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Chairperson Report

How fast can a year come around? If my recollections are correct, this is the seventh annual report I have had the pleasure of submitting. The years seem to have tumbled along to the ups and downs of this Organisation, which has grown at a head spinning pace. I am very pleased to inform you that the ups have by far outweighed the downs.

Our mode of operation is often tied to the whim of government, and the direction they choose to take can change the way in which we care for those in need of our services. At all times it is our aim to provide the highest possible standard of service, and I believe we have achieved this.

I congratulate our management team on their ability to move with these changes and keep CareSouth at the forefront in the provision of services. With an organisation of this size it is a Herculean task to achieve this flexibility and growth. I must again thank Andrew and his dedicated team for their commitment and hard work.

Our newest venture, the psychology group 'Psychology South' is settling down and appears to be about to launch off into being a most successful arm of CareSouth.

At this time I would like to thank Jim McEwan for all the blood, sweat and tears he has put into this Organisation. Without Jim, CareSouth would not exist. Jim is not leaving us, however he has decided to step back a little and take a slightly more relaxed look at life.

I thank the volunteers, the staff, the management team, and especially the Board, who give their time freely and take an essential part in setting the direction of CareSouth.

Thank you to all who have had a part in the successful running of CareSouth, and we look forward to another year of great achievements.

Peter Murphy

Chairperson

CEO REPORT

ANDREW MUNRO



“THE PAST 12 MONTHS HAVE BEEN A YEAR OF ‘UPS AND DOWNS’. I AM HAPPY TO REPORT THAT WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATED THE DOWNS AND ACHIEVED GREAT THINGS WITH OUR OPPORTUNITIES. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT CARESOUTH IS IN A MORE ROBUST AND CONFIDENT POSITION THAN 12 MONTHS AGO.”

The most notable achievement over the period is the growth and consolidation of our Out of Home Care (OOHC) program. Toward the end of the financial year we were involved in negotiation with Department of Community Services (DoCS) to fund our existing foster care program and to expand it considerably. This is recognition of our commitment over many years to provide a quality service to the children we support without compromise. I am expecting that 2008/9 will begin to see the rollout of this new work – whilst this is exciting it is certain to bring some significant challenges.

Other highlights were the start of our new psychology venture 'Psychology South'. We are hoping that this will allow us to expand and diversify our psychology work by providing services beyond those areas we traditionally operate in.

Achieving full five-year accreditation for our OOHC program with the Office of the Children's Guardian was also a significant highlight – a credit to our staff who persevered over a four-year period to achieve this highest quality level for OOHC work.

Our disability program also continues to develop. The Family Choices program, a program that places and supports children with a disability in foster care, was established during the year. This is a real 'pioneer' program as it's something that has not been done in New South Wales to date. It will be a real challenge for us but is certainly close to our heart. Nan Bishop House continues to flourish as well as another new program, the Leaving Care program, supporting young people with a disability when they leave DoCS care.

Our flagship program, Aunties & Uncles, continues to grow and flourish. We now have four staff in the program and support over 80 children from vulnerable families from Wollongong to Bodalla.

We will continue to seek to expand this vital early intervention program in the year ahead.

The year also saw us successfully bed down our new early intervention program in the Illawarra – the Brighter Futures Program. I expect that DoCS will develop this style of program extensively in the years ahead as it is clear that many of the problems families in our community face will not be addressed by the child protection system alone.

The central administrative core of CareSouth has also seen some significant growth and changes in the year. Our finance, public relations, human resources and clerical staff have all done a wonderful job supporting the programs of CareSouth.

We are indebted to our sponsors and partners Prime Television, WAVE FM, Kinghorn Motors and Russell McLelland Brown Lawyers for their ongoing support in raising the profile of CareSouth.

Our Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) has now consolidated the restructure of 12 months ago. The new staffing arrangements have assisted us to utilise our partnership with Shoalhaven Community Housing. CareSouth is now able to support young people in their own home until their tenancy is secure.

I have not mentioned individually the efforts of our staff. CareSouth's staff have done an amazing job and made my increasingly complex job so much easier. Over the year there have been times when staff have had to dig deep in order to overcome problems. There have also been great examples of innovation and creativity. Most importantly there has been a genuine heart felt commitment by our staff to working with our clients with respect, honesty and compassion.

AUNTIES & UNCLES

CLARE WILSON



“OVER THIS PERIOD, AUNTIES & UNCLES (A&U) HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY AND BUILT UPON ITS SOLID FOUNDATIONS WITH SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN ALL AREAS; PROMOTION AND FUNDRAISING, RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEER CARERS, REFERRALS FROM AGENCIES AND FAMILIES IN NEED OF SUPPORT AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN LINKED TO THE SPECIAL PEOPLE WHO MAKE THIS PROGRAM A SUCCESS.”

Aunties & Uncles (A&U) now has a team, which includes a Manager and three Caseworkers: Diane Rowley, Nowra; Lis Rust, Wollongong; Rieke Mergel, Ulladulla. The team works across a significant geographical region, which incorporates the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla regions.

Over the past year, we have been building upon our program's expansion into Wollongong and, with the support of Jo Munro (public relations), we have received many inquiries about the program and have now facilitated three training and induction evenings for applicants who have completed their assessments to become approved carers.

Across the three regions we are servicing, we have assessed, approved and are working with 41 new children and their families, most of which are now linked with an Auntie/Uncle.

In addition, we have achieved the following:

Community Awareness

Promotion in shopping centres - including Stocklands in all regions and street stalls in Crown Street Mall in Wollongong.

Ongoing promotion in school newsletters - including school visits to present the program's philosophy to parents and teachers.

Aunties & Uncles Annual Colouring Competition - this event held at the end of term one of the school calendar, has now become a substantial event to seek involvement from the primary schools in all the regions we currently work in. It has the support of many businesses that kindly donate family-friendly prizes, which are awarded to a student. Prizes included family passes to attractions such as the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the Australian Maritime Museum, and Taronga Zoo to name a few.

Twenty-five schools were represented in the list of prize-winners, judged by a panel, which included Shoalhaven Council's Manager Libraries and Community Services, a representative from Meroogal and local artist and a CareSouth representative. This year we received more than

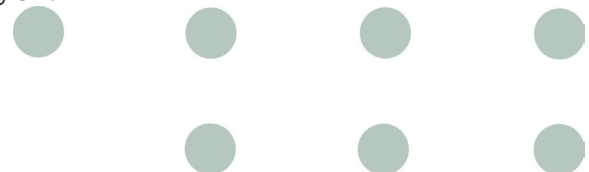
1300 entries, an outstanding result, which directly translated in the increase in the number of inquiries and community participation we have experienced in the program this year. Many thanks to Jo Munro for her huge support to A&U in making this happen.



Presentations to Service Clubs – Jack Laidlaw (Fundraising Volunteer) made a significant contribution to A&U with his fundraising efforts by speaking at 11 service clubs in the Kiama/Gerringong and Shoalhaven regions. This not only enabled us to receive financial support from these clubs, but also raised an awareness of the program across the community. Our sincere thanks go to Jack, for volunteering his time and effort to A&U.



Presentations to agencies and interested groups in the community continue to raise our profile in all regions, in addition to participation and involvement with interagency forums in each region.



Radio and media interviews have also featured strongly this year. We have seen an increase in our profile in the community as a direct result of this, combined with the advertisement screened on Prime Television, which has provided us with significant reach from Wollongong, all the way down to the far South Coast.

Events and Social Gatherings

In the past year we have hosted nine training and induction evenings for new applicants. Two were held in Ulladulla, four in Nowra and three in Wollongong. Before the end of this year, we expect to run one more in each region, bringing the estimated total to 12. At the completion of each of these events, we survey the participants and are very pleased with the feedback we are getting. For the period 2007 – 2008, we have trained 49 individuals for their role as A&U carers.

Our training continues to be of a very high standard, which, as a result, translates into having carers who are well informed and prepared for their role as an 'Aunty or Uncle'.



In addition we have hosted several social dinners in all regions, which seek to support and thank our carers for the wonderful job they do.

We have hosted a mid-year, all regions picnic this year in June. Despite a very cold and windy day at Huskisson, we were delighted to see the majority of families made the effort to take part in the day, with over 50 families in attendance.



In conclusion, 2007-2008 has been a successful and rewarding year for the program. We have grown as a team and have enjoyed the challenges of continuing to provide a best practice approach to our service delivery. As the program grows, we have continued to adopt systems, which ensure a seamless, generic approach to our assessment process and casework for both clients and families. We continue to liaise with Sydney A&U for on going collaboration and a shared commitment to the philosophy of A&U.

For the future...

We are currently working towards an evidence based research project to support and strengthen the aims and objectives of A&U, in conjunction with the University of Wollongong.

We hope to continue to grow the program and expand further into the lower South Coast communities, in addition to the Southern Highlands.

We will continue to look for funding opportunities in the corporate sector to aid our growth.

And lastly, our commitment is to support both carers and families at the highest possible level, so that the relationships between them can flourish and grow to give the children in our program the chance to experience a positive future.



COMMUNITY CARE, SHOALHAVEN

CHRIS STUBBS



“THE MOST OBVIOUS FUTURE ISSUE IS THAT WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A FUNDED AGENCY AFTER THE STATEWIDE PROCESS COORDINATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES. THIS REPRESENTS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TO THE OOHHC PROGRAM SINCE IT STARTED MANY YEARS PREVIOUSLY.”

Client Placements

For the period July 2007 to June 2008 there have been a total of 49 clients placed in Community Care, which represents a small increase from the previous year. It is noted that this figure includes 28 clients who were within the service at the beginning of this period. Interestingly, at the end of June 2008 we have 31 clients currently in care so the overall number has not changed dramatically.

New referrals were for a variety of crisis, short term, long term and respite placements.

The trend of referrals for younger age children has continued. From the 21 children who entered care in this period only seven have been high school age and four have been pre school age. The other 10 have all been primary school age. Therefore the average age for children currently in care is just under 9.5 years, which is consistent with last year.

Sibling groups still provide a large number of the children in care with 73 percent of the children and young people currently placed with CareSouth, Nowra having a sibling within the organisation.



Long term Placements

The program currently has 18 young people in long-term placements which is the same number as the start of the period.

Of the 18 young people in long-term care 15 of these have remained in the same placement and of the three who have moved one was a planned placement move for one of a sibling group of three.

During the last 12 months we have put into place a range of supports for these young people, a number of whom are approaching late adolescence.

This year saw a first for CareSouth. A young person turned 18 years and aged out of care, having been in the same placement for nearly five years. This was a marvelous outcome as the young person has entered the Army. I was privileged to travel with his carers to his passing out parade, where we met up with his natural family to celebrate his achievement together.

There are also four other young people in either Year 10 or Year 11 this year, so supporting them through this period is very important.

All of the young people in the long-term placements are progressing well and their stability is a testimony to their respective carers as well as the significant support provided by their caseworkers.

Foster carers

The foster carer numbers have not increased dramatically this year and are currently stable at 32. Enquiries have continued at a reasonably steady rate although it is envisaged that we will need to boost the efforts to increase foster care numbers over the next six months.

There has also been a significant increase in foster carer training this year, both internally and supporting carers to attend external training.

There is still a range of challenges in recruiting carers who can focus on supporting the high needs that children in care exhibit. But I have to acknowledge that we also have a number of



extremely amazing carers who provide a level of care and nurturing that is of a significantly high standard.

Staff

This year has again seen some minor changes in staff, although for very positive reasons. Kate Wright is on maternity leave and is now the proud mother of a lovely little girl. Kate's replacement Hanieh Turner commenced in July. Hanieh has been working very well and brings a new range of skills and experience to the team.

Lisa, Stella and Linda continue to forge a very strong team whose commitment to the children and young people we manage is a credit to both them and the organisation. I am well aware that I am quite blessed to have a team with such strength to supervise and this makes my role so much easier.

Future direction

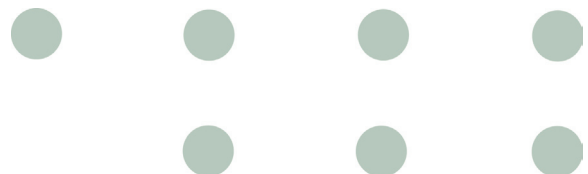
The most obvious future issue is that we are on the verge of becoming a funded agency after the statewide process coordinated by the Department of Community Services. This represents the most significant change to the OOHHC program since it started many years previously and whilst this is very exciting there will need to be significant time and effort ensuring that this growth occurs in a planned manner. I am confident of the strength and knowledge that exists within the organisation already will equip us well to manage the future challenges that will arise.

I would also like to again take the opportunity to pay tribute to the successful relationship that Nowra and Wollongong OOHHC Program have maintained throughout the last year. Rob Wilson has had a whole new team come on board but already strong links exist between the two program areas and this bodes well for the future growth of the program.

I would also like to again acknowledge the effort of Andrew and Jim in successfully gaining this funding and for the ongoing support that Andrew has given to both the program and me personally.

Chris Stubbs

Manager Community Care, Nowra



OUT OF HOME CARE, ILLAWARRA ROB WILSON



“WE ARE NOW CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN ONGOING DEMAND FOR CARESOUTH OOHC PLACEMENTS AND THE RECENT NEWS THAT DOCS WILL PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THIS SERVICE, WILL ALLOW THE GENERAL FOSTER CARE PROGRAM TO CONTINUE TO GROW.”

Client Placements

For the period July 2007 to June 2008, there have been a total of 35 clients placed in Community Care. It is noted that this figure includes seven clients who were within the service at the beginning of this period.

Although the number of placements in the last year increased slightly from the previous year (July 2006 to June 2007) – 34 clients, the length of placement of each client and the number of medium-term and long-term placements increased significantly for the period July 2007 to June 2008.

New referrals were for a variety of crisis, short-term, long-term and respite placements.

During the period July 2007 to June 2008, the average age of the current 25 children in community care is nine years old. In the previous 12 months, the average age was 12.5 years old.

Another significant factor is that there has been a greater number of sibling groups placed and in fact, 76 per cent of the children and young people placed with CareSouth have been a member of a sibling group.

In all current sibling group placements (there are 19 children belonging to sibling groups), all but one sibling were placed together or with carers of the same family. We have placed sibling groups of two, three and five children.

Long-term Placements

The program currently has 10 young people in long-term placements, up from seven at the beginning of the period. There are a further eight children, who have been in a stable and potentially long-term placement for six to 12 months, for whom we are waiting for long-term Court Orders before assessing the suitability of the current placement.

Of the ten young people in long-term care, all have remained in the same placement for various periods up to three years. We have two sibling groups of three children, two groups of two children and two other children in stable placements.



All of the young people in the long-term placements are progressing well and their stability is a reflection of the dedication of their respective carers, as well as the significant support provided by their Caseworkers.

Foster Carers

There has been an increase of foster carer numbers this year, from 13 to 19. This is a pleasing increase, given that we no longer have the availability of four carers due to various reasons.

The increase in potential carer response has been a direct result of increased hours by public relations staff and the implementation of a planned, concentrated media campaign over the last 12 months.

Newspaper advertisements, radio and television advertising has allowed CareSouth to run four training sessions over the period. We have successfully trained assessed and approved six new and two respite foster carers.

There has been a significant increase in the response from our advertising campaign of those



interested in becoming foster carers.

It is believed that the decrease in age of referrals has attracted more potential carers. Also, many of those people responding to the recent advertising do not have their own children still living at home (which is a more suitable environment), resulting in sustainable and durable foster placements.

Out of 19 current carers, only one carer has their own child living at home.

Over this period, foster carers have been provided with a full calendar of professional training, with the goal of developing their skill levels to that of a professional carer.

The training has included presentations by Dr Howard Bath, an expert in the field of trauma in children; ongoing carer training provided by our psychology department and a session on "Pathways Into Care" provided by DoCS.

The carers group also meet with Caresouth OOHC Manager and Caseworkers every eight weeks, to discuss relevant placement issues and any additional training in relevant skill development they may feel they require.

There has also been a significant increase in training and workshops for the children in foster placements. An example of this is that of school holiday workshops, which were held for them to learn 'Stranger Danger'.

Staff

This year has seen some changes in the OOHC Team, with Monique Ferguson moving on to the Brighter Futures Program and Belinda Davey taking 12 months maternity leave.

The Illawarra OOHC team acquired the services of three new Caseworkers: **Tracey Billett** – previously worked with DoCS Child Protection Team, for eight years. Tracey commenced work in March 2008. **Rose Tipping** – commenced in May 2008, with

experience in the field of youth work; and **Tim Ryan** – who is a qualified teacher, with a background in psychology, and has worked with Connect in Wellington NSW. His employment involved working with local youth in restoration programs.

All three staff bring a wealth of experience and skills to the OOHC team, each exhibiting a high standard of professionalism and commitment to working with the children in care. They will only enhance the already high standard of casework in the Illawarra OOHC team.

DoCS has acknowledged the professionalism of these Caseworkers via excellent feedback to CareSouth management.

Future Direction

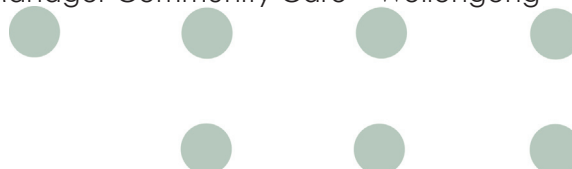
We are now certain that there is an ongoing demand for CareSouth OOHC placements and the recent news that DoCS will provide funding for this service, will allow the general foster care program to continue to grow. To facilitate this, the focus will be to implement a growth strategy in the immediate future.

All parties put in a significant effort to achieve accreditation by the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG). Case file audits were also conducted in February 2008, with results reflecting the OCG's acknowledgment that CareSouth continues to provide and meet the OOHC case management standards.

Both Wollongong and Nowra OOHC teams continue to work well together in providing a quality case management service to DoCS. Through regular regional team meetings and communication, the teams support each other and ensure consistency of the overall OOHC program.

Rob Wilson

Manager Community Care – Wollongong



FAMILY CHOICES

RHONDA MILLER



“THE FAMILY CHOICES PROGRAM HAS EMBRACED A FAMILY-FOCUSED APPROACH AND THE CHALLENGE IS TO FIND A CARER WHO IS NOT ONLY AN APPROPRIATE AND POSITIVE MATCH FOR THE CHILD WITH A DISABILITY BUT ALSO A POSITIVE AND APPROPRIATE MATCH WITH THAT CHILD’S FAMILY.”

The past 12 months has been an exciting and challenging one. The Family Choices Program started receiving referrals in November 2007 from the southern and western regions of NSW. The program is funded by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) to provide alternative family placements for 10 to 12 children with disabilities.

At present there are 11 birth families on the program that are hoping to be linked with carers who will assist them in the care of their son or daughter. Four families come from the Illawarra, two families from Nowra, one family from Ulladulla, one from Griffith, one from Bathurst and two from Wagga Wagga. Two of these families are requesting full-time care for their child and the remaining families are requesting a shared care arrangement for their child. All children on the program have significant disabilities and high support needs. The ages range from six years to 16 years of age. The average age is 12 years seven months. There are nine males and two females.



Recruitment campaigns have been rolled out across the state in an attempt to find caring families for these children. Recruitment strategies have included ABC radio interviews, numerous newspaper advertisements, information stalls,

schools newsletter advertisements, posters, canvassing recruitment agencies and identification of potential carers coming through the Nowra and Wollongong OOHC carer recruitments.

A Disability Training Module has been introduced into the general OOHC carer training. It is hoped that by providing carers with ongoing disability training that it will generate increased interest and confidence in carers towards children with disabilities. It is very difficult finding suitable carers for children with significant physical and intellectual disabilities, however assessments are presently being conducted with three potential carers from Ulladulla, Wagga Wagga and Nowra.

The Family Choices Program has embraced a family-focused approach and the challenge is to find a carer who is not only an appropriate and positive match for the child with a disability but also a positive and appropriate match with that child's family. We are very lucky to have found wonderful carers who have been matched to two children and their families in Wollongong and Bathurst. It is hoped that these children will be transitioned into their new caring family within the next couple of months.

Many of the families on the program are in great need of additional respite supports to ensure that they can continue to care for their child in the family home while waiting to be matched with a caring family. At present the program provides funding for respite services for seven families.

Negotiations are underway with DADHC to review the Family Choices Program. CareSouth and DADHC are working together to investigate how the program can be made more flexible so that it genuinely meets the needs of the children and their families.

Rhonda Miller

Program Manager



PSYCHOLOGY SOUTH DEE NEVELING



**“PSYCHOLOGY SOUTH IS A PROFESSIONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT
AND CONSULTATION PROGRAM THAT
OFFERS PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
TO PROGRAMS WITHIN CARESOUTH
AND TO EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS.”**

Psychology South is a professional psychological assessment, treatment and consultation program that offers psychological services to programs within CareSouth and to external customers. The Intensive Family Support Program operates under the Psychology South umbrella. Psychology South came into being in May 2008. We rent a commercial house in the centre of Wollongong, and the venue projects a professional image.

Staff

The aim in staffing this program is to ensure that all staff members are professionals and are able to deliver a quality professional service to both internal and external customers.

The staff consists of:

- a Senior Clinical Psychologist
- a Clinical Psychologist
- a part-time Intensive Family Support Co-ordinator (an Intern Clinical Psychologist)
- a part-time Intensive Family Support Caseworker (a Registered Psychologist)
- a part-time Administrative Support person
- two Intern Clinical Psychologists on placement

Customers

Our current customers are:

- Department of Community Services
- CareSouth Out of Home Care Program
- CareSouth Brighter Futures Program
- CareSouth Disability and SAAP Programs

Our potential future customers are:

- Clients referred for Medicare Services

- Clients of lawyers
- Workers Compensation
- Vocational Assessment
- Veterans Affairs
- Victims of Crime

Difficulties encountered during the year, and strategies to manage these

The set-up of the program was delayed due to computer difficulties. The set-up difficulties have been resolved, but there are frequent computer difficulties that impact negatively on capacity to work, for example e-mail not being accessible.

The previous Intensive Family Support Co-ordinator resigned in March 2008, and left behind significant challenges that required remediation. These issues took some months to manage, but finally appear to have been resolved without a detrimental impact on CareSouth. Consequently the referrals into the Intensive Family Support Program have increased, and we currently have 19 referrals awaiting DoCS approval. At present we are reviewing the manner in which we provide the Intensive Family Support Program interventions.

We currently have a part-time Intensive Family Support Coordinator, in a role that was previously a full-time position. This occurred due to the individual not having more time available, but given the increasing workload, the role needs to be reviewed and a full-time role considered in the future.

We have encountered significant difficulty in recruiting individuals to provide the casework function in the Intensive Family Support Program. The relatively low rate of pay, the casual nature of the work, and the complexity of the work, resulted in few people being willing to undertake the work. We have managed this by appointing a casual Registered Psychologist who is overqualified



for the work, but who wishes to have casual employment for family reasons. This psychologist has the potential to provide additional services to CareSouth, for example placement assessments, in the future.

There has been difficulty in developing the program to provide alternative psychological service. This has been due to the Manager of the Psychology South program also being the only Registered Clinical Psychologist on the team, meaning that the Manager has had to do all the clinical work, leaving little opportunity for service development. This issue has been addressed by hiring an additional psychologist who commenced employment in September 2008.

The employment of psychologists has presented some discussion within CareSouth given that the rates of pay required to employ registered Clinical Psychologists are in excess of the pay rates generally associated with this field of work. However, given that the header agreement with DoCS pays \$164.33 per hour (inc GST), the pay rates agreed upon are manageable for the organisation.

Strengths over the past year

- Enhanced our professional reputation in this field of work
- Strong links with the University of Wollongong, leading to increased research relevant to CareSouth
- Good experiences with Intern Clinical Psychologists who increase our capacity to provide services
- Developed a very good working environment at 47 Kembla Street, Wollongong
- Appointed an excellent Administrative/Support person

- Appointed a good part-time Intensive Family Support Coordinator

Plans for the year ahead

- Register with Medicare and provide generalist counselling via a bulk-billing process
- Notify local legal services that we are available to do court related family assessments
- Register to provide Workers Compensation assessments
- Register to provide Veterans Affairs counselling services
- Develop our potential to provide vocational assessments
- Develop our potential to provide assessments and treatment to children within the autistic spectrum disorder
- Increase capacity to provide services to internal customers given the increasing size and complexity of CareSouth (such as residential services and increased foster care services)
- Develop our capacity to provide appropriate services to Aboriginal clients via training of current staff
- Maintain and further develop our link with the University of Wollongong in order to enhance our professional credibility
- Develop a relationship with the Psychology Department of Canberra University

Dee Neveling

Senior Clinical Psychologist



BRIGHTER FUTURES TONI BOLTE



**“BRIGHTER FUTURES CONTINUES
TO WORK EXTENSIVELY IN THE
ILLAWARRA WITH ISOLATED
AND DEPRIVED FAMILIES
IDENTIFIED AND REFERRED TO
THE SERVICE BY EITHER DOCS
OR COMMUNITY AGENCIES.”**

Brighter Futures CareSouth is building a solid reputation with community and government partners for the work it is doing with children, young people and families in the Illawarra. The diversity of skills and backgrounds within the Brighter Futures team emphasises the professional depth and credibility of the program. The team has looked for opportunities through out the year to enhance their professional skills through accessing a wide range of training and development.

Since October 2007 the Brighter Futures team has offered support to approximately 155 families across the Illawarra. Currently the team is working to capacity with 74 families utilising the service and there is a waiting list. Referrals to the service were evenly spread between DoCS and community referrals.

The capacity of Brighter Futures to assist and support families is strongly enhanced through their capacity to access quality childcare. The early childhood facilitator has built strong relationships with our childcare providers, which is invaluable when requesting childcare and supporting parenting. In the most part, childcare services are receptive to Brighter Futures families and their needs.

The Brighter Futures team has remained relatively stable this year with only a few minor changes in team structure. One of the Team Leaders, Gabby Sutherland left in February 2008 to pursue other ventures. Rebecca De Salis, who had been a family worker with the program, successfully secured this position. Monique Ferguson from Wollongong's Out of Home Care (OOHC) team was the successful applicant for the vacant family worker position. Toni Bolte was warmly welcomed back to CareSouth in August 2008 when she commenced the position of Manager Wollongong; in this role she manages Brighter Futures.

Anglicare and Centacare continue to provide parent training to Brighter Futures families. Anglicare provides individual parent training within the family home, the aim of these sessions is to assist to parents to work on specific identified parenting issues. Centacare provides Brighter Futures families with access to parenting groups that they run within the Illawarra. We continue to work with these agencies on practice improvement for better outcomes for our families and a holistic service delivery model.

In the next 12 months it is hoped that Brighter Futures can continue to evolve and develop its service delivery model. The areas that I am particularly interested in forging ahead in 2009 are;

- Increased visibility of CareSouth in the Illawarra through Brighter Futures.
- Strengthening of community partnerships and relationships within the Illawarra.
- Increased accessibility of service for indigenous and non-English speaking clients and communities.
- Innovation in service delivery, particularly casework and group work.

Toni Bolte

Manager Wollongong



**RESIDENTIAL AND
SUPERVISED CONTACT
SONIA MCEWAN**



**NAN BISHOP HOUSE
LEAVING CARE
YOUTH HOSTEL
SUPERVISED CONTACT/
TRANSPORT PROGRAM**

Nan Bishop House

Nan Bishop House has had a bustling year, with its usual full agenda of activities and programs. With a permanent client base, there are rarely major changes. The most significant change is related to the living environment, as well as all of the positive progress that clients are making in pursuit of achieving their individual goals.

All clients are currently happy and well. There has been intensive focus required on positive behaviour support, which seems to have had a positive outcome. A big focus within the house has been on healthy living, including physical activity and healthy eating choices. There have been some very positive outcomes from this and it has complemented the individual goals for some of the clients. They are very proud of their weight loss and improved fitness.



The individual planning process has developed further to incorporate a more comprehensive approach to health and to comply with new Health Care and Epilepsy Policies put out by the Department of Ageing Disability and Home care (DADHC). This has involved the integration of additional documentation and monitoring into the case management process as well as training staff in these areas.

Throughout the year there have been two community visitor reviews as part of the Ombudsmen's monitoring of services and each report has been positive, reflecting the success of Nan Bishop House to meet a high level of service provision including organisational standards.

There have been two major improvements to the facility. After a long process of organisation and preparation, the main bathroom and toilet area has been renovated to be one large, wheelchair accessible bathroom, which meets Australian standards and specifications. This has the benefit of enabling greater independent access for clients as well as providing a safer environment for attending to personal care for both clients and staff. The new fresh look is an added benefit and it has proven to be a worthwhile venture.

Planning throughout the year has occurred to arrange for the construction of a carport and covered walkway. This is for the comfort of clients particularly in wet weather, when transporting. It is now underway and we are confident that it will also add to the appearance of the building. This project has been funded through the generosity of an anonymous donor whom we thank very much.

We are also giving the main house a fresh new look, with new dining table & chairs, a new lounge suite and a fresh coat of paint to brighten the place up.

We have been very fortunate to have a couple of volunteers come forward who are keen to provide some social outings and activities as part of clients' individual goals. This provides clients with a wonderful opportunity to enhance their own particular interests and social network. We are very grateful for these volunteers' time and generosity.

We continue to maintain close contact with all families of the clients and encourage input into all aspects of life. Beside the regular, day to day



contact as part of this process, we ensure a family get together is held every three months, which gives families an opportunity to share a meal together, to share their experiences and build relationships. We meet at a local Bowling Club for an evening meal together and all have a great time. This has proven to be a great opportunity to also extend the social network by inviting other interested people. There is one gentleman, John who has a mild intellectual disability who enjoys accompanying the group by independently driving down from the Highlands where he lives. John and his sister, who is a support for John, are keen to maintain this social contact and it is a great opportunity for everyone to experience connection. Monthly visits are also arranged for a lady who has a disability and lives relatively independently within the community, to visit Nan Bishop House and the residents. This has been welcomed by all and is another enhancement to the social lives of all clients.



It is with pride and confidence that I take this opportunity to thank all the staff - Jan, Trevor, Sharon, Kim and our pool of casuals - for their dedication and commitment to enhancing the lives of the people we work with. To Julia, who ensures, through her great commitment to the clients, a high level of quality care and maintains the smooth running of the unit on a day-to-day

basis, a big thank you for your effort throughout the year.

Leaving Care

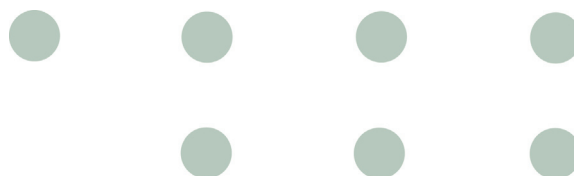
Our Leaving Care program has been operating now for approximately four months. With our continued partnership with South Coast Community Housing a flat within the local community was identified for a young woman. Drop-in support is provided across all days with both flexible and targeted times based upon critical daily and weekly activity periods.

The drop-in support provided aims at increasing the young woman's independence and sustaining her living arrangements well into the future. One of the goals of the service is to reduce the young woman's reliance on support hours over time so that she becomes as independent as possible.

Another function of the program is to provide social connections aimed at developing and sustaining relationships and linkages with the young woman's local community. We are aiming at some 1:1 training and support in relationship behaviour and communication skills, so that her ability to meet new people and sustain appropriate relationships is enhanced.

The program has had its challenging moments and thanks to the dedicated team of workers - Robyn, Lorraine, Katrina and a pool of casuals - we have been able to work through issues as they arise. Julia Hunter has done a great job at coordinating the program, organising the rosters and team meetings along with her hands on time spent with the young woman.

We are very keen to grow the Leaving Care program and continue to learn as we take on the challenges in providing support to this type of accommodation model.



Supervised Contact/Transport Program

It has been a busy year for this program and we continue to learn and further develop the program as we go along. We have spent a lot of time recruiting new staff so we can be in a position to provide a service for each referral that comes in.

We are in the process of developing a comprehensive induction and training package for all staff, revamping all our brochures and developing an information booklet outlining, "Everything you need to know about Supervised Contact and Transport". We would also like to do a presentation of the program to all the DoCS offices we work with.

We have had a few staff changes in program the over the past year and we have appreciated everyone's patience and understanding in this, the DoCS caseworkers in particular need acknowledging.

To the workers that carry out the supervised contact and transport a big thanks to you all, your flexibility and commitment to your work is very much appreciated. To the supervised contact team you are all amazing and your enthusiasm and teamwork is out of this world. Ngaere, you have been an enormous support to me and your dedication to the program is humbling.

Youth Hostel

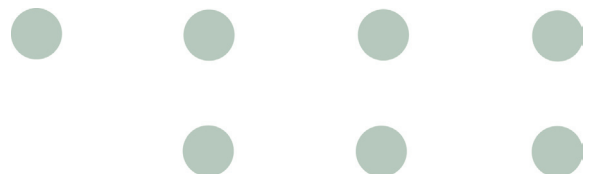
The hostel has seen another busy year running at full capacity providing safe accommodation for young homeless people aged between 15 and 18 years of age. Our flats, in partnership with South Coast Community Housing, have run at full capacity for the year. It has been a challenging year with the difficulties of exit housing for young people who want to stay in the local area and the increasing number of young people who present with mental health issues and drug/alcohol problems.

We have had some success with a couple of local real estate agencies being prepared to give some of our young people an opportunity to rent, despite being under 18 years of age. For this to be successful we have had to spread our existing resources of our caseworker to provide some outreach casework. This has proven to be very effective and instilled further confidence and independence in these young people.

Staff have participated in various training courses throughout the year that they have found very beneficial and directly related to issues faced at the hostel. To the staff - Lyn, Jason, Paul, Nikei and our faithful casuals - thank you for your commitment to the young people we work with. To Therese who has stepped up and takes care of all the day-to-day operations of the hostel and case manages all the young people we accommodate, your amazing effort and hard work is greatly appreciated.



Our partnership with South Coast Community Housing continues to grow and develop and this has enabled more young people to move out of the hostel into their own flat. I would like to thank Marg and her team for another strong year and look forward to building on our existing partnership.



A representative of the service continues to attend interagency meetings regularly to share information. This is an essential part of the service we provide, as it opens lots of opportunities for young people.

CareSouth Youth Hostel 14 Hale Ave Nowra

Combined units and emergency bed

1st July 07 to 30th June 08

1)	Referrals for accommodation:	53
2)	Referrals not accommodated:.....	20
3)	Total of clients accepted:.....	33
4)	Referrals from other agencies:	38
5)	Self referrals:	12
6)	Referrals from family members:	3
7)	Female:	37
8)	Male:	16
9)	Local:	46
10)	Out of area:	7
11)	State ward:	13
12)	15 years old:.....	12
13)	16 years old:.....	21
14)	17 years old:.....	15
15)	18 years old:.....	0
16)	Out of target range older younger:.....	5

Total of days accommodated in Hostel by clients for year: 922 days

CareSouth Youth Hostel Outreach Service**Flats: Campbell Pl, Nowra and Brereton St, Nowra****1st July 07 to 30th June 08**

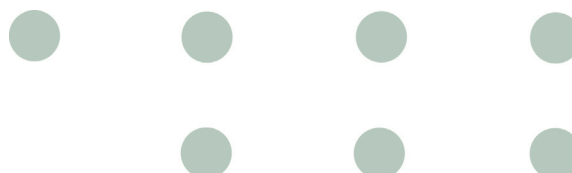
1) Referrals for accommodation:.....	6
2) Referrals not accommodated:	0
3) Total of clients accepted:	6
4) Referrals from other agency:	2
Southern Community Housing	
5) Self referrals:	4
6) Referrals from family members:.....	0
7) Female:.....	2
8) Male:.....	4
9) Local:	6
10) Out of area:.....	0
11) State ward:	0
12) 15 years old:	0
13) 16 years old:	0
14) 17 years old:	0
15) 18 years old:	1
16) 19 years:.....	1
17) 20 years.....	4

Total of days accommodated in flats by clients for year 812 days

In closing, CareSouth is a wonderful organisation to work for, they have given me the freedom, support and guidance to enable another fulfilling year for me and the program areas that I am responsible for. To our CEO and Board of Management thanks to you all for having faith in me.

Sonia McEwan

Residential and Supervised Contact Manager



FINANCIAL CONTROLLER RENEE SCHOTT



APPENDIX FINANCIAL REPORT