



# Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ending 30 June 2021

**Development Circle Inc.**

**ABN: 58174696182**

**Association registration number: A0059791Y**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to MDC's Annual Report for 2020-2021.

This report marks a milestone year for MDC in establishing itself as a stand-alone volunteer association. We take this time to highlight the evolution of MDC since its beginning in 2021, with stories of events and activities over the last 12 months, sector insights in the time of a pandemic, and a snapshot of recent organisational development to prepare MDC for its next steps into the future.

These past 12 months have continued to show MDC's continued adaptability and resilience, as we experience the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including snap and extended lockdowns, causing prolonged disruption and uncertainty in all aspects of our lives. Beyond the odd team get-together, our various attempts to host in-person networking events were thwarted, showing the vital need to find ways to engage and connect through online and virtual platforms. With MDC's dynamic leadership team and a continued stream of enthusiastic volunteer support, we have been able to offer continued event and activity offerings through the Game Changer and Community Building Action Groups, as well as growing our online presence.

The volunteer sector itself experienced significant disruptions due to the pandemic. [Volunteering Australia](#) estimates nearly two out of three volunteers (65.9%) stopped volunteering at the height of the pandemic in 2020. They also identify continued barriers to re-engage volunteers and support volunteer opportunities, even during times of eased restrictions. With this in mind, we recognise the enormous effort, dedication and achievement of our volunteer MDC Leadership Team, in not only keeping MDC afloat but also growing its engagement in the time of COVID-19 disruptions. It is a true testament that our volunteer team is the lifeblood of MDC. Throughout this report are Member Spotlights of our current MDC Leadership Team, showing the vast range of experience and expertise that keeps MDC going.

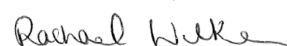
On a personal note, as we end our terms as MDC President and Vice-President, we take this moment to reflect on the incredible experience our time at MDC has offered, both professionally and personally. On taking up our roles in 2019, we determined that we would build the infrastructure of MDC to give clarity to our collective purpose and identity, enable leadership and agency of our volunteers, and to scale our activities responsively to capitalise on opportunities and weather external shocks. We are proud to leave the leadership team with a set of strategic assets, systems and processes that form a strong foundation from which they can build MDC's future.

We are profoundly grateful and proud to have shared our journey with every Leadership Team member and volunteer, past and present. We thank them for their enthusiasm and belief in MDC, their patience as we learnt along the way alongside them, their generosity in sharing their time, expertise and friendship, all of which makes being part of MDC so dynamic and rewarding.



Ju-Lin Lee,  
President 2019-2021

and



Rachael Wilken,  
Vice President 2019-2021

### Member Spotlight - President



**Ju-Lin Lee (AdvAPD),  
Coordinator - Dietetics, Diabetes  
Education and Community Nursing,  
Your Community Health**

Ju-Lin joined MDC in 2018 to contribute and be part of a community just as dedicated to social change as herself. Promoting nutrition outcomes in rapidly urbanising lifestyles in Mongolia was Ju-Lin's entry into the development sector. Over a decade on and with additional qualifications in Public Health, Ju-Lin has worked in a range of practice, research, policy and academic roles, where she can address nutrition, health and social inequities at individual, local community and population levels. Ju-Lin brings to MDC her joy in bringing people together to share stories of community development practice and best practice in promoting social justice.

### Member Spotlight - Vice-President



**Rachael Wilken,  
Manager, The Apiary Fellowship**

Rachael is a dedicated not-for-profit professional, with experience supporting social change internationally and in Australia. She has done a bit of everything from resource development and operational support, to quality management and governance. A member of the Leadership team since 2017, Rachael brings her experience in events and her love of a good process to keep the MDC team on track to create a vibrant community for MDC members!

## AN EVOLUTION OF MDC

**The MDC story is in itself representative of how MDC works and what MDC aims to foster - collaboration.**

MDC was created through the collaborative efforts of its founders in 2012, when MDC became part of a coordinated National Development Circle. In 2013 MDC became an incorporated association, which enabled access to more formal collaboration opportunities. Through continued efforts to work together, MDC has cultivated a dynamic team of volunteers to run regular events and activities, bringing together community and international development professionals and students.

To support the delivery of successful and engaging events and activities, MDC has built up a suite of tools for strategic impact. These tools for impact provide guidance and key reference points for MDC to be able to maintain its core mission, whilst being able to innovate and adapt when confronted with various challenges, and evolve with the dynamic needs of the development sector. Recently established additions to MDC's toolkit are:



Over the last several years, MDC has continued to review its organisational and strategic structures to embed collaborative actions in its operations to ensure the MDC community remains its focus. This has included:

- Introduction of the Leadership Team and Action Group governance model (2019)
- Financial Sustainability strategy (2020)
- Engagement and recruitment strategy (2021)
- Partnership model and implementation plan (2021)

Yet throughout its evolution, MDC's mission has not changed from its very beginning:

**MDC's Mission:**

- *To foster a culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing between people and organisations creating positive social, economic, environmental and cultural change.*

- *To provide our members with opportunities to connect and share good practice, using engagement platforms such as professional development and networking events, and online forums.*

***Lighthouse Statement:***  
**To connect and energise like-minded people, in an inclusive space, to build a thriving community in Melbourne that is dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how MDC's implementation of its tools for change and support structures for collaboration have enabled its continued ability to not only serve its mission but grow its community engagement. Further, MDC has shown it offers a valuable platform for community and international development practitioners, with a growing subscriber base, and a continued response to events and expressions of interest in volunteering. Today, MDC's current position as a stand-alone volunteer association equipped with its strategic impact toolkit, catalysing support structures and collaborative team of

volunteers, ensures that MDC builds upon its strong and dynamic history to continue its journey in the unknown future.

### Member Spotlight - Secretary



***Danyel Walker, Senior Project Officer - Communications and Engagement, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing***

Danyel Walker is a passionate and dedicated health promotion and communications professional. She has a rich experience across a range of community environments including health, international development and not-for-profit sectors in Bangladesh and Australia. She is now working within the Victorian government and is a health promotion and public health teaching associate at Monash University. Danyel brings strong coordination and organisational skills to ensure the effective running of MDC.

## REALISING OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

In 2019-2020, an MDC Leadership Team and Action Group governance model was adopted to purposefully and effectively operationalise its Theory of Change, whilst ensuring the obligations as a volunteer-run incorporated association were met. This operational structure supported the suite of activities that MDC delivers beyond events to be:

*“an effective and thriving development community in Melbourne that is dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”.*

In recognising the dynamic needs of the development sector and as various MDC team members finished their term, this governance model and structure was reviewed in 2021. This review was supported by all MDC team members through the identification of areas to strengthen, the development and implementation of a strategic communications campaign, dedicated promotion at usual events, and renewed commitment at the MDC Leadership Team planning day in 2021.

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### Key strengths MDC has built upon in 2020-2021:

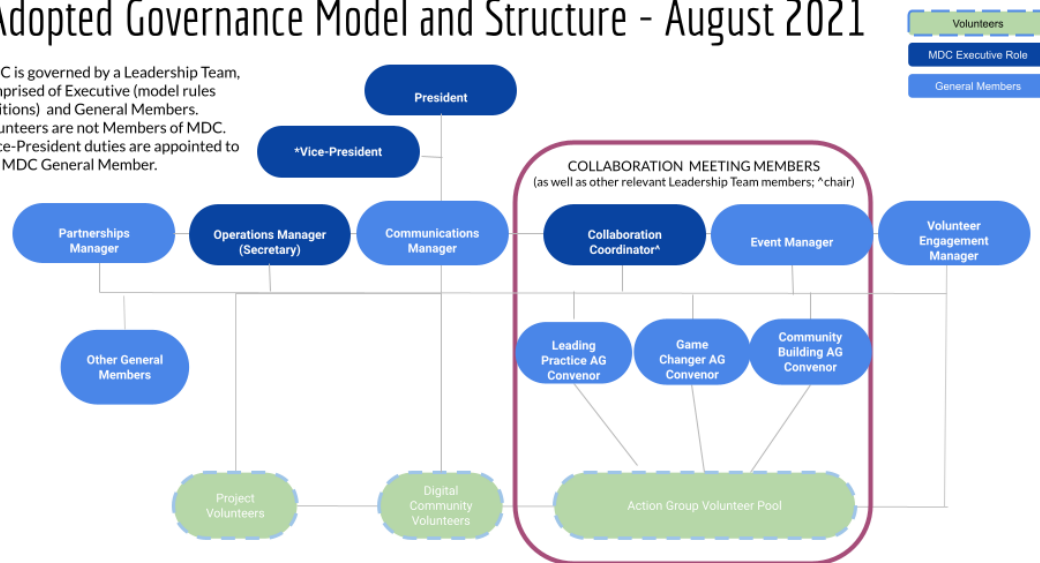
- A visible presence for our audience through the pandemic including our closed Facebook group
  - A proven ability of the team and our systems to adapt for the unexpected
  - A proven set of activities that contribute to our identified outcomes
  - Regular informal (Monthly Meet-Ups) and formal (Game Changer) events throughout 2020-2021 enabled opportunities for increased participation at MDC events
  - Foundational work on volunteer recruitment and induction processes. Our Monthly Meet-Ups were also a key pathway for people to express their interest in volunteering.
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Combined with [MDC's Financial Sustainability Strategy](#), the updated MDC governance model serves as a way to ensure MDC's sustainability in the long term. It aims to better enable MDC to purposefully build relationships, ensure representation of the community and international development sector, as well as engage and recruit MDC members and volunteers - a recognition that MDC team members are the lifeblood of MDC. Ultimately, this aims to allow MDC to realise its Theory of Change.



## Adopted Governance Model and Structure - August 2021

MDC is governed by a Leadership Team, comprised of Executive (model rules positions) and General Members. Volunteers are not Members of MDC. \*Vice-President duties are appointed to any MDC General Member.



### Team Collaboration

Building upon MDC's identified strengths, a range of internal support structures and processes have been embedded into MDC's updated Governance model. This presents opportunities to more purposefully support collaboration within MDC to effectively operationalise its Theory of Change.

Building on significant work to date in volunteer management, an MDC volunteer portal has been established by Rachael Wilken, Vice President, as well as creation of the Volunteer Engagement Manager position to uphold volunteering best practice across MDC. To maintain the balance of collaboration across Action Groups, reduce duplication of effort across roles and enable early deployment of budget processes during event planning, the Collaboration Coordinator position (holding Treasurer functions) was also created.

To grow our volunteers, an engagement and recruitment strategy was implemented in June 2021. This involved developing the following communications:

- An EDM focused on the MDC volunteer opportunities which received an 23.9% open rate and seven volunteer responses, one of which resulted in the recruitment of our inaugural Collaboration Coordinator, Rebecca Joiner
- Focused social posts highlighting the various roles available
- Invitation for interested parties to meet and chat further with MDC members at our online events (Meet-Ups and Game Changer)
- Social posts highlighting our MDC members

### 2021 Member Spotlight - Collaboration Coordinator



#### **Rebecca Joiner, Associate - Grattan Institute**

Bec Joiner joined MDC as the new Collaboration Coordinator in July 2021. Bec has worked in a range of economic policy positions in government and not-for-profit organisations, and is currently working in education policy. Bec has also previously volunteered with not-for-profit organisations assisting recently arrived migrants and refugees, and has worked as a paralegal in immigration law. Bec is also currently studying a Masters of International and Development Economics at ANU.

She is passionate about using economic policy as a driver to improve wellbeing and reduce inequality. Bec is excited to support collaboration across MDC and MDC's broader mission of knowledge sharing and connection as MDC's new Collaboration Coordinator.

## **BUILDING THE MDC COMMUNITY**

### **Insights from the Community and International Development sector**

Melbourne Development Circle activities are developed by teams of volunteers who are themselves deeply embedded in the international and community development sectors. MDC activities represent the needs and interests expressed by our colleagues, networks, clients and our event participants.

Our insights from the field reflected the impacts of the pandemic. Where travel is restricted, and traditional ways of working had to be reviewed, long standing challenges in the development sector were brought to the forefront such as localisation, food sovereignty and an array of social challenges. MDC volunteers working in community and international development contexts brought their own experiences to inform our events topics and planning, positioning MDC itself as a member of the development community to be able to increase connections and collaboration opportunities.

We invite practitioners to join us in our journey to ensure we continue to provide a space where we can all increase our knowledge, gain new connections and increase our impact.

### **To achieve its vision and mission, MDC recognises the need for diverse actions and full representation from the community.**

With a dedicated subscriber base that has been with us for nearly 10 years, a strong brand and suite of marketing resources, MDC's activities of the past year have aimed to create integrated and diverse opportunities to build the MDC community.

***MDC's Why Statement:***  
We recognise that development practice is complex, dynamic and cannot be done alone - we believe that achieving a better future for all requires diverse actions and full representation from the community.

Building mechanisms to efficiently enable ways for the MDC community to inform our activities and events has been a key objective for this year. This was through strategic actions in our event planning and communications, led by Bardie Barclay-Sutton (MDC Events Manager) and Kristy Tong (MDC Communications Manager). A key feature has been the use of ticketing and registration processes to track source data, identify potential speakers or partnerships, and connect with people interested in volunteering with MDC.

Further, the Game Changer and Community Building Action groups consolidated their calendar of events and event planning, so opportunities to collaborate across Actions Groups have been increasingly identified. For example, building on engagement with speakers for Game Changers, follow up invitations to delve into a deeper discussion at the MDC Meet-Ups was tested with increasing integration across the event planning process. Various attendees of Meet-Ups were invited back as Lead Conversationalists in subsequent MDC Meet-Ups. Some participants were able to further share their expertise to MDC's mission as MDC members or volunteers, establishing a clear pathway for increasing participation in MDC.

### 2020 Member Spotlight - Events Manager and incoming President



***Bardie Barclay-Sutton, Programs and Impact Consultant, Inclusiv Education***

Bardie Barclay-Sutton has spent the past decade working with NGOs focusing on social justice advocacy, including assignments with Australian Volunteers International (AVI) in Indonesia and Mongolia. To further her interest in gender-sensitive design and inclusive practice she is currently pursuing her Masters in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development.

Starting her career journey with volunteer-led organisations such as World Vision's youth movement, Oaktree and AYCC,

Bardie brings experience in volunteer management, project coordination and evaluation, and is motivated by her passion for deep conversations on everything development. Bardie joined MDC at a Meet Up, was invited back as a Lead Conversationalist and has subsequently been a dedicated MDC member as Events Manager and is to be incoming President for 2022.

### **Community Building Action Group: creating online spaces to connect**

The Community Building Action Group is led by Sanjna Ullal and supported by Travis Bubb. The Community Building Action Group's aim is to bring the MDC community together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by creating professional networks, sharing information and interactions with people in the sector that are doing commendable work and engaging with them.

One of the key activities of this Action Group's calendar is a virtual monthly Meet-Up. Applying community development principles to build our MDC community, one of the goals of the Meet-Ups is to create a space that can be a community of practice for those in the development sector. Held on the first Wednesday of the month, the Meet-Ups involve a Lead Conversationalist who facilitates an informal online discussion with participants on topics relevant to development practice.

Meet-Up and other MDC event participants are encouraged to join a closed [Facebook group](#) where the discussion can continue around these topics. Open to the national Development Circle audience, we aim to utilise this group to bring together the wider development community during COVID-19 in a meaningful way. The group was created in March 2020 and in July 2021 had 97 members with 50 posts shared within the group ranging from various Development Circle events, to partner events, to knowledge banks such as articles and podcasts.

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***A closed COVID-19 group was also created to provide an opportunity for development professionals to connect and build community. This group grew from 52 to 97 members over the year, showing the need for an online community.***

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In November 2020, the Action Group engaged students and professionals in an online speed mentoring session. This was a chance for emerging development professionals to meet professionals in the field. The event was structured to enable 1:1 connections to be made and lasting mentor relationships beyond the event. This has proved to be an innovative online event format to facilitate effective networking on an online platform, which has been added to the general calendar of events for MDC. There are plans to consider how this format can be applied for mid-career development professionals.

### Member Spotlight - Community Building Convenor



#### **Sanjna Ullal, Environmental Consultant - Blue Environment**

Sanjna Ullal brings experience in sustainability consulting and community development in South Asia and the Pacific. Currently working with Blue Environment, she works extensively with data to assist government and corporate clients with their community and climate commitments.

Passionate about social justice issues within the environmental space, she has worked and volunteered in waste management, food security, disaster management and political sovereignty movements. Having completed her Master of Environment and Sustainability at Monash University, and an honours degree in economics, she intends to continue working internationally in sustainable community development in order to apply her MDC learnings.

### Game Changer Action Group: the effects of COVID-19 in community and international development

The Game Changer series is MDC's flagship knowledge sharing platform. This year we have again highlighted multiple prominent challenges facing the community and international development sector and opportunities for using emerging evidence and practices to achieve significant impact locally and globally. The Game Changer Action group, led by Tanja Rosenqvist, RMIT University, held two events in 2020-2021, delivered as interactive webinars due to continued COVID-19 lockdowns.

In October 2020, 115 people registered for the webinar '[Localising humanitarian and development practice in the era of COVID-19](#)'. The webinar invited three panellists to share their experiences putting localisation principles into practice during COVID-19. Together the panel explored how the global pandemic has supported and/or hindered localisation. The panellists were:

- Anna Pelkonen, Program Lead at Oxfam Australia, the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Disaster Ready program
- Linda Kenni, Pacific Associate with the Humanitarian Advisory Group
- Lana Woolf, Co-founder and Co-Director of Edge Effect

Key insights from the event's discussion included:

- Organisations that already had localisation systems in place prior to COVID-19 more easily transitioned to new ways of working.
- COVID-19 has given local staff no other choice than to step up and lead development efforts and as a result has improved local/international cooperation.
- Localisation requires that international organisations do not hijack the mandate of local organisations, but rather find ways of working collaboratively.

In May 2021, the Game Changer series explored '[Food sovereignty in a Changing Environment](#)'. The audience heard from panellists about innovative examples in creating local food systems that embed community controls for food production that works with, rather than exploits, nature to ultimately keep the population and planet nourished. Focussing on local food systems in Australia, panellists discussed examples of building resilient food systems and networks especially recently in the time of COVID-19 and recent extreme weather events, where food supply chains were disrupted. They also discussed the re-building of Indigenous food systems and traditional practices that are sustainable for the planet and people. Panellists were:

- Chris Andrew, Black Duck Foods
- Jen Sheridan, Open Food Network Australia
- Dr Nick Rose, Sustain: The Australian Food Network

The discussion explored the role of creating online systems and using technologies to connect local food produce to the public and embedding structures for local community adaptation. It demonstrated the nuances and breadth in building local food systems to promote accessibility, ownership and agency that reflect communities' own 'food truths'.

## Our Year in Review - Event summaries and reflections for 2020-2021

**Table 1. Summary of events delivered**

#	Title	Venue	Presenters, MC, Panelist, Event leads	Attendees
1	MDC Meet Ups (July 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Lead Conversationalists: <i>Chelsey Parish</i> - Alumni Program Manager, Australian Volunteers International <i>Professor Diego Ramirez-Lovering</i> - Professor of Architecture, Monash University <i>Talei Caucau</i> - Intern at Fiji Women's Rights Movement, and volunteer content writer at Pink Space Theory  MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal and Travis Bubb	11
2	MDC Meet Ups (Aug 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Lead Conversationalists: <i>Briana Jones</i> - Engineers Without Borders Research Program, ANU University <i>Angelos Blackwood</i> - Angelos is a Senior Consultant at Clear Horizon  MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal and Travis Bubb	13
3	MDC Meet Ups (Sept 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Lead Conversationalists: <i>Samanthi Gunawardana</i> - Senior Lecturer in Gender and Development, Monash University <i>Naomi Francis</i> - Research fellow at the Monash Sustainable Development Institute (Monash University)	16

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			<p><i>Caitin Leahy</i> - Researcher in Timor-Leste</p> <p>MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal and Travis Bubb</p>	
4	MDC Meet Ups (Oct 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	<p>Lead Conversationalists:  <i>Paul Wright</i> - National Director, ANTaR  <i>Jessica Avalon</i> - Leader, Humanitarian Advisory Group  <i>Bardie Barclay-Sutton</i> - returned volunteer, Australian Volunteers Initiative</p> <p>MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal and Travis Bubb</p>	16
5	Localising humanitarian and development practice in the era of COVID-19 (October 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	<p>Panellists:  <i>Anna Pelkonen</i> - Program Lead at Oxfam Australia  <i>Linda Kenni</i> - Humanitarian Advisory Group  <i>Lana Woolf</i> - Edge Effect</p> <p>MDC Event Leads - , Tanja Rosenqvist (facilitator), Emily Laurie, Kristy Tong</p>	115 registrations
6	MDC Meet Ups (Nov 2020)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	<p>Lead Conversationalists:  <i>Nelia Agbon</i> - student, Master of International Development Practice  <i>Stephanie Ellis</i> - Complex Case Manager, Australian Red Cross  <i>Talei Caucau</i> - Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Intern - United Nations  <i>Briana Jones</i> - Engineers Without Borders</p> <p>MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal and Travis Bubb</p>	10
7	Emerging Professionals Networking (Nov 2020)	Online - Zoom (\$10 tickets)	<p>Advisors:  <i>Martin Pritchard</i> - Co-founder, Pacific Research &amp; Evaluation Associates  <i>Angelos Blackwood</i> - Senior Consultant, Clear Horizon Consulting  <i>Sashenka Worsman</i> - Lead, Pacific Strategy and Growth, Save the Children Australia  <i>Shani Cain</i> - CEO, Oaktree and Board Member, ACFID  <i>Euan Hind</i> - Partnership Lead - Biodiversity, Otago Regional Council  <i>Nicholas Metherall</i> - Data and Monitoring Systems – Advisor, Global EverGreening Alliance</p> <p>MDC Event Lead - Sanjna Ullal, Travis Bubb, Bardie Barclay-Sutton, Regina Agustin, Kristy Tong and Ju-Lin Lee.</p>	42 (31 attendees + 5 Advisors + 6 MDC volunteers)



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8	MDC Meet Ups (Apr 2021)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Facilitators: <i>Chris Franks</i> - Convenor, Women in Aid and Development  MDC Event Lead - Ju-Lin Lee, Sanjna Ullal and Bardie Barclay-Sutton	10
9	Food Sovereignty in a Changing Environment (May 2021)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Panellists: <i>Chris Andrew</i> , Black Duck Foods <i>Jen Sheridan</i> , Open Food Network Australia <i>Dr Nick Rose</i> , Sustain: The Australian Food Network  MDC Event Lead - Ju-Lin Lee (facilitator), Tanja Rosenqvist, Ellie Hewitt	32 registrations
10	MDC Meet Ups (Jun 2021)	Online - Zoom (Pay-as-you-feel model)	Facilitators: Ju-Lin Lee, Bardie Barclay-Sutton  MDC Event Lead - Ju-Lin Lee, Sanjna Ullal and Bardie Barclay-Sutton	9

## Member Spotlight - General Member, Former President

**Martin Pritchard, Principal, Pacific Research and Evaluation Associates**

Martin Pritchard's motivation to work in development began with the inequities of global trade and finance systems. A career in IT and sustainability evolved to co-founding Pacific Research & Evaluation Associates which focuses on consulting on project design, training, and evaluation. Martin has held environmental, environment and social justice volunteer positions and now looks forward to making a difference in the

development sphere as a member of MDC's leadership team.

## The impacts of COVID-19 on MDC events

MDC's evaluation activities have become more streamlined and integrated into ticketing, registrations and post-event follow up emails. Data has helped identify the main media channels that translate into ticket registrations, informing the best forms of communication to our target audience. The synthesis of this data will inform MDC's evaluation framework to align with MDC's Theory of Change. This is currently in the planning and development stage which will progress into the year ahead, presenting opportunities for volunteer project support.



### **Learning from MDC Meet-Ups**

The year 2020 saw the MDC enter the virtual event space through our pilot MDC Meet-Ups. There was burgeoning interest through the year. We attributed this to the lockdown, a need for learning beyond work and study, and a place to network and hear from peers. The start of 2021 saw far fewer attendees at our Meet-Ups, aligning with the trend of virtual events across the board; people wanted to get out and enjoy the new found freedoms in Victoria. We also shifted from having three Lead Conversationalists to one supported by MDC facilitators, which may indicate the power of word of mouth for each facilitator bringing different people to the Meet-Ups. Many other iterations have taken place through this year to make the Meet-Ups as seamless and easy as possible for the attendees, Lead Conversationalists and facilitators.

A key reflection is trying to book Lead Conversationalists in advance and the importance of the lead up time to engage and promote each event. Another insight was the value of topics that are common ground to all areas of development practice enabling a broader community reach into the discussion.

While we wanted to move our Meet-Ups to a face-to-face model, the knowledge that our virtual platform allowed attendees from across Australia and the world to come to our events, the need to uphold the health and safety of our attendees as well as the unpredicted lockdown announcements deterred us from holding one in the 2021. However, the benefit of our continued virtual events has been the reach beyond Melbourne, with participants joining from our National Development Circle branches, regionally, and even overseas. Having development practitioners from local settings abroad highlights the opportunity of effective representation in MDC's discussions and activities, reflecting the application of best practice in development practice in MDC's activities.

Consistently across 2020-2021, we saw more tickets sold than actual attendees. Our cap for the Meet-Ups was anywhere between 25 and 30 tickets, with a 60% attendance rate. This was attributed to two aspects - that it was free and the starting time of the event (after dinner). Considering the free tickets, the 60% attendance rate is seen as a success.

### **Evolution of the Leading Practice Action Group**

At its core, the purpose of MDC is to break down silos and increase connections among community and international development practitioners, beyond traditional sectors. The Leading Practice Action Group was established to provide opportunities for members of the MDC community to be exposed to industry best practice and encourage collaboration across networks and sectors. With the extended effects of COVID-19, the Leading Practice Action group had limited ability to gain traction. MDC also farewelled Emily Laurie in her role as MDC Leading Practice Convenor.

Further, the continued need for MDC to run activities online for the Game Changer series showed the overall trend of online webinar fatigue, saturation of webinar content, and the need to fill the gap of informal networking and interactivity that face-to-face events provide. It may be that the Meet-Ups create a pathway to find future Game Changer event panellists, just as much as the other way round.

With this in mind, the MDC activities across all Actions Groups, be it informal discussions at Meet-Ups to Game Changer webinars, has involved showcasing leaders in development practice and strengthening the partnership between practitioners and MDC. Leading Practice continues to be at the forefront of all MDC activities and is a key part to realising MDC's Theory of Change. This is pertinent with the increasing recognition of the need to create collaborative, networking and knowledge exchange spaces through online platforms, rather than primarily one-way knowledge transfer events.

### 2021 Member Profile - Game Changer Convenor



#### **Ellie Hewitt, Purpose and Impact Coordinator- The Funding Network**

As we farewelled Tanja Rosenqvist, we welcomed Ellie Hewitt as the MDC Game Changer Convenor in July 2021. Ellie is passionate about equality committed to creating innovation within the NFP sector. Through her role as Purpose and Impact Coordinator at The Funding Network, Ellie supports non-profits to build their capacity and provide new opportunities for growth whilst increasing collective giving and connection between sectors. Ellie has a background working within non-profits in a variety of capacities, focusing on social areas such as education, poverty, people seeking asylum, and people with disabilities.

## GROWING ENGAGEMENT

### The National Development Circle Network

The Development Circle is a national but discrete state-based movement. Last year we aimed to strengthen these relationships and leverage the national network where possible. The Development Circles share a base communications infrastructure and during COVID-19 lockdowns we have been able to share access to digital events, with Game Changers and Meet-Ups open to the development community nationally.

In April we met with Natalia Saeed from Perth Development Circle to talk about how we can collaboratively use the Development Circles shared assets, support access to digital events and exchange learning from our communities.

With less activity happening in Sydney, we were also able to make space in our Community Building Action Group to engage with SDC volunteer Paul Kaletsis to support our Meet-Ups in the second half of 2021.

A goal of the MDC in 2022 is to further strengthen and support the national network through regular touch points, the sharing of information and development of collaboration opportunities. A strengthened national network will benefit the collective and each circle respectively.

## MDC Partnerships

Following the introduction and endorsement of the MDC partnership model in February, the partnership strategy has been focused on the short to medium term goals of developing and strengthening relationships. These aim to support MDC activity by:

- Increasing MDC reach working towards broadening community impact
- Leveraging partner activity to provide additional content to the MDC community i.e. sharing of information, videos and events
- Opening avenues to source talent
- Providing further insights into sector needs and wants to assist in refining topics

To allow for the effective development and integration of new partners, a partner integration plan is being developed which will outline opportunities MDC can provide partners for cross promotion, integration of talent and an overview of 12 month activity. This plan is expected to be finalised by mid-October 2021 with its completion signalling the start of a concentrated effort to solidify further partnerships with key organisations such as ACFID, RDIN, AVI/RAVN, TACSI, IWDA, MIDPA and MAV by the end of the year.

From 2022 onwards, partnerships are expected to play a core role in MDC business as usual activity and will be integrated into Action Groups' project plans, to identify opportunities to leverage existing or new relationships.

With this in mind, the focus of the partnership role will move away from grant investigations as a priority. The exploration of grants through 2020/21 identified that due to the nature of MDC's existing operation and the desire to put grant funding towards administration costs such as insurance over project costs, the organisation was not eligible for numerous grant opportunities. Further grant investigations will continue to be explored as a secondary priority, however the focus will be on identifying new projects or organisational elements that can be supported by grant funding as opposed to core operating expenses.

### Member Spotlight - Partnerships Manager and incoming Vice President



#### **Toby Feldman, Head of Delivery Planning - Rising Festival**

Toby Feldman is a specialist in experiential and immersive event design/delivery with extensive experience in mass participation cultural events/festivals throughout Australia and beyond. He is passionate about user journeys and lived experiences. While new to the development sector, Toby brings his strengths in community/stakeholder engagement, design-led innovation, and strategic development to the MDC and is very excited at the chance to participate in such a worthwhile undertaking.

## Communications

Communications Snapshot	
<b>MDC Mailing List</b>	1,844 subscribers to date (increase of 4.47%)  13 EDMs sent with an average 23.53% open rate and 2.12 click rate.
<b>Facebook</b>	DC page grew to 2,525 followers (increase of 4.2%)  Closed COVID-19 Group from 52 to 97 members.
<b>Twitter</b>	664 (increase of 5.73%) Average of 6 tweets/month
<b>LinkedIn</b>	312 followers (increase of 41.8%)

Melbourne Development Circle uses communications to undertake event promotions, share sector news and opportunities with our network, and engage with new and existing audiences.

### Website

The MDC component of The Development Circle website was updated regularly during the year. Updates included event discussion topics and speaker organisations, associated background reading materials and adding new Member biographies and profiles.

### EDMs and mailing list

The MDC segment of the mailing list started at 1,765 in July 2020 and has steadily grown to 1,844 subscribers to date. The growth was driven by sign-ups via Humanitix to the Monthly Meet-Ups, networking and Game Changer events.

The mailing list is a valuable marketing tool, allowing for direct communication with our state-specific audience. As such, MDC made full use of its Mail Chimp subscription in 2020-21 to promote events and communicate with our network. General update EDMs had an average 23.58% open rate while event-specific campaigns recorded an average 23.48% open rate which compare favourably with the Mail Chimp average of 21.33%.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The average open rate for EDMs across all industries using the MailChimp platform is 21.33%.

Consistent and strategic EDMs distributed in the lead-up to the May and September Game Changer events, and the Emerging Professionals Networking Event, were well received by both MDC members and recipients. This schedule of communications will be replicated where possible for future events. The volunteer campaign in June also received high audience engagement. These open rates demonstrate there is appetite for general communications and opportunities from MDC and as such, regular updates should be scheduled throughout the year during breaks in event promotions.

### Social media

The Development Circle's social media channels (Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter) were primarily used for event promotions. MDC is the greatest contributor of content, being the most active of the Development Circles based in other states.

**Facebook** - Facebook followers totalled 2,525 at the end of the 2020-21 financial year, a gain of 102 (a 4.2% increase) on the previous year. Women made up three-quarters of supporters (74.9%) in the 25-44 age range and the majority are based in Melbourne (39.8%), followed by Brisbane, Sydney and Perth.

A closed COVID-19 Group was also created to provide an opportunity for development professionals to connect and build community. This group grew from 52 to 97 members over the year, showing the need for an online community. With the uncertainties around the pandemic and meeting in person, there is a great opportunity to foster and engage with the MDC online community more.

The main content posted was to promote MDC-run events, followed by other relevant general information and partner events which may be of interest to members. Creating Facebook events (with a link to the Humanitix platform) was an effective way of promoting events to MDC audiences and allowing speakers or other interested parties to share the details quickly and effectively. Followers are also able to connect directly and quickly with MDC members via the Messenger app, with inquiries fielded about tickets and volunteer opportunities.

**Twitter** – Twitter followers grew by 5.73% from the end of 2019-20 to 598. The strategy included tweets leading up to MDC events using #meldevcircle, tagging speakers in specific speaker bio posts and sharing related content. It has been recognised that Twitter is not a commonly used platform by our target audience.

**LinkedIn** – The Development Circle LinkedIn company page has 312 followers, a 41.8% increase from the previous year, with the majority based in Melbourne (121). Engagement on posts has been increasing with event posts tagging industry speakers and MDC members sharing posts increasing reach. MDC should continue to use this channel to engage with the sector and elevate the Development Circle as a thought leader in the sector.

While social media channels are a vehicle to aggregate and share development sector news (a key activity outlined in the Theory of Change, there is greater opportunity to elevate the content with sharing partnership information/posts and positioning MDC as a connected industry and community thought leader. Additional planning and resources have been discussed with the Partnership Manager in preparing a calendar for regular Partner Thursday posts and recruiting a dedicated

digital community engagement volunteer to manage and foster the online community.

Producing national Development Circle communications (e.g. an EDM) should also be considered as a strategic activity for 2021-22 to present a unified front and grow the brand. Further discussion between the Partnership Manager and the National DC groups will explore this further to develop wider brand awareness, partnership offerings and event opportunities.

### Member Spotlight - Communications Manager



#### **Kristy Tong, Creative Account Director - Equality Media**

Kristy has a background in marketing and communications, and has worked with a range of non-profit organisations focused on vulnerable communities, refugee and asylum seekers, children, and youth and social justice issues. She has volunteered with environmental groups and is driven by making a positive impact. Kristy brings her international expertise to MDC and is looking forward to learning more about the development sector and connecting with passionate change-makers.

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## MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The Melbourne Development Circle is a fully voluntary initiative. All of our members and volunteers contribute to the everyday operations and delivery of activities and we thank them immensely for their time, energy and commitment.

MDC has a strong volunteer base with our purpose striking chords with emerging community development leaders. As MDC's operational needs have changed under pandemic conditions, our volunteers have pivoted as well and we are immensely grateful for their creativity and passion for the practice domain we all call home.

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***“Volunteering is time freely given, but enabling volunteering is not free. Volunteers need induction, training and ongoing management and support. The role of volunteers in Australia needs to be recognised, supported and resourced.”***

Volunteering Australia CEO, Mark Pearce

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The new year will bring with it many opportunities for the sector and greater demand for connection, so we have created a role that will enable MDC to engage more deeply with the development community. Introducing you to Danielle Stephenson, Volunteer Engagement Manager:

### 2021 Member Spotlight - Volunteer Engagement Manager



#### **Danielle Stephenson, Emergency Planning Consultant - Hendry**

Danielle joined MDC in a new role as Volunteer Engagement Manager in July. With a passion to make a change, Dani's focus on disasters has led her through a Bachelor in Geographical Science and Bachelor in Global Studies, to her current role as an Emergency Planning Consultant.

Dani brings her enthusiastic personality and strong organisational skills to help develop the MDC volunteer team as we continue to foster the development community in Melbourne and across Australia.

### Melbourne Development Circle Leadership Team members

Ju-Lin Lee (President)

Rachael Wilken (Vice-President)

Rebecca Joiner (Collaboration Coordinator / Treasurer)

Danyel Walker (Secretary)

Alicia Barclay-Sutton (Events Manager - General Member)

Toby Feldman (Partnerships Manager - General Member)

Kristy Tong (Communications Manager - General Member)

Danielle Stephenson (Volunteer Engagement Manager - General Member)

Ellie Hewitt (Game Changer Convenor - General Member)

Sanjna Ullal (Community Building Convenor - General Member)

Martin Pritchard (General Member)



## Volunteer Acknowledgement

We are extremely thankful for the volunteers who are part of our Action Groups and operations support roles:

- Paul Kaletsis (Community Building Action Group)
- Nelia Agbon (Community Building Action Group)
- Kate Neely (Game Changer Action Group)
- Ashley Wild (Game Changer Action Group)
- Tina Ontariro (Communications)
- Chelsea Channing (Communications).

## Volunteers who transitioned out of MDC in 2021

Emily Laurie, Sophie Souchon, Tanja Rosenqvist, Travis Bubb



Outgoing Treasurer, **Sophie Souchon**, joined MDC at our 2019 AGM, leading the innovation of our financial management processes and then supporting us further to remain sustainable through COVID. On exit, Sophie transformed the role of Treasurer into what we now call our Collaboration Coordinator, embedding financial management closer to the site of activity within MDC. We congratulate Sophie on her wonderful new role as Digital Transformation Consultant with Infoxchange and are so appreciative of her time with us and all she achieved.



**Emily Laurie** also joined the Leadership Team in 2019 as Convenor of the Leading Practice Action Group, transferring to co-Vice-President when MDC needed to adjust our delivery for COVID. Emily provided support to our events and activities and was a buoy of energy for the Leadership Team through the pandemic. Emily was promoted in her role as Development Officer with Deakin University during her time with MDC and we thank her for her contributions to MDC.





**Tanja Rosenqvist** joined MDC as Convenor of the Game Changer Action Group in 2019 and stepped up to the plate right away, pivoting MDC to digital events. Tanja facilitated us through a year of Game Changer events, connecting the MDC community to key pandemic challenges of localisation and co-design. Tanja continues her role as an RMIT Lecturer in Humanitarian Engineering, managing a complex set of international projects under pandemic conditions, we send Tanja our gratitude for her important contributions in delivering topical content to our MDC community.



**Travis Bubb** joined the MDC as a volunteer in 2020 under the Community Building Action Group. He assisted the Convenor with all of the activities that we ran in 2020 and at the beginning of 2021, especially as the effects of COVID-19 began to unfold in Melbourne. Travis facilitated the Meet ups, engaged with mentors for the Networking event and mastered communications and marketing for our events. Travis began as a Sustainability Consultant and Analyst at Equilibrium in early 2021, ending his role as Co-founder of the Monash Association of Sustainability and graduating with a Masters of Environment and Sustainability from Monash University. MDC is grateful to Travis's contributions during a difficult year and wish him much success in the years to come.

## CLOSING COMMENTS

As Melbourne Development Circle's story continues to evolve, 2020-2021 has highlighted the group's strength and resilience to deliver despite the significant COVID-19 disruptions and rapid adaptation challenges.

Consolidating and sharpening collaborative efforts within MDC, enabled the group to respond to the needs of the development sector. This was seen through its continued adaptation of online events/presence, sharing of speakers and topics across action group activities, and the steady stream of volunteer interest and engagement, particularly in the Localisation Game-Changer event. With the further support of organisational structures such as the Financial Sustainability Strategy, MDC intranet, volunteer portal, and updated governance model, MDC can continue to grow and thrive as a volunteer run association.

With internal strategic structures and mechanisms now firmly embedded, MDC continues to progress towards the outcomes identified in the Theory of Change. The year ahead looks bright and exciting for MDC to respond to the evolving needs of the community and international development community. Supporting this direction is a robust partnership model and further opportunities for elevating sector representation in MDC and its activities.

Most importantly, 2020-2021 has demonstrated that the volunteers behind MDC are the lifeblood of MDC itself and without their expertise, dedication and leadership, even in the face of significant challenges, MDC would not exist. We recognise the high calibre of skill, enthusiasm, commitment and courage of MDC past and present members and volunteers, in shaping and building MDC to the strong association it is today.

MDC's team members are well on the path of their leadership journey, many of whom have progressed in their careers into leadership positions during their time with us, and are continuing to create positive social change in their own way. We warmly welcome our incoming President and Vice President and a new generation of team members, to take the community forward on its next steps with their passion and innovative ideas to progress the MDC purpose.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT****FINANCE SUMMARY**

The following summary will be submitted to Consumer Affairs Victoria as per our reporting requirements.

Gross revenue	\$1,630.00
Gross expenditure	\$1,463.10
Mortgages, charges, securities	\$0
Gross value of liabilities owed by the association	\$0
Gross value of assets held by the association	\$1,991.20

## INCOME STATEMENT

## As at Period Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Income</b>				
Event revenue		925	2,139	5,469
Public Support - Personal Distributions		705	256	
<b>Expenses</b>				
Administration expenses		1463	894	563
Finance expenses		-	-	-
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		-	-	-
Advertising and promotion expenses		-	-	101
Event venue hire		-	300	1,180
Event catering and supplies		-	1047	3,329
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for Year</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>296</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## BALANCE SHEET

As at Period Ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents		1,991	1,824	1,670
Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors		-	-	-
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>				
Property, Plant & Equipment		-	-	-
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Trade Creditors and Other Payables		-	-	-
Short-Term Borrowings		-	-	-
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>				
Long-Term Borrowings		-	-	-
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>
<b>ASSOCIATION FUNDS</b>				
Accumulated Surpluses		1,991	1,824	1,670
<b>TOTAL ASSOCIATION FUNDS</b>		<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>

## Annual Statement 2020-21

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the Period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$
Opening Accumulated Surplus	2	1,824	1,670	1374
Surplus (Deficit) from ordinary activities		167	154	296
<b>Balance at June 30</b>		<b>1,991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

## As at Period Ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Cash from operating activities:</b>				
Receipts from customers		1630	2,395	4,569
Payments to suppliers and employees		-	(1,347)	(4,610)
Other operating expenses paid		(1463)	(894)	(563)
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities</b>	3a	<b>167</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>				
Net purchases of property, plant and equipment		-	-	-
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>				
Proceeds from borrowings		-	-	-
Repayments of borrowings		-	-	-
<b>Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net increase (decreases) in cash held</b>		<b>167</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>296</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1824	1,670	1374
<b>Cash at end of financial year</b>		<b>1991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**As at Period Ended 30 June 2021**

#### **Note 1 Accounting policies**

##### **1a Statement of compliance**

The financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared to satisfy the financial reporting preparation requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity. Development Circle Inc is an association domiciled in Victoria and became incorporated on 15 August 2013.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 101: Presentation of Financial Statements

AASB 107: Cash Flow Statements

AASB 108: Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

AASB 118: Revenue

AASB 1031: Materiality

##### **1b Basis of measurement**

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and do not take into account changing money values except where specifically stated.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the association in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

##### **1c Comparative Figures**

Comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year where required by accounting standards or as a result of a change in accounting policy.



## **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**As at Period Ended 30 June 2021**

### **Note 1 Accounting policies continued**

#### **1d Property, plant and equipment**

##### **Plant and equipment**

Plant and equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

##### **Depreciation**

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a straight-line basis over their useful lives to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

##### **Class of Fixed Asset**

Office Equipment 20%

Computer Equipment 40%

Leasehold improvements 20%

#### **1e Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, bank overdrafts, deposits held at call with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

#### **1f Impairment**

At each reporting date, the association reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is

compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

**1g Income taxes**

No current or deferred income tax assets or liabilities have been raised by the association as it is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act as a community service organization.

## **NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**As at Period Ended 30 June 2021**

### **Note 1 Accounting policies continued**

#### **1h Revenue**

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable. Donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of any payable or claimable goods and services tax (GST). The association was not registered for GST during the period.

#### **1i Leases**

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all of the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

#### **1j Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the cash flow statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As at Period Ended 30 June 2021

## Note 2 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash on hand	-	-	-
Cash at bank	1991	1,824	1,670
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,670</b>

## Note 3 Cash Flow Information

## 3a Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with surplus for the year

	2021	2020	2019
	\$	\$	\$
Net surplus/(deficit) for the period	167	154	296
Cash flows excluded from surplus attributable to operating activities			
Non-cash flows in surplus			
- Depreciation	-	-	-
Changes in assets and liabilities			
- (Increase)/decrease in trade and term receivables	-	-	-
- Increase/(decrease) in trade payables and accruals	-	-	-
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>296</b>

## Note 4 Association Details

The office of the association is: Development Circle Inc

403/636 High Street, Thornbury VIC 3071

## COMMITTEE DECLARATION

The committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

The committee has determined that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the accounts.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 19 to 27:

Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Development Circle inc as at 30 June 2021 and of the results of its operations and cash flows for the period end on that date.

At the date of the statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Development Circle Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Treasurer: 

Date: 15th July 2021