



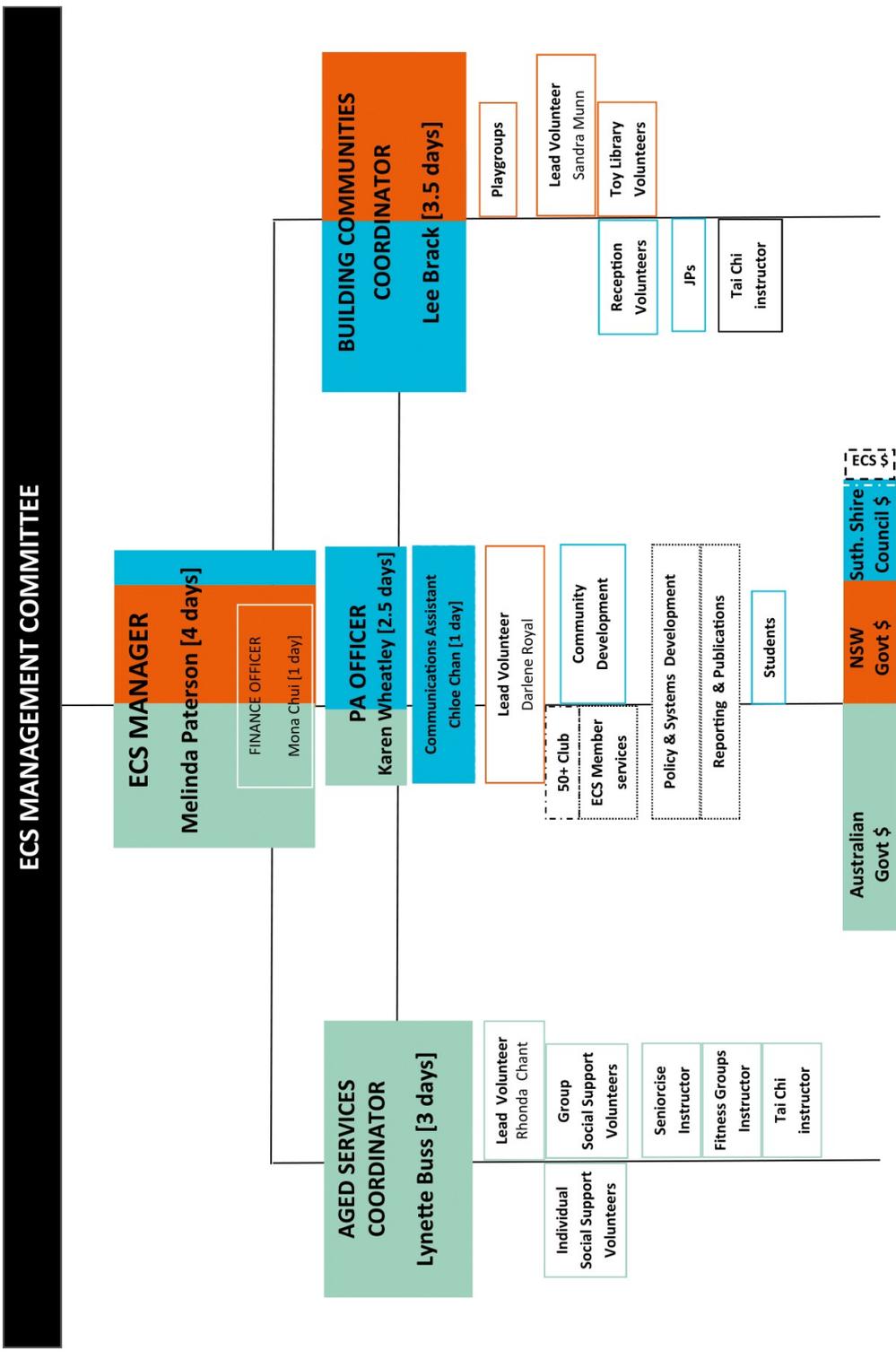
**SERVING THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 1971**

**Engadine Community  
Services Inc**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2021-2022**



# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



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## ECS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Suzanne Jenkins	Chairperson
David Gilmore	Vice Chairperson
Leanne Haynes	Treasurer
Garry Keir	Secretary
Susan Ransom	Member
Christina Mannyx	Member

## ECS PAID STAFF

Melinda Paterson	Manager
Lee Brack	Building Communities Coordinator
Lynette Buss	Aged Services Coordinator
Mona Chui	Finance Officer
Karen Wheatley	PA Officer
Chloe Chan	Communications Assistant
Terry Georgeson	Project Officer

# Chairperson's Report

Another year of ups and downs. COVID has certainly changed the world, as we knew it, forever. It seems vaccinations have had a good impact, and the virus has abated, allowing slow return to some form of "normal".

This past year has been a lot of hard work for the staff, who have excelled in getting the "work" done and keeping the doors of ECS open for our community. Thank you.

Mel has been busy doing proposals, making changes to documents and generally keeping her fingers on the pulse.

A great big thank you to our wonderful volunteers, who not only give their time, but put their hearts into helping the community. ECS, and many other community services, could not survive without these wonderful volunteers.

2022 brought sadness, with the passing of our Vice President, David Gilmore. David was a wonderful, caring and giving man. David spent his life giving of his time and expertise to help people and services such as ECS; his smiling face and sense of humour brought happiness to everyone he met. Not only will he be missed, but the committee will not be the same.

This brings me to the Committee. I would like to give a great big thank you to Christina Mannyx, Sue Ransom, Garry Keir and Leanne Haynes for all your work and support, intelligent discussions, and the laughs.

2023 will bring new challenges, but none that ECS cannot overcome. We will meet whatever comes our way; it will make us stronger and better able to help our wonderful community, which is our ultimate goal.

***Suzanne Jenkins***

# Treasurer's Report

The 2021/2022 Financial Year, like the previous year, has been one of many challenges for Engadine Community Services. During the two COVID lockdowns, ECS did not receive income and, as a result, we continue to draw on our reserves to ensure our organisation continues to function at the level needed and expected. We try to minimise the fees we charge our clients, knowing that many are on pensions; however, our aged care contract assumes that fees will be collected in Aged Services, and we haven't had an increase in the funding from the Australian Government for several years. We also need to cover the costs of printing services, as the Sutherland Shire Council funding can only be used for staff wages. It has not increased either, even though it costs us more every year to run the Community Resource Centre.

We now need to cover the costs of exercise classes upfront per month. Playgroup moved to a fee per attendance, to provide families with flexibility, and we were grateful to be able to give away some free Toy Library memberships thanks to a one-off grant from Sutherland Council. A much-appreciated COVID recovery grant from Sutherland Council provided hampers at Christmas for clients of all ages. NSW Government also provided organisations they fund with some welcome help with one-off IT purchases to assist with the new demands of COVID, and Engadine Rotary sponsored some of our bus outings.

Looking forward, we have more challenges for the coming financial year, as only our NSW Government funding has increased so far to cover the Fair Work Commission decision, and the funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme is going to be paid at the end of each month, instead of each quarter upfront. We recognise that continuing to draw on reserves is a finite strategy, so a key challenge for ECS management will be defining a more sustainable business model that will allow us to meet the growing needs of our local community into the future.

As always, the consistent and first-class support from Mona and Melinda ensures our financial position is well-tracked, understood and financially sound, as acknowledged in the accompanying Auditor's Report.

***Leanne Haynes***

# Funding Programs

## **COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME [Australian Government Department of Health & Aged Care]**

CHSP is the entry-level tier of the aged care system, offering choice and flexibility to older people. The CHSP aims to support frail, older people aged 65 years and over (50 and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) to live as independently as possible in their own homes and community for as long as they can, and wish, to do so. The programme offers low intensity ongoing support, such as domestic assistance and care services, or higher intensity support and care services on a shorter term or episodic, basis such as allied health and respite for carers. Services provided take into account each person's individual goals, preferences and choices, with a focus on pathways and activities that embed wellness, independence and reablement when required. The CHSP helps older people stay living in their own homes to delay, or altogether avoid, the need to move to more complex forms of aged care. ECS receives CHSP funding for Social Support, both Individual and Group.

## **TARGETED EARLIER INTERVENTION [NSW Government Department of Communities & Justice]**

TEI provides funding for a range of services to strengthen communities and build their capacity. These services include community centres like ECS, where people can meet and access resources that help improve the community's connectedness and capacity by providing information and referral on local services, access to the internet, access to skills training, and a place for local groups to meet. ECS Playgroups and the Toy Library aim to assist families and give kids the best start at life.

## **COMMUNITY CENTRES FUNDING [Sutherland Shire Council]**

ECS operates a community resource centre, which provides amenities to the residents of Engadine and neighbouring suburbs. The resource centre services include a volunteers program, social support groups, disability access toilet and adult change table, children's toilets, mothers' breastfeeding chair and baby change table, Tax Help, JP Service and information about Shire services and events, especially those run by the Council.

## **ABUSE COLLABORATIVES [NSW Ageing & Disability Commission]**

ADC is an independent agency of the NSW government, tasked to better protect older people and adults with disability from abuse, neglect and exploitation from someone they know living in their home or community, and to promote their fundamental human rights. ECS received a grant as Secretariat for the Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire to distribute resources to community leaders about responding to abuse, as well as informing the public generally about the pandemic impacts for seniors at risk.

# The ECS Volunteer Team

## **Aged Services**

Rhonda Chant [Lead]  
Zuzu Burford  
Elizabeth Carr  
Philip Dennis  
Narelle Field  
Mike Fernando  
Haylee Hagen  
Vicki Jeffree  
Garry Keir  
Virginia Malcher  
Trish Murray  
Denise Pond  
Helen Robinson  
Leanne Waddell  
Kerrie Waitai

## **Office**

Darlene Royal [Lead]  
Deborah Scott  
[Reception]  
Gloria Branson  
Elizabeth Carr  
Alan Brownscombe  
[Computers]  
Rhonda Jones  
Sandra Munn  
Liam Steacy

## **JPs**

Lynette Alexander  
Greg Anderson  
Gabrielle Baker

Kerry Baldwin  
Marjorie Birss  
Stephen Black  
Sandra Bowley  
Michael Bretherton  
Jillian Brookfield  
Bruce Campbell  
Jeff Cashman  
Beverly De Bruyn  
Garry Eggert  
Eileen Ellsmore  
Rebecca Fisher  
Jennifer Follett  
Sydney Frederiksen  
Peter Gill  
Michael Goldrick

Anthony Grahame  
Ken Hammond  
Warren Kelso  
Christine Kent  
Bruce O'Malveney  
Connie Morris  
Kevin Price  
Judith Raggatt  
Peter Sheehy  
Greg Tall

## **Toy Library**

Sandra Munn [Lead]  
Helen Dorman  
Keryn Johnson  
Maureen Flynn

# Manager's Report

We were so lucky to get our 50th birthday celebrations in before the lockdown at the end of the last financial year. Unfortunately, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on ECS operations were felt heavily throughout the 2021-22 financial year, as our doors were closed during the official statewide lockdown from mid-June to September 2021 and when cases were very high after Christmas, January to March 2022.

The January curse hit us again in 2022, with the loss of our beloved Tai Chi instructor, John Gough, who had been forced to retire the previous year to battle Motor Neurone Disease. He remained an active supporter of ECS throughout his illness via email, text and the provision of two lovely ladies who took over the classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Maxine and Serene, respectively. ECS is also blessed with two other contract exercise instructors who help us to keep our Aged Services clients fit and active; Kaz teaches Seniorcise on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (which I call 'the bouncy classes') and Mitch teaches the lower impact Parkinson's Fitness Group and Senior's Fitness Group on Mondays. Exercise classes were the first activities to return in March 2022 to meet overwhelming demand.

This past year, we have developed some great relationships with other community organisations and care providers who have been important to our success. Engadine Rotary sponsored the Big Day Out social bus for seniors as well as doing a letterbox drop for the Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire; we, in turn, supported the Rotary Markets by opening the community centre some Sundays. As chair of the Collaborative, I was again impressed by the support we received from Sutherland Shire Council and the generosity of our members, all busy providers who also struggled with the pandemic, but assisted with printing and sorting for a huge mailout to community leaders funded by our partners at NSW Ageing and Disability Commission. In the children's space, we welcomed Playgroup NSW back to use our meeting room on Wednesdays and the bimonthly TEI Providers Meeting, which I convene with Orana.

Marketing was our focus in the last quarter, including an overhaul of our brochure display in the foyer and information in the windows. We were so fortunate that one of students on placement from St George and Sutherland Shire Community College came to us with amazing skills in graphic design and promotions, and inspired us to improve our approaches to community engagement. We then began a project with one-off funding from NSW Department of Communities and Justice [our funder of TEI] to improve our online presence, including our website <https://www.ecs.org.au/>, which looks beautiful, thanks to Chloe. We have also started a recruitment campaign for Aged Services volunteers with several existing ECS Team members who were interviewed by Chloe on camera.



*ECS staff: Lynette, Karen, Mel, Lee & Mona*

ECS would not exist without our generous and dedicated volunteers! Please take the time to read all their names on the previous page. Everyone brings something different and special to make our services real and life-changing for the community of Engadine and over 300 hundred participants in 50+ Club plus Aged Services [see Lynette's report] and Child & Family Services [see Lee's report]. We are proud to be able to provide socially-based supports where people are known and addressed by name – often their chosen nickname, in fact – and clients consistently tell us that this is our strength. We just need governments to understand that bigger is not better for the people that matter.

The federal election this year had a few immediate benefits, which we hope are the sign of things to come. The new Home Support Programme replacing the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (our Aged Services funding) has been delayed until 2024 and there appears to be recognition finally of the serious under-resourcing of Aged Care. Unfortunately, we have not seen funding increases from either the Australian Government or Sutherland Shire Council to cover the Fair Work Commission decision, and we will have to reduce staff hours and ECS operations in 2022-23.

I want to end this report on a high, though. During the month of June, the ECS Team were unstoppable, completing EOFY processes (Mona), updating the data base and other records (Karen and Lynette, with help from committee member Sue), providing written reports (see **Volunteers' Reports**), completing the Aged Care self-assessment and writing policies (me and Lynette, with help from consultant Raine Kornfeld) and proofreading 24 policies (committee members Garry, Leanne and Sue), which immediately went onto the website (Chloe). All staff and members of the management committee participated in an extremely productive planning session, student Jana ran a parenting seminar and everyone proved themselves supreme professionals during a two day visit/scrutiny by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission which produced a perfect score for ECS Aged Services!

As always, ECS demonstrates what can be achieved through small community centres and the efforts of a team of people with passion.

**Mel Paterson**

# Aged Services Report

We were so looking forward to the new financial year at ECS, hoping for a change in the local community's health and an end to the lockdowns. Sadly, that was not to be, and we plodded through more difficult months either working from home or taking turns in the office.

2022 didn't really kick off for our activities until March, due to the Public Health Orders. Finally... it was go, go, go, with exercise classes, bus outings and shopping trips! We had missed our clients, and they had missed us too, and missed the regular contact with their group friends.

During this time, we created a library to share some classics and murder mysteries with clients. We were happy to drop bundles of books to their front porches.



On a lighter note, we surprised Mel on her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with gifts and decorations in the office and liquid chalk artworks on the windows (thank you Lee for the fabulous artwork). What a great birthday surprise!



*Volunteers: Helen, Santa (Garry) & Rhonda*

Our Christmas events – a dazzling lights bus tour and a lunchtime dinner party - were very much enjoyed by all. Santa agreed to everything on our wishlist, and offered compliments of the season.

And then, as our finale in June, we hosted a Quality and Safety Commission Review, for which we received an excellent report.

As I say goodbye to the 2021/2022 financial year, I would like to say a gigantic "THANK YOU" to Mel, Lee, Karen, Mona, Chloe, the wonderful volunteers and the Management Committee for their help and support over the last year in the ECS Aged Services world.

**Lynette Buss [Aged Services Coordinator]**

# Child & Family Services Report

Well, we ended last financial year with a bang, celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> year at Club Engadine . It was good to see some familiar faces from the past. I think everyone had a great time. Then COVID-19.2 hit, which left us thinking on our feet, thanks again for Mel's bright ideas.

We organised gift bags for our members of Playgroup and Toy Library, consisting of colouring books, pencils, a game of cards, and a shopping voucher, so the children had some activities to do during lockdown. We welcomed Jana, a new student who became a volunteer, to organise our playgroups. She did such a great job that we had to open a new Tuesday playgroup for mums!

It's great to work in a small office where we can bounce ideas off each other, and sometimes I try to help Lynette with bus ideas. However, the best thing during lockdown was giving care packages to the senior clients consisting of care worms (crocheted by our president Suzanne), shopping voucher, facemask, and handtowel and health information. There were also many discussions regarding grant applications.



*Volunteers: Alan, Leanne, Connie & Greg*

Volunteers Sandra and Gloria worked hard on the Toy Library, doing a stocktake and finding a couple of glitches in the database, which we are slowly working out as we catch them. Helen and Keryn did our Monday shifts. Toy Library membership took a hit during COVID, but with a grant from Sutherland Shire Council, we were able to offer some free memberships to struggling families. Our membership numbers are starting to rise, and it is good to see the toys now going out again.

We welcomed back our Tax Help volunteer, Stephen, to handle appointments for client's tax returns, and Alan our calm and helpful Computers for Seniors volunteer, for one-on-one classes.

With the help of the new world of Zoom and webinars, I was able to do courses such as "Having Challenging Conversations", "Suicide Prevention", as well as meetings with DCJ and TEI Interagency meetings. Although it is great to be able to do these during restrictions, I was pleased to be able to meet people in person again.

Again, another year has passed and we have lost some lovely members of our ECS family. The sad passing of longterm Tai Chi expert, John Gough, at the beginning of the year after a battle with Motor Neurone Disease hit us hard, but his shoes are being filled lovingly by Serene and Maxine. We lost gentleman David Gilmore from ECS Management Committee recently, which was a huge shock. Both will be deeply missed.

I just want to thank everyone again for trying to keep me on the straight and narrow, and for your assistance.

**Lee Brack [Building Communities Coordinator]**



*RIP David & John*

# Volunteers' Reports

**By Deb** [May 2022]

My name is Deborah Scott and I have been a volunteer at ECS since August 2018.

Whilst In the process of job-seeking, I was doing volunteer work to further my skills to get back into employment after having been a carer for my mother for a few years. I had been volunteering in an op-shop locally when one day I decided to come into ECS to get rid of a large amount of sharps needles that I use for diabetic medication. While I was here Lee (whom I had met previously when we were at TAFE) said there was a volunteer vacancy here in the office reception. I was in the right place at the right time as I really wanted an office volunteering role because I was applying for office jobs. So I started here half-day Wednesdays and it went from there...

My past office experience was in a call centre, which could be quite stressful, but it did not involve face-to-face customer service, therefore initially I found it challenging to assist members of the public/clients who came into the office. Like everything, it takes time and training to gain the confidence to effectively assist clients/customers.

Throughout late 2018 and early 2019 it was a steady process of juggling job-seeking activities with volunteering at ECS. During that time my volunteer hours increased as office reception volunteers had other commitments, so they had to cease volunteering with us. After a while I was doing full time Wednesday and then all-day Friday became available. Fridays I am here with Karen and Mel, it is usually a quiet day, the end of the week for most people, but every now and then it is all go! Friday afternoon rush.

The end of 2019 came with the bushfires, meaning most of my Jobactive mutual obligations ceased temporarily. During that uncertain time it was good to be here at ECS helping out and keeping busy. No sooner were the fires gone it was 2020 and lockdown. ECS was still operating, though the doors were locked we were still answering the phones and our field volunteers were going out to our clients homes to take shopping to them and checking that people on their own were okay. It was a worrying time with all the fears of COVID-19. Time goes quickly and it was 2021, we were getting a lot of our clients back for group activities and then the second lockdown hit. I was still able to volunteer here during that time as per 2020. Gradually that passed and we are now open again and operating in what is called the "new normal". I am now doing volunteering on Monday as well.

I feel that everyone here has been helpful and patient to help me grow in my role. My duties involve answering phone calls, answering enquiries at the front desk, running small errands (to the post office, getting lunches and occasionally getting items at the supermarket), writing receipts for clients exercise class fees, bus outing fees, assisting people with sharps/light globe drop-offs etc. ECS is often a focal point of the community, it is like Central Station sometimes, and people often come here when they are looking for somewhere else, but usually we are able to point them in the right direction.

Despite being an almost third-generation Engadine resident, I have often felt like a stranger in my town, my fault perhaps as I tend to keep to myself and am naturally a quiet person. However, since volunteering at Engadine Community Services I often see people out and about in the shopping centre whilst on errands for ECS or in my own time that I know because they are clients at ECS and I have got to know them.

**By Sandra** [June 2022]

Being involved with the toy library is a privilege and COVID caused big changes difficult to explain to under 5s. One small boy, maybe 3 years of age just looked at me when told he couldn't go into the toys and headed to the door to the outdoor area. I said "I'm sorry love you can't go out there", at which point he burst into tears.

With borrowings now done online and collected by parents it was also great recently to see a smiling little girl borrowing a wheelbarrow and spade that she was able to choose herself.

**By Gloria** [June 2022]

I have been working as a volunteer at Engadine Community Services for approximately two years, primarily as a Toy Library Assistant. The library consists of three rooms with many types of toys and of various categories. Members of the library come in with toys that have been borrowed. We check the toys for any damage and make sure all the pieces have been returned. The member then chooses more and we record what is being borrowed.

Part of my work is to put the toys (after cleaning) back on the shelf in numerical order. Sometimes I will be using the computer to check the lists of toys, including a photograph of individual toys. Each new toy is given: Category / Number & Name Label. These are then attached to the front of the container, and recorded in the toy library list.

I also answer phone enquiries. We have a front counter and people come in to pay for various activities. I make out receipts and put payment in the right container.

This is a general description of what I do on Thursday each week.

## Students' Reports

**By Perla Sinestra** [April 2022]

I had the opportunity to do my 80 hours work placement in Engadine Community Service (ECS) using my knowledge in graphic design and marketing from my previous work in Colombia (South America) and my knowledge acquired from the Certificate IV that I did at St George & Sutherland Community College (SGSCC).

These images are the result of the projects I worked on during my time with ECS, I was put in charge of three projects under Melinda's supervision. The first one was the design of a poster to communicate the benefits of becoming a member of the volunteers' group and the aged care programs available; the second was collaborating in the organisation and logistics of the Abuse Collaborative information package and the development of improvements in the building to make sure clients and people in the community could obtain more information about the programs, local events, what was on, schedules and activities.

In order to achieve the expectations, I've attended multiple face-face to meetings and Zoom meetings where I met different volunteers, learnt the importance of what the Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire group does for the community, and gained helpful feedback from the volunteers and staff members.

Melinda is an inspiration and all the staff under her supervision (Karen, Lee, Deborah, Lynette, Mona, Rhonda, Chloe). I will always carry this experience in my heart and have admiration for every person I worked with during my time at ECS. Engadine community service rocks with Melinda leading the vision, such leadership, knowledge, experience and management skills coupled with the passion, hard work, time, patience, kindness, dedication and skill of the staff members and the volunteers who make it possible for ECS to build unforgettable and memorable moments for those of us who are part of it.

My best wishes for ECS and for everyone to continue adding years of service to the community of Engadine and its surroundings



**ECS** Engadine Community Services

### Looking for fun & friendship?

**Join ECS Aged Services Programs**

- Seniorcise & Tai Chi classes
- Senior's or Parkinson's Fitness Groups
- Men's Cards & Social Group
- Social Craft or Bus Outings

**Become an ECS Volunteer**

- Assist clients with shopping
- Drive a bus or car to outings
- Befriend a housebound senior
- Go out and about with a client

If you need more information give us a call 📞 **9520 7022**

This activity receives funding from the Australian Government through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)

Chat with us in the ECS office  
Engadine Community Centre  
1034-1036 Old Princes Hwy, Engadine

<https://www.facebook.com/ECS2233/> [www.ecs.org.au/volunteer](http://www.ecs.org.au/volunteer)

**By Ivory Tolentino [Nov 2021]**

Experience teaches a person many things, lessons that go beyond the limitations of a theory. I have had a number of placements for the courses I had with SGSCC as an international student, from one nursing home to the next, but the best one was definitely the placement I had with ECS.

It was a breath of fresh air experiencing what it's like to work in a community centre. Transitioning from the familiar nursing home feel to an office environment was certainly a refreshing change of scenery. Prior to this opportunity, my knowledge of how a community centre worked was solely based on classroom theory, and ECS has certainly broadened my understanding of the sector and how it functions for the society. Meeting Mel, ECS Manager, had me feeling welcomed from the moment I came to see her for the initial interview with my trainer, Irene, prior to placement. Mel introduced me to the staff and everybody greeted me warmly. I was honestly uncertain if I would be able to remember all of the names, and thankfully, I somehow managed! Whew.

During the initial days, Mel briefed me with the projects she had in mind, and I was blown away with how many ideas she had to improve the services offered. It was initially daunting since I was clueless of what the nature of the job was, what was required of me and what skills I needed to carry out an unfamiliar task, not to mention my lack of field experience in the Australian community and limited knowledge of the commonly used terminologies, but Mel and the team of wonderful women has guided me through the process and provided me with all the support I needed for that particular learning curve. I had all confidence that support would be readily be available while I navigated the uncharted terrains of community service.

On regular days, I helped with drafting flyers and conducted a couple interviews for newsletters that featured the Grandparents Playgroup, Men's Social Group, and I wrote up staff spotlight articles about Helen D. [Toy Library volunteer] and the ECS Chairperson, Suzanne J. I have also helped the ladies with phone calls and appointment bookings for exercise programs, Computers for Seniors, Toy Library click&collect services, JP Service and annual Tax Help. Occasionally, I provided assistance to those who came for Syringe Disposal and general service inquiries on what's currently offered. During times of uncertainty with the information being requested, I have always turned to Building Communities Coordinator, Lee, for help and guidance. In addition, I have worked with Lynette, ECS Aged Services Coordinator, with a fortnightly Tuesday Men's Social Group.

However, the TEI Project with Targeted Earlier Intervention service providers in the St George and Sutherland LGAs was by far my favorite of it all. I got to practice my organisation skills by keeping track of availabilities for interviews with the involved providers, improve on my videography, editing and creativity, and practice my social communication. Best of all, I was able to explore and discover places I didn't know existed during interviews and expand my network meeting the leaders of other community organisations, in addition to working regularly with another lovely student on placement, Caitlin.

Through this process of developing information for a local TEI webpage, I was made aware of the services they provide, the programs they regularly run and had a better understanding of the importance of the TEI Providers Network team I was working on. At ECS generally, I learned that access to services poses a concerning gap for those who are in need of help in communities, from children needing toys and playmates that are essential for their motor, cognitive and social development to the elderly individuals who opt to stay at home, maintain their independence and preserve their sense of empowerment. These are only some of the issues the community is continuously facing, and the gap definitely requires bridging. This collaboration with other community providers aims to bridge that gap for a better connected community through inter-agency referrals, and it is of our highest hope that the webpage be published, so it can stretch out to vulnerable individuals seeking to access services. The magnitude of the project may be small, but I believe a ripple can influence multiple ripples that can someday potentially change the tides.

With the time I've spent doing my placement at ECS, and with all the support provided to me by Mel and all the staff I have worked with during my placement, I can confidently conclude that I have become a better, upskilled individual. Not only have I learned and grown from this placement, I also have made memories worth treasuring for a lifetime. I have utmost and eternally grateful for this opportunity, and I am hoping that whatever I have learned from the 4 months I've spent with ECS, I will be able to apply and share with those I will meet along the way, and hopefully, enable them to learn a thing or two from my experience.