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www.connectingup.org
It is a pleasure to present a Chair’s report for 2014-15. It has been another year of sustained growth and valued contribution to the community sector.

The team at Connecting Up are a delight and are professional. The staff are very committed to putting meaning to our aspiration to unleash the power of the not-for-profit sector. They continue to meet all the KPI’s and often exceed them. Anne Gawen continues to lead them very positively, and she also takes a leadership role with her colleagues in the TechSoup network around the world.

We now consider ourselves a service for Australia and New Zealand. Our NZ Board member James Austin has shown strong leadership, both in Australia and New Zealand, and we have increased our services and profile in that country.

We know there are opportunities for us to assist the not-for-profit sector in the Pacific, so we will make this a reality in the next year.

Each member of our board contributes voluntarily to help us respond to the many challenges and opportunities we meet. Collectively they represent a very broad range of skills and expertise.

We continue to place priority on reaching more organisations and looking for more products and services for the community sector. The strong growth in our webinars indicates that we are providing the right information.

The board reviewed and adjusted our strategy this year, and we were strongly influenced by feedback from surveys of our customers and the speakers and participants at our annual conference.

It is obvious that the big challenge on the horizon is the positive move by governments to deliver funding from the citizens’ perspective. This is having a massive impact on the way services are provided and how each not-for-profit organisation calculates unit cost of service and presents its’ service offering in an easily accessible way.

This new approach challenges those organisations to have more accessible customer-facing technology and Connecting Up can help with these challenges. The new business models will encourage organisations to enhance their practices and make better links with other services.

The board understands that many small to medium agencies cannot afford specialist IT services of their own and we like to think that we can fill this need to a degree. Our generous partners and suppliers make this possible.

Of course, our important connections to TechSoup and Microsoft give strength to our offer as they allow us to be the gateway for their services.

Deputy Chair Jane Brabham and I would especially like to acknowledge yet again the work of the Treasurer Andrew Culley, who manages to provide excellent advice on the financial statements and strategic business assistance.

Our new board secretary Rachel Inness has adjusted quickly to her role and we are thankful for her support.

The board thanks all the staff members who are positive, creative and very focused on our goal to support the community sector.

Sue Vardon AO Chair Connecting Up Board of Management.

There is much change and excitement in the NFP sector at the moment. Many of the 20,000 organisations that Connecting Up work with in Australia and NZ are reporting a shift in their approach and attitude to the digital world.

There is an increasing commitment from organisations to review their digital capacity and improve their digital strategy. Connecting Up and TechSoup New Zealand are excited to be assisting organisations to reach their potential in the current climate.

This year Connecting Up has continued to expand its products and services available to support the sector.

We have reworked our Premium Membership offerings, presented various events and weekly webinars, plus extended the conference program. We are also focused on ensuring that NFP organisations have a choice of cloud technologies, tablets, software, ICT services, education programs and directories, to ensure Connecting Up can be a central hub for technology in the sector.

Connecting up is continually working with local, national and international partners to provide products and services at significantly reduced prices (or in many cases no cost at all).

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all of our major contributing donating and discounting partners throughout 2015.

Our US-based partner, TechSoup, is the leader of our global network. Shortly we will be launching the Connecting Up and TechSoup New Zealand services in the Pacific Islands. As a consequence the global network of technology donations to the NFP sector will be in every country in the world except five.

The staff at Connecting Up are a dynamic, effective team with the Executive Team of Josh Goodwin, Kate Preiss and Pankaj Chhalotre providing a great foundation for the work and achievements of Connecting Up. In addition, I would like to thank the Technology and Information Team who ensure our technology systems and websites are of high quality.

The Marketing and Events Team produce innovative and high quality content, and the Customer Support Team are such an asset to our organisation. Finally, the Business Development Team and Administration Team have achieved great outcomes in the past year.

In total this year there have been 16 new products and services launched in FY15. We have seen donated offerings from Box, Shopify and NetSuite, and new discounted offerings from our partnerships with Infosys and Blackbaud. All of these new services are having a significant impact on the sector.

I would like to thank Sue Vardon AO, our esteemed board chairperson and an inspirational board leader and community member.

The Connecting Up board meets regularly to review and set strategy, and to demonstrate due diligence. I would like to thank them for their commitment.

Our primary donor partner is Microsoft, and they continue to support Connecting Up and TechSoup NZ and the whole of the global network of NFP organisations across the world. In Australia and NZ alone, they have donated over $40 million dollars’ worth of products this year. This figure does not include the donation of EL licenses through Office 365.

At Connecting Up we aim for a world where individuals and communities are supported to decrease digital divide, and where organisations are supported in their digital strategy to continue to provide their services and products.

Connecting Up is passionate about supporting not-for-profit organisations to reach their full potential. We commend the work of not-for-profit organisations - each one supports our community to be a better place.

Anne Gawen, CEO

Over $40 million of product donations from Microsoft in Australia and New Zealand!
Connecting Up continues to assist Australian and New Zealand not-for-profit organisations to access greater savings in their technology needs. Donated product across New Zealand and Australia was well in excess of $40 million of products donated by our partners in FY2014/15 alone. The volume of discounted products accessed by organisations through Connecting Up’s Discount Program increased in FY2014-15 in Australia and New Zealand by 16% and 15% respectively. Not-for-profit organisations are supporting the Refurbished program, and as a result it has become very popular. This program has grown substantially over the past year, along with the range of machines now available to organisations. It is expected this trend will continue throughout FY2015-16 and beyond. 

**Netsuite**

The introduction of the NetSuite donation program at Connecting Up has provided powerful online business management software to eligible not-for-profits, charities, and public libraries throughout Australia. NetSuite is now donating its products for accounting, enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), professional services automation (PSA), content management (CMS), human capital management (HCM), and e-commerce available to not-for-profits across Australia. This cloud-based software supports charities to manage their accounting and financials, maintain a constituent and donor database, manage inventory, sell products online, and more.

**Blackbaud**

Connecting Up is proud to announce a partnership with Blackbaud Pacific to provide eTapestry, an intuitive cloud fundraising database, discounted for all Australian not-for-profit organisations. eTapestry supports charities to grow their fundraising programs and associated revenue, streamline processes and build reputation and sustainability.

Blackbaud works with more than 30,000 customers in over 60 countries that support higher education, healthcare, human services, arts and culture, faith, the environment, independent K-12 education, animal welfare and other charitable causes. Using Blackbaud technology, these organisations raise more than $100 billion each year. Connecting Up is very happy to be assisting Blackbaud to accomplish its’ aim of helping Australian charities reach their fundraising potential.

**Box**

The Box.org donation program has been introduced to Connecting Up and TechSoup New Zealand this year, and provides the Box content management and collaboration service to eligible not-for-profit organisations and charities throughout Australia and New Zealand. Many Australian and New Zealand charities are using Box to manage and collaborate on content with staff members and volunteers and to distribute content to beneficiaries.

**Shopify**

The Shopify donation program at Connecting Up and TechSoup New Zealand provides a hosted online e-commerce service to not-for-profits, charities, and public libraries throughout Australia and New Zealand. Many charities are now using Shopify to raise funds for their organisations through setting up online shops to sell their merchandise.

**CRM4NFP Readiness Assessment**

Connecting Up has partnered with not-for-profit technology provider Infoxchange, to deliver Microsoft Dynamics CRM for the not-for-profit sector, and is offering a readiness assessment service so charities know where to start and what to consider when implementing a CRM. This service has been extremely popular since its launch, and provides a report that gives insight into a charity’s readiness for implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and a better understanding of the requirements needed to undertake a CRM implementation. Each report is tailored to specific organisation requirements, processes and environments and provides a recommended action plan.

Connecting Up is looking forward to growing this service further in FY16.

**Office 365 DIY Migration workshops**

Infoxchange and Connecting Up are proud to announce DIY Office365, a professionally guided self-implementation program for organisations that wish to migrate to an Office 365 platform.

The program is designed to help not for profit organisations build their capacity to implement and manage an Office 365 environment. Each tailored series of workshops are pitched to the requisite level of expertise within individual charities. This new service has proven to be very popular with not-for-profit and community organisations interested in Office 365 for email, intranet, document management and web conferencing.

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The Connecting Up Membership Program relaunched this financial year with new tiers and benefits.

- Free membership – giving members access to register for events and webinars, newsletters, and the opportunity to register for programs like the Donations and Discounts Program.

- Premium membership – modelled on the existing membership program, this provides discounts on events, webinars, workshops, Connecting Up Conference, mentoring and more.

Connecting Up Rewards was launched in conjunction with Premium Membership – a new member-benefit provided by external supplier Infinite Rewards. Connecting Up Rewards provides Premium Members with a range of discounts on household items including groceries, fuel, movie tickets, hotel rooms, car hire and more. Connecting Up Rewards allows Premium Members to sign up their staff and volunteers for the first time, giving significant additional value to our member base.

With the Membership Program relaunch, mentoring became a more popular option for organisations looking for trusted support in IT and marketing. Connecting Up provided organisations with mentoring on a range of topics, and in some cases this turned into ongoing support and mentoring.

“Ryan’s technical help, expert advice, enduring patience and good humour in the face of a variety of challenges was amazing and very much appreciated!” – Deborah Smith, Community Council of Australia

Advertising

Connecting Up continued to offer highly valuable advertising services this financial year.

The most popular advertising option was newsletter advertising, with a large number of partners choosing this as an important part of their marketing mix to reach not-for-profit organisations.

For the second consecutive year Connecting Up worked with Optus, Starcom and M&C Saatchi to promote Optus Community Grants, a grant program aimed at organisations that support youth and sporting organisations. This extensive campaign resulted in great uptake of the grants program.

Website advertising was relaunched during this period, with significant interest leading into the new financial year.

Branding & Perception

In the 2014/2015 financial year, Connecting Up pursued a new creative direction for the Connecting Up brand.

While not a full “rebrand”, some key aims of this work were to make the Connecting Up brand more sector friendly and engaging for the not-for-profit sector.

This adjustment is reflected in brightened colours in branding collateral featuring key Ambassadors with engaging photos to highlight the community impact from the Connecting Up services.

Social Media

The 2014/15 financial year saw the engagement of a new platform to manage the social media of Connecting Up. This enabled a new look at Connecting Up social media channels and additional reporting to measure ROI on each of the channels.

Ambassadors

As a key component of the update to the Connecting Up brand, plans were put in place to engage a set of not-for-profit sector Ambassadors, to act for Connecting Up in their respective states and territories as advocates for our brand and the services we provide.

The Ambassador program involves securing professional photography of the Ambassadors in their locations, for Connecting Up to then be able to use in branding and marketing collateral.

Connecting Up then aim to engage Ambassadors to share their stories at key events, including the Connecting Up Conference and local events in the Ambassadors’ respective regions.
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide

The eleventh Connecting Up Conference was held in Adelaide, South Australia. This year’s theme was “Empowering communities in the information age” to encourage a new way of thinking about the information age—supporting and encouraging organisations to look forward and utilise that which is the Information Age.

The Conference theme was carried out consistently throughout the sessions, which were categorised into technology, digital & marketing, leadership and productivity streams.

The Connecting Up Conference continued to offer two masterclasses and a decision makers’ breakfast as optional programs in addition to the conference sessions. A new addition implemented this year was the Connecting Up Conference Dinner.

This year’s conference received positive comments and high ratings, with delegates being inspired and able to take away ideas for immediate change in their organisation.

For more than half the delegates (61.2%), this was the first time they had attended a Connecting Up Conference.

Below are the top 5 sectors represented at the Conference which was very similar to last year with the addition of Finance to the top categories:

- Community organisation and development (22%)
- Health and disability (17%)
- Education (5%)
- Finance, Income & Business (4%)
- Personal and family support (3%), plus Recreation, Sports and Arts (3%)

Based on the 2014 Conference recommendations, several components which worked well this year were:

- Speakers were not seen to be promoting themselves, and were more educational in nature.
- The WiFi was of a high standard and received no negative comments.
- The general catering was of a good standard with good options for dietary needs.
- A professional MC from the sector.
- More organised social activities, such as the social dinner.
- Board and staff speakers rated very highly.

In addition to the above, a few other highlights for the delegates were:

- “I am glad I attended. It is always good to network with other not for profits. I also used it as a time for reflection about my own role and where I want to be in the future.”
- “Always highly informative, interactive and hits the spot for an IT/management worker with many hats and limited resources in the NFP sector : )”

The 2016 Connecting Up Conference will be held from 18-20 May 2016, at the Hawthorn Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Communities in the Future Conference (NZ)
Te Papa Tongarewa (National Museum), Wellington, 15 May 2015

The Communities in the Future Conference (CITF) 2015 was the second New Zealand conference presented by Connecting Up and TechSoup New Zealand. It was held in Wellington on 14 May 2015.

The conference encouraged a new way of thinking about innovation, as well as making small and step-by-step changes that delegates could implement straight away.

The conference was categorised into two streams based on the sessions offered; Digital & Marketing and Technology. Good feedback and ratings were received, particularly in regards to speakers, relevance and takeaway ideas.

FINZ Partnership

This year a key strategic partnership was trialled with the Fundraising Institute of New Zealand (FINZ). FINZ ran their conference from Monday 11th to Wednesday 13th May, and CITF was held in the same venue on the following day (Thursday 14th May).

Key elements of the partnership were:

- Special pricing for FINZ delegates to attend CITF and extend their stay.
- Targeting of FINZ sponsors to extend their stay and also sponsorship to include CITF.

Highlights

Some of the key highlights of the event for the delegates were:

- Enjoyed the quality and style of the keynote presentation.
- Relevant information with clear presentation was given throughout the day.
- The venue rated highly and was in a great location.
- Practical application that wasn’t a sales pitch in the sessions.

Speakers

All the keynote speakers were rated highly. Below are their ratings with a selection of delegate comments across the spectrum of feedback:

- Darian Rodriguez Heyman:
  “Excellent delivery style and a great introduction to the day”
  “I found Darian’s keynote very interesting and was impressed with his skill as a speaker. He kept my attention and was easy to understand.”

- Masterclass (Infoxchange & TechSoup NZ):
  “Another excellent session”
  “Some good practical stuff”

- Darian Rodriguez Heyman:
  “Enjoyed the quality and style of the keynote presentation. Particularly liked the way they interacted together. Lots of useful information about Office 365, digital marketing websites. Challenged to be really clear about the organisation’s focus and if we were meeting the needs of the community or our own needs. Really liked the idea of having an IT tech on governance board.”

In 2016, the conference will be renamed and will be called the TechSoup New Zealand Conference. The TechSoup New Zealand Conference will be held in Auckland, New Zealand, on Tuesday 12 April.
The Connecting Up Events Program, which has now been successfully operating for 3 years, is run with the aim of increasing IT capacity and knowledge across the not-for-profit sector in Australia, New Zealand and South East Asia.

A key focus this financial year was increasing the number of events targeted at executives, expanding from just technology-based content. This saw Connecting Up running successful webinars, workshops and online courses throughout the financial year.

A brief overview of just some of the events delivered are:
- Excel for database - tips and tricks
- Website essentials and analytics
- Introduction to Office 365
- An introduction to Wordpress
- Introduction to Google for Nonprofits
- How not-for-profits and social enterprises win in crowdfunding
- Building a sustainable organisation

The New Zealand program of events has also been increasing in popularity and registrations. For this financial year, New Zealand events have seen 900 delegates attend a variety of webinars, workshops and online course series on topics specifically aimed at the New Zealand not-for-profit sector.

A brief overview of just some of the events delivered are:
- Building a sustainable organisation
- Excel for database - tips and tricks
- How to produce a great annual report for your not-for-profit organisation
- Introduction to Microsoft Office 365
- Leadership - solving complex problems
- Microsoft Office 365 to empower your not-for-profit
- SharePoint for not-for-profits for collaboration and productivity

The Events Program in both Australia and New Zealand is promoted to a wide network of members. The program is not only promoted through newsletters, but through websites, social media, at other events and via direct customer phone contact.

To ensure relevance of event material, Connecting Up regularly collects feedback from members and event participants regarding event/training topics through yearly surveys and post-webinar feedback. The feedback questions help to ensure topics and presentations are relevant, contain current information, and continue to meet the needs of the not-for-profit sector.

2,900 registrations for events & training in Australia

900 registrations for events & training in New Zealand
It has been another huge year in the expansion of TechSoup Asia, and Connecting Up are privileged to have provided support to the program. TechSoup Asia reached 1100 organisations and donated over 19000 licenses. Overall, this is equivalent to USD$8 million in savings.

Venturing into new opportunities, and establishing new projects, were two integral aspects that made 2014-2015 a monumental year for TechSoup Asia, which includes:

**NGO Data Project Launch: 3 October 2014**

Announced during the 2nd day of the Digital Strategies for Development Summit; the launch of the pilot for the NGO Data Project in the Philippines promises to provide a comprehensive database of all NGOs in the Philippines; an initiative that we will soon be rolling out in more countries in the near future.

**First Partners’ Training: 24-25 November 2014**

Following the addition of in-country agents for Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia, the first ever partners training for the new agents was held in Yayasan Salam’s office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**Netsquared Manila Launch: 24 February 2015**

Through the efforts of Jake Fadailan (World Vision), Celina Agaton (Open Street Map) and Jed Dominic Adao of TechSoup Asia, Netsquared has made its way to Manila. The launch was followed by a Social Media Surgery session held last April.

**First Office 365 Roadshow: 15 April 2015**

The first of its kind in Asia, the Office 365 Roadshow in Singapore gave local NGOs, both new or already familiar to the tool, the chance to engage directly with experts to learn more about Office 365.

**Google for Non-profit Launch: 10 June 2015**

After the long wait and preparation, Google for Non-profits is now available in over 10 different countries all over Asia. Now, Asian NGOs can gain access to special services which include AdWords, premium YouTube accounts and more!

**TechSoup Korea Launch: 30 June 2015**

In partnership with the NPO ICT Support Centre, NGOs in South Korea can now access donations provided by Microsoft and Box through the new TechSoup Korea platform.

In addition to these events, TechSoup Asia and Microsoft have also been busy at work, helping countless not-for-profits within the region. This past year, TechSoup Asia and Microsoft have been hard at work hosting over 3 massive NGO Connection days in Indonesia (October 2014 and June 2015), and in the Philippines (June 2015). In addition, TechSoup Asia also provided support in promoting the #WeSpeakCode movement in Indonesia in March 2015.

TechSoup Asia has teamed up with in-country partners, Vietnet-ICT and LIN Center to help host three ICT trainings in Vietnam. Through a grant provided by TechSoup Asia, 3 different training sessions were held in Vietnam in order to meet the growing needs for more learning opportunities. These sessions ranged from as simple as Social Media Management to as unique as ICT to improve the health and contribution of the elderly.

Connecting Up continued to deliver the SACommunity directory. SACommunity provides a current comprehensive community information service for South Australia. It comprises over 14,000 listings with information about community, government and other relevant organisations and services.

This vital directory continues to be utilised by service providers, government agencies and the general public. The website received over 1.2 million visits in the past 12 months.

Connecting Up would like to thank the South Australian Government for their continuing support for this essential resource that promotes information flow, makes community information easy to find and helps to build community connections and involvement. Connecting Up also thank Public Libraries SA for their support and also the many local governments around South Australia who work with us to maintain the information.

Connecting Up staff provide training and support to SACommunity’s contributing editors at the local government level. A visit was made to the Riverland in December 2014 to assist the 3 councils, following their decision to adopt and promote SACommunity as their vehicle for community information management across the region.

Training was provided to staff at Berri Barmera Council, Renmark Paringa Council, Loxton Waikerie Council, City of Salisbury, Port Lincoln Council and Wakefield Regional Council.

Connecting Up’s volunteer team plays a significant role in the maintenance of the directories. Several volunteers have worked with Connecting Up for over a year, including virtual volunteers who work from home.

The monthly SACommunity News has featured the following topics: Innovative services for young people; Recreation and sport for people with disability; KESAB environmental programs; Secure passwords for online security; Youth Parliament; Autism Month; changes to aged care services.

SACommunity has over 6200 Twitter followers who receive a monthly stream of information about events, news and resources in the community.

Connecting Up also continue to deliver the Directory of Not-For-Profit and Charity Organisations. This directory has over 42,000 NFP organisations. The charity and not-for-profit sector actively support the directory with contributions of new listings and provision of updated information.

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In FY 2014, the TechSoup Global Network had total revenue of US$38.7 million, reinvested in supporting local communities through TechSoup and our partner NGOs around the world.

Since FY 08/09, the Microsoft Donations Program has saved the sector in Australia more than $260 million when compared to the retail value of donations distributed.

Since FY 08/09, the Microsoft Donations Program has saved the sector in New Zealand more than $49 million when compared to the retail value of donations distributed.