



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Cram Foundation acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate their continuing culture, the world’s oldest living culture and the contribution they make to this region and country.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Cram would like to acknowledge the support and collaboration of our many partners, colleagues, volunteers, suppliers and fellow providers for working with us to achieve the best outcomes for our Participants. We thank the below organisations for the many ways in which they work alongside Cram to enable people with a disability to live their best life.

- Albion Park Meats
- Compass Housing
- Community Industry Group
- Regional Development Australia
- Greenacres Disability Services
- The Disability Trust
- Wollongong Council
- Shellharbour Council
- The Flagstaff Group
- Illawarra Disability Alliance
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Health District
- Shellharbour Medical Practice and Chemist
- People for Purpose Solutions
- Illawarra YES Program
- Illawarra Advocacy
- Shoshana Dreyfus
- Diann Rodgers Healy
- University of Wollongong
- Stanwell Park Sea Eels
- Bluestone
- Built for Purpose
- Stiletto Homes
- Bluestone Group
- Butler HR
- Riding for the Disabled
- TAFE Illawarra





## ABOUT CRAM

**The Cram Foundation is a respected provider of person-centred services to people living with complex disabilities operating in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region for over 88 years.**

At Cram, we put our Participants at the centre of everything we do. We make a difference to the lives of the individuals and families we support by enabling choice, supported independent living and meaningful life experiences.

### Cram History

The Organisation was formed in May 1932 as the Wollongong and District Society for Crippled Children. At the time there were limited facilities within the Illawarra for children with physical disabilities. The organisation changed its name to The Illawarra Society for Crippled Children in 1964.

In 1965 a house at 362 Crown Street was bequeathed to the Society following the death of Miss Martha Cram a volunteer and member of the Ladies Auxiliary.

The property, known as Cram House, was modified in 1971, jointly from funds raised as result of the Lord Mayor's Appeal and Commonwealth Government funds. The organisation became 'The Illawarra Children's Hospital', caring for post-operative and orthopaedic patients.

In January 1972 an adjoining cottage was purchased by the Society and renovated by West Wollongong Rotary Club. This became a Special School for children with disabilities. The following year part of Cram House was used as a Day Care Centre. Both these services were later transferred to other community programs.

In 1974 Cram House closed, and in 1975 re-opened as a 'Special Purpose Nursing Home' and quickly filled to accommodate 26 children with severe disabilities.

In 1981 the Society established a community-based group home at Bellambi. It provided accommodation for four children with disabilities.

In April 1984 extensions to Cram House were built on adjoining land leased from the Education Department and later purchased by the Society. Funds for the extensions came from the community, through a telethon on WIN TV and assisted by the Commonwealth Government.

In 1999 the Society changed its name to The Cram Foundation.

Cram House became unsuitable for meeting the residents' needs and during 2002 and 2003 residents moved to 'group homes' in the Shellharbour area. These homes are located in the community and each accommodates small groups of residents staffed on a 24-hour basis.

Cram House was sold in December 2006 with the proceeds retained by Cram Foundation to ensure support for people with significant disabilities would continue in the future. With the closure of Cram House the head office moved to Shellharbour.

In 2010 Cram Foundation became the service provider for two more homes, both in Albion Park. In 2011 Cram Foundation achieved external certification under the Attendant Care Industry Standards.

In-home care for people living in their own homes commenced in 2013 and later that year began providing services to a number of Cram clients for their Community Participation program. In 2014, based on feedback from family members of clients, Cram Foundation won the Illawarra Business Award for Excellence in Customer Service.

In July 2017, The National Disability Insurance Scheme rolled out within the Illawarra and Shoalhaven region impacting significant operational change and the provision of person-centred funding to all clients via personalised NDIS plans. The scheme enabled clients to set personal goals for the future. At this time Cram began to embark on the delivery of Support Coordination for Participants of the NDIS who sought assistance in engaging services.

After extensive research and collaboration with external investors in 2018/2019, Cram opened a new home and 1 bedroom villa in the Shoalhaven region in Nowra, purchased a 2-bedroom specialist disability apartment and opened a purpose-built luxury modern 3-bedroom home in Dapto creating further opportunities for people with disability to enjoy independent living.

Despite the global pandemic requiring significant management and adaption to its service delivery, in 2020 Cram was nominated for a Leadership Award under the NSW/ACT Regional Community Awards and continued to expand its offering of services into 2021 opening two new 3-bedroom villas in Albion Park alongside further growth in its Community Participation and Support Coordination services.



# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Linda Wright**

*Chairman (Dec 16),  
Appointed 09/03/2009:  
Practice Review Committee Chair*

Linda joined the Board in 2009 and became Chair in 2017. Linda retired as a solicitor in 2018 having practised law for 37 years and been a partner in an Illawarra based firm for 27 years. Her principal area of practice was Family Law. Linda served on the Management Committee of the Illawarra Community Legal Centre for 25 years and is a past President of the Illawarra and District Law Society. She currently serves on the Social Science Ethics Committee of the University of Wollongong and has held executive positions on two school P & C Committees. She is currently the chair of Cram's Practices Review Committee and its Culture Committee.



**Bill Dowson OAM**

*Deputy Chair (Nov 18),  
Appointed 02/02/2017:  
Risk & Audit Committee Chair*

Bill joined the Board in 2017 and brings significant business and entrepreneurial experience, having both developed and acquired small businesses in the hardware, self-storage and document management sectors. Bill's community roles have included Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, Rotary, Illawarra Sports Stadium Trust, Illawarra basketball and Illawarra Academy of Sport. Bill is a member of Cram's Risk & Audit Committee and became the deputy Chair in November 2018



**Richard Walsh**

*Appointed 13/10/2017:  
HR & Remuneration Committee Chair*

Richard joined the Board in December 2017 and brings with him a wealth of experience in human resources and industrial relations across a number of industries. Richard is currently the Head of People & Culture Operations for a large aged care and seniors living organisation (IRT Group) and is also a member of the University of Wollongong HRM Advisory Committee. Richard has previously been a director on the board of IRT and he is the Chair of the HR and Remuneration Committee.



**Jessica De Angelis**

*Appointed 19/10/2018:  
Practice Review Committee*

Jessica joined the Board in 2018 and brings a background in strategy, communications and governance having worked across education, finance, health and government sectors from local start-ups to national and international ASX listed companies. She is a Board Director of Regional Development Australia Illawarra and is currently employed by NSW Health. Jessica has an Executive Master of Business Administration from Sydney Business School and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Jessica is a member of Cram's Practice Review Committee.



**Abbas Alibhai**

*Joined November 2020*

Abbas was appointed as a director of The Cram Foundation in November 2020. Abbas is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD). Abbas is currently the Executive Director of Finance at the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Abbas is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee and has extensive experience across the Health, Education, Manufacturing and Government sectors both in Australia and the UK.



**Ben Twyford**

*Joined November 2020*

Ben has been an accountant in the Illawarra for the past 20 years. As a practising accountant he has had exposure to many industries and various local businesses, from which he has developed a broad range of accounting and auditing skills. He also sits on the Salvation Army local business advisory Board. Ben will act on Crams Risk and Audit Committee.



**Judy Mullan**

*Joined November 2020*

Judy Mullan is an Associate Professor within the University of Wollongong (UOW) School of Medicine. She is the Academic Director of the Centre for Health Research Illawarra Shoalhaven Population (CHRISP) and the Deputy Director of the Illawarra and Southern Practice Based Research Network (ISPRN) recognised as one of Australia's most successful primary care research networks. Judy holds Bachelor degrees in Pharmacy and the Arts, as well as a PhD in Public Health. She is a registered pharmacist and a fellow of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia. Judy has made significant professional and research contributions in the areas of health services research, chronic disease management, safe medication management, aged care research, multicultural health, patient education and health literacy.



**James Robins**

*Joined November 2020*

James was appointed as a director of The Cram Foundation in December 2020 and sits on the HR & Remuneration Committee. He has resided in the Illawarra for over 15 years and brings a broad range of experience in leadership, risk management, strategy, Information Technology and cyber security. James is also currently Chief Information and Digital Officer at Peoplecare Health. He is a graduate of the AICD Company Directors Course and has completed a Bachelor of Science (Computer Science), a Bachelor of Commerce (Management), a Master of Information Science and a Certificate of Executive Leadership.

# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Karen Burdett**

Appointed 11/07/2018  
CEO & Company Secretary

Karen became CEO in July 2018 and brings over 15 years experience in senior roles working within Australia, Asia and New Zealand across a range of industries. Karen's expertise is in Strategic Planning, Innovation, Business Growth, Marketing and Communications within Corporate and Not for Profit sectors. Karen is passionate about delivering excellence in client service and collaboration across community, government and industry. She holds a Master of Business Administration with Sydney Business School, a Graduate Certificate in Marketing and is a current member of the Illawarra Business Chamber Regional Advisory Committee.



**Dr Melinda Williams**

Retired November 2020

Appointed 15/08/2014: Practice Review Committee

Melinda joined the Board in 2014 and brings a background in nursing and public health. Melinda has a PhD in Public Health and is currently the CEO of leading health insurer Peoplecare. Melinda is a Member of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Practice Research Network Strategic Advisory Group and is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Melinda is a member of Cram's Practice Review Committee and held the role of Deputy Chair from December 2017 to November 2018.



**Dale Cairney**

Retired August 2020

Dale Cairney Chair (Dec 16), Appointed 09/03/2009: Practice Review Committee Chair Dale joined the Board in 2015 and brings with him expertise in financial management and quality governance. Dale is currently the Deputy CEO of a not-for-profit organisation, is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and of CPA Australia. Dale's community roles include on the Board of WEA Illawarra and various past roles chairing community events with the Cancer Council, including 3 years Illawarra Relay for Life.



**Patrick Roberts OAM**

Retired November 2020

Appointed 23/05/2000: Risk & Audit Committee, HR & Remuneration

Patrick joined the Board in 2000 and became Chair shortly afterwards. He was awarded an OAM in 2017 for services to the community including the disability sector and Rotary, where he was a Past District Governor. Patrick retired from the workforce following a career in the banking industry where he held senior roles in Communications, Chief Manager Investment Advisory Services and Regional Manager Banking. Patrick is a member of Cram's HR & Remuneration and the Risk and Audit Committees. Patrick stood down as Chair in December 2017 however remained on the Board as a Director.

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP PATRICK ROBERTS OAM



The Cram Foundation is proud to recognise outstanding commitment to the organisation by awarding long term Board member and Volunteer Patrick Roberts OAM with Life Membership.

Patrick joined the Board in 2000 following his exemplary community service to Jaycees and APEX. Patrick was well respected for his thoughtfulness, compassion, and dignity and just seven months after joining the Board, accepted the role of Chairman. Steering the Board through difficult circumstances at the time, Patrick was recognised for his success in engaging several new directors with strong expertise in Governance and procedural improvement. One such director who passed away in 2016 was John Chaplin OAM, a revered member of the Illawarra community who was instrumental in contributing to the success and sustainability of not only The Cram Foundation, but other local disability providers within the region. Further to this, Cram's current esteemed Board Chair Linda Wright was also recruited by Patrick in 2009.

Throughout his tenure as the Chairman of the Board, Patrick led the organisation through a period in which both the Disability sector and The Cram Foundation were experiencing great change and a targeted focus on more person-centred service delivery. Following the very successful sale of the former Cram House site in Wollongong which had been bequeathed by volunteer Martha Cram, Patrick and the Board oversaw the transition from this larger institutional site to a revised model of smaller, independent, shared accommodation for people with disability. Patrick was awarded an OAM in 2017 and was honoured for his service to People with a Disability and to the Community of the Illawarra.

Patrick resigned from the Cram Board in 2020 after committing 20 years to ensuring those who rely heavily on for support in all aspects of their daily lives can live a full, fruitful, safe, and happy life. He will be recognised and remembered for his enormous contribution, compassion and enthusiasm for enhancing The Cram Foundation and its service delivery throughout his tenure and beyond.





# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Another challenging and complex year dominated by the COVID-19 global Pandemic has been successfully concluded thanks to the dynamic leadership of our CEO Karen Burdett, Senior Management, Team Leaders and our staff.

2020 – 2021 saw a number of changes to the Board of Directors. Directors Dale Cairney, Melinda Williams and Patrick Roberts had all given notice of their respective decisions to either resign or not nominate for election at the Annual General Meeting and in anticipation of their departures the Board undertook a recruitment process to fill the anticipated vacancies by matching incoming directors' skills to the Board's Skills Matrix. That process led to the election of Judy Mullan, Abbas Alibhai, Ben Twyford and James Robins as Directors of The Cram Foundation at the AGM in November 2020. Each has already brought great insight to the Board's decision-making and I look forward to their continuing roles and assistance.

At the AGM continuing Directors Richard Walsh, Jessica DeAngelis, Bill Dowson and Linda Wright were re-elected with Bill and Linda being re-elected to their respective roles as Deputy Chairperson and Chairperson.

An induction session was held for the new Directors to acquaint them with Cram's values and processes and at our Strategic Planning Day in December 2020 their knowledge was further imbedded by the presentation of background reports from each member of the senior management team which helped significantly inform the planning process. The Board agreed upon its Three-Year Strategic Plan.

Thank you to the three outgoing Directors Dale, Melinda and Patrick who served for 11, 6 and 20 years respectively. They all contributed significantly to the governance and development of Cram – none more so than Patrick who served as Chairperson for 17 years. To honour that achievement and service the Board voted unanimously to appoint Patrick as Cram's first Life Member.

The Board has continued to meet bi-monthly and the Board's Committees (People and Culture, Risk and Audit and Quality and Safeguards) have also met as scheduled. Most meetings have taken place through video conferencing although we did manage a couple of in person meetings in between lockdowns. The various Committees provide detailed reports and recommendations to the Board which the Board then considers. Each Director serves on at least one Committee and they are an integral part of the decision making process and Cram's governance.

2020 – 2021 saw a continued increase in Cram's growth in line with the prior and current Strategic Plans.

The partnerships with Specialist Disability Accommodation providers for new built accommodation in Nowra and Albion Park came to fruition and Cram now provides Supported Independent Living to 9 additional Participants in those properties. Further, negotiations commenced for the purchase of an existing property (which it is proposed to modify) plus an adjacent vacant block of land at Albion Park. Those negotiations were successfully finalised shortly after the conclusion of the 2020 -2021 year after the Board

reviewed the business case for the purchases and approved them. This is an exciting project which will continue to be developed in the new financial year and I particularly wish to thank Bill Dowson for his work on this project and in assisting Management with the negotiations.

Bill Dowson was also instrumental in the drafting and adoption of a new

Constitution for Cram which was adopted at an Extraordinary General Meeting in November 2020. The new Constitution better reflects the current accepted standard of governance and replaced the previous Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability continues to sit and published an interim report in October 2020. Our CEO presented a summary of the report to the Board setting out key themes and recommendations. The Board has taken note but at this stage has not needed to direct any significant changes to policy.

The annual audits conducted on behalf of NDIS and ACIS were postponed beyond the 2020 -2021 year to August 2021 but for clarity and certainty I am pleased to report that Cram passed both audits and accordingly is certified to continue providing our services. The Board in anticipation of the audits commenced a review of all Cram's Policies in May/June 2021.

Deputy Chairperson Bill Dowson and I were honoured to be invited to attend and present awards at Cram's Staff Recognition Day which this year was held at Shellharbour Council's function room and we took the opportunity then of publicly announcing Patrick Robert's Life Membership. Congratulations to all the staff who were nominated and to the winners of the various categories. Thank you to the organisers of the event who were able to seat, feed and water all the attendees despite the difficulties presented by social distancing rules.

Directors have missed the opportunity of being able to attend functions to meet Participants, family members and staff which has not been possible this year because of COVID-19 and Public Health Orders and we look forward to being able to resume that role in the not-too-distant future.

Once again, the Board recognises the on-going role all staff have played in the support of our Participants and their families this year. For extended periods of time during the year Participants' Day Programs and community activities have not operated and like the rest of the broader community Participants have been confined to their homes and visits by and to family and friends have been severely curtailed. This

of course has placed additional challenges on staff who have responded magnificently. The Board has been kept fully informed of changes to operational matters made by the CEO as a result of COVID-19. I particularly wish to thank our CEO for her strong advocacy in making vaccinations readily available to Participants and staff when resources were not

appropriately directed to the Disability Sector as had been envisaged when the vaccination rollout commenced.

The Board was very pleased with the 2020 -2021 Financial Report. It confirms that our Strategic Plan and longer-term goals are achievable and sustainable, and that Cram continues to have a viable future. Thank you to the Risk and Audit Committee which oversees the budget and to the drive and management of our CEO. Karen's vision for Cram and the work she puts into achieving that

vision are second to none.

Finally thank you to my fellow directors who served over the course of this year Dale Cairney (ret), Melinda Williams (ret), Patrick Roberts (ret), Bill Dowson, Richard Walsh, Jessica DeAngelis, Ben Twyford, James Robins, Judy Mullan and Abbas Alibhai for their assistance and commitment to the ongoing good governance of the Cram Foundation.

Linda Wright  
Chairperson

*"The partnerships with Specialist Disability Accommodation providers for new built accommodation in Nowra and Albion Park came to fruition and Cram now provides Supported Independent Living to 9 additional participants in those properties."*

*"2020 – 2021 saw a continued increase in Cram's growth in line with the prior and current Strategic Plans."*

# CEO'S MESSAGE

2021 has been a year of great challenge and achievement for The Cram Foundation which has seen the organisation juggle the COVID-19 Pandemic alongside our strategic growth and expansion of services to new Participants and their families.

Throughout the year, I have been extremely grateful and proud of the strength, resilience and outstanding commitment of Cram's growing team in continuing to deliver person centered support whilst managing the ever-changing disruptive impact of COVID-19 across our region. Despite the challenges that COVID-19 has placed on all individuals, I've been inspired by the resolve of our people to push forward and achieve so many significant milestones.

Our support staff including the great leadership of our Operations Manager and site Team Leaders, Participants and families were extremely resilient, and I appreciate the enormous effort made by all in ensuring our people remained safe and well during this turbulent time.

Risk management and a strong focus on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of our Participants and staff was our primary focus through the year. The pandemic brought notable change and disruption to the daily routines of our Participants. Responding to the changeable environment periods of lock down and restricted activity for those living within our Supported Independent Living services, Cram extended our delivery of further one on one support hours through the year. This change led to ongoing recruitment over this period and marked growth in our staff numbers.

This increased requirement of additional service hours throughout the year resulted in a significant revenue increase from NDIS funding as we have continued to grow, delivering a surplus result which was reinvested directly into additional resource and new initiatives that aim to achieve Cram's mission and vision.

Following Cram's strategic focus on delivering quality support environments and new housing it was through the extensive collaboration with local developers Stiletto Homes, Cram marked the commencement of the fiscal year in celebrating a new milestone opening two purpose built three-bedroom villas in Albion Park. The new accommodation enabled new opportunities for six people with high support needs to live independently.

I have been extremely grateful for the exceptional support and dedication of Cram's Executive Team who have adeptly juggled the changeable requirements during the pandemic. I would like to thank the Executive team for their leadership, personal sacrifice, and steady focus through the year.

Additionally, I would like to thank Cram's team of administrative staff who were relied heavily upon in supporting the homes and services throughout the year. They have supported Cram's strategic expansion, the onboarding of new projects and the back of house requirements for the organisation despite changes to location of work and hours during the lockdown periods.

*"Risk management and a strong focus on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of our participants and staff was our primary focus through the year. The pandemic brought notable change and disruption to the daily routines of our Participants."*

The year saw a momentous change to the NDIS funding levels in the areas of Supported Independent living which have required strong advocacy and have resulted in an increased administrative burden in ensuring Participants continue to receive adequate funds for their needs. Changes to the administration of funding from the Agency has also created inefficiency and confusion which Cram has also

accommodated during this difficult period. We are proud that despite the issues Cram has continued to work on the pathway of support and Lifestyle planning process which are key tools to assist in the required preparations for NDIS planning meetings and articulating each Participant's specific needs and goals.

I recognise the excellent work Cram's Culture Committee and WHS Committee (composed of staff representatives) which has added to our engagement of latest ideas and implementation of new processes and initiatives. Our people are at the core of our organisational success and ensuring the quality of our person-centred support and we have focused heavily in the past year on a range of initiatives to help our staff grow, develop and flourish.

Thank you to Cram's Participants, families, guardians, supporters, and volunteers who have been immensely patient and understanding as Cram has adapted our protocols and access to services in alignment with the frequently changing direction from the Government and Department of Health. We understand that the year has come at great personal cost to many families who faced restrictions due to the pandemic and I have been heartened by all we have done together in the face of true adversity and so many unknowns.



Through ongoing advocacy and collaboration, Cram played a strong leadership role within our community in securing the COVID-19 Vaccination in reach program to our sites and through the provision of a dedicated vaccination clinic. This work played a significant role in ensuring Cram Participants, their families and carers could avail themselves of the vaccine.

I would like to recognise the support, contribution and encouragement of Cram's volunteer Directors over this period. Within the year, Cram saw the departure of three Board members Patrick Roberts OAM, Dale Cairney, and Melinda Williams. All Directors were significant in Cram's recent success and helped to steer the organisation through meaningful change. Of note, Patrick Roberts, Cram's former Chair of the Board and long-term Director was celebrated in the year for his retirement and recognised with Life Membership for his considerable service to the organisation. The planned board vacancies provided a unique opportunity for new Directors and in November Cram welcomed the commencement of four new board members who possess extensive skills across Health, Finance, Risk and Technology.

Chair Linda Wright and Deputy Chair Bill Dowson led the Cram Board during in the year and I would especially like to recognise their strong governance, unwavering support and guidance to myself through the year.

I look forward to what I hope will be a safe and innovative year 2021 / 2022 as Cram continues to follow our strategic journey in enhancing person-centred service delivery and advancing the organisation to new success in achieving our vision of a world where people with a disability can live their best life.

**Karen Burdett**  
CEO

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## VISION

A world where each person with a disability can live their best life.

## MISSION

To provide person-centred services, high quality homes, meaningful life experiences and relationships tailored to unique individuals.

## CRAM VALUES

**Choice** We enable choice and a person-centred approach in everything we do.

**Respect** We respect each other and every person's right to contribute to their community.

**Accountability** We care and are accountable for our actions and decisions for each person's support and Cram's long-term future.

**Integrity** We approach our work with honesty and transparency.

**Empathy** We acknowledge and value every individual's perspective.

## PERSON CENTREDNESS PRINCIPLE

Underpinning Cram's strategic plan is the principle of person centredness. Cram puts Participant experience and quality outcomes at the heart of everything we do.

We enable Participant engagement, informed decision making and choice in all aspects of our service delivery and ensure a person-centred approach directs the basis of all decision and initiatives.

## CERTAINTY IN DELIVERY

Cram will ensure quality of service delivery through new initiatives to strengthen our culture and capability by embedding a framework of group-wide policies, making informed decisions through data and insights, improving core systems and building capacity of our people through education and recognition.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Culture & Values** - Cram's Culture is strengthened to ensure leading person-centred support and empowerment alongside future growth and expansion.

**Governance, Quality & Safety Management Framework** - Cram delivers a person centred Participant experience leveraging the new NDIS Commission quality and safeguards principles.

**Policies & Procedures** - Cram's group wide framework of policies and procedures guides continuity and consistency of support across the organisation.

**Insights, Process & Technology** - Cram's Optimisation Strategy and roadmap is underpinned by guiding principles (Person Centricity, Scalability, Single Source of Truth, Security of Assets, Enterprise First, Simplification and a Modern collaborative workplace) to deliver improved Service, Security, Value and Agility.

**Recruitment, Training & Recognition** - Cram's workforce capability is strengthened through a culture of education, talent recruitment, development and retention and is recognised as an Employer of Choice within the Disability Services Industry.

**COVID-19 Management** - Cram adapts to the changing COVID-19 environment adopting a leadership role in risk prevention, safety and wellbeing whilst shifting its focus as required to ensure person centred service delivery and financial sustainability.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY

Cram ensures its financial viability through strategic, purpose-based decision making centred on suitability, acceptability, and feasibility. Expansion via sustainable revenue streams and strong fiscal management enables Cram's sustainability and longevity for the long term.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Financial Viability** - Cram ensures its financial viability through expansion of sustainable revenue streams that align to our mission and vision and ensuring sound fiscal management.

## SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Investment in current growth and expansion within supported independent living services and disability accommodation for people with complex needs will be the backbone of Cram's Financial sustainability and longevity for the long term.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**SDA** - Cram expands its capability to enable the provision of quality Supported Disability Accommodation services in collaboration with partnerships across the Illawarra & Shoalhaven Regions.

**SIL** - Cram is a recognised leader for Participants with complex disabilities in providing Supported Independent Living services, enabling further expansion and collaboration to grow availability of housing in the future.

**Asset Management & Development** - Cram provides fit for purpose support environments and expands its footprint across the region through strong asset management and new development.

## INNOVATION & INFLUENCE

Cram influences and advocates for people with complex disabilities through service innovation, diversified income streams, research, policy, and collaboration to drive inclusion and empowerment.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

**Product & Service Innovation** - Cram delivers new, innovative, sustainable, person-centred services that are tailored to the individuals we support.

**Influence, Collaboration & Brand** - Cram is recognised as a trusted leader in provision of accommodation, life experiences and community inclusion for people with complex disabilities.

**Research & Best Practice** - Cram collaborates with community stakeholders and leverages industry research and business excellence models to drive leadership in Participant support and organisational strength.

# PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHTS

The Cram Foundation is extraordinarily proud of the resilience and strength of our Participants who were significantly impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and lock down. Despite the disruption and restrictions imposed as part of the Government Health Orders, Cram participants, their support staff and families have found innovative and creative options to keep busy and connected.

In recognition of this work, Cram was nominated and a finalist in the leadership category of NSW regional Community Awards and was a finalist in the Community industry Group awards for their work in creating meaningful moments and interactive activity whilst working within the rules of COVID-19 restrictions and keeping everyone safe. Participants enjoyed social distancing games, kindness rock drops, cultural days, dress ups, gardening initiatives, cooking competitions, performance challenges and more!

In the past year, Cram engaged closely with Participants, their families and guardians to work towards the attainment of their NDIS goals and outcomes whilst managing the disruption that COVID-19 presented. As part of Cram's holistic person-centred training, Cram has refined the Lifestyle planning process and documentation to assist families and Participants to complete activities that are in line with their aspirations and NDIA goals with a clear focus on exploring new options and building capacity through new experiences.

In 2020/2021, Cram continued to provide Support Coordination services which were used to assist Participants in ensuring they have adequate care and support within their housing and living, access to a range of Community Participation and skills and independence building. Cram's provision of Support Coordination continues to expand with several new Participants coming on board during the year.

Delivery of service to Cram's in-home support to community Participants has also been a significant part of the Cram's service provision enabling greater individual independence and inclusion through the support of our workers. Throughout the year, due to COVID-19, Cram has been proud to assist Participants in overcoming unique challenges of travel, relocations interstate, maintaining service and activity whilst tightly managing new risks and changeable environment of the pandemic.

Through Cram's expansion of Specialist Disability Housing, and the opening of a two modern, fully accessible three-bedroom villas within the year Cram welcomed new Participants into Supported Independent Living in the year. New housing projects continue to be developed as Cram works towards the goal of strategic growth, enabling independence and built for purpose housing to new NDIS Participants.

In working with Cram's SDA housing provider Compass and The Department of Communities and Justice, one of the existing homes received a renovation of the kitchen, living areas and flooring. These amendments have enhanced the living space of the home for its residence and afforded the residents of the home a six-week vacation in the beautiful Shoalhaven whilst the works were completed.

The Cram Foundation thanks the Stanwell Park Sea Eels of the Helensburgh-Stanwell Park Surf Life Saving Club who have continued to support our organisation who presented Cram with a very generous donation of \$1000. Their donation went towards the purchase of plants and equipment for the development of the Sensory Garden.

Cram's support staff have also worked closely with Participants to experience activities including fitness programs and personal training to enhance independence, health, and wellbeing. Within the year, Cram staff and Participants took part in the Wave-FM Feb Fit campaign which focused on achieving a goal of steps and a program of activity tailored to all.



## HIGHLIGHT TIMELINE



July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020	November 2020	December 2020
Cram and Minister for Disabilities open new 3-bedroom Villas in Albion Park	Celebrate R U OK? Minister for Skills visits Cram Foundation	Cram launches new group CP program Kindness Rock Drop Art Cram nominated in the NSW Regional Community Awards	Mental Health Month Initiatives Halloween Community Trick or Treating	Cram's Melbourne Cup Extravaganza	Board Strategic Planning Day Finalisation of Cram's Housing and Living Design Principles Cram Mega Virtual Christmas Party Completion of Sensory Garden



January 2021	February	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021
New Year Celebration Parties Staff Recognition Awards and Lifetime Membership for Patrick Roberts Australia Day Lamington Bake Off Competition and Parties	Cram and Wave FM Feb Fit Challenge	International Women's Day Celebrations	Renovations to Cram House and vacation to Shoalhaven	In-reach Vaccination program and Cram Vax Hubs for over 100 people Cram Finalist in We Do Magic Community Industry Awards	Creative Participant engagement initiatives through COVID-19 lockdown



## GROWTH, INNOVATION & QUALITY

In December 2020, The Cram Foundation's Executive Team and existing and newly elected Directors attended an intensive Strategic Planning Day to review the organisation's Mission and Vision and set the strategic focus for the next 3-year horizon. The day was facilitated by Board Chair Linda Wright and CEO Karen Burdett and reviewed the effect of the external environment including COVID-19 and other factors impacting the industry including the Royal Commission into Disability. The day's discussions considered three core areas which included a review of the organisation's operations, people and culture, business capability and quality service model. This was followed by an analysis of opportunities for growth & financial sustainability, ending with a discussion exploring future organisational design and structures fit for the future.

The planning day led to the Board agreeing to a set of aspirational goals for the organisation, including a commitment to utilise cash reserves and invest in the organisation's fiscal sustainability and future plans for expansion. Further to this, a 3-year operational road map, defining key initiatives that will deliver to the organisation's strategic objectives was created and now forms the basis of Cram's business plan.

Management of the COVID-19 Delta infection and subsequent periods of lockdown within the region led to substantial disruption in the organisation's service delivery and operational environment. In response, Cram's overarching focus for quality

was centred on the formation and continuous review of a resolute COVID-19 Management Plan. The plan was a crucial factor in the organisational alignment and compliance with Government and Public Health advice specific for residential service providers. This advice along with extensive industry collaboration has continued to inform frequent updates to the management plan including Cram's range of policies and operational protocols.

In line with the scheduled surveillance audits for certification of NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework and the Australian Community Industry Standards 2018 in August 2021, Cram's full suite of policies, procedures and supporting documents underwent a detailed review. Processes overseeing the delivery of high intensity support were areas of focus of the review, along with a detailed assessment of Cram's overarching governance processes.

In alignment with Cram's strategic objectives, 2020/2021 saw the fruition of further specialist disability accommodation, with the launch of two new purpose built modern three-bedroom Villas. In addition, Cram pursued a range of housing and development options across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven committing to two exciting new housing projects for 2022.



# PEOPLE AND CULTURE

2020/2021 saw employee numbers increase to accommodate organisational growth, increased service delivery across new sites and in response to the COVID-19 environment. The pandemic impacted the organisation considerably and required the need to adapt workplace planning, rostering, training and processes to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our people.



As part of Cram's ongoing management of COVID-19 within the business, detailed consultation was conducted with all staff and stakeholders regarding vaccination and the benefits of an immunised workforce in protecting the health and safety of employees and Cram's vulnerable Participants. In consultation with industry, staff, Participants and families, the Board of Directors made the critical decision to take a leadership approach in requiring vaccination as a condition of employment for all employees and providers. This led to the rollout of the organisation's first Vaccination Policy resulting in a 100% vaccination rate of staff across the organisation. The move ensured Cram was well prepared in advance of the NSW Public Health Orders which subsequently mandated vaccination across the disability sector weeks later.

## Organisational KPI's

In consultation with Cram's Board Committee for People and Culture, Cram re-established new KPI's encompassing targets for reduced casualisation, management of employee leave, and included targets for workforce planning and wellbeing. The KPI's have been adopted across the organisation and reported directly to Cram's Board of Directors.

## Staff Development and Recognition

Cram's annual training calendar and approach to employee education continues to focus on critical foundational elements of the NDIS Code of Conduct, Cram Values and a holistic person-centred approach to support and decision making. Cram continues to work with a number of external partners including Diann Rodgers Healy of the Illawarra Enablement Centre and Shoshana Dreyfus of the University of Wollongong in the delivery of tailored training programs.

As a valuable employee benefit, Cram was able to coordinate subsidised First Aid & CPR training and extensive education on specific competencies and specialised areas of support. Training including The Accidental Counsellor, COVID-19 Outbreak Readiness, Medication Management and Manual Handling are some of the key areas of development delivered during the period. Cram also offered a number of selected employees and Team Leaders the opportunity to gain qualifications within the leadership diploma regarding competency-based assessments. Opportunities for staff seeking Certificate IV qualifications and Certificate III in Disability were also made available for a range of staff in collaboration with several Registered Training Organisations.

An important and unique aspect of Cram's service proposition is the provision of in-house health and high intensity supports. Within the fiscal year, due to Cram's increased number of Participants, Cram employed an additional full time Registered Nurse. Cram would like to acknowledge the unwavering commitment and person-centred support that our nursing staff have provided to our Participants throughout what has been another challenging year. Their support and input regarding protocols, training and infection control in response to COVID-19 risk was highly valued.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, Cram was able to hold its dedicated recognition event to celebrate the contribution of staff throughout the year and provide awards for outstanding achievement of individuals across the organisation. Awards were in the categories of Person-Centeredness, People's Choice and Outstanding Attitude. Congratulations to all the nominated staff and the proud recipients of the awards:

- People's Choice Award – Jodie Street
- Person Centred Award – Tara Dingle
- Outstanding Attitude Award – Christine Cross

The tenure of staff who celebrated milestones of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years service during both the calendar years of 2020 and 2021 were also recognised:

5 years		10 years	15 years
Denae Reuter	Rene Ndayisaba	Linda Pullen	Patricio Covarrubias Danielle Matthews Erika Covarrubias
Rikki-Lee Fuller	Martina Worthington	Susan Hambly	
Nicole Mwangi	Thulani Moyo	Taleigha Gilbert	20 years
Rachael Parlett	Holly Buckley	Jessica Martelli	
Tanya Hampton	Maddison Hazelton	Christine Cross	
Francisco Alcalde Lopez	Stewart Newcombe	Penelope Holloway	Colleen Hicks
		Maria Klanac	
		Dorothy Keys	

Due to the challenges presented by COVID-19, frequent communication with staff was a critical aspect of Cram's employee engagement via a remote and online channel of Microsoft Teams. Live question and answer briefings with Cram's CEO were held frequently to ensure staff connection and the real time dissemination of information. Furthermore, Cram's annual employee survey captured valuable information on staff views on culture, teamwork and management of the pandemic. Pleasingly, the survey resulted in a response rate of over 70% and noted improvements in Cram achieving a positive net promoter score.

Cram is enthusiastic about raising the profile of the community services sector and the immense potential and career opportunities that exist in the Disability Sector. As part of Cram's commitment to promoting the wonderful benefits for purpose driven individuals from all backgrounds to enter the sector, Cram was a proactive partner and supporter of the region's Illawarra YES program. This is a State Funded initiative with Business Illawarra that aimed to introduce young people into traineeships. In collaboration with the program, two trainees graduated and secured permanent employment with Cram.

## Step-Up Program

Cram continues its commitment to investing in the development of our employees via our internally managed Step-Up Program. Developed in-house, the Step-Up Program is tailored to build leadership capabilities and career development opportunities from within. This work-based program aims to develop new skills, recognise leadership attributes, and enhance individuals' professional development, technical capabilities and career prospects in the future.

Following the program's recent success in enabling the successful promotion of two staff into leadership roles, the program was further refined in its relevance and efficacy in creating future leaders. In 2021, entry into the program was hotly contested by twenty-five internal staff applications whereby staff were required to submit their resume and participate in a formal interview selection process for the 6-month dedicated program.





## Cram Committees

In addition to the range of communication channels and surveys, a number of committees ensure staff have a structured and direct mechanism by which to bring forth ideas and feedback. Due to the ongoing frequency of changes to the Government's Public Health Orders and Cram's own internal risk prevention protocols, Cram established the COVID-19 Ambassadors Committee to complement and support the implementation and communication of COVID-19 prevention protocol.

The Joint Consultative Committee involves Cram Management, the Health Services Union and employee representatives. This committee convenes as required to discuss any industrial areas of concern and resolve issues where needed.

The Work Health and Safety Committee consists of staff appointed worker representatives from all areas of the workforce including operational support staff, administrative staff, site Team Leaders and Executive Managers. A key facet of the Committee's purpose is to harness worker feedback on new initiatives and opportunities to provide a safe workplace and staff input on safety and operational innovations within the organisation. This committee meets on a regular basis and has played a productive role in reviewing incidents, COVID-19 vaccination risk and protocol and emergency planning.

Despite the hurdles presented by the pandemic, Cram's Enrichment Committee completed the construction of a Sensory Garden at one of Cram's homes, partly funded via the region's Community Grants program. The garden provides a pleasant outdoor experience with a selection of plants and activities to engage a number of Participants.

Led by the Chair of the Board and a selection of staff representatives, Cram's Culture Committee continued to be an important channel for staff engagement and is committed to the continued development of a positive and transparent workforce culture. The committee directly contributed to matters regarding the organisation's culture initiatives and have played a key role in the consultation and decision making in the rollout of Cram's first compulsory uniform during the year.

## Recruitment and Induction

Throughout the year Cram reviewed its methodology for recruitment and induction strategy in line with COVID-19 restrictions to enable remote online delivery and assessment. In addition, a comprehensive review of content was completed to reinforce COVID-19 management protocols, infection control training, wearing of Personal Protective Equipment, Medication Management, Enteral Feeding, Defensible Documentation and Restricted Practices to align with new procedure and information.

Cram's growth in Participants and sites required a steady stream of onboarding of new staffing to support the new sites and increased delivery of community participation. Cram continues to employ the majority of staff in permanent

employment and is a large employer in the Illawarra Shoalhaven region with 220 staff. Cram strives to aim for reduced casualisation and has continued to manage its ratio of casual labour in the 2020/2021 year to an average of 9%.

The Cram Foundation's leadership team welcomed the commencement of a People and Culture Manager during the year who has worked with Cram to support our people and further develop the program of education and professional development.

Additionally, Cram conducted extensive consultation with its operational leadership team to redesign a new structure of supervision to bolster resource and increased support to teams and enhanced supervision across each site.

Due to the organisation's strategic growth and complex changes to the administration of NDIS Participant plans and funding, the 2020/2021 year saw the commencement of several new roles including a dedicated NDIS Coordinator, Roster Coordinator, Payroll Coordinator and Financial Accountant. Additionally, to enhance the oversight and escalation of Participant and staff issues during evening and weekends, Cram created the role of Night Shift Coordinator as a point of escalation for staff on shift overnight.

## Projects

### Payroll Audit

Cram engaged the services of an external consultant to conduct a detailed assessment on its payroll function. The project commenced a review of our compliance with the relevant industrial SCHADS award, integrity of employee data and efficacy of existing payroll systems and configurations. The project is due for completion in January 2022 when it will also assist in informing the simplification and rationalisation of systems and determine potential efficiencies in aligning future systems such as a CRM.

### WHS System Review

Throughout the year Cram employed the services of an expert in Work Health and Safety Systems to complete a gap analysis and comprehensive review of the organisation's documentation, officer due diligence, worker risk profiles and systems. The report identified key strengths in Cram's documentation, a strong and mature commitment to Participant care, quality competency-based training and COVID management protocols. Opportunities for further development and recommendations were also identified to continue to enhance our systems and processes which will be delivered as a program of work over the coming years.





## CRAM IN THE COMMUNITY

In the past year Cram has worked with a range of stakeholders across the broader Illawarra and Shoalhaven community and has played an active role in advocating priority access for people with disability, their families and support workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Through its work with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Health District and Aspen medical, this advocacy led to Cram collaborating with several health and disability service providers across the region to facilitate dedicated vaccination hubs.

The Cram Foundation continues to be outspoken advocates for the Disability sector as part of our membership of the Illawarra Disability Alliance. Cram's CEO has proactively engaged with politicians from all levels of government throughout the year and completed several submissions to peak body National Disability Service (NDS), National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and other Government agencies to provide feedback on key topics including Specialist Disability Accommodation Housing and Living, COVID-19 and mandatory vaccination, Independent Assessments, amendments to the Disability Act and the sustainability and efficacy of NDIS funding.

Cram's CEO and Senior Leadership Team attended a number of local leadership events including The Illawarra Connection Dinners (both in person and virtually), a range of Community and Disability Industry events, and Business Illawarra Networking events. Cram represented the community and disability services sector during the period with the CEO

completing the second year in her role as member of the Illawarra Regional Advisory Committee of the NSW Business Chamber. Cram supported the Regional Development Australia's Leadership Illawarra Program for emerging Senior leaders with Cram's CEO proud to take part for a third year as a Mentor in the external Leadership Illawarra Program which aims to enhance the skills of the regions next generation of Leaders. Cram's Growth and Accommodation Manager also began as a student of the two-year program.

Throughout the year and across the community Cram has promoted the unique opportunities that exist in the disability sector and has shown its commitment for workforce development. Pledging support towards the Illawarra South Coast Aged & Disability Services Workforce Charter, Cram affirmed its ongoing dedication to ensuring people across the Illawarra and Southern NSW have access to safe, quality and appropriate aged and disability services and how as an industry we will work together to uphold these standards.

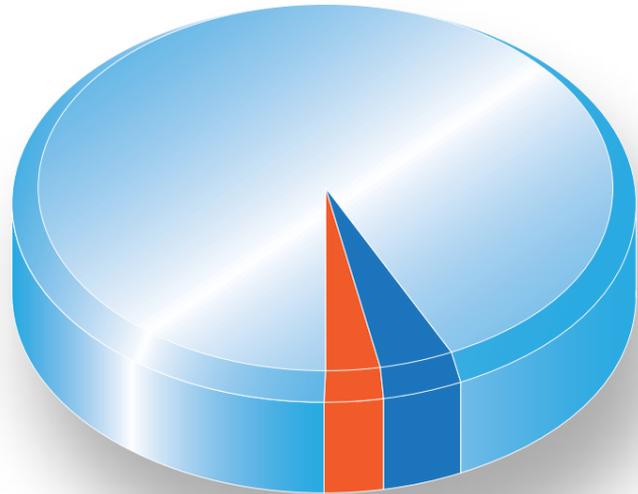
Whilst many events were placed on hold because of the COVID-19 lockdown at varying times of year, Cram maintained its community influence exhibiting at a range of Expos and events in the Disability sector which provided a platform to promote our range of services including new Specialist Disability Housing.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

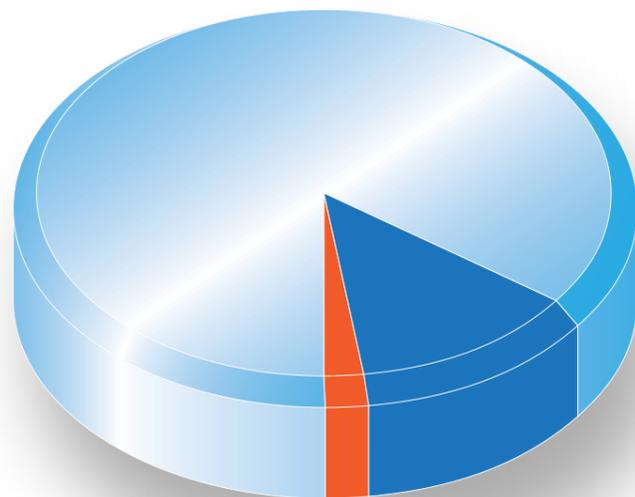
The financial year end 2020/2021 produced an operating surplus of \$1,608,953 compared with Surplus of \$1,193,287 for 2019/2020.

## Total Income \$18,739,008



- NDIA funding**  
93% (\$17,429,562)
- Participant Fees**  
4% (\$718,260)
- Interest earnings, donations, insurance payments and other**  
3% \$591,186

## Total Expenditure \$17,130,005



- Employee expenses**  
85% (\$14,615,889)
- Operating expenses**  
13% (\$2,091,306)
- Depreciation and interest expenses**  
2% (\$422,860)

Total assets were \$11,815,215 of which \$8,386,666 were current assets, comprised primarily of cash reserves; \$3,464,549 being non-current assets comprising of buildings, right of use assets, motor vehicles and furniture/equipment. Total liabilities were \$5,021,232 of which \$3,036,838 were current. Net Assets \$6,829,983.





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