



Photo: Diana Shypula

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

During 2015-2016 Newtown Neighbourhood Centre ran over 25 different programs and services involving thousands of people across the inner west community. None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers, and the support of all our funders and the community.

In 2015-2016 our activities included:

- Responding to over 30000 inquiries (in person, by phone and online) from community members accessing our frontline First Response Program and our Information and Referral service
- Regularly supporting over 300 people who are frail aged or living with mental and/or physical disabilities by providing shopping services, social support, skills development and recreational activities. This includes specific programs for older residents from various cultural backgrounds which assist them to continue to live

independently at home whilst remaining active in the community

- Working with over 250 people living in boarding houses (as well as Boarding House operators) to ensure they are living in appropriate accommodation with access to the services they need.

Some of the important achievements of 2015-2016 included:

- Jane Hehir, our "One Stop Shop" volunteer, was named Regional Volunteer of the Year for the Inner West
- Newtown Market received another Marrickville Business Achievement Award
- Record Newtown Festival donations of \$80,000 enabled us to continue our First Response program for people at risk of homelessness
- Over 150 community members participated in a Public Meeting to "Protect the Newtown Vibe", resulting in an ongoing roundtable which continues to meet at NNC and take action to monitor and protect the "Newtown vibe"

We also:

- Developed a new Strategic Plan for 2016-2018
- Commenced a project to assess outcomes being achieved in our programs
- Reviewed our future financial sustainability and developed a fundraising strategy
- Implemented a new cloud based financial management system
- Developed a quality improvement framework

Board members in 2015-2016

The Board retained a great mix of long term board members, as well as the addition of three new Board members who are all Newtown locals, with great professional skills, as well as strong business and community connections.

President: Karen Walsh
 Vice President: Digby Hughes
 Treasurer: Wayne Tynan
 Secretary: Amalina Wallace
 Ordinary members: Paul Shiel, Jo Wallace, Liz Dickson, Louisa McKay

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Over the next three years, we'll work harder than ever to make sure we achieve even more.

To make this happen, we're looking to invest in innovative services and solutions. We'll be working in partnership with organisations and policy makers, sharing our knowledge so that what we learn benefits our community beyond what we can achieve on our own.

Over the next 3 years, to create and maintain "Newtopia", we will ensure:

1. People's human rights and basic needs are met
2. People have appropriate affordable places to live

3. Newtown has a vibrant social and cultural life which reflects its diversity
4. Our community is safe, connected, inclusive and respectful
5. The community is pro-active and creating social change

As a Newtown local, or as someone who just loves all that Newtown stands for, you probably cherish that our community is a bit different to others. Many of the good things that happen here depend on support from our community.

As one of the many diverse and passionate Newtown community members, we ask you to consider supporting one of our key programs – the First Response Program.

This program gives the homeless and vulnerable on our doorstep a future in the year ahead. It is a program we can only continue with the support of this community.

CONTACT DETAILS

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THANK YOU

We would like to thank the following for their generous support:

Government and Community

Commonwealth Department of Health

Council of the City of Sydney

Inner West Council

Leichhardt Marrickville

Community Transport Group

Multicultural Health Service

- Marrickville

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

- Ageing, Disability and Home Care

NSW Department of Family and Community Services

- Community Services

Parramatta City Council

StreetSmart Australia

Sydney Local Health District

Business sponsors and donors

2SER

567 King

Aerialize

Australian Institute of Music

Bank Hotel

Bauhaus West

Better Read Than Dead

Bloodwood

Carlisle Castle Hotel

Coda Audio

Constant Security

Courthouse Hotel

D&M Research

Dave's Golf Cart World

Dendy

Dresden Optics

Environmental Enterprises

Estate of the late Beverly Rhonda

Brown

FBI

Ford's Pharmacy Newtown

Fitness First Newtown

Goget

Gooding family

Gloria Nicol and GPN Law

Green Living Centre

Happy Team Xtreme

Inner West Courier

John Cruthers

Love Police

Marlborough Hotel

Megadeck

Newtown Good Food Fair

Newtown Gym

Newtown Hotel

Newtown Locals

Newtown Social Club

Newtown Precinct Business Association

Reverse Garbage

Sassy Treats

Signwave

Sly Fox

Sydney Airport

Sydney Water

The Bower

The late Al Young, family & friends

The Music

The Powder Principle

Zanzibar

Help the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community

- Make a tax deductible donation
- Volunteer your skills
- Involve your business in supporting Newtown Neighbourhood Centre



Photo: Diana Shypula

GRATITUDE REPORT 2016

Home is more than just a shelter



Photo: Diana Shypula



FROM THE CEO

Come and take a walk with us and you'll see in this Gratitude Report how your support makes a difference in the lives of vulnerable people in Newtown and the Inner West.

isolation. In addition to the programs detailed in this report, here are a couple of the highlights over the last year which you have helped make possible:

- First Response program, an initiative that assists people at imminent risk of homelessness that continues due to donations at Newtown Festival gates.
- Protecting the Newtown Vibe - an initiative to keep Newtown vibrant, open, weird and safe. This followed a public meeting of concerned locals including the member for Newtown, representatives from local Councils, police, and businesses. One of the new initiatives developed was "Friday Night Vibes" in Newtown Square which provided a safe, fun space on Friday nights for our diverse community to come together to listen to live music, and enjoy the work of local artists and makers. A wonderful way to celebrate "the Newtown vibe".

There are a growing number of people who are doing it tough. They are facing real challenges in gaining employment, accessing health care and education, and achieving the fundamental human right of having a roof over their head and food on the table.

We deliver services to those who are the most disadvantaged, socially isolated and vulnerable in our community. We try to meet people where they are at. We help people access the programs and services they need, as well as supporting them to get on a pathway to a better future.

We know that making a real difference also means working with the whole community to try and address the causes of social disadvantage and

CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

Sometimes life throws more at you than you can handle. Just ask brickies labourer, Jim. In the space of just six months in 2015, he lost his close friend and ex-wife to cancer and his 28-year-old son to suicide.

Reeling from the losses, he then found out that the Campsie boarding house he had called home for two years was closing for renovation, leaving him homeless. Even worse, a dispute with the owner meant that Jim's bond wasn't being refunded. "I couldn't afford to go without my bond money," Jim explains.

"So, I stayed on when everyone else left. There was no water or shower or power, so I had torches and bottled water."

The stress of the situation led to Jim losing his two jobs, which in turn led to him drinking heavily. "I didn't want to think about things any more, and I was drinking a lot every day, and I mean a lot," he admits.

Jim, 53, says he is not sure where things were headed, but he was having frequent suicidal thoughts.

The timely intervention of NNC's Boarding House Outreach Service helped Jim avoid ending up on the streets and reduced the high risk that he would come to harm. This helped break the downward spiral.

After hearing about his situation, a caseworker helped Jim to inspect a number of new boarding house rooms and to land a spot in a house in Ashfield. She also helped him get professional psychological help, badly needed dental treatment, and to apply for disability benefits for his alcohol-related brain damage.

"My case worker got a plan together for me, whereas before I didn't know what to do. She's helped me set goals." Jim says.



Artwork: Bethany Smith

Unlike his former digs, Jim's new boarding house is clean and cockroach free, meaning he can think about getting work again. "I'm calmer, I'm not worrying about things all the time," he says. "Before my mind was constantly thinking and worrying."

Jim's advice to others in dire straits is to not hesitate about contacting NNC. "I'd recommend them. I said to a friend the other day, go and see the NNC they are wonderful and they will help you."



Photo: Diana Shypula

I am extremely grateful to you for choosing to support our organisation - whether you're a donor, a government funder, a fellow service provider, or a volunteer. I am thankful to everyone who accesses NNC services - thank you for trusting us to be part of your lives, particularly when you may be going through a difficult time - it's not always easy to seek support.

You are all critical to our continued success. YOU. Together, we reflect Newtown's heart - a place where people care. Thank you for being there - for us and for each other.

WORKING WITH BOARDING HOUSE OPERATORS

Would you rather spend the night in a boarding house or sleep rough in a park?

It might seem like a no-brainer, but when the boarding house in question is unsafe, unhygienic and has high levels of alcohol and illicit drug-use, the question becomes more complicated.

Boarding House Outreach Service Manager, Paul Adabie, says while the 2012 Boarding House Act made it a legal requirement for boarding houses to be registered and meet minimum standards, many operators are flouting the law and providing living conditions that are grossly substandard.

"We see some pretty shocking places," he says. *"Given the unsavoury feeling and how filthy some of them are, I can understand why people would prefer a park."*

We help raise standards by getting to know operators across Sydney's Inner West and helping to educate them about their legal obligations under the new law. *"One of the things we do is to run forums a couple of times a year to update operators on new developments and help them to understand the legislation."*

The process is paying off, but Adabie estimates at least half the boarding houses in the district remain unregistered. Confusion over enforcement means breaches of the Act are largely going unpunished.

Tom Petrovski is one of the area's proactive boarding house operators and has four premises that are both registered and compliant. *"I make sure that my carpets are clean and in good condition, the walls are painted, and repairs are taken care of."*

If furniture is broken or damaged, I replace it straight away."

Petrovski says being able to turn to NNC for support helps him to maintain standards and address problems with tenants. *"Newtown Neighbourhood Centre is a vital platform for my business,"* he says. *"Some tenants might have mental health problems or addiction problems and I can tell them that the centre is a place they can go to."*

Petrovski continues, *"I also refer people if they are struggling with paying rent. Newtown Neighbourhood Centre has a meeting with them, asks about the situation, and if it's a genuine reason they will help them avoid eviction and refer them to counselling and support services."*

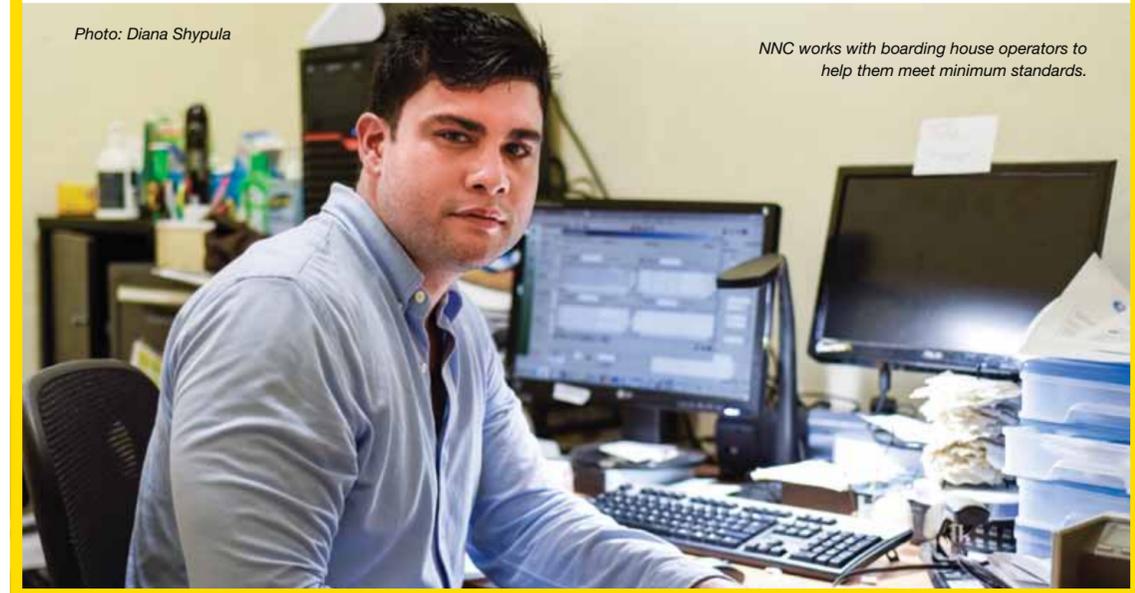


Photo: Diana Shypula

NNC works with boarding house operators to help them meet minimum standards.