



*Keeping our
community connected
in a year of isolation*

SANDYBEACH CENTRE
Annual Report 2020

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

An example of the impact a program at Sandybeach has on our community
From the Sandybeach Writing Skills class, taught by Claire Gaskin.

"Being part of the Writing Skills class..has made a huge difference to my belief in myself. I've found I may be much older but I still have something to give. I am learning from the group, and perhaps they are learning from me also."

"Sandybeach Centre has become a very important part of my life. The Writing Skills class has given me, not only writing skills, but has encouraged me to speak in public. It also has created a friendly environment where I've made friends..and it has also kept depression in check. As an older person, having contact with like-minded people of all ages is very important to me. So, in summary, thank you to Claire Gaskin and Sandybeach for providing such a meaningful and important course."

"I've lived in Australia for over forty years but was too shy to connect, to participate in community projects because of my lack of appropriate communication skills. The writing class has greatly improved my confidence in teamwork, in constructive criticism of one's works. I am much more confident in participating in community projects."

"Leaving school at 15 with low literacy compounded other issues I have had to face. Through this course my writing and communication skills have freed me to feel comfortable in everyday tasks. I no longer hide my writing using my arm, I now feel confident when having to fill out forms, I no longer run with embarrassment."

"After seven years at home with small children I felt that I was lacking in the confidence I needed to re-enter employment. The Writing Skills class sharpened my writing skills so that I could apply for work. It also helped with my confidence and my inter-personal communication skills so that I could feel comfortable in a new work environment."

"I came into the Writing Skills course at Sandybeach Centre as a young mother of three, who lacked confidence in my abilities. The skills, confidence and support I have received from the course has been invaluable to me for creating a pathway to gainful and fulfilling employment."

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SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19

2020 was a year like no other and it required a dynamic, creative and caring response.

See below for a summary of the activities that Sandybeach undertook to ensure our community and staff remained connected, healthy and happy.

Summary of our COVID response

Online Activity

17 Online weekly classes

Staff training in Zoom

E-newsletters sent monthly to approx. **1000** subscribers

5 online events as part of National Seniors Week

Outreach

160 Social Welfare Calls Weekly

128 hard copy newsletters & activity packs delivered to participants weekly

Musical program DVDs created & delivered to **over 50** participants with limited internet access

Social Connection

New online art show event with over 50 participants

Social Catch up's on Zoom

Community surveys conducted

Staff Wellbeing

Weekly staff meetings online

Fortnightly newsletter from CEO to all staff

Implementation of Microsoft Teams



WHO WE ARE

Sandybeach Centre is a not for profit community cooperative centre that provides programs and services to the local Bayside community and beyond. The centre's staff and volunteers deliver adult education services, social support and connection programs, early learning via the Childcare program and exercise and lifestyle programs to families and individuals. We also provide access to our facilities for community groups and local small businesses.

OUR MISSION

Sandybeach Centre is an inclusive organisation providing programs and services that enrich the quality of life for our diverse community.

OUR VISION

Sandybeach will become the place to meet, connect, learn and have fun.



OUR VALUES

RESPECT

for all members of our community is important. Without it, the enrichment and change will not be possible. We focus on being respectful of each individual and adopt a person-centred approach in everything we do.

INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

Great results can be accomplished with integrity by honest and enthusiastic people who value their community and actively seek out positive change for everyone. "Do the right thing, be mindful and acknowledge our mistakes".



Sandybeach
Centre

CARE

Provide a safe and secure environment for staff, volunteers and all who engage with us.

COLLABORATIVE AND INCLUSIVE

- Everyone is welcome

We aspire to work with people from diverse backgrounds and embrace teamwork first in order for all to succeed. We seek to understand the diverse needs of our community and our role in addressing them.





STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

Our aim is to develop and grow a sustainable business with innovative programs and services that meet our mission.

Our 3 key strategic goals include **growth**, **relevance** and **quality**, all of which are underpinned by **sustainability**.

The **growth** goal will focus on expanding our services and delivery platforms to cater for additional audiences and unmet need in the community. It will focus on identifying new and emerging trends, building organisational agility and instilling a growth culture internally.

The **relevance** goal will seek to maintain our reputation as a community hub, it will ensure our services meet our community's needs by requiring a continuous review of research, demographic data and community feedback.

The **quality** goal will ensure we are providing the highest possible standard of service to our clients with a focus on respect, inclusivity and a 'person-centred' approach. It will ensure our staff and volunteers have the necessary skills to cater for our diverse client base and that they are supported in a safe, engaged and happy workplace.

Long-term **sustainability** of Sandybeach Centre will be attained by diversifying revenue sources, optimising facility utilisation and renewal and ensuring operational efficiency by focusing on areas of greater impact. It will include systems, procedure and policy reviews to optimise utilisation.



OUR BOARD



(L-R) Elizabeth Hardy, Chris Hill (CEO), Cameron Gregson, Sue Coburn, Peter Bean, Rajah Ramanathan

CHAIRPERSON

Rajah Ramanathan

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

Peter Bean

FINANCE DIRECTOR

Stephen Hay

SECRETARY

Rajah Ramanathan

GENERAL MEMBERS

Cameron Gregson, Peter Bean, Elizabeth Hardy, Sue Coburn, Paula Appelhans

Thank you also to our departing members Christopher D'Arcy and Lois Lindsay who retired from the Board in April and May 2020 respectively. We appreciate your service and dedication to Sandybeach Centre.



BOARD CHAIR REPORT



It is with great pleasure that I present our annual report for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The financials will attest to this tough environment and I believe that the economic uncertainty and new unforeseen challenges will continue. The financial result whilst satisfying, does not adequately reflect the hard work, sacrifices and dedication given by all at Sandybeach throughout the year. We have been frugal and conscientiously searched for ways to ensure we extracted the maximum possible benefit and return for every dollar spent. We will exercise diligence and transparency as we move forward.

In 2020, we met and overcame many challenges faced through the passion, resilience and agility of our staff and volunteers. With the lessons learnt, we have also significantly developed leadership skills, knowledge and wisdom, tolerance and a positive 'can do' attitude and culture that has resulted in a more connected, focused and resolute team and organisation. Nevertheless, we dealt with significant uncertainty and fear and the unexpected impact of missing things we often take for granted but which have such a major impact on our very existence. These circumstances threaten to isolate us but we will not allow this to happen.

I am pleased and proud to say that these new found leadership qualities have emanated from the entire management team and that augurs well for the future of Sandybeach. To a large and significant extent, the influence of Mr. Chris Hill, our CEO has contributed to this. Accordingly, I will now refer you to Mr. Hill's report so that you can appreciate the efforts expended and the very satisfying results we have achieved in harsh, often chaotic and unpredictable circumstances and which I am afraid, will continue to be so until we have the virus contained and hopefully, eliminated.

We embarked on a journey of renewal and consolidation last year and this journey continues for we cannot lose our momentum and lag behind

other community organisations or become isolated from the needs of our community. We undertook a major review of our strategy and strategic plan and after much debate, discussion and deliberation, arrived at a mission that "Sandybeach Centre is an inclusive organisation providing programs and services that enrich the quality of life for our diverse community".

This means that we will consult, engage with and listen to what our community needs and will conduct research into our existing offerings and develop new programs to meet these needs so that we can provide and deliver programs that connect us and are inclusive. In saying this, we acknowledge that we may not be able to satisfy every contingency but we will try. Connecting to enrich and improve the quality of life of our community is a paramount objective in all we do. I encourage you to read the report in full to have an appreciation of the work and efforts undertaken during the year to enable us to reach this goal.

On this note, I would like to thank the staff, our wonderful volunteers and my fellow directors for your dedication, passion, care and support. I firmly believe that we will emerge from this uncertainty better equipped to meet anything from left field with courage, strength, compassion and camaraderie. I want to say a special thank you to long-serving staff members Angel Parker and Elana Pedersen for their tenure of 26 years and 19 years respectively to Sandybeach in 2020. Impressive and valuable contributions indeed.

We will remain vigilant and collectively, the Board, staff, volunteers and our friends will always act to ensure that Sandybeach will rise and meet any challenges we face and to remain and stay connected.

Humbly yours, Rajah Ramanathan



CEO REPORT



2020 was a challenging year, there is no denying it. In March, we saw a seismic shift in the way people were able to live their everyday lives and it has perhaps forever changed the way that organisations run.

Through it all though, we have seen inspiring displays of kindness and support and incredibly creative endeavours to keep our communities together and thriving.

This dedication to the preservation of community has formed this year's annual report theme 'Keeping our community connected in a year of isolation'.

Sandybeach Centre staff had to think outside the square this year - from launching online programs, running virtual art shows, filming online concerts, making hundreds of personal phone calls and compiling regular newsletters which were often personally delivered - Sandybeach staff have done it all!

I cannot speak highly enough of our staff and volunteers who have taken every twist and turn in their stride and have gone above and beyond to stay engaged with our community. Thank you for your dedication to Sandybeach Centre and the community that we are a part of.

We maintained our connection with the community via weekly support calls, the delivery and production of 2 amazing newsletters with a focus on learning, fun and engagement and the many Zoom programs to take place of our traditional face to face.

Of particular note this year was a new virtual event, the Sandybeach online art show, of which we had 65 entries. The quality of these artworks was extraordinary and took much of our community by surprise - who knew we had such talented artists surrounding us? Take a look at page 14 for some example of the artworks.

We were also lucky enough in 2020 to be selected as a finalist in the ACFE (Adult Community and Education Board) awards program for our mentoring program, which was designed to get adults with a disability into employment or voluntary positions. It is wonderful to see our staff and the programs they create getting the recognition they deserve. See page 11 for more information on this program.

Thanks to Bayside City Council, we also obtained funding in 2020 to launch an intergenerational program bringing together our childcare and our over 65's communities. Sadly, while we were unable to physically connect, we were able to find ways to bring these two groups together - for example, with childcare students creating artworks to send to our older adults.

Our Childcare and Early Learning Centre, maintained its doors open at the beginning of the year and then in the later part of the year as restrictions loosened slightly. This provided some continuity, respite and support for families in our community.

Thank you to the Board, and in particular our Chairperson Rajah Ramanathan, for providing endless guidance and support and working with myself and the management team to develop the strategic direction for Sandybeach Centre for 2021 and beyond.

Thank you also to all of our supporters, funders, donors and community partners who support our mission to be an inclusive organisation that enriches the quality of life for our diverse community through our programs and services. Without them and our amazing team we will not be able to meet our vision of "becoming the place to meet, connect, learn and have fun."

We look forward to working with you in 2021, in what we hope will be a less turbulent year.

- Chris Hill



ACHIEVING RECOGNITION IN THE SECTOR

In 2020, Sandybeach Centre entered the Learn Local Awards held annually by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board - Department of Education and Training.

Normally a prestigious gala event, this year the awards were celebrated as a virtual series due to COVID but this didn't take away from the importance of the awards in the sector.

Our program - 'Mentoring - A step towards mainstream volunteering or work experience' was entered into the Victorian Learn Local Pre-Accredited Pathway Program Award. While we were not selected as the overall winner we were selected as one of 4 finalists from a large pool of extremely worthy entrants. As a finalist, not only were we thankful of this fabulous recognition, it also meant that we received \$1000 in prize money to further our programs at Sandybeach Centre.

The Sandybeach Mentoring Program is a wonderfully personalised and successful program, developed by Tutor Emma Raverty and former CEO Sue Hart. It is targeted to adults with a disability who are looking for employment opportunities and it was developed to address barriers that often exist when individuals with a disability are searching for meaningful employment.

In the program, participants are paired with a volunteer mentor, to find and apply for a paid or volunteer work placement. Mentors guide students through the process of identifying their skill sets, interests and employment goals and then assist them in the creation of a job toolkit where participants learn job skills such as resume and cover letter writing, gaining working with children/police checks and developing a 1 minute elevator pitch.

By participating in the mentoring program, participants are empowered and given the tools they need to contribute as active members of the community, obtain meaningful and fulfilling employment and reach their potential. So far, all students who have taken part in the mentoring program have obtained either paid or volunteer employment opportunities - a huge success and testament to the hard work of participants, mentors and staff.

If you are an inclusive business looking to diversify your staffing resources, then please consider hiring a graduate from our mentoring program. Likewise, if you are interested in mentoring a student and working with them to achieve their employment goals, please get in touch with us, it is an incredibly rewarding opportunity.



Department of Education and Training & Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board

PARTICIPANT DANIEL

Participant Daniel and Tutor Emma. Through participating in the Mentoring Program Daniel was able to obtain 3-6 hours paid work weekly on a permanent part-time basis as a bus boy in a local bar. He also obtained 3 hours volunteer work weekly at a local Op Shop.



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY - The Statistics

933

OVER 65'S & CARER PROGRAM HOURS

OUTPUT: Over 120 individuals received phone call support and regular newsletter and activity packs plus approximately 226 carers and family members were indirectly supported.

OUTCOME: Enhancing quality of life for the seniors and carers in our community, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.



1064

DISABILITY PROGRAM HOURS

OUTPUT: 43 individuals assisted, receiving phone calls, online classes, newsletters and activity packs.

OUTCOME: Maintaining independence and life skills and developing friendships.



260

LIFESTYLE PROGRAM HOURS

OUTPUT: 147 individuals involved in programs including health, exercise and the arts.

OUTCOME: Combating health conditions and disease, improving mood, connecting with others, having fun and being social.

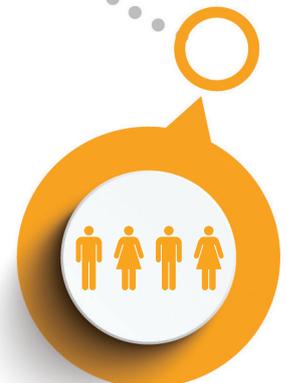


150

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

OUTPUT: 150 community members engaged in new community activities including Sandybeach Online Art Show and Seniors Festival Online.

OUTCOME: Developing friendships in the community, addressing social isolation and encouraging creative pursuits.



2125 VOLUNTEER HOURS

OUTPUT: From 78 individuals.

OUTCOME: Enriching their own lives and supporting others to achieve.



453 EARLY LEARNING CENTRE HOURS

OUTPUT: Over 2 half terms, 94 families supported.

OUTCOME: Children are connecting and contributing to the community and confidently learning whilst parents have a break.



2955 TRANSPORT HOURS

OUTPUT: 656 Hours of transport for programs and 153 hours of driving to deliver newsletters and socially distanced interaction with 2 people assisting.

OUTCOME: Create freedom and social opportunities for those wanting to stay in touch with the community.



93.7% ONLINE PROGRAM ENJOYMENT

OUTPUT: 93.7% of participants who participated in an online program in 2020 enjoyed it (Source: 2020 Sandybeach Community Survey)

OUTCOME: Continuing engagement, learning and social opportunities during COVID lockdown periods.



92% LOCKDOWN ENGAGEMENT SUCCESS

OUTPUT: 92% of participants were happy with how we kept them engaged during lockdown (Source: 2020 Sandybeach Community Survey) **OUTCOME:** Minimised negative impacts of COVID-19 lockdown on mental health and social isolation.



EMBRACING VIRTUAL EVENTS - Sandybeach Online Art Exhibition 2020

Much of 2020 was effected by an inability to interact face-to-face with our community. However, the need for an artistic outlet, inspiration and community interaction was greater than ever. Art has always been an important part of the Sandybeach offering, with art classes and events being held each year. This year however, required an especially creative response to ensure the artists and aspiring artists in our community had the opportunity to flourish.

Staff at Sandybeach worked tirelessly to develop a solution - and what they decided was an online art exhibition. The exhibition was titled 'All Along the Bay', with the goal of taking us on an extraordinary voyage through the wonders of our Bayside area. It was open to anyone with a connection to the Sandybeach community - program participants (including children attending childcare), carers, family members, volunteers and staff. The event opened with an online launch event on Zoom which was very well attended. The launch offered a wonderful incentive for individuals who were new to Sandybeach (and possibly reluctant) to trial this online platform as a way to connect with others at a time of increased isolation.

The exhibition provided a fabulous avenue for all members of the Sandybeach community to engage in their creative skills and work towards something together. The benefits of the event were numerous; it helped to maintain a connection to Sandybeach for participants who were missing visiting the Centre, it provided a creative outlet for people to explore challenging emotions in a difficult year, it improved wellbeing and morale among participants, and it provided an inspiring and uplifting community event for the broader Bayside community.

While we knew we had a talented community, we were blown away by the quality of the pieces that we received and the range of different approaches and interpretations that were produced for this theme. In total, 46 artists submitted 65 artworks!

We hope that you enjoy the images of the winning artworks included in this article and we encourage you to view the exhibition in full at sandybeach.org.au/artexhibition



1ST PRIZE

Anne Tompson, 'Over the Bay'

Sandybeach Online Art Exhibition 2020



2ND PRIZE

Cheryl Frost, 'Seaview'



3RD PRIZE

Germaine Vilbert, 'From a Distance'



CHILD AWARD WINNER

Sophie Hughes, age 8, 'Untitled'



PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER

Zac Barbarino, age 11, 'Patience'



ADAPTING TO ONLINE DELIVERY

Upskilling Staff - Zoom Training

When the need arose to move Sandybeach programs online due to COVID lockdowns, Tutor Alison Leyden was quick to put up her hand to develop a training program for staff in online platform 'Zoom'. Alison created a manual and training course in two parts - one which focussed on Zoom basics and then a more comprehensive course which focused on Zoom tools, tips and tricks for teaching staff. As part of the training, online and phone support was also offered for staff with specific questions or equipment difficulties. Approximately 25 staff and volunteers attended the courses.

When asked how staff responded to the training and new way of working, Alison commented that 'the staff at Sandybeach Centre were amazing and while some were apprehensive about teaching on a different platform, they all knew it was the way forward. Staff were interested and listened, reflected and embraced the technology knowing it was the best way to continue teaching and connecting with their students. I was impressed how quickly many staff developed courses and got them up and running'.

When contemplating on the greatest challenges of the training Alison commented that 'keeping up to date with the changes in Zoom was the most challenging. No sooner did I update the manual than another tweak was made by Zoom!'.

Upon reflection, Alison also commented that a side benefit of the training was that 'it enabled us all to stay connected during a very difficult time. Staff were able to update skills together, discuss difficulties and problem solve solutions... they were not alone, and they are now well placed for the future'.

Delivering online programs - A tutor's perspective

Pennie Johnson, Sandybeach pilates instructor, has a long-standing relationship with our Centre, firstly as a client in Rebecca Quin's 'fabulous Chi Ball class'! Having been a pilates instructor for over 20 years, when the opportunity presented itself, Pennie jumped at the chance to teach some classes at Sandybeach and has been doing so for years.



When the pandemic hit, Pennie was in shock and very resistant to the idea of transferring to online classes as it was a completely new experience for her. Her main concerns were that 'virtual classes just didn't match my teaching style - I like to be very direct with my clients, cue with touch and ensure everyone gets a personalised workout. My classes also have a great energy and I was worried that this wouldn't translate online. I was also mindful that my clients had specific needs from age, surgeries and injuries and I wasn't sure how I was going to cater for these needs online'.

To boost her skills and confidence, Pennie took part in the online Zoom training offered by Sandybeach. Pennie acknowledged that she 'needed to master the technology to feel confident'. Pennie also commented that by doing the training program in a group setting, 'we were able to share information with each other and learn from staff members who had run online

Adapting to Online Delivery

classes before and knew what worked'. Pennie was complimentary of the training program and noted that 'compared to other businesses I work with, Sandybeach was ahead of the game in terms of preparing me for the unexpected, and this definitely happened! I had never thought about things like people not wanting to see their bodies online or the increased isolation my students would feel simply because they could not share a coffee after class. Previous training I had received through Sandybeach on emotional health really assisted me in providing additional support to my class at this time'.

Pennie commented on how her classes evolved during 2020, 'I completely changed the way I ran my classes and as my style evolved we became more relaxed and really embraced it. I actually found that running online classes allowed us a greater freedom and we had an insight into people's lives that we hadn't seen before - we shared cats, dogs and husbands who often came into the picture! Pilates was brought into the home - we could use equipment like cans, pillows and blankets which gave us so many options and gave me an opportunity to push my class and give them exercises they wouldn't normally have done'.

When asked whether online classes would continue in the future, Pennie was optimistic 'Yes, in combination with face-to-face programs of course. Having an online option has given us greater flexibility and made us so much more inclusive of those who are unable to attend our Centre physically. We are able to cater for people who are unable to obtain transport, or people who are travelling and want to participate while on holidays and if we are ever faced with lockdowns again, we are well and truly prepared!'



THE SHOW MUST GO ON - RECORDING 'THE HAPPY SHOW' ON DVD

In a normal year, the Sandybeach music program is a time when the Centre comes alive with music, clapping, singing, cheering and laughing. Music Program Coordinator, Andrea Lees, hosts different performers each week as well as often taking to the microphone herself, being an incredibly talented singer in her own right.

With the music program unavailable in its usual format for much of 2020, Andrea and her team needed a way to get to their beautiful participants and in her words 'let them know we had a smile, laugh and love to give them, even if not in person'.

Andrea had many a sleepless night, figuring out how to make it work. Then she got on the phone and started the ring around to her crew - she wanted to put together a 'Happy Show' DVD with segments from all over the world - from Vegas to Hawaii!

This was no simple task and required all the performers to work from green screens at their own homes so that the show looked like they were all in the same room. Songs were recorded in each of their studios and then compiled together. The show was full of prominent performers - including Peter Sullivan (past Musical Director for Ch 9), Adrian Scott (from Air Supply & Kylie Minogue's MD) and of course Andrea herself. Compiling the shows also took a team of people to help with production, graphics and design. It was a huge task but it was so worth it! 'It was such a joy to create these shows and to hear the responses from our participants and know that we were bringing a smile to their faces was so rewarding'.



TAKING A LEAD ROLE IN ENSURING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

2020 was a year that saw many closures for Sandybeach Centre and a number of programs cancelled or transferred online. With these enormous changes, staff were conscious of the impact this would have on our community's well-being. To keep the connection with our community strong, Sandybeach staff were flexible, dynamic and quick to come up with alternative solutions that would keep our participants engaged, entertained and supported.

For the older adults in our community

One of the first solutions initiated by staff member Miranda, and heartily endorsed by Coordinator Juliet, was a hard copy newsletter for the older adults in our community when Victoria first went into lockdown. Miranda felt this was an important way to keep in touch with our participants, many of whom live alone or in residential care facilities with limited access to visitors and limited access to technology. The 16 page newsletter consisted of a page from each of our program leaders with content such as music quizzes, tips on keeping healthy, in-home exercise ideas, armchair travel, good news stories, puzzles, mindfulness colouring, reader contributions, stories and pictures from our occasional care children, riddles and 'getting to know you pages' featuring our staff and volunteers. When they could be hand delivered by the Sandybeach bus crew they were (thanks to John, Tony and Angel) and when that wasn't possible Miranda mailed them from home - all 170 of them!

For our participants with a disability

Staff and community collaboration (thank you Jim from MinuteMan Press!) also saw the production of a hard copy newsletter for our students with

a disability which involved worksheets developed by tutors, feel good stories, jokes, happy snaps and inspiring writings and useful resources to support our participants and their carers mental health. These newsletters included a reply paid envelope so participants could return their work to Sandybeach, get it assessed by tutors and then receive feedback during regular phone calls and online classes. 44 copies were sent out each fortnight. Thanks to tutor Margaret for all her work on these newsletters.

Social Support Calls

In addition to newsletters, a social support call roster was developed for Sandybeach participants, in which many staff were involved. Participants were called each week with some calls lasting for 10 minutes and some for up to half an hour, whatever the participant needed. Staff member Margaret reflected that, for our students with a disability, 'many calls involved a chat with their parents first as they were craving contact and a caring person to listen, just as much as the participant was. It was also very helpful having completed Lifeline training previously at Sandybeach, as I was able to recognise people who needed extra mental health support'.

Taking a lead role in ensuring community well-being

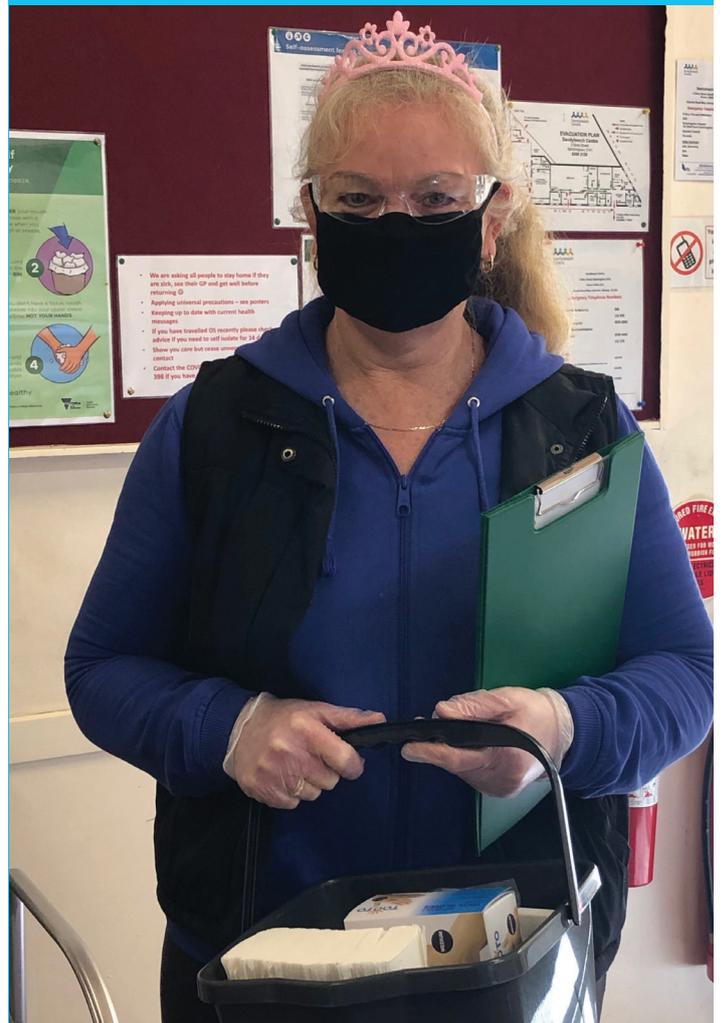


Delivering some Christmas cheer!

Christmas can be a difficult time for many, and COVID made this even more challenging in 2020. Sandybeach is normally a hub of activity pre-Christmas with Christmas themed events, morning teas and general Christmas cheer. With the Centre closed this year, Sandybeach staff decided to take Christmas to the community! Along with delivering the aforementioned newsletters, staff put together a Christmas pack for participants including a Christmas bonbon, a handmade label (made by our children in childcare) and a Happy Show DVD including performances from staff and other prominent entertainers. Staff member Miranda reflected on how it felt to deliver the Christmas packs - 'being able to hand deliver these packs to participants (in a COVID safe way of course) meant that we were able to have some face-to-face contact and personally wish them well which was so important - those we were able to see were so happy to see us and were so appreciative of the continued contact and support during the year'. Staff member Margaret agreed, 'At a time when vulnerable people had been stuck at home for months on end, it really was a lovely way of connecting and making sure people felt wanted. We couldn't go into their homes, only chat at the front door, but many would have loved to have us come and sit with them and share a cuppa. If we could, we assisted in the garden, collecting mail or putting the rubbish bins out. A number of participants had recently lost their lifelong partners and it was really important to have a chat and let them know they were always thought of. It made me feel good to have been a part of bringing joy to such worthy recipients'.

KEEPING OUR CENTRE COVID-SAFE

Sandybeach Centre has been vigilant in following the Victorian Government's pandemic advice and guidelines to provide a safe and flexible environment for all staff and participants. In addition to standard processes such as cleaning checklists, identifying high touch point areas, and implementing QR code registration, Sandybeach Centre has also implemented a new COVID Safe officer (CSO) role. This role is responsible for the smooth running, induction and training of staff and volunteers in COVID safe practices to minimise risk and prioritise the health and safety of our community.



COVID Safe Officer – Elana Pedersen



TAKING CARE OF OUR TINY HUMANS

Like all of us, our young children were incredibly impacted in 2020. Many experienced significant changes to their routines, a lack of contact with other children and limited freedoms.

Carmela Walker, Director of Sandybeach Occasional Childcare and Early Learning Centre, was very conscious of the needs of our little humans during this time and when they were unable to attend our Centre came up with some creative options to keep our children and their families entertained, connected and settled.

Carmela was conscious of the pressure and stress that families would be experiencing and regularly called families to check in and offer support. This was in addition to newsletters and activity packs that the childcare educators put together for children to do at home, which families loved and found kept their children engaged with the Centre.

To remain connected, many childcare families agreed to share photos of what they were doing during lockdown. Not only did this provide familiar faces for the children to look at but it also gave parents ideas of things to do with their children when stuck at home - things like camping in their backyards with pretend fires to toast marshmallows, making spoon pals to place around the neighbourhood and even learning Chinese!

Upon re-opening the centre later in the year, Carmela reflected that 'we as educators were very mindful that we would need to resettle families and the children back into the Centre, so patience, kindness and understanding was critical. However, we were surprised at how quickly the children settled, and the incredible resilience they have shown. It was such a joy to welcome children back to Sandybeach - to see their smiling faces and hear their laughs makes us feel so hopeful for the future'.





OUR SUPPORTERS, RENTALS AND FUNDING PARTNERS

We thank the following people, organisations and Government departments who in 2020 provided support to Sandybeach Centre through in-kind contributions, donations and grants. This support has enabled Sandybeach to better meet the needs of our local community. We also wish to thank the many participants who chose to forego the refund of fees from cancelled programs in 2020. We sincerely appreciate your support.

- Sandringham Lions Club
- Brad Rowswell MP
- Rosemary Sharman
- Minuteman Press
- PSN Family Trust
- Southern Star Coaches
- Buxton Real Estate

Thank you to our rental groups Astrology Group, Bayside Seido Karate club, Body Corporate groups, Little Jem's Cake Co., Sophie Alex School of Dance and Vocally Wild Choir who worked with us to navigate a very challenging year. We look forward to working with these groups again in 2021 and welcoming new community groups to our Centre.



Australian Government
Department of Health



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Education
and Training



Health
and Human
Services

SANDYBEACH CENTRE 2020 AT A GLANCE







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