



# Annual Report 2021

# Give Where You Live

Serving the  
community  
for 20 years





# Chair's Statement



In our 20th Anniversary year, despite living with lock down from Covid and the flow on effects of the Black Summer Bushfires we have met all challenges head on, we have evolved and defined our clear purpose:

**To grow and connect a more caring community that improves the quality of life for all those living in the Southern Highlands.**

The Southern Highland Foundation (SHF) plays a pivotal role as a trusted facilitator and connector, helping to 'Bridge the Gap' within our diverse community. We keep our finger on the pulse and listen to the needs of the community. We believe in working together, bringing those working in silos to the table, encouraging them to think collectively. In this way we can make the most impact.

'Give Where You Live' is our slogan. We acknowledge that we do more than provide funding dollars, we give time, expertise, a caring and listening ear, all contributing to creative problem solving for shared community outcomes.

The success of our year can be attributed to the active contributions of the Board, everyone giving their time, expertise and compassion to the work of the Foundation. I give my most sincere thanks to the directors of the board for all their efforts and for the professional and considered manner in which we work as a team.



**SHF Board**, from left: David Allen, Jenny Bott AO, Bridget Cosyn, Shelley Boyce OAM, Nicole Smith, Mike Walker, Annabel White, Peter Barge  
Insets: Jenny Harper OAM, Jim McAlpine AM





I thank Lyndall Dalley and Michelle Mulvihill, directors who stepped down from the board in 2021 for their time and input to the Foundation during their term as directors. We will miss their positive attitude and wise counsel.

We welcome to the board this year, Annabel White and Peter Barge as directors and Michael Walker as Treasurer and Public Officer. We are delighted that Annabel, Peter, and Mike have joined the board. They have all brought valuable skills, enthusiasm and passion for the work of the Foundation, and a heart for our community.

Thanks to our Community Liaison/Admin Officer Bridget Cosyn, words cannot express my gratitude for her efforts. Bridget attends to the day-to-day management of the Foundation and she works closely with our funding partners and community groups. The Foundation is very fortunate to have Bridget onboard and the success of the year for a large part could not have been possible without her. Heartfelt thanks Bridget!

As we move forward into 2022, we look back on the 20 years as a Community Foundation and are proud of our achievements over the past year, and equally proud of the efforts of the SHF since its inception.

We acknowledge a passionate group of local people who had a vision of what could be achieved within our community and thank our new and regular benefactors for their financial support throughout the year.

We will continue to step up, advocating mentoring, providing leadership, along with strengthening and encouraging community groups to work together. Our goal is to build a caring and inclusive community where we can all proudly feel a sense of belonging.

**Shelley Boyce OAM**

Chair

Image: 'Recovery', Brian Rapsey – PhotoVoice



# Financial Overview

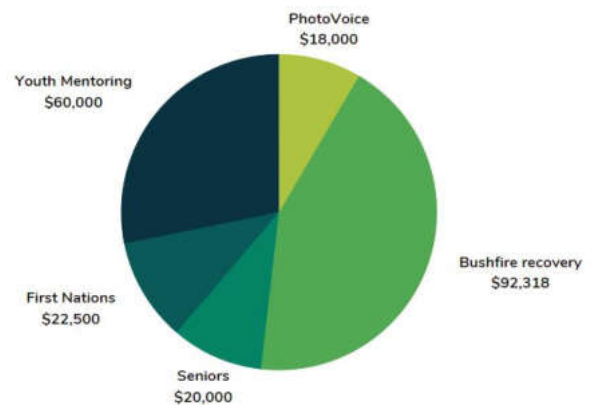
The Foundation experienced a highly active year in 2020-21 in helping the Southern Highlands community across a wide range of areas of community support.

The major sources of funds from which donations and grants were applied to projects during the year were:

- » FireAid
- » Global Giving
- » Paul Ramsay Donation
- » Elizabeth Williams Bequest

The funds were distributed to a range of projects and causes including:

- » Raise Mentoring Education project
- » Fire Recovery
- » Indigenous Brokerage
- » Youth Engagement and
- » Seniors and Women's Health.

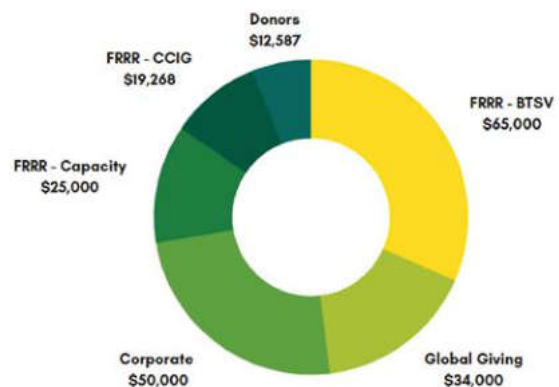


**A total of \$212,818 was distributed.**

# Grants & Donations

Throughout 2021 the SHF Board worked tirelessly to identify various avenues for sourcing additional grant funds to support the projects in the community.

Without the generosity of our benefactors and partners, Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) and Global Giving, projects like Raise Youth Mentoring, Grandfriends and Wingello Recovery Plant Fair may have struggled to be supported.



**Mike Walker**  
Treasurer



# Strategic Planning

A board strategic planning session was facilitated by directors Peter Barge and Annabel White in May 2021 to evolve our purpose of a connected and caring community.

Directors acknowledged the ongoing need to raise awareness of the Southern Highlands Foundation and its commitment to raise funds and awareness of community needs and acknowledge all towns in the Southern Highlands.

Key actions arising from the day included:

- » updated marketing/social media on the role of SHF as a 'community connector' (through knowledge sharing, granting and partnerships)
- » need for ongoing understanding of community needs which resulted in the launch of Vital Signs
- » ensuring we connect directly with our community with the development of a new community data base and launch of GIVIT (which links 'givers' to community individuals and not for profits)
- » commitment from the board to raise the profile and impact of SHF's work in the community through events such as the launch of 'Photovoice' and the upcoming Southern Highlands forum and birthday celebration in May, 2022
- » governance review identifying the need for three new directors to add to the existing skills of the current board.
- » Need for board to fundraise within the community and beyond to ensure we continue to 'give where we live'.



*Hugh MacKay AO, Patron*



**Annabel White**  
Director

# Community Consultation – Vital Signs Research

In July 2021 the SHF Board agreed to commission Vital Signs research study, collecting and documenting community input and statistics.

It is a community-based research initiative exploring key themes of health, education and employment, housing and belonging. This will give the community valuable hard data urgently needed to support community-based grant applications, needs, direction and focus.



A crucial element of the Vital Signs research project is to engage with the Highlands community directly in order to get more detailed research on key areas of need and concern.

In order to make the best use of this research project and to grow the reach of the SHF and to connect to the broader community, the Foundation has embarked on an initiative to combine the digital research project with the development of an extensive database and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The Foundation has engaged external provider, HyperHub to conduct the research, develop the CRM and database system, and to also conduct ongoing direct marketing and communication.



This system will be an invaluable asset for the foundation in the future, allowing direct communication with the broader highlands community, allowing the SHF to also build its reach within the community and better reach out to community organisations, service providers, community members and potential donors.

**Nicole Smith**  
Director

# PhotoVoice

## Black Summer Fires in the Southern Highlands

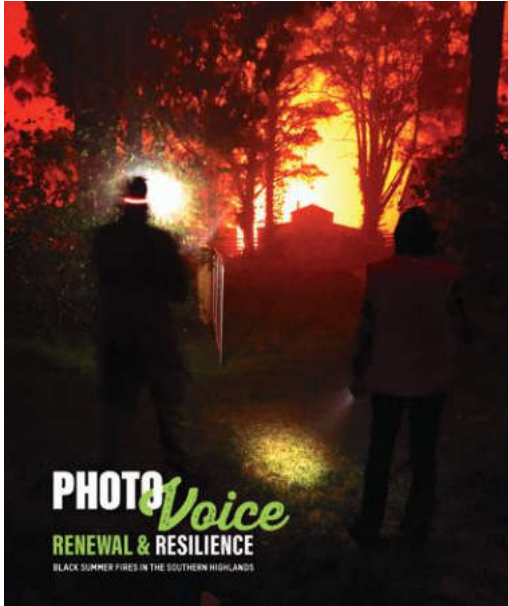


Image: David Bruggeman – PhotoVoice

**One of the great projects which the FireAid funds supported was a community photographic competition and exhibition – PHOTOVOICE: RENEWAL & RESILIENCE.**

The aim of the exhibition was to encourage those who experienced the horror of the fires and the community response to them, to tell their stories through images of those confronting days – and the strength, resilience and renewal which followed.

The exhibition was displayed for the public in Balmoral and Wingello. Four prizes were awarded to the most outstanding images which reflected the theme of the book: David Bruggeman; Ashley Mackevicius; Peter Gray and Andy Carnahan; and Bodhi Todd.

The exhibition opened the door to a collaboration between the Southern Highlands Foundation, the Wingecarribee Shire Council and Global Giving Foundation to curate a coffee table book PhotoVoice which is a pictorial essay cataloguing the journey from disaster to regrowth.



The book seeks to tell the stories, through images taken by those who were there, of the fires, of community resilience and environmental recovery. However, with 90% of families who lost their homes still waiting to rebuild, combined with the effects of two ensuing years of the COVID pandemic, much remains to be done to support these people in our community.

***See the video of the launch of PhotoVoice.***

**Jenny Bott AO**  
Director



Image: Bodhi Todd – PhotoVoice



# Youth Mentoring – RAISE

The SHF took a decision to support the mentoring of youth in our community by endorsing and supporting the Raise Mentoring program in the two local high schools.

An initial meeting was held in December 2020 with representatives of Raise to discuss how the program could work and what its intended outcomes might be.

The Board subsequently endorsed this approach. By April 2021, Bowral High had 14 mentors and Moss Vale High had 12 and the students had been selected.

The principals of both schools had keen staff to liaise with Raise and to monitor the program in their schools. The program began with lots of enthusiasm which was not dampened much in the middle of the year when Covid restrictions forced the program to be conducted remotely as the mentors, like all visitors, were not permitted to be on school sites.

Representatives from Raise, schools and SHF meet via Zoom late in 2021 to evaluate the program. Both schools were full of praise for the impact that Raise had had on the participating students. Their attendance had improved, they were keen to meet with their mentors (keener than going to normal classes!), and they had become positive about getting an education at school. Parental feedback to the schools has also been positive.

The data provided by Raise showed that the two local schools had had even greater success than schools in metropolitan areas. The SHF has decided that the success of Raise with the local schools was such that the Foundation should continue to support it and to look for other ways of obtaining funding support to assist with the program in the future.

Our communities will benefit from having young people who are better prepared for the challenges they will face after school and who will be positive contributors to their community.



**Jim McAlpine AM**  
Director

**"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being a good mentor that helps me get through difficult times and helps me understand my life better. Thanks you for making me happy."**

**Male mentee**





# Donations in kind – GIVIT

Our stated purpose to develop a more caring community and further drive our slogan 'Give Where You Live'.



In 2021 a GIVIT Southern Highlands Foundation platform was launched that actively engages both local community services and donors. This regional pilot, this will scale down the GIVIT national platform to work at a local community level.

A GIVIT dedicated community engagement officer in conjunction with SHF directors will engage, train and support local community services, schools and health programs within the Highlands to utilise the program and platform. The project will allow our local organisations access to the Southern Highlands community giving platform on a daily basis.

The project is being set up as a fully documented case study enabling other Foundations to adopt it within their communities. The idea behind the SHF funded GIVIT platform is to link the local needs of residents and community groups directly to people and businesses who can donate time, goods and expertise.



*Mike Walker, Peter Barge and Annabel White with Kirsty Bender from GIVIT*

**Peter Barge Director**  
Director

# Grandfriends

With the onset of Covid19 the increase in anxiety and depression associated with the isolation of seniors has had a tremendous impact on everyone in their support network.



'Grandfriends' - Pilot Program is a fantastic initiative born out of a prospering partnership between Harbison Care and the local school, Oxley College.

This partnership has paved the way for the opportunity to connect with a broad range of beneficiaries; residents (some of whom reside in high-level dementia care); Oxley students aged 5-7 years; the resident's families, & other community connections.

The SHF believed that supporting this initiative will not only build better relationships for those involved but has the potential to include joint partnerships with other schools in the community.

Through a funding opportunity from FRRR – In A Good Place, SHF submitted an EOI and was successfully granted \$19,268.00. These funds will assist the program to reduce social isolation, build capacity and connectedness.



*"I get such a thrill of attending the school for these visits.*

*To see the faces of the kids with big smiles and being called by my name, as I walk into the classroom is so very special"*

**Harbison Resident**

**Zac Hulm – Grandfriends Co-ordinator**  
Harbison



# Recovery Support Service Brokerage

The Recovery Support Service and the Southern Highlands Foundation/Fire Aid have successfully collaborated to provide a brokerage program for bushfire affected residents.



## Recovery & Resilience

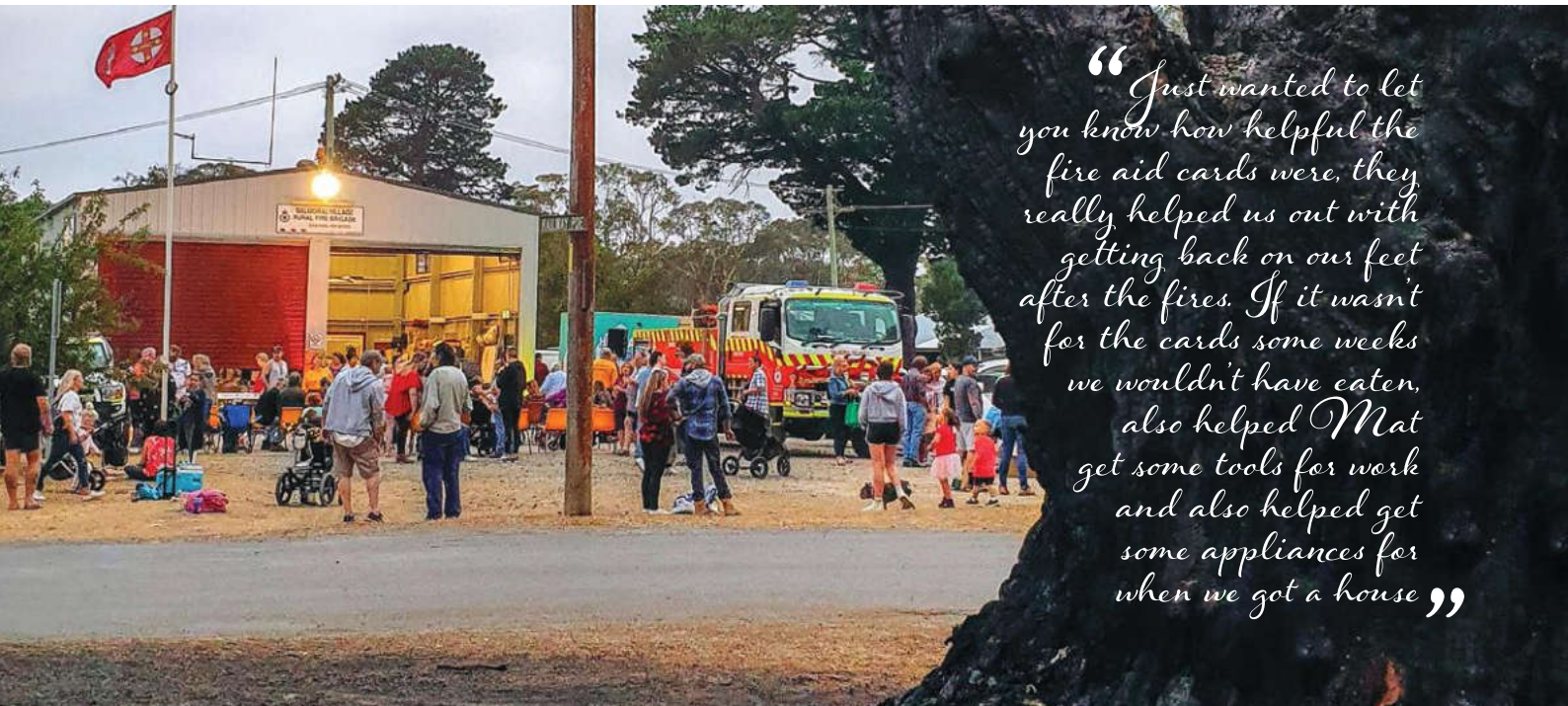
Assistance helps residents connecting with services, support lifestyle programs, capacity building, educational needs, health and wellbeing services, community rebuilding activities, and to support residents who have been ineligible for other grants and assistance.

The SHF have provided the community with invaluable support. The distribution of funds through a prolonged period has ensured a wide cohort have received support at a time that is most useful to the individual/family.

The psychosocial impacts of the bushfires on residents are often not identified and addressed until practical needs are addressed.

The SHF had provided access to practical relief through a variety of pathways, including the collaboration with Community Links, that has made a real difference to individuals and families.

Fire Aid cards were used at the following vendors: Gubbins Mitre 10 Moss Vale, Gubbins Mitre 10 Mittagong, Mt Murray Nursery, Wariapendi Nursery, Moss Vale IGA, Irelands Machinery, Welby Garden Centre, Southern Rural Traders and Pillow Talk.



“Just wanted to let you know how helpful the fire aid cards were, they really helped us out with getting back on our feet after the fires. If it wasn't for the cards some weeks we wouldn't have eaten, also helped Mat get some tools for work and also helped get some appliances for when we got a house”

Image: Community Meeting Balmoral Community Hall – PhotoVoice

**Tanya Smith**  
Recovery and Resilience – CLW

# University of Wollongong – Indigenous Scholarships

## University of Wollongong Partnership

We are thrilled to be working with UOW on a range of projects including promoting the role of the UOW campus in Moss Vale.

In particular, in 2021, we underwrote three scholarships for Indigenous students from the Southern Highlands to pursue their dreams of a tertiary education.

These scholarships were made possible by the Elizabeth Williams bequest. We have had great feedback from the students and see this as an important ongoing program to transform lives and fulfil the aspirations of these talented young people.

**Jennifer Bott AO**  
Director



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA





# Back to School Vouchers

FRRR's Back to School (BTS) program partners with community groups and Community Foundations to provide \$50 gift vouchers to local families in need.



The Southern Highlands Foundation has been partnering for many years with the BTSV scheme and this year we were very grateful to receive \$65,000 in vouchers.

A significant increase this year as the increased need has been amplified by the ongoing drought, financial struggles, and social disengagement only to be seriously compounded by the severe impact of the Black Summer 2019/2020 Fires.

Vouchers were dispersed to local public schools, community agencies and local support networks who have connected with those families in need of support.

The BTS program helps families to find some relief over the school term supporting and encouraging school attendance, integration and social awareness.



The vouchers can be redeemed at select national retailers and 5 local businesses for school essentials like uniforms, shoes, school bags or stationery.

Feedback from recipients was overwhelmingly grateful and appreciative of the support.

**Bridget Cosyn**  
Community liaison



# Global Giving

Global Giving is a large established fundraising organisation in the US which aims to provide disaster relief globally and connects nonprofits, donors, and companies in nearly every country in the world.



GlobalGiving

By establishing partnerships with not for profits it enables them to access the funding, tools, training, and support they need to serve their communities.

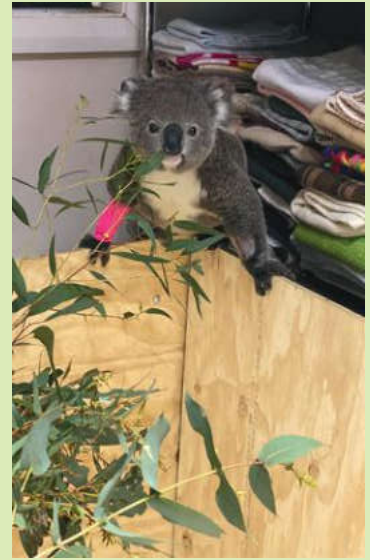
The Foundation is very proud to have formed a partnership with Global giving and received \$34,000 to support our ongoing Bushfire recovery projects.

Wingello Plant Fair, Balmoral Village Hall Bushfire Sprinklers, Photo Voice and Youth Muster song circle were the projects and initiatives that we supported with the aim to connect, strengthen and establish a continuing legacy for the future of our community.



**Bridget Cosyn**  
Community liaison







# Fire Aid 2020

The ongoing impact from the Black Summer Fires has been exacerbated by the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic.

With recovery and building hampered by lock down restrictions, building cost increases, inclement weather and other unforeseen incidents further Fire Aid funds were directed to support a brokerage with Recovery Support Service – Community Links to assist with community rebuilding and engagement.

**PhotoVoice: Renewal and Resilience** – photo book is a pictorial essay highlighting before, during and recovery from the Bushfires. Wingello Plant Fair encouraged community members to join in a rebuilding of their garden day and wildlife care was further supported with FireAid Cards to assist purchase food and infrastructure equipment.



Image: FireAid 2020: Karleen Minney – PhotoVoice



John Waters and Leo Sayer





# Mental Connect ARTS Scholarship

The pilot Supported Artist Scholarship offered through Mental and funded by the Southern Highlands Foundation was designed to support an emerging artist experiencing disengagement in the community.



We often see a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Jessica, 22, was the first recipient of this pilot and has been practicing art for almost a decade. Diagnosed with severe Autism, Jessica has struggled to engage with artistic opportunities. Access to services has hampered her aim is to work independently.

With careful interactions Jessica was introduced to the local art community along with new mediums and ways of working. She specifically learnt digital drawing techniques and computer skills.

Also digitizing her existing artwork helped to create a range of products designed to give her a personal income stream from art. Through this tailored-individual approach Jessica has benefited immensely from the program.

The program has now been identified as a possible case study for individuals with permanent disability to increase participation in the arts through the NDIS.

**Sergei Netchaef**  
Mental Connect Founder



# Cancer Care

Can Assist Southern Highlands extends their sincere thanks to The Southern Highlands Foundation for the donation of \$40,000 in the financial year 2019-2020.



The pandemic had halted any opportunity for our charity to fundraise, so the donation was timely and very much appreciated. For over 60 years, Can Assist SH has provided financial support, to ease the burden, for those in our community, who are experiencing financial hardship as a consequence of their cancer diagnosis.

- » Financial assistance may include help for the following expenses:
- » Out of pocket expenses for cancer medications during treatment
- » Travel for treatment
- » Treatment related accommodation
- » Respite care
- » Palliative or end of life care at home or in hospital.



The donation from The Foundation helped many of our patients in the first 12 months of the pandemic.

**Jenny Harper OAM**  
President,  
Can Assist Southern Highlands





# Community Connection and Recovery

- » Recovery Support Service Brokerage
- » Vocal Youth Muster
- » Wildlife Recovery
- » Festival of Lights
- » Mental Youth Arts Internship
- » FRRR – Bushfire Recovery Capacity

# Partners & Supporters

- » FRRR – Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
- » Global Giving
- » Wingecarribee Shire Council
- » Community Links Wellbeing
- » Highland Community Centre
- » University of Wollongong – Indigenous Scholarship
- » Givit
- » Raise
- » Peter Campbell Design
- » Steven Foster



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