



PARKS & LEISURE  
AUSTRALIA

# ANNUAL REPORT

20/21



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National President  
Paul Jane

Deputy President  
Les Munn (NSW/ACT)

Finance Director  
Tim Sargent

Margaret Barret (QLD)  
Sue Suter (SA/NT)  
Rachel Thorpe (VIC/TAS)  
Joanne Smith (WA)

Co-opted Members  
Tara Looby  
Barbra Gaiotto  
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We sincerely thank our national partners for their support.



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Paul Jane  
National President

### NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

This time last year the pandemic had kicked us all hard, but news of a vaccine was just emerging with the future looking bright. Fast forward 12 months and many of us again are either in lockdown or emerging from it, and again looking for that glimmer of hope. Whilst every day seems like a slog it's the relationships and connections that PLA affords us all that provides hope and the spiritual nourishment to keep going.

The team at PLA have planned and adapted, again and again over 2021 to continue the delivery of services to our members with the final disappointment delivered as NSW was forced to lockdown effectively cancelling the annual conference. Through all this the team and volunteers supporting them have revised their plans and continued the pursuit of getting us back together. So often we share the success of our teams working to deliver events, but rarely do we truly share the disappointment. Barbra Gaiotto, our National Conference Director, we thank you for your perseverance and eternal optimism.

From an organisational perspective over the last 12 months, we have redeveloped our strategic plan to lock in the organisation's ambitions over the next three years. This process heavily engaged our regions to guarantee it was a bottom-up process and ensures that we have a strong strategic approach to our actions. A big thank you to Susan Suter and Kris Davies who have led this process and everyone who was involved. The challenge will be to produce an integrated approach to the plan's delivery over the next 3 years, recognising the unique characteristics of each region and the strength of a national approach.

One of the greatest challenges for the organisation is that it has been largely devoid of its traditional funding sources to keep afloat. A big thank you must go out to our regional and the national team who have pivoted to continue operations, consider their cost base and worked with our generous sponsors and many volunteers to push on. The National Board many years ago, under the guidance of our national Finance Director Tim Sargent and CEO Mark Band, commenced a focus on financial sustainability of the organisation, a key strategic initiative that has ensured the organisation's viability during the pandemic.

Following on from the point of a pivoting organisation, I want to recognise the directors that represent their regions, as spanning both regional and national responsibilities was no mean feat and required a superhuman effort to ensure that regional intelligence was brought to the national board and that regional boards were kept abreast on National operations. My thanks go to Les Munn, Vice President (NSW/ACT), for his experience and support, Margaret Barrett (QLD) for challenging the norm, Sue Suter (SA/ NT) for your strategic perspective, Rachael Thorpe (VIC/TAS) for your work on our governance and Joanne Smith (WA) for balancing regional and national views. My gratitude goes to you all and the regional councils that support you.

Our regional directors are equally supported by skills-based directors who add both diversity and expertise to the board. These skills-based directors are Kris Davis (Generate Network), Tara Looby (Marketing and Communications), Tim Sargent (Finance) and Barbra Gaiotto (National Conference). Thank you all for your efforts over the past year.

All the efforts of our volunteer base are strongly supported by Mark Band and his team and the Regional Executive Officers. Their commitment and drive are beyond reproach, and they all undertake a significant amount of work with very few resources. I would like to formally acknowledge the work of Lina Court who left her role this year. Lina has been the organisation's rock, there through the good and bad. Your calming influence and support and friendship will be truly missed.

On a personal note, I want to thank all PLA members for your continued support of the organisation as you all inspire me to do better. The past 3 years as President have been an absolute pleasure and whilst the pandemic may have derailed some plans, I have faith in the organisation's DNA for future success.

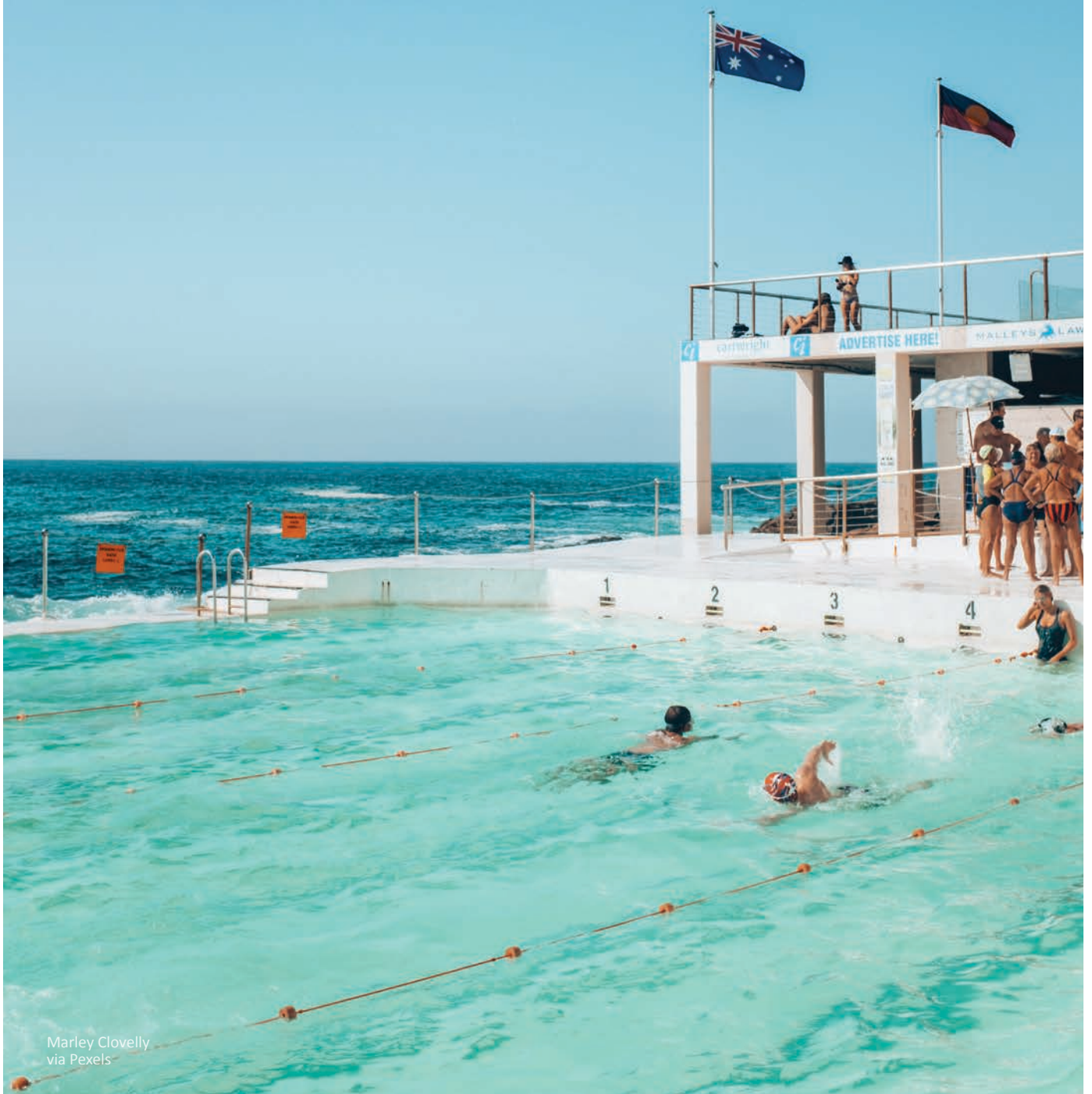


“Whilst every day seems like a slog it’s the relationships and connections that PLA affords us all that provides hope and the spiritual nourishment to keep going.”





“ We have changed and whilst this has been a challenge, we look forward to brighter days ahead when we can all reconnect face to face.”





**Mark Band**  
CEO

Another year over and forgive me for feeling that my annual report feels a little like Groundhog Day, or should I say year? I don't think any business can report on its last 12 month's operations without speaking of Covid-19 and its impact on operations. If one thing it has done however, is to highlight the robustness of PLA and how well we have done over recent years in ensuring our ongoing sustainability. It has been a core strategy of mine and the current and previous National Board, to ensure the organisation is financially viable by ensuring we have a healthy reserves fund to see us through rainy days, and I think we've just been through a typhoon! Hopefully there are brighter days ahead as we look to regroup and continue to serve you, our members, and the broader industry in Australia.

The national conference is our flagship event and whilst we tried to run it face-to-face in Sydney last year and this year, it wasn't to be. The virtual conference was a first for the organisation, and whilst it will never replace the face-to-face event, it did fill a gap to continue to share stories and events and the impact Covid-19 has had in all of our lives. As an industry, we are one of the few that continued to serve the community in more ways than ever. The lockdowns may have restricted movements, but access to our parks and open spaces was more important than ever.

Key outcomes for the year have included the handover of the long awaited PaRC library from the Trustee to PLA, which has been a long process and one we are happy to now take carriage of. We have also started the steps to bring in-house the Certified Parks and Leisure Professional (CPLP) which was being administered by the World Parks Academy based at the Eppley Institute in the USA. The international body has been very kind to allow us to use the criteria that was partly developed by ourselves, and this now means we can ensure skills and qualifications are constantly aligned with the Australian professional parks and leisure climate. We have also introduced Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which enables recipients of the CPLP and others, attain points for maintaining their status and developing as a professional in these dynamic times.

The team at the national office have been busy and unfortunately, we have had a turnover in staff this year with the moving on of our Marketing and Communications Manager Nicol Parton, Membership Officer Aldona Pretty, Finance Officer Hayley Wojcik, and National Office Manager Lina Court who have been replaced by Shireen Dawankar, Alex Giakoumis, Judelle Geer and Tara McConkey respectively. I would personally like to thank all of the staff that left our services, particularly Lina who has been with me since I took on the role of CEO in 2012. They will all be sadly missed but I welcome their replacements

whom I know are more than capable of taking the challenge and building on the great foundation their predecessors have laid.

Given the pandemic and during the transitional phase between staff, the National Board has assisted in many areas of the organisation's operational areas this year and a particular thanks to Tara Looby who helped in the absence of our Marketing and Communications Manager in developing a comprehensive Marketing and Communications plan, Kristin Davies in the development of Generate Network Australia and our membership strategy with the assistance of Sue Suter; and Rachel Thorpe who has been instrumental in the ongoing development of organisational policies and procedures, the national awards, CPLP and training standards for the industry.

It would also be amiss of me to not mention Barbra Gaiotto and her tireless involvement with the national conference and the constant moving of goal posts over the last two years, and of course John Senior, the Chair of the Conference Executive, whose wisdom and knowledge is unparalleled.

Under the professional guidance of Tim Sargent, we have managed to keep on top of our financial health and stay afloat. Some tough decisions have however had to be made and with Tim's expert advice, we have managed to see through the storm and start to regroup and plan for the years ahead.

Speaking of planning, the Board has developed a new 3-year strategic plan under the leadership of Paul Jane. This will be released at the AGM, and I would like to thank Paul for his leadership over the past three years as he steps aside in his role as President.

We are now planning to regroup and continue to service you, our members and the broader industry. Our sponsors and partners have been magnificent in these challenging times, and I would personally like to thank them all for their continued support and trust in PLA.

Covid-19 has taught us many things, but the biggest has been the need to react and adapt to constant change. We have changed and whilst this has been a challenge, we look forward to brighter days ahead when we can all reconnect face to face.

I wish to thank you each and every one of you and please continue to support your professional association that supports you, the people behind the places that have been a valuable outlet during times of need for all Australians.

Stay well.



**Tim Sargent**  
Finance Director

### FINANCE DIRECTOR REPORT

PLA for the 20/21 financial year has recorded a net deficit of \$100,177. This is \$28,504 worse than what was budgeted for. The impact of not having an in-person National Conference along with State Conferences due to Covid-19 is detrimental to our association. An opportunity now exists to provide value for members through innovative platforms and new products and services that deliver value for both the members and the organisation.

Prior to Covid-19, PLA for the past four years has recorded surpluses being:

- **2019/20** – \$10,450
- **2018/19** – \$22,875
- **2017/18** – \$122,152
- **2016/17** – \$115,163

At 30 June 2020 the association has net equity of \$668,219, twelve months later this sits at \$585,551. The Board has approved the budget for the 2021/22 year to show a deficit of \$62,643. This deficit is mainly caused by the National conference not going ahead. This is disappointing but this is reality for this year and hopefully we see the organisation return to surplus in the 22/23 financial year.

Key points to highlight for the year are as follows:

- Revenue from operations has declined by just over \$446k in months.
- Revenue generated in Conferences and Seminars last year was \$735k, this year \$243k. This accounts for 67% of the revenue decline.
- The regional conferences and state awards became non-existent due to Covid-19. National Conference was held online which financially has a big impact for the association.

- Membership subscriptions have remained steady which is a good outcome given the current environment.
- Sponsorship has been kept at similar levels to the previous year too. If we continue to operate like we have since March 2020, reduction in sponsorship dollars poses a big risk as we simply can't provide sponsors with value for money.

As stated previously The Statement of Financial Position shows our net equity position has declined to be now at \$585,551.

Current Assets to Current Liabilities show that we have an excess of **\$333,943 (prior year \$425,081)** meaning that for every \$1 of liabilities we have \$1.46 of short-term assets which provides comfort that Parks and Leisure has sufficient liquidity (cash flow) to be able to pay our debts as and when they fall due.

I reiterate the same message as last year - PLA has the opportunity to continue building its brand and providing strong value to its members as we learn to live with Covid-19. We are in a strong financial position and strategically we need to take advantage of this as other associations may evaporate.

Finally, I would like to thank the CEO Mark Band, the President Paul Jane and the rest of the Board for making Parks and Leisure the association it is today.



“ PLA has the opportunity to continue building its brand and continue providing strong value to its members as we learn to live with Covid-19.”



Kate Trifo  
via Pexels



“ I am excited at what is being explored and planned for our PLA membership in 2021/22 and encourage everyone to take up the challenge of getting involved.”







**Frances Hudson**  
President  
QLD

### QLD REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Another year has zoomed (pun intended) by, riding the roller coaster of ever-changing and challenging circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Last year's PLA Region Awards of Excellence (Queensland) were held in late August with more than 70 participants joining in for our virtual event. There were some high calibre projects demonstrating the quality and quantum of parks and leisure facilities and services being achieved regionally. Responding to these circumstances, our Region Sponsor SportEng provided our first Region webinar "Demystifying Natural Turf Fields of Play" - well subscribed with 48 participants. Whilst many parts of Australia were experiencing lockdowns in the new year, 15 PLA members joined the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Queensland Chapter's 10th annual Parks Forum event "Into the Park" exploring the changing face of Southbank Parklands.

Next was the amazing high with some of our very own Queenslanders taking out Awards of Excellence at the October online National Conference. The National *Research Award* went to The CityGreen Lab and the *Park of the Year Award* was won by Rounsefell Design and Western Downs Regional Council. Then, there was the penultimate scoop of Steph McCallum winning the *David Aldous Young Professional of the Year Award*, and Martin Lambert being presented the *Frank Stewart Distinguished Service Award*.

When writing my piece for the Annual Report a year ago, I was then excited to introduce our new Executive Officer (EO). Unfortunately, Adam Cheyne was unable to continue in this role and resigned soon after we held our 2020 Christmas event. Starting the new year with pulling together a professional development program without an EO really highlights their invaluable contribution and commitment to PLA. Fortunately, Ursula Gleeson (EO) and Fiona McColl (President) of our NSW/ACT Region found the capacity to support us with keeping on track whilst we secured the skills and expertise of our new EO - the award-winning Dr Chris Boulton of The CityGreen Lab! Chris' PLA initiation included a front seat for our first joint Regions Conference and Awards event for NSW/ACT/QLD during May in Coffs Harbour.

We sincerely thank the Conference organising committee, sponsors, trade exhibitors, and attendees for a great learning experience. Approximately 22% of Queensland delegates made the trek across the border, also enjoying the Regional Awards of Excellence dinner. Disappointingly our awards nominations were substantially down on previous years with a mixed quality of submissions. However, we have several quality regional winners representing us as National Award Finalists to be announced in November.

Our Regional Council has pressed the refresh button for our professional development program aiming to better service our members. In May we combined old-school planning with the digital age, using butcher's paper and patching-in our remote colleagues via several laptops and monitors, to commence our four-year strategic plan. It was a great session with loads of discussion and commitment to our highest priorities. Again there have been some changes on the PLA QLD Regional Council with Amy Ahchay and Adrian Burns joining from regional parts of Queensland (Gladstone and Gympie respectively). We also extend our thanks and gratitude to Peter Savage (9 years) and John Wood, who will retire from our Regional Council. Particularly, I extend my personal thanks to John who continually inspired me to keep going in this industry and with PLA, sharing his wisdom and research passions with many in PLA and he will continue to Chair the PLA Advisory Research Working Group.

Thank you to our region sponsor SportEng, and all Regional Council members who have contributed to forums, workshops, and surveys, including Adrian Burns. I would like to especially thank Marg Barrett for representing Queensland on our National Board and being an effective advocate and contributor on our behalf. I am excited at what is being explored and planned for our PLA membership in 2021/22 and encourage everyone to take up the challenge of getting involved to support our Queenslanders behind the places.



**Fiona McColl**  
President  
NSW/ACT

### NSW/ACT REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

As a result of the pandemic PLA NSW/ACT, as with many organisations has been consumed with “pivoting” and focusing on new ways to support our members and provide services in a restricted format.

As all face-to-face events were cancelled last year, we set up a series of “Around our PLAcE” online seminars. Throughout 2020-21 we have held nine online seminars with attendances ranging between 10 and 95:

- Bushfire Planning – Green Spaces and Bushfires
- Embedding First Nations Culture into Open Space/Recreation/Sport Design and Planning
- Older Adults and Parks – Advocating for Change
- Improve Your Fitness, Health, And Wellbeing for Free at Your Local Park: Ecofit
- Disability Inclusion and Planning for Sport and Recreation
- Parkrun Keeps Running
- Creating Sustainable Open Spaces
- Nature Play
- Making Public Spaces Everybody’s Business

As the region began to open again, we had been able to conduct several face-to-face events, (in a Covid-19 safe environment). These included:

- A site tour of the Oatley adventure playground
- Two operational playground inspection training courses
- Greenfield’s planning and development and site tour in Oran Park

The postponed 2020 regional conference finally went ahead with the theme, *Creating A Climate for Change*, in May 2021, at Pacific Bay Resort, Coffs Harbour. The event was a great success with 163 delegates, exhibitors, presenters, and sponsors in attendance. We worked closely with PLAQLD to run the event as a joint conference. This was a great result and was a definite positive to have the two regions supporting each other for the benefit of members across both regions.

The Regional Council was pleased with the number and standard of applications for the 2021 Awards of Excellence; and a highlight of the conference was the announcement of the regional award winners.

We will continue to grow our program for members and have a strong schedule, both face to face and online formats in place for the next year.

Our three portfolio groups: Membership, Strategic Planning and Partnerships, and Professional Development continued to meet throughout the year and work through their action plans. Following the adoption of the PLA Towards 2025 Strategic Plan, the NSW/ACT regional board will review their strategic plan and portfolio groups to ensure alignment with the national plan.

Advocacy on industry issues continues to develop, with members from the Regional Council being invited to participate in several working groups throughout the year, as well as contributing submissions for several government policy documents.

Thank you to all our sponsors for their support across the conference, events, and other regional activities. These include GLG Greenlife Group, Lark Industries, Syngenta, Christie and Otium Planning Group. We are pleased to have Andreasens Green, Kompan, Marsupial/Glascott and Scully all continue their sponsorship agreements with PLA NSW/ACT for the coming year. This shows how highly regarded PLA is by these organisations; and even in challenging times they feel the partnership with our organisation is mutually beneficial. All these organisations contributed to the success and growth of our region, and we look forward to their ongoing support.



“

All [our sponsorship] organisations contributed to the success and growth of our region, and we look forward to their ongoing support.”







**Sue Suter**  
President  
SA/NT

### SA/NT REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

As with every region, the past 12 months have been a little difficult for PLA SA/NT. The main challenges for us were:

- We did not hold a lot of events and activities in the second half of 2020 due to the possibility of lockdowns and the cautiousness of the industry in attending gatherings, and we had to postpone some events.
- Unfortunately, we once again did not receive financial support from the government body that is most relevant to our members (the sport and recreation sector) despite liaison and grant applications.
- We only received one half of the PLA SA/NT award applications compared to the previous year, and feedback from the judges is that applications from SA/NT are not high quality compared to other regions.

However, on a positive note:

- We held two very successful regional conferences, one in the Clare Valley and one in Darwin. Many of our speakers and participants stated how great these conferences were and one of our keynote speakers (who has spoken at and participated in many conferences) said the Clare Valley conference was the best he had ever been to!
- We are building a presence in the Northern Territory through our Regional Council member Robert Fleming (based in Darwin) and harnessing the positive results of the Darwin conference and related network event.
- We have had very good sponsorship support for our conferences and events and thank all of our sponsors for supporting us.
- We are in the process of planning for a number of high profile events including a Sports Seminar in August 2021, a State conference in the first half of 2022 and a Facility Managers program in 2022, as well as networking opportunities.
- We are working with and building relationships with other government departments including the health and environment sectors and we are continuing to contribute to planning and advocacy across our industry.

Specific initiatives undertaken by PLA SA/NT over the past 12 months are summarised below.

#### Governance

- The Regional Council has developed a new Business Plan that responds to the PLA Towards 2025 National Strategic Plan.
- Our President, Sue Suter, played a lead role in developing the PLA Towards 2025 National Strategic Plan.

#### Leadership

- Our Regional Council remained committed and stable with new members broadening our scope through Jason Taylor (CEO of Southern Mallee District Council) and James Lomax (YMCA Southern Regional Development Manager).

#### Connections

- PLA SA/NT is a sponsor of the recently completed Wellbeing SA Physical Activity in Nature Plan, with our President being a member of the government working group and playing a key role in the development of the Plan.
- Our Vice President, Kevin Lowe is playing a lead role in establishing connections with other industry bodies and attending planning initiatives.
- We are represented on the South Australian Active Living Coalition by John Wilkinson.
- We participated in Green Adelaide, Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing and Eco-Trail planning sessions and presentations.
- The Regional Council made a number of advocacy statements and submissions relating to recreation, urban development and the environment.



## Professional Development

We held the following events in 2020-21:

- Clare Valley Regional Conference in March 2021 (Sue Suter, Kevin Lowe and Allison Bretones)
- Best practice roadshow seminar in May 2021 (Stacey Dutton and Julia Wallace)
- NT Regional Conference in Darwin in May 2021 (Sue Suter, Robert Fleming, Kevin Lowe and Allison Bretones)

We have been involved in planning for the following events for 2021-22:

- Sports seminar in August 2021 (John Wilkinson, Annie Charlton and Julia Wallace)
- 2022 State conference (Kevin Lowe, Annie Charlton, Jason Taylor and Allison Bretones)
- Facility Managers program (Kevin Lowe, Rick Gower and James Lomax)

## Services

- We provided a regular PLA SA/NT newsletter through our EO, Allison Bretones.
- Despite the smaller number of award applications, we held a professional award presentation event at a great venue that was enjoyed by the participants. In 2021-22, we aim to place a stronger focus on award applications which will include targeted promotions and free sessions on how to develop applications.
- We have achieved an excellent number of GENERATE Network members through Julia Wallace and are looking to establish Generate Network members in the NT.
- We will establish online networking sessions including the Open Space and Recreation Planners Network, a Parks Manager Network and a Facility Managers Network.

“

We have had very good sponsorship support for our conferences and events and thank all of our sponsors for supporting us.”





**Ashley Fleming**  
President  
VIC/TAS

### VIC/TAS REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

This year our industry has been busier than ever in assisting the community in responding to and recovering from the global Covid-19 pandemic. An enormous amount of work has been done in the planning and delivery of programs, projects and infrastructure to provide improved opportunities for community sport and leisure. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has continued to impact, especially in Victoria, and at the time of writing this report Melbourne is just coming out of its fourth lockdown.

Victorian Lockdown 4.0 could not have come at a worse time for the 2021 Region Conference and Awards Event which were impacted for a second consecutive year. Hopefully, by the time you are reading this report the Region has been able to successfully hold both events in a slightly modified format as they are such a highlight each year.

All of that said, the importance of quality parkland and community services has continued to be at the forefront of everyone's thinking and this will leave a legacy for future years.

#### Region Council

I would like to acknowledge and thank the members and co-opted members of the 2020-2021 Region Council for the time and effort they put into the industry by attending meetings and participating in sub-committees.

#### Advocacy

The Region has continued to advocate for the industry and we are increasingly being invited to provide feedback and comment to government strategies and plans. This demonstrates just how much the PLA VIC/TAS Region Council is considered a valuable source of feedback through our members.

It is pleasing to have so many of our members outside of the Region Council who volunteer to assist in the preparation of submissions, and I thank them for their contributions.

The Region provided feedback submissions and attended hearings to the following over the past 12 months:

- Parliamentary Enquiry into Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations. Contributors: Sam Taylor (Boroondara City Council, VIC/TAS Region Council), Adrian Cope (City of Melton), Paul Reading (Knox City Council) and Liam Cole (Wellington Shire, VIC/TAS Region Council). Sam Taylor also presented at the Parliamentary Committee Hearing.
- Infrastructure Victoria 30-year Infrastructure Strategy. Contributors: Lyn Morling (Mitchell Shire), Simone Bonella (City of Frankston), Neil Ames (Glenorchy City Council) and Fiona Young (Tennis Victoria).
- Draft Guidelines for Precinct Structure Planning in Melbourne's Greenfields. Contributors: Bruce Fordham (Hume City Council), Anna Bunbury (Mitchell Shire) and Eliel Sotero (Wyndham City Council).
- Refresh of 'Active Victoria', the Victorian Government's strategic framework for sport and recreation. Rachel Thorpe and Lincoln Fitzgerald attended this session.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Region Council and the National Ageing Research Institute (NARI).

“The importance of quality parkland and community services has continued to be at the forefront of everyone's thinking and this will leave a legacy for future years.”





## Professional Development

The Region continued to deliver events virtually in late 2020 and early 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

- Following the cancellation of the 2020 Region Conference, the sessions from the Conference program were delivered during a two day virtual Seminar. I thank all of the presenters for their willingness to 'pivot' and present in this more challenging way.
- Introduced in 2021 was a series of online discussion forums, 'Industry Talk', hosted by a Region Council member. The forums delivered various topics which were well received by the membership.
- The Region Council partnered with Rec People for the delivery of three online professional development courses. PLA members benefited from a discounted registration rate to participate in the courses.

But nothing beats an in-person event, and the industry was pleased to get back to in-person seminars from April 2021. These included:

- The Greater and Greener Bendigo Seminar, which was postponed in April 2020, was finally delivered 12 months later. Thanks to all of the presenters and the City of Greater Bendigo for their support (twice) of this event, and to sponsors, Syngenta and Coolabah Turf.
- The Oakleigh Recreation Centre and Caloola Reserve Redevelopment Seminar was delivered in May. Thanks to the City of Monash for their support, and to sponsor dwp architects.
- Another victim of Covid-19 in 2020 was the 'Third Places' event, which was the recipient of the 2020 Greg Maddock Grant. However, Dion Gosling (106 Architects) was finally able to present his event as part of the NGV's Design Week in March 2021.

Unfortunately, our plans to deliver seminars in Tasmania have continued to be thwarted by Covid-19, however once there is more certainty around interstate travel we look forward to increasing our connection with Tasmanian members.

The VIC/TAS Region has now completed the final year of the *Together More Active* Round 1 program through which we received a grant from the Victorian Government to assist with the organisation and delivery of our professional development program. The Region Council has submitted three EOIs for funding through the *Together More Active* Round 2 program.

## Sponsorship

The support of the Region's activities by sponsors has been as strong as ever, even in these challenging times. I thank them all, particularly our Region sponsors, Playground123, Kompan, Glascott Landscape and Civil, Marsupial Landscape Management, and SPORTENG.

Finally, I am buoyed by the increased PLA membership in the Region, and particularly by the involvement of our membership in all of our activities. I continue to encourage all members to involve themselves in the sector at every opportunity.





Joanne Smith  
President  
WA

### WA REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Thank you to the enduring passion and skill of our industry members, partners and volunteers of Parks and Leisure Australia in WA (PLAWA) who continued to share knowledge and practice as we navigated the impacts of the pandemic during the last year. All aspects of the sport and recreation sector, including park infrastructure and facility management, events, fitness and leisure planning, have been severely affected. However, many economic challenges have been overshadowed by local communities letting us know much they value and need to access sport and leisure facilities and services for their mental and physical wellbeing. Thanks for the responses by providers supplying imaginative adaptations and new approaches to new problems. The parks and leisure industry as a whole are congratulated for their extraordinary and professional efforts applied over the past year.

For the first three-year term of the McGowan government PLAWA played a role in the state's strategic funding review for sport and recreation. All aspects of state and local government, sporting and industry body services were reviewed to establish a stronger system to support West Australians being physically active and healthy and for developing high quality elite sports pathways. Leading into the state elections in early 2021, organisations were invited to apply for peak body recognition and funding to deliver services outlined in a three-year program. PLAWA was successful in gaining peak body recognition for the parks and leisure industry Western Australia.

Funding from the Department of Local Government Sport, Cultural Industries (DLGSC) will assist PLAWA to continue to build capacity to grow and support the parks and leisure industry in the state. Key programs delivered in the previous year consolidate a platform for further products and services for the WA Region.

#### WA Leisure Centre Benchmarking Projects

PLAWA collates, interprets, redistributes and reports by industry benchmarking summary:

- Operational management data from Group 1 Aquatic Leisure Centres (ALC).
- Leisure Centre (court and fitness) centres operations not included in Group 1 ALC.
- Annual social value modelling (\$) of leisure and aquatic centres utilising participation data.
- Fees, charges and other relevant management information from leisure, aquatic and sports facilities to share and inform participating facility business planning and fee and charge modelling.

#### Community Facility Guidelines

In mid-2020 PLAWA released the *WA Community Facility Guidelines Report: High level public open space and sports on public open space data review, Perth and Peel 2020 (Report)* which analysed data collected from local governments in Perth and Peel, to identify adequate, under or over provision of POS and community sport and recreational facilities. Recent industry and research information was analysed with the data to test and verify the 2012 draft infrastructure provision guidelines. The project mapping was published in an online *Mapping Portal* and the final 2020 *Western Australian Community Infrastructure Guidelines* distributed for planning reference. PLAWA provided information seminars, partnered with the DLGSC to share data for a Perth and Peel POS planning project and collated revised community facility data for the 2021 update. It is evident how quickly POS and facility uses change and developments occur. This ongoing industry project can only grow in significance and value for community sport and recreation planning.

#### Event Management Workshops

Six learning modules were developed for delivery in workshop format. This year the workshops were delivered for the DLGSC in Broome and Carnarvon to local government officers, community resource staff, sporting organisations and community groups.

#### Event Risk Management Workshops

In partnership with *RiskWest* two workshops were delivered in 2020/21 to assist event organisers to identify risks and prepare an Event Risk Management Plan. The first through DLGSC in Exmouth and the second in Perth based on *Planning for Covid-19*.

#### Australian Standards

Practical online and seminar presentations were delivered by Australian Standards Committee member and Regional Councillor Andrew Reedy, on key changes and new standards for Playgrounds, with updates for Outdoor Exercise, Skate Park, Goal Post and Parkour facilities.

“The parks and leisure industry as a whole are congratulated for their extraordinary and professional efforts applied over the past year.”



## PLAWA State Deconstructed Conference

Due to the uncertainty created by Covid-19, PLAWA decided to move away from the large 3-day Conference event to a series of 1-day events focussed on 6 themed streams. Running over three months and concluding in September 2021, the conference included 70 speakers and a variety of topics, workshops, case studies, lightning talks, technical presentations and panel discussions and concluded with a networking event for delegates to connect and interact.

## Awards of Excellence

Two Awards of Excellence functions were held in 2020/21. The first was held in August 2020, rescheduled from earlier in the year due to Covid-19. Despite restrictions for events, 164 attended and for the first time PLAWA live streamed the event and it was viewed by 134 people. WA took home five of the 11 titles at the National Awards highlighting the high calibre of projects, initiatives and programmes in the region. In June 2021 Minister Tony Buti opened the WA Awards of Excellence to a sold out event of 150 guests with an additional 157 viewing by live stream. Our gracious sponsors and enthusiastic industry supported both events.

While Covid-19 has made it difficult for professional development, tours and face to face interactions, we are very grateful for sponsors and partners who continue to maintain their relationships with PLAWA for the conference and awards, in kind support and for our technical professional development series.





A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a dark wooden bench with metal armrests is partially visible. In the middle ground, two children are riding scooters on a dirt path. The background features a colorful playground with slides and climbing structures, surrounded by large, leafy trees. A yellow canopy is visible over part of the playground. The sky is overcast.

“We are keen to focus on facilitating discussions with members, on significant industry issues.”





**Andy Smith**  
Chair  
PLA Advisory

Parks and Leisure Australia has always been an organisation with the primary focus on serving its members and supporting its hard working and dedicated volunteers. This has been brought into even sharper focus with the current pandemic taking a substantial toll on our industry and its people. With this in mind, it's fitting that this year's edition of the PLA Advisory Annual Report opens by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of three PLA Advisory Executive members who have stepped down from their respective volunteer roles over the past 12 months.

Andy Smith led the advisory team over the past four years and, along with May Carter and Tessa Pentony, made invaluable contributions to the work of the Advisory team. Perhaps more importantly they also brought the strategic thinking and critical questioning which is crucial to the success of PLA Advisory. Tessa, May and Andy: we will miss your hard work, dedication and most of all we will miss you. All the best for the future and we look forward to catching up as part of the broader PLA family.

The departures of three members of the Advisory Executive has left a sizeable gap in the ranks of PLA Advisory and we will be looking to fill these positions with members who can represent South Australia and Western Australia. There will be more information on our recruitment drive in the coming months.

One piece of work that stands out from the Advisory contribution of the past year was the development and subsequent adoption of the gender equity charter. The charter is driven by the principles of non-discrimination, inclusion, participation and equity and we look forward to charting our progress against the nine targets adopted by PLA. The charter has also received international recognition from the influential National Parks and Recreation Association in the United States of America.

The Research Working Group (the Group) has continued to go from strength to strength with John Tower now assisting in the organisation of the group and supporting our Chair John Wood and long-term contributor Steph McCallum. The priority piece of work which remains is the National Industry Survey which aims to determine a national agenda of priority issues for our industry. The survey is scheduled for release in 2022. The Group also farewelled another long serving member, Olly Towson, who was instrumental in the development of the survey. Thank you for all of your time and hard work Olly.

As PLA moves into a new strategic planning cycle and broader organisational review, PLA Advisory is also taking the opportunity to review its function and give consideration to how it can best service the needs of our members. While all the pieces of the new Advisory puzzle are definitely not in place yet, we are keen to focus on facilitating discussions with members, on significant industry issues. The first opportunity for this will be the upcoming National Conference in Sydney where we will be looking to share our members' knowledge on how they have managed their rebound from the Covid-19 pandemic across our vast industry and even more sprawling country.

We are certain that there are many other topics of importance to our members across the parks and leisure industry, and we look forward to addressing these issues in the near future through mechanisms such as workshops, advocacy or research studies. If there are any particular issues that you would like to see addressed, or if you are keen to be involved in PLA Advisory activities, either on a regular basis or an issue-basis, please do not hesitate to contact any member of PLA Advisory to discuss further: Neal Ames (NSW), Ben Bainbridge (VIC/TAS), Wendy Holland (VIC/TAS), Cathy Kiss (VIC/TAS), Anand Pillay (QLD) or John Senior (VIC/TAS).



**Kristin Davies**  
Director  
National Board Parks and  
Leisure Australia  
Chair  
Generate Network Australia

Generate Network Australia is Parks and Leisure Australia's commitment to developing new professionals and emerging leaders and is made possible by the support of our National Partner Sponsor Otium Planning Group.

It is a launchpad connecting people to the industry, opportunities, and each other, and driving our work is our aim to build an inspired, empowered and connected industry workforce for generations to come.

Despite the challenges facing the industry this year with the global pandemic, the past 12 months have seen considerable progress and growth for the Generate Network with strong organisational alignment and reaching 184 members (63% are new to PLA); reinforcing Generate's important role in the PLA pathway.

## Launch Yourself With Generate

New professionals and emerging leaders across our industry have been disproportionately affected by the impacts of the global pandemic, continuing from 2020 into 2021. The implications of which, have not only impacted the roles and career opportunities of this existing cohort, but have also resulted in a workforce shortage across parts of the sector as people seek out more perceived 'safer' employment or further study.

The lasting impact on the perception of our industry as a sector and employer of choice going forward is yet to be fully understood and is something the Generate Network will research and provide insights on over the next 12 months.

It is our responsibility to ensure that people entering the workforce or coming through, retain access and meaningful connection during this critical time.

Establishing a sustainable network for emerging leaders, anyone new to the industry or looking to take their next leap was a high priority for 2020/21 and I am happy to report that we achieved our goal.

Working closely with the PLA National Board and each of the PLA Regions, we have been able to formalise our representation and pathways, strengthen our partnerships, establish important connections, and launch the thriving network for our industry.

We will continue to improve the operationalisation of the network through our daily activity and provide a mix of motivation, news and events, industry connections, career and jobs opportunities and overall support for our members to engage with and enjoy.

Building a mentoring culture and legacy leadership along with our industry succession plan, have also been a focus this year and will continue to be an important theme as we enter the post-pandemic recovery phase.

## The Highlights

- Achieved 184 new members (63% new to PLA) and 374 followers on social media.
- Embedded Generate Network in the broader PLA pathway and strong representation in the PLA Towards 2025 Strategic Plan.
- Established formal Generate representation on each PLA Region Council.
- Presented 'Our Industry Succession Plan' advocacy topic to the industry.
- Completed six successful Generate Network Social Events and connected the network with learning and development opportunities through Rec Relief Professional Development courses and more.
- Connected our network with over 260 job opportunities.
- Celebrated Mentor Month and showcased industry leaders through the 'Meet Our Mentors' series.
- Re-signed with our amazing National Partner Sponsor Otium Planning Group for the next 3 years!

## Future Focus

Over the next 12 months we will continue to focus on:

- Broadening and strengthening the network by providing meaningful connections with industry, opportunities, and professional peers.
- Implementing the PLA Towards 2025 Strategic Plan and linking closely with PLA initiatives.
- Championing a mentoring culture and legacy leadership by launching the 4-tier mentoring program and 'Get serious about your career' campaign.
- Developing a Digital Media and Communications Strategy to better serve and engage our members.
- Advocating and representing the interests of our network and the benefits of our industry, and
- Continuing to work closely with the tertiary sector through our research into pathways and enablers.



## A Huge Thank You!

Establishing a network for new professionals in our industry takes strong leadership and a team of passionate people, both established and emerging.

I would like to recognise and thank our National Generate Committee of industry go-getters for their commitment, skills and energy, Parks and Leisure Australia National Board for their commitment to new professionals, and our national sponsor, Otium Planning Group for their unwavering support of Generate Network AUS.

## Generate Network Aus National Committee:

Kristin Davies (National), Dom McGlinchey (VIC), Tarryn Harding (VIC), Sarah Robinson (VIC), Lauren Close (VIC), Michael McKay (VIC), Josh Geraghty (QLD), Patrick Beazley (QLD), Chris Earl (WA), Julia Wallace (SA/NT), Daniel Ferguson (VIC/TAS) and Ben Chan (NSW/ACT).

## Awards Of Excellence

Congratulations to the winners of the David Aldous Young Professional of the Year Award at the Parks and Leisure Australia Awards of Excellence in 2020 (pictured clockwise from top left):

- **Steph McCallum-Keily** – National Award Winner and PLA QLD Region Award Winner
- **Annie Charlton** – SA/NT Region Award Winner
- **Damon Lee** – WA Region Award Winner
- **Stephanie Ristevska** – VIC/TAS Region Award Winner



DAVID ALDOUS  
YOUNG  
PROFESSIONAL OF  
THE YEAR  
FINALISTS







Lachlan Ross  
via Pexels



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Parks and Leisure Australia exists to represent, advocate, support, connect and empower our members, stakeholders and the wider industry involved in parks, leisure, recreation, sport, open space, community places and the environment. We are the sum of all our parts across the regions and all the sectors that make up our wonderful industry.

As the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 persisted into 2021, it was more important than ever to create an environment for our members to stay connected and engaged with our networks, opportunities, and to support and learn from each other.

We are proud of the commitment shown by our membership throughout this period and the membership figures reflect the strength of our Parks and Leisure community, demonstrating our ability to come together in challenging times.

Despite a national trend of decreasing memberships across our industry, Parks and Leisure Australia has maintained a strong membership base and recorded 4.8% growth for 2020/21, with a total of 2042 members.

Since our membership restructure in October 2018, we have seen a 122% increase, up 1124 members and as a result of our work in the space of Gender Equity, we are seeing stronger representation of women across the membership profile with 45% of all members being female.

The impact of the continued and nationwide trend of economic pressures and budget issues has resulted in a reduction in non-essential spend across many industry sectors. Our focus in 2020/21 was to ensure that we adapted our approach and created sustainable, accessible, and affordable options to support our membership to stay connected, including, but not limited to:

- Freezing membership prices and dropping the standard CPI increase in recognition of the current financial climate.
- Providing ongoing professional development services and access to resources for our members across digital platforms.
- Hosting 50 events (92% virtual) with over 2547 member participants, including our Awards of Excellence ceremonies, webinars, member events, the National Conference, and select Region Conferences.
- Improving the use of electronic platforms for information sharing such as the website, our online AP&L Journal, e-newsletters, and social media, to enhance member engagement.
- Strengthening Generate Network Australia, PLA's commitment to developing new professionals and emerging leaders by breaking down barriers and connecting people to the industry, opportunities and each other.
- Launching the new PaRC Library, an Australasian collection of parks, open space and leisure resources and publications for our members and the public to utilise as a tool

to further develop and maintain Parks and Leisure Industry knowledge.

- Teaming up with GEO A.R. Games and offering reduced rates on Magical Park – an augmented reality mobile app which transforms a normal park into a digital playground, and
- Developing the PLA Towards 2025 Strategic Plan with a strong focus on Membership and Member Services, better understanding member needs and responding with diverse and valued services.

PLA has endeavoured to engage with our members to gather important insights and to track our progress. However, there is always more we can be doing.

As always, we want to hear from you! We want to know your thoughts on how we can continue to provide better value to our membership and go from strength to strength as the peak representative body for Parks and Leisure in Australia.

For more information on membership please contact the Membership Officer at [membership@parksleisure.com.au](mailto:membership@parksleisure.com.au)

We would like to thank our members for their continued support and for the role our members and volunteers play in supporting and promoting the values of PLA throughout the industry.

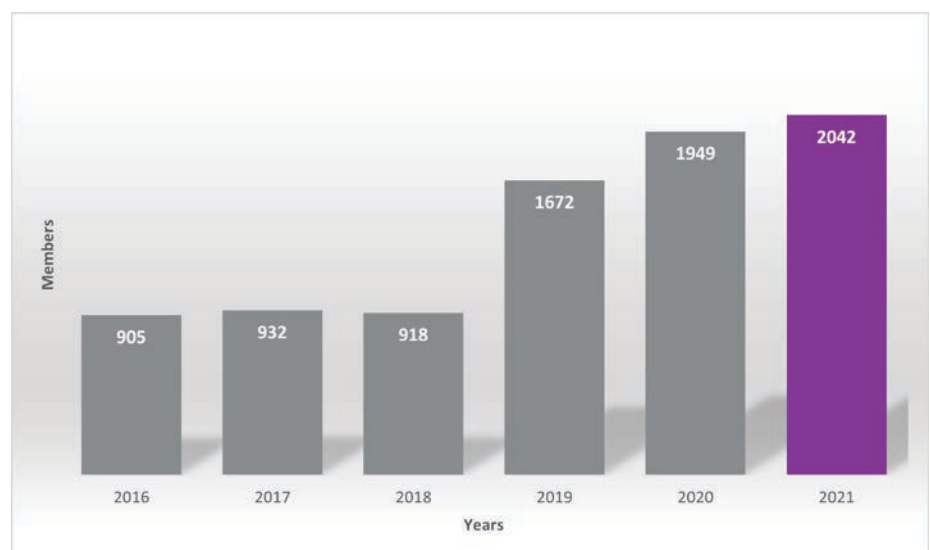


Figure 1: PLA Membership Total (2016 – 2021)







## Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

2021

	Accumulated Surplus \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2020</b>	668,219
Profit attributable to members of the entity	(82,668)
<b>Balance 30 June 2021</b>	<u>585,551</u>

2020

	Accumulated Surplus \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2019</b>	656,263
Profit attributable to members of the entity	11,956
<b>Balance 30 June 2020</b>	<u>668,219</u>

## Statement of Cash Flows

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:</b>		
Receipts from customers	1,104,817	1,111,066
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,197,600)	(1,607,648)
Interest received	1,038	3,763
Income taxes paid	-	1,294
Receipts from grants	171,752	458,546
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	18 <u>80,007</u>	<u>(32,979)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents held	80,007	(32,979)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	589,956	622,935
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	8 <u>669,963</u>	<u>589,956</u>

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

		2021	2020
	Note	\$	\$
Revenue	4	1,075,267	1,521,696
Other income	4	1,038	3,763
		<u>1,076,305</u>	<u>1,525,459</u>
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(9,039)	(8,517)
Conference expenses		(159,244)	(313,312)
Management fees		(636,362)	(679,746)
Other expenses		(371,837)	(513,434)
	5	<u>(1,176,482)</u>	<u>(1,515,009)</u>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before income tax</b>		(100,177)	10,450
Income tax benefit/(expense)	7	17,509	1,506
		<u>(82,668)</u>	<u>11,956</u>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		-	-
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>		<u>(82,668)</u>	<u>11,956</u>

## Statement of Financial Position

As At 30 June 2021

		2021	2020
	Note	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	8	669,963	589,956
Trade and other receivables	9	254,429	299,788
Other assets	12	127,689	63,888
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>1,052,081</u>	<u>953,632</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	10	221	766
Deferred tax assets	14	232,071	214,562
Intangible assets	11	19,316	27,810
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>251,608</u>	<u>243,138</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>1,303,689</u>	<u>1,196,770</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and other payables	13	48,131	35,949
Current tax liabilities	14	34,220	12,758
Other financial liabilities	15	635,787	479,844
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>718,138</u>	<u>528,551</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>585,551</u>	<u>668,219</u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated surplus		585,551	668,219
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u>585,551</u>	<u>668,219</u>





Rachel Claire  
via Pexels





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