



Annual Report

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JOHN PIERCE CENTRE
Spirit of the Deaf Community

Mission Statement:

Inspired by Jesus Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church, the John Pierce Centre seeks to empower all Deaf people and their families within Victoria to live their lives to the full

Our Vision:

To Promote Community through Education, Spiritual, and Family Support

Values:

To be inclusive of Deaf and hard of hearing people and their families

To be fair and ethical in all of our dealings

To have a team of staff and volunteers filled with passion and compassion
To be open to working with other organisations, individuals and corporations

To manage our resources with efficiency and effectiveness

To create a safe environment

To be accountable and transparent in our governance and business practices



Directors' Annual Report

On behalf of the John Pierce Centre (JPC) Board of Directors I am pleased to present our annual report for the 2023 year.

At the time of preparing the report, the JPC Accounts for the 2023 year have been subjected to the usual practice of a full independent review in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Auditing Standard ASRE 2415 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012. No issues were identified and the JPC continues to be in a financial position wherein the organisation is able to pay its accounts as and when they fall due.

During 2023, I am pleased to be able to say that the John Pierce Centre and services returned to a much more complete basis of support for our community activities and meetings. Of course, this was only possible with the continuing dedication and hard work of the JPC Staff, Board and Volunteers who ensure we continue to deliver our services to support our community. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to our JPC Staff and our Volunteers for their ongoing wonderful work and dedication.

*Our Executive Manager Sophie Duncan, who took up her role in the middle of 2023, has done a great job managing the Centre and keeping the Board apprised. Sophie continues to lead the JPC Staff and community with her energetic and committed approach, and is to be commended for her resilience and dedication.

*Brother Shane Wood continues to provide his valuable support and input to the Board.

*Financially we continue to remain focused on a careful approach to managing the finances and resources of the JPC.

* The Management, Strategy and Finance subcommittees continued to effectively support the JPC operations and the Board in its governance role.

* We have refreshed our JPC Values to reflect the different world we now live in and continue to focus on implementing our strategy to ensure JPC has a sustainable role in continuing to support our community going forward.

I would also like to thank my fellow Directors for their continuing support and professional commitment in their stewardship role for the JPC.

We are all encouraged to see our JPC team and community continuing to work together with understanding and compassion for each other in the Spirit of our Founders.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese and all our committed financial supporters, stakeholders, advocates and benefactors, without whom we could not meet our pastoral and community needs.



The JPC remains a unique Centre with compassion and inclusion at its core, positively impacting all those with whom it comes into contact - a demonstration of faith in action.

I commend the John Pierce Centre Board of Directors report for 2023.

Trevor Hughes
Chairperson
John Pierce Centre

JPC Board of Directors 2023



Dean Sinclair
Treasurer



Br Shane Wood
Board Minute
Secretary



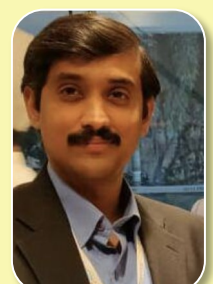
Sonya
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Evelyne
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Lucille
Bennetto



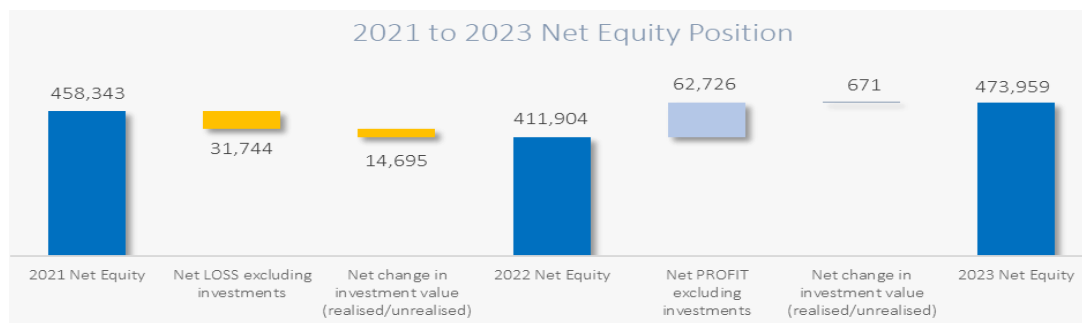
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Treasurer's Annual Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the John Pierce Centre Ltd Special Purpose Financial Statements for 2023. Overall, 2023 ended up being a *record year* in terms of profit and net operating cashflows. Net Profit excluding gains or losses on investment was \$62,726. This result was helped by a number of one off items - two bequests totalling \$34,125, and annual and long service leave provisions (notional accounting entries) with Carmel and Gail having retired. Excluding one off, abnormal items, we would have realised a loss from normal operations of c. \$25,750, which is c. \$5k more favourable than our budgeted forecasts.

At the start of the year, we sold our Vanguard Bond Fund holding and realised a net loss (including capital and income) of c. \$9k. This loss has been more than offset by a net gain (capital and income) from our convertible preference shares of c. \$38k over the past 14 months.

Our net cashflow for the year increased by \$57,701 (or \$4,800 excluding one off abnormal items) leading to a cash and liquid assets (investments) position of over \$500k. The below table provides a summary of our net equity position after retained earnings (profit/loss) and change in the market value of our investment portfolio from 2021 to 2023 as at the end of December.



Looking at the year ahead, we are forecasting a modest net loss of \$14k having taken a conservative lens to revenue and expense forecasts.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those that have contribute to JPC over these difficult years. We remain particularly grateful to our ongoing and loyal benefactors, such as the Ephpheta and Gorman Foundations, and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. The generosity of all involved is greatly appreciated by the Board, and assists JPC in providing and maintaining a solid level of support to the Victorian deaf community.

In closing, the Board and myself are most appreciative of the efforts of our Executive Manager, Sophie Duncan, and her team for maintaining a very prudent approach to spending. I would like to also acknowledge our chair, Trevor Hughes for his support, and our book keeper, Greta Tapps and our auditor, Ryk Eksteen of Collins & Co, for their assistance in preparing and reviewing our JPC Financial Statements.

We look forward to seeing you all at the centre.

Dean Sinclair

Treasurer, John Pierce Centre

JPC Staff 2023



Sophie Duncan
Executive Manager
from May 2023



Fr Wayne Edwards
Chaplain



Salomon Gerber
Operations Officer



Katrina Mynard
Pastoral Team
Coordinator



Janette Murphy
Pastoral Team



Diane Backholer
Community
Activities
Co-ordinator

Executive Manager's Report

2023 was an unusual year at JPC. It began on a sad note with the passing of three beloved members of our community; Maureen Brown, Raylee Thornton, and Margaret Brown. Carmel Phillips then became ill in February which ended with her retirement at our AGM in May. We thank Carmel for all of her wonderful work throughout her time as Executive Manager at JPC.

Some of our key achievements during the year included being able to secure several small grants to deliver exercise classes each week for our community and continuing our work in addressing Elder abuse in the Deaf community where many of our members are at high risk. It also included a grant from Tobin Brothers for the purchase of a defibrillator for the centre.

One of the highlights in 2023, was hosting Fr. Michael Depcik, an American Deaf priest, who lead a heartwarming special service here at JPC in July and spent time talking to the community. Katrina Mynard was invited to speak at the #Embolden2023 Symposium for Celebrating ageing—Building Respect for older people. A huge achievement for Katrina and an important work in reducing the gap of service for older Deaf people. JPC also restarted it's outreach program in Gippsland which was highly successful.

JPC had many staff movements during the year. Firstly , the resignation of Catherine Miller. Catherine did a wonderful job helping to reinvigorate Signee Tots playgroup and assist with the recruitment of Kym Parker and Ashleigh Kedge as volunteers to run Signee Tots moving forward. Families have found Sundays to be ideal and we now have up to 20 children attending each month. We thank our wonderful volunteers for their dedication and hard work.

After Carmel's resignation, I was promoted to Executive Manager and Salomon Gerber was recruited into the role of Operations Assistant. Salomon was instrumental in helping to reform the Men's Group. Margherita Riccioni also resigned from her position of Grants Officer and we thank her for the many grants she was able to secure during her time at JPC. The biggest thank you must go to Gail Finn for her amazing 24 years of service to JPC! She has spent countless hours here working and volunteering. The centre doesn't function without her deep knowledge of its workings. Even though Gail resigned, she continued to volunteer and support the work of JPC and this is truly appreciated.

Many thanks to our 2023 program participants, volunteers, donors, funders, Board, and staff for their commitment to the important work of the John Pierce Centre in supporting the social and spiritual wellbeing of the Deaf community throughout Victoria.

Sophie Duncan
Executive Manager
John Pierce Centre

Outgoing JPC Staff 2023



Teresa Paulet
Communications
Co-ordinator/
Interpreter



Carmel Phillips
Executive Manager
Resigned May



Gail Finn
Operations Assistant and
Liturgy Co-ordinator
Resigned September



Margherita Riccioni
Grants Officer
Resigned October



Ms Catherine Miller
Community Worker -
Family Support/ Project
Coordinator
Resigned August

Supporters Acknowledgement

On behalf of the John Pierce Centre staff and Board, we would like to sincerely thank the many people and organisations that have supported our work throughout the year.

Our appreciation goes out to the

- ongoing and first-time donors to our annual fundraiser Ephpheta Appeal
- long term private benefactors
- many community volunteers who helped us deliver our social groups and activities.
- philanthropic organisations who through their granting have made some of our core work and project initiatives possible including the Gorman Foundation, Ephpheta Foundation, CCI

Giving, Tobin Brothers Funerals, Felton Bequest and the William Angliss Charitable Fund

- many partners that supported our work including Deaf Victoria, Expression Australia, Deaf Connect, Melbourne Polytechnic, Victorian College of the Deaf, Council on the Ageing Victoria.
- faith organisations including Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, St. Patrick's Cathedral East Melbourne, Josephite's Associates, St. Paul Apostle Catholic Community Endeavor Hills, Catholic Social Services Victoria, donors of various goods and services including Toorak Uniting Church, Endeavour Hills Uniting Church
- Auslan and Deaf Interpreters who have worked closely with us to help facilitate our programs, services, staff meetings and events
- members of the JPC Deaf Men's Group who have volunteered their time to help with maintenance and



THE WILLIAM ANGLISS
CHARITABLE FUND

Community Groups, Spiritual Care & Pastoral Care

Community activities have continued to address the needs of individuals facing isolation. JPC serves as a welcoming hub specifically catering to D/deaf and hard of hearing individuals, fostering a sense of security and empowerment. Through diverse activities, JPC facilitates the formation of community bonds, enhances well-being, and fosters skill development. The centre offers a Deaf-friendly environment tailored to the unique perspectives and communication styles of its patrons, facilitating seamless interaction. JPC acknowledges the tireless efforts of its pastoral care team and group coordinators in orchestrating a wide array of enriching activities and providing vital support to vulnerable community members. The year 2023 marked a dynamic period characterised by heightened engagement and connectivity within the community.

450 hours of group sessions

for 2023

Approximately **125** people

attended regularly

340 Deaf Community

members supported

Over 520 hours

of pastoral support

18 church services in 2023

including special services

296 people attended the **monthly**

Mass services over the year

325 attended **special services**

Livestreaming of services with
regular watchers

Projects

Defibrillator Training and Equipment

JPC received a small grant from Tobin Brothers Funerals for the purchase of a defibrillator as well as training on the use of this equipment in an emergency. With many of aging seniors attending our centre it is vital that the staff and some volunteers are capable of assisting in medical emergencies. The device is a great addition to the centre and the local community.

Seniors Strengthening, Balance and Fitness Classes

JPC was supported by Felton Bequest to deliver a seniors exercise program to support the strengthening, balance and fitness of senior community members. The classes ran once a week for several weeks. Regular exercise helps seniors to improve their physical health. It strengthens muscles and bones, improves cardiovascular health, and enhances flexibility and balance, reducing the risk of falls and fractures.

The classes also offer an opportunity for social interaction and connection which is essential for emotional wellbeing within the Deaf community. It combats feelings of loneliness and isolation often experienced by older Deaf people.

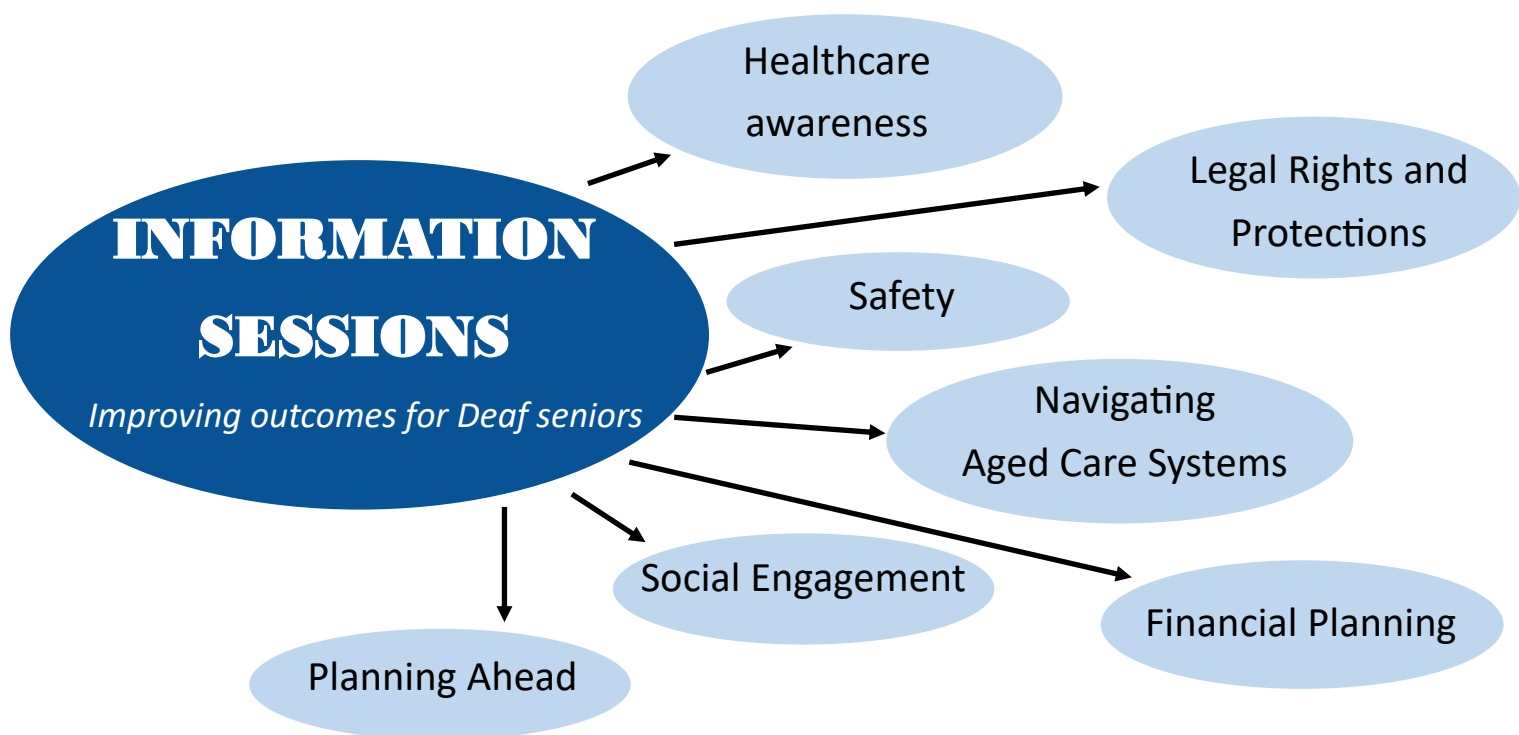
Due to the success of the program, JPC was successful in receiving a second grant later in the year from William Angliss Charitable Fund to continue the classes.





Information Sessions for Senior Deaf

JPC secured a grant from CCI Giving to establish a series of conversational sessions in collaboration with Seniors Rights Victoria around important topics related to seniors. Elder information plays a crucial role in promoting the health, safety, well-being, and independence of seniors, enabling them to lead fulfilling lives as they age. 2023 saw the planning of the sessions with the key aims and topics established based on need from the community. Topics included money, safety, grandchildren, as well as adult children living at home.



Partnerships

- In 2023, the John Pierce Center continued their partnership with the Council on the Ageing Victoria (COTA) and specifically their Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) program team; to complete the development of brochures with specific information for Deaf people about elder abuse and their rights. SRV provides information, support, advice and education to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older people. The brochure information was signed in Auslan on film by a JPC Deaf community member and is on the JPC website. Access to information in Auslan is a priority for JPC when providing vital community information.
- In 2023 Expression Australia and Deaf Connect who are leaders in service provision in the Deaf sector, attended the community centre throughout the year to provide information sessions about services available to the community and guidance to accessing eligible services.
- JPC worked with Tobin Brothers Funerals to support community members in the planning and organising of funerals throughout 2023. We are grateful for the continued partnership with Tobin Brothers for all their support of our community.





Communications & Events

1,017 followers on Facebook

14% increase of followers

newsletter subscribers **660**

In 2023 the John Pierce Centre provided a range of activities, events and supports. Communication is provided to community members and stakeholders via our newsletters. Information is also distributed via our Facebook page and website.

Events like the monthly Mass is livestreamed on Facebook and many information videos are provided in Auslan on our Facebook page.

Expanding our network and contacts is a key element of the work at JPC to ensure successful outcomes for Deaf community.

Regular annual events at JPC were once again well attended, including the AGM. The Thankyou party was held to give thanks to all of the volunteers that give up their time to support the vital work of the JPC. We could not operate without volunteers and we are truly thankful for their time and energy.

The annual Christmas Rally is the biggest event of the calendar for the community where people come together to give thanks for the year and the community that share a deep and special connection through language, history and culture.

Community Impact



Volunteer—Paul Jones

“I have been coming to the John Pierce Centre Pankina Social group for nine years. I enjoy coming and spending time with people. As a Deaf person who uses Auslan, it is a great place to come and be able to freely communicate with other Deaf people that sign.”

The centre is a great space with everything that we need. There are very few spaces like this for Deaf people.

I volunteered on the Pankina Social Group committee seven years ago and then became the Treasurer five years ago. I really like the opportunities to learn skills on the committee and as the treasurer. I also enjoy that I am helping out the Deaf community as well as getting to catch up with friends socially.”

Volunteer – Kathy Schmitt

“I first started coming to the John Pierce Centre for the Pankina Social Group three years ago when I was working as a Support Worker. I came with my clients and I thought it was just a catholic group for older people, but I soon realised that the group was welcoming of all people. It doesn't matter if you're not catholic and not a senior. So I started coming for myself .”



During Covid I was living alone and it was quite isolating. I remember at a health appointment I was given tips to reducing loneliness and one of them was to join a social group. I believe this is true. The social connections are really valuable for the Deaf community and I enjoy coming to the Pankina group.

A year ago, I volunteered to join the Pankina Social Group committee and I am enjoying learning new skills. I enjoy giving back to the Deaf community and the opportunities it offers me to catch up with friends.”

You can support the work of JPC...

MAKE A DONATION

By supporting John Pierce Centre, you are creating a positive change.

Financial donations are welcomed and can be made by visiting www.jpc.org.au or calling our Office on (03) 9525 1158.

Cheque, money order or telephone donations can be made to John Pierce Centre.

You may also like to donate online at www.givenow.com.au/jpcdonations

All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. Scan the QR code to donate



LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift to John Pierce Centre in your Will, you will have a lasting impact, supporting John Pierce Centre Deaf Community for years to come.

For more information, please contact our Administration Office on 03 9525 1158. or email us at admin@jpc.org.au

VOLUNTEER

We welcome volunteers' involvement at JPC.

Volunteers can contribute their skills to JPC whether it's by being a JPC Board member, assisting on special events in our calendar or participating in a local community activity.

For more information about volunteering, visit

www.jpc.org.au/volunteering/

KEEP UP TO DATE

Receive updates by subscribing to John Pierce Centre eNewsletter at::

www.jpc.org.au/newsletters/

And follow us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/JohnPierceCentre/>

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www.jpc.org.au



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John Pierce Centre HISTORY

Spirit Of The Deaf Community



Father John Pierce The first chaplain to the Deaf Catholic Community

The origins of the John Pierce Centre (JPC) date back to 1935 when Father John Pierce was appointed as the first Chaplain to the Catholic Deaf Community in Victoria by Archbishop Mannix. In those times, all the major denominations conducted missions of various sorts to the needy people of Melbourne; included in these were the deaf and blind.

Prior to 1979, Deaf Catholics were regular visitors at various churches in Melbourne including Armadale and St Francis, Melbourne. From 1973 to 1979, a monthly Mass was held at Jolimont at the Victorian Deaf Society.

In 1979, Fr Peter Robinson, Dr Pierre Gorman and Mr. Bryan A'Hearn were the driving force behind the setting up of John Pierce Centre at Ripponlea. A board of directors was set up as a Company limited by guarantee on 29th December 1979. The Centre was officially opened and blessed on Ephpheta Sunday, August 1980.

In 1995, The Catholic Deaf Community moved to the parish of Prahran and relocated to a refurbished church, St Francis Xavier, which had a multipurpose chapel and offices.

JPC has over 40 years of experience of supporting Deaf people who frequently are isolated within their local communities and even within their own families. Our pastoral care supports the well-being of our community and our community centre, all Deaf people and their families; sharing strength, friendship and the spirit of the Deaf Catholic Community.



Created by
Deaf Arts & Crafts Group



JOHN PIERCE CENTRE
Spirit of the Deaf Community