



The Compassionate Friends Victoria

ANNUAL
REPORT
2020 - 2021





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CONTENTS

2	Board of Directors Reflections
3	Staff at TCF
5	Support Groups 2021
5	Projects and Support
6	IT Annual Report
6	Accounts and Administration
7	TCFV Rhys Harmer Award 2020
8	Grieve Heal Grow
9	Walk to Remember 2021
11	Mother's Day Lunch
12	Time Out
13	2021 TCFV Annual Report Financial Report
14	Key Financial Data - Treasurers Report
15	By the Numbers
16	Compassionate Friend Poem
17	TCFV Board Members



Board of Directors Reflections

2020-1 continues to be a period of challenge for the world and for our TCFV community. As we moved in and out of lockdowns in Victoria, we were constantly repositioning with COVID-19 requirements in order to best support our bereaved membership. Kudos to the efforts of our staff and volunteers who fronted these challenges with dedication and genuine concern for those struggling with grief.

Whilst we continued to focus on phone support and ventured into the realm of online support, we also took full advantage of the windows of opportunities offered when restrictions relaxed.

We were still able to manage much longed-for face-to-face support, including meetings, socials and events such as our Annual Planning Day, the first Centre Open Day, the Walk to Remember and the Mother's Day High Tea, which kept us connected and supported. We were also able to reintroduce vital programs such as "Understanding Grief, Making Connections" sessions for the newly bereaved, and the Volunteer Information Day.

Restructuring to build both a financially stronger and more harmonious TCFV continued to be a priority with encouraging support from staff and volunteers. Board volunteers continued to fill the CEO role and we are grateful for the generous efforts of many who firmly belief in the value of TCFV and work tirelessly for it.

The Board is pleased to report the following:

1. Re-engagement with ex board/staff/ volunteers who returned with vigour to our range of service areas and who must be credited for many milestones delivered, such as the launch of the Sibling Chat Service and revitalising our volunteer management.
2. The establishment of the Sibling Chat Service and of a sibling volunteer team in the midst of a pandemic and organization restructuring was no mean feat. Although currently operating at a modest level, it marked a historic inroad into the sibling foray, which TCFV had struggled with in the last 40 years. Expectations will need to be realistic and ongoing efforts are needed to organically grow the sibling network.
3. Organizational management is continually being improved. Strong support from pro bono consultants has provided advisory support in areas such as risks, personnel, mentoring, well-being and strategic planning. Actions to improve calendar/roster planning, policy/procedural manuals and position descriptions etc. have resulted in greater clarity of roles and have positively impacted our service delivery.
4. Consultation with members has also been strongly emphasized. Firstly, a sibling consultation project surveying their service needs was carried out and followed up with 2 sibling focus group meetings. This eventuated in a website platform project for sibling memorials which is now in development. A recent general members survey was also conducted to evaluate and improve our service delivery (see details in the Volunteer and Member Services report). A strategic planning process is also currently in progress involving 25 members across the spectrum of TCFV, to help co-design our future priorities and goals.
5. Our 2020-1 finances continued to improve for another consecutive year, mainly from Government COVID19 subsidies. As such, this funding is only a temporary reprieve. The current board acknowledges the urgent need to develop a sustainable financial model of operations which will be a priority focus in our Strategic Planning goals. Meanwhile, to kickstart our fundraising efforts, a joint gala with partner organization Kidsafe is being organized for March 2022.

6. It has been challenging balancing the need for staff support and their financing cost. In the absence of a CEO position, the Board saw a need to create a Service Development Manager role to drive our mission to support our bereaved members and volunteers. Whilst it is still early days, this has eased the pressure on the Board volunteers. With the combined efforts of all, we are already seeing marked improvements (despite lockdown conditions) in service coordination, volunteer levels and even general morale in the TCFV.

Undoubtedly, TCFV still faces innumerable challenges ahead. Clear strategic focus from our current Strategic Planning process and our dedicated team drives us forward and better serves our community of bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

To end this report, we would also like to acknowledge the contributions of past staff and volunteers. Firstly, we congratulate Pat Burns and Sheila Schutz as worthy recipients of the Rhys Harmer Award. Their significant contributions will be recognized at the Annual General Meeting. This Annual Report contains recognition of the previous recipients, Bev and Rod Foster and Cathy Moran.

Daniel Bendel, our steadfast Treasurer will also be stepping down from the Board. He will thankfully be moving on to take on other active leadership roles in TCFV. A special tribute is also detailed in this report. We also thank Margherita Riccioni, Sheryl Sazenis, Paul Sessarego and Ashleigh Churchill for their stint on our staff team. Although short, each have contributed their invaluable skills and dedicated service to rebuilding TCFV.

We have also valued our relationship with our Patron, Dr Rhonda Galbally AC. Rhonda's wisdom and experience continue to be valued by TCFV. We look forward to the appointment of one of our founders, Margaret Harmer OAM, as a 'founding' patron. The Board has made this appointment, which will be publicly acknowledged at the Annual General Meeting this year.

Lastly, but too long to list, are all the individual Board, staff and volunteers without whom TCFV and its invaluable service would not be able to exist.

Board of Directors: Theresa Yeo, President; Kevin Purvis, Vice President; Lisa Gelbart, Secretary; Daniel Bendel, Treasurer; Jo Knoll, Harriet Clegg.
The Compassionate Friends Victoria Ph: 98884944 www.tcfv.org.au
National Help Line: 1300 064 068



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Staff at TCF VOLUNTEER & MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT SERVICES JENNY GALATI & DOROTHY FORD

TCFV works hard to maintain and create opportunities for bereaved members to get together to meet and support each other. Over the past year we continued to provide a range of support services, and social and memorial events, both online during lockdown and face-to-face when restrictions eased.

OPEN DAY

Open Day took place in February and was an exciting day, coming out of the long Victorian lockdown. It was a great opportunity to catch up with our many TCFV friends, young and old. It was the first time that we have held an Open Day and over 80 members attended.

We enjoyed the friendly and welcoming environment at the Centre and participated in a number of activities and events presented by members during the day. Chris Hermans provided a 'Water colour as self care' workshop and Lauren Foster offered art therapy sessions. Judy Dowling spoke about her book 'Yours, mine and ours', a collection of poems and short stories, and Lyn Strickland was available for one-to-one, peer-to-peer support for those who wanted to have a quiet talk.

Thank you for your card, acknowledging that I attended the recent Open Day. It was a challenge for me just to travel there, as my self-confidence suffered greatly when I lost my beloved son, John, aged 44, nearly 4 years ago and I haven't travelled far from home since then. I felt a sense of achievement just arriving at the Centre, which I had never visited before. By phone I had arranged to meet Dot when I got to the Centre, and indeed she was there for me and I spent all the time there with her ... I felt free to talk about John, and shed tears, and she held my hand. I so rarely have the chance to even talk about John that the opportunity was very welcome. Thank you for all you do. I had no idea what grief was like before John left me and my resilience is constantly tested. I know I now live for what I can do to help others, and not for myself.

Brenda (mother of John, 44)

CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL

Before the pandemic we always held the Candlelight memorial service at the Uniting Church Hall in Camberwell, in December. This year, for the first time, we organised the Candlelight Memorial online from the Centre. Many members helped in its organisation and on the night they prepared a slide show of photos of loved ones, and helped with the readings and the ceremonial lighting of the candles. Although it wasn't the same as an in-person event, the feedback was very positive. Under these strange COVID19 conditions, it was still a great way to connect and remember our children, siblings and grandchildren.



WALK TO REMEMBER (W2R) 2021

More than 75 TCFV members and volunteers began another moving and heart-warming W2R. The familiar format of some short speeches, a quiet walk around the park, (social for some, perhaps meditative for others), the spectacular releasing of doves, the placement of flowers to form a heart of love for those passed, and a relaxed BBQ (prepared by members of the United Firefighters Union), all gave us nourishment and strength. Sometimes I think all we can do in honour of our children and siblings is just to keep on walking, faithful to their memory. The W2R allows many of us to do this together and so it really is a shared and moving tribute to our lost children and siblings. It is quiet and mostly subdued, just an opportunity where we can be in solidarity with others walking the same journey as ourselves, sharing stories or just getting lost in our thoughts and memories.

Bruce and Catrina
(parents of Liam, 19)

TCFV BEREAVEMENT & WELLBEING CENTRE

TCFV Centre is a drop-in centre for bereaved people. Inside, the atmosphere is warm and welcoming with areas for volunteers to do their work, for groups to meet and for bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents to meet together and support each other. You are welcome to come in anytime during normal business hours for a cuppa and a chat, borrow some books from the library or simply say hi. We would love to see you.

VOLUNTEERS

TCFV has a small paid staff, each with lived experience, and we depend almost entirely on the participation of bereaved family members as volunteers.

We have had 20 new volunteers start over the last 12 months, particularly in 2021 after the long lockdown. It has been great to see volunteers back in the Centre and to have that buzz of activity around again.

Our motto is Grieve, heal and grow and as a mutual support organisation, TCFV aims to provide diverse opportunities for bereaved members to meet and support each other in safe, nurturing, 'trauma informed' environments. This can help to reduce the sense of isolation in grief. We also offer ways for the bereaved to learn about grief and trauma and, over time, to increase confidence and skills, to find friendship and to give support and

hope to others who have experienced the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. Members who volunteer may be interested in developing skills in a range of TCFV support areas including:

- the Sibling Chat Service and sibling support
 - group leadership
 - community education
 - promotion and fundraising
 - governance
 - volunteering at the Centre.
- Once oriented to TCFV, new volunteers are linked into areas of their interests, utilising our various training programs.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION DAY

In May, an Information Day was offered for members who may be interested in volunteering. Five members came along to hear about what volunteering entails and most have continued on to complete orientation and training.

CENTRE VOLUNTEERS

During the year, particularly in 2021, the number of volunteers who work at the Centre has increased to 15. The volunteers receive training in areas of their interest including: preparing and providing bereavement packages for new members; contacting members; maintaining the library of grief and bereavement resources; and helping with administration and accounts.

24/7 GRIEF TELEPHONE SUPPORT LINE

The TCFV Grief Telephone Support Service is provided by 16 trained volunteers. The Service received 2,085 grief support calls this year, and an additional 2,780 service inquiry calls. Our telephone volunteers have all experienced the death of a child, sibling or grandchild and provide a compassionate listening ear and real understanding of the pain experienced by those who need to call about their grief. Volunteers are rostered to accept calls during the day and the night, and receive debriefing after each rostered shift. Experienced volunteer

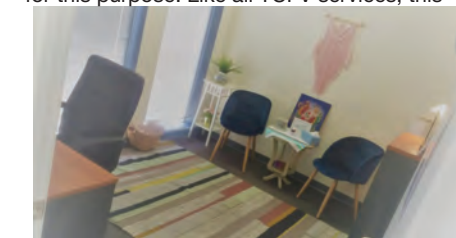
supervisors are available to be consulted if there are complex issues raised or if there is a crisis. While the previous training program for phone responders had to be cancelled in 2020, there will be a training program later in 2021, even if it must be via Zoom.

OUTREACH CALLS

A group of trained volunteers have been reaching out to members in the isolation of lockdown and the pandemic. These calls are made when a member contacts TCFV for support.

ONE ON ONE PEER SUPPORT SERVICE

This year we started to offer one-on-one peer support. Some members may not want to attend a support group so this provides another avenue for support. The support is provided by experienced, trained members who have lived experience of the death of a child, sibling, or grandchild. When COVID19 rules permit, the service is provided face-to-face by appointment or by telephone and a dedicated room has been set aside on the first floor at the Centre for this purpose. Like all TCFV services, this



service is free to members.

LIBRARY

The TCFV library is a specialist library on grief and bereavement for families. It contains hundreds of books which members can borrow. New books and resources are added regularly and can be posted to members.

MEMBERS SURVEY 2021

Thank you to the 89 members who responded to our online survey this year. It was timely to talk to members when so much has changed with the pandemic. We wanted to know about the helpfulness of our services and members' awareness of services and their interest in volunteering at TCFV. Your responses will help us to plan for the future.

A brief summary of results:

- Most people found out about TCFV from family and friends and via the internet.
- Rated very highly for helpfulness were: receiving the magazine; receiving anniversary cards and bereavement information packages; support and social group attendance; grief phone support line calls; visiting the Centre; and using the TCFV website.
- TCFV was most helpful for: contact with fellow bereaved; knowing that help was available whenever needed; that we are not alone in grief; that there is understanding of suffering / empathy / comfort; and that feelings are normal, we are not going crazy.
- TCFV support groups provided a safe place to explore grief-related issues and delivered access to a supportive community.
- Most respondents could access online support with Zoom, but one third could not access online support for various reasons.
- We can improve our efforts to make members aware of support available to them.
- A number of members expressed an interest in volunteering and providing mutual support to the bereaved.





Support Groups 2021

ANDREW MCNESS

In the ongoing climate of COVID19, the provision of group-related support has required flexibility and innovation. Equally, restriction levels in the first half of 2021 made it largely possible for TCFV to return to its historical mode of delivery: venue-based, embodied support groups.

We have wanted to maintain an online profile, though, and this has been achieved through a variety of mechanisms: the ongoing delivery of online art therapy and discussion workshops, and the establishment of a number of online groups.

Of the newly established online groups, we have a group for individuals bereaved of a child 14 years and under through accident. This group marks collaboration with Kidsafe. We also have a group for regional Victorians bereaved through suicide. Also, when the demand from new membership for online support is high, we can call upon "back up" support from a small group of established leaders to deliver a short run of Zoom-based meetings.

In February 2021, we also trialled our traditional on-site component of group leader training via an online platform. Seven participants took part. Their feedback – along with the feedback of facilitators – indicated the platform was an effective delivery option, allowing assessment of participants and the opportunity for networking and support between participants. The implications for leadership succession are exciting, particularly in terms of engaging regional TCFV members.

The online sphere has additionally been utilised for professional development sessions. Subjects have included: analysing the effectiveness of online support, managing "difference", and managing group discussion.

The groups coordination committee continues to provide stability during COVID19, providing outreach and debriefing support within the group community.

The bereavement advisory committee, meanwhile, intersects importantly with the work of support group leaders, as the committee reviews support processes at regular intervals. Over COVID19, leaders also continue to provide phone support to group members, a process which is also supported by support-line volunteers.



Projects and Support

SONIA ABERL

Sonia Aberl commenced work on a casual basis in July 2021 to implement a number of Community Education projects, including the City of Boroondara and The Coopers Brewery Foundation in the La Trobe Valley region. Sonia works with a team of volunteers to maximise the opportunities these grants provide.

Sonia also provides support to the management and co-ordination of Sibling Support Chat Service.

IT Annual Report

JESSE BENDEL

My initial role at TCFV was to support our large investment in our database (or Customer Relationship Management, CRM) software, "Zoho." There are new features in the works that are still to be looked at and tested, and once finished they can be implemented to make CRM-related tasks easier. Further work is on hold to make way for other higher priority tasks as below.

• Continual IT Support

Sustaining our systems and correcting errors and issues that occur. Ensuring that our systems are working remains the top priority task, both giving aid when requested (such as making changes to the website or helping create surveys) and on the less visible issues like supporting Zapier (software that connects different applications) which communicates with the CRM and MYOB (our accounting software), and correcting errors.

• Cybersecurity

One of our current main priorities continues to be working on strengthening the cybersecurity at TCFV and also to show we have taken appropriate measures in case of an audit. This is our largest ongoing current project for IT. This is being done with the help of consultant, Alan

Kohn. Covid19 lockdown has slowed this process this year but remains an important priority. My thanks to Alan and also to Ken Briscoe who provides external support and advice.

• IT Lessons

We are working on how we enhance our instruction of the various systems for staff, including prepared videos, our wiki and direct lessons held over video chatting service or in person. Due to differing levels of expertise between staff, this has primarily been taking place as one-on-one sessions.

The way that TCFV is promoted and connects with people over the years has been changing and IT is integral to that process. For example TCFV is implementing two online programs: the sibling chat service and sibling memorial platform.

All these initiatives are critical to keeping TCFV relevant. I feel privileged to be part of the staff that helps this wonderful organisation achieve its mission.

Accounts and Administration

PAUL GADSDEN

2021 has been another challenging year from my perspective but I think, given the situation we are experiencing, this is probably par for the course.

There was a semblance of returning to normality. We held an official reopening day at the Centre in February that was well attended and it was lovely to connect with our members on a personal rather than virtual basis again. The same for the Staff and Board lunch which we enjoyed in the Canterbury Gardens.

And...we were able to hold the Walk to Remember this year which was also wonderful. It was cold and raining hard in the outer eastern suburbs when I left on the Sunday morning. Jenny had asked me to get some ice to put the drinks in and given the conditions, ice was the last thing you would think necessary. I remember saying to the attendant, "I can't believe I'm asking this, but I need five bags of ice please"! Goodness knows what he must have thought, however, at Princes Park the weather

was quite different, only the occasional shower interspersed with sunshine and it seemed yet again as though our loved ones were looking down on us. We were able to enjoy a special day remembering and honouring those held so dearly in our hearts.

But now we are in lockdown again and from my perspective, have just completed the audit. The one positive thing to be acknowledged about this pandemic and the subsequent isolation is that we have had to learn to work electronically and in my case that means saving everything in electronic format. This meant that the auditors were able to access everything they needed with little or no interaction from me and the audit progressed relatively seamlessly. So, I suppose every cloud has a silver lining, but I long to return again to normality, albeit, a different normality than that we were used to pre pandemic.





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TCFV Rhys Harmer Award 2020

The Compassionate Friends is based on the peer to peer mutual support of bereaved people. Many people connect with the organisation in a time of extreme need. The organisation continues to meet those needs through the contributions of many volunteers. In the past twelve months, the following people have been recognised for their significant contributions. The Rhys Harmer award is named in honour of the son of our founders, Margaret and Lindsay Harmer. This report is taken from the Awards Presentations last year.

BEV & ROD FOSTER



Bev & Rod joined The Compassionate Friends as members soon after their daughter Natalie died, in 1995.

They quickly became respected, regular attendees at the Bereaved by Suicide support group in Glen Waverley. Always willing to help where needed in their warm friendly way. They were invited to join the leadership support team & were on that team until 2004. They were very reliable attendees at the group for nine years, and could always be relied on to be there to support others.

They were not only supportive to members at meetings, but also contacted fragile

members through phone calls, visits etc outside the group. Offering continuing support.

They were involved with ongoing training & other activities offered by TCF, volunteering in the organisation wherever required.

In 2001 they moved to Warragul to be closer to family, but for some time continued to travel monthly to Melbourne to attend the suicide group & to offer their support on the team.

After moving to Warragul Bev became a TCF Phone Friend for West Gippsland, and both she and Rod have been very active in promoting TCF in their local community in Warragul, supporting local bereaved people, & always availing themselves of any further development courses in their local region.

Bev & Rod have been dedicated ambassadors for TCF & have contributed to the needs of the bereaved over a long period of time and are very deserving recipients of the Rhys Harmer Award. Natalie would be very proud of her Mum & Dad

We thank them sincerely & wish them well.

CATHY MORAN



Cathy's son, Michael died in 1981 through stillbirth.

Cathy was one of TCF's very early group leaders; running the Kyabram group for many years & she was very active in promoting TCF & grief in general in her local regional area. She obtained funding so that the helpers in the area could go to grief education and counselling courses. During those days community understanding of grief and its consequences was limited so Cathy gave talks to many community groups, teachers, and worked with children to change this, as she did to initiate support for families of suicide victims.

Also in the Kyabram/Wimmera area Cathy was one of our first Victorian regional TCF phone friends in the 1980's through to 2010.

She was the author of some of our literature that has been sent out to bereaved families over many years, some of which is still currently in our bereavement packages. Her article on children and grief has been used by the social workers at the Coroner's Court and by The Centre for Grief Education for their grief accreditation course.

Cathy was involved in Group Leader Refresher Training Groups & Gatherings held in Melbourne, & was always a valuable contributor in discussions with her extensive experience in running regional groups. Along with other support members from Kyabram they would attend TCF activities in Melbourne when able. During the Compassionate Friends Australian National Conferences Cathy presented sessions on Children and Grief and Spirituality and grief. Sue & Jon remember in the early 90's travelling up to Kyabram with Jasper Daams and Pauline Lancaster to talk about TCF at a public meeting (which Cathy had organised), and attending one of Cathy's group meetings, and meeting some of the local members she was helping to support.

The early 90's was an especially emotional & moving time for Cathy & her family. After many years of searching they found where Michael had been buried, & were finally able to honour him in a way they had always wanted to.

Cathy was a tireless supporter of TCF in her region & beyond, & contributed in supporting so many bereaved families and making a difference in their lives, so the Rhys Harmer Award is so well deserved for all her work with others, & above all in memory of Michael.

Congratulations & thank you with our warmest wishes.

Grieve Heal Grow JANE MOSCHETTI

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS VICTORIA MAGAZINE

GRIEVE HEAL GROW is a bi-monthly, glossy magazine for Members of TCFV.

Since 2019, readership of the magazine has been slowly increasing: in August 2019, 817 copies of the magazine were posted out, and in August 2021, 804 copies of the magazine were mailed, with a further 267 sent out via email. This makes a total of 1,071, an increase of 254 over the two years.

The magazine is usually 28 pages long, but in the last twelve months, two of the six editions have been a bumper 32 pages in length (the December/January and June/July editions).

Since the October/November 2020 edition, there has been a permanent volunteer Editor in Jane Moschetti, who has been assisted during this time by staff members Jenny Galati and Sheryl Sazenis. There are also two regular teams of volunteers, one of which helps to write, proofread and source articles for the magazine, while the other team comes into the Centre to assist with packing the magazine ready for mailout.

Each magazine contains a Board Report, news from the Centre, information about upcoming events and memorial opportunities, a community noticeboard, Photo Love Gifts (which members can put in the magazine at a cost of \$30.00), news about support groups, as well as numerous articles, stories, poems, songs, book reviews and artworks from TCF members in Victoria, interstate and overseas.

Some editions of the magazine have themes, such as Mother's or Father's Day and Christmas, but in each edition, where possible, articles on suicide, selfcare and wellbeing, helping the newly bereaved, and sibling or grandparent loss are also included.

Whilst the magazine is always very much appreciated by members, many have mentioned how it has been a lifeline to them during the COVID19 situation, and every edition is eagerly awaited.

80% of respondents from the recent survey found the magazine helpful or very helpful:

- "I made intermittent contact over that first year, all useful, but the magazine has been my main support over all of the years since then. What I have learnt regarding death and grief since then helped me beyond measure after the untimely death of my father and young death of my husband."
- "In the early days of my grief I couldn't get past page 3 or 4 without crying or sobbing or feeling so sad. Not the magazine's fault. Some months I wouldn't even open it, but I always knew it was there."





Walk to Remember 2021

The weather looked inauspicious on Sunday 11 April. It was grey and cold and rain was about; not especially encouraging for those of us who had registered for the annual TCFV Walk to Remember, (W2R). Some, including ourselves, wondered if W2R 2021 might even be cancelled. But a reassuring text message from Jenny Galati told us that there was a break in the clouds directly above Princes Park – our W2R location, as it has been in recent times.

Buoyed with optimism, we arrived to find perhaps 50 or more fellow TCFV members and volunteers; a good sign! And thus, began another moving and heart-warming W2R.

The familiar format of some short speeches, a quiet walk around the park, (social for some, perhaps meditative for others), the spectacular releasing of doves, the placement of flowers as to form a circle of love for those passed, and a relaxed BBQ, all gave us nourishment and strength.

Sometimes I think all we can do in honour of our children and siblings, is just to keep on walking, faithful to their memory. The W2R allows many of us to do this together and so it really is a shared and moving tribute to our lost children and siblings. It is quiet and mostly subdued just an opportunity where we can be in solidarity with others walking the same journey as ourselves sharing stories or just getting lost in our thoughts and memories.

Thank you to TCFV and the many volunteers who made this year's W2R happen. After a COVID hiatus in 2020 it was a welcome return to 'normal'.

Thank you most sincerely.
BRUCE AND CATRINA HOUGHTON
(Parents of Liam, 19)





Mother's Day Lunch

HIGH TEA

A special Mother's Day High Tea was held in May between Bereaved Mother's Day on 2nd May and Mother's Day on 8th May. It was beautifully arranged with white tablecloths, individual red roses, and lovely sandwiches. Forty-eight bereaved mothers attended. Margaret Harmer (Founder of TCFV with husband Lindsay) gave an inspiring talk, looking back on her journey, and was especially reassuring to newly-bereaved mothers to have hope that things will get better. Susan Loch, who was visiting from Sydney, talked about her new book 'Jessica's gift' written after the death of her daughter. It was a lovely afternoon catching up with old friends and making new ones.

... so this was my first Mother's Day without my first born but the love and compassion shown by everyone at the High Tea made me feel at ease. It allowed me to share my pain with others who have gone through the same and all their hugs gave me strength to keep going. The food was great, the conversations were difficult but at the same time empowering and I am forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for making Mother's Day a little more bearable. Thank you to all involved in making this session happen.

Natalie (mother of Lex)



Dear Jenny and Jo,

I do want to thank you very sincerely for inviting me to the Mother's Day Luncheon last week. I was so glad to come and to meet the many inspiring, brave mothers who spoke to me.

The Luncheon itself was so beautifully arranged with the white cloths, individual red roses, and lovely sandwiches. It must have taken a lot of work to make it all so attractive. Thank you so much for the beautiful chrysanthemums you so kindly gave me...looking lovely in my lounge room.

It gave me such a deep sense of appreciation to see how wonderfully TCF is still carried on in such a loving way and I felt really inspired by the bereaved mothers who found me and told their stories. Naturally, I felt for them all so much, and so much wish their lives had been different, as do we all.

Many, many thanks too to dear Jo who transported me (and my walker) so generously to and fro. I am old now and it's a real trouble to get around.... but if you would ever like me to come again, I'll really try to do so.

God bless you all and the incredible work you are doing.

*My love always,
Margaret Harmer.*

I was privileged to attend the Mother's Day morning tea this year. Whilst it was a very difficult function to attend considering we lost our beloved Lex in September 2020 (so this was my first Mother's Day without my first-born), the love and compassion shown by everyone there made me feel at ease. It allowed me to share my pain with others who have gone through the same thing, and all their hugs gave me strength to keep going. The food was great, the conversations were difficult but at the same time empowering and I am forever grateful to Compassionate Friends for making Mother's Day a little more bearable. Thank you to all involved in making this session happen.

Natalia Isaacs

Hi Jenny,

Thank you for having us and for all your hard work. I really enjoyed myself and met some lovely new people. I find a lot of comfort in catching up with you all. It makes me realize I'm not alone in this hard journey. You and your family have a lovely Mother's Day. I'm sure our beautiful kids are watching over us.

Cheers, Fiona Bird Xx

I enjoyed the High Tea. The realisation that I had been around TCFV for a while (in fact since 2015) was apparent, as I knew many people at the High Tea, some I hadn't seen for a while. It was lovely to catch up and spend some time just talking, unwinding, taking it easy, along with enjoying good food.

Lyn Strickland



Time Out

"TIME OUT" RETREAT ACCOMMODATION

This program provides accommodation - at a much-reduced rate - for TCFV members who need an escape from their day-to-day grief. TCFV collaborates with a series of property owners who provide low-cost stays to TCFV members during off-peak periods.

While Covid-19 has affected the availability of properties, two properties on its registry - both located in Glen Forbes - have been able to offer stays when restriction levels permit. Additionally, with the relaxation in restrictions during the first half of 2021, TCFV has been approached by two property owners keen to join the "Time Out" registry. One property is located at Buxton; the other in Warburton. These developments have contributed to a feeling of optimism as we move through unprecedented times.

Andrew McNess





2021 TCFV Annual Report Financial Report

THE FINANCIALS

I am pleased to report for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 an audited surplus of \$93,736 on revenues of \$608,227.

This represents the continuing positive results from our restructuring undertaken in early 2020. Our organisation has become much stronger financially which allows us the ability to concentrate on our aim of supporting bereaved families.

I anticipate that in the near future our Finance sub-committee will be reviewing our mortgage of \$445,397 and our Investment in the upstairs administration building.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID19) IMPACT

The Covid19 pandemic continued to create significant social and economic uncertainty.

As with last year, despite the challenges of Covid19 the organisation has been able to continue to fund new initiatives with the support of our members and our external supporters.

There was a significant reduction in some fund-raising activities. The drop in this income was made up for by the Covid19 critical response funding by the federal Government.

EXTERNAL SUPPORTERS

Our external supporters funded the projects listed below;

We thank them most sincerely.

SUPPORTER	PROGRAM	GRANT (RECEIVED OR SPENT THIS YEAR)
Department of Health and Human Services	Covid management, purchasing equipment for staff to work offsite, assist online support groups	\$15,000
Department of Health and Human Services	Covid Infection control and management	\$1,767
City of Boroondara	Community strengthening program – in Boroondara	\$1,145
Coopers Brewery Foundation	Community education Latrobe valley	\$2,333
5point Foundation	Sustainability and internal capacity building and Sibling support chat and responder program	\$18,128
Grenet Merrin Foundation	Promotion of The Compassionate Friends	\$2,568
Geelong Cemetery trust	Memorial bench/Sibling Outreach	\$14,673

The majority of our daily operating costs is funded by the State Government Department of Health and Human Services. This enables us to employ our staff and deliver key services and education.

The balance of our costs are covered by donations and membership subscriptions.

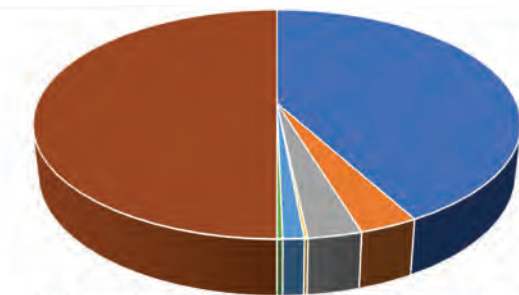
We also received end of year tax appeal donations of approximately \$7,500. We thank our staff, members, community members and sponsors for their generous donations.

The budget for financial year 2022 is forecast on a conservative basis to be in deficit. This will be closely monitored in the coming year to ensure it stays within controllable limits.

Daniel Bendel
Treasurer
September 2021

Key Financial Data - Treasurers Report

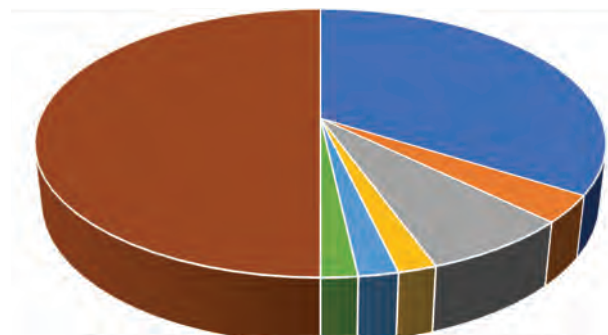
REVENUE	2021	2020
Government grants	511,332	459,771
Donations	39,902	60,873
Non-Government grants	36,607	74,522
Fundraising	2,258	25,137
Membership	14,346	6,017
Other	3,782	1,709
Total revenue	608,227	628,029



Left hand side is total. Right side is the break-up

- Government grants
- Donations
- Non-Government grants
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Other
- Total revenue

EXPENSES	2021	2020
Employee benefits	349,995	401,483
Depreciation	33,864	32,300
centre and Volunteer	74,020	92,088
Magazine	18,990	12,385
Finance	19,612	22,966
Events and services	18,010	11,466
Total Expenses	514,491	572,688



Left hand side is total, right hand side is the break-up

- Employee benefits
- Depreciation
- centre and Volunteer
- Magazine
- Finance
- Events and services
- Total Expenses

DANIEL BENDEL - BOARD RETIREMENT

Danny as he is affectionately known, joined the TCFV Board in September 2009, and has been Treasurer since October 2011.

It all began in June 2009, when Danny visited the Centre to innocently offer help for yet another TCFV move to another rented premises. Chatting with Danny, the CEO and Treasurer were to discover that Danny with his accounting and business qualifications could contribute greatly to the TCFV Board. And this has been proven correct.

Danny will be best remembered for his role in turning the dream for a TCFV-owned property into reality and ensured we never needed to shift premises again. This does not understate his other contributions which he worked just as tirelessly on. These range not just in the finance areas but also strategic planning, constitutional review, risk management, networking with government/sponsors... the list goes on.

A personable character with extensive connections, TCFV has benefited greatly from his network of contacts, who have generously supported us in pro bono consultancy as well as fundraising support.

Danny believes in rotating Board members and ensuring no one stays too long in a position. On that basis he was going to retire a couple of years ago, but stayed on a little longer to ensure the recent restructuring was bedded in first.

Whilst we are sad to see Danny leave the board, we know that he continues to play a major leadership role in TCFV. It's just a shift from a governance to more active engagement in revenue development and other TCFV strategies.

On behalf of all in TCFV, thank you Danny. We are sure Joshua is proud of how you have honoured his memory and will continue to do so....



By the Numbers

We recognise the impact of changed circumstances on our numbers.
Both staffing changes and Covid-19 responses have had their impact on some of our statistics.

SUPPORT

SUPPORT GROUPS	SUPPORT MEETINGS	PARTICIPANTS	GRIEF SUPPORT CALLS	OTHER CALLS
33	265	1657	2085	2781

PRINT MATERIAL SENT

TCFV MAGAZINES	INFORMATION PACKAGES	ANNIVERSARY CARDS
6802	148	2685

EVENTS

MEMBER EVENTS (in a Pandemic Year)	PARTICIPANTS	TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
5	148	26452

SOCIAL MEDIA

WEBSITE USERS	INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	CHAT SERVICE CHATS	FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS
15120	105	29	3998

Compassionate Friend Poem

Read out by Bev Foster at the AGM in honour of her friend Christine Campbell who wrote this poem for Bev.
Bev says that although written expressively to her, it speaks beautifully to us all.
Christine was Bev's first contact at TCVF in October 2002.



COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

I glimpsed the never ending journey, while newly torn with grief
I did not know which way to turn, nor where to get relief
I felt such loss and trauma, my heart was torn apart
The road ahead looked frightening, I didn't know how to start

A friend came knocking on my door, to help with my first step
I'd never known her prior to this, she hugged me while I wept
She said she knew the road real well, she'd walked it many times
She knew the hurdles that I faced, she'd help me with those climbs
I looked her deeply in her eyes, compassion overflowed
Right away I gained some strength with friendship she bestowed
She took me to a meeting place with others who'd been there
I knew then that I realised, there's other friends who care

Compassionate Friends are precious, they know and understand
One day I hope I can extend a friendly helping hand
To guide another on the way along the 'grieving track'
Knowing what that friendship means, to get some sanity back

Written by
Christine Campbell
Bereaved Mother of Cameron (32) 36



TCFV Board Members



THERESA YEO

Theresa migrated to Melbourne in 2001, soon after the death of her daughter, Clara, 7.

She had been a community worker in Church, auditor in banking, before leaving her career to start a Fair Trade shop. After Clara's death, she has focused on volunteering with TCF, where she found a lifeline community for her grief support, meaningful use of her skills and continued learning.

Volunteering in TCFV since 2003, she was on the TCFV Board from 2005-2012, mostly as Treasurer. She returned to the Board in 2019 to facilitate the leadership needs of TCFV as President. Together with a cohesive Board team, the last 2 years have been focused on restructuring for a stronger TCFV and negotiating the COVID-19 challenges.

She continues to be inspired by the dedicated TCFV community who work tirelessly to support our bereaved membership in honour of the memory of our loves ones.



DANIEL BENDEL

In the last couple of years Daniel has focussed on continually reviewing TCFV's financial position to ensure we are operating within our financial limits. This has led to a financially stronger organisation, and this is particularly important with the challenges of the COVID19 pandemic.

He has also been involved in establishing and running the Risk Committee. The committee consists of himself, Cyril Jankoff (Chairman), Paul Sessarago and Andrew McNess. The committee has reviewed and updated a number of policies and procedures.

He has also been involved as Treasurer of the National organisation, The Compassionate Friends Australia (TCFA). This organisation plays an important role in promoting TCF throughout Australia.



KEVIN PURVIS

Kevin Purvis has served as Vice President on the TCFV Board for the past two years. These have been years of great change, particularly as the organisation responded to a staff restructure in 2019 / 20 and managed the impact of the COVID19 pandemic.

He has valued working co-operatively with other Board members as TCFV has negotiated these changes. He has also had a role as a telephone responder on the 24-hour helpline. This has been a rewarding experience working where the importance of our organisation is played out in real life. Kevin is looking forward to working with the Board in the implementation of the new Strategic Plan that will set the direction for TCFV for the next period of time.

He is the bereaved father of Stephen, who died by suicide in 2001. He is married to Jenny, who is also involved in TCFV, leading the Canterbury Bereaved by Suicide Group.



HARRIET CLEGG

Harriet Clegg is entering her third year as the Sibling Board Representative at The Compassionate Friends Victoria and has almost finished her Master of Social Work degree.

Harriet enjoys supporting TCFV as a part of a cohesive team, and her role over the last couple of years has predominantly been centred around aiding the development of the siblings' services offerings. This included Harriet helping to shape the initial online chat responder platform for siblings and undertaking the Telephone Listening Skills and Chat Responder training to support those who walk the same path. Recently, Harriet has been collaborating with TCFV stakeholders on a new sibling specific website and is looking forward to the launch of this.

Other areas Harriet has contributed towards include: finding content for TCFV's magazine Grieve Heal Grow; updating policies and procedures; and connecting with members via outreach check-in calls.



LISA GELBART

Lisa Gelbart is a professional counsellor and clinical supervisor with many years' experience in supporting bereaved families.

Lisa is bereaved of two infant sons and connected with The Compassionate Friends Victoria (TCFV) in 2007. She subsequently began supporting families as a telephone responder. Lisa has been a Board Member at TCFV for the past two years and a member of the bereavement advisory committee. She currently works as a telehealth counsellor in the mental health and domestic violence fields.

Her previous roles include coordinating peer support workers and facilitating bereavement programs. Lisa's experience also encompasses the LGBT+ and disability communities. Lisa is about to complete her Masters of Counselling and looks forward to seeing where life leads, while continuing to be actively involved with TCFV.



JO KNOLL


Jo Knoll has been a Board Member for two years and a Member of TCFV for over twenty years since her son, Matt, died in 1998.

Board Membership has been an exciting role and given Jo a greater insight into just how challenging and satisfying the role is in caring for our membership.

Her reasons for joining the Board were to further the public's knowledge of the TCFV name and its work; to reinstate a bi-annual Gathering again as soon as possible and hold as many events and opportunities for members to come together. Unfortunately, the Board has been thwarted in some of its aims due to the COVID virus.

Jo is the Board Member and Chair of the Committee to hopefully work towards our next Gathering in Mooroolbark in October or November 2022.

Caring for our members and especially newly bereaved members at this time is always at the forefront of our minds and hopefully 2022 may see the virus abate and make our wishes possible.



JOIN US
KIDSsafe
Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia

Peer Support Group

IN CONJUNCTION WITH
TCFV
Grieve Heal Grow

CONTACT
ALEX@KIDSAFEVIC.COM.AU
TO REGISTER

BEREAVED OF A CHILD 14 YEARS & UNDER THROUGH ACCIDENT

— An online support group —

This group—which meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm—is a collaboration between TCFV & KIDSAFE. A safe, welcoming space for parents bereaved of a child through an accident. For more information and/or to register to attend, please contact: alex@kidsafevic.com.au

Thank You to All Our Supporters, including...





YARRAVILLE Social Group


The Compassionate Friends' YARRAVILLE Social Group provides a safe and supportive environment for individuals bereaved of children, siblings or grandchildren. It provides the opportunity to for us to socialise, talk about how we've been going, talk about our grief, and the legacy of our children, siblings and grandchildren in our lives.

When: we meet the third Saturday of the month at 11am
Where: Mantra Studio Kitchen and Bar, 10a Campbell St, Yarraville

For additional meeting information and to speak with the local group leader, please contact
TCFV Centre on 1300 064 068

www.tcfv.org.au





WARRAGUL Support Group

The Compassionate Friends' WARRAGUL Support Group provides a safe and supportive environment for individuals bereaved of children, siblings or grandchildren. It provides the opportunity to talk about our grief, how we've been going, and the legacy of our children, siblings and grandchildren in our lives.

When: we meet the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm
Where: Warragul Community House, 138 Normanby Street, Warragul

For additional meeting information and to speak with the local group leader, please contact
TCFV Centre on 1300 064 068

www.tcfv.org.au





The Compassionate Friends Victoria