

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23



Innovation
Respect
Integrity
Resilience
Inclusive
Flexible





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Contents**
- 2. Mission & Vision**
- 3. Our Values**
- 4. Executive Officer's Report**
- 6. Board Report**
- 8. Manager's Reports**

Allied Health
Mental Health
Targeted Early Intervention
Continuous Quality Improvement
Community Relationships
Recovery & Resilience
Workplace Wellbeing

- 20. Partnerships**



Community Links Wellbeing is a not-for-profit, non-Government community organisation working in the Wollondilly, Camden, Campbelltown and Wingecarribee Local Government Areas.

The service supports all members of the community and provides resources to help achieve positive personal and community outcomes through community development, events, groups, workshops, youth programs, crisis support, carer support, family support, Allied Health and Mental Health Services.

Community Links Wellbeing supports the community by providing services for individuals, families, young people and seniors. We provide programs and opportunities for social connection for community members across their lifespan. Our organisation works closely with other specialists such as disability, mental health and counselling services. We can refer individuals and families to these services or advocate on your behalf.

MISSION

To provide services that are adaptable to the changing needs of individuals, families and communities by embracing growth and empowerment through the facilitation of our community-based services.



VISION

A community that builds on the strengths, resilience and connection of diverse individuals and families, which fosters the growth, development and wellbeing of all.



OUR VALUES

FLEXIBLE

Responding appropriately and effectively to current and future programs, policy, practice challenges and changes.

INTEGRITY

Quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

INCLUSIVE

A service that welcomes and actively seeks the participation of all members of our community.

RESPECT

Always acknowledging the inherent value, dignity, rights and choices of the people we work with and support.

RESILIENCE

Ability to recover from setbacks, adapt well to change, manage relationships effectively, and keep going in the face of adversity.

INNOVATION

Evolving our service to suit the changing needs and identified gaps to provide support that is meaningful and relevant.



Twelve months on and we have achieved great things. There were more than 10,000 people attend our service for various reasons over this period and I would like to think that the majority of those were better off for having attended Community Links.

We turned things around significantly from a financial point of view with some tough but necessary decisions made along the way. We managed to record a small surplus which has been a team effort with all Managers, The Board and our Accountant spending countless hours pulling budgets and reports apart. The result of this is that we have a far greater understanding of where we are now and where we need to be for our future financial security.

We partner with many different service providers, funding bodies, businesses and individuals and to each and every one of you I say thank you and more importantly, the community say thank you. Our three main funding bodies include the Primary Health Network, South West Sydney Local Health District and the Department of Communities and Justice. We have a wonderful rapport with each of these services and their support and vested interest in what we achieve is highly valued.

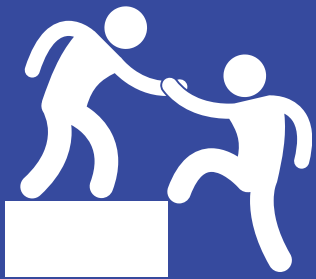
I sat at our most recent Board meeting and thought to myself how fortunate we are to have a group of volunteers so invested in Community Links and what we do. These meetings are never a chore and I look forward to every meeting where we can share ideas respectfully and nearly always agree on strategic ways to keep on moving forward and growing whilst never forgetting our core values from humble beginnings.



Thanks to all of the committee members and in particular, our Chairperson who goes above and beyond.

To the staff who have acted with integrity, humility and respect, thank you. To those that have taken the time to learn about and buy in to CLW's mission and ethos, thank you. It is a time to self reflect and think about what we did well and what could have been done better. The staff members that have been on board can look back with satisfaction on what we have achieved together.

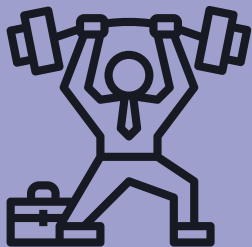
Finally to the wonderful community that we are proud and humbled to be a part of; thank you for entrusting us to play some part in your lives. We never take for granted what a privilege it is to be asked for support and we listen, learn and grow every single day from the interaction we have with our resilient consumers.



1,365 new Mental Health Referrals



Mental Health Referrals totalling 55 individuals per week



Recovery & Resilience supported 190 individuals in case management



265 NDIS customers receiving services with CLW



Over 1500 Community Members attended the Festival of Fun 2022



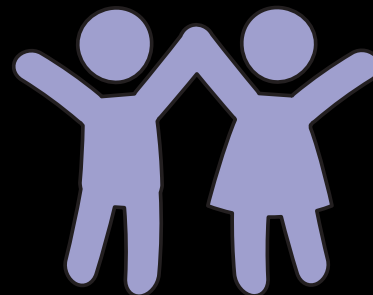
We held over 500 Individual groups/events for our community



189 families received Case Management



237 New Allied Health customers & 11,483 Allied Health team appointments



3,440 Playgroup attendees



> 2500 followers on our CLW Facebook



60 staff members



Over 3000 Individuals visiting our website per month

5

BOARD REPORT

MARK BENSLEY

2022/2023 has been a challenging year for both Community Links Wellbeing and our community, as we continue to encounter the long tail effects of COVID, support families impacted by cost of living pressures and continue to be responsive to a wide range of other difficult circumstances encountered by members of our community. It is our privilege as an organisation to support our Wollondilly, Wingecaribee and Camden communities with local support and services.

The organisation has continued to grow over the past year and continue looking for opportunities to expand further. To our Allied Health, NDIS, Mental Health, Targeted Early Intervention, Resilience and Recovery, administrative and organisational support teams, thank you for your efforts. Thank you also to those involved in the various sub-committees and continuous improvement projects which ensure a growing organisation can remain efficient and effective.

The Board of Management, and organisation as a whole, continues to benefit greatly from the expertise and passion of our Chairperson, Lyn. We thank you for your tireless efforts. Thank you to the Board, including Lyn, Gareth, Thomas, Mark, Nicole, Tony, Fern and Christine, who all bring diverse and valued skillsets to the governance team.



To Executive Officer Greg, all team members, paid or volunteer, and our partners; a very big thank you for your hard work this year. Your commitment to Community Links Wellbeing and your community is a privilege to observe and the wonderful outcomes you have achieved are reflective of your amazing efforts.

BOARD MEMBERS



Lyn Bright



Mark Bensley

Nicole Sharp



Tony Jagicic

Gareth Jamieson

Thomas Goodman

Fern Rice



*Thank
You*



Manager Reports

**Allied Health
Mental Health
Targeted Early Intervention
Continuous Quality Improvement
Community Relationships
Recovery & Resilience
Workplace Wellbeing**

“ —

A key to achieving success is to assemble a strong and stable management team.

Vivek Wadwha





ALLIED HEALTH

LIBBY DUFFY

The Allied Health Team have had a fun-filled year providing Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy services within the local communities. It has been a year of positive change and innovation for the team, with new staff joining our service and new programs being introduced.

The Allied Health Team have provided 11,483 occasions of service over the last twelve months, with many new clients having the chance to receive intervention due to increased staff and improved waitlist management systems. The team continue to be supported by the wonderful administrative staff who ensure that paperwork requirements are met and finances are managed. This allows our therapists to focus on their core work and for our branch of the organisation to run seamlessly.

Upskilling has been a priority for the team this year, with most team members attending training in areas of interest such as literacy, feeding and Key Word Sign. This has provided many of our clients the opportunity to achieve more of their goals and therefore have a greater quality of life. The team have introduced new school holiday programs which have been very popular amongst our clients. We are excited to continue to introduce new groups in the coming months.



“

“I wanted to express the gratitude and love we have for our therapist. She has really taken the time to get to know our son and has broken down his walls and he loves seeing her each week. We will be forever grateful.”



Transitional playgroups were once again a huge success, with a total of 3440 children in attendance across the three groups this year. The exceptional planning and facilitation of these groups continues to be recognised by both the community and our funding body. Our team are thankful for the assistance that both the Community Engagement and Administration teams provide to ensure the groups run smoothly each week.

The Allied Health team has experienced so much growth this year and I am certain that the community is in very capable hands with the dedicated, motivated and genuine individuals we have in our team supporting them. The level of care that our therapists provide is exceptional and it is a privilege to work alongside such a wonderful team each day. We are all looking forward to another exciting year ahead.

”

“Our son loves coming to his weekly playgroup. He loves the staff and all of the activities they set out. They are always inclusive. We love how special the ladies make him feel. I love the amount of thought and intention that goes in to planning all the activities set up each week.”





MENTAL HEALTH

MARTIN LUMETZBERGER

Another big year that saw a large number of referrals totaling 55 individuals per week of which 60% come via self-referrals and walk ins and the remainder from GP's. This efficiency is testament to the organisation's people and systems whom provide commitment to consumer support by prioritising their care.

South Western Sydney Local Health District financially supported CLW to participate in an independent clinical audit of which the outcome was full clinical accreditation. This was no mean feat for a fledgling program, particularly as it was our first attempt, significantly while we are still growing and learning. The positive outcome showed the ability of CLW to be flexible and accommodating when undertaking new ventures. It was a stressful time for participants but in the end its outcome was exhilarating and a very proud moment.



“

“It's like a second family for people, a place to feel safe away from home and get support in any way needed, create memories, learn new skills, help finding a job or with homework. Also get to do things you may not be able to afford, create art. “

“Everyone is welcome whether you're gay, straight, tall or short, you will find your place.”

“Lucky to have a place that's so hard to say goodbye to when I leave.”

Early in the year we participated in an independent evaluation by Queensland University Berghofer institute which involved interviews with consumers and team members. The outcome identified a supportive program that values participants as a priority and is a model that can be explored by other organisations and funding bodies to successfully reach people in need. Following the release of this report, the Federal Finance Minister and Deputy Treasurer, Honourable Stephen Jones met us at Bowral and commended the outcome of this evaluation and spent time understanding local issues and how we function.



Soon after this evaluation, a representative of our program was invited to meet the national CEO of Australia's Mental Health Commission, Christine Morgan to discuss related challenges and explore our treatment model. This was a powerful moment as it was opportunity to raise local matters directly to the Prime Minister's personal advisor on mental health wellbeing matters. At the end of our meeting, Christine thanked me for "thought provoking comments" --- a back handed compliment perhaps!?!?

Due to the high number of successful consumer sessions and quality of work, we have received funding from PHN for 3 new programs. Following years long review of primary mental health services across Medicare, PHN and LHD, funding is starting to get shifted and more focussed to improve outcomes for Australians. Due to this we embedded a program for clinical suicide prevention, a complex youth program called HYP and a new eating disorder program named ReClaim that is innovative because its wholly designed by ourselves. This is a real vote of confidence by the SWSPHN and validation of the team and organisation's ability to provide high quality treatment efficiently.

Ongoing focus has sharpened on disadvantaged groups post-Covid with our YEWS co-designing and facilitating the region's first youth queer formal. This was a huge success for this population with many attendees and numerous touching individual stories coming out of it. A lot of fun was had on the night.



Another significant community event we constructed by incorporating local high schools & THSPA was RISE. The basis was to provide an event for all young people to remind society they exist, are talented and continue to thrive even thorough multiple mass trauma events. Liaising with council on approval for such a big event in Corbett Gardens was like pulling teeth but was a positive learning experience and hundreds of kids and families attended. To see all high schools come together for the first time in the area's history was truly powerful, and has overcome barriers by uniting different groups in one cause. It was so successful the participants assumed we will do it annually, which of course we will.



TARGETED EARLY INTERVENTION

KATE WHITE - FAMILY SUPPORT

We always set out to achieve positive outcomes for families, children and young people through integrated and coordinated service delivery. Our early intervention focus is providing vulnerable families, children and young people with services to help prevent escalation of problems, providing support to improve family resilience, minimise future crisis and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The caseworkers walk alongside clients to encourage change and development for long term benefits. Assisting in empowering individuals by gaining a better understanding of what healthy relationships look like, improving their parenting practices to sustain a better quality of life.

Through our questionnaires we have found that our clients are not isolating, they are interacting with their caseworker and externally socialising in groups/activities. These interactions increase their confidence within themselves to be more engaged with their children and increase their ability to support the development growth of their child/children.

Caseworkers provide capacity building support for families, children and young people to assist in developing resilience especially when commencing school to participate in active learning. This in turn gives them a greater chance in building strong foundations of securing future employment and minimising the risk of entering into the child protection system.

We also found an improvement in health and wellbeing with the families we work with through our interactions, their feedback, and their personal well-being index scores. This has been accomplished by helping families achieve a positive environment in their home and linking them with supportive networks.

In the last financial year, we have exceeded our targets in TEI targeted support by making contact with 2,026 individuals. Thank you to all our staff. I'd like to congratulate and acknowledge the tremendous success you've achieved!



"Thank you for all your support and guidance. I feel stronger, more capable and happy. I feel that you have supported myself and my kids and always put our needs first. Thank you for listening and all of your support."

"Community Links has been great. They have listened to all my needs and helped me achieve all my goals."



TARGET EARLY INTERVENTION

KAYLA CORNISH - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



This past year has been a year of growth for the team, with new and existing programs continuing on. The team have been working closely with local services and agencies to break barriers in our community, such as a blossoming partnership with The Men's Shed to engage with local men providing events and projects around health and social connection. We have supported at-risk and vulnerable young people, alongside PCYC and local schools and provide community events to all abilities and backgrounds. We have seen a rise in people seeking connection this past year and after consultation we have seen a theme of people longing to engage fee-free services and groups that are inclusive, social and to be a part of a holistic service.

We were pleased to have facilitated the first Festival of Fun event since 2016, which had an attendance of over 1,500 community members. We received an abundance of positive feedback and this has reminded us the importance of rebuilding our community after enduring significant events.



The team are also proud to be working with our local Aboriginal community providing workshops, events and school holiday activities. This past year our Cultural Worker has worked hard in connecting Aboriginal children with their culture through art, stories and much more.

I would like to highlight the ability of our team to provide a holistic approach to our community members and help them engage with multiple services internally. We have seen participation increase overall, which is a great reflection of wonderful team work.



CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

DEANDRE FROUDE

In December 2021, our Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) committee, comprised of CLW managers and staff, embarked on a journey to enhance our organisation's performance. This initiative revolved around several crucial components:

- **Identifying Service Gaps:** The committee's first task was to identify gaps in our services. In May 2022, we introduced the "Three Wishes" survey template, allowing all staff members to identify service gaps. The survey revealed five primary areas for improvement, including communication challenges, staff awareness, and documentation accuracy. Approximately 20% of the gaps were not categorised but were also addressed. In response to the identified gaps, the CQI committee devised a strategy to address these issues over the course of several months.
- **Compliance and Legislative Requirements:** In November 2022, we prepared for an internal audit, developed approval templates, and initiated a staff questionnaire to measure the success of our communication strategy.
- **Internal Communication Enhancement:** We emphasised improved internal communication through measures such as sharing meeting points via the Intranet, introducing new staff to the organisation, and enhancing the Intranet with employee information and work photos. We discussed staff development days to enhance understanding of different teams' roles and compiled a partners' list for Community Links Wellbeing to inform all staff.
- **Training and Awareness:** A training video about the CQI committee's objectives was created and added to the Intranet for staff access.
- **Quality Audits:** In December 2022, we prepared, conducted, and reported on internal quality audit results, constantly striving to refine our processes.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** We proactively gathered input from our employees via surveys and our feedback process. The responses indicated positive progress, with 86% of our staff acknowledging improvements in internal communication.
- **Risk Management:** The risk identification document initiated in December 2021 was completed in April 2023, addressing all identified gaps, risk rating, and resolution.
- **Client Engagement:** a set of questions were developed to be added to Teams Annual Feedback Forms, aiding CLW in gathering crucial information and promoting stronger connections with consumers.

These efforts have led to several tangible outcomes:

- Increased staff awareness of CQI processes.
- Enhanced resources and information flow to the CQI committee.
- Ongoing refinement and development of CQI processes.
- Enhanced internal communication, leading to increased sharing of relevant information.
- The establishment of actions to gather feedback from consumers and staff members.



These achievements reflect our commitment to continuous quality improvement and the positive impact it has had on our organisation.

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

LARRY WHIPPER



Well, another exciting year has passed and CLW continue to respond and grow with the needs of our community. One of the strengths of Community Links is the strong and enduring relationships we have built within the community. The people we serve and the fellow agencies and partnerships we continue to nurture are an intrinsic factor in the growth and development. We continue to be relevant and gather pride from the fact that we not only listen to the diverse needs of our community, more importantly we respond to them. It is this truly person centered approach that gives CLW as an organisation a great satisfaction and sense of meaningfulness.

In my role, I know how important partnerships are and in developing mutual respect and connecting with service providers, politicians and executives who share common values our networks expand and ultimately we can reach out cooperatively with others to administer to the needs of those who are doing it tough. Be that through homelessness, family or personal trauma, mental health issues, or relationship breakdown, it is clearly obvious that it is only by working together as a team and with other service providers that we can respond to the expanding and diverse physical, social and psychological needs of those who we serve.



Our Aboriginal Cultural Worker continues to strengthen our connection and interaction by supporting cultural development in schools and within community, and across the lands of the Dharawal and Gundungarra people. Our partnership and relationships with SWSLHD and SWSPHN continue to strengthen. Our relationship with our local members has also increased and our direct line of communication has also become much more personal. Our relationship with Argyle Housing continues to strengthen and some exciting opportunities are on the horizon.

There are no greater ambassadors of Community Links than our staff who yet again have gone above and beyond in manifesting our corporate values of flexibility, inclusiveness, integrity, innovation, resilience and respect, through their actions. Under the guidance of our Board, EO and the Executive, I have no doubt that the best is yet to come.





RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

TANYA SMITH

The Recovery and Resilience Team was grateful to receive ongoing funding from the SWS PHN for the Community Bushfire Project after the initial 12-month contract was completed. In the last financial year, the Recovery and Resilience team have:

- Supported 190 individuals in case management
- Facilitated 5 x 4-week groups with 83 participants
- Facilitated 15 workshops with 195 participants
- Attended 19 community events
- Supported 29 mentors/mentees
- Facilitated 6 Community of Practise meetings with community leaders from across Wollondilly and Wingecarribee



In addition to the Community Bushfire project, the team also facilitated the Connecting and Preparing Isolated Residents (CaPIR) Project, funded through the NAB Foundation. The aim of the project was to support isolated and vulnerable residents to connect with services and organisations that can help prepare themselves and their property for future disaster events.

Team members ran several education and focus groups, where residents decided they wanted to create a perpetual calendar that included relevant information that would help them remain prepared for future disaster events. A callout to residents for photographs provided the creative scaffolding, while the team gathered the information and developed the project, resulting in 300 amazing perpetual calendars being printed and distributed to our target cohort.

Having worked with the community in the recovery space since May 2020, the team has watched the community heal and build their resilience after ten declared disasters, and a global pandemic. While most recovery services have concluded, or refocused on preparedness, the team at CLW has continued to provide a much needed recovery support service that is flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of the community.

It is a testament to the commitment and collaborate nature of the team's work that CLW has continued to attract ongoing funding across the Recovery and Resilience, Community Engagement and Mental Health teams in the recovery space.

WORKPLACE WELLBEING COUNSELLOR

JULIE SEDGMEN



One of the staff benefits offered by CLW is the Workplace Wellbeing Program. The Program aims to support staff to meet the Mission of the organisation by identifying and responding to the wellbeing needs of individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole. In this second year, the program's operational tasks have increased and diversified by offering Individual Wellbeing Sessions, workshops, support during change processes, conducting a Workplace Wellbeing staff survey and meeting WHS psychosocial safety regulations,

As the Wellbeing Program began to become more woven into the fabric of the CLW workplace culture, new staff were being informed about this staff benefit, and introduced to the Workplace Wellbeing Counsellor during their induction, and this has resulted in new staff accessing this unique staff benefit.

Throughout this year the program has provided 145 individual staff wellbeing sessions and has developed a new service offering Individual Wellbeing Plans where 6 plans have been created to date.

The Workplace Wellbeing Counsellor has provided support to the TEI team during the implementation phase of the TEI Change Plan and delivered a communication training 'Communicate, Collaborate & Create with Deep Listening' for the team.

Outcomes from the training were that 75% of participants improved their understanding of Deep Listening from 'Good' to 'Very Good', and 25% from 'A Little' to 'Very Good'.

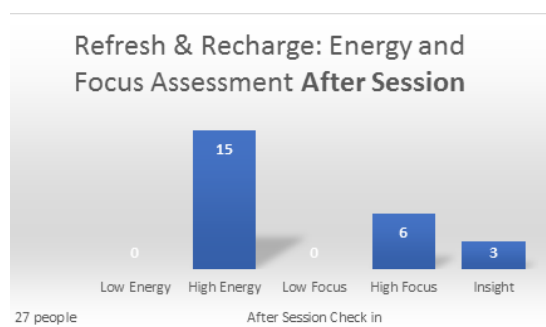
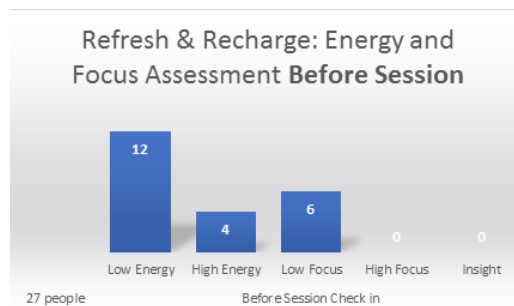
Participants reported their key take away's as:

- Enjoy learning about the different types of listening
- Learning how to be fully present and set aside judgements and bias

- The power of connection with the self in others

The 'Refresh & Recharge' project was an initiative that arose from identified staff needs and was developed on the foundation of evidence-based approaches to support staff to manage their energy throughout the day. When we manage our energy, we are increasing our capacity and productivity.

CLW are supporting staff to build resilience by committing to Workplace Wellbeing in the creation of the Wellbeing role and program. This is differentiating CLW from many organisations where wellbeing programs are often 'ground up' initiatives without support from the leadership. Based on this industry trend, CLW can proudly know itself as a leader in workplace wellbeing. Staff continue to express gratitude for this workplace benefit.



Partnerships

Residents and community leaders
Wollondilly Shire Council
Wingecarribee Shire Council
Grand Pacific Health
Wholebeing Yoga
Dr Clooney
Argyle Housing
WinterGarden
Cancer Support Group
Country Women's Association
WOLCOMS
Tyree industries
Tahmoor Coal
Tharawal Land Council
National Recovery and Resilience Agency
Resilience NSW
Service NSW
Anglicare
St. Vincent de Paul
Salvation Army
Red Cross
Rotary and Lions Clubs
Habitat for Humanity
GIVIT
Southern Highlands Foundation
Goods 360
Lifeline
Department of Primary Industries
Local Land Services
One Stop Community Assistance (OSCA)
Warragamba/Silverdale Neighbourhood Centre
Member for Wollondilly Nathaniel Smith's office
Member for Hume Angus Taylor's office
Coles Bowral
Tahmoor Woolworths
Butchers Hub Picton
Ngununggula Gallery
Oz Harvest
THSPA (The Highlands School of performing Arts)
Kazcare
At Full Potential
Headspace 'Be You' program
PHN Funded Projects such as Stories for Regeneration and Sounds of the Bush
BCRRF Steam 2 funded programs including Catholic Care, Good Grief, Fire Thrive and others
Legal services such as Macarthur Legal Aid and Illawarra Legal Service
Homelessness services such as Southern Highlands Homelessness Services and Argyle Housing
SWS LHD Bushfire Recovery – Specialist Mental Health Coordinator

Funding Bodies

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network
Dept of Community and Justice
South Western Sydney Local Health District
Dept of Education
CORE Community

Allied Health Sub Contractors

Brief Therapy Solutions
Macarthur Practice Psychology
Movement Therapy
Comet Kids OT
Southern Highlands OT
Rachel Stevens OT
Creative Achievers OT
River Road Interactive Learning
Effect Exercise and Rehabilitation
Eddie Ross Exercise Physiologist

Mental Health Sub Contractors

Sage of Mind
Wildflower Holistic Services
Highlands Holistic Art Therapy and Counselling

THANK YOU!







info@communitylinks.org.au



(02) 4683 2776



www.communitylinks.org.au



facebook.com/Communitylinkswellbeing



instagram.com/communitylinks