Annual Report 2020-2021

Travellers Aid

Who we are

Travellers Aid is a registered charity and social enterprise that has been operating in Victoria for 105 years.

Travellers Aid is committed to enabling individuals of all abilities to connect, engage and participate in their community.

We take pride in the diverse backgrounds of our team which reflect the communities in which we work.

We operate ethically and are guided by a volunteer Board of Directors who ensure strong and transparent governance.

Our workforce is made up of committed staff and dedicated volunteers who are intrinsically motivated to create positive outcomes for the people we serve.

Our Five Key Organisational Values

We **empower** people by providing choice, independence & freedom to travel.

We are **nimble** and **responsive** to changing needs.

Respect for the individual is at the heart of what we do.

We are **compassionate** to the challenges faced by others.

We **enhance** people's capacity to be their best and live life to the fullest.

Chairs & CEO Report

During the past year Travellers Aid has continued to show the resilience and flexibility that have been hallmarks of its 105-year history. Throughout these challenging times, with COVID-19 providing a landscape of uncertainty and ever-changing restrictions, we have adjusted our service delivery and responded to the changing needs of Victoria's travellers.

We have continued to focus on the safety of our service users and staff and, with the support of our business partners, we have handled the challenges that came with the varying demands for our services as we moved in and out of various restrictions and lockdowns. The pandemic has taken its toll on our way of life, but we have been able to adapt and to continue operating where we are most needed.

We would like to extend our thanks to the Victorian Government who through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Department of Transport, have provided continued support and have recognised that many of the services we provide are essential services for our community. Their service agreement funding, combined with the Federal Government's stimulus packages and JobKeeper payments, have enabled us to retain most of our workforce during the past year.

Elias Lebbos
CEO

Peter Gluskie
Current Chair of the Board

Bev Excell
2014-2021
Member & Chair of the Board

Even with the reduction in some of our services, the organisation has been able to prudently and proactively manage its financial position and we are pleased to report that we continue to be in a solid financial position and are ready to support continued growth.

Another important aspect of the year was maintaining strong and supportive relationships with our staff and volunteers via a range of innovative ways including online cooking classes, health and wellbeing sessions conducted by our Brand Ambassador, Dr Hannah Mcdougall and a workforce trivia night which was switched to an online event at the last minute. We make special mention of the event management students at William Angliss Institute, who did a fantastic job of being flexible at the last minute to facilitate this.

Unfortunately, with most major events in Melbourne being postponed or cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, and a reduction in non-essential travel, the opportunities for our fantastic volunteers to actively contribute were reduced. We look forward to engaging with them more as we emerge from this tough period and continue to empower people with travel related challenges to connect, engage and participate safely within their communities. We are extremely proud to have been able to collaborate earlier in the year with Yarra Trams and the City of Melbourne to increase accessibility and inclusion at the Australian Open and Moomba Festival, our first time at these major Melbourne events.

As we continue to look to the future, our current Strategic Plan is more relevant than ever. We have taken the opportunity to continue reviewing our service delivery to fine-tune the quality and efficiency of the services we offer. We have engaged with a wide range of current partners and potential new partner organisations to identify opportunities to add value within the sector. We look forward to working with the City of Melbourne, Yarra Trams, Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line, the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC), and other stakeholders to ensure that we are ready when Victorians are ready to travel again.

> **As we close out the year it would be remiss not to acknowledge the outstanding service of Bev Excell who stood down from her role as Chair of the Board in June 2021. Bev served Travellers Aid as a board member since 2014 and as board chair for the past 4 years. During that time her wise and considered opinion guided the organisation, ensured strong governance frameworks were in place and allowed Travellers Aid to continue to flourish and grow. Her amazing contribution will be missed by us all.**

Elias Lebbos, CEO

Peter Gluskie, Current Chair of the Board

Bev Excell, 2014-2021 Member & Chair of the Board

Treasurer's Report

For the Financial Year ended 30 June 2021, Travellers Aid received revenue of $2,739,465 from ongoing operations with a decrease of 4% over the previous year. Costs of $2,243,329 were incurred which resulted in a surplus of $496,136. This surplus was more than expected, as some efficiencies were made due to pared-back operations during COVID-19 lockdowns and a substantial review of costs was undertaken mid-year.

It was pleasing that contracted services were maintained during a COVID-19 year, as all other income sources fell, reflecting lower numbers of people out and about. Most events were cancelled, and we were unable to provide services or generate additional income as a result. This was offset by COVID-19 government assistance.

Travellers Aid acknowledges and appreciates the essential and continued support of Federal, State and Local Governments, who provided 65% of our operational funding.

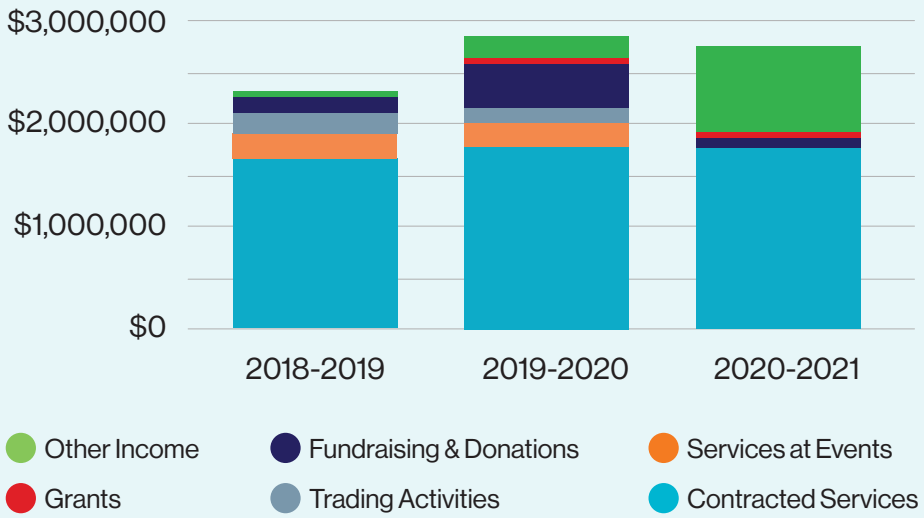
We continue to receive support from a number of philanthropic trusts and foundations which is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the many other individuals and organisations for their generous assistance.

Travellers Aid is now registered as a Social Enterprise, which will assist in enhancing contacts with like-minded organisations and expanding our funding sources.

Despite the uncertainty due to the pandemic and with careful management, Travellers Aid is in a sound position to respond to potential needs that will emerge in the coming year and beyond.

The staff and volunteers of Travellers Aid have continued to provide excellent service and valued support and I thank them on behalf of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee. I would particularly like to acknowledge our Corporate Services Manager Elaine Shallue and her team for their ongoing and exceptional work in supporting the work of Travellers Aid and the committee through this challenging time.

Finally, thank you to all the members of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for their valuable contributions.



Financial Results for the Annual Report 2020/2021

	2020-2021		2019-2020	
Income	**$**	**%**	**$**	**%**
Contracted Services	1,792,841	65.4	1,803,138	63.0
Services at Events	0	0.0	224,250	7.8
Trading Activities	49,729	1.8	154,936	5.4
Fundraising and Donations	59,962	2.2	81,634	2.9
Grants	43,056	1.6	54,252	1.9
Other Income	41,375	1.5	48,591	1.7
Major Bequest	0	0.0	307,385	10.7
Government Covid-19 stimulus	752,502	27.5	188,000	6.6
Total Income	**2,739,465**	**100**	**2,862,186**	**100**

...continued

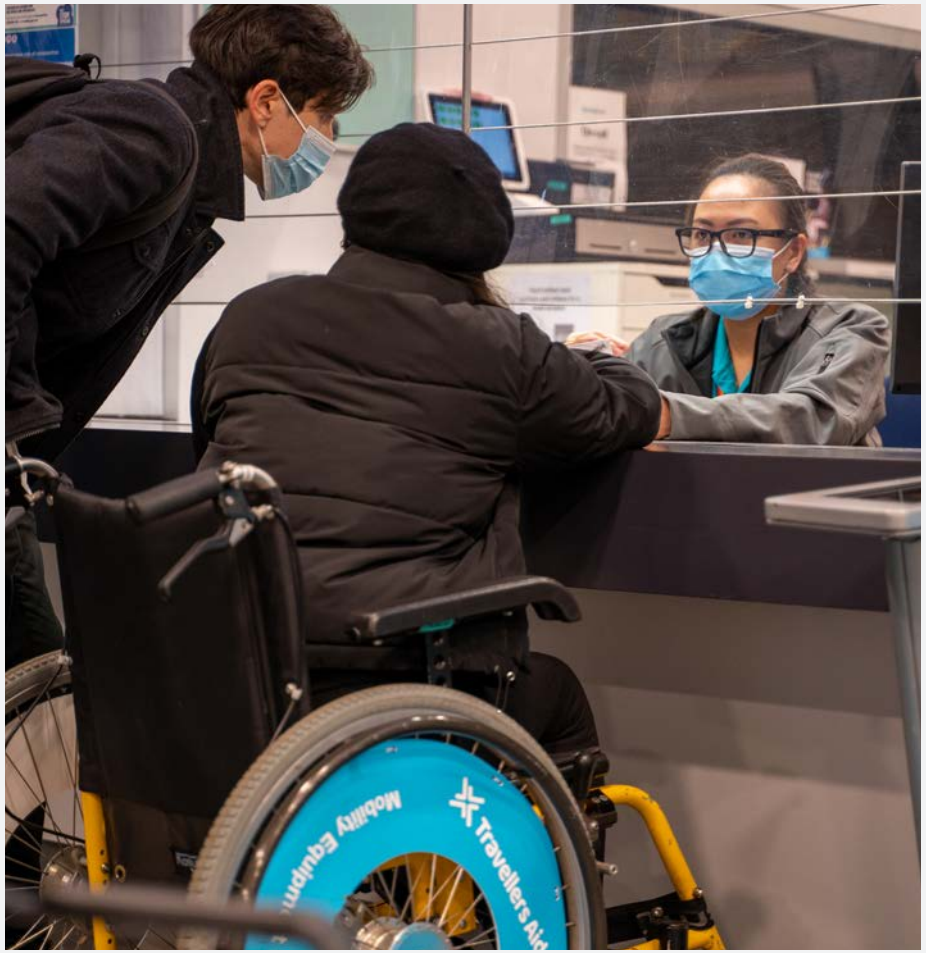
	2020-2021		2019-2020	
Expenses	**$**	**%**	**$**	**%**
Employee benefits	1,833,301	81.7	2,026,036	79.1
Depreciation and amortisation	42,301	1.9	45,966	1.8
Emergency relief	8,527	0.3	13,170	0.5
Occupancy	35,602	1.6	32,064	1.3
Administration	116,319	5.2	193,307	7.5
Consultancy	22,150	1.0	76,424	3.0
Information Technology	95,662	4.3	80,777	3.2
Marketing	40,303	1.8	39,982	1.6
Repairs and Maintenance	22,814	1.0	24,279	0.9
Other Expenses	26,350	1.2	29,572	1.1
Total Expenses	**2,243,329**	**100**	**2,561,577**	**100**
Surplus for the financial year	**$496,136**		**$300,609**	

Adaptability & innovation through a global pandemic

Often described as Melbourne's best kept secret, our people have made a difference to millions of individuals living in and coming into Melbourne. For more than 100 years we have been a warm and welcoming place in the heart of Melbourne.

During the challenges of the current pandemic, we have drawn strengths from knowing that our forebearers also overcame a global pandemic, the Spanish Flu, a century ago. They too were part of the essential services, and they too helped with the recovery coming out of the pandemic, bringing life back into the city.

Even during the strictest of restrictions, there were people who had to come to the city for work or essential appointments, for caregiving or transiting through as they sought safety from family violence. Our unique access and inclusion services were there for those who needed them, whether it was connection assistance at the train station, disability care assistance or companion assistance to get to medical treatment.



With the empty streets devoid of fellow human beings our people were there showing the human face of our city, enabling those human connections, smiling eyes, a chat, the comfort of being assisted by a real human being.

During those challenging times, we all experienced how much difference these little things can make regardless of our social status, financial means or physical abilities. Some of our usually mundane services became of crucial importance for many. With libraries closed, our public internet became a lifeline for many people experiencing social disadvantage and needing to access services online or stay in contact with family and friends.

People experiencing homelessness who would usually have a shower at the City Baths or at one of the homelessness services appreciated our clean shower facilities and the early morning or late evening chats with staff. Our lounges remained open for people to stay warm, sheltered and safe when most other public places as well as shopping centres were closed.

Emerging from lockdowns and restrictions, Travellers Aid has embraced its role in the recovery process, initiating and supporting revitalisation activities to bring life back into the city, building confidence in people coming to the city. This enables Melbourne businesses and events to open their business to markets they may not have previously tapped into such as the 20% of people living with disability.

Caring for our people

During National Student Volunteer Week in August 2020 Melbourne was in lockdown and Travellers Aid was unable to engage the valuable services of our volunteers. We had 26 active student volunteers based in Victoria at the time. To support these volunteers and stay connected we sent out care packages. Small packages with some stationary, a Lifeline brochure and information about our EAP (Employee Assistance Program).

A year in pictures

Play Video

Sector Leadership

Our senior staff play an important role in a number of relevant committees and groups, helping shape the future of accessible transport and transport assistance. Two of our senior staff members provide sector leadership and guidance by participating in the following groups:

Elias Lebbos - Travellers Aid CEO

- VTIC - Victorian Tourism Industry Council Roundtable
- Older Road User Stakeholder Group (Department of Transport)

Maria Groner - Travellers Aid Operations Manager

- APTOC - Accessible Public Transport Operations Committee (Department of Transport)
- Metro Tunnel Project Community Reference Group
- Changing Places Advisory Group (Department of Families, Fairness & Housing)
- Older Road User Stakeholder Reference Group (Department of Transport)

Travellers Aid Australia is now a registered social enterprise

In June 2021 Travellers Aid was certified as a social enterprise by Social Traders.

As leaders in the field of travel disadvantage, Travellers Aid has over 100 years of experience assisting people with mobility challenges to connect, engage and participate.

Travellers Aid has now been certified as a social enterprise, enabling us to offer our services to the broader business sector.

> **Our certification enables us to work with businesses' clients and customers who have mobility challenges, allowing them to access assistance during times of service disruption and at major and pop-up events.**

It also allows businesses' staff access to the Disability Awareness Training (DAT Training) that Travellers Aid offers in partnership with William Angliss Institute.

Social Traders
CERTIFIED
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Business for good

Major & Pop-up Events support

Australian Open 2021

As part of our partnership with Yarra Trams, Travellers Aid provided connection assistance for tennis fans to access the Australian Open in February 2021. Travellers Aid volunteers were on hand to assist people with mobility challenges by providing accessibility information, mobility equipment hire and to act as personal guidance companions to connect attendees to the Australian Open from Flinders Street and Southern Cross stations. Our rechargeable electric taxi bike (triobike) was a hit during this time, providing an alternative method of accessible transport from Federation Square to the Rod Laver Arena, City Entrance Gate.

Moomba Festival 2021

Following the success of our connection assistance service at the Australian Open, Travellers Aid was thrilled to have a marquee at Melbourne's vibrant Moomba Festival in March 2021. Travellers Aid had plenty of volunteers at the ready to assist all festival goers with their mobility needs so everyone could participate in the plethora of activities on offer.

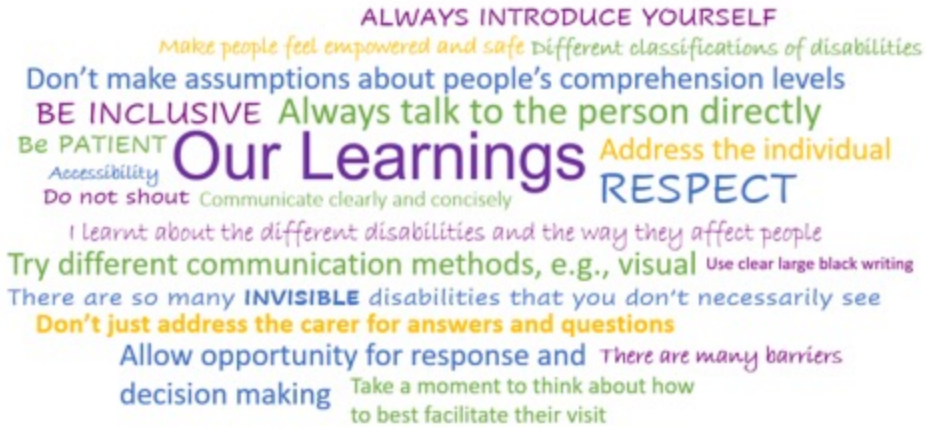
Travellers Aid's Disability Awareness Training

One in every five Australians currently lives with a disability and, as our population ages, many more will develop age related disabilities over time.

Travellers Aid's Disability Awareness Training (DAT) is a one-of-a-kind training program, designed to give participants the confidence to communicate with anyone who has a disability, whether it is in their workplace or in their everyday life.

In 2020, over 200 staff members from Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) undertook the online DAT training program, demonstrating their organisation's inclusive culture and a real commitment to finding ways to better support their community.

PINP have shared their staff feedback with us as a 'word cloud.' It clearly articulates the value of their training experience and how it will help them in their roles.



Disability Awareness Training

Visit: dat.org.au

Yarra Trams disruption assistance

In mid-2021, Yarra Trams engaged Travellers Aid to provide a disruption assistance service that included a buggy service and wheelchair assistance. Due to major works including tram stop upgrades, all trams were suspended along a section of St. Kilda Road and Swanston Street between Stop 17 Grant Street/Police Memorial and Collins Street.

Travellers Aid staff provided 1,254 instances of assistance to Yarra Tram customers, including directions/information, personal guidance, and buggy and wheelchair assistance.

The disruption assistance service enabled Yarra Tram customers to connect, engage, and participate in events and activities within the City of Melbourne.

Travellers Aid assisted service users to major events and attractions around the CBD such as at the NGV, the Arts Centre, AFL games, or visiting the Flinders Street Ballroom as part of the Rising Festival. Additionally, the disruption assistance service enabled people to get to work, attend appointments, catch up with friends, and get around the CBD for activities such as shopping.

By providing the disruption assistance service, Travellers Aid, in conjunction with Yarra Trams is assisting with the recovery and revitalisation of the City of Melbourne.

Yarra Trams disruption assistance continued...

"I am a stroke survivor with right side weakness (leg and arm). I can walk, but with difficulty over a distance, and slowly. Last Thursday taking a St Kilda Rd tram to the city I found myself left no closer than the Art Gallery. I was provided with a buggy ride to Hamer Hall and wheelchair to Collins St. This is just to record my sincere thanks to your staff who helped me. They were very considerate of my needs and thoughtful in looking after me. Full marks to the lovely lady who pushed my wheelchair (I am no light weight)..."

- Service User

"Yarra Trams is very proud to partner with Travellers Aid and support all our passengers get where they need to go. This year Travellers Aid has supported many of our passengers to complete their journeys at both the Australian Open and during major tram infrastructure works along St Kilda Road. We've also been proud to provide a space for Travellers Aid to conduct training for those who rely on mobility scooters at our New Preston Depot, helping them learn how to board and alight trams safely. Travelling on Melbourne's tram network isn't the same for everyone, which is why the Travellers Aid partnership has played an important role in connecting all our passengers with place and community."

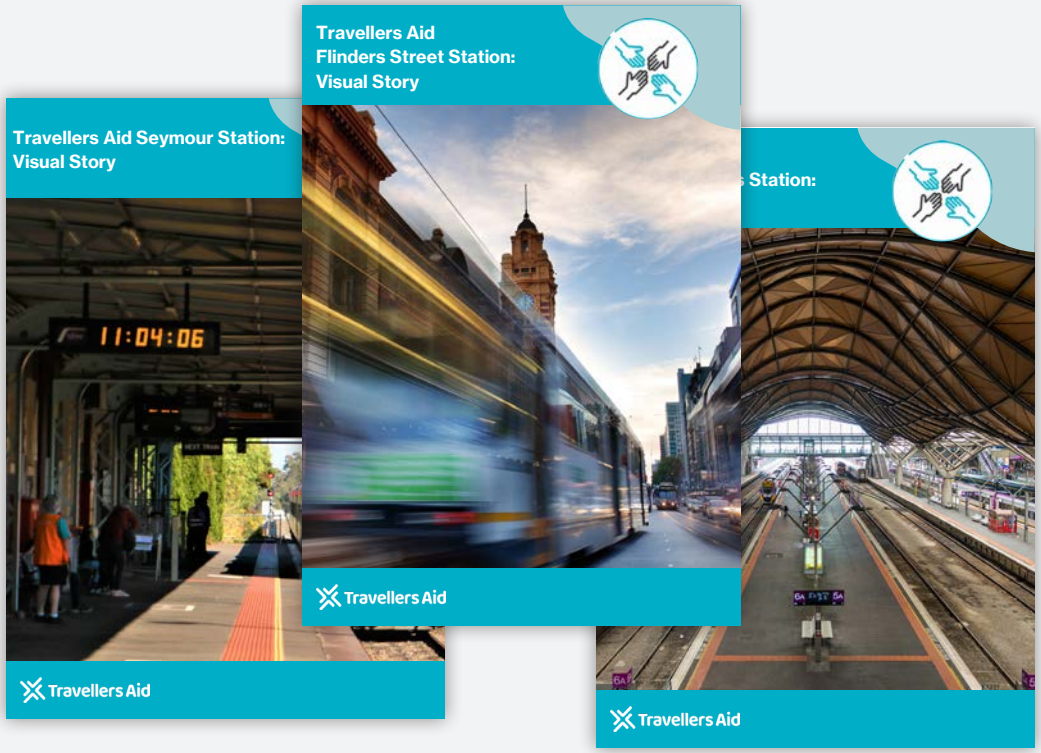
- Yarra Trams

New multilingual resources for users

We have taken the time to proactively create new resources for our users. We have created a suite of new **multilingual brochures, available here**.

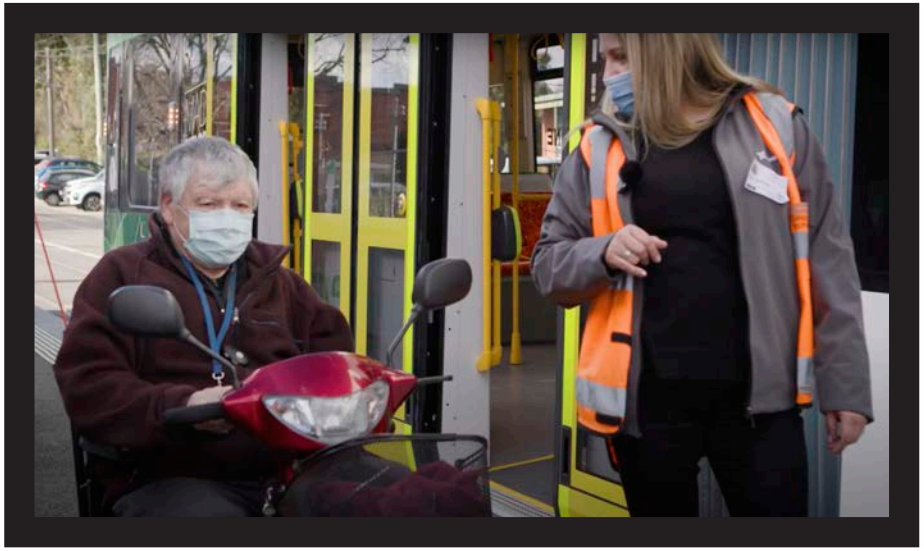
We have also added to our accessibility resources with our new visual stories and virtual tours. These were developed working closely with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) and are available in both **PDF and as descriptive Word documents here**.

The resources help users plan their journey prior to travelling and to understand what our service sites look like and what to expect when attending. This helps to ease any anxieties felt when experiencing a new, unfamiliar service. We have also worked on internal training, updating our training videos for staff and volunteers.



Scooter Safety Training

With support from the Department of Transport, we were excited to conduct a pilot program tailored to new and existing users of scooters and other motorised mobility devices. Our aim for the Scooter Safety training is for attendees to build knowledge, skills and confidence to safely and independently use a mobility device in the community.



Play Video

Our Board

Peter Gluskie
BEng, MBA, CPPD, GAICD
Chair of the Board

Sandy Bell
B Sc, Grad Dip Ed, B Bus, M Mgt, CPA, GAICD
Honorary Treasurer, Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Paddy Oliver
LL.B., M.Litt., MBA, GAICD
Member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee

Philip Cornish
FCHSM, GAICD
Member of the People and Services Committee

James Carroll
BCL, GAICD
Member of the People and Services Committee and Business Development Committee

David Hanrahan
B Bus, MBA
Member of the Business Development Committee

Jantine Eddelbuttel
FAICD, B.AS, Grad Dip Human Resource Management & Industrial Relations
Member of People and Services Committee

Nicola Edwards
Grad Dip PR, BA Arts
Member of the Business Development Committee

Thank you

Patron in Chief
Mr Anthony Howard AM, QC

Travellers Aid Ambassador
Dr Hannah McDougall

Supporters
Bus Association of Victoria
CDC Victoria
Country Women's Association of Victoria
Cycling Without Age Australia
Infranexus
Lions Clubs
Metro Trains Melbourne
Probus Clubs
Rotary Clubs of Victoria
Uniting Church Fellowships
Transdev
V/Line
Victorian Tourism Industry Council
William Angliss Institute
Yarra Trams

Government Supporters
City of Melbourne
Commissioner for Senior Victorians
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Justice – Magistrates Court
Department of Transport

Probono Consultants
Dan Feldman - HR Legal
Warwick Cavell - Profitable Conversations
Houda Lebbos - Confluence Consulting

Trusts and Foundations
Rod & Pamela Wells Endowment Reserve
State Trustees
The SNCF Foundation

Bequests
JB Were – The Simpson Hope Endowment
The Mackie Bequest

Friends of Travellers Aid
Gregory Adkins
Jeremy Ashton
Susan Beard
Karen Beaton
Judy Becher
Tommy Brittain
Enid Bryant
Margaret Carter
John Cilia
Annette Coutts
Geoffery Coutts
Meredith Creightmore
Lois Elliott
Laurie Elliot
Rory Elliott
Beverley Excell
Gail Fletcher
Leslie Friend
Bruce Gould
Hannah Green
Graeme Gulline
Glenis Hawthorne
Julie Hall
Laura Janes
Kathleen Jeppesen
David Jones
Norah Killip
Austin Lewis
Elva Lovett
Mary Mcgivern Shaw
Barbara Mitchell
Barbara Moore
Bill Morison
Maurice Munro
Anne Paynter
Nancy Paynter
Jennifer Simpson
Penny Skinder
Elsie Smith
Margaret Spinks
Shane Spowart
Fiona Sweetman – Hidden Secret Tours
Lesley Thorp
Anand Tom
Bonnie Walker
Helen Perry
Roger Thornton

Become a Friend of Travellers Aid

Travellers Aid

Contact us

City Village
Level 3, 225 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9654 2600
Email: info@travellersaid.org.au

Accessibility

If you would like to request an accessible version of this Annual Report, call (03) 9654 2600 or email info@travellersaid.org.au

Support us

Donate now at travellersaid.org.au/donate
Donations over $2 are tax deductible
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