



BIRTH FOR  
HUMANKIND

# ANNUAL REPORT

FY19-20





We acknowledge that we work on Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to the elders of the community, who have cared for this land for generations. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and this dispossession remains largely uncompensated and unreconciled. With our acknowledgement comes a commitment to using our work and our platforms to help end this injustice.

\*To protect confidentiality and privacy, client names and identifying features may have been changed throughout this report.

Layout: [www.sandymcdonald.com](http://www.sandymcdonald.com)

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## CHAIR'S REPORT

After my first year as Chair of Birth for Humankind, I am delighted to report that we have had a successful year. We continue to work tirelessly towards achieving our purpose of equitable maternal health and wellbeing for all. I am proud that Birth for Humankind continues to grow as a respected and trusted provider and advocate for respectful pregnancy, birth and early parenting support for women experiencing social and financial disadvantage.

A highlight during the year for me was our Community Celebration - an afternoon recognising the dedication and expertise of our volunteers, staff, supporters and donors together with our clients and their families. Another highlight was the team and the board working together to develop our second Strategic Plan for the coming three years. We now look forward to bringing this plan to life. Many of our current achievements, new and expanded programs are shared in this report.

This year was not without its challenges and the biggest by far has been the COVID-19 pandemic. It has affected everything we do. Equally, health crises can exacerbate existing inequalities in society and highlight the need for our work. The team has responded professionally with compassion and agility. They have continued, despite great uncertainty, to provide support and education services to women experiencing a range of interconnected barriers to accessing equitable and respectful maternal health care.

I extend my sincere thanks and congratulate our CEO, staff and volunteers for their leadership, expertise, passion, hard work and commitment.

It has been a great privilege for me to join as Chair of Birth for Humankind and I'd like to offer my gratitude to my fellow board directors for their continued dedication, the skills they bring and their strong support of the organisation. My thanks to outgoing directors Kirsty Burke, Olivia Mason and especially Kirstan Flannery, co-founder and previous Chair for her immeasurable and instrumental contributions. Her shoes as Chair are difficult to fill and her ongoing support is invaluable.

We remain committed to securing a strong and sustainable future as an organisation. The past year has seen growing relationships and awareness of our work. We are grateful to all of our donors, ongoing and new, for their continued support.

Never has it been a more important time for Birth for Humankind to actively pursue its purpose and reach the women who need our services the most. I look forward to the challenges ahead and to collaborating with our partners and funders as we work towards a successful 2021 and beyond.



Joanne Kirk  
Chair



## CEO'S REPORT

Unsurprisingly, it has been a year of change – some planned and some very much responsive – but all with clear focus on achieving our purpose.

COVID-19 has put a spotlight on inequity in access to health information and support in Australia. Both the virus and the policy response have created challenges in providing care continuity and have forced many women to birth in sub-optimal circumstances without known support. But this reality has long existed for many systemically disadvantaged people. COVID-19 has simply made that the case for all.

My huge thanks to the staff and volunteer team who swiftly adapted to supporting clients in these new circumstances. This included producing new multilingual resources, revising protocols and guidance for doulas to help transition to physically distanced support, and seeking new funding and partnerships to meet emerging client needs.

We also launched a new transport service for clients, delivered by Shebah, with start-up funding from Just World Charitable Fund and Australian Communities Foundation's Fairness Fund.

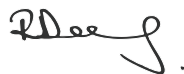
This year we launched our own doula training program and trained five bicultural women, thanks to the generosity of the Scanlon Foundation. This is part of our ongoing commitment to diversify our workforce and provide the most culturally appropriate care to our clients.

We look forward to expanding this program in the coming year. We have also welcomed and trained new volunteer doulas to the growing team. Thank you all for your tireless commitment to providing better birth experiences for our clients.

It has become a growing priority to increase our visibility and raise awareness of the need for more equitable maternity care. We are pleased to have built a growing media presence and to have continued to grow our engagement and partnerships with hospitals, policy makers and other community sector organisations. This will remain a core focus in the coming year as we begin implementation of our second Strategic Plan FY21-FY23.

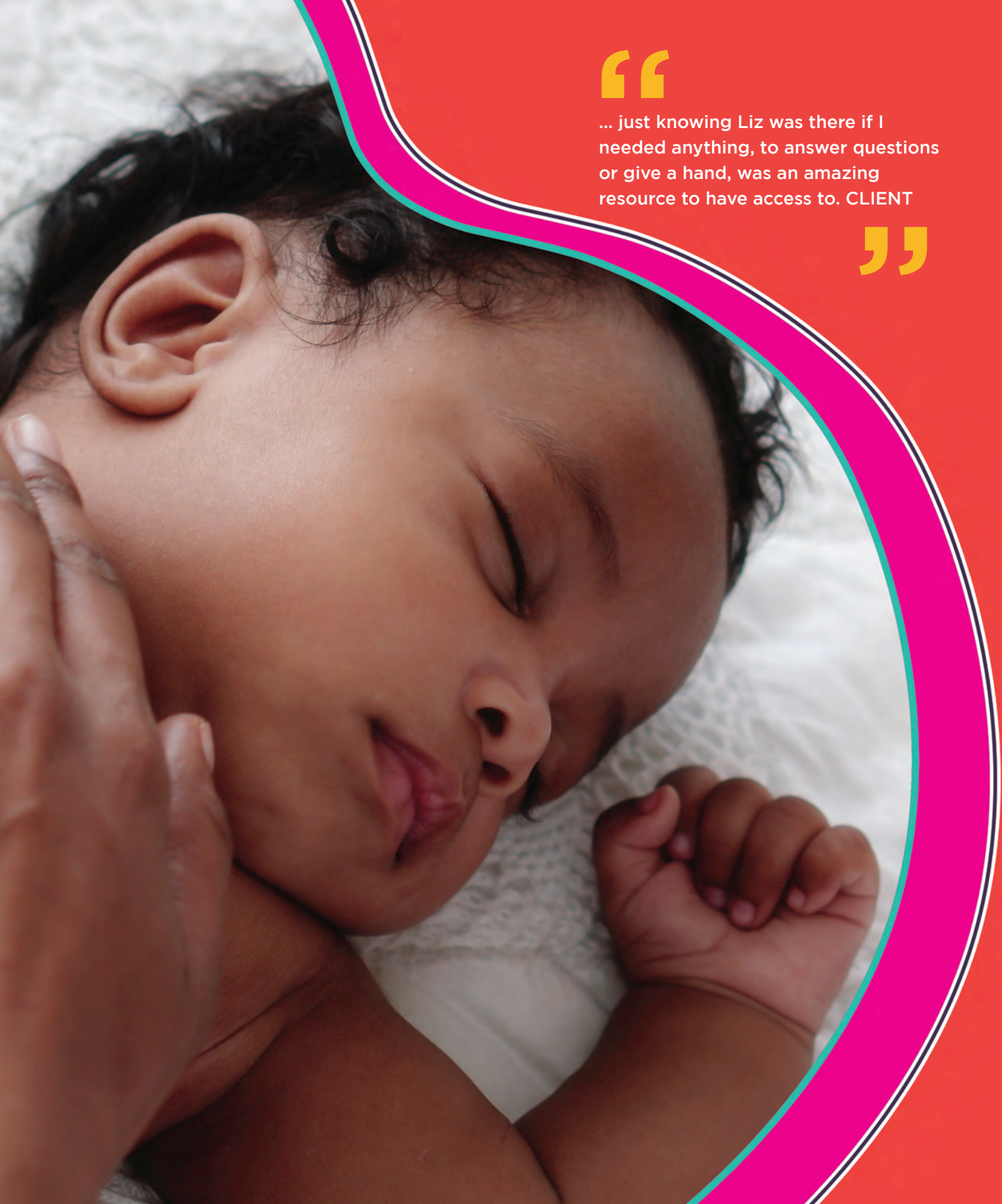
Like many of our for-purpose sector colleagues, there is a lot of uncertainty in what the future holds. But we can be sure that the communities that will feel the impacts the hardest are the most systemically marginalised and disadvantaged – especially at a time of such radical change and vulnerability, such as pregnancy and early parenting. That's why we will continue to hold the voices and needs of our clients at the heart of all we do.

I look forward to continuing to work with you towards more equitable health and wellbeing outcomes and experiences for all.



Ruth Dearnley  
Chief Executive Officer





“

... just knowing Liz was there if I needed anything, to answer questions or give a hand, was an amazing resource to have access to. CLIENT

”

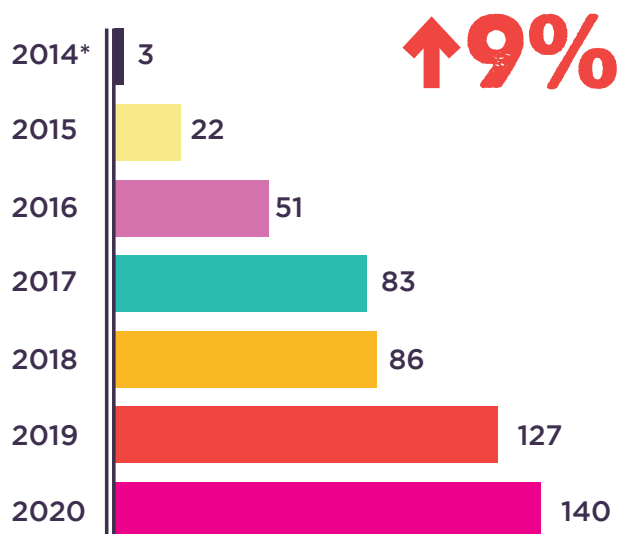
## OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

This year we increased the number of women who received pregnancy, birth and postnatal doula support by nine per cent. After efforts in FY18-19 to maximise our program capacity, this year we aimed to maintain our client levels whilst investing in additional multilingual child birth education resources to enhance the quality and accessibility of information for our clients.

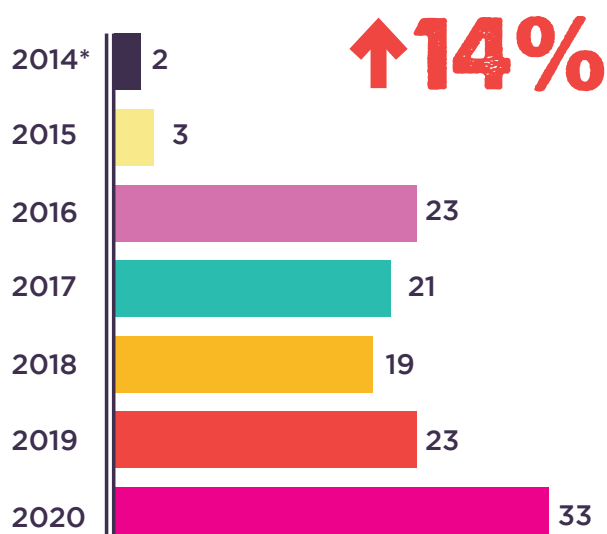
We provided 46 episodes of extended postnatal support over six to eight weeks for women and their babies – double the number supported in FY18-19.

We launched a new transport service for clients to safely get to and from appointments, providing more than 55 trips for women and their babies.

### CLIENTS RECEIVING DOULA SUPPORT



### NEW DOULAS RECRUITED



*\*Services and reporting formally commenced in FY15.*



I am currently on placement at the Royal Women's Hospital Sandringham and on Monday night had the privilege of supporting a woman through her birth who had a Birth for Humankind doula with her. It was so great to see.

She was the most lovely support to the woman, all the way from her home to the hospital via ambulance, and throughout her labour. The birthing woman was unbelievably calm and confident and achieved a normal unmediated birth, and I think this is a testament to her relationship with her doula. STUDENT MIDWIFE



## INCREASING OUR REACH AND VISIBILITY

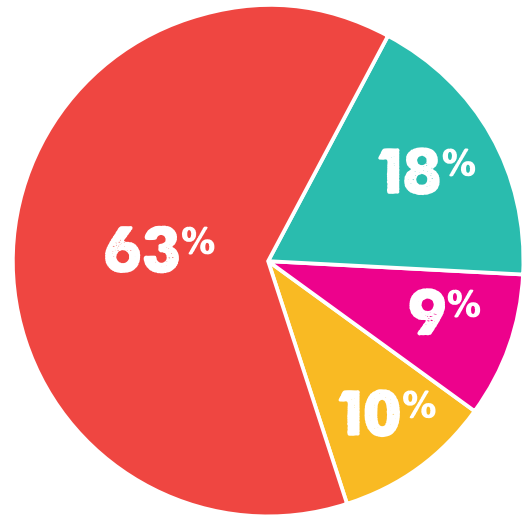
**↑12%**

This year referrals to our services increased by 12 per cent.

## ENABLING BICULTURAL CARE AND SUPPORT

This year we developed and began delivering our own doula training program with funding from the Scanlon Foundation. Five bicultural trainees completed their 18-week course in July and have been matched with one of our doulas for mentoring and support for their first three births. Once they complete their practicum they will be inducted as Birth for Humankind volunteer doulas. Preparation is beginning for our next bicultural doula training intake in early 2021.

Increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of birth support professionals is known to improve client's experiences. That is one reason we continue to invest in training more bicultural and bilingual doulas.



- 63 per cent from public maternity hospitals
- 18 per cent from community health and support services
- 9 per cent from self-referrals, friends and family
- 10 per cent from migrant and refugee support services

**We featured in 29 media articles and new stories, reaching over 671,000 members of the public.**



## IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING

Early in the year we were focused on developing professional education and training to enhance health and social support workers' ability to provide appropriate care to women experiencing social disadvantage and vulnerability.

The COVID-19 pandemic radically shifted the market for professional development within the sector and our capacity to deliver face-to-face training. So, we rapidly changed our focus to short-form educational webinars for both the public and sector professionals. Our aim was to improve knowledge and understanding of maternal health inequity and the barriers that people face in accessing appropriate care, whilst testing new ways of engaging audiences.

We piloted a mini-series of three webinars with over 330 participants that resulted in some great discussions and community connections.

### **Maintaining social support for pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The first in the series was facilitated by our Founder and Director, Mei Lai Swan on the practical implications of COVID-19 on the support available to birthing parents. The discussion with panelists Erika Munton, Director, Birthready and Frances Bilboa, Director and Clinical Psychologist, Mums Matter Psychology and participants from across the community and maternity sector led to practical advice for birth and support workers on how to navigate this evolving situation.

### **The future of woman-centred care**

This session focused on the gaps in the current Australian maternity system and how these were being highlighted and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists Jo Askham, Director, Birth for Humankind, Claire Wyborn, President, Doula Network Australia and Bridie Ryan, Doula and Registered Midwife explored their first-hand experiences of what it means to deliver client-centred care in an increasingly complex environment.

### **Nine months and beyond**

Guest host Berry Liberman, Co-Founder of Small Giants and Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Dumbo Feather magazine, used her wisdom and gift for engaging with people through conversation to facilitate a robust and insightful public conversation with Lee Ann Bassar, Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Jewish Women of Australia (Victoria) and Birth for Humankind's Chief Executive Officer, Ruth Dearnley.

They discussed the systemic challenges of maternal health inequity and how to reframe strategy, policy, dialogue and practical interventions to give mothers and babies the best possible start in life.

Building on the success of these conversations, we will expand the series to broaden our audience base, increase our visibility and strengthen our relationships.

## OUR CLIENTS



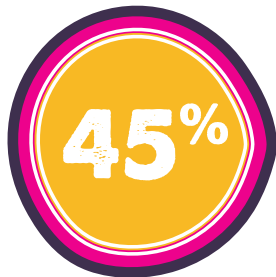
Had no support person.



Were experiencing, or at risk of perinatal depression.



Were newly arrived migrants, refugee background or seeking asylum.



Were experiencing or at risk of mental health issues.



Had current or historical substance misuse.



Were experiencing homelessness.



Were under 25 years of age.



Experienced trauma, abuse and/or family violence.



Different primary languages spoken by our clients.



Do not speak English as a primary language.

The most commonly spoken primary  
languages were:  
ENGLISH, ARABIC, OROMO,  
URDU, SOMALI,  
MANDARIN,  
VIETNAMESE



## SAFE ARRIVALS DURING COVID-19

Ani\* gave birth to her two-week-old baby Tamas\* during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ani was extremely socially isolated during her pregnancy, and COVID-19 made Ani feel even more alone and nervous about the future.

Arriving in Australia recently as an asylum seeker, she had no other support person until she was matched with her doula Sarah\*, who was able to be by her side during labour and birth. During her postnatal support visits, Ani confided to Sarah that she was in a lot of physical pain but she couldn't get to the doctor. She had no access to a car and lived in the outer suburbs, quite disconnected from public transport. She was understandably nervous about making multiple public transport connections with a two-week-old baby during a pandemic.

Thanks to Birth for Humankind supporters, we were able to launch a partnership with Shebah Rideshare to make sure clients could get to appointments safely.

Ani was the first client to use this service.

The Shebah driver, Jen\*, was warm and empathetic. She helped Ani get Tamas into the car seat and carried her bags inside when they arrived. Jen waited whilst Ani attended her appointment and then helped her stop by the pharmacy for the medication she needed.

Ani had never filled a prescription at a pharmacy in Australia before – and having a friendly Shebah driver to help her navigate this, made a big difference.

It gave Ani confidence about leaving the house safely with Tamas. It showed her that there is a community of people in Melbourne who are there to support her.

We provided more than 50 trips for 18 clients this year – that's over 1100 kms travelled! With an on-call option available to support women in labour, they know that safe and reliable transport will be there when they need it most.

Our partnership with Shebah continues to grow and complement our doula support program and we are seeking ongoing funding to enable this.

“

**I would definitely recommend volunteer doula, 10/10 because it meant a lot to me that [my doula] was there for me when I needed someone the most to support and stand by me. CLIENT**

”



...I almost feel bad for operating under the guise of 'unpaid volunteer'. I do receive so much. I feel like I get 'paid' in a currency infinitely more valuable than money. A tightly gripped hand. Eyes being met with eyes that convey joy, hope, faith. Tears. Patience. Quiet.

Having someone believe you when you tell them they are safe. Having someone trust you with their secrets, their fears, the most intimate and powerful moments of their lives.

Being the person that someone looks to and can say "I did it". Witnessing the most incredible moments of self-pride, power, perseverance and strength. Witnessing love, birth, and life.

I feel incredibly lucky, and privileged. And I certainly feel I almost always get more than I give.

GIORGIA, VOLUNTEER DOULA

# OUR PEOPLE

## OUR BOARD



**Joanne Kirk**  
**CHAIR**

(since 30 July 2019)



**Lauren King**  
**COMPANY**  
**SECRETARY**

(not a director)  
since 30 July 2019)



**Jeanette Royce**  
**TREASURER**



**Jo Askham**  
**DIRECTOR**



**Grant Fenton**  
**DIRECTOR**

(since 30 July 2019)



**Raj Gopiraj**  
**DIRECTOR**



**Mei Lai Swan**  
**DIRECTOR &**  
**CO-FOUNDER**



**Kirstan Flannery**  
**CHAIR &**  
**CO-FOUNDER**

(until 30 July 2019)



**Kirsty Burke**  
**COMPANY**  
**SECRETARY**

(until 30 July 2019)



**Olivia Mason**  
**DIRECTOR**

(until 3 September  
2019)

## OUR TEAM



**Ruth Dearnley**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**  
**OFFICER**



**Annabel Davies**  
**CHIEF**  
**OPERATIONS**  
**OFFICER**



**Natalie Kondzic**  
**PROGRAMS**  
**MANAGER**

(since 15 October 2019)



**Kristine Balfour**  
**DOULA PROGRAM**  
**SUPERVISOR**



**Cath Wright**  
**DOULA PROGRAM**  
**& EDUCATION**  
**SUPERVISOR**



**Cressida Blumson**  
**PARTNERSHIPS**  
**LEAD**



**Fairlie Tucker**  
**TRAINING &**  
**EDUCATION**  
**OFFICER**



**Kari Bynum**  
**COMMUNICATIONS**  
**ASSISTANT**

(casual since 1 October 2019)



**Jen Branscombe**  
**PROGRAMS**  
**MANAGER**

(until 31 October 2019)



**Kester Naismith**  
**PROGRAMS**  
**COORDINATOR**

(until 5 March 2020)



## OUR DOULAS

16%

People of colour.

18%

People of white, non-Anglo identity/heritage, including Jewish.

38%

Speak one or more languages other than English to conversational or fluent level.

16

Different languages spoken.

2864

Hours of direct client support provided.

“

If I have another baby, I need Nadia. Sometimes she helped bathe my baby and change nappies because of my disability...keep going, you're doing well, you help people with disability and who don't have family or support. CLIENT

”

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

We could not achieve such positive outcomes for our clients without the dedication of all our volunteers. Thank you for all you do.

### DOULAS

Melanie Abrams

Asiyeh Amrollahi  
Biyouki

Marion Anrys

Kristine Balfour

Cecilia Barberis

Deb Bartrip

Talitha Baxter

Laura Lee Berlingieri

Laura Biggs

Emma Blumer

Hayley Bourke

Jules Brooks

Jodie Burns

Rebecca Castles

Kathy Cooney

Ellie Cullity

Paulette D'argent

Gemma Daniel

Ally De Cesare

Lauren Di Palma

Tara Donohue

Kalifa Doucet

Vikki Eadie

Sarah Edwards

Jenine Ellis

Eliza Elsom

Reyyan Emniyet

Heidi Ernst

Barbara Ferguson

Michelle Ferguson

Ingrid Fitzgerald

Amelia Fuller

Ama Girard-King

Helen Hall

Giorgia Hall-Cook

Maxine Hardinge

Abby Holmes

Julie Huf

Julie-Anne Isaacson

Monique Jankulovska

Grace Jeffery-  
Kingston

Julie Kelleher-Byrne

Candice Lacey

Jade Leak

Maison Levot

Bridget Loats

Saraya Martin

Beth McDonald

Hela Mendoza

Debbie Michael

Corinna Millar

Ingrid Moe

Erika Munton

Farzana Muzafari

Alicia Nicholl

Stephanie Norquay

Claire Outtram

Chloe Pace

Indrani Parker

Teasha Parry

Fernanda Perez  
Trevino

Gabriella Piemonte

Kiersten Quinn

Tania Rahman

Molly Rayniak

Bridie Ryan

Bubbles Segall

Rena Sergeeva

Charysse Shepherd

Ella Slonim

Jae Stewart

Annie Tayleur  
Bertschik

Carolyn Tranter

Liz Varney

Neisha Wallace

Samantha Wray-  
McCann

Cath Wright

Claire Wyborn

Claire Youren

### OUR BICULTURAL DOULA STUDENTS

Habiba Ahmed

Tali Caspi

Hala Nur

Tania Rahman

Yousra Omer

### OFFICE AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Rosa Cass-Simpson

Allissa Desloge

Mary Giordano

Leslie (Lex)

Fiordalizzo

Chrissy Keenan

Kathryn Pickett

Erin Ryan

Quratulain (Annie)  
Waqas

### OUR BICULTURAL FACILITATORS

Dursitu Adam

Farzana Muzafari

Carolyn Jalhom

Ha Tu Thi Ngo

Hoang Nguyen



## OUR SUPPORTERS

Our achievements are enabled by the generosity of our supporters. Our grateful thanks goes to:

### OUR MAJOR DONORS AND GRANTMAKERS



The Dubsky Lang Foundation



The Red Rocketship Foundation



Jo Clark, Kirstan Flannery, Jacqueline Moth, Jane Sydenham-Clarke.

### OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

Thank you for standing beside the women we support. Your contributions make a lasting difference.

### OUR IN-KIND SUPPORTERS



Dial a Doula



Northmost°

## OUR COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE PARTNERS



Das T-shirt Automat design and produce our merchandise at cost-price and supported Birth for Humankind through the proceeds of their Black Friday sale.

**Go to [www.dastshirtautomat.com/birth-for-humankind](http://www.dastshirtautomat.com/birth-for-humankind)**



Ethical Investment Services holds social responsibility at its core. We are grateful recipients of its monthly donation program.

**Go to [www.ethicalinvestments.com.au](http://www.ethicalinvestments.com.au)**



Goodwill Wine donate 50 per cent of profits to Birth for Humankind every time you buy their wine. Just select Birth for Humankind as your charity of choice at the checkout.

**Go to [www.goodwillwine.com.au/charities/birth-for-humankind](http://www.goodwillwine.com.au/charities/birth-for-humankind)**



The team at Mama Goodness believe that connection is one of the foundational pillars of motherhood. Mama Goodness donates \$5 from every Nourish Pack purchased to Birth for Humankind.

**Go to [www.mamagoodness.com.au](http://www.mamagoodness.com.au)**



RECONNECTED PARENTING

Reconnected Being and Reconnected Parenting provide online courses helping individuals and families connect to breath, to each other, and to find joy in these busy and challenging times.

**Go to [www.thereconnected.com](http://www.thereconnected.com)**



SQUARE PEG CAREERS

Square Peg Careers provides career development for individuals, businesses and not-for-profit organisations. We are grateful for their generous support.

**Go to [www.squarepegcareers.com.au](http://www.squarepegcareers.com.au)**

# OUR FINANCES

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE, 2020

	\$ 2020	\$ 2019
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	265,093	258,172
Term deposits	245,234	200,655
Trade & other receivables	48,010	13,500
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	558,337	472,327
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Security deposit	3,000	3,000
<b>TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>	3,000	3,000
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	561,337	475,327
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade & other payables	8,527	29,816
Restricted Use Donations in Advance	-	-
Short term provisions	23,833	26,243
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	32,360	56,059
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	32,360	56,059
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	528,977	419,268
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>		
Unrestricted Reserves	274,505	189,268
Restricted Reserves	254,472	230,000
<b>TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS</b>	528,977	419,268

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

	\$ 2020	\$ 2019
<b>CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENSES BY NATURE</b>		
Revenue	762,486	898,922
Program Costs	153,386	193,785
Doula Support		
Education	142,002	23,631
Research	51,129	45,111
Personnel and Operations	234,334	235,759
Communications and Fundraising	71,926	58,676
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Surplus before income tax expense	109,709	341,960
Income tax expense	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net surplus for the year	<u>109,709</u>	<u>341,960</u>

## OUR YEAR AHEAD

Looking forward, through FY21 and beyond we will work to implement our new Strategic Plan FY21-23. Our foundational goal to address systemic inequity will be embedded in all we do. This includes looking internally at our own workplace practice as well as through our programs.

Over the coming year we will:

- Continue to respond to the emerging challenges caused by COVID-19 by:
  - diversifying our service offerings as needed
  - making efforts to reach the most isolated and vulnerable families, through the provision of increased online support.
- Continue to build our partnerships and relationships across the sector, with a long-term view to increase integration with public maternity care.
- Further diversify our workforce, including through the continued expansion of our bicultural doula training and scholarship program and by improving opportunities for client and community needs and voices to be heard at all levels of our organisation.

- Take steps towards embedding a trauma-informed approach throughout all our operations.
- Further develop our research and evidence-based advocacy presence by:
  - sharing the learnings from the PhD evaluation of our doula support program
  - supporting other aligned PhD and academic research in related fields
  - contributing to collaborative efforts across the sector to advocate for policy and practice change in the maternity, sexual and reproductive health sector.
- Expand our public visibility and profile and improve awareness of inequity in maternal health and how best to respond to it, through a targeted public engagement strategy, training and events.

We look forward to working alongside you to achieve our shared purpose.

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“

**Sometimes when you don't have family or mother or anyone and you have newborn it's difficult, but when you have someone to share with or guide you it helps a lot. CLIENT**

”

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**BIRTH FOR  
HUMANKIND**

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