





MACE is a community owned and managed incorporated association which encompasses a Learn Local Education provider; a Neighbourhood House; a Centrelink Agent and an Early Childhood Education and Care Centre.

## Statement of Purpose

Enriching lives through learning, engagement and community programs

## Values

- We will enable frameworks that exemplify quality across all MACE business and community activities.
- We will ensure that MACE is accountable by being open, transparent and ethical in all our practices and behaviours.
- We ensure the integrity of MACE by being honest, inclusive and respectful in our interactions and communication with everyone.

MACE Incorporated

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Incorporation No: A0048770V

ABN: 25 306 780 833

Licensed Childcare Provider No: 9



# President's Report

On behalf of the MACE Incorporated Board of Management, I am pleased to present the President's Report for the year ending 31 December 2020.

## **2020 Overview**

What can one say about 2020? A year like no other for countries all over the world!

Here, at MACE, we fared no differently to other similar organizations across the country with COVID-19 restrictions of varying degrees imposed on us throughout the year.

During the Victorian lockdowns, MACE was required to close the doors to its Community Services operations on a number of occasions while, at the same time, keeping Children's Services functioning throughout restrictions. At times it was a huge challenge for the Leadership Team with rules changing on an hour-by-hour basis.

The Board's focus was on the well-being of staff, tutors, parents and children. To this end the Board quickly developed and initiated an Epidemic/Pandemic Policy and Plan to ensure everyone was kept as safe as possible.

Our plans for business development during the year were put on the back burner for a while during the crisis but towards the end of 2020 we quickly revived our plans for the MACE Co-working Hub to get it up and running for the beginning of 2021. Given the changes in the way in which people will work in the future, we are confident that our new co-working hub arrangement will be a great success.

MACE was eligible for the Cash Flow Boost payment and JobKeeper subsidy for a period of time during 2020, which enabled the organization to not only sustain its activities but actively boost its cash reserves.

## **Governance**

As mentioned above, the Board's focus this year was how to keep staff, tutors, parents and children safe and how to ensure the survival of the organization.

Fortunately the strong governance and risk processes that have been developed and implemented over preceding years enabled the Board to focus their efforts on successfully managing the crisis. The organization's Epidemic/Pandemic, Business Continuity and Risk Management Plans provided the Board with the necessary contingencies and safeguards to manage the unprecedented environment in which we found ourselves.

The Board also embraced new technology with great zeal and, despite a few hiccups to start with, are now Zoom Wizards!

During the year we welcomed Sue Hare, Megan Kavanagh, David Mims and Michael Craddock to the Board. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, Michael was unable to continue his directorship and left the Board in August 2020. We also farewelled Simon Hicks whose input during his time on the board was invaluable, especially in the areas of information technology and business continuity management.

Without the experience and support of the other members of the Board, it would not have been possible to navigate a course through 2020. A big 'thankyou' to Imogen Smith (Vice-President/Secretary), David Roff (Treasurer) and Murray Chenery. It has been a pleasure to work with such dedicated people.

## **Leadership and Support**

The MACE and Cubby House Teams have, again, been extraordinary during the year, rising to challenges that many organizations would never have faced before in their history.

Our Chief Executive Officer, Ms Kylie Richards, has been instrumental in ensuring MACE and Cubby House met all the COVID-19 guidelines, some of which changed many times a day. Working in unison with the Children's Services Manager, Cassie Daykin, these two amazing women and their staff kept Cubby operating in an environment that was unknown and everchanging.

On behalf of the Board I would like to sincerely thank Kylie, Cassie and the staff of MACE and Cubby for their amazing efforts during a period of uncertainty and upheaval. The Board is extremely proud of you all!

### **Financial Sustainability**

MACE returned a large surplus for 2020, primarily due to government financial assistance in the forms of Cash Flow Boost payments and the JobKeeper subsidy.

The Board is cognisant of the fact that, as a result of the government subsidies, we now have significant cash reserves. The Board and CEO are currently analysing the best ways in which to protect this investment for the future.

Our debt repayment program continued and, due to a large one-off payment, has significantly reduced our borrowings.

### **Into the Future**

'COVID normal' is with us, at least for the next year or two. The Board has analysed what 'COVID normal' looks like for our organization and has taken that into account in our short and medium term planning.

While COVID-19 has changed the way in which we now operate, we have responded proactively and, with the implementation of the MACE Co-working Hub, it is hopefully for the better.

Janene Ridley



President Board of Management



## Chief Executive Officer's Report

2020 was certainly an interesting year at MACE, with many disruptions and a new business 'normal'. With a global Pandemic and Covid-19 present in Victoria, it was important for MACE to take all necessary precautions and manage community perceptions.

Despite the disruption of Covid-19, 2020 was a positive and satisfying year at MACE, with our Board and Management team working hard to ensure stability, relevance and sustainability, whilst developing strong connections with the community, council and various stakeholders. We continued to aim to enrich lives through learning, engagement and community programs.

In response to Government directives, when and where required, MACE staff adapted to working from home. Policies and procedures were updated, and a Business Continuity Plan was formulated. Infection control training was completed by all staff.

We were fortunate to receive Australian Government Cash Flow assistance, Australian Government Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package and Australian Government JobKeeper subsidy, assisting with our cashflow management during an uncertain period.

Community engagement continued, we met with the new Mansfield Council CEO, Kaylene Conrick, liaised with Economic Development Officer - Business & Industry at Mansfield Council, Derek Beautyman, joined the Mansfield Youth Service Providers Network (MYSPN) and participated in the Better Communities for Children Leadership Network and Early Years Educators Network meetings. Regular Goulburn North Eastern Association of Community Centres (GNEACC) Network meetings were maintained and important in 2020, along with remaining in contact with our various community groups.

MACE partnered with the Upper Murray Regional Neighbourhood House Network (UMRNHN) and successfully applied for funds through the Mental Health Support for Bushfire Communities initiative, funded by the Victorian Government.

This timely project will use a co-design process, inviting the community to partner with the neighborhood house to understand the issues and develop potential solutions, rather than taking a one size fits all approach.

We are pleased that the Victorian Government has recognized the importance of supporting mental health in communities that have been affected by bushfires and other disasters. This funding will help MACE take a proactive role in recovery and building community resilience.

MACE has been part of a project working group, regarding the Ovens Regional Universities Centres Project. MACE has a strong commitment to supporting people access education and training opportunities, and we are well aware of the difficulties in our community with connecting to and completing tertiary qualifications. Locally, students face limited relevant and suitable qualifications, with distance, technological barriers, and often minimal support/s. MACE has the capacity to address these hurdles, and create stronger relationships between providers, educators, community members and businesses.

Regional University Centres (RUCs) enable students in regional and remote Australia to access higher education without having to leave their community. RUCs operate as a hub where students can access quiet study spaces, computers and academic support services.

MACE continued to offer training and education in a range of areas through our Accredited Training and Learn Local education programs and services in 2020, adapting to online learning where possible.

In 2019 we created a new MACE Business HUB, offering a private space/meeting room to work, study or meet clients. In 2020 our Business Hub was contextualized to a co-working hub. The MACE Co-working Hub has been developed as an extension of our established room hire initiatives associated with current spaces for hire. Re-working the usage of some of our spaces provide greater scope to better use our facilities allowing different types of clients to work in our co-working facilities.

Our Child Care service, Mansfield Community Cubby House, continued to offer both Long Day Care and Outside of School Hours Care. We offer Long Day Care for children 3 months to 6 years between 6.30am and 6.00pm, Monday to Friday benefitting parents with busy work lives. We offer Outside School Hours Care for school age children (permanent or casual) providing added convenience to parents with busy work lives. We also pick-up and drop-off children from their designated schools.

Cubby House continued to thrive and grow, with consistent quality education programs provided. We value the trust parents place in us to care for and educate their children. We look forward to expanding our childcare services, based on increased demand and current community needs. I would like to thank all our educators for their continued passion and commitment to ensuring quality, flexible and reliable childcare was delivered to the community during a challenging year.

Cubby House was required to update policies and procedures on a regular basis. Given the constantly-changing environment, health and hygiene measures were increased and we were in constant communication with regulatory bodies regarding Covid-19.

Despite Covid-19 and the closure of the MACE office in 2020, from 25/03/20-13/05/20 and 05/08/20-05/10/20, many of our goals were met. Keeping currency with Covid-19 developments was challenging and time consuming as MACE was operating as a Child Care Centre, Learn Local, Neighbourhood House and Centrelink agent in an ever-evolving situation.



I would like to thank the Board for their ongoing support, professionalism and knowledge throughout 2020, an unprecedented year. I look forward to continuing to work with the remarkable team at MACE, I am fortunate to have an extraordinary team around me to ensure MACE remains relevant to our community.

Kylie Richards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kylie Richards', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chief Executive Officer



## Treasurer's Report

The 2020 year was one that presented both challenges and opportunity. With the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was great uncertainty about how MACE would operate and how our financial year would pan out.

As a consequence of government intervention to assist businesses in managing their way through the year, MACE was the recipient of both JobKeeper and the Cash Flow Boost payments. This together with efforts of the organization in functioning under trying conditions and uncertainty, saw MACE deliver a surplus for the year of \$344,000 which has put us in a very sound financial position.

The Balance Sheet shows net assets of \$1,846,721 and the liquidity ratio at 31 December 2020 was 5.9:1, a very healthy position. This puts the organization in the position of being able to consider investments in activities which will further strengthen MACE. The focus going forward will be on improving our underlying operating position.

Our Child Care Centre, Mansfield Community Cubby House continues to perform strongly with occupancy at capacity, and with a significant waiting list. Meeting this demand is a challenge for the community and not just MACE.

The Board has spent some time on the outlook going forward and is confident that MACE can continue to improve its financial performance.

David Roff

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Roff'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Treasurer, Board of Management

# 2020 Programs and Services

## Accredited Training



MACE continued to ensure Accredited Courses were offered locally. We continued to work closely with The Centre for Continuing Education Inc. (The Centre) in Wangaratta and with Asthma Australia to deliver Accredited Training to the community. We signed a Third Party Training Provider Agreement in October 2020 with Life Saving Victoria, to increase scope offered.

Accreditation means the course is nationally recognized, and MACE remains committed to the continued delivery of accredited training in the Mansfield Shire.

During 2020, MACE students enrolled in a variety of accredited courses, including:

- Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation, HLTAID001 (CPR)
- Provide First Aid, HLTAID003
- Provide First Aid in an Education and Care Setting, HLTAID004
- Provide Responsible Service of Alcohol, SITHFAB002

## Learn Local



As a Learn Local provider, MACE continued to offer a range of education and training programs. Learn Local providers can help you get the skills you need for study, work and life. They offer a range of training programs that can help you return to study, improve your digital, reading, writing and maths skills, gain a qualification, get a job, change careers or learn something new.

MACE had 164 enrolments, delivering 5,056 hours in the following pre-accredited programs in 2020;

- Adult Literacy and Numeracy
- Adult Reading and Writing
- Getting your L's
- Intel Easy Steps
- Introduction to Welding
- Introduction to Woodwork
- Literacy and Numeracy through Beekeeping
- Microsoft Office Intensive
- Reboot Your Employability Skills
- Success4U
- Wellbeing – Fit to Work
- Workshop Safety Induction and Best Practice

Strategies were put in place to ensure delivery of programs in 2020, as we recognized necessary changes to the mode, format and volume of training. We increased blended training delivery methods to improve access for geographically isolated learners or those with issues that make face-to-face learning difficult.

MACE is looking forward to expanding on the programs offered to learners and will continue to provide learning programs at a local level.

## **Neighbourhood House**



Neighbourhood Houses bring people together to connect, learn and contribute in their local community through social, educational, recreational and support activities. Neighbourhood Houses welcome people from all walks of life. This inclusive approach creates opportunities for individuals and groups to enrich their lives through connections they might not otherwise make.

There are over 400 neighbourhood houses across Victoria, but no two neighbourhood houses are ever the same. Guided by a community development approach, they each engage and respond to the needs and priorities of the communities they serve.

MACE remains committed to community development and engagement through increased communication, improved transparency and achieving positive outcomes for all participants in Neighbourhood House programs, activities and associated clubs.

Popular programs and activities in 2020 included;

- Basic Barista
- English Literacy
- Microsoft Office Training
- Spanish Language
- Tai Chi
- The Intelligent Body

MACE continued to proudly assist, support and promote the following local community groups:

- Line Dancing
- Mansfield Craft Group
- Mansfield Croquet Club
- Mansfield High Country Quilters
- Social Badminton
- Social Table Tennis

We also offer Internet access, book swap service, Room hire and Volunteering opportunities.

Late in 2020, MACE took over the management of three Age Friendly projects; Connect55, an age friendly newsletter. This monthly newsletter will keep residents updated regarding the availability of services, programs, activities and events offered within Mansfield Shire. Mansfield Offers A Seat To Town, (MSOAST), this project aims to increase and improve community transport options for residents aged over 55 years of Mansfield Shire and looks to establish a similar program to Tolmie's successful, "TOAST" (Tolmie Offers A Seat To Town). Weight And Strength Program (WASP). This increased physical activity option aims to increase the physical activity participation amongst adults over 55 years within communities of Mansfield Shire, by providing a low-cost and accessible program. We look forward to expanding these projects in 2021.

### **Co-working Hub**

The MACE Co-working Hub, offers community members and businesses private spaces and meeting rooms to work, study or meet clients. A range different size spaces in a flexible modular system are available a cost-effective rates.

Covid-19 showcased corporate employees' capacity to maintain efficiency while in home isolation. Technologies, such as Zoom, have allowed face-to-face connection with workers proving they are sufficiently disciplined to maintain productivity while working remotely.

The Pandemic has fast-tracked the evolution of de-centralised/remote corporate officing, with many companies now reworking their staffing model to include both centralised and remote options.

## **Services Australia Agent**

MACE continued to work with the Department of Human Services to offer Agent Services in Mansfield. An Agent helps people in their local area to access Medicare, Services Australia and Child Support services.

Agent Services available at MACE:

- Copy and verify identity documents
- Get help to set up and access digital services
- Use internet enabled computers and printers
- Get brochures and fact sheets
- Call Centrelink using a phone provided
- Use the phone claiming service
- Get reply paid Medicare envelopes
- Scan and upload documents

A total of 412 customer enquiries were processed by MACE staff throughout 2020.

Direction from Services Australia in March, was for Services Australia customers to use online services, and not visit Agents in person.

MACE considers acting as an Agent an essential service to the Mansfield community, and is pleased to continue to provide this service.



## Gadhaba Local Aboriginal Network, Mansfield

The word Gadhaba – pronounced Gud-a-bah, is a Taungurung word meaning “together”. Gadhaba Local Aboriginal Network (GLAN) acknowledges the Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which it operates and pays respect to their Ancestors and to Elders – past, present and emerging.

Established in Victoria from 2008 by Aboriginal Victoria, the Network enables and supports local Aboriginal communities to set priorities and problem solve to develop local solutions; improve social cohesion and strengthen relationships and to empower Aboriginal people to participate in civic and community life.

Gadhaba LAN usually meet monthly at MACE and in the community, to participate in all aspects of their 2020–2025 Community Plan.

In 2020, the GLAN network was hampered due to the impacts of Covid-19 restrictions, with only one physical meeting at MACE. They did however continue to meet via Zoom, to progress projects, raise awareness and support vulnerable members of their community, including:

- National Reconciliation Week and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week, normally held in July, was deferred to November.  
The NAIDOC theme in 2020 was “Always Was, Always Will Be”.
- The GLAN local website was launched: <http://www.gadhaba.com.au>
- A Taungurung words and symbols interpretative booklet to accompany the Mural displayed at Mansfield library was completed.
- The edible garden project in the Botanic Park commenced.



## Multicultural Group



Mansfield Multicultural Group (MMG) provides a program which is active in welcoming and supporting new residents to our growing Mansfield multicultural community. Usually MMG gathers monthly at MACE, however in 2020 social gatherings were reduced due to MACE Covid-19 closures.

When they did meet, good company and food was enjoyed by people from many cultures, including Nepal, Argentina, Cambodia, England, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia and China. Learning about local and other cultures is a feature of the evenings, and cultural festivals are usually acknowledged and celebrated with traditional food and dance. Everybody is welcome.

The North East Multicultural Association (NEMA) provides specific migration support and networking opportunities, which enables our diverse community the opportunity to share in a variety of cultural activities in Mansfield, and around the North East. NEMA conducted well attended weekly English classes when MACE was open in 2020.





## Skills First Reconnect Program

2020 saw the successful completion of the Department of Education and Training (DET) / Skills First Reconnect program. Despite the final months being hampered by MACE closure during the first Covid-19 lockdown, support was able to be provided remotely via teleconference sessions.

Reconnect provided unique opportunities over the past three years to assist more than 40 Mansfield learners re-engage and succeed at MACE in:

- vocational education such as First Aid, Food Hygiene and RSA
- pre-accredited learning such as computer skills, literacy, barista, equine, and wellbeing courses
- transition to accredited training such as Certificate II in General Education, Certificate III in Individual Support (Aged Care), Certificate IV in Disability and Diploma of Nutrition
- pathways to employment.

Embracing MACE purpose and values, Reconnect has encompassed many benefits to enrich lives, including quality intensive one-to-one support, networking and liaison or case management with local service agencies, practical strategies and solutions to barriers faced, and planning for ongoing options.

This DET / Swinburne University outreach program partnership with MACE concluded in June 2020. MACE Learn Local has ensured we continue to provide flexible options for disengaged people and those who may not have studied for many years, or who may lack confidence to learn.

The dedicated literacy and employability skills course established through Reconnect at MACE, continues to address learning needs for this demographic in pre-accredited learning or accredited training support, and is beneficial more broadly for the community.

Participants express how beneficial the MACE program is, and for many, our learning environment continues to provide the impetus for major life changes. Reconnect Access Worker, Elin Ree ensures through her Educational Officer role that learners are engaged in development of their knowledge about pathways and individual strengths and attributes.

# Mansfield Community Cubby House Report



2020 was a very different year for us at Mansfield Community Cubby House and indeed the world!

Cubby House is an approved local Early Childhood Education and Care Centre. It is Mansfield's only not-for-profit community-owned and managed childcare centre.

On 2 January 2020, the Victorian Government issued a State of Disaster for the period 3 January 2020 to 10 January 2020 and identified areas likely to constitute, a significant and widespread danger to life or property. Subsequently, we were unable to open until Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, a week later than planned.

Cubby House provides for children's individual growth through responding to their social, emotional, educational and recreational needs in a safe, welcome and fun environment. We develop partnerships with families, working collaboratively to provide quality care and education for our children. We began 2020, looking ahead to a fun filled curriculum, getting out and about in the community and beyond, and continuing to develop our children's individual interests and journeys, and enrich their lives through our educational programs.

Our ideas and plans were changed in March, when the Pandemic, Covid-19 took hold, and the plans we had made were amended. The health, wellbeing and safety of our Educators, their families and our children and their families is critical to Cubby House. In response, we developed a Coronavirus (Covid-19) Management policy, and we were required to introduce new health and safety measures.

To minimise the risk of exposure to Covid-19 at our Service, we were required to restrict the number of visitors to our Service in 2020, including students, and the delivery of goods, and also restrict the number of family members visiting our Service.

Parents/Families/Guardians and friends not physically entering our Service was a big adjustment for all.

We understood this was big change to the children's routines, but were necessary steps we needed to take to ensure everyone's safety.

Families adapted to this change on dropping their children at the front doors and ringing the doorbell when collecting their children for pick-up. This emphasized the importance we place on communication between families and Educators.

At Cubby House we strive on developing and building great relationships with our families and our children. To continue this during Covid-19 restrictions, we ensured all children remained engaged in our educational programs, even those that were unable to attend. With uncertainty in the community, our attendance decreased in April, and our Educators were required to rethink of ways to engage the children in the ever-changing environment. Our amazing team of Educators created gift bags for the children to be able to continue to engage in stimulating experiences despite being unable to come physically into Cubby House. These bags bought smiles to not only the children's faces but also the families. Filled with craft activities, and our favourite recipes for messy play and experiments, the children had an awesome time creating funny pictures and messes all over the Mansfield Shire.

In mid 2020 we introduced Xplor Education, a new software program with innovations including automatic submissions, digital attendance records, programming and planning, and learning observations. The ability to monitor our services performance in real-time and plan ahead is crucial. The Xplor Software is a new service business model – where software is hosted securely on the Internet. Xplor releases new features frequently, Additions and extensions to functionality are developed in response to needs.

All childcare services need effective planning and management to achieve growth and profitability, and ensure currency with new regulations. Xplor allows families to have access to their child's daily routine at Cubby House though an app.

Everything from nappy changes, bottle feeds, rest times and photos of children during the day is uploaded, and has meant the communication is available throughout the child's day, ensuring relationships with families are developed and maintained.

With the updated software came touchless sign in/out on iPads and access to accounts and updates, meeting new health and hygiene requirements.

Cubby House continued to offer Outside School Hours Care in 2020, for children of school age. This service currently caters for 30 children, and our before and after school care can be on a permanent and casual basis.

With Mansfield Kindergarten growing and Mansfield Kindergarten terminating our lease arrangement in November, effective 31st December and the Mansfield Shire Early Years Services and Infrastructure review delayed, we were under immense pressure to find a new location for Outside Schools Hours Care programs. After several options for a new location were explored, and general support from the community, Mansfield's St Mary's Primary School came to our rescue, with Principle Mrs Etccl going above and beyond to secure this agreement.

We were excited to be able to continue to offer the community our outside school hours care programs, ensuring local demand is met and we have secured access to an amazing age appropriate space and the children are thriving.

Our amazing team of Educators at Cubby House must be mentioned, as though 2020 there were times that required extra encouragement and validation, that our role in the lives of our children was important. Thank-you to Molly, Maddie, Teagan, Arwen, Amy, Shannon, Steph, Belinda, Nicole, Libby, Kate, Danielle, Alicia, Chloe, Clare, Niamh, Lauren, and Emily, for consistency and professionalism in 2020. This talented and resilient group of Early Childhood Educators has continued to strive in providing a place for the children in the Mansfield Community to remain feeling humbled, heard and entertained in a world that became unfamiliar to all.

All our Educators continued to remain current in their knowledge and skills meaning quality learning experiences through play always reflect the interests of your child.



We have very strong demand for our Cubby House services. Mansfield is Victoria's fastest growing regional location and has one of the highest birth rates in Victoria, and subsequently demand for Cubby House's services is increasing. That is why we are looking to expand its Children's Services offer soon, so we can meet Mansfield's increasing demand.

Cassie Daykin

Children's Services Manager





## MACE – Board of Management

Janene Ridley: President  
Imogen Smith: Vice President & Secretary  
David Roff: Treasurer  
Murray Chenery  
David Mims (incoming)  
Sue Hare (incoming)  
Megan Kavanagh (outgoing)  
Michael Craddock (outgoing)  
Simon Hicks (outgoing)

## MACE – Staff

Kylie Richards: Chief Executive Officer  
Bernadette Caminos: Student & Administration Officer, Finance Officer  
Elin Ree: Education & Quality Officer  
Vanessa van Clute: Reception

# Mansfield Community Cubby House – Staff



## **Bachelor in Early Childhood Education or working towards:**

Molly Walker: Children's Services Manager 2IC

Amy Hearn

Elizabeth Banks

## **Diploma Qualified or working towards:**

Cassie Daykin: Children's Services Manager

Arwen Hannaford: Education Leader

Alicia Foster

Belinda Banks

Chloe Smith (outgoing)

Clare Dale

Corrin Crawford (outgoing)

Kate Crawford

Madeline Cooksey

Niamh McKay (incoming)

Nicole Medcraft

Shannon Cameron

Steph Imlach

Taylah Service (outgoing)

Teagan Hopgood

## **Certificate III or working towards:**

Chloe Rekers

Danielle Rogers (incoming)

Emily Jackson

Kylie Warren (outgoing)

Lauren Hutchinson

Sally Kirley (incoming)