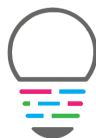


# Extended Families

2020 Annual Report

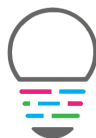
Innovation and  
Adaptation





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## Our People

### Committee of Management

President	Katherine Shamai
Vice-Presidents	Anthony Privitelli
Treasurer	Mei Wu
Members	Graeme West Peter Ernst-Russell Michael Louis Bryce Williams Leigh Huynh (to Oct 19) Abby Thevarajah (to Feb 20)

### Management Team

Chief Executive Officer	Julie Langdon
Manager – North West	Tamara Williams
Manager – South East	Rosemary Nicholls
Business Manager	Diana Abelardo (from Sep 19)
E-Learning	Derek Green
Project Manager	Julia Klieber
LinC Team Leader	Nicole Leathem

### Administration Team

Administration	Margaret Fitzgerald Natura Lia (to Dec 19) Olivia Nam
Finance	Monica Yan Ru Wang
Plan Management	Roz Talib Hai Tran Cindy Cheng Joshua Polley (to Feb 20) Nurasikin Ahmad Ahysa Ahmad (from Aug 19) Long Bui

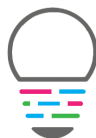
### Staff team

#### Coordinators and Group Facilitators

Bonny Barry	Jessica Jones (Nov 19 to Jan 20)	Nghia Nguyen
Kerrie Brown	Charlotte Kendrick (to Jan 20)	Amanda Perry
Kim Phuong Cheng	Tu Cam Le	Helen Roberts
Paul Collinge (from Sep 19)	Shuhan Liu	Megan Sapiano (from Mar 20)
Nga Do	Quyen Ly (from Sept 19)	Zoe Sweeney
Thi Thuy Duong	Nicola Marriot	Yoyo Tang
Rex Hateley	Leila McConnell (to Mar 20)	Chloe Thoo
Ashleigh Hicks	Brianna Muldoon	Quyen Tran (from Nov 19)
Quynh Hoang (from Nov 19)	Kim Anh Nguyen	Doris Zhang
Karlie Ignatiadis	Lan Anh Nguyen	

#### Inclusion Support Worker Team

Demi Adams	Matt Bean	Carla Burn
Parvin Ahadi	Dia (Darawan) Benjapak	Jessica Callanan
Cintia Alonso	Christopher Berogna	Lauren Cameron
Jacinta Anderson	Rabya Bhatia	Georgia Campbell
Najia Anjum	Rem Boih	Jade Cascun
Chiara Arena	Louisa Bonavia	Rebecca Van Sui Nuam Cen Hrang
Jacinta Aulsebrook	Jarryd Brand	Natasha Chan
Kayla Barden	Eamon Brodie	Katie Chandler
David Barros	Alex Bruhn	Kim Phuong Chenh
Bronte Batten	Gemma Brunetti	Nicole Cheung



Sasha Chopra  
 Alvin (Tsz Lok) Chung  
 Bridget Clark  
 Dana Clarke  
 Samson Clarke  
 Emma Clohesy  
 Madison Colpo  
 Luke Daniels  
 Alex Dean  
 Tori Debrincat  
 Alison Dillon  
 Lien Dinh  
 Sarah Drinan  
 Emma Druce  
 Sarah Druza  
 Sarah Eade  
 Stefanie Evans  
 Dana Ezzat  
 Jessica Farago  
 Molimau Farani  
 Hayley Farnan  
 Yueqi Feng  
 Hannah Fitzgerald  
 Tayla Fordham  
 Bianca Fotia  
 Ricardo Francois  
 Kay Fung  
 Alix, Gardiner-Phillips  
 Nadia Garofalo  
 Isabel Geleit  
 Maureen Gill  
 Dylan Gillies-Parsons  
 Dee Gistau  
 Jade Goodall  
 Nada Hajduk  
 Paris Halford  
 Grace Hall  
 Ayden Hamilton  
 Molly Helmore  
 Madison Henwood  
 Bronte Hodgson  
 Rylie Hogan  
 Paris Houeix  
 Emma Howden  
 Lik Hang Hui  
 Wan Ying Hui  
 Emily Hunt  
 Woolley Jaimie  
 Jan Johnston

Elisa Karlake  
 Stephanie Katsikaros  
 Alexandra Kennedy  
 Madeleine Khalu  
 Hayley Kinneavy  
 Andrew Ksefteris  
 Wai Lun Lam  
 Smriti Lamgadhe  
 Alana Laslowski  
 Tiffany Lay  
 Bobby Le  
 Thi Ngoc Han Le  
 Tse Wing Joanne Lee  
 Monica Leung  
 Jessica Lim  
 Shaun Lim  
 Catherine Luah  
 Jennifer Ma  
 Asha Macalin  
 Lorraine Magnaye  
 Rhiannon Makdissi  
 Ryan Marinelli  
 Kristi Mazalin  
 Barry McGinn  
 Ciara McHardy  
 Lachlan McKirdy  
 James Meikle  
 Nicole Millard  
 Gabriela Morell Camacho  
 Sam Morey  
 Deborah Morrison  
 Joshua Morrissy  
 Brianna Muldoon  
 Isbah Najam  
 Daniel Nguyen  
 Hung Nguyen  
 Thanh Ngoc Dan Nguyen  
 Nadia Omar  
 Irene Orora  
 Poppy Orr  
 Jude O'Sullivan  
 Mikaela Ottoson  
 Siv Cheng Pang  
 Nika Papadatos  
 Marielle Pastor  
 Belinda Pellegrino  
 Monique Pittas  
 Madeline Pratt  
 Jade Purchase

Ellouise Radalj  
 Kayla Raimondi  
 Joshua Renjen  
 Stephanie Rentzis  
 Tanna Reynolds  
 Hussain Rezaie  
 Isaac Richards  
 Nicole Ridley  
 Yogesh Rishal  
 Jessica Robinson  
 Molly Rosenberger  
 Ashlee Ruskin  
 Rebecca Salib  
 Peter Salvador  
 Charli Sargeant  
 Katie Sayers  
 Angela Shi  
 Laura Siddons  
 Grace Slocombe  
 Paulette Sola  
 Rozalie Synowiec  
 Chi Zhing Tang  
 Lucy Taylor  
 Chloe Thoo  
 Chris Tito  
 Ronald (Hou Ching) Tong  
 Rhea Torpy  
 La Van Tran  
 Linh Tran  
 Yen-Ngoc Truong  
 Maria Tsiaousidou  
 Steve Tsironis  
 Stefania Valerio  
 Mary Van Gils  
 Monica Vangeli  
 Gabrielle Vervoort  
 Cherie Vick  
 Steven Vocale  
 Tiffany Wasnig  
 Edward Watson  
 Ellyn Westwood  
 Keely White  
 Ellis William  
 Ferris Wong  
 Natalie Wong  
 Hania Yassin  
 Renee Yu  
 Erina Zhang  
 Jing Zhang

**Financial Auditor**

Mitchell Wilson and Partners, Chartered Accountants Malvern



## President's Report



I am pleased to submit my first President's Report for Extended Families Australia.

It seems like not too long ago that Extended Families Australia came through a period of transformation and change with the adoption of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding model. That period of change and transition required lengthy and careful planning to ensure Extended Families Australia's operating model was aligned to the new funding model, and how to continue to best support our families in the new funding environment. This time last year, we were celebrating that transition, and reflecting on the wonderful work of our management and staff over this extended period of change.

This year's theme is "Adaptation and Innovation", which is very fitting for financial year 2020. We had eight months of "normalcy" before the COVID-19 pandemic created a new kind of normalcy to which we are all still adjusting too. There have been massive changes in those 4 short months; and the level and speed of change was astounding. Extended Families not only had to respond to a completely different way to continue support our families, but also how our staff worked, and the mental health impact being in a lockdown environment can have on everyone.

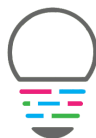
Strangely, a lot was accomplished in those 4 months. It showed us that we can be fast innovators to ensure we continue to support families with the rapid launch of the ExtendABLE program. It showed us that the families we work with are adaptable with our Vietnamese families attending an online celebration for the Vietnamese Families with Special Needs Digital Communication Launch. The Committee of Management and Management even managed to have two highly productive strategic planning workshops, remotely!

I am so appreciative of the Extended Families team, ably led by our CEO Julie Langdon, in how they have adapted to this challenge. Your contribution is what makes Extended Families Australia successful; your support in adapting and innovating to a new and evolving environment is what helps Extended Families Australia grow.

I would like to thank the Committee of Management for their commitment and flexible approach to supporting Extended Families Australia, especially during the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown. Your passion and the diverse range of expertise you bring to our discussions has enriched the governance of Extended Families Australia.

These are interesting times and the full impact of COVID-19 may be seen for some time to come. I believe Extended Families Australia is well placed to continue to adapt and innovate, and we look forward to continuing to support families.

*Katherine Shamai*  
Chairperson



## CEO's Report

In this memorable 2019-2020 year, the last 4 to 5 months of Pandemic seem to overshadow all else. However we achieved a lot before and during COVID 19.



### Growth

We continued to grow in all program areas (except for the volunteer match program that still struggles under NDIS funding mechanisms). Our staggering 87% growth reflects the positive regard and reputation we have built. With little to no marketing, the growth has come about through 'word of mouth'. We are pleased that families tell others about us and recommend us. We are also pleased that other professionals, organisations and Local Area Coordinators value our professionalism, support and timely response that they include us in their recommendations to participants and make referrals.

This growth is despite COVID causing a decrease in direct support work from March 2020. Conversely with COVID putting stress on all families, Support Coordination has been more in need as families manage home based schooling, changes to online therapy, loss of employment and a high level of stress and concern about safety and wellbeing. The NDIS wisely made Support Coordination available to all families though increased flexibility in how the NDIS Plan is used, so families who did not previously have Support Coordination could access it for the first time. We have seen significant uptake of this.

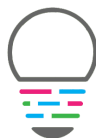
Plan Management services have also continued to grow, providing flexibility and supporting participants to manage the financial aspects of their Plans. Our technology solution, alongside great staff, has proven capable of this growth and in 2019-20 we managed nearly \$8 million NDIS funding for participants.

### Development and Innovation

At the end of 2019 we engaged in some work to review our social events program and also researched the need and program models to support siblings. We hope to still implement some of these models, particularly in the Southern Region where we retain some Home and Community Care (HACC) funding; however 2020 has not been the year for these group activities.

We were very pleased to receive a grant from the NDIS ILC program for a project in partnership with the Vietnamese Families with Special Needs focus on their organisational capacity building and also a group to support individual capacity building for young people with Autism. This project has been a highlight of the year, proving very valuable and has continued to strengthen our relationship with this vital community organisation. The project is detailed later in this report.

Other innovations occurred as a result of managing support to young people during the Pandemic. ExtendABLE Online – online activity groups have proven highly successful and will remain a model into the future we expect.



Our direct support services LinC and Volunteer Program have adjusted services where need to engage in some socially distant methods. But we have continued to provide direct support throughout COVID 19 when this was the choice of participants / families. This has meant constant work to manage safety issues for staff and participants and keeping up with the ever changing government advice and requirements regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

**Staffing**

In response to service demand, we are pleased to have been able to recruit experienced staff of high quality to add to our great team. We continue to grow our multi-cultural workforce, a key aspect of ensuring accessibility of the services we provide.

Office based staff have made the transition to working from home and continue to provide services and support albeit in new ways at times. Fortunately we had already embraced technology, but our period of social isolation has strengthened our uptake further, especially for meetings and communication.

*Julie Langdon*  
CEO

<b>Hours of Service</b>	
Support Coordination	12,173
LinC and Volunteer Match	35,212
Groups and events	4,040
<b>Total (not including Plan Management)</b>	<b>51,424 hours</b>



## Support Coordination

Support Coordination is a partnership. It is a partnership between the Coordinator and the person with a disability who has an NDIS Plan, and in most cases also with their family or carer. Like all partnerships, each case of support coordination is unique depending on a range of factors. These include expectations of the role, the experiences of the participant in life and the disability service sector, the carer experience, the coordinator's knowledge and skills, and the quality of the communication between the parties.

The support coordination role also varies depending on the wishes of the participant and their family, the complexity of the case and the more pragmatic reason; the number of hours allocated for this support by the NDIS. The larger number of hours relate to the complexity of needs and the situation, but nevertheless the coordinator needs to provide quality support to all participants.

The role may vary from being a "sounding board" to provide discussion and reflection where a participant may have capacity with this level of support, through to being a member of a multi-disciplinary care team that supports a participant and family with complex and challenging needs. For our Vietnamese and Chinese speaking Coordinators the role is broadened to also being a conduit between the family and the English speaking NDIS and disability service system.

In March this year, all Support Coordinators left the office and set themselves up to work from home as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. This required a mammoth adaptation to the role of Support Coordinator to ensure effective communication with participants and families without face to face contact. This was especially challenging with new referrals, which have continued to come to the organisation at a high rate ever since. Many families have experienced additional stressors and complexities in the pandemic environment. In the 19/20 year, new staff members have been recruited and have commenced in the role distanced from face to face contact with their colleagues and without the informal support that an office environment provides.

The Support Coordinators have embraced the challenge of supporting families from a distance and have thrived. They have continued to provide a quality service. Plan Reviews have been conducted via conference calls, and case conference meetings and staff meetings via Zoom or other online means. The staff have demonstrated a lot of resilience and creativity in how to deliver the Support Coordination service in this changed world of restrictions, and are to be commended for their dedication.

We look forward to the coming twelve months when face to face contact with participants can commence and enable them to once again enjoy the full range of supports they require and to resume the richness of work in an office environment with colleagues.





## Playgroup and Parent Groups

MyTime funded playgroups and parent groups for Vietnamese families have had to re-invent themselves in the 2020 world of the restrictive COVID environment. Whilst the key to the success of these groups is that they thrive on being together, support for these groups for the past six months has been provided in a different way - apart.

During the first part of the 2019/20 year; before the COVID 19 pandemic began, the Deer Park group was the usual group of mums and pre-schoolers who gathered for playgroup Monday mornings. Different topics were discussed with the parents and there were changing focuses for the children's development (sharing, turn taking, learning to sit down when told, participating in activities). Once COVID restrictions were in place in late March, this group evolved into a weekly online meeting for the parents. Facilitator Nga Do, presented to the group on different topics and also arranged for occupational therapists to do presentations for the parents. Nga also provided phone and online support to the parents as needed in between these online sessions. Whilst everyone is looking forward to getting back together in the near future, this group has survived and thrived.

For the Springvale group of Vietnamese families, the group began the 2019/20 year with the usual Monday morning meeting. Parents enjoyed coming together to share experiences and stories in their first language. This group is primarily a parent support group whilst the kids are at school, but some pre-schoolers do come along to play alongside their parents. Once COVID restrictions came along, Facilitator Tu Cam Le has worked to provide individual support to group members who have needed it. Whilst this group hasn't felt comfortable embracing online sessions, they have kept in contact via phone and messaging. This group is looking forward to coming together in person to reconnect and do things they enjoy.

The impact of restrictions has been particularly hard on some families who have other complexities and pressures to deal with. It has been important that these two groups managed to continue to provide support and connection over this year. We look forward to a situation where groups can get back to meeting each week and are again enjoying the ongoing support and connection with other families.



## LinC - Linking, Including and Connecting

*The LinC program matches inclusion support workers with participants with a goal of building skills and increasing social and community connections.*

What a year 19/20 has been! It began with solid growth in the first half of the year, with the participant base hitting 200+. More staff were hired and fine-tuned our processes to ensure delivery of a quality service. Changes were implemented in response to the roll out of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards commission and the new Behaviour Support Rules to implement safe and evidence-based positive behaviour support to NDIS participants, and further developed relationships with external community services providers. The LinC program within Extended Families has become known as a service that provides skilled, well trained and qualified workers, who excels at supporting participants with complex needs.

It does not need to be said that the event of COVID-19 altered the day to day. The global pandemic meant that people were being asked to stay at home and stay apart: quite the opposite of LinC's focus on social and community connection. This did not mean that motivation and the foundation of the program was lost. While responding to the quickly evolving environment and government health directions, working from home, and supporting staff to the every changing environment, our participants needed more support than ever to stay connected.

Some people chose to bunker down, and some changed the way their supports looked and got creative with activities – such as painting in the park, or exploring virtual museums instead of spending time indoors (all while workers donned face masks and eye protection). A new program, ExtendABLE was also developed - online facilitated group programs designed to keep people together virtually over a video call platform. ExtendABLE offers activities such as dancing, playing music, drawing, cooking and stretching and has been so popular that it has become a permanent part of Extended Families services portfolio.

At the end of this financial year, Victoria was in complete lockdown, with people only allowed to leave home for essential reasons. At the time of writing this and reflecting, our world, and the world of our participants is starting to open up and we are looking forward to supporting them to get back out into our community in a new COVID normal world.



### LinC - A testimonial from Denise - How Extended Families and the LinC team has contributed to Oscar (her son) and family's life

Nicole & Chloe from Extended Families became a big part of our family & care team for our son about a year ago with the help of the NDIS and we have not looked back. They deserve a medal they have certainly changed our lives for the best when were at our wits end. Our son has Autism with high sensory and was not dealing with his issues very well, his body just wanted to shut down which was too overwhelming for him and he gave up on life. This was putting a huge stress on our day to day lives and as a family, found it difficult as we have no extended family around and it was difficult as we were not able to talk to friends, because they didn't really understand as they hadn't experienced what we were going through.

Nicole & Chloe listened to our needs and were really helpful. They managed to find some amazing support workers (Hung, Isbah & now Billy) that not only love the things my son loves but have also blended into our family wonderfully and treats my son, and us with respect. They listen to him and understand his needs and have shown him not only life skills but have built friendships and have been very good mentors to him. They work hand in hand with my sons therapists and care team to improve his life and they have also given my husband and I some time to ourselves which has allowed us to build our relationship again, reduce our stresses, which in turn has helped with my husbands health issues as it has given him the time and space to be able to deal with things.

It's hard when you don't have family and friends around or you can't talk to them because they don't understand, so it's great that Extended Families understands and will do anything to help us. I find them very flexible too, which is helpful as you don't know from day to day what issues comes up and what changes need to be made. My son is much happier now, enjoying life and getting out into the community even with COVID 19. Extended Families have found other ways to support everyone (in this pandemic and lockdown) and have been there for us.

A big thank you from our family.

Denise (parent)



## Karlie and Noah – Finding a way

### A LinC Story

"Hello Noah, how are you?"

"I'm good, it's cold!"

While this may seem like a regular conversation to most people, to me it signified just how far Noah has developed since I met him 3 and a half years ago, especially these last 8 months.

Noah is 11 years old and has Autism Spectrum Disorder. He is mostly non-verbal but is able to communicate with basic replies, and will often repeat lines from his favourite movies to verbalise what he wants or needs, although to people outside of his family or support network, it may seem out of context.

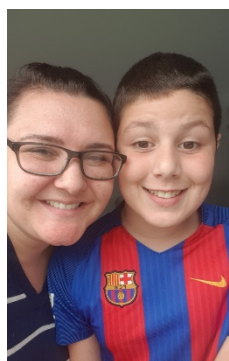


He loves school and his family, and enjoys music and drawing which he is very good at! He has an active imagination and thrives on routine. COVID-19 was particularly tough for most people, but Noah was able to quickly develop a new routine and thrive in the home learning environment.

Each morning would start with Noah waking up his older brothers "it's time to get up, fix your bed" he would say, as he helped his brothers make their beds. Noah loves when things are clean and tidy, and although his brothers would prefer not to be up so early, they happily obliged.

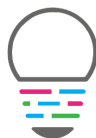
Noah's school created some amazing home learning packs for him, but with the help of his parents and brothers, he also learned some new daily living skills. Noah learned how to use a washing machine, which he enjoys doing, as he dislikes wearing dirty or wet clothing. Once he got the hang of it, there were a few times his Mum even heard the washing machine running with nothing inside it, Noah was just trying to help!

One of the biggest achievements Noah reached during COVID-19 was the ability to answer some very important questions that would help identify him, if he were ever to get lost. This is a major fear for many parents of non-verbal children. This goal was something his family and I worked on consistently, and when the day came that he was able to answer all of the questions, and even write some of the answers, I could not contain my excitement. I jumped up and down cheering and clapping, much to Noah's amusement.



Working with Noah has been life changing for me. I started off with no experience in the field, working 2 hours a week, so fearful of failing him, but determined to try my best. I quickly discovered that we had an amazing bond, and our sessions became more engaging every week. I love watching Noah grow, seeing his imagination and creativity develop, hearing his vocabulary expand each year, hearing his laugh as we make playdoh moustaches and do a silly dance in the mirror - nothing could have prepared me for the impact meeting him could have had on my life and career.

Karlie Ignatiadis  
LinC Worker



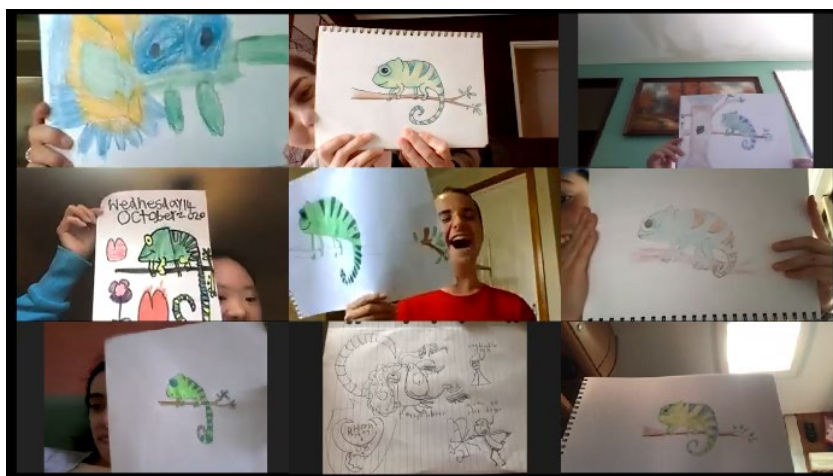
## ExtendABLE Online

ExtendABLE is an online social inclusion program that was developed in response to the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ExtendABLE program aims to reduce the experience of social isolation for people with a disability by creating an opportunity to connect with others through a variety of online groups.

LinC resources were utilised by engaging Inclusion Support Workers to create sessions on topics that they specialised in, such as Gaming with Ed, Drawing with Mary, Stretch and Relax with Keely, Disney Story Time with Amanda, Music and Rhythm with Matt and Fun and Games with Dee.

It has been warming to see our participants, who range in age from mid primary to early 30s, connect, have fun, and develop meaningful relationships whilst using an online platform. The program has proven popular, with participants and families appreciating the convenience that online groups have to offer, so it has now become permanent offering in Extended Families' suite of services.

Watch this space as we have lots of ideas brewing to keep the programs fresh and exciting with plans increase our focus on skill-building areas and to develop more age-targeted groups to facilitate socialisation.





## ExtendABLE Testimonials

Testimonial's given by parents of children/young people who have been partaking in the program.

*'Finn is loving his online sessions. His favourite is drawing with Mary, but he also loves Fun and Games with Dee and Drumming with Matt. When I ask what he likes about them he says "I want to learn things. I'm learning things with them." He remains my most content child at home, which is great! ... Having regular and interesting outside interactions keeps him happy.'* - Jennie Lamond -

*'I can't tell you how much these sessions have helped Charlie and the rest of us...they give him routine when he had none. He concentrates so hard (in the session) and we all get a little break.'* - Jenny Hale

*'I'd like to say that..... Grace thoroughly enjoys her Extendable sessions and these are definitely the highlight of her week. She often says "I want to stop zoom classes except Disney with Amanda, Art with Mary and exercise with Keely." She has set reminders on her phone for these sessions only because she loves them so much. All instructors make her feel confident and she is excelling in all sessions. She is able to shine in exercise class because that's her strength and passion. She's like me and has always struggled with drawing, but Mary has built up her confidence and her drawings look great. Disney Story time is such a hit, that the whole family loves spending time with Grace preparing for the next story. We read the book, watch the movie or gather items ready to show Amanda on Tuesday. We have now joined the Women's social group and she was very excited after her first session. Grace likes to attend the sessions independently and hearing her enthusiasm from a distance truly makes me happy. I can relax knowing that she's in good hands and experiencing something which lights up her life. Thank you to the brain child behind this program and for the team who are working so hard to deliver such a quality program. - Lena Chamoun –*



*'My daughter has been attending the ExtendABLE Disney Stories since it started, and she says "It's great fun!" She spends the whole week thinking about the story/movie that will be discussed at the next session and gathering any props that she can think of to take to the session! She eagerly looks forward to the email with the picture associated with the story of the week and colours it in as soon as she can! Amanda, the group facilitator comes up with many new ideas to make each session fun and exciting. During COVID-19 the ExtendABLE programs have been a wonderful support option for our 2 children while face to face school and services were not able to operate. They provide much needed structure to the long weeks, and gave the children some interesting and exciting activities and interaction with other children. The activities were well organised and well-priced. Well done to Extended Families for quickly transforming service delivery to address the changes required of the COVID-19 pandemic!' - Zoe London –*



## E-Learning



In an unusual and at times challenging year, one unexpected positive from our sudden need for “online solutions” was a greater awareness and uptake of our e-learning offering among staff and volunteers. This was pleasing as our courses are not only varied; they contain critical information about policy and procedure that is relevant to the roles of all staff. In particular the roll-out of courses covering topics to help staff become more aware of, and able to respond to, cyber threats, cultural differences, and infection control, felt particularly timely.

### Achievements

- Added new courses:
  - Cyber Security Awareness
  - Administering Medication
  - Supporting People to Stay Infection Free (COVID)
  - Understanding and Responding to Cultural Diversity in the Workplace
- Expanded internal learner numbers (both permanent and casual staff)
- Implemented e-learning policies for new and existing staff

### Looking ahead to 2020-2021

- Courses planned for development include new inductions for general staff and volunteers
- Plans to review and upgrade existing titles
- Explore opportunities to utilise 3<sup>rd</sup> party content, particularly from within NDIS frameworks
- Greater use of “learning bites” as a way to offer staff “on-demand” learning solutions
- To explore potential to expand video and VR use
- Potential to offer e-learning content to clients and families

Working “remotely” and utilising online systems to perform our usual roles may not have been how many of us saw the financial year ending, it has however for many of us, created connections, unlocked fresh methodologies and opened doors to useful technologies.

*Derek Green – E-learning Development Manager*

**Understanding and Responding to Cultural Diversity in the Workplace**

Introduction  Diversity  Awareness  Responsiveness  Communication  Engagement  In Practice  extended learning online

Introduction

This course should be made be accessible to any person or entity that engages with our people, systems or clients, including:

- Management & Coordinators
- Disability workers
- General office staff
- Inclusion Support Workers
- Volunteers
- Internal Contractors

CLICK the **page forward arrow** to continue.

Throughout the course you will see fictional characters who have been provided to demonstrate how to apply some of the key points

**Understanding and Responding to Cultural Diversity in the Workplace**

Awareness  Responsiveness  Communication  Engagement  In Practice  extended learning online

What is Cultural Diversity?

Torres Strait Islander Peoples

...treated harshly since the arrival of and to remember that, even though they are still present today, their sense of identity is valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them"

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

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## Vietnamese Capacity Building



AND



### The Journey of Building Capacity

In June 2019 Extended Families and Vietnamese Families with Special Needs (VFSN) embarked on a collaborative project funded by the NDIS' Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Program. The 1 year project focused on organisational capacity building initiatives for the VFSN and piloted an innovative group program for young adults with Autism who were experiencing difficulties in accessing social and vocational opportunities in the community. The total funding awarded for the project was \$109,403 with 65% of the fund allocated to activities that helped develop the VFSN's capacity in providing support to the Vietnamese community living with disability and 35% towards the pilot known as *Vươn lên*, meaning 'To Rise' in Vietnamese.

### Organisational Capacity

Key activities included building organisational capacity with the VFSN Committee of Management (COM) and wider membership to review the organisation's constitution, update its Vision and Mission, develop a new logo and brochure and create a 3-year strategic plan. A bi-lingual website (<https://vfn.org.au>) and new Facebook page were created to assist in widening the reach within the community. New policies and procedures were drafted and key COM members were matched to mentors and resources to further build their governance knowledge and expertise. Prior to COVID-19, five half day workshops in English and Vietnamese were held in Brimbank, covering the fundamentals of managing a community organisation and when the lockdown happened, the project ran a Digital (bi-lingual) Workshop on how to use online communications resources so that VFSN members could remain connected with each other.

### Individual Capacity

*Vươn lên* was the name given to the project pilot by our Vietnamese Facilitator, Nga Do; and means 'to rise'. Nine young people along with their families took part in the program. Each person involved brought their own unique set of interests, skills and talents to the group which met weekly for 4 hours on Monday evenings in community locations between January and April of this year. In mid-April the sessions transitioned to online, due to COVID-19.

Before group gatherings commenced individual assessments were undertaken. Individual goal plans were developed which informed the design of the program that supported the young people to extend their skills and experience across 5 key domains - social communication; health and well-being; community participation; vocational preparedness and daily living skills.

Throughout the program, individual participation was monitored, feedback was sought and reviews conducted which allowed for a dynamic approach to the design of each group session that was delivered by the facilitators, combining both learning and social activities. Where needed, participants were linked to community mentors (through NDIS Plan referral) to reinforce learning achieved in the group setting. Parents were also linked into a peer group and received a series of workshops focused on supporting their children to overcome inclusion barriers.





## Reflection

VL (as it has become known) proved to be a success and taught us a lot. We learned that by integrating a learning framework in with social activities – we can provide a tangible bridge over which young people with Autism can travel and connect. Peer groups must be safe places in which people can feel a sense of belonging, can take social risks and be vulnerable and experience success. A high facilitator to participant ratio is important to foster communication, indirect and incidental learning and program content needs to be tailored and modified as time passes and individuals progress in their learning.

**The journey of building capacity** that we took in the project was both challenging and highly rewarding. A lot of work was undertaken to achieve planned milestones and deliver project outcomes. At times we were overwhelmed with the many tasks we had set ourselves, cultural and language diversity on occasion tested us and COVID placed significant strain on our collective resources....but we made it through, grew in cohesiveness and together we achieved so much across both the organisational and individual capacity building arms of the project.

(In October 2020, the ILC awarded us a further two years of funding for the project. Both VFSN and Extended Families look forward to continuing the amazing journey we embarked upon back in June last year and to continuing to build both of our organisations' capacity to support Vietnamese families living with disability.)





## 'Thursday Group' - Vietnamese Families with Special Needs

The Vietnamese Families with Special Needs (VFSN) Thursday Parent group has been operating for many years to meet the needs of parents with children with disabilities and assist them with education, information and peer support. Extended Families works in partnership with the VFSN to deliver the group. The VFSN Committee and Extended Families Facilitator, Nga Do, meet regularly to plan a program of community inclusion activities for families for each school term. The program aims to provide holistic support to improve outcomes for the children and their families.



Health was identified as a key topic among the community in terms of physical, emotional and general wellbeing, especially among parents caring for a child with a disability. Programs were conducted throughout the year looking at various topics that were prevalent and sometimes not addressed in the community. These included an information session from Life Program Diabetes which included practices for healthy eating and nutrition, parent health and wellbeing in the form of yoga sessions, general self-care, emotional awareness and self-regulation of emotions and how to express oneself were all well received.

Ongoing sessions providing current information and available services were key throughout the year. These included presentations from Behavioural Specialists, Inclusion Melbourne, the Association of Children with Disabilities, Extended Families and the changes within the NDIS.

An important part of the VFSN community is gathering and socialising. During the 19/20 year (pre-COVID) a picnic was held at Sunvale Community Park to promote being outdoors, sharing food and enjoying each other's company. Team bonding games and strengthening the connection between parents was celebrated in Carers Week through a lunch as well as other VFSN gatherings. With the importance on social gatherings and interactions and the challenges that COVID lockdown posed, parents have continued to connect online where they share resources and attend learning sessions that may assist them and their children through the isolation.

The new website was also launched that provides information in English and Vietnamese, so that families with children with disabilities are able to access disability and community inclusion information and resources. In response to the COVID pandemic the Committee were able to transition to online group meetings. This was assisted by the Zoom training provided by the ILC project.



## Plan Management

At Extended Families, the Plan Management service supports NDIS participants by providing a financial intermediary service. As of June 2020, the service has grown 43% on the previous year, from supporting 230 participants last year, to 330 participants. Our investment in technology has helped us manage this growth through efficiencies in processing invoices and relating to the NDIS Portal.

Amidst the pandemic, the Plan Management Team has quickly adapted to the ever-changing environment, with our service continuing even with our Team working away from office. In keeping true to our team spirit, the Microsoft platform Teams allows constant and effective communication which has enabled queries to be solved and deal with any issues that may arise. Our centralised Extended Families IT platform has enabled the plan management team to share information with controlled and secure access, ensuring sensitive data is not compromised.

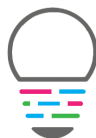
The team has responded quickly to the frequent NDIS policy changes and has assisted families in processing Low Cost Assistive Technology and items relating to COVID-19 flexibility. A plan management sharing session on Zoom was held to share the NDIS policy changes with Vietnamese families.

Being focused on work, the dynamic and hardworking team has reduced the duration of the payment cycle despite the increase in the volume of invoices with the increased number of Participants. Providers are happy with the improved service. The team is accessible on emails and mobile, with phones dedicated to Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Mandarin speaking participants' families. Our communication method via messaging apps like WhatsApp and Viber has made us a preferred provider for the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community.

The Team's dedicated support to families and providers has garnered appreciation and continuous engagement from our participant families.

As said by one of our continuing Participant's mum, Maria Dos Santos:

*"Many thanks once again for providing a brilliant and efficient service."*



## Volunteer Match

The 2020 year has seen the Volunteer Match Program continue to support connections made between mentor volunteers and the children, young people and adults they support; providing volunteers the opportunity to foster in others, a sense of self-worth, belonging and acceptance. The Volunteer Match Program fits within a greater support system for each participant. It aims to assist individuals to work on their personal or NDIS support goals through a connection made with their mentor, who is there to provide assistance in building life skills towards greater personal independence and an increased ability to engage with friends, family and their community.

It has been said that one of the greatest gifts you can give is your time, and this is what sets volunteering apart from other supports in a person's life. Our volunteers are generous of both time and spirit, helping develop genuine relationships that provide a positive foundation for mentoring and other support needs. With an extensive accreditation and training program, our Volunteers show a clear commitment to their role. In going through this process, the Volunteers at Extended Families develop a comprehensive understanding of the importance of making a commitment and following through for others. It is a program built with the hope of forming lasting friendships whilst also assisting individuals to take steps towards achieving some important goals in their lives.

In the face of an unexpected pandemic that led to a declared State of Emergency, the ability of the program to make new matches was impacted in the later part of the 2020 year by the ensuing periods of lockdown in Victoria. Existing matches were faced with the inability to meet up in person. Throughout this time, there were some inspiring examples of volunteers who were able to adapt and innovate in response to this challenge. Mentors maintained their connections with the individuals and families they support by setting up individualised remote forms of contact via platforms such as Zoom, FaceTime and WhatsApp, to name a few. This led to new ways of getting to know one another, a chance to be creative about their interactions and an opportunity for the development of new skills for participants and volunteers alike, in navigating through this new world of social contact. At a time of heightened risk of social isolation, it has been heartening to see volunteers continuing to have a supportive presence in the lives of individuals and families in the program.

Whilst it has been a challenging year for the program in terms of recruitment of new volunteers and in the establishment of new matches, it has provided the opportunity to begin to adapt some of the program's processes that will enable the Volunteer Match Program to continue to grow into the future. Work is being done to modify the training and accreditation process for volunteers to be accessible via online means, alongside the ability to connect accredited volunteers with individuals and families via remote platforms. Should similar challenges continue to exist into the future, such changes will ensure that individuals and families can continue to have access to and benefit from the unique form of support that a connection with a volunteer mentor provides.



## Volunteers recognised

Thank you to our volunteers for their time and dedication in helping support our vision.

Eve Addis  
Leslie Allanach  
Bridget Caruana  
Dot Cochrane  
Thi Nhung Dang  
Claudia Di Fabio  
Samuel Fairburn  
Sylvia Giles  
Nicola Grant  
Jane Green  
Lik Hang Hui  
Carolyne Jones  
Mary Kanavoutsos  
Billie Kempton  
Laurie Kempton  
Kathleen Kendler  
Clare Keogh  
Amelia Lam  
Maree Lay  
Ivy Loo  
Claudia Manibui  
Cassandra Mann  
Joshua Martin  
Joan McKeegan  
David Merlo  
Karen Mirfin  
Elle Nguyen  
Mahinthini Paramasivam  
Sophie Rushton  
Michael Timms  
Siobhan Zigomanis  
George Zographos



### Rebekah and Carolyn – learning new ways to stay connected

Rebekah is a 15 year old young person whose family has been engaged with Extended Families for many years. Rebekah is currently involved in our Volunteer Match Program, and has regular contact with Carolyn, a volunteer mentor. Rebekah is a delightful and very sociable young person who has always adored spending time out in the community, being involved in various activities. Growing up with five brothers, Rebekah loves the opportunity to get out and spend time with another female whom she can connect with in a manner similar to having a big sister.

Carolyn is kind, dedicated and caring and joined the Volunteer Match Program to have the opportunity to make a meaningful connection with a young person and to support her passion to encourage inclusion and community participation for people with disabilities. In the early stages of their match, Rebekah and Carolyn developed a bond quite quickly, meeting up once a fortnight. Rebekah's time spent with Carolyn has helped to keep her happy and engaged in regular activities she enjoys, such as swimming, shopping and going to the library, whilst also assisting her to develop independence skills and learn about safety in the community.

As has been the case for many, 2020 has been quite a challenge for Rebekah. As a young person with Down Syndrome and intellectual disability, Rebekah initially struggled in comprehending the need to change her routine to comply with the COVID-19 restrictions in Victoria. For the Volunteer Matches, this meant they were unable to continue their visits in person. Carolyn was quick to adapt their visits to Zoom catch-ups, where they could continue to build their friendship. Carolyn was guided by Rebekah's preferences and scheduled their chats to suit Rebekah's needs; for the most part they have been catching up weekly.

Throughout the time spent online with Carolyn, Rebekah has become more proficient in her ability to independently utilise online programs, helping to keep her connected with friends remotely. They had a lot of fun using online apps to sing, dance, colour and play together. They shared some meal times as well and Carolyn helped Rebekah with practical tasks like gift-list writing for upcoming birthdays or seeking out healthy recipes together to continue to work on some of Rebekah's health related goals. Carolyn was also able to be a regular outlet for Rebekah to talk about her feelings of missing her friends during this challenging time; helping to keep Rebekah's spirits positive during such times.

Rebekah's family is really appreciative of the positive relationship Carolyn is building with Rebekah. Rebekah is always full of praise for Carolyn and adores their time spent together.

Carolyn greatly enjoys her time with Rebekah and noted that the Zoom catch-ups have given her something to look forward to in lockdown. Although there was a barrier to connecting in person, Carolyn and Rebekah's Volunteer Match story during lockdown illustrates how important maintaining that feeling of a connection with another person can be in keeping people's spirits lifted during challenging times. With the easing of restrictions across the State, they are both very much looking forward to meeting up in person again soon to share new experiences with one another.





## Treasurer's Report

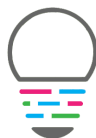
2020 has been an indescribable year to say the least, but despite the challenging times, the team at Extended Families remained focused in its vision.

The need to create, change and adapt became essential and thankfully the team thrived despite the ever changing and unpredictable environment that COVID presented. The continued effort to deliver the best service and support families with children and young people with a disability was prevalent in the way Extended Families responded to the pandemic.

According to the 2020 audited financial report:

- We enjoyed an operating profit of \$320,000, an increase of 247.3% from last year's operating profit. \$314,000 of the \$320,000 was represented by government support payments received during the year
- Revenue increased 174.7% compared to the 2019 year which excludes any government support payments. There was an increase in NDIS income by 214.3%. This is such a wonderful result given the COVID-19 situation
- To support the revenue increment, more staff were also employed. In addition, EFA invested in IT software to assist in more efficient processes of scheduling or growing services
- Overall expenses increased 183.6% compared to 2019 year
- The net asset position was \$571,000 at 30 June 2020, which is reflected by the operating profit for the year. This translated to an increase of 227.4% from last year's net asset position

Please refer to the Audited Financial Statements for further details of the financial position of Extended Families.



## Finances

**EXTENDED FAMILIES AUSTRALIA INC.**  
**A.B.N. 97 470 256 857**

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Income</b>			
Revenue		4,159,596	2,393,533
Other income		322,291	2,623
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration expenses		(237,613)	(138,520)
Depreciation expenses		(14,116)	(9,972)
Special event expenses		(14,745)	(5,522)
Staffing expenses		(3,889,958)	(2,101,306)
Volunteer payments		(5,244)	(11,376)
		<u>320,211</u>	<u>129,460</u>
<b>Profit</b>		<u>320,211</u>	<u>129,460</u>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<u><u>320,211</u></u>	<u><u>129,460</u></u>

**EXTENDED FAMILIES AUSTRALIA INC.**  
**A.B.N. 97 470 256 857**

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020**

	Note	Retained earnings \$	Reserves \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2018</b>		113,755	8,145	121,900
Profit attributable to members		129,460		129,460
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>		<u>243,215</u>	<u>8,145</u>	<u>251,360</u>
Profit attributable to members		320,211		320,211
<b>Balance at 30 June 2020</b>		<u><u>563,426</u></u>	<u><u>8,145</u></u>	<u><u>571,571</u></u>

\*For a complete copy of our Audited Financial Statement – see separate insert or request from Extended Families by emailing [info@extendedfamilies.org.au](mailto:info@extendedfamilies.org.au)





## Donors and Supporters

At Extended Families we celebrate the generosity and long term commitment of our donors whose gifts enable us to continue to positively impact people's lives. We sincerely thank our donors and supporters for their contributions.

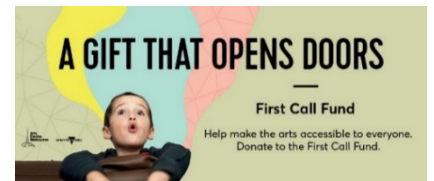
### Government funding

We acknowledge the support of the Victorian and Federal Governments, with significant funding provided by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Social Services.



### Corporate Partners, Charitable Grants and Sponsors

Jack Moody Charitable Foundation  
Paypal Giving Fund

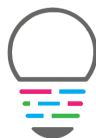


### Sponsored or subsidised office

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Karen Mirfin  
Thi Nhung Dang  
Anthony Privitelli  
Katherine Shamai  
Abiramy Thevarajah  
Michael Timms  
Graeme West  
Bryce Williams  
Mei Yong Wu



## Services



### Volunteer Match

Our volunteers provide genuine friendship, practical assistance and mentoring support to a child/young person, helping them to develop life skills. They help them take part in sport, recreation and leisure activities that are of interest to the child. Some volunteer matches also provide direct support for the family.



### LinC (Linking + Including + Connecting)

LinC provides skilled inclusion support workers to support participants with skill development, capacity building to overcome barriers and assistance to engage in the community, social and recreational activities. Our workers support the achievement of specified social, personal and developmental needs and goals.



### ExtendABLE

ExtendABLE is an online social inclusion program that was developed in response to the social distancing requirements of COVID-19. The ExtendABLE program aims to reduce the experience of social isolation for people with a disability by creating an opportunity to connect with others through online groups.



### Support Coordination

Extended Families provides independent support coordination to help you manage your plan. Our team of experienced staff, source and assess support options, connect with services, access the NDIS portal, coordinate services and manage your plan, respond and deal with any crisis, build your skills and confidence, implement and monitor your NDIS plan and re-develop your goals before your plan review.



### Plan Management

Extended Families is a registered plan management provider and can manage NDIS funding for supports on a participant's behalf. Plan Management is an intermediary financial service that manages the financial and administrative aspects of a NDIS Plan.

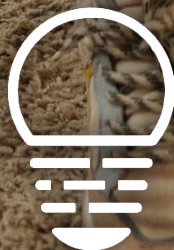


### Parent and Peer Support Programs

Regular get-together programs for parents and children with a disability to share experiences, develop connections and receive support, information and education relevant to their care role.



**Extended  
Families**



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