

**ADDISON ROAD**  
Community Organisation

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



**ADDISON ROAD**  
COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

**f** AddisonRoadCommunityCentre  
**@** addiroad  
**P** 02 9569 7633  
**E** info@addiroad.org.au  
addiroad.org.au



All content was correct at the time of publication.

Addison Road Community Organisation  
142 Addison Rd., Marrickville, NSW 2204  
ABN: 50 001 350 152  
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**ADDI  
ROAD**

## Acknowledgement of Country

Addison Road Community Organisation works on the lands of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation. We pay tribute to their custodianship and care of Country over hundreds of generations. We acknowledge and stand with the ongoing struggle for justice, rights and recognition by and for Indigenous Australians.

## ARCO Mission Statement

### Our Vision

Our vision is a just, equal, sustainable and diverse community.

### Our Purpose

Our purpose is to help create lasting alternatives for social, economic and environmental justice.

### Achieving Our Purpose

Addison Road Community Organisation spearheads a rights-based approach to community development programs in arts, culture, environment and social justice, as well as providing affordable spaces to non-government organisations, artists and community organisations.

Through managing the Addison Road Community Centre, we facilitate the provision of services and community development opportunities, working collaboratively with various levels of government, education institutions, community organisations and members of the public.

### Our Values

Addison Road Community Organisation is committed to fostering independent, sustainable and diverse communities based around our universal civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

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# From our CEO

This has been a year marked by disruption and change – uncertainty, rising levels of inequality, increased social unrest, environmental degradation and the spread of COVID-19. It has been a vertiginous time of insecurity.

What proved remarkable and extraordinary was the mobilisation of the community to show up in the hundreds from all walks of life and areas of Sydney, ready to roll up their sleeves, dig into their pockets or raise their voices to support the frontline emergency food-relief work we put into motion from March 2020. For that, we are extremely grateful and forever indebted to you. Individual donations to us online reached almost \$150,000, much of it composed of small donations whose collective impact across the year was immeasurably powerful.

Your commitment has helped Addison Road Community Organisation and our partners deliver much needed aid and hope to people and families experiencing anxiety, isolation and food shortages. Your solidarity sustains our critical long-term work to address food insecurity and rescue food from going to landfill. Your support enhances our core work to implement programs that address social, environmental and economic justice and promote a fairer society with equal opportunities.

In the first six months of the pandemic, you helped us support 30 civil society groups and that grew to over 70 civil society groups across Sydney and beyond, to fire-affected areas. Crises do not impact people equally. Those with fewer resources to prevent, manage and treat COVID-19 are unable to overcome it. ARCO joined in advocacy campaigns with Sydney Alliance members and the Inner West Multicultural Network to tackle the unequal impacts of this crisis, while also challenging the policy choices and systems that make those impacts so much worse for vulnerable people. That means addressing the economic, political, and social marginalisation of people based

on sex, gender identity, race, nationality and class; the systemic inequality exposed during this crisis.

Our rights-based approach to challenging inequality is by putting people who experience marginalisation – particularly women, refugees, CALD communities, the unemployed, temporary visa holders and people with disabilities – at the core of our work. We will stand with those who represent and campaign for the rights of marginalised populations, as well as our urban environment. We will protect and expand civil-society space, joining with others to ensure that rights are upheld, respected and defended.

Our bold, committed and engaged Board of Directors has multiplied its efforts to build on 45 years of growth and impact, progressing and adapting to changing environments. In 2020, our seven Directors steered the ARCO ship during turbulent seas, always remaining on the right course to achieve objectives and make wise decisions while fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities. Their stewardship and leadership are of the highest integrity, always maintaining accountable and transparent frameworks and structures that create a strong and sustainable organisation.

We are inspired by our partner organisations' support for their communities. And we are inspired by you, our supporters, who have continued to engage with this vital work even as you face a pandemic that touches us all. At the mid-point in a 90-year agreement to provide community benefit on public land, we look forward to 45 more years of progress and impact, together – starting with this year's development of our 5-year Strategic Plan – knowing the survival of the Centre for future generations and the quest for racial, climate, economic and social justice is more critical and necessary than ever.

As part of our regular planning and review processes, we made a small tweak to our name, from Addison Road Community Centre Organisation to Addison Road Community Organisation. This more accurately

reflects our role as a leader and participant in community development programs, and so much more than also being a venue for grassroots events and initiatives. We also started trying out a nick-name suggested to us by a team of visual communications students from UTS in 2019, which proved irresistible in 2020 – and 'Addi Road' we have become.

As you turn the pages of this report, words, images, facts and figures stand as testimony to the impact and achievements of ARCO in 2020. As a tribute and avowal to the extraordinary collective and collaborative impact on hundreds of thousands of people, we were honoured to stand among other greats and receive one of ten prestigious Human Rights Heroes awards from the Human Rights Commission.

What the report does not show is the endless hours, sacrifices and emotional impact of our work on volunteers, board members and staff. During this period of stress and endless need to respond to, we still managed to provide rental relief to Addi Road tenants despite our own COVID-related financial losses. Our commitment and responsibility as custodians is taken seriously and we managed to fulfil fire order and compliance requirements to receive a green light from Council. We also managed to put to rest the Order placed on us due to tenant organisation The Bower's illegal constructions on our premises and there is a commitment after Council intervention for The Bower to make good.

In the coming year we are looking forward to implementing our building works program for fire safety and compliance and this will be made easier thanks to a NSW government grant of almost \$200,000. We are also hoping that the next

vehicle to join our 'food rescue fleet' will be an e-van and we will be working with the EPA to top up the \$35,000 they have already committed, for a petrol-free vehicle. If this is realised, we will have the only food waste-rescue or landfill diversion program to be working towards zero vehicle emissions.

In September 2020, we opened a new service, the Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown, in the City of Sydney and have received substantial funding support from the City of Sydney to operate our new pantry in 2021.

When we receive emails, cards and visits from people who have been touched by Addi Road, from all over Sydney to far afield, which happens daily, we all receive a little more fuel and motivation to keep us powering through 2021, creating a better world.

**Rosanna Barbero**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Addison Road Community  
Organisation



Rosanna Barbero and Mimi Luna Arbar, Tim Bauer



# From our President

Like many organisations, Addison Road Community Organisation (ARCO) has been through a hugely challenging year. It's nonetheless been a hugely rewarding one as well. As we reflect on what we have learnt and how it will inform our decisions in the future, I am personally heartened by the impact we had in our local community – and how the community, in turn, has inspired the ARCO family and all that we have achieved. The way our team, our volunteers and community groups have united to support each other through this period is something to celebrate and be very proud of.

This has been a watershed time. It has asked us to redefine our respective social contracts. Many have decided they can do more for others to ensure our local society is fairer and just. It is wonderful that our volunteers often say they get back as much as they give to Addi Road, a remark that shows the depth of feeling which makes ARCO a true community.

In the theme that many hands make light work, we must profoundly thank our volunteers: local Inner Westies, committed individuals, sporting teams, not-for-profit organisations and corporates alike. A special mention here to Craig Foster and his #PlayForLives campaign, and to Bryan Brown, for their incredible energy, constant availability, and the valuable connections they provided.

We have enjoyed significant support from the wider community, from individual donations to small local businesses and larger corporate entities contributing generously, among them significant corporate donors (see listed donors in *Our Supporters* section)

Addison Road Community Organisation is responsible for maintaining 30 buildings and associated infrastructure across our nine-acre site. With eight buildings over 100 years of age and another 15 already over 70 years old, the need for an approach to upgrade these buildings is becoming critical.

ARCO has been working for the past three years to develop a Capital Works Program which we are pleased to announce will be initiated in 2021. In regard to improving infrastructure, ARCO would like to acknowledge the extensive stormwater mitigation works which Inner West Council have committed to alleviate periodic flooding of the site.

ARCO provided rent relief where required to a number of tenants to assist during the stresses of the shutdown period. It has been inspiring to see artists and organisations survive and begin to thrive again. 2020 did see Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) and Kids Got Skillz leave Addi Road for new premises; departures that were balanced as we welcomed The Burdekin Association, The Assemblage Sisters and Marrickville Legal Centre to our community site.

Towards the end of 2020, we said a fond farewell to Bob Boyd of HoboGro, whose commitment to building up Addison Road Community Organisation's community composting site is second to none. Bob, with his volunteers and TAFE Outreach teams, has played a crucial role in turning it into a place of education, enterprise and environmental action. We understand the circumstances of your retirement, Bob, and wish you luck for the future.

Operationally, 2020 has been a massive undertaking. As well as working supportively with our tenants, ARCO delivered an amazing array of programs, rescuing up to 20 tonnes of food per month and working with over 70 community groups across the year to provide access to good food for as many as 5,000 people a week across our food justice program. A very big thank you to all parties involved. Due to increasing requests from individuals affected by food insecurity, ARCO extended our Addi Road Food Pantry opening hours at Marrickville and opened a second Addi Road Food Pantry this year at 31 Pyrmont Bridge Rd, Camperdown.



The NSW Premier visited Addi Road on the 6th of November. L-R: Board members Dina Petrakis, Sean O'Connell, Matthew Day and Kween G Kibone; Liz Deep-Jones; Gladys Berejiklian; Bryan Brown; Rosanna Barbero, CEO and Craig Foster, Addi Road Ambassador, Danish Ravi

**The way our team, our volunteers and community groups have united to support each other through this period is something to celebrate and be very proud of.**

It is remarkable that as we experienced huge increases in the need for food, we saw equally huge increases in food rescue and food donations by local businesses rallying to support our food justice programs.

ARCO has hosted a number of dignitaries this year, eager to see first-hand the good work being done by so many good people. Visitors included the Member for Grayndler, Federal Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese; NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian; David Shoebridge, MLC; City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore; and a host of other VIPs from the political, sporting, media and corporate worlds. Wonderfully, our good work with the Inner West Multicultural Network has seen us win the NSW Premier's Multicultural Communications Award for our anti-racism campaign. We also joined a select group of Human Rights Heroes for the year, as chosen by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

During 2020, ARCO managed to host some very notable events – from fundraisers to campaigns like our #Hampers of Hope Christmas charity drive, the Open the Vault exhibition and weekend concerts, the Fijian Festival, #RaisetheRate, and the Public Schools Arts Festival which proceeded at our Stirrup Gallery and as an online event. Whilst site visitor numbers were down this year, we continue to be heartened by the increasing range and diversity of interested parties.

We would like to recognise our hard-working staff along with all these achievements. Small in number, they handle an extraordinary array of tasks and work many unusual hours to facilitate community access to Addi Road.

Importantly, this year has also seen Board continuity with all our members returning. Many thanks to the Board for your contributions – and a warm welcome to our newest Board member, Dr Juliana Jamaluddin. In closing, we would like to acknowledge our entire community for their continued support and engagement during these challenging times.

**Matthew Day**

President  
ARCO Board of Directors

# 2020 Achievements

Highlights from a big year for Addi Road



Food  
**200 tonnes\***

rescued from landfill

*\* equal to more than  
400 tonnes CO<sup>2</sup> equivalent  
or 102 years of one  
Australian household's  
annual electricity  
consumption*



Over  
**16k** food relief  
boxes

packed for community  
distribution  
throughout the year



Recycled  
**8,775,539**  
containers

*at the Addi Road  
Return & Earn reverse  
vending machine*



Award

*The Hollow Tree  
(our children's book)  
wins a 2020 Sustainable  
Cities' Award for  
Habitat and Wildlife  
Conservation*



Awards finalist

**2020 Human  
Rights Heroes**

*from the Human Rights Commission*



Relief  
**76** charities, services  
and community  
groups

*received food relief  
from Addi Road*



Giving  
**1,000  
Hampers  
of Hope**

*prepared and given  
to community groups  
for Christmas*



Close to  
**\$150k**

donated

*to our food justice work  
by countless individuals*



Food provided  
to up to

**250k**

people

**+64%**

**Food Donations Increased**

*Businesses donating  
to our food justice  
program increased from  
50+ to 78+*



+Volunteers

**500 people**

*with Addi Road in 2020*



# Our People

The purpose of Addison Road Community Organisation is ultimately *people* – our collective wellbeing and the sustainability of the places and human institutions we inherit from those who have gone before us. To work towards such a purpose requires the combined energies, talent, commitment and creativity of so many. We could not have achieved any of the milestones along the journey highlighted on these pages without the contributions of our board of directors, our staff, volunteers, and countless visitors, customers and community members. Below we profile our directors and share some highlights from staff and volunteers this year.

## Board of Directors

### MATTHEW DAY

Matthew has a Bachelor of Science Metallurgy (UNSW); a Graduate Diploma in Operational Management (UTS); and a Masters in Business Administration (USyd). He has worked in both corporate and small-medium enterprise environments with a focus on business performance, process improvement and negotiations in the services sector. He previously owned and managed a successful local business in the Inner West. Matthew joined the Addi Road Board in April 2018 and believes Addi Road is uniquely positioned to make a contribution to environmental sustainability and the local community in a practical and meaningful manner.

### SEAN O'CONNELL

Sean has a Bachelor of Science Architecture (USyd); a Masters of Commerce (UNSW); and is a Graduate from the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Sean has a background in the government, corporate and not-for-profit sectors. He is currently CEO of the NSW Rural Assistance Authority (RAA), working to provide high-level strategic direction and leadership to deliver financial assistance schemes to primary producers in New South Wales. Sean has previously worked as Chief of Staff to a NSW cabinet minister and Public Affairs Manager for Surf Life Saving Australia. Sean joined the Addi Road board in February 2020.

### MARION LAWSON

Marion has a Bachelor of Science (UWSyd) and a Diploma in Retail Management (NSWIT). She has over 30 years' experience in starting, building, growing and improving business performance. Marion has a focus

on innovation and growth and improving business strategy and execution in an operational and executive capacity. She has worked as a managing director and chief executive officer in leading agribusiness organisations across Australia, the United States and Asia. Marion joined the ARCO board in 2017.

### MAXWELL BURGESS

Max has a Bachelor of Mining Engineering (UNSW). He has over 50 years' experience in executive roles in the legal and engineering sectors across New South Wales, Queensland, and the Northern Territory. These include his role as Chief Executive Officer at Law Consumers Association, a longstanding tenant at Addison Road Community Centre. Max has been a passionate contributor to the life and development of Addi Road, having joined the Board in 2016.

### DINA PETRAKIS

Dina has a Bachelor of Arts (USyd); a Diploma in Education (USyd); and a Masters of Education (UWSyd). She has a background working in social justice, educational and aid programs in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Dina has worked to improve educational standards for corrective institutions with the NSW Department of Corrective Services and Solomon Island Prison Service, in addition to co-authoring 'Literacy in Correctional Institutions' and 'Literacy in Transition'. She currently works as the IGNITE Global Manager for Settlement Services International and developed their Small Business Start-up program. Dina joined the ARCO Board in February 2020.

### KWEEN G KIBONE

Kween has a Certificate in Business Administration and a Certificate II Music Industry (TAFE). She is also TV & Radio Presenter graduate from NIDA. Kween has a rich creative background as an MC, hip hop artist and community advocate. She has worked as a cross-cultural facilitator for events such as the Sydney Festival, Africultures Festival, Ethics Centre debate – IQ2, Marrickville Festival and Women's Scream International Poetry Festival. Kween has developed and delivered music-making workshops across the Northern Territory and New South Wales. She currently sits on the advisory panel of the Australian Women in Music Awards and joined the ARCO board in March 2020.

### JULIANA JAMALUDDIN

Juliana has a Bachelor of Medicine (UNSW); a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (UNSW); and a Masters in Global Health (USyd). She has a background as a medical practitioner, working as a medical registrar, and ward CMO in New South Wales, Queensland, the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. She has facilitated presentations on a variety of community issues: the alienation of Australian Muslim women; the impact of drugs and alcohol; and sexual health. Juliana has also performed in a variety of teaching and research positions. She joined the ARCO Board in July 2020.

## Staff Members

**Rosanna Barbero**, Chief Executive  
**Mina Bui Jones**, Programs Manager  
**Jack Carvalho**, Grounds Crew  
**Susan Conyers**, Administrative Assistant  
**Gurwinder Kaur**, Administration and Venues Manager  
**Michael Hayes**, Operations & Finance Manager  
**Vanessa James**, Project Officer  
**Elisa Koens**, Car Parking  
**Kerrie Lindberg**, Cleaner & Caretaker  
**Mark Locsei**, Food Collections Officer  
**Antonio Marques**, Grounds Crew  
**Damien Moore**, Food Pantry Manager  
**Mark Mordue**, Media & Communications Manager  
**Dulce Muñoz**, Outreach Coordinator  
**Brendon Taylor**, Food Collections Driver  
**Jo-Anne Ryan**, Partnerships Manager  
**Libby Shama**, Food Pantry Camperdown Manager  
**Ann Smith**, Car Parking  
**Mark Taylor**, Website & Marketing

L-R: Gurwinder Kaur, Mary Savva, Susan Conyers, Gurwinder Kaur



# Our People

## Staff

Personal highlights from some of our staff

### MARK LOCSEI

#### Food Collections Officer

A highlight of the year for me was that “no” just stopped being part of the vocabulary. We don’t say no to anyone anymore: not to donors who have food to give; not to anyone who needs food for themselves or someone they know.

The other highlight is the feedback from the donors. I talk to them all the time and they say that donating to Addi Road is one of the best things they have ever done for their businesses. Not only do they feel good about donating, but also it’s fundamentally changed the way they work and see what’s going on. Their workplaces are cleaner and more comfortable, their employees are more engaged and connected with all the different sections of their operations. Everything in their business is just better all around.

### GURWINDER KAUR

#### Administration and Venues Manager

Every single day is my special day here. I am from a Sikh family. And here I feel connected. It is like a little village. In my culture you serve your village. You help everyone. When I feed someone who needs food; when I see the smile on someone’s face ... that’s my special day, every day. Here I can serve my connected people – and all the people who come to us from everywhere. When COVID started, oh my gosh! I had hundreds of calls ... people saying, ‘I don’t have money’, ‘I don’t have support from the government’, ‘I don’t have enough money to pay the rent and eat’, ‘I don’t have food for my family’. I say, ‘When can you come here? 4pm, 5pm, 6pm? ... I will wait for you. We will help.’

### MIKE HAYES

#### Operations and Finance Manager

A highlight from this last year was the positive financial year that we had as an organisation, as many tenants requested rent reduction from COVID-related issues and our rental income from other spaces were being decreased. We were able to manage the decreased income and bring revenue from other means. Seeing the support from the community to help others in need at such a hard time for everyone was very inspiring as well.

### DULCE MUÑOZ

#### Outreach Coordinator

My personal highlight was being able to provide essential support to a new mum. It was right in the middle of a pandemic. We got a call from Canterbury Hospital that they had a new mother there with no food, no diapers, no nothing. Addi Road was able to catch her and her newborn – and stop them falling through the cracks when every other agency was closed. They became our clients and they are still our clients. So we basically welcomed a COVID baby into the world.



### SUSAN CONYERS

#### Administrative Assistant

I left my job in February and then COVID hit, so I was very concerned about what I was going to do. There I was, unemployed and right in the middle of a pandemic. I’d already volunteered at Addi Road for years working on the Living Museum program, transcribing recordings of soldiers and other members of the public who were part of the history of the site when it was used as an army barracks. Volunteering here again at the Food Relief Hub was a saving activity for me. I live alone, I had no job, I was stuck at home in lockdown ... even though I’m not that type of person. You could get down about all that happening. Coming here gave me a sense of purpose, a reason to get out of bed in the morning. A first big highlight for me was being at the Food Relief Hub, one day there was a group of women I had never met before – we had a huge pallet of carrots and for some reason we had to peel them all. One girl was a singer and she sang while we did it. The whole thing was so jolly and so great to be a part of. After that I got offered a contract here to do some information management work and then on a more permanent basis to help with getting volunteers involved. It has been a dream for the last 10 years to get out of the corporate sector, where I had worked in recruitment, and get into the community sector and find a job I really liked doing. It was why I left my job in the first place at the start of the year. Happy days.

### DAMIEN MOORE

#### Food Pantry Manager

A whole lot of people lost their jobs in 2020. It was a very trying year. But a real highlight for me was seeing people who’d suddenly become unemployed, whose lives were in disarray, turning that around and coming here to volunteer and help others and contribute to the community. A lot of them felt that coming here and volunteering gave them something too: it might have been a bit of structure to their day, or a sense of home, or some socialisation that was hard to find, especially with the lockdown. But everyone was stepping up to help others in need. We had a lot of young people, especially, joining our older volunteers. Young people who’d been working in the arts or hospitality, industries where the work had become very precarious. Young people who often did not have the coping skills and support networks and life experience that older people do. But they came here to help us. That was great to see. Together we really are stronger.



Above left: Dulce Muñoz offers pink doughnuts at the opening of the Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown, MerjaMedia  
Right: Damien Moore and Mary Savva during #HampersofHope, Gurwinder Kaur



## Staff

### Personal highlights from some of our staff (continued)

#### JO-ANNE RYAN

##### Partnerships Manager

There are so many highlights it races by and they all join together as one. Working with Rosanna during the first week of COVID to set up the new Food Relief Hub in Gumbramorra Hall – we worked like dogs those first few days! Driving around Redfern and Waterloo with Craig Foster to deliver food to the Indigenous services – with Craig doing impromptu interviews with the service providers, and then posting them, in transit, to his Instagram page. Seeing all the services come together and really collaborate on having the best response we could make together – nothing was impossible! Having people feel comfortable to come here and ask for help and being treated with dignity and respect (many of whom hadn't come to us before). Also, being able to say YES to anyone who reached out to us. And seeing the joy on the volunteers' faces, when they felt like they were doing something really important. Lastly: Burwood Girls singing 'Peace Train' for the Premier: "Now I've been happy lately / Thinking about the good things to come / And I believe it could be / Something good has begun." They were beautiful.



#### MARK MORDUE

##### Media and Communications Manager

For me the highlight is people's stories. The way people who come here talk about Addi Road and their own lives, whether it's staff, volunteers or clients. It's as if the story of this place and the story of each life gets mingled together into something larger. People aren't just coming here 'in need'. They're giving us a deep part of themselves. It's an exchange really; and they contribute to making something powerful. In some way or another they understand this and find a voice in it – and feel they can add their voice to the bigger picture. It's an honour every time to speak to people about this feeling. It seems to me that as the year has progressed Addi Road has naturally become a much bigger presence in the media because of this. We're not just a hub for food justice and social justice and arts and cultural events, we're a community story made up of all the people we serve, who speak to us and inspire us.

#### LIBBY SHAMA

##### Food Pantry Coordinator, Camperdown

My highlight for 2020 is coming back to Addison Road Community Organisation. It has been a tough year for me personally (as it has been for us all). In January I started a new job and in March COVID hit and we were all sent to work from home. A combination of being new, social isolation, home sickness (I am from the UK) and COVID-anxiety caused a bit of a breakdown. In June this year I made the agonising decision to quit this permanent, secure job, in the middle of a global pandemic – I wasn't coping.

One of the first things I did was contact my friends at Addi Road and arranged to start volunteering at the Food Pantry again. My mood changed almost instantly. Being part of a community again, doing work that made a tangible difference in people's lives, working with other volunteers and talking to customers, having that face-to-face contact, all these things made me feel like myself again. I had a purpose, I had a place I belonged, I had people who cared, I had come home.

In August I was offered the opportunity to manage the new Food Pantry at Camperdown. I feel like the luckiest woman in the world. I have the privilege to do purposeful, vital work, serving people and building community, and being part of the force that is Addison Road Community Organisation.

#### MINA BUI JONES

##### Programs Manager

I was really moved by all the young Latin American people coming to Addi Road and making the place their own. They came here out of hardship and tragedy when COVID-19 hit. They had no structures to support them; they had no food. It was like an echo of the previous Latin Americans who came to Australia to seek refuge and who built a community at Addi Road decades ago. That previous generation had fled the dictatorships and wars in Latin America. Now, because of COVID-19, we had another fragmented and distressed community coming here and finding strength again in the same place. All these students that were not unlike people in exile. People from their grandparents' generation had come here and taught Australians about 'solidarity' when I was a kid! The young Latinos who came seeking help because of COVID-19 found solidarity at Addi Road. It was fascinating and saddening but ultimately inspiring to see that happen.



Left: Jo-Anne Ryan at the Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown, MerjaMedia

Right: Mark Locsei and Libby Shama in the Addi Road food rescue van, 'Mama Addi', Mina Bui Jones



## Volunteers

### Personal highlights from some of our volunteers

In 2020, Addi Road had over 500 volunteers who donated their time and skills across the year. Without them we could not operate and realise all our initiatives. From our food rescue, food security and social justice programs through to our cultural and community events, it's our volunteers who help make everything happen.

#### ROZ

##### Volunteer Coordinator for Food Relief Hub

My highlight for the year is seeing volunteers come in for a second time, a third time and much more regularly than that. It's great knowing they found a sense of community here. It means the Food Relief Hub is a place where we offer a service for people who need it, as well as a service to each other, sustaining each other through the year.

#### ROBYN

##### Food Pantry Volunteer

I came here to volunteer in the middle of the lockdown. I live on my own and the part of my week that involved volunteering was a life-saver. Everything was closing down and it was really scary for a while. Just the camaraderie that I felt was really important. It's a lovely vibe here. I was a nurse before I retired, so that caring relationship is important to me. Seeing all the regulars come in, all the people able to get food at cheaper prices – seeing all the people that were doing it tough, much tougher than me – and being able to help and be part of a community, it's been wonderful.

#### SHIRI

##### Horticulture Volunteer

Volunteering at Addi Road is like coming to spend time in a village. A village away from all the madness outside in the city. I love all the little huts, the trees, my friends the magpies ... I don't mind the ibis either. I like the gardens that I look after. It's pretty laid back here. There are lots of nice areas, and corners that I like to be in. I do potter around. I like talking to all the artists here with studios, seeing what they are doing. And when the events are on, that is fun too. It's always nice when everyone comes out and has a good time. People are just happy to be in this place. That's the highlight of every year for me.

#### PAUL

##### Admin Volunteer

When it comes to a personal highlight, I can only cut it down to everything that happened in Gumbramorra Hall. The way it was turned into a Food Relief Hub [after COVID-19 hit in March]. The way so many boxes of food were packed. The food we provided for the overseas students that were stranded here without support; food for the refugees; food for people in need; food for all the charity groups that came in. We got 120 pallets of chocolates donated by Heinemann Tax & Duty Free – watching all that chocolate get moved in and given out again was something to see at Christmas. All that activity for *Hampers of Hope* created a lot of interest. Lots of media and TV. Channel 7 Sunrise came here to broadcast for a morning [with weatherman Sam Mac] to show the work we were doing; what Addi Road does and why. It just gave me joy. The whole thing. Knowing with the Food Pantry and with *Hampers of Hope* that someone is having dinner because of our food hampers. It was great to see Sunrise here and all that media attention and see how it all paid off. The recognition was fantastic. Now the whole world knows what we do!



#### MARY

##### Admin Volunteer

What touched my heart is that the people donating and the volunteers gave so much to make the hampers so beautiful at Christmas. It was so nice to know the *Hampers of Hope* were going to bring a smile to someone as well as give them lots of basics. It felt great just to be there in Gumbramorra Hall, packing the hampers with everyone, packing them while other people were bringing in even more donations and other [charity] groups were arriving and collecting the hampers to take them back out into the community. It affects me a lot because it really does fill my heart with happiness to be in the middle of it all, helping out with everyone else. The whole community coming together. It makes me feel like a paid worker even when I am volunteering! I praise the staff, I praise the donors, I praise the volunteers, I praise Rosanna, I praise everyone who gets involved.

#### ESTELLE

##### Food Pantry Volunteer

It's all to do with the people that work here. Just having someone to talk to and helping people with food. But really, all the things that go with helping people in need. That's the best thing about volunteering. It's just a nice thing to help people. At first, they are grateful for the food and the groceries. You see the change in their faces as things improve. That's when people will come and volunteer. They have food. They volunteer or just help us out in some way. It's doing something that matters. It's their way of paying us back. It's a real highlight to see that happen.



#### MATTHEW

##### Food Relief Hub Volunteer

Sometimes the media focuses on the dark side too much and does not look at the light side. It doesn't understand people. Coming here to Addi Road, it picks you up, it helps you. It is something you don't forget. You might never know the depths that people are at. How low they are feeling. But people do pick people up. And it's not even with what they think they are doing and giving; it's just by being here and inviting other people to be here too for a while. I just love ecosystems. They're so complicated and so beautiful.

#### VALERIA

##### Food Relief Hub Volunteer

The most impressive thing for me coming here is the feeling of family. I come from Colombia. It's a country where family is almost everything. When COVID-19 began, my Colombian student friends and I felt really isolated here. We had no support at all. Because of our culture, when we ask for help, we are looking for people who really care. We want people to care about us, as much as we care for each other and care for other people. I felt we became part of the community when we came here for help. It's a beautiful feeling. That's why I want to keep coming back here all the time – and it is why I started volunteering. 'Love' is the word that comes to mind. I feel love when I come here and I want to share that love with others.

Left: Volunteers Annerie and Veronique, Qantas flight crew, running the bar at Open the Vault vintage poster exhibition and concert series, *Danish Ravi*

Right: Food Relief Hub volunteer Matthew, *Mark Mordue*



**“It’s a celebration of  
the amazing creativity  
and diversity within  
our public schools.”**

**JOHN GAUCI,**  
Secretary of the  
**Inner City Teachers’ Association,**  
on the annual  
**Public Schools Arts Festival**

‘Flower of Friendship’ collaborative painting and collage work  
by Oakhill Drive Public School Year 2 Art Club, exhibited in the  
2020 Public Schools Arts Festival, *Mina Bui Jones*





# Our Programs

As a community development organisation with a commitment to the environment, social justice and arts and culture, Addison Road Community Organisation delivered programs in all these areas, at times against the odds, over this last year. We also responded to the needs of a community facing COVID-19 and lockdown, panic buying, deep anxieties and economic struggles. Addi Road implemented events and initiatives that had an immediate impact on these issues. We also worked in solidarity with our community to develop programs that contained a vision for a safe, healthy, fair and greener future. Addi Road: making our world better now; creating a better world tomorrow.

## Food Justice program

The words 'full on' go some way towards describing 2020, beginning with the bushfires and suffocating smoke, before the arrival of COVID-19. Ironically, the intensity of the year was made most apparent to us, at Addi Road, through the success of the expansion of our food justice work that began in 2015.

Addi Road Food Pantry Manager Damien Moore calculates that we fed nearly 250,000 people last year. We also saved over 220 tonnes of perfectly good food from going to landfill, equivalent to over 400 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. This represents a huge effort from a local community centre like ours. In every respect we rose to the challenge, exceeding all our expectations for food rescue and food security during the year.

Our food justice achievements would not have been possible without our volunteers. "When we started in 2020, we had 32 volunteers; when things were at their peak we had 196 active volunteers here per week," Damien says. "There were something like 500 volunteers in all, over the year, many of them rock solid and with us the whole year or whenever we needed them."

There was also something truly amazing about the way companies, local businesses and everyday people chipped in, whether it was Heinemann Tax & Duty Free with a phenomenal donation: 120 pallets of chocolates

in the lead-up to Christmas; groups of school children who ran 'food drives'; or the Food Pantry customer who sewed 167 face masks for our volunteers.

We went from feeding about 800 people a week through the **Addi Road Food Pantry Marrickville**, to nearly 2,000 people on a regular basis before COVID-19, a result of existing issues like casualisation of employment; low pay and job insecurity; high rents and lack of public housing; unemployment and the low levels of welfare payments. Addison Road Community

**"If food waste were a country, it would come in third after the United States and China in terms of impact on global warming."**

Food and Agriculture Organisation

Grassroots organisations collected #HampersofHope for their communities at Christmas. L-R: Rosanna Barbero, Susan Farrar, RUFF and Samia Syed from Twenty10, Mark Mordue, Craig Foster



Organisation began to rethink our operations as early as February as the looming health and social crisis became apparent. When COVID hit late-March, food insecurity went through the roof and we were in a position – both moral and practical – to respond.

After rescuing food and fighting hunger for six years through the Addi Road Food Pantry Marrickville, we had experienced staff and a loyal network of volunteers; strong relationships with food businesses; refrigeration units, vans and storage; food handling and safety practices that became twice as important with COVID-19. We were already doing it; the moment demanded we do it bigger and better, even if we weren't being funded to do so.

The first step was to expand our work at the Addi Road Food Pantry Marrickville by transforming our community events venue, Gumbramorra Hall, into a **Food Relief Hub**. The Hub became a focal point for putting together some 5,000 emergency food hampers monthly. These were supplied to more than 70 charity and civil society groups, working hard to answer the specific needs and locations of their communities.

Trust and experience were a big part of how effective this food supply chain became, as we provided hampers to groups assisting everyone from survivors of childhood sex abuse to isolated seniors, the homeless, youth at risk, Indigenous communities, single-parent families and all kinds of people who

found themselves broke, anxious or hungry. The need was so great we were even contacted by groups from across the state and down the coast.

Typically, government funding tends to work top-down, with huge sums going to a few large organisations while many smaller groups miss out. The food relief crisis prompted by COVID-19 was addressed in much the same way. Fortunately, Addi Road was positioned between the larger food relief agencies and the numerous small to medium-size services and social justice groups that needed help and needed it immediately.

We also added a cooked food service to our Food Pantry offer, with volunteers using the Barilla Australia kitchen to prepare ready-to-eat meals. We did this (again without funding) until other services, like OzHarvest, ramped up their operations to meet demand, and social enterprises like Colombo Social started producing boxed meals for charitable distribution.

The role we played in responding to the COVID-driven food crisis led to our CEO Rosanna Barbero being invited to make a submission to the **NSW Parliamentary Inquiry** into the government's COVID response, in August 2020.

Our relationship with Craig Foster and the **#PlayForLives** campaign was critical to rapidly expanding our operations. Thanks to #PlayForLives,





The NSW Premier viewing the Public Schools Arts Festival exhibition in Addi Road's StirrUp Gallery. L-R: Craig Foster, Gurwinder Kaur, Gladys Berejiklian, Damien Hawryluk, Robyn Chiles, Mina Bui Jones, Rosanna Barbero, Danish Ravi

Craig was able to provide a huge boost to our volunteer numbers, including friends like actor Bryan Brown and Sydney Swans players Kieren Jack and Nick Smith, as well as countless community sports club members looking to help out as COVID-19 shut down their playing year. His experiences with Addi Road helped Craig form a model

**“In 2019, 15% of Australians experiencing food insecurity were seeking food relief at least once a week. In 2020, this has doubled to 31%.”**

Foodbank Hunger Report 2020

for volunteering that could be replicated across the country, and indeed internationally. Craig's relationship with us was so integral that he became an Ambassador for Addison Road Community Organisation and helped bring media attention to the plights of those in need.

As the Addi Road Food Relief Hub got busier, we were invited by Mission Australia to start another service, and in just over a month, we opened the **Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown** on 1 September, 2020. This new service expands access to affordable food and participation in reducing food waste for residents across the Inner West and into the City of Sydney suburbs of Glebe, Forest Lodge, Camperdown and Annandale. Close to Sydney University and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and in a neighbourhood with historically high student and public housing populations, the Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown has been made to feel most welcome. Starting with just two days a week in September, by the end of the year we were able to announce trading four days a week in 2021.

The Addi Road Food Pantry Camperdown starts with the right to food and the responsibility to reduce food waste (just like its big sister in Marrickville). But it is also about so much more. It's about creating a space where everyone knows they are welcome and no one is treated as if they are a problem, a supportive space where getting supplies is an opportunity for connection, solidarity, creativity and something of a break in a busy or burdened life.

The new pantry is housed at the Common Ground Sydney building on Pyrmont Bridge Road, where Mission Australia provides support to tenants that include people exiting long-term homelessness. We are honoured to be working

with this community and have several exciting community development projects planned with Mission Australia and local residents for 2021.

Throughout 2020, whilst adapting to COVID restrictions, we also continued to run the **Addi Road Mobile Food Pantry**. This service provides support to over 80 families every week in the southwest and western suburbs of Sydney. With the support of volunteers and partner organisations, we have delivered emergency food hampers to families who are struggling, creating a bigger and stronger community in the middle of the pandemic.

The Mobile Food Pantry extends access to food at low or no cost to extremely marginalised people who cannot readily access our Food Pantries in Marrickville or Camperdown, as well as offering social connection, support and referrals. To deliver this life-changing solidarity service, Addi Road's outreach coordinator Dulce Muñoz works alongside agencies including Settlement Services International, Life Without Barriers, New Horizons, NSW Refugee Health, NSW Department of Education and Canterbury-Bankstown Council, as well as volunteers who dedicate hours per week to deliver supplies and stay in touch with families of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Volunteer numbers also spiked when we launched our **Hampers of Hope** for Christmas 2020. Originally a small project created by Craig and Lara Foster, it was rebooted in partnership with Addi Road with the goal of creating 1,000 gift hampers for people under stress and isolated by their struggles. Along with essentials like cooking oil and rice, we added treats like chocolates, moisturiser or soap, even a frisbee. It was the ultimate success story for us in a huge year.

Along with the support of many generous food businesses that regularly donate to our Food Pantries and Food Relief Hub, Addi Road's Food Justice work is supported by funding from the NSW Environmental Protection Authority. We anticipate continuing and

indeed expanding the food rescue aspect of our food justice work into 2021. Recognising that diverting organic waste from landfill makes a significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions makes this work imperative for both environmental and social justice.

## Community.a.Fair and more

Looking back over a difficult year that became an extraordinary one, it seems amazing that we managed to keep any of our **community development programs** running at all, let alone as many as we did.

At the start of the year, we were on track to deliver and engage in our regular calendar of **Community.a.Fair** events for Youth Week, NAIDOC Week and Mental Health month in Gumbarrorra Hall, and the monthly “mini-hub” Community.a.Fair barbeques at the Addi Road Food Pantry Marrickville.

We started out with hosting a **Seniors Week** festival led by our partner organisation, Community Cultural Connections: *Love to Celebrate Happy Aging Together*. For this special event, hundreds of seniors filled Gumbarrorra Hall to enjoy a huge range of activities from art making and seated yoga to Korean drumming and Salsa for Seniors, as well as lunch and information from local services and agencies. The joy and gratitude expressed by many of the seniors who came was overwhelming. They took the time to say thank you and goodbye, making us feel as if we'd had dozens of great-aunts and great-uncles over for lunch and games.

With COVID-19 in full force by the end of March, April's **Youth Week** events had to be cancelled, but we were able to offer a wide range of wonderful, free activities for young people in the October school holidays, partially funded by Inner West Council. These included yoga, poetry and beatbox workshops along with two all-ages events: a public forum called **Creativity and Mental Health in Tough Times** and a story-circle with YARN Australia. Although numbers had to be kept low, many of these activities were deeply meaningful



Left: Volunteer Damien helps out at the Food Relief Hub