

Switchboard Vic ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

STAYING
WELL
TOGETHER



► PURPOSE

We serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people, their families, allies and communities.

► MISSION

To provide peer-driven support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people, their families, allies and communities.

► VALUES / PRINCIPLES

WE ARE

/ INFORMED.

We listen, we reflect and we are well informed.

/ ACTIVE.

We contribute to our community and the world around us (we lean in and reach out)

/ ACCOUNTABLE.

We keep our **promises** to our members, to our LGBTIQ+ communities, to funders and to ourselves.

/ CONNECTED.

We connect, engage and mobilise communities, stakeholders and partners (we mobilise people power to empower our community).

/ RESPONSIVE.

We respond to the diversity of community need.

/ RESPECTFUL.

We are **empathetic** and meet people where they're at.

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Switchboard is based on the lands of the Kulin nations, always and forever the home of the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Wathaurong, Taungurong and Djadjawurung peoples.

We acknowledge that our work takes place on lands that are under colonial occupation and that Kulin Nation sovereignty was never ceded here.

We hope to pay our respects to Kulin Nation elders, past and present and wish to extend this respect to any and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

A note on photography - any photography in this report unless indicated that it is taken on-line, was taken before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions impacted Victoria in 2020.

Report design: jacqmoon.com

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OUR SWITCHBOARD JOURNEY



Switchboard Victoria Inc is a community based not-for-profit organisation that provides a peer based, volunteer run support service for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual (LGBTIQA+) communities and their allies, friends and families.

1991



Originally called **Gay and Lesbian Switchboard**, the organisation was established in 1991 as a volunteer telephone counselling and referral service with seed funding from the ALSO foundation. **Twenty-nine years on, Switchboard remains volunteer driven and runs a range of services and projects.**

The vision of our founder David Sampson was to create a service, like the then London Gay Switchboard, for gays

and lesbians who had not yet come out to themselves or others, or who were socially isolated.

In 1991, a community meeting was held to establish a core group of people to set up the service. The founders insisted lesbians be at the forefront, and not just as "token members", and Heather Morgan came forward. Heather had worked for general telephone counselling service Crisis Line and became the new service's core trainer.

Our founders identified the value of a peer-based counselling service, delivered by LGBTIQA+ volunteers who shared and could affirm the experiences of our callers.

They committed to delivering a fully inclusive service, open to all callers without discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, age, ability, religion, health, financial or social status, geographic location or isolation, sexual orientation or political belief.

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2014

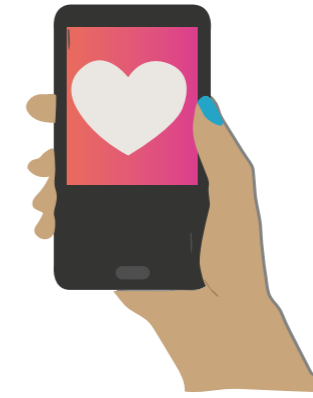
In 2014 we also significantly expanded our services to provide a volunteer-based home visiting service, now called **Out and About**, to reduce social isolation and improve community connectedness for older LGBTI Victorians.

2013

In 2013-14 Switchboard joined our phone service with services in other states to form Australia's first national LGBTIQA+ telephone and web-chat counselling service, now known as **QLife**.

By that time it was clear that the name Gay and Lesbian Switchboard reflected neither the callers' nor our volunteers' diversity in relation to sexuality and gender.

So in 2014, our members agreed to drop "Gay and Lesbian" and call the service Switchboard Victoria.



2017

In 2017 we established our **QTIPoC program**: QTIPoC stands for Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour. The program aims to further understanding within and beyond Switchboard on issues that affect accessibility and inclusion of QTIPoC.

2018

In 2017-18 we joined Queerspace/ Drummond street services, Thorne Harbour Health and Transgender Victoria in launching **w/respect**, Australia's first LGBTIQA+ integrated services response to LGBTIQA+ family violence.

2019

In 2018-19 Switchboard formally established our **suicide prevention service**, in February 2019 engaging our Suicide Prevention Manager.

In April 2019 the **Out and About** program was re-funded, following a decision in December 2018 where the program's funding was slashed by two thirds. Switchboard's broad-based campaign saved this valuable service. Since then we have been funded to expand the service to socially isolated LGBTI elders aged over 60, and to partner with and build the capacity of mainstream service providers.



2020

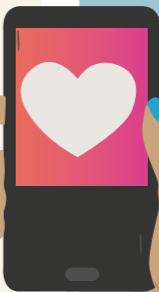
In 2020 in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19), we have transformed our service to respond to the needs of the LGBTIQA+ community during a world wide pandemic. As we move into a new era globally, Switchboard has grown as a service and know that we have the capacity and resilience as an important service for the LGBTIQA+ community in Victoria.




What have we achieved together

45
VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAMS TO LGBTIQ+ VICTORIANS SINCE 2015

 **4735**
PEOPLE LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

 **3505**
CALLS TAKEN BY SWITCHBOARD FOR QLIFE

 **\$55,916**
DONATIONS TO SWITCHBOARD

 **29**
YEARS WE HAVE RUN THE SERVICE TO SUPPORT THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY

Throughout 2019-20, the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) affected our ability to visit our Out and About recipients. However, volunteers continued to stay connected during this time.



72
RECIPIENTS FOR OUR COMMUNITY VISITOR PROGRAM


1200
IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL VISITS

CONNECTING THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY

/ PHONE AND WEB COUNSELLING AND REFERRAL SERVICE

Switchboard is the Victorian partner in the national telephone and web counselling, information and referral service QLife. This free peer based service is for LGBTIQ+ identifying people and those who have questions or concerns about LGBTIQ+ issues. This includes families, friends, teachers and coworkers of LGBTIQ+ people. This service is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

/ COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Switchboard runs Out and About, a social home visiting service for older LGBTI Victorians at risk of social isolation. This free service is coordinated in partnership with the National Community Visitors Scheme and is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Health.

/ ANTI RACISM

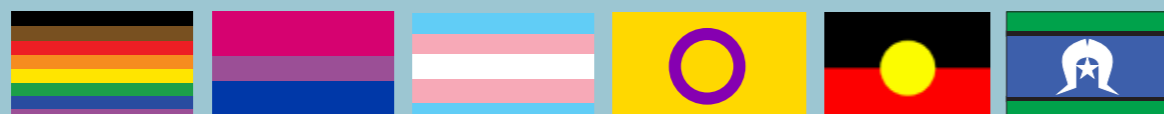
Switchboard runs a QTIPoC project aiming to build greater equity for Queer, Trans and Intersex Peoples and/or People of Colour and People of Faith.

/ LGBTIQ+ FAMILY VIOLENCE

Switchboard is a partner in the newly developed Victoria wide LGBTIQ+ family violence and intimate partner violence prevention service. This service, launched on 3 September 2018, is called w/respect. This service is managed in partnership with Drummond Street Services, Thorne Harbour Health, Transgender Victoria and Switchboard. Switchboard's primary service delivery role in the consortia is to manage the after-hours telephone support line.

/ SUICIDE PREVENTION

Switchboard is running its own postvention plan following the tragic suicide of our beloved staff member Ingrid Zhang. Going forward Switchboard will be developing suicide prevention resources for the broader LGBTIQ+ community.



THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

/ OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of Switchboard. We are so grateful to have the support of our wonderfully dedicated and diverse community of volunteers. Every one, past and present, has contributed greatly to growing Switchboard into the service and community we are today.

On behalf of all of Switchboard and the community we serve, thank you.

/ OUR STAFF

CEO: Joe Ball

Director of Services: Meaghan Holden

Out and About Program Manager: Ada Castle

Out and About Outreach Officer: Meredith Butler

Out and About Support Worker: Vanessa Pidwell

Teleweb (Telephone and Webchat) Manager: Libby Jamieson

Counselling Supervisor: Tracey Peterson-Esposito

QTIPoC Program Manager: Greg Rincon

Suicide Prevention Manager: Anna Bernasochi

Executive Assistant: Georgie Munro (to March 2020) and Elizabeth Tanter

Finance Officer: David Hand

The names of our two Teleweb Team Leaders, 14 Helpline staff and two Teleweb trainers are not published for reasons of privacy and safety. We thank them for their work in family violence prevention and crisis support, and for supporting our QLife services during COVID-19.

For a list of the Switchboard Victoria 2019-20 Board members, see page 11.

/ OUR LIFE MEMBERS

Life Membership recognises those who have made an extraordinary contribution to our work. We proudly acknowledge our Life Members, and congratulate those inducted in 2020.

- > Heather Morgan
- > David Samson
- > Chris Oxley
- > Carol Wilkinson
- > Michelle O'Sullivan
- > Julie Dyer
- > Libby Jamieson
- > Chris Mier
- > Dom Smith
- > Paul Cosgrave
- > Brian Murray
- > Peter Knight
- > Bruce Beet
- > Peter O'Grady
- > Nate Reid
- > Margaret Cannington
- > Bec Harris

Life Members inducted in 2020:

- > Bridget Gargan
- > Hadyn Klemm
- > Shane Laing
- > Leanne Renfree
- > Vanessa Robertson
- > John Wall
- > Kenny Yu
- > Mon Hameed
- > Christine Haag

Welcome from the Chair



'Staying Well Together' has been our motto this extraordinary year. And it encapsulates one of our deepest values and reasons for being.

For 29 years, Switchboard has been a place for LGBTIQ+ people to come together and care for our own. When the COVID-19 pandemic made being together physically impossible, Switchboard's decades of experience supporting our communities via phone and web-based services came to the fore.

This year's report provides a snapshot of our activities and services to both support our communities' wellbeing, and to be there in tough times.

Community and connection are powerful supports for wellbeing. Witness the unalloyed joy of bringing a big group of our elders in their own bus to Pride March (page 22), and the fun and connection of our outreach activities, including at Carnival (page 17).

Community and connection are also the foundation of our QLife phone and webchat services, offering callers a gentle, safe space to connect with another LGBTIQ+ person one-on-one. They are the core of *Out and About*, our elders visiting programs. I am so impressed by how quickly and effectively *Out and About* staff and

volunteers adapted to the challenges of COVID-19, maintaining a lifeline of friendship, community and care at a particularly frightening time for older people, especially those in aged care.

I'm deeply grateful for the ways Switchboard has been there for our communities in this very difficult year. Grateful to our dedicated volunteers, staff and Board. And grateful to everyone who supports our work, partners with us, shares our messages and donates when you can. It's a huge, and largely invisible, community effort.

Thank you for being there through people's everyday struggles. Through the harmful 'debates' on birth certificates and religious discrimination. Through our apocalyptic summer, when Switchboard made a big effort to get our service information to LGBTIQ+ people bushfire-affected communities. Through COVID-19 and its accompanying rise in racism. And thank you for still being there, every day of the week.

We know that always – and especially during hard times – LGBTIQ+ people experience a disproportionate level of mental distress and other

risks, including suicidality and family violence. And we know that because of the discrimination we experience in the wider world, in hard times many of us turn to community-controlled, peer-led services like Switchboard Victoria.

As a survivor of lesbian family violence myself, some years ago, I'm glad that Switchboard Victoria is part of the specialist response to LGBTIQ+ family violence, offering the After Hours Phone Service (page 20). I'm excited about the work of our new QTIPoC Programs Manager and program volunteers, including strengthening our networks and partnerships with refugee, multicultural and Aboriginal organisations, as a foundation for broadening our support and outreach to those communities. I'm proud of our suicide prevention program's groundbreaking work, including research, our podcast, our *Wear It Purple* event and advocacy (page 28-29).

We have an obligation to speak out about the issues our service users tell us most impact on their wellbeing. Preventing and responding to distress and harm in our communities requires both increased supports, and social

and policy change. This year our advocacy has touched on issues including suicide prevention, family violence, racism and the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in refugee detention (see page 26-17).

As we lean into these areas of more acute distress and risk, it has been equally important to increase our care for the caregivers. Thank you to our Director of Services, Teleweb Services Manager and Team Leaders for providing the additional support to our volunteer and peer workers on the *QLife* and *After Hours family violence phone service* (page 21), and to our volunteers for embracing this change so strongly.

As we lean into these areas of more acute distress and risk, it has been equally important to increase our care to the caregivers.



Thanks to our wonderful Board, for your skilled and thoughtful work this year. It's been a very productive year, with huge strides forward in governance, including in risk and financial management, and strategic planning. I will miss those who are stepping down, but thank you so much for your work. Special thanks to Mon Hameed and Christine Haag: your contributions have changed Switchboard forever, and we are so grateful.

Thanks to our much-loved CEO Joe Ball, for your dedication and leadership. What a pleasure it has been to work with and support you, to lead our organisation through yet another difficult year for our communities. Thanks to our wonderful staff, for adapting to the massive challenges of COVID-19 response. I would like to acknowledge the staff for their ability to adapt to working from home and a special mention to the Teleweb staff who throughout the lockdown had to travel into the phone room as designated essential workers. Thank you to our fabulous volunteers, for being the beating heart of Switchboard. We can't wait to see you all again, as restrictions lift in the new year!

Sarah Marlowe
Switchboard Chair

Switchboard Board Members - 2019-20

/ SARAH MARLOWE
Chair

/ TONY LEE
Deputy Chair

/ CHRISTINE HAAG
Secretary

/ BLAKE LESCHEN
Treasurer

GENERAL MEMBERS

/ AMELIA ARNOLD

/ BRIDGET GARGAN

/ MON HAMEED

/ MARY KOUTZAMANIS

/ RASHMI KUMAR

/ MICHELLE SHEPPARD

/ ISHWAR SINGH

/ SARA TIMMS



Supporting our community on the front line



I think it is hard to think of the year in any kind of totality, there is before the pandemic and then there is during the pandemic. Throughout the early onset of Coronavirus (COVID-19) I turned my thoughts each day to our Switchboard founders, those who built our service during the AIDS Pandemic.

I thought of their courage and ultimately their resilience to forge something anew, something essential and something ultimately very successful. They created Switchboard, born out of a response to AIDS that continues to this day as a community controlled organisation for and by our community. It was with their vision and legacy and knowing what they had achieved that enabled us, 29 years on, to respond again to a pandemic.

I am proud that Switchboard was at the frontline of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health crisis and in the case of the Teleweb workers they became classified essential workers. Yet again, as the Switchboard community of paid staff and volunteers we would not falter when our community needed us most. You will see throughout this report how we responded across our programs not only to the emerging needs within our community, but how we responded as the Switchboard community to the challenges that were presented and are ongoing.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the audacious Board of 2019-20. Together we were brave and I will always remember what we did this year in the face of each and every challenge, you were my confidants and my comrades,

I thought of their courage and ultimately their resilience to forge something anew, something essential and something ultimately very successful.



thank you. Each and every one of you deserves your own paragraph of thanks however that is beyond the scope of the words I have to give.

However I feel it would be remiss of me not to include here a few specific mentions. To Blake Leschen - Switchboard Treasurer, may you always be the brains and I will be the heart - as we have always joked when we wrote yet another and then another funding submission this year. To Christine Haag - Switchboard Secretary, you have always had Switchboard interests at heart, you have transformed our



It is always what we do when no one is watching that makes who we really are, and not a truer word could be said about the Switchboard volunteers.



To our volunteers, whether on the Board, in Teleweb, Out and About, on one of our committees or as our regional ambassador, you are our lifeblood. It is always what we do when no one is watching that makes us who we really are, and not a truer word could be said about the Switchboard volunteers. Whether it is answering the phone, having a cup of tea with a participant or attending yet another committee or Board meeting, very few people will ever know all that you have given to help another. However, as members of Switchboard whether as staff or fellow volunteers we know what you do and we are all grateful.

May we continue to grow as the Switchboard community and learn better, how to stay well together.

Joe Ball
Switchboard CEO

governance structure and you wrote us into the VPC clause by clause. Although you are leaving the Board this year, your legacy is prolific. To Sarah Marlowe - Switchboard Chair, you home schooled three children, worked full time and were our Chair. You have been, as ever, outstanding, inspirational and importantly, unwavering. To everyone of this years Board, you have been the custodians of our service for another year and you have much to be proud of. You will never be a stranger at Switchboard.

To the staff of Switchboard, who are numerically at the end of this financial year 26. You deserve a standing ovation. May we learn as a community that during a pandemic our peer support workers deserve to be clapped as much as any other health care worker. I hope that as a reader of this year's annual report you can see what has been achieved and I wish you to all know that this was only possible with the collaboration of a dedicated group of staff.

Staying well together

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH A PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has affected all Victorians, in ways we may never fully know. Its impacts on minority communities, including LGBTIQ+ people, has been substantial. Even in June, before Victoria's second wave and lock-down an *Equality Australia* survey showed a huge negative impact on LGBTIQ+ people's employment, income and mental health, and an increase in our caring responsibilities.

1 in 20 LGBTIQ+ people

have experienced violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behavior

"As we did during the AIDS epidemic, our communities swung into action to protect and support our own."

The survey also showed around 1 in 20 LGBTIQ+ people had experienced violence, abuse, harassment or controlling behavior. A number of people who reached out to our support services were experiencing these issues. This included young people forced to move in with unsupportive family by job and income loss. Others had little choice but to stay in unsafe relationships for similar reasons, as well as increased isolation and decreased community support during lockdown.

Through our front line work, we saw how health and wellbeing inequalities for many LGBTIQ+ people increased due to COVID-19. We also heard about painful memories of the AIDS epidemic that this health crisis triggered for many older community members.

As we did during the AIDS epidemic, our communities swung into action to protect and support our own. Events were quickly migrated online, and many community members stepped into a role of broadcasting and translating public health messages in our diverse communities, encouraging COVID safety, and promoting help-seeking and mutual support.



Keeping the QLife and Out and About services going - safely

Switchboard was an early adopter of the public health response, aiming to flatten the COVID-19 curve. By mid-March, all staff except Teleweb staff were working from home. Staff were assisted to set up home workspaces, and the team worked together to create a supportive virtual working environment.

We quickly implemented restrictions on who could come in for volunteer shifts, including recent travelers, anyone symptomatic or immune-compromised. By April, safety concerns and escalating COVID-19 restrictions meant that none of our 80+ active QLife volunteers could come in for their shifts.

We are very grateful for federal and state government support to keep the Switchboard QLife service going at this very difficult time. This enabled us to engage temporary paid staff, who were able to space themselves out much more widely in our otherwise empty office. Huge thanks to our teleweb volunteers for staying engaged with Switchboard throughout this time. We know it was difficult for you not to be able to play your usual, vital one-on-one peer support role during lockdown. As lockdown restrictions unwind, we can't wait to welcome you back to our phone rooms!

By April, our Out and About program had also completely switched to phone or virtual visits, given the risk to our older community members. With no additional funding to respond to the unfolding crisis for older people, we sought community donations. We are grateful for support enabling us to send our care packages to Out and About participants - see the report on page 22.

Staying Well Together: our IDAHOBIT theme and our motto

IDAHOBIT stands for International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, Biphobia and discrimination against Intersex people, and is on 17 May each year. This year Switchboard celebrated IDAHOBIT on Friday 17 May with a hugely popular online event, 'Staying Well Together'. Over 200 people joined us to hear a fascinating conversation, facilitated by CEO Joe Ball, between US psychiatric epidemiologist Dr. Ilan Meyer, and Sydney-based Tea Uglov.

Dr Meyer is perhaps best known for his influential conceptualization during the AIDS epidemic of 'minority stress' - in short, the mental health impacts of discrimination - and for his contribution to overturning harmful amendments to Californian same-sex marriage laws.

Tea is the Creative Director for *Google's Creative Lab* in Sydney. She works with cultural and creative organisations around the world exploring the space between technology and the arts and what can happen where they intersect. Tea is a passionate transgender spokesperson, public speaker, author and literature lover, and one of *Australia's top 50 LGBTQ leaders* as named by *Deloitte* in 2018.

The thought-provoking conversation explored how we conceptualise intersectionality in our approaches to mental health and social justice, and many of the event attendees shared their own experiences, insights and reflections in the webinar chat. The event ended with a reflection on the importance of IDAHOBIT and a moving online performance from the always eloquent gender transcendent diva Mama Alto.

Year in Review

In this tumultuous and unprecedented year, Switchboard events and fundraising initiatives provided some inspiring and fabulous highlights.



Change to Victorian birth certificates

In August 2019 Switchboard staff and volunteers were proud to stand on the steps of Parliament House with hundreds of other supporters from across the community, to support changes to the births, deaths and marriages registration bill. These changes would enable Victorians to change the recorded sex on their birth certificate to a descriptor of their choice, without requiring unnecessary and/or unwanted surgeries, or sign-off (for adults) from a medical professional. The reform passed both houses of State Parliament on August 28th, 2019 and became law on May 1, 2020.

While the reform was extremely welcome, the 'debate' surrounding it did real damage to trans and gender diverse people in the lead up and beyond, and resulted in a big surge in calls to QLife services. We are grateful for a one-off additional grant from the Victorian government, to help us meet this need.

This year a *Communications and Fundraising Committee* replaced the Community Engagement Committee. The newly formed committee was chaired by Tony Lee and included Amelia Arnold, Bridget Gargan, Michelle Shepherd, Sarah Marlowe and Joe Ball. We discussed a number of new events and fundraising initiatives, and we look forward to activating these in the coming year - on line and once we are all moved in to our new home, *The Victorian Pride Centre*.

Thank you for your generous donations

Every year Switchboard relies in part on donations from our communities and allies, to continue our important work. This year donations supported initiatives in:

- > suicide prevention
- > supporting people in crisis
- > our QTIPoC programs (support for queer, trans and intersex people of colour)
- > supporting our LGBTI elders and our Out and About program, and
- > preventing family violence.

We acknowledge that many in our communities have been doing it especially tough this year, and for many, it has been a significant challenge to contribute at the levels that they ordinarily would.

We are exceedingly grateful to all who have been able to contribute, whether through one-off donations, or as regular donors. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you.

LGBTIQ GLOBE AWARD

In 2019, we were very proud to receive the LGBTIQ Globe Award for *Protecting Our Community*.

Switchboard CEO Joe Ball accepted the award on behalf of Switchboard.

"Tonight this award is for our 180 volunteers, our 14 staff and our 12 board members, this award is also for our life members and our founders who shoulders we stand on, it is for anyone who has ever donated to Switchboard, its for our funders, we all share in this, we all do this as a community, we can't do it without you and it's for anyone who has ever shared our number to someone who needed it, any aged care worker who has ever referred someone to our Out and About services. We are one huge Switchboard community this is for all of us."



Switchboard staff and volunteers celebrating at the LGBTIQ Globe Awards, 2019.



Midsumma Pride March, January 2020.

Midsumma 2020

Midsumma 2020 was lots of fun, with our staff engaging community participants during Carnival with a fabulous nail-painting station, and selling Switchboard caps made from recycled materials! Our Midsumma festivities culminated in a first for Pride March, starting with breakfast with older LGBTI Victorians from the Switchboard Out and About program, in conjunction with Intersex Human Rights Australia. Participants then boarded a bus to be proudly escorted by Switchboard staff and supporters along Fitzroy Street. See our Out and About report on page 22. A big thanks to the City of Port Phillip who funded this unique initiative – a hugely emotional and proud moment for all involved.

IDAHOBIT 2020

In May our IDAHOBIT 2020 event had to move on-line due to pandemic restrictions. But it was a great success, with 200+ participants enjoying a wonderful Welcome to Country from **Aunty Annette Xiberras**, an expert panel discussion between **Dr Ilan Meyer**, **Tea Uglow**, and our very own **Joe Ball**, and concluding with an unforgettable reflective speech and performance from the fabulous **Mama Alto**.

Tea Uglow and Dr Ilan Meyer in discussion as part of our on-line IDAHOBIT event.



In safe hands



Good governance really helps to maintain Switchboard's reputation as a trusted and reliable community organisation. With that good reputation, we can attract great staff and volunteers; we can win government funding; we are a desirable partner for other good organisations; our opinions are sought, our advocacy has impact and we are respected.

Good governance means having systems in place so we can meet our obligations to external regulators and funders.

Good governance also means we can meet our own high standards in providing much needed health and well-being services to our beloved LGBTIQ+ communities and we can continue to grow and evolve.

Some essential tasks in our busy 2020 agenda have been:

- › Creating the next generation **Governance Handbook** to assist Board members. Some additions this year include a Code of Conduct, Life Membership Guidelines, Membership Rules, Protocols and a Delegation to manage the Membership Register;
- › Helping to cope with COVID-19 in terms of monitoring specific **risk management** policies and strategies. Also, we are engaging with a pro bono consultant for fuller implementation of our organisational risk management framework;

- › Liaising with the **QTIPoC** Board Working Group on developing terms of reference to establish this group as a new Board Committee;
- › We maintain various **Registers** – Declarations of Interests for Board members, Responsible People under ACNC regulations, Actions arising from Board decisions, current insurance policies and Membership.

Switchboard is planning to relocate to the new Victorian Pride Centre. This amazing building has been rapidly rising from the ground, but like so much in 2020, its completion has been impacted by "lock down" under the pandemic response. However, we all remain optimistic as there has been so much work by so many, to bring this plan to fruition as soon as possible.

We have been involved in planning practical aspects to ensure our proposed space meets our needs. There has been much co-operation between Switchboard's Secretary and CEO and the Centre's Board Chair and CEO around the documentation

involved with our proposed occupancy. The negotiations have been fruitful and we appreciate the opportunity for dialogue for our mutual benefit.

Our committee consists of me, Christine Haag (Secretary and Committee Chair), Sarah Marlowe (Board Chair) Ishwar Singh, Sara Timms, Mary Koutzamanis, Rashmi Kumar and Joe Ball (CEO).

I have chaired the Governance Committee since May 2018 and been Secretary of the Board since December 2018. I am intending to stand down as Secretary at the 2020 AGM, believing Switchboard is on a strong governance footing. I thank the members of the Governance Committee for their work, all done for love of our LGBTIQ+ communities.

– **Christine Haag**
Switchboard Secretary

In memoriam

Ayman Barbaresco

Ayman was everything Switchboard strives to be: big-hearted, generous and there for anyone having a hard time. Joe Ball remembers their fortnight on the road together for the LGBTI Rural Roadshow. Ayman would speak passionately about his lived experience: as a gay man, as someone with a disability, as a cancer survivor, and as a person of colour. His story connected with so many people.

Ayman began his volunteer journey with Switchboard as a peer supporter on the phones, then joined our Committee of Management (now Board). In his last year with us, he was an active member of our Community Engagement Committee. Ayman was a constant fixture at Switchboard stalls, in our Pride contingent, and in the planning and running of many events. His legacy lives on at Switchboard, because of his contributions over many years.



Rob Hughes

Rob was a much-loved Out and About volunteer. He supported three different Out and About participants over his time in the program: a huge contribution. Rob also gave invaluable support to our successful campaign to reinstate OAA's core funding. Rob's support was great at Switchboard events. He was always keen to help set up and pack down our stall, and to rattle the fundraising tin. And he did a fabulous job nail-painting at Midsumma Carnival.

Rob was kind, friendly and generous, and proud to support Switchboard as an older gay man. We are grateful for his contributions and support for Out and About and Switchboard.



Remembering Out and About participants who have passed away

We also remember the 12 Out and About participants who sadly passed away this year. Our program supports many older, often frail community members towards the end of their lives. And saying goodbye is not uncommon. But we feel each person's loss with sadness – and with sorrow for the grieving of our Out and About volunteers, who lose a friend when their participant passes away.

This year we remember Annabell Q, Edie M, Sue R, Graeme D, John D, Mike M, David C, John A, Shivanee M, Allen H, Warren P and Regina D.

The power of phone & web-based support

Switchboard Victoria began 29 years ago as a phone information and support line by and for our communities. Today we offer a range of phone and web-based support services for LGBTIQ+ people, building on and complementing our decades of expertise in peer-based support. This now includes a dedicated after hours phone helpline for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing family and intimate partner violence.

Our QLife service

In 2014, our core phone service merged into the national QLife service, with Switchboard as the Victorian QLife partner, working alongside the LGBTI* Health Alliance, Twenty10 (NSW), Diverse Voices (Queensland) and Living Proud (WA) to answer phone calls and webchats from all across Australia, 3pm to midnight every day of the year.

QLife caller feedback from earlier this year gives a glimpse into the value of QLife support:

"Thank you so much QLife, I'd love to do a testimony feedback-type thing one day of how much you have all helped me. I honestly wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for QLife."

"QLife has helped me smash through such traumatic burdens and find who I am. I finally have hope because of my chats with you all. There is such an amazing dynamic and unique family of people who work there, and they are the most amazing people I've spoken to."

THIS YEAR SWITCHBOARD'S SERVICES EXPANDED, AND THE PANDEMIC SAW PHONE AND WEB-BASED SUPPORT SERVICES COME INTO THEIR OWN.

COVID-19 forced us to temporarily adjust staffing of our QLife service, which has always been delivered by dedicated volunteers from every part of our LGBTIQ+ communities. During this time, we brought in paid staff temporarily to keep the service open during Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and they have done a fabulous job. However, volunteers are at the heart of our QLife service and we can't wait to welcome them back as restrictions lift.

Volunteer induction training

From the 1991 founding of the phone service to June 2020, Switchboard has delivered no less than 45 of our renowned training courses to LGBTIQ+ people wanting to volunteer in our teleweb services, including two courses this year, before the pandemic.

Our training course totals 78 hours, and includes a two day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), the internationally recognised best practice suicide intervention training course. Beyond ASIST, the training covers many topics relevant to our peer support, including (but not limited to) anti-racist practice, intersectionality, working with older LGBTI people, consent, sex and consent, safety planning and responding to disclosures of violence.

Specialist family violence services

With Respect is a specialist LGBTIQ* family violence service, established as part of the recommendations in the Victorian Government Royal Commission into Family Violence. *With Respect* is a partnership between

Drummond Street Services, Thorne Harbour Health, Switchboard Victoria and Transgender Victoria. Switchboard's role has been to run the **After Hours Family Violence Helpline**, offering family violence counselling, information, referral and crisis response.

Delivering a staffed, dedicated after hours family violence helpline service was a big change for Switchboard. It transformed our work across the board, including strengthening our focus on family violence within our QLife service, and on elder abuse within Out and About.

LGBTIQ+ people who experience family violence have historically had nowhere to go. And while the establishment of the *With Respect* services was a welcome development, they are simply not enough to meet the needs of vulnerable LGBTIQ+ adults, young people, children and elders in our community experiencing family violence.

Funding is urgently needed to support more services, and to support training and capacity-building for mainstream family violence services to help meet our communities' needs.

Thank you so much QLife, I'd love to do a testimony feedback-type thing one day of how much you have all helped me. I honestly wouldn't be alive today if it wasn't for QLife.

QLife caller



Supporting our teleweb staff and volunteers

This year saw a big step up in our in-shift clinical support for our volunteer and paid teleweb workers.

For many years, our volunteer supervisor, peer mentors and program coordinator have provided valuable support to our phone and web volunteers, including debriefing and supervision after calls involving risk, including mental illness, suicidality and family violence, and professional development.

But with these types of contacts increasing across our services, it was important to strengthen the support for our volunteers and staff. We now have Team Leaders providing support for our peer support QLife counsellors and *With Respect* peer supporters, including immediate support and debriefing while on shift.

Peer supporters responded very positively to this additional onsite support, and we saw a significant increase in shift coverage before Coronavirus (COVID-19). In-shift support enhances the quality of the volunteer experience, enables ongoing learning, and strengthens our service quality and clinical governance.



3505
CALLS TAKEN BY SWITCHBOARD VOLUNTEERS



241
WEBCHATS TAKEN BY SWITCHBOARD VOLUNTEERS

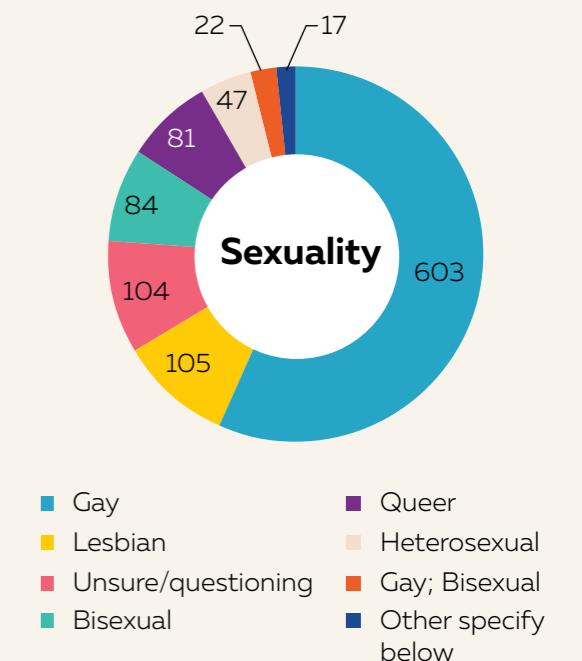
* VIC did not take webchats Apr - June 2020 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the subsequent restructure of the QLife service.

TOP 5 MOST RECORDED ISSUES FOR VICTORIA

Note: does not include "other", "regular callers", "hang up" & "general conversation" categories.

1. Suicide or self-harm ideation or intent
2. CALD/cultural Issue
3. Crisis and/or immediate distress
4. Transphobia or Transphobic violence
5. Domestic or family violence

BREAKDOWN OF CALLS BY SEXUALITY



*With Respect and Switchboard use the acronym LGBTIQ
*QLife uses the acronym LGBTI

Being there for our older community members

This year, the Aged Care Royal Commission cast a spotlight on how Australia treats the older members of our communities. Coronavirus (COVID-19) transformed that spotlight into a laser focus.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic taught us all that our collective public health depends on how we care for the most vulnerable people in our communities. Especially those living in aged care.

Our programs supporting older LGBTI community members grew significantly in 2019-20. This growth was seen in the Out and About reach – geographically and numbers of people

we supported, and in the breadth of our activities. This is despite the Coronavirus (COVID-19) impact on our staff, participants and volunteers, and on how we could deliver supports.

Bringing our community to Pride March

A truly fabulous highlight was bringing OAA program participants to Pride March on 2 February, in the comfort of their own air-conditioned bus. For every participant on board, this was either their first ever Pride March, or their first in many years.

As the bus drove slowly down Fitzroy Street, there was sheer jubilation amongst those on board – shared by Switchboard staff and volunteers marching proudly alongside.

The crowd lining the march route cheered and waved wildly to our elders inside the bus. And they all waved back with the biggest, widest smiles, thoroughly enjoying their moment of celebration and pride. It was quite a moment – something many of us present will never forget.



Out and About Volunteers and program participants on the bus for the Midsumma Pride March, 2020. (Photo was taken before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic)



Out and About Volunteers preparing care packages for recipients during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown.



Reaching and supporting more people

This was the fifth year of our pioneering Out and About (OAA) program, after a determined community campaign saved the program's funding in 2018-19. This year our staff worked hard to expand our services and our reach, including into rural and regional areas.

OAA's core funding is through the Federal Department of Health's Community Visitor Scheme (CVS) program. This enables us to deliver our visiting service for older LGBTI people in residential aged care, and to those on a waiting list for or in receipt of a Home Care package.

The CVS program's strict criteria has always been a challenge for us. Some of our most isolated and high-needs older LGBTI people are often not supported in their identity by family, and their needs are not always well understood by their aged care services. Ironically, this can make it exceedingly difficult to even reach those who might benefit most from our support. On the other hand, the CVS program's strict criteria means that many other isolated older people keen to receive visits are ineligible for our CVS-funded supports.

This is why we were thrilled this year to expand our visiting service, thanks to a significant one-off RACV grant. The expansion has been a terrific success, enabling us to reach many more isolated people during this particularly trying year for older community members. We are determined to seek further funding to build on this success, and offer even more isolated older people the benefit of connection and friendship with other LGBTI people.

Responding to the pandemic

We all know of the devastating impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on many older people, and the risk it still poses. OAA program staff and volunteers adapted quickly this year to address both the increasing needs of program participants due to the pandemic and to work within the restrictions it imposed.

In-person visits became virtual, and volunteers got very creative in keeping in touch with their matched participants. On top of regular phone and video chats, many wrote emails, letters and postcards, and sent flowers and sweet treats to celebrate special occasions.

As Coronavirus (COVID-19) escalated, some of our participants' additional needs went beyond the program's scope. Our staff were kept busy connecting participants with new services, including supporting their access to technology and health information, and even fresh food. We increased our staff check-ins with participants and volunteers, encouraging everyone to access Switchboard's other support services, as Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the lockdown restrictions impacted on our whole community's wellbeing.

With support from generous private donors, we sent out a range of care packages to participants, with the largest packages for those living alone. The packages included LGBTI magazines, letters, gorgeous handmade masks, sweet treats and senior-friendly Coronavirus (COVID-19) health information.

OUT AND ABOUT PROGRAM

Increasing understanding of our communities' needs

A big focus for the program this year has been educating mainstream organisations to better support the needs of older LGBTI people. Through our dedicated outreach role, Out and About staff were able to present at conferences, workshops and webinars including the Geelong Rainbow Festival and the Royal Commission in to Aged Care.

Clynton and Haydn on ABC

Participant Clynton and Switchboard Out and About volunteer Haydn were featured on ABC Life before and then during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating how our service adapted to the needs of our participants during Melbourne's lockdown period.



Hayden and Clynton as part of the ABC Life story on our Out and About program. Image courtesy of the ABC



Switchboard's staff and volunteers including Out and About's program team. (This photo was taken before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic)

Delectable

*With all my love
That feels like something
Warm and beautiful
This very special day
Makes a wonderful beginning
Although we may not often say
Of our love that is special
Delightful and perfect
Joy and Happiness always
You are loved more than you know*

**Poem from Annabelle
(Annabelle passed in 2020)**

Why do we use LGBTI for our Out and About services?

Since 2018, Switchboard Victoria has used the acronym LGBTIQA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual) when describing the communities we serve. However, we continue to use 'LGBTI' within our older people's programs, in line with feedback from older community members about how they feel comfortable identifying their gender, sex and/or sexuality. In particular, most don't identify with the term Queer, associating it with its history as derogatory slur. Many older people have told us they still find the term offensive and distressing.

Community language is always evolving, especially in minority communities. We may revisit the acronym we use in our older people's program in future. But we're committed to listening to what our communities tell us about who they are, and working to reflect the differing needs of our communities across all ages and stages of life.

Supporting Seniors Inclusion and Participation (SSIP) Program



Supporting Seniors Inclusion and Participation Program participants. (This photo was taken before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic)

Switchboard Victoria leads the Victorian Government's Supporting Seniors Inclusion and Participation (SSIP) LGBTI Project. This project supports mainstream organisations to work with older LGBTI people and support their participation in local communities.

We have partnered with *Transgender Victoria* and *Val's LGBTI Ageing & Aged Care* to work closely with four select organisations (*Activity Partners*) to improve inclusion and community participation for LGBTI seniors. These organisations are based across Victoria in the Macedon Ranges, Greater Bendigo, Banyule/Nillumbik and City of Yarra areas.

From the outset, LGBTI older people have been involved in deciding project themes and directions. LGBTI seniors told us they want: "recognition of our diversity and individuality; meaningful connections with others who share our experiences; real action to remove barriers to positive ageing; safe inclusive spaces where we can 'be ourselves' as we age; and opportunities to be active participants in our local and LGBTI communities".

Local LGBTI community members were invited to provide feedback on existing activities and help design new ones. In one instance, the local LGBTI seniors' group is leading the project and queer youth groups have been invited to provide connection across the ages.

Existing social support programs are reaching out to isolated LGBTI seniors through newsletters and surveys,

changing their activities to make LGBTI seniors feel welcome and visible.

Through the SSIP partnerships, our aim is that:

- > older LGBTI people will feel welcome and safe to join activities in their local communities,
- > social isolation and loneliness will decrease for older LGBTI people and
- > we can improve both community awareness of LGBTI ageing and access to a wide range of services for older LGBTI people.

SSIP project workers have found ways to get creative and keep up project momentum, given the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions, emergency response service priorities and the impacts of local community issues.

Activity Partners discovered new ways they might connect with communities online (such as movie discussion sessions, shared Zoom coffees, attending *All The Queens Men's* online dance club and shared art projects). Some face-to-face activities have been deferred to 2021.

The Project Team have also provided practical resources and service review tools and advice for Activity Partners to help build their LGBTI cultural competency and safety within the aged care context.

Working for inclusion, standing against racism

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR QTIPOC PROGRAM, ADVOCACY AND ANTI-RACISM WORK

Community consultation and a new phase for our QTIPoC Program

Switchboard's QTIPoC Program was established in 2017, to support greater equity for Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour, within and beyond Switchboard's programs. After our initial Victorian Multicultural Commission funding ran out, we undertook community consultation about future directions, led by Program Advisory Group member Mon Hameed.

The consultation identified a need for a two-pronged approach: targeted, peer-led support programs for QTIPoC communities, and – building on the work of founding QTIPoC staff member Caroline Ridler – continued work on inclusion and empowerment of QTIPoC communities across our programs and activities.

Several of those involved, including Mon, Rashmi Kumar and Ishwar Singh joined our 2019-20 Board to support this work – resulting in some exciting initiatives this year, with many more planned for year ahead. This includes a broader anti-racism organisational change plan that will work with and alongside a broader intersectional plan for the whole organisation. Our thanks to Rashmi and Mon for leading this work at Board level.

A new manager and activities

In February we welcomed Greg Rincon into the more senior role of QTIPoC Programs Manager. In line with the direction set by our community consultation, Greg's role combines working to establish new peer-led services with a broader focus on leading continued work on equity and access across Switchboard for QTIPoC people.

Partnerships and networks

This year, we established a collaboration with LGBTI organisation *Many Coloured Sky*, to provide peer support training for their Queer Refugee and Asylum Seeker Connections (QRAC) group. We are now exploring more ways to partner with *Many Coloured Sky* and others to broaden our supports and outreach to queer asylum seekers and refugees.

We also continue to prioritise building our networks and establishing partnerships amongst multicultural and Aboriginal organisations, including VACCHO, the *Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation*, peak body for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Victoria.



Switchboard staff acting in solidarity in response to the anti-Chinese racism at the beginning of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Australia. This photo was taken while staff were working remotely during 2020 - #unityoverfear.

Advocacy work

Sultan and Nassar (not their real names) are gay Saudi journalists detained in Australia after seeking asylum. Switchboard CEO Joe Ball worked with Canberra-based Ivan Hinton-Teoh, co-founder of LGBTIQ+ advocacy organisation Just.Equal, on a community campaign seeking their release. They were eventually released from detention in December 2019, while their asylum claims were processed.

"The whole Villawood experience ... it really made us jaded towards the Australian government, It made us think, my God, have we made the right decision coming here? Definitely, definitely, definitely the gay community rallied around us in a way that was so endearing and so powerful that I really feel it was the gay community that did this. Really from the bottom of our hearts we have to thank the LGBT community." - Sultan, shortly after his release from Villawood Detention Centre

Standing in solidarity

As COVID-19 kept us physically distanced, Switchboard focused on staying well together and supporting our communities, including through wellbeing, QTIPoC visibility and anti-racism content on social media.

This included support for the unityoverfear social media campaign, in solidarity with Asian Australians experiencing elevated racism during the pandemic. Our CEO, Joe Ball also joined leaders from organisations around Australia to acknowledge Traditional Owners of Country in a moving video posted on Facebook during National Reconciliation Week. This marked the 20th anniversary of the historic 250,000 people crossing bridges in major cities to support Reconciliation.

Let's talk about suicide

OUR WORK PREVENTING LGBTIQ+ SUICIDE AND SUPPORTING BEREAVED COMMUNITIES

The research is clear: LGBTIQ+ people experience higher rates of suicide and suicidality than the general population: LGBTI youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide, trans people are almost 11 times more likely, and intersex people nearly six times. And lesbian, gay and bisexual people aged 16 and over are six times more likely to have suicidal thoughts.

(National LGBTI Health Alliance snapshot, Feb 2020)

Switchboard's Suicide Prevention Program aims to change the story for LGBTIQ+ people living with thoughts of suicide, those bereaved by suicide and carers. We collaborate and partner in a range of ways with:

- › other LGBTIQ+ community organisations
- › leaders, services, researchers and peak bodies in suicide prevention, and
- › people with a lived experience of suicidality and bereavement.

Building the evidence base around LGBTIQ+ suicide

Despite our higher risk of suicidality, LGBTIQ+ people remain critically under-served when it comes to targeted suicide prevention services, government policies and strategies. A key reason is the lack of research about what drives suicidality in LGBTIQ+ communities, and how we can prevent it.

Addressing this gap is a big focus of our work, including doing and sharing new research. This year we presented on 'Queering Suicide Prevention and Postvention' (supporting the recovery of people bereaved by suicide) at two national conferences: the Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA)

Conference and the Pride in Practice Conference, on LGBTIQ inclusion in workplaces, sport and health and human services.

We were also honored to be awarded a SPA innovation grant for a research project on 'Improving support for LGBTIQ suicidal behavior: insight from lived experience', in conjunction with Professor Katherine Johnson (RMIT) and Dr Vanessa Lee (University of Sydney). This research will be informed by Indigenous co-design principles, and at least five of its 25 lived experience participants will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

Making the case for community-led services

A continued frustration is that governments often funnel suicide prevention funding to a few big services, neglecting smaller, community-led organisations and initiatives. Yet in the landmark 2019 study, *Understanding LGBTI+ Lives in Crisis*, 71% of participants hadn't accessed mainstream services during a recent mental health crisis, primarily due to fear of discrimination or being 'outed'. For this reason, Switchboard and our partners will continue to advocate for grassroots community responses to LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention, driven by research and the stories of people in our communities.



Our podcast *Let's Talk About Suicide* is available for download via JOY 94.9 website: joy.org.au/letstalk

A community of practice in LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention

Communities of practice can be very valuable for practitioners and organisations working for change in our sector. This year we were proud to collaborate with Thorne Harbour Health, Queerspace and Mind Australia to establish an LGBTIQ+ Suicide Prevention Community of Practice. Through this, we can share challenges, successes, ideas and strategies, and forge new partnerships and collaboration.

Partnerships and training

COVID-19 presented challenges for our Suicide Prevention Program, as for every area of our work.

Pre-pandemic, we delivered two two-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) workshops to LGBTIQ+ community leaders, in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health and LivingWorks Australia. ASIST is the internationally-recognised gold standard training in suicide prevention training. We look forward to getting back to delivering ASIST and its half-day counterpart workshop, safeTALK, to our communities as lockdown restrictions ease next year.

The pandemic also slowed some planned work and new partnerships, including with Beyond Blue and lived experience of suicide organisation Roses in the Ocean. We look forward to working together in the coming year, including on targeted bereavement programs, a national network of LGBTIQ+ people with lived experience, and advocacy for our communities within the wider sector.

The launch of our podcast

This year Sally Rugg launched our innovative *Let's Talk About Suicide* podcast at a hallmark Wheeler Centre event. The podcast focusses on the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ people bereaved by suicide and was produced by Hamish Blunch in partnership with JOY 94.9 and Support After Suicide. You can access the podcast anywhere you find other podcasts or you can listen online at the JOY website <https://joy.org.au/letstalk/>

Back to basics for Wear it Purple

Wear it Purple, held on the last Friday of August, was founded in 2010 to help combat LGBTIQ+ youth suicide. Since then, *Wear it Purple* has become a day to support LGBTIQ+ youth more broadly.

This year Switchboard honoured *Wear it Purple's* origins with a 'Queering Suicide Prevention' event featuring leading LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention experts, Professor Johnson, Dr Lee, Professor Baden Offord (Curtin University) and our own emerging leader Anna Bernasochi, Switchboard's Suicide Prevention Manager. The event booked out, with community members and services clearly wanting more community conversations and action to prevent LGBTIQ+ suicide.

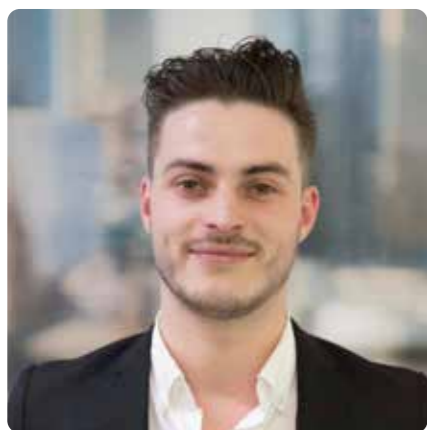
Into the future

Switchboard is currently working on the development of bereavement groups with Jesuit Social Services 'Support After Suicide'. We look forward to this important work we will do together.



Sally Rugg launching our podcast 'Let's Talk About Suicide', 2019

Treasurer's Report



Switchboard experienced another strong year of growth in 2019-20. However, we also experienced significant financial impacts from forced adaptations to COVID-19 in the latter part of the financial year.

Grant funding continues to be Switchboard's primary source of revenue, with all programs funded by various Victorian or Commonwealth departments (directly or indirectly, for example as part of the national QLife service).

Total revenue increased by 51% on the previous financial year as a result of additional grant monies received to fund the family violence service, expand Out and About, and capacity-building of other services. Donations and volunteer training fees remain largely consistent year on year.

The recruitment of additional staff within new programs and through growth of existing programs saw Switchboard's wage bill more than double this year: total wages increased by 135% from the previous financial year. Switchboard had a total of 23 employees at 30 June 2020, including eight casual workers. This increase is largely explained by the Board's decision to temporarily adjust the QLife teleweb service from being

volunteer-delivered to employee-delivered in direct response to pandemic restrictions. For more detail, see page 20 and the Chair's report.

The increase in expenditure on wages exceeded the rise in revenue, resulting in a net \$132,608 deficit for the financial year. Switchboard entered the financial year with a balance of accumulated funds and cash reserves that absorbed this net deficit.

I anticipate Switchboard's growth will continue into the 2020-21 financial year. Funding has been secured to continue QLife operating an employee-based service during COVID-19, and for the new Rainbow Door service, launched early in the next financial year. Switchboard was successfully selected as an employer under the State Government *Working for Victoria* program, helping us to fund the QLife temporary staffing and some additional short-term roles.

Strong financial management and good financial hygiene remains a core

strategic priority of Switchboard as our organisation grows. I continue to work closely with the Board and staff to ensure accurate and reliable accounting records are kept, and to enable clear and timely financial reporting in order to make informed financial decisions, and remain compliant to our funders and regulatory bodies.

As I complete my first term as Treasurer, I am proud of everything the organisation has achieved. The introduction of additional services, new revenue streams and our response to an unprecedented health crisis have all brought new levels of financial complexity. We have risen to all these challenges, and continue to deliver invaluable counselling and support services to our communities.

Blake Leschen
Switchboard Treasurer

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
INCOME		
Department of Health & Human Services (Federal)	264,693	94,746
Department of Health (Federal)	91,000	44,710
Department of Human Services (Federal)	-	171,574
Department of Premier & Cabinet (State)	-	103,600
Donations received	55,916	54,747
Drummond Street Services	230,909	-
Interest Income	693	1,996
National LGBTI+ Health Alliance	196,696	158,394
North Western Primary Health Network	69,170	53,082
Other Grants	41,638	74,728
Other Income	54,725	9,637
RACV	150,000	-
Training Fees	4,455	-
TOTAL INCOME	1,159,895	767,217

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

EXPENDITURE	2020 \$	2019 \$
Accounting, audit & consultancy fees	6,369	16,521
Advertising, promotions & marketing	13,865	29,809
Bank fees	-	17
Clinical supervision	18,611	19,941
Depreciation	-	12,727
Donations & Sponsorships	825	2,301
Events & functions hosted and attended	11,595	45,801
Fixed asset write off	6,099	-
Food & catering	15,655	4,449
Human resources support	4,761	-
Insurance	236	3,078
IT expenses	7,587	15,536
Leave entitlements	37,893	24,626
Office expenses	2,259	-
Other expenses	224	10,702
Postage, printing & stationery	4,566	4,983
Rent	19,032	13,049
Salaries & wages	972,569	413,692
Superannuation	90,387	38,092
Subscriptions	8,322	438
Telephone & Internet	7,821	5,252
Training	4,651	12,920
Travel	22,094	16,065
Volunteer costs	4,015	26,773
Workers compensation	33,067	(3)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,292,503	716,769
Net surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	(132,608)	50,445

This income statement is extracted from the audited Special Purpose Financial Statements that are to be lodged with the ACNC.

Financials

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,620,237	703,091
Accounts and other receivables	23,498	-
Prepayments	4,583	10,579
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,648,318	713,670
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	-	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	1,648,318	713,670
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other creditors	179,577	64,019
Amounts received in advance	1,084,307	170,503
Provisions	63,917	41,872
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,327,801	276,394
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	25,385	9,536
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	25,385	9,536
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,353,186	285,930
NET ASSETS	295,132	427,740
EQUITY		
Accumulated funds	295,132	427,740
TOTAL EQUITY	295,132	427,740

Financials

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	Accumulated funds \$	2019 \$
Balance as at 1 July 2018	377,295	377,295
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	50,445	50,445
Balance as at 30 June 2019	427,740	427,740
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	(132,608)	(132,608)
Balance as at 30 June 2020	295,132	295,132

Financials

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from funding agencies and grants	1,934,412	686,284
Receipts from other sources	115,096	64,384
Payments to employees and suppliers	(1,126,956)	(629,842)
Interest received	693	1,996
Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities	923,245	122,822
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(6,099)	(7,661)
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	(6,099)	(7,661)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	917,146	115,161
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	703,091	587,930
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	1,620,237	703,091

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020



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TOWARDS A VISION SHARED

SWITCHBOARD (VICTORIA) INCORPORATED
A.B.N. 81 367 786 099
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Switchboard (Victoria) Incorporated (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2020, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Switchboard (Victoria) Incorporated to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020



**Collins & Co
Audit Pty Ltd**

127 Paisley Street
Footscray VIC 3011
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TOWARDS A VISION SHARED

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.

Auditor: **Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen**ASIC Registration Number: **421448**Address: **Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd, 127 Paisley Street, FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011**

Signature:

Date:

21 September 2020

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK

We would like to acknowledge all the individuals and organisations that have made donations to Switchboard over the last year. Your donations have enabled care packages, the Pride Bus at Midsumma, our QTIPOC work and ongoing service provision of our core essential services. We could not have done it without you.

/ FUNDERS

- > City of Melbourne
- > City of Port Phillip
- > Department of Health (Federal)
- > Department of Health and Human Services
- > Department of Premier and Cabinet
- > Family Safety Victoria
- > Lesbians Inc
- > LGBTI Health Alliance
- > North West Melbourne Primary Health Network
- > RACV Community Foundation
- > The Pride Foundation
- > Transgender Victoria – SPARK
- > Victorian Government
- > Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust
- > Working For Victoria
- > YACVic

/ SUPPORTERS

- > Bendigo Aboriginal Development Corporation (SSIP)
- > City of Yarra (SSIP)
- > City of Banyule (SSIP)
- > Cobaw Community Health (SSIP)
- > Domestic Violence Victoria
- > LGBTI Health Alliance
- > LivingWorks
- > Many Coloured Sky- Queer Refugee and Asylum Seeker Peers (QRASP)
- > Queerspace - Drummond Street Services
- > Rainbow Health Victoria
- > Roses in the Ocean
- > Transgender Victoria
- > Thorne Harbour Health
- > Val's LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care



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Switchboard social media response during the 2019-20 catastrophic bushfires

