



Annual Report

2020-2021



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ABOUT US

Community Links Wellbeing has a long history of delivering a continuum of strengths-based services across the lifespan for community members.

The organisation is well respected in the sector and amongst government funding bodies as providing quality services at a grassroots level; connecting and consulting with community to identify existing and emerging needs and delivering projects that meet those needs.

Community Links Wellbeing acknowledges the Dharawal people are the original custodians of the land on which Community Links Wellbeing is situated and we are committed to working in ways that are both supportive and empowering of Aboriginal people and their families and communities.

Community Links Wellbeing respects the values, culture and heritage of the Aboriginal people and we will endeavour to promote this respect in all the work that we do.

Community Links Wellbeing's vision for reconciliation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are able to connect with our services in a culturally secure manner and to strengthen our solid foundation of respect, relationships and opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and community organisations.

Community Links Wellbeing has a commitment to cultural diversity and respect for Aboriginal people and does not tolerate racism, prejudice and harassment of any sort.

OUR MISSION

Community Links Wellbeing provides a diverse holistic service, building on strengths, resilience and connections for individuals and families.



OUR VISION

Provision of a service that is adaptable to diversity, promotes strengths of individuals, connects community and embraces growth.

OUR VALUES

Welcoming
Empowerment
Learning
Listening
Building capacity
Expertise
Innovation
Non judgement
Guidance





Good Vibes

"Before I started Music sessions with Antonio I would not feel motivated or confident to leave my house, now I feel happy, confident and look forward to attending the Music sessions"

"Danielle has been coming to our house for over a year. During this time she has not just treated her role as simply a job. She has shown passion and been consistent with her visits.... It is a struggle to get my son to co operate during therapy but Danielle has always found new and exciting ways to keep him interested"

-Amy.

Allied Health Assistant client



"The playgroup is such a great way for the kids to socialise with others from such a young age. The ladies are so creative and come up with great learning and sensory activities that the kids love each week. We would be lost without this fantastic resource!"

- Playgroup families

I have a 10 yr old son, he has been seeing Grace for about 18 months - 2 yrs now and the progress he has made has amazed me !! He first started the sessions using one word to communicate, he is now talking in up to 7 word sentences! -

-Lisa.

Speech Therapy client



General Manager's Report

In what has been a challenging year, Community Links has continued to have a significant impact on families living in our LGA's. We have continued to grow, learn and listen, and work alongside the vulnerable and deliver high quality programs with thousands of people accessing our high quality services.

Thanks to the staff for basically getting on with it, whatever was thrown at them. In these confusing times the staff were as resilient and committed as they have ever been.

The Managers, board and myself have worked closely together and their expertise and knowledge have helped us to provide systems and service delivery of high quality.

The Board have been more hands on this year with all sub committees having at least one board representative. This has been beneficial, particularly from a communication point of view. Without embarrassing our Chairperson it would be remiss of me not to single out Lyn for special praise. When Lyn retired it was CLW's gain. Lyn has spent hundreds of hours in many facets of our business and has had a positive impact in whatever area she has been involved in. CLW and I thank you Lyn and all Board Members for being so committed.

We have grown rapidly and continue to be sought out by partners and services for our intimate knowledge of the areas we cover.

Our funding bodies continue to work with us and in most cases share our journey, getting as much satisfaction as we do from our achievements.

As we look like entering into brighter times I will conclude by thanking our communities for trusting us to work with them. I continue to say that it is a privilege to be allowed to work with our inspirational families and one that we never take for granted. They are the reasons why we come to work everyday, and we learn more lessons from our communities than we can ever teach them.

Lets hope, looking forward, that 2022 is a more positive, happy and peaceful year. Lets face it, the bar was set pretty low in 2021

Thank you.

Greg Duffy
General Manager



Chairperson's Report

2020 / 2021 has been a very difficult year for everyone with COVID impacting on all facets of our lives. Even so CLW has continued to work through the difficulties with innovation and determination.

Working from home and Zoom or team meetings are a part of the staff's normal daily routine. Especially staff working out of or living in the COVID hot spots.

Thank you to everyone who has put in the extra effort to make these new and innovative processes work well.

During the 12 months the Board of Management and Staff have continued to build the foundations upon which CLW continues to grow and expand the services we offer to the communities predominantly in Wollondilly, Wingecarribee and Camden areas. Some of the activities have included the ongoing support for or the commencement of subcommittees such as: - Work Health and Safety, Finance, AGM, Tenancy, Constitutional and Marketing.

The major outcomes of the Constitutional Subcommittee were endorsement and adoption, at the Special General Meeting held on the 25th August, of the following motions:

- 1) Change the organisations legal status to Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee.
- 2) Change the organisations legal / trading name to Community Links Wellbeing Ltd
- 3) Adopt the Community Links Wellbeing 2021 Constitution as tabled.

The change of the status of the organisation from an Incorporated Association to a Not for Profit Company Limited by Guarantee reflects the growth of the organisation whilst providing solid protection and accountability under the Commonwealth rules and regulations.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Members for their ongoing commitment and support of Community Links Wellbeing. In particular our outgoing member Kim we wish you all the best in your new adventures.

To Greg and the staff of Community Links,
thank you and congratulations for a job well done.

Lyn Bright
Chairperson



Our Governance Body

Lynette Bright - Chairperson
Gareth Jamieson - Vice-President
Kim Cooper - Secretary
Thomas Goodman - Treasurer
Janet Elsie King - Public Officer
Mark Bensley
Tony Jagicic
Nicole Sharp

Resigned October 2021

Kim Cooper





MANAGER'S REPORTS



Community Relationships

Firstly, I would like to thank all CLW Staff and also our GM Greg Duffy and our Board who give so much of their valuable time and expertise to nurturing, growing and making Community Links Wellbeing the success it is. Given the challenges over the last 12 months this has been a credit to all.

Well what a year. One of our biggest challenges has been to Keep Covid Sane. From looking at what we have achieved over the last year in spite of the constraints and challenges being imposed upon the world, I think we at Community Links are keeping our sanity and true to our name, promoting and enabling wellness not only for us individually and as staff, but also in a community sense.

In some ways the pandemic has necessitated new ways of interacting and providing support and service. This is all good, but our real strength is still in our capacity and ability make meaningful relationships in the community. As valuable as it is to be able to continue to nurture these relationships and build networks in the virtual world, to check in on each other, have staff and team meetings and even supervision and consultations in a cyber-sense; there really is no better therapeutic or holistic tool than face to face contact and human interaction.

Although there are many disturbing and tragic legacies in the way we have been forced to look at "life", there are certainly a few positives that have also come from "Covid". Things that we often take for granted. One example is the value of relationships, be they personal, family, work or community. We have also been given an opportunity and the time for inner reflection, to measure our priorities, and to realize how connected we are. It is becoming obvious that we can only really survive in the truest sense, if we all come together as a community and in the service of each other.

In many ways I feel that staff at Community Links already know the value of these things. It is always evident in the way we work to assist people in our community that are in need. Although I am sure we don't always reflect on this, but what we do is in fact an offering of service, and a true appreciation for the value of relationships.

A quick overview of the last year reinforces this. We are strengthening our existing partnerships and continue to make new ones, like our partnership with Wingecarribee Council and the rebirthing of our Aboriginal Playgroup.

Our visit by Minister Bronnie Taylor in her capacity as Minister for Mental Health, Women and Regional Youth and the diversity of guests that attended was very representative of our ability to work holistically and make friendships across a wide range of services.

Our Visit to Parliament House to meet with the Minister, accompanied by Dr Nathan Cooney who gave up his time from his practice to and to offer his advocacy, again highlight the strength and value of working with community and a reciprocal belief in each other.

Relationships with Argyle Housing, Police, SWS Local Health District, SWS Primary Health Network, Tharawal and Illawarra Local Land Council's all continue to grow. Our relationship with Wollondilly Council and Nathaniel Smith member for Wollondilly remain strong. Our service and support in Bushfire affected communities is another example of working together.

Our ReFrame patron Ben Quilty visited our Station Street Office along with Megan Monte, Director of the New Ngununggula Regional Gallery to discuss possible partnership opportunities and art projects. Ben has offered a loan of artworks from his own collection to display in some of our offices.

Our close working relationship with SWSPHN and SWSLHD go from strength to strength. After a recent visit by Amanda Larkin chief Executive of SWS Local Health District to Community Links Wellbeing, we have also scheduled quarterly meetings with Dr Claire Jones, director of Mental Health and Patrick Parker, Director Community Mental Health & Partnerships.

Bimonthly meetings with Bowral Community mental health and Local Police Inspector are also scheduled (covid permitting). Our relationship with Highland FM 107.1 continues to, strengthen.

Thanks to Alice Richards and Be Kind in July (although somewhat hindered by covid), still provided a wonderful opportunity to talk kindness and remind ourselves how important this quality is particularly kindness toward ourselves, each other and in our work.

Another wonderful experience was a team day out at Sunnataram Monastery with future possibilities of working more closely with Phra Mana and the Monastery. Another exciting prospect is a growing relationship with MTC (Marrickville training Centre) and the opportunity provide more youth specific engagements with Picton High School and also the Aboriginal Youth of the Wollondilly. The sky really is the only limit albeit Covid that is presently keeping a cap on some opportunity.

Yes we can keep connected in a virtual reality, but our real strength is in people and in this world of increasingly bureaucratic bean counting and administrative mazes, the real magic of CLW remains in our People First approach and our local networks, partnerships, sincerity and in our ability and the flexibility to deliver programs and services that fit people rather than making people fit our programs. Yes, what a year!!

Larry Whipper.
Manager of Community Relationships



Mental Health

Another 12 months of growth both internally and externally but not in as such a rapid pace as previous years. Certainly this year with the addition of some senior clinicians and staff adjustments attention has shifted to efficacy and team dynamism. Referral numbers across moderate, high and ReFrame programs remained very high with a calendar year in 2020 weekly average of 55 then an increase in the first half of 2021 to an average of 65.

There have been numerous positive developments in individuals, teams and program however some of the more significant factors have included an invitation by the NSW minister for mental health regional youth and women Bronnie Taylor whom requested a briefing on our program then followed up with a visit to our Bowral site in which we arranged a high level systemic meeting including Minister Taylor, local member Nathaniel Smith, CEO of SWS LHD Amanda Larkin, Manager of SWS LHD community partnerships Patrick Parker, CEO Argyle Housing, PHN mental health manager and CLW select managers. The effects of this has had both intangible and tangible flow on impacts and marked the beginning of a high level collaboration to ensure greater primary health provision.

Some recruitments were added and significantly 2 senior practitioners from LHD agreed to come on board after seeing the impact our service has been making , Anthony whom brings over 20 years of experience in psychiatry and knowledge with high a degree of analytic strength in part due to his PhD experience, Lucy whom had been employed in the LHD and has years of connections and experience managing inside health care systems and clinical psychologist Luke whom moved over from Headspace where he had been providing assessment and interventions

to that cohort and has picked up responsibility for our training and supervision. These 3 people have joined Alice to form a stable and professional senior clinician team working hard at ensuring development and longevity for our program and community.

Evidence of good coherence has seen ReFrame shortlisted for the NSW mental health matters awards for excellence in mental health service provision to be finalised in Oct 21. Also the Berrima District Credit Union/Bendigo Bank decided to support the program via ongoing financial contribution of which a focus will be building on what we provide across mainstream community and deeper into the health industry.



The CEO of Argyle housing Wendy Middleton approached us with a request to develop a bespoke training/supervision model for their entire organisation of which has happened and will roll out in 2021 with a view to building upon. This is a show of support that we can evolve to provide training support across other person fronted agencies/services and talks are also happening with SWS LHD and SWS PHN.

The University of Queensland Berghofer Institute engaged ReFrame to participate in a research project to evaluate our program to as they said “present an alternative model to Headspace”. An exciting opportunity for the organisation but important for our young people whom will participate in the opportunity to feedback their personal experiences of service provision with a clinical research team. This academic aspect is an important part of developing ReFrame and also our broader mental health wellbeing program as it’s a step toward showing evidence of our model that makes some positive impacts in the wider industry.

Overall when I consider the enormity of the referral rate, the need for program individuals to integrate new information and collaborate as a team particularly inside COVID issues always brings me a high degree of pride, for the team to show faith in what we have built and commit to every single thing I ask them to do is a special experience that sometimes transcends my belief about what people are capable of, compounded by the support of the executive team and board and particularly our GM Greg.

To all, thank you.

Martin Lumetzberger
Clinical Program Director



Allied Health

Over the last twelve months, the Allied Health team has demonstrated resilience and innovation in their approach to the delivery of intervention services. In trying times with the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has remained motivated to continue providing supports to families within the community and have gone above and beyond to ensure individuals received ongoing vital services.

The Allied Health team have provided over 8400 occasions of services across the Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, Camden and Macarthur regions.

With the demand for Allied Health services being at an all-time high, the team branched out to incorporate Allied Health Assistants in order to provide support to a greater number of individuals. This has proven to be a highly effective initiative that has resulted in many more individuals accessing Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy intervention.



Our Transitional Playgroups continue to be a huge success, with up to 100 children attending the groups each week. This year, we have introduced an additional playgroup at Spring Farm to allow more families to connect with each other and our service.

I am incredibly proud of the commitment and perseverance that the Allied Health team have demonstrated throughout this challenging year. I am so grateful for the dedication that is shown by each individual on a daily basis not only to strengthening our team, but also to supporting our local community.

Libby Duffy
Allied Health Manager



Since starting playgroup at the beginning of the year the staff have been amazing. I was nervous about attending due to recently moving into the area, covid, post natal depression and sensory, allergies and intolerances with my then 1year old, Skylah.

Lana reassured me letting the staff know of my concerns regarding my daughter. She even went that little bit extra to email me additional playgroups for me to attend on other days with my eldest daughter.

Every week I am/was met with a smile and someone to check in, sometimes playgroup was all I needed to be lifted out of my slump. I have made connections within the community and watched Skylah (over many weeks) finally interact with sensory materials (this is massive for us), thus improving her eating. It took a long time but it's now a safe space for her. She even gets excited when I mention playgroup. Playgroup has become a comfort space for both of us.
Thank you



NDIS Support Co-ordination

Over the past year, Keryn and I have been working to assist to implement our participants' NDIS plans. What we have found is that we have been able to introduce our participants to services that, under normal circumstances and without NDIS funding, they would never have been able to access. As a result we have seen that our participants have benefitted greatly and their lives have, in many circumstances, turned right around. They have found skills in themselves they did not know they had, and have gained confidence in areas they believed they would never have been able to access.

Our clients have consisted of participants with a variety of ages, locations, and degrees of skills. We have been able to introduce services that have by far increased their capacity for engaging in social and community activities and expand on their own strengths and independence. For example, we were able to assist a participant to be removed from a residential setting that was most inappropriate to find one that is very supportive for his social and personal lifestyle.



We have also helped a young person secure accommodation who was at very high risk of losing his long term home accommodation with his carer, and help him relocate to a more secure accommodation with all the supporting services to develop his capacity. We have been able to watch as a young woman who would not leave her room, is now able to get out into the community and drive herself to access TAFE and wherever she wants to go. In addition, we have been able to be pivotal in ensuring that our participants are able to link in with the NDIS and get the equipment they need to be able to move around and stay active. We have made links with our partners so that they have been able to link them in with physical and exercise therapists who have been able to provide programs that build their strength, increase their movement capacity, and their confidence and health.

It is also most satisfying to see that we have been able to introduce services that assist them to overcome barriers so that they are able to reach out when they are overwhelmed and do not know where to go or start. We have been able to increase supports to scaffold a family of a young child with complex high needs so that they reconsidered relinquishing the child into the care of the Department. While we have done all this, we have helped participants understand their plans, be clear on what they could purchase with their plans, assist them to account for budgeting with the plan, negotiate with NDIS when the plan funding is exhausted, assist them access appropriate providers, help them when their plans have ended and need renewal, and help them understand how they can manage plans themselves if they want to. Part of our role is also to liaise with Local Area Coordinators, regular prepare and submit NDIS support coordinator reports on each participant to the NDIS, and if plans require reviews, notify the NDIA with permission of the participant.



During this time, we also recognized that people were having great difficulty understanding how to apply for NDIS plans. We have provided many information sessions and resources for people to not only gain an understanding of the process, but to access some very valuable resources to make the process easier and increase the opportunities of gaining an appropriately funded plan if they fit the criteria. Our expertise in this area has become very well recognized within various communities.

Carmel Flavell
NDIS Program Manager

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Team aims to work closely with our community, to provide unique opportunities to get involved in events, workshops, groups and more.... To build a strong and viable infrastructure that will support disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community and provide them with the capacity to effectively manage their lives.

Always aware of the uncertainties associated with COVID restrictions, we have managed to return to most of our existing programs and have introduced some new ones as well.

Partnerships have always been an important part of community engagement; we take this opportunity to thank our existing partners as well as our new partnerships for their continued support.

- Macarthur Gateway – Aboriginal Elders Group
- WOLCOMS/Bargo Men's Shed – Providing support building a new Green House
- Wollondilly Men's Social Group
- We are Community – Tahmoor Breakfast Club – Bargo Sunday Dinner's
- Wellways – "In our Nature Picnic" – Seniors Week

Our team continues to evolve with new team members joining, bringing diverse skills and personalities.

Transition to the Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) frame work is progressing well, thanks to all the dedicated team members we have.

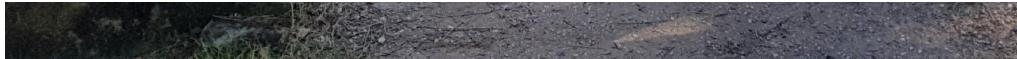
I believe a picture tells a thousand words.... enough said.

I hope you enjoy some of our special moments working alongside our community through these photos

Tegan Clift
Community Engagement Manager



“Supporting our Community and Colleagues through, listening, understanding and doing.”



Casework & Family Support

While it certainly has been a challenging year there is still a lot to be grateful for. Feedback from a family that was supported was “beyond grateful for the service we received”.

No doubt this family showed great insight and strength to recognise they needed some additional support for some of their family journey. I am constantly and genuinely in awe of the resilience shown by the families and communities we support.

While the families are grateful for the support they receive, so to am I for the Casework team and beyond. As I write this the lockdown has again been extended, despite these circumstances the teams continue to adapt and provide service to those in our community who need it most.

Casework has been offered by phone or Zoom sessions and the Rock Solid Caseworkers have moved their groups to an online format also. Continuing to prove most popular is the ‘pet’ day.

We do this very much in partnership within our own service as well as with external stakeholders and our funding body, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

Our new model of Targeted Earlier Intervention focuses on meeting the needs of people with known vulnerabilities, such as domestic and family violence, mental health needs, drug and/or alcohol needs, as well as social and economic disadvantage.

We have been working closely with the Community Engagement Team as we transition into Targeted Early Intervention. While it has not been without it’s challenges we continue the journey to ensure we are providing quality data to the Data Exchange portal or DEX for short.

As the name suggests, the Data Exchange reflects the two-way partnership of information sharing between funding agencies and service providers, which enables both to find smarter and more efficient ways of improving service delivery and understanding the overall outcomes being achieved for individuals, families and their communities.

We are also now working much more closely with the DCJ Allocation Hub taking on families with multiple vulnerabilities and complexities. Until the most recent lockdown they were outreaching to our office at Tahmoor.

The Casework team, particularly those who frequent the new Bowral office are also fortunate to cross paths regularly with the Clinicians from the Mental Health Team who are a wealth of knowledge.

Other professional development for the team has come from both internal and external Supervision, including case reviews, attendance at Interagencies. Several case workers are undertaking a Social Work Degree.

Julie, the recently appointed Wellbeing worker has proved to be a great asset to the team as she has provided support to the team for Supervision as well as in her Wellbeing role.

It is always the teams that are the greatest asset to Community Links Wellbeing. Many thanks to Greg Duffy, General Manager and all of the teams who allow us to continue to support those most in need in our communities.



Bushfire Recovery

Originally funded for 12 months, the RSS was extended a further 7 months until December 31, 2021. The team has worked with over 220 households, across Wollondilly and Wingecarribee – which is over 500 individuals.

Many of the residents we work with do not 'fit' into traditional models of service and support. Most arrive at our service with the belief they aren't entitled to, nor do they need help. But as time marches on, it becomes impossible for them to ignore the multiple issues they are faced with on their recovery journey.

The RSS is well-placed in the CLW family and their commitment to supporting individuals, families and communities using a holistic, participatory and highly responsive strengths-based approach that enables each person to engage in meaningful support.

The RSS provides nonclinical psychosocial support in partnership with a range of services, and access to information, decision-making and recovery resources; within a trauma-informed framework.



The success of the RSS can be attributed to a number of factors including:

- No wait list
- Residents able to move in and out of the program as required
- Simplified eligibility and referral processes
- Highly experienced, local staff
- Established service and support networks and referral pathways
- Staff service from Bundanoon to Warragamba with face to face visits in home and the community.

The impact of COVID has meant limited opportunities for community gatherings and events, hampering the social reconnection that is imperative for community healing. It has, in many cases, exposed the deep psychological wounds from ongoing trauma, isolation and lack of progress in practical areas of recovery. COVID has also slowed, if not halted, the rebuild process.

As 2021 draws to a close, the RSS has initiated a comprehensive transition plan for exiting the program – while leaving no stone unturned in the hunt for further funding.

Tanya Smith
Recovery Support Service Coordinator

Treasurer's Report

This year saw annual income climb to \$6,183,603, an increase of \$1,171,923 (nearly 20%) on last year. Expenses also climbed, reaching \$6,364,679, leaving the organisation with a small deficit of \$15,326 for the year. The main area of increase in expenditure was salaries and wages, up \$1,110,000.

Changes in the Australian Accounting Standards which came into effect from 1st July 2019 in relation to Income recognition and Leases have changed how our Statement of Financial Position and Income Statement appears. Income is now assessed under Accounting standards AASB 15 & 1058 on how and when to recognise income. This has resulted in a portion of income being recognised last financial year that would normally have been carried forward under the old standards and recognised this year. After these reserves have been reversed in accordance with the Accounting Standards it has given us a deficit of \$181,076 but our true deficit is \$15,326. This facet will need a new way of thinking next year to better understand how the accounting standards work, how funding is assessed and how contracts are written. Income that is assigned for a specific period may not always be that way under these new standards and this in turn can affect the bottom line.

The Statement of Financial Position reassures us that we have Current Assets (cash assets) at 30/06/21 of and Total Members Funds of \$954,282.

I would like to thank the Finance Committee and the auditor Michael Garcia for the work they have all done this year because as we continue to grow at pace it is a big job keeping abreast of financial control.



Thomas Goodman
Treasurer





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