

Milang & District Community Association Inc.



Annual Report 2016



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MILANG & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

President	Mr Mike Linscott
Secretary	Mrs Barbara MacGregor
Vice President	Ms Pamela Francis
Treasurer	Mr Gerry Thompson
Committee Members:	Ms June Dolling, Sue Cox, Bob Schembri
Ms Judy Hutson-Smith, Ms Katherine Stanley Murray, Jodie Dolling	

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THANKS

We acknowledge the Ngarrindjeri people on whose land we meet and we pay our respects to the Elders past and present.

Ngarrindjeri Vision for Country

Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan (Listen to what Ngarrindjeri people have to say)

“Our Lands, Our Waters, Our People, All Living Things are connected. We implore people to respect our Ruwe (Country) as it was created in the Kaldowinyeri (the Creation). We long for sparkling, clean waters, healthy land and people and all living things. We long for the Yarlumar-Ruwe (Sea Country) of our ancestors. Our vision is all people Caring, Sharing, Knowing and Respecting the lands, the waters and all living things.”

- From Ngarrindjeri Nation Yarlumar-ruwe plan 2006

The Milang and District Community Association Inc. is only here today thanks to the skills, talents, and generous financial support of our volunteers, our corporate partners, community groups and clubs, local councils and government.

It is an honour to work together with you all to strengthen individuals, our communities and our precious environment.



Yunti Ngopun Ngami ; Together We Walk
Art Work by Allan Sumner

ALEXANDRINA COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT

EASTERN FLEURIEU SCHOOL

COMMUNITY CENTRES SA

GOOLWA AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY BANK

COMMUNITY BENEFIT SA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES & SOCIAL
INCLUSION

STRATHALBYN COMMUNITY SUICIDE
PREVENTION NETWORK

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COUNTRY LIFE COMPASSION

MILANG POST OFFICE

INTERCHURCH COUNCIL

STRATH NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE INC

CLASS

GOOLWA TO WELLINGTON LOCAL ACTION
PLANNING ASSOCIATION INC

MILANG COMMUNITY PHARMACY
UNITING COMMUNITIES

COORONG COUNCIL

DEPARTMENT OF WATER, ENVIRONMENT
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MURRAY DARLING BASIN
NRM BOARD

COORONG COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

President's Report

This year has marked the end of a number of programs which have been overseen by Milang and District Community Association, but is also marked the beginning of new and exciting projects.

For the last five years we have been managing community engagement for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Restoration Project through the Lakes Hub and Community Nurseries Network. This was funded by the Federal Government and the SA Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and provided jobs and training for the many participants. MDCA benefited from the experience, formed many partnerships with the Lakes communities and a wealth of knowledge about our local environment, how to care for it and how to restore it.

The Community Nursery program was particularly significant, with a number of community nurseries (seven in all) growing plants for the program. They developed particular skills in growing native plants and providing jobs for many people. We made the decision two years ago to establish our nursery as a commercial and a community social enterprise and named it "Shoreline Community." This proved to be very successful and we believe that this business will continue to grow in strength and diversify in the plants it has to offer. It will also provide a base for a workforce and we will submit applications for large scale planting through Local Government and Commercial developers.

The Hubs have been invaluable as information centres and have received a great number of visitors and enquiries. Although funding came to end at the end of June 2016, we will endeavour to keep the two Hub centres open for business. The Meningie Centre will be housed in the Council information Centre and will be staffed by volunteers. The Milang centre will remain open for a few weeks while LAP staff are using the centre and then we hope to recruit volunteers to assist to keep it open. We will endeavour to provide this service if we can.

Other major projects we have been handling is the purchase, with the help of the Alexandrina Council, of the Butter Factory on Daranda Terrace. The history of the Butter Factory is woven around the history of Milang and is a valuable icon in the town. Bob Sim offered to sell the premises to the community as he felt that it belongs with Milang. The Butter Factory is listed as a Heritage building and this brings with it a number of problems in relation to its restoration. However, an engineer's report confirmed the structure is sound and the EPA report on the fuel tank showed there was no contamination.

I am happy to say at the time of writing this, we are in the final stages of a Contract to purchase and will own the premises and the cottage by the end of July 2016.

The next stage will be the restoration of the buildings and the determination as to its use.

A public meeting was held at the Institute in July and resulted in a great deal of interest from the community to help with the repair and use of the buildings.

As soon as we have the keys we will be holding an inspection so that those who are interested can have a look and see what needs to be done.

If you are interested in helping, please register your interest with reception at MOSHCC.

Our other project is the old Pump Station on the Foreshore. This has been cleaned up and restored by SA Water who want to give it to the Milang Community. Negotiations are underway through the Alexandrina Council (as it is on Crown Land) at this time and I hope in the coming year we will have access to this building. What to do with it and what use it can be put to, has yet to be determined.

So you can see we have a lot on our plate and there is more to come. All the other programs are running well and all the courses being offered are well attended.

The Milang Old School House Community Centre is always a hive of activity and has a great volunteer workforce. The activities are growing but unfortunately funding for some of the programs has been reduced by the Government. We will continue to offer the same level of service, but it will be a great strain on the staff.

I would like to thank members of the Management Committee, Karyn Bradford and the staff for all their support and hard work during the year. It has been an exceptional period in our history and will lead to a great many opportunities for the Milang community.

Once again my thanks must go to the many volunteers who manage the programs that are centred on the MOSHCC, ranging from the volunteers in the kitchen who produce the Friday Feast and the drivers who drive the bus and the Community Car, not to mention all the other programs that run so successfully.

Finally, we are tabling an amendment to the Constitution at tonight's Annual General Meeting. This will enable all members of the community who live in the Post Code area of 5256, to become members of the Milang & District Community Association with no financial cost. We hope that this will encourage more people to become involved in the Association and its projects and activities. I think this is a great step forward and I hope it will help to build a stronger community.

We are indeed a lucky community to have so much support and involvement in the things we do.

Mike Linscott

President

Secretary's Report

What an interesting and positive learning experience I have had since joining MDCA as secretary one year ago.

I am constantly enthralled by the work that staff and volunteers of Milang achieve in their endeavours to improve and make life easier and more enjoyable for all.

Until I joined MDCA I didn't realise the work that goes on behind the scenes in our beautiful little town and how staff from MOSHCC, volunteers and Alexandrina Council work together. No matter is too small, - as in repair of the rope railing on roadsides or too large, - such as the very recent purchase of the Milang Butter Factory. Some ideas take longer to achieve than others but all matters at MDCA meetings are dealt with in the correct manner and not ignored.

I can only praise the aforementioned groups for their diligent work, for turning up and getting things done no matter what. Cheers to Karyn Bradford, Mike Linscott and everybody in MDCA and MOSHCC.

Barbara MacGregor

Secretary

Executive Officer's Report

It has been an honour to be at the helm of the Association for another year. I sense that collectively we have felt challenged, tested and exhilarated in equal measure. This year we have been facing great changes whilst at the same time needing to reflect inwards on the effectiveness of the organisation and how it manages its business, so governance and momentum have been two key focus areas in 2016.

GOVERNANCE

The requirement to be audited for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (A legislated requirement) and also for Service Excellence certification (A State Government requirement) has been the impetus to review and update existing policies and procedures and in some instances write new ones where gaps were identified. These days the governance standards required of community organisations are at the same level as large business corporations and meeting these rigorous standards with limited funding and resources has been challenging for MADCA. However this process has served to reassure us of the effective management of the organisation and its resources and delivered a great deal of pride in our achievements in meeting quality governance and service delivery standards. I sincerely thank the Committee, staff and volunteers for their commitment, input and support.

MOMENTUM

In preparation for the changes to the Commonwealth Home Support Program, which in 2017 will move from organisational block funding to a fee for service model, we have successfully applied and been granted Aged Care Provider status. This will open up opportunities for us to extend the range of services we are able to provide and ensure sustainability to the Community Care program and our commitment to caring for our aged residents in their homes and in their communities.

The proposed changes to crèche funding are opening discussions about the possibility of moving into full day childcare service provision for the district in 2018. We are currently having discussions with the consultants provided by the Department of Education to ascertain the viability of moving down this path. We are also discussing the need for this type of service with parents and Eastern Fleurieu School.

Negotiations for the purchase of the Butter Factory have come to fruition and we anticipate that this project will contribute to economic growth through training, short and long term regional employment, development of social enterprise, formation of community business partnerships and an increase in visitor numbers and local spending. This is an exciting and challenging project but one that will bring great benefits and we will be looking to volunteers to help manage the project and to fund raise. After the success of fundraising for the Adelaide Hills Sculpture Symposium Milang work we know we have great fundraisers in the community.

The ending of the CLLMM Recovery Program has been a challenging transition but the local knowledge we have gained, and the collaborative partnerships formed will be of great benefit into the future. With the SA Government promoting nature based tourism and the Lakes being a gateway to excellent opportunities in this area we should be capitalise on this direction. The Lakes communities feel a need for the Lakes Hub to remain a presence particularly as there are still some issues of concern i.e. seals, carp herpes, Senate enquiry, Lake Albert Salinity and so currently volunteers are maintaining the Hub Offices and continuing to maintain the website and the Lakes Hub Bulletin. Ideally in Milang the Lakes Hub could eventually move into the Butter Factory as one aspect of the activities provided there once restorations are complete. At this stage Goolwa to Wellington LAP staff will remain at the Milang Office until the end of September.

Funding has been sourced for a Foreshore Habitat Restoration Project which is a collaborative project between MADCA, DEWNR, Alexandrina Council, Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority, Goolwa to Wellington LAP and consultation around that project will proceed once signed off by Government Agencies. It is expected to be completed by 30th June 2017.

It feels that although some projects are ending there are others that are connecting up the dots around heritage, environment, social enterprise, tourism, partnerships and job opportunities. I look forward to the forthcoming year knowing that with your support MADCA has the experience, management skills, and committed volunteers and staff for successful community outcomes.

Karyn Bradford

Executive Officer

MOSHCC Report

My second year reporting back as Manager of the Milang Old School House Community Centre, and what a big year!

Not only for my family and me personally, with the arrival of a little Jones, but for the Community Centre. Another big year of growth, changes and challenges.

The centre is always a busy hive of activity. Our volunteers are dedicated to their work, enjoy what they do immensely and put in so much time, as can be seen in the Volunteering report.

Activities and programs at the Centre are mainly funded through individual grants for those specific programs, and that has been true for many years. This year, and over the next two years, we are working towards changes in some of those programs, specifically the Community Care and the Crèche program, which will see the funding models change significantly.

Our very successful Audit of the Community Care program, progress towards the Certificate level of the Australian Service Excellence Standards as well as our skilled staff and volunteers, means we have a really good foundation to continue building upon.

I'd like to thank the Milang Campus, Eastern Fleurieu School, not only for continued use of the building but for working in close partnership our activities, most recently with the very successful Murray the Musical, our work towards changes in the crèche program, Friday Feast and MOSH Nosh and helping us catering for the wider community in areas like the Community Garden which is flourishing!

We always get fantastic comments about the Old School House, how friendly and inviting it is, and I know that it's our special magical blend of a community that's proud of its heritage, forward thinking, welcoming of strangers (who don't stay strangers long!) and new members of our district.

Thank you to the staff and volunteers who work in all the programs, and particularly our volunteer receptionists who do such an amazing job every day. Well done everyone!

Stuart Jones

Centre Manager

QUICK STATS

548 likes on Facebook

48 followers on Twitter

4663 visits to moshcc.com.au

6998 Centre visitors counted

4342 volunteer hours

Community Care

The beginning of the 2015 / 2016 Community Care year saw us farewelling Annemieke Braund who had coordinated the Community Care program for 2 years and welcoming Fiona Pitcairn as the new Program Coordinator. There have been significant changes to ageing services over the last few years and there is more change to come. The most visible change was in the name change from HACC to CHSP (Home and Community Care to Commonwealth Home Support Program). Most other changes have been in the background with regard to program management and funds distribution, however, there have been other changes that for those who receive services the changes have been at time difficult to understand.

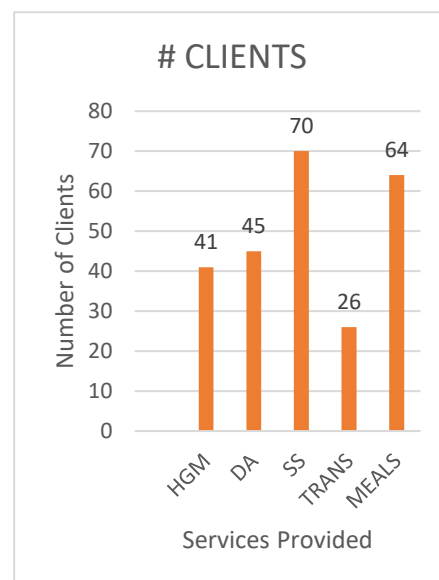
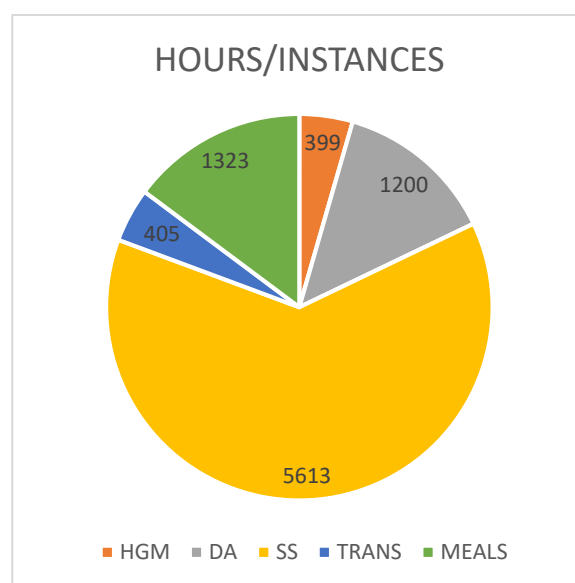
In December the CHSP program underwent its first Quality Review against the Home Care Common Standards. Historically the audit has been done under the auspices of Alexandrina Council. This review was passed successfully and we are pleased to say that the reviewers were very happy with the way we run the service, the organisation's management and our systems that are in place which all demonstrate high quality service and ethical management.

Without the hard work from our support workers, volunteers and contractors, this service could not be provided. Many of them willingly go above and beyond what is generally expected of them and enjoy the work they do for our residents.

The Consumer Advisory Groups have been well attended with 3 meetings held. By far the most interesting was the visit from the Guide Dogs SA/NT where many attendees learned a lot about how their government funds could be allocated. Many however were disappointed that there was no guide dog accompanying our speaker for the day!

Over the past year we have managed over \$116,867 in Department of Health grant funds and delivered quality services to approximately 100 people.

The following statistics show how we delivered the services and how many people received assistance. Our numbers of recipients has increased by 5 over the past year so we have a healthy intake of new people requesting our services.



Legend for both graphs

HGM – Home & Garden Maintenance **DA** – Domestic Assistance **SS** – Social Support (inc centre activities)

TRANS – Transport – 1 way trips **Meals** – Centre Based Meals

Of our 92 active clients across all services the graph clearly demonstrates the demand in services around social support and meals. This need has always been clearly indicated by client feedback and we are pleased to show we deliver on what you want.

The next year holds many changes with the deregulation of the Home Care Packages in February 2017. Essentially this means that any person currently in receipt of a Home Care Package will be able to choose their supplier. Milang and District Community Association has been granted this approval, so please consider us if you are thinking of making that move. Over the next few months the Community Care team plan to present these changes in a practical and informed manner.

Fiona Pitcairn

Community Care Program Coordinator



*Our very own Hills Treasure, Greta,
who runs our Keep Fit class.*

Emergency Relief

The Emergency relief program at MOSHCC is funded by the Federal Department of Social Services. The funding provides emergency financial relief for local people in the postcode regions of 5255 and 5256.

Relief is mostly provided in the form of food parcels or supermarket vouchers, as food is so often the last thing on the list after bills are paid. Petrol is also a common need particularly for residents of Milang and Clayton where public transport is non-existent.

Emergency payments on bills are considered if clients are going to be cut off, and clients are encouraged to talk to their supplier to arrange a payment plan, or to make an appointment to speak with a financial counsellor.

This year, as we see every year, the number of sessions has increased and we have been aware of more clients who have accessed the service who have become homeless. This is a huge issue, and we do what we can, but through Growing Life Connections partnerships and contacts we are able to make referrals to relevant services to help long term.

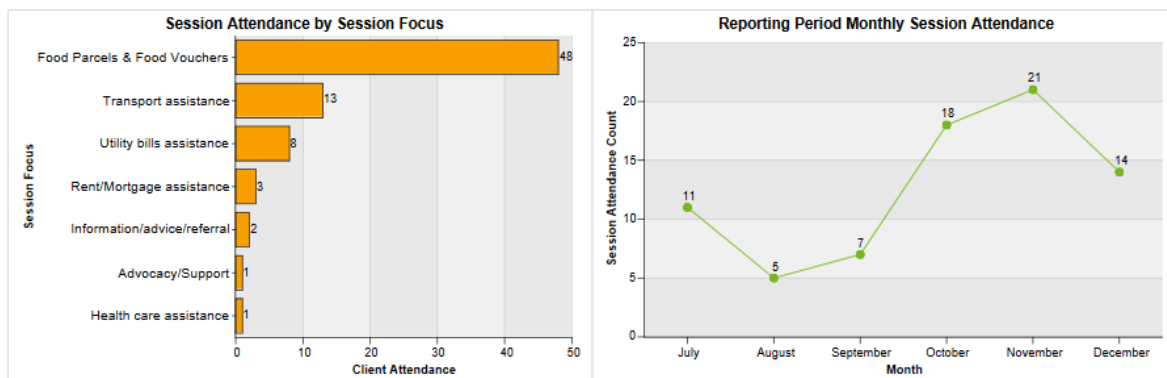
Quick Stats

Federal Funding from the
Department of Social Services

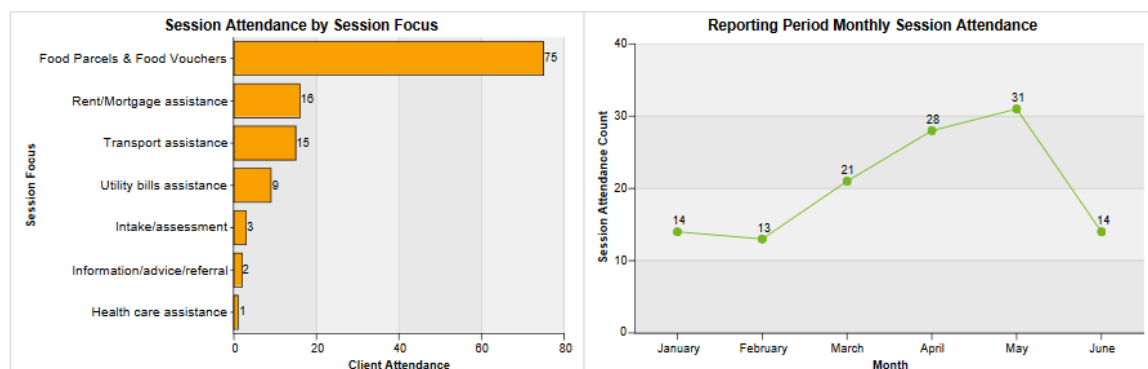
\$14,400 for 2015/16

170 appointments

Session attendance, July – December 2015



Session attendance, January – June 2016



Crèche

The MOSHCC crèche operates on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9.30 to 12.30, during school term.

The MOSHCC crèche provides an opportunity for children to engage in early learning activities in a community disadvantaged by a lack of public transport and access to childcare.

It was good to see our service used by parents gaining qualifications in Cert IV in Community Services and Cert III in Early Childhood Education and Care.

The number of children attending crèche this year has increased with some days reaching our maximum number of 10 children. The age group ranges from 6 months to 5 years.



Quick Stats

Federal Funding from the
Department of Education

\$31,450.30 for 2014/15

2 Mornings a week

8 Families

14 children

Children are provided with a daily program of activities that include:

- Craft work
- Outdoor play/Environment
- Social activities
- Music and movement
- Literacy and language through games, songs and toys
- Physical activities climbing, running, digging, building.
- Weaving
- Water play

Young children benefit from interaction with the crèche workers and other children to encourage their motor skills.



Adult Community Education

Foundation Skills Non Accredited

The Centre recognizes the value of non-accredited learning opportunities through a wide range of activities that enable participants to transition through to accredited studies, employment, and most importantly a passion for life-long learning.

The non-accredited training program provides opportunities for those in the community who may be looking to learn new skills as a pathway to further education, employment, volunteering or to pursue a topic for personal interest or self-development.

The benefits of the non-accredited program are in the support of learners not ready for assessment in accredited programs, and for those participating in programs designed to support community members in making their first step into learning at the Community Centre.

The 2015/16 project included:

HEALTH & WELLBEING aims to assist people to adopt healthy activities that are achievable while learning new skills that in turn can be transferred to other areas of their lives.



Examples:

Gardening, Healthy cooking and Introduction to Bushfoods. The Bushfood introduction was extremely popular with students and created great outcomes such as e.g. one participant is now running a workshop through the Strathalbyn Neighbourhood Centre while another has gone to further accredited study. There is strong interest in further training in the emerging bushfood industry.

Community Care programs)

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION & CULTURE

Which provides experiences in a range of social, recreational & educational programs, to assist people to gain knowledge of the concept of community and the value of friends, and provide social support for those who are isolated. (In partnership with Community Care programs) Activities: Wow – Women's Group, Sticky Beak – Men's Group - Lakeliners' Writers Group

COMPUTING – I PAD BASICS

The Computing & I PAD Basics program supports students within a class environment where students are able to benefit from other students who can assist less confident learners to progress.

QUICK STATS 2015/16

Funding from Department of State Development

\$25,000

122 Total Enrolments

Enrolments

- 18 attended Computing Ipad Basics
- 28 attended Health & Wellbeing
- 46 attended Creativity, Innovation and Culture Courses

2273 total training hours delivered

17 people became volunteers



Chillaxin' – Youth Program

Chillaxin' Youth group is for young people of High school age who live in Milang, to participate in contemporary social and cultural activities. An average of 15 members attend gatherings. The meetings are usually fortnightly with a monthly outing, decided by the group.

The aim of this program is to motivate and inspire young people living in Milang. The group provides opportunities for young people in the community, who are at risk of social isolation. Through social activities and gatherings, we aim to increase confidence, encourage social interaction, physical exercise, life skills and community participation.

We have been using Facebook as our main source of communication and data collection. Members were recently asked to complete an online survey and we were delighted to receive positive and constructive feedback.

We have found Facebook to be a terrific way to journal and share our fun times and experiences and have found it to be perfect for communicating with Youth.

Our most recent and most popular outing is West Beach Skate Park. Thanks to having access to the MOSHCC bus we have been able to transport bikes, scooters and skateboards safely. Thanks to Jo's culinary BBQ's, we are able to provide inexpensive and healthy lunches at the venue. This is a great activity for young people to get physically active, spend time with their friends, enjoy the outdoors and eat a great meal.

Another favourite is jumping at Bounce in Adelaide. Bounce is a trampoline gymnasium with a variety of activities and games on offer with a great vibrant atmosphere.



QUICK STATS

Funding from
Alexandrina Council

\$6,400

15 attend on average

2 Youth Workers



Once a month we hang at the MOSHCC Ace Space and entertain ourselves at home. Some of the things the group enjoy on these nights are Tie Dying, in house movies screen, wood oven pizza, making, Nachos, skating and Bikes and Scooters in and around the school house. Everyone participates in preparation, clean up and enjoy nights at home just catching up with each other and playing music.

Growing Life Connections



Growing Life Connections (GLC), is a Social Inclusion program run from the Milang Old School House Community Centre (MOSHCC). The Program commenced in 2014 and aims to assist people to feel safe in their community, have a sense of place, belonging and purpose and increase their social and emotional wellbeing.

Growing Life Connections is funded through the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and was brought about through the collaboration of eight local community organisations which include:

- ***Milang and District Community Association Inc.***
- ***Strath Neighbourhood Centre Inc.***
- ***Strathalbyn & Communities Suicide Prevention Network***
- ***Country Life Compassion***
- ***Strathalbyn Interchurch Council***
- ***Langhorne Creek Historical School Inc.***
- ***Clayton Bay Community Association Inc.***
- ***Community Living and Support Services (CLASS)***

GLC provides this support to individuals and families within the Strathalbyn SLA. This support is specific to those who believe themselves to be socially isolated, unemployed or underemployed, have poor mental health, lack resilience or who may feel they are disengaged from school, family and/or their community.

Our program also provides a small food pantry as part of our Emergency Financial Support to provide individuals and families who may be struggling for whatever reason and require support to feed themselves or their family. Many of these families are from the Strathalbyn and surrounding areas. All are welcome to access groceries that are generously donated through our Monthly Food Drive.

This food drive, facilitated by GLC volunteers, takes place on the 2nd Friday of every month at the Strathalbyn Woolworths. Woolworths have kindly given us permission to hold our Food Drive there and with their support and the generosity of our volunteers and local community we are able to provide food to families in need. We have seen this need grow significantly in the last 6 months and will continue to look for ways to grow our supply so that we can work towards meeting this increased need.

Up until recently however, we were only able to store and provide non-perishable items, rather than fresh food. This was particularly limiting during the summer period as many families required cold



items or even just cold water, which they could not access if they did not have access to power or a refrigerator. Sadly this is not an uncommon situation for many living in our community.

Fortunately for our program and the local community we were lucky enough to be supported by the local **Strathalbyn Community Arts and Crafts Group** with an extremely generous donation of \$500 which provided us with the resources to purchase a chest freezer where we can now store fresh and frozen foods and will in Summer be able

to store cold water to support those in need.

We are enormously grateful to this very generous community group who are a true example of the notion that “from little things, big things come”.

GLC is continuing to facilitate a number of groups for men and women in our local communities.

Connecting the Dots is an open and ongoing support group for men and women. It offers a safe place to have a chat, sound off or just listen. We explore strategies for coping with depression, anxiety, and Identity. We consider and discuss a range of related issues that may include consideration of the notion of depression, our emotions, family and friends, coping strategies, planning for my future or resilience building.

We have also established a **Women's Group** where women are connected to community, foster a sense of belonging and develop social and emotional wellbeing as well as discuss and support each other with issues that are specific to them. GLC approached Fleurieu Families for support in providing a Women's Group in the local area. They are happy to provide co-facilitators as the group grows and are also able to provide a crèche worker as required. The group's numbers have fluctuated throughout the year and we are looking at moving the group from its current location of Strathalbyn to Milang.

We are working on better ways of promoting this group, and will look to school newsletters, community radio and newspaper articles to ensure women in our community are aware of the group and what it may be able to offer them. This group is facilitated by a GLC volunteer who has completed studies in Community Services and is currently undertaking studies in Mental Health. We are extremely grateful for her input and her efforts to address social issues and disadvantage in our community.

A **Men's Group** continues to run on a weekly basis and has encouraged and supported several of its participants to continue with and recently complete their Certificate 3 studies in Community Services. This group considers issues specific to men and including their roles in relationships, stress and anger, confidence and self-esteem, understanding emotions, unhelpful thoughts and feelings and understanding change. A number of these men also volunteer for Caring Compassion, distributing food to those in need and another volunteers with GLC and is integral to the monthly food drive that supports the GLC food pantry. We are again so very grateful for the work they do and the added capacity they bring to our community to address social issues and disadvantage.

GLC was extremely fortunate to be supported with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services through Uniting Communities and ***Weathering the Journey*** to provide a fun ***Pampering Day*** for women in the local community. The workshop was held at the Milang Football Club and over 20 women attended. The workshop was facilitated by Larissa Jones and lunch was provided by a local caterer – *Pammies Pantry*.

The project has also been able to provide targeting support that in the past has been unavailable or limited with considerable waiting lists. GLC has been able to provide one to one counselling in the areas of family violence, drug and alcohol addiction as well as mental health and homelessness. Referral pathways have been opened and streamlined for financial counselling, family mental health services, homelessness and generic counselling.

GLC is continuing to grow and develop its program and has just opened a GLC Facebook site which has already gained close to 100 likes but more importantly will share and promote information about the project to a far greater audience.

The GLC project has highlighted the success that can come from collaborating with other community groups to address gaps and issues that are specific to our region. We have seen improvements in partnerships with government agencies, streamlined referral pathways, enhanced levels of trust between services and improved methods of information sharing and most importantly available, client centred support to individuals, their families and community.

Murray The Musical

How this all came to be.....

In 2003, quietly, the drought began. Low rainfall here and no flows down the Darling or upper Murray. Irrigators' allocations were cut but even then the barrages stayed closed, the Murray Mouth was dredged to keep it open, the water levels in the Lakes decreased and salt levels rose in the Lakes.



People started finding turtles with such growths of tubeworm 'homes' on their shells that they were unable to move. Many died. Some were brought to the Milang School and the Turtle Project developed. Schoolchildren carefully removed the tubeworms, gave them medical treatment, over 300 turtles were rehabilitated in the Turtle Shed and, when strong enough, released upstream in SA into less salty water.

As the level of the water below Lock 1 fell, 'beaches' appeared, farmers on Lake Albert walked their pipelines up to 3 km out from shore to get water and, on Lake Alexandrina, there was talk of 'engineering solutions'.

After several years of drought, there were studies done and suggestions made by various bureaucrats in various Govt. Depts. – but no-one listened to the people of the Lakes and their vast accumulation of local environmental knowledge. So the River Lakes & Coorong Action Group was formed.

Initially, the protest was against a dam/weir being built across the Murray, below Wellington and before it reached the Lake. The Lakes and Coorong, a Ramsar site with globally important wetlands, were to be sacrificed and left to turn into salt-ridden wastelands devoid of wildlife.

The protesting continued, Henry Jones made his 'dead' speech at many meetings. The focus became not only bureaucrats but Federal and State politicians.

By 2006/7/8, the River Lakes and Coorong had become proficient at dealing with these problems on a range of scientific, political and social levels. There was some change in approach and attitude.

One evening, around a kitchen table in Milang, someone said, "No-one would believe this. We should write this story and call it Murray the Musical." Our initial attempt to write a script and original songs, and produce a musical, all in 5 months quickly faltered.

But the idea remained and was taken up again. So the script was finally written (63 pages and 15+ original songs) – and we all sat back and enjoyed our sense of achievement. Since there was no money around, we didn't have to think about actually producing and performing our masterpiece.

And then early in 2016 a lady visited MOSHCC with Drought Relief money to be spent by the 30th June. Suddenly and unexpectedly (and with nowhere near 5 months till the first performance!!!) we somehow found the energy to re-visit that time, revive ourselves and produce Murray the Musical.

After major rewriting and many weekend rehearsals and poster designing and finding some willing turtles and learning about dramaturgy and dragging out our old battle cries we presented the true story of Murray the Musical at three performances at the Milang Institute. 363 people attended, and feedback was universally positive.

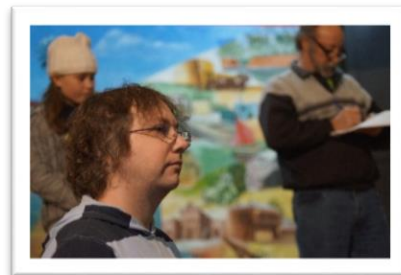


Communities flourish when people work together and feel well supported. But it's not always easy to stay strong in the face of stress and uncertainty. Like the weather, conditions in our lives can change quickly, affecting relationships and our ability to bounce back. The Weathering the Journey program has been designed to support communities in the Alexandrina and Onkaparinga councils to tackle changes on the land and in their lives. The more tools people have to manage challenges, the better they can bounce back and live the best lives they can.

The opportunity to support the presentation of "Murray the Musical" has been a personal joy for me and also brought me an awareness of the issues facing communities living near the Murray River. When I first heard about the community "play" I was intrigued at how these connections opened the door for resilience to flourish. People who are placed under adverse conditions don't always pull together to overcome, but in this instance many have been involved for many years and still continue strong due to the connectedness and strength that comes from belonging. It is a privilege to be such a small part of this project. After it came apparent that the funding was approved and so the community could finally see the dream become a reality, I was sitting with someone and heard the comment "Now we can heal"

This has been a long process and this community is still facing the ongoing issues relating to the Lake but this play embodies the truth of the strong spirit of community, and friendship that is alive and well in this area. The flow of creativity of the folk in this community is amazing, the story expressed in various mediums and each one valid and essential to bring the fullness of the heart of these people.

I hope we all take something home from experiencing this performance that stays with us and in turn strengthens us when we are facing difficult times.



Colleen White – Uniting Communities – Community Educator
"Weathering the Journey" is a Uniting Communities activity funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services' "Drought Assistance



Volunteers

Our wonderful volunteers continue to be pivotal in the activities and programs of the organisation. We are fortunate to currently have 99 volunteers currently contributing their time and commitment to MDCA (this number fluctuates throughout the year and has been up to 110). For our organisation this means that in hour terms-volunteers have contributed a massive 8209 hours which is phenomenal for an organisation of our size. 55% of MDCA volunteers have been with us for 5 years or more and we have had 18 new volunteers join us in the last 12 months.



Our volunteers work across the organisation in the Lakes Hub, Community Nursery, Community Garden, Meals on Wheels, Milang Community News and at the MOSHCC in administration, reception, transport, maintenance, adult community education and Milang & District Community Care activities including Friday Feast and Driving.



Involving volunteers in ongoing discussion and decisions about training, volunteer skill and knowledge development is a key part of our Volunteer Management Plan and so a Volunteer Review was undertaken in November/December to gauge important feedback for future planning. 42% of the 107 registered volunteers (as at 1/11/15) responded to the review. The overwhelming majority of volunteers look forward to volunteering and they feel really good about contributing to the organisation/community and feel that what they do is important. 97% of volunteers felt that they and their opinions are valued. Volunteers are confident in their role with 100% of the respondents to the question of whether or not they felt confident in their role replying 'Yes'.

Suggestions around training were role specific ie. Calender booking system for receptionists and these suggestions have begun to be implemented. We are endeavouring to meet suggestions of succession planning and more volunteers to allow for breaks and less pressure. In light of this we currently have additional receptionists being trained.



The Volunteer 2 Data Base enables us to continue to record volunteering hours for MDCA. It is also a really useful tool for meeting administrative requirements and keeping records up to date as it gives alerts as police clearances and other training specific requirements are due to lapse.

QUICK STATS

99 active volunteers

18 new volunteers

Over 8209 hours
volunteered for the
organisation

The Volunteer Voice is being published quarterly and continues to be a valuable tool for distributing information, sharing opportunities and sharing the great work of our volunteers. It has also enabled volunteers to become more aware of the different people and facets of the organisation.

Volunteer get togethers continue to be held, which involve a mix of information sharing, social activities and training. Feedback from these has been really positive with people able to meet other volunteers from different parts of the organisation. In the last 12 months we have held a pizza night, had a session for SA Police to update drivers, celebrated with a volunteer thank you lunch in national volunteer week and encouraged our volunteers to go to Volunteer Movie Day at Mt Barker. We have held meetings for drivers, gardeners and receptionists. Meals on Wheels volunteers have met with their coordinator and Friday Feast volunteers meet regularly for planning. At our MDCA Christmas celebration we took the opportunity to publicly acknowledge the 7 people who have now been with us for 10 years and the 2 people who have now been with us for 5 years, with a framed certificate. We will continue to do this each year. A representative from Meals on Wheels came to our celebration and acknowledged the long service of some of our volunteers including Margurete Loveridge-Aistrope for 20 years and Pauline Perry for 15 years.

How our volunteers feel about their volunteering with MDCA

- 56% said their volunteering contributed to them mixing with others, socialising, meeting new people and developing friendships
- 30% mentioned that their volunteering contributed to their personal growth and personal gratification, improved confidence, self-worth and self esteem
- 38% said their volunteering helped them to feel part of the community, connected and contributing
- 20% said that helping people in need was a benefit of volunteering, and made them feel more grateful of their own circumstances

*(It should be noted that the benefits mentioned were raised by the volunteers themselves, they were not from a given list)**Information from Volunteer Review Report*

A small group of volunteers again took on the organisation of The Biggest Morning tea to raise funds for the Cancer Council. They provided a fantastic morning with games, prizes, a raffle and lots of socialising. Our ACE Space venue was filled to capacity with people keen to support this fundraiser.



One of our longest serving volunteers Greta Mansveld, has been recognised as a Hills Living Treasure. Greta continues to volunteer with us each week with our fitness group. We certainly value her tenacity and commitment. Congratulations to Greta for this fantastic recognition.

We received a small NRM Volunteer grant to purchase an iPad for field work for planting trees. Other applications for training funds were not successful.

It continues to be a privilege to work with such a committed group of people who make volunteering for MDCA a priority in their life.

Volunteer Coordinator

Gae Thomas

Community News

As we look back over another year I would like to thank the members of the community who have supported the Community News by providing news, photos, stories and articles; as well as local businesses who have been willing to advertise in its pages or sell copies on our behalf; and especially the general public who have been willing to pay a modest subscription for each month's issue.

We have continued to include thirty-two pages so that it is possible to maintain a proper balance between advertising and text in the pages of the Community News. We have all looked at local newsletters where you have to wade through pages of advertisements before you can find a snippet of news.



So, as I have done in previous annual reports I again appeal to all local organizations to appoint someone who can be responsible for sending news of your activities, preferably with an appropriate picture, to me each month. I am very grateful for those that are doing this already and would like to especially thank the folk who write those monthly reports.

It is also possible that you might have an idea for a regular feature which can be included each month and be happy to find the appropriate material to maintain it. I would like to thank Alvyn Hopgood and Jude Aquilina who have helped in this way.

I would also urge you if you want to publicize an event not to just send me a copy of your A4 size poster which will end up looking like just another advertisement, but to write up a little story about it, again with an appropriate picture.

I also invite all our readers with a story to tell, a photograph they have taken or a poem they have written to consider sharing it through the pages of the Community News.

We have continued to include the monthly calendar with each issue. I hope that the readers find its summary of each day's activities helpful. Please let me know about any obvious omissions.

The Community News has recently been accepted as an associate member of the Community Newspaper Association of Victoria which is a network of seventy community owned newspapers which rely on the work of volunteers in their production. I hope that this may be a source of useful ideas about how we might continue the production of the Community News into the future.

At present we are printing about 260 copies each month, most of which are sold in Milang through the Post Office, Bakery, Port Milang Café, and Mini Mart. There are also a small number available in Strathalbyn at the Newsagent and Information Centre and a few are posted to subscribers and local members of parliament. Thanks again to all those who have helped with the sale of the Community News.

Finally, thanks to Beverley for her proof-reading efforts each month which help to prevent me from printing something which I shouldn't.

Alex. E. H. Stone

Milang Institute

This year the Milang Institute has once again been well used by community groups, individuals and the Community Centre Programs.

With the completion of the new stairs to the balcony, that have been used by several functions, as well as “keep fit” activities. It is great to see that the Library is still being well patronized.

The hall was used for 5 major functions (2 weddings 2 funerals and school functions), Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. The year culminated with the staging of Murray the Musical, with 3 successful performances. As this event was funded by a grant, it meant that we did not have any expenses for staging this event.

In May, 120 ‘new’ wooden chairs were donated by the Currency Creek winery and they add an air of elegance to the Institute.

During the year, 237 activities were held in the Institute (200 for MADCA and 10 meetings and functions) were held. The average monthly use, was 20 for the year (up from 16 last year). This year, we received income of \$5080 and expenses of \$2960 leaving a surplus of \$2120.

We look forward to the coming year with continued support from the community.

John Toshach

Caretaker



Lakes Hub

Quick Facts

Interactions

- Lakes Hub was contacted **29,925** times (averaging **125** contacts per business day).
- Lake Hub staff or volunteers provided information on the Lakes and Coorong to visitors, community and government staff **188,258** times (averaging **784** instances per business day).
- Staff gave **eighteen** presentations to community groups and other organisations.
- We sent **2,782** emails, not including emails to the Bulletin subscriber list.
- **3,158** people visited either the Milang or Meningie Hub.



Bulletins, Facebook, Website and Media

- Twelve electronic bulletins were produced and were opened by **45%** of bulletin subscribers.
- At the end of the financial year, there were **554** people on the Bulletin subscriber list, compared to 539 last year, with others accessing the bulletin through Facebook, the website and other organisations mailing lists.
- Lifetime likes (subscribers) on Facebook went from 290 individuals to **484** individuals.
- On Facebook, there was a total reach of **175,557** over the 2015/16 financial year, compared to last financial year, which had a total reach of 50,633.
- There were **8,320** visits to the Lakes Hub website, peaking at **1,030** visits to the website in November.
- Most visits to the website included downloading the latest Bulletin.
- There were more than **seven** media releases and printed-media published articles facilitated or about the Lakes Hub, along with **eleven** radio interviews organised by the Hub.

Public Events

- Through the Bulletin and other media, Lakes Hub provided community members with information on **78** opportunities for training, learning and education.
- Lakes Hub ran a total of **seventeen** events for the community, with **454** attendees.

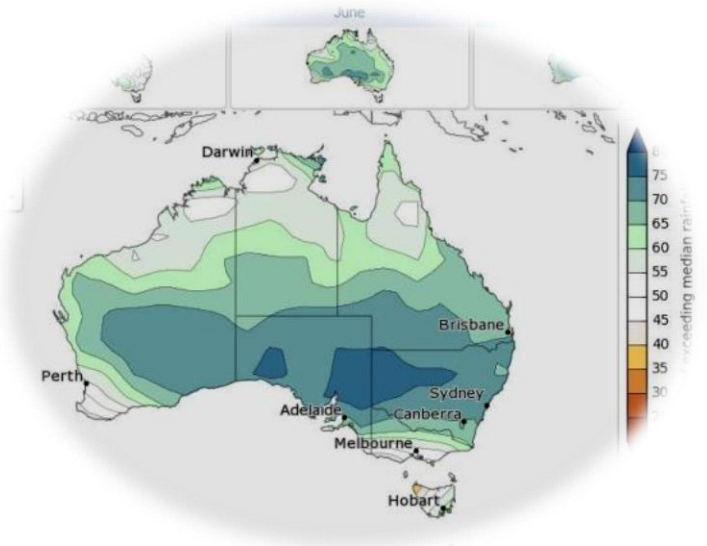


Community Nurseries Network

- Only one Community Nurseries Network (CNN) meeting was facilitated over the year due to the position of Community Nurseries Network Coordinator no longer being funded. The nursery managers on the west side catch up regularly to discuss any issues.

Community Drought Preparedness

- More than **50** potential stakeholder organisations have been identified.
- More than **28** organisational representatives have been engaged via meetings, phone calls or emails.
- More than **72** non-affiliated individuals have had input.
- **Seven** briefing documents have been prepared and supplied to stakeholders, on request
- **Four** Drought Preparedness related funding applications have been submitted (none successful to date).



Meetings

- Lakes Hub staff attended **4** training events,
- **81** DEWNR run meetings and
- **16** meetings run by other parties.
- **50** meetings were held at Lakes Hub shop-fronts.
- **Five** Lakes Hub Advisory Committee meetings were run.

In addition during 2015/16 the Lakes Hub have strengthened key partnerships with stakeholders such as the South Australian Murray Darling Basin Natural Resource Management, Community Engagement Team as well as the CLLMM Community Advisory Panel.



Shoreline Community



Shoreline Community Vision statement:

To ensure long-term sustainable growth of the Shoreline Community business by producing a strong competitive and attractive product and service to customers and to provide employment opportunities for the local community.

During the 2015 planting season;

86527 plants were planted under Commercial contract to DEWNR

29000 plants were planted as part of Community Revegetation Program through Goolwa to Wellington LAP



We had average staff numbers of 22 casual employees during the 2015 season but were reduced to an average of 15 this year due to the reduction in number of contracts available. Our commercial planting contract in 2016 was for only 6000 plants with 20000 in the Community Revegetation Program.

This type of project created employment, developed new skills and has improved team work with the planters who were involved.



The benefits to the community have been numerous. Through environmental education, employment creation and financial gain both for workers and businesses in Milang.

Shoreline has carryover funds of \$38,838 in the bank.