



bosom
buddies^{ACT}_{inc}

facing breast cancer together

2021-2022

annual report

Annual Report 2021 - 2022

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 2021 - September 2022.

It covers the financial year 1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022.

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Dear members and supporters

Welcome friends and members to the Annual Report for another year. And what a year we have had! Like you, I was sure we were getting settled in July 2021, thinking things would get back to normal and then things just began to ramp up with increased numbers of COVID cases across the ACT, dashing opportunities and events in it's wake. My hope was that it would settle down for the new year, but again it was not meant to be, we had more disruptions, and it seems that the entire 2022 will keep us on our toes.

But, despite this, I am very aware that new breast cancer diagnosis' do not stop, people still need support and treatment goes on. While Bosom Buddies has not been able to run as many coffee groups, or events, we have been busy throughout the year, to ensure we stayed connected to our members, and supporting those who needed our assistance.

Kareen Tait took the difficult decision to leave the helm of Bosom Buddies and while we are sad, we understand that 8 years as a solo Executive Officer is a huge ask of anyone. Kareen will be dearly missed, and we wish her every success for the future, and we have all loved working alongside her, with her compassion and gentle attitude. We also welcome Catherine Rider-Aichholzer as Bosom Buddies new EO and I look forward to working with her at Pearce and what the future holds under her leadership.

I thank the Bosom Buddies Support Team for their magnificent work and being able to 'go with the flow' through this difficult period. Things changed through this year so regularly that everyone at Bosom Buddies just did what they could to make it all work.

We also say goodbye to four Management Committee members Bonnie Bleathman, Angela Guilfoyle, Nicole Francois and Cheryl Tandy. We thank them all for their time and expertise on the Committee through this year.

Finally, I would like to thank the Bosom Buddies Members and the Management Committee for your support of Bosom Buddies, we appreciate your trust and sincerely hope that we will be able to have more face to face events, fundraising activities and catch-ups as things settle over the year ahead.

Carol Mead
President



Carol Mead
President 2022

Management Committee

December 2021-October 2022

Carol Mead - President

Shantanu Bhattacharya - Vice President

Cloudy Wei - Treasurer

Bonnie Bleathman - Secretary

Lynn Bean - Public Officer

Vacant - Fundraising Coordinator

Committee members

Cheryl Tandy

Justine Gibbings

Nicole Francois

Narelle Sargent

Other key positions:

Shelley Atkins - Support Team

Coordinator

Heather Jackson - Support Team

Coordinator

Kareen Tait - Executive Officer

Our Purpose

Our Strategic Directions for 2021 - 2022 was updated and 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 Covid, like all other organisations, we had to find other ways of providing support.

In 2021 our secondaries coffee group commenced in response to an increase in support requests, nicknamed "the Mischief Group". The group reduced in numbers in 2022 however it continued every month, meeting in the Mischief room at Rodney's. It's incredibly valuable to continue these groups for those that rely on this regular contact and support.

Our Kids & Coffee group, which recommenced in early 2022, unfortunately did not continue past July. Bosom Buddies will work with Playgroups ACT in 2023 to increase advertising and assist in providing some different venues to meet in. 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 is able to deliver our Breast Awareness presentations in a virtual format thanks to an IT grant we received in 2021 which enabled us to purchase a much needed laptop. The presentations work well via Zoom.

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. In 2022 we saw our bag packing volunteers return to Calvary hospital.

We've had a positive response to our sticker 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.

Our volunteers work with the Breast Care Nurses to ensure the bags are packing with the most relevant and up-to-date information.

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

In addition to the Blue Buddy, we also provide an Oncology Pack for patients who have chemotherapy prior to having surgery. This pack includes useful information about 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 Blue Buddy bag information pack

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 always welcome expressions of interest from those who have experienced breast cancer and are interested in learning more about joining the team.

Our Support Team has a diverse range of backgrounds, ages and experiences, who are all at least two years out from treatment.

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. Due to Covid patients must now make an appointment to visit with a Breast Care nurse. Our Drop-In Clinic volunteers are still unable to enter the hospital. The Breast Care Nurses will always recommend patients contact Bosom Buddies for extra peer support. We look forward to returning to Calvary in the near future.

The team has seven members and a Coordinator. Late in 2022 we welcomed a new Coordinator, Support Team member Heather Jackson. 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. There is always a member of the Support Team at the coffee gatherings.

"Thank you to our Support Team members for their contribution in 2021-2022."

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 both included a virtual option. The sessions are advertised to outside organisations and members of the community. Bosom Buddies also promotes information sessions and webinars provided by other organisations such as Cancer Council ACT, ACT Lymphoedema Support Group and BCNA (Breast Cancer Network Australia). The sessions not only benefit our members but it provides professional development opportunities for our Support Team.

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.

Breast Surgery Options was a new version of our previous reconstruction sessions. Dr Rebecca Read was our guest speaker. Dr Read wanted to present a session that included all surgery options available to breast cancer patients not just reconstruction. Factors, risks and outcomes were all part of the information covered. We were joined by some members of the Pink Hope organisation also.

Many thanks to all our presenters who volunteered their time.



Breast Surgery Options Information Session

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 in 2021 meant that we could customise our Breast Awareness PowerPoint presentation. Going virtual means we can present to staff located all over the country, whether they work in the office or at home.

Since 2015 we have handed out over 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.



COTA Seniors Expo with BreastScreen ACT



Breast Awareness @ Fernwood Woden

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.

Thanks to a grant from the John James Foundation we were able to continue our MOU's with HeadsUp and Colleens and increase the number of breast cancer patients we assisted with lymphoedema garments.

MOU's are currently in place between Bosom Buddies and:

- HeadsUp to offer support to those patients who need to buy headwear or a wig;
- Colleens for those women who were faced with buying specialists underwear and a prosthesis;
- Physiotherapy Department at Canberra Hospital and Positive Motion Physiotherapy to provide lymphoedema sleeves and gloves.

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 and Positive Motion Physiotherapy in turn help us in various ways, by handing out our information and referring people to us.

This support is really a gift from the local community.



Community representation

Many thanks to Bosom Buddies volunteers, Lynn Bean, 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 brochure & flyer

Priority Area number 1 of our Strategic Directions was to review and update our member brochure, promoting the uniqueness that is Bosom Buddies and the services we offer. While updating the brochure, Roxanne from 44Creative also produced a more modern looking flyer/poster to help Bosom Buddies stand out when competing with other organisations on noticeboards! The flyer/poster shows you very quickly how Bosom Buddies can help through the use of simple graphics.



I cannot finish writing this Annual Report without thanking our wonderful Bosom Buddies member and volunteer Lyn Brown. Lyn surprised me at our Mawson Coffee Group with this fabulous cake for my 50th Birthday.

Thank you Lyn xx



Member events

As with everyone we stopped and started the calendar of coffee groups and events during 2021-2022. 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 and all. 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 at a different cafe each month
- Young Women's Group at The RUC
- After work drinks at The RUC
- **NEW in 2022** - Braidwood at the Braidwood Serviceman's Club
- **NEW in 2022** - Goulburn at The Tatts
- **Revamped in 2023** - Kids and Coffee

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 2023.



Clockwise from the top left - Young Women's Group @ The break room; The Mawson Coffee Group; Free gallery tour @ NGA; Pinot & Picasso Night

Fundraising

2022 was filled with all sorts of different fundraising opportunities for Bosom Buddies. As always we are incredibly grateful for all donations and fundraising events we can be involved in. These events not only enable us to raise much needed funds but also increase the awareness of the organisation and provides an audience for us to hand out Shower Tags and spread the word about early detection.



BOSOM BUDDIES

Register to Fundraise

Donate

YOUR DONATION WILL BE DOUBLED

Every \$1 you donate will become \$2 with matched funding available for the first \$5,000 we fundraise (\$10,000 total)

PLEASE HELP US REACH OUR GOAL
#HANDSUP4GBR

Raised so far **\$6,072** Our goal **\$10,000**



Christmas gift wrapping at the Pearce Community Centre markets
Hands Up 4 Canberra Giving Day
CIT Sip N Painting Fundraiser
Christmas in July
Santa Photos at Pearce Community Centre markets
Tuggeranong Netball Turns Pink
Breast Cancer Awareness Day
Grill'd Local Matters Canberra City, Woden, Belconnen and Manuka
Independent Property Group Gingerbread House Competition
Gungahlin Bulls Ladies Day

2022 Fundraising continued



Gungahlin Bulls Ladies Day

Gungahlin Bulls always welcomes Bosom Buddies with open arms. For a second year the Bulls created a special Bosom Buddies Ladies Day jersey that was auctioned off after the game and all funds raised were donated to Bosom Buddies - over \$3,000, an amazing result. It was a freezing day, so our handmade beanies and Bosom Buddies stubby holders were the big sellers at our market stall. Big thanks to the Gungahlin Bulls Committee for inviting us along and helping us to spread the word about the importance of early detection.



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.

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 2021-2022 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 2022

Background

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. BB reports on a cash basis but maintains accrual accounts.
- 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 2021/22 financial year held in the Association's Xero accounting system.

Review findings

All matters raised by me have been addressed. The appendix to this report refers to a continuing need for documentation to support all transactions.

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 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
21 October 2022

Contacts

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Designated Gift Recipient
Donations over \$2 are tax deductible

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