



**DUNLEA CENTRE**  
AUSTRALIA'S ORIGINAL BOYS' TOWN  
*A place for change...*



# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



# OUR HISTORY

**Fr Thomas Dunlea OBE, founded Australia's Original Boys' Town in 1939 after being inspired by the youth work of Fr Flanagan in Omaha, Nebraska.**

It has continued to evolve over the years in order to remain relevant to the changing needs of adolescents and families. This ability to adapt was reflected in 2010 with the introduction of girls into the current programs.

This necessitated a name change and Dunlea Centre was adopted in honour of its founder. The Salesian charism still underpins the work at Dunlea Centre today, although it has an interdenominational charter.



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# CHAIR'S REPORT

**“Human dignity requires us to act out of conscience as moved and drawn in a personal way from within and not by any blind impulse or from external restraints.”**

The above words are those of Bishop Geoffrey Robinson who lost his battle with cancer on the 29th December, 2020.

As I reflect on the strange and demanding year that was 2020, I pay homage to Bishop Geoff, who was a softly spoken but intelligent man of deep conviction, who believed in man's basic goodness and ability to work for the greater good of mankind.

Our Dunlea community daily strive to develop this same belief and have shown conviction in their daily efforts to support our clients and their families through a year that saw floods and bush fires followed by a pandemic that currently has no end.

Adolescents have, particularly, experienced personal difficulties during COVID-19. We know that young adults require support when it comes to self-regulation, sleep patterns and technology use, not to forget the attraction of drugs and alcohol. The loss of structure, as experienced within our education and residential services, coupled with parents who are themselves struggling to cope has led to enhanced feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety.

Dunlea professional and support personnel have shown their true ability to handle any crisis this year: be it personal, professional or medical. Our professional staff have continued to guide educational goals and to offer tools for self-development as well as support in practising healthy coping skills with the aim of reducing anxiety and family stress.

Amongst all this upheaval, 2020 saw the continuation of the partnership between Dunlea and Boys Town Omaha to enhance our data driven research program. The year also saw new developments in the form of parenting programs and permission to start a Stage 6 HSC program. Congratulations to all involved.

It has been not just a difficult year for our staff and students but also for our supportive and diligent Board Directors. We have learnt to be effective through zoom meetings and phone hook ups. We have also managed to meet personally through our sub-committees in order to complete essential business. A special thank you to Chris Lonergan who has stepped down as chair of the governance committee, though I am pleased to say, will stay on as Director.

Finally, I would like to personally thank members of the Leadership Team, staff and volunteers, the Dunlea Board of Directors, members of both State and Federal Government departments and our Salesian Fathers who continue to walk with us and believe in our cause.



**Geraldine Gray**  
Chair



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**“The disruption it caused was unprecedented, let alone the loss and anxiety it caused not just here in NSW or nationally, but worldwide.”**

Dear Friends,

We look back on 2020 with mixed emotions no doubt. The COVID-19 pandemic struck with ubiquitous force whilst Australia was amidst reflecting upon recent devastating floods and bush fires. The disruption it caused was unprecedented, let alone the loss and anxiety it caused not just here in NSW or nationally, but worldwide.

However, throughout the melee, Dunlea Centre has been able to display resilience and enterprise in achieving the milestones that had been set strategically by its Leadership Team. Some of these include The Way Forward® aftercare service, which was launched into action by the Clinical Team; the introduction of the Common Sense Parenting® program to support families of enrolled young people, and the NESAs endorsed approval to move into the Stage 6 arena in 2021 incorporating a compressed curriculum. This is the first time Dunlea Centre has attempted to cover the Year 11/12 syllabus.

Additionally, the residential program was able to solidify and bed down the TFM into operations, now into its second year. What is more, an Evaluation Committee

was established to take responsibility for data collation processes and ensure program fidelity, which in turn impacts on strategic planning. This enables Dunlea Centre to continue to provide quality services for young people and their families.

Our gratitude goes out to all members of the Dunlea Centre Leadership and management team, to staff and volunteers, the Dunlea Board of Directors, our generous research analysts, donors and benefactors, the State and Federal Governments and their agency staff and our colleagues in the Salesian Province across Australia and the Pacific, as well as other peak agencies. We thank you for your continued support and belief in our work.

Best wishes,

Paul Mastronardi



**Paul Mastronardi**  
Executive Director



# SUMMARY OF OUR PROGRAM

In today's society increasing pressures are placed on families socially, financially and emotionally. Add the pressures and temptations that young people are exposed to in society and the media and it makes for a dangerous mix.

It can be difficult for parents to know where to seek assistance when their child is in trouble. Problems such as truanting, fighting, conflict with peers, constant arguments, anger and violence can have compounding effects on already strained family dynamics. The ever changing and developing social media platform is putting immense pressure on young people too.

A young person's behaviour spiraling out of control can have a negative impact on the whole family. If the behaviours are not addressed in a supportive and appropriate manner, they can quickly lead to family distress and eventual breakdown. These young people generally cannot cope within a mainstream school setting. They are at risk of falling through the 'educational cracks'. Difficulties with basic reading, writing and maths are common. Frequently, our young people have diagnosed mental health issues in addition to poor social skills.

Dunlea Centre's program addresses these issues in a positive and proactive manner. We unite in a partnership with families. Our program enables young people to re-engage with learning, whilst simultaneously building their self-esteem and in turn, instilling hope for a brighter future. This is underpinned by the provision of therapeutic, educational and independent living skills and the teaching of social skills. The ultimate objective is to reduce disruption in the home and school setting, leading to improvement in family engagement.

Dunlea Centre has 3 residential houses for boys (Bosco, Cianzar and Power) and 1 residential house for girls (Maria). Each house has a maximum capacity of 8. Young people remain in the program for an approximate period of 12-18 months, although at times some may stay longer. On completion of the program young people may transition to alternative educational settings or into the workforce. There is also an option of transferring into one of our two day programs, Savio or Hamilton.

## From Enquiry to Admission

Dunlea Centre is a voluntary program that centres on behavioural change and educational gain. Referrals come from a wide range of educational, welfare and health professionals, as well as from parents and carers. Interested families are invited to attend a Family Talk which outlines the nature of the program and application packs are given to young people who wish to join the program.

Once the enrolment forms are completed and returned, a Family Assessment process begins. Interviews are held to determine suitability and establish goals the young

person and their parents or carers wish to target while in the program.

A Personalised Learning Plan (PLP) is then developed for each young person who enrolls. This PLP is informed by the initial goals, which are adapted and extended over time in order to assist the young person and their family to achieve all stated goals while in the program.

This family preservation focus allows young people and their families to target a range of issues including truancy, conflict, anger, risk taking behaviours, general welfare and safety.

Some young people are at risk of entering the Out-of-Home-Care or Youth Justice system. The hope is that Dunlea Centre's program will have the potential to be an intervention for these young people.

## Enrolment Policies

A link to a summary of the enrolment process is available on Dunlea Centre's website: [www.dunleacentre.org.au/eligibility-and-enrolment](http://www.dunleacentre.org.au/eligibility-and-enrolment)

A link to our enrolment policy and procedure in full, which is titled Initial Access, Assessment, Placement and Referral, can also be found on our website at: [www.dunleacentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Initial-Access-Assessment-Placement-Referral-3a.pdf](http://www.dunleacentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Initial-Access-Assessment-Placement-Referral-3a.pdf) and is available in hard copy from the Administration Area.

## Policy Development

Dunlea Centre has developed a policy framework consistent with the standards of the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

Dunlea Centre abides by its policies and procedures in all aspects of its operations. Changes and updates are made to policies and procedures regularly in order to keep pace with current events and requirements. In 2019 such changes were made to the following policies and procedures: Behaviour Management, Child Protection, Student Wellbeing, Grievance Resolution and Complaints.

A number of policies, including those relating to student welfare, anti-bullying, discipline and complaints are publicly available on Dunlea Centre's website: [www.dunleacentre.org.au/policies-and-procedures](http://www.dunleacentre.org.au/policies-and-procedures) Hard copies are displayed and available in the Administration Area and on request.



# A PLACE FOR CHANGE

Dunlea Centre's residential program for young people operates from 9am Monday morning until 12pm Friday each week of the school term. Young people return to their family home for weekends and school holiday periods.

Throughout the week young people attend classes and focus on developing academic, social and life skills whilst at school. All staff are trained in a model of care that has an emphasis on teaching social skills and our qualified teachers have embedded this into their daily teaching practice. Youth Workers support the young people in the classroom, playground and during afternoon activities. All staff look for opportunities to praise and reinforce positive and prosocial behaviours, with replacement behaviours being taught when the need for correction is observed.

Dunlea Centre's Residential Youth Workers focus upon developing each young person's social skills through a variety of real life learning experiences in order to prepare them for positive re-engagement in their home environment. Some of these involve completing household chores such as kitchen tasks, laundry duties, grocery shopping and interactions during recreational activities. These are just a few examples of the numerous opportunities that arise in a 24-hour period and enable the teaching of prosocial behaviours in our program.

Each day Adolescent and Family Clinicians engage as required with young people and their families. This includes providing services such as individual counselling, case planning, family therapy and parenting classes. In addition the clinical team reinforces the teaching of social skills that occurs at all levels of our program and also instructs parents and carers in this.

This inclusive approach ensures that the method of teaching social skills throughout the agency maintains a consistently strong emphasis on praise and correction across all environments.

## Transition and Program Completion

A transition plan is steadily developed for each young person as their program approaches completion, which is generally after 12-18 months. The aim is to either return

the young person to their former school or a more suitable educational setting, or possibly commence employment. The clinicians have a strong focus on after-care during this phase of transition, enabling the changeover to progress smoothly.

A step-by-step process is developed to make the transition as seamless as possible. A concerted effort goes into consolidating the work with families during this phase to enable the successful re-integration of each young person into their family household on a permanent basis.

Likewise, significant importance is placed upon ensuring the smooth transition to a new educational environment or work setting. This is supported by the development of appropriate structures to increase the opportunities for a successful outcome in this setting as well.

## Tools to Assist Young People Academically and Emotionally

The academic tools used to assist a young person during their placement at Dunlea Centre include NAPLAN (Years 7 and 9), VALID (Years 8 and 10), ACER's Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) in Reading Comprehension, Mathematics, and Spelling; MultiLit Programs and other literacy and numeracy diagnostic tools.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire Self-Report Inventory (SDQ) and Resiliency Scales for Children and Adolescents are instruments that assist staff in capturing the perspective of young people, their parents or carers and teachers over time. Measures cover emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity-inattention, peer problems and pro social behaviour. The Beck Youth Inventory, DASS21 and JUTZ Climate Scale are other instruments that are also utilised in the agency's work.





# RESIDENTIAL MANAGER

**Bianca Matthews is Dunlea Centre's newly appointed Residential Services Manager. Bianca has completed her Certificate IV in Community Services and is a qualified trainer of the Boys Town Omaha Teaching Family Model. Bianca is currently studying a Bachelor of Psychological Science.**

Bianca grew up and attended school in South Western Sydney. It was within this very vibrant and social upbringing she realised she wanted to work with youth. Bianca was also passionate about design and sowed her creative oats out of High School in Visual Merchandising.

Bianca travelled all around Australia and many cities in the world setting up stores for various retail giants. Whilst gaining extensive experience in logistics and leading teams, she remained motivated to pursue a career helping others. With some life experience under her belt, Bianca made the decision to move into the Community Service sector in 2016 and hasn't looked back.

Bianca commenced at Dunlea Centre in 2018 and has undertaken different roles; Residential Youth Worker in the Maria and Bosco Houses, moving then into a support role across all four houses before becoming Assistant Residential Manager. It is from the experience of each of these roles Bianca has honed her skills in the model and can support the Residential team more effectively.

Bianca aims to build on the success of the Residential Program through consistent application of, and fidelity to, the Boys Town model. Empowering young people to make positive choices, to enhance the quality of their relationships whilst increasing their skill acquisition is Bianca's ultimate goal.

### What did you want to be when you grew up?

*Many things, but always wanted to work with children / young people.*

### Favourite TV Show?

*Younger*

### Favourite Breakfast?

*Poached eggs with avocado on toast*

### What is next on your travel bucket list?

*Japan*



**Bianca Matthews**  
Residential Manager



# TOYOTA AND SCHOOLS PLUS SUPPORT

**Across the last four years Dunlea Centre has gratefully received much needed financial support from Toyota and Schools Plus.**

This financial assistance underpins the existence of our Hamilton and Savio Day Programs.

The Day Programs at Dunlea Centre have provided students with an opportunity to attend classes of a smaller size with an emphasis on innovative hands-on learning. The results have shown improvements in educational outcomes for these young people as well as improved social skills.

Mr Paul Mastronardi, Executive Director, Dunlea Centre said *"The incredibly generous funding and student scholarships provided by Toyota and Schools Plus over the last four years have enabled young people from diverse backgrounds and educational abilities to attend Dunlea Centre as day students. Many of these students had previously disengaged from school and have now successfully re-integrated into the school system."*

Before attending the Hamilton and Savio programs, most of these young people had not achieved academically to the best of their ability. This was often due to low self-esteem as a result of feeling inferior to their peers when it came to educational measures.

The young people in our day programs are now making goals for themselves and able to look forward to a brighter future. This substantial financial support from Toyota and Schools Plus will also allow many other young people and their families who face disadvantage, to access programs that can change lives and restore relationships.

We are thankful to Toyota and Schools Plus, who in collaboration with our hard working educators, youth workers and clinicians have made these achievements possible.



Left Image: Rosemary Conn, CEO, Schools Plus Australia with Matthew Callachor - President and CEO of Toyota Australia and Scholarship recipient Noah.



# THE DUNLEA DHARAWAL WALK

Over the years Dunlea Centre has enjoyed a long and purposeful history working with indigenous youth. Today the centre assists young people and their families from many varied backgrounds.

After consultation and collaboration with members of the local Dharawal community, Dunlea Centre embarked on a journey in 2020 to create an indigenous space within the grounds. This space became The Dunlea Dharawal Walk. The project aims to raise awareness and recognition of young people with indigenous backgrounds; improve cultural sensitivity towards these families and empower them to be proud of their heritage.

The walk consists of a series of installations displayed throughout the school grounds. Part of the walk is seen when leaving the reception area and entering the playground, then continues on past the sporting areas and into the garden. Students, staff and the local indigenous community all participated in creating The Dunlea Dharawal Walk.

The walk includes:

- Permanent installation of the Australian National, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags, with appropriate lighting
- The collaborative painting of an indigenous mural relevant to the Dharawal people
- Creation and hands-on planting of a Reconciliation Garden and yarning circle that recognises the Dharawal people's land
- Displaying an Acknowledgment of Country in every classroom, our staff room and museum
- A digital recording of the development of the project for permanent display
- Commemoration of the project with a Smoking Ceremony and Didgeridoo performance

The work creates an outdoor learning space dedicated to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture, recognition and history in collaboration with the local Dharawal community. Teachers and young people will use the space for learning about the history, stories, spiritual connections, culture and activities of indigenous peoples. Local Dharawal elders will be invited to share stories and build connections with the young people across the coming years as Dunlea Centre continues on its journey of connecting with our First Nation's people.

The Dunlea Dharawal Walk ultimately aims to promote an attitude of understanding and inclusiveness, encouraging young people and their families to develop greater on-going support for all indigenous peoples.

The Dunlea Dharawal Walk was funded by the Sutherland Shire Council Community Grants Program 2020/21.

Watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/-t00KzpNa4M>



Mr Paul Mastronardi, Mrs Jan Forshaw & Sutherland Shire Deputy Mayor Michael Forshaw.





# EDUCATIONAL REPORT

**2020 materialised into an extraordinary year, not just for Dunlea Centre, but for the entire world. The consequence for most educational facilities was to transition to remote platforms utilising online learning.**

Research data has highlighted that Dunlea students work at their best with close classroom interaction. The suggestion of removing this support produced several nervous moments for both the families and staff. After postponing this variation to operations for several weeks, it was decided in Week 8 of Term 1 to make the change. Students were excited by the prospect (not knowing the school work would continue) whilst families and staff remained cautiously optimistic. How could Dunlea students be adequately supported virtually, and still achieve positive outcomes?

Remarkably, throughout this unprecedented period, Dunlea students displayed exceptional adaptability and resilience in adjusting to the necessary changes. Effective online learning was achieved through the utilisation of a 'Project Based Learning Model' where all students completed requisite set tasks contributing to their ROSA completion.

The school continued to grow academically despite the challenges and restrictions of the pandemic. Significant gains were made in education in addition to many positive behavioural changes observed across the classes. The implementation of the Boys Town, Omaha, 'Well Managed School' - Social Skills Model, has been a contributing factor in these encouraging outcomes. This evidence based approach incorporates individual intervention in reading comprehension, maths and spelling delivered during the daily Fundamentals session.

Twenty-two students successfully completed the ROSA in 2020. This was the largest cohort of year 10 students to achieve this milestone in any given academic year at Dunlea. This distended number led to deliberations over

extending current services beyond year 10. A successful application to NESA late last year has allowed the Agency the opportunity to deliver Stage 6, Preliminary and HSC from 2021. This is an exciting new chapter for Dunlea Centre as it will be able to support students in attaining a HSC qualification, with the option of an ATAR.

Students had a positive experience engaging in the 'YES' Program offered by NSW TAFE. These 6-week short courses provide students direct industry experience in a field of their choice, e.g. Beauty Therapy, Plumbing, IT and Early Childcare. Many glowing reports were received from the TAFE teachers relating to student application throughout the field experience. Dunlea Centre will continue to take part in these industry experience courses.

STEM Day was another exciting experience that is now into its third year of operations. Students were engaged in topics around chemical reactions and rocket building as well as examining combustion principles in engineering. Other topics included forces and friction, building boats out of cardboard and water testing/racing with many students displaying unforeseen shipwright skills.

An enormously challenging year has concluded with uncertain times still on the horizon. Nonetheless, many great accomplishments were realised in 2020 with many more to emanate in the New Year, in particular, the students working towards the HSC.





# RESIDENTIAL REPORT

**2020 started positively and Dunlea Centre's Residential Houses had significant plans for the year ahead. The agency had recommenced after a challenging summer holiday period where many parts of Australia were declared states-of-disaster.**

These included a series of unprecedented calamities with severe bush fires, wild hail storms and widespread flooding leading to major evacuations in many parts of the country. The damage and destruction these adversities incurred would be quickly usurped in late January, by the confirmation of the first Australian case of COVID-19.

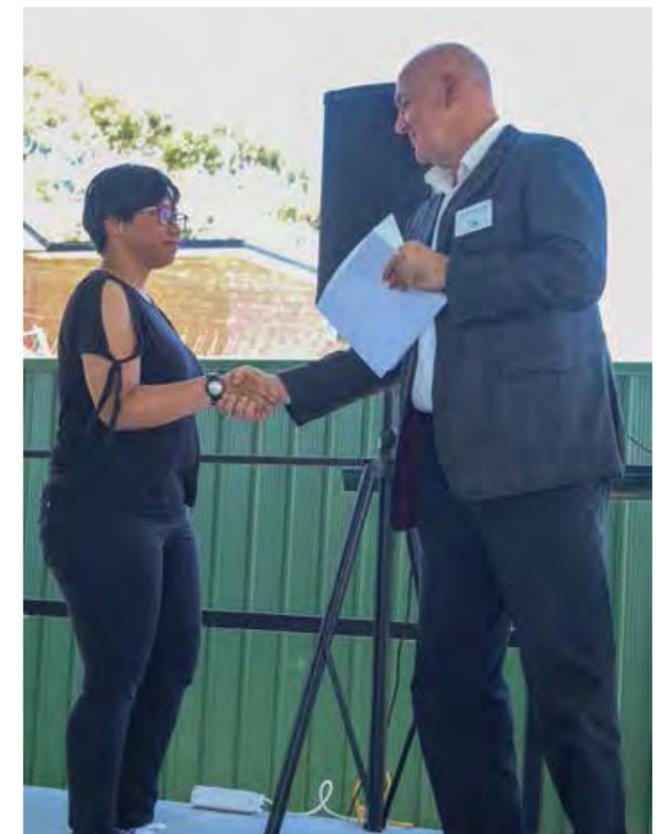
The Leadership Team commenced navigating a path through these demanding times whilst it gradually dawned on the world that a major pandemic was unfolding. Meanwhile, Dunlea young people resumed with energy, enthusiasm and a new sense of attitudinal maturity. A culture of fervour and eagerness permeated across the Houses as previous students welcomed the newly enrolled with care and kindness. Notably, self-reflection and skill development being at the forefront of everyone's thinking.

Self-governance was a focus for the year ahead. This involved promoting peer influence and offering opportunities for young people and staff to collaborate together with the responsibility of running the House a priority. This was articulated into helping young people learn and practice, responsibility, self-discipline and decision making in addition to, consideration of others and self-determination. In essence, it was about developing and empowering our potential future leaders.

Keeping in mind all the skills development, the residential team and young people focused heavily on developing review meetings. These discussions are prepared and facilitated by the young person, with a Residential youth worker and parents/carers in attendance. The focus of each meeting is about recognising and presenting academic achievements, feedback, praise and future goal setting. The intention is for young people to take ownership of their individual goals and their respective progress.

Not to be deterred by the global pandemic and the restrictions placed upon workplaces and life in general, engagement with families was still maintained. This was accomplished in a COVID creative way, primarily via zoom meetings and phone conversations. The latter part of 2020 witnessed an increase in more regular face-to-face contact culminating in an end-of-year social event in each House once COVID restrictions were eased. This involved young people and residential staff catering and entertaining for parents and carers, which was by all indicators, overwhelmingly successful.

The ongoing feedback received from young people, parents and carers has been extremely positive.





# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of NSW and Mr Lee Evans MP video address to Dunlea
- Father Briffa SDB OAM oldest living Boys' Town Teacher, 92nd birthday celebration
- Life Lessons With Lee Evans MP
- Common Sense Parenting® (CSP) commences in February
- Train The Trainer conducted under the supervision of the Boys Town Omaha certified trainers
- Annual Salesian Immersion moved to Zoom arrangement due to COVID-19 outbreak
- The Way Forward® - Dunlea Centre After-Care Program for families is launched
- Lori Scharff, Boys Town Omaha Certified Consultant returns for two weeks of supervision and consultation
- NESA registration and accreditation renewed for 5 years
- NESA approval for 12-month trial of the inaugural Stage 6 program
- Commencement of the 3-year HSA contract with Department of Communities & Justice
- Tune In With Dunlea - Podcasts commence, Joel Hamill and Katherine McEvoy
- Mental Health Awareness Month celebrated throughout October
- Salesian Sister Laura Chau prepares to return to Hong Kong after 5 years with CASS
- Establishment of the Youth & Family Program Manager position - Samantha Dennis
- Yarning Circle, Koomurri Smoking Ceremony & Dharawal Walk opening
- Provincial Will Matthews SDB visit
- Recognition Ceremonies introduced



Dunlea Centre Leadership Team with Mr Lee Evans MP.



# COMMON SENSE PARENTING®

In 2020, Dunlea Centre began facilitating Boys Town's Common Sense Parenting® program.

Boys Town's Common Sense Parenting® program is an evidence-based, 6 week group parenting course, which teaches parents valuable skills to help build healthy relationships with their children, communicate effectively and manage challenging behaviours. The program teaches step-by-step techniques, highlighting to parents that positive discipline is about teaching and instructing young people. Common Sense Parenting® assists families in developing a positive approach to parenting.

It has been truly remarkable to see the level of commitment from Dunlea Centre parents in wanting to support their young person and build positive family relationships. The young person is invited to the final session, to present their parent(s) with a certificate and to celebrate their family achievements. Every young person beams with pride!

Parents completed a pre and post-questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the program. In 2020:

- The completion rate of parents who commenced the program was 87%. Reasons for drop-out were varied, including work commitments and other life-stressors.
- A total of 27 parents successfully completed the program.
- Over 92% of parents reported overall improvements in their parenting skills, including in the areas of parenting confidence, ability to remain calm, increase in quality time spent with their child, decrease in problematic behaviours and increase in desirable behaviours.

Below is some of the feedback we have received from parents regarding Common Sense Parenting®:

- *"Great skill sets presented to enable me to calmly approach and deal with any situation with my child."*
- *"The course has shown me the value of effective praise and working with my child to address the issues rather than get upset and punishing."*
- *"I look at parenting so much differently now."*
- *"This course has changed both my husband's and my approach towards how we parent and how we parent together, in addition to learning skills that have improved the quality of our family life".*
- *"In the short space of time, just with your course and materials and how you presented, there have been huge benefits and change in our household already, all extremely positive, so thank you."*





# STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A diverse range of qualified and experienced staff are employed at Dunlea Centre across a variety of positions brought together in a multidisciplinary framework.

These qualifications incorporate the areas of teaching, psychology and psychological sciences, social work, business administration, financial management, governance, youth work, community services, trades, ministry and residential care.

Currently, there are 10 qualified and registered teachers with a range of focus KLA's across the curriculum. Additionally, there are 4 Behavioural Interventionists, 8 Residential Youth Workers and Clinical support team of 5 social workers and psychologists. These direct care roles are supported by the Leadership Team, Administration personnel and Facilities department.

On staff 8 members hold post-graduate qualifications, 18 are graduates with a further 13 holding TAFE or equivalent qualifications related to their positions. 9 staff members are studying towards higher qualifications in psychology, forensic mental health, teaching and counselling.

The average attendance rate of staff in 2020 was above 96%.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the ability of employees to attend face-to-face training and professional development courses. However, the dedication and determination of Dunlea Centre staff was evident as they embraced the online learning space to build knowledge and skills to assist the young people and families. Training courses in all formats in 2020 included:

Boys' Town Intervention and Assessment, Common Sense Parenting, Anaphylaxis, Child Protection, Reportable Conduct and Workplace Investigations, Work Health and

Safety, Governance, Fire Safety, Bronze Medallion, First Aid, Telehealth, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Literacy, Data Gathering, Finance, Risk and Compliance, IT and various mental health courses. Additionally, nine members of staff completed the Teaching Family Model Train the Trainer course to enable Dunlea Centre to provide a continuous and regular training program to all staff.

Professional exchanges and experiences further develop the capacity of Dunlea Centre to provide high quality service delivery. Whilst COVID-19 hampered the opportunities to physically visit, relationships were maintained with other NGO's and associated agencies through online connections. These include the Association of Independent Schools (AIS), John Berne Lewisham, Catholic Social Services (CSS), Association of Children's Welfare Agencies (ACWA) and numerous schools and education services from the State, Catholic and Independent sectors. The Leadership Team continue to maintain professional links with Lund University Sweden, Ulster University Belfast, St Patricks School Malta and closer to home, the Australian Catholic University, University of Western Sydney and the University of NSW.

Boys Town Omaha, Nebraska, USA continues to provide generous support and professional dialogue with Dunlea Centre. Prior to the onset of COVID-19 travel restrictions, Boys Town trainer Mike Meeks visited Dunlea Centre to facilitate training in early 2020. Whilst plans for Leadership Team members and Board Directors to visit Omaha have been postponed, Mike and practitioner Lori Scharff continue to support Dunlea Centre in a virtual capacity.



Left Image: Lori Scharff, Boys Town Omaha and Paul Mastronardi. Right Image: Mike Meeks, Boys Town Omaha facilitating Dunlea training.



# JOB READY PROGRAM

Each year Dunlea Centre assists young people with job readiness through education in resume writing, job specific research tasks, work experience and job interview skills.

Stage 6 students participate in work experience placements enabling them to have authentic experiences in the work place. This work experience is often the first contact our students have with the world of work.

In September 2020 as part of Dunlea Centre's Job Ready Program, a Mock Interview Day was held. This Interview Day afforded our young people an opportunity to prepare for job interviews and practise the skills required to achieve a successful outcome from an interview. The aim of the day was to help relieve some of the stress our young people experience when attending job interviews and therefore gain some confidence when applying for jobs. The concept was based around each young person being interviewed for their dream job. All Dunlea students participate in the job ready program.

The interview panel consisted of our Executive Director, Paul Mastronardi; Educational Services Manager, Joel Hamill and Youth & Family Program Manager, Samantha Dennis. The young people prepared for the day by researching their dream job. They then each wrote a resume and cover letter for their specific job, which they presented to the panel at the interview.

On the day, the young people dressed neatly for their interview, spoke clearly and appropriately and made good use of this opportunity to be interviewed in a familiar environment. The interviewers asked various questions and assessed each individual using criteria that would be typical in a real interview situation. This included appearance, greeting skills, body language, the quality of responses to questions and communication in general.

Overall the young people took on the character of the job they were 'applying for' with much enthusiasm and strived to be successful in their interviews. The panel were able to give positive suggestions and encouragement to each young person, who took on the feedback in a sensible and mature manner.

The staff were pleased to be able to give these young people the opportunity to practise their interview skills and answer relevant questions utilising both existing and new found knowledge of their dream jobs. The day was deemed a great success and plans are underway to conduct Mock Interview Day again next year.



Casey, Joel Hamill, Educational Services Manager, Paul Mastronardi, Executive Director & Samantha Dennis, Youth & Family Program Manager.



# DUNLEA PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

Dunlea Centre is privileged to have the continued support and assistance of researcher and residential expert Dr Frank Ainsworth, (Senior Principal Research Fellow (Adjunct) James Cook University), in addition to the magnanimous Dr Jonathan Huefner, Research Scientist, Boys Town, Omaha. Their continued benevolence enables Dunlea Centre's strategic direction to be data-driven.

In 2019, Dunlea Centre commenced implementing the Boys Town Model of Care imported from Omaha, USA. The BTO model is well established with over 50 years of research and collated data (Fixsen and Blase, 2018). It is the most researched residential program anywhere in the world. This model is heavily focused on the development of positive social skills.

Additionally, in November 2010, Dunlea Centre was accepted into the TFA (Teaching Family Association) as a developing site. The TFA is an international network of providers committed to best practices for persons and families served in a comprehensive continuum of environments including family homes, shelters, emergency settings, schools, small group settings, community care, transitional living, foster homes and other individualised settings. Membership with the TFA will ensure that Dunlea Centre maintains program fidelity and conformity through the established accreditation and certification standards it sets.

Highlights at the conclusion of 2020 are set out below:

## Graduates

Three years of data has been collected to ascertain the program's effectiveness and, in particular, the impact of the TFM since implementation (2019). Initially, the program completion time for a graduate was 6 - 12 months. Based on this program completion time and the relevant data, graduate success was a healthy 77%, which meets the agency's overall objective in achieving a

consistent minimum benchmark of 75% for graduates or better. In recent times, a graduate is considered a young person who has completed the program within a 12 to 18 month timeframe (increased). Current data indicates that student graduates spend an average of 17 months in the program, while the average for non-graduates is 4 months. The average length of stay overall for a young person is 10 months. By completion of 2021 there will be adequate relevant data to analyse the graduate success rate for the longer enrolment periods.

## Demographics

In 2020, the ratio of enrolments by gender was 68% males and 32% females. The 14-15 years age bracket was the dominant age where 28% were 14 year old males and 21% were 15 year old males. The data also revealed:

- 57% of young people who enrolled in 2020 had a mental health diagnosis, most commonly ADHD/ODD combination at 62% and a blend of Depression & Anxiety at 25%
- 17% males and 11% females had prior involvement with drugs and alcohol
- 21% of families were known to NSW Child Protection Services
- The largest source of referrals came from Self/Family at 43%, Schools at 32% and Psychologists/Paediatricians at 14%
- On average, the number of schools previously attended by 64% of current Dunlea participants was three or more



Dunlea Centre Leadership Team.

## Post-Evaluation Surveys

The post-evaluation survey results were encouraging. High scores were achieved across the Agency:

**Positive Relationship with Staff** - 8/10

**Keeping Parents/Carers Updated on Child Progress** - 9/10

**Meaningful Counselling Sessions** - 9.5/10

**Overall success of the program** - 8.5/10

**Residential Care** rated 9/10, which is most pleasing for the agency as this has been a strategic focus for the past four years i.e. improving the quality and service provision within the residential arena.

**Transition Planning** also rated 9/10. The agency is currently focused upon strengthening the transition further with the introduction of the Way Forward®, the after-care service initiated by the Clinical Team, which support graduates of the program for a further two years if required.

## Outcomes

**Education:** These statistics demonstrate the overall educational gains throughout the 2020 academic year in Mathematics, Spelling and Reading. The Progressive Achievement Test (PAT) was utilised and 85% of all residential students made an improvement.

**Behaviour:** These statistics demonstrate overall mental health improvements in 2020 through the Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which showed 91% of all residential students made an improvement.

**Follow-up surveys** have continued to gain an insight into the sustainability of change for young people after they

exit the program. The results from follow-up surveys at 24 months post discharge for students who exited the program in 2018 showed that 70% were still living at home, 35% still at school and 43% working either part-time or full-time.

## Other Summaries

Overall attendance rates across the agency for 2020 were 88%. The breakdown was:

**Year 7** - 99%

**Year 8** - 86%

**Year 9** - 86%

**Year 10** - 83%

**Non-Attendance:** If a student is absent from school without a legitimate reason, a staff member will make contact with the parent/carer on the day of the absence. The teacher completes this task in the first instance by phone. A return message indicating the reason for absence is necessary as a legal record explaining the absence. This is noted in the case notes of the student as well as marked in the Attendance Register. A parent can also explain an absence through an email, phone call or a written note on return of absence.

If a student continues to be absent for a period of time without a satisfactory explanation, an attendance meeting is organised with the student and parent/carer. If there is still no improvement and the student/young person continues to have unexplained absences a meeting with an AIS representative will be organised to support the process. From time to time the HSLO can also be utilised for advice.



Left Image: Paul Mastronardi & Dr Frank Ainsworth. Right Image: Dr Jonathan Huefner, Research Scientist, Boys Town Omaha.





# “TUNE IN WITH DUNLEA” MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

For over 80 years, WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW, has been integral in coordinating annual campaigns educating the community in mental health issues and promoting positive mental wellbeing.

Since 2010, October has marked NSW Mental Health Month. Throughout the years, a different theme and slogan is chosen to represent varying aspects of mental health and key emerging issues. The theme chosen for Mental Health Month October 2020 was “Tune In”.

Dunlea Centre was very fortunate to receive a grant from WayAhead to assist with delivering a number of activities throughout the month of October, with the aim of decreasing stigma associated with mental health, and educating our young people on ways to build positive mental health and the importance of help-seeking. Improving mental health awareness in young people is a key priority of Dunlea Centre.

A number of guest speakers graciously donated their time to speak with our young people. Moises Henriques, professional Australian cricket player, discussed his personal mental health journey and the significant improvement in his cricket game when he prioritised his mental wellbeing. Beau Champion, former professional Rugby League player, shared many stories about overcoming adversity and ways to build resiliency. Black Dog Institute presented their ‘Mental Fitness’ program, discussing the importance of gratitude and mindfulness for building mental flexibility.

Executive Director, Paul Mastronardi, guided our young people in mindfulness meditation sessions. There is a wealth of empirical evidence to support the benefits of regular mindfulness practice, including reduced stress and rumination, improved focus and working memory, and decreased emotional reactivity.



We hosted a Mindful Morning Tea and local Member of Parliament, Mr Lee Evans, kindly attended. Mr Evans addressed our staff and young people. He discussed the benefits in setting goals to increase one’s sense of mastery and achievement. We even had a surprise video address from our Premier, the Honourable Gladys Berejiklian! Staff and young people then participated in a mindful eating exercise. It was a great opportunity for our community to connect with one another and to normalise the conversation around mental health.

In 2020, Dunlea Centre formed a partnership with One Wellbeing – an organisation that supports elite athletes in tertiary education endeavours. Mental Health Month saw Dunlea Centre launch our first Podcast – “Tune In with Dunlea”. Some of our young people were fortunate to participate in mentoring sessions with professional athletes. The athletes and our young people shared many important messages about mental health in the Podcast. Their honesty, bravery and vulnerability is commendable. Head over to our website to listen!

Mental wellness is fundamental for living a meaningful life, fulfilling one’s potential, connecting with others and developing a positive sense of self. Dunlea Centre looks forward to continuing the conversations around positive mental health and celebrating Mental Health Month again next year.

Watch the video here:  
<https://www.dunleacentre.org.au/mental-health-month-ends-with-honourable-gladys-berejiklian-mr-lee-evans-mp/>

Thank you to John Hollis for the fantastic drone image!





# LIFE LESSONS WITH LEE

Mr Lee Evans MP, was invited to Dunlea Centre to support young people in developing culinary life skills.

Lee spoke to the students about budgeting and menu planning. He empowered students with the skill of making a meal from the pantry. Lee and the students cooked two delicious meals together. A number of the students were quite shocked at how tasty their meals were! Lee shared with the students how to save money by preparing meals ahead of time and freezing for future use, thereby avoiding the trap of take away food.

Dunlea's Educational Services Manager Joel Hamill said "Independent living skills is such an important part of our social skills program. Mr Evans has been incredibly generous with his time and energy sharing with our students. I have to admit learning how peel onions without crying is a new skill for me also!"

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW-Z8IESY5I>





# QUOTES FROM DUNLEA PARENTS

*“Our son has become respectful and confident – thank you Dunlea Centre.”*

*“We were desperate and losing sleep regarding our daughter’s education and future. She is thriving at Dunlea and progressing well with her studies.”*



# QUOTES FROM DUNLEA STUDENTS

*“Bullying is not allowed here. I can now relax and learn here!”*

*“The teachers really care and I feel OK to keep asking questions until I understand. I still don’t love maths, but I’m getting heaps better.”*





# THE WAY FORWARD® - DUNLEA CENTRE AFTER-CARE PROGRAM

Dunlea Centre has officially launched 'The Way Forward®'. The Way Forward® is a structured after-care program, supporting young people and parents/carers for 12 months following their transition from Dunlea Centre.

Whilst in the program, young people develop and improve their academic capabilities and social skills. These attributes promote their social and emotional growth and will benefit them throughout their lives. The Way Forward® is an after-care service for youth and families to support their transition from Dunlea Centre back to the family home. During this transition, young people and parents are provided with regular and consistent support to assist with overcoming any challenges. Maintaining behavioural changes and academic gains that young people have achieved in the program is critical to their success and is the focus of The Way Forward® service.

The key goal areas of The Way Forward® are:

- Young person maintains full-time engagement in education or vocational setting.
- Young person refrains from criminal and/or anti-social behaviour.
- Parents/carers demonstrate support and care of their young person in the home environment by establishing age-appropriate routines in the areas of education/vocation, sleep, technology, hygiene, diet, exercise and social interactions.
- Aligned with the principles of Common Sense Parenting®, parents continue to utilise strategies that promote positive family relationships.
- Young person and/or parents are connected with community supports if required.

The Way Forward® is a proactive, outreach support service, which may include home visits, school visits, regular phone/email check-in and any other contact that may be required. Quarterly reviews of target areas are completed to ensure young people and parents/carers are meeting their goals and successfully transitioning from Dunlea Centre.

After 12 months and the conclusion of The Way Forward®, young people and parents are contacted bi-annually for another 12 months to ensure ongoing maintenance of positive outcomes. This data collection also informs program effectiveness and evaluation. Dunlea Centre is committed to ensuring young people and families succeed following transition from the on-site program and families feel supported to take on the next part of their journey.



# DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY FOR ADOLESCENTS

In 2020, the Adolescent and Family Clinicians facilitated a 16-week Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for Adolescents (DBT-A) group.

Marsha M. Linehan originally developed Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). DBT is an evidenced-based treatment that teaches a set of standardised skills for how to regulate emotions and behaviours, and how to develop and sustain meaningful interpersonal relationships. Jill Rathus and Alec Miller designed DBT-A, which is an adaptation of DBT, that supports adolescents who struggle to regulate their emotions and behaviours. Young people are taught skills focusing on mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, distress tolerance and improving relationships with parents.

Four young people participated in the 16-week group. Young people completed a pre and post-questionnaire to measure the effectiveness of the group and improvement in skill level. As seen in the graph below, all four young people completed the group with an increase on their post-evaluation scores. An increase in scores demonstrate an improvement in overall skill acquisition.

The young people demonstrated considerable commitment and enthusiasm throughout the 16 weeks, learning valuable skills to support them across many areas in their life.

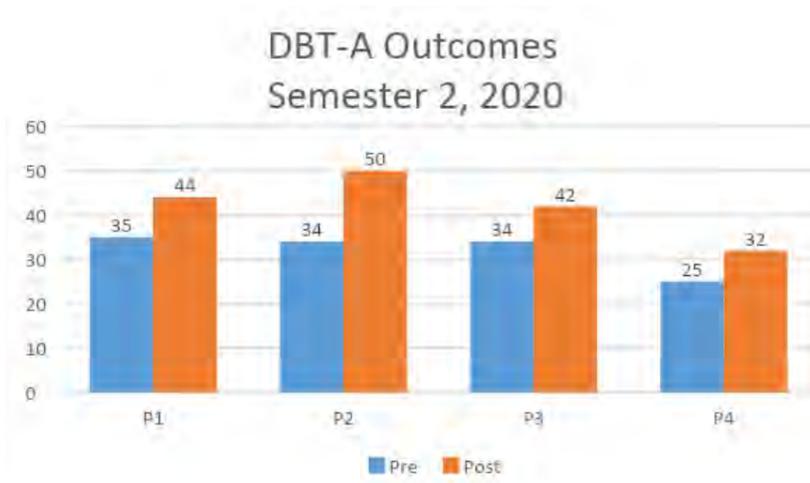


Figure 1: Pre and post-questionnaire results



# OUR CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The names of the directors in office during the financial period and at the date of the report were:

Ms Geraldine Gray (The Chair)  
Mr Peter McGuinn (Deputy Chair)  
Mr Ian Baker  
Fr Peter Carroll SDB  
Ms Mironne Golan  
Mr Kane Hansen (Retired)

Fr Peter Hoang SDB  
Mr Christopher Lonergan  
Mr Andrew McCallum AM  
Ms Cynthia McCammon  
Mr Gregory McKay  
Mr Andrew Watson

# DUNLEA CENTRE MISSION

To empower adolescents and families at risk to change their lives and restore relationships through the provision of quality therapeutic and educational services.



# THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE

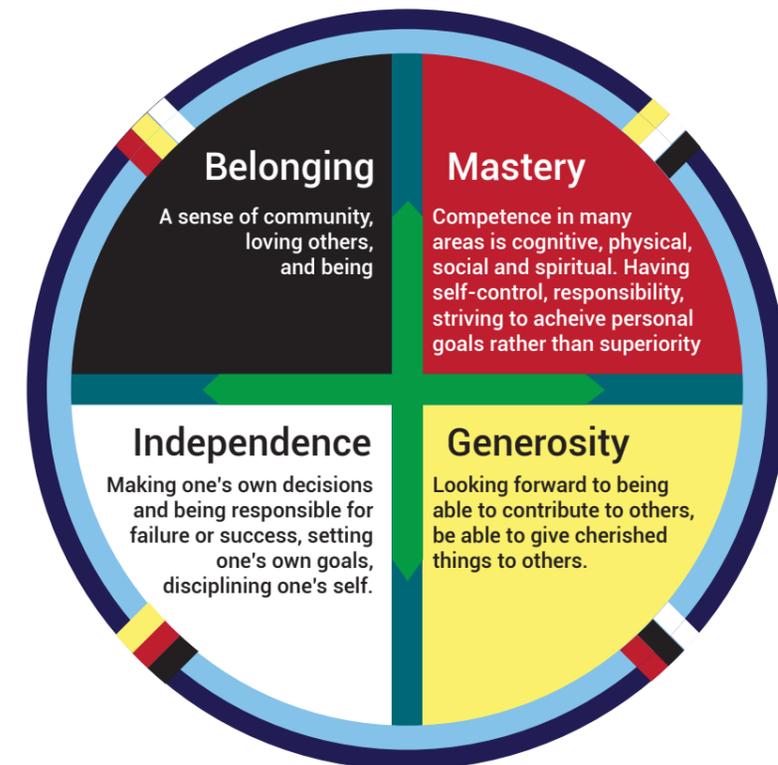
Critical to the model is to operate in the ecological environment of the young person: his or her home, school environments, peers and community.

A young person must be situated and understood in all of these contexts to work with them effectively and to achieve sustainable results. Program staff, for example, ensure that young people maintain links with their local community, continue to work on their goals at home, are supported in their transition back to mainstream (or other) education, and are able to establish and function well in their peer group. The multidisciplinary approach offered allows access to more aspects of the young person's ecology than a purely educational, welfare or accommodation support service can do alone. It is, thus, a truly wrap around model of service delivery.

The ultimate goal is for the day-to-day elements of the program to work together to develop in young people a sense of belonging (a sense of significance), mastery (competence), independence (a sense of personal power) and generosity (a feeling of virtue).

A young person with a strong sense of these elements is likely to do well in society. By applying the ecological 'whole of life' view to a young person's experience of these four domains, a matrix can be developed as follows (Table 1). This matrix can guide the identification of needs, goals and areas to work on. It is useful because it offers a broad and multifaceted view of change, with workers supporting young people to make real change and progress across each of the four domains, in each of the four central spheres of their life.

Importantly, Dunlea Centre values a 'strengths' rather than 'deficits' focused approach, meaning within each of these domains there is a focus on what is working, no matter how small it may be. The program then supports individuals and families to build upwards and outwards from those points.

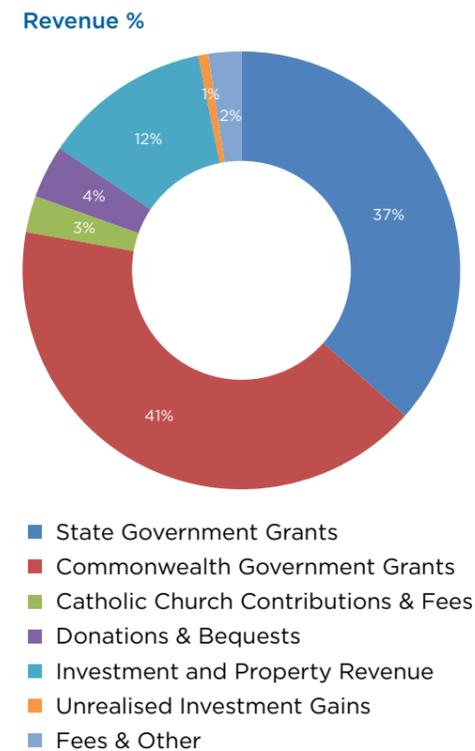




# FINANCIALS

## Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2020

REVENUE	2020	2019
State Government Grants	\$1,900,309	\$1,990,326
Commonwealth Government Grants	\$2,145,024	\$1,937,138
Catholic Church Contributions & Fees	\$140,000	\$140,000
Donations and Bequests	\$203,005	\$294,380
Investment and Property Revenue	\$646,266	\$768,598
Unrealised Investment Gains	\$38,548	\$154,760
Fees & Other	\$126,534	\$113,309
	<b>\$5,199,686</b>	<b>\$5,398,511</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Program Expenses	\$2,384,409	\$2,662,342
Admin & Finance Expenses	\$311,621	\$340,819
Building & Maintenance	\$534,730	\$402,232
Utilities, Property & IT	\$214,226	\$178,544
Wages & Salaries	\$1,538,808	\$1,431,928
Staff Employment	\$382,686	\$335,878
	<b>\$5,366,480</b>	<b>\$5,351,743</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$(166,794)</b>	<b>\$46,768</b>



### Principal Activity

Boys' Town Engadine is a public company limited by guarantee that is incorporated and domiciled in New South Wales, Australia. The registered office is at 35A Waratah Road, Engadine NSW 2233.

The principal activities of the company are the management and administration of the benevolent activities and welfare services of Dunlea Centre (the trading name of Boys' Town Engadine) and of the special assistance school Dunlea Centre, Australia's Original Boys' Town. The company commenced operations on 1 January 2006 upon receiving the gifting and disposition of the assets of The Salesian Society Incorporated as Trustee of Boys' Town Engadine.

### In the opinion of the Directors of Boys' Town Engadine:

- The financial statements and notes are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, and
  - comply with Australian Accounting Standards applicable to the company; and
  - give a true and fair view of the financial position of the entity as at 31 December, 2020 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that Boys' Town Engadine will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

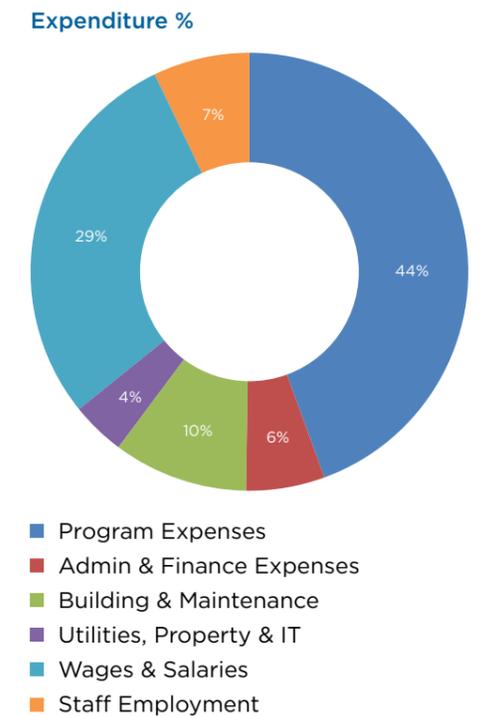
Signed in accordance with a resolution of the board of directors by Ms. Geraldine Gray on 24th of March, 2021.



# FINANCIALS

## Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020

ASSETS	2019	2018
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,285,857	\$3,417,137
Receivables	\$275,862	\$154,531
Financial Assets at Fair Value	\$2,905,949	\$1,818,175
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$5,467,668</b>	<b>\$5,389,843</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property Plant and Equipment	\$9,171,045	\$9,315,718
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>\$9,171,045</b>	<b>\$9,315,718</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$14,638,713</b>	<b>\$14,705,561</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and Borrowings	\$815,335	\$859,741
Provisions	\$553,987	\$302,529
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,369,322</b>	<b>\$1,162,270</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors and Borrowings	\$ -	\$ -
Provisions	\$307,049	\$414,155
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$307,049</b>	<b>\$414,155</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$1,676,371</b>	<b>\$1,576,425</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$12,962,342</b>	<b>\$13,129,136</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Gift and Disposition of Assets	\$2,654,368	\$2,654,368
Retained Earnings	\$10,307,974	\$10,474,768
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$12,962,342</b>	<b>\$13,129,136</b>



### Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion the financial report of Boys' Town Engadine, trading as Dunlea Centre has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 including;

- giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 31 December 2020 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in the Statement of Accounting Policies, and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Signed on 17th March, 2021 by Kevin F Jones, FCA.



# THANK YOU

Dunlea Centre would like to express immense thanks for the ongoing support it receives from the community. Only with your continued support can our work continue.

Also many thanks to:

Montessori Academy, Schools Plus, Toyota Australia & Sutherland Shire Council Community Grants.

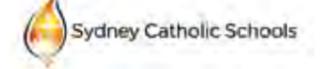
S. Angelides, D. Batchelor, F. & V. Chicco, C. Downy, V. Feeney, J. Fitzpatrick, C. Hellouli, J. McLaren, G. Nilon, R. Pidgeon, A. Rice, G. Rowley & T. Wright.

Beswick Family Fund & Edmund Resch Estate.

Amazon, Bosco Menshed, Catholic Asian Students Society, Catholic Church Insurance, Civic Disability Services, Club Grants - Engadine Bowling Club, COG Digital, GIVIT, Harold Mitchell Foundation, John Hollis, Miranda Musical Society, One Wellbeing, PayPal Giving Fund, R G Photography, Salesian Sisters, Terri Mackay Realty & WayAhead.

Patrician Brothers' College, Salesian College Chadstone, Salesian of Don Bosco Province Centre, St John Bosco College, St Joseph's College & Sydney Catholic Schools.

Mr Lee Evans MP, State Member for Heathcote & Cr Steve Simpson, Mayor of Sutherland Shire Council.



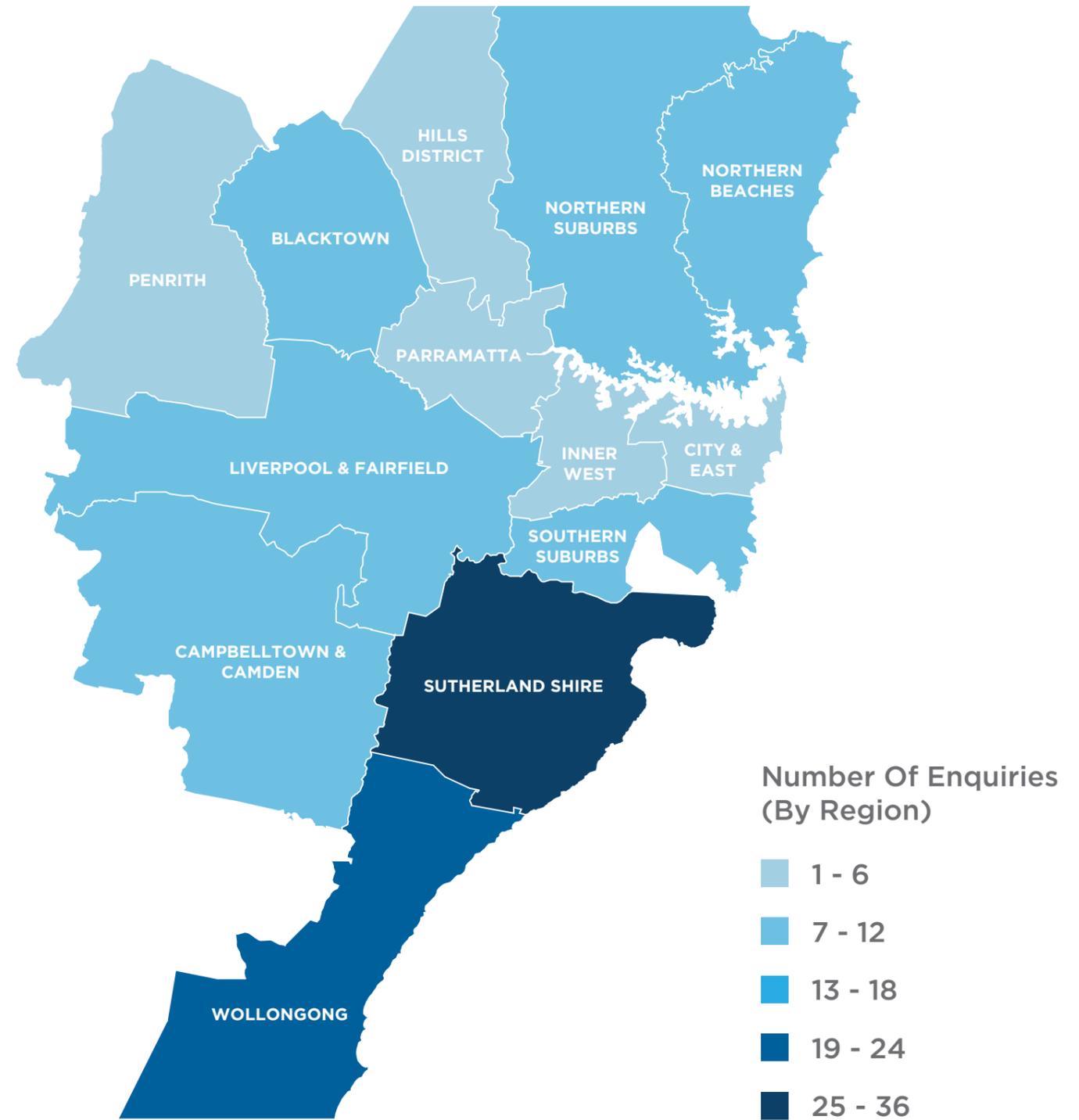


# WHERE DUNLEA CENTRE ATTENDEES CAME FROM IN 2020



# WHERE DUNLEA CENTRE ENQUIRIES CAME FROM IN 2020

133 enquiries received in 2020



# OUR VISION

Dunlea Centre aspires to be a welcoming community where lives are changed and right relationships are restored.





**DUNLEA CENTRE**

AUSTRALIA'S ORIGINAL BOYS' TOWN

*A place for change...*



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

Phone: 02 8508 3900

Corner of Waratah Rd

& Woronora Rd

Engadine NSW 2233