Annual Report 2019
ABN 73 477 193 897

25–27 Ross Smith Avenue East, Frankston, Vic. 3199
Presented to the virtual Annual General Meeting on 27 May 2020
1. Introduction

Groomed to Go Inc. is a registered not-for-profit organisation that has offered support services for women over the last 9 years through the Dress for Success South East Melbourne® program, and for men through the Smart Blokes program: a new service introduced in 2019.

We rely on fundraising events, community support, personal and corporate donations, and grants to help us to provide a range of career and development tools to help our clients build their skills, confidence and employability. Our goal is to inspire people to achieve economic independence by providing services to help them thrive in work and life.

As a result of the Jobs Innovation Fund Grant awarded in late 2018, we expanded our premises at 25 Ross Smith Avenue East to the adjoining shop at 27 Ross Smith Avenue East. We titled our grant application ‘Opening New Doors’ and it had three clear components:

• A dressing and styling program for men – Smart Blokes
• A dressing and styling program for Transgender women – Be Who You Are
• A digital literacy program for women over 45 years.

To successfully implement and manage the grant, we appointed Sandy Gregory as Program Manager in December 2018. Throughout 2019, these pilot programs were tested, reviewed and adjusted in response to feedback we received from clients and industry supporters. These programs have now been incorporated into the standard suite of offerings we provide at Groomed to Go Inc.

The key goals that we set for 2019 were to:

• Initiate a fee-for-service model to charge Job Active Providers for our services, thereby developing a sustainable funding pathway to reduce the pressure of obtaining short-term grants and donations
• Conduct at least four key fundraisers/events to raise a total of at least $45,800
• Identify a series of corporate partners to secure sponsorship of $35,000
• Assign a dedicated Committee member to manage the grant application process
• Launch a transgender styling program reaching 20 women
• Launch a digital literacy program reaching at least forty 45+ year old women
• Launch Smart Blokes: a styling and support program for men, based on the successful Dress for Success model, reaching 150 men
• Secure funding for the retention of an ongoing Program/General Manager and the Smart Blokes program

Our scorecard shows that we achieved most of these ambitious goals while having some misses and adjustments along the way, as well as some successful additions:

• To help generate sustainable income, a fee-for-service system was introduced early in the year for government funded Job Active Providers who refer clients to us. It took some time to become embedded and has taken significant effort in terms of time and follow up to ensure timely payment of these fees. It is important to note that all our clients, whether they are referred from a Job Active Provider or fall outside that process receive our full range of programs and services at no charge.
• We raised just over $47,000 from clothing sales and events. Our annual Golf Day was postponed until 2020, due to external circumstances.

• We increased our focus on developing corporate partnerships and were rewarded by receiving valuable in-kind support from several companies, notably Hewlett Packard and Price Waterhouse Cooper. Overall, we raised $20,565 in corporate donations.

• Robyn Tredinnick joined our Committee in late 2018 and took on the management of grant applications, for which we are extremely grateful.

• Our innovative Transgender styling program – Be Who You Are – provided services to 21 women. Ably led and managed by Tanya Williams, and promoted and supported by our Ambassador, Sandra Pankhurst, we modified and refined delivery of our program to create a more individual approach. With the valuable support of Wigs on Wheels, as well as Chisholm College students providing hair and beauty styling tips, we were able to dress 21 transgender women. Of these 21 clients, 11 attended a specific workshop Celebrating Me, a further 4 clients attended Dare to Shine and 8 clients also attended Developing Positive Workplace Relationships.

• In total we had 57 women over the age of 45 attend our digital literacy program workshops led by Sophia Jane from Digital World Training. With small groups and a personalised approach, many reported that the workshops assisted them in applying for jobs as their confidence had increased substantially.

• Following many years of inquiries, we finally launched our Smart Blokes program. We initially set a goal of styling 150 men, however by July we realised that this had been an overly ambitious target and with the approval of the grantor, we modified this goal to 80 men. Happily, by December we had provided styling to 88 men!

• Acknowledging the tremendous support and work our General Manager, Sandy Gregory, had contributed to the organisation, the Committee agreed in December 2019 that we would extend the contract for a further 6 months, with the view of consolidating the work done to date and to continue to develop a solid financial base.

• We also established a Work for the Dole Program that brought in funding, while supporting our purpose of assisting people to find employment by providing work skills. We were fortunate to be able to utilise some grant funding to employ an Operations Manager, Tracey Probert, to manage this initiative.

• Throughout 2019 we actively sought to diversify our Committee in terms of skills, gender and age bracket. In November, we were delighted to be able to second George Stancu to the vacancy created by Prue Leggoe’s resignation. George lives locally in South East Melbourne and is currently a Director, Tech Consulting at PwC (Pricewaterhouse Coopers) bringing 15 years plus experience in the information technology field to us, along with industry expertise, a passion for developing people and giving back to the community. George’s extensive knowledge of the digital space has already proved an invaluable asset to our organisation as we continue to grow and expand our service delivery across South East Melbourne.
2. 2019 in Review

2.1 Highlights

Kick-off!

After a full year of much change we started the year in February with a Volunteer Kick off Day to learn of our plans for 2019, new programs and processes, and to discuss the changes that had come along so quickly over the past months. Thirty-four volunteers participated in the day, which was facilitated by Dina Pozzo from Insium Pty Ltd who gave of her time on the day. It was great to re-visit our purpose and remind ourselves of why we volunteer!

International Women’s Day

Our first fundraising event of the year centred on International Women’s Day and Empower Hour, a national campaign in collaboration with the other Dress for Success affiliates around Australia, where we ask individuals and corporates to donate just one hour of their annual salary to help a women in need. This year we were asked to speak to several companies who held events to celebrate International Women’s Day. Thanks go to Robyn Wight who spoke at a Munro Shoes’ event, to Robyn Tredinnick who spoke with the team at Electronic Arts, and to Marian Gandy who covered Hewlett Packard, GlaxoSmithKline and Gilead Sciences.

WomenConnect Frankston holds an International Women’s Day Luncheon annually with proceeds going to Dress for Success South East Melbourne. A fascinating array of speakers entertained a packed house on the topic of ‘Women in Crime’ – featuring our own Be Who You Are Ambassador, Sandra Pankhurst. We are grateful to WomenConnect for their sustained support!

Grand Opening

On 21 March we held our Annual General Meeting and combined that event with a Grand Opening of our premises at 27 Ross Smith Avenue East.

It was great to see the turnout! We had 74 acceptances and around 60 plus actual attendees. Mr Chris Crewther, Member for Dunkley, who has been a great supporter over the years, was pleased to attend and to officially declare our fabulous new premises open! In attendance were many past members, volunteers and supporters, including Simon Linardi, the architect who gave so generously of his time and energy to design the layout of 25 Ross Smith Avenue East and provide our fabulous mural outside.

Sandra Pankhurst, Marian Gandy (President) and Chris Crewther MP
Muriel’s Wedding

During April, thanks to the generosity of Global Creatures, producers of the stage production of ‘Muriel’s Wedding’, we were able to offer our wonderful volunteers and corporate partners the opportunity to attend the show free of charge. It was a wonderful way to say thank you to these folks for their amazing support.

In addition, Global Creatures offered ticket purchasers the opportunity to donate to Dress for Success, with over 700 good people taking up that opportunity and raising almost $7000! A most generous and unexpected windfall!

Melbourne Women’s Fund

We were delighted to receive notification in late April that we were FINALISTS in the Melbourne Women’s Fund 2019 Signature Grants Category.

Our grant application was for a mobile dressing service as many of our clients struggle to travel to Frankston with an astonishing 80% have neither a driving licence nor a car. Public transport in the region is scant and can be challenging for some of our vulnerable clients.

The format of the Awards Night in July was a short presentation, delivered by Marian, Sandy and our client Nancy, and a display stand of our ‘bus’, ably managed by Robyn Wight and Sheila Sedgwick. Great job team – thanks for your hard work! Sadly, we were unsuccessful on the night, but received a $4000 merit award that was much appreciated. All the applications were so well deserving; it must have been a huge challenge for the judges!
Open Garden

In 2019 we were invited to be the main beneficiary from the opening of a spectacular garden belonging to one of our volunteers, Alison Swift, as part of the Victorian Open Gardens scheme. The weather did everything to make the opening weekend in November a difficult one, but it could not hide the beauty of Moat’s Corner. Huge thanks to the Swift family for their generous donation of the proceeds from the weekend.

Christmas Lunch

Our Christmas Lunch was held at the Frankston RSL on Friday 6 December. It was a great event to close our year and was well attended by volunteers and VIPS, including our State member for Frankston, Paul Edbrooke, the Frankston Mayor, Sandra Mayer and our Be Who You Are Ambassador, Sandra Pankhurst. Our Federal member, Peta Murphy, was represented by Majella Frick, the Frankston Football Club by new CEO, Adrian Lloyd, and Frankston RSL by the General Manager, Rob Morrison. We were also joined by representatives of some of our fantastic partners – PwC, Hewlett Packard, Spair Pair, Deakin University and Chisholm Institute.

Karin Hann, Vice President, Majella Frick, representing Peta Murphy, Marian Gandy, President, Paul Edbrooke, State Member for Frankston.

Adrian Lloyd, CEO Frankston FC, Kellie Rosenfield, Sandra Mayer, Mayor Frankston, Sandra Pankhurst, BWYA Ambassador
2.2 Our Structure

With the addition of Tracey Probert as Operations Manager in May 2019 and the promotion of Sandy Gregory to General Manager in June, the following structure was rolled out.

![Groomed to Go Inc. Committee Diagram]

At the close of 2019, the Committee of Management consisted of:

President – Marian Gandy
Vice President – Karin Hann
Committee members – Bridget Thakrar, Robyn Tredinnick, George Stancu (seconded)

2.3 Our Premises

February 2019 saw Groomed to Go open for business across the adjacent sites of 25-27 Ross Smith Avenue East. These much larger premises brought our Career Centre under the same roof as our dressing and styling services and allowed the acquisition of a Work for the Dole team to assist with sorting of clothes and other necessary tasks.

After a number of iterations to best utilise the spaces we had, No. 25 housed our dressing and styling services, while No. 27 housed our operational and administrative services.

2.4 Our Programs

Styling: An appointment of 1.5 hours where a personal dresser helps a client select their outfit; and puts them at ease, helping with appropriate clothing to suit their body shape, colour type and potential employment or life opportunity, whether they be female or male.

Dress for Success South East Melbourne is our women’s program and the longest running of our services. Our clients’ experience is best summed up by their own feedback.

*On arrival I was very emotional and felt like a beggar. Following the support, encouragement and enthusiasm of the staff I felt hope for the future. A very uplifting, heart-warming experience. Women helping women get back to their identity of former self!* - Lynne, Dress for Success South East Melbourne Client

**FANTASTIC, EMPOWERING EXPERIENCE. THANK YOU SO MUCH.**

**THE PROGRAM AND WOMEN WERE PHENOMENAL. I WAS ANXIOUS AND NERVOUS, THE WOMEN MADE ME FEEL VERY COMFORTABLE AND PREPARED.** - Hannah, Dress for Success Client
Be Who You Are is our program for transgender women: the revised program gives clients the option of a regular appointment or a VIP one-on-one appointment to ensure privacy and safety. With the integration of our BWYA program into our mainstream styling and career workshops in 2020, we are excited to see this program continue to grow and flourish.

Smart Blokes replicates the successful Dress for Success formula for our male clients. A special thank you to Len and Irene, our volunteers with amazing skills who really kick started this program!

**Coaching and Mentoring:** When the client is a job seeker, the fitting is followed by a personalised one-on-one coaching session by a trained Career Mentor covering the client’s upcoming interview or job interests.

> Happy to be here today and I am more than satisfied. I learned to be more confident about myself, I learned how to answer smartly and I learned how to express my previous experiences in a good way, especially my behaviour.

Imane 2019

**Job Support:** Workshops held in the Career Centre each week covered Celebrating Me! Building Self Esteem, Dare to Shine, Steps2Employment, Face2Face and Building Workplace Relationships as well as Digital Literacy workshops.

> It is very helpful for me how to create a good cover letter and resume. Great workshop! Love having good examples of cover letter and resume format.

Thein 2019 (Steps2Employment)

> Loved learning about where/what and how computers work as these aspects are rarely explained. Very interesting.

Alida (Digital Literacy)

**Post-employment Support:** Support is available to clients who have gained employment and who now need help to hold that role as they begin their working life in a new world.

**Pack and Send:** A program through which we pack and send outfits for clients who are in remote locations and unable to visit the boutique. We can also perform this service for those fleeing domestic violence.

**Schools:** We are regularly invited to present to school leavers and VCAL students as they prepare to leave school and seek employment.
2.5 Our Clients

During 2019, there were 522 client attendances at our stylings and workshops, comprising 299 individual women and 88 men. Of the attendees, 31% were under 25 years, 26% between 25 and 40 years, and 38% over 40 years.

Many of our clients have little or no employment experience or have been long-term unemployed for a variety of health, injury or family reasons. Personal tragedy and domestic violence are regular challenges for our clients; therefore, they are in need of careful and personalised support to help them with their self-confidence and sense of self-worth.

2.6 Our Volunteers

In 2019 we had 58 registered volunteers who donated around 7500 hours to the organisation. Our thanks to each and every one of these individuals for their passion and enthusiasm, without them, we would be lost.

Our volunteers manage our styling services, coaching and mentoring, and stock control. They assist with administrative tasks and with events and fundraising. A dedicated team engage with our referral agencies and other community groups to promote our services or to deliver presentations.

Our Career Centre volunteers deliver workshops under the guidance of the wonderful Alison Swift. A suite of programs is scheduled, and bookings are made online across each quarter to best accommodate the needs of our current clients.

Sisters Taking A New Direction (STAND) is our post-employment support group which provides a mentoring service for clients who successfully gain employment. Thanks to Marie Cullen for leading this group through 2019.

Our social media, Facebook and Instagram, are ably managed by the wonderful Eliza Murray – thank you Eliza! We also utilise business networking platforms such as LinkedIn to enhance awareness of our services.

Special thanks and congratulations to Rhonda Idczak, who not only keeps our finances on track as our Treasurer, but multitasks as marketer and creator of posters, banners and marketing literature – as well as creating a new website for Groomed to Go in 2019 – please visit groomedtogo.org to see her work!

3. Our Partners

Throughout 2019 we have worked hard to develop some significant partnerships. We are grateful to the following organisations for their support.

Deakin University: Annually we participate with Deakin University’s Best Foot Forward event in which we ‘speed-style’ students who are just about to complete their degrees. You can see a video for 2019 here or log into our website - https://groomedtogo.org/news/.

We also work with the fantastic team from the Deakin Freelancing Hub. A team of 7 students across various courses has developed the foundations of a fundraising campaign called Shout-A-Mate, to celebrate International Men’s Day. A second team will build upon these foundations in 2020 in order to launch the campaign in November.
Chisholm Skills and Jobs Centre Dandenong became aware of our services through a community networking meeting and immediately recognised that these services would be a great addition to their service offering. By August we had approval to open a ‘pop-up’ in the Skills and Jobs Centre in Dandenong. A fledging service by the end of 2019, we have great hopes for a long and mutually beneficial partnership.

Spair Pair is a social enterprise founded by Beau and Josh – two best mates from Melbourne who saw an opportunity to empower ordinary people to do the extraordinary. They assist us in helping the men of South East Melbourne on their journey to employment. By ensuring our clients look and feel fantastic in a pair of socks from their high quality, ethical and sustainable (not to mention stylish) range of undergarments, Spair Pair helps us rebuild the vital confidence and positivity needed to return to the workplace.

Price-Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) have been enthusiastic supporters of our organisation for 2 years, assisting with strategic discussions, specific projects and clothing and donation drives. In 2019 we spent a day with Christian from the PwC team who facilitated the development of our corporate strategy.

Hewlett Packard has been a tremendous supporter, from participating in Empower Hour, donation of a colour A3 printer with a regular supply of cartridges, and a bar coding machine. When our office laptops started to struggle to cope, HP came to the rescue with 3 brand-new (speedy!) laptops – so grateful. In addition, staff members have given up their time to mentor our clients, either in person or virtually, providing a great experience for clients.
Matchworks Narre Warren loved our services, but let us know that some of their clients had difficulties travelling to our premises in Frankston. Manager, Karen Mensley, suggested that we could come to them and offered us some space to run a ‘pop-up’ styling suite once a month. What fun it has been to be part of the office community and for the case managers to observe, firsthand, the difference we can make to their client’s confidence and self-esteem!

Monash University runs a Student Placement Program for Occupational Therapy Students, who participate in a community program as part of their last year of study. The students gain valuable experience at all levels of the not-for-profit sector, fundraising, client interactions and business skills. This year’s students, Thein & Hazel helped develop a new program for our clients to celebrate International Women’s Day. The students will continue into 2020 and launch this new program in March.

4. Our Supporters

We are grateful for the ongoing support of the following organisations:

- Accenture who support Dress for Success nationally
- WomenConnect Frankston whose annual International Women’s Day lunch has been a dedicated fundraiser for us: thanks to Karin Hann, Michelle Bragins, Beckie White, Jenny Wright and Pippa Hanson for your support.
- C4U Pty Ltd: a generous sponsor of Golf Day (deferred to 2020)
- StreetSmart who supported us through their Café Smart initiative
- Frankston RSL for ongoing assistance
- Noonan Family Foundation
- The Swift family for the Moat’s Corner Open garden
- Australian Pipeline Trust
- JPMorgan Chase (DFS Worldwide)
- Knight Frank for clothing drive and donation
- Gilead Sciences
- Melbourne Women’s Fund
- Koala
- Munro footwear Group
- Aible
- RAD Bookkeeping
- Various stores and company outfitters, who have generously donating new clothing and accessories, all of which has been very welcome
• Dress for Success Sydney: whose leadership on a national campaign to recognise International Women’s Day in March through which individuals and corporations can donate an hour of their pay.

There were a number of corporate volunteering groups who joined us throughout the year and enthusiastically performed any of the tasks that were asked of them – from refreshing the styling suites, to eBay sales, to sorting and ironing! Thanks to Lion Company, Goodyear, and Seek

5. Grantors

Groomed to Go Inc. has received financial grants in 2019 from the following:
• Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund
• Federal Government $2300 volunteers Grant
• CVGT $2000 grant for Smart Blokes shoes and socks
• LMCF Frankston Charitable Fund $5000 for Be Who You Are wigs
• LMCF Melbourne Women’s Fund $4000
• Collier Charitable Fund $20000 carried over from 2018

6. In conclusion

2019 was a year of challenges, innovation and opportunities for our organisation to grow and implement new programs that we had dreamt of for years. We had some success and some misses, but at the end of the year we emerged stronger and more focussed than ever to continue to deliver our services to those who need us the most. 2020 will see us continue to strive to build a sustainable funding model, and to extend our services to those fleeing domestic violence and to those in the Justice system. We will build on our partnerships for mutual benefit.

The support and passion of our volunteers is at the heart of this organisation and I wish to acknowledge and thank each and every one of these individuals without whom we could not continue the amazing work we do – thank you!

Marian Gandy
President
For the Committee of Management