



# Annual Report

2017 - 2018

Upper Hunter Homeless Support Ltd.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

**Margaret Mead**

## Our Vision

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To use a holistic approach to empower people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to obtain and sustain safe accommodation

## Our Mission

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UHHS is committed to delivering a respectful client centred service, by working to identify and reduce homelessness and networking and maintaining collaborative links with other services to support homeless people into safe secure accommodation

## Our Aims

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- To provide best practice, integrated client-centred homelessness support services to a diverse range of client groups within our local region, who are chronically homeless.
- To play a key role in a collaborative service network of community, NGO and government services providers working in partnership to deliver effective integrated services to people at risk of homelessness, or those who are already homeless in the Upper Hunter Region.
- To build within UHHS the specialist skills, experience and capabilities required to effectively respond to our client groups and deliver best practice approaches across all aspects of our service delivery.

## Our Values

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### **Responsiveness**

We respond in a timely way to the needs of individual clients, recognising that experiences differ from client to client.

### **Equality**

We recognise that inequality between men and women is both a cause and effect of violence. We strive to draw attention to and redress gender inequality in our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of women and children, and in our work with partners and the wider community.

### **Justice**

We are committed to advocating for just outcomes for all clients at both an individual and systemic level.

### **Respect**

We act fairly, honestly and openly in the way we engage with our clients, staff, partners and the community.

### **Leadership**

We lead by example in what we do as individuals and as a leading Specialist Homelessness Service.

### **Diversity**

We recognise diversity in all its forms and are committed to ensuring our practice, fair and accessible and meets the needs of the clients.

### **Quality**

Our services strive to deliver contemporary best practice. We are committed to embedding current strategic priorities where they complement our own strategic direction.

### **Accountability**

We are accountable to our clients, our funders and the community

## Presidents Report - 2018-2019

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Upper Hunter Homeless Support provides accommodation and support services to people experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness in the Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shires. The Service has continued to expand and develop over the past twelve months in an effort to meet the needs of this very complex client group.

Highlights for 2018 include;

- A total of 9888 client bed nights were provided to individuals and families. UHHS properties were full / tenanted for most of the year.
- The high number of brokerage clients that repaid their debt to the Service. This is a great achievement for these individuals and families.
- Successful tender of the Temporary Accommodation (TA) project. The Service is now fine tuning the implementation of the project, with the first clients utilising the accommodation over the last six weeks.
- The Service received a community grant of \$10 000 from the Commonwealth Bank Centenary Grant for a youth project. This project is also in its initial phase with the first clients gaining accommodation over the past eight weeks.
- The Service received donations of \$8 700 from a number of community groups and fundraising activities. A special mention to all the schools in Upper Hunter Shire who participated in sleep-over / pyjama day activities to raise awareness of issues of homelessness.
- Participation in local community partnerships and awareness raising activities such as the Candle Light Vigil, White Ribbon Day and the St Vinnies Sleep out.
- Development of a staff wellness package.

UHHS continues to offer the Domestic Violence Enhancement program, with funding secured until 2020. These funds provide a much needed after-hours service for individuals and their families who are affected by domestic violence. The Crisis Room at Nydia's is an important part of this program, providing a safe short term accommodation option for single women and families escaping domestic violence.

UHHS continues to offer a flexible range of accommodation options across the three shires including the small unit above the 'Hub' office space, a TA unit and a youth specific unit in Muswellbrook. The partnership with Upper Hunter Shire Council to accommodate and support tenants in the Merriwa units is on-going, with plans to extend this to an additional Council property in Scone in the near future. The partnership with Macquarie Generation also

continues in Singleton.

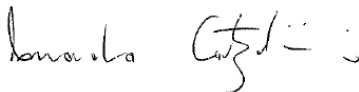
The first traineeship at UHHS is now complete. Congratulations Niamh who is a great asset to our casework team. The Service is beginning the initial recruitment process for a new trainee to begin studies in 2019.

During the past year there have been a number of staff changes and a realignment of staff duties and responsibilities. I would like to welcome Stacey to the Manager's position. We are very excited to have her extensive skills and experience leading UHHS. A special thank you to Tash and Una who worked in partnership for more than six months to manage the service during this particularly lengthy recruitment process. I would also like to congratulate Fran as she steps into the Team Leader role and our temporary staff who joined the team in permanent roles; Rachel and Katherine. Recruitment seems to be ongoing in this busy service and I commend all the staff for their initiative and flexibility as they deal with these changes.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their valuable contributions. I hope you will consider joining us for another year and sharing your expertise.

UHHS is a NSW FACS funded project. Thank you to Andrew Hunter, Michele Ireland and Adam Murray from the Regional Office, for the on-going support to staff, the Board and myself.

Once again, thank you for all your hard work.



Amanda Catzikiris

President

## Management of Service

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UHHS is managed by a voluntary Board with members drawn from other community organisations.

As usual our UHHS Board has shown great commitment to and passion about the work that UHHS does.

## Members of the Board for 2017/2018

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Amanda Catzikiris	President
Sue Milton	Vice President
Rhonda Griffith	Treasurer
Ross Pahuru	Board Member
Leah Welsh	Board Member
Veronica Matheson	Board Member
Penelope Fenley	Board Member
Garth Belford	Board Member

## Staff

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### Staff members of UHHS during 2017-2018

Manager	Lenore Little - until October 2017
Finance & Office Administrator	Una Garland
Admin/Reception	Robyn Rawlinson
Team Leader	Natasha Solman
Domestic Violence Specialist	Krista Turner
Case Workers	Jo Perrett - until March 2018 Fran Rockliffe Marina Lee-Warner Kathryn Gill Rosie Grigg - until July 2018 Darlene Locke – until July 2018 Rachel Vasta
Trainee Case Worker	Niamh Scanlon

## Manager's Report

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While I have only been the Manager for a few short months I have had the opportunity to see the service grow from strength to strength in this short time. This is only achievable because of the dedicated workers who are committed to providing the highest quality service to the clients accessing the service.

With new management comes new opportunity; to reflect on what has been working well and what has not, to develop and implement changes and improve all aspects of the organisation and service provision and grow and develop into the best version of the service possible.

Ultimately reflection and opportunity for improvement can only be positive for all stakeholders with the most significant benefits being received by clients. With a high level of dedication from the team a renewed focus on providing a strengths based, solutions focused case management model has brought with it consistency and clarity.

Collaborative partnerships has been a focus particularly over the past months, strengthening existing relationships and developing new ones within the Upper Hunter. UHHS Staff should be commended on their dedication and commitment shown throughout a period of change as they continue to represent the service by providing respectful and ethical service provision.

For workers, being able to best support not only themselves but each other and complement this with a wellbeing policy which focuses on self-care and the concept of looking after ourselves as a priority is a focus area of the organisation. This is enacted by the wellbeing policy as well as the development and implementation of comprehensive supervision and reflection practices being provided to workers on a regular basis.

It is an honour to lead this wonderful team and I not only look forward to being a part of the positive changes ahead for UHHS but working within the Upper Hunter community into the future.



Stacey Gately

Manager



## Our Client Services

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It has been another busy year for Upper Hunter Homeless Support (UHHS). This year has brought in wonderful new employees and seen the sad departure of others who we wish the best in their career journey. Our staff have enabled our service to continue to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The year of 2017-18 has seen the service almost entirely at no capacity for outreach services. It is evident that service demand in our community outweighs the number of hours funded for staff.

UHHS assisted 621 clients, 202 of which had experienced domestic and/or family violence in the 2017/2018 financial year. 73% were female and 27% were male. Of the 517 clients supported, 26% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. 45% of clients had been previously diagnosed with a mental health condition, however only 18% were receiving support from a mental health service. There were 64 clients who had more than 1 support period during this time, consequential to the client returning to the service for case management support more than once. The majority of Clients were referred to our service by self-referral via drop-in or telephone or from another service. There were 35% self-referrals and 61% from other services.

UHHS had 371 clients who were unassisted in the 2017/2018 financial year, 58% female and 42% male.

### Nydia's Place

This year saw the introduction of staff rotation to Nydia's, staff have spent a period of up to 6 months here before moving to other sites within the service. Nydia's Place now has two caseworkers each day as well as the DV Specialist. Our community development caseworker has also spent time with the residents completing various activities including cooking, drumming, art and gardening. An example of the artwork is on the cover of this report.

All 5 rooms within the refuge have been occupied for the majority of the financial year.

The Crisis Room also located at Nydia's has meant we can immediately supply 4 days of safe secure emergency accommodation for women with or without children, escaping domestic and family violence. This room is separated from the main part of the house with a separate bathroom and kitchenette. Most clients who have stayed here have either entered into the main house, been approved for a place in short-term supported accommodation in another area or successfully assisted to relocate to family and/or friends.



## Transitional Properties

All transitional properties have continued to be leased to clients experiencing homelessness throughout this period with the majority exiting into secure and safe accommodation after receiving intensive case management support. We have had a trend this year of clients needing to stay for the entire 12 months due to the increase of rental demands in the Upper Hunter. The transitional properties however have provided a good rental reference for most clients who have vacated.

## Emergency Property

We have continued to lease a small 1 bedroom unit close to our offices for short-term accommodation. This is used mainly for young people, men and women who are not eligible to reside in refuge accommodation. This year the unit has been fully occupied for the majority of the year. Mostly the tenants have been young people, men and young couples.

This continues to fill a need that Case Workers have not been able to in the past.

## Offices

The main office has continued to be the hub of our service within the community for other services to visit, donations to be dropped-off and referrals to be made.

Our Office in the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre has had two workers, two days a week; Tuesday and Wednesday. The workers are able to provide advice and information at this site to the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre staff and their clients when needed. We are also able to retrieve useful information in return. Our relationship with the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre continues to grow and we thank all staff; with a special mention of the Coordinator, Judy, for their continued hospitality and welcomeness.

The beginning of the financial year started with a caseworker using an office in the Scone Neighbourhood Centre. This is once a fortnight and is used as a space for appointments with clients living in the Scone area. Although reduced staff hours prevented a staff member using this space for part of the year, we have now begun visiting the site again on a fortnightly basis. We look forward to the continued use of this space in 2019.

## Keeping Safe at Home

As the Mercy Foundation's Keeping Safe at Home project ended we realise the need for this service was too great for it to end. The Keeping Safe at Home Project aims to enable women and children experiencing Domestic and Family Violence to stay in their own homes and leave the violent relationship.

This project provides personal safety plans, risk assessments, installation of security measures, support and advocacy in applying for AVO's and court matters, referral and case management to address financial and tenancy issues, networking with police and other local services and organisations, facilitation of DV education and parenting programs and the provision of supporting brochures regarding the new initiative to assist women and children to live without fear of violence.

We continued this program using our brokerage as it was evident of the need in our community due to the mirrored program 'Staying Home Leaving Violence' not being available. This program was used to assist 17 women with or without children to remain safe in their home and live free of violence.

### **Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE)**

This year our workers who participate in the On-Call roster had extra responsibilities, after the success of receiving funding for the DVRE project. This project enables the after-hours On-Call worker to assist women with or without children after an incident of Domestic Violence into safe accommodation. The DVRE afterhours contact number was provided to the Muswellbrook and Singleton Police Stations, DV Line, Link2Home and in the CIMS Vacancy system enabling access to other SHS and DVRE services.

During the 2017-2018 financial year, we have assisted 31 women either in our Crisis Room, or with other out of hours support. Our DV Specialist has successfully followed-up with the women who have used this program in business hours.

This year has also seen continued growth of our D&FV education and support group in Muswellbrook. Since commencing the group, it has had full attendance at each group and this year we have needed to start a waiting list. The Muswellbrook group was held every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at the main office with child minding provided.

It became clear that the Singleton area needed the same response so a partnership with Singleton Family Support was formed in June 2017 which allowed for a supported playgroup in conjunction with the D&FV Support group.

### **Brokerage**

The amount of \$74190.91 brokerage in the 2017/2018 financial year has been used to assist clients at risk of or experiencing homelessness into secure long-term accommodation.

Out of this amount the following was provided:

- ✓ \$18,213.57 advanced rent to assist clients experiencing homelessness into

- secure long-term accommodation.
- ✓ \$4,578.17 short term temporary accommodation when they were unable to receive assistance from Link2Home.
- ✓ \$7084.40 assist clients with food, transport, sleeping essentials and mobile phones to enable access to temporary accommodation and support services.
- ✓ \$2236.36 essential furniture was to set up their long-term accommodation
- ✓ \$12085.20 removalists costs
- ✓ \$11,358.48 for rent arrears and property care to sustain tenancies
- ✓ \$2281.91 clothing and school supplies

We have continued to loan out bar fridges to clients this year, although these have not been returned as promptly as in the past. This program provides clients with a fridge that is returned, until they are eligible for a NILS loan or obtain a fridge by other means.

### Education and Groups

This year our DV education and support groups continued to develop in collaboration with Singleton Family Support. The number of participants attending the groups continue to increase and we now have a waitlist for the Muswellbrook group.

The 'Rent it Keep it' program has increased in frequency and aims to educate participants of their rights and responsibilities as a tenant. This year we also liaised with Ungooroo SHS service to deliver a 'Rent it Keep it' in Singleton for young people between the ages of 16-24years.

Our service has continued to collaborate with other services for the delivery of Lovebites in High Schools in the Upper Hunter. This program continues to produce messages of healthy relationships to young people to assist in the prevention of unsafe and abusive relationships.

Once again we thank all staff, the management board, and our funding body for our continued growth and abilities to provide these services to our clients and the community. A special thank you to all services who we have liaised and collaborated with this year to assist our community.

On behalf of  
**Natasha Solman**  
**Team Leader**

## Finance & Office Administrators Report

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The past year has been one of change for the Service; processes were reviewed; quality assurance continued and the extent of the homelessness problem in the Upper Hunter was almost overwhelming. Therefore, it was with sheer determination that the staff moved into the 2017 – 2018 year.

The year commenced with the resignation of the Manager, the Team Leader and I moving into a shared caretaker management role. This also meant a reallocation of funds and the employment of some additional staff on time limited contracts.

The long awaited Supported Temporary Accommodation Tender was released in December. Our response was prepared and submitted for the Muswellbrook area. Short after the tender closed we began 3 months of negotiations with the provider, prior to accepting the offer they made to our service.

The DVRE project was in place and early in the financial year funding for an additional year of this project was received. FACS funding for this project provides support for women with or without children who require an immediate response to a domestic violence incident after hours in the Upper Hunter.

The crisis room at Nydia's has been well used and we have been able to purchase additional furniture to brighten the room and make it a little more comfortable. This unit allows the client a safe and self-sufficient space where they are able to stay for up to 4 days. Clients are then taken into Nydia's or referred to a service out of town.

Short-term accommodation for men and young people across our service area had been problematic for the service since we commenced. There is has not been the same focus on these groups as with other sections in the Community.

Our case workers, are regularly being creative in finding accommodation providers who will allow young people to stay. In regard to men we used caravan parks and pubs regularly for them to stay as there is simply nowhere else. Young people cannot stay in pub accommodation and caravans are less than ideal particularly in this area.

Assistance came our way for youth by way of the Commonwealth Bank Centenary Grant. This grant of \$10,000.00 to be spent in the area of youth homelessness. This grant is sponsored by the staff at the Commonwealth Bank Branch at Muswellbrook. The funds will be used to rent another one bedroom unit in Muswellbrook to be used just for youth, when one comes available. The grant will allow us to rent a unit for a year. This would mean we could house a young person or couple with a baby during this time.

As occurs every year Christmas saw an abundance of donations of gifts for our client's children in both Nydia's & the transitional houses and we are very grateful for this.

In the area of Governance we have continued to update, develop and extend the Policy Manual, as they are required. Quality Assurance has continued during the year. This set us on a path of ensuring that the appropriate paperwork was available to ensure we met the standards. Work on new documents have been written and uploaded as needed.

Technology has continued to be a problem in relation to our phone system, as reported last year. The new faster speed internet connections were installed at Nydia's Place the first week in July. This meant that the planned Computer Network could be rolled out or so we thought. There are still problems with the network speed we are working through.

Centrepay has worked well and while we don't anticipate making a large amount of money, during the year Centrepay deductions have contributed \$48,847.30 to the Budget. This includes the rent at Nydia's, the Emergency Unit and the Singleton Houses, plus the repayment of some brokerage.

The Work Development Orders continue to be successful and they are now discussed with most clients. This has been very successful, with a number of clients starting to pay off their debts. Following are the statistics:

Total client applications submitted: 29

Total WDO credits applied: \$10929.00

Total WDOs closed: 23

Dollar value of closed WDOs: \$31656.97

Work Development Orders assists the clients and their families financially, increases money staying in the local area and offers the client an option of gaining or regaining their driver's licence which would otherwise have been prevented due to outstanding fines.

A number of MOUs were either signed or resigned during the year including:

- Singleton Neighbourhood was renewed. They, along with AGL Macquarie Ltd. provide us with a medium term or transitional house in Singleton for a woman with and without children leaving domestic violence. The sponsorship for this funding pays the rent for the Singleton Unit and rent we receive from our client in this property provides us with a small amount of income.
- Renegotiation Upper Hunter Shire Council for two properties in Merriwa.
- The MOU with Vines Church is in regard to the provision of food relief to Homeless clients.

We have also been able to continue our relationships with the following National volunteer organization:

**Share the dignity**, whose aim to provide homeless and at risk women nationally with feminine health products to allow them a sense of dignity at a time when they need it most.

**Every Little Bit Helps** receive unused sample sized complimentary hotel toiletries, airline amenity kits, sanitary items, make-up and cosmetic samples, that are then distributed to people in need in Homeless Shelters, Women's Shelters and Youth Shelters as well as rough sleepers.

The contributions made by the Community have also been enormous during the year. The donations of funds have been wonderful with organisations and citizens donating funds and goods. We have received household goods from across the state via local residents.

The community of Scone has been generous in their support of our service. The highlights of this support is that every school in the Scone & Murrurundi held a function in conjunction with the Vinnies Community Sleepout held in June. A further highlight was the International Women's Day Luncheon held on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018. I was privileged to speak on behalf of the service, and many questions and conversations resulted after this talk.

We also had the opportunity to meet with Prue Goward, the Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Social Housing, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on a number of occasions during the year both in Muswellbrook and also in Singleton.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Community Project Officers Michele Ireland and Adam Murray and also Andrew Hunter from Family and Community Services. Your assistance has been invaluable.

Our Contractors, who have worked; moving furniture and other assorted jobs, nothing has been too much trouble, with them often coming at very short notice, a thanks goes to them as well. I need to mention and express my thanks to both Shane King from Ask Itee and Anne Berry for their assistance and dedication to our service.

Also thank you to the Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre Manager Lee Watts and the Singleton Neighbourhood Centre Coordinator Judy Mitchell and Tash Taaffe at Merriwa Office of Upper Hunter Council, who have all assisted our service for the good of our clients.

As we move to the new challenges that this year will bring I wish to acknowledge the diverse team I work in, their support of each other and clients is amazing. I would like to thank Natasha Solman for the assistance, support and laughter we shared on our journey, and I am also grateful to the clients who let us in and trust us enough to share their journey.

Thank you to the Board your support and guidance has been fantastic. A huge thank you to all of you, but especially Amanda Catzikiris and Rhonda Griffith, who have always taken my call, always offered practical advice and guided the service along the journey.

**Una Garland**  
**Finance and Office Administrator**

## Data collected for the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017–30<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### UHHS assisted 888 clients

Total number of closed support periods:	517
Total number of ongoing support periods:	171
Number of support periods that could not be used to derive information about clients:	5
Number of clients (excluding support periods that could not be used to derive client information):	621
Number of support days provided within the reporting period:	47,882
Total number of support days in closed support periods during the reporting period:	30,626
Average length of support (days):	70
Number of support periods with accommodation:	146
Number of accommodation days for all accommodation periods within the reporting period:	9,888
Number of accommodation days for closed support periods:	4,271
Average length of accommodation (days):	68
Number of support periods for children:	116
Number of children (excluding support periods that could not be used to derive client information):	113
Number of adults accommodated (excluding support periods that could not be used to derive client information):	80
Number of children accommodated (excluding support periods that could not be used to derive client information):	64
Total number of ALL instances of persons not assisted:	371
Number of unassisted persons with a distinct valid SLK:	313
Number of support periods where consent was not obtained:	4
Last monthly submission for the reporting period:	06/2018

The tables below compare the difference between suggested SHS targets and actual rates – combining the two areas shows overall we have exceeded the projected SHS modelling targets by 351

	Targets	Actuals
Going Home	171	412
Staying home	271	381
Totals	442	793





## Main Presenting Reasons

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Main reason for seeking assistance	Number of Support Periods	Percent
Financial difficulties	49	7.12
Housing affordability stress	59	8.58
Housing crises	213	30.96
Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions	84	12.21
Previous accommodation ended	22	3.20
Relationship/family breakdown	27	3.92
Domestic and family violence	202	29.36
Non-family violence	7	1.02
Medical issues	1	0.15
Lack of family and/or community support	5	0.73
Other	19	2.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>100.00</b>



## Where our clients were the week before presenting

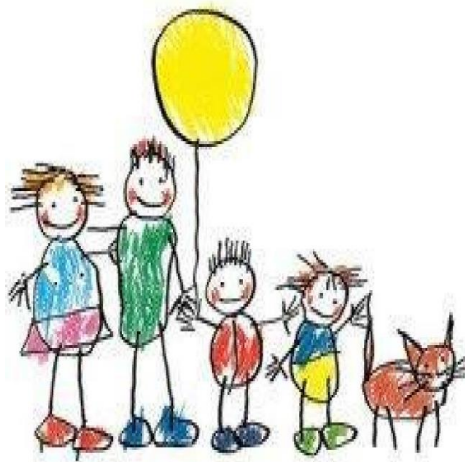
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Location	Number of Support Periods
Muswellbrook	285
Singleton	109
Scone	33
Aberdeen	16
Singleton Heights	16



## Reasons clients could not be assisted

Reason	Number of unassisted requests for service	Percent
Invalid or Missing	142	38.27
Person did not accept service	26	7.01
Person wanted different services	3	0.81
Agency was in the wrong area	20	5.39
Agency had no accommodation available	16	4.31
Agency had no other services available	1	0.27
Agency had insufficient staff	27	7.28
Agency was inappropriate, wrong target group	3	0.81
Person was refused service/ person did not meet criteria	6	1.62
Other	133	35.85



## Feedback comments received from UHHS Clients

“Staff listen intently to needs, I felt heard and my opinion valued.”

“Staff were understanding, empathetic and supportive”

“Excellent level of service, availability the only issue as staff are stretched thinly”

“Full of information and resource”

## Staff Training

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- Indigenous DV Alert
- Mental Health First Aid
- Motivational Interviewing
- Practical skills in responding to people who experience domestic and family violence DV-alert
- MYOB Advanced Processes: Beyond Basics
- Accidental Counselling
- First Aid Refresher Course
- Child Protection Part 1: Identifying & Responding to Risk of Harm:
- Child Protection Part 2: Child Protection Dynamics.
- An Introduction to Working with Individuals Who Have Self-Destructive Behaviours'
- Drug and Alcohol First Aid
- Working with Men to End Family Violence Conference

## Interagency Meetings

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- Upper Hunter Interagency
- Singleton Interagency
- Safety Action Meeting (SAM)
- Upper Hunter Youth Service
- Merriwa Family Support Network
- Upper Hunter Mental Health Interagency
- Upper Hunter DV Committee Meeting
- Youth Rental Choice Group
- Newcastle Interagency
- Homelessness Working Group
- Specialist Homelessness Services Operations – Hunter
- Upper Hunter Youth Network Meeting
- SHS Youth Sub-group

## Community Development Activities 2017 –2018

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UHHS has continued to expand our profile over the past 12 months, contributing to community activities and events throughout the year. Community engagement serves to raise awareness and break down the stigma around homelessness, highlighting that this is an issue that can affect any one at any time. Participation in community events also enables us to network with other services in our area and contribute positively, strengthening those relationships.

This year, more than ever, our efforts in the community sector have resulted in business, community and school leaders creating their own events to raise awareness of homelessness and support the work our service does.

### ***Hunter Homeless Connect - August 2017***

UHHS again participated in this day in Newcastle, providing information about our service and networking with the other services in the Lower Hunter that we regularly talk to throughout the year.

Case workers engaged with the estimated 1,000 guests who come through and provided a table of donated knitted winter beanies, kid's jumpers and purse pack body wash & shampoos.

### ***World Homelessness Day, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017 - Scone's Big Couch Surf***

The Big Couch Surf was the idea of local businessman, Jason Brooks to raise awareness of World Homelessness Day, and homelessness in the Upper Hunter.

Jason recruited additional Scone business leaders to spend a night 'couch surfing' outside the Upper Hunter Shire Council building on a range of shabby couches and sofas donated by the community.

Scone High School students also participated, raising money donated by their peers for not only spending the night outdoors on a couch, but going without their phones!

The event attracted great media coverage from radio interviews to newspaper articles. This event was supported by the Upper Hunter Shire Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council Youth Services and Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

### ***White Ribbon Day - November 2017 –***

UHHS attended the White Ribbon Day awareness stalls in the Muswellbrook Marketplace and South Muswellbrook Coles Complex selling White Ribbon merchandise and providing information on support for those experiencing domestic and violence. Members of the team participated in a walk from Simpson Park to the library, for speeches and the cutting of the cake.



### ***Red Cross Christmas Window Display Competition December 2017***

UHHS participated in the Red Cross Window Display Competition creating a window display with the theme 'Everyone Deserves a Home at Christmas'. The display featured a large gum tree branch sprayed silver, which was decorated with no less than 40 tiny koalas hanging on the branches. We received a Highly Commended for our efforts.

### ***Merriwa Family Day – February 2018***

Case workers attended the Merriwa event, which drew a huge crowd and provided information about services offered by UHHS and the ever popular badge making activity.

### ***International Women's Day - March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018***

Staff attended the IWD function at the Scone Race Club and delivered a powerful speech that both moved and educated the large crowd about the impact of Domestic Violence on women's and children's lives.

UHHS was the financial beneficiary of the day, and donations of goods and clothing have been received at the Hub consequentially

### ***Scone Services Connect Day - April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018***

A Case worker attended this day at the Scone Senior Citizens Centre providing information on UHHS services and networking with other services.

### ***Candlelight Vigil - May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018***

Held to Remember the Victims of Domestic and Family Violence, held in Scone in partnership with Scone Neighbourhood Centre and Upper Hunter Shire Council was attended by around 40 members of the community.

Guest speakers included Prue Martin from Joplin Lawyers, Samantha Jones from the CBA Bank and Inspector Guy Guiana, Upper Hunter District Command and White Ribbon Ambassador.



### ***Compass Tenants Day - May 8<sup>th</sup>***

Case workers attended this day providing information about our services to Compass Housing clients.

### ***Upper Hunter Community Services 'Picnic in the Park' Family Day - May 23<sup>rd</sup>***

Always a fun filled and vibrant day to be a part of, UHHS provided badge making activity for the children. Case workers provided information on our homelessness support services and domestic and family violence support.

### ***Vinnie's Sleepout - June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018***

This was the 4<sup>th</sup> Vinnie's Community Sleepout held at the Muswellbrook Showground to raise awareness of homelessness in the Upper Hunter and raise funds for St Vincent de Paul, locally.

Our partners in this event are, St Vincent de Paul (Muswellbrook), Hope City Church, Upper Hunter Youth Services, and Muswellbrook High School.

The event is growing in popularity and participation each year. This year raised over \$3000.00 for our local Vinnie's while around 50 people slept out.

The Muswellbrook Red Cross ladies kept the crowd warm and well fed by providing a soup kitchen on the night.





### ***Community Donations:***

- \*8 Weekly support from Baker's Delight with their donation of fresh bread and rolls every Wednesday
- \* Scone High School – pantry stores and a cheque, as a result of their sleep out fund raising effort.
- \* St Mary's Primary School- Scone, a cheque donation following their Pyjama day.
- \* Murrurundi Primary School and Aberdeen Public School.
- \* Made By Bee – donation of pumpkins



Cheque presentation from Commonwealth Bank Centenary Funding



# Future Directions for Upper Hunter Homeless Support

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## Looking to the Future

- Strengthening and building on our community partnerships
- The Supported Temporary Accommodation becoming operational.
- An emphasis upon ensuring policies and procedures are fully integrated to maintain and enhance good practice throughout the organisation.
- Strengthening our good governance to encapsulate UHHS's organisation foundations.
- A strong emphasis on UHHS's values, through workshops and organisational awareness of our values that inform our practice, community partnerships and internal operations.
- A continued commitment to relevant training to enhance service delivery.
- Further investigation of an assertive outreach program in the Upper Hunter area.
- Enhancing the Family and Domestic Violence response provided within our communities with further role out of the Shark Cage Framework ® group, investigation of safety and security options available to high risk survivors, upskilling of all case workers to better provide DFV education and support (including case planning, risk assessment, safety audit and assessment and upgrades to physical premises)

## Financial Report

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Upper Hunter Homeless Support is in a strong financial position at the close of the 2017-2018 financial year.

After a number of years of running behind in providing the documentation required by the Auditor we have the processes in place that all reports have been submitted on time. A big thank you to Una Garland and the rest of the staff for their cooperation in changes that needed to be made to stay within our budget.

### Results for 2017 - 2018:

- The result for the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June was a deficit of \$62242.20
- The Organisation has an amount \$482106.50 in its bank accounts at the end of the financial year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June
- A grant of \$100,000.00 was received for the Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Project. This was in addition to other DVRE funds and the last of this funding will be spent in the 2018 - 2019 financial year.
- The continued funding from Family and Community Services (FACS) and Singleton Neighbourhood Centre with AGL Macquarie has kept a unit in Singleton funded for the benefit of our clients.
- A Commonwealth Bank Centenary Grant will allow us to provide some additional accommodation for youth in the Community.
- Many donations came in from the community, Business Houses and service organisation during the year. An International Woman's' Day Luncheon hosted by Scone Chamber of Commerce, Upper Hunter Shire Council at Scone Race Club also saw a large donation made to the Service.
- Every School in the in the Upper Hunter Shire area held a Sleepout this year. This brought \$1100.00 in donations to the Service. In addition to this our pantry was filled with food plus clothing and toys were also donated.

### Notes to the Financial Statement:

#### From the Audit

There were no matters of major significance noted.

- It was suggested that we be mindful of the security for all online passwords. That they change regularly.
- It is suggested that we have fewer Payroll Categories, to simplify the wages process.
- Client & DVRE Brokerage have job coding to provide ease of reporting.
- It was suggested that MYOB bank feeds be set up for all accounts

#### Statement by Treasurer:

- I hereby move that the Auditor's report be accepted as a true and accurate record of the 2017 - 2018 financial year.

**Rhonda Griffith**  
Treasurer

## Acknowledgements

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**Upper Hunter Homeless Support would like to thank the following people for their support and assistance to the service during the 2017-2018**

- Andrew Hunter, Michele Ireland and Adam Murray – Department of Family and Community Services, Community Services and Housing
- Aberdeen Public Schools
- Adra Food Pantry
- Anne Berry Book-keeping
- Ask Itee Computers
- Ausure Financial Services
- Bakers Delight
- Bates Removal
- Betta Electrical Muswellbrook
- Brighter Futures
- Bunnings – Singleton
- Challenge Foundation
- Commonwealth Bank Staff
- Compass Housing Services
- Elks Locksmiths
- Every Little Bit Helps
- Godolphin Australia
- Hope City Church – Garth Belford
- Hunter Valley Aboriginal Corporation
- IGA Denman
- Inner Wheel Scone
- Interrelate Family Service
- Joblink Plus Muswellbrook
- Joplin Lawyers
- Judy Wheeler
- Kathy Burns
- Made by Bee
- Mum's & Babe's Playgroup Singleton

- Murrurundi Public School
- Muswellbrook High School Students & Staff
- Muswellbrook Lioness Club
- Muswellbrook Men's Shed
- Muswellbrook Red Cross
- NSW Dept. Environment & Heritage (Fiona)
- Red Cedar Motel
- Rob Ella Mowing
- Rob Tesoriero
- Robyn Edwards & Noeline West
- St Joseph's Aberdeen
- St Mary's Catholic School Scone
- Saint Vincent de Paul – Muswellbrook
- Scone & District CWA Evening Branch
- Scone Chamber of Commerce
- Scone Grammar School
- Scone High School,
- Scone Race Club
- Scone Womens' Probus Club
- Share the Dignity
- Singleton Crafters
- Singleton Family Support
- Singleton Neighbourhood Centre
- Singleton Rotary Club
- Tenancy Team Muswellbrook – Compass Housing
- The Vines Food Pantry
- Upper Hunter Community Services
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council Youth Services
- Upper Hunter Youth Services
- Woolworths Muswellbrook
- YTC Maintenance

