

Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc.

HỘI PHỤ NỮ VIỆT ÚC

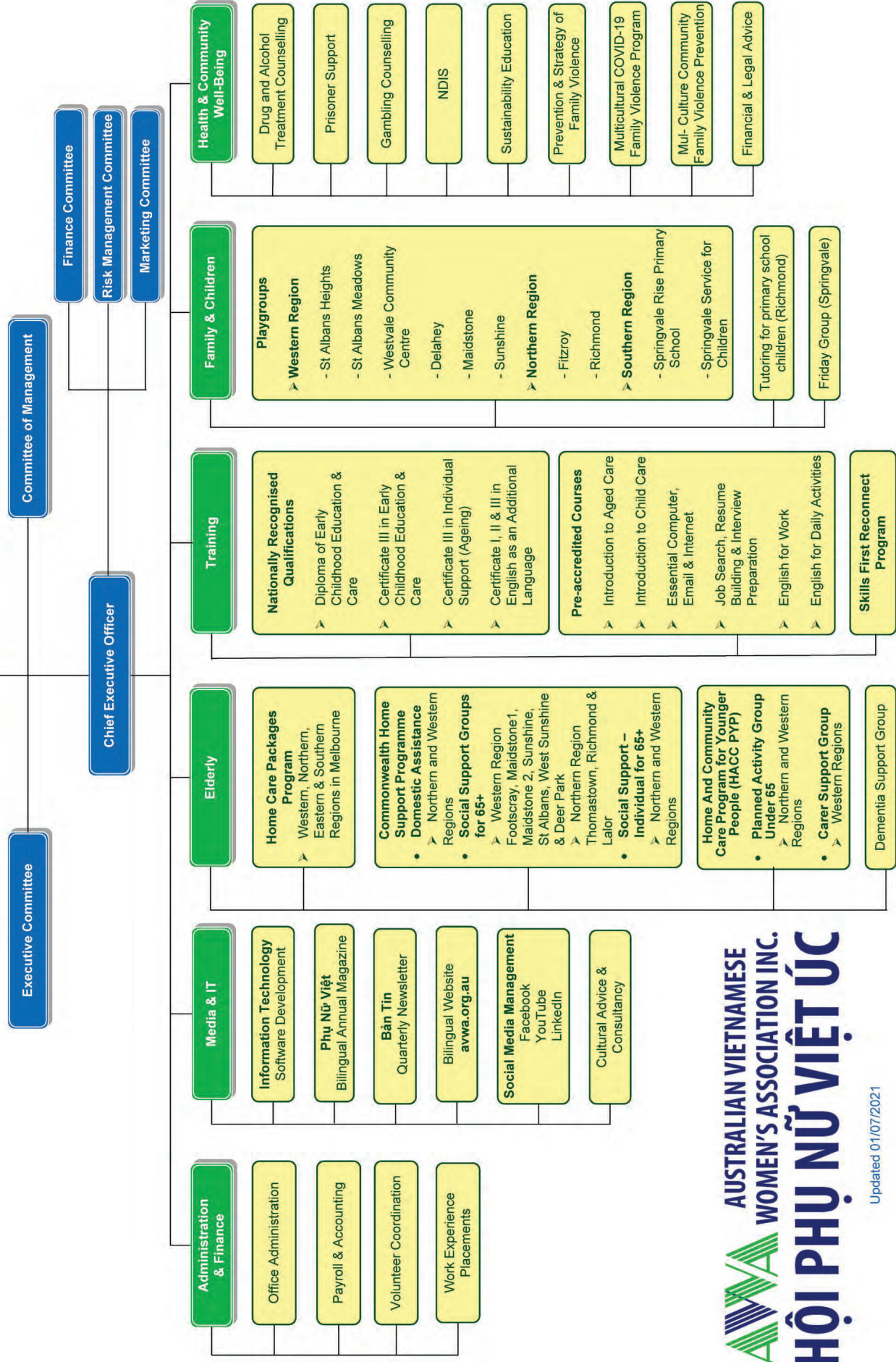
Serving the community since 1983

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Cam Nguyen

2021 Victorian Senior Australian Of The Year



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AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC.

HỘI PHỤ NỮ VIỆT ÚC

Acknowledgements

24 YEARS

Tuong Nguyen

20 YEARS

Nam Nguyen, Thao Ha

15 YEARS

Quynh Hong Nguyen

Huy Luu (5 Years as Operations Manager)

10 YEARS

Hoa Trinh, Chi Thi Kim Nguyen, Thu Trang Ly, Trinh M Chau

5 YEARS

**The Ly, Thuy Bui, Lan Ly, Nhu Phu, Quy Lam, Vy Ha, Cam
Huong Le, Lan Pham, Le Nguyen, Huong Dinh, Minh Quang
Nguyen, Hoa Hong Co Nguyen, Trong D Hoang, Oanh Phi Do,
Nhưng Thị Ngọc Bui, Mai Thuy Ngo, Khanh Thi Nguyen, Oanh
Phuong Tran, Thi Lan Pham, Lieu Nguyen, Phuoc Loi Lam,
Ngoc Hieu Pham, Hoang Anh Truong-Dinh, My Tien Lac**

Thank you for your loyal service

A message from our President



To
Members, Associates, Volunteers, Staff and Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very proud to present to you the Annual Report for the financial year ending on 30/06/2021.

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land. I also acknowledge the significant contributions made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I pay my respect to Elders past, present and future.

Living with the pandemic Covid-19 for the whole year, we are fortunate to have a brave Committee of Management who makes precise decisions and the best CEO to implement them and find the right solutions.

Thank you to everyone for their hard work during these challenging times. It is important that we continue to love and support each other as much as possible. I am grateful to all of you.

Please live your life well. Be safe!

Thanh-Kham Tran-Dang, OAM
President

Treasurer's report



The financial year ending 30 June 2021 was a challenging one as we were in and out of lockdowns. However, the commitment and dedication of our staff had ensured that our organisation continued to thrive despite the repeated restrictions and their challenges.

Our total revenue was \$19.47 million compared to last year \$16.24 million. Our costs jumped from \$14.1 million to \$17.99 million, mostly due to the increased number of staff, equipment and infrastructure to support effective working from home arrangement.

Our auditor for this year is DFKBKM, who declared that AVWA's practice was compliant with the Australian Accounting Standards, and other requirements.

COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc throughout the world and here in Victoria where the number of COVID-19 cases keeps increasing while the number of infected cases and daily deaths in Vietnam soared exponentially. In the spirit of *"good leaves shielding tattered leaves"*, AVWA plans to fundraise for Vietnam. The fundraising activities would take place in the first quarter of the 2021- 2022 financial year.

I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for working hard all year, our Committee of Management for their time and effort, our members for their support and all our clients for making this a successful year.

Yen Bui, OAM
Treasurer

A message from our Secretary and CEO



When COVID-19 first hit in March 2020, our organisation had to scramble to quickly make necessary arrangements for all office staff to work from home. Staff worked entirely on-line during lockdowns and in hybrid mode between lockdowns. In the year 2020-2021, as the pandemic became the new normal, staff had time to refine their working methods. Staff and clients worked together to co-design innovative, improved and more suitable services and activities.

Our organisation did not apply for Jobkeeper as we knew that our total turnover for the year would not fall on account of the increasing number of clients coming to us for help with home care packages.

Information about COVID from both federal and state departments was promptly and faithfully conveyed to our staff, clients, members and community. Instructions and precautions were carefully implemented and we are proud to report an absolutely clean sheet.

With the unprecedented COVID 19 challenge, we had to be nimble: we moved effectively and efficiently from strategic to scenario planning. As per the Treasurer's report, our total turnover increased by more than 30% for the year which is a remarkable result. The small decrease in surplus was due mainly to the increase in COVID related costs such as equipment, OHS and financial support for staff and clients.

COVID 19 caused delay in the development of both our new Braybrook and Springvale offices. However, as the year drew to a close, work reached completion in Springvale and the \$0.5m infrastructure grant from the Victorian Government towards the total costs was discharged on time.

What I, as the Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the organisation, had not planned for was me receiving the award of *2021 Victorian Senior Australian Of The Year* last October and being invited to Canberra for *Australia Day* to meet with the P.M. and other VIPs. In addition, two members of our Committee of Management, President Kham Tran Dang and Hon. Treasurer Yen Bui were both awarded OAM on the Queen's Birthday in June.

2020-2021 is indeed an unforgettable year. I would like to thank all our members (including the President and CoM members), clients, staff, associates and stakeholders for their support and cooperation during the year.

May we all have a better and safer 2021-2022.

Cam Nguyen

Secretary and Chief Executive Officer
2021 VIC Senior Australian Of The Year

Home Care Packages Program (HCP)

The 2020-2021 financial year was a challenging year for the HCP Program with the responsibility for providing care to an increased number of vulnerable consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Victoria.

The number of packages as of 30/6/2021 had increased by 21% compared to twelve months earlier. We served a total of 886 clients from level 1 to level 4 across all Melbourne Metropolitan regions. In order to meet the needs of the growing number of consumers, staff recruitment, induction and training formed a growing part of our activities.

The percentage of our HCP consumers who lived with dementia was quite significant: 20% were receiving Dementia Supplement. The special needs of these consumers and their special care goals were identified and reflected in individual care plans. Staff actively attended training to improve their knowledge and better support their clients.

The Coronavirus pandemic greatly affected the Program during the first half of the financial year. Many clients cancelled direct services due to fear of contracting the virus. Infection control was our main focus during this year. To ensure the safety of clients and staff, the Program continued applying all COVID-19 safety measures based on the Government and AVWA directions. These included mandatory training of COVID-19 infection control for all staff, training on how and when to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) and other training modules provided by the Department of Health. Guidelines in the **“COVIDSafe Guide for Home Care Provider”** were carefully discussed and implemented by our team. Our Case managers consulted with clients and family carers to have COVID Emergency Plan for each individual client to ensure that relevant arrangements were in place for emergency cases. Direct care workers and case managers were required to strictly follow all COVIDSafe procedures. Letters were sent out to clients to update information about COVID-19 from the Department and to inform clients about current COVIDSafe measures applied by the Program.

Continuous improvement is one of the core values of our organisation. Our HCP consumers enjoyed culturally and linguistically appropriate direct care, additional purchased services and intensive case management in accordance with their agreed care plan. We got ongoing consumer engagement through feedback during phone contacts, home visits, letters, and consumer surveys. HCP staff attended professional development meetings and training sessions to improve the quality of service provision. Key topics of this year were *Infection control, Manual handling, Wellness and reablement, Caring for people with dementia and Elder abuse prevention*. Online meetings, training and webinars were the main venues for staff communication and training.

The Program conducted a Consumer survey in November 2020. Ninety-one per cent (91%) of those consumers who returned the survey - always or most of the time trusted the Home Care Package Program to do the right thing by them. Eighty-eight per cent (88%) rated care attitudes of staff as excellent or good. Eighty-six per cent (86%) confirmed that, during COVID-19, the services they required had been always or most of the time arranged in a timely manner. Ninety-two per cent (92%) were highly satisfied or satisfied when using AVWA HCP services.

Due to cultural and linguistic barriers, there were still a lot of senior people of Vietnamese background in need of aged care support who did not know about services available to help them live at home longer. We continued assisting the elderly in the Vietnamese community with referrals to *My Aged Care* for support services as appropriate.

The financial year 2020-2021 was a significant and memorable year with great challenges and important innovations. We are very proud of the quality of services we have been providing to seniors from Vietnamese background throughout the last 17 years. We remain strongly committed to excellence and continuous improvement in our practice.

Our HCP Program received many complimentary letters from our consumers and their family, expressing their appreciation and gratitude for the care and services provided by our team.

Home Care Packages Program (continued)



"Hello Chi Bao Hiep Ly,

I was meant to email you earlier, but forgot how many issues had to be wrapped up with my father's passing, and still we have a few things to finalise.

We wish to sincerely thank you personally for the support that you and AWVA aged care had provided us since AWVA took my father Mong Kien under your care.

There is no doubt, without your support and coordination of services provided in the last 4-5 years by AWVA, my father's and my family's quality of life, as we live together, would not be possible.

Your support and guidance had been much more than that mandated by general Aged Care guidelines. We cannot put into words the gratitude for the genuine empathy and compassion from AWVA, it meant a lot to us that you and the AWVA team attended my fathers funeral.

It must be difficult for yourself to meet and support many lovely elderly people towards the end of their lives, and to see them pass. However, the help and services you provide give them (my father included) a dignified and meaningful life.

Chi Ly, you should be very proud of what you do for the community, and the community is lucky to have AWVA aged care services. Your dedication and leadership have forged AWVA into an extremely valuable asset and service to the Vietnamese community, I look forward to continue working with you looking after and supporting the elderly in our community

On behalf of my late father, and family thank you so much.

Yours sincerely,

Vincent and family"

Home Care Packages Program (continued)

"Dear Anh,

We would like to thank you very much for all your help, care and support, we very much appreciate all the help and care you did for our mum.

We know that we asked you a lot of things and I, Tram, am not always calm when solving the problems, but you are always patient to explain everything to me.

My mum was in terminal illness and she was very weak. However, we noticed that she was happy when having support from you and Thuy Hoang. That meant a lot to us.

We would also like to thank you and your team and all carers for giving our mum Phi Nguyen good care. Thank you very much.

Tram."

"Hi Trang!

Chuc mung nam moi! Hope you are well rested after all the festive breaks! How fast the year went and it's 2021 already. I wanted to thank you for your help in making life better for my mum and helping me with her care. It has made such a huge difference to both our lives!

Thank you for organising the Zoom meetings for the elderly. I can see that they all enjoy them very much! Please forward my thanks to the others involved in making it happen as well (especially the organizer running the meetings on Tuesday from 10am)!

Kind regards,

Helen."

"Hi Uyen,

I am writing this email on behalf of my mum, Anh Thi Tran, I would like to thank you for all the hard work and diligent effort in helping her over the years.

On every occasion when I visited my mum in Melbourne, she always mentioned your name and expressed her gratitude and appreciation for the assistance and support you provided her.

Last year, our mum went through surgery and she seemed to be weaker. Having said this, we noticed that she was happy, energetic and attended a number of exercise activities which meant a lot to us.

Again, we thank you for your assistance and support for our mum. They have made all the difference. Cheers,

Andy"

"This organisation provides high quality and caring support workers. So thankful to have this kind of organisation offering a range of support services for the Vietnamese community. I can have peace of mind knowing that my mum will be properly cared for by a person that understands her and can communicate with her in Vietnamese. Communications with all office staff have been very pleasant too as my mum's needs changed over time.

Tony"

Home Care Packages Program (continued)

Our HCP team:

Aged Services Manager – Qui Ma

HCP Coordinators – Hue Van (West), Thuy Nguyen (North, East & South)

Case Managers

West – Huong Dinh, Huy Do, Thao Ha (*cum Assistant Coordinator*), Van Ha (*cum Assistant Coordinator*), Thao Hoang, Queenie Lam, Lan Ly, Tai Mai, Dung Nguyen (*cum Assistant Coordinator*), Linh Nguyen, Lan Pham, Phuong Anh Pham, Thao Pham, Chuong Phan, Tuyen To, Ngoc Tran, Tam Hoang, Hien Le, Jade Nguyen.

North East South – Lien Huong Nguyen (*cum Assistant Coordinator*), Uyen Do, Quynh Luc, Quynh Lan Pham-Owens, Michael Luu, Trang Huynh, Kim Vo, Phuong Tran, Uyen Truong, Nhi Dang, Tuan Truong, Quynh Huong Nguyen (*cum Assistant Coordinator*), Bao Hiep Ly, Thuc Anh Nguyen, Cam Huong Le, Le Nguyen, Duy Tran, Vee Nguyen, Tram Mai, Van Do, Trang Vu, Hong Phan

Administration Officers

West – Van Ha (*Team Leader*), Anh Ninh, Khue Phan, Trieu Dinh, Loan Nguyen, Helen Tran

North East South – Anh-Thu Nguyen (*Team Leader*), Nga Lam, Hoai Linh Tran, Van Hoang, Tuan Truong, Van Do

Rostering Officers

West – Van Ha, Ngoc Nguyen, Khue Phan, Minh Ta, My Nguyen, Nhi Tu, Linh Tran

North East South – Ha Nguyen, Hoai Linh Tran, Nga Le, Thao Tran, Van Do

Purchasing Officers

West – Van Ha, Ngan Dinh, Giang Nguyen, Anh Ninh,

North East South – Nhu Nguyen, Nga Le

Care Workers

West – Loan Bui, Tram Bui, Hong Chau, Trinh Chau, Thu Dang, Tien Dang, Huong Dang, Tham Do, Thuan Doan, Oanh Duong, Thong Hua, Thuan Huynh, Loi Lam, Phuong Lam, Thu Lam, Tu Thanh Lam, Thao Le, Phong Le, Ngan Luong, Thanh Mai, Mai Ngo, Chau Ngo, Ngan Ngo, Bac Nguyen, Nguyen Han, Ngoc Anh Nguyen, Tan Nguyen, Trang Nguyen, Tuyet Hoa Nguyen, Khanh Nguyen, Liem Nguyen, Lieu Nguyen, Ngoc Thu Nguyen, Sang Nguyen, Xuan Nguyen, Hieu Pham, Lanh Pham, Nhat Lam Pham, Phao Pham, Phuong Phan, Truong Sanh Phan, Tham Phan, Mai Quach, Binh Thai, Thu Nguyet Thoi, Dieu Tran, Tran Tran, Ai Binh Tran, Hoang Tran, Linh Tran, Loan Tran, Oanh Tran, Hiep Trinh, Hoang-Anh Truong Dinh, Y Vo

North East South – Dung Nguyen, Tuyet Nguyen, Thuy Hoang, Trang Le, Sau Le, Quoc Huynh, Huong Phung, Minh Nguyen, Nu Tran, Hoi Tran, Tu Nguyen, Xuan Cao, Ann Yen Do, Kimmy Le, Le Dang, Loan Hoang, Tien Pham, Duong Nguyen, An Nguyen, Nhung Nguyen, Hanh Nguyen, Thu Vu, Hung Long, Chi Nguyen, Trang Ly, Thi Thu Tran, Kim Ngo, Huong Nguyen, Liem Tran, Huyen Nguyen, Ha Hoang, Hoa Nguyen, Trong Hoang, Lam Tran-Ingram, Oanh Do, Nhung Bui, Linh Huynh, Han Ngo, Vicky Van Ma, Hang Nguyen, Tuyet Nguyen-Liljegren, Nguyet Tran, Lien Pham, Thi Huynh, Hoa Pham, Lien Nguyen, Vy Le, Nguyet Tran (2), Chau Tran, Quan Quach, Thu Do, Thao Nguyen, Thao Pham, Cung Huynh, Anh Nguyen, Loan Chau-Reniers, Phai Nguyen, Kiem Phan, An Boi Giang, Thao (Helen) Nguyen, Quynh Tran, Trang Ha, Thuy Pham, Thuy Dao

Dementia Support Group (West)

Van Ha (*Facilitator*), Helen Tran (*Assistant*)

Commonwealth Home Support Program & HACC PYP Social Support Groups/Planned Activity Groups (PAGs)

In the 2020-2021 financial year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our *Planned Activity Group Program (PAG)* had gone through several lockdowns. However, at the end of June, the number of participants in our PAG groups had increased steadily, reaching a total of **310**. Total service hours provided for our main clients from CHSP and HACC PYP not only met requirements, they even exceeded those in the previous year. In addition, the Program also extended its reach to clients who were receiving care packages such as HCP or NDIS.

Online activities for PAG groups have been created by our hard-working staff team since the early days of the pandemic, which at first seemed to be only temporary for a few weeks. However, the very diverse and interesting online activities were still going on after several months.

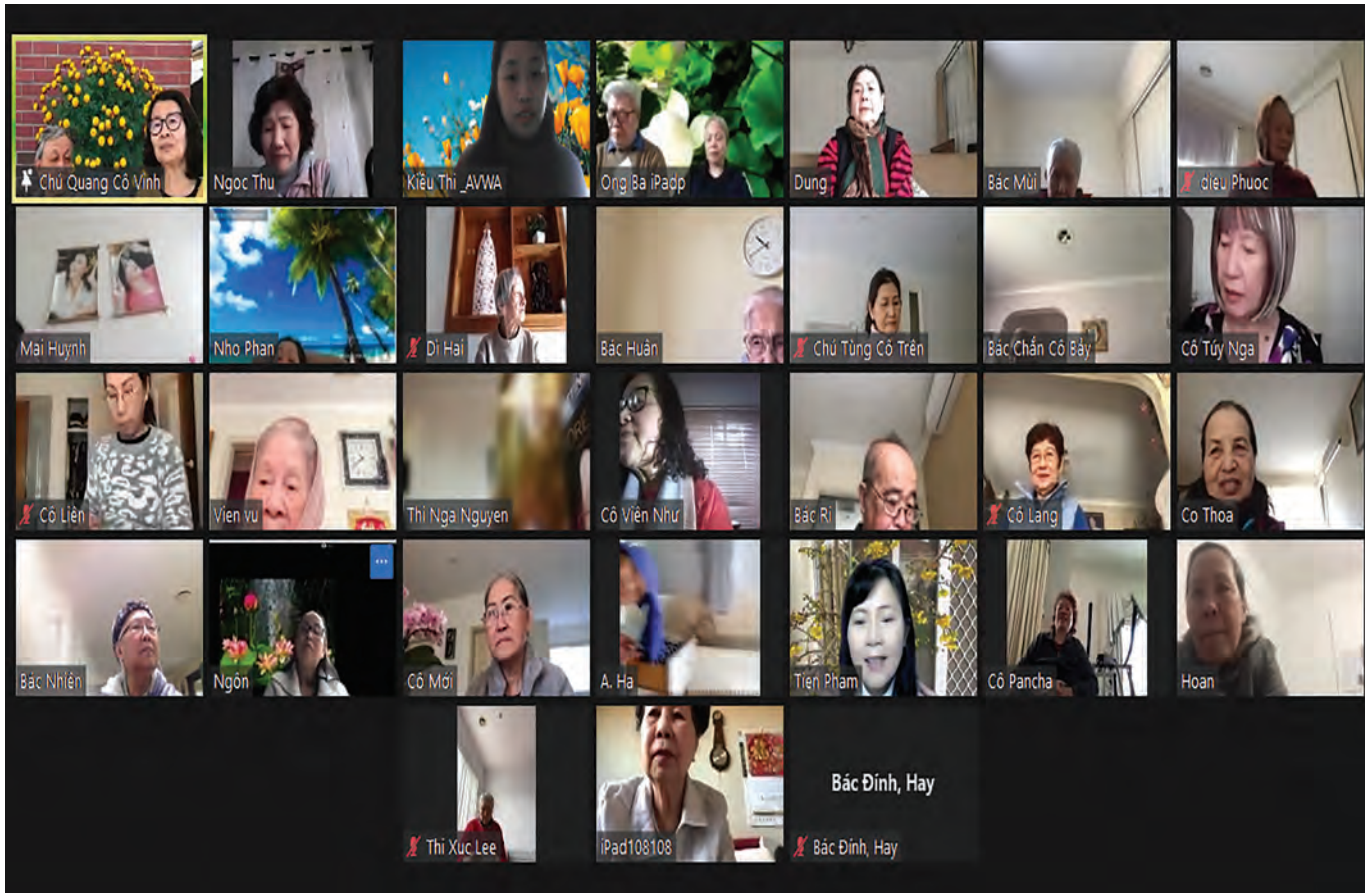
In the first five months of the financial year (July to early December 2020), about 80 per cent of the group members participated in online activities. The Program started a few additional online groups to support clients and relieve their loneliness during the lockdown. They are two online groups for HCP clients living in the East and South of Melbourne, an online karaoke group and a mental health support group (now renamed: "*Healthy and Happy Living group*").

In the early months of 2021, as the pandemic situation was getting gradually better, the government allowed visitors to attend public places. Our PAG staff quickly set a date to resume group activities at centres and provided clients with all necessary information re. COVID-Safe plan details in order for them to stay safe when gathering in groups are implemented with practices such as limiting the number of participants, COVID-19 screening questionnaire, body temperature checking, scanning QR code for contact tracing, social distancing, frequent hands washing and wearing mask properly, etc. Staff also carried spare masks for clients, disinfected surfaces before sharing equipment and chairs. To ensure that group participants still had delicious, nutritious and safe lunches, lunch portions were carefully prepared and packed in sealed containers to minimize the risk of contamination.

When the government started the first phase of vaccinations for the elderly in mid-March, our staff regularly encouraged and reminded clients to get vaccinated. As a result, by the end of June vaccination rates for our clients were very high compared with general rates in Victoria: about 80% for clients over 65 years and 75% for those under 65. As to our staff and volunteers, nearly 95 % had been vaccinated.



Commonwealth Home Support Program & HACC PYP Social Support Groups/Planned Activity Groups (PAGs)



The continuous lockdowns highlighted the agile and creative response of our staff in maintaining the continuity of group activities. Especially our elderly ability to adapt to the changing situation was amazing. They were always in a state of readiness either online or onsite whenever they received news announcements from the government. Information about COVID 19 was also regularly updated by staff so that the elderly would know in advance where and what program will be on next week. They were very confident to change from on-site to online activities. In Zoom rooms, clients still enjoyed chair based exercise, singing, telling funny stories, quizzes, bingo and information sessions about elderly health. Activity programs were still fully implemented as our PAG staff managed to find activity types suitable for both online and face to face environments.

In the consumer survey in December 2020, the program received a lot of compliments from clients on its quality and staff performance and skills, especially the enthusiasm, dedication and creativity of some PAG staff.

All PAG staff and volunteers obtained certificates of COVID-19 training. Many of them attended the Manual Handling training held in May 2021, as well as other online training related to aged care. At the beginning of 2021, PAG staff had a special meeting to discuss the specialisation of the PAG workforce in order to promote individual strengths and abilities. There will be many exciting changes to our Program in the upcoming financial year.

PAGs Team:

Aged Care Services Manager: Qui Ma

Coordinator: Nam Nguyen

Team Leader: Ngat Ho (Natalie)

Staff: Minh Bui, Nhan Huynh, Cam Sau Le, Kieu Nguyen, Tien Pham, Kieu Thi, Charlene Ho, Thuan Tran, Ngan Phan, Loan Nguyen, Thuong Nguyen, My Tien Lac, Tien Dang, Huong Lam, Tham Do, Xuan Doan, My Huynh, Phuong Tran

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

Domestic Assistance

AVWA provides domestic assistance to older people through *Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)* across the Western and Northern regions.

In 2020-2021, **4,908** hours of service were delivered to **297** clients. During the pandemic, the program highlighted the needs for cleanliness, hygiene and safety, supporting the elderly with general domestic chores such as cleaning, washing, changing bed linen and unaccompanied shopping.

Service delivery was based on the principle of wellness and reablement which focused on promoting clients' independence. Clients were encouraged to perform light tasks to maintain and/or improve their functional capabilities in order to increase their ability to remain living independently and safely at home. Staff worked with them to identify what they were able to do such as dusting furniture, wiping tables, washing dishes, etc. and what they needed help with such as vacuuming, mopping, bathroom cleaning...

Continuity of services was maintained during the pandemic with a range of COVID safety measures, protecting both clients and care workers. All care workers attended infection control training and focused on hygiene practice. Adequate protective equipment had been provided to care workers. COVID safety screening questions were asked carefully before each service to minimise risks of COVID transmission. **Wellbeing checks were carried out by dedicated staff with isolated clients.**

Regular reassessments had identified clients with increasing and complex care needs and referrals were made to *My Aged Care* for support plan reviews as CHSP was not designed for people with intensive care needs. Over 40 clients needing support other than domestic assistance were reassessed and 18 among them were eligible for appropriate care through *Home Care Packages Program*.

Due to several lockdowns, some services were cancelled as per *Department of Health* guidelines or put on hold as per clients' requests during the pandemic challenging time. However, by June 2021, 95% of clients had resumed their services, reassured by AVWA COVID management plan and the high percentage of care workers being vaccinated.

Our CHSP team:

Aged Care Services Manager: Qui Ma

HCP Coordinator West: Hue Van

Service Coordination Officers: Lan Pham, Thuc Anh Nguyen, Helen Tran, Jade Ngoc Nguyen

Admin Officers: Loan Nguyen, Trieu Dinh, Hoai Linh Tran

297 Clients



Training

As a Learn Local Provider and Registered Training Organization (RTO) since 1997, we have aimed to provide skills and knowledge to people of both genders and all ages who want to improve their English language proficiency, to enter or re-enter the workforce, or to improve their career and employment prospects. 2020-2021 was a challenging year for our RTO due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. However, we achieved important milestones during this difficult time. We became a 'one-stop shop' training service provider whilst achieving a 2-year funding contract for our Skills First Reconnect program. Furthermore, the number of younger students enrolling for English courses increased tremendously in recent years. Lastly, the new Springvale office presents ample opportunities to expand our training in the Southeastern region.

The most noticeable achievement was that we provide a "one-stop shop" training service to participants with non-training and training barriers. With the diverse services available at AVWA and our partners, we successfully supported 52 disadvantaged and vulnerable participants to engage in education and/or employment. For example, a Skills First Reconnect participant was able to be fully funded to have one-on-one support from emotional, family violence, alcohol or gambling services to English, computer, vocational and job search training programs. The above results could be achieved thanks to close cooperation and partnership with internal stakeholders including HCP, AOD, Gambling and Prisoner Support programs as well as external community groups.



With the excellent outcomes of our Skills First Reconnect program delivery in previous years, we kept receiving a 2-year Skills First Reconnect funding contract to support 80 participants and had the opportunity to renew for another 2 years. This enabled us to continuously support participants to get them back on their feet in life through our "one-stop shop" training service. We registered 40 participants in the first five months of 2021 and they have been extensively supported to re-engage in the training programs and employment. One of our participants, H.T.C.P shared her story while she attended the program:

She became homeless and widowed after a few months living in Australia in 2018. She and her baby were kicked out of the house. Her relatives allowed her to stay with them temporarily. Despite living with her relatives, she felt stressed and lonely. For the last 3 years, she has received mental health treatment regularly. She had many barriers such as mental health and financial issues, and limited family and social network to support her.

Since she participated in the Skills First Reconnect program at AVWA from January 2021, she has been provided with:

- ☞ *Wrap-around support services: mental health sessions, career planning consultation, police check application, house application follow-up and many in-group coaching activities to help her connect with the community.*

Training (continued)

- ☞ *Free training programs: Introduction to Aged Care course and Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) towards her learning and employment. She also received financial supports for her travelling costs during these courses.*
- ☞ *Employment opportunity: She has volunteered at AVWA's PAG to help aged people in their weekly group activities since May, 2021.*

Through our "one-stop shop" training service, she now has the motivation to learn and work, and look forward to re-engaging in the community.

Another bright point was that the number of students enrolled in English courses has more than doubled in recent years while the average age of students has dropped with more than two thirds (70%) of students aged under 50 years in the period 2020-2021. This trend showed that younger learners wanted to improve their English skills to seek further education and employment pathways.

As a Registered Training Organization, one of the challenges we are faced with is to meet frequent changes in our nationally recognized training qualifications. The contents of our 6 accredited training programs including 84 subjects have been changed almost every 3 years. We are now planning for the reaccreditation of our *Certificate III* and *Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care*.

Last but not least, our new Springvale office provides opportunities for us to expand the training activities in the Southeast region. We have three large and well-equipped classrooms and a practice room for aged care and childcare students. This new space will allow us to organize more courses to meet the high demand for learning in the area.

Training Management Team

- Dr. Phuong Ngo, Training Coordinator.
- Dr. Huyen Bui, Training Development Officer, EAL Trainer & Skills First Reconnect Program Leader.
- Trang Do, Training Administration Officer
- Helen Nguyen, Training Administration & Skills First Reconnect Program Officer.
- Ninh Tran, Training and Skills First Reconnect Program Officer & Student Placement Officer (Northern and Western regions)
- Huong Phan, Training & Skills First Reconnect Program Officer; Student Placement Officer (Southern and Eastern regions)
- Trong Hung Nguyen, Training Officer

Training and Assessment Team

- Minh Lam, Trainer - Certificate III in Individual Support (Aging)
- Thao Do, Trainer - Certificate III in Individual Support (Aging)
- Seema Maini, Trainer - Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Ruchika Vohra, Trainer - Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Tracy Thao Nguyen, Trainer - Certificate I, II & III in EAL
- Raheleh Davaripour, Trainer - Certificate I & II in EAL
- Jenny Nguyen, Trainer - Certificate I & II in EAL
- Giang Lam Hoang, Trainer - Certificate I in EAL
- Nhu Nguyen, Pre-accredited English Trainer

Illicit Drug and Alcohol Treatment Counselling Project

This project which had been operating for over 20 years, was greatly impacted by the pandemic since April 2020. The AOD staff was supported to work from home during much of the second half of the financial year. Most counselling sessions were done via phone, except in some special circumstances.

Due to Covid 19, the *Drug Education Program* at DPFC could not be run as in previous years therefore the AOD staff switched to providing information sessions either face to face or online to the Vietnamese student groups in the AVWA's Training Program.

The project provided in total 95 episodes of care including 86 completed cases of consultancy and care counselling, and 9 non-exited and continuing counselling cases across the metropolitan regions: North-West Metro (88), South- Eastern Metro (7). During this financial year, the number of female clients increased to 39 cases.

Counselling and cultural/psychological support were provided to help clients change their views on - and use of - drugs and alcohol. A lot of advocacy work was also done to support our clients with reports/support letters sent to agencies such as *Magistrates and Drug Courts, Corrections Victoria, Legal Aid, educational institutions, Community Justice panel* and other AOD Agencies (*cohealth, Odyssey House Victoria* etc.). Family mediation was also provided when required.

Through Vietnamese media, the project also provided to the Vietnamese community related information viz "*10 medical reasons why you can't sleep*" published in *Phụ Nữ Việt Magazine* 2021 and *Amphetamine – an article from Alcohol and Drug Foundation* - updated on 15th December 2020.

Coordinator: Tuong Nguyen

Clinician/Counsellor: Tuong Nguyen

Mười lý do y khoa làm bạn bị mất ngủ.



Dẫn nhập

Gần nguyên cả một năm 2020 toàn thế giới bị hỗn loạn do dịch COVID-19. Dù tương đối nhẹ hơn nhiều so với các nước công nghiệp Tây phương tuy nhiên ảnh hưởng của dịch lên kinh tế, xã hội và con người ở Úc cũng không kém phần nặng nề. Đơn cử

trần trọc, mất ngủ là cái chắc do ... không biết lúc này em ở đâu? hay đang làm gì? Còn các anh chị xồn xồn ở Melbourne thì mất các buổi họp bạn ở nhà, cà phê - quán xá, karaoke v.v... Các bạn trẻ hơn thì chẳng thể nhóm bạn tán gẫu, chơi thể thao, đi pub piéc, nhảy đầm lúc về đêm trong lúc đó cũng

việc ngủ nghê của bạn. Giấc ngủ không đầy đủ sẽ làm bạn dễ gắt gỏng, có một số nguồn con có thể gây mất ngủ như dưới đây:

Đái tháo

Một bác sĩ chuyên về niệu khoa cho là "*trong khi đái tháo xảy ra nhiều hơn ở phụ nữ, thì hàng triệu người cả nam lẫn nữ có một số*

Indo-Chinese Prisoners Support Program

The Indochinese Prisoner Support Program provides culturally appropriate individual support, liaison, and advocacy to Indochinese prisoners and their families. It has two components: pre-release and post-release support.

Pre-release support

Pre-release support is provided to both sentenced prisoners, and prisoners in remand.

Regular prison visits are conducted according to the following schedule:

Prison	Frequency
Melbourne Assessment Prison (MAP)	Twice per week
Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC)	Twice per month
Port Phillip Prison (PPP)	Twice per month
Barwon	Monthly
Marngoneet	Monthly

During these visits, the support worker provides ongoing support for prisoners serving long sentences, and their families. The worker can liaise with prison staff to address needs such as enrolment in education programs, filling in forms for telephone use and family contact, requesting personal items for prisoners who have no family support, referring prisoners to internal services, and providing informal counselling when needed. The program can also provide support by communicating with lawyers, and writing support letters for court cases.

The support program assists with reconnecting the prisoners with their families, whether intra-state, interstate or internationally. The hours of this service are flexible, to accommodate time differences when supporting family members abroad. The workers can provide families with information about the prisoners' whereabouts, as well as passing on prisoners' requests for phone numbers and spending money. In the last year, the need for this service increased significantly due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The program can refer prisoners and families to culturally appropriate services as required.

The program also delivers sporting and cultural events such as *Lunar New Year* and *Full Moon Festivals* at MAP, MRC, PPP, Barwon Prison, Marngoneet Correctional Centre, Tarrengower Prison and Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC).

Post-Release Support

Post-release support offers individual support to newly released Indochinese prisoners.

The program can refer offenders to a wide range of community services assisting with legal matters, healthcare, mental health, alcohol and drug management, vocational training, employment, gambling, and accommodation.

Workers can also assist offenders with accessing services such as Centrelink, housing, employment, Legal Aid, and health care. They can also provide emotional and practical support to offenders and their families, either in person or on the phone, as well as perform outreach as required.

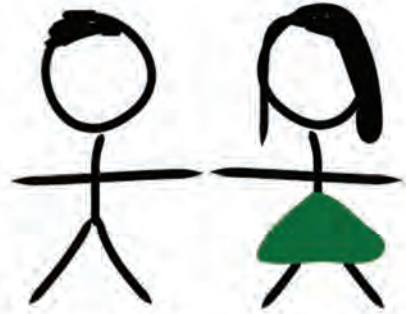
Achievements

Total from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021:

Prisoners who received individual support (in-person, phone, or Zoom)	253 (208 new)
Families that received support	253
Prison visits	18
Individuals who received post-release support	34

Indo-Chinese Prisoners Support Program (continued)

253 Clients



In the current financial year, neither the Lunar New Year Festivals nor the Full Moon Festivals were held, due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many post-release clients have requested material and financial aid. Because of this, we have continued to provide the \$200 social support to each client, as authorised by our CEO, Mrs Cam Nguyen. Mrs Nguyen stated, “Our aim is to assist our most vulnerable clients. With \$200 to spend, they can return to the community as a member, not as a pariah. Moreover, to take clients to socialise over coffee and cake will make them feel equal and relaxed”.

Case study

The worker met An, a 45-year-old prisoner of Vietnamese background at MRC and MCC.

During his time in prison, An would occasionally come and speak with the worker. An stated that he came to Australia when he was 10 years old with his parents and four siblings from a refugee camp in the Philippines. Since he turned 16, An was frequently in trouble for school truancy and using drugs. He married a woman from Vietnam when he was 32. His daughter was born one year later. An then relapsed and was divorced two years later, when his daughter was nearly three years old. After he was divorced, An moved out and did not have any contact with his family for 10 years. During that time, An was in and out of prison several times for drugs and related offences. Whenever he was out of prison, he was homeless and would immediately seek out his friends for shelter. These friends were also using, therefore perpetuating An’s drug habit. He would usually be back in prison soon after release.

This time was different. An was released during the lockdown and he could not find any of his friends, so he decided to call AVWA for help with accommodation.

During the first session, An told the worker his story, and the reason why he was homeless. He said that he missed his family and most of all, he wanted to see his daughter who would be eight years old by now. However, his family was no longer living at their previous residence, where they used to live together with his parents. An told the worker that his family used to go to a local church in southeast Melbourne. The worker then contacted the parish priest at that church. Fortunately, the priest knew An’s parents and gave them the worker’s number. An’s parents immediately called the worker, and were more than happy to welcome An back into their home, and to help An see his daughter.

The worker will continue to support An with his needs, including a referral for AOD counselling.

Gambling Counselling

The AVWA Gambling Counselling Program is targeting Vietnamese Victorians experiencing gambling harm in the western and northern metropolitan regions of Victoria. We provide culturally and linguistically appropriate counselling and social support groups to Vietnamese clients who encounter difficulties gaining access to mainstream services due to linguistic and cultural barriers.

Our activities include direct-clients and non-direct clients.

Direct client activities

Due to the unstable circumstances of COVID 19, we have been making timely and appropriate adjustments in delivering our services to accommodate the demands of the situation. We use hybrid methods of delivering counselling sessions to our clients: face-to-face, telephone and Zoom.

Since December 2020 we have been running an online social support group which is co-facilitated by the *Footscray Narcotics Anonymous's* facilitator. The group runs fortnightly via Zoom. The participants are encouraged to take turns chairing the group in order to increase their sense of empowerment in their recovery journey.

After attending our counselling sessions and social support group, clients disclosed that they felt less stressed, being supported by non-judgmental professionals. Clients also reported that they gained a greater sense of control over their gambling behaviour, significantly reduced their gambling urge, and developed coping strategies to prevent future relapse. Clients also attempted to improve their relationships with their family members, who were affected by their gambling habits. A number of clients were willing to participate in the community project as lived experience and proactively contribute inputs to the project to raise awareness about gambling and its associated harms in the community.

Our referrals came from various sources, including: *Corrections Victoria*, *Prisons*, *Gamblers' Help* flyers, financial counselling services, Family Violence services, AOD services, *Indochinese Prisoner Support services*, *Crown Casino*, legal offices, other *Gambler's Help* agencies, and word-of-mouth.

Non-client activity

We strengthened our relationships with other organisations which ran programs targeting the Vietnamese community. In particular, the organisations we worked closely with included but were not limited to *Brimbank Council*, *Neighbourhood Houses*, *Brimbank Libraries*, *Libraries After Dark*, *Relationships Australia Victoria*, *Federation of Chinese Associations*, *IPC Health*, *cohealth*, *Settlement Services International*, *The Vietnamese Community in Australia*, and *Narcotics Anonymous*. We also strengthened our relationships with our AVWA's internal services including *Drug and Alcohol*, *Family Violence*, *Indochinese Prisoner Support*, *Playgroups*, and *PAGs*. We collaborated with these organisations and programs to exchange knowledge, develop resources, co-design and co-run groups, workshops and information sessions.

We worked very closely with *Brimbank City Council* and *Libraries After Dark* to produce different resources for our social media campaign, including videos, articles, radio interviews, posters and animation. These products aimed to raise awareness about gambling and gambling harms in the Vietnamese community, destigmatise help-seeking, and promote alternative activities rather than gambling. These materials would be published on various platforms, including but not limited to AVWA's websites and Facebook page, *Brimbank City Council* website, *Inside Gambling* magazine, and Vietnamese newspapers to get to a wider audience. We aim to maintain the long-term benefits of these resources to the community.

We also worked closely with *Inside Gambling* magazine and translated evidence-based and valuable articles regarding gambling written by industry professionals, so the Vietnamese community could benefit from them.

We also worked closely with the media, such as *ABC News*, *SBS News*, and *Star Weekly* to discuss gambling in the Vietnamese community, gambling as a pathway to prisons, stigmas of help-seeking in the Vietnamese community and to promote contact information of available supporting services.

Gambling Counselling (continued)

NIỀM TIN VÀ HY VỌNG

Cờ bạc là một hình thức giải trí khá phổ biến trong cộng đồng người Việt. Đôi khi, cũng có những người tìm đến cờ bạc để giải tỏa những căng thẳng hoặc những cảm xúc tiêu cực mà họ có thể gặp phải trong cuộc sống. Càng chơi nhiều, họ dần dần bắt đầu chịu những ảnh hưởng xấu bởi cờ bạc. Vì mặc cảm và xấu hổ, họ không dám chia sẻ những khó khăn này với ai và từ từ đánh mất hy vọng vào một cuộc sống tốt đẹp hơn.

Chúng tôi, những chuyên viên trị liệu tâm lý người Việt chuyên về cờ bạc, sẽ lắng nghe và giúp bạn đưa ra quyết định vì lợi ích tốt nhất của bạn.

Chúng tôi có thể cùng bạn tìm hiểu nguyên nhân của việc chơi cờ bạc, những yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến việc chơi cờ bạc của bạn, và tìm kiếm những hoạt động giải trí lành mạnh khác thay thế cho cờ bạc.

Chúng tôi tin một cuộc sống mới với những điều tốt đẹp luôn ở phía trước khi bạn mạnh mẽ tìm kiếm sự giúp đỡ

Dịch vụ này hoàn toàn **Miễn Phí & Bảo Mật** và có thể được áp dụng với bất cứ ai bị ảnh hưởng bởi cờ bạc bao gồm vợ/chồng, gia đình và bạn bè

Để biết thêm chi tiết về các dịch vụ trợ giúp các vấn đề liên quan đến cờ bạc, xin quý vị vui lòng liên lạc:

Trụ sở Richmond

30-32 Lennox St, Richmond VIC 3121

Tel: 03 9428 9078

Văn phòng Braybrook

7/6-12 South Road, Braybrook VIC 3019

Tel: 03 9396 1922



Parallel Learning Playgroups

When Melbourne's hard lockdown started on a chilly day in early July 2020, no one knew it would last for 112 days and that was when it took a mental toll on every single one of us. For staff who work in the community sector like ourselves, besides coping with the stress and obvious challenge of not being able to physically do much including going to school or work, visiting family members, grocery shopping and exercising, we had to stay strong in order to support our clients as well as our families.

With much anticipation for a better year in 2021, the road to Covid normal has been a bumpy road and so are our emotions. Even so, Playgroup staff have been working hard and flexibly to support our clients, keep families informed about the Government's vaccination programs as well as other relevant services.

Story of a father at Playgroup Sunshine

I am a father living in Maribyrnong (Victoria) with my partner and our 11-month-old daughter. When our daughter was born in 2020, we were keen to have her growing up in a multicultural environment where she could explore both her Australian and Vietnamese identities. Living in Melbourne West is an advantage as there is a large presence of the Vietnamese community. When our kid turned nine months, we attended an online storytime session with Maribyrnong Library and found out about several Vietnamese playgroups in our area that sounded very well suited for my girl. Soon after, my kid and I went along to her first playgroup at Duke Street Community House in Sunshine.

I must admit I was slightly nervous at the start. Being a first-time father of a baby born through overseas surrogacy, our story of how our daughter came to be was wonderful but quite unique and not simple to explain to people whom we met for the first time. To my surprise, the other parents and the playgroup facilitators understood our story and embraced us. The three playgroup staff were particularly supportive. They encouraged us to attend the Mother's Day Celebration event, perhaps so we did not feel left out. This is a big annual community event where all the Vietnamese playgroups in Melbourne West get together to sing and dance and for the children to have fun. Being a father, I initially felt slightly unsure at the idea of attending this event but before long Daisy and I were dancing with the mothers from our Sunshine playgroup to an audience of more than 100 at Deer Park Hall. It became clear to me after that day that the event was more than a celebration of Mother's Day. It created an opportunity for the Vietnamese community to come together, for the young ones to understand more about their heritage and for all of us, the young and the old, to celebrate our Vietnamese culture.

Attending the playgroup coincided with the time my kid was going through many of her social developments. She had become less shy around other children and even grown to enjoy their company. She also showed strong interest in watching the singing and dancing, performed by playgroup staff, at rhyme times and storytimes. I was also pleased that these interactions were in Vietnamese, a language I am hoping my girl would be able to use when she grows up. Having observed how the girl had changed through her time at the playgroup made me confident of her social nature. I had since taken her to in-person rhyme times at our local libraries and she really enjoyed them too. My kid was not the only one loving the playgroup, I learned many useful tips from the other parents whose kids were a little older and enjoyed the opportunity to have adult conversations while our children were playing.

I feel that the playgroup is well set up for culturally diverse families like ours. I am grateful that these community playgroups exist allowing my daughter to grow up in a multicultural and inclusive society.

Letter of appreciation from a participant of AVWA Maidstone Playgroup

The phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" is perhaps familiar in Western society like Australia; however, such a "village" can be difficult to find as a matter of fact. Playgroups are there to serve the purpose of creating that sense of belonging to a "village" for parents and more importantly, their children. What is even more exciting is that there are plenty of supported playgroups out there that are tailored to meet distinctive cultural backgrounds and needs. I am so pleased to have found AVWA Playgroup, a place where I and my son can now call our second family. Vietnamese culture highly values the tight bond of community revolving around a child. What can be more wonderful than being a part of a village

Parallel Learning Playgroups (continued)



of other Vietnamese families and children and especially of qualified facilitators who are energetic and passionate about what they do? I find that AVWA Playgroup offers invaluable experiences for me during the huge learning curve of becoming a new parent. Being a structured and formal playgroup itself, AVWA Maidstone playgroup is a trusted platform to connect and share with other families in our Vietnamese community. We meet on a weekly basis to play and chat, welcoming new families along the way. Even in the current challenging phase of Covid, AVWA succeeds in maintaining its operations and is continuing to play an active role to the supported families by running online playgroup sessions and organising outdoor gatherings in the park whenever possible. Now more than ever, families need that sense of ongoing and committed support. I love the friendships and sense of community AVWA Playgroup has allowed me and my son to develop. Additionally, my previous experience in the field of education firms my belief in the benefits that playgroups would offer to my child. A child's environment and the learning that occurs in that environment play a crucial role not only in the early years but also dictates their holistic wellbeing through adulthood. While it is needless to say that participation in playgroups boosts children's confidence and social skills, it is especially important to mention that children should be given opportunities to stay connected with their cultural identity and home language. The structured bilingual literacy and play programs that AVWA designs are perfect for this purpose. I would like to express huge gratitude to AVWA staff who I can draw on for both emotional and practical support. The support they offer doesn't stop at being themselves a great resource for parenting skills; it expands to create a channel through which families get in touch with existing active support bodies. For instance, recently I have been referred to the city council's consultation service for preschool enrolment which I found very helpful. In closing, I can't speak highly enough of the service that AVWA delivers to Vietnamese families. They do it in the most genuine and dedicated manner. I feel inspired to be a member of this group and so look forward to participating in more fun events that AVWA has envisioned for us. And I hope to see the expansion of the AVWA Playgroup family in the future.

Vi Vi Ho Tran

Master of Early Childhood Teaching

Coordinator: Tina Vo

Team Leader: Thuy Pham

Facilitators: Thao Tran, Thuy Pham, Tien Pham, Tuyet Nguyen, Dieu Nguyen, Quynh Bui

Assistants: Phuong Pham, Phuong Lam, Phuong Vy Le Ta, Huan Cao, Linh Nguyen, Loan Nguyen, Kim Gerrand, Nganh Ha, Ana Vuong

Richmond Tutoring Program

Due to COVID-19, our Tutoring Program was suspended for the 2020 calendar year. It was resumed in early 2021. This is a great program, providing a supportive learning environment to disadvantaged children alongside learning at school. The program attracted 30 primary students - most of them reside in Richmond, Abbotsford and Collingwood.

In this financial year, the program had some changes: COVID-19 restrictions made our usual venue at 106 Elizabeth Street not suitable, so we had to move to Richmond Salvation Army at 22 Lennox Street. The Salvation Army was very supportive – they worked in collaboration with us to provide a safe environment for the students to come and get help. Then the lockdown came, the Tutoring Program had to switch to online via Zoom. We were lucky to get help from St Kevin High School along with Melbourne Girl College with the volunteer students.



The Program was operated normally and efficiently both on-site and online when the restrictions were on. The sessions were run smoothly every Tuesday from 3:30 pm to 5 pm during the school terms. When it was run on-site, the number of primary students who expressed their wish to participate went up to 50, but due to COVID restrictions, we had to cap the number of participants at 30 and put the rest on the waiting list.

Among the participants, there were some special students with autism and learning disabilities who needed one-on-one support with. We were very grateful that Melbourne Girl and St Kevin High School provided more volunteer tutors to help the special students feel more comfortable in their learning.

Even though we were in and out of lockdowns unpredictably, both the volunteer tutors and the primary students were very persistent with their schedules, be it on-site or online via Zoom.

One in five Australians identifies as living with a disability. Yet according to the report from *Settlement Services International* (SSI) in 2018, Australians born overseas in non-English speaking countries are one-third as likely to use disability services compared with people born in Australia. It is concerning to the *Australian Vietnamese Women's Association* (AVWA) that people of Vietnamese background with a disability may not have access to disability services under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme* (NDIS) due to language barriers.

The AVWA has proudly been providing a variety of services to the Vietnamese community in Victoria for more than 38 years, and has a vision of providing services with integrity, respect, inclusion, compassion, excellence and innovation. At AVWA, all employees have a Vietnamese background, from support care workers, care managers to senior managers and CEO. Sharing the same background, culture and language we truly understand the needs of Australian Vietnamese using care services. Given this long-term expertise in care management for the Australian-Vietnamese community, AVWA is in an excellent position to include disability services in the services it offers to the Vietnamese community as part of its vision of inclusion.

In January 2021, the AVWA launched its *Disability Support and Service Program* after being granted NDIS registration as a service provider.

The two aims of the program are:

1. *To assist Australian Vietnamese with additional needs to access NDIS funding through implementing the NDIS plan and helping to steer them to suitable support.*
2. *To offer support to those who are not eligible for NDIS to obtain other help.*

Since the program started, more than 30 cases have been provided with information about services. Ten cases are NDIS participants, who have sought advice and assistance about implementing and managing the fund. Others have been guided to go through the process step by step, from accessing immediate support, to short-term and long-term support. One successfully has become an NDIS participant, and is closer to achieving the goal of living independently. Five cases have been processed and are waiting for outcomes. Five cases are still at the stage of accessing request applications. Some, whilst not eligible for NDIS funding, have been helped by the program to access support from local councils, making their daily activities easier and more meaningful.

As an NDIS registered provider, AVWA provides plan management and support care workers to NDIS participants. AVWA connects participants to suitable therapeutic supports and services in the home and in the community. We also enable carers to have time for themselves, whilst ensuring that their care recipient is well looked after. Under AVWA plan management, both participants and carers are offered guidance to maximise the funding benefit and utilisation.

The program will continue recruiting and expanding registration with NDIS in the months and years ahead to provide a wider range of supports and services to those who are in need, with the goal of reaching more Australian Vietnamese with disabilities and giving them the same access opportunities to appropriate services as other Australians.

Hiep Ly
NDIS Plan Manager

REFERENCES

Still outside the tent: cultural diversity and disability in a time of reform – a rapid review of evidence
Settlement Services International Occasional Paper 2, October 2018

https://www.ssi.org.au/images/stories/documents/publications/Still_outside_the_tent_Accessible.pdf

Sustainability Education

Environment Activities and project reach:

A program called “Sustainability Education” commenced in collaboration with *Brimbank City Council* and *The Greater Dandenong Council*. The aim of the program was to inform people’s choice concerning usage of gas, electricity and water, rubbish disposal, **6 R’s** (*Recycle; Refuse; Reduce; Reuse; Repair; Recover etc..*) and last but not least, green investment in their house. Projects that promoted pride in Brimbank’s Vietnamese residents’ identity, healthy living and increased participation in community life.

Activities included:

- ☞ Information sessions on new energy benefits offered by the State Government to residents in Victoria.
- ☞ Nine online information seminars for PAG groups on Energy efficiency: Footscray, St Albans, Thomastown, West Sunshine, Delahey, Sunshine, Maidstone-1, Maidstone-2 and Deer Park.
- ☞ Information sessions for local residents and not-for-profit organisations such as schools and temples.
- ☞ Video chats with Dandenong and Brimbank city council residents about energy savings, how to read the bills, compare electricity companies to find cheap rates and get \$50 from the government, usage of gas, electricity and water, rubbish disposal, solar & green energy, keep in touch with some families, how to “*compost at home*” from kitchen and garden waste, while people were isolated at home on account of COVID-19 to reduce their stress and make good use of their free time at home.

Composting bin program

Home Composting Program offered households a \$50 discount (from *Brimbank City Council*) on the purchase of a compost bin, so they could recycle their food scraps at home instead of sending them to landfills.

The message that our project intended to convey was that while saving money, people could also make a difference in regards to protecting the environment.

Brimbank residents - get up to 80% off RRP on a compost bin, worm farm or Green Cone from your council.

Join the fast-growing movement to compost at home - cut your waste in half and make rich soil & fertiliser by recycling your food scraps. Grab your gear, learn how to do it with our quick online tutorial and start nurturing your garden today.



Cheaper energy plans

Let people know how easy it was to get their energy company’s best offer and save money

Practical guide on how to ensure they were getting the best deal from their energy company, how to have a discount on their bill once or twice a year if they had concession card. How to compare the rates of energy companies, how to make complaints about energy company etc.

Family Violence

This project used Vietnamese social support groups and information sessions to help prevent family violence:

- i. Helped disadvantaged women who did not have enough English knowledge and skills to exercise their rights including advocacy for temporary visa holders
- ii. Empowered women including friends and relatives of victims to speak out and try to stop the violence.
- iii. Helped disadvantaged elderlies to seek help if they knew any victims and families needing help
- iv. Helped women to feel confident to speak out: in many cases, breaking down the cultural and language barriers that existed:
 - Change the underlying causes of inequality and violence, i.e. the lack of understanding of basic human rights, gender stereotyping and patriarchal views of women as subordinates among the Vietnamese speaking community. Women's and children's rights are human rights.
 - Increase awareness of sexual assault and understanding of intimacy and ethical behaviour
 - Build positive attitudes and ways for Vietnamese speaking females to address controlling, macho, aggressive or violent behaviour
 - Provide details about the interventions/activities being undertaken as part of the project, including outputs
 - Provide emotional and practical support to people affected by domestic violence through referrals to Safe Steps, InTouch, Legal service.
 - The support provided was tailored on a case-by-case basis to make sure it met the needs of individual clients, including supporting clients to apply for Intervention Orders, planning for safety, and providing emotional support during the mediation period.
 - Donating emergency food to victims of family violence

Incidents of family violence increased during the outbreak of COVID-19.

Other contributing factors to the increase of domestic violence were financial insecurity, insecurity of employment and housing shortage (or too much time together and not enough space), reduced victims' ability to flee domestic violence as well as reduced access to community support because schools and family violence services were closed on account of lockdown. We had to work with health and police services as a key partner in identifying and responding to domestic violence.

Our service experienced an increased number of people calling for help for domestic violence in many areas including Noble Park, Springvale, Richmond, Fitzroy, Broadmeadows, Reservoir, Sunshine, St Albans, Sunshine North, Keilor, Shepparton, etc. Problems did not only occur between men and women (husband, partner, etc.) but also between parents and children, insulting elderly parents, wanting to unfairly obtain ownership of property and money, and effects of alcohol when men had too much to drink at home and vented their anger on relatives.

Kim Thien Truong
Project Officer

Get-Connected

Building digital skills across the Vietnamese community in Victoria

Demand for digital skills increased during the COVID-19 lockdowns. We helped Vietnamese community members to connect.

The pandemic forced many people to stay home and rely heavily on technology to connect with their loved ones, the services they used and the outside world. It was even harder for the CALD communities on account of the language barrier.

Face-to-face activities, services and programs from AVWA and other providers ceased due to COVID-19 restrictions. Many community

members felt like they were abandoned, particularly those who did not have the digital skills necessary to navigate the systems, participate in AVWA activities, keep up to date with information from the government or access available support services.

AVWA created a “*Get Connected*” team to help AVWA staff and its Vietnamese clients across Melbourne upgrade their digital skills. The program was funded by the Victorian Government, aimed at increasing the confidence, skills and online safety of older Australians using digital technology to keep up with the COVID-19 restrictions.

The program adopted a community-centred approach to assist individuals aged 50 years and over, or even young people with limited digital skills who have little or no experience with digital technology. AVWA always strictly followed the health directions from the Government: our staff completed the Infection Control and other COVID-19 related training before visiting our clients. If we could not help them in person due to COVID-19 restrictions, we gave them instructions and support over the phone, by email or by sharing our easy steps for making video calls.

When the restrictions eased, we provided one-on-one support until people were confident about their digital skills. Older people who were new to the internet often felt isolated - *Get Connected* aimed to change that through a family and community centred approach, helped them get connected online and provided them with appropriate training and support in a safe and familiar environment.

Our team was made up of young, creative, professionals. We provided services to all Vietnamese speaking employees, volunteers, clients and members of AVWA. We loved to contribute our knowledge and skills to help people become independent while staying in touch with those they care about in a fun and relaxed way.

The Get connected staff understood how difficult life was during the pandemic. Personalised services helped staff learn and understand clients’ circumstances and tailor the training to accommodate individual needs and pace of learning. We also helped refer clients to other service departments either within or outside AVWA for issues that were outside our expertise. The clients highly appreciated the help from AVWA staff. Without it, many would have been living in isolation, anxiety and even depression through the pandemic.



Media and Information Technology

During the pandemic, digital technology enabled AVWA to stay connected with staff, clients and stakeholders and support a hybrid working environment.

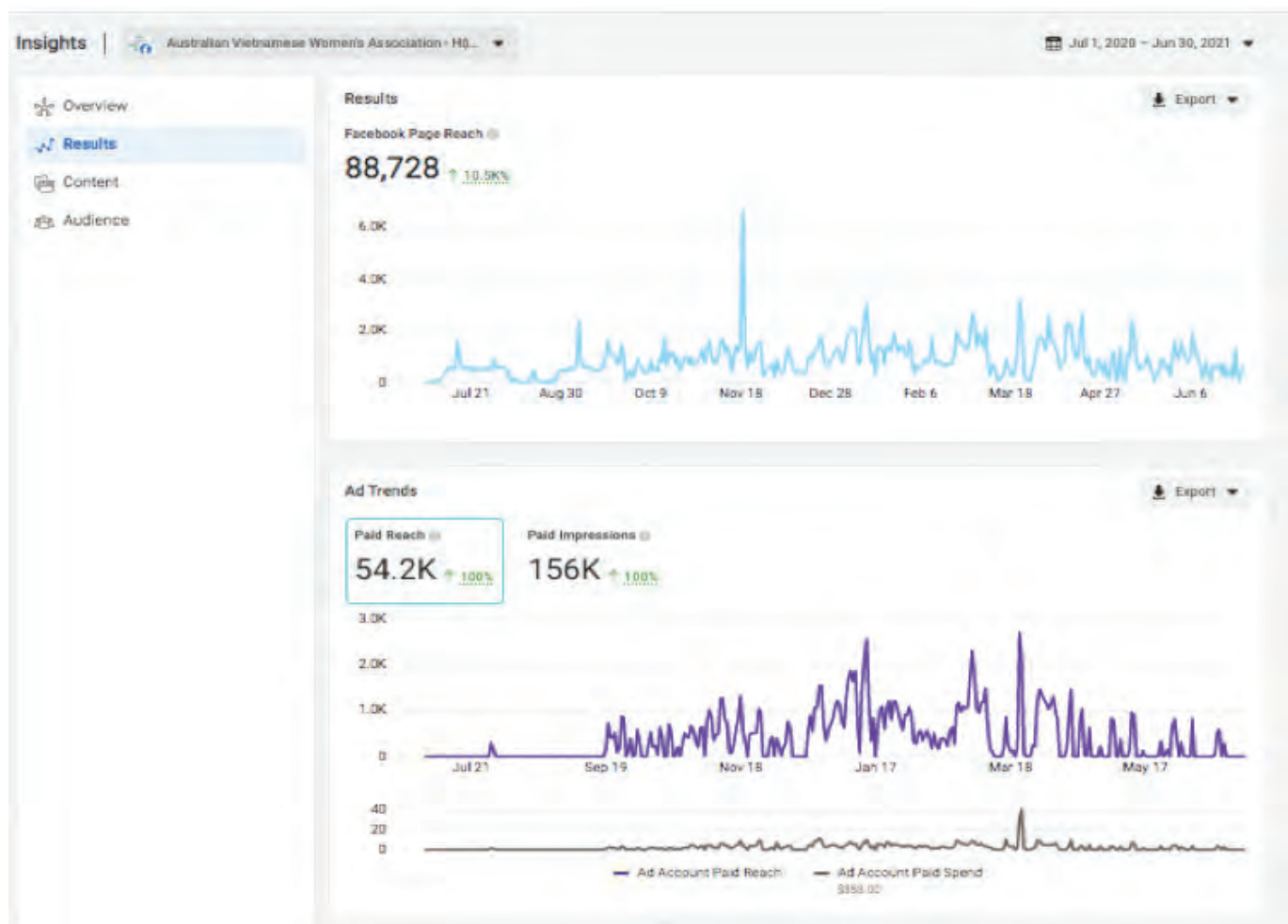
With the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, workers had to learn to work remotely at short notice. Under COVID rules, AVWA was considered an essential service. Media & IT Team had to work hard to support our employees to work seamlessly from anywhere. As approved by our CEO, from the first semester of 2021, the implementation MYOB Advanced, cloud-based software solution allowed our staff to be connected with easier access and heightened security, laptops were assigned to more than 100 office staff, wireless technology with cloud management was implemented for the transition to mobile workstations, and *hybrid working* and *hot desking* for all three offices became a reality.

A highly mobile and integrated communication system was needed to accommodate the growing volume of staff, clients, and efficient data processing. *RingCentral*, an IP-based telephone solution, was selected towards the end of the financial year for replacing the old legacy phone system.

Promoting social media during the pandemic

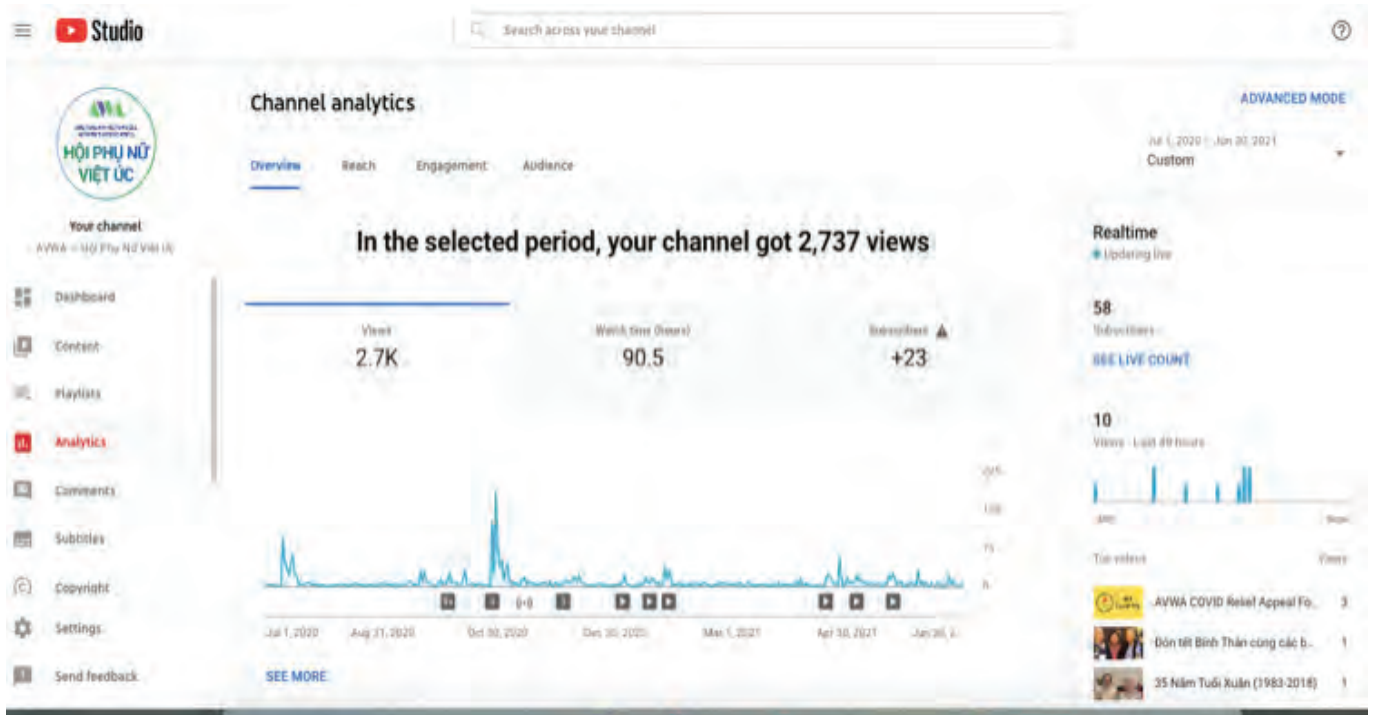
We were well-positioned to quickly provide health information to our vulnerable and harder-to-reach community because of our reputation and established presence. We were active in social media every day of the week and created videos, branded content, and campaigns to highlight the quality care and support provided to our clients. We increased our presence on social media across four platforms – Facebook, Linked In, Youtube and Web site. **Since the last financial year, our Facebook followers had increased by 470% to over 2,600 followers (550 - 2600+).**

Below are some statistics from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021.



Facebook Insights (July 2020 - June 2021)

Media and Information Technology



Youtube Analytics (July 2020 - June 2021)

- Via AVWA website, Facebook and Google Business profile, we actively listened to our community and took into account their feedbacks. We aimed to increase our commitment and build a successful online brand community. Data analysis was becoming increasingly important as AVWA worked to ensure the continued involvement of its members and clients.
- To help people maintain their wellbeing and manage isolation, we continued to be a trusted media resource for external partners, sharing COVID updates and beneficial information, focusing on promoting COVID-19 testing and vaccination amongst members of the Vietnamese community.
- We supported the *Get Connected* team, a 6-month project, to help the Vietnamese community ramp up their digital skills by using technological devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Producing in-house videos such as Zoom tutorial videos on different devices covering iOS, Android, and Windows was the highlight of our activities. Via social media channels, we directed our community to follow Government Guidance through helpful information and resources from both our CEO and Pandemic Officer.
- We implemented social media recruitment to reach a larger talent pool and connect with our ideal candidates.
- Our annual *Phu Nu Viet* magazine and other marketing materials were published and made digitally available to the Vietnamese community through various means including AVWA website, Facebook & other platforms.
- Subtitled & released AVWA Playgroups Video: *Tu's Story (Chuyện của Tú)*
- AVWA Events Streaming: *Annual General Meeting 2019-2020, AVWA Professional Development Days, celebrations, etc.*
- While embracing digital transformation, one of our challenges was to ensure that we did not lose the engagement of older and long term staff and clients. The key factor was to create a culture of continuous learning and to demonstrate the true benefits of up to date technology to the organization and all stakeholders.

Work Health and Safety

AVWA takes staff health and safety very seriously, and the results speak for themselves: **No COVID-19 transmission either among employees or between employees and clients.**

This great outcome was achieved thanks to the hard work of the management team as well as the support and collaboration of all employees at all levels.

Messages, instructions and information from the *Commonwealth Department of Health, Victoria Department of Human Services, Department of Education and Training, and WorkSafe* were gathered and distributed to employees and clients in a timely manner around the clock on a variety of platforms: *Website, Facebook, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Viber, Email, SMS.*

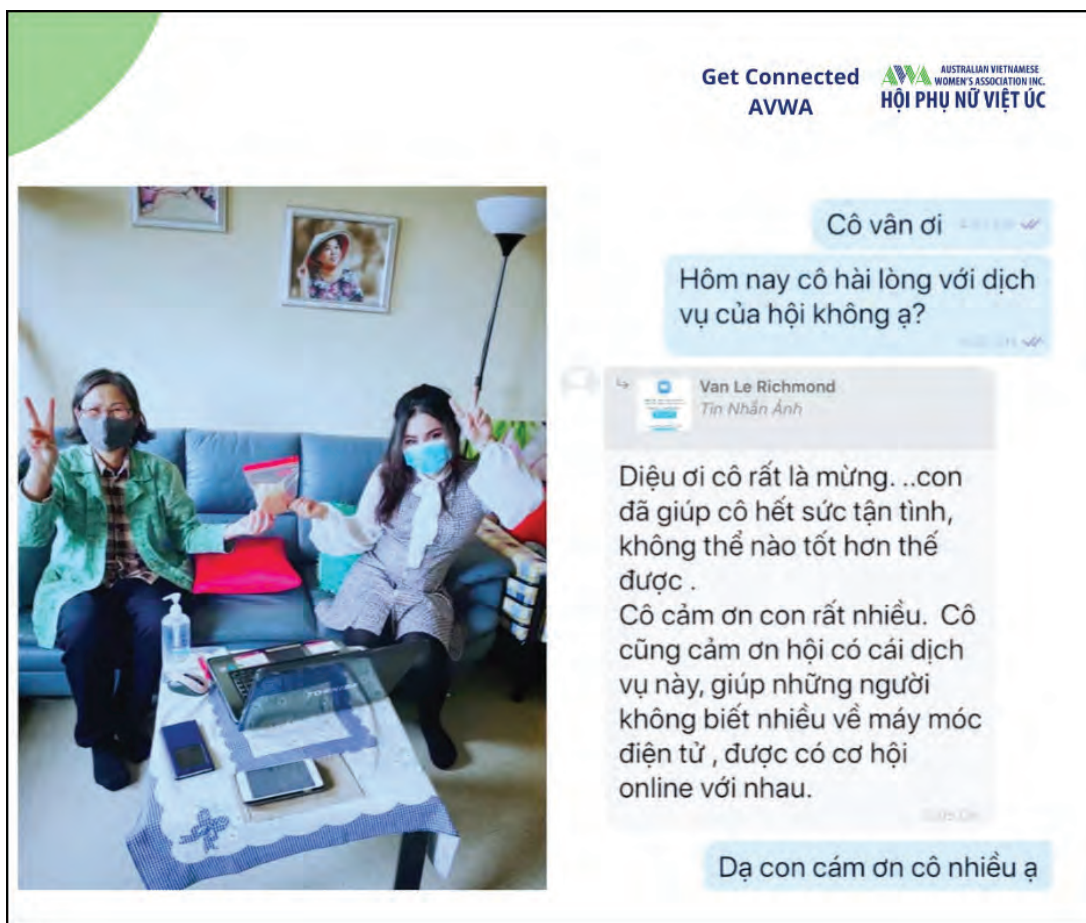
Changes in our procedures were made to make it possible for staff to help keep COVID-19 transmission cases away: reports of health concerns can be made and dealt with 24 hours a day, no certificates were required for staff to take sick leaves, financial support for casual employees to take time off to have COVID-19 tests, etc.

Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, our office staff spent most of their days working from home – this made our work COVID-safer. However, the risks of developing mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, loneliness, feeling isolated, etc. were of real concern to management. Special virtual gatherings such as “happy hours”, team meetings, and even staff meetings, were organised for sharing and bonding.

It is understood that COVID-normal can only be achieved if 80% or more of the population were vaccinated. AVWA was successful in encouraging its employees to vaccinate by providing adequate information on the benefits and risks of having the jabs. **The vaccination uptake rate of our AVWA workforce was more than double the rate of the general public by the end of June 2021.**

Huy Luu

Operations Manager



Springvale New Office

In preparation for the expansion of services for the Vietnamese community in the South-Eastern Region, AVWA bought a property in Springvale, just around the corner from the currently rented office, towards the end of 2018.

The property at 8 Parsons Avenue, Springvale VIC 3171, was a warehouse, completed in October 1998, covering 3430 m², with an adjoining car park for staff. The property should be big enough to serve as both an AVWA office and a community hub.

With that in mind, AVWA engaged *Kwon Architects, Swinburne University* to design the alterations. Besides the usual standards required, the design must meet strict environmental guidelines, above and beyond what was required, as well as uniquely representing the Vietnamese culture.

In July 2020, AVWA commenced the tender process. After reviewing submissions, all of very good quality, AVWA decided on Neo Construct Pty Ltd. The decision was based on building quality, post-construction service and competitive pricing. Neo Construct came highly recommended by former Vietnamese clients in Springvale. AVWA then assigned Tuan Bui as the project manager and volunteer Civil & Structural Engineer, Retired Senior Lecturer in the Department of Civil Engineering, Monash University, Mr Quy Le, as a consultant. The duo, with the support of the AVWA Executive Committee, went to work with Neo Construct on this building project.



Construction was to commence in September 2020 and completed by the end of February 2021. When the construction started, the COVID-19 pandemic was in full swing, the whole of Victoria was in lockdown. Our staff had to juggle with working from home and being available on site from time to time to monitor the construction. The lockdown ended at 11:59 pm 27th October 2020: lasting 112 days, that Victorian COVID-19 lockdown was the longest continuous lockdown worldwide, at the time.

AVWA worked closely with Neo Construct towards our common goal, overcoming multiple challenges and obstacles along the way. There were problems with the soil, pilings, the conditions of the roof, etc. These issues were made more difficult with the intermittent lockdowns. Nonetheless, by early February 2021, it looked like we were on target to meet our scheduled finishing date and within budget. However, when Neo Construct disconnected the power to the building for relocation, it was uncovered that the high voltage power line supplying electricity to the building was buried only 10 cm below ground, when it should have been at least 60 cm below. All work was halted, the power company was contacted. Despite our plea for quick action, the power company did not address the issue until early June 2021. Consequently, our completion date was put back to June.

The rest went smoothly: the AVWA Springvale team got together and completed the move within a week. We are now happily operating out of our new office and very proud of the yellow conical hat out the front, a symbol bringing to mind images of hard-working Vietnamese in rice fields or graceful schoolgirls in their traditional long dress (áo dài) on their way to or from school.

Abstract from 2020-2021 Financial Report

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC.
ABN 69 724 826 405

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
REVENUE			
Project grants		18,450,714	15,223,817
Brokerage		921,186	876,879
Interest income		47,008	72,308
Other income		50,929	67,180
		<u>19,469,837</u>	<u>16,240,184</u>
EXPENSES			
Employee benefits expense		(12,801,307)	(9,992,957)
Project activities and support expenses		(3,945,418)	(3,567,552)
Operational expenses		(389,587)	(302,010)
Professional development and consulting fees		(125,685)	(96,491)
Depreciation		(80,663)	(62,353)
Repair and maintenance		(18,732)	(79,003)
Impairment losses	6	(625,699)	-
		<u>(17,987,091)</u>	<u>(14,100,366)</u>
Net surplus from ordinary activities		1,482,746	2,139,818
Infrastructure grant	12	449,758	-
Net surplus for the year		1,932,504	2,139,818
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u>1,932,504</u>	<u>2,139,818</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Abstract from 2020-2021 Financial Report

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC.
ABN 69 724 826 405

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	6,033,858	8,093,739
Trade and other receivables	3	2,097,518	54,629
Financial assets	4	8,800,973	3,756,304
Other assets	5	11,000	94,000
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		16,943,349	11,998,672
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	6	9,147,463	6,419,102
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		9,147,463	6,419,102
TOTAL ASSETS		26,090,812	18,417,774
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	1,530,744	1,071,616
Provisions	8	12,299,675	7,055,647
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		13,830,419	8,127,263
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	8	264,791	227,413
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		264,791	227,413
TOTAL LIABILITIES		14,095,210	8,354,676
NET ASSETS		11,995,602	10,063,098
EQUITY			
Reserves	10	1,331,700	1,331,700
Accumulated surplus		10,663,902	8,731,398
TOTAL EQUITY		11,995,602	10,063,098

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Abstract from 2020-2021 Financial Report

AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC.
ABN 69 724 826 405

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from customers		22,701,449	19,514,129
Payments to suppliers and employees		(16,328,946)	(13,928,963)
Interest received		47,008	72,308
Net cash provided by operating activities	9	<u>6,419,511</u>	<u>5,657,474</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		(3,434,723)	(129,492)
Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment		-	27,883
Payment for other financial assets		(5,044,669)	(170,196)
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(8,479,392)</u>	<u>(271,805)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(2,059,881)	5,385,669
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<u>8,093,739</u>	<u>2,708,070</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	2	<u><u>6,033,858</u></u>	<u><u>8,093,739</u></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Abstract from 2020-2021 Financial Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION INC.

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity, and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the Statement by Members of the Committee of Management.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. is in accordance with the Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- o giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- o complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1, and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (the ACNC Act) and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee of Management for the Financial Report

The Committee of Management of the association is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The Committee of Management's responsibility also includes such internal control as the Committee of Management determines is

Abstract from 2020-2021 Financial Report

necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Committee of Management is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Committee of Management either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Committee of Management is responsible for overseeing the association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.


DFK BKM Audit Services



Kevin P Adams
Director

Camberwell
28 September 2021

Acknowledgements

The Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc. wishes to thank the following organisations and agencies for their continuing support:

97.4 FM Radio - Vietnamese Program
Acacia Children's Centre
ACACIA Indochinese Children's Services Centres
Adult Community and Further Education Board
Aged Care Services Australia Group (P/L)
Alliance for Gambling Reform
Anderson Road Childcare Centre
Baptcare Westhaven Community Aged Care - Footscray
Brimbank City Council
Brimbank Leisure Centres
Brimbank Libraries
Brimbank Neighbourhood Houses and Community Centres
Catholic Care
CentreLink (Services Australia)
cohealth
Collingwood Library
Communities for Children Brimbank
Delahey Community Centre
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Social Services
Duke St Community House
Duke Street Community House
Estia Health Ardeer Aged Care
First Choice Allied Health
Footscray Royal Freemasons Aged Care
Good Shepherd Community House
Goodstart Early Learning Braybrook
Hepatis Victoria (LiverWELL incorporating)
Higher Education & Skills Group
Hoa Nghiem Temple
Hullaballoo! Music For All
Inside Gambling Magazine
Intouch- Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
IPC Health
Lady Nelson Childcare Centre
Main Road East Early Learning Centre
Maribyrnong City Council
Maribyrnong City Council- Active and Healthy Lifestyles Program
Melbourne Girl' College
Mission Australia
Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
Multicultural Women Health Care
Narcotics Anonymous (Footscray)
National Ageing Research Institute Ltd
Nhan Quyen - Vietnamese Newspaper
North Richmond Community Health Centre
Our Lady of Lavang Shrine Catholic Community
Palliative Care Victoria
Phoenix Street Children's Centre
Playgroup Victoria
Quang Minh Temple
RecWest Footscray - YMCA
Relationship Australia Victoria
Richmond Salvation Army Corp.
SBS Radio – Vietnamese Program
Settlement Services International
Springvale Neighborhood House
Springvale Rise Primary School
Springvale Service for Children
St Albans Main Road East Early Learning Centre
St Joseph's Catholic Church Springvale
St Kevin' College
St Vincent Liem Centre
The Federation of Chinese Associations
The Smith Family
Thomastown library
Tivi Tuan San - Vietnamese Newspaper
VELG Training
Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
Viet Luan - Vietnamese Newspaper
Viet News - Vietnamese Newspaper
Viet Times - Vietnamese Newspaper
Vietnamese Families with Special Needs Group
Western Bulldogs Community Foundation
Whizkidz Early Learning Centre & Pre-school
Yarra City Council
Youthworx

Our Values: INTEGRITY, RESPECT, INCLUSION, COMPASSION, EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

Our Vision: A harmonious society in which everyone, irrespective of age, gender, skills, abilities, ethnicity and religion, feels valued, is motivated and empowered to contribute.

Our Mission: To help individuals and families

- Know their rights, responsibilities, options and opportunities
- Realise their full potential
- Improve their health, happiness and well-being



Staff & Committee members at Professional Development Day (29/04/2021 - Springvale Office)

Our Purposes

- ☞ To provide a framework for mainly Vietnamese women to collaborate and learn to lead and operate a not-for-profit organisation to assist the settlement and harmonious integration of refugees and migrants of Vietnamese and other backgrounds in Victoria.
- ☞ To help Victorians, irrespective of age, gender, religion or ethnic background, obtain the information they need, know their rights, responsibilities, options and opportunities, realise their full potential and improve their health, happiness and well-being.
- ☞ To provide high quality education and training services to the disadvantaged people in Victoria including the unemployed, the educationally disadvantaged, the aged and disabled.



Australian Vietnamese Women's Association Inc.

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Springvale Office 8 Parsons Avenue
SPRINGVALE VIC 3171
Phone + 61 (3) 9546 2699 - Fax + 61 (3) 9546 4188

ABN 69 724 826 405 - TOID 22594



**NEW OFFICE LOCATION: 8 Parsons Avenue
SPRINGVALE VIC 3171**

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