



RESILIENCE IN A NEW WORLD

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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‘Nurturing resilience
through social connections’

CEO MESSAGE

Serge Sardo
Chief Executive Officer

Whenever I visited my parents, I noticed a group of octogenarians playing cards in a nearby café. Social connections go a long way in strengthening their personal resilience during this stage of their life.

Nurturing resilience through social connections

Centuries have passed since the English poet, John Donne, first penned his now famous line 'No man is an island'. Never have those words rung truer than in recent times. Even as we retreated from the outside world, we instinctively rebelled against living in solitude. Instead, we found new ways of protecting and nurturing our social connections.

Whether it was celebrating momentous events on Zoom or raising our eyebrows in communication behind a mask, we sought out connection through whatever means possible. And as we held each other up this way, we also strengthened our own resilience – first to get through the pandemic and then to live in this new post-pandemic world.

The anatomy of resilience

Social connections and interactions are the cornerstones of resilience. These two factors are instrumental in helping individuals cope with stressful situations, recover from adversities and adapt to significant life changes. The thriving of social connections enables each individual to act as pillars of strength and trust for one another. This builds a resilience to bounce back from personal, family and community traumas.

In the aftermath of any disaster, the emergence of resilience is the clearest sign of a strong social network. The pandemic proved this over and over again. That resilience helped many of us craft a new story of hope and optimism this year as we moved forward from those difficult times. But not everyone is fortunate enough to tell this story.

Loneliness is a silent threat

There is a warmth that comes from collective participation and a sharing of life. Being with others is an acknowledgement that we are an integral part of their social fabric, just as they are of ours. When we are prevented from making social contact or participating as we wish, loneliness can set in.

Loneliness deals a brutal blow to our mental wellbeing and physical health. It leads to despondency and distress, which can make it more difficult to deal with life's challenges. Lonely people are more vulnerable and at a higher risk of being harmed by those they trust.

During the pandemic, loneliness became a pathway towards elder abuse. The social isolation forced many senior citizens to be heavily co-dependent on family members or caregivers who did not always have their best interests at heart. Behind closed doors, the abuse went unnoticed. But now that we have re-entered society, we need to work on including the older person in our communities.

The essence of social inclusion

Social inclusion is not limited to running designated programs for 'seniors' or group activities that try to appeal to all. True social inclusion means acknowledging and celebrating the many ways in which we age yet continue contributing to our communities. It's about giving people a choice to participate rather than excluding them through indifference.

Social inclusion means dismantling any barriers that prevent people from actively participating in society in the way and at the level they wish. Age-friendly environments are an example of this. By ensuring that environments are accessible and welcoming to older people, we are also creating a space for people of all ages. Frequent and affordable public transport, public spaces with good lighting, and signage that is easily understood are little things that make a big difference.

Whenever I visited my parents, I noticed a group of octogenarians playing cards in a nearby café. The café owner said this group became regulars ever since he offered them half-price coffee, a reserved table and free WiFi access. What a wonderful way of creating a sense of belonging for a group that is often ignored or overlooked. I also daresay that the social support this group receives from the café owner and each other goes a long way in strengthening their personal resilience during this stage of their life.

Ageing is opportunity and strength

Our country is built on the shoulders of the older generation. Actively encouraging their social participation is not a one-way initiative as they carry a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from a lifetime of experiences. The more we empower older people to be involved in ways that suit them, the more options there are to share knowledge, make meaningful connections and continue building our collective resilience.

As American activist Betty Friedman quipped, "Aging is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength."



Serge Sardo
Chief Executive Officer

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Rachel Holthouse
Chair of the Board



As we emerged from the constraints of COVID, new challenges awaited. A tense geopolitical landscape, economic pressure and skills shortages have impacted services and the cost of living. An unprecedented need for mental health support has been noted across Australia as people seek ways to help them navigate uncertain times.

Better Place Australia recognised this need early and was able to adapt and adjust services to reach out to more Victorians. 29,000 inbound calls were received and over 48,000 sessions were provided to clients while straddling the new hybrid approach to working. Our practitioners strove to achieve a balance between face to face and remote services, recognising the most vulnerable clients often needed to be with people in a safe and reassuring way.

The response from those we helped was positive with 95% of clients expressing satisfaction with our services and 97% of clients stating that they would recommend BPA. We are challenging ourselves at BPA to capture the client voice as often as possible to ensure our services and support are reflective of their expectation and needs. We are also exploring ways to integrate services across therapeutic interventions, to offer more mental health services at this time of high demand.

Taking the lead in caring for older members of our community has become a signature piece for BPA, and we are now recognised as a leader in elder abuse prevention advocacy. Ageism is a hidden phenomenon that is not yet fully recognised across Australia and attitudes towards older people need to change. BPA is contributing to building understanding by chairing Elder Abuse Prevention networks and advocating for change in the mental health and aged care sectors. In addition, we expanded our support of older people through our residential facility program and the Elder Abuse Prevention service to the Orange Doors as a way of reducing social isolation, addressing risks to elder abuse, and increasing mental well-being.

This year BPA also opened a Child Contact Centre at Narre Warren to increase family resilience. We have helped over 900 clients through children's programs and presented at key conferences in the family and relationships sector. There is still much work that needs to be done, but we can see the difference services like the Contact Centre is making to the lives of many families. Another important initiative that BPA has cultivated is The Way Back Support Service, a non-clinical suicide prevention and support service which provides vital psychosocial support to those at a very vulnerable stage in their lives. The service helps participants remain safe in the crucial 12 weeks post an attempt, and to prosper beyond this time.

Financial sustainability is critical to ensure we can continue to respond to the needs of the community and BPA consistently performs well. Due to its reputation for delivering on the promise, we continue to attract funding to help us reach out to those in need. BPA has a strong record of prudent management of resources and for quality client service which our mid-term Quality Innovation Performance Limited (QIP) results confirm.

Our own community at BPA continue to be amongst our greatest ambassadors. Despite periods of restriction, our staff celebrated World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Reconciliation Week, Pride month, IDAHOBIT day, R U OK? day and have been active in LGBTIQ+ Committee and Family Violence networks. We are beholden to the dedication of the many individuals that play a role, whether that is our empathetic and talented practitioners, managers and support staff, CEO and Executive or volunteer Board members and we are grateful for the professionalism and dedication each person brings. Together we can be proud of the difference we make in so many lives and the part we are playing in fostering a caring society.



Rachel Holthouse
Chair



BOARD

Better Place Australia

BOARD



Rachel Holthouse

Chair of the Board

Rachel Holthouse believes that access to learning is critical for individuals at all stages of life. Her career has focused on aligning education with the needs of communities and industries, both in Australia and internationally. She enjoys learning about different areas of expertise and fostering connections that bring mutual benefit and result in positive impact. She has a strong commitment to the needs of the learner and a compassionate approach to the challenges people face as they seek to change their lives for the better.

As Chair of Better Place Australia, Rachel brings that passion to the support of the BPA community.

She applies her experience of using technology to facilitate learning and teaching to support professional development across the BPA community and is an advocate for initiatives that enhance the organisational culture of BPA.

Rachel is currently working with SEEK investments as Senior Strategic Advisor to FutureLearn and Executive Director, Pathways for Online Education Services. Rachel's career has included senior governance roles in Australia, the United Kingdom and Singapore. She is well respected across the higher education sector and her previous roles include Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Global Development at RMIT University.

Rachel's achievements have enhanced the reputation of the organisations she served. She is known for having an entrepreneurial and innovative mindset that balances the values and objectives of stakeholders and enables organisations to flourish. She brings her talent for vision and strategy to Better Place Australia and nurtures a collaborative relationship with the Board and BPA Executive.

Rachel joined Better Place in May 2017 and is a member of the People and Governance Committee and the Financial, Risk and Audit Committee. She has been Chair of the Board since 2020.



Erika Owens

Deputy Chair

Erika Owens channels her dedication to support victims of crime in Victoria into initiatives and collaborations with various government agencies and not-for-profits. Her empathy, resilience, and clear vision are reflected in every project she leads. And in each one, her mission is clear - prevent harm to others.

Erika is currently the Director of Victim Support within the Victim Services, Support & Reform (VSSR) unit at the Department of Justice and Community Safety. She was previously the CEO of Crime Stoppers Victoria.

Erika has also held executive positions as Senior Manager, Southern & Eastern Melbourne and later as General Manager, State Services at Relationships Australia. Prior to this, she worked in the Department of Justice overseeing the delivery of government reform and operations.

Erika joined the Board in 2018 as a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and the People and Governance Committee.



Magistrate Anne Goldsbrough

Director

Anne Goldsbrough has been a leader in the area of Family Violence and Family Law since her appointment as a magistrate in 1996. She was the Part-Time Law Reform Commissioner for the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry and report into the interaction of laws and practice in Family Law, family violence, child protection, sexual assault, and criminal laws in 2010. She sits on the Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity.

Anne is currently the Regional Coordinating Magistrate and Lead Family Violence Magistrate for the Hume region including Shepparton and 8 other regional courts. She has presided over notable projects as a magistrate, including the development and introduction of the Specialist Family Violence Court Division in 2005.

In June 2022, Anne was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the judiciary, and to the law and to legal education. She regularly contributes to ongoing legal and judicial professional development and to a range of community information and education programs both locally and abroad.

She brings the same dedication to Better Place Australia where she has a natural interest in our services that are supportive of those at risk of family violence and our practitioners focus on risk assessment and safety planning.

Anne joined the Board in November 2018.

BOARD



David Speyer

Director and Treasurer

David Speyer firmly believes in an individual's capacity for change and growth. He is committed to creating dynamic environments that facilitate self-development. He has taken great pride in leading the delivery of service excellence to clients and the wider community.

David has spearheaded services to people living with disabilities to help them live their chosen lifestyle. He is currently interim CFO at Teach for Australia. His style mirrors Better Place Australia's approach to helping our most vulnerable clients gain autonomy and build the confidence to make their own life decisions.

David's leadership career revolves around applying commercial and financial acumen to complex organisational change and turnaround. His agility and ability to see the big picture have also helped guide Better Place's strategy and direction.

David joined the Board in October 2014 as member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.



Dr Bruce Bolam

Director

Dr Bruce Bolam is Director of the Loddon-Mallee Public Health Unit based at Bendigo Health. He has extensive experience in public health, research and policy, gained through senior roles in health and government sectors in Australia and the UK.

Passionate about improving health and wellbeing for all, Bruce believes that empowering people to build better relationships is foundational for happier and healthier individuals, families and communities.

Bruce is a Fellow of both the Public Health Association of Australia and the UK Faculty of Public Health of the Royal Colleges of Physicians, and holds several related degrees.

Bruce joined the Board in February 2020.

Bruce is a member of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee and the People & Governance Committee.

Thomas King

Director

Thomas is a Finance and Strategy Executive with extensive experience across finance, operations, procurement and M&A both locally and internationally, leading change and transformation. Thomas has worked in Melbourne, Paris and Singapore and covered regional roles across Central Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

Thomas has held senior executive roles at Australia Post including General Manager, Finance and General Manager, Procurement, and executive roles at ANZ Bank including CFO South and South East Asia, CFO Enablement, Divisional Financial Controller Asia Pacific, Head of Finance Integration RBS and Head of Productivity, Planning and Performance. Prior to working for ANZ, Thomas held roles in Mergers and Acquisitions for the Global AXA Group and was also financial controller for AXA's Asia Pacific business based out of Paris.

Thomas holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Melbourne University, an Honours degree in Banking and Finance from Monash University, is a qualified Chartered Accountant and a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

Thomas joined the board in August 2020 as a Chair of the Finance, Risk and Audit Committee.

Delia McIver

Director

Delia McIver has significant experience at a senior executive level across the post-secondary education sector in the areas of People and Culture/Human Resources, safety, risk and corporate services and has worked across Australia and internationally in her career. Delia currently holds the position of Executive Director People, Culture and Safety at Chisholm Institute, having held similar positions as Executive Director People & Capability at Box Hill Institute and Director Human Resources at Victoria University.

Having a keen interest in the not-for-profit sector, Delia has been a member of the Fitzroy Learning Network Board, Oakleigh Centre Board and enjoys participating as a volunteer at Reclink.

Delia is a graduate of the University of Melbourne, Monash University and La Trobe University and a member of the Australian Human Resources Institute (CAHRI).

Delia joined the Board in May 2017

Delia is Chair of the People and Governance Committee.



EXECUTIVE TEAM

Better Place Australia

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Serge Sardo

Chief Executive Officer

As CEO of Better Place Australia, Serge is passionate about transforming the lives of vulnerable Victorians and their families. With over 15 years' experience as a CEO and non-executive director for not-for-profit and government organisations, Serge brings to Better Place Australia a record of results built on inclusive leadership and strategic planning.

In his previous role as CEO of the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Serge was instrumental in establishing the Foundation as a world leader in the delivery of counselling, support and prevention programs to over 100 different locations.

Serge is a registered psychologist and has an MBA qualification complemented with strong commercial experience. With expertise in preventative programs, social policy and advocacy, he has delivered and managed a wide variety of community-based therapeutic and prevention services.

Serge's commitment to developing stronger communities is exemplified through his involvement across sectors. He is a member of the Board for the Family and Relationships Services Association (FRSA) and chairs the Finance, Risk and Governance Committee, he is also a non-Executive Director of Scope Disability Services and Chairs the Governance and Remuneration Committee. Serge is also a non-Executive Director of the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and is Vice President of Sandringham Secondary College.



Graeme Westaway

Executive Manager Advocacy - Brand, Digital & Communications

Graeme believes all people should be able to live their lives fully, in socially connected ways without fear of coercion or discrimination.

With a science, communication and services development background, Graeme leads Better Place Australia's advocacy through digital presence, corporate communications, stakeholder management, and growth generation.

Graeme has held executive and senior leadership roles across the not-for-profit, mutual and corporate sectors. He brings to Better Place Australia a strong background in developing strategies to drive growth, digital engagement and service innovation. He has a passion for raising ageism awareness, elder abuse prevention and respecting the right of all people to self-determine.



Jenni Dickson

Executive Manager Community Support Services

Jenni has a passion for health and community services and believes in the importance of safe, inclusive and quality access to services for all. She has a strong understanding of client-focused outcomes coupled with a passion for health and community services.

With her extensive experience in the Aged and Community Care sector, Jenni works constantly to improve service standards and the highly developed standard of reporting at Better Place Australia.

Jenni has a Bachelor of Nursing, a Graduate Diploma in Community Health, and significant experience in the Aged and Community Care sector.

Jenni is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).



David Turen

Executive Manager Human Resources

David Turen has extensive career experience in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations in both the corporate and not-for-profit sectors. David has held HR leadership roles across a variety of organisations in health and community services, contact centres and commercial aviation.

David's portfolio covers responsibility across the full suite of People and Culture functions including HR Strategy, Employee Relations, Performance and Reward Management, HR Consultancy and People Policy.

David has an Honours Degree in Law (LLB)(Hons), a Master's Degree in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management and a Bachelor of Economics (Business). David is also a Professional Member of the Australian Human Resources Institute (CAHRI) and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Andrew Johnston

Executive Manager Mental Health Services

Andrew Johnston has nearly 30 years' experience in program management, organisational development, operational management, and quality and risk management spanning the mental health, community services, aid and development, and private sectors. Andrew has held a variety of executive and senior positions within large non-profit, community, and private organisations.

Andrew has a passion for working with strategic, values-based people and has an educational background in business, management and leadership. He has also undertaken extensive work as an independent organisational development consultant supporting a range of not-for-profit agencies in the health/community service sectors.



Craig Dennis

Executive Manager Operations and Business Systems

Craig maintains strong ties to his local community and has a long history of volunteer work in his local community, including holding senior roles in the Country Fire Authority. As a believer in values-driven leadership, he has also consulted for a number of not-for-profits.

Craig has over 30 years' of experience in IT systems, information management and information technology strategy. He has held a number of senior and executive roles, and has extensive experience in technology change consulting, and advisory and business leadership roles.

Craig's expertise in business automation systems for small to medium businesses has enabled Better Place Australia to develop new key IT strategies and systems.



Olivia Darcy

Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary

Olivia is passionate about making a difference. Olivia started her career in chartered accounting before moving overseas to work in investment banking. Upon returning to Australia, Olivia worked for ANZ in a variety of roles across projects, corporate communications and finance. Following a lifestyle change, she moved to a farm in regional Victoria and worked as CFO of a community-based, not-for-profit aged care facility igniting a passion for using skills gained from a corporate background in the "for purpose" sector.

Olivia has a Bachelor of Business, is a CPA and is currently studying with the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Olivia has three young boys and is treasurer of their school council.

A photograph of a man with a beard and a young boy hugging. The man is smiling and looking to the right, while the boy is resting his head on the man's shoulder. The image has a purple gradient overlay on the left side.

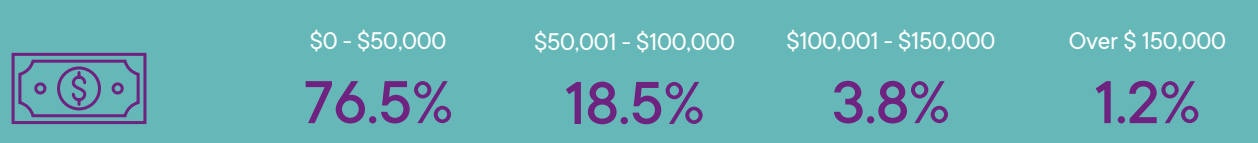
OUR CLIENTS

OUR CLIENTS

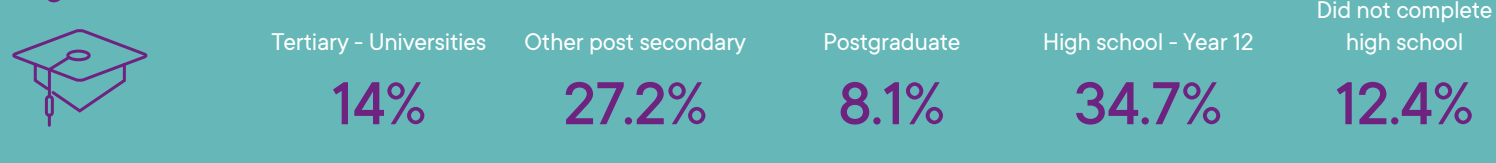
Those who identify as binary



Current household income



Highest level of education



Marital status



Employment status



Household Composition



A photograph of a man with grey hair, a full white beard, and glasses, wearing a headset. He is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and a rainbow-colored lanyard with a badge. He is sitting at a desk in an office, looking down at a laptop. The background shows office cubicles with glass partitions and a window. The text "OUR IMPACT" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

OUR IMPACT

OUR IMPACT #1

Leading elder abuse prevention in Australia

Better Place Australia believes our aged care system may deprive the older person of the ability to make independent decisions pertaining to their life. Our psychological services supports residents in 120 aged care facilities across Victoria heard how many residents struggled with the transition from independent living because their capacity for self-determination was diminished. There is an urgent need for a clearer process to allow the older person to retain their dignity and autonomy by involving them in conversations and decisions on matters important to them.

We are also deeply concerned over the prevalence of ageism in our society. A big part of our work involves championing the social inclusion and active participation of older people in our communities.

We co-funded the Framing Age Messaging Guide, a project led by a consortium of multi-agency Elder Abuse Prevention Networks (EAPNs), that focuses on how to talk about age, ageing and issues affecting the older person in a way that reduces ageist attitudes, stereotypes and behaviours.

The Southern Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network (SMEAPN) hosted by BPA and in collaboration with other organisations, then followed up with a social media campaign to further promote this messaging.

We still have a long way to go in closing gaps within the aged care system but we remain steadfast in our efforts to reduce ageism and create a more inclusive society for people of all ages.



OUR IMPACT #2

Our presence at national conferences

National conferences are an invaluable source of emerging trends and changes in society, and a lens into how organisations like ours can respond in a way that provides quality care and effective services to those in need.

These events are also a means for our practitioners and researchers to share important research, service and data insights that can shape and evolve future service delivery. These events also provide opportunities for collaborations that inspire new ways of working and engaging with our communities to tackle the challenges they face.

The conferences we actively participated in this year include the FRSA National Conference National Mediation Conference, the National Mediation Conference, and conferences by the Australian Association of Gerontology and Australian Institute of Family Studies, all with excellent outcomes.



OUR IMPACT



**centre
for better
relationships**

Expanding our research team

The Centre for Better Relationships welcomed two new members to its research team – Dr Rachel Bonnici and Dr Laila Hugrass. The Centre, which is the research and policy division of Better Place Australia, expanded its work this year to include research into the design of a new elder abuse prevention model and insights into the influence of coercive control awareness in practice.

Improving access to psychological services

The Centre for Better Relationships conducted a review of access to mental health supports across Melbourne. The review found that outer suburban areas were not as well supported with Mental Health practitioners as compared to suburbs closer to the city. To address this need, Better Place Australia's psychological services has placed clinicians in areas of need, where it is possible. Data from the review helped us develop stronger linkages to support those in areas of greater need and limited access, to offer affordable and accessible mental health support.



The Way Back Support Service funding expanded

Better Place Australia secured a further period of funding for its highly successful suicide prevention program, The Way Back Support Service (TWBSS). Since its inception in 2020, our team of TWBSS Support Co-ordinators have provided a non-clinical peer support approach to over 450 people in Melbourne's south east after a suicide attempt. Through outreach the team works to keep people safe over an initial 12-week engagement and to establish personalised psycho-social supports for ongoing social connection. Through the provision of this service, Better Place has demonstrated the value of a non-clinical approach to suicide prevention service that complements the clinical model.

Client satisfaction survey highlights

97%

would recommend BPA

79%

learnt new coping skills for their issues

95%

accessed our services with ease

98%

praised our staff for being warm and respectful

95%

gave our services the thumbs up

kind

caring

supportive

**Words used to
describe our people
and services**

easy

professional



OUR IMPACT



First client at Children's Contact Service

Better Place Australia welcomed its first client in April 2022 at the new Children's Contact Service based in Narre Warren. BPA's fee-for-service Children's Contact Service provides a beautiful and therapeutic indoor/outdoor space for children to spend time with their parents in a safe and supported environment. Children and their parents can access supervised visits and changeovers including on Fridays and Saturdays with minimal wait times.

The centre also provides a central referral point to a range of family and relationship support services, including individual counselling for children and adults.



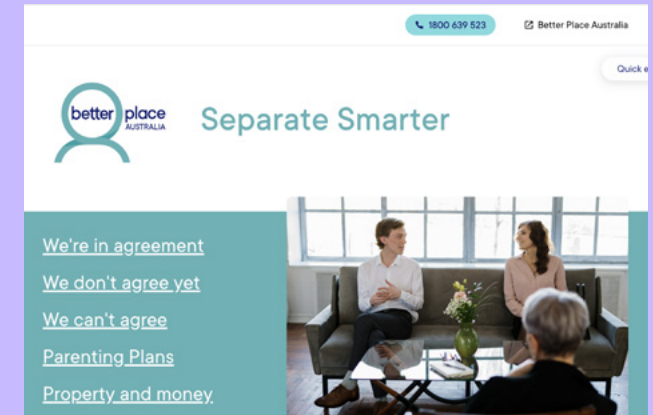
Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Respect and dignity are at the core of everything we do at Better Place Australia and our journey to be part of Reconciliation is reflected in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP is about building foundations for relationships, respect and opportunities, and states our commitment to making our organisation a culturally safe and inclusive workplace for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face poorer health outcomes as compared to other Australians. The RAP guides us towards a better understanding of their wellbeing needs and helps us create a culturally safe environment to receive our services.

Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate – these are the four stages of the RAP process and we are proud to have completed the first stage. In the Innovate stage, we are consulting with an Aboriginal Elder to develop and strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through innovative strategies that empower them. Our other focus is on increasing cultural competency among our staff and stakeholders.

The RAP is led and developed by a RAP Working Group comprising of representatives from across our organisation.



Separate Smarter campaign website

We launched a Separate Smarter campaign website in December 2021 for Victorians contemplating or going through separation, and who were looking for more information on the family law process.

Separation is often difficult for a family and we want to help the couple understand there are more options to the separation process than involving family lawyers and undergoing court proceedings, which can be time-consuming, stressful and expensive.

Our research showed that existing online information pointed to the legal pathway as the default and necessary first step in a separation. In an effort to help couples 'separate smarter', our campaign offered information relevant to each viewer's level of agreement/disagreement, and outlined the benefits of using a family dispute resolution (FDR) service instead of family lawyers.

The client experience survey continues to indicate positive feedback with 97% saying they would recommend Better Place Australia following their session with us. They also reported finding the sessions beneficial to their wellbeing and being better able to deal with their issues.

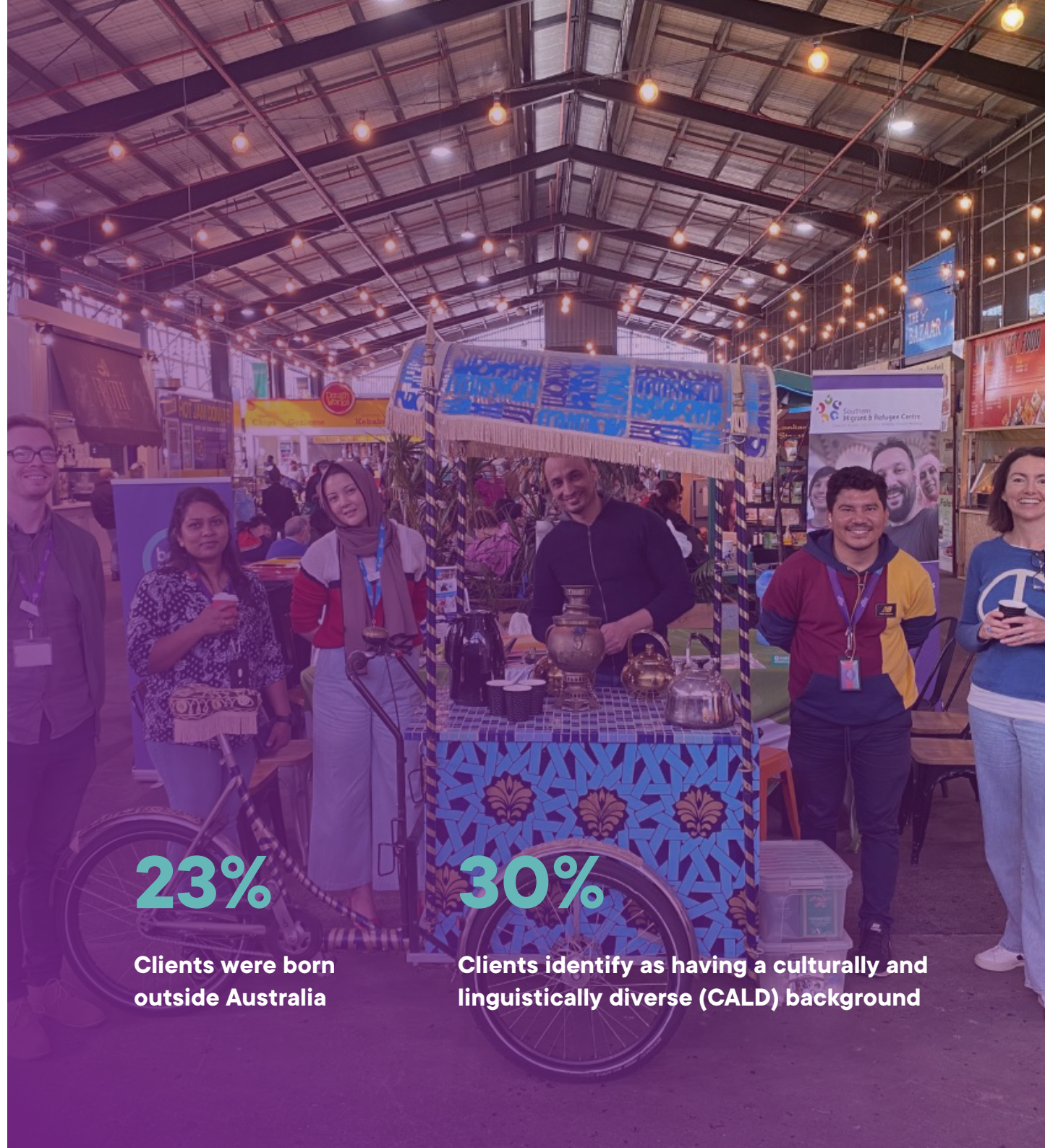
OUR IMPACT #3

Equal access for migrants and refugees

An estimated 23% of our clients are born outside Australia and 30% of our clients identify as coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. People of migrant and refugee backgrounds often face formidable barriers to accessing mental health support services. Many groups come from some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

Our partnership with Southern Migrant Refugee Centre (SMRC) aims to dismantle those barriers by normalising conversations on mental health and providing culturally appropriate resources in multiple languages to these communities.

A big part this partnership focuses on driving change by supporting and building connections with specialist CALD organisations, delivering talks on mental health and suicide prevention, launching a podcast and building awareness of mental health and wellbeing in migrant communities.



23%

Clients were born outside Australia

30%

Clients identify as having a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background

OUR IMPACT



Respect My Home Research Project

Funding from the Jack Brockoff Foundation enabled exploratory research into a proposal for a new model of care for elder abuse survivors and perpetrators. The Respect My Home Research Project collected qualitative data that will help us pioneer an innovative elder abuse response model and create referral pathways for both victim and perpetrator.

We consulted 16 external elder abuse practitioners and national policymakers in the fields of law, prevention, advocacy, research and case management. Through this, we identified service gaps and potential solutions in the existing models of care. An external facilitator then conducted interviews with 12 of the participants. We also consulted with community members.

Secondary data on elder abuse and intervention models helped us identify contextual risks and intergenerational characteristics of elder abuse, and revealed a glaring absence of data on subsets of elder abuse like neglect.

An internal governance committee provided oversight and guidance on the development, implementation and data management strategies.

The data has helped us identify common abuse experiences and the link between subsets of abuses. It also revealed that risk factors among perpetrators, like mental health issues, financial hardships and substance abuse, have high associations with elder abuse victims. All these findings have brought us closer towards developing this new model of care.



Mental health support in aged care facilities

Better Place Australia has expanded our psychological services for older people living in residential aged care facilities (RACFs). We now service facilities across the Mornington Peninsula, NWPHN, SEMPHN, WVPHN and the Geelong-Otway regions.

Residents in RACFs have a high rate of diagnosed mental illness but mental health services had been unavailable to them. Funding from the Commonwealth Government Funding from the Commonwealth Government through PHNs has enabled us to now provide free psychological support to residents with low to mild diagnosed mental health conditions and those who are at risk of mental illness.

Our interventions cover individual and group sessions including music therapy which has proven to be highly effective within this group.



Orange Door Support Service Outreach

Orange Doors Elder Abuse Support Service is an older person-centered service that supports the older person in maintaining self-determination and the prevention of elder abuse. Better Place Australia are funded to provide support to clients referred to us via the Orange Doors at Inner Gippsland, Bayside Peninsula, Barwon, North East Melbourne, and via Women's Health West and the Integrated Model of Care (IMOC) at Monash Health, Peninsula Health and Latrobe Community Health.



ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY #1

Valuing the older person

Mental illness is more prevalent in aged care facilities than among the general public but it was only a few years ago that psychological services were offered to residents of these facilities. Today, Better Place Australia provides free psychological support to 120 aged care facilities across Victoria.

Through this service, we have seen how our aged care system diminishes the older person's ability to make independent decisions regarding their care and lifestyle. In many instances, the older person is forced to adapt to a highly constricted and structured life in an aged care facility.

This begs two big questions – is there enough opportunity for older people to make their own decisions about their life, and is the element of self-determination valued in the system?

We also found that a dismissive attitude towards the older person's needs does not just exist within the aged care system but in society at large. The driver of this attitude is ageism – a collective social and cultural prejudice against older people that causes them to be abused, marginalised and dismissed. As the least known form of discrimination, ageism is more pervasive and socially accepted than sexism or racism.

Ending scourge of ageism

Better Place Australia is among the funders of the Framing Age Messaging Guide, developed by a consortium of multi-agency Elder Abuse Prevention Networks (EAPNs). The consortium is led by Southern Melbourne Primary Care Partnership, Eastern Community Legal Centre, Merri Health and Barwon Community Legal Service.

The guide aims to promote a better understanding of how to talk about age, ageing and issues affecting older people without resorting to ageist attitudes, stereotypes and behaviours. After the guide was published, BPA collaborated with Southern Melbourne Elder Abuse Prevention Network (SMEAPN) on a social media campaign to support and spread the message.

Part of our ongoing work in this space also involves championing social inclusion among the older generation by embracing the diversity of ageing, recognising their continued contribution and removing barriers to their participation in society.

A dignified transition to aged care

A recent survey of almost 6,000 Australians over 50 indicated an opposition to and distrust of the aged care system, particularly aged care facilities. Our anecdotal evidence suggests that many older people living in residential care typically entered because of hospitalisation and never returned home. In other words, residential aged care was not a choice but a necessity.

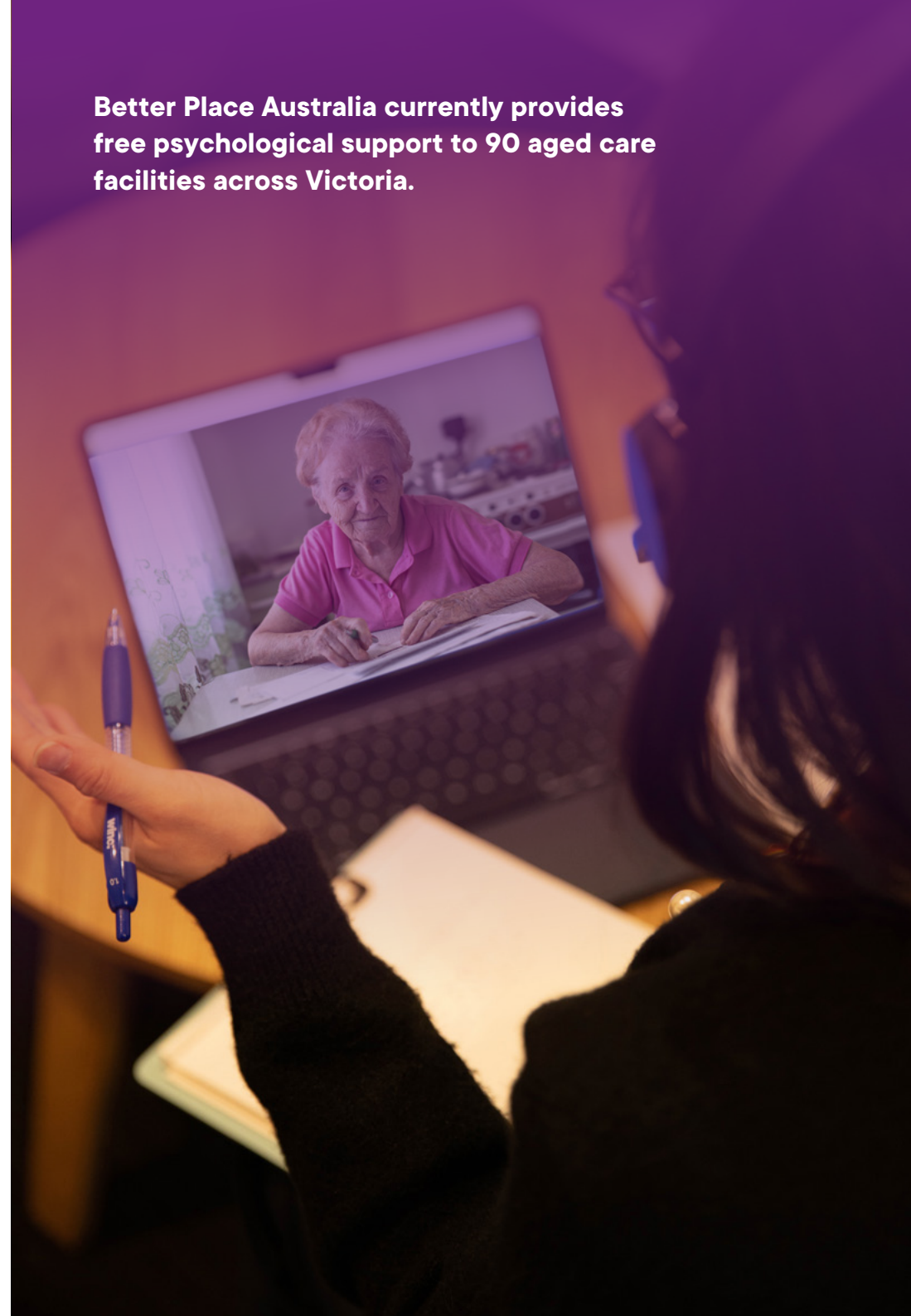
Circumstances often prevented the older person from preparing for this transition which eventually took a toll on their mental, physical, and emotional health. Unfortunately, this outcome has become so normalised that it is assumed to be a natural part of the transition. The older person's journey into supported care cannot continue this way.

The biggest change that needs to happen is ensuring the older person retains their dignity and autonomy during the difficult transition from independent living into an aged care facility. This means involving them in every conversation and decision on the matter. It is a small shift that will make a massive difference.

A long but important road ahead

Needless to say, we have our work cut out for us in this sector. There are many gaps to plug within the system and many issues to tackle in the public space. Our elder abuse prevention service is helping many survivors but equally important is our work in encouraging every Victorian to think about how they can reduce ageism and create a more inclusive society for people of all ages.

Better Place Australia currently provides free psychological support to 90 aged care facilities across Victoria.



ADVOCACY #2

A better life starts with better relationships



The Centre for Better Relationships is the research and policy arm of Better Place Australia, and an invaluable resource for our many projects and initiatives. The Centre's meaningful and insightful research supports our commitment to helping Australians lead a better life through stronger relationships.

This year, the Centre has focused on four key projects – research into coercive control within family dynamics, the co-design of a new elder abuse prevention program, comprehensive data collection and the publication of research papers on elder abuse.

An invisible form of control

Coercive control is part of family violence but often goes unnoticed due to its subtle nature. In many cases it continues plaguing relationships without ever being identified and resolved. The Centre's initial survey of family counsellors and mediators found a big challenge in recognising the signs of coercive control within family dynamics. The ongoing research has resulted in more in-depth training of practitioners so they better understand these signs and can equip clients with the tools and strategies to overcome this form of control.

A dual pathway towards a single outcome

The Centre received funding from the Jack Brockhoff Foundation to explore gaps in existing elder abuse prevention services. The Respect My Home Research Project team identified the biggest gap as the absence of a referral pathway for the perpetrator. The research findings will inform the design and development of a new and integrated elder abuse response model with a dual response that involve providing quality of care to the victim and a referral pathway for the perpetrator. This model will position Better Place Australia as the first organisation of its kind to undertake such an initiative in the elder abuse prevention space.

Letting data lead the way

Data collection sits at the heart of the Centre's work. Whether it's data on demographics or data from one of its programs, the findings are instrumental in driving research that could have a real and significant impact on people's lives.

The older person's approach to aged care

One of the Centre's latest research proposals revolves around the older person's transition into aged care. This eventual publication aims to provide those in the aged care industry with a solid foundation upon which to build their work - whether in academia or human-centered design research.

The Research Team

The Centre's team is made up of two well-respected personnel.



Dr Rachel Bonnici

Senior Research Officer

Dr Rachel Bonnici has worked as a researcher for many years with expertise in qualitative research design and analysis. She has worked for not-for-profits including membership organisations such as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. Rachel's interests lie in researching and collaborating with marginalised communities such as Aboriginal communities, individuals who are drug-affected and women experiencing family violence. She has a particular skill in preparing briefings and condensing complex information.



Dr Laila Hugrass

Data Analyst

Dr Laila Hugrass is a researcher and data analyst. She has conducted research in the fields of psychology and cognitive neuroscience at La Trobe University, Swinburne University and Australian Catholic University. Laila holds an adjunct research position at La Trobe University, where she is currently studying her Master of Art Therapy. Laila has expertise in data management, applied statistics, quantitative analyses, data visualisation, and data storytelling. She is passionate about communicating research findings to non-academic audiences in an engaging and accessible manner.

ADVOCACY #3

Championing social inclusion in communities

Better Place Australia works with clients from many culturally diverse backgrounds. We know how important it is to provide culturally responsive service delivery that helps every person in the community fully participate in everyday life. Making access and equity for culturally diverse communities a core element of policies, programs and services builds a strong, inclusive and cohesive society.

Yet during the pandemic, we witnessed how many culturally diverse groups faced barriers in accessing much-needed community services. The recognition that inclusivity is still not part of our social fabric has strengthened our efforts to provide individuals and groups the right support for their social, economic and emotional wellbeing.

BPA also takes great pride in being an inclusive organisation that champions and nurtures a culture of diversity among our clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders. This is especially important when we're working with one of our five priority groups – older people, LGBTIQ+, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and those with a disability.

Our initiatives this year included a partnership with the Southern Migrant Refugee Centre (SMRC), furthering the work of our a Consumer and Community Engagement Committee (CECC) and working towards better social inclusion of priority groups in our service through our Diversity and Inclusive Access Committee. These projects are among the many that have brought us closer to fulfilling the commitments in our Inclusion, Diversity and Access Framework and Plan 2017–2022.

Dismantling barriers faced by migrant and refugee communities

Migrants and refugees are a diverse segment of society and many are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Navigating a new country and culture can be intimidating, and the fear and uncertainty that arises from this prevent many people from seeking out support services.

A key project in our partnership with SMRC was the Refugee, Migrant and CALD Community Suicide Prevention Initiative (Southern Melbourne), commissioned by the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (SEMPHN). The initiative aimed to spark conversations on mental health and provide information on accessing relevant services available to these communities.

We are keenly aware that mental illness and seeking mental health support carries a stigma within these communities. English is not a first language for many migrants and refugees which can make conversations on mental health challenging and at times, intimidating for them. With this in mind, we always ensure that our mental health resources are in multiple languages and also culturally appropriate.

A big part of our partnership with SMRC focused on driving change by supporting and building connections with specialist CALD organisations within the public and private sectors. We also delivered talks, launched a podcast and worked on building awareness of mental health and wellbeing in migrant communities.

Real feedback for positive outcomes

The CCEC was another significant initiative in guiding improvements to our service delivery. Acting as a form of consumer and client advocacy, the CCEC provided us invaluable feedback on our services through the complaints process, consumer feedback forms, surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Feedback that the mediation process can be difficult to understand when someone is in a highly stressed state helped us develop an accessible family dispute resolution (FDR) flow chart that will better serve those in need.

We also used the feedback to review our Better Pride and Separate Smarter websites and client information packs to ensure that all the material is welcoming, easily understood and uses inclusive language so that every client feels safe, supported and affirmed.

BPA believes that embracing diversity as a source of innovation, creativity and critical thought will lead to better service design and make us a stronger, more responsive service provider.



OUR PEOPLE

Like many other organisations in Victoria, Better Place Australia transitioned back to our physical offices this year and introduced a blended workplace approach. This included boosting our focus on organisational culture to support staff in adapting to this new way of working.

We strive for a workplace culture reflective of a vibrant, learning organisation, where our people are highly engaged, passionate about what they do, and committed to making a difference. This means providing resources, tools and learning opportunities to ensure they are supported in their work. We had provided service delivery on multiple platforms (phone, video and in-person) during the pandemic and decided to keep this model to provide continued flexibility for clients. However, we also recognised the challenges that come with a multi-platform so we ensured our practitioners continued receiving regular supervision to maintain their competence and confidence. Our employee benefits also extended to paid study leave and extensive professional development opportunities.

Workplace Flexibility

Workplace flexibility is a key part of our new way of working. We supported our practitioners' work-from-home needs while maintaining high-quality service delivery and optimal site operations. Staff were encouraged to tell us what flexible working looks like for them and how we could work with them to achieve it.

As a mental health organisation, the wellbeing of our staff comes first. We pursued mental health and wellbeing initiatives through Benestar, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) service provider. EAP is accessible to all our staff and their family. Staff receive frequent updates from the People and Culture team and information is available on our intranet, The Loop. Staff also have access to mental health first aid officers, and up to 20 days of family violence leave and personal leave.

Full steam ahead

Once back in the office, we went full steam ahead in organising social events and participating networking events. We hosted themed lunches like Taco Tuesday and Friday Funday to encourage staff to socialise in the workplace and build cohesion across different teams. We were excited to return back to onsite events to celebrate R U OK? day, IDAHOBIT day, and Reconciliation Week with posters, digital material and afternoon tea. Our World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event launch saw a record turnout of staff tuning in to view the Respect Victoria video launch, listen to the star of the video and a fellow BPA family consultant talk about elder abuse.

Our intranet and Yammer exploded with staff enthusiasm and engagement this year as they shared personal and work experiences, resources and information. As we welcomed new members to the BPA fold, we scheduled a bi-monthly introduction blog posts on the intranet so staff who were working remotely did not miss out. Our CEO and executive team also visited our offices to meet staff, introduce themselves to new arrivals and gather feedback on everyone's return-to-work experience.

It did not take long for our staff to get back into participating at conferences and networking events. These functions opened up great opportunities for cross-collaboration of knowledge, services and organisations. These networking events were valuable and created opportunities for important referral pathways to be forged.

2022 has been another big year for Better Place Australia and our staff have displayed the same admirable traits of optimism, commitment and resilience that they did during the pandemic. This time those traits are focused on helping Better Place Australia fulfill its advocacy work and provide essential, high-quality service delivery to Victorians in need.





CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY #1

Elder Abuse Prevention – Orange Door

End of the road

Julia immigrated from Greece with her now late husband three decades ago. For the last decade, she lived with a partner who also acted as her carer due to a medical condition.

The relationship recently turned fraught and became abusive. Her partner also developed a bad temper and frightened Julia with his aggression during their arguments.

After a particularly heated row that ended with crockery smashed against the wall, she decided to end the relationship. Julia was referred to Better Place Australia by the Orange Door.

Getting back on her feet

During a comprehensive risk assessment, Julia was able to identify the goals she would work on collaboratively with the family consultant. She wanted her ex-partner to stop receiving the Carer's Payment from Centrelink, she expressed the need for counselling for the relationship trauma she had experienced, as well as her desire to maintain a friendship with her ex-partner. The Family Consultant advocated to Julia the importance of safety, and identified the need to empower her to establish clear safe boundaries through safety planning and counselling.

Better Place Australia's Family Consultant scheduled regular sessions with Julia over a five-month period. During these sessions, Julia discussed the complexity of ending the romantic relationship but recognised that she could not maintain a friendship with a person using violence. With the help of the Family Consultant, she sought an Intervention Order to maintain her safety. The consultant helped her talk through her fear and guilt.

Setting her individual goals was a new experience for Julia and the consultant helped her reflect and gain clarity on what she truly wanted in life.

Julia and the consultant then worked on her decision-making skills so she felt empowered enough to make independent decisions.

Embracing life again

By the end of the sessions, Julia felt very positive about having her ex-partner removed from Centrelink as her carer and from further contact from him.

More importantly, her independence, confidence and happiness had also grown. Part of this came from being able to embark on an independent life which she had not experienced as an adult. This enabled her to live more fully and cultivate a more positive outlook on life.

“I feel like I am in control of my life and it's a great feeling! I'm looking forward to each day now because I can spend it doing what I want to do without having to check with anyone else first.”

* Names have been changed for privacy



Julia, 76

Divorced with no children

Needed support in ending an abusive relationship and setting boundaries

CASE STUDY #2

The Way Back Support Service

Lost in her world of grief

Amira is an Iranian single mother of a nine-year-old daughter. During the COVID lockdowns, her 25-year-old nephew moved in with her. Last year, he overdosed on sleeping pills and she discovered his body in his room.

The incident sparked nightmares for Amira and irrational fears for her daughter's wellbeing. On top of that, her nephew's family blamed her for his death and she became the topic of conversation within the local Iranian community.

Feeling shunned and judged, Amira began isolating at home. When she couldn't face going to work, she quit her job. Amira's past trauma and new financial stress led to suicidal ideation and a suicide attempt.

Amira presented with severe guilt, grief, depression and PTSD. Desperate to overcome her mental anguish, she consented to being referred to HOPE/The Way Back Support Service (TWBSS).

Finding her way back

The first meeting between Amira and the TWBSS coordinator took place in Amira's house as she was still uncomfortable leaving her home.

The experienced TWBSS coordinator provided a safe and non-judgemental space for Amira to fully express her thoughts and emotions. After that session, the TWBSS coordinator took the following steps:

Mental health support. Amira was referred to the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (SEMPHN) where she was linked with a psychologist and given a list of support groups.

The TWBSS coordinator contacted Amira's daughter's school to ensure she was receiving proper support and encouraged Amira to get a

mental health care plan from her daughter's GP so she could access Headspace for more support.

Medical treatment. The TWBSS coordinator suggested Amira speak to her GP about alternative medication for her depression.

Financial matters. The TWBSS coordinator supported Amira in approaching her utility companies and bank to discuss payment plans. Amira was also given information on access to financial aid within her community.

Miscellaneous. The TWBSS coordinator helped Amira obtain a copy of the police report of her nephew's death for his family in Iran.

Living a full life again

Through a referral to a mental health support service, Amira attended counselling sessions with a psychologist where she learned strategies for dealing with the perceived stigma in her community. This helped build her confidence and made it possible for her to return to work in a part-time capacity.

Amira successfully negotiated payment plans with her utility providers and bank, and also received the \$250 government electricity rebate based on her part-time work.

She has ceased contact with family who blame her for her nephew's death and has started grief counselling. She's also met her GP to discuss alternative depression medication.

Amira hasn't had any further suicidal ideations. Her eating and sleeping habits have also improved, and this has helped her cultivate a more optimistic outlook on life.

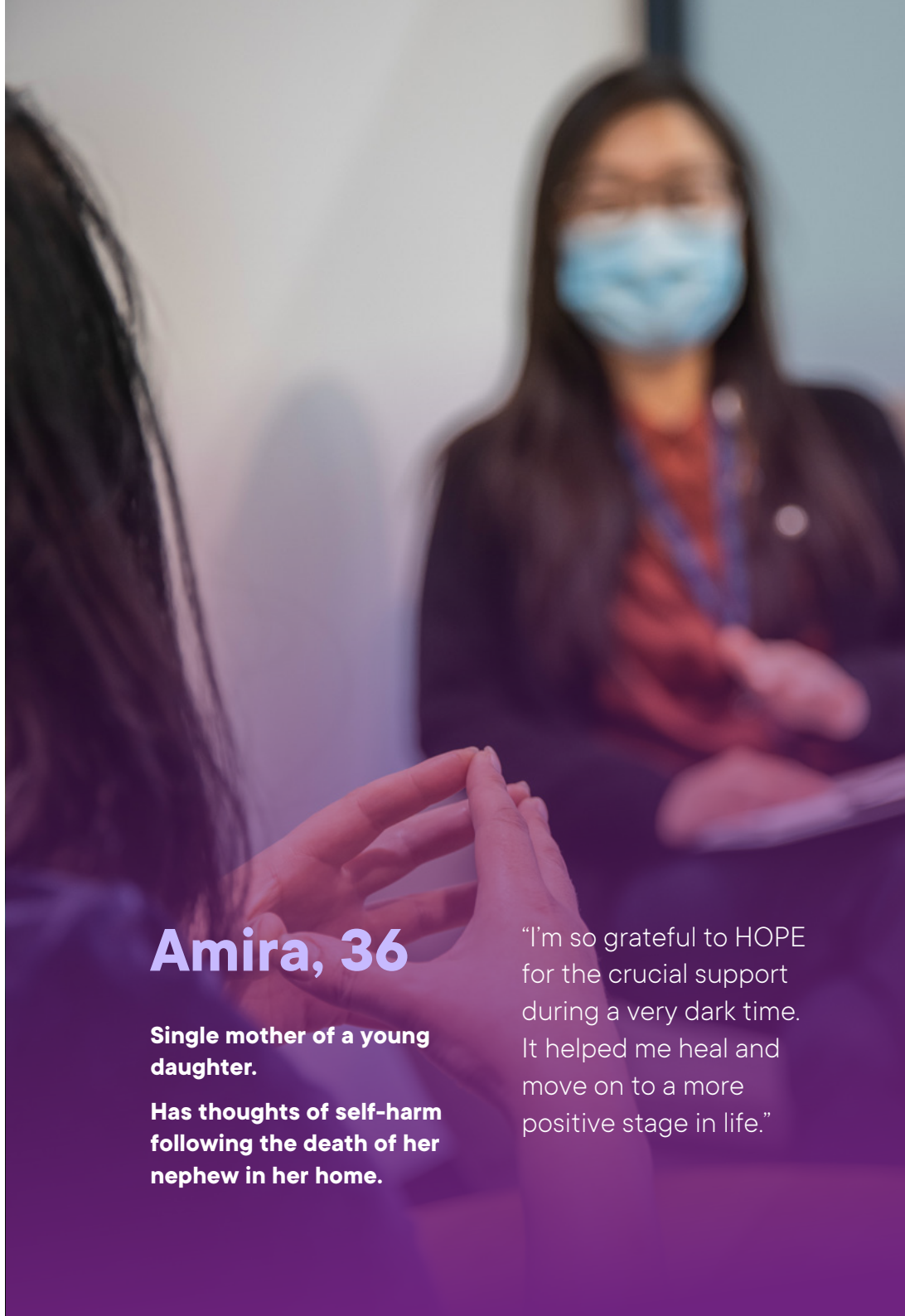
Amira's daughter is receiving ongoing support with her own grief and is progressing well.

Amira, 36

Single mother of a young daughter.

Has thoughts of self-harm following the death of her nephew in her home.

"I'm so grateful to HOPE for the crucial support during a very dark time. It helped me heal and move on to a more positive stage in life."



CASE STUDY #3

Mental health support

Trapped by childhood trauma

Joseph migrated to Australia from Singapore with his family at age 13. Previously an excellent student, his grades plunged as he struggled to adapt to his new cultural environment. His parents attributed this change to laziness and rebellion, and were verbally and emotionally abusive towards him.

By the time Joseph reached adulthood, he was experiencing high levels of guilt, anxiety and depression. Years of abuse had also affected his ability to express his needs and his interpersonal relationships suffered as a result.

Joseph welcomed the isolation of the COVID lockdowns but his anxiety peaked when things opened up and he had to return to the workplace.

His motivation and self-esteem increasingly worsened to the point that he had thoughts of self-harm.

When his five-year marriage began breaking down, Joseph reached out to his GP who then referred him to Better Place Australia.

Changing the narrative

Joseph began individual counselling with Better Place Australia. The psychologist guided Joseph in safely revisiting his childhood trauma and helped him understand how his parents' abuse continued to impact his self-worth, personal development and relationships. They also talked about how Joseph's difficult cultural integration into Australia had impacted his adult life.

The psychologist then worked with Joseph to develop strategies for setting healthy boundaries with his parents. The psychologist also used cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to help Joseph develop a positive sense of self, reduce his anxiety and manage his lack of motivation.

After Joseph underwent a risk assessment, he was taught tools for managing any thoughts of self-harm.

Once Joseph began making progress in his counselling sessions, the psychologist made an internal referral for Family and Relationship Services (FARS) couples counselling.

Walking towards emotional freedom

By the end of 9 counselling sessions, Joseph had developed a strong therapeutic alliance with his psychologist. This trust resulted in some clear outcomes.

He is now able recognise triggers for his low mood, anxiety and self-harming thoughts, and is actively using healthier coping strategies to manage and overcome them.

Joseph's motivation continues to improve and he has gained enough self-confidence to make significant changes in his life. One of these changes includes successfully applying for a managerial role at his workplace. He now enjoys his job and is making new friends at work.

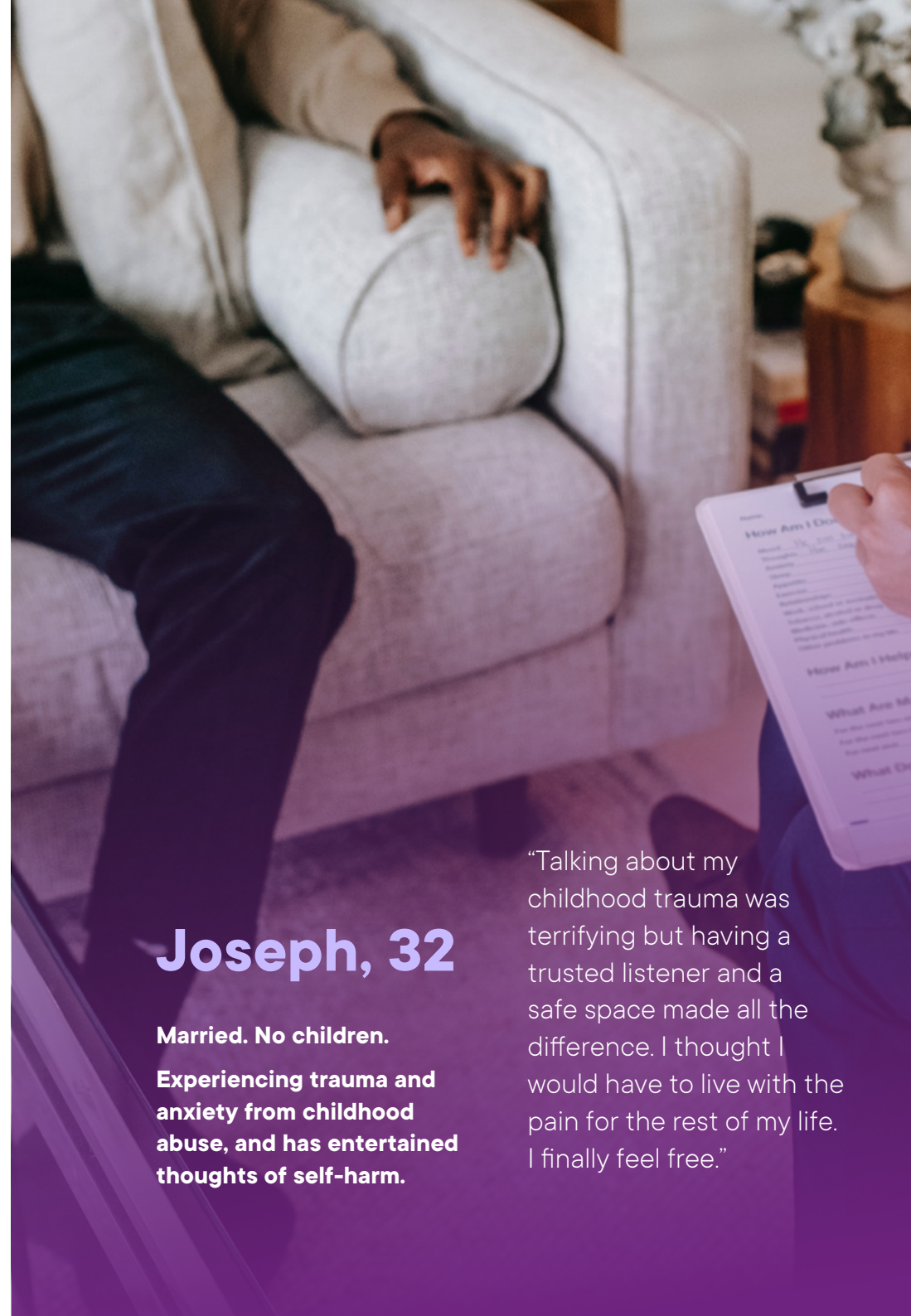
The FARS couples counselling has helped Joseph communicate his emotions to his wife and this has greatly improved their relationship. His wife, meanwhile, understands him better and is able to empathise when he's going through a hard time.

Joseph, 32

Married. No children.

Experiencing trauma and anxiety from childhood abuse, and has entertained thoughts of self-harm.

“Talking about my childhood trauma was terrifying but having a trusted listener and a safe space made all the difference. I thought I would have to live with the pain for the rest of my life. I finally feel free.”



CASE STUDY #4

Family dispute resolution (FDR)

Reaching a deadlock

Nancy decided to leave a marriage of two decades that was plagued with family violence and social control. The last straw was when Peter was diagnosed with depression but chose to turn to alcohol instead of seek support.

After the separation, Nancy sought support from a psychologist and a family violence agency. She also took out an intervention order against Peter who was harassing her for a reconciliation.

Nancy wanted to sell their family home and begin a new life in a different state. She hired a lawyer to liaise with Peter on her behalf. Peter initially agreed to the negotiations but when the legal process began, he insisted that he would only go through with it if Nancy met him in person to discuss the matter. Nancy rejected this condition.

When it was clear the couple had reached an impasse, their lawyers referred them to Better Place Australia for property mediation.

Meeting in the middle

The FDR specialist began with a property mediation assessment that involved taking Peter and Nancy through their asset and liabilities list.

When Nancy viewed Peter's list she realised that he hadn't included his business on it. The FDR specialist raised this with Peter who argued that it was a family business which he owned with his siblings. He refused to put the business on his list.

The FDR specialist expressed understanding but also emphasised the importance of full disclosure of assets and liabilities in the mediation process.

The FDR specialist recommended that Peter consult his lawyer if he was adamant about leaving out the family business from the list.

After a few more mediation sessions, Peter disclosed his share of the business which was then added to the assets and liabilities list.

Both parties continued discussing their individual contributions and future needs. The FDR specialist guided them in drawing up different proposals and exploring each one thoroughly.

Going their own way

Peter and Nancy eventually came close to reaching an agreement and decided to hand matters over to their lawyers to wrap it up. The property was sold six months after their final property mediation session.

Nancy acknowledged that the FDR specialist and her individual counselling sessions were key in helping her overcome the challenges she faced during the mediation. The sessions also gave her the confidence she needed to move on.

Peter, 51 & Nancy, 42

Separated after 20 years of marriage. No children.

Sought property mediation after heated arguments over property settlement.

"I didn't think property mediation would help but I'm pleased with the outcome. The process was smooth and I felt supported throughout it. I would still be stuck in my old life if not for it."



CASE STUDY #5

Financial Counselling

A crippling diagnosis

Cheng was making great strides in his career when he had his first seizure in 2019. His eventual epilepsy diagnosis crushed his self-confidence, especially at work, where he feared having a seizure in front of his workmates.

Cheng's self-esteem took a further beating when he was passed over for a promotion due to his poor work performance. Frustrated and humiliated, he quit his job and remained unemployed for two years. During this time, he successfully applied for income protection.

A few months before his income protection was due to end, Cheng decided to return to the workforce. Then he had another massive seizure that resulted in brain surgery.

His doctors advised him to put off working for a year. With no source of income, Cheng began looking for cheaper accommodation and applied to Job Seeker on the basis of a medical exemption.

When the banks began calling for debt repayments, a frightened and desperate Cheng turned to the National Debt Helpline (NDH) for support. He was then referred to Better Place Australia.

Paving the right financial pathway

Cheng explained his financial situation to the Financial Counsellor and said that a further three months of financial hardship allowance would be a huge relief. This timeline coincided with his next medical review.

After an assessment confirmed Cheng was facing financial hardship, the Financial Counsellor took the following action:

Debts. The Financial Counsellor contacted Cheng's bank to explain his current situation and advocate for a partial or full debt waiver on his behalf.

Income. Cheng was connected with an employment agency to help him find a job that suited his circumstances. The Financial Counsellor also helped him create a money plan that would increase his disposable income.

Accommodation. Cheng was given resources to seek affordable accommodation in his preferred suburbs.

Utility bills. The Financial Counsellor helped Cheng work out an affordable payment plan with his utility providers.

Mental health. An internal referral was made to a psychologist to address Cheng's high stress and anxiety levels.

Walking forward in confidence

The bank granted Cheng a full debt waiver totalling \$42,500. With this load off his shoulders, he was able to focus on finding new accommodation and a job.

Through the resources provided, Cheng found an affordable rental in an ideal location. Through the employment agency, he landed a part-time job with a supportive employer.

The counselling sessions helped rebuild his confidence and set new goals for his future.

Conversations with the Financial Counsellor also equipped Cheng with a better understanding of handling his finances and any further financial challenges.




Cheng, 48

Single unemployed male

An epilepsy diagnosis led to unemployment and a struggle to make ends meet.

"I was at my wit's end and thought my future was ruined for sure. I'm deeply grateful to the Financial Counsellor for helping turn things around for me."



Providing accessible support to clients across all contact channels

In 2022, clients reached us through:



Website



Referrals



Phone



Online chat



Social Media

ACCESSING BETTER PLACE AUSTRALIA

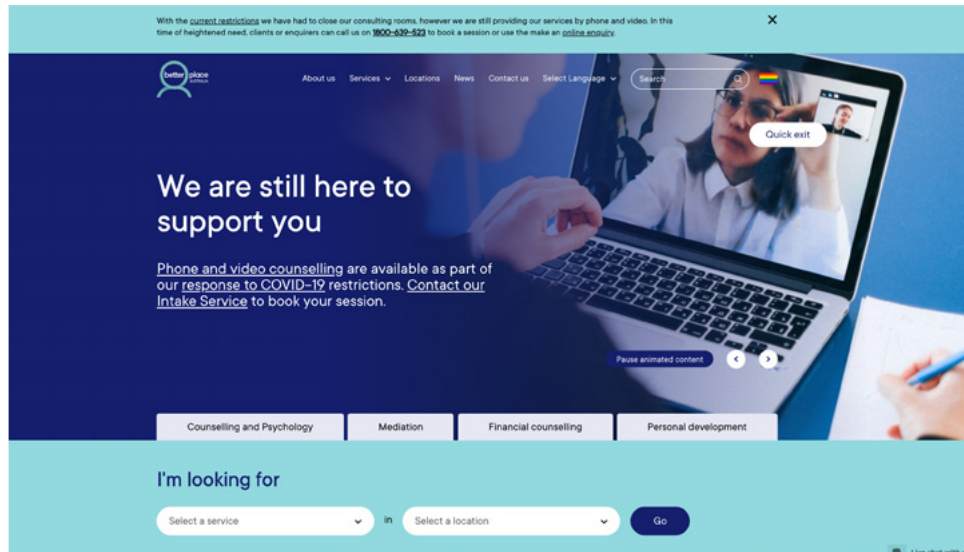
SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB PRESENCE

Social Media



Better Place Australia

betterplaceaustralia.com.au



Growing our digital footprint, providing support for the community

63,464

Total sessions

25-44

Most visitors are 25-34 and 35-44 age groups

65% ↑

increase in users visiting the 'Make an Enquiry' page

64%

Women

35%

Men

119% ↑

increase in users visiting the 'Counselling' page

Top 3 service pages:

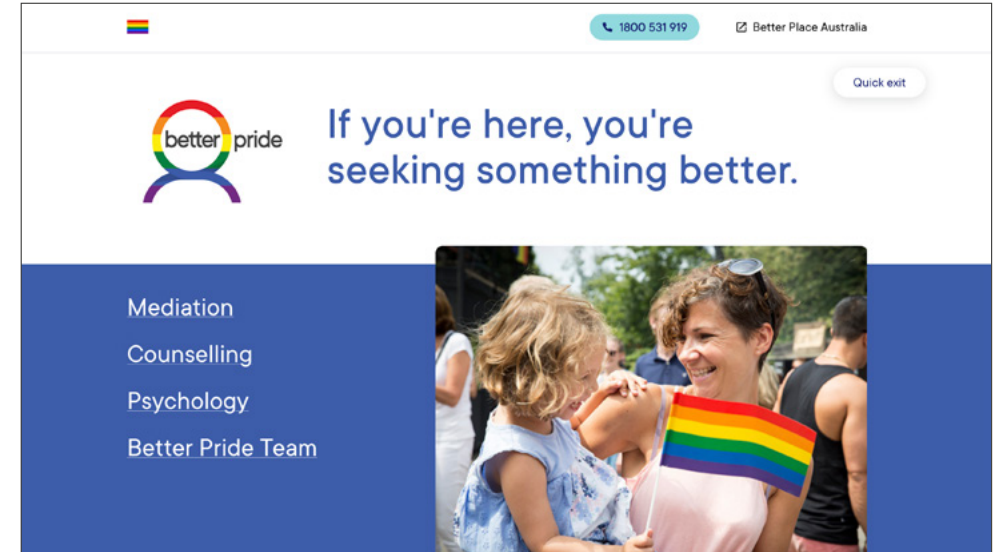
1. Counselling
2. Mediation
3. Children's Contact Centre

Most visited pages:

1. Counselling
2. Make an Enquiry
3. Careers

Better Pride

betterplaceaustralia.com.au/better-pride/



Better Pride is a support service for the LGBTIQ+ community that supports rainbow families during and after separation, and ensuring all families have access to safe, inclusive and equitable services.

2020

Year launched

4,475

Total sessions

18-34

Most visitors are 25-34 and 18-24 age groups

20%

visitors access via mobile

71%

Women

29%

Men

Most visited pages:

1. Counselling
2. Psychological services
3. Mediation services

BETTER PLACE ASSIST AND CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Helping clients find the right service for them

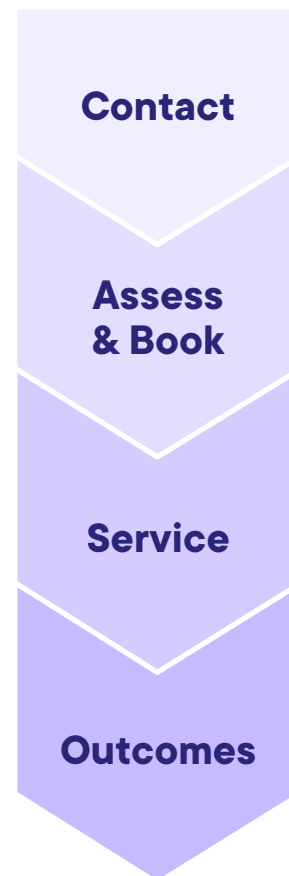
Clients, prospective clients and referrers can reach us by phone, on our website enquiry form or through online chat.

The first point of contact is through our Customer Support team who will assess your needs and situation to help you find the service most suited to your needs, means and location, before referring you on to our Better Place Assist team who puts you in contact with the relevant Better Place Australia service.

Our dedicated team of trained professionals are well-equipped to take you through the next steps on your journey with Better Place Australia.

From first call to first session

Referral Process: From first call to first session



Phone 1800 639 523
Email enquiry@betterplace.com.au
Web www.betterplaceaustralia.com.au (live chat available)
Secondary consultations welcomed.

Call or email responded to within 24 – 48 hours.

- Risk and needs assessment conducted
 - Appropriate service referred to
 - Case file opens
 - Appointment booked
-

Client attends service.

Services are outcome-based and delivered by skilled and experienced clinicians. Continual assessment for risk of family violence throughout service delivery.

Clients rate their experience with client satisfaction survey.

More than just customer support

The Better Place Customer Support team is the first point of contact for those wanting to find out more or access Better Place Australia services before they are put through to our Better Place Assist Intake team who will connect clients to the right service.

Better Place Assist team members are qualified and trained to assess and manage risks. They engage, screen and assess, refer and coordinate care support to clients, including providing complex risk assessments and action a plan to mitigate any identified risk.

Better Place Assist and Customer Support

- Access the right service
- Immediate front-line response
- Live Chat
- Risk assessment and screening
- Referred by external organisations or other staff
- Referrals: Warm, External and Wrap-around
- Facilitate integration and coordination of care for clients
- Provide information and resources
- Statewide directory and information gateway
- Book into appointments, programs and groups
- Prioritise the most vulnerable

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at 30 June 2022

Statement of Profit or Loss or Other Comprehensive Income

As at 30 June 2022	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
Revenue	14,607,461	14,375,365
Gain on sale of asset	399,253	0
Gain on modification of Right of Use Asset terms	0	326,402
Employee benefits	(11,928,551)	(11,483,364)
Supplies and services	(1,447,861)	(1,280,603)
Depreciation and amortisation	(595,968)	(745,719)
Occupancy and utilities	(354,349)	(303,737)
Surplus for the year	679,985	888,344
Other comprehensive income		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss	0	0
Items that will be reclassified to profit or loss when specific conditions are met	0	0
Total comprehensive income for the year	679,985	888,344

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2021	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,804,630	2,293,069
Trade and other receivables	346,499	168,521
Financial assets at amortised cost	1,134,005	255,153
Assets classified as held for sale	0	413,588
Other assets	247,570	146,873
Total current assets	3,532,704	3,277,204
Non current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	8,619,877	9,108,760
Total non current assets	8,619,877	9,108,760
TOTAL ASSETS	12,152,581	12,385,964
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	530,352	583,847
Lease liabilities	230,628	263,146
Provisions	1,161,908	1,084,280
Other liabilities	218,961	1,072,310
Total current liabilities	2,141,849	3,003,583
Non current liabilities		
Provisions	1,505,917	1,652,858
Other liabilities	298,472	203,165
Total non current liabilities	1,804,389	1,856,023
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,946,238	4,859,606
NET ASSETS	8,206,343	7,526,358
EQUITY		
Accumulated surplus	8,206,343	7,526,358
TOTAL EQUITY	8,206,343	7,526,358

BETTER PLACE AUSTRALIA

Better Place Australia has spent over 36 years helping people build resilience, empowering them and enabling them to enjoy healthier relationships.

We have evolved into one of the most successful providers of counselling and mental health support, including elder abuse prevention support, suicide prevention, and community support services in Victoria, seeing over 11,000 new clients a year across metro and regional Victoria.

Better Place Australia Suite of Services

Mental Health Support

- Child and Youth Counselling
- Relationship Counselling
- Family Counselling
- Psychological Services
- Couples Counselling
- The Way Back Support Service
- Family Mental Health Support (Family Counselling)
- Private Counselling
- Residential Age Care Facility mental health support
- Group Therapeutic Programs
- Elder Abuse Awareness Raising

Family Dispute Resolution Mediation

- Parenting Agreements
- Property Agreements
- Preparing for FDR

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Services for Older People

- Elder abuse prevention support services

Financial First Aid

- Financial Capability
- Financial Counselling

Learning Programs

- Accredited Mediator Training Course (NMAS) training
- Parent & Group Programs



LOCATIONS

www.betterplaceaustralia.com.au/locations

Bairnsdale

306 Main Street
Bairnsdale VIC 3875
03 5175 9333

[View location details](#)

Broadmeadows

Unit B1, 1-13 The Gateway
Broadmeadows VIC 3047
03 9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Cheltenham

Level 1/16 Park Road
Cheltenham VIC 3192
03 9556 5333

[View location details](#)

Croydon

1/16-18 Croydon Road
Croydon VIC 3136
03 9847 5888

[View location details](#)

Fitzroy

126 Moor Street
Fitzroy VIC 3065
03 9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Frankston

Level 2, 60-64 Wells Street
Frankston VIC 3199
03 8781 9111

[View location details](#)

Geelong

7-9 Ryan Place
Geelong VIC 3220
03 9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Greensborough

Diamond Valley Community Support Centre
Shop 378a, Level 3 Greensborough Plaza
Greensborough VIC 3088
03 9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Leongatha

5A Church Street
Leongatha VIC 3953
03 5175 9333

[View location details](#)

Melton

195 Barries Road
Melton West VIC 3337
03 9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Narre Warren

86-88 Victor Crescent
Narre Warren VIC 3805
03 8781 9111

[View location details](#)

Oakleigh

Level 3, 20 Atherton Road
Oakleigh VIC 3166
03 9564 6999

[View location details](#)

Traralgon

41 Grey Street
Traralgon VIC 3844
03 5175 9333

[View location details](#)

Wyndham Vale

IPC Health, 510 Ballan Road
Wyndham Vale VIC 3024
9355 4700

[View location details](#)

Better Place Australia

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- City of Kingston

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Better Place Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.