

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre

Annual Report 2017 - 2018

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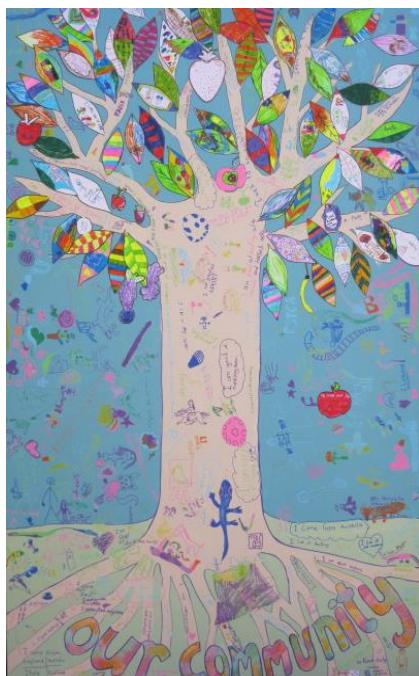


Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre Inc. (BANC)

ABN 83 058 109 149

BANC acknowledges the Gundungurra
and Darug peoples as the traditional owners of the land.

For assistance with funding, BANC acknowledges:
NSW Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Office of Fair Trading; Dept. of Social Services;
NSW Treasury Community Building Partnership Program;
Blue Mountains City Council; Good Shepherd Micro Finance;
Dept. Education & Training; Dept. of Health & Aging.



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*Serving the communities of the Upper Blue Mountains
Blackheath, Medlow Bath, Megalong, Shipley, Bell, Mount Victoria and Mount Irvine, Mount Wilson and
Mount Tomah as well as the broader area for some services.*

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Introduction to BANC

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC) is a not-for-profit community based organisation that is based in Blackheath and serves local communities, principally in the Upper Blue Mountains of NSW but also more broadly.

BANC supports activities and services that enhance its communities, provides programs that empower people to improve the quality of their life and realise their potential, and works to build a community that supports its members.

We seek to be inclusive, help people connect, and build community resilience.

BANC's MISSION

Connecting people with communities *Creating opportunities for inclusion*

Contributing to resilience of people and place

BANC exists to serve our community. We believe that a strong, vibrant community holds its members, supporting each person to meet their potential and to live constructive, meaningful and participatory lives. BANC holds that a neighbourhood centre is a hub within the community for organising activities that allow people to meet one another, build skills, align interests and work together.

BANC will ensure that sustainability and resilience inform its decisions. Wherever possible we will select green, recyclable, local options, always mindful that BANC's area of operation is in the heart of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

BANC is committed to social justice, access and equity for all through a working methodology of community development. BANC is managed by a voluntary Management Committee.



BANC values

- Inclusiveness • Sustainability • Equity • Social Justice

Management Committee 2017-2018

Adrienne Kailofer	President (Till May 2018)
Kathleen Chirwin	President (Since May 2018)
Kathleen Chirwin	Vice-President (Till May 2018)
Jo Hibbert	Vice-President (Since May 2018)
Chris Arnott	Treasurer
Bronwen Stinson	Secretary
Sandra Hoot	Member
Fran Reid	Member
Carla Billinghurst	Member (Since May 2018)
Michael Brogan	Member (Since May 2018)
Jennifer Ross	Member (Since May 2018)
Jo Hibbert	Member (From March-May 2018)
Ann Dinsdale	Member (From March-May 2018)
James McKidd	Member (Till March 2018)
Mellissa Opie	Member (Till March 2018)



**Our BANC Christmas Party
had great food for all**



BANCs famous Book Sale, was a huge success

BANC Staff

Working from the Neighbourhood Centre (the Vault)

Executive Officer	Jo Ridley (From April 2018)
Locum Manager	Jude Finch (From April till August)
Finance Manager	Dot Allen
Payroll/HR	Barbra McCauley
Community Development Worker	Jo Davies
NILS Officer	Cathy Rood
Hall Bookings & Projects Officer	Jade Hudson
Administration Assistant	Peter Karsten
HUFF Project Officer	Mina Howard
School for Seniors Coordinator	Octavia O'Brien
Cyber_Shed Coordinator	Simon Hare
Cyber_Shed Volunteer Office Manager	Bronwen Stinson
Information Technology (IT)	Nick Wilson
Cleaner	Michael Clarke

BOOSH - Before and After School and Vacation Care

Co-ordinator	Anne Parker
	Alison Rodrigo
	Nicky Roxburgh

Community Access Service

CAS Manager	Sue Johnston
Service Coordinator	Jane Byers
Intake and Support Coordinator	Fiona MacFarlane/Helen Beeby
Administration Assistant	Caroline Mitchell

Support Workers:

Alicia Owng	Michelle Seers
Colleen Roche	Nicole Toms
Debbie Hill	Patrick Moylan
Erin Grace	Paula Havey
Helen Beeby	Peter McQuade
Helen Lawrence	Rick Webb
Joanne Felton	Rika Kristall
Juliet Macken	Sarah Molineaux
Michaela Dabson	Stephen Carr
Michael Deane	Trent Kennaugh
	Vivian Georgiou

Volunteers @ BANC

Alma Magnus	Gate Ball at Lithgow Croquet Club (CAS)
Alyson Tyler	Jewellery Club (CAS)
Andrew Double	Cyber_Shed
Ashley Baker	BOOSH
Bronwen Stinson	Cyber_Shed Office Manager
Bryn Town	NILS Committee
Carol Crowther	Community Reader
Carol Kettlehohn	Community Reader
Cass Hawkins	Gate Ball at Lithgow Croquet Club (CAS)
Cathy Rood	Reception
Chris Arnott	NILS Committee
Christina Rayment	Morning Melodies (CAS)
David Hobbs	Reception (BANC)
Diana Reffold	Community Reader
Diana Swift	Reception (BANC & BOOSH)
Di Jones	Moove 'n' Groove Activity (CAS)
Fran Reid	Reception
Fran Visser (client)	Reception (CAS)
Gabrielle Burns	Jewellery Making (CAS)
Hilary Thompson	Community Reader
Howard Barton	Community Reader
Ian McGreal	BOOSH
Jade Hudson	Cyber_Shed
Ken Bromilow	Radio Blue Mountains Host
Liz Bond	Reception
Lois Horton-James	Community Reader
Maria Burns	Indoor Bowling at Portland RSL (CAS)
Maggie Williams	Croquet Activity at Lithgow Croquet Club (CAS)
Margaret Egan	Community Reader
Margaret Gough	Community Reader
Michael Mitchell	Reception (BOOSH)
Mike Chirgwin	Cyber_Shed
Murray Reid	Radio Blue Mountains host
Octavia O'Brien	School for Seniors
Peter Karsten	Projects, Reception & Administration Assistant
Phil Irvine	Reception
Roger Pinferi	Community Reader
Rose Graham	Reception (BANC)
Ross Ingram	Gate Ball at Lithgow Croquet Club (CAS)
Simon Hare	Cyber_Shed

President's Report



Kathleen Chirgwin

BLACKHEATH AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE has reached a very significant milestone. It is with pride and pleasure that we celebrate BANC's 25th year of community support and assistance. This is very much a two-way process as without your support and assistance we may never have reached this point.

Thank you to all our community members, volunteers, staff and management committee members for your contributions, suggestions, participation and hard work to achieve our current status.

I acknowledge two of our serving members, Chris Arnott and Sandra Hoot, who are retiring tonight, for their years of dedication to BANC. Their knowledge and experience have been very much appreciated during their terms of office.

Earlier this year we farewelled our former president Adrienne Kailofer and appreciate her guidance, leadership and committee skills, and members Geoff Brehaut and Mellissa Opie whose support of and contributions to BANC were also much appreciated. Thank you all, and to our current committee members - Jo Hibbert and Fran Reid, and new members Carla Billinghurst, Michael Brogan, Jenny Ross and Bronwen Stinson, who were elected and welcomed at our Special General Meeting earlier this year in order to replace those who had resigned for personal reasons.

Last year BANC encountered some financial difficulties which required us to consider ways in which we could reduce costs. One of the solutions was to restructure the administration of BANC by downgrading the position of Executive Officer to General Manager. We farewelled our Executive Officer, Jo Ridley, in April after three years with BANC and wish her all the best.

In April we employed a Locum Manager, Judy Finch, whose previous experience with BANC provided her with the necessary skills to fill this temporary position. We are very grateful for her input. In July, Leah Godfrey joined BANC as its new General Manager.

Whilst 2017/2018 was certainly not without its challenges on many levels, the commitment of all those mentioned above and others has enabled BANC to achieve positive results. There were many committee meetings held, resulting in ideas and suggestions being discussed, decisions made and actions put in place. Some of these decisions and actions were very difficult to make but necessary to ensure BANC's continued existence.

BANC's involvement within the community is wide ranging and dependent on staff, volunteers and members to keep the various programs operating as efficiently and skilfully as they do. The professionalism of those running and assisting with these services is reflected in the satisfaction expressed by the clients and their families. I will not go into detail about each service as the managers have each included a report about their own programs. You are encouraged to read these in order to develop a greater awareness of how the services function, the activities provided, progress made, future plans and, at times, difficulties within each area of community involvement.

In addition, the treasurer's report is also included.

An achievement of which we are particularly proud is BANC's performance when it underwent its three-yearly Third Party Verification procedure in May, and what a satisfying outcome. With the inclusion of staff, volunteers and committee members to prepare for this process, BANC passed with flying colours and received very positive feedback from the auditors. Thank you to all for the time and effort you put into the preparation for this demanding accreditation.

Other community events, requests and responsibilities which included BANC's participation in 2017/2018 were Remembrance Day, ANZAC Day, Blackheath Day, Blue Shorts, hall bookings, monetary grants to our Community Access Service, BOOSH, Community Development and Cybershed, computer usage and food distribution to name just a few. The managers will supply more information in their reports.

There was also a very successful book sale. Again, there were many people who participated in this event and their enthusiasm and energy ensured a healthy profit. Some of our volunteers also helped with the internal painting of part of the BOOSH building and tidying up the CAS garden.

BANC will continue to provide a caring environment for the population of Blackheath and its surrounding area whilst we have such a positive, engaged group of people willing to be involved and participating in helping others.

Kathleen Chirgwin

President



The infamous 'Blackheath 7' – Don't let the smiles fool you. When they were invited on My Kitchen Rules, at the Hydro, their critique sent shockwaves throughout the Blue Mountains. From Left: Kathleen Chirgwin, Annie Parker, Bryn Town, Liz Bond, Jade Hudson, Peter Karsten, Photo taken by Mike Chirgwin.



BANC Community Access

BANC Community Access has been in operation for over 20 years, delivering person-centred and innovative supports for people with a disability and mental health diagnosis. We do this so people can live the lives they want in our community.

For the last four years **BANC Community Access** has been navigating the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), whereby former NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care funding ceased and supports for people with a disability and a mental health diagnosis transitioned to be individually funded under the NDIS.

While in the last reporting period we managed the implementation of the Scheme for all remaining participants across our service, in this period we more broadly engaged with people in the community who had not previously accessed the Scheme, or were seeking new opportunities with their individualised funding. In response to the significant amount of requests for supports we received, we aimed to be responsive, person centred and creative. This has resulted in a diversification of supports which we offer, resulting in new experiences for our service participants and our support staff.

At the time of this report, BANC Community Access delivers NDIS supports to adults and children living in the mid-upper Blue Mountains and through to Lithgow, and Department of Health and Ageing Continuity of Support program supports (for people over 65 years of age who were ineligible for the NDIS).

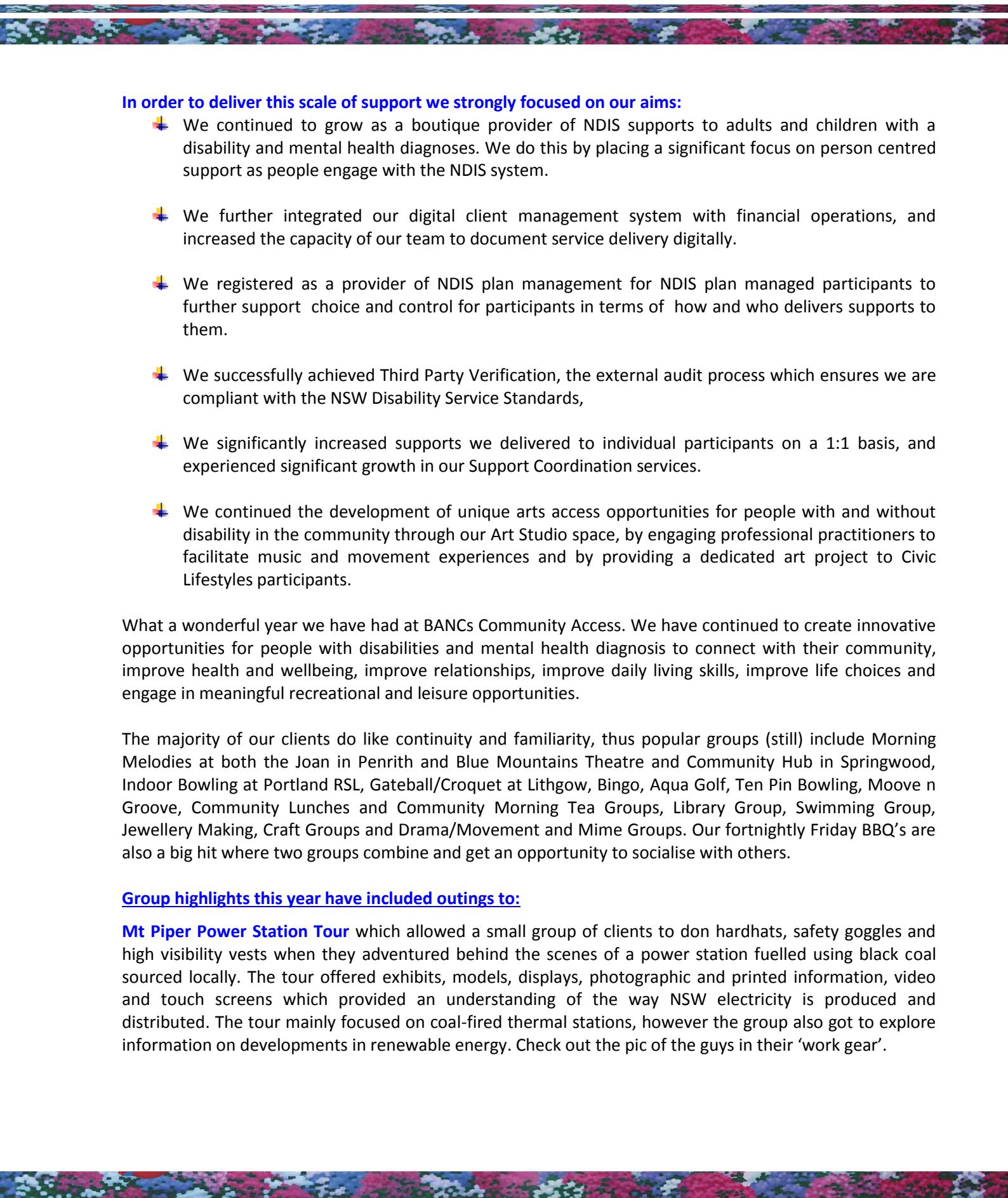
We deliver:

- Supports to assist with daily life – in home and in the community
- Social and community participation with individuals and in small groups
- Skills Development
- Support Coordination
- Plan Management
- Transport Support
- Supports to volunteer or seek employment or further education
- Art Therapy
- Seniors Activities for older people with a disability or mental health diagnosis

Of particular note is our unique approach to working closely with individuals to deliver supports which engage them in their interests and aspirations – we offer creative arts supports, bush adventure activities, support to volunteer and access educational or learning experiences, a dedicated art studio facilitated by a professional practicing artist, travel training, cooking, skills to obtain a learner driver permit, digital skills support, sewing and money handling/budgeting. Our Support Coordination and Plan Management services are highly personalised and aimed at providing maximum choice.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES THROUGH 2017/18

BANC Community Access delivered in excess of 25,000 hours of supports to adults and children with a disability and/or mental health diagnoses in the Blue Mountains Region.



In order to deliver this scale of support we strongly focused on our aims:

- ⊕ We continued to grow as a boutique provider of NDIS supports to adults and children with a disability and mental health diagnoses. We do this by placing a significant focus on person centred support as people engage with the NDIS system.
- ⊕ We further integrated our digital client management system with financial operations, and increased the capacity of our team to document service delivery digitally.
- ⊕ We registered as a provider of NDIS plan management for NDIS plan managed participants to further support choice and control for participants in terms of how and who delivers supports to them.
- ⊕ We successfully achieved Third Party Verification, the external audit process which ensures we are compliant with the NSW Disability Service Standards,
- ⊕ We significantly increased supports we delivered to individual participants on a 1:1 basis, and experienced significant growth in our Support Coordination services.
- ⊕ We continued the development of unique arts access opportunities for people with and without disability in the community through our Art Studio space, by engaging professional practitioners to facilitate music and movement experiences and by providing a dedicated art project to Civic Lifestyles participants.

What a wonderful year we have had at BANCs Community Access. We have continued to create innovative opportunities for people with disabilities and mental health diagnosis to connect with their community, improve health and wellbeing, improve relationships, improve daily living skills, improve life choices and engage in meaningful recreational and leisure opportunities.

The majority of our clients do like continuity and familiarity, thus popular groups (still) include Morning Melodies at both the Joan in Penrith and Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood, Indoor Bowling at Portland RSL, Gateball/Croquet at Lithgow, Bingo, Aqua Golf, Ten Pin Bowling, Moove n Groove, Community Lunches and Community Morning Tea Groups, Library Group, Swimming Group, Jewellery Making, Craft Groups and Drama/Movement and Mime Groups. Our fortnightly Friday BBQ's are also a big hit where two groups combine and get an opportunity to socialise with others.

Group highlights this year have included outings to:

Mt Piper Power Station Tour which allowed a small group of clients to don hardhats, safety goggles and high visibility vests when they adventured behind the scenes of a power station fuelled using black coal sourced locally. The tour offered exhibits, models, displays, photographic and printed information, video and touch screens which provided an understanding of the way NSW electricity is produced and distributed. The tour mainly focused on coal-fired thermal stations, however the group also got to explore information on developments in renewable energy. Check out the pic of the guys in their 'work gear'.

Arms of Australia Inn Museum in the Penrith Valley at Emu Plains was once a staging post for travellers making the trip from Sydney over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and the goldfields. One of its buildings was built in 1826 and is now a wonderfully accessible museum that contains artefacts either used or manufactured in the local area and thousands of photos. We would really like to thank the volunteers at the Museum for being so welcoming and accommodating on our visit.

Calmsley City Farm is a farm based attraction, in Fairfield Sydney. The large group who attended enjoyed a variety of shows and exhibits such as the whip cracking, sheep shearing, working dog show and cow milking. In particular the group really enjoyed the opportunity to get up close to and feed a range of native and farmyard animals. Added bonus was all the new babies born just before Spring!

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre exhibitions as well as exhibitions at the Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest. Of particular interest was a free accessible guided tour for individuals living with a disability - the Tactile Exhibition was a vibrant and colourful exhibition exploring the sense of touch that allowed client a hands on experience

We also noticed a huge increase in 1:1 supports this last year. 1:1 supports provided during the year were flexible, reviewed regularly and are adapted to meet changes in interests and needs. A number of 1:1 supports were delivered closer to home and provided assistance to clients with daily life in the home and the community. Other 1:1 supports assisted some clients with travel training and exploring the wider community that they live in and further afield such as attending a footy game at ANZ Stadium and going to the Easter Show.

One particular client engaged in weekly supports to visit places of interest such as The Maritime Museum, Featherdale Wildlife Park, Norman Lindsay Museum and Gallery, Waradah Aboriginal Centre, Olympic park – Public Art Walk, Sea Life Sydney and Old Government House in Parramatta.

Another one of our clients has taken up a 1:1 support seeking assistance and guidance with hand sewing projects. Over the last few months this client has completed a gorgeous pillow and pin cushion that she is extremely proud of. It's such a joy for staff to see this client's confidence increase. She has just ordered herself a sewing machine and we are looking forward to seeing her next completed sewing project.

We have also provided Bush Adventure supports to a number of children (however this kind of support is open to people of all ages and abilities) over the last year giving them the chance to explore, enjoy and discover the wonders of nature in our beautiful home of the Blue Mountains.

THE TEAM

BANC Community Access is fortunate to work with remarkable people. Thank you to Jo Ridley, BANC Executive Officer who left her role in April, 2018 – we appreciate your leadership in a very challenging transitional time for our service. Special thanks to BANC Finance Manager Dot Allen, for her intensive work preparing and tracking budgets, unit costing and embarking on adventures in NDIS plan management.

The small senior team at **BANC Community Access** comprises of a service delivery coordinator, manager, support coordinator, an administration officer and all of these roles are part time. The team has worked intensively to navigate the delivery of supports under the NDIS scheme and the Continuity of Support Program, and their performance has been outstanding:



Jane Byers coordinates the service cohesively managing the delivery of group and individual supports, programming rostering, developing new activities and leading the support team's approach to supporting participants. Jane's work is exceptional, and we are very fortunate she is a key team member. Caroline Mitchell is the administration officer for **BANC Community Access** and her work is invaluable, surfing the administrative complexity of the NDIS, data collection, fleet coordination, and reporting on the Continuity of Support program, whilst lending a hand right throughout the service.

At the end of the reporting period, Helen Beeby (Bee) resigned from her role as Support Coordinator. We thank Bee for her work being the first NDIS Support Coordinator with our service and for establishing a highly professional, person focused Support Coordination service.

Fiona MacFarlane commenced the role of locum Support Coordinator at the end of the reporting period and has taken to the role like a duck to water, working closely with the complexities of the NDIS and ensuring participants are able to utilise their NDIS plans to organise meaningful and essential supports.

We welcomed a number of support workers to our team during the year who joined some longer serving support staff. This was to meet the increase in demand for supports, and to replace some people who we farewelled with thanks. We are proud to report that we continuously receive feedback that our support staff provide excellent support to our service participants. Thank you to our excellent support worker team.

Staff engaged in a number of development opportunities over the year including: Driver training; manual handling training, 1st Aid training and NDIS Support Coordination training. Staff also attended various forums, briefings and sector events.

We have a fabulous team of support workers and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their roles in providing dedicated, compassionate, professional and diverse supports to our clients. I would also like to extend my thanks to staff for their commitment in learning to navigate our ever changing client management system to complete individual client notes after each support and to access their rosters.

The team at BANCs Community Access looks forward to partaking in these wonderful activities again and engaging in other exciting activities, supports and programs in 2018/19.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Sustainability

The questionable sustainability of delivering supports under the NDIS Scheme has been flagged in several formal sector papers and reviews throughout this reporting period. We welcome the announcement of an increase in pricing from July 1 2018, and hope this positively impacts our ability to sustain services under the scheme. We also note several issues remain regarding collection of payment for supports, NDIS plan gaps for participants and evolving policies and rules add to the complex operating environment also testing sustainability for the majority of providers. We will continue to work to navigate these challenges and remain a key community based provider of supports.

NDIS Certification

After successfully achieving our Third party accreditation to keep our NDIS registration current in May, 2018, we are now preparing for the transfer of our registration and a new audit process under the oversight of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. We support a nationally consistent system for safeguarding and NDIS registration however acknowledge the tremendous tasks ahead for all providers to navigate this process.

Service Development

We continue to seek opportunities to support people in our community, and to develop programs in response to community needs and interests. We are excited by the prospect of developing a refreshed online presence and service promotion materials in the coming year, and look forward to offering new opportunities which are currently in development.

In conclusion

Thanks to the support of participants, staff, volunteers and Management Committee across the organisation, BANC Community Access is emerging as strong local provider of supports to people in our community under the NDIS and Continuity of Support Schemes. While we expect challenges in the year ahead, we are excited to explore the opportunities ahead.

We would also like to thank the following for their support:

The Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub at Springwood,
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre
Blue Mountains Food Services –BMFS,
Community Connection Café with NADO
Blue Mountains Libraries,
Katoomba Aquatic Centre,
United Cinema's Katoomba (The Edge)
Mt Vic Flicks,
Zone Bowling at Penrith,
Aqua Golf at Panthers Penrith,
The Joan – at Penrith
Mountain High Pies in Wentworth Falls,
Wentworth Falls Bowling Club,
Blue Mountains Hotel Lawson (Pub)
Canton Palace in Wentworth Falls,
The Ivan Hoe at Blackheath,
Calmsley City Farm,
Mt Piper Power Station
Arms of Australia Inn Museum,
The Penrith Reginal Gallery & The Lewers Bequest.

Sue Johnston

Jane Byers

BANC Community Access Manager and BANC Community Access Service Coordinator

Blackheath Out Of School Hours (BOOSH)



Annie Parker

2018 started off with aplomb! We had more permanent bookings for Before and After School Care than in the previous years, with casual bookings topping up the numbers. Vacation Care attendances looked quite healthy too. Over the course of the year, we have continued to fluctuate with numbers and this is based on family need and necessity for work related reasons or respite breaks.

There has been an increase in grandparent/ relative custodial care this year, so we have been working more closely with Family and Community Services and the Sydney Metro West Inclusion Hub/NSW Inclusion Agency which offers funding through their Inclusion Support Program.

Respite and child protective care has increased and we feel proud at BOOSH to be able to support these and all of our families, as much as possible.

This year has also seen greater use of our Before School program by the Blue Mountains Christian College and Mt. Victoria Public School, with children being escorted onto the morning buses and taken to their schools.

During the After School Care program, we have been able to continue to support the children's extra-curricular activities escorting them to and from Blackheath Public School for dance and music classes. The Bond of \$100 per family for permanent bookings was introduced at the beginning of the year. This has not impacted on permanent booking numbers and families have happily accepted this as part of our operational cost.

Casual bookings, with the required 24 hour notice given, continue to be very popular and supportive for families who need us on an ad hoc basis. This demonstrated the need for us to be flexible in service delivery.

We continue to draw from a wider demographic during Vacation Care with children attending from 7 different schools in total. Many of these children come under the special needs banner, so we appreciate greatly the funded support from our Inclusion Agency, which enable us to employ a third staff member for each shift. This applies to After School care too.

During Vacation Care, we are continuing to work with Jo Davies, our Community Development Worker, organising activities which the community can join in on with us too. This year has seen more families taking up this great offer.



During term time, our positive relationships between the 3 schools continues to flourish, these schools being Blackheath Public School, Mt Victoria Public School and the Blue Mountains Christian College. We are now using the Blue Mountains Christian College bus for our excursions during Vacation Care, free of charge, which is wonderful.

Talking of positivity and support, the Katoomba Co-op has donated some food vouchers for us to use to purchase food items for our afternoon tea menu. This has been greatly appreciated and the children made then a very special Thank You card.

In July, we saw the introduction of the new Child Care Subsidy system, a government initiative, which replaces the older Child Care Benefit and Rebate programs. For all services this has been a difficult and problematic transition, (through no fault of services) and families have had to comply with the many directives from Centrelink in order to continue appreciating the benefits. My thanks go to Barbra for her never-ending perseverance and patience whilst grappling with this and the families too for their patience.

This new system is supposed to be an improvement for everyone!

We were successful in being awarded a grant of \$10,000 from the Commonwealth Bank this year. So far, some resources for the children have been purchased along with new table and chairs for the children which suit all ages and heights. They look better too, making the Cottage a more inviting environment. We would like to do some more internal painting in the future.

I have had the pleasure of working with a wonderful team of staff, including, Alison, Nicky, Jade and Michael who are consistent regulars. We are also supported by valuable members in our casual pool. All members of my team show dedication, commitment and professionalism to our children, families and to BOOSH as a whole. I value each and every one, and feel honoured to be their leader. Also, I would like to thank Simon, from Cyber_Shed for his help and advice, and also his patience!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the BANC Management Committee, Jo Ridley, Jude Finch, Dot and Barbra, for their support and advice throughout the year and look forward to continue working with everyone and everybody.

Anne Parker
BOOSH Co-ordinator.



Being awarded a grant of \$10,000 from the Commonwealth Bank this year

No Interest Loans (NILS)

What is NILS?

NILS provides individuals and families on a low income, access to safe, fair and affordable credit with no fees, no charges and no interest.

NILS@BANC has been providing NILS to people in the upper mountains for over 15 years through a process of circular community credit. When a borrower makes a repayment to NILS, funds are then available to someone else in the community.

Good Shepherd Microfinance accredits NILS@BANC and all other NILS programs across Australia. Whilst there continues to be a strong focus on improving opportunities for women and girls; NILS is also working to build borrowers financial capability and confidence through the experience of applying for a loan and successfully meeting their repayment obligations. A reduction in the use of payday lenders by NILS clients is also an ongoing goal of the program.

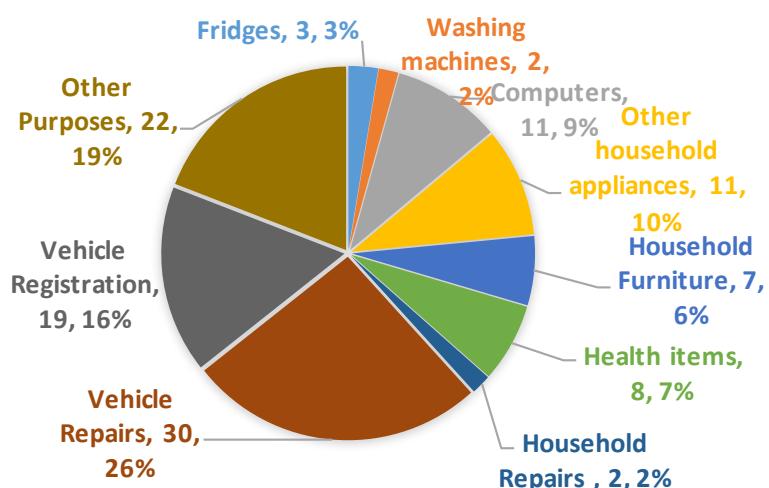


Cathy Rood

Selected statistics for 2017-18

Number of Approved Loans in the financial year: **83** (46% female, 54% male; 19% identify as ATSI; and of borrowers receiving Centrelink payments over 46% received a Disability Support Pension).

Number of Items Purchased: **115** (1.38 items per loan). The break-up of items purchased is shown on the diagram below.



As shown the majority of loans in the upper mountains were overwhelmingly for vehicle related items (42%) reflecting the necessity of car ownership in this area of NSW. Twenty-five percent of loans were for appliances including refrigerators and washing machines; and 9% of loans were for computers for use by clients in pursuing educational opportunities in the main.

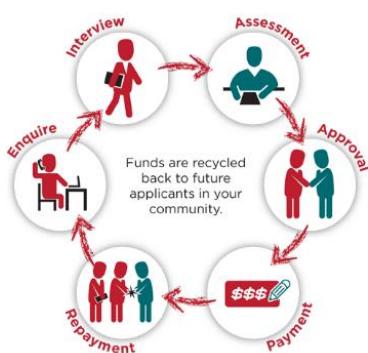
Changes to NILS

There have been numerous changes to NILS both at BANC and in the general NILS program in 2017-18. In 2017 Good Shepherd Microfinance initiated a review of the NILS program Australia-wide. One result of this review was that NILS providers were split into Client Service Providers (CSP), Loan Providers (LP) or both. Agencies were asked to tender to provide these services. Although BANC applied to become both we were successful in becoming a CSP. Ten NSW agencies were successful becoming loan providers. CSPs are registered to promote NILS, assist eligible people to apply for a loan; gather necessary documents from the applicant; and submit the application to a loan provider who assesses and provides ongoing management of the loan.

Other significant changes from the review include: loans are now for a maximum of \$1500 (up from \$1200), the NAB provides all money to the loan provider agencies in partnership with Good Shepherd Microfinance; and borrowers are able to commence a second loan as long as the first loan is more than half paid off and the total of the new loans is not more than \$1500.

What this means for NILS@BANC now and in the future

NILS@BANC, as a CSP, will continue to provide information to the community on NILS; conduct loan interviews mainly at the BANC office, or over the phone or at other centres (if required); and send applications to our loan providers.



Loans are now applied for by the NILS Officer using the new secure NILSApp online portal whereby the applicant's information and documents are uploaded by BANC and then submitted online to a loan provider. It is important to note that the overall process is essentially the same and will continue to strive to ensure clients are able to access affordable finance. Unfortunately due to these changes the BANC NILS Loan Committee will no longer be meeting to assess loans.

Existing loans provided by NILS@BANC will continue to be managed at BANC until they are paid off. NILS@BANC is continuing to be supported by the NSW Office of Fair Trading to provide administration funds to employ a NILS Officer.

Personnel Changes

In addition to program changes there has been a number of changes in personnel providing NILS@BANC. Long-time Community Resilience Worker and NILS worker, Deborah Allen, resigned in June 2017 to pursue other adventures and for six months Samantha Vandell, from Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre, stepped in to provide our NILS service. In January 2018 myself, Cathy Rood, commenced as the NILS Officer. Jade Hudson has also been trained in the new process and is able to assist with NILS enquiries and applications.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Deborah Allen for over seven years of service to BANC and NILS. Deb provided invaluable support to the upper mountains community in providing NILS and other support programs as well as ably helping those who just popped in to the centre. We wish her well in her new endeavours. I would like also like to convey BANC's appreciation to Samantha for keeping NILS going in the second half of 2017.

Finally I would like to thank our final NILS Committee volunteers Bryn Town, Kath Chirgwin, and Chris Arnott for their support, encouragement and hard work not only for this year but for all the time they have been on the committee. It has made mine and previous NILS workers job so much easier having their support at the end of the phone or in person.

Cathy Rood
NILS Officer

Community Development

Blackheath Day

We had another fabulous community day on May 12th 2018, with over 300 people coming together to celebrate our community - and there is much to celebrate in this wonderful village. Thanks to our partner, the Blackheath and District Chamber of Commerce, all the volunteers, performers and our community members for their outstanding contributions and to my colleague Jade Hudson for doing such a fine job co-ordinating the event this year.



Fabulous Blue Shorts trophies made by Murray Reid and Cathy Rood

made by a child of 12 and under. Blue Shorts ran in the evening to a packed theatre audience. We hope to be able to run this again in 2019, so watch out for information or phone us please!

Blackheath Village Map

Making the Blackheath Village map this year came about through an exciting opportunity and partnership between Blackheath Public School and BANC. Research shows that children who are connected to local places and spaces, as well as to community networks tend to do better in life and when they are faced with adversity. Making this map enabled the children to think about the places and spaces in Blackheath that they see every day, to write poems and to reflect on its history. Thank you to all the children who participated in this project, to Cathy Rood, Hannah Surtees and Judi White who assisted with it, and for all the local businesses and groups who supported the cost of printing it. This includes the Popes Glen Bushcare Group, Blackheath Automotive, Richardson and Wrench, Blackheath Rotary Club, Blackheath Golf and Community Club and Cyber_Shed. Please visit them if you would like to purchase a copy, or pick one up from BANC HQ.



The Map of Blackheath

BANC – Working for people and the small communities at the top of the mountains

Senior's Events:

For Senior's Week this year, we had a science fiction inspired film screening and delicious morning tea. Thanks to Robin Bell for contributing his time and equipment here, and to Blue Mountains City Council for their support. We nominated a number of volunteers for the Senior's Week Awards this year: Lois Horton-James, Howard Barton, Carol Kettlehohn and Margaret Egan for their long-term contribution to the Community Readers program; Margaret Gough and Bob Burnett for their contribution to the Mount Victoria community; and Fran Reid for her assistance with the Food Recovery program at BANC.

Get Ready Week:

BANC partnered with Blackheath Public School and the Blackheath/Mt Victoria Rural Fire Service brigade to bring an information session and fire truck to the school in September. The children enjoyed learning important bushfire safety information and had a climb on the truck/spray of the hose.

Mental Health First Aid:

In 2017 and 2018, we collaborated with Springwood and Winmalee Neighbourhood Centres and our local Mental Health Master Trainer Jane Armstrong in order to provide Mental Health First Aid training courses to our local community. BANC was responsible for running 3 separate courses during that time, in both Katoomba and Lawson. We are keen to train as many people as possible, as knowing what to do when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis could well save someone's life. Different courses focus on a variety of different age groups, including Youth, General and coming soon, Seniors so there is a course for everyone. Please contact me for further information.

The Stronger Family Alliance:

"The Blue Mountains City Council and the Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) share a vision of vibrant communities where child and family services work together with one aim – maximising the wellbeing and resilience of children, young people and their families" (Child and Family Plan, 2012). BANC is part of this alliance of government, non-government, community and voluntary organisations. There is a shift in the target group of these organisations as young people up to the age of 21 are also included in this next iteration of the Child, Youth and Family Plan. The SFA is also working hard to work out the best way to evaluate the programs and projects undertaken in the community in order to ensure that we are doing the best job we can.

The Hub At The Top:

The Hub at The Top (HATT) group is another way that BANC is supporting the SFA initiative, by bringing together the children and families of Blackheath, Mount Victoria, and other local groups and communities. There are regular meetings of the HATT committee comprising representatives from the local library, schools, pre-schools, playgroups and government and non-government organisations. Any member of the community is welcome to attend these sessions which occur quarterly, so please contact me for further information.



The Blackheath RFS crew Mina Howard, Mike Doolan and Nicole Honeyman at Blackheath Public School for Get Ready Week.

Hub Playgroups and Parenting Groups:

The Hub Playgroup has been in operation in Blackheath (Mondays in the school hall during term-time from 9am – 11am) facilitated by trained family worker from Thrive Services and wonderful local volunteers. BANC partnered with both Gateway Family Services and Thrive to provide parenting programs to parents and carers in Blackheath and Mount Victoria.

Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network (BLINN):

This year we have continued our work with the Blue Mountains Lithgow Integrated Neighbourhood Network (BLINN) consulting with the community of the Upper Mountains with “ASK” exercises capturing the authentic voices of our community and its aspirations. Over the past several months, we have been focusing on peoples’ perceptions of safety in their community. Thank you to those who have already participated in a Conversation or Ask exercise. This is an ongoing piece of work, so expect to see more of it in the upcoming months. We want to use the information that we obtain to assist us to seek funding and grant opportunities.

Community Readers:

Literacy is one of the most fundamental foundations for success in school and life and has many benefits for children, their families, the community and society as a whole. We are proud to continue our support of the Community Readers Program at Mount Victoria Public School. We are so grateful to the volunteers who attend the school once a week for about an hour. They listen to the children read and undertake other word-based activities. This scheme is great fun. Please contact me if you would like more information about this project.

Other opportunities:

I was fortunate to participate in the Women’s Heart Health photographic workshops and exhibition in partnership with multiple organisations and the Blue Mountains Women’s Heath and Resource Centre. On behalf of BANC, I was also able to curate the Blue Fringe Arts Exhibition for another year, which is always an incredible privilege.



Women's Heart Health exhibition

Vacation workshops

We continue to collaborate with BOOSH to bring affordable vacation activities for children and their families.

Volunteers

Many of the events and activities above just would not be possible without the generosity of the volunteers in this community, in ideas, time and resources. Thank you again for your contributions in making this part of the Upper Mountains such a remarkable place to live, work and visit.



References and other useful contacts:

Blue Mountains Child and Family Plan (2010) Blue Mountains City Council, Australia.

For information about the Stronger Families Alliance please contact: www.strongerfamilies.co

To participate in the Hub At The Top or the Community Readers project please contact:
com.development@banc.org.au

Volunteers:

Community Readers:

Margaret Egan, Howard Barton, Carol Crowther, Margaret Gough, Lois Horton-James, Carol Kettlehohn, Diane Reffold, Roger Pinferi, Elizabeth Pinferi and Hilary Thompson.

Get Ready Week:

The crew from Blackheath Rural Fire Service

Senior's Week:

Robin Bell and Cathy Rood

Blue Shorts:

Charlie Hudson-Baker, Ruby Kerr, Mia Kerr, Sophie Clement, Charlie Cousins, Charlie Tanner, Max Ackerman and Finn Cousins, Kirsten Mulholland, Adam Cousins, Murray Reid, Matt Curry, Norman Yeend, Lindena Robb, Robin Bell, Robin Martin, Claire Absolum, Peter Karsten, Adam Cousins, Kirsten Mulholland, Claire Absolum, Stephen Davis, Undine Marshall, Sean O'Keefe, Beth Champion, Roger Barber, Carol Thompson and the cast and crew of Popcorn. Jade Hudson, Murray Reid, Mina Howard, the staff at Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre and everyone who helped make Blue Shorts 2018 happen.

Blackheath Day:

Liz Bond, Michael, Fran Reid, Peter Karsten, Lindena Robb, Murray Reid plus many other choirs, dancers and stall holders. A special thank you to Blackheath Baptist Church for bringing along a couple of jumping castles, which brought a lot of fun to the morning!

Jo Davies

Community Development Worker

Cyber Shed



Simon Hare



CYBER_SHED advocates community digital inclusion, and teaches digital literacy skills, aiming to close the widening digital divide. We educate & equip people to stay connected with far-flung family, participate in the broader community & stay safe online.

We do this one-to-one, in a friendly no-jargon, non-threatening way. We offer advice on choosing new information & communication technology (ICT) equipment - including laptops, tablets & mobile phones. We also advise on best internet service provider options for the upper mountains.

Our volunteer tutors teach all the three main operating systems: Windows, Android & Apple. We encourage people to bring along their own portable device - tablet or laptop & use our free Wi-Fi - or learn on our big-screen desktop PCs.

CYBER_SHED is located at The Principal's Cottage 207 Great Western Highway.

BE CONNECTED NETWORK

During the reporting year we began to benefit from the rollout of BE CONNECTED, which replaced Broadband for seniors in late 2017.

"The Be Connected Network is made up of community partners from around Australia helping to make a difference to the lives of digitally excluded people." From CYBER_SHED's point of view benefits include a range of available grants, and the provision of free student-focused online tuition options, which scaffold face to face classes.

CYBER_SHED CORE ACTIVITIES

SILVER SURFERS seniors' tuition

We offer over-50s four sessions one-to-one digital literacy tuition without charge. We also offer fee-for-service tuition & small classes on demand, with a sliding scale of fees based on student capacity to pay.

During 2017-18 CYBER_SHED opened three days/week, offering up to 15 teaching hours. A total of 37 individual students learned from volunteer tutors, across a total 142 one-hour visit. This averages to over 4 visits per week, across the 40 weeks of public school terms that Cyber_Shed opens.



Any one student visited between 1 and 15 times across the year. N.B. these are documented/booked student visits. We also have unbooked drop-ins inquiries, so overall contact figures are higher.

VOLUNTEER STAFF 2017-18

Andrew Double, Mike Chirgwin, Jade Hudson, Bronwen Stinson

Many thanks to our generous volunteers, without whose assistance we would be unable to operate:

Cyber_Shed Coordinator & volunteer tutor Simon Hare works a core of 9-3 Tuesday to Thursday each week. 5.5hours per week paid, remainder volunteer.

EQUIPMENT

Cyber_Shed continues to attract significant equipment donations from individuals & peer organisations. We either make use of these in-house at Cyber_Shed, distribute across the organisation or re-donate to students in need. We offer colour printing, scanning, laminating etc at BANC standard rates. Printing is available Wi-Fi from mobile devices.

PROMOTION

Cyber_Shed is active on Twitter daily, with a following of approximately 400. Weekly we publish our online newsletter Cyber_Shed digital cottage: digital inclusion | smart work | kids coding | a weekly newsletter curated in the Blue Mountains of NSW Australia. We encourage you to consider subscribing at www.cybershed.org.au

CYBER_SHED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

NBN ROLLOUT FEEDBACK COORDINATION

Since late 2016 Cyber_Shed has been gathering NBN rollout feedback from the community, and continues to do so.

It is noteworthy that since her visit to Blackheath in August 2017 Shadow Minister for Communications Michelle Rowland has initiated a national survey of NBN consumer satisfaction. Ahead of the public NBN forum she & Susan Templeman and their team joined Simon, tutor Mike Chirgwin, a student & a remote worker at Cyber_Shed for a twenty minute discussion.

Michelle was particularly interested in the non-funding of myGov registrations, and the lack of info about how DLOA funding will be granted.

She suggested SH work with Templeman's office on briefing for Senate Estimates.

BUSHFIRE/DISASTER PREPARATION and MY HEALTH RECORD



DESK HIRE

We have expanded opening hours for smart work to five days, Monday to Friday, in hopes this added flexibility will increase the number of interested clients. Hours remain 9AM to 3PM. Cyber_Shed digital cottage benefits include high-speed Wi-Fi, multi-function colour printer with scanner, excellent mobile phone reception, a short 5 min walk from Blackheath Station, located 1 minute from Blackheath Public School, great for working parents.

We continue to enjoy both in-kind & actual support from Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE), most particularly free online publicity via MTNS MADE brand website at
http://mtnsmade.com.au/listing/cyber_shed-digital-cottage

DONORS 2017-18

Cyber_Shed would like to acknowledge its generous donors during the 2017-18 reporting year. They include Wendy Freer, Denis Golding, Maree Kearns, Yvonne McReady, Robert O'Neill, Roger Pinferi, Victoria Rodas & Nicole Roxburgh, to name but a few. We send a warm thank you to all our donors. Your donations help keep the good ship Cyber_Shed afloat. All donations are most welcome, and as BANC is a registered charity (with Deductible Gift Recipient status), any donation is tax deductible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This year Cyber_Shed acknowledges the generous support of the federal government's Stronger Communities program, the National Be Connected Network and the 2018 KICK STARTER Mentorship scheme run by Social Enterprise Finance Australia, Macquarie Group and NCOSS.

CYBER_SHED acknowledges the traditional indigenous owners of the land on which we teach and learn, the Darug and Gundungurra people.

Simon Hare

Cyber_Shed Coordinator

Blackheath Theatre Company

BTC is now in its third year and exciting developments are taking place.

In our first year we put on *Murder on the Blackheath Express* written by our member and co-founder Myra Hutton. In our second year we performed three short plays and this year four short plays one of which was written by two members of the theatre.

Each season performed to capacity audiences. The short play seasons were performed in the Bates Hall converted into an intimate theatre.

We have run workshops in acting techniques and expression, directing and play writing. We have a wonderful collection of costumes and tiered seating in our store.

After our mid-year performances we held a series of 'planning for the future' meetings with the result that we now have a proposed Board with responsibility for all aspects of production and a draft plan for a three season, three year program. Our search for suitable premises and storage continues.

Don't miss the 2019 seasons.



Blackheath Radio Blue Mountains



The Blackheath Hour on Radio Blue Mountains

Every Thursday morning local lads Murray Reid, Ken Bromilow and Tad Breezy take to the airwaves, pontificating on matters of uncertain import, sharing news both fake and otherwise.

This year has seen them do fewer interviews and more social commentary, discussing the local arts, music and social scene.

Remember to listen in each Thursday from 10am



Murry Reid



Ken Bromilow

The Heathens Choir



BMRSG concert

The Heathens Choir is a happy place these days, with 75 members on our books and over 50 people at most weekly rehearsals and performances. So far we have managed to maintain a welcoming atmosphere despite the growing size of the group, thanks in part to our small team of members who bake for the choir each week and encourage our tea breaks to be times of animated conversation as well as home baked refreshment. This year we almost continued our practice of keeping term 1 free of any performing commitments, in order to give new members time to get a few songs under their belts and to make some friends within the group. This practice also works really well for old and new members, as it is our best chance to learn some new repertoire without the pressure of getting ready for a performance.

Here is a list of the choir's performances and commitments this year:

April - a shared social event with the Phoenix Choir, a bush dance in Phillips Hall with a wonderful bush band from Sydney, the Inland Navigators. **May** - Blackheath Day; followed by the Mt Victoria Great Train Weekend. Choir member Robin Mosman wrote a song called Queen of the Great Western Line, which encapsulates the story of bringing the railway up the Blue Mountains. It was very well received, especially by the government officials present for the event. **June** - our most significant event for the year was a fundraising concert for the Blue Mountains



Leura Gardens festival 2017

Refugee Support Group, with the Spooky Men's Chorale as the main act and the Heathens as support. The event was a huge success and a credit to the hard work and organisational abilities of some of our members. The following week, we paid a visit to the residents at Morven Gardens Nursing Home. **August** - Our main focus for term 3 was the Blackheath Choir Festival, always a major and enjoyable event in our calendar. **September** - Rydal Daffodil Festival and Leura Gardens Festival, both enjoyable informal performances. **October** (forthcoming) - opening of Blackheath Art Show, this year being the 50th anniversary. **December** - to finish a busy year we have our regular Christmas concert with the Blue Mountains City Band in December, as well as an invitation from Blackheath Golf Club to do a Saturday night performance.

I will be away for 2 weeks in October, during which time choir member and experienced singing teacher and performer, Deb Wells, will lead rehearsals and lead the choir at the Art Show opening. I'm most grateful to Deb for the ongoing musical and performance tuition she has offered throughout the year. We're so lucky to have the support of BANC through provision of rehearsal and performance space, public liability insurance, photocopying and moral support.

Christine Wheeler

Director

The Welcome Table



The Welcome Table is an initiative created by Blackheath local Lindena Robb and is supported as a community development initiative by BANC.

The aim of The Welcome Table is to generate social capital at both the individual and community level by creating a place where people can get together, meet others and make connections. If people live within the same geographic area, know one another, share a number of social ties and feel a commitment to the place where they live, then this increases the level of community social capacity. The Welcome Table also increases the capacity of social wellbeing in this community. As the population ages and more people live alone, social isolation amongst older people is emerging as one of the major issues facing industrialised societies, particularly due to the adverse impact that this can have on health and wellbeing.

Lindena Robb

The Welcome Table is a place where everyone is welcome. It provides a time and place to welcome newcomers to the community, as well as to facilitate connections between new and existing locals. The Welcome Table is a place to share stories and experiences about activities and opportunities in the locale, as well as a place where those who find social interaction challenging can come and be with other people on a regular basis. Once a week from 3.30 till 5pm, The Welcome Table is open for anyone to sit, buy a coffee, and meet others. People come to know it as a place they can visit every week and meet other people from their community. Some people may have just arrived in the town, some come for a chat, and others come because they may be lonely, want some company, or have found it difficult to make friends.

"The Welcome Table is one of the best initiatives that I have come across. Not only does it serve as a get-to-know others platform, but also a social network that serves the most wonderful purpose of support. Keeping an eye out for each other is not always easily achieved in a society where busy lives don't facilitate such an outcome."

"I moved to Blackheath a few years ago and mentioned to a local shop assistant that I was finding it hard to feel part of the community. She recommended the Welcome Table. I was made to feel most welcome from the first time I attended and I have been attending whenever possible ever since... I've forged friendships, as I'm sure most of us have and we all enjoy the laughs and camaraderie of the group ably led by Lindena."

"Some of the encounters we have had via the Welcome Table lead to further contact outside and friendships or liaisons develop – strengthening the very important fabric of community. In addition, faces are recognised and acknowledged in the street making one feel at home and happy."

"I was struggling to make connections after living in Blackheath for 12 months. I needed to be part of a community but it is hard to do this. I felt isolated and that I did not belong. The Welcome Table is ideal for me, as I am somewhat anxious and though I am outgoing I am not good at small talk... after being welcomed here my resilience is amplified, my mental health is soothed and I am no longer isolated. This is community development at its best!"

Lindena Robb

Hostess & Organiser

Heads Up for Fire (HUFF)



Mina Howard

The Heads Up For Fire and any emergency (HUFF) Project continues to remain active with one coordinator and seventy-seven facilitators. We now have Medlow Bath firmly established with seven facilitators and the newsletter being distributed via the Medlow Bath Residents Association's website.

The HUFF Newsletter is continuing to be distributed on a monthly basis keeping the issue of being prepared and connected with neighbours in the forefront of our minds. Indeed, the list of people who receive the newsletter continues to increase with thirty-nine people on the mailing list at present.

By the end of 2017 the HUFF Coordinator had completed a program of visits to seniors groups in our community, including Rotary, CWA, The Men's Shed, PROBUS and Red Cross. Visits were also made to Blackheath Public School where a comprehensive five week program was carried out to help our younger community members become more knowledgeable about the risks inherent with living in the Blue Mountains. A visit was also made to Mountains Christian College.

HUFF is gradually spreading its message to other villages in the Blue Mountains via the local Rural Fire Service (RFS) brigades. This is the result of a presentation being made about HUFF at the inaugural Blue Mountains District RFS Community Engagement Conference held in August 2017. Those brigades who are trialling HUFF have made the vital connection with their Neighbourhood Centres who have come under the Mountains Community Resource Network (MCRN) umbrella thanks to the support of its coordinator Kris Newton. Kris and RFS District Office Community Engagement Officer, Andrew Kaye' fully support the HUFF Project and are working to assist where needed.

The HUFF Coordinator continues to maintain the project as a volunteer, supported by BANC, having been fortunate to have a small grant allocated in 2017. The HUFF Website, maintained by Blackheath/Mount Victoria Rural Fire Brigade posts the newsletters and receives and passes on queries relating to HUFF.

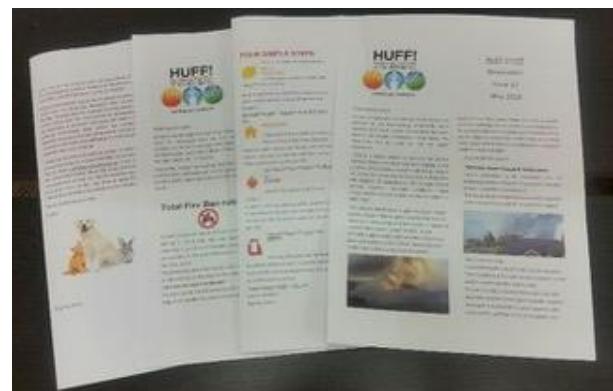
Thankfully we have again seen out another year with no emergency events, either fire or storm. However, if an event should occur I am confident that we have a good number of people who will be able to pass on any vital information to their neighbours and are aware of those who are more vulnerable and at risk.

Mina Howard
HUFF Project Director

HUFF!
Heads Up For Fire
or any emergency



Looking out. Linking in.



In Memoriam

Vale Scott Linstid

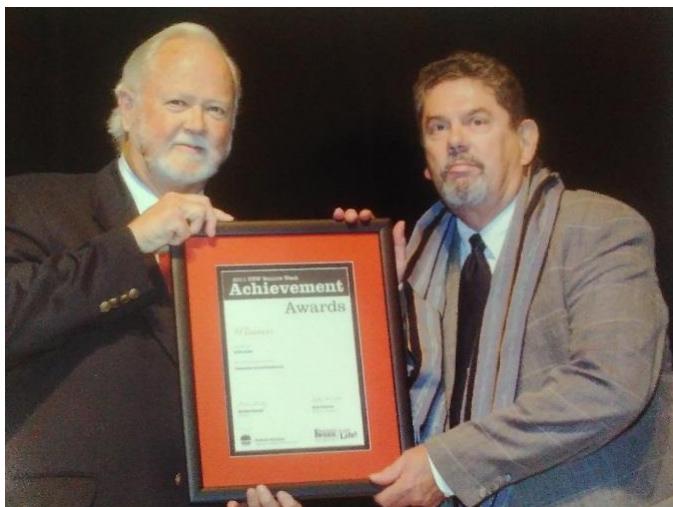
We pay our respects to Scott Linstid who died this year.

Scott was been a member of the BANC Management Committee for 11 years. He was Treasurer for many of these years, and even when not formally acting as Treasurer or keeper of the BANC safe, Scott kept a strong eye on the organisation's finances. Actually, more than an eye, because Scott has never shied away from doing some work – for many years he took responsibility for the reporting to Committee, producing impeccable Excel spreadsheets.

Similarly Scott served on the NILS Committee and through this avenue contributed to the wellbeing of hundreds of people in the Upper Mounts.

Scott also volunteered at the BANC reception desk for many years. As a reception volunteer Scott brought humour and spirit to the office. Despite having an unpredictable and debilitating illness it was very rare for Scott to ever miss his rostered shift or complain about his discomfort. He always did his best to make sure that anyone who came through the door at BANC was well looked after.

Scott received a NSW Seniors Week Achievement Award in 2011 in recognition of his contribution to BANC and to our community.



Author Bill Bryson presents Scott with NSW Seniors Week Achievement Award in 2011

Treasurer's Report on the Audited Accounts



Chris Arnott

I returned to the Treasurer role in May this year, and hence, once again have the pleasure to report on the financial results for the year and the financial position for Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC) as at June 2018.

It was a challenging year and the Management Committee made some difficult decisions, both as to financial and operational matters. A small trading loss for the year was recorded in the consolidated Profit Statement. After the annual depreciation charge of \$13,384, the consolidated loss was \$18,543. The cash reserves shown in the Balance Sheet were, however significantly reduced. Nonetheless, the cash reserves remain strong, and potential liabilities are well covered.

The challenges are continuing in the new financial year. Staff in each of the divisions has with accepted ownership in a most responsible fashion. At the time of this report, trading

results are acceptable, and the continued co-operation of all is a tribute to the quality and dedication of the staff. The long term viability of BANC is paramount if the Upper Blue Mountains community is to continue to enjoy the services and support available.

Community Access Services, our largest operation, has managed the transition from block funding to the client focused arrangements under the NDIS. The uncertainties and frustrations have demanded changes to staff, operations and policies, and the dedication of all concerned has been outstanding. Sue Johnson and her staff are to be congratulated on their progress. There are a myriad of projects facilitated by staff and volunteers at the Neighbourhood Centre. Out of School Hours programs, and the No Interest Loans Scheme are major programs, but the range of activities that enhance resilience, connectedness, and inclusion make the upper Blue Mountains such a wonderful place to live. Our services are funded by a number of sources, and all 3 levels of Government. Their support is greatly appreciated. Our financial well-being is supervised by Dot Allen and Barbra McCauley. Judy Finch and Jo Ridley have been wonderful leaders. They are all the heroes of the organisation, and the role of Treasurer is a minor one.



Barbra McCauley

Barbra will cease her service with us in October 2018, after some 10 years of exemplary performance; much of it as our sole financial officer. Her guidance and care with our accounts deserves the greatest thanks. Shelley Rothwell, as external Auditor, gives assurance to our year end accounts, and gives a valuable independent view to our financial affairs.

I will again be standing down at the AGM, but have welcomed the chance to again serve as a member of its Management Committee.

Chris Arnott
Treasurer