



The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation, which was established in 1996 to provide a range of education, training, research and professional service options for those working in the area of grief and bereavement. Opportunities are available for those working with grieving people and for members of the community to attend seminars, workshops and courses, undertake clinical work placements and receive supervision. Customised training, consultation and tailored solutions are also available to organisations on issues of grief, loss and bereavement.

ACGB is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide a state-wide specialist bereavement service for individuals, children and families who need assistance following the death of someone close to them. A range of specialist services and programs are provided, including office-based bereavement counselling, regional specialist bereavement counsellors, a range of support

groups, written resource material and newsletters, an annual ceremony of remembrance, bereavement information and referral service for the general public and an advice and consultation service for workers in other settings. Volunteers are integral to the delivery of the wide range of services provided by the ACGB.

The Carers Recognition Act 2012 (the Act) came into effect on 1 July 2012. The purpose of the Act is to recognise, promote and value the role of people in care relationships. It formally acknowledges the vital contribution that people in care relationships make to our community and the unique knowledge that carers hold of the person in their care. The Centre takes all practical measures to comply with the care relationship principles in the Act and reflects them when developing and implementing support for people in care relationships. ACGB undertakes a range of activities, including staff training and policy development, in order to comply with the Act.

Acknowledgements

The Centre would like to acknowledge the exceptional efforts and dedication of our Board of Directors, staff, practitioner associates, professional educators and many volunteers.

Board of Directors

Chairperson

Stuart Rechner, BSci, LLB, GAICD

Director and Secretary

Paraskevi (Vicki) Kyritsis,
GradDipPublicRelations, BA, BSW,
CertIVTAA

Directors

Michael Ashby, MD, BM, BSurgery,
MRCP(UK), FRCR, FRACP, FACHPM,
FFPMANZCA

Philip Bachelor, OAM, BAppSc, MBA,
PhD, FIML, FAICD.

Lauren Breen, BSc (Hons), GradCertEd,
PhD, MAPS

Angela Maguire, BArts (Soc Sci) Hons,
MArts (resigned 16 February 2021)

Partha Nag, MA, BBus (Mgt), DipBus,
CPA, MAICD

Robert Law, BA (Hons), MA, MDipl (Hons)

Patron

Walter Mikac, BPharm

Staff

Chief Executive Officer

Christopher Hall, MA,
GradDipAdol&ChildPsych, BEd, CertIVTAE,
MAPS, MAICD, FAIM

Executive Assistant

Kate Foreman

Manager – Corporate Services

Geoff Wakefield, BEc, CPA

Customer Service Coordinator

Alina Oberbichler
(From 19 November 2020)

Accountant / Business Analyst

Lan Mai, BAcc, CA

Finance Special Projects

Helen Russo (From 6 July 2020)

Accounts Payable

Tristan Heffey, BBus (Marketing), MAcctg
(From 9 November 2020)

Manager – Education and Health Promotions

Geoff Wakefield, BEc, CPA

Conference and Events Lead

Annie Graham, DipEvent (Maternity Leave
from 15 February 2021)

Online Learning and Events Officer

Cassandra Leckie

Marketing Officer

Sherly Gunawan, BAMark., AdvDip Bus

Lead Clinical Educator

Bianca Lavorgna (BSc, GradCertBer,
Couns&Int, CBP, MA Couns & Psych (From
30 March 2021)

Clinical Educator

Rebecca Coombes, Bb AppSc, MA Couns,
BAppSc (Psychology) (From 26 October
2020)

Education Development Coordinator

Danielle Snoxell, AssDip Social Science,
ADip Children Services, BTeach(Early
Childhood), Cert IV TAE40110

Education Enrolment and Support Officer

Diana Florez, B.Soc.Comms., Dip.Mark.

Course Tutor and Assessor

Teresa Pace-Gandolfo, CertIV
TCS, CertIV TAE DipCommWelf.,
GradCertBerCouns&Intervention, CBP.
(Until December 2020)

Course Tutor and Assessor

Eliza Oakley, B.Ed., Grad.Dip Soc Sci (Couns), Cert IV TAE (Until December 2020)

Manager – Bereavement Counselling and Support Services

Wendy Howard, BBSc, AdvCertRes&ComCare (Retired 30 April 2021)

Jasminka Kosanovic, MSW, MIH, PGCertAOD (From 1 June 2021)

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor, Support Group Coordinator & Resource Developer

Jo Baker, BANurs; DipCoun, DipMid, RGN, GradCertBerCouns&Int, CBP

Team Leader – Intake

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor

Sue Cameron, DipWelfare, GradCertBerCouns&Int, CBP

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor

Clinical Educator and Supervisor

Anita Hoare, MSW, GradCertBerCouns&Int, M.Couns & Human Service, DipEd, BA, CBP

Team Leader – Feedback Informed Treatment**Specialist Bereavement Counsellor**

Miguel Lopez, BSoSc, BPsych, CBP

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor. Intake Worker KG2 Children's and Support Group Programs

Hayley Lowe, GradCertBerCouns&Int, BCouns, DipChildServ, Cert111ChildSrv

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor. Intake Worker

Susan Pascoe, MCouns, BEd (From 2 March 2021)

Team Leader – Clinical Supervisor BCSS & Aged Care Grief Bereavement Service Specialist Bereavement Counsellor & Clinical Supervisor**Coordinator of the Internship and Practitioner Associates Program**

Susan Meyerink, BSocWelf, GradCertBerCouns&Int, DipBusMgt&HR, CBP

Administration and Support Officer

Cassandra Leckie

Manager – Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Program

Ric Ellis (From 22 February 2021)

Team Leader – Counselling, Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Service

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor, Supervisor & Group Facilitator.

Janice Butera, BA (Psych & WomensSt), GradDipCouns, MA(Couns), GradCertBerCouns&Int, MSW, CBP

Team Leader Education – Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Service

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor

Support Group Programs, Clinical Educator and Supervisor

Jackie Tarabay, BCouns, GradCertBerCouns&Int, CertIV TAE, CBP

Specialist Bereavement Counsellor

Support Group Coordinator

Alexa Powell MSW, Grad Dip Conflict, BA (from 1 February 2021)

Peer Support Development

Carissa Kuswanto, DP, MA (Sc), B Sc, (From 29 March 2021)

Peer Support Program

Linda Shaw, BCouns, GradCertBerCouns&Int, CertIV TAE, (From 3 March 2021)

Interns, Practitioner Associates and Support Group Facilitators

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement supports Interns, Practitioner Associates and Support Group Facilitators in their role delivering bereavement support services to ACGB clients. Without them, ACGB would not be able to provide the amount and range of counselling and support services that are offered to bereaved children, young people, adults, couples, and families. Practitioner associates are specialist bereavement counsellors who have completed their internship placement and apply to continue working as a volunteer with ACGB. Our Support Group Facilitators are made up of professionals and non-professionals who have been trained to work with bereaved people in a range of roles and capacities. Some of our Practitioner Associates also co-facilitate support groups.

The following is a list of practitioner associates who have contributed to ACGB during the 2020-2021 financial year.

Kim Abdurazak
MSocialWork, GradCertBerCouns&Int,
CertIV TAE, AdvDip DisabilityWorkLevel3,
NAATI Auslan

Bruno Chene
BA, BSE, MSW, GradCertBerCouns&Int,
CBP

Dorothy Dullege
DipCouns,
GradDipSpiritualDirectTheology,
GradCertBerCouns&Int, CBP

Faith Goircelaya
BCS,GradCertBerCouns&Int,
BachMusicTherapy, FamilyTherapy

Dianne Griffith
CertContempSomaticPsychotherapy,
GradCertBerCouns&Int

Nizra Haniffa
DipWelfPrac, BAComDevelop,
GradCertBerCouns&Int

Christina Havlin
BachDegreeCouns, CBP

Anne-Marie Holten
BscNutrDiet, MaPublicSectorMgt,
GradCertClinPastoral Ed1,11&Adv,
GradCertBerCouns&Int

Julie Jensen
AdvCertTraumaCouns, AdvDipGroupFac,
BehavSc(Psych), GradCertBerCouns&Int

Mustafa Koukhan
BSW, DipWelfStud,
GradCertBerCouns&Int

Judith Lillis
MA (EdCouns),GradCertBerCouns&Int, BA
(Psych), LPC, CBP

Dr Maree McClutcheon
EdD, MEdSt, GradCertBerCouns&Int,
BSpecEd, CertPrim&SpecEd, ACA Level2,
CBP

Teresa Pace Gandolfo
CertIVTCS, CertIVTAE,DipComWelf,
GradCertBerCouns&Int, CBP

Liz Powell
RegNurse, AdCertCouns&Psychotherapy,
GradDipTraumaCouns,
GradCertBerCouns&Int, CertIVTelCouns

Carmel Richardson
BSSc (PastoralCouns),
GradCertBerCouns&Int, ACA (Level 2)

Rae Silverstein
GradDipSpecEd,
GradDipMentalHlthforTeachProfs,
SpecCertBerCouns,
SpecCertBerCounsPrac, TPTC

Ros Tatarka
BEd, MSocSc (Couns & HumServ)

Doug Thompson
BSW, GradCertBerCouns&Int, CBP

Ayumi Wantanabe-Roberts
BSW, GradCertBerCouns&Int

Julie Jensen
AdvCertTraumaCouns, AdvDipGroupFac,
BehavSc(Psych), GradCertBerCouns&Int

The following is a list of support group
facilitators who have contributed to
ACGB during the 2020-2021 financial
year.

Anton Anagnostou

Anne Carr

Bruno Chene
BA, BSE, MSW, GradCertBerCouns&Int,
CBP

Mark Dean

Pauline Shilkin
BSWGradDipAdultEd

Hayley Russell
MSocSc, GradCertBerCouns&Int

Antoinette Tataro
DipCounselling

Yimfong Voon
GradDipCounsMasters
Coupls&RelationshipCouns, Supervision
SystemicTherapy,CertBerevement Studies

The following is a list of interns who have
contributed to ACGB during the 2020-
2021 financial year.

Dr Hellen KempBAPsych, PostGradPsych,
MastersCouns

Sonya Taylor
BSW, PostGradCertSocialWorkforAdults,
GradCertBerCouns&Int

Academic and Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC)

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB), since its commencement as a Registered Training Organisation, has established an Academic and Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC). The AIAC provides advice to ACGB on issues such as course content, industry needs, appropriateness of assessment strategies, workforce expectations and issues of quality and compliance.

The AIAC was reviewed in July 2020 to ensure ongoing representation of key industries such as palliative care and the funeral industry. We have broadened this further and included representatives outside Victoria and from rural and remote Australia.

The committee comprises of:

Christopher Hall CEO, ACGB
Melbourne

Geoffrey Wakefield
Acting Manager – Education & Health
Promotion, ACGB
Melbourne

Danielle Snoxell
Education Development. Coordinator,
ACGB
Melbourne

Tony Feagan
RTO Compliance Consultant
Where to From Here
Brisbane

Karen Quinn
Coordinator of Education
Centre for Palliative Care
Melbourne

Chris Harrington
CEO Australasian Cemeteries &
Crematoria Association (ACCA)
Melbourne

Nigel Davies

President
National Funeral Directors Association
(NFDA)
Melbourne

Lauren Breen

Researcher/Academic
Curtin University
WA

Liz Lobb, PhD, MAppSci, B.Adult Ed. Post
Grad Cert Bereavement Counselling
Professor of Palliative Care
Deputy Chair, Calvary Palliative and End
of Life Care Research Institute
Adjunct Professor, School of Medicine, the
University of Notre Dame, Sydney
Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Health,
University of Technology Sydney

This committee was reconvened in 2021 to review and provide industry feedback on course structure and units of competency. The consultation and validation activities supported the adaptation of previous units from the reviewed course to the current proposed accredited course.

Facilitators at ACGB

The ACGB maintains a database of over 120 facilitators who contribute to ACGB's education program. These educators bring a wealth of clinical and teaching expertise to ACGB's education program.

We also deliver a Graduate Certificate in Bereavement Intervention which is offered as an online mode of delivery. The presenters who delivered this program over the 2020-2021 year were – Louise Friend, Jackie Tarabay, Margaret Sealey and Mardi Sheahan.

Sponsorship and Major Contributions

Department of Health and
Human Services, Victoria

Department of Health
Commonwealth Government



Chairperson's Report

The hardship, suffering and grief of last year continues for many Australians. The global pandemic is relentless and, as exhaustion sets in, hope can seem a long way away.



Despite this, the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement continues to deliver, even as we are called upon to do more and more. I have watched our staff and volunteers yet again rise to the occasion with feelings of both pride and concern.

During the year, the ACGB commenced the national Aged Care COVID-19 Grief and Bereavement Service across Australia as directed by the Commonwealth Government. The successful rollout of this significant additional capability is due to the hard work of our people and supporters. We have welcomed many new staff during these busy times, and they have risen to challenge.

This year saw the retirement of our long-serving Manager of Bereavement Counselling and Support Services, Wendy Howard, whose outstanding contribution over many years will be sorely missed. Wendy has built a team of great strength and depth that remain to continue her work.

Also, this year we quietly celebrated our 25th Anniversary. I look forward to the time we can gather together as a group and properly acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices made over that time.

Once again, I wish to thank all our staff, associates, volunteers and members for their service. To our donors and supporters (including the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments), I hope we have exceeded your expectations.

Stay hopeful and remember, we are always here to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stuart Rechner", with a horizontal line underneath.

Stuart Rechner
Chairperson
Board of Directors
Australian Centre for Grief
and Bereavement

*"I have watched
our staff and
volunteers yet
again rise to the
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CEO'S Report

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement 2020–2021 annual report.



2021 marks the 25th year of operation of the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB). Although the long shadow of COVID-19 continues to fall across our country and the rest of the world, there is much to mourn and celebrate.

The original vision for the Centre for Grief Education, when established in January 1996, was to provide 'optimum support for all bereaved people in order to assist their recovery and prevent chronic illness and ill health'. Over the years, this focus has broadened to focus on 'building the capacity of individuals, organisations and communities in order to enhance wellbeing following adverse life events'. Our work now takes us into the realm of providing a broad array of services for bereaved and grieving Australians. Providing training for health professionals throughout Australia continues to be an important undertaking for us, as do research and projects that enhance the quality of bereavement care. This original vision, articulated by the founders of the Centre, still drives much of what we do and, as would be expected, continues to evolve in step with our advances in knowledge and the needs of the

communities we serve.

Our 2021–2024 strategic plan focuses on three primary areas of activity – Reimagining ACGB, Increasing our Social Impacts and the Sustainability and Growth of ACGB.

In alignment with these goals, ACGB, in collaboration with Taylor & Grace, is undertaking a brand and marketing review. This will determine how key stakeholders perceive ACGB, how effectively the current brand communicates across its various touchpoints (e.g., website, publications, education course delivery etc.) and how the existing brand supports or limits the execution of ACGB's future strategy.

ACGB has also commenced work on achieving compliance with the National Safety and Quality Primary Healthcare Standards. These standards, developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, will ensure that ACGB has rigorous clinical governance processes and delivers safe and high-quality care to clients.

Other examples of actions within the

strategic plan include the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, which will allow ACGB to sustainably and strategically take meaningful action to advance reconciliation. The organisation is also working to achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation, a world first quality framework to help health and human services organisations become safe and inclusive for the LGBTIQ community.

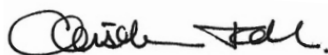
I wish to note the vital contribution of the management team. Wendy Howard (Manager – Bereavement Counselling and Support Service) retired after many years of service to ACGB. I want to thank Wendy for her contribution to ACGB, firstly as the coordinator of services following the Black Saturday bushfires and as our counselling and support service manager. We have been delighted to welcome Jasminka Kosanovic as the new manager of this program. Geoff Wakefield (Manager – Corporate Services) has continued to provide leadership in finance and business planning and oversight of the Education and Health Promotion program. In late February 2021, Ric Ellis was appointed Manager of our Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Program. Ric has brought a deep

understanding of the aged care sector and human service organisations to this complex new role.

I want to acknowledge the hard work and commitment over the past year of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers of ACGB. I wish to express my thanks to Stuart Rechner, who has again fulfilled the role of President with great skill and dedication. Stuart continues to bring his tremendous experience to this role, and the organisation benefits greatly from his contribution. I would also formally thank

I would also like to formally thank Dr Michael Ashby, Dr Philip Bachelor, Dr Lauren Breen, Vicki Kyritsis, Angela Maguire and Partha Nag for their ongoing support and contribution to ACGB as Directors. I also wish to thank the staff employed by ACGB staff who always bring great passion, enthusiasm and creativity to their work. I also want to acknowledge the financial support of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and the Australian Government Department of Health, which enables ACGB to offer the range of programs and services it can do.

The organisation continues to build upon its strengths – a proud record of meeting the needs of the bereaved, strong governance and management, and a skilled group of staff and volunteers – and in doing so, continues to find new ways of providing sustainable, high-quality education, bereavement care and research programs for all Australians.



Christopher Hall
Chief Executive Officer
Australian Centre for Grief and
Bereavement

"Although the long shadow of COVID-19 continues to fall across our country and the rest of the world, there is much to mourn and celebrate.

Our work now takes us into the realm of providing a broad array of services for bereaved and grieving Australians."

Education

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement continues to be the largest national provider of grief and bereavement education, offering a broad range of professional development training that includes Workshops, Customised Training and Webinars. ACGB also offers Certificate IV and Graduate Certificate courses within an accredited framework.

COVID-19 Enduring Changes in Education and Health Promotion

Life under covid presents us with many challenges and as well documented with primary and secondary schooling, education in a post-secondary environment has seen the opportunity to present face to face all but di

Our Graduate Certificate in Grief and Bereavement has converted fully to on-line presentations. Moving forward, this transition to online learning will remain; this model has enabled us to offer the course nationally, no matter where you are located be it another capital city or regional and rural Australia. We are embarking on further redevelopment to increase the occasions of contact sessions and also develop a more interactive learning model.

Over the last year there were no workshops customised training made a belated albeit strong return in the final

months. In their absence we saw the massive rise in short courses of \$200k over the year.

Our monthly webinars were popular, bringing income worth \$116k, with \$54k of those funds being generated by the July webinar series that was held in place of the cancelled International Conference.

During the year Rebecca Coombes and Bianca Lavorgna joined the education team, adding significant value in terms of content development and planning in terms of positioning our education and health promotion programs.

Anita Hoare completed her tour of duty presenting one of the Graduate Certificate intakes in December 2020. During the year we also had guest presenters including Margaret Sealy and Louise Friend.

Table 1 - Education training activity

Event Type	2019 - 20			2020 - 21		
	Number of Events	Training Hours	Total Participants	Number of Events	Training Hours	Total Participants
Workshops	22	154	202			
Short Courses				39	273	763
Customised Training	11	46	223	20	102	766
Webinars	11	17	1,500	17	26	2,249
Graduate Certificate		2,640	64		3,960	82
Cert IV		500	45		3,960	82
Totals	44	1,377	2,034	76	4,361	3,860

The impact of COVID-19 is clearly illustrated in Table 1, with the cessation of workshops and the dramatic take-off in short courses reflecting the move from face to face to online learning and training replicating a common trend which many of us experienced as we transformed our kitchen table or study into our new office.

Throughout the year we had three intakes of the 11-month Graduate Certificate course with intakes from February 2020, October 2020 and February 2021, with a 28% increase in students from the previous year.

Work is underway is well advanced on the new Cert IV course, with the previous course being completed in 2020.

Customised Training

COVID-19 meant that for much of the year our customised training program could not be delivered, however in a brief window of opportunity towards the end of the year. There was a flurry of activity reflecting the pent-up demand for this type of training.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO 22004)

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement has been a Registered Training Organisation since 2010 and delivers two accredited courses – one at the Certificate IV level (currently under redevelopment) and the other at the Graduate Certificate level.

0775NAT Graduate Certificate in Bereavement Counselling and Intervention

The course has been delivered online with an am and pm intake. Intakes generally commence in February; however, the July intake was rescheduled to October to enable further work to be undertaken to facilitate the transformation to a completely online delivery model.



Bereavement Counselling and Support Service

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement operates a State-wide Specialist Bereavement Service for Victoria. Specialist bereavement counsellors provide support to bereaved individuals, children, young people and families after the death of someone close to them.

Funded by the Victorian Government, no fees are charged for counselling or group support programs provided to Victorian residents. Fees are charged for interstate telehealth counselling, clinical supervision and secondary consultation. Fees are currently waived nationally for clients seeking bereavement support resulting from COVID-19 related deaths.

The Bereavement Counselling Support Service (BCSS) is comprised of the following services:

- Counselling is provided by a team of specialist bereavement counsellors, including practitioner associates and interns. Counselling is provided face-to-face, by telephone or online via telehealth.
- We have specialised counselling support for clients identified with symptoms of complex or prolonged grief disorder.
- A range of open and closed support groups including bereaved partners, younger bereaved partners, death of a parent, children's groups, men's groups, grief talks and coffee and chat groups.
- The provision of clinical supervision, secondary consultation and debriefing support to other practitioners on a fee for service basis.
- Responding to enquiries received from a range of organisations, employers, community groups and schools seeking professional advice and support to deal effectively with bereavement, grief and loss in these settings.
- Provision of resources relating to grief and bereavement for professionals and the bereaved, including publications, fact sheets, and books.
- Advanced training, professional development and clinical supervision to Practitioner Associates.
- Supervised Internship Program.
- Coordination of the Certified Bereavement Practitioner Program.
- Editorial responsibilities for preparation and dissemination of the Bereavement Practice Newsletter (for practitioners) and the Rosemary Branch Newsletter, which is prepared specifically for clients.
- Responding to requests for information, advice and support received from the public, other practitioners and organisations across Australia.

BCSS provides a suite of specialist clinical services to individuals and families experiencing grief and bereavement. We take an integrated approach to this complex issue, offering professional learning and development programs and resources to build knowledge, expertise to constructively inform clinical practices and decisions.

BCSS delivers a variety of accessible clinical supports and interventions tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals and families experiencing grief and bereavement, and these include intake screening and assessment, telehealth, and telephone counselling, and therapeutic groups. We use the best available clinical evidence to provide therapeutic change for individuals and families accessing our services. This means putting clients at the Centre of decisions in planning, developing, and monitoring care to get the best clinical outcomes.

Specialist clinical services

As the pandemic continues to impact how we deliver counselling services, our counsellors have conducted primarily online counselling and telephone support, with a small number of in-person support when permitted.

The Intake and Assessment team has continued to facilitate client entry into our services by a comprehensive screening and assessment to ascertain suitable care which takes into account the clients' needs and preferences. Psychoeducation and bridging support are made available for those with more complex clinical presentations, such as Prolonged Grief Disorder, grief-related anxiety and depression.

Bereavement Counselling

The Bereavement Counselling team has continued to offer a variety of evidence-based counselling interventions underpinned by cognitive behavioural and solution-oriented modalities together with narrative therapies. As we view our clients with unconditional positive regard and understand that their needs and preferences are unique, we ensure that those with Prolonged Grief Disorder receive appropriate person-centred support and trauma-informed interventions in order to improve both client and organisational outcomes.

The service currently operates a wide range of therapeutic and support groups that complement the suite of therapeutic interventions currently offered to children and adults experiencing

grief and bereavement. These groups are meticulously designed for bereaved partners, younger bereaved partners, death of a parent, men's groups, grief talks and coffee and chat groups. Kids Grieve Too (KG2) are uniquely tailored for children aged from six to fourteen years of age who have experienced the death of someone significant in their lives to help them grieve in a healthy manner.

Professional development

BCSS provides professional learning and development as part of the Bereavement Practitioner Program, delivers clinical supervision for Practitioner Associates and Interns, as well as offers clinical supervision and debriefing support to external organisations and health practitioners.

Capacity building

BCSS offers resources and expertise to build capacity and provides secondary consultations to other health professionals, community services and communities across Australia. We publish promotional and educational materials, including publications, fact sheets, and books. We take on editorial responsibilities for the preparation and dissemination of the Bereavement Practice Newsletter (for professionals) and the Rosemary Branch Newsletter (for clients).

Research and evaluation

BCSS ensures that we stay abreast of contemporary and innovative research to inform therapeutic service delivery and outcomes. We evaluate our clinical effectiveness and outcomes using Feedback Informed Treatment (FIT) and share our findings for educational purposes.

Who Provides the Services?

On 30 June 2021, BCSS had ten paid staff (5.46 EFT), five intern bereavement counsellors (experienced counsellors undertaking advanced training in bereavement counselling), 21 practitioner associates (qualified specialist bereavement counsellors voluntarily supporting clients), and eight support group facilitator volunteers.

Bereavement Counselling Support Service Data

During 2020–2021 the BCSS team provided counselling to 463 clients across Victoria. A total of 3,435 counselling related sessions were conducted. This figure is comprised of 2,808 counselling sessions, 423 intake appointments and 204 secondary consultations. Just under half of the total sessions were conducted face to face, and over half, conducted by telephone or online telehealth services. This represents a significant increase in clinical activity from the previous financial year. At 30 June 2021, the service had a waiting list ranging from one to five weeks.

Bereavement Support Groups Data

During the 2020–2021 financial year, eight different types of specialist support groups were run, and a total of 750 clients attended an overall of 119 group sessions. Due to a temporary suspension of support group sessions in March, the number of group sessions is slightly down from last year. Each BCSS team member has responsibility for coordination of a specific support group and/or providing supervision to support group facilitators who volunteer their time to co-facilitate a broad range of bereavement support groups.

Anonymous Service Data

Anonymous services are usually one-time services offered to the public, other practitioners or organisations documented in Penelope. Calls and emails relating to the BCSS received by reception are recorded as an anonymous service and forwarded to counsellors for follow up as required.

During the 2020–2021 financial year, 180 anonymous service contacts were made to the Centre, resulting in an average of 17 minutes per enquiry. In order of volume, these calls and email messages related

to – service enquiries, interstate referrals, resource materials, non-bereavement referrals, requests for secondary consultation, crises call's, telehealth and volunteering questions. Anonymous service enquiries assessed as requiring bereavement support are referred to an intake appointment.

Support for Staff and Volunteers

All specialist bereavement counsellors, practitioner associates, interns and volunteer group facilitators receive regular supervision and support. Supervision is provided by specialist bereavement counsellors who are also qualified, clinical supervisors. Kaye Griffin, Daryl Chow and Raelynn Wickein are currently contracted to provide clinical supervision to the BCSS team of counsellors. Peer and live supervision are an important component of the BCSS. During the 2020-2021 financial year, 295 supervision sessions were conducted.

Professional Development

Professional development, case discussions and training opportunities are provided on a regular basis to all specialist bereavement counsellors, interns, practitioner associates and support group facilitators. Professional development activities support the integration of contemporary loss, grief and bereavement research and theory into practice and opportunities to meet with others to discuss and critically reflect upon work challenges.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

- ✓ Delivered **2,808** individual telehealth and telephone counselling sessions
- ✓ Completed **423** new intake assessments
- ✓ Provided **204** secondary consultations
- ✓ Facilitated **119** therapeutic groups and engaged **750** participants
- ✓ Conducted **295** clinical supervisions sessions with practitioners
- ✓ Facilitated **223** research meetings
- ✓ Received **180** anonymous services phone calls

Aged Care COVID 19 Grief and Bereavement Service

COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact across the Aged Care sector. In responding to this, The Australian Government has invested in a Grief and Trauma Support Program to help those impacted by COVID-19 across the aged care sector.

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement along with Phoenix Australia, Dementia Support Australia and OPAN are partnering with the Commonwealth to deliver a range of supports to older Australians impacted by COVID-19. This project is available to people receiving an Aged Care Package, as well as their loved ones, and the staff providing care and support.

ACGB are providing a range of clinical and educational supports for people in the sector who are or have experienced grief and loss due to COVID, and supporting capacity building with community groups and other organisations across the sector.

To date The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement's has:

- Established the National Telephone Support Service 1800 222 200.
- Develop and distribute printed resources in plain English and translated into five major languages English, Arabic, Chinese simplified, Chinese Traditional, Vietnamese, Greek.
- Establishment of an aged care specific website www.aged.grief.com.au
- Deliver webinar series of webinars.
- Develop peer support session pack.

Clinical support is being provided by team leaders and counsellors from ACGB all of whom are specialist bereavement practitioners and experienced clinicians focused on supporting those in the aged care sector. At the time of writing, ACGB are recruiting staff nationally to support the Package.

The primary presenting issue for those accessing clinical support must be related to COVID-19; however, grief may relate to loss, including loss of lifestyle, and not only to bereavement from death. Clinical support provided under the Package includes:

- A National toll-free telephone service, using a dedicated 1800 number, to immediately link aged care recipients and their loved ones who have been impacted by COVID-19 with counsellors
- Telehealth support from counsellors
- In-person counselling in residential aged care facilities (RACFs) (including group-based and individual)
- SMS service to access information and referral to counselling and support
- Support and advice via the *MyGrief* mobile app.

Aged Care Website

Educational resources are housed on a dedicated aged care support website: <https://aged.grief.org.au/>. ACGB is providing self-care resources including a series of webinars and printed resources for families, loved ones and aged care staff.

Fact sheets developed include:

- Grieving when others do not acknowledge your loss
- Strategies for Managing Grief and COVID-19 Related Anxiety
- COVID-19, Aged Care Restrictions, End of Life Care and Grief and Loss
- Support for Healthcare Workers Dealing With COVID-19 Related Distress, Death and Bereavements
- Living in Uncertain Times
- Social Support and Bereavement during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak
- Funeral Support and Physical Distancing
- Working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Grief and Bereavement – A Resource for Workers
- Uncertainty and Aged Care
- The loss and grief of residential aged care staff in the wake of COVID-19.

There have been approximately 70,000 hard copy fact sheets ordered through the Department of Health.



Capacity-building support in Aged Care

This involves creating a peer-led support pack, including resources and a training program to support the delivery of peer-led support sessions within aged care facilities and communities. ACGB are providing consultancy and advice to other community to help build the capacity of the leadership to work with grief and trauma, which will be supported by a specific webinar. This is designed to enable those leaders to reach out and respond effectively in their communities. This support is primarily targeted at communities of people (e.g., CALD) who may be unlikely to contact a stranger for advice and are more likely to engage with their religious, spiritual, and community leaders. Building the capacity of the leadership to work with grief and trauma positively impacts their communities.

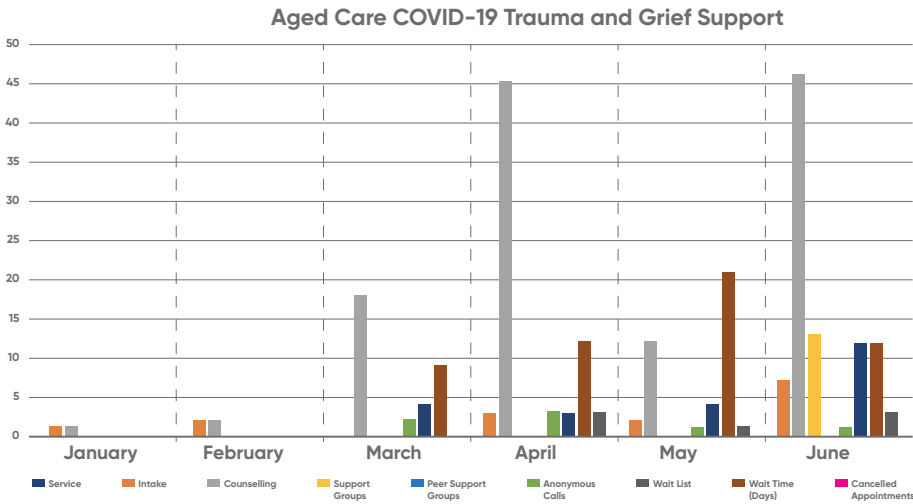
Commencing in October 2020, the first six months of 2021 has seen a slow build-up of people accessing the service, with an expected increase in the second half of 2021

People accessing Aged Care Trauma and Grief Package.

Marketing

The Department of Health (DoH) is responsible for the promotion of the project, with information being sent to all Aged Care Providers and Home Care Package recipients. ACGB is promoting the project through social media channels, websites and has engaged

Corporate Media Communications Pty Ltd (CMC) to promote the service to the wider community. Where possible, ACGB staff have engaged with Residential Aged Care Facilities and promoted our services face to face.





Media & Communications

MyGrief App

The *MyGrief* mobile application was launched in November 2019 and was developed with the financial assistance of Gandel Philanthropy and the Jack Brockoff Foundation.

MyGrief provides support and strategies for bereaved individuals and the tools and strategies for those supporting a bereaved person. It provides a portal for grieving individuals, families and friends to access support, resources, tools and strategies to understand and work through an individual grief journey.

The *MyGrief* was launched in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom as a free downloadable app for both the Android and Apple platforms. It has been downloaded a total of 9,570 times since its launch in November 2019, with a total of 4,645 downloads taking place in the 2020–2021 financial year. 3,300 of these to iOS devices and 1,345 to Android devices. The app continues to be positively reviewed with an average rating of 3.9 out of 5.

57% of the total downloads have been within Australia. The remaining downloads have come from the US (32%), the UK (6%), Canada (3%) and New Zealand (2%).

Following the establishment of our Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Service, the app is being further developed to provide support to older people and those impacted by COVID-19.

Websites

The website for ACGB, www.grief.org.au, continues to attract both local and international interest and serves as an important point of contact for grieving people and those who are seeking grief and bereavement training.

During the 2020–2021 financial year, there were a total of 126,000 visits to the ACGB website, with the majority of users coming from either Melbourne or Sydney (47%). 85% were new users, and 15% were returning visitors.

The Aged Care Grief and Bereavement Support website, www.aged.grief.org.au was launched in June 2021 as a resource for older people, family, friends and carers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This new website has attracted interest nationally and provides information on the support packaged and services available from ACGB.

Social Media

During the 2020–2021 financial year, the Centre continued to build its digital footprint using LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. These platforms allow the Centre to connect and communicate with the public, health professionals and other organisations locally and globally.

For the 2020–2021 period, ACGB registered 6,036 followers on its corporate Facebook page, an increase of 10.3% from last year financial period.

The data indicates that 85% of our followers are female, 13% are male, and 2% unspecified. The largest group age groups are the 45–54-year-old (1,446 female & 221 male) and the 35–44-year-old (1,328 female & 205 male). 84% of followers are from Australia, 3.2% are from Fiji, 2.8% from the USA and 10% from other countries.

Nationally, Facebook visits are most typically represented by a Victoria audience (38%), followed by New South Wales (21%), Queensland (18%), Western Australia (12%) and South Australia (11%).

ACGB also experienced growth in both the Twitter and LinkedIn social media platforms. Twitter followers increased by

19, up by 2% on the previous year and LinkedIn followers increased by 202, up by 197% on the previous year.

Online and Radio

ACGB continues to respond to regular media requests. This year staff have provided expert comments to organisations such as *Body & Soul*, the ABC and *The Age* on various issues such as the impact of COVID-19, having compassionate conversations, young widows and grief, dealing with death anniversaries, as well as a range of other grief and bereavement related subjects.

Research

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement aims to facilitate the advancement of research into grief and bereavement practice through contribution to and publication of academic research and discourse.

The Centre provides consultation to graduate research students around bereavement research proposals and ethical considerations in conducting research with bereaved populations.

The Centre also undertakes thesis assessment tasks for advanced degrees

on an ad hoc basis. The development of a new clinical data set enables ACGB to develop a more accurate picture of a number of important research constructs as they relate to our clients. It is hoped that this data will enable the undertaking of a number of studies, which demonstrate the efficacy of a range of clinical interventions.

Our journal, *Grief Matters: The Australian Journal of Grief and Bereavement*, continues to be a vital forum for the publication of national and international bereavement research.

Grief Matters: The Australian Journal of Grief and Bereavement

Grief Matters provides information relating to current research and practices in loss and grief to health professionals and those working with bereaved people. It continues to be a very popular and highly valued benefit for our members, and two further editions have been published over the past twelve months.

The journal is a very popular benefit for ACGB members and is also available to other individuals and organisations by subscription. People can also purchase



individual copies of back issues at full price or at discounted prices for bulk orders of older editions. These older editions date back over 20 years and cover a wide range of themes proving an invaluable resource for academics and health professionals alike. This has become a very popular practice for those people wishing to purchase copies focussing on particular themes.

Since 2009 full-text access of all issues of *Grief Matters* has been hosted on RMIT's academic database, Informit. The journal continues to be extremely well-read on Informit.

Memberships & Journal Subscriptions

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement offers memberships and subscriptions to individuals and organisations both nationally and internationally.

All members have access to a wide range of exclusive benefits, including professional development programs, resources, support and networking opportunities and discounts on our many education programs and webinars.

During the 2020–2021 financial year, ACGB membership grew by 34%, which can be mainly attributed to an increase in individual memberships from 332 in 2020 compared with 431 in 2021.

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement continues to offer discounted rates for students and those eligible for concessional rates due to retirement or low income. It also offers an international member package.

Reference Library

The Library at the Centre provides a valuable reference service to staff, counsellors, educators, members, students and the public. Although not a lending library, members and interested parties can visit and photocopy the required material. The library offers a range of books, journals, newsletters, videos, audiocassettes, CDs and DVDs.



Board of Directors' Report

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement
ACN 159 297 444 Directors' Report

Your directors present this report, together with the financial statements, on the company for the financial year ended 30 June 2021.

Directors

Prof. Michael Ashby –
from 29 October 2013
Re-elected 20 November 2018

Dr Philip Bachelor –
from 18 December 2018

Ass. Prof. Lauren Breen –
from 16 December 2014
Re-elected 21 November 2017

Ms Paraskevi (Vicki) Kyritsis –
from 2 July 2012
Re-elected 20 November 2018

Mr Robert N Law
Elected 17 November 2020

Ms Angela Maguire –
from 17 December 2018
(Resigned 16 February 2021)

Mr Partha Nag – from 27 May 2014
Re-elected 21 November 2017

Mr Stuart Rechner –
from 27 May 2014
Re-elected 21 November 2017

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the company during the financial year were to provide services for bereaved persons and a range of education and training programs.

The company's short and long-term objectives are:

- To develop and provide a range of specialist interventions and innovative education services, informed by evidence-based practice, for grieving people who are at risk of adverse outcomes;
- To provide grief education and a range of consultancy services to develop and enhance the capacity of individuals, organisations and communities to deal effectively with loss;
- To provide grief and bereavement counselling training and supervision through the placement of practitioners at the ACGB Counselling and Support Services and other settings as deemed appropriate;
- To build the capacity of the universal health services to provide bereavement supports and responses;
- To provide advocacy and representation on grief and

bereavement issues in order to inform policy development, raise community awareness and support universal access to mainstream grief and bereavement services;

- To undertake research, program evaluation, public policy development and the production of evidence-based publications and resources to enhance grief and bereavement knowledge and practice;
- To maintain cooperative links with relevant state, national and international groups and organisations in relation to grief and bereavement;
- To promote, develop and monitor competence in bereavement practice; and
- To collect and raise funds for the promotion of the preceding purposes and objectives of the ACGB.

To achieve these objectives, the company has adopted the following strategies:

- ACGB strives to attract and retain quality staff and volunteers who are committed to working with bereaved persons.
- Staff and volunteers work in partnership with a range of community stakeholders who continue to support ACGB's projects and initiatives.

- Staff and volunteers are committed to creating new programs while maintaining existing programs in support of the bereaved.
- ACGB's staff and volunteers strive to meet consistent standards of best practice and provide clear expectations of professional accountabilities and responsibilities to all stakeholders. This is evidenced by the revision of policies at all levels and the performance of staff and volunteers being assessed, based on these accountabilities.

Mr Stuart Rechner: Director, Chairperson and Company Secretary

Qualifications: Bachelor of Science (Geology), Bachelor of Laws, Graduate Australian Institute of Company Directors

Experience: Director since 2014, Secretary since 2015, Chair since December 2018

Ms Paraskevi (Vicki) Kyrtis: Director and Secretary

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Social Work, Graduate Diploma in Public Relations, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Experience: Director since 2012

Prof. Michael Ashby: Director

Qualifications: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (London) Doctor of Medicine (Adelaide), Member of the Royal College of Physicians (UK), Fellow of the Royal College of Radiologists, Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians, Fellow of the Australian Chapter of Palliative Medicine, Fellow of the Faculty of Pain Medicine, Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists

Experience: Director since 2013

Dr Philip Bachelor OAM: Director

Qualifications: OAM, Bachelor of Applied Science, Masters of Business Administration, PhD, FIML, Fellow of Australian Institute of Company Directors

Experience: Director since 18 December 2018

Ass. Prof. Lauren Breen: Director

Qualifications: Bachelor of Science (Hons), Graduate Certificate of Education, Doctor of Philosophy

Experience: Director since 2014

Ms Angela Maguire: Director

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Social Science), Hons, Master of Arts.

Experience: Director since 18 December 2018. Resigned 16 February 2021

Information on Directors

Mr Partha Nag: Director

Qualifications: Bachelor of Business (Management), Diploma of Business, Master of Accounting, CPA, Member of Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD), Certificate of Training in Management Systems Auditing
Experience: Director since 2014

Mr Robert Law: Director

Qualifications: Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Master of Arts (Strategic Studies), Master of Diplomacy (Honours)
Experience: Director since 2020

Meetings of Directors

Table 2 – Director attendance

During the financial year, seven meetings of directors were held. Attendances by each director were as follows:

Director	Director's Meetings	
	Number eligible to attend	Number attended
Mr Stuart Rechner	6	6
Ms Paraskevi (Vicki) Kyritsis	6	6
Prof. Michael Ashby	6	6
Mr Partha Nag	6	5
Ms Angela Maguire (resigned 16 Feb 2021)	4	3
Ass. Prof. Lauren Breen	6	6
Dr Philip Bachelor	6	5
Mr Robert Law	3	3

Membership

The company is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 and is a company limited by guarantee. If the company is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$1 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the entity. At 30 June 2021, the total amount that members of the company are liable to contribute if the company is wound up is \$497.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

The lead auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2021 has been received.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

A handwritten signature in white ink on an orange background. The signature appears to be 'Kyritsis' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Ms Paraskevi (Vicki) Kyritsis
(Chairperson)

Dated this 11 November 2021





The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.





Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

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ABN: 22038 903 478

ACN: 159 297 444

RTO: 22004



The Australian
Centre for Grief
and Bereavement
acknowledges
the support of the
Victorian Government.