

# YWCA HUNTER REGION INC.



EMPOWER



CONNECT



SUPPORT



## 2015/16 94th ANNUAL REPORT

# YWCA Hunter Region

Support, empower and connect

Women and families for a stronger community



YWCA Hunter Region Inc.  
ABN: 72582209745

***We would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people who are the traditional custodians of this land. We would also like to show respect to the Elders, past and present, of the Aboriginal nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people.***

## Y Hunter Vision

*Support, empower and connect women and families for a stronger community.*

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 YWCA in the Hunter has been delivering services to women of the Newcastle region and later to the wider Hunter community for 94 years.

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

For over 125 years, **YWCA's 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. YWCA's 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.

The **World YWCA** is a global network of



women and young women leading social and economic change in over 122 countries. The World YWCA is one of the world's largest and oldest women's organisations with a global reach of 25 million women and girls. 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.



# Y President and Executive Director's Report



Yolande Willis  
President  
Board of Directors



Jenny Baldwin  
Executive Director

Once again it is a great honour to be able to present the YWCA Hunter Region Inc. 2015/2016 Annual Report, covering the financial year from July 2015 to end of June 2016 to our members and supporters. This is our 94<sup>th</sup> year of operation.

This report aims to provide Hunter members, stakeholders, partners and our many supporters with an overview of our performance in the financial year and to share some of the things that have happened in the course of the year. We also aim in this report to impart an understanding of our future direction.

We wish to commence our report this year by acknowledging and thanking the dedicated staff, Board Directors, members, and friends over not just this last year but in the years past as well.

As an organisation we appreciate the time and effort that being on the board requires of directors and the voluntary time and dedication that is greatly appreciated by the organisation. This year the Board has invested more time as they have been involved in a number of meetings including with YAustralia visits and with outside consultants meetings in Newcastle.

It has been an exciting time to be Board President with the National Merger Project high on the agenda. Our participation in the National Merger Project has also been a major focus this year. We have been working collaboratively with all YWCA Member Associations in Australia to review our federated structure.

The Board takes this opportunity to thank Jenny for continuing to manage affairs and operations at a local level whilst taking on the expanded focus on a national level as a member of the Executive Committee with the merger. Thank you to staff also who as a result of Jenny's absences with the committee has stepped up to take on additional work.

The collective goal of the Merger project is to identify the most effective and efficient business model for our movement, so that we can maximise our impact on the lives of women, girls and their families. Underpinning this work is our shared purpose of achieving gender equality, a historic reorientation to our original goal as a movement.

This National Merger Project also seeks to empower the Australian YWCA movement to better respond to trends affecting the viability



of the community sector and secure our long-term viability and growth.

Discussions with the Governance group in meetings and teleconferences as well as the monthly meetings of the Operational Executive Group continue to bring a range of possibilities for considerations. The Presidents and Executive Directors Forum was addressed by Dame Quentin Bryce who encouraged the YWCA to champion the cause for women, particularly in housing and domestic violence.

We continue discussions and look eagerly toward the future of the YWCA.

Amanda McInnes (October 2015) and Cheryl Burke (May 2015) stepped down from the Board this year due to work commitments. Elly

Buyers joined the board in May 2016 and brings with her a Business Analysis background.

PRESIDENT	Yolande Willis
SECRETARY	*Stacey Lynch
BOARD MEMBERS	Judy Gresham Cheryl Burke Jenny Baldwin * Elly Buyers

\*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.



# Y Staff Team 2015/2016

What a great staff team we have. I am continually impressed with how they carry out their roles with innovation and passion. This is the essence that makes the difference between great programs and average and our programs in every area are truly that – great!!

Belinda Matheson, in the administration, left us to move with her family back to Tasmania. We also said goodbye to Rebecca Newton from our permanent staff team as she decided to move back into teaching. Rebecca was the Children's Program Coordinator for the last two years.

Sharon Gruber picked up the work in Kindergym and the Playgroup and is bringing her own dynamic presence to the role. Tannon Muller, who had been an educator in the vacation care program for the last couple of years took on the role of the Nominated Supervisor for the vacation care. He brings a wealth of experience, innovative ideas and energy with him to the role and is highly respected by the staff and very popular with the children.

We welcomed the talent of Natalie Smith to administration and we are appreciative of her great contribution to the office team. She brings with her knowledge and expertise in all things admin and was inducted in the middle of the vacation care program, nothing less than amazing. As we did not deliver the EveryGirl program this year we farewelled both Sarah King and Madeleine Lewin, the Everygirl Facilitators.

We also were lucky to have assistance from Cathy Stubbs as our temporary fill in as Encore Coordinator while Sue was on leave.

The 2015/2016 team:



**Sharon Gruber -  
Kindergym, Playgroup,  
Administration**



**Jennifer Sumner –  
Finance Officer**



**Belinda Matheson –  
Administration (exited)**



**Natalie Smith -  
Administration**

**Encore Facilitators –Sue Boswell, Sharon Jephson, Grainne Myles, Ann Grimshaw, Sandra Woods, Jennifer Sumner**

**Kindergym Instructor -Lynette Edwards-**



Vacation Care staff team 2015/2016:

Tannon Muller, Ben Pomplun, Bianca Uicich, Byron Richards, Jonathon Navarro, Jessie Scanlon, Alanta Walker, Phoebe Baker, Laura Williams, Sean Kees, Louise Gillespie, Izaac Hillery, Jake Hooper, Claire Finch, Rebecca Newton



**Tannon Muller - Nominated Supervisor VC**





# Y-Kids Get A Better Start!

and social development for school readiness.

## Y-Kids Programs

The YKids programs aim to provide an opportunity for toddlers and infants to interact socially with their peers and to experience activities that enable them to explore and develop the social and gross motor skills essential for healthy neurological

- building confidence
- developing social skills, language and communication
- learning about caring for others and the environment
- developing physical skills
- connecting and refining pathways in the child's brain.



This year we have offered Kindergym classes on Monday at 9.30am to 10.30am and two classes on Tuesday at 9.30am to 10.30am and at 10.45am to 11.45am.

The classes provide 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.

Rebecca Newton leads our Monday kindergym session while Lynette Edwards, a trained kindergym instructor, facilitates the Tuesday morning sessions. Approximately 70 families attend.

### ....and what parents say:

*My 18 month old just loves the gym program. He is a budding gold medallist..."*





Play is more than just fun for kids. At the YWCA Playgroup this is where babies and children learn and work out who they are and where they fit in the world. Playgroup is about play and our program allows for lots of unstructured free play as well as sections of structured planned activities.

Playgroup ran on a Thursday morning during this year. Sharon Gruber with the help of a wonderful volunteer, Kerrie Maddison, facilitated. Over the last two years numbers have been dwindling and more sporadic during the colder months. We are seriously looking at dropping this activity as not

sustainable. We strive to stay relevant and if parents are looking toward different activities for their children we will move in a new direction as well.





# Vacation Care

School is out! Vacation care is in!!

***A quote from a mum “my son said this morning, I’m so excited, it’s almost the holidays. I said, why? He said, cause I get to go to vacation care!”***

School holiday time is when the YWCA vacation care program comes alive with an innovative, fun packed program that ensures the children of working parents have a thrilling and enriching school holiday experience.

The program is funded through DEEWR with parents eligible for the Government’s Child Care Rebates.

Some of the children live locally while many come with their parents who work in the city. Our aim for vacation care is FUN, FUN, FUN where the children experience new ideas and activities and take home something in the form of craft, art, new skills, ideas and experiences.



The program runs at the YWCA centre through each school holiday break –two weeks each break and three weeks in the January school holidays. We enlist the children’s suggestions and use the information from their interest lists to develop a program of activities, experiences and excursions that ensure no one is disappointed.



Excursions are particularly popular but the children also get a thrill out of the themed onsite days where they create, cook, eat and play their way through the day.



Many of the photos make their way to our Facebook page which delights the children.

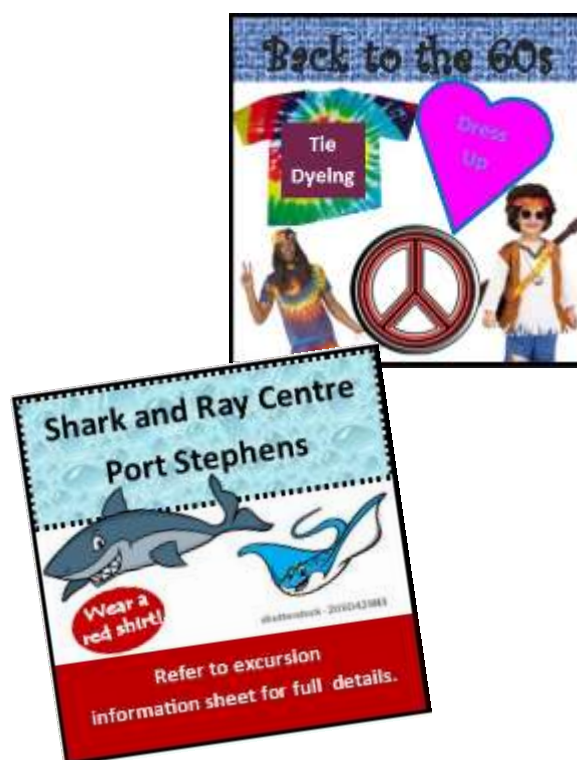


All activities are delivered through much fun, community awareness and interesting themes set under the government guidelines called 'My Time our Place'.

Much is owed to the young staff team whose contributions, enthusiasm and energy are of an exceptionally high quality and we just couldn't do it without them!!!

Enrolments continue to be strong as we reach full capacity on many days each vacation care. The program saw a total of 80 new families in the twelve month period from June last year and provided fun school holiday activities for 480 children in total!

From the thrill of excursions like Ice skating; Scavenger Hunts; movie days; Mattara events; Hunter Wetlands; Edgeworth Trains; Barefoot Bowls; Flip out; Revolution; Shark and Ray Centre; Howzat; Beach Party; Super strike Bowling; a Day at the Museum; to the mystery of theme days like Back to the 60's; St Pats; Everything Italian; Creepy Crawly bug; chicken Hatchlings; Cartoon drawing workshop; Masterchef; Cool Kids Science; Sombreo Mexico; Colour your World the children have lots to take home and lots to talk about.



#### ....and what parents say:

*"My son never wants to leave vacation care in the afternoon so I give up and just pick him up at closing time now"*

*"This is our first experience ever with a vacation care as our daughter is in kindergarten. We both work so really had no option but we really didn't want to put her in a program somewhere so only booked her in for a couple of days each week and we*



*juggled the other days between family members. After her first day at vacation care she so wanted to go again and just refused to go with her grandparents...very awkward"*

*"its just so great to see our two come home in the afternoon so weary and then so excited to get out the door in the morning to get to vacation care. You do an amazing job!"*

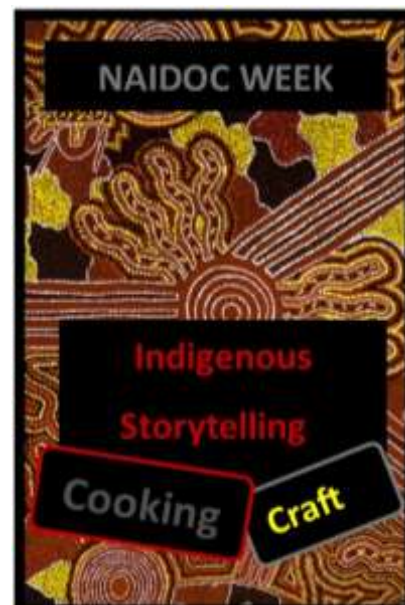
*"I would like to express my appreciation to the staff who spend their time looking after my children. They enjoy their time at vacation care and they are very fond of the teachers.*

*..... is struggling emotionally at times and can be very difficult. I am aware he would try the patience of a saint, so please pass on my apologies to staff who had to deal with him during his difficult moments.*

*You provide a wonderful service and always keep the program interesting"*

*"thank you to the staff for making two little children very welcomed and happy"*

*'we love vacation care, the set up of the program, the staff and the organisation and variety of activities were all great.*



# YWCAencore

## after breast cancer gentle exercise program

### Health & Well-being – Encore



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

#### The program will:

- ✓ Improve mobility and flexibility in the upper body
- ✓ Improve general fitness, health and well-being
- ✓ Boost body image and self-esteem
- ✓ Help to relieve stress and tension
- ✓ Help to restore a sense of control
- ✓ Relieve discomfort associated with surgery and treatment
- ✓ Reduce the potential risk of lymphedema
- ✓ Assist in the management of lymphedema

Utilising both land and water based exercises YWCA Encore improves overall fitness as well as manages the side effects associated with breast cancer treatment including pain, fatigue, loss of mobility and loss of strength. The program is tailored to each individual, accommodating all fitness levels.

Sue Boswell has been the Co-ordinator of the YWCA Hunter Encore program. She is supported by Sharon Jephson, Sandra Woods, Ann Grimshaw as excellent and enthusiastic facilitators with Jennifer Sumner and Grainne Myles providing that excellent support where needed.

It has been another busy year for our facilitators this year as we ran classes in October 2015 in Salamander Bay, Valentine, Maitland and Waratah. In February 2016 classes were conducted in Waratah and for the

first time we ran classes in May in Valentine, East Maitland and Salamander. Unfortunately, although we had believed the need was there it has been increasingly difficult to fill the Salamander Bay program and we will need to look at the viability of continuing to run in that area in the future. The venue at Salamander Haven was generously donated free of charge by the center and we are very grateful for their



generosity and support. We are also investigating an alternative venue for the Maitland program as the current venue does not adequately meet our needs.

The program not only provides good physical results for the participants but is very instructive. The guest speakers have impressed the ladies participating not only by being very informative but speaking from a position of having themselves had personal experience with breast cancer.

Encore sessions will continue to run in February/March and October/November in Waratah, Valentine and Maitland.

Once again Encore had a display stand at Wests Leagues Club for the Breast Cancer Forum on the 24th July. This was a very



educational day for those who attended and proved a valuable way of getting the YWCA Encore name out there as well. We have also increased our promotional drive with new contacts and advertising being a priority. An article was featured in the Newcastle Weekly at the beginning of the year and we have provided electronic promotional material to be used in doctor's waiting rooms as an effective way of getting the Encore message out.

#### **....and what our ladies say:**

*"I so enjoyed the classes and I feel much more confident now"*

*"I was excited every week to come to the class. Thank you for allowing me to be myself, have fun, but learn at the same time, loved the motivation beginning of each week"*

*"I really enjoyed meeting the other ladies in the class and we still meet up for coffee occasionally."*

*"The exercises were so easy yet so effective. I saw improvement in the first few weeks"*



# Budget Accommodation for Female 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 has been the temporary home to many female students, many of them international with their first taste of Australia.

The building currently accommodates 5 female residents.

Although there is an increase in university accommodation in the inner city region there are many advantages to staying at the YWCA:

- Tenants have secure and safe accommodation for females only – giving reassurance and peace of mind to their parents.

- Budget accommodation with competitive rates (\$160-180 per week)
- An ideal location:
  - Close to the city centre and sitting on the door step to the coffee strip of Darby St.
  - Close proximity to Newcastle University city campus and the conservatorium where the international students attend classes.
- Peace and quiet an ideal study environment with only 5 rooms

## .....and what the tenants say:

*“what a great new home I have here in Australia. I will always remember living here”*

*“a big part of my stay in Australia will be fondly remembering the time I stayed at the YWCA in Cooks Hill. I just have loved it so much”*

