

Community Care TASMANIA

# Annual Report

## 2015-16



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# Managing change over 26 years

Fred Schoenmaker, Chair, Community Care TASMANIA, Board of Management.



Fred Schoenmaker, Chair, Community Care TASMANIA, Board of Management

“ We have now had 26 years of caring for the elderly and frail in our community and we are aiming for many more. ”

Throughout those years the Board of Management has played a long-term strategic role in guiding the organisation and ensuring that we continue to meet our governance obligations.

I would like therefore to acknowledge my fellow board members; Secretary Therese deRuiter, Treasurer Jo Gorsuch as well as Henry Gebka, Margaret Barlow, and John Spiranovic who give up their time freely to attend meetings and other events in order to help govern, plan and promote Community Care TASMANIA. Thanks for your work and support this last 12 months, it's been quite a demanding year for all of us.

We have a new name and branding which better reflects what we do. Our services cover the whole state and are not restricted to non-english speaking background clients any longer - in fact our largest client base is now Australian born. We are still the best placed organisation to look after our non-english speaking clients and will remain focused on that task. We also have a brand new website

that is very fresh, informative and easy to navigate. All our information and a list of services are there, so please, if you are able visit the site and see for yourselves: [www.cct.org.au](http://www.cct.org.au)

The Board appreciates the outstanding work of General Manager Wendy Mitchell, and Senior Case Manager Ina Bakker during this last financial year. We have gone from strength to strength and our client numbers have doubled. This year an audit was conducted by the Australian Government Aged Care Quality Review panel with a staggering result of 100% satisfaction rate, which goes to show that the management and staff have done an outstanding job to ensure all the policies and procedures as well as work practises are at or above industry standards.

This year our financial position is very strong. We ended the year with a surplus that will enable us to manage our liabilities with greater confidence as we move into an era where we will no longer receive direct funding from the government.

Early in the new year clients will be able to choose their service providers with more flexibility than ever before so this organisation and many others will be competing to gain the trust and support of existing and new clients. That is why you will see us and other organisations advertising their services on local media and billboards etc. We will need to do this to retain our existing client base as well as attract new ones to Community Care TASMANIA.

A survey of our clients was conducted this year to determine how they feel about the services received. We rely on these results to give us information that will help us to determine if our clients are getting the very best care and support we can give. I am pleased to report that the results from those who responded were very happy with the service giving an average score of nine out of ten. This is an outstanding result and the board wish to thank the Office Management, Case Managers and all the support staff for maintaining this high standard of care that clients have come to expect from this organisation.

We have a number of programs running again this year. Creative Connections is one that continues to be a success. All attendees have a great time socialising and creating works of art which you will see printed onto the beautiful calendars that are presented for sale every year.

The Community Visitor Scheme has had another successful year. Thanks to all our volunteers who faithfully visit their residents every month.

Last but not least I wish to acknowledge the fine work of Community Connections which was set up to support the ageing Bhutanese.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all our members and clients for choosing Community Care TASMANIA.

The Board and staff aim to ensure that you, our clients, obtain the very best possible home-based care that we can give. We are not large but we are a local, not-for-profit organisation aiming to give our clients personalised, friendly service.

“ There are challenges ahead but I believe we have the right team in place to successfully navigate through the sometimes murky waters. Thanks again to all our hard workers who make this organisation the success it is today and also to our community who continue to entrust us for their individual care. ”



Ina Bakker, Senior Case Manager



Wendy Mitchell, General Manager



## Board members

(Left to right) Henry Gebka, Margaret Barlow, Treasurer Jo Gorsuch, Fred Schoenmaker, Secretary Therese deRuiter and John Spiranovic.

# Community Care TASMANIA Looks to the future

Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.



Wendy Mitchell, General Manager

“ 2015-16 has been a momentous year. One in which Community Care NESB has taken on a new lease of life as Community Care TASMANIA. ”

The most obvious change is in our name. We have proudly served the Northern Tasmanian migrant community as Community Care NESB for over 25 years. During that time we have built an enviable reputation as a provider of personalised and specialised multicultural home-care services. We have also been at the forefront of innovation through the implementation of our Creative Connections and Community Connections programs.

From next year the world will change and we have to change with it. The changes to Consumer Directed Care in 2017 means that all clients and potential clients will be able to choose their care provider as well as what services they want and when they want them. To remain viable and vibrant we need to compete with other providers to retain existing clients and attract new ones.

Given our region's relatively low projected population increase and small slice of the migrant intake, to continue to rely on our traditional base is not sustainable. However, given the big jump in potential demand from an ageing population where 25% of Tasmanians will be over the age of 65 by 2030, we must move from a specialised agency to one which can attract clients from the broader Tasmanian community.

The change to Community Care TASMANIA does not mean we will be giving up our speciality in multicultural care. Our history means we truly understand this community in many varied and complex ways and we can now bring that sensitivity and in-depth knowledge to a broader range of clients.

At the same time I have allocated some moderate funding to promote our services in our community. If we do not do this people will not be aware of us when making choices about what aged care services they want and who should provide them.

The first stage of our promotion campaign incorporated the development of a fresh website. If you have not already, please take a look at [www.cct.org.au](http://www.cct.org.au). As well as outlining our approach and services it incorporates some state of the art features that allow people to buy "Dial an Angel" vouchers as gifts, pay accounts and make donations. Staff members have been allocated a log in account, to enable them to access such things as policies and forms.

“ I would like to thank the W.D. Booth Foundation for their support for our new website. ”

We have also produced two new quality brochures that highlight our community focus and services. The next step is a two year program of promotion.

During July 2016 we advertised extensively in the Examiner and Advocate newspapers. We are trialling spots on City Park Community Radio for two months and have agreed to a 12 month campaign with Tas Senior newspaper which is distributed via chemists and supermarkets.

We have also contacted all Tasmanian medical practices to explain our new approach and our "Dial an Angel" services. Hopefully this will build awareness and increased referrals. We have had some encouraging feedback so far.

Over the next year we will be developing metro bus advertisements, commercial radio and TV campaigns. All of these will be medium to long term. Depending on results, we will consider targeted letter box drops in late 2017. Alongside this we have redesigned our car fleet advertising, launched a facebook page and are developing materials for road shows around Tasmania during 2017. This will be an opportunity for us to talk directly to potential clients and their families.

Last, but not least, we have moved into our new offices which many of you would have seen by now. This is a crucial part of making us more accessible and welcoming to not only to staff, but also clients, potential clients and their families.

I understand that our resources are limited and thinly stretched at times, however the reality is if we do not make our community aware of what we can offer Community Care TASMANIA will struggle to survive. This will mean poorer services run by organisations that are underpinned by a profit motive rather than a client care motive.

The Board of Management and myself are being very cautious and prudent in our marketing spend. However, we regard it as an investment in supporting the provision of quality home-care in our community for the longer term.



# Our major successes this year



Ms Bolzonello with Case Manger Karen Crisp

**“ We have had a huge year at Community Care TASMANIA. ”**

Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

## *In short our successes were:*

- Embracing the My Aged Care Portal and ensuring we used this new government system to its fullest;
- Achieving the highest possible ratings from the May 2016 Australian Government audit. Three standards and 18 outcomes were reviewed and no recommendations for improvement could be made by the auditors.
- Recruiting 20 new support workers and skilled office personnel;
- Changing our name from Community Care NESB to Community Care TASMANIA;
- Developing a new website, [www.cct.org.au](http://www.cct.org.au), facebook page, [www.facebook.com/Community-Care-Tasmania](http://www.facebook.com/Community-Care-Tasmania) as well as brochures and a longer term marketing campaign. These will showcase our approach and expertise to our clients, potential clients and contractors;
- Purchasing our own larger premises at Broadland Drive to house our growing team;
- Receiving several grants to allow us to better serve our Bhutanese community;
- Further developing our staff's already outstanding customer service skills, allowing us to grow our contract work;
- Supporting a huge growth of clients across Tasmania; and
- Working in effective partnerships with a number of allied organisations across Tasmania. These include Migrant Resource Centre – Southern Tasmania; Hospice@HOME; Care Assess - North, North West and South; Alzheimers Australia; Southern Cross Care; Kinicare; Care Forward - North, North West and South; Integrated Living; and Family Based Care - North West.

Community Care TASMANIA's new website



New Community Care TASMANIA office

# Meeting our strategic business goals



**“ The 2014-16 Community Care TASMANIA strategic plan had a number of elements that the Board identified as keys to improved performance. ”** Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

## This included:

- A. Maintaining our focus on care of our clients;
- B. Improving consultation with our clients and stakeholders;
- C. Achieving better practice and outcomes in the provision of services to our clients;
- D. An emphasis on continual improvement and refinement of our quality systems;
- E. A commitment to understanding, adapting and responding to the changing environment;
- F. Expanding our customer base;
- G. Ensuring the organisation is sustainable; and
- H. Adopting the Consumer Directed Care Model.

| CCT's Strategic Objectives   | Our performance over the past 12 months   |
|--|---|
| Maintaining our focus on care of our clients   | CCT has always prided itself on the outstanding care and understanding it provides to its clients. The changes imposed on the organisation have meant that our traditionally high level of intervention and case management has had to be reduced. At the same time we are looking after a growing number of clients. Despite this the Case Managers have responded to the needs of the clients, while learning and implementing new systems, which I consider an outstanding effort.   |
| Improved consultation with our clients and stakeholders;                             | We have successfully undertaken regular surveys of our clients to ascertain firstly, if they feel we are doing a good job and secondly, how well they can cope with the changes to the aged-care system, which is more and more a technology based system.<br><br>We have also produced regular client newsletters as well as one-on-one calls and visits. Our information gathering indicates that our traditional client base is not responding all that well to the changes and some find these changes confusing and help hard to access.<br><br>One of things we have noticed is that clients can have multiple providers, each providing different aspects of care. This is very confusing for a client, who might not understand that different services are sending in support workers to undertake different jobs. This appears to be the way of the aged care portal now. |
| Achieving better practice and outcomes in the provision of services to our clients;  | CCT continues to be recognised as a small but significant player. With a growing number of package and contract clients utilising our services. We know we have a good product and respond to both our clients and our contract clients as appropriate in a timely, efficient, empathetic manner.<br><br>The balance sheet facts speak for themselves in this context.  |
| An emphasis on continual improvement and refinement of our quality systems           | This year the Board has reviewed all policies.<br><br>Developed new policies to meet the changing needs of the organisation, especially related to CDC and the new focus on clients managing their own care.<br><br>In our Commonwealth Quality Review Audit CCT obtained 100% in all categories, an outstanding result for the organisation and the teams.   |
| A commitment to understanding, adapting, and responding to the changing environment. | CCT has embraced the changes imposed on the industry. CCT has adapted well, developing many new systems and processes to manage the changes, while continuing to provide for a growing number of clients simultaneously.  |
| Expanding our customer base  | CCT's new program Dial an Angel, which responds to the needs of fee paying clients, is slowly getting traction.<br><br>The 2015 change in the Constitution, to look after other people in the community, has allowed the organisation to meet the needs imposed under the My Aged Care website and portal. Our client base has grown from 204 clients to 454 clients this year. We continue to employ more support workers across the state in order to cater for our growing number of clients.  |
| Ensuring Community Care TASMANIA is sustainable                                      | CCT has worked in partnership with other organisations this year, supplying services and support. The result of this work is an additional \$800,000 (approximately) in income which has supported firstly, our expansion moves into new premises and secondly, our longer term promotion campaign.<br><br>It will be necessary for CCT to be an active player in the market from January 2017.   |
| Adopting the Consumer Directed Care Model  | CCT has successfully adapted to the Consumer Directed Care Model. This has been enabled through the purchase and implementation of appropriate software and through training the Case Managers and teams to adopt the model as per the Commonwealth guidelines. The CDC model has been fully operational since January 2015.  |

# Financial matters



Dial an Angel  
Amie with Victoria

## Balance Sheet

**“ Our financial team has done an outstanding job this year in managing our accounts in a context of increasing complexity and organisational growth.”** Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

The complexity is due to the accounting required to manage the Consumer Directed Care (CDC) clients. Each CDC client requires their own set of accounts incorporating monthly invoices and statements. In addition we have undertaken a large amount of contract work this year and this small team have managed all this beautifully, truly a job well done.

I would like to thank our financial team of Sharlene Hardy from Sherwood Business Services, Powell Accounting who not only undertake our Annual Audit but provide advice, support, excellent service and attention to detail in a timely manner.

I would also like to sincerely thank our internal team of Chris Johns and Debbie Smedley for their great work.

This healthy balance sheet has enabled Community Care TASMANIA to make three strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening our capacity to operate effectively in the post 2017 aged-care world.

They are:

- The purchase and renovation of new premises, 8 Broadland Drive;
- The expansion of our services and reach; and
- The development of a 18 to 24 month marketing campaign.

These initiatives aim to ensure Community Care TASMANIA remains strong and viable so that we can keep caring for as many clients as possible.

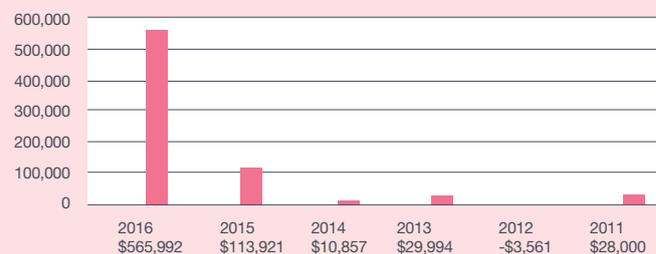
We know that the future holds some great uncertainties for providers. The changes in the past 24 months have been extensive and these will only continue over the next 24 months. All providers will need to position themselves in a fast changing environment, where government grants are a thing of the past and providers will have to raise the bar to survive in a CDC environment.

That is why this surplus and positive balance sheet is so very important to Community Care TASMANIA in these times of change. We have been here for 26 years providing wonderful service and we need to ensure that we will be here into the future. The balance sheet summary to the right shows that Community Care TASMANIA has a healthy asset base from which to continue to provide quality home care for our clients.

Community Care Balance Sheet End of Year 2011 - 2016



Community Care Surplus End of Year 2011 - 2016



### Surplus

The surplus depicted above has been created as a result of the contract work Community Care TASMANIA has undertaken on behalf of other specialist care providers throughout the year. Such specialist providers seek to utilise our staff because of our professionalism and commitment to providing the best quality customer service at all times. This contract work is over and above our commitments to the state and commonwealth governments. This outstanding surplus result is a credit to everyone at Community Care TASMANIA and I thank all our staff, board members and volunteers. As I said earlier this result will provide the buffer we need as we head into an uncertain future where payments to us cannot be predicted.

# Successful grant applications



*“Over the last twelve months Community Care TASMANIA has sought and received several important grants. These grants have enabled us to get to know and understand our ageing Bhutanese communities.”* Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

The grants were used to survey the health of the community and put in place programs to help them gain confidence in understanding how our aged care support system works, and to design the most effective services to address needs in a culturally appropriate manner. The overall aim is to assist the ageing Bhutanese to remain as healthy and happy as possible.

*The two grants we have received this year are:*

- **Tasmanian Community Fund**

From January 2016 \$74,304 was granted to enable Community Care TASMANIA to employ three Bhutanese Support Workers to run the Community Connections program for three years - until December 2018. Community Connections tackles social isolation among older members of the Bhutanese/Nepalese community. It will introduce them to places and services available to them in their new community and show them how they can access the places and services they need.

- **Department of Health and Human Services Gambling Support Program**

Community Care TASMANIA was awarded \$11,000 from May 2016-April 2018 to assist in offsetting the Community Connections excursion costs and weekly room hire. It will cover the site entrance fees for group members as well as fuel costs and the hire of the Migrant Resource Centre Hall, 21 Haig St, Mowbray - the venue used for the group's weekly gatherings.



Lok Nath Subedi greeting Punchbowl gardener

# Clients



Danielle  
Care Support Worker

## A. Client numbers and profiles

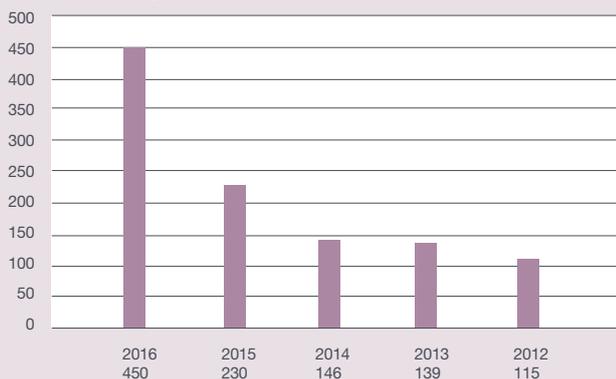
The significant growth in client numbers, (see table A below) is a reflection of our growing capacity to attract clients from across the Tasmanian community while retaining our speciality in caring for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients. The development of the My Aged Care Portal (MAC) has also contributed to our growth as it has allowed us to pro-actively attempt to match client needs with our service capacity.

Some 39% of our clients - 179 in total - are in the 80 to 89 age bracket (see table B below). The other noticeable group is aged between 70 – 79 with a total of 149 clients or 32%. Interestingly we have just over 50 or 11% of clients aged over 90 - a pointer to our ageing society.

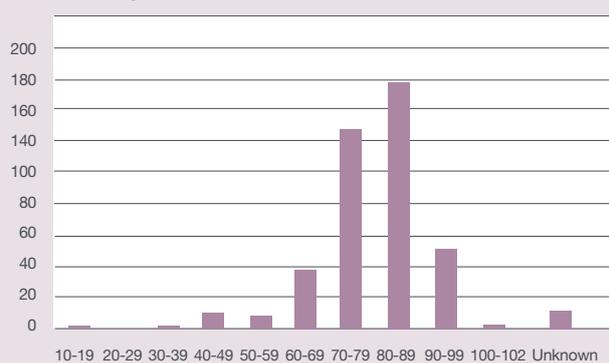
Of our 454 clients, 321 are from the North, 99 live in the North West and 32 in the South (see table C below).

68% of our clients are female with 311 women and 137 male clients (see table D below).

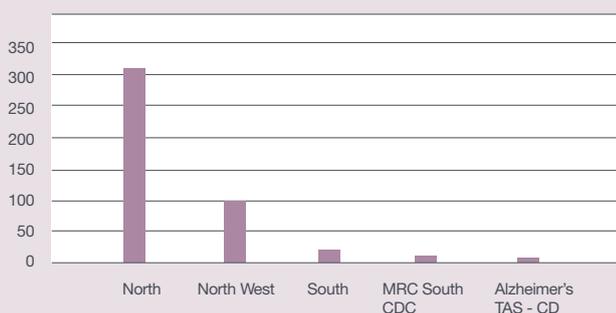
Community Care Growth in Client Numbers - table A



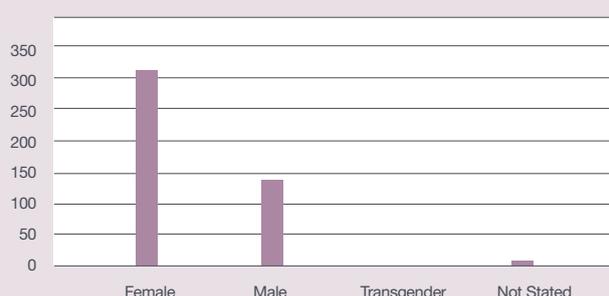
Client Age Profile - table B



Client Sources 2015 - 2016 - table C



Client Gender Profile - table D



# Clients



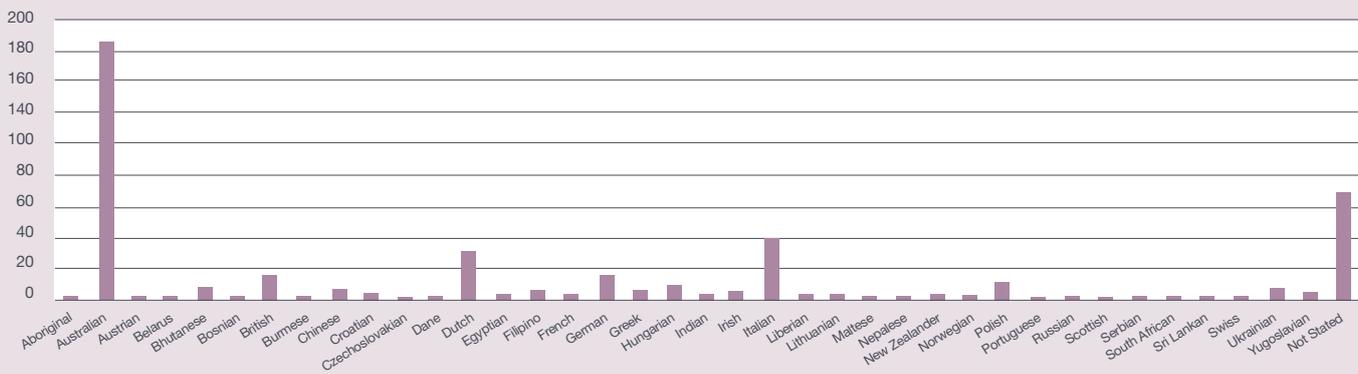
Ms Bolzonello

## A. Client numbers and profiles

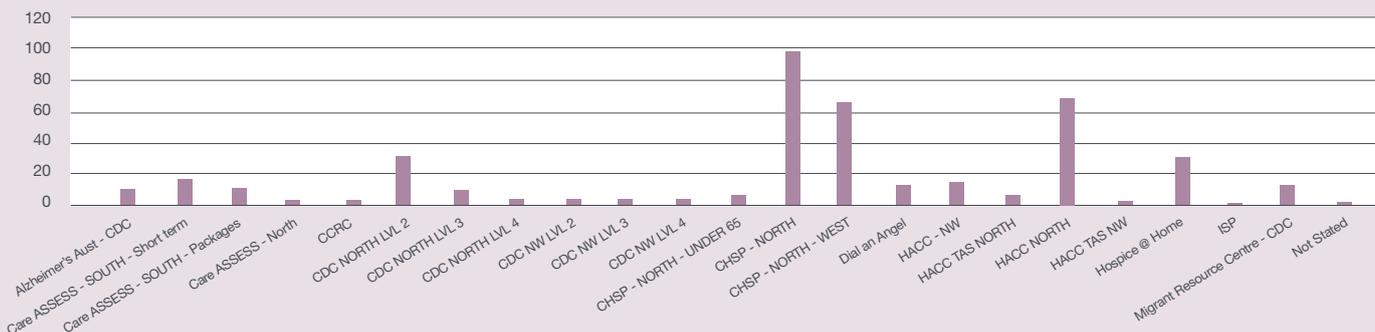
A total of 184 or just over 40% of our clients are Australian born. Our next largest groups are Italian, Dutch, Polish, British, German, Ukrainian and Bhutanese. Overall, Community Care TASMANIA has clients from 39 countries.

Community Care TASMANIA clients are on a varied range of client contracts as highlighted by the graph below. 23% of our clients are Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) North clients; the next largest group is the Home and Community Care (HACC) TAS North clients, followed by Commonwealth Health Support Program (CHSP) North West and Hospice@Home palliative care clients. We now have just under 11% of clients with Consumer Directed Care (CDC) packages. In all Community Care TASMANIA services 23 different client groups.

Client Nationalities



Client Contract Profiles





Mrs Palmina Letterio with gardener Andrew

## B. Delivering our care services - some statistics

We successfully delivered against our Commonwealth and State HACC and CHSP contracts. Under these programs we are funded to deliver a defined amount of services. There is sometimes a wide variation between the allocated funding and the service levels that staff and clients together judge is actually needed on a day to day basis. Although our average for the various categories in the North was 82% and for the North West 79%, there are some wide variations with North West domestic assistance and Northern personal care service heavily over-subscribed. These figures do not include the combined staff total of 5500 hours of essential individual unfunded case management delivered during the last year.

### North West Coast

- Domestic Assistance 124%
- Personal Care 80%
- Social Support 44%

### North

- Domestic Assistance 101%
- Personal Care 181%
- Respite 4%
- Social Support 72%
- Home Maintenance 105%

### CDC Packages

Currently Community Care TASMANIA manages 52 CDC packages. These include nine linked to North West clients and 43 allocated to our clients in the North. A more detailed breakdown is listed below:

### North West

- 3 Level - 4 packages
- 3 Level - 3 packages
- 3 Level - 2 packages

### North

- 3 Level - 4 packages
- 9 Level - 3 packages
- 31 Level - 2 packages

This year our teams have been encouraged to think creatively in order to assist CDC package clients to make the most of their packages.

The key words are wellness and re-enablement – supporting clients to continue to do as much as they can for themselves. To this end our Case Managers work with clients to determine how to best utilise the package funds to keep them as active and involved in life as possible.

For example, some creative thinking this year has enabled a package client to use funds to put in a security screen door so she is no longer afraid to live at home. Another client has used funds to purchase a chair lift, so they can get up and down more easily. Yet another client has had a new bed purchased and is now no longer afraid to sleep in a bed rather than on the floor as was previously the case. Other clients have used funds for IT support.

It is unfortunate we do not have more package funding and/or CHSP hours available. It's a sad thing to see needy clients who could do so much better on a package but we are unable to help them.



# Clients



Mrs Palmino Lettero

## C. What our clients tell us

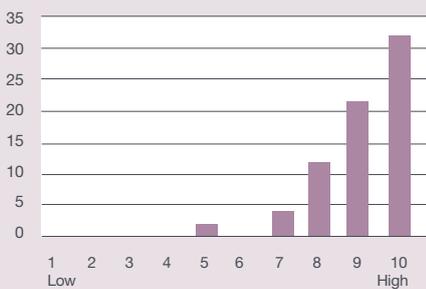
*“ Our regular client surveys suggest that we are providing a personalised and quality level of home care.”*

Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

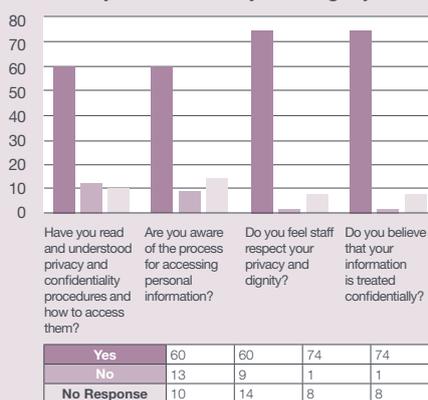
As always, there are some areas in which we can improve. The survey suggests that we can do more to make clients aware of advocacy services, complaints procedures, privacy and confidentiality and how they can initiate changes in the services they receive. This is particularly relevant to the post 2017 service delivery model of Consumer Directed Care.

These surveys are also used to inform our decisions around future care services, community support programs as well as the content of our training and staff support initiatives. We are always looking to improve our service delivery.

Satisfaction Levels Overall Service 2015



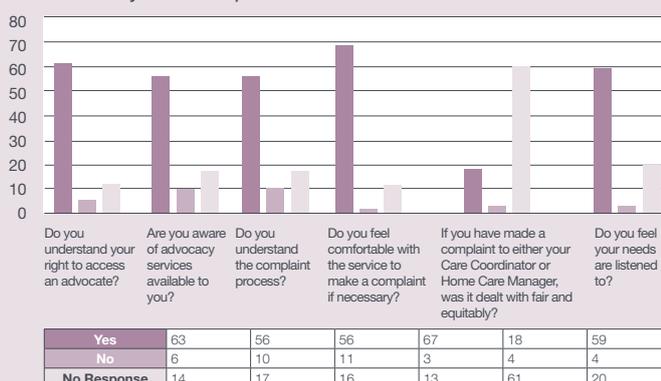
Privacy, Confidentiality and Dignity



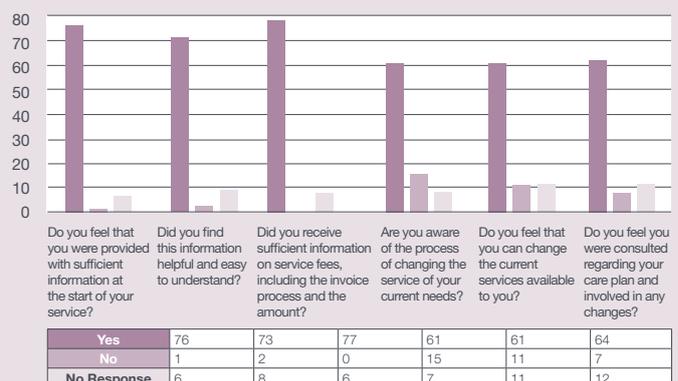
Rights and Responsibilities



Advocacy and Complaints



Information and Consultation



# About our employees



Community Care TASMANIA employees

**“Eleven full-time office staff and sixty nine support workers successfully look after our 454 clients state-wide.”**

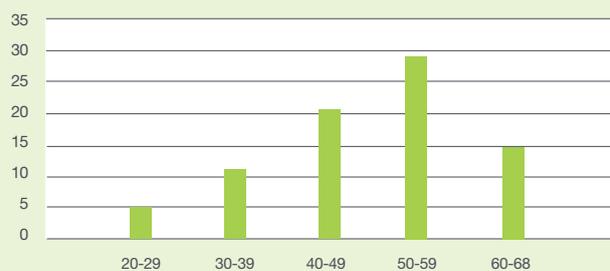
Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

I would like to thank our teams for their dedication, empathy, attention to detail and lovely manner with our clients. They assist our clients in their daily lives to live as full and healthy lives as possible considering their age and their circumstances. This year we have become a state-wide service, and as a result we have initiated an online training program. This has reduced our reliance on face-to-face training, saving time and resources. This has enabled us to deliver training efficiently to all of our support teams. This year our employees numbered 80 in total; an increase of 20 positions over the last 12 months. These are made up of 11 full-time, 13 part-time and 56 casual employees. The overwhelming majority of employees are female, (around 85%). Employee location mirrors the client base with 77% of our employees based in the North, 17% in the North West and 6% in the South.

Employee Location



Employee Age Profile



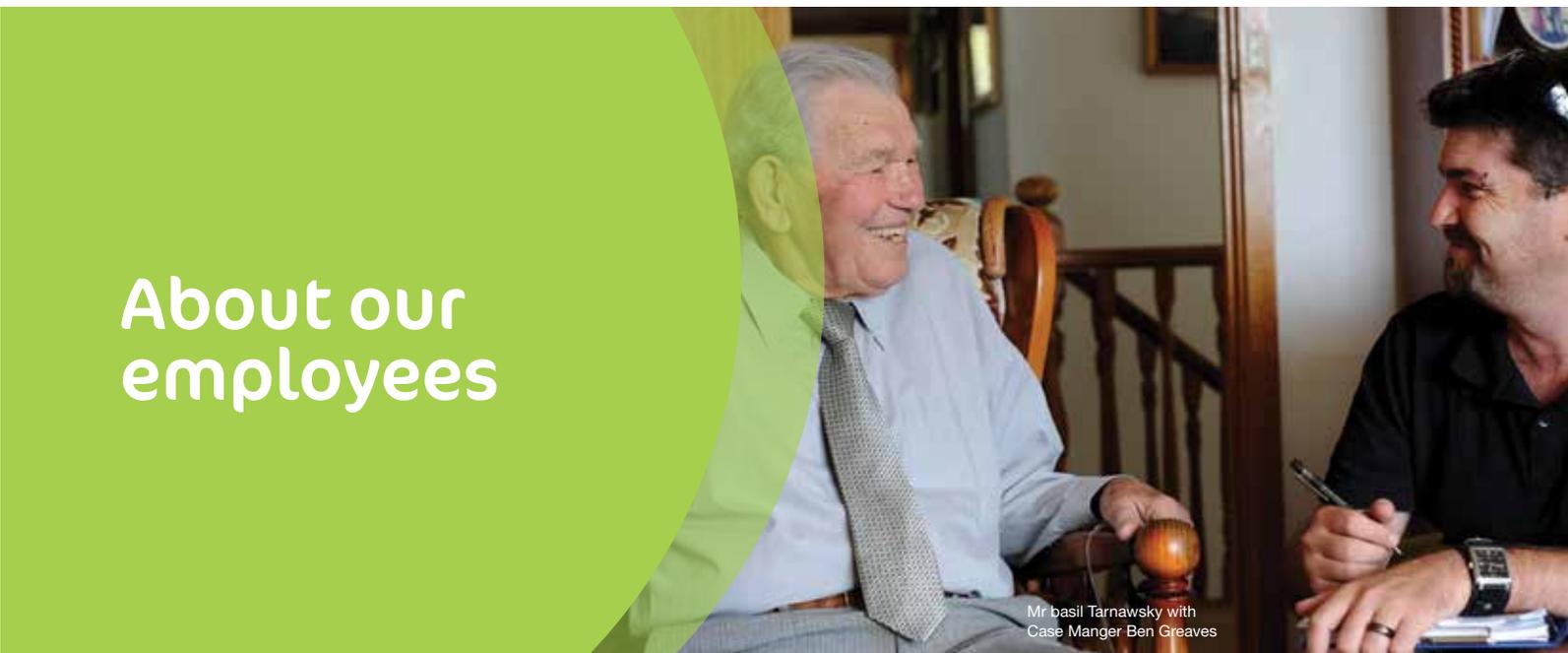
Above are the age profiles of our support worker base. While we are working on retaining our older employees we need to anticipate that as our client numbers are growing and there is a large demand on our support workers. Our age profile may therefore change over time.

In understanding our workforce and their capacity to respond to an ever changing and demanding work environment we need to consider that our support workers are mostly women and a large proportion of our workforce is in the 50 – 59 age range. More than half of our workforce is over 50 and 18% are over 60.



Care coordinators and support workers work together to deliver the best care

# About our employees



Mr Basil Tarnawsky with Case Manager Ben Greaves

## A. Employee Training

Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

### During the year Community Care TASMANIA office teams have completed training in:

- Reckon accounting systems;
- Certificate IV in Training & Assessment;
- I-Care Health System; and
- External Student Supervision

### Support Worker Training

Since the beginning of 2016 the training of our support workers has largely been online. There are a number of reasons for this, with flexibility regarding training delivery a critical factor. Now that Community Care TASMANIA is operating state-wide, online training ensures staff outside Launceston are not excluded and training delivery itself is more cost-effective.

Since 2015 all support workers have been equipped with ipads or other tablets to receive rosters and report back on services and clients. Adding access to training on these devices has been a practical and convenient progression.

However, face-to-face meetings and hands-on training are still highly valued and Community Care TASMANIA will continue to ensure that there are opportunities for such events in all areas of the state over the next 12 months. This year for example, the June training session on Manual Handling of Equipment was conducted in three centres: Launceston, Hobart and Ulverstone.

### Support Worker Training Schedule Jan-Jun 2016:

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| January 2016  | Hand Hygiene session x 42 completions            |
| February 2016 | Policies and Procedures x 37 completions         |
| March 2016    | Charter of Rights, Duty of Care x 33 completions |
| April 2016    | Infection Control x 20 completions               |
| May 2016      | Car Survey/ Manual Handling x 21 completions     |
| June 2016     | Hoist & Equipment training x 31 completions      |



Lalita Rai at Community Connections

## B. External student supervision

*“Supervising workplace students is a time consuming but rewarding experience.”*

Wendy Mitchell, General Manager, Community Care TASMANIA.

However, it was an offer we readily accepted when in June 2016 TASTAFE approached us to supervise one of their students.

Community Care TASMANIA supervised the work placement of Lalita Rai, a Bhutanese/Nepali student doing Certificate III in Community Services Work. Given Lalita’s language skills and interest in working with her community, much of her placement time was involved with Community Connections, our program designed to improve the wellness of ageing Bhutanese people living in Launceston.

Lalita’s participation in the weekly Community Connections program assisted other Bhutanese workers to translate and explain information from various external presenters who attended the program in June. These included presentations from Community Care TASMANIA Senior Case Manager Ina Bakker (29 June) and Palliative Care Tasmania Charter Consultant, Rosie Beardsley (22 June).

Lalita also took and assisted several Community Connections participants at the weekly Tuesday Creative Connections art class, another of Community Care TASMANIA’s community wellness programs.

Senior staff and Case Managers also took Lalita to observe aspects of their roles when meeting clients who had agreed for her to attend. Lalita’s participation in these visits was in an observing and learning capacity, and provided her with an understanding of the organisation’s core business, as well as an opportunity to meet a broader range of our clients.



Lalita Rai at Community Connections

# Community Visitors scheme

20 years of creating friendship and wellbeing

*“ In July 2016 the Community Visitors Scheme, (CVS) celebrated 20 years under the auspice of Community Care TASMANIA. Over these two decades hundreds of volunteers have spent time with residents of aged-care facilities across Northern Tasmania. It is a fantastic way to promote wellbeing and bring some extra fun and joy to the aged-care residents.”* By Susan Aykut, Coordinator Community Programs.

Our CVS volunteers are generally motivated by a desire to give back to their community in some tangible way. They find visiting and befriending socially isolated people in aged-care facilities is a meaningful way to do this. Many volunteers forge close bonds with the people they visit and nearly all would say that the greatest joy they receive as a CVS volunteer is having the opportunity to brighten up someone's day.

Our current CVS funding from the commonwealth is based on 47 'active' volunteers visiting residents in 11 Aged-Care Facilities. Five of these are in Launceston (Aldersgate, Kings Meadows, Island Care Tyler Village, Prospect; Presbyterian Home, Norwood; The Manor, Kings Meadows; Mount Esk Aged Care Facility, St Leonards), the others are located in Scottsdale (Aminya May Shaw), Longford (Toosey Community & Extended Care), Low Head (Ainslie), Legana (Legana Presbyterian) and two are in Deloraine (Grenoch and Kanangra).



**Community Visitors Scheme**

Bertine and Willie

To be defined as active, a volunteer is required to make 20 visits per year, making a total of 940 visits for the year for 47 volunteers. This financial year (1 July 2015-30 June 2016) CVS exceeded this target with 49 volunteers making a total 1422 visits.

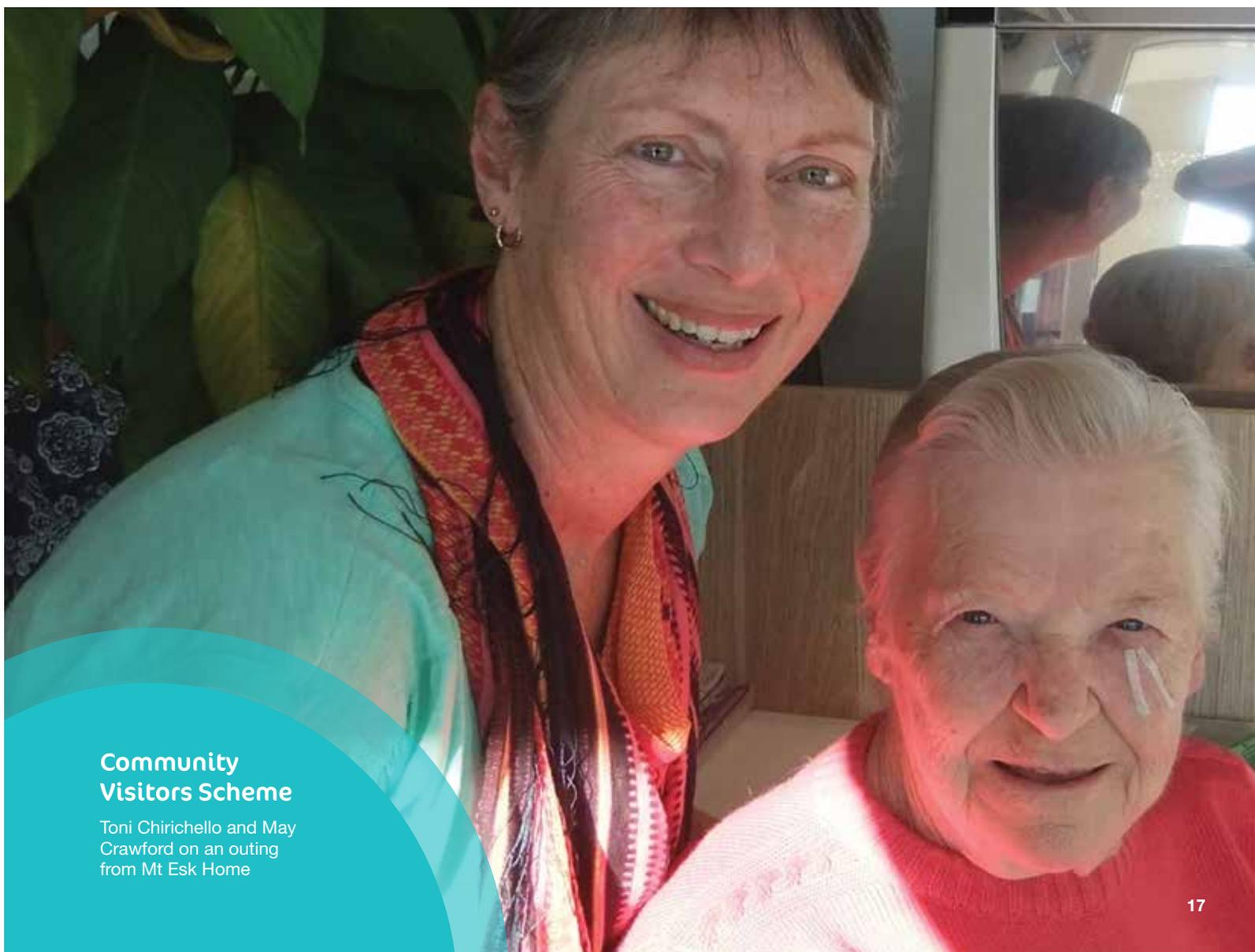
Another measure of success is that CVS volunteers visited residents in all of our allocated aged-care facilities. Moreover 50 of the 62 residents visited were identified as "Special Needs" residents. Of these 31 were categorised as Rural and Remote, 9 as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, and 10 had other special needs.

In addition to the formal aspects of the CVS, volunteers have participated in a number of community events including Seniors Week, National Volunteer Week and the Dying to Talk-Better Access to Palliative Care Expo.

At this stage federal funding has been secured until 30 June 2017. We hope it continues long after that.



Mr Antonio Iezzi



### Community Visitors Scheme

Toni Chirichello and May Crawford on an outing from Mt Esk Home

# Community Connections

Promoting wellness in Launceston's ageing Bhutanese community.

**“ In 2014 Community Care TASMANIA began working with local Bhutanese/Nepalese to find out more about their ageing and its impact on health and wellbeing.”** By Susan Aykut, Coordinator Community Programs

We also wanted to determine what could be done to address some of their particular mental and/or physical concerns particular to ageing.

Our surveys and questionnaires revealed that many older Bhutanese/Nepalese were experiencing social isolation and post traumatic stress issues arising from their many years as refugees.

In response Community Care TASMANIA initiated Community Connections in January 2016. With the support of the Tasmanian Community Fund and the Community Support Levy Charitable Organisations Support Program, a three year pilot program is up and running.

Participants gather at the Mowbray Migrant Resource Centre Hall every week to informally discuss and learn about services and support that are available and how they can be accessed. Site visits are often arranged so that they can get a better feel for the broader community in which they live.

On top of that we have organised a number of monthly excursions around Northern Tasmania. We have visited community gardens, Woolmers Estate, Bridestowe Lavender Farm, QVMAG and the Lilydale Falls just to name a few.

Community Connections employs four part-time Bhutanese support workers, one of whom is a Bhutanese elder.

**They work closely with the participants to improve wellbeing in:**

- Creating social opportunities to overcome isolation and depression;
- Better connecting the community to our region;
- Better connecting the community to people and services; and
- Enhancing re-enablement by encouraging them to be more active and do more for themselves.

The real success measure is in the numbers. Eleven people attended the first session on January 20. By June this had grown to 49 registered participants with an average of 35 people attending the weekly program.



**Community Connections  
- Bringing people together**

**Their responses speak for themselves.**

“ Before the weekly sessions people had no opportunity to meet others...we felt sleepy... now we are active fresh & are having fun. ”

- Lok Nath Subedi

“ These gatherings are good for older people to come together & share things...before the stress increase because we are not doing anything ...here we forget our stresses & time passes easily..it keeps us active & alert. ”

- Damanta Phu Yel

“ The Community Connection has made a huge difference in my life. I am not depressed like I used to be. I really enjoy going to the meetings and the outings. ”

- Ganga Ram Acharya



**Community  
Connections volunteer  
Breanna Hancock**

# Creative Connections

A productive and vibrant year

*“ Creative Connections was established in 2010 to provide a creative and social outlet for socially isolated Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members.”* By Jo Anglessey

Throughout 2016 the vibrant and productive group of participants have certainly achieved those original goals.

We have undertaken silk scarf making, ceramic pot painting, ceramic tile painting, wool dyeing and knitting, hessian shopping bag embellishment, hand-decorated gift cards as well as painting for the 2017 calendar.

Painting lessons have also been conducted producing some great results such as an imagined landscape and painted decorative flowers for gift cards.

We all have participated in the city of Launceston arts fund tile project which is part of the funding support provided by the City of Launceston for Creative Connections.

Creative Connections retains its unique qualities as it provides both a teaching environment where new skills are learnt as well as a vibrant social environment for participants to socialise and get to know each other. The program is still largely directed by the participants.



Creative  
Connections

Three Bhutanese ladies and a translator joined our group for four weeks. I believe they loved participating in the class. I enjoyed teaching them immensely. They have artistic aptitude and were very eager to share food and culture with everyone.

Creative Connections remains a very attractive and worthwhile program for those who are involved but it is not without some challenges. Encouraging new members, supporting them to get to the art studio at Inveresk as well as issues with nearby parking arrangements are sometimes difficult and needs future monitoring. Also funding for materials is somewhat stretched at times.

The good news is that Creative Connections provides fun, intellectual challenges and a sense of achievement for all of our clients who are involved. Long may it continue.



Fatima winning first prize at Royal Launceston Show



# Care Support Worker Profiles



Support worker  
Alicia Bramich

## Alicia Bramich

“ A ‘new’ Support Worker doing what she loves. ”

By Susan Aykut, Coordinator, Community Programs.

Alicia is not exactly new. She has been working with Community Care TASMANIA since last December. But she is so enthusiastic when she talks about her role as a support worker and working with us, you’d swear she had just started! Alicia has, however, only recently completed her training.

Alicia’s previous working life was in retail. It was a role she ‘sort of fell into’ after she had her first child when she was 19. She is surprised she is now working in aged-care. Upon reflection, it is not such a strange move. She grew up surrounded by older people, and her Nan, who died two years ago, was her best friend.

Before her grandmother went into care at Mount Esk Nursing Home seven years ago, Alicia was her go-to person. She took her shopping and on outings, so Alicia felt she was pretty experienced in the social support side of home-care. She also realises that she had paid close attention to the carers who provided her grandmother with domestic assistance. After her grandmother went to Mount Esk, she got to know the carers there as well, and became a volunteer after her grandmother died, finding ‘it was a joy to participate’ in the outings with other residents.

Alicia’s grandmother spent the last five weeks of her life in hospital after her kidneys failed; Alicia’s father stayed with her overnight and Alicia during the day. When she died, Alicia was shattered. She also knew she was changed by the experience, although she was not exactly sure how. Six months later she came to the realisation that she wanted to be able to help others like her grandmother and began her Certificate III in Aged Care. When she saw an ad for support workers at Community Care TASMANIA, she came in to see Ina Bakker and Ben Greaves. They offered her a job the following week, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Alicia loves all the beautiful people she meets in her new career. She particularly loves working with culturally diverse clients because she learns so much. She tries to learn a bit of their language to help communicate with them better, and she is genuinely amazed at the way other people have lived. Born and bred in Launceston, Alicia says she is ‘learning a lot about the world, the past and different cultures’. She loves hearing about people’s lives and where they grew up.

Alicia says her husband has noticed the change in her. He is delighted to see her so happy in her job, and he is very supportive of her role because he knows how passionate she is about it. As she does a lot of cooking for clients, her husband now cooks for their family. ‘Fortunately’, she adds laughingly, ‘he loves cooking!’

Alicia loves working for Community Care TASMANIA. She loves that it is local and she says she has never worked for an organisation that is so supportive: ‘It is nice to be appreciated in what you do’. But her real joy comes from clients. When they tell her ‘if it wasn’t for you I would be in a home’, says Alicia, ‘it makes you feel really good that you can do that for someone’.

Alicia believes in fate. She says she once saw a sign at St Thomas More’s school saying, ‘Do something in life that you love’, and she can honestly say that she does.



Support worker  
Sheila Crerar

## Sheila Crerar

### “ Reflecting on 20 years as a Support Worker. ”

By Susan Aykut, Coordinator, Community Programs.

A former kindergarten teacher, Sheila joined Community Care TASMANIA nearly 20 years ago. She started as a support worker and then spent two years as a ‘travelling librarian’, distributing foreign language books that had been donated to our library at the old Frederick Street office. Sheila recalls the job was heaps of fun and it fitted in with her role as a mother.

Sheila then became a part-time coordinator. She left this role after three years when the position became fulltime: ‘Family comes first’, she explained, ‘I did not want fulltime work while my children were young’. In 2002 she returned as a Support Worker and ‘It has been so good’, she says, ‘I have met so many lovely people’.

We still have clients that Sheila has known since she was a Coordinator. She signed up Basil Tarnawsky (featured in July Newsletter) as a client and fondly remembers his wife; ‘They were a couple who idolised each other’, she says.

There are also support workers still with us who were here when Sheila began, as well as some who started not long after her. ‘We stay’, says Sheila, ‘because it is very satisfying and rewarding work, and it is always interesting. Community Care TASMANIA is also very family friendly and supportive of what is happening in our lives.’

Working for a local organisation is important to Sheila. She believes we are the best organisation providing aged home-care services. While there is always room for improvement, she believes our team is flexible and responsive: ‘Support workers are the eyes and the ears of the organisation, and coordinators are quick to act on changes we tell them about, or issues we raise, and this makes a big difference to client and worker satisfaction.’

Over the years, Sheila has seen many changes in both the organisation and the aged-care sector. She is very happy with the new Community Care TASMANIA offices and loves the space and ample

parking it provides that was not available at the Tamar Street premises. While she understands the need to grow the business to stay competitive and viable, Sheila really loved it when we were smaller and she misses the social contact once provided. She is ‘old school’; she likes face-to-face meetings and getting things on paper, rather than receiving and reporting on electronic tablets that limit her interaction with coordinators. Sheila is concerned that the push to keep people in their homes for as long as possible might result in a lot of isolated and lonely people, whose only visitor is their support worker who no longer has the time to have a chat over a cuppa.

Nevertheless, she says, ‘we have some lovely support workers, who, by offering a little bit of kindness and respect – which costs nothing – can make the world of difference’.

Sheila sees being multi-cultural is one of our huge strengths. She remembers when she started with Community Care TASMANIA, nearly 20 years ago, she was concerned that she did not speak another language, but as a migrant herself, she could empathise with clients. Sheila’s family migrated from England under the ‘Ten-Pound POM’ scheme. She laughs when she recalls their arrival in Australia; they landed in Freemantle and their sponsors had forgotten they were coming. Her parents were then given jobs as Assistant House Parents at Sister Kate’s Children’s Home. In hindsight, it was a special and privileged start to her new life in Australia, as she realises now that the Aboriginal children at the home, with whom she shared dormitories and friendship, were children of the ‘stolen generation’. She remembers her excitement when her friend Daisy told her they were going to feed the chooks; she thought she was going to be introduced to some new and exotic species, not the hens!

Sheila moved to Tasmania when she was 20. Her father wanted to return to England but his three children didn’t. After travelling around the country he decided that Tasmania was the next best place: for Sheila it was the best place.

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