



**MIFWA**



Mental Illness Fellowship of WA

# **Annual Report**

**2020-2021**

# The **impact** we seek to make

## Our vision

To realise the potential of all Western Australians to recover from mental illness, to maintain mental health, and to live a meaningful life in their community.

## Our mission

- To walk alongside people affected by mental illness, providing person led recovery focussed support;
- To promote acceptance and understanding of mental health in the community; and
- To be a leader in innovation and systemic reform in mental health service delivery.

## Our values



### Empowerment

We work to empower people, helping them gain control over their own lives, fostering power in individuals to act on the issues they define as most important to them.



### Collaboration

We work with individuals and groups to achieve shared goals; sharing knowledge, learning together, and building consensus.



### Inclusion and Acceptance

We acknowledge everyone's worth and dignity, regardless of background, abilities, or beliefs. We demonstrate empathy, show consideration for one another, and acknowledge the value of other.



### Integrity

We demonstrate integrity by having the courage to do the right thing, and to stand up for what's right/being responsible for our actions, being honest and adhering to the highest ethical standards.



### Accountability

Individually and as an organisation, we are accountable and responsible for our behaviours; activities; decisions; outcomes; and are open and transparent in what we do.



## In this report

The impact we seek to make	2
A message from our Chair	4
CEO report	6
2021 highlights	8
Our impact	10
Support for a better life with the NDIS	10
My time as a community mental health worker – Louise’s story	12
Innovating through peer support	13
Supporting carers, families, and friends	15
Building a future for carers – Kay’s story	17
A light at the end of the tunnel for parents	18
Supporting young people where they are	20
Lorikeet Centre	22
The Lorikeet Centre has given me hope – Rod’s story	24
Empowering communities with mental health training	25
Partnering to strengthen mental health in regional communities	27
The importance of community: a reflection	29
Building a strong team and culture	30
Our supporters	34
Promoting awareness and celebrating community	36
Finance report	40



## A message from our Chair

On behalf of the MIFWA Board, I am pleased to present the MIFWA Annual Report for the 2021 financial year. In 2021, I was delighted to be appointed to the role of chair of the Board.

The past year has been a year of growth, consolidation, and innovation for MIFWA, as MIFWA's Board and CEO have continued to respond to the changing mental health landscape and evolving community need. I'd like to congratulate the CEO, leadership team and staff on their hard work and achievements over the last 12 months.

### **Delivering on our three-year strategy**

June 2021 marked the final year of our three-year (2018-2021) strategy, which focused on delivering practical and reliable programs throughout Western Australia via tailored service delivery. With our strong leadership, MIFWA doubled in size over the last four years, something that can largely be attributed to the success and growth of our National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) services. As a result, we exceeded our goal of 500 participants across the Perth metropolitan area. This achievement is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the MIFWA team and our members as they focused on the person rather than the diagnosis when creatively managing services and providing bespoke support to people living with mental illness and to their families and carers.

### **Growth, risk, and governance in the NDIS**

We continue to reflect on the impact of COVID-19, the ongoing challenges, risk, and uncertainty that have arisen due to the pandemic, and the challenges and changes within the NDIS operating environment that present a risk across our organisation. The Board is focused on how MIFWA can innovate and develop new programs and

services to support the organisation to become sustainable alongside the growth of the NDIS and how we manage governance, quality and risk whilst maintaining a personal focus.

### **Partnering for regional impact**

Over the last year, we partnered with CBH Group to deliver the CBH Regional Mental Health Program. In conjunction with Lifeline WA, Youth Focus and Black Dog Institute, we are supporting the mental health and wellbeing of people living in regional grain growing communities across WA, with mental health and suicide prevention training and workshops, a large percentage facilitated within regional school communities with adults and young people. This program has been a privilege and provided insight into what helps regional communities and individuals support one another and sustain resilience. We have also collaborated with other individuals and organisations to deliver art therapy workshops, workshops tailored to carers, and digital services, focusing on raising awareness of mental health recovery, training, and capacity building.

The demand we have received from people in regional grain-growing areas for information, workshops, and training, as well as the reception we have received from local communities throughout WA, has been positive as we have delivered a comprehensive approach to education, forged new partnerships, and strengthened existing relationships, all of which are helping us to reach more people where they are. We look forward to continuing this work in 2021-22.



## Our Board

(from 2 December 2020)

- **Annette Watkins**, Chairperson (ex-Deputy Chairperson)
- **Ann White**, Deputy Chairperson
- **Erin Bourne**, Deputy Chairperson
- **Nick Hopkin**, Treasurer
- **Kellie McCrum** (ex-Chairperson)
- **Carolyn Ngan**
- **Gianni Ripani**
- **Preetie Boler**
- **Hugh Cook** (until May 2021)

### MIFWA's new strategy

In early 2021, the MIFWA Board, in liaison with the Leadership team, commenced reviewing our overall mission, vision, and strategic direction. As a result, we updated our vision and mission statements and established a new strategy for the next five years, including eleven strategic projects. These projects centre around our overall social impact, systems and efficiencies, workforce growth and development, and capacity building in regional WA, to name a few.

As part of MIFWA's new strategy, we aim to:

- Grow our NDIS services with a focus on financial sustainability and quality.
- Make a systemic impact on Western Australia's and Australia's mental health system, keeping the needs of people we support at the centre.
- Build capacity across metro, regional and rural areas of WA, focusing on community-based services supporting families, parents, and carers.

- Build a more effective, efficient, and contemporary organisation rooted in our innovative and empathetic past.
- Be one of the Government's primary partners in WA, supporting people with mental illness and their families, delivering efficient and effective services and growing revenue streams.

Primarily, we will maintain focus on quality and building partnerships with our stakeholders to achieve our vision to realise the potential of all Western Australians to recover from mental illness, to maintain mental health, and to live a meaningful life in their community.

We are grateful to our funders, donors, members, volunteers, and supporters who have made an important contribution to our organisation over the last year. We look forward to continuing our collaborative engagement to strengthen our collective impact within the mental health sector across WA.

**Annette Watkins**  
MIFWA Chairperson

# CEO report

With the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, our long-held vision of a good life for individuals affected by mental health issues has never been more important.



During 2020-21, MIFWA remained focussed on managing quality and risk, embracing challenges, and innovating as we continued to support people to navigate their experience with mental health challenges, holding the belief that resiliency and wellness are possible for everyone. We continued to invest in our organisational culture and staff, develop new and existing programs, and improve our systems and processes, all while ensuring we keep the person at the centre of what we do.

## COVID-19 and the emerging demand for support

We have never seen such demand for mental health services and supports across the sector, adding further pressure on an already strained mental health system. However, all our programs and services experienced an increased demand for mental health services, particularly from young people. This was primarily related to the impacts of COVID-19 and the uncertainty created by a global pandemic. As a result, we have increased our partnerships with other services and diverted additional resources to support as many people as possible. We continue to monitor this demand and explore strategies to ensure young people are getting better access to support.

## Growth of our NDIS services

We love the NDIS as it gives us a chance to work with people flexibly and meaningfully. We see positive results daily from the people we support with their NDIS plans. However, as our NDIS services grow, the program framework and pricing established by the NDIA continues to present challenges. One of the ways we overcame

this was to review our structure, so we remained sustainable while focussed on a quality mindset. As a result, we introduced a new area manager role across our North, South and East metro sites, which has seen us better able to support communities and maintain growth in each region. We also delineated the roles of support coordinator and service team leader and embraced the new recovery coach role; these flow naturally from the introduction of the NDIS recovery coach role.

## Innovative approaches and health partnerships

We believe new models of peer support will significantly benefit individuals and communities throughout WA. For example, we created our new Opening Doors Program to address the growing needs of people referred to vital services in the community only to find limited availability and lengthy waitlists when starting their help-seeking journey at the GP. Staffed by a team of passionate and skilled peer workers, Opening Doors will help people navigate the mental health system to access timely and affordable support, all while reassuring them that they are not alone.

Aiming to facilitate stronger in practice partnerships between mental health clinical services and non-government organisations, the Mental Health Commission selected MIFWA as a key partner in the new Active Recovery Team program. This program is an exciting opportunity to work together to provide a new model of support while impacting consumers positively, with our team members based in clinical settings across Perth.



### **Advocating for more investment**

We are proud of our team and the broader mental health sector. However, we work in an increasingly pressured environment where people often struggle to navigate the system created to support their recovery and find and access the right support at the right time. We stood with our peak body Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), during the year to drive the Prevent Support Heal campaign. The campaign continues to seek adequate government investment in preventative community mental health support and new service approaches to benefit our community and improve outcomes for people experiencing mental distress. In addition, we continued to work with the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA) to drive home this message with key decision-makers.

### **Continuing to invest in supporting families and carers**

Families and carers provide fundamental supports for many experiencing mental health challenges. We continue to identify opportunities and develop innovative solutions to support families, parents, and carers and focus on how these supports help. We see increasing demand from families and carers as they navigate the mental health system as with other services. We are proud of our substantial history of offering peer support and educational opportunities to them. We continue to see this mutual support and new perspective impact carer wellbeing and confidence.

At MIFWA, we are committed to providing a flexible and supportive work environment to employees who identify as unpaid carers. During the year, we were proud to have become the first mental health service provider in WA to become an Accredited Carer Employer.

### **Peers with lived experience**

The role of peers in recovery cannot be understated. With over 50% of MIFWA's workforce having a lived experience of mental health, from experiencing mental health challenges themselves to carers, families, and friends, this is one of MIFWA's key differentiators. There is something powerful that comes with understanding the experience of mental health challenges and recovery through a lived experience. It is not just the wisdom gained through lived experience that makes the difference. It is the development of a deeper appreciation of each other's journey and the mutual trust from some insight into ordinary experiences. The mental health system is still strongly reliant on diagnosis and labels, and this is often associated with stigma. Peers tend to focus on potential, mutuality, humanity and hope, and this refreshing focus makes a positive difference.

Our work is about people. The people we support, the people who come together as our Board, the staff, volunteers and students, the people who support and partner with us, and the people who invest in our capabilities. With this year's achievements, our new strategy, refined vision and mission, and the commitment of our passionate team and supporters, we look forward to the next 12 months and beyond.

Thank you for supporting MIFWA.

**Monique Williamson**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2021 highlights



We have supported over **550 people** via the NDIS since 2016

We provided over **2,000 hours** of support to carers across WA



Our Hospital to Home program supported **242 people** throughout the year



Our MIFWA team grew to **173 people**, with **68%** of our team working in the NDIS



We maintained an average staff happiness rating of **7.9 out of 10**



**200 members** attended the **Lorikeet Centre**, our member-driven community centre



Over **750 hours** of mental health training provided across WA

We facilitated **195 hours** of training and development courses to staff



Our Early Intervention Recovery Program supported **137 young people** aged 16 to 30

Our Parent Peer Support Program supported **71 parents** who identified as living with mental illness and had children under the age of 18 residing with them

We received **700 calls** for information and support from people across WA

We received **\$26,471** from **49 donors**



We partnered with over **56 communities, organisations, and individuals** across Australia



Our website received **98,383 pageviews** from visitors seeking information about mental health services and supports



Our social media community grew to more than **4,358 followers**

Our social media reach was **219,485 users**

**834 people** subscribed to our new monthly eNewsletter

# Our impact

## Support for a better life with the NDIS



We have supported over **550 people** via the NDIS since 2016

Identifying and connecting with the right supports and services can be a challenge for many on the NDIS, with the system being difficult to understand and navigate. However, for many of the NDIS participants we support, having the right supports and guidance means there is less of a chance they will fall through the cracks.

At MIFWA, we support people to get the best out of their NDIS plan by working alongside them to shape practical and relevant supports. Since the NDIS began in 2016 our program has grown significantly, with our teams of area managers, coordinators, service team leaders and community mental health workers having supported over 500 people.

Supporting people to access the right supports and services to have a better life is what motivates our NDIS team, and it is encouraging to see that we are helping people progress through their recovery journeys by simplifying the process. We walk alongside the people we support as they take small steps, gain confidence, and achieve their goals. This is the best part of what we do and why we enjoy coming to work every day.

COVID-19 remained one of our biggest challenges throughout the year. When we were in lockdown, we identified creative ways of ensuring those we support remained connected and well. As usual, our team responded quickly. For some this once again meant transitioning to telephone and video-based support. For others it involved our team members delivering shopping to people's doorsteps and assisting others in attending their

regular appointments. Whatever it took, everyone worked hard to minimise any disruptions to the people we supported.

This year, the NDIS introduced a new role, the role of a recovery coach. MIFWA embraced this introduction as it aligned to our values of working alongside a person on their recovery journey and supporting them to achieve their goals. As a result, we recruited six recovery coaches who thrive in their roles, supporting people to achieve remarkable outcomes.

Over the year we continued to experience significant growth in our NDIS program which prompted the opening of our new Kingsley office in January 2021 (we now operate out of Midland, Kingsley, and Rockingham). The growth of our NDIS services brings the need for additional staff, and finding the right employees is key to our program. It is always a challenge when demand is growing. Still, MIFWA's recruitment process allowed us to onboard a combination of community mental health workers, experienced peer workers, recovery coaches, service team leaders, and coordinators across the Perth metro area.



*"I have support from MIFWA 4-5 times a week and receive guidance, assistance and travel from my support workers. They assist me with cooking, cleaning, tidying, shopping, and getting out into the community, such as horse riding. My support workers are always positive and willing to help. They calm me down, and I believe I would be in hospital without their support. I'm extremely happy with them. MIFWA have been there for me throughout and have really helped build my confidence. They help me to think clearly, and I feel that they really understand me and that I can talk to them when I don't feel able to talk to anyone else. Getting back into horse riding again after at least ten years is one of the best things I've done since having my NDIS plan with MIFWA."*

**– NDIS Participant**



*Art and craft have played a big role in Lisa's recovery (pictured). Throughout the year, Lisa utilised things she found laying around the house and garden to create bags and artworks, including rags, food colouring, string, and beads.*



Having peer workers is essential because many of our NDIS participants prefer to be paired with someone who has had similar experiences.

Our hard-working team is the key to the program's success, and we believe it is because everyone is focused on delivering high-quality support. It is also because our team members share MIFWA's values, which include encouraging ongoing professional development to ensure everyone acquires the skills and knowledge to support the program's growth.

What we do is unique, and the feedback from the people we support tells us that we're doing it well. We aim to maintain MIFWA's reputation as a leader in NDIS support for people facing mental health challenges and continue providing the quality service we pride ourselves on.



## Louise's story

### *My time as a community mental health worker*

"I enjoy spending time with participants, and I'm learning so much about mental health and the mental health system, which is valuable for my other role as an art therapist. I especially enjoy seeing the enormous impact the NDIS is having on participants.

Several participants have said to me on more than one occasion that they really can't quite believe how lucky they are that they have been able to ask for and receive all the different kinds of support they require. Some have said that having struggled with isolation, societal stigma, and feelings of worthlessness, they are genuinely surprised that the government, and therefore the Australian people, have deemed them worthy of this kind of support. Yet, they still can't quite believe they have a right to it. I think that this fact alone has a powerful effect on participants' sense of self.

I am one of those privileged healthy people now, but I have not always been this way. I experienced a lot of traumas in my early life and subsequent struggles with my mental health. In my case, the things that made the most difference to me were not medication or hospitalisation, although I did a bit of both when it was necessary. The important things that led to my healing were unconditional regard, lack of judgement, the belief that I was of value and had something to contribute to the world, and most importantly that I could and would recover. It gives me a lot of pleasure to provide these qualities for our NDIS participants now."

# Innovating through peer support

## Hospital to Home Program

We believe that even small amounts of the right support from the right person provided at the right time can make a big difference in an individual's recovery path. Support can empower people to gain control over their own lives and inspire people with a sense of hope that wellness is possible for them. It can also help build mutual and authentic human connections through shared lived experiences of challenge and adversity and significantly reduce feelings of distress and readmission hospital.

Launched in partnership with Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWA) and St John of God Midland in early 2020, Hospital to Home is the first program of its kind in Western Australia. Originally funded through WA Primary Health Alliance, the program was designed in response to research showing that people aged 18 and over who were facing mental health challenges often didn't have a safety net when being discharged from mental health wards. Supported by a team of peer workers from a diverse range of lived experience with mental health challenges, the program aims to connect with and assist people to navigate the complex pathways into Mental Health support services from the hospital through to returning home.

In 2020-21, we engaged 242 participants through the Hospital to Home Program. In analysing the feedback received, we know that the program has offered practical support that builds capacity, connection, and person-centred recovery for each person. A recent evaluation of the program concluded that those engaged reported increased feelings of capacity and resilience alongside greater feelings of community support and involvement, rendering them less likely to require emergency intervention or hospitalisation.



Hospital to Home supported **242 people** over the year.

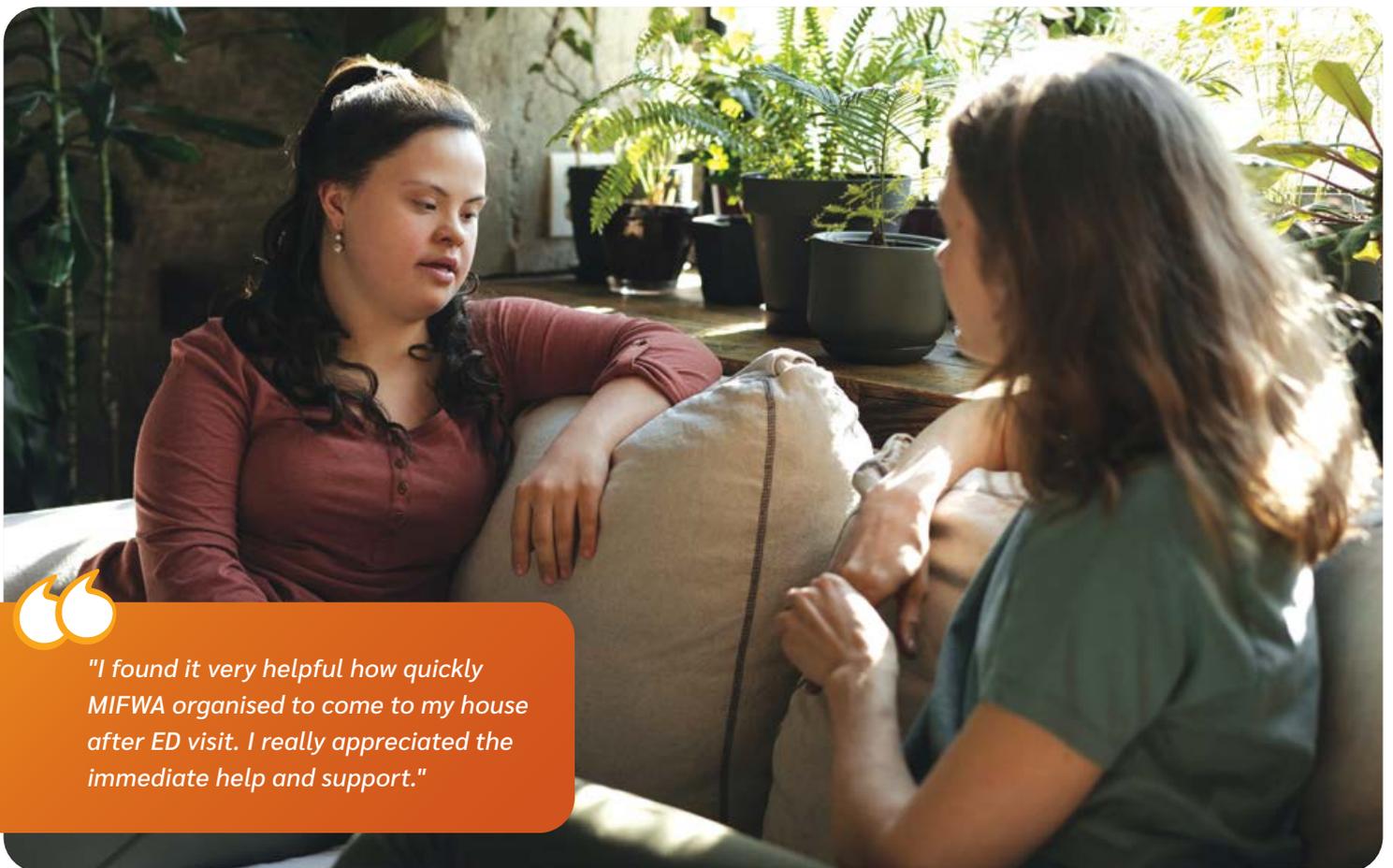
Hospital to Home has supported **96% of participant transitions** from a mental health ward to home.



*"My peer worker was the most help I have had and received from any support service and went above and beyond to help me with any transitions."*  
– Participant, Hospital to Home Program

Having run for two years, Hospital to Home has seen a substantial reduction in hospital readmission rates in the people we have supported. Additionally data collected from 300 Hospital to Home participants shows that the program has helped support 96% of participants transition from a mental health ward to home.

Hospital to Home has proven that getting the right support at the right time makes a difference in people's lives. It helps to reduce distress, which then expedites their recovery significantly. Most importantly, the support comes from peers with similar experiences of mental health challenges, distress, and recovery. They are skilled and knowledgeable about the best services available. They understand the challenges associated with being discharged from mental health wards, are trained in mental health first aid, and provide moral support without judgment.



*"I found it very helpful how quickly MIFWA organised to come to my house after ED visit. I really appreciated the immediate help and support."*

## ED to Home Program



From 2017 to mid-2021,  
ED to Home supported **371 people**

2021 saw the culmination of MIFWA's ED to Home program, a peer-led outreach program that supported 371 people across St John of God and Midland Public Hospital Emergency Departments from 2017 to mid-2021. These were people who had presented to emergency departments in an extreme state of mental health distress yet were being deemed 'not unwell enough' to be admitted to the mental health wards.

A MIFWA peer support worker offered practical support to people on referral from the emergency department through an individualised person-centred recovery pathway as part of the program. This support ensured a smooth transition from the emergency department to home, their daily life, and its myriad of demands. ED to Home provided people with a sense of safety and support while connecting them with the different health and

community services to increase their sense of inclusion and participation. They learned how to navigate the mental health services and got the support to work through the things that had led them to the emergency department and avoid returning to the emergency department.

Feedback received shows the positive impact ED to Home has had on people's lives. For example, the hospital involved in the program also reported how the program helped to reduce the number of recurring visits to the emergency department.

In July 2021, the ED to Home program transitioned to Ruah's Choices Program. Although the ending of this MIFWA program saddens us, we are also pleased that this form of support is still available to our community and that we have motivated others with our work.

## Supporting carers, families, and friends



We provided over **2,000 hours** of support to carers across WA

**900 individuals** registered for support with MIFWA's Carer Services

Supporting a loved one through mental health challenges can be a challenging and sometimes tiring, overwhelming and frustrating experience.

Many find the information and mental health system confusing, making it stressful when figuring out the best way to support their loved ones. That's where our Carer and Family Services can assist. We offer ongoing support to carers, families and friends of people living with mental health challenges. We support them to access peer family education easily, as well as information and referral services, one-on-one and group peer support, educational workshops, and social connections such as pamper days, the Carers Coffee Club, and carer retreats.

### Staying connected during COVID-19 lockdowns

Our Carer and Family Services evolved in 2020 when we took our family education programs online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This caused challenges for carers who preferred the in-person connections or could not participate online, however as soon as we went online, a new group of carers joined our programs for the first time. Carers who would have never participated in in-person sessions due to mental health challenges, social anxiety, the inability to travel or to leave their loved ones at home. Through this experience,

we learned there was great value in providing programs online, and we have been doing so, alongside face-to-face programs, ever since.

In August 2020, we introduced an Online Parent Support group to support parents in caring for young people with emerging mental health challenges. This initiative resulted from a carer peer worker at Fiona Stanley Hospital and the identified need for parents to receive support at such a crucial time.

### Peer workers who understand carers

We believe in our work and see that it changes other carers' lives every day. It's been a great year and a privilege to have this unique opportunity to support them. Our team of Carer and Family Services facilitators previously participated in the program before joining the team, which means we understand the recovery journey as we've been family carers. When we needed support in the past, we appreciated that other people gave up their evenings and weekends to help us. Now we want to do the same for other carers.





### **Carers supporting other carers**

The carers we support are time poor and, at times, don't have the freedom to access information and services on their own. So, during the year, we've helped them become more informed and get a better understanding of what was happening to themselves and their loved ones.

Feedback from carers indicated that they felt less alone since coming to MIFWA. They could talk to and learn from others who understood their situations and openly share their stories and their health journeys. They had finally found a platform where they felt comfortable talking about their frustrations with the mental health system, other family members not understanding their struggles, feeling isolated, tired, worn down and misunderstood, and not being recognised as carers.

Carers also had the opportunity to support each other through emotional support and share the strategies that had worked for them. Many expressed their worrying concern about preparing for a future for their loved ones as they age.

We hosted activities for carers, such as Anxiety Solutions, Growing Well, Sound Bath Meditation, and Daring Greatly Workshops across metro and regional locations. We also delivered two Mental Health First Aid courses specifically for those in a caring role, with carer peers presenting all workshops.

Our one-on-one coaching service for carers went beyond their caring roles. It involved asking them questions that helped develop awareness, enabling them to reflect on past experiences, and supporting them in taking appropriate actions to their situations. We also trained carer peer facilitators for the new Borderline Personality Disorder Carers Support Group.

### **Recognising and valuing the carers in our community**

One of our key roles is to raise awareness around carers during Carers Week. While we knew that the people already using our services knew that 'carer' was the word that described their roles, many others didn't realise they were also carers. MIFWA values carers in the community. We acknowledge the importance of what each carer does regardless of their age or the complexity of their role. We also do this because very few people would say thank you to carers.

During Carers Week 2020, we thanked carers for everything they were doing by hosting a free art therapy activity for them at The Hepburn Family Centre. Through the guidance of Paul Davis from Reflective Visions Counselling & Art Therapy, 30 individuals who identified as carers learned how to use a visual diary for personal reflection and creative expression.

### **Creating a carer-friendly workplace**

In the first half of 2021, MIFWA became WA's first mental health service provider to become an Accredited Carer Employer. As a carer-friendly workplace, MIFWA provides a flexible and supportive work environment to employees who identify as unpaid carers. We developed a support practice, carer-related policies, and a simple Information Sheet so carers can quickly locate information specific to their needs. We also introduced the role of Employee Carer Champions across our sites to provide peer support to employees who identify as carers.



*"I broke down in tears one day and called MIFWA after hearing about them from someone else who had a daughter with BPD. Sam was the first person I spoke to at MIFWA – and it was heartening to finally speak to someone who understood."*



## Kay's story

### ***Building a future for carers***

"When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Australia, I had an adult son living near Melbourne diagnosed with mental health issues. Besides communicating with his mental health team, I was at a loss, not knowing what to do and who to turn to.

This was compounded by my son living interstate in continual lockdowns and with a hard border control in place between Western Australia and Victoria. Consequently, I was stressed by worrying about how best to deal with the situation. In addition, my son's personal documents had been stolen, including his Australian Citizenship, and he had no photographic ID. This did not help matters and merely increased the stress for my son and me. My first thought was to locate a mental health support group in WA for guidance.

After an internet search, I contacted the MIFWA office and contacted Caroline, who also ran the North Metropolitan Carers Coffee Club mornings at Woodvale. This was my introduction to MIFWA, and I cannot speak highly enough of the support they have given me.

My initial one-on-one meeting with Caroline was an emotional experience as I poured my heart out to her and realised I wasn't coping. However, Caroline was empathetic, supportive and suggested attending a coffee morning to meet others caring for family members with mental health challenges. So I did and later attended regularly. Through these meetings and regular communication, I gained the confidence to advocate for my son, who was later placed onto the NDIS. After much research with Victorian organisations, I secured a support coordinator and plan manager. I also continued to research and seek further information on mental health issues using MIFWA's website and Caroline.

I later undertook the 12-week Building a Future Program run by MIFWA and facilitated by Robyn and Nadine. Both Robyn and Nadine have practical experience of having family members with mental health challenges. Consequently, both are knowledgeable about various mental health issues and speak with compassion and understanding from the heart. As a result, a great deal of trust developed between the facilitators and participants, and we were able to engage in discussions and be open with our experiences. I hope MIFWA will continue to run the Building a Future Program and that families supporting people who live with mental health issues will be enlightened by attending.

During the Building a Future Program, I briefly visited my son last May (when the border control eased between WA and Victoria) and put into practice all I had learnt, which was effective with both my son and his mental health team. My son's journey continues to be a work in progress. However, I'm hopeful he will return to WA, and I'll continue to advocate and assist him."

# A light at the end of the tunnel for parents



We supported **70** parents during 2020/21

MIFWA's Parent Peer Support Program is a peer-led home visiting program that provides support in the home or community for parents who identify as having a mental illness and have children under 18 residing with them.

We acknowledge that many of these parents are distressed, and often their children are their biggest concerns. They constantly worry about their parenting and themselves. We know this can get overlooked in a mental health system where there is often a lack of consideration that these individuals are parents.

Since launching in 2012, the program has supported parents to achieve their goals. From helping parents gain a sense of belonging and feel accepted despite the difficulties faced, supporting them to keep their relationships strong, and providing them with a safe space to share their experiences and help others.

Last year, we supported more than 70 parents who came to us through self-referral, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, carers, psychologists, schools, mental health clinics, and agencies that don't provide in-home support.

## **Support from others who 'get it'**

Our team of peer workers have first-hand experience in facing and overcoming mental health challenges. This makes the program unique, as our peer workers 'get it' having lived through similar challenges and experiences. In doing so, they have gained tools, knowledge and strategies that could be helpful for the parents.

Team training is always a priority to ensure that our peer support workers remain trauma-informed.

With our current team members all starting together this year, we offer additional knowledge of self-care, empowerment, and mindfulness, helping our new peers look after themselves.

## **A parent's wellbeing makes the family stronger**

Our team of peer workers adopt a strength-based 'whole of family' approach, supporting each parent in a way that aligns uniquely with them and their family. By looking at what the parent used to do and can no longer do, peer workers support them in setting and achieving their goals, building resilience, and developing coping strategies that can positively affect themselves and their children. This approach is beneficial as the parent's wellbeing is essential in the family's ability to cope and become stronger. For example, MIFWA peers have supported parents with practical tasks such as budgeting, connecting them with services, and helping them to secure and maintain accommodation during the ongoing housing crisis.

The hard work by parents improves their mental health, confidence and self-esteem. In addition, many tell us they have improved their parenting skills and learned new coping strategies and ways to approach or improve their situations, including strengthening relationships with their families and friends. This helps parents to develop the confidence to connect with their communities and get involved and their children.

## Taking our supports to you

Often, anxiety is a significant factor keeping anyone living with mental health challenges from leaving home or asking for help. Parents find it easier to commit to appointments by receiving support in their homes and feel more at ease in their environments. Our weekly visits have made us a mainstay where other support services are time limited.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, peer workers were there to receive critical phone calls from parents who were struggling or who needed to talk to someone who understood and supported them without judgement. We also experienced a considerable increase in demand from parents who had not been with us before and faced

various challenges. Our team did as much as they could over the phones and online, and once the lockdowns were over, ensured they met them face to face.

## Partnering to support parents in the community

We partnered with CLAN Midland on their Baby FAST® program for young parents with children 0-3 and their parents throughout the year, and Midvale Hub Parenting on their Circle of Security Parenting workshop. We assisted workshop facilitators by supporting participants who needed to talk to someone during the day. These partnerships are invaluable in the work we do and often result in referrals to the program.



*“I am now much happier after three months with your support. I can now see the light at the end of the tunnel.”*

– **Participant**, Parent Peer Support Program



# Supporting young people where they are



**137 young people supported**

The Early Intervention Recovery Program (EIRP) plays a vital role in supporting young people aged 16 to 30 across the Perth Metropolitan area who have emerging mental health challenges or are within two years of receiving a diagnosis.

The psychosocial model guiding the EIRP minimises the long-term impact of mental health challenges on young people in areas such as education, employment, and engagement in the community. It also allows us to give them the guidance and tools they need to achieve their recovery goals.

Using a holistic approach, we involve anyone the young people wanted to invite into their plans, including their relatives and friends, MIFWA peers and social workers, their clinicians, and any other external professionals supporting them in their recovery. This approach ensures they receive a combination of support that complements each other.

## **The benefits of an outreach program**

In some areas, the EIRP is one of only a handful of programs assisting the cohort of at-risk youth who continually fall through the gaps in the system. The EIRP is also different from the other youth services in that we are an outreach program – young people don't have to travel. We know that in-reach programs can impact participation from those who are reluctant to go to agencies.

We strongly believe that everyone at some point needs to rely on other people – it's now your turn, and that is okay. Through the EIRP, our peer workers have helped young people extend their knowledge and abilities and develop an understanding that they can achieve whatever they want.

Young people have praised the EIRP for assisting them in building their self-confidence early, which has allowed them to re-establish and maintain their social, educational, and professional networks. They set their own goals, and then peers with similar lived experiences gave them ongoing guidance and support to achieve these goals. Some set goals to improve their family dynamics and friendships and to feel comfortable leaving the house. In the process, they developed new coping skills that made them feel a part of their community.

We saw young people who had not left the house in two years finally engaging in groups and open to meeting new people. Some who had displayed anxiety at the beginning had become quite comfortable being there. The 'small' steps could be as simple as getting up in the morning, getting dressed, or picking up the phone to call a friend rather than waiting for their friend to call them. These may not seem like 'huge' achievements to others, but they are huge to these young people. Many of those outcomes may not be visible, so hearing their stories motivated our work.

We ask program participants which groups they would like to attend through MIFWA. Based upon the feedback and responses, EIRP staff arranged and facilitated these activities, including art, learning to drive (theory), hiking groups, art museum tours and mini-golf. Group activities allowed them to share their experiences with others who were facing similar challenges. They also increased their social skills as they became more comfortable talking to others.



*“I love my support worker. She has changed my life already in what we have done. She is considerate about me and my gender identity and anything she doesn’t know about my gender identity she is curious about and super open to learn and takes it on board.”*  
– Young participant

EIRP staff identified a gap in groups where the young people could not attend due to employment or educational commitments. To address this gap, EIRP commenced running three-monthly Friday night groups, which have included a games night and quiz night.

### **Increased referrals due to COVID-19**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIRP experienced an influx of referrals. As a result, we successfully diverted resources to expand the program to accept and activate as many referrals as possible. We also saw a different category of cohort come through during this time.

Lockdowns presented our team with the opportunity to review our processes and brainstorm new strategies. We asked young people how we could best work to support their outcomes and get other young people involved in the program. And quickly modified how we contacted young people: we moved our one-on-one and group meetings online to keep participants engaged when face-to-face contact was not possible.

We created new self-care activities that we safely delivered to our participants’ homes to help them work on their goals, and we regularly checked in on them over the phone or through text messaging. Overall, this was our most significant area of growth. Once the restrictions were relaxed, we continued to offer online support as an option.

During the year, the EIRP helped families, including those who had never faced mental health challenges before and weren’t sure what to do. Early intervention education gave them a greater understanding of mental health issues to support the young people in their lives. Where needed, we linked families to our carers at MIFWA and other providers who provide additional support.

As we have young people coming to us with different challenges, our team continues to pursue professional development to learn about these issues and how to support them, and which agencies to refer them to for additional support. It’s a great feeling seeing the smiles on their faces when they tell us how we’ve helped them achieve and how far they have come in their recovery journeys.

# Lorikeet Centre



Lorikeet Centre has **200** members



*"It opened up my world, after very long periods of being unwell."*  
– Lorikeet Centre member

Lorikeet Centre, our member-driven community centre located in West Leederville, has supported people living with mental illness for more than 27 years.

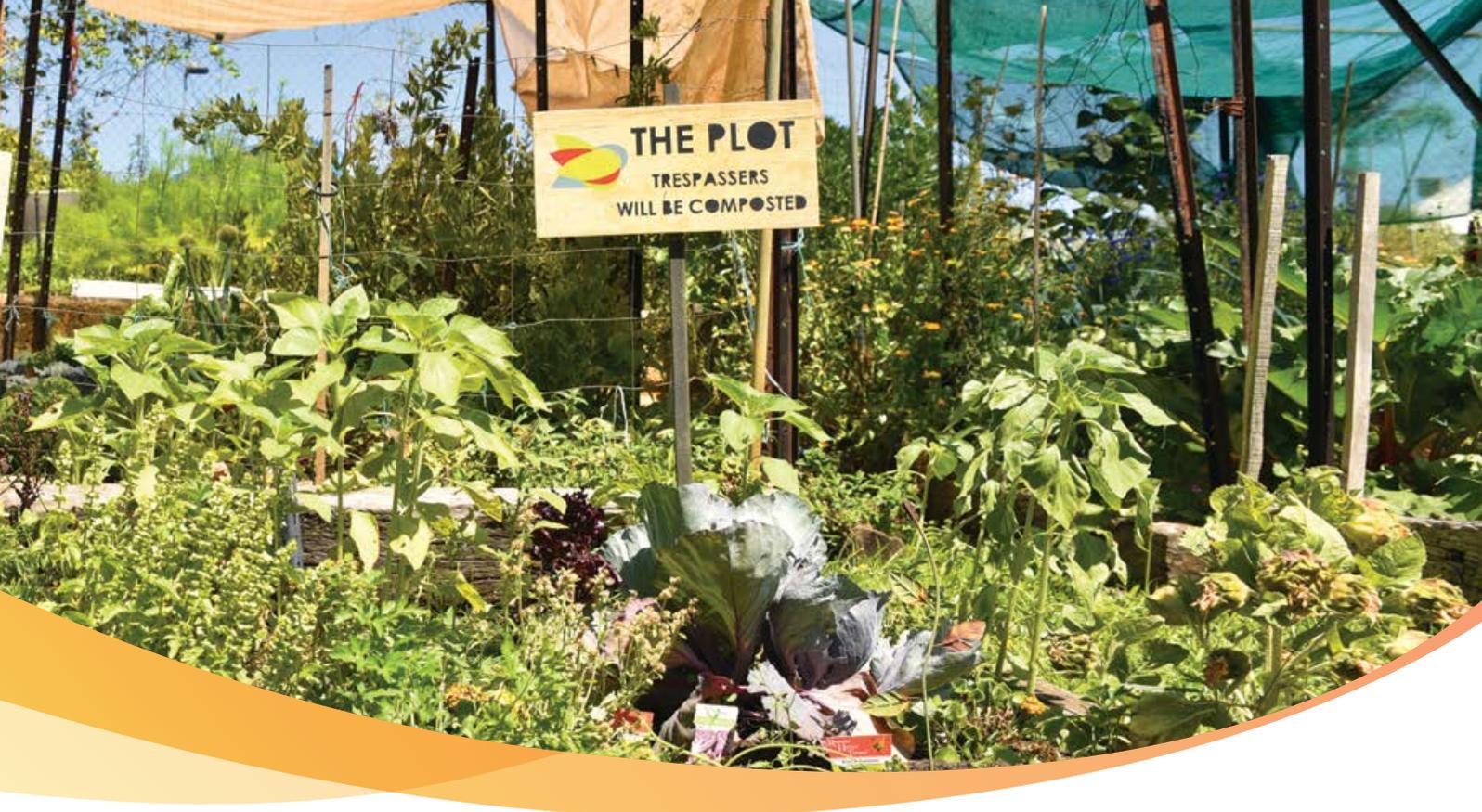
Underpinned by the importance of peer relationships, a small team of staff, volunteers and students work alongside members to provide practical support and connect people to other services or inclusive opportunities. We assist members in accessing accommodation, primary health, employment, training, and education and manage any challenges such as tenancy issues. There's also a commercial kitchen onsite where members assist in preparing nutritious lunches. We receive a donation of food from OzHarvest WA each week, which we use for our meals each day, and members also get to take some home.

Throughout the week, between 60-80 people attend the centre to contribute, connect, participate, share, and sometimes be. Members suggest the activities, which our team then facilitates, such as art therapy, walking groups, Spanish groups, and self-esteem and other wellbeing groups, all of which help with members' recovery and confidence. We often collaborate with other organisations to provide these activities, such as Neami, Consumers of Mental Health WA, UnitingCare, Peer Sport, Pharmacy 777,

Hepatitis WA, and Asthma WA. If members become more confident and want to try new things, they can support an existing group or start their own.

If the COVID-19 pandemic reminded us of anything, it was how critical social connection is for mental wellbeing. It also changed how many of us perceived social connection when combined with physical distancing. COVID-19 significantly impacted Lorikeet Centre over 2020 and 2021, with several forced closures due to physical distancing restrictions. Staff and members took creative approaches to connection and support, including meal preparation and deliveries, phone check-ins, deliveries of care packages, as well as activities to support people at home (the daily nine-letter word puzzle via text and phone was a hit).

Once the lockdowns ended, there was an influx of referrals, partly due to several day centres across Perth shutting down. We were at capacity, and the demand for our peer-led support kept growing. As always, we gave members or potential members information regarding other community groups and opportunities to pursue, while maintaining a waitlist.



## The impact of being a member of Lorikeet Centre

We recently talked with members about the impact being a member of Lorikeet Centre has had on them, and here is what they told us:

*"A sense of belonging, learning new skills, being appreciated for what I have and understanding more about mental illness."*

*"A healthy learning environment."*

*"Gives me a reason to get up in the morning."*

*"Helpful staff."*

*"It's given me a home so I can be happy and well."*

*"It saved my life."*

*"Being able to volunteer at Lorikeet gives my life meaning."*

*"Non-judgmental."*

*"I felt included in the community and society."*

*"Friendships."*

Members tell us that they have learned more about mental illness, improved their daily routines, and developed new skills, which have helped some gain more confidence to get back into the community. In addition, our team enjoys seeing our members' lives change over time and the positive things as they progress on their recovery journey.



## Rod's story

*“The Lorikeet Centre has given me hope.”*

“I’ve been coming to Lorikeet Centre for two and a half years. Hasn't it gone quick! It all started after my therapist recommended it to me. When I first came here, I was all over the place, didn't have any hope, and I was going nowhere.

My life before was different. It was out of control. I wasn't doing much. I was staying home all the time and getting depressed. Lorikeet Centre, well, it gives you something to do for a start, but it does more than that. I'm learning so much more about keeping myself well, and it helps connect me with other people who have mental health problems. You can talk to people who are on the same level as you. There's no judgment or anything like that.

Today I'm a lot better, thanks to the staff, volunteers, and people at Lorikeet. The Lorikeet Centre has given me hope and taught me about recovery, resilience, gratitude, and patience, which have helped me get better. The self-esteem and wellness workshops on Tuesdays are good. I get a lot out of them, they help keep me well, and I like to go on outings on Fridays. It fills the week. We also do art therapy, which is very therapeutic.

Everyone's got their own story and, it's good to get to talk to people and get to know them. There are a lot of people here for different reasons who have similar interests. I've got one friend who comes in regularly and, we're very similar. We're good friends. Jason and I go out for coffee once a month. Ken and Margaret both have similar interests to me around spirituality, and then there's Bonnie, who arranges lots of activities outside of the Centre through Befriend. Bonnie is always planning activities you can go to that are lots of fun and very inclusive.

Since coming here, I'm so much more stable, and I don't have as many ups and downs. I did have one episode at the start of last year, but I had people here I could talk to and who helped me through. It's important to keep as many connections as you can, connecting with people, connecting with nature, and connecting with the things you do. Connection is key to everything else. My hope for the future is to continue to stay balanced, keep learning and keep working on my recovery. I want to do more activities and set achievable goals.”



## Empowering communities with mental health training



- Over **650 hours** of mental health training via our public training program in the Perth metro
- Over **195 hours** of training and development were provided to staff

MIFWA maintains its reputation as a leading training provider in the mental health sector in WA. During this past year, we delivered training to upskill and strengthen our workforce. We also continued to nurture our strong relationships with individual collaborators such as Valued Lives, Status Employment and Edge Employment.

Over the year, our training team delivered a rich program designed to empower people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to look after their mental health and the mental health of those they support. We tailored workshops to specific groups such as people with mental health challenges and their carers, relatives, and friends. We offered a suite of these workshops at no cost to attendees or a heavily discounted rate due to our commitment to making education a part of giving back to the community. Our Standard Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid courses were our most popular courses across all regions.

### Training the best recovery workers

Our internal training program includes compulsory training for new and existing employees. This training supports everyone in increasing their knowledge of the different mental health challenges people face, identifying distressing and suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and having a conversation with the people they support and the best ways to support them. Even though we are leaders in mental health training, we always encourage employees to attend external training. We are big believers that our employees can learn a lot from others and keep abreast of what is there.



*“Our partnership with MIFWA saw over 120 operational personnel trained in Mental Health First Aid. The training delivery was first class, professional and facilitated by industry experienced trainers. The courses have been highly beneficial, and positive feedback from our patients and staff is a testimony of this. We genuinely have set a new standard for our industry. By continuing to provide our frontline personnel with the knowledge and skills to confidently and effectively attend to and manage a person with a mental health issue or crisis, we are ensuring everyone has the same level of access to high-quality care while breaking down barriers and removing stigma at the same time.”*

*– Samuel Fehlauer, Emergency Services Officer, BHP Mining Area C & South Flank*

## **Preparing as many caring people as possible**

Carers do it tough, and they have told us that having knowledge, skills and confidence help build better relationships between family members and friends. We also know how important it is to carers, relatives, and friends to develop empathy and empower them with the skills and knowledge of the struggles the person in their care is going through. Through our training, carers learn to view respite like the oxygen mask in an aeroplane – if you don't look after yourself, it will be hard to look after someone else. They also learn to recognise signs that they may be struggling and what they could do to make themselves strong again.

## **Supporting the private sector**

One of our priorities for the year was finding ways to influence for-profit companies to make mental health first aid training a priority for their employees. We successfully reached a handful of employers who agreed that giving employees the ability to look after their mental health and look after their colleagues were invaluable and would make their companies stronger. BHP collaborated with us to provide two-day Mental Health First Aid training for their frontline

medics, which was an excellent outcome given that their medics are often the first point of contact for many employees. We hope to influence other companies into providing mental health training for their employees.

## **Using digital channels to reach more people**

Our newsletters, website, Eventbrite, and social media pages have been invaluable in helping us reach more people who were searching for training. With the help of our Impact and Engagement team, our training team quickly became more tech-savvy, and the online reach for our training events grew drastically. In addition, thanks to our relatives and friends helping us share our training events on social media, we contributed more within our sector.

## **Praises from the community**

Attendees tell us that our training courses and trainers are highly regarded. We're also proud we have surrounded ourselves with external trainers who are as passionate as we are about the work we do. The combination of expertise continues to be the foundation of why our training program remains so strong and so positively regarded in the community.

We look forward to another year full of positivity.

## Partnering to strengthen mental health in regional communities



**166 total people:**

**63 adults, 103 young people aged 12 to 18**

**100.5 total hours of training and workshops delivered**

In 2020, MIFWA partnered with CBH Group, Lifeline WA, Youth Focus and Black Dog Institute in a three-year CBH Regional Mental Health Program to support the mental health and wellbeing of people living in regional grain-growing communities across WA.

As part of the program, MIFWA provides a variety of mental health and suicide prevention training and workshops for young people aged 13 to 19 and the whole community.

In the program's first year, regional organisations, groups, individuals, and schools inundated us with requests. This demonstrated the increasing mental health challenges experienced by those living and working in regional communities, the need for mental health services and support at a local level, and increased awareness and the willingness to talk about mental health.

At every step of the way, communities guide us in what they want and need. So rather than pushing a solution on them, we work with them – and in conjunction with local organisations and Mental Health and Suicide Prevention teams – to tailor our training and workshops to each community.

Over the 2021-2022 period, we will continue to work with communities and partners to build on the groundswell from the program's first year.



*"I couldn't recommend this higher for anyone wanting to increase their knowledge of mental health in youth or increase their awareness of signs and symptoms. If you have the opportunity to do this accreditation, grab it. The more awareness there is out there, the more young lives could be saved."*

*– Attendee, Youth Mental Health First Aid*

We will do this by expanding our Custom Mental Health Workshops for Teens, revisiting some towns and schools to continue with our holistic approach, and offering online training to expand our reach to people in other areas of WA.



## Empowering young people in grain-growing communities

We actively engaged several schools and groups throughout the Wheatbelt area in developing our new customised mental health and resilience workshop for young people aged 12 to 19.

Sixty-five young people were involved in piloting our workshops, which aim to reduce stigma about mental illness and distress, increase empathy and understanding, and improve young people's resilience when their friends and classmates are experiencing a challenging time.

A vital component of the workshop is working with young people to explore what is helpful and what isn't when they are feeling stressed or experiencing difficult emotions. So we asked them the following to gain their insights:

*“Think of some times when you have shared something with someone who was deeply personal. What responses did you find unhelpful, and what did you find helpful?”*

*“This exercise provided young people with a voice and an opportunity to discern what advice and responses were helpful.”*

### Helpful VS Unhelpful



#### Helpful

1. Ask questions like “how can I help?”
2. Words of encouragement
3. I'll listen when you're ready to talk about it
4. Having a shoulder to cry on
5. Silence with a hug
6. I'm proud of you, son
7. Asking comforting questions such as “are you okay?” and “do you need help.”
8. I am here for you, doll!
9. Listen to music or watch a movie
10. I understand
11. Receiving resource information for professional help or numbers, you can call such as Lifeline
12. I love you



#### Unhelpful

1. Not taking it seriously
2. When they talk down to you
3. Unapproachable body language
4. Comparing the importance of issues – “not as bad as my problems.”
5. When they laugh at you
6. Not giving their full attention
7. Spreading the information you had told the person
8. Shaming and teasing
9. Not listening or responding
10. Being told that someone is “too busy” to listen
11. When they treat you like a baby
12. Hearing comments such as “stop crying”, “grow up” or “it's just your hormones.”



*“Something I’ve learned through my recovery is that recovery doesn’t happen in a silo. Connectedness is recognised as a key process in mental health recovery.”*

*– Hayley Harris, MIFWA Trainer*

## The importance of community - Hayley's reflection

If you’ve driven from the city into the country, you will know the familiar feeling of community as you get further away from the city. But where does that feeling come from? Is it the yellow of the canola fields? Is it the increase in the density of the trees? Is it the fresh air?

No, it’s the little wave you get as you drive past another car. It is the “g’day” you get as you walk through town. But, regional WA has the most important resource anyone could ever wish for. Community. The key is reaching that rich community and providing the skills for each community member so that adults and young people no longer feel the pain of reaching out for help and hearing “I don’t have time” or “it’s not that bad”. Instead, they will hear, “I’m here for you, tell me what’s been happening” and “that sounds incredibly overwhelming – I want to support you”.

Through conversations and observations, something that stands out is that the smallest communities with the strongest culture have solid mental health initiatives and high turnout rates to mental health training. These communities tell me, “if people need us, we’ll be there, and we all chip in. This town shows up for people”.

This can’t be said of all regional communities, however. From what I’ve observed and from conversations I’ve had with people over the last year, there is a different vibe in larger regional towns and cities, particularly in the transient cities. In these communities, I have noticed lower community engagement, higher statistics of suicide, and possibly some compassion fatigue related to frequent suicides in the town.

We have a long road ahead of us, but I am heartened by how people, partners and community organisations are pulling together to make a difference.

## Building a strong team and culture



**173** staff at the end of June 2021 –  
69 part time, 36 full time,  
82 casuals

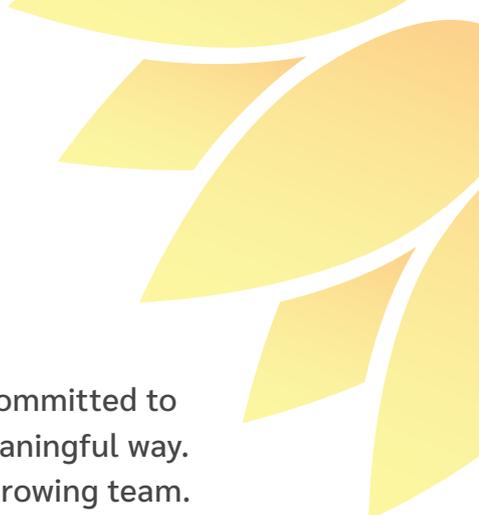


**68%** make up  
the NDIS team



**Over 195** hours  
of training provided  
to staff





Our team of 173 passionate, dedicated, hard-working people are committed to working alongside people facing mental health challenges in a meaningful way. In 2020-21, we were thrilled to welcome 85 people to our rapidly growing team.

### **The challenges of working in the NDIS**

The NDIS is a complex environment for our workforce, and we continue to grapple with how to be a great employer in this challenging NDIS environment. Nonetheless, we work with our team, supporting each person to thrive at work despite the constraints of the NDIS.

Over 50% of our workforce identify as having a lived experience of some kind related to mental health challenges. Therefore, we are focused on providing our team with the supports they need to do their jobs well, training and development to help them thrive in what they do, and career opportunities.

Over the year, our management team supported staff on their career paths as they pursued their dream careers within MIFWA. We also offered mentoring and coaching for staff, leadership training to our leadership and management teams, and further training to help our team stay up to date with the ever-changing requirements in an NDIS environment. And by improving our induction process, we've ensured our employees quickly learn that they need to reflect MIFWA's values and apply what they learn when supporting people with mental health challenges and their families.



Maintaining our culture and supporting our people is important to us. Our high retention rate and average monthly staff happiness score which has remained steady at 7.9 out of 10 even with the impacts of the NDIS and COVID-19 disruptions, reflect this.

A thematic analysis of feedback received over the year reveals the top three positives of working at MIFWA:

1. MIFWA has a great work culture
2. Staff feel supported by managers and colleagues
3. Staff have a sense that they are doing meaningful work

**Our Annual Employee Feedback Survey results reflect this. For example, when asked which words people would use to describe working at MIFWA:**



*“I have been so surprised about how smooth and efficient MIFWA’s operations have been since I joined the team. There are very good internal processes and support from management, making it easier to concentrate on delivering top-quality services for our clients. Since working with MIFWA, my mental and physical health and outlook on life has significantly improved! I have never been as happy as I am now and working with MIFWA has played a huge part of this in my life!”*  
– Rahul Seth, Community Mental Health Worker



## The Glenn Pickett Sunflower Awards recognising MIFWA's gentle leaders

In 2020, MIFWA established the Glenn Pickett Sunflower Awards to celebrate individuals who demonstrate gentle leadership qualities and embody the MIFWA values of accountability, integrity, inclusion and acceptance, collaboration, and empowerment.

Glenn Pickett was a longstanding supporter and member of the Lorikeet Centre and served as a Board member for many years. A passionate advocate for MIFWA and the development of new service approaches, Glenn had a gentle way about him, a way of putting people at ease, and was always willing to pitch in and assist. He helped in many areas at the Lorikeet Centre, although nurturing the Centre's plot at the local Community Garden was what he loved most.

Glenn passed away in 2019 following a short illness, and his loss was deeply felt by many across the MIFWA community. Our aim for this Award was to honour him, ensure his legacy lived on, and demonstrate what he meant to us all.



With two awards categories – a Lorikeet member and a MIFWA staff member – the awards were presented by Glenn's sister, Kerry, at MIFWA's 2020 AGM in front of a room of friendly faces and supporters. Angel, a Lorikeet Centre member, was recognised as a helping and friendly person who provides others with good advice to help them solve their problems. Claudia, a team member at Lorikeet Centre, demonstrated gentle leadership qualities through being a positive role model.

## Our leadership team

**Monique Williamson** – Chief Executive Officer

**Dawn Walton** – Business Development Manager

**Bev Bolton** – Finance Manager

**Samantha Scott** – Manager, Carer Services

**Joyce Vidot** – Training Manager & Volunteers & Students

**Steve Sandhu** – Manager, Hospital to Home, ED to Home, Opening Doors

**Sharon Puren** – Area Manager, East

**Judith Sherry** – Area Manager, South

**Margie Gardiner** – Area Manager, North

**Janine Ripper** – Impact, Engagement & Communications Manager

**Kellie McGhie** – Program Manager, Youth

**Naomi Bowran** – People & Learning Advisor

## Our supporters



**49 donors**

**\$26,471 total donations**

Our community of passionate supporters, fundraisers, and partners continually inspire us. Their generous support enables us to continue supporting people with a lived experience of mental illness, their families, and carers across Western Australia.



*“My TAFE lecturer assigned me to Lorikeet based on my performance at TAFE and my communication skills. I am so glad she did, as I hadn’t heard of Lorikeet before, and it’s such an open, safe, inclusive social centre that welcomes all. I feel very lucky I was placed there.” – Student*



**Volunteers are invaluable to making our organisation and community a better place, and we would like to thank those who helped us throughout the year, including:**

Tewen Abraham, Ken Abrahams, Kirstyn Boden, David Campbell, Emma Campbell, Jan Davis, Ron Deng, Margaret Emmelhainz, Marisha Gerovich, Stephen Giles, Tania Harrison, Sara Horvat, Margaret Jones, Abigail Laver, Allannah McKnight, Carlos Monterrosa, Tracy Robinson, Grace Stajkowski, Vivien Steketee, Cathy Stokes, Rafayet Suchi, Jodi Sutherland, Pauline Thermarajai, Ross Synnott and Jie Yi Tang.

### Volunteering with MIFWA

MIFWA was built and continues to thrive on the goodwill of people who give back. People who volunteer with MIFWA do so for several reasons: to give back to the community, to maintain expertise, to gain the practical experience they couldn’t gain from a classroom, and to make a difference. Regardless of their why, our volunteers share our vision to realise the potential of all Western Australians to recover from mental illness, to maintain mental health, and to live a meaningful life in their community.

Volunteers assist MIFWA in various ways.

From facilitating and helping with art therapy activities, volunteering at Lorikeet Centre and in the community garden, supporting people during student placements, attending community events on behalf of MIFWA, general admin, and being there for someone when they need to talk.

Students also play a big part in the MIFWA story. Each year, students undertake placements at Lorikeet Centre and in programs like Hospital to Home, gaining an insight into what it looks like to support someone living with mental health challenges or caring for someone who does.

Many go on to join MIFWA as an employee after completing their studies. As one of the leaders in employee training in the mental health sector, we are honoured to support students to become the best in their chosen field.

## Fundraising

In 2020-21, MIFWA received over \$26,471 in donations.

Thank you to the following donors who have supported us through donations that have helped to enrich the lives of the people we support:

Ann and George White, Jeremy James, Joyce Douet, Denise Bayliss, Ellen MacKenzie, Geoff Spencer, Jane Davies, Anthony Zorbas, Kate Bradley, Containers for Change, David Riddell, Margaret Speed, Lindsay Finkel, Luisa Pirone, Maria Ravlich, Marian Riddell, Maureen Payne, Pamela Lee, Patricia Hargreaves, Roseanna Ingham, Delys Meyer, Stuart Lynch, Monique Williamson and the My Cause Gift Fund.

Additionally, we saw an increase in donations through the PayPal Giving Fund, specifically Facebook birthday fundraisers. With 100% of donations made to PayPal Giving Fund going directly to the chosen charity, this new fundraising channel was embraced by the MIFWA community, with \$3,098 raised by everyday fundraisers.

MIFWA was also the beneficiary of an \$18,000 donation from the CBH Group Harvest Mass Management Scheme (HMMS). Developed by the CBH Group and Main Roads WA, the HMMS seeks



*“Thanks a million for your empathy and compassion and the enormous gift of this workshop. Very enlightening for me with a lot to take away and unpack.” – Daring Greatly workshop attendee, Northam*

to reduce the frequency of overloaded grain trucks during harvest. Under the HMMS, growers can forfeit grain from overloaded trucks, with funds from the sale of this grain provided to Western Australian charities nominated by growers and CBH employees. This donation helped us meet the demand for mental health and suicide prevention training from regional grain growing communities across WA. We were also able to host a free two-day Daring Greatly workshop in Northam for 17 carers, families and friends of people living with mental health challenges.

And thanks to generous donations from the CBH Group HMMS and WAAMH, MIFWA and Reflective Visions Counselling & Art Therapy facilitated a series of free art therapy workshops in Northam to assist people in using the power of art to promote mental health and wellbeing. The Creative Resilience workshop series was incredibly popular, with 63 people attending four workshops from November 2020 to June 2021 and four more workshops planned, including two art journaling workshops for young people living in Northam.



## Promoting awareness and celebrating community

MIFWA receives funds from the Mental Health Commission of WA to promote wellbeing and a better understanding of mental ill-health and recovery. In 2020, we further diversified our events and critical messages that helped us reach more people who needed our support and services.

### Sector and community involvement

MIFWA was involved in awareness-raising and advocacy across the WA and national mental health sectors, including:

- Sponsoring the Lived Experience category of the 2020 WA Mental Health Awards.
- Being named one of five finalists in the Not for Profit / Charity of the Year category in the inaugural Business News RISE Business Awards.
- Attending and facilitating a mental health awareness session for 16 people at the Eastern Wheatbelt Education Network Conference.
- Addressing the TheMHS Conference to share the importance of peer support for mental health recovery for carers and individuals facing mental health challenges.
- Hosting a stall at the CaLD Jobs Expo in Mirrabooka (1,000 attendees) and engaging with job seekers and other service providers.

MIFWA and other MIFA members continued to collaborate on promoting mental health awareness. Together, we hosted Mi Networks ([www.minetworks.org.au](http://www.minetworks.org.au)), a dedicated information line and website where experienced mental health workers provide up-to-date and relevant information about mental health concerns and referrals to a broad range of services. This free and confidential service is available Australia-wide, Monday to Friday during business hours.



## Awareness-raising events

Our events make it easier to attract, educate, and support people seeking vital information and support to help them in their recovery or connect with the community.

### Mental Health Week 2020

MIFWA coordinated four free events over the week including a safeTALK workshop, Youth Mental Health First Aid training, an online Understanding Mental Health workshop and a Staff and Consumer BBQ in the park. Over 90 people attended over the week. Team members also attended the Regional Closing Ceremony Lived Experience High Tea in Narrogin hosted by WAAMH and hosted a stall and facilitated an art activity at the CoMWHHA Peer Power Day.

Additionally, we collaborated with MIFA and other national partners to design and promote a digital media marketing campaign aligned to the 2020 global theme of 'Mental Health for All. Great Investment – Greater Access. Everyone, everywhere'. The campaign raised awareness in an empathetic way, with a unifying voice, to help people feel hopeful, empowered, and ready to take action to create lasting change.

### Schizophrenia Awareness Week 2021

The 2021 Schizophrenia Awareness Week (SAW2021) campaign, with the theme 'Stay Connected', aimed to give adequate support during the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage people to stay connected for their mental health and wellbeing and reach out for supports if needed. We coordinated four free events including an online CHIME workshop, a two day Daring Greatly workshop in Northam, and free Mental Health First Aid training.

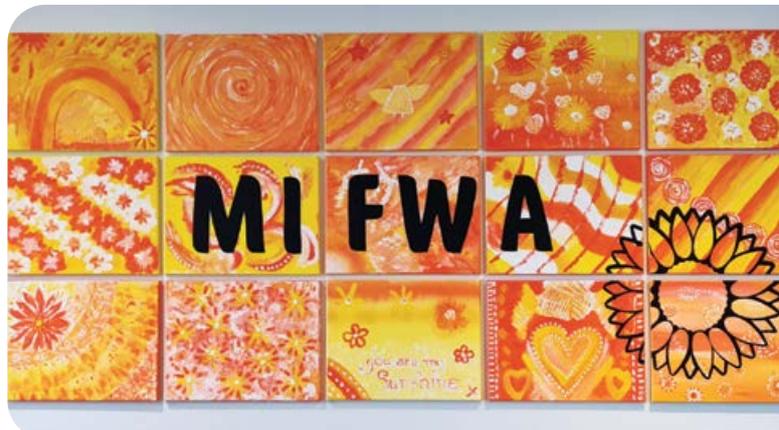
Our annual Community event was the highlight of the week, with a guided collaborative art therapy activity. Attendees painted 15 canvases to form the beautiful artwork that now hangs in our foyer at MIFWA Midland.



Mental Health First Aid training, Tambellup



Gianni and Monique, Schizophrenia Awareness Week





*“Thank you very much, it is nice to have something to work towards and to look forward to this respite.” – Sharyne, grant recipient*

And for Children’s Week 2020, which celebrated the right of children to enjoy childhood, MIFWA’s Parent Peer Family Support Project celebrated with a few strikes at Rosemount Bowl with the parents we support and their children.

### **Tecwyn Jones Bequest Grants Program**

Tecwyn Jones was a member of the Lorikeet Centre from its beginnings in 1994. A popular and generous member with a keen interest in people and travel, he was well informed regarding world events, enjoyed the friendship and support he received through the Lorikeet Centre and the Fellowship, and regarded all who attended as members of his family.

When Tecwyn passed away in 2004, he bequeathed a generous sum of money to MIFWA to be shared equally between Lorikeet Centre and MIFWA. In setting up the Tecwyn Jones Bequest Grants Program, we hoped to pay ongoing tribute to Tecwyn’s memory by providing an annual grants program that would benefit the consumers, carers and families who are members of MIFWA. Fifty percent of the yearly funds are allocated to Lorikeet and its members.

This year, we provided seven grants totalling \$4,000.00, which will go towards the purchase of health and fitness memberships, family respite, dental work, and practical items for the home.

Additionally, we collaborated with MIFA and our national partners on a digital media marketing campaign which reached 21,277 users MIFWA’s website and social media channels.

#### **Other awareness events**

MIFWA assisted the WA branch of the Australian BPD Foundation in promoting their Picnic by the River for people living with BPD, their families, friends, and carers. By sharing on our social channels, we helped the event reach a broader audience.

For Carers Week 2020, we hosted several events to thank and celebrate carers who help and support their family members and friends, including a Regional Carer Wellbeing Day in Northam, a free luncheon for staff who identify as carers in their personal lives, and a Carers Wellbeing Day in the metro area.

## Growing MIFWA's digital media footprint



**98,383** Website page views

**40,931** Website users

**834** MIFWA General eNewsletter subscribers

**192** Staff eNewsletter subscribers



**4,358** Social media followers

**219,485** Social media reach

**16,836** Social media engagement

**8** Media mentions across print & digital

In 2020-21, we increased our online presence by:

- Partnering with MIFA and our MiNetworks partners to run national awareness campaigns across social media
- Showcasing powerful stories from our staff, carers, and consumers through our website, eNewsletters and social media
- Hosting the online SANE Forums from our website, a popular online space for people with lived experience and their families and carers to engage and participate in discussions
- Revamping our members' print newsletter
- Launching our first public eNewsletter, which rapidly attracted 800+ subscribers

- Launching a staff eNewsletter, which has attracted 195 subscribers
- Producing several videos featuring our CEO and other team members.

These efforts increased awareness about mental illness and MIFWA, resulting in more enquiries from people wanting information about mental health and mental distress. We also saw an increase in registrations for our training courses, workshops, and events.

Growth continued across all networks, inclusive of the website, newsletters, and social media. The increasing reach and opportunities created via digital media help to ensure that MIFWA can reach and assist the people who need our support and services.

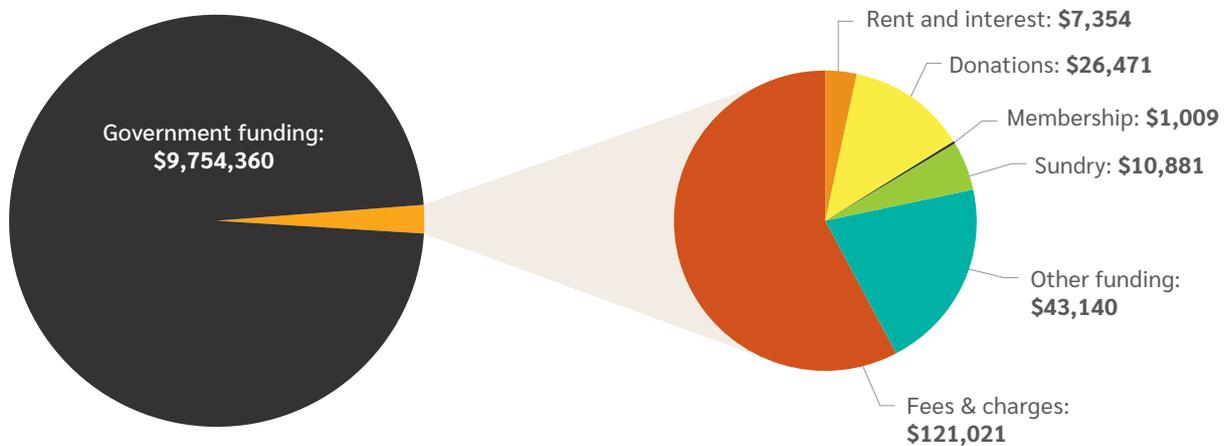
# Finance report

The following financial results reflect our growth throughout the year ending 30 June 2021.

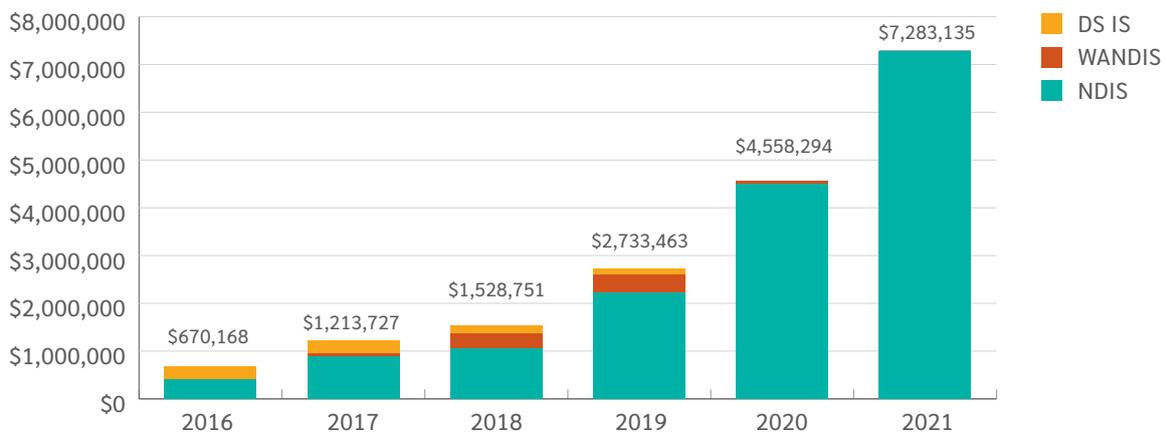
## Income

In 2020-21 our operating revenue was \$10 million, an increase of 26% from 2019-20, with NDIS services representing 74% of all funding.

### Income sources

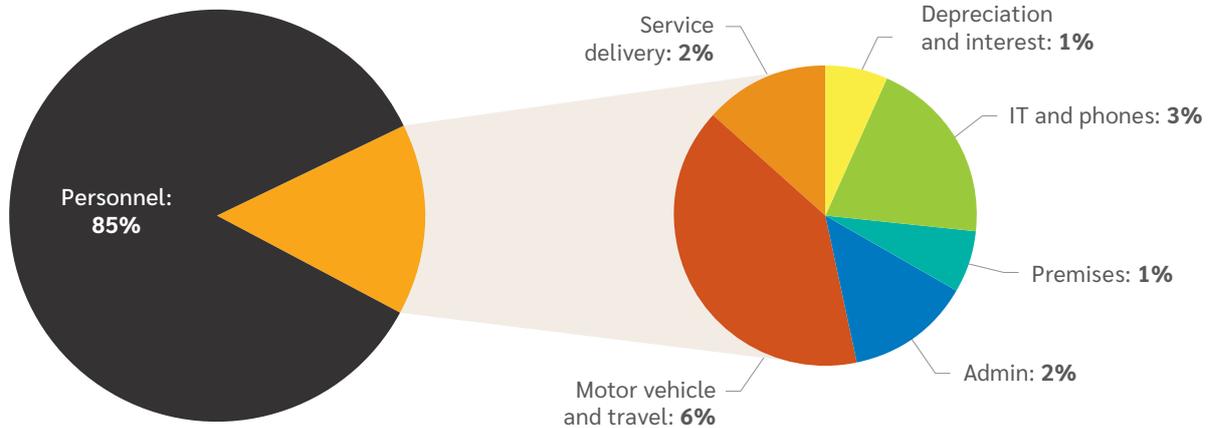


### Individualised services



This year, there was an operating deficit of \$55,216, which was 0.6% of operating revenue.

## Spending



## Financial position

	2021 \$	2019 \$
Property, plant and equipment	2,686,235	2,735,347
Cash and cash equivalents	2,761,302	2,741,715
Contract assets	449,111	421,653
Receivables	424,020	232,016
Right of use assets	145,662	34,643
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>6,466,330</b>	<b>6,165,374</b>
Contract liabilities & income in advance	1,507,404	1,269,540
Trade and other payables	958,097	701,767
Employee leave provisions	634,895	489,921
Borrowings	170,935	488,686
Lease liabilities	147,525	37,769
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>3,418,856</b>	<b>2,987,683</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>3,047,474</b>	<b>3,177,691</b>

This summarised financial information is only a summary intended to provide an overview of the financial statements and highlight matters of significance. This information is not intended to replace or modify the content of the audited Financial Statements. Please refer to our website, [mifwa.org.au](http://mifwa.org.au), for the complete audited financial statements.

## Partnerships

This year, we forged and strengthened meaningful partnerships to launch new initiatives and improve our ability to support our community together. We thank our partners for their invaluable contribution throughout 2020-21 and for working tremendously hard to help us achieve our goals.

Australian BPD Foundation  
Australian Council on Smoking and Health  
Armadale Hospital  
Armadale Mead Centre  
Befriend  
Bentley Hospital  
Black Swan Health  
BPD Australia  
Carer Gateway  
Carers WA  
Carnamah District High School  
CBH Group  
Centre for Accessibility Australia  
CLAN Midland  
ConnectGroups  
Consumers of Mental Health WA  
Dryandra Country Visitors Centre  
East Metro Community Mental Service  
Fiona Stanley Hospital

GROW WA  
Holyoake  
Ishar  
Kulin District High School  
Mental Health Commission of WA  
Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia  
Merredin Residential College  
Midvale Hub Parenting Service  
MiNetworks partners  
Mission Australia SHIFT  
Mukinbudin District High School  
Narembeen Community Resource Centre  
Narembeen District High School  
Neami National  
North Metro Community Mental Health  
OzHarvest WA  
Palmerston  
Reclink

Reflective Visions  
Counselling & Art Therapy  
Royal Perth Hospital  
The Hepburn Family Centre  
SANE Australia  
Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital  
St John of God Hospital  
Sista Fitness Midland  
Tambellup Community Resource Centre  
Vivian Paans  
Volunteering WA  
Wagin Community Resource Centre  
Wellways  
Western Australian Association for Mental Health  
Western Australia Primary Health Alliance  
Wheatbelt Mental Health  
Wheatbelt Postvention Group





**Mental Illness Fellowship of WA**

**MIFWA Head Office**  
Level 3, 9 The Avenue, Midland WA 6056

**Email:** [info@mifwa.org.au](mailto:info@mifwa.org.au)

**Phone:** (08) 9237 8900

**[mifwa.org.au](http://mifwa.org.au)**

