

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020

MAN  
CAVE





## Acknowledgment of Country

The Man Cave would like to acknowledge the custodians of the land throughout Australia on whose unceded countries we conduct our business. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people continue to live in spiritual and sacred relationships with this country.



# CONTENTS

Impact to date	2
Letter from the CEO	4
Man Cave Culture Code	6
Great organisation to work for	10
Programs that foster healthy young men	12
Credible source for boys' journey to Manhood	16
Sustainable Business Model	
Partners & donors	20
Financial report	22
A boy's story	24



# IMPACT TO DATE

## VISION

The Man Cave envisions a world in which every man has healthy relationships, contributes to his community and reaches his full potential.

## MISSION

The Man Cave works to empower boys to become great men by providing them and their communities with impactful programs, role models and resources.

## END-GAME

By 2023 TMC resources and programs are readily available to every young man, parent and teacher in Australia and TMC has a replicable model for overseas adoption.

“The outcomes of The Man Cave workshops are materially significant, when benchmarked against other interventions evaluated by EY.”

— Ernst & Young Impact Evaluation Report, August 2019

## IMPACT SUMMARY

**16,000+**  
Students

**3000+**  
Parents

**1000+**  
Teachers

**500+**  
Workshops

**95%** OF THE BOYS BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF NOT TALKING ABOUT THEIR EMOTIONS.





# LETTER FROM THE CEO

## CEO of The Man Cave Hunter Johnson

As we reflect on a year like no other, one thing is certain, The Man Cave's vision and mission remain as important as ever given the current state of the world.

They say a crisis has a way of sharpening your focus and when we experience such adversity, we're called to intensify our focus on what's important. At The Man Cave that's the wellbeing of thousands of boys and young men. Despite the hooks and turns of COVID-19, our guiding light throughout the times of unprecedented challenge was a simple question:

### “What's best for the boys?”

The clarity gained from this question, alongside our incredibly resilient staff, provided an important foundation to continue achieving our goals. Our updated strategy and bolstered governance meant that The Man Cave has come out of COVID-19 as a more mature organisation than when we entered, with an overall growth of 24% this year. Thanks also to our robust and trusting donors, who's pool of untied funds allowed us to manage our solvency risks and provided strong financial security throughout the uncertainty of 2020.

Whilst we intended to work with 10,000 young men this year, we were still able to impact 5,500 lives and fast-tracked our digital capabilities by investing in the development of multiple new digital initiatives. Our face-to-face and digital programs proved to be wonderfully impactful, with many schools and

parents sharing powerful stories of the programs impact – particularly around processing the emotional challenges of COVID-19.

Whilst some new projects haven't been developed as quickly as we had hoped, they have set the platform for an important evolution of TMC to further scale our work to the communities who need our services the most.

Of course the year wasn't without its challenges; transitioning to a digital work environment and the stop-start nature of 2020 made it difficult to build continuity and momentum. We did our best to keep staff hyper-focused on clear, short-term KPIs throughout the turbulent environment. We will build upon this in 2021 as we continue evolving our systems and processes to meet our long-term goals.

The entire organisation should be proud to be finishing the year in such a strong position and we look forward to incorporating the lessons learned into our 2021 plans. Finally, thank you to all our partners, donors, and supporters who continue to champion our important work – we couldn't do this without you.



“It was life-changing and something I'll never forget. Australia needs more groups like you.”

— Year 8 Student



# MAN CAVE CULTURE CODE

## VALUES

### 1. CARE

We take care of each other and create a psychologically safe workplace.

### 2. CHALLENGE

We challenge each other to learn and grow so we can realise our potential.

### 3. CHOICE

Every person has the agency to choose what they need between care and challenge.

## OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose as a team, our guiding light, is to always do:

*What's best for the boys.*



“I learnt that it’s okay to share anything because the boys have got your back.”

— Year 8 Student



# MAN CAVE CULTURE CODE

## BEHAVIOURS

The behaviours we expect of each other:

### 1. HUMANITY FIRST

We put the care for others first before moving onto business.

### 2. TAKE STOCK AND CELEBRATE WINS

We make time to slow down, reflect and celebrate what we have achieved.

### 3. CATCH IT BEFORE IT DRIFTS

We catch even the smallest issues before they become larger, including interpersonal conflicts.

### 4. BE HERE AND NOW

We are fully present with those around us and remove distractions so we can do our best work.

### 5. DO YOUR WORK

We take responsibility for our personal wellbeing, prepare effectively for meetings and other events, and are prepared to do the work on ourselves so that we can become better people.

### 6. GET IT DONE

We are resilient and focused under pressure so that we can achieve the outcomes we set.

### 7. TAKE THE SHOT

We back ourselves to take action, make decisions and be proactive.

### 8. BE A SPRINGBOARD

We support others to bounce back up when they take a shot and miss.



“I’ve learnt to appreciate what I have, to respect others’ feelings and how to share my own.”

— Year 9 Student





Our unique culture recently led staff to give TMC a near-perfect score of 9.6/10 when asked “how likely are you to recommend working at TMC to others?”



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

# A GREAT ORGANISATION TO WORK FOR

**At The Man Cave (TMC) culture is not an idea – it is a practice.**

If we can't see our culture in the work people do, the way they relate to others, the way they hold themselves – it doesn't exist. That's why our culture is expressed through behaviours that are front and centre in large team meetings and one-on-ones; behaviours to which all staff are equally accountable, no matter how senior. **These are behaviours that we celebrate in each other and that we use to hold one another to higher standards.**

Our unique culture recently led staff to give TMC a near-perfect score of 9.6/10 when asked “how likely are you to recommend working at TMC to others?”

Our culture delivers on one big promise every time:

**You'll be a better person when you leave TMC than when you arrived.**

## MAN CAVE STAFF ON WORKING AT THE MAN CAVE IN 2020:

“The challenge of this year has made our culture code and values seep deeper into the DNA of our organisation. Our heartbeat is as strong as ever and I have been consistently blown away by the strength of our community and the trust we have in each other. Simply, there is no where else I would have rather worked this year.”

“Our culture creates a space each morning for our team to feel and be seen – to share our thoughts, experiences and feelings. This has meant that despite the distance, our community has braved 2020 together. We've learned, grown, and endured, sharing wisdom, laughter and tears, all as one beating heart. I am so grateful to have worked here in 2020.”

“The Man Cave has given me the privilege and gift of gaining a deeper understanding of manhood and masculinity, in all its extraordinary forms, and therefore greater confidence to use my role as a mother, friend and partner to support and enable healthy conversions and actions. The Man Cave has changed me.”

“TMC has provided me the opportunity to step into 'eldership' and bring to life the cultural values of Care, Challenge & Choice not only into my work but also into my daily life. I have never been part of an organisation that every single person (without question) lives and breathes the values and behaviours and is 100% committed to the organisations mission and vision. Working at TMC has given me hope for the future generation of young people.”

“The Man Cave has played an instrumental, probably hard-to-quantify role in developing me as a human being. Put simply, I'm a better person, not just to others but to myself, and I'm a better son, brother, friend, partner, lover, facilitator, comms person and community member for my experiences in TMC. 2020 in particular, TMC has challenged me, but always with great care and the freedom of choice.”

“The Man Cave has allowed me to grow both emotionally and mentally into someone who I want to be.”



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

# PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER HEALTHY YOUNG MEN

## School Programs

Matt Defina (Head of Programs)

Despite the 'corona-coaster' of 2020, we have been able to adapt and deliver online and face-to-face workshops to **5,500 boys** across Victoria with **95% of the boys recommending our programs to other young men**. That is pretty remarkable for a program that asks boys to openly talk about their emotions!

Importantly, we continued to deliver our **full-day transformational program** across the year, running 102 workshops with **4,700 boys** before, in between and after lockdowns. This workshop continues to be a potentially life-changing experience for the boys, who are given the opportunity, often for the first time, to **talk openly about masculinity and their emotions** with their peers. After this program, 87% of boys reported they are, 'now more aware of other people's emotions and what it means to be a man.'

Once lockdowns came into place and boys started studying from home, we quickly adapted and developed an **online wellbeing workshop** designed to equip boys with the basic tools to manage their

mental health and wellbeing. Once schools adjusted to the online teaching environment, they very quickly sought us out to support their boys. As a result, we were able to work with **800 boys** across 63 workshops and despite the online format, 86% of boys felt the facilitators created a 'safe space for them to share and be honest.'

The future is very promising for our school programs and in 2021 we are set to launch our **'Journey to Manhood' program**, which will build on the foundations established in workshop one and equip boys with **critical relationship and leadership skills** across two final workshops. We're also partnering closely with our newly established Man Cave Academy and will be aiming to train and upskill educators at every school we work with. Finally, we are **partnering with VicHealth and Monash University** to conduct an independent review of our programs and to further bolster the evidence base that supports the effectiveness of our work.



## 2020 PROGRAMS

# 5,500

Lives impacted

# 102

Full-day workshops

# 63

Online workshops

# 95%

of the boys recommend our programs

# 87%

of boys reported they are now more aware of other people's emotions and what it means to be a man



“To know I’ve got that support network there at the end of the week, whether I felt my week was good or bad, was incredibly reassuring.”

— Working Men’s Club Participant



## Role Model Programs

Joel Hines (Head of Training)

Our aim with our Role Model Programs is to create and mobilise a movement of young men who are motivated to challenge and break the bounds of traditional masculinity in order to become better brothers, fathers, husbands, partners and role models.

**We are doing this through two initiatives:  
Man Cave Academy and the Working Men’s Club.**

### Man Cave Academy

Man Cave Academy is designed to provide and teach others the tools, mindsets and methods we use to engage boys in meaningful conversations, working with individuals such as educators, youth workers, coaches and other critical roles in young boys’ lives.

#### Reflection from participants of Man Cave academy:

- “ It really made me think very deeply about me as a person and what I bring to the table to support these lads. There were a couple of revelations and “aha” moments about my own personal development that I will definitely take away from this course.
- “ That was one of the best personal development courses I think I’ve done.

### Working Men’s Club

The Working Men’s Club provides a platform for young men aged 18-35 to further reach their potential, have positive relationships, and contribute to their community by creating a space for transformational personal growth and taking tangible actions towards becoming better men.

#### Reflection from a recent Working Men’s Club participant:

- “ A guided journey of self discovery, to recognise the power of positive intentions and the act of talking out my problems with fellow men. To know I’ve got that support network there at the end of the week, whether I felt my week was good or bad, was incredibly reassuring. The men were there to hear me out and support me through it no matter what, and I was there to hear them out, to offer my support, and to put my own problems into perspective.

The finale was unlike anything I’ve ever done before. A circle of men, face to face, creating a truly sacred space where it felt like nothing was too hard, too scary, or too difficult to put into words for me fellow man to hear me and understand me.

And the final act of honouring one another – to choose to see the best in one another and to vocalise it, to bring those positive thoughts and ideas about what we saw in each others manhood into reality was phenomenal. A feeling of completeness, as we openly expressed all we had learnt from each other and all that we loved in each other after our 4 week journey together.

I am truly blessed to have found myself in such a space, with so many positive changes that have come about in my life, some of which I don’t think I could have done alone, it’s impossible not to be thankful and grateful for The Man Cave and all the work these gents are doing.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

# CREDIBLE SOURCE FOR BOYS' JOURNEY TO MANHOOD

## What we've learned about the boys

Matt Defina (Head of Programs)

At The Man Cave we regularly act as the conduit between boys and adults; this year during our online programs we asked the boys what they are really thinking about lockdowns, adults and the things they're struggling with. They didn't hold back with their answers and we can now share their insightful and honest opinions with you so you can more effectively parent, teach or simply understand their world.



for more insights subscribe to our mailing list



**QUESTION 1:**  
What do you want adults to know right now is hard for you?

Boys want adults to know they're struggling in 3 key areas:

**24%** School pressure, homework and learning

**19%** Being isolated from their mates and family

**16%** Their personal mental health and wellbeing

This won't surprise you and it didn't surprise us either. However, their actual responses to this question provide a real insight into their experience right now.

Here's what a few of them said:

*'Being able to keep up with all the school work at home'*

*'How hard and stressful online school is'*

*'I don't know if I'm ready to take on my responsibilities growing up'*

*'Performing to their standards'*

**QUESTION 2:**  
What do you want adults to chill about?

This time, 4 really distinct themes emerged from their answers. They want adults to chill about:

**32%** Expectations, rules and being treated like babies

**24%** Schoolwork, study, tests and grades

**15%** Gaming, devices and screen time

Overwhelmingly, the boys told us they wanted adults to chill about the expectations adults place on them, both at school and in their personal lives.

*'I can't do everything perfectly'*

*'Being on technology... that's how we communicate with our friends at the moment'*

**QUESTION 3:**  
As a young male, what's something you wish you could talk about that you usually can't?

**49% of the boys** told us they want to talk more about their mental health, personal challenges, problems in life and personal struggles.

Their request doesn't surprise us. They don't want advice, they just want to have the space to speak openly and be heard. One boy summarised his experience of being a teenage boy quite well:

*'I feel like as a male my emotions are slightly oppressed, and I am not looked out for as much as I should (and that's for young males as a whole). Everybody feels emotion, and emotion should be acknowledged equally.'*



## Media and Communications

To facilitate cultural change, we must create a movement by engaging the public and bringing them along on our journey. In 2019 we successfully built our new brand identity and website, and in 2020 we leveraged decades of communications experience in our new director, Carolyn Bendall, to commence a communications strategy that will further increase our visibility, bolster sales and build relationships with key decision-makers as we move forward.

Our investments in our digital presence continue to open doors for our organisation. Recently, our CEO had a public conversation with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex hosted by the Queens Commonwealth Trust to discuss the role of the online world and social media as a force for good. The conversation has reached over 435,000 people so far and counting, and is an important catalyst for more advocacy from TMC on this subject.

We continue to benefit from the numerous mainstream media opportunities secured over the last year, such as Vanity Fair, The Telegraph, ABC, Scottish Sun, and The Age. TMC also featured in prominent policy settings such as the International Women's Day panel hosted by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

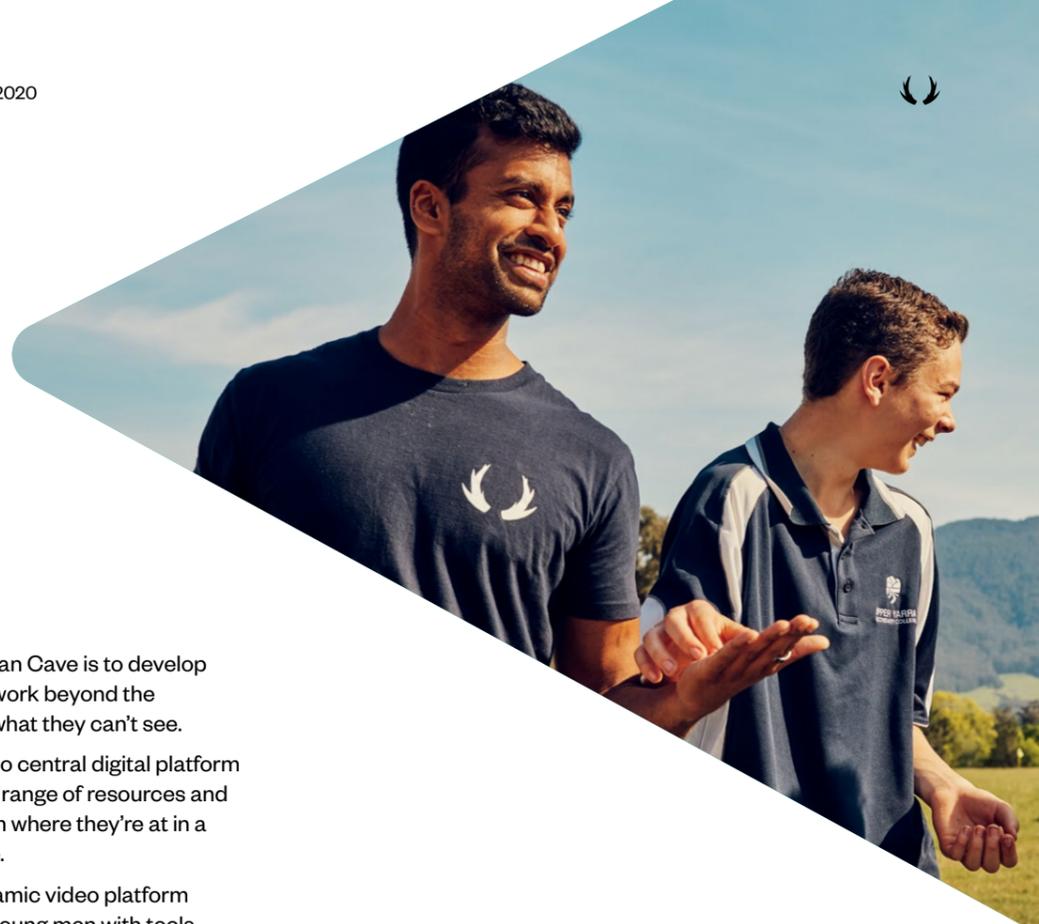
Our social media presence has evolved and found its stride in 2020. We zeroed in on our tone of voice and brought on board a Digital Content Producer to create engaging video content that hits our authentic, cheeky and educational mark. This has seen our social media channels grow by 21% in 2020 and our digital resources translated and used by values-aligned organisations overseas.



Man Cave's CEO, Hunter Johnson and Duke and Duchess of Sussex during a public conversation hosted by the Queens Commonwealth Trust to discuss the role of the online world and social media as a force for good.

“During the conversation, CEO of The Man Cave, Hunter Johnson, quoted Brown, saying, ‘Vulnerability brings connection and connection is why we are here. It brings meaning and it brings purpose to our lives.’”

— Vanity Fair

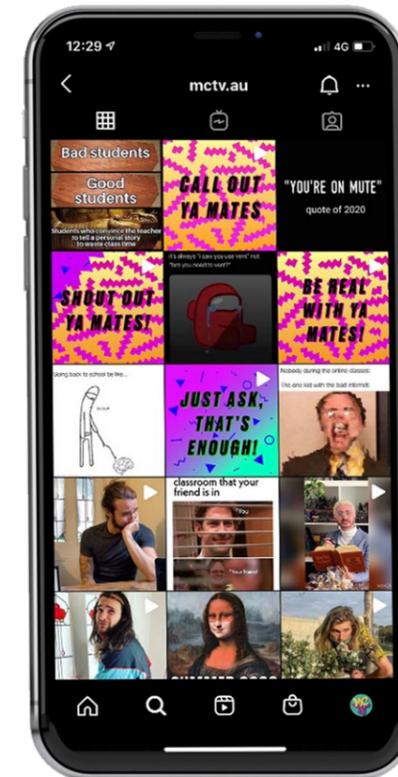


## Man Cave TV

A core part of our mission at The Man Cave is to develop impactful resources to extend our work beyond the classroom, because boys can't be what they can't see.

We have also noticed that there is no central digital platform where boys can go to find a diverse range of resources and positive role models that meet them where they're at in a cheeky, authentic and positive tone.

Enter Man Cave TV (MCTV), a dynamic video platform that uses social media to connect young men with tools and role models that improve their emotional intelligence, relationships skills and connection to the world around them.



## 2020 MCTV HIGHLIGHTS

- MCTV's dynamic educational content has been viewed over 35,000 times between August and December.
- MCTV was one of eleven applications in Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and the UK to receive Movember's Social Connections Grant. We will work with Movember in 2021 and beyond to bring MCTV to new audiences.
- Insights gained from boys in workshops are being used to create specific content that speaks directly to what they want to explore (i.e. sex, death, drugs, wellbeing, romantic relationships, philosophy, parents, passion and purpose).

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

# SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

## Partners & Donors

### Principal Donors



Reinehr Family Foundation

Anonymous Donor



Isabelle Silbery



### Major Donors



River Capital

### Donors



Bassat Family Foundation

Roberts Family Foundation

AndyInc Foundation

The Calvert-Jones Foundation



Frank Mahlab

Seri Renkin & Danny Bessell

### Donors

Carl Soderland

Ward-Ambler Foundation



The Calvert-Jones Foundation

JA Scholarship

Bartlett Family Foundation

The Penn Foundation

The Cattnach Charitable Gift

Paragon Holdings

The Timekeeper

### In Kind



### Research & Evaluation





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

# FINANCIAL REPORT

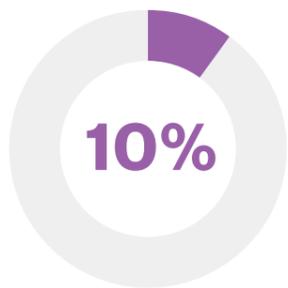


- \$31,434.06**  
Public donations & other
- \$216,420.16**  
Workshop revenue
- \$1,148,573.77**  
Grant Donors (tied & untied)
- \$480,600.00**  
Government COVID Supports

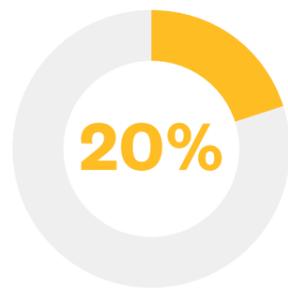
## RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS



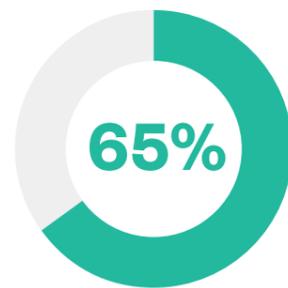
Community Workshops



Program Design



Online resources for young men



School Workshops



“Despite the challenges of 2020 TMC has remained financially robust and impacted the lives of thousands of young men.”

— Hunter Johnson, CEO



# A BOY'S STORY

“ When I walked into school on Thursday I was apprehensive I will admit. I had heard we had a mental health workshop from a group called The Man Cave but that was the extent of my knowledge. What followed was a rollercoaster of a day of incredible programs facilitated by down to earth educators.

The session started with enjoyable icebreakers that even the more introverted in our group took a liking to. After breaking the ice we moved on to more serious topics, a central theme being openness to talk about one's feelings. As a group, we shared our experiences with lockdown mental health and relationships. It was eye-opening to hear of other's experiences, to be privy to the hopes, dreams, and anguish of my fellow peers. We ended the session focusing on the future talking about what, and where we want to be in the future. I highly rate the workshop as it gave our cohort the means to emotionally open up with each other.

It is no exaggeration to say the lesson was life-changing for many of my peers and equipped our cohort with the tools we need to maintain emotional stability in an ever tumultuous world.

— Year 9 Student, The King David School

We're privileged to hear thousands of stories like this every year and we are excited to continue scaling our programs across the country in 2021.



**MAN  
CAVE**

[themancave.life](http://themancave.life)