



Annual Report 2022-2023





WE ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK THE
TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND, THE
BEDIGAL TRIBE OF THE DHARUG CLAN ON
WHICH WE MEET, WALK, WORK AND LIVE. WE
ACKNOWLEDGE THE ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT
FOR THE CARE THEY HAVE GIVEN THIS COUNTRY.

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ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

Riverwood Community Centre (RCC) is a cherished, not-for-profit neighbourhood organisation serving a local, vibrant and diverse community for over 49 years.

As a trusted community organisation, RCC has consistently provided essential support to individuals, families, and community groups through an extensive array of programs and services. All of these offerings are delivered within a nurturing and inclusive environment, empowering community members to actively participate in decisions that shape their lives.

At the core of our mission is the unwavering commitment to supporting vulnerable families and individuals within a culturally diverse, and inclusive community.

SERVING OUR LOCAL,
VIBRANT AND DIVERSE
COMMUNITY SINCE 1974



3
PREMISES

- Belmore Road North (main centre)
- Thurlow Street Riverwood
- Rossmore Ave Punchbowl



THE TEI TEAM HELPED
6382
PEOPLE, MARKING
A 223% INCREASE



OUR RECEPTIONISTS
HANDLED OVER
4000
TELEPHONE AND
EMAIL INQUIRIES



62 150
STAFF VOLUNTEERS



OVER
2000
PEOPLE COMING
THROUGH THE
CENTRE EACH WEEK

OUR MISSION AND VALUES

The mission of the Riverwood Community Centre is:

- To pursue a future for everyone that embraces diversity and encourages sustainable strategies that support the most disadvantaged in our community;
- To support people in a way that is professional, respectful, and effective and suit them best.

We recognise that our approaches will differ in response to the people or situations involved, including centre-based or outreach responses.

This mission is supported by core values including:

<p>Integrity</p> 	<p>Community</p> 	<p>Teamwork</p> 
<p>Respect</p> 	<p>Inclusivity</p> 	<p>Compassion</p> 

RCC is a Company limited by guarantee, governed by a voluntary and community-based Board of Directors who are fully committed to the local community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CHAIRPERSON
Lyn Lormer



ACTING CEO
Karl Saleh OAM



BOARD MEMBER
Pauline Gallagher OAM



BOARD MEMBER
Tony Moubarak



BOARD MEMBER
Kevin Mooney



BOARD MEMBER
Zorka Petrovska



BOARD MEMBER
Bhadra Waiba



BOARD MEMBER
Robert Furolo



BOARD SECRETARY
Jessica Xu

MANAGEMENT



FINANCE AND CORPORATE
SERVICES MANAGER
Ram Nishant Alajangi



DIRECTOR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND OSHC MANAGER
Tara Hrdlicka



AGED CARE & DISABILITY
SERVICES MANAGER
Jessica Laker



COMMUNITY, YOUTH AND FAMILY
SUPPORT MANAGER
Salma Taleb



CELEBRATING

49

Riverwood
Community
CENTRE

YEARS



RIVERWOOD
COMMUNITY
CENTRE, 49 YEARS
OF SERVING TO
THE COMMUNITY

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



CHAIRPERSON

Lyn Lormer

I wish to acknowledge that Riverwood Community Centre is situated on the land of the Bedjigal of the Dharug tribe and pay my respects to their elders - past, present and emerging. I thank them for their custodianship of the land and waters that surround us and acknowledge the land was never ceded.

I have only been the Chairperson of Riverwood Community Centre for a short time, since July 2023, but I have had close association with this community since my early childhood and it has been a pleasure for me to serve in this way.

I took over the role from Karl Saleh OAM when he stepped down after 6 years as an exemplary Chairperson to act in the role of Chief Executive Officer, while the Board recruits for the top leadership position.

I would personally like to thank Karl for his outstanding Leadership and dedicated service to RCC.

He has been tireless in building RCC's reputation and advocating for more services and resources for the area. He has made a significant contribution to the making Riverwood a place we can all be proud of.

The governance of the organisation rests with the Board, that as members of RCC Ltd, we elect every year at the AGM. The Board is both diverse and inclusive, made up of people from many different cultures and backgrounds, with a wide range of experience and skills which we use for the benefit and growth of the organisation and to achieve the outcomes as stated in our Constitution.

Our role is to ensure the community is engaged and can participate in meeting their own aspirations and to be an advocate for identified community issues when necessary.

We also have stewardship of community resources where our role is to ensure excellent service provision for our children, youth, aged and families.

The most significant thing the Board does is to set the Strategic Plan – the vision for the future. Its about how we bring people together, whether its through Harmony Day, NAIDOC Week celebrations or the Family Festival and how we help facilitate a strong, resilient community which has the capacity to support its most vulnerable members.

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 has 6 main focus areas:

- Demonstrate strong leadership
- Embrace and encourage diversity
- Foster a thriving & responsive Centre
- Prioritise support for the most disadvantaged
- Collaborate effectively
- Deliver quality services

I think we can report that Riverwood Community Centre is well on the way to delivering these outcomes through our programs, community development activities and advocacy. I would like to thank the Board for their hard work in guiding and monitoring the progress of the organisation. It is often a thankless task but makes a real difference to how the community operates and moves forward.

I want to also acknowledge the funders, supporters and community partners for their fantastic collaboration and assistance throughout the year and which, ultimately makes the work more rewarding.

Lastly, my thanks goes to the staff and users of the Centre, who are the very reason RCC exists. The staff at RCC are remarkable, they are dedicated and work long hours to make RCC a "centre of excellence" and the users bring their wisdom, their play, their vulnerability and resourcefulness to make it a place of acceptance, compassion and inclusion.

The Board commits to making more progress on the strategic plan in the coming year and hopes that your trust in us as an organisation grows and is rewarded as the Riverwood community goes from strength to strength.

CEO'S MESSAGE

This year, our community once again started to return to normal after Covid.

Thank you to everyone who has played a role in our community's ongoing recovery. We are very proud of the role RCC played in partnership with our stakeholders, local businesses, and local state federal governments.

The rapid growth in our local community has been particularly noticeable. Our community engagement with youth, and family services working to support the community in partnership with other community agencies.

The demand for community services is significantly larger than the previous year's. Our team has helped thousands of local people for emergency relief and provided support for other services.

We will keep working with all stakeholders and government agencies whilst sourcing to increase resources in the area. Some of our additional service pressures have been the increase in homelessness due to the high cost of living, poverty, lack of public and affordable housing, and the cost pressures on delivering our community services, including NDIS, age, and children's services.

We advocate to the government for some of the solutions to these problems. This is assisted by strong partnerships with a number of other community organisations.

We are pleased to see our community members reengage and return to our community garden and the Riverwood Men's Shed. Over the past year the RCC team serviced 6382 clients. Over 5,000 people joined us at the Community Fair in May this year,

nearly 3,000 people for our Harmony Day. On July 8, 2022, we were joined by hundreds of community members to sign the Uluru Statement on a display banner, to commemorate and endorse a message of unity, respect, and reconciliation.

The Riverwood Community Centre is committed to work alongside the state Government and the NSW Land and Housing Corporation on the proposed estate development plan to upgrade the existing units and local infrastructure and deliver better outcomes for public and social housing tenants, delivering more affordable and social housing and reduce the number of homeless and vulnerable people.

With challenges come opportunities; we continue to be very well supported by a strong and cohesive Board and Executive team and have continued to build on our achievements with tremendous support from our stakeholders as we continue our journey to realise our vision for Riverwood Community.

I want to thank our staff for managing everything incredibly well throughout the year. Their commitment and focus continue to be the driving force as we support our community.

I would like to thank Lyn Lormer, our new Board Chair, who brought with her great knowledge, passion, and commitment to the task.

Lyn has a long history with the Riverwood Community Centre dating back to the early 1980's when she started out as a Community Worker and Coordinator.

Also, I would like to thank the RCC Board members for their quality oversight and commitment to all that we do for our community, and of course, all our stakeholders for their ongoing support and partnership that enables our achievements to be made.

ACTING CEO
Karl Saleh OAM





For nearly five decades, Riverwood Community Centre has been an unwavering source of support and assistance to our community. A cornerstone of our commitment to meeting the evolving needs of our residents is our Aged Care Services division.

Our Aged Care Services are seamlessly integrated into the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), offering essential entry-level services that empower older individuals to maintain their independence and continue living in the comfort of their homes. Our service offerings have evolved to adapt to the changing needs of our clients, encompassing a wide spectrum of support, including social support groups, domestic assistance services, personalised care, community transport, and home maintenance and gardening.

As the ageing population continues to grow, driven by increased life expectancy, the demand for affordable and culturally sensitive services remains higher than ever within our culturally and linguistically diverse Riverwood community.

Riverwood Community Centre's culturally tailored Social Support Groups are designed to foster community engagement and combat the social isolation experienced by many of our clients. In the past financial year, we have witnessed a remarkable 134% increase in attendance, attributed in part to the waning fear of COVID-19 and the persistent encouragement of family members for social engagement. We firmly believe that social participation and inclusion are integral to maintaining the cognitive and emotional well-being of our elderly population. In direct response to the isolation wrought by the pandemic, we have introduced welfare checks into our operational practices.

Additionally, we've observed a shift in behaviour among post-pandemic clients, with many hesitating to use public transport and instead opting for our

transport services, resulting in a 75% increase in the past year. Our newest offering, Home Maintenance, has also exceeded its target output in its inaugural year. Recognizing that mobility can decline and health issues can increase with age, this service provides essential garden maintenance, weeding, and lawn care, contributing significantly to an improved overall mood.

In anticipation of the Aged Care Reform scheduled for July 2025, our Aged Care Services division has proactively implemented policies and procedures aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and service quality. Our entire staff has undergone comprehensive training provided by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, ensuring they are fully equipped to meet their responsibilities under the impending reforms. This investment in staff training and professional development has cultivated a highly skilled and compassionate workforce, a fundamental element in delivering high-quality Aged Care services.





We've also embraced ongoing technological advancements, incorporating monitoring systems and data collection improvements to bolster our existing processes and elevate the level of care we provide.

Our envisioned trajectory points to continuous improvement, innovation, and growth, all of which will sustain Riverwood Community Centre's commitment to delivering top-tier health support services. These ongoing enhancements and our unwavering commitment to community collaboration are essential to ensuring that our clients receive the highest quality of care and support in their later years.



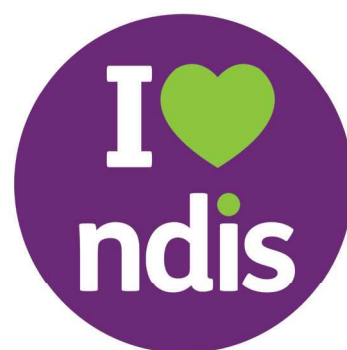
OUR AGED CARE SERVICES ARE SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATED INTO THE COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMME (CHSP), OFFERING ESSENTIAL ENTRY-LEVEL SERVICES THAT EMPOWER OLDER INDIVIDUALS TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE AND CONTINUE LIVING IN THE COMFORT OF THEIR HOMES.



NDIS SUPPORT COORDINATION

Our centre is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to our community, and this commitment extends to offering NDIS Support Coordination services. Navigating the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can be a complex process, and we understand the importance of having a skilled and compassionate team to guide individuals and families through this journey.

Our NDIS Support Coordination services are designed to empower individuals with disabilities, ensuring they have access to the right supports and services that best meet their unique needs. Whether it's assisting with plan development, connecting with service providers, or advocating for the rights of our clients, our team is there every step of the way.



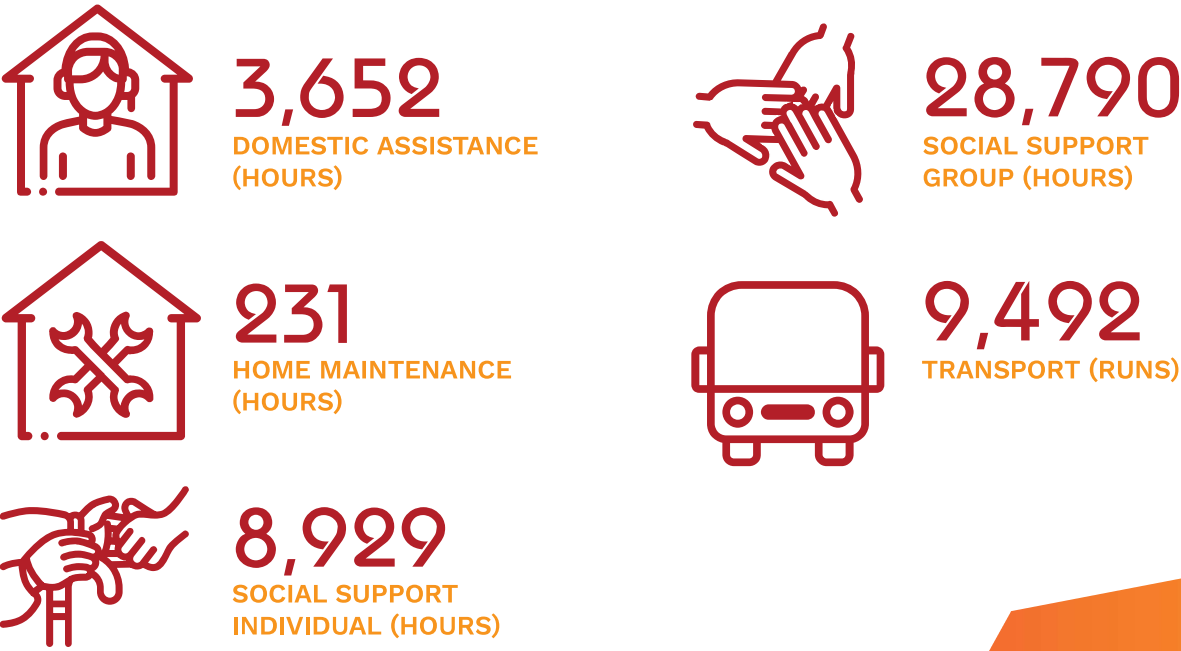
AGED CARE PERFORMANCE

Fig. 1



2022-2023 RESULTS

Fig. 2



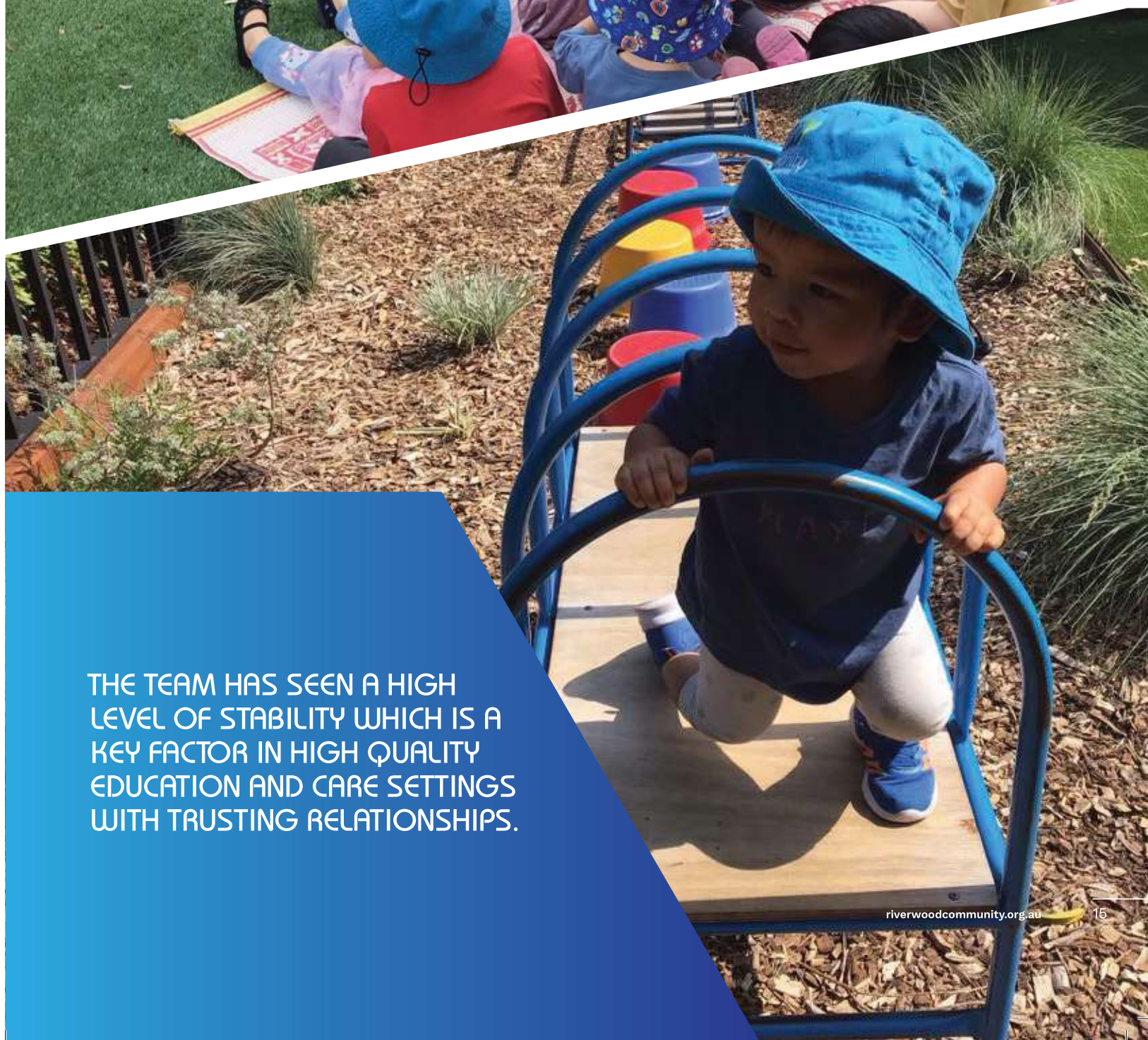


CHILDREN'S SERVICES ADMINISTRATION OSHC, VACATION CARE AND LONG DAY CARE

Continuous Quality Improvement

1. High performance team providing positive outcomes for children: The team has seen a high level of stability which is a key factor in high quality education and care settings because it builds trusting relationships between children, their families and the educators.
2. Value added positions: The team has been strengthened with an additional two Nominated Supervisor roles. This quality measure exceeds regulatory requirements.
3. The team is now supported by a part-time role focusing on the administration of OSHC, Vacation Care and Long Day Care. As enrolments continue to increase across services, this role is appreciated.
4. Grants have been submitted to improve practice, environments, and physical space in OSHC and for Protective Behaviours awareness for educators, families and children.
5. Sunsmart Centre – both OSHC and LDC were registered as SunSmart Centres with the Cancer Council to promote children's, educator and family practice and understanding of sun safety and the importance it plays in long term health outcome.
6. Training and staff development included updated First Aid and CPR.





THE TEAM HAS SEEN A HIGH
LEVEL OF STABILITY WHICH IS A
KEY FACTOR IN HIGH QUALITY
EDUCATION AND CARE SETTINGS
WITH TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS.

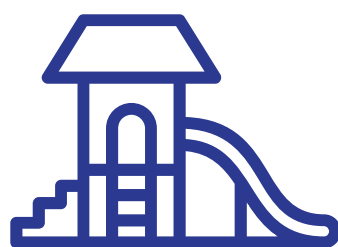
EARLY CHILDHOOD RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY LONG DAY CARE

A highlight for this period is that Riverwood Community Long Day Care achieved a Meeting National Quality Standards rating based on the continuous improvements to practice across all seven quality areas implemented by our dedicated educator team. It is wonderful seeing the children thriving, contented and developing in all their domains of development with our Early Childhood Teacher and Educational Leader leading and collaborating with our Early Childhood Educator Team to implement the cycle of planning which ensures all children from babies to toddlers to preschoolers receive a program specific to their needs.

Liaison with KU Inclusion Support Professionals to investigate supports for the children with additional needs. Outcomes include:

- The achievement of an Innovative Solutions Grant of \$10,000 for a Child Psychologist to work alongside the early childhood educator team to support exceeding practice in children's
- Educational experiences, centre environment and routines and specific strategies to support the developmental goals of children with additional needs.
- Families of children with suspected developmental delays encouraged to see diagnosis from family paediatrician.
- Collaboration with Inclusion Support Professional to develop inclusion support strategies and investigate possibility of Inclusion Support Subsidy for an additional educator to increase educator team capacity.

- Toddlers and Preschoolers are enjoying regular visits to Riverwood Library Storytime which enhances the language-rich environment that children experience at Riverwood Long Day Care. During Book Week, children and Educators had a wonderful time dressing as their favourite characters and sharing their favourite storybooks. Our older children who are transitioning to school next year engage in school readiness programs to develop the skills needed to write, read, follow instructions, line up and walk safely, negotiate and socialise with their peers in an environment outside the centre.
- Increased casual pool of Educators to ensure adequate consistent relief educator to provide consistency of children's carers and support educator wellbeing through regular well deserved holiday breaks and reduced overtime.



\$40K

GRANT FOR THE
UPGRADE OF THE
OUTDOOR PLAY
ENVIRONMENT





Creation of an Educational Leader/ Nominated Supervisor role to support the day-to-day management of the service in the absence of Director.

To support children's healthy development, dental checks were arranged for the children. The benefits of these checks which are conducted in our service is that any issues are caught early and can be followed up to address. Children and their parents also learned about dental hygiene and the method and importance of regularly brushing their teeth.

Vision checks were also arranged for children – early intervention being important where any issues are identified as good vision is essential to children's learning and any problem can have long term negative impacts of children's development.

We honoured Mothers and Fathers, the role they play as primary carers of their children and in partnering with early childhood educators to achieve their goals for their children. All families received an invitation to join a BBQ and an afternoon tea with some families bringing along a dish from their culture to share.

Visits from the Police and Fire Brigade were arranged because of their vital role in the community. These visits were a highlight for children who gained confidence to join in on using the fire hose, spending time listening to Police and Fire Officers about their roles and safety tips and trying the drivers seat and the sirens in their vehicles.

\$40,000 Grant for the upgrade of the outdoor play environment achieved in

- Quotes sought for works and contract assigned.
- Completion of Upgrade of outdoor environment including new Softfall and Astro turf, a bike track, and a large garden with new sensory plants.





SCHOOL AGE EDUCATION & CARE RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY OSHC & VACATION CARE

The OSHC team worked collaboratively with the Early Childhood Team to achieve a “Meeting National Quality Standards” rating for Riverwood Community OSHC & Vacation Care. This improvement in rating was a result of reflection, observation, planning and taking feedback from families and other stakeholders. Continuous improvement goals were set and progress in quality practice achieved across all seven quality areas, as implemented by our dedicated OSHC educator team.

Our Transport Policy was updated and implemented to meet changes in Education and Care Services National Regulations with a full Risk Management Plan, transport supervision checklist and staff educator to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children transported to and from six local school during term and to and from Vacation Care Excursions during school holidays.

Our OSHC team leadership was strengthened with the creation of a new OSHC Coordinator/ Nominated Supervisor role to oversee the day-to-day management of before, after school care and vacation care and the safety and wellbeing of children, at all times.

RCC OSHC continues to develop community trust and a reputation for inclusiveness with several children attending with both diagnosed and undiagnosed special needs. Our collaboration with KU Inclusion Support Services was identified as a way to enhance and improve the outcomes of children with additional needs and provide practical support to the educator team who work closely with families, the schools, Department of Communities and Justice and referral support services.





VACATION CARE PROGRAM OSHC

Our Vacation Care programs gave way to in centre workshops with Bambora Tours, teaching our children traditional Indigenous dancing, hearing dream time stories and time for questions. During NAIDOC week our Vacation Care service was privileged to participate in the largest NAIDOC event hosted by RCC. At this event our children experienced a great boomerang painting session with a local elder and Aunty.

Children collaborating to create their vacation care program, based on their feedback and evaluations of the previous programs. Higher risk suggestions for activities underwent a risk benefit analysis and were included in the program for the first time e.g., Ryde Aquatic Centre with a 40 metre Wave Pool, the Rapid River and a 56m Giant Water Slide. Children were given supported independence to move about in age groups with greater choice in their swimming locations around the facility, opportunities like this have seen a greater increase in booking attendances for the holiday program.

Children have enjoyed access to the outdoor garden space on a daily basis. Children incorporated learning about plants, insect lifecycles, local reptiles and wildlife with binoculars and magnifying glasses. Children's learning was strengthened through hands on exploration and engagement with sports,

group games, and social down time with their friends on the grass. This natural environment continues to promote a deeper sense of overall well-being and resilience.

Our Engagement with the local community extended to regular library visits every Monday in OSHC this was a momentous learning opportunity for children to independently use the library borrowing system. Sourcing their own books of interest, for school study projects, using their own library cards encourage children to use the library outside OOSH time. Children learnt to scan their books for borrowing and returning them. Children also took leadership to choose books for the service in line with the weekly educational program to support their learning e.g., Sharks information books.

Our collaborative partnerships with our local schools continue to grow with our nominated supervisor meeting with school principals at Riverwood Public, Riverwood South Side Montessori Peakhurst West Public School and Hannan's Road Public School in the best interests of our kindergarten students , families for transition to school programs and Inclusion support services.



STUDENT PLACEMENT

Our commitment to supporting student placements goes beyond providing opportunities; it's about nurturing the talent and potential of more than 100 students. We believe that by investing in their growth and development, we are shaping a brighter future not only for them but also for our community. TEI Manager Salma Taleb stated, “Offering student placement opportunities is not just about giving them a taste of the real world; it's about providing them with a platform to learn, develop essential skills, and gain hands-on experience that will serve as a foundation for their future careers”.

- RCC supported 59 student placements between 2022-2023.

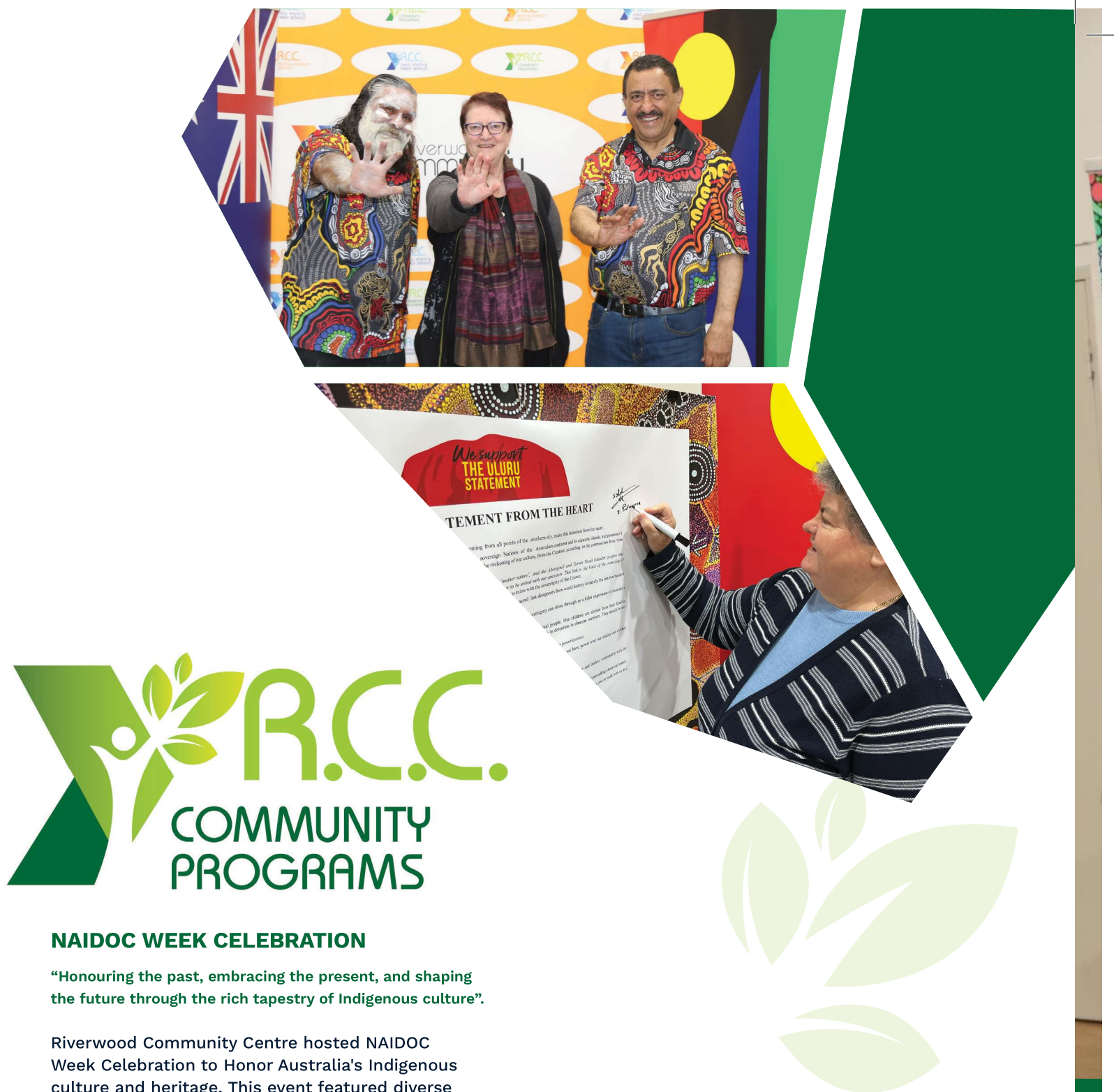


59
STUDENT PLACEMENTS
BETWEEN 2022-2023





OUR BEFORE AND AFTER
SCHOOL CARE & VACATION
CARE PROGRAM SUPPORT
AND EMPOWER CHILDREN
TO EXPLORE, LEARN,
DISCOVER AND CHALLENGE
THEIR CURRENT SKILLS, MAKE
NEW FRIENDS, AND BE A PART
OF THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY.



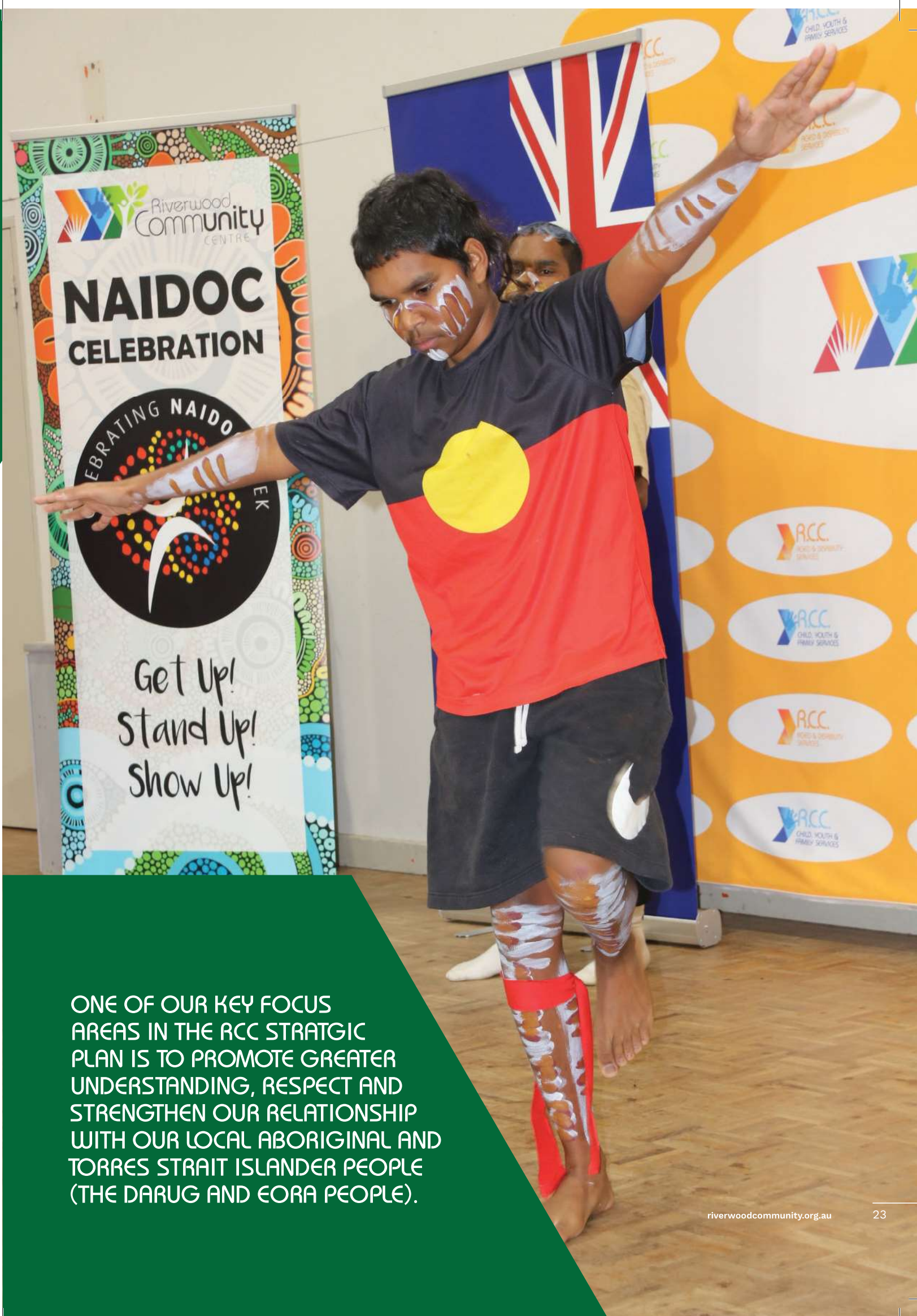
NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATION

“Honouring the past, embracing the present, and shaping the future through the rich tapestry of Indigenous culture”.

Riverwood Community Centre hosted NAIDOC Week Celebration to Honor Australia's Indigenous culture and heritage. This event featured diverse activities such as traditional dance performances, art exhibitions, and storytelling sessions led by Uncle John and Auntie Liz, and children engaged in Boomerang Painting, connecting with Indigenous artistry. Educational initiatives, cultural cuisine, and community engagement emphasised the importance of understanding and appreciating Indigenous history.

Their wisdom, guidance, and leadership were acknowledged, highlighting their invaluable contributions to the community. This celebration served as a symbol of unity and respect for the First Nations people, fostering a sense of reconciliation and appreciation within the community.

ONE CRUCIAL ASPECT OF THIS CELEBRATION WAS THE HEARTFELT RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS ELDERS.



ONE OF OUR KEY FOCUS AREAS IN THE RCC STRATGIC PLAN IS TO PROMOTE GREATER UNDERSTANDING, RESPECT AND STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE (THE DARUG AND EORA PEOPLE).

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

"Celebrating the strength, resilience, and limitless potential of women worldwide".

Riverwood Community Centre hosted an International Women's Day Celebration, It symbolised our collective effort to empower women and pave the way for an inclusive, equal, and inspiring future.

The event featured workshops, discussions, and artistic showcases, highlighting the achievements and contributions of women. It promoted community engagement, recognised outstanding women, celebrated cultural diversity, and encouraged young girls to dream big.



IFTAR (RAMADAN) CELEBRATION

"A moment of unity, a feast of compassion, and a celebration of diversity".

The Iftar Ramadan Eid Dinner at Riverwood Community Centre is an annual celebration that brings together people of diverse backgrounds to break the fast-during Ramadan. This multicultural feast showcases a variety of traditional dishes, fostering community bonding and cultural exchange.





CELEBRATING THE
STRENGTH, RESILIENCE,
AND LIMITLESS POTENTIAL
OF WOMEN WORLDWIDE

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

"In embracing our traditions, we step into the future with hope and unity."

OVER 1200 CAME TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE OUR LOCAL VIBRANT CULTURAL DIVERSITY.

HARMONY DAY CELEBRATION

"In the symphony of diversity, we find harmony, for it is through understanding, appreciation, and unity that we create a beautiful melody of cultures."

This year's Harmony Day Celebration was a resounding success, attracting over 500 attendees who gathered to enjoy captivating cultural performances.

Beyond the performances, the celebration fostered unity and understanding among attendees, emphasising the richness of cultural diversity in our community.

RCC BIGGEST MORNING TEA CANCER COUNCIL EVENT

The RCC Biggest Morning Tea Cancer Council Event, graced by the presence of international star and former two-time world boxing champion Billy 'the kid' Dib, was a deeply compassionate gathering that left a lasting impression. Salma Taleb stated that, "Billy Dib's story illuminated the path of compassion and resilience, inspiring us, and reminding us that together, we can overcome the darkest of challenges". This event is a testament to the enduring power of unity and compassion in our battle against cancer."





ASKING 'R U OK?' IS A POWERFUL WAY TO SHOW THAT WE GENUINELY CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER

R U OK DAY

"The 2022 R U OK Week theme, 'No qualifications are needed to ask R U OK?' was hosted at the centre, where locals attended. This initiative served as a reminder that compassion and empathy have no prerequisites and that anyone can make a positive impact on someone's mental well-being. **"In our community, caring is our qualification, and asking 'R U OK?' is a powerful way to show that we genuinely care about each other."**

FLU-VACCINE INITIATIVE

The collaboration between the Community Centre and NSW Health for the RCC FLUVAX Clinic has been a pivotal initiative in ensuring the health and well-being of the community. This clinic has provided a vital service, offering not only COVID-19 boosters but also flu vaccines to safeguard the health of residents. **"In partnership with NSW Health, we're not just administering vaccines; we're delivering peace of mind, protecting lives, and fostering a healthier and more resilient community."** This initiative, represents a proactive and caring approach to community well-being during challenging times.

As one community member aptly stated, **"In times of uncertainty, the support and care from our centre make a world of difference. The RAT test distribution not only helps protect our health but also shows that we're not alone in this journey."**



1034

RAPID ANTIGEN TEST (RAT) KITS DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY





RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY FAMILY FESTIVAL

The Riverwood Family Festival, making its return in June 2023 after the challenges posed by COVID, was a much-needed event in the community. It aimed to increase social cohesion and eliminate isolation, offering rides, entertainment, food, and children's activities. The festival brought more than 2000 community members together for a day of fun and joy, symbolising the strength found in unity after challenging times. TEI Manager Salma Taleb, emphasised its importance by saying, "In our community, events like the Riverwood Family Festival are more than just celebrations; they are vital moments that increase social cohesion and eliminate the shadows of isolation. They bring us together, reminding us of the strength we find in unity. This event reflects our commitment to nurturing strong bonds and a sense of togetherness within our community."

CHRISTMAS TOY-DRIVE AND COMMUNITY DINNER

The Stakeholder Christmas Dinner Event and RCC Christmas Community Lunch, coupled with the heartwarming Client Gift Distribution, are cherished traditions at the centre. They epitomise the essence of community, gratitude, and festive cheer. "During the holiday season, we come together as a community to celebrate our achievements, express our thanks to stakeholders, and spread joy among our clients and their families. It's a time when smiles on children's faces, as they receive gifts generously donated by Club Rivers and All Saints Greek Orthodox Parish Belmore, remind us of the magic of giving."

These events serve as a heartwarming reminder that the centre is not just a place for services but a hub for creating cherished memories and a sense of belonging during special times, fostering a strong sense of community and unity.



YOUTH DROP-IN SERVICE & YOUTH HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

Social Participation at our centre encompasses the Youth Drop-in Service and Youth Holiday Programs, offering a safe space for young people to connect, learn, and grow. The Youth Drop-in Service, hosted by Youth Case Worker Jessica Nakakawa weekly on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and in partnership with Humanity Matters and Street Industries, fosters a sense of belonging and trust within our youth community. Meanwhile, the Youth Holiday Programs provide enriching experiences during school breaks, encouraging personal growth and creativity.

"In our centre, we provide a lifeline for our youth. Through our programs, they build friendships, confidence, and a profound sense of belonging."

In addition to these programs, our centre also hosts a Basketball Tournament, and employment program in partnership with Street Industries. This collaboration enhances social engagement and provides youth with opportunities for teamwork, skill development, and healthy competition. "We've seen numbers reach up to 78 clients in one session, and this number continues to grow, highlighting the importance of these initiatives."

EMERGENCY RELIEF

The Community Centre's 'Community Engagement' initiatives, including OzHarvest Food Hamper Distribution, Bread Distribution (Bakers Delight), One Meal (All Saints Greek Orthodox Parish Belmore), Community BBQ with Street Industries, Bonds Emergency Clothing Relief, and RSPCA (Animal Vet Support), have had a significant, positive, and beneficial impact on locals. Our centre has provided support to an impressive 2545 individuals, significantly surpassing our initial targeted number of 230. More than 3500 emergency food hampers were packed and distributed to the community.

- More than 3561 loaves of bread were distributed to the community.



SUPPORTING OVER

350

YOUTH CLIENTS PER MONTH



MORE THAN

3561

LOAVES OF BREAD DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY

INTERFAITH CELEBRATION

"In the tapestry of our diverse beliefs, the Interfaith Dinner weaves threads of unity, understanding, and respect. It's a gathering that reminds us of the common values that unite us, transcending religious differences."

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY GARDEN

Riverwood Community Centre Gardens, with 82 plots tended by locals, provide a serene green oasis. "In our gardens, we cultivate not only plants but also connections, belonging, and a shared passion for nature."

ABC's host of 'Gardening Australia,' Costa Georgiadis, and Member for Oatley Mark Coure MP, added significance to the gardens, with a "Grow it Local" initiative. During this event, local gardeners gathered for a BBQ, sharing stories and advice. These gardens are a testament to the power of community, nature, and shared knowledge, with strong support from Canterbury Bankstown City Council.



82

PLOTS TENDED
BY LOCALS



WE CULTIVATE
NOT ONLY
PLANTS
BUT ALSO
CONNECTIONS.

EDUCATION, SKILLS, & TRAINING

At our centre, we prioritise education, skill development, and training through various programs and partnerships. One such program is our Employment Program, created in partnership with Street Industries. We're dedicated to

equipping individuals with the skills and resources necessary for securing meaningful employment.

Our Cooking Program, conducted in collaboration with Humanity Matters, empowers participants by imparting culinary skills and nutritional knowledge. This not only promotes healthier living but also fosters a sense of accomplishment.

Additionally, we conducted an Anti-Bullying Workshop in cooperation with Kingsgrove North High School. This workshop was designed to raise awareness and provide students with strategies to address and prevent bullying. We aimed to create a culture of respect and empathy.



TARGETED SUPPORT

The centre plays a pivotal role in providing targeted support offering a wide array of essential services that cater to various aspects of community well-being. These services encompass Information, Advice, Referral, Mental Health through counselling and therapy, Family Capacity Building, Supported Playgroup, and Parenting Programs.

We serve as a valuable resource hub, providing Information, Advice, and Referrals to community members seeking guidance on a wide range of issues. Whether it's housing, education, employment, or any other concern, our team is dedicated to connecting individuals with the right resources and support networks.

Mental health is a cornerstone of well-being, and our centre recognises its significance. We offer counselling and therapy services, providing a safe and empathetic space for individuals to address their mental health challenges, find coping strategies, and work towards recovery and resilience.

Strengthening families is at the core of our mission. Through various programs and workshops, we empower families to build stronger bonds, enhance their problem-solving skills, and create nurturing environments for their children.

Our Supported Playgroup is a vibrant and inclusive space where children and parents come together to play, learn, and grow. It fosters early childhood

development and provides opportunities for families to connect and form meaningful relationships.

Our parenting programs offer guidance, support, and valuable insights to parents, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to raise happy and healthy children.

As one community member aptly expressed, **"The support we receive from the centre under TEI is a lifeline. It's not just about assistance; it's about empowerment. They equip us with the tools we need to overcome challenges, strengthen our families, and build a brighter future."**

Our commitment to delivering these essential services underscores our dedication to the well-being and prosperity of our community.

- The TEI team at the Riverwood Community Centre was originally tasked with supporting 2,865 individuals but surpassed expectations, helping 6,382 people, marking a remarkable 223% increase. This underscores the centre's dedication to meeting the community's diverse needs and empowering individuals and families.
- Our Friendly receptionists handled over 4,000 telephone and email inquiries, providing timely responses.



Our parenting programs offer guidance, support, and valuable insights to parents, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to raise happy and healthy children.



More than 150 people, along with 26 government and non-government community sector stakeholders, gathered at the centre on February 2023 to enjoy a stronger connection with their community during Riverwood Community Centre's Social Housing Engagement Day.

MEN'S SHED ▶

Good health and wellbeing are based on many factors and becoming a member of Riverwood Community Men's Shed gives a man that safe and busy environment, and most importantly, there is no pressure. Members of Men's Shed come from all cultural backgrounds and walks of life, the bond that unites them is that they are men with time on their hands and they would like something meaningful to do with that time.



◀ PUNCH BOWL COMMUNITY CENTRE



RIVERWOOD RENEWAL SUBMISSION

Riverwood Community Centre (RCC) supports the renewal of the Riverwood housing estate to better reflect the needs of the residents of this evolving suburb and to provide social housing that better meets the needs of current and future tenants.

Riverwood is a vibrant and diverse community that incorporates unique cultural, ageing and disadvantaged groups including people with disabilities and mental health conditions. The existing social housing in Riverwood is well past its useful life and is no longer fit for purpose .

The RCC acknowledge there are over 55,000 people across this state on the Public housing waitlist and the redevelopment of the Riverwood Housing Estate proposed by Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) is about getting more people who are living in housing stress into homes sooner.

Recommendation

Any Planning Agreement should address the concerns raised to the following elements:

- A clear analysis should be undertaken outlining the impacts on all aspects of local infrastructure including open space, traffic and transport, local schools, utilities and services capacity of Riverwood Community Centre.

- The renewal needs to provide suitable funding to transform and renew Riverwood Community Centre to continue to provide and expand its vital services. Funds will be required to ensure new residents are fully integrated into the Community.
- The ratio of new public housing dwellings should not be less than 35% of the total new dwellings proposed for the renewal project measured as a proportion of Gross Floor Area and total dwelling numbers.
- A comprehensive relocation program to be developed in consultation with existing social housing tenants and implemented in consultation with an advisory group of tenants. The Tenant Relocation Advisory Group is to be established and supported with the assistance of RCC.
- The mix of new Public and social housing is to be developed with regard to the existing tenant requirements and the needs of applicants currently on the waiting list.
- The new Social Housing dwellings need to incorporate housing sizes to accommodate a variety of tenants including disabled, single, elderly, couples, single parent families, small families, and large families. The new social housing is to include a mix of apartment style and townhouse style dwellings to ensure a variety of housing typologies.
- The renewal needs to incorporate the items identified in any council recreational needs analysis undertaken for the area.



WE CALL FOR FUNDING TO RENEW RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND FOR NO LESS THAN 35% OF NEW DWELLINGS TO BE PUBLIC HOUSING.



□ Walla Omer and her children and with support workers at Riverwood Community Centre.



Fleeing family find a home

Riverwood Community Centre helps open doors to a new life

A SUDANESE mother and her six children who fled the escalating conflict in Sudan's capital Khartoum, have found a safe haven in Riverwood.

The family moved to Punchbowl from Sudan in 2007 but five years ago moved back so the children could "further their languages studies".

However, with Sudan's escalating violence they had no choice but to flee, "risking a long and dangerous journey" to get out of

the country.

The family has now found the temporary housing in Riverwood, thanks to Riverwood Community Centre, which also provided clothing, food supplies and informal counselling "to help the family feel at home".

Walla Omer and her children were among more than 150 people evacuated back to Australia by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade by a military plane via Sudan's Saidna Valley Airport ear-

lier this month.

"It is a big relief for me and my family to be in safety," Ms Omer said.

"I feel safe, I am very grateful for the opportunity to be here in Australia with my children.

"Thank you very much Riverwood Community Centre staff for their support and assistance."

Local Sudanese community leaders have expressed appreciation and gratitude for the Centre's aid and support, especially Family

Support Worker Ina Shouly.

Centre Chairperson Karl Saleh said that while everything was being done to support the evacuated families, they would face a long and challenging road ahead.

The Australia Government has condemned the violence across Sudan which has resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries since fighting began on April 15 and called on all parties to cease hostilities and "prevent further needless bloodshed".

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE LOCAL SUDANESE

Riverwood Community Centre was recognised for assisting a Sudanese community member who had a 'terrifying' experience fleeing Sudanese violence. Ms. Manal Arbab, local Sudanese community leader, expressed her appreciation and gratitude for Riverwood Community Centre's aid and support in this regard.

The family was thankful, and the Sudanese community admires Ina for taking the time to support the family stated Ms. Rabab.

Mrs Walla Omer and her six children from Riverwood were among more than 150 persons transported back

to Australia by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Mrs. Omer was evacuated by a military plane last week via Sudan's "Saidna Valley" airport.

"These families will face a long and challenging road ahead," stated the chairperson of Riverwood's Community Centre. They will require more and ongoing Government aid to settle in Australia, additional assistance with relocating and settling in, and support to cope with their trauma, among other things.

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY
CENTRE HELPS OPEN
DOORS TO A NEW LIFE FOR
A SUDANESE MOTHER
AND HER SIX CHILDREN.





VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our centre, and their unwavering dedication has a profound impact on our community. All our volunteers provide essential support to our programs and services, helping us reach even greater heights. We are immensely grateful for their time, passion, and commitment, as they embody the spirit of giving that defines our centre's mission. In the words of one of our cherished volunteers, **"Being part of this community and making a difference is the greatest reward of all."**



SUPPORTED BY OVER

150

DIVERSE, DEDICATED
VOLUNTEERS

"CONGRATULATIONS
TO OUR 2022
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER
AWARD WINNERS JENNY
HANTZOPOULOS FROM ALL
SAINTS GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH, DAVID HALLIDAY FROM
THE NSW STATE EMERGENCY
SERVICE (SES) CANTERBURY UNIT,
AND SHENG BIN LIU - RIVERWOOD
COMMUNITY CENTRE AND HARMONY
GROUP VOLUNTEER."

Presented at the RCC 2022 Christmas
party by the Premier of NSW Chris Minns,
MP, Jihad Dib MP, Mark Coure MP, David
Coleman MP and Clr Karl Saleh OAM





OUR PARTNERS

Partners

All Saints Greek Orthodox Church
 Canterbury Bankstown Lions Club
 Lugarno Lions Club
 St George Rotary Club
 Club Rivers Riverwood
 Lantern Club Roselands
 Barnardos Australia
 Commonwealth Bank
 Hannans Road Public School
 Humanity Matters
 Lebanese Muslim Association
 Nangahmi Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation
 NSW Police
 NSW SES Canterbury Unit
 One Meal Australia
 OzHarvest
 Riverwood Public School
 Punchbowl Public School
 Punchbowl High School
 Kingsgrove North High School
 STARTTS
 St George Community Housing
 Street Industries
 Sydney Local Health District
 TAFE NSW (Bankstown)
 St George and Sutherland Shire Leader
 Harmony Care Australia
 Aboriginal Culture Incursions
 Uncle John Dickson
 Koomurri Entertainment PTY LTD.
 KU Inclusion Support
 EducAID
 CDAT
 Hearing Australia

Beverly Hills Girls High School
 Peakhurst Early Learning Centre
 Riverwood Squadron Air League
 St John's Ambulance
 Cancer Council

Funding Bodies

Australian Government Department of Health
 Australian Government Department of Social Services
 Canterbury Bankstown City Council
 Georges River Council
 Multicultural NSW
 National Disability Insurance Agency
 NSW Department of Communities and Justice
 NSW Department of Education
 NSW Government Community Building Partnership

Auspecting Community Groups

Australian Chinese Seniors Club
 Canterbury Bankstown Harmony Group
 Basketball Opportunities for People with Disabilities Group
 Canterbury Riverwood Senior Badminton and Lifestyle Group
 Narcotics Anonymous
 Riverwood Chinese Dancing Group
 Riverwood Italian Group
 Sundanese Girls Club
 The Riverwood Australian Arabic Association
 The Riverwood Community Choir
 Twilight Rouge Dance Group
 ROAR







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Auditor's report and financial statements

Members can request a copy of the Riverwood Community Centre Auditor's Report by contacting reception during business hours.

