

WODEN COMMUNITY SERVICE INC. ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015



woden
community
service inc.



Our Vision

A vibrant and connected community

Our Purpose

Working together, enriching lives

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Acknowledgement of Country

Woden Community Service acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners of this land and their continuing connection to land and community. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have come from other nations to live on Ngunnawal land. We pay our respects to their cultures, ancestors and elders past, present and future.



Woden Community Service (WCS)

WCS is a not for profit community organisation that has been providing community based services for over 45 years.

Our vision is to build and nurture a vibrant and connected community, working closely with stakeholders, partners and the local community.

We deliver services on behalf of the ACT and Australian Governments across the ACT and a range of children's services within the region.

We employ over 250 permanent and casual staff and have an active volunteer program with over 80 volunteers.

WCS provides a wide range of services covering a cross section of the community from children, families, young people and seniors including disability, housing, refugee and mental health services.

For more information visit wcs.org.au

Follow us on     

Our Values and Service Commitment

Hope

We welcome, we listen, we value people's stories, we support people to build goals for their future, and we offer services based on respect, acceptance and choice.

Community

We create connections within a diverse community and opportunities for people to engage in meaningful roles.

Integrity

We work together, we are accountable and professional and we partner with others to develop and provide high quality, innovative services.

Responsiveness

We actively engage with individuals, our community and our sector. We respond to critical events to maintain resilient communities.



Board of Governance 2014-2015

Members of the Board of Management of Woden Community Service Inc. are elected by the community and volunteer their services to support the organisation in responding to the needs of the community. Any person living in the ACT is eligible to become a member of the Board of Governance.

President Christopher Wood

Treasurer Carolyn Campbell Wood

Secretary and Public Officer Chandalala Mambwe

Executive Director Chris Redmond

General Members Helen Scully, Chris Healy, Marie Luise Persson, Bhavana Kaul, Chris Flaherty, Anita Phillips, Lora Shaw, Julie Smith, Jennifer Bennett



President's Report



2015 has been a year of renewal for Woden Community Service. All levels of the organisation have been affected by these changes, including management and the Board. Some changes, like the restructure of the organisation and the introduction of an Executive Team to support the Executive Director, are in response to the growth Woden Community Service has experienced since commencing in 1969. Some changes have been required to facilitate the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the most significant shift in Government policy the community service sector has ever experienced.

In October last year at the 2014 Annual General Meeting, three directors with a collective 20 years of service to the organisation retired. This provided an opportunity to recruit, with the assistance of Volunteering ACT and the Australian Institute of Company Directors, four new directors experienced in governance, the community sector and business. The well rounded skill set the Board now possesses has enabled it this year to progress: the organisational restructure, the recruitment of four new executive staff, an updated constitution for the organisation and a new five year strategic plan.

All staff members throughout the year are thanked for their patience and perseverance during the uncertainty resulting from these changes. Members, service users and families are thanked for their ongoing support and commitment provided by using our services. Thank you also for the sentiments of gratitude and encouragement you provide every day to our staff.

Thank you to my fellow directors throughout the year for your untiring commitment to the sustainability and longevity of Woden Community Service. I am heartened continually to know that, together with the Executive Director, I have the privilege of leading a team of professionals entirely committed and passionate about the Woden and ACT community and seeing its citizens receive the essential human services they require.

Christopher Wood
President

Executive Director's Report



This time last year, Woden Community Service had just commenced the change process due to the sector wide challenges and opportunities that were emerging. Since that time the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has rolled out in the ACT and the aged care sector commenced planning for changes that were introduced on 1 July 2015.

While these initiatives were not the sole reason for our renewal they signposted the importance of preparing ourselves for a changing service environment that community organisations needed to prepare for to ensure their ongoing sustainability and longer term viability. WCS developed a new organisational structure that would support our operations for the next few years as the shifts within the sector settled and financial security became clearer.

While there has been a significant internal focus by staff, the Board and the new Executive, WCS staff continued to deliver the quality services that are a trademark of the organisation with some notable additions.

As the ACT Government and community struggled with the Mr Fluffy crisis we became very active in seeking to assist and support affected homeowners across the broad region. Once the ACT Government decided to fund a buyback scheme, our first priority was to ensure residents had ready access to government support so we provided office space to Asbestos Response Taskforce staff in the WCS community centre. We hosted morning teas to bring together affected homeowners to build a sense of community through mutual support. We also mobilised volunteers to assist homeowners with practical tasks in their decision making about vacating their properties.

The WCS Board sponsored a MrFluffy Digital Stories initiative in which eight home owners told their story about their relationships with their home. This initiative will be launched shortly and will serve as a long term legacy of the crisis.

Again WCS's mental health programs demonstrated their quality through winning a tender to deliver another sub-acute program to people at risk of entering hospital due to failing mental health or supporting them in their recovery and release from hospital. The evaluation of the Transition to Recovery program (TRec) was released during the year that confirmed the value of the program, not only from participants' perspectives but also from mental health clinical services who work very closely with WCS staff to assist participants in their recovery.

In partnership with ACT Medicare Local, WCS also developed a number of mental health service

initiatives, such as a program to develop a peer workforce, further develop the Canberra Living Conditions Network that is developing practice to address squalor and hoarding issues and tenancy support and options for people with mental illness.

WCS also banded together with Richmond Fellowship and the Mental Health Foundation to advocate for the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs) whose funding was to cease with the introduction of NDIS. We were part of a national advocacy approach that saw the program retained for at least another year. PHaMs is a critically important service to people with significant and enduring mental illness that was established to be a long term recovery program eight years ago. Our PHaMs advocacy efforts will continue.

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the ACT was ably managed in WCS by our disability staff and we have continued to work with people with a disability and their families as they transition to the new scheme. WCS sought to assist this transition as best we could through the preplanning phase of NDIS ensuring that people were well prepared for the planning sessions with NDIS staff in developing plans that address their goals and aspirations. WCS has developed a good reputation for this approach and is now assisting with plan coordination for people with NDIS plans.

There has also been significant governance renewal within the organisation. We have a new Board, with a redrafted constitution and a new strategic plan about to be launched.

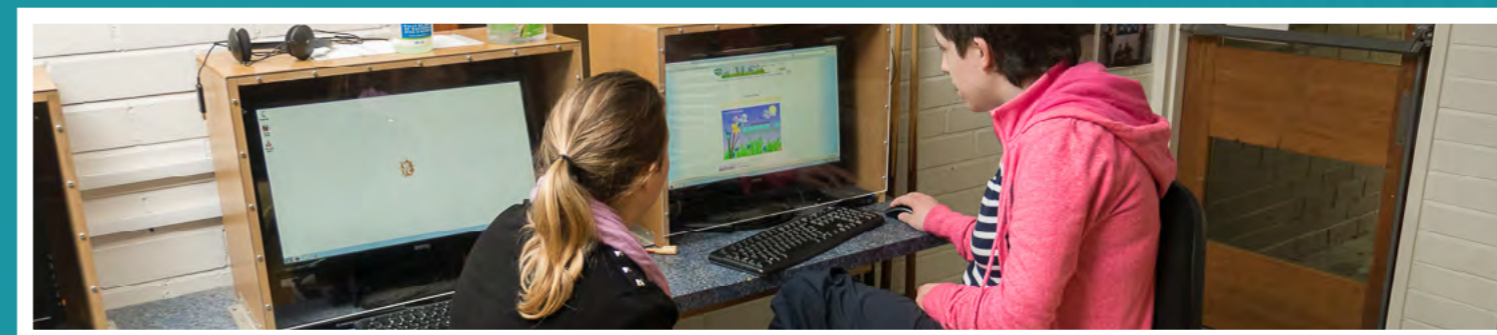
The organisational changes have affected staff within WCS with a number of staff leaving during the year. I would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of staff present and past and thank them for their contribution during the year in their work with the people that are the raison d'être of a service organisation such as WCS.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the people that we work with – thank you for trusting us to share your lives.

Chris Redmond
Executive Director

Chris Redmond

Chris has led WCS for the past 11 years and his professional background includes direct service delivery, management and leadership roles in the Australian public service.



Reconciliation Action Plan

Woden Community Service is committed to advancing reconciliation through a range of activities to engage staff and the community, as set out in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The RAP working group arranged various events to highlight the issues facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, often in partnership with other community organisations.

In July 2014 we participated in three events to celebrate NAIDOC week. We shared a stall with Belconnen Community Service at NAIDOC on the Peninsula, which was well attended by the Canberra community. We also held a morning tea in our Community Room with guest speaker, Dr. Peter Radoll from the University of Canberra for staff, service users and community members. WCS staff also attended NAIDOC on the Green in Phillip, which was hosted by Habitat and Indigenous Community Volunteers.

In October 2014 WCS held a lunchtime film screening for staff featuring short films from the National Film and Sound Archive Black Screen collection.

In March 2015, for Close the Gap Day, we invited Stephanie Harvey, CEO of Indigenous Community Volunteers, to talk about her organisation. The audience, including representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Health, were entertained by the singing and dancing of children from the Lollipop Children's Centre. In the afternoon, a joint event between ACTCOSS, WCS, The

Smith Family, Northside Community Service, Karralika, and the YWCA Canberra was held at Tuggeranong Arts Centre with special guests Rod Little and Larry Brandy.

To commemorate National Sorry Day, the children and educators from Lyons Children's Centre made a banner, which is now displayed in the WCS Community Room. A delegation of educators and children from Lyons and Lollipop Children's Centres joined in with WCS staff to walk over Commonwealth Bridge with a big crowd of Canberrans.

Cultural awareness training has been a key feature of the WCS RAP commitment. In the past, we had been very pleased to have Kerry Reed-Gilbert provide this training. With her retirement, rather than run WCS specific training, staff have attended various cultural awareness courses run by ACTCOSS.

A key focus for the RAP team in 2015-16 will be to work with staff and community members to develop a new Reconciliation Action Plan, including establishing a new program for training, to ensure that the service provided by WCS is culturally appropriate and makes an important contribution to addressing the challenges experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community.



Children, Youth and Family Services

KATE CRAWFORD, DIRECTOR

Kate has been with WCS for the last nine years in a range of different roles in Children, Youth and Family Services. She has recently taken on the role of director and will use her experience to bring these service lines together and provide a comprehensive range of services to families requiring support.



LYONS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Lyons Children's Centre is part of Lyons Early Childhood School, which caters for the learning and development of children from birth to eight years old and their families.

This model is an innovative approach to education that provides a 'one-stop shop' of wrap-around care to families and ensures children are ready to make the transition to primary school.

We participate in many multicultural and diverse community events to expose the children to what is happening in the community. We have also been involved in raising funds for World Vision and The Pyjama Foundation by holding special events at Lyons.

We have fantastic support from the Parents and Citizens with funding for new bikes, gardening, sorting and repairing toys, and also the development project of our chicken coop, which will be up and running by the end of the year.

Our educators have been involved closely over the year with our sister centre Lollipop, through training, professional development and WCS events. We will continue to encourage this collaboration between our two WCS childcare centres.

In response to our parents' feedback, we have brought all administration under the umbrella of the Lyons manager and have restructured our processes and the services.

We have a WCS Seniors group visit our service regularly with our Nannies and Poppies visits for morning teas and sing-alongs.

We think outside the box and take our pre-schoolers on an out of gate educational experience for half an hour every day. This includes walking to the library and exploring their local community.



LOLLIPOP CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Lollipop Children's Centre has been providing high quality care for the last 40 years.

We offer a range of services including long day care, occasional care, sessional care, part-time care, emergency care and playgroup.

Our centre is extremely diverse and we are actively involved in participating in local community events. Children celebrate these events both within the service with art, craft, music, movement, cooking and out in the community, by singing, performing or just being part of the event.

Woden Library is part of Lollipop's weekly life. Each week our preschool children walk over for storytelling and songs, the librarian also visits

Lollipop for the infants and toddlers, and the Lollipop children are invited to participate in special library events.

Lollipop playgroup offers families the opportunity to be a part of the Lollipop Wednesday morning program and encourages inclusion. Everyone joins in the activities together. Here families can interact and ask

questions of our educators and approach Lollipop management for family support and advice.

Playgroup is often the first step in childcare for families, and becomes a link for many families to the broader community and other agencies in Canberra.



School Age Care

We continue to operate two programs at Red Hill, a Junior and Senior program, one at Lyons, and have split our program at Garran into two.

We now have a separate 22 place Kinder program, and a 117 place Year 1 to Year 6 program at Garran. This is the first time we have been able to offer all the families on the waitlist a place at Garran after school care.

We introduced an electronic sign in system called Qikkids Kiosk during the April school holiday program at Garran. Overall the introduction was a success and we are in the process of rolling this out in all our Children's Services.

During the April school holidays, we organised a very successful three day camp to the London Bridge Woolshed near Googong Foreshores. 16 children and three educators enjoyed bushwalks, caving and other fun activities.

Then during the July holiday program, we organised our annual day trip to Perisher snow fields. This was our biggest trip so far with 48 children attending.



Curtin has
120
children with a
Junior and Senior
program

Hughes has
44
children

Torrens has over
60
children

Lyons has
40
children

Red Hill has
130
children

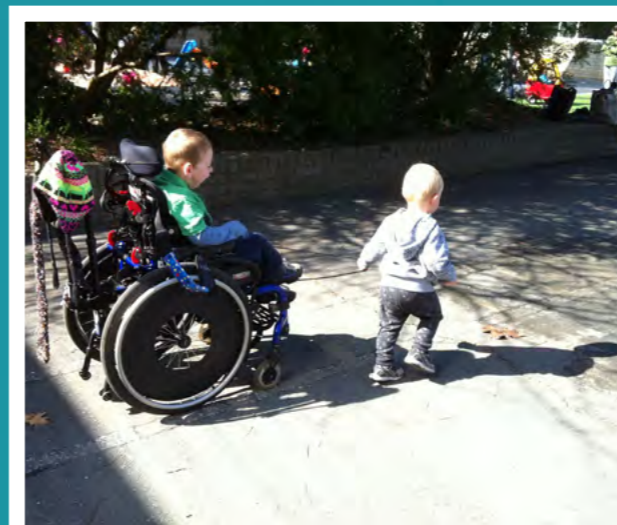
Family Day Care

During 2015 we have continued to support the Paint & Play Programs in our area. This is a valuable resource for young families in the Woden and Weston areas as the Paint & Play is a useful opportunity to enhance child-family bonding along with building parenting and leadership skills among families in a safe and child friendly environment.

It helps to build community connections and networks providing a sense of community inclusiveness. It is also a useful avenue for sharing of community and family support information to parents.

Our educators have been accessing activities for the children in our local region and this has given our children the opportunity to take part in activities offered to the community by various organisations and gain life experiences.

Under changes to the Community Support Program (CSP) announced in the 2014-15 Federal Budget, from 30 June 2015 the Department of Education terminated all CSP contracts with family day care approved services. As a result Woden Weston Family Day Care coordination unit was not eligible for funding to administer the scheme and therefore we needed to increase our fees by 10%.



Youth Engagement Team

The Youth Engagement Team (YET) provides youth outreach engagement, recreational activities, events, and case work for young people aged between 12 to 25 years. YET is funded under the Child, Youth and Family Support Program from the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate.

Here are some of our activities:



HOLIDAY PROGRAMS which have included trips to the coast, trips to the snow, trips to Sydney, movie days, pool and ping pong and dodgeball competitions, a day out at Jamberoo, climbing the Outward Bound ropes course, and a half day of physical activity, life skills and goal setting at Stockade Gym. Many of these activities were planned and executed in collaboration with other youth services from across Canberra.



BAND NIGHTS operate approximately one night a month at the Youth Centre and are an opportunity for up and coming bands to play in front of an audience. We have managed to increase our following and now attract between 70 to 150 young people at each event.

In July we hosted Forever AWOL band night with students from Lake Tuggeranong College to raise awareness of mental health issues and funds for Headspace Queanbeyan. This event was a great success drawing over 160 people.

We also hosted Yo Funky, a dance event promoting positive and healthy engagement for young people with their peers and the community, organised in collaboration with local dance studios. This event attracted over 140 young people.



LIFT OFF and WEST WODEN FIELD BEATS (WWFB) are important stand-alone events for young people, showcasing the diversity and wealth of musical talent among young people across the ACT.

Lift Off is a music competition with great prizes for young people aged 12-25 consisting of two heats at Woden Youth Centre, and a final at CIT Phillip. While WWFB operates in collaboration with Woden Westfield, who provide financial and practical support to host the event. WWFB is a showcase of youth music and dance performances, held in a public square with community information stalls and family-friendly activities. Over 650 young people and families attended these events throughout the year.



NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK We hosted a stall at the National Youth Week Launch in Civic, as well as hosting a WWFB event in Woden. Both of these activities operated in close collaboration with youth services from across the ACT.

We continue to focus on developing partnerships with key agencies across the ACT and have played a strategic role in the development of both the Youth Worker Practice Network and the All CYFSP Youth Engagement Meetings.

Our other partnerships are with ACT Policing Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) to provide targeted support to at-risk young people. We also worked with St Johns First Aid and CRU at the Multicultural Festival and Skyfire where we engaged with over 700 young people.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT is funded by ACT Government's Community Services Directorate.

This program engages with the Woden Valley region and the rural communities of Stromlo, Uriarra and Tharwa, working with groups and individuals to plan and deliver programs that will strengthen and enhance a sense of community.

Some of the events which the Community Development Team helped facilitate during the last 12 months included:

- Woden Valley Festival
- Community Christmas Day Lunch
- Annual Easter Egg Hunt
- International Women's Day
- Anti-Poverty Week
- Speakers at the Library
- Marist College Service days



Case Management Team

CMT supported 78 families over the past year and achieved its goal of empowering these families to deal with the issues facing them. Over the Christmas period we were able to collect donations to have toys and food hampers for these families.

In January during the school holidays we organised a trip to the coast which brought many of the families together for a fabulous day out. Over the Easter holidays there were various trips and activities organised for the whole family such as rock climbing, a trip to the caves and barbecues. The relationship with Strengthening Families has helped us make a difference by giving us the opportunity to network with the wider Canberra region and focus on each family's goals.

78
families supported
by CMT last year

Some of the ongoing programs that Community Development assist with include:

The Little Pantry provides emergency food relief for people in need in Woden and its surrounding areas. The pantry operates on Thursday mornings and emergency packs are available during WCS business hours during the week.

Women Supporting Women Group provides the opportunity for women stepping down from our Mental Health programs to meet on a fortnightly basis. They organize outings, guest speakers and participate in a variety of projects. The CDP worker assists with sourcing venues, transport and providers.

Woden Men's Shed Working towards starting up a Woden Men's Shed in the near future.



Child, Youth and Family Gateway

This program is delivered in partnership with Barnardos, Belconnen Community Service and YWCA Canberra with the aim of assisting vulnerable individuals and families who do not know where to go by linking them with relevant support services and information.

We maintained our presence in the ACT Child and Youth Protection Service. There was also opportunity for direct contact at Housing ACT as part of the One Human Services Gateway.

This has resulted in an increase with referrals from both ACT Child and Youth Protection Service and Housing ACT. This program will continue to be a valuable source of support for the community.



Wrap Around

Wrap Around was a pilot project self-funded by WCS for the duration of 2015 to address the gaps in service for young people aged between 9 and 11 years and to provide flexible support for those who have disengaged from school due to mental health concerns.

This program has filled the service gap left after Youth Connections was defunded at the end of 2014. Wrap Around has also provided groups in schools, which is an area not covered by the CYFSP funding stream in the Woden area.

During the first half of this year, Wrap Around has worked with over 40 young people through groups and case management.

Two particularly successful groups include the Torrens Primary School Resilience Building Group which focused on building resilience in year 5 and 6 students, and the Melrose High School Aboriginal Transitions Group which focused on linking year 7 Aboriginal students with their school and community to assist them in their transition to high school.

Wrap Around is funded to the end of 2015 and we are in the process of seeking more funding to deliver this much needed program to vulnerable young people in our community.

Wrap Around supports young people in education, training or employment through group work and case management, to successfully transition to high school, build resilience and self-esteem, set educational and employment goals, and work through anxieties regarding school.



Social Inclusion

As a result of the decision to move towards a new structure within WCS the 2014 - 2015 financial year saw many wide reaching changes that involved bringing together a diverse group of programs, breaking down silos, fostering a strong sense of team and providing opportunities for professional development.



Beth Wurcker, Director

Beth has worked in the not for profit community sector for over 20 years across a diverse range of programs and organisations. Her background is in developing sustainable and contemporary programs that deliver great outcomes for service users and building focused, capable and motivated teams.



Home and Community Care (HACC)

99%

felt our services offered good value for money

99.7%

said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received

99.7%

said they would recommend WCS to other people

This was largely a year of transition towards the implementation of the new Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) in July 2015.

This program replaces Home and Community Care whose objective is to provide entry level services for people aged 65 and over, accessed through a new government gateway called My Aged Care.

Unlike HACC, the CHSP does not provide case management and one of our challenges was to identify service users who, due to complexities in their lives, would require ongoing case management and transition them to Home Care Packages which contain an element of case management.

In order for WCS to remain sustainable it was necessary to explore new models of service delivery which resulted in the decision to move from using agency staff to employing our own Home Support Workers.

This financially sustainable model allowed us to employ our own staff and ensure we incorporate the CHSP mandated concepts of wellness and re-ablement into our every day and strategic practice.

Feedback from Service User:

“I am very satisfied with all the points covered here, in particular the courtesy and consideration shown to the elderly”



Social Groups

WCS run a number of social groups catering to different interests and mobility levels.

Highlights and activities include:

- Social Groups Coordinator Sandy Vandertoorn won the inaugural ‘Capital Chemist Seniors Week Ambassador Award’ for the category of “Most Supportive Worker”.
- Pam and Sandy organised many out of town trips to locations including Boorowa, Cooma and Junee. These are always popular due in large part to Pam’s excellent local history knowledge
- John Kaye and Sandy Vandertoorn as well as Honey, our therapy dog, were recognised at the ACT Seniors Week Ambassador Awards.



Case Management

Four case managers provided 2,200 hours of case management during the year to Canberrans over 65 years of age.

Case management was a core function under HACC and was the service type most affected by the transition from HACC to the CHSP. The case managers worked hard to find alternative supports for those WCS service users identified as requiring ongoing case management post 30 June 2015.

Due to a lack of options there were still a small number still working with WCS as at 30 June and WCS successfully applied for a moderate amount of funding to finalise the transition by December 2015.



Client Services

WCS provided over 3,000 hours of domestic assistance, personal care and social support to 150 service users aged over 65 years.

WCS has historically brokered all domestic assistance and personal care out to agencies and we will be moving away from this model towards employing our own workforce.

During the year we also increased our use of volunteers for home visiting and shopping support.

Community Transport

We provided a total of 6,865 trips this year.

This program continues to deliver a valuable and well respected service to the Woden community with the goal of providing a friendly, flexible, affordable and professional transport service.



ACT HACC Program

We provided almost 1,600 hours of service and over 850 individual transports.

This program, funded to provide a range of services to Canberrans aged under 65 years, has also been in a state of transition due to the staggered rollout of the NDIS across the ACT.

We already know that a significant number of service users will either not be eligible for the NDIS at their transition date or may choose not to access it. What this means for this group of service users is unclear at this time but WCS is actively involved in working with the ACT Government in the design of the replacement program.



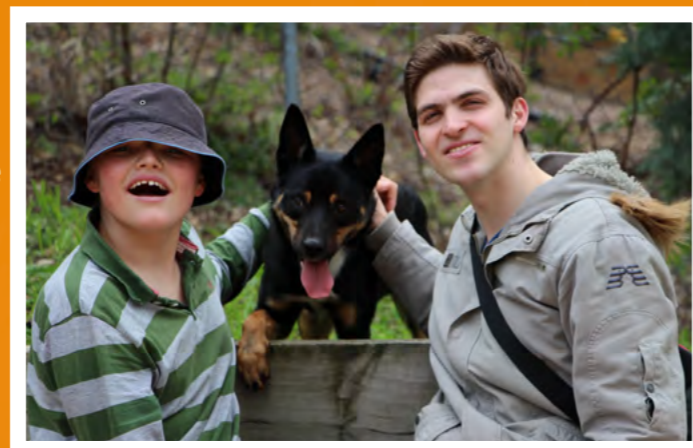
to people living with disability the impact on services cannot be underestimated.

One of the biggest issues we began addressing this financial year was the re-alignment of our support workers with the price paid under the NDIS. WCS has had a long history of employing the best and most experienced support workers and it has required some innovative approaches to be able to maintain our current workforce under the NDIS pricing structure and it is still a work in progress.

The NDIS has seen significant changes to support requests and models of support. Support hours have increased and times and days have been adjusted to support participants in the realization of their goals and social outcomes.

As well as direct service delivery, the NDIS has also provided another opportunity for WCS to work with people with disabilities through plan funded Support Coordination. Many NDIS plans include funding which aims to coordinate all of the plan's activities and this is an area where WCS already has considerable expertise.

The inaugural role of NDIS Specialist is held by Donna Law and she has built on her already considerable networking skills to position WCS as the territory's premier provider of Support Coordination for people, especially those with complex plans.



WCS strives to empower people living with a disability to live a meaningful and purposeful life by promoting and supporting individual choices and assisting them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

This past year our Disability Services have undergone significant changes in their structure and service delivery area to ensure our sustainability now and into the future in the NDIS world.

Since the beginning of the NDIS in the ACT trial site in July 2014, we have seen 100% of our Community Supported Respite (CSR) participants transition to the NDIS. We have also assisted a number of Community Life Skills participants to prepare for their transition to the NDIS from March 2015 onwards.

The move to the NDIS has presented our organisation, along with many others, with the significant challenge of moving from block funding to individualised packages. While there is no doubt the NDIS will bring many benefits

Feedback from families, carers and service users...

"I have seen her develop so much over the past year. She is more independent, engaging and her confidence has grown. She has even started playing pranks on me at home and laughing more and more."

"Thank you for all the logistical problem solving that surrounds this case. As we are continually reminded, this is a complex case and one that will evolve over time. We are very fortunate to have people such as yourself in his corner. This is indeed a team effort!"

"Thank you very much in assisting us in our NDIS planning. You have done a fabulous job"



Volunteer Coordination

Our volunteers are dynamic, diverse, and inclusive and all share a common interest to make our community cohesive and connected.

89

active
volunteers

12

volunteer board
members

35

volunteers who
participate in weekend
and one time
events

WCS was recognised as the Volunteering ACT Inclusive Champion Volunteering for taking practical action to provide meaningful volunteering opportunities for vulnerable people in our community through participation in Volunteering ACT Inclusive Volunteering Program.



Settlement Grants Program (SGP)

This year we focussed on supporting service users with employment readiness, assistance to navigate Centrelink and other government agencies and put service users in touch with organisations to assist with family violence and divorce matters.

We have undertaken significant service redesign and have successfully been able to target this service to reflect the wide diversity of the ACT migrant community.

SGP works closely with other services within WCS and this has resulted in the formation of a working party to establish a multicultural play group, identifying volunteer opportunities for service users to improve their work readiness and English language skills and a strong relationship with the new provider of government funded English language classes.

Rural Settlements



With funding from the ACT Government, WCS provides a range of supports to older people living in the ACT rural settlements that were affected by the 2003 bushfires.

12 years on, this group continues to meet once a month at the Lanyon Homestead for morning tea and friendship. About 8 to 10 people attend. This is a supportive and cohesive group who enjoy getting together for encouragement and mutual support.

Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged (ACHA)

We supported 118 service users with varying housing and support needs - 55 were from non-English speaking backgrounds.

This program assists older people who are frail, on low incomes, homeless or living in inappropriate accommodation to access appropriate, long term, suitable and secure housing and community resources to develop independence and allow them to remain in the community.

Many of the program's tasks include writing support letters for people who are applying for accommodation with Housing ACT, accompanying people and advocating for them in their interviews and contacts with Housing ACT, negotiating with Housing ACT and the

maintenance department over renovation, upgrading and maintenance issues.

The program also provides information about allied services in Canberra and empowering service users through independence, decision-making and raising their self-esteem. From July 2015 this program will move under the Commonwealth Home Support Program and be renamed Assistance with Care and Housing.



The Big Issue (TBI)

90%

of vendors have been with us for over 12 months

60%

of them have been with us for over three years

6 vendors

have been with us for over five years

The Big Issue is a national street magazine run under a social enterprise model. WCS has been managing The Big Issue in Canberra since 2004 supported by a grant from the ACT Government.

Big Issue vendors sell around 40,000 magazines and calendars each year, making the ACT the highest selling jurisdiction in Australia per capita.

We currently have 25 registered vendors of which 15 sell regularly and a strong support network of staff and volunteers.

Vendors come from a diverse group, most living with a disability, mental illness, some have a history of being in the criminal justice system and/or drug and alcohol issues. The high level of support provided by WCS is one of the main reasons there is low vendor turnover.

What our vendors say:

“The Big Issue means that I have enough to eat.”

“The Big Issue means that I can buy things that I’ve always wanted. This year I bought an electric bike and new shoes.”

“The Big Issue is the best job I’ve ever had. My customers love me.”



Mental Health and Housing



Pam Boyer, Director

Pam has an extensive background in community sector management, community education and health advocacy. In recent years she has found her niche in applying this experience in the mental health domain. She joined WCS in 2014.

Our key achievement has been the bringing together all of WCS's mental health programs, Transition to Recovery (TRec), Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) and Partners in Recovery (PIR), with the Supportive Tenancy Service to create the Mental Health and Housing team.

This has seen a significant improvement in our ability to integrate our work across programs when supporting participants accessing our services. Focusing on people's recovery, strengths and inspiring hope, this suite of WCS mental health and housing services are linking a range of supports to enable people to lead fulfilled lives in their own communities.



Other highlights include:

- Expansion of our TRec program
- Work in the area of squalor and hoarding
- Preparation for the transition of both our services and our participants to the NDIS
- Growth of our peer workforce

Our Mental Health Programs are focused on:

- Developing the personal resources of participants to reduce the impact of the symptoms of their mental illness
- Create stronger linkages to the community through social activities
- Providing employment and training opportunities
- Work with clinical services and community organisations to better support and assist participants move towards achieving greater independence and quality of life



Mental Health Recovery and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

There have been significant challenges for our Mental Health Recovery programs as we begin to accommodate the impact of the NDIS across the community managed mental health sector in the ACT.

PHaMs has already begun to assist participants of the program, who may be eligible for an NDIS individual funded package, to apply. We have begun providing coordination and support services for people with NDIS packages as well as developing a peer workforce to extend the opportunities the NDIS will afford.

We have been aiming to ensure a continuity of service for participants of our Commonwealth funded programs, PHaMs and PIR, funding for which will be transitioned into the NDIS after 30 June 2016.

Transition to Recovery (TRec)

TRec is an intensive 12 week outreach program to assist people to transition back into the community following an episode of mental illness.

It aims to prevent relapse as well as reduce hospital admissions and is unique in that it is offered as a community based program so participants are back in their homes rather than a hospital bed.

TRec has been running successfully for the last four years and is currently supporting 45 people who have left psychiatric care or who need additional support in the community.

This program is run in partnership with Mental Health Justice Health and Drug and Alcohol Services by a team of 10 TRec staff.

Some of the program highlights are:

- Its community based and offers support seven days a week from 9am to 9pm each day.
- A number said that it averted negative consequences including suicide as well as feeling equipped with the resources and skills to manage future crisis.
- Inpatient hospital service and emergency service use also decreased among participants.

90% of TRec participants rated the program positively over a two year period in an evaluation conducted by the ANU Institute for Mental Health Research.





Partners in Recovery (PIR)

WCS is part of a consortium of services under ACT Medicare Local (now the Capital Health Network) that form the Partners in Recovery service. This service is committed to ensuring coordinated care for people with severe mental illness and complex needs who are more at risk of falling through gaps in the service system.

Our Support Facilitators work with people to develop plans that will sustain recovery as well as coordinate and integrate services to help their needs. Flexible funding is also available for Support Facilitators to use to address immediate and urgent needs where no other options exist, often making a remarkable difference to the life of a participant.

Personal Helpers and Mentors program (PHaMs)

PHaMs supports people whose ability to manage daily activities and to live independently in the community has been affected by the experience of mental illness.

Participants of the program are linked with a key worker who supports them on their unique journeys of recovery – helping them overcome barriers to living valued and fulfilled lives in their own communities.

The PHaMs team has six full-time workers, including two full-time Peer Support workers and a PHaMs Employment Services worker, as well as a growing membership of those who provide peer support work or contribute to our peer groups and initiatives, including PHaMs participants past and present.

Within our mental health programs we are committed to assisting people in their recovery journey. Research has identified

the importance of peer support in the mental health field, including the availability of peer support workers – workers with a personal experience of mental illness and recovery.

As a result, we have taken innovative steps to both offer peer support and develop a peer support workforce to meet people's need. Our most recent initiative in this area was the Social Inclusion project.

We have a range of initiatives that involve peers in recovery groups and activities: the Mindfulness, Art and Philosophy Groups. Peerzone and other groups and workshops are organised according to the needs of people in our programs.



Social Inclusion Project (SIP)

The Social Inclusion Project involved engaging mental health participants who were particularly socially isolated and needed greater support to engage in social and community life.

It was funded by ACT Medicare Local under their Partners in Recovery Flexible Funds.

Seven peer workers (people with lived experience of mental illness and recovery who have progressed sufficiently to use their lived

experience to benefit others) were supported and trained to undertake this work with eight participants. Despite the brevity of the project, positive gains were made with all participants.

One peer worker says “When we started he could only last 5 minutes in a coffee shop before he had to retreat to the safety of home. Now we attend a two hour group at Tuggeranong.”

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Supportive Tenancy Service (STS)

The **Supportive Tenancy Service** is run as a partnership with Belconnen Community Service and YWCA Canberra. It provides support to people whose tenancy is at risk, and provides advice for people looking for a new tenancy. STS assists people who are at risk of homelessness to sustain or obtain a tenancy, working with people in public housing, private rental and with mortgages.

In 2014 - 2015, STS worked with over 800 people, from providing one-off advice or information, to supporting them over extended periods to sustain a tenancy. The **Supportive Tenancy Service** receives funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, which are jointly funded by the ACT and Australian Governments.

Tenancy Options and Salvos Housing

In September 2014, STS redirected resources to incorporate a new service – Tenancy Options. Previously the focus of STS had to been to sustain tenancies. However, in some cases, this is not possible and a person needs to find a new tenancy.

The Tenancy Options team know about the full range of tenancy options available, and can help people understand the different tenancy options and how to obtain them. In particular, they have a good knowledge of the private rental market, and the processes involved in securing a private rental tenancy, including accessing bond loans through Housing ACT. The team have good relationships with a number of community housing providers.

The Tenancy Options team has successfully partnered with Salvos Housing to assist people in accessing affordable rental properties at a complex in Narrabundah.

Those assisted include young people, recent migrants, women leaving domestic violence, and older people. All had been living in precarious situations, and are now able to use the opportunity of secure and stable housing to address other issues in their lives.

Canberra Living Conditions Network

The Supportive Tenancy Service has supported many people facing difficulties with their tenancy due to squalor and/or hoarding. As a result, STS has taken a leading role in supporting the Canberra Living Conditions Network (CLCN), which brings together community, government and private agencies to improve services to respond to squalor and hoarding.

In 2015, Capital Health Network (then known as ACT Medicare Local) provided WCS with funding through the Partners in Recovery

Flexible Funds for a six month project to improve the capacity of the CLCN.

This project provided the opportunity to host Dr Christopher Mogan, a psychologist with a PhD in hoarding, to present a workshop for professionals and a public lecture.

Both were extremely well attended and led to the establishment of a peer group, building links between the community and mental health sectors, collecting data, and launching its website, www.cln.org.au.

Mental Health and Tenancy

People who are dealing with mental health issues often face difficulties in sustaining or obtaining tenancies.

At times, PIR support facilitators had to work with participants to urgently address tenancy issues before they could work on other goals; and STS support workers worked with people over extended periods whose tenancy issues were related to their mental health.

The challenges could be in meeting the financial and maintenance requirements of a tenancy, in dealing with conflict with neighbours, and in finding a tenancy that was suitable for their needs.

As a result, Capital Health Network has funded a 12 month project to build capacity in this support area and better understand the connection between mental health and tenancy issues and the specialist support needed to establish and maintain tenancies.

STS has employed two additional support workers to provide direct support to people

who are PIR-eligible, to build relationships with PIR Support Facilitators and other mental health professionals, and to prepare reports looking at the issues and options for support.



Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness to me...

It is meditating within my means.

It is seeing my loving family walk toward me.

It is managing my own behaviour and noticing distraction and naming them.

Mindfulness calls me back to myself and refocuses me on the here and now.

Mindfulness helps me heal myself of ill feeling and brings broader benefits to my health and wellbeing.

Mindfulness is like a time commitment and thinking about my awareness of the permeations of time.

I feel a little surprised by Mindfulness.*

* This poem was written by someone who has been attending our mindfulness group for over a year.

We have to date completed over 150 mindfulness sessions and the impact it is having on participants has been very encouraging. Teaching a simple skill such as this has the power to make a huge positive difference to someone's wellbeing.



Corporate Support



Jennie Seppings, Director

Jennie has over 15 years of experience in senior Human Resources leadership roles nationally as well as internationally across a diverse range of industries. She brings with her expertise in developing organisational capability through leadership, systems and process improvements.



The Corporate Support business unit was established early in 2015 as part of an organisational restructure.



Its key objective is to enable the organisation to deliver its services through the provision of specialised knowledge, practices, tools and systems in the areas of Organisation Development, Human Resources, Finance, Information and Communication Technology, Quality and Marketing & Communications.

As part of our journey so far, we have:

- Established three key new positions – HR and Work Health & Safety Specialist, Senior Quality Specialist and Marketing & Communications Manager

- Centralised the Finance function to streamline its services and processes
- Restructured and renamed the HR function to People & Culture to reflect its strategic focus
- Negotiated a new Multiple Enterprise Agreement
- Increased the engagement and accountability of our leadership teams at a more strategic level
- Completed the review of our IT infrastructure for further improvements
- Consolidated our facilities to support WCS's continued growth



Financial Report 2014-2015

The total revenue for this financial year increased from \$13.3 million to \$14 million. This was largely due to the level of CPI increase.

The net result was a surplus of \$107,634. This is compared to a surplus of \$493,156 last financial year.

Review of Financial Position

- Operating activities resulted in a net cash inflow of \$462,758 as compared to \$692,037 last financial year.
- This cash inflow was predominantly used for capital expenditure and investment i.e. \$93,253 and \$93,067 respectively; a total of \$186,320. Last financial year's investment was \$327,861.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

- The introduction of the NDIS saw WCS, along with all other community service organisations, facing significant challenges.
- The NDIS created a significant shift in terms of balancing the commercial viability of our services while maintaining the high standards of service delivery.
- To meet these challenges, a change management process and plan was developed to support the effective transition to NDIS.

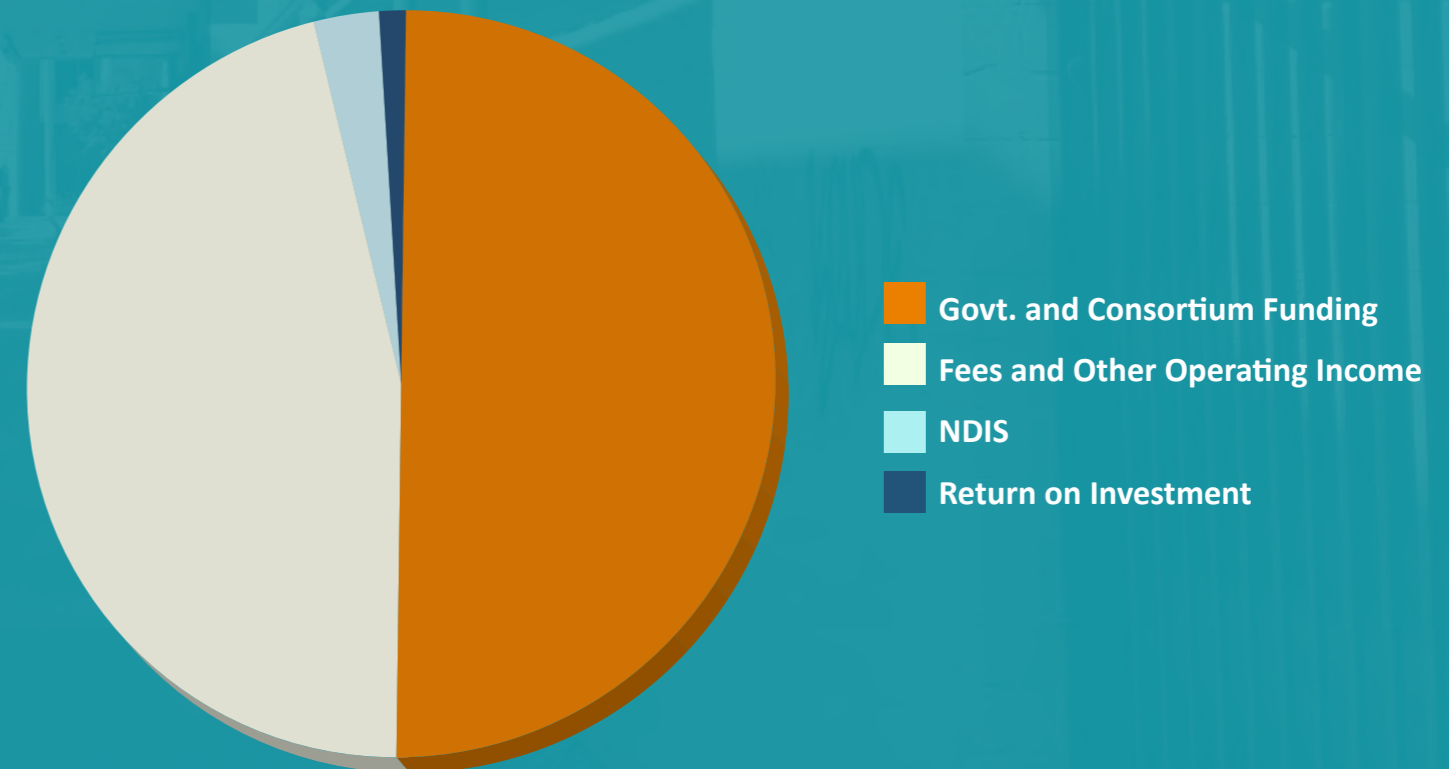
Sustainable Surplus

- Over a period of time, WCS has generated a sustainable surplus. This has allowed us to invest in NDIS and the future.
- As at 30 June 2015, our current ratio stood at 1.89. This demonstrates a strong liquidity position.

The following is a snapshot of our current revenue, where it came from and our expenditure

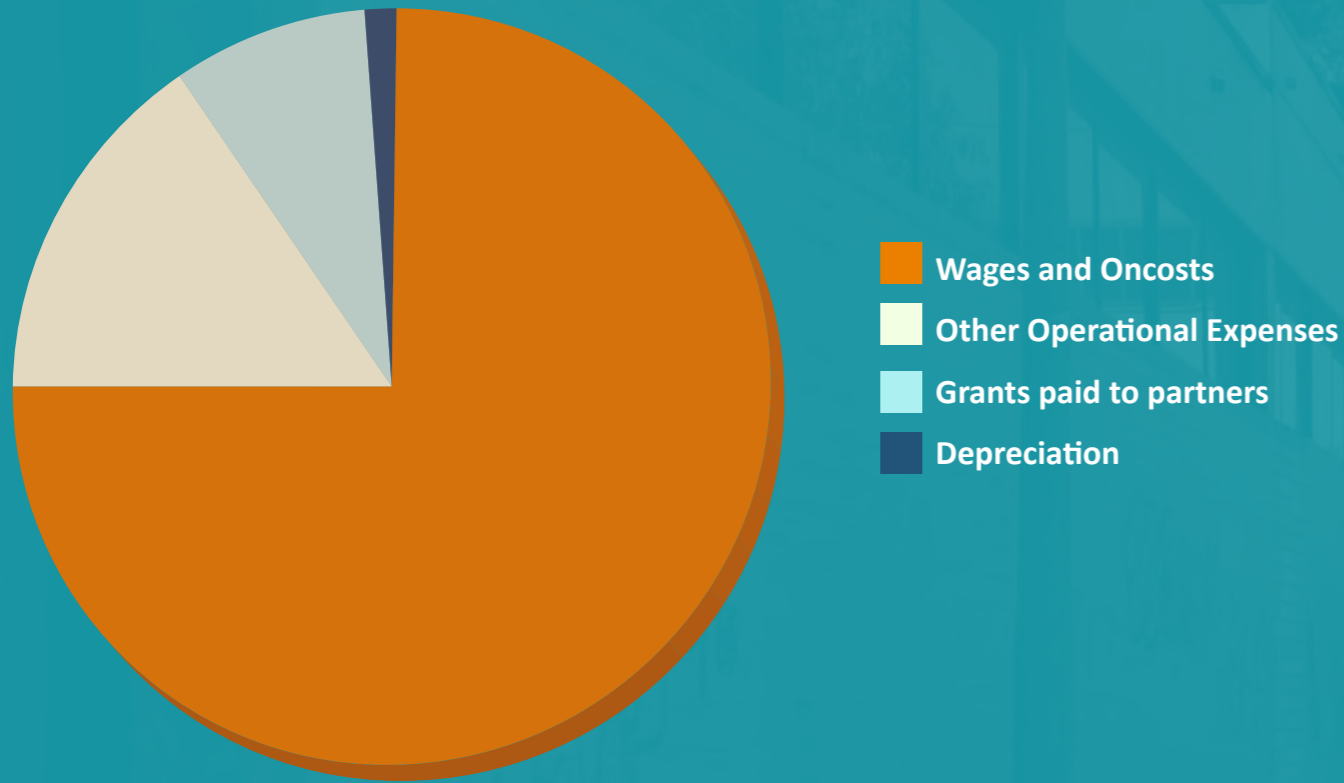
Revenue

Govt. and Consortium Funding	\$6,884,187	49.16%
Fees and Other Operating Income	\$6,695,547	47.81%
NDIS	\$280,354	2.00%
Return on Investment	\$142,942	1.02%



Expenditure

Wages and Oncosts	\$10,384,494	74.73%
Other Operational Expenses	\$2,345,961	16.88%
Grants paid to partners	\$1,061,792	7.64%
Depreciation	\$103,147	0.74%



Acknowledgement

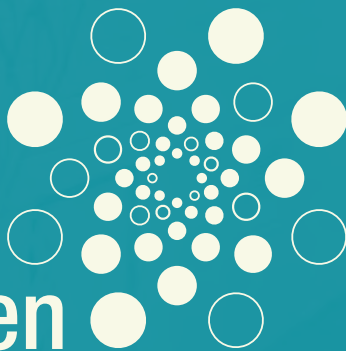
The organisation has been operating in a period of significant change and continuous growth.

Our impressive financial results for the last financial year would not have been possible without the support and dedication of each and every member of the Finance team. I would like to thank them for their level of contribution through what has been a challenging year.

The Finance team remains committed to providing value added services and timely, accurate information to all parts of the organisation, and partnering with the service areas to achieve their strategic goals.

Dipak Mehta
Finance Manager





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