

ECS

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

SINCE 1971

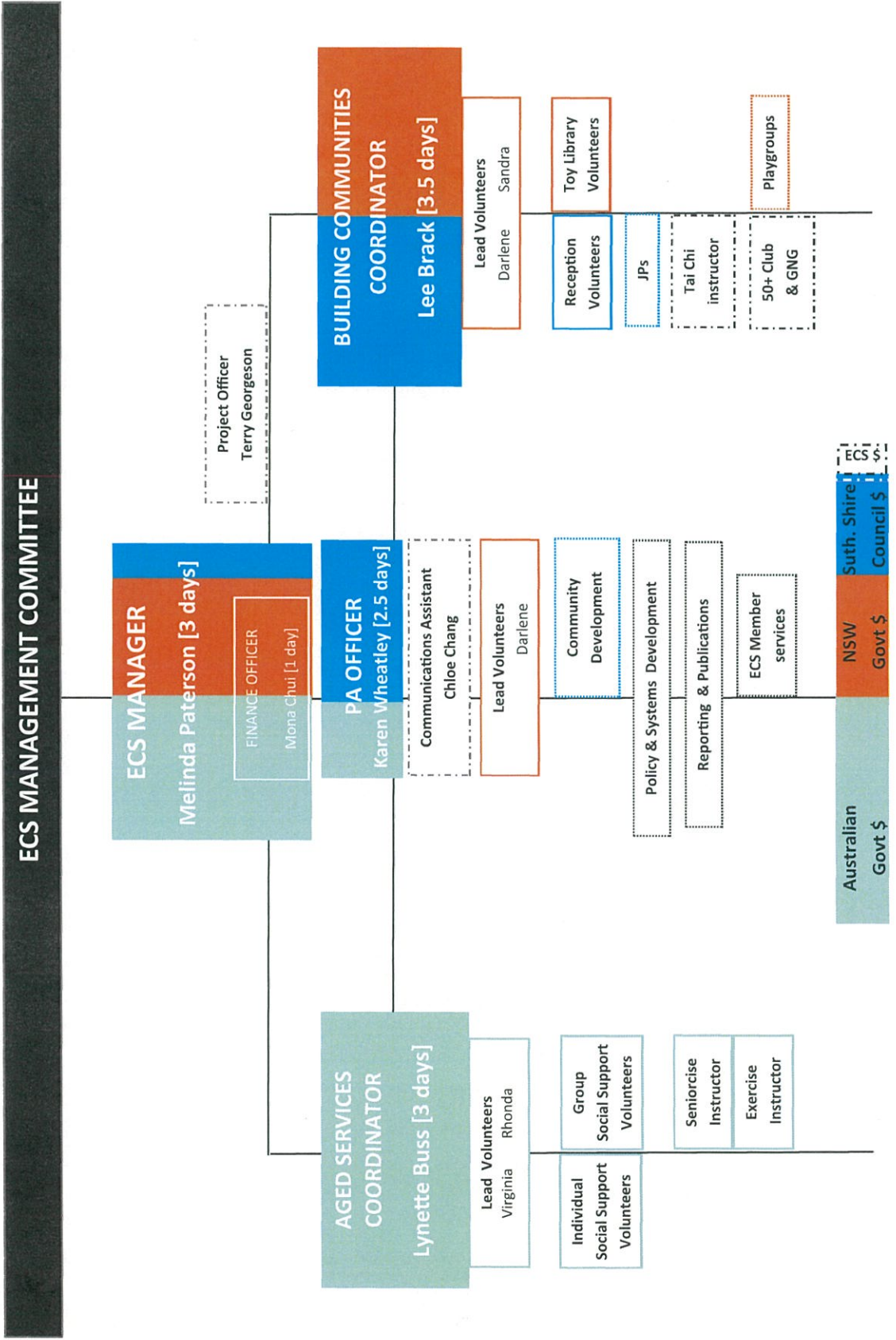
**Engadine Community
Services Inc**

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



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ECS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Suzanne Jenkins	President
Garry Keir	Vice President
Christina Mannyx	Treasurer
Susan Ransom	Secretary
David Gilmore	Member
Leanne Haynes	Member [4/21-]

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 [6/21-]
Irene Henderson	Project Officer [2020]
Terry Georgeson	Project Officer [2/21-]

President's Report

My first year as President and what a year it has been. "Eventful" is not quite how to explain it – "unsurpassed" comes to mind, and in ways that will forever remain in the history books. We have survived. ECS has maintained its' services to the community owing to the amazing Manager and staff along with the incredible volunteers. Thank you to you all.

2021 also brought us sadness with the passing of our dear Sandra Bennie. Sandra was a volunteer and a paid staff member prior to me joining ECS, and for several years she heavily supported the management committee by distributing monthly papers, organising Annual Reports and AGMs. She became a volunteer again in 2019, working on the front desk on Mondays and Tuesdays, organising the JPs Service, Tax Help, Computers for Seniors and several elements of Aged Services, including friendly phone calls. Her personality was so valuable to ECS, making visitors welcome and ensuring they were happy and felt valued.

Prior to our 50th birthday celebration in June, we had a visit from Opposition Leader Jodi McKay. Jodi presented us with a certificate and thanked us for our service to the community. It was wonderful to be able to tell her how ECS serves the community and show her the knitted ECS sign put together by our craft groups.

The 50th birthday of ECS was certainly a highlight. The staff worked tirelessly to make this a celebration to remember. Thank you Lee, Lynette, Karen, Mona, Chloe, and not forgetting Mel who led the team. Photos on the tables opened the doors of our memories and gave guests much to laugh and reminisce about.

The Commonwealth Bank presented ECS with a cheque, which was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the members of the committee, Garry Keir, Christina Mannyx, Sue Ransom, David Gilmore and Leanne Haynes for your support, discussions and laughs.

It is an honour to be part of this wonderful organisation and I look forward to 2022, and working with such a great team. There will always be challenges, but none so big as the challenges of 2020 and 2021, which we overcame and made us stronger.

Suzanne Jenkins

Treasurer's Report

This has been another year of challenges for ECS. COVID-19 has continued to make normal operations very difficult. Financially, the Government COVID-19 support has helped us to keep functioning as best we can. As always, our clients have been our top priority. The long lockdown made it particularly difficult for our elderly clients, especially those who live on their own. Friendly phone calls were our only contact at times. Baskets of goodies were also delivered to cheer-up the housebound. Now that our vaccination rates are higher and we are coming out of lockdown, the service is starting to function more normally. Our financial position continues to be sound (see Auditor's Report) and we look forward to the coming year when normal programs can recommence.

The highlight of the year was of course our 50th Anniversary Celebration. Staff, volunteers, clients, management committee members and guests greatly enjoyed our evening dinner. A special morning tea was held for the clients and others who could not attend the evening celebration. The Engadine branch of the Commonwealth Bank presented us with an unexpected Community Grant of \$500.00, which helped us provide the clients celebratory morning tea, special badges for the volunteers and a toy kitchen for the playgroups.

I would like to thank Mona Chui for her continued expertise as Finance Officer. Thanks also to Melinda and all the staff. Your hard work, dedication and professionalism ensured that our work continued to the best of our ability. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by all who come into contact with ECS.

Christina Mannyx

Funding Programs

COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME

[Australian Government Department of Health]

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.

COMMUNITY GRANTS & SUBSIDIES

[Sutherland Shire Council]

The Community Grants and Subsidies Program is delivered by Sutherland Shire Council to support and empower the local community. The aim of the program is to fund a range of projects that contribute to a connected, supportive, caring, inclusive and engaged community. ECS received a grant for Cultural Diversity in the Sutherland Shire Toy Library in 2020-21.

ClubGRANTS

[ClubsNSW, Engadine Bowling Club & Club Engadine]

Registered clubs who earn \$1 million or more in gaming machine profit each year are taxed through the ClubGRANTS scheme. The scheme enables a club's participation, support, and leadership within their local area by providing funding for projects, services and programs that benefit their community. ECS received a grant as Secretariat for the Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire last year; the project was extended due to the pandemic.

Results of the Telephone Survey [June 2021]

Unfunded services: Good Neighbours Group & 50+ Club

- *Important for socialization and looking after one another*
- *Always enjoy going. It is good for people on their own and I have made some nice friends.*
- *It is a lovely group and you form friendships*
- *It is a positive thing and nice to have a group such as this in our community.*

The ECS Team

Roll Call of Volunteers 2020-21

Aged Services

Rhonda Chant [Lead Volunteer]
Garry Keir
Gary Dundon
Mike Fernando
Narelle Field
Philip Dennis
Denise Pond
Jasmin Eason
Helen Robinson
Deanne Richmond
Leanne O'Connor
Pat Newbold
Janet Martin
Rob Milson
Leanne Waddell
Margaret Cullen
Trish Murray
Vicki Jeffree
Haylee Hagen
Virginia Malcher
Aine Love
Deborah Keevers
Kira Smithson
Kerrie Waitai

Office

Sandra Bennie [Lead Volunteer]
Darlene Royal [Lead Volunteer]
Deborah Scott [Reception]
Gloria Branson
Alan Brownscombe
Rhonda Hunter
Adrian Issac

Sandra Munn

Greg Yates

Toy Library

Sandra Munn [Lead Volunteer]
Helen Dorman [every Monday]
Keryn Johnson [every Monday]
Elizabeth Carr [Saturdays]
Catherine Ankeshian
Megan Cox
Carol Donnelly
Denise Gnomes
Shirley Handley
Yushan Li
Wei Lin
Virginia Malcher
Dayna Mellor
Yuevgeniya Osypenko
Lauren Phillips
Gillian Powell
Jie Yan

JPs

Lynette Alexander
Greg Anderson
Gabrielle Baker
Kerry Baldwin
Gary Beaumont
Barbara Bell
Marjorie Birss
Stephen Black
Christine Boorman
Sandra Bowley
Michael Bretherton

Jillian Brookfield
Bruce Campbell
Jeff Cashman
Beverly De Bruyn
Jon Drummond
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

Results of the Telephone Survey [June 2021]

Volunteers' activities:

TAI CHI and IT

- *Excellent group, enjoy it so much and enjoy the company of the people*
- *Great group, good pace for learners, really nice meeting all the other ladies.*

Client Morning Tea to celebrate ECS turn 50

- *Everyone enjoyed themselves and the slideshow was good. Interesting to see how Engadine has changed in 50 years.*
- *It was nice receiving the ECS badge. Everyone had a good time.*

Manager's Report

As I reflect on the year that was my third at ECS and the organisation's 50th of serving the community, I must report on the strength and resilience of these amazing people who I work for. We ended last year excited to be reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic had forced Sydney into lockdown, only to start a nastier Financial Year 2020-21.

Despite the massive heartbreak and hard work to come, the mix of personal losses and professional achievements, the ECS Team maintained their mission to make the world better, and did not stop.

Our joyful and busy community hub bounced back quickly in August 2020; our Aged Services clients had missed their friends and outings immensely, and the volunteers were thrilled to return to work. Lee, Lynette, Karen, PR volunteer Aine and Rhonda's team of bus volunteers put on the usual seniors Christmas party lunch and ECS Team dinner at Engadine Bowling Club, and Christmas Lights Bus at our place. All needed a good rest, ahead of big plans for 2021. In a cruel twist, we lost two beloved members of the ECS Team in December and January; Pat Newbold had retired from volunteering, but visited the office with her sunshine constantly when her health allowed it, and Sandra Bennie pretty much ran the office on Mondays and Tuesdays. Working as paid staff until 2018, Sandra was my first official volunteer appointment, and set a standard of organisation and productivity that few of us can hope to reach. She was calm in a crisis, clear of purpose and considerate of others to the end.

In February, Chris (one of our JPs) and Liz (Toy Library) joined the permanent office team on Mondays and Tuesdays, as well as our dynamic student Ivory, who worked on a film project for the TEI Provider interagency we convene. Ivory also helped Lynette in Aged Services (see Lynette's report), wrote some fabulous articles for our external newsletter (revived by Aine) and *ECS Weekly* and filled gaps in IT expertise until the clever young Chloe joined the ECS Team, first as a volunteer during uni holidays and then as Communication Assistant (see Lee's report). I have to say working with the students is one of the best parts of my job (please read Caitlin's report too).

Too much happened between February and June. In the aged care part of our world, the Royal Commission Report was released, government policy reform began and the NSW Neighbour Aid and Social Support Association, on which I had served as Board member since 2019, wound up. In Child and Family Services, we successfully applied for several grants, including a Sutherland Shire Council Community Grant for Sandra M to expand the Toy Library collection. Terry joined us as Project Officer, to get us ready for ChildSafe Standards and help me to finish the ClubGrant project started in 2020 for the Collaborative Against Abuse (see below).

Unfortunately, I have not enjoyed good health this year, which has created additional pressure for the staff and management committee. Their endless kindness and support has been a blessing; I particularly want to acknowledge what Finance Officer Mona and Lee have managed while I was working from home. Suzanne, Garry, Chris, David, Leanne and Susan kept a watchful, caring eye on the staff.

The 50th birthday celebrations actually began in 2020, with research by student Alan and PA Officer Karen. This led to a series of Fun Facts (below) in social media and on Lee's display window. We also hosted a visit from the NSW Opposition Leader, who hand-delivered a birthday card (see Suzanne's report) and we received a grant from CommBank Engadine. Lee and Lynette created a stunning array of decorations for the official ECS 50th Birthday party dinner on 5th June, and we shared memories with 70 dignitaries and team members past and present. Those who could not attend a night event, celebrated at a morning tea. Current ECS workers received a commemorative brooch, and Chloe and Mona took beautiful photos of both affairs.



As I write this, again we're looking at a shemozzle in 2021-22, with an extended lockdown due to COVID-19 from mid-June. Thank goodness we have Darlene's up-to-date data base to make friendly phone calls and emails...

Mel Paterson

Fun fact #1

In 1956, when the poultry farm at the corner of Station Street and the Old Princes Highway Engadine was subdivided for shops, Sutherland Shire Council wanted to acquire land for a community centre opposite Waratah Road. A group of local people formed in 1958 to support the push.

Fun fact #2

The ECS archives tell us that Engadine Community Services was originally part of the Senior Citizens Centre. It stood on Lots 39, 40 and 41 of DP 29583 purchased from Engadine poultry farmers Marie M Glenn and James E Rodger by Sutherland Shire Council in July 1959.

Fun fact #3

Engadine Community Services has had several names since the organisation was formed in 1971, beginning as Engadine District Neighbour Aid. The foundation members of the EDNA team included Ann and Noel Lang, Bennie Moxon, Myrna Rogerson, Mary Schroeder, Laila Stubbs and Margaret Wright; Francine Bartlett was the social worker at Sutherland Shire Council.

Fun fact #4

Engadine Community Services has had several names and funders. In 1975, it received several grants and was able to extend its services to include the Occasional Care Centre and the Youth Centre, under the name Engadine District Community Aid & Information Service.

Fun fact #5

In 1986, Engadine District Community Aid and Information Service was re-located to the Women's Rest Centre [the current address 1034-1036 Old Princes Highway]. In 1990, the building was modified to provide wheelchair users with access to the office and information service and to open up greater part of the building for public. Under Centre Coordinators, Karen Wilcox (1989-1992) and Kaye Morris (1992-93), saw its role as servicing the needs of the whole community, while working for social justice and change to improve the lives of Engadine residents.

Fun fact #6

Christina Mannyx was the longest serving manager of Engadine Community Services from 1993 to 2009 (when it was Engadine Community Aid and Information Service). EDCAIS activities increased to include a wide range of courses and programs that have included parenting, menopause and personal development courses, current affairs discussions, craft groups and self-protection workshops to name a few. Christina also established the Engadine Network, a bi-monthly meeting of health and youth workers to identify local community needs.

Fun fact #7

Engadine Community Services has operated out of several buildings over the past 50 years, including the Women's Rest Centre (renamed the Community Resource Centre in 1997) Engadine Community Services started the 50+ Club in 2019, Engadine Community Services started the 50+ Club in 2019, Engadine Community Services started the 50+ Club in 2019, and an interim office at Boy's Town while awaiting the redevelopment of Engadine Town Square and the current Engadine Community Centre by Sutherland Shire Council in 2008/09.

Fun fact #8

Engadine Community Services has a strong history of improving the lives of senior citizens through friendships groups, crafts, games and entertainment in the community centre, as well as bus outings. Engadine District Neighbour Aid was formally funded by the Home and Community Care Program in 1995.

Fun fact #9

When she was the Sutherland Shire HACC Development Officer (1998-2018), the current manager of Engadine Community Services, Melinda Paterson, actually worked with three of her predecessors, Carl Piraino, Nick Haney and Christina Mannyx.

Aged Services Report

What a year! Such an interesting and difficult year it has been.

We are so lucky that some of our wonderful volunteers offered to continue working with and for our clients who needed life's little necessities... like food and medication and even the chance to pay their bills at the post office or the bank. For the most part, our clients could go along with the volunteer to Engadine to do this but the last week or so of June changed dramatically with a statewide lockdown and the clients could no longer leave their home.

Over the year, we have provided over 376 hours of support to our clients for shopping and home visiting, even a couple of appointments. To keep in touch when we couldn't see our clients regularly, we organised deliveries of hampers and goodies, again delivered by our Aged Services volunteers. Thank you to Kelloggs and a number of local donors. Our clients were very appreciative and sent us many thank you messages.

Our Seniorscise and new Seniors Fitness and Parkinson's Fitness groups were very popular, although in reduced and limited numbers due to COVID requirements, and we still had a few on the waiting list to attend the classes. Our instructors, Mitch and Kaz, put all through their paces, and they kept coming back for more.

Our famous bus trips were a sad casualty of the COVID pandemic, but we still organised 25 shopping bus trips and a lovely day out to celebrate Seniors Week 2021 with a bus trip to Sunrise Nursery in Helensburgh to check out the beautiful flowers and plants, have morning tea then a scenic tour down the coast to Headlands Hotel at Austinmer for lunch, with magnificent views of the coast. We enjoyed Christmas parties [see photo below] and a Christmas lights tour which was loved by all.



Seniors Week also found ECS hosting Karen Buckley, an Aged Care Consultant, to provide complimentary sessions to clients, families and guests on all aged services available, including residential care. She was fully booked and impressed with the interest shown by all who attended her individual consultations. We appreciate the time and knowledge she shared with us.

Many thanks to our student Ivory, who assisted with setting up and supporting clients to attend the new Mens' Social Group, now meeting fortnightly on Tuesdays in Lorenzini's Café and for her work on annual reviews with the Aged Services clients. Also thank you Ivory for the treats brought to the office, which were always a big hit.

ECS Aged Services workers attended and provided training to continue to update skill sets including First Aid, Infection Control Procedures and Self Care & Stress Management.

On a sad note, we lost our wonderful volunteer and ECS supporter in Sandra Bennie, who was the "face of ECS" for anyone coming to the office on Mondays and Tuesdays for many years. We miss her and her dedication to ECS staff, volunteers and clients.

Congratulations to Engadine Community Services on 50 fabulous years, celebrated with an anniversary morning tea [right: handing out volunteer badges] and a dinner at Club Engadine for current and past members of ECS teams, management committees and guests, including the current and former Sutherland Shire mayors.



What a night! What a year!!

Lynette Buss [Aged Services Coordinator]

Child & Family Services Report

Well, the past twelve months, what can I say it was the best of times it was the saddest of times.

Sandra M, Gloria, Keryn, Helen, Elizabeth have been working hard on the Toy Library updating the database with all the new toys I have been buying. We have many new toys arriving compliments of our Sutherland Shire Council Grant we received last year, ride on toys, role-play kits (doctor, vet, hairdresser, builder, and dentist), science toys and some new big trucks. We have had fun unpacking and playing with the new toys.

We welcomed back our two playgroups for Grandparents and parents of kids from Czech Slovak backgrounds, the children were happy to be back, it was great to hear their laughter and singing on Mondays and Fridays

John, our ever-reliable Tai Chi expert, kept our clients balanced and calm, but after a fall, John has had to hand over the helm to the always calm Maxine. John has popped in to check on his disciples, we wish him well and miss his happy face. Dani has kept both a children's and adult's yoga classes running and feeling Zen. Our Minecraft group had to be put on hold due to work restraints of Rhiana but we hope to be able to give a place to have a safe, calm environment to hold a support group later on.

In June we celebrated our 50th Birthday, I would like to thank Nerida, Gary E and George at Club Engadine for their support and assistance to put on the night. Thank god for Chloe's technical assistance. It was lovely to see so of the familiar faces of the past. It was great to see the old photos and hear the stories of years gone by. We produced some interesting fun facts of ECS and the Engadine Area. It made us miss some very important people to ECS, Sandra J, Sandra B and Pat N. They will always be a part of ECS and always remembered.

By the end of the financial year, we again faced the fear of Lockdown due to COVID 19, which again got us thinking on our toes. Thank you to Mel again for her bright ideas. Thanks also to Lynette, Karen, Darlene, Mona, Terry and the board for support and keeping me on the straight and narrow. (Well sometimes, I can get them to my way of thinking)

Thank you to all for putting up with my madness.

Lee Brack [Building Communities Coordinator]



left: Mona, Lee, JP Beverly and Lynette at the birthday bash

above: members of our Grandparents Playgroup

Collaborative Against Abuse of Older People in Sutherland Shire

I was delighted to be invited back to ECS by Mel in 2021 and to work with the wonderful team and volunteers again. The greatest value of the Collaborative is the depth of experience of the different members and the variety of Government and non-government services represented. Knowing how each service can support an older person and having the confidence to reach out to consult with other Collaborative members makes such a difference. This can result in the older person being able to receive effective and compassionate local support.

The plan was to hold a couple of events for Community Leaders, similar to the previous successful 2019 CEO Breakfast with guest speakers. Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions again meant that we needed a creative alternative. Mel invited local artists to design some social media tiles that could be shared with Collaborative members, attendees from the CEO breakfast and Community Leaders from the list compiled for the proposed events. A local young artist, Amalia, 12 years of age, took up the challenge and we look forward to how she illustrates our message of safety for older people during lockdown. We also plan to update last year's flyer [right].

Tips for Staying Safe During Self-Isolation

BE CAREFUL WHO YOU TRUST

- Only accept help from, & share personal details with, people you know well & feel comfortable with - it's ok to say 'no thanks' or change your mind
- Never give your house keys to strangers or let people in your home who you don't know - get deliveries to the door only
- Be wary of registering yourself with any neighbourhood help group - do you want to advertise that you are home alone?
- You always have the right to be valued, feel safe inside your house & receive the food & medical care you need - no one should ever say you are a burden
- If you don't have family or friends you trust, seek registered Community Services from My Aged Care - 1800 200 422 or www.myagedcare.gov.au

STAY SOCIALLY CONNECTED

- Have a few phone buddies & make a time to talk to at least one of them every day, so they know you're ok
- Call for help if someone is hurting you or taking your money - 000 for police or 1800 628 221 for the NSW Ageing & Disability Abuse Helpline

BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR MONEY

- Make sure you nominate a trusted person as your Power of Attorney & let the bank know who that is - always review your bank statements
- Don't give anyone your credit card - if you need someone to shop for you, pay them when they deliver the shopping with a receipt or invoice
- Protect your password - never give your pin or login away

HAVE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

- Have at least one buddies' number programmed into your phone for a quick call if you need urgent help
- Put your essential papers in a place where you can find them in a hurry or if you need to explain the location to a trusted person
- Write a list of your key family members, phone buddies & any Community Services you use who need to be contacted in emergencies

Are you over 65? Are you & your friends ok?

The COVID-19 restrictions are stressful for everyone, but you deserve to be comfortable & safe

ABUSE & NEGLECT OF OLDER PEOPLE IS A CRIME

Community Services are working together to protect vulnerable seniors & support them to remain safely in their own homes

More information: tel 9520 7022 or email collaborative@ecs.org.au

TEI & ChildSafe Standards

Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) is a new way of funding services through the Department of Communities and Justice. A Program Logic was developed for programs, as well as evaluations and recording of different outcomes. This was adjusted after feedback from DCJ.

The Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, have been accepted by the NSW government and organisations need to adopt these standards to promote Child Safety at all levels of the organisation.

An important part of this is consulting with carers and listening to the needs and concerns of carers and children attending the service. Consultation with carers resulted in feedback that led to some changes in checking rooms before playgroups are held to ensure safety, purchasing toys based on children's needs and changes in Playgroup Policy to reflect this.

At the Governance level, the Duty of Care Policy was updated to include the Child Safe Standards, with training for staff, volunteers and Management Committee members.

Terry Georgeson [Project Officer]

Volunteers' Reports

This year has posed some real challenges and I think the staff and other volunteers at ECS have handled them admirably. The year began as any other, getting programs underway and greeting return clients to the many activities that are offered. There was an added bonus for most of the office volunteers in that a TAFE class was offered to improve our computer literacy skills.

My role of volunteer assisting with administration means I do the data entry for our clients on the Access program. This program has a listing of all of our clients and the services they receive, emergency contact details, etc. In my working life, I had not used Access, so this was a steep learning curve that I enjoyed. My focus in the TAFE class was to improve my knowledge of Access, so we could better utilise the information that was available. The information could be there, but if not easily extracted it was frustrating to try to use. The TAFE teacher was excellent when I requested assistance with the program. She was a great help and very encouraging to all of us, and I felt reassured that I could be more effective in using Access.



COVID hit, and with the lockdown we had to rethink our services. The community transport for shopping, social buses; exercise classes, playgroups and the toy library all had to close. We have had 'Friendly phone calls' for years to those who could not participate in our programs. This program was extended to include all of our clients, volunteers and staff.

As many of our clients have no family in the area and being housebound, they had no outside connection to the world. Their mental well-being was a grave concern, so volunteers and office staff used the time to make welfare calls. These calls went not only to our Aged Services clients, but to others that we knew were on their own. I was privileged to participate in this program. There was instant gratification, as you could hear the difference in their voices from the hesitant 'hello' to the final 'speak soon'. Many just needed to speak to another person. Their days were long and the phone calls helped with the monotony of lockdown. They felt like someone valued them and was there if they needed assistance. The personal bonds strengthened and I know everyone valued our care.

The clients are the joy of the volunteer role. They make me feel my role is worthwhile and they appreciate the services we provide for them. There are not only the clients we see regularly, there are many that use our services only occasionally.

The needle disposal program caters for a real need in the community. Some people use it once and have no further need and others we see on a regular basis. They do appreciate being able to safely dispose of their needles. We try to make it as friendly as possible because many are embarrassed to have to use the service. The JP Service supports anyone in the community that needs a JP. Many remark how difficult it is to find a JP and how they have passed our door but never really knew what we did.

I continued to work in the office in my role during the lockdown. I appreciated the time I could be providing a service to the community and having the friendship of the other volunteers and office staff. We see a real cross section of the community for a variety of services. For me, the people make the role worthwhile and I feel it is a valuable service that ECS provides to the local community.

Darlene Royal

The Good Neighbours Group are 10 local ladies who, with one exception, are in their 60s and 70s, who meet for lunch twice a month. Attendances are good, with usually only one or two not making it. Until COVID, they travelled by public transport, far and wide on one of these days each month, but recent times venues have been local. We are a motley bunch, grandmothers, widows and spinsters with different backgrounds and life stories. There were 11 lunches January to end of June, including Heathcote pub and Kirrawee, the Engadine venues being Engadine Hotel, Club Engadine, Billy's Bowl, Lorenzini's, The Den and Hoomiko Sushi.

Sandra Munn

My name is **Elizabeth Carr**, I am retired and have been a volunteer at ECS since August 2020.

I have several volunteer roles with the organisation. I commenced assisting the Toy Library on Saturday mornings in the August 2020. This involves the volunteer selecting toys from the Library that have been reserved by the Member on the ECS online catalogue. The toys are placed in the foyer area of the office to await the member's arrival. The member may also return toys that will be checked back in on the online system by the volunteer. All returned toys will remain in an area of the foyer to be thoroughly cleaned before being returned to the Library shelves.

At the beginning of this year, I was invited to spend Tuesday every week in the office and help out the team with reception duties. This involves answering phone calls, attending to enquiries at the reception counter: taking payments and writing receipts for Seniorcise attendees; accepting sharps containers from the public.

I have also been asked to make Friendly Phone Calls to seniors at home. The conversations I have with a person are generally to ask about their health and how they are getting along. At the moment there is a lot to talk about regarding COVID. We often talk about their interests and their views on the world. Each call normally lasts 15 to 20 minutes.

Engadine has a Market on the first Sunday of each month run by Rotary. ECS decided to set up tables and a banner outside the ECS building and display brochures and information on the organisation for the public attending the Market [twice before lockdown]. We also included tables with toys that had become obsolete and were priced very cheaply. I helped out on both Market days and found that people passing our area were very interested to learn about ECS and about becoming a volunteer.



The original schedule for 50+ Club was to make the 1st Tuesday of the month a Movie-day and the 4th Thursday an outing or just lunch somewhere. Planning meetings would be held on 3rd Thursdays. Over time, the idea to go to the movies lost interest, so it was dropped from the regular schedule. Whilst the group now largely organises itself away from the ECS Centre it is still very much supported by the ECS team, who assist with getting the minutes of the planning meetings typed up and emailed to all members. Core membership has grown to about 12 lovely ladies, and while attendance is never compulsory, it is great to see regular participation by most members. Venues/restaurants visited include: Hazelhurst Gallery, The Birdcage – Miranda, Wollongong Art Gallery & Lighthouse, Manly by ferry, Watsons Bay by ferry, Engadine Tavern, Club Engadine (RSL), Royal Hotel – Sutherland, The Den – Engadine, Heathcote Hotel, Club On East – Sutherland, Cronulla RSL, Diggies Café – Wollongong, Union Place Hotel – Jannali, Como Hotel.

Helen Dorman

Students' Reports

Our placements are win-win scenarios. Lovely young people bring their energy, new ideas and often amazing skills we can't afford on the payroll, so we try to give them knowledge and experiences.

What I Learned at ECS - Caitlin Gray - Loftus TAFE

Student workplace placement at Engadine Community Services (ECS) has been a fantastic learning experience that far exceeded expectations. During my time there, I was fortunate enough to co-lead the coordination of an interagency community development project for providers of Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) operating in the Sutherland and St George region. This project showed me the importance of maximising funding and the referral of clients. It also highlighted some of the challenges in trying to organise a community development project with so many stakeholders.

Working on this project, I also learned more about community development and how it works. The opportunity to meet and connect with a variety of community services and sector development providers in my local area was invaluable. I learnt so much about what those organisations do, built upon my industry networks and gained a better understanding of where I would like to work within the sector.

I had the privilege of conducting a review of and updating ECS's constitution. I then presented my recommendations to the voluntary Management Committee and had the chance to see firsthand how these meetings run and the type of content that is discussed. I now understand how vital it is to have a Management Committee, appropriate governance and the important role they play in a community services organisation.

Through my contributions to the ECS newsletter, I improved upon my writing skills. I learned how to adapt my style according to the article content I was writing, from light, fun content about the Toy Library to serious articles about the Royal Commission into Aged Care Report.

Speaking with ECS clients and volunteers, I gained a better understanding of some of the issues currently facing older Australians, such as social isolation, loneliness, physical limitations and elder abuse, and the strategies and actions ECS is taking to help resolve or prevent them.

I have also learned what a community centre does - the services they provide to the community, how they operate and the people who make a community centre what it is. The staff and volunteers at ECS are incredibly compassionate, considerate people who genuinely care about the people they are helping. It was a joy attending placement each week.

My time at ECS was an incredible experience and I'm so glad they agreed to have me for my 100 hours of placement. I would absolutely recommend ECS for any student looking to complete their placement in community services or development.

