

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre
Incorporated



ANNUAL REPORT

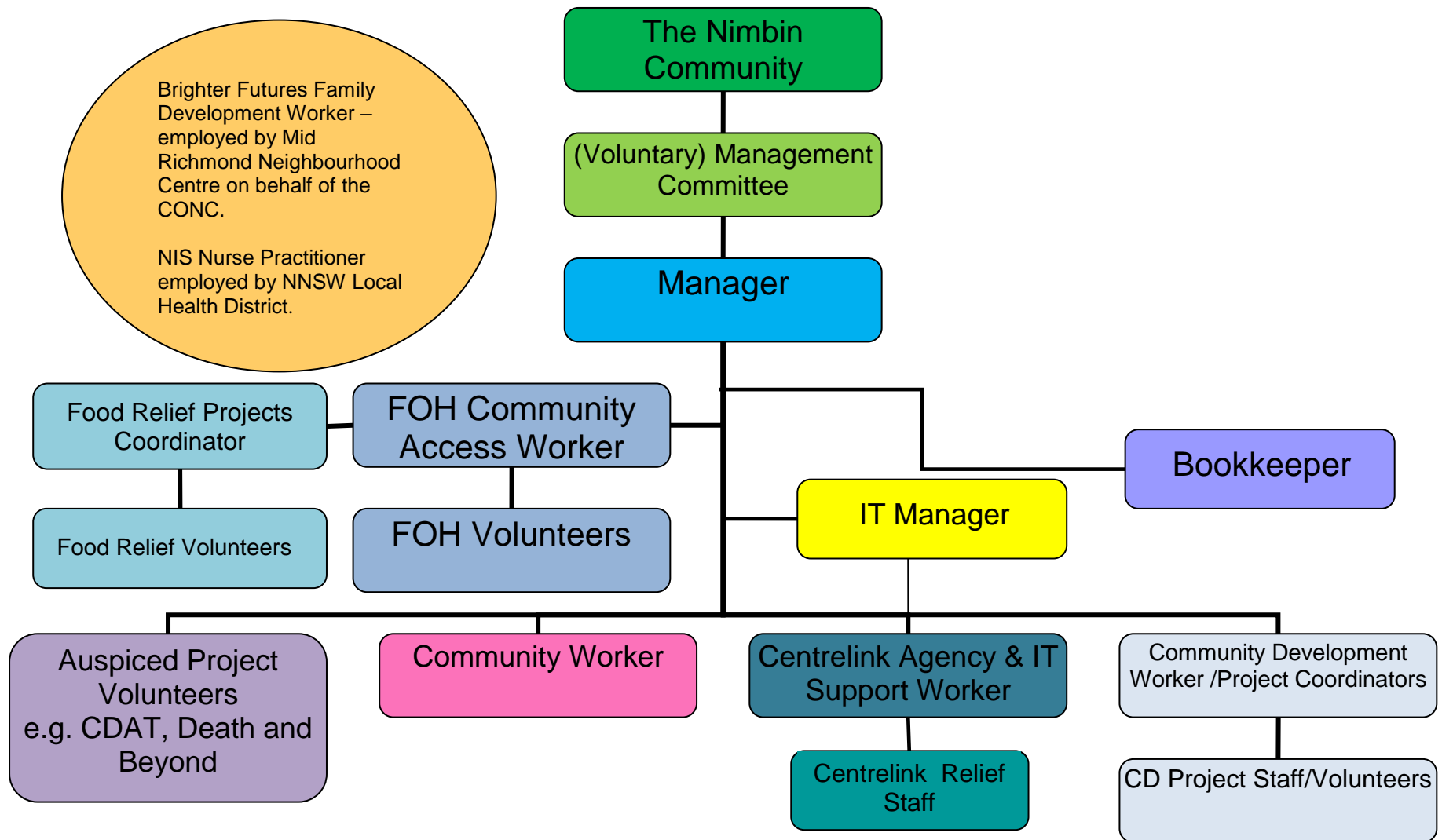
1st July 2021 – 30th June 2022

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Appendices - Audited Financial Reports for the 2021-2022 financial year.

NNIC Organisational Chart





ABOUT US



Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC) is a not for profit incorporated association, and a registered charity with gift deductible status. NNIC is governed by a voluntary management committee which is accountable to the Nimbin community, NNIC's members, regulatory and funding bodies. NNIC employs staff and volunteers, delivers various projects and activities directly, as well as providing an auspice role for community groups and projects.

NNIC works in partnership with many organisations, government and business, both locally and across the Northern Rivers.

OUR TEAM in 2021-2022

Staff

Natalie Meyer, Manager

Julia Melland, Bookkeeper

Peter Hawkins, Community Worker

Elke Tavra, Relief Community Worker

Kath Moyes, Community Access Worker

Nicole Raward, Community Access Worker and Casual Relief Services Australia/Centrelink

Stephanie Seckold, Community Development Worker

David Julian, Services Australia/Centrelink Agent and IT Support

Laura Hill, Casual Relief Services Australia/Centrelink

Kirsty Pamplin, Casual Relief Services Australia/Centrelink

Reg Saunders, Casual Relief Services Australia/Centrelink

Chris Harris – Casual IT Administrator

Virginia Waters – Project Coordinator – Community Disaster Info, Education and Fun Day

Max Reithmuller – IT Consultant

Management Committee

Lisa Lucken, Chairperson

Janice Potter, Deputy Chairperson (resigned)

Matthew Brumley, Deputy Chairperson

Reg Saunders, Secretary, Public Officer

Helga Bligh, Treasurer (resigned)

Laurel Grant, Treasurer

Chibo Mertineit, Ordinary Member
Paul Le Bars, Ordinary Member
Sabina Brady, Ordinary Member
Tashanna Fuller, Ordinary Member

Volunteers

Front of House Support – Front Desk, Cleaning, Stalls etc:

Mark Hill, Ron Duffy, Chris Harris, Reg Saunders, Roxane Graham-Smith, Chantelle Lapham, Tom Schuf, Gavin Ryder, Samantha Elizabeth, Tia Koivisto, Kirsty Pamplin.

Webmaster: Dave Julian (and Tom Schuf).

Food Relief Projects Coordinator: Heidi Glover.

Soup Kitchen/Food Team: Heidi Glover, Ron Duffy, Ryder Pope, Sarah Donnelly, Liz Ipping, Sophie Lichon, Bob Keane, Doug Moffett, Judith Springer, Toni Martin, Roxane Graham-Smith, Kirsty Pamplin, Gail Clarke (Community Xmas Lunch).

Many thanks to the Anglin Family for their regular cook ups of meals for our freezer.

Cleaning Fairies: Heidi Glover, Nicole Raward, Perlicita Olivar

Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) Members: Chibo Mertineit, Deborah Woodbridge, Sabina Brady, Amber Johnstone, Catherine Wisniewski, Natalie Meyer (Chair).

7 Sibley Street maintenance, gardening and mowing: Andrew Edwards-Taylor, Eric Humphries, Karen Arielli, Steven David.

7 Sibley Street volunteers – shop front etc: Sienna Blake, Doug Pinch, Christine O'Brien.

7 Sibley Street Compost Loo build: Adrian Medcalf of Green-e Building, Shane Moore, Mick.

OUR SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

Our Services

- Community Hub (information and referrals/community development) – *funded by NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) – Targeted Early Intervention (TEI).*
- Energy Accounts Payment Assistance scheme (EAPA) vouchers, Phone cards and taxi vouchers.
- Community Access to Technologies: *funded via fees for services.*
- Services Australia (Centrelink) Agency – *funded by Commonwealth Services Australia.*
- Nimbin Integrated Services (NIS) – *(clinical service for dual diagnoses (people struggling with mental health and or alcohol/other drug issues) - the Nurse Practitioner position is funded by the North Coast Local Health District, and NNIC's costs of supporting and accommodating the project are funded by Healthy North Coast /North Coast Primary Network.*
- Brighter Futures Far North Coast – Nimbin Outlet Agency – *funded by NSW DCJ via the Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres Far North Coast (CONC).*
- CONC Emergency Relief (material aid, case coordination and wrap around services) – Nimbin Outlet Agency - *funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) via the CONC.*
- CONC Food Recovery project.
- Material Aid: e.g. Food parcels/Meals/Tea and Coffee/Soup Kitchen/blankets etc: *funded via donations.*
- Disaster response and recovery.

What is 'Community Development'?

Community development is a process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them. Community development empowers community members and creates stronger and more connected communities.

(<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/what-community-development>)

The basis of community development is the idea that local people already know what the issues and problems are and how to solve them. The community development approach assists communities to undertake projects in planned and structured ways, recognising the strengths and knowledge of local people and providing leadership.

NNIC is committed to community development which contributes to a stronger community and region. Underpinning this is a strengths-based approach and the understanding that community pride and cohesion is the key to a

functioning community and reducing crime, disadvantage, isolation and unemployment. We have seen that people working together and sharing resources can lead to significant activity including economic benefits. Community development is therefore a major element of NNIC's core business.

Our Community Development Activities in 2021-2022

- Nimbin Disaster Resilience Group (NDRG)
- 7 Sibley St – Nimbin's Sustainable Living Hub – workshops, activities, events, Seed Savers, community composting, community gardens.
- Community Disaster Info, Education and Fun Day – including development of disaster preparedness resources for young people.
- Welcome to Nimbin Kit updates and distribution.
- Auspicing Nimbin CDAT
- Auspicing Nimbin Death and Beyond
- Auspicing NDRG funded project to install shipping container at Nimbin Showgrounds to store community emergency supplies.

Other Services/Activities Co-located at NNIC:

- Various community meetings
- Mobile Library Bus (Thursdays)
- As from late March 2022 and continuing - Flood Recovery Hub services including Services Australia, Services NSW, Resilience NSW, DCJ – Emergency Housing.

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to our services and activities, and to the functioning of the Nimbin community in general. A number of volunteers assist with the operations of our front desk and technologies. Many other volunteers are involved in our community development projects.

We are a registered provider for Community Service Orders (Corrective Services), Work Development Orders (Revenue NSW) and Centrelink/JobActive volunteer placements. We also provide placements for school and tertiary students.



REPORTS 2021 -2022

Management Committee Report

Matt Brumley – Deputy Chairperson

Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC) continues to demonstrate why it is a respected and valued part of the Nimbin and district community. Dedicated staff, relevant, timely programs and services, plus enormous adaptability have enabled the NNIC to navigate effectively a remarkably challenging and dramatic FY 21-22.

COVID. Although we began to see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel through the second half of 2021, lingering COVID-19 challenges continued to be a significant restraining force on the community, and NNIC, getting back to normal. It was only through hard work and dedication of the NNIC team that the Centre was able to deal with various COVID restrictions, juggle vaccination requirements and preferences, and still deliver safely the best quality services and activities possible.

The Floods. When the flood disaster struck on 28 Feb, Nimbin was isolated. For days the community had no choice but to survive; relying on its own resources, cooperation and innovation, with only sporadic external support. From gathering and analysing information in aid of affected residents, to the direct provision of necessities, communication of accurate information about roads, water infrastructure, telecommunications, availability of services and more, NNIC was central to supporting Nimbin and surrounds. While NNIC played a key role in the community's flood response, it could only do so with exceptional cooperation and support from key local and government agencies or organisations such as the RFS, NSW Police, A&I Society, the CWA, as well as local businesses. With the likelihood of another wet Summer ahead and the lessons of the last 12 months still ringing in our ears, the NNIC team's disaster response planning and preparation situates us well for the future. We will be ready to support the community, come what may.

Programs and Funding. Even under the duress of COVID and the floods, NNIC delivered the vast majority of its services and activities. This annual report provides an excellent wrap-up of what was achieved this financial year, so I won't address specifics here. Suffice to say, it is a great achievement and testament to our people who continue to commit themselves to serving the community. Financially, NNIC is in sound position, however, funding for specific programs continuously ebbs and flows and we are always competing for limited resources. Much of NNIC's funding is from government grants (your taxpayer money) or benevolent donations by community members, which means none of it is permanently assured! Therefore, seeking funding from diverse sources remains an important endeavour for the NNIC management team. We feel a great sense of responsibility to use wisely community money, ensuring that funding goes as directly as possible to our programs.

People and Community. NNIC services don't just happen; our volunteers (both regular and occasional) and employees are what makes us tick, regardless of whether their contribution is big or small. We are a diverse organisation, comprised of people from all walks of life, with varied experiences, skills and knowledge; we embrace that diversity for the greater good of the community. We are a true reflection of the community, which makes the NNIC better and more robust, allowing us to do more for Nimbin and surrounds. The management committee, therefore, expresses its great appreciation for the terrific efforts of all our people, the very same people also affected by COVID, floods and the rigours of everyday life. Thank-you for everything you do!

This report highlights a great team effort that continues a decades long commitment to the local community. I sincerely commend it to you.



NNIC Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Progress in 2021-22

NNIC is sustainable and well managed.

- TEI Program Logic reviewed.
- Reporting against UN SDGs commenced
- \$3,016 general donations received, \$8,430 (dons) & \$3,653 (income) for Sibley St, \$2,435 for community cooling plate, and \$13,342 Flood Appeal + pre-paid visa cards \$3100.
- \$142,947 extra short-term project/ER funds secured.
- Memberships = 81(20 less than 20-21)

NNIC is responsive to community needs.

- Submissions made to Lismore City Council re:
 - ✓ Budget and operational plan 2023
 - ✓ Boundary adjustment 7 Sibley st
- NNIC Community Emergency Response Plan implemented and Flood response initiated on 1st March 2022.
- 5 x the average occasions of service provided between March and June 2022.
- Submissions made to Janelle Saffin, NSW Flood Inquiry, Lismore City Council re local flood impacts, landslips

Community members, esp. the disadvantaged, have access to services, resources and support.

- CONC Food Recovery continued. Fresh food delivered to NNIC every Wednesday.
- \$81,493 worth of food, fuel, stockfeed, building supplies, bobcat & electricity vouchers provided to disadvantaged and flood impacted people
- Flood updates posted around the village.
- Disaster Recovery services hosted at NNIC since March 2022.
- Covid PPE and RATs distributed.

The community is well-resourced to address its needs and aspirations.

- Nimbin Community Disaster Plan progressed.
- Strategic relationships maintained.
- Funds secured for community projects.
- Skills share workshops conducted.
- Equipment Library restocked.

Services Snapshot - What We Did in 2021-2022

Early
Intervention/Info/referrals
11,116 O/S
CW: 847
Front of House/Manager: 9724
7 Sibley St: 545

Material Aid
8,931 O/S
ER Case Coordination: 763
Meals/Food Parcels: 5,249
Misc essential items: 845
Showers: 118
Telstra/EAPA vouchers: 43
Christmas Hampers/Gifts: 25/60
Food Vouchers: 119
Laundry vouchers: 109
Soup Kitchen: 1600

Access to Hub
Equipment Etc.
2,908 O/S
Community Access to
technologies: 2,843
Room Hire: 65

Identified
Clients/Customers
3,065
NNIC CW: 297
NIS: 137
Centrelink: 2,631

Website
www.nnic.org.au
Unique Visitors
12,977
Average 1,081/month
Visits: 30,795 Average: 2.3 per
visitor

General Assistance
(Front Desk)
1,502 O/S
Access Phones: 137
Appointments – client reception
and support: 1,365

Workshop participants
305
7 Sibley St: 195
Dying to Know (online): 34
Family Fun Day(online): 47
CDAT Cannabis Forum: 29

Disaster Response
Recovery
Agencies/services hosted
at NNIC post floods: **7**
Flood Relief Vouchers:
\$68,000

CDAT
3 O/S
Info posters
produced: 2
Film Produced

Centrelink
Agency
7,342 O/S

Events/Workshops
37 O/S
Big Community Xmas
Lunch
Textiles Fair
Sibley St wkshops: 35

Total Occasions of Service
= 31,836 (+ 30,795 website visits)
3,065 Identified Clients + 305 workshop
participants

Some of our Outcomes for 2021-2022

Service Outcomes

General NNIC Services:

97.5% of survey respondents Agreed/Strongly Agreed that they were better able to deal with the issues they sought help with via NNIC.

100% Agreed/Strongly Agreed that the service listened to them and understood their issues.

100% Agreed/Strongly Agreed that they were satisfied with the services they received.

TEI – Community Worker Services:

88.6% of clients reported overall positive outcome in relation to their Circumstances.

97.7% of clients reported overall positive outcome in relation to their Goals.

Nimbin Integrated Services:

57% of people achieved their goals and completed their case plans.

98% were satisfied with the NIS services provided.

Sibley St Workshops Outcomes

96% of groups demonstrated overall positive outcomes.

98% of participants surveyed reported increased confidence.

56% reported said they were inspired to consider a new business idea.

100% said they learned new skills to improve their life circumstances.

100% said they feel more connected to the community as a result of the workshop.

Our CO2-e footprint

(travel, electricity,
food, water & waste)

10,565kg

Food Recovery

- Over **36 tonnes** of food rescued via CONC Food Recovery across the region in 20-21.
- **4 tonnes** of that was distributed by NNIC in 20-21

Managers' Report

Natalie Meyer, Manager

It is difficult to imagine a more challenging twelve months than we saw in 2021-2022.

The financial year began with ongoing COVID 19 restrictions including two lockdowns in the region in September and October, and continuing event cancellations including Nimbin NAIDOC Day and the annual Nimbin Show in 2021.

We received funding from Healthy North Coast Bushfire Grants to incorporate a Disaster Resilience focus into Sustainability Alley at the Nimbin Show, with activities aimed at children and young people in particular. When the Show was cancelled, we arranged to hold the event at Nimbin Central School instead. However, Covid restrictions subsequently imposed at the School rendered this impossible also and in the end we were forced to downsize and pivot



the event to online workshops instead, held on 13th November 2021. By then online fatigue was clearly evident, especially among children and young people, nonetheless 48 parents and children attended one or more workshop. The high-quality workshops delivered on the day included: Evacuation Kit Pillowcase workshop for kids with Red Cross, Build a Native Bees Hotel with Barbara Mills, and Beeswax Wraps with North East Waste. 100 showbags were printed and filled with information, activities and resources for disaster preparedness. 50 of those showbags were distributed to families, with the remaining 50 to be distributed at Sustainability Alley at the 2022 Nimbin Show.

Vaccination policies caused the departure of several dedicated volunteers from the team, plus most of our Vacation Care staff including our long serving Coordinator. This negatively impacted on our capacity to undertake the work involved in applying to become a registered child care provider so as to retain the Vacation Care program in Nimbin, the funding for that program having been discontinued at the end of the 20-21 year.

COVID restrictions eased in time for us to hold the annual Big Community Xmas Lunch at the Town Hall in December 2021, for the first time in two

years. The event was very well attended and community members really enjoyed being able to gather together after such a long time.

The respite was short lived, however, with COVID breaking out across the community from January onwards, further impacting on staffing levels and supply chains, and particularly upon the construction of the composting toilet facility at 7 Sibley Street.

But there was of course more to come with the two devastating flood events on the 29th Feb/1st March, and again exactly one month later.

The floods have touched everyone in the Northern Rivers Region in one way or another. Lives were lost, damage was widespread to homes, infrastructure such tanks and water lines, many animals perished (both livestock and wildlife), and large areas of land simply slipped away suddenly reducing the available usable land for grazing, homes, gardens, even forests. The damage to our main Regional Centre, Lismore, is immense and as at the end of June 2022 only around 10% of Lismore businesses in the CBD and North/South were back up and running. At least 1000 people from Lismore alone were still displaced and staying in emergency accommodation across the region and in Qld, due to the destruction of their homes.



There are numerous displaced people in NNIC's catchment area also due to their houses being damaged or destroyed by landslips, washouts and fallen trees. As at 30 June an estimated 20% of people in our catchment still had no phone or internet service. Many kms of internal private roads and driveways remain destroyed or severely compromised.

The response to the disaster by the Nimbin community, local businesses, our local RFS brigade and locally isolated Police, and the community organisations on the ground and spontaneous volunteers was extraordinary. The NNIC team sprang into action and opened our doors to the community at 10am on Monday 1st March, operating on a skeleton crew at first, because many people were trapped on the other side of landslips and broken roads and could not get into the village. The NNIC Emergency Response Plan was activated. Various community members dropped in and offered to help.

In circumstances where the community had become locally isolated due to the destruction of the surrounding road and telecommunications networks, we reverted to posting to paper notices around the village with updates about water, roads, power, telecommunications, fuel and food availability etc. These were updated and replaced up to three times daily after the floods, as per our ERP.

Notably, maps became highly valuable, people having learned to rely on GPS and google maps to which they no longer had access. Fortunately, we did have maps at NNIC and many copies of these were made. We had a very large topographical map of the area which was part of our Food Security mapping project, and that big map ended up down at the Showgrounds and became the central operations map for the external official combat agencies when they arrived in town including the helicopter operations.

Various community organisations on the ground worked closely together, having committed to do so after the 2019 bushfire experience, and an information desk was set up in the foyer of the Town Hall to both gather and distribute info. Fuel being in short supply, there were volunteers running messages on foot between the CWA premises, NNIC, the Town Hall and the Evacuation Centre once it opened up a couple of days later at the Showgrounds, to facilitate effective communications between us all. Demand for NNIC's support services and material aid sharply increased and in March and April 2022 our occasions of service were five times the average monthly levels.

When the ADF arrived in town to assist impacted residents, we became responsible for gathering suitable jobs for them to tackle and for dispatching these jobs to them on a daily basis. That list of jobs evolved to become our case list of impacted residents, which will soon be handed over to our new Recovery Support Service for which we have been funded to provide by Resilience NSW in the coming financial year.

Many of Nimbin's local businesses, plus the Hospital, the Medical Centre and the Post Office also went above and beyond to get the village back up and running again after the floods. The Hospital had limited NBN signal via their own tower relay to the Lismore Base Hospital, and they generously opened up their signal to the community. This enabled people to contact family and friends, and in our case our team members, Lismore Council and our various funding bodies and partners, to check on them or update on the situation for the Nimbin community. As a result, the Hospital grounds became the most popular place in town for several days.

In June 2022, to acknowledge these immense contributions, the CWA and NNIC together presented Certificates of Awesomeness to:
Nimbin Aged Care and Respite Service, Nimbin A & I Society, Nimbin Apothecary, Nimbin Bakery, Nimbin Bowling Sports and Recreation Club, Nimbin Caravan Park, Nimbin Building Materials, Nimbin Bush Theatre and



Other Challenges in 2021-2022 included

- The composting toilet project at 7 Sibley Street has been hindered by delays. After an unexpectedly long turnaround time for the DA, the use of hemp masonry for the composting toilet at 7 Sibley Street was initially rejected by Council for breaching the Heritage provisions of the Nimbin Development Control Plan (DCP). The use of hemp was eventually approved following our submission that the sustainability clause in the DCP should take precedence, given the overall aims of the 7 Sibley Street project. Construction finally commenced some five months later than anticipated, and has been subject to continuing delays in 2022 caused by covid and illness, loss of workers, supply issues and escalating costs.
- The first step in the boundary adjustment between 7 Sibley Street was unanimously approved by Council at its final meeting of 2021. Council elections were held in December and at the first Ordinary Meeting of the new Council in February 2022, Cr Rob sought to effectively rescind the Motion passed in the previous year. We were able to convince Council to delay a decision on the Motion by Cr Rob until further investigations are conducted by Councillors and we are able to produce a revised site plan.
- The Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan was due for review in the past year but the combined impacts of Covid and the Flood Disaster rendered this impossible to achieve.
- The first two months after the floods were very chaotic. When we came to do our After-Action Review it took a considerable collective effort to piece together the sequence of events. From this we learned to diarise these much better next time.

Other Highlights:

- We received significant additional funding support from NSW Department of Communities and Justice via the Social Sector Transformation Fund and Social Sector Support Fund, as well as from the CONC via the Commonwealth Department of Social Services Emergency Relief funding. This funding greatly increased our capacity to support the community during Covid and after the floods.
- We also received funding to install a shipping container at the Nimbin Showgrounds to stock with emergency equipment, thanks to The Flood Relief Fund (Partnership between Northern Rivers Community Foundation (NRCF) and the Byron Community Centre), and the generosity of the Nimbin A&I Society. The container is due for delivery in August 2022.
- Our Strategic Planning Day held in June 2022 was well attended by NNIC teamsters, despite considerable team fatigue.

Partnerships and Networks

The **Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres Far North Coast** (CONC) remains our primary partnership and is currently funded to deliver Emergency Relief (Commonwealth – DSS), the North Coast Food Recovery Program, and

Brighter Futures (NSW DCJ) across the region, as well the Staying Home Leaving Violence in Tweed and Ballina and the Tweed Child and Family Service in Murwillumbah (NSW DCJ).

Across the Region, the CONC Food Recovery program recovered **36,393kg** of food that otherwise would have gone into landfill, in the past year. Around **4,000kg** of that was distributed via NNIC.

The CONC partnership proved to be especially valuable in enabling our community flood recovery efforts, by attracting significant funding through the Emergency Relief program to distribute to flood impacted community members, which we did by providing \$500 to \$1000 vouchers to suppliers including livestock feed suppliers, Nimbin Building Materials and Mr Bobcat, plus food and fuel vouchers.

The **Nimbin Advisory Group** (NAG) continued to provide a strong communication conduit between Council and the Nimbin community. Plans for the amenities block to service the Nimbin Pool and surrounding recreational area, progressed to costings and were submitted to Council for consideration in the 22-23 operational plan and budget. Unfortunately, Council did not vote in support of its inclusion in the coming year's budget. To coincide with the end of the former Council's term of office, Community members were invited to submit EOIs to become NAG members for the reformation of the group after the Council elections. The last meeting of the former NAG group was held in November 2021 and the first NAG meeting of the new NAG members under the new Council term was held on 26th May 2022.

The **Nimbin Disaster Resilience Group** (NDRG) worked on the implementation of the Community Disaster Plan and commenced a review of the Plan and achievements to date in January 2022. The work of the NDRG enabled the fast, community-led response to the 2022 flood event when the Nimbin community became locally isolated due to the destruction of the roads and communication networks. The experience has informed the further refinement of the Community Disaster Plan including the development of a Community Response and Recovery plan which is due for community consultations towards the end of the 2022 calendar year.

Pete Hawkins our Community Worker continued to attend **Nimbin Health and Welfare Interagency** meetings, which is useful for promoting services and activities and generating referrals between the participants.

The Community Worker also attended the regular **Nimbin Police Community Consultative Committee** meetings on behalf of NNIC.

Auspiced Projects

Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) "Our Cannabis Culture" film was completed in late 2021. The film was shown as a conversation starter at the

Cannabis Harm Reduction workshop held at the Nimbin Town Hall on 7th May 2022. Despite COVID and Flood impacts, 29 people attended including 7 young people. An lively conversation occurred, as captured by graphic scribe, Michelle Walker.



Cannabis workshop survey responses:

What in your view is the most significant issue that needs addressing to make our Cannabis Culture Safer & Healthier?

Prohibition.

No regulation of quality or strength.

Education is one-sided and we need to let people know about addiction.

Teach people about addiction as a human condition.

Smoking isn't for everyone.

Kids shouldn't smoke or do drugs because the brain hasn't fully developed yet.

Education for youth and adults on healthy use of cannabis and how to recognise and avoid addictive or self-destructive habits.

Inform yourself of the current facts.

Abuse by young people.

Stigma.

THE LOWDOWN ON SAFE CANNABIS USE

Non medicinal cannabis use has risks which can be reduced by the community working together to support safe and responsible use.

THC IN EDIBLES

Where will you be in TWO HOURS' time?

It can take 2 hours for effects to show, they can last for up to 8 hours and may be stronger than smoking it. Concentrations of THC in brownies and cookies are highly variable. Less is often best, and as with all cannabis use, try a small amount first to see if it's safe and has the desired effect.

Fizzy Drink ANYONE?

Anxiety, agitation, nausea, and paranoia are some negative effects of cannabis use. A sugary drink can help regulate blood sugar levels if this occurs, but always call 000 for medical help if you're concerned or you or someone else seems unwell from cannabis use.

3 SECOND ABSORPTION

Holding cannabis smoke in does not increase its concentrations and doesn't get you higher, as cannabinoids are absorbed within the first few seconds. Using a non-dyed filter, also reduces harmful effects from chemical compounds released in smoking cannabis. Glass smoking ware is always better over plastic too, as this reduces the toxins released from plastics.

MIXING IT UP MIXES YOU UP

Avoid mixing cannabis with alcohol or other drugs, to prevent unintended effects.

SHORT TERM GAIN FOR LONG TERM PAIN?

If you suffer from anxiety, or are having a bad day, cannabis might make you feel worse, not better. Proceed with caution.

NATURAL OR NOT?

Not all cannabis is organically grown and may contain pesticides and other chemicals. "Synthetic Cannabis" products are chemical compounds and can have nasty effects. Not all cannabis dealers are ethical. Know what you're buying, and always maintain your safety when buying...don't get into debt, avoid going alone and meet in a safe place.

TAKE ACTION KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Take action by educating yourself, friends, and family on safe cannabis use. If you're pregnant, prone to mental health problems, or your brain is still developing (up to 25 yrs old), cannabis is not a good choice. The use of any drugs, even cannabis, can be harmful. Reach out and seek support if your cannabis use is negatively impacting on your social, work or family life.

Choose mindfully - be aware of who you may be influencing. Kids look to adults to guide their behaviours and choices.

NIMBIN Community Drug Action Team

How Could We Do Better/Improve the situation?

Educate people on the difference between THC and CBD.

Talking about it/educating.

Education about high THC levels and more knowledge on CBD/THC ratios.

Learn more and teach more.

Don't sell to young people.

Drive positive legal change by providing the public and politicians with

credible, intelligent explanations as to why prohibition does not work and causes more damage than good. Promote healthy coping mechanisms.

Deal with my own addiction.

Address people living with mental health issues and drug use.

Some kind of Class/talk in schools.

Develop an app that relates to ages 10-18 so if you put in your age it comes up with some things that you or your family can relate to so if your mum or dad is using drugs and you are scared you can be assured that they will be okay.

Nimbin Death and Beyond

The Death and Beyond group was forced to pivot the Dying to Know workshop to an online event. Following the engaging conversation held between the 34 participants, there was renewed resolve to forge ahead with the procurement of a cooling

Dying to Know

...about dealing with Death and Dying

With presentations by:

Zenith Virago, Celebrant and Deathwalker
and
Mimi Zenzamaier, Holistic Funeral Director & Celebrant
Death Doula & End-of-Life Consultant

Preparing for a home death Followed by a Q&A session Eco-friendly death options

Saturday 21st August 1pm - 3pm

NOW ONLINE!!!!

RSVP to admin@nnic.org.au and we will email you the link to join us

Do I need funeral insurance? The journey of grief

Brought to you by Nimbin Death and Beyond (auspiced by NNIC)

plate, for use at home deaths. Saskia Kouwenberg led a fundraising campaign and \$2,435 was raised towards the purchase and importation costs. To date Covid supply interruptions and other importation factors have meant that we have been unable to secure the purchase of a cooling bed (they are not available within Australia and are manufactured in the Netherlands), despite Saskia's concerted efforts.

Staff professional development

Various staff attended Professional Development opportunities including ASIST Suicide Prevention Training, First Aid/CPR training, Culturally Aware Trauma Informed Care with Dr Derek Chong, Virtual Workshop Facilitation training by Scott Dutton, Cyber Security via InfoXchange, DEX training by FAMS.

The Manager attended the 23rd annual IFS (see page 23 below) Conference in September 2021. The conference was due to be held for the first time in the Southern Hemisphere in 2020 in Sydney (in partnership with LCSA and ANHCA), however COVID restrictions forced the conference to be postponed and eventually go online in 2021. The theme was "Social Justice: The Unfinished Journey, Global Issues – Local Solutions". There were 100 guest speakers, panellists and presenters over 4 days, covering multiple time zones to cater for a global audience of over 350 attendees, with 11 different countries represented. Getting together with so many people from around the world working in community services and community development was an invaluable learning experience.

Finances

The financial state of the organisation remains healthy with over \$3.60 of (current) equity for every \$1 dollar of (current) debt as at 30 June 2022.

There was an overall deficit of \$10,163, which was better than was projected for the year, but nonetheless reflects the ongoing issue of our regular funding falling increasingly short of the escalating costs of overheads and wages. The additional funding provided by NSW Department of Communities and Justice via the Social Sector Support Fund was crucial in enabling us to retain service levels in the past year, despite the HR challenges caused by COVID and then the floods. For the coming year, the decision has been made to draw upon reserve funds in the short term, rather than reduce staffing hours and therefore service levels, given the ongoing need to support the community as much as possible post COVID and the floods.

Our bookkeeper Julia continues to maintain our books in a highly professional and accurate fashion.

This year we welcomed Graham Cook of Cook and Cook Accountants as our new auditor.

Organisational Carbon Footprint

CO2-e -Travel

Manager: 670kms

Other staff: 120kms

Total for travel: 790kms x 186g CO2-e/km = **147Kg** CO2-e

(assumptions: ~8L / 100 km | ~186g CO2-e / km (8L/100 km x 2.33 and divide by 100 = 186 g CO₂e/km)).

CO2-e Electricity

6713 kWh's BILLED (6379 NNIC +334 Sibley)

Solar production - Surplus to grid: 349kWh

Total for electricity: **5,664kg** CO2-e

CO2-e Water

Sibley St 7Kls plus NNIC 26Kls = **21kg** CO2e

CO2-e Waste

1 x 240L bin x fortnightly @75% = **1,498kg** CO2-e

CO2-e Food (for clients)

Approx \$109 weekly spend, mostly vegetarian = **3,235kg** CO2-e

Total CO2-e: 10,565kg = 10.56 tonnes (Cf 6.4t in 20-21 BUT that did not inc. food).

(Note: this is the first year we have included food. CO2-e ex food = 7.3T. The final ¼ of the year saw an increase in food and electricity due to the heavy use of the Centre post floods).

The global aim is for a max of 2t per person, and for organisations to steadily decrease their CO2-e.

Ref: <https://calculator.carbonpositiveaustralia.org.au/>



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

NNIC is a member of the Local Community Services Association (LCSA) which is the Peak Body for neighbourhood and community centres in NSW. LCSA is a member of the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (ANHCA), the Peak Body for neighbourhood and community centres in Australia. ANHCA is a member of the International Federation of Settlements and community Centers (IFS), which is the global Peak Body for neighbourhood and community centers ('settlement houses' being the term used for neighbourhood centers in the USA).

The IFS is a signatory to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. *[The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)*, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

The IFS is calling upon neighbourhood and community centres across the globe to consider how they may be contributing to the UN SDGs.



1 NO POVERTY



\$9,850 of electricity relief provided through the EAPA program to 49 people.
\$3,325 worth of Food and Fuel Vouchers provided.
\$68,318 worth of flood relief vouchers provided.
8 people paid off \$3,847 worth of unpaid fines via volunteering under the WDO scheme.
2,631 people assisted with income support issues via our Centrelink agency.
206 people's financial crises reduced via wrap-around services provided.

2 ZERO HUNGER



Community gardens at 7 Sibley Street: est. 30 people sharing harvest/seeds

Food Distributed in 21-22

Via Food Recovery Project:

Fresh fruit and vegetables– 2,800 kgs

Bread and rolls– 7,200 loaves and packs

Meat– 820 kgs

Baked treats– 805 packs

Via Food Pantry: 4,802 kgs

Via cooked meals: 3,081 meals

Via Friday Soup Kitchen: 1600 serves

Via Christmas hampers: 25 hampers

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



137 people supported to address mental health and/or AOD issues via NIS clinical service.

78 people successfully completed treatment plans with NIS (MH/AOD).

At least of 88% of the people who received services via the NNIC Community Worker reported moderate to full progress against goals and circumstances leading to empowerment and independence.

Local Flood response and recovery efforts initiated/supported.

100% of attendees at Sibley St workshops felt more connected to the community.

100% of attendees met someone new or connected with a new network of people.

28 people attended the Nimbin CDAT Cannabis Harm Reduction Forum, and 80 participated in the locally made film.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



MC representation: 60% women, 40% men, 0% other.

Chairperson is female, Secretary is male.

Staff representation: 69% women, 31% men, 0% other.

Volunteers: 55% women, 45% men, 0% other.

CDAT FASD campaign aimed at partners and friends. (Not only the pregnant woman's issue).

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



Provided community members with access to rainwater post floods.

Supported the distribution of clean drinking water to 80 residents impacted by broken mains water line post floods, for 5 weeks.

Provided 118 shower vouchers for flood impacted people.

Provided 109 laundromat vouchers to disadvantaged and/or flood impacted people (funded by St Vinnies).

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Shareholders in Enova Community Energy—locally owned energy retailer, applying profits to local renewable energy projects including addressing energy inequality and energy poverty e.g. solar garden project on social housing.

Member of Sustain Energy, Northern Rivers—collaboration working on regional renewable energy projects.

4.5kW array on premises at 71 Cullen Street.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



NOTE: NNIC questions the concept of perpetual economic growth, and prefers the goal of economic security and stability.

Skills workshops at 7 Sibley Street:

56% of participants reported new skills acquired to apply to a new business idea.

56% reported the workshop inspired them to consider a new business idea.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Demonstration composting and hemp masonry toilet under construction.
Tools and Equipment Library - sharing equipment to reduce consumption and user costs - 35 members.
7 Sibley Street promoting sustainable living skills and technologies - 545 visits (locals) and 334 (visitors).
Providing access to IT equipment - PCs, internet, phones, copy/print, plus rooms/space - 2,933 occasions service.

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



NNIC is a registered member of ACON's Welcome Here project, which promotes LGBTQI welcoming and inclusive businesses.
Bundjalung language promoted at the centre with key words & meanings on permanent display (with consent).
% of people accessing universal services who are First Nations People: 12%
% of FTE staff who are First Nation employees: 15%.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



7 Sibley Street promotes sustainable living ideas, skills and technologies.
Tools and equipment library - sharing resources/reducing consumption.
Stewardship role over the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan (SNCP) - Strategies under 9 key Focus Areas being progressed by NNIC, community organisations and community members.

Nimbin Community Disaster Plan reviewed and updated.

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



100% compostable or washable plates/cutlery etc used for our events and soup kitchen.
100% post-consumer waste recycled paper used.
100% of compostable waste is composted. 100% of recyclable plastic is separated and sent to recycling. Some of the produce grown using this compost is donated back to NNIC for events and food relief.
NNIC Purchasing policy embeds sustainability considerations
7 Sibley St promoting recycling and reduction of single use plastics.
Glass storage jars available at 7 Sibley Street.

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



Stewardship role over the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan (SNCP) - the SNCP strategies aim to either mitigate or adapt to climate change.

Our organisational CO2-e for 21-22 (electricity, travel, water, waste and food) = 10.5 tonnes.

15 LIFE
ON LAND



Workshops held at 7 Sibley St: cassava and bunya nut processing, resilient food gardening, coking with perennial tubers, rag rug making, making oil lamps, tools revival, furniture revival, pushbike maintenance, building with bamboo, cob building, dome construction.

Welcome to Nimbin Kit includes a page "Living on the land" plus wildlife and environmental information.

Wildlife info and referrals: 50.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



NNIC is a member of the following:

- Local Community Services Association (CSA), ANCHA and IFS.
- Better Chances Forum, Northern Rivers
- Nimbin Health and Welfare Committee, Nimbin Police Community Consultative Committee and Nimbin Advisory Group (convened by Lismore City Council).

We are partners in:

- Consortium of Neighbourhood Centres Far North Coast.
- Sustain Energy Northern Rivers.
- Nimbin Disaster Resilience Group.

Community Access Worker - Front of House Report

Nicole Raward, Community Access Worker (CAW)

I took over from Kath in the CAW role in July 2021. To say it's been an interesting learning curve is an understatement.

The role of Community Access Worker (Front of House) consists of the daily running of the front of house at NNIC, whilst ensuring continuity of communication between our staff, volunteers, clients and community members to ensure consistency of support and information.

The role involves welcoming community members when they present at NNIC including the initial triage of clients and booking them in with the various services at NNIC. It includes assisting with basic needs and providing a supportive environment whilst people wait for appointment with various workers in the Centre, as well as referrals to external organisations where appropriate. The number and complexity of issues faced on a daily basis can vary greatly and each day is unpredictable.

NNIC is often the first point of contact for someone in crisis.

The Community Access Worker recruits, rosters and supervises Centre volunteers including those who may have Centrelink mutual obligations, student placement or Work Development Order requirements.

COVID Impacts

COVID resulted in many external outreach services offering phone and online appointments, rather than providing face to face services. COVID restrictions limited the extent to which Health or Education staff could provide appointments or meetings with patients and their family members, or parents, on their premises, so NNIC was approached to provide space to facilitate such meetings including between the Community Care Mental Health Team and their clients. Working together also helped create greater community supports for these clients by linking them into other services available at NNIC.

Balancing our diverse community's needs and preferences, their safety and our own during this time has seen some tricky conversations, compromises and problem solving including seeing unmasked service users outside or providing phone appointments. Being inclusive to all is a core value of NNIC, so adapting to the changing requirements of COVID and vaccine mandates, keeping our essential services functional and safe for our community, our staff and volunteers, has been challenging.

I would like to thank the community for their understanding during these unprecedented times of our need to follow all health recommendations and for helping us adapt to this 'new normal'.

Disaster Response

NNIC was one of the first responders on the ground following the 2022 Flood Event. We stayed open for the following three weekends, providing daily information updates, communication access, food, material aid and support for our community. We worked alongside other organisations, government agencies and with locals who stepped up to respond to their community's needs, traversing landslides and partially collapsed roads to get to town to help and to ensure the needs of our isolated residents and vulnerable members were met. It has been heart-warming to witness the resilience of our community, to watch their generosity in action with neighbours helping each other, through donations to our local Flood Appeal Fundraiser and from other donations of time, food and goods. Our ability to work together under duress, to be flexible and adaptive, to remember and show care to those who need it is an indicator of the strength of our community and something we should be proud of. Many new networks were formed, and lessons learnt during these events that will only strengthen our ability as a community to respond to future disasters.

Disaster Recovery

Supporting our community's ongoing recovery has become part of our core business. Providing support, advocacy and advice navigating the bureaucracy of claim processes for government support and grants where our local knowledge of our community's individual response and recovery needs has been our focus. We have been keeping tabs on how our community are doing and working hard to see Nimbin wasn't forgotten in the greater recovery efforts.

NNIC became the Nimbin Flood Assistance point and we hosted various recovery agencies and services personnel including Services Australia, Services NSW, Resilience NSW, DCJ Housing staff, LHD Mental Health, Legal Aid, and the John Lyons group. Our staff worked collaboratively with these personnel to achieve client outcomes. The impacts felt by our community are unique to our local landscape, different to those experienced in Lismore, and for the first few months there were significant gaps in services and funding available to the community as the initial focus was on homes that had been inundated by water. In our area homes were lost to landslips and roads and water infrastructure were destroyed. We actively reached out to the community attempting to find solutions to the gaps we identified and the frustrating encounters we witnessed as external agencies struggled understand the issues such as landslides and Multiple Occupancy living.



Delegate visit to Nimbin- NSW Police Deputy Commissioner- Mal Lanyon, NNIC Manager- Nat Meyer, NSW Minister for Emergencies Services and Resilience- Stephanie Cook, NNIC CAW- Nicole Raward and Jackie Jones from Resilience NSW

NNIC's relationship with the Nimbin Branch of the CWA, the Nimbin Rural Fire Brigade and the Nimbin A&I Society strengthened further

as a result of the flood events. We worked together sharing resources and donations to provide for flood impacted residents. This included the provision of free hot showers down at the showground for residents whose domestic water infrastructure was destroyed, co-funded by the CWA and NNIC. We also provided point of contact helping to coordinate water deliveries and supplies as well as welfare checks carried out by the RFS.

The CWA also provided us with daily access to material aid in the form of clothing and bedding for those in need, something our limited storage at NNIC cannot easily accommodate.

Service Statistics

During COVID we experienced fewer occasions of service as many people chose to stay at home to keep safe, but during the final quarter of the year we saw a huge increase in occasions of service across all service areas as the pressures of rising living costs, the affordable housing crisis and the impacts of the floods all converged to throw people into total crisis.

Comparing the occasions of service in March 2022 with the same period in 2021 gives a clear picture of the impact of the floods:

March 2021 - total occasions of service 705

March 2022 - total occasions of service 5279

Many service users presented at NNIC for the first time. As a result of dealing with the floods we have formed deeper relationships and networks within our community.

Prior to the floods, the greatest area of unmet need was housing. 166 occasions of unmet need in relation to housing were recorded. This has

increased in the past few months with a greater number of rough sleepers and people living in their cars.

Front of House Occasions of Service

Reception: (triage, client appointments and support): **1,365** (Cf. 1,026 20-21, 1419 19-20, & 1441 18-19)

NNIC Community Workers: 436

NIS: 200 *

Brighter Futures: 0 (*service was suspended while a new Family Development Workers was recruited for Nimbin*)

Outreach: 313**

Notes: co-located services were interrupted by Covid

**Not a true reflection of actual occasions of service due to NIS response to Covid- work from home and telehealth appointments not recorded via FOH*

***Flood Recovery Assistance provided by Services Australia, Services NSW and Resilience NSW. This is also reflected in higher number of room bookings by external providers (65).*

Information and referrals – (inc. Manager): 9724 (CF. 3194 20-21, 4,458 19-20, 3,412 18-19)

Referrals: 2,484

Information given: 7,240

Plus 50 animal welfare info and referrals

Front Desk Material Aid Occasions of Service: 6,124 (Cf. 1,828 20-21, 3,504 19-20, 3,725 18-19)

Miscellaneous goods (toiletries, blankets etc): 845

Meals: 3,081

Food packs: 2,168

Showers: 30 CWA-donated vouchers given, plus another 88 showers paid for at the Showgrounds post floods: 118

Access Equipment/Rooms: 3,045 (CF. 3,632 20-21)

(PCs, copier, phones, printing, secretarial support, room bookings)

Note: We have seen an increase in the uptake of smart phones during Covid due to QR check-in requirements and the need to provide evidence of vaccination status. This may be a contributing factor in the reduced access to our IT equipment services with many people having learned to use their phone to access the internet, engage with online services and other apps for their business and care needs. This has also led to increased demand for assistance with devices, however!

Volunteers

Volunteers provide crucial support to all operations at NNIC, it is part of the Community Access Worker role is to recruit, roster, and supervise NNIC

volunteers with many using the opportunity to meet Centrelink mutual obligations, work off fines to meet Work Development Order (WDO) requirements or do their student placement. Covid restrictions continued to impact these opportunities and vaccination requirements saw a reduction in the number of volunteers and WDOs this year.

This year we:

- Assisted 1 student placement with obtaining their Certificate 2 in Community Services
- Supervised 8 Work Development Orders
- Assisted 7 volunteers to meet Centrelink obligations
- Had a total of 32 volunteers engage with our FOH service activities.

We are always seeking new volunteers and we welcome volunteers of all levels. NNIC matches their skill sets or learning needs to tasks and support we offer at NNIC.



Total number FOH activities: 32

Front Desk/reception volunteers: 11

Front of House volunteers trained: 5

Nature of training: COVID compliance, cultural competency/ safety, WHS, customer service, administration and IT skills, triage and referral options.

WDO volunteers: 8

Food team volunteers: 10

Soup Kitchen volunteers: 6

Cleaning volunteers: 1

FOH Snapshot Service Satisfaction Surveys – conducted in June 2022
(40 responses)

The service listened to me and understood my issues - Agree 10; Strongly Agree: 30

I am satisfied with the services I received - Agree: 5; Strongly Agree: 35

I am better able to deal with the issues I sought help with - Neither Agree/Disagree: 1; Agree: 8; Strongly Agree: 31.





Food Relief Projects Report

Heidi Glover - Food Relief Coordinator

CONC Food Recovery project

Once again, supply issues caused by Covid impacted the regular deliveries of fresh produce via the CONC Food Recovery Project. This meant that unfortunately we were unable to regularly supply our local preschool with fruit and bread for their healthy eating programs. The floods in March 2022 further hampered the delivery van due to road closures etc. Despite this, there was an increase in meat produce when deliveries did occur, which was very helpful in reducing people's food bills (meat being expensive) plus we had plenty to make a lot more meat-based cooked meals for our freezer and to add to the weekly soup kitchen wares.

Food Distributed in 2021/2022 through the Food Recovery Project (approx.)

Fresh fruit and vegetables: **2,800kgs**
 Bread and rolls: **7,200 loaves and packs**
 Other Baked goods: **805 packs**
 Meat: **820kgs**

It feels good knowing our services provide support and assistance to our community while also preventing all these goods ending up in landfill. Any goods not deemed ok to give to people are collected to give to a local pig farmer or put into the compost over at 7 Sibley St.

Food Distributed in 2021/2022 through the Food Pantry (approx.)

Food ordered from NSW/ACT Foodbank: 3002kg
 Extra COVID hampers via CONC ER: 600kg (60 boxes x10kg)

Flood relief donated food: 1200kg
Total estimate: 4,802kg.

Other Food Relief updates

Supply issues caused by COVID affected the range and availability of produce via Food Bank throughout the year.

An isolated community member at Barkers Vale was supported with deliveries of cooked meals and water supplies while she recovered from multiple injuries. All part of the NNICs commitment to caring for our community.

Demand for food relief increased after the 2022 floods. Many people were unable to access food or shops due to landslides and damaged roads. Town access was disrupted with Lismore having no supermarkets open and our local shops were often stretched whilst waiting on deliveries, with limited supplies of fresh food and added rising prices.

The following tables show the phenomenal increase in demand following the floods:



March 2021

Meals/Beverages	90	Meals/Beverages	508
Food Packs	47	Food Packs	486

March 2022

April 2021

Meals/Beverages	168	Meals/Beverages	282
Food Packs	82	Food Packs	152

April 2022

To meet this need we received donations from Food Bank in the form of pre-packed food hampers, plus generous food donations from the Koori Mail and many locals. These were either distributed from NNIC or delivered by RFS and community volunteers to isolated residents. Drinking water was also in high demand due to contamination and supply disruption and we had many donations from organisations to meet this demand.

As the flood impacts subside, the demand for food relief continues due to rising living costs.

Sadly, we lost some valued volunteers from our food relief team because of COVID vaccination requirements. This requirement is now lifted, and we welcome anyone who would like to join our friendly team.



Christmas Lunch and Hampers

25 hampers were distributed to families in need in 2021. The CWA Nimbin Branch made delicious puddings, cakes and biscuits to add more Christmas joy to the hampers.

With the COVID restrictions eased we could finally come together to celebrate at our Big Free Community Christmas Lunch. It was a great day in the Town Hall with many volunteers helping to provide a delicious smorgasbord. This year we served around 300 meals to adults and kids with Santa's visit a highlight with gifts given out to 60 children aged 12 years and under.

Thanks to Woolworths Centro for their donation of \$50 towards the roast chickens,

to my partner-in-crime Gail Clarke, the donors for the raffles and the many volunteers who helped make the event a success.

Soup Kitchen

Total weeks: 40 (unable to operate periodically due to COVID)

Total serves: 1600

NNIC's Soup Kitchen has operated for 30 years providing hearty meals and social interaction opportunities for our diverse Nimbin community. The ingredients for the soup come from produce from the Food Recovery Project supplemented by our gift fund donations and other community donations of fresh produce. The Nimbin Bakery also



regularly supplies us with gifts of bread for our soup kitchen.

This year we served on average 40 bowls of soup each Friday (and the occasional curry!). The numbers saw an increase late last year and have been well attended due to relaxation of COVID restrictions and a committed Soup Kitchen team with a record number of 50 serves on 13th May 2022.



Police Community BBQ

We attended the May Police Community BBQ and our team was treated to a cook up by the Area commander.



Community Worker Report

Peter Hawkins, Elke Tavra Community Workers

1. Service Summary

The Community Worker (CW) service is primarily funded under NSW Department of Communities and Justice's Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) funding stream and provides an integrated wrap-around service response to people in need, with the goal of providing early intervention and lasting outcomes, rather than a purely crisis-driven response. The Community Worker also delivers Emergency Relief Case Coordination.

CW Services include information, referrals, a wide range of, material aid, Telstra and Electricity vouchers, advocacy and general support to members of the community who are socio-economically disadvantaged and/or geographically isolated. The role includes community development work and involvement in key groups such as Nimbin CDAT.

The role works closely with the staff and volunteers at NNIC, other Nimbin services, the wider Nimbin Community and external agencies and organisations beyond the village.

The success of services aimed at the most vulnerable people in the community is intimately connected to the level of engagement between the provider organisation and the community itself. Neighbourhood centres are uniquely placed to play a strong role in the delivery of a whole range of social services. Being embedded in the community, neighbourhood centres can contribute significantly to improving the lives of individuals, families and communities within their neighbourhoods.

2. Using SCORE to measure client outcomes – Is anybody any better off?

Our TEI and Emergency Relief services both report via the DEX reporting system, using SCORE to capture client outcomes and assess whether they are any better off as a result of the services or support they received.

SCORE is one of many accredited measuring tools and the one that is most commonly used in the DEX reporting environment.

Clients are scored across three categories: Circumstances, Goals and Satisfaction; and are scored both pre- and post- service. During the reporting period only 19% of CW TEI and 11% ER clients were scored. The low number of clients scored reflects the massive surge of clients post floods and the lack of capacity to undertake scoring assessments due to the sheer numbers of people turned over in the final quarter of the year.

% of clients reporting overall positive outcome in Circumstances:

88.6%

% of clients reporting overall positive outcome in Goals: 97.7%

% of clients reporting overall positive outcome in Satisfaction: 94.4%

3. Service Data

21-22 Total No of Clients: 297 TEI (ER 233) Cf. 438 in 20-21, 605 in 19-20, 379 18-19, 571 in 2017-18 & 338 in 2016-17)

21-22 Total Occasions of Service: 1,610 (TEI: 847, ER: 763)(Cf. 1037 in 20-21, 1,834 in 19-20 1,502 18-19 & 2,986 in 17-18 & 1,476 in 2016-17)

The average occasions of service per TEI client was 5.4 – a marked increase from the previous year (2.4) (3.4 in 19-20) and a reflection of the greater level of need post the floods.

The complexity of client issues also increased significantly with clients averaging 5.2 issues each, (up from 2.4 last year).

This meant that more time was spent per client.

The top areas of need of TEI clients were financial stress (69%), Housing (57%), and Mental Health (49%). There was a massive increase in people needing referrals for legal assistance, which primarily occurred post-floods, from an average of around 5% in prior years, to 34% in the past year.

COVID continued to impact client numbers for the first half of the year, and in fact up until the March 22 flood event. Client numbers remained lower than usual due to lockdowns, restrictions and then two waves of COVID itself. The community worker experienced periods of illness. A relief worker was employed in the final ¼ of the year to assist with maintaining and adding to service levels, by providing back-up to the CW and also extra days of service after the floods.

Even before the floods, housing affordability was the key issue facing the community. The issue has been greatly exacerbated by the displacement of so many people due to the floods. With rental stress and homelessness comes increases in episodic mental health presentations, financial stress, reduced ability to provide for basic necessities such as food and electricity, increased family and domestic violence, increased problematic AOD use, and a generalised decrease in physical health.

Prior to the floods, public housing waiting lists had blown out beyond 10 years, with wait times even for 'priority list' clients generally exceeding two years. As a result, many clients give up and lose hope. A person who wants to be housed will need to call once or twice a week every week, sometimes for years, in order to be housed.

Applications for Centrelink's Disability Support Pension can also be fraught. Tougher rules imposed by Services Australia have meant that many clients, some who would appear to be clearly eligible, are rejected, often multiple times, despite strong advocacy and strong medical evidence.

There is significant evidence supporting the link between financial stress, homelessness, mental health and family breakdown, and the complex issues that clients present to NNIC play that out.

For most of the year the Covid impacts resulted in fewer clients than usual, and both self-referrals and external referrals were low. Indeed the whole village was very quiet during the July-December period.

There was a large increase in clients after the floods, however. The number of occasions of service per client increased significantly, reflecting the degree of trauma and crisis resulting from Covid and then the flood disaster. Utilising the funds raised via our Nimbin Flood Appeal, together with flood relief funds provided by the CONC via the Emergency Relief Program, we were able to distribute almost **\$78,000** in vouchers for building materials, earthworks, feedstock, food and fuel, as well as pre-paid Visa cards (donated), all of which were of great value to the impacted people in our catchment area. We remain grateful to those people who donated as well as the Cth DSS which provided the extra ER funding.

Client Demographics	Percentage:
First time client	53%
Male	41%
Female	59%
Aboriginal	9.5%
CALD	1%
Youth < 20 years	3.7%
Aged 65yrs+	2%
Pensioner	21.5%
Parent with dependant child	17.5%
Homeless	11.12%

TEI SERVICE ISSUES	OCCURRENCES:
Material Aid	505
Counselling	124
Family Functioning	54
Mental Health	147
Aged Care	11
Health	53
Alcohol And Other Drugs	13
Grief And Loss	46
Housing	171

Disability	10
Risk of Serious Harm (Rosh)/Brighter Futures	11
Family Violence	27
Legal	102
Financial Stress	206
Youth Justice etc	12
Work Development Order/ Office of State Revenue	19
Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Social And Emotional Well-Being	38
Suicide	1
Other	13
Total:	1,563

EMERGENCY RELIEF/ MATERIAL AID	OCCASIONS OF SERVICE
Food Parcel	95
Food Voucher	119
Telephone	14
Laundry Voucher	109
Hygiene Products	45
Miscellaneous * Includes vouchers for Building materials, Bobcat, feed stock etc post floods	112
Petrol	31
Meal	82
Electricity/Gas	29
Swag Backpack Bed	7
Not Classified (Nappies, Bedding/Linen, Clothing, baby formula,)	120
Total O/S:	763

Case Studies

"Sarah"

Sarah (not her real name) is a young Aboriginal mother who arrived at NNIC post floods having escaped a physically and emotionally violent Domestic Violence relationship with her two young children, both under 5 years old. She was homeless, living in a tent, scared and broken. The children appeared well cared for, being washed, dressed in clean clothes, and were not visibly undernourished. The initial priority was safety, as Sarah told me that her ex-partner did not, and could not, know where she and the children were. An urgent referral was made to Women Up North (WUN), one of our partner agencies with whom we have developed strong relationships. WUN are a specialised Domestic Violence service and were able to provide support that included emergency accommodation.

We provided material aid in the form of food, and food and petrol vouchers, and over the next couple of months, provided a 'safe haven' for Sarah to access services including computer access, access the Centrelink Agency, and emotional support in collaboration with WUN. Sarah had a mental health worker from the region in which she had previously been living and we were able to set up telehealth communication with that worker to provide continuity in her care. As time went on, the children were enrolled in pre-school and kindergarten which allowed some normalcy to return to their lives. There is an ongoing court matter regarding the family violence that has not been finalised, and both NNIC and WUN are providing support around that, including referrals to legal support. Sarah often comes in smiling and knows staff here by name, and engages with all of us.

"Mary"

Mary was a middle aged woman who was significantly flood affected, and also had 2 of her adult children return home with their toddler children, 1 of whom has special needs. The sudden increase of the size of the household from 1 adult to 3 adults and 4 children put an enormous strain on the family's finances, and Mary approached NNIC for some ER assistance, as she had just received an electricity bill for the April – June quarter that was beyond her capacity to pay. It should also be noted that 2 of her children had lost employment due to the floods, and this contributed to the significant financial impact. Mary met the criteria for EAPA assistance and was able to receive \$300 credit towards her bill. In consultation with Heidi, our food coordinator, we were able to support Mary and her family with fresh food boxes over a couple of weeks, and she was also given a hamper of dry staples. I also introduced Mary to Services Australia workers who were in attendance on a Wednesday at NNIC so she could discuss her situation with them to determine if there was any further assistance and/or rebates she may be entitled to. Mary was grateful for the assistance, and I later saw Mary in the street and she told me the family were recovering and that her 2 children had been able to work (as businesses where they had been working in Lismore were reopening) and this had increased the family's financial resilience.



IT Report

Chris Harris, IT Manager

The Social Sector Transformation Funding was fully expended during the year and enabled the following upgrades:

- All public access PCs replaced;
- All staff PCs replaced;
- Wifi signal within the Centre boosted and enhanced;
- Teleconferencing capacity enhanced by setting up our meeting room with technology to allow for joint Zoom/face to face meetings to occur;
- Staff equipped with laptops, headphones etc. to enable work from home options;
- NAS (Network-Attached Storage) set up to enable file sharing across the organisation;
- Software licenses purchased for all the new machines.

Many thanks to Max Reithmuller who assisted us with the IT improvements at NNIC with his significant expertise and advice.

All our IT services were severely disrupted after the Feb/March Flood Disaster. Our phone lines were down for a total of 8 weeks after the event and when some mobile phone signal was re-established in the area, we relied on a single mobile phone to which all our calls were being diverted. Our internet was also down for 2 weeks after the floods. This meant that most of our portals or data bases including CSM Flex, could not be accessed. We reverted to excel spreadsheets, Word tables and handwritten notices and documents during this time.

It was a huge relief to get everything back up and running again by the end of April. Many thanks to Dave Julian, Reg Saunders and Ron Duffy who all worked hard to get our IT systems restored after the disaster.



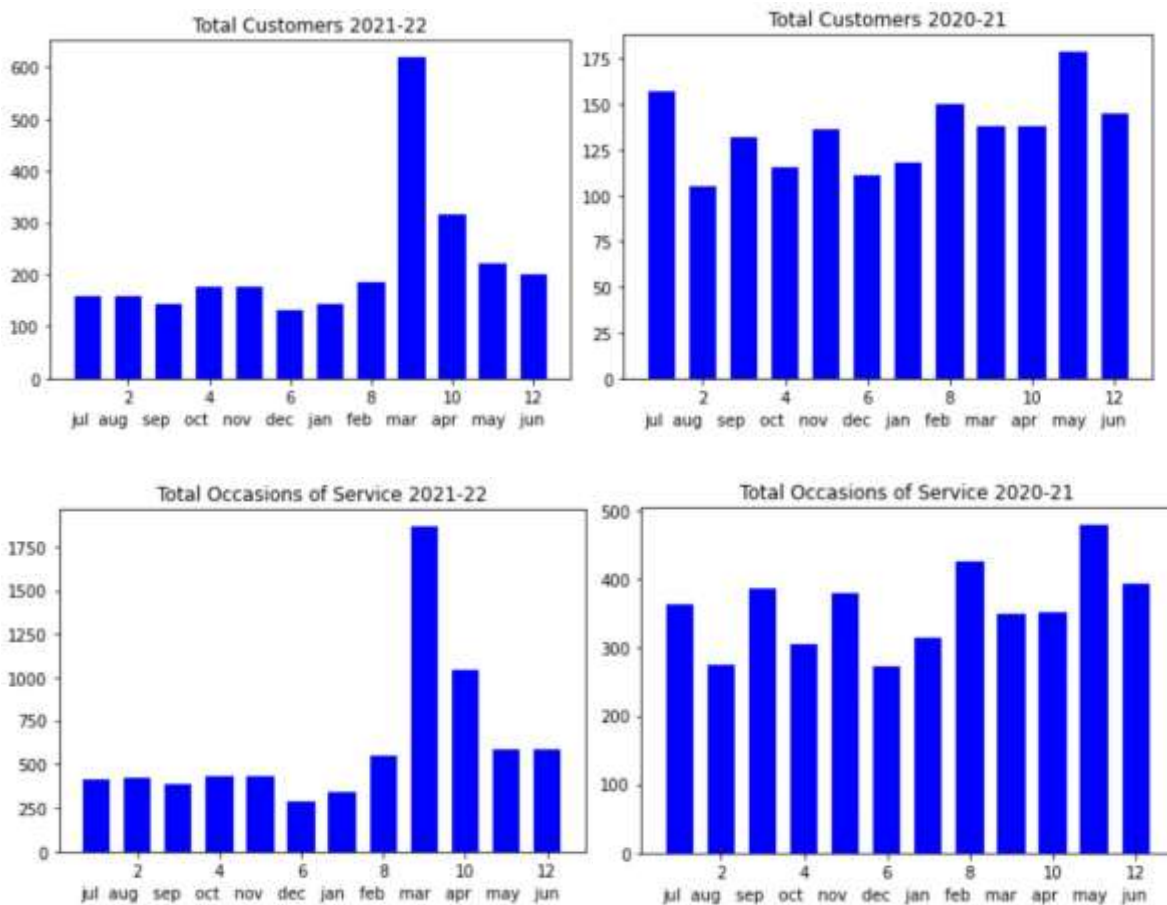
Services Australia (Centrelink) Agency Report

David Julian, Services Australia Agent and IT Support/Webmaster

Total Occasions of Service: 7,342

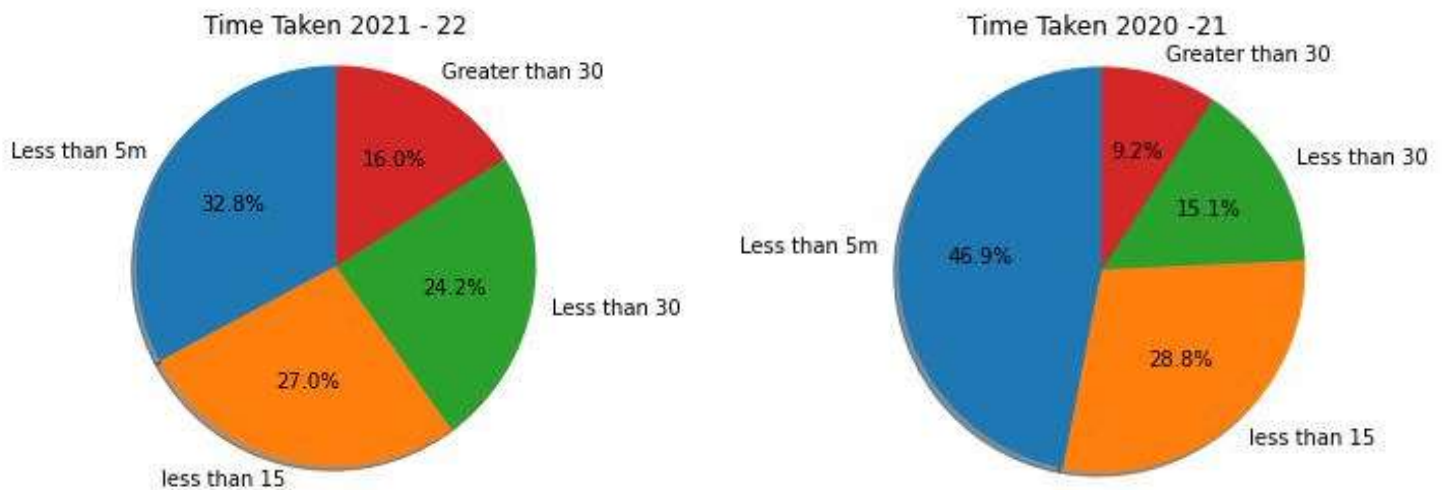
Total number of customers: 2,631

	2021-2022	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Occasions of Service	7432	4299	5081	4306
Total Customers	2631	1625	1982	2136



As things began to return to some semblance of normality after the disruption of the first two COVID waves in 2022, the massive climate disaster of March 2022 hit. There is no precedence for these events and in the immediate week or two after the first flood event, beginning in the last week of February, there was collective shock at the changed landscape, damaged and destroyed homes, and roads buried under tons of mud and rock.

Demand for Centrelink services subsequently increased exponentially, especially in the months of March and April. The total number of customers for March 2022 was 620, compared with 138 in March 2021. (note the change in scale on the above graphs). The time for enquiries to be completed also significantly increased. In 2021 enquires taking longer than 30 minutes were 9.2% of the total, in 2022 it was 16% of the total.



For several weeks after the floods, internet and phone communications were only partially available, if at all. Many Centrelink customers were unable to report, initially resulting in a number of people not receiving payments. However, once the scale of the disaster became evident, automatic payments commenced, and, since the job network agencies in Lismore were destroyed, all mutual obligations for Jobseeker customers were suspended.

Service	% of O/S 2021-22	% of O/S 2020-21
Lodge form or document	8.8	10.4
Assist with POI	1.1	1.3
Assist with form completion	7.4	5.3
Provide form / publication	4	4.8
Refer to DHS call centre	4.8	7.4
Refer to other	9.4	12.3
Register customer for self service	2.3	2.7
Assist customer with self service	25.0	19.6
Assist with equipment	19.0	13.1
Interpret / translate	.5	0
Respond to general enquiry	17.6	22.8

In the weeks after the disaster the Centrelink office was inundated with a steady stream of traumatized people telling incredible stories of heroics and survival. Two weeks after the March event a disaster was officially declared and relief grants established. Two payments were offered to those affected. Firstly, The Disaster Recovery Allowance, a fortnightly payment equivalent to the maximum rate of the Jobseeker payment, for people who lost employment due to the climate events. Secondly the Disaster Recovery Payment, initially a one-off payment of \$1000 and subsequently increased to \$3000. This payment was for people who were affected by flooding in their homes. A major limitation of this payment was the eligibility requirements did not consider the effects of landslides. This included the majority of people affected in the Nimbin hills who did not suffer inundation but were severely affected by landslides making homes uninhabitable or inaccessible. Following feedback to Centrelink the criteria was changed to include external assets such as access roads, driveways and water tanks over the value of \$20,000.

The Lismore Service Centre was severely damaged and was moved to a smaller temporary office. For a number of weeks during March and April two Centrelink workers from the Lismore Service Centre were relocated to NNIC to deal with the increased demand. The Silver Service Call Centre staff, which we rely on to help with complex enquires, were outstanding in their commitment and compassion in assisting customers in need.

Conversely, the Jobactive system seems to be rather punitive and a major impediment to customer wellbeing. Customers report the common experience of appointments being made without sufficient notice being given and payments suspended if customers are unable to attend. Significant Agency time is spent assisting customers who have had payment suspensions. This also becomes a burden on the NNIC's Emergency Relief and welfare services.

Case Study

A customer's payment was suspended when he was unable to attend a Jobactive appointment with his provider due to a combination of a lack of transport and a medical issue. He did not have phone reception where he lives so could not notify the provider. His living conditions were very basic, consisting of a small caravan and a tarp set up on a friend's property. The property was badly impacted by a landslide and there was no vehicle access, requiring him to walk for over an hour to get into Nimbin. I advised him to call his provider. He did so and was told that his case manager was with someone else and would ring him back within half an hour. The customer waited over half an hour with no phone call. He rang the provider again; the receptionist apologised and assured the customer his case manager would call him back. The customer waited a further hour with no return phone call. He was becoming increasingly agitated and frustrated. He was clearly physically unwell. We provided him with a meal and a hot drink. He asked if I would try calling his provider on his behalf. I rang the provider and told the receptionist I was the Nimbin Services Australia/Centrelink Agent calling on

behalf of a client. The receptionist put me through to a manager. I attempted to explained the situation, and was advised by the manager that the customer's case manager was extremely busy and would call back when he had an opportunity. The customer waited for the remainder of the day but received no call. I saw the customer several days later. He told me he had to hitch into Lismore, wait for several hours to attend a 5-minute re-engagement appointment so that his payment would be restored.

Because I have been employed at NNIC for five years, I have gained the trust of many of NNICs regular clients which, reluctantly, puts me in a position that sometimes extends beyond my duties as Centrelink worker. People often disclose personal information unrelated to Centrelink matters, and this was especially so after the disaster events of 2022.

Ideally, people with complex needs would be referred immediately into the NNIC Community Worker (CW). The CW is only available 3 days a week, however, and is often heavily booked. External support agencies are also difficult to access due to a lack of public transport and long waiting lists in many cases. This means that the Centrelink Agents are often forced to deal with immediate crises until a referral can be successfully made. It seems clear that more resources are needed to support these people at NNIC.

NNIC Community Access Worker and Services Australia Agency staff are often the first contact people in need have with welfare services. It can be an unpredictable work environment, often dealing with people in emotional distress with complex needs. For the staff this can have implications for their lives beyond the work environment as, often, the people we are dealing with are people we know and interact with in the wider community.

Dealing with Centrelink matters often involves discussing very personal, and often triggering, matters such relationship, family and living situations. We deal with a wide variety of issues such as dementia, mental and physical health, aging, disability, prisoner release, relationship breakdown and domestic violence. It is often impossible to separate the purely technical role of assisting with Centrelink matters with the wider, more complex, issues of human welfare. I always make it clear to customers I am not a trained welfare worker or psychologist and, at the first opportunity, refer them to those who are professionally qualified.

It is clear that the world is changing faster than organized human society can respond. Climate disasters across the planet, and our own direct experiences, show that cumbersome bureaucracies are ill equipped to deal with the destruction of these increasingly severe events. In the aftermath of the February event, community-led responses were key. Services Australia did show some agility in grant rollout and subsequent criteria update in this instance. However, in the coming years as the climate crisis worsens, the expectation that government departments, such as Services Australia, will be available to help may no longer be feasible.

Technical Support

Upgrading front of house, public and back office computers was a prolonged but relatively trouble-free exercise. All of the public computers have the same software installed and offer a consistent user experience regardless of which machine they are working from. Two shared folders have been created for both public and in-house use. Thanks to Max, Chris and Reg for their work completing this upgrade.

The upgrade of the NNIC website from Joomla 2x to Joomla 4x was proceeding well prior to the events of March and April. I had manually copied most of the content to a new redesigned site and placed it on a test server, (<http://137.184.8.144/nnic/>) However this work had been put on hold and subsequently the new site has become out of sync as new content has been added to the live site. Tom Schuff, a technically capable volunteer is working on an alternative approach that will hopefully allow us to run a script on the current site to directly port it to the new version of Joomla eliminating the synchronization issue. I am hopeful that in the near future we will be able to easily export content from the existing site to the updated and redesigned platform.



Nimbin Integrated Services

Genevieve Beggs, NIS Nurse Practitioner

This program has just completed its fifteenth year. The NIS provides clients with access to various services, crossing boundaries which have been previously difficult for the clients to negotiate, and takes an integrated, holistic approach. The “one stop shop” model facilitates successful outcomes by ensuring strong linkages with NNIC’s services as well as other service providers who access their clients at the Centre, enabling ‘wrap-around’ service provision for NIS clients. These strong integrations and collaborations extend outside the Centre with other service providers as well; though difficulties with complex communication issues can hinder responsiveness or outcomes.

Nimbin Integrated Services (NIS) is an innovative community originated and based clinical health service targeting multi-diagnoses clients, those with mental health and substance abuse issues, in particular. The service is delivered by a part-time Nurse Practitioner (NP) specialising in mental health/drugs and alcohol who is permanently based in a well-used, non-health community organisation in the town – NNIC. The NP works through close street-based contact with the community of Nimbin and offers a flexible, immediate, short and longer-term therapeutic support to clients with a range of mental health problems and/or drug and/or alcohol dependence. The service includes a proactive and preventative approach as well as having the capacity to deal with crisis situations. The major focus of the role is the caring relationship, which includes engagement with all stakeholders, collaborative problem solving and decision-making, and the promotion of interpersonal competencies, growth and health.

The NIS model is underwritten by the core principles of consumer-centred care; thereby generating the most effective and satisfying care and treatment to all stakeholders. The Nurse Practitioner practices within her realm of advanced practice under her Clinical Guidelines (Scope of Practice). In the process of treating patients, State and Territory legislation allows nurse practitioners to initiate diagnostic studies, perform certain procedures, and prescribe certain medications within an approved drug formulary and to refer patients to other health care professionals.

The average duration of service is 6 months. This is highly variable, however; and many clients re-present for services later after case closure as their need arises. Strong liaisons with police and collaborative work ensures that informal and formal supportive practices in place which are effective when required. Other strong collaborative work continues with GP services, DCJ, AOD Services, Probation & Parole, NSP, and Mental Health as well as many others. It is important to note that all clients referred are contacted within a week but this can vary depending upon numerous factors.

NIS also provides an ancillary support for LHD Mental Health Extended Care Service clients. These clients are not identified in the service data because their primary care management is provided by Mental Health's ECS.

NIS further provides an ideal environment for training placements of future medical professionals from Medical, Pharmacy, and Nursing. This year training was utilised by Pharmacy students through the UCRH.

NIS in 2021-2022

Originally a five day a week service, NIS has been operating on reduced hours at three days per week since 2018, due to health issues impacting upon the existing NPs capacity. The reduced hours of service have not coincided with reduced client demand however, and client numbers remain at significant levels. There is an ongoing need for an active succession plan and a strategy to resume services at five day per week. Previous attempts by the LHD to recruit a second worker to augment the service have not been fruitful. At one point in 2020, a D&A NP was recruited for one day a week. However the NP never opened their service to clients after completing their scope of practice and being authorized to perform within its boundaries. Ultimately, the individual chose to move to another state and position.

Since that time, there has been no active succession plan enacted. Recruitment has been partly hampered by the hours offered to a second permanent worker – previously approved for one day in addition to the current NP's hours at three days a week.

Several meetings were held with Local Health District (LHD) staff in late 2021 with a view to addressing this and we were advised that the goal would be to restore the five day a week service. Since that time there have been significant personnel changes within the LHD and it would seem the issue has not progressed as a result. Additionally, the NP's management support team changed in early 2022, and NIS was shifted from the Nursing directorate to the Mental Health/Drug & Alcohol directorate.

The current NP is moving towards retirement and is committed to staying on board for long enough to enable a smooth transition and handover to a new NIS NP, but the period for which she is able to do so may be limited going forward.

Other ongoing challenges concern the NIS IT issues. Since December of 2021, the NP's main computer has not been workable secondary to internet connection issues. After months without internet access, despite many reports being made, the IT Department of the LHD provided a laptop for the office with LHD intranet access, but there is still no access to printing, scanning, faxing, or data entry. This has caused a massive backlog in data entry and given the already significant time constraints of the NP, bringing it up to date after so

many months can likely only be done by sacrificing time spent with actual clients.

Flood Impacts

Devastating weather fronts began occurring towards the end of February 2022 creating catastrophic flooding throughout that Northern Rivers area. These conditions further caused significant land slips, road/bridge decimation, inundation of thousands of homes with water and mould, loss of life, and isolation. The trauma and events led to a rapid development of community support within the Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre (NNIC). NNIC facilitated many different types of services and demand upon NIS to provide crisis support for people suffering significant personal trauma and dealing with distress, grief, and loss, increased.

The outcomes of these events are still impacting people throughout the area in terms of housing, environmental, and psychological components. This was reflected in the data - whilst there were fewer numbers in the first half of the year, there was an increase in client numbers and occasions of service after the floods in 2022.

COVID Impacts

NIS services continued to be disrupted by COVID-19, which continued to create a downward trend client numbers despite measures put in place to reduce the impact such as the provision of telephone appointments. The nature of NIS clients is such that telephone service does not meet their needs in many cases.

Service Data

Total clients for 2021-2022: **137** (166 in 20-21, 263 in 19-20, 274 in 18-19)

Total active client cases as of 30.06.2021: **51**

NEW referrals: **54**

Cases reopened: **32**

Cases closed: **94**

Total active client cases as of 30.06.2022: **43**

Client demographics: New referrals and reopened cases – **86**

CALD: **1**

ATSI: **5**

LGBTQI: **4**

Men over 50: **12**

Men under 50: **17**

Women over 50: **18**

Women under 50: **21**

Families with dependent children: **6**

Children (under 15yrs): **0**

Teens (15-17): **2**

Average length of time between referral and contact – **1.5 week**

Average duration of service – **6 months**

Mental Health Act Involuntary Scheduling Events: **0**

Case Closures:

Number of cases closed and categories of case closure: **94**

Successful completion/improvement: **78**

Never engaged (referred in but never presented): **16**

New Referrals (54) came from:

- No of client self-referrals/presentations: **17**
- No of community/family/carers referrals: **6**
- No of in-house NNIC referrals to NIS: **23**
- Other sources: **8**

Note: Other referrals **into** NIS came from: GPs, NDIS providers, Acute Care MH, AOD treatment services, Corrective Services, Centrelink services, out of area MH services, and Police.

Referrals out: 13

No. of NIS clients referred TO NNIC universal services: Most of the clients are engaged in some form of NNIC services apart from NIS

Other referrals **out from** NIS extended to Centrelink services, GP services, Acute MH Care services, Women's Health care, Aged Care, Drug and Alcohol services, and Revenue NSW.

Client Surveys

% surveyed (via paper surveys in a two-week snapshot period): 8.5%

On a scale of 1-10

I felt heard, understood and respected - 10: 62.5% 8: 37.5%

The service I received was right for me - 8 or above: 87.5%, 5 or below: 12.5%

The service encouraged the involvement of my family and friends as per my wishes/consent - 62.5% (37.5% = N/A)

NIS has benefited me - Strongly agree/agree: 100%

I am more able to manage my circumstances as a result of NIS - Strongly agree/agree: 100%

I would recommend NIS to others - Strongly agree/agree: 100%

Locating the service at NNIC makes access comfortable - Strongly agree/agree: 100%

Notably, 25% were unsure about how to complain about the service they received if they wanted to.

63% of NIS clients were linked into other services at NNIC. 100% of those people reported they felt less isolated and more supported as a result of those additional services.

Case Studies

Case 1

Client was referred by NNIC seeking counselling. She grew up feeling loneliness issues and a need to be liked. She started drinking alcohol when she was a teenager and slowly increased its usage over the years. Trauma resulting from a significant grief incident accelerated her alcohol use further.

A marriage of 15 years split up. She relocated and met a new man but when this relationship also failed she recommenced heavy drinking. One night, she got very drunk and was threatened by someone which was a key moment of awareness for her. She realised that alcohol was causing her to have rages and blackouts. She realised that she was always drunk and in tears not having control of her drinking. She talked of how she always considered herself to be a binge drinker rather than an alcoholic. She felt she could always just have one drink without needing more but realised she had lied to herself.

In her therapeutic work, she realised she needed to be more connected to herself and clearer with her intentions. She made a pivotal decision and ceased drinking. She has now been without alcohol for two months, continues to engage with NIS and is also with a local Alcoholics Anonymous group.

Case 2

Client originally referred in 2008 after a crisis presentation to ED. He had a year 10 education level and worked in mechanical industry. He had an acquired left-sided brain injury sustained from an accident he suffered at a young age. The injury had resulted in ongoing irritability, memory loss, and aggressive behavioural changes. He had a history of IV amphetamine use, but with the help of family had managed to get his life back on track. He later moved and married and had a child. Prior to birth of his child, he had started back using IV drugs and alcohol.

His relationship broke down and he ceased going to work. He told me that about 6 months before his 2008 crisis presentation, he had started to experience psychotic symptoms such as hearing people talking about him and haunting feelings of people

surrounding him trying to harm him. Through our clinical work over the years, which included the provision of education on various topics, the prescribing of appropriate medications, and the teaching of distraction and mood regulation techniques, the client ceased his use of IV amphetamines. He maintained employment for many years until the business shut down. Eventually, he also ceased his excessive alcohol usage and moved from the area.

In the past year the client returned to the area and re-engaged with NIS. He reported that he has secured a good job in the health industry and is happily remarried. He has learned to manage his psychotic symptoms with the help of a small amount of an antipsychotic. He no longer uses any drugs or alcohol.

Case 3

Client presented complaining of chronic pain and being “flat broke”. He had been seeing a GP and certain medical investigations were underway. He had a history of psychologist treatment with EMDR and psychiatrists recommending antidepressants. However, he refuses all pharmaceuticals. He said he takes CBD oil as well as B complex, Vitamin D, and garlic.

He told me he was raised in a strict family and spoke of having suppressed memories of sexual abuse before the age of 13. He finished year 11 and hated school. He then worked in various roles and businesses. His marriage broke down after the miscarriage of a child. He moved to the Nimbin area and bought a home and began slowly fixing it up.

He reported that he self-sabotages and has nervous energy, then spirals downward into depression. His dog helps bring him out of that state of mind. He said he gets suicidal feelings - his feelings of hopelessness come from having no money. He was diagnosed 15 years ago with degenerative osteoarthritis in his back but assessed as being ineligible for the Disability Support Pension. He had a nerve conduction test that came back negative. An MRI is the next step but his specialist has suggested surgery may be a possibility.

He indicated that he has friends that help him at times with activities around the house that he cannot do anymore. He also shared that he feels supported through the NIS program.

Community Development Report

Stephanie Seckold, Community Development Worker

7 Sibley Street

In the last 12 months, the challenges associated with COVID restrictions and lockdowns, plus the impacts of the flood disaster resulted in fewer opening days, visitor numbers and opportunities to host workshops. Even when we were able to open, the threat of COVID kept many locals away and tourist visitors unable to visit. Road closures, inaccessible driveways and dealing with flood damage continue to keep many locals busy in their own homes. With almost a year of wet weather, workshop attendance has been low.

With the help of our volunteers, Christine, Sienna and Doug, we continued to open (subject to the above factors) on Wednesdays to Saturday for the Community Tools library and Thursdays for garden maintenance with Andrew and Rick (lawns). Workshops (1 per week) were held Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Saturdays.

In the coming year we will be moving workshops to the weekends to increase the opportunities for more people to participate.

Regional Floods

We were closed for the duration of the initial flood response. I assisted at Evacuation Centre (Nimbin Showgrounds) food distribution response until the evac centre closed. Workshops held in response to floods: emergency lighting (making oil candles), white vinegar making, water proofing fabric.



Program/Activities data

Info and referrals (locals) occasions of service: **545** (651 in 20-21)

Info and referrals (Tourists): occasions of service: **334** (559 in 20-21)

Workshops conducted: **35** (37 in 20-21)

No of workshop participants: **195** (214 in 20-21)

Events:

3 May 22 – Online scams info session with Summerland Credit Union

18 June 22- Textile fair 7 stalls, 34 people -

Stalls, workshops, displays. Local artisans, vintage textiles, pop-up café.



Farm Tours:

No of Farm Tours conducted: **1**
Virtual (COVID) – Resilient Gardens

No of participants: **5**

Tools Library: (note: most of the tools were stolen in June 2021. Library was temporarily closed until the tools were replaced and reopened for business in Sept 21. Repeated Covid related lockdowns also impacted on the use of the library).

Tools Library members: **35**
O/S: **23** (49 in 20-21)

Summary of Workshop Topics:

Knitting, papercrete, spinning and weaving (regular), beginners skateboarding, concrete cloth slumping, macramé, processing cassava, making a peg loom, needle felting, felt hat making,

building with bamboo, training your goats, Native bees, Insect making/silk painting, silk processing, Cobs for Kids, Build a Mini Stardome, Making rag rugs, Bike maintenance, working with textiles, non-toxic pest control, making oil candles, Rags Rugs with Nimbin Central School, Resilient Food Gardening, Clay oil lamps, making bamboo panels, water proofing cloth, cooking with resilient foods, sewing for beginners.

Regular spinning and weaving was held every 2nd Wednesday and knitting with Sue Bingham every 3rd Tuesday each month.

Kids' workshops were offered during school holidays (kid's cob, paper lanterns, skate boarding).



Four workshops were held by invitation of/in collaboration with Richmond-Tweed Mobile Library in January and February 2022.



Workshop Outcomes – Group SCORES

No of workshops SCOREd as a group: **25 (72%)**

% groups with overall positive outcomes: **96%**

Average SCORE: **2.63** (out of a possible 5)

Workshop Outcomes – individual participant surveys

% of total participants surveyed: **9%**

% of respondents who fall into one or more TEI category (ATSI/CALD/Disability/Financially struggling/isolated): **43%**

% respondents who reported:

- The workshop was good/very good: **100%**
- My Confidence to Learn has increased- strongly

agree/agree: **98%**

- The workshop inspired me to consider a new business idea – strongly agree/agree: **56%** (44% neither agree/disagree)
- The workshop provided me with new skills to apply to a new business idea- strongly agree/agree: **56%**
- The skills I learned will help me improve my life circumstances - strongly agree/agree: **100%**
- I learned something new about services, activities or facilities available in the community- strongly agree/agree: **100%**
- As a result of the workshop I feel more connected to the local community- strongly agree/agree: **100%**
- I met someone new at this workshop OR I connected with a new network of people - strongly agree/agree: **100%**

Some workshop participant testimonials

- *Great space, great workshop and great facilitator*
- *It was very well considered and organised*
- *A well facilitated workshop – will recommend to others!*

- *Steph is a great communicator and puts information to you in a way to understand which is priceless*
- *Excellent – the educators were very positive and helpful*
- *Courtney was an amazing teacher and I can't wait to try more at home! Thank you!*
- *I love learning a new skill and connecting with people especially during all the hard times post flood and post pandemic. The facilitators were super helpful and informative and excellent teachers.*

Site maintenance/development

- ❖ Front flower and herb gardens maintained by Andrew
- ❖ Mowing and whipper snipping - Rick
- ❖ Aquaponic system removed, additional sandstone rocks delivered
- ❖ Back stair handrail repaired/re-painted
- ❖ Work ongoing to complete hempcrete composting toilet



New Equipment

- ❖ Donated– petrol chainsaw and leaf blower (for firefighting) Makita electric sander, picket puller
- ❖ Replaced stolen tools

Progressing the Sustainable Nimbin Community Plan (SNCP) Goals

LOCAL FOOD SECURITY

- ❖ Cassava processing, bunya nuts workshops, seed exchange
- ❖ Resilient food garden (3 workshops, including cooking class with perennial tubers) for drought and wet seasons (popular workshop following floods)

REDUCING WASTE

- ❖ On-site composting continuing with organic waste from NNIC and Nimbin markets
- ❖ Continued sales of glass packaging
- ❖ Consultation meeting with LCC waste management team to discuss community-based waste initiatives

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

- ❖ Engaging with tourists, explaining 7 Sibley purpose and Nimbin values (environmental, self-sufficiency, etc.) referring them to sources of information and easy to implement changes they can do at home.
- ❖ Repair/recycle: furniture revival, pushbike maintenance, rag rugs, tools revival workshops.



- ❖ In the home: non-toxic pest control, making wax wraps.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

- ❖ Weed blocks, bamboo building, paper bricks, cob, weed blocks, bamboo screens, stardome building workshops.

Financials

In the past year Sibley Street revenue (net \$3103) was enough to cover the site operating costs (rent, utilities, supplies etc). We were able to claim the NSW Business Rebate in relation to the costs of rates and water rates for the past year which was a significant saving. The primary costs in the past year were the non-operating costs associated with the construction of the composting toilet facility.

