



2021 Annual Report

A Year of Accomplishments.





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We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we learn, share and grow. We acknowledge their long and continuing relationship with their land and thank them for caring for Country for thousands of generations. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and stand in solidarity with First Nations communities.

We would like to also acknowledge our own ancestors and all the diverse places they were born in and journeyed to. We honour the courage it takes to make a new life in a new place and to welcome newcomers. We particularly recognise all of those whose love of this land has made this a place we treasure and seek to nurture.

Latin Stories Australia, 2021

Author: Trinidad E Abascal

Design: Carolina Perez Dilsizian

Images: Some of the images have been provided by Latin Stories Australia, Diana Paez or participants of the Nuestras Voces project.

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Message from Directors



Image by Diana Paez

We are proud and pleased to share with you Latin Stories Australia's work and achievements for the financial year 2020-21.

Latin Stories Australia adjusted the way in which we support our community in response to the impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. As we share this report with you, the impacts of COVID19 are still affecting us all. However, our Latin American and Spanish-speaking communities, have shown resilience, strength and willingness to adapt to the challenges we are facing. At Latin Stories Australia we have supported those in our community whose livelihoods were more affected.

We are extremely proud of the "Nuestras Voces" project and feel very grateful for the senior members of our community who trusted in us to share their stories. A documentary, a findings report presented to Government and a podcast series were developed with a focus on the lives, stories and needs of the Spanish-speaking migrant community who arrived between the 1960s and 1980s. This project is truly an accomplishment for us and we celebrate this achievement with you and the team who made it possible. This project is expected to have a strong positive impact on our communities but also on the wider multicultural society we live in.

We would also like to acknowledge all who participated in "Juntos Contigo: Estamos conectados" workshops. You showed strength and bravery by showing up to understand and learn more about mental health. You contributed to the discussion around these topics, and took the necessary steps to support your wellbeing.

As an organisation we created new projects that responded to the emerging needs and we have been able to strengthen our position by (1) continuing growing as a team with an amazing group of committed volunteers; (2) developing internal policies and procedures that have allowed us to obtain the Deductible Gift Recipients status which enables us to receive tax-deductible donations; and (3) re-designing our website to better communicate the activities of Latin Stories Australia.

Thank you for your continued support in this dream of advancing multiculturalism and social cohesion in Australia.

Achievements

- We've got very far

326

People directly engaged in our projects.

99

Beneficiaries of a \$50 culturally-relevant food relief voucher.

8

Latin American and Spaniards small businesses were supported as part of our "Juntos Contigo: Estamos conectados" project

20

Volunteers across our different projects

906

Volunteers/pro-bono hours. This represents a volunteer replacement cost of **over \$45,000.**

97.686

Reach through the year across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

4

New Government funding contracts to continue supporting our community in the next financial year on the topics of gender equality and healthy relationships, mental health and sense of belonging.



Latin Stories Australia received the prestigious **"OHTLI" award** by the Mexican Government for our continuous work for the Mexican and Latin American community in Australia. This award is the maximum honour and acknowledgment the Mexican Government gives to Mexicans living abroad.

During our projects we collaborated with **3 organisations** (Momentum psychology, UNITED-Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre and SBS Radio Spanish).



Laura's story

- Impact on people



Image by Diana Paez

The first time I heard about Latin Stories Australia (LSA) was in April 2019 when someone shared a post in a group on Facebook with the story of Juan Pablo Guerrero, a Colombian working with the Australian Antarctica Division, which had been published by LSA. "It is fascinating" I thought. Reading that story really filled me with hope for the future and, as a Colombian, I felt very proud.

As a migrant, it is easy to focus just on what one must do to survive and fulfil your goals, and if things do not go well the desperation can be overwhelming. However, being able to know stories like the ones LSA publishes monthly allow us to remember that even though the path can sometimes be harsh there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Later that year I had the opportunity to participate in one of the LSA workshops called "Interweaving" in which I understood a bit better the Australian values and learned ways to connect and strengthen my sense of belonging into Australian life. It was a fun and safe space to share and reflect on our experiences in Australia with a group of extraordinary women. As part of that workshop, I got to know people that now I call "friends". This has helped me to expand my community in Australia and increase my sense of belonging. I had recently lost my job, and during this workshop, I was lucky to meet a very kind woman who gave me a job babysitting her son.

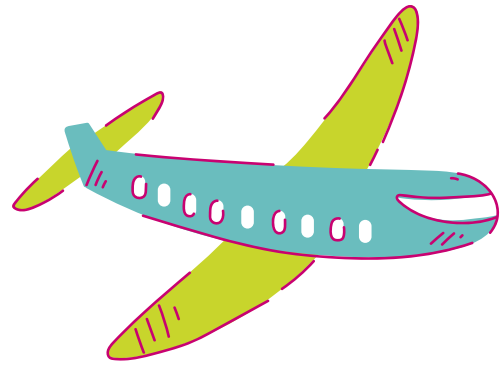
In addition, last year during the 4th lockdown in Melbourne, as part of LSA online workshops to support our mental health and wellbeing, I learnt strategies to manage the distress and anxiety the pandemic had triggered in most of us. Furthermore, they gave a food voucher for \$50 dollars to the participants of the workshops experiencing financial hardship, which meant a lot to me as I was not working at the time and allowed me to enjoy a delicious meal from a Colombian restaurant that made me feel at home. I want to express my gratitude to the Latin Stories Australia Team for all your hard work to support the Latin community and visualise its contribution to Australian society.



Instagram post of LSA about online Depression & Wellness workshops

Inspiring migration

- Series 2020-2021



As part of our monthly "inspiring migration series" we published 11 stories and 1 special article.

Who was featured?

6 women and 5 male

Representing **6 Latin American countries**: Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Argentina, Mexico and Peru.

Special article on the important project by Professor Adrian Hearn from Melbourne University titled "Who is Nature? Ancient traditions meet virtual reality". He investigated the nexus of humanity and nature and in 2019 visited sacred sites introduced by community elders in Mexico, Cuba, and Australia.



Nuestras Voces

- Overview



“Nuestras Voces” is a special project developed and delivered by Latin Stories Australia between September 2019 and June 2021 with the support of the Victorian Government.

This project has engaged numerous members of the Spanish-speaking communities in Victoria who arrived between the 1960s and 1980s to develop a common narrative of our history, increase understanding of barriers to access adequate services and participation in society, and increase community pride and cultural connection between young people and the older generation.

The original project included a series of intergenerational interviews between the new migrant communities and those who arrived between the 1960s and 1980s. However, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged during the course of this project, and as such, it had to be adjusted so that we could continue to deliver it. This project has resulted in the following activities:

- Development and distribution of storytelling migration journals distributed to 90 seniors to reduce isolation during the pandemic (September – November 2021).
- Interviews with 23 members of the Spanish-speaking communities who arrived during these decades. These participants are community leaders, community activists and drivers of change (September – November 2021).
- The documentary film “Nuestras Voces” (to be released in the next financial year).
- A findings report including the analysis of the stories of thirty-two members of the Spanish-speaking communities (to be released on the next financial year).
- “Nuestras Voces” podcast series covering 10 interviews with key members of the Spanish-speaking communities, in collaboration with SBS Radio Spanish (to be released on the next financial year).

It has been an honour to lead this project.

We would like to thank and acknowledge those special people who made this project possible. In particular, everyone who shared their stories with us. The working group and volunteers: Trinidad Abascal, Diana Paez, Cristina Abela, Tamara Ortegón, Claire Bower, Valeria Silva, Juan Chacon-Olier, Carolina Perez Dilsizian, Jemma Ives, Rebecca Batelaan, Laura Chevis, Zoe Gleeson, and Carlos Colina (from SBS Radio Spanish) who undertook some of the interviews. The Steering Committee: Rafaela Lopez (nee Torres), Telmo Languiller and Teresa De Fazio.



- Developing a narrative of our history in Victoria

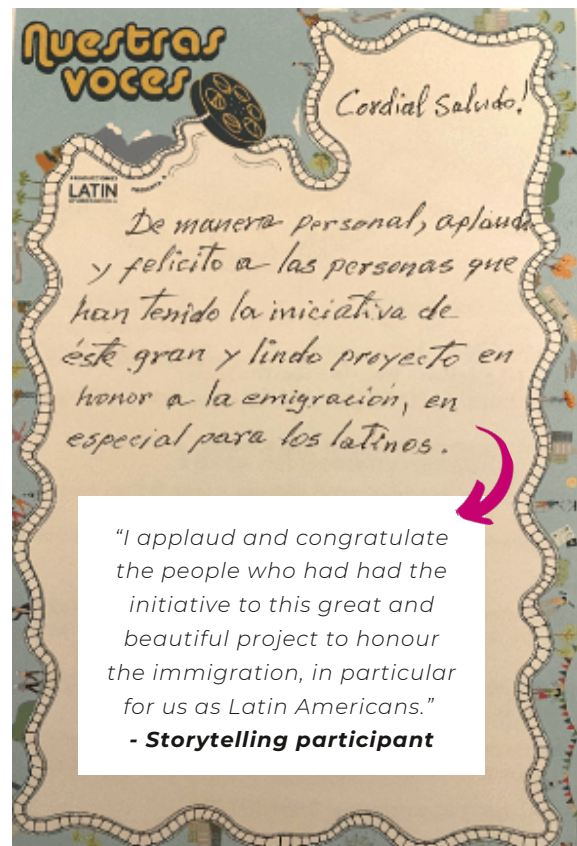
This project was possible given the support of the Victorian Government - Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Storytelling journal activity

And COVID-19 hit... and given our target community was not only particularly vulnerable to this virus; but also, the most affected in terms of social connection (as many of them are not digitally literate); we had to adapt and innovate to be able to continue the project.

To support this vulnerable group during a very difficult time, a storytelling journal activity was developed and sent to almost 100 seniors.

Latin Stories Australia contacted UNITED-Spanish Latin America Welfare Centre - a service provider supporting the senior Spanish-speaking communities - to distribute these with their senior clients with the option to return the completed journals to Latin Stories Australia to be included in the findings report and in the premiere of the documentary.



"I applaud and congratulate the people who had had the initiative to this great and beautiful project to honour the immigration, in particular for us as Latin Americans."
- Storytelling participant

Further testimonies

"I just opened them -the storytelling journals- and they are gorgeous!! The presentation will make many want to participate with great enthusiasm. Thanks."

- Interim Operations Manager, UNITED

"Thank you for giving me this great opportunity to share a little of my life with the Australian community and everyone."

- Storytelling journal activity participant

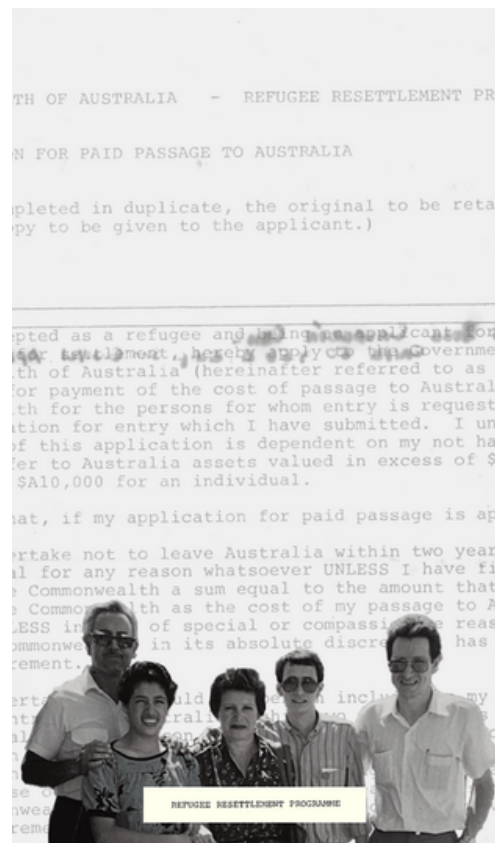


- Our impact

Participants had the opportunity to return the completed journals to Latin Stories Australia be included in the Findings Report of this project (9 were received back).

From those who returned the storytelling journal, all...

- Strongly agreed (**56%**) or agreed (**44%**) that the activity made them use their time (during the COVID-19 restrictions) in something enjoyable.
- Strongly agreed (**78%**) or agreed (**22%**) that the activity was a good opportunity for reflection.
- Strongly agreed (**67%**) or agreed (**33%**) that the activity made them feel connected to their culture and country of origin.
- Strongly agreed (**67%**) or agreed (**33%**) that the activity made them appreciate their contribution to Victoria and Australia.



The Documentary

The documentary showcases the stories of 18 members of our communities and explores migrant and refugee settlement themes such as: settlement challenges, the refugee voice, multiculturalism, and the transformational experience of education and opportunities for migrants.

The documentary “Nuestras Voces” is a reminder of the challenges migrants have to endure to leave their home countries and make a new beginning in a completely different environment.

“What brought them to Australia? What was life like for them when they came? Who are they now?”

Around the world, there are over 270 million immigrants, more than ever before. However, the benefits of migration have been questioned by some. Through the testimonials of a group of Spanish-speaking migrants who arrived in Victoria, Australia between the 60s and the 80s, we embark on an emotional journey to understand the challenges and joys of their stories, showcasing their contribution to the social and cultural fabric of this country.

The documentary “Nuestras Voces” is a powerful reflection on the strength and resilience of immigrants”



- The Director

Diana Paez is the Director of the “Nuestras Voces” documentary film. She is a passionate creator, who came from Colombia to Australia in 2014 to study filmmaking in Melbourne. She is fascinated by stories of resilience and enjoys learning and creating in collaboration with people and organisations that want to generate an impact.

She wants to use the audio-visual and visual medium to generate empathy and connect people with each other and themselves. She has worked with different organisations that focus their work around the themes of migration, diversity and inclusion such as RMCC, SisterWorks, CMY, Melbourne Filмотeca and Mosaik.

The Report

Latin Stories Australia strongly believe in the power of advocacy through hearing the stories of our communities. Therefore, as part of the “Nuestras Voces” project, a findings report was developed to provide insights into ways to better support senior migrant communities from a Spanish-speaking background, and new migrant and refugee communities. This report will be shared with the Victorian Government, Government departments, other jurisdictions and the broader community. This report will be released alongside the screening of the documentary and made available to the community through our website.

32

Members of the Spanish-speaking communities who arrived during the 1960s and 1980s were part of this report.

22

Of these participants are community leaders, community activists and drivers of change.

9

Of these stories were from the storytelling journal activity to represent the wider senior Spanish-speaking communities in order to gain a better understanding of the current challenges and gaps in support services.

- Why is this important?

Many members of the Spanish-speaking communities migrated to escape political persecution and human rights abuses, including torture, lengthy detentions, death threats and disappearances, among others. The lack of access to culturally relevant mental services at the time meant that the trauma experienced is now having long-term effects associated with mental and physical ill-health, and social isolation... This report highlights the need to assist our senior community through relevant services in our own language

“I am concerned about the elderly, the process of loss, mourning... They are in their homes, reflecting on their story, what has been... perhaps they are alone because their children and grandchildren do not speak the language, they have lost the ability to speak Spanish... The loneliness, dementia, Alzheimer’s in connection with the trauma. One remembers the traumatic part that was never spoken about”.

- Dr Maritza Thompson, Psychologist

For more findings and recommendations you can check our site:

<https://www.latinstoriesaustralia.com/our-projects/2021/5/24/nuestras-voces>

The Podcast

The Spanish-speaking communities lived the transformation of Australia, from a “White Australia” to a “Multicultural Country”, which began in 1973 when the “White Australia Policy” was abolished by the Whitlam government. The difficulties experienced by those who arrived during the “White Australian Policy” and their contribution to the Victorian community is largely missing from the multicultural history of Victoria.... The “Nuestras Voces” podcast series gives voice to 10 key members of the Spanish-speaking communities, to hear the story and learnt about their contributions.

The podcasts series is delivered in collaboration with **SBS Radio Spanish**. The 1st of 10 episodes will be aired on SBS Radio Spanish in July. One episode will be released every fortnight from then onwards. The 10 people selected and interviewed by Carlos Colina (SBS Radio Spanish) are members of our communities who have widely contributed to the Victorian social fabric.

Featured members of the community include: Angela y Pablo Barra, Angel Calderon, Ivana Csar, Cecilia Hernandez, Telmo Languiller, Peter Lochert, Rafaela Lopez (nee Torres) Gladys Novoa, Dr Maritza Thompson, and Wilfredo Zelada.



We appreciate the support of SBS Radio Spanish during this project, and in particular for undertaking some of the interviews and producing the podcasts series.

Juntos Contigo



- Estamos conectados

The social distance restrictions used to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pushed us to find new ways of being connected and “**juntos**” (**together**). Latin Stories Australia developed the **JUNTOS CONTIGO** project to **APAPACHAR (pamper)** those sectors of the Spanish speaking community who were most vulnerable.

A response to the needs of our community during the pandemic...

- We delivered **6 free online workshops covering a diverse range of topics on mental health and wellbeing** (in conjunction with Momentum Psychology). The topics covered were targeted to the community and delivered in Spanish. The sessions were recorded and are available on our website to the wider community.
- We provided culturally appropriated food relief **via \$50 food vouchers** to those with economic hardship. Vouchers were to be spent on Latin American and Spaniards restaurants/staples to make them feel closer to home.
- **Useful and relevant information related to COVID-19** was compiled and shared in a culturally and targeted way to the community, in particular to those with temporary visas.

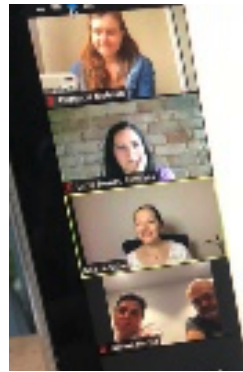


Estrés

Esta tensión psicológica se manifiesta cuando estamos abrumados por una situación. Una vez más, la pandemia pone a prueba a nuestro cuerpo que intenta dar respuestas a través de la lucha o de la huida de los momentos conflictivos.

PARA DETECTAR EL ESTRÉS EN TU CUERPO, TEN PRESENTE SI...

- No duermes bien
- Tienes problemas de concentración
- Experimentas cambios en tus hábitos alimenticios
- Padeces miedo por tu salud y la de tus seres queridos
- Aumentas el consumo de alcohol, tabaco y otras drogas
- Empeoras tus problemas de salud crónicos o mentales



- Mental health and wellbeing online sessions

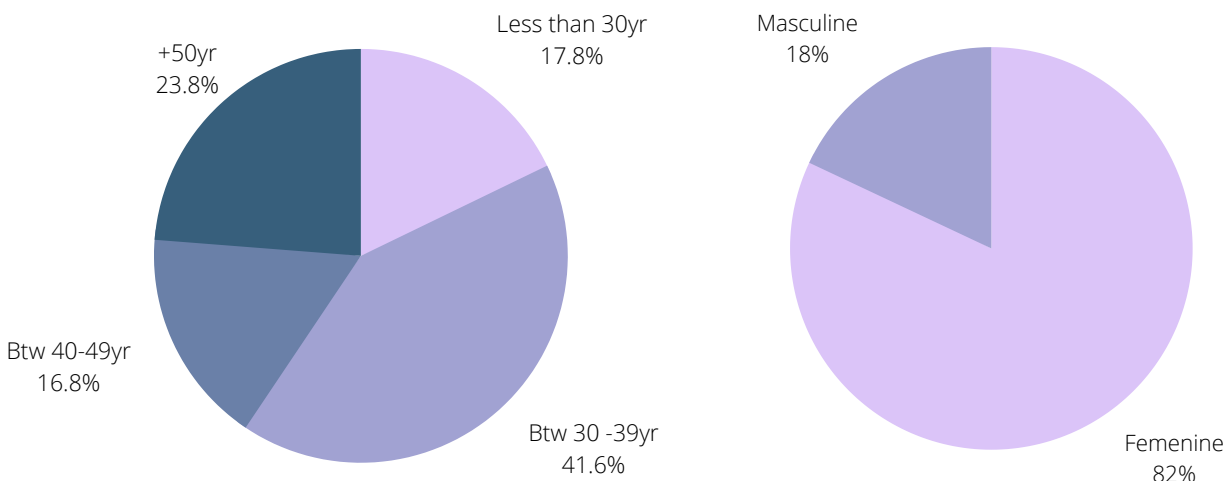
Loneliness is a key problem for everyone; however, for people from a collective culture such as the Latin American and Spanish cultures, this is particularly difficult. Additionally, as migrants, not being able to see the people you know and worrying about their families in Latin America and Spain is causing a lot of stress in the community we want to support.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, social isolation and loneliness can be harmful to both mental and physical health. We responded by delivering 6 mental health and wellbeing sessions on the following topics.



- Who participated?

102 attendees from **8** different countries, mainly from Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Argentina. Participants ages varied from **28** to **over 70** years old.



- Our impact

After the sessions, participants...

Increased understanding of mental health:

“I have a child with depression and the workshops helped me to understand him a little bit better”

Learnt about strategies and tools to support their mental health and wellbeing:

“I really enjoyed the mindfulness exercise. This is something I can practice”

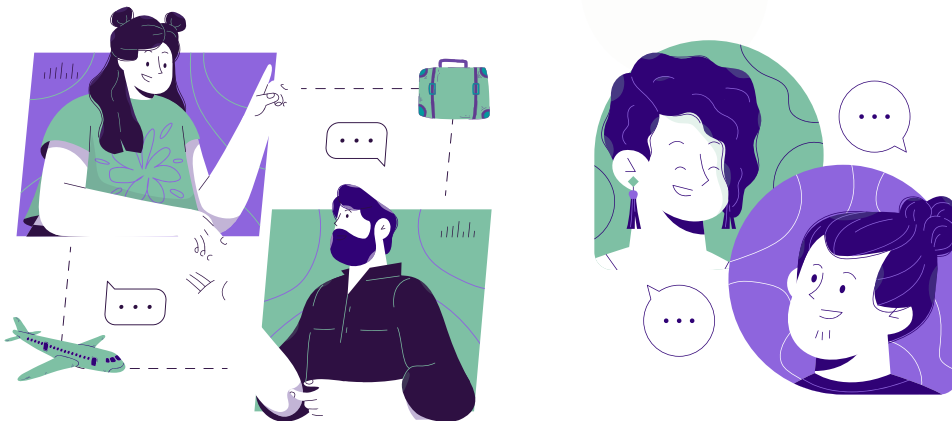
“Tools to overcome the sadness”

Reduced stigma and increased likelihood to seek support:

“I learnt that we go through the same emotions during this pandemic...It made me realise there are people willing to support and help”

- **98%** were very satisfied, or satisfied, with the sessions
- **96%** stated that they received valuable information to support them during the difficult times
- **91%** felt connected with other people in the community

“I wish there could be more workshops like these. Thanks so much for your support. If I were not in Australia, maybe I wouldn't have had this lifesaver that we all need; in particular given what we are going through”



We learnt that the participants were very eager to create a community. Some people attended more than one session as this made them feel a sense of belonging. In particular, those of more advanced age.

- Food relief

Many people from our communities were not considered during the COVID-19 financial support available from Government due to visa restrictions. The majority of these people struggled financially due to the decrease on casual work shifts and continuing expenses. Their families back home were not able to support them as some were in ever worse situations.

Whom did we support?

99 members of the community in need and with no access to financial support given their visa status **received a \$50 food voucher**. This also involved the support towards **8 Latin American and Spaniard** small businesses as we acquired the **\$50 dollars** vouchers from them. This represented an income of almost **\$5,000**.



Most of the community members who received the vouchers were students on temporary visas. However, we also supported some members who were placed in isolation as per DHHS advice.

From 7 different countries, mainly from Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Argentina.

"Thank you very much. I will be able to have a nice dinner. You are like angels that God have on this earth. I hope God protects you and increase your prosperity" - **A voucher recipient in isolation - DHHS advice**

"The voucher helped me a lot as I am not able to work. It is a way to help my husband and share it with my children. It makes me very happy. Thanks so much for all your help"

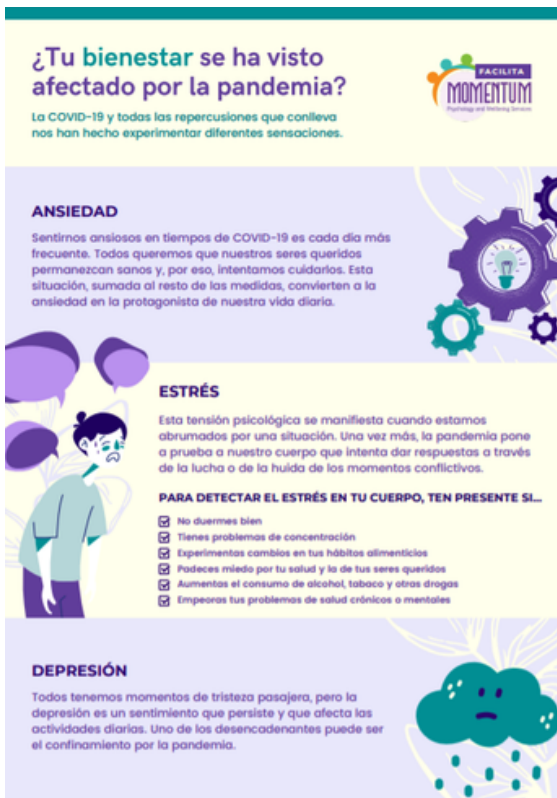
IN COLLABORATION WITH



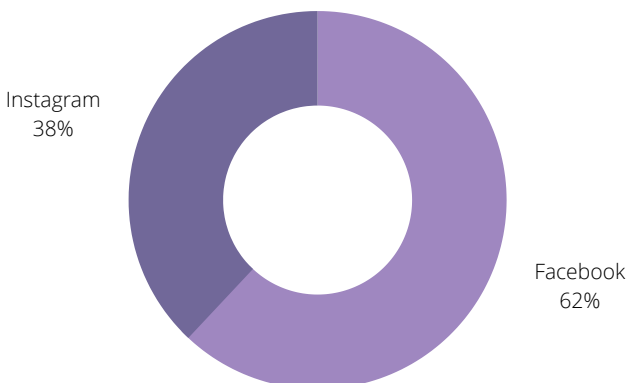
- Relevant information in Spanish

Many members of our communities, in particular, those with temporary visas have limited English; therefore, access to up-to-date information (regarding health and available support) is a challenge. In addition, some of them might be new to the country, so they might not understand the system and what services are available to them.

We supported them by delivering health resources and communications in Spanish including information tailored to those with temporary visas.



We delivered these key messages in Spanish in our social media and engaged with Latin American influencers and Latin American key organisations in Victoria to distribute these messages via their social channels. This information is also included in our website for the community's further reference.



During the duration of the project, had a reach of: **28,276 on Facebook** and **17,339 on Instagram**

Financial Report

- Statement of Financial Performance

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
Revenue		
Fundraising	—	—
Grants Received	72,949.00	80,001.00
Sales of Photographs	—	—
Member donation	—	2,092.56
Total revenue	72,949.00	82,093.56
Expenditure		
Accountancy	650.00	650.00
Advertising & Marketing	1,516.00	2,418.51
Administration	3,681.71	4,459.19
IT Expenses	343.07	343.07
Project Development	7,538.95	11,045.00
Delivery of projects	25,614.94	41,957.85
Stationery & Printing Materials	1,293.45	4,249.01
Software training	—	105.00
Travel Expenses - Local	4,799.75	2,706.02
Total expenditure	45,437.87	67,933.65
Net Surplus / Deficit from Ordinary Activities	27,511.13	14,159.91

- Statement of Financial Position

Detailed Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2021

	2021	2020
Equity		
Association equity	102,466.91	74,955.78
Total equity	102,466.91	74,955.78
Represented by		
Current Assets		
Cash Assets		
Cash at Bank - Current Account	101,354.38	80,001.00
	101,354.38	80,001.00
Other debtors		
Accounts receivable and another debtors	—	—
Total current assets	101,354.38	80,001.00
Non Current Assets		
Fix Assets		
Equipment at cost	1,112.53	1,112.53
	—	—
Total Fixed Assets	1,112.53	1,112.53
Total Non-Current Assets	1,112.53	1,112.53
Total Assets	102,466.91	74,955.78
Current Liabilities	—	—
Total Current Liabilities	—	—
Non-Current Liabilities		
Total Non-Current Liabilities	—	—
Total Liabilities	—	—
Net Assets	102,466.91	74,955.78
Retained Earnings		
Balance at 1st July 2020	74,955.78	60,795.87
Surplus (Deficit) attributable to association	27,511.13	14,159.91
Balance at 30 June 2021 ¹	102,466.91	74,955.78

1. Under the cash basis of accounting the Retained Earnings have not been matched to related expenditure in the financial year in which it will be expended. As a result, the 2022 financial statements will be reporting the expenditure of committed projects Latin Stories Australia will deliver during the 2021/2022 financial year.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2021

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Reform Act (Victoria) 2021. The committee have determined that the Association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards. The financial report is prepared on a cash basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations or non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

a) Property, Plan and Equipment (PPE)

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

b) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the assets, being the higher of value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

c) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of 3 months or less.

d) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred considerations is not discounted to present value when recognising revenue.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

All revenue is stated exclusive of the number of goods and services tax (GST).

d) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised exclusively of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the TAX OFFICE. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the assets and liabilities statement are shown inclusive of GST.

Thanks for being part
of this journey with us!



This year has been a very difficult one for many, we commend the resilience of our community and willingness to walk the journey with each other and with us.