



2016-2017
**ANNUAL
REPORT**



Hello

We are delighted to present this summary of our activities for the 2016-2017 financial year, in which we continued to grow and develop, faced many challenges and achieved some extraordinary results.

We wish to thank our Board, staff, supporters, colleagues and collaborators in the sector. Most of all, we wish to thank our participants – a small number of whom have been gracious enough to share their stories in these pages – for the privilege of working with them and bearing witness to their resilience and success.

We are passionate about making a difference in regional communities and this has driven our growth. We added **Richmond Care Choices, Connecting You, Youth on Track** to our programs portfolio and we won competitive tenders to operate **headspace** Lismore and Tweed Heads. We were also endorsed as an **NDIS** partner to provide **Local Area Coordination** services across much of regional New South Wales, helping drive the most important social reform since Medicare.

The continued high demand for many of our services, particularly in the areas of family support and homelessness challenged us to be creative in finding new ways of working that enabled us to reach record numbers of participants and stakeholders across our service areas.

During the year, we worked with **12,665 participants**, directly supported **2,620 families** and assisted many more during **35,130 occasions of service**.

A feature of growth is the opportunity to engage in other important activities. Our successful Dirty Laundry Day Project, our accreditation among the first 100 White Ribbon Workplaces in Australia and having our Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed are just some examples of the freedom we have created to ensure issues pertinent to our regional communities are kept on regional, state and national agendas.

Kellie Shields, President

Tony Davies, Chief Executive Officer

Reconciliation Action Plan

Our vision for reconciliation is for genuine relationships, strong partnerships, and connected communities between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge that access and connection to country, knowledge and people supports wellbeing.

At Social Futures, reconciliation is everyone's business.

We will work with communities to:

- break structural cycles of inequality and injustice
- commit to employ, train and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- welcome, celebrate and share our region's rich, diverse cultures, histories and contributions
- provide services that enhance the wellbeing and safety of all children, families and communities
- strengthen relationships with, and respect for, Australia's first peoples
- ensure meaningful inclusion in our planning and service delivery

We will know we have achieved our vision when we can show we are doing better to contribute to connected, active, strong children, families and communities.



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Vision

Thriving people, strong communities

Our Purpose

We work to create positive change in people's lives and connected resilient communities in regional Australia

Our Values

Integrity - Inclusion - Learning

Who we are

Social Futures is a not for profit community organisation. From our origins in Lismore more than forty years ago, our programs now reach communities in more than 80% of regional and rural New South Wales.

Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind

Participant story

The boy becomes the teacher

Supporting resilience and building outcomes across a school community.

When 9-year-old Tom* was referred to Mijung Jarjums Kids in Mind (MJKIM) his anxiety levels were so high he was only managing to stay in the classroom a short time each day.

Having experienced family violence and witnessed traumatic events, Tom was referred to the program by Women Up North and his school, with the support of his mum.

MJKIM worker, Teresa Waters, initially engaged Tom over his love of animals and used creative therapies to teach him strategies to help regulate his anxiety.

Not only did Tom quickly manage full days at school, he was able to share some of emotional regulation strategies with his class. This led to MJKIM running a 6-week Resilience and Wellbeing Group with the whole class.

A parent information session was held at the end of the program. A number of parents expressed interest in learning more about emotional regulation strategies developed by MJKIM.

They were connected to the Social Futures Network Development Project and an NDIS Local Area Coordinator Community Liaison Officer, for additional information and support.

**Not his real name*

Responses from participants

What did you enjoy most about the visits/group?

"I will do things differently when I have big emotion"

"I really loved making paper boats and I also loved learning about empathy"

"Got to have some one-to-one time; mostly I'm in big groups"

"How to control my anger, taking responsibility"

"Doing art and meeting very kind people"

"With my friends I'll be playing with them more not yelling and hitting"

"Calm myself down"

"The MJKIM worker initially engaged Tom over his love of animals."

177 individual and
421 group
participants supported

61 families supported

12% were
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

65%
participants experienced
mental health issues

100%
Of those surveyed
were satisfied with the
experience with their
Child and Family Worker

11 workshops and awareness-raising events reached



93%
of participants surveyed
achieved their goals

14 outreach locations
including Casino, Kyogle,
Coraki and Lismore.



1,500 participants



Mijung Jarjums is an early intervention family mental health service, providing support to children and young people at risk of developing mental illness. **Find out more:** socialfutures.org.au/mijung-jarjums-kids-mind

Elements

Youth and Family Relationships Program

Teacher story

Healthy Relationships build interpersonal skills, resilience and confidence

A local high school contacted Elements to request the Healthy Relationships program for a group of young people with a range of backgrounds and experiences including extensive trauma. Some of the challenges the young people faced included developmental delays, foetal alcohol syndrome, ASD, ADHD, ODD, anger issues, disengagement from school, and experience of homelessness.

Social Futures Elements worker Maire led the sessions, which ran weekly for one term. She disarmed this group with her humour, down to earth approach, confidence and knowledge from her own life experience, which can be a difficult ask for teachers. The Healthy Relationships program helps participants explore different emotional aspects of their lives; how they relate to people and how people relate back to them; how they can create healthier lifestyles; and how to build skills to cope with everyday stresses.

The teacher observed "Overall, the students, who typically manage to disengage a new presenter, were on task and participated in discussions and activities."

The program used the Healthy Relationships model to help develop interpersonal skills so that students could engage successfully in their education.

The teacher also reflected that through sharing, the students became more aware of their actions, and in turn better able to recognise problems. Maire's emphasis on communication skills enabled students to listen to others' points of view and make allowances for them. "It allowed students who never get a voice to express themselves and this helped develop their confidence," she said.

"I believe their resilience was improved. I only wish it was a weekly class over the year, as the students and myself got a lot out of it. I came away with more knowledge and a few new strategies."

"It allowed students who never get a voice to express themselves, and develop their confidence."



Elements provides free counselling services for 10 to 24 year olds and their parents to build supportive and positive family relationships and delivers the Healthy Relationships program to schools.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/elements

37

Participants

33%

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



120

participants involved in Evans Head Healthy Relationship Day with *Reconnect*

37.5%

participants live with disability

11%

were impacted by child protection issues

Network Development Program

Families of children living with a disability self-advocate for the support they need

Procuring an iPad for a recently diagnosed eight-year-old with Irlen Syndrome and ASD was one of the many outcomes for the Network Development Program.

Project Officer Abby says the program fosters crucial relationships that help to build capacity and social inclusion for children with a disability and their families.

"This was a wonderful win," said Abby. "It will make a huge difference in the life of a little girl who would not otherwise be able to access that technology."

Living with a child with a disability pushes many parents into the role of case manager.

"I also work with another mother living with incredible physical and mental health challenges of her own, while caring for her son who lives with Cerebral Palsy," Abby said. "To date we have facilitated the child's assisted school taxi program, his participation in holiday programs and applications for free one-on-one Auslan tuition, so the mother can communicate better with her son."



The Network Development Program helps children living with a disability and their families to build social networks in their communities.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/network-development-program

42 families linked to community networks

17% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

100% with disability



The Belonging Project

Project Officer story

A guide dog helps kids learn about the importance of inclusion

When vision-impaired author Bev Larsson released her friendly guide dog Henry into a crowd of delighted children, Project Officer Heather Tannock knew her job was done.

As part of Social Inclusion Week in November, The Belonging Project and Northcott, enabled Bev and Henry to visit eight schools in two weeks.

At the primary schools the children were quickly engaged. Bev spoke with passion and humour about her life. Heather explained what social inclusion is and asked the children to imagine how Bev would feel without Henry and how they would feel to be excluded.

Heather said the inclusive roadshow was a great success and she looked forward to further refining the activities and stories that help kids develop such a positive insight into other people's lives.

Providing support from Grafton to Tweed Heads

19 community-based educational and learning events

A Sensory Tent and inclusive activities were taken to 3 farmers markets

Provided engagement for 153 kids
Information/awareness to 89 parents

8 school sessions conducted



The Belonging Project aims to increase inclusion for children aged 0 to 8 living with a disability.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/everybody-belongs

Reconnect & Getting it Together

Participant story

With the right support at the right time, this young person reached her amazing potential

When she joined the Reconnect program at 17, Montana* already had what it took to succeed. She was engaged at school, connected to culture, and had big aspirations. Most importantly, she showed she could overcome incredible adversity on her own.

But at pivotal times, she needed the support of Reconnect to ensure she didn't fall through the cracks into homelessness.

Complex family issues drove Montana to leave home. She spent three years living with various family members and friends prior to seeking help from Reconnect.

Montana had developed various coping mechanisms when moving from household to household. Learning new techniques through the Reconnect program with implementing Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Narrative therapy strategies to reframe some difficult life experiences, allowed Montana to move forward with her goals.

With its close working relationships with other Social Futures programs, enabling a wraparound approach, Reconnect ensured Montana didn't fall into homelessness.

For example, she was supported through the Reconnect program to obtain independent Centrelink payments, enabling her to apply for various private rental properties. The program was then able to link her with the Connecting Home program, which helped her secure transitional housing -- a stepping stone into independent living and safe sustainable housing. She also completed a Survival Skills program through Connecting Home.

The real hard work, however, was done by the tenacious young person. As her Reconnect Support Worker reflected, "The program simply amplified and supported strengths which were already inherent within Montana."

Montana completed her HSC and Traineeship. Throughout her high school years Montana was an active member of the Guja Murra (Deadly Moves) dance group and worked with Bangarra Dance Company on a number of occasions. Evidently, her inherent ambition and connection to culture, with support from Reconnect, was an effective combination. She has just applied for work at Uluru.

Her Support Worker said, "It's a wonderful example of how targeted support accessed at an opportune time enables young people to achieve positive outcome and not fall through gaps within the homelessness sector."

**Not her real name.*

"The program simply amplified and supported strengths which were already inherent within Montana."



Reconnect assists young people aged 12-18 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness to stabilise their current living situation and improve engagement with their families.

Getting it Together helps young people aged 12-25 find opportunities for positive change in relation to their drug and alcohol use.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/reconnect-and-git

Reconnect

67%

impacted by parenting issues and homelessness

164

participants

908

occasions of service

7

community-based events reached 250 participants

Getting It Together (GIT)

107

participants supported

39%

were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

6

Community-based awareness events reached 200 people

Continued collaborative practice and participation with local Aboriginal organisations and communities



The Clubhouse & Links to Learning

Participant stories

Young people demonstrate how technology creates an exciting future

14 year old Tilly Jones and 17 year old Ash Mabbot regularly attend The Clubhouse, and were selected as the representatives to visit Boston USA in July 2016. Together with an adult Clubhouse mentor, they attended the biennial week-long Youth Leadership event, which brings youth from more than 100 Clubhouses in 19 countries together to showcase their tech-savvy inventions, meet, connect and share ideas and vision.

14-year-old Tilly, says "I come to The Clubhouse to learn more about technology and how I can use that knowledge with my music." Tilly, who has cerebral palsy, is pursuing her dream to develop new ways for people with disabilities to play instruments. "The Lismore-based Clubhouse mentors make you feel that anything is possible," she said.

Tilly's international dreams are by no means far-fetched. The Clubhouse has fostered her cross-pollinating talents in music composition and production, animation, photography and Photoshop. She has aspirations to continue her studies internationally.

For 17-year old Ash, the social nature of The Clubhouse makes it the perfect place to base his many tech projects.

"The best thing is the awesome creative atmosphere and welcoming community," he says. "I repaired my first laptop at 13 and built my first computer at 15."

Ash believes access to technology provides the ability to explore interests, helping young people to thrive in a technology-centric society.

Links to Learning worked with local schools to provide weekly experiences for year 8 and 9 students. The activities are designed to: build self-esteem, teamwork and communication skills; support them to engage in their school education; and explore potential job and career skills



"The Lismore-based Clubhouse mentors make you feel that anything is possible."



The Clubhouse is a safe free out-of-school tech space co-located at the Northern Rivers Conservatorium in Lismore. It opens 3.30pm-6pm every school day. Links to Learning is funded by the NSW Department of Education.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/clubhouse

174
participants

25% were
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

10% were
Culturally and
Linguistically
Diverse

81%
of graduating
students said "I am
better at finding
ways to overcome
problems or
challenges that I
encounter at school"

92% said
"The Clubhouse staff understand
how to work with young people"

94%
of students say
"The Clubhouse
staff help me
explore
interesting
technology"



The Clubhouse gratefully received equipment from Enterprise and Training Company (ETC) and gratefully acknowledges Dick Smith, QBE and private donors for donations received to assist in refurbishing The Clubhouse space after the March flood.

Youth on Track

Participant story

A young person is now job ready, in secure accommodation, and has a new direction in life

16 year old Matt* was referred to Youth on Track after couch surfing for months, due to conflict within his blended family. With a significant family member in jail, he was not attending school nor receiving income support. He also had his own outstanding offence charges pending.

Youth on Track Team Leader Liz stated “We couldn’t get Matt into a refuge as there were no available spaces. The Department of Housing couldn’t help us, even though he was experiencing homelessness and physical health issues that affected his speech and mobility. Community Housing was unable to assist, because he was under 16.”

“Through Youth on Track Matt accessed support from Centrelink and sourced accommodation with an extended family member. He got assistance with basic necessities and linked with a job network provider who helped to gain job readiness skills and support to register with the NDIS. Matt also received support from Youth on Track with his offence charges; and advocacy during court appearances.”

Currently Matt is living with a family on a farm, doing farm work for rent.

Liz continued “We have kids referred to the program who have experienced out of home care, complex trauma backgrounds, drug and alcohol issues and disengagement from school. Young people are referred to us from communities and families with multiple socio-economic disadvantages, such as homelessness and generational unemployment. We liaise regularly with a range of other services including Juvenile Justice, legal services, Family and Community Services and youth mental health services, such as **headspace**.”

“Our workers all genuinely believe in positive outcomes for young people.”

**Not his real name.*

100% come from households with income less than \$66,000 per year

60 participants attended training during mental health week

100% experienced domestic violence and/or impacted by child protection issues

33 participants



Youth on Track is an early intervention scheme for 10-17 year-olds that identifies and responds to young people at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. Youth on Track is funded by NSW Department of Justice.

Referrals are made directly by NSW Education, Police or Juvenile Justice.

For more info: www.socialfutures.org.au/youth-on-track

headspace

Participant stories

Championing their safe place, headspace

For Brooke and Lauren, participation in the headspace program has not only improved their mental health, it's empowered them to find their calling as program advisors and advocates.

When Lauren started as a headspace participant two years ago, her mental health had deteriorated to such a point that she couldn't work. With the help of her headspace counsellor she was able to achieve her goals, including employment, without the pressure of a looming program exit date.

For Brooke, headspace has given her somewhere to belong. "Ask anyone who lives with a mental illness – it is rare that they feel like they belong, but headspace is somewhere where you feel comfortable. It's my safe place.

"I would love to become a headspace support worker. I'm now a psychology student at uni. That's my goal," she says.

Both Lauren and Brooke are members of the Lismore Youth Advisory Group (YAG) which meets fortnightly to review headspace policies and activities.

Lauren says, "I love giving back because headspace has given me so much. It's been so great to be able to raise money and to refer people and talk about it. That's what I love."



headspace is a youth mental health service that supports young people dealing with depression, substance abuse and other mental health issues.

Find out more:
headspace.org.au/lismore
headspace.org.au/tweedheads



headspace Lismore

773
participants

3,313
occasions of service

11 staff

11
sub-contracted
clinical staff

30 sector/peer events

300 participants
engaged in Mental
Health Awareness,
Anti-bullying, Youth
Advocate Program
training and Youth
Advisory Groups

10% Aboriginal
or Torres Strait Islander

11% identify as
LGBTQI

"It has given me
a place where
I belong and
before I didn't
have that."

- Brooke, headspace
participant and Youth Advisory
Group member.

headspace Tweed Heads

551
participants

14% Aboriginal
or Torres Strait Islander

3,560
occasions of service

12% identify as
LGBTQI

A dietician & exercise physiologist at Tweed
Heads support a holistic approach to care

headspace centres work in consultation with Youth Advisory Groups which consist of young people from the local area who are passionate about helping other youth in the community by ensuring the delivery of high quality youth services.

Lismore Young Songwriters Competition

Unveiling extraordinary talent in regional Australia

The lights were beaming and the sound just right as the stage of SCU's Deck Bar was graced by some of our region's most talented young songwriters. The Competition Showcase was held on 6 April 2017 where finalists battled it out on stage to win some great prizes.


Free to enter, and held as part of National Youth Week, the Competition provides a stepping stone for young songwriters into the exciting and competitive world of music. Finalists were chosen out of more than 50 entries from around the Northern Rivers.

Prizes included professional studio recording time, film clips and photography, and musical equipment – and the competition was fierce! The crowd was wowed by the star quality of the performers and the judges had a difficult task.

In a first for the Awards, Social Futures' own home grown band The SoFu Fighters performed while the judges deliberated and finally the announcements were made.

Manager of Community and Family Programs, Deb Hall says,

"This awesome platform for young creatives would not be entering its 8th year without the tireless passion and commitment of the community people (musicians) that have driven it – many who volunteer their time and expertise."



Vamasi –
Best Male Songwriter

And the winners were...

Young Female Songwriters of the Year – **Maple**

Young Male Songwriters of the Year – **Vamasi**

People's Choice Award – **Prysm**

Folk/Pop Maple – sister duo lilting voices and stunning harmonies

Urban/Electronic Prysm – 17 year old student Fynn Barker

Human Rights Vamasi – 21 year old producer/rapper

Rock/Indie East Atlantic – three piece heavy rock band formed by three Year 9 students

Punk/Metal Melted Couch – a five piece band with an explosive on stage performance



Originally an initiative of Lismore City Council, the Lismore Young Songwriters Competition is now organised by representatives from Social Futures, **headspace** Lismore, Southern Cross University, and the Northern Rivers Conservatorium. The event is supported by a small community grant from Lismore City Council.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/lismore-young-songwriters



Prysm –
People's Choice



Maple – Best Female songwriters

Connecting You

Homeless youth assistance program

Oh, the places you'll go

As a Connecting You support worker, Helen finds her work days diverse, stimulating and incredibly worthwhile. Helen's role places her in a diverse array of environments such as in shopping centre food courts, in cafes and assisting to fill garden skips; while engaging young people at risk of homelessness and disconnection from their families.

Helen says, "The inspiring determination of the program's participants never ceases to surprise. I knew I would meet some very diverse young people, which I have, but it was difficult to imagine just how inspiring their resilience, determination and independence would be. They have lived – and in some cases, continue to live – through some really challenging events in their young lives and continue to deal with the impact of them. Complex as this job can be at times, it is immensely rewarding".

Responses from participants

What were the best or most positive aspects of your experience with the service?

"it was all good – having someone who doesn't judge, does what they say, gets things done"

"someone to help you work things out"

"having someone to talk to that's not taking sides"

"nice people that don't let you down"

"Helen always had ideas and helped me have hope"

"very kind and non-judgemental"

"spent a lot of time with my daughter and really helped us both"



Connecting You helps young people 12-15 years and their families who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. It helps them reconnect with family, friends, work, school and the community. The service is available to young people referred by NSW Family and Community Services.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/connecting-you

A Family Carers' story

Having Family Carers support a young man through tough times has assisted him to find his place in his community

It had been a year since Rebecca and her husband's daughters had moved out of home. After experiencing the freedom of no children, Rebecca said she "felt lost."

The couple found a renewed sense of purpose when they welcomed into their home 16-year-old 'Will'* through the Connecting You and Pathfinders programs.

Will's family relocated to another town and due to circumstances Will chose to stay within his community leaving him on his own, explains Rebecca.

"Being our first placement, it was daunting. But he was awesome. He was very open and upfront. He told us that he had anger issues," says Rebecca.

"He was slow to come out of his shell, but we showed respect for him and he showed respect for us," she says.

Will was supposed to be with the family for 28 days but ended up staying for three months. "He left a lot less angry" says Rebecca, "We focused on listening to him and ensuring he felt heard and acknowledged."

By the end of his stay, he was ready to move into independent share house living, and had experienced many formative lessons which strengthened his resilience and self-worth.

"He loved going out to dinner in a family group, he obtained his first part-time job, and learnt mechanical skills at the family's shed. He is finishing the school year and is looking to a career path in the Australian Defence Force next year."

Will became such an important part of the family, he was included in the family wedding portraits at their daughter's wedding.

They celebrated his 16th birthday together. "We went all out," says Rebecca, who lovingly curated a timeline for his big milestone and created a special album, including those prized family wedding photos, for Will to take and treasure as he embarked on his peaceful road to independence.

**Not his real name.*

"We focused on listening, ensuring he felt heard and acknowledged"



59%

of young people reconnected to live with their immediate family or kin/extended family

24%

of young people reconnected to a safe, long term home in community

Commenced
1 Oct 2016

30 participants

82% participants
achieved their outcomes

37% Aboriginal
or Torres Strait Islander

3 Family Carers authorised by Pathfinders to provide
short term voluntary placements and respite care



Total 83%
young people supported to
secure safe home

Connecting Home

Participant story

Connecting Home, helped 17 year old Michelle* to finish her HSC, complete a TAFE course and secure employment.

If the 'new Michelle' could speak to the 'old Michelle' when she was homeless and struggling to stay in school 18 months ago, she would say: "I know it is hard, but don't give up. It's worth it."

The 17-year-old explains, "I was homeless because of family violence. I was couch surfing and staying with family and friends."

Michelle's biggest obstacle to finding a home was her age. Connecting Home support worker, Jess, was able to advocate on Michelle's behalf and find her a youth transitional property.

Michelle conquered her social anxiety to ride the bus an hour-and-a-half each day from Casino to Lismore to get to school for 18 months. When she was close to dropping out, Jess was there to ensure she stuck with it.

Michelle has not only completed her HSC but also an AUSLAN course at TAFE.

She has secured casual work in educational support at a local school and is pursuing further studies in disability support with a potential job lined up in that field.

"I'm so much happier now," says Michelle.

**Not her real name.*



Connecting Home supports people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The program provides case management and support from Tweed to Grafton, assists people to maintain their tenancies; helps them find new housing; and provides longer term support for people with complex needs.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/connecting-home

2,906
new referrals

1,931
families supported

16%
Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

15%
of participants
experienced
Domestic Violence



76%
of participants with a case plan
had partly or totally achieved
their goals



18% of participants live
with disability

"I was homeless because of domestic violence. I was couch surfing with family and friends."

Participant story

After her home burned down, Joan* had no option but to live and sleep in her car

In her early 60's, Joan puts a face to the nation's growing homelessness crisis among mature women. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports the number of homeless older women seeking help has risen 44% since 2011.

Many women like Joan experience changes in their circumstances that contribute to their homelessness, including divorce, domestic violence, a lack of superannuation and job insecurity.

After the loss of her own home, Joan sought temporary accommodation, which was not sustainable. Due to financial disadvantage she found herself sleeping in her car for 6 weeks. Joan said "I would do a lot of my sleeping during the day because the park was unsafe at night. It was very cold at night by the river."

Joan was referred to Connecting Home, where her support worker was able to advocate alongside her to source secure accommodation in a unit within a larger block. Joan, who has worked in aged care and has raised children, said she benefited from the community connection.

"I get a lot of peace from walking at the beach now. I've also started line dancing classes once a week, which makes me feel so much better."

**Not her real name.*

26,340

occasions of service

2

Homelessness
Connect community
days with 200
participants attending

26%

participants
experienced mental
health issues

Connecting Home gratefully received a donation of \$10,000 from Westpac Banking Corporation following the Lismore floods in March



"I get a lot of peace from walking at the beach now."



"Jeez, I'm lucky. I sleep well now."

Participant story

After years of living in pubs, Steve* now has big plans for his life, his bike, and his garden

Steve reflects on how far he has come in the two months since joining the Connecting Home program.

After fifteen years living in share accommodation at pubs, Steve has secured a private rental and now lives independently.

"Jeez, I'm lucky. I sleep well now. I haven't laughed like this in ages," he says.

Steve lives with bipolar disorder and was spending all his time and energy simply existing at the pubs. Now he has big plans.

Steve says he is incredibly grateful for his Connecting Home worker, Nikki, and for the perspective she has provided him along the way.

"When we confirmed we got the place, Nikki said, 'Do you want a fridge? Do you want a washing machine? I can't believe how generous people are.'"

Free from housing stress for the first time in 15 years, Steve now has plans to fix his bike and take up woodwork.

He can't wait to potter in his own garden, just like his nan. "My nan had a garden. I like plants," he says.

**Not his real name.*

Family Referral Service

Participant story

Mother and daughter facing challenges were supported by the Family Referral Service



It's a common story. Facing housing uncertainty while caring for a young child, this Family Referral Service participant met her Support Worker during the "worst experience of her life."

"My FRS workers' ability to translate my needs and barriers were spot on, even when I could not identify them for myself. When you're facing adversity and have a child as well, it makes all the difference, and I've been supported to make some really positive changes," she says.

Through the support of the Family Referral Service this mum secured accommodation, found a psychologist, and enrolled in TAFE studies.

"My daughter is in a good routine, and I have structure and normality. As a mum, it's like a godsend. My workers' authenticity towards me, and her consistency in following things up at a time when I was so vulnerable, was invaluable." This participant found it really beneficial to have someone there to bounce off. Someone to ask 'why don't you try this?'"

"I found her highly professional at all times. It was so refreshing. As I had not experienced this with previous services," she says.

1,886

individual
participants

588

families supported

42%

were
impacted by mental
health issues

36%

participants have
experienced
domestic violence

55%

impacted by
parenting issues

Family Connections

Young parents sought help to reach their life goals.

12 participants

attended 32 playgroup sessions

16 were supported individually
by the program manager



The Family Referral Service provides support to children, young people and parents around the challenges and demands of everyday family life.

Find out more:

socialfutures.org.au/family-referral-service

"When you're facing such adversity, it's really nice to have someone there."

Stock Library Photo



Social Futures

2018 Community Sector Dates

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NAIDOC & Young NAIDOC week						
1 NAIDOC & Young NAIDOC week	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Lifeline Stress Down Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 UN International Day of Friendship	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Homelessness Prevention Week						
National Missing Persons Week						
5	6	7	8 UN International Day of World's Indigenous People	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
UN World Humanitarian Day	20	21	22	23	24	25
19						Dementia Awareness Month
National Child Protection Week						
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Women's Health Week						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dementia Awareness Month	UN World Suicide Prevention Day			R U OK Day		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dementia Awareness Month						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Dementia Awareness Month						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29



Social Futures

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
Social Futures Car Free February						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Social Futures Car Free February						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Social Futures Car Free February						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Hearing Awareness Week						
Social Futures Car Free February						
25	26	27	28	1	2	3
Social Futures Car Free February						
4	5	6	7	8	9	9
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Social Futures Car Free February						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Social Futures Car Free February						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL						
1	World Autism Awareness Day	2	3	4	5	6 Youth Week & Lismore Young Songwriters Competition
8	Youth Week & Lismore Young Songwriters Competition					
9		10	11	12	13	14
15		16	17	18	19	20
Youth Week						
22		23	24	25	26	27
28						
29		30	1	2	3	4
5						
6		7	8	9	10	11
12						
13		14	15	16	17	18
19						
20		21	22	23	24	25
26						
27		28	29	30	31	1
2						
3		4	5	6	7	8
9						
10		11	12	13	14	15
16						
17		18	19	20	21	22
23						
24		25	26	27	28	29
30						

Dementia Awareness Month		Mental Health Month		World Cerebral Palsy Day	
		International Day of Older Persons	International Day of Non Violence		
30		1	2	3	4
					5
					6
National Amputee Awareness Week		Mental Health Day			
7		8	9	10	11
			Lift The Lid on Mental Illness Day		12
					13
Mental Health Month		UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty			
Anti-Poverty Week		14	15	16	17
				18	19
					20
Mental Health Month					
Anti-Poverty Week	21	22	23	24	25
					26
					27
Mental Health Month		28	29	30	31
					1
					2
					3
4		5	6	7	8
					9
					10
					National Suicide Survivors Day
11		12	13	14	15
			UN Universal Children's Day		16
					17
					18
18		19	20	21	22
					23
					24
White Ribbon Day		16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence			
25		26	27	28	29
					30
					1
White Ribbon Day		UN International Day of Persons with Disability			
16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence		2	3	4	5
					6
					7
White Ribbon Day		UN Human Rights			
16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence		9	10	11	12
					13
					14
					15
White Ribbon Day		16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence			
16		17	18	19	20
					21
					22
23		24	25	26	27
					28
					29

White Ribbon Workplace

In April 2017 Social Futures was one of 27 organisations to celebrate accreditation as a White Ribbon Australia Workplace, bringing the total number of accredited workplaces in Australia to 107.

The accreditation acknowledged that Social Futures demonstrated effective leadership, resource allocation, communication, HR policy development and training to create a safer and more respectful workplace. It showed Social Futures is a pioneer in promoting gender equality and supporting employees to be more respectful.



Ronan Smyth, White Ribbon Australia's Executive Workplace Program Manager said, "The White Ribbon accreditation represents an incredible amount of work over 18 months."

"In three areas – leadership, training and collaboration with other organisations to form partnerships – our assessors deemed Social Futures 'best in class'. Social Futures showed itself to be outstanding," Mr Smyth said.

Among the first wave of organisations to become accredited, Mr Smyth said Social Futures is at the forefront of the work that organisations are doing to be part of the solution to violence against women.

Mr Smyth said, "We are trying to impart social change, and social change is like trying to turn a tanker. There is lots of work that has to happen, but Social Futures is at the forefront of that change."

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/about/white-ribbon-workplace



White
Ribbon
Workplace



The Dirty Laundry Day Project

The Dirty Day Laundry Day Project was created by Connecting Home's Niki Gill. It opens up dialogue, reducing shame, empowering survivors and ensuring our wider community participates in this conversation around domestic and family violence.

The 8th campaign was launched on 24 November 2016 by local commentator Mandy Nolan (herself a survivor of domestic violence); Karen Hogan, (wife of local MP Kevin Hogan), and Greg Telford from Rekindling the Spirit.

Hundreds of t-shirts created by survivors were displayed in more than 100 shops in Lismore CBD. They initiated many conversations and were exhibited until 10 December, the end of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

"There is a critical need for raising awareness of the impacts of family violence within our communities."

Ability Links

Participant story

Grateful for a chance encounter

Usually, being followed by security isn't good. But in this case, the outcome was brilliant.

A Centrelink Security Guard, attuned to people and patterns, noticed a Linker frequently attended the office with participants.

The guard approached the Linker with concerns about his son, who was having issues associated with Asperger's Syndrome. He was particularly concerned that his son's school tended to isolate him and that his behaviour was deteriorating – he hated going to school for the few hours a day the school would have him.

The Linker told the Security Guard about the successful initiative of a nearby school in addressing students' behavioural issues.

When the Linker next attended Centrelink, she was again approached by the security guard.

He told her the whole family had attended an interview with the Principal of the school she recommended that his son was given the school's last place.

Later, he told her how grateful his family were for their chance meeting that day. His son loves school and fills their house with his alphabet songs.



Ability Links works with people with disability, their families and carers to live the lives they want in their local communities.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/ability-links

"His son loves school and fills their house with his alphabet songs".



2,142
participants

95% were
living with disability

5% were carers

10% were
Aboriginal or
Torres Strait
Islander

8% were
Culturally and
Linguistically
Diverse

75%+
experienced mental
health issues

2016
SNAPSHOT SURVEY

Of those surveyed:
100% were treated
with respect

92% would
recommend Social
Futures to others

49% achieving
their goals

41% partially
achieved their goals

Ability Links

Participant story

Dishing up dreams

Nate had two goals: To find employment and to produce his own cookbook for others living with a disability. With the help from Ability Links, he achieved all this and more.

Having owned a successful café and become known for his signature dishes, Nate never expected to be out of work.

However, after moving from the Central Coast to the Tweed area to enable him to get his new guide dog Keno, Nate found getting a new job extremely difficult.

With his Ability Links Linker, Nate explored options that could open up opportunities for employment, but stay within the food industry.

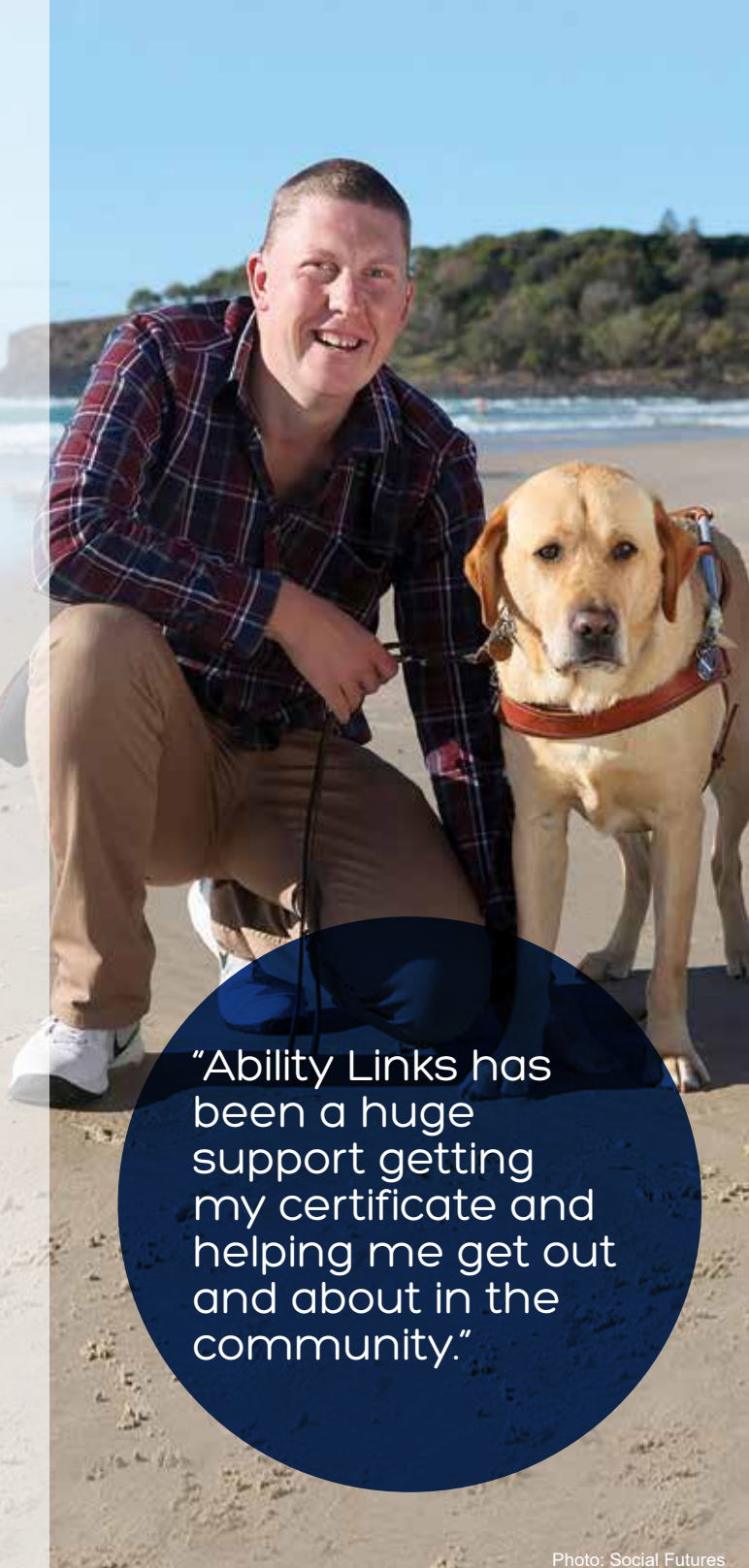
Nate enrolled in a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment at Murwillumbah Community College, with the aim of sharing his hospitality skills through teaching.

Not only did he pass the course, the college offered him a part-time job teaching hospitality. There, Nate also teaches lifestyle courses including a Christmas Cooking course which has proven popular with other Ability Links participants.

Christmas came early when Nate achieved his goal of publishing his own cookbook. To make this possible Nate's Linker worked with the college to secure \$10,000 through the AMP Tomorrow Fund.

Nate says, "Ability Links has been a huge support for getting my certificate; and helping me get out and about in the community."

The proof is in the pudding. Being part of the Ability Links program has opened up incredible opportunities for Nate. Not only has he found employment, but he is fostering a new generation of chefs living with disabilities.



"Ability Links has been a huge support getting my certificate and helping me get out and about in the community."

Photo: Social Futures

Richmond Care Choices

With offices in Lismore and Ballina, Richmond Care Choices supported **68** participants living at home with an ongoing disability, to help increase their independence and quality of life at home and in the community.

Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/richmond-care-choices



Stock Photo

CHOICES

Reproductive & Sexual Health

Formerly Lismore & Kyogle
Family Planning Clinic

Feedback from our clients:

"It is a great service. With wonderful doctors and support staff."

"Wonderful great help and information. More funding from the government please."

"Lovely service, felt completely comfortable."

"Yes, I would like to thank all the people involved with this amazing service! I recommend you to my friends and family."

"Informative, professional and caring. Thank you."

"Fabulous service, helpful. Great for when dealing with sensitive issues."

"Wonderfull women very helpful – from reception to doctor."

"Brilliant customer service from both nurse and reception. Highly recommend."

"Warm and friendly. Prefer coming to family planning clinic than doctor to discuss any sexual health issues."

"Very understanding and open minded and non-judgmental."

961
clinic appointments

Presented
workshops at PASH
conference 15 and
16 June 2017

38% live in a
household with income
less than \$66,000

2 University Centre
for Rural Health (UCRH)
Student placements with our
General Practitioner

2 UCRH Student
placements with our
Clinical Nurse



Social Futures Photo

- Sexual health screening
- Contraception options and advice including emergency contraception
- Pregnancy planning, testing, information, counselling and referral
- Gynaecological investigation and treatment
- Cervical screening tests



Choices Reproductive and Sexual Health Clinic (formerly Lismore and Kyogle Family Planning Clinic) has been providing service to the Northern Rivers community for more than thirty years.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/choices

STANDBY:

Support After Suicide

StandBy: Support After Suicide is dedicated to supporting people and communities bereaved or impacted by suicide. We provide a coordinated community crisis response from Tweed Heads to Port Macquarie, for families, friends, witnesses, workplaces and schools.

StandBy aims to reduce potential adverse health outcomes and the sense of isolation experienced by the bereaved.

We know many people are impacted by each suicide and the aim of StandBy is to provide understanding and compassion and to be available at the time of significant need.

StandBy also aims to increase the sustainable capacity of communities to respond and support others by providing tailored community education and workplace training.

The 2016 Australian suicide rate was slightly lower than the previous year which is noteworthy. This suggests that awareness of suicide and related issues such as mental health and wellbeing contribute to reducing the rate and also the stigma of suicide.

StandBy's message "you are not alone" works to enhance community respect, understanding and support for the health and well-being of people bereaved by suicide.

StandBy: Support After Suicide is contactable 24/7.

A program of United Synergies Ltd
StandBy: An Australian Government Initiative



Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/the-standby-service



"...you were here for me when all the family went back home... I so appreciated your care."



SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY (R U OK)

StandBy collaborated with **headspace** Lismore, raising awareness and kite making/flying at a local high school.

63 families directly supported

88% were satisfied with their experience



10 Community-based events with 300 participants



SECTOR / PEER

48 local events
800 participants

National event in Canberra for Suicide Prevention Australia

Co-presented paper "Effectively supporting young people exposed to suicide in educational settings."

Leadership and Contract Management

North West Alliance

Social Futures leads the work of the Northwest Alliance, five regionally based organisations with shared values who have come together to deliver Ability Links NSW across much of regional and remote NSW. The Alliance shares experience, research, resources and expertise to support people living with disability, their families and carers to live the lives they want.

In 2016-17 North West Alliance led projects included the state-wide rollout of the Ability Links Lived Experience Project (see below).

Our partner organisations:
Intereach, Live Better, Mid Coast Communities and Pathfinders

North West Alliance

3,425
participants

14%

Aboriginal or Torres
Strait Islander

66 Linkers

30 offices

Working across

100 Local
Government Areas



6 regions:

Far North Coast NSW

Mid Coast/Hunter

New England
Tablelands

Central West

Orana Far West

Riverina Murray

16,277
individual outcomes
achieved

7% Culturally
and Linguistically
Diverse (exceeding
both targets)

2,819
community
outcomes achieved

Ability Links Lived Experience Project

Peer Linker story

Nothing about us, without us

Peer Linker Damien Becker explains the value of his 'lived experience'.

Ability Links NSW works with people with disability and their families and carer. It also supports communities to be more inclusive of people living with disability. As part of this innovative and transformative program, Social Futures recruited Peer Linkers who could share their lived experience as one of their professional tools with participants and communities.

"Working as a Peer Linker was the first time in over 20 years of working in the community sector I was able to seriously consider my lived experience as a professional asset," says Peer Linker Damien Becker. "I hadn't fully understood how sharing some of my lived experience could benefit other people in such a direct way, or contribute to broader change at a community and organisational level."

The Ability Links NSW Lived Experience Project grew out of a desire to share these successes and learnings across the Ability Links NSW network. Damien, sees a transformative shift in thinking - from an idea where people living with disability should be 'consulted' during the design and delivery of programs, to one where people living with disability are at the centre of those processes – driving it in their professional capacity.

"I see great potential across the sector in how we value and develop the use of lived experience expertise as a professional asset."

In 2016-17 the Ability Links NSW Lived Experience Project training program was written and piloted "The response of Linkers with lived experience wanting to use their professional expertise in an informed way in their practice has been amazing," Damien says.

The project has developed a best practice framework for other organisations that embodies the "nothing about us without us" creed which is critical to disability reform and broader understanding of disability in the general community.



Lived Experience Pilot Training Package
developed and piloted for workers & organisations

Sector/Peer Network Training

28 participants attended 2 local events

50 participants attended 3 regional events

390 participants attended 2 state level events

Local Area Coordination

In December 2016, Social Futures was appointed as a NDIS Partner in the Community for the implementation and coordination of Local Area Coordination (LAC) Services across five service areas encompassing 76% of regional NSW.

LAC is a natural extension of our collaborative success with Ability Links. Our delivery model enables us to ensure the circumstances faced by NDIS participants in regional centres are accommodated and their planning needs are met.

Social Futures was the first NDIS Partner to provide LAC through our own teams (Northern NSW) and three external sub-contractors responsible for Mid North Coast, Western NSW, Far West and Murrumbidgee service areas (Mid Coast Communities, LiveBetter and Intereach).

To meet our full delivery LAC team requirements, we recruited and trained 131 new LAC staff by end June 2017.

Subcontractor transition

In advance of the 1 July public launch of the NDIS in regional NSW, LiveBetter (formerly Care West) decided it was better placed to deliver services as a NDIS provider than support participants as a Local Area Coordinator.

Between April and June, Social Futures worked with LiveBetter to transition LAC staff and offices in Western and Far Western New South Wales in house, starting 1 July.



LAC delivered by Social Futures 
LAC delivered by subcontractors 



Photo: NDIS

Social Futures established 10 new offices with assets and infrastructure required to meet their working demands. We developed our service provision capacity and embedded the processes and management systems required to support it.

Considerable community engagement was undertaken from January - June 2017 in advance of the first NDIS plans to be implemented from 1 July 2017.

Our LACs are the face of the NDIS in communities. They assist people with disability and carers to build and pursue their goals for a good life and to exercise choice and control. They are the transition point and conduit for participants to bridge the previous model of disability funding and the NDIS.



131

staff recruited and trained for LAC direct delivery

Staff diversity is a key success factor in supporting the participant base, and across the 5 service areas

14%

lived with disability

11%

were carers of people with disability

12%

were cultural and linguistically diverse

7%

were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Community engagement:

Northern NSW

46 events

897 attendees

Murrumbidgee

13 events

146 attendees

Mid North Coast

34 events

894 attendees

Western NSW

50 events

907 attendees

10

offices were prepared for operating in: Ballina, Bathurst, Broken Hill, Casino, Dubbo, Grafton, Lismore, Orange, Parkes, Tweed Heads

Training & Professional Development

The Social Futures Training Program provides training and professional development to the health and human services sectors across the Northern Rivers.

We engage trainers from community, government and private sectors to facilitate workshops and training courses responding to the practice and development needs of workers and managers across the region. We also present community education focusing on inclusion and support community members caring for people with dementia. Free Dementia Care courses are offered across the Northern Rivers in partnership with Dementia Australia and the Dementia Outreach Service (NSW Health).

The Training Program also facilitates professional development for the Social Futures workforce.

603 attendances at

48 external and internal workshops

7 community-based awareness workshops with

95 attendances, including Dementia Carers Education

31 sector training sessions

10 internal training sessions



98% of evaluation respondents said the training had improved their knowledge and skills

96% said training met their expectations

93% said the training would change the way they work

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/training

Photo: Social Futures

2016/17 TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT SNAPSHOT

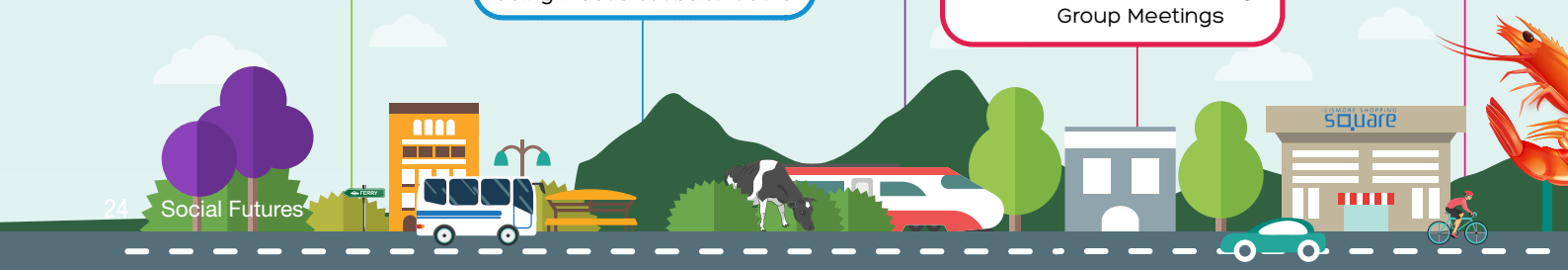
5 LGA public transport brochures developed for the Northern Rivers

25 Transport Working Group meetings attended

2,040 People assisted through the Lismore Transit Centre

24,947 Going Places Website Users

36 organisations represented at Transport Working Group Meetings



Regional Community Services Development

We bring together workers from across the Northern Rivers to support and connect human services across the region to improve community wellbeing. We coordinate information, consultation, planning activities, regional workshops and forums.

2016-17 Key Focus Areas

Northern Rivers Housing Forum: works to improve responses to homelessness and housing and held 9 Steering Group meetings, highlighting housing need in regional communities.

Forum Convenor and regional housing specialist Trish Evans, published her advocacy action *It's Not Just About the Cities* in NSW Shelter's *Around the House* newsletter. The article outlines challenges facing Northern Rivers communities with low rental vacancies and high housing cost to income ratios.

170 sector peers attended the regional 2016 *Northern Rivers Homelessness Forum* at Lennox Head in 2016. The forum included insightful presentations from Assoc. Prof David Mackenzie of Swinburne University; Care2Change (a reference group of local young people); Mission Australia (national homelessness policy and funding); and an Australian Bureau of Statistics' workshop to improve the 2016 Census count of people who are homeless.

Social Change Collaboration: established in February 2015 to support implementation of the Northern Rivers Regional Social Plan.

Better Chances Forum: works to identify and share ways to improve the chances for children, young people and their families. In 2017 we worked with Family Services NSW to use the Results Based Accountability framework to identify the population results we endeavour to influence and proposed some preliminary headline indicators to track our progress.

Northern Rivers Transport Project:

works to increase access and opportunities across the Northern Rivers, particularly in our most transport disadvantaged communities. Initiatives include managing the website goingplaces.org.au and convening transport information days and transport groups.

Key 2016-17 Data

Better Chances Forum

180 attendees
Inaugural forum
15 September 2016



Out of people surveyed

94% agreed the forum was engaging and interesting, well designed and informative; they learned new things/made new connections to assist their work



98% agreed they enjoyed the opportunity to network and learn about how other organisations delivered services in our region

10 Better Chances Forum steering meetings

134 attendances



Social Change Collaboration

3 meetings
15 attendances

Northern Rivers Housing Forum Steering Group

9 meetings
45 attendances



Northern Rivers Homelessness Forum

21 July 2016
Lennox Head
170 attended

Northern Rivers Housing Forum website

560 views

18 Electronic newsletters produced for 1,078 subscribers



Find out more:
socialfutures.org.au/development

10,513

Trips analysed across 78 towns as part of the Northern Rivers Transport Mapping Project

65

Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme Project applications supported by TDP

1,166

Issues resolved & 734 people supported across 10 transport information days



Ageing and Disability Sector Support and Development

Social Futures works collaboratively with the community service sector to build a strong cohesive community care system. It offers face-to-face visits to services to support development and implementation of reforms, disseminating policy and reform information and other resources through service networks across the Northern Rivers, aiming to improve the capacity of the ageing and disability services sector to deliver quality services that respond to client needs.

“Our service and staff have benefited enormously from the ageing and disability sector support, in particular the Communities of Practice meetings, of Sector Development conferences and the Aged Care Road Map training.”

“The current Aged Care landscape is shifting and bursting with new systems, approaches, relationships, requirements, jargon and acronyms – at times this can be challenging and confusing. The information, networking and training offered has been crucial in supporting us to understand and continue to participate in the developing sector, enabling us to adapt and develop with confidence, ultimately benefitting our service users.”

Jenny Martin

Assistant Coordinator for Nimbin Aged Care & Respite Services and Admin Support for Nimbin Health & Welfare Association Inc



Launched a campaign to raise awareness of the abuse of older people

Older Persons Wellbeing Checklist adopted by NSW Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit



May 2017:
Northern NSW Aged Care Sector Development Forum

45 aged care professionals attended

5 Northern NSW Communities of Practice Ageing meetings were convened

Compiled 22 editions of the Ageing and Disability Digest and sent it to 250 subscribers



We work to build capacity across the region to deliver responsive services and develop best practice in ageing and disability.

Find out more: socialfutures.org.au/development



Communications and Engagement

During 2016-17 we increased our communications capacity to meet the need of our growing organisation to communicate effectively with participants and communities; and to respond to the rising expectations of our stakeholders.

Following an update of our visual identity in September, we moved our Communications function to the Strategy and Engagement branch.

The Communications team managed more than 150 briefs, from carrying out a revamp of the website and updating program collateral for programs, to generating nearly twice as much media coverage than in previous years.

Print media continued to be our main media type and we increased the number of mentions and articles by 73%. Many newspapers also featured our stories on their websites and in social media, reflecting the changes in the habits of their business models and readerships. We also had strong responses to our stories from local ABC and commercial radio stations. Affordable housing, disability and inclusion, mental health and the challenges faced by families living in poverty continued to be key themes.

Our main presence in social media was on Facebook, a platform well-suited to our content and audiences. We paid to promote several campaigns to support recruitment; and fundraising following the March floods. We increased our total reach by 269%.

Our new look website attracted more visitors. We added more current stories to the home page to improve reasons to return, and encouraged click-throughs from eNews and Facebook to specific content. Monthly page views increased by 72% while the bounce rate (number of visitors exiting the same page without interaction) reduced from 62.43% to 27.75%.



Traditional Media by type

↑ **73%**

211 articles (up from 122 last year)

144 Press & online

56 Radio

11 TV



Traditional Media by topic

27% Housing/homelessness

19% Inclusion, NDIS LAC

10% Families, Poverty, Domestic Violence

9% Mental Health

9% Children & Young People

7% Transport

7% Floods & Community

6% Aged Care and Disability Sector

5% CEO/Corporate



Website

200,000 visits

(up from 56,500 last year)

Monthly page views up **72%**



Facebook

↑ **269%** **177,000** total reach
(from 48,000 last year)

Practice Excellence

We are only as good as our professional practice. Luckily Social Futures attracts people from many walks of life who share a desire to make a difference.

There is great depth of expertise in our staff whether that comes from life experience, years of working in the sector or a deep love of learning.

The Practice Excellence team supports everyone at Social Futures by:

1. Helping to base everything we do on the best available evidence, theory and research
2. Fostering a deep curiosity about our work and learning from our participants
3. Sharing the knowledge that emerges from our work with each other so we can achieve greater impact

This year we embarked on an **organisational learning strategy** to build the networks, processes and structures we need to ensure that the right knowledge is available to any of us when we need it. This is ambitious in a time of rapid growth but our core value of learning and our desire to make a difference drives us to see it through.

Our Practice Framework is a collection of theories, evidence and approaches that applies to every role in the organisation. Our Practice Excellence Group contributes to its ongoing development.

All our people receive practical, skills-based training in how to apply the Practice Framework to their role, including how to bring our values to life.

Our Core Values: Close Up

Inclusion

- An organisation/community is stronger when everyone participates
- A collaborative team that respects each other's value

Learning

- Sharing and learning from our own and each others experience

Integrity

- Doing what you think is right at that point in time
- Do what you say, say what you do. If you're not sure, ask



People and Quality

We established a Human Resources team within the wider People & Quality branch to implement a range of systems and processes to support the whole organisation. This branch now has passionate Quality, Administration, Practice Excellence and Human Resources staff with a range of specialist skills including accreditation, administration, reception, recruitment, volunteer management, Workplace Health and Safety, culture and leadership support and development.



Key achievements in the last year include:

↑ **120**

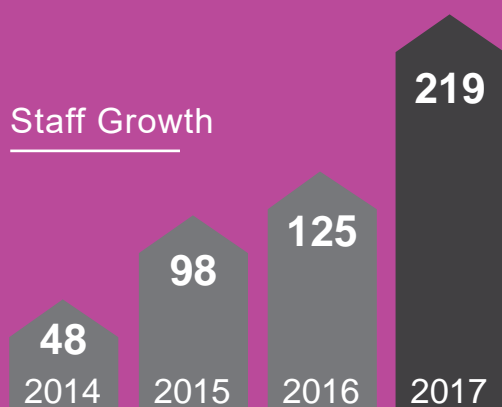
New employees

Our recruitment system, helped us manage more than **1,200** applications for employment since January 2017

We introduced a **24/7 Employee Assistance Program** to provide confidential assistance to staff

0 hours lost to workplace injury

Staff Growth



Maintaining staff turnover at

11% during growth of **76%**

Introduction of paid Parental Leave of

10 weeks

in addition to the statutory **Paid Parental Leave scheme**

↑ An increase to **15** days paid leave for staff **impacted by domestic violence**

300 hours of **paid Study Leave** were provided for continuing development

Financial Snapshot

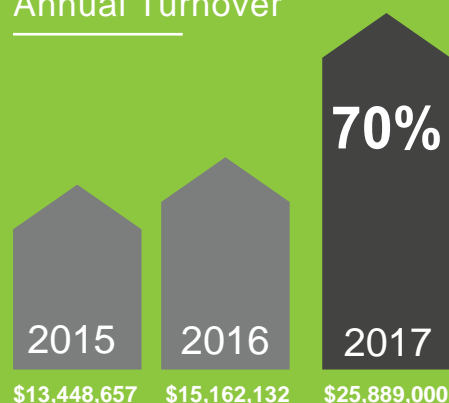
2016-17 was a year of significant growth for Social Futures. Turnover increased by

70%
to
\$25.8M

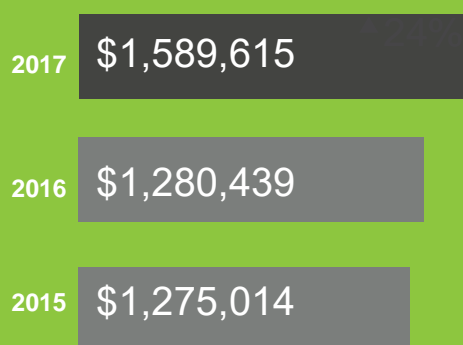
This growth provided many challenges and opportunities for the organisation to change and adapt. Our staff responded by delivering improved processes and increased activity across our programs. At the same time we maintained or improved key balance sheet ratios realising a \$309,000 surplus and receiving an unqualified audit opinion in relation to our Financial Statements.

Through direct delivery and via our participation in and co-ordination of consortia, Social Futures is well placed to continue to increase the range and volume of services that deliver on our vision by making real and significant contributions to the lives of the people living in our communities.

Annual Turnover



Members Equity



Expenditure

48.3%
Payments
to
funding
partners

36.7% Wages

Other 6.6%

Rent 2.5%

ICT 2.2%

Motor Vehicles 1.5%

Brokerage 2.2%

Equipment 1%

Business Development

Our Business Development activities built on our strengths, i.e. working with young people at risk and facing homelessness; and people living with disabilities. We also explored potential for investing in affordable housing and social enterprise.

Key achievements: enhancing our Links to Learning program and securing five new funded programs: Youth on Track (\$1.9 M over three years); Homeless Youth Assistance Program (\$2.1 M over four years); NDIS Local Area Coordination Transition Services (\$25.9 M over two years); headspace (\$2.7 M over two years) and the Mental Health Innovation Fund (\$262,308 over 15 months).

Vale

Paul Cruickshank

Board Member 2007-2017
President 2013-2016

Our longest serving Board member, Paul Cruickshank, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday 1 February. He passed away peacefully in his sleep surrounded by close friends and family.

Paul experienced some health issues following cancer treatment in 2015, including a loss of hearing and challenges with balance and mobility.

Paul joined our Board in 2007 and was elected President in 2013. He was passionate about social justice and the environment and contributed to both these areas through a long career in environmental organisations, within our sector and as an environmental policy advisor to government.

Paul also made a huge voluntary contribution. He served on many boards of non-government organisations and used his spare time to write grant applications for small environmental groups.

Paul helped steer us through many changes during the past decade. He was extremely supportive of us all and committed to what we wanted to achieve in our community. He had an incredibly positive outlook and loved putting big ideas into action. Once a decision to do something was made, he would be off doing it while the rest of us were still working out how to get started. Paul also loved to socialise and he was an enthusiastic participant in many of our events over the years. His cheerful presence, words of encouragement and big wide smile are missed.





2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we live and work and their continuing connection to land, water, sea and community. We pay respects to Australia's First Peoples, to their unique and diverse cultures, and to Elders past, present and future.