Annual Report 2012
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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Pathfinders Ltd

Kent House 141 Falkner Street, Armidale.

Wednesday 30th November 2011

AGENDA
1 Welcome
2 Apologies
3 Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
4 President’s Report
5 General Manager’s Report
6 Financial Report
7 Election of Office Bearers and Management Committee
8 Other Business
9 Close Meeting

Meeting opened at 12.30pm

Present: Alan Brennan; Patricia Schultz; Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-A; Justin Hardman; Fiona Miron; Joe Craigie; Michael Sivaraman; Penny Marsh; Gary Bennett; Sandra Smith; Bruce Dennison; Lisa Harvey; Penny Hackney; Mary Fitzgerald; Nigel Forsyth; Rosemary Rich; Jennifer Birks; Julian Hardman; Scott Mason; Beth Ford; Lee Woodward; Cathy Petteit; Michael Smart; Ryan Madden; Wayne Griffiths; Kara Curtis; Leanne Brown; Jodie Rudkowski; Firth Fergusson; Cath Ellis; Nick Levy; Scott Groszmann; Jacob McCue; Laura Pigott; Tracy Rudge

Apologies: Ron Binge; Lynn Lennon; Michele Saxby; Stephanie Mouthaan; Shane Jubb; Izabel Soliman.

Minutes from 2010 AGM:

Minutes from the 2010 AGM were tabled by Patricia Schultz.

Amendments
Cath Ellis was not included as an apology on the 2010 AGM minutes.

Resolution: that the minutes from the 2010 AGM be adopted with the addition to the minutes that Cath Ellis was an apology.
Moved: Fiona Miron  
Seconded: Justin Hardman  
Accepted: unanimously

**Presidential Report:**

*Presented by: Patricia Schultz*

Pat informed the meeting that this is the first meeting of Pathfinders as a new Company and the last for the old Incorporated Association.

- As from 2011 there is no requirement that Reports be accepted / rejected by the AGM.

**General Managers Report**

*Presented by: Alan Brennan*

Alan thanked Pat for her report and for her 8 years as President of Pathfinders saying "It has been a privilege to have worked with you. Your consistency, energy and determination has allowed Pathfinders to grow as much as it has."

**Financial Report**

*Presented by: Gary Bennett*

Gary informed the meeting that Pathfinders management and staff must continue to reduce spending and make savings and remain within budget.

**Elections of Directors**

No elections are required as the number of nominations is equal to the number of positions. Pat thanked the past members of the Board and welcomed the new Directors to Pathfinders.

**Nominations**

**President:**  
Nominated: Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-A  
Seconded: Pat Schultz  

**Vice President:**  
Nominated: Fiona Miron  
Seconded: Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-A  

**Treasurer:**  
Nominated: Pat Schultz  
Seconded: Joe Craigie

**Directors:**

Fiona Miron  
Pat Schultz
SPECIAL RESOLUTION – AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION

IT IS RESOLVED THAT the company’s Constitution be amended as follows:

That a new clause 47.1.3 be added in respect of the deductible gift recipient status of the company in the following terms:

“to which income tax deductible gifts can be made”

That clause 47.3 be deleted and replaced with the following:

“Should the company’s deductible gift recipient endorsement be revoked for any reason, then any surplus gifts remaining after all liabilities have been met, must be given to other funds or institutions which have similar objects and to which tax deductible gifts can be made.

1. Replace clause 27 as follows:

“27. Number of Directors

27.1 The number of directors shall be no less than 6 and no more than 12 and such number of directors within that range shall be determined by the Board. Any number of directors outside of that range must be determined by the company in general meeting by special resolution.”

1. Replace clause 30.3 as follows:

“30.3 In respect to the appointment of directors at the 2011 Annual General Meeting, one half (50%) of the directors appointed at that meeting shall hold office for the period from the close of the 2011 Annual General Meeting to the close of the 2012 Annual General Meeting and such half (50%) of the directors shall be selected by lot. At the 2012 Annual General Meeting one half (50%) of the directors shall be appointed to office in accordance with the Constitution and the term of office of such director shall be in accordance with clause 30.1. This clause provides for alternate elections of one half (50%) of the number of directors every second year commencing from the 2011 Annual General Meeting.”

Explanatory Note

These proposed amendments are for the purpose of complying with the ATO requirements for DGR status and to provide flexibility and continuity for the Board of Directors in the governance of the Company.
Moved: Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-A
Seconded: Fiona Miron
Accepted: Unanimously
The appointment of WHK as auditor for the company was confirmed.

Meeting closed 1.15 pm

Minutes taken by: Tracy Rudge
PATHFINDERS VISION

Pathfinder’s Vision is that all children, young people and their families will have a home and family where they feel they belong, are free from abuse, neglect, discrimination and inequality and are able to achieve and contribute to their full potential in Australian society.

PATHFINDERS MISSION

PATHFINDERS aims to make a positive contribution to the lives of children, young people and their families through the provision of appropriate, timely and high quality community based support services which ensure the safety, emotional security and connectedness to community of our children, young people and their families.

PATHFINDERS PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

The following principles guide our provision of services to children, young people and their families:-

- Our practice will reflect the rights of children, young people and their families to social justice, economic and social equality and self-determination and to be free from discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, race, sexuality or disability
- Quality service provision on the basis of equity and need
- Community based, collaborative approaches to the provision of services
- Individualised, flexible case planning using a strengths based intervention model that ensures the safety, emotional security and connectedness of our clients
- Culturally appropriate interactions with families and children are paramount
- Participation of our clients and stakeholders in the process of service delivery and Planning
- Continuous service development and quality improvement through ongoing evaluation and review

PATHFINDERS ACROSS THE NEW ENGLAND AND NORTH WEST TABLELANDS

Pathfinders is now located in offices across the New England and North West Tablelands at Moree, Tenterfield, Inverell, Glen Innes, Tamworth and Armidale.

Our services continue to grow with our organisation now supporting children, young people and their families with supported accommodation services, family support services, juvenile justice, youth work, child protection, family referral services and Out of Home Care services.

Recently funded initiatives include our Open Door youth project at Glen Innes which is now operating with the assistance of the Royal Freemasons’ Benevolent Institution and FaHSIA funding and recently our Family Referral Service began servicing the Liverpool Plains Shire.
Pathfinders programs and services include:-

- Youth social, recreational and vocational programs
- Family referral services to ensure assistance gets to families and their children when they need it
- Information and referral assistance to link clients with appropriate support agencies
- Refuge and supported accommodation services to young people
- Full time residential support for young people in out of home care
- Juvenile justice support services to assist young people to reintegrate into our communities
- Child protection and family referral services
- Field placements and training for local TAFE and University students seeking employment in human services
- Provision of residential out of home care services, foster care support programs and foster care programs for children and young people under the guardianship of the Minister for Community Services
- Provision of family preservation services, supervised contact, therapeutic camps/activities and after care services to vulnerable children, young people and their families
I heard a colleague say that our young people in residential care come home every night. In a busy day the importance of this and achievements like it can easily get overlooked. When young people keep coming back it says they feel they belong. If people feel they belong we have taken an important step forward together. This has a tremendously positive influence on a young person's life and generates hopefulness in everyone. It's important to reflect on the positive impact our work has on people's lives and the communities in which we live. This year my CEO's report reflects on our progress, some key aspects about our culture and some opportunities that lie ahead.

Pathfinders core business is delivering services to families, children and young people who have experienced trauma, abuse, homelessness and disadvantage. Our 30 years of experience in assisting families and children provides Pathfinders with the knowledge and expertise to deliver services that keep people safe and provide practical support, advice, case management, information and referral to individuals and families in need.

Collaboration & Growth

Pathfinders is known and respected throughout the ngo sector across New England, North West and Northern NSW from Moree to Lismore to Newcastle.

Pathfinders connect with scores of youth, family, health, education, accommodation, counseling and employment services and organisations. Through our services we inform and educate, make and receive referrals, case manage clients, provide 24/7 care for many young people, work tirelessly to ensure children and their families are safe and we support young people living independently in our communities across the NENW.

We participate in interagencies and community committees, Regional bodies and forums, think tanks, identify service gaps, develop innovative joint projects to benefit mutual clients, share ideas and resources and offer advice and support to each other and our service partners.

Our organisation began as a single Youth Refuge service in Armidale almost 30 years ago. Pathfinders now has diversified interests and programs in a range of social services for children, young people and families. We provide a continuum of support and care from early intervention and prevention right through to long term care and support.

This approach to our work, the quality of the services we provide and our recent growth has
placed Pathfinders at the forefront of initiatives to meet the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our NENW communities.

Pathfinders Organisational Structure

Our organisational chart (attached) outlines the structure of Pathfinders. The chart highlights the growth and diversity of Pathfinders during 2012.

Advocacy for Homeless Young People, Children at Risk and Children in Care

Pathfinders continues our important advocacy role at a local, regional, State and National level for the plight of homeless young people and for children and young people without families. This is given expression in Pathfinders active participation on regional panels, interagency forums, child protection and Out of Home Care forums and State peak bodies.

Pathfinders is a member of the NENW RIG, we participate on KTS forums, Place Team Meetings throughout the Region, Regional Planning Forums and RHNE homelessness forums. Pathfinders is a member of ACWA’s Regional OOHC panel.

Skills Development

Pathfinders invest heavily in staff training. We provide a broad range of training and learning experiences (including specialised training in OOHC like RAP and TCI) to enable staff to meet the diverse needs of our client group.

Pathfinders also provide a number of local TAFE student placements and UNE Social Work student field placements. Pathfinders understand the range of mutual benefits derived from partnerships with our local educational institutions. In 2012 Pathfinders strengthened our partnership with University of New England by offering Social Work student field placements.

Governance, Management & Sustainable Growth

During 2012 our Board and staff have consolidated Pathfinders diverse range of projects and our profile throughout the region. We have improved our governance, management, financial accountability, IT and service delivery systems.

Thanks to our Board, we have secured our status as an Australian Company Limited by Guarantee.

Our Board of Directors bring a vast range of skills, experience and expertise to the task of providing our organisation with good governance. This year the Board has established a Finance Committee to support the Board’s work to ensure our financial sustainability into the future. Pathfinders geographical representation on the Board has been further extended this year and the Board is co-opting specialist skills and expertise when required to meet our additional responsibilities under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth).

Technology

In 2012 we expanded and improved the Pathfinders Website and the functioning of Pathfinders Intranet right across the region. We have ensured that all Pathfinders data is secure in safe data
storage systems which will serve us well into the future as we continue to grow and provide services to our communities.

Pathfinders has already invested resources in a sophisticated internally developed database specifically designed and currently operating for our Family Referral Service (FRS). Pathfinders is also operating the AIMS Out of Home Care data base and a HR data base to further enhance HR services to our staff.

**HR / Worker Health &Safety**

This year we have invested heavily in HR and continued to improve our computer technology and WH&S protocols. Safe workplaces and the health and safety of our staff are one of Pathfinders highest priorities.

Our WH&S system provides for ongoing staff training, regular workplace safety audits, clinical support and debriefing and regular workplace reporting and consultation on WH&S matters.

**Challenges and Opportunities - Achieving Pathfinders Goals and Growing Sustainably**

**Foster Care**

Pathfinders has 5 year accreditation status with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian for the provision of residential OOHC. Pathways continue its work towards achieving Accreditation as an Authorised Foster Care provider. The addition of Foster Care to our range of placement options will greatly benefit our clients.

**Family Referral Service**

Our FRS has strongly engaged and partnered with the NENW community and its community service networks. We continue to experience a growth in referrals and expanding interaction with the sector.

**Ghana Project**

We have taken the first steps in creating an international vision for Pathfinders. Using funding obtained from AusAid and with the assistance of our ngo partner Crescent Education and Volunteer Services, Ghana, we have assisted in the construction of a Disability Assessment Centre in Tamale, Ghana.

**Open Door**

Despite the challenges, we have continued the operations of Open Door under difficult financial circumstances and finally obtained some funding to continue its operation at Glen Innes.

**Specialist Home Services [SHS] Changes**

Over the next 12 months we could see some of the most significant changes to the Specialist Homelessness Service sector since the SAAP program commenced in 1985. Pathfinders is committed to improving our youth homelessness support systems including prevention, early intervention and specific housing models for young people to increase exit points from homelessness.
The Future

Pathfinders cannot stand alone in our mission if we are to successfully address structural disadvantage and meet the growing needs of our families and communities. Experience teaches us that the roots of disadvantage run deep. The recent ACOSS research into poverty in Australia released last week reminds and confronts us with this fact. Pathfinders must continue with even more determination, to develop a range of partnerships in collaboration with other ngo’s and government agencies. Pathfinders must work within and outside the Region to assist in our work to bring relevant and timely services, resources and support to our clients and our Region.

In doing this we take small steps forward together, remembering to find time to reflect on our achievements. This is one of those times. In 2012 there are many inspiring and heart-warming stories to tell. This Annual Report will touch on some of them. These achievements are our shared achievements. They ensure the continuing growth and sustainable development of Pathfinders and its capacity to serve our communities.

Finally I want to acknowledge and pay tribute to Pat Schultz who is retiring from the Board this year. Pat has guided the organisation along its journey with great skill, care, wisdom and wonderful good natured comradeship. We are all extremely grateful for her remarkable contribution over the past 14 years to Pathfinders and the community sector.

Thank you all for your commitment, enthusiasm, vision and support throughout 2012.

I look forward to serving and leading Pathfinders into the year ahead.

Alan Brennan
PATHWAYS OOHC PROGRAM 2012

Michael Sivaraman

Pathways Out-Of-Home-Care (OOHC) provides a stable home for Young People who come into our care. The main purpose of our residential care model is to:

1. Create a homelike environment.
2. To understand behaviour of Young People that is based in past traumatic experiences.
3. Engage in Restorative Growth Plans rather than use cohesive attempts to bring about positive changes in the Young People in our care.
4. Create opportunities for re-learning.

Our program commitments, for all staff, stake holders and our Young People, are to:

- Growth and change
- Non-violence
- Open communication
- Self-awareness
- Social learning
- Social responsibility
- Emotional growth
- Self-determination and
- Respect

The therapeutic focus within the program is:

1. Strength based
2. Solution focused
3. Clinical involvement in the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of our interventions and a
4. Multi-disciplinary approach
We have now chosen to embrace RAP (Response Ability Pathways: designed by Larry Brendtro and Lesley Du Toit) as our main training tool to embody our program philosophy. RAP relates to the Circle of Courage with its four quadrants of Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity. Belonging is a critical element in all of our lives without which nothing else matters. Another important aspect that RAP focuses on is to:

- Connect (natural emotional bonds)
- Clarify (natural problem solving)
- Restore (resolve conflicts and meet needs)

RAP helps to cultivate a work culture that nurtures growth.

**Viewing Progress through the Lens of a Circle**

Pathways employ *Reclaiming Youth's Circle of Courage Model* to inform and guide its practice in each residential unit. The Circle of Courage represents four universal growth needs: Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity.

The Model suggests that the provision of these four central values fosters a restorative environment that promotes positive change in youth. Part of the application of the Model involves direct care staff exploring the young persons' individual goals. This process is guided by three basic questions: Where is the young person now in each quadrant of the Circle? Where does the young person want to be? How can they get there? From this exercise, individual restorative goals are identified; tasks are then set, reviewed, and revised to ensure the young person is heading in the direction of their set goals.

When looking at the progress of Pathways' residents, we can see clear indicators of personal growth in each quadrant of the Circle of Courage. As expected, this effect is more evident in our longer term residents and the rate of change is variable amongst individuals.

**BELONGING:**

This Circle of Courage quadrant represents finding personal significance in nurturing environments and through the development of relationships of respect. Pathways has witnessed significant growth of most of our residents in this area, particularly with the longer term residents. Many of our residents have maintained their Pathways' placement for over two years and at times some have referred to the residence as "home". In general, the residents have developed strong connections with Pathways' staff, and will actively engage in conversation, sharing their daily experiences, interests and aspirations.

Similarly, in one site, two of our residents have developed a strong sense of connection and belonging with their non-mainstream education provider and fellow students. Upon commencement of the Pathways' program, disengagement from education presented as a huge challenge for these residents. Through an individualised and collaborative approach with the young people, their education provider and the Department of Education and Training and where patience and persistence were employed, the young people progressed from disengagement with education to attending their educational programs five days a week. Today truancy is rarely an issue.

**MASTERY:**

This Circle of Courage quadrant represents developing skills and competencies through the provision of learning opportunities. All residents present with unique abilities and skills. Pathways encourage and support the young people to build on their existing strengths. Across
each unit we have examples to illustrate the residents diverse and unique skills and talents in: Aboriginal art, cooking, welding, singing, photography, agricultural work, animal husbandry, sport, drama, fishing, and motorcycle riding to name a few.

**INDEPENDENCE:**

This Circle of Courage quadrant represents the encouragement and modelling of decision-making and problem solving abilities and the importance of taking personal responsibility for one’s actions to build respect and inner discipline. In conversations with the residents, Pathways staff place emphasis on the residents making good choices in their daily lives. Staff regularly explore with residents what outcomes their choices to date have yielded. Pathways endeavour to frame the house guidelines for residents in terms of choices. For example, “If you choose to attend your daily activity then you are choosing to have free-time that day”. There has been a gradual improvement in the resident’s abilities to make good choices, and to take responsibility for their actions when they make not so good choices. Staff continually support the residents to explore and identify solutions to effectively manage everyday challenges that arise.

**GENEROSITY:**

This Circle of Courage quadrant represents making positive contributions to the lives of others and this is achieved through kind and unselfish acts. Examples of generosity abound in the residences. These can range from a small act of kindness where a resident will make dinner for everyone to a large act of kindness where residents have provided flood relief to communities in need.

Pathways look forward to continuing to provide restorative environments to promote positive change in our young people and support them in their journey to adulthood.

**Official Community Visitor (OCV) program**

This year Pathways has been working closely with the Official Community Visitor (OCV) program, which is under the auspice of the NSW Ombudsman. The role of the OCV is to advocate for some of the most vulnerable Young People in OOHC residential homes. There is stringent monitoring of:

- Individual plans, health care plans, behavior management plans and strategies and ensuring these are in place, implemented and reviewed.
- The premises where Young People live are safe, clean, suitable and well maintained.
- Young People have access to health, education and recreation and vocational opportunities.
- Young people’s cultural and community connection.

Pathways has been fortunate in having a strong working relationship with the OCV for our region.

The relationship is based on mutual respect.

**Increase in Residential Capacity**

This year Pathways has successfully tendered for an increase in its residential capacity. We now
have a 15% increment – 2 extra beds to the previous 12. However, we have lost 4 (67%) of our 6 Supported Independent Living (SIL) packages.

**Technology Upgrade**

Another significant change Pathways has undertaken this year is in its process of documentation/filing from hardcopy to an electronic system. Pathways has implemented AIMS software in all of its residential homes and offices. AIMS is a software tool that succinctly captures all matters relating to the Young People in compliance with all of the 22 NSW Standards for Statutory Out-of-Home Care.

*A snapshot of Pathways staff and Young People for 2011-2012*

**Pathways Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>INDIGENOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverell</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Office</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24 (61%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 (39%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 (28%)</strong></td>
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**Pathways YPs**

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<th>MALE</th>
<th>INDIGENOUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Armidale</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverell</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamworth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 (25%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>9 (75%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 (50%)</strong></td>
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</table>
Residences

Our residential homes are showing how both our Young People and staff collaboratively achieve desired outcomes (as reported by its Team Leader).

Pathways Inverell Unit

August 2012

2011/2012 has been a productive period for the Pathways Inverell unit. During this time staff have been implementing the RAP philosophy which has created a sense of calm in the unit. The use of RAP has created consistency and increased stability for staff and the residents. Inverell has been met with some challenges throughout this period and has also seen some positive changes.

The young people in Inverell have shown improvement over the last 12 months in areas relating to the Circle of Courage. The Circle of Courage consists of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. The young people have shown how well they understand the Circle of Courage by implementing these aspects in their day to day activities.

Just recently our young people participated in creating a sign for the entrance of our Residential home demonstrating a sense of belonging to Pathways.

Circle of Courage
Re-engaging in Life

Education

A major challenge for young people in Out of Home Care is re-engaging back into mainstream education. The young people in Inverell have been able to overcome these challenges with the support of staff and members of external organisations including; Distance Education, McIntyre High School, TAFE, Bundarra-Crossing the Divide Program and the Inverell Linking Together Centre. With the help from these organisations, three of our young people are successfully completing education.

Our youngest resident (14 years old) has been attending McIntyre High School (mainstream schooling) and at this point has attended every day. He has excelled in sport and represented his school at State level for Basketball and Zone Athletics; he has also travelled to Coolah for Zone Cross Country. His achievements to date include an Award for drama and sports, demonstrating his persistence and effort towards education.

Family

A lot of the young people who come to Pathways have had several family break downs before entering our care. One of our main goals is to re-engage our young people with their families by mutual consent. Recently one of our young people has re-engaged with family after several years of minimal contact. This has been a tough journey for both the young person and staff--the young person having to deal with the resurgence of pain of the yesteryears and the mixed emotions of this new experience and staff having the sensitivity and patience to assist the young person on his journey to move towards a meaningful reconnection. The training we have had in RAP has most certainly come into play.

Activities

The diversity of the Inverell staff has enabled the young people to participate in a variety of activities. Some of these activities include: fishing, kayaking, hip hop workshops, mechanics, and jewellery making and traditional cultural activities - aboriginal art and gardening. These are just a few activities that the young people enjoy doing on a regular basis with staff.

Living Skills

An important goal for our young people is to obtain living skills to assist them in their future after
Pathways. As a team, we are constantly trying to provide opportunities for the young people to participate in day to day activities including: shopping (budgeting skills), cooking, and maintaining healthy hygiene. Staff have become role models for the young people and are constantly aware of modelling behaviours, demonstrated through daily chores completed by staff around the house. The young people have the chance to complete additional chores to earn credits while obtaining living skills.

The success of the Inverell unit can be attributed to the constant effort and emphasis around team work and communication; especially between the Program Manager, Team Leader, Case Workers and Direct Care Staff. The future for Pathways Inverell unit will certainly have challenges, however with the diverse team, and high level of communication, the Inverell unit will strive to achieve and provide a high level of care.

Armidale and Tamworth residential homes operate in a similar mould to Inverell but being mindful of the unique differences of our Young People in their needs, hopes and aspirations.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to our board members who freely give their time and energy to ensure good governance: our General Manager Mr. A. Brennan for his dedication to Pathways Program, to all our staff for their tireless commitment and to all our stake-holders, family members and carers and to the young people in our care for making this program successful and most certainly rewarding.

*Rewarding*--- simply by being involved in the process of bringing about positive changes in our young people.

*Slowly* --- yes.

*Surely* --- only with the assistance and persistence of all others who work with us patiently and mindfully. Not reacting but responding, not with coercion but with support. Only in this way does transformation happen. As our logo - the lotus which rises from the muddy water with the help of the sun and other supporting elements to become one of the miracles of nature - so are our young people given every opportunity to turn their lives around.

Pathways Program Manager – *Michael Sivaraman*
New England North West Family Referral Service

Manager’s Report 2012 – Tania Willis

Service Description

New England North West Family Referral Service (NENW FRS) is one of 7 such services in NSW where strengths-based practice allows Families to connect with relevant services that enable them to grow in skills, confidence and capacity for providing a safe environment for their Families.

New England North West Family Referral Service (NENW FRS) is a project of Pathfinders, under the Keep Them Safe Initiative of the NSW Government.

NENW FRS provides a gateway into the service support system for families with dependant Children and Young People in the New England and North West area of NSW. The FRS provides a voluntary and coordinated referral service for families, particularly Aboriginal families in New England and North West NSW, who are in need of assistance and who do not require child protection statutory intervention. The FRS Family Referral Workers bring together families, relevant local support services and community resources to assist with the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Service is primarily concerned with encouraging and facilitating families to access services which will assist them to nurture and protect children.

Services provided by NENW FRS are free, with the purpose of assisting and encouraging access for clients facing financial and other barriers to services.

NENW FRS provides the following services:

- Face to face or telephone consultation with services and families
- Assessment of family needs
- Information, advocacy and supported referral to relevant services to meet those needs, in accordance with the individual family’s priorities
- Forge and improve links between services culturally appropriate to Aboriginal families.
- Outreach home visiting service to all areas within New England and North West NSW
- Purchase of services where this is considered appropriate and within the bounds of Brokerage budgets and policy
- Provision of advice and information to other services
- Timely feedback to referring services
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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| 1. NENW FRS is operating and promoting an augmented referral service that provides information to vulnerable children, young people and their families on support services in their local area and/or refers them to available services. | - Approx. 1,029 referrals(incoming) received  
- Approx. 660 referrals made(outgoing) by FRS staff  
- Just less than 3,000 hours of direct face to face service provided to clients.  
- Just under 6,000 individual service occasions conducted by FRS staff |
| 2. NENW FRS has provided a service that has a regional focus                      | - Incoming referrals have come from 34 different postal zones within the New England North West Region                                     |
| 3. NENW FRS has provided a culturally appropriate service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from CALD backgrounds | - 39% of incoming referrals are from this target group                                                                                 |
| 4. NENW FRS has provided training opportunities to staff.                         | - Approx. 570 hours of training has been provided to FRS staff members  
  - A 2 day workshop on Trauma Informed Work Practice was sponsored by the NENW FRS; it was held in Inverell and attended by more than 40 services providers from across the NENW region.  
  - Staff have attended, as well as co-facilitated Keep Them Safe Training across the region. |
| 5. NENW FRS has provided a service that is specifically responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, and developed the capacity to refer Aboriginal clients to support services culturally appropriate and responsive to their support needs within their local area | - 39% of referrals in identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander  
- Approx. 5% of these referral were able to be referred to Aboriginal specific services |
| 6. NENW FRS has promoted the Service                                              | - NENW FRS Staff have attended 43 community/promotional events in the first 12 months. These include:  
  - NAIDOC events  
  - Disability Expos  
  - Women’s Health  
  - Aboriginal Children’s Day  
  - Sorry Day  
  - Family Week  
  - Youth Week  
  - Reclaim The Night |
| 7. NENW FRS has developed partnerships with other support service providers at regional and local level. | - NENW FRS Staff represent the service by holding a place on many local & regional meetings/committees.  
  - Regional Implementation Group  
  - Regional Case Plan Group  
  - Local Youth Interagencies  
  - Werris Creek, Quirindi, Walhallow Aboriginal Interagency  
  - Domestic Violence  
  - Indigenous Interagencies  
  - Integrated Service Delivery meetings  
- It should be noted the NENW FRS is the only Non-Govt. representative on the Regional |
The Year in Review

The NENW FRS has assisted vulnerable children, young people and families access appropriate services in their local area. NENW FRS has provided information and assisted clients gain access to services that may assist them with their current concerns and/or difficulties.

The NENW FRS has focused on the provision of referrals and information of services to Aboriginal families which support and address their needs in a culturally appropriate manner.

The NENW FRS has built local relationships with service providers in order to support their clients rather than 're-invent the wheel' where it is not necessary. The NENW FRS has developed relationships with government and non-government services establishing partnerships within the New England North West area.

The table below lays out how the New England North West Family Referral Service has achieved the above and how we measure ourselves.

Community Involvement

Staff regularly attends various Interagency Forums such as:

- Regional Implementation Group (RIG)
- Regional Case Mgt. Panel (the only Non-Gov. agency on this panel)
- Place Team Meetings
- Youth Interagency Meetings
- Domestic Violence Forums
- Aboriginal Specific Interagency Meetings
- Learning & Development Meetings etc.

It should be noted that the NENW FRS is the only Non-Govt. representative on the Regional Case Mgt. Group. We were invited by the Govt. sector & approved by the Non-Govt. sector to represent them.

FRS Staff have also participated in 43 Community Events with other service providers across the region throughout the last 12 months

In Moree with:
- NSW Health
- Pius X
- Benevolent Society
- Northcott Society

In Inverell with:
- Inverell Family & Youth Support Services
- Benevolent Society
- Community Services
Directions for Next Year

NENW FRS will continue to make a positive contribution to the lives of our clients by offering appropriate, relevant and timely services to our client group. We will continue to ensure the safety, welfare and well-being of our clients by fostering their health, developmental needs, spirituality, self-respect and dignity.

Over the next year the goals and objectives of the FRS will be to:

- Operate within the KTS (Keep Them Safe) framework and the Best Practice Standards for Family Referral Service
- Continue to provide leadership & information resources that support the KTD Framework and the strategies surrounding KTS
- Ensure appropriate and timely referral services according to the Client’s priorities
- Continue to offer referral services to Clients in need of support without regard to gender, culture, ethnic status, religion or sexuality
- Promote awareness of and access to relevant services available to assist Families and Young People
- Develop community partnerships and capacity building within the sector
- Collect information about referrals to identify and report where access to relevant services are not available
- Maintain positive links with government and non-government agencies which provide services for Clients
- The NENW FRS will grow its position as an influential player in the NGO Sector.
Program Description:

Post Release Support Program (PRSP)

The primary purpose of the Juvenile Justice PRSP is to provide support to clients released from custody by comprehensively addressing barriers to reintegration and facilitating a successful transition back into their communities.

The PRSP program is a structured 12-week program with a potential extension of up to 12 weeks. The program is designed to achieve an overall reduction in the number of clients who re-offend after release from a Department of Juvenile Justice Detention Centre.

Primarily targeting departmental clients and disadvantaged young people from the New England and North West Region of NSW, the program assists those who are released from custody and young people who are at risk of further coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

Cyclebreakers staff assesses each referred client with the aim of maximising participation in the program and monitoring progress towards case plan goals. The objectives of the program are to assist and support the community reintegration of identified clients by providing support and assistance across a broad range of areas including; health, social functioning and well-being. Welfare areas include; accommodation and income support, high risk behaviours, vocational training and employment, education, family support and counselling, health and well-being, living skills, social and personal skills.

Cyclebreakers provides these supports directly or utilises brokerage and mentoring funds to secure the support services from additional agencies. With bases in Armidale and Inverell the PRSP provide a range of services to support clients released from custody across the New England North West.
Program Description:

Targeted Youth Support Program

TYSP identifies youth at risk of offending within the Armidale area and then engages these clients into structured social and recreational activities thus enhancing access to opportunity for community engagement.

Cyclebreakers also develops case plans with clients, assisting the clients in identifying and addressing high risk behaviours with the aim of maximising participation in the program and monitoring progress towards case plan goals.

Training

Achievements and Recognitions

Cyclebreakers staff has attended First Aid Training with Steve Gollan from the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia. This training is necessary for all Cyclebreakers staff working with young people often in remote areas such as the upcoming trip to Port Stephens. Peter Denovan, Nick Levy and I attended the course and Natalie Hahn is scheduled to complete the next First Aid course.

In the 2013 financial year additional values have been designated toward staff training and development. Staff of Cyclebreakers is considering the available options for training and staff development opportunities.

Activities:

Several recreational activities have occurred over the past 12 months such as fishing, touch football, camping and bush walking. A major aspect of reducing re offending rates of young people is effective community reintegration. This can easily be achieved by providing young people a safe and inclusive opportunity to participate in recreational activities with other young people from similar experiences.

Cyclebreakers has planned a trip to the Foster area of NSW on the 01/09/2012 and this will provide clients with the opportunity to engage with other young people of the area and safely interact in a supervised environment. Participants of this event are given the opportunity to reflect on offending behaviours and are able to discuss such in a non-threatening and inclusive environment.

Program improvements:

A vital key to improving and performing any program is communication. Communication inhouse between Cyclebreakers and Pathfinders is consistent. Regular meetings are held to discuss program direction and performance.

Cyclebreakers meets regularly with our funding body, Juvenile Justice, to discuss performance and the direction of the program.

In addition, Cyclebreakers continues to consult with Phil Byrne (previous regional manager of
Juvenile Justice) for matters regarding program development and effective case management. All these consultations ultimately provide Cyclebreakers with knowledge and awareness to make informed decisions regarding the performance and direction of the program.

Most recently our mentor Natalie Hahn has increased her workload with Cyclebreakers in the Tamworth area and this had led to an improvement in communication between our organisations. Natalie also works with the Department of Juvenile Justice giving valuable insight to the operations of Juvenile Justice and how our organisations strive to reduced recidivism in the New England and North West areas of NSW.

Peter Denovan continues to work with Cyclebreakers on a part-time basis operating out of Inverell. Peter's advice and knowledge is appreciated and I would like to thank him for his continued efforts toward our program.

Cyclebreakers has submitted review/exit forms of clients for 2012 and this provided Cyclebreakers with the opportunity to review our data collection methods.

Cyclebreakers has been continually updating documentation and data collection methods (including comprehensive spreadsheets) which are used to collate client data provided to Juvenile Justice.

**Direction**

Cyclebreakers is continually looking for ways to include key-stakeholders in its practice and will continue to consult with industry experts to achieve this into the future.

Cyclebreakers would like to thank all those in the Armidale community who are committed to reducing recidivism in our younger generations. Some of these include:

- Juvenile Justice
- Homes North Community Housing – Armidale
- Armidale Community Foot Patrol
- New Horizons - Armidale
- Back Track – Armidale
- Scho's Fishing School
- PCYC – Armidale
- TAFE – Armidale
- Centrelink – Armidale

Pathfinders and all their Staff & I would like to thank Bruce Dennison for his commitment to the program over the past three years and wish him well in his new position.

I look forward to an exciting year working with the young people who gain so much from being included in the Cyclebreakers Program.
TIGYS Report

Mary Fitzgerald & Alyson Foster
Case Managers

Service Description

Tenterfield, Inverell, Glen Innes Youth Service provides young homeless people with support and advocacy during their transition to independent living. TIGYS offers assistance with budgeting and living skills, education and finding suitable and affordable accommodation. The staff at TIGYS also provides help with filling in forms, maintaining tenancy and transport and we pride ourselves on empowering youth to make informed decisions and promote positive outcomes in their lives.

Year in Review

2012 has been a year for change in the TIGYS office. After 8 years of service, Case manager Renata de la Croix resigned from TIGYS and a luncheon was held for her to highlight her valuable services to the organisation. Jodie Rudkowski was employed for a short period to job share with Mary Fitzgerald. In April, Alyson Foster began permanent part-time in a job share position with Mary. Alyson has a background in health and environmental management and is currently completing her Postgraduate degree in Child and Adolescent Welfare. She has been a positive attribute to the TIGYS team.

TIGYS office is also home to Lisa Harvey (ICA coordinator), Peter Denovan (Cyclebreakers) and Colette Ginman (Juvenile Justice Officer). It is lovely to have such great relationships with these services and they all contribute to the friendly office atmosphere. The one office location proves to be very convenient as often we have cross-over clients.

Tina Eichorn is the new Community Program Officer (CPO). Tina visited the office and introduced herself to the staff and was very impressed with the TIGYS office and we were similarly impressed with her easy approach and knowledge of the industry.

Seventy six homeless youth accessed our service this year. There is no doubt many more youth in our regional area are sleeping in non-conventional or emergency accommodation but they...
have not approached our service. This highlights the continual need for services such as TIGYS which provide non-judgmental support and advocacy to young people when they are at their most vulnerable. Staff at TIGYS are humbled to be able to offer some direction and assistance to those in need.

**Staff and Training**

**Keep Them Safe.**

**Case Management.**

**Specialist Homelessness Services Collection.**

**Rent It Keep It.**

Some of the programs and meetings we have been involved with in conjunction with other services include:

- Youth Week
- Celebrating Women's day
- NAIDOC Week
- Sexual Health Action Group (SHAG) meetings
- Inverell Housing meetings
- Rural Homelessness New England
- Crossing the Divide- Bundarra Youth Engagement Programme

For our work to have positive outcomes for our clients we need to have strong interagency relationships. We continue to have a friendly working relationship and interact well with services in the Inverell area including:

- Linking Together Centre
- Juvenile Justice
- Department of Housing
- Community Housing
- ADAHC
- EACH
- Armajun
- FACS
- Women’s Refuge
- IFYSS
- Employment Agencies
- Family Referral Service
Achievements and Acknowledgements

**Youth Homelessness Awareness Week Art Competition**

TIGYS held an Art competition and afternoon tea for Youth Homelessness Awareness Week in April. First Prize was an iPod and docking station valued at $400 generously donated by a local business owner. Second Prize was a $50 Telstra voucher donated by Telstra and a $50 Big W voucher. Third Prize was a $30 iTunes voucher donated.

Fifty two entries were judged by local artist Helena South with first prize being awarded to a young girl from Ashford for a mosaic portrait. Second prize was awarded to another Ashford girl and third prize was awarded to a local Aboriginal girl.

Esther Gardner (Aboriginal Elder and poet) began the afternoon tea with a Welcome to Country and recited a collection of her poems. About 50 people visited the office for the event, including representatives from Best Employment, Community Services, Community Housing, Linking Together, Ashford School, Juvenile Justice, ADAHC, clients, the general public and MP Mr. John Williams.

The event was a great success and we had wonderful feedback from the community.

**Crossing the Divide- Bundarra**

We travelled to Bundarra to look at the Crossing the Divide programme and to introduce TIGYS and explain our role as a youth service. The programme is run through Bundarra Central School and is the brain child of Teacher Matt Pye. The programme began in September 2011 and enrolled 22 previously disengaged male students to accredit these predominantly indigenous students with an HSC, TVET competencies and a range of workplace accreditations. It was a very positive day and great to see so many boys involved in the programme. Following a short information session relating to drugs and alcohol a barbeque was enjoyed by the attendees.
Meeting with the Assistant Attorney General

Judith Smith, the Assistant Attorney General visited the Inverell Council Chambers to discuss Aboriginal Justice and funding for the Linking Together Centre. Agencies in attendance included the Linking Together Centre, IFYSS, The Referral Agency, Armajun, Police, EACH, and representatives from the local Primary and High schools. Many Aboriginal workers spoke about successful interagency work and the overwhelming community and interagency support for the centre. It was a delight to see so many agencies attend.

TIGYS would like to acknowledge the efforts and support of local real estate agent Miles Devlin from LJ Hooker. Although finding accommodation within the private sector can be difficult, Miles recognises the effort TIGYS put into finding suitable accommodation for our clients and has an understanding of issues facing youth in rural communities.

We would like to thank Scott Mason for the continued effort involved in updating policy and procedures, brochures and client forms.

Direction for Next Year

We plan to develop a music program in conjunction with another service in Inverell. Music has been shown to help social development and assist youth to develop an understanding and an appreciation of their differences. Learning to play an instrument teaches discipline, builds self-esteem and develops self-confidence. It encourages each to express their emotions and is one of the activities that can be enjoyed by anyone.

Due to the success of this year’s art competition, we plan to organise another competition. We hope to attract more local support and prizes to create awareness about youth homelessness. It is also our intention to organise another one day event to promote youth homelessness in Inverell.

We will continually strive to strengthen our relationships with local agencies to improve the outcomes for youth in our area.

It will be interesting to see what changes come out of the SHS reform. We can only hope that whatever the outcome, homeless youth will benefit in the long term.

Mary Fitzgerald & Alyson Foster
Case Managers
Service Description

The TIGYS Glen Innes service operates from offices in Grey Street and young people aged up to 25 years are welcome to drop in or can be referred from other services. The service provides support to assist young homeless people through their transition into independent accommodation and independent living.

We have a small number of dedicated properties available for this use and other properties are, sourced from Homes North. We also assist young people with finding appropriate accommodation in the private sector, helping them understand their lease and tenancy obligations and we assist them with personal budgeting.

Where needed, we advocate for young people to assist them address barriers to stable, long term accommodation. We encourage them to have goals and help with strategies to reach those goals. We provide assistance with living skills and transport when required. In Glen Innes, we promote the service by talking with students at schools and by participating in community meetings.

The Year in Review

We experienced many challenges through the year which helped push our service forward. We remained focused on youth issues, particularly homelessness. Many of the youth who requested support this year were younger than seen in previous years and they have faced many adult issues.

During the year we saw 81 young people seeking support for accommodation and of these, 43 identified as Aboriginal.

On Average 40-50 young people utilized the Open Door Youth Centre each week of operation.

The year has been a busy one including learning the new data system for SHS, Open Door struggles for financial support and many other challenges being thrown our way.

Some of that hard work done by a vast array of people was rewarded by receiving a Federal Government grant for the Open Door Program for 2012/13. Many thanks go to the Masonic Lodge for their generosity in providing funds to keep the youth centre open for much of 2011/12.

We are very grateful to our volunteers and service providers who have assisted in so many ways and to our CEO, Alan Brennan who had the confidence in us to get our many tasks completed.
Training and Conferences

TIGYS Glen Innes has been involved in a range of training opportunities and conferences during the year.

These include:

- Attending training for ‘Deadly not Shamed’ which describes how Aboriginal school students feel in relation to participating in the education system.

- We attended the Homelessness summit in Sydney. This was very helpful as it provided useful information, knowledge and networking opportunities with other services who are all working to alleviate the issue of homelessness. Also very useful was a training course in Sydney on Project Management and Communication.

- We attended the KTS Training at Community Services facilitated by Pathfinders’ Family Referral Service and we also participated in training for the SHS system in Inverell which was facilitated by Tamworth Family Support.

- The Y Foundation held their Conference in Sydney and our trainee and Aboriginal Elder, Rosemary Curtis attended. This was very informative and we found out Rosemary was not shy in asking the provocative questions of the presenters that they couldn’t answer.

- Open Door volunteers and the parents of our clients attended Aboriginal Health first aid to gain more skills. The course was run by Karen Williams, Tom Gerard and Damien French from the Division of General Practice.

- On the 22nd March, we left for Canberra to attend The Homelessness Awards at Parliament House. It was an invitation-only event where 18 other services were invited to showcase their services. We provided a stall for Pathfinders and spoke to other prominent homelessness services. We were supported by Michael Coffey CEO, for Foundations. We met with many politicians in particular, Tony Windsor MP for New England, where we advocated for funds to keep the Open Door Youth Centre running. What an experience! Trevor, Rosemary, Alan and I attended. We made a good team and of course it was the team effort that proved effective. Tracy, Scott and Jake from Head Office helped and worked hard to make our presentation work. Everything was ready so all our equipment and presentation material could be collected, printed and transported by courier to Parliament House in time for the day. We were very grateful for their amazing help. Thank you.

- I attended Trauma Informed Care with volunteer, Lisa Smith held in May at Inverell and we both came away with food for thought. Also further KTS training with three volunteers from our Youth Centre and each of us expressed that the training had been very beneficial.

- A Rural Homelessness New England (RHNE) forum was held on June 21st to discuss what does and does not work with regard to homelessness solutions and a helpful discussion on possible directions were presented.

Achievements

- The Open Door program took 18 young people aged between 8 and 18 fishing. On our first afternoon, we showed our participants how to manage the hook, line and sinker and then next day we went fishing. We didn’t catch any fish but had a good time at the Aboriginal farm named The Willows. It ended up a freezing day with storms but the young people revelled in it. A sausage sizzle was provided as well as transport to and
from the venue. Volunteer’s Trevor Smith and Gary Marshall tirelessly untangled fishing lines and baited hooks all day and Rosemary Curtis had a never ending line up for the sausage sizzle.

- We’ve had three clients who have moved through the system into independence some years ago pay a visit just to say thank you. They came with their little families and we at TIGYS were delighted and gratified to wish them well for their future.

- TIGYS continues its involvement with Rural Homelessness New England. This pilot program assists homeless people in the community. The program has many advantages with the clients and the services working together to give the maximum support to the clients and to show how to manage accommodation issues. As Lead Agent, our RHNE client outcomes show continual improvement for independent living.

- TIGYS work with young people is developing as the ideal youth connection for the Open Door youth centre to grow. Many TIGYS clients have connections to the youth who attend the youth centre because Glen Innes is a small and connected rural community.

- Open Door received a donation of $22,450.00 from Mr. Alex Shaw, the CEO of the Freemasons, to assist with the running of the Youth Centre while we tried to source funding from the government. $450 was raised from a raffle of a quilt made by the auxiliary ladies and donated to our organisation. Thank you sincerely ladies. The Freemason’s held an afternoon tea where we met many people who are supporting us. Many thanks go to Crystl Haron whose husband, Ross is a Freemason and she wanted to help through the ladies auxiliary. The Freemasons also donated a further $10000 to keep the service running. We are so thankful that the people involved with the Freemasons see the need for Open Door and through them we are able to keep the door open for our youth. We are very grateful for their help and the encouragement and support we receive from Alex Shaw and his Freemason members.

- In October 2011, Richard Torbay, the Independent Member for Northern Tableland gave a speech in the private members session in Parliament presenting our achievements and program for Open Door. Now we have a presence on the official record of the proceedings of the NSW Parliament regarding the Open Door youth centre.

- Penny Hackney, who writes our submissions for funding and does all the follow ups, obtained our Woolworths’ Food Rescue Program, a program where meat is donated to the Open Door. She also secured The Second Bite program from Coles re bread and some vegies and fruit. Many thanks to Penny as she works tirelessly and these programs are now running smoothly.

- In December 2011 we held a meeting with Nationals Senator, John Williams regarding support for Open Door and he was happy to hear all about our work and of the many who are involved.

- We held a Christmas Dinner for Open Door and attracted 40 kids, 16 volunteers and a lot of family members. All kids received a present and our volunteer, Judy Boney did all the
cooking herself with Barry Fuller in the form of Santa playing his role to the delight of the kids. To all concerned a big thank you. We felt it was too good; it went so well, many kids were very reluctant to go home. It was a great happy day.

- In April “Youth Inspire”, a Glen Innes Council initiative put together by Shannon O’Brien, Youth Worker for youth week was held. TIGYS and Open Door volunteers attended with an information display about TIGYS and the Open Door for young people. We were able to obtain resources and had some freebies to give out. It was a successful day.

- In May, a 2 week Social Emotional Well Being program was conducted through the Supporting Children Supporting Families [SCSF], a program under Family and Community Services. The program targeted 6 young girls aged 14-15 years who were vulnerable, not attending school and becoming noticed by the police. The program included interaction and services from the High School Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer (ACLO); Jane Hunter, Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) and Juvenile Justice. They gave information on what young people need to know about the law. Also presenting were the Youth Liaison Officer, Mental Health and D&A from Armidale, Sexual Health from Inverell and Skin and Make-up Care from Glen Innes. At the end of the program each participant received a gift pack of personal products. The program’s aim was to give knowledge to help protect the young girls so they can make more informed choices for their future.

- Our CEO, Alan Brennan advised us in May that we have been successful for a grant of $100000 for the Open Door. This was a huge achievement for the youth. Many thanks to everyone who supported Open Door and who tirelessly volunteered for our youth to make this happen.
On Volunteer’s Day, we held a luncheon for our volunteers to say a big thanks and we were very happy to have Mr. Tony Windsor attend and meet the volunteers and staff of Open Door. He was accompanied by Mr. Graham Nuttal and six young people attended to present themselves and chat with Mr. Windsor and Mr. Nuttal. Our young representatives did Open Door proud and were very well received. We had other financial supporters attend from the Freemasons, Bi Low and Pathfinders and I felt all visitors were very impressed with our activities, progress and program with the Open Door, not to mention the very healthy spread the volunteers and some of the youth put together for the luncheon.

- We received a donation for Open Door of $3200 from Ken Barker in June. Ken is a Rotarian who has worked with many local families and is very supportive of Open Door.

- In August we signed a new lease for the Open Door after weeks of not having a venue. Yes, Open Door found itself homeless, however, talks with the Mayor, Steve Toms, Alan Brennan and the Deputy Mayor, Col Price of Glen Innes Council came to our rescue and a lease has now been signed for our new venue. In many ways the new location will be more user friendly with the pool next door, skate park around the corner and a sports ground just waiting for the kids to run on. I guess everything happens for a reason. We are very thankful as I am sure are the youth who can use our services and give a real sense of community to the youth of this town. Aboriginal Elder Rosemary Curtis is a staunch supporter for our youth and Open Door and I am happy to say we have not yet worn her out as she has been with us every step of this journey. A heartfelt Thankyou Rosemary.
Direction for next year

Meetings are set for the possibility of more accommodation for youth in coming months and regardless of whether we call them homeless, street kids or couch surfers, all have the right to have a safe secure place to call home.

We are aiming for effective programs to run in the Open Door project and hopefully to have a Co-coordinator on the team who can support and empower the youth as they pass through the Open Door onto their independence.

Acknowledging support from our network partners

We acknowledge and thank Glen Innes Community Centre, Glen Innes Council, EACH, Glen Innes High School, Juvenile Justice, Health, Baptist Church, St Vinnie’s, Salvation Army, Pathfinders-all inclusive, TIGYS Inverell, Family Referral Service, Community Services, Centrelink, Y Foundations, Woolworths, Bi Lo, Homes North, RHNE, Tenterfield Hub, Corrective Services, Armajun, Medicare Local, Family Referral Service, Family Support Glen Innes/Tenterfield, IFYSS, Women’s Refuge Inverell, Brighter Futures, Job Link Plus, Best Employment.
Armidale Youth Refuge and Outreach Housing Managers Report 2012

Beth Ford

Service Description

The Armidale Youth Refuge provides a 24 hour, round the clock intensive supported crisis accommodation for homeless young people between the age of 12 and 25 years. The support is available up to a period of 3 months.

Young people become homeless for a variety of reasons. It can include family breakdown through drug abuse by parents or the young person themselves. Violence, physical, emotional and or sexual abuse, neglects, or adolescent conflict between parents and the young person often leads to detachment from the family.

Homelessness is not just when a young person is sleeping on the streets but includes less visible transience such as couch surfing. Homelessness for young people is whenever they do not have a safe, secure and stable place to live, free from violence and abuse.

Homelessness or the risk of homelessness has many impacts on young people and often can develop drug/alcohol and/or mental health related issues.

The Youth Refuge works with the young person to assist with returning them to their families or into secure accommodation through the private rental market. Other options are Community housing or Outreach Housing which provides medium term supported accommodation.
The Year in Review

Renovations

Renovations on the Allingham St buildings have been completed. One of the bedrooms has been converted for wheel chair access and another made slightly smaller to accommodate the changes. Walls and doors in the client rooms were repaired and replaced. The client bathroom and kitchen have also been altered to suit wheel chair use, as have all doorways and access into the Refuge. With the new guttering, outside alterations and new paint, the Refuge is looking brighter and welcoming.

Second Bite Program

The Second Bite program introduced to the Refuge by Penny Hackney and run by Coles has been a welcome support to the budget for the Refuge. Through this initiative, Coles provides the Refuge with bread, fruit and vegetables up to three times a week.

Data Collection Improvements

SHS data collection has been a challenge this year, but with firm commitment it has been corrected and brought up to standard.

Going Home Staying Home

On 10th July 2012, the Hon. Pru Goward, Minister for Family and Community Services launched Going Home Staying Home – a program to reform the specialist homelessness services system in NSW. Going Home Staying Home is an initiative of the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) and will be led by Housing NSW in partnership with Community Services.

Going Home Staying Home is intended to deliver system-wide changes to improve client outcomes and has started with sector consultation regarding their 5 proposed building blocks. the Refuge was represented at the meeting prior to the Tamworth consultation which was headed by Michael Coffey from Y Foundations. During the consultation, we had an opportunity to give feedback and ask questions. Further involvement is invited via Submission/s from Pathfinders in regard to the direction of change proposed by FACS.

Staff and Training

The past year has seen staffing challenges with the resignation of Shirley Foster from the role of Refuge Manager and she was replaced by a temporary Team Leader.

Nick Levy stepped down from permanent Case Manager to work with Pathways and Cyclebreakers.

With the ongoing support of Pathways and their Armidale Team leader, Laura Piggott, the Refuge has been staffed with friendly, professional direct care personnel.
Training this year has included:

- Rap – Response Ability Pathways
- SHS data collection
- First Aid Training
- Introduction to Case Management
- Safe Food Handling

Community Involvement

Youth Week

The Armidale Dumaresq Council provided direction and funding this year with a barbeque and information day at the skate park and the Youth Awards were held at the town hall.

Directions for Next Year

Our direction is to remain informed and stay involved in the consultation regarding SHS reform. We are working closely with the community and other service organisation to continue to provide an essential service to young people in the New England area.
Pathfinders Outreach Housing
Annual Report 2012

Tracy Rudge

Service Description

Pathfinders Outreach Housing works to assist Homeless Young people 16 to 25 years of age and their children by providing medium term supported accommodation and case management in Armidale N.S.W.

The most commonly accepted definition of homelessness is Mackenzie and Chamberlain’s definition which includes three categories in recognition of the diversity of homelessness.

*Primary homelessness* is experienced by people without conventional accommodation. Primary homelessness applies when a person lives on the street, “sleeping rough” in parks, squats in derelict buildings, or uses cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.

*Secondary homelessness* is experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another. It applies to people using emergency accommodation, youth refuges or women’s refuges, people residing temporarily with relatives or with friends "couchsurfing" (because they have no accommodation of their own), and people using boarding houses on an occasional or intermittent basis (up to 12 weeks).

*Tertiary homelessness* is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards. Tertiary homelessness is used to describe people who live in premises where they don’t have the security of a lease guaranteeing them accommodation, nor access to basic private facilities (such as a private bathroom, kitchen or living space). It can include people living in boarding houses on a medium to long-term basis (more than 13 weeks) or in caravan parks.

Homelessness assistance services in Australia cannot meet the demand for accommodation. Most of the people turned away from services every day are under 20 years of age.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing Program assists homeless youth and young families between the age of 16 and 25 years of age. These young people have difficulty securing long-term accommodation and are particularly affected by poverty and the shortage of affordable housing in the New England and North West of NSW.

The Youth Allowance rate makes it difficult for independent young people to meet the basic costs of living. Young people face a long wait for public housing and often experience discrimination in the private rental market.

Every individual who is homeless has a different story and find themselves homeless for different reasons. Family breakdown, domestic and family violence are two of the primary reasons young people seek support from homelessness assistance services. Housing
affordability is a significant issue for many groups, but particularly for young women who are trying to leave violent relationships. For some young people fleeing physical, sexual and emotional abuse, reconciliation with their families may not be possible.

Indigenous Australians are over represented among Australia’s homeless population. While they comprise 2.4 percent of the population, they represent 10 percent of the homeless. Rates of homelessness are much higher in rural areas where Indigenous Australians are over-represented in every category of homelessness.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing focus on providing the support and assistance that each young person requires to find and maintain secure accommodation to ensure that young people who are vulnerable find a way out of homelessness. The longer a person is homeless, the more difficult it becomes to achieve housing stability and connection with the community.

Youth homelessness is a significant issue in the New England North West region. There is a high need for support services that can assist young people access and retain tenancies. Medium to long-term accommodation options are particularly needed for young people in the 16-18 years age bracket.

There are increasing numbers of homeless young people with mental health, drug and alcohol issues. Many young people develop substance use issues after they become homeless as a means of coping with the experience and their reasons for homelessness.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing works with many services to provide the appropriate health and social support services for young people with complex needs. Experiencing homelessness under 18 is a significant risk for longer term homelessness. Intensive support for independent living programs is more appropriate for young people who have complex needs. Young people exiting institutional care may also ‘fall through the gaps’ when it comes to accessing public and social housing.

Homeless young people make more use of emergency services (including shelters, hospitals and the juvenile justice system) than the mainstream population.

The long-term use of emergency services including emergency housing is often more expensive to government and society than providing integrated housing and support and the potential savings to government of intervening early and preventing homelessness can be as much as double the cost of providing assistance once a person has become homeless.

Support to prevent eviction from social housing can prevent homelessness.

For people leaving prisons, being homeless and not having suitable accommodation are high risk factors connected to reoffending and returning to goal.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing works to strengthen relationships between youth health services, housing and community housing providers and homelessness specialist services to identify accommodation that is appropriate for use as medium and long term housing for young people.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing encourages clients to develop life skills including social skill, relationships and family planning, financial planning, health and nutrition knowledge.

We have developed strong linkages with community housing providers and attend interagency and case management meetings for young people accessing accommodation and support services.
The year in Review

I joined the Outreach Housing service in August 2011. The Outreach Housing service receives no funding and is supported from the Armidale Youth Refuge budget. A $70,000 a year deficit in the Refuge Budget has occurred for many years. Pathfinders could no longer sustain this level of expense.

After many failed submissions for funding, the Outreach Housing Program was required to reduce its costs by reducing staff numbers and hours to one staff member one day a week.

With this has come many challenges and I am very grateful for the assistance our clients received from Beth Ford and Rosemary Rich at the Armidale Youth Refuge who have increased their workload to assist Outreach Housing clients in crisis.

There have been many clients assisted this year but also many who have been unable to receive accommodation due to lack of available housing stock.

One of the highlights for me this year is the knowledge that the program now has a number of new babies who are in supported environments and young parents who are no longer homeless.

Staff Development

Outreach Housing has operated as a SAAP service (Supported Accommodation Assistance program) for many years. This year has seen a change to a new system with the introduction of the Specialist Homeless Service Program (SHS) in 2011. The change to the SHS program allowed a new and much improved format to collect client data and manage casework. Thanks to the Youth Refuge team leader and staff for their assistance and training in this new program.

I attended “Response Ability Training” in May 2012. This training is now used across a number of programs and ensures Pathfinders staff is working with clients and residents in a consistent manner across the many Pathfinder programs in the New England North West.

Achievements and Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support we have received from our network partners. Special thanks to Homes North Community Housing for all your support over the past year and the Armidale Interagency group for connecting services in the Armidale Community.

My thanks to the Outreach Housing Team Leader Beth Ford and the staff of the Armidale Youth Refuge for your assistance this year and to Alan Brennan, Pathfinders CEO for your excellent leadership through this period of transition.

Future Direction

Pathfinders aim to make a positive contribution to the lives of children, young people and their families. The Outreach Housing Service will continue to assist young people to attain accommodation and support them to develop positive family environments where they can lead meaningful lives in our community.

Pathfinders Outreach Housing aims to increase the public’s awareness of Youth Homelessness and increase the resilience and independence of these families, children and young people who are among the most vulnerable members of our community.
Project Development Unit: Annual Report 2011-2012

Penny Hackney
Funding Manager

Service Description
The Project Development Unit (PDU) builds the capacity of the organisation to attract funding and develop new and existing projects under the Pathfinders umbrella. The PDU works with the CEO and Program Managers to identify priorities for growth and to develop project ideas. Funding opportunities are sourced and grant applications submitted to make those ideas a reality.

Staff
The year began with the decision by Rosemary to return to her permanent part-time position at the Youth Refuge. I took up Rosemary’s hours and became the sole worker within the unit. The increase in hours also came with a title change – Funding Manager. I work 4 days per week out of the Inverell office at 92 Otho Street.

Training & Meetings
Trauma Informed Care training provided by Heal For Life Foundation in Inverell on 8th May – provided me with insight into the effects of childhood abuse on the developing brain and will assist me in developing projects and grant applications for this target group.
Regional Arts NSW Grant Writing Workshop in Glen Innes on 23rd May – information on grants available for projects involving the arts plus general tips on grant writing.
Alan and I attempt to hold PDU meetings every two months. The meetings are valuable and productive, where funding opportunities, project ideas and strategic planning are discussed.

Year in Review
2011/12 was an extremely prolific year for funding applications. 31 grant applications and tenders were submitted, totalling $4 million. Success was varied, but if there is any truth in the old saying “practice makes perfect”, we are surely on the right track!
We certainly learned that the current climate is very challenging and competition for limited dollars is extremely fierce. It was also apparent that the personal touch can go a long way – a trip to Parliament to lobby for Open Door clinched a major grant thanks to our federal member Tony Windsor.
Once again, much of my focus has been on ensuring the continuation of the Open Door youth centre in Glen Innes. Dozens of grant applications were submitted, a Business Plan developed, several meetings with politicians and potential supporters were attended, correspondence to various stakeholders was prepared and the Policy & Procedures Manual was completely overhauled. I also wrote the Job Package for the newly created position of Youth Centre
Coordinator.

Major projects undertaken include the redevelopment of the Tilbuster property in Armidale and the refurbishment of the back area of the IFYSS building. Although we missed out on funding, the time and effort invested in preparing the submissions was not in vain. Potential partners and supporters have been rallied and the groundwork for the success of both projects has been laid.

**Achievements**

**Funding for Ghana**

Our efforts to assist our West African partner, Crescent Educational & Volunteer Service (CEVS), to complete the construction of an assessment and support centre for disabled children in a tiny village in Ghana, came to fruition with a grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This is a big step and very new territory for Pathfinders and we see this as the beginning of some exciting opportunities for exchanges between our two countries.

**Best Enemies**

For the second year running, Joblink Plus has supported IFYSS by providing funds to conduct the highly acclaimed Best Enemies educational program at Inverell High, Macintyre High and Tingha Primary schools.

The program is facilitated by specially trained educators who travel up from Sydney. After the screening of a 12 minute film, the students are engaged in activities and discussion to reinforce the films message about the devastating, insidious and often hidden effects of bullying and harassment via online social media and mobile phones. Thanks to this partnership between IFYSS, Joblink Plus and the Best Enemies organisation, 744 local young people have experienced the program and participating schools are thrilled to have noticed a huge reduction of these issues.

**Open Door**

You could say 2011/12 was something of a rollercoaster ride for the youth centre. Closing in July 2011 due to funds drying up, the Centre was rescued by the Royal Freemasons Benevolent Society with a huge $22,500 donation. We reopened the doors in October. Despite determined
attempts to secure another funding source, we were again on the verge of winding up the service in April when the Freemasons offered a further $10,000 to keep us going until the end of the financial year.

An invitation to Canberra where a meeting took place between Tony Windsor, Alan Brennan, Sandra Smith and Aboriginal Elder Rosemary Curtis, created the spark for a series of events that resulted in the promise of a $100,000 grant for the 2012/13 financial year. With us now in the process of finding another venue, no doubt the ups and downs will continue for a while yet!

**Woolworths Food Rescue**

The task of feeding 30 to 40 young people per week at the Open Door is a massive one, not to mention expensive. This year we applied to receive food products through the Woolworths Food Rescue Program. Woolworths now provides the youth centre with donations of food, mainly meat and poultry, which has been taken off the shelves due to being past the Best Before date, but is still perfectly fine for consumption.

**Second Bite Food Program**

When I heard that a similar food donation scheme involving Coles Supermarkets was kicking off, I quickly responded and successfully registered Pathfinders as the sole recipient of food donations from Coles/BiLo in Inverell, Armidale, Tamworth and Glen Innes. Abundant quantities of food, this time bakery goods and fresh fruit and vegetables, are now being donated up to 3 times a week for Pathways Inverell, Pathways Armidale, Pathways Tamworth, Armidale Youth Refuge and the Open Door Youth Centre. The savings we are making across the organisation are significant, allowing funds to be directed into programs for our young clients.

**Directions for Next Year**

My involvement on the recently formed Pathfinders Executive Committee will provide opportunities to be involved in 'big picture' planning and new directions for the organisation, and therefore the PDU.

Application for a Fundraising Authority from the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing has been submitted. Obtaining this document will allow Pathfinders to explore fundraising activities to support a variety of programs.

This year I will take on a greater role in preparing the annual returns and reporting requirements of funded services, an important task to prove we are meeting the specifications of the funding bodies.

Later this year I am planning a ‘road trip’ to meet with all Program Managers. This will be a great opportunity to identify the funding needs of each Service, look at areas of potential growth and discuss new project ideas.

I will also be creating a Project Planning Tool to assist services in developing their ideas.

**Acknowledgements**

Special mentions to Alan for his time and support, Gary Bennett for his unbelievable efficiency and Scott Mason for answering my questions at the drop of a hat and for always making me laugh out loud!

Penny Hackney
Funding Manager

Ghana Project construction during the dry season of the Disability Assessment Centre.
Quality Assurance Report

2012

Scott Mason  Quality Assurance Officer

Service Description

Quality Assurance is responsible for Project Research, Development, Implementation, Assessment and Review and includes Risk Management, Statutory Compliance, Quality Improvement, and IT across Pathfinders.

The Year in Review

Quality Assurance was involved in the negotiations with Community Services during the handover process of Out of Home Care Services from Community Services to the Non-Government Agencies.

Corporate Policies for staff management, complaints and grievances were reviewed and updated.

The Policy and Procedures of both Pathfinders NPSS and TIGYS were reviewed and completed in this year.
Human Resources
Annual Report 2011 – 2012

Bianca Rice
Human Resource Manager (Tuesdays/Thursdays)

Service Description

Human Resources provide leadership, direction and support, ensuring staff receive effective delivery of Human Resource Functions across all programs within Pathfinders. The role includes a strategic focus in terms of planning and support and the day to day functions for recruitment; selection, induction, performance management and staff appraisals; reporting systems, training and development, change management support, and assistance in Industrial Relations issues when required.

The Year in Review

The Human Resource Manager role commenced in January 2012 in a part time capacity moving to two days a week since August.

Recruitment & Selection

Recruitment processes have been reviewed to address regional and project specific issues. A more structured approach with the necessity to address set selection criteria for further consideration has generally been adopted. We have increased our exposure to potential candidates by effective use of online processes including our Pathways’ website and by developing more effective general advertising methods.

Job Descriptions

Updating all position descriptions and job packages in line with award changes and bringing them up to date to ensure a consistent format across Pathfinders has commenced.

Mediations

Mediation is offered and conducted by HR when necessary. Support for Managers and the organisation in general in terms of HR advice and assistance are provided on a regular basis.

Human Resource Information System

A system for recording and reporting HR data has been sourced and implemented. Bianca, Gary and Sharon have attended the first of two training sessions in this package.
### Staff Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Appointed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pathfinders Head Office</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Human Resource Manager</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>Tamworth</td>
<td>Team Leader – Residential Unit</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Six direct care staff</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>March, June &amp; August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Team Leader</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Four direct care staff</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inverell</td>
<td>Two direct care staff</td>
<td>Full time &amp; part time permanent</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclebreakers</td>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>Cyclebreakers’ Coordinator</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenterfield Inverell Glen Innes Youth Service</td>
<td>Glen Innes – Open Door</td>
<td>Team Leader Youth Centre</td>
<td>Part time – 12 months fixed term</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Referral Service</td>
<td>Moree</td>
<td>Family Referral Worker</td>
<td>Full time permanent</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverell Family Youth support Service</td>
<td>Inverell</td>
<td>Aboriginal Family Worker</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>To interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Performance Management

HR provides support for managers and employees when conducting performance appraisals and as general performance management issues arise.

### Move to modern Award

All positions within Pathfinders have been reclassified from the Social and Community Award (SACS) to the modern Award – Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (SCHCADS). As of 1st July 2012, Pathfinders is transitioning to the new SCHCADS (SACS modern award).
Future Plans

- Selection testing for recruitment purposes
- Consistency with a corporate induction for all programs
- Development of site specific inductions for all programs
- Formalisation of graduate recruitment/programs
- Training and awareness sessions on performance appraisals and general performance management
- Training in other areas as identified such as conflict resolution
- HR communication strategy to be developed
This is the first year for IFYSS with its new service specification which was renegotiated prior to the commencement of the last financial year. The specification now focuses on priorities the community of Inverell and district were seeking services in. The new services available include advice and referral, where adolescents, individual and families are able to seek information about specific topics and or be referred to specialist/s locally or out of town. IFYSS provides support for parents; this incorporates just about all areas within a parenting capacity.

For adolescents 13-25 years of age, IFYSS provides living skill which cover the majority of issues young people may face such as creating healthy relationships and prevention awareness for acts of bullying.

**The IFYSS Team**

*Cath Ellis*

Cath is IFYSS Program Manager and part-time family worker. She is about to commence her 5th year with IFYSS. Within the family worker role, Cath supports families with dependent children 0-12 years, providing advice and information.

Since the changes within the service have become known, the most concerning issues notified by parents have been supporting strategies for behavioral issues, budgeting, and responsibilities.

It is exciting and challenging to have a team that is willing to look and work outside the square in presenting ideas. We’ve had our successes and disappointments but the persistent progress continues to prove positive.

*Lynn Lennon*
The role of Adolescent Support Worker, undertaken by Lynn, went full time as of 1st July 2011. The rise in hours for this service has not been able to overcome the average waiting period of 2 weeks highlighting the demand for this service in Inverell.

Lynn continues to work closely with the local high schools and has built strong working relationships with other services in Inverell. Working with the schools and with youth attending IFYSS, Lynn’s focus is currently shifting towards healthy relationships. An increase in domestic violence related issues within this age group has highlighted a need for more information and training for youth. The project is in its early stages and will be a major focus for the upcoming 12 months.

Lynn also continues to be an advocate for events and services for the youth of Inverell. She continues to be a pivotal player on the Summer Sun Youth Festival Committee and has been a part of the resurgence of the Blue Light Discos. She played an important role in the securing of $100,000 funding for extension of the local Skate Park.

*Candy Conners /Laurel Duncan*

Laurel joined the IFYSS team in January 2011 as a full time Aboriginal Outreach Family Worker. Laurel supports Aboriginal families with dependent children 0-8 years, with the focus on improving social, educational and health outcomes for Aboriginal Children in Inverell and the outlying areas of Bundarra, Ashford and Tingha. Laurel links with the Tingha supported playgroup and the Tingha public school as part of her role with IFYSS.

*Josh Campbell, Therese Dimmock –Noble*

This position has seen a couple of changes in our supporting staff. The position is over three days only and covers the same components as the other family worker position. The results of not having this position filled throughout the year shows in the charts at the end of the report.

*Firth Fergusson*

Firth’s role commenced with working 2 days a week until the 3rd of October when she stepped into Penny’s role of Program Development Officer and began working a 4 days week. Firth provides general office administration and continuing support to ensure the IFYSS program and workshops are organised. A major achievement was bringing to life the concept of a monthly IFYSS newsletter, with the first edition published in September 2011.

*Stephanie Mouthaan*

Stephanie joined the IFYSS team in August 2011 after IFYSS successfully secured funding to develop a Domestic Violence educational tool the “Power and The Passion”. This project covers a two year period with the end result being a user friendly Domestic & Family Violence Educational tool, Power and the Passion.

Stephanie is also employed to deliver the ‘Rent It Keep It’ training workshop and Support Homeless Person through the Tamworth Family Support program Rural Homelessness New England program on one day per week.

**Training**

Cath was invited to attend the National Homelessness Summit in Sydney during August 2011 by Tamworth Family Support and the Rural Homelessness New England Program. The conference highlighted aspects of homelessness of the individual with speakers discussing the connection between health care & homelessness, mental and physical health issues which are major components to homelessness. Other contributors raised ideas on how to create more inter-dependency with housing, improve social connections and personal supports.

The Youth Homelessness Conference was held in Sydney over 3 days during November 2011. This conference provided IFYSS with up-to-date information on the homelessness crises that are impacting all cities and towns around the country. Individual workshops allowed attendance at sessions that were relevant to our day-to-day work and client base. This proved a most worthwhile trip.

**Indigenous Parenting Factor Program (IPF-Program)**

The Indigenous Parenting Factor Program (IPF-Program) delivered by the Australian Parents Council in partnership with Department of Education Workplace Relations (DEEWR) was held at Inverell and attended by Laurel. The three day workshop covered training in how to present the three IPF workshops- Successful Early Learning; Successful Learning to Read; and Successful Learning to Write.

**Early Years Conference**

Laurel attended the 2012 Early Years Conference in Armidale. The sessions chosen for the two days were the Grandparent Inclusive program about the legalities for grandparents who want visiting rights to see their grandchildren given by Professor Margret Sim. Pedro Sousa presented Helping Children Master Their Emotions and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness was presented by David Widders. Key note speakers were Maggie Dent – Parenting and Resilience Specialist as well as Dr. Richard Fletcher who leads The Fathers and Family Research Program at the University of Newcastle.

**Aboriginal Leadership Program**

The Aboriginal Leadership Program was supported by FaHCSIAs (Dept. Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs). Laurel attended this 2 day workshop held in Tamworth. The Indigenous Leadership Program encourages participants to continue their journey in becoming inspiring and effective leaders who will make a positive difference to the lives of Indigenous Australians.

**Trauma Informed Care Workshop**

On the 8th and 9th of May, Firth and Therese attended a very worthwhile workshop which was presented by Liz Mulliner, CEO of the Heal for Life Foundation. The Foundation also runs a residential healing program for children and adolescents who have experienced childhood trauma and abuse.

Including Liz, there were three speakers who were all survivors of childhood trauma. Listening to their personal stories provided real insight into individual journeys and the healing process which for some, continues to this day. Topics were; Effects of trauma on the brain; Effect on brain development / hormones / behavioural impact; The 8 Fundamentals of Trauma Informed Care (TIC); Practical examples of how to use TIC in the Workplace; Transactional Analysis plus practical application in the workplace; Putting TIC into the workplace particularly with reference to children; Heal For Life Research; Attachment Styles and Bringing it all together.
Achievements & Challenges

Client Services Provided by Type

Monthly Newsletter

The concept of a monthly IFYSS newsletter became a reality in 2011 with the first official IFYSS newsletter containing information and flyers on upcoming IFYSS’s workshops and projects became realised. The newsletter is being emailed to other service providers and professionals within the community. Interest has grown and the email list has been slowly expanding with continued requests to be ‘put on the mailing list’. It has proven that the newsletter is valued and worthwhile.

Strategic Planning Day

IFYSS Strategic Planning Day has become a very enthusiastic event during November with team members debating and throwing new ideas about on how to engage families and adolescents. This includes revamping workshops, providing new workshops, ideas for funding submissions, partnerships, and national days. It has become a great storm between walls, with all team members thoroughly engaged with their input.

Power & Passion Project

Interviews were held for the Domestic & Family Violence Education Project Power & Passion to employ a Program Development Officer. Three very impressive applicants were interviewed and Stephanie Mouthaan was offered the position. Stephanie commenced mid-August 2011 and the first task was to research the target audience for the training tool. After discussions with Police, Schools, Family Support organisations and Aboriginal organisations it was decided to target 8 – 12 year old children. The tool will be designed to cover the four major areas of Domestic Violence being psychological, physical, emotional and verbal abuse. The training tool, Power and Passion will be developed in a way that the entire program can be completed or it
can be separated to allow group work or one on one interaction.

**Ashford Supported Playgroup**

The birth of the playgroup was in 2010 and was being held in the Community Health Centre of Ashford but a lack of attendance was concerning. After considering possible reasons as to why attendance was low we approached the Ashford Local Aboriginal Land Council (ALALC) to discuss the possibility of holding Playgroup on their premises. The more central location with its proximity to the centre of town was desirable. IFYSS Program manager and the Board of ALALC agreed to trial the relocation commencing in the New Year. The last week of Playgroup for 2011 was held at the Land Council premises which were themed around Christmas and of course the man in the Red Suit made an appearance. Attendance was outstanding with 13 children attending. Carers/parents confirmed the relocation to the ALALC would increase the attendance.

Ashford Supported Playgroup commenced its second year in 2012 with a new co-coordinator, a new name and at a new location. The new co-coordinator of the Playgroup is Laurel Duncan AOFW and the new name for the playgroup is called The Ashford ‘Bunbun’ Playgroup. ‘Bunbun’ means grasshopper taken from The Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay Dictionary. With the new location at the Ashford Local Aboriginal Land Council building, the playgroup is held every Wednesday (excluding school holidays) for children aged 0-5 years of age. The Bunbun playgroup is for parents and carers to get together each week with their children for interaction and general meeting with others from the community. The theme for the playgroup is learning through play while having fun. There is now a regular attendance of between 5 – 11 children and it is great to see Bunbun being supported by the Ashford Community.

**Parenting Essential 8 Week Parenting Workshop**

One major component of IFYSS is the Parenting Essential 8 Week Parenting Workshop. The continuation of 8 weeks’ worth of workshops was proving difficult to provide in groups and individually. It was decided to break the workshop into four two week workshops, while keeping a large percentage of the content. The structure now means that participants are required to attend two weeks straight, but would also be required to complete all four workshops throughout the year to actually complete the IFYSS parenting program. Results thus far from the completed round of the workshops has been exceptionally positive, with all of the workshops having waiting lists.

The four components are Parenting in A Nutshell which covers topics including; Your Role as Parent; Legal Responsibilities; How your Parenting Affects your Children; Your Health and Well-being; Planning and Organisation and Recognising your Strengths.

Communication workshop topics include Understanding your Child; Self Esteem; Body Language; The Importance of Good Communication; “What is Trust” and Ways to Build Trust with your Child. The ‘Give N Take’ workshop covers the basics of Effective Discipline; 123 Magic an Emotional Coaching; Positive role modelling; Children See Children Do and Age Development. The final workshop Safe & Strong Families covers topics which can be regarded as ‘the elephant in the room’, domestic violence; sexual and emotional abuse; psychological and physical abuse; Values and Goals; Family Rituals and The Importance of Belonging.
**Domestic & Family Violence Education Program**

After a review of this program it was decided the successful 6 week Domestic Violence Education program required a 'make over'. Research was completed to ensure the program contained the most up to date information available. IFYSS now has a user friendly education tool containing six sessions, laminated facilitator worksheets and clear concise handouts for participants. The program is further enhanced by the inclusion of four DVD’s; Safer Lives Better Health - NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence, Loves Me Loves Me Not, Angela Barker’s Story – Angela Barker, Children See Children Do - NAPCAN and Who’s the Loser – Western Sydney Health Education Centre Against Violence. Stored in a compact folder it is easily transportable and ‘ready to go’.

**RHNE**

The Rural Homelessness New England program is coordinated by the Tamworth Family Support Service and offers two programs to homeless people within New England. Participants are required to be over 18 years of age and living in the New England North West area. The two programs assist homeless persons and persons at risk of homelessness. Participants are required to engage with support organisations for either 12 months (Case Management) or 4 months (Early Intervention) depending on which program they are referred to.

**Rent It, Keep It**

The Rent It, Keep It program is an initiative of the NSW Department of Housing. It is a short course (4 weeks for 2.5 hours per week) for those in rental properties and those seeking or thinking about going into a rental property. Guest speakers are invited from the Department of Housing (NSW), local Real Estate agents, Centrelink and Salvation Army Financial Counselling Service to offer advice on the rights and responsibilities for both tenants and landlords. Participants of the program have acknowledged the benefits of being able to discuss their issues/concerns directly to the relevant services.

**Money Matters Workshop**

Money Matters is a partnership between IFYSS, The Salvation Army and Moneycare Financial Counselling Service. Facilitated by Katrina Hawthorne from The Salvation Army, Moneycare Financial Counselling Service workshop provides participants with knowledge, skills and information relating to financial matters including personal budgets and support in making suitable arrangements for bad debts and creditors.

**Summer Sun Youth Festival**

At the Australia Day celebrations held at the Pioneer Village, Inverell, the Summer Sun Youth Festival 2011 was named the Event of the Year in the Australia Day awards. This was a great acknowledgement for the efforts and success of the day of which IFYSS played a
pivotal role.

On Saturday, 31st March 2012 the Summer Sun Youth Festival Committee held the Summer Sun Battle of the Bands. Six bands battled it out for honours on the day which saw the winner take away a full day recording session in a professional recording studio in Tamworth and 200 copies of their music. The event was won by Moree band; The Unopposed. The festival also allowed youth from the Inverell area to showcase their talents as “fillers” in between band changeovers. The day was held on the Macintyre River and was attended by approximately 1800 people.

**Indigenous Hip Hop Australia – Sexual Health Awareness Program**

IFYSS was invited to help coordinate a Sexual Health Awareness program in conjunction with Armajun Medical Health Service. This program was launched by the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council during September 2011. The program was conducted by Indigenous Hip Hop Projects – a Melbourne based group of talented dancers who have been recruited from around Australia. The program incorporated dance, workshops on sexual health, good relationships and advice. The delivery was age appropriate for the students.

The program was conducted over 3 days and involved children from the local primary and high schools. Students were taught a Hip Hop dance that culminated in a “Deadly Styles” event at the Town Hall where they showcased their talents.

In addition to the awareness program for students, a Salsa Night was held for parents, guardians and carers. The aim of this program was to get students and their carers talking about an often taboo subject – SEX! This program taught some of us the Salsa moves (while others struggled - Cath!).

At the conclusion of these 3 days, two local students, Jay Tickle and Jahaml Blair were chosen to attend a Hip Hop Workshop in Melbourne during late November. A funding application was submitted to Arts NSW to pay for flights, which was one of the conditions of attendance. Our application was successful. Jay and Jamahl had an amazing experience with this trip and both have gone onto bigger and better things. Jay has been accepted and is currently attending a dance school in Brisbane and Jamahl has begun teaching Hip Hop at a local dance studio.

**Make Me Over Program**

The Make Me Over Program continues to be a huge success and the achievement was acknowledged with a nomination and the awarding of the coveted Juvenile Justice Directors Award for Excellence. This program is aimed at young men and women who struggle with self-esteem, self-awareness and self-worth. The program has seen one attendee enter and win Miss NSW Country and a young man enter full-time study.
Inverell Skate Park

IFYSS has been integral in the revamping of the local Skate Park. After meeting with the local Shire Council, a committee was formed, designs and quotes sourced and the majority of funding required was secured. To date the Committee is approximately $70,000 short to meet the full park extensions however planning is underway for fundraising to see this project completed.

Community Involvement

4th August- IFYSS was invited to attend celebrations and a BBQ for National Aboriginal and Islander Children’s day. This event was organised by the Benevolent Society at Victoria Park Inverell. IFYSS interacted with ball games for the children which included the large beach ball that was a popular hit.

Children’s Week was celebrated with IFYSS providing a KIDS JUMP FOR JOY AT FUN DAY in Victoria Park. The day involved services from George St Day Care Centre, FRS, Benevolent Society, Armajun, Inverell McIntyre Lions club and Danthonian’s. There was a variety of games and activities for the children which also became fun for the adults.

NAIDOC Week Celebrations

NAIDOC Family Fun Day was conducted at South Inverell as part of NAIDOC Week Celebrations. IFYSS attended the fun day and conducted a Treasurer Hunt. Participants were given a list of items to search for. Different items were awarded different points value. At the conclusion of a set time, participants returned to have their tally counted to determine the winner. All participants received prizes which included soccer balls, water bottles, wristbands, bookmarks, pencil cases and much, much more.

National Close the Gap Day

National Close the Gap Day was held on 22nd March and hosted by Armajun Aboriginal Health Service in Victoria Park. This day is to raise an awareness of the crisis in Aboriginal Health. Laurel, Lynn and Therese supported the day exhibiting informative pamphlets, booklets, flyers and sharing the IFYSS community role and services to the large attendance of the public who came on the day.

Best Enemies Program

The Best Enemies program was conducted for a second year during August at Tingha Public School, Warialda High School, Inverell High School and Macintyre High School. This program was made possible through the Joblink Plus Community funding program. The program focuses on Social Media, Internet use, bullying and cyber-bulling with an aim to bring awareness and a change of focus with how to communicate on the Net on day-to-day Basis.

School Holiday Activities

During the January school holidays IFYSS, in conjunction with Armajun Health Service and Inverell Shire Council coordinated a number of activities for the youth of Inverell. “Jammin in the Park” was held at Campbell Park where a number of local acts and dancers performed. A BBQ lunch was provided with meat being donated by Coles Inverell, and the Salvation Army provided the cooking facilities.

The second event held was “Fun & Fitness in the Park” with Proactive Gym, Inverell providing
a personal trainer and equipment for use. The youth were able to participate in exercise in a fun way.

The final event was “The Amazing Race” and required participants to read clues that lead them to local businesses. After arriving at their destination they were required to perform set tasks. These included yelling “Aussie, Aussie, Aussie” while playing a tambourine, solving optical illusions and singing for their next clue. All youth and business houses had a great time and have asked for the event to be held again. It’s so much fun.

**Dive Inn**

As part of Youth Week 2012, IFYSS, Armajun Health Service and Linking Together Centre joined forces to conduct a “Dive Inn”. Held at the local pool, a large sheet was erected and while swimming and laying around on airbeds, the youth were shown the film “SHARK NIGHT”. Numbers were disappointing on the night though, however those that did attend enjoyed the event.

**Blue Light Discos**

Blue Light Discos returned to Inverell for the first time in approximately 8 years. A number of IFYSS volunteers attended the first event and were renowned for “cutting a move” on the night. The Chicken Dance was a really popular dance for the little ones aged 5-12 years although they did require tuition from us older ones as they didn’t know how to do it!

**Partnerships**

Partnerships have again been a highlight for IFYSS, this year. There have been special events made available because of these partnerships and quite honestly without them, the events may not have eventuated. This includes the Ashford Local Lands Council, Armajun Aboriginal Health Service, Salvation Army, Linking Together Centre, Inverell Council, Tamworth Family Support, New England North West Family Referral Service, Juvenile Justice, Centre link, Ray White real state, LJ Hooker. We offer a huge note of appreciation for all our partners and their members. Thankyou.

IFYSS supports many National Days throughout the year, R U OK day; Stress Down day; National
Aboriginal and Islander Children’s day; World Mental Health Day; Sock It to Suicide; Mental Health Day and Youth Homelessness day. These days are supported with window displays, street beats handing out information, and or dress ups.

**Acknowledgments**

Salvation Army  
Tamworth Family Support Service  
Juvenile Justice  
Premier’s Cabinet for Women  
Inverell McIntry Lions Club  
The Ashford Local Aboriginal Land Council  
Local school  
Armajun Aboriginal Health Service  
Benevolent Society  
Inverell Shire Council  
GEM FM  
STAR FM  
Inverell Times  
Local Job agencies  
Linking Together Centre  
Armidale Family Support Service  
New England Domestic Violence Pro-Active Support Service  
Inverell Women’s Refuge  
Gunnedah Family Support Service  
Julie Scott – Standing Together Against Crimes of Sexual Assault – Gunnedah  
Ashford Local Aboriginal Land Council  
The Tingha Supported Playgroup  
Toy Library  
The Ashford Local Aboriginal Land Council  
Pathfinders Ltd Board of Governance
New Directions

There are several key areas for this coming year and one would be obvious, in filling the position of Aboriginal Family worker (Outreach) and the Ashford Bunbun playgroup coordinator.

With team member's new training, there is excitement with the use of Arts as Therapy which will incorporate the use of Soul Collage with clients.

The future focus for the Adolescent Support Worker role will remain focused on workshops for youth. Funding applications have not been successful during the previous 12 months for Slamming and Drum Making however these will again be a focus for the upcoming 12 months. In addition, programs concentrated on healthy relationships and sexual health will be investigated as this is an area that has arisen recently and that requires urgent attention in the Inverell High Schools.

We acknowledge the continuation of the major revamp of our four Parenting workshops and the Domestic & Family Violence Education Tool. Hopefully, we will see them in the form of PowerPoint presentations which include visual aids and animation.
Service Description

The ICA program, known as Non Placement Support Services (NPSS) is a fee for service brokerage partnership with Community Services. Community Services contract us to provide services for children and young people in Out of Home Care. This currently includes supervised contact, transport and mentoring support.

The objectives of the program are as follows:

- To provide trained professional staff to carry out a range of services for children and young people aged 0-18yrs placed in Out of Home Care.
- To create a neutral, nonjudgmental environment where children and young people and their families can interact safely.
- To provide safe transport for children aged 0-18 years.
- To provide a mentor where needed for children and Young People in Out of Home Care.

The program has a Manager with currently up to 10 direct support workers, some of whom work for other Pathfinders Services which include TIGYS and Inverell Pathways. These employees undergo relevant checks and a training program to ensure they can meet the needs of children, young people and their families in Out of Home Care.

The Year in Review

The NPSS program has been working steadily for the last 12 months with all workers getting plenty of work. We are currently providing up to 100 hours service per week to 69 clients from 35 families. The territories covered are Inverell, Glen Innes, Moree, Narrabri and Tamworth CSC’s.

Our main service delivery issue continues to be finding adequate and suitable venues for families in bad winter weather in Inverell and Moree. Many of our children have challenging behaviour and public indoor venues such as McDonalds or the Library have not been suitable, although we have no choice but to use them. Glen Innes has a community centre and an OOSH house and will accommodate our clients. The Open Door Youth Centre run by TIGYS in Glen Innes was used for much of the year but has recently moved to another venue. This is an ongoing issue for which it is difficult to find a solution.

Scott and I continue to work on the NPSS Policies. We developed a client pamphlet containing all relevant information which staff have found very useful and are working on ID badges for staff so
that collecting children from school and day-care is secure for all parties. There has been a major change in the funding structure to fixed price fee for service for all organisations. We are expecting an increase in our client numbers due to our ability to provide a strong team of available personnel.

### Staff Training

Including myself as Manager, we have up to 12 staff solely occupied on the NPSS program and six of our workers also with allied Pathfinders programs. Two staff are also employed by outside organisations.

I attended an information session on Workers Compensation and OHS Legislation which was very informative.

I continue to run supervision sessions with staff members, ensuring the team is effectively supported and positively able to face issues that may arise.

The fortnightly staff meetings continue to be positive for the program. Staff enjoy the opportunity to get together and discuss issues relevant to everyone. It is a good opportunity to information share for mutual clients, debrief for people with similar issues, discuss rosters and make any necessary changes. These meeting include allocation of the work vehicle and the on call workers for the fortnight. The meeting provide opportunity to raise any issues that have occurred; disseminate information relevant to staff for service delivery, work on WHS risk assessments and any other WHS issues.

Due to the fact I often work on weekends it was decided by Management that I have designated days off during the week when other staff members take it in turn to be ‘on call’. On these days the phone is diverted to a worker selected at the meeting. They take all the calls, deal with any emergencies and email me the details the next day. Overall the new system is working and is less stressful than it was when I was working 7 days a week.

### Achievements and Acknowledgments

Again, I would like to thank my staff who continue to be wonderful. They really put everything into the service provision and are loyal, dedicated and professional.

I have received much positive feedback both from Community Services and clients. On some urgent occasions staff have had to drop everything to be on the road in less than half an hour after the initial call from Community Services. They have also had many long trips and some very traumatic incidents which have been overcome through support for each other and seeking out support from me. This program would not run nearly as smoothly without these people’s dedication.

I would like to thank Scott for providing me with guidance, support and supervision, and Gary who tirelessly answers my endless questions and is a wealth of knowledge on many subjects.

I would like to thank the Board and Alan for their continued support for this program in the last year.

### Direction for next year

I would like to see the NPSS program continue to grow and develop and include more mentoring services for the continued need of young people in Out of Home Care as they struggle to find their
identity and place in life. I believe we can provide positive role models for these young people and hope that Community Services will recognise the importance of this and utilise our service for their clients. Sourcing suitable training for my workers to assist in their professional development is a priority I’d like to pursue.

I am still interested in running NPSS training with Pathways workers as it would give me an extra pool of casual workers and it may also be positive for them as they often need to supervise access between their clients and families.

Lisa Harvey, NPSS Manager
Organisational Governance

The governance functions of Pathfinders Ltd are performed by our Board of Directors. There have been many activities during 2012 but principally among them have been:

- Consolidation of the new governance structure of Pathfinders, including being a public company limited by guarantee with a board of 6 – 12 directors
- Operating several community based family, children and young person focused services and programs, including services throughout the New England and North West Tablelands of New South Wales
- Oversight consolidation of Pathways Out of Home Care service (including Accreditation) and the NENW Family Referral Service
- Oversighting the enhancement of financial and budgeting systems
- Commencing development and renovation of the Tilbuster property.

Our Board of Directors include:

Fiona Miron

Qualifications: Bachelor of Laws (Hons) (ANU) Graduate Diploma Legal Practice (ANU) Professional Certificate in Arbitration (Adelaide)

Special Responsibilities: Chair, Board of Directors Member, Finance Committee

Experience:
Fiona completed her Bachelor of Laws (Honours) at the Australian National University in 1995 and obtained a post-graduate qualification in arbitration from the University of Adelaide in 2006.

Fiona was admitted to practice as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of the ACT and a solicitor of the High Court of Australia in 1996, and a solicitor of the Supreme Court of NSW in 2000.

Fiona has been in private practice as a solicitor in the ACT and later in NSW since 1996, practicing initially in the areas of insurance litigation and criminal law. Since 2003, Fiona has conducted a property, estates and civil litigation practice in Armidale and has worked with Wilson & Co Lawyers since 2010.

Fiona appreciates the challenges and rewards of living in rural and regional communities, having been raised on a farm in the Northern Tablelands and having lived and worked in the New England for over ten years. As a mother of two children, she has a keen interest in issues affecting families and young people.
Pat Schultz

Special Responsibilities: Deputy Chair, Board of Directors

Experience:
Pat brings a wealth of experience and local knowledge to the board. Pat has been a long-serving member of the Pathfinders board and was President of the organisation for many years.

Pat enjoys working with young people and is currently employed as a Social Welfare Worker in Mental Health. Her previous employment has included community welfare work, working with people with intellectual disabilities, nursing at A&NE Hospital and teaching pottery.

Pat has a strong involvement with and commitment to environmental issues and has been a Greens candidate in local and Federal elections. Pat is also actively involved in the National Parks Association.

Pat’s family are very important to her and she enjoys spending time with her family particularly her grandchildren.

Shane Jubb

Qualifications Bachelor of Business (Accounting) (CSU Mitchell)

Special Responsibilities: Chair, Finance Committee

Experience:
Shane holds a Bachelor of Business with a major in Accounting and he achieved CPA status in 2000. Shane began practicing as an accountant in 1993 and has held numerous accounting positions with firms in Sydney, Brisbane and the New England area and currently works for a legal practice firm in Armidale.

Shane has been involved as a volunteer with numerous not for profit organisations and his family were heavily involved with various disability services in the Central West of New South Wales.

Shane is married with two children and takes a keen interest in their activities including coaching his son’s soccer team.
Joe Craigie

Qualifications
Cert IV Workplace Trainer and Assessor
Cert IV Electrical Contractor
Cert III Welfare

Experience:
Joe is an Aboriginal Man of the Gomeroi Nation and has been a resident of the region all his life, the majority of which has seen him live and work on a regional basis from his Tamworth hometown. He has been a career public servant with both the State and Commonwealth public service, and has held positions of Deputy State Manager of DCITA, Regional Manager with ATSIC and Department of Aboriginal Affairs, as well as the Manager of the Aboriginal Education Unit within New England Institute of TAFE. He has worked closely with the Youth and Aboriginal communities in the capacity of a consultant, public servant and a community person.

Joe has Chaired, and been a board member of Tamworth Regional Council’s Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Crime Prevention Committees in support of his home community. He was a former Manager and founding Director of the Kamilaroi Development Initiatives Aboriginal Corporation (KDIAC) and has served as a Board Member of ABSEC and Pathfinders. Joe is currently the Director of the Clontarf Oxley Rugby League Academy in Tamworth. These bodies are all associated with his continuing support of young people and Aboriginal youth, a cohort for which he has worked in partnership to bring about their individual prosperity in the educational, social, and economic arenas.

Ron Binge

Qualifications
Diploma in Education
Cert III Welfare

Experience:
Ron Binge is an Aboriginal man of the Gomeroi Nation and has resided in the New England and North West Tablelands throughout his life. He currently resides in Tamworth with his family. Ron has operated a number of small businesses and more recently owned and operated a motel in Tamworth for a number of years.

Ron is an active member of his local Aboriginal community and has also been involved in a number of community based organisations promoting Aboriginal culture, arts and education.

Ron has qualifications in diesel and automotive mechanics and teaching. Ron currently teaches mechanics and heavy industry at the Tamworth TAFE Campus.
Ahmed Bawa Kuyini-Abubakar

Qualifications

Bachelor Education (Hons)
Diploma Religion Studies (University of Cape Coast, Ghana)
Bachelor Social Work (Volda University College, Norway)
M. Phil (UCC, Ghana)
PhD (University of Melbourne)

Special Responsibilities:
Member, Finance Committee

Experience:
Bawa was born in Ghana and educated there as a teacher. He taught in Teachers College, Secondary School and at the University of Cape Coast between 1988 and 1996. He has worked for and established NGO's in Ghana.

Bawa brings to the board international experience in the areas of education, social welfare and disabilities.

Bawa studies health and welfare administration and ultimately social work in Norway and worked for the Child Protection Service in Norway. Bawa holds qualifications in Social Work, Religion Studies and holds a Doctorate in Education.

Bawa is currently lecturing at UNE in Special Education and Social Work.

Justin Hardman

Qualifications

Bachelor of Arts (UNE)

Experience:
Justin has been a long standing member of the Pathfinders board. He first became involved with youth issues in 2000 when he stood for election to the local council in Armidale. Justin has previously held the positions of treasurer and public officer for the organisation.

Justin completed a degree in Political Science and History from the University of New England in 2008.

Justin had been a member of the Armidale Duval Lions Club for sixteen years and has been a president of the Club. Justin has been the chairman of the Armidale Access Committee several times between 2000 and 2006. Justin is Armidale’s local consultant for Vision Australia and he brings many valued skills and much life experience to the Board.
Michele Saxby

Experience:
Michele has been involved in volunteer work for most of her adult life mostly with children. Michele was a Respite Carer for troubled children with the Aunties and Uncles program and has co-ordinated the Primary School Basketball comp for PCYC in Wollongong as well as being involved with the Girl Guide Movement as a Brownie Guide Leader.

Michele has owned and managed her own business and brings 30 years’ experience in Business Management and Administration to the board.

Michele is employed by Housing NSW as the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator for the New England and North West area.

Izabel Soliman

Qualifications
Bachelor of Arts (Ottawa)
Bachelor of Education, Masters of Education (Alberta)
PhD (UNE)
Diploma of Education (Toronto)

Experience:
Dr. Soliman is a resident of Armidale who completed a three and a half year term as Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of the Professions, at the University of New England. Currently she is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at UNE, where her teaching and research interest focus on addressing disadvantage, progressing social justice and inclusion, and reflective and ethical professional practice in schools and higher institutions.

Dr. Soliman is the co-editor of the international scholarly journal, Higher Education, Research & Development. In 2009 she received a grant from the University for implementing a research project that aims to investigate the perceptions of a group of young people and youth workers who are participants in the "Cyclebreaker Program", offered by Pathfinders.

Dr. Soliman is also active in other community groups, the Sanctuary group concerned with the support and settlement of refugees, and the Harmony group, concerned with the harmonious interaction among people from different ethnic backgrounds in Armidale. She has published a book for primary and secondary student teachers on the topic of Interrogating Common Sense: Teaching for Social Justice (Pearson Education).