



**MENTAL HEALTH  
FIRST AID®**

For Anyone. For Everyone.®

# Annual Report

2021



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which Mental Health First Aid Australia operates today, and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We extend our respects to all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who are reading this document.



We recognise, value and celebrate diversity and act in the spirit of inclusion.

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Mental Health First Aid® and MHFA™ are registered trade marks of Mental Health First Aid International.

## **Mental Health First Aid Australia is a purpose-driven, Australian based, global provider of mental health first aid education and training.**

We are a registered health promotion charity, operating within a professional, evidence-based model, and guided by best practice and the voices of lived experience. We build the capacity for mental health literacy and teach the practical skills that allow anyone to understand, identify and respond to common mental health problems.



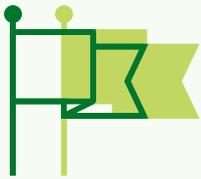
### **Our Vision**

**A world where we all have the skills to support people experiencing mental health problems.**



### **Our Values**

- **Accountability**
- **Collaboration**
- **Creativity**
- **Empathy**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Integrity**



### **Our Purpose**

**Provide high quality, evidence-based, accessible mental health first aid education to everyone.**



# Message from the Board Chair



When a person is experiencing a mental health problem, it's likely that the first person who provides them with care will be a family member, a friend or a work colleague, rather than a psychologist, doctor, nurse or other health professional. In such situations, anyone can have a conversation that may prove critical in terms of providing initial care and support for someone experiencing a mental health problem. Such conversations may even save a life.

As we continued to experience the mental health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the course of 2021, this underscored the importance of people having the knowledge and skills to have these conversations. That is why Mental Health First Aid Australia exists and why we strive towards our vision of 'a world where we all have the skills to support people experiencing mental health problems'.

2021 also marked the 21st birthday of Mental Health First Aid Australia and its training. We celebrated this milestone by paying tribute to the immense contribution of our founders Betty Kitchener AM and Professor Tony Jorm. We reflected on how the impact of our training programs has grown over the last two decades, with 5 million people around the world, including one million Australians, having now completed a Mental Health First Aid training course.

2021 also marked an important point in our organisation's journey, with a change in the leadership of our Board and the launch of our 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Professor Tony Jorm concluded his time as Chair, having served with distinction and dedication since 2011. I am honoured to have been entrusted by my fellow Directors to take on the role of Chair, and I am very appreciative of Tony agreeing to stay on as a Director.

As part of developing our new Strategic Plan, the Board, our CEO Shannon Anderson, and the leadership team worked closely together to examine our organisational context and to understand challenges and opportunities. We affirmed our vision, purpose, values and guiding principles and set the course for organisation over the next 4 years.

Our new look annual report is an 'impact statement' that tells the story of how MHFA and our team of motivated and experienced staff made a difference throughout 2021. We are proud of our achievements as an organisation, and as a global movement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Krystian Seibert". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Krystian Seibert**  
Chair of the Board

# Message from the CEO



**2021 was a challenging year for individuals, families, organisations and communities worldwide. The circumstances of the global COVID-19 pandemic has had and continues to have significant and lasting impacts on the way we live, work, learn and socialise.**

This has also been an unprecedented time in which the mental health and well-being of entire populations has come into sharp focus, along with the recognition that individuals can and should take practical action to look after their own mental health. Community connectedness also came to the fore and our extensive networks of trained Mental Health First Aid Instructors and MHFAiders within Australia and worldwide mobilised to refresh their own skills, to deliver more mental health first aid courses face-to-face and online, and to utilise their knowledge and practical skills to look after themselves and to care for others.

In 2021, over 8,000 Mental Health First Aid training courses were delivered nationally reaching more than 100,000 people in community, workplace and school settings. We also reached the milestone of having over 1 million Australians complete a Mental Health First Aid training course. Increasing the access to our Mental Health First Aid® courses for all communities remained a strategic priority for our organisation as young people and adults alike continued to report high levels of psychological distress, and the feedback we continue to receive from course participants to our flexible delivery options has been overwhelmingly positive.

Our course delivery continued during times of lock-down and social distancing, during which we piloted various new delivery modes for virtual and blended training, while continuing to uphold our high standards of adherence to our evidence-based course curriculum and safe delivery.

The development and delivery of an ambitious new Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 has galvanized our leadership, staff, international Licensed Providers and the wider Instructor and MHFAider communities. We all have an important role to play in the delivery and practice of Mental Health First Aid as an integral component of building localised mental health support safety nets in every school, workplace and community.

As an organisation in 2021, we have set a new aspirational (yet achievable) population goal of equipping 1 in 10 Australians with the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide mental health first aid, by 2030. Population-based goals will also increasingly come into focus in all 26 countries where we have established Mental Health First Aid programs as part of our global growth and dissemination efforts.

I would like to acknowledge our staff, Instructors, funders, Licensed Providers, our network of trained MHFAiders and the Board of Mental Health First Aid International for their unwavering and continued dedication to our vision and purpose. Their collective professionalism and resilience has enabled us to remain active and adapt our response to changing conditions and community needs.

It has been a pleasure to both lead and be a part of Mental Health First Aid Australia's practical community response throughout this significant year of community need.

We look forward to working with you into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Anderson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Shannon Anderson**  
Chief Executive Officer

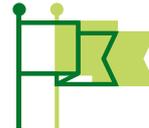
# About Mental Health First Aid Australia

## History

Mental Health First Aid was established in Australia in 2000 by Founder Betty Kitchener AM and her husband Professor Tony Jorm. They developed the first Mental Health First Aid course to fill a gap in practical community mental health education, with a training program that would parallel the first-aid training offered for physical health. Today, Mental Health First Aid has grown into a truly global movement spanning all states and territories of Australia and 26 countries internationally.



**Over 5 million people world-wide have been trained.**



**1 million+**

Introduction of the Australian MHFAider Network and we hit a milestone – 1 Million+ Australians trained in Mental Health First Aid since inception

### 1997

The idea is sparked!

### 2000 – 2001

First Mental Health First Aid community course developed and piloted.

### 2002 – 2005

Instructors trained in all Australian states and territories.

Mental Health First Aid Program adoption begins overseas.

### 2012 – 2013

Resources and operations expand significantly to meet demand.

Mental Health First Aid added to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (USA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

### 2014

A peak evaluation period. Swedish researchers publish a systematic review and meta-analysis of 15 of the major Mental Health First Aid trials with positive results. Former US President, Barack Obama recommends funding for Mental Health First Aid Youth programs.

### 2015

Over 1 million Mental Health First Aiders trained world-wide and over 4,000 accredited Instructors.

Workplace Program introduced.

Former US First Lady, Michelle Obama becomes an ambassador in the United States.



### 2006 – 2007

Over 50,000 Mental Health First Aid Manuals disseminated. Research translated into Mental Health First Aid Guidelines.

Programs adapted for linguistically and culturally diverse groups and young people.

### 2008 – 2009

Mental Health First Aid wins first awards internationally and domestically.

Founder, Betty Kitchener is awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM).

### 2010 – 2011

170,000 Mental Health First Aiders reached in the first decade – 1% of the Australian adult population.

### 2016 – 2019

Approx. 500,000 people in Australia have attended a Mental Health First Aid training course.

Over 20 awards won internationally.

Internationally acclaimed performer, Lady Gaga endorses Mental Health First Aid Youth Program in the United States.

### 2020

Mental Health First Aid International and its Licensed Providers respond to COVID-19 and unprecedented global demand by adapting course delivery modes to include blended online learning.

### 2021

Over 5 million people trained world-wide, in over 26 countries by 50,000 Instructors. Australia has over 2,400 accredited MHFA Instructors, with over 1,000,000 people trained.

### 2022 and beyond!

A new aspirational population goal – equip 1 in 10 Australian adults with the skills and confidence to support people experiencing mental health problems by 2030.

Aspirational population dissemination targets to be progressively set in all countries with current Licensed Providers and mature Mental Health First Aid Programs.

# What we do

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training equips individuals with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a difference through practical mental health support.

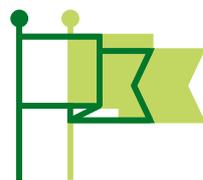
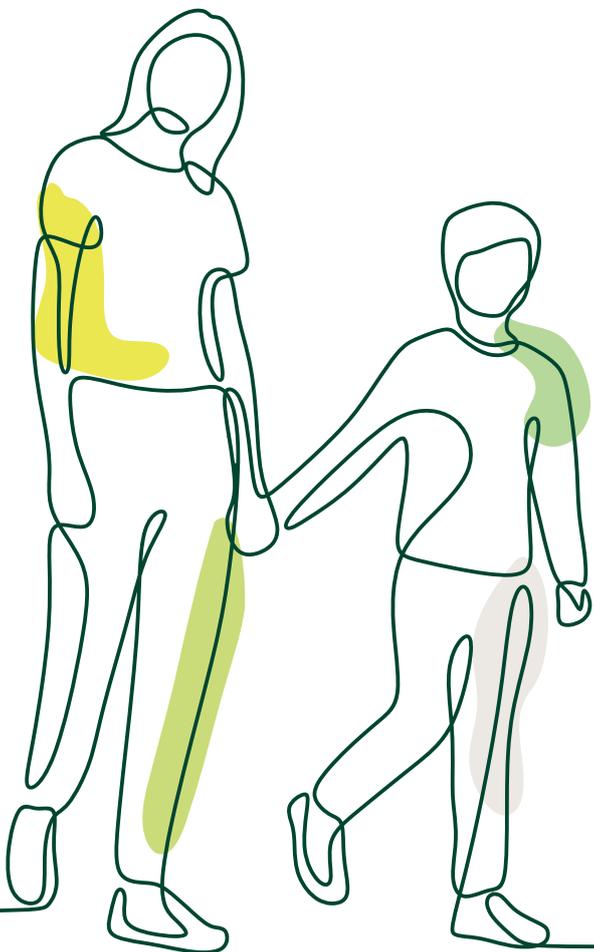
We train people from all walks of life across various settings including in the community, in workplaces and in schools.

## Delivery

Mental health training that is trusted, world renowned, evidence-based and community led. Mental Health First Aid training empowers and equips individuals with the skills needed to recognise, respond and support someone at three key stages:

1. Developing mental health problems
2. Worsening of an existing mental health problem
3. Mental health related crisis

Our programs are delivered by Mental Health First Aid Australia trained and accredited Instructors and cater to diverse audience groups of adults and young people. Courses are delivered in various formats to meet participant needs including face-to-face, blended online and fully online courses that combine self-paced eLearning together with an Instructor-led component. We further work with community groups, workplaces and schools to embed Mental Health First Aid training into their broader well-being supports so that it will continue to make a practical difference into the future.



**Our new aspirational goal is to equip 1 in 10 Australians (by 2030) with the skills and confidence to support people experiencing mental health problems.**

## Role of early intervention

Community based support is an important contribution to the complex issues of mental ill health, personal and community crises, and suicide. People who complete a Mental Health First Aid training course go onto become empowered members of the community, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to recognise, connect, understand and support family, friends, colleagues, peers and other community members experiencing a mental health problem.

### Improve Knowledge

Increase mental health literacy



### Develop Confidence

Increase confidence in providing mental health first aid



### Reduce Stigma

Decrease negative attitudes and behaviours regarding mental health problems



### Improve Support

Broaden skillset for providing support to others



## Voice of lived experience

Our work is informed by the lived experience of people with mental health problems and their carers. This is essential to the design of community-informed and person-centred training. Course content addresses real life experiences and is relevant and respectful. Our training embraces the diversity of all people and their right to give and receive care irrespective of health, age, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender identity, sexuality, socio-economic status or abilities. Lived experience is represented in three ways:

1. As part of the expert consensus process – Delphi studies typically feature a panel of people with lived experience;
2. MHFA training courses feature films with lived experience interviews – giving course participants the opportunity to hear firsthand the impact of mental illness and understand helpful recovery processes; and
3. MHFA training course materials feature artworks that are created by people with lived experience.

## Evidence and evaluation

A commitment to research, evaluation and understanding our impact, is at the forefront of our vision and delivery. Our programs have been extensively evaluated and reported on through various trials, peer reviews and expert consensus within Australia and overseas.



**“This is exactly how Mental Health First Aid training adds value. It increases knowledge, skills and confidence around mental health conversations. Conversations between real people about real problems, at a local level. Conversations that can be life-changing and even lifesaving.”**

**Annie Rowland,**

Live4Life Community Engagement Coordinator

# Mental Health First Aid in Australia

Australia faces an ongoing mental health crisis with far reaching impacts on individuals, families, workplaces, communities and the economy.

Community-based care models are essential to the coordinated response to supporting those who live with mental health problems. Best evidence supports the power of individuals in providing peer-to-peer support through supportive conversations that reduce stigma, increase personal connections, encourage self care, and facilitate pathways to professional support. MHFA training empowers individuals and communities in this way by supporting them to work together to provide a safety-net of localised care and support.

- Everyone in Australia today, will (statistically) be impacted by mental health problems, either directly or indirectly<sup>1</sup>
- Mental health problems are the leading cause of disability in the world<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 5 people in Australia will experience a common mental illness each year<sup>3</sup>
- 1 in 3 Australian Young People now reports high to very high levels of psychological distress<sup>4</sup>
- Nearly half of all Australians will experience mental health problems in their life time<sup>5</sup>
- Mental disorders account for 12% of Australia's total burden of disease and injury<sup>6</sup>
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people under the age of 45, and a leading cause of death across other age groups<sup>7</sup>
- On average Australia records 9 deaths per day to suicide<sup>8</sup>
- The cost to Australia's economy from mental illness and suicide is reported as being \$200-220 billion per annum<sup>9</sup>

- Many groups are at increased vulnerability, including:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - Young people
  - People in rural and remote communities
  - LGBTQI+ people
  - People in detention or closed facilities
  - People in aged care
  - People in high risk industries/job roles
  - Men and women (both experience different prevalence risks for different mental health problems)

**"Someone may take part in Mental Health First Aid training through their workplace or sports club, but the beauty of mental health first aid is that the skills can then be applied in multiple settings. You never know when you may have a conversation with someone that may save a life."**

**David Bastian,**  
Education and Training Manager,  
Richmond Institute



**1 in 5**

People in Australia will experience a common mental illness each year



**Nearly half**

of all Australians will experience mental health problems in their life time

1 Australian Productivity Commission – Inquiry Report Mental Health 2021

2 WHO, 2019

3 AIHW, 2020

4 Headspace, 2020

5 AIHW, 2018

6 PWC, Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance, 2014

7 ABS, 2019

8 ABS, 2020

9 Australian Productivity Commission, 2021

# Our Global Community

Mental illness and suicide are problems with international concern that span across geographic, cultural and social boundaries.

In addition to our commitment to early intervention and preventative mental health education in Australia, Mental Health First Aid International is also dedicated to equipping Licensed Providers to deliver Mental Health First Aid training in countries around the world. We maintain strong international partnerships and are proud to spearhead this truly global movement.

**Mental Health First Aid training is an Australian not-for-profit innovation that is truly making an impact on an international scale.**

## Mental Health First Aid International

Mental Health First Aid International is the founding organisation and global authority on Mental Health First Aid. It represents an international network of independent Licensed Providers working together to deliver practical mental health first aid training and education. The role of Mental Health First Aid International is to work with both new and existing licensed providers, in the delivery of Mental Health First Aid training programs. The Mental Health First Aid Program now has an unparalleled reach with 26 licensed programs being delivered in 26 countries. These programs draw on international best evidence, and our course curriculum is culturally adapted to meet the needs of local populations.

## Our Eco-System in Australia



### Mental Health First Aid Network

- People who have undertaken MHFA
- Accredited MHFA Instructors
- Global Instructors/ MHFAider networks
- Accredited MHFAiders
- Australian public – Potential MHFAiders



### Partners & Collaborators

- Research partners
- Supporters and funders
- Cross sector collaborators for mental health and well-being
- Governments and decision makers
- International licensed providers



### Settings where we Work

- Workplaces across industries
- Diverse communities: metropolitan, regional, rural
- Community groups, clubs and community organisations
- Schools, universities and education training institutions

## Core Beneficiaries

People experiencing mental health problems

# Mental Health First Aid Training Programs

Mental Health First Aid Australia offers a suite of early-intervention training delivered by Mental Health First Aid trained and accredited Instructors.

Our core courses cover a diverse range of population groups, and our specialised courses address targeted topics. People who complete a core course can complete a short online assessment to become an accredited MHFAider. Accreditation lasts for three years at which point participants are encouraged to refresh their knowledge and skills.

## Standard Mental Health First Aid

Designed for adults supporting other adults in community, workplace or school settings. Course participants learn about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems in adults, how to recognise and respond to emerging, worsening or crisis point mental health problems, and the interventions and supports available. This 12-hour course is delivered face-to-face, blended or online.

## Youth Mental Health First Aid

Designed for adults, such as school staff, parents, carers and other people working with young people aged 12–18. Course participants learn about the signs and symptoms of mental health problems in adolescents and how to recognise, respond and support a teen in need of support. This 14-hour course is delivered face-to-face, blended or online.

## Teen Mental Health First Aid

This age-appropriate training course is designed for secondary school students in Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 12. It teaches the skills and empathy for provision of peer-to-peer support. It also reinforces mental health literacy and help seeking. This 3.5-hour course is delivered face-to-face.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid

This is a culturally adapted course for adults to learn how to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who are developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. Training is delivered by accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Instructors, ensuring cultural safety and relevance. This is a 14-hour course delivered face-to-face, blended or online.

## Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid

This is a culturally informed training course for adults supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Designed for adults such as school staff, parents, carers and other community members. The course is delivered by accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Instructors to ensure cultural safety and relevance. This is a 14-hour course delivered face-to-face, blended or online.



**Our core courses cover a diverse range of population groups, and our specialised courses address targeted topics.**

## Older Person Mental Health First Aid

Designed for adults who are working with, living with, or caring for a person over 65 years of age. The program addresses mental health problems and strategies specifically relating to older people. This 12-hour course is delivered face-to-face.

## Refresher Courses

Mental Health First Aid Refresher courses allow a person who has completed Mental Health First Aid training in the past three years to refresh their knowledge and build on their existing skills. These abbreviated courses vary in length and mode depending on the course previously taken. They further allow a person to maintain their MHFAider accreditation.

## Specialised Courses

Mental Health First Aid Australia offers the following courses to build on existing knowledge and skills and address specific mental health and crisis problems. This includes:

- Conversations about Suicide
- Conversations about Non-Suicidal Self-Injury
- Conversations about Gambling
- Talking about Suicide (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA)
- Talking about Gambling (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA)



# Year in review: 2021 at a glance

## 2021 was a significant year of challenge and change for most people.

The global COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching impacts across all communities, presenting challenges with social distancing, border closures, quarantines and other restrictions.

Having introduced a suite of fully online course options in 2020, Mental Health First Aid training courses continued to be delivered throughout 2021, despite these many obstacles. However, face-to-face training was heavily impeded, impacting the delivery of courses that cannot be offered online, including Instructor training and Teen Mental Health First Aid. In 2021 we were able to reach more than 100,000 people with education and training despite these barriers.

The mental health and well-being of people in the community was directly affected in 2021 as a result of the pandemic, reinforcing how vital our work is. Recent figures suggest that presentations of mental illness and psychological distress may have increased significantly due to the global pandemic and related stressors (RANZCP, 2021). Additional barriers in access to mental health care, such as long wait times for psychologists and other professionals, presents a risk factor for many. This further exemplifies the need for a broad community safety net for mental health support and interventions – empowering everyone to provide support to someone who is struggling. Mental Health First Aid remains a key mechanism to support informal community care, and is a program of choice for communities, workplaces and schools.

Other challenges in 2021 year included an economic downturn, resulting in an increasing number of Australians experiencing financial stress and employment struggles, and reported increases in social and family problems.

Many Australian communities also continue to struggle during the recovery phase from natural disasters including the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019, recent catastrophic flooding events, and follow-on from years of prolonged drought that mostly impacted our farming and rural communities.

2021 was however a year of progress in terms of mental health sector dialogue towards positive systemic change, with the notable release of the Australian Productivity Commission's Report from an Inquiry into Mental Health. Mental Health First Aid Australia continues to engage with Governments, Policy Makers, Practice Leaders, and Academic Institutions.

**“Over the last two years, we have significantly expanded our MHFAider Network within Clayton Utz (we have trained over 200 people to be mental health champions and first aiders). We’ve found that this has increased people's skills and confidence in identifying the signs that a colleague may be struggling and understanding how they can guide them to seek support. It's also raised the level of mental health knowledge and awareness across the firm.”**

**Alexia Houston,**  
Head of Insurance & Risk,  
Clayton Utz



**100,000+**

We were able to reach more than 100,000 people with education and training in 2021.



**"I am such a big advocate for Mental Health First Aid....I've been so impressed with just how simple, but practical and really approachable this training piece is for everyone."**

**Natasha Hall**  
Group Health Manager  
Downer

# Year in review: Instructor network

The backbone of Mental Health First Aid Australia's national course dissemination efforts is a network of over 2,500 accredited Instructors who deliver training to individuals, community groups, workplaces, and schools across a diverse range of communities nationally.

Prospective Instructors undertake a rigorous 5-day training course, facilitated by one of our 14 National Trainers. They must then successfully complete all assessment requirements and have their accreditation supported by the facilitating Trainer to become a fully accredited Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

All Instructors must deliver a minimum of two courses and attend at least one continuing professional development (CPD) event per year. During 2021 Mental Health First Aid Australia ran 20 CPD events to support our accredited Instructors and their continued learning.

Mental Health First Aid Australia have a dedicated team of Instructor Quality and Program Specialists (IQPS), who provide ongoing mentoring and support for our Instructor network. They are also available to provide advice and guidance on technical, organisational, course content and accreditation queries.

## Key Achievements



**106,375**

Mental Health First Aid training course participants in Australia



**8,864**

Courses Delivered  
Outstanding number of courses delivered during tough times



**1,333**

Instructors



**531**

New Instructors trained



**51**

Instructor training courses delivered



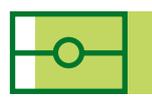
**1,100+**

Blended Community Courses delivered



**2,338+**

Students accessed online learning programs



**4,800+**

Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous participants in Aboriginal Mental Health First Aid core and specialty courses.



### Instructor profile:

#### Nicola Fisher, one of our dedicated and passionate Mental Health First Aid Instructors

Over a six-year period I worked in various roles across the community services sector including case work, community development and engagement, and disaster recovery. For me, this experience cemented the notion that well-being and belonging is everyone's right and very much requires a whole of community approach.

The move to becoming a Mental Health First Aid Instructor seemed like a natural progression. Case management adopts a person-centred, strengths-based approach encouraging and supporting the self-efficacy of others.

Mental Health First Aid training aligns with this; equipping people with mental health literacy and skills and supporting a whole of community approach to well-being and mental health supports.

Many people think that a mental health conversation is something structured and formal, but that's not the case. It's about recognising and responding when you know someone needs help. I've had mental health first aid conversations with people on their porches during bushfire recovery, over the phone with colleagues and friends, and amid local, public community events.

I feel privileged in my role as an MHFA Instructor to facilitate learning, to hold space for robust conversations and to build the courage and confidence of individuals to enter what is a scary conversation space for most. I often hear stories from people who have gone through the training, about how they have had a conversation that may have saved a life. This is undoubtedly one of the most rewarding aspects of my role as an MHFA Instructor; knowing that the practical skills learned in the course are making a real difference in the community more broadly.

The training I deliver provides the skills and tools for an individual to support those they care about, work with and meet, regardless of their original intention to attend the training. This is both incredibly rewarding and powerful.

# Year in review: Workplaces

Mental health is the leading cause of sickness, absence and long-term work incapacity in Australia, and costs Australian employers billions annually, in absenteeism, presenteeism, and compensation claims.

Workplaces are becoming increasingly aware of the need for mental health literacy and supports. Mental Health First Aid is the training program of choice for many Australian workplaces across a broad range of sectors and industry types.

Our Workplace Engagement Team assists organisations to introduce Mental Health First Aid training within workplace settings, ensuring it supports internal structures and complements other workplace well-being initiatives.

The team help support and guide decisions around training options and pathways, and work with organisational Instructors to embed knowledge and skills into workplace policy, practice and culture for long-term benefits.

In 2021, new resources were developed to assist workplaces – supporting seamless implementation from business case development through to the appointment of Mental Health First Aid Officers within organisations. The team was also busy keeping stakeholders informed across a number of platforms. This included supportive and informative content around COVID-19, how to stay connected, and skills refreshers on our practical action plan.



**"The tangible differences that we've seen is a change in the levels of absenteeism."**

**Allyson Musster**  
National People & Culture Manager for Operations, Roads Division  
Downer

## Key Achievements



### 1,200+

Workplaces engaged – from small business, to large multi-national organisations.



### 143

Workplaces recognised with the Mental Health First Aid Workplace Recognition Program across a broad range of industries and sectors.



**Representation** at Human Resources Directors Summit, ANZMHA Workplace Mental Health Symposium and ANZMHA Rural and Remote Conference.



**Working Group established** with key industry bodies in the Transport & Logistics sector to engage with and deliver training in the industry.

## Featured Case: Lending a hand to staff and community

Lendlease is a global property and construction company that has addressed the health and well-being of its people head on. As one of the longest running supporters of the Mental Health First Aid Australia Workplace Recognition Program, they currently have 905\* people actively trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Since 2015, the principles of Mental Health First Aid have become an ongoing component of how Lendlease operates. They aim to have an MHFAider at every site, office, centre, project, or asset that they own or operate as part of Lendlease's Global Minimum Requirements. MHFA training is now embedded into their safety management systems and processes, and they have made the courses and upskilling highly accessible to all staff.

Since completing their training, 75% of Lendlease employees say they have gone on to support a family member, friend or someone else in their community, while 52% have supported

a colleague in person, and 22% have used their skills to support a colleague virtually (Lendlease, MHFA Network Survey, 2020 n=186).

Lendlease provide just one example of the significant real-world impact of people helping people, and creating positive mental health conversations and actions in the workplace.



**"This is having very positive outcomes for our employees who are receiving the support, as they feel heard, understood and less judged no matter what they are going through."**

**Jason McGovern,**  
Business Engagement and Program Manager

# Year in review: Universities and schools

Young people represent a significant audience for mental health education and early interventions.

Adolescence is also a time when the emergence of mental illnesses may peak, with around half of adult mental health problems having onset before age 14 (AJGP, 2018). Currently around 20% of young people were reported as having high levels of distress (AIHW, 2018) and suicide remains a leading cause of death for young people with many other young people experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours (ABS, 2019).

The Mental Health First Aid Schools and University Engagement Team provides support and guidance to education institutions across Australia, to enable Mental Health First Aid training in a targeted and sustainable way – reaching educators, families and young people to help build a whole of community approach to supporting the mental health of young people.

The Engagement Team works with a wide range of stakeholders including primary and secondary schools in both the public and private sector, alumni associations, departments of education, catholic education departments, universities and other tertiary institutions.

Throughout 2021, priority work included forging departmental relationships and strategies to implement wide-scale training across national public education systems.



**"Mental Health First Aid is a wonderful initiative in terms of it being user-friendly, evidence-based and easy for everyone to learn and everyone to use."**

**Emma Steer**  
Head of Psychological Services  
Lauriston Girls' School

## Key Achievements



**Increased collaboration** with Departments of Education and Training in NSW, VIC, WA, QLD and SA and at national level.



**350+**

Training support in NSW for more than 350 School Support Officers to become either Youth or Teen MHFA Accredited Instructors.



**Approved supplier** on the Victorian Department of Education interim mental health menu.



**7**

Youth and Teen Private Instructor Training courses delivered in the education setting across 2021, seeing 40 new Instructors trained to deliver Mental Health First Aid training in secondary schools nationally.



**2,338**

Students across Australia accessed the eLearning component of MHFA training for Medical Students.

## Featured Case: Department of Education NSW

In late 2021, Mental Health First Aid Australia embarked on an exciting project with the NSW Department of Education, to offer the growing Student Support Officer (SSO) workforce the opportunity to deliver Youth and Teen MHFA training to secondary public schools across NSW.

Commencing in 2022, SSOs from across the state will be supported to train as either Youth or Teen MHFA Instructors. This project will provide schools the opportunity to embed MHFA Instructors across school communities, who will then facilitate the delivery of Youth MHFA training to school staff and parents, and Teen MHFA training to entire student cohorts.

Additionally, the NSW Department of Education will be supporting SSOs who have trained as a Youth or Teen MHFA Instructor, to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) using existing,

established networks across the Department. This CoP will aim to connect Instructors both within, and across regional networks, in collaboration with their school executive, to deliver Youth and Teen MHFA courses in their school communities.

**This exciting training strategy will increase staff, student, and community understanding of mental health. Accessibility to the MHFA training will improve the mental health literacy of whole school communities, promote understanding of the benefits of seeking help early, and reduce the stigma associated with mental health.**

# Year in review: MHFAider network

MHFAiders are everyday people who have completed Mental Health First Aid training.

They are ready and able to provide support to people who are experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis. They are in workplaces, schools and community settings within Australia and 26 other countries worldwide.

In 2021, Mental Health First Aid Australia invested considerable time and resources into celebrating, connecting and supporting this network within Australia. This included the development of new communication resources and channels including the introduction of a bi-monthly update. This will ensure our network remains engaged and informed of events, upskilling opportunities, news stories and case studies, opportunities to engage with fellow MHFAiders, and tips for implementing Mental Health First Aid and refreshing their knowledge and skills.

## Key Achievements

- ✓ Formalisation of an MHFAider Network, consisting of more than 60,000 Mental Health First Aid course participants.
- ✓ Formed the MHFAider advisory group to inform network engagement events and opportunities.
- ✓ Introduction of bi-monthly MHFAider Updates – 7 updates distributed across the year.
- ✓ First live networking events held, giving participants the opportunity to practise their MHFAider skills and connect with other MHFAiders.
- ✓ Mental health awareness week event held to celebrate 21 Years of Mental Health First Aid.

## MHFAider Profile: Nic Bloom – from loss to empowerment as an MHFAider

For Nic Bloom, Mental Health First Aid training was the spark that ignited a passion for mental health education. Since undertaking his course Nic has gone from strength to strength – developing new skills and finding ways and roles that enable him to give back to the community.

Sadly, in the middle of 2020, Nic lost a close friend to suicide. “Amidst the overwhelming sense of grief and loss, I was searching for answers, and I was searching for meaning and a greater sense of purpose that I could draw from this experience, and that’s when I discovered Mental Health First Aid Australia. It just felt like the right fit at the right time.”

Seeing the value of the course first hand Nic decided to then extend his involvement with Mental Health First Aid Australia by becoming an Instructor.

**“The Mental Health First Aid course has helped my confidence on how to be empathetic and supportive of others, and how to access a wide range of well-being resources and professional help options.”**

People like Nic are part of a growing network of people on-the-ground, in our communities, schools, universities and workplaces, who have the skills to provide support to someone who may be struggling with mental health problems, and otherwise not know where to turn.

# Year in review: Community

Mental Health First Aid training plays a unique and important role in developing individual, group and whole-of-community capacity to respond to mental health problems.

Statistically, everyone in Australia will be impacted by mental health problems (either their own or someone else's). Building the knowledge, skills and confidence of every day people to offer support is a practical response to the far-reaching mental health crisis.

The Mental Health First Aid Community Engagement Team work together to increase the profile of our training courses, Instructor training pathways, and our Champion Community Program. They provide support and guidance to community groups and organisations assisting with the planning and implementation of Mental Health First Aid courses and related activities to meet localised community needs. The organisations supported in the community setting include: place-based health promotion organisations; community health organisations; government departments; local governments; primary health networks; sports and recreation groups and clubs and community groups.

In 2021, the Community Engagement Team worked with organisations including the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Richmond

Institute, Life4Life, Rotary, and Disability Sport and Recreation to progress various projects. This included contracts for the development of new targeted program content, and the training and accreditation of community-based Instructors.

## Key Achievements

- ✓ 14 Open Arms Veterans & Family Counselling Staff Trained as MHFA Instructors with resourcing for a further 48 in 2022.
- ✓ Preparations for mental health training for up to 7,000 members of the veteran community across Australia to enhance their capability to recognise and support 'at risk' veterans.
- ✓ Recognition of the first Mental Health First Aid Champion Community.
- ✓ Working relationships established with 10 local councils.
- ✓ 1,100+ Blended Community Courses delivered.

## Featured Case:

### Growing from crisis to support communities

In Victoria, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) plays a significant role in keeping people safe from fires and other emergencies. In turn, they have established a comprehensive mental health literacy program, to help support their members. Mental Health First Aid training has become a key component in training members that are often the first points-of-contact, during times of crisis.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Mental Health First Aid Australia continued support for organisations such as CFA, via a new blended online training model that allowed participants to complete their training entirely online. To date, feedback from both Instructors and course participants has been "overwhelmingly positive", according to Cara McIntyre, Well-being

Consultant at the CFA, who anticipates that the CFA will continue to offer a mix of face-to-face and blended online training in the future.

Mental Health First Aid Australia will continue to work with communities and organisations to innovate, adapt and increase our community impact.

**"The course material is so very relevant and timely, thankfully as mental health discussions are becoming more prevalent in the community, which in itself will reduce shame and stigma felt for so long by people struggling with mental ill-health."**

**CFA Course Participant**

# Year in review:

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid

The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Program is culturally led and informed from an Aboriginal perspective, recognising the need for culturally responsive Mental Health First Aid training to empower individuals and communities.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Team is responsible for all course materials, Instructor Training, and ongoing Instructor mentoring and support. The team works in partnership with a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous individuals, communities, workplaces and organisations (government, not-for-profit and Aboriginal Community Controlled). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA courses are developed and reviewed by our Aboriginal Curriculum Specialist in consultation with staff, Instructors, and communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA courses contain significant tailoring that include cultural considerations, protocols and yarn ups. The program has a diverse range of Master Instructors and Trainers with extensive community connections who contribute to and review course materials. The courses incorporate cultural perspectives, lived-experience stories and First Nations photography, film and artworks.

### Key Achievements

- ✓ 63 new Instructors trained and 34 Instructors upskilled.
- ✓ Successful pilot of online Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Instructor training.
- ✓ 380+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA courses delivered reaching more than 4,000 adults in community.
- ✓ Launch of new Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Training courses. – 35 new Instructors trained and 50+ courses delivered reaching more than 570 adults in community.
- ✓ Sponsorship of the Indigenous Well-being Conference (6–7 December 2021).
- ✓ Participation in NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week campaigns with targeted content and stories shared by Instructors and Staff.

**“I am in a position to create a culturally informed, open and safe environment where participants from different backgrounds and cultures are able to talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Well-being and Mental Health. Feedback from participants supports that I am enabling partnerships and understanding by breaking down barriers and building capacity through community (Aboriginal Style and Ways) development, which plays a major role in moving toward better outcomes for reconciliation.”**

**Margaret Saunders,**

Proud Wiradjuri Woman and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Instructor

## About our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program

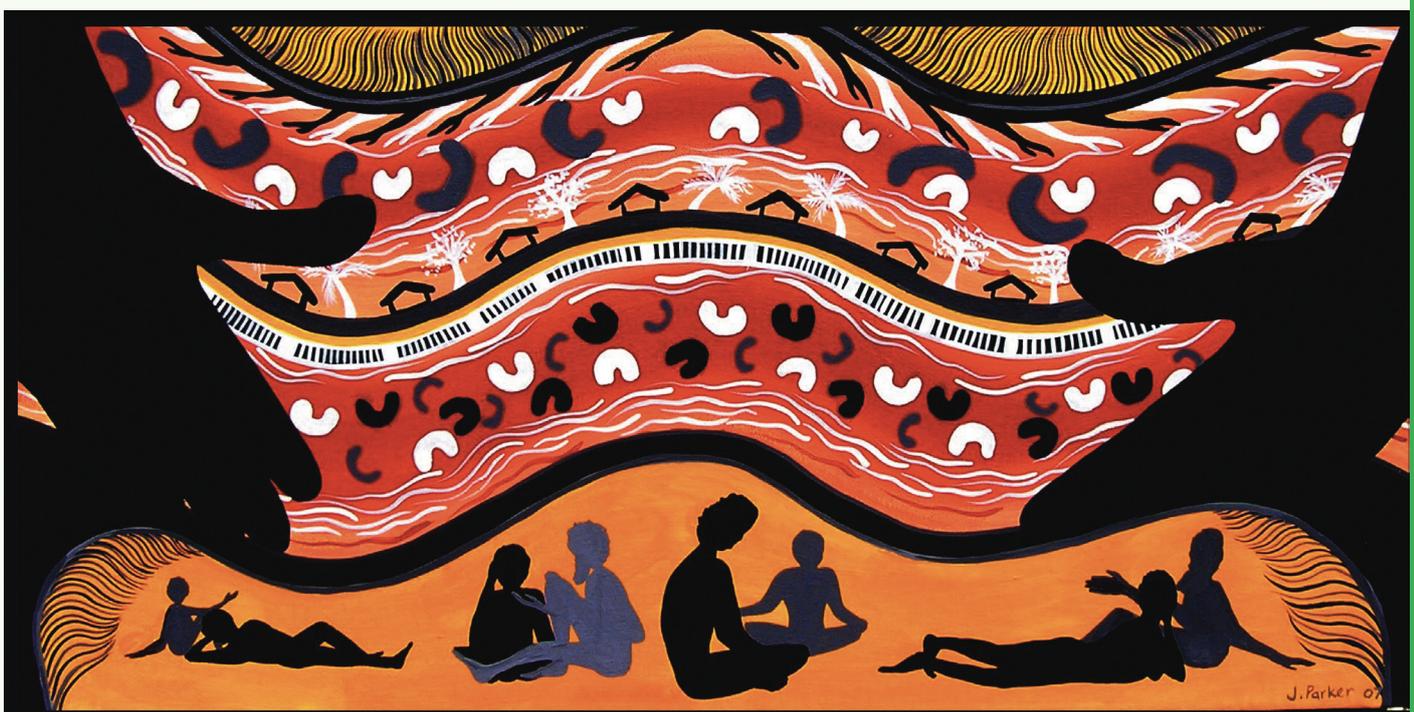
Excerpts from “Culturally capable well-being support and the power of community” an MHFA article produced for NAIDOC Week 2021 by Karen Bates, Program Manager AMHFA.

I am a proud Barkindji woman originally from the far west of New South Wales along the Darling River and have strong connections in South Australia. I come at the topic of mental health both from my experience as an Aboriginal woman, and as the Program Manager for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid. I am passionate and committed to improving the social and emotional well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples now and for our future generations.

Mental Health First Aid Australia has over 200 dedicated Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Instructors who live and work in community. They understand that certain practices and beliefs can differ between cultures and language

groups. They can adapt content to acknowledge different kinships, family obligations, spiritual beliefs and cultural practices. They share this knowledge with both our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous participants, while skilling them on how to recognise and respond to developing, worsening or crisis point mental health problems.

Together we can contribute to our collective responsibility towards healing our country, and our nation. There is power in all of us for this change.



# Year in review: Research and Curriculum

Mental Health First Aid is grounded in rigorous evidence and evaluation.

Through insights about real-world application and impact we are able to develop course curriculum that meets the population needs in various settings in Australia and around the world.

The Research and Curriculum Team is responsible for the development and delivery of research that informs Mental Health First Aid Australia's courses, curricula and evaluation. They disseminate and utilise our research through academic publications, updates to course content and by sharing impact findings through presentations and stakeholder liaison. In addition to this strong foundation, the team is busy with the development of new Mental Health First Aid courses and updates to existing course materials, including teaching materials to develop and upskill Instructors.

## Key Achievements

- ✓ Developed and piloted curricula for the Mental Health First Aid for People with Intellectual Disabilities and Deaf MHFA courses.
- ✓ Released updates to 23 existing Mental Health First Aid courses.
- ✓ Completed data collection for our Conversations about Non-Suicidal Self-Injury uncontrolled trial.
- ✓ Completed the redevelopment of guidelines for how to support a person experiencing a panic attack.



## Research and Curriculum Development & Evaluation Process Recipe for Impact

1

### Phase 1

#### Scoping, consulting and evidence review

- Stakeholder engagement – understanding course needs
- Internal briefing and resource allocations
- Secondary evidence and data review and assessments
- Determine strength of the evidence base (Australia & International)

2

### Phase 2

#### Course development and rollout

- Delphi Expert Consensus Study – Including systemic literature review, exploration of First Aider actions, Expert Panel incl. lived-experience consumers, carers and professionals, guideline development
- Curriculum development by a professional team over 12 and 24 months (considerations to delivery mode, length and materials. This includes advisory body input)
- Course materials developed: skills, scenarios, conversations and groups activities, as well as supporting films, texts and imagery
- Instructor manuals and teaching aids developed
- Pilot courses to test and review
- Rollout on demand in correct settings

3

### Phase 3

#### Evolution

- Uncontrolled trials to test safety, acceptance and effectiveness (pre, post and six month post follow-up with participants to test: attitudes, behaviours, confidence)
- Randomised control trials – to further test efficacy and impact with university partners through best practice formal and independently assessed evaluation methods
- Further research: Engagement with other research and evaluation on MHFA. Research to address specific elements of mental health issues impacting our courses

# Year in review: Our people

Mental Health First Aid International has a diverse and highly skilled workforce of 54 employees (46 FTE) which grew by 12% in 2021.

We have a head office in Melbourne, but many staff work remotely in other states and territories. Our employees work in roles including Curriculum Development, Instructor Development, Research, Engagement and Customer Service. Our staff espouse the vision and values of the organisation, which were updated earlier in the year.



**“Thank you for the time to put our initiatives in place and the time of Senior Management to communicate with us”**

**Staff Member,**  
via Well-being Survey

## Key Achievements

- ✓ Establishment of a new Human Resources function and internal business partnership model to inform internal policies and practice for efficiency and sustainability.
- ✓ The introduction of employee monthly lunch and learn sessions.
- ✓ Staff well-being initiatives including employee-run mindfulness sessions, flexible work options, on-line social events, COVID-19 vaccination leave and mental health days.
- ✓ Health and Well-being staff surveys indicated almost all (97%) employees felt supported in their ability to manage their work during the pandemic.
- ✓ Driving strategic direction with additions to the Senior Management Team and two new Directors recruited to commence in January 2022.
- ✓ Larger premises and purpose-built office facilities secured for occupation in 2022.



## Internal Working Groups

- Rainbow Tick accreditation
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Carbon neutrality
- Wellness Program

## International Board

**Krystian Seibert**, Chair of the Board, LLB, BCom (Econ) (Deakin), MSc Regulation (LSE)

**Professor Anthony Francis Jorm**, BA(Hons) (UQ), MPsych (UNSW), PhD (UNSW), DSc (ANU), FASSA

**Darren Abbruzzese**, B.Comp (Monash), Grad. Dip Applied Finance (Finsia), MBT (UNSW), GAICD

**Nicki Batagol**, B Ec Hons (Monash), Grad Dip Asian Studies (Monash), GAICD, WCLP 2018

**Kathryn Brown**, B.Com, CA (CA ANZ), GAICD

**Marcia Gough**, BA (Swinburne), Grad Dip Human Resources (Monash), Grad Dip Counselling Psychology (Monash), MAPS

**Kerry Ryan**, LLB (UniMelb), BA (UniMelb), FAICD, FGIA

**Benjamin Stretch**, B Ec (Hons) JD (Hons) (Syd), MBA (London, Chicago)

## Executive Team

### Chief Executive Officer

Shannon Anderson

### Director Communications & Engagement

Nicole Pinder

### Director Research & Curriculum

Dr Claire Kelly

### Director Operations

Steve Schuurmans



## Thank you to our staff

We take this opportunity to formally thank the staff and volunteers of Mental Health First Aid Australia. Their dedication, expertise, passion, hard work and skill enables the work that makes a tangible difference to people and communities in Australia and the world over. This year has brought additional challenges that have been handled with grace and professionalism. We acknowledge the extra effort and flexibility that was required to innovate, adapt and move forward during this time.

# Financials:

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the year end 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Revenue</b>			
Government Funding	2	1,449,026	1,381,868
Training		4,665,251	3,205,241
Sales		2,839,048	1,913,029
Royalty Income		1,066,104	1,171,403
Dividend Income		709,580	439,897
Other Income	3	136,229	1,117,461
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>10,865,238</b>	<b>9,228,900</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Cost of Sales		2,099,478	1,557,404
Professional Services Fees		1,047,857	959,669
Bank Fees		52,436	24,760
Rent & Outgoings		46,080	25,985
Depreciation		44,932	37,959
General Office Expenses		583,113	278,416
Amortisation of Right Of Use Asset		115,829	115,816
Inventory write off		50,088	5,616
Other Expenses	4	285,901	188,989
Grant Expenses (excl. Payroll)		30,461	41,857
Payroll		4,220,121	3,112,106
Insurance		18,505	12,278
Audit Fees	5	13,750	13,100
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>8,608,551</b>	<b>6,373,954</b>
<b>Surplus for the period</b>		<b>2,256,687</b>	<b>2,854,946</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
Revaluation of financial assets		1,372,282	(17,732)
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>		<b>3,628,969</b>	<b>2,837,214</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

# Financials:

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	3,186,924	3,447,516
Trade receivables	7	519,776	456,932
Inventory	8	405,860	276,271
Other current assets	9	308,055	149,002
Financial assets	11	-	800,000
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>4,420,615</b>	<b>5,129,721</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	10	518,284	191,080
Financial assets	11	16,766,623	11,872,505
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>17,284,907</b>	<b>12,063,585</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>21,705,522</b>	<b>17,193,306</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	12	748,381	711,785
Unidentified receipts		15,859	11,540
Employee entitlements	13	241,140	189,609
Unexpended government funding		301,903	85,629
Receipts in advance		1,394,460	727,999
Lease Liability		65,206	123,615
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>2,766,949</b>	<b>1,850,177</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Provisions	13	109,907	111,273
Lease Liability		-	32,159
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>109,907</b>	<b>143,432</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>2,876,856</b>	<b>1,993,609</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>18,828,666</b>	<b>15,199,697</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained surplus		17,456,384	14,427,184
Reserves	14	1,372,282	772,513
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>18,828,666</b>	<b>15,199,697</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

\* Full audited financial statements for 2021 are available through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

# Financials: Auditor's Independence Declaration



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**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 60-40 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION ACT 2012 TO THE DIRECTORS OF MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID INTERNATIONAL**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 31 December 2021 there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

McLean Delmo Bentleys Audit Pty Ltd

Martin Fensome  
Partner

Hawthorn  
3 May 2022



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**MENTAL HEALTH  
FIRST AID®**

For Anyone. For Everyone.®