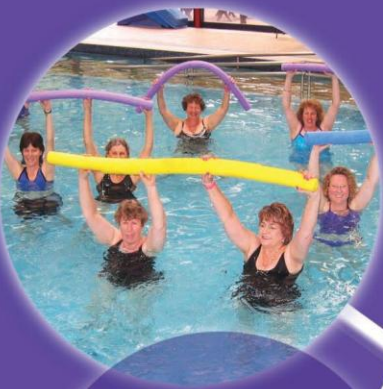


# YWCA HUNTER REGION INC.



EMPOWER



CONNECT

SUPPORT



91<sup>st</sup>  
2012/13 ANNUAL REPORT

# YWCA Hunter Region Inc.

Exists to support, empower and  
connect women and families  
for a stronger community



## Y President and E Executive Director's Report ~ Ruth Hallett and Jenny Baldwin



Ruth Hallett  
President  
Board of Directors



Jenny Baldwin  
Executive Director

This will be the final report for Ruth Hallett as President as she retires from the Board at the AGM 2013, and the first full twelve month term report for Jenny Baldwin as she completes twelve months in the role of Executive Director.

It is, therefore, a great honour to be able to present the YWCA Hunter Region Inc. 2012/2013 Annual Report, covering the financial year from July 2012 to end of June 2013 to our members and supporters.

This report aims to provide Hunter members, stakeholders, partners and our many supporters with an overview of our performance in 2012-13. We also hope to impart an understanding of our future direction and the passion and enthusiasm that we have for what the future holds for the YWCA in the Hunter. We are excited about the foundational groundwork that has been laid in the last financial year as with solid foundations we are in a stronger position to support the long term growth that we are planning. We hope that our enthusiasm will be contagious and that you will be eager to move forward with us as we continue to strive to connect and empower the women in our society for a better future for them and their families.

Extensive maintenance and upgrading work in the building was carried out over the last year to

bring the building in line with safety WHS compliancy and building code requirements. This proved to be expensive but essential for both our client safety – parents and their children, hall users and tenants - and that of our staff. Many of the repairs were unexpected and along with the alterations and additions are too numerous to list. The major building improvements, however required to meet safety and building codes included emergency lighting and illuminated exit signs throughout the building; electrical rewiring and earthing of the building; roofing issues; leaking plumbing from the top floor into the Preschool building; pest control with regular inspections and emergency exit plans from all aspects of the building.

We are extremely grateful to Dave Aubin, our builder and maintenance guru, who really did go above and beyond in all aspects of the work but especially in finding and sealing the leaks in the roof that has plagued the building and the previous management for years. It no longer rains in the storerooms.

Furnishings in the office and the student accommodation upstairs were replaced giving an overall fresher and newer appearance to the internal aspects of the building. The new brightly coloured equipment that was purchased to replace the old in the children's programs was received with much excitement by the many toddlers in our children's programs.

We launched a new, interactive website this year along with a facebook page. Both have proven popular and effective in promoting the services of the YWCA in the Hunter. Vacation Care packages are available on line and we see a growing number of new families coming via our website. Membership is also available on line with paying facilities through Pay Pal.

2012/2013 has seen considerable growth in the programs at the YWCA Hunter Region, particularly evident with our children's programs.

Our strategic plan and value points have been refined and this has assisted us in aligning our whole organisation with the vision, so that meaningful growth towards stated outcomes can occur. Our vision proclaims our desire to be "A progressive organisation with dynamic community partnerships and seeing confident, resourced women and families contributing to their communities".

#### **Value points:**

##### **A Christ-centred foundation**

For over 90 years, being motivated by God's love for people and seeking to express this through Christ-centered leadership.

##### **Women and families**

Investing in women to transform their world – their lives, their family and their communities.

##### **Excellence and integrity**

Delivering quality, consistent services in the context of transparent, professional business practices that create trust in the community.

##### **Quality relationships**

Building relationships between women and families that foster resilience and connect them to the community.



**Inter-generational care**

Providing services that empower and care through every stage of life.

In 2011/12, as part of the strategic plan, we identified 5 signposts to ensure our progress.

1. Building Profile & Marketing - to increase awareness and engagement  
Developing Programs - to meet the needs of women and families in the community.  
Investing in Our People - so we have stable management, competent board and trained staff/ volunteers
2. Partnering and Increasing Membership - to connect individuals, churches, businesses and others to the need
3. Sustainability - to ensure longevity and growth

In 2012/2013, together with the Board the Executive Director developed a strategy for signpost 4 – partnering and to increase membership. This strategy is proceeding effectively and we are currently working on a strategy for each of the other 4 signposts.

**Partnering with the Community and Increasing Membership** - The Board and Executive Director successfully partnered together to increase Membership numbers. Strategies were taken to ensure that members were kept informed of events at the YWCA and with the opportunity for member involvement. A quarterly, members' newsletter and regular interim updates were appreciated by the members as evidenced by the many positive responses.

It has been part of our purpose this year to deepen our roots and connect with the local community in a more meaningful way in order to promote the YWCA as a community based organisation with community needs at the fore of our interest. With this desire to partner with others in the community the YWCA has joined the Darby Street precinct. This cluster group's mission is to promote the Cooks Hill village and enhance the reputation and services in Darby Street.

The Community Noticeboard set up this year in the hall has proven to be a focal point for passing on information as the hall is extensively used for our children's programs and hired out on a regular basis each day throughout the year.

In May we celebrated International Women's Day, in conjunction with the popular Darby Street coffee strip, to bring an international flavour to our grounds. By providing free wine and cheese tasting along with facepainting, clowning, magic shows, hip hop dancing, belly dancing, market stalls and live music and many other multicultural



delights we were able to draw an interested crowd all day. What a great way to raise our profile in the community, make contacts and gain positive exposure through the activities held onsite.

How exciting it has been to be part of the *Every Girl* Program. We believe that the program has tremendous potential to impact the lives and futures of the young girls who participate. 2012 has seen the launch in the Hunter as we introduced it into the Hunter Christian School with excellent results and feedback from the students, the school and the parents. Including it as part of the July Vacation Care program for upper Primary aged girls attending was also a great success. Biraban Public School would be next. We look forward to an ongoing relationship with the schools participating and delivering *Every Girl* to every student as they move into the appropriate ages. Unfortunately funding from YAustralia may only cover one program for the next year but we will be seeking funding from other sources.

We are intending an expansion of the Encore Program further into the Hunter to encompass the Maitland area for next year as there is a large group of women who are in need of this service and not being catered for. Once again we will need to seek funding to assist with this.

Jenny and Ruth

## YWCA Australia:

### **YWCA Australia: Women leading change in local, national, regional and international communities**

Celebrating the success of our new crop of YWCA Every Girls has been a highlight of the YWCA year in Australia in 2012-2013. With the support of the Australian Government, YWCAs around Australia have delivered Every Girl to over 150 girls around Australia. Working from a strengths-based, human rights framework the Every Girls have delivered community change projects focusing on homelessness, animal welfare, student welfare, education of girls in developing countries, and anti-homophobia. Every Girls also spoke on the same platform as Prime Minister Julia Gillard on the inaugural UN Day of the Girl and attended a morning tea with Minister Collins, Senator Cash and Senator Rhiannon to learn about the experience of being a woman in politics.

Working with our Members we have continued to deliver Encore to women recovering from breast cancer surgery. This year we have welcomed a new partnership with the Prostate and Breast Cancer Foundation and renewed our relationship with Avon. Their support has enabled training of Encore Coordinators across Australia, vital to the delivery of the program in local pools around the country.

We celebrated with Michelle Deshong and Rebecca Vassarotti when they were appointed to the Australian Government Delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. YWCA women from Australia joined over 90 YWCA women from around the world at the CSW, which this year focused on violence against women and girls.

In July we joined YWCAs around the Pacific to focus on young women's programs and governance. In November YWCA members travelled to North Korea for the International Training Institute on Violence Against Women and Peace Building, and in May YWCA Australia President Emma Bird attended the International Leadership Institute for Young Women.

YWCAs from around Australia gathered together in Albury-Wodonga for Convention in November, adopting new three-year Strategic Directions and sharing the best practice of the organisations around the country. Members were also able to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of the YWCA of Albury-Wodonga. A new leadership team was announced at AGM who are well positioned to build on the legacy of leadership from Yvette Park and her team.

YWCA Australia, with partners the Australian Council of Social Service and Women on Boards, launched the first ever Gender Audit of the Community Sector in October. With national press coverage, the report showed women occupy more leadership roles than other sectors, but remain under-represented. Drawing from our Member expertise we prepared a submission to the community consultations for the Federal Budget and provided commentary on budget night.

YWCA Australia continued to follow the charity reform agenda and welcomed the adoption of a statutory definition of charity at the end of the Parliamentary year.

YWCA Australia continued to auspice the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA), both of whom have been refunded for a further three years. The Alliances provide important input to the government on gender equality.



Every Girls with Prime Minister Gillard



YWCA Australia Members with Minister Julie Collins, Ambassador Penny Williams and Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick



## Y Vision

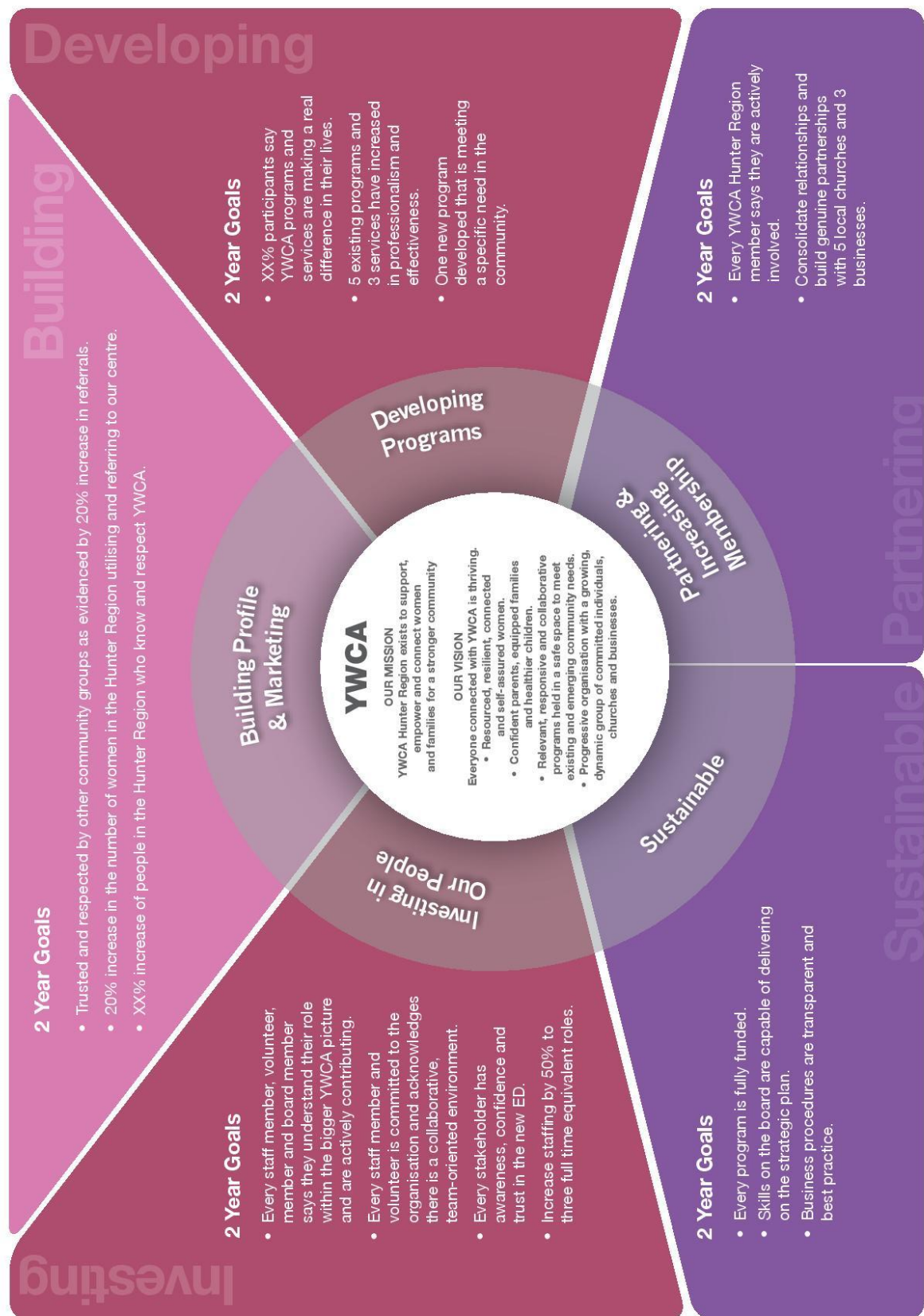
Strengthened by the Christian faith and enriched by our worldwide membership of women and girls the **YWCA Hunter Region** exists to support, empower and connect women and families for a stronger community.

The Y Hunter is part of a national and international movement, a global network of women and girls, which promotes women's leadership and gender equality. In the Hunter, the Y has been supporting and working with women and their families since 1880.

The **World YWCA** is a global network of women and young women leading social and economic change in over 120 countries. It advocates for peace, justice, human rights and care of the environment, and has been at the forefront of raising the status of women for over 150 years. The World YWCA develops women's leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face. Annually the network supports 25 million women and girls.

For over 125 years, **YWCA in Australia** have been developing the next generation of women leaders, and providing services which meet the needs of women and girls, their families and communities. YWCAs in Australia provide strong leadership, mentoring and opportunities for women and girls; advocacy with government and programs and services that support women and girls, their families and communities.

# Strategic Plan



## Y Hunter Board 2012/2013:

The Board of Directors comprises women from diverse backgrounds, ages and experiences who share a common passion for social justice and supporting young women to fulfil their potential. The current Board will retire at the AGM in October 2013 and a new Board will be inducted.

PRESIDENT	*Ruth Hallett
VICE-PRESIDENT	Katrina Gulbrandsen
BOARD MEMBERS	Sue Mackenzie, *Amy King, Alissa Coons, Jenny Baldwin.

It is with immense appreciation that we say thank you to the current long serving Board of Directors and with sadness we farewell every Board Director at the 2013 AGM. They have all contributed significantly in the process undertaken with the future strategic direction during 2012 and this has positioned the organization well for future growth. Each retiring Director has given graciously of her time for the last 6 years and shown great passion and dedication to the YWCA.

Alissa Coons who came onto the Board in May, along with 6 other candidates will be voted onto the Board at the AGM. We look forward to welcoming a new Board of Directors to take the YWCA in the Hunter to the next level.



\*Denotes young women (aged 30 years or under) at time of appointment. The YWCA Hunter maintains a commitment to 30 per cent of Board appointments are held by women aged 30 or under.

### Fair Trade Venture

As part of the 2013 Hunter Walk for Freedom against human trafficking the YWCA Hunter Board held a Fair Trade Stall at Speers Point Park on 15th June. The fair trade products on offer included crafts, gifts, homewares, children's items, fashion and art from around the world. By purchasing these items people were able to partner with the YWCA to support women and families from disadvantaged areas around the globe.





# Y Staff Team 2012/2013

Considerable changes were made to the permanent staff this year as we expanded our operations. Jennifer Sumner joined us as our financial officer, Nina Aubin as administration extraordinaire, Rebecca Newton as our Children's Program Coordinator. We also added staff in vacation care as numbers expanded; Jo Hilder, Roxanne Stols, Sarah King in the EveryGirl Program; Tracy Lynch as EveryGirl Trainer; Shamini Seelan as an extra Kindergym Instructor; Sharon Jephson in Encore and Sue Boswell as Encore Coordinator; Jo Hilder also worked on the new, revamped website and Roxanne Stols contributed to admin and graphic design. All amazing assets to the team.



Jenny Baldwin  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Staff:

Nina Aubin

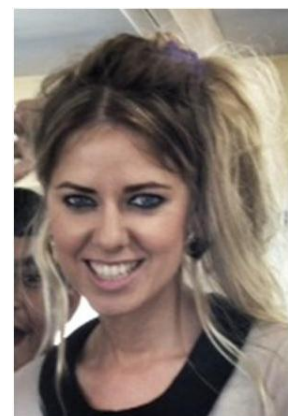
Lynette Edwards  
Katrine Kennedy  
Sandra Woods

Sharon Jephson  
Sue Boswell  
Roxanne Stols  
Sarah King  
Shamini Seelan  
Rebecca Newton  
Marc Coppard  
Elise Dunford  
Gary Pomplun  
Ben Pomplun  
Bec Cronk  
Anna Frost  
Bianca Uicich  
Elizabeth Hughes



Lachlan Hemsworth  
Jasmine Lynch  
Tahlia Willis  
Melanie Moyle  
Jennifer Sumner  
Jo Hilder

**Volunteers:**  
Lynette Petite





## Y Kids Programs

**'I am learning through play for I will make a difference one day'.**



The children's programs at the Y continue to grow in strength. In May Rebecca Newton was appointed as our new Children's Program Coordinator. With a Masters in Teaching, Rebecca comes to us highly qualified to bring the children's programs in line with our philosophy on play - the rights of the child and the child's right to play - and with new government requirements for vacation care programs. In her role Rebecca is also the Nominated Supervisor for the Vacation Care program.

Rebecca has developed an enthusiastic connection to the YWCA Hunter and we feel very fortunate to have her expertise as part of the Y Team.

The introduction this year of the Y-Kids newsletter, covering all of the children's programs, including Vacation Care and Everygirl, provides information not only about the children's programs but the many other activities and events which are happening at Y-Hunter.



Despite an early significant setback with the original paperwork submitted in 2012 and after considerable rewriting of policies and procedures, coupled with building upgrades to comply with building and safety codes we were finally granted Accreditation under the National Quality Framework for our vacation care program. All of our children's programs at YWCA

Hunter Region (including Kindergym and Y-kids playgroup) will benefit from the philosophies that underpin the NQF as we focus on best practice in delivering our children's programs.

The Preschool that rents rooms on our premises continues to bring a hive of activity, families, joy and lots of children-noises into our building.



# Y Kindergym



whY Kindergym indeed??

This is an essential preschool program that helps children from an early age to maximize their learning potential and develop gross motor skills for preschool readiness. It provides an opportunity for valuable insights into early childhood development while having lots of fun in the process.



The Kindergym program is a structured program for children aged 1-5 years. Classes support a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to participate in activities that develop the necessary gross motor skills at this age.



Easter at Kindergym

Two sessions run each Tuesday and the recently introduced Monday programs – at 9.30am and 10.45am. Shamini Seelan, a qualified Early Childhood Teacher with training in children's gymnastics, leads our Monday kindergym sessions while Lynette Edwards, a trained kindergym instructor, facilitates the Tuesday morning sessions. Approximately 70 families attend kindergym on a weekly basis.



# Y Playgroup



The program addresses the importance of both free play and structured play that lays the solid foundations for the school years ahead. It also gives the mothers, many of them stay-at-home mothers, the opportunity to meet with other mothers over a cuppa. This year we introduced a loyalty card giving parents a lucky dip for their child on their 20<sup>th</sup> visit.

And some comments from the parents:

***"My children just love the new equipment and how it is setup, especially the sensory activity corner with the sand play, touchy stuff and bubble wrap. Marvellous idea for kids to feel and play with their hands"***

***"We love coming here. It is the highlight of our week!"***

***"I just love the multicultural aspect of this playgroup. It has been a great experience for my daughter and we wouldn't have missed this for anything. Just love that trampoline too!"***

Our playgroup program continues to reflect a place where parents and caregivers relax, exchange ideas, and children can learn through play. We introduced a number of new activities over this last year including a dress up area, a role play kitchenette, much new equipment and toys, celebration of special events such as the Biggest Morning Tea, Multicultural Day and Naidoc week as well as a number of excursions. We aim to continue to introduce many more activities such as music, library visits, walks to the park and celebrations of special events.







## Y Every Girl

Is a transformative self-esteem program for girls 9-14 years of age.

The Program is founded on research illuminating that poor self-esteem is on the rise among girls. This is having a profound effect not only on their development now, but also in the long term on the achievement of gender equality.

YWCA Australia has identified early intervention as vital to improving girls' self-confidence, social skills, leadership and community engagement.



The Program uses a strengths-based approach and a human rights framework to connect girls to their community and to influence community change through weekly sessions that equip them to address the critical issues they confront in their daily lives.



This year the YWCA Hunter delivered the Program in two schools with great success. The Hunter Christian School, at the end of 2012, provided an opportunity for the facilitators to explore the potential for the program and work through any teething problems. Both the students and the school were thrilled at the outcomes. The program incorporates a community event which gives opportunity for the girls to be proactive in thinking about community needs and act on that recognised need. At Hunter Christian the girls produced a poster and a short talk to raise awareness of water issues in the third world. They decided to raise money for two wells and the money raised was donated to Oxfam. They participated in a market day where they ran a cake stall, sold ice creams and 'wet' the teachers.



Everygirl was also offered during the vacation care program and was received enthusiastically by parents who were not regular attenders of vacation care. A number of our vacation care attendees participated in the program alongside others who joined us just for the Everygirl program. The girls looked at the issue of bullying and designed a canvas art work which will be on display at YWCA Hunter. We will be offering the Program again during vacation care.



We were delighted to be able to deliver the program in Biraban Public School where there was much debate and enthusiasm around the community event. The girls decided to split into 2 groups – one would focus on animal welfare and another on discrimination. They had an out of uniform day to raise funds. The animal welfare group designed t-shirts around animal cruelty as the awareness campaign and decorated cupcakes, which they sold on their lunch break to raise money for the RSPCA.

The second group explored bullying and discrimination toward people with disabilities. They also designed t-shirts as an awareness campaign, painted finger nails for a donation, gave out affirmation ribbons and hugs as part of a 'feel good' campaign.

The funds

raised in this group went to the Newcastle team for the Special Olympics.



Tracy Lynch has been trained as the Everygirl trainer and she has ensured a high quality for all our facilitators. Jo Hilder and Roxanne Stols delivered the program as part of the Vacation Care, Roxanne and Sarah King ran the Biraban program and they will continue as we explore other schools to work with. How exciting it has been to be part of the *Every Girl* Program. We believe that the program has tremendous potential to impact the lives and futures of the young girls who participate.





# Y Vacation Care



The Vacation care program runs at the YWCA centre through each school holiday break –two weeks each break and three weeks in the January school holidays. The program offers affordable and fun holiday programs for the children of parents living or working in the inner city region. The program is funded through DEEWR with parents eligible for the Government's Child Care Rebates.



With the introduction of programing changes and in delivery over the last 12 months we have seen an unprecedented increase in the numbers of families and children attending the vacation care, with a total of 110 new



families since June last year. Places book out very quickly and families are finding that they need to book well in advance in order to secure places.



The Vacation Care program is underpinned by the children's and parents' feedback, staff involvement, and the National Government ACECQA Regulations. This has assisted in the development of an enjoyable, successful holiday environment for all. Our aim with vacation care is to ensure the children have lots of FUN, experience new ideas and activities and take home something in the form of craft, art, new skills and experiences.

We continue to offer an assortment of excursions and experiences to cater for the many and varied interests of the children and their varying ages. This last year included trips to movies, Speers Point Park, Zone Empire, Reptile Park, Ice Skating, Mattara Festival, Tree Top Adventure Park, Megamania, Young Peoples Theatre, Blackbutt Junior Ranger Program, Superstrike bowling

and Rock climbing for the older children.

Despite an early significant setback with the original paperwork submitted in 2012 and after considerable rewriting of policies and procedures, coupled with building upgrades to comply with building and safety codes we were finally granted Accreditation under the National Quality Framework for our vacation care program.



What is NQF? The National Quality Framework (NQF) raises quality and drives continuous improvement and consistency in Australian education and childcare services. Introduced in 2012, the NQF applies to most long day care, family day care, pre-school/kindergarten and outside schools hours care services, including vacation care services. It sets a consistent, high quality standard for these services.

The Vacation Care Program is very fortunate to have extremely dedicated casual staff, lead in the beginning of the year by Elise Dunford and now by Rebecca Newton. Due to the increased numbers the team has recently been

expanded to include four new staff members. Team contributions, enthusiasm and energy are of an exceptionally high quality and we just couldn't do it without them!!!



## Health & Well-being – Encore



YWCA's Encore is a free eight week program designed specifically for women who have experienced breast

cancer to improve and retain mobility and flexibility in the upper limbs, confidence and general wellbeing. YWCA encore is a holistic program, helping to create positive self-esteem and body image and a positive attitude to life and health.



After breast cancer surgery and treatment, many women experience numbness, pins and needles, a loss of mobility and strength and discomfort in their upper bodies. Simple things like pegging the washing and carrying children can become difficult. **YWCA Encore** consists of specially designed gentle exercise, relaxation, support and information for women who have experienced breast cancer at any time in their life.

The exercises help strengthen arms, shoulders and chest and improve flexibility and mobility. The exercises can also help to improve general fitness and wellbeing, reduce the risk of lymphedema, aid the management of lymphedema and reduce fatigue associated with treatment.

The sessions also provide an opportunity for women to share their experiences in a safe and supportive environment and connect with other women in their local area who understand what it is like to experience breast cancer. Many great friendships have been formed at YWCA encore programs.



The YWCA Hunter ran 6 programs in 2012/2013 – 3 at the beginning of the year and 3 at the end of the year. A total of 60 women benefited from the program as they attended at facilities at either Valentine or Waratah. Katrine Kennedy and Sandra Woods facilitated the programs during the year. Katrine left the program this year to follow her own business pathway and two new facilitators have been trained. We welcome— Sue Boswell, to be our Encore Coordinator and Sharon Jephson as a facilitator. We are intending an expansion of the Encore Program further into the Hunter to encompass the Maitland area for next year as there is a large group of women who are in need of this service and not being catered for. Once again we will need to seek funding to assist with this.

The facilitators speak at Lake Macquarie Private Hospital Support Group; represent the Program at The Breast Cancer Forum annually; and keep a working relationship with the Breast Centre at Calvary Public Hospital in order to stay informed and promote the Program.



## Low Cost Accommodation for University Students

The top floor of the grand old building in Dawson St, Cooks Hill, one block back from the very popular and cosmopolitan Darby St is home to 5 international female students. The location is ideal for close proximity to Newcastle University city campus where the international students attend classes. This year we have housed Chinese students, coming direct from the plane to our doorstep and an Indian student. The young women appreciate the homely feel of the residence and the security that it provides them. The building currently accommodates 5 female residents.



The offices are located on the ground floor and lunch time can be very challenging for staff with the aroma of delicious Chinese cooking and this year Indian cuisine also, wafting through the building.

It has been a pleasure and a really valuable learning experience for both the students and for us to have the cross cultural connection with these lovely young ladies. As is the case with all cultures, everyone is different and the surprise that this brings into the Y building has been a delight for all the staff.

***"I get really homesick when I first move to Newcastle and was very sad. But then I moved into this YWCA building and everything changed for me! I am happy now. It can be like a family and if I need something they help me. It is also very close to the fun parts like Darby St so it's not so lonely. But I also talk to everyone at the YWCA and even had my face painted and tasted some Australian cheese when International Women's Day"***

What an opportunity for us here at the YWCA!!

It is our hope that we can enrich their lives as they most certainly enrich ours.