

# 2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT



COWRA INFORMATION &  
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC



# 2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ABN 37 152 608 106

---

## AGENDA

Friday 4th October 2024 at 10am  
Cowra Information & Neighbourhood Centre  
15 Vaux Street, Cowra, NSW 2794

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Confirm minutes of previous years AGM
4. Presentation of Chairpersons Report
5. Report from Treasurer
6. Board Elections
7. Welcome to the new Board
8. Appointment of Auditor and Accountant
9. Appointment of Public Officer
10. Presentation of CEO report
11. Thank you and closing



# BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

2023 - 2024



Nikki Kiss OAM

Chairperson  
Secretary



Alicia Ball

Vice Chairperson



Steve Moriarty

Treasurer



Marc Grant

Board Member



Esther Cutmore

Board Member



Lyn Beer

Board Member



Cheryl Speechley

Board Member



# STAFF

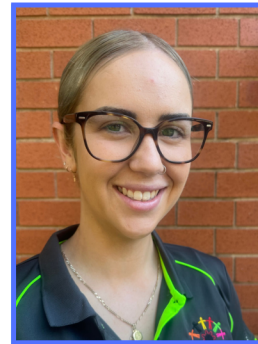
2023 - 2024



**Fran Stead**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Alison Cooper**  
Administrative Support



**Antonia Curtale**  
Disability Support Worker



**Bronwyn Sainsbury**  
Administration Officer



**Damien Benson**  
Disability Support Worker



**Danny Jackett**  
Team Leader Home  
Modifications & Maintenance



**Donnah Chown**  
Client Services Worker  
Family Support



**Hellen Horton**  
Youth Worker



**Jaeme Bird**  
Disability Support Worker



**Jessica Bateson**  
Receptionist



**Jess McLeish**  
Community Engagement



**Karen Pearson**  
Compliance Officer



# STAFF

2023 - 2024



**Maddie Brooks**  
Disability Support Worker



**Madelyn Stead**  
Community Engagement



**Marion Speechley**  
Team Leader  
Community Engagement  
& Disability Services



**Monique Gillespie**  
Receptionist



**Natalie Rush**  
Key Worker



**Nicollette Regan**  
Disability Support Worker



**Peter Van Dartel**  
Disability Support Worker



**Rebecca Bartle**  
Community Engagement Assistant  
& Disability Support Worker



**Renee Simpson**  
Aboriginal Community  
Engagement Officer



**Sandra Conway**  
Community Support



**Sarah Taylor**  
Disability Support  
Worker



**William Ingram**  
Aboriginal Community  
Engagement Officer





Cowra Information &  
Neighbourhood Centre

## OUR VISION

" Locals Supporting Locals "

## OUR MISSION

To empower people and our community to grow and celebrate diversity, to be safe and connected.  
To provide services, information, advocacy and referral to all our communities, focusing on the people who are vulnerable, isolated or at risk.

# CINC MEMBERS

2023 - 2024

The Board of Management and Staff would like to thank all of our wonderful members for their ongoing support of our projects within the Cowra Community.

Ball, Alicia	Maloney, Greg
Beale, Lewis	McAlister, Robyn
Beer, Lynette	McGrath, Lesley
Bryant, Leticia	Mewburn, Robert
Budge, Chris	Miller, Sandra
Budge, Kay	Moriarty, Judith
Burton, Kasey	Moriarty, Stephen
Close, Vicki	Nichols, Rosalie
Cole, Paul	O'Brien, Lynette
Cultmore, Esther	Painter, Julie
Delphin, Christopher	Russell, Terence
Delphin, Theresa Joy	Ryan, Nakeya
Feltham, Coral	Ryan, Thomas
Foster, John	Smith, Janet
Giallourakis, Theodore	Speechley, Cheryl
Grant, Marc	Steen, Leona
Grout, Dorothy	Stone, Robert
Guihot, Robyn	Terelinck, Diane
Hackney, Valerie	Toohey, Jodie-Lee
Hampton, Sandra	Vale, Lucille
Kirkwood, Douglas	Vial, Kerry
Kiss, David	
Kiss, Nicole OAM	
Langfield, Wendy	

Why do we need members?

By having a strong membership we are able to actively display that we are supported by all sections of the Cowra Community. Being a member is a great way to keep in touch with what is happening in our community.

Interested in becoming a member?

Please contact Admin on (02) 6340 1100.

# CINC VOLUNTEERS

## Roll of Honour

2023 -2024

The Board of Management and Staff would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for their ongoing support of our projects within the Cowra Community.

Ball, Alicia Maree  
Beale, Lewis  
Beer, Lyn  
Bryant, Leticia  
Burton, Kasey  
Budge, Chris  
Cutmore, Esther  
Grant, Marc  
Hackney, Valerie  
Kiss, Nicole OAM  
Moriarty, Steven  
Quinn, Darren  
Smith, Janet  
Speechley, Cheryl  
Steen, Leona  
Stone, Rob  
Toohey, Jodie-Lee  
Vial, Kerry

Why do we need volunteers?

By having volunteers, we are able to actively display that we are supported by all sections of the Cowra Community. Being a volunteer is a great way to give a helping hand in our community.

Interested in becoming a volunteer?

Please contact Admin on (02) 6340 1100.



**Volunteers do not necessarily have  
the time; they just have the heart.**

— Elizabeth Andrew



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Midway through our 2023/24 year, I was given the opportunity to step up from the role of Vice Chairperson to Acting Chairperson due to the retirement of long-standing board member and Chairperson Mr Chris Budge. I would like to acknowledge Chris for his many years of dedication to CINC and wish him well on retirement. His community-focused nature has left a legacy on all those fortunate to be on his Board.

CINC's services continue to thrive due to the commitment of our CEO Fran Stead and her team of staff and volunteers. It is evident that Fran has selected the very best to be CINC representatives. Our collective success is owed to the fact that every individual has their heart in CINC. You have my deepest respect.

This year has seen CINC receive grant funding for the Justice Reinvestment Project – the result of years of collaboration and community consultation, not to underestimate the determination of CEO Fran to bring it to realisation. 2023/24 saw CINC receive 100% compliance in its NDIS Audit, which was a true credit to the way we provide our services.

We have seen major infrastructure growth - both in the development of our new community building at the rear of our property at 11 Vaux St and the purchase of our new property at 7 Vaux Lane. These will serve to future-proof CINC to ensure that we can continue to cater for the growing needs and expectations of our community.

Our clients continue to be our most valuable commodity. They are the reason behind our passion! Locals Supporting Locals is something we take great pride in.

As a Board, we believe that challenges are an opportunity for consolidation, learning, and redevelopment. Our focus is on strategic direction – we are giving greater consideration given to why we do things the way we do. We continue to challenge our way of thinking to ensure our community receives the standard of service it deserves. Having new and diverse members on our CINC Board has been invaluable in ensuring that fresh views are given to old ideals.

I would like to thank my fellow Board of Management for extending me the opportunity to step into the role of Chairperson for the last 6 months. Your faith in my ability to govern fairly and effectively has been greatly welcomed. I look forward to walking beside you as we seek to continually improve CINC.

Nikki Kiss OAM  
Acting Chairperson - CINC

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

I am honoured to present my report for 2024. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our incredible board and staff. Your unwavering dedication and hard work have been the cornerstone of our success during this hectic year. The demands on our services and everyone's individual growth do not go unnoticed. Each of you shows incredible teamwork and jump in where needed to make everything look easy. Your efforts are sincerely appreciated and valued.

I thought long and hard about including the next paragraph, and if I am being genuine, it needs to be included as it has taken its toll and used up lots of energy.

The past six months have been a significant challenge with turbulence, as we grappled with the complexities of implementing a new program. Some days have been more demanding than others, but our resilience and unwavering commitment have been genuinely inspiring despite our obstacles.

My word of 2024 was "willpower", and the statement "the standard we walk past is the standard we accept". This year, I have needed to draw on executing willpower to keep my head in the game and my ego in check; I required the willpower to restrain myself when I wanted to shout out in anger. On many occasions, we have also called out bad behaviour, as CINC has no place for this. We are entitled to feel valued and safe like any other workplace. I also thought, what type of leader would I be if I only shared the wins? Reflecting and being honest is how we grow and become better leaders. If we pretend the world has no obstacles, we give a false narrative about our year.

Our community has faced significant financial hardship, deeply affecting many members. We have strengthened our advocacy efforts in response, ensuring we speak out against injustices. Our commitment to being a strong voice for our community, standing firm in our support and upliftment of those in need, remains unwavering. We understand the challenges and are committed to addressing them, ensuring our community feels valued and supported.



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Each day, we look forward to seeing who walks through the doors, who will share their stories with us, and who will trust us to help them. Trust is the most significant gift for all people. This trust fuels our mission, and we truly appreciate all who put their faith in Team CINC, even if it is just for a cup of coffee; it all matters.

Part of our growth has been in programs we deliver within schools; we are so grateful for donations from Cowra Rotary that allowed us to target younger students.

This has also been a massive year of study; I'm nearly there, I keep telling myself! My master's is almost finished, and I am unsure what to do with all my spare time.

For a fleeting moment, I found myself looking at what to study next, and then I thought about all the other things I could be doing with my spare 20 hours per week, lol.

THANK YOU to my husband, who has always taken a back seat and let me give CINC and UNI my all. His unwavering support and understanding have been my rock, and I am truly grateful for this.

This year, I have asked myself many questions and been asked by my family: Why do we do what we do? The answer is simple: We each have a purpose, and part of my purpose is to try and make a difference. We cannot just keep going as we do; our world is changing, and we must fight for change and equality. Together, we will continue to overcome challenges and make a positive impact

Team CINC will continue to grow and serve our community to the best of our ability. As we live here, we all wish to make a difference.

Big love, Fran xx

Fran Stead  
Chief Executive Officer

## OUR YEAR IN PICTURES





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NAIDOC celebrations started with flag raising at Squire Park then 500 people marching together to River Park. Everyone then headed to PCYC for the family fun day. We held cultural workshops and had many service providers and great activities for everyone to enjoy. We were entertained by Plus One and enjoyed a wonderful BBQ lunch with Rapid Relief.



Our school holiday activities have varied throughout the year including water colour workshop, movies, lego, skin care and makeup, arts and crafts and cultural painting workshops.



Our Youth Engagement Program have continued with workshops in tie dying, lego, painting, cooking, makeup workshop, diamond art, gardening and more. The kids love making friends and learning new skills.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We held our first Women's Health Week Trivia Evening with the lovely Jen Shady as guest speaker and quiz master. We all learnt a lot and acknowledge women's health and the importance to take the time to look after ourselves.



Playgroups are held every Wednesday and Thursday during school terms. Each week there are lots of fun activities and social interaction for the children and parents/carers. An opportunity to explore different sensory, creative, imaginative, fine and gross motor activities. Playgroup provides the opportunity for children to play, learn, participate and enjoy new activities. Parent/carers form friendships and can support each other with sharing ideas.



Children's week was celebrated with family and friends at PCYC. Everyone enjoyed the jumping castle, face painting, tattoos, playdough, cookie decorating and a lunch together. The theme was "Children have the right to relax, play and take part in activities they enjoy".



Fun Friends, Friends for Life, Friends Youth and Rage programs have been running in our local schools. All have had great participation and outcomes with great reports back from all schools who are now wanting to continue the programs for the wellbeing of the students



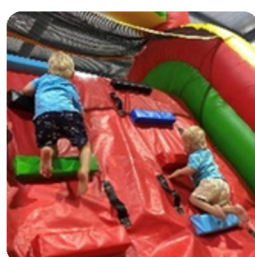
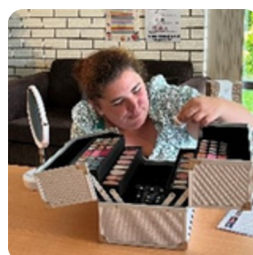
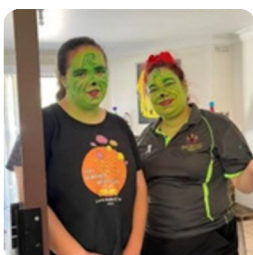


# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

International Day of People with Disability was celebrated with a Fun Day at River Park. A great day with the opportunity to connect with friends while enjoying a BBQ lunch. There were lots of activities, goody bags and service providers ensuring everybody had an enjoyable day.



We love Christmas at CINC. It's such a beautiful time of year for people to come together. We held a community luncheon at the Cowra Bowling Club with 180 community members chatting, laughing and connecting while enjoying a meal together. We had our winter wonderland at the Cowra Christmas Festival at Squire Park with Santa photos and lots of activities and fun for all the family. And lastly we celebrated with our playgroup and Stewart Street families.





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We were joined at our International Women's Day Event by 40 + incredible women for a beautiful floral arrangement workshop with young florist Ella, owner of Designed to Bloom, and afternoon tea. Lots of chatter, laughter and creativity with everyone taking home a beautiful bunch of flowers.



Our wonderful seniors enjoyed a lovely High Tea with friends, great food and laughter. The room was buzzing with chatter and lots of smiling faces.



This years the theme for Harmony Day was 'Everyone Belongs'. A luncheon was held to celebrate and recognise Australia's diversity bringing people together from different backgrounds. Harmony Day is about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone, something that CINC promotes everyday.



CINC held a Candlelight Vigil to honour the 36 women and children who had lost their lives to violence by 2 May 2024. So many people came together to show their respect and bring awareness to this national crisis.





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

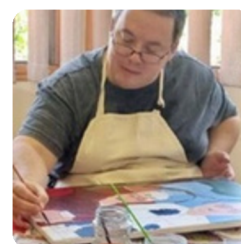
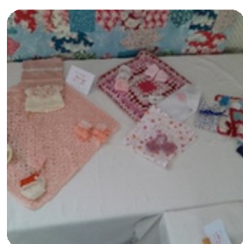
We celebrated family diversity & connection at our Willy Wonka Families Week event held at the Cowra PCYC with our incredible community. A great day for people to come together and celebrate all families and connect with our community.



CINC have celebrated many events at our Community Morning Teas and in our Community including: Closing the Gap, R U OK, Jeans for Genes, Wear it Purple, Pink Ribbon Day, White Ribbon, Biggest Morning Tea, Reconciliation week, we held raffles and raised awareness for these great causes. We have been entertained by our friends at Cowra Public School on a regular basis.



Our regular weekly and fortnightly groups Chances Clothes Project, Knitting and Art Group are not only great creative experience for people but also a fantastic social network. These groups are attracting lots of new people, young and old. Social connection is so important for health and wellbeing.



**Marion Speechley**  
Team Leader  
Community Engagement & Disability Service



# JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Finally, JR is here. We have spent the last 4 months networking and introducing ourselves to the wider community. We have continually engaged with the primary and high schools, students and teachers Including Mulyan, Cowra Public, St Raphaels, Holman Place, Holmwood Public and Cowra High.



We have been attending regular meetings relevant to the JR project including fortnightly community meetings with community members, local stakeholders and the local youth. These meeting have provided an opportunity for our community to contribute their thoughts, ideas and opinions on the direction of Justice Reinvestment. PACC meetings and visits to the station have provided insightful information on custody procedures, and support group training for local community members who wish to support Aboriginal youth when they are taken into custody. The local interagency has a good network of information held bi-monthly at the local library.



Training and professional development have been a part of our engagements over the last few months. We attended Accidental Counsellor training run by Lifeline. Binaal Billa held a seminar on legislation change and AVOs and Family Law changes. We were invited to spend a day in Wagga attending training in junior Love Bites which will be facilitated at the local high school in term 3.



**Renée Simpson and William Ingram**  
Aboriginal Community Engagement Officer

# COMMUNITY & FAMILIES FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre - Family Support is committed to providing families and young people the skills to cope with the challenges of family life, to promote development, wellbeing and community engagement.

During the financial year 2023 – 2024 we provided services to 103 families, currently engaging with 38 families.

We provide advice and referral, home visiting, linking families to appropriate services, parenting and support groups, programs to assist with their knowledge and growth, community activities and events.

We assisted families in Cowra, Canowindra, Grenfell and the surrounding areas. CINC Family Support assists families, families who require family group conferences – FGC, families who are carers of children, grand children, foster children as well as foster carers, children court clinician assessments or appointments.

We are grateful to Second Bite Coles and Woolworths for their continual support to our community and families, without this support families and community would find more pressure on their finances, thank you your support is greatly appreciated.

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre- Family Support offered the following Programs for families/carers and Children in 2023-2024.

**Triple P – Positive Parenting Program** is a multi-level system of family intervention for parents/care givers, aiming to promote positive, caring relationships between parents and their children, to help parents develop effective management strategies for dealing with a variety of childhood behaviour problems and common developmental issues.

Triple P is a scientifically researched program run around the world, the evidence shows it helps parents feel more confident, less stressed, less angry, and less depressed.

Triple P Programs available are Group Triple P children aged 2-12 years, Stepping Stones Primary, Children with Disabilities, Stepping Stones Seminars, Children with Disabilities, Teen Triple P.

Group Triple P 2023- 2024 we had 15 Families Complete the Program.

**Out of the Dark** is a program for women who have experienced domestic and family abuse – Emotional, Financial, Sexual, Social, Physical, Religious abuse. The program helps Women to make informed choices, understand domestic and family violence, regain control of their lives, and know the options and support available for them.

Participants learn the different types of family violence, the cycle of violence, myths and facts about family violence, power and control in abusive relationships and safety planning.

We had 6 People complete Out of the Dark in 2023 - 2024

## COMMUNITY & FAMILIES FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

**Black Box** is a 5-session group program, 5 individual phone sessions for parents who have experienced family violence and/or other trauma.

Each session gives parents and carers the opportunity to think about how they interact with their children in a supportive non-blaming way. It has been designed for parents to reflect on how past events might be affecting their parenting, including information on the effects of trauma on the brain and how activities like play offer the opportunity to repair attachment bonds, some of the common parenting strategies, understanding that these need to be built on the foundation of a strong attachment in any relationship.

Black Box Parenting is about understanding a bit more about how past things that have happened to us and to our children and how this affects how we get along as a family today, is interested in how the past might be affecting us RIGHT NOW. These five sessions are not intended to teach you everything about being a parent, only to begin to understand a bit more about us and our children and the way we interact with each other.

For some parents, who have themselves experienced trauma, sitting in a parenting group can be challenging. It is widely acknowledged that children do better with fair, predictable limits but a history of family violence or trauma can make setting these limits seem like an impossible and demoralising task, our goal is to assist families to implement successful strategies and to be united as a family.

We had 10 families complete Black Box Parenting in 2023 - 2024

**Shark Cage** is an eight week evidence based program, exploring common types of abuse that women experience and how this abuse relates to violations in human rights. This program is relevant for women who have experienced more than one instance of abuse in their lives and may have begun to internalise social messages of victim blaming.

Shark Cage is a way of preventing and understanding violence against girls and women. It draws on powerful metaphor, multiple psychological modalities for working in trauma informed ways to empower girls and women.

Shark Cage covers 5 steps, Introducing the Shark Cage Metaphor, Renovating the Shark Cage, Fixing the Shark Cage Alarm, Defending the Shark Cage, Recognising Sharks and Dolphins.

The program objectives are to increase knowledge in healthy & unhealthy relationships, capacity to set boundaries, in assertive communication, awareness of the impacts of abuse, ability for self-care & kindness, connection to feelings, sense of self-worth, connection to body, belief in entitlement to human rights, ability to recognise a potentially abusive or exploitive person and to decrease any feelings of self-blame for abuse, this is an 8 week program.

We had 6 Ladies complete the program in 2023 - 2024



# COMMUNITY & FAMILIES

## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

**LOVE BiTES** is a Respectful Relationships Education Program for young people aged 15-17 years. It consists of two interactive workshops: one on Relationship Violence, and one on Sex and Relationships, followed by creative workshops. Love Bites aims to provide young people with a safe environment to examine, discuss and explore respectful relationships. All LOVE BiTES programs are strength-based approach and views young people as active participants who are able to make choices for themselves and their relationships when supported with information and opportunity for skill development.

The overall aims of the programming are to equip young people with the knowledge needed to have respectful relationships, encourage, and develop their skills in critical thinking and assist them in being able to problem solve and communicate effectively. When equipped in these areas, NAPCAN and Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre believes that young people can make the right choices for themselves and their relationships that are free from violence and abuse.

We have facilitated LOVE BiTES at Cowra High, Canowindra High, Henry Lawson High School Grenfell, St Raphael's Cowra, all together we have facilitated LOVE BiTES to 256 Students within our area.

### Professional Development

Here at CINC, professional development for staff ensures we have the most up to date knowledge and skills to best suit the needs of our clients. This year we have participated in training via zoom, webinars and attended conferences.

### Committees and Groups

We are involved in the Cowra Domestic and Family Violence Committee.

#### Family Support Canowindra

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support is committed to providing families and young people in Canowindra the skills to cope with the challenges of family life, to promote development, wellbeing and community engagement.

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support provides advice and referral, home visiting, linking families to appropriate services, programs.

In Canowindra we facilitate LOVE BiTES at Canowindra High,

We do one on one programs if the family is unable to attend in Cowra for Group Programs.

We have supported 1 Family in Canowindra in 2023 - 2024

#### Family Support Koorawatha

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support is committed to providing families and young people in Koorawatha the skills to cope with the challenges of family life, to promote development, wellbeing and community engagement.

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support provides advice and referral, home visiting, linking families to appropriate services, programs- usually one on one if the family are unable to attend for Group Programs, we do this in their home or the local school which has been very supportive.

We have supported 2 Families in Koorawatha in 2023 - 2024

# COMMUNITY & FAMILIES FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

## Family Support Grenfell

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support is committed to providing families and young people in Grenfell the skills to cope with the challenges of family life, to promote development, wellbeing and community engagement.

Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre Family Support provides advice and referral, home visiting, linking families to appropriate services and programs. We facilitate LOVE BiTES at Henry Lawson High School.

We do programs, usually one on one if the family are unable to attend for Group Programs, we do this in their home, we do the Friends Program at the Grenfell Public School as a group.

We have supported 1 Family in Grenfell in 2023-2024.

**The Friends Program** helps people of all ages build resilience, confidence, and emotional wellbeing which improves learning and social outcomes in schools, families and work settings. Friends Resilience offers four programs, Fun Friends (Age 4-7, Positive Social Development), Friends for Life (Age 8-11, Inspiring Confidence & Emotional Strength), My Friends Youth (Age 12-15 Building Positive Peer & Relationships) and Adults Resilience (Age 16 – 18+, Resilience Programs for all Adults). The group was run at Cowra Public School, Grenfell Public School, St Raphael's Catholic School and Mulyan Public School. The program can also implement one on one with children, young adults.

## Partnerships

As a frontline service for children and families in need we work closely with other service providers to ensure positive outcomes for our families. We would like to thank Department of Communities and Justice – Family and Community Services NSW - Housing NSW, Cowra Public School, Mulyan Public School, Holmwood Public School, Holman Place, Cowra Early Childhood Services, Yalbillunga Boori Day Care Centre, Good Start Early Learning, Nurture One, Cowra Mobile Preschool, Housing Plus, Mission Australia, Cowra Social Workers, Psychologist and Doctors Surgeries, Salvation Army, St Vincent DePaul, Community Chest, Westnet - phone, Headspace, ROCP solicitors, Legal Aid, Cowra Court House, Cowra Police, Wesley Centre Food Hall, Canowindra Community Health, Canowindra High School, Cowra High School, St Raphael's Catholic School, Henry Lawson High School Grenfell, Cowra Mental Health, Cowra Community Health, Community Transport, Relationships Australia – Mediation, NDIS – Social Futures, Barnardos, NILS loans, CentreCare Specialists – Homelessness, Staying Home Leaving Violence, Barnardos, Cowra Community Enterprises, RDA Shop.

**Donnah Chown**  
**Family Support Worker**

# YOUTH CONNECT

This has been another big month. A lot of programs running in partnership with other CINC programs as well as partnerships with PCYC and the schools.

The Drop In Afternoons at PCYC of a Tuesday were a big success. Snr Const Andrew Buchtmann, Jeff Taylor, Danielle Ingram, William Ingram and myself all supervised these events and many young people attended. Sadly this will not be running term 3 as we will not have enough supervision, but hopefully we can kick it off again term 4. Fit for Life continues strong at PCYC with Bushy, Jeff, Percy, Will and myself also.

The RAGE program at Cowra High with the girls group finished up at the end of the term. This was a successful group as the insights and analysis of behaviours was mind-blowing. The girls have asked that we have catch up groups every few weeks as a check in with how they are going with RAGE concepts and as this is a great idea we are going to roll with it with Cowra Highs blessing.

Youth Justice Conferences are growing in numbers again as they are a successful way to keep some charges from reaching the courts as well as giving the young person insight into how the victims were impacted. I will be overseeing the outcome plans of 4 YJC's in the next 3 months.

We have started another strong alliance with Ted Noff's rehabilitation in Canberra. They are running both a physical and phone program that involve quite a few Cowra kids past and present in our program. They are good people and we look forward to having a strong partnership and great success rate with our shared kids well into the future. All the schools are still amazing, engagement stays high and interest in engagement ever-present. Can not fault any of the schools as they are very keen to have us on site and with their young people.

Grateful on so many levels to still be here, still see the good, still walking beside these young people. While they are moving forward, the time the individual journey takes does not matter. We are with them. They are important. They matter. With genuine thanks, there are not enough words.



**Hellen Horton**  
Youth Worker



# HOME MODIFICATIONS & MAINTENANCE

2023 /2024 has presented the Home Modification and Maintenance service with a mix of challenges. The high demand for builders and associated trades has made managing wait times and securing quotes for recommended modifications a challenge and added to the operating pressures being put on builders and associated trades

The progressive changes in relation to the new Aged Care Act and how Aged Care services are expected to engage with clients in response to the Aged Care Royal Commission recommendations are keeping the HMM staff busy.

The staged introduction of the new Aged Care Program ( the Support at Home Program ) commenced in 2024 it has started for Home Care Package provider and will to continue through to 2030 – CHSP providers have been advised that these service will transition to the Support at Home Program ( SaHP) after 2027.

Information on the Support at Home programs can be found online at.  
<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/support-at-home/about>

David Buttenshaw the HMM services Nominated Work Supervisor and Grenfell builder has continued to assist the HMM services during 2024, he was planning to retire at the beginning of 2024 but the demand for builders has seen him stay on for the balance of this year. (2024)

The rapid and consistent increase in material costs along combined with the shortage of building materials is presenting its own challenges. The need to provide quotes and costing to clients' months in advance being particularly difficult, more so when the approval to commence work can take many months.

The Occupational Therapists that work with the HMM service are facing the similar challenges with high demands for their services resulting in long wait times for O.T assessments and reports.

Referrals to the service have been consistent and the service receives new referrals for yard and home maintenance and modifications work on a weekly basis. The Neighbourhood Centre has been successful in securing additional recurrent funding for the Home Maintenance side of the service.

The additional funding has allowed the HMM service to accept the bulk of the new referrals from the My Aged Care portal. To manage this increase in workload we have engaged a number of additional home and yard maintenance contractors to aid the HMM services' new participants.

There have also been changes to how the existing My Aged Care Program operates with monthly statistical reporting being mandatory and the allocation of funding being made in arrears. ( i.e. after the work has been completed )

# HOME MODIFICATIONS & MAINTENANCE

440 request for assistance from other agencies -NDIS, Home Care Package managers, and DVA , Country Care for yard maintenance clients . The service provided approximately 1, 294 hours of support for these clients.

72 referrals were received for Home Modifications of those:  
25 were for Aged Care clients.

The value of work completed for clients referred by My Aged Care clients was approximately \$ 41,171.00

37 requests for assistance were received for Full Cost recovery modifications work from other agencies - SASH, NDIS, Veterans Affairs, Insurance and Home Care Package clients.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for the support, assistance, and good humour that the Board of Management, Chief Executive Officer, Staff and volunteers of the Neighbourhood Centre have provided across the last 12 months. In December 2023 a long serving member of the Neighbourhood Centre and the HMM office retired, and we bid fair well to Diana Broeksema.

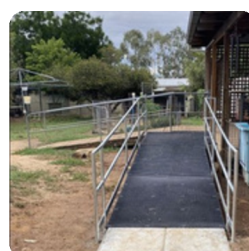
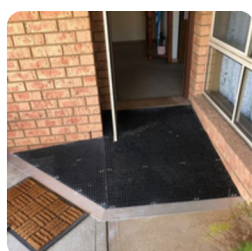
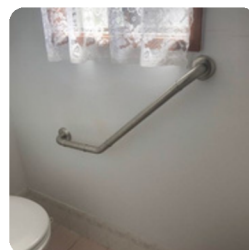
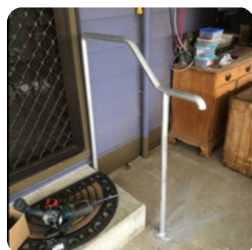
Alison Cooper has joined the HMM and CINC team and has managed the steep learning curve very effectively and efficiently.

I would also like to acknowledge the builders, the trades people and the Handymen / lawn mowing contractors who work with the service and provide such essential support to our clients and their carers.

In the period from July 2023 to end of June 2024 the service received:

758 Request for assistance from existing CHSP Aged Care home and yard maintenance clients. The service provided approximately 1,999 .00 hours of support. The value of completed works for CHSP yard maintenance clients is approximately \$ 123,470.00

Photos Below of completed work.





# CAPACITY BUILDING EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

During the last 12 months our key worker model of therapy delivery has seen some changes. CINC now offers a therapy assistant model of therapy to support children and families to access and receive the specialised therapies needed.

CINC therapy assistant currently supports 22 children and families. The program is well supported by allied health professionals and providers independent of CINC and our program would not be possible without their support. We wish to thank Karen Trengrove (Learn2Communicate, Speech Pathology), Amy Hointink (The Orange Spot, Speech Pathology), UMBO (online Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology), and Rachel Dewhurst, (Canobolas Kids Health, Occupational Therapy) for their collaboration and supervision to ensure all therapy delivered by our therapy assistants is relevant, appropriate and strengths-based for the children we work with. It is a privilege to work with you all. Your passion and dedication are evident in your work.

One service I would like to make special mention of is SEED Paediatric Services from Orange NSW. SEED was supporting over 15 families in Cowra to receive high-quality occupational therapy that supported children with autism, ADHD/ADD, and adverse childhood events and trauma to name a few. Their core values of love and respect matched the CINC therapy assistant values and aligned with CINC's relationship-based model of therapy delivery. Sadly, due to circumstances out of our control, SEED ceased services in Cowra in April 2024. We do hope to pick up this relationship again in the future. All children who access therapy assistant support receive annual support plans to ensure these are relevant to the needs of the child. Therapy goals and strategies used to support are reviewed monthly or per term depending on the needs of the child and are done with the allied health professional, families, and child where appropriate.

Professional development was a highlight this year with the opportunity to attend Trauma-Sensitive Practice training with Kim Barthel. Kim is a world-renowned therapist, teacher, and speaker on topics such as developing self-awareness, compassion, and healthy relationships. She is passionate about understanding complex behaviour, attachment, and more. To hear her speak was a career-altering experience. Additionally, CINC now has a trained facilitator of Circle of Security which supports families to recognise the importance of attachment and secure relationships with caregivers.

Some challenges these past twelve months include delays in funding reviews for children who have had their National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plans rolled over for the third year in a row without review, and others given short notice to prove eligibility. Changes in therapists either leaving the profession or having long wait lists are challenging to ensure consistency of approach and delivery. And, like last year, we have found recruiting quality employees to meet the demanding needs of those on our waitlist.

By offering extensive support to children and families, adapting to challenges, and continually enhancing service delivery through partnerships and professional development, CINC aims to establish itself as a preferred provider in our community. We remain steadfast in our commitment to connecting children and families with providers dedicated to the high standards of service quality we uphold.



**Natalie Rush**  
Early Intervention Key Worker

# AFTERNOON GROUPS FOR YOUTH ACCESSING NDIS SUPPORTS

The Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centre provides After School Group Activities from their Stewart Street residence for school aged participants 7 to 18 years of age. These groups support individuals accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) with a supported, safe and engaging environment to develop various skills, including social and emotional, communication, motor skills, independence and community participation.

Through the Afternoon Group Program participants are empowered and supported to practice daily living skills, develop healthy relationships and social skills, increase emotional regulation and stress management strategies and explore their world through multi-model activities and experiences. Participants are supported to develop skills for increased community participation and develop their sense of well-being within a small group setting.

Strategies to support participants to work toward their individual NDIS goals are implemented by Support Workers within the program allowing practice of skills through the use of modelling, individual practice and coaching and embedding activities within real world games/activities/play in a fun, supportive and understanding environment. Strategies and information to support participants is sourced from initial interviews with families/care givers, therapists, assessments, and the individuals themselves.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building for parents/carers is also nurtured as information and support and is provided outside of the Afternoon Group Program in the form of:

- Information regarding local and tele-health therapeutic services is sourced and provided to ensure choice and control and best fit for our participants and their families/carers
- Information regarding community organisations and activities is provided on-going to foster connection to community and develop community engagement
- We have a fully functioning tele-health room located within the building for participants to access with a Support Worker to oversee and implement strategies within their natural environments
- Access to support for family members through the Cowra Information and Neighbourhood Centres various programs ensures a holistic approach for the whole family.

## SUPPORT WORKER INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT – Tele-Health Support

Due to limited Therapy Services in Cowra and its surrounds we have had to look for alternate ways to support our families and participants to access the therapy supports they require while waiting for face-to-face services. We have been fortunate enough to link some of our participants with a tele-health service and our dedicated and experienced support workers are supporting families and participants with this service. We have a fully functioning Tele-health room set up at our Stewart St residence and we are currently supporting 3 participants via our Stewart St residence to access this service.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All our Support Workers are highly skilled and trained with a commitment to on-going Personal Development. Support Workers hold a Certificate 3 or higher in Individual Support and have completed their NDIS Worker Orientation Certificate. Upcoming training includes Report and Document Writing.



# AFTERNOON GROUPS FOR YOUTH ACCESSING NDIS SUPPORTS

Our afternoon groups have been working on their NDIS goals each week. Lasting friendships have been made. Our participants continue to work hard on their social and communication skills. It is wonderful watching their confidence grow, show empathy for their peers and managing emotions.

Our activities each afternoon incorporate fine and gross motors skill, sensory activities, imaginative play, exercise while having fun, problem solving responsibly, patience and so much more.

We are so fortunate to have Young Conservatorium of Music join us for Music therapy sessions. This has been amazing for the participants providing sensory stimulation and helps improve physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing.

We are constantly amazed and proud by the growth we are seeing in every one of our participants.





# AFTERNOON GROUPS FOR YOUTH ACCESSING NDIS SUPPORTS



Marion Speechley  
Team Leader  
Community Engagement & Disability Service



## DAY PROGRAM FOR NDIS PARTICIPANTS

Another fantastic year for the Stewart Street Gang Day Program participants setting and achieving their goals, learning new skills to build independence and experiencing new things.

Goal setting is an important factor in our disability service. Participants are continuing to work on their independent living skills. The gang do everyday chores like shopping, cooking, laundry, washing up, vacuuming, sweeping, cleaning the pool and helping in the garden. Participants are independently, and with support cooking meals for their families and as a group are choosing a nutritious recipe, writing a shopping list, shopping, preparing, cooking and cleaning up while working together as a group.

The group have worked hard on their social and communication skills to build strong relationships and friendships at CINC and in the community. Participants attend lots of events including Families Week, Biggest Morning Tea, NAIDOC, International Day of People With Disability, Christmas parties and community morning teas to name a few.

The gang have performed as a group and individually at the Cowra Eisteddfod spending many hours rehearsing. It was a wonderful day with smiles all round. A big step out of their comfort zone for those performing in solo's and duo. The group Latin dance lessons in Canowindra, so much fun and lots of laughs.

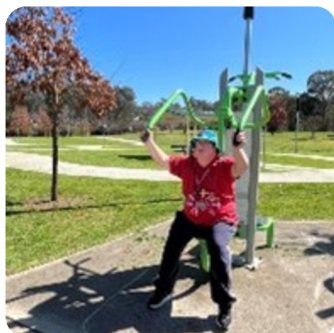
The gang enjoy being involved in our local community walking and exercising daily, playing tennis, indoor activities at Cowra PCYC, movies at Cowra Civic Centre, picnicking at Cowra Japanese Garden and visiting our library, art gallery and many local shops.

Some of our participants have enjoyed weekends away going bowling, fishing, movies and Dubbo zoo.





# DAY PROGRAM FOR NDIS PARTICIPANTS



Marion Speechley  
Team Leader  
Community Engagement & Disability Service



# GRENFELL OUTREACH

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

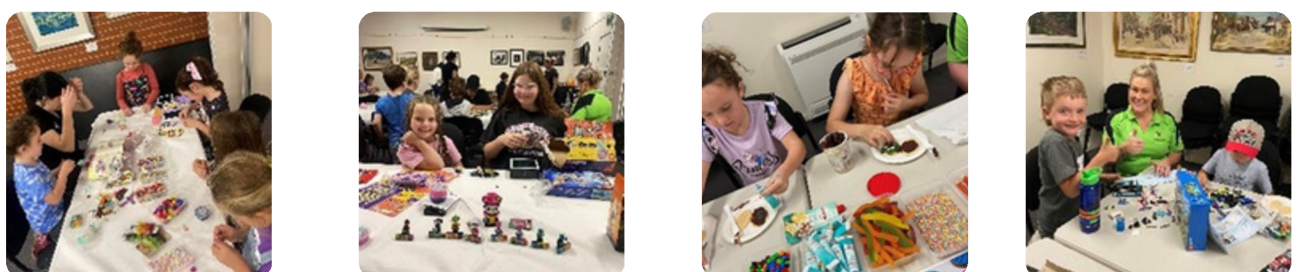
CINC ran the Fun Friends program at Grenfell Public School. The program helps build the social and emotional skills of young children by using fun, play-based activities. The children engaged in the program with great outcomes and reports back from the school.

Grenfell playgroup continues to run every second Tuesday. Our Grenfell families enjoy playgroup indoors at the Grenfell Hub and occasionally at a local park. The playgroup is a great opportunity for the children to play and learn. Parents/carers have the chance to play with and interact with their children whilst meeting other parents/carers sharing experiences and forming lasting friendships.

We held events for Christmas and Families Week such a lovely time to celebrate with our families.



During school holidays in Grenfell we held workshops in succulent planting, soap making, lego, cookie decorating, craft, painting and games. A great fun way to catchup and meet new friends. So many beautiful kids enjoying a morning of activities.

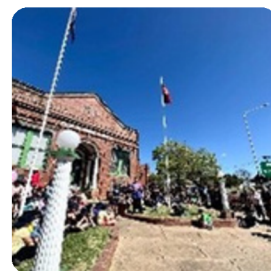




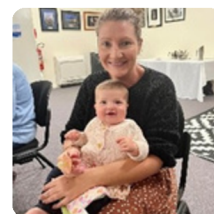
# GRENFELL OUTREACH

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & FAMILY SUPPORT

CINC joined Grenfell again for their NAIDOC celebrations with tattoos, face painting, sensory play and goodies to take home. It was such a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful day full of community spirit.



CINC held a community High Tea at the Grenfell Hub. The room was buzzing with conversation and laughter. From 6 months old to 94 years young everyone enjoyed the great company, food and friendship.



**Marion Speechley**  
Team Leader  
Community Engagement & Disability Service



# CINC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS COWRA VIOLENCE PROTECTION NETWORK

The Cowra Violence Prevention Network Committee convenes monthly at the Cowra Information & Neighbourhood Centre, the primary goal is to educate the community and schools about Family and Domestic Violence, including its effects on families, children, and the broader community.

We do this by Facilitating the LOVE BiTES Program, this is designed as a Respectful Relationship Program, adhering to the highest standards for educational programs as suggested by the Federal Government funded Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearing House and other leading academics in the field of violence against women.

LOVE BiTES is primarily for young people aged 11 to 17, delivered during school hours with teachers or social workers in attendance to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the program, allowing them to support students throughout the year to make informed choices regarding healthy relationships.

In 2024, the LOVE BiTES Program expanded to include Years 7, 8, 9, including the Senior LOVE BiTES Program. Along with other service providers, we assist with running the LOVE BiTES Program at Cowra High School, St Raphael's Catholic School Cowra, and Henry Lawson High School at Grenfell.

We extend our gratitude to all facilitators for their contributions to the LOVE BiTES Program.

We eagerly anticipate the upcoming financial year, which promises significant updates regarding Coercive Control.

The Cowra Violence Prevention Network boasts a dedicated committee focused on fostering a healthier and safer Community

## **Cowra Violence Prevention Network**



# CINC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CHANCE'S CLOTHES PROJECT

Yet another enormous year of production for Chance's Clothes Project. Productivity the physical act of clothing Stillborn and Miscarried babies in preparation for their final rest was our focus in the beginning some 12 years ago.

And although we have moved so far beyond this simple physical support, this year has given us time to reflect on just how important our network of crafters is to bereavement processes of the maternity unit midwives. Last year we were able to report that we had touched base with almost all maternity units in Australia – which created a supply to 193 hospitals. We now supply to 213. That's an additional 20. Yes, some of these additional hospitals are new contacts for us, but the majority of them are hospitals we had initially contacted some 6 or more years ago. As I'd anticipated, there appears to have been a natural attrition of local ability to provide for these hospitals.

CCP owes its success to the acceptance of all quantities of crafting abilities. Whether a crafter is able to produce 1 pair of booties every month or 20, their efforts are equally appreciated and useful. Collaboration and coordination of these contributions ensures that no single volunteer or local group is responsible for providing for the local hospital. Equipping one hospital is an enormous responsibility, and when life gets in the way, the pressure is compounded. For all the good intentions that the locals may have, sometimes it just becomes an impossibility. By contrast, these same volunteer crafters are able to continue to provide to the best of their ability directly to CCP.

The past 12 months have seen CCP distribute 1069 individual Baby Bereavement Packs, bringing our total since commencement to 6944.

The need continues to grow. And CCP intends to continue to support this need. I would like to thank our bereaved parents who entrust us with memories of their precious babies and personal experiences.

I thank our midwives for granting us the privilege to assist with their processes for the bereaved.

Our CCP volunteers, for them I am always lost for words. They are more than a team of volunteers, they are a Family. A collection of the most beautiful souls imaginable.

And our final thanks of endless gratitude to CINC for allowing us to work under your auspice. Without you all of this would not be possible. You are our home.

**Nikki Kiss OAM**  
**CCP Founder**





# CINC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## MARY MACKILLOP TODAY

### FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROGRAM NILS

I have now worked for Mary MacKillop Today for over 5 years and I give my heartfelt thanks to everyone at CINC for their continuing support for myself, Mary MacKillop Today and the work we do in the local community. I couldn't do the work I do without the on-going support of my Team and organisations and the friendship and assistance I receive from the CINC team.

I am constantly inspired and astounded by the wonderful work CINC does in the community and I recall a Helen Keller quote I am fond of "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

In my report last year, I wrote that our No Interest Loans are strongly supported by those in need in the community and this was acknowledged in a NILS Network Meeting in October 2023 where Cowra was acknowledged by the State Manager for being in the top 20 suburbs across Australia.

I was extremely proud that our community continues to get the message out to people in need about the assistance we can provide through No Interest Loans and am pleased we are able to help so many in our community.

A highlight for me this year was our move to a new computer database to improve the management of our enquiries. I enjoyed being involved in our transition to Salesforce and we have made many service improvements and provide an on-line enquiry form which has been well received and gives client another option to commence an application with Mary MacKillop Today NILS.

In this Financial Year the Mary MacKillop team provided 726 NILS loans for essential household items while continuing to grow our NILS for vehicles programs where we provide no interest loans for cars and other essential transport for low-income earners across the state of NSW and the ACT.

Our Financial Education program now provides workshops in partnership with community organisations throughout the Central West. The highlight for the Financial Education team this year was being invited to speak to senior Bathurst High School students to help them build financial knowledge and resilience.

Mary MacKillop Today continues to provide:

- NILS (now up to \$2000 for essential household items/expenses)
- NILS for Vehicles (Up to \$5000 for essential transport with up to 4 year loan term)
- Financial Counselling for low-income earners
- Financial Education in groups and individual basis
- Work and Development Order Financial Education activities
- Financial capability and capacity building to build financial resilience and self-advocacy
- Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA)
- Referral linkages to better support all people in need

In 2023-2024 it was a pleasure to work providing No Interest Loans in the Cowra community while also providing options and support for low-income earners needing financial counselling.

Mary MacKillop Today continue to offer services in Cowra on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from our office at CINC and I look forward to another successful year in 2024-2025!

**Emma Roberts**  
**Financial Inclusion Officer - Cowra**  
**Mary MacKillop Today**

MARY MACKILLOP  
*today*

# CINC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to make special mention of a number of local businesses who have displayed such amazing community spirit this year. They are true examples of "Locals Supporting Locals" and their staff are an absolute credit to them.

To the team at Woolworths Cowra - you guys are amazing! Your daily donations of bread, produce and groceries are very much appreciated and goes such a long way to help so many in our community.



To Coles Cowra, in partnership with Second Bite - your daily donations of bread and produce is greatly appreciated and goes a long way to helping those in our community.



To Cowra Rotary club for there such generous donations towards programs targeted towards younger students.





# OUR YEAR IN PICTURES





A watercolor-style graphic with soft, blended colors of green, teal, blue, and purple. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

A little progress  
*each day*

Adds up to  
*big results*





Cowra Information &  
Neighbourhood Centre