



Fresh Start

Helping people with addictions

Annual Overview

2022

From the CEO

**Annual Report
June 2022**



This year has seen Fresh Start continue to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 hiatus and return to full service in most areas. The recovery of the service has also seen a change in the range of options offered to patients and the uptake of other sustained release treatments.

In 2021 we began the planning process for the upgrade of the Fresh Start Clinic in Subiaco. We have worked carefully and closely with the WA Health Department and our architects to progress the redevelopment of the Clinic to meet the requirements of a Class B Day Hospital. Obstacles notwithstanding, we hope to commence construction of the renovations in early 2023. This will provide a modern, first-rate facility for treatment to continue on the site for the next 20 years.

The re-branding of Fresh Start to clearly identify the functions of the Fresh Start Clinic, Fresh Start Foundation, Fresh Start Lodge, Fresh Start Psychology, Fresh Start Northam, Fresh Start Metro and Fresh Start Busselton has been successful and led to a better understanding of the role of each arm of our service.

As the year progressed, we have also been able to provide accommodation and residential recovery for a steadily increasing number of people. These services were particularly affected by the restrictions imposed during COVID-19 and it has been pleasing to see the demand return. Fresh Start has more than 100 beds available to meet the pressing needs of homeless and unwell patients but only a limited number are supported with Government funding. This has necessarily reduced the number of people we are actually able to accommodate, with a limit of 20 beds being made available in our Northam program, while up to 50 men remain on our waiting list in prison until a place becomes available in our program.

In the world of change we have all become accustomed to, I am incredibly grateful to the faithfulness of our donors who have continued to provide steady support through difficult times. The goal for the year ahead is to reach new supporters to increase funding in the face of the challenges of increasing demands for help and the effects of inflation on the costs of providing the services.

Finally, I am ever thankful for the team of staff and volunteers at Fresh Start who achieve remarkable outcomes every day. The expertise of our clinical staff and the care shown by our support staff and volunteers is outstanding.

**Jeff Cloughton
CEO**



Highlights for the year

27,848 occasions of service were provided to our clients

1,238 patients received treatment or support

516 patients received treatment at Fresh Start for the first time

999 patients received detox and pharmacotherapy treatment of whom **159** patients received naltrexone implants

327 people received **1,256** counselling sessions

216 people received accommodation during their treatment in Perth



Volunteer Toni preparing a delicious meal for residents at Fresh Start Lodge.

Facts and Figures 2022

450 patients were treated for **heroin** and other analgesics addiction

245 patients were treated for **amphetamine type** substances and other stimulants and hallucinogens addiction

75 patients were treated with pharmacotherapy for **Benzodiazepine addiction** and **anxiety**

403 patients were treated for **alcohol** and other sedatives and hypnotics addiction

43 patients were treated for **cannabinoid** addiction

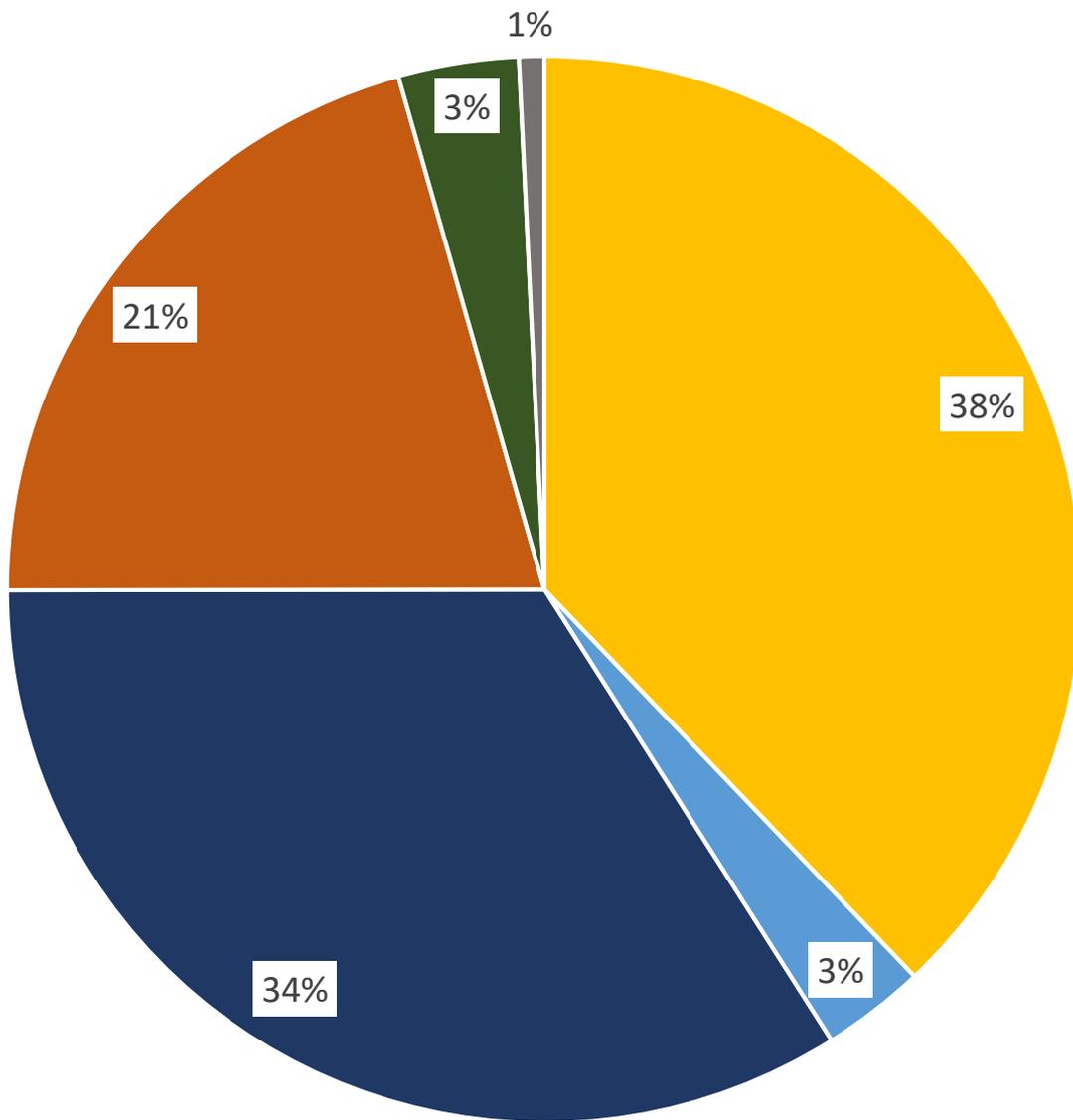
1,145 clients were **from WA (92%)**

132 clients identified as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (11%)**



Volunteer Phil and receptionist Deb outside the Fresh Start Clinic.

2021-22 Clients by Primary Drug of Concern



■ Heroin and Other Analgesics

■ Alcohol and Other Sedatives and Hypnotics

■ Cannabinoids

■ Benzodiazepines

■ Methamphetamine and Other Stimulants and Hallucinogens

■ Other

Fresh Start Northam

The Fresh Start Northam staff are a highly effective, caring and experienced team who welcome and support people through a 6-month recovery program in a modified Therapeutic Community setting. People who have been treated for their addictions at the Fresh Start Clinic and who are ready to commit to complete abstinence can apply for this program by completing an enquiry form which is available at the Fresh Start Clinic reception.

The team in Northam allocate key workers who assist and encourage the residents by setting and achieving life and recovery goals. Residents work together in a mutually supportive environment, attend group and individual counselling and work and volunteer in the community. The team in Northam are dedicated to helping the residents make lasting and positive changes in their lives. Their enthusiasm and professionalism produce excellent outcomes which are evident at the graduation events that are held each year.

In the 2022 financial year, **68** men took part in the Northam Recovery Program, staying an average of **101** days each. **78%** of 54 exiting residents successfully graduated from the program with many graduates transitioning into education or paid employment.

Fresh Start Clinic

The Fresh Start Clinic continues to operate as a Class B Day Hospital and GP Clinic with Addiction Medicine Specialists, Psychiatrists and a full nursing team on site. Post-COVID-19 demand for care and treatment at the Clinic has continued to grow throughout the 2022 year and our clinical and administrative support staff have continued to provide high quality individually tailored care to all clients who attend the clinic for help with their addictions.

A range of relapse prevention pharmacotherapy and detox treatments are provided through the Fresh Start Clinic and all medical and allied health support services are provided bulk billed or free of charge.



Staff celebrated Fresh Start's 25th Anniversary with cake at each of the Fresh Start sites. Lots of great memories were shared by staff and volunteers.

Clients are only required to pay for their own medication, pharmacotherapy products and medical consumables. All Western Australian patients are offered the option of a payment plan if they are unable to meet the costs incurred at the time of treatment. Fresh Start is able to continue to provide detox and treatment services on this basis only because of the support of the WA Government and our generous donors.



Fresh Start Lodge

Our team of dedicated support workers provide safe and stable accommodation for residents who are often in the early stages of their recovery. The support workers' encouragement and the practical assistance they provide to residents play a key role in stabilising residents' lives and in providing a secure base while they are receiving medical treatment. We give thanks to the Fresh Start Lodge team for all they do.

165 people were provided with accommodation pre and post detoxification treatment at Fresh Start Lodge in 2022. The average length of stay was 20 nights.

In addition to the accommodation provided at Fresh Start Lodge, we also provide longer-term supported accommodation at our metropolitan houses (Fresh Start Metro). In 2022, **20** people were provided with accommodation in these houses. Staff from Fresh Start Lodge continued to provide support visits and follow up to these residents.

Fresh Start Psychology

Post-COVID-19 demand for Mental Health support services has increased significantly to the point where we have now employed another (almost) full-time counsellor. We have also relocated our psychology and counselling support services to their own site in Subiaco which has the space, quiet and privacy necessary for effective counselling.

Counselling is an integral part of the addiction recovery process and the counsellors and psychologists at Fresh Start Psychology can help clients to make the changes they need to their alcohol and drug use. Evidence shows that engaging with counselling in the medium to long term after medical intervention for drug and alcohol use significantly increases the chance of recovery.

Fresh Start is an addiction treatment organisation but, the majority of those impacted by addiction also are suffering from co-morbid mental health conditions. Our counsellors and psychologists assist patients to deal with mental health conditions more effectively and to improve self-esteem through psychosocial education and the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

Fresh Start offers bulk-billed psychology appointments while other counselling services are government funded. Fresh Start also offers counselling support to clients' families and significant others to help them best support their loved ones through recovery.

Chaplains

The Chaplains lead Fresh Start community support groups in Subiaco and at Fresh Start Northam. The team of one full-time, one part-time and a Volunteer Chaplain provided chaplaincy support to **187** people and also ran **89** group sessions this year with an average of 10 people attending each session. Our chaplains provide general support and Christian spiritual care to our clients and their families. They provide group sessions for mutual support and can be available for one-to-one meetings to encourage and support Fresh Start clients and their families through their recovery journey.



Staffing and Volunteers

As at 30th June 2022 there were **66** employees (46 FTE) with 31 full-time, 18 part-time employees, and 11 casual employees. In addition, there were **6** Medical Practitioners on contract. Volunteers' contribution to our service was valued at **\$619,283.64** in 2022 (according to *Volunteering Australia*). Fresh Start was also fortunate to benefit from the services of **69** Fresh Start volunteers, including 32 regulars, 5 on-call and 7 on the lunch roster for detox days. There were a further **8** volunteers helping at Fresh Start Northam, and 17 'other' volunteers. Our volunteers contribute to our service and support our patients in their recovery in a variety of ways including cooking meals, driving clients to appointments, managing our pharmacy service and caring for patients in recovery. We are very grateful to our volunteers for their care and generosity which ensures that both staff and clients are supported in the work of recovery. They are the backbone of our community and we couldn't do it without them!



Our Volunteer Coordinator Judy made sure that National Volunteer Week 2022 was celebrated in style.

Employee Assistance Program

Fresh Start provides support through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for staff experiencing any work-related and personal, legal or health problems. This service, made available free of charge to staff and their immediate family is provided through WANADA and *Relationships Australia*.

"Relationships Australia WA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to help organisations support their employees by promoting personal well-being and strengthening relationships in the workplace, at home and within the community. Support services provided through EAP are provided at no cost to employees whose employer has a contract with Relationships Australia WA for EAP provision. An EAP assists employees at all levels of an organisation to better deal with personal, family and work-related concerns which may impact on their work life and job performance."

Training

Fresh Start has continued to provide training opportunities for undergraduates from University of WA, Notre Dame University and Curtin University.

Each week up to 2 students are guided by our medical staff in their clinical approach to addiction treatment. Fresh Start Northam residents provide feedback each term to medical students at UWA as part of their course. In the year 2022, we provided clinical training opportunities for **34** medical undergraduates from Western Australian Universities.

Facilities and Capital Works

Fresh Start Busselton at 132 Caves Rd, Siesta Park Busselton

Designed as a Family Reunification Centre on the Locke Estate, a landmark site in Busselton used by church and community groups, Fresh Start intends to commence using the site in 2023.

Fresh Start Northam – Northam Recovery Centre (NRC) at 27 Gairdner Street, Northam

More than \$100,000 was committed to renovating bedrooms and the common room at NRC. This has provided a better and more comfortable environment for residents in their recovery journey.

Fresh Start Clinic at 65 Townshend Road, Subiaco

Our fully licenced Class B Day Hospital in Subiaco is earmarked for a significant building renovation in 2023. These renovations will provide up to date and comfortable surroundings for patient treatments and appointments. The plans for this renovation have been submitted to the WA Health Department for approval and we hope to begin building works early next year.



One of the freshly renovated bedrooms at Fresh Start Northam.

Marketing

In 2022 our website had **86,085** page views and **31,029** sessions which represents a decrease of **3%** from the previous year. Fresh Start also has an active presence on Facebook with a total of **3,593** followers and an Instagram page has recently been created with **96** followers.

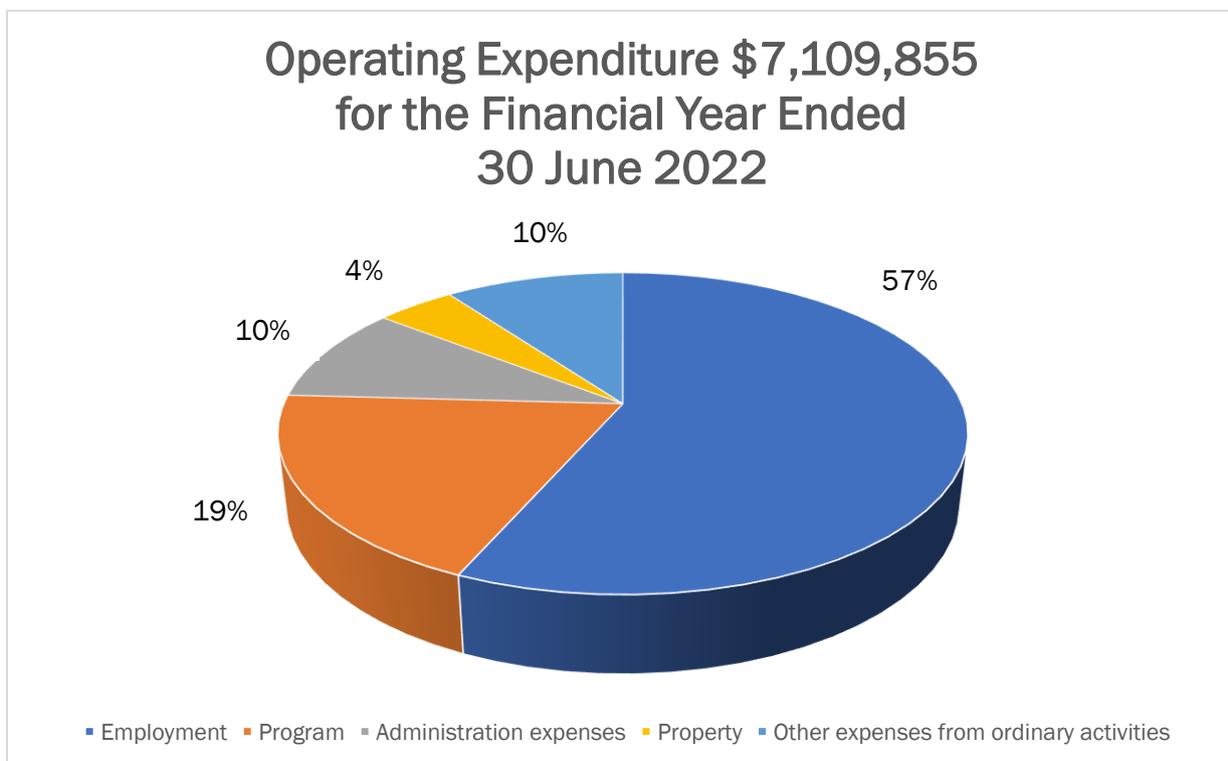
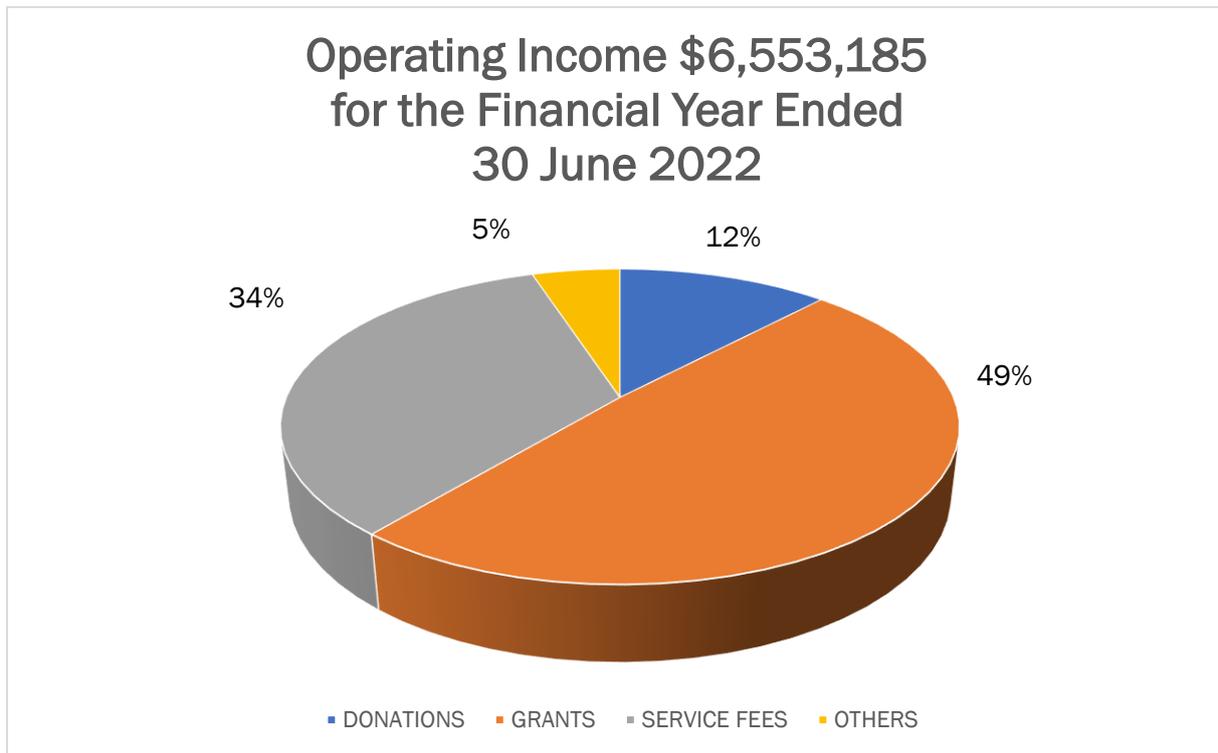


2022 was the year of Fresh Start's 25th Anniversary and we celebrated this milestone occasion at a number of events. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to Fresh Start's success over the past 25 years, and particularly to our founder, Dr George O'Neil. His vision, innovative approach, care and compassion for people struggling with addiction formed the foundation of the Fresh Start approach to recovery - hope for a future free from addiction.

We are also enormously grateful to the many donors, sponsors and volunteers who have turned this vision into reality. Fresh Start has evolved from a small clinic staffed by volunteers in 1997 into a fully accredited medically directed program with a suite of integrated services in 2022, but our spirit has remained the same; we still provide the same care and offer the same hope for people who struggle with addiction.

Vicky and Dr George O'Neil at one of our fundraising events. Vicky inspired and encouraged many of the guests by sharing her story of recovery from addiction.

Financial Overview 2022





Fresh Start

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Chairman's Report 2022

Not-for-Profit organisations have to work hard to raise money for their operations and we are no exception. We were fortunately looked after by the Commonwealth Government during the Covid pandemic and we are grateful for that funding support. However, we still needed to work hard to do what we are good at: treating people with addictions, helping and supporting their families, and ultimately saving and restoring lives.

This statement simplifies what we are about but for the purposes of this report it helps to understand the following summary.

Over the past year, there has been a strong increase in patient treatment numbers and increasing numbers of people in post-treatment residential care in both Fresh Start metropolitan and Fresh Start country housing. The recovery rate for people following our recommended treatment is remarkably good and these results encourage our staff to continue to deliver the excellent treatment we provide.

In 2022, our 25th year of operations, Fresh Start reached a milestone of having treated more than 14,000 patients – an achievement we are immensely proud of as it represents not only an impact on the lives of each patient, but also on the families and community of which they are a part.

We are proud of our assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. Over the past year staff worked together to develop our first Reconciliation Action Plan which will be officially launched in the new year. We are committed to providing the best care we can give to all our clients and strive to ensure that every person who accesses our services is welcomed, cared for in culturally appropriate ways and is supported in their recovery journey.

In 2022 we upgraded the structure of our operations to work across multiple function-specific sites. This structural evolution ensures that we can provide more focused care for our clients. The Fresh Start Clinic is the centre for all our client's medical treatment needs and all of our other sites now have a better focus on the service we provide.

These are the facilities we now have:

Fresh Start Clinic incorporating a GP Clinic and Class B Hospital.

Fresh Start Lodge for short stay pre and post treatment accommodation

Fresh Start Psychology for psychological support to our clients and their families.

Fresh Start Northam incorporating the Northam Recovery Centre and residential property outside Northam.

Fresh Start Foundation which forms the executive, finance, research and marketing centre of operations.

Fortunately, due to very careful financial management, Fresh Start is in a stable financial condition. We receive some finances from the State Government, but this is not adequate to

properly finance the services we offer to the community. We continue to be reliant on our donors, volunteers, the O'Neil family and other supporters to make up the 'gap'. Although our addiction recovery work has assisted to reduce the burden on the public health care system (including ambulance services, emergency departments and hospitals), and to reduce crime rates and recidivism, our services are not being adequately funded by the State Government. They could do much better.

I would like to finish by thanking the Board of Directors, Management, the O'Neil Family, Staff and Volunteers for their help this year.
All the best and Happy Christmas.

G A D (Sandy) Clarkson

Chairman



Fresh Start Northam residents: walking together in recovery.