



Psychotherapy and Counselling
Federation of Australia

Annual report summary 2021–2022

pacfa.org.au

Dr Di Stow finishes as PACFA President after 12 years on the Board

During June, July and August of 2022, I had the immense privilege of visiting members in person, in Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales—and ACT Branch members online—sharing reflections on PACFA's past and future.

This contact with members felt momentous, both because of the two pandemic years that preceded it, and because 2022 is my final year as President and a Board member, after 12 years of serving PACFA in this capacity.

Indeed, PACFA was established in 1998, so I have been fortunate to serve PACFA for 12 of its 24 years.

Having chaired the committee responsible for the restructure of PACFA in 2015 from a conglomerate of member associations to the structure of committees, Branches, Colleges, member associations, and Interest Groups we have today, I am excited by the latest changes for PACFA and how we are representing members as the premier peak body for counsellors and psychotherapists in Australia, including our unique College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices (CATSIHP).

Changes to PACFA's membership pathways and full membership of the Allied Health Professions Australia

herald a new phase of positioning members for the recognition we deserve within the mental health and allied health sector. I was proud to tell members about these changes, with CEO Johanna de Wever, in our Strategic Roadmap Member Forum in April.

As a Registered Clinical Counsellor member of PACFA, working in private practice in Hobart, I understand from experience the big-ticket issues for many members, and share the frustration with a lack of recognition within the broader mental health system. The increased demand for mental health services since the Covid pandemic has only served to amplify the urgency for this recognition.

Through the relationships I have built over 12 years, with MPs such as the Independent Member for Clark, Andrew Wilkie, I have represented members, and advocated on their behalf, to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce, and the MBS Taskforce on Eating Disorders, the Productivity Commission, the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Taskforce, and the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

Over the 2021–22 year, I have continued to educate communities about counselling

and psychotherapy and promote the work of counsellors and psychotherapists, in media interviews about everything from Medicare rebate access to hoarding.

There is no doubt we are making headway; one marker is greater receptivity to our Federal Election policy platform recommendations regarding access to Medicare rebates and Primary Health Networks, and our increasing recognition as allied health professionals.

During 2021–22, 2044 new members joined our organisation, a testament to the ever-growing regard for PACFA within our profession. This increase in our ranks is a credit to all the members who voluntarily contribute to PACFA—on the Board, committees, Leadership Groups—and to the PACFA staff, who continued to support the membership and process new applications during that period, through rolling lockdowns in Melbourne and the transition to a hybrid office/home working environment.

As Chair of the Board, I want to thank my fellow Board members, past and present, as well as our CEO Johanna de Wever, for their great support and inspiration. It has been a pleasure and privilege to contribute to the profession for these past 12 years.

I particularly want to acknowledge and thank Counselling Representative, Pat Bradley, and Treasurer, George Gintilas. They are finishing on the Board from the October 2022 AGM, having served PACFA in these roles for 6 years. Counselling has grown and flourished under Pat's leadership, and George's great work, with our dedicated accountant Belinda Gomez, is reflected in our financial growth and stability.

It is not quite over yet. I will continue to serve on the Board as ex-officio Immediate Past President, following the October Board elections, providing support to the new President. And of course, I will continue to be a proud member of PACFA and my PACFA TAS Branch.



Di Stow
President



A year of growth and change

Despite the challenges of the Covid pandemic continuing into 2021–22, the past year has been one of membership growth and positive change for PACFA as we refine our activities operationally and increase our engagement externally.

In 2021–22 more than 2000 new members joined us as we took significant steps to cement our position as the premier peak body for counsellors and psychotherapists and to increase recognition of the specialised skills of counsellors, psychotherapists and Indigenous Healing Practitioners.

This included revisions to our membership criteria, publication of a new *Counselling and Psychotherapy Training Standard*, establishment of a College of Creative and Experiential Therapies, a new Interest Group for members working with children and young people, enhanced accreditation processes, refined ethics guidelines and significant re-organisation of our staffing and operational resources to ensure services best support our members.

The prioritisation of the quality of our members' experience can be seen in the introduction of free student membership as well as new web FAQs and a chat function to help people get access to the right information efficiently. We also continue to work on a redevelopment of our Recognition of Prior Learning assessment process to ensure the membership advances the profession.

Most significantly in 2022, PACFA committed to a process of quality improvement to drive greater recognition for the benefit of our members. The first step of this was our plan to apply for full membership of Allied Health Professions Australia adopted by the PACFA Board in February 2022 and accepted by AHPA's Board in August 2022. The enthusiasm and efficiency of this approach was a great credit to the PACFA membership.

Externally PACFA has continued to build meaningful relationships with politicians, the Department of Health, Primary Health Networks and service providers to encourage optimal utilisation of the counselling

and psychotherapy workforce. This included advocacy to the Select Committee into Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy. In December 2021 we joined the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the Department of Health's review of the Medicare Better Access initiative. We have also continued to collaborate and advocate through ARCAP.

New PACFA partnerships were formed with the Mental Health Professionals' Network, the Australian Patients Association, ReturnToWork South Australia, WorkSafe Victoria, Benestar and Malvern Private. New private health insurers and employee assistance programs (EAPs) were also keen to join with PACFA and utilise the skills of our membership.

We also launched a refreshed 'look and feel' on our website, upgraded our Find a Therapist Directory and sent new digital badges with the PACFA member titles 'Certified Practising Counsellor', 'Registered Clinical Counsellor' or 'Registered Clinical Psychotherapist' to practising members to display with pride.



All this could not have been achieved without the efforts of our volunteer members on the Board, committees, interest groups and leadership groups, and of course, our hard-working staff. I thank you all.

In winter, I joined Di Stow in two Branch visit events, a pleasure tinged with sadness as it is Di's final year as President and on the Board. Since joining PACFA as CEO in March 2021, I have much appreciated her wise counsel, positive energy and breadth of knowledge of PACFA and the profession.

2022–23 will be another exciting year as we build on our hard work.

Johanna de Wever
CEO



Membership

- ✓ **2044 new members** joined us in 2021–22
- ✓ **New referral and employment partnerships developed** with Beyond Blue, ReturnToWork South Australia, WorkSafe Victoria, Benestar, Malvern Private and other EAPs
- ✓ **New College of Creative and Experiential Therapies** created
- ✓ Delivered **exclusive digital badges** with titles Certified Practising Counsellor and Registered Clinical Counsellor/ Psychotherapist to eligible practising members



- ✓ Upgraded our **Find a Therapist Directory** enabling search by radius, telehealth, and more
- ✓ First counselling and psychotherapy peak body to offer **free student membership**
- ✓ **Opened online applications** for member upgrades, leave of absence and improved private health Insurance quality assurance processes
- ✓ Introduced new policy for **compassionate fee relief**
- ✓ **New Welcome Packs** produced for incoming members
- ✓ **Reduced upgrade application processing time** from 6 weeks to 2 weeks

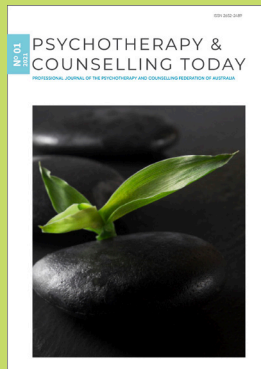
Advocacy and promotion

- ✓ Met with Ministers, Senators, advisors and departmental staff about **increasing utilisation of counsellors and psychotherapists**
- ✓ **Built professional relationships with key workforce stakeholders** including Mental Health Professionals' Network, Australian Patients Association, Allied Health Professions Australia, Marathon Health and Mental Health Australia
- ✓ **Represented members** to the Select Committee into Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy and review of Medicare Better Access initiative
- ✓ Presented to the **National Rural Health Conference**
- ✓ **Released our Federal Election Statement 2022**, a policy platform to inform federal election candidates
- ✓ Launched new look, **easier to navigate website**
- ✓ **Issued 9 media releases**, resulting in multiple interviews with President Di Stow about recognition and greater utilisation of counsellors and psychotherapists
- ✓ **PACFA social media reach increased by 143%**



Publications

- ✓ *Psychotherapy & Counselling Today* (4th edition), edited by Stephen Andrew, sent to members
- ✓ *Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia* Volume 9, No 2, edited by Dr Gávi Ansara, published online



- ✓ **New PACJA editor**, Jane Marsden, appointed
- ✓ **Monthly e-news, CPD Bulletin and Jobs Bulletin** sent to members
- ✓ **COVID-related regulation/practice updates** sent to members

Practice and accreditation

- ✓ Provided more than **1800 free downloads of PACFA CPD webinars** for members
- ✓ Provided **low-cost high quality CPD** to more than 3200 attendees
- ✓ Organised **62 CPD events**, including 15 short courses
- ✓ Development of revised **PACFA Training Standards** (released July 2022)
- ✓ Removal of **Equivalence Pathway to support adherence to AQF framework** and aid member recognition
- ✓ Enhanced accreditation processes, and **refined ethics guidelines**
- ✓ Accreditation of **seven tertiary education courses**, and **one specialist training course**
- ✓ Liaison with universities and private training providers to **support quality training**
- ✓ Responded to **significant increase in demand for ethics support** from members and the public

Our Membership

Individual PACFA Members	
Clinical	1619
Provisional	1511
New Graduate	255
Student	1603
Affiliate	153
Academic	14
Non-Practising	74
Total	5229

Branch Membership	
ACT	130
NSW	2145
NT	21
OS	32
QLD	744
SA	333
TAS	90
VIC	1180
WA	434
Total	5109

Member Association Members	
Clinical	214
Provisional	119
Provisional New Graduate	1
Total	334
Grand Total	5563

College Membership	
College of Counselling	3303
College of Psychotherapy	181
Gestalt Therapy	65
Somatic Psychotherapy	37
Other Modality	78
Australian College of Relationship Counsellors	210
College of Counselling & Psychotherapy Educators	225
College of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Practices	65

Member Association Membership breakdown	
Australian Association of Buddhist counsellors and Psychotherapists	13
The Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand Psychodrama Association	6
Australian Radix Body Centered Psychotherapy Association	5
Association of Soul Centred Psychotherapists Inc.	13
The Association of Transpersonal and Experiential Psychotherapists Inc.	17
Christian Counsellors Association of Australia	230
Australian Technical Analysts Association	6
Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia	7

Total Members: **5563**

2044 new members joined in 2021–2022

More than **1000** PACFA members are now registered for rebates from private health insurers

Treasurer's report 2021-22

Audited financial statements

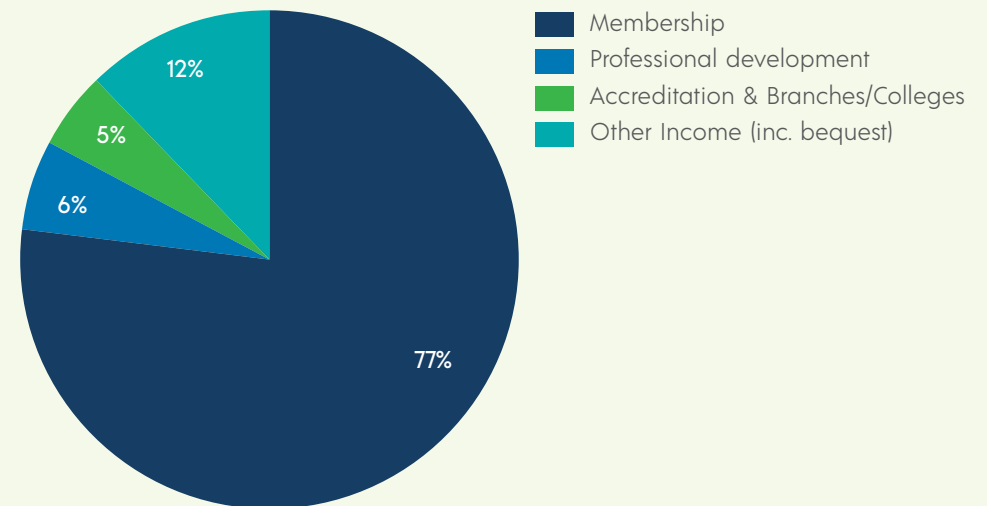
PACFA's financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2022 were prepared by independent auditors, Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards, the Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT), and the Australia Charities and Non-Profits Commission Act 2012. Thank you to Saward Dawson and to PACFA's Accountant, Belinda Gomez, for successful completion of the audit.

Income and expenditure analysis

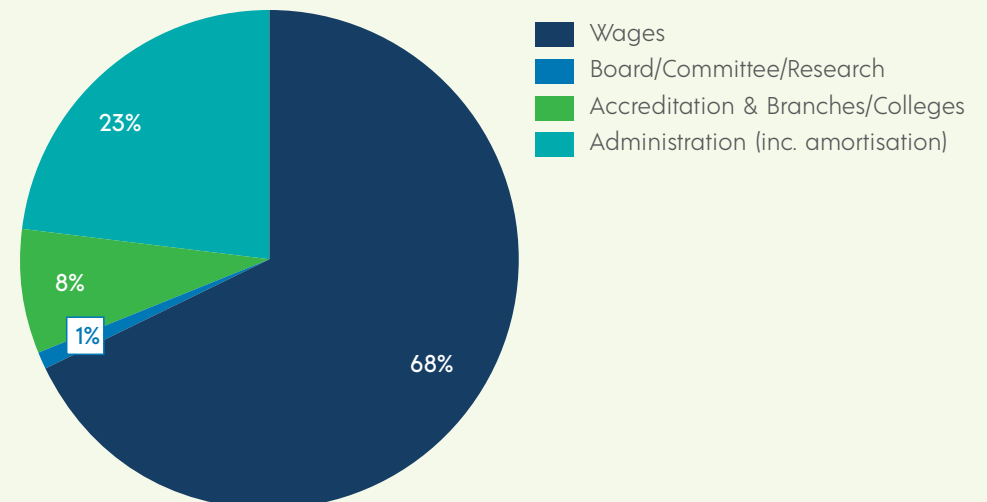
The growth in revenue in 2021-22 was principally from membership growth and increased professional development events delivered by PACFA. A bequest was also received for which a reserve has been created for future spending by CATSIHP. Income grew from course accreditation and registration, while Branch and college incomes were slightly down. Interest income was significantly down due to low interest rates. A planned conference was cancelled during the reporting period so there was no conference income and expenditure related to this.

During the period expenditure was well controlled to maintain PACFA's healthy surplus. The largest expenditure item has been staffing as PACFA has invested in building a strong team to deliver the best outcomes for the members and to respond to the current recruitment market. Other significant expenditure items were rent, portal improvements and professional development expenses, amortisation, and replacement of desktop computers with laptop computers given changes in the working environment since the COVID pandemic.

Income 2021-22



Expenses 2021-22



Balance sheet

The surplus of \$310,365 in 2021–22 is a very positive result as it enables PACFA to increase our reserves. In addition to the CATSIHP reserve of \$100,000 we have created a relocation reserve for \$60,000 as we have moved to a centrally located and comfortable office as the current office is marked for demolition.

The balance surplus of \$150,365 is held in PACFA's accumulated reserves. This will ensure PACFA is financially secure to deliver our mission. However, the Board will consider whether to allocate some of the surplus to priority initiatives in the 2022–23 financial year as we pursue our mission and priority agenda.

As a result of this year's surplus, net assets after meeting all liabilities increased from \$924,721 to \$1,235,086 which is an increase in net assets of 33%.

Our reserves are at an acceptable level for a non-profit organisation the size of PACFA.

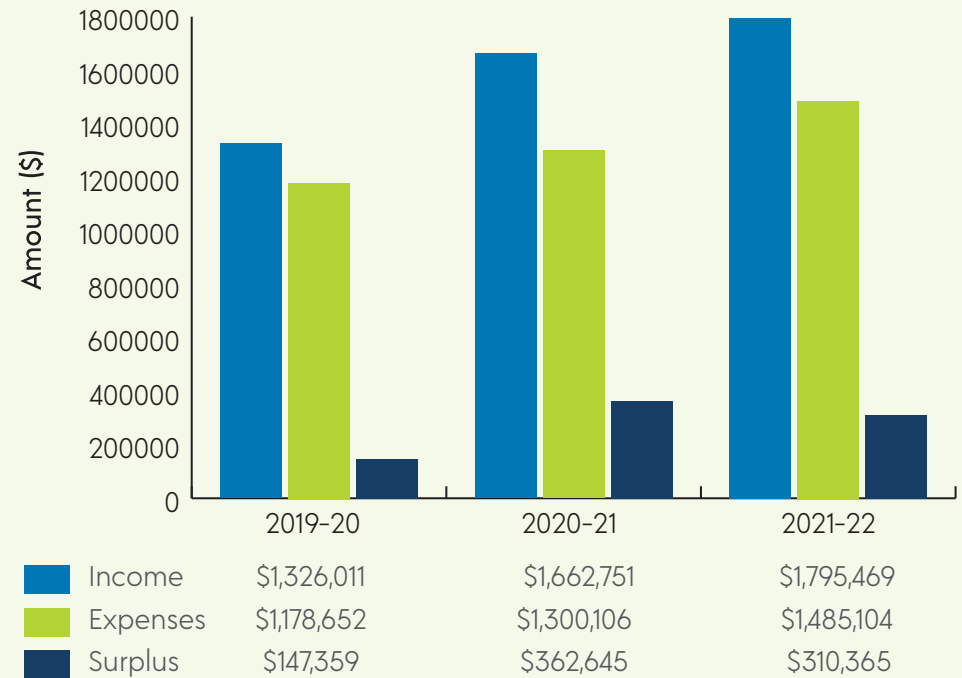
As at the end of the financial year, we are covering current liabilities by 2.02 times slightly higher than last year. This is a very healthy ratio. Our Current Cash Assets are \$2,118,859. This is \$498,944 (31%) above the same time last year. Total Liabilities are higher than last year as we received more income in June 22 for the new financial year. This puts PACFA in a stable financial position going forward.

The Board aims to further increase our reserves over the next 3 years. This is particularly important as it will ensure PACFA continues to be financially stable and secure. Strong reserves will enable PACFA to continue investing in our iMIS membership management system and increase our current workforce to ensure PACFA is fit for purpose as a member-based organisation.



George Gintilas
PACFA Treasurer

Income and expenses with previous years' figures



PACFA Mission

Our mission is **to represent the profession to communities and government, and to develop the evidence-base for counselling and psychotherapy.**

PACFA promotes the development and practice of counselling and psychotherapy and respects and supports the diversity of approaches within the field.



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