



# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

## THE VACSEEN PROJECT

Accessible, high-quality health care for all.



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The VacSeen Project acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. In particular we acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples on whose land our organisation is primarily based. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. We will always strive to respect, acknowledge, include and celebrate the Indigenous peoples of this land in our community.



# 1.0 OUR VISION

'Accessible, high-quality health care for all.'

## 1.1 OUR PURPOSE

- 1 Providing preventative health care services and treatment free of charge.
- 2 Establishing innovative programs and models for delivering health care, particularly in non-traditional spaces.
- 3 Collaborating and providing ongoing support to community members and organisations assisting in the provision of health care services.

## 1.2 OUR VALUES

### Respect

Treat people with dignity, pursue equity and act with compassion

### Meaningful Change

Evidence-based innovation

### Community

Build connections, combat isolation and find common goals

### High-quality care

Safe, patient-centred and convenient care

# 2.0 CEO REPORT



*Varun Karnik (CEO) presenting at the 2024 Vacseen Project Annual Party.*

***Varun Karnik, CEO, reflects on the past year, highlighting The VacSeen Project's progress in expanding health care access and support services for the homeless community.***

Reflecting on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride in the progress our organisation has made in providing health care to the homeless community. In the face of many changes and challenges, we have maintained commitment to our mission and have continued to create meaningful impact through our initiatives and by supporting of our community partners.

We ended 2023 with a goal to expand on the impact of our previous vaccination clinics and support the homeless community through a broader program of more holistic pop-up primary care clinics. Run by teams of volunteer medical students and doctors, our primary care clinics deliver high-quality outreach medical advice and services to people experiencing homelessness. Our clinics create a safe and accessible place for people to receive health counselling, wound care, primary care treatment and referrals.

With clinics generally running on a 'pop up' basis alongside other service providers, we seek to remove multiple barriers to health care faced by the homeless community (including competing needs, travel limitations, and cost) to provide GP-style preventative care. Further, limited ongoing health care management for many homeless people means that some individuals regularly present at emergency departments with acute medical issues, contributing to hospital overcrowding. This has been shown to further reduce patient access, compromise clinical care and lead to adverse patient outcomes. In providing an accessible option for this particularly vulnerable population, we aim not only to address individuals' healthcare needs, but also reduce broader pressures facing the healthcare system.

In 2024, through the hard work of our dedicated volunteers and community partners, VacSeen established three additional primary care clinic locations at the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Bundaberg, in addition to the existing Brisbane and Toowoomba clinics.

*...continued overleaf*

As a result, VacSeen was able to host over 100 primary health care clinics across Queensland, leading to approximately 450 patient interactions.

In addition, with the generous support of the Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust, Brisbane Grammar School and Brisbane Girls Grammar School, in 2024 we continued to support the wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness through our mental health program. Run in collaboration with Brisbane North Psychologists (and particularly Keri Okanik), our mental program supports patients presenting with mental health illnesses, and provides brief interventions, assessments and referrals to facilitate access to longer term bulk billed psychological care.

From a governance perspective, we were also very fortunate to welcome Sophie Watson, Bridget Seawright, Kaitlyn Bates and Mira Prashar as board members in 2024, each bringing diverse expertise and enthusiasm to our organisation. Their experience in areas such as public health, community advocacy and corporate strategy have helped us navigate the continuing development and evolution of the VacSeen Project with confidence.

In looking back at our progress in 2024, I want to thank our incredible team of volunteers, including medical students, doctors, allied health professionals, social media managers and project managers (among many others), whose dedication and passion inspires me daily. I also thank our donors, partners, and supporters, who make our work possible.

As we move into our fifth year of operations, we are committed to consolidating and expanding upon our primary care and mental health services, utilising community partnerships to pursue new initiatives, and deepening our advocacy efforts to address the systemic issues that contribute to homelessness and poor health outcomes.

Thank you for standing with us as we do our part to help build a future where all people have access to the care they need and the opportunity to live a healthy life.

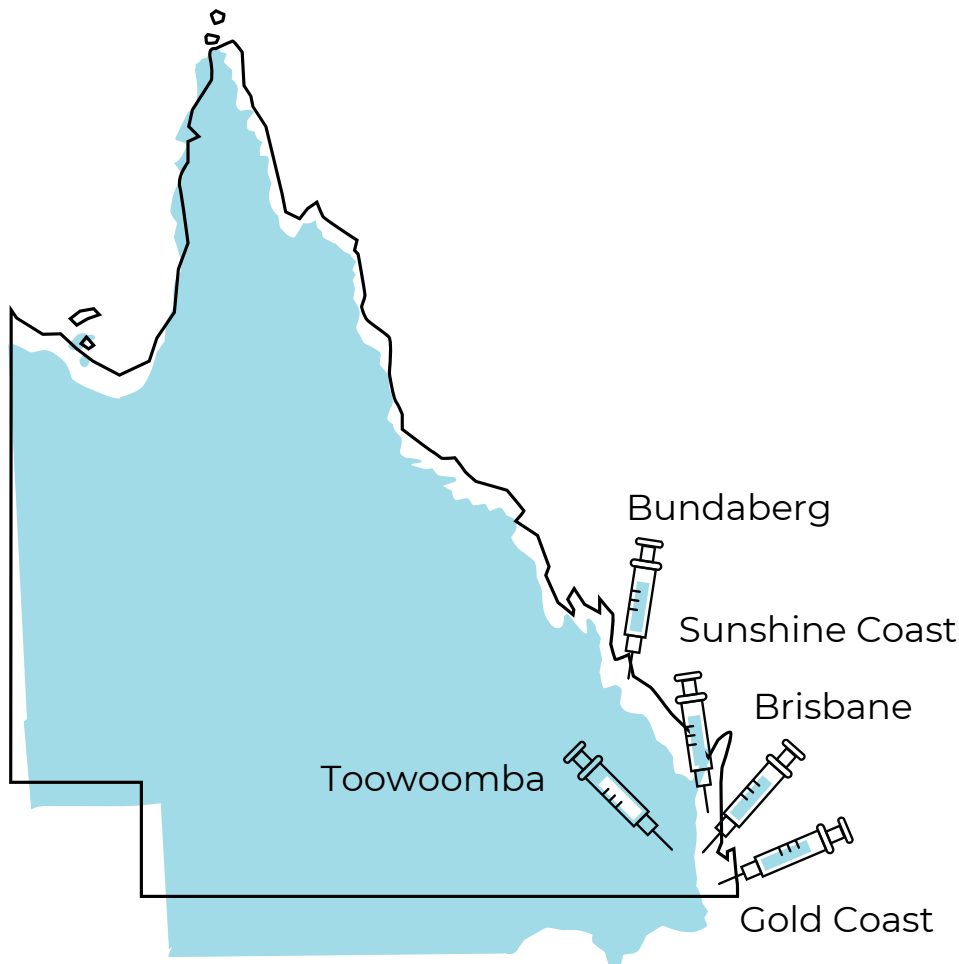
**Varun Karnik**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



# 3.0 OUR IMPACT

Our impact is best reflected by the respect, quality of care and meaningful change that we see in our community as a result of our work. Below is a quantitative snapshot of what we have been able to achieve.

## 3.1 OUR REACH



**100+**



Primary Care Clinics

**400+**



Patient Interactions

**25+**



Mental Health Clinics

**50+**



Volunteers

*Collaborating to provide assistance to the homeless community*



## 3.2 CLINIC SPOTLIGHT

### VacSeen Mental Health Clinics

In Australia, approximately 20% of people over the age of 16 experience a mental health disorder in any given year. However, this figure rises to 39% among people who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness. Further, people experiencing homelessness, who are precariously housed, or who reside in social housing are faced with myriad barriers when accessing mental health support – individual, structural, and institutional.

In March 2023, VacSeen partnered with North Brisbane Psychologists to implement an initial 10-week trial of a mental health service for people experiencing homelessness in inner city Brisbane, designed to bring mental health services to the people who need them most. The pilot program was delivered by mental health social worker Keri Okanik (pictured) together with student volunteers, with the goal of providing onsite assessment and brief interventions while facilitating access to longer-term bulk-billed psychological care. Unfortunately, during the trial period, it was announced that the shelter where the trial was taking place was to close imminently. The goals of the trial program were accordingly amended to accommodate for the implementation of a crisis response strategy, which was key in supporting more than 70 residents to obtain alternative housing. Moreover, the pilot program delivered encouraging outcomes in engagement, indicating the significant value of bringing care into familiar spaces.



**Keri Okanik**  
Mental Health  
Social Worker

In 2023-24, VacSeen and North Brisbane Psychologists built upon the findings of the pilot program, and successfully launched a regular onsite mental health program at the Jeays St Community Centre, located in Bowen Hills, Brisbane. Operating for two hours once per week, the clinic engaged participants for a total of 47 individual sessions between December 2023 and April 2024. A range of therapeutic interventions were provided, including (primarily) motivational interviewing and supportive counselling, as well as solution-focused brief therapy (including delivery of psychoeducation to assist participants to navigate social, financial and community support systems) and dialectical behavioural therapy to provide participants with tools to support emotional regulation. The mental health team also liaised with broader community services and supports and provided referrals to partner organisations and other providers, including by providing referrals for bulk-billed psychological care, ADHD assessment, treatment for depressive disorders, assisting with disability and housing accessibility support, and liaising with general practitioners.

Beyond the tangible health outcomes of the clinic, the mental health program has provided a genuine sense of community and connection for participants, which is driven by the genuine passion and care of our mental health team, and particularly Keri Okanik. For Keri, one of the highlights of her work is the privilege of being invited into the lives of the people she helps:

*"Each person I meet carries a unique story shaped by resilience, pain, hope and survival. It is humbling to listen as they share their struggles and dreams, allowing me to be a part of their journey toward healing."*

Through the program's provision of onsite mental health services at a local community centre, facilitated by a dedicated social worker and volunteer team offering a range of therapeutic interventions and referrals, significant strides have been made in addressing the complex needs of people experiencing housing stress and other marginalised individuals. By continuing to prioritise accessibility, adaptability, and community connection, the program is well-positioned to continue to drive meaningful and lasting mental health improvements for marginalised people into the future.



# 4.0 OUR TEAM



**Varun Karnik**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Director

Varun is the Chief Executive Officer of The VacSeen Project, where he coordinates internal volunteer teams and external partnerships to implement the board's strategic priorities. A co-founder of VacSeen, he has previously served as a Chief Operations Officer coordinating vaccination clinics. Varun graduated in 2020 from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Science (Hons), and is currently studying a Doctor of Medicine at Griffith University.

Mike serves as a Director and the Company Secretary of The VacSeen Project. Also a co-founder of VacSeen, his specific responsibilities include establishing and managing governance frameworks and clinic and other operational procedures, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Mike graduated in 2022 from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws (Hons) and works as an Associate in Litigation and Dispute Resolution at law firm Cooper Grace Ward.



**Michael Fielding**

Company Secretary,  
Director

Hannah is a co-founder and director of The VacSeen Project and oversees the Brisbane clinic operations. She currently works as a junior doctor at the Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital, and hopes to train as a specialist physician. Hannah has also held positions on representative committees for the RBWH Resident Medical Officer Society, University of Queensland Medical Society, and has experience writing policy for the Australian Medical Students' Association. Hannah is passionate about continuing VacSeen's community health outreach programs, expanding advocacy efforts, and creating education opportunities for doctors in training.



**Hannah Bates**

Director

Lili is a co-founder of The VacSeen Project and serves as its Chief Financial Officer. In her role she manages clinic expenses, planning for long term financial decisions and annual financial reporting. She has previously held leadership roles as a representative on the UQ Disciplinary Board and Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Board. Lili graduated in 2022 from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Arts. Lili currently works as a Management Consultant at KPMG supporting large-scale technology transformations across government and the private sector.



**Lili Wackwitz**

Chief Financial Officer,  
Director



**Sophie Watson**  
Director

Sophie has recently joined the VacSeen board, after previously volunteering as VacSeen's Local Head of Operations in Toowoomba in 2023 and 2024. Along with her experience in successfully establishing VacSeen's Toowoomba clinics, Sophie also has extensive governance experience across various not-for-profit organisations (including as the company secretary of Doctors' Health in Queensland) and through her completion of the AICD's company directors course. Sophie holds a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Queensland (2024) and previously graduated as a university medallist with a Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours) majoring in biomedical science. Sophie currently works as a Resident Medical Officer at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital.

Bridget also joined The VacSeen Project board in 2024. Bridget holds a Bachelor of Advanced Finance and Economics (Honours) and a Master's in Economics and Public Policy from the University of Queensland, where she completed a Master's thesis evaluating the Australian national plan to reduce violence against women and children. Since 2023, Bridget has worked as a consultant at Nous Group, where she has provided public policy and economic analysis to both government and private clients across sectors including health, education, climate and human services.



**Bridget Seawright**  
Director



**Kaitlyn Bates**  
Director

Kaitlyn was recently appointed as a director at The VacSeen Project. She strongly believes that healthcare should be affordable and accessible to everyone, and has extensive governance experience, including as a Company Secretary for a local Brisbane not-for-profit. Currently in the final trimester of her Master's in Business Administration, Kaitlyn also works in the operations team at Micah Projects to assist in the coordination of services for individuals facing homelessness and/or domestic and family violence.

After volunteering in various capacities for VacSeen, including as the Local Head of Operations on the Gold Coast, Mira was appointed to the board of The VacSeen Project in 2024. Throughout her time with VacSeen, Mira has been extensively involved in clinic management, sponsorship coordination and volunteer engagement. She graduated from Bond University with a Bachelor of Medical Studies/Doctor of Medicine in 2024, and is currently working as a junior doctor at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Along with her experience at VacSeen, Mira gained leadership and sponsorship experience serving as clinical vice-president and sponsorship director for the Bond University Surgical Society, and as a university representative and events team member for the Queensland Medical Women's Society.



**Mira Prashar**  
Director



## 4.2 VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**Macarena Gonzalez**  
Clinic Volunteer

Macarena is a final-year medical student who volunteers at VacSeen's primary care clinics to connect with marginalised people and seek to address the healthcare inequities they face. Macarena has found it particularly rewarding to help initially hesitant patients to feel safe and supported in re-engaging with healthcare services. Macarena's dedication to fostering trust and dignity among vulnerable individuals embodies the mission of VacSeen.

*"It's deeply fulfilling to contribute to restoring dignity and empowering people to lead healthier lives."*

Anavi first learned about The VacSeen Project when her high school donated the proceeds of its Year 12 formal to fund VacSeen's clinics. Now a medical student, Anavi volunteers as the Local Head of Operations for the Gold Coast region, where she coordinates outreach primary care clinics in collaboration with student and doctor volunteers. For Anavi, the meaningful and long-lasting relationships she has built with the Burleigh community and individual patients have been a major highlight.

*"I could recognise the appreciation from members of the community in our dedication towards caring for both their physical and mental well-being."*



**Anavi Prashar**  
Local Head of  
Operations (Gold Coast)



**Dr Rachael Gray**  
Volunteer GP  
(Toowoomba)

Dr. Rachael Gray is a dedicated GP volunteering at VacSeen's Toowoomba primary care clinics. Rachael was keen to give back to the local Toowoomba community, and after hearing about VacSeen's outreach Covid-19 vaccination program, decided to lend her time and expertise at our outreach primary care clinics. Rachael has greatly enjoyed the opportunity to provide practical teaching to medical students and treat some very grateful patients.

*"I was humbled and honoured to meet some people who had found themselves in very tough situations and were trying to make the best of their circumstances"*

For Dr Laura Lee-Allison, volunteering at VacSeen's Toowoomba outreach clinic represented a great opportunity to give back to people doing it tough and to teach and mentor the next generation of doctors. Laura is hopeful that volunteering with VacSeen inspires a passion for general practice and community service in medical students. For Dr Lee-Allison, the generosity of VacSeen's community partners has been particularly inspiring.

*"Seeing first hand how a place like Tony's Kitchen is able to provide such altruistic service for those who need it the most has been a highlight"*



**Dr Laura Lee-Allison**  
Volunteer GP  
(Toowoomba)



**Noah Steel**

Local Head of Operations (Bundaberg)

As a second-year medical student, Noah took the initiative to establish VacSeen's Bundaberg primary care clinic after identifying a gap in health care access within the community. Noah and his team of volunteers operate the Bundaberg clinic out of a local soup kitchen. Noah is particularly grateful for the relationships he has built with patients and with other members of the homeless community.

*"I cherish the relationships that I have built with these people and know that we are their best point of care when they do need medical attention, or just a friendly chat!"*

Dr. Elizabeth Flynn brings her extensive experience as a GP and medical educator to her work as a volunteer at VacSeen's Toowoomba primary care clinic. It was Dr Flynn's passionate for social justice and for helping those less fortunate than herself that brought her to volunteer for VacSeen, as well as the opportunity to contribute to the education of medical students. For Dr Flynn, the treatment of patients in need has been deeply rewarding, and the partnerships formed with local Toowoomba community organisations and programs such as Winter Shelter have also been a source of great enjoyment.



**Dr Elizabeth Flynn**

Volunteer GP (Toowoomba)

Rushil, a doctor pursuing a career in OBGYN, brings his expertise and passion for equitable healthcare access to his work as a volunteer doctor at VacSeen's Brisbane clinic. Rush is focused on delivering comprehensive care to underserved populations, including the homeless, while also mentoring medical students and collaborating with partner organizations. A particular highlight for Rush has been working collaboratively with other homeless care providers, such as Rosie's, One Voice mobile showers, and Micah Projects nurses, who also provide vital supports to the Brisbane homeless community. Most importantly, Rush values the connections he has formed with patients in the homeless community.



**Dr Rushil Sharma**

Volunteer doctor (Brisbane)

*"It's incredibly rewarding to see how even small gestures of care can have a significant impact on someone's life."*



# 5.0 OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the incredible individuals and organisations that have supported The VacSeen Project throughout 2023 and 2024. We are deeply appreciative of our generous sponsors and partners, whose contributions have been instrumental in shaping our organisation and its impact.

## Major Sponsors

- Lord Mayor's Charitable Trust
- Brisbane Grammar School
- Brisbane Girls Grammar School
- Royal Queensland Golf Club
- AMAQ Foundation

## Strategic Partners

- Cornwall Street Medical Centre
- Robina Medical and Dental
- Ochre Medical Centre Caloundra
- Toowoomba Day and Night Pharmacy
- North Brisbane Psychologists
- Aberdovy Clinic
- Jeays St Community Centre
- Tony's Community Kitchen
- VaxWorks Health Services
- Oceana Immunisation
- Gold Coast PHN
- Brisbane Youth Service
- BHC
- AMA Queensland
- Healthsave Everton Park
- Beddown
- Orange Sky Laundry

**Pro-bono assistance** from Minter Ellison



# 6.0 CFO REPORT



*The CFO and The VacSeen Project's assisting members are responsible for the preparation of the financial reporting and have determined that the basis of preparation is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act 2012 and the Collections Act 1966.*

The committee's responsibilities also include internal controls, as determined is necessary, to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The VacSeen Project's financial statements have been prepared as required by the ACNC Act and ACNC Regulations and in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards set by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB). The VacSeen Project keeps financial records in a way to properly record the Company's income and expenditure, and dealings with its assets and liabilities.

Comparative financial reporting from the 2022/2023 financial year indicates a 12% decrease in net assets in FY24. However, The VacSeen Project remains in a favourable financial position as we continue to expand our capabilities. With the onboarding of our grant writer, Jock Lucas, our focus for FY25 is to increase our ability to generate revenue from relevant government and community grants.

As a Board, we are grateful for the support of our volunteers, sponsors and donors in 2024. The ongoing commitment of the community will enable us to continue to grow and adapt our services to fit the needs of Queensland's homeless and vulnerable people. We look forward to what's to come in 2025.

**Lili Wackwitz**  
Chief Financial Officer



# 6.1 CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS

## Income Statement FY22-23

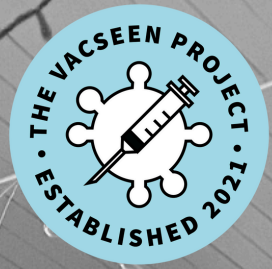
Revenue	Donations	\$ 16,208.56
Operating Expenses	General Health Clinics	\$ 4,937.93
	Mental Health Clinics	\$ 5,850.00
	ConTREATnuity	\$ 282.10
	Administrative Costs	\$ 4,830.75
	Merchandise	\$ 932.35
	Social Events	\$ 2,619.57
Net Income		\$ (3,244.14)

# 6.2 CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2024

	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2024
Current Assets	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Cash at Bank	\$ 2,746.53	\$ 10,138.52	\$ 27,020.56	\$ 23,776.42
Total Assets	\$ 2,746.53	\$ 10,138.52	\$ 27,020.56	\$ 23,776.42
Non-current Assets			\$ -	\$ -
Current Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Liabilities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Net Assets	\$ 2,746.53	\$ 10,138.52	\$ 27,020.56	\$ 23,776.42
Working Capital	\$ 2,746.53	\$ 10,138.52	\$ 27,020.56	\$ 23,776.42





# CONTACT

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