

BLACKHEATH AREA
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

ANNUAL

REPORT

2019/2020



BANC



Who are we?

BANC is a multipurpose not-for-profit community-based organisation servicing the Upper Blue Mountains of NSW.

Vision

A diverse, inclusive and connected community which works together to build its resilience, and its social, environmental and economic sustainability.

Mission

BANC is the heart of creative, inclusive services that support the sustained well-being and resilience of its community.

Values

Inclusive: BANC welcomes all people regardless of their age, gender, ability, cultural or religious background.

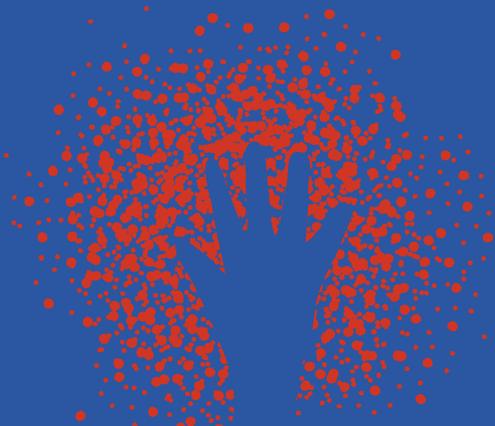
Fair: All those who wish to participate in our programs and services are treated equally and respectfully.

Professional: BANC pursues high ethical standards.

Committed: BANC works with its hearts and its head to build a great organisation that meets the needs of its clients and community.

Responsive: BANC aims to meet, as efficiently and effectively as possible, the needs of its clients, colleagues and community.

Innovative: BANC designs creative options to deliver the most effective results for its clients and communities.



We acknowledge the
Gundungurra and Dharug
peoples as the traditional
custodians of this land.

BANC provides a range of direct services and undertakes community development programs. We provide our services from three sites:

- BANC Access at 110 Wentworth Street;
- the Neighbourhood Centre at 41 Gardiner Crescent; and
- BOOSH from Blackheath Public School.

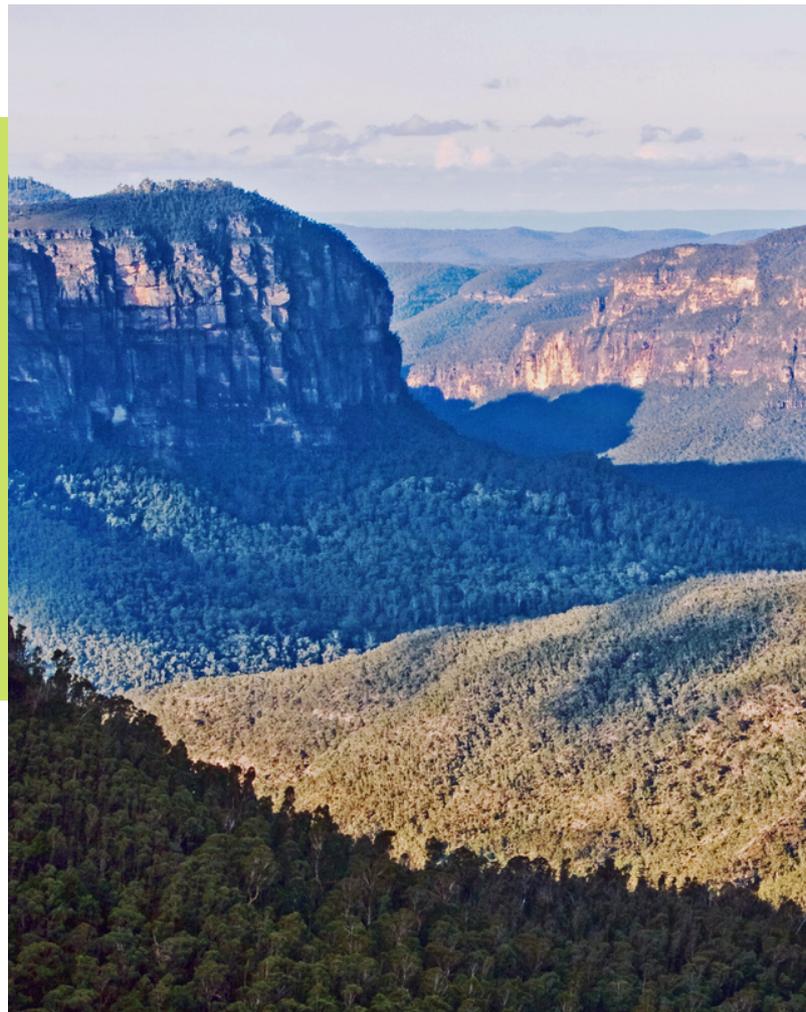


BANC gained its autonomy from Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc. and was incorporated under the Incorporated Associations Act of 1984 on 27 January 1993.

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre Inc has over 100 members and is governed by a Board comprising members of the local community. There are 7-9 positions on the Board, four of these holding executive responsibilities. The Board is responsible for the employment of staff, ensuring that the organisation operates within legal guidelines (including worker health and safety), and that its finances are sound as are all financial decisions. The Board sets the strategic and policy environment for BANC.

BANC BOARD

Michael Brogan: President
Johneen Hibbert: Vice-President
Bronwen Stinson: Secretary
Yuliya Mann: Treasurer
Kath Chirgwin
Jennifer Kelly
Roger Butterworth
Henry Lebovic
Gary Moore (from January 2020)



BANC



Leah Godfrey
General Manager

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

I suspect 2019/20 will be long remembered across the Upper Mounts. A time of heightened anxiety and constant alert - of increasing concern about the impacts of climate change on our daily lives and a pandemic thrown in for good measure. As the crippling drought took hold in late 2019, waves of dust storms were replaced by choking smoke. Fires ripped through dry countryside, devastating communities and bushland. The upper Mounts were not spared, although the local impacts could have been immeasurably worse. Our local communities showed their strength and resilience throughout the summer. Many families sacrificed their summer holidays to fight fires, share information, provide shelter, nurse wounds, listen to stories, and cry at the loss. The loss of homes and wildlife and habitat across NSW is unimaginable. Locally the recovery is frustrating and inspiring both.

Late in the summer rain eventually fell but news began to build about the new corona virus named COVID-19 that seemed likely to make its way to Australia. As a pandemic was declared, BANC was well prepared for staff to work from home, providing services on the telephone or online. We delivered care packages to participants who were unable to attend groups due to the lockdown. We delivered letters and art works from children to people isolating at home, sparking pen pal relationships that kept both parties engaged with the outside world. We conducted emergency relief assessments over the phone and delivered food parcels to homes.



So a tough year for us all, but through all this BANC continued to thrive. Aably led by new President Michael Brogan, the Board embarked on a strategic planning process. Bronwen Stinson continued as ever-dependable Secretary and Treasurer, Yuliya Mann, provided outstanding financial information to support the Board's decision making.

BANC stands in a solid financial position at the close of the year. BANC suffered enormous income losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many businesses across Australia, we were happy to receive the JobKeeper payment and cash flow boost from the Commonwealth government. However, the constant changes to child care policy through the height of the pandemic only added to the uncertainty and were unnecessarily time-consuming.

Perhaps the one and only constant throughout the year was the Great Western Highway. The completion of the safety upgrade through Blackheath was delayed into 2020. Meantime Transport for NSW released plans for a four lane highway from Katoomba to Lithgow, and commenced a consultation process marred by heatwave, fires and pandemic. BANC was represented on the Transport for NSW Blackheath Co-Design Committee by Gary Moore. His immense experience with government process was appreciated by the Board.

When Henry Lebovic joined the Board he was keen for BANC to support the international climate strike by students. Henry has also led an ambitious project to power the Blackheath Community Centre Halls and the Neighbourhood Centre with solar energy.

BANC Access was recommended for certification with the National Disability Insurance Agency following audit in July 2019. The auditors praised staff communications and client files, and were impressed with the close knit team.



In October 2019 BOOSH was assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law) and Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations). As a result of this assessment BOOSH received an overall rating against the National Quality Standard of Meeting National Quality Standard (M). This was the first time BOOSH has received this rating and is a significant achievement.

The result is a reflection of the significant contribution of Board member Kath Chirgwin throughout the assessment and for the years preceding. Kath's contribution to BANC as a Management Committee member and then President cannot be overstated. Her sheer hard work and commitment are impressive, and I cannot thank her enough for standing up for BANC when the chips were down.

Blackheath Public School asked BANC to vacate the Old Principal's Cottage in December 2019. BOOSH was relocated to the Old Bell Room on the school grounds and Cyber_Shed to the Neighbourhood Centre in Gardiners Crescent. Whilst the eviction was a shock, the new premises have proved beneficial, and BANC is unburdened by the costs of operating in a heritage property.

BANC signed a 5 year agreement with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for a Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) grant in December 2019. This marked the end of a protracted and confusing process, but offers stability of funding and an opportunity for the impacts of the work of the Neighbourhood Centre to be measured.



The generosity of local people never ceases to amaze me. Every single day someone comes to BANC to donate their time and skills. Others bring food for us to give to people who don't have enough. Murray Reid makes healthy vegetarian meals; Mina Howard coordinates an army of HUFF facilitators; Jane Armstrong facilitates Mental Health First Aid Training. Check out the list of names in this Report of just some of the amazing volunteers who give each and every day. And know that there are many more who remain nameless who give to BANC and to their local community. We are blessed with the riches that they provide to us all.

Finally to the BANC staff who are skilled and enthusiastic, and work together to amplify their impact. They have responded to the fears and uncertainties of the year with calm dedication. They have managed the shift to working from home and online with flexibility and professionalism. They have cared for each other, accepting each other's vulnerabilities and strengths. I cannot thank them more. As I write, daily uncertainty remains the norm. We wait for the morning release of local COVID infection numbers; watch as another wave of infections develops as winter approaches in the UK; shake our heads in disbelief at an election in the USA that is wilder than fiction. But I hold great hope for BANC in the coming year. BANC is fortunate for the leadership, skills, passion of staff, Board and volunteers, working together to build a resilient, connected, sustainable community.

-Leah Godfrey, General Manager.



'CHALK AROUND THE POOL' CHALK ART FESTIVAL

It has been a very challenging year. We ended 2019 with the bushfires and began 2020 with floods, followed by Covid-19. This community continues to offer support to each other in the kindest and most thoughtful ways. One of the events from last year (before we could even IMAGINE what was heading our way with Covid-19), was the Chalk Around the Pool event, that occurred at Blackheath Pool during the Rhododendron Festival in November 2019.

This was an idea brought to us by local resident Lisa McLachlan, and we were very happy to support it, along with Blue Mountains City Council. A big thank you to Mitre 10 for their generous sponsorship of this event, and for Matt Kelly for providing some songs.



BLACKHEATH TRAIN STATION 150th ANNIVERSARY

In December, I was fortunate to work with the children from Blackheath Public School to make banners to celebrate the 150th birthday of Blackheath Train Station, organised by local marvel, Heather Pye. The children did an outstanding job and their banners were hung at the station for several weeks.

-Jo Davies, Community Development Worker





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Throughout 2019-2020 the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC) has both achieved significant outcomes and overcome substantial adversity. During this period BANC has consolidated its financial position, thanks to hard decisions being made by the Board and staff, while providing a high quality service to clients, participants and visitors. The Blackheath Out Of School Hours (BOOSH) service undertook a formal audit and easily achieved a satisfactory review – many thanks go to its manager Annie Parker. BANC Access, your local NDIS service, has continued to provide many and varied services to people with disability within our local area. And the Neighbourhood Centre and Cyber-Shed has continued to provide advice, assistance and activities for our regular guests and visitors.

The past year has seen BANC deal with the fallout from some of the most significant bushfires in recent memory, as well as negotiate its way through its first global pandemic. During this period the staff and Board have had to adjust to rapidly changing situations, some life-threatening, in an attempt to provide the services that are expected and needed within our community. I cannot thank the staff and Board enough for their resourcefulness and compassion during this very difficult time. In addition to being worried about their own homes burning down, or how to deal with a new and insidious virus, the staff and Board have worked hard to overcome the barriers imposed from outside in order to deliver whatever services were possible during this time. Particular praise must be given to our General Manager, Leah Godfrey, who has worked tirelessly in order to keep the various components of BANC working and financially viable – including determining the manner in which BANC and its staff could access government support during the pandemic lockdown. Leah's advice to the Board and clear communications with staff have been a fundamental reason why BANC is still operating and delivering for its community.

There have also been some significant changes to personnel within the management of BANC. I wish to thank Sue Johnston for her management of BANC Access for many years. Her experience and advocacy will be sorely missed. This year we also saw our Finance Manager, Dot Allen, move on to the next phase of her life and career. Dot's reports to the Board, and general advice, has been invaluable in helping the Board make the sometimes difficult decisions that it has had to make.

The Board has worked hard in the past year and I formally thank them here. In addition to dealing with fires and pandemic (where the protection of employees and clients was paramount), the Board has worked on a new strategic plan, supported the Blackheath Highway Action Group, made a number of submissions relating to amenities in the local area, and met regularly, online, a significant number of times in order to deal with the ever-changing conditions affecting our community. This year the Board welcomed new members Yuliya Mann as Treasurer, and Gary Moore and Henry Lebovic. Yuliya has provided the Board with clear and informative advice and assisted in ensuring the Board is properly apprised on all matters financial. Gary has brought his experience with governments to bear in spending significant time being the BANC representative on the Blackheath Highway Upgrade Consultative Committee. And Henry has brought a renewed focus upon environmental sustainability, resulting in his heading a scoping project designed to allow BANC and the wider community to be renewable energy producers. I thank our continuing Board members, Vice-President Jo Hibbert, Jennifer Ross, Kath Chirgwin, and Secretary Bronwen Stinson, for their invaluable contributions to Board matters, including their involvement in recruitment processes and projects. Sadly, I note Roger Butterworth's departure from the Board. Roger has been a member for two years and his wise counsel will be sorely missed.

BANC is a dynamic and valuable part of the Blackheath Area community. In 2020-21 the BANC will be implementing its new strategic plan, part of which is to ensure the community knows about how BANC works with citizens and other organisations to be the conduit to keep our community thriving. In order for BANC to keep providing the services it does it requires support. I ask that you consider supporting BANC by becoming a member and, if you can, offering financial or in-kind support to allow BANC to do what it does best.

-Michael Brogan, President

BANC VOLUNTEERS

Neighbourhood Centre reception: Diana Swift, Liz Bond, Tonica Bird, David Hobbs, Peter Karsten, Bronwyn English, Amanda Worgan, Elouisa West, Leona Kieran, Nina Gonzalez, Ash Wanders, Phil Irvine.

BANC Access: Di Jones, Maria Burns, Maggie Williams, Ross Ingram, Cass Hawkins, Alma Magnus.

Cyber_Shed: Simon Hare, Mike Chirgwin.

Food relief: Murray Reid, Fran Reid.

Community events: Lindena Robb, Jade Hudson, Ashley Baker, Charlie Hudson-Baker, Murray Reid

Community readers: Elizabeth and Roger Pinferi, Howard Barton, Carol Kettlehohn, Hilary Thomson, Carol Crowther, Jenny Fisk, Margaret Gough, Garry Lamb.

School for Seniors: Gordon Watson.

HUFF: Mina Howard, Amanda Butler, Anna Martin, Anna Bahnisch, Bill Pixton Cathy MaNamara, Cheryl Cordery, David Easton, David Buckley, Christa Buckley, Deb Wells, Elaine Valton, Gail Sunderland, Garry Way, Jean Ingle, Jennie Curtin, John Isbister, Adrienne Isbister, Jonathan Mallin, Jude Mellers, Judy Quodling, Rob Quodling, Katie Newkirk, Keith Jebb, Kim Allen, Lee Spencer, Leona Kierna, Lindena Robb, Liz Parker, Liz Robertson, Lloyd Willis, Maggi William, Margaret Griffiths, Margaret St John, Marilyn Bull, Geoff Bull, Melanie Treziset, Alexander Hadjinanov, Natasha Cameron, Paul Cassidy, Penny Park, John Park, Rose Leaper, David Leaper, Ross McLeish, Ruth Williams, Sandra Dodwell, Steve Fraser, Susan Cooke, Tim Kaye, Tony Chinnery, Tony Jacques, Vanessa Freeman, Wendy Trankels, Barbara Gordon, Brian Jewell, Catherine Cole, George Gerontakas, Heather Pye, Karyn Morgan, Liz Windred, Piers Burbrook, Robyne Hobson, Tristan Schwartz, Annie Parker, Bob Burnett, Frank Norman, Janene Theol, Josee Jupp, Margaret Gough, Marianne Bate, Melita Sutton, Michael Greensmith, Vanessa McGarrigle, Zuzana Kutena, Carlene Martin, Deb Howell, Debra Brown, Jane Lingard, Jill Rattray, Joan Crawley, Marlene Harris, Michael Biber, Micki Summers, Pat Drummond, Carol Drummond, Peter Ofner.



Murray Reid- Emergency food relief volunteer



CREATIVE ACCESS LAB

Creative Access Lab was a client driven weekly arts intensive space run through BANC Access. The program began in 2019 and continued until the unforeseen closure due to Covid. The emphasis was on drama, expression, visual arts and film making. Projects within the Creative Access Lab were often devised and driven by the clients themselves. For instance one client was keen to make stop animation films with lego. So all members of the group decided how they would contribute, some painted backdrops to the film as an art exercise, the others built lego models and the filming was coordinated and achieved by the clients themselves. As well as drama exercises, acting and filming, the group also requested activities such as visual arts, jewellery making, cooking, etc. all of which was facilitated through the Access Lab.

The Creative Access Lab fostered confidence and friendships within members of the group. It was a safe space for clients to model self expression and self assertion, and proved a great forum for sharing and understanding personal stories. Many short films were made during the duration of the Creative Access Lab. Some were client devised, and were often whimsical and irreverent, others films were serious, where clients were interviewed about their experiences, such as what life was like for them during the bushfires. Clients, rehearsed, acted, filmed and even edited some of the short films that were produced.

-Nigel Glassey



NILS NO INTEREST LOAN SCHEME

The No Interest Loans Scheme at BANC has again delivered an invaluable service to our clients. Over the past year we have had over 150 enquiries with 63 loans approved. This is slightly down on 2018-19 in the main due to the challenges in providing a face to face service during the COVID shut-down. Despite this challenge we were able to provide a phone interview service with 13 loans approved during the shutdown. The main purposes that clients applied for over the year were car repairs and car registration (45%), household appliances (25%), computers (10%), furniture (10%), and purposes such as vet fees, medical equipment and other health-related items .

Thanks to Jade Hudson for all her work in helping to provide the NILS service this year. We also want to thank our loan provider partner – Mary MacKillop NILS – who approve and pay the money to the vendors. They continue to provide us with valuable assistance as needed and a quick turnaround for approvals.

-Cathy Rood, NILS Officer



OUR SUPPORTERS, SPONSORS & PARTNERS

Anonymous
Belong Blue Mountains
Bendigo Bank Blackheath
Blackheath Baptist Church
Blackheath Butcher
Blackheath Chamber of Commerce
Blackheath Community Op Shop
Blackheath Country Women's Assoc.
Blackheath Knitwits
Blackheath Golf & Community Club
Blackheath Men's Shed
Blackheath Public School
Blackheath Presbyterian Church
Blackheath Probus
Blackheath RSL
Blackheath S355 Hall Committee
Blackheath Scouts
Blackheath/Mt Victoria Rural Fire Service
Blackheath Uniting Church
Blue Gum Montessori Children's House
Blue Mountains Christian College
Blue Mountains City Council
Blue Mountains Food Coop
Blue Mountains Libraries
Bruce McKenzie
Christine Wheeler
Commonwealth Department of Health
Councillor Kerry Brown
Dance for Life
Earth Recovery Australia
Family First Credit Union
Gateway
Heather Pye
Jane Armstrong
Jenny Marchionni
John Jukiel
Kookaburra Kindergarten
Lindena Robb
Lis Bastian
Mary MacKillop Today NILS



Medlow Bath Residents Association
Megalong Public School
Mick O'Neil
Morna Colbran
Mountains Christian College
Mt Vic Flicks
Mt Victoria Public School
Nick Wilson from Kestrel IT
NRMA
NSW Dept.of Family & Community Services
Office of the eSafety Commissioner
Possum's Patch Child Care Centre
Sacred Heart Parish Blackheath
Scenic World
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre
Sydney Water
The Big Fix
The Heathens
The Victory Theatre & Cafe
Thrive Services
Vera Hartley
Vocal Edge
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre

BANC STAFF

Aimee Lee Druett: BANC Access Support Worker
Alicia Owyang: BANC Access Support Worker
Amanda Banks: BANC Access Support Worker
Anne Parker: BOOSH Coordinator
Brook Saunders: BANC Access Service Delivery Support Officer
Cameron Austen: BANC Access Support Worker
Caroline Mitchell: BANC Access Administration Assistant
Catherine Rood: NILS Officer
Claire Gurney: BOOSH Educator
Darren Proctor: BANC Access Support Worker
Debbie Hill: BANC Access Support Worker
Dorothy Allen: Finance Manager
Elizabeth Thomas: BOOSH Educator
Erin Grace: BANC Access Support Worker
Fiona MacFarlane: BANC Access Support Coordinator
George Roure: BANC Access Support Worker
Helen Beeby: BANC Access Support Worker
Igor Dabic: BANC Access Support Worker
Jacqueline Gilchrist: BOOSH Educator



Nicole Toms: BANC Access Support Worker
Nicole Roxburgh: BOOSH Educator
Octavia O'Brien: School for Seniors Coordinator
Paula Havey: BANC Access Support Worker
Peter Karsten: Neighbourhood Centre Worker
Rafael Salamanca: BANC Access Support Worker
Richard Webb: BANC Access Support Worker
Saffron Harris: BANC Access Support Coordinator
Simon Hare: Cyber_Shed Coordinator
Stephen Carr: BANC Access Support Worker
Susan Johnston: BANC Access Manager
Terry McQuade: BANC Access Support Worker
Trent Kennaugh: BANC Access Support Worker
Tylaa Ryan: BANC Access Support Worker
Vivian Georgiou: BANC Access Support Worker



Jade Hudson: Projects Officer
Jane Byers: BANC Access Service Coordinator
Janette Booth: BOOSH Educator
Johanna Davies: Community Development Worker
Juliet Macken: BANC Access Support Worker
Kellie Martin: BANC Access Support Worker
Kym Dow: BANC Access Support Worker
Leah Godfrey: General Manager
Michael Clarke: Cleaner
Michaela Dabson: BANC Access Support Worker
Michelle McKenzie: BANC Access Plan Management Officer
Michelle Seers: BANC Access Support Worker



BULGAMADA

'Bulgamada: Big Sing Blue Mountains' brought together 100 singers from community choirs in the Blue Mountains and others from the central west, Sydney and the central coast; 4 First Nations singer songwriters and storytellers, and a band comprising some of the best musicians in the Blue Mountains. All music in the concert was composed by First Nations artists.



The project was a celebration of talent, a chance to listen to the stories in and around the songs, and an opportunity to pay respect to indigenous artists in a mainly non-indigenous forum. The performance was an outstanding success, warmly received by both indigenous and non-indigenous participants and audience. Almost 100 entirely unsolicited written comments were received by email, every one a glowing endorsement of the beauty of the music, the power of the stories they told, the generosity of our guest artists, and the respectful treatment of all elements of the event.

Darug chorister Stacey Etal said: 'the concert was amazing and for me personally extremely moving. I am hoping you have already heard but that first rehearsal of Yarramundi was an awesome and even spiritual experience. The ancestors were so approving of this event. Thank you for having the dream for this and following through. There needs to be more!'

The teamwork behind this event was indispensable to its success, from the rock solid support of staff at BANC, to the team of soup makers feeding the choir during rehearsals, all the way through to the large team of volunteers who skilfully managed the concert night. We are extremely grateful for the wholehearted and generous contributions of our featured artists, Jacinta Tobin, Lexodious Dadd, Corina Norman and Glenn Skuthorpe, as well as the contribution of additional magnificent songs from Archie Roach, Kev Carmody and Rachel Shields.

An edited version of the concert can be found at https://youtu.be/nDm4DXuQP_A

-Christine Wheeler
Artistic Director and MD of The Heathens Community Choir



BANC ACCESS

What a tumultuous year we have had at BANC Access. We first experienced bushfire and then COVID-19, and now its October! Strangely it feels like March was 7 weeks ago or 7 years ago!

Nevertheless, BANC Access continues 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 through Service Delivery (group and individual supports), Plan Management and Support Coordination.

The COVID-19 pandemic has however changed the landscape considerably and we have had to learn to adapt to this ever-changing new world we all find ourselves in. BANC Access has adapted its service to ensure both client and staff safety. In the initial phase we maintained Service Delivery and contact with participants via phone calls, hand delivered care packages and zoom sessions, now we have resumed face to face supports both individually and in group settings. Support Coordination moved to an online platform during the initial phase supporting clients online and by teleconferencing, and has now resumed face to face connections. Plan Management continued as normal managing client invoices as necessitated.

BANC Access has been and continues to follow NSW Health guidelines around mask recommendations. We have also provided our staff with Infection Control Training COVID-19 and continue to provide Support Workers with PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). We have also introduced stringent COVID 19 safety protocols including rigorous cleaning schedules, social distancing and good hygiene practices. BANC Access continues to provide ongoing training, support and resources to ensure the people we support are engaged in meaningful activities and services in our community.



Earlier this year we started a younger group called "The Socials" which was created in response to community needs for young individuals (18-35y/o) to access social and community participation with like-minded people.

The Social's started off as a weekly or fortnightly outings or activities to places of interest (often decided by the members of the group) such as going to "The Beach" (La Perouse and Bare Island Fort Tour), Dinner and Drinks, Movie Nights and going to the Zoo!".

The group enjoyed these activities, however, this was short lived due to COVID-19. We do hope to get this group up and running again, especially in time for the warmer weather and a return visit to The Beach!



In the last year we've continue to support individuals with skill development, tasks of daily living, travel training and exploring the wider community that they live in and further afield such as a bike ride in Centennial Park, the new Sydney Zoo, Museum of Contemporary Art, The Blue Mountains Hop on / Hop Off bus, Harbour Bridge Pylon and Parramatta River to name a few.

The majority of our clients do like continuity and familiarity, thus popular groups (still) include Indoor Bowling at Portland RSL, Bingo, Aqua Golf, Ten Pin Bowling, Community Lunches, 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.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions our larger group outings were limited this last year. Of Highlight was a group outing to:

Eskbank House at Lithgow - Eskbank House Museum is Lithgow districts regional museum. Set within an historic estate, the museum aims to collect, preserve and interpret the histories associated with the early settlement and development of the region. The group enjoyed a guided tour of the house and artefacts on display and history of the town.



National Motor Racing Museum (Bathurst) - The National Motor Racing Museum is located alongside the world famous racing circuit, Mount Panorama. The group enjoyed the museum with its collection of 60 bikes, 50 cars and other racing memorabilia. The group also enjoyed the drive around the race track (keeping to the speed limit).

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 especially throughout these trying times where supports have been cancelled or requested at the last minute due to the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape we have found ourselves in. We have sadly lost a number of staff in the last year due to personal reasons, pursuing other careers and dreams and having to look for alternative work as a result of the unpredictable nature of this industry. We have also gained some wonderful new staff members, both Support Workers and Senior/Office staff and welcome them to the BANC Access team!

The staff at BANC Access look forward to continuing to provide an exceptional service to our community and engaging in other exciting activities, supports, programs and services in 2020/2021.

-Jane Byers, BANC Access Service Coordinator



BLACKHEATH OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS



BANC operates BOOSH, an approved Before and After School and Vacation Care service, from Blackheath Public School. We draw families from public and independent schools across the Mid and Upper Mounts.

BOOSH aims to meet the diverse needs of the parents who work, study or have other commitments, as well as providing opportunities for children from a variety of backgrounds to socialise in a safe and caring environment.

In late 2019 BOOSH was assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (National Law) and Education and Care Services National Regulations (National Regulations).

As a result of this assessment BOOSH received an overall rating against the National Quality Standard of Meeting National Quality Standard (M). This was the first time BOOSH has received this rating and is a significant achievement. The result is a reflection of the leadership of Annie Parker, the teamwork of BOOSH staff and the significant contribution of Kath Chirgwin throughout the assessment.



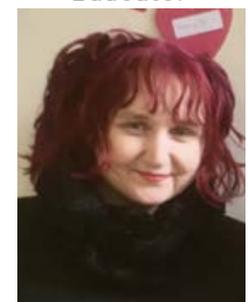
Annie Parker-
Coordinator



Nicky Roxburgh-
Educator



Janette Booth-
Educator



Jade Hudson-
Educator



THE HEATHENS SOUP PROGRAM

During the Covid-19 lock down period, The Heathens choir initiated a fabulous soup program in the local community and beyond. The idea was to provide vulnerable people with a recipe and the ingredients for a delicious home made soup. Soup packs were made up by members of the choir, and distributed through BANC and a number of other services.

Altogether they collected 25-30 soup packs for 19 weeks from late April until early September, which equates to over 1,000 meals. BANC is hugely grateful to The Heathens for creating and facilitating this wonderful project during a very difficult time. We thank them all for their thoughtfulness and their generosity, particularly Vera Hartley and Julie Blackenbridge for organising the project.



BANC LETTER WRITING PROJECT

The Mayoral Fund awarded BANC a small grant to fund a letter-writing project between children, young people and older people who were socially isolating due to Covid-19, as a way of keeping people engaged and connected during this challenging time. There was a most inspiring exchange of almost 200 letters, and I felt absolutely privileged to be the person forwarding beautiful letters and pictures backwards and forwards for these few months.

-Jo Davies, Community Development Worker



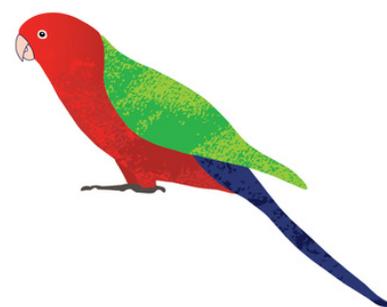
OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE SERVICES

- No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) no interest loans for small capital items for low income earners
- Community Development focused on families with children and people facing social disadvantage and isolation
- Cyber_Shed - digital literacy support, laptops, smartphones, tablets, apps.
- we manage bookings for the Blackheath Community Centre halls,
- courses, workshops, support groups and various activities are offered to community members
- referral to an enormous range of community resources
- we offer low cost print/copy/scan service
- free Wi-Fi and computer access
- free and low cost food, including pantry items, fresh and frozen
- emergency food vouchers,
- the Sydney Water PAS bill help program
- one-on-one help with navigating online forms and application processes and sometimes just a chat and a cuppa!

BANC organises local events open to the entire community. These events often coincide with and celebrate Seniors Week, Blackheath Day, and dates that have local importance, for example the annual Rhododendron Festival.

Other Community Projects

- HUFF: Heads Up for Fire provides information and builds resilience for Blue Mountains communities to help deal with bushfire and other emergencies
- Heathens Choir
- The Blackheath Show on 89.1RBM FM Radio
- The Welcome Table
- School for Seniors: a fortnightly bus trip for seniors, enabling them to get out of the house, socialise and enjoy a meal together
- MBRA: Medlow Bath Resident's Association
- Blackheath Carers Support Group
- Blackheath Cares: A program that provides volunteer opportunities to offer practical and social assistance to older people living in Blackheath, promoting wellbeing and assisting older people to remain in their homes.



Peter Karsten- Administration

CYBER_SHED

CYBER_SHED is BANC's community-based digital literacy project. 2020 is CYBER_SHED's tenth year of operation. All too starkly, Covid-19 has shown that it is critical for isolated, vulnerable people to readily access & use online resources.

CYBER_SHED is a largely volunteer team. We pride ourselves in our commitment to sharing expertise in online and mobile technologies. Our target learner group is the over-50s, who we offer four 1hr classes at no cost to students. As we teach one to one, we base our teaching practice on following and facilitating each student's individual interests. We are passionate about using online technologies to make lives easier, especially the opportunities offered by the assistive technologies.

CYBER_SHED is a Be Connected network partner. Be Connected supports CYBER_SHED with online teaching resources and a range of small grants. Coordinator Simon Hare has been a passionate advocate of digital equity since the inception of the World Wide Web in the 1990s. In 2010, 'Broadband for Seniors' offered BANC the opportunity to draw these threads together. Resources were meagre - they consisted of two PCs, a desk & two chairs. However, CYBER_SHED was born.

Find CYBER_SHED at https://twitter.com/Cyber_Shed

Look for our free online learning resources at <https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/topic-library>



cyber_shed



Norwich City Council taking delivery of their first 'electronic' computer in 1957.



BANC

BANC is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC); is a Public Benevolent Institution endorsed to access Tax, GST and Income Tax exemptions; and is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR).

BANC is a no interest loans scheme (NILS) provider; registered NDIS provider; approved provider for Child Care Subsidy; and approved provider through the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.

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NSW Department of Education -Early Childhood Education & Vacation Care

Blue Mountains City Council-Vacation Care

Commonwealth Department of Health-Continuity of Support

Good Things Foundation-Be Connected and Health My Way

Fair Trading NSW

Federal Government via Good Shepherd Aust & NZ

Wildly generous anonymous donation

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