

AGM Annual Report July 2019 - June 2020



Committee of Management

Chairperson	Debra Hargreave
Secretary	Pam McCorriston
Treasurer	Fiona Livermore
General Committee Member	Rosalind Scott
General Committee Member	Steven McKewan











Staff

CEO	Jemma Toohey
Operations Manager	Renee Wilson
Office Manager	Sharon Pellas
Outreach & Project Coordinator	Megs Osborne
Multicultural Settlement Worker	Frank Johnson
Multicultural Youth Worker	Diana Elliott
Multicultural Settlement Worker	Carol McQuade
Bilingual Support Worker	Marcel Bentana
Administration Officer	Lindee Clarke
Cultural Exchange Project Officer	Glenys Atkins
Cultural Exchange Support Worker	Radha Guragai
IT Assistant	Stephanie Dodd

Volunteers - Administrative

Monika Butt, Justine Morris, Kelly Trainor, Lyn Dodd, Jiracha Klaharn, Rowan Bougoure, Pam Hewitt, Heather Jenkins, Shirley Schubach.

Funding and support provided by:

-  Department Social Services - Settlement and Volunteering
-  Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (VIC)
-  Department of Communities and Justice (NSW)
-  Department of Health and Human Services Victoria (VIC)
-  Learn Local (VIC)
-  Border trust - Scanlon Foundation (Local)
-  Multicultural NSW
-  Albury City - Local
-  City of Wodonga - Local
-  2AY Radio



Reports



Chairpersons Report

2020

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting for the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau and Multicultural Services. This year as everyone says, has been an unprecedented year, especially for our VRB community. However, our staff have embraced the challenges they have faced during these COVID times with new styles and methods to achieve results. The programs and services offered by the VRB and Multicultural Services team have been delivered differently but with professionalism and safety at all times.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and effort put in by our wonderful staff and volunteers who have made our year successful. With changing circumstances across our Border region, it has been wonderful to see staff meet these challenges to keep our services operating as best as possible.

Our staff have been amazing working from home, managing to connect with volunteers regularly on the phone, with each other via Zoom, and managing to include stakeholders at all levels of working out how to support them and deliver programs or courses. Your loyalty and commitment to this organisation and its programs is acknowledged.

Our multicultural community have had many of their programs stopped during this time, and they have required significant support during this year. I would like to thank the whole multicultural services team for providing such support during COVID, for significant events as well as encouraging them to continue to meet within their familiar groups. New ways to connect were developed and delivered by our staff and stakeholders to these groups.

This year we have also farewelled two of our long-serving staff members. Lindee began with the VRB in August 2006 and has been a mainstay for staff and volunteers over her 14 years. Frank joined us in July 2008 and was the lead for the Multicultural Services team, providing guidance for many from our refugee communities during his 11 and a half years with us. We thank them for their loyalty and work with the VRB and wish them well for the future.

I would like to thank Jemma for being vigilant in changing the way the VRB operates as an organisation, for always supporting staff and meeting regularly via Zoom to connect with staff and stakeholders.

I would also like to thank the Committee of Management who have achieved much over a Zoom meeting, provided input regarding the current times, as we venture into the continuously changing world of COVID-19 led volunteering and multicultural services. It is a privilege to work with you all, as the VRB continues to meet the needs of those in our region.

Debra Hargreave
Chairperson

CEO Report

2020

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting 2019-2020 for the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau and Multicultural Services. This year we have faced many challenges with the pandemic COVID19 to continue to remain sustainable and viable, this AGM is virtual as you can all see, thank goodness for Zoom- our virtual world and, thank you for your presence and continual support.

This year we farewelled two long term staff members Frank Johnson and Lindee Clarke we thank them for their dedication to our community over a combined total of 25 years. We also said good bye to Carol McQuade with the Settlement Engagement and Transition Support (SETS) team. Staff have worked through the many changes associated both with this and all elements of how we work and volunteer, being ever vigilant of our effectiveness and efficiency. Our volunteers have continued to be dedicated and loyal as they work through twelve months of new and exciting projects and processes. Other administrative processes have been very intense and with staff changes and managing the Job keeper assistance package has kept us busy. This along with new technology my learning curve looked more like a peak than a curve at times!

We have certainly missed seeing and interacting with everyone since late March. Staff have struggled with the isolation and the stress of trying to complete tasks from home and pivot, it seems, every other day to address the needs of all our stakeholders. This has been a mighty effort and I am so grateful and proud to be part of the team and I thank you most sincerely as each of you have shown courage and determination throughout, allowing each other to be human , to show your vulnerabilities and to share your strengths in order for us to continue. Thanks also to our Committee members for their understanding and support through trying times. This may sound dramatic, however at times without each other we would not have come through to celebrate and acknowledge our achievements today.

Our funding partners have continued to be stakeholders, however, some funding is decreasing as we endeavour to do more with less. I am constantly seeking new funding knowing the positive impact it has as we strive to help our community. Over the past financial year I have applied for grants to the value of \$80,000. Most grants have been successful with some small grants missing the boat with COVID. Since May this year I have also applied for grants valued at a further \$10,000 for the next financial year.

We continue to participate in an intensive research project over the next year in partnership with the Centre for Participation (Horsham), Hunter Volunteer Centre and Think Impact and look forward to the intensive look at volunteering and the impact it has on individuals and community. We also continue to provide opportunities for our local and distant communities with training, mentoring and partnerships that include a mixture of shared expertise, income and resources. One highlight for me in July 2019 was a youth camp at Watchbox with 15 multicultural young people staying for the weekend. The African women from Albury and Wodonga sang joyously for hours and we all ate build your own pizzas.

In 2019/2020 we have continued to update our policies and procedures with the support of both staff and volunteers. We have had many examples of how important these processes are to our compliance as funding and people management requires close attention with an ever changing set of guidelines.

Our social media profile continues to grow and change giving us an important place in a virtual environment that has completely exploded with COVID. It has highlighted our capacity to move and change with emerging new issues for our communities including our multicultural, volunteers and non-profit organisations. I believe the Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau Inc. is more important than ever as we remain a steady and positive force at a regional and rural level. This year our challenge has been to focus on our community more than ever with social isolation affecting each of us in some way. Staying in communication and supporting and continually recognising our volunteers and non-profit organisations has been crucial, as has been, our correspondence with our funding partners. We were sadly disappointed not to be able to celebrate National Volunteers Week in our usual happy public fashion, we were, however, able to highlight some activities and special people through social media.

Throughout the last year we steadfastly adapted to supporting our community with **1062 contacts** with individuals, **170** organisations and **188** volunteers via our data exchange. This has been challenging as we strive to show that the recipients are more than just numbers, they are people that are passionate and committed to community, without them we lose sight of what matters. We were once again invited to assist with the judging of the Wodonga Council Annual Awards and I also participated in judging the CBAA volunteer awards for radio broadcast stations across Australia run by volunteers.

The Cultural Exchange (currently being funded by Albury City Council) is in its third year and has sadly been missed by participants this year, but, thankfully, the group were able to contribute to refugee week with photos and stories for Albury City. We welcomed Glenys to our team earlier this year and both Radha and Glenys are keeping in touch with clients weekly.

My final note is serious – our future depends upon our success as an important collaborator and partner in the National Network as we gain momentum and launch our research later this year. This will be closely followed up with our NNVRC campaign to “reimagine volunteering for a contemporary Australia.” Our focus is to work towards a transformational rather than a transactional service and to investigate the how and why we can all engage in social and economic inclusion. This has given our organisation the authority to redesign ourselves and our work plans for AWVRB.

Thank you sincerely
Jemma Toohey.

Operations Manager/Training

Operational Information

This year has seen many changes and challenges from an operational perspective. Due to COVID-19 we had to think on our feet and promptly implement staff changes, including working from home. Making sure all staff were equipped to work from home was a large task from desk setups, computers, electronic equipment and the capacity to attend virtual meetings via Zoom.

There was a new focus on managing and supporting staff virtually, something we haven't experienced. I attended webinars to support a new management style which really helped. Another focus was supporting staff and volunteers with mental health. Discussions and topics were included as an agenda item in our fortnightly team meetings and offering information on an EAPS program kindly offered through DCJ. Links to mental health organisations were also offered.

Volunteers were contacted via phone fortnightly to gauge how they were going and to offer support if needed.

Local Training

In the first half of the year we had another successful year with training for volunteers. Training numbers were steady with 310 participants attending different sessions. This includes funded, fee for service, general volunteer training, cultural awareness and Know your Gizmo. The second half of the year dropped dramatically given COVID-19 restrictions. We had a number of sessions locked in and had to postpone.

AWVRB have attended expos and delivered numerous presentations on the benefits to volunteering to schools, TAFES and local organisations.

There have been various volunteer training sessions for our cultural exchange program held over the past 12 months. Each session has been well attended and received. This training educates the volunteers around knowledge of the role, rights and responsibilities, boundaries and effective cultural communication.

Reports

Reporting was successfully completed for the Department of Social Services, Department of Communities and Justice and ACFE.



Good News Story

We delivered Pathways to Volunteering and Employment training to a group of volunteers in Tallangatta in February 2020. This was not long after the bushfires had been burning out of control in surrounding areas. This had a huge impact on the local community with friends and family affected. This training opened a lot of conversation around the participant's feelings and the impact the ordeal had on them personally. This was a great way to express their feelings in a positive way and was a nice focus on something different to the trauma they had experienced. Sharing the skills and knowledge to volunteering had a positive effect as this was expressed in the feedback.

Renee Wilson
Operations Manager/Training



Office Manager/Interview & Referrals

Staffing & Professional Development

Staff participated in a range of professional development opportunities across the past financial year. Professional development learning opportunities are linked to position descriptions and performance reviews. In summary members of the team attended the following;

Performance Reviews;

- Completed for all VRB staff members

Adult Literacy & Numeracy Practice Program

- Megs

OHS & Workplace Safety – Health and Safety Rep Course

- Steph

Health & Well Being

- Psychological Well Being and Resilience Online (May) - Megs
- Managing staff online – Renee
- Virtual leadership – Renee
- COVID-19 impacts on mental health – Renee

Social Enterprise Training (Feb/May 2020)

- Jemma, Renee, Glenys, Radha, Megs

VET Development Centre – for Learn Local

- Teaching and Learning – Megs
- Pathways – Megs
- Learner Support – Megs
- Annual accountability webinar – Renee

Community Visitor Scheme- State forum (Feb/June 2020)

- Megs

Australian Network on Disability (May)

- Stronger Together Conference – Megs
- Navigating Aged Care Services COVID – Megs

National/State-wide Peak Bodies

- VVSN Victorian Network - Sharon
- VVSN Executive – Sharon
- VCN NSW Network – Renee

Celebrating Volunteers

VRB continues to refer volunteers to agencies & services across the region. We have placed volunteers across a range of community service organisations, Aged care, Disability services, Community Service -Committees of management, Animal rescue, RSPCA, Op shops, Cultural services, Arts programs, Community Neighbourhood Houses, Transport Services – drivers, Sporting events, fundraising events etc.

The volunteer workforce within our specific programs are within the cultural exchange programs, 10 volunteers are engaged in the Cards & Coffee program 4-6 are engaged in the Conversations in English support program and 10 volunteers assist in the Homework Help program including 3 volunteer bus drivers' and one handyman volunteer. VRB also has volunteers within the Community Visitor Scheme, within the SETS team and have the administrative area supported by volunteers.

Due to the COVID restrictions we celebrated our volunteers on our website with the sharing of stories uploaded every day.

National Volunteer's Week

Alice, whom also volunteers in the AWVRB Cultural Exchange Homework Help program to assist children with schoolwork and skills.

“Alice had decided that she just wanted to start volunteering, and once she had reached out to programs and started said volunteering she did not want to stop.

For Alice, volunteering is a lot of fun where she has met a lot of lovely people and very much enjoys being able to help the kids through the role she currently volunteers for. That you only have one life, and you ought to acknowledge your own privilege and realise there are people out there you can help – if you have the chance to help others when you have the power to, you should.”

Administrative Support



The administrative support that is provided by the volunteer admin team continues to strengthen. This team have worked consistently together to achieve stronger usage of our current systems within the office, Skills Bank, and filing within the Shared Drive.

The reception area is staffed by two administrative/reception volunteers from Monday to Thursday. The admin team is fluid and changes as team member's move on to new opportunities. Pam, and Heather now support and mentor any new administrative volunteer members. Kelly and Justine provided support on Thursdays. Monica & Kerry have finished working with VRB. Jiracha has now gained employment.

Shirley continues to provide word processing support and works on the policies and procedural manuals. All our volunteers have provided fabulous administrative support across all program areas and they are very much appreciated for the work that they undertake.

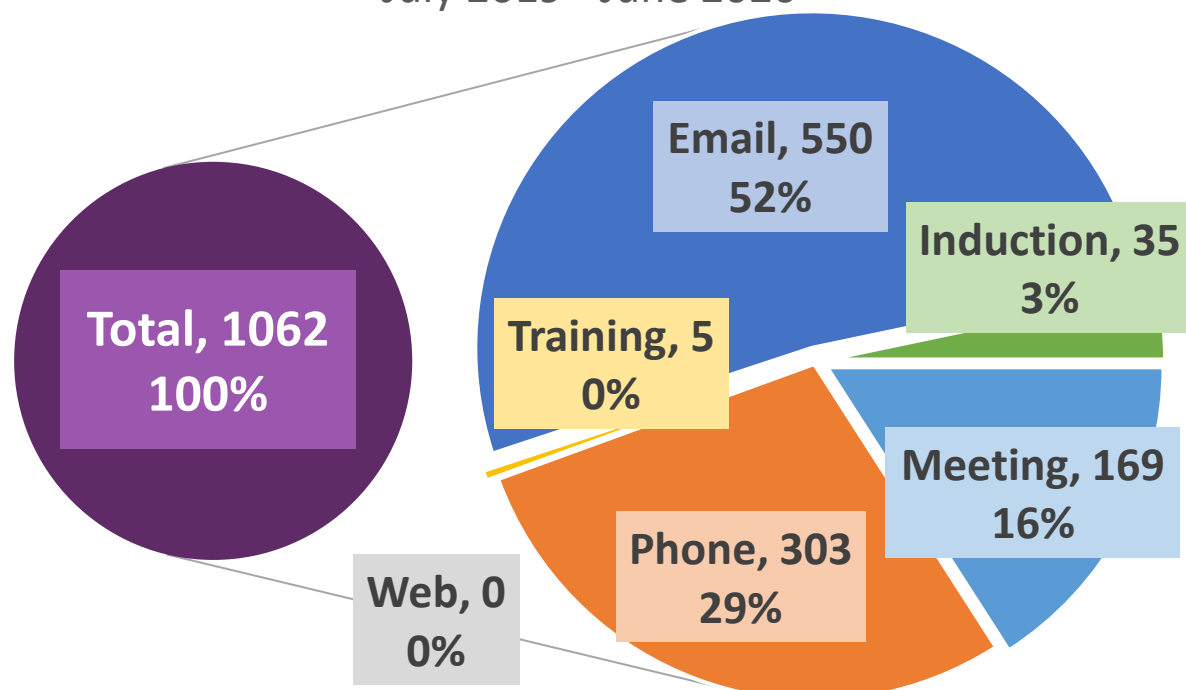
During the COVID office shut down volunteer contact continued and support was provided to the team fortnightly via phone.

Skills Bank - Stats

Aligning volunteers to organisations and services is part of the core business of the VRB our statistical data captures our service provision across the region. You can clearly note the impact of COVID in relation to the declining volunteer opportunities.

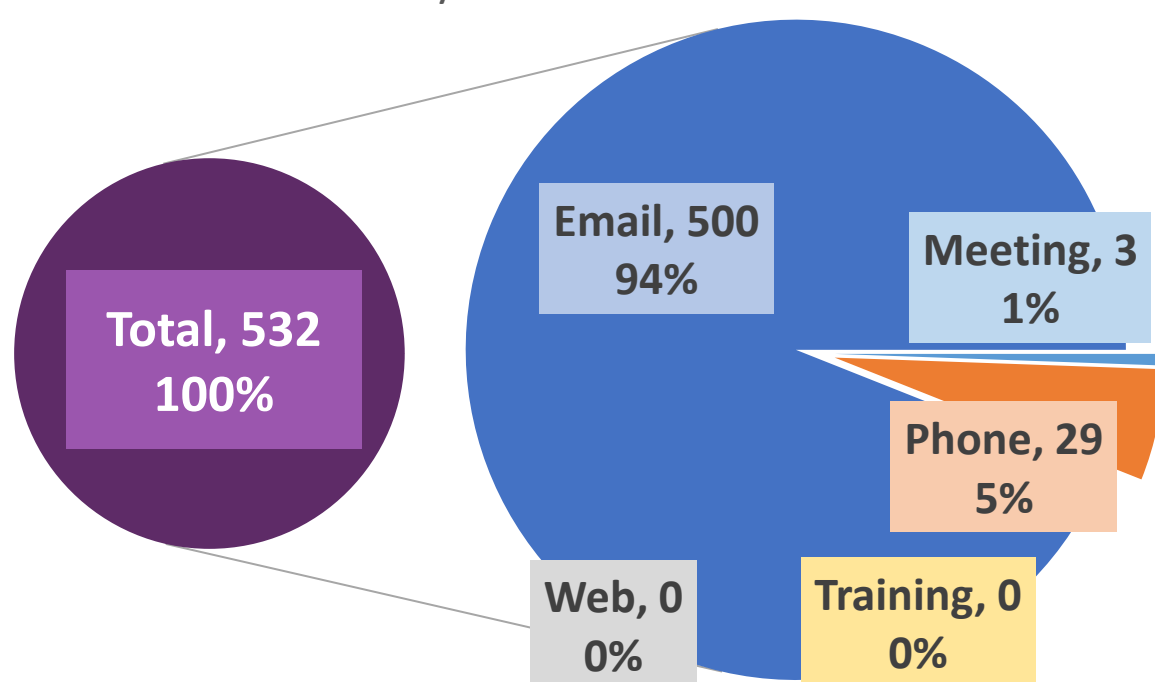
NAME of VRC: Albury Wodonga Volunteer Centre													
Mode of Assistance	Jul 19	Aug 19	Sep 19	Oct 19	Nov 19	Dec 19	Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 20	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Total
Meeting	22	15	24	17	17	18	13	25	16	1	0	1	169
Phone	25	21	23	23	38	17	23	60	46	9	8	10	303
Email	85	55	39	35	40	47	96	66	44	17	21	5	550
Web	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5
Induction	2	8	5	4	2	2	7	3	1	0	0	1	35
Total Times of Contact	138	99	91	79	97	84	139	154	107	27	29	18	1062
Total Volunteers Contacted	78	59	51	49	49	42	58	86	63	20	19	13	361
Volunteers who identify as:													
Indigenous	3	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	13
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	9	5	6	10	7	2	7	3	2	1	2	1	55
Seeking work at Registration	4	3	4	1	2	2	7	2	2	0	1	0	28
Receiving Newstart Allowance	6	6	9	6	9	9	9	6	2	1	4	1	68
Having a disability	10	1	2	6	8	5	5	6	1	1	3	2	50
Having a mental health issue	13	6	11	7	10	4	22	10	4	2	2	1	92
	31	14	20	20	21	14	36	19	6	2	4	1	188

Skillsbank Volunteers Data July 2019 - June 2020



Organisation Interactions													
Meeting	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Phone	5	5	3	4	2	1	4	2	0	2	1	0	29
Email	103	54	25	36	8	12	10	14	13	8	153	64	500
Web	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Times of Contact	108	59	28	42	10	14	14	16	13	10	154	64	532
Total Organisations Contacted	38	29	12	18	6	7	6	9	6	9	137	44	170

Skillsbank Organisations Data July 2019 - June 2020



Work Development Orders

AWVRB is a sponsor organisation for the WDO scheme. This program is offered as a community service supporting those in need. The goal is to support customers to reduce any outstanding debts through Revenue NSW by providing either a volunteer experience or support to clients who are completing programs of work or engaging in an approved treatment. Our role is case management of individual clients within the scheme. We have supported clients with volunteer activity across several local organisations. AWVRB has assisted 22 WDO clients, over the past 12 months with 6 having completed all requirements, 6 have moved out of the scheme and we have 10 active clients that we are currently supporting.

Policy Development and Management

COVID-19

In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, in early March 2020 AWVRB implemented the Pandemic policy and procedure. "As per the directions recommended by the World Health Organisation". The purpose of the policy is to outline the strategies and actions that AWVRB will take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics, and how AWVRB will control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified within the organisation. The procedure is now well entrenched in the work environment. The team are continuing to practice all health related procedures within the work place for all AWVRB sites including the Bus, KiTH food van.

Sharon Pellas
Office Manager/Interview & Referral

Projects & Outreach Manager

Training

COVID-19 had a profound impact on the ability to deliver projects, training, outreach programs and events this year. It has given us an opportunity to review and take a look at how we can be effective for delivery in the future. Development of an online approach has been commenced with some programs to be moved to an online learning platform and others being suited to a Zoom workshop. Work will continue on this so that training can be sustainable in this unknown environment.

ACFE/Learn Local



August 2019 saw AWVRB be awarded the Learn Local Legend award for the Hume Region. This was a very positive reward for the innovative programs and training delivered for ACFE and Learn Local Staff attended the award night held in Melbourne.

Due to the COVID19 shut down most scheduled training for Learn Local was cancelled as no face to face training could be delivered. As this has been an ongoing issue AWVRB has begun developing training in on-line programs and investigating using online forums to deliver workshops so that training can continue.

Volunteer Information Sessions

A number of information sessions were held to provide the community or groups about volunteering including an information display at Belvoir Special School for students and parents, speak to Wodonga TAFE students at TAFE Space about the benefits of volunteering, and for the Dept. of Health for the Albury School Canteen Group to provide information in recruitment and good management of volunteers.

Projects- Kitchen in The Hood

Work continued on the kitchen ready for use in the community. Information sessions were conducted at Riverina TAFE and this was followed by Volunteers from a CALD background being provided with Basic skills in food handling training and food preparation ready to participate in future catering events.



Projects – Governance/Mentoring Program

The program has successfully supported a number of community organisations to improve their organisational governance in the past year. One organisation was supported to set up governance properly and to commence a board of management to help it grow and develop into the future. A Community Strengthening Forum held in December 2019. New mentors were recruited and trained face to face in the beginning of the year and further training was completed via zoom to be matched with new community organisations.

Projects – Way2Go Train the trainer

The program was successfully delivered last year. The follow up research was completed toward the end of last year to measure the outcomes and achievements of attendance at the workshops. The final results showed that organisations who had engaged with the Way2Go Volunteer Managers Workshops had gained significantly from the training and from having access to the Way2Go Online Managers Toolkit. Participants reported they have initiated changes in their practices for managing volunteers and updated their documentation systems as a result of the training.

Projects – Women's Purse

The Womens purse project was an 8 week pilot program designed to develop womens financial skills to manage finances, set goals, and navigate all matters relating to management of money and bill paying. The Project was funded by the Victoria Government and delivered through Learn Local Agencies. Staff attended training to be a coordinator of the project. The program was well attended with some participants making great gains in their financial management with most able to make life changing decisions that improved their quality of life.



Projects – Community Visitor Scheme

The program is ongoing and continues to take referrals for people living in the community who are identified as being socially isolated and would benefit from having a regular visitor. Recruitment for volunteers to be registered visitors also continues. Over the shutdown period of COVID19 volunteers continued to have contact with their allocated participant by phone. The participants benefited greatly from the continued contact. One volunteer went beyond by buying herself a take away coffee and sitting outside on the veranda to speak with the participant through the window so that the person could still have some contact with others.

Megs Osborne
Outreach and Project Coordinator

Cultural Exchange Programs

Coffee & Cards

The Coffee and Cards Program is provided for senior members of the CALD community and continues to be a much anticipated and well attended activity for people in the 60-85 year age group.

The group consists of up to 25 people who are generally picked up from, and returned to their homes in Lavington, Albury, Thurgoona or Wodonga for the twice weekly activity. The program is held on a Monday at Albury Library Museum and Thursday at Lavington, and receives strong support and warmth from staff at both venues.

The program is supported by volunteers who provide a range of assistance including driving the bus, assisting the participants on and off the bus and encouraging English and other expressive ways of communicating during the 2-hour sessions.

The participants have also enjoyed outings to various Albury City facilities, coordinated by Library Museum staff. These visits have included Wonga Wetlands and the Botanic Gardens and are enjoyed by all.

- The popularity of cards & coffee program is extremely high amongst the senior participants who started attending this program in 2015
- The participants have shared with us that they always find the sessions full of joys, lots of fun and shared happiness and the activities offered at the sessions keep them meaningfully engaged

- Many women participants enjoy colouring Mandalas as the men folk love playing cards
- Women who engage in colouring have found the activity has provided them a therapeutic impact because it helped block too many bad memories
- Many participants have requested different activities to be provided at their homes during the lockdown to keep them both busy and occupied
- Many participants have mentioned that the cards & coffee sessions helped them to develop friendships and networking amongst the participants, bond with volunteers and staff who involve working with them
- It also enabled the participants to: understand and learn about wider culture, little improvements in their language, communication skills and importantly to seek support whenever required from the local libraries, through their involvement in this program.

COFFEE & CARDS & COVID-19

Throughout the lockdowns and restrictions of COVID-19, the Cultural Exchange team has maintained a strong connection with staff at both libraries and the Coffee and Card participants themselves. We recognised that the group was particularly vulnerable to suffer from isolation during this time and were committed to checking in on their health and wellbeing regularly. We did this by:

- Radha making weekly phone calls to provide comfort and assurance
- Coordinating with the library teams an “At Home” Exhibition designed to encourage the participants to document their time in isolation. This was done by taking photographs with a disposable camera provided to them and resulted in an online video and exhibition at both libraries.
- This project provided a good reason for Glenys & Radha to visit the homes of participants (always in line with restrictions and guidelines) which was a lovely experience for all at a difficult time
- We also distributed colouring pencils and paper to provide a focus for some of the women participants in the early stages of the restrictions. This was boosted by items purchased by the Library including jigsaw puzzles and again through grant funds received by Jemma through radio 2AY- No Boredom Bags.

We have also kept in touch with our many program volunteers throughout this period.



Homework Help

Homework Help is another popular activity of the Cultural Exchange Program for young children from the Migrant and Refugees background. The delivery of homework support was initiated when the need to assist these children in their school's assignment by many parents was not fulfilled. Over 25 sessions of homework support have been provided for 20 plus children in assisting them in their school assignments as well as other reading and writing tasks with a help of more than 12 dedicated volunteers, since July 2019 to March 2020. Many changes such as positive behaviour, socialising and group work skills and improvement in their academic performances have been witnessed in many children who have attended homework sessions regularly. However, the delivery of homework has been postponed at present due to an outbreak of pandemic.

Conversations in English

Conversations in English is another program which has been delivered in Wodonga Library with a help of dedicated volunteers in partnership with Wodonga library Team. An intent of this program is to assist people who want to improve their conversation skills but cannot afford to go to TAFE or other institutions due to costs associated with it. Over 15 sessions of Conversations in English have been provided for 5 -7 female participants who have come from five different countries across the world, from July 2019 to March 2020. Initiation of conversations on a one on one basis on general topics, in informally designed sessions, guided by a motivational volunteer, helped the participants improve their conversational skills at a much faster rates than expected.

Bus

- Processes and procedures have been updated for the bus
- A session was held for all volunteer drivers and bus "runners" to refresh procedures and thank them for their involvement
- An annual bus audit document was developed and completed

Glenys Atkins & Radha Guragai
Cultural Exchange

Kitchen in The Hood

The mobile food trailer, Kitchen in The Hood, has been on quite a journey over the past year in preparation for event and neighbourhood participation.

- The internal fit-out was altered and warranty upgrades carried out during September 2019 – March 2020
- Presentations to CALD community students at Riverina Institute TAFE were held in March with a view to August food-handling training
- A morning tea was held for people who have been involved in the van so far, to keep them up to date with what was in the pipeline
- Harmony Day (March) was earmarked as the first 2020 outing for the van, however, this and all other training and event plans were postponed due to COVID-19

Social Enterprise Training

Grant funding provided the resources for the Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE) to facilitate Social Enterprise Training specific for the KiTH initiative.

- A full one-day session in February provided an introduction to Social Enterprise. This was attended by
 - 5 VRB staff members,
 - 1 VRB Board member
 - 3 CALD community members who have had past involvement with VRB and/or food handling training in preparation for event roll-out
 - 3 representatives from local community organisations
- This broad session of introduction was to be followed by 6 sessions specific to KiTH including a full day visit to other local businesses running as social enterprises
- COVID-19 had other plans however, and the remainder of the course was run remotely over 2 months
- This program was intense and at times challenging due to the remote nature of the learning and the inability for participants to connect between sessions.
- ACRE were flexible in their approach and provided tremendous support to all, including re-scheduling to include a session outside VRB with the van on site in the car park to build momentum and connection (when restrictions allowed).
- The resources are permanently available for participants and will be valuable to re-start the thinking around the model and structure that KiTH aspires to.



Glenys Atkins
Project Coordinator

Settlement Services

The Settlement Services program is funded by Department of Home Affairs Services Settlement Engagement Transition Support (SETS) Program and works with clients from humanitarian and refugee backgrounds in Albury and Wodonga.

We have seen many changes over the past financial year.

Staffing wise; Frank Johnson retired in December 2019 after many years working with the AWVRB. Our casual Bi-lingual Support Worker Marcel Bentana finished in December to take up a full-time position elsewhere in 2020. Carol McQuade put in her resignation in May and finished with us in July 2020. Our new Caseworker, Edwina Willett and Bi-Lingual Support Worker, Joyce Manthi were appointed to start in July 2020.

Programs

March 2020 saw the AWVRB office close due to COVID-19 and staff working from home. Caseworkers provided outreach services to clients at TAFEs, home visits and offsite meetings as required. We have been able to adapt our services to connect with clients and other service providers on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facetime, Messenger, email and we have become very proficient in all things Zoom!

In response to COVID-19 and issues arising in the community, AWECC have been hosting weekly Zoom meetings with Settlement Sector organisations including – AWVRB, AWECC, Red Cross, Uniting, Murray Valley Sanctuary Refugee Group, STARTTS, Gateway Health, RDA and VIC Department Premier & Cabinet. This group has collaborated to ensure our clients have continued service and access to information in their own language. Information translated through Government and other organisations has been shared, and with funding from Department of Premier & Cabinet the group was able to employ 2 casual workers who have translated COVID-19 information into written form along with voice recordings and video clips, that hasn't been available in languages used by our clients locally, as well as translating information directly relevant to our border region.

Highlights

- Numerous group information sessions and workshops were held with topics ranging from Legal Aid – Sponsoring Family and Citizenship, Healthy Lunch Boxes, Bushfire Safety and a 4 week Citizenship Program.
- We were also involved in programs including the Birang CALD Driving program, Job Readiness workshops, Careers Expo, and Bhutanese and Congolese community festivals.
- We have provided Cultural Awareness Training to local organisations and training providers, and run employment readiness workshops such as the Intel Basic Computer program and Pathways to Volunteering and Work.

Youth Settlement

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

Following consultations with youth, we partnered with Headspace and Gateway Health to develop and deliver Healthy Relationship Workshops to multicultural youth in English as Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) classes in high schools across Albury and Wodonga.

Youth clients have also attended Interview Skills sessions, How2Days Work Readiness events along with youth leadership programs.

Good News Story

Wellness Packs

With funding provided by VIC Department of Premier & Cabinet, the settlement sector group purchased items and prepared Wellness Packs (which included jigsaws, arts & crafts, puzzles, games, books, skipping ropes, colouring books and pencils).

The packs were distributed to over 120 CALD families across Albury/Wodonga during lockdown in May 2020.



Diana Elliott, Edwina Willet and Joyce Manthi
Settlement Services Team

IT Support

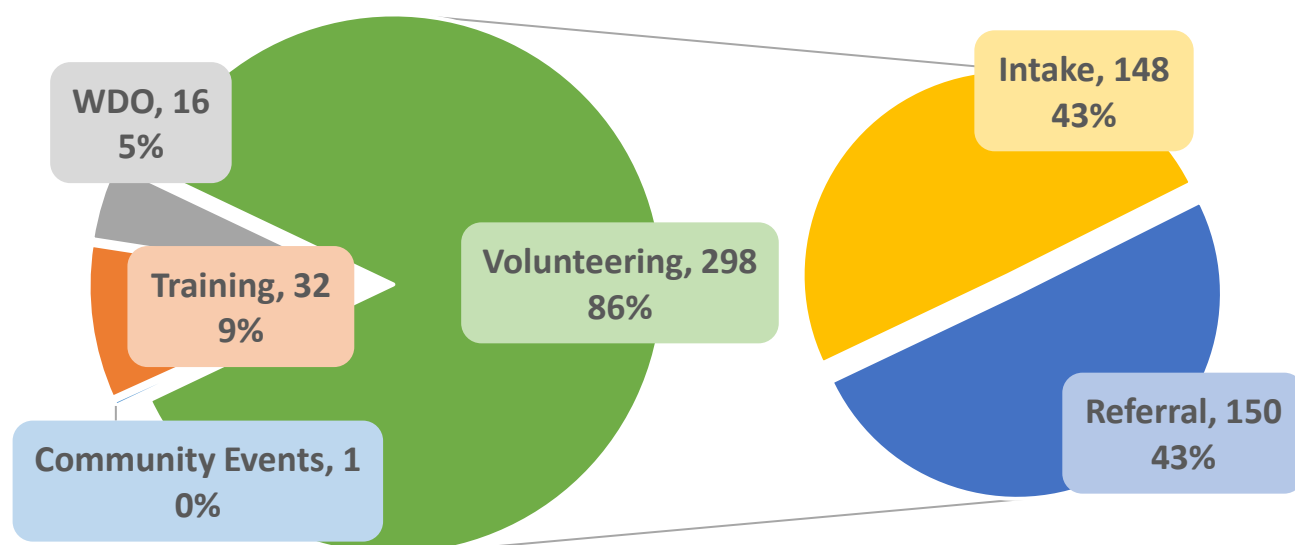
IT/Social Media

Providing IT support to the team within the office & online for computers, devices, phones, monitor and program problems and questions. Maintaining and updating the website system and information as required. Researching and purchasing completed for required technology. Worked through Shared Drive with direction from office manager and removed many doubled up documents and cleaned up folders. Uploading flyers and information posts on Facebook & Twitter. Set up outlook & assisted with Zoom problems for various staff members on laptops / phones. Researching + testing the Moodle platform.

DEX & Skillsbank

DEX data continued to be input as needed – volunteers, training and occasionally assisting SETS inputting data. Created various reports and graphs with DEX information. Kept staff updated on DEX login switch over from AUSKey to myGovID. Created a list of active organisations & roles while sorting through and de-activating many roles of those that have temporarily shut down due to COVID. Contacting volunteers that register online. Contacting organisations about active status, insurances, and volunteer roles status. Sent out communication emails to organisations with COVID updates for the office or regarding volunteering.

DEX Volunteer Management Program July 2019 - June 2020



Other

Developed PowerPoint and invite for AWVRB Afternoon Tea thank you event. Attended 4 days of the 5 day Health & Safety Representative course at Thurgoona Training Academy, will attend the final day in November. Called various AWVRB volunteers to ask about their How Did You Start Volunteering stories and shared them online through the week of National Volunteers Week. Working on documents & setting up technology for Gizmo Plus project.

Stephanie Dodd
IT Systems/Data Support