

# Annual Report

2023



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# VISION AND VALUES



## Our Vision Safe and Connected Communities

What does that look like?

### Safe

- Children and families are safe
- FUN - being able to hang out
- Being seen and heard
- Everyone feeling included
- People participating - rights, access, equitable
- People have wrap around support
- Low crime & family violence, lighting, footpaths, people feeling safe, walking, public transport
- People know and understand their community
- Resilient

### Connected Communities

- Intergenerational groups
- Coming together
- Community members sharing aspirations
- Social capital, Facebook, mentoring
- Checking in on each other
- Going out into the community
- Walking groups
- Children participating in extracurricular activities
- Creative thinking
- Innovation
- Increased volunteers
- Empowered
- Inclusive

## Our Mission

To support children, families, and individuals in being safe and connected in our communities

## Our Values

At The Canopy we will:

- Conduct ourselves with **integrity**
- Act with **compassion**
- Ensure **empathy**
- Maintain **trust &**
- Demonstrate **respect**

We will use a collaborative and inclusive approach underpinned by a social justice framework

What will we do?

### Our Clients

- Identify opportunities to grow our client base
- Conduct unmet needs assessment and formulate response
- Increase wrap-around services
- Investigate and review temporary care support for families
- Investigate income generation options
- Develop a communications and marketing strategy to increase brand recognition and awareness of The Canopy
- Research
- Advocacy
- Maximise community benefit of community facilities
- Community development
- Maximise reach and impact of Maryland Neighbourhood Centre Services

### Our People

- Provide professional development opportunities
- Develop a well-being strategy for staff
- Ensure professional supervision for staff
- Provide space & time to innovate & create
- Review pays scales
- Acknowledge staff & volunteers

### Our Systems

- Use current data to inform service delivery
- Identify and implement a process to measure children's outcome data
- Present outcomes data (case studies, conferences, seminars)
- Develop a fee-for-service finance model
- Investigate the best way to present data to the Board for effective decision making

### Our Partners/Stakeholders

- Community service providers
- Disability services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
- Education
- Universities
- CALD service providers
- Housing/homelessness
- Domestic violence services
- Government (Local/State/Federal)
- Mental health services
- Primary health network
- Material aid providers
- Business sector

How do we measure success?

### Population

- ROSH
- Hospital/immunisation
- Wellbeing index
- Volunteering
- BOSCAR
- Education trends & attendance
- Housing
- ABS Census
- AEDC
- Local / State Governments community surveys / consultations

### Program

- Motivation/Change
- Knowledge
- Measuring children
- Case studies
- Performance against contractual KPIs
- Qualitative feedback (clients, agencies, stakeholders, social media)
- Community facilities utilisation
- Usage of community facilities and patronage reflects local community needs, aspirations, and demography
- Reputation
- Client outcomes

**The Canopy Incorporated  
Annual General Meeting  
AGENDA  
21st November 2023**

Welcome:

Acknowledgement Of Country:

Attendance:

Apologies:

Minutes of 2021-2022 Annual General Meeting:

Business Arising from Previous Minutes:

Reports:

- President's Report
- Executive Officer's Report
- Visual presentation service reports
- Auditor's Report

Introduction of the Returning Officer: Sinead Coakley

Nominations and Election of the Committee:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Public Officer
- Treasurer
- Committee members

Appointment of Auditor:

2024 Board Meeting schedule (day/time)

General Business

Close

## MINUTES of the 2021-2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### The Canopy Incorporated

#### VENUE: Pasterfield Community Centre

18 Horizon Avenue, Cameron Park NSW 2285

**Date:** 15th November 2022

**Meeting Commenced:** 1.43pm

**WELCOME** was extended to all present by: Iain Gardiner

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

*"Acknowledgement that the meeting was being held on Awabakal land and paid respects to past, present and emerging elders. We honour the collective knowledge and experience of First Nations Peoples within our community, families, and organisation. We value our connections with community and commit to ongoing listening and learning as we walk alongside First Nations Peoples."*

**Attendance:** Iain Gardiner, Sandra Feltham, David Betts, David Price, Janet Lee, Kirsty Porteous, Sinead Coakley, Paul Procter, Feona Ray, Jade Tapper, Kellie Hackney, Lisa Standen, Lee Manning, Laura Cole, Sonya McAlister, Jarrad Macey, Sally Gardner, Kikki Tagaroulis, Terri Carter, Michael Birch

**Apologies:** Sheena Harvey, Sherrie Mace, Cathy Odgers, Bill Hitchcock, Rosemary Heppell, Bronwyn Brixton

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the 2020-2021 Annual General Meeting were tabled.

**Motion:** That the minutes be approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**Moved:** Sandra Feltham

**Seconded:** David Betts

#### 2. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There was no business arising from the previous meeting.

### 3. REPORTS

The following reports were tabled, and a general briefing was provided by the following:-

i) President's Report – Iain Gardiner

ii) Executive Officer – Paul Procter

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** David Price

**Seconded:** Sandra Feltham

iii) Family Service Leader – Kellie Hackney

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** Janet Lee

**Seconded:** Sandra Feltham

iv) Family Time – Bronwyn Brixton

Report delivered by Paul Procter on behalf of Bronwyn Brixton

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** David Betts

**Seconded:** David Price

v) Community Capacity Building – Kikki Tagaroulis

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** Sandra Feltham

**Seconded:** Janet Lee

vi) Maryland Neighbourhood Centre – Terri Carter

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** David Betts

**Seconded:** David Price

vii) Facilities Management – Jarrad Macey

**Motion:** Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** David Price

**Seconded:** Janet Lee

viii) Auditor Pitcher Partners – Kirsty Porteous

**Motion:** Financial Report as tabled is approved and accepted.

**Moved:** Sandra Feltham

**Seconded:** Janet Lee



# 2021-2022 AGM MINUTES - Cont

**4. THE RETURNING OFFICER:** Sinead Coakley was introduced and took the Chair.

All positions were declared vacant and nominations for the incoming board were read.

As there were no objections to the nominations and there were sufficient numbers to fill positions, the nominees were declared as being duly elected.

The following people were nominated and accepted as board members: -

Position	For Position	Nominated by	Second Nomination
President	Iain Gardiner	Rosemary Heppell	David Betts
Vice President	Sandra Feltham	Iain Gardiner	Rosemary Heppell
Treasurer	Vacant		
Secretary	David Betts	Iain Gardiner	Sandra Feltham
Board Member	Janet Lee	Iain Gardiner	Sandra Feltham
Board Member	David Price	Iain Gardiner	Sandra Feltham
Board Member	Rosemary Heppell	Iain Gardiner	David Betts
Public Officer	Paul Procter	Iain Gardiner	Rosemary Heppell

The Returning Officer handed the meeting over to the incoming President, Iain Gardner.

## GENERAL BUSINESS

### 1. Appointment of Auditor

**Motion:** Kirsty Porteous from Pitcher Partners as the appointed Auditor

**Moved:** Sandra Feltham      **Seconded:** David Betts

### 2. 2022-2023 Board Meeting schedule

The Canopy Board Meetings to be set bi-monthly on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, commencing at 5.00pm

**This meeting was declared closed at:** 2.41pm

# PRESIDENTS REPORT

Can I start by saying that it is an honour to give the Presidents Report for this past year. We have recorded strong operational and financial performance in the past year. This performance was achieved alongside our continued focus to help and support the people of our community. The post COVID era has seen inflationary cost pressures that will see our communities and thus our people, through the important work they do, face new challenges that will require resilience and commitment.

I am more than happy to announce that the diversification of our income seen the infancy of capital investment for the organisation, whilst comfortably remaining within our key financial policy targets. It has always been my personal mantra that we cannot rest on our laurels, I see The Canopy as an industry leader, not follower, and as such we must ensure that we look for new opportunities to fit within our core values in an effort to help our community. A prime example of this is The Canopy taking on the Targeted Earlier Intervention program at Jesmond Neighbourhood centre.

Again, I thank the Canopy's most important assets, the employees and volunteers for their commitment and dedication, without them we are nothing. I would also take the opportunity to thank the Board of Directors for their wisdom, advice, and time. I also welcome the new members of the Board and look forward to working with you to help grow this wonderful organisation. Finally, our EO Paul Procter, it is no surprise to me that Paul's hard work and dedication has a direct correlation to the financial and reputational position we are in.

I wish each and everyone one of you a happy holiday season and look forward to working with you next year.

**Iain Gardiner**

President

Board of Management

The Canopy Incorporated



# EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

It's been a year of growth and new opportunities for The Canopy.

We've grown our fee based family services with the establishment of our new 'Family Plus Program' and seen continued growth year on year in the occasions of service provided under our 'Family Time Program'.

We have increased our staffing in our family services and facilities management administration to help meet service demands.

For the communities we work in, it's been a difficult year for many people due to the impacts of increased living costs. This has increased the vulnerabilities of families and individuals who were already struggling. We've also seen the emergence of people entering poverty who were previously 'getting by'.

This has resulted in more people requiring our services. Some families however have been hindered in their capacity to access our services by the financial household pressures they are under, which have necessitated they work additional work hours and/or jobs to make ends meet. This has a knock on effect of people not having time, energy or in some cases funds to cover fuel costs to travel to support services and programs. Our staff have been proactive in seeking to make our services easier to access and more flexible in response to these challenges.

We have undertaken several community development activities to connect the community with social support services and build a sense of community belonging. Our Maryland Neighbourhood Centre and community facilities management have been central in our ongoing efforts of strengthening communities.

I want to commend our wonderful staff and volunteers who have assisted, supported and instilled hope and belief in the individuals, families and children who have accessed our family services, Maryland Neighbourhood Centre and community facilities. Our Facilities Management staff have provided our hirers with an overall positive experience in booking our community facilities. This in turn has enabled people to use our facilities to gather together, access programs, training, events, activities and social connect and experience social connection and a sense of belonging.

# EXECUTIVE OFFICERS REPORT - Cont

This year has seen the roll out of improved systems and service frameworks centering on introduction of our new Client Management System, embedding the Signs of Safety framework into our family services and roll out of internal continuous improvement processes across The Canopy centred on staff engagement.

The impact of our work is greatly aided by the wonderful help of our supporters and partners who we collaborate and depend upon. I want to acknowledge the NSW State Government Department of Communities and Justice for their ongoing funding of our Family and Neighbourhood Centre services and programs.

I look forward to the year ahead and what it brings. We are in a good financial position and have clear directions in our '2023-2026 Strategic Plan'. We will gain the insights of our newly appointment Board members which will add to our governance. We will build on our efforts in supporting and building the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers, who are dedicated and committed to making a positive difference in the lives of people accessing our services. We will continue to grow our knowledge base of evidence based practice which will guide and inform our work and it's impact in supporting children, families, and individuals in being safe and connected in our communities.

Finally I want to express my thanks to our Board of Management for the ongoing governance of The Canopy. I want to acknowledge outgoing Board members Steve Grant, Rose Heppell, Tania Peterkin and David Betts for their service and contributions. I also want to thank City of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie City Council for the opportunities we continue to have in the management of their community facilities to strengthen the community.

**Paul Procter**

Executive Officer

The Canopy Incorporated

# FAMILY WORK TEAM

## **2022/2023 Highlights**

We saw the completion of our digital transformation project and the implementation of our client data management system across all the family work programs.

Staff opportunities to expand their skills through the following training: - Signs of Safety, Shark Cage, Seasons for Growth, Circle of Security.

The family worker role which was created for IFP has been a great success and addition in our work to support families.

Embed the Signs of Safety Framework into our practice and processes.

The Canopy Family Plus:- launching the Canopy fee for service support.

Continuing our contribution to the Intensive Services Redevelopment and Redesign.

Facilitated our first Season's for Growth program in partnership with Minmi Public School

## **Overview of service program service provision activity**

Our Child and Family Team (Targeted Early Intervention), support families across the North Lake Macquarie and Blue Gum Hills areas and our Intensive Family Preservation Team, (Family Preservation), support families throughout the Lake Macquarie LGA. Maintaining a healthy family can be a challenge. By addressing each family's unique needs, our staff assist families to be equipped with tools and strategies for child development and family wellbeing both now and into the future.

We achieve this through: - Home Visiting, Intake and Assessment, providing Information and Referral, Parenting Programs, Supported Playgroups, Advocacy, Modelling, Coaching and Partnering with other services, groups and individuals.

# FAMILY WORK TEAM - Cont

## Community Impacts

The Parents as Teacher's Playgroup at West Wallsend, a partnership with Sugar Valley Neighbourhood Centre, Good start Early Learning and The Canopy continued to provide early learning and development opportunities to the West Wallsend Community and surrounds.

Whilst this year has brought many challenges, we also had the opportunity to witness the care and generosity of The Canopy's partners, in supporting the families we work with. The generous donations of food and other essential items by the Cameron Park Fellowship have brought relief and hope to families that were in real need. Families, experiencing financial distress due to increased costs of living. We also witnessed the spirit of Christmas with generous donations of toys and gifts from the Fellowship, to pass onto families, as well as food hampers and children's toys from Macquarie Life Church.

The Child and Family team partnered with Lake Macquarie Council to deliver a Resilience Project to staff at Edgeworth Public school and to parents of Fair Play OOSH, Edgeworth

## Glimpse of 2022/2023

- Continuing our contribution to the Intensive Services re-development and re-design.
- Developing our feedback opportunities and evaluation processes.
- Reimagine our service delivery, so to be responsive to the changing needs of families, amidst the changing pressures of life.

I want to acknowledge and thank the families who have allowed us to walk beside them this year.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and celebrate each of the members of the Family Work Team.

I am truly humbled to lead a team of passionate thoughtful and empowering workers. For all that you bring and all that you give, to our team, to each other and to our work, Thank you.

Kellie Hackney  
Family Services Leader  
The Canopy Incorporated



# FAMILY TIME

Family Time is a fee for service option at The Canopy providing supervised transport, supervised contact visits, respite and mentoring for children who have been assumed into the care of the Secretary or Minister. Family Time is provided under the Department of Communities and Justice Casework Support Scheme. Family Time includes a Fee for Service Leader, Family Time Coordinator, Administrative Support and sixteen casual contact workers.

## **Community Impacts**

When considering the impacts Family Time has on its community, one of the most important impacts is the average of 36 hours a day of service provision in 2022-2023. This service provision ensures children and young people have a safe connection to the significant people in their life. This is vital for this group of children to maintain their right to personal relationships with their parents, (The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 9, 1989). Access to this right to continue a relationship to significant people in their life contributes to a sense of identity, belonging, and their place in the world. For the children and young people who access Family Time at The Canopy, this is achieved through supervised visits with significant others including siblings.

Family Time has continued to grow in service requests during the 2022-23 period. The team would like to acknowledge the unfaltering support and commitment of the Executive Officer Paul Procter in ensuring Family Time continues to improve and thrive.

## **Highlights of Strengths and Challenges**

The highlights for the 2022-2023 period for Family Time have included implementation of the Deputy Scheduling system, continual growth, Family Service Leader position, promotion and peer support opportunities for Family Time Contact workers.

The growth in Family Time has come from promotion to Department of Communities and Justice, and an ongoing and increased interest from Non-Government Organizations (NGO) who oversee out of home care placements. The development of relevant processes and promotion to NGO's will continue in the next financial year.

# FAMILY TIME - Cont

The 16 contact workers in the 2022-2023 period worked from a minimum of 6 hours per week up to 20+ hours per week. The Deputy scheduling system has eased an administrative burden for scheduling these workers and Family Time sessions. Contact workers can obtain all the visit details, using this system, log their kilometres and shift times using this one system. Whilst it was a process to learn and change over to Deputy, the administrative benefits far outweigh the challenges. It is noted that communication has decreased between the Coordinator and workers since Deputy commenced as they no longer are clocking on and off via phone or text. A new system of inviting contact and support will need to be implemented moving forward.

The commitment to a Fee for Service Leader for the Family Time and Family Plus components has meant a dedicated role to oversee and support the operations of these services along with the continual development of systems and procedures which are specific and unique to servicing children and young people in the care of the Minister or Secretary.

The Coordinator facilitated a peer support session for Family Time Contact workers where these workers were encouraged to provide feedback on what they were proud of, their struggles, and areas of development and support they would like in the 2023-2024 period. These workers identified they would like support in the areas of installing car seats and writing case notes.

## Glimpse of 2023-2024

In 2023-2024 growth has continued along with plans to create systems which will support the team and attend to the variety of needs of all stakeholders within Family Time. A planning day will be held in early 2024 to timeline the key tasks and allocate responsibility for these tasks, including a system for continual review and improvement which will place Family Time in a strong position moving forward.



**Feona Ray**  
Family Time  
The Canopy Incorporated

**Jane Mitchell**  
Fee for Service Leader  
The Canopy Incorporated



Our new fee based family support service 'Family Plus' was launched this year.

We established this specialised service to respond to the identified need for tailored therapeutic family supports for families in the restorative space. These families have children who are in the care of the Minister or Secretary and are in the process of being restored to their families or moving to permanency through guardianship. Family Plus offers a suite of professional specialised supports tailored to strengthen families and children.

Utilising a child and family centered model and attachment theory, the program aims to maximise the strengths within the family, while utilising community supports to create and maintain safety for children/young people.

The purpose of Family Plus is to build parenting capacity in the restoration space through fostering home as a safe space for children through provision of personalised family supports delivered in the home.

### **Our vision for Family Plus**

- Support and empower children and parents as they prepare to reunite as a family, and/or strengthen their confidence and self-belief in their role as a parent.
- Provide support and programs tailored to these family's unique situation while honouring their existing family values, culture, systems and strengths.

### **Family Plus Goals**

- Ensure no family is disadvantaged by existing gaps in support services or programs.
- Provide a safe, non-judgmental support to families.
- Achieve an available and timely option to ensure children, young people and their families are safe, supported and connected.

### **Highlights and Challenges**

The response to Family Plus from referring agencies and clients has been overwhelmingly positive and has been the highlight of the 2022-2023 period. This is largely attributed to our Family Plus Worker Cathie Odgers, who as our first staff member in the program has been responsible for delivery of face to face supports to clients in the program.



# FAMILY PLUS - Cont

The challenge of the Family Plus program has been balancing growth with capacity and continually learning the uniqueness of each family who has entered the process of restoration or permanency which is quite different to the work of prevention or preservation in terms of risk and relevant models.

The impacts on the community can be seen from some of the feedback from families who have been supported:-

- *"Learnt some new play. Very enjoyable".*
- *"My journey has been tough, but with the support of my case worker from The Canopy I have felt supported and empowered. She has helped me learn new skills that benefit not only myself but my children as well".*
- *"No words could express how grateful I am for The Canopy. They have provided me with all types of assistance which has helped me in many ways. My children love the workers as they all are very warm, gentle hearted and unique. This makes my journey a lot easier, especially knowing I have The Canopy around me".*

## **Glimpse of 2023/2024**

With the continual growth of Family Plus 2023/24 sees the Family Plus Leader role filled along with the expansion of the team with a casual and a part time Family Worker. This will enable promotion of Family Plus in the New Year, establishment of team functions and support systems as well as the development of the Family Plus model informed by evidence based research and practice to ensure the Service is targeting the unique needs of these families.

### **Paul Procter**

Executive Officer

The Canopy Incorporated

### **Jane Mitchell**

Family Plus Leader

The Canopy Incorporated

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

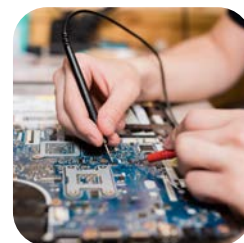
2022-2023 has certainly proven to be yet another challenging year. With COVID restrictions easing, the hope for more bookings and usage of our facilities has not reached the apex we had hoped for. The high cost of living is now proving to be our next obstacle.

Currently we have been supported by a great team of volunteers aiding in the delivery of various programs across the Western Corridor. Supporting our community, particularly in these trying times, has proven to be yet another challenge for us all.

## Highlights and Overview

The location of our facilities has certainly been highlighted as the most important factor for the general community and the many service providers that we work with recognising they are important spaces for our community to connect and run various programs out of, spaces that are accessible to all people, friendly and welcoming. Transport has been identified as the least favourable aspect of our centres as several are not located close to public transport.

The highlights for the year have been the delivery of services through the People and Place program and community-based events in partnership with other service providers.



### People and Place events:

- **Money Matters** – Partnering with Home In Place, Salvation Army Money Care Team, Services Australia and Share the Dignity, this one day drop-in centre assisted participants to access support and advice on how to be “smarter with our money”. Those attending enjoyed a sausage sizzle supported by the Elernmore Vale Lions Club.
- **Arabic Tech** - Held over 8 weeks, The Canopy delivered classes including children’s activities to build digital literacy and cyber safe capacity within the women of Newcastle’s Arabic speaking communities.
- **Immigration Card Service** – Held in partnership with Newcastle Libraries and MOSAIC Multicultural Connections a one day workshop assisted those wishing to apply for an immigration card and the necessary steps involved in supporting them with their applications.
- **Flavoursome Friday** - Working in partnership with various Multicultural Community Groups, Flavoursome Friday was about connecting people from all demographics, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds to come together and connect with our community.

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING - Cont

- **Graffiti Art and DJ Workshop** - This fun interactive workshop provided a supportive and fun environment to form friendships, social connectedness, a sense of achievement and a place to be heard while learning about mixing music, safe skateboard riding and painting a mural. The artwork is now prominently displayed at our Maryland Neighbourhood Centre.
- **Fletcher Playgroup** – Supporting Playgroup NSW delivering play-based programs to families in Fletcher, offering development, shared experiences, and family support.

## Other great programs coordinated at our various locations

- **SEED Library** – Held in partnership with the Newcastle Library, was to assist in the development of resilient communities through the delivery of a seed saving workshop. Those attending the SEED Library reported an increase in their knowledge and skills of collecting and starting their own vegetable gardens. More have been planned for the future.
- **Repair it Café** – Held in partnership with Repair it Lake Mac. this free workshop saw over 110 participants requesting assistance with the repair of various household items from the expert repair volunteers. An upcycle workshop and activities was simultaneously held for the kids.
- **Jesmond Lions Club** - Purchase of a number of sleeping bags through the Backpack Bed for the Homeless program. The bags were passed on to our Family Team and Maryland Neighbourhood Centre for distribution.
- **Multicultural Action Group** - I had been invited, and am now a member, of the Multicultural Action Group (MAG) Committee. A committee made of pertinent services providers assisting our community on several pressing issues.
- **Expo's** - With the support of Terri Carter, our wonderful Blue Gum Hills Community Hub Coordinator, we have attended and supported the Multicultural Services Expo, Hunter Volunteer Centre Expo and the Hunter Homeless Connect Expo.

## Glimpse of 2023/2024

We have been actively engaged with and supporting various community groups including CALD Connect, Legal Aid, LGBTQUI, Hunter Community Legal Aid, Afghan Association of Hunter, Castle Personnel Services, Catholic Care - Gamble Aware, Diversity & Disability Alliance, Newcastle City Police – Multicultural Liaison Officer and many others. I look forward to building on these relationships further in 2023/2024.

Kikki Tagaroulis

Community Capacity Building Manager

The Canopy Incorporated

# MARYLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

## Highlights 2022/2023

Maryland Neighbourhood Centre started operating back to its full capacity again the past 12 months, COVID was and is still lingering but not impeding our services like it has the previous few years.

This past year we have attended many expo's and events within the community and we at the Centre. Our Halloween disco was a huge highlight this year. It was the biggest event I have hosted since starting at MNC. I thought we would maybe get 100 children, parents and community members but we had 400 - 500. Entry was free and Wallsend/Maryland Rotary Club held a free sausage sizzle. Two hundred (200) sausage sandwiches were sold out in 35 minutes. It was fantastic to see MNC overflowing with families engaging with each other and having fun.

We also have an amazing army of volunteers that attend the Centre 5 days a week, tirelessly giving their time and support to not only myself but the local community. They are dedicated, committed and devoted to MNC. Without the help of these volunteers, MNC would not be able to run as smoothly as it does. I am always grateful for the team that surrounds and supports me.

Two of our longest serving volunteers were recognised and received awards, "Service to the Community" and "Valiant Volunteer", at the Wallsend Community and Business Awards held by Wallsend/Maryland Rotary Club. MNC also received an award for "Connecting Communities".

## Overview of service provision and activities

Maryland Neighbourhood Centre has had a busy year assisting the Community providing information, advice and referrals to people seeking assistance. This is done in person, via phone, email, website enquiries and Facebook. The following are just some of the activities provided during the last 12 months.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Information / Advice / Referrals                       | Food Relief Program                                    |
| • Youth Week Event                                       | Little Library & DVD Library                           |
| • Free Bread, excess fruit & vegetables                  | Yarn Up  |
| • Coffee Shop  | Tax Help   |
| • Community Breakfast                                    | Play Sessions  |
| • Photocopying, Computer Help, Email, Printing           | Halloween Disco  |
| • No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)                        | Multicultural Expo                                     |
| • Tree of Hope   | (Callaghan College Jesmond Campus)                     |
| • Money Aware (Financial counselling)                    | Welcome Year 7   |
| • Volunteering   | (Callaghan College Wallsend Campus)                    |
| • Volunteer Week (Morning Tea)                           | Christmas Hampers                                      |
| • Volunteer Christmas Lunch (MNC)                        | Hunter Homeless Connect Expo                           |
| • Seed Library   | School Holiday Activities ( <i>arts &amp; crafts</i> ) |
| • Get Online Week (digital literacy tutorials /workshop) | Seniors Week Activities (line dancing)                 |

## Key Challenges

The impact of the rising cost-of-living has been felt across all income levels and age groups. Rent, utilities, groceries, petrol, insurances and interest rates have continued to rise throughout the past 12 months hitting everyone very hard.

We have seen a massive increase with people seeking assistance with food, petrol and help with bills. There are a lot of families that are not making ends meet. We are hearing over and over the stress of keeping a roof over your families head and paying the bills and being left with no excess money for groceries or petrol.

## Community Impacts

Maryland Neighbourhood Centre prides itself on being a warm, friendly, non-judgemental, empathetic and a safe environment. We try to make clients feel welcome and at ease when coming into the Centre. The toughest thing to do, is to walk through any door and ask for help. No one should ever feel embarrassed or ashamed because things have gotten a bit tough. We continue to put the bread out the front of the Centre 3-5 days a week and it continues to be a soft entry to reach out and ask for assistance.

## Glimpse of 2023/24

We will continue to do most of the activities that we have been doing for the past 12 months. We are always looking for opportunities, ideas, suggestions and avenues to extend and improve the services we provide to local community.

Terri Carter

Blue Gum Hills Community HUB Coordinator

The Canopy Incorporated





# FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

## **2022/2023 Highlights**

So much as happened over the last financial year. Cameron Park Community Centre had some new infrastructure installed in the form of fencing and a sail to provide a safer, shaded area in the public playground. Maryland Neighbourhood Centre was rekeyed to a master key system providing improved security from the original and now discontinued system and was lucky enough to be the recipient of a custom fire engine cubby house, built by Toronto Rotary Sunrise NSW for their raffle, and donated by a considerate member of the community. Fletcher Community Centre even saw a lick of new paint giving it a fresh new appearance. State Elections were held once again with multiple venues facilitating voting for the local community they operate within.

## **Overview of service program service provision activity**

Overall casual bookings have seen an increase from previous years (excluding years affected by facility closures), and new regular hirers continue to approach The Canopy for use of our centres.

## **Key challenges experienced and how overcome and results**

Within hiring, there has been a swing towards casual hires which has come with an increase in the administrative workload. This has paved the way for a new administration booking officer position to help improve communication with hirers.

Within facility maintenance some of the key challenges faced is the ever-changing day-to-day problems, with which we find that experience tends to be the best teacher. The rising costs of goods and services has led to investigation into alternatives yielding better value; such has been the case with chemicals and consumables being sourced from a new supplier leveraging The Canopy's buying power.

## **Community Impacts**

The community impacts are as always, rich and varied. The community benefits from the facilities available for hire through meeting the needs of the locals whether they be; social, recreational, or cultural to name a few. These needs can be seen being met through commercial, private, and charitable purposes bookings such as; functions celebrating weddings, birthday parties and anniversaries, sporting groups training in martial arts, performing art groups practicing ballet, interest groups exhibiting stamp and coin collecting, religious gatherings taking part in study and worship, and educational bookings undertaking training.

# FACILITIES MANAGEMENT - Cont

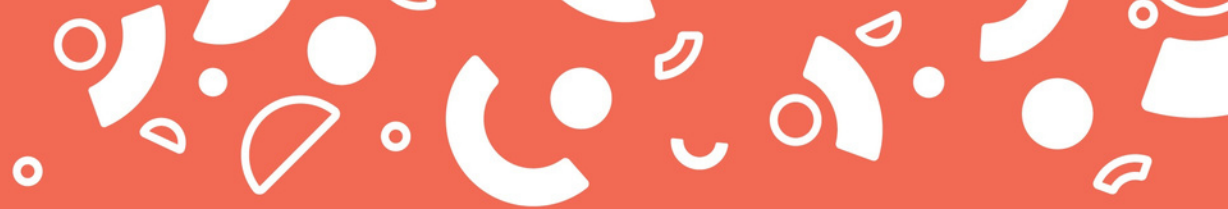
## Glimpse of 2023/2024

I look forward going into the next 12 months and at what we might achieve. The biggest challenge for the next 12 months will most likely be external with the cost of living and its impact on non-essential activities and consequently hire for non-essential activities. This however has still not stopped the enquiries of people interested in finding a space within the community; with new activities and services being offered by our hirers and partners it is a joy to see the local community continually evolve.

Jarrad Macey  
Community Facilities Coordinator  
The Canopy Incorporated







# CANOPY BOARD AND STAFF - 2022/2023

## CANOPY BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

President: Iain Gardner  
 Vice President: Sandra Feltham  
 Treasurer: Vacant  
 Secretary: David Betts  
 Public Officer: Paul Procter

**Board Members**  
 Rosemary Heppell  
 David Price  
 Janet Lee  
 Steven Grant  
 Tanya Peterkin  
 Bryce Adamson

## STAFF

### Executive Officer:

*Paul Procter*

### Finance and Administration Manager:

*Lisa Standen*

### Community Capacity Building Manager

*Kikki Tagaroulis*

### Community Facilities Coordinator:

*Jarrad Macey*

### Bookings and Administration Officer:

*Sonya McAlister*

### Administration Support Officer

*Samantha Nicholls*

### Blue Gum Hills Community HUB Coordinator

*Terri Carter*

### Facilities Maintenance:

Bill Hitchcock

Stephen Groves

## STAFF

### Family Services Leader:

*Kellie Hackney*

### Family Services Team Members

*Sally Gardner*

*Laura Cole*

*Stacey Williams*

*Emmaline Tangye*

*Leeanne Manning*

*Feona Ray - Senior Worker*

*Sherrie Mace*

*Cathy Odgers*

*Jade Tapper*

## STAFF

### Family Services Leader - Fee for Service

*Rachel O'Connor*

### Family Time Coordinator:

*Feona Ray*

*Bronwyn Brixton*

### Family Time Team Members

*Sonya McAlister (Administration)*

*Dianne Hurtz*

*Joanne McDonald*

*Grace Macmillan*

*Amy-Louise Ford*

*Mikaylah Livermore*

*Shayla Hunter*

*Nicole Kristiani*

*Lynn-Marie Locock*

*Sally Face*

*Lucinda Coyle*

*Hayley Ayres*

*Gail Rath*

*Jennifer Huett*

*Eliesha Kelly*

*Amanda Hall*

*Kimberley McEwan*

*John Bayliss*

## Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2023

