



MANAGERS REPORT – AGM – 10th NOVEMBER 2021

This past year marking our 10th year that we have been serving our community was a mixed bag of ups and downs. Upon reflection 2020-2021 brings up feelings of being very proud and having a great sense of achievement, of continual problem solving, of being frustrated, challenged, feeling blessed to be part of an amazing growing team, welcoming new faces and saying goodbye to others. In gratitude to the people who worked alongside us and helped to get us through this challenging year, my report offers many thanks.

OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

In 2020 we were gifted with substantial help from federal and council COVID support grants and Jobkeeper payments and this saw an increase in our staff hours as a result propelling us into a new direction for the team. In October 2020 we changed our organisational structure to address a number of issues in overlapping roles and duties. We restructured to a Manager, Bookings Coordinator and a Volunteer Reception Team. This was a very large step for our centre after having just the one role of Centre Coordinator covering all bases for 9 years. In August 2021 we made another much needed change and further delegated the increasing bookkeeping side of the Managers Role to engage a Volunteer Bookkeeper. Thank you so much to Joyce for putting her hand up for this role.

The Bookings Coordinator position was initially made possible through a Subsidised Job Access Wage due to Alison Kendell being a mature aged worker. We were fortunate to secure a portion of Alison's wage through this subsidy until March 2021.

This assistance combined with the COVID assistance throughout 2020 and an increase in the centre hire for both regulars and event hires, saw us continue into 2021 fairly confidently even in the face of continued uncertainty surrounding COVID. We are very thankful to Alison for assisting in implementing a number of much needed changes, systems and procedures during her time here. With Alison's unfortunate resignation in May 2021, we saw a month and a half of temporarily returning to one role which was a very stressful and frustrating time for myself and our executive committee.

Thankfully, after over 100 applicants for the role, Clare Seibel was employed in June 2021 and has been such a wonderful addition to the team, taking the role by the horns and is exceeding expectations in all areas, with endless praise pouring in from our hirers and all that have had the opportunity to work with her. She did not begin in an easy period however. After two lockdowns and much fear from the community in being able to plan or book anything after Clare began in her role, we again saw an unfortunate reduction in income but this time were not bailed out this time by any financial assistance from our government or Council. A big thanks to Clare for her continued hard work in securing more bookings and bringing us back from a position of financial strain. Clare's vision for the future growth of our Bookings sector of the centre is precisely what is needed and set to be implemented in the new year.

Thank you so much to Doris for stepping in throughout the year whenever called upon, wearing one of her many hats here as our Relief Office Supervisor. It is of great comfort to know that we have such a knowledgeable, helpful and reliable back up for our staff at all times.

Thank you to our cleaner Kirsten Lynds who takes enormous pride in her work as our daily cleaner. Our staff/volunteers and hirers have certainly noticed the higher standard of cleaning that she is providing.

With much increased focus this year with a considerable amount of interviewing, meetings and training, I am very proud of the huge contributions now coming directly from our current receptionists and office volunteers. Our team grew significantly over the year and continues to do so with our front reception office and centre becoming a fun and busy hive of volunteer activity most days of the week. The connections being made and the skills being shared and learnt is really heartwarming to see. Our community has personally mentioned to me many times how wonderful our customer service is and how welcome they are made to feel upon entering and using our centre. This praise is very much owed to Andrea, Chris, Pam, Sue, Anne, Pep and Vivien for their very valued daily contributions to our centre and community. We certainly could not continue moving forward without their contributions.

Big thanks also to our centre, maintenance and gardening volunteers, Keren, Bruce, Gloria and Gary and Richard, your'e all contributing on a weekly basis to maintaining and improving a well looked after, welcoming space that we can be very proud of.

COMMUNITY WORK

In reflection of our community needs that emerged in the past year, we began in a space of heightened activity in terms of community development. With the Department of Education calling and flagging our area as a high risk area for vulnerable families. I was then involved as a representative of the centre in a working group to join all of the services, schools, kindys, playgroups and other support surrounding families in a combined effort to help our areas struggling families thrive. This was a worthwhile experience led by the Department of Ed. in local networking, forming partnerships and making each group/contact visible to the other. From this project, we were able to secure free counselling for families and parenting education workshops at the centre with Uniting Care for a period of 8 months. It is very unfortunate that we weren't able to continue to host UC to offer this valuable support but we felt unable to continue to provide an office space free of charge when our own staff were struggling to complete their work undistracted and Uniting Care were not willing to pay for anything for the space despite the need being very strong in our area. This exercise, even though it wasn't sustainable on our first attempt, proved not only the strong need for more support for vulnerable families in our direct area but also the convenience and familiarity for our community to access the support they need from our central community hub in particular. This area needs further discussion on other ways we might be able to bring the UC program or a similar service back in 2022.

In addition to Uniting Care, other valuable contacts were made or strengthened with the Pacific Paradise School, Mudjimba Kindy, Tadpoles, Good Start Early Learning and the Family Support Collective Group for the Sunshine Coast which I was invited to do a presentation of our centre and its needs at their monthly meeting. This initiated a series of meetings with service providers who held workshops and started regular drop in chats for our community at the centre in areas of family support and budgeting assistance for families. Unfortunately this has not taken off as of yet. The two visiting services, The Smith Family and Maroochy Neighbourhood Centre Family Support Program were started to partner in with the UC Counselling at the centre with the intention that the programs and chats would all bounce off each other in collaboration on a referral basis. Without UC now at the centre and a lack of other services frequenting the centre regularly, the visiting services creating a hub where our community could access support hasn't come into fruition as of yet.

The increase into Homelessness in our area and directly surrounding our centre led to a series of meetings and discussions which continue around what we could do to help out at a base level in

collaboration with direct homelessness service providers in Maroochydore. Whilst proper discussions around providing food as emergency relief to people in need as a bare minimum has not eventuated as of yet, we continue to offer a cuppa, a chat, a place to sit, phone use and referrals where possible. All issues raised surrounding our capacity to do more are valid concerns and further meetings are still needed with the right people to help us navigate a solution that hears and addresses all parties affected by this problem.

We hosted and were involved in a series of community meetings, workshops and events this year that opened up new partnerships and networks and also exposed our centre to many organisations and individuals who had not previously known about our centre. To mention just a few, the Mental Health Recovery Program for the 1 year Anniversary of the 2019 bushfires, Disaster Readiness Training for centres such as our that are classed as Evacuation Centres, the Loneliness Forum addressing social isolation and the Seniors Week Event encouraging healthy eating and lifestyles.

NSCC RUN PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Be Connected Program

In June 2021 we were successful in renewing our Be Connected Program, receiving a \$2500 grant to continue running the for seniors over the age of 55. Our digital mentor for this funded Good Things Foundation initiative, Doris, continues to work so hard in this program with amazing patience, kindness and dedication to the seniors participating. Doris has now taught over well over 100 seniors from our area one on one or in small groups in how to be connected online with loved ones and friends and in the basic use of their device. Through an additional \$1000 grant, Doris hosted her 3rd annual Get Online Week Event in October this year which was a great success. The combined grants not only cover Doris's wages in full, printing and photocopying expenses, they also included over \$1000 towards project management of the programs completed by myself and allowed us to purchase the WIFI printer for public use.

Social Computer Group

Numbers have ebbed and flowed throughout the year and those attending are always very appreciative of the help and support they are receiving. Big thanks to Robyn Harm for continuing to dedicate her time to teaching this fortnightly group the basic of computers and devices.

Playgroups

This was a big year for playgroups with our centre taking over the Mudjimba Nature Playgroup at the Mudjimba Community Hall. The members of this playgroup came to us in March 2021 concerned that the playgroup which is the longest running in our area was about to fold due to not having any parents stepping up to take on the role of running the group. This has always been an ongoing issue with volunteer parent run Playgroups. The NSCC Committee decided that due to the value this large and very popular playgroup brought to the areas families in providing opportunity for connections, that we should trial adding this playgroup with a paid coordinator to our NSCC run programs. We must give a big thank you to Suzi Gelling for all of her work in setting up these two playgroups for the benefit of our communities families, it was sad for all connected to see Suzi go. The group has now grown from strength to strength since taking over and both groups are now thriving under the direction of our newest team member, our Playgroup Coordinator Frances Van Grieken. The very generous sponsorship of this program by North Shore Realty and Maroochy North Shore Realty has made the outlay of Coordinators costs achievable and we are very appreciative of this ongoing support.

OFFICE LEASES

The Christian Community Church continue their office lease and have resigned for an additional year ending in July 2022. The CCC who only use the office space on a Thursday and Sunday agreed to share free of charge their space with Uniting Care for Counselling however this was turned down by UC due to space and aesthetic reasons.

The Seaside Shores Office beside the Church office is now completely utilised by myself and Clare as a much needed shared office space to work undistracted when our reception is being manned by our volunteers.

BOOKINGS

Due to the majority of our income being reliant on the room hire of our centre, COVID has made consistency and growth of the venue hire sector very difficult across the Coast.

Despite this, our centre achieved an increase in both regular and event room hire over the 20/21 financial year of approximately \$40,000. Imagine the increase we may have seen had COVID not interfered. I attribute the majority of this significant increase to having a dedicated Bookings Coordinator role to focus the attention needed on our number one source of income.

Whilst not in the last financial year it is also worth mentioning that despite being very fresh to the role and encountering more COVID challenges, Clare has managed to increase our regular hirers income for the period of Jul – Oct in comparison to last year and 2019. The income received from one-off events over this period compared to the same time last year and the year before has also increased.

Our total regular hirers at the date of this meeting stands at with 53 regular classes being offered to our community (an additional 36 (an additional 8 hirers and 4 new classes). We continue to juggle fitting everyone in during the peak time slots and find hirers willing to fill our quieter less popular times in the early afternoons.

GIVING BACK THIS YEAR

This year was further restricted in our ability to give back to the community more than any previous year. Our biggest event of the year, the annual North Shore Community Christmas Celebration was sadly cancelled in 2020 due to COVID for the first time in 8 years. As always however, as a community centre with “giving” and “providing opportunities for connections to be made” being at the very core of why we are here, we were still very proud to have made a difference in the following ways;

- We have supported over 10 different not for profit groups to run valuable community services or social groups with gold coin donation only bookings and the added support of coming under our public liability insurance banner for small low risk groups.
- We continue to support the not for profit organisation, University of the Third Age on a weekly basis with discounted room hire for the various educational classes for those over the age of 65.
- We support local organisations, the Twin Waters Residents Association, Pacific Paradise Progress Association, North Shore Jets and OSCAR with free monthly or quarterly meetings.
- We have supported hundreds of members of the general community and community groups with free printing, photocopying, laminating and phone access and laptop use where needed.
- We are an official sponsor (for donating the above services) for the North Shore Jets who held their Presentation here free of charge.
- We supported free of charge the Maroochy North Shore Lions with Australia Day Bush Poets Breakfast, Youth of the Year Event, Children of Courage and a Social trivia night.

- We have supported several artists, both individuals and groups, by hanging their works in our centre foyer and sponsoring art exhibition nights and days.

Giving the above support (even in a time of financial strain) to those who add value to our community and are not able to afford the full room hire charge or to those who continually support our centre financially is important. The above donations allowed us to encourage and allow opportunities for social connections and inclusion, healthy lifestyles, the growth of community collaboration and community participation. All high priorities for our centre. Having said this, in response to a drop in income, we also assessed and converted a number of “free” bookings to “gold coin donation” or full fee paying bookings moving forward.

This past year for all of the team at the NSCC has been quite the rollercoaster ride with times of wonderful highs, milestone moments and areas of great growth. Yet thrown in there to keep us on our toes were some significant and frustrating lows. These lows and challenges we encountered are important and not to be wasted, always providing an opportunity to reflect on our mistakes or weaknesses and strive to pivot and learn and grow a result. This is what our team has always done and will continue to do. The 10th Anniversary Celebration this year signified a very proud moment for the members of our team that have been here from the very beginning and continue to be here, through thick and thin, giving so much to their community.

On that note, we could not have got through this year without our wonderful outgoing management committee who all deserve a round of applause. In particular a big thank you to our very hardworking executive committee, Tony Brown as Treasurer, this year can't have been an easy one for you with our finances taking a big hit, not to mention the many other areas that you are called upon to offer support, advice and guidance to throughout the year but you continue to show up, smiles and jokes in tow, keeping us all positive, on track and moving forward. Joyce Peters, our Secretary & Bookkeeper, has taken on these two roles with an energy and enthusiasm that is very rare to see. Joyce dedicates so much of her time to getting our books accurate and in order, she is fast becoming the person who spends the most time in our offices out of the lot of us! We are so blessed that you now play a major part in the running of this centre.

Lastly, Richard Dennis, our extremely knowledgeable, skilled and incredibly energetic President since 2013. Richard just never stops! For his tireless work he was elected as Senior Citizen of the Year in the 2021 Australia Day Awards by our centre and although he didn't win this year, he is certainly our volunteer of the year and many of the previous years too. Thank you, Richard, for continuing to show up year after year and provide the steadfast leadership this community centre needs, now more than ever.

Thank you.

Shannon Embery

Manager