives from the Centres who contributed to the strategy

Partners and Stakeholders from Red Cross, GIVIT, local councils, and Queensland Recovery.

## Funding Partners

This project has been jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments through the Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund 2020-21

# Media Attention

In 2022, Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland gained more media exposure than ever before. Representatives from across Queensland stood up and spoke up for the sector, and were featured on Channel 7 News, ABC Breakfast Radio stations across the state, and in print media.

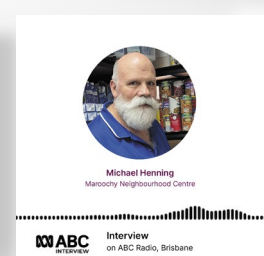
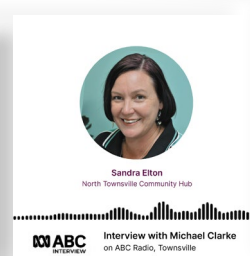
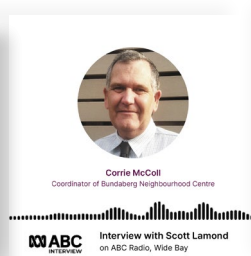
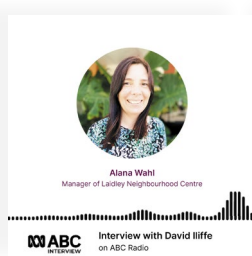
In May 2022, during National Neighbourhood Centre Week, NCQ partnered with QCOSS to deliver a joint media release declaring 'Crucial community services set to be cut in time of critical need'. The media release highlighted the vital role and impact of centres, who had supported over 1.6 million Queenslanders in 2021, through floods, COVID-19, the housing crisis and soaring costs of living. In the release, QCOSS and NCQ made a joint call to the State Government to urgently increase funding for Neighbourhood and Community Centres.

A number of people working on the frontline at Centres agreed to have their stories shared with media and made time to take live media interviews, describing the situation and echoing the call for funding. ABC featured interviews with Jeanelle Horn from Emerald Neighbourhood Centre, Alana Wahl from Laidley Neighbourhood Centre and Corrie McColl from Bundaberg & Districts Neighbourhood Centre. Em James, CEO of NCQ, and Tomas Passegi, Chair of NCQ and Coordinator of Baringa Community Centre were featured on Channel 7 News and in a number of ABC radio interviews, speaking on the statewide situation facing the sector.

In June 2022, in the days prior to the State Budget outcomes being announced, NCQ pitched five additional media releases and secured further media publicity on ABC. Yet again, committed spokespeople from Centres stood up and spoke up for their communities. Sandra Elton from NOTCH and Michael Henning from Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre, along with NCQ CEO Em James, were featured in an additional 5 news stories.

## Contributors

Melanie Maher, Sector Development Lead – Communications and Digital  
Tanya Chillcott, Media Advisor, QCOSS  
Taylor Bast, Sector Support – Communications and Digital Engagement  
Representatives from NCQ and NCCs interviewed by media



"I've been involved with Neighbourhood Centres for the past 12 years and with NCQ for 4 years. This week [May 2022] I have seen the biggest coordinated media push I've ever witnessed in our sector. We are so often undervalued and unrecognised."



**Chris Mundy**  
Sector Development Lead, NCQ

"It's inspiring to see us coming together for shared aims. People are becoming more aware of the scale of what NCCs are doing... [The NCQ media campaign] was a great process to be part of. It was so good to have the freedom to share my perspective and [at the same time] enough direction to be able to stand up for the sector. I'm all for it!"



**Corrie McColl**  
Coordinator, Bundaberg & Districts Neighbourhood Centre

"I get goosebumps, I feel like I'm part of an active and supportive team, part of something. We can see that our voices are being heard, that's one of the most exciting parts – it doesn't matter where you are in QLD, you can get involved. I know it's lobbying but how we're going about it is really pleasant, with warmth and connection. Being heard in a diplomatic, respectful manner, but it's real... It's very heartening, it makes you feel like there's a future [for our sector]."



**Jeanelle Horn**  
Director, Emerald Neighbourhood Centre

"We really appreciate the work NCQ has done, highlighting some of our work in the community, and sharing those stories throughout. We have since had departments and funding bodies read about our work with the One Roof Project and understand how our Centre is making a difference."



**Michael Henning**  
Coordinator, Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre

# Stories of Impact

*Stories of Impact* is an ongoing project that uncovers, documents and shares diverse, human stories of how Neighbourhood and Community Centres are impacting the lives of people in their community.

In early 2022, it was difficult to find real, recent and tangible stories of how Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland impact peoples lives. The *Stories of Impact* project was born out of a need to address this gap.

*Stories of Impact* documents the impact of the programs, initiatives and stories at the heart of Neighbourhood Centres; the people within them and the lives they have transformed across the state. These stories are shared with Government Departments, stakeholders, funding bodies and Members. For those on the edges of the sector, the stories offer deeper insights into the nuanced ways Centres create meaningful change. For members, the stories offer inspiration for their own work, and a greater connection to other Centres across the state.

Eighteen stories have been published since the project began in February, with new stories being shared each fortnight.

The stories are also used as case studies in research reports and collects qualitative data that compliments quantitative data captured by the Sector Impact Report.

## Contributors

Author and Interviewer: Taylor Bast, Sector Support – Communications and Digital Engagement  
 Editor: Melanie Maher, Sector Development Lead – Communications and Digital Engagement  
 Allison Wicks (Redland Community Centre), Tomas Passeggi (Baringa Community Centre), Sandra Elton (NOTCH), Christian Berechree (Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre), Julie Theakston (Mareeba Community Centre), Michael Henning (Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre), Nicolette Ffrost (TN Hub Mackay), Yasmin Barber (North Burnett Community Service), T Schultz (Discovery Bay Community Services), Phillipa Adams (Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre), Corrie McColl (Bundaberg and Districts Neighbourhood Centre), Paula Callaghan (Benarrawa Community Centre).

“Thank you NCQ, for your support and continued awareness of the Redland Community Centre’s Homeless United program. Thank you for all your wonderful work in the sector – Together we can achieve so much more.”



**Allison Wicks**  
 Coordinator, Redland Community Centre



# Local Community Heroes

NCQ's *Local Community Heroes* project highlights the remarkable people in Neighbourhood and Community Centres who work to support their communities and deliver extraordinary outcomes every day.

Launched in March 2022, the Local Community Heroes project identifies remarkable people making a difference in the community, interviews them, writes a story about them, and shares their work with governments, funding bodies, stakeholders and other members. The heroes featured are diverse in their roles (both staff and volunteers are featured), diverse in their location, and diverse in the work they do.

The Local Community Heroes project is ongoing, with 8 local community heroes highlighted so far, including Sandra Elton from NOTCH, T Schultz from Discovery Bay Community Service, Melinda McInturff from Yeronga CC, Caroline Sciascia from Winton NC, Denise from Laidley NC, Simon Rixon from Maroochy NC, Tomas Passeggi from Baringa CC, Valeriya Edsall from Mackay NC, and Megan Blacklow from Port Douglas NC.

The project builds rapport and fosters stronger relationships between NCQ and Neighbourhood Centres, through engaging in meaningful conversations and learning from the voices of those who work within them. The project has also led to stronger connections and sense of community between people within the sector.

## Contributors

Author and Interviewer: Taylor Bast, Sector Support – Communications and Digital Engagement

Editor: Melanie Maher, Sector Development Lead – Communications and Digital Engagement

The Local Community Heroes featured in 2022



# Neighbourhood Centre Regional Networks

NCQ are highly involved in 9 regional Neighbourhood Centre networks around the state, bringing Neighbourhood Centre workers together to create a community for those building community.

Neighbourhood Centres have been involved in creating supportive networks for themselves since the early 1980s. These networks offer connection, peer support, information sharing, continued learning, opportunities to work together on complex challenges and a sense of community for those involved.

In 2022, NCQ has been involved in attending Neighbourhood Centre Regional Network meetings in 9 regions, including North Brisbane, Wide Bay, South Brisbane, Ipswich Region, Logan, Sunshine Coast, Far North Queensland, and North Queensland. Attendance at these meetings allowed NCQ to keep up-to-date on challenges and opportunities facing Centres and their communities across Queensland, and regularly listen to the experiences of workers on the front line.

A tenth Regional Network is in development, to ensure every Centre in Queensland has access to peer support and NCQ in 2023.

## Contributors

Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead - Research, Policy and Networks

Geoff Roberson, Sector Regional Development (North QLD)

Em James, CEO

Heather Ellis, Blue Wren Consulting

Logan City Council

DCHDE Staff

## Funding Partners

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

“We work quite closely with other Neighbourhood Centres. We share resources and often those resources can be things like peer support and peer debriefing. Running Neighbourhood Centres can be quite isolating in some ways, you’re often a lone worker or only have a couple of staff with you.”



**Sharon Gingell**  
Coordinator, Northside Connect

# In-person Visits to Regional Neighbourhood Centres

NCQ staff members travelled extensively in 2022 to visit regional and remote Neighbourhood and Community Centres in person. The visits have helped to deepen our understanding of the diverse experiences and strategic priorities of Centres across the state.

Between May and July, Em visited Neighbourhood and Community Centres in North Queensland and the Central Coast. They received a warm welcome from the teams at Hambledon House and Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre in Cairns, The Neighbourhood Hub in Mackay, alongside Proserpine Community Centre, Whitsunday Neighbourhood Centre, Sarina Neighbourhood Centre, Maryborough Neighbourhood Centre and Burrum Heads Neighbourhood Centre. The visits highlighted the unique and positive impact each Centre makes in their community.

In July, Em, Chris and Heather took a week-long road trip to visit six Centres in remote Western Queensland. They were welcomed by Brilla Brilla Community Centre, Boulia Community Support Services, Mount Isa Neighbourhood Centre, Centacare, Winton Neighbourhood Centre, and Barcaldine. The trip was aimed at gaining and sharing valuable insights from these Centres, as well as identifying networks, opportunities and resources for building the sector in drought-affected areas.

The team has also been visiting Centres in South East Queensland, across Greater Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

## Contributors

Em James, CEO

Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead - Research, Policy and Networks

Heather Ellis, Blue Wren Consulting

The NCQ team

## Funding Partners

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal



# Research Partnerships

NCQ has been working in partnership with Griffith University and University of Queensland to forward research into Neighbourhood Centres.

Research with Griffith University explored ways of undertaking Community Development responses to Neighbourhood Centre users experiencing acute crisis. Masters of Social Work student Katie Everingham worked with Lecturer Helen Betts from Griffith University and NCQ's Chris Mundy to conduct this research via a Community of Practice with Neighbourhood Centre workers from around the state.

The second piece of research saw NCQ become an industry partner with UQ and 6 students from their Bachelor of Social Science degree. The students gathered perspectives from NGO's, Government, Peak Organisations and Community Based Organisations to understand perceptions of the Neighbourhood Centre sector in the Greater Brisbane Region. They have condensed their findings into a report and video summary that helps us gain further insights into the sector.

NCQ plays an active role in these research partnerships by co-designing research with academics and students, helping them understand the complexities of the sector's work in communities and the wider human services sector. These industry relationships with universities also result in the linking of students with Neighbourhood Centres for student placements, further research opportunities and creating workforce pipelines for the sector.

## Contributors

Katie Everingham and Helen Betts from Griffith University.

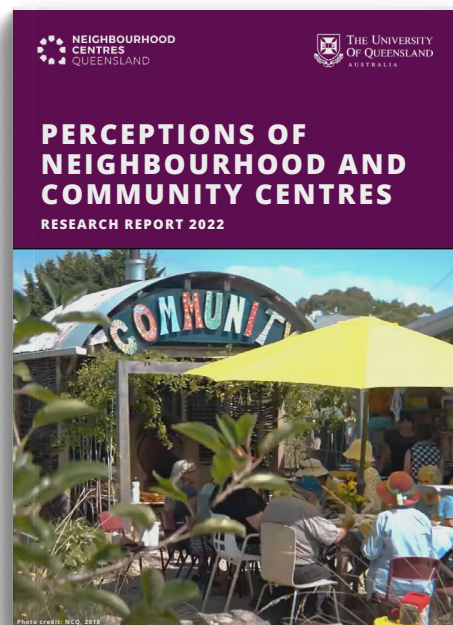
Rauha Firaq, Zoe Nethery, Emily Scott, Bronte Bratton, Emily Rexa, Rowena Johns, Professor Paul Henman and Dr Lynda Shevellar from University of Queensland.

Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead – Research, Policy and Networks.

## Partners

Griffith University

University of Queensland





# Financial Resilience Program Partnership

NCQ partnered with Good Shepherd Australia and Neighbourhood Centres to deliver a new Queensland Financial Resilience Program (QFRP) through Neighbourhood Centres in twenty locations around the state.

For more than 30 years, Neighbourhood and Community Centres across Queensland have been working in partnership with Good Shepherd to provide access to affordable and appropriate credit to people that are less able to buffer against financial shocks or unexpected expenses. This has been through the delivery of the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILs). Currently more than 30 Queensland Neighbourhood and Community Centres provide NILS financial support to their communities. In the 2021-2022 financial year, over 4,343 no interest loans were delivered, improving financial resilience for over 10,000 people.

In 2022, NCQ partnered with Good Shepherd Australia to co-design and support their organisation to create the new Queensland Financial Resilience Program (QFRP) alongside 20 selected Neighbourhood and Community Centre locations across Queensland. The program aims to increase the financial resilience of Queenslanders experiencing financial challenges by connecting them with supports, helping them manage the factors that are contributing to financial difficulties, improve their financial knowledge and access safe financial products such as the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS).

The partnership with Good Shepherd Australia leverages NCQ's knowledge of Neighbourhood Centre networks to ensure that the program complements existing financial resilience activities in each Centre, is designed around unique local needs and is consistent with place-based community development practice.

## Contributors

Karen Denham, Microfinance Manager Queensland, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand  
Em James, CEO  
Chris Mundy, Sector Development Lead – Research, Policy and Networks  
Neighbourhood and Community Centres in DCHDE-identified priority areas

## Funding Partners

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand  
The Department of Communities, Housing and the Digital Economy (DCHDE)



# Celebrating Our Board

As a member-based incorporated association, NCQ is governed by an elected Board. We thank the Board for their time and commitment to the sector in 2022.

Our Board is comprised of a minimum of seven and maximum of nine committee members. This includes three ordinary members from the Metropolitan Zone and four ordinary members from the Rural/Regional Zone who are Neighbourhood Centre representatives. This geographical diversity supports NCQ to effectively represent, collaborate with and understand the unique perspectives of Centres and communities throughout Queensland.

(Note: 'Metropolitan Zone' means SEQ, specifically metropolitan Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. 'Rural/Regional Zone' means the remaining areas in Queensland that are not part of the Metropolitan Zone).



**Tomas Passeggi**

NCQ Chair  
Metropolitan QLD  
*Baringa Community Centre*



**Louise Judge**

Treasurer  
Rural/Regional QLD  
*Chinchilla Community Centre*



**Mel Hilditch**

Board Member  
Metropolitan QLD  
*Community Plus+*



**Tanya Stevenson**

Secretary  
Rural/Regional QLD  
*Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre*



**Caroline Cuckson**

Board Member  
Metropolitan QLD  
*Deception Bay Neighbourhood*



**Val Edsall**

Board Member  
Rural/Regional QLD  
*The Neighbourhood Hub Mackay*



**Alana Wahl**

Board Member  
Rural/Regional QLD  
*Laidley Community Centre*



**Fiona Hunt**

Associate Member

Board contact details: [theboard@ncq.org.au](mailto:theboard@ncq.org.au)

# Celebrating Our Team

Our team has a deep commitment to social justice and sustainability, delivering on a diverse program of work from disaster resilience to community development.

Our team is a powerhouse of experience and expertise, and welcome collaborations for the benefit of the sector and the community.



**Em James**

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**Laurelle Muir**

Disaster Resilience Co-Lead

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**Natasha Odgers**

Disaster Resilience Co-Lead

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# Celebrating Our Members

As the peak body for Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland, we represent over 143 Neighbourhood and Community Centres across the state.

Walk into a Neighbourhood Centre, and you'll meet committed, caring and resourceful people. Whether volunteers, staff or board members, they care about their communities and work hard to deliver extraordinary outcomes every day.

2022 has been particularly challenging for many of our members. The soaring cost of living, the increase in DFV and the housing crisis have led to skyrocketing demand. Centres have also supported their communities through COVID-19 and compounding natural disasters, with some Centres experiencing three floods within a 6-month period.

We acknowledge and appreciate the immense contributions of Centres throughout 2022. Together, they supported over 1.6 million people in Queensland.

We are particularly grateful for the time and energy Centres have committed – amidst their incredibly demanding local-level work – to making visible the collective impact of Centres across Queensland. In 2022 this included participating in the the 2021 Sector Impact Survey, contributing to the State Budget Advocacy, courageously speaking up in media interviews and collaborating to develop the Disaster Resilience strategies.

We thank you.

# Thank you to our supporters

We are grateful for the supporters, collaborators and funders who have been part of our success over the past 12 months.

Australian Communities Foundation

Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association

Community Services Industry Alliance

Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

GIVIT

Griffith University - School Of Health Sciences & Social Work

Griffith University – Yunis Centre

Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand

Community Development Queensland

Queensland Council of Social Service

Queensland Social Enterprise Council

Queenslanders with Disability Network

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

Paul Ramsay Foundation

SurveyVista

University of Queensland – School of Social Science

8Ball Media

