



2021 Annual Report



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3. Auditor's Financial Report

The Auditor's Financial Report can be downloaded from The Bower website via the listed documents for this year's AGM: <http://bower.org.au/annual-report/>

1. The Bower Board of Directors

1.1 Chairperson's Report

Doing Our Part Locally

The past year we have seen many challenges to society at a global level, from the COVID pandemic to the Glasgow COP26 Climate negotiations, plus many climate related natural disasters. In Sydney, as in many other parts of the world, many have found it hard economically and physically to make ends meet. The Bower's House to Home and HomeKeeper programs have played an important bridge to assist those most in need by outfitting emergency and more permanent housing for members of our community experiencing homelessness, doing it tough, and survivors of domestic violence. We are increasing our connection with organisations working across this spectrum.

The Bower is uniquely positioned to work at the intersection of social, environmental, and waste reduction issues. These have never been more needed.

Notably over the past year we have had adapted operations to a second wave of COVID. Many courses and shop sales were suspended but are now restarting. Where plausible we have made available online courses and videos. Now at the end of the year operations are back to full capacity with waiting lists including the workshops at our Redfern and Parramatta hubs.

We welcomed our new GM in August, Daphne Drew, who has assisted us greatly transitioning our operations through COVID, and in the lead up to the relocation from our Marrickville HQ to larger premises at Summer Hill. With the DA now approved we will move from Addison Road Community Centre in April 2022.



We wish to thank a for their valuable contributions - the previous GM Guido Verbist for his seven years of service to grow The Bower in organisational capacity; our Interim GM Terry Chenery; and our soon to retire Programs Manager Louise Grace who has been a cornerstone of the Bower 365 days a year.

The board over the past year played a more active role due to the above key changes:

- Utilising external Human Resources consultants, we have modernised all the Bower's HR procedures, job descriptions, reviewed award wages, and updated the Bower HR manual.
- For the second concurrent year we have a healthy financial report and have further built-up reserves despite the many variables the organisation has faced.
- Following a long consultation period with staff members we and the Senior Management Team have agreed the 2022-27 five-year Strategic Plan which is presented to the AGM. The plan has two phases 2022 - the relocation and integration of our work into Summer Hill

(while maintaining our current supporters) and the future development of The Bower where many of our workshops and programs can be undertaken under the one roof 7 days a week. The 2022-27 Bower Business Plan will be presented to the 2023 AGM.

- The Bower board has been a steady hand at the helm and thank you to all current board members for their time, skills, and commitment. The board's Strategic Sub-Committees have assisted with the relocation, legal matters, fundraising strategy, and strategic planning – all of which have continued efficiently.

The Bower has been cited as an inspiration to many with practical solutions and education initiatives to assist our membership, the wider community, those in need, those seeking upcycled and pre-loved goods and consciously reducing waste. We are an example of a better way for society to do things - join us.

Michelle Sheather
Board Chairperson



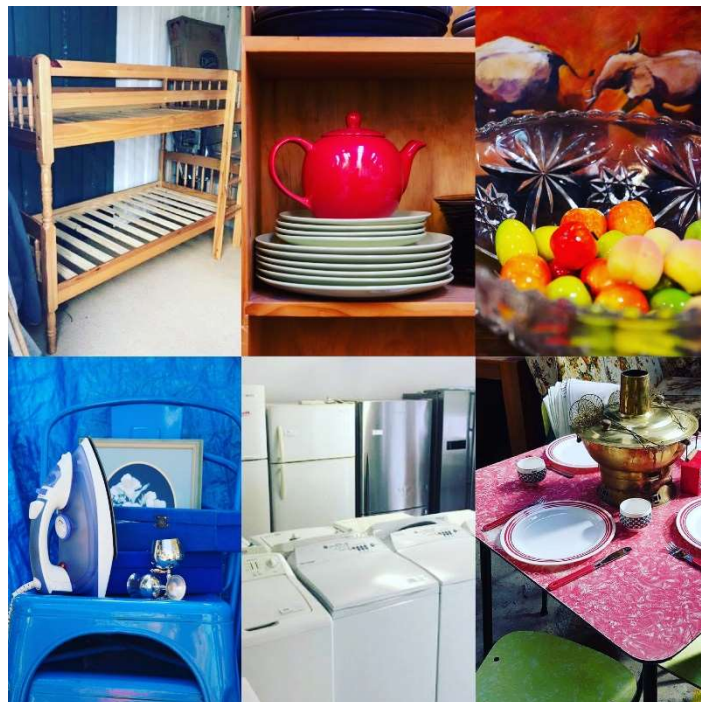
1.2 Board Details

The Directors present the financial report of The Bower Re-Use and Repair Centre Co-Operative Limited for the year ending 30 June 2021 and report as follows:

NAMES OF DIRECTORS

The names and positions of the Directors who held office during the year were:

Name of Director	Position Held	Meetings Attended
Linda O'Malley	Independent Director	9
Helen Cooper	Secretary (<i>from 21 November 2020</i>), Member Director	7
Suzan Campbell	Member Director (<i>resigned 27 January 2021</i>)	9
Margy Vary	Secretary (<i>to 21 November 2020</i>), Member Director	7
Michelle Sheather	Chairperson, Member Director	8
Antonio Turri	Treasurer Independent Director	9
Judy Foster	Member Director (<i>appointed December 2020, resigned June 2021</i>)	4

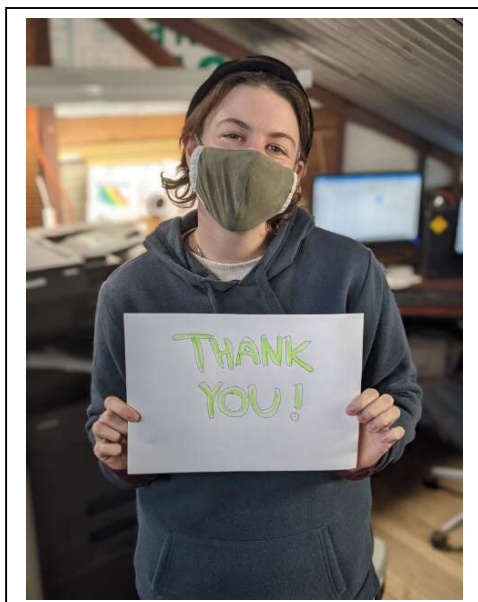


1.3 Treasurer's Report 2020-2021

With COVID restrictions and significant staff changes, the last financial year was one of disruptions and challenges. Once again, The Bower thrived on the disruption, with unexpected positive news.

Our sales revenue of \$628,901 (2020 \$520,924; 2019 \$544,255 & 2018 \$528,416) was up +21% on prior year, with the Parramatta store converted to a workshop centre and a focus online assisting the growth on prior year. Whilst instore and online sales prevailed, donations reduced by 30% on prior year.

Our overall Income has increased with our Revenue of \$1,448,430, up on prior year by 26% (2020 \$1,148,837; 2019 \$927,284 & 2018 \$877,485), resulting from the government support & Job Keeper incentives and some larger grants offsetting the reduction in donations and the loss of Work for the Dole (WFD) program participants due to COVID restrictions.



An operating expenditure of \$1,309,756 (2020 \$1,029,245; 2019 \$907,019 & 2018 \$925,563) was higher than prior year by 27%, driven by the incremental payments required to be made under the Job Keeper scheme and incremental consultancy fees.

On the positive side, some prompt decisions were made by the Bower management throughout these uncertain times implementing various cost constraints as required.

Net Profit or Surplus for the year of \$145,629 was recorded, +22% on prior year (2020 \$119,592; 2019 \$20,265 & 2018 deficit of \$48,078) based on an originally approved modest budget surplus. This surplus strengthens our modest reserves

by \$351,833 +70% on prior year (2020 \$206,504; 2019 \$86,912 & 2018 \$66,647) improving our resilience and the future of The Bower.

I'd like to acknowledge in this tough year The Bower's external accountant, David, for his tireless diligence and consistency, especially in a year with many legislative changes. My fellow directors for volunteering their personal time and the way they have managed and collaborated with The Bower's management, The Bower's staff for their resilience, innovation, agility, passion, and vision and leading the organisation during these disruptions and The Bower's volunteers and facilitators for their dedication in 2021 and beyond.

Tony Turri
Treasurer and Director

2. Co-operative Manager's Report

2.1 Making a Difference

Bower Reuse and Repair Centres is an organisation with tremendous heart and spirit, and I am incredibly pleased to be a part of such an enthusiastic team. The last year and a half has been an extraordinary time in modern history. On the back of drought, fires and flood has come COVID 19, a global pandemic bringing with it hardship for many and significant changes to the way we live and work.

We have all experienced two periods of lockdown. Our lives have changed and at The Bower everyone has managed to adapt to this new world. We continued operations throughout to pursue our mission of diverting significant amounts of goods away from landfill, supporting training, knowledge sharing and education in the forms of Repair Cafes and course delivery at multiple locations, and creating our own Bower Made items. Our Tiny House event was a grand one, bigger and better than its predecessors. COVID 19 restrictions however did result in the cancellation of one of our most enjoyable and exciting events, Art from Trash.



Improvements in revenue were seen in most categories resulting in an overall increase in income for the Bower. Sales revenue increased by 21%, course revenue saw a considerable increase of

162% on the previous year and a third category, Government grants revenue increased by 61%.

Bower's Social Impact Report	FY 20-21
Kg diverted from landfill	160,990
Residents donated goods	3219
Residents consulting online	12,498
Furniture repaired	52
Bikes repaired	143
Workshops organised	71
Workshop Participants	570
Repair Cafes organised	66
Repair café visitors	264
Counter Sales transactions	18,605
Permanent Jobs created	2
Casual jobs/consignors	22
Regular Volunteers	34
Regular CSO, WFD and NDIS staff	33

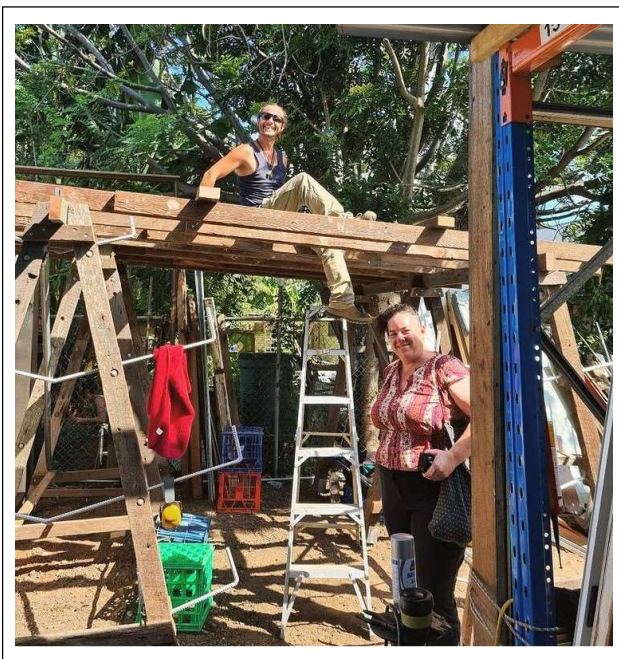
The second lockdown saw our retail store close and the suspension of our furniture and electronic repairs, our courses and our repair cafés. We had to stand down many of our staff. Through this time requests for support from welfare agencies, to which we supply household items for homeless individuals and families in crisis who are being rehomed, more than doubled. We noted, sadly, that one of the major social impacts of lockdown was an increase in domestic violence rates and homelessness.

Core staff and treasured volunteers enabled us to continue to collect and redistribute household items for these agencies to help alleviate the stress and trauma their clients had suffered. The Bower team also developed two online courses and managed to further develop our online sales. The Bower is now updating its new Online Store every week. We kept busy with our mission.

Although we have seen particularly challenging times over the last year, the heart and spirit of the organisation remains strong. With support from funders and donors, our staff and volunteers are looking to the future with enthusiasm and hope. We plan to relocate to new premises at Summer Hill in mid-2022. We will grow and develop our training courses and further develop our online course offerings. We will build up our retail operations and our collections service and we plan to strengthen our outreach connections and build our capacity to provide support for vulnerable families and individuals in their journey towards improved safety and wellbeing.

We know what we do makes a difference to the world we live in, the people in our communities and the environment we all call home.

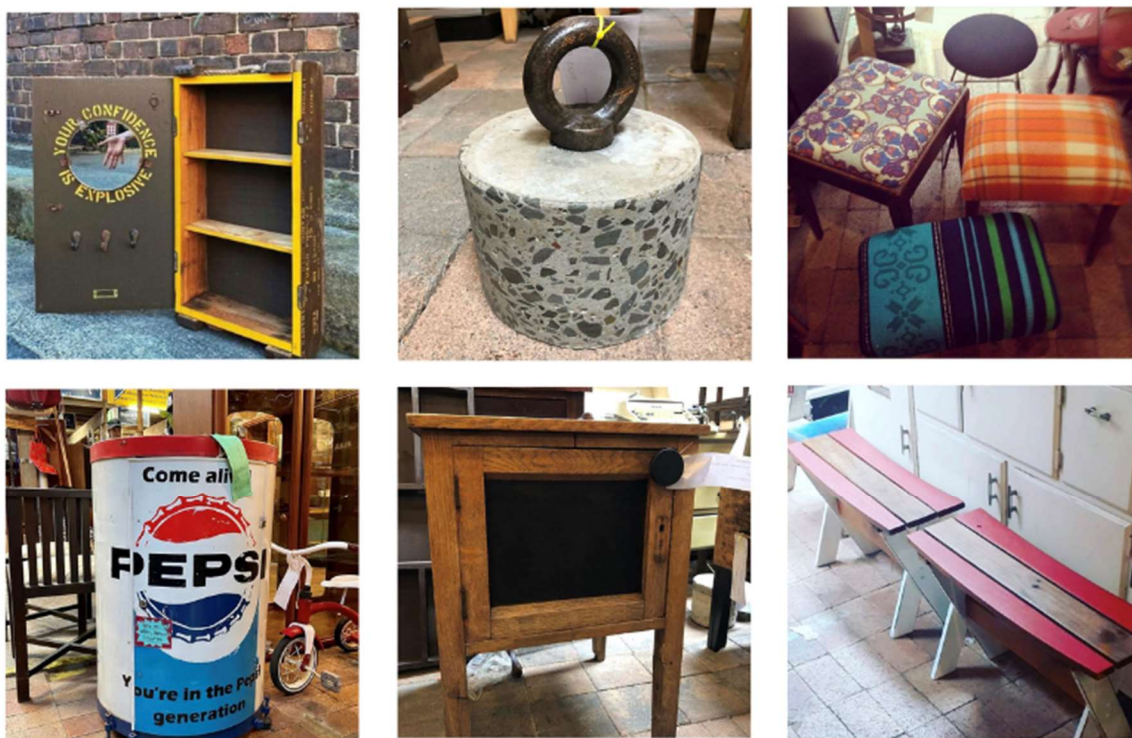
Daphne Drew
General Manager



2.2 Membership

At the close of the 2021 Financial Year there were 88 active members of The Bower Co-Op. This figure marks an increase of 64% in the organisation's annual membership (up from 57 in the 2020 FY) and reflects a growing awareness of the importance of reuse, repair, refurbishment and repurposing in taking individual action against climate change.

Bower membership includes a loyalty card and access to our consignor program (allowing members to sell refurbished and upcycled items through The Bower), eligibility to join the Bower Board as a member director and voting rights at the organisation's Annual General Meeting.



Just a small selection of the upcycled pieces The Bower sells in its Consignment Corner

2.3 Bower People



Staff

The staff of Bower Reuse and Repair Centres are a talented and diverse group, all of whom contribute their time, energy, and expertise towards our mission.

Over the last year COVID 19 has caused significant disruption; families have moved closer to relatives; some have looked to the future and made the decision to study while others are simply looking for change.

We have said goodbye to seven members of staff but have been joined by twelve new faces. It has been a time of great renewal.

Volunteers

As an organisation we are grateful for the time and the energy that our volunteers contribute towards our mission and goals. They offer all sorts of much-needed human resources.

Not only do they help us to offer quality repair services, they also help to organise in-store displays and follow mandated Covid 19 guidelines. Our volunteers help by supporting our digital endeavours, by sourcing materials, and providing support at events. They help us build, repair and design, as well as deliver training for courses.

Our volunteers use their skills and expertise in supporting our organisation to grow and improve and we are tremendously grateful for their contributions.



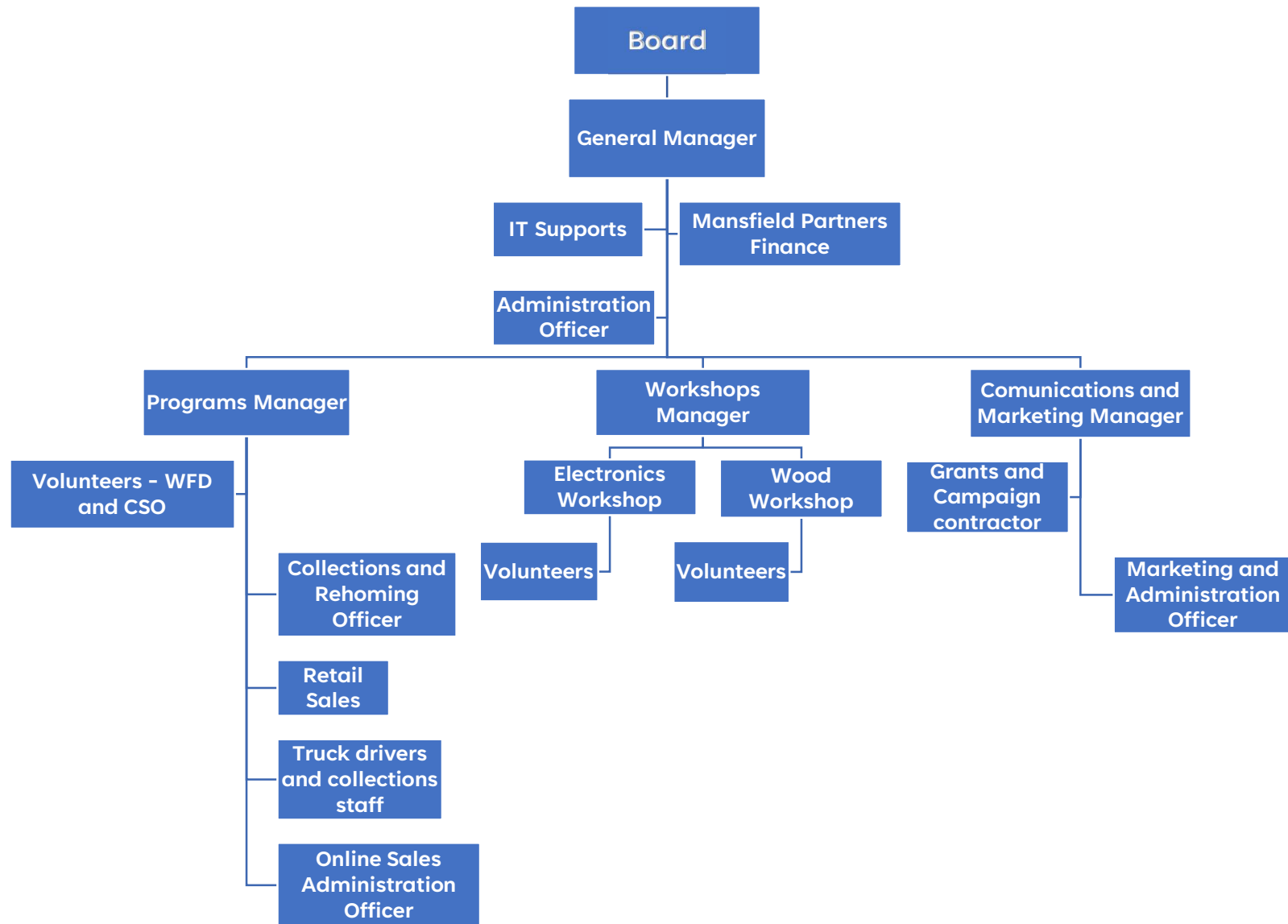
Community Service and Work For the Dole

During periods of lockdown, Community Service Order (CSO) and Work for the Dole (WFD) volunteers were unable to assist as usual. Their contributions were missed; particularly their input into supporting our collection services and the redistribution of goods received from donors. We are looking forward to their return in 2022.

Waste Consultant

In consideration of The Bower's need to remain at the forefront of the campaign for Australia's Right to Repair, the organisation has contracted a Waste Consultant to bring additional expertise. Our Waste Consultant is researching the NSW Waste Strategy, the NSW government's Plastics Policy and identifying the opportunities available to The Bower to advocate for improved waste management and supporting the implementation of good waste strategy.

BOWER ORGANISATIONAL CHART NOV 2021



2.4 Sales



Shopfront sales continue to make the largest contribution towards supporting The Bower's efforts.

Special mention must be made of the commitment demonstrated by The Bower's Collection and Rehoming team who have worked diligently to ensure our shop floor remains stocked with high quality used items for resale back to the community.

Similarly, credit should be given to the sales staff who are responsible for receiving and pricing stock and displaying it for sale. A job well done by all.

Towards the end of 2020 The Bower enjoyed a sales spike in response to the initial lockdown period; we have attributed this in part to the federal government's HomeBuilder initiative and the corresponding growth in home renovation projects.

The Bower experienced a quiet summer period with sales reigniting in the fourth quarter of the 2021 FY ahead of the mid-year, COVID-related shut down.

While sales remain the primary source of income, The Bower continues to maintain a diverse list of income streams.

Revenue Stream	FY 20-21	FY 19-20
Sales	628,901	520,924
Govt Grants	145,335	90,363
Govt Support (Covid-19)	423,837	232,236
Non-Govt Grants	30,922	29,814
Service to Councils	72,156	74,621
Workshops	44,178	16,853
Donations	56,952	79,768

2.5 Collection and Rehoming Service

Our Collection and Rehoming Service remains one of the core elements of The Bower's business model. Without this valuable service our ability to source items for sale and rehoming via our outreach programs would be greatly hampered.

In 2021 we have maintained our service agreements with 21 councils in the Sydney metropolitan area. From these 21 LGAs combined with in-store donations we have managed to collect 160,990kgs of materials which otherwise would have been sent to landfill. Instore donations continue to play an important part in The Bower's Collection and Rehoming service.

It was noted that 3,465 requests were uploaded via The Bower's Web Booking Tool. 2,772 were declined and closed while The Bower's collections team completed 693 truck collections. A quarterly breakdown is available in the table below. In 2022 The Bower will investigate opportunities to improve its collection and rehoming capacity with the aim of satisfying demand.

Consultation of online Reuse Database 1/7/2020 - 30/6/2021	
Category	Total
Furniture	4142
Electrical Goods	1458
Mattresses	1156
Whitegoods	694
Building Materials	598
Books and Records	497
Computers	419
Homewares	353
Other	407
Textile, Fabric and Carpet	290
Nursery, Toys and kids	328
Office Furniture	346
Metals, Ferrous and non-Ferrous	167
Audio and Video games	219
Musical Instruments	181
Hardware	150
Sports and Leisure Goods	113
Charitable Organisation	87
Waste service	80
Paper and Cardboard	87
Removals and Vehicles for removal	65

Public awareness of The Bower's Reuse Database continues to grow with 12,498 searches conducted in the 2020-2021 FY.

Results for 21 Participating Councils Breakdown of total kgs diverted

Quarter	Truck Collections		In-Store Donations		Total	
	Household	KG	Individuals	KG	Residents	KG
01 Jul – 30 Sep 2020	197	21,758.00	742	24,962.90	939	46,720.90
01 Oct – 31 Dec 2020	173	18,496.50	596	21,697.00	769	40,193.50
01 Jan – 31 Mar 2021	173	18,663.20	592	20,167.45	765	38,830.65
01 Apr – 30 Jun 2021	150	16,577.90	596	18,667.40	746	35,245.30

2.6 House to Home

As The Bower's reputation for providing quality support services continues to grow, so has the success of our House To Home program. In 2021 The Bower worked alongside frontline service providers to assist 86 groups representing an estimated 344 individuals.

Through House To Home these individuals were referred to The Bower by frontline service organisations in order to access high quality used household items for furnishing newly acquired safe and permanent accommodation. In 2021 we noted an increase in the cost of the average transaction (previously estimated at \$250 per family, now in the vicinity of \$500) which we attribute to growing economic stressors in the community and rising costs.

The impacts of the first COVID lockdown period signalled a need for another, similar program to run alongside House To Home, and so in April 2021 The Bower established HomeKeeper; a program designed to assist vulnerable individuals and family groups impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic. These referrals come from within the community (schools, community centres, frontline service providers) to help individuals and families that may otherwise 'fall through the cracks'. In its first quarter HomeKeeper assisted 11 groups and is poised for significant growth given the events of June 2021 onwards.

In 2021 both programs have enjoyed financial support from several foundations sourced via rigorous application processes. The Bower would like to thank its supporters, without whom our outreach programs would not be possible.

In the future The Bower will lobby low cost and community housing providers to provide household items for residents in new housing developments, saving even more items from landfill and helping to perpetuate a circular economy.

Our Partners



Our Supporters

100 WOMEN



2.7 Bower Made, Manufacturing and Workshop Repairs

The workshop flourished under the steady hand and inspired creativity of our new workshop manager throughout 2021.

Not only did the organisation continue to offer bespoke repair and manufacturing services to the general public, The Bower also manufactured items at a scale never tackled before in our workshops. Most notable of these projects was the production of 100 point-of-sale chalkboards for certified B Corporation, Ben & Jerry's made almost entirely from reused materials. A valuable learning experience, this is the type of work our woodworkers are keen to explore further in future.

Volunteers and paid staff also collaborated to create a range of items with the working title 'Bower Made'. Some amazing creations have emerged from the workshop, all of them crafted out of repurposed found items and donations, redesigned and upcycled for sale at The Bower shopfront and online. We look forward to continued creativity out of the workshop in 2022.



Over at Banga Electrical Workshop The Bower continued to offer a low cost and impartial appliance repairs. Many thanks to Gokhan and long-term volunteer, Bob, for keeping the good ship Banga afloat in 2021.

In the coming years, The Bower will build on its positive reputation and further expand its workshop services.

2.8 Right to Repair AU

The Right to Repair formed an important part of The Bower's messaging throughout 2021. Information shared through The Bower's digital channels frequently elicited a strong response from the community and the media, with our efforts rewarded in October 2020 when the Australian Productivity Commission established an Inquiry into the economic benefits of fostering a Right to Repair culture in Australia.

Bower GM, Guido Verbist met with Commissioners Paul Lindwall and Julie Abramson to discuss the issues preventing Australia from embracing a Right to Repair culture, such as existing barriers to repair, problems around e-waste disposal and planned product obsolescence.

We continue to monitor and engage.



2.9 Fundraising

AUCTION

Due to the limitations placed on the organisation as a result of COVID-19 related restrictions, The Bower's annual auction was limited to one item: our Tiny House.

Thanks to the expertise and steady hand of Michael Thomas on behalf of Raffan, Kelaher and Thomas Auction House, the Tiny House auction attracted 31 registered bidders with approximately 8 active bidders. The final bidding war was a heated battle which led to the sale of the Tiny House for an incredible \$38,500, up by \$17,000 on the year prior and setting a new high-water mark.

Congratulations to the lucky bidders on their excellent purchase.



CROWDFUNDING

During the 2021 FY, The Bower received \$61K in donations; above budget but a reduction of approx. 18% from the record high donation income received during the 2020 FY. The result remains historically high compared to earlier years. Detailed analysis reveals three underlying causes:

A reduction in corporate donations;

A reduction in on-site cash donations; and

Curtailing of the Christmas fundraising campaign in order to maintain eligibility for JobKeeper.

Recommendations have been sought and implemented to remedy these shortfalls.

In 2021:

*The average amount given per donor was **\$130***

*The average donation was **\$98***

*The number of donations received was **607***

*The average number of gifts per donor was **1.3***

*The number of donors who gave was **461***

GRANTS

Preparation of Grant Applications was brought in-house towards the end of the 2020 calendar year, a step which reaped considerable success.

Out of 14 grant applications submitted by The Bower, 8 applications were successful equalling a success rate of 57%.

In 2022 The Bower will endeavour to secure additional in-house resources to assist with the research and writing process; preparation of applications takes considerable time and funding is inevitably tied to labour-intensive projects with little room for variation.

2.10 Communication

With the creation of a permanent role for a Communications and Marketing Manager The Bower's messaging around reuse and repair and associated concepts has been positive and inspirational throughout the 2021 FY.

15,426 Facebook fans
4,541 Instagram followers
14,700 Newsletter subscribers

Social media following and newsletter sign ups continue to grow and a trend towards increasing customer engagement is evident based on digital analytics.

Our Tiny House course sold out in record time! The auction that followed attracted significant interest and was ultimately far more successful than previous years. 2021 Bower events such as Art From Trash and Parra Pickers also enjoyed high levels of engagement due to marketing and communications efforts.

In 2022 The Bower's Marketing and Communications Manager will work more closely with our contracted fundraising consultant to ensure continuity in messaging and assist with campaign roll out.

2.11 Educational Programs

The Bower continues to focus on education as an important way to engender cultural change and to encourage our community to engage in practices that involve reuse and repair.

REPAIR CAFES

In 2021 and in response to the COVID situation, The Bower's Repair Café program remained in the digital space, where our organisation worked closely with several councils to deliver informative and entertaining online Repair Cafes.

WORKSHOPS AND COURSES

Our course offerings continued to grow and develop with The Bower continuing its collaboration with Sydney Community College to offer beginners and intermediate courses in Woodwork in both our Redfern and Parramatta locations. A research and development process is currently underway to develop online delivery of some of the organisation's signature courses and in 2022 The Bower intends on offering workshop courses from its new premises in Summer Hill.

COMMUNITY SHED

The Bower's community shed programs continue to go from strength-to-strength with Parramatta Women's Shed enjoying significant success in the first six months of the 2021 calendar year. Congratulations to Rachel who has come on board to coordinate the women's shed and who has been instrumental in guiding the program to new levels of popularity.

TINY HOUSE COURSE

The Bower's big-ticket item, the Tiny House course, also enjoyed great success in 2021. This year's house was designed by talented architect and long-term associate of The Bower, Ashley Menegon, who also led the course facilitation alongside Luke Mitchell and Matt Jollow.

This year's Tiny House has been designed as a north-facing dwelling to maximise the sun's light and warmth, with the added potential for a landing deck, an added awning, solar panels and water collection options.

With the course commencement delayed by 2 days due to heavy flooding of the hired premises, 15 students gathered in mid-March to build one beautiful Tiny House to lock up stage.

Staff have been diligently collecting Expressions of Interest for 2022 and are looking forward to running the course out of The Bower's new premises in Summer Hill.



The Bower's school holiday workshops – teach them well and let them lead the way!