

*Northern Illawarra Community
Connections Inc.*

NICCI

*Funded by Family and Community Services and housed by the Wollongong City Council
Members of the Illawarra Regional Community Development Consortium*

**The Hub of the Woonona/Bulli
Community**

Annual Report

2010/2011

*Bulli Community Centre
328 Princes Highway, Bulli*



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Board Membership/Staff Members for 2010/2011

Executive

President.....	Robyn Alderton
Vice President.....	John Costello
Treasurer.....	Mary Goodman
Secretary.....	Jan Hamilton

Ordinary Board Members

Graeme Deutscher
Graham Sturgiss
Judy Harris
Janeta Gravch

Staff Members

Centre Manager Position funded by	Elizabeth Brassaud Family & Community Services (former DoCS)
Administration/Personal Assistant	Mariana Moonsun Voluntary
No-Interest-Loan-Scheme (NILS) Position funded by	Janelle Trigg, Mariana Moonsun and Julianne Lovi-Welch Office of Fair Trading FaHCSIA-Auspersed by Good Shepherd Youth & Family Services Capital provided through The Australian National Bank (NAB)
“Energise Our Kids” breakfast program Program supported through donations	Julie Street-Smith BlueScope Steel Bulli Fruit & Deli Community Transport Wollongong Master Builders Woonona Lions Club
Cleaner Position funded by	Angela Burgess Northern Illawarra Community Connections

Acknowledgements

The Northern Illawarra Community Connections would like to give special thanks and acknowledge the following:

- Family and Community Services, former known as Department of Community Services (DoCS) – ongoing core funding
- Wollongong City Council – housing this Service.
- NILS the trademark with Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service Victoria. We would also like to acknowledge the support of the NILS NSW Network in the process of Accreditation and ongoing support and training to NILS Schemes in NSW.
- Office of Fair Trading – NILS Operational Funds
- Family and Housing, Community Services, Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Auspused by Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service
- National Australia Bank – NILS capital.
- BuleScope Steel for their continuing annual donations to our Breakfast Program
- Woonona Lions for their very generous donation to our Breakfast Program
- Bulli Fruit and Deli – supply of fruit at a minimal price for our Breakfast Program
- Wollongong Master Builders Club – donation through the CDSE program for our Breakfast Program
- Thirroul Bowling and Recreation Club – use of their bus for a minimal price for our Breakfast Program
- Our very special Program Volunteers;

:

1. Rhys /Ban
2. Malcom Delory
3. Hilary Delmore
4. Penny Dunning
5. Clive Dunning
6. Joan Fletcher
7. Jan Hamilton
8. Brian Hardaker
9. Cherida Hardaker
10. Judy Harris
11. Judy Hedges
12. John Kearns
13. Gwen Lucas
14. Graham McCall
15. Mary McCall
16. Mariana Moonsun
17. Jean Mulligan
18. Donna O'Rourke
19. Maura O'Sullivan
20. Janelle Te Pairi
21. Sue Thomson
22. Peter Watters
23. Judy Watters

24. Bernie Wilkes

With out the support of these very dedicated volunteers who are committed to making a difference in their community, this Service could not produce the successful results that it does year after year,

A special thanks to:

- The Treasurer, Mary Goodman for all the weekly bookkeeping and preparation of the monthly reports and the annual financial reports for the Auditor
- The Administration Support, Mariana Moonsun, who always does above and beyond her duties
- The free media:

Advertiser	Northern Leader
Win TV News	Community Wave FM
I98 FM	Prime TV

President's Report



Presented by: Robyn Alderton

Welcome to the Northern Illawarra Community Connections Inc or otherwise known as Bulli Community Centre. Another year has rolled around with many ups and downs.

This is a year for celebration for Neighbourhood/Community Centres across the State. For many years all Neighbourhood/Community Centres have lobbied the Government for increased funding but to no avail. But throughout the last couple of years and in particular 2010 in conjunction with LCSA Neighbourhood/Community Centres lobbied the Minister for Human Services and with Minister Linda Burney's support we were successful.

The aim of the Community Service funding reform is to move towards clear evidence based service models with identified performance indicators for reporting results. We will be in a transition period over the next three years so these will be interesting days.

The greatest thing was with the transition is that we have been funded for three years instead of one, which enables us to strengthen our community and build in to the future.

As an organisation we have grown in leaps and bounds obtaining the No Interest Loan Scheme has been a tremendous achievement, this has enabled many residents who reside in the Northern Suburbs of Wollongong to be able to access money to be able to purchase items that they could not have previously been able to afford and for some people, what many people take for granted the money has allowed them to register their car, for some residents on part-time work their car is crucial to allow them to travel to work. For many families this program has improved their quality of life.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Wollongong City Council for not only allocating the ex Library facilities to us but also for refurbishing the kitchen which allows our Merry band of Breakfast volunteers to provide breakfast for the children in a nice new kitchen.

2010/2011 has also seen the introduction of the Broadband for Seniors program which has attracted Seniors from the northern suburbs. This program has enabled older people to be able to learn how to use the internet, be able to contact friends and relatives from across the globe.

Our “Gossiper” newsletter was distributed this year in March/April I would like to thank Mariana for her hard work in producing this document.

To our volunteers who work to ensure that the office, broadband for Seniors and the breakfast program is successful and accessible for our community a huge thank you without people such as yourself these programs would not be possible.

I would like to thank the Board of Management for their support throughout the year, who have worked tirelessly for the residents of the Northern Suburbs. I know that I will speak on behalf of all the Board members in thanking Mary who spends many hours at the Centre and has the unenviable job of balancing the books.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank Elizabeth and her hard working team for their commitment and effort that they have undertaken throughout the year, we faced many challenges throughout this year, but handled it professionally and with a smile. Without the team’s commitment and dedication the Centre could not provide the quality of service to the Northern Suburbs community.

THANK YOU AGAIN TO ALL THE STAFF AND BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS WE MAKE A GREAT TEAM.

Manager's Report



Report presented by: Elizabeth Brassaud

It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to work as the Service Manager for the Northern Illawarra Community Connections Inc., for almost ten years now, and I must say they have been the best years of my working life. During this time I have experienced many changes as well as many ups and downs, highlights, disappointments, struggles and rewards; but always a challenge. The challenges are what makes the job interesting.

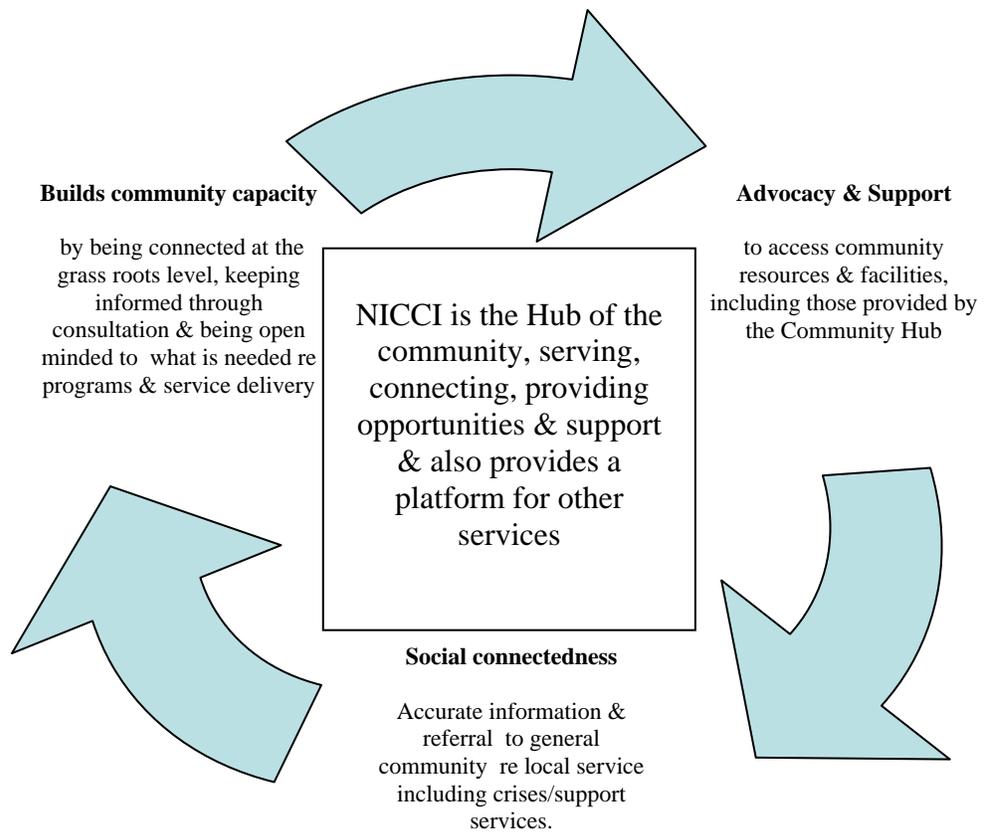
The past year has been one of regrouping, consolidation and looking to move forward into the future for service provision for our community, a community whose borders have now been defined as covering the Woonona/Bulli areas.

The Northern Illawarra Community Connections Inc. (NICC), continues to be the Hub of the community, serving and connecting the suburbs of Woonona and Bulli and working towards building a community that is safe, inclusive and resilient.

Community Hubs work with individuals, service providers and community groups to provide a locally based, single point of access to information, resources and services that are accessible to all members of the community.

Community Hubs connect individuals to information and services to promote community capacity, increase resilience and improve safety in the community.

Community Hubs also provide a location for the delivery of a range of community based, services including visiting and/or co-located agencies as well as supporting self help groups to contribute to community capacity building, as well as providing information referral and other resources to the local community across the following support categories:



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A huge focus was placed on early intervention for child protection after the Woods Commission Inquiry, into child protection. The powers that be, felt funding would be better spent within larger organisations with the infrastructure to work closely with the former Department of Community Services DoCS now know as Family and Community Services (F&CS), to support them in relation to child protection and family support.

The “Keep Them Safe” strategy was developed and there didn’t seem to be any recognition for the role that small organisations would play in the restructuring of the big picture in relation to funding allocation. The Community Services Grants Program funding was at great risk, which is this Service’s main source of recurring funding.

The challenge was informing Treasury that government funding spent on small not-for-profit organisations like community/neighbourhood centres, or otherwise known as place-based organisations produce value for the dollar.

The inquiry failed to see the integral role that smaller organisations played because it was difficult to measure outcomes. How do you measure if someone is better off? Small organisations have always run off the smell of an oily rag and resources to develop these tools have never been available.

Eventually the peak bodies within the sector were able to access funding through F&CS and much research was undertaken to develop tools to measure the outcomes and long-term impact of small organisations.

The peak bodies and in particular the Local Community Services Association (LCSA) were able to bring to light that community/neighbourhood centres are usually the first point of contact. They provide support before problems become serious. They don't just provide services to communities, but offer opportunities for people to belong and feel included. The use of "family" in describing the value and significance these organisations hold for individuals is a common metaphor. (Stories from the Hood, 2008).

Because of the hands on, grass roots relationship we have within our communities we are better placed to know what is needed in terms of support and service delivery. The valuable work community/neighbourhood centres do in their local communities, places them in a very important position within the puzzle that forms the bigger picture. They provide support on many levels to minimize/prevent problems from escalating to serious levels.

Small orgs are not just the first point of contact but often a soft entry point into the service system, providing up-to-date information and support by using the referral system, which then means people are not sent out on a merry-go-round of misinformation when trying to find help, particularly if they are affected by mental health issues. community/neighbourhood centres also provide advocacy to ensure that people are given a fair go.

Therefore small orgs are value for money and well placed to provide support in terms of early intervention saving government departments huge amounts of money as the ripple effect takes place, i.e. if parents who are supported, are then in a better position to support their children and remain as a family unit.

In the second half of 2010 there was a change in government thinking, thanks to the advocacy and support from the Minister for Human Services, Linda Burney. Services that were funded through the Community Service Grants Program (CSGP) that were not providing direct early intervention into child protection, have been streamlined into the Community Builders stream.

Community Builders stream of funding, as we are now called, is that services such as ours are recognized as having significant impact on early intervention because we provide community hubs and build community capacity.

We are now predominantly responsible for servicing the Woonona/Bulli areas, where as before boundaries were from the northern suburbs of Wollongong. This has been a positive change, as we can now focus our resources on these areas and not be spread as thinly as before. We can continue to do what we do best, only better!!

Service Overview

This Service provides information, referral and advocacy. We work towards creating community hubs and bringing people together. Creating links and developing community support networks, providing opportunities for people to learn new skills and increase self confidence/feelings of empowerment, and enhancing the social development of communities as a whole and the individuals within them.

Our philosophy is that the Association respects the dignity, rights and potential of all people. It demonstrates this via its recognition of the rights and responsibilities of the individual and of specific groups/communities and its commitment to self-determination for individual groups and communities.

The Association recognizes the just claim of disadvantaged and marginalized people to the resources of the community. It undertakes to provide services regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, sexuality, disability or country of origin as resources permit, and it will prioritise the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized people/groups in the community.

It aims to assist/support people in our community to live in a just society and encourage participation in strong communities that cope effectively with change and promotes safety, welfare and in particular the groups such as disadvantaged children, young people, disadvantaged families and communities.

Funding Sources

1. Family and Community Services, formerly know as Department of Community Services (DoCS) – provide the main source of recurring funding, which enables this Service to operate.
2. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs Auspused by Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services – provide one-off and operational grants for the NILS
3. Office of Fair Trading – provide administration and operational grants for the NILS
4. National Australia Bank (NAB) - provide the capital for the NILS program.

Donations for 2010/2011

- BlueScope Steel again donated \$1,200 for the “Energise Our Kids: Breakfast Program
- Woonona Lions Club donated \$2,000 for the “Energise Our Kids” Breakfast Program

Other Relationships

1. Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre
2. Centrelink – Corrimal
3. Department of Housing
4. Helensburg Neighbourhood Centre
5. Illawarra Forum
6. Illawarra Regional Community Development Consortium
7. Local Community Services Association
8. Local schools
9. Smith Family – Learning for Life Program

Activities, Services and Programs for 2010/2011 have included:

Activities



1. African Drumming with Janine weekly
2. Arthritis Support Group - monthly
3. Avon – by-monthly
4. Backyard Craft Girls - weekly
5. Beginners Yoga with Lesley Goldacre – twice weekly
6. Illawarra Respite Carer Respite - fortnightly
7. Dynamic Yoga with Diana Timmins - weekly
8. Friday Writers Group - weekly
9. Gentle Exercise with Marie Downie – twice weekly
10. Guitar Group – bi-annually
11. Meditation with Mark Ballesi - weekly
12. Sublime Sound Healing with Barbra Jackson – twice weekly
13. Rama – Teaching Group
14. Yoga for Everybody with Sue Brittain - 8 sessions per week
15. Yoga Class with Nandi Hollo - weekly



Support groups included:

1. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Thursday and Saturday groups
2. Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Thursday and Saturday groups
3. Overeaters Anonymous (OA) Friday group

We provided a platform for other Services to deliver:

1. Adult Survivors of Child Abuse drop-in service
2. Butterfly Courage – Counselling
3. Consultation with Rama Prasad

4. Justice of the Peace
5. Schizophrenia Fellowship (SFNSW) – Illawarra Respite Services
6. St Vincent de Paul – Welfare
7. Dr. Rama Prasad B.A.M.S., C.A.C.H. Ayurvedic Physician, Yoga & Sanskrit Teacher

Service Programs

No-Interest-Loan-Scheme (NILS)



In 1981, The Good Shepherd Sisters of Victoria provided funds to the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service to ‘commence the first “NILS”’. Since then, Good Shepherd has supported the provision of NILS to low-income earners throughout Australia and celebrated it’s 30th years of operation nationwide, at this year’s National Conference, held in Melbourne.

The National NILS Network provides support to schemes that have been accredited as NILS providers as well as those seeking to initiate a new program.

The major functions of this network are:

- To oversee the Accreditation process, including the establishment of standard Policies and Procedures
- to collect relevant data for monitoring, evaluation, program development and research purposes
- to provide resource material, information and training opportunities
- to provide support for and between the state network representatives
- to strengthen the advocacy voice of NILS.

This Service received accreditation as the Northern Illawarra Community Connections Inc No-Interest-Loan-Scheme and is registered as NICCI NILS, over 18 months ago. NICCI NILS covers the areas north of Wollongong to the southern suburbs of the Sutherland Shire.

NICCI NILS provides interest-free loans for individuals and families on low income. It’s a community-based program that enables people to access fair, safe and equitable credit for the purchase of essential white goods, furniture and other items such as lap-top computers, car registrations and repairs. Loans are given from \$500 to \$1,200.

When a borrower makes a repayment to NICCI NILS funds are then available as a loan for someone else in the community This is called ‘circular community credit’ and is a real demonstration of the community in action.

All NILS projects are run by local community groups such as NICCI NILS, who try to provide loans to as many people as possible. At the end of the financial year the capital funds were almost expended and there was a need to apply for further capital funding from the National Australia Bank, (NAB), who provides an over-draft at no cost.

NICCI NILS had a few hiccups at the beginning of 2011 in relation to changes in staff. I would like to thank Mariana Moonsun for stepping in for the interim periods and doing a wonderful job. The transition would not have been as smooth without her support.

We were initially only lending for white goods but soon realized that car registrations and repairs, lap-top computers and furniture were just as essential as a washing machine or a dryer.

We are based here in Bulli but the second half of the year saw the program expand to providing an outreach from Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre. Bellambi has been our main source of referrals, second Centrelink and work-of-mouth has really worked well.

Seniors Broadband Kiosk



Broadband for Seniors is part of the wider Australian Government initiative 'Making Ends Meet Plan for Older Australians, People with Disabilities and Carers'.

Broadband for Seniors is to provide support by offering free computer access, free broadband internet access and free computer training.

The main aims are:

- To give senior Australians free access to computers and the internet via internet Kiosks
- To support senior Australians in gaining confidence and in building new skills in the use of computer technology
- To address the issue of senior Australians feeling isolated and 'left behind' in a technological age
- To build community participation and social inclusion among senior Australians.

This initiative is aimed at people aged 50 years and over who have never had the opportunity to learn how to operate a computer or explore the internet and feel threatened by this technology or believe it is too late to learn. People in this group who have a desire to learn can freely do so with help from their peers in a familiar environment.

They learn to use a computer, how to explore information on the World Wide Web and how to stay in touch with friends and family online. The Broadband for Seniors concept is to provide a seniors-friendly environment where they can come and learn basic computer and internet skills.

This program started here at the Bulli Community Centre, this year in full swing. We were very fortunate to have acquired a wonderful group of volunteers who are dedicated to the program. On advertising we had a huge response and had more participants than tutors, so as result put together a waiting list.

The waiting list became too long and it was decided that for the second half of the year group sessions will be introduced

“Energise Our Kids” Breakfast Program



This program also experienced a few hiccups early in the year due to staff changes, but we were able to secure a new worker , Julie Street-Smith, who has be a great addition to the already wonderful team.

This program was developed as a result of an identified need within this community over 4 years ago. We have supported many children and their families during this time. We have worked with Family and Community Services and the children of the families that were being case managed by them and others that just needed a hand.

Due to the changes in funding, increase in costs and the limited resources available, it will no longer be viable to run this program as we have, as an early intervention program. There are now larger organisations, who are being appropriately funded to do so.

New Directions

Times and needs are changing and we have to go with what is needed. There is a growing need for low income families in this area, who earn too much to receive help from Centrelink but not enough to cope with the rising costs of living. These families are known as the working poor and are disadvantaged.

After discussions with school principals and others in the community it appeared that the best way to support the wider community, was through the local schools.

Offering to partnership the program within the local schools, seems like a natural progression and viable alternative. I met with the Principal of the Bulli Primary School, Sue Elliot, to discuss how we could work together to support families in need within her school community.

Sue was able to offer us the canteen area, which is perfect for the program’s needs as it also had an enclosed area, which could be used for the youths to have their breakfast out of the weather.

It was decided that the program would be introduced into her school by advertising in the school newsletter as a food tasting morning, the last Monday of the 3rd School term and have it on a regular basis every Monday in term 4.

The program will be evaluated at the end of term 4. It will then be decided if it will be offered as a permanent in-school program, providing breakfast for disadvantaged families in the new year 2012.

I am very excited about the possibilities regarding the future of this program and the opportunities it may provide.

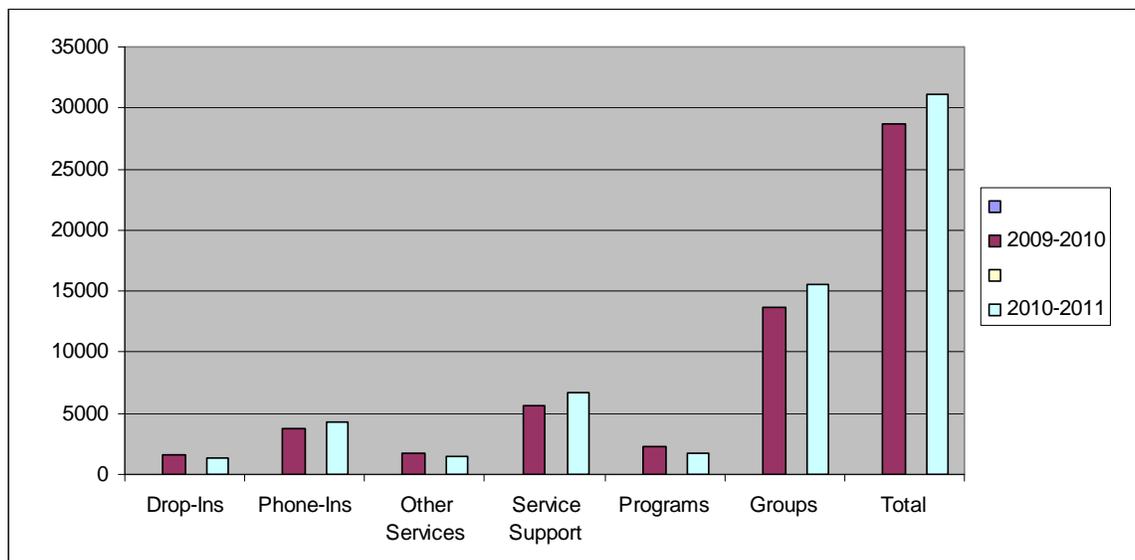
Worker Training

1. Local Community Services Association Conference
2. No-Interest-Loan-Scheme Annual Conference
3. No-Interest-Loan-Scheme Annual Forum
4. Family and Community Services changes to accountability information sessions

Statistics

Occasions of Service Provision Comparison for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 Financial Years

Year	Drop-Ins	Phone-Ins	Other Services	Service Support	Programs	Groups	Total
2009-2010	1,577	3,709	1,795	5,658	2,240	13,672	28,651
2010-2011	1,310	4,325	1,481	6,648	1,795	15,579	31,138



Statistical Comparison for 2009/2010 – 2010/2011 Financial Years

An increase of 2,487 occasions of service for 2010/2011 financial year. This was a surprise, as there were many interruptions when groups and other community members were unable to access the Centre/Service, due to Wollongong City Council's refurbishment of the outside of the building.

Highlights

Finally, the recognition by Government, that small grassroots organisations such as community and neighbourhood centres are valuable and contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities.

This was demonstrated by the streamlining of Services and the 20% increase in recurring annual funding. The one-off \$12,000 transitioning money was also very much appreciated and will go a long way to helping this organisation transition from the Community Services Grants Program (CSGP) to the Community Builders.

It has also been wonderful that Family and Community Services, former Department of Community Services, has invested time and money into providing information sessions and welcoming feedback from organisations that will be affected by the changes in terms of how affective the new tools that are being developed to measure how many people came and how were they better off.

The successful funding applications to the Office of Fair Trading for continued operational grants until 2012, when they will review.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, operational funding auspiced by Good Shepherd Youth and family Services, to ensure the continuation of NLS programs.

Disappointments

It was very sad to see the closure of the Advocates for Survivors of Child Abuse (ASCA) Service here at Bulli. They have however regrouped to form Purple Ribbon Illawarra.

It was a huge loss to see David Campbell go from office, but we were able to say goodbye and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



Proposed projects for 2011/2012

1. Set up of a social lunch in partnership with Northern Illawarra Meals on Wheels.
2. Introduction of the “Energise Our Kids” breakfast program into the local schools.
3. Community Drop-in and information booth
4. Men’s Sheds