

ANNUAL REPORT



**mental health
foundation**

A C T



2021–2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Brien Hallett

I am pleased to present my first report as President of the MHF Board.

This year has been one of consolidation as the ACT Region emerged from the constraints of COVID 19 lockdowns but still faced various challenges.

MHF has continued to support our community by providing a range of services including Accommodation, Support Coordination and Recovery Coaching, Outreach and Plan Management. The Rites of Passage Program for teenage boys and their fathers/carers was postponed due to COVID restrictions but we hope to launch it in 2023.

After its introduction in 2020, MHF has continued to provide a Mental Health Discharge Assistance Program to assist people in the important and challenging early days after they leave the Mental Health Unit at the Canberra Hospital. The continued support for this program by the ACT Government means that this work can continue to make a positive difference in our community.

In his report last year, the then President recorded that MHF had made an important strategic step by changing our structure to a company limited by guarantee. The various administrative steps to effect this change were finalised this year which will mean that MHF can serve the wide region beyond the ACT border.

Thanks to the work of the Treasurer and MHF finance team the organisation continues to be in sound financial shape despite the difficult times in which we operate. The board has continued to explore ways to diversify our operation and funding sources to ensure that the organisation is sustainable.

Of course, none of this is possible without the expertise and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and board members. I wish to particularly acknowledge the contribution of former President Paul McGinness who has continued in a volunteer role providing advice to the CEO and leadership team. Being a board member is a demanding role, particularly in terms of the time of already busy people. So I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Daniel Ryall and Simonette Benedictos who stepped down during the reporting period.

Finally, our CEO for more than a decade, Angie Ingram, resigned in September to undertake fresh challenges in her hometown of Cooma. The board thanks her for her work during this time and wishes her well in her new endeavours.

Brien Hallett
President



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Peter Lennon (Acting CEO)

I am pleased to present this report as acting CEO following the resignation of Angie Ingram after more than a decade's service.

Angie led MHF during the transition from block funding to being an NDIS provider, as well as the challenges of the COVID pandemic. I know I speak for both staff and clients of MHF in thanking her for her contribution and wishing her well in her new role.

In the reporting period, we focused on our main service offerings of Support Co-ordination and Recovery Coaching, Accommodation, Outreach, and NDIS Plan Management. As the President has mentioned in his report, I hope that following COVID delays, MHF can finally offer a Rites of Passage Program for young men in the forthcoming year.

Participants tell us that they particularly value our Outreach Program in which our staff assist clients to access community activities, as well as building capacity in important daily tasks such as shopping, catching public transport, and maintaining contact with others. For some time now MHF has struggled to make Outreach sustainable under the NDIS model, and I have worked with the Board to look at ways that we can continue to offer this important service.

Discussions have continued with ACT Health and the Canberra Hospital to refine the discharge program whereby MHF provides interim accommodation for people being discharged from the Adult Mental Health Unit at the hospital. This program makes a

real difference and I look forward to continuing to work with colleagues in these agencies to improve this service.

During the year, my colleagues and I provided information to support our continued accreditation as a mental health service provider. While these exercises are time-consuming for a small organisation such as MHF, the feedback and suggestions received provide valuable information to help us move forward.

Throughout the year we have also refreshed the MHF website and corporate livery to reflect modern standards, and to support people who want to engage – at least initially – with us in a digital format. This involved a lot of work behind the scenes, and I thank our staff and the contractors for making it happen.

Finally, I wish to thank my colleagues for their flexibility, dedication, and patience during this transition period.

Peter Lennon
Acting CEO

TREASURER'S REPORT

David Talbot

I am pleased to present the 2022 Treasurer's Report.

COVID lockdowns and ongoing uncertainty impacted our participants, demand and provision of services, and our operations. Taking the lessons learnt from the previous year, the 2021-22 budget was measured. A budget that necessarily balanced achievable growth with the health and wellbeing of our staff and consumers.

The continued priority focus, in terms of ongoing financial sustainability, has been on maximising National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) revenue while diversifying to alternative revenue streams. The continued successful partnership with ACT Government's Mental Health Discharge Program and other grant funding provided the opportunity to expand service provision and reduce reliance on NDIS revenue. I would like to commend the executive team, and all MHF staff, for their continued resilience over the last 12 months and for investing in MHF to help identify opportunities for growth, improvement opportunities and for supporting our consumers.

In FY 2021-22 MHF recorded a loss, predominantly due to reduced demand for NDIS services and ACT Health grants resulting in lower revenue compared to budget. While expenses were managed, MHF strategically invested in refreshing our brand, website and social media presence to expand our market share and awareness of MHF's service offerings. Additionally, this investment was in preparation for the change in structure to a company limited by guarantee that will enable operations to expand beyond the ACT border.

MHF's finance manager and team should be commended for their continued drive to improve financial practices and controls. This is evidenced through the unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 30 June 2022 and improved rigour of financial information provided to the Board.

The current financial year brings some challenges with the economic environment and increased cost of living, which will impact our community. The Board and MHF leadership will continue to look for opportunities to support the community, while proactively managing the financial position of MHF. We will continue to monitor trends, evolving government mental health policies and community needs, to invest in areas of the greatest unmet need.

A special thanks to Brien Hallett, President, for his leadership over a particularly uncertain and challenging year and for your continued direction during a period of change for the organisation.

Thank you again to the Board, the acting Chief Executive Officer and broader MHF team for your dedication. This dedication and oversight ensures MHF continues as a high quality service provider and enables MHF to continue to strengthen our reputation as a successful partner for government to provide tailored and empathetic mental health services to our community.

David Talbot
Treasurer

November 2022

SERVICE REPORTS

Support Coordination

"My anxiety is relieved by talking with my Support Coordinator and Recovery Mentor. They help me to be more independent and go into the community with more hope and confidence. They are helping me rebuild my life and be resilient and are helping with the healing process. They help me being positive and creating hope" S M 2022

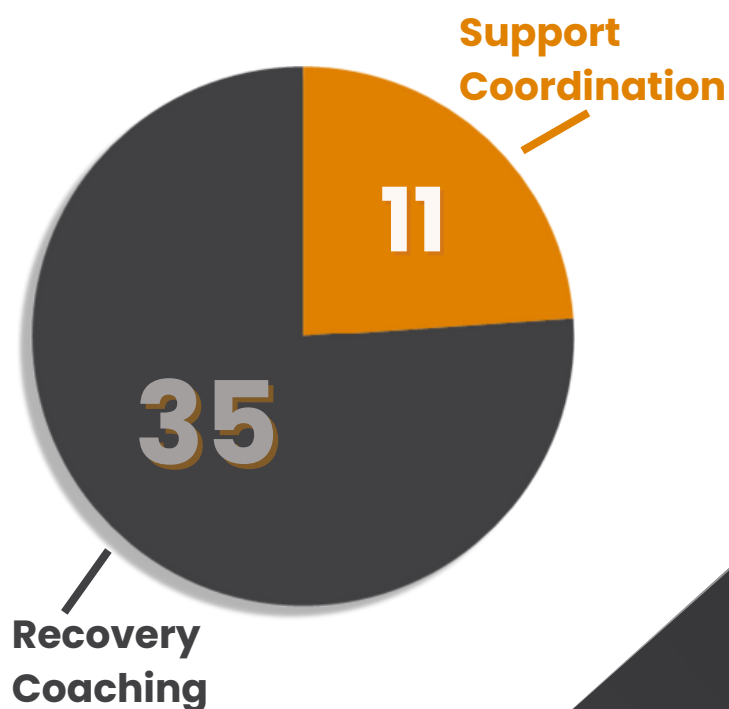
The MHF Support Coordination team plays a vital role to participants with a NDIS plan. The team worked hard during the COVID pandemic to make sure the participants received the appropriate services they required on an ongoing basis. We continued to grow and improve over the financial year.

Our Support Coordinators are highly skilled and experienced, who supported the participants to understand and implement their NDIS plans, while working closely with them, their families, and guardians. They helped the participants to organise supports and services, assist with service agreements and monitor the available funds for the duration of their NDIS plans.

MHF is looking for opportunities to grow beyond the ACT region and exploring the opportunities and risks associated with this venture. As a learning organisation, we continue to provide training and upskilling to our staff to grow our team of coordinators.

At the end of this past financial year, we had 35 Support Coordination participants, two of whom have transitioned to Recovery Coaching. A couple of the participants have not required Support Coordination anymore, as they have learned to coordinate their respective plans themselves.

SC/RC Clients Ratio



Recovery Coaching

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Reputable organisation, nice staff members, well-resourced generally – TM 2022

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Recovery Coaching is an opportunity for a person to take greater control over their life, to manage challenges, and to assist people to build on their strengths, increase confidence, get motivated to make changes, try new things and improve relationships.

MHF is proud to be one of the first providers to offer this service. Psychosocial Recovery Coaching became available from July 2020 for participants of the NDIS. Currently, we support 11 Recovery Coaching participants, having received five new Recovery Coaching participants to support this year.

Our Recovery Coaching team adopts a person-centred holistic approach and understands that every individual is unique. Our focus is to help participants build and develop their skills, based on their personal goals and aspirations while connecting them to appropriate support providers.

Outreach Services

“Thanks for supporting and helping me, and for taking time to visit and to listen to what my support needs and goals are.” C W, 2021

Who We Are

Since the NDIS was established, MHF has continued to provide participants with support in the COVID environment through their unique NDIS plans.

Our staff used a co-design methodology to give our participants trauma-informed care and to assist them in making decisions.

In the midst of the COVID pandemic, participants expressed concern for their own personal safety, and this concern was mirrored in the decreased demand for Outreach services. Some of the people who received our care also struggle with chronic physical illnesses, alcoholism, other drug use, along with their mental-health issues.

By taking more safety and hygiene precautions, we provided Outreach services to help participants attain their set goals and milestones in accordance with recovery principles. The participants' rights and obligations, as well as their power of choice and control, continued to serve as our main guiding principles.

“

I rely on my support worker to help me achieve my most important goals because he understands how important they are to me. – H M, 2022

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What We Did

We worked with participants to take part in neighbourhood, social, and recreational activities. These activities included going to appointments, shopping, eating out or seeing a show, seeing family and friends, and exercising.

This meant that members of our Outreach team were always accessible, whether

online or in person. With COVID protections easing, participants generally chose face-to-face help over the digital medium. Despite this, participants did learn to get more accustomed to the digital medium.

Through mentoring, peer support, and individual skill development, we helped participants increase their capacity by enhancing their abilities to independently engage in community, social, recreational, and daily personal activities. Furthermore, participants improved their aptitude for paying bills, participating in social activities, keeping in touch with people, and using public transportation.

While there was still a demand for quick out-of-state visits to increase their capacity (such as travels to Canberra’s surrounds, as well as Queanbeyan and Bateman’s Bay in nearby NSW), Outreach continued to take advantage of this optimistic trend, where it was possible.

According to their needs, we made these community activities and service-related transportation available to participants from the morning until evening.

“*I’ve been working on my relationships for many years, and the time Ada has spent with me has helped me piece together the different parts of my life that I’ve been working on.*” G H, 2022

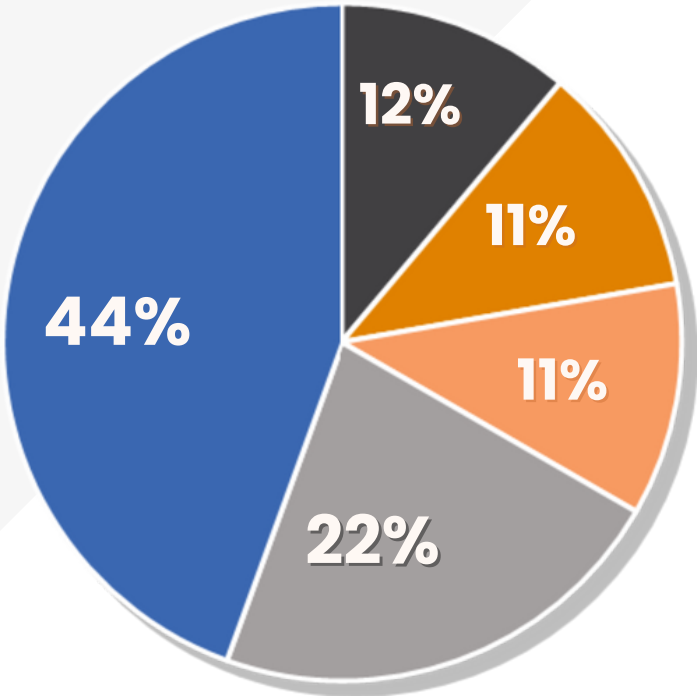
Half of the participant base for Outreach comprises persons identifying as female, while 49% identify as being male, and 1% identifying as being transgender.

The Outreach team served people of different ages. The majority of participants (41%) were above the age of 56, followed by those aged between 46 and 55 (31%) and participants under the age of 46 (28%).

Among participants who received Outreach assistance, 44% said they were living with schizophrenia, followed by 22% who said they were living with bipolar disorder.

Primary Disability Type Distribution

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar
- Acquired Brain Injury
- Neuro Degenerative Parkinsons Disease



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“Staff have been very helpful and efficient in their work. I am happy with the support I am getting at the moment. (I’d like for MHF) to keep supporting me to achieve my day-to-day goals.” M A, 2022

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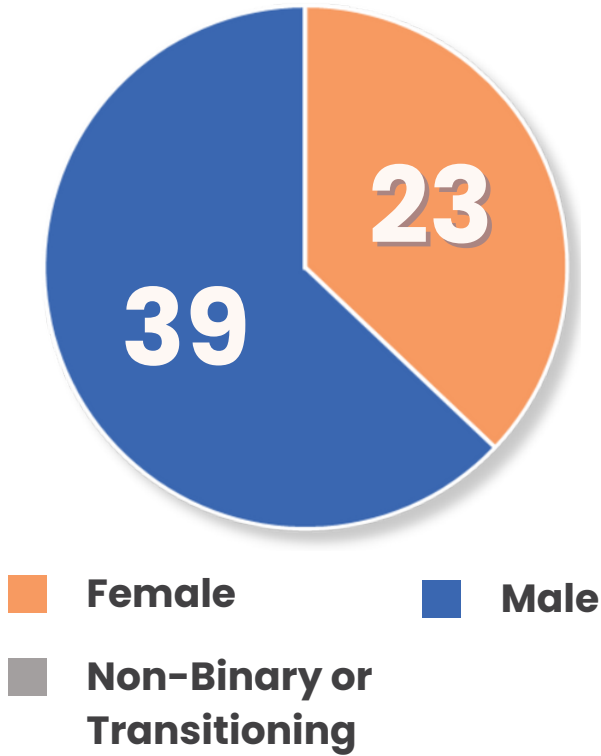
When the Outreach team provides its services, person-centredness continues to be its primary concern.

The Outreach team keeps in regular contact with participants to develop their capacity to enhance their quality of life in accordance with their goals. The team will continue to do the following to reach this goal:

- 1.** Assist participants during NDIS planning sessions and processes;
- 2.** Collaborate with participants' support networks, who include their guardians/ carers, clinical managers, and other service providers to facilitate continuity of support within the community.
- 3.** Establish connections with other service providers.
- 4.** Inform participants of NDIS rule changes; and
- 5.** Put money towards training opportunities.

Shahrin Ariff
Program Manager (Outreach)

Gender

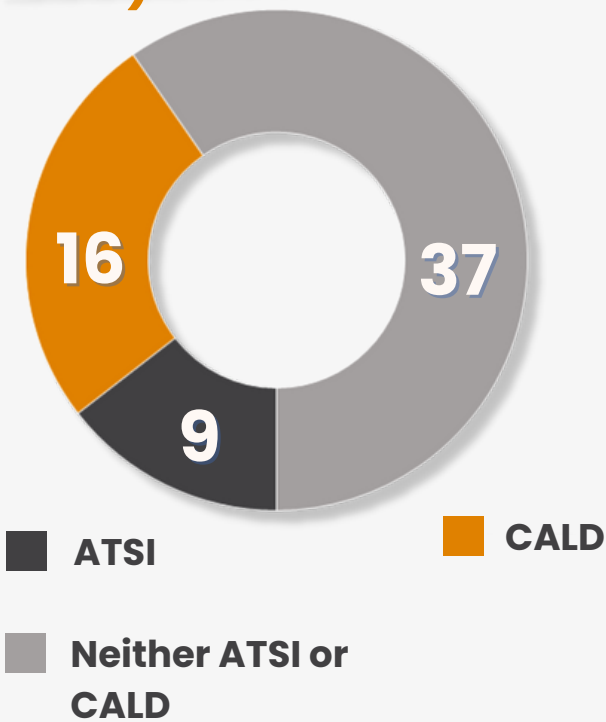


Mental Health Discharge Assistance Program

MHF had the pleasure of being able to continue to operate the Mental Health Discharge program this year. The program started during the COVID pandemic as a collaborative program with Canberra hospitals Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) and ACT Health. The program was built to assist people experiencing homelessness or inappropriate accommodation when exiting mental health services.

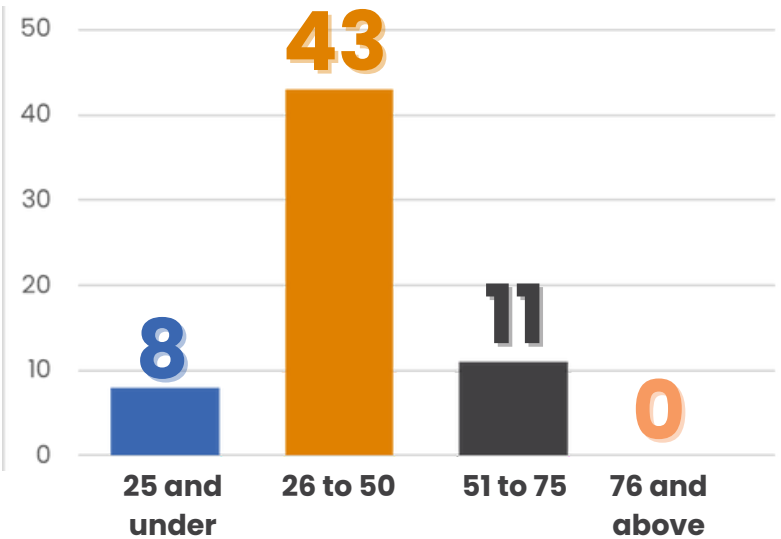
The program has a capacity of seven people with beds in Kambah and O'Connor. The participants can stay 14 days with the possibility of extension (16 people required extension).

Identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

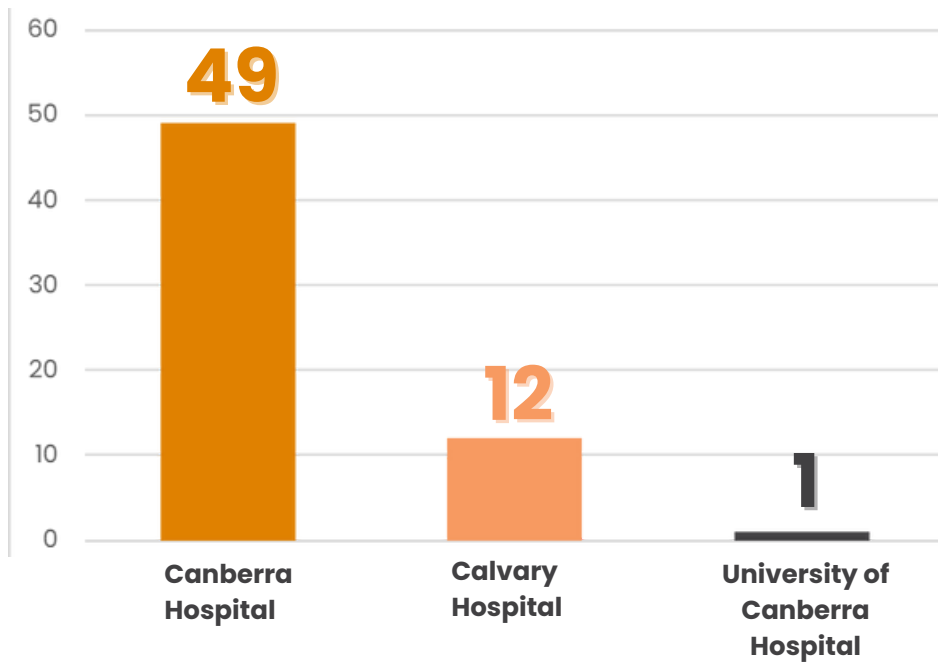


During the financial year, the program accepted and assisted 62 people to find the next step on their accommodation journey.

Age



Hospital discharged from:



Nearly 70% were extremely satisfied with the service.

During their stay we assisted people not only to work towards their accommodation goals but other important tasks and goals they set for themselves. Below are some examples of goals participants utilised our team to achieve:

- Start an out of hospital routine and prepare for out of hospital life.
- Start cooking for myself again.
- Regain my financial independence
- Regain documents e.g. birth certificate, proof of age card, bank cards
- Apply for Centrelink
- Apply for NDIS
- Help rebuild my relationships with family and friends
- Get connected with ACT health services
- Get connected with community supports
- Find a job
- Feel better and less stressed about my circumstances

When feedback was collected 83% of the participants felt that their goals were met with the help of the program and 16% felt that their goals were moderately achieved but still ongoing.

“Expectations met = timely service and caring from all staff”

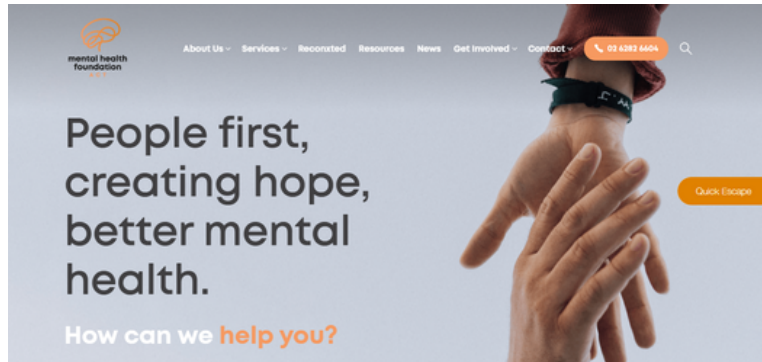
“All goals met. STAFF HELPED ME!”

“The interview at the hospital made me feel safe about coming to the program”

“MHF Staff went above and beyond to assist and support. There are bottlenecks with other support services that are difficult to navigate. This in no shape is a result of the MHF staff. Thank you for a safe place to begin the long road back. with Love and gratitude- J”

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

We were excited to start turning our attention to things other than the pandemic – all in support of the people we serve.



1. This year, with the support of Threesides Marketing, we launched a new website. The website aims to provide support to people with lived experience of mental illness wherever they are on their journey. At the same time, it better represents our achievements so as to attract the vital support we need. Check it out www.mhf.org.au



2. We created a new logo for MHF which illustrates the sometimes circuitous nature of the recovery journey and the shared wisdom in the partnership between participant and MHF.

3. Masters of Social Work student, Emily Klukas worked on a research project identifying the consequences to individuals and the community to the delay in accessing clinical supports.

4. Emily Klukas also worked on a research project looking at the mental health of older persons. The research has continued since to look at developing solutions that will meet the gaps in service delivery.

**Insights on Delays in
Accessing Mental
Health Care:**

**A Landscape Scan to
Inform Mental Wellness
Solutions**

2021

5. In June, MHF was awarded a grant of \$7,900 from the 2022 Infrastructure and Capacity Building grant scheme funded by the ACT Government. MHF will partner with The Coaching Room to provide Integral Leadership training to the Executive team, starting in the first quarter of the next financial year.

Here's just a taste of what you'll get:

- ✓ Learn how to accelerate your development as a Leader
- ✓ Clearly Identify your current Leadership Strengths and Weaknesses
- ✓ Apply the Models and Tools from the program to help solve your Team/Organisational challenges
- ✓ Reduce Meetings by 80% and Learn to Prioritise
- ✓ Lead higher levels of performance by creating an engaging team vision
- ✓ Become a leader of Context that Transcends and Includes Performance
- ✓ Learn how to Engage & Retain Talent, while Transforming under-performers
- ✓ Learn how to address Complex Issues Quickly and Sustainably



6. MHF, in partnership with ACT Health, won a Mental Health Month Award for Innovative Person-centred Valued Support. In this photo you will see (from the left) Roz Fitzgerald from ACT Health, Angie Ingram from MHF, Dr Elizabeth Moore from Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Ellen Mugridge from MHF.

7. During Mental Health Month 2021, Business Development Manager, Peter Lennon hosted a panel discussion – “Facing the Challenges of Young Men’s Mental Health”. We had some great guests including: Martin Fisk – CEO of Menslink, Lockie Cooke – Founder of iYarn, Dr Amar Dhall – Centre Director of Canberra Trauma and Well-Being Centre, and PJ Lennon – Student and Youth Leader .



8. In October, we were honoured to be featured in a City News article about Rites of Passage for teenage boys. The essence of these camps was beautifully captured and portrayed by journalist Nick Overall.



STAFF TRAINING

The new etrainu learning platform was rolled out in early June. This subscription based on-line platform will provide access to mandatory and other important training for staff and will allow management to keep track of progress of staff in relation to each specific course.

During the financial year, staff attended a range of training courses, including 'Understanding Abuse – Zero Tolerance', a 'Co-Design Workshop', 'Indigenous Cultural Awareness Foundations', and 'A Community Workers' Guide to Health Literacy and Health Care'.

Immunisation

All MHF staff have received at least two COVID vaccinations in line with the ACT Government health directive



Human Resources

MHF had 37 staff employed at the end of June 2021, this compares with 35 employed at the end of June 2020. The staff retention ratio of 73 percent is a significant increase on the previous year.

Accreditation

In January 2021, MHF received accreditation against the NDIS Quality Standards as set out by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. This is valid until December 2023, with a mid-term audit due in the middle of 2022.

Also, at the start of 2021, in February MHF received renewed accreditation against the National Standards for Mental Health Services. This accreditation is valid until February 2024.



mental health foundation

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