



Expanding Ideas; Creating Change

Annual Report 2021 - 2022

Strategic Goals 2020-2022



thriving

CRU will be a sustainable organisation which delivers on its vision and values.

delivering

CRU will work with individuals, families, organisations, allies and the wider community to deliver on our mission.

learning

CRU will continue to improve our work and seek out new ideas.



CRU Vision and Mission

our vision

full and meaningful lives for people living with disability

our mission

we inspire, challenge and equip people to embrace ideas, to take action and to build a movement for change.

This Annual Report covers our activities and performance for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Governance and Management of CRU

The direction and management of Community Resource Unit is vested in the Board of Directors that is elected annually. The implementation of CRU programs is the responsibility of the CEO and the staff team

Board

Josey McMahon, Chair
Narissa Niesler, Secretary
Laura Listopad
Cinnamon Morrissey
Natalie Palelei
Matt Stone
Gerhard Tromp (until Feb 2022)
Sherryn West

Stewardship Group

Leanne Burke
Lyn Farrell
Bobby Noone
Pam Spelling
Tony Swords
Richard Warner

Presenters

John Armstrong
Ann Greer
Michael Kendrick
Bronwyn Moloney
Rodney Mills
Joyce Lyn Smith
Jeremy Ward

Staff

CEO, Margaret Rodgers
Senior Consultant, Lisa Bridle
Senior Consultant, Catherine Laherty

Consultants

Gina Barwell-Pickup
Sharon Bourke
Lindie Brengman-Harvey
Sue Duncan-Kemp
Kelly Harrison
Diana Kerr
Danielle Mason
Trish Murdoch
Casey Northam
Tracey Pate
Kyla Ranger
Ainsley Robertson
Jo Walters
Suellen Welch

Administration & Finance

Sonia Brown-Diaz
Edde Rose Fenson (until November 2021)
Kathleen Fleming
Meegan Hardaker (temp May - June 2022)
Kim Jensen
Janene Parsons
Michael Pender (January – May 2022)
Kerrie White

Director's Report

As Chairperson of CRU, I welcome each one of you to the AGM, whether you are on-line or attending in person. We appreciate the support that you provide to CRU. Your attendance demonstrates this when there could be any number of other things you could be doing on a Saturday morning. Thank you for your attendance and support.

I would like to dedicate this report to Jeremy and Margaret Ward who have provided invaluable support to CRU – CEO's, members, and staff. As you are aware Jeremy passed on in early July and has left an incredible legacy with us. Jeremy and Margaret's unwavering commitment to their daughter, Mena and to many other people with disability and their families no doubt paved the way for the meaningful and fulfilling lives that many people in Qld, nationally and internationally live today. They set the example and taught so many of us so well. I am indebted to them for the good life my sister lives and as a result the good life I live. Thank-you Jeremy, thank-you Margaret.

This last 12 months saw CRU in its 3rd year of its strategic plan with its three strategic goals of thriving, delivering, and learning. 2022 commenced with an operational planning day facilitated by Jon Eastgate who has now travelled alongside CRU for a few years. Jon has been with us in the ups and downs and very skilfully challenges us to reflect on the previous year in relation to work with people with disability and families and to a lesser extent work with services. We reflect on any gaps in the work and devise a flexible plan to work towards achieving stated outcomes in the strategic plan.

Given that CRU was in our final year of a three-year strategic plan, the Director's spent time considering a strategic vision that would take us well into the future. To help us with this task Elissa Farrow was engaged to facilitate three separate workshops. Elissa facilitated 3 sessions in all and then worked with the board and CEO to finalise the 10-year strategic vision. First session was with staff, board, stewardship group and some invited allies. We first looked at where CRU had come from through the use of story-telling, by our founders. Although I have been involved with CRU from the early 1990's I was surprised that there were stories that I had not heard before. We also looked at where we are now, and we dared to dream about where we would like CRU to be in 10 years. We discussed what could keep us strong and what we needed to build on – always keeping in mind our work is about building the capacity of people with disability and their families. The first session was conducted on-line due to the threat of Covid-19 at that time. It was very beneficial to hear also from current staff who are working at the coalface with people with disability and their families.

The second session was also held online with the Board of Directors and CEO who were given the task of prioritizing and setting the agenda going forth - in other words setting the roadmap for how it was to happen and the financial implications. The third session was finally able to be held face to face in this current financial year. In November we will start planning with Jon Eastgate, onbringing the Vision to Action – setting the goals for the first three years and developing the strategies for implementation.

A practice that the Board of Directors introduced a few years ago is having a time of reflection for 10 minutes at each board meeting. Directors do this on a rotational basis. The director responsible for the reflection is to present a topic that is relevant to the events, themes or challenges within the disability sector which may influence or impact the work of CRU. Additionally, it is important to reflect on CRU's vision, mission and linking the Board of Directors back to their overarching purpose. The directors never seem to be short of topics for reflection. I believe that this also assists us to remain true to the values and vision of CRU.

The Board of Directors have monthly board meetings. These are held mostly on-line with the Board meeting face to face on a quarterly basis. Moving to this model has opened the way to attract members from regional Queensland to be on the Board. The Board of Directors are also actively involved in additional sub-committee work, stewardship group meetings, compliance and continual improvement

meetings for auditing processes and finance meetings. They are a committed group of people with values aligned with CRU's values and who bring knowledge, skills, and experience to the table.

Earlier in the year Gerhard Tromp left the board to allow himself more time to pursue his studies and personal commitments. Thank-you, Gerhard for the contribution and time that you gave so willingly to CRU. With Gerhard leaving we welcomed Matt Stone back onto the Board. Matt brings with him a long history of working with people with disability and has a strong commitment to CRU having been a former board member for a long time and chairperson. Welcome back Matt.

CRU values the support that we receive from the Stewardship Group – Leanne, Lyn, Bobbie, Richard, Pam, and Tony. They also are a very busy group of people but who willingly give their time to CRU to participate in Stewardship meetings. They bring ideas, suggestions and prove to be a good sounding board for the board and CEO. Your time, wisdom and support are greatly appreciated, and we thank you for that.

It has been another year when COVID-19 has impacted the operation of CRU. At each board meeting time was set aside to discuss COVID-19 impact and to review the pandemic risk management and planning so that directors could be aware of any actions that may need to be taken at short notice if an outbreak was to occur. Notice by government with orders to work from home at short notice posed challenges as the CEO and staff have to reprioritise and rearrange work commitments. Additionally, the absence of government orders during the year made it difficult to navigate. Social distancing has also meant that the numbers of people attending workshops need to be kept at a minimum. At other times workshops may need to be cancelled due to low registrations. Despite the protocols that CRU have in place re COVID-19, staff are still susceptible to catching COVID-19 in the community as we all are which impacts the ability to deliver work in a timely manner. CRU is also very mindful that we work with vulnerable people with disability and therefore need to be highly aware that people with disability and their families are not placed at risk of catching COVID-19.

The work to develop a registered training organisation continued and in September 2022, CRU along with Staffing Options launched Crucial Training Options. We are planning for the first intake of students to undertake their Cert 3 in Disability and the Diploma course next year. CRU also offers CPR and First Aid. This is an exciting venture as will happen in the new year. It will in the future provide an alternative form of funding for CRU as well as ensuring that there is a pool of support workers with strong values and equipped to provide intentional support to people with disability.

CRU continues to attract government funding and has a number of projects on the go. CRU secured Information, Linkage and Capacity Building Funding both individually and as part of a consortia. CRU has been involved in a project "My Home, My Way as well as My Home: My Way Making Individualized Options a Reality. Individual capacity building work continues with people with disability and their families as the requests come in. Another project centred around economic participation – From School to Work finally gives some support and focus to people with disability exploring work opportunities. The contract with Education Queensland around inclusion for all continues. When QPPD made the decision not to continue I was concerned about what support would be available for students with disability and families needing support for inclusive education. CRU has picked up this work All the work that CRU carries out including the work around inclusive education is so important.

Fee for Service work continues and provides CRU with an alternative source of funding. However, it is not enough on its own to ensure financial viability for CRU ongoing. This year CRU engaged the skills of a strategic Financial Consultant, Raj to work alongside CRU to help us monitor closely our spending and to explore further opportunities to sustain financial viability.

CRU continues to be a member of NACBO, a national alliance of capacity building organisations. CRU is a very valued member of this alliance and mutual support is gained from being part of the national alliance. Pre Covid days Marg and I would travel to Melbourne for NACBO meetings, however, zoom monthly meetings are now occurring.

I know I said something similar at the last AGM, but I will say it again. CRU is very fortunate in having Marg Rodgers as CEO. She works alongside the Board of Directors and offers much needed support. Marg is always professional in all her dealings with the Board and keeps CRU at the centre of all her work. She is someone with integrity, wisdom, insight, humility and has strong leadership qualities and skills. Marg brings out the best in her staff team. Succession planning is important and to this end Marg encourages other staff to take on the role as Acting CEO in her absence. The Board has been keen for Marg to take leave for the past few years but with the turbulent times this has not felt possible. We were pleased that Marg was finally able to take 9 weeks off at the beginning of this financial year. I thank Lisa and Catherine who acted as CEO in her absence. Thank-you Marg for your commitment and contribution to CRU and thank-you for the team that you have created who competently deliver the work of CRU. Also thank-you to the staff team and external consultants who deliver the work. The board is very proud of the work of CRU.

In closing, I want to say a big thank-you to the Board of Directors who supported me in my role as Chairperson. Narissa as secretary you have done an awesome job. Sherryn who assisted with finances – a job well done. Laura kept us on track as ‘time-keeper’ at board meetings. In her first year Cinnamon, who is a younger parent – has brought her enthusiasm and willingness to learn. Matt brings to the table the history of CRU and Natalie a wealth of knowledge around networks in the disability sector. Also, many thanks for stepping up when I needed to have a couple of months off due to health-related matters.

Sherryn will deliver the financial report and Marg will speak to the work of CRU. Again, many thanks to you all for the support provided to CRU.

Josey McMahon
Chairperson 2021 – 2022

Finance Report

On behalf of the Directors, I report on the financial activities of CRU and table the financial statements that represent the year and correspond to the story contained in the CEO's report for the year ended 30th June 2022.

It was a year where the Directors were tasked with visioning for the future. How and what might CRU do that ensures we remain current and sustainable into the future? We were challenged to think outside the box and look at opportunities. I would like to thank Elissa from About Your Transition for facilitating those workshops. The Directors also engaged the services of an external financial consultant to assist us in financial modelling, scenario forecasting and efficiencies with our reporting. I thank Raj from Find Insight for this work.

Revenue received in the financial year was predominately from a mixture of various Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grants and a grant from the Department of Education. Workshop and Fee for Service income streams performed well considering the COVID-19 restrictions throughout the year. Expenditure for the financial year was as projected. The directors would like to acknowledge the financial support received from Hudpac.

The net result of this and activities for the year is presented as a deficit in the financial statements for the year ended 30th June, 2022 of \$(137,250) in comparison to a profit of \$23,970 in the previous year. As disclosed in previous years CRU has drawn on the retained funds to assist in implementing its strategies and this year continued its commitment to those. The investment in Crucial Training Options Pty Ltd is shown in the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss. It is anticipated that activities will commence in 2023.

I thank the directors, stewardship group and staff for the ongoing conversations, planning and decisions that brings us to where we are now. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Margaret for her leadership and adopting an agility with managing and reporting on various contracts whilst safeguarding and working on the vision of creating and promoting positive change so that people living with disability can belong and actively contribute to social and economic life.

Thank you to all the staff for their commitment, resilience and flexibility in continuing to deliver on the work of CRU. I acknowledge the flexibility of funders enabling the negotiation of deliverables as a consequence of the delays with the COVID pandemic.

It has again been a very different year from those previously but as CRU has itself shown its agility and resilience, I am confident that it will continue to do so.

I also thank Sue Bradnock of Total Audit Services for the audited financial statements.

Sherryn West
Finance Chairperson 2021 – 2022

P&L Statement

**COMMUNITY RESOURCE UNIT LTD
STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**

	Note	<u>2022</u> \$	<u>2021</u> \$
INCOME			
Revenue	2	1,673,088	1,585,156
TOTAL INCOME	1(f)	<u>1,673,088</u>	<u>1,585,156</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Cost of Sales	5	162,351	160,183
GROSS PROFIT		<u>1,510,736</u>	<u>1,424,973</u>
Administration Costs	4	92,632	87,137
Amortisation Expense		122,220	122,220
Depreciation		22,626	12,545
Employee Benefits Expenses		1,328,064	1,119,102
Motor Vehicle Expense		1,460	1,174
Interest Expense		4,825	4,825
Other Expenses		26,948	5,803
Occupancy Expenses		13,030	17,853
Share in profit or loss in Crucial Options Training Pty Ltd		36,182	30,344
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>1,647,987</u>	<u>1,401,003</u>
SURPLUS BEFORE INCOME TAX		(137,250)	23,970
Income tax expense	1(b)	-	-
SURPLUS AFTER INCOME TAX		<u>(137,250)</u>	<u>23,970</u>

Financial Position Statement

**COMMUNITY RESOURCE UNIT LTD
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2022**

	Note	<u>2022</u> \$	<u>2021</u> \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash Assets	6	1,648,243	1,942,000
Trade Debtors		91,042	63,987
Inventory		16,918	16,630
Other assets		15,299	13,277
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		<u>1,771,502</u>	<u>2,090,550</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Investment - Crucial Training Options	7	18,475	54,857
Plant and equipment	8	30,341	28,330
Right of Use Assets	8	122,282	244,503
Leasehold Improvement	8	16,694	28,150
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		<u>187,792</u>	<u>355,640</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>1,959,294</u>	<u>2,391,533</u>
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	1,212,245	1,424,997
Provisions	10	214,817	165,765
Lease Liability	11	67,250	127,312
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>1,494,312</u>	<u>1,718,074</u>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	10	13,210	22,933
Lease Liability	11	67,250	128,754
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>80,460</u>	<u>151,687</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>1,574,772</u>	<u>1,869,761</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>384,521</u>	<u>521,772</u>
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Accumulated surplus brought forward		278,904	254,934
Capital Reserve		236,029	236,029
Reserves		6,839	6,839
Surplus/(Loss) for the year		(137,250)	23,970
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		<u>384,521</u>	<u>521,772</u>

Happenings at CRU



Natalie, Sherryn, Laura, Narissa, Matt and Cinnamon - CRU Board (missing Josey McMahon, Chair)



A rare change for all CRU staff to get together



Lindie, Gina, Ainsley, Sonia and Casey at School to Work Conference, Sydney



Gina and Casey - School to Work Team



The Board, StewardshipGroup and Staff working online to develop a Vision for CRU.

Connecting with Others

Getting the Quality Support You Need



CRU Road Trips
Above: Jo in Clermont
Right: Catherine in Longreach

Families for Inclusive Education - From Vision to Inclusion

Families for Inclusive Education - Peer Support Training



Getting to the Heart of What Matters Workshop



DEVELOPING CAREERS IN COMMUNITY
Crucial Training Options Launch - 17 August 2022

A Day with Janet Klees: Talking about Relationships and why they still matter



CEO Report

I want to dedicate this report to Jeremy Ward who has been a member, friend, and supporter of CRU from our beginnings. His wife Margaret was involved in the group that initiated the Search Conference in 1987 where the idea of CRU was born and then she became President when CRU was incorporated the following year. His daughter Mena worked for CRU as an admin assistant for a number of years until she got a better offer and took up a job in the city.

Jeremy presented workshops with us, spoke at our conferences, wrote for CRUcial Times, was interviewed for podcasts and videos, trusted us with his book and always generously shared his story, doing whatever he could to help improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Jeremy's sister Margaret and his daughter Mena both lived with disabilities and in his work, he drew on his lifetime of experience.

Between 2013-18 he chaired the Disability Leadership Project advisory committee at CRU and we were delighted that during that time he attended most of our family leadership weekends. He was so encouraging of younger families, particularly fathers, in their quest for inclusion.

While leading other organisations here in Queensland, he collaborated closely with CRU on projects concerning advocacy development and succession. A clear, strong and fiery advocate he was not afraid to take on powerful people and powerful systems to argue for the rights of our most vulnerable Queenslanders.

He stood up for what was right; he led by example; he was clear and consistent, and he shared generously. His legacy will live on in the hearts and minds of the many people whose lives he touched. In 2021-22 Jeremy delivered three workshops for CRU to assist people to develop their advocacy skills. In 2022-23 we will work with his daughter Rebecca to capture some of Jeremy's work on succession and advocacy and to keep it available to people with disabilities and their families in the future.

CRU has three strategic goals – thriving, delivering, and learning - and this report will reflect our progress in meeting them during the year.

2021-2022 was the second year of operating under a new funding structure. While the major transition was completed in the first year this has continued to require investment behind the scenes to ensure CRU moves to a more secure financial footing and that people with disabilities their families and allies can continue to access as easily as possible the information, encouragement, hope and inspiration that they look to CRU for.

We want to ensure that the changes in funding sources and agreements don't impact on the response that people get when they connect with us by phone, email, website or at a CRU event. Not everything that we believe is important is funded under the new arrangements and we continue to explore creative ways to include these offerings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has of course had a significant impact on our ability to do this during the year but we have managed to meet the majority of our commitments.

GOAL 1: Thriving: CRU will be a sustainable organisation which delivers on its vision and values

Apart from monthly Board meetings, the Directors of CRU are actively engaged in additional sub-committee work, stewardship group meetings, planning and this year gatherings to establish a new 10-year vision for CRU. Their commitment and hard work has been invaluable to CRU and to me as CEO through the year and I thank them for that. The Board has been encouraging me for some years to take an extended break but this was difficult given our uncertain future. In 2021-2022, the middle year of our 3-year funding, I was able to take a 9 week break and leave CRU in the capable hands of our senior consultants Lisa Bridle and Catherine Laherty. My thanks to them and also Board for making this happen.

In early May, Elissa Farrow facilitated a gathering of staff, Directors, stewardship group and friends of CRU to discuss a shared vision for CRU for the next ten years. This was followed by a session with Board directors in late May and again in early July. It's been a valuable exercise in clarifying what we believe should evolve and what should remain the same. It has also been valuable to include a broad range of CRU stakeholders in this conversation. The Board is keen that this vision becomes our roadmap and informs the strategic planning and financial planning for CRU.

The Stewardship group met in November and then joined us for the vision day in May. This group, Leanne, Lyn, Tony, Bobby, Pam and Richard bring great ideas and suggestions and provide ongoing support as a sounding board to the Directors and to me as CEO.

During the year the staff team welcomed Casey, Kyla and Kylie to join Kelly, Diana, Gina, Jo, Lisa, Lindie, Catherine, Kim, Janene, Kerrie, Kath, Danielle, Ainsley, and Sonia. In March, we were sad to farewell Hugh Rose-Miller after nine years at CRU and Edde Rose and Michael who had held short term administrative positions.

CRU's staffing model has changed in recent years to meet the new style of working and to allow our workforce to expand and contract. This year Sharon, Suellen, Sonja and Sue were engaged on a casual basis. They were involved in the delivery of CRU workshops and took on occasional pieces of work. They are a valuable extension to the team that are based in the office at South Brisbane. We also engaged a number of presenters, both local and international, to deliver their workshops for and with CRU. As a small organization we rely on external contractors and professionals to assist with various aspects of running CRU. We are fortunate to have committed and reliable contacts that we trust, that know us well and that we can call on for help and I want to acknowledge the contribution they each make to CRU's work. Some of these people have worked with CRU for many years. This year I want to thank Paul Hebinger, Pauline Heaney, Jon Eastgate, Mark O'Reilly, Cinta Graves, Paul Paxton Hall, Sue Bradnock, and Brendon Donohue who have worked closely with us to promote, develop and safeguard CRU in a whole variety of ways. There are countless other supporters who share their stories and experience on behalf of CRU, respond to our requests to support others and promote our work. They are a critical part of what makes CRU work.

The Board had identified the need to increase the strategic financial oversight of the organisation. We identified that a busy CEO and bookkeeper and voluntary Directors did not have the focus or range of expertise that the organisation requires currently and that this was important for succession. In April, Raj Gohain was engaged to work as a strategic financial advisor to the Board and in the period til June worked to understand the finances, culture and vision of CRU.

Partnerships

The National Alliance of Capacity Building Organisations (NACBO) has been operating for seven years. Three of the funding grants are with members of this consortia. The alliance has not met face to face since February 2020 but has continued to meet using Zoom and we have continued our shared work on measuring the outcomes of capacity building nationally over time.

CRU has been a member of the International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL) since 2011 and I am currently a member of the Australian Reference group. This is another group that has been impacted by COVID and have persevered, hosting some online events to connect people nationally with plans to meet face to face again in the new year.

CRU is a member of the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education, convened by Children and Young People with Disability, Australia (CYDA) and through that group has collaborated on a number of important reports, recommendations and roundtables. Lisa represents CRU on that group

The Anne Cross Leadership Initiative, established in 2017 to honour Anne's contribution is a partnership between Uniting Care and CRU. This initiative aims to contribute to the development of strong, principled leadership amongst people with disability and families throughout Queensland in order to contribute to better lives for people with disability. There was no project delivered in 2021-2022 due to both COVID and some other unforeseen delays. We will catch up in the new year with a plan to develop three small booklets on key topics for family leaders. During the year we started conversations with the Ward family about capturing Jeremys work on advocacy and succession in two of these booklets.

CRU participates in the Decision-Making Possibilities national advisory group convened by Western Australia's Individualised Services to support their current project on Supported Decision Making. I represent CRU on that group.

CRU has continued to support and promote Social Role Valorisation as a foundational framework. We have worked with the national body, ASRVA to safeguard SRV training in Australia and to this end, CRU supports two staff members who are interested in becoming SRV trainers. We have also contributed financially to the development of an online version of SRV training, regularly run the 2-day course, 'Towards a Better Life' for people with disabilities and their families, and provided meeting space, access to our mailing list and other practical support to the local group known as VIAA.

Government funding

CRU is engaged in four Information Linkages and Capacity Building funding grants (ILC) one individually and three as part of consortia. These are administered by the federal Department of Social Services. There are also two contracts with Queensland government.

The grants are as follows:

1. Information provision, "My Home: My Way" as part of a consortia. This work began in November 2019 and will continue for 3 years.
2. My home: My Way Making Individualised Living Options real – also as part of a consortia.
3. Individual capacity building work. This work began in April 2020 for 3 years. This is specific to CRU, relatively flexible and will cover the cost of continuing some of what we have regarded as our core work.
4. Economic participation "From School to Work project "as part of a consortia. This work began 1st July 2020 and will continue for approx. 3 years.
5. The final year of the contract with Department of Education finished in June 2022. A short extension has been granted til December 2022 with another application pending.
6. Vocational placements in the homes of people with disability project (Feb- Oct 2022) with Department of Employment, Small Business and Training.

It is worth noting that all of this funding finishes by mid-2023. We have had offers of a one-year extension on the four ILC grants but no details on how much or to do what. We also have an application pending with the Department of Education. Also worth noting is that this funding is for building the capacity of people with disabilities and their families.

Our work to resource and support paid workers does not currently receive government funding but is offered by CRU on a fee for service basis and workers are welcome to attend some of the events offered to families. In June we launched our subscription program for workers in the sector. This has been well received and we were delighted that several people donated places for workers who could not otherwise afford it.

The shift in income streams; reporting requirements, working from home and the growth in the CRU team has required changes to the office systems. Work to rebuild our mailing list, develop a new data base and refine our shared network has continued this year. This work behind the scenes is not adequately funded. After the first year we were clear that CRU would need to invest in administration positions in order for the organisation to run smoothly and a restructure was conducted early in the year. A full-time reception position was created along with two other part time project resource positions and the part time Office Manager role. Michael Pender worked in the new full-time role from January until May and Kylie Harrison joined CRU in early July 2022.

As a small organization we are always concerned about how visible we are. This year we had a steady increase in Facebook followers to 3500. Email remains our strongest medium with 8,240 individuals and 2,203 organisations that have selected to receive emails from CRU.

Following consultation with the indigenous community, we have included artwork and messaging that we hope will be more welcoming to first nation's peoples. To increase our accessibility, we signed up with the Translating and Interpreting service (TIS) and also bought a portable hearing loop with funding from the Brisbane City Council.

The Families for Inclusive Education team has focused on reaching out to families and organisations in communities that are unlikely to just respond to a CRU event flyer. For example, they have offered individual consultations and follow up to families from CALD backgrounds; customised workshops for small groups and partnered in running workshops with the community engagement counsellors for aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students.

We participated in the following consultations or groups:

- Community of Practice with Carers Qld on transition to adult life.
- Department of Communities on Disability action week
- Department of Education stakeholder reference group on disability resource allocation
- QUT on a positive communication framework for parent school partnerships
- UNSW research on supported decision making
- All Abilities Planning group for the National Disability Strategy via QDN
- Centre for Social Impact research (Swinburne) on ILC for DSS
- Consultation commissioned by Dept of Social Services for the Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan on current models of peer support for families of young children with disability.
- Education Advocates mtg for youth and young people with disabilities (vulnerable youth in QLD)

We gave presentations to:

- Down Syndrome Association
- Belonging Matters
- Reframing Disability
- Square Peg, Round Hole – podcast
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Vic branch)
- Qld Catholic Education Commission
- Parent to Parent
- EACH, Ipswich.
- pre-service Secondary Teachers at UQ, as part of their Inclusive Education unit.

Income generation

In a bid to help CRU transition to a more secure financial footing we will continue to seek government funding but will also grow and develop our fee for service arm. We are becoming increasingly clear that the purpose of this arm of CRU will be to fund the core functions of CRU, rather than our future being so dependent on the vagaries of government funding programs.

While this is the purpose, what we choose to offer and how we offer it will of course be determined by the values and priorities of CRU. As this work is interconnected with all other CRU work the details of it will be described under the second goal of Delivery. At a time when much of our work is defined by deliverables negotiated months if not years prior, the beauty of the fee for service arm of CRU is its flexibility. If there is something that people want that is not already on offer or offered through one of the government subsidized initiatives, then we can tailor something for a person or for a group of people. These requests are met by staff from across CRU, including our casual team, depending on the skills and experience required.

Crucial Training Options, the RTO developed in partnership with Staffing Options applied for registration in March 2021; was audited by Australian Skills Quality Authority in August 2021 and received registration in November 2021. These long delays caused issues with staff recruitment, and we have seen a lot of changes already. We are fortunate that CRU staff members Diana Kerr and Danielle Mason and Debbie Wiseman from Staffing Options have completed their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and will teach the Certificate III in Individualised Support when it starts. This initiative has required a large investment of money and time and we are very grateful to Carol Brosi from Staffing Options who has been a great partner in this work. I also want to thank Danielle, Sally, Joel and Eirin for their work with Carol and I to take this from an idea to a reality.

Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The reduction in government direction about COVID-19 this year has increased the complexity of managing an organisation as we have tried to navigate what needs to be done legally but what we also believe is required ethically to keep people with disability safe and to keep our staff safe. Keeping up with the changing thinking on vaccinations, COVID plans, check in apps, mask mandates, isolation periods, working from home etc is time consuming and frustrating. In recent years, we have fought hard to attract funding for travel to regional Queensland and face to face workshops and we did not want to convert everything to online unless absolutely necessary. This has meant we have needed to plan and replan many events; calculate risks of booking flights, venues and accommodation and try to judge the appetite of people and their families to attend face to face events. All of this is inefficient and frustrating, and I want to thank the team for their good-natured determination to keep reshaping what we offer. It has also had an impact on the overall numbers of workshop attendees.

To protect and support our staff we purchased air purifiers and masks and in addition to the lockdowns we predominantly worked from home through January and February with a staggered return to the office between March and June to minimise numbers in the office at any one time. We didn't hold events at CRU for some months which did enable us to move some desks into the training room to increase social distancing. We explored introducing a policy requiring vaccination but did not proceed with that.

GOAL 2: DELIVERING: CRU will work with individuals, families, organisations, allies and the wider community to deliver on our mission.

Our challenge during 2021 and 2022 has been to combine the work from all the various funding streams with the fee for service arm to serve people with disabilities and their families in a way that is comprehensive, coherent and useful.

i. What we focused on:

I want to describe here the areas of focus of the work of CRU, not the particular projects or funding streams that we currently have to support the work in those areas.

Inclusive Education:

Our main strategy to further Inclusive Education is the Families for Inclusive Education project which involved the delivery of workshops across the state; peer network development; webinars and online resources to build the capacity of families to advocate for, nurture, and sustain their child's successful participation in inclusive education. This was the third and final year of our initial funding agreement. Lisa leads this project and was joined by Lindie, Ainsley, and Sonia. Hugh and Kyla also support the team. The team has been alert to maximising the impact and has worked to bring families together in Brisbane; to connect broadly with families while on regional visits and to assist families to develop and share their stories at full day workshops.

The project was externally evaluated by Professor Suzanne Carrington of QUT again this year. While it's heartening to see a steadily growing group of informed, connected, and passionate families engaging with CRU and working not just for an inclusive education but a full and meaningful life in community for their sons and daughters we are also deeply concerned that in the past year, many of our strongest family leaders have withdrawn their children from school and taken up home schooling. We have raised this as a crisis in our quarterly meetings with the Department of Education.

Finding a job:

This year, the main way that we could resource people on finding employment was through the School to Work initiative which is a three year initiative to support high school students with disability and their families to engage with employment. Primarily an information strategy to help students and their families build confidence and explore what work could look like for them we have resources to deliver webinars and workshops across the state. Gina Barwell-Pickup worked with Casey Northam to deliver this project and they were backed up by Hugh, Tracey Pate and Sharon Bourke. Interstate consortia partners met through the year to share ideas and resources.

CRU developed resources for a webinar featuring interviews with Jane Sherwin, to provide families with an SRV lens for thinking about employment and also five small videos featuring young Brisbane adults with disability in the workforce. Our thanks to Jack and Andrea Baggoley, Freya and Donna Toussaint, Emma and Jo Lynam, Will and Anna Coventry and Bobby and Tracey Pate for allowing us to share their stories.

We have also developed an online workshop on employment for all ages which will be offered in the new year.

A home of your own:

Our strongest contribution to this work has been through our involvement in the My Home My Way projects, which includes the Making Individualised Living Options (ILO) real partnership as well.

As a consortia member, we delivered an online workshop and contributed to the development of a new website and 2 podcasts and 2 videos for the site. We developed podcasts with Tammy, Kelly and Bobby Noone and also Sherryn West and Marisha Targett. We developed videos with Julius Sigut and his family, Genna Harrison and her family and Matthew Holles and his family. These will all be released in the new financial year.

There is a lot of interest in people having homes of their own and we are keen to find ways to support people to achieve this. My thanks to Danielle, Jo, Hugh, Kyla and Bronwyn for collaborating on this work and my thanks to Heather Batt and Myrtle Cleary for sharing their story with us.

Danielle and Jo have led the ILO work offering large group presentations, smaller meetings and individual conversations to families and their supporters to assist them to understand and assess the benefits and limits of this funding type.

Shaping Great lives:

School, work and home are key elements of a good life but there are other skills and frameworks that are also critical to ensure people are safely and deeply embedded in community. To assist people to shape great lives we offered workshops on advocacy skills; the dilemmas of supporting choice; understanding intellectual disability; responding well to challenging behaviour, sensory and movement difference, connecting to community. vulnerability and safeguarding; succession and planning for the future,

We have tried to offer events that would appeal to people new to this sector and events that can deepen the understanding of people who have been journeying with us for a long time. I thank Catherine for her strong lead on the majority of this work. She is well supported by Diana, Casey and Jo.

In addition to these workshops and webinars, CRU has convened a small working group since August 2020 to think about what is needed in our sector to assist people to do well in this new era with its new threats and opportunities. We are particularly interested in the people who are most likely to miss out and conscious that new ways are needed, or perhaps a return to some old ways that have been lost.

The group engaged Bridget Patchell to interview identified leaders and innovators and explore evaluation reports and documents of organisations that have closed, to capture in a written document some of the key factors for their success in serving people with disability and what can be learned from them. Despite the current challenges we are mindful that the Queensland disability sector has a history of action and innovation, led by people with disabilities, family members and other allies. This project aims to pass on this knowledge and use it to strengthen ongoing action and change.

A number of attempts to gather people together to spread the questions and conversation further and use the information gathered to work for change were thwarted by COVID and will be taken up in the new year.

To shape great lives, we took on a broad range of projects and initiatives during the year on a fee for service basis. In addition to providing training for 3 teams managed by people with disability (20 participants) and 7 organisations (115 participants) we also provided consultancies to 10 people with disability and 3 organisations.

Our disability awareness training with the Logan City Council staff has not gone as planned given changes of personnel in Council and shifting training priorities with their staff working from home. We have provided 7 workshops all of which were very well received.

The Getting to the Heart of what matters 2-day workshop was offered four times with 78 support workers attending. This has now been developed in an online format and will be offered in the new year.

In March, CRU began an update of the Optimal Individual Service Design course which was developed by Michael Kendrick. We have two roles – one is voluntary, to convene an international governance group to safeguard the delivery of the course in the future. This small group has representatives from Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia and the membership also spans the generations. The second role is to work with Michael to update the presentation materials and make them accessible to a group of trainers. CRU will be recompensed for this work.

We continued our projects to explore vocational placements in the homes of people with disability as part of the NTSSS. The first phase was completed in October 2021. Two fact sheets, one for students to prepare them for their placement in someone's home and the second for people with disability and family members who might consider taking on the workplace supervisor role were developed. Our key recommendation was that an agency or middleman be developed to facilitate these placements. With the assistance of CSIA we secured further funding from DESBT to develop and pilot The Placement Agency. Phase 2 began in March and will run until December 2022. We want to acknowledge the assistance of CSIA, others from this industry, our focus group members and workplace supervisors for their contributions to these projects.

Using Support Well:

Another important safeguard in this time of increased funding and resources is for people and their families to use their support well. We ran workshops on this topic and trust that the values-based training for support workers, Getting to the Heart of What matters, offered by CRU also increases the chance that people and their families will get to use their support well.

Leadership Development:

CRU is seeking dedicated funding for leadership development but has not yet been successful. We keep leadership development on the agenda through various capacity building strategies.

We offered a 2-day masterclass for people and their families on the topic of Sensory and Movement difference in June and the Families for Inclusive Education project convened gatherings in October and March to resource families from across the state in inclusive education and importantly how to connect and support other families.

There were opportunities for leaders to share their stories at webinars, workshops and in podcasts and videos. There were opportunities to contribute to thinking via focus groups on a number of topics.

CRU would not operate as it does without the generosity of people with disabilities and family members who continue to share their wisdom, insights and experience with us and we thank them sincerely for being prepared to do this.

ii: How we worked – our strategies for change:

Our contributions to resourcing people to work for change contain the broad strategies of running events and also the distribution of resources to people around the state. These strategies provide information and sometimes they serve as an introduction to the work and thinking of CRU. In addition to this we are keen to provide opportunities for people to deepen their learning through individual conversations and connecting and linking with each other.

Events:

We delivered 98 events during the year with 2212 registrations. Please note this does not equate to 2212 individuals, as many people attend more than one event. About 50% of those registrations were parents or extended family members which is a reflection of the funding CRU now receives for the inclusive education project and the School to Work initiative which are large projects designed specifically for family members. People with disabilities were well represented at the other CRU events. Of these events, 39 were online either as webinars or more interactive online workshops or

conversations and the remaining 59 were face to face which is quite an achievement given the impact of the pandemic and regular lockdowns. 27 of the face-to-face events were held in Brisbane and 32 in regional Queensland. CRU sought and obtained resources to ensure we could travel to more remote parts of Queensland and this year CRU staff also visited smaller centres such as Clermont, Emerald, Barcaldine and Longreach. There were over 950 registrations by workers to CRU events.

Resource development and distribution

The Families for Inclusive Education team continued to provide families with many resources through the year, some developed in the first two years of that project. This year they also distributed two newsletters which contain a lot of material and useful links to equip families.

In 2021, the Anne Cross Leadership Initiative funded two webinars on the impact of sensory and movement difference with four presenters from the United States – Kate McGinnity, Anna Nikolay, Lisa Ladson and Sharon Hammer. This year we negotiated with the presenters to offer 2 videos for hire through our website. This was our first foray into videos-on-demand, but we have plans to add more. The two websites play a key role in our communications, and we were able to upgrade our accessibility during the year. www.cru.org.au and thegoodlife.cru.org.au had approximately 66,220 users and 156,535 Page Views across the two sites this year. I thank Hugh Rose-Miller and more recently Kyla Ranger and the admin team for taking a lead on this work. We also engage Cinta Graves and Dan Holman with the work behind the scenes and Brendon Donohue checks our accessibility.

Individual conversations and consultations

There were 286 requests for information during the year via phone calls, emails and visits to the CRU office. Some of the calls are short just seeking some information, while others welcome the opportunity to talk through their own situation at more depth. We have sought and secured funding to provide this through two of our funded projects, in particular for people who are not NDIS participants or who are agency managed, and we are also happy to discuss the provision of this service on a fee for service basis for those who are self managing and plan managing. About 10% of these calls were from people who are not family members and included teachers, professionals, workers and friends.

Connecting and linking

CRU played a role in bringing people together in a variety of ways. There are peer support strategies where people were linked in a semi-formal way, some facilitated by CRU and others started by CRU but now operating more independently. The majority of these are topic based. This year, we were able to support the establishment of a family voice for children with mental illness and psychosocial disability. CRU also fosters and resources a network of peer supporters for inclusive education. We have been really pleased to see people connect with each other, even through and despite so many things being on-line this year. Apart from these semi-formal networks, CRU also continued to connect people in more individualized ways.

Change and Strategy

It is part of CRU's mission to challenge what is not in the best interest of people with disability and each year we commit time and resources to trying to influence systemic change. This is a small but important part of CRU's work. This year, with a small amount of funding coordinated by DANA, we co-hosted two information sessions on Sharing your experience with the Disability Royal Commission with SUFY.

I want to express a huge thank you to the people who did all of this work. Some team members were engaged on particular projects, while others worked across the whole organisation, responding as needed to an ever-changing workplace. I want to thank all the staff, casuals, part timers and full timers; those who are still with us and those who have left us during the year, for their careful

thoughtful work, flexibility and commitment during the 2021/2022 year. I want to also make particular mention of and thank our Administration and Finance team – Kim Jensen, Kerrie White, Kath Fleming and Janene Parsons, and also Edde Rose, Michael and Meegan who were with us short term. This hard-working team are very generous in the way they resource their colleagues and they too have felt the impact of all the shifts and changes brought about by the pandemic.

GOAL 3: LEARNING: CRU will continue to improve our work and seek out new ideas.

CRU has always sought feedback after events and distribute a biennial survey, the most recent in late 2021 provided very valuable feedback about what we are doing well and what could be improved. Over 200 people responded to this survey. To get to the deeper questions of what difference our work makes in people's lives, during the year, as a member of the National Alliance we commissioned and participated in a two-year evaluation to gauge the impact of capacity building over time. Academics from the Social Policy Research Centre (Flinders University and the University of New South Wales) visited CRU in March and spent two days observing, interviewing people, and documenting stories of change. Following a similar process in the other states they released a draft interim report which is not yet finalised.

During 2021-2022 CRU engaged external reviewer Professor Suzanne Carrington to assist us to measure the impact of our work in the Families for Inclusive Education project and 99 Consulting has been engaged by the School to Work consortia to evaluate the initiative. The feedback on both these initiatives was positive and affirming of our direction with both reviews giving us food for thought on how we could improve. We thank people for taking the time to fill out surveys and those who agreed to be interviewed. We have also maintained our accreditation under ISO 2015.


In closing, I want to share a quote from Jeremy Ward that we use in a number of our workshops:

To craft the good life, we need to do the hard work on clarifying and sustaining our vision of what we want, not what others tell us are the limits of what's possible. If we try to choose in a vacuum not knowing what it is we really want others will choose for us.

While Jeremy was talking to people with disabilities and their families when he said this, it is also an important message for CRU.

We need to be clear about who we are and what we want to do so we can seek funding and resources to achieve that. We don't want to wait to see what's on offer and shift our core values and vision to survive. We want to find ways to self-fund the core of CRU so that that continues regardless of what government grants come and go.

We have started exploring what that means, what it costs and ways to do that. 2021-2022 has helped us clarify the work we need to do and to gather the people we need to help us take this further in the coming year.


Chief Executive officer
22/10/2022



Expanding Ideas; Creating Change

Community Resource Unit Ltd

ABN 16 143 460 250 ACN: 617 860 009

Level 2/43 Peel Street
PO Box 3722
South Brisbane QLD 4101

p. 07 33844 2211
e. cru@cru.org.au
www.cru.org.au