




**BIRTH FOR
HUMANKIND**

ANNUAL REPORT

FY20-21



We work on Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to the elders of the community, past and present, 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 acknowledgment comes a commitment to using our work and our platforms to help end this injustice.

*To protect confidentiality and privacy, names and identifying features may have been changed.

Illustration and design by @suecroke_

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CHAIR'S REPORT

Dear Birth for Humankind supporters, donors, clients, volunteers and team,

As I write my 2021 report for Birth for Humankind from a wintery, locked down Melbourne for the second year in a row, I feel lucky to be in a safe home. I am reflecting on the year that has been as I juggle my work, online learning for my two sons and home life. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect all of our lives, but we know that it affects women and birthing people experiencing social disadvantage and financial hardship even more harshly. As such, the work of Birth for Humankind is needed more than ever.

Over the past 12 months, I have witnessed the Birth for Humankind CEO and the team tilt, reinvent, be challenged, be resourceful, laugh and support each other as they continue without pause to deliver vital birth and early parenting support. I want to thank each and every one of you who contributes to this organisation, for your heart and continued commitment to our clients and our values. For a small team working on a very small budget, you continue to provide a unique, invaluable support service to women and birthing people in Victoria that is one of a kind in Australia.

I recently read an article titled 'Volunteering: The ultimate act of kindness' and realised just how proud I felt to be part of an organisation like Birth for Humankind. A place where volunteering has been central to all that we do. Volunteers are the cogs of our community, schools and the for-purpose sector and I especially thank all of our wonderful Birth for Humankind volunteers: our doulas, our office volunteers, those who offer their skills pro bono and our Board for your commitment to our shared work.

Our profile has grown immensely in the last 12 months and we are respected in the maternity sector for the great value we add. Having our story featured in The Australian Women's Weekly magazine and one of our volunteer doulas and her sister interviewed on SBS Insight's program about birth trauma are great examples of this. Our first peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, Be the Village, was also a huge success and I'd like to thank all our new ambassadors who jumped on board to support us. Thank you Clare Bowditch, Amy Taylor-Kabbaz, Nadine Richardson and Yemi Penn. Our community continues to grow and we look forward to growing it further in the coming year.

A special thank you also goes out to our longest and biggest champions and supporters the Flannery Foundation and co-founder Kirstan Flannery. They have been there since the very beginning and continue to trust us to support pregnant people and those experiencing disadvantage, before they birth, during their births and afterwards as they embark on their parenting journeys.

Once again, I'm delighted to report we have had a successful year and we will continue to work tirelessly towards achieving our purpose of equitable maternal health and wellbeing for all.

Joanne Kirk
Chair



CEO'S REPORT

Dear friends,

The global pandemic's evolving impacts continue to weigh heavily on us all. No more so than on our clients who face unprecedented challenges birthing and navigating early parenting with little social contact.

As such, our priority has remained firmly on delivering the best services we possibly can to those who need it. This included increasing our provision of extended postnatal support by 41 per cent. We have done this whilst adapting to the impacts on our own operations.

It has also been a difficult year for our staff, with an ongoing need to juggle the increasing demand for services with the additional challenges that arise from working remotely and supporting families. We have felt first-hand the burden of the unpaid care economy, especially on our volunteers who worked tirelessly to maintain support to clients and sometimes reluctantly had to reduce their volunteering commitment. Despite this, our talented and committed team have managed to achieve so much.

We have raised our brand profile and reputation and developed productive partnerships with community organisations and influencers. Despite the demands on the public health system, we have progressed relationships that help us influence systemic change.

Whilst we have felt the impacts of reduced philanthropic giving and delayed grant rounds, we are pleased to say that our public fundraising has been more successful than ever before.

This is due to the cumulative efforts to engage new audiences in the past few years and the implementation of donor stewardship models.

I am most proud of how the team has come together to support each other through the enduring uncertainty of lockdowns and remote working. Sometimes this has looked like reworking operational plans and establishing shared performance indicators and project working groups to drive forward productivity. Other times, it has been the care and personal support offered to colleagues that has put the values of the organisation into practice. Thank you all.

Whilst uncertainty remains, with this level of commitment and concern we will continue to make progress towards more just, equitable maternity support for all.

Ruth Dearnley
Chief Executive Officer

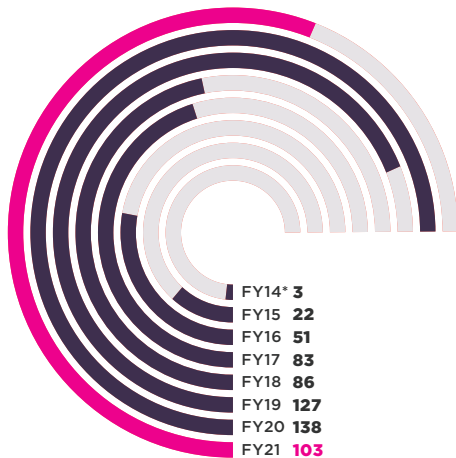
OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE



SUPPORT WOMEN AND THEIR BABIES

We will increase access to respectful, tailored support, education and connection for women, birthing people and their babies experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

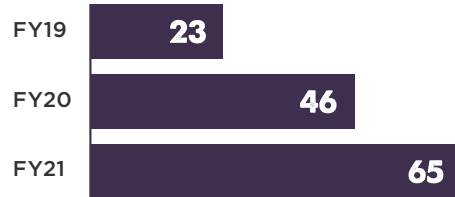
CLIENTS RECEIVING BIRTH SUPPORT



This is a slight reduction compared to last year and is a result of reduced capacity for in-person support during lockdowns, difficulty transitioning some clients to virtual support and doula availability. However, we also increased our focus on other areas of work to compensate for this.

*Services and reporting formally commenced in FY15.

CLIENTS RECEIVING EXTENDED POSTNATAL SUPPORT



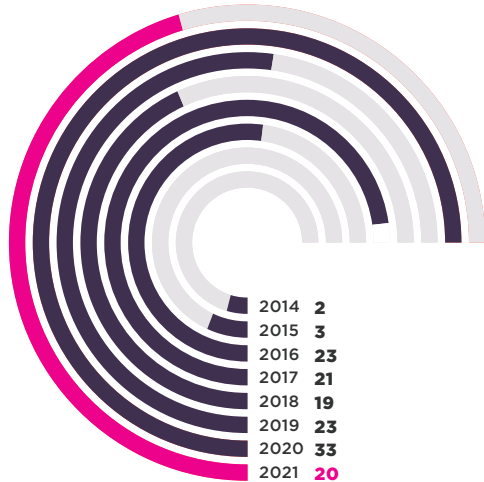
In total, we provided **168** services to **109** clients.

Some clients received either birth support or extended postnatal support and some clients received both services.

We provided doula support and extended postnatal support for six repeat clients during FY21, including supporting one of our clients to welcome her third baby with a Birth for Humankind doula by her side.



NEW DOULAS RECRUITED



We recruited and trained **20** new volunteer doulas, including **five** women from bicultural backgrounds through our bicultural doula training program.

ENABLING CARE AND SUPPORT FOR BICULTURAL CLIENTS

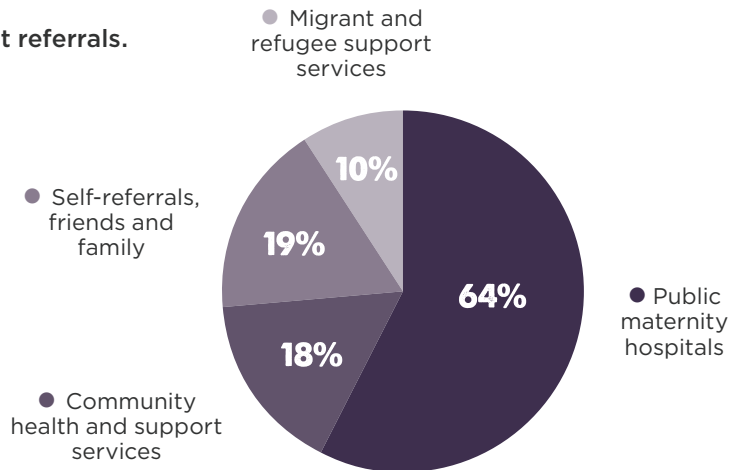
This year we have refined our foundational doula training program for women from bicultural backgrounds, with support from the Scanlon Foundation.

Five bicultural trainees participated in our 18-week pilot training in 2020. Two have since completed their coursework and practical requirements and have been inducted as Birth for Humankind doulas. One graduate has started her own private doula practice.

Eight new students have commenced in our 2021 doula training intake and will be matched with an experienced doula mentor and inducted as Birth for Humankind doulas on completion of their coursework in October 2021.

REFERRALS TO OUR SERVICE

This year, we had **209** client referrals.





ENCOURAGE AND MODEL RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE

We will build the capacity for maternal health workers to provide respectful maternity care for all women and birthing people, and increase awareness of this need with the wider community.



COMMUNITY WEBINARS

Delivered **two** free webinars
Reached **335** supporters

Webinars have been a key piece of our engagement strategy as they create opportunities to increase our reach as well as stimulate conversation and connection with our supporters and people working in maternal health.

In September we hosted a conversation with renowned childbirth educator and author Rhea Dempsey about vulnerability and the psychological aspects of pregnancy and birth.

In December we brought together three experts to address the challenges of pregnancy and homelessness in Australia: Dr Theresa Lynch, Dr Juliet Watson and Annie Watson.

These webinars attracted 335 registrations, many of which were new supporters of our organisation.



MEDIA COVERAGE

31 Victorian and national media stories
600,000 people reached

Whilst the pandemic dominated media coverage, we continued to build our media profile. We raised awareness of the unique challenges faced by our clients (and other people) birthing during the pandemic.



In June, Birth for Humankind featured in a four-page article in The Australian Women's Weekly magazine that recounted our founding story and highlighted the powerful bonds that our volunteer doulas and clients share. Special thanks to Faiza, Farzana, Julie-Anne, Maison, Carly and Mei Lei for shining a light on the far-reaching impact of our work.



“I think the most important part of my work is helping the women find their power... and I feel like I get as much, if not more, out of it as I give.”

- Julie-Anne

Photo credit: Julian Kingma



ENSURE ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT

We will continue to strengthen our governance and operations, whilst growing and diversifying our funding to secure our sustainability.

EMBEDDING TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

This year, staff and directors completed trauma-informed leadership training to help us increasingly embed trauma-informed care principles across all governance and operational practice.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

This year we introduced quarterly pulse-check surveys to measure staff and volunteer engagement. This has increased our ability to quickly respond to emerging challenges.

Staff satisfaction and engagement rate: **81%**
Volunteer satisfaction and engagement rate: **91%**



PEER TO PEER FUNDRAISER: BE THE VILLAGE

From 23-29 May 2021 we ran our inaugural peer-to-peer community fundraising campaign, Be the Village.

Inspired to connect communities and recognise the life-changing impacts our doulas can have on those they support, we encouraged our supporters to complete a challenge: seven days, seven acts of kindness, to raise money for new parents in crisis.



231 ACTS OF KINDNESS COMPLETED



\$13,500 RAISED



653 NEW SUPPORTERS ENGAGED



“She [Kristine] helped me a lot, I’m happy from day one until I gave birth. I really appreciate her. I need to share her with someone else.” - Jae*

OUR CLIENTS

CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



97 clients
Lacking a birth support person



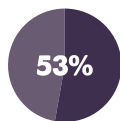
22 clients
Experiencing homelessness



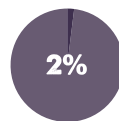
63 clients
At risk of perinatal mental health issues



12 clients
Current or historical substance misuse



55 clients
History of mental health issues



2 clients
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



55 clients
Experiencing, or a history of family violence, trauma or abuse



26 clients
Refugee background or seeking asylum

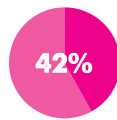


23 clients
Under 25 years of age



22 clients
Newly arrived migrant

Our clients collectively speak more than **35** different languages.



Speak a primary language other than English

The most commonly spoken primary languages are English, Arabic, Oromo, Urdu and Somali.

“I think it’s really helpful, especially for single parents. For me it’s helpful because it’s nice to have someone visit [and someone] talking [to me].” - Yee*

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON OUR CLIENTS

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on those experiencing disadvantage or isolation while pregnant or as new parents. A greater number of clients need mental health support and experiences of family violence have increased. This has highlighted the importance of our individualised and trauma-informed approach.

Many of our clients have experienced increased isolation due to their partners or

family members not being able to join them in Australia, as well as difficulties that came with COVID-19 restrictions. Many that relied on community or cultural support groups to find and maintain connections were left feeling lonely or disconnected when services ceased during lockdowns.

Thankfully, our doulas gave many clients someone to rely on.

“When I think of myself without my doula, everything was dark for me, so that kind of service or help is very, very good even for others who are the same as me.” - Alia*

“She [my doula] made me feel like I could rely on her.” - Tasneem*



OUR PEOPLE

OUR BOARD



Joanne Kirk
Chair



Lauren King
Company Secretary
(appointed as Director
on May 3 2021)



Jeanette Royce
Treasurer



Jo Askham
Director



Grant Fenton
Director



Raj Gopiraj
Director



Mei Lai Swan
Founder and Director

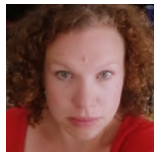
OUR TEAM



Ruth Dearnley
Chief Executive Officer



Annabel Davies
Chief Operations Officer



Natalie Kondzic
Programs Manager



Kristine Balfour
Doula Program
Supervisor



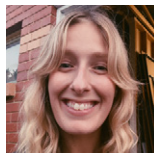
Cath Wright
Doula Program and
Education Program
Supervisor



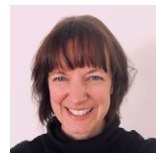
Maison Levot
Program Officer
(since August 2020)



Cressida Blumson
Partnerships Lead



Jess Sartori
Communications and
Fundraising Assistant
(since November 2020)



Fairlie Tucker
Training and
Education Officer



Kari Bynum
Communications
Assistant
(until November 2020)



“I still don’t think I would have been able to do it without Amelia. I’m super grateful for her and your organisation, it would have been a lot harder without her.” - Karleigh*

OUR VOLUNTEERS

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

DOULAS

Habiba Ahmed
Marion Anrys
Kristine Balfour
Nikki Baxter
Laura Lee Berlingieri
Isabella Berrell
Laura Biggs
Nikola Bonacci
Hayley Bourke
Jodie Burns
Tali Caspi
Rebecca Castles
Kathy Cooney
Abigail Creamer
Ellie Cullity
Paulette D'Argent
Gemma Daniel
Sophie Deola
Lauren Di Palma
Sarah Edwards
Jenine Ellis
Michelle Ferguson

Ingrid Fitzgerald
Ronii Forster
Amelia Fuller
Helen Hall
Giorgia Hall-Cook
Maxine Hardinge
Abby Holmes
Julie Huf
Julie-Anne Isaacson
Grace Jeffery
Shelby Johnson-Boe
Julie Kelleher-Byrne
Alex King
Maison Levot
Stephanie Lockhart
Saraya Martin
Beth McDonald
Hela Mendoza
Corinna Millar
Lauren Miller
Erika Munton
Nadine Murphy

Farzana Muzafari
Charlotte O'Donnell-Young
Karly O'Malley
Yusra Omer
Teasha Parry
Fernanda Perez Trevino
Gabriella Piemonte
Tania Rahman
Molly Rayniak
Sitar Regev
Judith Robinson
Bridie Ryan
Bubbles Segall
Rena Sergeeva
Charysse Shepherd
Ella Slonim
Carolyn Tranter
Liz Varney
Neisha Wallace
Tayla Weltner
Claire Wyborn

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

Kathryn Costello - Communications and fundraising (until May 2021)
Lauren Karas - Communications and projects (since April 2021)
Chrissy Keenan - Evaluation and story collection

STUDENTS IN OUR BICULTURAL DOULA PROGRAM

Zubeyda Ahmed
Mariam Abdelkrim
Hawalul Abdisamed
Chizomam Adams

Saffa Dawelbait
Rahel Negash
Betsy Prieto
Maria Venegas

OUR DOULAS:



**ARE PRIVATE
PRACTICE DOULAS
MIDWIFERY
STUDENTS
AND REGISTERED
MIDWIVES**



**COLLECTIVELY
SPEAK 16
DIFFERENT
LANGUAGES**



**PROVIDED
2383 HOURS OF
SUPPORT TO
CLIENTS IN FY21**



“I love the support I receive from [doula program supervisors] Cath and Kristine... I love feeling like I’m helping families make the best start possible despite difficult or disadvantageous life situations.” - Susan*

“I believe every birthing person deserves gentle care and support from someone she connects with and trusts.” - Lydia*

“I want to be a volunteer (doula) and help someone go through this. I see a big impact for the mum and now I’m really interested in helping, especially in my community as it’s [doula support] not something that’s known...” - Zainab*

OUR SUPPORTERS

Our achievements are enabled by the generosity of our supporters. Thank you for standing beside the women we support. Your contributions make a lasting difference. Special thanks to:

OUR MAJOR DONORS AND GRANT MAKERS



Jo and Ted Clark, Jacqueline Moth, Julie-Anne Isaacson, Kirstan Flannery

OUR IN-KIND SUPPORTERS



OUR CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



OUR CAMPAIGN SPONSORS AND AMBASSADORS

Our heartfelt gratitude to the organisations and individuals who generously donated their time, energy and services to support our Be the Village campaign. This helped us extend our reach to more people than ever before. We look forward to growing our village in the years to come.

Campaign sponsors

JJC Operations
Mama Goodness
The Reconnected
Ripe Maternity
Jenna Ward, School of Embodied Arts
The Body Shop

Campaign ambassadors

Nadine Richardson, She Births
Yemi Penn
Clare Bowditch
Amy Taylor-Kabbaz

OUR FINANCES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30 June, 2021

	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	239,538	265,093
Term deposits	448,443	245,234
Trade & other receivables	7,882	48,010
Total current assets	695,863	558,337
Non current assets		
Security deposit	3,000	3,000
Total non current assets	3,000	3,000
Total assets	698,863	561,337
Current liabilities		
Trade & other payables	28,356	8,527
Short term provisions	30,906	23,833
Total current liabilities	59,262	32,360
Non current liabilities		
Long term provisions	4,807	-
Total non current liabilities	4,807	-
Total liabilities	64,069	32,360
Net assets	634,794	528,977
Accumulated funds		
Reserves	634,794	528,977
Total accumulated funds	634,794	528,977

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June, 2021

	\$ 2021	\$ 2020
Classification of expenses by nature		
Revenue	759,241	762,486
Program Costs		
Doula Support	187,862	153,386
Education	111,207	142,002
Research	31,666	51,129
Personnel and Operations	233,904	234,334
Communications and Fundraising	88,785	71,926
Surplus before income tax expense	105,817	109,709
Income tax expense	-	-
Net surplus for the year	105,817	109,709

OUR YEAR AHEAD

IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR WE WILL:

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND INCOME GENERATION

- Explore co-funded partnership models of service delivery, in line with our vision for a new strategic service delivery model and financial sustainability goals.
- Maintain incremental growth of public supporters through social media engagement and our annual peer-to-peer fundraising campaign, Be the Village.
- Continue to seek multi-year grant funding and consolidate relationships with existing funders.

PROGRAMS AND ADVOCACY

- Gradually work towards a new strategic service delivery model where doulas can be paid for their work. Whilst this will not be achieved in the coming year and volunteering remains at the core of our organisation for the foreseeable future, we know that service growth across Victoria requires a paid workforce. This vision will inform how we engage with the public health sector and aim to position the organisation in the future.
- Integrate the learnings from the PhD evaluation of our doula support program model into service improvements and use the findings to advocate for systemic reforms.

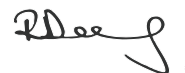
- Continue to support research that will assist in influencing systemic change.
- Continue to witness the experience and use our collective voices to speak alongside the communities we support and bring awareness to the continued inequity in the Australian maternity system.

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

- Implement Board, CEO and leadership succession planning to mitigate the risks of turnover in uncertain times.
- Continue to focus on achieving financial sustainability, with primary emphasis on income generation. We know that cost reduction will impact on outcomes and therefore this will only be considered as a last resort.
- Implement project-driven working group structures – with shared performance indicators – to reduce siloes and burden on our part-time team and increase efficiency, productivity and collective accountability.




Jo Kirk
Chair, on behalf of the Board



Ruth Dearnley
Chief Executive Officer





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