



# Annual Report

Financial year ending 30 June 2022

[WWW.CREATINGLINKS.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CREATINGLINKS.ORG.AU)

**Creating Links acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of country throughout Australia and recognise our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continued connection to land, waters and community.**

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and acknowledge their ongoing commitment to culture and community.

We acknowledge past atrocities that were inflicted on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples due to past government policies.

We are committed to approaching culture with humility, respect and curiosity. We acknowledge the children who are our hope for a brighter future.

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We're excited to announce that from the end of November we will be moving offices from our current location of 58 Kitchener Parade Bankstown to Civic Tower - 66-72 Rickard Road, Bankstown NSW 2200 (The BIG BLUE Council Building)

# WHO WE ARE



Creating Links is a leading not-for-profit multicultural community service provider that is dedicated to delivering the highest quality of standards and service across South-West Sydney and the Greater Sydney region.

Garnering a deep and rich history of 50 years, we understand the importance of culture and community. Today, we have grown to provide Disability services, Foster Care, Child & Family services, and Financial Wellbeing.

We are committed to delivering a holistic person-centred approach combined with a strong passion and focus on providing quality support and service excellence that you deserve.

We pride ourselves on the cultural diversity of our staff and the flexible services we offer to ensure all members of the community regardless of age, religion, ability, and culture can access the services and support you require.

# OUR MISSION

At Creating Links, we aim to develop resilient, productive, and inclusive communities and families.

We are an evolving, forward-thinking organisation that values:

- Our socially and culturally diverse community
- Our ability to create opportunities to provide services and programs
- Our collaboration and partnerships with various networks; and
- Our role in providing services in partnership with government

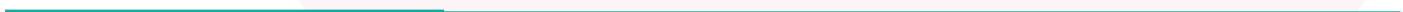
# OUR VISION

Communities for the future – Creating Links aspires to be a leading community service provider, strengthening and building community capacity.

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We are committed to delivering a holistic person-centred approach combined with a strong passion and focus on providing quality support and service excellence that you deserve.

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# OUR STORY

When a small group of community members met in Canterbury-Bankstown in 1972 and formed Bankstown Community Services Co-operative, the idea of providing services to thousands of children and families over 50 years was probably beyond their wildest dreams.

The group of community members shared the same passion and belief that all children, young people, and families were entitled to live and grow up in safe, productive, resilient, and inclusive communities.

In the early 2000's, Bankstown Community Services Co-operative transitioned to what we are now known as, Creating Links.

In 2013, Creating Links became a registered Out of Home Care provider, and together with Disability and Child & Family services, thousands of clients have been provided quality care and support since the inception.

Today, we continue to carry on the legacy of the small group of community members who formed Creating Links and strive for excellence in service delivery to support our most vulnerable community members.

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The group of community members shared the same passion and belief that all children, young people, and families were entitled to live and grow up in safe, productive, resilient, and inclusive communities.

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# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Creating Links is proud to be celebrating 50 wonderful years in the community.

Join us for our 50th Anniversary Family Fun Day celebration. This event is an opportunity to bring the local community together to honour and recognise our team members, families, and communities we have supported over 50 years across multiple services. The day will be action packed with activities for the whole family to enjoy.

From a petting zoo to children's rides, science workshops, face painting and local community cultural acts. There will be plenty of seating available to watch the performances or even enjoy a bite to eat from one of the food trucks available.

We look forward to welcoming you all to our Family Fun Day and celebrating this amazing milestone.



## Event Details:

**When:** Saturday 11 Feb 2023

**Where:** Griffith Park 4A Olympic Parade, Bankstown NSW 2200

**Time:** 11:00am - 3:00pm



# CEO & CHAIRPERSON MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure we present our Annual Report for 2021-22. Creating Links staff, volunteers, foster carers, and board members have demonstrated great resilience and innovation over the last two years to support our community, deliver high quality services, and create a positive social impact. In 2021-22 we transitioned into a new normal, taking the learnings of the last two years, transitioning to hybrid working and service delivery models, and emerging as a stronger and more robust organisation.

In March 2022 Creating Links welcomed Greg Benson as the new CEO of Creating Links. Greg joined Creating Links having held several Executive and CEO roles in the NSW Government and the not-for-profit sector. The Board and the Executive Team are looking forward to working with Greg on the organisation's growth and positive position in our community.

Chris Cahill, who had led Creating Links since 2019 as Interim CEO, retired from Creating Links and is focusing on his role as Councillor with Canterbury Bankstown City Council. Chris stepped into the role of CEO during an incredibly challenging period, with the pandemic impacting our community and disrupting the operations of Creating Links and all organisations in our sector. Chris, with the support of the Creating Links Board and Executive Team, navigated Creating Links transition to online services whilst keeping our staff and our community safe. Chris also led the organisation through transformation of some of our core systems and processes, placing Creating Links in a positive position to further build our positive social impact in the community. We all thank Chris for his many contributions to Creating Links.

Creating Links welcomed Jamie Upton to our Executive Team as the Executive Manager Out of Home Care. Jamie brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to Creating Links having worked in the Out of Home Care sector for 30 years and has been a foster carer. Jamie joins an Executive Team that have worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on Creating Links and our community and ready to lead Creating Links on the next steps of our journey.

## RESILIENT SERVICES AND TEAMS

In 2021-22 we welcomed the return of face-to-face services. We had transitioned many of our services to online methods and it was positive for our staff and community members to be able to re-engage face to face. Our community has provided positive feedback that they appreciate flexibility in how they engage with our services, and we will continue to provide both face to face and online services.

Our Child and Family services have had a significant role in supporting families over this period, providing case management, counselling, and programs to over 600 community members. The Child and Family team were able to provide targeted financial support to 172 families impacted by the pandemic through funding provided by the Department of Communities and Justice. Creating Links extended our partnership with The Smith Family to deliver the Parent Child Mother Goose program for an additional 2 years. The impact and quality of our Child and Family services is reflected in feedback from families rating Creating Links 4.6 out of 5.



In 2022, our Out of Home Care program partnered with over 180 Foster Carers to provide care for over 260 children and young people. We continued to achieve positive permanency outcomes for children and young people through guardianship, adoption, and restoration to family. We promote the social development of children and young people through community programs and events including sports, arts, and culture programs.

Our Disability Services have had significant disruption, so it was with great happiness for ourselves and our participants that we were able to recommence our group programs in May 2022. We will continue to be guided by our participants and strive to continuously improve and innovate in our programs.

## OUR PEOPLE

Creating Links has a highly committed, talented, diverse, and capable team of 140 staff members. This year has seen greater stability of our staff team who have created a positive culture that promotes innovation and community. The Creating Links Board continues to be a source of stability and leadership for Creating Links. They volunteer their time, passion, and expertise to Creating Links, providing us with guidance and governance. We thank them for all their hard work and ongoing commitment to Creating Links.

We would like to thank all our partners, Foster Carers, and volunteers who have committed their time and resources to creating positive outcomes in our community and amplifying the impact of Creating Links. We will continue to grow and extend our relationships in the coming years.

## THE COMING YEAR

We anticipate that 2022/23 will be a big year for Creating Links and our community. We will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary and will be holding community events

through the year to celebrate and acknowledge the commitment of the many families, foster carers, volunteers, staff, and Board of Directors who contributed to our organisations journey.

We will be relocating from our Kitchener Parade offices in Bankstown to Civic Tower on Rickard Road in Bankstown. This relocation will bring together all Creating Links services and teams in the one location. This will make it easier for community members to engage with multiple Creating Links services and will enable stronger collaboration and teamwork.

2022/23 will also see the development of a new Creating Links Strategic Plan and embedding a risk culture within Creating Links. The delivery of our 2019-21 Strategic Plan continued to build our practice and robust systems which provided strong foundations for the next steps of Creating Links journey with a new strategic plan setting our direction.

On behalf of the Board and the Executive Team we express our sincere thanks to all our staff, carers, and volunteers for the great job they have done during the last very challenging two years.

Our thanks to Chris Cahill for his period as interim CEO and the achievement made along with the Board and Staff.

We look forward to the continuing growth in 2022/23



**Greg Benson - CEO**



**Raad Richards - Chairperson**

# DISABILITY SERVICES

This financial year, as COVID-19 continued to have a profound impact on the lives of so many, we focussed on continuing to support and protect all our participants ensuring we adapt to the changes to continue having a positive and long-lasting impact on the lives of our participants and their families.

We used the 2020 lockdowns as a blueprint for 2021 to prepare ourselves to keep everyone safe and provide new and improved online services to our participants. We were able to quickly adjust to the fast-changing environment around us and switch to online group support.

Throughout this period, participants, families, and staff adopted a range of new practices and strategies to keep everyone safe. We are extremely proud of the way the team and participants problem solved together to change practice.

Our online support groups provided our participants with the opportunity to learn about technology, stay connected with their friends and join in new and fun activities. Our online groups were also an opportunity for parents and carers to connect with the team at Creating Links and join their children participating in group activities. This was an amazing achievement by the whole team to be able to continue to deliver quality care and support.

With the many challenges faced by the team and participants during the height of the pandemic, everyone welcomed the end of lockdown and enjoyed day trips to Sydney Zoo, cooking and craft classes, shopping at Parklea Markets, Ten Pin Bowling and the adults got back to enjoying their weekly dinner, theatre, and club night out.

We are excited to be able to run all our activities and assist our participants in developing and improving their social, emotional, and physical skills – for their everyday wellbeing as well as within the wider community, with a strong focus on increased independence.

The past year has shown that we have a team of dedicated and passionate staff who are committed to ensuring our participants continually achieve their goals and remain connected to their families and communities.

Thank you to everyone we have worked with over the past year. It has been a challenging period for all. We look forward to continually improving our service and delivering quality support and care for our participants and community members.

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# CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

This year Child and Family services continued to rise to the challenge of the impacts of COVID-19. With stricter lockdown processes in place, the new financial year saw the staff stretch themselves creatively and technically to support our families and communities.

The Targeted Earlier Intervention Team supported 65 families through our case management work, 51 clients accessed counselling support and 664 individuals accessed our parenting programs. These programs were both evidenced based and soft entry for parents, children, and young people as well as school holiday programs for families. They included but weren't limited to, Circle of Security, 1, 2, 3 Magic and Emotion Coaching, Tuning into Kids, Bringing up Great Kids, Kite Making, Surviving the Storms, Cup your Hands to Sound, Looking after ME, No Scaredy Cats, Holistic Wellbeing and Black Box Parenting.

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We want to thank everyone with whom we have worked with over the last 12 months, in what continued to be another challenging year for all. ”

Families who participated in these programs reported having increased knowledge of child development, improved family functioning and general mental health improvements. We work with families to assess their growth and development across several domains of parenting capacity and seek their feedback on their experience of Creating Links family support. The families that had completed a satisfaction survey had rated the service on average as 4.6/5.

To help support our families and our local community through the continued challenging times of COVID-19, Department of Communities and Justice had provided services with funding to support the needs of families experiencing any financial strains due to loss of income because of the pandemic. Creating Links supported 172 families to purchase household necessities, meet educational needs for their children and assist with utility bills.

The end of 2021 saw the much-needed refurbishment of our “kids’ room” on level 2 of our Kitchener Parade office. We had been awarded a Canterbury-Bankstown Council grant to improve the space to allow for better community access for all our clients, participants, and stakeholders. This included new furniture, painting, and flooring, as well as new artwork. The new ‘Kids’ room supported a range of programs for parents and children including our Vietnamese Parents and Children group, Buddies and Me, Drumbeat, School Holiday Craft groups, Peer training, and external meetings.

Our Restoration team has continued working with our birth parents in supporting them in achieving their goal of restoring their children to their care. The team has supported 33 children and their parents.

We supported birth parents to build their parenting capacity, understand their children’s development and the impacts of trauma, and to work collaboratively with a range of services and organisations.

Our Parent Child Mother Goose program funded by The Smith Family was able to continue supporting families and children enhance their relationships and parenting skills, through taking part in the program by learning songs, rhymes, and stories to support parenting strategies and enhance family wellbeing. We adapted our approach to provide online programs for families and were able to recommence face to face programs as part of a hybrid model later in the year. We were able to support 203 parents and children through these programs. As part of the funding, we were able to support an additional 150 parents and children with literacy resources during the COVID-19 lockdown.

We were successful in securing funding to continue the Parent Child Mother Goose program across the Canterbury-Bankstown Council area for another 2 years. This program has had a positive impact for families and we are excited to be able to continue delivering the program.

We want to thank everyone with whom we have worked with over the last 12 months, in what continued to be another challenging year for all in the sector and look forward to continued partnerships over the coming year.



# OUT OF HOME CARE

The past 12 months the Out of Home Care program (OOHC) have seen many changes, challenges and positive outcomes for our children and young people.

Creating Links has appointed a new Executive Manager, Jamie Upton. Jamie comes to Creating Links after an extensive history of working in government and non-government positions within the OOHC sector including as a foster carer for young people with complex behaviours.

The past year has been challenging for many foster carers and children and young people in their care, with pandemic restrictions limiting access to schools, sports

and community programs, and to the broader community support that we rely on. Through these challenges our team has continued to adjust service delivery and to partner with foster carers to meet the support needs of children and young people.

From keeping family contact through video, home schooling, to participating in online foster carer forums, our foster carers innovated and found solutions. We thank 160 members of the Creating Links foster carer community for the high-quality care of children and young people.



We have had significant interest from community members in starting a fostering journey, with over 50 community members applying to be foster carers to support children and young people in care. Our Carer Assessment, Recruitment, Training and Support team and our Community Engagement Officer have worked with community members to assess and train them for their caring journey. We look forward to the positive impact these foster carers will have on the lives of children and young people in the coming year.

In 2021/22 the OOHC team provided care to over 300 children and young people. Our Case Work teams and Permanency Coordinator work with foster carers, birth families, and the Department of Communities and Justice to achieve permanency for children and young people through restoration with birth families, guardianship, and adoption with foster carers. We celebrate every permanency outcome.

A highlight of 2021/22 has been our Youth Work team which has been mentoring young people and providing programs including Boot Camps, Basketball and sport programs, Girl Talk, and cultural events aimed at young people. The young people and team members who

participated have had a great time and it has enabled young people to form friendships in a fun and positive environment.

The OOHC program continues to imbed a clinical Model of Practice and build the therapeutic team to assist in delivery of this model. The model ensures a stronger therapeutic focus on the practice, engagement and case management for our children, young people, and carers. The trauma informed model is the driving point of the service as it delivers the culture of purposefully recognising and understanding the impact of trauma for children and young people, carers, and staff.

In the coming year we look forward to further embedding the clinical Model of Practice and consolidating the great work, effort, and commitment of the team to continue to work for the best outcomes for the children and young people.

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The Model of Practice continues to guide the organisation in best practice, supporting the holistic care of all young people within our care.

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# MEET OUR BOARD MEMBERS



## **Raad Richards - Chairperson**

Raad has over 37 years' experience in health and aged care services, and brings a wealth of knowledge to Creating Links. Raad joined the board in 2004 and was elected Chair at the Annual General Meeting.



## **Rana Moubacher**

Rana has extensive knowledge in Property Law & Conveyancing, Business Law, Commercial & Corporate Law, Divorce & Family Law, Litigation & Wills and Estate Planning. Rana joined the Creating Links Board in May 2017.



## **Joseph Azzi**

Joseph has worked in the banking and finance industry for more than 35 years and has been a director in the aged care industry for more than five years. Joseph joined the Creating Links Board in 2016.



## **Henry Tan**

Henry is a Senior ICT executive with over 25 years' experience in the private and public sectors in a diverse range of industries with state, national and international knowledge. Henry joined the Creating Links board in 2016.



## **Anne Zele**

Anne is an experienced Senior Business Executive, with 25 years' experience as a non-executive director in the Not for Profit Sector. Anne has international experience across multiple industries and a strong commitment to social inclusion, better health and empowerment for all Australians.

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# MEET OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

## Greg Benson

Chief Executive Officer

## Jamie Upton

Executive Manager – Out of Home Care / PSP

## Rose Fernandes

Chief Financial Officer

## Ebony-Ann Blewitt

Executive Manager – Child and Family Services

## Matthew Richards

Executive Manager – Marketing,  
Communications & Business Development

## Joseph Magri

Executive Manager – Accreditation and Policy

*Thank You*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our team members, stakeholders, community partners, local businesses, donors, and to our children and families for your ongoing support to Creating Links.



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

ASSETS	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,964,429	7,329,375
Trade and other receivables	609,973	387,953
<i>Total current assets</i>	7,574,402	7,717,328
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	324,227	454,245
Right-of-use assets	897,471	1,535,369
Intangible assets	2,244	9,160
<i>Total non-current assets</i>	1,223,942	1,998,774
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>8,798,344</b>	<b>9,716,102</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	3,414,806	3,843,449
Employee benefits	467,000	394,989
Lease liabilities	464,119	641,976
<i>Total current liabilities</i>	4,345,925	4,880,414
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Employee benefits	86,222	61,797
Lease liabilities	512,254	930,353
<i>Total current liabilities</i>	598,476	992,150
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>4,944,401</b>	<b>5,872,564</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,853,943</b>	<b>3,843,538</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Accumalated funds	3,853,943	3,843,538
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>3,853,943</b>	<b>3,843,538</b>

# STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME



FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>	22,168,008	18,477,802
<b>Expenses</b>		
Administration and other expenses	1,446,490	955,472
Client costs	4,667,446	4,864,949
<i>Depreciation and amortisation</i>	784,885	820,094
Insurance	219,026	171,223
Occupancy costs	114,505	136,203
Programme expenses	5,522,426	2,553,982
Salaries and employee benefits	9,402,825	8,591,830
	22,157,603	18,093,753
<b>Surplus before income tax</b>	10,405	384,049
Income tax expenses	-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	10,405	384,049
Other comprehensive income	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	10,405	384,049

Total Revenue  
and other income

 **22.1M**

Growth in Revenue  
and other income (%)

 **20%**





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