“empower for positive change”

Living the Dream Foundation
Annual Report 2017
About Us:

Living the Dream Foundation was established in May 2008 to provide a positive response to the needs of at risk, disadvantage and marginalised young people. Living the Dream Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation based in Melbourne’s south.

The Foundation’s mission is to provide personal development opportunities for disadvantaged young people through high quality mentoring, wellbeing and sport programs. Our programs apply a mentoring philosophy that values the strengths and uniqueness of each young person, with the aim of empowering them to see their true potential in health, education and relationships and ultimately fulfill their dreams.

The Foundation’s encourages young people to create necessary change in their lives, to break stereotypes, create awareness on present and arising issues and needs of young people today. Living the Dream Foundation creates a place for young people where they can meet, socialise, and participate in the programs that provide learning opportunities to further their personal, well-being, academic, athletic and career development. Living the Dream Foundation values diversity in its young people, whether that diversity is expressed by disability, sexual orientation, gender, culture, race, belief or age.

Our programs are built on a foundation of trust and personal understanding. We identify the strengths, weakness and limitations of each individual and design our programs to address their needs.

Our holistic approach addresses the physical, mental and social wellbeing needs of the participant. Our programs combine engagement in sport and fitness with mentoring to enable young people to gain a clearer sense of purpose and direction in life.

Richard Weiss CEO
Our Vision is that all young people should have the opportunity to develop a strong sense of purpose, values and belonging.

Member Care – celebrating friendships and cultural diversity

Our Mission is to equip and empower young people to make positive change in their lives and to provide the personal development opportunities to promote their development.
Message from our CEO

I like to acknowledge and thank the Board of the Living the Dream Foundation for its continuous support and assistance during the year to assure the organizational focus on good governance and service remains the focus.

As an organization we have been privileged to work closely with our clients, parents, carers, teachers and community organizations delivering the services that meet the needs of disadvantaged youth in our community. Witnessing young people engaging in our programs and developing a strong sense of purpose, values and belonging reinforces for me why the organization exists.

The success of our programs is in the relationships we build with our clients. For example, seeing a young asylum seeker positively integrate into the Australia society is a success. To see a young person with a disability acquire confidence and knowledge in how to exercise and becoming more independent is a success. To see youth at risk re-engaging with the academic institutions to pursue completion of VCAL or VCE is a success. Their success is the measure of our success.

Living the Dream Foundation exists on the principle of solidarity providing a caring and empathy driven environment where young people are empowered to make positive changes in their lives and are equipped to overcome the adversity in their lives.

I like to thank the contributing funding partners who made the facilitation of our programs possible. Thank you for your generous financial support during this year.

I like to invite you to take the time and read more about the work we did in the 2017 Annual Report and hope this will inspire each one of you to identify how you can personally contribute to the transformation of your community and be part of creating or assisting in positive change in the lives of the most vulnerable young people in your community.

Richard Weiss
CEO
President’s Acknowledgement

This has been a challenging yet rewarding year for Living the Dream Foundation. We continue to be indebted to our CEO Richard Weiss for his tireless dedication to ensuring the success of the organisation in fulfilling its goals to serve the community.

Challenges have come from the evolving demand for services and from the ongoing difficulties in fundraising. I encourage you to read about our responses to these challenges and our successes this year outlined in this report.

I wish to briefly outline some of the organisational achievements, which have occurred this year in addition to those client-based activities:

• Developed a new Website including implementation of online giving capability and introduced a new LTDF logo design.
• Reviewed and implemented a range of Governance and Policies including up to date Working with Children policies and procedures.
• Undertook a range of administrative changes following a board review covering banking, insurance cover, and documentation to ensure best practice.
• Implemented a common repository for LTDF documents and made Annual Report and Policy and Procedure documents publicly available on the website.
• Undertook a funding application program with tracking.

I thank the Board for their contribution in making these improvements possible and for continued support in providing wisdom and guidance.

Finally, I wish to thank Richard Weiss again for his unwavering commitment to LTDF clients in order to deliver them powerful life changing outcomes.

Paul Dennis
President
Our Community Programs

*Living the Dream Foundation values diversity in its young people, whether that diversity is expressed by culture, race, belief, age, sexual orientation, gender, or disability and identifies the need to work as a team while valuing each individual.*

**Member Care**

- Consulting with our Members on a weekly basis to ensure their needs and expectations are met and adding value to their purpose.
- Offering every Member the opportunity to identify and set their goals, objectives and aspirations and share about their health challenges and struggles.
- Supporting our Members through identifying the right pathways towards overcoming adversity.
- Providing assistance to our Members with personal or complex issues by finding access to appropriate community counseling and/or legal aid.

**Wellbeing Engagement**

- Facilitating group and one on one fitness sessions according to the individual’s needs.
- Enabling young people to establish healthy habits and routines in day-to-day life through free access to weekly regular training sessions.
- Delivering a range of free access to learning and development resources, and activities that are relevant to our Members’ wellbeing needs.
- Using Educational Training Videos to enhance learning, physical health and promotion of active involvement in the community events.
- Assuring wellbeing activities are innovative, effective and engaging.
- Promoting healthy culture, importance of regular physical activity and healthy diet.

**Mentoring**

- Facilitating group and one on one mentoring sessions.
- Building closer relationships with and understanding of our Members’ day-to-day life needs and how to overcome adversity.
- Helping young people to identify the limitations and risk factors associated with their lifestyle and the choices they make.
- Provide our Members with opportunities to learn about their personal intellects, behaviours and interests and pursue them with measurable outcomes.

“empower for positive change”
Disability

As part of a strategy review, the Living the Dream Foundation envisioned working more closely with the disability community and improving awareness of the services we provide and benefits of participation in our programs. Through the study ‘Dropping of the Edge’ [https://dote.org.au](https://dote.org.au) Frankston region was recognized as one of the most disadvantaged suburbs examined on the dominant characteristics such as disability, child maltreatment, low family income, unemployment, long term unemployment, and criminal convictions. During the past year we have conducted consultations in the Frankston area with the parents and friends whose children are living with the intellectual and physical disabilities to discuss and acquire insight on their concerns and needs relating to their children’s wellbeing needs.

Parents expressed the following concerns:
A need for more specialized services to work with their children.
Creating an access to a regular weekly personalized coaching and positive training environment.
Enhanced participation in fitness/sport related activities.
Many parents are single parents, have mental health issues, and/or are on a low income with limited financial capacity.
Children becoming over weight, living sedentary lifestyle, poor motivation, and a lack of education in how to keep the body healthy and safe during training.
Provide assistance (Capacity Building) to educate children how to establish healthy habits and routines in day-to-day life so when they reach adulthood they can become less dependent on assistance and have the capacity and knowledge to stay active, safe and healthy.

Through the consultations conducted and identification of the concerns raised by the parents and friends we have changed our approach by providing not just engagement in the fitness/sport activities but also offer Member Care where each participant is supported to identify, set and reach their personal set goals, objectives and aspirations. They are supported and educated to improve their skills and enhance their knowledge to increase individual independence and to feel socially connected/able to access support with confidence when they need it and to develop capacity to be actively engaged in the community.

We are now successfully implementing the Wellbeing Engagement program and Member Care for 9 individuals aged 12 - 23 offering a positive and professional environment where the individuals with special needs are assisted in the most effective way and where we are working towards minimizing some of the parental concerns. The program beneficiaries we are working with are those with the intellectual disabilities, hemiplegic migraines, Down syndrome, hearing impaired, autism and mental health issues.
We have been encouraged to see parents whose children take part in the program are connecting us with the community group organizations such as Department of Human Services Frankston and other community parents allowing us to establish additional new contacts creating greater awareness of the services we provide, promoting the work of the Living the Dream Foundation and assisting in the recruitment of possible new beneficiaries to the program.

**Success Story:**

*Ben is 20 years old with Down syndrome. Ben had a road accident few years ago and sustained serious injuries after being hit by a traveling car at 80kph. Ben is now recovering well from the physical injuries sustained but has been diagnosed with the PTSD. When Richard Weiss, CEO of the Living the Dream Foundation, found out that Ben was having anxiety issues, and refusing to leave the house Richard offered to travel to our home, 25km away, to try and assist Ben with his recovery. This started out as exercise and games in the backyard and these initial sessions have given Ben the motivation to engage with the programs offered by the Living the Dream Foundation on a weekly basis. (Chris Watts, father)*
Enabling individuals to flourish in their lives and success stories such as Ben’s only strengthens the importance of the organization’s presence in the community and the service we want other community members to experience.

Case Story:

Lynton, provided this feedback on his participation -

“The Wellbeing program is empowering me to do more things, making me feel better and changing my active life. I am now able to get out of bed in the morning and I am feeling I am doing something with my life.”
Asylum Seekers

This is our 4th year working with the asylum seekers from the Dandenong area. Weekly provision of fitness/sport activities has allowed 20 young asylum seeker men engage in the Wellbeing Program and through the Member Care build stronger relationships where personal matters have been discussed and necessary supports provided according to the individual’s needs.

While working with the asylum seekers over the past 12 months we began to observe changes in their life priorities due to the change of their visa status. The newly offered visas issued by the government have created employement opportunities for the asylum seekers and they are now contributing to the Australian economy and also providing financial assistance to their families overseas. While the employment opportunities have created a significant financial assistance to the asylum seekers but they also began to experience new challenges in their lives as the support previously received from the community agencies, where the asylum seekers were assigned by the immigration authorities, no longer exists.

Through our Member Care, we have found that many asylum seekers are now experiencing longer working hours, not enough sleep, difficult working conditions, stress, issues providing ongoing financial support to their families overseas, increased isolation in Australian society, expensive legal assistance, feeling unhealthy, limited participation in maintaining or improving their physical health and some are beginning to show signs of depression.

Case Study:
Najib, I met this young man during a one-night visit to one of the asylum seekers who participates in our programs. Najib began to share with me his struggles with life due to the work injury he sustained 2 years ago, surgery and the process of the work cover insurance claim. He told a heartbreaking story of struggles and frustrations that has cost him his marriage, loss of employment, and depression. Listening to young men who express loss of their sense of purpose and belonging is devastating however we are able to listen and respond through the role the Living the Dream Foundations plays in the asylum seeker community.

“Living the Dream Foundation exists on the principle of solidarity, providing a caring and empathy environment offering opportunities for individual change through Member Care leading to a better quality of life.”
Due to these characteristics we are experiencing shift from asylum seekers being less engaged in the fitness/sport related activities to more need for Member Care.

“Weekly Member Care allows young men to discuss, identify and raise any personal concerns and needs and develop a psychological resilience, an ability to successfully adapt, to identify pathways, and seek professional assistance helping them to positively assimilate into Australian society and work towards overcoming personal adversity they might be experiencing in their lives.”

Our Member Care offers weekly home visits, calls and small or large gatherings where we are able to interact not just with our members but also meet new asylum seekers from the community and hear their life stories. Building relationships and trust through Member Care has given us greater understanding on how they are integrating into Australian society, to learn about their needs/concerns and allow asylum seekers to feel valued, respected, acknowledged and supported.

“I have never seen anyone who embraces my culture and my people the way Richard has. He is different person compared to others who just watch us from a distance but he engages in our lives just like all Afghans do”

The Wellbeing Engagement offers weekly access to the training environment and activities for the asylum seekers such as wrestling, strength and conditioning, soccer, swimming, running and rehabilitation activities in different locations. There has been increase of numbers from 12 to 20-asylum seeker men aged 18+ engaging in the Wellbeing Program and Member Care and we connected with around 100 asylum seekers during the year. We are also engaging in discussions with other organizations in regard to their concerns identified while working with their young asylum seekers and who are interested to know more about our services we provide.
Success Story:
Roshan, became involved in the program 2 years ago. Roshan attends 1 or 2 times per week to learn about wrestling and staying fit. He really enjoys the program but is not always able to attend due to work. Through the Member Care Roshan has identified that to be successful in Australia he must change some things he does and work towards accomplishing his personal goals. Roshan is now taking regular English classes, has recently resigned from his work, and in July will be taking a short course on becoming a driving instructor that will offer him employment flexibility when he will begin to study full time.

The success of our programs relies on providing weekly engagement, best care and support that allows for positive integration of the asylum seekers into the Australian society, increasing their capacity to be socially and economically active in their community and feeling supported when experiencing adversity in their lives.

2017 Asylum Seeker - Engagement Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Management</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Care</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Engagement</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>154</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Annual Hours</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success Story:
In 2017, 8 asylum seekers participated in the weekly 5’Men Mini-Soccer tournament held in Dandenong. The team of young asylum seekers demonstrated to most advance soccer skills and team cohesion winning 16 matches out of 16 matches. Unfortunately the team was eliminated in the semifinals but the experience and brotherhood established during this tournament has been identified as the most positive personal development experience for all.

With the previous engagement of the asylum seekers in the Mini-Soccer tournament and its success we have entered another 5’Men Mini-Soccer tournament.

“I always played soccer in Afghanistan and when I came to Australia I started to attend the wrestling and soccer program offered by the Living the Dream Foundation. Wrestling is very hard sport and taught me lessons on how to have strong morals even when life is difficult” (Javid)
Youth

We have maintained the facilitation of the Wellbeing Program to the Connect Program students from McClelland College. The Connect Program works with young men and women who are experiencing difficulties engaging in the mainstream school setting and have experienced significant trauma in their lives, and have issues with behaviours or intellectual processing difficulties.

**Success Story:**
An important part of the CONNECT Program is to provide students with activities and experiences that build their self-esteem and character, giving them tools to help make the right choices in the future so they are able to reach their full potential. Weekly visits to the Wellbeing Engagement Program facilitated by the Living the Dream Foundation have provided students with not only a positive experience but also the chance to interact with Richard who has become a positive role model in their lives. (Danielle Harry, Flexible Learning Coordinator, McClelland College)

The facilitation of the Wellbeing Program 1 hour per week allowed 8 young people to engage in fun based activities such as soccer, acrobatics and tag wrestling. The flexible nature of the program allowed all youth to connect well with the program facilitator and develop a strong relationship that led to provision of Mentoring assistance to the Connect Program at McClelland College for a total of 14 students.

It is important to understand that many young people who are engaged in the Wellbeing and Mentoring Programs have personal challenges, behavioral issues, are disengaged from the mainstream curriculum, live precarious lives, and have difficulties trusting others for various reasons. To develop supportive, lasting and trusting relationships with students plays a critical role in the development of a successful youth program where young people are assisted, cared for and supported to overcome personal adversity in their life.

**2017 Youth Engagement, Mentoring & Contact Clients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McClelland Engagement</th>
<th>McClelland Mentoring</th>
<th>McClelland Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Success Study:
Cam, is a 13 years old, very intelligent young adolescent with social skills that are different compared to the social skills we demonstrate in our lives with others. Cam has different outlook on things, people, how society operates, how he communicates with others and how others see him. Cam has developed positive relationships with the program facilitator enhancing Cam’s social skills that have not been previously observed with others and the teachers.

The success of the program strongly relies on the partnership established between Living the Dream Foundation and McClelland College where we had a clear understanding of the Connect Program goals and objectives. Through the understanding of these goals and objectives the facilitation of the Wellbeing Engagement and Mentoring offered significant benefits to the participating youth.

The teachers describe these benefits:

Wellbeing Program

• Gives opportunities for the program facilitator, teachers and youths to interact in a fun and safe environment.
• Enables youths to develop skills in building healthy relationships.
• Provides youths with a controlled environment in which they can release their emotions through activities such as acrobatics, fitness, tag wrestling, and soccer.
• Flexible approach to each session according to the youth’s emotional state.

Mentoring Program

• Engage with a young person through the pursuit of common interests.
• Provides at risk young person with non-judgmental support.
• Provide young person with strategies for impulse control.
• Provide support for young person in learning environment.
• Support with de-escalation of students.
• Provide students with strategies for emotional and behavior management.
"I really enjoy being part of the Wellbeing program where I am able to use the acrobatics equipment to keep physically active for 1 hour and interact with the other students and program facilitator in a positive environment"

(Brandon, 14 year old)

### 2017 Youth - Engagement Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
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<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Engagement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Annual Hours</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
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Funding

LTDF would like to acknowledge the funding partners who have greatly contributed to the success of the programs we have delivered in 2017 and the Commonwealth Bank Grant 3 years grant support of $10,000 per year starting from 2018.

- Matana Foundation
- Commonwealth Bank Community Fund
- Slater & Gordon, managed by Australian Communities Foundation
- Leith Turst
- Andrews Foundation
- GWA Griffiths

During the past year we have submitted 31 grant funding requests totaling to $465,950 with the success rate below 10% with the total amount of $40,000 received.

Re-purposed grants totaling to $70,000 from GWA Griffiths and Andrews Foundation have also greatly contributed to the annual operation and successful delivery of the programs in 2017. We wish to especially thank these Foundations for their support in allowing grants to be re-purposed and hence facilitation of our ongoing work.

We were also successful with the Commonwealth Bank community ‘Youth’ grant of $30,000 to be spread over 3 years and Slater & Gordon “Disability – Short term project’ grant of $10,000. Both of these grants will hugely add value to the provision of the services we offer.
# Financial Accounts

**Living The Dream Foundation Inc. Incorporated Association No. A0056020M**

Financial Statements Prepared for the Board, Granting Organisations and Consumer Affairs Victoria
Income & Expenditure Statement For Year Ended 30 June 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants - Trusts and Foundations</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and Donations</td>
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<td>$4,919</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program fees</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$20,837</td>
<td>$4,919</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program delivery costs</td>
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<td>Program development and management costs</td>
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<td>Marketing and fundraising costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lease of premises and utilities costs</td>
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<td>Administration and office costs</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)</strong></td>
<td>-$17,344</td>
<td>-$33,410</td>
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FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES

## Reconciliation of Cash Flow

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<tr>
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<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Bank Balance @ 1 July 2016</strong></td>
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<td>$93,232</td>
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**Add**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue from Ordinary Activities</td>
<td>$20,837</td>
<td>$4,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less non Cash Revenue Reported</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cash Inflow</strong></td>
<td>$20,837</td>
<td>$4,919</td>
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**Less**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses from Ordinary Activities</td>
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<td>-$38,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Purchased</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>GST On Expenses</td>
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<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cash outflow</strong></td>
<td>-$38,182</td>
<td>-$38,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing Bank Balance @ 30 June 2017</strong></td>
<td>$42,476</td>
<td>$59,821</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash at Bank</td>
<td>$42,476</td>
<td>$59,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GST Refundable (Annual GST Return)</td>
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<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$42,476</td>
<td>$59,987</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non Current Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$19,259</td>
<td>$19,259</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
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Leadership and Governance

The Board of Management and CEO are highly committed to strong governance practices and financial management in all aspects of program administration and delivery. The Foundation is supported by a Board who offer a wide range of skills and experience:

Paul Dennis B.Sc (Hons.) – Chairman
Paul retired from a director role and senior leadership team member at Hewlett-Packard Australia in 2005 and operated his own business until 2012. He has extensive experience in the mining, IT and wine industries. He has served as a volunteer at several not-for-profit organisations including Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) and was a Board member of the Micah Law Foundation (now retired).

Gus Barda BSc, MBA, LLb. - Treasurer
Gus has recently retired from his position as an Executive Director at Telstra after a career spanning 37 years. Over this time, he has held a number of leadership positions in Strategy and Operational Line management. Gus has undertaken a number of volunteer activities including 2 years as a volunteer at the Springvale Community Legal Centre and one year as a commissioned Independent Visitor to Victoria’s Juvenile Detention Centres.

Don Juniper B.Sc.(Hons.), Dip. T. (P), M.Ed. - Secretary
Don works at Deakin University in the School of Education where he is engaged in Pre Service Teacher preparation both on campus, and on-site, in schools. Formerly he was a principal and teacher in Victorian government schools. In 2011 Don was appointed by the Governor-in-Council as a Community Visitor for the Department of Justice [Office of the Public Advocate] and for whom he visits the residents in Victorian disability accommodation services to ensure they are being cared for and supported with dignity and respect, and to identify any issues of concern.
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