



2023-2024







*NDCAS acknowledges the Gomeroi people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and meet. We respect their cultural heritage and beliefs which have been practiced and shared across countless generations and recognise the importance of the continuing connection of the Gomeroi people to country, water, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge the youth who are the future.*



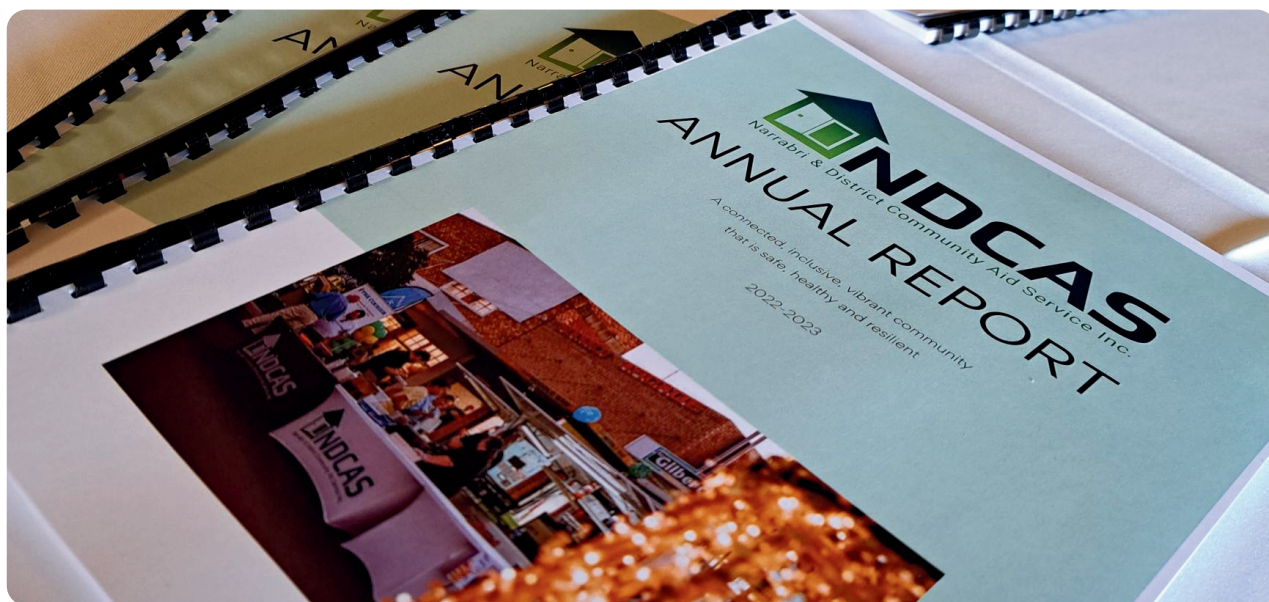
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# ABOUT THIS REPORT



This Annual Report covers Narrabri and District Community Aid Service Inc (NDCAS) activities and outcomes for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. This report covers activities NDCAS have undertaken or supported.

This Annual Report is one of the ways we seek to satisfy our accountability and obligations to our stakeholders, including the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC), NSW Department of Communities and Justice, NSW Department of Education and Training, our partners, supporters and community. We believe accountability is crucial for our sustainability and therefore our ability to fulfil our vision. By holding ourselves accountable, we demonstrate that we are worthy of ongoing trust.

We encourage you to read this Annual Report in conjunction with our Strategic Plan. This addresses the mechanisms and processes that the organisation has in place to assure quality improvement and ensure integrity, as well as addressing the challenges the organisation faces as a whole.

Our annual financial statement is available as a separate document on request. From December 2024 a digital copy can be viewed on the ACNC website or by scanning the QR code.



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

I am delighted to present the 2023 – 2024 NDCAS Annual Report. Within this report, you will discover highlights of our activities, milestones, challenges, and accomplishments from the past year.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the CEO, Operations Manager, Team Leaders, and all staff for their creativity and commitment in delivering services and resources to our clients. We truly have an amazing team, and the NDCAS Board is deeply appreciative of the dedication, passion, and resilience exhibited by our staff.

In 2023, NDCAS achieved ASES Accreditation—well done to all staff for this accomplishment! We are fortunate to have a team of multi-skilled, enthusiastic workers, along with a forward-thinking CEO and Operations Manager who support our staff.

The board appointed new titles for Joshua and Lisa in 2024: Joshua, formally Manager, now titled CEO and Lisa, formally Administration Officer, now titled Operations Manager. These titles reflect the responsibilities of the Executive team.

NDCAS staff are consistently engaging with the community, providing one-on-one assistance through programs and events. As a board, we frequently acknowledge the positive feedback we receive about NDCAS and its staff. While it's impossible to detail every achievement in this message, please know that the board and I recognise the excellent work they all do, especially in collaboration with other services. As the CEO of the Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council (WWLALC), I would especially like to commend the strong partnership NDCAS has cultivated within the Wee Waa Community and local schools.





I would like to express my gratitude to Noeline Kiss, Alan Marshall, Louise Stewart, Antony Vuragu, and Bradley Cork for their outstanding contributions as members of the NDCAS Board. I would like to acknowledge Noeline on her life membership with NDCAS and commend Alan on his upcoming 10 years of dedication to the service. This past year involved tough decisions and lengthy meetings as we developed our Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2027 with the support of Highwire Group. I look forward to continuing our work with the same dedication and enthusiasm to see NDCAS thrive under its new vision.

Financial management has remained a strong area for us over the past year, and I extend my sincere thanks to everyone involved. The excellent work in this domain allows the board to focus additional time on other areas, including the development of our risk management procedures. Special thanks to Brad, Antony, and the Board for their efforts in updating our Policies and Procedures to align with changes to relevant Acts.

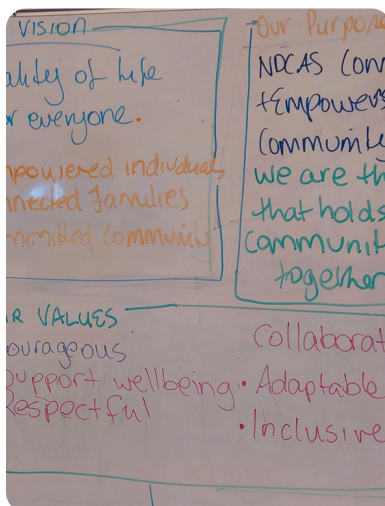
Later this year we will mark a significant milestone for NDCAS, 50 years of service to the Narrabri Shire Community. We will celebrate this achievement in November 2024 with a gathering of past and present board members, staff, volunteers, and partner community groups and services.

Finally, I would like to mention some developments that have occurred since the end of the financial year. We warmly welcomed new team members Tamara Roberts and Jessica Fitzsimon to NDCAS and look forward to a long and successful journey together. It is with sadness that we received the resignation of Amber Burgmann. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Congratulations to Kayla (Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator) and all the staff involved in the NDCAS Community Christmas Drive, which is currently underway. Even in its early stages this initiative has garnered much praise from the community, showcasing the incredible efforts of our team.

Once again, thank you to Joshua, Lisa, the staff, and our board.

Robyn Keeffe  
NDCAS Chairperson



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

What a year!

The past 12 months have been noteworthy at Narrabri and District Community Aid Service (NDCAS), we marked several significant milestones that had us reflecting on our past and looking towards our future.

With all the milestones I will mention below we could be moved to look at our day-to-day work and see it as less significant, but nothing could be further from the truth. The day-to-day work of NDCAS is where the real magic happens; it happens in casework, programs, events, intakes, administrations, board meetings, advocacy, facility maintenance, and the many other activities that serve our community. This work can at times be challenging and often comes with disappointments, but it is worthwhile when we see people achieve their goals.

I would like to thank team leaders Amber Burgmann and Kelly Herden for both leading and supporting their teams and Operations Manager Lisa Smith for her tireless work throughout the year. Thank you to every team member; each of us has a part to play in seeing the vision become reality, and every part is important. Thank you to the NDCAS Board for guiding the service from strength to strength in this busy year. Thank you also to the local services that we work alongside to support clients and community, and to the local businesses, community groups, and individuals for their generous giving towards making a difference in people lives.

We closed out 2023 having completed all assessments for Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation and started 2024 as an accredited service. We were very happy with how we moved through the accreditation process.





Following accreditation, it was right into action on developing a new Strategic Plan (2024 – 2027). It was important to us that this was a very collaborative process gathering input and feedback from clients, members, partner organisations, staff, and Board. The final product is something that truly reflects the heart of NDCAS as we look to the future.

We also took time this year to mark 40 years of the Namoi Toy Library which is an amazing service available for children and families in our Shire. I have had the pleasure of being involved with the Toy Library first as a child, then as a parent accessing the service, and my first position at NDCAS was Toy Librarian.

2024 is also the year that NDCAS marks 50 years of service to the Narrabri Shire community. This milestone is testament to the dedication and vision of the many volunteers and staff since 1974 who paved the way for where we are now. I am immensely proud to play my part in both the history and future of NDCAS alongside our excellent team of staff, Board, and volunteers.

In 1974, the minimum wage was \$2.08 p/h, 4oz of Heinz Baked Beans at Woolworths cost 9c, and the median house price was somewhere around \$22,000. In 2024, the minimum wage is \$24.10 p/h, Heinz baked beans at Woolworths cost \$1.06 for the equivalent of 4oz (113g), and Narrabri's median house price (according to realestate.com) is \$445,000. One of these things has become much more unaffordable...and it's not the baked beans.

In 2024, and in our Shire, affordable housing, even just available housing, is a challenge seemingly out of reach for many people. There are many other challenges faced by our community, domestic abuse is an often-hidden scourge on society that does not discriminate, and there are alarming increases in mental ill health rates in young people. External and internal factors place pressure on families which are the core building block of healthy communities.

The world has changed, some things for worse, but many more for the better. Things have also changed at NDCAS over the past 50 years, but we share the same core purpose as those who paved the way before us and whose shoulders we now stand on. We are motivated by service to our community and our newly established vision is Quality of Life for Everyone - Empowered Individuals, Connected Families, and Committed Communities. We are committed to building and providing a service for the community that lasts.

Joshua Pattison  
NDCAS Chief Executive Officer

***Creating something new is easy. Creating something that can last is the challenge  
– Simon Sinek***

# WHAT WE DO



Narrabri and District Community Aid Service Inc. (NDCAS) is a not-for-profit community service. We provide essential support services throughout the Narrabri Local Government Area (LGA).

## **Busy Little Hands at Play Supported Playgroup**

Busy Little Hands at Play Supported Playgroup holds 40 playgroup sessions each year, working towards outcomes which include healthy living, child safety, parenting skills and child development, early literacy/numeracy support and school transition. Playgroup is held every Thursday (excluding school holidays and public holidays) from 10am – 12pm at 51 Tibbereena Street Narrabri. This is a safe space for parents, carers and their children (aged 0 to 5 years) to develop social skills, connections, participate in learning activities and access information and advice.

## **Community Strengthening**

Narrabri and District Community Aid Service delivers a variety of programs and events within the Narrabri LGA, to foster community spirit and participation. Each year NDCAS facilitates small and large events to increase social participation and a sense of belonging to the community, reduce risk of entry into the child protection system, empower individuals and families and a training event for early intervention service providers.



### **Namoi Toy Library**

The purpose of Namoi Toy Library is to provide educational support to young children within our LGA, promoting the importance of early childhood education to families. The Namoi Toy Library provides the Start Strong Pathways program to support educational engagement of children too young to receive a preschool education, support pathways to pre-school and to promote the importance of early childhood education to families and communities.

### **NDCAS Families & Youth Service**

The Families and Youth Team (NFYS) delivers programs which meet wellbeing and safety needs of children, young people and families.

This is achieved through case management which could include home visits, support, advocacy, referrals and skills development to help people achieve their outcomes and goals. NFYS also offer parenting programs that provide support specifically targeted at parent/child relationships and/or practical skill building for parents.

### **Narrabri Homelessness Support Service**

The Homeless Support Team (NHSS) provides support to men, women, young people and children who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness or domestic violence, aiming to decrease homelessness and empower them to overcome related challenges. We provide crisis accommodation for women and children and offer referrals and support for cost of living challenges, mental health matters, substance use issues, and life skill development. This comprehensive approach addresses immediate needs while promoting long-term resilience and personal growth.



# AT A QUICK GLANCE

NDCAS supports the community in many ways. Below is a snapshot of the services we have delivered throughout the period of July 2023-June 2024.

## 13

Events held in the Narrabri LGA

## 30

Women and children accommodated by the Refuge-80% of these clients experienced domestic and family violence

## 40

Women and children supported by Staying Home Leaving Violence

## 75

Toy Library Members across Narrabri, Wee Waa, Pilliga & Gwabegar

## 207

Intakes conducted

## 223

Attended playgroup one or more times.

## 294

Clients supported by NDCAS Family & Youth Service

## 327

Clients supported by Narrabri Homelessness Support Service





Home is where Lillie-Mae is



It's been a long journey, but Lillie-Mae Groth is finally home.

Feb 13, 2024

At the age of 17, Lillie-Mae Groth has a few exceptional achievements

Last year she graduated high school, attended her formal, got a job in favourite subject and bought her own car.

At the end of her final year at Narrabri High School, she was also awarded

The Courier  
26 October 2023

Bri-an the Elf is back on the shelf and will be hanging out, and around town at eight businesses around Narrabri in the lead-up to Christmas.



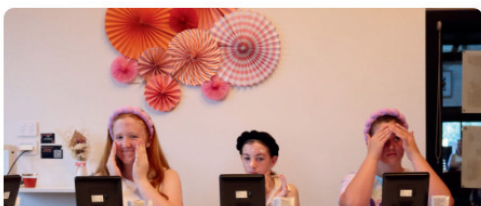
NARRABRICOURIER.COM.AU

Elf on the Shelf is back - The Courier

Bri-an the Elf is back on the shelf and will be hanging out, and around town at eight businesses...

21

1 share



The Courier  
21 May

Four generations and many hundreds of Narrabri Shire kids have grown up with access to a world of toys thanks to the dedicated volunteers and staff of the Namoi Toy Library.



NARRABRICOURIER.COM.AU

Forty years of fun: Toy Library milestone celebrated - The Courier

Forty generations and many hundreds of Narrabri Shire kids have grown up with access to a w...

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## NDCAS marks mental health awareness month

ALI SMITH  
narrabricourier.com.au

Mental health tips such as taking a coin to your pocket so it's a reminder that "things are going to be okay" and the simple message to "be kind" were just some of the advice shared at a recent NDCAS community breakfast.

Community Aid Service events mark mental health awareness month at a fitting location - the equal House on Rose gardens in Waa.

Mental health month is celebrated each year in October in NSW, said NDCAS community engagement officer Karla Nohkum.

This month encourages all of us to think about our mental health and wellbeing regardless of whether we have lived experience of mental illness.

It also gives us the opportunity to demand the importance of good mental health in our everyday lives and encourages the help-seeking behaviours we need.

NDCAS client pathways officer Gail Davies added, "It was really good to hear from people who connect with prevention and self-help."

Waa was part of our shire and we're so inclusive of the whole shire. Our goal is to give all the towns access to services.

We had young people and older adults, and people from all backgrounds.

personal experience with depression and suicidal thoughts, he began to realise "each time he was almost at the end" that he always found a reason to live.

"Just one reason was enough to get him through his darkest moments. This pattern seeded the concept of Just One Reason as a suicide survival toolkit," states Mr O'Neil's website.

"I'm just a Aussie bloke with an idea that worked for me, and it's working for others," Mr O'Neil said.

Mr O'Neil has opened up about his own story to try to help others and save lives, telling Waa that at the breakfast about his personal battles, including with bullying and depression.

Mr O'Neil shared some of the coping mechanisms he's used to overcome dark days, including seeking professional help.

He praised the power of a caring community and explained how his wife has been supported by locals during times when his mental health has gone off track.

"Taking ownership of your own mental health and looking out for signs that might mean a person is having a tough time, were other topics Mr O'Neil covered at the event."

"If you see something that's not morally or ethically correct and you do nothing or say nothing, then they're complicit," he said.

"And say you've got to take a stand. If we all keep turning a blind eye - nothing is going to change."

Pointing out the high number of

been visiting once a week, offering the option of assistance in a casual and comfortable environment.

NDCAS said the free breakfast event with Mr O'Neil aimed to provide practical resources, inform the community about services available, connect the community and break down barriers to open up discussions about mental health.

"Mental health still isn't talked about by some people. If we can talk about it more than we can bring a greater understanding and hopefully help those who need it."

"NDCAS we often talk about the doors to people's houses, and how everyone assumes what people are like behind those doors."

"That if you walk in and live in that house, what you assume and what is real can be very different."

"And trying to be understanding and also just being nice - they are easy things to do to help."

NDCAS community engagement officer Karla Nohkum thanked Mr O'Neil, his wife Sasi, attendees and those who helped to make the Just One Reason breakfast a success.

"This event would not have been possible without the support of the



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS BREAKFAST: Back, Sasi and Stuart O'Neil (guest speaker), Narrabri and District Community Aid Service team members Sasi O'Neil, Karla Nohkum, front, Gail Anderson and Karla Nohkum with Larannah Hamblin.

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Shire for Life and Health, WISE.

Mr O'Neil's books are available for free at the NDCAS office.



Elizabeth Shepherdson, Anne Williams, Suzanne Kable and Helen Hare attended NDCAS mental health awareness month breakfast in Waa last week.

Cheryl O'Neil, April Leggett and Sarah Schwaner.

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THE COURIER

PROUDLY SERVING THE NARRABRI SHIRE SINCE 1913

NEWS SPORT SOCIAL BUSINESS COMMENT WEE WAA BOGGABRI REAL ESTATE FEATURES

37 Dangar St, Narrabri  
6792 4692

NARRABRI AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY AID

NDCAS disco fever hits Baan Baa

Young teens and mums of N... and District Community Aid S...

READ MORE

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Forty years of fun: Toy Library milestone celebrated - The Courier

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# THE COURIER

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024 • VOL. CXX NO. 30

PROUDLY SERVING THE NARRABRI SHIRE FOR 113 YEARS

WOOLWORTHS WEEKLY

BOGGABRI DROVERS' CAMPFIRE

PAGE 9

DAZZLING DEBUT

## \$5 million for Violet Street

One of Narrabri's most flood-prone bridges will be replaced after the state government awarded Narrabri Shire Council \$5 million as part of the Infrastructure Betterment Fund.

The Violet Street bridge will receive a massive overhaul as part of the jointly-funded Commonwealth and NSW governments' \$200 million program.

The funding program sets directly damaging bushfires and flood and early 2022.

## Holiday fun galore at thrift store



Min 9° Max 24° Mostly sunny. Winds south to southwesterly 15 to 25 km/h, tending south to southeasterly 15 to 20 km/h during the evening.

Our net on holiday with you

THE COURIER

PROUDLY SERVING THE NARRABRI SHIRE SINCE 1913

NEWS SPORT SOCIAL BUSINESS COMMENT WEE WAA BOGGABRI REAL ESTATE FEATURES

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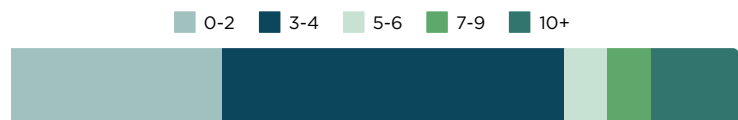
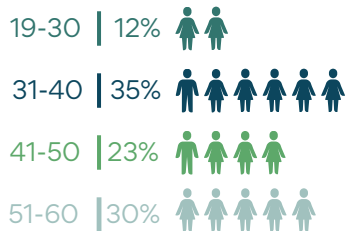


# WHO WE ARE

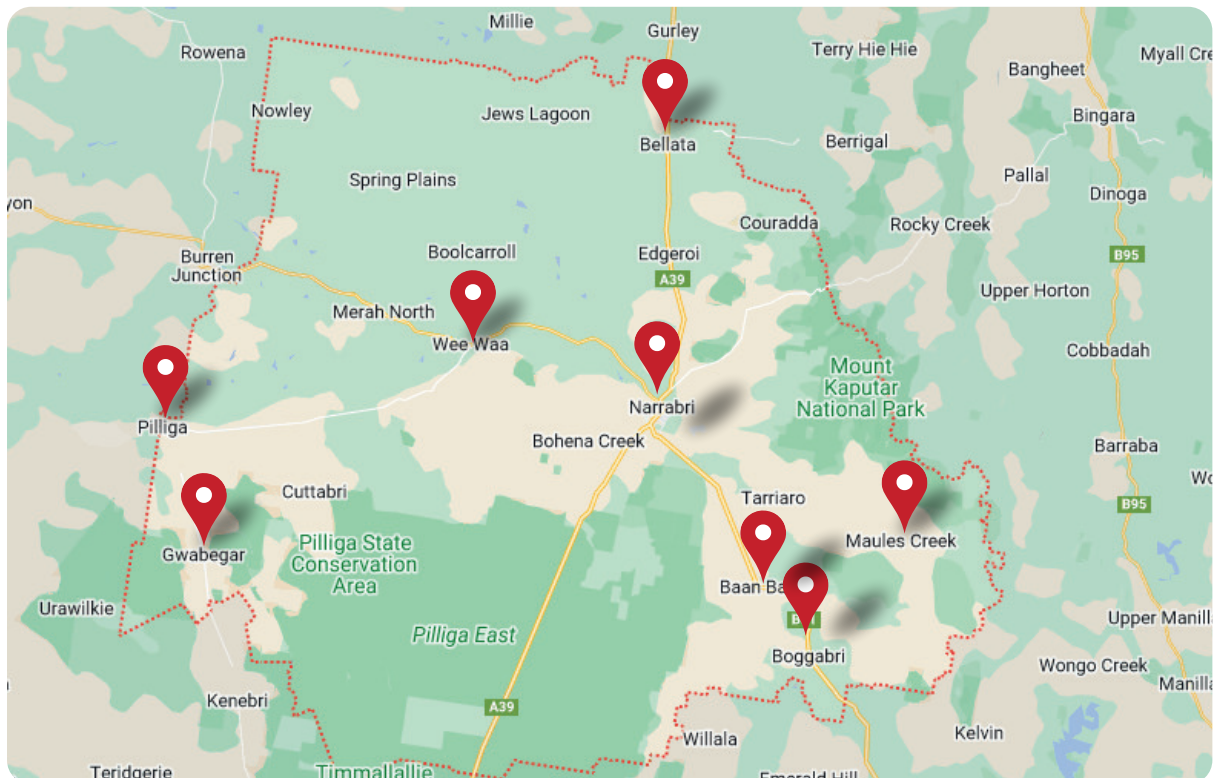
NDCAS was formed in 1974 and has been registered as a charity since 1978. In 2023-2024 we provided services to the whole of the Narrabri Shire based from four Narrabri sites. Our team is made up of passionate locals with a range of skills and experience.



## Our team by age



## Our team by years of service



# COMMUNITY COLLABORATION



Establishing and maintaining close working relationships are essential to achieve the best possible results for individuals, families, and the community.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support over the last 12 months; Summit Community Services, Shared Table, Narrabri and Wee Waa High Schools, Salvation Army-Moneycare, Wee Waa and Narrabri Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gunida Gunyah and Narrabri Police. This is just a small list of the organisations we have worked with and we know there have been many more along the way, we extend our thanks to them all.

We have continued to work in partnership with Narrabri Shire Council through the delivery of several events and programs within the LGA. These include NarraBRIGHT, Crime Prevention Week, National Reconciliation Week and Youth Week.

Each month, NDCAS host the Narrabri Interagency meeting to promote strong relationships between organisations and agencies within the LGA. NDCAS is honoured to facilitate these connections within our community and can see the benefit of providing a space for all to come together and share information, advice and develop referral pathways between services.



# GOMEROI COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Gomeroi people have been the custodians of the land that makes up the Narrabri LGA for many generations. At the time of the 2021 Census 14.8% of the Narrabri LGA population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, compared to the NSW average of 3.4%. NDCAS recognise the importance of working and learning together to build a bright future.

Wee Waa High School students participated in a fortnightly cultural learning program, facilitated by Open River Enterprises and Wee Waa Local Aboriginal Land Council. NDCAS supported the facilitation of this project during terms 3 and 4 of 2023 to the Year 7 class. The program explored various subjects, including local seasons, native plants, art forms and more.

In May NDCAS was invited to join with the local Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health team and Narrabri Hospital who held a welcome to country for all babies born over the past year. This was an important time to reconnect people, community and culture.

Annually NDCAS provide an opportunity for service providers in the New England to participate in an education and skills training event that is relevant to community sector workers. This year, local services toured The University of Sydney's Indigenous Grassland for Grains site which highlighted native foods that can be found in our backyard, the process required for these plants to be turned into food, and the nutritional benefits of local native plants. This was followed by training delivered by Gomeroi Education, aimed at deepening attendees' understanding of how Australian laws impacted Aboriginal people and the experiences of Gomeroi people residing in missions and fringe camps in Northwest NSW.

NDCAS partnered with Narrabri Shire Council during Reconciliation Week in June 2024. Lynn and Ed Trindall shared knowledge and stories, including the traditional background for acknowledging country and what it means for a traditional owner to perform welcome to country.



*"Gomeroi education put things into perspective like family mapping, which has never been explained in that way before."*  
-DGT attendee



# WHAT IS DFV?

**Domestic and family violence refers to violent, threatening, or controlling behavior in intimate or family relationships that instills fear.**



In the Narrabri LGA, domestic and family violence is one of the most significant crimes requiring police intervention. This statistic is backed by Bureau Of Crime Statistics And Research data. For this reason early intervention is key to ensuring our community and families remain as safe as possible both now and into the future.

To effectively inform the community about domestic and family violence, it is essential that NDCAS staff are trained in the latest best practices that address the constantly evolving landscape of the sector. Our staff have engaged in professional development to enhance their understanding of safety planning, family violence and sexual assault.

NDCAS staff conducted various short workshops for community services and businesses to provide education about the signs of domestic and family violence and the local support that is available for people experiencing abuse.

Narrabri Rotary, Narrabri Police and NDCAS collaborated to hold an information stand at the Bunnings Christmas Family Open Evening. This initiative was a part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign against domestic violence.

For the third consecutive year NDCAS partnered with Narrabri Shire Council and Narrabri Police to deliver a community information session during Crime Prevention Week in June 2024. The Narrabri Police covered topics ranging from cyber safety and online scams while NDCAS discussed domestic and family violence in our community and the supports that are available.

The Love Bites program aims to promote open communication among high school students through engaging group discussions, creative arts, and interactive sessions. It helps students gain insight into respectful friendships as well as their rights and responsibilities within relationships. This program was implemented for students in Years 7 and 10 at Wee Waa High School and Year 7 at Narrabri High School.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT



As the cost of living increases, the kindness and generosity of individuals, local businesses and volunteers, who dedicate their time and resources to support those in need, stands out even more.

The Narrabri Women and Children's Refuge was provided support from Bunnings Narrabri, staff who helped upgrade existing and new garden beds to include flower and vegetable seedlings. The garden beds will provide significant benefits for the women and children residing in the Refuge. By participating in upkeep of the gardens, they can enjoy fresh produce and experience times of mindfulness and self-care.



Share the Dignity works to make a real, on-the-ground difference to the lives of women and girls who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, domestic violence or poverty. NDCAS were pleased to receive an abundance of personal hygiene products from Share the Dignity which were distributed to women and girls in need within our community. NDCAS partnered with other services to help distribute products to the wider LGA community, including Wee Waa, Pilliga and Gwabegar.

Community donations from organisations on Mother's Day and Christmas can mean the world to those going through tough times. The Narrabri Anglican Church kindly arranged hampers for clients residing in the Refuge during these periods.

This is just a snapshot of the generosity we have seen in the past year. NDCAS would like to extend our thanks to all individuals, community groups and businesses who have supported us over the past 12 months.



# SCHOOLS OF OUR COMMUNITY



In 2023 Narrabri Public School Student Representative Council had conversations about supporting those in our community who may be less fortunate than themselves, specifically those who may be at risk of homelessness. After discussions with NDCAS staff, the SRC decided to purchase hygiene products for men with funds from a recent fundraiser. This experience provided students with a fantastic opportunity to further develop social awareness, empathy and kindness.

To foster engagement among parents, students, teachers and the community, NDCAS was invited to support the P&C of Narrabri High School to serve a BBQ breakfast once a term at Narrabri High School. This included a Year 7 transition breakfast to welcome new students and families to the school.

NDCAS was delighted to support Narrabri High Schools RAISE Youth Mentoring program in 2023. This initiative focuses on pairing trained mentors with young individuals who meet weekly to enhance their social and emotional wellbeing, as well as address issues such as social media, bullying and household stress.

“

*“We wanted to donate some of the money we raised from our Disco but before the Disco we decided to donate to NDCAS for the homeless people”*

*-Year 3 student*

# EXPRESS. EMPOWER. GET LOUD.



This year, NDCAS partnered with Narrabri Shire Council, Joblink Plus and Namoi Care Connect to host a 'Thrift Shop Party' for youth in the Narrabri LGA. The event was funded by NSW Regional Youth and featured a free lunch and dance party, providing a warm meal and a safe space to connect with friends. The "Thrift Shop" theme encouraged self-expression through fashion, allowing those from all backgrounds to participate without judgment. Many youth confidently joined the dance floor, with older teens fostering a supportive atmosphere inviting younger ones to join in a dance-off. These experiences help youth build relationships beyond their usual social circles, fostering connections that extend to school, sports and in the community.

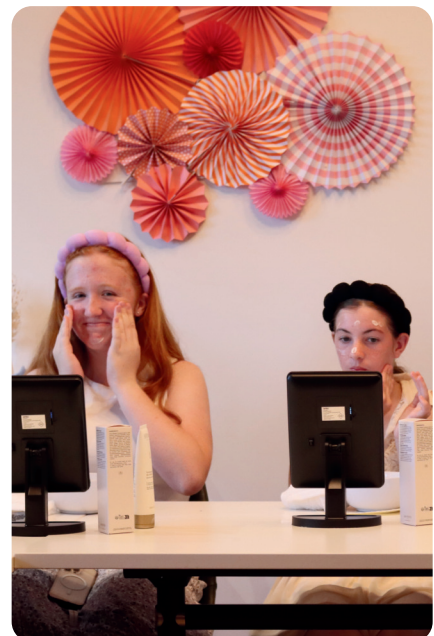
To celebrate NSW Women's Week in March, twenty three teens and fourteen women attended an event focused on boosting self-confidence, personal health, and engagement. The teens took part in a hands-on skincare workshop led by beauty therapists from Visage Beauty Narrabri. Meanwhile, mothers and caregivers of the teens met with Alvin, from HNE Health to discuss matters relevant to their wellbeing. This was particularly impactful, fostering meaningful conversations among the women.

In partnership with Project School Formal, NDCAS assisted several graduating Year 12 students from Narrabri and Wee Waa in accessing the ideal formal attire for their special occasion. Project School Formal supplied the students with all the necessary accessories to complete their look. Purchasing formal wear can often impose a financial burden on families.



*"It was perfect, open and honest with the ability to talk amongst the group as a whole. The conversation flowed openly without judgment that allowed all who attended to join in."*

*-Parent attending Women's Week event*



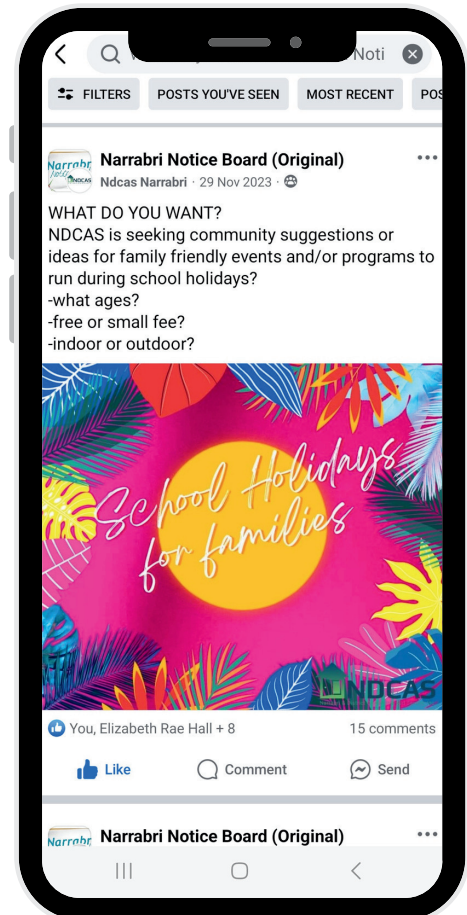


# WHAT'S YOUR THOUGHTS?

The Community was invited to share suggestions for school holiday activities. Results from a social media survey in November 2023 showed that the community were interested in school holiday events for families with young children. With this feedback in mind NDCAS hosted multiple discos for various age groups to ensure environment, activities and music was suited to the children and youth attending. NDCAS partnered with the Baan Baa community to host a disco at the newly renovated hall.

School holidays are an opportunity for Youth to attend activities at the Youth Centre. In January 2024 an Escape room for Year 7, class of 2024 was created to build further connections outside of school by completing a variety of puzzles, riddles and obstacles.

To help shine a light on our vibrant community NDCAS supported Narrabri Shire Council's NarraBRIGHT festival by hosting a laser tag zone in Maitland Street. Hundreds of children and youth were able to engage in an activity that isn't readily available within our shire.



“Great atmosphere, it was something different for the kids to do”  
-Parent attending Narrabri Disco



# 40 YEARS OF NAMOI TOY LIBRARY



Forty years of operation of the Namoi Toy Library was celebrated in May 2024. Playgroup and Toy Library families were joined by committee members, staff and volunteers from the past 40 years to celebrate the Toy Library's anniversary.

Initially, the Toy Library was designed to assist families with children who had a disability or learning difficulties and was operated from a committee members house. In 1984, the Toy Library expanded its offerings to include all families with children aged 0 to 5 years, soon needing a larger location and relocating to St Francis Xavier's convent. Later moving into the Narrabri Library building and eventually to the current Tibbereena Street premises where it is now well established.

Namoi Toy Library continues to offer a large range of toys and resources to support the development of children's cognitive, social, emotional, gross and fine motor skills. Each week the toy borrowing service is available both on-site and by delivery across the Shire.



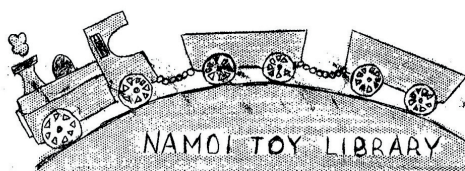
*Thumbs up to the Toy Library in Narrabri celebrating its 40th anniversary on Thursday. The Toy Library has been great for the kids and parents for generations. Hundreds of district children have been toy borrowers over the years. How many towns have such a fantastic service?*

*-The Courier, Thumbs up & down anonymous*

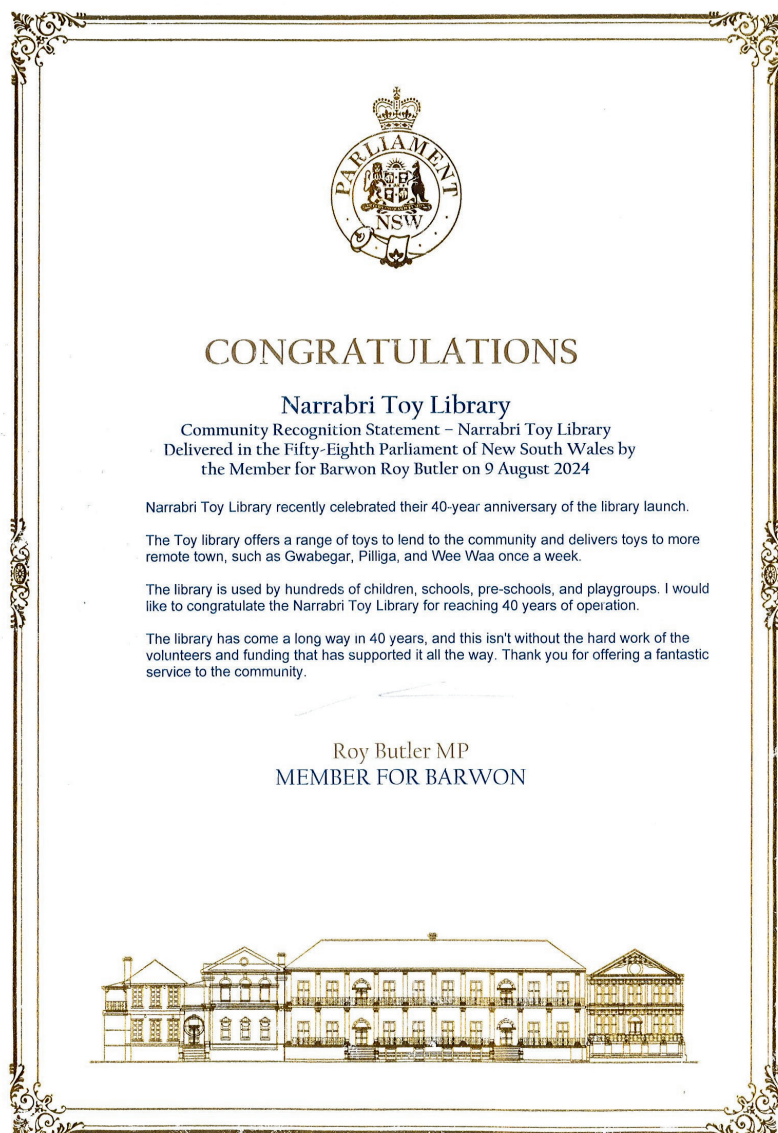


The original Namoi Toy Library logo was designed in 1982 by Toy Library Committee Members and remained the logo until 2020.

1982



2020



The Namoi Toy Library was honoured to receive a Community Recognition Statement from Roy Butler MP Member for Barwon to congratulate the Toy Library on 40 years of service.

# HOMELESSNESS WEEK 2023



## Coffee Cup Awareness Campaign

NDCAS partnered with Summit Community Services to run a local Homelessness Week campaign to increase awareness within the community.

During August 2023, coffee shops in Narrabri served takeaway coffee to customers in specially designed cups. The coffee cups featured five locally relevant homelessness statistics, (examples below) covering subjects including; why people may become homeless, the social housing waitlist, youth homelessness and the number of people NDCAS and Summit supported in the year prior.



*"I found them informative. Especially with statistics related to our Shire. I get my coffee from Relish each morning so not getting the usual mint green coloured cup had me looking at what the change was. Very effective!"*  
-regular coffee drinker

Where do homeless Youth go?  
The closest Youth Refuge is  
Tamworth

ALMOST **450**  
PEOPLE WERE SUPPORTED  
IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS  
FOR HOMELESSNESS IN  
THE NARRABRI SHIRE.  
OVER 25% OF THESE  
WERE BETWEEN 12 & 24  
YEARS OLD

*Did you know?*  
Homelessness is not just  
sleeping rough on the street. It  
can include couch surfing, over  
crowded housing or sleeping in  
a car



In February 2024 NDCAS and Summit Community Services supported Homes North and the NSW Government to undertake its fifth annual street count of people experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough on the streets. As well as providing a snapshot of where people are sleeping rough across the State, street count helps foster local collaboration and inform approaches to prevention, housing options, and post crisis support. It was encouraging that 2024 identified the lowest number of rough sleepers in Narrabri over the past five years.

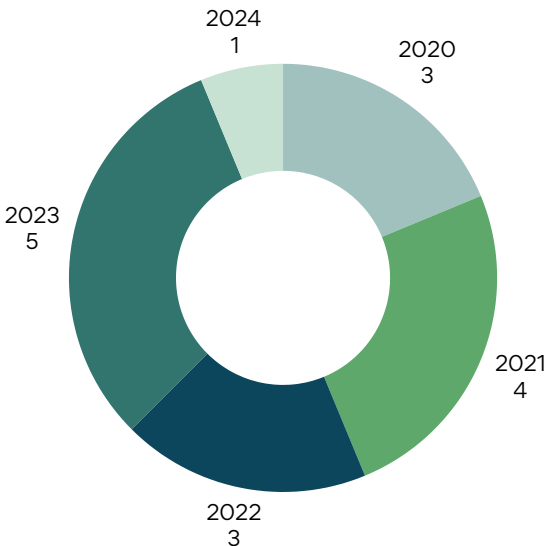
The current housing crisis has created a demand for longer-term accommodation in our Refuge. Previously women and children would require accommodation on average one to three months before gaining a tenancy. However, we are now seeing their stay extend out to six to 12 months due to low local housing availability. Consequently, this limits access for others, which exacerbates homelessness within our community. The shortage of affordable and available rentals in Narrabri has led those staying in temporary accommodation to also remain longer than in past years. This leads to increases in the amount of people who may be sleeping rough in tents and cars.



THE SOCIAL HOUSING WAITLIST  
IN THE NARRABRI SHIRE CAN BE  
UP TO 5 YEARS



People can become homeless due to  
relationship break down, family &  
domestic violence, financial difficulties  
and tenancy eviction or termination



Narrabri street count results

# PLAYGROUP



*"I wouldn't have even used the Town Library if it wasn't for our visits with Playgroup"*  
-Playgroup parent



Playgroup provides babies, toddlers, and young children with a diverse range of early learning experiences. It serves as an excellent platform for children to explore the world, forge friendships, and cultivate social skills. Additionally, Playgroup offers parents, grandparents, and caregivers an opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences, create relationships, and provide mutual support.

Each week, children and their families have access to an array of toys and learning resources aimed at fostering development and enhancing play opportunities. This variety changes weekly to maintain children's interest and promote their growth. The program includes quarterly excursions to the Town Library which allows families to engage with the community and access local services.

To enhance social engagement amongst families, Playgroup hosted several dance parties throughout the year to celebrate the end of term and Christmas.

Busy Little Hands at Play Supported Playgroup has become a vital part of the Narrabri community as evidenced by the increasing number of families utilising our service. From July 2023 to June 2024 Playgroup had a 61% increase in attendance compared to the previous year.



# ACROSS OUR SHIRE

NDCAS is passionate about supporting the whole of Narrabri Shire by providing practical solutions and connections through the delivery of community events and targeted support to children, youth, individuals and families.

Mental Health Month was celebrated in Wee Waa in October 2023. NDCAS partnered with HealthWISE to deliver an informative breakfast event, encouraging the community to think about their mental health and wellbeing. Stuart O'Neill, author and publican shared his lived experiences with mental illness and suicidality and reasoning behind creating his pocket size help book 'Just One Reason'.

Youth of the community attended a free movie screening at The Crossing Theatre in conjunction with Youth Week 2024. This is our third year holding this event with the support of Narrabri Shire Council.



# 95%

*participants felt they have an increased knowledge in regards to suicide prevention*

# CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



The Elf on the Shelf Christmas activity had its third successful year in 2023. Elves Bri-an and Cotton Candy visited Narrabri and Wee Waa for 8 weeks throughout October, November and December 2023. This interactive activity allows families to explore and discover local businesses and services of their LGA trying to seek out the elves using weekly clues.

NDCAS once again supported the Narrabri Chamber of Commerce annual Street Christmas Party in December. The BBQ trailer provided the ideal hub for community to engage with staff and enjoy hot dogs for dinner.

Christmas is a busy and expensive time of year and pressures of the season can quickly add up. NDCAS supplied people in need with support to purchase food and toys for their families over the Christmas period to ease some of these stresses. We were fortunate enough to partner with businesses, organisations and individuals including Kogil Street Preschool, C & W Financial Services, Whitehaven Coal and the Narrabri Anglican Church who donated items including Christmas gifts for children, personal hygiene bags and food to enable families to celebrate Christmas.



*"I didn't even realise we had a realtor in Wee Waa. I stayed and chatted to Jo for half an hour"*

*-Farmer from Wee Waa who visited JMW Real Estate to find Cotton Candy with his children.*





# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS



## Australian Service Excellence Standards Accreditation

In August 2023 Narrabri and District Community Aid Service Inc became an ASES accredited organisation.

This achievement reflects the dedication and commitment of everyone involved, demonstrating a shared vision for excellence and continuous improvement. The accreditation process involved rigorous evaluation, requiring the implementation of best practices and adherence to quality benchmarks. As a result, NDCAS is now better equipped to serve its community effectively, providing reliable and top-notch services. The journey has fostered a culture of learning and growth, empowering the team to innovate and respond to future challenges with confidence and resilience. This milestone is not just a testament to past efforts, but a foundation for future success, ensuring that NDCAS remains a trusted and valuable resource for all those it supports.



*"You're doing such a brilliant job – I often mention the culture in your team to other organisations – so connected and supportive"*  
-Hirewire group

NDCAS was awarded runner up in the Employer of Choice more than 5 Employees category at Narrabri Chamber of Commerce Business Awards 2023.

This award not only celebrates the achievements of NDCAS as a growing team but also that we continue to innovate and thrive. We remain dedicated to maintaining our status as a leading employer in the community. As we celebrate this achievement, we remain committed to nurturing and enhancing this vibrant team culture, ensuring that it continues to flourish in the years to come.



# NDCAS VISION & PURPOSE



## Our Vision

Quality of Life for Everyone -  
Empowered Individuals, Connected  
Families, Committed Community.

## Our Purpose

NDCAS connects, supports, and strengthens  
our community. We are a link that helps hold  
the community together.

### Courageous

We choose what is  
right over what is  
easy and take actions  
that lead to positive  
change.

### Supportive

We care deeply about  
the wellbeing of our  
team, clients, and  
community.

### Respectful

We choose behaviours  
that recognise the  
importance of every  
person.

### Collaborative

We seek ways to work  
with others to maximise  
our impact and  
outcomes for clients  
and community.

### Adaptable

We are creative and can  
be flexible to meet the  
changing needs of our  
clients and community.

### Inclusive

We respect and  
promote diversity. We  
work to remove  
barriers, so everyone  
feels that they belong.



# BUILDING OUR FUTURE

This plan sets out our priorities, goals and actions as we work to achieve our vision.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2024-2027



### **Strategic Priority 1:**

Our services and programs are Responsive and Innovative



### **Strategic Priority 2:**

We will create Healthy Spaces and New Places



### **Strategic Priority 3:**

A Strong Team Culture where everyone can be their best



### **Strategic Priority 4:**

Strong governance systems and process ensure a sustainable service

# A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Supporting  
the community



## WHAT WE DO BEST

NAIDOC  
CELEBRATIONS

Wee Waa & Pilliga

NDCAS Community  
Christmas Drive



Launching a new team

Safety Beyond  
Violence Service

## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

NDCAS celebrates 50  
years of service

