



ConnectGroups
helping support groups & individuals

Annual Report 2012/2013



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Local Government and Communities**



ConnectGroups

helping support groups & individuals



Who we are

We are a Not-for-profit organisation that promotes the philosophy and practice of Self Help within Western Australia and facilitates its development and effectiveness by educating and empowering individuals, families and groups to meet their specific needs.



Our Mission

To provide assistance to existing and emerging Self Help and Support Groups, linking individuals affected by a wide range of life affecting issues to them.





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Chairperson's Report

ConnectGroups celebrates its 30th year this year! We have much to celebrate and look forward to. We have a rich history of service and capacity building. I would like to thank all those who have been part of the journey and have given their time and resources over the years. It is a privilege to support and help others. This element of service is fundamental to ConnectGroups' existence.

The ConnectGroups' Board has had a busy year with a particular focus on the new Strategic phase for the organisation. Five aspects have been prioritised, including raising the organisation's profile as a Peak Body and gearing up for a campaign to promote the organisation. This activity will benefit Self Help and Support Groups and Foundations in that the sector will be better known and ConnectGroups will have a stronger platform as a Peak to deliver support and advocacy. The Board will oversee a range of strategic developments in the coming year and medium term, including augmenting Board member numbers to ensure a broader skills set and adequate capacity for strategic and governance activity.

The sector welcomes our new Minister, Mr Tony Simpson. ConnectGroups looks forward to a continuing positive relationship with the State Government. The organisation's alliances and partnerships are growing from strength to strength.

The Department of Local Government and Communities continues to give core support to the organisation; Lotterywest support remains unwavering and our relationship with the Mental Health Commission continues to find new dimensions. This year we also welcome the Health Department into the circle of support for our work and hope this is the start of an enduring partnership. After many years ConnectGroups' lease at Pier Street is coming to an end which has necessitated the finding of new premises. The change presents new opportunities for the organisation and the impending move is welcome by both the Board and staff. We thank the City of Melville for their generosity in the negotiations for our new home. These relationships ensure that our member groups continue to grow and strengthen and we value them.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board, Executive Officer and ConnectGroups staff for their tireless work to help Self Help and Support Groups and Foundations to support members facing a range of health and life challenges. Joining hands with everyone who has found safe harbour in the organisation, I would like to say Happy 30th Anniversary ConnectGroups!

Pearl Proud,
ConnectGroups Chair.





Executive Officer's Report



The mission of the organisation continues to be to promote its health promotion services through the work conducted by its Self Help and Support Group members; ensuring their sustainability; continuing to add value to the sector and endeavouring to be considered a valuable partner by Government line agencies.

2012/2013 has been an astonishing year focused on building the resilience of our Self Help and Support Groups members and simultaneously ensuring that ConnectGroups addressed the ever changing face of the Social Services and Community sector.

A year that we launched The Pay It Forward Plan and the Self Help and Support Group Care Package, thanks to our partnership with the Mental Health Commission. The response and outcome from both projects were overwhelming, with over 40 groups and 20 individuals benefiting from them. It was the year that we worked unwaveringly with the (then) Department for Communities to negotiate and set our unit price, and successfully secured our five year funding contract. My special thanks go to Kay Channer (Program and Funding Officer Department of Local Government and Communities) and Jane Chilcott (Executive Manager Linkwest) for their guidance throughout the process.

It was a year that we were challenged by the implications of the launch of the ACNC, ensuring that our members were well informed as to the potential impacts it will have on them. It has also been a year where we prepared to celebrate our 30 years anniversary and for the first time, formally acknowledge those Self Help and Support Groups and individuals that have made a measurable difference in the lives of those facing adverse situations. It is the year we say goodbye to our Pier Street home that has served us well for the last 10 years. We farewell Linkwest and Clan WA who we have collaborated with, whilst sharing their wisdom and good practice.

It has been a year of excitement as we conducted a feasibility study and subsequently developed a Business Plan as part of our Social Enterprise "Hot Desk Community Hub" project.





Our thanks go to our Consultative Group, Members and Social Ventures Social Enterprise Consortium NGO's for their support. 2013/2014 will see us pilot the model. It has been a year when nothing has deterred us from our ability to continue to offer our core grass root services; whilst concurrently complying with the new sector reforms and for the Board and Management to continue to identify innovative ways to offer and expand our services in line with our key stakeholders needs.

It has been a year that life at ConnectGroups has been never boring or monotonous. I pride myself in the exceptional workforce and the calibre of the Board of Management. The mission of the organisation continues to be to promote its health promotion services through the work conducted by its Self Help and Support Group members; ensuring their sustainability; continuing to add value to the sector and endeavouring to be considered a valuable partner by Government line agencies.

My thanks go to my lovely staff for their untiring support, in ensuring that all those who access our services are provided with a viable solution, and by representing the organisation so admirably.

To my Board of Management for their tireless efforts and well defined strategies as we look to continue to grow the profile and raise the awareness of the organisation, and in overseeing the organisation's governance processes. I look forward to 2013/2014, as we prepare to move to our new home in the City of Melville.

Antonella Segre
Executive Officer



Treasurer's Report



We finished the 2012/13 year with surplus funds of \$18,924.00 after a very active year. It reflects an approved carryover of funds from the two Mental Health Commission projects.

We were pleased with the modest income from the sale of Governance Manuals and the provision for the imminent relocation costs.

The 2012/13 year saw improved levels of financial reporting. We have continued to enhance the quality of the overall reporting and clarity of data around the acquitting of funds for grants and projects. Changes of personnel enabled us to reset reporting requirements and to take on new advice on our reporting quality.

Our funds at bank and retained earnings place ConnectGroups in a healthy position that will allow us to further develop over time the benefits we provide to our Members.

Garry Jacobs,
Treasurer.





Auditor's Certification Statement



DAVID TRUSLOVE

ACCOUNTANT and TAX AGENT

ET.M.A., ET.I.A., M.N.I.A.

PO Box 270, Guildford 6935

Phone: **9379 1444** Fax: 9379 2856



Brockman House

143 James Street

Guildford 6055

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: 1st July 2012 to 30th June 2013.

Scope of Audit.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards as necessary to provide a 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 the 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 of the Service Agreement, management resources and internal controls.

The opinion on compliance expressed in this report has been formed 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.

Expenditure

- Expenditure is adequately supported;
- Expenditure has been appropriately authorized;
- 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.


.....

DAVID TRUSLOVE FIPA (107792)

Dated this 11th Day of September 2013.



Financials

Balance Sheet

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Payroll Liabilities

Total LIABILITIES

Net Assets

EQUITY

Retained Earnings

Current year profit/loss

Total EQUITY

2011-2012

2012-2013

\$494,117

\$416,310

\$350,862

\$232,306

\$16,550

\$38,376

\$367,412

\$270,682

\$126,705

\$145,628

\$111,859

\$ 126,704

\$14,845

\$18,924

\$126,704

\$145,628

Profit and Loss

2011-2012

2012-2013

INCOME

Grants

Operations

Other Income

Total INCOME

EXPENSES

Personnel Expenses

Operations Expenses

General Expenses

Total EXPENSES

Net Surplus / (Deficit)

\$371,906

\$645,061

\$7,674

\$9,246

\$8,212

\$12,221

\$387,792

\$666,528

\$236,709

\$209,395

\$20,074

\$46,676

\$116,164

\$391,533

\$372,947

\$647,604

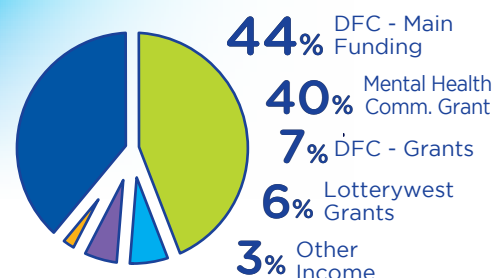
\$14,845

\$18,924





Annual Statistics



Revenue Resources

Funds Description

DFC- Main Funding

DFC- Grants

Lotterywest Grants

Other Income

Mental Health Comm. Grant

Total Funding

2011-2012

2012-2013

\$284,471

\$296,561

\$2,500

\$43,500

\$84,545

\$40,000

\$15,886

\$21,467

\$390

\$265,000

\$387,792

\$666,528

Summary of Activities

Grant Applications Submitted

Total registered calls

Hits to ConnectGroups Website

Workshops Delivered

Newsletters distributed

Newsletter recipients

Stakeholders attending training

Members

2011-2012

2012-2013

7

8

810

953

1,815,998

1,753,155

8

12

6

8

2,105

4,315

94

128

611

634





ConnectGroups Community Development and Capacity Building Activities

The past twelve months have been a time of consolidating initiatives and projects commenced in 2012.

Priorities were placed in continuing to identify the most effective strategies as a means of raising the profile of our Self Help and Support Group members, as well as ensuring that the service provided to our existing and emerging groups were current and relevant.

We were invited to attend a series of events as keynote speakers, to showcase the work conducted by our member groups and ConnectGroups -

- South Bunbury Rotary Club – About ConnectGroups and Value of Self Help & Support Groups/Peer Support
- Amps & Associates – Value of Peer Support
- West Australian Practice Nurses Association Seminar – Value of Self Help & Support Groups
- Gold Coast Medicare Local – Value of Self Help & Support Groups and Peer Support in general, plus overview of ConnectGroups, - past, present & future
- Carers WA Practical Matters Forum

ConnectGroups, as part of its philosophy of “adding value to” formally attended a series of events as a demonstration of its belief in creating long standing and mutual partnerships

- Incest Survivors Association - Open Day at their new home
- Prostate Cancer Foundation – Official Opening of their newly refurbished office
- Carers WA – Service Providers Orientation
- Wheatbelt Women’s Health Hub - Official opening (York)
- GROW - OCD Support Group planning meeting
- Health Consumers Council - networking event
- 1 Life Suicide Prevention
- Multicultural Health Fest

And to build relationships through face to face meetings with -

- Playgroup SW (Bunbury)
- Denmark Community Resource Centre
- Cancer Council Bunbury
- Great Southern Employment Development Committee
- Defence Communities Organisation
- MI Recovery (MIFWA)





- Town of Kwinana
- Commonwealth Care Respite Services
- National Disability Services
- Royal Perth Hospital
- MIFWA

ConnectGroups communication and marketing strategy heavily relies on its ability to network. These opportunities are invaluable; enabling us to acknowledge the work being conducted by ConnectGroups members and subsequently allowing us to better meet their individual needs.

2012/ 2014 Self Help and Support Groups Consultative Group

The Consultative Group was established in 2012 as part of the organisation's means of ensuring that ConnectGroups is adequately representing its member groups. Its role is to provide feedback to the organisation as to its annual strategic direction, ensuring at all times that the member groups are appropriately represented. We have ensured that we have a diverse selection of members on the Consultative Group, thus adequately representing as many different types of groups as possible.

The organisation's thanks go to:



AUSTRALIAN LEUKODYSTROPHY
SUPPORT GROUP
Making a Difference



Prostate Cancer
Foundation of Australia



ConnectGroups



Parent Drug
Information Service



hepatitiswa



* Tricia Young





Projects



The Pay It Forward Plan - Supported by The Mental Health Commission

2012 saw the organisation put into place a project that had been negotiated with the Mental Health Commission in 2011. At the time ConnectGroups, with the Mental Health Commission, rotated around accessing funds and engaging in a brokerage role in order to address the 10% attrition rate of groups and to provide them with the goods and services that would ensure their sustainability and capacity building. Through this initiative, ConnectGroups could also directly liaise with Self Help and Support Groups and their members to ensure these grants have a positive impact on the mental well-being of their 'family'.



The outcome has been overwhelming with the organisation receiving a wide variety of submissions; including requests for room hire, professional assistance with strategic planning and becoming incorporated, funding a series of recovery workshops, promotional items and logo design, assistance with costs associated with team building days and facilitator training and even the publication of a poetry anthology created by individuals during their mental health recovery journey.

SUMMARY



73

Submissions received across two rounds

Total amount of funds allocated

\$162,569.00



25

Mental health-specific Self Help and Support Groups received funding

Total amount requested in the original submissions

\$460,121.00



Grants ranged from start-up and marketing resources through to small events and professional development opportunities.



15

Rural Self Help and Support Groups received funding





Grants were approved to Metro and Regional and Rural Self Help and Support Groups

Adoption Jigsaw
Angelhands Inc.
Befriend Inc.
Birthrites: Healing After
Caesarean
Bunbury Mental Health
Consumer Advisory Group
Bunbury Prostate
Foundation Support Group
Chrysalis: CFS/ME & Lyme
WA Youth Support Group
Even Keel Bi-Polar Support
Association
Fibromyalgia Support
Network
FIFO/DIDO SW Support
Group
Foster Families SW
Fremantle Multicultural
Centre
From the Heart WA
GenWHY?

Grandparents Rearing
Grandchildren
Growing Towards Wellness
Lorikeet
Lotus Young Mums
Busseton
Mental Health Matters 2
Milligan Community
Learning & Resource
Centre
Milligan House
MyTime Bunbury
North Metropolitan
Diabetes WA
Northcliffe Family &
Community Centre
PFLAG
Prison Fellowship Australia
(WA)
Prostate Cancer
Foundation of
Australia

South West Impaired Lung
Support
The Compassionate
Friends
The Neurological Council of
WA (Bunbury)
The Neurological Council of
WA (Perth)
The Peripheral Neuropathy
Support Group
The Support Group for Self
Harmers
Thyroid WA
Tuart Place
WA Special Families
Wheatbelt Women's Health
Hub Inc.
Widows and Widowers
United!
Williams Syndrome

Grant Allocation

Marketing & Events
Capital & Resources
Start Up Assistance
Administrative Assistance
Submissions were received across 2 rounds

26%

38%

10%

26%

78

Positive Mental Health Outcomes Achieved

- ✓ Greater awareness of the group/condition leading to a feeling of belonging and acceptance for groups members
- ✓ Consolidating good practices and validating/legitimising the work of the group
- ✓ Ensuring the sustainability of a Self Help or Support Group, offering balance and security to members
- ✓ Developing facilitation skills and professionalism, ensuring the best provision of care for members
- ✓ Motivating groups and members to continue seeking help and raising awareness
- ✓ Increased sense of self-worth, feeling of inclusion and more open, genuine communications



ConnectGroups invites you to read PIF Booklet; a compilation of 17 interesting and touching stories.



Self Help & Support Groups Care Package - Supported by The Mental Health Commission

The Self Help and Support Groups Care Package was a study opportunity for ConnectGroups' members who were currently facilitating Self Help and Support Groups. Thanks to a grant received through The Mental Health Commission and in partnership with The Central Institute of Technology, ConnectGroups was able to offer 20 scholarships to members, which allowed them to undertake 6 foundation units. These 6 units have supported them in formalising their facilitation skills, and have gone towards a Certificate IV in Community Services. Seven will go on to complete the full qualification, once again thanks to the support from The Mental Health Commission and The Central Institute of Technology.

The 9th May 2013 saw the formal completion of the course and scholarship holders were presented with their Certificates of Completion. ConnectGroups congratulates all the scholarship recipients on their success and acknowledges their support and commitment for the initiative.

Some feedback from the participants:

"The units on offer were extremely relevant, especially when dealing with individuals with mental health issues..."

"I have learned so much and can see so many applications for this learning for all the community groups I am involved with that it will keep me going for years!"

"I recently had an experience at my group where 5 new people arrived but no previous members turned up. I handled this with better self-confidence and self-belief than I would have done before this course."

"It feels great to be able to let my group know that I actually have training and experience!"

"Spending time with the rest of the class and learning about their situations had a positive impact on me. I learned a lot from my class members, as well as my lecturer."





Social Enterprise Study – Supported by The Department of Local Government and Communities

The State Government of Western Australia launched in April 2012 a \$10 million Social Enterprise Fund – Grants Program (SEF) aimed at increasing the number, effectiveness and efficiency of social enterprises in Western Australia by supporting the not-for-profit community sector organisations to establish new or strengthen existing Social Enterprises. Social Enterprises are organisations that:

“are led by an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit, trade to fulfil their mission, derive a substantial portion of their income from trade, re-invest the majority of their profit/surplus into the fulfilment of their mission.”

ConnectGroups was successful in receiving a grant of \$41,000.00 to run a feasibility study. This study explored the possibility of ConnectGroups running a virtual office space or hot desk environment for Self Help and Support Groups that are currently working out of their homes and cannot look at leasing permanent office space. It was based on existing corporate and social return models based in the UK and Canada, based on offering above and beyond the actual office space at an accessible price.

This research was broken down into three phases:

Phase 1 Focused on collecting the relative data that indicated that there was such a need.

Phase 2 Conducted a real estate market cost analysis.

Phase 3 Focused on the actual development of the Business Plan.

A comprehensive Business Plan was presented to the Social Enterprise Consortium and a request for seed funding was put forward in July 2013, which would see the trialing of the model. ConnectGroups thanks Jennifer Chaplyn from Same Page Consulting for her work and ability to comprehend the target market and Social Ventures for their guidance along the way.



HAVoC Hope After Violent Crime – Supported by Lotterywest

The aim of this project was to investigate best practice models of Support Groups for people who have experienced the trauma of violent crime. Its purpose was to gain understanding and specific, local, contemporary knowledge of the most helpful and healing elements of effective support for victims. An initial review of the relevant literature indicated that peer support is a promising model for helping victims to regain hope after violent crime. Therefore, the peer support group project was named HAVoC.



Five peer Support Groups for victims of violent crime were the focus of the project. As different support methods and models have implications for efficient use of limited funds - for example, facilitator-led as opposed to mutual self-help groups - it was also anticipated that some comparison of the groups would occur. Although the nature of the project data did not permit such comparison, valuable information on physical, emotional and general wellbeing, and psycho-educational, emotional and social support provided by group membership was obtained.



In conclusion, the information gained from this project indicates that stronger focus on addressing physical wellbeing and quality of life issues has the potential to improve support outcomes for people who have been traumatised by criminal violence. The project findings have also demonstrated that the peer support group model can provide the emotional and social support needed for help, healing and hope for victims of violent crime.

November 2013 saw the official launch of the findings in the tranquil surroundings of Kings Park in the Place of Reflection.



Out Reach Activities

WA Regional and Rural

ConnectGroups endeavours to ensure that its regional and rural members are able to access those services available to its metro members. Two trips to the South West were organised as a means of identifying those local needs and to also provide the member groups information as to the organisation's priority areas. Both trips were well received and allowed the organisation to reinforce and build new partnerships. The road tour allowed for the organisation to develop new strategies as to how to best meet those identified needs which it will attempt to meet.

Medicare Local - Gold Coast

ConnectGroups was invited to attend a Community Engagement Forum organised by the Medicare Local on the Gold Coast as a means of showcasing the organisation's service delivery model. The forum was attended by approximately 50 Self Help and Support Groups which gave us an opportunity to identify what their local needs and



wants were and compare them to WA. It was interesting to find that they are similar and that funding, training, insurance, meeting places and governance were top on their agenda for support. We were heartened by the fact that we have been able to address those needs in WA. However, work must continue if we are to ensure that our Regional/Rural members and those who are also physically isolated have access to the full range of our services. 2013/2014 will see us engage in the development of a new website and the delivery of training through webinars and online training.



Acknowledgments

ConnectGroups Board and Staff thanks and acknowledges the Department of Local Government and Communities, its Director General, Director 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.

It extends its thanks and gratitude to all of the organisations whose support has been a key to its growth and development. A special mention to:

Mental Health Commission

Commissioner Eddie Bartnik
Mark Cowie
Steve Scanlon
Louise Howe
Pui San Whittaker

Lotterywest

Jan Stewart
Jacquie Thomas
Lee Grmas
Jo Wilkie
Pauline Logan

WACOSS

Irina Cattalini
Lyn Levi

Developmental Disability Council of WA

Taryn Harvey

Linkwest

Jane Chilcott and her team

Charity Direct

Peter Carter

Central Institute of Technology

Lara Sappal
Lena Charlick
Stephanie Tchan

CRS

Noelene Spinks

North & South Metropolitan Health Services

Karen Bischoff
Adina Quattrini

Our Consultants and Friends

Denise Kelly
Karen Tighe
Elda Kingston
Ivi Sanchez
Jennifer Chaplin
Rebecca Tilbrook
Lee Ann Smith
Michael Sheehan
Kathy Logie
Ted Dowling
Anita Peiris

To all of our lovely CRS Volunteers with a special mention to Kerry Short.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Local Government and Communities**



Government of **Western Australia**
Mental Health Commission





2012-2013 Board of Management

Pearl Proud
Chairperson

John Burrell
Vice Chairperson

Garry Jacobs
Treasurer

Kirsten Tannenbaum
Secretary

Faye Baxter
Funding /Strategy

Marie Smyth
**HR/Policy and
Procedures**

Sumit Dutta
Regional and Rural

Anne Hill
**Strategy / Marketing
and Promotions**



2012-2013 Staff

Antonella Segre
Executive Officer

Tracey Brooke
Juanaili Hultzsch
Lisa Barrett
Juliet Nota
Georgia Booth
Miguel Beaumont



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helping support groups & individuals

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Support Groups Association WA Inc (previously WISH)