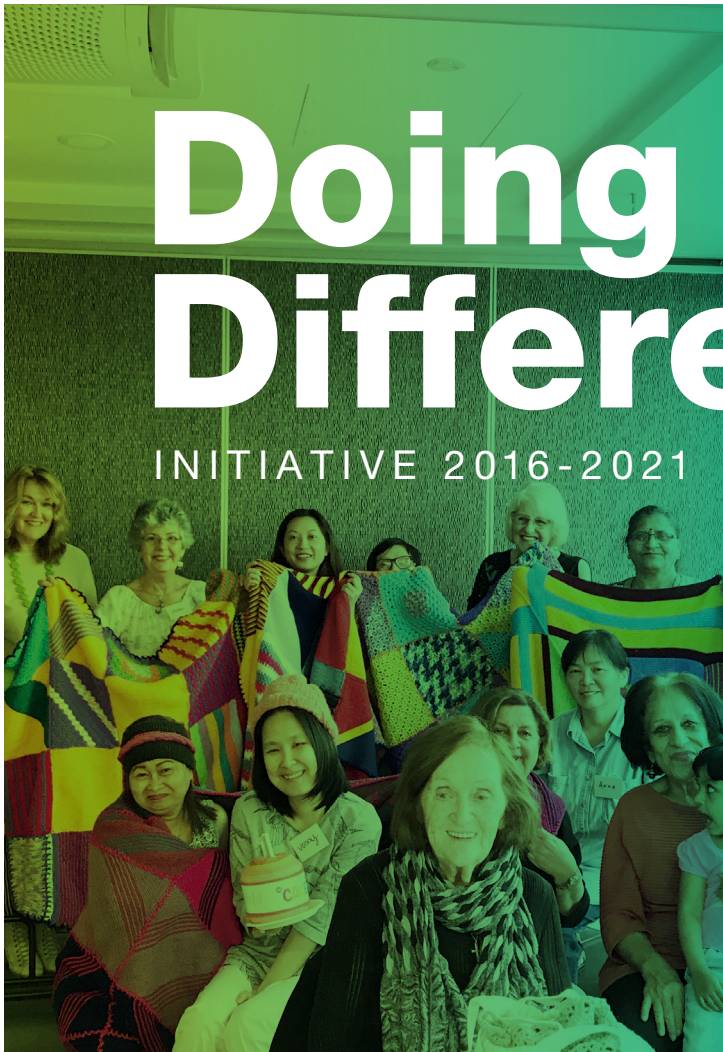


# Doing it Differently

INITIATIVE 2016-2021



Health  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICE



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians on whose land we stand, and the lands our facilities are located on; the lands of the Dharawal, Gadigal, Wangal, Gweagal and Bidjigal peoples.

We would like to pay our respects to the Elders past, present and those of the future.



Artwork by  
Brenden Broadbent

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## The Health Promotion Service

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service strives to improve the health and well-being of our community. We aim to empower people to have more control over their health by working in collaboration to deliver evidence informed programs and support clinical services. We focus on childhood obesity, falls prevention, smoking cessation and healthy built environments.

For more information, resources and to collaborate



## Key Partners and Participants

SESLHD Health Promotion Service would like to thank key partners Bayside Council, Sutherland Shire Council, Georges River Council and Calvary Health Care Kogarah.

We extend this thanks to the community members and community groups who have been involved in this initiative across all phases. Without these important community assets, Doing It Differently could not have made the impact it has across South Eastern Sydney since 2016.



# Executive Summary

From 2016 to 2021, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service (SESLHD HPS) awarded 63 Doing It Differently (DID) grants. The grants were awarded in partnership with Calvary Health Care Kogarah and local councils including; Bayside Council, Sutherland Shire Council and Georges River Council. Various community groups and organisations received funding to implement projects aimed at improving community health and well-being, and building healthy, strong and connected communities.

The Doing It Differently initiative champions an equitable approach, using a simplified application process that allows access for those who may not otherwise receive grant funding, including individuals (using an auspice organisation) and small community groups.

Projects supported a wide range of community focused initiatives, all underpinned by four key objectives;

1. Improve community health and well-being
2. Enhance levels of trust and understanding within and between communities
3. Increase sustained community driven initiatives
4. Reduce loneliness and social isolation.

For the duration of the initiative over 3000 SESLHD residents regularly participated in DID funded projects and activities, with over 12,000 residents benefiting from the activities in some way. Of the 63 funded projects, 21 supported culturally and linguistically diverse groups and 31 projects were located in socially disadvantaged areas of SESLHD.

The collaborative, strength-based approach used in DID recognises and supports communities to be the experts in their own health and well-being. DID aims to make it easier for people to find the care and support services they need, manage their own care effectively and keep people out of hospital as much as possible.

SESLHD Health Promotion Service



# Background

**Doing It Differently (DID)** is a community grants program based on the 'Cash 4 Communities' model from Tayside, Scotland.<sup>(1)</sup>

This model acknowledges that local communities are often best placed to address many of the problems faced by their community, but they may need support and funding to get started. By incorporating key aspects of this model, DID provides an opportunity for smaller groups and organisations to be heard, rather than competing with large organisations for funding. Combined with Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), a global philosophy and practice related to asset focussed, place based and community driven initiatives, DID is an innovative grants program that champions developing the abilities and potential of communities.

## THE MODEL PROVIDES FUNDING TO SUPPORT:

- ✦ Working in partnership with residents and communities in disadvantaged areas.
- ✦ Promotion of quality of life and overall health and well-being in areas which would most benefit from creating a stronger sense of community and social relationships.
- ✦ Joint proposals from disadvantaged communities and the organisations which provide them with regular support.

## DID AIMS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, AND BUILD HEALTHY, STRONG AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES.

Commencing in 2016, DID started as a joint initiative in the Bayside Local Government Area (LGA) between South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) and Bayside Council. Since that time, a total of 40 community projects have been funded in the Bayside LGA. In 2019 DID was expanded to include the Sutherland Shire LGA and Georges River Council LGA.

Across all phases of DID, not only the monetary contribution but the significant human resource contribution from all partners was integral to the success of this initiative.

# Rationale

As a local health district, SESLHD strives to create wellness in communities as well as treating illness. Health systems have traditionally focused on treating disease, rather than investing in actions that promote the conditions for good health and well-being.

DID aims to be a platform from which government can support communities to take control of their own health. Working across sectors and community led action have both shown to have a powerful impact on improving community health and well-being.<sup>(1)</sup>

## DID ALIGNS WITH A NUMBER OF NSW GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL DISTRICT STRATEGIES AND PLANS INCLUDING:

[NSW State Health Plan Towards 2021](#) - Direction One: "keep people healthy".

[SESLHD Journey to Excellence Strategy 2018 - 2021](#) - Community well-being and health equity.

[Mental Health Commission: Living Well – A strategic plan for mental health in NSW 2014-2024](#): "The people of NSW have the best opportunity for good mental health and well-being and to live well in their community and on their own terms".

[National Healthcare Agreement 2019](#): "focus on the prevention of disease and injury and the maintenance of health, not simply the treatment of illness".







“The application was simple and well designed. All involved were supportive and the initial workshop helped beneficiaries to have input. The follow up coffee chat enabled us to ask additional questions. It was a pleasure to be involved with a professional group working for the community.”

—Grant recipient

# What makes this initiative Different

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

The vibrancy of social networks and the extent to which individuals and communities trust and rely upon one another. Social connection and trust is essential for communities to function, for people from different backgrounds to find common ground, and for residents to have access to opportunities that will improve their lives. High levels of trust and social connection are not simply “feel good” notions, but key to making both individuals and communities productive, healthy and safe <sup>(2)</sup>.

### ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD)

Focuses on abilities, aspirations and potential and aims to discover and mobilise resources already present in a community for greater project sustainability<sup>(3)</sup>.

### PARTNERSHIPS

The importance of fostering strong partnerships across sectors and the combined strengths of organisations recognising that health, well-being and social connectedness is determined by many factors. Together, organisations are better able to support community needs in a holistic manner.

### AN EQUITABLE AND SIMPLE PROCESS

A simple application process allows access for those who need it most, including individuals and small community groups. Community members are empowered to participate and are supported through the whole DID process.

Individuals and community groups receive funding to enhance their environments, resilience, and social connectedness, promote community spirit and inspire pride in their local neighbourhoods.

**AIM:** TO BUILD HEALTHY, STRONG, CONNECTED INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

### OBJECTIVES:



1 | Improve community health and well-being



2 | Enhance levels of trust and understanding within and between communities



3 | Increase sustained community driven initiative

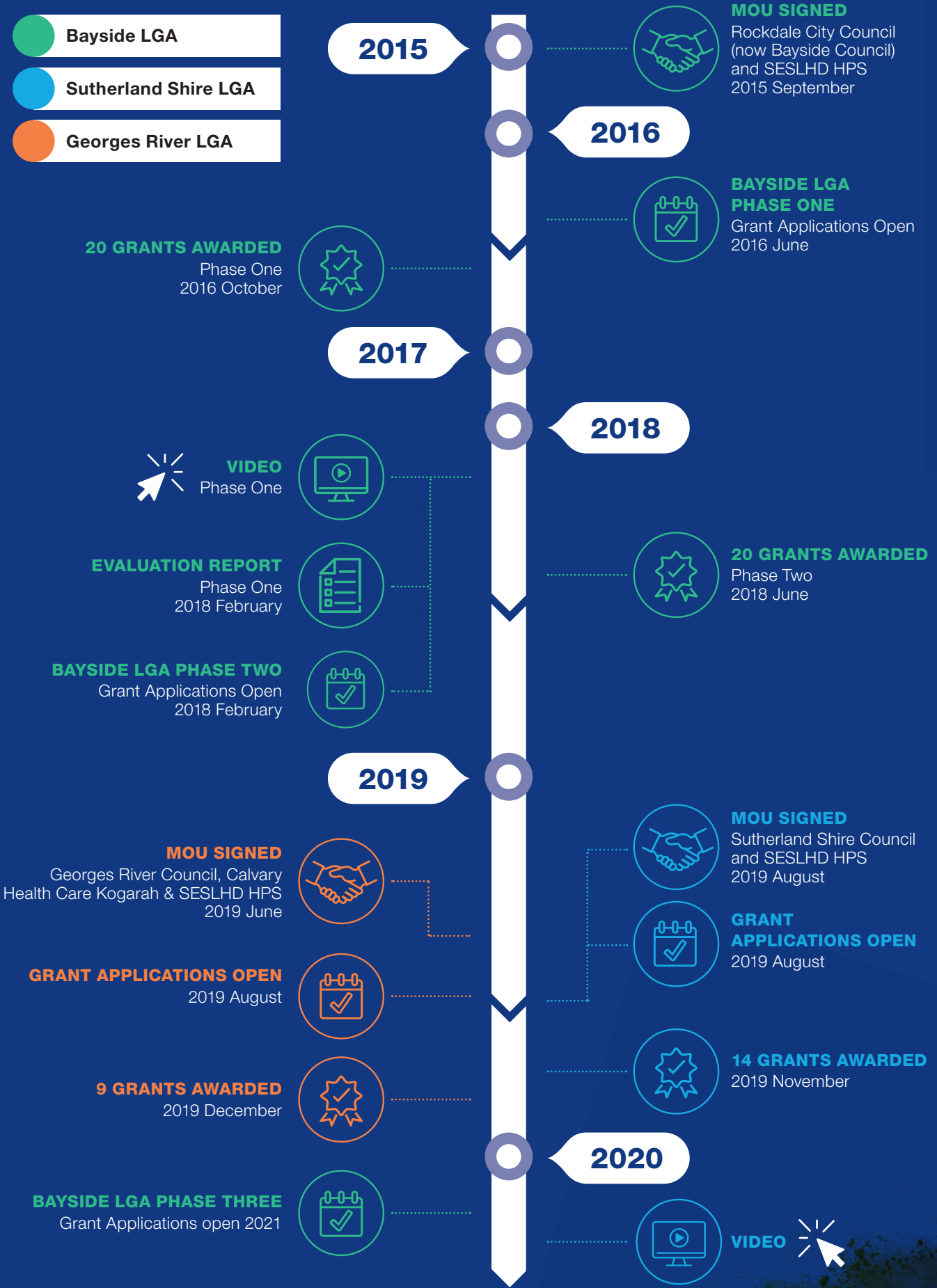


4 | Reduce loneliness and social isolation



# Timeline of key milestones

- Bayside LGA
- Sutherland Shire LGA
- Georges River LGA





# Outcomes

Since 2016, **3083** people have regularly participated in DID related activities and **12,009** people have benefited from the projects and activities in some way.



Across all local government areas DID has funded:

**21**  
projects supported culturally and linguistically diverse groups



**9**  
projects supporting those with a disability

**63**  
DOING IT DIFFERENTLY GRANTS AWARDED

Number of projects in each phase

**9 projects:**  
Georges River Council and Calvary Health Care Kogarah.

**14 projects:**  
Sutherland Shire Council

**20 projects:**  
Bayside Council phase 1

**20 projects:**  
Bayside council Phase 2



**31**  
projects located within socially disadvantaged areas

**7**  
groups promoting physical activity

**7**  
KEY THEMES EMERGED

Key theme

1. Healthy Children and Families (12)
2. Youth Health (10)
3. Healthy Aging (6)
4. Physical Activity (5)
5. Arts for Well-being (17)
6. Mental Health (8)
7. Healthy Built Environments (5)

**5**  
parenting groups

**3**  
new community gardens







# Discussion

**THE OVERALL AIM OF DOING IT DIFFERENTLY WAS TO BUILD HEALTHY, STRONG, CONNECTED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.**

The evaluation process generated qualitative data through mid term and full term reporting, completed by each project lead.

**SPECIFICALLY, the evaluation focused on the four key objectives;**



**1 | Improve community health and well-being**

Evaluation sought to understand the strategies that were utilised by the grant recipients as they implemented their respective projects and to identify other important issues relevant to the management of the program.



**2 | Enhance levels of trust and understanding within and between communities**

The amount of data generated through qualitative means was significant and the analysis process identified seven overarching health themes from the range of projects.



**3 | Increase sustained community driven initiative**

Overall, grant recipients were happy to share their reflections and insights, the strategies they employed across the various settings, and any modifications they needed to implement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**4 | Reduce loneliness and social isolation**





# Key themes

## HEALTHY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



A number of projects were designed to support children and families. Programs in school settings enabled students, teachers and community members to be involved. For example a student led food drive was funded which created over 50 food parcels for school families and the wider community over the holiday period. Other opportunities encouraged students to connect with teachers, youth workers and community volunteers, helping to develop lasting relationships and support networks for vulnerable children.

In other projects, funding provided various materials and equipment for volunteers and group participants, allowing the successful running and sustainability of programs.

*“ I love that we have such a happy environment and everyone is so calm. ”*

Breakfast Club – Student Year 5



*“ It’s been an absolute privilege to be a part of something that’s helping our youth. I only wish there was something equivalent when I was growing up. Maybe there was. Definitely not as accessible. To see the growth of these kids/young men truly flourish in the time I’ve been there has been remarkable. Their fitness and confidence has improved outta sight!!! ”*

A quote from a mentor

## YOUTH HEALTH



Engaging young people in community based programs can provide opportunities for them to be happy, healthy, safe and connected. Motivated project leads developed and implemented programs for young people in their local communities such as fitness and nutrition programs and the provision of toiletry and hygiene packs for disadvantaged young people.

Providing young people opportunities to improve engagement with schooling, and connecting them with services helped them to feel more positive about life in general. It also helped them to develop better relationships with mentors such as youth workers and police through local PCYCs.

“ In great appreciation of the B Active Program I would like to say the Aqua Aerobics classes that I have been going to since the commencement of the program have been both a wonderful experience and also a great help to me physically. I missed not going on the days when we were in lockdown, both the exercise and socially. Providing transport for me to and from the pool enabled me to participate. Please keep up the B Active program. ”

B Active program participant.

## HEALTHY AGEING



Projects that targeted older aged groups generally focused on social inclusion, connectedness and engagement across various settings, fostering genuine friendships.

Educating participants on various health issues, increasing awareness and understanding of the services available to them helped build connections with local health services.

Others provided cooking lessons that helped participants learn new skills and increase their knowledge of nutrition and reading food labels as well as gaining a better understanding of aged care services. Reducing the cost of transportation to participate in social activities helped older people to form new connections by removing the financial barrier.

Member contribution across projects varied, with some learning new skills while others drew on local knowledge to share with their groups.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Funding helped to support low to no cost programs focusing on fitness, social connections and improving mental health.

Groups spent time in outdoor or green spaces, enjoying and appreciating the natural environment.

“ I feel more positive and more energetic, I am eating healthier food now. I wish we had two classes a week. ”

Exercise group participant



## ARTS FOR WELL-BEING



Findings reveal that arts in all forms have the potential to bring people together, helping to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Funding supported the arts including;

- music and singing
- repairs or wood work
- arts specific to cultural groups.

Interfaith and intergenerational community projects helped to celebrate diversity and shared skills and assets across culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

These groups found that promoting multiculturalism, tolerance and diversity allowed participants to take charge of their own well-being, despite pressure they often face in their everyday routine.

Grant recipients found that DID provided wider opportunities to connect or maintain networks or community groups and allowed the inclusion of additional community organisations in their events.



“ Making new friends, speaking English, learning to sing in English with many people together, singing songs and learning recorder with new friends. ”

Music group participant when asked what they enjoy most about the group.

## MENTAL HEALTH



Projects supported those living with mental ill health or their carers, providing an opportunity to connect with others for mutual support. By removing the stigma often faced within the community by those living with mental health concerns organisations have been able to continue to grow support services for their communities, while others provided services specific to the cultural backgrounds of participants.

Forums provided an additional avenue to create a safe space where carers could network and seek support and guidance, as well as share resources and problem solve as a collective.

Resources were also developed as part of some projects, sharing tips and strategies.

“ I know who to contact now to get information, the best beginners guide to the NDIS. ”

NDIS Resilient Carers forum participant.



## HEALTHY BUILT ENVIRONMENTS



Community gardens helped connect socially isolated or new members of the local neighbourhood, promoting a sense of belonging within community. Some projects saw the confidence of members develop overtime and participants take on roles within the organising committee, using their new skills and abilities to promote their gardens.

Fundraising activities such as plant stalls helped to raise money for initiatives such as Drought Aid.

Neighbourhood based activities sought to connect locals through a range of activities involving all age groups, contributing to better physical and mental health and general well-being.

“ It’s very social and rewarding to see your efforts being able to take produce home and cook. ”

Community garden participant when asked what they enjoy about the garden



## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC REQUIRED SOME GRANT RECIPIENTS TO MODIFY PROJECT ACTIVITIES, WITH MANY TURNING TO ONLINE DELIVERY TO ENSURE PUBLIC HEALTH RESTRICTIONS COULD BE ADHERED TO.

Project modifications were reviewed and approved on a case by case basis by the relevant steering committees.

In some instances, an extension of the funding period allowed additional time for project activities to be fulfilled, despite the disruptions caused by restrictions.

Groups and organisations were quick to pivot to virtual delivery and project leads shared their successes and challenges experienced during this time. The Health Promotion Service hosted online events that replaced the traditional face to face networking usually held as part of the DID program.





# Recommendations

## FUTURE GRANT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION TO BUILD HEALTHY, STRONG, CONNECTED INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES SHOULD:

- ❖ Consider barriers to implementation and strategies to mitigate disruptions, such as those caused by COVID-19, changes in staffing and the capacity of volunteers to deliver projects.
- ❖ Continue to provide regular communication and flexibility to ensure grant recipients are supported to deliver projects to meet requirements and expectations.
- ❖ Consider incorporating key components of the DID model into grant initiatives to allow an equitable opportunity for all organisations.
- ❖ Ensure adequate support and leadership exists for projects, and where possible, share these responsibilities across more than one contact to allow continued implementation.

## Conclusion

When delivered in partnership across sectors, a community grants program that aims to improve community health and well-being, and build healthy, strong and connected communities can empower the community to feel more in control of their health and well-being.

Investing in abilities and potential that are already present in a community and recognising the community as the experts in their own lives leverages these strengths and can facilitate action on the social determinants of health.

DID allows community groups and organisations a great sense of ownership over their projects, resulting in sustainability and up-scaling of activities. By creating space that enables communities to make decisions about the change they want, genuine community driven action is possible.

## REFERENCES

1. National Health Service.2014.Community Innovation Fund. Available at: <http://www.nhstayside.scot.nhs.uk/GettingInvolved/CommunityInnovationFund/index.htm>
2. The Environics Institute. 2015.Toronto Social Capital Project. Available at <http://www.environicsinstitute.org/institute-projects/projects-in-works/toronto-social-capital-project>
3. Bank of I.D.E.A.S, 2016. Practical techniques & tools for engaging community. Available online: <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/StGeorge/media/Community-Development/Engaging-Community-Practical-Techniques-and-Tools.pdf>





# Appendix 1: Bayside Council



**PHASE ONE** commenced in 2016 with total committed funding of \$150,000. More information about this first round of funding can be found in this report.



**PHASE TWO** commenced in 2018 with total committed funding of \$150,000. During phase two,

**20 projects** were funded.

A **THIRD PHASE** of DID in Bayside LGA commenced in 2021.

**6 projects**

were funded with a total commitment of \$30,000. Community members were encouraged to apply if they had an auspice organisation to support them.



**WATCH THE VIDEO HERE**

**NUMBER OF FUNDED PROJECTS**

**40**

## REACH

**REGULARLY PARTICIPATED IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**2,206**

**BENEFITED FROM PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN SOME WAY**

**8,156**

## MAIN CHALLENGES

- ✦ longer term investment of time and funding to effectively reach target groups

## OUTCOMES

- ✦ relationship building between organisations and participants
- ✦ referrals to other support organisations
- ✦ opportunities to connect with like-minded people
- ✦ partnership with local businesses
- ✦ establishment of mentoring programs and workshops
- ✦ increase in social media followers
- ✦ connection with other DID grant recipients
- ✦ developed stronger relationships with CALD communities
- ✦ opportunity to come together to support each other's well-being and promote confidence
- ✦ connection with community members that needed more support
- ✦ strengthen interaction between youth services and participants
- ✦ reducing social isolation by increasing social networks
- ✦ improving mental health outcomes
- ✦ encouraging healthy lifestyles and behaviours
- ✦ supportive environment for friendships to develop
- ✦ opportunity to have fun and bring people closer together.

# Appendix 2: Sutherland Shire Council

**Total funding available was \$80,000**  
SESLHD contributed \$60,000 and Sutherland Shire Council contributed \$20,000.



**NUMBER OF FUNDED PROJECTS** **14**

**REACH**

<b>REGULARLY PARTICIPATED IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>BENEFITED FROM PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN SOME WAY</b>
<b>240</b>	<b>1,974</b>

## 14 projects

were funded for the 2019/2020 phase and received support from 2020 onwards, initially for a period of 12 months, with some variation due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**MAIN CHALLENGES**

- ❖ COVID-19 Pandemic implications

*“Our partnership with SESLHD in delivering the Doing It Differently grant program has given us the opportunity to engage in innovative strength-based community development that focus on the abilities, aspirations and potential of our local community. From this we have identified key learnings that we’ve been able to implement in the administration and delivery of our other local community grant programs.”*

Manager, Business Sport and Community Services Unit, Sutherland Shire Council

**OUTCOMES**

- ❖ new connections formed
- ❖ increased community participation
- ❖ education of various health issues
- ❖ gained self-defence skills
- ❖ increased interest in volunteering
- ❖ greater access to services
- ❖ developed and strengthened relationships with local organisations and businesses
- ❖ connectedness
- ❖ social inclusion
- ❖ engagement and genuine friendship
- ❖ skill development
- ❖ opportunity for networking amongst carers.



**WATCH THE VIDEO HERE**

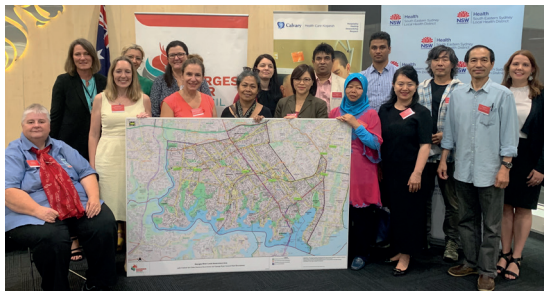


## Appendix 3:

# Georges River Council in partnership with Calvary Health Care Kogarah

### Total funding available was \$120,000

SESLHD contributed \$60,000, Georges River Council contributed \$40,000 and Calvary Health Care Kogarah contributed \$20,000.



NUMBER OF FUNDED PROJECTS

9

## REACH

REGULARLY PARTICIPATED IN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

638

BENEFITED FROM PROJECT ACTIVITIES IN SOME WAY

1,879

## 9 projects

were funded for the 2019/2020 phase and received support from 2020 initially for up to 18 months, with some variation due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### MAIN CHALLENGES

- ✦ COVID-19 pandemic implications
- ✦ shift from face to face to online engagements
- ✦ difficulties to secure appropriate indoor venues due to Covid restrictions

### OUTCOMES

- ✦ maintaining connectedness through online engagement during COVID-19 physical distancing and isolation
- ✦ fostering togetherness, engaging people (all age groups) in various activities (online and face to face, restrictions permitting) which contribute to physical health, mental health and general well-being
- ✦ collaboration and partnership with other community services and organisations
- ✦ strengthen connections between volunteers, project members and community members.

**“Doing It Differently encourages community to showcase the talents and assets of their local community members. Accessible to lay-people, it helps build community confidence through recognition that ideas are worth supporting”**

– from Indonesian Arts and Culture Club

**“All group members contribute with their knowledge, skills and resources to achieve group goals. For example, a librarian has facilitated the street library donations, while the local men’s shed group built the library. A senior member and experienced gardener has helped with the veggie garden set up, a yoga instructor organised appropriate sessions for various groups.”**

– from Bibby Street Neighbourhood Project Auspice by Kogarah Community Services, when group members were asked if they were aware of community strengths & resources as a result of DID.

**CONTACT US**

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February 2022

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