



**THE SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
SETTLEMENT
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

Annual Report

2013/2014



Celebrating 123 years of community service

1891 - 2014

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The Settlement pays respects to the traditional owners of the land,
and Elders past and present.

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2013-14

The Board of The Sydney University Settlement Neighbourhood Centre, is responsible for the good governance of the service. They are accountable to the community and Settlement members. They are a team of dedicated volunteers, who embrace this responsibility in a wholehearted and professional manner.

Chairperson	Fran Collins [resigned April 2014] Tiffany McComsey [from April 2014]
Deputy Chairperson	Shireen Malamoo
Co Deputy Chairperson	Lyn Turnbull [November 2013 – March 2014]
Treasurer	Lyn Turnbull [till November 2013] John Alexander [November 2013]
Secretary	Tiffany McComsey [till April 2014] Maggie Roche [from September 2014]
Sydney University Representative Members	Kathy Rushton Vicki Ashton Thom Calma Fay Carroll Liz Crosby Brendan Kerin [resigned] Warren Roberts Lorenzo Serva [May 2014] Lyn Turnbull [resigned March 2014]

SUPPORT

Financial Management & Support Systems Auditor	Accounting for Good (Matrix On Board) Shedden & Green Partners Chartered Accountants ABN 43 723 342 276
Legal Support Consultant	Gilbert & Tobin – Lawyers
Cleaning	Donna Bevan, Connect Consulting Global Cleaning & Maintenance

STAFF

Manager	Michele Goodman [resigned January 2014] Ellie Rule [acting February-April 2014, resigned] Lane Blume [temporary April-July 2014] Nettie Marie [July 2014]
Administration	Ellie Rule [till January 2014] Ryan Donohue-Pitt [February – May 2014] Co Nguyen [from May 2014]
Muralappi Program Youth - EIPP Youth Worker	Gloria Donohue Kristina Touma Leighton Pollard – temp [August – October 2014]
OoSH/Vacation Care Coordinator	Michael Carr [resigned June 2014] Joann Moloney – temp [August – October 2014] Alia Seror-O’Neill [October 2014]
OoSH/Vacation Care Assistant	Rose O’Connor Say Yong Loo (Jerome) temp [August – Sept. 2014]
OoSH Casual Relief Worker	Gabi Bowen [September 2014] Imana Taouli [September 2014]
Cleaner	Adriana Boyd

FUNDING AGENCIES

The Settlement gratefully acknowledges the financial and in-kind support from:

- Australian Department of Education
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Family & Community Services
- NSW Department of Family & Community Services – *Community Services*
- NSW Community Relations Commission
- Sydney City Council
- Lend Lease
- Save the Children Fund



Special thanks also go to our local agencies and services for all the incredible support and assistance you have provided over the past year. We greatly value your contribution.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I would like to start this report by paying my respects to the traditional owners of the land, and Elders past and present. This acknowledgement extends to the local Aboriginal community whose involvement, support and guidance enriches The Settlement and the work we do.

The 2013 – 2014 financial year brought great challenges with it and has resulted in significant changes at the Settlement. Not all of these challenges and the journey of change they prompted were foreseen at the 2013 AGM. It has been a year where both the Board and Staff have had to undergo deep reflection about how we have been working internally and externally and what needs to change in order to once again make The Settlement a thriving neighbourhood centre that is a model of best practice and a source of inspiration and leadership in the programs we provide, the community development work we do and our work as advocates for social justice.

Some of the challenges we faced included:

- The resignation of key management staff and board members
- Significant reviews of the programs we provide and the need to develop strategic responses to those reviews
- The need to develop and revitalise the management of the Settlement through the appointment of a new Manager
- The financial management of our programs and the financial health of the Settlement
- The need to rebuild our relationships with our community partners and the community we serve

Some of the responses to these challenges included:

- The development of a holistic strategic planning process (the Board employed Connect Consulting to undertake this work)
- The appointment of a new manager (Nettie Marie joined the Settlement in July 2014)
- The continued improvement of financial management practices at the Settlement

- The implementation of key practice guidelines and policies to improve our programs and service delivery at the Settlement
- The renewal of mutual support between Staff and Board and creating a shared vision for the Settlement

Both the Staff and Board should be commended for the work they have done to address and work through these challenges. At this AGM the Settlement membership can and should feel confident that we are on the path to great things. As an organisation we have turned a corner in the way we work and will continue to reach important milestones during the coming year.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to recognise the unique contributions and work of key staff who left the Settlement during the 2013/2014 period. This includes the long service of Michael Carr and the work of Michele Goodman and Ellie Rule. Each of these individuals made important contributions to the Settlement during their employment.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to acknowledge the Board members who resigned during the year: Lyn Turnbull, Fran Collins and Brendan Kerin. Special mention needs to be made of the enormous amount of love, commitment, engagement and professionalism that Lyn Turnbull brought to her plus 20-year involvement on the Board. I would also like to personally acknowledge the work and commitment of current board members.

Without the commitment of a dedicated staff team, The Settlement would not be where it is now. To this end, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank long-standing staff who worked through these changes: Gloria Donohue, Rose O'Connor, Kristina Touma and Adriana Boyd. On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge and thank Donna Bevan and Lane Blume who went above and beyond the call of duty in their work for the Settlement during one of the most challenging periods for The Settlement, those months when program reviews were taking place and we were between managers and then when our newly appointed manager was on leave.

On behalf of the board, I would also like to recognise the commitment, leadership and exciting energy Nettie Marie has brought to the Settlement and the great work she has been doing over the last four months as Manager. Alongside Nettie and our long serving staff, new staff members have come on board who should also be recognised. These include key temporary staff (some of who

continue to volunteer their time and energy at the Settlement!) Angela Hepple, Leighton Pollard, Say Yong Loo (Jerome) and Joann Maloney. And on behalf of The Board I would like to thank Co Nguyen, who joined the Settlement in May of this year, for her commitment and the skills she brings to The Settlement. The recent engagement of a dynamic group of volunteers is also contributing to the new dynamism that can be felt at the Settlement, and on behalf of The Board, I thank you for your contributions.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to acknowledge the support our long term funding bodies provided us during this period of change. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our long-term community partners, contractors and supporters who have helped us through this past year.

The Settlement is set for a great year ahead and it will be exciting to watch what new developments occur over the next 12 months.



Tiffany McComsey
Chairperson

TREASURER'S REPORT

This has been a challenging year at the Sydney University Settlement. Our income has not covered the expenses associated with our goals of providing quality social housing and excellent community programs and services to children, young people, families and adults.

This financial year the Settlement produced an overall deficit of \$124,644, compared with an overall deficit last year of \$38,303. This deficit included an item that was brought into the accounts for the first time; namely the amortisation of the renovation of the hall at \$34,617 as well as an increase in the long service leave provision of \$8,392. The financial reports show an operating cash deficit of \$60,747.

This year, two of our properties, a terrace and one of our flats, were extensively renovated. The combined cost was \$142,818. The renovation of the terrace was not unexpected; our budget for the year anticipated a deficit of \$75,000. The renovation of the flat was not anticipated, and contributed \$31,818 to our deficit.

We have recognised over the last few years that we must find further sources of revenue. We are charging a nominal cost for the hire of our hall and bus. We are increasing our efforts to identify available grants and are planning more fundraising events. At the same time we continue to review our operating costs.

I have been Treasurer since November of last year. I would like to thank my predecessor Lyn Turnbull, who worked tirelessly for the Settlement and in her time as Treasurer continued the process of improving our financial systems and processes.

We are continuing to develop these processes. In particular we are budgeting for future property renovations, and while we are not anticipating any major renovations this coming year we have included in the 2014-15 budget a general reserve line item that is intended to grow over the years and be used for future major renovations when they fall due.

Thanks must go also to the team at Accounting For Good (formerly Matrix On Board), who during this challenging year have supported us both operationally and at an advisory level, providing financial advice that has informed the decisions we have made. Thanks also to our auditors Shedden

& Green, and to Bendigo Bank, whose assistance and advice has been greatly appreciated as we explore ways to improve our financial position.



John Alexander

Treasurer

PROPERTIES REPORT

As older members will know, the Settlement owns a hall, six houses, and co-owns with Housing NSW six flats, all in Edward Street Darlington, bought over many years, through the fundraising efforts of Sydney University's Women's College in conjunction with committees chaired by the wives of the Vice Chancellors.

Bridge Housing manages three of our houses and all six flats, offering affordable housing to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, while three of our houses are currently let commercially. However, because we co-own the flats with Housing NSW, they are not eligible for rental subsidy, and this means the income from the flats is not enough to cover the flats' repairs and maintenance. In February 2013 we met with representatives of Housing NSW and the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) to discuss the dilemma of how to properly maintain the flats. In August 2013, under the guidance of Gilbert + Tobin Lawyers, we made an offer of \$80k to LAHC to exit the 1993 agreement between HNSW and the Settlement, so that the Settlement would wholly own the flats, and could therefore be eligible for subsidised rent. Our lender Bendigo Bank has indicated they would cover the offer amount. We hope to have an answer from LAHC shortly.

On the renovation front, number 3, which had been uninhabitable for two years, in December 2013, received a complete renovation, as well as flat 4, and both are now tenanted by Aboriginal families. The Settlement would like to take this opportunity to thank Cracknell & Lonergan Architects and Onsite Building Services, who made these renovations possible.



Liz Crosby
Properties Liaison

MANAGER'S REPORT

'The Winds of Change'



I open by noting my respects to, and acknowledging, the traditional owners of this land and Elders past and present.

It is difficult for me to present a formal report of matters relating to the funding period 2013 – 2014, given that I was not present at the time. I have therefore decided to leave the 'formal report' for the next AGM and will instead, take this opportunity to express my respects to those who have been involved in this transitional period, my view of the Settlement as it is today and my hopes for the future.

Five months ago, I walked through the front doors of the Settlement for the first time. As I did so I was struck by the spirit of the place. It was evident that hundreds of stories were embedded in the walls, particularly in the front kitchen, the back yard and within the timber of the old kitchen table. I knew instinctively, that here existed a strong, sturdy soul that had, in times gone by, and would in the future, generate good outcomes for the surrounding community. Although I had already dreamed of joining the team, at that time, as I walked around with the then Acting Manager: Lane Blume, I forged a deep connection with the place and made a personal commitment, that if I were successful in obtaining my current role, I would do whatever I could to enhance the work that others had started. Many aspects of this task, I soon realised, would be quite easy, as it appears that everyone I come into contact with, wholeheartedly want the Settlement to do well, and they want to do well within it. What is challenging is working out just which exciting adventure should be pursued first! And how many can be done at once! It is a wonderful problem to have to solve although sometimes an exhausting one.

This is not to ignore the fact that the past year has been rather difficult, at a range of levels, for the Board of Management and Staff. Working through the related matters is rather challenging for everyone, myself included. Over the past 12 months the Settlement experienced the departure of a

number of staff members: Michael Carr (OoSH Coordinator), Michele Goodman (Manager), Ellie Rule (Administration and Acting Manager) and Ryan Donohue-Pitt (Administration). Further, Kristina Touma (Youth Worker) went on an extended break for 5 months to travel to the other side of the world. These departures were unsettling. Programs also altered, and in some instances, were placed on hold. This too was quite unsettling. Despite the difficulties these changes generated, Gloria Donohue (Muralappi – Community Health Worker), Rose O'Connor (OoSH Assistant) and Adriana Boyd (Cleaner) remained and continued to provide a service to the Settlement and the community. They were joined by Lane Blume (Acting Manager), Angela Hepple (Casual Youth Worker) and Co Nguyen (Administration Assistant).

Lane ensured that the Board, funding bodies and key stakeholders were all kept in the loop, associated reports were produced and submitted, and targets were met. She did an incredible job and is to be congratulated and commended for it; hers are hard shoes to fill. Co provided assistance with a range of bookkeeping matters, and continues to remain with us, and indeed is now very much an integral component of the centre and the 'right hand' of staff and management. Angela made sure that the EIPP program ticked over in Kristina's absence.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes the Board set about sorting matters out. To assist with the process the Board engaged well-respected and much admired consultant: Donna Bevan from Connect Consulting. Tiffany McComsey, (who can only be described as truly remarkable) along with Donna, led the team of dedicated, determined individuals on the arduous journey of filling the gaps, building esteem and producing an environment conducive to achieving good work and sound results. It proved to be a time for reflection, adjustment and re-direction. The results? Not only has the Settlement survived, a new strategic plan and business plan have been developed, and are soon to be implemented; quite an achievement given the circumstances.

As the financial year drew to a close, the personal toll associated with the changes that had taken place was evident by the tired faces of those involved. The records will show that the financial cost was also quite high. This continued as the new financial year opened and as next year's financial records will demonstrate. It included investing quite a large sum in engaging a team of professional temporary staff for a significant period of time including: temp youth worker Leighton Pollard (in my view, one of the best in the field); temp OoSh Coordinator Joann Moloney (a very determined player) and Relief OoSH Assistants, Say Yong Loo, who we call Jerome (also determined and

engaging), and a new casual relief OoSH team: Gabi Bowen and Imana Taouli (both capable, reliable workers).

It is impossible to put an exact figure on the 'true value' obtained from having these talented individuals engaged at the Settlement, it is pretty clear however, via the current activities at the Settlement, that the social capital far outweighs the financial burden it placed on the service. They arrived on a 'wind of change' and injected a new vigour into the environment and helped to place solid 'bricks', on top of the foundation, laid by our permanent, longer term staff.

The new wind also brought with it an insurgence of volunteer staff; we currently have over 20 different individuals on our books with a core group of 17 rostered on a regular basis to assist: Agatha, Deb, Rebecca, Andrea, Rachael, Patrice, Ben, Maha, Janine, Louise, Rachael (2), Sarah, Jane, Sassy, and Carlyn, Soo Mi Lee, Genobia U. Thanks go to each one of you for your commitment and your endeavours to ensure that the place moves forward at a steady pace. How incredible is this? Added to the equation are our students on placement – Carlyn, Mark and now James. Each talented and industrious (which is a massive understatement).

The outcome of these combined efforts: existing staff, the Board, Donna, new temps and casuals, students plus our volunteers? We are witnessing the re-emergence of a thriving community centre, a centre which is quite magic, as I believe it always has been. Every single day, something wonderful occurs. People walk through the front doors to offer their assistance; clients and fellow/sister services seek the input and support of our fantastic workers Gloria & Kristina. Rose can be seen smiling as she goes about her duties. Adriana is now no longer to be seen as she is fully immersed in Child Care training thus bringing a personal dream to life. The administration hub is buzzing, with a pool of hard working volunteers managing the phone, filing and other significant matters, and our community consultation process is well underway thanks to Carlyn who has done a phenomenal job on this latter project.

This good work is recognised by the community. Only last week we received an open letter from the father of one of our young Settlement children noting his gratitude and expressing his thanks. Following is a section of his letter:

I wish to say a big heartfelt thankyou to The Settlement. I wish to say a big thank you to those that work and have worked there. Also I am sure there

are many behind the scenes making sure the doors stay open. It is amazing to know that there is an organisation that strengthens the community so much.

So thank you because my son has been blessed by all the good work that the Settlement does. Also thank you because now I have had time to go back to University. When I finish my studies I can find a good paying job ... You have given me hope when there was none. You have given me an opportunity when everyone just talks about it. So thank you. It's beautiful to know my son is in an environment at the Settlement that is drug and beer free. It's beautiful to meet all the staff that has genuine interest in helping the kids of this area. You all do more good than you possibly imagine. For the time my son is at the Settlement he gets to meet positive role models. He gets to avoid hearing the neighbours swearing and fighting. For that time my son can be a child this is something I really appreciate ... My son gets to be a boy. So to everyone seen and unseen at the Settlement THANK YOU!!!!

Like the author of the above letter, I am grateful to the Settlement and to each individual who has been involved in matters during this report period. Everyone in their own way has worked extraordinarily hard during the year to keep the place alive, and it is through this combined effort and determination that the doors have remained open.

In particular I would like to offer my respects to Gloria, Kristina & Rose.

Gloria has been at the Settlement for a decade or more. She has witnessed many 'comings and goings' and assisted a large number of people to settle into their roles and provided aid to so many clients that it is impossible to count them all. As the storm of change blows through the hall, I watch her remain steady within its centre, calmly going about her business in her own quiet way. She has already taught me the power of bending with the wind. I am grateful to her for this and for her understanding, and welcoming smile each day; I greatly admire her perseverance and commitment. Kristina adds laughter and light to every corner of the place, the combination of her enthusiasm, compassion and patience is a mighty force. She too is to be admired. Rose, also, has weathered the storm and is embracing the future with a new enthusiasm and vigour. Well done Rose! My congratulations go to you all. I am honoured to be part of your team, and to work alongside you. On

behalf of this team, I extend a heartfelt welcome our newest member: Alia Seror-O'Neill (new OOSH Coordinator). Alia adds yet another fascinating dimension with her sparkle and eagerness.

There is no stopping us now! As we head into the new year, we do so with smiles and warmth and a shared understanding of what it means to survive and to strive in unison as professionals who adhere to good practice principles and work within a continuous improvement framework to obtain the best possible outcomes for clients, visitors and the community.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks, and the thanks of all staff and the Board, to our funding bodies for supporting our programs and offering guidance; our partnering services for sharing resources and knowledge; the amazing team at Lend Lease for all your hard work in sprucing up the place, Global Cleaning & Maintenance for organising a volunteer cleaning day, and providing an ongoing service, and Save the Children Fund for bringing their mobile bus service to us. Most of all, thanks go to the community who have continued to come in, regardless of whatever changes are afoot. The Settlement is **your place**, and we are here to assist you and we are all very pleased that you choose to use it.



Nettie Marie
Manager

YOUTH & MURALAPPI PROGRAMS



Youth Programs

The Early Intervention and Prevention Program (EIPP) is funded by the Department of Family and Community Services. It is targeted at providing programs and individualised support and casework to young people aged 12-18 that are at risk in the City of Sydney region. This Early Intervention and Prevention Program is aimed at assisting and supporting young people and their families at a community level and in partnership with other local organisation to build life skills, resilience and empowerment amongst young people.

The Muralappi Aboriginal Health Program is funded by the NSW Health Department and is focused on health promotion with Indigenous young people aged 12-24 in the Redfern/Waterloo area. This program offers support and advocacy with government departments around housing, court support, Centrelink and others to ensure the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of the Indigenous young people in the area.

At the Settlement the EIPP and Muralappi Aboriginal Health Programs work in collaboration with the Out of School Hours Program and the Community Builders Program and by linking and partnering with Redfern Community Centre, Oasis, Weave, Family Culture Day Consortium, Augustinians and Tribal Warrior to provide a holistic approach to service delivery for young people and their families.

This 2013-2014 financial year period has been a challenging year for the Youth Work programs and the Settlement as a whole, with various changes and with workers being on leave. This year has seen a transition period in the youth work programs with a shift of focus from providing a 'drop in' service 5 afternoons a week to providing structured programs that are targeted at providing a range of services and programs aimed at building confidence, self-esteem whilst promoting healthier lifestyles, positive relationships and connections with other young people and the community.

The EIPP and Muralappi program remain involved in the Family Culture Day monthly events, Tribal Warrior Clean Slate boxing program, Augustinian volunteer homework program and Art program with Weave. The school holiday program continues to draw large numbers with young people also attending from areas outside of Sydney to join those family and friends from the City of Sydney area. The activities undertaken draw on social connection and self-esteem building whilst engaging in a fun and safe program during the school holidays.

This financial period was another year that saw the delivery of 4 camps throughout the year with a total of 95 young people attending. The camps were held at Perisher Blue, the Hawkesbury and Ku-Ring-Gai National Park, with one camp incorporating the younger children at the Settlement, 7-12 year olds, and one camp running in partnership with Weave.

The Youth Programs look forward to the following year at the Settlement, providing solid structured programs around life skills and health in partnership with other local organisations to better enrich and enhance the experiences of young people in the area.



Kristina Touma

Youth Worker - EIPP

&

Gloria Donohue

Muralappi Health Worker

Thank You