

## Immediate Past Chair's report

### **Vision for the future**

I am a proud Australian

and I was born on

Ngarbal Country.

I acknowledge Australia's

First Nations Peoples

as the custodians of the

Country on which I live,

learn and work.



I recognise their continuing connection to the lands throughout Australia, culture and communities. I pay my respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

I acknowledge the shared history between the First Nations Peoples of Australia and other Australians as well as the need to heal past and ongoing injustices. I long for an Australia that embraces unity and a shared vision of the future.

This is the 20th time that I have sat down to write – and more to the point – think about the year that has just passed. And it is the first time that I have acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land that I love... the land that the First Nations Peoples call Country. I have been a slow learner.

About 18 months ago we – the Bennelong Foundation and the other corporate members of the Bangarra and Bennelong groups embarked on a journey of learning and understanding and respecting the resilience and sustainability of Indigenous culture. And it has been a wonderful experience ... filled with Indigenous people of great charm and wisdom and longing – longing for reconciliation and their rightful place as the first Australians.

I have enjoyed every moment of it and I urge you all to pause, reflect and learn how our lives can be enriched by respecting the past and walking together in the future.

When I did a personal “stop, listen and learn” a loud chorus of voices said that the future of the Bennelong Foundation lay in the highly capable and talented hands of younger directors and trustees and advisers and management – and it gives me great pleasure to hand the chair to my wife, Carena, and to stop, listen and learn from the restructured Board.

The Bennelong Foundation has grown over its 20-year history from an idea to a great organisation that will go on serving Australia and Australians for a long time to come. Thank you to all those who have made it possible and thank you for allowing me to be a part of it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Chapman'.

**Jeff Chapman AM**  
Immediate Past Chair

## Chair's report

### **A time for change**

The past year has been  
a great challenge but  
also a great opportunity.  
We have been forced to  
pause, listen and learn.



And what a good time to do this! As the Bennelong Foundation grows and expands for both the Australian and the UK Foundations, the focus will be on sustainability and community.

While we were challenging ourselves about traditional philanthropic endeavours we discovered a whole new approach to it: seeking not only knowledge and deeper understanding but a desire to partner and work with communities rather than just making grants. Like the pandemic that turned our lives upside down, this education journey has completely changed how we do things.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community has been a focus of Bennelong Foundation Australia from the very beginning. Aligning this with our focus on education and better understanding, we have committed to partnering with Australia's First Nations Peoples with an emphasis on community-led change.

Another key target community is people of a refugee and migrant background, which is also an area where we have committed to a collaborative partnership model, and to embedding awareness and understanding at every level of the Bennelong Foundation and the wider Bennelong Family.

The Bennelong Foundation achieved a great deal during the year. Particularly significant was the appointment of Sandra Jacobs as an Executive Director of the Board of the Bennelong Foundation Australia, and of Greg Thomas to the Board of Trustees of the Bennelong Foundation UK.

Another very exciting milestone was the first grant round of the Bennelong Foundation UK. Grants were made to five community-based projects, and there was a special focus on youth and crisis support, both areas of great need during the pandemic.

We hope you enjoy reading about some of our work. Thank you to CEO Sandra Jacobs, Directors and Advisers and all members of the wider Bennelong family who have enthusiastically participated in the activities of the Foundations both in Australia and the UK.

We continue to learn and plan for 2022 which is the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Bennelong Foundation. We have a very busy year ahead. More about that in our next report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carena Shankar". The signature is fluid and includes a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**Carena Shankar**  
Chairperson