



SOUNDFAIR

EMPOWERING. HEARING. EQUALITY.

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



Acknowledgements

Soundfair would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which we conduct our business. We would like to thank Elders past, present and emerging.

We would also like to acknowledge and pay respect to those living with hearing conditions who have fought hard for their right to be heard. Your strength and resilience are invaluable to Soundfair, and the general community.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our donors and supporters. These donations allow us to deliver person-centred care for our clients, supporting them to live connected lives and overcome the emotional and social impacts of hearing conditions.

OUR

LEADERSHIP



Christopher Carter

CHAIRPERSON



Kim Turudia

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON



Dianne Semmens

BOARD DIRECTOR



Ross Green

BOARD DIRECTOR



Scott Fisher

BOARD DIRECTOR



Dr Caitlin Barr

CEO



Dr Jessica Vitkovic

INNOVATION LEAD



Lisa Westhaven

ENGAGEMENT LEAD



Melissa Chandler

CLINIC LEAD



Prue Thomas

BUSINESS LEAD

BOARD

EXECUTIVE

ENGAGE

Deeply **ENGAGE** with people (not just ears) who have hearing health conditions, with the public and the sector.

We will grow and nurture an army of supporters made up of the community, professionals, organisations and government.

- We will apply a whole-system approach.
- Build our networks and bring others along.
- Ensure we understand and deliver on the needs and expectations of these people.

CREATE

CREATE the future of hearing experiences by taking a truly person-centred and a whole-systems approach.

Using co-design and inclusive principles, we will innovate to deliver hearing care that sets new standards of person-centred experience

- The current system of devices on ears isn't serving people well enough.
- We will create a new way of delivering hearing services.
- This new methodology will create awareness, understanding and empathy.

SERVE

SERVE people impacted by hearing health conditions.

Our programs fill a gap in current services for the public broadly, but also offer unique services for people who otherwise miss out or who are disadvantaged financially, educationally or culturally.

- We exist to serve the needs of people who are impacted by hearing conditions.
- We have a particular passion for ensuring the needs of those most vulnerable are met.

CATALYSE

CATALYSE change in the system and the community to be focussed on what people really need to be connected and healthy.

We provide the essential link between people with hearing conditions and government, policy and service providers. We lobby, agitate, and question the status quo because we represent those with hearing conditions.

- We are passionate about change.
- Instead of being geared to what is best for people, the system is geared towards providers' preference, profitability and systemisation.
- Stigma and limited access to quality information, services and support means that the community as a whole doesn't act on hearing conditions despite the impact on health and wellbeing.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

With Soundfair's exciting transformation and constitutional changes newly in place at the end of last financial year, the Board were keen to build on the renewed focus and organisational structure. Consequently, a period of significant consolidation of Soundfair's strategic plan and governance processes has occurred during the 2020-21 reporting period.

Leveraging the previous years' investment in innovation, advocacy and stakeholder relationships, it has been wonderful to steer the progression and transition of our ENGAGE, CREATE, SERVE, CATALYSE strategic plan towards the development and implementation phase. Despite the challenges of ongoing lockdowns due to COVID-19, the Board, Caitlin and the extended team have remained focussed on delivering against the strategy to eliminate the social and emotional impacts of hearing conditions.

In early 2021, the Board also made an important strategic decision to expand and accelerate Soundfair's growth through the acquisition of an audiology clinic in Mount Waverley. This acquisition will play an instrumental role aligning Soundfair's physical location with

our social ethos by moving from a medical suite into the heart of the Mount Waverly community. Importantly, it also grows and progresses the development of our new model of hearing healthcare while also solidifying the sustainability of the organisation.

The Board's ongoing commitment to exceptional governance has seen a strengthening of several policies through a review of governance processes. A new Board committee structure has also been established that aims to expand Soundfair's reach into the philanthropic world, support Director recruitment, and fortify good governance practices.

The Board itself has also changed. In September 2020, we welcomed Scott Fisher as a new Director. He brings with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the finance area and has personal experience of living with a hearing condition. Further Director changes are expected in the coming year, with Ross Green due to step down from the Board at the end of his term in November 2021. Ross's expertise in communications, branding and innovation have been immensely valuable, particularly throughout our period of transformation from

Better Hearing Australia (Vic) to Soundfair. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Ross for his contribution to Soundfair and wish him all the very best.

I am excited by, and proud of the work that Soundfair is undertaking to transform the experience and wellbeing of all people with hearing conditions. We are up for the challenges ahead of us in 2021 and 2022 and are committed to building on this period of consolidation and growth to ensure a fairer world for people with hearing conditions.

**CHRISTOPHER CARTER
GAICD, FIML**



Hearing Bank



Connection Coach



Audiology Diagnostics



Rehabilitation



Social & Emotional Health Programs



Connected Care



Tinnitus Australia



CEO'S

REPORT

Listening to individuals' stories in a purposeful way is central to how Soundfair works to create a fair world for people with hearing conditions.

Soundfair's strategy centres on people – their wellbeing and diverse, individual experiences. This year, we made our strategy more overt by refining our vision and mission and by ensuring lived experience stories are central to all our work. In line with our values, the Soundfair team approached a year challenged by the global pandemic with courage, curiosity and collaboratively. I am delighted to share a snippet of some of our achievements and impact, which are highlighted further on in this report by each Executive Lead.

This year, Soundfair progressed its transformation by shifting our focus from innovation to implementation alongside investing in collaboration.

On the ground, this involved:

- Expanding our Hearing and Connection Coach and Hearing Bank Services by

acquiring an audiology practice in Melbourne and opening the Soundfair Hearing Centre

- Moving our whole-person and person-centred model of hearing care into implementation phase. We now offer this world-first service!

- Engaging in purposeful partnerships nationally and internationally
- Undertaking and commissioning world-class research, reports and submissions, namely the HearMe Report and for the Hearing Services Program Review
- Creating the Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee and new website
- Refining our organisational structure and building an outstanding team

Towards the end of the year, Soundfair took a big step in expanding our services by acquiring an audiology clinic in eastern Melbourne. Now our head office, the Soundfair Hearing Centre allows us to embed the work of Soundfair within the community. Namely, this space is where we now run our Connection Coach (our new model of hearing care), audiology and Hearing Bank services. Soon (COVID allowing) we will also be able

to run social and community events. Partnerships and collaboration have played a large role in our work throughout the year. Drawing on our research strengths, Soundfair were delighted to collaborate with Macquarie University, Flinders University, AccessAbilityAustralia, the Ida Institute and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) on projects ranging from national and international research grants to community projects. We were very pleased to be accepted to join the Hearing Health Sector Alliance, who bring representatives across the sector together to support implementation of the Government's Roadmap for Hearing Health. Along with this role, Soundfair strengthened our relationship with Minister Coulton, and the office of Minister Donnellan and Minister Foley. We thank and acknowledge all our partners and collaborators.

A substantial project for the year was the development and launch of Soundfair's HearMe Report. This report was catalysed by the recurring themes we identified in the diverse lived experience stories of people living with hearing

OUR VISION

Soundfair's vision is for a **FAIR – fulfilling, accessible, inclusive, respectful – world for people with hearing conditions.**

OUR PURPOSE

To transform the experience, inclusion and wellbeing of people with hearing conditions by amplifying their diverse voices, focusing on the whole person and catalysing change across the system and society

conditions. We were struck by the vast impacts of hearing conditions that go beyond issues for the hearing sector to address – these issues are society wide and ask us to consider hearing conditions through a social model of disability rather than a medical lens. This collaborative report was launched in person and online in March, with Minister Coulton highlighting the importance of looking beyond ears to overcome the barriers posed by hearing conditions.

After such a unique year, I would like to share my thanks to the Soundfair Board, whose clear vision is

essential for Soundfair's ongoing transformation, and to the Soundfair 'More Than Just Ears' team, which again evolved this year for their passion and humour. We welcomed our final Executive Lead this year, Melissa Chandler (Clinic Lead) who completes our Executive team consisting of Prue Thomas (Business Lead), Jessica Vitkovic (Innovation and Education Lead) and Lisa Westhaven (Engagement Lead). You can read more about the achievements in each portfolio later in the report. I would also like to make a special thank you to Dr Jessica Vitkovic who took on the reins of Soundfair for the last quarter while I went on parental leave.

The work of Soundfair would not be possible without the support of our members, funders, and supporters. I would like to acknowledge the funding support of the Department of Health, Ida Institute, Deafness Foundation, and the State Trustees, and all those individuals who made a generous donation to Soundfair over this period.

Wishing our community the best of health as we take on the next phase of this pandemic.

DR CAITLIN BARR

WHAT WE DO

Provide services that are about more than just ears and devices. Nurture communities that support the wellbeing of people with hearing conditions.

HOW WE DO IT

We ENGAGE with people and the community. We CREATE new solutions. We SERVE the community, especially those most vulnerable. We CATALYSE change beyond us.

OUR VALUES

- People-centred and inclusive
- Courageous, curious and collaborative
- Evidence-creating and innovative



CLINICAL SERVICES

Soundfair's clinic-based team began the 2020-21 year with a new look and renewed focus. Delivery of whole-person, person-centred services to support and address the impacts of hearing conditions, driven by the voices of those with lived experience, is our clinic's purpose. Our initial principles of #MoreThanJustEars and #MoreThanJustDevices evolved into strategic action, but like every Melbourne-based entity, sporadic periods of closure and constantly fluctuating restrictions became our reality.

Telehealth practice enabled us to continue to offer some support to those impacted by hearing conditions and, when we could, we practised Covid-safe face to face essential services, learning to navigate masked consults and density limits. We took to educating our visitors on the legal removal of masks when safe, and communicating with a person with a hearing condition and sought to empower our clients to self-advocate in this space. The inclusion of a support person or significant other in a consultation was also impacted by density limits at times, and so creativity was required to ensure we could support both our clients and their loved ones with the impacts of hearing conditions, including video conferencing family during a consultation, pre and post-appointment phone calls, or separate consultations for each family member.

Mask wearing also brought about an increase in the number of lost hearing aids, as hearing aids, mask loops and often glasses arms all taking up

the same limited space on the ear. Our clinicians were able to supply the broadest range of devices to ensure our clinic could offer expertise in all available hearing aid brands and offer prompt replacement device fittings.

We also saw an increase in people seeking support to address the social and emotional impacts of their hearing conditions, compounded by pandemic-related isolation and lockdown measures. Our ability to provide independent, objective and empowering phone support was, and continues to be, a vital part of the Soundfair service, and we continue to expand our networks and community connections to ensure we can offer a range of resources and support pathways across Australia.

I joined the Soundfair team in late October 2020, and began working on broadening our service access to all people with hearing conditions, and optimising opportunities within existing funding models with a view to creating a sustainable, whole-person focussed clinical service offering that can support our work with the underserved and unfunded client groups in our community. A key change was to register the Soundfair clinic with the Commonwealth Hearing Services Program. This involved bedding down many of the foundational elements of a traditional hearing service, as well as exploring ways to integrate our Connections model into what is perceived as a device-focussed funding model of hearing care. March saw us listed as an accredited service provider, making our Connections model more accessible, including to people on a pension and veterans.

Extending our service to the largest demographic experiencing hearing conditions supports our 'no wrong door' approach and our vision for a fair world for all people with hearing conditions. It also supports our aim to create a social enterprise within Soundfair to fund the continuation of our Hearing Bank program.

The Soundfair Hearing Bank exists to provide essential hearing services including the fitting of hearing devices to the vulnerable, unfunded and underserved in our community at low or no cost. This includes those in financial hardship or on low incomes and people seeking asylum or refuge, all of whom would have no other option but to live with the impacts of unaddressed hearing conditions. We are so grateful for the generous donations of hearing devices that we receive, without which, this service could not exist.

Lockdown and restrictions also impacted this program and this year there were 95 Hearing Bank appointments, with 51 donated devices fitted. This year we began to explore possible collaborations to increase access to the Hearing Bank, as well as lobby government to find ways to fund these groups, and we are pleased to see that others in the sector also support an increase in eligibility to current funding models.

The clinic also joined the Hearing Business Alliance, a collective of over 300 independent hearing service providers, helping to increase our professional network and share our vision for hearing service provision reimagined.

We continued to grow and develop our Connections model of service and the role of the Connection Coach in whole person service provision. When people connect with us, we work together to co-design hearing health and wellbeing goals and actions to address the social, emotional and audiological aspects of hearing conditions.

Thanks to grant funding received from the Ida Institute, we were able to pilot the use of whole person evaluation tools in the clinic, with a view to being able to measure the impact of whole person, person-centred care on both an individual and clinic-wide basis. The ability to road-test these developments edges us closer to being able to catalyse change within the industry as a whole, and provide data to support the need to fund services that are not simply device and 'single solution' centric, but rather whole person and person-centred.

We continued to offer specialised phone-based triage, support, information and resource provision via the Commonwealth Home Support Program and through our relationship with My Aged Care. were able to present information sessions to several LGA aged care assessment teams to enhance their understanding of how they can be more hearing friendly in their care for those with hearing conditions.

The close of 2021 saw a strategic move to fast track our expansion and reach within the community and we acquired an existing, successful hearing clinic - Quality Hearing in Mount Waverley. Navigating the ever-changing service delivery landscape that was 2020-21 has enhanced our agility, creativity and appetite for change, and we look forward to bringing these strengths into 2021-22.

ABRHAM'S STORY

I was granted a Commonwealth Access Scholarship to study. I contacted my university's audiologist and she put me in touch with Soundfair so that I could get a hearing aid from their Hearing Bank.

I can wear my hearing aid and talk to everyone, but I notice that there is fear. I miss a lot of information and feel ashamed to ask people to repeat what they said. My social interactions have become limited. I don't want to go anywhere, just want to be at home. I feel lucky to be able to study from home at the moment. If I go outside, I need to put my hearing aid on and I feel different. I guess it takes time getting used to it. I am lucky to be here, though. I look at myself, at how I am getting better and better because everyone has tried to help me. Community can change you, change your situation.

Refugees and asylum seekers like me need support. We have suffered many things. People leave their country because they had a problem. If someone does not help us, it is very hard for us to access things. Communication barriers, language barriers, feeling ashamed, there's many reasons. Organisations like Soundfair can help, but we still need donations from the community and government funding.

KATE'S STORY

My journey into hearing loss began when I was three years old, when my mum noticed that I wasn't speaking and that I looked at her lips when she spoke, mimicking her mouth. She took me to an audiologist and it turned out that I had a very severe ear infection. I got grommets, but afterwards they discovered I had a permanent mild to moderate hearing loss.

It was quite a negative experience for my parents. My mum was told that I wouldn't be a party girl, and she was quite devastated by the idea that her child wouldn't be social because she had a hearing loss.

For me the painful experience really began when I was ten years old and I was fitted with hearing aids. Up until that point I thought I was managing just fine, even though I did have to get my hearing tested every year. Being deaf was something that I associated with elderly people. I would sit in the audiology centre and see images of old people or babies hung up on the walls. I had this idea that there wasn't anyone young with hearing loss out there but me. I felt incredibly ashamed and isolated.

I also had to see a special needs teacher at school. When she walked into the classroom and said "I'm here to see Kate" I'd think "I must be an absolute idiot. There's obviously something wrong with me."

From that moment I got the idea that I was never going to be very smart; that I wouldn't be good at reading and writing. And while I never said anything, I spent the next 15 years feeling that way. I ended up studying visual communications at university and later became a photographer.

Up until I was 26, I felt incredibly ashamed by my hearing aids. I wouldn't tell people about them. I thought that people would think I was less competent if I did. I didn't think it was glamorous. I thought people would find me unattractive if they saw them on me.

All this changed in a matter of minutes. When I was 26, I was reading Frankie magazine and I stumbled upon an article by a young woman who was the same age as me. She was a photographer and, in the article, she shared her experience with deafness. I basically broke out in tears.

It was the first time I had read about the exact things that I had felt. It shocked me that I had gotten to that age and had never read anything like this. This was not only my story, but for the first time, I realised that deafness actually seemed interesting. That story had value.

Suddenly, I found myself thinking: "imagine what I could do with a project that shared stories like this?" Imagine if I had been given a book filled with these beautiful stories when I was 10 years old? Stories of people with all different kinds of experiences of deafness that showed hearing aids and cochlear implants and Auslan... How different my journey might have been.

...How different the journey of so many other people out there could be...

And so, that was the beginning of a five-year journey to make Earshot – a coffee table style book filled with photographs and stories of a diverse range of people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. I didn't know anyone else who was deaf, and so the process of meeting and connecting with others opened a whole new world for me. It also forced me to wear my hearing aids and feel proud of them. After all, how could I be doing this project as a deaf person needing hearing aids and not wear them? Now, the idea of not wearing them is just absurd and the idea of feeling ashamed of them is such a distant memory.

**PUTTING STORIES
OF LIVED EXPERIENCE
AT THE HEART OF
SOUNDFAIR**



MARGOT'S STORY

I was six when my hearing loss was finally discovered. My mum was advised by an ENT specialist that my sensorineural deafness could not be helped with hearing aids.

I simply had to learn to live with not hearing well. This news didn't overly concern my mum, though, as my dad was also deaf; he had mastered the art of masking his deafness and getting by. My mum and dad both lived through the war; they were, by necessity, of the 'stiff upper lip generation', where you just got on with it and made the best of your lot in life. And, naturally, I was expected to do as well.

For years I tried to hide my deafness. I was self-conscious. Embarrassed even, especially as I always had to sit at the front of the class in school when what I really wanted was to sit at the back with all the cool kids.

I left school at 16 and worked in a variety of office jobs, where it was possible to mostly get by. However, by my mid-20s, my deteriorating hearing was affecting my ability to carry out tasks such as minute taking.

At 25, I took the initiative to finally see an audiologist and, to my surprise, was advised that hearing aids would, in fact, help me. But the cost was out of my reach; I couldn't afford them on my wages. However, the audiologist was sympathetic to my situation and very kindly set up an unofficial payment plan. Due to that initial act of kindness when I first obtained hearing aids, I have remained loyal to my original hearing care providers.

While those first hearing aids improved my life, their limited lifespan (three to five years) heralded a new cycle of financial debt: I needed hearing aids in order to work and had to work in order to afford hearing aids. The cost of hearing aids continues to be a barrier to a whole cohort of people within the 26-64 age range who, by a stroke of genetic bad luck, illness, or mishap, are deaf or hard of hearing. Hearing and communication should be a basic human right; one that everyone should have access to regardless of their ability to pay. We shouldn't have to rely on the kindness of an understanding audiologist who bends the rules, or on securing bank loans.

There's a constant undertow of anxiety when you live with hearing loss. Every day is a challenge. It affects your confidence, self-esteem, and mental wellbeing. You often have feelings of inadequacy. You feel stupid when you mis-hear or, worse, don't hear at all.

Last year I started a university degree. After only three weeks, Covid hit and all lectures and tutorials were moved online. I soon discovered that in an online learning environment I was on equal footing with everyone else; without the struggle to hear in a face-to-face physical environment, I was confident and could fully engage in all lessons.

This year, half of my subjects are face-to-face. After my first workshop, I left university with a humongous headache from concentration fatigue. My confidence took a nose-dive and by the time I got home, I was in a dark place, angry and sad and considering dropping out.

Like many people with disabilities, I'm used to getting by. The deaf have to accommodate the hearing. I find myself saying sorry every single time I need someone to repeat themselves. I'm so tired of apologising for being deaf.

Deafness is often described as an invisible disability. Despite all my lecturers receiving a copy of my disability access plan, they still didn't see me as disabled and therefore made no efforts to accommodate me.

After that first workshop, my husband, however, picked me up, dusted me off and persuaded me to contact my lecturers . . . and they were fabulous! They apologised to me and are now actively trying to be mindful of my needs.

Being deaf can be lonely, especially when, like me, you occupy that grey-space between the hearing and the profoundly deaf. I'm not entirely part of either community.

I'm also of the strong opinion that we are failing our senior citizens with age-related deafness. After a life of hearing, they're now confronted with not hearing well. Adapting to wearing hearing aids is tiring and tricky; some senior citizens are tech averse or are unaware of the limitations of hearing aids (which will never replace "normal" hearing) or they have arthritic hands and struggle to manipulate small hearing devices and even smaller batteries. This is an issue that will only get bigger as we improve our lifespan.

It's my view that we shouldn't just accept hearing loss as a natural part of ageing. I see our elderly constantly being overlooked and left out in a social context because they can't hear properly. Once a senior citizen is fitted with a hearing aid, that should be the beginning of their new hearing journey and not the end. We need to have a proper aftercare program, such as regular home visits, to ensure our senior citizens are correctly using their hearing aids and demonstrate how to, for example, utilise captioning on the telly.

The deaf have as much to offer as anyone, but until technology catches up and society sees us, then we will remain unseen.

And yet, I still hold on to the hope that I might one day sit at the back, there with the cool kids.



INNOVATION & EDUCATION

Building on the previous year's investment in design, innovation and collaboration, the focus for 2020-2021 was to turn those ideas and concepts into tangible programs, products and resources.

The introduction of mandatory masks in Victoria meant a flurry of innovation activity early in the year to design and then meet demand for our accessible fabric masks. The design was recognised by the City of Melbourne where we reached the preliminary finals of their innovation awards. With the ongoing pandemic, the masks continue to be a much-needed solution for people with hearing conditions.

A large body of work has also been undertaken on our Connections Model; our reimagined hearing healthcare model that focusses on partnering with individuals to understand their medical, social and emotional needs and goals prior to establishing an action and review plan. The processes and procedures for the entry and review stage of the patient journey have been developed and trialled and now form an integral component of our clinical services.

Recognising that we needed other services to complement the more traditional audiology services already available within the model (such as diagnostic and device fitting services), we identified and began developing a range of psychosocial service offerings, including psychosocial supports, personal adjustment therapy, and place-based assessment, advice, and resources. Our choice of psycho-social

service offerings was informed through a human-centred design process with a design team comprising of people with hearing conditions, researchers, audiologists and psychologists. The process led to the development of an overarching concept of a hybrid online/face to face resource hub which acts as a 'one stop shop' for people with hearing conditions looking for information or help at any stage across their hearing journey/lifespan. A crucial component within that is the hearing wellbeing program and has been the initial focus of development. Working with psychologists, we are bringing the hearing wellbeing program concept to life by developing a suite of 10 self-guided wellbeing resources for people living with hearing conditions. These resources are designed to provide guidance on the social and emotional challenges associated with hearing conditions and include topics such as anxiety, confidence and assertiveness skills, acceptance, stigma and managing your relationships with your primary communication partner.

A business model encapsulating the full-service offering has been formed and ensures we provide consumers with access to health services funding streams such as Medicare, the hearing services program and our hearing bank. The acquisition of our new Mount Waverley clinic in June 2021 presents us with the next chapter where we will transform this traditional audiology clinic into the Connections Model, teach others how to do it and learn what it takes to scale it.

Given that Soundfair is innovating new ways of doing things that are about more than just ears and devices, we have been creating two tools important for measuring the impact of what we are doing. Supported by our Ida Institute grant, the development of the measurement tools will

help us understand the 'whole-person' impact of a hearing condition on an individual, and how person-centred their clinical experiences with us are. Most importantly, these tools have been developed with people with lived experience to ensure we are measuring outcomes important to them, and consequently, improving our services to best meet the needs of those we serve.

Outside of clinic innovations we have also been delivering community and workplace education while building our in-house education and leadership capabilities. Our educational offerings have been expanded and reviewed and its ongoing development in the next financial year will see educational offerings which are much more flexible and customisable. Our Sound Leaders program also engaged 18 people in a leadership program. Several self-initiated projects arose from this program including a mandarin translation project and the development of a funding proposal to ACCAN to research effective information and awareness raising strategies to improve use of captions.

Research remains an important avenue for Soundfair to inform and create change for a fairer world for people with hearing conditions. We have partnered with the Federal Government, Audiology Australia, Ear Science Institute and ACAud to undertake research investigating audiology telehealth experiences during the pandemic to improve consumer uptake and experiences. Work supported by the Deafness Foundation Grant has commenced and uses human centred design practices to improve hearing help seeking in primary care. We also partnered with Macquarie University and engaged a group of 15 people with hearing conditions to co-design their NHMRC funding submission. Our expertise in person-centred care and our track



record of working with consumers to reimagine hearing health care also informed Soundfair's submissions to government regarding the review of the hearing services program.

Reflecting on the achievements of the past year, we are most grateful for the enjoyment we have

gained from working with the fantastic people in our community. It's been a privilege to learn from their insights and experiences and see the sum of those experiences cumulate into the development of programs that are already making a difference.

Working with our community is a core tenant

of Soundfair and central to our innovation. We couldn't have done any of the above without the numerous workshop participants, volunteers, stakeholders, grant partners and collaborators who have been involved with us over the last year. A wholehearted thank you goes to all those involved.



ENGAGEMENT

In our first full 12 months as Soundfair, this financial year saw us grow from solid foundations in a challenging environment. An ambitious program of advocacy ensured individuals' lived experience was the cornerstone of our submissions, reports and outreach to government.

Unquestionably, the standout highlight of the year was the launch of the HearMe Report. The HearMe Report platformed the lived experience of people with hearing conditions and built on our submissions to the Royal Commission on Disability and the Hearing Services Program Review to call for society-wide change and a fair world for people with hearing conditions.

The launch event, held both online and in person at the Crown Convention Centre in Melbourne, was keynoted by Minister Coulton, with a moving presentation from Suzanne Waldron, and MC'd by Josh Piterman. The event also featured an immersive art installation by Kate Disher-Quill, inspired by the HearMe Report, that explored the diverse experiences of Deaf and hard of hearing people. The HearMe Report launch was extensively covered by Croakey, the home of public interest journalism for health, which further amplified Soundfair's advocacy message. The event was sponsored by Specsavers and Oticon, and we thank them for their support.

Another in-person event that was a highlight was the afternoon tea for the Board, staff and Members, which was held in December. This relaxed and sociable event was an opportunity to celebrate the strong heritage Soundfair has as an organisation with a proud history of supporting people with hearing conditions as well as look to the future.

As Melbourne was under Covid restrictions for much of the reporting period, we increasingly relied on our online activities to create community connection. Moving into the digital space, in June we launched a monthly storytelling event for our community. The first Yarn Night took as its theme "the first time I knew". We were honoured to facilitate four storytellers who shared their experiences of first realising that they had a hearing condition. Future Yarn Nights are planned on a variety of topics and highlights are available to view via Soundfair's YouTube channel.

Soundfair's social media channels - Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube - continued to be central to our strategy of sharing stories of lived experience to increase awareness and help catalyse change. During the reporting period, standout campaigns included: a series of takeovers during International Week of Deaf People; a virtual roundtable for International Day of Disability; and stories@soundfair (posts that platform lived experience). All channels have

seen significant growth during the reporting period, with an increase of more than 400 fans/followers per channel. Each channel reaches a different audience demographic and so we are able to segment our messaging accordingly. Our total audience across all channels in June 2020 is more than 3.5K. Pleasingly, with no channel yet reaching maturity, we can expect this growth rate to continue during 2021-2021.

Connection and communication are, of course, core to achieving our strategic goals and serving our community. During the reporting period, we launched two new publications: The Drum is a monthly digest of news and events in the hearing space distributed by email; Soundboard is a quarterly newsletter, in print and online, that showcases Soundfair and Tinnitus Australia's news and activities.

The Soundfair and Tinnitus Australia websites are another key channel for extending our reach and sharing our work. Of particular note, we were pleased to launch a shop on the Soundfair website in February. The shop offers a carefully curated range of products that advance our vision of a fair world for people with hearing conditions. As Covid restrictions became a part of everyday life across Australia we were pleased to see our accessible clear face masks, which have been welcomed by our community, find new buyers.





TINNITUS AUSTRALIA

Tinnitus Australia has gone through a significant period of consolidation, where its strategy and purpose have been renewed, defined and refined. This has only been made possible by our tribe of passionate tinnitus expert supporters who work together with us on our mission via the Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee.

Building on the work of Tinnitus Australia members in 2019, a Roadmap was developed and outlined 30 high-level actions that could be undertaken to build the capacity and capability of Tinnitus

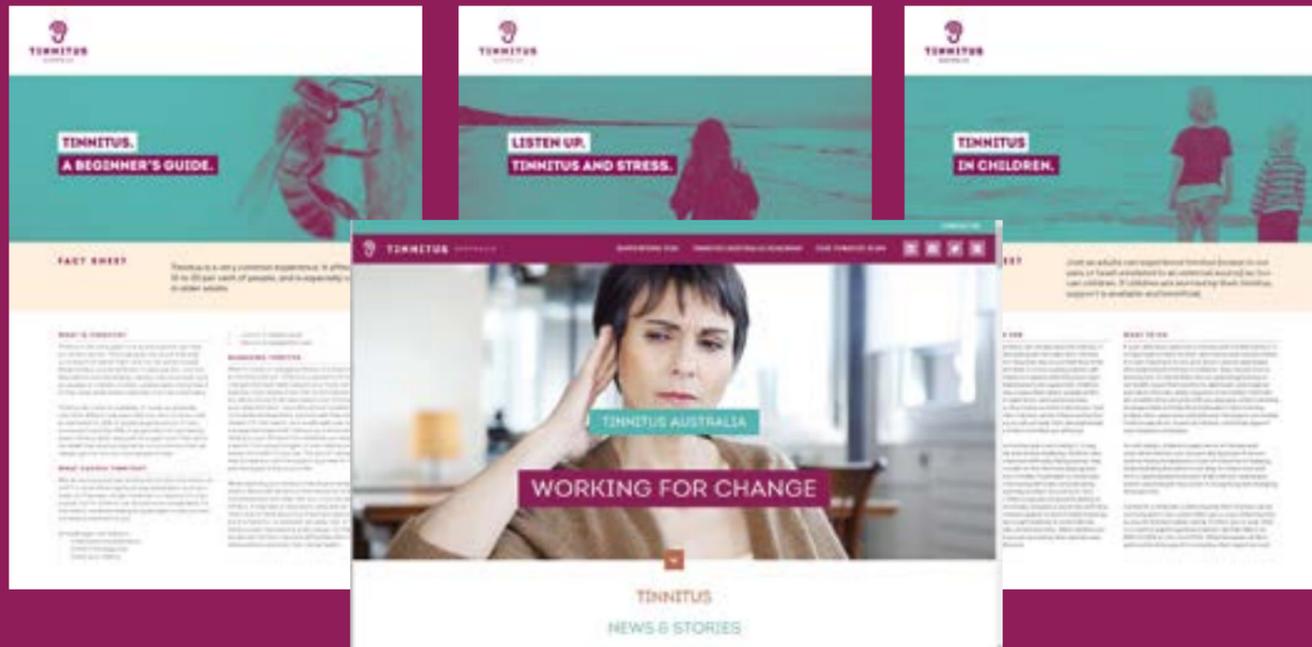
Australia to help people impacted by tinnitus. The Tinnitus Australia Advisory Committee was then formed in January 2021, with the aim of bringing together professionals and organisations across multiple disciplines to provide advice to refine the Roadmap. The inaugural committee, comprising, Chair Victoria Didenko, and members Myriam Westcott, Paul Cavicchia, Susan Tegg-Quinn, and Jason Ridgway, also helped set priority actions within that Roadmap.

One such priority was Tinnitus Australia's rebrand and website rebuild, which was launched in Tinnitus Awareness week in February 2021. The launch also included the release of new and revised information resources and education materials on the website and was coupled with a social media campaign to highlight the impacts of tinnitus.

In May 2021, we were excited to work with the events students at Swinburne University of Technology to hold an educational and fundraising

event for the community. A Morning Yarn invited parents and children to a morning tea and a presentation from Susan Tegg-Quinn about tinnitus in children. The event was well attended and was supported by local businesses who contributed items for a silent auction. We were pleased to raise \$1100 for Tinnitus Australia.

Inspired by Tinnitus Australia's multidisciplinary presentation to Audiology Australia members in July 2020, the year was rounded out by the development of a series of educational webinars, which are due to be released on the Tinnitus Australia website in September 2021.



The relaunched Tinnitus Australia website and some of the newly developed consumer fact sheets.



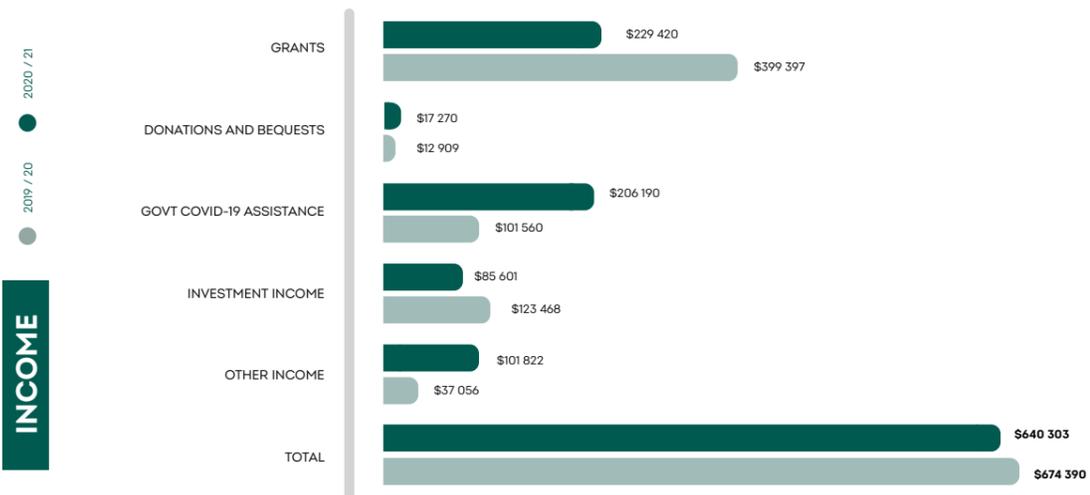
GRACE'S STORY

"I have had tinnitus for as long as I can remember. So I am quite fortunate that I haven't had to struggle with trying to navigate a new thing.

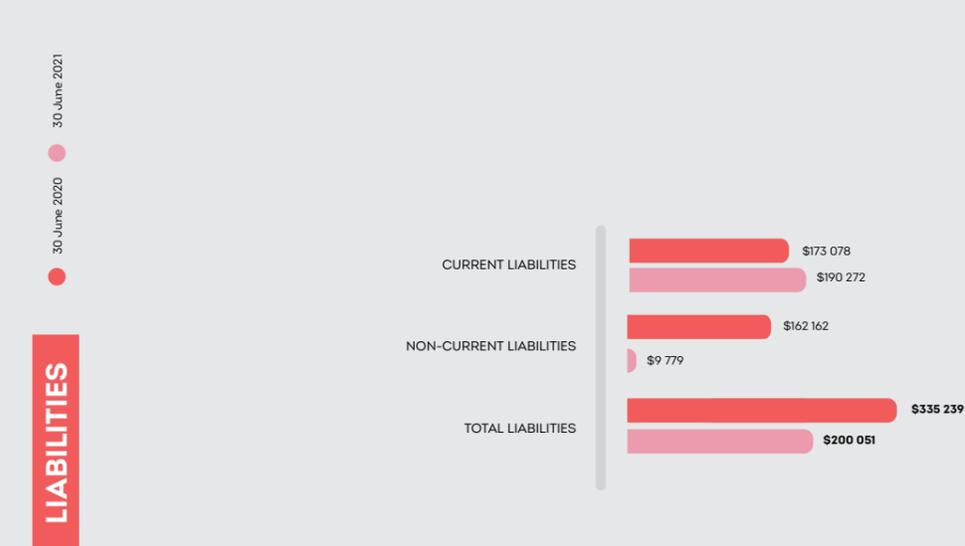
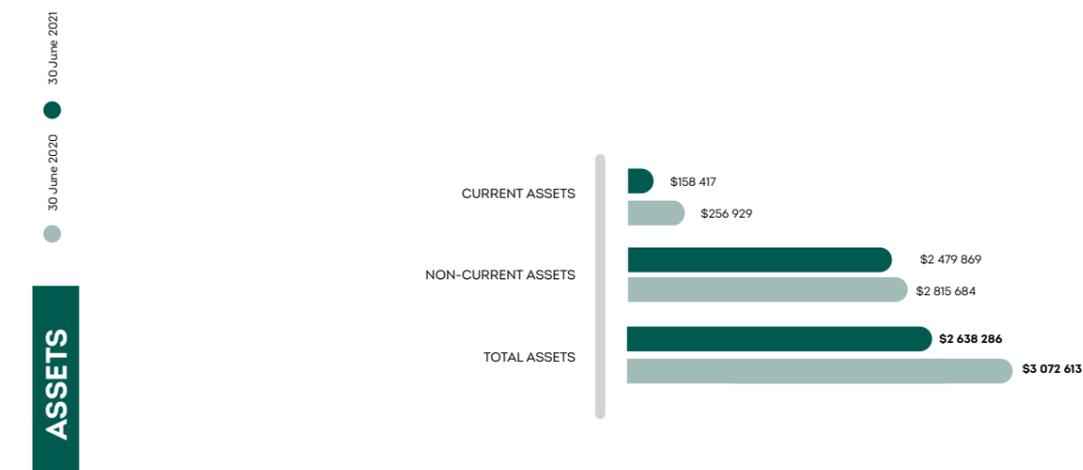
I always thought that ringing in people's ears was normal, which means that I do have a bit of an obsession with silence because I have never experienced silence before, so I will quite often ask people to explain what silence is, which is quite difficult if you can all imagine. So how I cope with it on a daily basis, especially being a musician, I'm surrounded by noise all the time, and on bad days it fills your head so I use music as a focus point because it's a lot better than just the high-pitch ringing in your ears."

Grace shared her tinnitus story at a Soundfair Yarn Night.

Statement of Profit or Loss and other Comprehensive Income



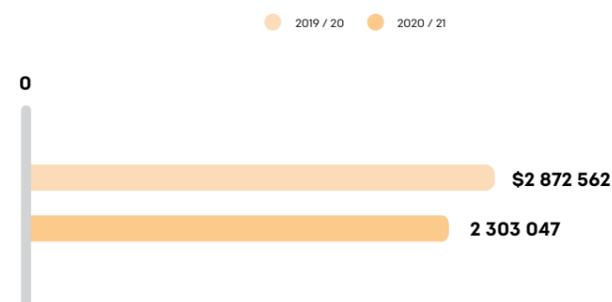
Statement of Financial Position



NET RESULT FOR THE YEAR



NET ASSETS



**A FAIR WORLD
FOR PEOPLE
WITH HEARING CONDITIONS**



SOUNDFAIR

EMPOWERING. HEARING. EQUALITY.

HEARING LINE

1300 242 842

For hearing, social and emotional support, and general enquiries, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

ADDRESS

1 Hamilton Place
Mount Waverley
VIC 3149
Phone (03) 9510 1577
Fax (03) 8640 0681
Email info@soundfair.org.au

LET'S CONNECT



#MoreThanJustEars

#MoreThanJustDevices