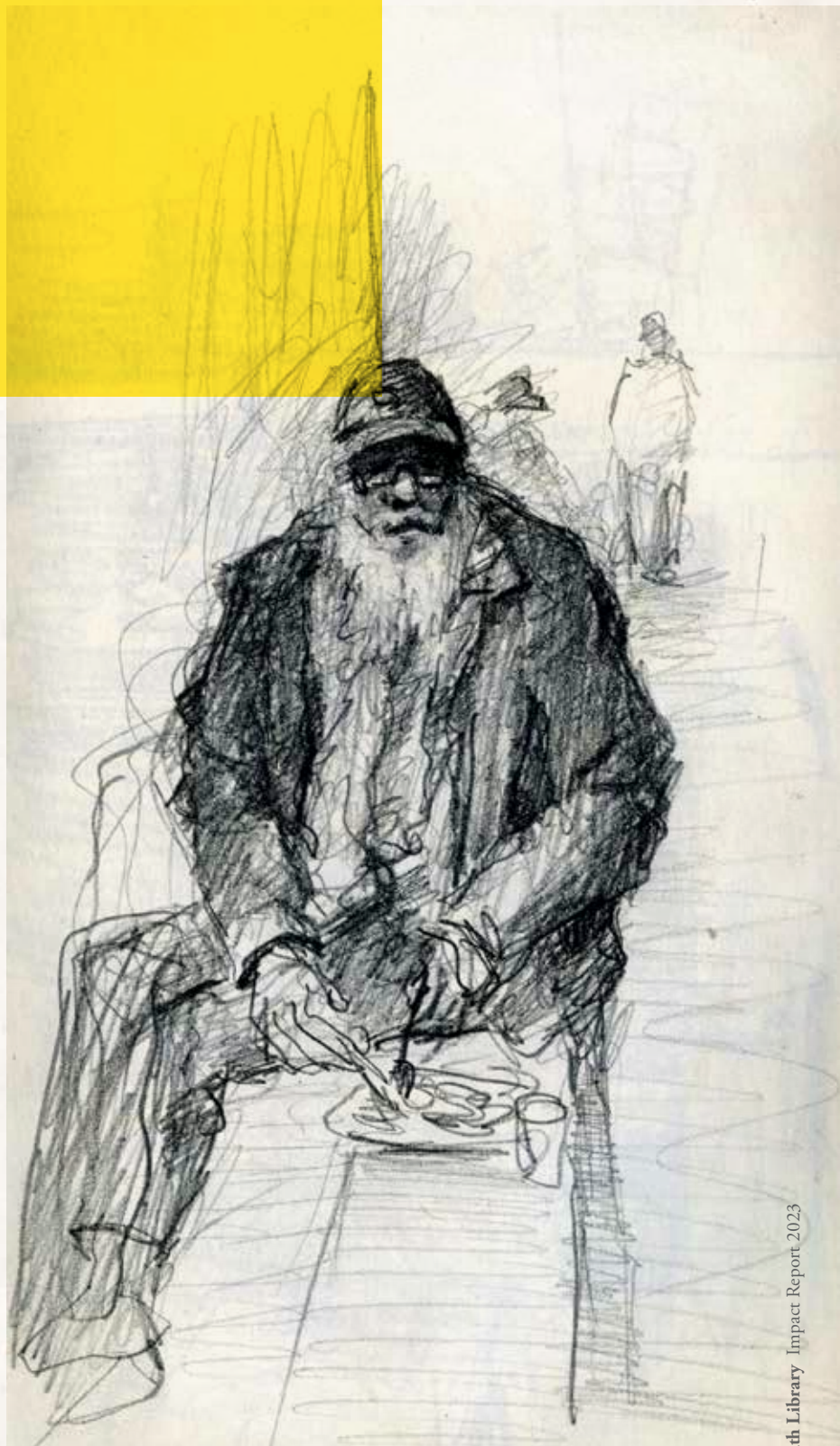


2023

Impact Report



www.footpathlibrary.org

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Message from the Chair

Social connection and the freedom reading provides are at the heart of what The Footpath Library aims to provide people experiencing homelessness. It can be an incredibly lonely existence and reading can feed their soul and provide an escape from their daily struggles. As Australia's only free giving library we provide access to good quality books and reading glasses and ask nothing in return.

I count myself as supremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve as the Chair of The Footpath Library for the past five years and am proud of the growth we have managed to achieve over this time as evidenced in our 2023 Impact Report. In particular, I would like to highlight the way our staff, board, volunteers, funders



The Footpath Library Board (left to right): Victoria Adams, Barbara McKellar, David Anthony, Raj Pillay, Sarah Garnett, Shelley Norton, Penny Mapp (Chair).

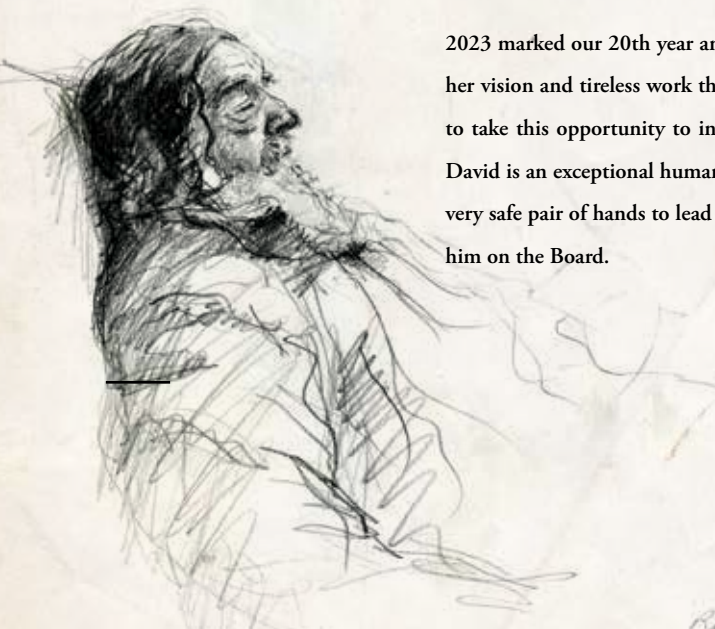
and supporters were able to respond and adapt so that we could continue to serve the most vulnerable in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unfortunately, the rising costs of living and housing shortages are forcing more people in Australia below the poverty line and as a result The Footpath Library acknowledges that we need to focus on reaching a broader demographic of people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness including women and children, migrants, refugees and First Nations people.

The board and I extend our deepest gratitude to our many volunteers who ensure the books get into the hands of our readers at our mobile libraries and to our supporters, funders, partners and collaborators both old and new.

2023 marked our 20th year and I would like to acknowledge our Founder, Sarah Garnett, for her vision and tireless work that has seen us reach this significant milestone. I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce our new Chair, fellow board member David Anthony. David is an exceptional human being, and a Partner at Corrs Chambers Westgarth. We have a very safe pair of hands to lead us onwards and I look forward to continuing to work alongside him on the Board.

PENNY MAPP
CHAIR



Message from the Founder & Managing Director

2023 marked the 20th year of The Footpath Library and it's hard to believe that back then it was just me and a couple of mates, boxes of books in the boot of my car, and a commitment to Tuesday nights in Woolloomooloo. We would empty those boxes onto the footpath and watch with delight as fifty books disappeared into the hands of happy readers. This came about from a conversation with a man called Joe who I met one wintry night standing on a street corner; I wasn't to know that a simple conversation about his joy of reading would change my life.

The Footpath Library's mobile library outreach services operate regularly across Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, providing free, quality books and reading glasses to people who love to read. In 2024, The Footpath Library remains Australia's only giving library for people experiencing homelessness. This would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers (including our Board members), our supporters and funders, and of course, our part time staff. I'm so proud of what we have achieved together and I'm grateful for their ongoing commitment to getting books and reading glasses into the hands of people who love to read.

20 years on, and we continue to make a positive impact on people experiencing homelessness, one book at a time, one conversation at a time. I love having conversations with our readers, I am passionate about the importance of literacy, and I am convinced – more than ever – that books can transform lives.

I also remain a firm believer in the words of Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

SARAH GARNETT
FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR



2023 Impacts



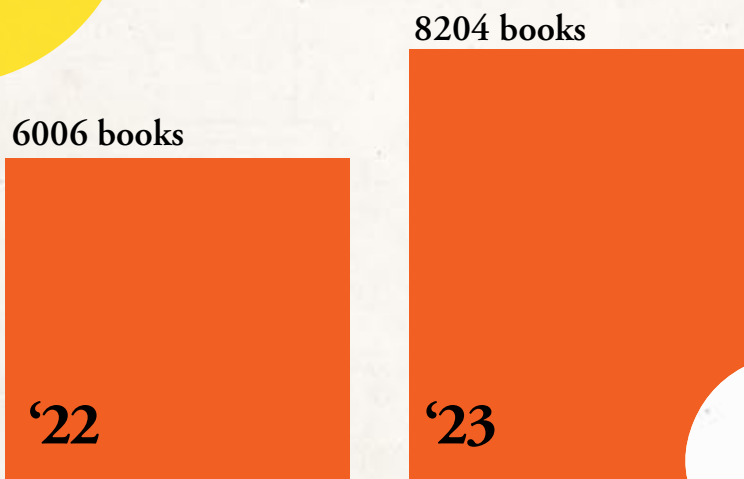
8,204

Books



1,150

Reading glasses



37% increase in book distribution



685

Volunteer hours



1,235

Knitted goods

20

Outreach services

50+

Partners and
collaborators



Stories from the Street

‘I feel blessed by The Footpath Library.’

Phillip is a regular reader who visits our Mitcham service in Melbourne.

‘Reading is important because you use your imagination; all the furniture, all the characters, all the voices of the people, you have to think them up for yourself. You have to translate the words into your mind... there’s a lounge room, that I’ve never been to before, and I remember that lounge room because I imagined it when I read that book. You’re virtually the architect of your own imagination and you build things... I build everything in my mind when I read a book.

(The Footpath Library volunteers) are not standing there giving out books, they’re touching peoples’ lives... it’s such a blessing, they’re just really kind and caring.’

PHILLIP

A READER FROM MELBOURNE



Our Programs



New South Wales

The Footpath Library's Sydney program went from strength to strength in 2023, growing from six to nine mobile library services. New services commenced at Waterloo, Newtown and our first Western Sydney service in Riverstone (Blacktown City Council). Our longest running mobile library service, Martin Place, continues to operate in Sydney's CBD whilst our other services are monthly.

The Hub service at Rozelle ran successfully for its second year and is a well-established and popular service with regular collaborators coming together to support people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness offering hairdressing, podiatry, assistance with documentation, mental health counselling and access to free, quality books and reading glasses.

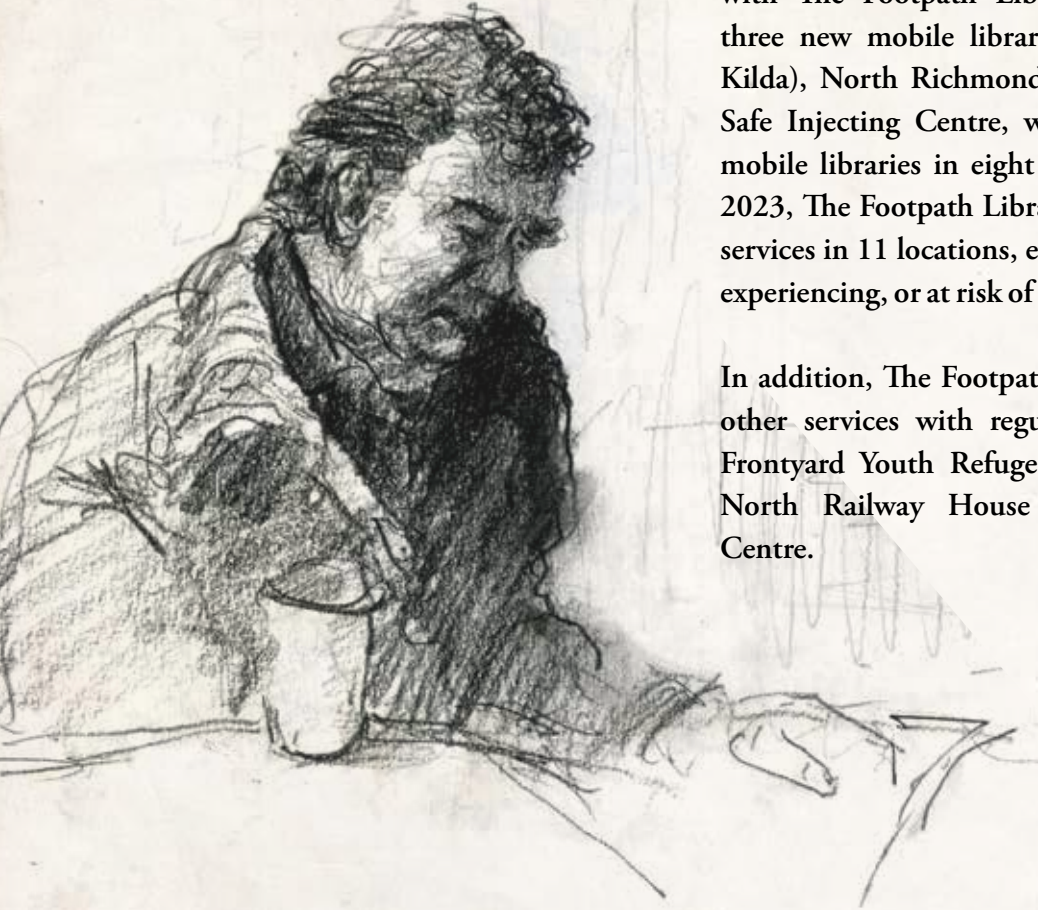
“2023 saw us diversify our services with the consolidation of The Hub's one-stop-shop' model of support, but what continues to be at the core of our work is providing opportunities for social connection and inclusion whether that be at a mobile library or The Hub.”



ANGELA SPECK
NSW PROGRAMS MANAGER



Victoria



2023 was a year of growth for the Melbourne program with The Footpath Library extending its reach with three new mobile libraries: The Engagement Hub (St Kilda), North Richmond Community Health, and The Safe Injecting Centre, whilst maintaining our existing mobile libraries in eight other locations. By the end of 2023, The Footpath Library operated 280 mobile library services in 11 locations, enabling us to reach more people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness across Melbourne.

In addition, The Footpath Library continued to support other services with regular stocks of books including Frontyard Youth Refuge Centre in the CBD, Carlton North Railway House and Maidstone Community Centre.

“A highlight of 2023 was providing access to books for children. The Footpath Library worked collaboratively with another service provider running homework groups for children in social housing, and together, we made sure each child could choose a book to take home after they attended homework club. The inclusion of Indigenous children’s books at some of our mobile library services proved to be popular as we witnessed more parents and young families attending our services.”

KATRINA WEBB
VIC PROGRAMS MANAGER



Western Australia

The Footpath Library continues to run a weekly Sunday morning service in Perth's CBD. Operating for many years, this is a main hub delivering our mobile library service alongside Perth Homeless Support Group, Orange Sky, Street Doctor, and many others. The weekly Friday service at Peel Community Kitchen (Mandurah) has been operating for over two years, thanks in large part to our long-term volunteer, Tony.

The Footpath Library made the decision to close the St Bart's service due to changes in service delivery; however, a new monthly service commenced at 55 Central in Maylands. In addition, hundreds of books and reading glasses were donated to families and individuals at two community events: Mission Australia's Christmas Lunch in the Park, and Karawara Community Christmas dinner.

“The strength of The Footpath Library WA is the dedication of its volunteers, with some giving over 10 years of service – they give so much of their time including on weekends and even on Christmas Day. We really couldn't operate without them.”

CAMILLE GRUBBA
WA PROGRAMS MANAGER



Stories from the Street

‘It’s a sense of community, you get to know them and their story.’

Kelly-Anne is a regular volunteer at the Martin Place mobile library in Sydney. After moving to Sydney from the UK, Kelly-Anne was looking for a way to get involved in the community and has volunteered with The Footpath Library for the past four years.

‘One of the things I love about The Footpath Library is, I find it really rewarding, but I know the people who come by and use the service do as well, that recognition – knowing their names, remembering their tea or coffee order, having a little chat – it’s so much more than a book we offer; it’s a sense of community, a sense of belonging. We see the same people coming back week after week and you get to know them, and their story and the regulars are a huge part of why I love volunteering with The Footpath Library.’

KELLY-ANNE
A VOLUNTEER AT MARTIN PLACE



2024 Goals



Access to reading and connection

Increase engagement with under-represented readers including children, women, migrants, refugees, First Nations people and other identified groups

Collaboration and Advocacy

Increase our public profile and galvanise the goodwill of booklovers (and others who share our vision) into tangible support

Amplify the experiences of, and advocate for, readers to government and other stakeholders

Business Sustainability

Achieve diversified and sustainable funding that supports our sustainable growth goals

Maintain 33% of operational costs delivered via in-kind and pro bono support





According to Census 2021 data, of people experiencing homelessness :

35,011
people in
New South Wales



20%
were aged under 18
years of age

30,660
people in Victoria



25%
were aged between
12 and 24 years

9,700
people in Western
Australia



25%
were First Nations
people

Stories from the Street

‘Reading can be a revelation!’

David is an Australian author of eight novels and three creative non-fiction books, and he also teaches on a prisoner writing program in Perth and creative writing at Curtin University. David has been a committed advocate of The Footpath Library.

‘I slept rough myself when I was young and broke and out-of-sorts, and having taught in the prison system I’m aware how homelessness and disadvantage can be a trigger for incarceration. In both of those situations I’ve seen how books can not only bring about an escape into other worlds but can also help bring into definition both a sharper sense of ourselves and of the world around us. I’ve seen first-hand how being able to tell a story and immerse yourself in a fiction world can really turn someone’s life around – reading can be a revelation! The Footpath Library always struck me as a fantastic charity, and I’m happy to be an Ambassador.’

DAVID WHISH-WILSON
AUTHOR AMBASSADOR WA



Thank you to our Partners and Supporters

The Footpath Library would like to acknowledge its pro bono supporters and the following funders for their generous support of the work that we do in assisting people experiencing homelessness with free, quality books and reading glasses, and a safe and welcoming space to feel included and connected.



Trusts and Foundations

- o Bank Australia
- o Clayton Utz Foundation
- o Grahame Mapp Family Foundation
- o IMB Bank Community Foundation
- o James N Kirby Foundation
- o Learning Changes Lives Foundation
- o Sheargold Foundation
- o StreetSmart Australia
- o The Greeba Jamison Perpetual Charitable Trust
- o The Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation
- o The Jack Brockhoff Foundation
- o The Norman H Johns Trust
- o The Readings Foundation
- o Tobin Brothers Foundation
- o WA Charity Connect

Publishers and Book Store Supporters

- o Allen & Unwin
- o Fremantle Press
- o Gleebooks
- o Hachette Australia
- o HarperCollins Publishers Australia
- o Hay House
- o Indigenous Literacy and Numeracy Foundation
- o Magabala Books
- o Mandurah Central Bookshop
- o Pan Macmillan Australia
- o Penguin Group (Australia)
- o Random House Australia
- o Readings
- o Schwartz Media
- o Simon & Schuster Australia

Financial Overview

The Footpath Library is a registered charity with DGR-1 status and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible. The Footpath Library is fully funded by donations from the public and receives no government funding for the work that we do.

Revenue

Total revenue: \$281,676

95%
Donations & Bequests

5%
Investments

Expenses

Total expenses: \$288,771

54%
Employment Expenses

46%
All other expenses



FOOTPATHLIBRARY.ORG

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The Footpath Library extends its thanks to Kindleman for their ongoing in-kind support of our website and the 2023 Impact Report.

All illustrations by Michael Kelly.