



42nd ANNUAL REPORT

2015-2016



GYMEA
COMMUNITY AID
& INFORMATION SERVICE

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ON THE COVER

Elaine Grimley has been a part of the GCAIS story for many years: as a loyal volunteer, client and long-standing Association member – a truly fine example of what community is all about.

SPECIAL THANKS

Many of the images in this annual report come from a fantastic project we embraced during 2016 that celebrated the *Changing Face of Ageing*.

Our thanks to all our wonderful clients featured here, and to photographer Carolina Ferraro, who coordinated this project with GCAIS staff Angela Roberto and Jenny Grey.

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OUR VISION

To be a dynamic community force in bringing self-reliance, dignity and wellbeing to people's lives.

OUR MISSION & PURPOSE

At GyMEA Community Aid & Information Service (GCAIS), we are uniquely positioned to build the aspirations of individuals and families *to achieve inclusiveness, independence and participation* in the community while recognising diversity and desire for wellbeing.

Our longstanding presence in the Sutherland Shire draws on both staff and volunteers to provide information and associate support services to the general community, our ageing members and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Through social groups, planned programs and activities, we strengthen and promote individuals' self-determination, enriching the broader community.

ABOUT US

Our centre was established in 1975 when a group of residents formalised the neighbourly help that they were giving to one another and formed the Gray's Point Community Aid & Information Service. In 1987 the organisation was incorporated as GyMEA Community Aid & Information Service (GCAIS).

Today our services include

- Social activities and personalised assistance for older people
- Settlement and migrant services
- Activities and support for people from multicultural backgrounds
- Community development activities and events
- Information resources for all members of the community
- The GyMEA Community Centre.



GCAIS receives funding from federal, state and local government agencies, including the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health, and Sutherland Shire Council.

As a public benevolent institution, donations over \$2 to GCAIS are fully tax deductible, and we gratefully acknowledge all our donors and supporters.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018

Leading up to our decision to remain an independent community centre, a full review of GCAIS was undertaken in 2015. Whilst we felt our community would be best served if we retained our status, we also recognised the need for improvements to our service development and delivery, and our internal processes and systems.

We believe that by executing the plans and actions in our new strategic plan, we will be a more robust organisation, aligned to our community's needs by being flexible in how we bring self-reliance, dignity and wellbeing to people's lives.

Our strategic plan, which was adopted in April 2016, has five key themes for the next three years:

PEOPLE & CULTURE

Objectives

- Providing leadership and direction to all staff and volunteers

Key result areas

- Retention of General Manager aligned to funding contracts through to June 2018
- Evidence of active participation at forums and networks
- Increased services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and Migrant Services funding over the next three years
- Evidence of collaboration through increases in grant/funding applications as a whole business
- Policies and procedures updated to reflect current information by June 2017



FUNDING & GROWTH

Objectives

Developing business programs across all GCAIS services to investigate new opportunities for sponsorships, funding, grants and donations

- Identifying potential partnerships to grow our services
- Leveraging GCAIS's brand to increase range, quality and service delivery areas to allow GCAIS to compete in a rapidly changing environment

Key result areas

- Achieve a sustainable and independent organisation
- Increase revenue year on year through to 2018
- Meet or exceed targets in existing funded programs
- Increase the users and usage of our services year on year to 2018



RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Objectives

- Identifying and engaging formal and informal research partners in order to align to the immediate and future needs of our community



Key result areas

- Align services to the current and future needs of the community
- A culture of continuous improvement through ongoing feedback
- Community involvement in strategic plans

PROGRAMS

Objectives

- Review and realign programs and services to the GCAIS vision and mission
- Produce a relevant, well researched and structurally sound offering to our clients

Key result areas

- High levels of community participation in research-based programs
- All programs offered reflect the principles of self-determination and inclusiveness
- Innovative programs, based on identified gaps in service delivery, offered to the community
- Mutually beneficial program partnerships operating
- Income and sustainability



INFRASTRUCTURE & REPORTING

Objectives

- Consolidating and streamlining back office functions, reporting and IT resources to meet governance requirements and effectively manage relationships with our stakeholders

Key result areas

- Secure information accessible from anywhere at any time
- Gain accreditation to compete in key areas
- Increase in productivity and efficiency
- Elimination of duplication and redundant processes
- Reduce operational costs
- Full compliance
- GCAIS has a reputation for excellent governance and compliance

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I welcome you to the 42nd Annual Report of GyMEA Community Aid & Information Service (GCAIS). I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Dharawal Nation, and pay my respects to their elders past and present. I extend this respect to all indigenous Australians.

In our 2015 report, our then-President, Helen Schuler, committed to reporting back to you on how we have progressed with our five strategic themes and I am going to deliver on that promise! 2015-2016 has been a year of strengthening our foundations and refining our practices, including reviewing our policies and procedures, auditing our methods of delivery and exploring whether we have the right structure for our people to do their best work. Ultimately, our key measure is whether we have impacted on our clients' needs to be Included, Independent and Participative.

HIGHLIGHTS

People & culture

In February we appointed Jan Samuels as general manager of our business. This was the beginning of a more collaborative effort and one where all resources were maximised across all services. Lynette Buss joined us as manager of the Community Connections Team, bringing greater depth in our knowledge of what it takes to meet our obligations to our funding bodies and sponsors and to increase the services and programs provided to our clients. We also expanded staff numbers in our other teams. Next steps are to complete an analysis around our existing capabilities and identify development opportunities.

Funding & growth

One of our goals was to develop new partnerships and we are pleased to announce the *Living Well Locally* initiative with Activus Transport, Sutherland Food Services and Home Modification Solutions. The four businesses have collaborated to develop ways to maximise awareness and access to services for customers by promoting each other's services and working together. Our visual brand and image received a much-awaited overhaul and is seen in our written communications, logo and advertising material - a much brighter and energetic look!

Research & analysis

We have a project underway in conjunction with UTS to help us understand the effectiveness of our current programs and what we should be planning for in the near future. This information, together with the recently published *Sutherland Shire Economic Profile*, will help shape our programs, particularly in the area of services for older people and those from multicultural backgrounds.

Programs

Our 'trailblazer' program for 2016 I would have to say is Drive time, headed up by our Settlement & Multicultural Services team of Jenny Grey and Helen Ledlin. Receiving a lot of attention from high profile organisations such as NRMA, this program is targeted to support eligible clients in gaining their driver's license. A detailed explanation and outcomes of this program can be found in the Settlement & Multicultural Services section in this report.

We have achieved a lot in this past year. Like all organisations, there were some highs and several lows. There is value in learning from mistakes to make our organisation stronger than what it has been before and I look forward to reporting on more achievements when we meet at the 2017 AGM.

Infrastructure & reporting

Due to the tireless work of our volunteers, namely Raj Asawa and Christine May, our I.T systems have been moved to a platform which ensures our data security and safety.

This has been a change of epic proportions which now sees us with increased efficiencies, staff and volunteers being able to access information from anywhere at any time, reduction of contingent funds with our information now being stored in the Cloud with automatic backup, retention of corporate knowledge at all levels including the management committee and clearer visibility of our assets.



Our office space has also been reviewed and rationalised to provide a more welcoming place for visitors and a more functional environment for staff.

Drop into the Centre and note our tidier appearance!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There has been an enormous amount of work delivered over the past year, aiding our progress.

I extend my thanks to:

- All staff and volunteers who embarked on our journey to achieving our Vision. Without their trust, faith and commitment to our purpose, our clients would not be able to benefit from the valuable services we offer
- Our funding bodies and sponsors, who allow us to operate and deliver to the needs of our precious community
- My Management Committee colleagues, past and present, who gave an enormous amount of their time to put the "meat on the bone" of our strategic plan and to engage in honest and robust debate, enabling us to come to the best decisions we can for our organisation.

This AGM is the final chapter of Helen Schuler's tenure on the GCAIS Management Committee. During the last three years, Helen held the roles of Treasurer, President and general committee member which saw her heavily involved in not only helping to shape the future of GCAIS but leading us through the previous merger discussions. We wish Helen and her expanding family well.

This closes my first year as President. I thank all who I have networked with, met with, laughed with and in some cases, (almost) cried with. It has been an amazing journey and I am proud of where we are today and what we have achieved and look forward to our future success.

JOANNE CRACKNELL

President

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2015-2016

President	Joanne Cracknell
Vice President	Raj Asawa
Treasurer	Mark Franklin (September 15 – January 2016). Peter Eaton - Current
Secretary	Allison Scheffer
Members	Helen Schuler, Lisa Conyers, Dianne Prince (Retired), David Scott (Retired)

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our sector is undergoing a significant period of change, and I am pleased to note that GCAIS is responding to the many challenges that have come before us over the past 12 months.

Perhaps the highlight of the year for our Management Committee and staff was the very welcome news that we have secured federal government funding for Settlement & Multicultural Services and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), which support older people living in the community, until June 2018.

While this development is reassuring in the short- to mid-term, like many other community organisations we still face an uncertain future financially. In response, the Management Committee developed a new strategic plan for the next three years which focuses on increasing our ability to compete in a more open market place, without the security of government block funding for the first time in many years.

The 2015-16 financial year has seen changes to how we receive and acquit our funding to provide services for older people, and a new partnership model for delivering migrant and multicultural services. Significant changes to the government's reporting requirements and data collection systems have also demanded much of our small team, who have faced these changes with a mix of trepidation and determination.

With greater competition, the demand for quality services and an expectation of transparency and accountability for funded services, we know that GCAIS's performance, systems and processes must continue to improve.

I am pleased to report good progress with these important elements of our business under the direction of our first general manager, and look forward to embedding the improvement made in the 2016-17 financial year.

In addition to acknowledging the federal funding we receive, we also gratefully acknowledge the ongoing financial support GCAIS has enjoyed this year from Sutherland Shire Council; the state government through the NSW Settlement Partnership; our fantastic local club, Tradies GyMEA; and the many companies, trusts, foundations and individual donors whose support and commitment have enabled our team to keep making an impact in the community.

AUDITED ACCOUNTS

In accordance with our obligations under the *Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009*, an independent audit of GCAIS's 2015-16 financial results was carried out by Shedden & Green Partners. The auditor has concluded that the financial reports present a true and fair view of GCAIS's financial position.



PETER EATON

Treasurer

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The past 12 months has been an amazing time for our sector, presenting a mix of challenges and opportunities for our team and the community we serve.

We have been hard at work implementing the Management Committee's strategy across the organisation, with the aim of strengthening the way we work and our ability to make a positive contribution in a dynamic operating environment.

Some of the milestones we have shared include:

- Farewelling the Home and Community Care (HACC) program, which funded services for the frail aged for more than 30 years;
- Embracing the new Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), with its rigorous standards for service delivery and reporting, and a greater emphasis on generating income to remain sustainable beyond the end of block funding in 2018;
- Supporting clients to navigate My Aged Care, the new federal system intended to streamline referrals and access to services for eligible seniors;
- Being welcomed to the NSW Settlement Partnership, under the direction of Settlement Services International (SSI) – an initiative which funds GCAIS to deliver migrant and settlement services across the Shire until 2018
- Updating the look and feel of our branding; and
- Undertaking an independent review of our HACC/CHSP program and team structure (now renamed Community Connections, under new manager Lynette Buss) to improve our efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery.

OPPORTUNITIES

The past 12 months have also presented us with great opportunities. For example:

- We have secured project funding from several new sources;
- We've attracted some highly experienced new staff, who bring a fresh perspective to our work; and
- We have begun integrating our services more effectively to provide a seamless and enriched service for our clients and their families.

We have also added some great new groups and programs to our calendar, and I thank our team and clients for coming up with new ideas and then making them happen.

INNOVATION

Another exciting development has been the launch of a new partnership between GCAIS and Home Modification Solutions, Sutherland Food Services and Activus Transport - to launch an exciting new partnership called *Living Well Locally* for people over 65 living in the Shire.



Our clients say they like living local, and want the people who support their independence and wellbeing to understand what is important to them, and to be part of the community where they live.

Identifying new partnerships is a key platform in GCAIS's strategy for growth, and *Living Well Locally* is an exciting example of community businesses working collaboratively for the greater good. I look forward to seeing the concept develop in the year ahead.

While the way we look and how we work together continues to evolve, one thing has not changed at all: the commitment and dedication of our staff and volunteers remains as steadfast as ever.

I thank the management team – Jenny Grey, Vera Au and Lynette Buss – for trying new ways of working this year, and acknowledge Angela Roberto who was Acting HACC/CHSP Manager for most of the reporting period. I also thank every team member, staff member and volunteer for their commitment to delivering excellent services to our valued clients, their families and our community.

Finally, I thank our volunteer Management Committee for their commitment, and our President, Joanne Cracknell, for supporting me through the many twists and turns we've experienced together this year.

JAN SAMUELS

General Manager

OUR SERVICES

GCAIS offers a broad range of services to the community, including social support, transport for groups, outings and events, multicultural services, and programs for migrants, refugees and humanitarian arrivals. Our clients include everyone from young mums through to school students and seniors.



Services are offered from both our Gymea Community Centre (generously funded by Sutherland Shire Council) and from other venues around the Shire. We also have an active program of outings and other events that encourage inclusiveness, independence and participation in community life.

A snapshot of our services and impact over the past 12 months is provided on the following pages.

GYMEA CENTRE

Our premises in Gymea, conveniently located close to buses and trains, continue to be a well-used community resource. For example:

- Our affordable meeting rooms are hired to community groups and service providers, and our Community Connections and Migrant Services clients are often in the building enjoying a range of activities and special interest groups.
- The Centre is also a collection point for sharps, and old fluorescent lightbulbs, as part of Council's initiative to encourage a safe and healthy environment for the community.
- We also offer a JP service and migration advice (by appointment only).

This year we secured grants through the Community Building Partnership and Stronger Communities Program, to create a more comfortable waiting area for visitors and to purchase new audio visual presentation equipment. The Council is also helping us to replace our old carpet, with a matched contribution to the cost.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Despite a number of staffing challenges during the reporting period, GCAIS clients continued to enjoy an enriched range of programs and activities designed to contribute to their sense of wellbeing, independence and social connection. In response to client requests, we also celebrated a number of special days and festivals, including Harmony Day, Diwali, Moon Festival, Easter, Seniors Week, Carers Week ... the list goes on!

Regular activities throughout the year include:

- Chinese high needs social activity group
 - VIP group (for people with vision impairment)
 - Chronic fatigue support group
 - Computer tutoring
 - Centre-based activity days
 - Arts and crafts
- 
- A photograph of three men sitting outdoors on a grassy area, playing acoustic guitars. The man on the left is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and a brown hat. The man in the middle is wearing a green t-shirt and a brown hat. The man on the right is wearing a black t-shirt and a brown hat. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying their music. There are music stands and a microphone in front of them.
- Multicultural groups (including Greek, Italian, Indian sub-continent, Spanish speakers, and Chinese)
 - The Pickers, our fabulous guitar-playing men's group (see above)
 - Knitting and sewing group, supporting the *global Wrapped with Love* campaign, which knits and distributes blankets for people in need all over the world
 - Senior men's discussion group
 - Light exercise programs including zumba, tai chi and chair yoga
 - Information sessions and guest speakers on variety of topics including health, mental wellbeing, nutrition and changes to the aged care system.

The majority of our programs for seniors are funded under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). While we met our funded target of 6,524 hours of group social support for the reporting period, limited staffing capacity meant we achieved approximately 40% of our funded targets for individual social support activities (which include assisted shopping and home visits) and transport outputs.

Lynette Buss joined our Community Connections team as manager in June 2016 and under her direction we look forward to expanding our social connecton programs in 2016-17.

SETTLEMENT & MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

GCAIS has become a consortium member of the Settlement Services International (SSI) NSW Settlement Partnership (NSP). We deliver core settlement support for humanitarian entrants and migrants in their first five years in Australia.

The NSP represents a unique and innovative settlement services delivery model and provides an opportunity for local and regional community-based organisations to work collaboratively to support successful settlement of new arrivals.

We have maintained our high volume of service delivery to our clients during this reporting period with ongoing programs such as:

- English Conversation classes
- School Support Tutoring program
- Settlement Groups for the Chinese, Thai, Russian and Spanish-speaking communities
- Casework, advocacy and referral service
- Southern Sydney Refugee Support Group.

A fundamental part of our multicultural service includes participation in community events as a way for our clients to become involved in the local community. Pictured on this page are the NSW Premier's Harmony Day dinner (top) and a food festival in the Sutherland Shire.



We continue to maintain a significant profile in regional committees and forums, with a highlight being involvement in organising two innovative *Working Together* forums, aimed at developing skills, creating partnerships and encouraging collaboration within the sector.

Funding has enabled us to expand existing activities as well as develop new programs:

Drive time

Drive Time is a collaborative partnership with NRMA, Sutherland Shire Council, NSW Police, Tradies GyMEA, local businesses and the Southern Sydney Refugee Support Group. The aim of the program is to provide safe driving workshops, driving lessons and supervised driving sessions for young people from refugee backgrounds and migrant women.



Photo: The Leader

GyMEA Tradies provided funding for a car specifically for the program, and we have been fortunate to secure discounted driving lessons from Motivator Driving School.

Multicultural seniors' activity club

The Club was established with funding from the IRT Foundation, providing a diverse range of affordable and accessible activities for seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, aiming to combat social isolation and celebrate inclusiveness.

Refugee challenge

Continuing the highly successful *Refugee Camp in My School* project, funding from Amnesty International provided leadership training for schools, community groups and students to run simulated Refugee Challenges. Over 300 students attended the Kirrawee High School Refugee Challenge in 2016.

The Settlement & Multicultural Services team has now expanded with the addition of Helen Ledlin, who is working on several projects. As we continue to seek partnerships and additional funding, it is anticipated that staffing levels and services for clients will increase over the coming year.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

GCAIS could not exist without the support of our volunteers, who provide such valuable support to our frontline services, and a wonderful warm welcome to all members of the community who visit our



centre throughout the year. GCAIS has the good fortune to have around 80 regular volunteers, many of whom have devoted years of service to our centre and our local community. Our volunteer program in 2015-16 was coordinated by Angela Roberto and Vera Au, who continued their long tradition of supporting our volunteers with their mix of warmth, dedication and time.

OPPORTUNITIES

There are many volunteering opportunities at GCAIS, and we also work with the Volunteer Link service run by 3Bridges Community to help promote and share volunteering roles with other organisations.

On the menu at GCAIS are:

- Helping with social groups and outings for seniors
- Assisting clients with shopping trips and appointments
- Teaching English to migrants
- Tutoring students in our Homework Club and educational support programs
- Mentoring migrant or refugee learner drivers
- Explaining the mysteries of the internet and new technology to seniors
- Participating in events such as Refugee Week, Seniors Week and the annual GyMEA village fair.

With a very lean team, we also cherish our office volunteers, with their administration experience and warm smiles, who take the time to make our visitors and clients (and us!) feel welcome and important at the GyMEA community centre.

A BIG THANK YOU

Volunteer recognition events continued to have an important place in our annual calendar, and we were pleased to honour our volunteers with a range of activities and celebrations, such as this special morning tea to mark Volunteer week 2016.



INTO THE FUTURE

The benefits of volunteering are well known. As well as providing a priceless contribution to the local community, the experience of helping others can provide a sense of purpose, social connection and personal satisfaction for a job well done. This philosophy is fundamental to the way GCAIS operates, and reflects our vision of enhancing people's wellbeing, independence and dignity.

Our strategic plan also places a strong emphasis on the role of volunteers in our organisation, recognising that many of our services are enriched by their passion and commitment to deliver quality, person-centred services to the community.

In the new financial year, we have identified several projects to add depth to our long-standing volunteer program, including:

- A review on how we can meet or exceed the national volunteering standards – the benchmark of good practice
- A skills audit to capture all those hidden talents, abilities and interests we know many of our volunteers modestly keep to themselves
- A more structured training and development program for volunteers, as one way we can say thank you and give back to people who give so much of themselves to community work
- More opportunities for participation in the life of the community, for example for new arrivals in the Shire, or those who would like to develop work-ready skills and experience.

It is a big agenda and we are grateful and excited to continue our partnership with all our wonderful volunteers who choose to share their time, experience and skills with us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FUNDING BODIES

Department of Social Services

Department of Health

Department of Community Services

Department of Infrastructure and Regional

Sutherland Shire Council

South East Sydney Local Health District

Multicultural Health

Clubs NSW – Tradies Gymea

Royal Australian Historical Society

IRT Foundation

Amnesty International

Settlement Services International

Adult Learning Australia

Multicultural NSW

ROOM HIRE CLIENTS

Sydney U3A Inc

3Bridges Community – Volunteer Link

Sahaja Yoga

Neami National Hurstville

PARTNERS & SUPPLIERS

Bunnings Kirrawee

Purple Patisserie Gymea

Sharon Metzl, Ink Design Studio

Adam Lawdor, Vanguard House

Motivator Driving School

Sutherland Shire Mobile Mechanic

Stewart Toyota

Rotary U Turn the Wheel

Harold Acar, St George Migration &
Citizenship Planning