

GREATER MELBOURNE VitalSigns™ 2020



Special Edition



WELCOME TO GREATER MELBOURNE VITAL SIGNS 2020 SPECIAL EDITION

Greater Melbourne Vital Signs takes the 'pulse' of our city. It provides a snapshot of its health and vitality and identifies the things we can celebrate and the issues we face as we all create a sustainable and resilient city.

WHAT WE CAN CELEBRATE

- Melbourne is the world's second most liveable city
- There has been Federal and Victorian Governments Parliamentary inquiries into homelessness
- 4 per cent increase in household solar rooftop since 2017
- 89 per cent of young Australian's completed Year 12 or equivalent in 2018
- Australia's digital inclusion is improving

THINGS WE NEED TO WORK ON

- Melbourne is the fourth least affordable city internationally
- 82,000 people are currently on the public housing waiting list
- Poorest air quality on record due to the 2019 bushfires
- National youth unemployment was 12 per cent in 2019
- 19 per cent of people have reported experiencing discrimination

The goal of *Greater Melbourne Vital Signs 2020 Special Edition* is to share how the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the weak points in our social fabric, and showcased our inherent ability to adapt rapidly whilst also providing opportunities for significant systemic change previously thought impossible.

We hope this report will help charities, not-for-profit organisations, other foundations, policy advisors and our local communities to identify where together we can make the most difference and how through collaboration, knowledge sharing and innovation we can strengthen our community to overcome the challenges ahead.

LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is Australia's largest independent community foundation. It inspires philanthropy throughout Melbourne and the wider community, and creates positive social change through its support of charitable organisations delivering innovative and effective programs.

WE ARE AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Established in 1923, the Foundation connects people, ideas and funding to meet the challenges and needs of the people of Melbourne now and into the future.

Vital Signs is an international program, begun in Canada in 2001, that measures the health and vitality of communities and builds community engagement around core issues of liveability. Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is a member of the international Vital Signs network.

OUR GREATER MELBOURNE AREA

This Vital Signs report focuses on information and data for the 'Greater Melbourne' area. The Greater Melbourne area includes 31 local government areas stretching from the Yarra Ranges to Wyndham and the Mornington Peninsula to Whittlesea. If Greater Melbourne data is not available, we have used local government, state or national data.

2020 GREATER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

In May 2020 the Foundation undertook a pilot survey of 500 people who live, study or work in Greater Melbourne to gather information about the big issues facing the region including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preliminary results revealed that the community recognises the highly liveable nature of Melbourne through opportunities to attend and participate in events, celebrate our diverse culture and values as well as access to excellent services such as our healthcare system.

The survey showed that the top 3 community concerns are well aligned with the available snapshot data reinforcing our areas for improvement for the Greater Melbourne community.

Top 3 General Community concerns

- Level of homelessness and housing affordability
- Levels of household debt
- Levels of poverty

Top 3 Community concerns relating to COVID-19

- Short term economy
- Long term economy
- Health of older relatives

GREATER MELBOURNE VITAL SIGNS 2020 SNAPSHOT



GREATER MELBOURNE AT JULY 2020

Population¹

4.96M

Population density

497

people per sq kilometre

↑ UP BY 8 PER CENT SINCE 2017

Age

18% Children 0-14 YEARS

14% Youth 15-24 YEARS

50% Adults 25-60 YEARS

19% Seniors OVER 60 YEARS

ABOUT PEOPLE IN MELBOURNE

AVERAGE AGE

36 years old²

35 per cent speak a language other than English language at home³

34 per cent were born overseas⁴

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

0.5 per cent⁵

EMPLOYMENT

2,877,640 in the workforce⁶

AVERAGE INCOME

\$673 a week⁷

POVERTY

12.6 per cent⁸

4.9 per cent of people are living with a disability⁹

27.5 per cent have a bachelor's degree level or above¹⁰

\$9.9 billion was spent on mental health in Australia in 2017-18¹¹

MENTAL HEALTH

1 in 5 people had a mental health or behavioural condition in Victoria in 2017-18¹²

For more information about the Foundation visit lmcf.org.au

Learn more about VitalSigns, visit lmcf.org.au/MelbVitalSigns



HEALTHY & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



The major environmental, health and social challenges we face, including those attributed to climate change, require new ways of collaborating to build community resilience.

Discrimination based on **skin colour, ethnic origin or religion** has remained high at **19 per cent** for the **fourth** year running.¹³



59 per cent of Indigenous respondents **experienced racial discrimination** in 2017.¹⁴



Victorians are less likely to feel safe home alone at night or walking around their neighbourhoods, day or night than people living in other eastern states.¹⁵



80 per cent of Victorian healthcare professionals are seeing the impacts of climate change on human health.¹⁶



Only 36 per cent of Melbourne dwellings have access to a **bus, tram or train stop with a regular service within 400 metres safe walking distance**.¹⁸

People living in **Greater Melbourne are less likely to volunteer** than those living elsewhere in Victoria.¹⁹



IMPACT OF BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES²⁰

445 people killed by **exposure to bushfire smoke**.



3,340 were admitted to hospital because of **heart and lung problems**.

1,373 people attended emergency departments with **asthma complications**.



\$2 billion in estimated **extra health costs** associated with the premature loss of life and admissions to hospitals.



IMPACT OF COVID-19^{21,22}

COVID-19 CASE SUMMARY IN VICTORIA AT 4 SEPTEMBER 2020

Less than **19,000** total coronavirus cases.

Close to 2.3 million tests have been conducted.



There were **less than 2,200 active cases**, over the **16,300 recovered cases**.

591 deaths

97 per cent were **aged over 60 years**.

10 per cent of cases occurred in **Aged Care facilities**.²³



Close to **69 per cent** of people who died from the virus **had pre-existing chronic conditions**.²⁴

350 new cases on average **everyday** in August.²⁵



People most affected by COVID-19 are **often already disadvantaged or vulnerable**.

HARD LOCKDOWN AT JULY 2020

3,000 residents affected.



Nine public housing towers.²⁶



30 residential disability services linked to COVID-19 outbreaks (VIC).²⁷



\$200 million Federal funding + **\$60 million** in Victorian Government funding for Mental Health Services

33 per cent increase in self-harm in young people.²⁸



Increased funding to family **violence** and **mental health services**.

TOP 3 COMMUNITY CONCERNS



1 Levels of poverty



2 Cost of living



3 Alcohol use by people 15 years and over

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

How we adapt and evolve with the compounding nature of community challenges is, to a large extent, dependent on work done at the community level. Communities with high levels of participation, social cohesion and equitable access to resources and systems are better equipped to respond to and recover from major emergencies and chronic stressors.

Understanding and addressing how these events disproportionately impact people experiencing disadvantage and structural discrimination is critical to protecting health and increasing resilience in our communities.



MONASH UNIVERSITY

Living clinical guidelines for the clinical care of COVID-19

The Australian Living Evidence Consortium rapidly established the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce which is using Veritas Health COVIDENCE technology to provide 'living' clinical guidelines for healthcare assessment and treatment. Continuous evidence surveillance is being undertaken using COVIDENCE to identify and rapidly synthesise emerging research providing weekly national, evidence-based guidelines for the clinical care of people with COVID-19.

The world first in evidence-based "living guidelines" address questions that are specific to managing COVID-19 and cover the full disease course across mild, moderate, severe and critical illness.

The Foundation supported this project alongside major support from DHHS Victoria, Medical Research Future Fund, Ian Potter Foundation and other philanthropic supporters. Outputs to date include 20 weekly Taskforce communiques which have consolidated and shared findings distilled from thousands of research reports into clinical flowcharts and protocols.



To learn more, visit: covid19evidence.net.au

ALFRED HEALTH

Research to support the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 for the most disadvantaged

The Foundation provided a grant to Alfred Health to support research to understand the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable people in our community such as older people living in aged residential care and people with compromised immune systems. The research will provide evidence and advice that will inform how best to look after people with COVID-19 and improve the public health response to COVID-19.

The Foundation has provided this grant to ensure the most disadvantaged and vulnerable communities that are at-risk of severe diseases are a priority in the healthcare response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, the Alfred's Department of Infectious Diseases will be able to provide more detailed data to public health units to improve the public health response to COVID-19 and advise how best to deploy interventions such as flu vaccine programs and infection prevention interventions in the community.



To learn more, visit: alfredhealth.org.au

GATHER MY CREW

Creating and building support networks for vulnerable people

Gather My Crew is an online tool that enables people facing challenging times or a crisis to reach out to their family and friend networks and develop a schedule of care and support.

Gather My Crew has been working with emergency response organisations and community sector partners during the bushfires and now COVID-19 to create tailored technology solutions that activate and coordinate online 'support crews' around vulnerable and isolated Victorians.

The Foundation's grant supported the development of three new types of crews: street crews for local neighbourhoods to help one another, volunteer crews in local government areas to support the most vulnerable and isolated people within communities, and kindness crews to support healthcare professionals who are working to support Australia during the COVID-19 crisis.

Early learnings from this rapid response grant led to a clearer understanding of what was needed at a community level to enact ongoing and sustainable change. An additional grant secured from the Victorian Government 'Let's Stay Connected Fund' mean these learnings are now being applied in conjunction with three local councils through the Community Mobilisation Project to optimise provision of assistance to people in need.



To learn more, visit: gathermycrew.org.au

HOMELESSNESS & AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Access to safe, affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of a community is a key measure of a successful city.

Melbourne is the fourth least affordable major housing market internationally. Only Hong Kong, Vancouver, and Sydney are less affordable than Melbourne.



The median price for a dwelling in Greater Melbourne was \$665,000 in 2019.



It will take 9.6 years for a median income household to save a 20 per cent deposit for a median priced home in Melbourne.



There are roughly 82,000 people currently on the public housing waiting list.²⁹

Families with children with a female main income earner are more than twice as likely to be in poverty as those with a male main income earner.³⁰

Women over 55 years are the fastest growing group experiencing homelessness.



19-24 year olds have the highest rate of homelessness at nearly 1 in 100 compared to 1 in 200 of the general population.



This is even higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who make up 25 per cent of 15 to 24-year-olds seeking help for homelessness.



LGBTIQ+ people in Victoria are twice as likely to experience homelessness.



IMPACT OF COVID-19

The pandemic has brought about some of the most significant policy reforms in housing and homelessness seen in the last fifty years:



\$500 million COVID-19 Victorian Government Building Works program to build and upgrade community and public housing.

Emergency hotel accommodation (July 2020) estimated: ³¹

2,000 VIC

including:

220 Children



500+ Women



1,100 Single person household



\$20 million Victorian Government support to keep more family violence victim survivors safe in their own homes and to adapt family violence services under COVID-19 restrictions.



\$150 million Victorian Government From Homelessness to a Home package to support those in emergency hotel accommodation out of homelessness and into their own homes.

Introduction of eviction moratorium (until March 2021).



32,000 reduced rental agreements registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) as of September 2020.³²

TOP 3 COMMUNITY CONCERNS



1

Level of homelessness



2

Housing affordability



3

Levels of household debt

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

Melbourne continues to be one of the most unaffordable housing markets in the world which directly impacts the number of people experiencing homelessness. Melbourne needs a long-term plan to increase its affordable housing, so that it remains one of the most liveable cities in the world.

As a community, we must focus on systemic, lasting interventions that prevent homelessness or stop entrenched homelessness so that incidents of homelessness are brief.

JUSTICE CONNECT

Dear Landlord getting help to prevent homelessness when affected by COVID-19.

Thousands of Victorians working in retail, travel, hospitality and customer service became unemployed due to the public health requirements and economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice Connect is a leading community legal centre that specialises in a variety of legal areas, including Homeless Law - a program which provides online resources and tools to help people find information and advice to remain housed.

The \$120,000 Foundation grant increased their capacity to provide a series of tailored legal information and advice for their online self-help hub responding directly to external factors caused by COVID-19.

The self-help hub also provides other related legal information for employment, social security and domestic violence. It also translated COVID-19 related government policy and assistance into plain, easy to understand language.



To learn more, visit justiceconnect.org.au

COUNCIL TO HOMELESS PERSONS

Everybody's Home

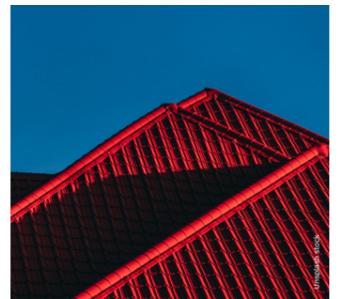
The COVID-19 pandemic has seen the rapid implementation of some of the most significant policy reforms in housing and homelessness in the last 50 years including the rapid rehousing of rough sleepers, doubling of the JobSeeker payment and introduction of the JobKeeper payment.

Council to Homeless Persons launched Everybody's Home in 2018 to bring cohesion and coordination to the community sector's voice advocating for better homelessness and housing policies.

The collaboration now includes over 300 organisational members across the housing and homelessness sectors, local government, and other industries.

A new plan to ensure COVID-19 related housing and homelessness issues continue to receive funding to ensure Australians remain housed involves raising public awareness about the issues of homelessness and housing in the current context, and significantly increasing sector engagement with state and federal governments.

The Foundation's grant will enable Everybody's Home to advocate for 500,000 new social and affordable homes as part of the post-pandemic stimulus package.



To learn more, visit: everybodyshome.com.au

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTORIA

COVID-19 and Family Violence Crisis Response

The COVID-19 lockdown, economic hardship, social isolation and the restriction to movement has contributed to increased rates of family violence.

World Health Organisation statistics report a significant increase in family violence brought about by the restrictions used to minimise the impact of COVID-19.

The Foundation has provided a grant to Domestic Violence Victoria to lead the establishment of new pathways for victim survivors to access family violence support, the production of resources, and the establishment of new industry partnerships.

This project includes the research needed to publish and distribute family violence information at new access points. The Foundation's funding focuses on women with disability. Women with Disabilities Victoria will produce disability inclusive and accessible family violence resources for the community.



To learn more, visit: dvvic.org.au

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT



Melbourne is a vibrant student city, with more than 1,290 primary and secondary schools teaching 700,000 young people. One of the great education cities of the world, it is home to seven universities.

92 per cent of Victorian children attended kindergarten in 2018.³³



89 per cent of young Australians completed Year 12 or equivalent in 2018.³⁴



50,000 young Australians aged between 6 and 16 are not participating in education of any type.³⁵



The national youth unemployment rate was 12 per cent in 2019.³⁶



40 per cent of the Australian workforce is below the minimum literacy and numeracy standards needed to function in a knowledge economy.³⁷

15 per cent of adults in Victoria have low-level literacy skills.³⁸



There were an estimated 15 job seekers for every job vacancy in Australia in 2018.³⁹



2.5 million Australians don't have the basic digital skills they need to thrive in today's world.⁴⁰

Those aged 65 or over are the least digitally included age group in Australia.⁴¹



Australia's overall digital inclusion score rose from 54.0 in 2014 to 61.9 in 2019 with improvement across Access, Affordability and Digital Ability.



Melbourne has the highest digital inclusion score of all state capitals.⁴²

But Australians with low levels of income, education, and employment are significantly less digitally included – with a substantial digital divide between richer and poorer Australians.⁴³

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Nearly half of Australian children and young people are at risk of adverse effects on their educational outcomes, nutrition, physical movement and emotional wellbeing by being physically disconnected from school.⁴⁴



AUSTRALIA

UNEMPLOYMENT ⁴⁵

Up 30% to 7.5% (Jan > July)
Over 1 million people are currently unemployed

UNDER EMPLOYMENT

25% increase nationally.⁴⁶ (March > July)



YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth Unemployment Rate (15–24 year olds): 16.3%

JOBSEEKER JOBKEEPER

\$289 billion of economic support including \$164 billion of direct fiscal support (e.g. JobKeeper)

VICTORIA

UNEMPLOYMENT

Up 30% to 6.8% (Jan > July)
Rate of female job loss almost five times the rate for men in July 2020

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Across Greater Melbourne ranges from 9.2%–14.3%

- Mornington Peninsula 14.3%
- Inner East 14.2%
- North West 13.8%
- West 13.7%
- South East 13.0%



JOBSEEKER JOBKEEPER

An estimated 31.7% of local businesses in Central Melbourne have applied for JobKeeper⁴⁷



TOP 3 COMMUNITY CONCERNS



1

Level of unemployment of older people



2

Income growth for low income households



3

Level of youth unemployment

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

The importance of equal access to education at all ages is well known. Ensuring that everyone, young or old, can develop the skills and experience to actively participate in meaningful work and contribute to their community presents challenges.

More than ever before new and innovative approaches are needed to better enable our young people to be workforce ready and to ensure the participation of older Australians faced with under or unemployment but still keen to learn and work.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

Raise the Rate campaign

The Raise the Rate campaign is a national advocacy campaign targeted at raising the weekly rate of the Newstart Allowance (now known as JobSeeker Payment). The Foundation joined forces with 14 other philanthropic trusts and foundations to support this three year campaign.

Pre-COVID-19 JobSeeker had not increased in real terms for 26 years, creating a poverty trap for a growing number of Australians.

The campaign has used strong economic data and deeply personal stories to galvanise support from a wide range of individuals and organisations. The campaign has now shifted to #raisetherateforgood to ensure that the higher level of Job Seeker is kept beyond the pandemic and to adequately support Australians and the economic recovery.



To learn more, visit: raisetherate.org.au

YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL VICTORIA (YACVic)

COVID-19 Support for increased capacity needs

COVID-19 is severely affecting the health and wellbeing of young people due to major disruptions to their education and employment. Many young people are also facing existing issues such as family violence, discrimination and housing shortages. There is great concern that this generation of young people will face huge economic and mental health challenges.

The current crisis has significantly increased the workload of Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic), the peak body for the youth sector and young people in Victoria. Its Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) is also facing overwhelming demand.

The Foundation's grant to YACVic will support and increase its advocacy for the Victorian youth sector and specifically young people with a disability. Three new positions will be created including a research and policy officer to coordinate a sector-wide COVID-19 response to focus on employment, mental health and education responses; a disability advocate team leader to coordinate the enormous increase in demand for services; and a digital communications officer to manage the increase in demand for online services, particularly from young people with a disability.



To learn more, visit: yacvic.org.au

MOVING FEAST

Mobilising Melbourne's food community for emergency relief

STREAT's response to COVID-19 has been to bring food social enterprises together to create Moving Feast with the aim of providing wholesome and nutritious food to vulnerable communities across Melbourne.

This collective of social enterprises already have in place chefs in kitchens, delivery drivers, and staff at a distribution centre and depot packing and delivering food. The Foundation's grant to STREAT enabled Moving Feast to provide food for vulnerable communities and assisted in creating and maintaining employment within the social enterprise sector during the pandemic.



To learn more, visit: streat.com.au

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY



We are all dependent on the natural systems that support us. How we interact with those systems, how we consume and produce goods, determine their sustainability as well as our own.

Melbourne's foodbowl has capacity to meet **41 per cent** of Melbourne's total current food needs.



Victoria's per capita emissions remain at **four times the global average**.



4 per cent increase since 2017 of rooftop solar in households.⁵²



Costs to build and run new renewable power plants are estimated to be **between 40 and 60 per cent** of the cost of a new fossil fuel plant.⁵⁴



Air quality due to the 2019 Australian bushfires is the **poorest ever** experienced in Greater Melbourne.⁵⁵ **A 4 per cent increase since 2017.**⁵⁶



4.3 metric tonnes of food waste was generated in Australia - with **87 per cent** going to landfill, only **11 per cent** being recycled (2018).

11% recycled
87% to landfill

By 2050 there will be 7-8 million people in Melbourne, requiring **60 per cent** more food.



17.9 per cent of households in Victoria now have rooftop solar.⁵¹

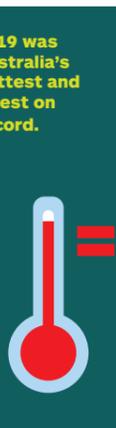


23.9 per cent of Victoria's electricity comes from renewables.⁵³



2019 was Australia's hottest and driest on record.

And the December 2019 **Forest Fire Danger Index** was the highest on record.^{57, 58}



The average Victorian household **throws out approximately \$2,200 worth of food** each year.⁵⁹



IMPACT OF COVID-19

Greenhouse gas emissions have **decreased in Australia due to the pandemic restrictions.**



8 per cent year-on-year fall in emissions in the June quarter.⁶⁰



A 79 per cent reduction in emissions caused by jet fuel.⁶¹



TOP 3 COMMUNITY CONCERNS



1
Cost of electricity relative to household income



2
Energy affordability



3
Level of food waste

SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

We have the technology, the expertise and wealth to transition toward a more sustainable economy. We need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, support more sustainable production and consumption, and adapt to a changing climate.

Securing and sustaining our food systems and protecting our rivers and bays must become a priority.

FOODBANK Mobilising Melbourne's food community for emergency relief

COVID-19 initially had a major impact on the availability of everyday grocery store items impacting Foodbank Victoria's supply chain of donated food goods. As stock levels became alarmingly low in April, Foodbank faced with the prospect of having to buy food items and goods to meet the unprecedented demand.

To assist in meeting this urgent need, the grant helped Foodbank increase their stock levels to continue distributing much needed food and goods to vulnerable people in our community.



To learn more, visit: [foodbank.org.au](https://www.foodbank.org.au)

THE SMART ENERGY COUNCIL STIMULUS SUMMIT A Renewables-led Economic Recovery

Rebuilding the Australian economy via smart energy and transport infrastructure is proposed as a critical component of government stimulus packages. Australia has the potential to be an economic superpower in a quickly decarbonising world.

Australia has some of the best renewable energy resources globally, including solar access, geo-thermal, wind and tidal, within its borders. All of the components essential to storing renewable energy via the lithium-ion battery also exist as well as vast tracts of available land. In addition, Australia has the skills, economic wealth and infrastructure capabilities to harness these natural assets. There is potential to develop clean hydrogen for markets around the world, supply renewable electricity directly to Asian grids, as well as encouraging energy intensive industries here, using renewable energy. Significant land is available for carbon sequestration opportunities, including tree planting and soil carbon. Equally, our extensive marine environments could be utilised to sequester carbon, through carbon capturing activities such as seaweed farms.

The Foundation's new Clean Technology Powerhouse Initiative aims to direct community attention to the economic and employment opportunities associated with Australia's transition to zero emissions through a series of strategic communications.

The Smart Energy Council Stimulus Summit in May 2020 brought together over 20 government, industry and experts online to highlight the opportunities involved with an economic recovery led by electrification and renewable energy.

The summit included presentations from Energy Ministers from Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and the ACT, making several long and short-term commitments to a clean recovery. Australia's potential to export renewable energy, renewable energy fuelled products and the sequestration of emissions in terrestrial and aquatic environments was expertly articulated. Attended by over 3500 delegates the summit resulted in over 350 media clips and Twitter engagement yielded an audience reach of more than 300,000 for the hashtag #stimulussummit.

The Smart Energy Council Global Smart Energy Summit in late September involved over 20 keynote speakers including international experts, political influencers, eminent Australians, leading Australian business and renewables firm CEOs, as well as community and social change leaders.

This event presented an international perspective, featuring industry and political leaders exploring ways to tackle the economic crisis and the climate crisis at the same time. Leaders from across the world set out their plans to revitalise and decarbonise economies. It also highlighted how Australia was well placed to prosper as trading partners move swiftly to clean energy. The event had a total of 5,000 registrations and extensive traditional and social media exposure, including 150 media pieces and a potential audience reach of over 10 million.



To learn more, visit: [smartenergy.org.au](https://www.smartenergy.org.au)



Strategic community giving since 1923

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