

# Annual Report 2021

Responsiveness, Flexibility and Innovation



The Junction Neighbourhood Centre Inc





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# Our Statement of Purpose, Vision and Values

## JNC Statement of Purpose

We believe that being socially connected improves people's wellbeing. We listen to our local communities and work with them to deliver critical services and opportunities for social connection.

## JNC Vision

To be a leading provider in South-Eastern Sydney of services that enhance the wellbeing and resilience of individuals and communities with the best quality services delivery.

## Our Values and Practices

VALUES	PRACTICES
Accountability and Professionalism	We are evidence based and outcomes focused We deliver quality client services with accountability for our work.
Social Justice	We work to enable fair and equitable access We take an holistic approach to well-being and focus on the whole person. We are person-centred and work with people to build individual resilience using enabling and strength based approaches.
Participation	We encourage people to participate and engage in community life so that they have a say and retain control over their lives.
Respect	We provide culturally appropriate, safe and accessible services where strengths, capabilities and diversity are acknowledged and valued. We strengthen our commitment to reconciliation.
Collaboration	We work with others to build community resilience and connectedness.
Courage	We are committed to our purpose and vision even in the face of adversity.

## Chairperson's Report

I'm pleased to present the Annual Report for The Junction Neighbourhood Centre.

This report provides an overview of how the team sustained the service and provided support to the community throughout the COVID -19 Pandemic. I commend Janet Green and the team for stepping up to the many challenges presented by a prolonged battle with the virus. In a constantly changing environment the team responded to each wave of restrictions with determination and innovation, ensuring vulnerable community members remained protected and supported. The team remained constant to the core values of the service, employing a flexible and sustainable approach to ensure the community remained connected and no one was left behind. This responsive approach ensured JNC met targets and delivered an exemplary service balancing the needs of community and the requirements set by the Public Health Orders. It's been an extraordinary journey. I'm proud to be part of a dynamic, thoughtful and hardworking team.



***Gillian Elliott***

## Message from CEO

This past year has been busy and exciting, as the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged the team at JNC look for new and different ways of connecting with community members and providing support services across Inner and Eastern Sydney. It has been difficult as we saw many clients and community members doing it very tough, due to isolation, financial challenges and increasing mental health issues.

Being responsive to the community during the pandemic required flexibility and innovation in the ways we provide our services and the ways we work. This was demanding for our dedicated staff who always kept the needs of clients and community members at the forefront and continued to provide our essential services during the lockdowns and different stages of the pandemic. It was challenging to have our centres closed when our core business is creating connections. It was challenging to learn different ways of providing services, including online. And it was challenging to open services up again, only to be faced by another outbreak and new restrictions within a few months. We worked in an environment of uncertainty and constantly changing restrictions.

We also worked in different ways with new work practices and different working arrangements, with some people doing some or all of their work from home, at times quite isolating. We also had staff providing essential face to face services on the frontline over the whole pandemic period, within a range of COVID safe practices.

For JNC there have been many lessons from the pandemic in 2020—21. We have learnt:





- that agility, flexibility and responsiveness are critical to providing essential community services during a pandemic.
- the value of innovation - that we can provide our services in new and different ways, taking many of our services online or over the phone.
- about new aspects of disadvantage in the communities we work with, including the impact of the digital divide, exacerbated as so many everyday services went online
- that we can work in different ways and connect as a team in different ways.

For this flexibility and responsiveness, I want to thank the amazing JNC team. I have reflected many times over the past two years that people working in community services have been among the unsung heroes of the pandemic. You have all always kept the community and our clients at the heart of what we do, and I thank you for all your hard work and passion. I also want to thank our volunteers. While not all our volunteer roles were able to continue, we had a very dedicated team of volunteers who supported us in new and different ways. As I have said many times “we couldn’t do it without you”. A key group of volunteers over this period was our Board who provided clear guidance and support in their governance role. I wish to thank each of you for your involvement in leading the vision of JNC and supporting our initiatives in the community.

Finally, I want to thank our funders and supporters for providing the resources that enable us to do this important work and keep JNC going each year.

Looking to the next year we will be building on the lessons for JNC from the pandemic period, and focusing on our new strategic plan, an opportunity to set key strategic directions for JNC that will take us to and beyond our 50th year.

**Janet Green**

## **Our Work:** **Responsiveness, flexibility and innovation to address social isolation**

The continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020 - 21 year required significant changes in how JNC services were delivered, continuing and expanding on the changes initiated at the beginning of the pandemic earlier in 2020. It was a constantly changing environment – responding to each wave, meeting the changing COVID-19 restrictions and planning and preparing recovery and new services, then heading into another lockdown. Flexibility, responsiveness, and innovation drove the development of new services and modification of others.

Responding to our Statement of Purpose relating to creating connections posed new challenges: how to engage with and support people who are socially

isolated during periods of lockdown. JNC has been committed to providing services in safe ways throughout the pandemic. Many of our services were essential services and we developed ways to provide these face-to-face in COVID safe ways. Responsiveness, flexibility, and innovation were constantly required to ensure that not only were essential services provided to meet the needs of clients and community members, but that they also complied with Public Health Orders and were COVID-safe for clients, staff and volunteers.



# Addressing social isolation while responding to community needs

## Food security

Food security continued to be an issue for many people in the local community, particularly for older clients who had no family or friends nearby who could assist with shopping. In addition, many community members reported either not feeling safe going out on public transport to shop or were affected by high food prices. We implemented two main food security strategies during this period:

- List shopping was provided to 326 Aged Services clients, offering personalised and contactless shopping delivery weekly or fortnightly. The list shops evolved into clicking and collecting not only groceries, but PJs, slippers, and household items.
- Fruit and vegetable delivery - in partnership with Randwick City Council, Viral Kindness and Harris Farm Markets Randwick, 800 fruit and vegetable bags were collected and delivered to community members in the Randwick and Waverley LGAs.
- The JNC also assisted in collecting food boxes for other services in the Randwick LGA, including Randwick Council and Kooloora. Demand for the service continued to increase with JNC collecting 100 boxes a day from Harris Farm. The JNC participated in this initiative for twenty-six weeks.

While addressing food security issues, these services also played a valuable role in maintaining face to face contact with clients, albeit just a brief meeting at the door where shopping or fruit and vegetable boxes were delivered.



Contents of food delivery box



Linker van packed and ready to deliver food boxes

## Food security continued

While providing the list shopping service to an Aged Services client who lives by herself, the worker noticed a pattern of the client purchasing the same list of food every week. There was no fruit or vegetables, only food high in sugar and fat. The support worker also noticed that the client was always paying with small change and seemed to be struggling financially. The service was extended to include a weekly food box which contained fruit and vegetables. She now buys the fruit and vegetables herself.

"I wanted to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the amazing generosity provided by JNC over the past few months in terms of providing Food Boxes, veggies and bread for my family on a weekly basis. I was absolutely delighted with the kindness, care and professionalism that the team demonstrated. She made the entire process seamless and highly efficient! This service was an absolute Godsend during these challenging times." "It is great what the JNC is doing. I pick up a few boxes for my neighbours who can't come down and collect them from you at the community room. They are so grateful, every little bit helps, particularly as fruit and veg is so expensive at the moment".

"We really appreciate the boxes and fruit and vegetables. It takes stress off the family, particularly as my shifts were cut. I am also able to bring a box to my elderly mother who we really don't want going down to the shops during the Covid outbreak".

## Supporting testing and vaccination pop ups

JNC supported local testing and influenza then COVID-19 vaccination strategies as another way of engaging with community members. Our Aged Services team took people to GPs and hubs to have their vaccinations. In our outreach work in social housing estates, we worked in partnership with Kirkton Road Centre and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD), supporting community members at the mobile COVID testing and flu vaccination clinics and later at the pop-up COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Both these initiatives were opportunities to talk with community members, distribute information and food boxes, and follow up issues community members raised with us. We were, at times, just a friendly face for a chat breaking the isolation of lockdown.

## Supporting people isolated at home or unable to access face to face services

Many of our clients were housebound at times during the pandemic, exacerbating social isolation. We used a range of print, online and phone strategies to address this and ensure people were also well informed:

- Throughout the year 2,551 friendly phone calls were made to over 400 Aged Services clients providing not only support and social interaction but the opportunity for a welfare check. Calls were as frequent, sometimes daily if a person was very isolated or less frequently as a quick check-in. The aged team focused on continuing connection with clients by calling them to check on their well-being, making sure they had everything they needed, and providing information from vaccine bookings to downloading Dine and Discover vouchers. The phone calls became a way of sharing the ups and downs of the lock-down together.
- Staff kept in touch with Casework clients and community members by phone and online platforms such as zoom, often supporting the clients to address complex issues, all by phone.
- In response to concern about the difficulties that some community members and clients had in accessing accurate information and the misinformation that was being circulated, JNC worked in partnership with South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) to distribute information relating to COVID and vaccinations including information in several community languages. The JNC Crisis Directory was also circulated.

## Supporting testing and vaccination pop ups continued

- To respond to requests for information on services from the community, we maintained an easy access and an updated crisis directory, kept up to date on a weekly basis and maintained on our website and distributed through food and other programs.

One client reported

*'the loneliness gets to you, this was like an answer to a prayer'*

and another reported that the worker who made the phone calls

*'is absolutely delightful. So easy to talk to.'*



Phone call volunteer

## Opening up between outbreaks

In the periods between lockdowns and COVID outbreaks we opened our centres and resumed face to face services, with a range of COVID safe measures in place.

- Our centres at Maroubra and Bondi Junction were open for reduced hours.
- Let's Get Digital proved to be very popular. Many local community members drew on the assistance of our volunteers to learn essential skills such as sharing photos, accessing important information and video calling.
- The JNC offered a JP Service to the public when our Maroubra Centre reopened. This was well attended on a weekly basis



Staff happy to be opening up after lock down



## Opening up between outbreaks *continued*

- Community members looked forward to our popular Heart Foundation Walking Group when lockdown restrictions eased. This initiative helped to build connection and improve health outcomes.
- We resumed our regular outreach services in South Coogee and Namatjira with a couple of important local events:
  - o In partnership with the RSPCA and Randwick Council, JNC ran a pet vaccination day at South Coogee Housing Estate. This event was attended by 81 local people who were given the opportunity to have their dogs and cats vaccinated free of charge.
  - o In May we ran a community event at Namatjira for National Reconciliation Week. Local Community Members did a Smoking Ceremony, and we enjoyed some bush tucker food, as well being a chance for people to catch up and reconnect with services.

Family Support and Domestic Violence Caseworkers continued to deliver services and adapt work practices to meet the needs of the clients while still ensuring that they were COVID safe. These included conducting meetings with clients online, friendly phone calls and modifying home visits to undertake safety planning. Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) supported 199 clients over the year. Many SHLV clients reported that home visits during the lockdown period were essential to them feeling safe and secure in their homes.

*“the boxes delivered from Home In A Box felt like Xmas, the items were so helpful & lovely.”*



Smoking Ceremony



Donation of Christmas gifts



Organizing playgroup



Walking Group

## Outcomes from case work

**Case Study 1** Caseworker advocated for DCJ Housing to house a client with three young children in temporary accommodation whilst maintenance and repairs were being carried out in the unit she had been transferred to. When the client moved SHLV undertook a safety audit, completed safety upgrades, and supported her to obtain essential household items. The client reported that she is doing well, the family have settled in and the children are enjoying their new school.

**Case Study 2** A single mum with her children had been couch surfing for 12 months. She had applied for DCJ Housing but then discovered her application had been closed. The JNC Family Support Worker assisted the client in reapplying to Housing and advocated strongly for the family to be given housing. JNC assisted the client to obtain furnishings and household items including weekly food boxes during COVID lockdown.

**Case Study 3** A single mother with 3 children had accepted a bond loan from DCJ Housing for a private rental property. She was relying on Centrelink payments and was unable to afford the private rental and so was in arrears immediately and was later evicted. JNC was successful in advocating for the family to be provided with DCJ housing. They were supported by JNC to settle into their new home through assistance such as receiving weekly food boxes during Covid lockdown.



## Taking our services online: JNC's Digital Inclusion project

One in five Australians are not online and not able to take advantage of the education, health, and social benefits of being digitally connected. The lack of digital connectivity has negative consequences for people's social participation, wellbeing and access to services and information. Although the digital divide is closing there are still many people without internet access including many clients of the JNC, due to lack of devices, affordability of data and digital skills. In acknowledgment of this, JNC initiated a Digital Inclusion Project to build the organisation's capacity in digital engagement and service delivery, expanding on the work started in early 2020.

Key areas of the project included:

- Providing support and assistance to staff in developing and delivering online services
- Providing support to enable internal meetings to meet with both face to face and online participants
- Securing a Stronger Communities Program grant to fit out the Linker with digital equipment to create a mobile hub
- Developed and delivered a training package to CHSP service providers on delivering services online

JNC remains committed to supporting local initiatives to address the digital divide among vulnerable communities by taking some of our services online and supporting people to access them, and this will continue to be a focus of our work in coming years.

Some of our initiatives to increase digital access and take our services online over the year included:



## Taking our services online: JNC's Digital Inclusion project *continued*

**Webcasts** were produced for several community celebrations and to share information with the community online. We celebrated and promoted Lunar New Year, International Women's Day, Mental Health Month, Harmony Day, and RUOK Day. Several services were filmed so that clients could watch them in their own time, including Story Time, Aged Services Exercise Class and Tai Chi. The JNC has a YouTube channel where you can access this informative video content, all you need to do is type 'JNC Webcast' in the search bar.

**Online parenting courses** Parenting courses and seminars such as Small Steps, a seminar about understand anxiety in children, Connecting Dads with Kids and 123 Magic were also held online. Many attendees said that it was convenient to be able to attend the course from home, avoiding the difficulty of rushing out of the home in the morning to attend a course in person.

**Transition to school playgroup** As a result of not being able to run playgroup face to face, weekly webcasts targeted at families with young children were produced, with some being viewed over 100 times. Moving the Transition to School Playgroup online, while necessary, created challenges for children and parents or guardians to experience the social aspect of playgroup and follow instructions through a screen. To overcome this challenge, JNC developed individual and group activities easily accessible over videocall. Each playgroup session involved singing, reading an electronic book, and a group craft or life skills activity with a focus on developing fine and gross motor skills. These sessions were enjoyed by the families, fostered communication between the children and adults, and encouraged active listening.

### Older people getting online

During the year JNC started an online football group called the Footy Fanatics. One of the participants who was a long time South Sydney supporter did not have a computer or a smart phone to connect and see the others in the group. She only had a land line phone. With the assistance of a worker who was visiting her to drop off her list shop, the client was able to join the group over the phone. After the last group she expressed an interest in learning more about computers and the internet.

A 89 year old participant of the online discussion group reported that '*I never thought I could use zoom*'

A socially isolated Aged Services client was reluctant to join any of the groups offered. She decided to attend an online discussion group run by a volunteer. She enjoyed the weekly interaction with the volunteer and other group members. During a discussion the volunteer shared that he had been volunteering for 30 years and how he enjoyed giving back to the community. The client was motivated by this and shared in the next meeting that she would like to volunteer as a mental health advocate and talk about her lived experience. She said she wants to face her fears and tackle her anxiety.

## Taking our services online: JNC's Digital Inclusion project continued

### English Conversation Class

The Bondi Junction English Conversation Class has been held for many years. All the participants are older people and they wanted to continue the classes during the lockdowns. JNC staff trained and supported each participant and the volunteer to use their phone or computer. The classes were held fortnightly over Zoom with a JNC staff member managing the IT while the volunteer facilitated the group.

Participants regularly reported how happy it made them to be able to connect with each other and the volunteer. Some participants also told us that logging into zoom each week for the class gave them the confidence to be able to connect via video with friends and family. Many lessons were learnt from the online English Conversation Class including challenging the idea that older people don't want to or can't use technology. Training and supporting the volunteer and participants online was a challenge and took a great amount of time. However, staff have developed their skills and confidence in using online platforms and it has transformed how we work.



### VAST

2020/21 was a period of reflection and an opportunity to rethink the services provided. A review of VAST was undertaken to develop a service model for supporting, strengthening, and building capacity of CHSP service providers in our area to enable them to deliver high-quality, consumer focused services. Although some training was provided face to face, the pandemic highlighted the need for online programs. In response to the pandemic several new courses were developed and delivered including Managing During COVID and Digital Creativity – providing services online.

Throughout the year 27 training courses were provided to 328 participants, a total of 746 hours of training. These courses were delivered both face to face and online.

## Our People: JNC Volunteers

The pandemic has seen a reduction in volunteer opportunities at the JNC as many of our volunteer supported group activities were put on hold or went online and other services were provided with significantly less clients, removing the need for volunteer support. Some of the face-to-face services were able to resume during the year with volunteer support including the JP service, Let's Get Digital and the Walking Group. Dedicated volunteers were supported to work with online groups: the Walking Group, Tai Chi and the English class, maintaining social contact during the pandemic.

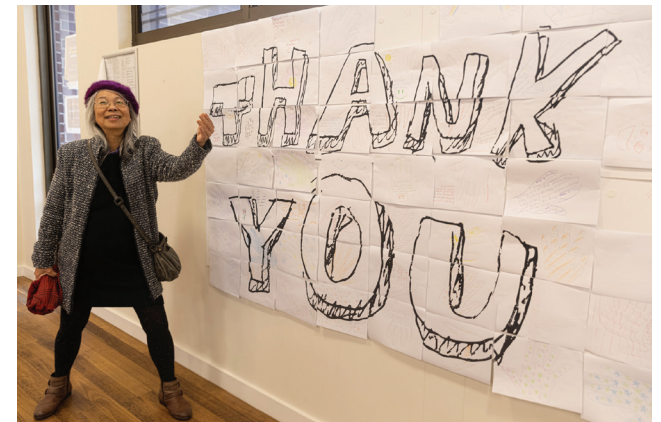
During the lockdowns, a small core team of volunteers assisted with essential activities. We had a small but very dedicated group of volunteers who assisted with the food delivery services, picking up boxes, and delivering them to community member at home. Others called older people isolated at home.

Behind the scenes, our volunteer Board played an important overseeing our work and

planning amidst regular changes to the public health orders and Government advice.

To celebrate National Volunteer Day in May 2021, we had a face-to-face event which was great. It was an opportunity to catch up in person, re-connect and thank our wonderful volunteers. Thirty people attended an afternoon tea at Kensington Community Centre and joined in on a fun activity to thank everyone. Thanks to Jules Sebastian from The Sebastian Foundation for her inspiring words recognising the vital role volunteers play in our community.

At the end of another challenging year, we have much to be thankful for. It is heart-warming to note that whenever we ask for support, there is always somebody willing to answer the call, whether that be during lockdowns, or in the busy times when services resumed. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported us throughout the year and thank you to those eagerly awaiting the day that their activity can resume.



## Our People: JNC Staff 2020 - 2021

### Leadership Team

Petra Besta, General Manager – Finance and Operations  
Janet Green, Chief Executive Officer  
Anna Hartree, General Manager – Client Services  
Jane Rogers, Aged Services Manager

### Aged Services

Rakiely Andrade	Kerry Muldoon
Mehrnoush Bonakdar	Janniene O'Sullivan
Tehrani	Fasina Pene
Jasmine Enright	Tess Roden
Donata Fiori	Amanda Rodrigues
Denise Fung	Larangeira
Cynthia Gibbs	Kimberley Snelson
Tamara Haneman	Terry Stathakis
Amneh Harb	Vicky Tam
Heather Jones	Tara Weldon
Katharina Koenig	Salwa Zakaria
Mark Kolaczowski	
Maria Kovacs	
Coco Li	
Mike McShane	

### Neighbourhood Engagement

Kimberley Brandner  
Daniel Cavagnino  
Emma Dunford  
Angie Garnett  
Therese Graham  
Linda Joyce-Rabbitt  
Mala Kapoor  
Barbara O'Neill  
Danya Schonberger  
Joshua Tierney  
Tanya Tisizis  
Carolina Torchetti Braga

### Staying Home Leaving Violence

Alanah Boota  
Ana Chacar  
Georgie Grant  
Ali Wardill

### Information & Engagement

Avril Janks  
Matthew Smallwood

### Finance & Operations

Meherlyn Bamboat  
Antonia Hay  
Lia Moore

### VAST

Sandi Madikane  
Danni Meredith



## Our Partners:

**We would like to acknowledge the following organisations and groups that work with us to support our local communities:**

3 Bridges Community  
Access Sydney Community Transport  
Anglicare Sydney  
ATO Tax Help  
Bondi Beach Cottage  
Botany Child and Family Service  
Bridge Housing  
Canterbury City Community Centre  
Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN)  
City of Sydney  
Clovelly Community Bank – Bendigo Bank  
Department Communities and Justice  
Eastern Area Tenants Services  
FAMS NSW  
Harris Farm Markets - Randwick  
Hope Uniting Church  
Inner Sydney Voice  
Kingsford Legal Centre  
Kirketon Road Centre  
Little Bay Community of Schools and member schools  
Local Community Services Association  
Namatjira Dreaming Community Group  
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre  
NSW Volunteering  
NSW Police– Eastern Beaches PAC

Randwick City Council  
Randwick Waverly Community Transport  
Relationships Australia  
RSPCA NSW  
Salvation Army  
St Vincent de Paul  
South Eastern Community Connect  
South Eastern Sydney Local Health District  
St George Community Housing  
Sydney Children's Hospital  
Sydney Multicultural Community Services  
The Benevolent Society - Child and Family South East Sydney  
The Benevolent Society - The Shack  
The Deli Women and Children's Centre  
Thread Together  
Viral Kindness Eastern Sydney  
Waverly Community and Seniors Association  
Waverly Council  
WEAVE Youth and Community Services and the Kool Kids  
Wesley Mission  
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre



## Our Funders:

### Thanks to our funders:

#### Australian Government

- Department of Health - Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Department of Social Services (via DCJ) - Keeping Women Safe in their Homes
- Department of Business and Infrastructure - Stronger Communities Program

#### NSW Government

- Department of Communities and Justice - Targeted Earlier Intervention Program
- Department of Communities and Justice - Staying Home Leaving Violence
- Department of Communities and Justice - Social Sector Transformation Fund
- Department of Health - South-Eastern Sydney Local Health District - ComaC initiative in South Coogee Housing Estate
- Department of Communities and Justice - Community Building Partnership

#### Business and Community Supporters

- Clovelly Community Bank - Bendigo Bank
- Coogee Lions Club
- Local businesses through in-kind support and donations

#### Local Government

A very big thank you to our local councils for community grants for local services, generous in-kind support for subsidised rent for our centres in Maroubra, Bondi Junction and Glebe, and collaborative working arrangements:

- City of Sydney
- Randwick City Council
- Waverley Council

## Our Contact Details

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Website: [www.jnc.org.au](http://www.jnc.org.au)

### JNC Maroubra

Shop 2, 669 - 673 Anzac Parade, Maroubra NSW 2034

### JNC Bondi Junction

59 Newland Street, Bond Junction NSW 2022

### JNC Glebe

St Helen's Community Centre  
184 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037

### Social Media

 Facebook - [www.facebook.com/TheJNC](https://www.facebook.com/TheJNC)  
 Instagram - [www.instagram.com/the\\_jnc](https://www.instagram.com/the_jnc)

