



# Annual | 20 Report | 20

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



*“We build digital literacy in communities experiencing disadvantage.”*

## Chairperson Report

Guy Freeland



In 2020 the need for effective digital skills accelerated. As drought, bushfires, and then COVID-19 rolled through our communities people were forced to stay at home and increasingly live their lives on-line. For those who were digitally competent, the technology largely worked and whilst life changed, goods and services were still purchased, bills were still paid and connection with friends and relatives was still possible. However, for those without adequate digital skills life became much more stressful and isolating, reinforcing the importance of the role Leep plays to address digital exclusion, one learner at a time.

I'd like to recognise the agility and commitment to Leep's purpose shown in this challenging year by our CEO, Cecily Michaels. In the face of an upending of Leep's mentoring delivery model her leadership, together with the skills and hard work of the Leep team, was critical in allowing Leep to make adjustments which saw our work continue in a COVID-safe fashion.

Many thanks to our key funding partners, the Federal Department of Health and Department of Social Services, for entrusting

Leep to deliver important digital inclusion and volunteer management activities. Further, with funding from Good Things Foundation through Be Connected and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District we have been able to do more in regional areas, training digital mentors and bringing digital skills to communities affected by drought.

I acknowledge also with much gratitude the immense pro-bono support provided by Clayton Utz that led to Leep's attainment of Public Benevolent Institution status. This important milestone now formally recognises the role Leep plays in addressing the disadvantage lack of digital skills creates in our communities.

Finally I'd like to thank Leep's skilful and committed Board for bringing all of themselves to the task of governing the Leep organisation and keeping its work relevant and on-purpose.

2021 surely cannot be as difficult as 2020. However, post-COVID much is different and the need for organisations like Leep to break down the barriers to living successfully in a connected digital world has simply never been greater.

## CEO Report

Cecily Michaels



This has been another amazing year for Leep. It began with a hugely successful forum [Digital Mentors: The Heart of the Digital Revolution](#). The Summary Report was presented to both sides of Government calling for a national awareness campaign to encourage learners to get online, and the need for increased funding.

In November, Mike Allen retired as the Chair of the Leep board after serving the organisation for four years. He was highly valued by all, for his wise counsel, astuteness, professionalism, inclusion, warmth and humanity. Since then we have been led by the equally valued, hard-working, dedicated and strategic Chair, Guy Freeland.

Before COVID we were excited to be selected for presenting at two conferences in the US, the Nonprofit Technology Conference 2020 in Baltimore, and NetInclusion in Portland. We also were due to present at the National Volunteering Conference in Perth.

Even with the challenges of drought, bushfires, floods, and COVID, Leep has exceeded our reach and impact through the delivery of a record number of training events (39 for volunteers and 12 for professional development) reaching over 1,289 individuals. With COVID, Leep began running our events online.

Whilst COVID-19 has been disruptive and challenging, it has also been the impetus for new opportunities at Leep. We have pivoted our digital mentoring program online. Before doing so we consulted with our learners and Tech Mates and found 70% of learners willing to try remote learning delivered either by phone or video call.

Our workshop [Hone Your Tech Mate Skills](#), delivered by Leep volunteers Brad Yee and Phil Greenidge, provides an introduction on some of the methods and approaches used to make this program a success. Jan's story, later in this report, is just one of many who benefited from this program. Also having learners participate in our online workshop, [Smart Savings Online](#), is evidence we're doing something right.

The changes to our delivery model have allowed us to recruit Tech Mates from across Australia. Within a few weeks of being advertised we received over 100 expressions of interest. Of these, 77 signed up for a briefing session and 67 went on to join the Leep team.

Working remotely through COVID provided the opportunity for Leep to close our office of 27 years and become a fully remote organisation.

We are excited about the future and what we are doing to close the digital divide, but our data suggests we're still not doing enough. The overwhelming majority of learners Leep meets are still at the entry phase to technology use: learning how to set up and send an email, take and manage photos and use social media. Learners are often not motivated to attempt functional or higher order transactional tasks, such as accessing government services online, completing online forms, shopping or banking. When Leep runs promotional events, such as Get Online Week, we find a large number of people who have little or no tech skills but lack the motivation or willingness to learn.

In seeking a solution to these challenges Leep jumped at an opportunity to participate in a CommBank Design Jam in December 2019. At this workshop, led by the highly talented Eloise Newbury, we analysed the transcripts of 7 in-depth interviews with learners, and identified the common themes to understand the barriers they experienced to learning. Taking a human centred design approach, we're still working on the solution and hope to have more to tell you next year.

Engagement



5028

Mentoring Sessions

1278



Learners

215



Events Held

93



Training Events

51



Number of People Trained



1289

Volunteers

744



Professional Development

545



Feedback

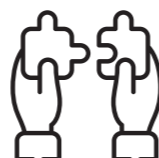
Enjoyed volunteer training

98%



Would implement what they learnt into their role

97%



Active Tech Mates

NSW

80

VIC

12

SA

11

QLD

10

TAS

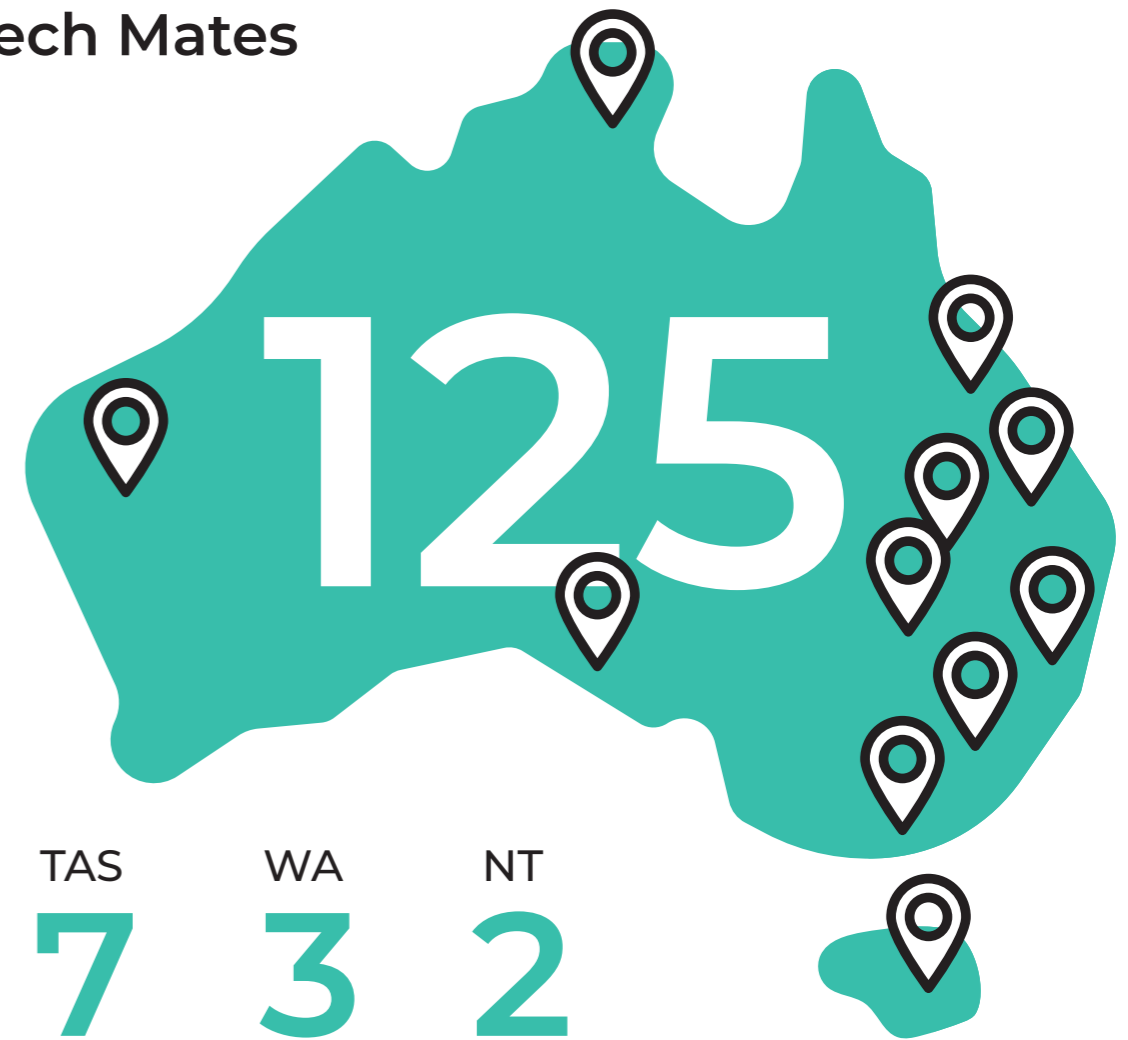
7

WA

3

NT

2



Newsletter Recipients



2930



VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION IN PARRAMATTA



WORKSHOPPING SOLUTIONS



PRESENTING AT AGEING IN A DIGITAL WORLD



MIKE ALLEN



TECH MATE AND LEARNER IN CONDOBOLIN



DIGITAL MENTORS: THE HEART OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION



ELOISE NEWBURY, COMMBANK DESIGN JAM



TRAINING TECH MATES



LEAP GET ONLINE WEEK PROMOTIONAL EVENT



MEETING SENATOR PAYNE AND MINISTER FLETCHER



DIGITAL MENTORS: THE HEART OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION



TECH MATES AND LEARNERS IN BLACKTOWN

# I don't know what I want to know.

## Interview with Jan Lappan

Jan had built up a wall of resistance to technology and couldn't understand why people relied on it so much. She saw it as a failing in people who relied on computers for everything. She's the type of person who would rather go to the library and read a book than use technology. Her husband Barry will read the news online but she much prefers to read the daily paper.

Whilst being against technology for so long, Jan now says, "I have come to the conclusion that it is the way of the future".

When she saw a notice in the local paper advertising Leep's one on one

support from a Tech Mate at Gunthers Lane in Bathurst (pre the pandemic) she and her husband, Barry, went along "to give it a go". They met the very engaging, competent and personable Tech Mate, called Brad (pictured opposite with Jan), and were thrilled with all the things he was able to teach them.

"I could already use email, Safari, YouTube and search recipes" says Jan, "but I couldn't work out how to include accents when I wrote to my daughter-in-law in French. Brad showed me this and opened up a new world for me with emojis."

*"What's so good with the whole program is that it is one on one and getting support over the phone does work."*



Jan had taken a couple of computer courses in the past but had found them too technical and too advanced. "It wasn't personalised in any way and went over my head."

Barry, who has always done their banking and paying of bills online, is keen for Jan to learn. Jan replies, "Why can't I just walk down to the Council Chambers and pay the rates?" But due to concerns around Barry's health she says, "I need a gear change in my brain".

When COVID-19 stopped all Leep face to face support, Jan was offered remote support from Brad. She says, "I thought it was wonderful to have an opportunity to learn remotely. I didn't know how it

was going to work but thought, that's Brad's problem."

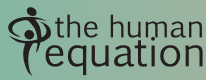
For the first session, Brad set things up so Jan could receive a number which gave Brad access to her iPad (giving him only viewing status). Jan explains, "It was such a surprise that he could actually see my iPad and then he was able to direct me and teach me things by explaining where to look". Sometimes Jan is nervous and pushes buttons twice but Brad is always so patient and she has realised that she can't break anything.

"What's so good with the whole program is that it is one on one and getting support over the phone does work."

# Pro-Bono Support

CLAYTON UTZ

Designit®  
a wipro company



## Photographers

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Solaradt Bungbrakearti

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Lesley Parton

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# Special thanks to Leep's volunteers

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Nasreen Umer  
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Roslyn Wheatley  
John Williams  
Henry Woods  
Bradley Yee (AC)  
Rehana Zafar  
Bas Abboodi  
Habibul Azam  
Dina Chakma  
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Lewis Noonan  
Esther Uddin  
Denise Yeung  
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