



Sydney Community Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018



Our goal

is to continue to grow and provide more services
while capitalising on our strong foundations:
our expertise in and our passion for delivering
local, holistic community care.



Chair and CEO view

This has been the first year of our organisation, which was created in July 2017 through the merger of Lane Cove and North Side Community Services and Hunters Hill Ryde Community Services. This transformation demanded much work and financial investment in getting both organisations' systems and data aligned and to get all our teams communicating around board, committee and other meeting tables.

We have developed a strategic plan for the next three years 2018-2021, and set up three committees to keep on track our goals of flexibility and growth to meet market demand while maintaining the quality of holistic support services that we know make a difference to people's lives.

The last couple of years have seen, and the future will continue to see, radical changes in both aged care and disability support services, and we'll continue to evolve to meet them. Increased numbers of people eligible for the NDIS and the Scheme's individualised budgets and consumer-directed care demand a new response from service providers. Our answer is greater transparency, stronger systems, more efficient practices, while maintaining quality service based on deep understanding of customers' needs. Despite increased Government funding in the disability and aged care sectors, demand still outstrips supply.

Demand for aged care is both growing and changing. We need to define a new generation's expectations of aged care services if we are to meet the baby boomers' expectations. Locally, demographics also show clients are experiencing increased cultural diversity, more mental health issues, social isolation and financial stress than before.



John D Devine, Chair



Gillian Batt, CEO

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We need to define a new generation's expectations
of aged-care services if we are
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To meet these changes we will capitalise on our strong foundations, our passion for and expertise in delivering local, holistic community care. We will need to realign existing products and services for a more one-stop-shop model while also repositioning these services for new markets. We recognise the need to be agile in our response and to upscale what we do so well without diluting quality.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and support freely given by the Board members, the staff and the volunteers to make this first year of Sydney Community Services such a success.

We'll capitalise
on our passion for
and expertise in
delivering
local, holistic
community care.



*Back left to right: Rod Cooke, Warren Bell, David Brooks-Horn, James Shevlin.
Front left to right: David Button, Peter Fay, John Devine, Deborah Hutchens, Ian Longbottom.
Missing: Deborah Hill.*



Human connection,

relationships, compassion and understanding
will stay central to our services
and our role as an easy access point to complex
aged care and disability services.

Community advisory service

When our Community Care Advisor listens, gives information and support to over-55s and people with a disability, their family, and carers, she draws on more than 20 years' experience in community work. Callers from the Lower North Shore and Ryde/Hunters Hill areas, want to know the best way to move forward and their situations often involve a hospital discharge or dementia diagnosis.

Advice about support options makes a positive difference because when people are better informed, they feel more in control and optimistic and are much more able to make decisions. It's never too early to phone and ask questions because, later on, decisions are much easier if the options are already familiar.



"If you get information in advance, you can discuss options with family and friends, and take your time to think about what's best. It's far better to decide without the pressure of a tight timeframe."

"I love talking with and meeting people – hearing their stories – and then seeing the change the service makes in their lives. People can often forge ahead once they've got some information and an understanding of the system and many options. It's extremely rewarding work."

NUALA WILLIAMS, COMMUNITY CARE ADVISOR AT SCS.

320

clients or carers
were given
information and
advice

COMMUNITY ADVICE INCLUDES:

Information – about options, resources, how to navigate MyAgedCare path to services, eligibility for subsidies, how assessments and referrals work

Assistance and informal counselling – in identifying priorities and making decisions to help reduce stress and confusion

Advocacy – providing another voice to ensure equal access to support and information



Health supports

Nurses and
personal care
workers made
more than

12,000

visits to clients'
homes

Nurses and
personal care
workers devoted

5,460

hours to in-home
care

In-home nursing

Our client independence team of Registered Nurses and Personal Care Workers adopts a 'whatever-it-takes' model of care so clients get what they need, when they need it. The team regularly reviews clients' needs to ensure comprehensive, holistic care evolves as needs change to enable clients to stay living independently, safe and well in their homes.

Nurses and Personal Care Workers visit clients in homes in Lane Cove, Greenwich, Cremorne, North Sydney, Castle Cove, Castlecrag, Willoughby, Artarmon, Chatswood, Roseville, Longueville, Northwood, Riverview, Hunters Hill, Ryde and Gladesville.

OUR COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE PROVIDES:

- Care after a hospital discharge
- Supervision of medication
- Advice on health and related problems
- Support for family, friends and carers
- Personal care eg helping people shower and dress
- Management of wounds and conditions eg diabetes, chronic venous insufficiency, heart failure
- Clinical monitoring of chronic diseases to prevent hospital admissions
- Catheterisation
- Dementia monitoring and management
- Consultation and discussion of options and services for clients and carers

A referral from a GP, Hospital Discharge Planner, Aged Care Assessment Team, or My Aged Care links clients with services which can start within a few days.



Our volunteers
delivered
more than
36,000
meals

Home-delivered meals

About 50 SCS volunteers delivered more than 36,000 meals to grateful residents in northside suburbs Lane Cove and across the Ryde and Hunters Hill local government areas. Clients get more than a nutritious meal from wonderful volunteers who also offer a friendly face, chat and regular community connection. Regular visits by meals deliverers also helps ensure people are managing well enough by themselves at home (and if not can raise attention), which can be reassuring for clients and their families.

Meals do not always arrive on volunteers' wheels because many are picked up from the Lane Cove Community Hub when people visit for social activities. For those who like to go out for a meal, SCS hosts fortnightly, three-course lunches throughout the year (see Park View Cafe).



In-home podiatry

SCS arranges registered podiatrists to visit housebound people as often as every eight weeks. Visiting podiatrists treat patients and assess ongoing care needs.

Our podiatry service covers the entire North Shore from Harbour Bridge to Hornsby including local government areas Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Ryde, Hunters Hill, Willoughby, Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, Manly, Pittwater and Warringah.

2,253
happy pairs of
feet through
in-home visits by
a podiatrist

Joan Rafferty, who is 102 years young, knows a few of the secrets to a long and happy life:



"I've been independent all my life," says Joan, "So I'm trying not to change that now."

Joan says she's blessed to have help from "a wonderful lot of nieces and nephews" and, most days of the week, enjoys lunches delivered by Sydney Community Services volunteers.

And she believes a blessing in disguise might be the stairs on the way up to her flat: "I don't know whether to commend them or condemn them!" she quips.

Joan still enjoys living in the sunny Lane Cove apartment which has been home for 46 years.



Park View Cafe

Each fortnight Lane Cove Community Hub hosts extremely popular three-course lunches in our Park View Room. Apart from being great value, they support nutritional and all-round wellbeing. They are sometimes themed around events such as a royal wedding, Melbourne Cup, 'Christmas in July' or December. While themed lunches can attract up to 60 people, we usually host an average of 30 guests for lunch, about 20 weeks of the year.

Medical transport service

Volunteer drivers working through Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Community Hubs transport clients to medical appointments as well as everyday activities such as shopping and clients pay a nominal price towards petrol for transport to medical appointments.

A photograph of an elderly couple riding a bicycle outdoors. The woman in the foreground is smiling and wearing a light blue shirt. The man behind her is also smiling and wearing a light purple shirt. They are on a paved path with trees and mountains in the background.

We aim

to realign services with changing demands
while maintaining our holistic wellness
and reablement approach which helps people
achieve goals and better quality of life.

Help around the home

Linen

People love our linen service when recovering from an illness or find it hard to launder large sheets and towels. Friendly volunteers visit fortnightly to change bed linen and swap used towels for fresh. As well as fresh linen, clients enjoy the convenience and a chat with a friendly visitor.



Home modifications and maintenance

These services help people stay comfortable and safe in their own homes in LGAs Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney, Willoughby and Hunters Hill. Home modifications and maintenance work is done by registered tradespeople while gardening services rely on teams of volunteers who work under the supervision of qualified gardeners. All work is done by referral from My Aged Care.

Maintenance

SCS arranges maintenance jobs including changing light globes, fitting smoke alarms, minor carpentry, fixing taps and concrete repairs or pressure cleaning.

Modifications

Improvements our tradesmen typically make for clients include installing hand-held showers, internal and external 'grab' rails, ramps to replace steps – among other things.



717

freshly made beds
and fresh towels
delivered



Gardening

Services are offered up to a few times a year for each client. Service includes weeding, pruning and general tidying as well as advice on making gardens easier to access and maintain. We also source easy-care plants for clients and clean pathways for safety. Gardening services rely on teams of volunteers who work under the supervision of qualified horticulturalists.

< Volunteer gardener,
Helen Kottler.

SCS teams
improved homes and
gardens in more than

5,300
hours of service

Total social support
for individuals and
groups was more than

30,000
hours

Individual social support



Five years ago, when she was in her early 20s and studying counselling, **Emma Flockhart** did an internship with SCS and became a volunteer visitor to John Tritton, then living in Gladesville. At the time Emma was living with her aunt and grandmother who wasn't physically active but happily greeted many visitors – and Emma could see the multiple benefits of great social connections.

"I knew that if I get to that age and didn't have friends around, I would still love to have a yarn with someone. I am the only person who sees John apart from his carers ... so I've always said to employers I can't work Tuesdays because I see John."

Earlier this year John was in respite and hospital; Emma worked hard to track him down to visit him, now in St Anne's nursing home, Hunters Hill. Emma still visits John as part of the SCS Community Visitors Scheme, which provides friendship and companionship by matching socially isolated aged-care recipients with volunteer visitors.

"You make a commitment to the person because you value the person over the visiting program: John is part of my life and routine. And I feel good when I visit John and afterwards."

Social support and community connection services

Our skilled staff and dedicated volunteers provided

2,572

hours of individual support in a range of programs

Social support services help keep people active, boost community connection, reduce risk of loneliness and mental health problems. Sydney Community Services runs a range of social support services for individuals and groups, including several cultural groups. Many of our practical support services which help clients fulfil a basic need also work as social supports because they are personal, direct contact with someone who can raise attention if a client's needs change.

Social visiting

Funded by the Community Visitors Scheme, our wonderful volunteers provide companionship to people who are at risk of isolation in Australian government-funded aged care homes. Through this free service, our volunteers alleviate loneliness by linking residents with the wider community. SCS is funded to provide this service for two years to 2021.

The CVS Coordinator matches people who would like to be visited with a volunteer who shares similar interests. Our 48 clients this year include 13 people with special needs. Visitors and clients share activities such as outings; practise computer or English skills, play card games, look after plants, peruse photo albums etc. Often a relationship forms which gives happiness to both client and visitor.



43 volunteers
made
1,500
regular visits to
48 residents in aged
care homes

40 clients
relied on a
companion for
870
hours

Social visiting in the home

SCS also arranges home visiting for housebound elderly or people living with a disability in their home.

Local shopping and transport assistance

Shopping and transport services support independence by enabling people to access their community for everyday needs.

Accompanied activities

SCS Hunters Hill runs a one-on-one companion service for residents of Hunters Hill, Ryde and Lane Cove LGAs who need help with local activities such as shopping or appointments. Paid by the hour, the service enables clients to engage in their choice of activities and access the wider community when it suits them.

Phone monitoring and shopping service

Phone monitoring for people who rarely leave home is a weekly friendly phone call from a volunteer who will also place a shopping order for the client. Run in conjunction with Coles, this convenient service connects clients with the

community, can raise attention if needed, and enables clients to organise their shopping to be delivered on a requested date.

Social activities to boost community connection

Medical opinion increasingly recognises the importance of social interaction for all-round health and wellbeing, and particularly for mental health. Sydney Community Services' social activities also introduce middle-aged and newly retired people to the organisation and its services so that they are aware of services for later in life.

Myriad weekly and fortnightly activities at Hunters Hill and Lane Cove Community Hubs are opportunities for community connection and stimulating social interaction. These range from Women's Wellness Tai Chi and Mindfulness & Relaxation classes to more physical activities such as Movement Matters, shuffleboard and table tennis sessions, or brain-games for players of Scrabble, chess, mah jong and cards, to monthly book club discussions and movie afternoons. Seasonal events include Seniors' Month events, fashion parades and occasional live performances.

Social support for groups

Cultural and linguistically diverse groups (CALD)

With help from volunteer community leaders, SCS runs social support groups and outings for elders from Afghan, Iranian, Italian, Spanish and Chinese backgrounds. We facilitate a range of activities to support and promote independence and wellbeing through exercise classes, information sessions and talks, day trips and cultural event celebrations.

Highlights of social support for CALD groups this year included a new art program and a new Chinese group meeting.

Our successful new art program included a workshop (guided by Mara Lyone of Healing Colours Sydney), at Blandville Court, Gladesville, where residents made beautiful paper birds which were later 'released' into public spaces. Made to be found, each bird holds a tag to let the finder know about mental health services, raising awareness of mental health and available support.

Seniors Day in October was the first official meeting of the new 'Australian-Chinese Kanglur Group' – so named because 'kanglur' means health and leisure in Chinese. Attended by 30 clients, this meeting celebrated birthdays of four Chinese clients, all more than ninety years old. The blossoming group thanks SCS Administration Officer, Stella Small, who made a Chinese birthday cake with the character for longevity on top. By the end of the month there were another 16 group members and the first edition of the Kanglur group newsletter was out.

Weekly English conversation classes running for more than five years are ever-popular with a committed group of 10-12 Chinese clients.

Iranian women in traditional dress celebrated 'Nowruz', the Persian New Year, early in 2019. They gathered around the 'half seen', a traditional table setting to bring in the new year and count blessings of the past year, and they sang and danced along to Persian new year music.

Participants were most grateful after the Stepping On program greatly improved leg strength and balance through two weekly hours of exercise for elders (in Chinese) for seven weeks.

SCS provided

28,840

hours of group support
via the Commonwealth
Home Support
Program

Five nationalities
enjoyed more than

7,000

hours of group
social support

1,100

hours of exercise
and social connection
for older
women

Tuesday bus-
trippers enjoyed

7,354

hours' travel and
companionship



Older Women's Wellness group

This group focuses on Tai Chi with its weekly classes at SCS Hunters Hill Community Hub during school terms and also enjoys quarterly outings.

Group bus trips

Day trips on Tuesdays - Tuesday bus outings are popular with people from the Ryde and Hunters Hill LGAs interested in visiting places from the Blue Mountains and the Central Coast and down as far as Wollongong. Clients have said their experience of these areas and their social lives are both vastly improved by the Tuesday trips. Many long-term friendships kicked off on a Tuesday bus trip.

BOOMers - Bus Outings for Older Men run two groups who meet alternative Fridays, giving men from Lane Cove and surrounds a chance to socialise while visiting interesting places. Two groups, one for independently mobile and another for less mobile men, visit destinations such as parks, galleries, historic sites and museums and this year enjoyed more than 800 hours together at various destinations.

Monthly bus trips

SCS also runs monthly trips open to all independently mobile older people who don't require one-on-one assistance. The combination of destination plus lunch, with optional bus pick-ups, attracts on average 25 guests each trip. Destinations lately have included Kimbriki Recycling Centre at Terrey Hills, Old Government House at Parramatta, and the ANSTO Discovery Centre at Lucas Heights.



119 clients
were engaged for
more than

14,300
hours at
Seniors Hub



Hunters Hill Seniors Hub

Seventeen SCS staff co-design and deliver day-care programs for 119 high-needs elders, including 90 regulars, who attend a Seniors' Hub group at Hunters Hill Community Hub. We provide transport to and from Seniors Hub as needed plus lunch and refreshments. Seven days of activities at two centres focus on wellness and social engagement and programs are tailored to meet needs of current clients. Groups and typical activities included:

'Ladies day' alternates days at the Hub and outings. 'In' days' activities include themed celebrations such as Melbourne Cup, international days, gentle exercise, gardening, trivia, quizzes etc. Days out include picnics, cafe and club venues, garden centres ... destinations based on client requests.

The 'Young At Heart' group is ideal for people needing more assistance with mobility or cognition. Short, structured activities including a weekly Tai Chi class, sing-alongs and reminiscence activities, afternoon drives and walks. There are fortnightly outings – picnics, clubs and cafes.

The men's group lunches together at the centre fortnightly before an exploratory afternoon drive or walk. Other weeks include club or picnic lunches often at harbour, park and bush locations. Men engage in their programming.

Village Bus

To enable more people to connect with their community and benefit from activities, our bus offers door-to-door service for residents of Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove LGAs as needed. Medical appointments transport is provided by a small group of dedicated volunteers in Lane Cove and Hunters Hill LGAs. The Village bus service also gives Lane Cove residents weekly transport to local facilities – shops, banks, libraries, pharmacies etc. On returning, our driver or volunteer can carry shopping to their kitchen.



Support for carers

SCS provided

1,138

hours' respite
for carers



SCS offers information, individual and group support and respite from the demanding work of caring for people with a disability, age-related conditions or limited mobility.

Respite: Our flexible respite service gives supervision and assistance to the client which gives a break for carers in the Ryde area. It also gives the client a chance to meet others and take part in various activities. Respite care can be in a client's home or out in the community, at a nominated time, and offers stimulation and interaction in a bi-monthly program of activities including half-day trips. Respite care is usually between two to four hours a day.

Peer support carer groups: We organise six peer support carer groups where experiences and concerns are shared and support is provided. Some groups also have the occasional guest speaker or go on bus trips, and one does a regular exercise class together. The groups are

- Carers of a person who has suffered ABI, Spinal injury or Stroke
- Carers of a person who is frail aged, has dementia or a chronic illness

- Carers of adults with a disability living in northern Sydney region
- Carers of people on the autism spectrum and/or with diverse disabilities
- Korean carers of children with a disability and/ or special needs
- Other general carers

SCS works with Carers' NSW to help deliver the 'Together' program which supports groups of carers of people with a disability. We thank Carers NSW and Hunters Hill Council which generously funded a celebration for our clients in Carers' Week. Forty carers were treated to a three-course lunch at the restaurant at Ryde Catering College. Each was given a small bouquet of flowers to acknowledge the extraordinary job they do caring for loved ones every day.

Please also see 'Disability services' for bus trips and other activities for people with disabilities.

Disability services

SCS is an NDIS provider, compliant with NSW Disability Standards and successful in third-party verification process. It offers centre- and community-based programs for individuals, small and large groups. A total of more than 120 participants engage in programs they help design, delivered by qualified disability workers to enable people to:

- enjoy social interaction, develop social skills and friendship
- explore their creativity and achieve goals
- develop skills for independent living
- maintain fitness and wellbeing
- have input into activities

Programs facilitate communication, maintain or increase independence and decision-making, give suitable supports for clients' needs, and connect people with the community.

Community-based activities

'Walking group', Monday, half-day: This small group of a few active participants visits fun places, maintains physical fitness and socialises together

'Exploring Sydney group', Wednesdays half-day: This group of seven visits places further afield by bus (Brooklyn, Featherdale Park, Palm Beach). The group has bonded strongly in the past year and is gaining in popularity thanks to proactive SCS staff.

Individual and one-to-two support: Eighteen participants receive one-to-one support and five are supported at a one-to-two ratio. The activities range from swimming, attending gym, visits to local shopping centres and skills development, e.g. computer course.

Tuesday social bus trip for seniors has 34 regular clients for a full-day outing, and regulars have been suggesting special-interest destinations lately such as visiting a plant nursery or a museum.

Monday and Friday Disability Groups have 30 active members who meet for a full day, starting at Hunters Hill base for morning tea before accessing the community. Activities include music, art, sailing, archery, ten pin bowling, and cycling plus lunches out and picnics.





James Russell, centre, in Santa suit celebrating Christmas with Social Club friends.

It's another busy week for **James Russell** who works Mondays and Thursdays for Jigsaw, a document management service which pays award rates to people with the ability to digitise archives. Today, James makes time to chat between data entry work and drama in the afternoon. Then, in the evening, it's his favourite event, Social Club at the Chatswood Youth Centre. He's even been known to consider holidays on the basis of what the Social Club has lined up! A Social Club member for eight years, James has also been stepping out with Exploring Sydney group on Wednesdays for a year.

"I like all the music at Social Club, except jazz dance night which is too girly," says James.

In Exploring Sydney's mini-bus, James likes singing with friends almost as much as the destinations. His likes visiting places with games such as putt-putt golf as well as scenic destinations. After Exploring Sydney on Wednesdays, James gets back to his apartment for a cooking session with Clare Ganly from SCS – one of many activities SCS can line up when clients' interests can be matched with SCS staff skills.

Centre-based activities

Chatswood Social Club, Tuesday evenings: Our largest group of 28 registered members with low support needs all absolutely love their Club and being part of it. Participants meet for a chat and activities ranging from dance, music, table tennis and social outings to local venues e.g. bowling or cinema.

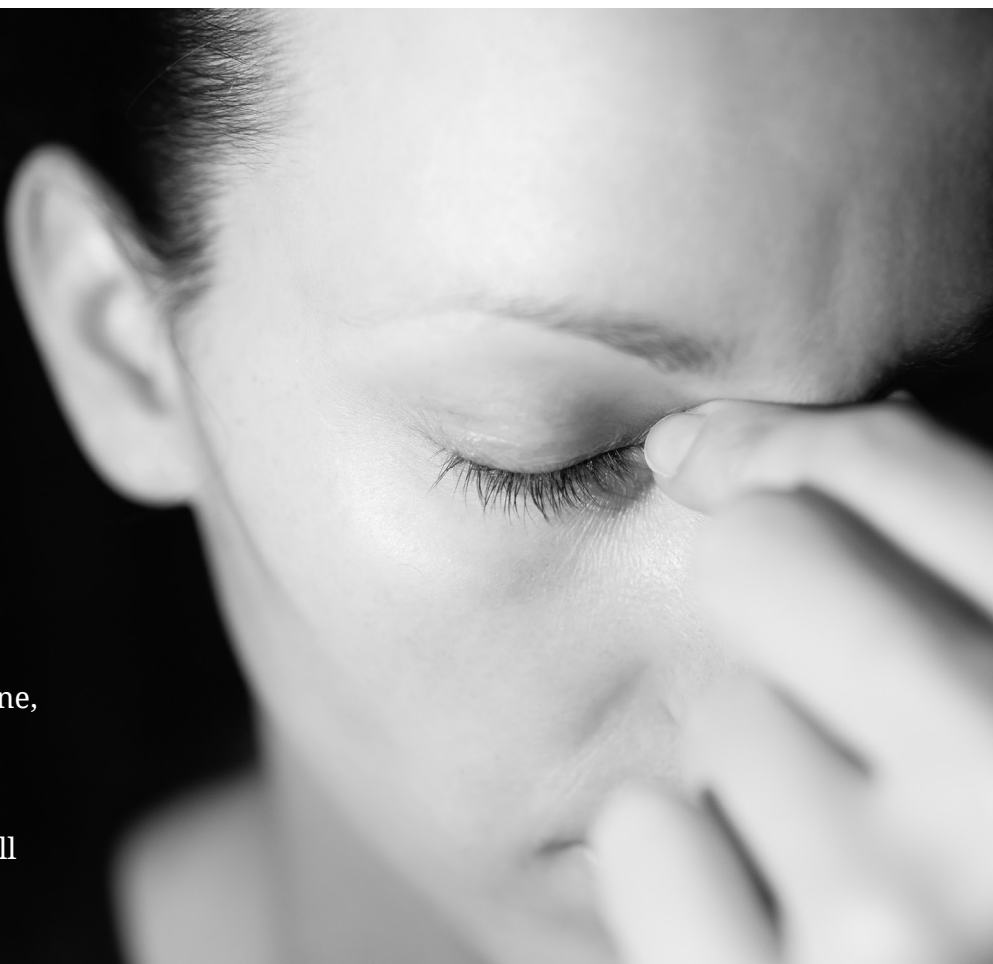
Drama workshop 'Different Degrees', Wednesday evenings during school terms: A dozen skilled members acquire further skills in movement, acting, voice, music and stagecraft. The ensemble performed at the Concourse Theatre, Chatswood for an audience of nearly 300 people during the Lane Cove Festival.

Art classes and social gathering at Boronia Park, Thursdays: Ten regular participants engage in art and craft activities and lunches plus games and gardening. The group exhibited their artwork at SCS Art Expo in Gladesville.

Dance group, six-week trial project: A new group of nine members using movement for self-expression and learning new dance techniques. The group was formed in response to many participants' requests for dance activity, and its popularity suggests it is likely to continue.

Hardship assistance

During 2017- 2018 we supported more than 250 people who found themselves in temporary financial difficulties. We distributed 240 food parcels and more than \$1,500 in food vouchers and 171 Christmas gifts to local people in need. In collaboration with the Department of Planning and Environment, Sydney Water and Telstra, we provided phone, water and energy assistance vouchers of over \$25,000 to residents of Ryde, Hunters Hill and Lane Cove LGAs.



Financial difficulties are often brought on by loss of employment, chronic health conditions or family breakdowns. One fifth of all clients we saw this year needed help more than once a month.

Thank you to the many people who brought food or toiletries in around Anti-Poverty Week 14-20 October – we extended the collection dates and accepted more than 100kg to parcel up and hand out. Although our Hardship Assistance is an unfunded program, with the commitment of our Board of Directors and community we continue to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community.





We'll create

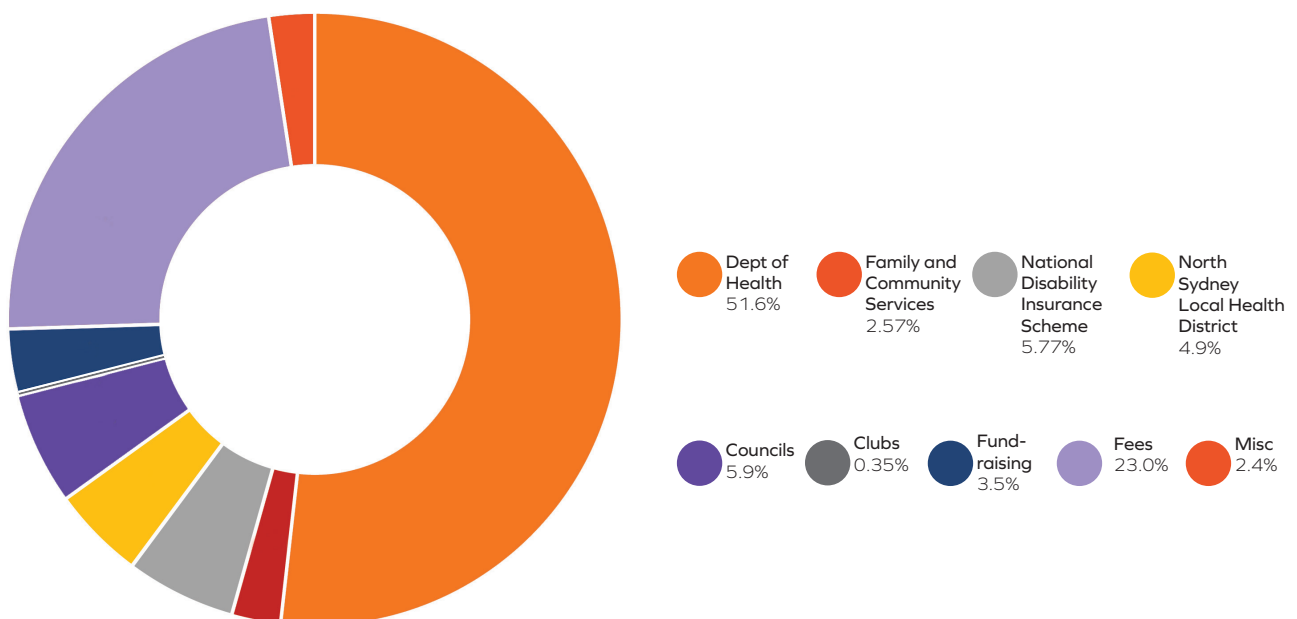
new service and fundraising initiatives to ensure that
neither funding restrictions nor growth of services
will impact the quality of our work,
including the simple human moments which might be
a consistent friendly face, a chat, or an extra cup of tea.

Fundraising, donations and support



SCS wishes to thank all its supporters for funding our essential services. We are most grateful to the brilliant Hunters Hill Food and Wine Fair Organising Committee for its tremendous work in planning and putting together our main fundraising event, the highly successful Hunters Hill Food and Wine Fair which is held annually in May.

We also receive many in-kind contributions. None are more used than the 12-seater bus donated by Rotary Lane Cove and the utility van donated by the Longueville Hotel. The bus is used for group outings and shopping or other local services people need to access. The ute is used by our busy gardening, and home modifications and maintenance teams. The C3 Church generously donated towards Christmas hampers, which we give each year to clients and local people in need.



Sydney Community Services
would like to thank its
funding partners and supporters
including:

Department of Social Services, Commonwealth

Department of Health, Commonwealth

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Family and Community Services, NSW

Hunters Hill Food and Wine Festival

Lane Cove Council

Hunters Hill Council

Ryde Council

IGA

Lane Cove Rotary

Hunters Hill Hotel, Hunters Hill

Longueville Hotel, Lane Cove

Hunter Holden, Ryde

Anglican Parish of Hunters Hill

C3 Church, Lane Cove

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
TO SOMEONE'S LIFE!

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