

# Annual Report



2021/22





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# From the chair

The past 12 months have continued to be challenging and uncertain. These challenges (local, national and global) continue to be unprecedented, not only for Brite but for all. However, I am pleased to share that we have weathered this time and, with the support of many, continued to operate. I am quietly optimistic for the organisation's future. We are fortunate to be in this position and it is because of the resilience, dedication and hard work of our entire team that we can be optimistic.

During the year, Brite continued to pursue its strategic objectives and further aligned these with the evolving requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the requirements of new business and manufacturing opportunities.

Our CEO, senior management team, staff and employees continue to work intelligently and collaboratively to improve our systems, processes and procedures. Such improvements are essential to ensure we operate at the highest level of professionalism. They mean the organisation will continue to be able to make the most of every opportunity that arises. A number of initiatives were put in place throughout the year that will form the foundation of our growth into the future. We were successful in winning several significant contracts and grants, established new partnerships and built on business opportunities – all with the objective of providing meaningful employment in a range of different areas for Brite employees.

I have been a member of the Board for ten years and of those ten years, I have served as Chairperson for three. It has been a privilege to serve on the

Board and to support the Brite community. The experience has enriched my life and the rewards have been many. It is now, however, time for me to step down from the Board and make room for the leadership of the future. I have every confidence the organisation will continue to thrive and I look forward to seeing that from the sidelines. I am incredibly thankful for the support I have enjoyed, and I wish you all the very best.

In closing, we acknowledge our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria, whose ongoing support of our work is always appreciated.

And a final thank you to all. We are extremely grateful for the ongoing support we receive as we anticipate a more positive future.

**Megan Broome**  
Chairperson



# From the CEO

Although the challenges presented by the pandemic continued into 2021–2022, I am pleased to report that our organisation remains focused and resilient, with plans in place that will ensure a successful and sustainable future.

During the year we continued our diverse social enterprise initiatives – operating a successful nursery, producing food, packing products and manufacturing plastic containers. Our work on special assistive technology projects such as the Brike continued, as did our activities as a registered training organisation.

Highlights of the year included a significant increase in nursery activities, resulting in commercial revenue growth of 103 per cent. A major Nursery Redevelopment Project commenced, funded by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. New infrastructure and equipment purchased under this grant will allow us to grow around 500,000 more plants per year, adding capacity and allowing us to save substantially on water usage.

Our people remain at the heart of everything we do and this was especially important during the pandemic. While it adversely affected our bottom line, we chose to pay our supported employees who were unable to work on site due to disability and health issues. This was critical as it kept our people connected to their jobs and to the Brite community. It proved to be the right decision, as we were very pleased to have 95 per cent of our supported employees back on site by February.

Partnerships continued to be important to our organisation during the year. Work continued with the Toyota Production System Support Centre on improving our systems and processes. Our new nursery cooperative is an ongoing partnership that will help us to further build our reputation for reliability, no matter what the project size. Connections with the Melbourne's North Food Group continued to be of value to our food production area. And we signed up to the Hume Circular Economy initiative, an important local project that aligns well with our commitment to sustainability.



Our transition to the new NDIS supported employment funding model was completed at the end of 2021, in line with government requirements. In March, we also achieved formal certification as an NDIS service provider.

The value that Brite provides to the community was recognised when I was invited to participate on several key advisory boards and committees: Advanced Manufacturing Taskforce, Broadmeadows Revitalisation Board, Seed, Melbourne's North Advanced Manufacturing Group, and Hume Jobs and Skills Taskforce.

With the Brike almost ready to be launched, we are working closely with Toyota's marketing group on an anticipated launch date as early as 2023. Many organisations have expressed interest in purchasing the Brike and production is about to commence.

Next year, our plans include anticipated partnerships with food groups such as KoKo Black, and organisations such as Melbourne Storm, NRL Victoria, Kangan Institute, Marriott Group, Parks Victoria and healthcare organisations such as TLC Healthcare and Mercy Health.

We would like to express our gratitude to our Chair, Megan Broome, who will be stepping down and leaving the Board. Megan has worked closely with me through some difficult times and will be missed after a long involvement with the Board and the last three years as Chair. I thank her for her tireless effort and stewardship.

Thank you to our Board for their expertise and commitment to our organisation across the year. To our staff, thank you once again for demonstrating professionalism, efficiency and dedication beyond expectations during difficult times – it is much appreciated.

We look forward with optimism to the next chapter for Brite, one that continues to build on what we have already achieved.

**Robert Hannaford**  
Chief Executive Officer

# 2021-2022 at a glance



**142**  
supported team  
members



**90,571**  
hours worked by  
supported team  
members



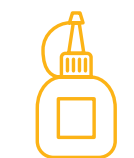
**400,000+**  
plants sold



**666,000**  
plastic ice cream  
trays manufactured



**130,824**  
confectionery products  
processed



**214,854**  
adhesive products processed



**140,332**  
units labelled for the  
export market



**133,776**  
hours of training  
delivered



achieved food  
accreditation standard  
FSSC 22000 certification



passed Quality  
Safeguards  
Commission Audit





# What we do

For more than 40 years we have been changing people's futures by providing our community with jobs and opportunities.

We know that real employment is a catalyst for change, breaking down barriers and setting people up for success in life.

Through our pick pack dispatch facility, plant nursery and training, we empower our community and offer our business customers quality services.

We know that everyone has the potential to make a genuine contribution. Our purpose is to transform people's lives through meaningful work and give our customers the best possible results.

## Our history

Brite was established in the late 1960s, when a group of parents and carers saw a need for an inclusive workplace and environment that supported the needs of people with a wide range of abilities and skills. Representatives from local and state governments, local service clubs and families worked hard to purchase land in Broadmeadows, build a factory and offices, and establish our organisation. Today we have grown and evolved into a successful social enterprise providing genuine employment opportunities for more than 240 people.

## Our strategic drivers

- Brite is recognised locally as a provider of choice and nationally as a market leader in the delivery of NDIS services and supports.
- Brite is a highly respected registered training organisation.
- Brite is commercially focused and financially viable.
- Brite culture consistently delivers high impact outcomes.
- Brite is acknowledged as a partner of choice.
- Brite achieves improved access to government, philanthropic and corporate funding opportunities.
- Brite Board, executive and management performance is well understood and well managed.

## Our Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan focuses on the following:

- 1 Employment & Training including disability employment supports and services (such as support in employment), training (Brite Institute), and our Community Learning and Employment Hub.
- 2 Social Enterprise including nursery, advanced manufacturing and food.

### OUR VISION

Equity and access to a better life.

### OUR MISSION

Provide sustainable services that create opportunity and support for people living with a disability or who are vocationally disadvantaged.

### OUR VALUES

Courage, dignity, compassion, accountability, flexibility, performance.





# Brite Pak

Brite Pak offers quality, reliable contract assembly, packaging, food co-packing, plastic manufacturing, labelling and warehouse services at a competitive cost.

Our Brite Pak sales were 7 per cent down on the previous year due to lockdowns and the impact of the pandemic on export/import supply chains significantly affecting our sales, particularly in plastic manufacturing.

Overcoming supply chain issues was a challenge during 2021–2022, with components often arriving later than expected. This had a flow-on effect as work would take longer to complete and production scheduling became problematic. We implemented highly flexible production scheduling and constantly adjusted our timelines to satisfy customer requirements and ensure our employees had ongoing meaningful work.

During the year, our food business continued to grow. We expanded our food room work output from 30 per cent to 80 per cent total usage rate.

We also approved an extension to our existing food packing rooms to meet expected demand for food co-packing services for the 2022–2023 financial year. Customers included medium to large-scale companies within the food manufacturing sector.

Sales of Brite Muesli improved on the previous year, and our range extended to stores in South Australia and Western Australia. Exports to Malaysia were affected by lockdowns but we are aiming to continue this activity in 2022–2023.

The year also saw an expansion of our food room capability, addition of new production line printers to improve labelling and transitioning of plastic manufacturing material to fully recyclable to meet customer requirements.

A grant from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions enabled us to purchase a range of essential machinery items that will enhance our food and liquid packing capability to meet future demand.

## OPERATIONS





# Brite Plants

Brite Plants supplies a diverse range of quality plants at competitive prices to customers in Victoria and Australia-wide.

During the year, our commercial revenue increased by 103 per cent on the previous year's sales, marking six years of continuous sales growth.

Large plant supply contracts for various infrastructure projects were the leading driver of sales growth for 2021–2022. We undertook work on a number of major road and rail projects, growing and supplying plants for the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal, Bondi Road Bonbeach Level Crossing Removal and the Cranbourne Line Upgrade Program.

We also grew and supplied plants for the Lara Correctional Facility. On this project we worked with three other social enterprises (Yarraview Nursery, Billabong Nursery and Park Lane Nursery) as part of a new nursery cooperative, working together to provide a greater social impact for commercial partners.

Our positive results were particularly pleasing given the fact that the pandemic impacted on supply chains across the entire horticulture sector. In some cases major projects were postponed due to enforcement of lockdown protocols. There was also a noticeable drop in plant orders from retail nurseries during the lockdown period as the public were not permitted to enter their premises.

In May, our significant Nursery Redevelopment Project commenced thanks to funding provided by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. This project will provide us with:

- three new fit-for-purpose plant growing yards
- new water efficient irrigation fixtures in our main plant growing yard
- a new nursery vehicle to transport employees to multiple job sites
- new greenhouse and shade house complexes
- a new nursery vehicle for transporting supported employees and staff.

Brite is a Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA) accredited wholesale production nursery.



# Service Delivery

Service Delivery ensures that our supported team members are given every opportunity to succeed, all NDIS regulations are followed and obligations are met.

Our focus during 2021–2022 was on ensuring that our organisation and our employees returned as much as possible to safe, pre-COVID levels of operation.

With our supported employees adjusting after long-term absences due to lockdowns, we continued our focus on regular communications and welfare checks. To increase confidence and assist employees in returning to work, we hosted pop-up COVID-19 and flu vaccination clinics on site. Early in the financial year, we achieved a 95 per cent return to work and to contracted hours.

In October we welcomed our first group of new supported team members, who are participating in our tailored My Journey to Employment program. We also welcomed the return of school groups for work experience.

Communications were a major focus for us and we ran Family Forums every fortnight. Other communications included regular email updates, SMS updates and daily briefings for team members. In November, we established a regular newsletter.

We continued delivery of our employment-focused training programs, with six employees enrolled in the Certificate II in Work Education (Hospitality). We increased our efforts in creating work placement and further employment opportunities for this group. Where suitable, we provided opportunities for team members to take on more complex work in line with goals identified in their Employment Assistance Plans. Open employment continues to be an option that we discuss with all individuals.

Transition to the new NDIS supported employment funding model was completed successfully at the end of 2021 in line with government requirements. In March, we also successfully achieved formal certification as an NDIS service provider.







# Brite Institute

Brite Institute is a registered training organisation that provides students with the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to follow the career they want.

Despite disruption caused by COVID-19, we delivered all scheduled programs during the year. Our courses ranged from Certificate I through to Certificate IV in areas such as aged care, work education, adult literacy and numeracy, individual support, disability, and leisure and health. For the majority of our 366 students – those enrolled in Certificate III and Certificate IV qualifications – training was conducted online.

We continued to improve our online services and offered a range of additional supports as required including emails, phone calls and one-on-one Zoom sessions with trainers. As new training packages are due for release in late 2022, we have commenced planning for a review to upgrade our learning management system.

Our scope of registration grew with the addition of a First Aid Certificate to our offerings. We held a trial of this program, delivering to 17 staff members who now hold First Aid accreditation. We are planning to commence broader delivery of this course in 2022–2023.

While the year brought a higher dropout rate than normally experienced, this was in line with student disengagement across the sector. Many students reported challenges including personal and family illness, mental health and other issues that affected their ability to continue studies. Others in health and care roles were working long hours and additional shifts. Where possible, we instigated flexible timelines and provided support.

Completion rates across our programs were again affected, as compulsory work experience and practical placements were put on hold until COVID restrictions and host employers allowed. These units will be completed as the situation improves.







## Brite café

Our Brite Café reopened for business in December. This facility features barista-made coffee, fresh healthy foods made onsite and accessible facilities. Importantly, it also adds an additional vocational pathway for our Brite people and a welcoming place for staff to relax. Lead by a chef/trainer, our employees undertake training and employment in a real hospitality environment. They gain a full range of hospitality skills, from preparing and cooking food, making coffee and serving customers through to ordering stock and maintaining the menu. Plans are underway to offer an external catering service next financial year.



## Brike

We are pleased to say that, despite delays caused by the pandemic, our innovative Brike project is almost ready to launch. The Brike is a power assisted tricycle built to transport a passenger in a wheelchair. It features a battery powered pedal assist drive unit, in-built loading ramp and a passenger seat belt. This project will provide ongoing employment and training opportunities for Brite employees and others in assembly and repairs. It will also mean that people with a physical disability can enjoy greater social inclusion through the fun of cycling. We have developed a comprehensive marketing plan for the project, which has generated significant interest and some initial orders. The Brike will go to market in the 2022–2023 financial year.



## Partnerships

Throughout 2021–2022, partnerships remained key to our success across all our operational areas. We continued to develop existing relationships and work with new partners to grow our customer base and provide increased opportunities for our supported team members.

Notable partnerships during the year included growing and supplying plans for major level crossing removal projects through ACE Contractors. We co-founded a new nursery cooperative in partnership with Yarraview Nursery, Billabong Nursery and Park Lane Nursery so that we could generate greater social impact for commercial partners. Our work with Toyota Production Systems continued to be of great benefit in assisting us to improve our systems and processes. And the Melbourne's North Food Group again provided invaluable support in our food business operations.

Importantly, our close working relationship with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the National Disability Insurance Agency assisted us in successfully delivering quality support to our community.



# Ways to give

## make a donation

Since we began operations in 1976, Brite has empowered thousands of people. But we need support to do more. All donations to Brite are gratefully accepted and will help us to continue our important work. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

## spread the word with crowdfunding for brite

Instead of celebrating with gifts, you could nominate Brite to receive donations by setting up a crowdfunding page. There are a lot of different crowdfunding platforms around. It doesn't need to be a big amount to make a real difference to people in our community—every donation helps.

## become a brite volunteer

Our volunteers make a huge contribution to the work we do. We would like to hear from people who are interested in a student placement, keen to get some experience in the caring profession or in the production workplace, or wanting to help out in the local community.

## make a bequest

People who make a bequest to Brite in their Will are giving a helping hand to people who need it and changing lives for the better. It is a positive way to be remembered.

## become a corporate partner

Aligning your brand to Brite will deliver value to your stakeholders and improve your triple bottom line. There are many different ways to get involved with us, including supporting a project or training program, sponsoring an event or activity, employee fundraising and more.



# Ways to volunteer

At Brite we value the role of our volunteers, who are essential to our organisation. We respect and appreciate their skills, talents and contributions.

Our goal is to maximise volunteers' potential by creating opportunities to utilise their talents and abilities. From the outset, we ensure that volunteer roles match their skills, interests and capabilities. We provide an induction and ongoing support.

We welcome volunteers across a range of areas:

- **student volunteers:** project based or carer/ support worker
- **professional volunteers:** including project management, workplace health and safety, technology, construction, business management, human resources, marketing, administration, horticulture and more
- **production volunteers:** including packaging, labelling, mail outs, logistics, maintenance and more
- **community volunteers:** we engage with local community groups representing a range of backgrounds and cultures; they may work with us to hold joint community ventures, host cultural events or use our facilities for their own community-based practices.





# Our Board

## Megan Broome

BA, BArch, MPlan&Env, RAIA, AICD

### CHAIRPERSON

Megan Broome is a managing director with over 25 years of consulting experience in strategic planning, urban planning, property development and capital works management. She has over 20 years of experience as a non-executive director in the profit-for-purpose and charity sectors and has been a member of a number of government advisory boards. Her interests include governance, designing urban environments that enable dignified access for all and creating flexible public spaces. She has been a member of the Brite Board's Constitution Reform Committee, Chair of the Development Committee and Deputy Chair of the Board. Megan joined the Brite Board in 2012.

## Shelley Karpathakis

B.Couns

### DEPUTY CHAIR SENIOR

Shelley Karpathakis is the Youth Reconciliation Practitioner at Hope Street Youth and Family Services, providing counselling to young people and families who are experiencing homelessness. She is a former coordinator of the Young Carers Program at Carers Victoria, where she worked with young people in a caring role. Shelley is a clinical counsellor, completing her qualifications at the Australian College of Applied Psychology. In 2014, she joined the Committee of Management at Plenty Valley FM community radio station and held the position of Vice President in 2015. Shelley joined the Brite Board in 2018.

## Michael Wilson

FCPA

### TREASURER

Michael Wilson is the sole Director of Wilson Business Services, an accounting practice which he founded almost 30 years ago. Wilson Business Services specialises in accounting and consulting support for a number of for-purpose organisations. Michael joined the Brite Board in 2020.

## John Carter

John Carter is General Manager of KinKerra Community specialist disability accommodation. He is a highly regarded disability housing specialist with a strong track record of success in the planning and development of accommodation facilities for people living with disability. Previously he was Director of SDA Stakeholder and Sector Engagement at the National Disability Insurance Agency. He has held senior roles with community housing associations, a large non-government organisation in the disability sector and an international facilities management company. A registered builder, he also owns and operates registered specialist disability accommodation. John joined the Brite Board in 2018.

## Neslihan Dastan

LLB, GAICD

Neslihan Dastan is the General Legal Counsel for the Krongold Group of Companies and Executive Officer of Krongold Construction Group. She is an in-house lawyer who has practised in the areas of commercial law, business law, technology and finance, property, building and construction law across a group of private companies. Neslihan also has expertise as a strategic business manager, and business and governance advisor. She is a member of the Board of Lawlers Apartments Pty Ltd and was previously Treasurer and Chair of the Brite Board's Finance Audit & Risk Committee. Neslihan joined the Brite Board in 2013, retired in October 2020 and re-joined in November 2021.

## Tom Carra

B.Comm

Tom Carra is Managing Director of Carra Property Group, director of Beyond The Spec and director of Accessible Housing (Victoria). He has 25 years of experience across diverse industries and has been involved with innovation projects at The University of Melbourne, including social and accessible housing projects. Tom has close ties with community housing associations, developing affordable and social housing for them. He is a registered NDIA provider for specialist disability accommodation and a leader in providing innovative housing solutions for people with disability. Tom is a member of the Finance Audit & Risk Committee and joined the Board in 2022.

## Phillip Perroni

Phillip Perroni is a retired public servant, having worked for 37 years in a major Australian Government department in the Broadmeadows area. He is President of the Meadow Heights Education Centre Board, where he has been a Board member for 25 years, and President of the Meadow Heights Primary School Council. Phillip has served on a number of committees and Boards, including Pascoe Vale Girls College School Council (parent rep and President) and the Federation of Sicilians in Australia (Secretary). He received a Hume City Council citizen of the month award in 2011. Phillip joined the Brite Board in 2016.

## Jennie Pinnell

Jennie Pinnell is a parent of a supported team member and has had a close association with the Brite community since 1998. She has been involved in Brite's fundraising for the past 20 years and previously served as a Brite Director from 2000 to 2003. Jennie is an advocate for people with a disability, focused on providing a voice and promoting choices for how they work. Jennie retired from full time employment after 25 years in hospitality business management and continues to do bookkeeping and associated statutory reporting for several small businesses. Jennie joined the Brite Board in 2019.

## Cindy Shelley

Cindy Shelley has a background in industrial relations and has worked in warehousing for more than 20 years. She holds a current work health safety permit, which allows her to investigate health and safety breaches in the workplace and holds a right-of-entry permit, which allows her to visit workplaces associated with the mail industry. She is currently Chairperson of the Fundraising Committee. Cindy joined the Brite Board in 2013.



## EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

### Aaron Furniss

Aaron has made amazing progress this year. Our staff have been impressed by how far his vocational development and social skills have improved.

"Before I came to Brite I didn't know anything about plant care but I've learned lots. I can pot plants now. I've also learnt how to tidy my work area and help others. At Brite there's always something to do and work never is boring."



## STUDENT OF THE YEAR

## PROFILES



### Athanasios (Arthur) Tsonis

Arthur gained a Certificate III in Individualised Support at Brite Institute. Now undertaking a Certificate IV in Ageing Support with us he continues to be an excellent student, presenting meticulous work, showing great professionalism and supporting other students.

"Brite gave me the opportunity to embark on a career change, making me feel valued and supported as a student. The course was flexible and engaging, and it was great that I could put what I learned into practice through work placements."





## Jessie Arena

### SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Jessie works with our supported employees, assisting them to achieve their vocational goals.

"I come from a country where people with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty and an insecure future. I feel blessed that I'm working at Brite and so very proud to be a part of the Brite family."



## Tony Carter

### EMPLOYEE

Tony has worked at Brite for over 26 years, primarily as part of our nursery team. He is always ready to help his co-workers in their various tasks.

"I love potting plants and being part of the nursery team. It feels good to be able to help my co-workers when they need it. I enjoy winter, when we pot up our bare rooted plants to grow for the next season."





## Tiadours (Theo) Issac

PAK FOOD ROOM TEAM LEADER – PLASTICS

Theo oversees all production work within the food rooms and ensures stringent quality control is maintained on food products.

"I enjoy working with our diverse team, making sure that food is packed safely and our customer needs are met. No two days are ever alike! Brite is a very respectful environment and it feels more like a family than a workplace."



## Rebecca Retallick

EMPLOYEE

Rebecca has been at Brite for 14 years. She currently works with the Pak floor assembly team.

"I've learned a lot at Brite, like how to behave at work and how to approach the jobs I'm given. Now I have skills in labelling, kitting and assembly. It's comfortable working in a place where I can be me."



## Erdinc Uzelpostaci

### EMPLOYEE

Erdinc has been at Brite for over 15 years. His role involves working with different plants, propagation, weeding and labelling.

“What I like best about my job is working with plants and caring for them. I enjoy having a coffee with my co-workers and joking about the footy results. Working as part of a team is really good too.”



## Sebastien Chamaillard

### NURSERY TEAM LEADER

Sebastien is team leader in our nursery, a supervisory role that also involves plant deliveries to clients. He is also our Plant division's health and safety representative.

“I like interacting with people from all walks of life – clients and co-workers – and I’m passionate about working with people with disabilities. My role at Brite has given me a lot of insight into how people are treated and supported in the work environment.”





# Matthew Whiting

PAK TEAM LEADER – PLASTICS

Matthew is responsible for supervising the thermoforming and plastics manufacturing room team. He is also working on our Brike project.

“I love working for a profit-for-purpose business that invests in delivering greater social impact outcomes for people with a disability. Brite’s vision and values align with my personal views and I’m proud to contribute to the growth of the business.”



## Keith Goggin

EMPLOYEE

Keith has been at Brite for 41 years, working most of this time in the Pak division. He currently works with the plastics and thermoforming team.

“I’ve learnt so many things working at Brite. It’s my second home. I like helping our teams with the workload on the floor. I really like fun days such as dressing up in football colours, and hot dog day too.”



Michelle  
Nanscawen

EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST – PATHWAYS

Michelle assists our Pathways students both in the classroom and the community as they learn about and set employment goals.

“I love my time with the Pathways students – every day is completely different to the next. They always amaze me with what they can do. I know how much being part of the workforce really means to our supported employees.”



Joseph Leggio

EMPLOYEE

Joseph has worked Brite for 12 years. Most days he is with the Pak division, with one day a week in our nursery.

“I like being able to work in more than one area. Now I have lots of experience in packing different things and working with plants. I also enjoy catching up with my co-workers and friends over our breaks.”





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