



bosom  
buddies <sup>ACT</sup><sub>inc</sub>

facing breast cancer together

2020-2021

# annual report

# Annual Report 2020 - 2021

To our members and supporters

This report reviews the activities and accomplishments of Bosom Buddies ACT inc during the elected periods of the Management Committee: December 2020 - October 2021.

It covers the financial year 1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021.

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Patron: Annette Ellis



## Dear members and supporters

*What a year we have had, despite the challenges, lockdowns and navigating what has been a very difficult situation with COVID restrictions and guidelines, Bosom Buddies has achieved so much.*

*We were the beneficiaries of some fabulous opportunities this year which helped us enormously through times when our normal channels of fundraising dried up due to COVID.*

*The Jonny Warren Golf Day was a wonderful success – lots of fun for the teams and we are so thankful for the funds raised which helped enormously, through this period. The photos show how much everyone enjoyed themselves, and thanks to Kareen and her family for ensuring the day was fun for everyone.*

*While the year has been a little tricky for groups to meet we are having great success with the new Kids & Coffee group and the Young Women's Group. Both these groups have become a real focal point of support for young women.*

*We have secured several new grants this year from ACTEWAGL and CSD Infrastructure grants which help us to continue our services to our members, and have assisted us gaining more appropriate technology. Our stakeholders have always supported Bosom Buddies and this year was no exception, we have wonderful support from the region.*

*Thank you to the volunteers who offer their time and expertise to help others. I have enjoyed my first year as President of Bosom Buddies and am grateful to the Board for their input and support.*

*I thank Kareen Tait for her work and support of the members, volunteers and people with breast cancer. Her kind and gentle assistance, knowledge and understanding has helped so many in their experience with breast cancer.*

*I particularly look forward to the next year and to see what it brings for Bosom Buddies.*

Carol Mead  
**President**



Carol Mead  
President 2021

# Management Committee

December 2020-October 2021

Carol Mead - President

Shantanu Bhattacharya - Vice President

Cloudy Wei - Treasurer

Bonnie Bleathman - Secretary

Lynn Bean - Public Officer

Cheryl Tandy - Breast Awareness

Vacant - Fundraising Coordinator

## Committee members

Justine Gibbings

Nicole Francois

Narelle Sargent

## Other key positions:

Shelley Atkins - Support Team

Coordinator

Kareen Tait - Executive Officer

## Patron

Annette Ellis



## Our Purpose

Our Strategic Directions for 2021 - 2022 was updated during this reporting period. The new version was approved by our Management Committee in July 2021.

**Vision** - Our vision is that women, men and their carers and families are supported through their diagnoses of breast cancer.

**Mission** - Our mission is to connect people affected by breast cancer to support, information and services provided by Bosom Buddies and others within the community. **Support - Community - Connection - Awareness**

**Purpose** - The dual purpose of Bosom Buddies is to:

- provide practical care and support to people affected by breast cancer;
- to raise community awareness about early detection.

### Priority Areas:

#### Uniqueness

Raise the Bosom Buddies profile within the community, businesses and media such that Bosom Buddies ACT inc is acknowledged for the support work it does and attracts community and corporate support. Expand our volunteer base and our support work to be inclusive of younger patients and family members as well as carers.

Continue with our existing support based activities:

- Hospital presence, phone calls, social gatherings, information sessions and social events.
- Raise awareness in our community about breast cancer and how to detect it early.

#### Promotion & Advocacy

- Bosom Buddies presence at Community Events
- Build a new supporter database
- Reinvigorate our Patron and Ambassador program
- Continue to advocate for better services and treatment
- Communication with medical professionals. Ensure they provide our literature to patients and recommend us.

#### Rebuild and continue active relationships with breast cancer related services, organisations and committees:

- BreastScreen ACT
- ACT Branch of BCNA and BCF
- Dragons Abreast ACT
- HeadsUp
- Colleen's
- Look Good ... Feel Better
- ACT Health Care Consumers Association
- Rise Above (formerly Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group)
- Knitted Knockers

Bosom Buddies volunteers and Committee members are currently on ACT Health Committees, including:

- ACT & SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Group
- BreastScreen ACT Advisory Committee
- BreastScreen ACT Consumer Focus Group

## Programs

**Buddy Program** includes our personalised support via phone, at the Calvary Drop-in Clinic or through visits by our Support Team. It also includes morning teas, after work get-togethers, social events and information sessions for members both during and after treatments. During lockdown, like all other organisations, we had to find other ways of providing support.

Unfortunately in 2020 & 2021 Bosom Buddies saw an increase in the number of members we were supporting with secondaries. In order to increase the amount of support we could provide we started the "Mischief Group".

Our second new group which will recommence in early 2022 is Kids & Coffee. We were only able to host the group once before lockdown in August 2021. The opportunity for Mums to catch up and share parenting stories and tips is going to be of great value particularly for those going through treatment.

**Spreading the Word** involves Breast Awareness presentations to organisations large and small, as well as the thousands of flyers, shower tags and "lemons" that are distributed each year by our volunteers, BreastScreen ACT and the ACT Women's Health Service.

Bosom Buddies was able to deliver our breast awareness presentations in a new virtual format thanks to an IT grant we received which enabled us to purchase a much needed laptop. The presentations worked well via Zoom and using this platform meant we could record the sessions and distribute to those staff members who were unavailable.

**Giving Back** is a service through which we donate funds for specific items requested by the hospitals, from medical equipment to artwork, from offering financial assistance for health professionals' professional development, to supporting women in a practical way.

**Community Representation** includes specific advocacy programs, building awareness among our political representatives, and consumer representation on specific ACT Health projects and committees.

**Blue Buddy Bag** is the blue information bag we provide to the Breast Care Nurses who distribute them to patients in Canberra, Queanbeyan and Yass hospitals. Again this year was slightly different. Just as our volunteers were able to return to the hospital the ACT entered lockdown and once again we were unable to pack the Blue Buddy bags in the hospital, the dining tables in our homes became the place to pack.

In response to our member survey completed in 2021 we designed a sticker to be placed on the front of the information folder packed in the Blue Buddy bag (see below). The sticker gives a very clear indication of what's included and the importance of reading the post surgery information from the breast care nurses.

The Blue Buddy bags contain handmade drainage bags, under-arm cushions and seat-belt cushions, made by volunteers, literature from all the other support groups and services in our region, and medical information from the Breast Care Nurses.

Thank you to Theresa, Barbara, Annette, Judith and Ellen for continuing to keep this vital service going.

In addition to the Blue Buddy, we now provide an Oncology Pack for patients who have chemotherapy prior to having surgery. This provides them with useful information and support available, including the offer of support from Bosom Buddies. We are currently investigating the need for a pack for those diagnosed with secondaries.



Our new Blue Buddy bag sticker

## The Support Team

The Support Team is the oldest component of Bosom Buddies' services, and the reason why we were established and have lasted so long. Support Team volunteers are there to offer one-on-one contact to people who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and who would like to chat to someone else who has gone through the same experience.

We are very clear that members of the team are not medical professionals or counsellors, but are people who have experienced breast cancer themselves and, having undergone treatment and come out the other end, are willing to offer their experience and support to others as a 'Bosom Buddy'.

People contact us through our office. They may have heard about us, read our literature in their Blue Buddy Bag (distributed to those having surgery for breast cancer in the ACT and surrounding regions), or been told of us by a friend or a health professional. Initially we make contact by phone, we only make contact with people who have given their consent for us to phone. The Support Team encourage people to come along to one of our social events or information sessions.

Over the last twelve months the team have supported over 200 women, men and their families or work colleagues.

A regular role for us was our fortnightly presence at Calvary Hospital's Wednesday outpatient clinic run by the Breast Care Nurses. Unfortunately the clinic was closed for a period of time due to restrictions in 2020 and 2021 and our volunteers are currently unable to enter the hospital. Patients must now make an appointment to visit with a Breast Care nurse, the nurses always recommend patients contact Bosom Buddies.

The team has seven members and a co-ordinator. We meet regularly and use the time to share useful information and to support one another. We have agreed to undertake at least three sessions of professional development each year. It's important to us that we understand issues like privacy and confidentiality. Most importantly we understand the value in just listening to someone and giving them the chance to air their emotions to someone who does have an idea of what they are experiencing.

One of the things members of the support team can do is simply let people see that others who have been through surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy are now getting on with their lives, looking and feeling confident about themselves.

*"Thank you to our Support Team members for their contribution in 2021."*

Shelley Atkins, Support Team Coordinator

## Information Sessions

Each year we run a variety of Information sessions. The calendar of sessions this year was reduced, however we were still able to run two face to face sessions and one included a virtual option. The sessions are advertised to outside organisations and members of the community.

**Advanced Care Planning & Palliative Care** is always a difficult subject to approach, however Claudia from Health Care Consumers Association and Julie from Palliative Care ACT made this session an easy and informative morning which lead to a great discussion. Attendees learnt the steps to make an end of life care plan, tips for having the conversation about your wishes with your family and where can you go for further assistance. Understand what Palliative Care really is and how it can help.

**Genetics** is a topic we have always wanted to present and this session didn't disappoint. It was the first time we had a session face to face and via Zoom, which did present some technical difficulties however we were successful in the end. Thank you to our presenters Stephanie Badman from the ACT Genetic Service and Robyn Smith from Pink Hope. We do have a recording of the session if anyone would like to view it!

Many thanks to all our presenters who volunteered their time. We look forward to some new topics and a bigger calendar in 2022.



# The Awareness Team

The Awareness Team had a quiet year again and was only able to attend a few events to promote breast awareness. However the message is always very well received and people show a genuine interest in learning how to look after themselves.

The addition of a laptop meant that we could customise our breast awareness PowerPoint presentation and present it for the first time in 2021. Going virtual means we can present to staff located all over the country, whether they work in the office or at home.

As there were less opportunities to “spread the word” during Breast Cancer Awareness month and throughout the year we made the decision to once again advertise on the back of four Action Buses.

Since 2015 we have handed out nearly 40,000 shower tags that show women and men how to check their breasts to detect differences. Bosom Buddies provides shower tags to BreastScreen ACT and ACT Health centres, and sends them to nurses and Health Centres in the local region.



One of four Action Buses



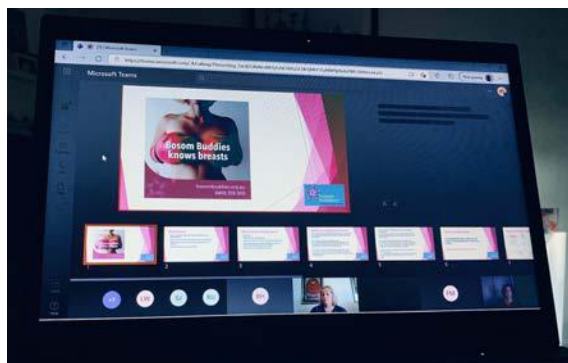
Shopping Centre display @ Westfield Belconnen



Breast Awareness @ Fernwood Woden



Gungahlin Bulls Football Club Ladies Day



Breast Awareness online with Beyond Bank staff

## Giving back

We are very aware that breast cancer has a big financial impact on many people especially those who have to stop work and who may be facing additional medical and other costs as a result of their cancer.

It particularly hits people paying rent or mortgages, those with family expenses and women on reduced retirement incomes.

In 2021 we continued our MOU's with HeadsUp and Colleens, to offer support to those patients who needed to buy headwear or a wig and for those women who were faced with buying specialist underwear and a prosthesis. A grant from Hands Across Canberra's Covid Relief Fund enabled us to carry on this support in 2020 and 2021.

Thanks to a grant from the John James Foundation we have been able to increase the number of breast cancer patients we can assist with lymphoedema garments. MOUs are in place between Bosom Buddies and the Physiotherapy department at Canberra Hospital and Positive Motion Physiotherapy.

We do not see this as 'charity', but as offering a sisterly, buddy-like helping hand at a difficult time. Colleen's, HeadsUp, Calvary Hospital, Capital Chemist and Positive Motion Physiotherapy in turn help us in various ways, including by handing out our information and referring people to us.

This support is really a gift from the local community as it is community fundraising and donations that allow us to offer subsidies.

## Community representation

Many thanks to Bosom Buddies volunteers, Cheryl Tandy, Marisa Gerussi, Theresa Kerby, Justine Gibbings and Shantanu Bhattacharya who continue to represent Bosom Buddies on a number of ACT Health committees: Breast Cancer Treatment Group, BreastScreen ACT Advisory Committee, BreastScreen ACT Consumer Focus Group and the Canberra Business Chamber.

Our lived experience of breast cancer is useful to health professionals, and in turn we learn more about what is happening in the field of breast cancer treatment.

Bosom Buddies was honoured to be invited to and mentioned at the launch of the Breast Cancer Treatment Group's 20 Year Report in July 2021. Bosom Buddies provided initial funding to the project and have been a part of the project ever since. We thank Professor Paul Craft for acknowledging our contribution.



Professor Paul Craft with members Kaye Johnston and Di Summerhayes



## Member events

As with everyone we stopped and started the calendar of coffee groups and events during 2020 and 2021. Our members are always keen to catch up (safely) and looked forward to the coffee groups recommencing each time. Our Monday morning Mawson Club group continues to be our biggest group. We have grown from 10 to 25 attendees most months. Some people attend regularly or from time to time, but most months at least one new person turns up. You don't need to be a member to attend the coffee groups, they are open for one. We encourage people to bring along a friend or family member.

Our list of groups just keeps growing:

- Northside Afternoon Group at Cafe Injoy
- Queanbeyan Group at Bean Central Cafe
- Yass Group meets somewhere different each month
- Young Women's Group at a variety of central locations
- After work drinks at the Deco Hotel
- **NEW in 2022** - Braidwood, by request
- **NEW in 2022** - Kids and Coffee at Canberra Southern Cross Club Woden

People hear about these events via our website, Facebook, our member newsletter, the breast care nurses or by phoning the office, but quite often from the information provided in their Blue Buddy Bag.

Our gatherings are a chance to get peer to peer support from someone who's been there and done that and also just to have coffee and chat about life in general – holidays, children, food, politics, movies. All welcome – the more the merrier!

We are looking forward to having a full calendar of events in 2022.



Clockwise from the top left - Young Women's Group @ The Breakr Room; The Mawson Coffee Group; Free Gallery Tour @ NGA; Pinot & Picasso Night

## 25 years community service

October 2020 marked Bosom Buddies 25th Birthday. The High Tea celebrations in November were not quite as big as we had planned and due to Covid our numbers were limited to members, a handful of our wonderful long term supporters and Breast Care Nurses. The day also gave us a chance to surprise and celebrate our two longest serving volunteers, Marilyn Ward and Di Summerhayes, over 24 years of volunteering for the same organisation is not something a lot of people achieve. Marilyn and Di have supported hundred of people diagnosed with breast cancer.

Organised amazing fundraising events and like all small volunteer organisations held a variety of positions on our Management Team. The knowledge and history between these two ladies is something Bosom Buddies accesses regularly and we are incredibly grateful for their contribution to Bosom Buddies.

*Thank you x*

Sadly in 2021 Bosom Buddies lost an original member of the organisation - Norma Bradley. I had only met Norma on a couple of occasions however her name is constantly mentioned when discussing fundraising and breast awareness. One event Norma is probably remembered for the most is the Bosom Buddies Fundraising Fashion Parades. One year over 850 people attended the event. The highlight of these evenings was the fact that the models were women who had experienced breast cancer, from 30 year olds to 78 year olds, from swimsuits to evening gowns. "Nothing can be more inspiring than to see these women strutting the catwalk" - Annette Ellis, Patron.

Norma not only volunteered for Bosom Buddies she was also a volunteer at the hospice. Norma loved good coffee, whiskey, detective fiction and anything Scottish! Norma Bradley will forever remain in the history books for Bosom Buddies and will be missed by her regular lunch group "Norma's Girls".



## Bosom Buddies brochure & flyer

Priority Area number 1 of our Strategic Directions was to review and update our member brochure, promoting the uniqueness that is what it is Bosom Buddies offers.

We worked in conjunction with Roxanne from 44Creative to produce a clear outline of who we are and what we can offer those diagnosed with breast cancer their family, friends and work colleagues. The brochure also gave us an opportunity to welcome those that have experienced breast cancer to join the Support Team or volunteer in a variety of other ways.

Roxanne also created the new sticker for the Blue Buddy bag, which then lead to the creation of a very simple flyer (as seen to the right). The flyer shows you very quickly how Bosom Buddies can help through the use of graphics.





# Fundraising

## Golf Day

In March 2021 the Jonny Warren Golf Day was held. Eighty golfers took to the greens at the Gold Creek Golf Club. The day was a huge success raising nearly \$50,000 for Bosom Buddies. Jonny and his team worked tirelessly on the day and leading up to the event.

Prior to the big day Jonny and Chad from Domino's organised the "Raise some Dough day". Everyone got into the spirit and pizza's were being delivered in home and business all around the ACT - over 6,100 pizza's were ordered on the day including our big supporters Capital Chemist. Some of the participating Domino's stores were even happy to hand out shower tags and promote breast awareness.



# Golf Day Supporters

- Jonny Warren Real Estate
- Chad @ Domino's
- Abel Auto Traders
- ACT Property Inspections
- Balls of Fluff Mobile
- Dog Grooming
- Beaumont Concreting
- Breakr Room/Axxe Fyshwick
- Canberra Raiders
- Canberra Southern
- Cross Club
- Canberra Zoo
- Capital Brewing Co
- Capital Chemist
- Carol Mead
- Club Lime
- Cornerstone
- Domino's
- Fairies in the Garden by Nikki
- Gallagher's Winery
- Gold Creek Golf Club
- Grady's Transport
- Hotel Realm
- Independent Property Group
- JB The Gentleman Barber
- Marcel Kievit
- Mogo Zoo
- Next Gen Health Club
- Ngunnawal IGA
- NK Foundation
- Numbers Group
- OTG Custom Apparel
- React Roofing
- Shanise Sugar Cookies
- Ultimate Facility Services
- Zeus Electrical Data



## Fundraising cont - Gungahlin Bulls Ladies Day

Another big day out for us this year was the Gungahlin Bulls Ladies Day in July 2021. We were welcomed with open arms, a jersey with our logo all over it and a dedicated member of the Bulls shaving her head to raise funds for the Breast Cancer Foundation. The special Bosom Buddies Ladies Day jerseys were auctioned off after the game and all funds raised were donated to Bosom Buddies. Big thanks to the Gungahlin Bulls Committee for inviting us along and helping us to spread the word about the importance of early detection.



## The Breast Ladies Night Out

With Pink Cocktails on offer of course The Tourist Hotel was fully booked out on Friday 30th July 2021. Thanks to Chelsea's events Bosom Buddies was the first charity group to benefit from what will be a regular Friday night event at the Hotel. The night brought a great opportunity to hand out shower tags, speak to the locals about being breast aware and the importance of regular breast screening. The event was also the perfect venue to sell a bucket full of pink breast aware stubby holders!





# Organisational governance

## Management

The Constitution, updated in November 2016, defines our purpose and work, establishes a Management Committee of four officers and up to six general members, and acknowledges the authority of the Management Committee to create subcommittees within which volunteers implement the policies, objectives and budgets established by the Management Committee.

The Management Committee oversees a number of permanent and ad hoc committees, including the Support Team, Events, Breast Awareness Team, Communications and Advocacy and Fundraising.

Bosom Buddies is a member of SHOUT (Self Help Organisations United Together), and we maintain our office through SHOUT in the Pearce Community Centre. The office is staffed part-time Monday to Thursday from 9.30am to 2.30pm by an Executive Officer.

People interested in Bosom Buddies ACT inc can visit the office, borrow books and publications from our library, and participate in various volunteer activities or can call us on 0406 376 500 or visit our website [www.bosombuddies.org.au](http://www.bosombuddies.org.au).

**Compliance** - Bosom Buddies complies with the requirements of the Office of Regulatory Services and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission - ACNC.

**Finance** - Bosom Buddies ACT inc uses an external bookkeeper, Hudson Gray and supporting advisor to ensure all finances are properly handled. Bosom Buddies ACT inc was reviewed for the fiscal year 2020-2021 by Russell Hearne. Potential sponsors or paid members can request copies of the financial statements.

## Audit - Review of accounts and records for the year ended 30 June 2021

Under Section 70A of ACT Associations Incorporation Act 1991, (the ACT Act) the accounts and records requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cwth) (ACNC Act) apply in lieu of the ACT Act's accounts and audit provisions.

Bosom Buddies ACT Incorporated is a small charity under the ACNC Act. As such it:

- has an annual revenue of less than \$250 000. (ss205-25(1))
- can choose whether to use cash or accrual accounting
- must submit an Annual Information Statement. This is an online questionnaire completed separately to the financial statements. (s60.5)
- does not need to have their financial statements reviewed or audited for ACNC purposes.

At the request of the Board, I reviewed financial information, specifically the profit and loss statement and balance sheet, for the 2020/21 financial year held in the Association's Xero accounting system.

## Review findings

All matters raised by me have been resolved or are currently receiving attention. Outstanding queries are documented in the Xero accounting system files area, Review queries final 2021.

## Review conclusion

Pursuant to section 60.50 of the ACNC Act, no matter has come to my attention that causes me to believe that the financial report does not satisfy the requirements of the ACNC Act.

## Declaration

In accordance with Section 60.40 of the ACNC Act I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the review.

Russell Hearne  
31 October 2021

# Contacts

## Registered Name

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Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

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