

THE UNDERGROUND COLLABORATIVE



# ANNUAL UPDATE

20

22

# KAYA WANJU

## HELLO WELCOME

THE UNDERGROUND COLLABORATIVE  
ACKNOWLEDGES ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER PEOPLES AS THE FIRST INHABITANTS OF  
THE NATION AND THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF  
THE LANDS WHERE WE LIVE, LEARN AND WORK..

WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ANCESTORS AND ELDERS  
PAST AND PRESENT AND ARE COMMITTED TO A  
POSITIVE FUTURE FOR THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.

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PO BOX 1421, EAST VICTORIA PARK, WA 6981  
KATIE@THEUNDERGROUND.ORG.AU  
WWW.THEUNDERGROUND.ORG.AU

    
@theundergroundcollab

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# WHY WE EXIST

*“I raise up my voice - not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.”*  
-Malala

The Underground Collaborative (TUC) exists to provide employment to empower and educate women and young people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in WA.

We aim to achieve our vision through:

## EDUCATION

We aim to provide ongoing knowledge to our partners and create safe learning environments for our Team Members. We seek to educate our community through sharing stories and generating meaningful conversations to positively influence attitudes, behaviours and beliefs whilst overcoming common misconceptions and stigmas surrounding homelessness and its underlying causes.

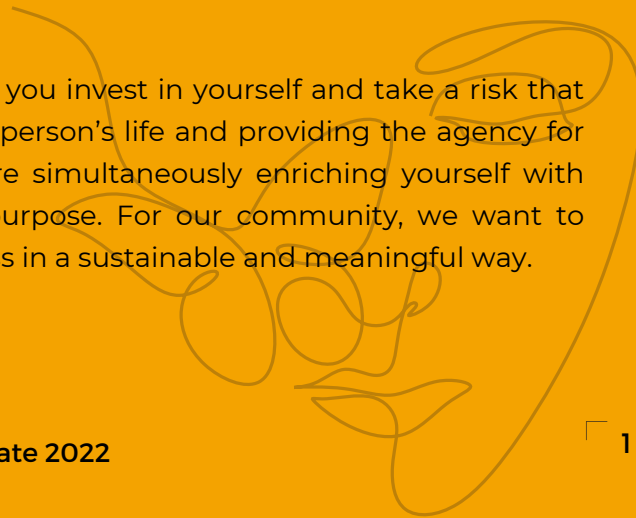
## EMPLOYMENT

Our first employment initiative Ground+Co cafe provides employment and training to empower women and young people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, and supportive pathways for transition into permanent employment.

Work Integration Social Enterprises support the development of, and create sustainable employment for the most disadvantaged people, groups and communities. The Underground Collaborative is on a mission to create paid pathways to employment to break the cycles of homelessness.

## EMPOWERMENT

When you empower another person, you invest in yourself and take a risk that has the potential to change another person's life and providing the agency for them to choose. Additionally, you are simultaneously enriching yourself with their story, their culture and their purpose. For our community, we want to empower you to disrupt homelessness in a sustainable and meaningful way.



# WHO WE ARE

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## THE BOARD



**KATIE LIEW**  
FOUNDER | CEO



**BROOKE DRAPER**  
CHAIRPERSON



**AMANDA GRAY**  
TREASURER



**ASHLEY MOORES**  
BOARD MEMBER



**CHANDRA SUNDARESWARAN**  
BOARD MEMBER



**JEFF HEALY**  
BOARD MEMBER



**MATT DELMENICO**  
BOARD MEMBER



**TAMARA COOK**  
BOARD MEMBER



**TANIA CECCONI**  
BOARD MEMBER

# To The Underground Collaborative Community.

It feels like a lifetime ago that the rampant COVID case was reported just before Christmas 2021 and Ground+Co saw a marked decrease in customers when returning in the new year. It wasn't until October 2022 that the cafe saw similar figures to 2021 before the borders opened.

Needless to say, it has been challenging not only for the organisation but for our employees, who have worked so incredibly hard while trying to protect their own mental health and wellbeing amongst all the other pressures that seem to sit above us like a foggy haze. I couldn't be more proud of how they have worked together as a team - looking after them is a top priority because I know without our people, we simply couldn't operate and consequently deliver on our impact.

In Australia, the demand for work among vulnerable groups is growing and disproportionate to the general population. As a Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE), we focus on providing employment, training and mentorship for vulnerable women and young people to address these barriers to employment – beyond that, one that is meaningful and sustainable.

This year, with the assistance of funding from Lotterywest, we have been working hard to refine our Employment Program which seeks to deliver employment more effectively through greater collaborative partnerships and reimagining how current employment systems can be improved.

2022 signifies The Underground Collaborative's fifth year since the organisation became official - how time flies! There is much to be done but for now, I will be reflecting on the past five years, our wonderful achievements, lives we have touched and hope to continue impacting over the next five years and beyond.

Thank you so much to everyone who has continued along and supported our journey - we are who we are because of you.

I would also like to make particular mention to my very hard working team, all of our partners, volunteers, magnificent Board and to the State Library of WA who continues to provide an incredibly special home for Ground+Co and our team.

With a very full and grateful heart,

Katie Liew | Founder, CEO



# OUR SUPPORTERS



**THANK YOU FOR CHANGING YOUR WORLD, TO CHANGE THEIRS.**

ACCESS CARDIOLOGY

LOTTERYWEST

ASSOCIATION OF FINANCIAL  
ADVISORS

PWC

CITY OF PERTH

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

COMMONWEALTH BANK STAFF  
COMMUNITY FUND

STANLEE HOSPITALITY

CT GROUP

STATE LIBRARY OF WA

CUSTOM PEOPLE SOLUTIONS

ST VINCENT DE PAUL

FIVE SENSES

ZONTA HOUSE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION

HOUSE DIGITAL

VIVACITY MARKETING

KNOWN ASSOCIATES EVENTS

WESTPAC FOUNDATION

+ THANK YOU TO ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL AND ANONYMOUS DONORS

# WINS & LEARNINGS

The year saw many exciting things happen while equally a number of learnings that will allow The Underground Collaborative to operate more effectively and sustainably for those we exist to serve.

## LOTTERYWEST GRANT

The Underground Collaborative received a significant grant from Lotterywest to support the enhancement, development, trial and evaluation of our broader service model and Employment Program. This is currently being tested at Ground+Co, with the intention to expand to future employment initiatives and through our partners.

## STAFFING

In July, The Underground Collaborative and Ground+Co employed an Engagement & Training Officer and Program Cafe Manager respectively to assist with the delivery of the Lotterywest grant. While these are funded positions, this is a milestone in that this is the first time the organisation has been in a position to employ staff beyond the Ground+Co team.

However, like many other businesses, stable staffing has proven to be challenging and we had to learn to be adaptable enough to ensure our existing staff were front of mind without losing sight of our Employment Program and support for our Team Members.

## BRAND REFRESH

The organisation underwent a brand refresh, with a big thank you to the Known Associates Events team who assisted in redeveloping our brand guidelines. This formed part of the work undertaken in developing our new website.



*nobody makes  
a greater  
mistake than  
he who did  
nothing because  
he could only  
do little.*

-edmund burke

## WEBSITE REFRESH

The Underground Collaborative launched a new website in December which we are so proud and excited about.

A massive thank you to the incredible House Digital team who assisted with this pro bono!

Early next year, our Ground+Co website will also be getting a facelift with thanks to the City of Perth Bounceback grant.

## ONBOARDING

This year, Ground+Co onboarded three new Team Members. While numbers can be a good measure of impact, so too can the learnings; including the understanding that not all who come through our doors will be ready or suitable for our Program.

This was true for one of our Team Members who while trying to escape her domestic violence situation was also caring for her child who had special needs. We were also presented with systemic barriers which further highlights the importance of our work.



# OUR IMPACT

The Underground Collaborative engaged with Social Scaffolding who worked with us to refine and gain greater clarity on our Theory of Change and Business Model Canvas. This important piece of work was crucial in our path forward in ensuring we remain values-aligned in continuing our work to break the cycles of homelessness.

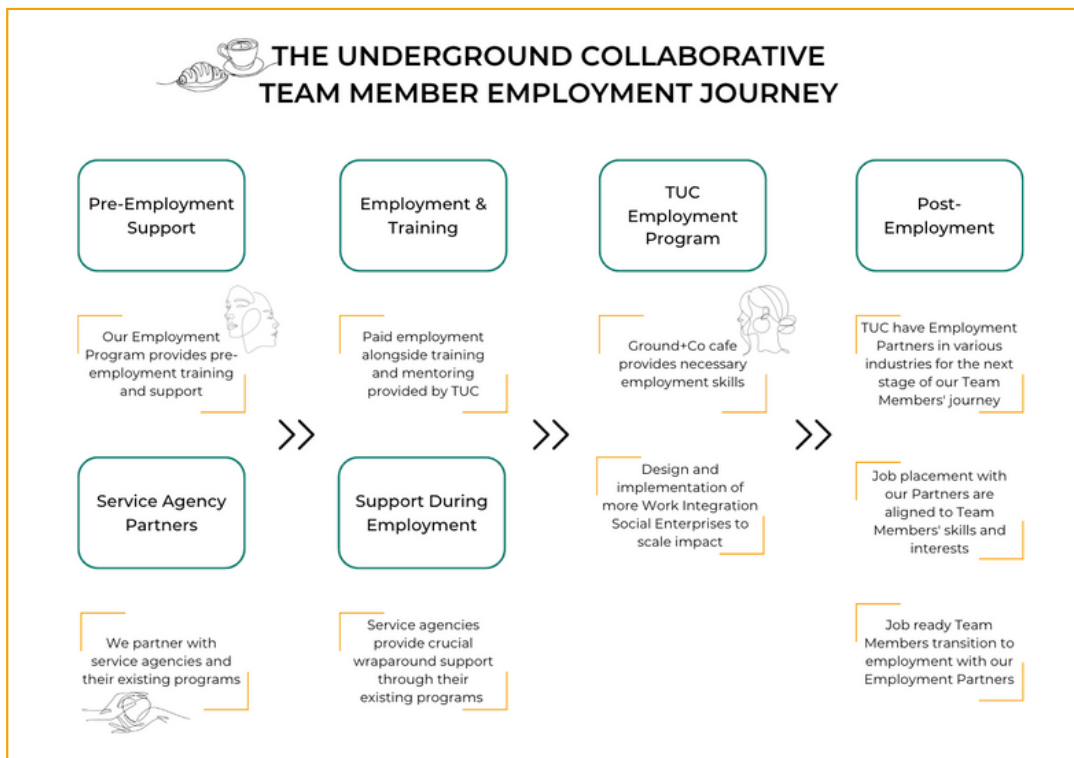
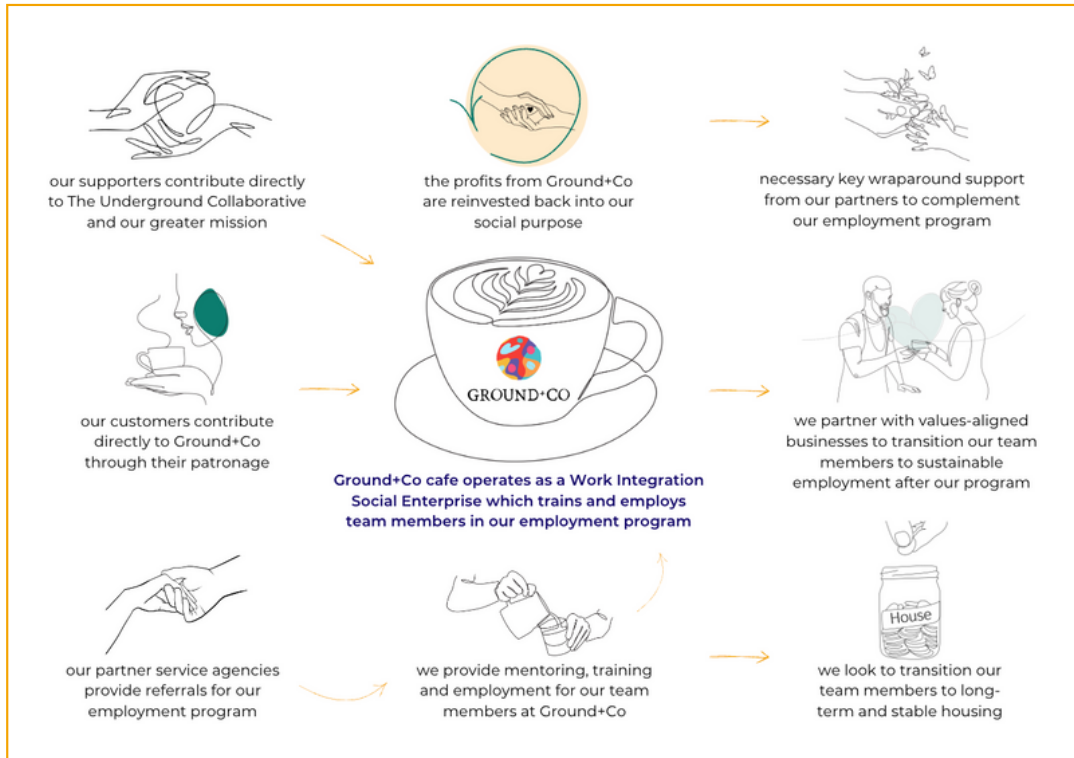
More importantly, these feed into our Outcomes Framework which provides the basis for identifying the necessary work required to achieve our desired outcomes, helps us stay on track and leads to better evaluation of our Employment Program.

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE



# OUR IMPACT

## OUR BUSINESS MODEL



# OUR IMPACT

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*This year...*

**\$221K  
SALES**

**466 HOURS &  
\$12.5K OF PAID  
TRAINING &  
EMPLOYMENT**



“[The Employment Program] really helped me financially and by giving me a chance to come out of that hard time and see the world with a different perspective.”

You won't see a lot of statistics and numbers in our annual updates. That's because we feel that impact is more than a number - without the background and context behind it, numbers start to lose its meaning.

What's important to us is seeing the visible change in people - their personalities starting to shine, emotional barriers breaking down, life-changing conversations over time, building trust that can never truly be captured by figures. These are the deep and lasting impacts that will change their world.

-Katie Liew, CEO

# OUR IMPACT

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“Thank you for helping me find my peace. The person I was trying to be wasn't me, and you helped me so much to see that.

By not having a dad, by being pushed away by so many people, by not knowing who I really was inside myself. I thought hurting people and selling drugs was my life.

I thought that's all I was gonna be and you started this by showing me I can be so much more.

*I'm finally growing up.*



# OUR IMPACT

What else did we get up to...



We collaborated with 100 Families, uneARThed and Self Made Indigenous Corporation as part of their Sonder exhibition, which shared the art and stories of artists with lived experience of disadvantage. You can find the beautiful pieces for sale on our cafe wall.

We started a little book club with a focus on financial literacy.

*“I developed a good sense of managing money and now I understand that it is very crucial to have a source of income on my own. I’ll always look for better opportunities to have a good living.”*



Research shows that identity and belonging help us create purposeful lives where we feel connected to others around us; employment can be a powerful tool in helping to provide a sense of belonging and purpose.

We try to spend time together outside of work to build those friendships and relationships which in turn helps build stronger teams.

*“After working at Ground+Co my confidence level has increased, I have learned communication skills, developed a sense of problem solving, become more patient and optimistic, learnt etiquettes and teamwork.”*

# BE PART OF THE CHANGE

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## **PARTNER WITH US**

The Underground Collaborative welcomes the support of our partners through sponsorship or philanthropy who share similar values and we are always keen to explore opportunities to work with organisations that align with our vision and mission to help break the cycles of homelessness through education, empowerment and employment.



## **BECOME AN EMPLOYMENT PARTNER**

Our Employment Partners are incredibly important for the success of our Employment Program. If your company is passionate about providing a safe and welcoming workplace for our Team Members to transition to after completing our Program, being an Employment Partner will help provide stable and diverse employment options for our Team Members.



## **VISIT GROUND+CO**

By enjoying our hospitality at Ground+Co, you can make a very real, and very tangible difference. Every coffee you buy provides employment for people experiencing, or at-risk of homelessness.

The human interactions, routine, stability, team environment, conversations - these are all positive impacts you will create for our Team Members' mental health and journey out of homelessness.



# THANK YOU 🐾

