

2021 - 2022

Annual Report





Our Vision

To reduce the incidence and impact of road trauma.

Our Purpose

Amber Community is a not-for-profit organisation contributing to the safety and wellbeing of Victorian road users. We provide counselling and support to people affected by road trauma and address attitudes and behaviours of road users through education.

Our Values

Caring — We are committed to serving our clients with empathy and compassion.

Integrity — We display integrity, respect and dignity in all our dealings with clients, stakeholders and members of our workforce.

Quality — Our focus is on the people we serve, and we strive for excellence in service delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement.

Accountability — We are accountable for our actions in working to deliver our services and our mission.

Our History

Amber Community was founded in 1994 by a small group of people whose lives had been directly impacted by road trauma.

These people understood the need for a specialist service where support could be offered to those who, like them, were suffering because of the injury or loss of a loved one on the roads. They joined with professionals working in the area to provide counselling and support.

From this humble beginning, Amber Community has grown to offer state-wide counselling and support to any Victorian affected by a road incident. Amber Community now comprises a team of staff and volunteers who provide support and education services to more than 3,000 people annually.

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Chair's Report

Xander Alpherts

The year ending June 2022 has been another busy and important year for our organisation, now called Amber Community!

The first four months of the period (from July to October 2021) saw Melbourne and other parts of Victoria in continued lockdown due to COVID-19, with our counselling and education teams continuing to adapt and provide ongoing services remotely. Unfortunately, with the increased mobility of road users post-lockdowns, we have seen a resurgence in lives lost and serious injuries on our roads, with 248 fatalities in the financial year compared to 203 the year before. The demand for our counselling services has therefore continued to be significant, placing pressure on our counselling teams, who have responded incredibly, providing 2,764 counselling interventions during the year.

Our education team continued to deliver Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) programs remotely for most of the year, which we feel rivals the physical delivery in terms of effectiveness and has the benefit of reaching a broader audience. Going forward the intention is for seminars to be delivered both in person and virtually.

In parallel with the continuation of our service provision, we embarked on a change in name and brand for the organisation. While the Road Trauma Support Services Victoria name had served the organisation extremely well for the last 14 years, the board and CEO felt the time was right to update the name. The associated brand imagery reflects the nature of the organisation today and aids with recall and community awareness. We are extremely excited to go forward as Amber Community, providing the same service by the same team, as we always have.

During the year, we also made the decision to move our head office location. The organisation had been run out of its current location in Blackburn for 18 years, and the space was no longer fit for purpose for the counselling meetings and broader work undertaken by the organisation. The market dynamics allowed us to secure an exciting new space in Mitcham, which will be a big improvement for the team in terms of work environment, as well as for those impacted by road trauma when they visit the office for counselling.

The financial surplus delivered in the last financial year allowed us to invest significantly into our teams, organisational infrastructure, and growth initiatives. This resulted in a temporary, deliberate, financial deficit as the result of the investments in the future we made this year.

Finally, we renewed our funding agreement with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) for a further three years, and we are extremely grateful to the TAC for their continued and strengthened support for the organisation.

I would like to sincerely thank Bernadette, the management team, the staff, all the volunteers and my fellow board members for continuing to do such amazing work in what was another challenging year externally.

I would also like to express our gratitude for the continued support of our key partners: the TAC, Victoria Police, Department of Transport, VicRoads, Community Corrections Services, the Magistrates' Courts, and our corporate partners. We could not achieve what we do without all of you.

I look forward to the coming year as Amber Community, with hopefully fewer external disruptions, a new, much improved office, and the ability to continue to grow and enhance the services we provide – to reduce the impact and incidence of road trauma.

Xander Alpherts
Chair





CEO's Report

Bernadette Nugent

The last 12 months have been productive, challenging and exciting.

We adapted our service delivery each step of the way to ensure that we were doing all we could to meet the needs of the people we serve as COVID-19 began to reduce its impact on the community, and as restrictions and COVID-19 guidelines changed over time.

Sadly, people continue to lose their lives and are being seriously injured on our roads. The counselling service consistently operates above capacity, and they work tirelessly to meet the demands of the service. The team were the first to return to work at the office so they could resume face-to-face sessions and provide each other with the appropriate level of collegial support — which is incredibly important for the work we do. Manager of Counselling and Support Services Lorraine Flannery, retired at the end of June 2022. Lorraine worked with us for nearly three years. She was instrumental in supporting the team through staff changes and lockdowns. We are very grateful to Lorraine for the skills and knowledge that she brought to the role, and we wish her a wonderful retirement. We were delighted to welcome Renee Brauer as our new Manager. Renee's background includes being Centre Supervisor for Lifeline. We look forward to Renee sharing her

skills and expertise and leading the counselling team moving forward.

The education team continued to run the Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program online until the venues for face-to-face sessions reopened in April and COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. Carmel Maher was employed in the role of RTAS Coordinator in July 2021. It was a challenging time as we navigated our way through COVID-19 restrictions. Still, Carmel and Kirsten McLaren, RTAS Booking Officer, did a terrific job to ensure that RTAS programs continued to run. Carmel also conducted an evaluation of all aspects of the program and assisted with the redevelopment of the online booking system. Carmel has since decided that she would like to return to the Regional Coordinator and facilitator roles, so we are currently recruiting for a new RTAS Coordinator. We are delighted that Carmel will continue to work for us as she is an asset to the organisation.

The team has also been involved in a variety of community education programs that have also been supported by our amazing volunteers who generously share their personal stories.

After eight years working with the organisation, Fundraising, Events, and Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator Fiona Elliott, left the organisation in early 2022. Fiona played a significant role in creating the Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign and was responsible for developing our partnerships with four

legal firms. Fiona has gone on to new endeavours, and we wish her all the best for the future.

As a result of good financial management, in 2021, we were in an unusual position of having some funds available to us due to the Government support we received throughout COVID-19 and reduced expenses. Over the years, staff and the board of directors have discussed the pros and cons of the organisation undergoing a rebrand. With the funds available, we saw this as a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity to undertake the enormous task of doing a rebrand. With the assistance of Taboo Agency, we took a deep dive into who we are and what we want to look like and why. We worked through a few iterations of potential rebrand ideas in a lengthy process that involved several consultation sessions with both internal and external stakeholders. We are delighted with the outcome, and Amber Community was launched on 16 June 2022. We are confident that our new brand represents our warmth, inclusiveness, and our values, and we look forward to it taking us into the future with renewed energy. We will never forget our roots or lose sight of why we are here, and the name Road Trauma Support Services Victoria will be held with honour in our hearts. The rebrand was an enormous project, and I would like to acknowledge Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Bronwyn Saville for all her work to ensure that the rebrand and launch were successful.

In May 2022 we held our ninth Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign and walk. It continues to resonate with people impacted by road trauma, even though we acknowledge that they would prefer not to be a part of this community. It is always bittersweet to see so many people on the walk, knowing that their lives are sometimes changed forever because of road trauma. The walk was supported by Minister Ben Carroll, Joe Calafiore, CEO Transport Accident Commission, and David Clayton, Acting Commissioner of Road Policing. We acknowledge and thank our sponsors, Transurban, Narva, and EastLink, along with our legal partners, Maurice Blackburn, Slater + Gordon, Henry Carus + Associates and Polaris. We are very grateful for the support we receive throughout the year and for this special event.

In 2021, COVID-19 restrictions meant that we could not hold our Time for Remembering Ceremony at Queen's Hall. To ensure that we continued to offer this important occasion to people impacted by road trauma, we held the service online, as we did in 2020, with the assistance of Jasper Pictures. This year was the first year that I presided over the service. It was such an honour. Although having the ceremony at Queen's Hall allows people to connect and support each other, having the service online makes it more accessible to people in regional Victoria. Moving forward, we will return to Queen's Hall and also live stream the event so people who cannot attend in person can join us online.

At last year's Annual General Meeting, Ingrid Williams resigned as Director and Deputy Chair after nine years of volunteering for our organisation. Ingrid was an invaluable support to me when I started as CEO in 2019. Ingrid taught me a great deal, and I will always be very grateful to her. Ingrid generously shared her knowledge and expertise, and we thank her for years of dedicated service. Mark Musgrave has been on the board as Director and Treasurer

since 2015 and was elected Deputy Chair. We are fortunate to have directors who genuinely care about our organisation, goals and values. Once again, I would like to thank the board for their support, input and dedication to the organisation.

"Over the last 12 months, I believe that all staff and volunteers have worked above and beyond any expectations of their roles."

We have grown and developed our relationships with key road safety partners, including the Minister for Roads, Road Safety and Public Transport, Ben Carroll, Joe Calafiore, CEO TAC and all the TAC staff who work closely with us at various levels, Assistant Commissioner Road Policing Glen Weir (and the various members of Victoria Police who support the work we do) and Carl Muller, previously Executive Director of Road Safety Victoria, Department of Transport, Monash

University Accident and Research. We believe there is enormous value to the community to continue strengthening these relationships so that we can enhance our collective ability to support people impacted by road trauma and focus on promoting road safety to reduce serious injury and lost lives.

Amber Community is dedicated to the people we serve in the community, and we are passionate about making a difference. It continues to be an honour to lead the organisation, and I would like to thank the entire team for their effort, enthusiasm, and commitment to the organisation.

Moving forward, we aim to focus on evaluating our services to ensure that we are providing programs and support that have meaning and impact; and to look for more opportunities to grow in a way that supports our goal to reduce the impact and incidence of road trauma.

Bernadette Nugent
CEO



Volunteer Services

Amber Community has 148 active volunteers, 128 of whom are involved in delivering our education programs and engaging participants in conversations about the impact of road trauma.

Many of our volunteers have also been involved in speaking to the media, drawing on their experiences to address the question of why we need to keep talking about road safety. The volunteers’ personal stories, and the powerful effect they can have on listeners, is integral to what makes Amber Community unique in the road safety space. We continue to support our volunteers to ensure they are not negatively affected by continuing to speak about their experiences.

The Amber Community board of directors is a voluntary group; we currently have nine directors who give up their time to attend board meetings, sub-committee meetings and organisational events. Directors bring a diverse range of skills to the table while ensuring the good governance of Amber Community will serve the organisation into the future.

This year, Chris Harrison, of Amber Community, joined the University of Melbourne’s Lou Harms in presenting to the Volunteering

Victoria State Conference 2022 about our volunteer speakers’ program. Aspects of the program’s processes, speaker training, and support were explained. Other key points included: the phenomenon of road trauma’s ripple effect on communities, and the aims of volunteer speakers.

A 2019 study by the University of Melbourne, which surveyed Amber Community volunteer speakers, found that volunteers were motivated by a desire to instigate change, and give some meaning to their traumatic experiences in the process. The study also highlighted the importance of the training and support of volunteer speakers, of meeting individual needs, and of

working according to the practices of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Meanwhile, Amber Community was this year selected as a finalist in the Volunteering Victoria Awards in the category of ‘Covid-19 support and connection’ – a great recognition of the challenges we faced in the delivery of programs, and in people generally staying connected. In some respects, there was a positive in the situation of being forced to connect online in that we could bring together our remote and office teams more frequently. Moving forward, we hope to develop a peer support program as another way to help people in the community impacted by road trauma.



Volunteers

- Nadine Ahfat

Peter Aldersea

Xander Alpherts

Yeksan Altun

Ian Aranyosi

Matthew Armour

Christian Ashby

Roger Astell

Samantha Bala

Joyce Ball

Anthony Bartl

Les Beechey

Phillip Behan

Adrian Benson

Kellie Bishop

Barb Bleicher

Leigh Booth

Robin Bowerman

Wendy Bowler

Corey Bray

Dan Cansovski

Byron Carson

Robert Carter

Mark Cartledge

Belinda Clark

Kathleen Clark

William Cole

Natasha Cook

Leonie Cooke

Darryl Crowley

Sam Curry

Francine Davy

Jan Dilworth

Melinda Dine

Andrew Downes

John Dows

Rosalie Dows

Glenn Dunn

Kajol Kate Eagle
- Gerardine Eales

Alex Eleftheriou

Wilma Felton

Lorraine Ferguson

Roni Forai

Kristy French

Gary Frost

Victor Gartside

Nadine Goldsmith

Catherine Gracias

George Greaves

Robyn Greening

Susan Hansford

Maria Harkins

Geraldine Harley

Russell Harley

Lou Harms

Irene Harrington OAM

Glenn Heazlewood

Michael Hellwege

Merryn Henderson

Tony Hoeboer

Paul Illman

Shane Jayasinghe

Julie Jochs

Anthony Johns

Rosie Johnston

Sean Kay

Jo Keep

Andrew Knowles

Andrea Korvin

Kat Kranz

Stuart Le Grand

Maeve Su Mi Luu

Virginia Mahoney

Chris Mair

Manny Marchesin

Teegan McDonald

Dale McIvor

- Johan Meyer

Graham Milner

Stuart Morris

Mark Musgrave

David Natenzon

Jason Naumann

Tim Nolan

Gail Noonan

Kerry Ann Norton

Angela Nuss

Carmel O'Brien

Paul O'Dwyer

Karina Osgood

Sophie Owen

Kristine Papworth

Chris Parkin

Matthew Pope

Lynda Pottage

Sherry Pratt

Rebecca Reilly

Anne Riches

Karen Robinson

Danny Rogers
- Paul Sabo

Byron Sedgwick

David Simmons

Nilsson Smyth

Bernie Stanley

Natalie Stanway

Bev Steart

Reg Stott

Jeanette Suhr OAM

Damian Sumner

Rhys Thomas

James Thompson

Peter Thomson

Ben Trotter

Fiona Umbers

Jonathon Van Ek

Merryn Wallace

Richard Watkins

Sam Wilson

Martin Wrangle

Vaughan Wright

Jessica Zaghet



Counselling & Support Services



Transitioning from COVID-19 lockdowns, where our every move needed to be recorded or recognised, to one where we are modifying and adapting, makes me think of the word change.

This is reflected in our organisation and our counselling team who are reviewing and, in some cases, adding value to our processes, adjusting our work to a hybrid model, establishing ourselves in a new office space and embracing our name change to Amber Community. Like the seasons, change is inevitable, sometimes challenging, sometimes welcomed, and moreover, an opportunity for hope and growth.

Throughout this year, we have seen a society that has struggled with change and the disruption of our normal. As counsellors we heard about the impact of isolation on people's mental health, the enormous sadness and loneliness during times of sorrow when only a few could come together and support each other, and the frustration of inaccessibility to services and long wait times to see doctors, counsellors and psychologists. It often felt the everyday supports, that we previously took for granted, were no longer reliable nor meeting the needs of society. People were in a state of despondency as things

had changed so much; their dependency was being tested at times, often falling short of expectations.

The present-day conditions and changes prompted us as a team to look at our service, and as the year progressed, the team reflected and adjusted to the changes. We reviewed our programs, considered better ways to process information from referral to individual sessions and considered investing in a Client Information Management System (CIMS) to update our flow of work and meet the growing demands of our clients' expectations when dealing with a modern counselling service. The CIMS project was led by counsellor, Leanne Hyndman with additional support from Fiona Elliott. We were grateful to have the expertise of Industries and Co, who took us on as a pro-bono project. They guided us to find the best option that would accommodate managing clients and produce retaliative data.

Staffing and Program

The team kept moving forward, managing the challenges of change, and as one staff member left for a different position, we brought on a new member to the team with the hope of returning to the office. Unfortunately, the community were put into another lockdown, and the isolation of learning the new job was too much and we found ourselves searching for another new counsellor. This proved to be a happy process. Susan Konstantas came along in October, working very closely with the counselling manager to find her

feet and eventually managing a full caseload by the end of November.

The Counselling and Support Services Manager Lorraine Flannery dropped one day a week to part-time, working four days, and this allowed us to have Leanne Hyndman step up and support her in the Assistant Manager role. Leanne brought a lot of enthusiasm to the position and took on, not only the CIMS project, but supported the counsellors in arranging professional development opportunities. Our other counsellors stepped up, backed our decisions to improve our system and helped to manage the growing referrals. Claire Mann did the bulk of intake, and Mustafa Koukhan, along with Susan Konstantas handled the counselling sessions, with Lorraine and Leanne managing caseloads as well.

Like last year the team assisted with Time for Remembering. While we all love to come together for this special occasion at Parliament House, it was rewarding to instead talk online with those from the rural regions. Many clients had found this service helpful to remember loved ones and celebrate their lives; however equally wished they were not in this situation. The theme for Time for Remembering was hearts. The participants from the art therapy group were able to make glazed clay-shaped hearts to hang from a tree shown on the day and in the future, these will be given away as mementos.

At Christmas the team took the opportunity to take a couple of hours off and celebrate another calendar year over, with a picnic

in the park. We recognise, as both a team and individuals, the need to take care of our wellbeing. Our work, whilst rewarding and we hope helpful, can often be overwhelming and with the conversations we hear daily, it is important to take time to find joy and lift the load from our shoulders, smell the roses and turn our faces to the sun.

Year at a Glance

The new year 2022 gave us more freedom from our homes, and we gradually moved back into the office. We also welcomed opportunities to have guest speakers focusing on important subjects to assist with skill building enabling us to further support our clients. These included a discussion with Mark Kulkins on managing shame, opportunities with our legal partners to talk about their role with our injured or bereaved clients, regular supervision throughout the year with Dr Rob Gordon and a special visit to the Coroners Court to learn how our services can work cohesively.

I had the pleasure of presenting to the staff of the legal firm Henry Carus + Associates on empathy and self-care and to the Coroners Court counselling staff. Lorraine also joined Chris Harrison on an Australasian College of Road Safety (ACRS) webinar titled "Post-Crash Care – Understanding the Psychological Needs as Part of the Safe Systems Approach", with several states and other countries taking part. Through this event, we were interviewed by a research team working on developing a similar organisation to Amber Community called Road Trauma Support Group NSW.

This year the Prison Program started back, supporting clients from the Prison Program who wished to participate in counselling, starting with three clients and hoping to increase this as another block of training begins later in the year. The Prison Program has been rewarding for both counsellors and clients, and it provides a conduit of support as these clients become reconnected with their community. We will continue this program in the future, offering a positive way forward to educate, inform and reconnect.

In Summary

On reflection, we have met the changes with the same dedication to supporting our community, and this has been evident from the data. We increased our new referrals by 407, bringing the total to 1,734. During the year we managed 2,764 counselling interventions, which were made up of 2,060 telephone sessions, followed by 43 face-to-face sessions and 135 online sessions and 526 other various forms of communication via emails, text, and letters.

The Victorian Police provided most of our referrals, totalling 1,369, via their electronic referral system (VPeR). The team has continued to make use of the SMS system, informing our referred clients of any changes and providing contact and crisis phone numbers. Once engaged with Amber Community, clients on average had 3.9 sessions. The team felt more comfortable, as did our clients with online counselling, and increased our sessions exponentially. This year we had 136 clients take up the offer compared to last year when we had only three clients participate.

Counselling and Support Services has welcomed our new name Amber Community, embracing the new logo and spending time renewing our forms. The team is excited to keep this change theme going as we prepare for the coming year.

A Final Word

The counselling team would not be able to do their work without the other members of staff to support them. Our CEO Bernadette Nugent is always very supportive and has guided us as we navigated our work through COVID-19 along with our Office Manager Virginia Cummings, Road Trauma Awareness Seminar Officer Kirsten McLaren and Marketing and Communications Coordinator Bronwyn Saville. We also worked closely with Education Services Manager Chris Harrison, and of course, the regional team and the volunteers. While as an organisation we have pulled together in uncertain times, we have also stood by each other to pursue excellence in all the work we do.

As the Manager of Counselling and Support Services, I have had both the pleasure and honour of leading a fantastic team of talented and empathetic people who come to their workspace ready to take on all concerns of the day. This will be the last report I write as I have decided to retire in July 2022. I acknowledge the team's good work and skills and wish them all the best for the future. The team continue to support and encourage traumatised and bereaved people, showing there is space to hope and inspire individuals or clients to take each day as an opportunity to grow.

As always and in the spirit of the organisation, we give the last word to the clients with their comments from our latest survey in June 2022.

"I appreciated the counsellor's understanding of the post-accident legal process that my other counsellor didn't fully appreciate."

"It's good to talk to someone. I was very sceptical of a phone consultation, but the counsellor knew how to encourage conversation without prying and made you feel safe."

"Sadly, you guys are overworked and don't have enough counsellors to help. If there were fewer road traumas, it would be better, but that's not happening."

Lorraine Flannery
Manager, Counselling and Support Services



Lorraine Flannery

Counselling & Support Services Manager

In 2019 I was working for a very large community health organisation managing several programs when I decided I needed a change.

After several months of looking, I saw the Amber Community advertisement and was lucky to get an interview. As I walked into the office on the day of my "chat", as Bern (Bernadette Nugent, CEO) called it, I felt I had found what I was looking for. While the office space was a mixture of comfy, snug, counselling and business, there was a welcome home feel as well. My journey began as I learnt the job and worked out how I could fit into this world of people's trauma, counselling, and community education.

Little did I know that many years prior, a life-changing event in our family had set me on the course of contributing to the safety and wellbeing of all young Victorians and other road users. Aged thirteen, my stable, happy family was completely shattered when my eldest brother Lance was killed in a car crash. Over time, I processed this event from a child's point of view into an adult's understanding. I can still recall the powerful emotions and the intensity of the reactions from family and others.

As a young teen, I was bewildered. I could not understand many of the behaviours of others and the lack of concrete answers to my many questions. Throughout my adult life, it has been important to make sure children are given a voice in confusing times and to assist their parents and carers in holding them securely while they sort through their feelings and concerns.

Considering my experiences, I felt honoured to be chosen as the next Manager of Counselling and Support Services. And with my background in pediatric nursing, psychology, and social work, I felt ready to take on this challenge. Bern expressed to me the importance of having a stable and cohesive counselling team that works alongside everyone in the organisation to establish relationships that meet the needs of the broader stakeholders that Amber Community serves.

I grasped this concept and moved forward with a full team of experienced professionals, who have many years of counselling skills between them, to support our road users. As in all teams, people go and new staff settle in, and by mid-2021, our current team had formed. By then COVID-19 had well and truly taken hold as we shifted to our homes to work and learnt to see and meet each other on a flat screen. Our 'new normal' was challenging, but we all remained together as we moved back into a more hybrid framework in 2022.

The position I hold is one of privilege, and I am grateful to have spent time with my team, other staff members and of course, the public who we support. Our mission in counselling is to find the right balance, hear the story, support the experiences in trauma and grief and assist in finding a way forward. Often, we can manage all three and feel rewarded with a thank you. However, we are only the starting point at the beginning of a person's journey. Counselling can also be a humbling experience and to sit with a parent as they struggle to understand why they will never see their child again is both amazing and mystifying as they find an inner strength to move to the next job, the next day, and find some purpose to keep going.

I decided to finish my professional working career and retire in July. I did so in the awareness that Road Trauma Support Services Victoria now has a new name: Amber Community, and will continue its mission to make sure everyone who seeks support can find it in the counselling team, the education programs and most importantly as they walk through the doors of the office. I wish everyone all the best in taking this organisation and its great services into the twenty-first century. Thank you, Amber Community.

Rebecca

Counselling Client

When we had a two-week travelling holiday planned for Easter this year, with extended family, it was triggering.

Last October, my daughter got her 'L's. Congratulations to her, but that was triggering to me.

Late last year, my husband bought another older car, without all the safety gear, for our kids to go in and for our daughter to sometimes drive. Also triggering.

Again last year, my daughter had allergy testing done, where she ended up having a 'long faint' with her eyes wide open which was extremely triggering, and that was what sent me over the edge.

Nine years before, I had been given a couple of pamphlets by Victoria Police after a terrible crash out the front of our property. I had run down immediately. A female 'P' plate driver and her boyfriend passenger had pulled out in front of a semi-trailer truck. She was killed, he was seriously injured, and the truck driver was in shock. After trying to avoid the car, his vehicle ended up launching over our dam bank and landed in our dam. It took weeks to clean up, and there is still a memorial at the front of our property, so there is no escaping what happened there. However, I am very spiritual, practice gratitude and try to be mindful. Besides, when going in the car to travel, I managed

my trauma pretty well day to day, with a few exceptions, until now.

I was a mess when my daughter fainted with her eyes open and, after a few days, went searching for Amber Community pamphlets that I had carefully put away. I rang the number, and things were put into place for me to begin counselling with my matched counsellor. In the meantime, some caring, kind and practical advice was shared to help me.

Amber Community counselling has given me the tools and strategies to calm my mind and body and be able to do and enjoy more things with my car and holiday-loving family. It has helped me to feel freer from my past trauma and to manage myself when thoughts and feelings come up. It has helped me move on with my life, and I am forever grateful.

When I began my counselling, I found my counsellor warm, kind, patient and knowledgeable. She took her time with me, and there was never any pressure on me to do tasks. She was constantly telling and showing me how to check in with my body.

She has given me so many tools to add to my management strategy, and a number of things made the tools I was already using click and work so much better for me. Her help has been so, so beneficial to me, and I was even able to enjoy travelling most of the time on our recent family holiday. And that's even after the death of my cousin in a road accident two weeks before we left. I used the tools she taught me to manage my anxiety, bring me back to the present and help me feel safe. I am grateful to her and Amber Community for this service.

Amber Community has reinstated in my mind that although terrible accidents occur, there is a lot that can be done to stay safe and a lot more people survive each day on the road than don't. Travelling when doing it safely is a small risk to take for all the benefits of family time and happy memories. So please, everybody, be safe, don't take risks, and keep your eyes on the road, not your phone. It may save your own or someone else's life. Thank you.



Education Services



"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples."

— Mother Teresa

Education Services

We often hear about the 'ripple effect' of a road incident, and the negative impacts of road trauma on many people in the community, but it is also possible to think about this from another perspective. We can consider that, by sharing details of their lived experiences, our volunteer speakers are also casting out stones.

At Amber Community, we often hear volunteers remark, 'If I can make a difference to just one person, then I have done my job'. In other words, each personal story is a bid to instigate a process of positive change, one ripple at a time. The hope is that enough momentum will build to cause offending drivers to change their behaviour – and, in doing so, create positive stories for themselves.

Data can provide ideas about what needs to happen in the road safety arena, but we can forget to address the core question of why we need to make change. Hearing personal stories about the life-changing effects of road trauma highlights the why of road safety, so other families and communities do not have to go through the same painful experiences. In our education programs, we ask participants: 'What's the impact you're going to

make?' We hope that by connecting with our volunteers' stories, offending drivers may also be a force for positive change.

Going forward, a big focus will be to use the lived-experience perspective of our volunteers to influence community values, attitudes and behaviours towards the aim of greater road safety. We aim to make a stronger impact at the local level by providing programs in partnership with other organisations.

Below is a summary of the work carried out by Amber Community Education Services in 2021–2022.

Road Trauma Awareness Seminar program (RTAS)

The RTAS program began the year online, and then as lockdowns and

restrictions eased, we transitioned back into delivering at venues across the state from April. We welcomed nine new facilitators to the program and many lived-experience volunteer speakers. More than 1,200 participants attended the seminars, with an attendance rate of 85 per cent.

Offences leading to RTAS attendance have remained reasonably consistent over the past eight years. Unlicensed driving continues to be the most common driving offence for a referral – at 47 per cent of offences in 2021–22. Careless driving has increased since 2015–16, now at 30 per cent. After an increase in 2020–21, drug driving has declined to 17 per cent.

Post-seminar attendance, 94 per cent of participants indicated they might change their driving behaviour due to what they had



heard at the seminar. For example, one response stated:

Although I do feel quite ashamed to admit this, especially being 35 years old ... for such a long time, my greatest motivator to obey road safety rules has been my will not to be caught by the police, instead of the will not to cause any harm to anyone ... Today, in some way, my outdated perception revealed itself to me and I am beginning to adopt the new realisation that, every time I'm on the road, I'm driving next to someone's mum or dad, brother, sister, daughter, son etc. ...

Driving – Better Choices Program

Since 2019's pilot of Driving – Better Choices at Dhurringile prison, we have continued to grow the program. To date we have delivered four nine-week psycho-educational programs wherein a participant can identify how their offending behaviour has impacted not only themselves, but all those involved in the incident leading to their conviction and sentence.

Our lived-experience volunteer speakers attend the program to provide a different perspective of road incidents and assist in the restorative process (additional

to the provision of restorative justice conferencing in the future). Counselling is provided for prisoners with unresolved trauma and grief.

Driving – Better Choices aims to be a behavioural change program addressing the underlying causes of driving offending, which in turn facilitates recovery, leading to a decrease in trauma and recidivism. The target group is people impacted by road trauma who have been sentenced for serious driving offences, or who have an extensive history of road offences.

Upon release participants can connect to Amber Community so they may continue to receive support for their recovery from road trauma and prior harmful life trajectories. Below are two examples of participant responses:

1. *This program exceeded my expectations ... A highlight was the guest speakers who shared their experiences, which has enlivened my understanding of the effects of road trauma, helped me on my personal journey as a result of my accident, and given new, helpful perspectives on this time in jail and my life afterwards. Chris [Harrison] was an empathetic and engaging facilitator, and I would in future like to be involved in the program, myself, in any*

capacity. I have found it a useful and enriching experience.

2. *One of the most useful and fulfilling courses I've done in jail; opened my eyes to so much more and made me feel a lot deeper about my story and the path I took ... Therefore, I understand how and why these things happened, and how to prevent them from re-occurring.*

Road Safety as Culture in the Workplace

Nationwide

Following several meetings with Nationwide Group, Amber Community developed a clear understanding of the issues that motivated the company to create a safety brand, including situational awareness and driver wellbeing.

A two-hour workshop was created and delivered to Nationwide and RACV drivers, including vital contributions from our lived-experience volunteer speakers. Over three weeks, 159 drivers and managers attended. Eleven face-to-face sessions were held at RACV in Noble Park, and two conducted online.

Overall, participants suggested they would change very little about the workshop design, although some

you to both for fostering such a great team of facilitators, volunteers and community partners.

The highlights of the year included: attending volunteer training with Anthony and Dan; joining the RoadSafe Westgate community; building relationships with many regional councils; meeting team members at the Edinburgh Castle gathering; taking part in the Nationwide workplace sessions with some of our regional speakers; attending safe driving presentations at the Migrant Resource Centre; attending the Melton Community Road Safety Forum with Shyam; and participating in a Youth Justice session with Anthony.

We had a round of volunteer training in January, after which we welcomed Anthony Bartl to the team. He has taken up the role with enthusiasm, taking part in RTAS programs and a TAC campaign promoting pedestrian safety.

"I have learnt that the key to this role is to establish and maintain personal connections across the region, and that all work really

comes down to the principle of sharing ideas, stories and resources to prevent road incidents."

— Phil Preston

South East Metro

Among the many highlights of the year was the region receiving a donation from Eastlink to benefit our volunteers, which enabled us to run a 'Road to Hope' writing group. Another stand-out event was our volunteer speaker, Paul, with his carer Julie, attending the finals of the National Volunteer Awards. It was a thrill to see him get this far.

A huge effort was made by volunteers to raise money for Shine a Light on Road Safety, with many being able to attend the event in Melbourne. Presenting to the Nationwide company with volunteer speakers to address workplace safety was an incredibly valuable exercise, which we followed up with an Amber Community Stand at the Workplace Health and Safety Show. This year our region has had 10 new volunteers go through volunteer training online.

We had some in-person breakfast

catch-ups before Christmas and during National Volunteer Week, plus had a farewell event for Tarli to recognise her many years as a volunteer speaker and facilitator. Besides presenting at RTAS sessions, SE Metro volunteers have spoken to the media, Nationwide employees, schools, in the prison program and the Shine a Light on Road Safety walk.

"We are constantly in awe at how, while giving voice to their trauma and hurt, volunteers are also able to sow the seeds of hope. They speak for the people who cannot speak – including emergency and hospital workers, bystanders and witnesses, carers and therapists – and advocate for a safer future on the roads for all of us."

— Gillian Scaduto

Student Research

University of Melbourne social work students, completing placements at Amber Community this year, conducted research into the Driving – Better Choices program plus designed an assessment and evaluation tool for bereaved clients of our counselling services.

Driving – Better Choices Study

Our aim was to conduct research on evaluating the Driving – Better Choices program, which focuses on creating behavioural change in driving offenders at Dhurringile Prison. The task was to develop an evaluation plan for Amber Community to determine the effectiveness of its program, but we also drafted a statistical outline of driving offences in Victoria for the benefit of the organisation. The latter informed a literature review that we

developed, exploring the question: 'Do restorative justice practices help create positive outcomes for traffic offenders within the prison environment?' This review, developed in response to the evaluation of the prison program, provided an evidence base for the effectiveness of using a behaviour change program for driving offenders within the prison context. We observed the prison program by listening to the stories told by participating prisoners. In our final weeks, we presented our work to the Amber Community board and to Dhurringile Prison staff. Amber Community offered us creative freedom to work on projects that we hoped supported its values.

— Alana Thomson and Tessah Mather

Tool to Help Bereaved Clients

This project was a collaboration between Amber Community and

Master of Social Work students to design a new assessment and evaluation tool for bereaved clients. Based on a literature review, we identified three new measures of grief that we presented to Amber Community counsellors for consideration. The project highlights our joint commitment to using robust quantitative tools to ensure high-quality counselling practices in the bereavement area. Perhaps the most valuable interviews we conducted were with service users; it was an honour to be given the opportunity to listen to their stories of bereavement and how Amber Community had been guiding them through their grief. We have published our findings in the journal *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, wanting to share our knowledge and experience with the wider social work community.

— Kevin Campbell, Megan Elmer and Hanh Nguyen



Luke Elliot

Regional Coordinator

My name is Luke Elliot, and I am the Regional Coordinator for the Barwon Southwest region.

Amber Community Barwon Southwest started the year, as did we all, in lockdown and having to work from home and manage our lives accordingly. This meant facilitating road trauma awareness seminars with the obstacles of poor internet and participants struggling to keep up with technology. Volunteers, too, felt the pressure to perform online and with limited contact, which meant we all had to come together to help support and encourage better connection and wellbeing.

I believe this was achieved as the feedback from participants of education programs and volunteers alike was that they felt supported emotionally and practically and had more accessibility to others within the organisation who they may not have met or worked with before.

Other employees and I also felt supported by independent wellness support, and a general focus on wellness, coping with change, mental health and wellbeing and work-life balance, ensured we made it out of lockdown safely.

While Road Trauma Awareness Seminar programs have remained largely online, we have been able to come together around the volunteer week lunches and "Shine a Light on Road Safety" activities in May.

I had the privilege of spending time in the Warrnambool meeting, getting to know the volunteers and prospective volunteers, and sharing their experiences. The Geelong team grew as new volunteers were trained to come on board and already started sharing their experiences and helping others become aware of their choices and actions in relation to road trauma.

Individual volunteers have taken part in other educational events in schools and locally and gone about fundraising, making videos and advocating in their own time.

Midway through the year as Regional Coordinator, I was asked to take on the added responsibility of looking after the far Southwest Warrnambool region and took this as an opportunity to get to know another great group of volunteers and facilitators.

At the end of 2021, other regional coordinators and I interviewed and employed three new facilitators in the Barwon region, and I have seen them hit the ground running and facilitate both online and face-to-face with aplomb.

I have been engaged in many speaking opportunities with Rotary Geelong, the Mental Health Advisory Group, Volunteers Geelong, Victoria Police and others and have been able to advocate and spread the word about our volunteers and the services we provide in education and counselling.

When I first came into this position, I had originally applied for a role within the counselling team as I

have a background in creative arts therapy and counselling. I have found that I have been able to call upon those skills and experience as a performer to facilitate and support others around mental health and wellbeing and help coordinate the volunteer team with a special focus on connecting and building relationships.

I have been able to hold and help participants and volunteers navigate emotions, self-worth, guilt and trauma and better understand the consequences of their actions as they participate in seminars and educational activities. I have born witness to the great courage our volunteers have in sharing their experience of road trauma with total strangers in order to help prevent them from suffering from road trauma or inflicting that trauma on others.

I have helped plant the seeds of change in behaviour and attitude and witnessed the light bulb moments as participants begin to understand the impact of their actions on the roads.

I feel privileged to play a small part in helping make the roads safer for all in regional areas with the help of amazing teams of volunteer speakers and facilitators and the staff of Amber Community.

We are all looking forward to connecting more often face-to-face and building on creating a whole community as the organisation changes its name and image to better reflect the services and ideals we embrace for the wider community.



Kerri-Ann Batchelor

Regional Coordinator

My journey with Amber Community commenced a year ago when I was inspired to answer a Facebook advertisement looking for a Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) Group Facilitator in the Grampians region.

As the proud mum of four children, teaching the last of my learner drivers our experiences on the road and the message I was sharing as a road user, I realised was so important. It was my loved ones impacted by road trauma and the many hours of being a passenger to learner drivers that I realised the hazards and the choices other drivers make continue to put everyone's life at risk. Were they just not aware?

After many years of working for not-for-profit community organisations, Amber Community inspired me to do more and become involved. I have a counselling background and have provided lots of group education, information and support over the years, so it felt like a perfect fit. I also have friends, family and community members all impacted by road trauma. My husband was first on scene of a single driver fatality and never sought support or counselling. Fortunately, he has been able to share with me and reflect, but he will never forget the mum who never made it to

her daughter's home. My Mum and Dad were first on scene of a horrific crash that took the lives of a young family and their children. My dad has never recovered from this trauma and continues to become emotional if he talks about this with me. Our children's friends and schoolmates have all been impacted by road trauma and have seen the young lives lost.

It was a wake-up call to realise just how challenging all hazards are to every road user. Our young people just starting out on our roads are at increased risk of road trauma and are generally less experienced and can sometimes be less responsible and take risks. Disrespect on our roads I observed was high, impatient driving, speeding, experienced drivers pulling out in front of learner drivers when not safe to do so, tailgating learner drivers, tooting learner drivers, and pedestrians stepping out suddenly. Along the way, I felt I was teaching my son to be a defensive and reactive driver to the unforeseen, not to be able to trust that other road users would obey the law, traffic lights, or other vulnerable road users. I'll quote my son, "But they have to give way to me", as a driver pulled straight out in front of him while he was doing 58km per hour and then had to break suddenly with a line of cars behind him. Crisis over, heart in mouth, we survived unscathed. The pressure was real.

All the while, I was reflecting that everyone has choices on how they use our roads. We can choose to drive at a safe speed, we can choose to be impatient or show patience, we choose whether to drink and drive, to wear a seatbelt, to be careful of cyclists, motorcyclists and trucks. We

also choose to be well rested, or drive fatigued, we choose to notice and be aware of pedestrians and all other road users. I truly believe that one life lost on our roads is one too many.

I have been incredibly humbled to work with some amazing facilitators and our incredible volunteers both in the online space and face-to-face. The power of our volunteer stories continues to inspire me, and I have been very proud and honoured to be in these beautiful people's space and hear their lived experiences shared with strangers. The change in our RTAS participants is always profound and it is always due to the impact of our volunteer speakers' stories and our emergency service volunteers stories. Our volunteers never think that they are brave beyond words. Our volunteers never mind giving up their personal time to spread the message of the impact of road trauma. I am sure our volunteers may also never consider how important they really are in reducing the number of lives lost on our roads.

Our team of facilitators and Regional Coordinators all amaze me, and really care about all lives lost on our roads. The connections in regional communities and sense of community power is incredible. The 2022 Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign has been so successful in the Grampians region due to the dedicated staff and volunteers and their connections within the community. Amber Community has had such wonderful support from media— both print and radio, in the Grampians region, State Emergency Services, the Country Fire Authority, Victoria Police, local councils, the Magistrates' Court, local schools and individuals.



Jennifer Marshall

Facilitator

I first heard about Amber Community more than a decade ago when a colleague spoke very highly of the Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program.

I heard about the work Christine Harrison had done to develop the seminars and many years later I saw an opportunity to become involved and joined the team in 2019.

At the beginning of each seminar, we invite participants to share why they are there. Without fail I am awash with feelings of shock and despair, sometimes inner fury, hearing about repeat drink driving offences, speeding, carelessness and recklessness as well as driving while unlicensed. In the majority of cases the participant appears cavalier while they describe their offences, underplaying their role and responsibility. As a professional trainer I maintain a poker face.

We work through some statistics, perhaps half are listening to me, eventually the volunteer speaker begins. A stillness creeps over the room, some eyes are averted but all ears are listening, tears well for some, others control their breathing. The reality of road

trauma is no longer a fine, a court appearance, an impounded car and the inconvenience of public transport. The takeaway at the end of the session is almost always the impact from the volunteer and the cavalier attitude is almost always replaced with a recognition that perhaps they are lucky to be alive and sitting in the room.

It's not easy to deliver RTAS programs. They can be intense and exhausting, frustrating and even overwhelming at times. I do it because the program works, it is short and sharp and delivers a message. The combination of evidence and data with the lived experience of the volunteer and the

opportunity for self-reflection is a powerful recipe for change. At the end of each session, I feel that we may not reach all, but we definitely reach some and if that can prevent and deter the behaviours described in the opening then we are a step closer to safer roads for all.

Working with Amber Community has made me more aware of how the media discusses driving and traffic offences. I am happy to see that we are talking more about roads as shared spaces and perhaps we are moving towards a greater awareness of vulnerable road users.





Paul

Lived Experience Speaker

Since I started volunteering with Amber Community, my carer Julie who helps me volunteer, thinks I have blossomed.

She has noticed I have become more confident engaging in the broader community. For example, now I can talk to shopkeepers. She also thinks I'm now doing things I would have previously found too stressful such as presenting online and attending volunteer breakfasts etc. Volunteering for Amber Community has been a very positive experience for me. It's given me more confidence, self-esteem and purpose in my life. I look forward to presenting and making a difference. I go to the volunteer breakfasts and have been to some of the Shine a Light on Road Safety walks. I feel I have something in common with other people involved with Amber Community and that they appreciate and understand me.

In 2008 I was a passenger in a car accident and have an acquired brain injury (ABI) as a result. It had a big impact on my life. I felt life no longer had meaning or purpose.

Belinda, my neuropsychologist, suggested I could share my story with other people to help reduce the road toll. We went to watch an Amber Community presentation. We heard a volunteer speak about how her son died in a car crash caused by drink driving and speeding. I thought she was very brave to share her story. The participants were shocked and moved listening to her story. Some of them even cried. It made me realise that if I shared my story, I could make a difference too.

"I love volunteering with Amber Community because I can keep people safe and make people safer drivers on the road."

My key road safety message is "Slow down before you kill someone or kill yourself". I love helping other people understand what I've been through and what they might have to go through in life if they don't start driving safely. Before my presentation, some people think they are invincible. After my presentation, I see a physical change in the participants. As they

realize no one is invincible on the roads, especially when it comes to speed, alcohol and drugs. They look remorseful after hearing my story. This makes me feel great because I'm helping change their attitudes and driving behaviour.

This year a big highlight for me was being nominated for the 2021 Volunteering Awards for how well I adapted to volunteering during COVID-19. I was initially anxious about volunteering online but overcame this because I know how important the presentations are for reducing the road toll. So, with the help of Julie my carer, I ended up doing two online presentations most months. I wasn't shortlisted for the award but just being nominated was a huge honour. Another honour was being chosen to represent Amber Community at the Volunteer Awards Ceremony at Government House when Amber Community was shortlisted for an award. We didn't win, but it was a great achievement.

I feel proud knowing I'm making a difference and am looking forward to doing more face-to-face programs again within the next few months and attending another volunteer breakfast.



Maria

Emergency Services Volunteer

As an emergency services volunteer, I am humbled by those who share their personal stories during Amber Community education sessions.

Sometimes I have to do all that I can just to remain composed enough to speak. What I really want to do is hug and hold and apologise for all that went wrong in their picture. I hope I remind them that we, the essential services, cared very much for their loved ones whilst at the scene. We valued their lives and protected their dignity. Where possible, they were not alone. I truly appreciate the people I have met on this journey (even if recently that has only been online).

The key message is that driving a vehicle is a privilege. Each person is responsible when behind the wheel. If just one person shares their mistakes with their mates, it may be enough to start to change a culture of selfish risk.

I became a volunteer with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in 2001 when my local brigade needed support to ensure all calls were answered in the 24-hour triple zero watch room. So much has changed since then and, apart from being a firefighter, part of my current role is peer support and community

safety. I can't remember when I started with Amber Community, but Robin Eaton presented to the CFA about the organisation, and from there our journey began.

Like most people, Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program participants rarely realise that the big red truck turns up to road incidences. When the participant says 'no one else was involved', I can say, "I, the firefighter was." The change on their faces when they realise that essential service personnel were not even considered as impacted by their behaviour is very clear. There is a moment of clarity and what appears to be shame/remorse. So, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to share a view from an essential service volunteer's perspective. Like all of us involved, I hope that we somehow make a difference.

My focus has changed since the beginning as I was unsure of what I could and couldn't say. With direction from the supportive facilitators, I have continued to evolve my approach and am closer to what I think works. I ask questions that hang in the air and try to challenge the participants whilst honouring the safe place that the facilitator provides.

Reminding people that what we see and do is a direct result of their decisions is very powerful. I listen carefully to the stories of the participants, and depending on their words and attitude, I share from my experiences to make it as real as possible by impacting

their sensitivities. It's somewhat of a shock tactic to remind them that they are the reason every essential service worker turned up on the day.

Thank you Amber Community, for being a voice of reason for road safety. Thank you for continuing your work during such trying times. Thank you for understanding that victims need a voice to share their stories and for all you do in support and education. Thank you for the great simple paperwork that we can hand out at a crash and beyond. Thank you for ensuring essential service personnel are considered and included in a collective attempt to improve road safety for all.

In the future, it would be fantastic if Amber Community were financially supported to educate every new driver, so they are aware of the impact of their decisions after hearing the real voices of people affected by road trauma. With this in mind, I look forward to watching Amber Community continue to grow and do what they do best.

Shine a Light on Road Safety

In May, we celebrated our 9th annual Shine a Light on Road Safety campaign.



Thousands supported the campaign, sharing messages with their family and friends on social media, walking with us at Albert Park Lake, and donating funds to support our work.

Together, we raised more than \$56,000 to fund information, counselling and support for people who have experienced road trauma, and our life-saving road safety education and advocacy programs. What an amazing effort!

The walk was supported by Minister Ben Carroll, Joe Calafiore, CEO Transport Accident Commission, (TAC) and David Clayton Acting

Commissioner of Road Policing. We acknowledge and thank our sponsors, Transurban, Narva, and EastLink, along with our legal partners, Maurice Blackburn, Slater + Gordon, Henry Carus + Associates and Polaris. We are very grateful for the support we receive throughout the year and for this special event. Also, the TAC for their support.

Maeve Luu was our 2022 Shine a Light on Road Safety ambassador. 16-year-old Maeve Luu's world changed forever on 6 June 2016. Her father, Louis Luu, was out training for the Melbourne Marathon when a drunk driver hit him. As a result, Louis has a permanent acquired brain injury.

Maeve shared her story to shine a light on the impacts of road trauma, including the words:

"I want everyone to think about their children and use their love for them as a strong catalyst for change. Because this awareness of how road trauma impacts children will hopefully stop more children from losing a loved one."

Maeve's story is sadly too familiar. More than 7,000 Victorians are seriously injured or bereaved by road trauma each year. The impact on those directly involved and the ripple effect on those around them is often life-changing and ongoing. Every journey should be a safe one – and that is why we will continue to Shine a Light on Road Safety.

Thank you to everyone who supports this important campaign.



Campaign Highlights

Nine years of Shine a Light on Road Safety

Raised more than \$56,000 for vital road trauma prevention and support

More than 700 people walked together at Albert Park Lake, Melbourne

More than 100,000 people shared the campaign on social media

More than one million people reached via news stories

2023 will mark 10 years of Shining a Light on Road Safety. Please join us again at Albert Park Lake on Sunday 7 May.



Time for Remembering

"Time for Remembering gives the community a safe space to come together to honour loved ones and connect with others who have been impacted by road trauma."

— Bernadette Nugent, CEO

Time for Remembering is a special occasion to come together to commemorate loved ones lost and people injured on our roads, give thanks for those who have survived, and pay tribute to all who work tirelessly to reduce the road toll. Time for Remembering is held on the third Sunday in November – the United Nations' World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

The 2021 ceremony was our 21st and due to COVID-19 restrictions, and with the assistance of Jasper Pictures, we held the service online. Despite being unable to hold the event at Queen's Hall, Parliament House, we received extremely positive feedback, including feedback from someone with a disability and people from regional Victoria who usually cannot attend. This has prompted us to consider our options of having a hybrid event in the future.

The ceremony was opened by Xander Alpherts, Chair of Amber Community, and the Hon Ben Carroll MP, Minister for Roads and Road Safety, who shared a message from the Victorian Government.

Tarli Bogtstra shared her story about sustaining serious injuries in a road crash whilst holidaying with friends in the Northern Territory in June 2005. Tarli tries to look at every day as a challenge and pushes herself to achieve what others thought was impossible: driving a car, running, travelling. Tarli can do these things now.

"The crash has had a dramatic impact on my life. But if my story can prevent road trauma from affecting just one other family, I will feel something positive has come from it."

Families lit candles of remembrance as the names of lost loved ones were acknowledged. It was poignant to see everyone lighting their candles and holding up photos and other mementoes.

We thank everyone who contributed to this special event – sharing the names and photos of their loved ones – and to all our guest contributors, including Jeanette Suhr OAM; Irma Turner; Robyn Greening; Senior Sargent Brad Peters, Victoria Police; Joe Calafiore, CEO, the Transport Accident Commission (TAC); Assistant Commissioner Glenn Weir, Victoria Police; Leanne Hyndman, Manager, Counselling and Support Services, Amber Community; and Stuart Le Grand, Director, Amber Community.

We warmly thank the choir, Organised Water, and harpist Michael Johnson for their beautiful music. We are very grateful to the TAC for their ongoing support.



Board Members



Xander Alpherts
Chairman



Mark Musgrave
Deputy Chairman



Johan Meyer
Treasurer



Richard Watkins
Secretary/Public Office



Robin Bowerman
Board Member



Nadine Goldsmith
Board Member



Sue Hansford
Board Member



Stuart LeGrand
Board Member



Merryn Wallace
Board Member

Subcommittees

Financial and Risk Committee

The Financial and Risk Management subcommittee made up of directors and CEO meets every two months to discuss the organisation’s financial management and any risks identified that could cause issues impacting on Amber Community’s service delivery and financial security. Members: Johan Meyer (Chair), Xander Alpherts, Mark Musgrave, Merryn Wallace, Bernadette Nugent.

Evaluation and Research Committee

Work currently being addressed as part of the evaluation and research committee is ongoing with placements of Master of Social Work Students with Melbourne University. Students have been working with Associate Professor David Rose in evaluating the Driving – Better Choices program, delivered through Dhurringile prison. Professor Lou Harms has been working with students looking

into the experience of our lived experience volunteer speakers on themselves and others, and now conducting an impact and outcomes evaluation on the RTAS program. We have been highly privileged to have the ongoing expertise of Lou Harms, Belinda Clarke, Samantha Barker, Jennie Oxley, and Richard Watkins in the directions of evaluation and research. This input assists in the evidence needed behind what we do and the efficacy of all our work.





Treasurer's Report

Financial Year Ending 30 June 2022

The 2022 financial year can be described as the year of change and revitalisation after a two-year period plagued by interruptions and impacted by lockdowns.

Following the strong financial performance of 2021, the organisation reinvested the surplus from that year back into its services offered to our community. These initiatives included investment into our people who serve so tirelessly, our branding to align us closer to the community we serve and our facilities to bring it to the same quality as our service offering in this post-COVID world.

Amber Community recorded income of \$1,222,408 compared to last year of \$1,506,343 a decrease of 18.8 per cent, noting that if the Government Assistance is excluded, revenues were up 12.5 per cent largely driven by the education fees and community fundraising efforts. The introduction of prison programs, as well as the ongoing face-to-face Road Trauma Awareness Seminar (RTAS) program being adapted to an online platform, has allowed for greater reach resulting in an additional \$48,049 in revenue.

Corporate memberships, and community fundraising growth also contributed an additional \$79,228 to the overall revenue position.

Operating expenses totalled \$1,348,468 compared with last year of \$1,392,163, a decrease of 3 per cent with savings occurring in most categories. Despite the costs savings year on year, the organisation posted a deficit of \$126,060 compared to the surplus of \$114,180 the year before, reflecting the reinvestment of the surplus into our growth initiatives.

Salaries and wages increased by \$57,325 from last year as a result of the investment in counselling resources to meet additional demand and marketing awareness that drove additional fundraising and community support. The continued investment in our brand and profile initiatives resulted in the organisation being able to expand its services with more focus on preventative initiatives that bring about attitude and behavioural change in drivers particularly as Victoria opened up and people began moving freely on our roads again. As traffic increased on our roads, so did the fatalities. The number of lives lost on our roads during the past 12 months to 30 June 2022 increased from 203 to 248, highlighting that the need is greater than ever to make a substantial impact.

Our most recent funding agreement with the Transport

Accident Commission (TAC) concluded on 30 June 2022 and I am pleased to report that we have worked hand in glove with the TAC to obtain a further three years of funding support running from July 2022 to June 2025. Having this support from the TAC provides the foundation for our counselling services that so many rely upon.

Our balance sheet at 30 June 2022 remains strong with total members equity of \$380,227. Cash at bank at 30 June 2022 was \$632,611 and total assets were \$697,184. Liabilities were \$316,957, mainly made up of employee related liabilities such as annual leave and long service leave provisions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our strategic partners for their ongoing support. Without your financial contributions, it would not be possible to provide the counselling and support to those impacted by road trauma. Finally, I would also like to thank Theresa Cocking (Accountant), LDAssurance (Auditor), Bernadette Nugent (CEO), our staff, volunteers, Finance and Risk Committee and fellow board members for your tireless contribution and look forward to your ongoing support over the coming year.

Johan Meyer

Treasurer

Auditor's Report

Report of the independent auditor on the summary financial statements to the members of Amber Community Incorporated

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprises of the summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the summary statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows are derived from the audited financial report of Amber Community Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2022. We expressed an unmodified auditor's opinion on that financial report in our report dated 12 October 2022.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards for the financial report. Reading the summary

financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of Amber Community Incorporated.

Board members' responsibility for the financial report

The members of the board are responsible for the preparation of a summary of the audited financial report in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations).

Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of Amber Community Incorporated based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

Auditor's opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of Amber Community Incorporated

for the year ended 30 June 2022 are consistent, in all material aspects, with the financial report from which it was derived. For a better understanding of the scope of the audit, this auditor's report should be read in conjunction with our audit report on the financial report.

**LDAssurance
Chartered Accountants**

Stephen O'Kane

**Stephen O'Kane
Partner**

Dated: 12 October 2022



Financial Report

Income	2022	2021
Grants	566,074	594,930
Fees and charges	447,302	399,253
Fundraising	117,659	80,821
Donations	87,920	41,754
Interest	3,453	7,229
Government assistance	-	382,356
Total	1,222,408	1,506,343

Expenses	2022	2021
Advertising, branding and business development	(804)	(470)
Amortisation - right-of-use assets	(49,710)	(49,710)
Audit fees	(6,000)	(5,800)
Bank charges	(6,082)	(5,233)
Cleaning expenses	(2,149)	(1,551)
Client Support Projects	(7,017)	(37,339)
Depreciation	(8,480)	(11,517)
Education venue hire	(9,944)	(8,224)
Entertainment and gifts	(1,132)	(1,399)
Fundraising expenses and commissions	(10,559)	(14,759)
HR recruitment, meeting and other expenses	(11,913)	(20,363)
Insurance	(10,987)	(8,056)
Interest expense	(994)	(2,985)
Minor equipment, service and maintenance	(23,722)	(23,033)
Office and business consultancy expenses	(7,386)	(11,625)
Office rent, rates and body corporate fees	(11,960)	(7,989)
Postage and stationery	(6,075)	(9,047)
Rebranding	(41,484)	(87,751)
Salaries and wages	(983,841)	(926,516)
Superannuation	(92,648)	(78,027)
Support groups and memberships	(2,863)	(2,862)
Telephone and communication	(10,145)	(24,502)
Time of Remembering	(8,601)	(11,635)
Training and development	(2,400)	(17,905)
Travel, accommodation, parking and motor vehicle expenses	(7,287)	(4,002)
Utilities and permits	(2,069)	(2,834)
Volunteer expenses	(1,928)	(1,576)
WorkCover	(20,288)	(15,453)
Total	(1,348,468)	(1,392,163)

Profit/(loss) for the year	(126,060)	114,180
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	(126,060)	114,180

Current Assets	2022	2021
Cash and cash equivalents	632,611	794,633
Trade and other receivables	33,634	13,086
Other assets	10,339	17,209
Total current assets	676,584	824,928

Non-Current Assets	2022	2021
Property, plant and equipment	13,866	22,346
Right-of-use assets	6,734	56,444
Total non-current assets	20,600	78,790
Total assets	697,184	903,718

Liabilities	2022	2021
Trade and other payables	84,643	140,151
Lease liabilities	3,108	51,614
Employee benefits	175,101	171,272
Other financial liabilities	39,903	21,273
Total current liabilities	302,755	384,310

Non-Current Liabilities	2022	2021
Lease liabilities	3,626	6,734
Employee benefit	10,576	6,387
Total non-current liabilities	14,202	13,121
Total liabilities	316,957	397,431
Net assets	380,227	506,287

Equity	2022	2021
Retained earnings	380,227	506,287
Total equity	380,227	506,287

Supporters

We are very grateful to the Transport Accident Commission who have supported our services since 1999.

We thank our generous supporters who raise funds and awareness to help us reduce the impact and incidence of road trauma. We are especially grateful to those who have supported our work in memory of a loved one – your kindness and generosity has touched the lives of many others.

- ABC Ballarat local Radio

ABC Horsham Radio

ABC Shepparton & Goulburn Murray

Acton Print

Adam Roddick

Ambulance Victoria

Amy Gillett Foundation

Anne Wicking Consulting

Archie Graham Community Centre, Warrnambool

Australasian College of Road Safety

Azem Elmaz – People Supporting People

Belinda Clark

Budget, Blackburn

Bunnings Nunawading

City of Ballarat

City of Greater Geelong

City of Melbourne

City of Whitehorse

Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre

Country Fire Authority

David Bunn

Deng T Yong Deng and Jessica McArdle, Settlement and Community Project Workers, Migrant Resource Centre, St Albans Department of Justice and Community Safety

Dhurringile Prison
- Dr Rob Gordon, Clinical Psychologist

Eastern Hub Community Center Geelong

Foundstone Advisory

Frank Amato Photography

Frankston Arts Centre

Gen u Geelong

Greater Shepparton City Council

Hume City Council

Industrie & co

ISSR – Research and Evaluation

Jennie Oxley, MUARC

Jim Giddings, Chairman, Road Safe Westgate Community Road Safety Council

Leongatha and District Community Foundation

Melbourne Fire Brigade

Metec

Moonee Valley City Council

National Road Safety Partnership Program

Research and Evaluation sub committee Melbourne University, Professor Lou Harms and David Rose

Road Trauma Support WA

Road2Zero Steering Committee, Melton City Council

Rotary Club of Bayside Geelong

Rotary Club of Geelong
- Samantha Barker, Institute for Safety Compensation and Recovery Research

Secon Freight Logistics

Shepparton News

Sophie Owen, Ruby Palmer-Tanner from Insync Research and Evaluation

South East REM

South Gippsland Shire Council

Stan Winford, Centre for Innovative justice, RMIT University

Stuart Newstead, MUARC

Tamer Sahin, North West Metro Region, Department of Justice and Community Safety

The Circle at Coles (Cnr Maude and Vaughan Streets) Shepparton

Tomorrow Agency

Triple J Hack

Victoria State Emergency Service – Peer Support

Victorian Transport Association

Volunteering Geelong

Volunteers Victoria

Warrnambool City Council

Wimmera Mail Times

Wodonga TAFE

Workplace Health and Safety Show

Yarran Dheran Nature Reserve

Youth Justice

Supporters — Our major donors and community fundraisers

- Adrian Eiffert, walking for Jye Eiffert
- Andrea Korvin in loving memory of Marc
- Belinda Dowel and family in loving memory of Brandon Dowel
- Carey, Michelle & Luis McLaren in loving memory of Lachlan
- Eva Szymanski in loving memory of Ben
- Family and friends in memory of Jorydn Close
- Jarney Newey
- Katrin McMahon in loving memory of Rose Mary McMahon
- Louise Studley, in loving memory of my daughter Holly Studley

- Secon for a safer road network system and keeping the Community safe
- Shae Plowman, in loving memory of Colleen
- The Marchesin family in loving memory of Jack and Claude
- Vaughan Jones

Our road safety partners and supporters

- Community Correctional Services
- Department of Justice
- Department of Transport
- Magistrates’ Court of Victoria
- The Transport Accident Commission

- The Victorian Government
- VicRoads
- Victoria Police
- Victoria State Emergency Services

Our major corporate partners

- EastLink
- Henry Carus + Associates Lawyers
- Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
- Narva
- Polaris Lawyers
- Slater + Gordon Lawyers
- Transurban





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