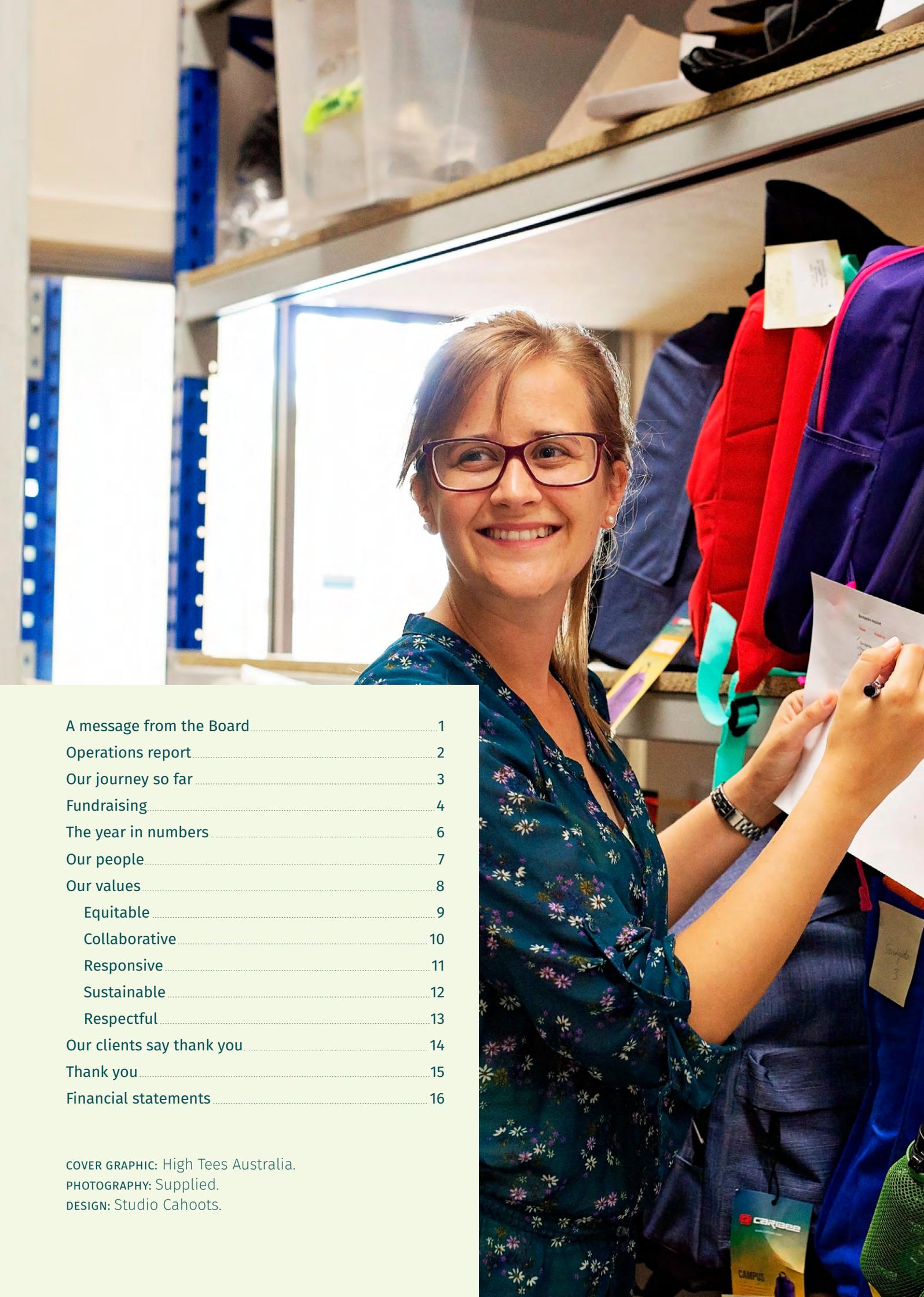




**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  
2020-21



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COVER GRAPHIC: High Tees Australia.  
PHOTOGRAPHY: Supplied.  
DESIGN: Studio Cahoots.

# *A message from the Board*

We will hopefully look back on these last two years with a sense of achievement, pride and new-found strength and confidence. Actually living and guiding our organisation through this last financial year has felt challenging, if not threatening. I sense we have stood up to the challenge well. If last year was the year of pivoting, this last year has been one of bare knuckled holding on tight, growing our capability and building for the future.

COVID restrictions virtually shut down our ability to deliver in teams and enter households. So we looked to see what we could do, checked what our supported community needed and reinvented ourselves.

Our friends at RACV Community Foundation continued to support us with their EGA food program and we helped them reach a very broad audience across Victoria. Supporting us included support in the purchase of a new van, in conjunction with a grant from Gandel Foundation.

The Commonwealth Government implemented a number of financial responses that assisted us. The Victorian Government heavily invested in food relief. This included not only actual food purchases but investment in building our capability to deliver now and into the future.

Our financial supporters and donors have been critical in an environment where physical donations were heavily impacted. Individual and corporate supporters have been in constant touch and inspire us to achieve more than we imagined possible.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going! We have uncovered a seriously tough core of volunteers who have inspired me to do more. We have learned and implemented COVID plans, attended the warehouse in masks and remarkably just achieved more. Volunteers in our society have been largely overlooked in all the debates around COVID but our volunteers have continued to put the needs of our clients at the forefront. We seem to be getting older on average, mainly because our younger volunteers have been overwhelmed with home schooling, working from home and just coping.

Our board has met only by Zoom in the last year but we have continued to drive forward and bring new dimensions to our organisation. Safety has taken a high profile and we were pleased to complete the year without a single COVID infection despite our operation being in the epicentre of most outbreaks.

Reflecting on the last year gives us a chance to catch our breath and realise how much we have achieved. We are stronger, busier and more connected to our partners, supporters, volunteers and our supported community.

This year, we have included all our individual supporters, corporate supporters like RACV, GIVIT and High Tees, our volunteers and our community in a series of small articles. We hope you enjoy reading what we do and hope to inspire you to get on the Wagon.

I hope to meet you on our journey and together do more wonderful things for our important community.

**Chris Scerri**  
Chair



# Operations report

This has been a particularly challenging year. COVID-19 has increased our clients' need for support, while at the same time constraining our ability to operate. Although as an essential service we were able to continue our operations, many of our volunteers chose not to come in to the warehouse – which is something we totally understand and support. We had social distancing limits in the warehouse. We opted to have only one person in the delivery van at a time, except if they were working with someone from the same household. We chose not to enter the houses of either donors or clients. But still, we delivered a record amount of large goods.

With restrictions on our ability to collect and receive donations, *Koala* has become our major furniture supplier. They donate the majority of our mattresses and all of our sofas, plus many beds, desks and tables. This modular furniture has enabled us to meet our clients' needs with one-person deliveries. We could not have operated without their support.

Upgrading our equipment has also been key to meeting our increased demand. Our original delivery van was replaced with a new, larger, bright orange van, thanks to RACV and Gandel Foundation. In addition we received a Victorian government grant to purchase a smaller van for food deliveries.

**Roland Wahlquist**  
Operations Manager



# Our journey so far

## 2013 – founded

It all begins as a response to discovering that some local asylum seekers had been living without beds or electricity in an empty apartment for six weeks.

The local community's response was quick, compassionate and incredibly generous.

## 2016

- We rent our first warehouse
- Delivery van obtained
- Online store launched
- Management team formed
- Launch of Facebook public page and other social platforms

## 2019

- Second warehouse secured
- Adult clothing days become Reach Out days
- Multiple council recycling days are attended

## 2014

- Became an Incorporated Association and a registered Charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status
- Trailer provided by Department of Justice and Community Safety (Victoria)

## 2017

- Inaugural CEO appointed
- Host our first adult clothing day
- Database installed to manage operations
- Warehouse Manager appointed
- Now offering support in Moonee Valley municipality
- Board established (instead of committee)
- Introduction of workplace volunteering program

## 2020

- *Double Your Impact* fundraising campaign
- Food program expansion
- Collaboration with RACV Foundation
- Recipient of a Honda Odyssey for 12-months
- Education and Community Connections program launched

## 2015

- Organisational Values established
- New website launched
- Inaugural AGM
- Governance and structure refreshed

## 2018

- Strategic Plan 2018-2021 launched
- Expansion of adult clothing days
- Increased focus on governance and policies

## 2021

- Increased impact during difficult times
- Food program further expanded via Government grants
- Doubled the number of families supported through our education program
- Increased capability for deliveries through acquisition of two new vans



## GRANTS

Our Grants team has had another successful year with a number of grants received, including:

- Adobe
- Alfred Felton Bequest
- Catholic Church Insurances
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Gandel
- Hobsons Bay Community Fund
- Sisters of Charity
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Transurban.

Many of these organisations take an annual and active interest in our progress and success, which is much appreciated. We also wish to thank the fantastic individuals and organisations that have requested no publicity. You know who you are. We hope we've made you proud.

## FUNDRAISING

Due to the incredible focus of our new Fundraising Coordinator, we were able to continue raising funds, even though festivals, sausage sizzles and other public events were indefinitely placed on hold.

Anonymous donors continued using online platforms including GiveNow, Paypal, Facebook and Good2Give, however, sales of the Entertainment Guide, and products from our online shop were significantly down in 2020.



# The year in numbers

During 2020-2021 we delivered to our clients:



**222**

BED BASE /  
FRAMES



**40**

BEDSIDE TABLES



**40**

BIKES



**44**

CHESTS OF  
DRAWERS /  
DRESSERS



**268**

CHILDREN'S  
CLOTHING  
BUNDLES



**121**

CHILDREN'S  
LARGE GOODS



**35**

COFFEE  
TABLES



**71**

COUCHES / ARM  
CHAIRS



**45**

DESKS



**342**

DINING AND  
DESK CHAIRS



**65**

DINING TABLES



**12**

ENTERTAINMENT  
ITEMS  
(MISCELLANEOUS)



**4529**

FOOD AND  
TOILETRY  
HAMPERS



**120**

FRIDGES /  
FREEZERS



**70**

FURNITURE  
(MISCELLANEOUS)



**22**

HOUSEHOLD  
FULL PACKS



**104**

HOUSEHOLD  
ITEMS  
(MISCELLANEOUS)



**66**

HEATERS



**208**

KITCHEN  
ELECTRICAL  
ITEMS



**88**

KITCHEN  
FULL PACKS



**61**

KITCHEN ITEMS  
(MISCELLANEOUS)



**322**

LINEN  
FULL PACKS



**225**

LINEN  
(MISCELLANEOUS)



**334**

MATTRESSES



**112**

MICROWAVES



**174**

NAPPIES, WIPES  
AND BOTTLES PACKS



**46**

RUGS



**465**

SCHOOL  
BACKPACKS



**96**

TOY BUNDLES



**81**

TELEVISIONS



**79**

VACUUMS



**126**

WASHING  
MACHINES

# Our people



## DEEPAK, WAREHOUSE ASSISTANT

Deepak has been working with West Welcome Wagon since December 2020, when he started with us as a volunteer. However, his involvement with us started before that, as an asylum seeker and a client of our services.

His journey to Australia was hard and he took many risks to ensure the safety of his family. When he arrived here with his wife and only a single suitcase, he settled in Adelaide. Deepak notes that no service like we provide was available to him there, and this is one of the motivations that brought him to volunteer with us.

Since coming to Australia, Deepak has worked in a commercial laundry, supervising a team of workers, and obtained barista and forklift certificates. His methodical, problem-solving attitude is a great asset in his work at West Welcome Wagon. While he started as a volunteer, he is now employed part-time doing a range of work in the warehouse and with our clients. He receives and stores donations, prepares deliveries, does test-and-tag, manages stores and delivers goods to clients.

Deepak appreciates the work of our volunteers:

***“West Welcome Wagon’s volunteers are very helpful and understand each other and work hard for asylum seekers. That is a big thing. Helpful thoughts make a good work environment.”***

Deepak is now the father of two girls and a newly arrived baby boy, and working with West Welcome Wagon makes his life a lot easier.

## DEDE, STUDENT PLACEMENT

Dede is another one of our community who started as a client before coming on board to assist us with our activities. He comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo, where difficult politics made him leave with his family and travel the long refugee journey to Australia via a refugee camp in Malawi.

Dede is following his passion and working towards a Diploma of Community Services at Victoria University. Doing a placement was difficult due to COVID-19, but finally Dede was able to come on board in late 2021 and has been involved in warehouse work, assisting with deliveries, client contact and a good variety of daily activities at West Welcome Wagon.

Dede declares:

***“For me West Welcome Wagon means love and passion. It means knowing that no matter what, I have someone to count on. This makes me feel good inside. I can trust in people. I am full of love and passion and I am comfortable around our clients. It’s like my heart tells me that it is good for me.”***

## HANAN, VOLUNTEER

Hanan is from Syria, and left her job, friends and family seeking safety. She came to Australia five years ago as a refugee.

Many people have supported Hanan getting settled here, including West Welcome Wagon. Now, hoping to be an active member of the community, she volunteers to provide support to others.

Hanan says:

***“A few months ago I joined the wonderful West Welcome Wagon team – they are good people, hardworking, there is no limit to their giving... With them, I feel like I am with my family.”***

Hanan also completed a Certificate in Community Service to develop her skills and knowledge to be able to help people professionally. She is now working with the Spectrum organisation, which provides services for refugees, immigrants, the elderly, youth and people with disabilities. She works in pursuit of supporting vulnerable people to achieve their goals.

# Our values

Our values are the bedrock of who we as an organisation and are woven into every element of our work, governance and relationships.

## Equitable

We apply the principles of fairness and impartiality to all actions and decisions.



## Collaborative

We seek to share knowledge, skills and resources with others in order to maximise opportunities and achieve shared goals.

## Responsive

We listen to our clients, volunteers and community and find flexible innovative solutions to achieve outcomes.



## Sustainable

We use environmentally sound processes and resources, and encourage recycling, and repurposing whenever possible.

## Respectful

We value all members of our community and respect the dignity, uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every person.



## VALUE

# Equitable



We apply the principles of fairness and impartiality to all actions and decisions.

### REACH OUT DAYS

Reach Out days are an important part of our program, as we invite our clients in to make their own selections from our supplies. Although principally set up for adult clothing, we also give out children's clothes, linen, toys, food and make up.

Like everything else, COVID-19 disrupted the program this year. However we managed to squeeze in three very successful days – attended by almost 150 families – between lockdowns. Venues were made available to us at no charge: St Albans Community Youth Club's Tin Shed; Barkers Café, courtesy of the Western Bulldogs Foundation; and the Werribee Masonic Hall, courtesy of the Werribee Masonic Lodge.

We greatly appreciate the support of Uniqlo, who donated many pallets of clothing, as well as our other corporate supporters: Hanes Brands, who supplied underwear and socks; and Eva, supplying linen. Plus our many private donors of course.

### EDUCATION ESSENTIALS

Equipping children for school can put a big hole in a family budget. The Education Essentials program tries to soften this blow by providing students with a backpack filled with the basics: pencil case, writing books, lunchbox and drink bottle. This year the program more than doubled the quantity of backpacks given out, to assist 465 children. Over 100 students also received assistance with school shoes and uniforms, which enabled them to return to school looking the part and fitting in.



Technology needs have very much been highlighted this year, with students working from home during lockdown. We are currently evaluating the best way we can meet these needs, to prevent our clients falling behind. This will be our challenge for 2022.

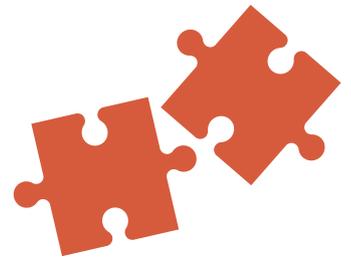
### CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

The Christmas program is always a massive event at West Welcome Wagon. This year it was bigger than ever, with our enthusiastic socially distanced team of volunteers packing and delivering presents to more than 350 houses. This was generously supported by the community with donations of toys, money and time. A big thank you to all!



## VALUE

# Collaborative



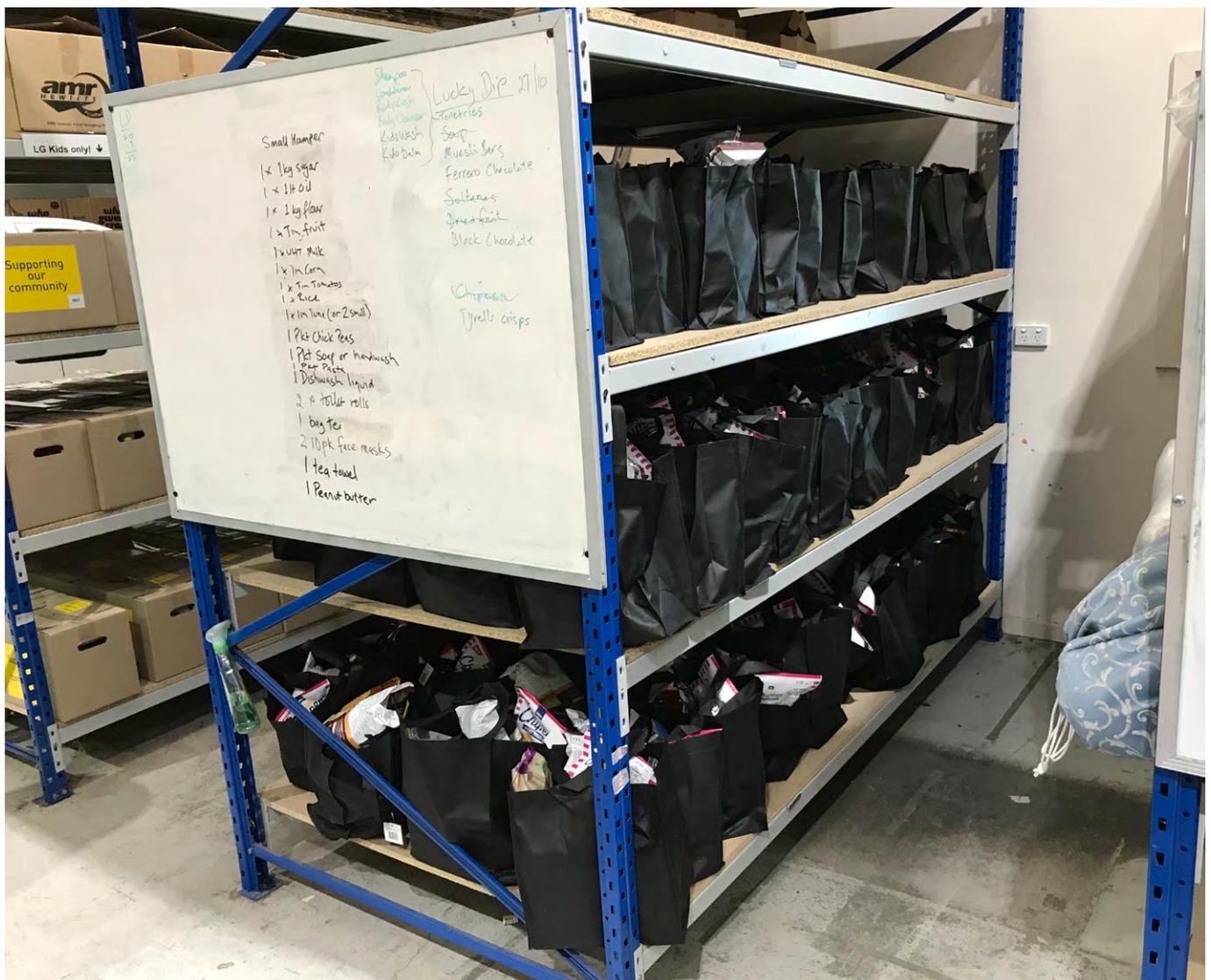
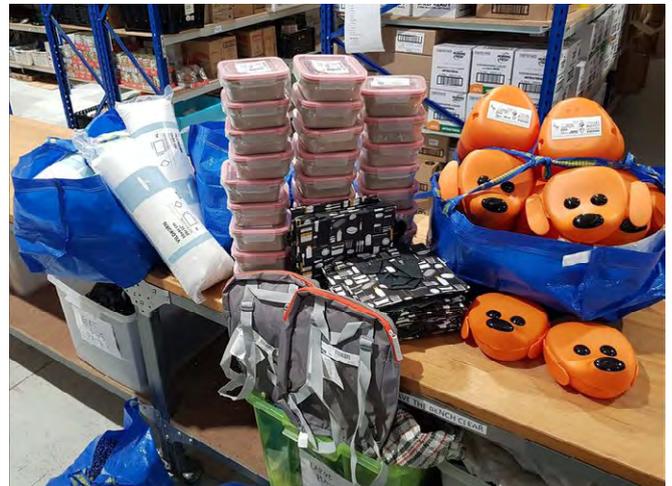
We seek to share knowledge, skills and resources with others in order to maximise opportunities and achieve shared goals.

## RACV

Since the start of COVID in Australia in March 2020, RACV Community Foundation and West Welcome Wagon partnered to deliver the Emergency Goods Assist service, which delivered 130,000 nutritious meals and emergency food boxes to Victorians in need.

West Welcome Wagon and RACV combined their separate capabilities to deliver impact exceeding all expectations, ensuring families and communities impacted by COVID-19 received access to healthy food.

This project further strengthens our relationship with RACV Community Foundation.



# Responsive

We listen to our clients, volunteers and community and find flexible innovative solutions to achieve outcomes.



## EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (ECC)

In early 2020, COVID-19 restrictions forced us to suspend visits to students in their homes for lessons. However, our team of dedicated volunteers was determined not to let that negatively impact our clients, and devised a range of alternative connections. Throughout the year we have offered telephone conversations, for general support and an opportunity to discuss public health information, as well as online English lessons. A grant allowed us to provide tablets – which we preloaded with apps and resources – to students without technology; and tutors met with students on Zoom for weekly lessons.

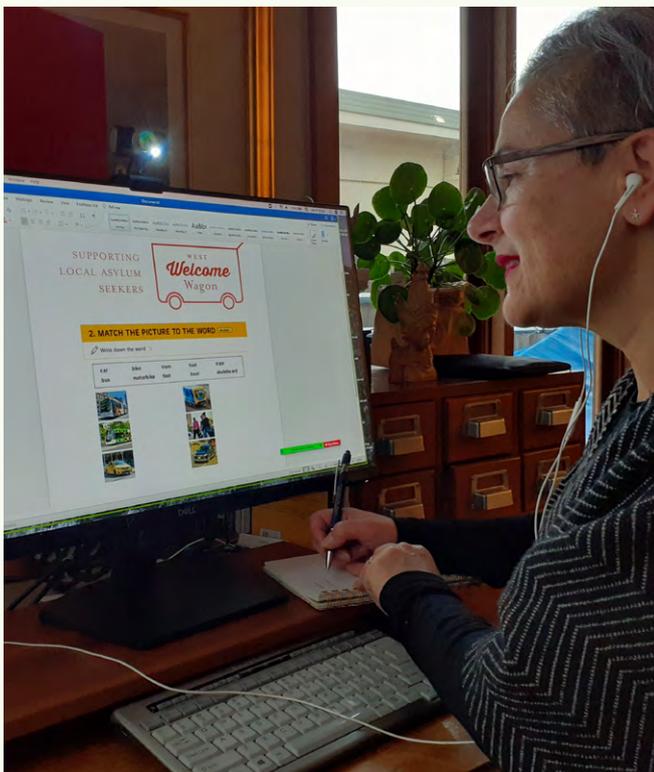
In these ways we were able to support 19 clients with a wide range of English-language competencies and goals – from wanting to be able to communicate better while shopping or discussing their child’s progress with a teacher, to improving their employment prospects. Feedback from clients indicates that this program is appreciated because it is both practical and enjoyable.



## LEGO

Peter Dean is a WWW volunteer and LEGO enthusiast. Thanks to him, lots of asylum seeker and refugee children are enjoying the wonder of LEGO!

*The first season of LEGO Masters rekindled my interest in LEGO. I originally enjoyed helping my children build their LEGO and thought it was something I could now share with my grandchildren. I bought a few new LEGO sets and then went onto Gumtree to buy a couple of tubs of used LEGO. This really sparked my interest as the used LEGO was like having a 10,000 piece jigsaw puzzle with no picture or instructions. From the used LEGO I was able to identify sets that the pieces belonged to; and where pieces of a set were missing, I was able to source them on the internet. This process has led me to donating around 400 LEGO sets to West Welcome Wagon.*



## VALUE

# Sustainable

We use environmentally sound processes and resources, and encourage recycling and repurposing whenever possible.



West Welcome Wagon was born from an idea to repurpose, so sustainability is in our bones. This flows through everything we do.

### SECURING SUPPLY

Where we can, we supply our clients' needs without purchasing new items. We take quality used household items from private donors. We get large donations from our corporate partners – a mix of new stock and customer returns. Donations waxed and waned with COVID-19, but we can put the call out for what we need at any moment and the supply line starts up again with the assistance of our valuable community.

### SHARE THE DIGNITY

West Welcome Wagon has built strong relationships with many organisations, which allows us to fill a range of demands. This year we again received donations from Share the Dignity, a group that encourages women to donate handbags crammed with period products and sanitary items to be distributed to those who cannot afford them. This provided them with a way of distributing their donations, as we can pass them on with food and clothing requests and at Reach Out days.



### COUNCIL RECYCLING DAYS



West Welcome Wagon works with local councils to repurpose items that are no longer needed. Despite the lockdowns, Roland and his crew managed to participate in pop-up recycling and reuse days in Hobsons Bay, Dandenong, City of Whitehorse and Brimbank. This enables us to build up our store of whitegoods, furniture and electrical appliances, whilst saving them from landfill.

### INTERNAL PRACTICES

In the warehouse, West Welcome Wagon practices the principle of Reduce, Repurpose, Recycle.

## VALUE

# Respectful



We value all members of our community and respect the dignity, uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every person.

### CLIENT LIAISON

The client liaison team consists of three very committed women, who accept email referrals from agencies and directly from clients, as well as referrals from the West Welcome Wagon phone number. The team can be busy with calls and emails every day.

When clients are contacted, the liaison explores their household circumstances and records their needs. Client liaisons speak to all sorts of different people from many different countries with varying degrees of English language proficiency. Sometimes young children call and interpret for their parents, or it is possible to use an external interpreter if necessary. The team hears some very difficult stories of hardship, and some clients are distressed; but the team is continually struck by the genuine care caseworkers show, and by the resilience of clients who are facing so many challenges. It is rewarding to assist these clients who just want to take care of their families and be accepted into our community.

### HOUSE NAMES

Anonymous house names have been used to protect the privacy of our clients since West Welcome Wagon began. Parcels sit on the sorting shelves or in cars awaiting delivery with labels that do not identify a person by name. Developing the lists of names is an ongoing process, but they speak volumes of the tastes and predilections of the Client Liaison team. The lists include mountain ranges, rock bands, chocolate bars, retail shops and airline companies. The names do not reflect background, race or religion, but they often bring a smile.

Volunteers at West Welcome Wagon never forget the people behind the house names. We are reminded by this arrangement that it is our responsibility to protect our clients' stories, by not using their names.



# Our clients say thank you

Dear WWW,

I would like to express my gratitude to you for the great support provided for the family referred below. The family was so happy and grateful for the materials. Thanks again for continuing to provide support for our vulnerable people during this difficult time. I hope you and your team are keeping safe and well during this difficult time.

Kind regards,  
AMES caseworker

Just got my care package and I just want to say thank you so much.

Due to Covid I lost my job and I've been struggling to buy groceries.

Thank you again.



Dear respected madam/sir  
I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to your service and ministry.

Thank you so much for a lot of things and food hamper which you distributed yesterday.

May God grace your ministry and all volunteers.

On behalf of my family we are going to say thanks for the food you delivered to us on Wednesday.

We like the food and are enjoying it.



Thanks for the food delivery.  
My kids loved it, especially fruits and veggies and crackers.  
Thanks for the food delivery.  
My kids loved it, especially fruits and veggies and crackers.

Thanks for everything you do. Without you we would be lost. Wishing you the best during the holidays. Merry Christmas to you and all you love. I hope one day to pay it forward. My gratitude is beyond words.

Thank you so much for foods. You peoples are so kind.

I am very grateful to you from the bottom of my heart. You have helped us a lot. May Allah keep you successful I am very grateful to you guys I have no words I think you guys. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You guys help us so much.

May God keep you safe and sound. Always be happy. Thank you again.

Thank you very much I received your dried foods. It is very helpful for this critical situation. God bless you.

I am very thankful for your kind team who helped me in such a critical condition.

You are very special and kind people.

I have no words to explain. I appreciate all your team.

Good morning

I just received grocery items from West Welcome Wagon.

Millions of thanks and I'm really appreciate with your kind help.

The Magnificent West Welcome Wagon

Thank you for your continuous varied seasonal valid food basket and its attachments of basic and cosmetic household necessities, which always come at the appropriate and critical times assures me absolutely and certainly that I am in front of generous permanent donors of moral and ethics, and a crew of competent employees respected management and individuals, and virtuous volunteers who with good manners and excellent polite treatment.

Thank you all, West Welcome Wagon, withing you all safety and highest level of happiness in your life, and with you families and all your loved ones

Yours Sincerely, M

# Thank you

We sincerely thank everyone who volunteered their time to support our work over the past 12 months, including those who were able to contribute the greatest amounts of time to our work:

- **Dagmar Andersen**  
Kitchen Coordinator (former)
- **Tina Conroy**  
Warehouse and Delivery Volunteer
- **Michelle Cooper**  
HR Manager (former)
- **Terry Donohue**  
Warehouse and Delivery Volunteer
- **Danila Durante**  
ECC Program Coordinator
- **Amy Gardner**  
Social Media Coordinator
- **Wendy Grimston**  
Donations Coordinator
- **Tina Hatzistavrou**  
Client Liaison
- **Errol Hunt**  
Warehouse and Delivery Volunteer
- **Angela Judd**  
Adult Clothing Coordinator
- **Matt Kuter**  
IT Coordinator
- **Kerry Lewis**  
Kitchen and Linen Coordinator
- **Fiona Lomas**  
Client Liaison
- **Merrin McTaggart**  
Warehouse and Delivery Volunteer
- **Rose McVicar**  
Donations Liaison
- **Sarah Priday**  
Workplace Volunteer Coordinator
- **Zoe Robertson**  
Fundraising Coordinator
- **Kushla Ross**  
Graphic Designer
- **Sarah Salter**  
Media and Communications Manager
- **Gabrielle Sharpe**  
Referrals Coordinator
- **Kim Shearman**  
Warehouse and Delivery Volunteer
- **Gretchen Szabat**  
Children's Coordinator
- **Catherine Ryan**  
Education Essentials Coordinator



# *Financial statements*

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

# Statement of Income and Expenditure

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2021 \$</b>	<b>2020 \$</b>
Donations	82,073	76,454
Fundraising	5,711	11,837
Grants	845,223	212,457
Other income	36,569	26,602
	<b>969,576</b>	<b>327,349</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Client costs	599,799	102,796
Fundraising costs	4,407	7,700
Employee and volunteer costs	43,918	45,007
Occupancy costs	80,686	83,000
Depreciation	11,562	5,014
Motor Vehicle	16,764	7,752
Bank and third party fees	1,298	1,350
IT running costs	6,822	1,438
Other expenses	15,174	6,177
	<b>780,430</b>	<b>260,234</b>
Surplus before income tax expense	189,146	67,115
Other comprehensive income for the year net of income tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income after income tax for the period	<b>189,146</b>	<b>67,115</b>

# Statement of Assets and Liabilities

AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	335,805	551,539
Trade and other receivables	34,928	34,292
Inventory	-	4,483
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>370,733</b>	<b>590,314</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	97,971	35,071
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>97,971</b>	<b>35,071</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>468,704</b>	<b>625,385</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	91,813	439,161
Provisions	2,241	720
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>94,054</b>	<b>439,881</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	397	397
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>397</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>94,451</b>	<b>440,278</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>374,253</b>	<b>185,107</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained surplus	374,253	185,107
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>374,253</b>	<b>185,107</b>





WestWelcomeWagon



WestWagon

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

