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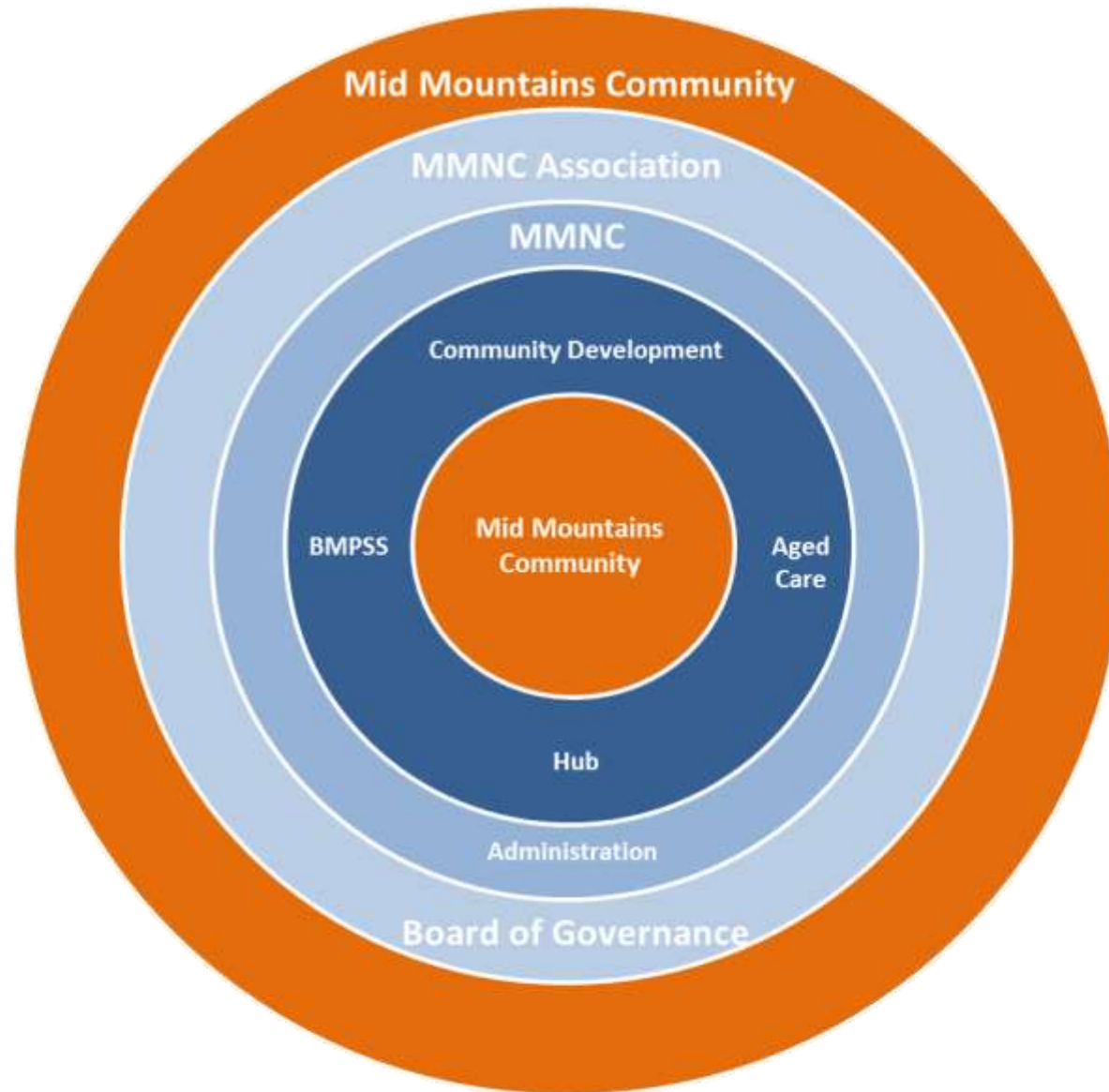
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We acknowledge the Darug and Gundungurra nations as traditional custodians of these lands



MMNC's Vision:

A mid mountains community that is strong and resilient, where everyone's worth and contribution is valued, and where time is taken to build relationships, facilitate aspirations, make shared decisions and enjoy life together.



MMNC's Mission Statement:

MMNC values and works closely with volunteers, the community and other partners to: reach out to the whole mid mountains community; support the needs and aspirations of vulnerable children, young people, families and individuals; and increase community connectedness, participation and access to services.

Community Development:

supports the development of a strengthened community: A community where individuals support each other to build strong, resilient, healthy and participatory communities where diversity is celebrated.

MMNC Hub:

supports the community in realising its aspirations and meeting its needs by facilitating community connectedness, participation and access to services.

Aged Care:

Services support older people to achieve individual goals to remain connected, healthy and engaged members of the community and increasing their capacity to remain in their homes. Services and activities create environments in which older people can celebrate, share and belong.

BMPSS:

Supports community members with a life limiting illness. A team of compassionate and competent volunteers support clients and their carers to maximise quality of life, maintain meaningful connections to community and supports individuals in achieving their goals.

Neighbourhood Centre Operational Management:**Strategic Purpose:**

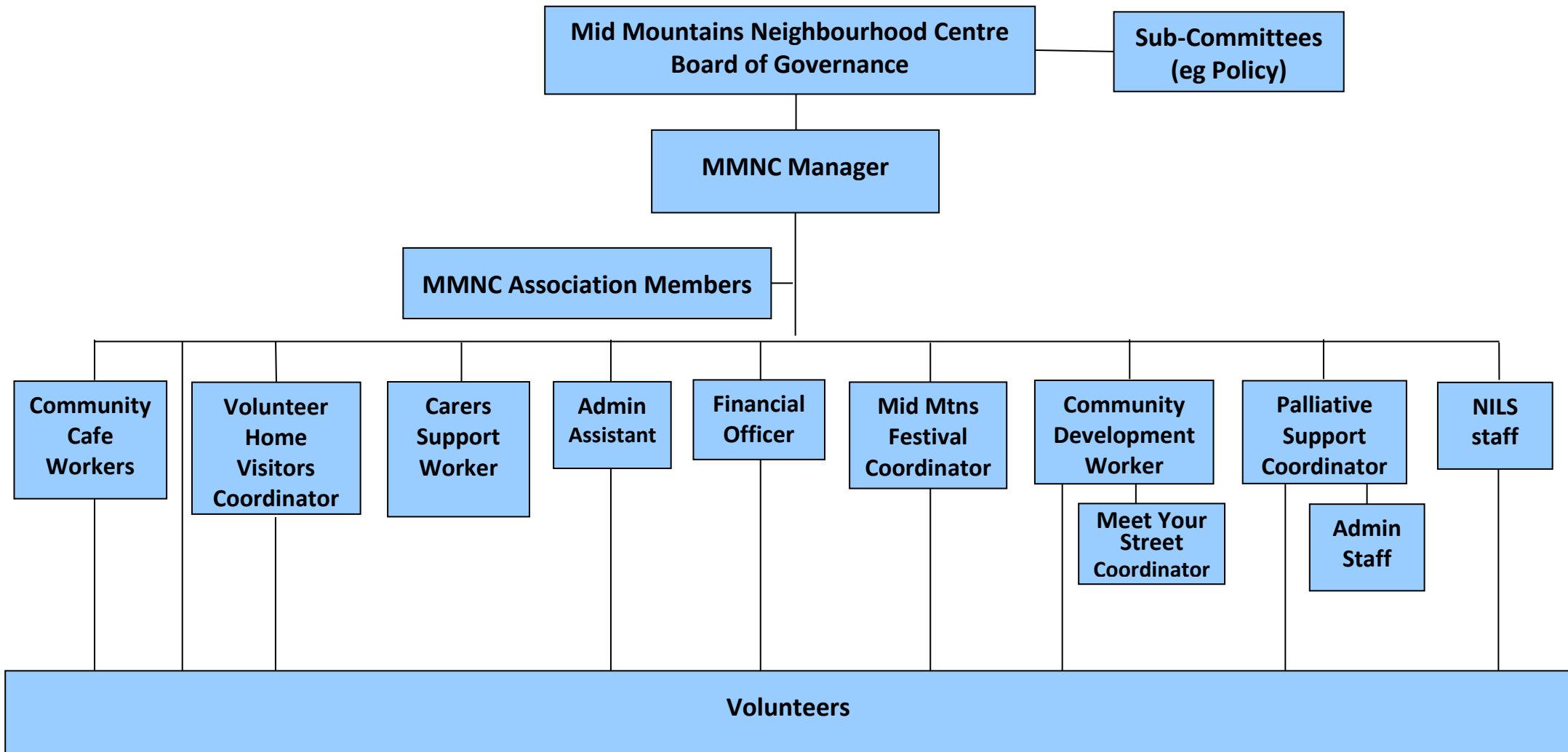
The Neighbourhood Centre Operational Management supports the community by providing managerial and administrative support to effect MMNC programs and activities. Managerial and administrative support will support relationships between the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, the mid mountains community and other key stakeholders.

Board of Governance:**Strategic Purpose:**

The MMNC Board of Governance has overall responsibility for the governance of the organisation. It operates from a foundation of community centred knowledge and engagement. The Board of Governance supports the Manager in the operation of the organisation by developing organisational Vision and Mission and Ends goals informed by the aspirations of the community and MMNC Association.



Organisational and Management Structure





Board of Governance 2015 – 2016

Executive Positions	Board Members
David Caton (Chairperson) Paul Garde (Vice Chair) Nadja Lawrence (Secretary) Jean Bundesen (Treasurer)	John Baker (Public Officer) Greg Birtles Martin Nichols (Quality Improvement & Policy Committee Chair) Franco Veronesi

Staff

Mick Barrett	Manager
Danielle Wilding-Forbes	Community Development Worker and Mid Mountains Festival Coordinator
Katrina Simmons	Coordinator - Blue Mtns Palliative Support Service
Stacey Fantom	Administrative Assistant – BMPSS
Robin Thomas	Coordinator - Lawson Volunteer Home Visitors Service (on secondment from KNC; til October 2015)
Eva Regitz	Coordinator - Volunteer Home Visitors Service (from October 2015) and Carers Support Worker (from January 2016)
Gillian Oxley	Carers Support Worker (til January 2016)
Helen Wilson	Financial Officer – MMNC, MM NILS & BMPSS
Leigh Gordon	No Interest Loan Scheme Admin Officer
Pauline Stafrace	Community Café Worker and No Interest Loans Interview Officer
Kerin Pollock	Meet Your Street Coordinator
Sarah Dean	MMNC Administrative Assistant

Reception & Administration Team Volunteers

Koula Van Megen, Stacey Fantom, Angella Dunstan, Nell Daniel, Carol Lubbers, Helen Routledge, Pat Caton, Barbara Sanson, Sophia Stephenson, Terry Greer, Daisy Medina, Faith Wallace, Grace Wallace, Pam Walters, Virginia Field, Cris West, Selena Perry, Helen Wilson, Janet Noble.

Minutes of Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc Annual General Meeting

Held at the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, **Wednesday 28th October 2015**

Present: Robin Thomas, Eva Regitz, Mary Bull, Doug Baker, Bev Baker, Martin Nichols, Alex Mitcheson, David Caton, Jean Bundesen, David Olsson, Wendy Bugeja, Marilyn Urquhart, Max Urquhart, John Baker, Jane Marshall, Margaret Gittins, Helen Wilson, Leigh Gordon, Pauline Stafrace, Stacey Fantom, Angel Fantom, Meg Benson, Colleen Roche, Nance Cooper, Kerin Pollock, Carol Lubbers, Franco Veronesi, Paul Garde, Barbara Charman, Bronda Taffel, Katrina Simmons, Tina Hallman, Jo Ridley, Greg Birtles, Helen Coltman, Rosalind Baker, Raoul O'Brien, Grace Wallace, Stephen Davis, John Telford, Patricia Caton, Kath Harrison, Danielle Wilding-Forbes, Aurelia Fittler, Henk Luf, Margaret Gittins, Nance Cooper, Colleen Rhodes, Jane Marshall, Alex Mitcheson, Karen Cussen, Sarah Dean, Keith Dowling (Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, Returning Officer), Mick Barrett (Manager, MMNC)

Apologies: Di Gates (Hazelbrook Girl Guides), Trish Doyle MP, Suzan Mehmet, Wendy Starkey, Peta Williams (LMNC), Colin Oriti, Eve Rashleigh, Nadja Lawrence, Robert Lawrence, Deb Dare (FACS), Terry Greer, Helen Routledge, Olivia Cumberbatch, Gillian Oxley, Erzi Gimes, Karen Dean, Cherie Veres, Romola Hollywood (BMCC), Maurice Brady (BMCC)

The Chairperson, David Caton, **opened the meeting** at 4:05, acknowledged the traditional indigenous owners of the land, welcomed all those present and called for any apologies.

David indicated to the meeting that anyone wishing to be **nominated for the Board of Governance** should collect the forms from Martin Nichols (acting Secretary), with nominations to close in five minutes from that point.

The Chairperson (David Caton) drew the meeting's attention to pages 6 and 7 of the Annual Report and called on those present at last year's AGM to move **acceptance of the Minutes** of that meeting.

Moved: Greg Birtles, Seconded: Bev Baker, Motion carried.

The **Chairperson** (David Caton) **presented his report**, which can be found on pages 8 and 9 of the Annual Report. In particular David thanked Mick Barrett for his leadership during the year, thanked the Centre staff, volunteers and Board members for their contributions. He also pointed out the regional approach to community needs being undertaken through BLINN (the Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network).

The Chairperson called on Mick Barrett to present the MMNC **Manager's Report** (pages 10 to 20 of the Annual Report), including reporting on the NILS program (pages 46, 47), Strengthening Exercise Classes Report (p48), Carers Groups (page36) and Cyber Seniors (p38). Mick thanked all staff, the Board, volunteers and all involved. He also emphasized the role that BLINN had to play in co-ordinating community services.

David Olsson reported on progress with the **Mid Mountains Community Gardens** (p49 of the Annual Report).

The Chairperson called on Danielle Wilding-Forbes to present the **Community Development Worker's Report** (pps 21-31 of the Annual Report). Danielle summarised the work detailed in the Annual Report and thanked all staff and volunteers involved.

David called upon Robin Thomas to present the **Volunteer Home Visitor's Report** (pps 32-37 of the Annual Report). Robin commended the report to those present but also introduced a volunteer carer Alex Mitcheson to those present. Alex, in turn, introduced a client Karen Cussen to the group. Both spoke of the importance of the program in assisting Karen to recover from past trauma.

The Chairperson called on Katrina Simmons to present the report of the **Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service** (pps 39-45 of the Annual Report). Katrina briefly summarized the work of the service but introduced two volunteers Barbara Charman and Bronda Taffel to the meeting. Both spoke to some detail of their work and their motivations for undertaking that work.

David called upon the Manager, Mick Barrett to present the **Financial Statements** (pps 50 - 66) in the Annual Report to the meeting. Mick nominated William Tomiczek and Associates as the Auditor for 2015/16 and John Baker as the signatory for the Fair Trading Form 12. This was agreed by the meeting.

A motion was put by Henk Luf, seconded by Jean Bundesen. that the meeting "accept the annual reports, including acceptance of the Association's financial statements for the financial year 2014-2015 and the auditor's report for those statements". The motion was carried by the meeting.

The Chairperson vacated the Chair and invited Keith Dowling (Chair, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre) to act as Returning Officer for the election of the incoming Board of Governance.

The Returning Officer congratulated MMNC, then officially dissolved the current Board of Governance of the Neighbourhood Centre, and before calling for **nominations for the new Board of Governance**, noted that no further applications for membership had been received. The Returning Officer identified each of 8 Nominations for positions on the 12 person Board, as follows:

Paul Garde, Greg Birtles, Jean Bundesen, David Caton, John Baker, Martin Nichols, Nadja Lawrence, Franco Veronesi. All were asked if they agreed to stand. Nadja Lawrence had indicated agreement in an email to the Manager.

As there were no further nominations, the Returning Officer **declared the Board elected** as read and congratulated the new Board. The Returning Officer announced that the Executive Officer positions of the Board will be decided at the next Board meeting (25th November, 2015). Mary Bull acknowledged outgoing Board member Meg Benson who had been Chairperson for 2 years.

Keith declared the meeting closed at 5:40 p.m. and invited all present to join in for a light meal.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Nichols'.

Martin Nichols (for the Secretary)

Chairperson's Report



David Caton addressing the MMNC Christmas Lunch, 2015

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples; and pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present. MMNC is committed to reconciliation between all Australians. MMNC is committed to living & working together peacefully and respectfully inclusive of people of all ethnicities and faiths and none. We pledge not to position any community as 'the other'; we are one Australia which will not be divided. Our diversity makes us stronger and richer and we will stand together.

Welcome everyone to the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre (MMNC) Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2016.

Before going further, I would like us all to remember those members of our community that have passed on this year with a minute of silence for our personal reflections.

Thank you.

Your membership, attendance and support at various activities assists with making the MMNC and its various communities a great place, so I thank you all for your interest and participation this year. If you are not already a member of the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, you may wish to become an association member. It cost a mere \$2.

The various supportive and caring services and programs offered to the community have again this year been overseen by our Manager, Mick Barrett. On behalf of the Board I wish to commend his efforts, particularly when there continues to be much change and uncertainty occurring across the entire community sector, driven, in the main, by the ever decreasing availability of the dollar. There is not a single manager or worker who is free from the impact of these threats and unpredictable future and the extra stress load, particularly on all managers, should not be underestimated.

Mick is fully committed to social justice and to forming the necessary partnerships to ensure the disadvantaged and valued community members have continued access to social inclusion, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.

Mick has continued to look into various pathways of future sustainability, from fundraising, philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, and strategic partnerships.

The Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Centre Network (BLINN) consisting of eight organisations, of which MMNC is one, continues to look at ways to share our ideas and, in some cases, resources to secure future funding for the various programs. At this stage the Managers meet on a regular basis (where their expertise from senior management is combined to form a think-tank for the sustainability of all neighbourhood centres in view of funding changes), and also meeting with appropriate funding providers. The Chair and the Manager of each organisation form the BLINN Board quarterly, to ensure mutual understanding and the preservation of goodwill.

The Board also extends our thanks to each and every staff member and volunteer who work so hard with care and commitment to the Mid Mountains Community and beyond. There have been fewer staff changes this past year providing stability.

MMNC is governed by a voluntary board. It has been a privilege to again Chair this Board for the past year.

There have been some members from the Board who have moved on to other activities and we thank them for their generous involvement. In particular I would like to thank Nadja for her contribution as Secretary. There are now vacancies on the Board. There are twelve positions, but at present we only have eight filled. If you are interested in finding out what we do, please do not hesitate to ask.

Board members are passionate about their local community, and it is preferable that board members have past senior management or board experience, plus Community or Not-for-Profit experience is an advantage. There are a range of roles operating within the board to allow for various skills and interests. In some cases, you may think you cannot contribute across all of those skills, but many of you will have a particular skill that would be of some benefit to MMNC, and you would fit in perfectly as part of our Volunteer Team.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank last year's board members, with particular mention of the Quality Improvement & Policy subcommittee, including Mick, who have worked extraordinarily hard to update many policies for MMNC best practice and to meet the Home Care Standards and Australian Service Excellence Standards.

Thank you again for your interest in the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre.

David Caton
Chairperson



Receptionists Pat and Helen at MMNC

Manager's Report

There are changes afoot. The strategies and activities that have been successful in the past for MMNC to serve the whole of our community, are under review as funding reforms loom.

What has been our strength, in combining funding sources to complement each other to maximise services that are local and accessible to all, becomes a potential sustainability weakness. Smaller organisations like us are vulnerable in the new funding scenarios, as the sources we depend on (NSW Family & Community Services [FACS] for our core funding, NSW Health for Palliative Support Service, and federal Department of Social Services for our aged care services) are all undergoing upheavals.

The programs that we offer and support are dependent on the combination of funding for these 3 main projects that provide our infrastructure. It is so important for our community that such locally managed community organisations exist, so that everyone can be part of a healthy whole.

At the same time there are opportunities to look at ways that we can be more effective. For years our community development activities have been planned with outcomes that we want to achieve, but we have been limited in measuring how effective they have been. For example, how has an MMNC activity helped someone feel more supported, connected, able to enjoy life? MMNC are increasingly involved in developments to collaborate across whole areas, and make greater collective impact, and measure the benefits.

As part of Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network (BLINN), a consortium of all the Neighbourhood Centres of the Blue Mountains & Lithgow LGAs and Mountains Outreach Community Service, we offer the benefits of locally accessible services from a strengths base that one small Neighbourhood Centre can no longer provide in the foreseeable future (see BLINN table on the page following this report).

MMNC is leading the way in the Harwood model which is being recognised as a very useful tool (via Community Conversations and 'ASK exercises') to focus on people's aspirations, that is, what is important to them. These conversations are developing narratives based on common values and so they resonate with the people throughout our community, and we better engage on identified priorities, and collaborate to change things together for the better.

In terms of the FACS Targeted Earlier Intervention reform which focuses on families with children 0-18, we are challenged to not only provide preventative programs targeted at the entire population, but also to be a conduit to help families via strategic collaborations, according to outcomes we are working on together.

For our aged care services, the federal MyAgedCare and imminent move to individual client directed care packages instead of block funding for organisations providing services, are making it hard for frail aged people who have trouble negotiating with the system, while their traditional services face defunding. MMNC has traditionally focussed on social support for seniors; we need to adapt to offer a suite of services, for us to continue being useful to seniors.

Many people with a disability are finding things much more difficult under the NDIS despite the increased overall funding, and MMNC is increasingly being requested to support and advocate for them.

We have different challenges for our Palliative Support service, with the NSW Health NGO funding review possibly leading to funding by competitive tendering, where all the value added aspects of this service may not be acknowledged, so we need to adapt to be sustainable without compromising what is important in supporting people across the Blue Mountains and Lithgow with life limiting illnesses.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the valuable contributions of those involved in all that you can see throughout this Annual Report.

Our Board ensures that we achieve our organisation's vision and that our governance is effective, so that our activities are effective. Thank you to Chairperson David Caton and all members of the Board for your support and work.

While our staff team has faced some big challenges this year, we are not only overcoming them, but we have increased productivity, and we create a most harmonious community hub.



Combined with our volunteer Reception team, we offer a Centre that is friendly and welcoming, and able to help each person with opportunities to connect with each other, participate in activities that interest them, and access services that enhance their quality of life. All of you contribute in your special way.

All of our projects and activities are made possible by people who voluntarily contribute their time and energies; throughout each year over 140 people have partnered with MMNC as a volunteer, and each person in these roles is coordinating or performing activities that

provide for many more people to participate in. Together we facilitate ways that we can give, receive, share and participate with each other. When people have an opportunity to get together, amazing things happen.

Some key partners in shared projects:

- We thank our local, state and federal government representatives for their support for our services. We acknowledge funding assistance from NSW Family & Community Services, NSW Health, and NSW Fair Trading; and federal Department of Social Services / Health; and Blue Mountains City Council, as well as generous sponsors for individual program activities.
- The Hazelbrook Association operates the Mid Mountains Graffiti Removal project, and the Hazelbrook town centre gardening project, with support from MMNC.
- There is a vibrant Festival Committee that creates the fantastic local community based Mid Mountains Festival each November, supported by the army of people who voluntarily organise and run it each year.
- The Mid Mountains Community Garden operates with volunteer participants (particular thanks to its Safety Officer Janet Rannard, and David Olsson), and is situated at Kihilla thanks to hosts the Church Army.
- TAFE Outreach has run several courses via MMNC this year.

The Australian Tax Office coordinates a volunteer Tax Help service each July - October, helping people complete their tax returns. Thanks to Karl Barhoum for being our volunteer in 2015.

- Broadband For Seniors is a project that makes internet use accessible to seniors who otherwise would not know how to use it. The computers have been provided by the Australian Government. Thanks to the volunteer tutors; please see the Cyber Seniors report.
- The community groups that use the Joy Anderson Hall (weekdays 9am – 3pm), Alma King Meeting Room, Small Meeting Room and Interview Room, serve to create wonderful opportunities for locals to participate in, and each day we are treated to seeing the rooms and courtyard fill with activity.
- Mid Mountains Community Centre 377 Committee, with stakeholders from MMNC, BM Food Services and Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS), work with Blue Mountains City Council in management of the Community Centre. This Centre is a terrific venue for many groups to use. We liaise with Council to maximise facilities and opportunities for the community to use this resource. Thanks in particular to Karen Ives from Council who works with us on bookings.
- The annual Caring and Sharing Elders Lunch which brings indigenous and non-indigenous people together in the spirit of Reconciliation is organised in partnership with BM Food Services, Mountains Outreach Community Service, and Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre.
- Thanks to Storage King for their generous sponsorship in providing much needed storage space for our archives.

We are lucky in the Mid Mountains to have many people with ideas and energy for things to happen, and all they need is some support from MMNC to make it happen. Please see the following report (under “Auspiced projects”) for the list of projects that MMNC auspiced this year, as well as all the project reports for details of other such projects that thrive on partnerships and community participation.

I am especially appreciative of the Managers from BLINN, as well as Kris Newton from Mountains Community Resource Network, for mutual support, collaboration and information sharing. We have much to learn from each other and work on together throughout the region.

It is more important than ever that MMNC has a strong and active membership. The members of our Association are the representatives of our community. The interests of our membership tell us what is possible for our community, what is important, what we can build with. We thank all our members for all the ways you contribute.

As we rise to meet the challenges in the coming year with the wonderful people who share common aspirations, I thank you.

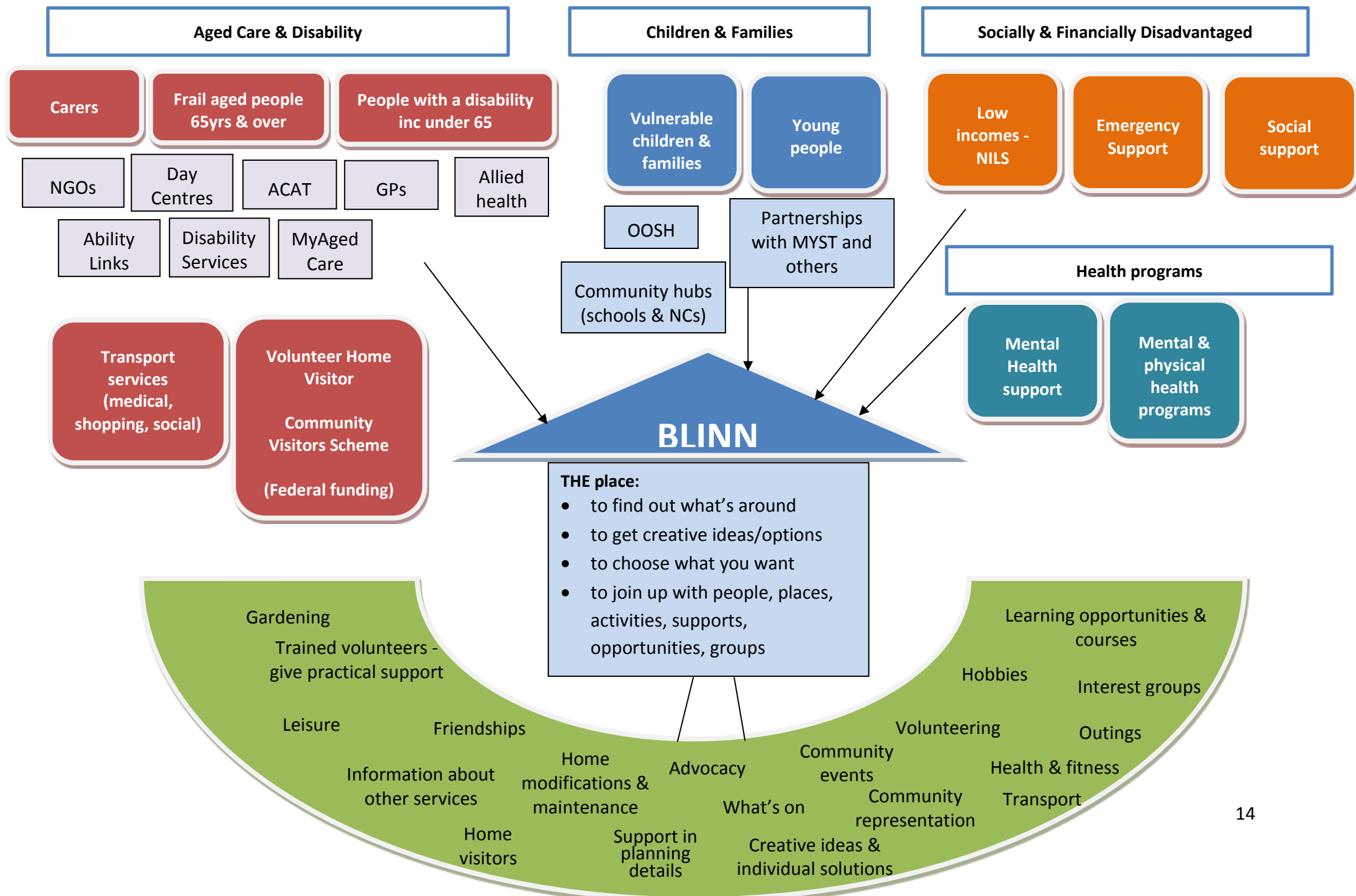
I commend you to the reports that follow.

Mick Barrett

MMNC Manager



Staff and Reception team meeting



Report on Progress (June 2016) of MMNC Management & Operations - as per MMNC Strategic Plan 2015-2018

<p>Governance Support</p> <p><i>Support is provided to ensure MMNC's Governance reflects best practice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 new MMNC Association applications have been approved this financial year. 102 Association members as of June 2016 (compared to 93 members as of June 2015); • Form 12 was sent to Fair Trading, and ACNC register was updated. • All governance policies have been reviewed to meet Home Care Standards. • Quality Improvement processes have been integrated via: monthly Board meeting review of matters from quarterly Quality Improvement & Policy Committee; quarterly service coordinator reports, monthly staff meetings; and monthly Manager Compliance reports. • MMNC Strategic Plan 2015-18 developed in consultations with Board and staff.
<p>MMNC Visibility and Profile</p> <p><i>MMNC's visibility in the Mid Mountains community is increased (also see CDW Report)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Association events held (54 attended AGM on 28/10/15, 70 attended the MMNC Christmas Lunch 9/12/15) • The annual Community in a Teacup (celebrating Neighbourhood Centre Week, Volunteer Week and Biggest Morning Tea) was successful with 36 participants. • MMNC stalls held: At Mid Mountains Festival 14/11/15; and Hazelbrook shops 27/8/15. Board members also represented at MMNC events eg Seniors Expo, Hazelbrook community BBQ. • Joy Anderson hall is booked at 85% capacity 9-3 Mon-Fridays; Small meeting room is used at half capacity 9-3 Mon-Fridays and utilised by MMNC and local groups. Average bookings per month: 112. • Continued promotion of the activities of groups hiring halls and rooms at Mid Mountains Community Centre via 'Whats On' in Mid Mountains News, and social media. • MMNC website and Facebook "page views" average 3830 per month. • 5500 printed copies x 4/year MMNC News distributed: via insert in the Gazette as well as via local outlets. The October edition included Mid Mountains Festival flyer insert x 5500. • The monthly enewsletter is being emailed to 243 addresses (MMNC members and other interested parties). Total MailChimp x 15 reached 3630 deliveries. • Fridge magnets distributed: 455. • Emergency information kits distributed: 300. • White Ribbon Day Ribbons distributed: 320. • Mid Mountains Residents Kit 2014 & 2015 editions: 622 distributed. • People connected with information average: in person at Reception 218 per month; by phone 323 per month. • People using resources eg photocopier, computer, cuppa (other than as part of a program): average 122 per month.

Human Resources	<i>MMNC's staff and volunteers are supported in their roles and are better able to meet organisational needs: On track:</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual supervision meetings with staff. Staff team meetings monthly. • Reception volunteer team: Roster is full. Reception team meetings quarterly. • MMNC Administration Assistant position is now permanent (6 hours/week), supporting MMNC frontline services as well as providing administrative assistance to the Manager and other staff. This position is addressing the long term gap in admin support for Manager & staff.
Auspiced projects <i>Auspiced projects (funded and unfunded) are effectively managed and supported</i>	<p>All auspiced projects have governance practices that meet MMNC's accountability expectations, risk management and insurance requirements as outlined in MMNC's Auspice policy</p> <p>Projects auspiced this year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BM Palliative Support; (see separate report) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPIs were negotiated with NSW Health for 2015-2016 funding, and for 2016-2017 funding. Accountability on track. ▪ We are in the process of collecting evidence for ASES Standards accreditation. • Home and Community Care (Volunteer Home Visitors / Carer Support Group, and Community Café (see separate reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VHV: The Blue Mountains VHV services are using standard practices and forms eg Careplans, service priority protocols. Meetings between BM Managers & Coordinators are regularly held to address best practice according to the Home Care Standards. Quality review of this service according to Home Care Standards was attained this year. ▪ VHV Managers & Coordinators meetings are also addressing priorities for remodelling the service in response to changing referral and funding scenarios. ▪ Carers peer support group: This group is now facilitated by Eva (VHV Coordinator) ▪ CHSP funding (BM Community Support via KNC): The weekly "Community Café" Thursday Morning Tea social support group is attracting an average of over 12 weekly attendances. Social transport and domestic assistance to current clients are also available, and referrals to make use of this in the Mid Mountains need to be developed in our area. • Community Development project (see separate reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MMNC participates in the development of the Stronger Families Alliance plan which is developing an Outcomes based framework for collaborations between partners focussed on families with children 0-18. • Strengthening Exercise Classes expanded to six weekly classes (see separate report). • No Interest Loans Scheme (see separate report) • Mid Mountains Community Gardens (see separate report) • Broadband for Seniors: (See Cyber Seniors report)

<p>Auspiced projects (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anzac Day annual event in Honour Ave Lawson April 2016 organised by Lawson Combined Services Social Club - approx. 1000 attended with support from MMNC (insurance coverage) • Hazelbrook Association projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An ANZAC Day event in Woodford was covered by MMNC insurance, with popular attendance. ▪ Tidy Towns gardening: monthly working parties have cleaned up and weeded the Hazelbrook shops area. ▪ Graffiti removal project throughout the Mid Mountains area: 3 Persons Responsible have been orientated to supervise so that separate teams can operate according to a revised risk management plan. Weekly clean up runs with average 3 volunteers per run. During 2015/16 672 Individual tags covering 589.1 sq. metres were removed in the area by six resident volunteers, working every week with support from the Blue Mountains Council, the State Government and our own local Police Force. • Mahjong, Scrabble, BM Refugee Support Group, BM Renewable Energy Group were supported with meeting space, and promotion. • Joy Anderson Bequest: annual \$150 community development grant was used for a youth zone at MM Festival. • “REACH” program – coordinated by volunteer Virginia Field - for people with depression was offered this year but postponed to late 2016. • See also “Sustainability - Partnerships “
<p>Sustainability</p> <p><i>MMNC strengthens its sustainability in the longer term</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FACS Community Builders funding (core MMNC infrastructure): The uncertainty of funding sources past 2017 places the organisation and its projects at risk. In response to FACS “Targeted Earlier Intervention” reform focus for funding streams to prioritise children & families: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The BLINN Board has been exploring options including workshop “From MOUs to Mergers” with Justice Connect. ○ BLINN are considering statewide (as collated by LCSA) and regional (as being developed by SFA) outcomes and indicators to use as templates in anticipation of the funding reforms shift to population outcomes to measure effectiveness of services in preventing and responding to vulnerability for children and families. ○ BLINN Managers have been modelling collaborations, with focus on both Harwood model, and Resilience & Preparedness model, with agreed delegations for Community Development workers to partner in. ○ MMNC have reviewed its Vision & Mission, so that we can make informed decisions and strategies in light of the changing funding scenarios. • Harwood: (see also CDW report) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As well as facilitating ‘Community Conversations’ and “ASK Exercises” in each Mid Mountains town and assisting throughout the Mountains in collaboration with other organisations, MMNC has been facilitating workshops and Innovation Spaces with BLINN and Stronger Families Alliance organisations to develop best practice around the model.

Sustainability (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding accountability requirements continue to be met for all funded projects • Premises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking for staff is still an issue, with increased popularity at the new Lawson shops impacting on parking spaces. Council has been lobbied to proceed with the gazetted MMCC Staff Carpark behind the MMNC, which was included in the 2014-15 Capital Works program, but bumped off. There has been no progress with this in the past year. ▪ Interim arrangement for use of Small Meeting Room is in place. ▪ Ongoing liaison with Council for Mid Mtns Community Centre (WHS, repairs, maintenance, best use of space/rooms, feedback from user groups, bookings issues and suggestions for improving usage). Convening MMCC 377 Committee. • Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing partnership with Mountains Youth Services Team, Lawson & Hazelbrook Primary Schools, Hazelbrook Association, and “Standout” the Baptist local youth group, to increase youth activities and develop conversations around youth issues. (see CDW report) • Ongoing partnership with BM TAFE to host 2 x 8 week “Microbusiness” courses in 2016: 11 and 6 students completed the courses. There were 2 courses cancelled in 2015 due to lack of registrations during the time that TAFE had high fees for the courses.. • Ongoing partnership with MOCS, ACRC and BM Food Services to host annual Elders Lunch reconciliation event for indigenous and non-indigenous elders; 2015 event went well, with 140 attending. Debrief meeting has set plans for 2016. (see CDW report). • MMNC was lead agency on behalf of BLINN with a grant from 2016 NSW Seniors Week Grants Program, to hold a Seniors Mini Expo – see CDW report. • Partnership with Blackheath Area NC for MMNC to use a \$5k grant to provide creative arts activities for children with disabilities (see CDW report) • Tax Help: provided via volunteer Karl Barhoum fortnightly August – October, in partnership with Australian Tax Office • St Vincent de Paul weekly Emergency Relief hosted at MMNC. • Food Rescue provides food for distribution twice a week via MMNC.
Work Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All workers (paid and unpaid), clients, Board members and visitors experience a safe and healthy environment at MMNC: On track.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The updated WHS Manual was ratified November 2015. ○ Safety audits were conducted in MMNC, MMCC, and Bullaburra hall. ○ Emergency evacuation plans are displayed in each MMCC room. ○ Staff & volunteers training included: ‘Dealing with Challenging Behaviours’; emergency evacuation & defibrillator procedures.

Community Development Worker's Report

Overview

Community Development Activities and Programs

Throughout the last year MMNC have continued to work across the Mid Mountains and turn outward to hear what people want for their community. Contributing to resilience and preparedness, community connectedness, the wellbeing of families and children and social support for seniors has created a year full of great outcomes for our community.

Children Youth and Families

Children, youth and families continue to be a priority area of our CDW work plan. We have made connections with a number of community groups like Stand Out Youth Group and Blacktown Youth College (Blue Mountains Campus). Both of these groups contributed to the Mid Mountains Festival activities and are keen to work together more in the future.

MMNC extended our Harwood work to young people through community ASK exercise in schools. Both Lawson and Hazelbrook Public schools year 5 & 6 students participated. We also facilitated a Harwood training and innovation space in December for the Stronger Family Alliance as part of our combined efforts to use this model to consult youth and young people.

Holiday Workshops

Drama

Target Participants 8-14yr olds

In September 2015 school holidays 12 young people between the ages of 8 and 14 attended a drama workshop held at MMNC. This was facilitated by our Community Development Worker and a lot of fun was had by all. It also afforded the opportunity to talk to young people about what they would like to see in their community. When asked what they would like to do in their spare time/ holidays there was a resounding agreement in the older 40% of the class that they would like a place to hang out and socialise. The younger 8-12yr olds were keen on craft and performing arts activities.



Paint a Chair with Flair

Target Participants - Young People and Families

This was a fabulous event held in partnership with Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS) instead of a community fun day. Young people and families were invited to attend a craft workshop to decorate an old chair and transform it into artworks that will ultimately go on display at the Mid Mountains Festival. We had a healthy cross section of the community in attendance with a lot of new faces. There was lots of conversation and laughter shared.

Christmas Craft Workshop

32 young people and 16 adults attended the Christmas craft workshop in December. We invited the community to come make cards and chat which resulted in a lovely event. It was a vibrant and celebratory day. Definitely an event to repeat in 2016.



Local Carols Donation for Work with Youth

Three local faith communities ran a combined Churches Christmas Carols event on the 12th of December at Kihilla in Lawson. The organisers of the event decided to collect donations for a local cause and identified MMNC and our work with youth as their chosen recipient this year. I attended the event and spoke about the work that MMNC endeavour to do with young people in our community. It was lovely to be invited in and have such generosity extended to our local youth.

Simultaneous story time at Heatherbrae

May 25th 2016 15 attendees in total

As part of simultaneous story time in 2016 we partnered with MOCS and facilitated story time at Heatherbrae. It was a small crowd but very well received.

Community Hub and Fun Days

MMNC partner twice a year with MOCS to deliver community fun days in Woodford & Bullaburra. These events are well attended and provide a great opportunity to connect with local families.

Community Readers

2016 community reader training and induction was conducted on Tuesday the 3rd of March 10am at Hazelbrook Public School. There were 5 returning volunteers and 4 new; it was particularly good to attract a male volunteer this year. This program is an integral part of the reading recovery program at Hazelbrook Primary school. It would be good to be able to extend this program to other local schools in future.

Nova Employment

On the 23rd of March we had 9 NOVA employment workers on work experience for half a day. They were accompanied by their support worker and contributed the senior's Expo preparation by filling goodie bags, laminating signage and collating the documents for check

in. They were a lovely group of varying capacity. We had sufficient notice to commit to this activity and will look to invite them in more.

Student Placements

February- June 2015 Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Supervised by: MMNC CDW

We had two students from Wentworth falls TAFE on placement in 2015. Robyn Elliot and Ranya Sharara. Both students made great contributions to the CDW work of MMNC.

Jennifer Anderson began her placement in February 2016 and has fitted in beautifully. She was an invaluable support at the senior's expo and is putting in a lot of work towards this year's Mid Mountains Festival.

Mid Mountains Walkers

Occurs weekly on a Monday and Friday, Attendance varies (22 participants registered)

Mid Mountains Walkers in partnership with the Heart Foundation continues to run well. It is led by a community volunteer Nigel Armstrong and is largely self-sustaining. This group vary their activities by sometimes walking in Wentworth Falls and have plenty of social activities throughout the year. Last year's Christmas dinner in Springwood was a definite highlight. We got to farewell a long time walker and welcome some of the newer faces.

Carers Pamper Day

On the 16th of October a carers Pamper day was held at Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre and Heatherbrae. Run by the Women's Health Centre in partnership with MMNC and Uniting Care. There were approximately 42 carers in attendance and the program was made up of talks, art therapy,

Massage, Reiki and Reflexology sessions. There was a nominal cost of \$10 to cover catering. Participants were able to choose which information sessions they attended to work around the complimentary therapies on offer. The event was very well received.



Mid Mountains Festival 2016



The 2015 Mid Mountains Festival was well attended and received a lot of positive feedback in spite of the rain. We had more volunteer help this year which meant the day ran a lot better with fabulous representation from across the community.

Mountains Outreach Community Services ran the Children's activities in the morning in the Joy Anderson room and the local Baptist church ran a youth Zone in the afternoon. Blue Mountains Youth College had a stall in the morning and also participated in the paint a chair activity. Steiner school band, Korowal School band and local drummers Samba Trombada were fabulous and represented local youth in a creative and energetic way.



MMNC Community café crew did a fabulous job creating a pop up café in the dining room serving scones, cakes and noodle salad proved to be popular options. The Beard and Mo Competition returned for another year and had more participants than ever. Over all the colour and level of activities was inviting and manageable.

Community organisations and groups represented:

- Steiner School
- Korowal School
- Mid Mountains Fencing group



- Dragon Fly Dance Co
- Tanya's Dance school
- Blacktown Youth College (Blue Mountains Campus)
- Lawson Preschool
- Southall Playgroup
- Stand Out Youth Group
- Crowd Around Choir
- Springwood Neighbourhood Centre
- Blue Mountains City Council Weeds display
- Fair trade Down under
- Wesley Dalmar Out of Home Care
- RSPCA (cancelled due to rain)
- Local Aikido group
- Mountains Outreach Community Service
- Wolves Martial Arts
- Blue Mountains Beard & Mo Comp



Seniors Activities

Pre Seniors Week Morning Tea

Attendance: 36



On the 17th March the community Café was a pre senior's week celebration. It gave us a chance to access funds to cater for an increased attendance and have entertainment. We also used this opportunity to publicise the Seniors Expo.

Mini Seniors Expo 2016 – Ageing with Altitude

Lead agency: Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Partners: BLINN -Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre, Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, Mountains Outreach Community Service, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood centre, Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, Lithgow



Neighbourhood Centre & Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre.

Date: 2nd April 10:30-2:30 Attendees: 116

Location: Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Budget and funding source: \$3900 Seniors NSW FACS

\$ 6000 in kind contribution

BLINN

Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network ran Ageing with Altitude, a Mini Seniors Expo at Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre on Saturday the 2nd April 10:30-2:30. It was an opportunity for seniors, their families and carers to come together and hear about services and how to access them. With specific attention paid to My Aged Care access, Neighbourhood Centres, physical activities available in their local area, opportunities to upskill on technology and hints on positive ageing. All this was also presented in a method that was informative, entertaining, social and free to attend.



Trish Doyle the state Member of Parliament for the Blue Mountains opened proceedings to a packed hall and introduced our guest speaker Graham Long from the Wayside Chapel; he inspired everyone with his poignant and entertaining observations of humanity, aging and life. The program included a short introduction from services on display, a local senior's choir, and a yoga group. Then guests were invited to engage with the exhibitors, attend more in depth talks and have some lunch. A wide array of senior's services and volunteer organisations were on display to provide information throughout the event.



This was a fabulous event which confidently achieved all outcomes outlined in our grant submission and more. Workers from BLINN were present on the day to ensure that guests were greeted and assisted where necessary. This ensured that there was a healthy representation of services from across the Blue Mountains. The information was clear and relative with professional expertise on hand to answer enquiries in a meaningful and productive way.



96% of attendees said that they found information that was useful to them.

Biggest morning tea

We held a biggest morning tea event Thursday 26th May. Some of our regular community café attendees extended an invitation to friends or groups which contributed to 36 people in attendance. Unfortunately Mary Bull was unavailable to run the trivia this year. So I ran the trivia, participants were very patient and embraced the new format and silliness by the end of the event. We shared lots of laughs and raised \$107 for Blue Mountains Cancer Help and \$48.15 for the cancer council of NSW.

Elders Lunch

Each year MMNC partners with Mountains Outreach Community Service, Blue Mountains Food Services and the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Cultural and Resource centre to host a local Elders Lunch. This is a whole community event to honour and celebrate culture. Students from Katoomba high school attend as helpers and Lawson primary school choir raised their voices to sing "One People One Land". This year's Elders Lunch on the 21st of October 2015 was the first I have had the pleasure of working on. This event runs with a tried and tested formula, honed over the last 19 years. We had well over 100 guests this year and everyone had a lovely time.



Building resilience & Preparedness in our Community

Resilience & Preparedness Group

MMNC continue to be a member of the Blue Mountains R & P Group which is a cross sector steering group that oversees resilience and preparedness activities in the Blue Mountains.

The R & P Group formed following the October 2013 bushfires in the Blue Mountains. To support the Blue Mountains to build a more resilient and prepared community, a collaborative, cross sector effort was needed as no one sector alone can manage long term recovery and build preparedness for emergency events. There are 2 unique features to R & P the collective partnerships and broad cross-sector representation & the broad spectrum of resilience and preparedness work undertaken by group members that supports both the broader community and the community services sector.

Meet Your Street

(An MMNC Resilience & Preparedness project funded by Blue Mountains Flexible Community Grants)

The Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre received \$22,394 from the Blue Mountains Flexible Grants Program to complete the Meet Your Street (MYS) Project.

The Meet Your Street Project was conducted with the following objectives:

Project Objectives:

- Promote awareness of emergency preparedness within the community
- Increase level of community preparedness by supporting the community in preparation of fire plans and other preparedness measures.
- Providing an opportunity for people to meet their neighbours and build community connections with a particular focus on families.
- Support the development of a baseline understanding of community preparedness levels in line with other Blue Mountains based projects and using common evaluation tools.

Continuing Benefit to the Community:

Discussions with community members and RFS Brigade members during the project indicated that there was both a need for and an interest in The MMNC having an ongoing involvement in bushfire preparedness in the community. RFS Brigade members felt that the community connections held by the neighbourhood centre were a resource they did not possess. Community members felt the neighbourhood centre's ability to organise events and respond to identified need in their communities was unique. Both groups felt that bush fire preparedness needed to be an ongoing conversation not only in mid mountains communities but also across the broader Blue Mountains area.

With this in mind project staff began development of an ongoing project model based on successful strategies used in the Meet Your Street Project, community and RFS feedback and within the restrictions of existing budgets. While still in development an ongoing bushfire preparedness project would include an annual bushfire preparedness day. Community members would take a pledge, committing to taking one of a small number of preparedness actions. Pledges could be recorded online through the MMNC website. Once a community member has made a commitment they would be sent an acknowledgement of their pledge that could be displayed in their home or on their letterbox to further promote the day at a local level and to trigger conversations between neighbours.

(The MYS text above is an extract for the Meet Your Street final report written by Kerin Pollock the Project Coordinator full report available on MMNC website)

This project was acquitted in 2016 by Kerin Pollock the Coordinator who did a wonderful job of delivering this project together and her final report reflects its success.

Some of the highlighted outcomes:

- Engaging families and children in high numbers affirmed that using place based strategies in the community was affective to engage this demographic.
- The model has been recreated by Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS) and continues to achieve quality engagement.
- MOCS have applied for funding to do another project that uses the MYS model.
- MYS was part of an overarching report conducted by Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre and Charles Sturt University.

- Anecdotal high point:** I recently hung a banner at a location in Hazelbrook for the MYS due to happen that Friday. 6 kids ran over to ask if it was Meet Your Street Time again and told me how much they enjoyed these events, “can you guys do more?”

Turning outward to listen to our community

By using Harwood Community Conversations and the Harwood ASK exercise MMNC have been building its understanding of Public Knowledge.

Public Knowledge is important because it:

- [illegible]

We engage the community to build an understanding of:

- ## Community Consultation with Young People -The strength of partnerships

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afforded **BLINN and SFA** a fabulous opportunity to partner and talk with children and young people. Neighbourhood Centres as generalist services were able to reach out to their established networks. To start the ball rolling Mid Mountains Public Schools welcomed MMNC in to consult year five and six students.

Students were reminded that there are no right or wrong answers, every perspective and topic is valid. Using the ASK exercise opened a dialogue with young people and was a successful means of gathering Public Knowledge that is authentic and recorded in the participant's words.

The four questions in this exercise help gain a better understanding of community hopes and aspirations.

Using Harwood has informed how we

Engage the community – inviting new people opens the door to new relationships

Find new partners – sharing Public Knowledge creates coalition opportunities

Develop strategies – working on the issue AND building capacity to work together

Mobilise resources – creating natural pathways for people to contribute

What have we learned?

We have noticed that there are distinct themes connected to each suburb, region and Blue Mountains wide.

For example:

- **Woodford** residents are very concerned about preserving the infrastructure in their town that is linked to its history.
- **Mid Mountains** residents all raised safety and mobility around their neighbourhood as a concern for them. This theme is also very prominent when speaking to young people in Schools.
- **Blue Mountains** When we compare our activities with that of Katoomba & Springwood Neighbourhood Centre's we find common themes like connectedness, jobs, housing, public celebrations and opportunities to connect are reoccurring themes.
- **Young People in Hazelbrook**
Young people in this group are concerned about all areas of their community the words used most when asked what kind of a community you want. Were, friendly, kind, fun, and safe. Safety was referred to in over 57% of the written responses. Of these comments 46% related directly to footpaths.
- **Young people in Lawson**
By examining common themes across all areas and groups we can see what people have in common and focus efforts on areas that will have greater impact and positive outcomes.

Where this public knowledge has been used:

- **Pocket of change**

One conversation led to a pocket of change within a local community group.

The concerns revealed at a conversation were done so in a safe and supportive environment. Following the conversation the facilitator was able to work further with this community group. They are on the path to greater social cohesion which has enabled fabulous outcomes for the members, and the wider community.

- **Grant Applications**

We have confidently referenced Public Knowledge in two grant applications at the end of 2015. One was successful and funded a Mini Seniors Expo in April 2016.

We have also received funding from a partner to run more youth programs

- **Informing programs**

-Using Public knowledge to inform the content of the mini Seniors Expo led to a high level of engagement and a number of measurable outcomes.

-Consulting Young people in Mid Mountains Schools informed the structure of our of school holiday workshops. Mid Mountains Neighbourhood centre scheduled two “Movie Making for Tweens (8-14yr olds)” workshops and they were booked out within two weeks of being advertised.

- **Sharing Public Knowledge**

Pedestrian Access and Mobility Paper Feedback to BMCC

Public Knowledge from MMNC’s ASK in schools activity in 2015 has been presented to BMCC as part of the community response to PAMP. This knowledge has also been used in the local Gazette to illustrate community responses and concerns about safety in their local neighbourhoods.

The beauty of this work is that in the end we save time implementing our programs because they are responding to needs identified in the community by the community.

CFS/ Fibromyalgia Support Group

(Me= Myalgia Encephalomyelitis/CFS=Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibro= Fibromyalgia)

1st Thursday of the month, MMNC, Attendance: 8-12 per month with approximately 120 members on the mailing list and interacting on FB.

This is a thriving support group started and continued in conjunction with sufferers of the disorders and the MMNC/Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre. It has a healthy level of attendance and has attracted a lot of new members via face book this last year. A big thank you to Therese Corbett for all the energy she puts into running this group.

Parents and Families Finding Support (PAFFS) Grief Support Group

4th Saturday of the Month, MMNC, Attendance: 6-10 people per month

PAFFS is a grief support group for parents, grandparents, siblings and any family members living with the loss of a child at any age and from any cause. This was initiated and led with great humanity and care by Becky Avenel. It meets monthly on 4th Saturday and is regularly attended by 6-10 people from all over the mountains, Western Sydney and even from Orange. A big thank you to Becky for all the energy she puts into running this group.

Community Outcomes:

Harwood Community Consultation

- New relationships are created
- By sharing Public Knowledge we create new partnership opportunities
- We work on issues and build capacity to work together
- By making the community part of the solution we create natural pathways for people to contribute
- We have authenticity and can consider public knowledge in all our planning processes.

Support groups

- Community Members feel supported and safe when they come together to share common experience.
- Social connections were created

Resilience & preparedness projects

- The community were informed about Emergency response procedures. Contributing to greater resilience and preparedness in our community.
- Attendees at MYS event made a commitment to take action on creating an emergency management plan in their household.

Community fun days and craft workshops

- Parents and carers had an opportunity to play and have fun with their children.
- Parents and carers took part in stories and rhymes with children.

Seniors events

- Seniors felt valued and celebrated.
- Social connections were made, attendees met new people.
- Seniors had an opportunity to connect with MMNC workers and learn about other programs they may wish to be involved with.
- Seniors discovered services that were useful to them and were better supported.
- Carers connected with services that could help their loved ones and in turn they felt better supported.

Mid Mountains Festival

- People connected with MMNC and learnt about the services we offer.
- Attendees felt like part of their local community.

Community Readers

- Community volunteers assisted in delivering the reading recovery program to HPS.
- Social connections were made between volunteers; they met new people.
- Literacy levels improved in the children who participated.

Mid Mountains Walkers

- Community volunteers assist in making this program sustainable.
- Social connections were made each week.
- Participant's fitness levels were improved.

Youth and Tween Activities

- Young people connected with MMNC and learnt about the services we offer.
- Young people felt like part of their local community.
- Social connections were made, attendees met new people.

Student placements

- Community volunteers assist in making this program sustainable.
- Social connections were made each week.
- Participant's fitness levels improved.

Danielle Wilding-Forbes

Community Development Worker



Singing at the Mid Mountains Festival

Volunteer Home Visitors Report



2015-16 was another year of many changes and challenges for our small Volunteer Home Visitors service. We saw the introduction of a new centralised referral system (MAC) and new reporting system (DEX), and the introduction of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) which replaced the former HACC program. The service also passed the Aged Care Quality Review and Third Party Verification, and was able to demonstrate that it meets the new Home Care Standards and is on track with the implementation of consumer directed care.

Despite increasing demands on a small service, the Volunteer Home Visitors (VHV) service continues to provide high quality care to its clients and is valued by both the people it supports and the volunteers providing care.

Client numbers in 2015-16 remained stable. At the end of June 2016, the service was supporting 36 clients, including 10 carers. Services included:

- Friendly home visits
- Assisted shopping
- Library service and shared reading
- Community connection (volunteer accompanies the person to an interest/social group or activity of their choice)
- Local outings
- Carer Peer Support Group
- Information, Support and Referral

Program funding and VHV service collaboration

In 2015-16 the service was funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) administered by the Department of Health.

The Managers and Co-ordinators of the four VHV services continued their collaboration to strengthen the service under the banner of Blue Mountains Volunteer Home Visitors service. This year saw the introduction of a central intake service for all My Aged Care referrals for social support to the four VHV services, administered by Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre.

Social support groups, social transport and domestic assistance continued to be funded, and are a welcome extension of services to VHV clients across the Blue Mountains.

Providing social support

Home Visits

Home visits are the cornerstone of social support provision. Most of our clients are linked with a suitable volunteer who visits once a week or fortnight for company and a chat, and to share an interest or hobby. Local shopping or going for a walk together may also be part of

the routine of visiting, or the volunteer and the person supported read and discuss a book of interest, research the client's family ancestry, or share knowledge and skills, eg in gardening, art and craft etc.

Community Connection

Community and interest groups were popular with clients. Clients were able to participate in a number of social support and interest groups by providing a volunteer who accompanies and connects the person with a group of their choice. Especially popular were outings to the Community Café and the Pie Shop Men's social group.

Pie Shop Men's Social Group

This group for men meets monthly at Mountain High Pies to exchange news over a cuppa and pie. The group has been going for a number of years and meets the expressed needs of local residents who were looking for a social setting appropriate for men.

'Coffee & Culture' Outings

In 2015-16 the service introduced monthly outings to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, following the request of a number of clients to be given the opportunity to meet with others in a similar situation, in a community social setting. Individual clients had expressed their wish to spend time at the library or visit the art gallery. Another client who had been a keen bushwalker in the past, said that he missed the bush. The Cultural Centre in Katoomba proved to be the perfect place to come to, as it allows people to engage with others and with their individual interests in a number of ways. After catching up over a cuppa, people either visit the art exhibition, read the paper at the library, browse the gift shop, catch the view from the viewing platform, or simply take in the atmosphere of the centre. And for those who physically are no longer able to walk in the bush, the audio-visual world heritage exhibition "Into the Blue" at least offers a virtual experience of familiar, much-loved natural landscapes.



"Coffee & Culture" –outing to the Cultural Centre in Katoomba

Carer Peer Support

At the end of June 2016, the service supported 10 registered carers, caring for a frail-older person.

Gillian Oxley resigned from the role of group facilitator after many years of committed service. I took over this role in January 2016.

Carers meet monthly at the centre to share experience, information and to support each other. Group meetings are a platform for carers to find out and make use of information and training workshops relevant to carers to support them in their caring role.

A carer survey was conducted to identify carer needs and to tailor a program to meet those needs.

Some of the highlights in 2015-16 were:

- High Tea at the Hydro Majestic
- Outing to “The Beatels” Concert at the Carrington hotel to celebrate Seniors Week
- Introduction to meditation for relaxation and to manage carer stress
- Outing to Café & Patisserie Schwarz in Wentworth Falls
- Guest speaker from Carers NSW on “The role of carer and self-care”

The service also was able to secure free tickets to a theatre play “Teacup in a Storm” at the Joan Sutherland Centre, a moving play that offered a window into the unseen world of carers.



Carers enjoying “The Beatels” concert at the Carrington Hotel

Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Support

The service relies on a committed team of volunteers, many of whom have supported our clients for a number of years.

As at June 2016, the service had 20 registered volunteers providing social support to clients. The service also recruited new volunteers with specific skills to match the interest of individual clients, eg classical guitar, craft, or the movies. One volunteer now contributes her organisational and promotional skills, organising bus outings for the service’s clients.

At the heart of positive volunteer management is ongoing support, eg regular debriefing of volunteers at support meetings, individually face-to-face, by phone or written correspondence.

A quarterly newsletter is also distributed to the volunteers.

Volunteers attended an in-house workshop *Journey of the Volunteer* with local grief counsellor, writer and historian Megan Wynne-Jones to explore motivations, inspirations,

joys and challenges of volunteering and to celebrate the work of volunteers. Another in-house training workshop, offered in partnership with Nepean Volunteer Services Inc., explored *natural health and well-being*. Individual volunteers also attended *Orientation to Volunteering, Identifying and responding to the abuse of older people in the community*, and a training workshop with *Vision Australia* to raise awareness on the different types of vision impairment and how to provide effective assistance to clients.

Quarterly volunteer support meetings regularly provide opportunities for volunteers to develop new knowledge and skills, in an experiential learning setting. Focus themes this year included *Planting the seeds of goal setting – Client Enablement at work, Exploring strengths and how these support our work with clients*. The group also had guest speakers from The Stroke Foundation with a presentation on 'Stroke', and from the Wentworth Area Health service with a presentation on 'My E Health Record'.



Volunteers enjoying Christmas lunch at the Lawson Hotel

Professional Development

On-going professional development is crucial as the aged care industry is implementing the Aged Care Reform, requiring staff to gain new knowledge and skills to effectively support older people to achieve their individual goals, and to implement best practice to meet sector standards.

In 2015-16 the Co-ordinator attended the following training:

- Recovery-oriented leader development (Mental health)
- Supporting volunteers to discuss preparedness with vulnerable clients
- The accidental counsellor
- A workshop with Vision Australia
- Training "Vicarious Traumatization"
- Supporting clients experiencing grief/ recovering from trauma
- Recognising and responding to the abuse of older people living in the community

Social Support – But what does it mean

The following examples show how social support can positively impact on a person's life.

One client had lost her speech and was struggling with simple everyday task such as shopping and cooking. She is linked with a volunteer who helps her plan and cook meals for herself. Her volunteer also shares her interest in art and they sometimes draw together.

Another client had lived much of her life in Brisbane before she became homeless. When she finally moved into stable accommodation in the Blue Mountains, she didn't know anyone and often suffered panic attacks when going out. She was linked with a volunteer who accompanied her to a movie club social group, and assisted her with her shopping. A highlight for her are visits from a volunteer who shares her interest in books and meditation. She feels much more settled and at home in her new community now and hasn't suffered panic attacks for a while.

One client was grieving the loss of his wife and subsequent loss of meaningful activities because they used to do everything together. After initially attending the Community café, supported by a volunteer, he decided to take the next step to widen his social circle. He started coming to the outings to the Cultural centre where he met with others who encouraged him to take up old interests - painting and gardening. He has since been proactive and made contact with the Society of Blue Mountain artists to attend their meetings.

Thank you to everyone

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making this service the great service it is – first and foremost, our volunteers who give Volunteer Home Visitors its friendly face. Thank you for your care, commitment and dedication! It's because of you that our clients are able to stay in touch with who they are, and do the things that are meaningful to them.

I would also like to thank our partners in the aged care and community care sector for their ongoing advice and support. Thank you to MMNC's board of governance for their interest in this service, and to MMNC's manager and staff for their valued support.

I look forward to another exciting year of strengthening the Volunteer Home Visitors service to the benefit of its clients, volunteers and the wider local community.



*VHV Co-ordinators Eva Regitz and Anne Snowden
at the Seniors Expo, March 2016*

Eva Regitz

Service Co-ordinator

Community Café Report

Once again I report that Our Thursday Morning Cafe has been a wonderful catalyst for our local members.

We started out as a come-together group for a cuppa and Cake for a predominantly senior clientele and are now joined by school children in school holidays, the occasional walking group, and local mums who pop in after dropping the kids off to school.

We also have an increase in interest on special occasions such as Community in a Teacup, Christmas in July, Christmas in December, Seniors week celebrations and any other excuse to celebrate being together.

We have some of the most beautiful people in our community who share a wealth of life experiences, stories and skills.

We are a Family, and take great pride in keeping these relationships strong through Love & Support.

Pauline Stafrace

Community Café Worker



Christmas in July at Community Café

Cyber Seniors (Broadband for Seniors)

Broadband for Seniors is a federal government initiative, with 2 computers made available by the Department of Social Services, for kiosks to provide volunteer tutors. The Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre kiosk developed during 2014-15 to include fortnightly individual tutoring with Colin Oriti; daily computer use; and 'Cyber Seniors' group tutoring.

In 2015-16 there were 96 seniors making use of the kiosk, including 72 seniors trained over 652 lessons, and more than 800 total uses. There was an average 4 tutors per week.

2016 has seen an influx of seniors with smart phones wanting help to connect with their families and friends and keep up with today's technology.

Cyber Seniors is a small and friendly group that has run each Tuesday afternoon throughout the year during school terms. We are 'young tutors helping seniors' to come to grips with today's 'smart' devices: providing participants with the opportunity to extend their technical skills and knowledge with mobile phones, tablets and laptops in a no-pressure, enjoyable, interactive environment.

This has proved to be a very popular weekly activity at MMNC, with the tutors having the opportunity to help people including those with hearing impairment, as well as people with limited English to become computer aware, with great results.

Group members have expressed a very high level of satisfaction both with the technical aspects of the meetings as well as the social support and opportunities for sharing that belonging to Cyber Seniors provides. My heart-felt thanks to our wonderful volunteer tutors Grace Wallace, Caity Oxley, Faith Wallace, Amir Eyal, Owen Corcoran and Jacob Wilson.

Broadband for Seniors / Cyber Seniors is administered by Sarah Dean.

Sarah Dean

Administrative Assistant



Colin and Bill receiving help from the BFS Tutors

Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service Coordinator's Report



Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service (BMPSS) is a community based volunteer service providing care and support to:

- *People living with life limiting illnesses who wish to remain at home*
- *People wishing to die at home or in the environment of their choice*
- *The carers and families of those with life limiting illnesses, from the time of referral up until 12 months after the death of the client.*

Our goals are:

- *To provide an appropriate and accessible service that supports people with a life limiting illness, their carers and families.*
- *To develop and implement strategies which promote Palliative Care in the broader community.*

Service Operation and Funding

The BMPSS operates 5 days per week from 9.00am – 4.30pm. There is one part time Co-ordinator, a part time Administrative Assistant and Financial Officer. The service covers the Blue Mountains Local Government Area and Lithgow. Funding is provided by NSW Health, through Nepean/ Blue Mountains Local Health District and BMPSS is auspiced by MMNC. The service has been notified that funding is currently through to the 30th of June 2017.

Client Referrals

Referrals are made through the Nepean/ Blue Mountains Palliative Care Team. There is no current waiting list.

PALLIATIVE SUPPORT VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROVISION

Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service (BMPSS) provides a volunteer service to support clients with life-limiting illnesses in their place of residence or in hospital – Springwood, Katoomba and Lithgow Hospital. Currently at Springwood and Katoomba hospital there are two volunteers visiting the Palliative care ward weekly. Lithgow Hospital has one volunteer visiting the palliative care ward weekly.

Volunteers provide up to four hours support each week depending upon the needs of the client and family. This includes offering companionship, respite care, help with simple household duties, short outings, transport to appointments and bereavement support.

We currently have **29** volunteers who provided **1549** hours of direct support to our clients at home and in hospital. Volunteers travelled **17,868** kilometres in their client related duties in the past year. The figures are considerably higher than in the same period last year, due to the increasing demand for our service.

Major users of the Service

The majority of clients referred have a cancer diagnosis. A small number have organ failure and chronic degenerative diseases such as Motor Neurone Disease.

Feedback from Consumer Satisfaction Survey

A consumer satisfaction survey was conducted in Oct 2015 .100% of the clients rated the quality of service as excellent or very good and 100% said they had an excellent or very good rapport with their volunteer. Some of the client comments were:

“The support of the gentleman who kept my husband company and gave me respite to attend an important meeting every month gave me complete reassurance that he was cared for in my absence”

“I look forward to my visitor, a very caring person”

“This service has made a huge difference to my mother-in-law’s life”

“Ann is now in care at UC Springwood and the volunteer visits make a difference to Ann’s wellbeing.”

“The Memorial Day I attended this year was so beautifully presented and, to gather with so many other grieving souls, in thanksgiving for the life of our departed loved ones, and those who gave us care and support, was tremendously helpful”

SERVICE PLANNING

The service conducted a ‘Planning Day meeting’ in April 2016. We discussed ideas to assist in reducing the increasing costs of mileage reimbursements for volunteers and also strategies for fundraising over the next 12 months. As a result of this day volunteers were surveyed with suggestions from the ‘Planning Day’. The results were that most volunteers were happy to reduce the current rate from .75c to .60c per km and also for the monthly record sheet to be amended to have an “opt out” tick box if they did not wish to be paid for that month. A group of volunteers met in August to plan ongoing fundraising activities for the next financial year.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND TRAINING

The volunteers receive comprehensive training, prior to their placement in the community, and there is a strong emphasis on continuing education and training. Regular supervision and support is provided to volunteers, both through the Co-ordinator and a professional clinical supervisor.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

The service conducts interviews for new volunteers normally every two years. Due to an increase in referrals at the beginning of 2016, the service conducted recruitment, interviews and organized training for 11 new volunteers in April/May for the Blue Mountains and Lithgow area. Training commenced at the end of June 2016.

Ongoing Education and In-service Training

Education and training for volunteers was provided in the following ways:

- Six volunteers attended the NBMLHD Supportive & Palliative Care Conference at Peppers Stadium in Penrith 3/6

Topics and Guest speakers for 2015-2016 were:

- Amanda Levett RN Dementia specialist from Lawson Community Health gave a talk on "Symptoms and behavioural strategies for clients with dementia" 1/7
- Robyn Yates from BM Cancer Help Inc gave an update on their service and a talk on "Cancer Prevention" 2/9
- Kerry Noonan from the Groundswell Project spoke on 'Natural Burials' 7/10
- Debbie Horsfall from the Western Sydney Uni spoke on 'Carer Network Project' formal and informal supports in the community for Carers of Palliative care clients at home 4/11
- Pat Joyce from 'The Aged Rights Service' spoke about case histories and when and how to contact for assistance 3/2
- Beth Edwards volunteer ran a session on "Non- Verbal communication" 4/5
- Selwyn Maynard Team Leader from RAS Lemongrove spoke on "My Aged Care" assessment and referral process 1/6

Volunteer Supervision and Support

- Monthly support meetings for peer support, information exchange, clinical supervision and client updates;
- Phone or face to face contact with the Coordinator as required;
- Annual volunteer appraisals;
- Access to a well-resourced service library;
- Monthly newsletters.

Volunteer Appreciation

- Volunteers were recognised and appreciated for their contribution at the end of year Christmas lunch held at Wentworth Falls Country Club. 20 people attended including the palliative care nurse from Lawson community Health 2/12
- Our volunteer Robyn Artup was recognized for 19 years of service as a Palliative Care volunteer (8 years in Oberon and 11 for our service) at the Blue Mountains 2016 Seniors Week awards in May 2016

- Regular thanks were extended to volunteers through the monthly newsletter.
- Five of our volunteers were recognized for 10 years of volunteering for our service at the Volunteer morning tea hosted by Blue Mountains Hospital in May. Volunteers were presented with a certificate and flowers.



Photo: Left Robyn Artup receiving her Senior's week award Right: BM hospital 10 year anniversary volunteer recognition Morning tea - Nerida, Wendy, Pat and Chris



Wentworth Falls Country Club Christmas lunch 2015

Left: Volunteers Anthony, Kathy, Ivy and Vicki Right: Narelle, Pat and Anne

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SERVICE PROMOTION

The second major goal of the Service is to develop and implement strategies which promote an understanding and acceptance of Palliative Care in the broader community. The activities undertaken to achieve this are listed below.

- 'Memorial Day 2015' was held on the 15th of September 2015 at MMNC. There were sixty attendees (32 residents and 28 staff) including local community health staff,

palliative care doctors, staff from Blue Mountains hospital, Lithgow hospital and Springwood Auxiliary and volunteers. Feedback from the event was very positive.



'Memorial Day Sept 2015' Left: Volunteers Rhea and Maureen at the Registration desk

Right: Palliative Care RN Tracy Mullavey BM Hospital, Mel Stufkins , Community Nurses Anne, Linda and Mary- Mavis Wood Hall MMNC

- The coordinator and two volunteers were guest speakers at the Probus club in Blaxland on the 15th of April 2016 where 76 members attended the meeting and talk.

NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Coordinator is responsible for maintaining close links with Nepean/ Blue Mountains LHD Palliative Care Team as well as building strong links with other agencies and networks. The relevant meetings and events attended are listed below.

- Weekly clinical meetings of the Nepean/Blue Mountains Palliative Care Team;
- Monthly hospital liaison meetings with Palliative community & hospital staff;
- Monthly MMNC staff meetings;
- Monthly Blue Mountains Community Care Forum meetings;
- Quarterly Nepean/ Blue Mountains LHD Business meetings for Palliative Care;
- BMPSS is a member of the NSW Network Managers of Palliative Care volunteer services. The Coordinator attended quarterly meetings.
- The coordinator attended the Strategic Planning Days for the Palliative care team at Nepean Hospital 14/10 & 25/11. Regular consultations and contact with Lithgow, Katoomba and Springwood Hospital staff took place to monitor and obtain feedback about the service
- In partnership with staff at BM Hospital the service hosted a 'High Tea' for Palliative care week. 22 members of staff from the palliative care and rehab ward attended as well as seven of our volunteers 25/5/16



Left: Staff BM Hospital Palliative Care ward Dr David Lee Centre Right: Volunteers Sophia, Maureen, Barbara, Beth, Ivy and Robyn

The Blue Mountains Palliative support service continues to have a great reputation in our community. We are very fortunate to have a strong and compassionate group of volunteers who truly love their work. Five of our volunteers achieved 10 years of service in 2016 which is truly and inspiration to all our volunteers. It is heart-warming to know the level of commitment and dedication that the volunteers have towards supporting palliative clients in our community and our service. The feedback I regularly receive at meetings from clients and nursing staff is about how wonderful our volunteers are. Families are so appreciative of the volunteer's contribution to their care and support when their loved ones are so unwell at the end of their life.

Our service will be continuing our accreditation process in 2016-2017 which will result in achieving the Certificate level in the 'Australian Service Excellence Standards'. Our goal is to continue with current and new projects and to continue promoting our service in the Lithgow area.

I would like to thank the MMNC Board and Mick for their on-going support.

Thank you to my colleagues for your inspiration, good sense of humour, listening ears and advice. A special thanks to Danielle, Sarah, Stacey and all the wonderful volunteers on reception who have been a wonderful support team.

Katrina Simmons

Co-ordinator Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service

Mid Mountains No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) Report

Establishment of the Mid Mountains NILS Scheme

MMNC established the Mid Mountains NILS project in September 2000.

Thanks to National Australia Bank for providing a fee free, interest free overdraft of \$75,000 for capital base since 1st January, 2012. Until 2009 we had been operating with loan capital base grants from: Mercy Foundation, Perpetual Trustees, Ian Potter Foundation, and Sydney Water.

Over the past 16 years the Neighbourhood Centre has recycled those funds through repayments to provide a total of 622 loans to families in need in the Mid Mountains.

Operation of the Scheme

We are accredited with Good Shepherd Microfinance (the community organisation which holds the trademark for NILS and oversees the operations of NILS programs nationally).

The Scheme covers residents from Linden to Wentworth Falls. Pauline Stafrace conducts loan application interviews as the Loan Interview Officers. Loan applications are submitted to the Assessment Committee for decisions; Joy Pospisil continues to support the NILS program in this role.

Volunteers and staff attended local NILS Forums to network and keep up to date with training and developments.

Number & Value of Loans during 2015-16

During the financial year to June 2016 we issued 48 loans to the value of \$48 506.

Profile of Existing Loans

Over the past year loans have been approved for things like: fridges, washing machines and other appliances, hot water systems, computers, furniture, dental work, household repairs, moving expenses, educational fees, music expenses, medical equipment, car repairs, green slips and car registration.

Most loan recipients use the free Centrepay direct debit repayment arrangement from their Centrelink benefits. This lowers default rates for the Centre across all loans.

Administration & Funding

NSW Fair Trading has granted administration funding until June 2017. We hope that this funding will become ongoing. Without this funding for management and accountability administration, we would not be able to provide this service.

We have also secured another grant from the federal Department of Social Services which will fund administration until June 2017.

Leigh Gordon is the NILS Administration Worker, responsible for monitoring repayments, following up any loans in arrears, reconciliations, preparation of reports to Good Shepherd and providing general administrative and backup support to the NILS service.

Thank you

We appreciate the organisations as above for their support. We also work closely with the Lithgow, Blackheath Area, Winmalee, and Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centres to

provide NILS across the Lithgow and Blue Mountains LGAs. We are part of a network of NILS services across Australia and are supported by the NSW NILS Coordinator via Lismore Neighbourhood Centre.

Thank you to our volunteer Loan Application Assessment Committee, especially Joy Pospisil, for supporting the Scheme and participating whenever called upon.

We look forward to continued service for the people of the Mid Mountains community.

Mick Barrett

MMNILS Manager



Pauline and Chenelle



Mid Mountains Walkers

“Strengthening Exercise Classes” Program Report

I have been privileged to run the St George Hospital Strengthening for Seniors program for a little over a year. It has proven to be beneficial to all participants who have joined the program, with acknowledgements coming back from doctors, osteopaths and other various medical practitioners in how their patients are improving in strength, health and an all over better well being.

Classes remain at 6 per week although our numbers have increased and some classes are now at full capacity.

This program and the people I work with has been the highlight of my career. It is a great initiative run by the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre!!!

Markesha Hartshorn

Fitness Instructor.



Strengthening Exercise class at Bullaburra Hall

Mid Mountains Community Gardens

The Mid Mountains Community Gardens are located in Queens Road Lawson, at the Kihilla Retreat and Conference Centre, our community partner, and are auspiced by the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre.

Highlights of the Group's activities and achievements over the past year include:-

- Maintaining a small but active group of volunteer members who meet to garden and socialise every Saturday 9am to 12noon.
- Successful growing of a wide range of vegetables and herbs in 5 raised garden beds, including silverbeet, chards, kale, mizuna, broccoli, salad greens, lettuce, beans, parsley, rocket, tomatoes and potatoes.
- Saving our own seeds from the heritage food plant varieties we grow and collaboration with the Mid Blue Mountains Seed Savers group.
- Crop protection netting structures have been installed over several of the garden beds to protect produce from birds, wallabies and other garden pests.
- Produce grown at the community garden is shared by the garden members and our community partner. Excess produce is taken to the Community Market Stall at the local Lawson Magpie Markets.
- The group plans to continue with infrastructure development at the gardens over the coming year including perimeter fencing, irrigation, garden bed refurbishment and composting bays.

A number of new volunteer members have joined the community gardens over the past year and have become involved in the gardening programs and social activities of the group.

David Olsson

