





# QUEENSLAND FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019-20**





**Queensland Families and Communities Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Queensland, their diversity, histories and knowledge, and their continuing connections to land and community. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community members, past, present and emerging.**



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# WHO WE ARE

QFCA is the peak body for Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland. QFCA board members and staff are comprised of current and former neighbourhood centre committee members, managers and workers. Staff members operate out of Neighbourhood and Community Centres (NCCs) across QLD. In 2020 this included Chinchilla, Cairns, Deception Bay and Brisbane. QFCA is thus immersed in the daily experiences, strategic challenges and core value of our members. This enables QFCA to provide meaningful representation, information-sharing and insights across rural, regional and urban NCCs and their communities.

This deep understanding of neighbourhood centres is strengthened by our strong relationships with other peak bodies, government departments and academic research institutions. In addition to its participation in the Queensland's Community Service Sector peaks network, QFCA sits on the board of the national peak body for neighbourhood centres, the Australian Neighbourhood and Communities Association (ANHCA). These horizontal and vertical relationships equip QFCA with key insights into the sector nationally and globally.

In 2019, QFCA had 119 paying member organisations, including over 95% of NCCs funded under the DCDSS Neighbourhood Centre funding program. QFCA's membership has grown by over 50% in the past three years due to our extensive engagement activities and sector relevance. We nurture relationships with over 140 NCCs throughout Queensland, co-creating training and development opportunities, participatory research projects, networking, resources and professional support. We also work closely with government to provide policy advice, stakeholder linkages and real-time community data.

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

## VISION:

Neighbourhoods transformed into thriving communities that are self-directed, connected and resourceful

## PURPOSE:

The QFCA:

- “Tell the story” of citizen-led community transformation through Neighbourhood Centres
- Build cross sector relationships to increase the value and effectiveness of centres
- Provide opportunities for centres to be connected and united
- Train and lead centres in place based community development
- Foster research and evaluation into the community based work of centres

## OUR CHALLENGE:

To become an effective leader of Neighbourhood and Community Centres so their value will be increased.

### If we:

Build relationships that deliver deep insights about Neighbourhood Centres

Highlight citizen led place based community development work

Focus on developing a strong evidence base

Encourage active leadership across Neighbourhood Centres

### By:

Forming strategic cross sector and government partnerships.

Engaging strategies to share stories

Fostering research into Neighbourhood Centre work

Creating forums for leadership and training

### This will result in:

The QFCA becoming a strategic leader in the human services sector

Greater awareness of the work of Neighbourhood Centres

The value of Neighbourhood Centres being clear

Increased capacity of Neighbourhood Centres to empower local citizens

### Which will lead to:

Neighbourhood Centres acting collaboratively to contribute to system transformation.

Neighbourhood Centres being recognised as leaders in place methodology.

Greater investment and support of local community based work.

Neighbourhood Centres leading communities to drive their own agendas for change.

### Overall this will contribute to:

Neighbourhood Centres being widely recognised as the citizen led vehicle for transforming communities in Queensland.

# OUR PEOPLE

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

### CONTINUING MEMBERS:

- **TOMAS PASSEGGI** (Chair) – Caloundra Community Centre
- **LOUISE JUDGE** (Treasurer) – Chinchilla Community Centre
- **FIONA HUNT** – Basic Rights Queensland
- **VALERIYA EDSALL** – The Neighbourhood Hub Mackay

### OUTGOING MEMBERS 2019-20:

- **JENNY RYAN** – New Farm Neighbourhood Centre
- **LINDA MCCLELLAND** – Hinchinbrook Community Support Service
- **SAMANTHA WAY** – Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre
- **VIRGINIA WACKER** – Millmerran Community Support Service

### INCOMING MEMBERS 2020-21:

- **ALANA WAHL** – Laidley Community Centre
- **CAROLINE CUCKSON** – Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre
- **MEL HILDITCH** - Community Plus+
- **TANYA STEVENSON** - Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre

## STAFF

- **EM JAMES** – General Manager
- **GEOFF ROBERSON** – Executive Officer
- **CHRIS MUNDY** – Sector Development Officer
- **MENGTING LIN AND NATASHA ODGERS** – Disaster Resilience Project Workers

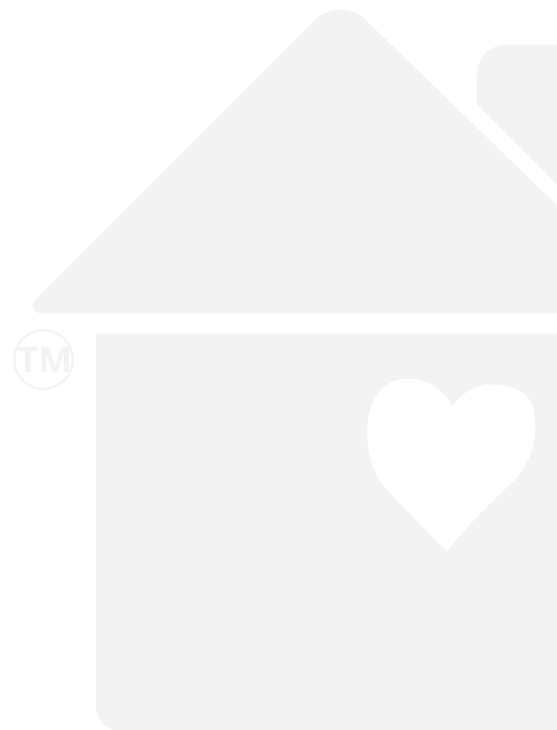
# FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

***Tomas Passeggi, Caloundra Community Centre***

It's been testing times for our communities. Besides the obvious public health challenges, our organisations have had to manage complex and on the fly changes to industrial relations, human service payments, sharp increases in some areas of our work and sharp decrease in others. They had to manage staff morale and physical work arrangements, plough through various legislation and insurance clauses, establish business continuity plans and make extremely difficult decisions, sometimes with a real lack of clarity from various Government departments, as to what course of actions we need to follow.


The questions with every change in QLD Health roadmaps and protocols seemed to be: "are we considered 'family and community' or 'business and economy?'; how do we discern which one of our groups and services are essential?

Despite all of our challenges, our sector has done phenomenal work, as we usually do, in patching service holes, displaying incredible flexibility and addressing needs of those who often fall through the cracks and above all keeping people connected. From food relief to sewing masks and hospital gowns; from social calls to online choirs, we have been instrumental in keeping our communities thriving.



As part of our organisation's growth and new directions we have created a new role of QFCA General Manager. In June 2020 we appointed Em James to this position. With over 15 years of experience in the for-purpose sector, Em has worked in a range of roles including; community development, community centre management, sector advocacy with peak bodies, and university facilitation and research. Em is passionate about the role of neighbourhood centres in connecting people to make change in their communities and have greater agency over issues affecting their lives. Em holds a Bachelor of Social Science, a Master of Development Practice (Community Development) and is in the final stages of a Master of Business Administration (Social Impact).

Following requests from the sector at the 2019 Community Development Conference, we launched a series of webinars on community development practice. We did this in partnership with a number of leading Queensland practitioners and academics. Community Development practice has always had a strong tradition in Neighbourhood and Community Centres as an authentic and grass roots methodology to engage in a meaningful way with our communities.



However, the nature of competitive funding, pressures to deliver more crisis end services, Government reporting requirements and staff mobility has had a negative impact on this important practice over the last decade or so. With these webinars and some more upcoming opportunities we are hoping to upskill and rekindle the sector in this vital practice.

NCCs have been around since the 60s. Historically they were established as a place for local people to work together on matters of importance to them. They were and are to this day an important part of locality based social infrastructure in Queensland, across Australia and in many countries around the world. They have traditionally operated within a citizen led community development framework. Ordinary people taking responsibility for their wellbeing - learning and doing it together.

NCCs are welcoming spaces and our doors are open to everyone. We respond quickly to community emergencies such as floods, fires, storms and cyclones. A lot of human resources are allocated in advocating for people to access services



required at different points in their lives. In regional areas, they have an even greater significance as community members have even less access to specialised services.

Prior to the State Election a number of Centres and other representative bodies conducted lobbying of individual members of Parliament for further funding for our sector. We welcomed those requests and acknowledge that QFCA did not publicly seek an investment commitment from either party as an election promise. Our approach has been to work with the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors for the last three years to strengthen the sector and assist in the preparation of a sound budget pitch to Treasury to ensure the long-term re-structure of funding and reporting arrangements. We have done this in the following ways:

- Increasing recognition of Neighbourhood Centres as hubs of community-led responses to natural disasters, investing \$95,000 to develop sector capacity in Monsoon regions.
- Activated \$30,000 in department funding for sector communications and resources.
- Investing \$70,000 in developing a new reporting and performance framework for DCDSS' Neighbourhood Centre program.
- Undertaking Monthly Meetings with the Assistant Director General and Executive Director
- Regular conversations with Minister O'Rourke
- Participating in the DCDSS Thriving Communities Leadership Group with other peak organisations from the community sector.
- Undertaking joint work and co-design in the Department's Investment Logic for Neighbourhood Centres with Griffith University

- Securing \$40,000 for bursaries to support regional and remote Centres to attend the Community Development Conference.

The Department have acknowledged the complexities we have raised about the Neighbourhood Centre sector and need for long term sustainability. In fact, in a letter to QFCA from Director General of the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, Clare O'Connor wrote:



Firstly, I would like to thank you for the ongoing positive collaborative working relationship between the Queensland Families and Communities Association (QFCA) and the Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (the department) During this challenging year, I believe our partnership has resulted in improved support, guidance and information provision to NCCs across Queensland. thereby providing communities with the assistance they need to thrive.

It is pleasing to hear that the department's investment is being utilised for training and educational purposes, in particular in the areas of participatory development and community development practice Place-based, resident-led tailored solutions are integral to supporting communities, particularly those impacted by natural disaster. drought. expenenang disadvantage or facing challenges This work is especially important as communities recover from the impacts of COVID-19.



Furthermore, on the 12th of November, the same day the new QLD cabinet was announced, I received a phone call from newly elected Department of Communities Minister Leeanne Enoch. This is testament of the Government taking our sector seriously and willing to engage with QFCA. Our General Manager, Em, and I have since met with Minister Enoch and believe her interest and enthusiasm for Neighbourhood Centres will be a great asset to our sector.



I would like to thank all the staff and project workers throughout this year. Geoff, Chris, Em, Natasha, Tobi, Lorna and Mengting. Your passion and drive to this organisation and the sector is infectious and truly appreciated. I also want to thank those Centres who are always happy to provide meeting and working space for our travelling band of workers. Community Plus, Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre, Northside Connect, Baringa Community Centre and Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre.

QFCA would have not come as far as it has in the last few years if it wasn't for our ANHCA colleagues. From sharing resources and ideas, support with policy development and funding submissions, guest speaking and data collection, and much more. Nicole, Can, Gretchen, Jane, Greg, Michael, Tracey, Kylie, Sue, Cameron, David and Emily; I am truly thankful for your contributions and ongoing mentorship.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the outgoing committee for their work and commitment. Jenny, Sam, Lynda and long term member Virginia, thank you. Our robust conversations and your unique perspectives are what makes this work amazing.

***Tomas Passeggi***  
***Chairperson, Queensland Families and Communities Association***  
***Community Development Worker,***  
***Caloundra Community Centre***

# FROM OUR TREASURER

***Louise Judge, Chinchilla Neighbourhood Centre***

The 2019-2020 financial year saw significant change in the financial situation and arrangements of Queensland Families and Communities Association Inc. Highlights of these changes include

- a new bookkeeper – welcome and thank you Leanne!
- transitioned to the use of XERO for all our bookkeeping and payroll needs
- growth in funding as QFCA successfully secured new funding to undertake various sector development and disaster projects

This additional funding resulted in the management committee conducting a review of the needs of the organization. The committee made the exciting decision to invest retained members funds to recruit our General Manager in June 2019 to support this growth and change – welcome Em!

All of this has led to a change in the financial position of the organisation. The committee and staff have worked together to ensure costs are managed, and funds have been invested wisely in support of the growth and changes for QFCA. At the end of this financial year QFCA is in a sound financial position.

I am pleased to table the Auditors Report for the year ended 30 June 2020, prepared by Goodman Chartered Accountants. Total member's funds have increased over this financial year to \$262,567. Our income from all sources totaled \$352,678. Coronavirus supplements from the government contributed \$10,198 of this. Expenses for the year totaled \$312,033, and we recorded a surplus of \$40,646. At the end of the financial year QFCA had \$284,537 invested in a term deposit, accounting for staff liabilities, all other liabilities, and member's funds.

Feedback from the auditors has revealed a number of challenges, and in turn opportunities to improve our financial systems. Some of these challenges result from changing bookkeeping systems and the resultant limited access to records; others result from inadequate adherence to, and adaptation of, our financial policies and procedures considering the rapid growth of QFCA and our remote workforce. Systems have been put in place to address some of these issues immediately, while other improvements require a more considered response in consultation with our accountant over the course of the financial year.

Louise Judge  
QFCA Treasurer  
January 2021

I request:

1. That the Queensland Families and Communities Audited Financial Report for 2019-2020 is accepted.
2. That the Treasurer's Report to the 2020 Annual General Meeting QFCA is accepted.
3. That Queensland Audit Services are appointed as the auditors for QFCA in 2020-2021, per quote.



# FROM OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

***Val Edsall (QFCA Board Representative) and Bea Rogan (Sub-Committee Chair)***

On behalf of the QFCA Community Development (CD) Sub-Committee it gives us great pleasure to present the report for this year.

Fortunately, by utilising the Zoom platform, the CD Sub-Committee was able to continue to function through the COVID 19 restrictions imposed by Government in its successful attempt to prevent COVID 19 taking hold in our communities.

We would like to thank other members of the Sub-Committee for their continuing commitment to furthering CD practice in NCCs in Queensland. We are so grateful to the staff of QFCA for the superb work they are doing in supporting this important work through a number of projects and events.

The formation of the Sub-Committee and all subsequent work was in direct response from NCC's who participated in the CD Conference in October 2019. They identified a number of concerns. In particular the number of NCCs that are no longer working with people from the bottom up, drawing people with a common idea or concern together to shape and run collective action and bring about social change. It was identified that many NCC's have moved primarily into a service model approach which is about systems that work for the broad community, are implemented from the top down and can be replicated across different sites. The gradual loss of citizen involvement around common concerns was directly linked to the loss of CD practice skills. There was a request for QFCA to work with the sector to enhance the practice which facilitates local people working together around their concerns.

Based on this mandate the QFCA Board established a CD Sub-Committee with the purpose of furthering CD practice in NCCs. A Terms of Reference was prepared, and committee members were appointed for a period of 2 years. Membership included representatives from QFCA; NCCs ; CD Qld and senior practitioners. Momentum built very quickly as a number of people and organisations made commitments to support this agenda. They include:

- 01** A participatory research project: "Has CD been lost, is it relevant to today, what would it take to give it new life?" A partnership with Griffith University was established and task group was established and under the guidance of Dr Ann Ingamells with Helen Betts from Griffith University; Maria Tennant and Carmel Daveson, all senior and experienced practitioners and trainers. The research was conducted through the delivery of 5 2hr webinars. A comprehensive report has been prepared and will be launched soon by QFCA.



**02** An experimental Education Training project: “Implementing a developmental program in your organisation”. Anthony Kelly made a generous offer to facilitate a educational conversational process, with clear objectives, for a group of 6 NCC Directors/Managers who have an interest in enhancing their understanding of the capacity and structures to promote and carry a participatory development program in their organisation and create an environment for both services and community development work to flourish. The project was delivered over four online sessions and supported by QFCA staff. It was based on the section, “Building Developmental Organisations” in the book ‘Participatory Development Practice Using traditional and contemporary frameworks’ by Anthony Kelly and Peter Westoby (2018).

**03** A mapping session was convened with the purpose: “How can QFCA work together with people and organisations/structures to strengthen CD practice in neighbourhood centres”. This was a beginning step in building an analysis to inform the work required in 2021 to progress the agenda.

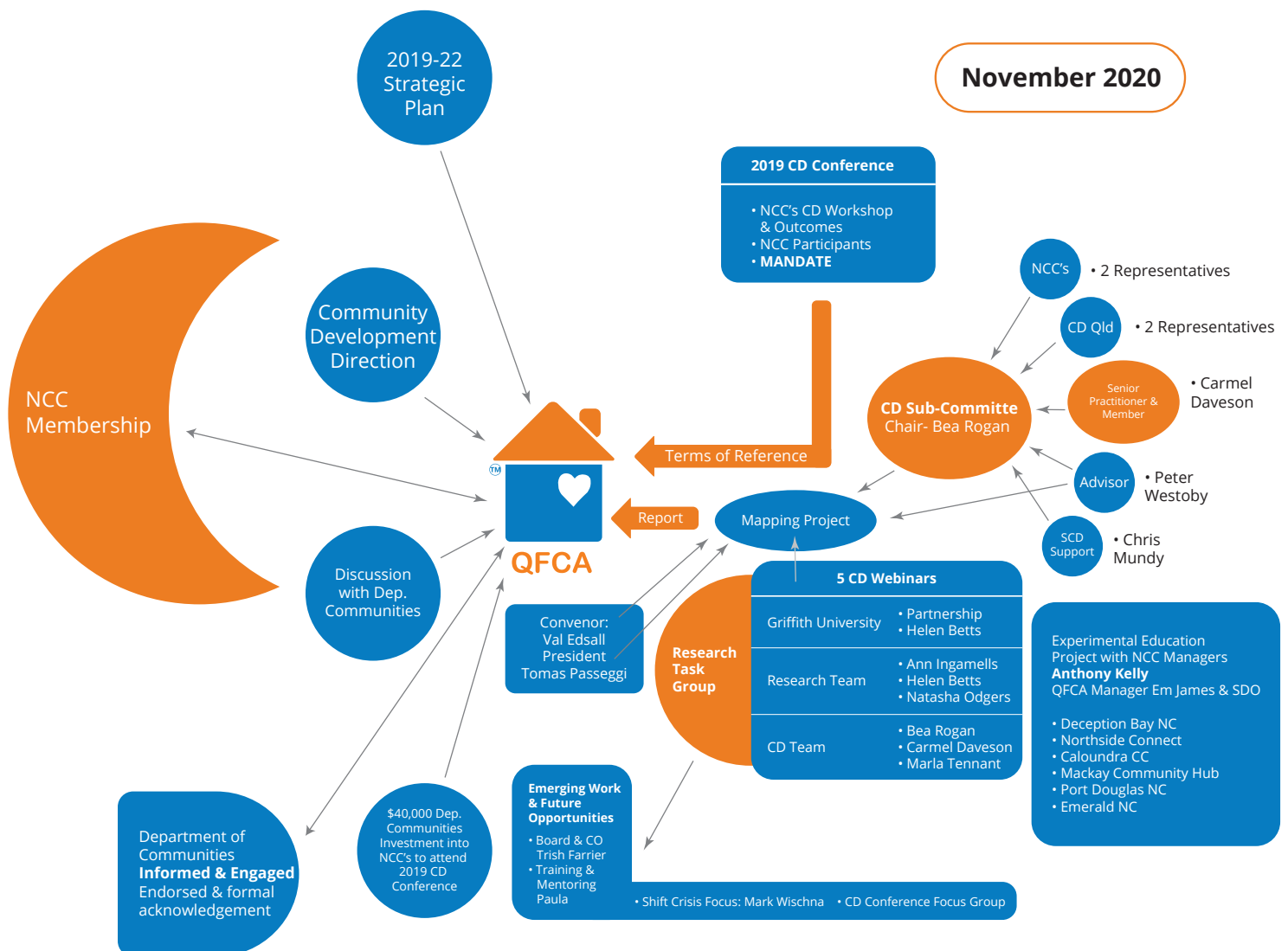
**04** Harvesting project: Supporting NCCs who engaged in the research project and want to work with other NCCs to further:

- Training & mentoring opportunities
- Supporting whole of organisation in building a developmental agenda including Management Committees
- How to respond to the crisis demand developmentally
- Internal and external support

Our collective CD work has been rewarding over the past year, bringing lots of learnings, meaningful conversations, connections and opportunities. Last year’s projects unveiled that despite some loss of knowledge and skills, there is a shared passion and yearning in the sector for creating social change through grass-roots community development. We hear the stories and see the opportunities for advancing community development across the centres, locally on the ground, in organisations and systems. And see CD as a unique way of practice that can truly promote participation, respect, social justice, and human rights. Therefore, this year we will aim to become a standing CD subcommittee of QFCA, will continue working with NCCs on the Harvesting project, and will report on the findings from the research project and other work with the goal of strengthening CD practice in NCCs across Queensland.

We would like to express our express gratitude to the Board of QFCA for the foresight and commitment to NCCs across Qld in supporting this work. As well, Dr. Ann Ingamells, Anthony Kelly, Carmel Daveson, Maria Tennant, and Helen Betts, Griffith University who offered their expertise and a huge commitment of time all on a voluntary basis. Equally we would like to acknowledge all the people from over 80 NCCs who participated in the work over the past year.

# Resourcing Community Development with Neighbourhood and Community Centres in Queensland





# FROM OUR STAFF TEAM

***Em James (General Manager), Chris Mundy (Sector Development Officer), Geoff Roberson (Executive Officer), Mengting Lin (Disaster Resilience Worker), Natasha Odgers (Disaster Resilience Coordinator)***

The Neighbourhood and Community Centre Sector in Queensland has undergone a massive journey over the past 10 years.

In 2017, the Queensland Government agreed to fund the Queensland Families and Communities Association for a Sector Development Officer. This came after 5 years of what we have identified as a “sector rupture”, featuring widespread funding cuts to all organisations and the need for sector diversification to maintain financial viability. The recommendations of the Carmody Report also had a considerable impact in 2013 with the push for more community-based family support.

The Sector Development Officer role at the QFCA was an important move by the Queensland Government to rebuild a sector that had been through some hard knocks. The role began by building connections with stakeholders that could assist the sector on our journey and then moved to building the capacity of the Neighbourhood Centres themselves to be valued and unified.

The 2019/2020 year has seen us not only regain considerable ground in sector rebuilding but to move the QFCA in a direction that has been unprecedented in the peak body's history. This work began in the 2018/2019 year with the formation of a clear strategic plan, soon followed by additional project work that was undertaken using participatory development approaches with the sector itself.

In late 2019, the QFCA re-joined with the CD Queensland Conference and secured funding for many Neighbourhood Centres to attend. The conference physically brought together many Neighbourhood Centres from around the state to discuss ways to move forward as a sector. The result of these discussions led to the formation of the QFCA's Community Development sub-committee that has undertaken many projects in 2020. A research project with Griffith University followed, along with experimental education programs and mapping, all provided pro-bono by senior practitioners who have decades of experience in the sector.

Despite a global pandemic, the organisation launched itself into a State-Wide Disaster Resilience Strategy, bringing together our vast number of Neighbourhood Centres affected by drought, monsoon and bush-fire. These projects saw the employment of more staff members at the QFCA including Ros Wade, Natasha Odgers and Mengting Lin. The end of the 2019/20 financial year also saw us undertake the design of a new reporting and performance framework for the sector. Lorna McGinnis was a most welcome addition to the team throughout this time conducting an amazing piece of work that has been well received by the Queensland Government. These additional projects paved the way for the QFCA to employ its first ever General Manager, Em James. This increased resourcing has been invaluable for QFCA to build the vital infrastructure to ensure it can operate as a peak body well into the future.

While COVID19 affected the service delivery of our organisations, the QFCA's confidence with online systems has meant that we have connected Neighbourhood Centres together in ways we have not previously. The wonders of Zoom have meant centres can meet with us and their peers despite being more than 2000 km's away at network meetings, webinars, workshops and in discussion groups. The use of technology has also enabled the organisation to form closer relationships with interstate peak bodies. In particular, our relationship with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria has allowed us to embark on Queensland's first ever Annual survey and social value calculations.

As with all sustainable community work, it's important for us to be mindful that sector development for Neighbourhood Centres is a marathon, not a race. Many of us are disappointed when resources don't suddenly appear for the Neighbourhood and Community Centre sector in Queensland (particularly when we saw how suddenly they have been able to disappear in previous Governments!). It is important for us to acknowledge that long term sustainability and developmental work is a process that takes time and needs structuring. Strong and unified communities are not built overnight. However, as an organisation and as a sector, we have much to celebrate over the past year despite its challenges. Our growth as a sector has been considerable, the process being just as important as our end goal as we work together to transform Neighbourhoods into thriving communities that are self-directed, connected and resourceful.



”

QFCA is working to support the sector and providing a lot of value. I thought the NCC survey was a great initiative and it is through work like this a voice can be provided to government with data and outcomes to sit behind the messaging.

(Community centre feedback 2020)

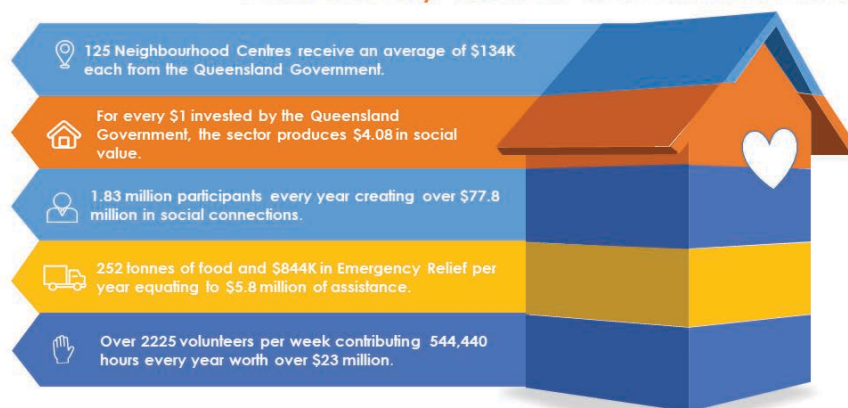
# Highlight: Communicating the Value of our Sector

The inaugural Annual Survey of Neighbourhood Centres enabled QFCA to estimate baseline social values for Queensland's entire Neighbourhood Centre network for the first time in the history of our sector. \$77.8 million worth of social value and over 1.83 million participants per year! They are astonishing figures that demonstrate the power of local place-based centres who often work away unnoticed by larger organisations, Government institutions and the general public.

The survey will build cumulative insights each year, which can be used in further reports, grants programs, policy development and further research and advocacy. This work was made possible through the support of our Victorian equivalent peak, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria. Both sector and stakeholder feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Each participating centre also received their own statistics and local value report. This was used in many AGM's, brochures and advocacy material during the state election in October 2020. The QFCA continued to work both in front of, and behind the scenes to ensure that the Neighbourhood Centre sector and their local communities were being seriously considered in party policies leading into the October 2020 election. Our strong working partnership with the Department continues into this new political cycle, supported by increased capacity to measure and communicate the value of NCCs.

## Queensland Neighbourhood Centres *Valued by Local Communities*



## Sample election communication materials

**We want to talk to you about Neighbourhood Centres helping communities weather the perfect storm, by providing significant social value.**

We could talk about the \$4.08 of social value that goes back into communities from every \$1 of government funding.

We could talk about the 1.8 million visitors that create over \$77 million of social connections.

We could talk about the 250 tonnes of emergency food relief we provide worth \$5.8 million in assistance.

And we could talk about the 2,200 volunteers contributing 540,000 hours' worth, over \$23 million each year.

We could talk about all that because it's all very important and all very true. But what we'd really like to talk about is the intangible benefits Neighbourhood Centres also provide. Then we would talk about community pride, a sense of belonging, leadership development, community voice through advocacy, and increased personal independence. And we would talk about fostering resilience, about being embedded in communities, about local governance, and about local resourcing.

**Neighbourhood Centres - the beating heart of communities.**

Another dimension of the ongoing focus of capturing and communicating the value of NCCs is the Performance and Reporting Framework. QFCA codeveloped this framework with the sector and DCDSS in 2020, and would like to thank NCCs and our project worker Lorna McGinnis for their valuable contribution to this framework. Its implementation would greatly improve both sector and Departmental capacity to understand and aggregate the work of Neighbourhood Centres. QFCA have a key role to play in supporting the roll-out of this framework with Neighbourhood Centres across Queensland.



# Highlight: Sector relationships, communications and resources

The power of bringing Neighbourhood Centres together is clear in the flow-on effects of the 2019 Community Development Queensland Conference. QFCA initiated a “neighbourhood centre” stream at the conference and negotiated \$40,000 in DCDSS funding to sponsor neighbourhood centres to attend. The value of bringing neighbourhood centres together for meaningful discussions and connections is evident in the ongoing sector-wide conversation regarding the integral role of NCCs in fostering place-based change. This has led to the creation of the CD Sub-Committee, a research partnership with Griffith University, Community Development webinars, individual mentoring of NCC workers by experienced practitioners, and facilitation of a pilot training program for managers offered by eminent NCC and CD practitioners. QFCA would like to thank everyone involved in this ongoing work.

QFCA have also been focussing on sector communications and resources, using a variety of online platforms including regular sector newsletters, email distribution and social media presence. These platforms provide news stories, information, grant opportunities, training and academic material increasing the capacity of the Neighbourhood Centre sector, consolidating its identity, unifying organisations and sharing sector achievements internally and externally. Responses to our 2020 Sector Communications Survey was highly positive, with feedback incorporated into our 2021 planning; -

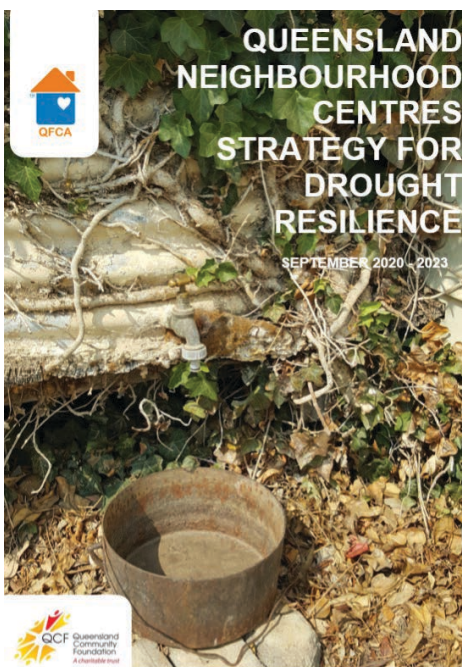


The newsletter is great, it represents interesting, informative information, and demonstrates the value NCCs provide to the community. I find it easy to figure out what I am interested in reading and feel it is something I can easily fit into my busy schedule... Well done. (Community centre feedback 2020)

In 2021 we are excited to expand this work further with the launch of our new website, which will include a resource, learning and sharing platform for the sector.

# Highlight: Neighbourhood Centre Strategies for Disaster Resilience

The rising incidence of disasters worldwide has highlighted to both government and neighbourhoods the importance of building resilient, vibrant and sustainable communities. The Neighbourhood Centre sector has the skills, experience and relationships to lead the way – yet it does not always receive the recognition or resourcing to do so. In light of this, QFCA is pleased to have worked alongside Neighbourhood Centres to launch the Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Drought Resilience (Drought Resilience Strategy) and Queensland Neighbourhood Centres Strategy for Monsoon Resilience (Monsoon Resilience Strategy). A third strategy focussing on Bushfire Resilience will be launched in March 2021. These strategies focus on regions affected by the three most prominent environmental disasters experienced in Queensland – Drought, Monsoon and Bushfire – which collectively covers most of Queensland. COVID-19 is adding yet another dimension to this ongoing participatory action research and the implementation of the strategies.



## DROUGHT RESILIENCE STRATEGY

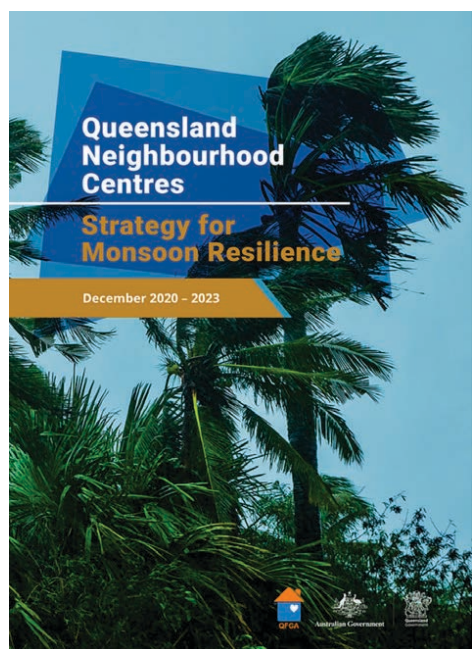
With funding support from the Queensland Communities Foundation, QFCA connected with Neighbourhood Centres in West and Far-West Queensland to explore and understand the roles they play in supporting drought-affected communities. 18 neighbourhood centres collaborated on the development of the Drought Resilience Strategy.

Through their stories and reflections on drought resilience initiatives, it is evident that Neighbourhood Centres are trusted by the community and a place that people turn to for support in times of need. They act as a resource for emergency relief, a conduit for drought information, and a key point of referral to local support services. Neighbourhood Centres also bring the community together for support and connection. These multifaceted roles, naturally, also come with challenges. The development of

the Drought Resilience Strategy involved analytically reviewing these challenges and identifying sustainable strategies to address them.

The facilitated online conversations - a critical part of the participatory research process - transformed into a think tank for Neighbourhood Centres to share their knowledge and experiences. Together centres devised strategies to strengthen and enhance their work in building the resilience of drought-affected communities. Neighbourhood Centres then presented the identified strategies and shared their stories at the online launch in September 2020. This was well received by attendees, including Claire O'Connor, Director-General of Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors.

With thanks to the generous contributions of Care Goondiwindi, Charleville and District Community Support Association, Somerset Region Community Support, Tara and District Family Support Committee, Boulia Community Support Service, Brilla Brilla Centre, Cloncurry Community Support Service, Winton Shire Council, Chinchilla Family Support Centre, East Creek Community Centre, Graham House Community Centre, Millmerrin Community Support Service, Murilla Community Centre, Paroo Community Support Service, Centacare Kingaroy, Wilsonton Height Community Centre, Dalby Crisis Support Association, and Harlaxton Neighbourhood Centre. We are now seeking to resource the implementation phase of this strategy.



## MONSOON RESILIENCE STRATEGY

The Monsoon Resilience Strategy was funded under the Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement to understand and enhance the capacity of the Neighbourhood Centres in North and Far North Queensland to support their communities in times of monsoon troughs. Over 26 Neighbourhood Centres were involved in the participatory research project.

It is clear that Northern Queensland have supported their communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters in their communities for decades have first-hand knowledge of what locals need in order to cope with impacts of the disaster and rebuilt their lives. The Monsoon Resilience Strategy highlights the necessity of drawing on Neighbourhood Centres' local knowledge, supports and connections in disaster planning and management. It also emphasises the importance

of fostering community engagement and connection to support disaster resilience at the individual, community and organisational level. Neighbourhood Centres' presentation of these principles and key strategies at the online launch was commended by Tammy Myles, Executive Director of Community Recovery at Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors;

QFCA would like to thank Boulia Community Support Service, Brilla Brilla Centre - Community Support Service, Burdekin Community Association, Burdekin Neighbourhood Centre, Carpentaria Shire Welfare Services, Centacare North, Centacare Townsville, Cloncurry Community Support Service, Collinsville Community Association. Community Gro, Community Support Centre Innisfail, Cooktown District Community Centre, Dimbulah Community Centre, Douglas Shire Community Services Association, Hambledon House, Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre, Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre, Manoora/Mooroobool Neighbourhood Centre, Mareeba Community Centre, Mt Isa Family Support Service & Neighbourhood Centre, North Townsville Community Hub, NPA Family & Community Services ATSI Corp. Port Douglas Community Services Network, Prospect Community Services, Rollingstone and District Community Association, Tully Support Centre and Whitsunday's Neighbourhood Centre. Their generous contributions were instrumental to the development of the Monsoon Resilience Strategy.

The Disaster Resilience team has formed trusting and collaborative relationships with participating Neighbourhood Centres through these two projects. We will continue to showcase Neighbourhood Centres in their resilience-building role by providing a platform for story and knowledge sharing in the implementation of the strategies.



Congratulations to all involved in the development of the Monsoon Resilience Strategy. I think it's a fabulous example of how collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and experiences can really support and build the capacity across the broader network of Neighbourhood Centres, but more importantly, will also create the opportunity for you to showcase the role you do and can play in disasters, whether it be in preparedness, response or recovery or into future community development and resilience going forward.



# APPENDICES

**Queensland Families and Communities  
Audited Financial Report for 2019-2020**

**Queensland Audit Services – Quote for Services**

**2019 Annual General Meeting minutes**



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