



BELONG

BLUE MOUNTAINS

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024



BE HEARD • BE CONNECTED • BE SUPPORTED • BELONG



Belong Blue Mountains acknowledges and respects the Darug and Gundungurra Peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the land in which we work and live. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise the impacts of past and present injustice and the role we can all play in working together towards a better future.

Belong Blue Mountains supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We will promote mutual respect and

understanding, paying respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their cultures and their heritage.

We acknowledge that this land is, was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Inside cover art: "Gumnut Magic"

by Anastasia Vickers, a member of the Walanmarra Group. The Walanmarra group is a group of Aboriginal women and friends. Walanmarra means to grow strong, which we do through our art.



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For more about our services go to:
belongbm.org.au

INTRODUCTION

Belong Blue Mountains is a community and neighbourhood services organisation operating across the Mountains and providing services from Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres.

We provide a wide range of services and activities for people of all ages and circumstances to improve the wellbeing and capacity, social inclusion, resilience and quality of life for people in the Blue Mountains.

Our work is grounded in the principles of social justice: connection, inclusion and access, safety and conditions for wellbeing. We focus our resources on the disadvantaged and least powerful in the community. We believe the development of networks, mutual support and collective action can improve the quality of life of our whole community.

OUR VALUES

PERSON-CENTRED

We see the community as equal partners and experts in their capabilities and needs. We put people, their families and their wellbeing at the centre of all that we do so that we can design and deliver quality services and programs that are relevant and effective.

INCLUSIVE

We are a non-religious, non-political organisation. We embrace diversity and welcome all individuals irrespective of faith, culture, age, gender or any other point of uniqueness. Everyone has a voice and place at Belong Blue Mountains.

PRINCIPLED

At Belong Blue Mountains we operate with fairness and integrity, within an ethical framework of practice. We deliver services and programs that are designed according to evidence-based need. We are transparent and responsible in all of our undertakings.

COLLABORATIVE

We recognise the expertise and knowledge of the community itself, our peers in the social and community sector, as well as business and government. We work collaboratively to achieve better results and value for our communities.

RESPONSIVE AND PROACTIVE

We recognise that communities, the service environment and the natural environment are ever changing. We listen and are adaptive, flexible and agile. We design and deliver services and solutions that are responsive to continue to meet our communities' priorities and needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

We are a place based social justice Organisation. We strive to continue to meet the needs of community, staff, volunteers, Board and sector partners now and into the future. We do this by utilising, growing, supporting and developing the skills, experience and expertise of our people and by integrating these values into practice. We work to achieve financial independence and to build resilient, flourishing communities without compromising the ability of future generations.

WHO WE SERVE

We are proud to support the cultural diversity of community members across the Blue Mountains. Our services reach children, young people, families, seniors and people living with various challenges, including life-limiting illness. We bring people together to build stronger communities where all people feel included, heard and supported and our services aim to empower individuals and groups so they can thrive.

OUR TEAMS

Aged, Chronic Care & Allied Health

Our Aged, Chronic Care & Allied Health team aims to enrich the quality of life for frail, older people living at home, residents of Aged Care Facilities and community members living with life-limiting illness. With our experienced, professional workforce and large base of volunteer workers, we can provide the support you need to stay at home. From domestic assistance to friendly visitors, social groups, building modifications and home maintenance, our services include:

- Commonwealth Home Support such as transport, social support in an individual or group setting, outings to assist in community connectedness and assisted shopping
- Domestic assistance to maintain household tasks such as cleaning, paying bills, etc.
- Allied Health services from qualified occupational therapists, physiotherapist and social worker to maintain safe home environments, address functional limitations and improve or maintain wellbeing
- Standing Strong: strength and balance classes
- Community Visitors Scheme: providing social support for people on Home Care packages or in residential aged care
- Palliative Support: providing

respite and support to clients, families and carers

- Access and referral across Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services as a central point of contact for new referrals

ASSIST Building & Home Maintenance

Our ASSIST Building & Home Maintenance service provides home modifications (major and minor) for eligible community members including the infirm, elderly and people living with a disability, so they can remain safely in their own homes for longer.

Families, Children, Youth & Communities

Our Families, Children, Youth & Communities (FCYC) team delivers a range of centre and place based, inclusive and flexible supports. The team facilitates activities that increase community connections, resilience and self-determination.

Our Katoomba Out of School Hours service (KOOSH) team believes children learn and make sense of the world around them through play and the program has a strong emphasis on activities which build children's sense of autonomy.

Our services include:

- Neighbourhood Centres in Blaxland, Lawson and Katoomba
- Community supports including information and referral,

emergency relief food hampers and drop-in facilities

- Provision of spaces for community groups, social activities and community connection
- Community and social support groups and community advocacy
- Family and children's services including KOOSH, supported playgroups, family fun days, transition to school, school holiday activities and toy library
- Disaster, resilience and preparedness support
- Pick'n'Mix youth support in Neighbourhood Centres and schools
- Mental health support through the Blue Fringe Arts & Literature Festival and targeted support groups

NDIS Disability

As a registered NDIS provider, we offer support to people living with a disability, their families and carers via our Plan Management service. We assist NDIS participants to manage their NDIS plan more effectively and provide support for the financial and administration aspects of the plan. Belong Blue Mountains Plan Management program is operated within the Families, Children, Youth & Communities team with collaboration from our finance team.



GOVERNANCE

Board Members

Belong Blue Mountains is governed by a voluntary Board.

Board members for 2023-2024 were:

Chair: Warwick Fuller

Deputy Chair: David Caton

Secretary: Warwick Fuller

Treasurer: Nigel Cunningham (to May 3), David Caton (from May 3)

Members: Ruth Bennett, Mahalya Middlemist, Wendy Holland, Maria Katrivesis, Elizabeth (Gay) Thornton, Lynne Hudson, Shannon Lane, Motofumi Kotsuka, J.B. Claray (resigned Feb 8)

Public Officer: Len Kasper

Chief Executive Officer: Kath Harrison

Executive Support: Shelley Oliver

Executive Manager Finance, Business

Development & Service Support: Len Kasper

Senior Management Team:

Aged, Chronic Care & Allied Health Stream: Christine Baird

ASSIST Building & Maintenance: Steven Hart

Families, Children, Youth & Communities: Danielle Wilding-Forbes

Finance: Len Kasper

Information & Communications Technology: Dale Reardon



CHAIR'S REPORT

WARWICK FULLER



What does it mean to belong?

Or as has occupied much of our attention this past year,
what does it mean to be Belong?

For the year past this has meant reflection, challenge and change.

Reflection began with a simple suggestion that we review our progress with the first strategic plan for Belong developed to cover the period 2020-2025. Under the guidance of our facilitator, Deborah Sharpe, this began with a consideration of the values that underpinned our original plan, whether they were fit for purpose and more significantly, whether they were enacted upon and visible in practice in our day-to-day operations. This engaged the staff and the Board, independently and for the first time, together.

The upshot was a general acceptance that, after some slight modification, the values we enact are; person-centred, inclusive, principled, collaborative, responsive and proactive, and sustainable.

From this base, staff and the Board have continued to review and develop a strategic plan to guide Belong for the period 2025 – 2028, first with a common understanding of our purpose, then an acknowledgement of the strategic pillars upon which our plan rests, identifying our priority focus areas and finally the plans to address these focus areas and how we will assess progress and success. So, from a suggestion, has sprung nearly a years work with the base of the new Belong Blue Mountains Strategic Plan completed this year and to be presented to you today.

Being a community focused, values

driven organisation is hard work. We are challenged by the needs of our Blue Mountains community in the areas we operate, broadly; Seniors Ageing Well services, Children, Youth and Family services, Community and Neighbourhood services, Health Support services and Disability Support services. We run the risk of spreading ourselves too thin and the parallel risk to our sustainability. In particular, Belong Blue Mountains has a history of identifying at risk or invisible populations and tailoring programs to engage and accommodate them, most notable being the Pick 'n Mix program. Most areas of our operation are regularly audited by our external state and commonwealth funders and recognised for their outstanding performance. Recently Belong Blue Mountains was acknowledged as one of the better performing CHSP service providers, achieving, under accepted challenging conditions, over 80% of our targets.

This recognition does not however translate into funding guarantees. Outstandingly successfully programs like Pick n' Mix and Be Ready are hostage to project-based funding with the onus falling on Belong Blue Mountains to shuffle funding to continue once funding runs out and we are told "there's no new funds available". Equally, while all our programs are people centred, both state and federal governments are pushing our funding models towards a fee for service basis, with payment in arrears. This is very much a "business" model and

presents Belong Blue Mountains with significant, but not unassailable challenges.

With challenges have come change. The year started with our KNC base in Station Street becoming uninhabitable due to mould and age and our relocation to the Katoomba town centre. It's not been without its issues, but certainly places us closer to the action and, we hope soon to be confirmed as our permanent Katoomba base.

Internally, the Board accepted that after freezing the position of Executive Manager Client Services and Operations for 3 years; in doing so asking Kath and Len to share the load intended for 3 people, it was time to acknowledge the need to bring additional skills into the organisation. The process engaged our Board Employment sub-committee member Gay Thornton as well as Board member Wendy Holland, CEO Kath Harrison and myself in the extensive interview process with impressive external and internal candidates. The result was that we welcomed Frances Tinsley to Belong in the Operations role. However, the process also presented us with an unexpected opportunity for change that would create a new team to lead Belong through the challenges we have identified. The interview team unanimously identified a potential succession pathway and we are excited to witness Kath passing her leadership baton to Rachel Dillon as our new Belong Blue Mountains

CEO, from September 2024. Rachel and Frances bring a set of skills and experience from difficult funding and operational areas and will be great assets to Belong as we develop the substance to our new Strategic Plan.

So, as we welcome new leaders, we say goodbye to Kath Harrison, one of the driving forces in the establishment of Belong Blue Mountains and our founding CEO. On top of her years as CEO of KNC, Kath leaves an outstanding legacy of service to our Blue Mountains community and a true champion for values based community service more broadly. It's been my genuine pleasure to work with Kath from the early days of BLINN, the momentous decision by the three neighbourhood centres to merge to form Belong in 2018, and through all the challenges and successes that have paved the way for the Belong Blue Mountains we know today. Enjoy your retirement...until we meet again.

We also say farewell to two retiring, founding members of the Belong Blue Mountains Board, David Caton and Gay Thornton. David, as deputy Chair, Treasurer and, Gay, David's fellow member of the hard-working Employment sub-committee. Both have been very active contributors to community life in the mountains for many years and like Kath have

been there through all the ups and downs as we established Belong Blue Mountains as a major community service organisation. My deepest thanks for their service and support and best wishes for whatever comes next.

Equally I would like to pay tribute to my fellow Board members, Maria Katrivesis, Ruth Bennett, Wendy Holland, Nigel Cunningham, Motofumi Kotsuka, Lynne Hudson and Shannon Lane. It has been a challenging and at times difficult year and you have been engaged, considered, thoughtful and caring and Belong has benefited greatly from your presence. I also look forward to welcoming back to the Board Mahalya Middlemist another long-standing contributor to Belong Blue Mountains and KNC.

On behalf of the Board, my particular thanks to Shelley Oliver. Shelley organises us, feeds us, faithfully records all our deliberations and stays calm when we continually run over time, late into the evening.

The engagement between the Board and staff has been a feature of the last year and I acknowledge the outstanding contribution of our senior Management team of Len Kasper, Chris Baird, Danielle Wilding Forbes, Jo Ridley, Dale Reardon, Leigh Gordon and Steve Hart in the development of the

plans for Belong Blue Mountain's future, while maintaining our broad range of services and programs across the Mountains. They and their teams are what makes Belong Blue Mountains a positive model for community service organisations beyond the Mountains.

We recognise the support of our key funders, the NSW State government and the Federal government and look forward to continuing to exceed standards and expectations as a strong, sustainable contributor to supporting our community.

We thank the Blue Mountains City Council for their support, particularly as our presence in the heart of Katoomba has taken shape and our growing team has challenged the capacity of our Blaxland site.

Finally, I would like to thank all our volunteers. Covid had such a dramatic impact on volunteering numbers, generally a situation from which we, and most other community dependent organisations, are yet to recover. Thankyou for hanging in there and for the time and contribution you all make to supporting those in need and to the smooth running of our operations and programs. You and all our Belong Blue Mountains team, epitomise what it means to belong.



CEO'S REPORT

KATH HARRISON

1ST JULY 2023 TO 30TH JUNE 2024



I wish to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land and water on which Belong Blue Mountains operates, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. I would also like to pay my respect to their elders past and present and to the young people who are the elders of our future. I wish to acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

I also wish to also acknowledge the diverse and rich lived experiences of our members and communities and all they bring to and teach Belong Blue Mountains.

2023-2024 was again a year of opportunity and challenge for Belong Blue Mountains. The Organisation, our communities, our staff, volunteers and service partners continue to exhibit extraordinary resilience. This year we needed to reset and stand as partners and allies with our First Nations community members after the result of the Voice referendum. It is noteworthy that the Board of Belong Blue Mountains took an active and public position on supporting a Yes vote on the First Nations Voice to Parliament. Despite the public rejecting constitutional change enabling a First Nations Voice to Parliament, Belong Blue Mountains continues to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart and will continue to listen deeply and walk together with First Nations people to achieve a better future.

This year saw the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre move from its Station Street site after 40 years, to the heart of the Katoomba town centre. This was a monumental decision given the emotional investment the community, staff and volunteers held for the place and space offered by the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre cottage environment for such a long and

unbroken period. The relocated services were launched on November 23rd 2023. The move was necessary due to two 2022 natural disaster rain events that severely impacted the Belong Blue Mountains Station Street site, eventually requiring the buildings be vacated. The Neighbourhood Centre, Belong Blue Mountains upper mountains staff and governance offices, and the co-located Link Wentworth tenancy staff and offices moved into the Katoomba Town Centre in the main street of Katoomba. The ASSIST and Disability Service staff were relocated to the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre and Lawson Belong Blue Mountains offices, with the Katoomba Out of School Hours (KOOSH) service moving on site to North Katoomba Public School. Since establishing our upper mountains services at the Katoomba Town Centre, we have seen a significant increase in a diverse range of community members accessing our services, particularly our more disadvantaged and isolated community members. The co-location with Belong Blue Mountains Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre and Link Wentworth, the local social housing provider, has proved a very strong and effective strategic partnership delivering innovative and accessible services to and for our most vulnerable community members.

This move was a challenging logistics exercise, physically moving

entire services whilst still delivering service to our communities. This would simply not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of Belong Blue Mountains staff Jo Ridley, Liz Cooper, Danielle Wilding Forbes, Shelley Oliver and Sharise Watson, and the IT, ASSIST and Gardening Service teams. I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and genuinely thank Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) staff and management in assisting, supporting and working with us to achieve this. Their continued work with Belong Blue Mountains and the financial support given by BMCC for the upgrade and refurbishment of the new Katoomba site, enabled this enormous undertaking to be seamless, successful and result in a light and inviting community space and resource for our community.

The partnership between Blue Mountains City Council and Belong Blue Mountains is considered one of the Organisations most important, I thank them for their continued support. This support enables the work that we do in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable within the Blue Mountains community. Particular thanks go to Kirrily Twomey, Director, Cultural and Community Services; Vicki Edmunds, Manager Community, Library & Customer Services, Tan Vo, Manager Property and Commercial Services and Jeff Nakajima, Manager Property and Fleet Maintenance.

This reporting period has seen the Board and Management of Belong Blue Mountains embark upon the critical review of the governance and strategic directions of the Organisation. It is and was envisaged that by engaging in this work we ensure that Belong Blue Mountains maintains relevance, our ability to continue to meet existing and emerging community need, and be agile in responding to the current reforms and policy directions impacting the sector. This work would not have been possible without the energy and experience of our external facilitator and consultant, Deborah Sharp. We were extremely fortunate to be able to work with such an experienced and qualified community sector consultant. Thank you, Deborah.

The review of the 2020-2025 Strategic Directions began with the review of the Belong Blue Mountains underpinning values in this period. This process engaged our staff, volunteers, clients, service partners and stakeholders in examining our values and if they remained "fit for purpose". The result of this process was the restating of our values with minor amendments, and the addition of sustainability as a core value, as outlined in the Chairperson's report. This work also resulted in the development of the Belong Blue Mountains Values Decision Making Framework. The framework is a critical mechanism to guide future strategic decisions and the implementation of the next Belong Blue Mountains Strategic Plan 2025-2028, ensuring the decisions are grounded in our Organisational values. We are proud of this work and excited by the potential the future brings.

Reform and policy change at State and Federal levels continue to be a trademark of the current community sector environment. Belong Blue Mountains is meeting these challenges, changes and reforms with a lens of opportunity and a culture of embracing the changes that reform inevitably

brings. Belong Blue Mountains like all Targeted Early Intervention Services (TEI) under the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) mantel, has been preparing for the new commissioning process for services that will roll out in 2025-2030. Belong Blue Mountains has worked closely with DCJ to adjust our current contracts and focus, to ensure that our work reflects the priority needs and service requirements within our community, particularly evolving work with marginalised and at-risk young people. I would like to acknowledge the work and leadership of Danielle Wilding Forbes in guiding the ongoing growth and development of the Belong Blue Mountains Families Children Youth and Communities Stream.

The Support at Home Aged Care reforms represent one of the single major changes in the delivery of community based aged care services in decades. The historical Community Home Support Program services (CHSP) will be replaced by the Support at Home program. Belong Blue Mountains currently provides a range of CHSP aged care services to our communities under this program (allied health, home modifications and maintenance, transport, domestic assistance, social support, assistive technology, gardening). This reform will see community aged care services move from a combination of block funded and packaged funding models, to a person-centred packaged care model, based on 6 levels of care, predetermined unit costings and payment in arrears for services provided by service organisations to clients. This reform is akin to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Full implementation is slated for July 1st 2027, with a transition period to come in to effect between 2025-2027. This policy and funding shift brings with it many changes for Belong Blue Mountains in the provision of community aged care services, for our community

members receiving care and for our designated aged care staff. The actual detail of the program, how it will work and how existing services and clients will be transitioned to the new model have yet to be finalised. The Board and Management team are working to understand the changes the reform will bring, the impact on our funding, our workforce and our service delivery model, to ensure Belong Blue Mountains is fully prepared for the changes in readiness for the transition. I acknowledge the work and leadership shown by Christine Baird, Manager of Aged, Chronic Care and Allied Health Services, for her laser focus and experience in assisting the Organisation prepare for these changes and thank her. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Len Kasper Executive Manager Finance, Business and Service Support for his tireless work in understanding the funding implications of the reforms and modelling how Belong Blue Mountains can best adapt to the changes financially.

The year brought with it a concentrated focus on succession planning by the Board and Executive Management Team. As the founding CEO of Belong Blue Mountains, I embarked on transitioning to retirement after over 14 years with the Organisation. As a result, Belong Blue Mountains began the process of recruiting the vacant Tier 2 Executive Manager Client Services and Operations (EMCSO), and began selection for the position of CEO. Frances Tinsley was appointed to the position of EMCSO, and Rachel Dillon was appointed to the position of CEO. Both will commence their roles with Belong Blue Mountains in the new financial year. I wish to acknowledge the extraordinary expertise both successful candidates bring to the Organisation and wish them well into the future, Belong Blue Mountains will be in good hands.

I wish to acknowledge and thank the Belong Blue Mountains senior

Management team. Belong Blue Mountains whilst a smallish place-based Organisation, is a complex construction providing services across the lifespan and across a unique demographic and geography. The strength of the leadership team of Belong Blue Mountains is without peer. You provide clarity, innovation, critical thinking and reflection, and adaptive and agile leadership. Your abilities to embrace change and provide guidance and confidence to and for our staff, communities, clients, partners, stakeholders and funders in times of change, is truly extraordinary. As individuals your strengths are exemplary, as a group you are without equal. I am humbled to have worked alongside you for these many years. To Len Kasper, Chris Baird, Danielle Wilding Forbes, Jo Ridley, Dale Reardon, Leigh Gordon and Steven Hart, your commitment and dedication to the work that we do, enables Belong Blue Mountains to continue to provide critical services across our communities and to our most vulnerable within them. I thank you all.

The governance of Belong Blue Mountains, both Board and Executive Management, simply would not function without the critical support and sage understanding of our Executive Support Officer, Shelley Oliver. I simply could not fulfil my role as CEO and the added role of Operations these last years without the support provided by Shelley. Neither would the Board function efficiently without Shelley's organisation skills, intuitive abilities

and quiet confidence. Shelley manages and prioritises the diverse and competing agendas that impact these positions on a daily basis, with grace, humour and integrity. You support us all so ably in a changing and at times volatile operating environment. You have been the constant in the uplifting moments and in the difficult and challenging times, your commitment and loyalty to this Organisation is humbling. I truly thank and acknowledge you.

The care, commitment and humanity shown by all the staff and all the volunteers of Belong Blue Mountains in meeting the challenges of working with our diverse and unique communities is present every day. I acknowledge, thank and honour you all for your ongoing commitment to the work of Belong Blue Mountains through yet another year of significant challenge and change. Your capacity and your capabilities to continue to care and support the most vulnerable in our communities is the essence of Belong. The Organisation is strong and resilient as a direct result of your commitment, professionalism, integrity, expertise, innovation and caring.

I wish to also acknowledge the Belong Blue Mountains group of external supervisors who support our workers across the Organisation. The work you do with our staff and volunteers enables us to maintain a workforce focused on wellbeing, ethics and professionalism.

The Belong Blue Mountains Board continues to exhibit great vision, strength, bravery and absolute

commitment to the important work that we do. This year saw challenges not previously experienced by the Board of Belong Blue Mountains, we met and managed these challenges with focus, kindness, integrity and consideration. The Organisation is so much stronger for the vision you have brought and continue to bring. I wish to thank the Chairperson, Warwick Fuller who continues to steer the Organisation with a steady hand, a gentle presence, a quiet strength and a razor-sharp intellect. To the Board, you embody our values; your experience, loyalty, integrity and commitment to the Organisation enables such confidence within our community. To David Caton, Ruth Bennett, Mahalya Middlemist, Nigel Cunningham, Gay Thornton, Wendy Holland, Maria Katrivesis, Motofumi Kotsuka, Shannon Lane and Lynne Hudson, I thank you all.

On behalf of the Organisation, our clients, participants and community members I must thank our local members of Parliament, Trish Doyle State Member for the Blue Mountains and Susan Templeman, Federal Member for Macquarie. To Susan and Trish, it has been an absolute privilege to work with you and stand beside you on the matters that truly count for our community. Belong Blue Mountains has always received your unflinching support, it has been my absolute pleasure to work with you and to have our community represented by you.

As I retire officially after the Annual General Meeting this year, this is my last Annual Report as CEO of this extraordinary Organisation. In my professional lifetime the experience of leading Belong Blue Mountains has been my unmatched professional privilege in what has been a long and colourful career. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people of our communities and our service partners who contribute to our work in some way, we are simply stronger together. ■

Kath Harrison
Chief Executive Officer



2023-24 IN REVIEW

FAMILIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH & COMMUNITIES

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

The Families, Children, Youth and Community team have worked collaboratively and responded to community need this year which has resulted in a stronger more dynamic team heading into 2024/25. We deliver activities and programs designed to strengthen community connection, wellbeing, and increase a sense of belonging for community across the Blue Mountains. Our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to deliver impactful services and support to individuals and groups in our community, fostering a strong sense of community cohesion and connection.

This year we frequently worked in partnership with Blue Mountains Community Services, Blue Mountains City Council, Lithgow City Council Emergency Services and the Department of Education to build a network of care and support that increases the reach of our work and ensures we remain connected with emerging issues and challenges for our most vulnerable community members. We are very grateful for these networks and the wisdom we share across the sector.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Our Neighbourhood Centres located in Blaxland, Lawson, and Katoomba serve as a hub for community engagement, where residents can access information, attend group activities, and connect with

resources. By providing a welcoming space for community members to come together, our Neighbourhood Centres promote social cohesion, trust, and a sense of belonging among residents.

Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre experienced considerable change this past year. Moving from its home of 40 years in Station Street to Katoomba town centre in the Town Centre Arcade. The tireless efforts of our team and Blue Mountains City Council supported this move and this has translated to a fabulous new space for community, with access to our Neighbourhood Centre supports doubling in the time we have been in the Town Centre. It has also afforded us the opportunity to create a drop in space for youth of a

Thursday afternoon.

Moving to the Katoomba town centre afforded us the opportunity to co-locate with Link Wentworth Housing (LWW). This has proved to be a wonderful relationship. With LWW onsite on a Monday and Friday we are able to connect community with their support. It has been a pleasure to welcome their team to share space. We are also very grateful to Blue Mountains City Council for working in partnership with us to make this happen.

Throughout the year our Neighbourhood Centres host a wide range of community support groups and events. From the Community Book Club to the Walanmarra Women's Art Group, these groups have been instrumental in fostering

FCYC OVERVIEW



connections and personal growth within our community. We are grateful for the dedicated volunteers and community members who contribute their time and energy to make these programs a success.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Our information and referral service has been a lifeline for many community members in need of assistance. This past year, we have seen an increased demand for food relief, and our team has worked tirelessly to provide emergency food hampers to individuals and families in need.

FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Working with families and children remains a key focus for our FCYC team. This past year, our transition to school support program has guided parents and children through the exciting journey of starting school. We have also organised school holiday activities, social support groups, and family fun days in partnership with other community organisations. These initiatives have helped build a strong and connected community, providing families with a safe and enjoyable environment to come together and participate.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Elders' Lunch

2024 saw the return of the Annual Elders' Lunch. The event brings

together First Nations and non-Indigenous Elders for a meal and entertainment. This year's event began with a Welcome to Country by Aunty Carol Cooper and a Smoking Ceremony by Aunty Dawn Harris. Lunch was provided by Blue Mountains Foods Services and served by students from Katoomba High School. Col Hardy, Charley Boyter and the Bidgewong Crew from Lawson Public School provided entertainment. Aunty Rita Wright shared her experiences as a member of the Stolen Generations. It was a great day of connection, celebration and cultural sharing.

Blue Fringe Art and Literature Festival and Mental Health Support

The Blue Fringe Art and Literature Festival continues to be a beacon of creativity and mental wellbeing within our community. This annual festival showcases the talent and resilience of individuals with a lived experience of mental health, promoting the benefits of creativity for mental wellbeing. In 2023, we expanded the festival to include a Youth Short Film Festival, further engaging with young people and starting important conversations about mental health and resilience.

Supported Playgroups

Our supported playgroups in Blaxland East, Lawson, and Katoomba have continued to be

a valuable resource for parents and caregivers. These playgroups provide a nurturing environment for children to learn and develop while fostering connections among families in the community. The addition of Billy Booksie to our playgroup team has enhanced our efforts to promote early literacy through the Paint the Blue REaD program, creating a fun and educational environment for children.

Be Ready - Disaster Resilience Preparedness Support

Belong Blue Mountains remains committed to promoting emergency preparedness and building resilience within our community. Our Get Ready events have provided residents with essential knowledge and resources to effectively prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Be Ready Team, has been instrumental in providing person-centered emergency planning (PCEP) to individuals with complex needs, increasing our community's overall resilience in the face of potential disasters.

Working through what we may need in the case of an emergency is a complex issue and we all need different supports. PCEP assists vulnerable individuals to work through some of the more challenging elements like access to transport, the correct information



channels or where a beloved pet may or may not be able to go in the case of an emergency. Not so straight forward if it's a Donkey. This two year project has conducted 262 Clients visits, 42 property risk mitigations and completed 152 individual emergency plans. It has also equipped us with invaluable learning for future community support.

Pick N Mix - Youth Team

The Pick N Mix Youth Team continues to grow and has become an integral part of the Community Development team by providing young people with safe and inclusive spaces to connect, create, and access local resources and mental health support. This outreach youth-focused model takes a holistic approach to wellbeing, integrating art and health to support young people to feel connected and supported. The move of KNC to Katoomba Street offered the PNM team an opportunity to open a drop in space on a Thursday afternoon. This has gone from 3 people the first week to 10 on week 3 and now averages 12-15 young people a week. It is great to see young people owning a community space in this way.

The Pick N Mix team regularly consult their participants and reflect on the wisdom shared. This plays a big part in planning how and what they do in this space. Working in

partnership with young people, schools and the broader youth sector in the Blue Mountains has been instrumental in addressing social and systemic challenges faced by young people and creating a supportive community for all.

KOOSH BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

KOOSH has gone from strength to strength this year, providing care for 216 children over the last 12 months. Katoomba North Public School continues to be a good location for this service and enables families at the school to access the service with ease. Some of our highlights from this year have included excursions to the Sydney Zoo, Parramatta Riverside Theatre and the Zig Zag Railway, and providing incursions such as go kart racing.

Most importantly, KOOSH undertook external accreditation through our Regulatory Authority. Under the National Quality Framework (NQF) for childcare services in Australia, services are subject to assessment and rating, which results in a service being given an overall quality rating, assessed against each of the National Quality Standards. We are pleased to say that KOOSH has met all quality standards and has been overall rated as Meeting the NQF. We have received commendations from the Department of Education for our

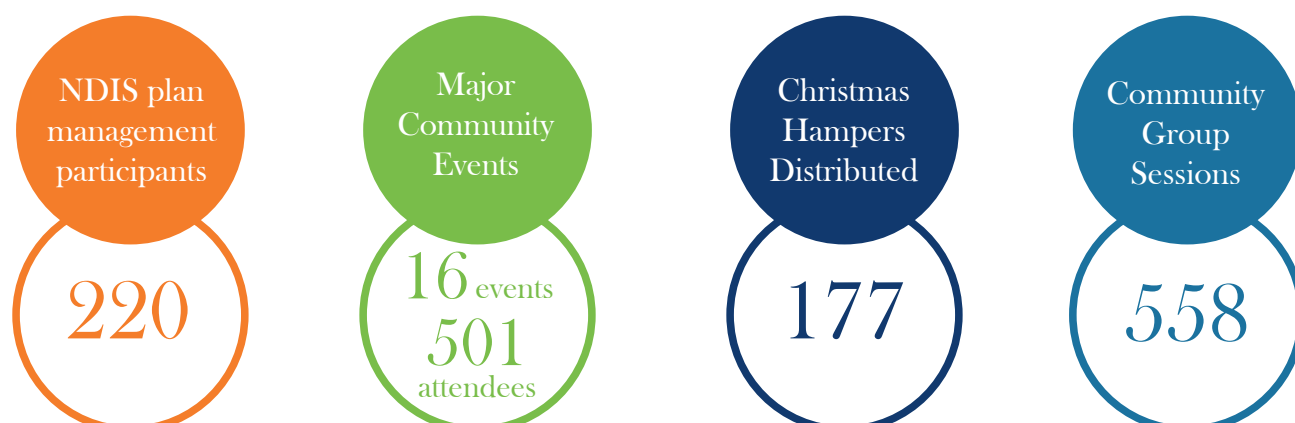
service quality and are continuing to strive for excellence in our programs and services.

NDIS - PLAN MANAGEMENT

Our NDIS Plan Management service is a fabulous example of cross team collaboration. With Both FCYC and Finance responsible for Plan Management services delivery. Our dedicated staff have consistently demonstrated an exceptional level of personalised support, ensuring that each participant receives tailored assistance to navigate their NDIS plan effectively. Their commitment to understanding individual needs has fostered trust and empowerment among our participants, enabling them to achieve their goals with confidence.

Our finance team's attention to detail has been pivotal in managing the financial components of service delivery. This year, we successfully executed an immense volume of transactions, reflecting our ability to handle complex financial processes with precision and care. The meticulous management of budgets and funding allocations has not only streamlined service delivery but has also maximised the value of each participant's plan. As we move forward, we remain committed to enhancing our service and ensuring that all participants continue to receive the highest standard of support.

FCYC OVERVIEW cont...





216
children
160
families

KOOSH

Total days open.....	240
Hours open	1529
Before School Attendance	2242
After School Attendance	3794
Vacation Care Attendance	1585

BE READY CASE STUDIES/ CLIENT JOURNEY

Jemima, a 19-year-old woman living with quadriplegia, resides with her family in a high-risk bushfire area in the Blue Mountains. Due to her complex medical needs and reliance on essential equipment, her family, with the help of a P-CEP Facilitator, developed a detailed bushfire evacuation plan. This includes specific triggers for action, such as staying together at home on extreme fire days and evacuating to respite care when fires are nearby. They prepared checklists for essential items, practiced evacuation scenarios, identified temporary accommodation options, and enhanced their communication and social connectedness within their community. Additionally, they advocated for better mobile phone reception and continuous power supply for Jemima's medical needs.

Margaret, a 70-year-old woman living alone near the National Park, faced concerns about evacuation during a bushfire, particularly due to her lack of transport and the need to evacuate with her two cats. With the help of a P-CEP Facilitator, Margaret established an evacuation plan, including deciding when and how to evacuate, what to take, and identifying suitable locations. Fire and Rescue NSW installed new smoke detectors in her home, and she was referred to the Belong gardening team to

address overhanging branches on her property. Margaret packed an evacuation kit, registered for a personal emergency response pendant, and prepared for a potential 7-day shelter-in-place scenario. She also purchased a second cat carrier, ensured her cats' vaccinations and microchips were up-to-date, and registered with the NSW Police Next of Kin Register. Additionally, her son scanned and stored her important documents on a USB at his home.

In partnership with Lithgow City Council the Be Ready Team conducted a P-CEP Group Workshop with the permanent residents of a local caravan park. This community is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters due to their location and the nature of their dwellings and demonstrated remarkable resilience and community spirit during a disaster preparedness workshop. Despite the unique challenges they face, such as greater exposure to property damage, underinsurance, and complex medical needs, the residents actively engaged in the workshop which was held in their park's laundry on a wet and cold day. Key outcomes included installing the Hazards Near Me app on every participant's phone, developing personalised evacuation triggers, creating emergency plans, and sharing these plans with their support networks. The workshop led to a significant

increase in the residents' self-assessed preparedness and confidence in managing stress during emergencies. The event also fostered social connections among residents, which will serve as a protective factor in future disasters. The workshop's success was attributed to prior relationship-building efforts, the informal setting and the supportive atmosphere, which encouraged collaboration and mutual support. Residents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to plan together, highlighting the value of community-based approaches to disaster preparedness.

MANAGER'S SUMMARY

In closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers, service partners, and dedicated staff members who have contributed to the success of our programs and services this past year. Your commitment and hard work have made a positive impact on the lives of many in our community, and I am grateful for your continued support and dedication. I look forward to another year of working together to strengthen community connections and promote wellbeing across the Blue Mountains.

It is such a pleasure to work with this team and the community they walk with. ■

Danielle Wilding-Forbes





This page top left: Blaxland East Playgroup

Top right: Lawson Playgroup

This page middle: Laura Christmas Special Playgroup

This page bottom: Lawson Playgroup

Opposite page left: Lawson Cafe

Opposite page right: Be Ready Meeting - Dargan

AGED, CHRONIC CARE AND ALLIED HEALTH STREAM

Chris Baird
ACCA Manager

The Aged, Chronic Care and Allied Health team delivers a comprehensive range of services primarily to residents aged 65 and older. Our initiatives are designed to promote active living and ensure the safety of residents within their homes.

Services provided include:

- Allied Health
- Domestic Assistance
- Gardening
- Social Support (both individual and group settings)
- Dementia Program
- Palliative Care Support
- Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

Our programs are primarily funded through the Department of Health and Ageing's Commonwealth Home Support Program. In the 2023/24 financial year, our dedicated staff provided approximately 14,500 occasions of service, contributing over 24,000 direct hours to residents across the Blue Mountains.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Aged, Chronic, and Allied Health services owe their success to the remarkable volunteers who generously dedicate their time each week to support our clients and programs. The diverse skills, patience, and friendship you share are invaluable.

QUILTS OF COMFORT

The Caring Hearts Quilters have continued their beautiful tradition of creating unique quilts for our palliative care clients. Each quilt is crafted with love and care, making every piece special. Recipients express immense joy, knowing each quilt is thoughtfully selected for them. Margaret and her group have devoted countless hours to ensure that our Palliative Care residents in the Blue Mountains and Lithgow

receive these cherished gifts.

SOCIAL SUPPORT INITIATIVES:

Lead - Sonda Mitchell

SOCIAL OUTINGS

Our social activities have enabled many residents to enjoy outings to locations such as Watsons Bay for fish and chips, the Printing Museum in Penrith, Wiseman's Ferry, and the Secret Garden in the Hawkesbury. Special thanks to volunteer driver Andrew Mitchell and Deb Dare for their efforts in ensuring safe and enjoyable experiences where many new friendships are created.

INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Lawson Community Preschool children have joined our seniors for engaging activities that foster connections across generations.



ACCA Team



DAWN Group

Activities such as storybook reading, painting, dancing, and cooking have created joyful interactions, particularly for children who may not have grandparents nearby. These initiatives have infused a lively atmosphere at the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, benefiting all visitors, not just those in the intergenerational group.

INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

With support from Jocelyn, Katie, Bethany, and Renee, our individual social support program helps older adults connect with their community, significantly reducing feelings of social isolation. New ways of connecting older people with each other and the community are always being explored by the team.

BIN BUDDIES PROGRAM:

Lead - Lyn Farthing

The Bin Buddies program was established to assist elderly community members (65+) who may struggle with managing their council bins for weekly rubbish collection. We have received an encouraging response from volunteers willing to help. However, uptake from older individuals has been less enthusiastic, as many express concerns about losing

their independence. Despite various outreach efforts, some seniors remain hesitant to accept assistance. Encouragingly, a few participants have chosen to manage their bins independently, reflecting a positive reablement outcome. A heartwarming feature in the Blue Mountains Gazette highlighted a mother encouraging her six-year-old daughter to assist with a neighbour's bins, showcasing the importance of community support.

ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES: Lead - Gillian Menear DEMENTIA AND WELLNESS NAVIGATION (DAWN)

Belong Blue Mountains offers an innovative Dementia program, supporting individuals with dementia and their carers, led by Gill and Vania. Given the rising prevalence of dementia, this program addresses the significant stress placed on caregivers. DAWN combines personalised education, support, and activities to ease the burden of care. A carer support group has been established to foster community and strengthen support networks among carers, alongside activity groups designed for individuals with dementia to engage in meaningful activities.

STANDING STRONG

Our Standing Strong program has seen remarkable growth, with 200 participants attending strength and balance classes weekly across the mountains, facilitated by our physiotherapist and allied health assistant. Adam and Simon have complemented these classes with walking groups, integrating exercise into participants' daily routines. You may see the walkers around the neighbourhood.

ALLIED HEALTH THERAPIES

Our Allied Health therapy team, comprising occupational therapists and a physiotherapist: Emma, Adam, Gill, and Vania, provides targeted programs alongside individualised assessments to address functional decline in older residents. This support aims to reduce fall risks and promote independence at home, including recommendations for assistive equipment under our Goods, Equipment and Assistive Technology funding.

PALLIATIVE CARE SUPPORT:

Coordinator - Sheryl Hardy

Our dedicated volunteers were recognised with certificates at the recent Seniors' Week Awards for their outstanding contributions.



Bin Buddies

Our volunteers Andrew and Kerry showcased their talent in a promotional video produced by Tour de Cure, who generously donated \$10,000 to the program. This video can be viewed on our website: Palliative Support.

During Palliative Care Week, Sheryl organised a virtual tree art project, inviting the community to add leaves symbolising hopes and aspirations. Our annual memorial celebration at the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre honoured families and friends of those who have passed, highlighting the strong connections forged between family members, palliative care volunteers and staff from both Belong Blue Mountains and the Local Health District during their journeys of grief and loss.

Volunteers in the Palliative Care Support service engaged in training on topics such as voluntary assisted dying, advanced care planning, grief and self-reflection, enhancing

their ability to support caregivers and individuals facing life-limiting illnesses. This vital service thrives thanks to the compassionate dedication of our special volunteers, who provide friendship and care to families and palliative care clients.

HOME SUPPORT SERVICES:
Lead – Claire Grover

DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE AND GARDENING

In 2023, our gardening team expanded from two to seven staff members, enabling Belong Blue Mountains to offer an enhanced gardening service. This expansion allows us to support over 235 clients aged 65 and older in maintaining safe and comfortable homes, with potential for further growth as gardener availability increases.

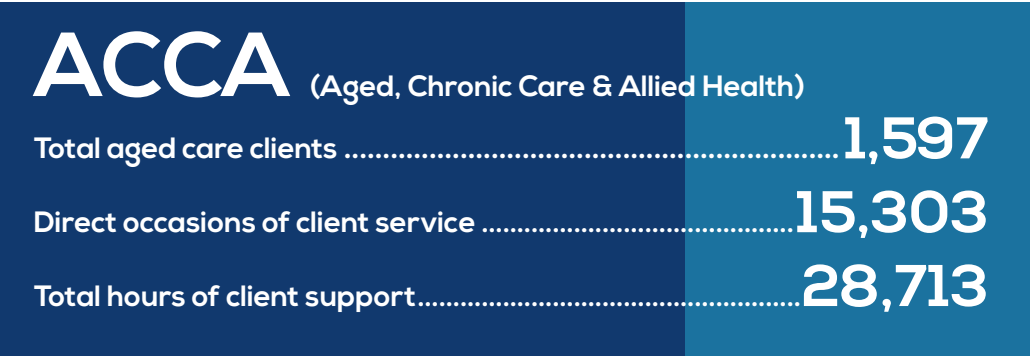
We welcomed new team members Carl, Trent, Tom, Dylan and Leah, who join Lea and Amos in delivering

essential gardening services.

Domestic Assistance: Natasha and Jillian provide domestic assistance, combining practical help with valuable social interaction for clients who may have limited contact with family and friends. The relationships formed through this service are invaluable, as reflected in client feedback stating, “You make growing old pleasurable.”

ADMINISTRATION AND INTAKE: Lead – Eddie Bosnich

The success of our The Aged, Chronic Care and Allied Health programs and services is underpinned by the dedicated efforts of our Intake and Administration staff. This essential team, consisting of Eddie, Ingrid and Lucy, works diligently behind the scenes to ensure our operations run smoothly. They are often the silence cogs that keep our services functioning and efficient. ■



ASSIST BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE

Steve Hart,
ASSIST Manager

Assist Building & Home Maintenance is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health’s Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

Belong Blue Mountains ASSIST is also a registered service provider with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to provide home modifications and maintenance for people with an NDIS plan. Assist Building & Home Maintenance provides Minor & major Modifications for package providers.

Assist also provides private full fee home modifications and maintenance work throughout the Blue Mountains LGA.

SERVICE AIMS

- Our service provides Home Modifications (Major & Minor) for eligible members of the Blue Mountains community, including the infirm, elderly and people with a disability, so they can remain safely in their own homes for longer

RESULTS

Total quotations provided	215
Total projects completed	141
CHSP completed.....	81
Package & NDIS jobs completed.....	60
(Facilities maintenance Jobs Contract) Connect Child Care Centres jobs completed.....	379



- This is made possible by installing ramps (large or small), grab rails and handrails and creating wheelchair accessible spaces internally and externally.
- We can also assist with major bathroom accessible works if it affects the safety and wellbeing of our clients.
- Assist covers the whole of the Blue Mountains from Lapstone to Mt Victoria and now the Nepean LGA.
- Quality service at a very reasonable, affordable price.
- To support our community with quality service and expert advice and being able to sustain this for the future. ■
- Assist covers the whole of the Blue Mountains from Lapstone

Home modifications by our ASSIST team



OUR IMPACT

Total number of individual clients receiving direct support	3594
Aged Care & Allied Health	1597
ASSIST	215
FCYC	782

In addition, individual community members received information and/or referral to other services

Total number of occasions of service provision	73056
Aged Care & Allied Health	15303
ASSIST	379
FCYC	57374

Total number of hours of support provided	34481
Aged Care & Allied Health	28713
FCYC Adults	3737
FCYC Children	2031



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people that the Belong Blue Mountains Board and management team would like to acknowledge and thank, starting with our wonderful volunteers, amazing staff and the individuals and partner organisations who work with us to make a difference for the Blue Mountains community.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are blessed with almost 180 energetic and dedicated volunteers who provide their time, knowledge and experience to extend the work of our staff. They share their skills at reception desks across our three Neighbourhood Centres at Blaxland, Lawson and Katoomba. They support community activities and events, drive our buses and accompany outings, facilitate programs and visit community members in their homes.

Our volunteers are an essential part of our workforce and we are committed to their support, training and encouragement to demonstrate our gratitude for their continued efforts on behalf of this community. We are enormously thankful for their support, kindness and generosity of spirit. We could not achieve all that we do without them.

OUR STAFF

Over the past financial year, the Belong BM staff team has worked with enthusiasm, compassion and professionalism to provide support to an increasing number of clients and community members. This has not been an easy year for individuals and families balancing budgets and facing challenges in many areas of life. The programs and services our staff undertake truly make a difference to the resilience, connectedness and wellbeing of our community.

Belong staff have walked with us through many changes this year, including updating their programs and activities, reviewing our organisational values and purpose, and adding their knowledge and wisdom to our future planning. They are an essential ingredient in the successful achievement of our goals and their skill and professionalism makes a substantial difference to the life of the Blue Mountains community.

OUR "BACK OFFICE" TEAMS

All organisations require the support of behind-the-scenes teams to keep the operational wheels turning. Belong Blue Mountains has three such teams:

- Information & Communication Technology – Dale Reardon and Jordan Fiddling,
- Finance & Payroll – Justin Reardon, Jenni Howard and Caroline Peel,
- Human Resources & Quality Improvement – Leigh Gordon, Emma Wheeler and Jo Ridley.

Without these teams the community services and supports provided by the organisation would grind to a halt. These "back office" staff have quietly continued to assist their colleagues across Belong and have provided sound advice and guidance to managers and staff that has improved the overall outcomes and success of our services.

To all of these valued volunteers and staff, we extend our sincere thanks and gratitude.



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) REPORT

Belong Blue Mountains Internet and Communications Technology (ICT) team has been very busy over the last year with major cybersecurity architecture upgrades to all sites to maximise our security and compliance. As well as our relocation of Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre from its original location to our new location in Katoomba's town centre.

Dale Reardon ICT Manager

The ICT team also dealt with 1134 staff help desk requests over the last year. The team enjoys working with our staff while resolving help desk requests and it gives us a chance to get to know all of our staff.

Cybersecurity and data privacy are of very high importance for Belong Blue Mountains. Our "AI" cyber security software that was installed in the recent cybersecurity architecture upgrades has blocked over 5400 external connection attempts in the last 12 months. And that number is for one site only. This is a typical number for any similar size workplace but it does point out the importance of quality cybersecurity.

Our ICT also underwent an audit on our ICT systems during the last six months via an external company and we had very good results and feedback from the audit. Belong Blue Mountains ICT is meeting the essential eight ICT maturity model.

Our Internet and Communications Technology manager Dale Reardon and ICT Technician Jordan Fiddling enjoy our interactions with our work colleagues and clients and enjoy working in the community sector. We look forward to Belong Blue Mountains continuing to establish itself as a leader in our sector for the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas. ■



HUMAN RESOURCES & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT

During this year we have welcomed Emma Wheeler to our team and she has added a much-appreciated level of IT expertise to the group. Emma's skills have supported our work in refining the organisation's use of our HR platform, Employment Hero, and this work will continue into the next financial year.

Various changes in industrial legislation during the year have been reviewed and incorporated into Belong's Human Resources policies and practices, with guidance provided to staff as to how these changes impact their working lives.

Our Work Health & Safety Framework was developed with all WHS policies and procedures

reviewed and updated as required. An internal Health & Safety Committee has been established, with training and ongoing support for committee members provided by our consultant, Rob Watson of Bridge the Gap.

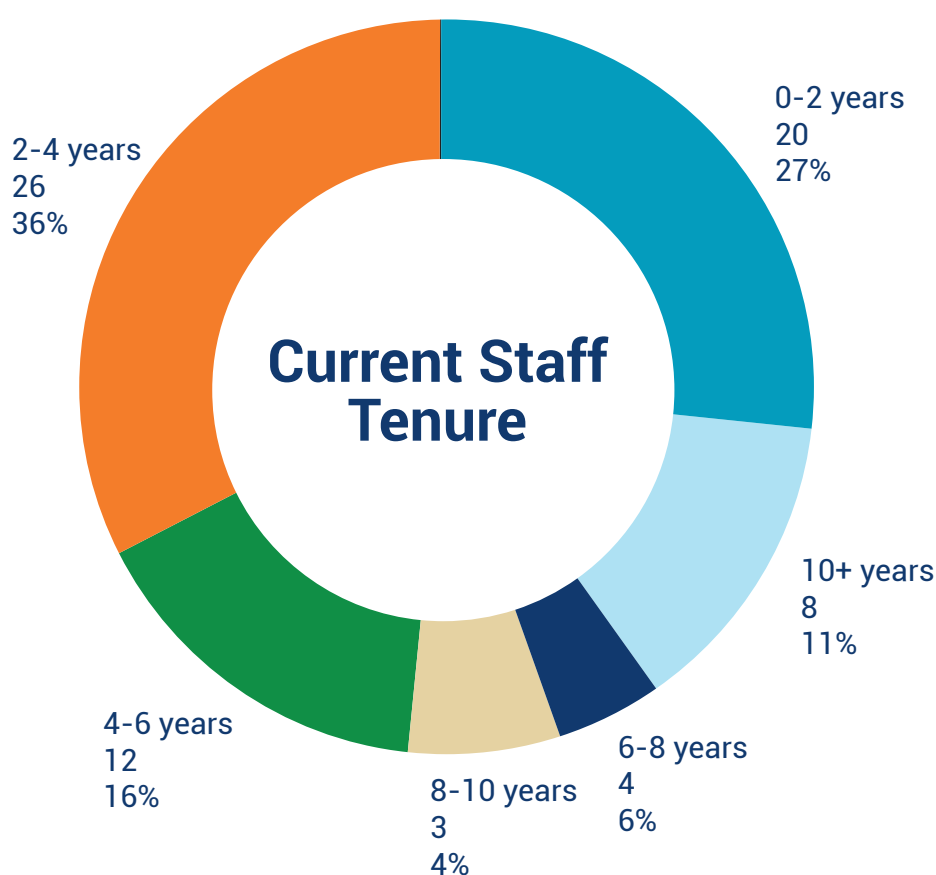
The KOOSH team underwent an external Assessment and Rating quality audit by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQA) with outstanding results. The service met all standards and regulations and was rated as meeting the National Quality Standards. Other quality audits of our NDIS and Aged Care services are expected in the next financial year and preparation for these audits has commenced. ■



STAFF SNAPSHOT

Total Workforce	251	100%
Number of staff	73	29%
Number of volunteers	178	71%

Employment Type		
Full time	19	26%
Part time	42	58%
Casual	12	16%



Staff Diversity – Age range	
0-20	1%
21-30	9%
31-40	21%
41-50	21%
50+	48%

Staff Diversity - Gender	
Female	78%
Male	22%

OUR SUPPORTERS

Belong Blue Mountains wishes to acknowledge and thank the following:

Government Support

Australian Government

Department of Health

Department of Industry, Science Energy & Resources

Department of Social Services

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)



NSW Government

Department of Communities & Justice

Department of Education

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD)



Local Government

Blue Mountains City Council



Members of Parliament

State Member of Parliament: Trish Doyle MP,
Member for Blue Mountains

Federal Member of Parliament: Susan Templeman
MP, Member for Macquarie

Community donations

Thank you to all individuals and organisations who have donated to Belong Blue Mountains over the last year, either through cash donations, donations of wool, food and other practical items.

Community partnerships, collaborations and support

Thank you to everyone in all services across the Blue Mountains who are committed to working collaboratively for a community that values justice and equality. Belong BM thanks the following businesses, organisations and partners for their contributions in 2023-2024:

Active Care Network

Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)

Aged & Community Services Australia

Apprenticeship Support Australia

Bakery Patisserie Schwartz

Bendigo Bank - Katoomba & Upper Blue Mountains

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre

Blaxland & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Blaxland East Public School

Blaxland Library

Blue Mountains City Council Squalor and Hoarding
Committee and Prue Hardgrove

Blue Fringe Committee

Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource
Centre (ACRC)

Blue Mountains Community Interagency (BMCI)

Blue Mountains Food Services

The Blue Mountains Gazette

Blue Mountains Leisure Centres

Blue Mountains TAFE

Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre

Caring Hearts Quilters

Aunty Carol Cooper

Carers NSW

The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

Central Mountains Rotary

Central Tablelands & Blue Mountains Community
Legal Centre

Commonwealth Bank Katoomba

Community Care Forum and Prue Hardgrove BMCC

Connect Child and Family Services

Gateway Family Services

Hazelbrook Association

HUBitat –
 Lower Mountains Community Hub
 Katoomba Radio Cabs
 Katoomba High School
 Katoomba North Public School
 Katoomba Public School
 KU Children's Services
 Lawson Community Preschool
 Lawson Public School
 LEEP Understand Technology
 Link Wentworth (Community Housing)
 Lithgow High School
 Lithgow Information & Neighbourhood Centre
 Local Community Services Association (LCSA)
 Mary Mackillop Today (for NILS)
 Mental Health Commission of NSW
 Mental Health & Networking Forum
 Mid Mountains Cabs
 Mid Mountains Family Support Network
 Mootang Tarimi (Nepean Blue Mountains Aboriginal Health Unit)
 Mountains Community Resource Network (MCRN)
 Mountains Multicultural Interagency
 Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS)
 Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST)
 NCOSS – Council of Social Services NSW
 Neighbourhood Aid Association
 NBMLHD:
 • Palliative Support
 • Regional Assessment Team
 • Community Health
 Nepean Blue Mountains NDIS CEOs Roundtable
 Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services (NCNS)
 Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network
 Network of Community Services
 Paint The Town Read
 Partners in Recovery
 Peppercorn Services
 Resilience & Preparedness Working Group
 Rotary Club of Upper and Lower Blue Mountains
 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
 Rural Fire Service
 Springwood High School
 Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative
 Stronger Families Alliance
 Thrive Family Support
 Wendy's Home Care
 Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF)
 Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre

Youth Mental Health Illness & Substance Abuse Network
Bread and Food Donations
 Central Blue Mountains Rotary
 Food Bank NSW & ACT
 Woolworths
 Lawson Baptist Church
 Cornerstone Community Care
 St Vincent de Paul
Other Donations
 Tour de Cure
 Collier Foundation
 T Leuffeu
 David Taylor
 Lucy Keady
 Zonta Club of Blue Mountains
 Colin Semmler
 The United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW
 Commonwealth Bank
 Susan Lalaluddin
 Audrey Anderson
 Big Issue distributors
 Emily Jateff
 NRMA Katoomba
 Michael Woodfine
 Lorna Jackson
 Blue Mountains Grammar School
 Warwick Harrison
 Kevin Schreiber
 Sabina Danigawa
 Blue Mountains City Council Community Assistance Program
Consultants and Contractors
 Marty Walker, Still Moving Design
 Michael Farrell-Whelan
 Wendy's Home Care
 Tracey Willow
 Deborah Sharpe
 Rob Watson, Bridge the Gap
 Nikki Boys, Blue Tide Consulting
Annual Report Acknowledgements
 This report was written by staff at Belong Blue Mountains.
 Editor: Jo Ridley
 Proof-reader: Emma Wheeler
 Photographs: Marty Walker and staff
 Design and layout: Felicity Stannard
 The Belong Blue Mountains Board and staff acknowledge with thanks Bennett's Printing, Katoomba, for the production of this report.

FINANCIAL REPORT

TREASURER'S REPORT

DAVID CATON



I am pleased to report that the financial performance of Belong Blue Mountains continues to be strong with increasing turnover and revenue in this period by \$2,516,531 to \$18,589,624 as a result of the following:

- NDIS Plan Management throughput increased by \$1,724,098 to \$12,462,601 increasing turnover.
- Increased funding in line with the funding contract - Carer and Dementia Support - Working together to improve wellbeing program contributed \$333,356 to 2023 /2024 growth in revenues.
- Additional Growth Funding for the Home Maintenance unit of the Commonwealth Home Support Program funded by the Department of Health contributed \$194,014 to 2023 /2024 growth in revenues.
- New funding program: Transport for Katoomba Out of School Hours Care program – a one-off grant to assist the purchase of a new bus funded by the NSW Department of Education contributed \$135,202 to 2023/2024 growth in revenues.
- New funding program: Home Bin Assistance – a \$40,000 one-year project running from
- January 2024 to December 2024 funded by the Collier Charitable Fund contributed \$40,000 to 2023/2024 growth in revenues.
- New funding program: Connecting Seniors – a \$20,000 six-month program running from March 2024 to September 2024 funded by the Department of Communities & Justice contributed \$20,000 to 2023/2024 growth in revenues.
- New funding program: Toy Library – a \$13,431 one-year project running from July 2023 to June 2024 funded by the Department of Social Services contributed \$13,431 to 2023/2024 growth in revenues.
- New funding program: First Nations Support – a \$14,838 one-year project running from July 2023 to June 2024 funded by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology contributed \$14,838 to 2023/2024 growth in revenues.
- Other one-off programs (both last year and this year) and all other revenue streams increased 2023/2024 revenues on a comparative basis by \$41,592.

Expenses for 2023/2024 grew by \$2,558,016 to \$18,552,922 as follows:

- NDIS Plan Management throughput increased by \$1,724,098 to \$12,462,601 increasing turnover
- Staff costs grew by \$541,799 in line with the new funding programs detailed above
- Program costs grew by \$238,723 in line with the new funding programs detailed above
- All other costs grew by \$53,396

The 2023/2024 financial year resulted in an overall operating net income of \$36,702, a decrease on last year's operating result of \$78,187.

Reserves increased to \$477,408 being 7.8% of operating income (down from 8.3% last financial year).

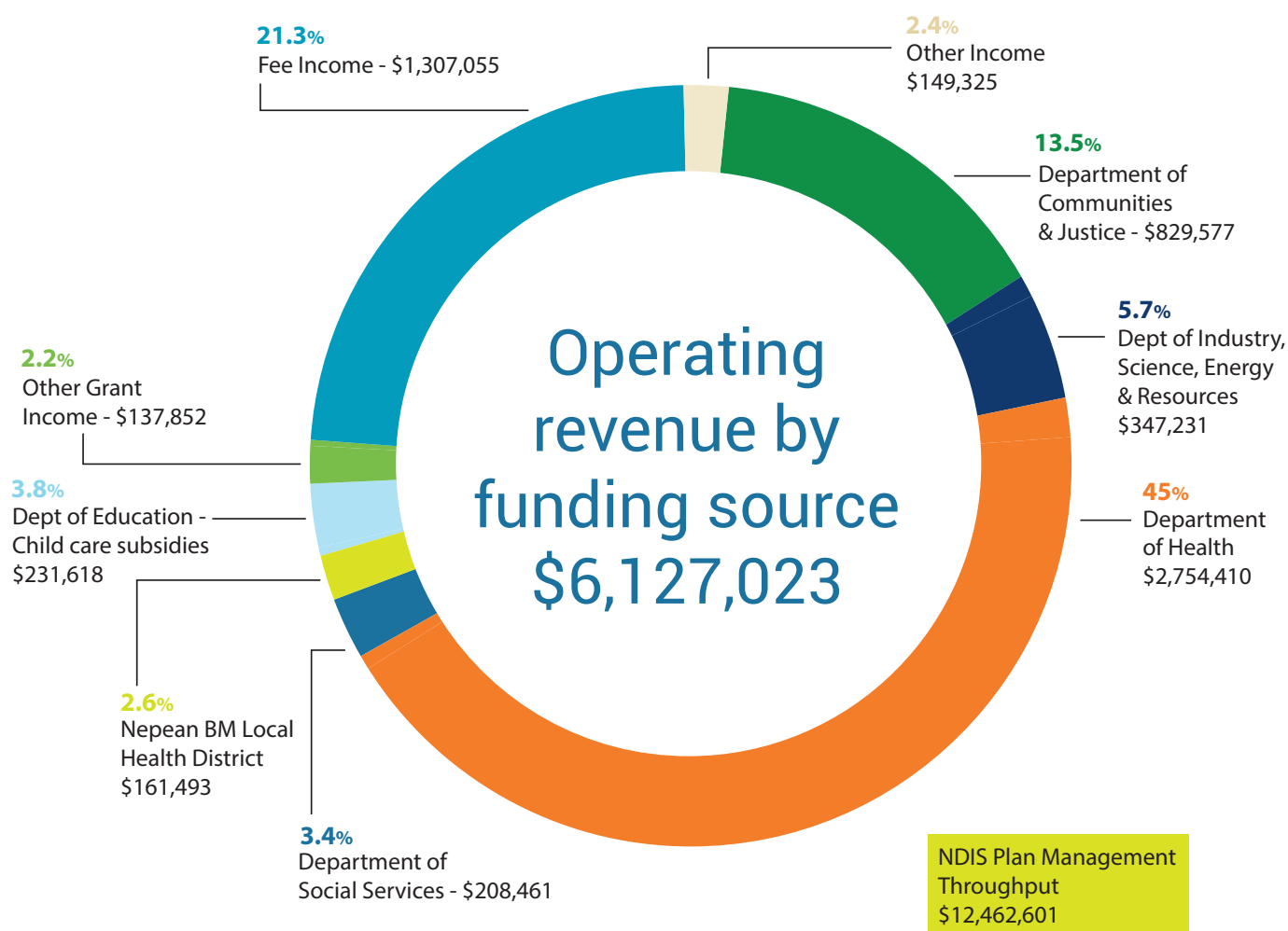
I thank our CFO Mr Len Kasper and our finance team for their professionalism and excellent performance throughout the financial year.

Ms Leanne Smith replaced Mr John Thompson as audit partner of Intentus as Belong Blue Mountain's auditor for the 2023/2024 financial year. ■

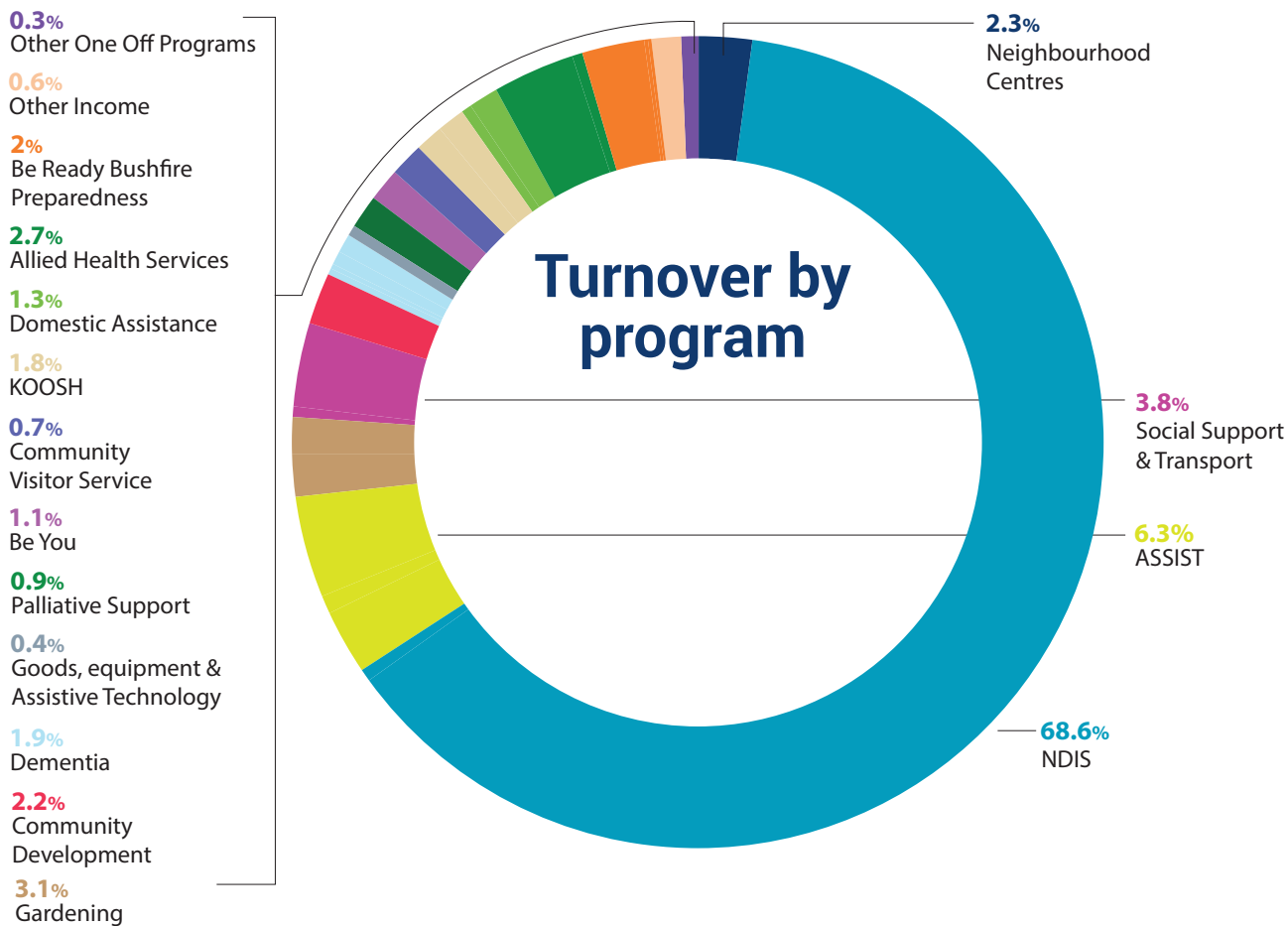
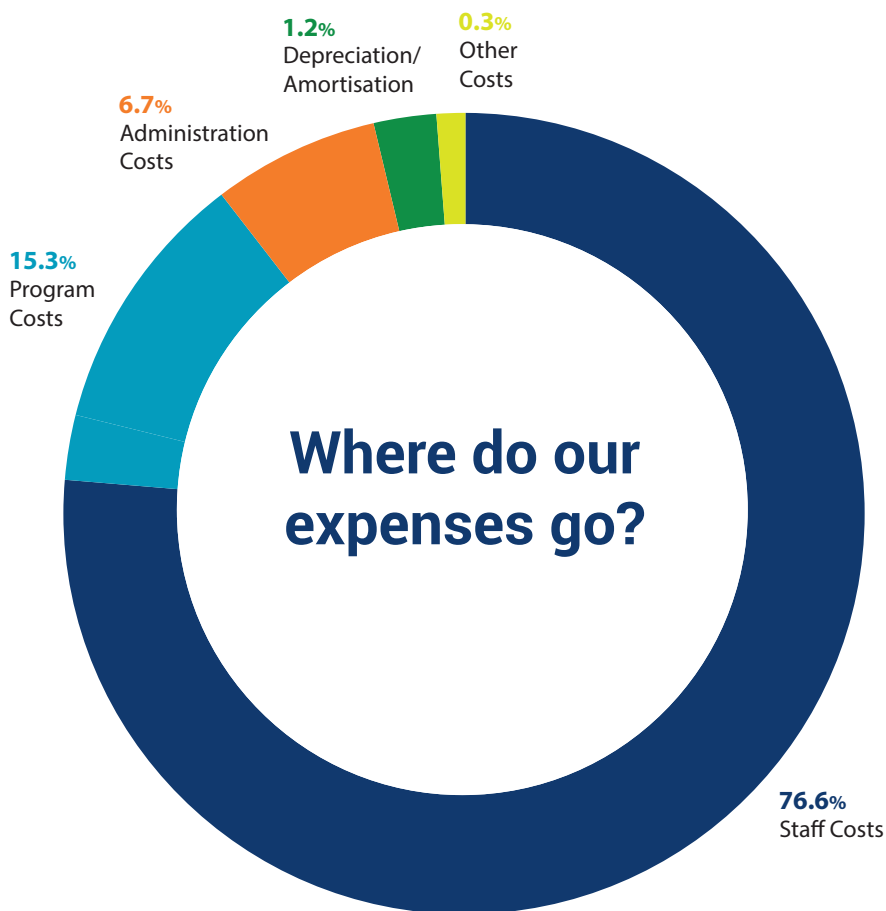
FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT 1 JULY 2023 - 30 JUNE 2024

Income Statement	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022
Revenue	\$6,127,023	\$5,334,590	\$4,819,083
Expenses	\$6,090,321	\$5,256,403	\$5,014,975
Net Surplus/ Deficit	\$36,702	\$78,187	\$195,892
Reserves	\$477,448	\$440,746	\$362,559
NDIS Plan management throughput	\$12,462,601	\$10,738,504	\$8,918,998



FINANCIAL REPORT continued







BE HEARD • BE CONNECTED • BE SUPPORTED • BELONG



How you can contact us

Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre

(Head Office)

Town Centre Arcade

81-83 Katoomba Street

Katoomba NSW 2780

Tel: 02 4782 1117

Email: kncadmin@belongbm.org.au

Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Mid Mountains Community Centre

9 New Street

Lawson NSW 2783

Tel: 02 4759 2592

Email: mmncadmin@belongbm.org.au

Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Blaxland Community Centre

33 Hope Street, Blaxland NSW 2774

Tel: 02 4739 1164

Email: lmncadmin@belongbm.org.au







BE HEARD • BE CONNECTED • BE SUPPORTED • BELONG

We recognise, celebrate and thank everyone
who contributes to the the work of
Belong Blue Mountains
for and with the people
of the Blue Mountains community.

