







**Alan Ferris**  
CHAIRMAN

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Board of Palmerston Association has been entrusted with the responsibility of preserving Palmerston's rich history and strong reputation while at the same time, growing the organisation in a sustainable way.

It has been an honour again this year to Chair the Palmerston Board. During 2019-20 Palmerston

achieved significant milestones in the operationalisation of our strategic plan, managed changes to the Board membership and successfully managed the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am fortunate to have an incredibly skilled, dynamic and diverse Board. The Board has worked hard to ensure that the changes to the organisation have been managed smoothly and that the organisation has continued to build on its strengths. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Board members for their ongoing contributions, support, passion and engagement throughout the year.

We were sorry to say farewell to long serving Board member Tony Silipo after 26 years of service. Tony was Treasurer of Palmerston during his tenure and his experience, knowledge and long period of service to Palmerston were greatly appreciated.

A skills audit of Board members highlighted the need for clinical, data and IT knowledge to further support our strategic objectives. Following a search for talent we were delighted to welcome Dr Rupert Backhouse, Caroline Elliot and Sankarsharan Thiagarajan to the Board. All three have contributed strongly to the Board's work and we look forward to this continuing.

The Board focus has been around improving and upgrading our corporate systems and investing in our corporate capacity to ensure that we have the right systems, people and skills to deliver on our strategic plan. This work will continue into next year as we position Palmerston as a provider of choice in the provision of services and programs for the drug and alcohol sector.

I am thankful to our CEO who has provided excellent leadership in working with the Board and the staff to successfully manage the changes and challenges that have come in 2020. I would also like to thank our wonderful staff who will continue to drive us forward to achieve our fundamental purpose to positively influence the lives of people, families and communities affected by alcohol and other drugs.



**Emma Jarvis**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## CEO'S REPORT

Palmerston has worked within the West Australian community for almost 40 years and on 5 November 2020 we will celebrate our 40th birthday. We have over this time built a solid reputation and in this financial year we have continued working towards our vision to be the leading and most trusted service improving

the lives of people affected by alcohol and other drugs.

Our first Your Experience of Service (YES) survey taken across all sites highlighted that 94% of clients rated our service good or very good.

We have once again embraced growth, allowing us to increase our geographical footprint and the number of people we work with. Highlights have included the implementation of two new programs in the South East Metro which support families, a Regional Employment Trial to support clients into employment in the Peel region, providing new services in three GP clinics, participating in the take home Naloxone trial and being a consortium partner in the new WA Recovery College.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the organisation fully demonstrate our driving values CARES (Compassion, Acceptance, Respect, Excellence and Service) and I am incredibly proud of the dynamic way we pivoted our service delivery methods in order to continue to meet community need. As an organisation we grew stronger together as we leaned in, learned, listened and adapted. It is a strong testimony to our success that our client numbers have increased again this year.

As an organisation we are committed to further building our relationship with the Aboriginal community and in collaboration with our valued Elders and key stakeholders, we commenced the development of our new Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan. We anticipate this will be ready for launch by the end of 2020.

Finally, we continued to build our capability and increase our capacity to deliver excellent service through reviewing and adapting our operational models to ensure sustainability. This has included increasing our use of technology to streamline systems and processes as well as some operational restructuring.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Board of Directors, management team, wonderful staff, clients and partners of Palmerston for your ongoing support, collaboration and continual pursuit of service excellence.

# Palmerston's COVID-19 Response

Palmerston reacted quickly to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and it was particularly important to ensure the wellbeing of our staff as well as the continuity of service delivery to our clients and residents. Planning undertaken by management during the early stages facilitated a smooth business continuity response.

Technology was mobilised to ensure staff, where possible, were able to work from home effectively and new systems of record keeping were set up. Almost all clients were comfortable to receive counselling sessions remotely. 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) rates reduced significantly, with many clients finding benefits of attending counselling sessions remotely.

The ongoing response was closely monitored by management, to continually review and update our business continuity response, with a particular focus on ensuring effective and regular communications and check ins with our staff. Teams met frequently via video calls and even engaged in online social gatherings at the end of each week.

A number of initiatives were put in place including a pulse survey to evaluate staff wellbeing, the effectiveness of working from home procedures, and how comfortable our staff were regarding a graduated return to work process.

Once again, the commitment, resilience and dedication of Palmerston staff across all branches was evident and allowed for an almost unaffected delivery of service and unwavering quality of care. Responses to the survey provided us with assurance that staff were confident in our pandemic response, and also open to longer term changes in how we work, including continuing the provision of remote counselling for clients, offering increased choice of service availability. 93% of staff felt exceedingly well supported and informed.

Palmerston also utilised social media and videos to support our clients and communities across the regions in which we work. The 'we are in this together' message shared with our community helped break down the 'them' and 'us' barriers between services and clients and anecdotal feedback from clients was that they appreciated Palmerston's engagement and business continuity during the lockdown period.

## Continuity of Service

The COVID-19 restrictions saw Palmerston review and remodel service delivery to our clients. We really did place people at the heart of our thinking when responding to such a unique situation. Clients across the organisation were able to access services via telephone and digital platforms and feedback on this method of delivery has been very positive. In the Great Southern as travel to remote communities was not permitted, online bush classrooms were also developed to support engagement with young people in communities isolated as a result of the virus.

Residential Therapeutic Community (TC) services continued with increased hygiene and infection control measures including reduced occupancy. Residents were able to leave the program to be with family during lockdown restrictions and whilst it was a challenging time, those who stayed benefited and worked productively in the program. As outings were no longer permitted we introduced additional health and wellbeing activities such as walks, yoga and mindfulness classes. Residents also turned their hands to more practical things such as making washable and reusable facemasks. Despite the intensity of the situation, the tenacity and strength of both TC communities was evident and residents shared regularly how grateful they were to be at the TC and how they couldn't imagine a safer place to be.



Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 landscape, Palmerston continued to have a positive impact within the community in which we work with a extensive list of activities undertaken both in the metropolitan, South West and Great Southern regions. Some have been highlighted below.

#### INNOVATION

Delivery of the innovative Regional Employment Trial for clients in recovery, in partnership with Jobs South West in the Mandurah Peel Health Hub.

#### PREVENTION

We continued a focus on prevention through a number of activities including community education, health promotion events, the Needle and Syringe Exchange program and participation in the MHC trial naloxone project to help prevent overdose.

#### FLEXIBLE SERVICES

In conjunction with emergency and community services, further embedding of a suicide prevention response in the Great Southern providing specialised support to those bereaved by suicide.

#### WORKING WITH OUR YOUTH

Supporting our youth through mentoring, resilience and transition programs, helping young people at risk transition from primary to senior high school.

#### COLLABORATION

New partnerships and continued collaboration with community organisations and allied health services working together to provide a range of programs which have a positive impact on our clients.

#### RECONCILIATION

The development of a draft Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), through extensive consultation with our Aboriginal Elders, Board, staff and oversight by the Palmerston RAP working group.

#### LISTENING AND LEARNING

Yarning with Aboriginal Elder Gabrielle Hansen, on country in Katanning, listening and learning of her journey through the challenges of colonisation to become a respected Aboriginal Elder.

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff at our newest residential service, Beela Valley TC, focussed on engagement with the local South West community to expand our reach and increase local referrals to the service.

#### GROWING THE REACH OF OUR SERVICES

We provided outreach and support in a number of communities across the Metropolitan and Great Southern Regions. This included outreach in Pinjarra and Waroona in collaboration with GP down south, provision of some in home services as well as outreach services exclusively to Aboriginal people in both the Perth and Great Southern Regions.

#### FAMILIES

A greater focus across the organisation on family work. This included family sensitive practice, counselling and support groups as well as working with other services to provide support to families at risk.

#### BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Organising the first Waakal Moort Kaadjining festival in Armadale, attended by over 700 community members and 40 organisations to promote the services available to our Aboriginal community.



POSITIVE  
INFLUENCE  
WITH GREATER  
IMPACT



Palmerston invested significant time and resource into identifying and implementing organisational management systems and processes to support priorities in this financial year. We invested in organisational capability, and grew a skilled workforce to thrive in the changing environment.

#### REVIEW OF SYSTEMS

Palmerston undertook a significant audit of systems and review of processes to identify improvements and implement new organisational management systems to support business priorities.

The implementation and update of systems have cut finance and payroll processing times by 50% in six months.

## DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

#### TRAINING TO BUILD CAPABILITY

As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions a staff member at Palmerston Farm TC was trained as a certified SMART facilitator so groups could be held on site. Residents from stage two onwards were able continue their personal work by setting and achieving short term goals, and provided an opportunity for two senior residents to enrol in the SMART Recovery Facilitator training and co-facilitate onsite.

SMART groups are delivered at all Palmerston branches as a continuing care initiative.

#### USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY

We undertook an extensive review and research for a new client management system (CMS) to enable better access to program specific data and outcomes which will ensure that what we do is effective and support us to do more.

The Lumary CMS will be rolled out in late 2020.

#### LISTENING AND LEARNING

Palmerston continues to invest in our peer workforce and now have our first fully integrated peer support worker in the Great Southern. This position was designed and developed by the Insight Consumer Reference Group.

“Being a Peer Support Worker at Palmerston has been a thoroughly rewarding and fulfilling experience. Being in this role demonstrates to clients that their past does not have to define them, that they can rebuild their life and they can become more than what they are today - I get to provide that example. I offer a unique understanding and a knowing that only someone who has walked in their path knows. And some days that's all they need.

I get to give them hope.

I am so grateful to Palmerston for supporting me through my recovery when I was a client, and as an equal team member now that I am an employee.

Being recognised for the skills I have to offer is an absolute honour!”

*Penni, peer worker Albany*

We have worked hard to improve the services we offer and continuously evaluate our services to identify, implement and promote best practice.

#### YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE

Palmerston surveyed 489 clients over a two week period in November 2019. The snapshot results demonstrated the difference Palmerston is making. Over 94% of clients surveyed felt that their individuality and values were respected and their experience of our services was very good or excellent.

#### EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

We have embarked on an exciting journey to develop a Palmerston specific evaluation framework that is aligned with the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS) Outcomes Framework. Work is ongoing to refine the framework with the aim of evaluating our service across the client journey. We will ensure that our desired measures can be collected and reported on using our new client management system.

#### COLLABORATION

In collaboration with managers and coordinators we explored what data we need for reporting and what additional meaningful data we would like about our service delivery and outcomes. We also looked at what clinical tools we could use and how our evaluation activities would tie in with the WACOSS wider sector outcomes of 'safe', 'healthy', 'stable', 'empowered', 'connected' and 'equipped'.

## EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE AND EVALUATION

#### DATA COLLECTION

The new Client Management System is being developed to enable program specific data collection and analysis to better inform the work that we do.

#### INTEGRATE RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO INFORM PRACTICE

The evaluation of the metropolitan Parents Under Pressure program was developed in conjunction with a Curtin University researcher, to ensure excellence in delivering individual and program level outcomes.

#### CONTINUE TO MEET TARGETS

We continue to meet our contractual targets as set by all of our funding bodies.

#### STAFF WELLBEING DURING COVID-19

We surveyed our staff to gauge wellbeing, views on support, work structures and ideas on opportunities to improve the way we work and deliver services. The results reflected a strong sense of feeling supported, cared for and well informed and staff appreciated the opportunity provide feedback on what was working, not working and what aspects of the changes to the way we are offering services and functioning as teams we would like to keep.



Following the success of the long established Parents under Pressure program in both Albany and Katanning, Palmerston's South East Metro Community Alcohol and Drug Service (SEMCADS) received funding from the Department of Communities to implement the program in South East Metro region.

### PARENTS UNDER PRESSURE

In 2019 Palmerston's SEMCADS implemented the Parents Under Pressure (PUP) program to help support parents in the community struggling with drug and alcohol use, financial stress, physical and mental health issues, family violence, or conflict in their lives. PUP is an evidence-based program that aims to improve parenting skills, knowledge and abilities, enhance family functioning and provide assistance to families to create an environment where children feel safe.

The counsellor/educator engaged to coordinate and facilitate the program visited the team in Albany who were able to provide valuable insight into the program. The counsellor also undertook a six month certificate of accreditation to become a qualified Parents Under Pressure facilitator.

The program, delivered to families with children up to 12 years, is tailored to suit the needs of each family helping parents build more positive, secure relationships with their children, using a combination of counselling and family sessions including: child centred play therapy, family therapy, art therapy, mindfulness and psycho-education techniques.

The work is focusing on safe attachment and emotional regulation that supports child development. Parents are encouraged to engage in local community networks such as playgroups, afterschool activities, financial counselling, child development centres, legal centres, medical and psychological services.

The first PUP client intake and assessment took place in September 2019. Families were referred from within Palmerston as well as the Cannington Armadale Family Support Network, local primary schools and hospitals.

As the program expanded, so did community awareness of its existence and by October 2019 the program was running at full capacity and a waitlist established.

## UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

### FROM A STAFF PERSPECTIVE

The most significant change observed in this family has been how dedicated they are to communicating and engaging with each other, and not giving up. They are working more together as a team and valuing how important they are to each other. The parent's patience, persistence, resilience and willingness to get help and do the work (participate in the program) has made this positive change possible for them.

### CATHY'S STORY

Before I had felt very isolated, friends and family had abandoned me because they felt too overwhelmed with my problems. I didn't know where to go to get the long-term help that I needed. There seemed to be no one around to point me in the right direction. I felt depressed, in pain, and unable to get help for myself, so I wasn't able to be there for my children, as I wanted to be. As a family we were facing so many pressures, and we were struggling.

At times over these months I had hospital admissions, and the biggest things I think of is the support my PUP counsellor provided to stay connected, to give hope and to keep making plans, goals and setting up sessions for the future. Having someone there to talk to helped to reduce my anxiety and stress levels by reassuring me of my strengths I have as a parent and giving me the confidence to make weekly goals and changes to help support myself and my family life. My husband and I made the effort to spend more time together, instead of sleeping away the pain. My husband stepped up and took our sons fishing more regularly, and our sons were happier and more content.

Over the months I spent participating in the program I learnt a lot more about myself, and myself as a parent. I focussed more on my family, to make more time for myself, time for my children, and even have some one-on-one time with my children. The program made me commit and set aside precious time each week to participate in family sessions and individual counselling for me to practically work through things that were happening for me and my family.

Having the support to engage and persist in accessing and receiving other health services that provided my sons diagnosis and NDIS support changed our family's world.

Doing art therapy was really enjoyable; expressing how I was feeling through colour and the use of different materials, I was able to play and have fun too. The children made wishing bead hangings to go on the trees at home, and we discovered what some of their wishes were e.g. to go fishing more. The activities we did in the PUP sessions gave us ideas that we used through COVID-19 isolation time.

We all got involved in the PUP program, we had the same goal- to help our family. We felt closer. Some things became easier for me to manage because I felt more supported and less on my own...Cathy

Here at Palmerston, we continuously collect data in order to evaluate our services so we can develop and deliver models of care in line with the best available evidence.


 TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS IS **6424**

**58%** 3740 WERE MALE

**39%** 2520 WERE FEMALE

**<1%** 4 CLIENTS DID NOT IDENTIFY AS EITHER MALE OR FEMALE

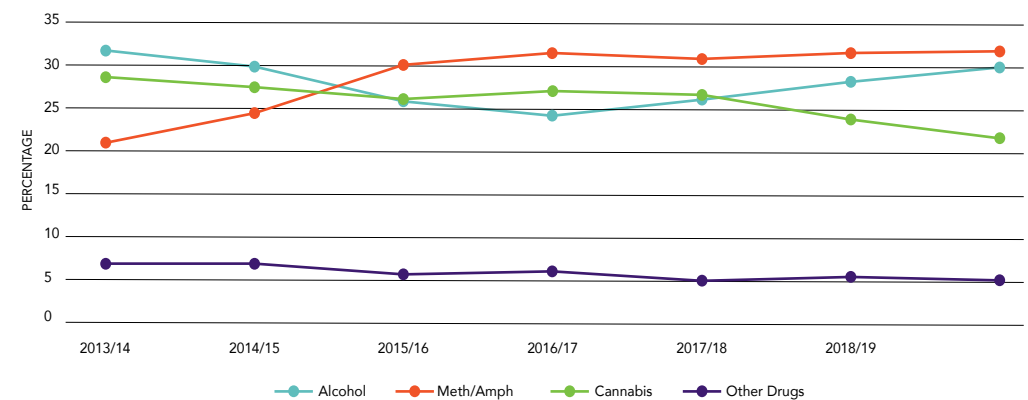
**11.4%** OF OUR CLIENTS IDENTIFIED AS ABORIGINAL

THE REMAINDER (160 CLIENTS) WERE PART OF UNSURVEYED CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS.

**24%** OF OUR CLIENTS WERE 24 YEARS OR UNDER AND **38%** WERE 29 YEARS OR UNDER

ALMOST **6%** OF CLIENTS WERE OVER 60

The chart below highlights the change to the major drugs of concern since 2013. The most recent figures show a continuing increase in alcohol and decrease in cannabis as the main drug of concern. Whilst methamphetamine is remaining steady, it is still reported as the main drug of concern by our clients.



Other drugs: including but not limited to Heroin, Nicotine, Cocaine, Ecstasy, LSD, prescription drugs



Snap Shot of Palmerston's Therapeutic Communities (TC) -  
Palmerston Farm TC and Beela Valley TC



TOTAL OF  
TC RESIDENTS  
\*(INCLUDED IN TOTAL  
CLIENT NUMBER OF 6424)

263

177 MALE ..... 86 FEMALE

16% ABORIGINAL  
RESIDENTS  
(A SLIGHT INCREASE  
OF 1% FROM 2018)

AGE RANGE OF  
RESIDENTS WAS  
18 - 59  
YEARS OLD

PRIMARY DRUG  
OF CONCERN (TCs)



METHAMPHETAMINE 57%

ALCOHOL 30%

CANNABIS 7%

HEROIN 3%

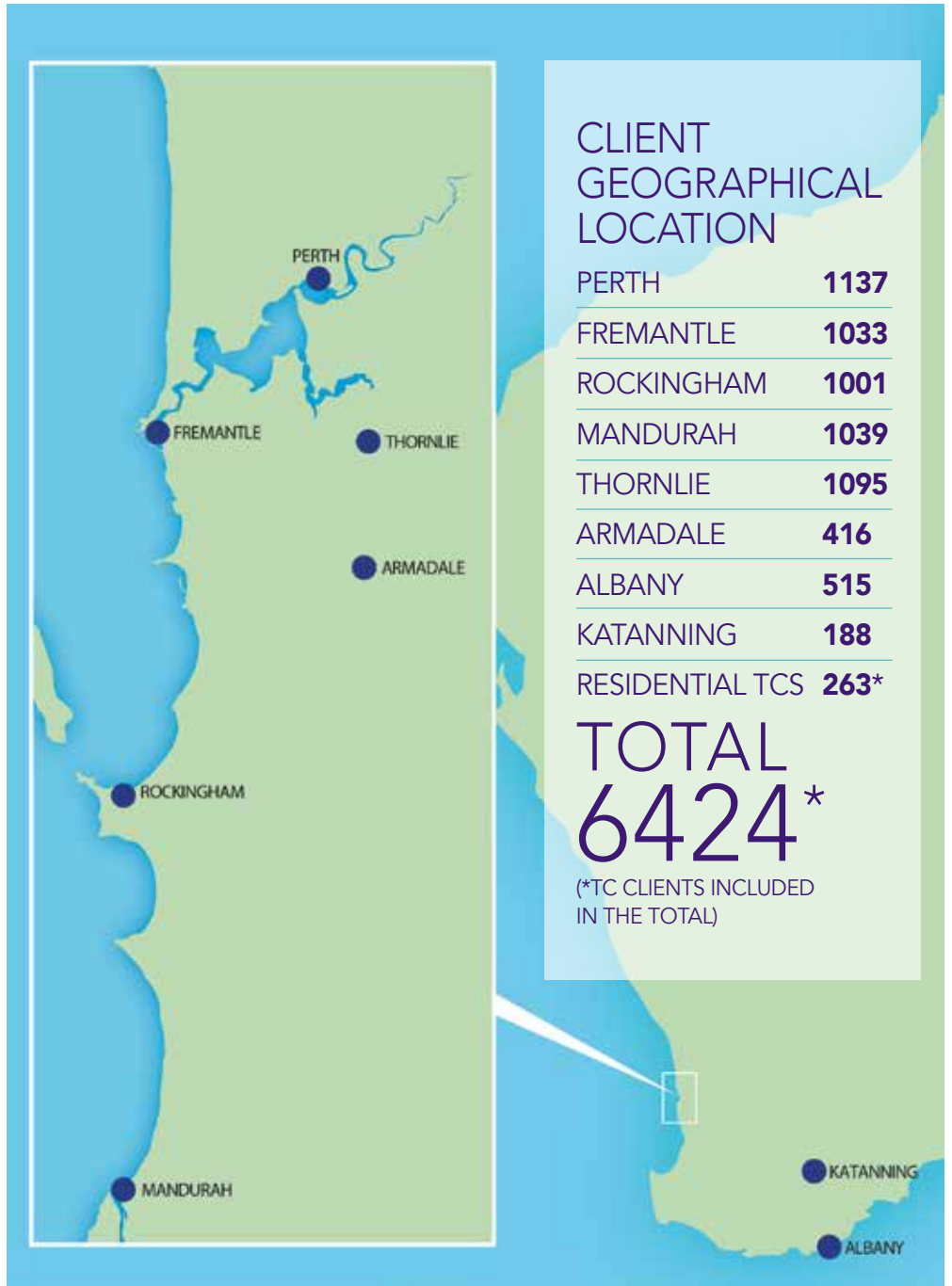
OTHER 3%

CLIENT  
GEOGRAPHICAL  
LOCATION

PERTH	1137
FREMANTLE	1033
ROCKINGHAM	1001
MANDURAH	1039
THORNIE	1095
ARMADALE	416
ALBANY	515
KATANNING	188
RESIDENTIAL TCS	263*

TOTAL  
6424\*

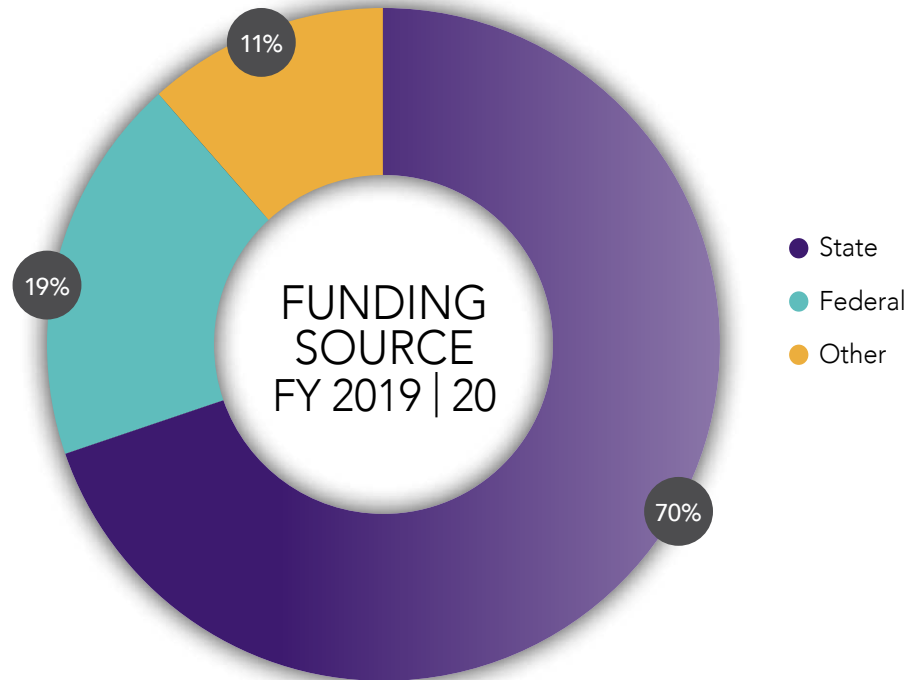
(\*TC CLIENTS INCLUDED  
IN THE TOTAL)



# Financial Summary

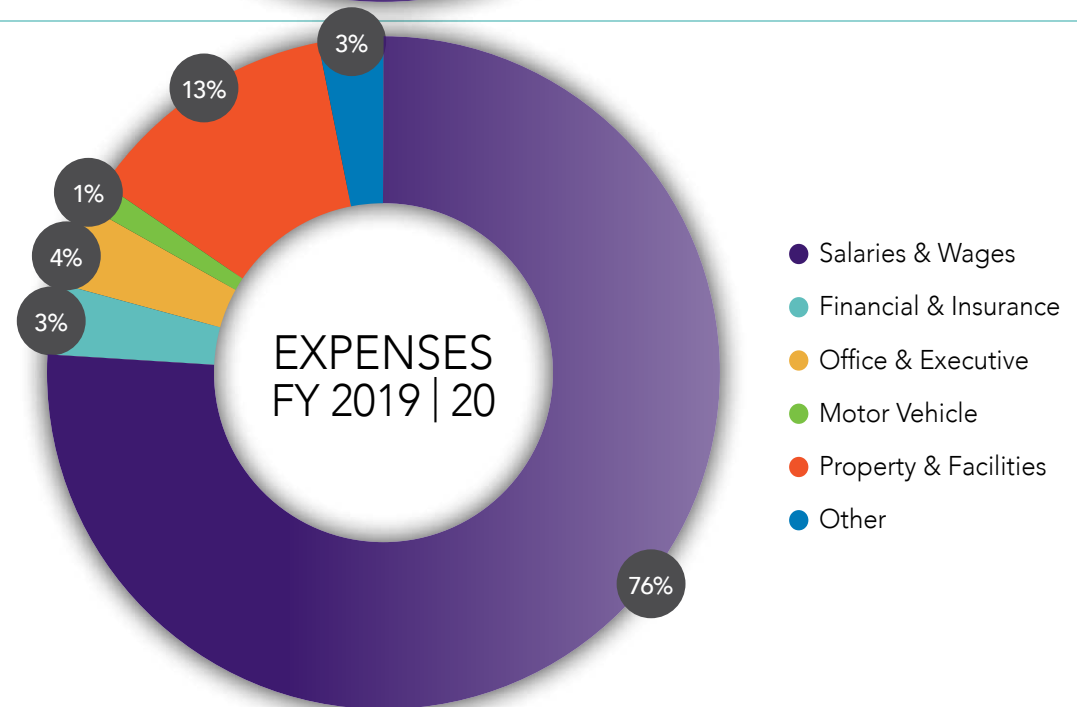
## INCOME

Palmerston receives 89% of its funding from Government sources with 19% of this from Federal/Commonwealth funding and 70% from the State Government. Of the state funding, the Mental Health Commission is the largest single funder at just over 95% of State funding. Other funding, representing 11 % of total income, is made up of smaller grants, fee for service, donations and interest income.



## EXPENSES

Salaries and wages make up the majority of expenses at 76% as one would expect with the nature of our services. The next largest is property and facilities expenses due to the multiple locations required in order to deliver our services over a large geographical area. Remaining costs are made up of financial and insurance, motor vehicles, office and executive, and other costs





# In summary...

Despite all the challenges we have achieved a great deal this financial year including:

- Organisational sustainability project
- Employee Self Serve system implementation
- Expense Manager system implementation
- Lumary client management system project
- Tendering for and winning two new major contracts
- Preparation for mid-term accreditation to transition to the new Alcohol and Other Drug and Human Services Standard
- Development of a Palmerston evaluation framework and implementation plan
- Development of a new Stretch RAP
- Planning for Palmerston's 40th birthday celebrations
- Achievement of all contractual outcomes
- Successful management of organisation through COVID-19 pandemic resulting in client numbers staying the same and maintaining a positive culture.

## COVER PAGE ARTWORK:

Artwork by YirraKurl artists Deborah Newenham and Melissa Spillman who are Aboriginal Artists from Western Australia. This painting is their interpretation of the fantastic work achieved by Palmerston, and was commissioned to celebrate our 40th birthday.

# What next...

- Palmerston in partnership with Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, have won the competitive tender to deliver the **Solid Steps AOD Recovery Program**. This innovative program supports men to break the cycle of addiction to alcohol and other drugs within a modified therapeutic community environment. Located in the Mallee Unit within Casuarina Prison, the voluntary program is aimed at males aged 18+ from all cultural backgrounds. The program will commence in October 2020.
- In a further partnership with Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, we have won the tender to deliver **Connect Wanju (Connect and Welcome)**, a General Court Intervention Program (GCIP) within the Perth Metro area. The program aims to enhance the treatment outcomes of people within the court system eligible for support. The broader community outcomes are to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody and to improve community safety through reduced offending behaviour. The program will commence in November 2020.
- Finalisation of the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan - Reconciliation Australia describe the Stretch stage as that of embedding reconciliation, and this recognises that Palmerston have already succeeded in establishing a strong approach towards advancing reconciliation internally.
- The roll out of our new client management system Lumary in late 2020.
- Finalisation of the Palmerston Evaluation Framework.
- The celebration of Palmerston's 40th birthday on 5 November 2020.



# Palmerston

Improving your wellbeing

ihca  
supporting excellence  
CERTIFICATION

Standard on Culturally  
Secure Practice  
QUALITY CERTIFIED  
ORGANISATION

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of this land upon which we walk together. We recognise that Palmerston services are located on Nyoongar country.



[palmerston.org.au](http://palmerston.org.au)