

Annual Report 1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018



Committee of Management

Chairperson	Debra Hargreave
Secretary	Pam McCorriston
Treasurer	Fiona Livermore
Committee	Rosalind Scott










Staff

CEO	Jemma Toohey
Outreach & Projects	Megs Osborne
Office Manager	Sharon Pellas
Multicultural Settlement officer	Frank Johnson
Multicultural Youth Worker	Diana Elliott
Administration Officer	Lindee Clarke
CALD Community Development Officer	Radha Guragai
Clerical Assistant	Stephanie Dodd

Volunteers

Pam Hewitt	Sue Peisley	Monika Butt	Debrah Box	Shirley Schubach
Nada Streulens	Sue Rose			

Funding and support provided by:

-  Department Social Services - Settlement and Volunteering
-  Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC)
-  Family & Community Services (NSW)
-  Department of Employment Job Active
-  Learn Local (VIC)
-  Border trust- Scanlon Foundation
-  Multicultural NSW - Unity Grants
-  Albury City - Local
-  City of Wodonga-Local



Reports



Chairpersons Report

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting for the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau and Multicultural Services. We have had another amazing year, with our range of programs and services offered meeting the highest standards.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and effort put in by our wonderful staff and volunteers who have made our year the success it has been.

Our organisation is the major face of volunteering and multicultural services in our region, and major achievements this year have been:

- 👉 The Longing to Belong photography exhibition which was the launch event for our city's Harmony week celebration.
- 👉 The revamped bus which raises the profile of our organisation.
- 👉 The Kitchen in the Hood project

These will be highlighted elsewhere in this report by staff.

We have had some changes in staffing this year and very fortunate to have had our first VRB babies born! Congratulations to Renee who is currently on maternity leave following the birth of her beautiful twins.

To cover Renee's operations manager role Sharon has been employed and has continued to provide stability in the office for all staff, and to manage the day –to – day running of all programs and services, and all human resource functions for the organisation. Megs has also increased her hours to cover Renee's training commitments. A huge thank you to both Sharon and Megs for taking up these roles, and for performing them so professionally.

All members of the team have worked incredibly hard and have delivered great outcomes across all programs and services, as you will see by their reports.

The team are so skilled in their roles, and I would like to thank them for continuing to do the amazing job they do, going beyond what is expected from them in order to represent the organisation.

Our organisation has continued with major achievements in times of limited funding across all sectors, where all agencies are competing for grants in an effort to provide their projects. The Committee would like to thank Jemma for being ever-vigilant in applying for all available funding and being successful for so many. She is an amazing and forward-thinking CEO and we are grateful for her knowledge and skills in the volunteering arena, and for the way she represents our organisation on state and national level boards.

I would also like to thank the Committee of Management who have provided much guidance and spirited discussion as we venture forward in the continuously changing world of volunteering. It is a privilege to work with you all, and to see the impact we are having within our region.

Debra Hargreave



CEO

The Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau and Multicultural Services welcomes the community to participate in our Annual General Meeting and celebrate another successful year in our regional communities.

In 2017/2018 we have been busy with both staff and funding agreement changes. With the shift of The Volunteer Management Funding to the Department of Social Services we worked closely with the department and our regional stakeholders/collaborators to make a strong case for the continuation of the funds that were in danger of being non-existent. This battle was definitely worth the time and energy taken to secure three year funding. Staff have worked well in a hectic and unsettling environment as we currently await word regarding our major funding for the Settlements Grants Program.

Staff have adapted well to changes including saying farewell for now to Renee Wilson on Maternity leave, welcoming Radha Guragai as our Multicultural Development worker, Steph Dodd to the administration and technical team, Sharon Pellas changing to office manager and Megs Osborne working as our training and outreach manager.

Diana and Frank continue steadfastly in their roles with the settlement grants program and new arrivals.

We thank David Saxton for his efforts with the work for the dole crew. We acknowledge Nicole Stephens for the cultural exchange and sisters in the kitchen projects.

Our relationship with local media continues to be strong and often we can convince them to be involved in our events especially during National Volunteers Week, Harmony Day, and refugee information sessions. Highlighting our marvellous volunteers is our ultimate aim and sharing our pride in community.



This year we were not able to attend the NSW state awards due to them being held in Wagga. We are disappointed that the awards no longer allow us to take strong local ownership as a vital community service supporting volunteers

It is important to note that 36 different communities attended Way2go training and over 160 settlement grants clients have been supported over the past financial year. VRB have travelled over 25000 kms over the past year.

Along with the change, my new responsibilities have enabled a greater focus on our strategic direction, I have written and collaborated to complete grant applications in the region of \$2,179,496. We have been successful in 27% of these applications to date and expect to hear soon a positive response for our settlement Grants application valued at 68% of the total applications. These grant applications allow us to extend and deepen our community work with better results that can actually increase our impact. All of this is only possible with the seven partnerships that continue to develop with our funding agreements

I would like to highlight and celebrate in particular The Cultural Exchange currently being funded with substantial support from the Albury City Council.



Over the course of the year our dedicated Committee of Management faced our challenges squarely with determination and dedication. Our thanks to all of them and in particular from myself to Debra and Fiona who are always available for the tough conversations. I also wish to thank Pam for her exceptional work with Know your Gizmo. Thanks to Rosalind for her continued support on the committee after receiving full time employment.

It is important that we acknowledge the work of our dedicated volunteers at reception. We have seen a steady increase of Volunteers at our administration and reception desks with the rotation of 8 volunteers working across half days/full days and scheduling that is giving our volunteers greater work flexibility. Three volunteers have moved into paid work and we celebrate their success.

Jemma Toohey

Projects, Training and Outreach

It has been a successful year with training and outreach for AWVRB with many opportunities to present Way2Go Volunteering management across NSW and promote AWVRB in our local community.

Way2Go workshops:

All funding commitments with FACS for the delivery of workshops across NSW has been completed with nearly 700 individuals now having access to the online Way2Go Managers training and toolkit. Way2Go Workshops were delivered in 36 different communities with a final attendance of approximately 570 participants. It has been very well appreciated.

Training:

This year saw a transition and learning about the training delivered in Renee's role in preparation for covering her leave. The training included Pathway to Work and Volunteering with Albury and Wodonga TAFEs with participants coming from a CALD background and with the Job Centre in Lavington where participants are the long term unemployed. This training also included a very successful Mentored Volunteer Project in partnership with the Sustainability Centre.



The group were very proud to participate in the project. Other training included Intel Easy Steps Computer training held at Charles Sturt University, Way2Go volunteer Management workshops held in Melbourne, Know your

Gizmo programs being held in Albury, Wodonga and Tallangatta. In-house training was also delivered to our own volunteer team.



ACFE/Learn Local:

Have attended the regional meetings to learn about and work with the changes currently happening and how the partnership with the TAFE system will effect Learn Local agencies and what will be required in the future for applying for funding and reporting.

Presentations:



AWVRB was invited to present displays and to speak at events on promoting AWVRB and Volunteering including at Wodonga Council and Albury Library as part of Volunteer Week at the Defence Force open day, Corryong High School and Mirambeena Community Centre Expo.

Projects:

Catering for Multicultural Event. Staff and volunteers spent a weekend preparing a meal for 200 delegates at the event in Wodonga. The task was a big one but was successful due to the hard work of a handful of volunteers.

Kitchen in the Hood is a new project that is a specific fitted out kitchen trailer that will be utilised to teach and support unemployed and cultural groups to learn skills to help them seek employment or further education in many TAFE courses. The project will roll out in 2019.

Megs Osborne

Office Manager & Volunteer referrals

Staffing:

Over the past financial year VRBs staffing has been fluid in line with our previous and existing projects. Saying goodbye to Elissa, Nicole and David all whom have moved on to new horizons. Along with the change we welcomed Radha Guragai as our new CALD Community Development Officer – Cultural Exchange programs. Whilst Renee Wilson is on Maternity Leave both Megs Osborne (Training & Outreach) and I have undertaken role changes in order to support the operational requirements of VRB.

Administration Volunteer Team:

We have trialled a new administrative support system across the organisation with the main office now being staffed with two administrative/reception volunteers throughout Monday to Thursday. The team consisting of Pam Hewitt, Sue Peisley, Monika Butt, Debrah Box, Nada Streulens, Sue Rose, Tanya Nicole, and Shirley Schubach have all provided fabulous administrative support across all program areas to all of the VRB team.

NSW Volunteer Awards Nominations:

This year we submitted 3 nominations for volunteer awards from our organisation within the two categories. Firstly the “Regional and State NSW Volunteer of the Year Award” where we nominated, Shirley and for “Certificates of Recognition” we nominated both Pam & Sue, the event was held in Wagga.



Professional Development & Training:

The VRB team have attended a range of training opportunities across the year, ranging from DEX webinars, Risk Management/Risk Appetite workshops, social media workshop, conferences and industry based workshops at Local, State and National levels.

DEX:

DEX Data is a secure online IT system that is hosted by Australian Government Community Grants Hub. We are now required to input all our client activity (volunteers, training/pathway programs, Way2Go) through this reporting system.

The team have been entering client data from Jan 2018. In light of this process we have now updated the client volunteer forms to gain permission to include data into DEX. We are currently running the two data programs alongside each other “Skills Bank & DEX” and will input volunteer data into the new DEX system every Monday whilst moving forwards

NAME of VRC: Albury Wodonga Volunteer Centre													
Mode of Assistance	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sep 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Total
Face to Face	12	34	30	16	25	11	14	31	21	36	33	23	286
Phone/email support	22	45	42	6	36	9	33	26	44	44	70	56	433
Web based assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other (eg expos/fairs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total number of individuals assisted towards volunteering regardless of outcome	34	79	72	22	61	20	47	57	65	80	103	89	719
Those who identify as:													
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	6	3	14
CALD	2	4	1	1	4	0	1	1	4	3	2	3	26
Having a disability	2	4	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	9	4	34
Having a mental health issue	11	11	10	1	4	1	4	2	8	5	16	9	82
Referred by JSA provider					1				1				2
Referred by CentreLink		2						1					3
Number of community organisations or agencies assisted:													
	46	48	18	2	11	2	36	10	17	45	37	98	370

Volunteer Referrals/Skills Bank Volunteer data:

When reviewing Skills Bank data the total number assisted towards volunteering is approx. 719. VRB assistance provided to 370 organisations. At this stage the data does not capture the number of individuals and organisations that are also assisted via expo's/fair's or information sessions.

Sharon Pellas

Clerical Assistant

Technical and clerical support has been offered across VRB with a range of activities and systems to enable smoother operational outcomes to be achieved.

Multicultural programs – assisted with the input of data for AWCE programs Cards & Coffee, Computer Help, Conversation in English, and Homework Help. Including DEX data entry for Multicultural Settlement programs. A new app was placed on an iPad for AWCE volunteers to use to mark off attendees for Cards & Coffee program, assisted with flyer creation, and social media.






With the introduction of DEX we spent the entire month of July with assistance from the Admin team calling for data transfer permissions from every client. My personal datasheet has from Jan to Jun 2018, 146 clients contacted that did not respond or call back being unable to be placed into DEX, 7 clients that said they did not give permission and were not put into the system, and 111 clients that did give permission and were input into the DEX system.

Stephanie Dodd




Multicultural Settlement




The Settlement Grants Program has been very busy and performing well and exceeding expectations with clients and the Department of Social Services in the 2017-18 financial year.

Highlights include:

-  We have seen over 160 clients in the 2017-18 financial year.
-  Numerous group information sessions were held on topics such as Legal Aid, Citizenship, Making a Will and Family Relationships.
-  We were also involved in community celebrations – 'Harmony Day', 'Refugee Week' as well as the "Longing to Belong" photo exhibition to promote language, cultural expression and community support for our multicultural community.
-  We have provided Cultural Awareness Training to many local organisations and training providers.
-  The vast majority of clients are refugees on humanitarian visas – with clients coming from Bhutan/Nepal and various African countries, the main one being the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The main presenting issues in which they require help are:

-  Assistance with documents
-  Citizenship
-  Education, training and employment

-  Health
-  Rental issues
-  Family relationships

Youth Settlement

Casework has been provided to eligible youth to increase their independence and confidence.

Youth have been involved in sporting programs such as netball and cricket, an Employment Skills Program, been guest speakers at Cultural Training with local schools, and attended youth leadership programs and camps. We held youth activities over the summer holidays which proved very popular.

After consultation with youth, a weekly Music Program was introduced and held at The Retro Lane Youth Cafe, with youth performing at local events and festivals.

Good News Story

2017 Australia Post One Netball Community Award for Volunteering



Lauren Coelli has volunteered for the past 3 years with our NetSetGO Inclusion Program, and was rewarded for her time when she received the 2017 Australia Post One Netball Community Award. The Award was for Lauren's ongoing commitment to the NetSetGO Inclusion Program which involved the coaching of young girls from refugee backgrounds, improving their netball skills and building their confidence.



Diana Elliott & Frank Johnson

CALD Cultural Exchange Program

The funding support from Albury City and Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau (AWVRB) enabled its Cultural Exchange Programs to operate again into 2018. The Cards and Coffee program has become very popular for elderly people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, as is the Homework Help amongst the young participants from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The participants utilising Cards and Coffee often mention that the program has become immensely helpful for them to minimise their social isolation, loneliness and a sense of alienation which has certainly been experienced by some of the group. One of the participants has said that the cards and coffee has not only become a way of engagement and participation in different activities but also the “program has assisted us to get connected and socialized amongst ourselves, volunteers and libraries staff”.

Likewise, using the VRB’s bus with logos of multicultural arts wrapped around it, does in fact assist in illuminating a program that picks up and drops off the Cards & Coffee participants in Albury Wodonga, it is certainly another significant highlight of the cultural Exchange program.



The third term of the cultural exchange program has been over with beginning of the NSW term 3 school holidays. Cards and coffee, in the third-term has run for eight weeks, 2 days a week or 16 days in both Albury and Lavington libraries and on average 20 – 21 participants attended on each of the day’s program. Cards and coffee for this term has now concluded with a short excursion to Beechworth intended by the participants.

Homework Help is another popular program which has run for eight weeks this term and assists children from the CALD communities who were experiencing significant challenges in doing their homework, school projects and reading and writing activities.



Over thirty-two children from the four different primary schools based in North Albury and Lavington areas have registered for this program which has been run over the past eight weeks.

On average 14 – 16 children have attended the program on each week's program supported by 10 – 12 mentors. The development of a video story on Homework Help Program for social media from an ABC journalist and a coverage in Newspaper in Border Mail are the main highlights of this program.



Radha Guagai

Administration Officer

In my administrative role I am involved in the following areas:

Work Development Orders

Total fine debt for our local area, Albury - \$4,305,378 in fines debt outstanding 33 active WDOs, Lavington - \$2,168,521 in fines debt outstanding 23 active WDOs . Active WDO's for AWVRB is 17.

I have seen many positive outcomes and improvements while doing this project and this is backed up by my conversations with participants including that some have attended our Pathways training, which are classed as educational/vocational or life skills courses.

Social Media

Our Twitter page <https://twitter.com/AWVRB> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AWVRB/> continues to gain followers and be a link to communicate what is happening with upcoming training and events and in turn to post pictures of those events, training and activities.

Our pages are updated at least weekly Total Page Followers as of today: 625



Administration and Accounts

My work in administration continues to keep me busy on a daily basis, recording and maintaining financial records. On occasion stepping in to do interviews with volunteers and administration support when needed.

Lindee Clarke