



LCSA Annual Report

2014-2015

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LCSA's Vision

*Strong communities
through
strong community
organisations*

LCSA's Purpose

The Local Community Services Association is a state-wide, representative body whose purpose is to prevent social exclusion and promote social inclusion and community strengthening through supporting, developing and promoting neighbourhood centres and other community based and community managed organisations which focus on community development, social inclusion and community-focussed services.

LCSA's Aims

- 1. To actively maintain, develop and promote locally managed, integrated/generalist community services.*
 - 2. To advocate and represent the interests of members.*
 - 3. To identify issues affecting members and develop strategies to deal with them.*
 - 4. To link members and encourage mutual support and action.*
 - 5. To support and resource members to meet the needs of their communities.*
 - 6. To effectively and efficiently manage LCSA.*
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President's Report

2014-15 was a year of changes and opportunities for both our sector and LCSA.

In times of uncertainty feelings of doubt and anxiety can drive our own reaction to change. We make choices to either survive or thrive. We either turn inward to control what we can or we turn outward to find opportunities for growth and innovation.



I wish to congratulate our Management Committee for their vision, commitment and leadership in driving organisational change within LCSA with a view of thriving and working towards the opportunities that lie ahead. We succeeded in maintaining the staff team to build on the strength and success from previous years.

We wish to thank Brian Smith, who as outgoing Executive Officer has shown tremendous leadership and deep wisdom in strengthening LCSA and its members and has given our sector the confidence of a peak body for locally based, locally managed community development organisations. We are delighted to welcome Can Yaşmut to lead the team into the future in his new role as Executive Officer.

Through our strategic partnership with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation we have created an environment for LCSA members to embark on a journey of becoming public innovators. This involves authentically engaging with all members of our community and becoming the gatherers and custodians

of public knowledge that lies within their aspirations. Anyone who wishes to do good work within a community is ill-advised to bypass people's aspirations.

Thus we have confidence to continue to advocate for the importance of community engagement as the basis for good community development. And neighbourhood centres are well positioned into the future to demonstrate that local relationships matter and that trust is the scaffold for effective services and community change.

I acknowledge and thank the LCSA Executive Committee, our Regional Representatives, the LCSA staff team, our supporters, partners and funding body for their work towards creating the opportunities to thrive within a changing environment.

Gretchen Young, LCSA President

Executive Officer's Report

LCSA receives funding from FACS from two different programs, 1) for Sector Development (core operations) and 2) for administering the CommunitybuildersNSW-website (project funding). In addition to that we receive membership fees and fees we charge in return for services.



Sector Development and Capacity Building

LCSA aims to achieve three key outcomes under:

1. Sector understands FACS intentions concerning future service and program design and the role of neighbourhood and community centres and locally based
2. Sector contributes to FACS understanding of the capacity and potential of neighbourhood and community centres, locally based services in its service and program design
3. LCSA member organisations are prepared and developed to be able to identify and provide required services within FACS reform framework.

In the financial year 2014-15 we commenced sending out a quarterly survey to LCSA members to identify whether we are delivering towards these outcomes. The following data is based on 106 responses we have received from the first two quarterly surveys:

1. 76% of member agencies/consumers reported they are well informed by peak about broader social policies, and of changes and developments within the sector.
2. 65% of members reporting their views were sought by peak on social policy issues affecting the child and family services sector.
3. 85% evidence based approaches (aimed at improving outcomes for members, the sector and clients) being applied either: directly by the peak &/or by members agencies as a result of peak activity/project (For peaks with member agencies).

We will continue act in the best interest of our members through representation, policy collaboration and involvement in program planning and reform.

CommunitybuildersNSW Website

The CommunitybuildersNSW Website has achieved its goal in changing to a new content management system and new website appearance and functionality.

We also established a reference group which was initiated with the view of creating a broader perspective to an online resource that brings together government, non-government, academic, business and philanthropic community builders.

Membership Support

LCSA strives to provide members with ongoing support through organising a Neighbourhood Centre Week campaign, to curating information and providing a website that is meaningful, accessible and useful for members. Please read the sections below to learn more about our achievements in the past year.

Partnerships, collaborations and representation

Throughout this year we have forged new and nurtured existing relationships. We value peer support and acknowledge that often we are stronger together than by ourselves and that working together is about making a difference in the lives of those we serve. I wish to express my thanks to all colleagues and partners that share this collegial spirit.

On behalf of LCSA I acknowledge our strategic partnerships, without which none of our work could be accomplished:

- NSW Department of Family and Community Services, for providing funding for Core Operations (Sector Development Funding) and the communitybuilders.nsw website
- Australian Neighbourhood House and Centre Association (ANHCA), for further developing the DGR Public Fund and raising the profile of neighbourhood centres nationally
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), for being a leader in best practice and outcomes measurement
- FaMS NSW, Youth Action, ACWA and NCOSS, for being collegial fellow peak bodies
- the Forum of Non-Government Agencies (FONGA), for ensuring that the NSW government hears the voice of the NGO sector
- Fiscal Policy Studies Institute, for the ongoing inspiration and support for LCSA's RBA work
- International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, for advocating for the neighbourhood centre philosophy in the international arena

- Internet Vision Technologies (IVT), for the continuous commitment to bring technological innovation into the community sector
- People Advantage, for bringing the Role Requirement Frameworks to LCSA members
- Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement, for sharing their deep insight and knowledge with us so liberally
- The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, for their friendship and for providing us with the opportunity to introduce public innovation to Australia
- The CollectiveNSW and United Way Australia, for their support of the first Public Innovators Lab in Australia
- University of New England, for their keen interest in the professional development needs of our sector and for being an ongoing supporter of our conference
- Collaboration for Impact, for partnering around events, workshops and campaigns that promote collaboration

I would like to thank the LCSA Management Committees for their leadership, their capacity to wrestle with difficult issues and being prepared to take the risk of innovation.

Finally I wish to express my respect and gratitude to the LCSA staff team, to Asha, Lyn and Brian, for working with great focus, at times in very difficult circumstances, to represent our members' best interest and continuously finding ways to prepare them for changes and opportunities that lie ahead.

Can Yaşmut, Executive Officer

Sector Development

All LCSA staff contributed to sector development and capacity building during the 2014/15 financial year. The work entailed regular attendance at regional meetings, communication through blogs, Morning Insights and newsletters, the organising of the Annual Conference: Being Belonging Becoming in September 2014 and Neighbourhood Centre Week: Hear the Voice of the Community in May 2015 as well as responding to requests from members.

Specific requests from members included assistance to conduct strategic planning sessions, Lasso and governance training, policy development and assistance with specific issues. There were 12 requests from individual centres, each involving several meetings with successful outcomes for each agency. There were up to 107 web based inquiries from members and over 250 phone inquiries.

Our focus at regional meetings centred on preparing member organisations for the FACS reforms and fostering relationships with the FACS Districts. Productive relationships have been formed with a number of District Directors and other senior staff as Neighbourhood Centres participate in co-design workshops and FACS planning processes.

We also continued to meet with the Regional and Sub-Regional Peaks Partnership to support the work of Community Builders funded services and the role of sector development. There were three meetings of this group during this period. LCSA formed new partnerships with the NCOSS regional training initiative and ACWA/CCWT to ensure members training needs are taken into consideration. LCSA has also joined the NCOSS Sector Development Committee to ensure Neighbourhood Centres are represented in broader forums and issues.

Following on from our connection through the LCSA Conference with Minister Dominello, Volunteering NSW

and the Time Banking Program, LCSA sat on a working party with Justice Connect and a range of professional mediators to develop a new voluntary service for volunteers and organisations in need of mediation.

LCSA staff also continued researching the most up to date methodologies in relation to community strengthening, engagement and development. We maintained our relationship with Liz Weaver from Tamarack in Canada (Collective Impact). We supported and attended the Developmental Evaluation workshops run by Mark Cabaj in Sydney in May. Two staff were also trained in the use of SROI (Social Return on Investment) techniques.

In addition, the first Harwood Lab for Public Innovation was also organised to further develop the tools and skills of Centres in community engagement and participation. This was held in October 2014 and some of the sector development work done since then has been in the follow up and implementation of these tools and skills for public innovators across NSW.



Lyn Lormer



Brian Smith

Annual Conference 2014

Being Belonging Becoming

The LCSA 2014 Conference was held at the Novotel Hotel Brighton-Le-Sands on 2-4th September with the theme “Being Belonging Becoming”. Member attendance at this conference was lower than previous years at about 190 altogether.

The preconference training “Understanding and Accessing Philanthropic Grants” had a very high attendance rate reflecting members concerns around how they access different forms of funding to diversify their incomes as FACS considers reforms to the community sector.

Levels of anxiety were high due to the roll out of the Going Home Staying Home reforms which changed the face of the specialist homelessness services across the state. The first plenary session addressed these concerns as keynote speaker Maureen Chapman from UNE outlined why “It’s not just business as usual” and Marie Walk talked about “Adaptive Leadership” and the intended changes in the FACS approach to funding while Brian Smith asked members to “Imagine there’s no Heaven (or funding).

The rest of the first day saw workshops preparing people for new skills they may need in the future. Delegates were able to attend three workshops from a total of 14. Some of the workshops were repeated so that people had a wide choice.

The plenary session on the 2nd day proved to be very popular with delegates as a range of speakers addressed current social justice issues such as the Recognise Campaign (Lachlan McDaniel), the growing disparity between rich and poor (Andrew Leigh MP), the work of

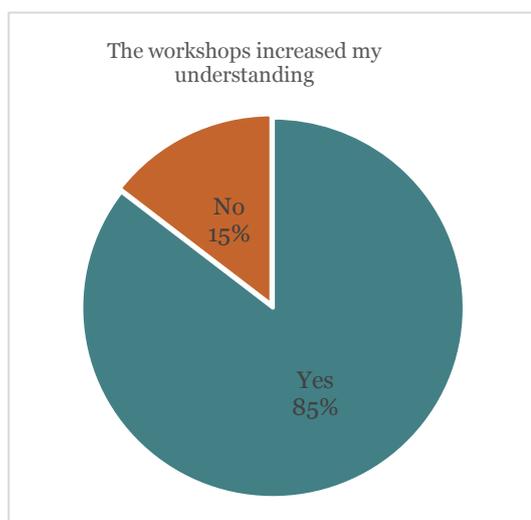
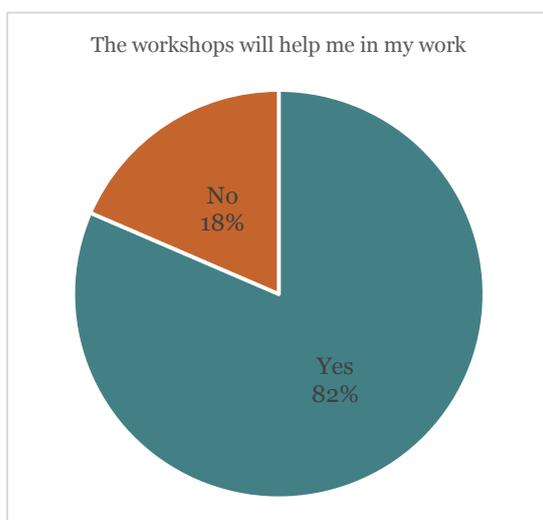
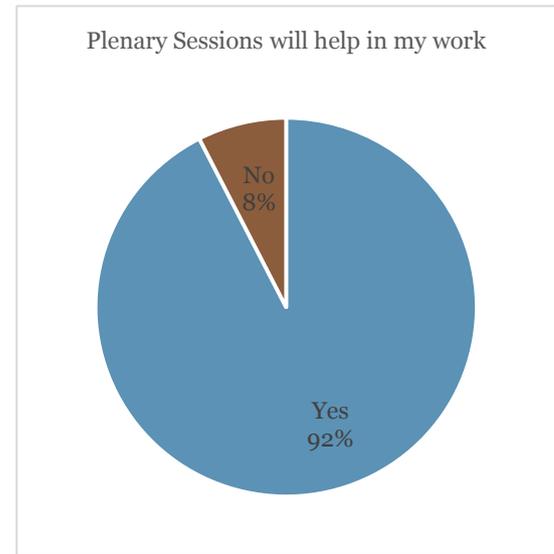
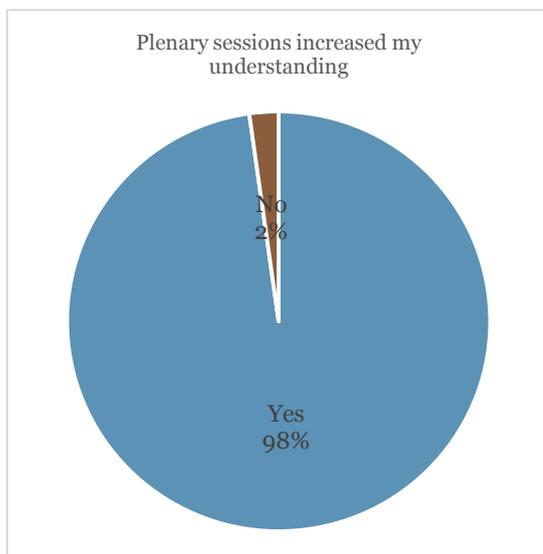
the NSW Ombudsman (Steve Kinmond) and the value of multiculturalism in our society addressed by Racial Discrimination Commissioner (Dr. Tim Soutphommasane).

The participatory session facilitated by Bruce McKenzie gave LCSA valuable input from members around a range of policy issues. The conference finished on a positive note with Minister Dominello launching new sites for the Time Banking Program throughout NSW.

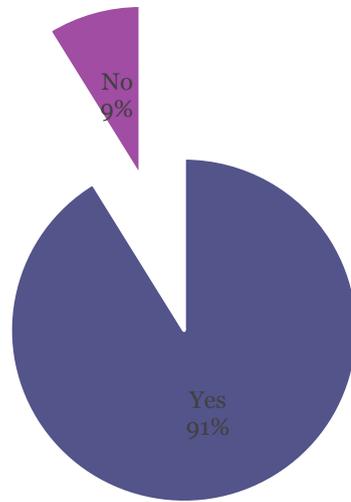
The LCSA Conference is always a great team effort... but a special thanks to LSCA Administration Officer Asha Hewafonsekage who works tirelessly to provide the administrative support that makes LCSA events and initiative such as the conference, Neighbourhood Centre Week and many others happen.



Conference outcome measures



The Conference has improved my networks



Neighbourhood Centre Week



The theme for Neighbourhood Centre Week (11-17 May 2015) was "Hear the Voice of the Community".

Why is hearing the voice of your community so important?

While Neighbourhood Centre staff and volunteers connect with community members on a day to day basis, consultation with regular attendees at Centres may focus on improving the quality of service or the experience of the client. Very rarely are they asked what their aspirations are for themselves or the community they live in. Also, our engagement with the community, as a general rule, does not range beyond those we know or reach with existing services.

As community development practitioners, our role is to encourage local residents as key players in community change, as contributors to strong, resilient communities and to facilitate the conditions that would help bring this about. To do this, meaningful, authentic engagement and trust needs to be developed.

Turning outward so that the aspirations of people in the community becomes the central focus of your organisation's decision making, program, service development and advocacy efforts is essential for empowering communities and inspiring people.

Community conversations (not just surveys or questionnaires) asking people about their aspirations and listening carefully to the common community themes arising from these conversations is the first step to building community.

The kind of local, public knowledge that arises from these conversations can help you to understand your community better. For instance, what might be the conditions under which people are willing to engage in change, what choices and trade-offs are they willing to make, what their fears are around change and whether and how they are willing to participate.

A big “Thank You” to all LCSA members who participated in this initiative!



Asha Hewafonsekage

LCSA Partnership with the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

The Harwood Institute is a nonpartisan, independent non-profit based in the USA that teaches, coaches and inspires people and organisations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. In its work across the USA, the Institute has partnered with some of the world's largest non-profits, including United Way Worldwide, the American Library Association and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The people the Institute teaches and coaches are called public innovators – leaders who can move their communities toward positive change. Public innovators may come from non-profits, businesses, government, the media, and educational and religious organizations. The Harwood Institute regards them as an essential ingredient to solving our most vexing challenges.

LCSA hosted the first Public Innovators Lab held outside North America at the end of October 2014. It was attended by 100 participants, including 65 LCSA members and 25 from NSW government departments. The Lab was run by four Certified Harwood Coaches who continue to support the participants through an ongoing series of coaching calls, webinars and personal contact.

Since the Lab, New South Wales public innovators from communities as diverse as the Far North Coast, Blue Mountains, Wellington, North Sydney and Forster, have begun exploring ways their organisations can turn outward to their communities. Early initiatives have included “Ask” exercises, where community members are engaged with four simple questions, Aspirations exercises and community conversations.

In the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, public innovators from neighbourhood centres and government departments teamed up to run a large scale “Ask” exercise across the region. They determined to hold these conversations with as many people as possible in as many locations as

possible on the 12th February 2015. They trained colleagues and volunteers prior to the day with the result that some 100 volunteers held “Ask” conversations with 1,700 people.

The benefits of initiating such a large undertaking were the support and encouragement the participants received from each other as they launched into a process which was new to all of them. The ambitious scale of the event also generated media interest which helped initiate many conversations, with people who had heard about it coming to take the opportunity to share their aspirations for their community.

These first steps across NSW along the route of the Harwood practice have been very encouraging, and as centres have taken them they have recognised afresh the challenges of authentic engagement with their communities and tackled it with renewed hope and new skills.



communitybuilders.nsw

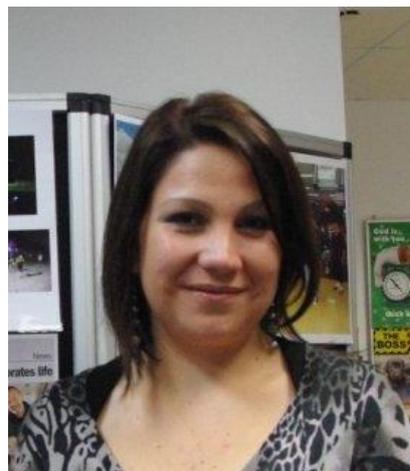
LCSA was contracted to manage the communitybuilders.nsw website by the Department of Family and Community Services in 2013. The Sector Development team have been running the site over the past year, together with Asha Fonseka our Administration Officer.

The most significant achievement for 2014-15 was the development and launch of a new platform which incorporated both a new content management system as well as a new webpage-design and functionality.

We could not have achieved this without the valuable time and expertise contributed by the newly established CommunityBuildersNSW Website Reference Group representing views from government, non-government, academic, philanthropic and business perspectives. We thank:

- Maureen Chapman
- Bruce McKenzie
- Dee Brooks
- Margot Rawthorne
- Kelly Climo
- Bronwn Hutchings
- Lloyd Grosse
- Brett Mitchell

Treasurer's Report



2014-2015

The Local Community Services Association's (LCSA) main source of funding comes from the Department of Family and Community Services under the Sector Development Program. During the year our total income of \$910,860 included grants of \$388,690, conference income of \$107,847, membership fees of \$53,231 and Harwood Institute Public Innovators Lab income of \$303,796. Our total expenses of \$1,270,017 included employee costs of \$454,376 and Harwood Institute payments of \$567,887.

The Local Community Services Association recorded an operating deficit of \$359,157 for the financial year ended 30 June 2015. The main reason for the deficit was due to the decision to use prior years retained earnings for the Harwood Institute training. Our balance sheet as at 30 June 2015 shows a sound financial position with a cash balance of approximately \$388,199 and just over \$228,000 in equity.

In accordance with the requirement of the Office of Fair trading and our funding bodies, the financial statements in this year's annual report have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards in line with the requirements of funding bodies. The complete audited financial statements are included in the report and provide a more detailed account of the overall financial position and performance of the LCSA during the financial year ended 30 June 2015.

I would like to thank all LCSA staff for their commitment and responsible approach to handling finances which have allowed the organisation to end the financial year in line with our strategic directions.

Tairyn Vergara, Treasurer

LCSA Committee

2014-15

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President:	Gretchen Young , Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre
Vice President:	Sharon Parker , North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre
Secretary:	Naomi Rees , Maitland Neighbourhood Centre
Treasurer:	Tairyn Vergara , The Parks Community Network
Member:	Skye Sear , New School of Arts Neighbourhood House
Member:	Margaret Tipper , Community Resource Network

Regional Representatives:

Blue Mountains	Kris Newton , Mountains Community Resource Network
Central Coast	Jillian Hogan , San Remo Neighbourhood Centre
Cumberland/Prospect Blacktown	Margaret Tipper , Community Resource Network
Far North Coast	Skye Sear , The New School of Arts Neighbourhood House
Hunter	Naomi Rees , Maitland Neighbourhood Centre
Illawarra	Sharon Parker , North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre
Inner Sydney/Inner West	Charmaine Jones , Regional Council for Social Development
Marrickville/Canterbury/ St George	Shelley Ross , Kogarah Community Services
Mid North Coast	Paul Sekfy , Lifetime Connect
Nepean	Joy Impiombato , Nepean Community & Neighbourhood Services
New England	Gail Galloway , Tenterfield Social Development Committee
Riverina Murray	Amy Murphy , Junee Community Centre
SouthWest Sydney/Macarthur	Tairyn Vergara , The Parks Community Network
Sutherland	Luba Munro , Shire Community Services
Western NSW	Alison Conn , Wellington Information & Neighbourhood Centre

Audited Financial Report