

# BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC. 2019 Annual Report 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019

### BE HEARD • BE CONNECTED • BE SUPPORTED • BELONG





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Belong Blue Mountains acknowledges the Darug and Gundungurra nations as the traditional custodians of the land of the Blue Mountains.

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### Be Heard • Be Connected • Be Supported • Belong

### Bringing Belong Blue Mountains into being

Kath Harrison, CEO and Peta Williams, Director, Corporate & Quality

ourneys like the one the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres took over the last 2½ years began well before that.

Our journey to Belong Blue Mountains actually began with the formation of BLINN, the Blue Mountains & Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network, which is made up of the then six neighbourhood centres in the Blue Mountains, the neighbourhood centre in Lithgow, and Mountains **Outreach Community Services** (MOCS). We remain a committed member of BLINN and believe that we have a strong voice that supports the challenges of the community sector through our membership of BLINN. We are privileged to be part of a community sector in the Blue Mountains that is committed to the work we all do in the community and are supportive of each other.

It was from the discussions within BLINN about its future structure that the Boards of the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres decided to form one organisation, and the birth of the idea of Belong Blue Mountains began.

The three separate neighbourhood centres - Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre - were formed throughout the late 70s to late 80s and have always played a vital role in providing essential services to the community.

The Centres were always hubs of community support and activity. Together they employ some 50 staff and manage an army of over 200 regular volunteers. Their services include programs for children, young people, families and neighbourhoods (such as community information and referral services, social, health and wellbeing groups, exercise classes, playgroups, Out of School Hours service, community festivals and many other community projects), aged care services (including transport services, social groups, ASSIST home modifications and maintenance, domestic assistance and volunteer home visitors), No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), palliative support services and disability services.

The steps along the journey to bringing Belong Blue Mountains into being included many meetings of Board



representatives and the managers of each of the neighbourhood centres; workshops and consultation with staff; surveys with our volunteers: and consultation with members of our communities, undertaken in part with the creative vision of Wild Hive Studios, and through the work and support of our Transition Project Officer, Deb Dare. The key strategy was to come up with an organisational structure that would grow and improve the invaluable services that the three neighbourhood centres provide for their respective Blue Mountains communities.

We'd like to thank the staff of our State and Commonwealth funding partners, and in particular the NSW Family & Community Services and the Commonwealth Departments of Health and Social Services, for their support and help in navigating how we folded our separate funding contracts into the one organisation.

We would also like to acknowledge with thanks the support of the Mayor, Councillors and staff of the Blue Mountains City Council, Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains, and Susan Templeman MP, Member for Macquarie, throughout the transition process.

On 8 November 2018, after more than 100 years of combined community service, the Katoomba, Mid Mountains and Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centres joined together under the new umbrella organisation, 'Belong Blue Mountains Community and Neighbourhood Services' at a special event held at the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre. Belong Blue Mountains was officially launched by Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains, and so began an exciting new beginning for neighbourhood services in the Blue Mountains.

Each of our neighbourhood centres and community hubs strive to create a sense of belonging in the community. To be heard, to be connected, to be supported, is to belong. The new organisational name 'Belong' was selected as it reflects the heart of who we are and why our services exist.

Research shows that a strong sense of connectedness and belonging to our local community are of critical importance for the wellbeing and quality of life, as well as for building social cohesion and resilience. The new structure will give us an even greater opportunity to make a real and lasting difference in our communities.

Kath Harrison, CEO & Peta Williams, Director Corporate & Quality

# Belong

A poem by Brian Bell

All through life we aspire to be not just "I" or "me" - rather "us" and "we", in a sometime search for a place to go to engage with friends with a heartfelt glow.

We can take time off from the push and rave from the family's nest and the he-man's cave, to a place that calls like a siren's song with a hint expressed - that we all belong.

With no need to brag or to make a fuss it's the place for friends - which belongs to us!

Brian Bell © 2018

Our warmest thanks to Glenbrook resident and poet, Brian Bell, for writing this beautiful poem for the launch of Belong Blue Mountains on 8 November 2018.

### Section 1: An overview of Belong Blue Mountains

#### Who we are

Belong Blue Mountains Inc. is a locally-based, locally-run, community development and service organisation formed in November 2018 to bring together the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres.

Our three Centres have more than 100 years of community service between them. They are safe, welcoming places in which we work to build the strength and resilience of our community.

#### What we do

We provide services and activities for people of all ages with many different needs. We aim to be inclusive and build connectedness and belonging to improve wellbeing, quality of life and social cohesion. We create shared aspirations with our community. We link children, young people and adults with the support they need. And we provide volunteering opportunities for those who want to give back.

### Why we do it

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 groups in the community. We believe the development of networks, mutual support and collective action can improve quality of life for our entire community.

**Below:** Board member Rob Firth (left) with former LMNC Chair, Peter Johnson at the launch of Belong Blue Mountains.



# A SNAPSHOT OF OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES 2018-2019

#### **AGED CARE SERVICES**

hours of social support through social inclusion groups and individual Volunteer Home Visitors services

#### COMMUNITIES

484 social inclusion program sessions

6,024 people attended social inclusion programs

43 services coordinated through the hubs

24 events held

4.441 people attended our events

57.243 resource items produced

**4,565** people connected with information in person

7,854 people connected with information by phone

963 people supported through assisted referrals

922 people attended our community consultation activities

369 Intake enquiries

\$212,083 expended on Home modifications for My Aged Care clients

2,630 hours given to Home maintenance for My Aged Care clients

72 clients being supported by 67 volunteers through Volunteer Home Visitors

2,160 hours of service in Palliative Support with 23 volunteers

3,865 social transport trips

2,395 hours of domestic assistance

#### **DISABILITY SERVICES**

43% increase in Disability Support coordination participants

19% increase in Disability Plan management participants

# KOOSH (Katoomba out of School Hours)

Number of families 124

Number of children 183

Number of days open for before and after school care 206

Number of days open for vacation care and pupil free days 62

Total days open 268

Total bookings for before school care 1,420

Total bookings for after school care 4,619

Total bookings for vacation care 1,572

Total bookings 7,611

### **Section 1: Our People**

#### **Board members**

Belong Blue Mountains is governed by a voluntary Board. The key role of the Board and staff is to ensure that Belong Blue Mountains is an active contributor to the development of a strong, healthy, safe, resilient and vibrant self-help community across the Blue Mountains.

# Board members for 2018-2019 were:

Chair: Ruth Bennett

**Deputy Chair:** Wendy Holland **Secretary:** Mahalya Middlemist

Treasurer: David Caton

Members: Greg Birtles (resigned November 2018), John Crichton, Rob Firth (resigned November 2018), Warwick Fuller, Maria Katrivesis, Leanne Kent, Don McGregor, Elizabeth (Gay)

Thornton

Public Officer: Len Kasper, Chief Financial Officer

### **Executive Staff Team**

**Chief Executive Officer:** Kath Harrison **Director, Communities:** Mick Barrett

**Director, Care & Support**: Barbara Cuthbert **Director, Corporate & Quality**: Peta Williams

Director, Finance (Chief Financial Officer): Len Kasper

#### Belong Blue Mountains Executive team.

**Below from left:** Barbara Cuthbert, Director Care & Support; Mick Barrett, Director Communities; Kath Harrison, CEO; Peta Williams, Director Corporate & Quality; Len Kasper, Director Finance.



### Section 1: Our People (cont.)

#### Directorates' staff

Care & Support (Chronic, Vulnerable, Aged & Disability Services)

**Director:** Barbara Cuthbert

**ASSIST** 

ASSIST Building Services Manager: Stephen Ramsay Service Coordinator: Megan Kavanagh (to Jan 2019)

**Building & Maintenance Staff:** 

Thomas Redmond, Chris

McKenzie-McHarg, Dave Noble

**ASSIST Administration Assistant:** 

Patricia Kerry

**Occupational Therapist**: Matthew Jones (resigned Sept 2018)

**Aged Care** 

Blue Mountains Community
Support Program Coordinator:

Claire Grover

Community Visitors Scheme Coordinator: Felicity Tonks

Coordinator: Felicity Tonks
Volunteer Home Visitors

**Coordinators:** Marlene Churn, Narelle Mackander, Eva Regitz

**Community Cafe Facilitator:** 

Pauline Stafrace

**Katoomba Film Club Coordinator:** 

**Korey Gunnis** 

**Disability** 

**Disability Services Coordinator:** 

Anna Tardent

Tracey Johnson: NDIS Support

Coordinator

Vickie Hastedt: NDIS Support Co-

ordinator

Patricia Kerry: NDIS Plan Management Administration Kasey Arnold: NDIS Plan Management Administration

Intake workers: Korey Gunnis and

**Bren Sherring** 

**Palliative Support:** 

Palliative Support Coordinator: Katrina Simmons

Communities (Children, Youth, Families & Neighbourhoods)

Director. Mick Barrett

Community Engagement Manager: Danielle Wilding-Forbes Community Development Coordinators: Kerin Pollock, Christopher Smith, Josie Vendramini (to May 2019),

Deb Dare (temporary)

**NILS Customer Support Officer:** Pauline Stafrace

Mental Health Coordinator: Bren Sherring (to March 2019) Mental Health Project Officers: Melanie Van Kessell (to Nov

2018), Natasha Simon,

Casuals: Amos Tito, Jennifer Mace.

KOOSH Coordinator, Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader: Vasant Demello (to Feb 2019),

Amy Gaymer (Acting from Feb 2019)

Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader: Cate Harrison Childcare worker and First Aid Officer: Isaac Sherring-Tito Casual childcare workers: Cid Bender, Hunter de Groot, Mia Gyaneshwar, Aida Arce, Miranda Carofalow, Belinda

Lopez, Zoe Tombs

Administration Officer: Katherine Johns

Administration Support Officers: Sarah Dean, Sara Fawcett

#### Corporate & Quality

**Director:** Peta Williams

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Manager:

Dale Reardon

**Development Coordinator:** Laurie Strathdee (resigned Jan 2019)

#### **Finance**

**Director & Chief Financial Officer:** Len Kasper

Assistant Accountants: Leigh Gordon, Neil Smith and

Carole Williams



# Section 1: Our People (cont.)

#### **Our Volunteers**

Volunteering is part of building a caring community. Our work at Belong Blue Mountains through its range of programs and services could not be undertaken without our strong volunteer workforce; they are the foundation of who we are and what we do. We thank you for your time, energy, skills, expertise, and generosity of spirit.

#### **Communities**

#### **Lower Mountains**

#### **Reception volunteers**

Lynn Baggaley, Anna Bednarz, Yvonne Etherington, Diane Greenaway, Maureen Fuller, Kerrie Howson, Robbie McKenzie, Pam Murray, Gioia Price, Anna Russell, Maree Spillard, Jan Wilkinson, Lynn Willis

#### Reception supervisor & trainer: Lynn Willis

Project/service volunteers
Community Liaison Officer Merilyn Blacker
Transport Drivers (social, medical, bus transport): Peter Apps,
Ray Barrett, Marek Bowman,
Wayne Clark, Damon Cox, Jenny

'Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society.
It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety and justice for all people.'

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering

Dooley, Jim Fitzpatrick, Philip Gilchrist, Barry Henry, Diane Greenaway, Marn Harrex, Pip Kells, Russell Lang, Rick Paynter, Jan Wilkinson, Lynn Willis, Heather Lee, Beth Madden, Terry Madden

#### **Shopping Bus Hosts**

Maureen Fuller, Sue McCully, Laurie Willis

#### **Graffiti Management**

John Oakey (Co-ordinator), Scott Annabel, Kevin Archer, Lynn Cheshire, Ian Dingwall, Luke Dingwall, David Fuge, Aaron Govendir, Bob Treasure, John Watkins-Wilson, Roger Winterburn

#### **BUGs (Blaxland Ukulele Group)**

Kay Burton, Co-ordinator

#### **Blaxland Disco**

Lani Fercher, Co-ordinator

#### **Harmony Art & Friendship Group**

Neville Rowe, Coordinator

#### **Art Group for Seniors**

Sara Fawcett, Shirley Williams (artist and facilitator)

#### **Christmas Day lunch**

Christine Kelly and a large number of volunteers

#### Wrap With Love

All those who contribute to the Wrap With Love project

#### **Mid Mountains**

#### **Reception volunteers**

Patricia Caton, Glenis Cole, Sue Grimble, Sarah Griffiths, Hamsa Lingham, Carol Lubbers, Helen Routledge

#### **Project / service volunteers**

Sophie Williams - Book Club, Nigel Armstrong - Mid Mountains Walkers, Therese Corbett - CFS/Fibromylagia -Robert Musgrave and Brian Sneddon - Cube Club, Natasha Simon - Bipolar Support Group, Alexandra Holmes -Multiple Diagnosis, Barb Bee - Work Skills for Women, Ken Goodlet - Bushwalks leader

#### Katoomba

#### **Reception volunteers**

David Armitage (also reception trainer), Dave Croll, Dianne Donnellan, Jackie Delaney, Jim Hennessey, Mary Lawson, Carol Price, June Rose, Angela Sharman, Denise Stott and Bradley Young

# Retired KNC Volunteers during 2018-2019

Johanna O'Hea and Hanna Lemire

# Community Lunches First Thursday of the Month Volunteers

David Armitage (set up), Adrian Gean (Music), Lyn Harrison, Jim Hennessey, June Rose (cooks the meals and plays music), Brad Young, Gillian.

# Care & Support Lower Mountains

#### **Volunteer Home Visitors**

Andrea Lupuleasa, Beth Madden, Beth Strahan, David Burnett, Diane Greenaway, Elizabeth Rose, Gavin Latz, Greg Batten, Heather Lee, Jan Oliver, Jan Wilkinson, Jan Winterburn, Jenny Dooley, Joy Pierce, Lesley Willis, Lynn Willis, Marek Bowman, Marn Harrex, Maureen Aspinall, Neville Rowe, Paul Ethrington, Pip Kells, Sara Fawcett, Steve Callaghan, Terry Madden, Tonia Segon, Wayne Clark

#### **Mid Mountains**

#### **Volunteer Home Visitors**

Greg Birtles, Harry van den Bout, Sue Grimble, Brian McGrath, Glenis Cole, Pam Cooley, Jennifer De Roo, Dianne Hall, Tony Hiam, Chris Kelly, Kate Litchfield, Anne Lydamore, Sandra Metcalf, Alex Mitcheson, Suzanne Morrow, Janet Noble, Jackie Rickard, Aysheh Esawee, Nyla Thomas, Susan Wedd, Franco Veronesi, Elke Vogel, Yuping Xia, Adriana Perez, Paul Garde

#### Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service

Robyn Artup, Kim Berthon, Barbara Charman, Jill Comber, Anthony Craig, Anne Davies, Jill Dujuric, Maureen Doherty, Beth Edwards, Vicki Glew, Ruth Grace, Margaret Gudgeon, Bill Harvey, Kerry Healey Binns, Agnes Jaccoud, Penny Kearney, Chris Kolokoutsas, Patricia Marshall, Ruth Myers, Kerry Rice, Terry Ryan, Kathy Ryan, Christine Sinclair, Sophia Stephenson, Andrew Stout, Brenda Taffel, Sally Taylor, Melinda Turner

#### Katoomba

#### **Volunteer Home Visitors**

Antonio Cornado-Cornet, Narelle McIntyre, Robyn Fairbairn, Diane Stebbings, Sabrina Haberlah, Bernadette Power, Biruta Latta, Joy Constantine, Matthew Johnson, Rexann Maxwell, Gwen Meehan, Pat McCullough, Gino Baudo, Verna Van Ryswk, Dave Croll, Suzanne Kuhn.

#### **Community Visitors Scheme, Katoomba**

Elizabeth Bowe, Antoni Cornado-Cornet, Keith Davies,
Denise Garden, Kerrin Gale, Jules Booth, Carol Price, Linda
Hemmings, Matthew Tonks, Chantelle Wallis, Patricia
Woodley, Sabrina Haberlah, Sara Nyssen, Carolanne Van
Leeuwen, Giulia Priante, Joy Constantine, Matthew Johnson,
Narelle Wilson, Peter Aboud, Wendy Jones, Rosemary
Barrett, Christine Haiss, Arone-Ru Gumas-Lopez.

#### **Community Visitors Scheme, Springwood**

Wendy Hutchinson, Noreen Mason, David Rees, Phiona Stone, Ann Thomas, Lisa Varjavandi, Lynette White, Pat Wilby, Rodrigo Bourke, Carol Carroll, Anne Cawley, Marlene Doublesin, Vicki Glew, James Henderson, Nerine Hide, Melissa Hill, Jill Hogwood, Louise Hughes, Chris Hughes, Jenny Hughes, Marion Hughes.

#### **Film Club Volunteers**

Greg Rich (Movie Program Design), Aaron Thorn and Gino Baudo

Vision Impaired Group Volunteer Pat McCullough



# Section 2: Acknowledgements

Belong Blue Mountains wishes to acknowledge and thank the following:

#### **Government support**

#### **Australian Government**

Department of Health
Department of Social Services





#### **NSW Government**

Departments of: Family & Community Services, Education, Justice, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, and Fair Trading







Education



Fair Trading

#### **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 or funding to the Wrap With Love project, or those who donated funds through the supply and purchase of books at our second-hand book stall.

#### 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 Blue Mountains thanks the following businesses, organisations and partners for their contributions in 2018-2019:

Aged & Community Services Australia

**Anytime Fitness** 

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre

Blaxland & Districts Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Blaxland High School

**Blaxland Library** 

Bendigo Bank

**Blue Fringe Committee** 

Blue Mountains Community Interagency (BMCI)

Blue Mountains Food Services

The Blue Mountains Gazette

Blue Mountains & Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network (BLINN)

Blue Mountains TAFE

Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre

The Carrington Hotel, Katoomba

Coalition Against Violence and Abuse (CAVA)

Community Care Forum and Prue Hardgrove BMCC

**Elder Abuse Collaborative** 

**Elders Lunch Planning Group** 

Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre

Friends of Melrose Park

**Gateway Family Services** 

Glenbrook Panthers

**GREAT Community Transport** 

Good Shepherd Youth & Family Service (for NILS)

Hazelbrook Association

HUBitat – Lower Mountains Community Hub

Junction 123

Kinship at Christmas Foundation

Lithgow Information &

Neighbourhood Centre

**Local Community Services** 

Association (LCSA)

Mental Health Commission of

**NSW** 

Mental Health & Networking

Forum

Mid Mountains Family Support

Network

**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

Nepean Blue Mountains NDIS

CEOs Roundtable

Nepean Community &

Neighbourhood Services (NCNS)

Partners in Recovery

Palais Royale Katoomba

Resilience & Preparedness

**Working Group** 

Rotary Club of Lower Blue

Mountains

Springwood Neighbourhood

Centre Cooperative

Stronger Families Alliance

Thrive Family Support

LEEP Understand Technology

Western Sydney Community

Forum (WSCF)

Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre

**Wentworth Community Housing** 

Wesley Counselling Support

Services

Youth Mental Health Illness & Substance Abuse Network

#### **Bread and Food Donations**

Central Blue Mountains Rotary

Earth Recovery Australia

Food Bank NSW & ACT

Hominy Bakery, Katoomba

Woolworths

#### **Community Lunches**

Ananda Marga

Avalon Restaurant, Katoomba

Bennett's Office Supplies, Katoomba

Blue Mountains Food Co-op, Katoomba

Café Landseers, Leura

Fine Flowers, Katoomba

The Hatter's Café, Katoomba

Leura Newsagency

Leura Pharmacy

The Lunch Box, Katoomba

Megalong Books, Leura

Pears and Apples, Leura

#### **Consultants and Contractors**

Cocoon Creative

Marty Walker, Still Moving Design

Michael & Wendy Farrell-Whelan, Farrell-Whelan &

**Associates** 

Virginia Field

Juan Pereyra, PNYX

Wendy's Home Care

Jo Ridley

Wild Hive Studios

Tracey Willow

#### **Annual Report Acknowledgements**

This report and its accompanying compendium was written by staff and volunteers at Belong Blue Mountains.

Compiled and edited by: Peta Williams

With assistance from Carole Williams

Photographs: Marty Walker, Wild Hive Studios, and staff

Graphic design and layout: Felicity Tonks

The Belong Blue Mountains Board and staff acknowledge with thanks Bennett's Printing, Katoomba, for the production of this report.

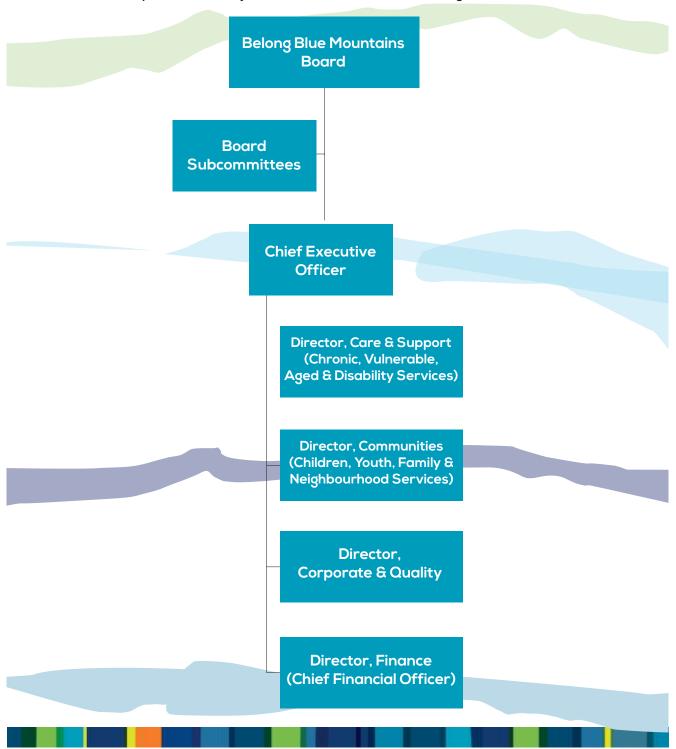
### **Section 3: Governance**

### Structure & Management

elong Blue Mountains is designed on a directorate model, with the four directors reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, who reports to the Board.

The three neighbourhood centres in Blaxland, Lawson and Katoomba are part of the community hubs within the Communities Directorate, with programs and services from the Communities and Care & Support directorates being delivered through these community hubs.

The Finance and Corporate & Quality directorates work across the organisation.



**Director** Care & Director Director Support **Communities** Director Finance (Chronic, (Children, (Chief Financial Corporate **CEO** Vulnerable. Youth. Officer) & Quality Aged & Family & Disability Neighbourhood Services) Services) Communication **Financial** Neighbourhood (marketing & reporting, **Disability** Centres & promotion) budgeting and NDIS Community and Information, Hubs **Services** Governance management **Communication & Technology (ICT)** Social, Health & Wellbeing groups **Quality, Policies** Compliance **Vulnerable &** & Procedures **Aged Care** & activities incl. Accreditation **Services Mental Health** support incl. Volunteer Human Home Visitors, Resources Community **Visitors** Community Community development, **Facilities** Support, Intake, **Strategic** events and Governance **Domestic** Management **Planning** consultations Association Assistance, Membership, **Transport Board support Facilitated** playgroups Home **Financial Modifications Operations** & **Acquittals** KOOSH Maintenance Katoomba (ASSIST) **Out Of** Compliance **Business School Hours** Development childcare Accreditation Audit & **Palliative** Reconciliations **Support No Interest Work Health Loan Scheme** & Safety (NILS)

### Section 3: Governance (cont.)

### Chairperson's Report Ruth Bennett

elong Blue Mountains is proud to acknowledge that we are privileged to meet on the traditional lands of the Darug and Gundungurra nations. We pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging and thank them for their wisdom and for their support for this organisation.

Belong Blue Mountains has had many noteworthy achievements this past year. We pay tribute to our CEO Kath Harrison, our executive management team our Directors Mick Barrett, Peta Williams, Barbara Cuthbert, and our CFO Len Kasper. I pay tribute to our CEO who is highly valued by the board, and is indefatigable in her commitment. Our CEO and executive management team have displayed extraordinary leadership, integrity, hard work, inspiration and dogged diligence in always going the extra mile.



They have the board's full support.

Over this past year our turnover has increased; our staff and volunteers have grown in number; our responsibilities have broadened and deepened. We have stayed on message and stuck to our knitting: Belong BM always seeks to be of assistance to the most needy in our community – across age groups, across abilities, young families, older singles living with health conditions, the vulnerable, the elderly, the homeless without homes to go to, those requiring palliative care, to children and families in our out of school hours care, and in our auspicing of playgroups for the very young.

We have a strong governance focus, and our board has been agile in responding to the changing funding environment, and in providing guidance to our management team. I thank my fellow board members for their commitment, their energy, their wisdom, and their generous commitment of their time and effort in supporting Belong BM and its endeavours. We have had some change at board level, and we sincerely thank those Board members who retired at our AGM in November last year - Sue Atherton, our retiring Treasurer, Greg Birtles and Rob Firth - for their service, and contribution to the board over this past year.

Over this year we have successfully bedded down the new organisation, and commenced planning for the services we will provide to our Blue Mountains region in each of our centres, and also in conjunction with other neighbourhood centres and in partnership with other community organisations. This growth in these fragile economic times in which we find ourselves is truly remarkable, and the management and staff of Belong BM have worked incredibly hard under, at times, extremely stressful circumstances. There have been a number of expansions across our services, including increased client numbers in our NDIS plan management and support coordination services and in the amount of services offered at each location - Blaxland, Lawson, Katoomba - and those services offered in partnership with Springwood and Blackheath Neighbourhood Centres. Our Assist home modification service has grown from strength to strength, taking on increasingly complex projects to enable residents to age in their homes. Our manager and builder Steve Ramsay and

his hardworking team have sought to provide the highest quality of workmanship within time and budget to our clients, which has been of huge benefit in ensuring clients can live in an ongoing way in safety and security in their homes.

We thank the local community for the key support they give us, for their word-of-mouth recommendations that enable us to sustain and increase our business, and especially to the local business community who provide ongoing donations which ensure that our food bank can assist clients on a daily basis, and that community lunches can be held regularly. We strive to work with other likeminded organisations in our sector across our region in trust and cooperation, to ensure that ongoing empathic and responsive service delivery is provided to the vulnerable. These efforts are carried out by our hardworking and inspirational staff and volunteers, who we highly value, as they work with wisdom and kindness with clients who often face difficult situations with nil or limited budgets and resources.

Going forward, Belong BM seeks to remain a strong, viable and sustainable organisation. We wish to offer the best of the values of the neighbourhood centre movement to our communities across the Blue Mountains and to Lithgow and provide the highest quality aged care, disability, chronic care, child care and mental health services, for the long term.



Ruth Bennett, Chairperson, at Belong Blue Mountains' AGM in 2018

We are committing to ensuring that local communities and local voices have their priorities heard, and are listened to, and that strong and vibrant local services are sustained within our region, to serve our population, and offer employment to our residents. Our Belong BM family this organisation, its board, staff and volunteers – thanks the community, local government, our parliamentary representatives, and our funders for their commitment to this organisation in this competitive funding environment. We thank State and Federal government for their support, and ongoing financial funding which enables wide-ranging programs to be run in our community. We thank Local government for their support, our premises, and for their donations. We draw strength from this confidence and trust in us from our community and our funding bodies, which sustains us and keeps us to the task of moving forward.

Ruth Bennett, Chairperson

# Section 4: CEO & Directors' Reports

### **CEO's Report**

#### Kath Harrison

wish to acknowledge that Belong Blue Mountains Incorporated (Belong BM) operates on the lands of the traditional owners, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. I pay respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

In beginning, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Board of Belong BM for their grace, trust and support. As referred to previously, Belong BM launched on November 8<sup>th</sup> 2018, amid and in response to far reaching political, funding, economic and social reform impacting the community sector space and changing the work that we do and how we must now undertake it.

The professionalism shown by this committed group of community members in governing the new organisation with strength, commitment, grace, understanding and expertise is in no small part responsible for Belong BM being enabled to establish itself within our communities, our partners, funders and key stakeholders in our new form.

I would particularly like to thank the Board Executive for their commitment to me as the CEO of Belong BM and their availability during a time of such critical change. Our Board truly embodies strength in citizenship and a commitment to the provision of relevant, dynamic local services delivered by staff and volunteers who are of and for our local communities.

I acknowledge all staff and thank them for their ongoing support and commitment through a period of significant change impacting all aspects of their work environments from who they now target, to the forms they use to where they sit and who they report to. The staff of Belong Blue Mountains is a remarkable group of people and it is truly a privilege to be part of this team; the community and our target populations benefit from the professionalism, expertise and agility shown by the workforce in response to their needs and those of the Organisation. I honour and thank you for the trust placed in us during this challenging journey of change.

To our volunteers across all aspects of Belong BM neighbourhood centres, our volunteer home visitor programs, our palliative support service, the community visitors scheme, our many social inclusion groups and activities, reception volunteers, the community lunch volunteers, those engaged in the Mid Mountains Festival and the Graffiti programs - you continue to journey with us with generosity and commitment to the work we do. We could not operate without the support and expertise of our teams of volunteers. Our volunteer workforce enriches all service components of Belong Blue Mountains, providing friendship, connection, information, support

Kath Harrison, CEO, at Belong Blue Mountains' AGM in 2018



and care. Volunteers provide the vibrant and welcoming face of the Organisation as the first and essential point of contact as our reception workforce. We celebrate, honour and thank our volunteers.

I wish to acknowledge my colleagues Mick Barrett, Barbara Cuthbert, Len Kasper and Peta Williams who form the Management Executive of Belong Blue Mountains. This period of transition has been at times challenging and frustrating balanced with potential and opportunity. For the Executive Management Team, leading this change, letting go of the past, building new working relationships, learning new skills and going forward positively in a time of flux and funding uncertainty has brought with it not inconsiderable stress. I thank you for your ongoing commitment to the process, the Organisation, our community, our staff and volunteers.

Belong BM is privileged to continue to be strongly supported by the broader community -Blue Mountains City Council, local businesses, community groups, service clubs, our partner Community Sector Organisations, the Local Health District, individual community members and our State and Federal Members of Parliament. I join with the Belong BM Chairperson in thanking them all for their ongoing support. Our overall community support comes in many forms - practical assistance, resources, pro bono professional assistance, donations, fundraising, advertising, produce, expert advice, advocacy and representation. Our profile in the community is made possible by the strength and diversity of this ongoing support.

This Annual Report spans both service models. The first and second quarters of the reporting period, July – December 2018, saw the service readiness for operation under the new structures. The third and fourth quarters of the reporting period, January – June 2019, saw transition to the new Belong BM models of practice with staff, volunteers and contractors transferred to their respective directorates under the newly established Director positions. We have spent much of our first year building and bedding our Belong BM Directorate structures, establishing ourselves locally within our communities, and exploring opportunities with funders and stakeholders as Belong BM.

As identified in the Governance section of the Annual Report, we have organised the new Belong BM entity into Directorates with Directors responsible for the respective Directorate activity and services:

- Care & Support responsible for service provision to the aged, chronic care and disability target groups including home modification and maintenance, palliative support, disability support coordination and plan management, aged social support and inclusion services, one-on-one and group, domestic assistance and transport
- 2. Communities responsible for the neighbourhood centre and community hub information, referral and Linker services at the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba sites, community development, engagement and consultation, provision of the Targeted Early Intervention services (facilitated play groups, social inclusion, mental health support, children and young people, resilience and capacity building), the Out of School Hours child care services, No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)
- Corporate & Quality responsible for implementing and developing strategy, business development, procurement, governance, human resources, quality, compliance and work health safety, communication and information technology
- **4 Finance** responsible for Belong BM operational financial functions, payroll, accounts, procurement,

suppliers, compliance with Australian accounting standards, NDIS plan management supplier payments, facilities management, financial acquittals and audit and fleet management

The Directorate structure has been designed to govern and support current Belong BM activity and the ability to respond and adapt to opportunities for growth and the reforms driving change policy and strategic direction.

The challenges we face in cementing our place as Belong BM are complex and varied. Belong BM is grounded in neighbourhood centre philosophy, culture and practice and continues to provide critical neighbourhood centre and community hub services to our communities actively seeking the community voice. This function now exists alongside the need to establish new targeted services and activities in response to reform and grow the existing Belong BM suite of Disability, Aged and Chronic and Child Care services across the Nepean Blue Mountains region and no longer just the Blue Mountains Local Government Area.

The challenges and impacts can perhaps be best summarised as:

#### Competitive Tendering for Historical Contracts

Changes in government policy and direction have resulted in the historical allocated levels of funding being tendered competitively or services being 'commissioned' to provide specific activity or to specific population groups. This shift impacts key Belong BM activity. Whilst there is a level of surety with funding for core Belong BM State and Commonwealth funded services being extended post 2020, through to 2021 and 2022, the amount of funding to be received and the priority activities supported by the funding may change.

This shift impacted Belong BM in this reporting period with the need for Belong BM to competitively tender for the Community Visitors Scheme, a Blue Mountains-wide program that had existed under the mantle of Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre and Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative (SNCC) for more than 14 years. The result of the tender submission saw Belong BM and SNCC work together rather than compete with one another for the local funding, with Belong BM nominated as the lead agency. The result of this process saw the historical residential aged care component of this funding allocated to Catholic Care with the smaller community component being allocated to Belong BM. This change would have meant an overall reduction in funding to a local NGO of 60% and mirrors the preference for the allocation of funding to the large often faith-based providers in this space. As a result of intervention of both the media and the local Federal member, this decision was reversed and our historical levels of funding for this program reinstated until 2021. This environment is now the new norm and brings destabilisation for clients, our staff and in many cases the volunteers who are working across programs such as these.

The other issue impacting and challenging the Organisation is the gap between the CPI adjustment passed on by funders under our contracts compared with the actual wage increases. This gap continues to grow and will impact the Organisation's ability to maintain the same levels of service over time in an attempt to manage this systemic funding disparity.

# Department of Family & Community Services (now Communities and Justice) Targeted Early Intervention Reforms (TEI)

This reform has resulted in Belong BM needing to nominate if our organisation would align with the Family & Community Services TEI reforms and then which service options would we operate within. The TEI reforms have far-reaching implications for both Belong BM going forward and the historical client base of our three Neighbourhood Centres and Community Hubs. The reforms are designed to re-focus on children and young people at highest risk. The target populations for TEI service delivery are children and young people with the local priorities focusing heavily on young people and young people with a mental illness.

The reforms and the service mapping necessary within this process have very little focus on the provision of service across the lifespan to the historical neighbourhood centre client within the Blue Mountains - the socially disadvantaged and disenfranchised single adult and the socially isolated older person living independently. Blue Mountains' local statistics based on the 2016 census show that nearly 35% of the Blue Mountains population is over 55 years of age, with the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders greater than 65 years of age, yet the reforms demand that our community development and community hub activities reorientate to target the 29% of our population that is less than 24 years of age and their families. Currently there is no contingency for the gap this reform may well create.

# National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Belong BM continues to operate targeted NDIS services through our Disability service, focusing

**Right:** Kath Harrison, CEO, Barbara Cuthbert, Marlene Churn at The Australian Beach Boys Seniors Week event at The Carrington Hotel. largely on two areas - Support Coordination and Plan Management. The Belong BM Disability Service has grown and now has a client base exceeding 150. The issue, however, with the NDIS is that the level of remuneration against staff cost, compliance, development and participant advocacy in a client-centred funding model does not support or allow for these requirements. This, along with the lack of responsiveness of the actual National Disability Insurance Agency in its current structure when issues arise with participant plans or system issues that impact Belong BM business, will remain an ongoing issue and challenge in the operation of this service for Belong BM.

# Aged Care Service Reform – Community Home Support Program (CHSP)

Aged Care reform has been identified as a major requirement and social issue currently within Australian society, with the need to increase access to community services and packages that maintain older Australians safely and independently within their home environments. The reform of the Aged Care system will see client-centred funding models emerge in this space and increased opportunity for quality community aged care providers. Belong BM is well placed to grow our existing Community Support program with this reporting period seeing direct additional funding allocations received from the Commonwealth Department of Health to both our Home Modifications Services and our Domestic



Assistance Service, totalling in excess of \$110,000. Funding was released for the first time since 2013 for CHSP Service Innovation submissions. Belong BM as Lead agency, in partnership with SNCC and Lithgow Information and Referral Service (LINC), lodged the required Stage One Expression of Interest for this funding opportunity for the Healthy Elders Active Living (HEAL) program for a total of \$498,000. HEAL was developed and submitted based upon a community-based mobile multidisciplinary allied health response team targeting older persons with functional needs operating clinics and one-to-one follow up visits. The program also has an innovative soft entry social inclusion component around access to technology and digital mentors for isolated older people, enabling them access to community and their families using technology and social media. Belong BM was successful in progressing from Stage One of the EOI process to the Stage Two process as one of the 69 organisations across Australia targeted to submit a full application based on the submitted funding amount. Success with the HEAL program would enable Belong BM an opportunity going forward to expand into aged care health service and aged care package provision as a strategic priority.

#### **Meeting the Challenges Head On**

Belong BM is choosing to meet our challenges head on by looking to diversify our service profile(s), strengthen our internal capacities and capabilities, actively seek funding opportunities and develop adaptive and agile characteristics as an Organisation. During this reporting period we embarked in a partnership with Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) to provide the Belong BM executive management team with a purpose developed Adaptive Leadership training program across a 6-month period. The program was opened to a number of Belong BM's close partners. I wish to thank the Belong BM Board for supporting and funding this initiative and Tom Nance from WSCF for his professionalism and expertise in delivering the program. This initiative has resulted in the development of the Belong BM platform for leadership and management and will support the Belong BM leaders to meet the challenges of the current reform and service delivery environment adaptively.

The other challenge for Belong BM and all small Non-Government Organisations is the construction of our services as Not for Profit. Belong BM is endeavouring to embrace the potential for us to operate and shift to a 'profit for purpose' construction that enables profit to be made and then channelled back in to services and service development. This reporting period has seen us develop internal streams in our self-funded or semi-subsidised services to support other Belong BM priority service areas. This is a space and concept that Belong BM hopes to further develop and implement into the future and focus on expansion of this concept working with external service partners.

In this reform environment Belong BM has continued to grow, and in growing the Organisation it behoves us to ask critical questions going forward - when are we big enough, what are our core services, what are our priority service directions going forward, how big is too big, how do we continue to capture the voice of the community and meet local need. These questions will form the basis of our strategic journey in the upcoming year.

Whilst reform has become a constant companion within the Community Sector and the impact of these reforms have touched all areas of this Organisation, Belong BM at its core is a truly local service provider with a strong and sustainable future working within a framework of social justice, of equity, access, inclusion, capacity building and participation.

Kath Harrison
Chief Executive Officer

### Section 4: CEO & Directors' Reports (cont.)

### Director, Care & Support (Chronic, Vulnerable, Aged & Disability Services)

#### **Barbara Cuthbert**

t the start of the 2018-19 financial year, I was in a particular role, managing a particular group of staff, located in one workplace site, and working for a particular organisation. At the end of this financial year, all aspects of that equation had changed, though I was still working for the same organisation. That will give some indication of the scale of transformation that has taken place across the organisation and for staff, and for our volunteers, across 2018-2019. However, across this year of fundamental organisational change, we have continued, uninterrupted, to provide services to clients, to grow and diversify the services that we offer, to be responsive to the needs of our community, and to support our volunteer workforce.

#### Manager Operations & Quality, Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre

For the period July-December 2018 I was Manager Operations & Quality at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre (KNC). In this position I supervised and supported service coordinators across all KNC services, including:

- Blue Mountains Community Support Program
- Katoomba Volunteer Home Visitors
- Community Visitors Scheme
- Intake



Barbara Cuthbert, Director Care & Support at The Australian Beach Boys Seniors Week event - The Carrington.

- Assist Building & Maintenance
- Disability Services
- Katoomba Out of School Hours Childcare
- Community Development
- KNC Support & Development
- · Vale Street Centre

as well as managing the day-to-day running of KNC. During a period of extended leave that I took across October and November 2018, Tracey Willow stepped into my position. I thank her for doing so, and for the support she provided to service coordinators during this period, and for the wealth of sector experience and enthusiasm she brought to the organisation and its day-to-day operation during these two months.

During my period of leave, Jo Ridley also came on board to assist our aged services staff and the organisation to prepare for the Aged Care Quality Review that took place in November 2018. KNC and its CHSP-funded aged care services, and the CHSP-funded services operating at MMNC and LMNC, met all 22 of the expected outcomes across the three quality standards in the Home Care Standards. I thank Jo for taking carriage of the process of preparing for the review, supporting the staff to prepare,

and helping ensure that we demonstrated that we met all quality indicators. Jo's depth of experience, thorough approach and steady hand supported the staff and organisation to shine through the demanding process of external review.

#### Director Care & Support, Belong Blue Mountains

Following the formal amalgamation of KNC with Mid Mountains Neighbourhood **Centre and Lower Mountains** Neighbourhood Centre in November 2018, and the branding of the newly-formed organisation as Belong Blue Mountains, at the start of 2019, I commenced in the newly-created role of Director Care & Support with Belong Blue Mountains (Belong BM). The Care & Support Directorate encompasses all of the aged and disability services in Belong Blue Mountains. In my role as Director, I manage and support service

coordinators and staff across the following Belong BM services:

- Blue Mountains Community Support Program
- Volunteer Home Visitors and social support Katoomba
- Volunteer Home Visitors and social support Mid Mountains
- Volunteer Home Visitors and social support Lower Mountains
- Community Visitors Scheme
- Intake
- Assist Building & Maintenance
- Disability Services
- Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service

# The Care & Support Directorate encompasses a range of funding streams including:

- Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
- Commonwealth Department of Health
- NSW Department of Health, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD)
- Fee for service for NDIS participant clients
- Private full fee clients for Assist Building & Maintenance

#### **Outputs**

Output targets must be met for CHSP, Commonwealth Department of Health and NBMLHD funded services as follows:



#### **CHSP**

# Output targets for 2018-2019 were met for.

- Social Transport (3,840 trips per year)
- Home Maintenance (2,143 hours of maintenance service provided per year)
- Home Modifications (\$208,700 of modifications provided per year)
- Social Support Group (648 hours per year)

# Output targets were not fully met in two areas:

of the target of 3,760 hours of service per year was met. Annual increases in the unit cost of the cleaning subcontractor since the BMCSP service was initially funded has meant that fewer hours of domestic assistance are able to be purchased each year. This is the core reason why output targets were not met – demand for this

**Below:** Volunteers Maureen Doherty left and Kerry Rice right receiving their Seniors Week Award 2019 with staff member Katrina Simmons (BMPSS)



- service continually outstrips capacity, and the client load for this service is the highest of any of the Care & Support services. With the continuing strong demand for this service, we hope to be able to re-negotiate the unit cost with the funder when CHSP contracts are reviewed in 2020. We are also looking at developing an in-house team of domestic assistance staff to further reduce overheads, provide more hours of service to more clients, and help meet output targets.
- Social Support Individual challenges with standardising the reporting of data across multiple outlets, and the reliability of technological infrastructure, impacted on the organisation meeting the full target of 13,998 reported hours of social support per year. Concentrated work is being done as a result to resolve these issues and to ensure robust and accurate reporting going forwards, and to ensure the full target is met.

# Community Visitors Scheme (Commonwealth Department Health)

As detailed in the CVS Coordinator's report, output targets were not met for Residential Aged Care (72% July–Dec 2018 and 62% Jan–June 2019) and for Home Care Package clients (55% July–Dec 2018 and 45% Jan–June 2019). However, there is important context to give to these results, namely:

- CVS outputs target to achieve is 90% of funded Active Visitor places across Residential Aged Care and Home Care Package clients
- New reporting protocols introduced by the Department of Health have significantly impacted what can be counted as a full "Active Visitor"
- Existing CVS funding agreements ended 31 December 2018, and we were not advised that we would continue to be funded post-December 2018 until the very end of December 2018. This impacted on volunteer recruitment in the last quarter of 2018, as it was uncertain whether we would still have a CVS service from January 2019.

#### **Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service (NBMLHD)**

The BMPSS service is required to report biannually to NBMLHD against 14 biannual KPIs. The KPIs encompass a detailed range of measures around client numbers, volunteer numbers, developing and maintaining partnerships with clinicians and other service providers,

promotional activities, satisfaction survey results and volunteer training and review.

The service is also required to report annually to NBMLHD against five annual KPIs, and against service objectives and targets.

The BMPSS service met the overwhelming majority of individual KPIs, both biannually and annually, and was determined by the NBMLHD to have therefore met service KPIs and output targets for 2018–2019.

#### **Key Challenges and Changes**

Key challenges and changes for the Care & Support Directorate for the first half of 2019 have included:

#### New quality standards for Disability Services

From 1 July 2018, the NDIS
Quality & Safeguards Commission
commenced operation in NSW.
The changes introduced by the
Commission for NDIS providers
include new practice standards
and a new Code of Conduct for
providers. The introduction of a
whole new regulatory and quality
framework across a whole service
area has been a significant
change this year.

#### **Disability Services modelling**

The demands of trying to operate as a sustainable disability services provider within the constraints of the NDIS system have required our management team and the Disability Services Coordinator to engage in extensive modelling and refining of how our Disability Services

team operates across our Coordination of Supports and Plan Management services. The Disability Services team have moved to explicit billable hours targets, and highly streamlined work practices and allocation of client loads. The staff in this team have continued throughout the year to refine practice as the modelling was refined, and they are to be commended for their continued willingness to do so, and for the energy and dedication they bring to their demanding work practice requirements to ensure that a high quality and responsive service is offered to our NDIS participant clients. Staffing in the service doubled across 2018–19, which is testament to the ability of the staff and management to manage the ongoing sustained growth of the service, as well as being testament to the excellent reputation our staff have built for this service.

#### **Community Visitors Scheme (CVS)**

As existing providers of CVS in the Blue Mountains, Belong BM and SNCC collaborated in 2018 in submitting a tender in the Department of Health's competitive tender process for new CVS grants from January 2019. Belong BM was the lead agency in the application. We were ultimately successful in being funded to provide the CVS service across the Blue Mountains to 2021 for clients of Residential Aged Care and Home Care Packages. Continuing to develop and innovate in the partnership we have with SNCC to deliver the service across the Blue Mountains to clients has been a core part of the work done in the first six months of the new funding agreement.

#### Staff

Laurie Strathdee, KNC Support & Development Coordinator and so much more, having spent many years working at KNC in a variety of roles, retired in February 2019. It was my privilege and joy to work closely with Laurie in his role as Support & Development Coordinator. Laurie's ability to generate ideas and be innovative in his thinking, and his unique blend of energy, enthusiasm and kindness were a great inspiration to me, and an asset to our organisation and community.

Felicity Tonks, Community Visitors Scheme Coordinator, resigned at the end of the financial year after over seven years in her position. The qualities Felicity brought to her work made our organisation and our community a better place. Her kindness and compassion were always offered readily and generously to her clients, volunteers, colleagues, and every community member who walked

through our door. Felicity's dedication to doing her work thoroughly and wholeheartedly helped the CVS service to flourish at KNC, and nurtured many connections and friendships between clients and volunteers. Felicity was a valued and highly esteemed colleague both within our organisation, and with partner organisations. Felicity was very much an irreplaceable colleague.

Megan Kavanagh, Service Coordinator in Assist Building & Maintenance, was on extended leave from her position since late January 2019. It was confirmed at the end of the financial year that Megan will not be returning to her position in Assist. Megan has been a long-standing member of the staff at Belong Blue Mountains (formerly Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre), and over her time with the organisation Megan developed wellestablished warm relationships with her colleagues, Assist clients, and organisations and colleagues that Assist works in partnership with, including local occupational therapists and Regional Assessment Service staff. Megan's role was fundamental in keeping the service running effectively during the long illness and the passing of the previous **Building Services Coordinator,** Ruth Ley, and the process of recruiting for the new Building Services Manager, and helping Steve Ramsay to settle into this role. Megan will be missed by many people.

I would like to particularly

acknowledge Claire Grover and Marlene Churn for the work they did as NDIS Support Coordinators with the Belong BM Disability Services team. Claire and Marlene initially took on the role of Support Coordinators for existing clients of theirs who transitioned from their CHSP-funded services to the NDIS. Over time, they also took on new NDIS clients. Following the internal remodelling of our Disability Services team in early 2019 to ensure sustainability in the 'fee for service' environment, in June 2019 Claire and Marlene both finished up in their roles as Support Coordinators and handed their clients over to our core Disability Services staff. Claire and Marlene were dedicated and passionate in their work with their NDIS participant clients, and worked continually to build on their skills and knowledge to be effective support coordinators, and supported their participants to achieve their goals and enhance their quality of life. I thank them for their dedicated work, and for their understanding and flexibility in stepping out of these roles.

#### **Staff now in Communities Directorate**

I worked closely with the following staff who are now within the Communities Directorate and acknowledged there. However, I would like to also acknowledge them here:

#### Josie Vendramini, KNC Community Development

Coordinator, left the organisation in May 2019. Josie was a powerhouse of enthusiasm and passionate dedication to community work. From developing a partnership with Wimlah to support their clients, to the hugely successful Harry Potter-themed children's event that Belong hosted at The Carrington, to the Meet Your Street events that she organised annually in North Katoomba, Josie's work brought people together, truly nurtured community connections, and brought colour and joy to our local community. Josie's unfailing positivity was a joy and an inspiration to work alongside.

Vasant Demello, KOOSH Coordinator, left the organisation early in 2019. I worked closely with Vasant for a number of years. Vasant worked with great dedication over his time at KOOSH to develop it into a service that was supportive and accepting and kind to all families and children and staff who were a part of it – in all their diversity – and to truly place the children and their wellbeing at the centre of all that KOOSH did. Vasant was a kind and generous and supportive colleague, and his sense of humour was a

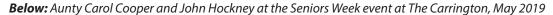
saving grace on many occasions! He is much missed by all of us.

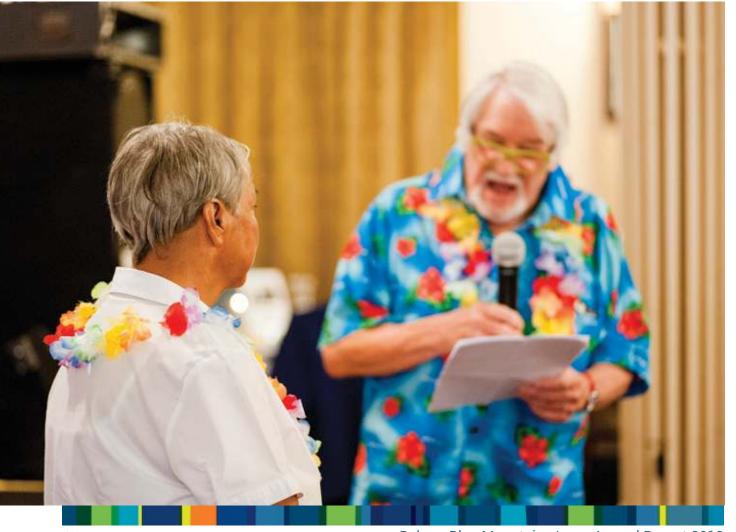
#### In Closing

I would like to end by thanking all staff in the Care & Support team at Belong Blue Mountains:
Narelle, Eva, Pauline, Katrina,
Claire, Marlene, Brenda, Korey,
the Disability Services team of
Anna, Tracey, Kasey and Vickie,
and the Assist team of Steve,
Tish, Chris, Dave and Tom. In this
year of significant change in the
organisation, thank you for always

placing your clients, participants and volunteers at the centre of what you do, and for doing your work with them with dedication and skill and wholeheartedness. Thank you for always being kind and generous of spirit and flexible with each other, and with the management team. Thank you also to all the other staff across Belong Blue Mountains, and to my colleagues in the Belong BM management team. Together we are building something really innovative and unique in our organisation and for our community, and I could not wish for a better group of people to be doing it with.

Barbara Cuthbert
Director, Care & Support





# Section 4: CEO & Directors' Reports (cont.)

#### Director, Communities (Children, Youth, Families & Neighbourhoods)

#### **Mick Barrett**

I the start of the 2018-19 financial year I continued my role as Manager of the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre as we transitioned to Belong Blue Mountains. In January 2019, I took on the newly-created role of Director of Communities as the four Directorates forming Belong Blue Mountains came into being.

#### **The Communities Directorate**

The Communities Directorate operates within a framework of strengths-based community development according to social justice principles. We are committed to the Harwood model of community consultation, which informs how we engage and collaborate with our communities. We use a Results Based Accountability approach, and we are committed to a collaborative impact approach with all stakeholders in achieving those results.

# The key areas of the Communities Directorate are:

 Community hubs and neighbourhood centres in Lower Mountains (Blaxland), Mid Mountains (Lawson) and Katoomba.

Programs and services through the hubs include Linker services (Information and referral), emergency relief and food hampers, social inclusion groups, mental health support, Tax Help and Graffiti removal,

- community access to computers, wi-fi, printing and scanning.
- Community development, with a primary focus on children, young people and families, including community consultation
- Facilitated playgroups and KOOSH Out of School Hours Care
- No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

More details of these key areas can be found in the Service Reports compendium.

I'd like to highlight the number of social inclusion groups and other services that are coordinated within the Communities Directorate by a highly committed team of volunteers. We thank you.

In noting the reports under the Communities directorate, I cannot overstate the depth and scale of change that these services have undergone over 2018-19. Since the past year, the content we are reporting on is authored by different staff, all in different roles and developing new teams, with developing relationships with other directorates in the new larger organisation. For each team the service has been dramatically influenced by changing funding and regulatory dynamics.

To those team leaders, I acknowledge with gratitude that

**Below:** Mick Barrett, Director of Communities at Belong Blue Mountains' 2018 AGM



they are making sense of a year of achievements that has in no way been 'business as usual'. I am tremendously proud of these teams, not least for facilitating these impressive outcomes in often stressful circumstances.

#### **Challenges**

A big focus since becoming
Director has been to consolidate
staffing and processes across
the three community hubs, and
navigate the reforms coming out
of the NSW Department of Family
and Community (FACS). Some
restructuring of the physical and
human resources at each hub has
been required, and I would like to
acknowledge the challenges to
our staff and volunteers as these
changes take place.

One of our important programs is around Mental health support, and the challenge this year was the discontinuation of funding from the Local Health District to what was historically Vale Street, and how we can support mental health in the future.

Another challenge this year was with KOOSH, as we rebuilt the staff team and made urgent changes to our service processes in preparation for the accreditation assessment. I would like to warmly acknowledge the support of our locum Support Manager, Jo Ridley, in facilitating the preparation for the KOOSH accreditation.

#### **Memberships**

Belong Blue Mountains is a member of the Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) and the Linker Network, which are both vital



**Above:** Amy Gaymer, KOOSH's Acting Coordinator, at Belong Blue Mountains' 2018 AGM

planks in the Communities Directorate platform.

#### **Staffing**

We were sad to lose Josie Vendramini, our Community Development Coordinator based at Katoomba, who resigned in May 2019 to explore new horizons. Josie brought much passion, commitment and hard work to her role, and I would like to acknowledge with thanks her energy and unfailing commitment to the people of our community and to Belong Blue Mountains.

Christopher Smith continued in his role as Community
Development Coordinator based at the Lower Mountains
Neighbourhood Centre, and Danielle Wilding-Forbes
was successful in moving from her former position
as Community Development Coordinator at the Mid
Mountains Neighbourhood Centre to the newly-created
position of Community Engagement Manager. Kerin
Pollock was subsequently successful in being appointed
to the Community Development position at Mid Mountains,
and was pivotal in coordinating mental health programs
in the latter part of the year when that position became
vacant. Thanks also to Natasha Simon (sometimes
volunteer, sometimes a staff member when funding was
available), for her facilitation of the Multiple Diagnoses,
bipolar support, and suicide bereavement support groups.

Bren Sherring continued in her role as Coordinator of

Bren Sherring continued in her role as Coordinator of Mental health support through her work at Vale Street, mental health support programs, and the Blue Fringe Arts. At the time of writing this report, Bren has now moved to another role within Belong Blue Mountains, and I would like

to acknowledge with gratitude the many years of committed service Bren provided to people living with mental health challenges through her work with Belong Blue Mountains.

We were also sorry to lose our long-standing Coordinator of KOOSH, Vasant Demello, another committed staff member who engaged wonderfully with the young children under his care. We were fortunate to have Amy Gaymer to step up to the role as Acting Coordinator for the last part of the financial year, and I would like to thank Amy and her staff for their terrific work in ensuring that our accreditation for KOOSH was given with flying colours. At the time of writing this report, Amy has just been formally appointed as the permanent Coordinator of KOOSH. I'd also like to acknowledge all the KOOSH casual team as well as Cate Harrison, Isaac Sherring-Tito and Administrator Katherine Johns, for their great work over the last year.

Deb Dare moved from her role as locum Transition Project
Officer to temporary community development Coordinator at
Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre while Josie was on leave. On behalf of the whole organisation, I would like to thank Deb for all the support, care and commitment she gave to Belong Blue
Mountains through the transition period in her various roles.

Through the challenges of changes to the Hubs in the last year I'd like to thank Sarah Dean\* at Mid Mountains and Sara Fawcett at Lower Mountains, as well as the volunteer reception teams, for continuing to be the welcoming face of Belong Blue Mountains and the administrative foundation.

Over the last year Pauline Stafrace has had an increased role with the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) due to the national restructure of NILS functions, as well as providing the service for the larger organisation, and I would like to thank her for managing this with professionalism and enthusiasm.

#### In Closing

It is also hard to do justice in a brief report to those who have been involved in these activities in both pre- and post-restructure. In particular, the hubs that are now part of a greater team, a year ago were three separate entities with a Manager (special thanks Peta Williams LMNC and Barbara Cuthbert KNC) and key staff supporting the volunteer Reception teams (at KNC, Marlene Churn and Felicity Tonks). What was a relatively straightforward purpose for the individual Neighbourhood Centres to inform, connect and support people within a smaller and defined community, has become complex in addressing challenges to increase our service for the broader community with a considerable capacity.

We are also developing new ways for the hubs to interface with the other Belong BM services, and I acknowledge the whole of our organisation's staff including staff on backup rosters, and volunteers, in your contributions in making hubs effective. We are getting there. Purple hearts all round!

I look forward to a year of consolidation, clarification and development of roles and relationships within and between teams across Belong Blue Mountains. I look forward to working together with our communities to build resilience, connectedness and wellbeing.

Mick Barrett

Director, Communities

\* It is with great sadness that I advise that Sarah Dean died suddenly on 24 September 2019, at the time of writing this report. She will be missed. Our thoughts are with her family and loved ones.

# Section 4: CEO & Directors' Reports (cont.)

### **Director, Corporate and Quality**

#### **Peta Williams**

financial year I continued in my role as Manager of the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre as we transitioned to Belong Blue Mountains. In January 2019, I took on the newly-created role of Director, Corporate & Quality, as the four Directorates forming Belong Blue Mountains came into being.

# The Corporate & Quality Directorate

The Corporate & Quality
Directorate works closely with
the Finance Directorate so
that together we can provide a
comprehensive, integrated human
resource and administration
function across the whole
organisation to enhance service
delivery and the welfare of all
employees.

In 2018-2019 the focus of the Corporate & Quality Directorate has been twofold:

- (1) Setting up best practice systems and new, more environmentally-friendly information and communications technology that connects the three neighbourhood centres and all sites of Belong Blue Mountains, and streamlines administration functions
- (2) Consolidating best practice in policies and procedures, supporting the governance of the organisation, branding

of the new organisation, developing promotion and communication strategies and new website development, and developing human resource processes to support the new organisation.

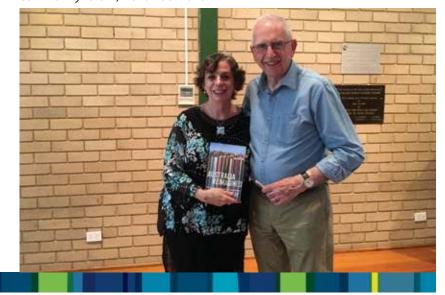
#### **Challenges**

There were inherent challenges in combining the best of the operations of the three neighbourhood centres into operations, administration functions, policies and procedures that best fit Belong Blue Mountains, and that process is ongoing. Branding the new organisation is taking longer than I anticipated, and the development of the new website has been delayed, hence the current plan to turn one of our existing websites into an interim Belong Blue Mountains website. These things all take time.

Human resource management is a key and vital component of any organisation, and the challenge here is how to best support the people of our organisation without a dedicated Human Resource Department. The Chief Financial Officer, Len Kasper, and I have therefore been researching online systems to support human resource processes and we will be adopting the Jobs Australia-endorsed Employment Hero platform in the new financial year. This system will include online tools and processes for recruitment, employment, contracts, induction, position descriptions and payroll.

Despite the challenges inherent in any transition, we have

**Below:** Peta Williams with guest speaker Hugh Mackay at LMNC's Think BIG!! community forum, November 2018



achieved much in the last year.

#### **Highlights**

The launch of Belong Blue
Mountains took place in
November 2018, and I worked
closely with our branding
organisation, Wild Hive, to achieve
that. We are very happy with
our new look and tag line – 'Be
Heard – Be Connected – Be
Supported – Belong' and believe
that the colours of our brand well
represent our vibrancy and the tag
line summarises our reason for
being.

Reviewing and re-branding our policies and procedures — taking the best of the existing policies from each of the three neighbourhood centres — continues, albeit more slowly than I would like, yet this is important work and will take the time that it needs.

Considerable time has been taken in developing a new filing structure that best fits the needs of the new structure of the organisation. While not yet completed at the end of 2018-2019, at the time of writing the new system is about to be implemented. I would like to thank the Staff Working Group — Leigh Gordon, Narelle Mackander, Anna Tardent, Felicity Tonks and Danielle Wilding-Forbes, together with our ICT Manager, Dale Reardon, for all their work on this.

In terms of what we have achieved in Information & Communication Technology, I recommend to you the report by our Manager of ICT, Dale Reardon, in the Service Reports compendium.

Dale achieved much over the last 12 months, including strong ICD auditing capabilities in line with government requirements, as well as world's best practice cyber threat protection and protection against emerging risks. This is a significant achievement.

#### In Closing

A couple of years ago I read a beautiful book called 'The Little Paris Bookshop', by Nina George. The main character, Monsieur Perdu, calls himself a literary apothecary, prescribing books specifically for the person's particular ailment. He says that:

"There are books that are suitable for a million people, others for only a hundred. There are even remedies—I mean books—that were written for one person only... A book is both medic and medicine at once. It makes a diagnosis as well as offering therapy. Putting the right novels to the appropriate ailments: that's how I sell books."

This made me think of a neighbourhood centre as a community apothecary, where we listen to people's stories and offer programs and services that might soften the hardships in our lives, soften the pain that we feel in our hearts, minds and souls. The role of the Corporate & Quality Directorate is to enable Belong Blue Mountains to be that community apothecary by providing the administrative, operational and human resource foundation to enable our staff to do their work in delivering programs and services to the people of our community, and in doing so, strengthening and empowering the people of our community to be heard, be supported, connect and to belong.

I have the pleasure of working directly with an exceptional ICT Manager in Dale Reardon, whose expertise in all things technological is without question, and whose patience, good humour and goodwill continues to carry us through our technological challenges.

To the Executive team – our CEO Kath Harrison and my fellow Directors Mick Barrett, Barbara Cuthbert and Len Kasper – it has been a bit of a wild ride to date and undoubtedly will continue to be so, but together we can and will achieve much, and I thank you for all that you do.

To the staff of Belong Blue Mountains, this journey of transition to Belong Blue Mountains hasn't been easy for you, but with grace and goodwill you continue the journey with us, and I thank you.

And to our volunteers, you remain our bedrock, our foundation; thank you for your generosity and good heart in all that you do for Belong Blue Mountains.

One final thought. The eminent writer and researcher, Hugh Mackay, who was our guest speaker at our Think BIG! Community forum at the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre in November 2018, writes:

'For most of us, life's richest meanings spring from our personal relationships and connections. That's why the desire to belong is a throbbing urge that won't be stilled until our hearts find safe lodgings.'

Hugh Mackay, 'The Art of Belonging' (p.288)

And that's what Belong Blue
Mountains is all about; providing
that 'safe lodging' for connection
and belonging within our Blue
Mountains communities.

Peta Williams
Director, Corporate & Quality

**Below from top:** Peta Williams and Brian Bell, Trish Doyle MP, Staff and community members at the launch day of Belong Blue Mountains.





### Section 4: CEO & Directors' Reports (cont.)

# Director, Finance (Chief Financial Officer) Len Kasper

#### **Overall Result and Commentary**

As reported in the Treasurer's report, the three significant events that affected the financial results this financial year were the ongoing investment of funds into the establishment of Belong Blue Mountains Incorporated (BBM), the increasing gap between government funding levels and the outcomes of the annual national Wage case, and the significant changes to the Child Care Subsidy scheme resulting in a decrease in enrolments in our Out of School Hours child care service.

BBM recorded an operating deficit of \$17,940 which, when added to the investment into the BBM business combination of \$83,793, resulted in an overall deficit for year ended 30th June 2019 of \$101,732 compared to a deficit last year of \$105,283. BBM continues on its 5-year strategic growth plan aimed at increasing turnover and reducing reliance on government-sourced block funding income. Grant income represented 32% of income compared to 38% in the last financial year with total revenue growing by 23%.

Income increased significantly this year, rising from \$5.3m to \$6.6m. The most significant increase related to the provision of plan management services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), an

increase of \$1.2m. We also received growth funding for our Domestic Assistance program (\$33k) and one-off supplementary funding for our Assist Home Modifications service (\$92k). These increases were partially offset by the closure of the Aboriginal Flexible Respite and Older Parent Carer schemes and one-off transfers from provisions last year (\$76k).

Operating expenses increased in line with the increase in income rising from \$5.3m to \$6.6m. The most significant increase related to the provision of plan management services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), an increase of \$1.2m. Staff costs rose by \$103k reflecting the increase in services provided by Assist and under the NDIS. This was partially offset by a decrease in administration costs (\$30k).

A detailed analysis of income and expenses is as follows:

#### Income

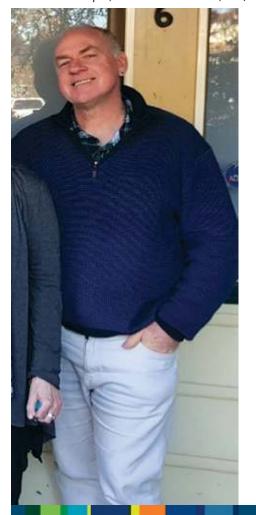
Sources of grant funding were:

- Commonwealth Department of Health \$1,048,013 for people over 65 years age, Home Modifications, Home Maintenance, Social Support, Social Transport, and Domestic Assistance
- Commonwealth Department of Health, \$58,742 for the Community Visitors Scheme
- NSW Department of Family & Community Services \$665,612 for Community Development and the provision of neighbourhood centres and related services.
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District \$234,798 for the Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service and the Vale Street Social & Wellbeing program.
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet \$43,358 for the Community Building Partnership 2017 and 2018 programs
- NSW Fair Trading \$24,409 for the No Interest Loan
   Scheme
- NSW Department of Education \$8,610 for vacation care activities for children aged 5-12 years.
- Blue Mountains City Council \$7,750 for the Katoomba,

Lower Mountains and Mid Mountains Neighbourhood centre community development programs and Cultural partnerships program.

- NSW Department of Education Inclusion Support \$3,513 for special needs children in Out of School Hours Care.
- DIISRTE Australian
   Apprenticeships scheme
   \$2,500 subsidising our trainee
   in our Out Of School Hours
   child care program
- NSW Department of Justice \$2,230 for our graffiti removal project
- Several other grants of \$2,000 or less from various sources including the Good Things

**Below:** Len Kasper, Director of Finance (CFO)



Foundation and NSW Clubs Grant scheme.

Other sources of income were:

- NDIS Plan Management Income \$3,461,292, offset by NDIS Plan Management Payments.
- DEEWR childcare fee subsidies \$156,170 paid to KOOSH based on individual parents' income level and the daily fee charged.
- Fees received for services \$746,807 including Childcare fees \$92,684 Home Modifications & Maintenance fees \$246,864, NDIS service fees \$329,599, and other fees for services \$63,612
- Other income of \$96,092 including Donations/ sponsorships \$13,724, Fund Raising \$1,913, Interest & Dividends \$19,928 and insurance claims \$21,306.

#### **Expenses**

Total expenses for financial year was \$5,339,3087, an increase of \$2,373,311. Most of this increase is attributable to plan management services provided under the National Disability Insurance Scheme, as well as the overall growth in business as reflected in the income figures above.

Expenditure consisted of:

- Employment expenses \$2,295,400, an increase of 5%
- NDIS Plan Management payments \$3,461,292 offset by NDIS Plan Management income.
- Program and Services expenses \$525,462, consistent with last year.
- Administration and occupancy costs \$260,456 a decrease of 23% on last year.
- A one-off Investment in the Business combining of KNC, LMNC and MMNC of \$83,793, and
- Other Expenses \$44,239 an increase of 3% on last year.

#### In closing

I would like to thank the Finance team, Carole, Leigh and Neil, for their continuing professionalism and dedication during quite a challenging year in the Finance department as we grappled not only with significant business growth, but also the integration of the finance functions of three quite different organisations. Your assistance has been invaluable.

Len Kasper Director Finance, Chief Financial Officer

### **Section 5: Our Finances**

### Treasurer's Report

#### **David Caton**

Overall, Belong Blue Mountains Incorporated ("BBM") returned an operating deficit of just under \$18,000 for 2018-2019. During the year BBM completed its targeted investment into the business combination and infrastructure of KNC, LMNC and MMNC of \$84,000 from reserves. When added to the operating result, BBM returned an overall deficit of \$102,000, decreasing reserves to just over \$317,000. Investment into the business combination is now complete, with the financial focus now moving towards the strengthening of BBM's strategic position of having a number of income streams, not just heavy reliance on government grant incomes (38% of total revenue last year, 32% of total revenue this year). Total revenue increased by 23%, mainly from revenue from the provision of services of the NDIS, especially the provision of plan management services to NDIS clients. A more comprehensive analysis of the financial results is provided in the Chief Financial Officer's Finance Report.

The long-term financial strategy of BBM continues to aim to build a level of reserves that ensures the long-term sustainability of the organisation, thereby ensuring the critical services we provide to the community are maintained and improved despite the significant and constant changes

in government policy that continues to occur in this sector. BBM also continues to review operations to ensure all projects remain viable and operate within the financial constraints of funding bodies.

Significant events that occurred throughout the year that have impacted the financial results of BBM include:

- The National Wage case approved a 3% increase in wages from July 2019. However, NSW FACS only increased funding at an indexation increase of 2%, NDIS increased prices by 2.1% and the Commonwealth Department of Health approved indexation of 1.5%. The trend of the National Wage Case determinations not being matched by the various government departments, both State and Federal, puts pressure on organisations working in the sector and represents a real reduction in funding. BBM continues to lobby government directly and through industry peak bodies to address this mismatch.
- The Child Care Subsidy Scheme was overhauled from July 2018 which resulted in fewer families being eligible for subsidisation. This had a direct negative result in lower enrolments and therefore income from our Katoomba Out Of School Hours (KOOSH) and Vacation Care programs.
- The NDIS scheme prices continue to be funded to cover the direct costs of service provision, but not to cover the costs of compliance with the very complicated service standards and compliance regime as well as the capital costs of running these services (pretty much the same theme for all government funded services). We have rebalanced our NDIS service provision to take this into account, but it still remains a difficult equation to deliver on our values of social justice for the disadvantaged when funding favours a low-cost, low-service model that often adds to the disadvantage of the vulnerable.
- On the positive side, our NDIS service provision continued to grow with fee income increasing over 18%
- Government funding requires that we remain a going

concern, yet it fails to provide capital funding necessary to build reserves to finance ongoing investments in technology and staff to remain compliant with the ever increasing complexity and volume of compliance.

 BBM employed 58 staff throughout last year, making us a significant contributor to the Blue Mountains economy. At June 2019 we employed 36 permanent and 16 casual staff (10 casual vacation care staff).

I would like to thank our outgoing Treasurer, Sue Atherton for the valuable contribution she made to BBM in her time as Treasurer, as well as Mahalya Middlemist for undertaking the role of Acting Treasurer prior to my appointment as Treasurer. I would also like to thank our Chief Financial Officer, Len Kasper, our Assistant Accountants Neil Smith, Leigh Gordon and Carole Williams for their continued high-quality work and dedication, especially in a very complex year of growth and business combination.

David Caton Treasurer



Above: David Caton and Ruth Bennett at Belong BM's 2018 AGM

### Section 5: Our Finances (cont.)

### **BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC.**

(Previously trading as Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc.) ABN 59334 227 797

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 30 June 2019

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INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
BALANCE SHEET
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
INDEPENDENT OF SUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

#### Committee's Report

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

Your committee members submit the financial accounts of the Belong Blue Mountains Inc. (Previously trading as Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc.) for the financial year ended 30 June 2019.

#### Committee Members

The names of committee members at the date of this report are:

Ruth Bennett - Chairperson

Mahalya Middlemist - Secretary

Wendy Holland - Deputy Chairperson

Gay Thornton

Donald McGregor

Maria Katrivesis

David Caton - Treasurer

Warwick Fuller

Leanne Kent

John Crichton (Appointed 29th November 2018)

#### Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were: Provision of Community Services.

#### Significant Changes

During the 30 June 2018 financial year, the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("KNC") Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("LMNC") and Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("MMNC") came together to create a combined service know as, Belong Blue Mountains Inc. This arrangement was passed by the members of LMNC and MMNC by way of special resolutions to support in principle the business combination and to then voluntarily wind up both LMNC and MMNC in accordance with the Associations Incorporations Act 2009.

KNC then changed its name to Belong Blue Mountains Inc. during the 30 June 2019 financial year.

Both LMNC and MMNC had their incorporation cancelled effective 26th October 2018.

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

#### Operating Result

The deficit from ordinary activities amounted to

Year ended	Year ended
30 June 2018	30 June 2019
\$	\$
(105,283)	(101,732)

#### Committee's Report

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

#### Auditor's Independence Declaration

A copy of the auditor's independence declaration as required under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 has been included.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee on:

Ruth Bennett

David Caton

#### Auditor's Independence Declaration

For the year ended 30 June 2019

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, I am pleased to provide the following declaration of independence to the Directors of Belong Blue Mountains Inc.

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- b. No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Signed on: 11 1 1-pt-mb- 2019

William Tomiczek F.I.P.A., Registered Company Auditor 1425

William Tomiczek & Associates

66 Emu Plains Road, Mount Riverview NSW 2774

### income and Expenditure Statement

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
income		
Grant funding - FACs	665,612	652,561
Grant Funding - Dept of Health	1,106,755	973,350
Grant Funding - Dept. of Ageing & Dis.		34,931
Grant Funding - Nepean BMLHD	234,798	230,535
Other Grant income	101,383	119,241
Fee income	902,977	903,770
NDIS Plan Management Income	3,461,292	2,271,256
Transfers to/(from) provisions		76,256
Other Income	96,092	80,311
Total income	6,568,909	5,342,211
Expenses		
Administration costs	260,456	290,578
Other costs	44,240	27,555
Business combination related expenses	83,792	108,185
NDIS Plan management expenses	3,461,292	2,287,994
Program costs	525,462	540,923
Salaries - ordinary	2,295,400	2,192,259
Total expenses	6,670,642	5,447,494
Profit (loss) from ordinary activities before income tax	(101,733)	(105,283)
, ,	(101,733)	(105,283)
income tax	(101,733)	(105,283)

#### Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2019

2(a) 3	781,030	864,889
	-	864,889
	-	864,889
3	77.910	•
	76,818	63,051
	12,819	12,819
4 _	2,533	2,721
_	873,200	943,480
5 _	82,644	97,392
_	82,644	97,392
_	955,844	1,040,872
6	200,459	187,318
7	369,281	324,960
-	569,740	512,278
7	68,763	109,520
_	68,763	109,520
_	638,503	621,798
	6 7	873,200  5 82,644  82,644  955,844  6 200,459 7 369,281  569,740  7 68,763  68,763

#### Statement of Cash Flows

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
Cash Flow From Operating Activities		
Receipts from customers	6,589,764	5,372,422
Payments to Suppliers and employees	(6,673,623)	(5,527,895)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities (note 2(b))	(83,859)	(155,473)
Cash Flow From Investing Activities		
Purchase of motor vehicles		(51,842)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(51,842)
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	(83,859)	(207,315)
Cash at the beginning of the year	864,889	1,072,204
Cash at the end of the year (note 2(a))	781,030	864,889

# Statement of Changes In Equity For the year ended 30 June 2019

2019	2018
S	s

### Statement of Changes in Equity

Opening retained profits	419,074	524,357
Net loss attributable to the association	(101,733)	(105,283)
Closing retained profits	317,341	419,074

Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 30 June 2019

#### Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act of New South Wales and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

#### (a) Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Motor vehicles are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

#### (b) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

#### (c) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled.

#### (d) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reasonably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

#### (e) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

#### Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2019

#### (f) Revenue and Other Income

Revenue comprises of revenue from grant income, child care centre operations, NDIS services (including NDIS Plan Management activities), home modification and maintainence services, donations, bank interest and other income.

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue.

Interest revenue is recognised on an accruals basis.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

#### (g) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the assets and liabilities statement are shown inclusive of GST.

#### (h) Trade and Other Payables

Trade and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period, which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

#### (i) Income tax

The association is a registered charity and is exempt from income tax in accordance with Section 50-B of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The association holds deductible gift recipient status.

#### (j) Leases

BBM do not have any current lease commitments for any of its leased premises.

#### Statement of Cash Flows

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

2019

2018

Note 2(a) Reconciliation Of Cash		
For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks and investments in money market instruments, net of		
outstanding bank overdrafts.  Cash at the end of the year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the		
related items in the balance sheet as follows:	252 472	ጎደረ ግብቡ
Cash At Bank	277,472	366,289
Term deposits	502,138	496,933
Cash on hand	1,420	1,667
	781,030	864,889

# Note 2(b) Reconciliation Of Net Cash Provided By/Used In Operating Activities To Operating Profit

Operating loss	(101,733)	(105,283)
Depreciation expense	14,748	30,535
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase) decrease in trade and term debtors	(13,767)	30,211
Increase (decrease) in trade creditors and accruals	13,141	(72,012)
(Increase) decrease in other assets	188	(5,600)
Increase (decrease) in employee entitlements	3,564	52,986
Increase (decrease) in sundry provisions		(86,310)
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	(83,859)	(155,473)

#### Notes to the Financial Statements

#### For the year ended 30 June 2019

	2019	2018
Note 3: Receivables		
Current		
Trade debtors	76,818	63,051
	76,818	63,051
Note 4: Other Assets		
Current		
Other	2,533	2,721
	2,533	2,721
- At cost	136,061	136,061
- Less: Accumulated depreciation	(53,417) 82,644	(38,669) 97,392
- Less: Accumulated depreciation		
- Less: Accumulated depreciation  - Note 6: Payables  Unsecured:	82,644	97,392
Note 6: Payables	82,644	97,392 97,392 54,390
Note 6: Payables Unsecured: - Accounts payable - Unearned grant income	82,644 82,644 114,194 32,140	97,392 97,392 54,390 78,082
Note 6: Payables Unsecured: - Accounts payable - Unearned grant income - Payroll liabilities	82,644 82,644 114,194 32,140 23,313	97,392 97,392 54,390 78,082 20,083
Note 6: Payables Unsecured: - Accounts payable - Unearned grant income	82,644 82,644 114,194 32,140 23,313 30,812	97,392 97,392 54,390 78,082 20,083 34,763
Note 6: Payables Unsecured: - Accounts payable - Unearned grant income - Payroll liabilities	82,644 82,644 114,194 32,140 23,313	97,392 97,392 54,390 78,082 20,083

#### Notes to the Financial Statements For the year ended 30 June 2019

2019

2018

Note 7: Provisions		
Current		
Employee entitlements*	369,281	324,960
Non Current		
Employee entitlements*	48,608	89,365
Sundry provisions	20,155	20,155
	68,763	109,520
* Aggregate employee entitlements liability  There were 52 employees at the end of the year (18FY)	417,889	414,325

#### Note 8: Effect of Changes in Accounting Policy

The Association changed its accounting policy during the reporting period in relation to accounting for the provision for sick leave for employees. This provision is not required under Accounting Standards and accordingly this provision was written off in the 19FY. The financial effect of this change in accounting policy was to increase current year earnings by \$60,444.

# Note 9: Business combination of the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc., the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc. and Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc.

During the 30 June 2018 financial year, the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("KNC") Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("LMNC") and Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc. ("MMNC") came together to create a combined service know as, Belong Blue Mountains Inc. ("BBM"). This arrangement was passed by the members of LMNC and MMNC by way of special resolutions to support in principle the business combination and to then voluntarily wind up both LMNC and MMNC in accordance with the Associations Incorporations Act 2009.

Accordingly the following transactions relate to the 18FY comparative balances:.

- \* As part of the business combination, the employees and payroll of LMNC and MMNC were transferred to KNC on 2 May 2018 including the liability for employee entitlement of \$189,172 recognised by KNC on that date.
- The total administrative cost of amalgamating KNC, LMNC and MMNC was \$108,185 of which \$63,879 was contributed by KNC, \$29,888 by MMNC and \$14,419 by LMNC.

Both LMNC and MMNC had their incorporation cancelled effective 26th October 2018 and any remaining cash balances were transferred to BBM (2018FY; cash balance remains within MMNC in relation to auspiced funds of \$21,680).

#### Statement by Members of the Committee

For the year ended 30 June 2019

The Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Committee the Income and Expenditure Statement, Statement of Financial Position, and Notes to the Financial Statements:

- Presents fairly the financial position of Belong Blue Mountains Inc. (Previously trading as Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc.) as at 30 June 2019 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due, and
- the financial statements and notes satisfy the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013 for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Ruth Bennett

President

David Caton Treasurer

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

#### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Belong Blue Mountains Inc. (Previously trading as Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc.) (the association), which comprises the Statement by Members of the Committee, Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2019, a summary of significant accounting policies and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 30 June 2019 and [of] its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and division 60 of the Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

#### **Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

#### Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 and the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

#### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Signed on: 1111 September 2019

William Tomiczek F.T.P.A., Registered Company Auditor 1425

William Tomiczek & Associates



# BELONG BLUE MOUNTAINS INC. 2019 Annual Report

1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019

### **SERVICE REPORTS COMPENDIUM**



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### Section 1: Care & Support

# Assist Building & Maintenance

# Steve Ramsay, Building Services Manager

#### **Staff**

Manager: Stephen Ramsay Service Coordinator: Megan Kavanagh (to Jan 2019) Building & Maintenance Staff: Thomas Redmond, Chris McKenzie-McHarg, Dave Noble ASSIST Administration Assistant: Patricia Kerry

Occupational Therapist: Matthew Jones (resigned Sep 2018)

#### **Funding Body**

Assist Building & 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 also does private full-fee home modification and maintenance work.

#### **Service Aims**

Our service provides home modifications and maintenance to the infirm, elderly and people with a disability, so they can remain safely in their own homes. This is made possible by installing things



such as ramps, grab/hand rails and creating wheelchair accessible bathrooms. We also assist with minor maintenance if it affects safety, and garden maintenance including gutter cleaning. We cover the whole of the Blue Mountains from Lapstone to Mt Victoria.

#### **Outputs**

The funding body requires the service to report separately for work carried out for modifications and maintenance.

Period	Modification \$	Maintenance Hours
July 18 – Dec 18	111,791	1967
Jan 19 – June 19	100,292	663
Total this financial year	\$212,083*	2,630 Hours*

<sup>\*</sup> These figures only include My Aged Care clients

Assist was funded to provide 2,143 hours of home maintenance and \$208,699.58 worth of home modifications in 2018-19. As can be seen from the the table above, both output targets were met.

Breakdown for other works completed:

	Private	Home Care Package	NDIS	TOTAL
2018-2019	\$42,345.15	\$16,919.39	\$10,304.00	69,568.54

#### **Highlights & Achievements**

- New staff Dave Noble, experienced carpenter, started March 2019
- New sub-contractor EasyBuild. Over the last year, EasyBuild has completed four major jobs for us totalling \$21,898.44
- Two major bathroom modifications have been completed this year with an approximate value of \$82,990. Two other major bathroom modifications are currently underway.
- Private work quoted and completed is up 63% on last year from \$15,629 to \$42,345.15.
- We completed four maintenance and one modification job for NDIS clients. This is the first year we have had a guote approved from the NDIS for modifications.

#### What some clients said...

think this is a wonderful service in the community and I'm sure everyone would agree. Before your assistance I was not sure how I would have the back railing fixed and it was an accident waiting to happen. - SC, Lawson

t is a very personal thing to have strangers working on your home at times, being elderly, female, living on my own. Not all such experiences have been good for me and have on previous occasions felt taken advantage of. However, my experience with Assist has been an excellent one. I could not in any way fault the work and I was treated with great respect and kindness by Matthew, Chris & Tom. It was a pleasure to have them on my premises. - CS, Katoomba

rateful that this service is available to my mum and me. It's a relief to know that modifications have been made to make it easier and safer for my mum to stay in her own home. All concerned could not have done more and in fact did more when certain steps were noticed to be a factor in Mum's difficulty stepping down onto the back veranda. - BW, Faulconbridge

#### **Challenges**

- Lack of consistent funding to the Service for Occupational Therapist assessments and a long waiting list at Community Health for OT assessments
- Approximately six NDIS modification referrals were received in the period and

quoted. Of these, we have only received approval from the NDIS to complete one. A great amount of time and attention to detail is being spent on these referrals with not a great deal of positive response.

#### **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge the outstanding contribution of our OTs and contractors. The service could not function without the outstanding work of our valued trade and office staff: Chris McKenzie-McHarg, Tom Redmond, Tish Kerry and Dave Noble. We also thank all the staff at Belong Blue Mountains for their ongoing support.

We would like to thank Chris for all his hard work holding down the fort whilst the Building Services Manager was on sick leave for three months. The Assist team greatly appreciates the time and effort Chris put in to make the service continue to run smoothly.

We would like to thank Megan Kavanagh for her contribution to the Assist service over her time with KNC and Belong Blue Mountains. Megan will be missed by many.

And finally, we would like to acknowledge the effort Tish Kerry put in the first five months of the year to cover for Megan whilst she was on leave, and the continued professionalism which she brings to Assist Building and Maintenance. 

- Steve Ramsay, Building Services Manager



### Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

### Aged Care Services -Volunteer Home Visitors

Marlene Churn, Narelle Mackander, Eva Regitz: Coordinators

#### **Volunteers**

#### Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Andrea Lupuleasa, Beth Madden, Beth Strahan, David Burnett, Diane Greenaway, Elizabeth Rose, Gavin Latz, Greg Batten, Heather Lee, Jan Oliver, Jan Wilkinson, Jan Winterburn, Jenny Dooley, Joy Pierce, Lesley Willis, Lynn Willis, Marek Bowman, Marn Harrex, Maureen Aspinall, Neville Rowe, Paul Ethrington, Pip Kells, Sara Fawcett, Steve Callaghan, Terry Madden, Tonia Segon, Wayne Clark

#### Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre

Greg Birtles, Harry van den Bout, Sue Grimble, Brian McGrath, Glenis Cole, Pam Cooley, Jennifer De Roo, Dianne Hall, Tony Hiam, Chris Kelly, Kate Litchfield, Anne Lydamore, Sandra Metcalf, Alex Mitcheson, Suzanne Morrow, Janet Noble, Jackie Rickard, Aysheh Esawee, Nyla Thomas, Susan Wedd, Franco Veronesi, Elke Vogel, Yuping Xia, Adriana Perez, Paul Garde

#### **Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre**

Antonio Cornado-Cornet, Narelle McIntyre, Robyn Fairbairn, Diane Stebbings, Sabrina Haberlah, Bernadette Power, Biruta Latta,



Joy Constantine, Matthew Johnson, Rexann Maxwell, Gwen Meehan, Pat McCullough, Gino Baudo, Verna Van Ryswk, Dave Croll, Suzanne Kuhn.

#### **Service Description**

The Volunteer Home Visitors service (VHV) aims to support and enrich the quality of life for older people living independently in the Blue Mountains.

We provide a social support service with trained volunteers who give their time to visit clients in their own homes. VHV assists people to remain living in their homes for as long as possible, and to maintain their independence. The service provides a vital link between residents who are at risk of becoming socially isolated and their local community. Social support can include things like friendly home visits, accompanying you on local outings and local shopping.

VHV is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

#### **Service Reports**

#### **Lower Mountains**

**Covering Lapstone to Warrimoo** 

Narelle Mackander, Coordinator Sara Fawcett, Administrative Support

#### **Service Targets**

The performance of the service is measured and reported bi-annually to the funding body. We are funded to contribute to the Belong Blue Mountains annual Social Support target of 14,700 hours.

#### **Service Activity**

Over the past year, we completed ten new assessments and as at July 2019 we had 24 VHV clients. We received a total of 18 new referrals for the year. The program has 28 active volunteers.

#### **Highlights**

Throughout 2018-2019 we have hosted four coffee mornings and two bus outings.

Our coffee mornings continue to be a great success. These mornings are ideal for those clients who are unable to go out on bus outings, mostly due to poor mobility, and who prefer a more intimate setting in which to socialise. Our volunteers play a key role in providing door-to-door transport and we look forward to many more of these over the coming year.

For the second year in a row, we participated in an intergenerational project at Christmas time. We know there is a great benefit in children mixing with older people and it's really important to enhance children's understanding of older generations. The interaction between generations can have a real therapeutic benefit for the elderly and can provide meaningful engagement. For older adults, intergenerational programs have shown psychological benefits by creating a sense of purpose and enhancing dignity. For children, intergenerational programs have benefits in terms of psychological and social development and there is some evidence that intergenerational contact reduces delinquency in young adults. The project involved my daughter's year two class in Sydney all writing Christmas cards and letters to our very own VHV clients. We received some amazing feedback from our clients who were thrilled to receive some heart-warming messages from the children.

#### Challenges

The main challenge faced for the service this year was the complexity of clients who were assessed. There were a number of clients where an intensive amount of time was put in place, particular at the commencement of the service, to then have the client not continue with the service. In most cases this was because they were no longer able to safely live in their own homes and had therefore moved into more appropriate living arrangements.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to say a big thank you to the Board, Barbara, Peta, Leigh, Christopher and Sara and of course the reception staff for all their support over the past year. It really is a wonderful environment to work in. I would also like to thank my colleagues Eva and Marlene who provide me with advice and support when needed. Most importantly, a huge heartfelt thanks to all of the volunteers connected with the VHV service because without you all we would not be able to service the community and do the job we do. Thank you for your professionalism, kindness, flexibility and willingness to always help out.

*Narelle Mackander, Coordinator* 

#### Mid Mountains

Covering Woodford, Hazelbrook, Lawson and Bullaburra

**Eva Regitz**, Coordinator **Sarah Dean**, Administrative support

#### **Service Targets**

Over the year, the service supported a total of 36 clients. Client numbers remained stable at 24-26 clients per quarter. The service contributed to the total Belong Blue Mountains social support outputs target of 14,700 hours for 2018-19.

Until December 2019 the Co-ordinator facilitated a Carer Support Group.

#### **Highlights**

#### **Biography Service**

This service has gained momentum as more clients are taking up the opportunity to have their life story recorded for their own enjoyment and to share with their family. This year we trained a second volunteer biographer to meet growing demand.

# All Things Life – Conversations inspired by Art Group

The Art Conversations program continues to be a great success. Now in its third year, it has engaged people to talk about life and the things that matter to them. A guided conversation based on selected paintings had people sharing their observations, stories, experiences and wisdom. The strength of the program lies in its ability to include clients with special needs such as people from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background, people living with mental illness, and people with Dementia.

#### **Seniors Week Recognition Awards**

Two long-standing volunteers, Christine Kelly and Harry van den Bout, received the Seniors Recognition Award this year. Both volunteers are well respected beyond the boundaries of MMVHV for their contribution to the wider Blue Mountains community.

#### **Bus Trips**

Our bus outings to Austinmer beach and Berowra Waters were a great success and for some participants they were a trip down memory lane remembering treasured family picnics near the water.



Mid Mountains Volunteer Home Visitor bus outing with clients at Austinmer Beach

#### **Stepping On Program**

This year we hosted the successful Stepping On Program, an effective falls prevention program for seniors, combining education and gentle exercises to enable seniors to effectively reduce their risk of having a fall.

#### **Volunteer Training**

Wesley Life Force held a suicide prevention workshop for our volunteers to raise awareness of a growing societal problem. Participants learned how to identify the signs that someone may be at risk of suicide and simple, effective interventions that can make a real difference and save lives.

Survival First Response again delivered excellent training in First Aid and Manual Tasks that was hands-on and packed with useful information.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank our amazing volunteers for their commitment to enabling our clients to have meaningful social connections, and to enjoy life more. Without their



kindness and generosity we couldn't do what we do. A big thank you to my colleagues in the Aged Care services team for their support, and to my new supervisor, Barbara Cuthbert whose listening ear and advice is much appreciated. And finally, a heartfelt thanks to Katrina, Pauline, Danielle, Sarah, Kerin and our front desk volunteers at our Mid Mountains office for their support, the sharing of ideas and most of all, their light-hearted humour in times of change and uncertainty.

Eva Regitz, Coordinator

#### Katoomba

Covering Wentworth Falls to Mount Victoria

Marlene Churn, Coordinator

**Sessional Worker**, Korey Gunnis (Katoomba Film Society)

Writers' Group and Bookclub Facilitator: **John Hockney** 

Clinical Supervision for Staff Supervision and KNC Volunteer Group Clinical Supervision: **Michael Farrell-Whelan** 

# Individual One-to-One Social Support

The service's volunteers provide an invaluable individual one-to-one social support for clients of the service who are often the more vulnerable members of our community living in isolated situations. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their patience and amazing ongoing support during this extended time of change in the community sector

and that of the organisation. The focus areas moving forward with the one-to-one social support component of the Katoomba VHV program include increasing volunteer recruitment, maintaining volunteer support, and working with clients moving from the Commonwealth Home Support Program to Home Care Packages. Over the next 12 months a strong focus is required with regard to volunteer recruitment, more time face-to-face with clients and new client referrals. This is of importance for the home visiting service to be able to manage the ongoing change in the sector, meet diverse support needs, work towards a model of engagement and reablement for clients, and meet the needs of the community.

On average the service had 16-18 one-to-one social support client/volunteer matches over the 2018-2019 period. The hours of social support provided to clients across 2018-19 contributed to the total Belong Blue Mountains social support outputs target of 14,700 hours.

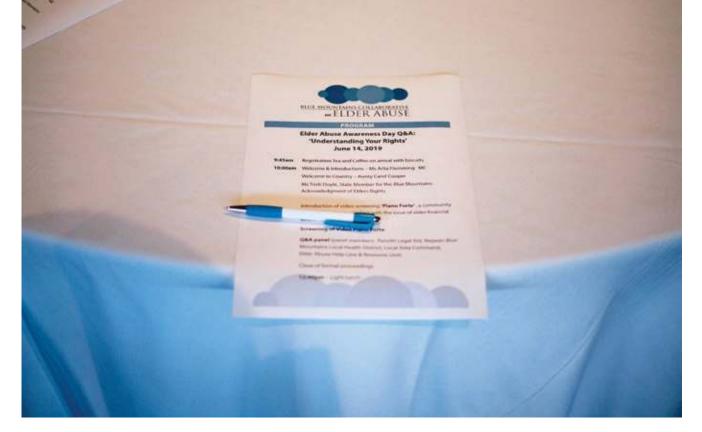
#### **Social Inclusion Groups**

A place for people to meet, share ideas and form connections.

- Writers' Group (monthly) Facilitator John Hockney
- Bookclub (monthly) Facilitator John Hockney
- Katoomba Film Society (fortnightly) Sessional Worker Korey Gunnis
- Out and About (weekly) Lesbian Gay Bisexual
   Transgender, Intersex Queer (LGBTIQ) weekly social
   group Support Worker Marlene Churn
- Vision Impaired Group (monthly) Support Worker Marlene Churn and Volunteer Pat McCullough

Out and About Social Group at the Theatre





Stepping On Program - NSW Health Stepping On is a community-based falls prevention program run by NSW Health. The program has run several sessions at KNC and LMNC. in partnership with Belong Blue Mountains, over the past twelve months. The KVHV Coordinator provides regular information and referral for participants who attend Stepping On, and helps nurture the community and social connections that are an important part of the program for participants.

#### **Annual Community Events**

Seniors Festival Events – Beach Boys Show Concert and Official Seniors Week Launch for the Blue Mountains at the Carrington Hotel Katoomba on 21 February 2019. Other Belong BM Seniors Week events included Katoomba Film Club movies at the Palais Royale, Yoga for Wellbeing in Later Life, Film Trivia evening and workshops on health matters and the range of services available for older people in the Blue Mountains. Attendance across Seniors Week events - 214 attendees.

**Elder Abuse Collaborative & International Elder Abuse Awareness Day** – As a member of the Blue Mountains
Elder Abuse Collaborative, Belong BM was involved in organising and hosting a community awareness event on June 14 at Springwood Sports Club for International Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Many thanks to David Armitage, Graeme Hudson and Julie McGregor (Blue Mountains Elder Abuse Ambassador), Jack Goldberg, Kate Le Corneu and Collaborative members for their time and skills in supporting this important and challenging annual event. Attendance at this event - 65

**Volunteer Week Celebrations and Brian Gravison Volunteer** Awards – These were held on May 31 at the Carrington Hotel to honour volunteers across Belong Blue Mountains services, as well as volunteers in partner organisations including Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative and Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre. Brian Gravison was a long-term volunteer at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre and a much-loved member of our community, and the awards are named in his honour. Many thanks to Rita Burrows (Brian's sister) and her family for their continued support. A huge thank you to Michael Farrell-Whelan for donating his time and compassionate words to the role of MC. Also many thanks to the other organisations and their amazing volunteers who were able to participate in this year's event. Attendance at this event - 105.



Seniors Week participants at The Carrington

### NDIS Support Coordination Role

My role in providing support coordination for a participant with chronic and complex care needs living in a local Aged Care Facility continued until the end of June 2019. The support coordination role was then handed to the core Disability Services team at Belong BM with support coordination for this participant to be provided by Tracey Johnson. It has been a privilege to support the participant in this role and I would like to thank the participant who, despite the enormous challenges in her life, has shown to me over time a great sense of humour, times of sadness and eyes that look on in amazement on a trip to the Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library. I would also like to thank the participant's sister and brother-in-law who were so gracious with their trust and

support, welcoming someone new being involved in her care. Many thanks to all involved in the participant's care, support and advocating for her human rights and quality of life. Also many thanks to Brian the Taxi Driver, generous and funny, who helped us take the participant on outings.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Our fantastic Katoomba Volunteer Home Visitors, our wonderful Belong staff, volunteers, participants, social group members, Bendigo Bank & Peter Carol, The Blue Mountains Gazette, The Carrington Hotel staff and management, Anita Bray (Carrington Hotel Functions Coordinator), Palais Royale, Blue Mountains Gazette and Damien Madigan, Springwood Sports Club, Katoomba Aquatic Centre, Stepping On – Susan Renkert & Evelyn Argall, Vision Australia – Jarryd Busuttil and Kim Roots, Blue Mountains Radio Players – Denise and Diane, Sue Wildman Art Therapist, Aunty Carol Cooper, John Hockney, Michael Farrell-Whelan, Big W Katoomba, Megalong Books, Bunnings Katoomba & Valley Heights, United Cinemas (The Edge Cinema), The Joan Performing Arts Centre, Coles Katoomba, The Family Hotel - Katoomba, Bunnings (Valley Heights), Bygone Beauty's, Rotary, The Australian Beach Boys Show, Sphere Organisation, Megalong Books, Teddy Sinclair, Mt Vic Flicks, The Nepean Belle Paddle Wheeler, Moontree, The Hattery, The Hub Springwood,

Blue Mountains Leisure Centres. Mountains Oddities, VHV Coordinators, Marty Walker (Photographer), Prue Hardgrove and Blue Mountains City Council, colleagues across the services, Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre staff and volunteers. Thrive, Neighbour Aid Association, ACAT Team, Springwood Police, **Elder Abuse Collaborative** Members, Jack Goldberg, Kate Le Corneu, Trish Doyle MP, Suzie Van Opdorp, Susan Templeman MP, clients of the service, their family and friends, Katoomba Men's Shed, Community Care Forum members and my family.

Marlene Churn, Coordinator

### Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

### **Aged Care Services**

### Blue Mountains Community Support Program

**Claire Grover, Coordinator** 

#### **Funding Body**

Blue Mountains Community Support Program (BMCSP) is a CHSP-funded program. The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health. The aim of the CHSP is to help older people stay independent and in their homes, and communities for as long as possible. The CHSP programme provides entry-level home support for older people who need assistance to keep living independently.

#### **Service Description**

The Blue Mountains Community Support Program is funded to provide care in three key areas: Domestic Assistance, Social Support and Transport. This program is an initiative of the Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network (BLINN) consortium, with Belong Blue Mountains as the Lead Agency for the program. The program is administered from Belong Blue Mountains in partnership with Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre and Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative.

#### **Domestic Assistance**

The Domestic Assistance Service provides assistance tailored to help maintain independence in the home through help with housework, cleaning and shopping, and identified domestic tasks.

#### **Social Support**

The Social Support component of the program encompasses various Social Support Groups operating across the Mountains. These groups encourage social interaction, community involvement and connection, and are diverse in the types of support they offer and specific interest groups or special needs groups they cater to.

These groups include: Art Group for Seniors, Best Men's Pieshop social group for men, Cyber Shed, School for Seniors, Film Society, Writers Group, Book Club, Out and About, Community Café, Board Games, Dementia Support,



Knit and Yarn, Clak 'n' Yak, Open Door, Vision Impaired group, Harmony Arts & Social Group, Tai Chi, Over 60s Social Club, Golden Years, Social Stories and Life Story Writing.

#### **Transport**

The Transport aspect of the program in the main provides Social Transport to and/or from the Social Support groups, but we are also able to offer subsidised transport for short trips to members of the community identifying an urgent need.

#### **Service Targets**

BMCSP is required to report service activity twice per annum to our funding body, against established output targets for each of the three arms of support. Outputs for Domestic Assistance and Social Support are measured in the number of hours of service received by each client. The measurement for Transport is the number of transport trips taken by clients.

This year we provided 2,395 hours of Domestic Assistance, against the output target of 3,760 hours. We delivered 12,930 hours of Social Support through our diverse social inclusion groups and individual social support Volunteer Home Visitor services, against the output target of 13,998 hours. We provided Transport to a great number of clients across the mountains totalling 3,865 trips, exceeding the output target of 3,840 trips.

After a budget review we will be increasing client numbers for

Domestic Assistance for the next financial year to help us meet the required outputs target. The target output was difficult to meet this year due to budget changes, cost increases in service provision and maintaining a manageable client load for the service coordinator.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Wendy's Home Care management and ground staff; Metro CM who are always on board to assist; all staff at Belong Blue Mountains, Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre & Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative; and all volunteers who assist with the BMCSP. Special thanks to Korey Gunnis and Brenda Sherring who provided service administration for the program and Narelle Mackander, Liz Murphy, Eva Regitz, Marlene Churn, Octavia O'Brien — the Social Support & Transport Service Coordinators.

Claire Grover, Coordinator

# CHSP (Community Home Support Program) Social support groups

A snapshot of some of our social groups follows:

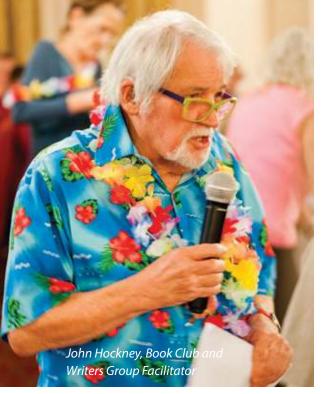
# Bookclub and Writers Group: Facilitator, John Hockney

#### **Book Club (Monthly)**

Now in its eleventh year our faithful band of book lovers continue to discuss, delight and challenge. Members look forward to each month's discussion, and its success is due to each member able to present their opinions openly without prejudice. Facilitator John Hockney ensures a smooth discussion with everyone able to agree or disagree with each member presenting their own dialogue. Not only has the book club flourished - from its conception, members have found mutually interesting discussions on poetry, Shakespeare and Play reading all stemming from the Belong Book Club.

#### **Life Story Writing (Monthly)**

The Life Story writing group kicked off again just a year ago. The band of writers read their work from monthly assignments followed by discussions on other life matters and writing styles. The success is due to the strict adherence that whatever is shared between the group stays with the group. There are no fears of sharing and



surprisingly we all learn from each other. We hope to continue into 2020 with new stories and life challenges. ■

John Hockney, Facilitator

# Best Men's Pieshop Social Group for Men

Greg Birtles, Group Coordinator writes that:

"Men of the Best Men's Pie Shop have continued to meet for a coffee on the first Thursday of each month at Mountain High Pies at Wentworth Falls. The numbers this year have been up and down with a couple of the members becoming involved in a Cook & Connect course for older men. The exciting news is that following a get together of about 14 men the group decided to go ahead with the idea of a Men's Shed for the Central Mountains. Well some months later there is now a viable Men's Shed at Kihilla Conference Centre in Lawson. One participant when asked what the group means to him, said "I like the camaraderie of the group."

#### **Art Group for Seniors**

Our monthly Art Group for Seniors at the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, is led by local artist Shirley Williams, herself a senior, with support from Sara Fawcett.

The group involves discussion about various aspects of art followed by some practical creative work, including how to paint mandalas and the craft of painting miniatures on a piano key. A delightful way of connecting with others through art.

#### **Community Café**

The Community Café is one of the CHSP-funded social support groups operating from Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre. It runs each Thursday morning from 10am-12noon. Community Café is facilitated by Pauline Stafrace with one volunteer.

The Café is designed to connect people over 65 years with others in the local area over a cuppa and something yummy to eat. It has evolved into a fabulous space where friendships are made and participants get together for social catch ups on other days.





Christmas with volunteers, staff and community members at MMNC.

It's an informal gathering and also a point of referral for clients wanting to find out about or utilise other services within the centre and the community at large.

We have regular annual events including:

- Seniors Week Program
- Cancer Council Biggest Morning Tea
- Christmas Party

There are also opportunities for relevant services to come and chat with the group on their

Korey Gunnis at Katoomba Film Club's Trivia Night Fundraiser 2019 specialised services. This year we had guest speakers from the following Services/Organisations:

- · Stepping On Program
- · My Health Record
- NBN Q & A
- Legal Services Information Morning

On average the morning is attended by 10-15 members, although this number blows out during the "events" mornings with up to 30-45 attending. As a part of the MMNC social support program the Café is a wonderful support for locals to get out and meet new people and make friends.

The challenges going into the future relate to diminishing numbers due to group members moving into full-time care out of the area.

Making others aware in the community about Community Café will keep this activity a vital and thriving part of participants' weekly routine and connection to peers.

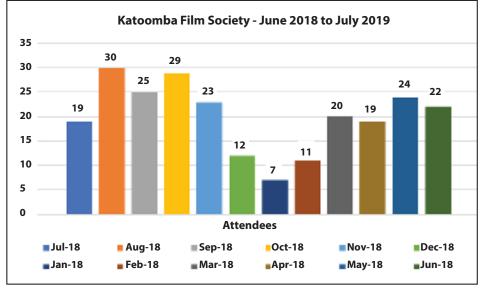
#### Katoomba Film Club

Korey Gunnis - Film Club sessional worker

Volunteers: Aaron Thorn and Gino Baudo

Katoomba Film Club is a classic film club and social inclusion group and has been operating for six years and has about 50 members. The film club aims to facilitate a social connection for older people in the community, and to enable shared enjoyment of and discussion about films. The film club operates out of the Palais Royale in Katoomba, screening matinee sessions on the 2nd and





4th Wednesday of the month. The film club is partly self-funded by membership and is also a CHSP-funded social support group operating from Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre. Between July 2018 to June 2019, the service has had 241 attendances (refer to graph). The service has two regular volunteers, Aaron and Gino, who have assisted with the running of film sessions. Some highlights have included the

Seniors Festival in February 2019, which included a special morning tea, a guest speaker Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains, and a film screening. Another highlight was a Trivia Night fundraiser for the film club, held on 23 February 2019, with the special guest appearance of Travis Johnson, a film critic, which greatly assisted with funding of the service. I would like to especially acknowledge Marlene Churn, who oversees CHSP-funded social support groups at KNC, the two volunteers Aaron and Gino, and the Palais Royale for providing the venue for film sessions, and members who attend the film club.

Korey Gunnis, Sessional Worker



Left: The Blue Mountains
Collaborative on Elder
Abuse, which Belong
Blue Mountains is a
part of along with other
community stakeholders,
hosts an event to raise
awareness of Elder Abuse
during World Elder Abuse
Awareness week, with
Trish Doyle, MP, giving the
opening address.

### Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

### Aged Care Services Community Visitors Scheme

CVS Coordinators: Felicity
Tonks, Belong Blue Mountains
(Belong BM) KNC; Joanne
Newton, Springwood
Neighbourhood Centre
Cooperative (SNCC).

The Community Visitors
Scheme (CVS) is an Australian
Government initiative funded by
the Department of Health (DoH).

From January 2019, Belong Blue Mountains (Belong BM) became the lead agency for a CVS service operating across the Blue Mountains LGA, working in partnership with SNCC.

#### **CVS Volunteers**

Belong BM: Elizabeth Bowe,
Antoni Cornado-Cornet, Keith
Davies, Denise Garden, Kerrin
Gale, Jules Booth, Carol Price,
Linda Hemmings, Matthew Tonks,
Chantelle Wallis, Patricia Woodley,
Sabrina Haberlah, Sara Nyssen,
Carolanne Van Leeuwen, Giulia
Priante, Joy Constantine, Matthew
Johnson, Narelle Wilson, Peter
Aboud, Wendy Jones, Rosemary
Barrett, Christine Haiss and
Arone-Ru Gumas-Lopez.

#### **Springwood Neighbourhood**

Centre: Wendy Hutchinson, Noreen Mason, David Rees, Phiona Stone, Ann Thomas, Lisa Varjavandi, Lynette White, Pat Wilby, Rodrigo Bourke, Carol Carroll, Anne Cawley, Marlene Doublesin, Vicki Glew, James Henderson, Nerine Hide, Melissa Hill, Jill Hogwood, Louise Hughes, Chris Hughes, Jenny Hughes and Marion Hughes.

#### **Service Description**

The CVS aims to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life for isolated residents living in Residential Aged Care (RAC) as well as for residents who are living at home and are being supported by a Home Care Package (HCP), by matching them with volunteer visitors. Volunteers make a commitment to visit at least once per fortnight to enhance the resident's social contact with the larger community.

#### **New Funding Agreement**

In 2018, the Department of Health put out to competitive tender new grants for the CVS across the country, with funding for the existing CVS ending on 31 December 2018. As the existing providers of CVS in the Blue Mountains, Belong BM and SNCC collaborated on an application for the CVS to cover the whole of the Blue Mountains – with Belong BM being the lead agency working in partnership with SNCC. In late December 2018, following robust negotiation with the Department of Health, as well as coverage in the media of the concerns of Belong BM and SNCC that CVS funding was being significantly reduced at short notice for clients in the Blue Mountains, Belong BM was successful in being funded to provide CVS across the Blue Mountains for 2019 - 2021. The new funding agreement allocates funding for 70 volunteers across the Blue Mountains LGA.

#### **Service Targets and Challenges**

The performance of the program is measured and reported to the DoH based on the number of Active Visitors in service. An 'Active Visitor' is defined by the program operating guidelines as someone who visits a resident 20 or more times per year. There have been changes made to the definition of Active Visitor, which have impacted negatively on the outputs for this reporting period. The recent change in the Department's reporting protocol means that we are unable to count newly recruited volunteers as full active visitors for this reporting period. Given that it takes time to recruit, train and match volunteers with residents, the new protocol has contributed to our numbers for this current reporting

period being lower. The new reporting protocol has also meant that disruptions to regular client visiting, including deaths of care recipients, Aged Care Facility (ACF) lockdowns during periods of illness, or significant illness suffered by care recipients - all of which are commonplace for the cohort of care recipients we provide services to - have also significantly affected our numbers for this reporting period.

It should be noted that the 2018 –2019 Financial Year (FY) was split into two reporting periods. The July–Dec 2018 report was submitted by Belong BM independently of SNCC. The period Jan–June 2019 however, saw SNCC reporting with Belong BM under the new funding agreement.

For July-Dec 2018, Belong BM reported a total of 18 Active Visitors against the target of 25 places in residential aged care, which equates to 72% of the target reached. Belong BM was also funded for five RAC 'Group' visits. We achieved three active group visits out of the target of five, which equates to 60%. Of the ten places Belong BM had allocated for HCP placements, we had 5.5 Active Visitors over this period, equating to 55% of target.

In the new funding agreement to June 2021, Belong BM is funded for 70 places across the Blue Mountains, with some flexibility around whether places are allocated to RAC or HCP. Belong BM, incorporating the SNCC CVS service, reported the following outputs for Jan–June 2019:

For Residential Aged Care, 31 Active Visitors were reported against the target of 50, which equates to 62% of the target reached. 37 RAC clients were visited in the reporting period. For Home Care Package clients, nine Active Visitors were reported against the target of 20, which equates to 45% of the target reached. 11 HCP clients were visited in the reporting period.

As noted above a variety of factors have made it difficult to reach our output targets in this reporting period:

- Our CVS funding was uncertain until the start of the Jan-Jun 2019 reporting period, hence a hesitancy to recruit new volunteers in the second half of 2018 when it was possible funding for the service may not be renewed.
- The issues mentioned above regarding the new protocol for calculation of Active Visitors impacted on our outputs as we could not report new visitors as Active.
- Over this financial year, Belong BM alone had ten care recipients pass away, which reflects in our Active Visitor numbers.
- We still have four wonderful groups running in our Aged Care Facilities, with multiple residents in attendance, however we are only permitted to count these visits as one Active Visitor match.
- The My Aged Care portal does not allow for referral
  of clients on HCP to the CVS service this has been
  lobbied by CVS services nationally for some time.

Now that funding is secured until 2021, concentrated work is being done to recruit more volunteers to be able to meet our targets and provide social support to more clients.

#### **Highlights**

On Friday 31 May 2019 we held our annual Brian Gravison Awards Ceremony, to celebrate the service of our volunteers at Belong BM as well as volunteers across the community working with other agencies. We were pleased to have Trish Doyle, State Member for the Blue Mountains, share in this special event to honour our volunteers, who all do such an amazing job.

Thursday 21 February 2019 - During Seniors Week Belong BM hosted the Australian Beach Boys in concert. Many residents from our local aged care facilities attended, as well as many other seniors – to a tune of about 120 people. People danced in their wheelchairs and walking

trames. It was a wonderful sight to see!

More generally, the CVS volunteers continue to do wonderful work with their residents. One male volunteer, David, visits a gentleman and takes him on outings to the local hardware store, cafes and the club. They always have a great time chatting and having a laugh and it provides an opportunity for this gentleman to stay connected with his local community and do some of the things he enjoyed doing before entering residential care. Another recent introduction was between CVS volunteer. Nerine, and a lovely lady who was very isolated within her facility due to both vision and hearing impairments. Nerine brings in crosswords and the two complete them together. They also enjoy a good laugh and Nerine is now aiming to teach both the client and some other residents how to dance the Charleston. In one aged care facility, visits with a volunteer who brings in farm animals are continuing to provide simple and wholistic enjoyment for the residents who are not able to leave the facility and see the world around them. Nature is a salve for the soul.

#### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to staff at the following Aged Care Facilities: Kerry-Anne Coxhedge at Opal Anita Villa, Elisa Southall at Bodington, Nellie Campbell at Morven Gardens, Anna Hottwagner at Martyn Claver, staff from Buckland Aged Care Service, Uniting Springwood and from Opal Endeavour. Your assistance in identifying the residents who are most in need of social support has been an integral part in ensuring the success of the CVS scheme. We would also like to acknowledge the staff who we work alongside at both Belong BM and SNCC, and for the camaraderie which we feel within the organisation/s, as well as the support from the Boards and the Management team. Special thanks go to Michael Farrell-Whelan for his support to volunteers at KNC with the excellent clinical supervision that he provides, as well as the orientation which we run with him as facilitator four times a year.

Felicity Tonks, Coordinator



**Above**: Lyn Anag receiving her volunteer award for CVS volunteering at the annual Brian Gravison Volunteer Awards: From left: Rita Burrows, Trish Doyle MP, Lyn, Kath Harrison, Michael Farrell-Whelan. **Below**: CVS Coordinator Felicity Tonks at Belong Blue Mountains' 2018 AGM



## Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

## Disability Services & NDIS

#### **Anna Tardent, Coordinator**

#### Staff

Tracey Johnson, NDIS Support Coordinator; Vickie Hastedt, NDIS Support Coordinator; Patricia Kerry, NDIS Plan Management Administration Kasey Arnold, NDIS Management Administration.

#### **Funding**

Funds in individual participant NDIS plans pay for the services that Belong Blue Mountains Incorporated, as a registered NDIS service provider through Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, provides to each client.

#### **Service Description**

#### **Support Coordination:**

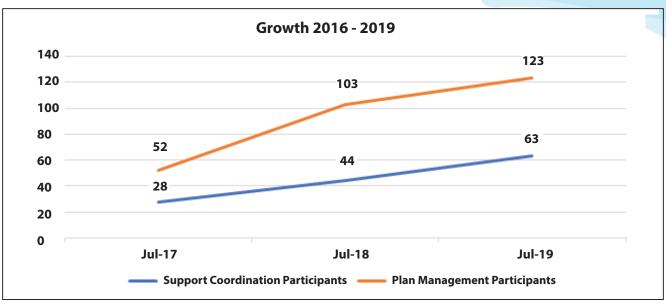
Some NDIA participants have a budget allocated within their plan for Support Coordination. This allows them to access help to build the best system of supports from their NDIS plan. It is a "capacity building support to implement all supports in a participant's plan including informal, mainstream, community and NDIS funded supports. **Support Coordinators work** creatively and resourcefully with participants in how they utilise their support budgets to achieve their goals." (NDIA March 2017 | **Support Coordination: Information** for providers).

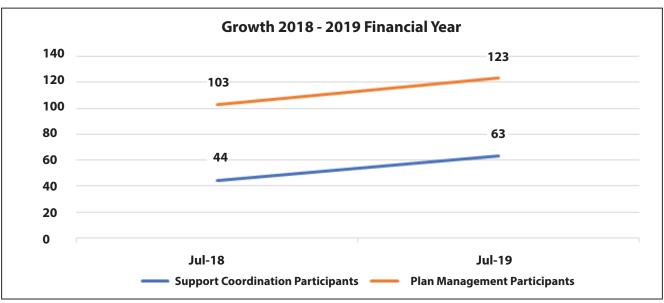


The Disability Team at Belong Blue Mountains. From left: Tish Kerry, Anna Tardent (seated), Tracey Johnson, Vickie Hastedt, Kasey Arnold

#### **Plan Management:**

When a participant receives an NDIS plan, there are three ways in which the budgets in the plan can be managed. 'Agency Managed' – the participant can engage only NDIA-registered providers of supports. 'Self-Managed' - the participant is responsible for requesting payment from NDIA and paying providers. This gives the participant an opportunity to purchase supports from suppliers that have not registered with the NDIA. 'Plan Managed' – the participant still has the benefit of being able to choose providers not registered with NDIA as well as registered providers, however the Plan Manager as intermediary is responsible for organising the financial and administrative aspects of the plan such as paying invoices on time, requesting payment from the NDIA, preparing reports on how funds are being used, and helping a participant to connect with providers and organising service agreements. This is our Plan Management service.







Anthony Mahr with his new Guide Dog, Yorric, and Tracey Johnson, Support Coordinator at Belong Blue Mountains

## Home Modifications and Maintenance and Household Tasks:

There are two further categories that we are registered NDIS providers for, which are delivered by Assist Building & Maintenance. Services provided include garden maintenance and bathroom modifications.

#### **Service Activity**

The number of clients accessing both Plan Management and Support Coordination services have grown since we began providing NDIS supports in 2016. Growth over the 2018-2019 financial year has been steady.

#### **Highlights**

We welcomed Vickie Hastedt and Kasey Arnold to our team in January 2019. This was a significant highlight and their contributions over the year have allowed us to continue to grow as clients request our services.



NDIS participant Chad Graham with his newly modified van

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge Tish Kerry who was such an integral part of the growth of Plan Management. In June Tish's efficiency, diligence, and friendly, helpful nature led to her being offered an expanded role in Belong BM's Assist team, where she will be an asset. Kasey Arnold, who joined us to assist Tish, will now take on the extra responsibilities within Plan Management. My thanks to Tracey Johnson and Vickie Hastedt, who continue to allow the service to grow as we grapple with the new financial modelling required in a 'fee-forservice' environment. I would also like to acknowledge our clients who choose us to provide their supports, and who are unfailingly kind, polite and generally admirable in so many ways. Thank you! ■

Anna Tardent, Coordinator

Disability Services staff Tracey Johnson and Anna Tardent, receive their recognition awards, including the Ruth Ley Award, at Belong Blue Mountains' 2018 AGM from CEO Kath Harrison and Lyndall Sullivan.

## Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

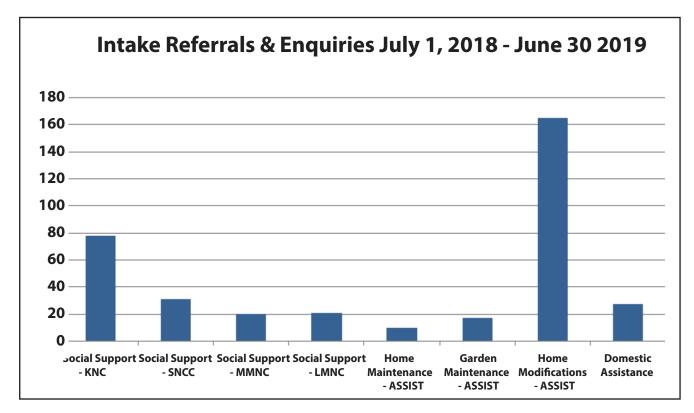
#### Intake

Intake Staff:

#### **Korey Gunnis & Bren Sherring**

he Intake service has provided a regular intake referral, enquiry and information service four days per week, between 9-1pm. The service targets people aged over 65 years. Referrals to Intake are primarily received through the Commonwealth Department of Health's web portal, My Aged Care. Enquiries to Intake are also taken over the phone, in person, and by email. Referrals to Intake are for the range of aged care services operated within Belong Blue Mountains, and some services operated by our partner organisations, Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative and Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre, and include referrals for social support, domestic assistance, home maintenance, garden maintenance and home modifications. Funding for the Intake Service is through the Commonwealth Home Support Program. Highlights for this reporting period include being able to assist people aged over 65 years to navigate the complexities of the My Aged Care system and being able to refer them to services which are best matched to their individual needs. Challenges for this service have been working with the changing dynamics of the aged care system.





## Service Activity – Domestic assistance, home and garden maintenance, social support

Service activity for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 has included 204 individual referrals and enquiries. A statistical breakdown of referrals to each service for this period is depicted in the graph above.

## Service Activity – Home Modifications

During the 2018-2019 reporting period, Intake received a total of 165 referrals for home modifications via the My Aged Care Portal. Of these, all were accepted except for one that was rejected as falling outside our service delivery area.

Domestic assistance, home maintenance and garden maintenance were at capacity for most of 2018-19 and were consequently closed for new referrals on the My Aged Care portal. In addition, 49 referrals that were received by Intake were

rejected due to insufficient capacity.

#### **Acknowledgements**

**Korey:** I would like to acknowledge Bren, my fellow Intake officer, for all the wonderful work Bren has done this year.

Bren: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of Assist Building & Maintenance for their professionalism and their ongoing support of frail aged and vulnerable people in our community throughout what has been a year of significant change. It has been a pleasure to work with you. I would also like to thank my co-worker Korey, for his support over the past year. ■

**Below**: Coffee Mornings at Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre.



## Section 1: Care & Support (cont.)

#### Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service

Katrina Simmons,
Coordinator
Sarah Dean,
Administration Support

#### **Volunteers**

Robyn Artup, Kim Berthon,
Barbara Charman, Jill Comber,
Anthony Craig, Anne Davies,
Jill Dujuric, Maureen Doherty,
Beth Edwards, Vicki Glew, Ruth
Grace, Margaret Gudgeon, Bill
Harvey, Kerry Healey Binns, Agnes
Jaccoud, Penny Kearney, Chris
Kolokoutsas, Patricia Marshall,
Ruth Myers, Kerry Rice, Terry Ryan,
Kathy Ryan, Christine Sinclair,
Sophia Stephenson, Andrew Stout,
Brenda Taffel, Sally Taylor and
Melinda Turner.



Palliative Care Week at Blue Mountains Hospital: Volunteers Kerry Healy-Binns and Kathy Ryan at the 'Hands display' May 2019

#### **Service Operation and Funding**

The Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service (BMPSS) covers the Blue Mountains Local Government Area and Lithgow. The service is funded by NSW Health, through Nepean/Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD). Referrals are made through the Nepean/Blue Mountains

The service reports to NSW Health on its service activity KPI's bi-annually.

#### **Service Description**

Palliative Care Team.

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

Currently at Blue Mountains Hospital there are two volunteers visiting the Palliative care ward weekly. Springwood and Lithgow Hospitals have one volunteer visiting the palliative care ward weekly.

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

#### **Service Targets**

In 2018–19 we had 23 active volunteers who provided 2,160 hours of direct support to our clients at home and in hospital.

The funding body requires the service to meet a broad range of service output targets and service objectives. There are five5 annual KPIs, 14 bi-annual KPIs and a number of service objectives and activities to be met. These performance measurements cover a range of matters, from the number of clients assessed, number of volunteers, number of hours of service provided by

volunteers, to volunteer training and review, to client and volunteer satisfaction measurements, to working partnerships with other organisations.

The service met all required KPIs and performance measurements in 2018-19.

#### **Highlights**

In partnership with NBMLHD, the service held "Memorial Day" on 25 September 2018 at MMNC. Memorial Day is held annually in memory of clients and patients known to the Palliative Care Services in Blue Mountains and Lithgow Community Health Service who have died over the past twelve months. It brings families and staff together by acknowledging the grief of bereaved families, carers and friends. It is an opportunity to provide support within a community setting with other bereaved families and to bring

Volunteer Christmas lunch 2018 back row Brenda Taffel, Kerry Rice, Christine Sinclair, Anne Davies , Kerry Healy-Binns front lvy Lorenz, Katrina Simmons and Melinda Turner closure to the illness phase. It allows all staff to reflect on the patients they have cared for.

At this year's Memorial Day, there were seventy attendees 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.

The Blue Mountains City Council's Seniors Week
Recognition Awards recognised our long term volunteers
Maureen Doherty from Wentworth Falls and Kerry Rice
from Winmalee.

The service organised a photographic 'Hands' display and information table at each of the three regional hospitals for Palliative Care Week in May. Nine volunteers reported they spoke to 86 people and there were a total of 114 dots of interactions with the photos on the theme 'What matters most?'

#### **Feedback from Consumers**

The service conducted a mail out of client/ carer surveys in April which were posted to 55 families. We received 23 replies. Feedback comments included:

'This service enabled my husband and I a chance to escape an intensive situation and have some time together'

'My late wife had a fantastic rapport with the volunteer and her company provided great comfort for my wife'

'Yes the love and compassion and care was exemplary'

#### Feedback from the Memorial Day event 2018

"being with other people", "realising other people in same position as me", "companionship of others who were in the same position", "a real sense of community", "heartened to hear poems, linked to memory of wife who was a poet", "just what I needed"

#### **Acknowledgements**

This service could not exist without the dedication and commitment from our volunteers.

Our volunteers were recognised and appreciated for their contribution at the end-of-year Christmas lunch held at MMNC on 13 December which 11 volunteers attended.

Katrina Simmons, Coordinator

### NTERLUDE

## Celebrating our volunteers

By Marlene Churn, Volunteer Home Visitors Coordinator, and Peta Williams, Director, Corporate & Quality

he volunteers of Belong Blue Mountains, who work across the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba Neighbourhood Centres in a range of services and programs, are the foundation of what we do. We couldn't do what we do without the skills and experience of a range of people who are willing to give their time in supporting what we do and empowering our community. We thank you all for your generosity of spirit, your kindness and your goodwill.

Our reception volunteers are the front-line of Belong Blue Mountains. It is these people who welcome people to our neighbourhood centres, who are the first point of contact in person or by phone, and who provide support in all shapes and forms. How lucky are we as an organisation to be able to keep the front doors open and provide such a welcoming space, a space that is close to being at times similar to that of the comfort of a lounge room. It is in this space that one of the most valuable things offered is the ability to provide, what on the face of it appears to be simple - a safe space to sit and have a cuppa and enjoy some company.

The receptionists on a daily basis take numerous enquires via emails, phone calls and greet people walking through the door of all backgrounds and ages, and at times with many different people coming in at once. What makes this space work is having a team who have a diverse range of skills, backgrounds and life experiences who also have that ability to be able to work alongside people, staff, other services, community groups and organisations. On any given day a shift can be complex, challenging, confronting and uplifting and the volunteers manage this with professional grace and kindness. A volunteer shift may include assisting or connecting people to accommodation services, food parcels, assisting with correspondence and listening to someone's story. The volunteers play an essential part through their role of working with staff and managing the complexity of needs of the community and that of an ever-changing community sector. This is combined with the ability to work with people to allow a level of dignity, to be present and to 'enable' rather than 'do for'.

Our reception volunteers also provide practical administrative support, cover shifts, do buddy shifts and train and support new reception volunteers. Some also volunteer in other areas of the community as well as for Belong Blue Mountains including our home visiting services, visiting people in local Aged Care Facilities, Community and Cultural Development events, our KOOSH children's service, our Community Lunches, our graffiti removal program, and social and medical transports.

The space does not go without its challenges and to do what they do it is important to have ongoing support, training and engagement with the volunteers as part of the team. This is also the role of back up staff in ensuring that volunteers are welcomed, checked on during their shift and touch base at the end of each shift and ask how their day went. This is important on an ongoing basis with the aim of maintaining wellbeing and monitoring what works well and what may be done differently and improved.

An additional special thank you to volunteers David Armitage and Graeme Hudson for their support at our Elder Abuse Awareness Events, the Brian Gravison Volunteer Awards and the Seniors Festival Concerts. David and Graham alongside other volunteers and staff make sure that guests feel welcome and are safely guided to their seats with grace and finesse. These events attract a large amount of people including guests who may be frail-aged, and have difficulty with access and mobility issues. With their smiling and attentive support it not only makes these events safe but also fun and glamorous for all those who attend.

In this year of transition the reception volunteers at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre were supported by staff members Marlene Churn and Felicity Tonks, and we thank Marlene and Felicity for their important role here. At the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre our Reception volunteer trainer, Lynn Willis, continues to provide support and initiative over and above the call of duty, and we would like to thank and acknowledge Lynn for her fantastic work here. We would also like to thank Administration Support Officer Sara Fawcett for her support here.

At Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, reception volunteers were ably supported by Administration Support Officer Sarah Dean, and we thank and acknowledge Sarah for her care.

Here are some words from some of our reception volunteers themselves:

'KNC is a great place to volunteer. The staff are all great to work with, and make it a positive and optimistic place to spend time as a volunteer. It's a much-needed refuge for those less fortunate or for people who are going through a difficult time. KNC is very much needed in this increasingly troubled world.'

'I enjoy working on Reception as it is an important job in the Neighbourhood Centre. It helps me stay engaged in my local community, which I value as I am now retired.'

'The joy of reception volunteering is the eclectic people one deals with and the wonderful staff of Belong Blue Mountains.'

'Volunteering as a receptionist, gives me a sense of belonging to a community.'

'My shift at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre is the highlight of my week. The time I spend with our kind, generous and interesting staff, volunteers and visitors, enriches my life, more than I can say. I love being part of an organisation which fills a such a need in the community.'

'Working on the reception desk broadens my perspective, stirs my soul and makes me feel like a better person.'



'Working on reception is a very rewarding experience. One never knows what assistance can be provided from one minute to the next. The camaraderie of KNC is that of a very close family with all the arrows heading in the same direction to achieve the closest outcome to our values of Community Caring for Community.'

'It's a privilege to be able to support and help those disadvantaged in our community. It is also an honour to work with inspirational staff at Belong Blue Mountains.'

'As a receptionist you never know what's going to happen next. It's one of the most colourful, interesting and educational jobs I have had.'

'Volunteering as a receptionist has enabled me to learn about so many services for the vulnerable in our community. It is a privilege to support the staff and other volunteers who provide valuable services across our local community and to be part of the larger Belong Blue Mountains family. It is an opportunity to give something back in a meaningful way.'

'We like preparing the monthly community lunch, because we love eating and feeding other people. We also have a jolly time socialising in the kitchen.'

#### Brian Gravison Volunteer Awards 2018-2019

Held at the Carrington Hotel in Katoomba in May 2019.
The Brian Gravison Volunteer Awards, originally an initiative of the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, were expanded to include volunteers across the Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba centres.

We thank Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains, for agreeing to present the awards this year, along with Rita Burrows. Our thanks also to Michael Farrell-Whelan for donating his time as Master of Ceremonies, and to Aunty Carol Cooper for her Welcome to Country. While every volunteer at Belong Blue Mountains is very much valued and appreciated for all that they do, a few volunteers were highlighted this year for their contributions, as follows:

#### **Excellence in Volunteering Awards**

#### Belong Blue Mountains Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Lani Fercher

#### **Excellence in Volunteering**

Lani Fercher has been running the Blaxland Disco for people with living with a disability for almost 20 years with the 20th anniversary coming up on 14 June. This award is for her many years of service and passion in bring joy and connection through dance and having fun.

#### Belong Blue Mountains Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Jim Fitzpatrick Excellence in Volunteering

Jim is a long-term volunteer driver for LMNC. He also volunteers as Santa at our annual Christmas lunch. Jim is known for his sense of humour, his easy-going attitude, his caring nature and his ability to put a smile on the face of anyone he meets.

#### Belong Blue Mountains Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Patricia & David Caton Excellence in Volunteering

Pat and David have served as a reception volunteer and board member respectively for a number of years and are an invaluable support at everything we do in the Mid Mountains. Their spirit and commitment goes above and beyond. During the transition from MMNC to Belong they have led with positivity and optimism.

# Belong Blue Mountains Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Pamela Joy Constantine Excellence in Volunteering

Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre has been very fortunate to have Joy volunteer for both our Volunteer Home Visitors service and the Community Visitors Scheme for the last five years. Joy's kindness, gentle nature, grace and intelligence has meant that she has been able to develop meaningful and close relationships with the ladies she has visited, who have benefited, and indeed found joy in their friendships with her. This award is in recognition of Joy's ability to connect with the people she visits, see who they really are, and to share their life stories

And then there were the Oscars...

## **Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Oscars**

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards for excellence in art Shirley Williams (facilitator, Art Group for Seniors)

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards for dedication to Harmony Neville Rowe (volunteer coordinator, Harmony Arts & Friendship Group)

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards for excellence in music Kay Burton (Volunteer Coordinator, BUGs – Blaxland Ukulele Group)

#### Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Oscars

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards for Excellence in Blue Mountains Palliative Support Service Robyn Artup

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards For Volunteer Home Visitor Touring Queen Nyla Thomas



**Top**: Food relief at Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre. **Bottom:** LMNC volunteers

Belong Blue Mountains
2019 Brian Gravison Awards
For Longest serving reception volunteer at Belong Mid
Mountains
Carol Lubbers

#### **Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Oscars**

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Actress in a Comedy and/or Musical Gay Thornton

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Actress in a Magical Movie Carol Price Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Screenplay Mary Lawson

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Volunteer in Social Support Role Lynn Anag

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Unique & Artistic Production Lyn Harrison

Belong Blue Mountains 2019 Brian Gravison Awards Best Supporting Actress Biruta Latta

Marlene Churn, Volunteer Home visitors Coordinator, and Peta Williams, Director Corporate & Quality



Left: Kath Harrison at Belong BM's AGM 2018 Above: LMNC volunteers receiving Seniors Week volunteer awards with Susan Templeman and Trish Doyle. Right: Volunteer Christmas lunch 2018 - Back row; Brenda Taffel, Kerry Rice, Christine Sinclair, Anne Davies, Kerry Healy-Binns Front; Ivy Lorenz, Katrina Simmons and Melinda Turner



## Section 2: Community Hubs

### Community Hubs & Community Development Report

#### Danielle Wilding-Forbes, Community Engagement Manager

#### Staff

Community Engagement Manager:

Danielle Wilding-Forbes

Community Development Workers:

Christopher Smith, Lower

Mountains

Josie Vendramini, Katoomba (Resigned in May 2019) Kerin Pollock, Mid Mountains NILS Customer Support Officer: Pauline Stafrace

Administration Support Officers: Sarah Dean, Sara Fawcett

#### **Funding**

NSW Department of Family and Community Services (Targeted Early Intervention)

NSW Department of Justice (Graffiti removal program)

#### **Volunteers**

Lynn Willis

#### **Lower Mountains**

#### **Reception Volunteers**

Anna Bednarz, Lynn Baggaley Yvonne Etherington, Diane Greenaway, Maureen Fuller Kerrie Howson, Robbie McKenzie Pam Murray, Gioia Price, Anna Russell, Maree Spillard, Jan Wilkinson, Lynn Willis Reception supervisor & trainer

#### **Project/service Volunteers**

Merilyn Blacker, Community Liaison Officer

#### Services directed through the Hubs:

#### **Transport Drivers (social, medical, bus transport)**

Peter Apps, Ray Barrett, Marek Bowman, Wayne Clark, Damon Cox, Jenny Dooley, Jim Fitzpatrick, Philip Gilchrist, Barry Henry, Diane Greenaway, Marn Harrex, Pip Kells, Russell Lang, Rick Paynter, Jan Wilkinson, Lynn Willis, Heather Lee, Beth Madden, Terry Madden

#### **Shopping Bus Hosts**

Maureen Fuller, Sue McCully and Laurie Willis

#### **Graffiti Management**

John Oakey (Co-ordinator), Scott Annabel, Kevin Archer Lynn Cheshire, Ian Dingwall, Luke Dingwall, David Fuge Aaron Govendir, Bob Treasure, John Watkins-Wilson and Roger Winterburn

#### **BUGs (Blaxland Ukulele Group)**

Kay Burton, Co-ordinator

#### **Blaxland Disco**

Lani Fercher, Co-ordinator

#### **Harmony Art & Friendship Group**

Neville Rowe, Coordinator

#### **Art Group for Seniors**

Sara Fawcett, Shirley Williams (artist and facilitator)



#### **Christmas Day Lunch**

Christine Kelly and a large number of volunteers

#### **Wrap With Love**

All those who contribute to the Wrap With Love project

#### **Mid Mountains**

#### **Reception Volunteers**

Patricia Caton, Glenis Cole, Sue Grimble, Sarah Griffiths, Hamsa Lingham, Carol Lubbers and Helen Routledge

#### **Project/service Volunteers**

Sophie Williams, Book Club

Nigel Armstrong, Mid Mountains Walkers

Therese Corbett, CFS/Fibromylagia

Robert Musgrave and Brian Sneddon, Cube Club

Natasha Simon, Bipolar Support Group

Alexandra Holmes, Multiple Diagnosis

Barb Bee, Work Skills for Women Ken Goodlet. Bushwalks leader

#### Katoomba

#### **Reception Volunteers**

David Armitage, Dave Croll, Dianne Donnellan, Jackie Delaney, Jim Hennessey, Mary Lawson, Carol Price, June Rose, Angela Sharman, Denise Stott and Bradley Young

## Community Lunches First Thursday of the Month Volunteers

David Armitage (set up), Adrian Gean (Music), Lyn Harrison, Jim Hennessey, June Rose (cook and musician), Brad Young, Gillian.

## Retired KNC Volunteers during 2018-2019

Johanna O'Hea and Hanna Lemire

#### **Community Hubs**

#### **Lower Mountains, Mid Mountains and Katoomba**

"A welcome space for community to access support and information that assists them to reach their goals, aspirations and best selves."

This has been a year of merge and consolidation as we acknowledge the rich history that each of our neighbourhood centres have and take forward the best of our practices to create Belong Blue Mountains.

#### We worked towards:

- Strengthening what our Neighbourhood Centres do in their role as community hubs and embedding the Linker principles and practices across our organisation.
- Sharing what each hub has to offer and increasing information and referral capacity within our staff and volunteers.
- Making our hubs a place where community can access a welcome space that will respond to their needs and aspirations with a "no wrong door" ethos sits at our core.

We could not run these hubs without our fabulous reception volunteers. They staff our front desks with enthusiasm and are the first face people see when they visit a Belong BM Hub. Their generosity of time and expertise is of great value and we thank them all for their ongoing efforts.

I would also like to thank all the other volunteers who enable us to deliver a range of valuable programs and services to our community.

Kids participating in the Stop Motion Workshop during MMNC's ho<mark>liday program</mark>





Cube Club Workshop at Hubcon

#### **Hub Services**

**Hub Services include:** 

- Linker services Information and referral
- Emergency relief (partnership with Vinnies)
- Food Hampers (partnership with Central Mountains Rotary)
- Food Rescue (partnership with Junction 142)
- Community access to computers, wi-fi, printing and scanning.
- Digital tutoring
- Provision of space for community groups and activities
- Tax Help
- Graffiti removal administration support
- · Family lunches
- Book club
- · Social Support Groups
- Out & About
- ME/CFS support group
- NDIS advocacy and support group
- Walking Groups
- Community in a Tea cup and seniors

#### **Auspiced groups**

Belong Blue Mountains supports a number of valuable local groups under its auspice policy.

#### These include:

- Mid Mountains Community Garden (including TAFE caPE gardening course)
- ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day events
- · Tidy towns garden maintenance groups
- Hazelbrook Association partnership projects
  - Tidy Towns gardening: Two bi-monthly working parties clean up and weed the Hazelbrook shops area and Memorial Park. Average attendance: 6
  - Annual Family Fun Day

#### **Graffiti Removal Service**

Funded through the NSW Department of Justice and supported by Blue Mountains City Council, Belong Blue Mountains supports a graffiti removal service through the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre and the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre, in partnership with the Hazelbrook Association.

An LGA-wide alliance has been formed under volunteer coordinator Greg Birtles of the Hazelbrook Association with the Lower Mountains Volunteer Coordinator John Oakey. We are pleased to also have the support of our local Police Force for this service.

#### **Community Development**

#### **Children Youth and Families**

Working with families and children to improve child health and wellbeing, connect people with services that they need and reduce levels of vulnerability is at the core of our Community Development work.

By working with those who walk through our door and also reaching out to extend services to those who we may not usually see. We are motivated by the Harwood principles to constantly turn outward to examine what community needs are.

#### Community Development Activities and Programs

Our Community Development Coordinators in the Lower Mountain and Mid Mountains co-convene their local family support interagency, a network of schools, community and statutory services that meet regularly to advance social and educational outcomes for children under 12. This provides them with opportunities to link with other services, identify local needs and collaborate. With the creation of local playgroups, holiday activities and

capacity building workshops.

Other community development activities that promote connection and belonging and support people in need include:

#### Play and Chat at Blaxland Public School

A play group aiming to reach out to parents in the community to provide opportunities to socialise, learn and be informed about assistance available.

#### Play and Chat in the park

Lower Mountains hub has organised and facilitated a series of events aimed at promoting services for parents and younger people.

**Pre-school tutoring** – Tutoring sessions for children struggling in mainstream environments.

#### **Bushwalks**

Led by local historian Ken Goodlet and delivered in partnership with Springwood Bushwalking group, these fabulous local bushwalks keep our tracks alive and connect with local history and culture and are ideal for individuals and families.

#### Sensory Processing Disorder Seminar at KNC

12 September 2018
50 attendees
Run by Occupational Therapist
Matthew Johnson
A free information session for
parents/carers of children with
SPD

#### **Elders Morning Tea**

14 March 2019
An invitation went out to seniors in our community to share morning tea with primary school

children at North Katoomba Public School. Well attended.

#### White Ribbon Day

As part of our commitment to the campaign against violence to women and children, and in partnership with CAVA and our BLINN partners, we put together and distributed 500 white ribbons attached to cards outlining the cause as well as contact details for relevant local services.

#### Kookaburra Playgroup

Runs every Monday 9:30-11:30 (in school term). This facilitated playgroup is a welcoming and energetic space for families to connect, play and share. 40 sessions per year and an average of 28 families attending each term.

#### **Mid Mountains Cube Club**

4th Saturday of the Month - This group has been running for over a year now. Notably this has a very high number of fathers participating. They also presented at the Springwood Hub's Hubcon event this year.

#### Community Readers at Hazelbrook Public School

16 volunteers with over 40 participants
This is a partnership between our Mid Mountains
Neighbourhood Centre and Hazelbrook Public School. This
program has been running for over 10 years and supports
kindy students by providing them with a volunteer to listen
to them read once a week. When one student's literacy
skill improves they can be rotated out to create a place for
another.

#### Read & Grow- Lawson primary school

12 volunteers with over 120 participants
This was a new partnership between our Mid Mountains
Neighbourhood Centre and Lawson Primary school.
Supporting early literacy efforts in the school using much
the same model as the community readers program, this
program works on an individual level as well as the whole
of the class.

#### **Holiday Workshops**

Throughout the year we held a number of school holiday workshops at our hubs and in the community.

These include Coding & robotics, Minecraft and stop motion, all of which we partner with Build a Mind to deliver. These workshops cater to 12 students per session and with a total of 10 workshops run across our hubs this year means we were able to engage 120 participants in this activity this year.

Other activities include a Paper Pulp workshop, Christmas Craft, Boards Games Galore, Tots and Toddler Time, and Harry Potter Trivia for tweens and teens.

#### **School Holiday Fun Days**

Twice a year we partner with Mountains Outreach Community Service to run family fun days in Woodford and Bullaburra. These are always popular and engage well over 50 families at each event. Activities include Indigenous games, Face-painting, Painting & playdough, make a Story Box and morning tea. Having information to engage in referrals is also a priority in these outreach events.

## Hazelbrook Association Family Fun day

7 October 2018 - The Hazelbrook Association runs an annual family fun day in October with Mid Mountains Hub supporting this event with an MC and activity table. This event has a high volume of engagement with an approximate attendance of 750 people.

Stop Motion Workshop at MMNC



#### Mid Mountains Festival

This event is a definite highlight of our family events calendar. This year's Mid Mountains Festival was held on Saturday 17 November 2018. The day began under grey skies as 26 community groups and stall holders set up according to wet weather plans. The rain held off and a steady stream of people began to arrive. Changes to traffic management requirements made blocking off the Lowden Lane carpark unviable and the decision was made to hold the festival on a smaller scale. This allowed us to prioritise stalls for community groups and food and ensured that the tradition of live music and performance could be maintained. With such a diverse range of community groups, performances and activities within the grounds of the community centre the day felt energetic and vibrant.

The event was well attended with an estimated 600 people coming through the gates on the day. Those attending were a great representation of our community including families, older people and adults. A number of groups from disability support services visited from as far away as Campbelltown.

This year the festival program was extended to include more live music and performers at the 'Pub Stage' at the Blue Mountains Hotel. This was organised with the support of Blue Mountains Folk Group and was also well attended.

Highlights of the day included a range of activities for children of all ages including discovery rangers, creation of a mural, old school letter writing and designing your own bags.

#### **Youth & Young People**

Through the Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre we were successful in receiving a Youth Opportunities grant from the Department of Families and Communities. We have entered into a partnership with MYST to deliver this project. Maddy Forward is the worker assigned by MYST to coordinate this project.

The Project culminated in a Halloween Pool party, an historic tour and a bush walk.

The target group was 12-17 years.

Number of young people involved in steering committee: 12

Number of young people in attendance at events: 42



#### **Stronger Families Alliance (SFA)**

As an active member of the SFA, Belong Blue Mountains convenes the Child & Youth Friendly Cities working group. This group coordinated a community consultation using the Harwood Ask tool themed around safety and what this means to people in our community.

This consultation had 500 responses, with 64% being from people aged 8-18yrs of age.

This information, in conjunction with the Wellbeing index conducted with over 2,500 Blue Mountains high school students and the Harwood Community Conversations with young people themed around Mental Health, will be presented to the SFA members late 2019 to determine future work.

The four working areas of the Stronger Families Alliance are:

SFA - Child & Youth Friendly Cities

SFA - Reducing stress and improving wellbeing in young people

SFA - Children start school ready to learn

SFA - PEG (Parent Education Group) attended a planning meeting on the 31 May 2019

#### **Community Consultations**

Belong Blue Mountains is committed to turning outward and being held accountable by the community. To do this we employ the Harwood method of community consultation. A number of our workers are trained in this method and are part of a network of neighbourhood and community sector workers



who hold these skills in the Blue Mountains. Having workers across the sector using the same method regularly opens up opportunities for collaboration and strengthens the reach of our work.

Harwood consultations
contributed to the Stronger
Families Alliance consultation
processes aiming to increase
resilience and wellbeing for
younger people, and discover what
safety means to younger people.

#### **Community Capacity Building**

#### Mental health first aid

A series of courses aimed at building community capacity to assist people experiencing mental health crises.

#### NDIS peer support group

Monthly meetings are experiencing low numbers, and energy needs to be allocated to promote and reframe this group to ensure it is as inviting as possible.

Support for one person to attend by providing childcare was funded by the Ability Links' financial contribution to this project.



#### **CFS/ Fibromyalgia Support Group**

(Me= Myalgia Encephalomyelitis/CFS=Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibro= Fibromyalgia) - Meets 1st Thursday of the month at MMNC. Attendance: 8-12 per month with approximately 120 members on the mailing list and interacting on Facebook.

#### Supporting local communities in need

Through Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre. Support continued to be provided to the people of the local Tibetan community, to families leaving Wimlah Women's Refuge by coordinating the collection of household items, and through a 'Linker clinic', which supported community members negotiating problems within the community.

#### **Building resilience & Preparedness in our community**

Belong Blue Mountains continues to make disaster resilience and preparedness a priority. By participating in the annual 'Get Ready' calendar of events we contribute our expertise to outreach events and build capacity in the community.

We also focused on building capacity within our staff and volunteers throughout 2018-19, ensuring that we all have a common understanding of our ability to respond in the case of an emergency and what we can do to assist our clients to prepare and to have conversations around this theme.

#### **Social Inclusion**

Weekly, fortnightly and monthly groups for older people focused around interests, activities and social interaction. Groups meet to knit, sing, read, paint, chat, play and explore together, and connect with each other.

Some of these groups and activities include:

#### **Pancake Morning**

Monthly event designed to inform new residents of what we do. This enabled people to get together and provide a point of contact outside of 'usual business hours' for people who struggle to come to the centre in that time.

#### **Community Disco**

The Disco provided opportunities to socialise and have fun for people living with disability.

#### **Community Connectors Program**

Outreach program aiming to assist people experiencing loneliness.

#### **Leep Online & Digital Learning**

Digital Mentoring for older people and people living with disability.

#### **Book Club**

Run by a volunteer facilitator. This group meets each month to explore literature and perspectives.

#### **Community Lunches**

Community Lunches at Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre are on the first and second Thursday of each month (except January). Everybody is welcome, and while donations are gratefully accepted, payment is not required for people to access these lunches.

## Physical activity for health and wellbeing

Creating opportunities for people to get active are also a conduit to staying connected.

These activities include:

- Free 2 Flow stretch and exercise –Stretches and exercise for people recovering from injury or with limited capacity
- Accessible yoga –Yoga classes for older people and people living with disability
- Tai Chi Weekly Tai chi classes
- Strengthening over 60s -Weekly fitness classes
- Other Social inclusion groups are supported across the three Hubs with meeting space and promotion.

#### **Community Networks**

Communities staff attended the following community networks with which we are involved:

- Resilience and Preparedness Group
- Blue Mountains Community Interagency (BMCI)
- Coalition Against Violence and Abuse (CAVA)

- Mental Health & Networking Forum
- Youth Mental Health Illness & Substance Abuse Network
- Combined Community Development Workers and Managers
- Mountains Multicultural Interagency
- Elders Lunch Planning Group
- · Stronger Families Alliance Members
- Stronger Families Alliance Working Group Child & Youth Friendly Cities
- Stronger Families Alliance Working Group Building Resilience and Wellbeing in Young People
- Hubitat Lower Mountains Family Support network
- Mid Mountains Family Support network

#### **Staffing**

Bedding down a new organisation takes time, and it has taken us time to develop our community hubs that include the three neighbourhood centres in Blaxland, Lawson and Katoomba. It is an ongoing process as we streamline ways of doing things across the three hubs.

I give my warm thanks to the terrific staff and volunteer team within the Communities Directorate for their patience, goodwill and good humour as we built the Communities Directorate this year, and to our Director, Mick Barrett, for his guiding hand.

I would also like to acknowledge, with sadness, the loss of our Mid Mountains Administration Support Officer, Sarah Dean, on 24 September 2019, at the time of writing this report. She will be missed.

Danielle Wilding-Forbes Community Engagement Manager



## Section 2: Community Hubs (cont.)

### Social and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Program

(Formerly Vale Street Program) (aka OK Space aka Reaching Out)

Mick Barrett,
Director Communities

#### **Service Objective**

Improve the connections, community participation and wellbeing of people living with a mental illness and their families through the establishment and delivery of the Reaching Out program (previously known as the Vale St program), to the Blue Mountains and Lithgow.

This service underwent significant changes over the year, in adapting from centre-based Vale St to an outreach program, in response to negotiations with the NSW Department of Health Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD). New KPIs were negotiated in early 2019 to reflect these changes, and the report below reflects the latest version. The funding was discontinued by the NBMLHD in June 2019. BelongBM's ongoing commitment to mental health has been absorbed under our Community Development team.

#### **Program Focus**

 GROW - Establishment of a GROW group was scheduled in early 2019. There were not sufficient numbers to continue a GROW group. Enquiries are being referred to the Peers in Recovery group.

- Peers in Recovery (in partnership with Springwood Neighbourhood Centre) In all, nine groups were conducted during the reporting period. Feedback from the group indicates that it fills an important role in their lives. As a direct result of this feedback the group will continue to run in Term 3 2019 on a new day and at a new location in the hope of attracting more members.
- REACH Of the three REACH Programs scheduled, one was completed. The majority of participants strongly agreed that the program met expectations and addressed topics they wanted to cover. Two other scheduled groups were postponed until late 2019.
- Everybody Yoga 151 participants completed the weekly Yoga program. 100% of participants indicated improved wellbeing and satisfaction with life. 100% of participants indicated that participation in the group contributed to their overall sense of health and wellbeing. One member noted that participation in the group not only provided her with relaxation and exercise but also with the opportunity for social interaction.
- Bipolar Support Group This monthly group came under the support of Belong BM at the beginning of 2019 and has established a core group of participants, averaging 24 per quarter. 100% of respondents indicated that participation in the group supported them in improving or maintaining their overall wellbeing and sense of self satisfaction.
- Create 4 Wellbeing This weekly art therapy group started in early 2019, with 14 participants in the first term, and 53 in the second term. 100% of participants indicated the program had met or exceeded their expectations. Similarly all respondents indicated that participation in the group had contributed to their overall sense of mental health and wellbeing.
- Walanmarra This weekly group came under the support of Belong BM at the beginning of 2019 with a core group of participants (114 in Term 1, and 83 in Term 2). The overwhelming response from the women in conversation about the group was that the benefits of the group stretched beyond the time they spent in sessions through relationships built. It was also noted by a number of women that during difficult periods wanting to return to the

- group was the thing that gave them something to get out of bed for. 100% of participants were satisfied with their participation in the program, with the support provided by the facilitator.
   All participants felt that the group supported their overall sense of wellbeing and helped them remain connected. All participants would recommend the group to a friend.
- Multiple Diagnosis Group This monthly group was established in early 2019, and after its first five sessions had a core group of participants. Eight participants in the first term, and 14 in term 2. In response to feedback from these participants the group now runs in two parts. The first part of the group session focuses on support through conversation and in the second part of the session the group participates in a creative expression exercise set by the facilitator. 100% of participants indicated that their participation in the program had satisfied their expectations. One member noted on the survey that the group had exceeded their expectations. Survey respondents indicated that participation in the group had contributed to their overall sense of mental health and wellbeing.
- Blue Fringe The Blue Fringe
   Arts & Literature Awards
   celebrate and acknowledge the
   creativity of people with a lived
   experience of mental illness.
   This year we celebrated our
   26th year!

Belong Blue Mountains again partnered with Springwood

Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative; SSI Ability Links; Aftercare; WSI TAFE Wentworth Falls Campus and local community artist Karen S. to facilitate the 2018 Awards, held in October during Mental Health Month.

Through the courage and generosity of over 100 writers and artists across a number of disciplines, we are able to connect and find that we are not so very different after all, despite the diversity of style, subject and personal experience. We honour the courage of every entrant and look forward to continuing to bring the Blue Fringe Festival to the people of the Mountains for many years to come.

My thanks to our Blue Fringe representative, Bren Sherring, for her dedicated work to this important project.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Brenda Sherring within the Vale St program both as project worker and Coordinator over many years. This program was often the only social construct participants with a chronic mental health issue had for connection within the community. It was central to the health and emotional wellbeing of the participants. Together with Bren, the Vale St program staff and the participants themselves, created an environment that embodied safety, enabled creative expression and a voice to the most vulnerable and invisible within our community. It is heartening that many participants now have improved options for social connection and community engagement through the NDIS. Bren resigned from this role in March 2019.

I acknowledge the work done by Kerin Pollock who, from March, steered our mental health programs through their final funded stages, and negotiated either closure or continuation post-funding.

Thanks also to Natasha Simon (sometimes volunteer, sometimes a staff member when funding was available), for her facilitation of the Multiple Diagnoses, bipolar support, and suicide bereavement support groups. ■

Mick Barrett, Director, Communities

Blue Fringe Artwork



## Section 2: Community Hubs (cont.)

## NILS (No Interest Loan Scheme)

NILS Customer Support Officer: **Pauline Stafrace** 

The NILS (No Interest Loan Scheme) program has been running with great success across MMNC and LMNC for some years. This program is funded by the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading.

NILS is managed nationally by Good Shepherd Microfinance. NILS is designed to assist people who have long been left out of many of the conventional financial products on the market.

NILS caters for people on low incomes and government payments.
Our clients include sole parents, students, casual and part-time employees, retirees and families fleeing domestic violence. NILS can be used for a wide range of services including:

- replacement of white goods
- car related bills such as repairs,
   CTP, tyres and insurance
- · educational needs
- technology- televisions, computers, laptops, printers and mobile phones
- medical costs orthodontics, dental, specialised equipment, optical and veterinary costs
- · furniture/ baby needs
- · driving lessons.

Program statistics from 1 July 2018-30 June 2019

Number of enquiries: 191

Number of scheduled appointments: 72

Number of applications: 49

#### **Additional Outcomes**

Financial capability: 49

Advocacy: 38

Family/relationship support: 26

Emergency assistance: 65

Ombudsmen: 4 Housing: 10 Centrelink: 47

Other NGO service: 50

HEA search: 16

As well as seeing clients, I have liaised with:

- Wentworth Community Housing, at both Katoomba and Penrith locations to make them aware of the service NILS provides and as a result they have NILS information to provide their tenants and also included the NILS information in their newsletters
- Thrive Katoomba, who have a "Drive program" which allows women who have never held a driving licence due to life circumstances, domestic abuse or financial hardship, to learn to drive for a small fee which includes up to ten lessons and the driving test. NILS can also be used to cover the shortfall in lessons.
- Elizabeth Evatt Legal Centre Katoomba, for clients with legal issues through housing, domestic abuse or other domestic issues concerning their rights.
- Schools, local services and businesses. I ensure that they are aware of NILS and how they can be used to assist clients. The focus is always to steer clients away from Payday lenders and further debt.
- These are some of the ways in which I have assisted clients who come to me for NILS. In a face-to-face session there is almost always other issues besides what they need the loan for.

Pauline Stafrace, Customer Support Officer

## Section 2: Community Hubs (cont.)

#### KOOSH (Katoomba Out Of School Hours) Childcare

Acting Coordinator, Nominated Supervisor and Educational

Leader: Amy Gaymer

Childcare worker, Nominated Supervisor and Educational

Leader: Cate Harrison

Childcare worker and First Aid Officer: Isaac Sherring-Tito

Administration Officer:

#### **Katherine Johns**

Casual childcare workers: Cid Bender, Hunter DeGroot, Mia Gyaneshwar, Aida Arce, Miranda Carofalow, Belinda Lopez and Zoe Tombs

On behalf of the entire KOOSH team, I would like to take the time to acknowledge the long-term input to the service of our previous coordinator, Vasant DeMello.

Vasant was a mentor to staff here at KOOSH and taught us the importance of forming meaningful relationships with our KOOSH children, families and each other. Vasant's guidance through positive and thoughtful interactions with children and their families is a legacy that will last long into this service's future.

Vasant has been sorely missed by KOOSH staff and families and we thank him for his time and effort put into the day-to-day running of this service throughout his employment with Belong Blue Mountains.

#### **Service Description**

KOOSH is a 'before' and 'after' school care service (BSC and ASC). We also offer a vacation care program to families during school holiday periods. During 'before' school and 'after' school care periods we operate Monday to Friday, 7am-9am and 3pm-6pm. Vacation care days are also Monday to Friday running a full day, 11-hour session from 7am till 6pm.

At KOOSH we believe children learn and make sense of the world around them through play. Our emergent curriculum ensures staff are implementing a play-based program each day that is always flexible and responsive to children's needs and everchanging interests.

#### **Funding**

KOOSH is funded by our fees received for childcare services provided, of which a significant portion is paid to us by the Federal Government's Child Care Subsidy Scheme. Department of Education funds part of our vacation care programs throughout the year and we also receive Inclusion support funding through KU Children's services from the Department of Education and Training.

KOOSH mural by childcare worker Isaac Sherring-Tito





Victoria proudly displaying her artwork at KOOSH

#### **Service Targets/Capacity**

KOOSH is a maximum 45 place service. For us running at full capacity (within staff ratio requirements, staff employment arrangements and budget parameters) would mean 30 children attend each BSC session, 45 children attend each ASC session and 45 attend each VAC care session daily.

#### Highlights for 2018-2019:

- Isaac Sherring-Tito fulfilled his course requirements and now holds a Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care.
- Amy Gaymer stepped into the role of KOOSH Coordinator from her position of KOOSH Assistant Coordinator.
- Cate Harrison was employed as KOOSH'S third permanent part-time employee and is also our second Nominated Supervisor and is working towards her Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care.
- The rebranding of KOOSH which involved the creation of a new logo and strengthening the connections between KOOSH and Belong Blue Mountains and our local community.
- A major highlight for KOOSH staff and children was being invited to enter an art piece into the Aboriginal Cultural Resource Centre NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition by the Walanmarra Artists that use our space each Thursday during school term.
- The opportunity to work closely with Jo Ridley in preparation for the 2019 assessment and rating visit.

#### Challenges for 2018-2019:

- KOOSH staff, children and families adjusting to the change in service coordinator.
- Receiving Notice of Assessment in March of 2019,
   Department of Education giving us notice of their imminent assessment and rating visit.

#### **Katoomba Out of School Hours (CCS OSHC)**

All Children Utilisation

From 1/07/2018 to 30/06/2019		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Attended		1075	1437	1505	1383	1225	0	0
Scheduled		1158	1552	1629	1478	1333	0	0
Attended Capacity		51.93%	63.87%	66.89%	62.72%	55.56%	0%	0%
Scheduled Capacity		55.94%	68.98%	72.4%	67.03%	60.45%	0%	0%
Total Attended:	6625							
Total Scheduled:	7150							
Total Children:	180							
Average Attended	27.15							
Average Scheduled	29.30							
Average Capacity (attended)	60.34%							
Average Capacity (scheduled)	65.12%							



Drawing and craft at KOOSH

 Preparing the service for accreditation, which involved reflecting on current practices and procedures, making many necessary changes to the day-to-day running of the service, updating every policy, every procedure and imbedding those into daily practices.

#### **Special Acknowledgments for 2018-2019:**

Todarello's Katoomba Village Fruit Market and Blue Mountains Food Co-op for their generous donations and services provided to KOOSH; United Cinema The Edge with special mention to Sarah Williams (supervisor), Tracey Willow, Jo Ridley, Suzanne Allnut, Dale Reardon, Felicity Tonks, Tom Redmond and our CEO, CFO, Directors and colleagues at Belong Blue Mountains. ■

Amy Gaymer KOOSH Acting Coordinator





## Section 3: Corporate & Quality

# Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

#### Dale Reardon, ICT Manager

Information & Communications
Technology (ICT) is always a
growing sector proposing new
products and new services every
day, worldwide, and Belong Blue
Mountains has seen big leaps
forward with regard to ICT over
the past twelve months.
Belong Blue Mountains staff have
also migrated to new, greener,
environmental-friendly computer
systems that consume only 15%
of the power we were using two
years ago.

Our staff and management now work in a collaborative and knowledge-sharing ICT environment, across many site locations with so many advantages on how we worked in previous years.

Belong Blue Mountains has also introduced strong ICT auditing capabilities in line with government requirements, as well as world's best practice cyber threat protection and protection against emerging risks.

Our move to the NBN (national broadband network) has increased productivity at most sites with the last site to come online in the next few months.

Belong Blue Mountains also introduced our Online help desk system for staff, making it easy and efficient to report all types of ICT issues and equipment procurement.

I have enjoyed watching Belong Blue Mountains staff grow in their use of ICT over the last twelve months. New technology is quite challenging at times, and ICT is one of those fields where it is almost constantly changing, whether it be changes generated by management or changes generated by government and other bodies.

I do look forward to continuing our growth in the Blue Mountains and I can honestly say I enjoy my job. ■

Dale Reardon, ICT Manager



