



ANNUAL REPORT

2016

Strong Investment in Community



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Hills Community Aid
Empowering Communities to Thrive



03

OFFICE BEARERS REPORTS

Ian Jacob - President

Ben Jackson - CEO

Clr Dr Michelle Byrne - Patron

Community Foundation of North Western Sydney

Gailsusan Moore, President / Director

04

PROGRAM REPORTS,

FINANCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS

More No Interest Loans than South Australia

Crisis Support helping where Emergency Relief left off

05

PROGRAM REPORTS, COMMUNITY SAFETY

AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Moving Forward moves past Pilot Stage

White Ribbon Day involvement Grows

Foundation laid for Community Legal Service

06

PROGRAM REPORTS, COMMUNITY SAFETY

AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Worth the Grind

Learning Still Popular

06

PROGRAM REPORTS, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Holiday Program expands to Rouse Hill

07

FINANCIAL REPORT

End of Year Financials

Fundraising Challenging at a Local Level

A Constant in the Shire

To understand the full extent of the journey an organisation has travelled you must look back to see where you have come from. In 1994, last century, the way Hills Community Aid's role had developed over its life was encapsulated in the mission statement written at that time: "The mission of The Hills Community Aid and Information Service is to identify changing needs of the residents of Baulkham Hills Local Government Area, and to empower them to meet their needs by initiating, providing or facilitating the development of appropriate services."

When we look at Hills Community Aid's current mission there is certainly a constant in there.

"To deliver a diversity of sustainable social, financial and educational programs that assist the vulnerable and strengthen and connect all communities in Greater Western Sydney".

Hills Community Aid at its heart is driven by their community.

Looking Forward

Hills Community Aid is driven by the need to rely less on government funding and to be more financially independent. This drive has pushed the organisation to actively pursue social enterprise as a method of sustainability. While the Hills Community Legal Service is now incorporated, the organisation still sees this service to the community as one that could fit a social enterprise model. The Salvation Army has an award-winning social enterprise legal service. Hills Community Aid could do much to emulate that service to bring legal inclusion to the Hills.

OFFICE BEARERS REPORTS



Ian Jacob
President

I am amazed at the changes that have taken place over 2016 in the community space. So is the change that Hills Community Aid has had to go through in 2016. This year has been a year of consolidation to better service our community from Kellyville to Wisemans Ferry.

This year we have seen:

- A brand refresh to simplify and strengthen our message.
- Strategic partnership with Interrelate to provide a range of services for couples, families and individuals including; mediation, counselling and groups.
- Sector leadership to participate in consultation initiatives relating to social enterprise as part of the Social Innovation Council.
- Greater community involvement with our White Ribbon Day program as Castle Towers partnered with us.
- Greater exposure from press locally for the Hills Daily Grind as we have provided barista training to students in our schools. This has really helped engage students, give them confidence and engaged community with more volunteer options.

Finally thank you to our staff, volunteers, supporters and partners that help us multiply our effectiveness in our community on a daily basis as every single person counts. We look forward to another impactful year ahead.



Ben Jackson
CEO

For the Financial Year 2016 it has been a year of struggles and surprises. Hills Community Aid followed the strategic plan to drive activity that would help create sustainability with less reliance on government funding. Hills Community Aid employed a part-time Fundraising Manager that was able to put a level of structure around funding our programs never before seen in the organisation. Their resignation has left the organisation all dressed up with no party to attend. Hills Community Aid also made a significant investment in the Hills Daily Grind social enterprise, to see the program have to shift its focus away from commercial runs to developing a training program in schools. With the continued investment in the Rouse Hill site, it made for a poor financial performance overall. This meant a reduction in service hours that had been increased for the expected gains in funding, deeply affecting staffing levels. With a more conservative approach, 2017 will prove to be more financially rewarding.



Cllr Dr Michelle Byrne
Patron

I am proud to be the patron of Hills Community Aid, as there is no other organisation like it in the Hills. It offers a wonderful range of community-based services, activities and programs for residents of all ages in the Hills Shire as well as offering a helping hand to those most vulnerable in our community. It has certainly been a productive and innovative year for Hills Community Aid with Moving Forward the domestic violence program progressing past pilot stage and the incorporation of the Hills Community Legal Service which will see it deliver services in 2017. I again want to thank the staff and volunteers under the leadership of CEO, Ben Jackson for the remarkable job they do every single day in making the Hills a better place for everyone.



**Community Foundation
of North Western Sydney**
Gailsusan Moore,
President / Director

During the 2015/2016 financial year the Foundation was able to continue the work started by our founder and friend Bill Dixon. We have again been responsible for the Hills Winter Sleepout which raised in excess of \$63,000 after fees and charges. The Foundation, Hills Community Aid, Lisa Harnum Foundation, and Give and Take Families were the organisations benefiting by each receiving 25% of these funds. These funds will be helping those organisations run their domestic violence, and homelessness programs.

During 2015-2016 the Foundation provided a total of \$29,899 to Hills Community Aid to run the Crisis Support Program, a program to aid those in financial hardship with food and energy bills, the Bridging the Gap Program, a program for small grants, and Training Cups to help students hone their barista skills on Hills Daily Grind.

The Foundation is still run by volunteers and I would like to thank the following volunteers for their selfless and hard work: Jackie Duffield, Naomi Martin, Majorie Anderson, Michelle Harder and the ladies of the Mid Coast Community Quilters. I would also thank the Board who also volunteer their time: Rob O'Neill, David Barnett, Greg Dixon, Steve Dixon, Steve Pringle, and Ray Whiteman.

More No Interest Loans than South Australia

The NILS program at Hills Community Aid continues to be one of the strongest performing programs. The staff and volunteers are relentless in their drive to make every loan count and turn as many applications as possible into loans. In 2016 NILS reached two significant milestones: 300 loans in a year and \$1,500,000 in loans since beginning the NILS program. Just to put that in perspective: in 2016 Hills Community Aid did more loans than all of South Australia put together.

Anna is a 24-year old single mother of two young children under five. Anna applied for a NILS loan to access the last \$1,200 of the \$3,000 course fee she needed to pay for her final semester of nursing. She had no financial support and as she was getting closer to the due date of the payment, this situation was putting lots of pressure on Anna. However she was determined to complete the course and gain financial independence for herself and her children.

Anna was already planning ahead and was surviving on a very tight budget. She accessed the Saver Plus matched savings program to save up for the children's educational expenses when her eldest child started school in January.

NILS was not the end of the matter though as she ended up accessing the Moving Forward program, which is a peer lead group therapy program that help builds capacity to move beyond the effects of domestic violence. Anna also applied for a Sports Grant for her two children under the Bridging the Gap Sports Grants provided by the Community Foundation of North Western Sydney and was appreciative of the opportunity given to her children to attend swimming lessons.

Anna left us feeling a weight lifted off her shoulders. As this was her last semester of the course, she said she now can see herself taking charge of her life and NILS was a life-line for her.



Crisis Support helping where Emergency Relief left off

It has been over a year since Hills Community Aid lost its submission to continue delivering the Federal Government's Emergency Relief program, a program that we had run for over 30 years. However with the confusion that ensued many Hills residents were left at a further disadvantage, being made to travel longer, at more expense for less benefit. Hills Community Aid believed the system had let them down. So it went and raised its own money to give to those in most need in the Hills. Through the contribution made by the Community Foundation of North Western Sydney and continued support through EAPA, Sydney Water and Telstra, and a strong collaborative relationship with Youth Rezolutions, Hills Community Aid developed its own Crisis Support Program.

During the time that Hills Community Aid delivered the Emergency Relief program it engaged over 500 people per annum, making sure they were adequately cared for in their time of need. With no government support Hills Community Aid has engaged almost 300 people in the 2016 financial year. Almost half of those people Hills Community Aid hadn't engaged previously, proving that financial hardship is never far away, even for the 'comfortably middle-class' Hills area.

Moving Forward moves past Pilot Stage

Moving Forward is an eight-week educational and peer support group program that exists to strengthen and empower participants post a domestic violence situation. The program provides these participants with practical life-tools, social interaction and opportunities for personal development within a safe and supportive environment. The program is facilitated by two trained and experienced facilitators who integrate group activities and therapeutic discussions together with a focus topic and guest presenters. The participants also have the opportunity to connect with relevant local services for ongoing support. Topics include maintaining healthy relationships, information on housing, finance and budgeting, rights, career & education options, self-care and ongoing support pathways.

Over the past 12 months there have been some significant milestones for the Moving Forward Program. We have been fortunate enough to complete two full cycles of the program with some wonderful outcomes for participants. Of the

16 women enrolled in the two series, many have reported returning to work, obtaining private rentals and loans and achieving a greater sense of self. At this stage none of the women who successfully completed the program have returned to perpetrators.

Most importantly however, the women have reported finding camaraderie in their peers from the program. One participant recently contacted us to let us know that the women had continued to meet and support one another after the formal program had concluded. She wrote "I got so much from the Moving Forward Program, but I think it will be the long-term friendships that will be most valuable. There have been so many firsts and situations that my old friends just don't understand, these women just get it".

The Moving Forward Program has received attention from other local service providers and we are currently working on the best way to make Moving Forward available more widely.

White Ribbon Day involvement Grows

White Ribbon Day is held on 25 November each year to raise awareness of domestic violence and what the community can do to stop it. The White Ribbon campaign positively encourages the community, particularly men to speak out against violence against women.

In November of 2015, Hills Community Aid led the White Ribbon travelling pledge. The pledge was a simple but important opportunity for people to commit to living by the White Ribbon oath "I swear never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women, this is my oath".

The pledge formed an integral part of the 2015 White Ribbon Day events in the Hills and was a significant inclusion in the inaugural Hills White Ribbon Day march and breakfast. The march was a chance for thousands of people within the hills to publicly voice their support of ending violence against women.



Foundation laid for Community Legal Service

Hills Community Aid is establishing a Community Legal Service which will offer local residents access to free one-off legal advice. The service will be based within Hills Community Aid and staffed by local expert legal volunteers. The Hills Community Legal Service is being established in response to Hills Community Aid's concern about the lack of availability to free legal advice to residents within the Hills area.

Over the past 12 months Hills Community Aid has made significant progress in the legal service's development. The Hills Community Legal Service is now an incorporated association and has its Board established. Hills Community Aid has been lucky enough to have the talented Justin Dowd, accredited family law specialist and partner at Watts McCray support the service, join the Management Board and take on the role of Principal for the service.

Hills Community Aid continues to work tirelessly with the Law & Justice Foundation and the NSW Community Legal Centres to ensure that a best practice and superior centre is available for local residents. In the year ahead, Hills Community Aid will continue to work towards formal accreditation for the community legal service. Hills Community Aid is excited about beginning to deliver a quality free legal service for the local community.

PROGRAM REPORTS, SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAMS

Worth the Grind

Hills Daily Grind

The Hills Daily Grind has grown over the past 12 months with the introduction of our Youth Skilled Up Program (YSUP) and community awareness about who we are and the great work we do in the community.

This year has seen 27 students graduate from YSUP with skills that assist them not only now but way into the future with

their careers, life skills, communication and confidence. One teacher reported back, "this hasn't just provided students with skills to make great coffee but to have confidence in themselves and their abilities. Jason (not real name) now engages with peers and staff outside the classroom and is a happier person all round".



Learning Still Popular

Learning in the Hills

Leisure Learning celebrated its 10th Birthday back in 1993. In its 10 years of operation it had grown from a start-up to a four-day a week service, and had provided low cost continuing education and social engagement in over 25,000 student interactions, or about 2,500 per year. Betty Kean remained the Centre's Principal, and much of its success was attributed to her ongoing leadership and commitment. The work and commitment shown by Betty and her team, laid the strong foundations for Learning in the Hills that we see today.

In 2016 Learning in the Hills always has something for everyone, with over 9,000 student interactions per year over six days of the week. This year Learning in the Hills has students who have won prizes in the Royal Easter Show, Castle Hill Show, and Blacktown Show but also has students who have picked up a paintbrush or needle for the first time. This learning is driven by the love of the class they attend, the friendships they have gained and learning from one another as much as they have learnt from the tutor.

PROGRAM REPORTS, FAMILIES AND CHILDREN PROGRAMS

Holiday Program expands to Rouse Hill

School Holiday Program

Our Family Fun Days are a school holiday favourite and this year we have had three great events attended by over 700 people. Some of our participants' favourite activities included Drum Beats with their vibrant singing and percussion instruments, One Good Day singing their songs to celebrate NAIDOC Day, the AFL Big Kick and of course the Fires with their fire engine and the Police with their van*.

While Balcombe Heights Estate is the spiritual home of Family Fun Days the School Holiday Program also cemented its position as one of Rouse Hill Town Centre's



key holiday activities. It was great to see a whole new part of our community engage with our Families and Children Programs.

*No children were arrested in the delivery of Family Fun Days.

End of Year Financials

Hills Community Aid and Information Service Inc ABN 15 602 757 218 Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016		
	2016	2015
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Fees Received	151,715	92,481
NILS	95,429	95,195
State Government Funding	329,458	356,454
Federal Government Funding	-	6,000
Fundraising Income	48,478	27,144
Grants FaHCSIA	-	120,472
	625,080	697,746
OTHER INCOME		
Grants - CFNWS	20,000	11,500
Interest Received	1,538	7,836
Other Revenue	78,273	63,000
	99,811	82,336
	724,891	780,082

Fundraising Challenging at a Local Level

Hills Community Aid took the bold step of employing a fundraiser in 2015 to drive income streams independent of government funding. It was a difficult position to fill, it was part-time, it was Hills-based and Hills Community Aid was not able to pay a premium.

However Hills Community Aid eventually found a local qualified to do the job, and it was with great gusto that he began building the foundations of a fundraising function at Hills Community Aid.

Much credit has to be given to Costa Demos as he moulded a number of 'asks' that Hills Community Aid could take to the public. Hills Community Aid ran its first fundraising appeal at Christmas raising over \$2000, a result achieved, with no database, no previous experience in fundraising and few resources to commit.

As this is written, Hills Community Aid is building strategies to use this platform despite Costa's resignation early in the 2017 financial year.

Hills Community Aid and Information Service Inc ABN 15 602 757 218 Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2016		
	2016	2015
	\$	\$
EXPENDITURE		
Administration Resources	34,632	25,531
Administration Expense	-	6,052
Computer Equipment	1,150	-
Electricity	45,200	51,750
Essential Equipment	3,285	852
Finance	31,496	28,254
Fundraising	3,995	-
Food	8,550	63,410
Furniture	-	250
Gas	4,200	3,327
Human Resources	539,234	436,919
Marketing	29,214	27,554
Medical	(130)	2,213
Motor Vehicle Expenses	23,618	27,701
Motor Car Expenses	326	3,650
Personal Items	-	435
Program	109,704	65,348
Rates & Taxes	-	4,416
Rent	-	20,874
Repairs & Maintenance	-	340
School Fees & Other Items	505	1,724
School Uniforms	635	420
Sports & Recreation - BTG	6,808	6,201
Telephone	7,500	7,633
Technology	27,972	25,612
Travelling Expenses	400	15,547
	878,294	826,013
Loss before income tax	(153,403)	(45,931)
Loss for the year	(153,403)	(45,931)
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	149,081	195,012
Transfer To Reserves	(2,959)	-
Retained earnings (Accumulated losses) at the end of the financial year	(1,363)	149,081

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Special Mentions

Jill and her wonderful team of volunteers in the 1 to 1 program.

John and his committed team of volunteers in the Hills CarPal program.

Crystal for holding Hills Daily Grind together when we didn't have staff to cover.

Without Norm, the Hills Community Bus would be among the Hills' homeless.

Joe's hard work with the Hills Community Legal Service.

Louise who is the engine room of Learning in the Hills.

All of the volunteers who give so much and ask so little.

The Community Angels parading as Hills Community Aid staff, for never quitting on a client, and for always going above and beyond, even when they are told to go home.

Partners



BLACKTOWN
YOUTH SERVICES
ASSOCIATION



Hills Community Aid
Empowering Communities to Thrive

