



**ConnectGroups**  
helping support groups & individuals

## 2010 - 2011 Annual Report

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### ***Our Vision***

Helping people help each other.

### ***Our Mission***

To promote the philosophy concept and practice of self help within Western Australia and to facilitate its development and effectiveness by educating, linking and empowering individuals, families and groups to meet their specific needs.



**ConnectGroups** offers a window of opportunities providing meaningful service to self help and support groups communities in Western Australia.



## ***Chairperson's Report***

*We come to the end of an eventful successful year at ConnectGroups. The Board has engaged in a range of strategic and governance activities that will see organisation sharpen its focus which will sit on a very stable foundation that has been built within the organisation over many years. The cohesiveness and continued commitment of board members combined with positive changes that have occurred in the Not For Profit (NFP) sector mean that the organisation is set for a dynamic and exciting year in 2012.*

The ConnectGroups Board started the year with very dedicated nine member Board of Management. The Board shaped the 2010-2011 Governance agenda to include Strategic Planning as one of its priorities for 2010-2011. Ms Leonie Shileds was retained by the Board to facilitate the Strategic Planning Day in December 2010. The process resulted in a more streamline Strategic Plan and a decision to devise Portfolios and allocate them to Board members. The Portfolio approach resulted in a clearer management and focus of Board business. However due to personal reasons two members resigned one in March 2011 and another in July 2011 – Alan Halford and Chris Murphy - whose contribution is greatly appreciated by ConnectGroups.

The NFP sector has seen positive and long-awaited developments in the past year. Primary among these was the increased funding allocated to the sector in the State Budget. The Board decided to be in line with the Government recommendation that the extra funding be mainly allocated to salaries, a recommendation which was well received by the sector peak body and largely adopted by most organisations in the sector. ConnectGroups staff salaries were increased by 10%, this combined with the CPI indexed increases will see ConnectGroups salaries remain competitive in the sector.

The establishment of the Mental Health Commission (MHC) in Western Australia heralded a very welcome development for the NFP sector. The engagement with a very consultative Commissioner in Eddie Bartnik provided a platform for sector reforms. The Board has welcomed the strategic shift in direction for how the sector conducts business. Our approach has adopted the focus on Recovery as outlined by the MHC as well as the emphasis on Partnerships as emphasised by our funder, the Department of Communities, has seen ConnectGroups build and grow alliances and linkages with other community service agencies in the sector.

ConnectGroups has an ever-growing profile. The inaugural National Awareness Day (NAD) in 2010 brought in an era of collaboration with like-agencies at a national level. With this linkage further being in the 2011 National Self Help and Support Groups Awareness Day Symposium in September 2011. Our mission continues to be a dedication to educating, linking and empowering individuals and groups by providing support, resources and services to support groups and self- help groups. Raising awareness in this area continues to be regarded as very important by the Board.

The Board's activities in 2011 have also had a focus on sustainability for the organisation. Board members continually ensure that effective fiscal management is prioritised. ConnectGroups financials remain a strong feature of our success as an organisation. The attached financial reports are evidence of very professional financial management over the fiscal year by the ConnectGroups Treasurer. The surplus at the conclusion of the 2010-2011 financial year was retained as a result of organisational planning spanning the 2011-2012 calendar year. Our auditor Mr Peter K Edwards reported that the organisation was compliant to its obligations with its service agreement.

The Portfolio approach will continue to ensure the Board has a clear process in its work with the Operational team to deliver on effective governance and strategy execution.

*With thanks*  
***Pearl Proud***  
*Chair*



## **Executive Officer Report**

*2010/2011 cannot but be defined as a year of celebration! Where we have been able to consolidate existing projects; strengthen new and old partnerships; actively participate across a range of “themes” in a consultative manner; engage extensively with the community and contribute and support the implementation of the WA Economic Audit Report. But, most importantly, it has been a year in which our core stakeholders have been recognised for the work that they do in the community.*

### **This year’s summary**

2010/2011 has seen the organisation beginning to place all of the pieces together– creating what we believe to be an amazing crossword! – a pot-pouri of consumer focused activities in collaboration with the Department for Communities, The Mental Health Commission and the Health Department.

It has seen the completion of the Governance Train the Trainer Project funded through Lotterywest, in partnership with PANGO (Pilbara Association for NGO’s). Training was rolled out across the metro and regional and rural WA – engaging with a total of 80 stakeholders. Our CALD Women’s forum allowed for the establishment of a professional CALD sub group which has allowed agencies working with CALD clients to share good practice. The Minimum Standards Guidelines “Towards Good Practice” was completed and special thanks go to the dynamic Steering Group – Lifeline WA; The Genetic Support Council, The Neurological Council, The Cancer Council of WA, Meniere Australia and Sheila D’Arcy Consumer Representatives. The Health Department entrusted the organisation to conduct research around existing Road Trauma supportive services for Road Trauma victims and their families. This research will become part of an ECU research study which will look at the potential establishment of a WA Road Trauma “one stop shop”. ConnectGroups has continued to run its bi monthly leadership workshops which have now been mapped against the first 5 units of a Certificate IV in Self Help and Support Groups Facilitation which we hope to roll out in 2012, based on securing funding.

### **From the inside out**

In order to ensure the sustainability of the organisation and its staff; focus was also placed on our internal HR processes with a review of the current policies and procedures, and Retention and Attraction of Staff Strategy. It safeguarded that we were compliant with the New Modern Awards but, also that staff were adequately remunerated for their skills set and roles and responsibilities. A strong professional development program was offered which has seen staff work towards or gain the following qualifications – Cert IV TAE in Training and Assessment; Certificate IV in Frontline Supervision; Certificate IV in Project Management; Open Space Facilitation; Indigenous Mentoring Emphasis was also placed to assure our IT process would allow for maximum output – the organisation now works within a shared environment with LinkWest and ClanWA – has its own WIKI and is utilising a new Data base solution – Maximiser. These 2 initiatives allow us to better service our members and the wider community which has and will always be our primary focus.

### **Where are we heading to**

2011/2012 will see ConnectGroups continue to engage with the above mentioned Government Bodies and other NGO’s in the endeavour to secure funding for its members in order to address the current attrition rate of groups. It will look at establishing a Self Help and Support Groups Advisory Group whose role will be that of informing the Board of Management of new strategic directions.

Finally my thanks go to all of my ever hard working and creative staff , to my forward thinking Board and all of those ( that are too many to mention) that I have allowed CG to be what it is today.

With thanks  
*Antonella Segre*  
Executive Officer

# A very productive year!

**\$353,455.29**

Total Funding

**6**

Grant Applications  
submitted

**543**

Total calls

**228**

referrals to existing  
support groups

**1,358,954**

Hits to ConnectGroups'  
website

**460**  
**Members**

Including Affiliate, Associate  
& Corporate members

**123**

Stakeholders  
attended training

**6**

e newsletters distributed

**2,079**

Readers

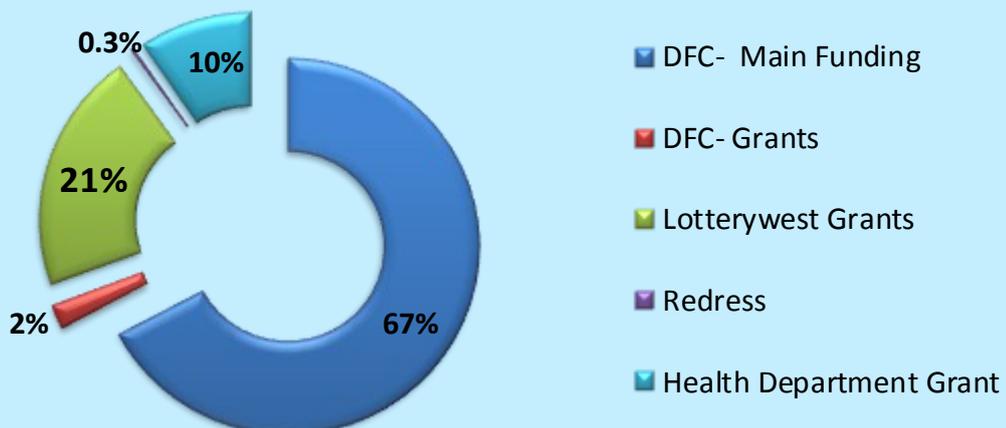
**8**

Workshops  
delivered

**45,092**

Web Directory visits

## Grants - Funding



# From the Treasurer's Desk

## Financial Reports July 2010 - June 2011

### Balance Sheet

	2010 / 2011	2009 / 2010
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>\$162,728.04</b>	<b>\$123,873.89</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current Liabilities	\$34,426.10	\$25,219.94
Payroll Liabilities	\$13,597.80	\$11,998.16
<b>Total LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$48,023.90</b>	<b>\$37,218.10</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$114,704.14</b>	<b>\$86,655.79</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained Earnings	\$86,655.79	\$67,193.50
Current year profit/loss	\$28,048.35	\$19,462.29
<b>Total EQUITY</b>	<b>\$114,704.14</b>	<b>\$86,655.79</b>

### Profit & Lost

	2010 / 2011	2009 / 2010
<b>INCOME</b>		
Grants	\$353,455.29	\$265,884.63
Prior Year Wage Adjustment	\$4,928.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$11,047.46	\$11,667.54
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$369,430.75</b>	<b>\$277,552.17</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
General Expenses	\$145,925.70	\$69,521.36
Wages Expenses	\$153,526.51	\$145,737.20
Building Expenses	\$41,930.19	\$42,821.32
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$341,382.40</b>	<b>\$258,079.88</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Net Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$28,048.35</b>	<b>\$19,462.29</b>

# From the Treasurer's Desk

## Auditor's Report

### Auditor's Certification Statement

To the Community Development Ministerial Body

**Service Provider:** CONNECT GROUPS – SUPPORT GROUPS ASSOCIATION WA (INC)

**Funded Service:** SUPPORT AND SELF HELP SERVICE

**Financial Year:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

### Scope of Audit

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards as necessary to provide reasonable assurance as to whether, in all material respects, the Committee of Management and the **Connect Groups – Support Groups Association WA (Inc.)** have complied with the Constitution of that Body and the relevant requirements of the provisions (to the extent applicable) of the Service Agreement.

Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting compliance with the Constitution of the Service Provider and the requirements of the Service Agreement. These tests have not been performed continuously throughout the period and were not designed to detect all instances of non-compliance.

The Committee of the Service Provider is responsible for ensuring compliance with the terms and conditions of the Service Agreement, management resources and internal controls.

The opinion on compliance expressed in this report has been based on the above basis.

### OPINION

In our opinion the Committee and the Service Provider have substantially complied with the obligations imposed by the Constitution of the Service Provider and the terms and conditions of the Service Agreement. The accounts and records have included the following accounting and internal controls: -

### Financial Management

- \* Committee meetings were held at appropriate intervals and financial information tabled for analysis and action;
- \* Minutes of Committee meetings were adequately documented and indicated acceptance by members;
- \* Appropriate written management policies and procedures are in place and are being observed.

# From the Treasurer's Desk

- 1 -

## Expenditure

- \* Expenditure is adequately supported;
- \* Expenditure has been appropriately authorised;
- \* We have found no evidence that cheques were pre-signed or that cheques were signed other than by two officers;
- \* Adequate written policies detailing what payments were appropriate for the Service Provider to pay were maintained and adhered to;
- \* Expenditure is considered to be appropriate for the purpose of the objectives of the Service Provider as set out in the Service Agreement;
- \* Expenditure has been adequately documented and creditors pay within 30 days.

## Revenue

- \* Receipts are completed for monies received;
- \* All monies received have been regularly and promptly banked;
- \* Revenue has been adequately documented

## Wages

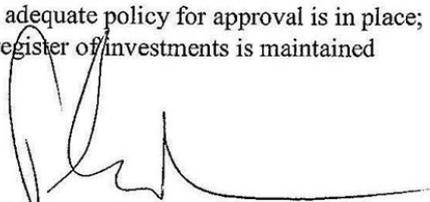
- \* Adequate records of hours worked have been maintained;
- \* An appropriate system is employed to ensure that only bona fide employees have received wages;
- \* Employees are not paid wages in advance except for leave purposes.
- \* Staff have executed contracts of employment or work place agreements;
- \* Provision has been made, where appropriate, for accrued unpaid annual leave and long service leave in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Standard Accounting Concepts.

## General

- \* Payroll and income tax obligations have been met;
- \* Insurance payments are up to date;
- \* An adequately documented asset register has been maintained;
- \* The Service provider has taken reasonable steps to safeguard assets;
- \* The Service Provider is abiding by all applicable legislative requirements.

## Investments

- \* An adequate policy for approval is in place;
- \* A register of investments is maintained



**PETER K EDWARDS BComm CPA**  
**Registered Company Auditor 13575**

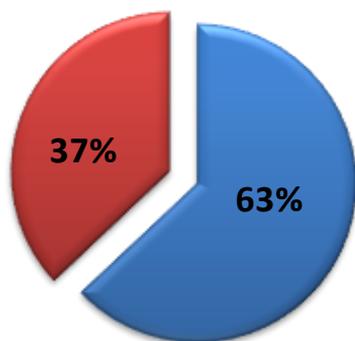
Dated this 17<sup>th</sup> day of August 2011

- 2 -

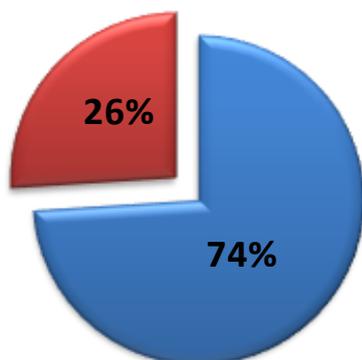
# Showcasing our leadership workshop series

## Benefits and Responses

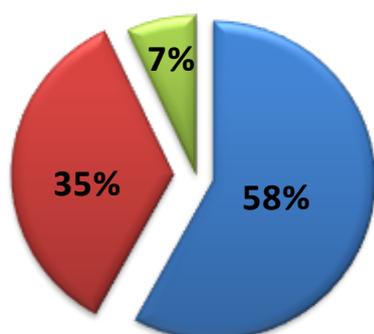
**Facilitation**



**Content**



**Engagement**



The 2011 Leaderships Series Workshops have provided great benefits to our members; demonstrated by the consistent number of attendees and the positive feedback received. Their strength lay in providing the balance of a holistic overview- the contribution of Support Groups to creating a positive culture in society- with the specific intricacies of how this can be achieved- tools for better communication, creating safe spaces, resolving conflict and utilising team building games.

The Series involved a combination of up to date, well researched information and practical, experiential exercises. Attendees were thus given the chance to put knowledge to the test and practise new tools with one another, to maximise uptake of the tools and knowledge delivered.

The workshops emphasised the building of connections between group participants and the dissolution of unhelpful barriers between participants; thus there was a focus on sharing, opening up and on group discussion. Indeed, perhaps much of the success of the workshops can be attributed to their ability to explore topics that are commonly shied away from: being vulnerable, recognising and working with emotions, being present. Participants were invited- in the safe space created within the Series- to delve within and to have the courage to reach out to one another.

We are looking forward to continuing to offer the learning's and benefits to our members through running The Leadership Series Workshops again in 2012.

Statistics from feedback indicate that participants viewed the Workshops to be of high quality.



# Recognitions we are chuffed about

## *Lifeline WA*

### Peer Recognition Award.

For Delivering services with meaning and impact.

## *CRS Australia*

### WA Employer Awards 2011.

In appreciation of outstanding support in providing employment opportunities for people with a disability, injury or health condition.

### Valued Employer 2010.

In recognition of our effective partnership.



## *Central Institute of Technology*

### Certificate of Appreciation.

For supporting Community Services Work students and assisting them in making informed **decisions** about their future.

## *Australian Institute of Management*

### 2011 Scholarship

Management and Leadership Development



# Things we can brag about

## Nominated for...

- 2011 AMA WA & Healthways Healthier WA Award
- 2011 Mental Health Good Outcomes Award

## Participated in...

- 2011 Sorry Day Event
- 2010 Volunteering WA Homeless Connect

## Developed in partnership with ...

- Linkwest Beyond the Room Booklet
- PANGO Governance Train the Trainer resource
- TAFE – 5 units of competency towards a Certificate IV in Self Help and Support Groups Facilitation
- Lifeline WA, The Genetic Support Council of WA, Neurological Council of WA, Meniere Australia and Cancer Council WA – Self Help and Support Groups Guidelines “Towards Good Practice”

## Contributed to...

- 2011 Social Innovation Grant in Partnership with Lifeline WA
- Research conducted as to best practise supportive services for Road Trauma victims and their families a WA Health Department funded research
- South Metropolitan Area Health Service application for supportive services for patients affected by adverse incidents
- Department for Finance SCOA Consultation
- Mental Health Commission Consumer Consultations
- WACOSS pre budget submission 2010/2011
- CEWA Fair Work Australia Pay Equity Case
- Partnership Forum “ Putting the people first report” consultations and briefings

# References Groups ConnectGroups belongs to

- Chair of Self Help and Support Groups Minimum Standards Reference Group
- Ethnic Women's Subcommittee
- Member of Peaks Forum WA
- Chair of Victims of Crime Steering Group
- Road Trauma Supportive Services Research Reference Group
- MAN Informal women's advisory group
- WACOSS 2012 Conference Committee
- Jobs 2 Communities Steering Reference Group
- Chair of The Multicultural Service Providers Networking Support Groups Meeting
- Member of Bringing them Home Committee

## Our members





Self Help & Support Groups  
National Awareness Day ~  
**Symposium & EXPO**

8 September 2011

*"Helping each other to help ourselves"*



## Our stories...

I would like to share a story with you ...

I am going to read to you a story from one of the many stories that make up ConnectGroups -

A distinguished man in his late 70's stood in front of an old character home in Pier Street. Once the area was predominantly inhabited by Greek and Cypriot migrants who had travelled to Australia in search of work and a better quality of life. As they had settled their lives were full of wishes!!

The old gentleman paused, staring at what once must have been a family home and he smiled and murmured words to himself under his breath. He held his hat in his hands and then gently brought his hands to his lips and blew out a kiss.....

A small car known to her friends as the green jelly bean arrived and parked beside the gentleman. The driver – a petit curly haired woman – had seen the scene as she was attempting to park in her spot – which was where the man was standing.

She stepped out and walked towards the man – his hat fixed to his head and it was then that she notices how well groomed he was in his matching waistcoat and tie.

She enquired if she could be of any assistance – he looked steadily at her and then responded –

“I am here for WISH”

“WISH is no longer here” the lady replied

The man insisted with a knowingly smile “I am here for WISH”.

The woman proceeded to explain, gesticulating her hands in the air that the organisation no longer was called WISH and that it now was ConnectGroups – so if there was anything she could do, she was more than happy to oblige.

But the response remained the same – “I am here for WISH.”

The woman – who was well known - for her curiosity – inquired if he had once lived in the building or if he knew of someone who did. But to no avail the response remained the same –

“I am here for WISH”. His eyes looked down towards the step that lead to the front entrance. The woman followed his eyes and as they both looked up their eyes met.

She now understood – her parking spot was marked by a word – WISH! She looked up and grinned.

I am here for WISH he repeated – I come here every day and make my wish....

### Some Food for Thought...

When I first started with ConnectGroups in 2008 - the organisation had just re branded and in my “corporate mind” - I was determined for all stakeholders to no longer refer to us as WISH – I wanted to ensure that ConnectGroups – previously known as WISH would disappear and for us only to be known as ConnectGroups.

But this true story made me realise that the 4 ladies who chose the name chose correctly – they knew at a grass level that those that look for self help and support groups – WISH that they find others that will help them along their journey – that is often hard and challenging..

It made me question why we had changed our name – yes people confused it us for the “make a wish foundation” –

So was it more of an admin issue?

Or of fear of not being recognised for the work that we do ?

I know by looking at all those that are here today that we are recognised for what we do regardless of the name. But, I hope that we continue to provide services in the community as sincere today as we did 28 years ago.

There are enough wishes for all to have ... and we do our best to support them in finding them.

*Antonella*

# Acknowledgements & Appreciation



ConnectGroups thanks and acknowledges the Department for Communities, its Manager and Staff:

Ray Peters, Helen McGinty and Kay Channer for their constant support and belief in the work that we do and in their ability of sharing our vision.

ConnectGroups extends its thanks and gratitude to all of the organisations whose support have been a key to its growth and development.

A special mention to :

## ***Lotterywest***

Lee Grmas

Jo Wilkie

## ***PANGO***

Karen Armstrong

## ***WACOSS***

Irina Cattalini

## ***CRS***

Noelene Spinks

## ***Lifeline WA***

Amanda Wheeler

Richard Wolterman

## ***Meniere's Australia***

Tricia Young

## ***Cancer Council WA***

Simone Rowles

## ***Linkwest***

Jane Chilcott

## ***Neurological Council of WA***

Kathy McCoy

Tracy Paul

## ***The Genetic Support Council of WA***

Sharon Van Der Laan

Kristina Sengotta

## ***Consumer***

Sheila D'Arcey

## ***The Department of Health of WA***

Sylvia Griffiths

## ***Central Institute of Technology***

Jane Bellinge

## ***Fremantle Multicultural Centre***

Vlasta Mitchell and her team

## ***Mental Health Commission***

Pui San Whittaher

Ayla Potts

Louise Howe

## ***Developmental Disability Council of WA***

Taryn Harvey

## ***Our Consultants & Friends***

Elda Kingston

Catherine Ferguson

Karen Tighe

Erica Bramilow

Janice Mason

Wendy Lamotte

To our lovely CRS volunteers and Tafe students - Jacqueline Rea, Kai Chee, Sharna Grant, Be Thi Nguyen, Diana Rodriguez, Rita Mukolo & Vijeta Patel.

To the "fabulous" Board of Management and Team of ConnectGroups.



**ConnectGroups**  
helping support groups & individuals

335-337 Pier Street, Perth WA 6000

Freecall: 1800 195 575 / T: 08 9228 4488 / F: 08 9228 4490

E: [info@connectgroups.org.au](mailto:info@connectgroups.org.au) / W: [www.connectgroups.org.au](http://www.connectgroups.org.au)

Support Groups Association WA Inc (previously WISH)