



What a year!

A year that began with internal change as the Bennelong Foundation challenged its traditional methods and practices, followed by six months or

more of seismic external change brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and its up-ending of our lives, lifestyles and livelihoods.

A year of two halves, and so that's the way we are presenting the Annual Report for 2019/2020.

During the year the Bennelong Foundation shifted its emphasis from the traditional granting process to supporting more social enterprises. We also opted to change the focus of our strategic granting to the related areas of supporting refugee talent and continuing to build the skill, education and employment base of the wider Australian community.

We have always believed there are multiple benefits to building Australia's migrant and refugee base. And this is as true in today's digital, technological world as it was in the days of artisan traders and workers. We see it every day in our own multicultural workforce. The Bangarra Group has a policy to offer employment opportunities to refugee talent, and we encourage other employers to do likewise.

Of special significance during the first half of the year was the appointment to the Bennelong Foundation's Board of two members of the next generation of Australian community leaders: Christine Fleer and Kelly Chapman. They have both already made significant contributions.

The Bennelong Foundation also made a successful start in the field of "in-kind" philanthropic assistance and support by arranging for the General Sir John Monash Foundation to share office space with us at Bennelong House in Melbourne at no cost. A win-win outcome for all.

Little did we know as we concluded the first half of the 2019/2020 year that the internal changes that we had introduced would be so overshadowed by the events of the second half.

Suddenly, half of Australia seemed to be on fire, and shocking pictures of whole communities under threat were being beamed around the world every day. The Bennelong Foundation reacted to this tragedy with direct funding and support aimed at providing immediate relief to those who had lost everything.

And just when the embers of Australia's worst fires in over a century had cooled, the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world leaving a trail of health and economic chaos behind it.

The Board of the Bennelong Foundation chose to prioritise supporting those suffering extreme economic and social hardship brought on by COVID-19. It put together a significant package of immediate "direct action" assistance comprising:

- Employment and re-employment support for social enterprise organisations.
- Emergency food distribution in regional areas most severely hit.
- Extra counselling services to deal in particular with mental health issues.
- Case management for emergency housing for those who'd lost their accommodation.

During any crisis it's critical that objectives are clear and decision-making is swift, and I am pleased the Bennelong Foundation reacted to the effects of the pandemic quickly and decisively. It is possible that in 2020/2021 there will be a change in emphasis from community survival to community revival, and the Bennelong Foundation stands ready to participate fully in this.

In June 2020 we registered the Bennelong Foundation UK. This will allow the Foundation to work directly with its business entities and management teams in the UK, and many London- and UK-based community projects are already being briefed to work with the Foundation and with our community-based caring model.

In a year of great challenge and great change thank you to CEO Sandra Jacobs, the Board of Directors and Advisers of the Bennelong Foundation, and to the management teams of the wider Bangarra and Bennelong groups for adapting and whole heartedly supporting the aims and ambitions of our work.

Jeff Chapman AM
Chairman

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Chairman's Report

Jeff Chapman