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Coast Shelter News

Our vision is to prevent homelessness, sustain tenancies, provide emergency accommodation and move homeless people into permanent housing.



CHRISTMAS HAS COME EARLY THANKS TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT



Local State Members of Parliament have joined forces to contribute a total of \$200,000 to Coast Shelter to assist with the building of the new Community Centre.

In a wonderful example of our local members coming together, the Coast Community Centre is now a big step closer to completion.

The money was provided as part of the Community Building Partnership Program, which provides funds for community groups and local councils to invest in community infrastructure throughout the State.

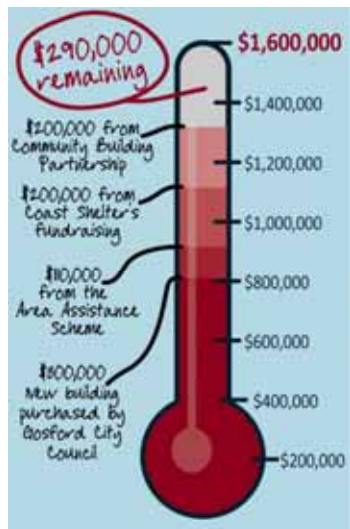
When told of the latest State Government grant, Laurie Maher our Executive Officer said that Christmas had come early for Coast

Shelter and now builders could continue with the refurbishment.

Gavin Shepherd, President of Coast Shelter, pointed out that the support received by Gosford City Council to purchase the building was our first and perhaps our biggest step forward. Now, with the State Government's contribution totalling \$310,000 and Coast Shelter's own contribution of \$200,000, we are left with \$290,000 left to raise.

Although Coast Shelter still has some way to go to raise the funds necessary to complete the Community Centre, with the ongoing support of local businesses and the community, it is hoped that this building will be completed and opened by the middle of 2011.

To make the Coast Community Centre a reality, Coast Shelter needs to raise a further \$290,000 and we need the help of the entire community!



Sign up to our electronic newsletter at www.coastshelter.org.au and find us on Facebook or Twitter for more news updates

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT ALIVE ON THE COAST



Volunteers sorting presents on Christmas Day 2009

Christmas at Coast Shelter is shaping up to be wonderful thanks to the generosity of the Central Coast community. Everyone is giving what they can to ensure that those experiencing hardship, also have an enjoyable time.

to Christmas. This year we have been blown away by the tremendous support of groups such as Sanitarium, ADC Krone, Bridgecoast Stadium, Regional Arts Gallery, Gosford TAFE Library, Holgate Primary School, and many many more.

We have also received extra support to provide special Christmas celebrations at our refuges. Families at Kara Women and Children's Refuge will enjoy a lovely Christmas celebration thanks to Gosford City Rotary Club who are putting on a lunch at Umina Surf Club.

Maya Young Women's Refuge will also enjoy a Christmas lunch with a generous contribution from the Lioness Club of Wyoming.

The **Donnison Street Community Centre** is preparing for a beautiful Christmas Day Lunch between 11.00am and 1.30pm. Volunteers will serve a traditional Christmas lunch with ham, turkey, chicken, salads and fruit cake.

As usual, we have been flooded with phone calls from people wanting to volunteer on Christmas Day, which is further testament to the charitable nature of our community. Sadly, we cannot accept all people who volunteer, however everyone is welcome to attend on the day, join in the festivities and enjoy a lovely Christmas lunch.

Christmas Hampers, which are put together and donated by the House of Praise and Sanitarium, will be distributed over the Christmas period. The hampers are jam-packed full of food and goodies and our guests look forward to receiving them each year.

Coast Shelter also makes sure that each one of our clients and guests receive a gift on Christmas Day. This is made possible thanks to a host of individuals and groups who donate presents leading up



Guests enjoying lunch on Christmas Day in the Donnison Street Community Centre 2009

As gifts and donations keep coming in every day, we are truly grateful to the Central Coast community for showing such generosity and keeping the Christmas spirit alive. Thank you to all those who have helped to make this Christmas truly magical for our clients and guests.

We would like to wish all of our friends a Merry Christmas on behalf of Coast Shelter's clients, staff and Board of Directors.



Allan (Community Centre volunteer) collecting gifts from Bridgecoast Stadium



On learning of Coast Shelter’s work, Raffie of Simply Smashing, in keeping with his reputation of being a compassionate person, responded immediately to our call for assistance. Although he runs a very busy car repair business at West Gosford, he offered to service and maintain our new refrigerated van free of cost. Our van had its first service from Raffie recently and noticing its lack of signage, he immediately wrote a cheque for \$500 to pay for signage.

Raffie has since visited the Community Centre with more donations and was very

impressed with what he saw. He has also contacted his friends in the hospitality industry and encouraged them to donate their surplus food to us through the Oz Harvest program. We have since received food from several new sources, but more significantly, have been granted access to Aldi’s Food Recovery Program through the connections Raffie has created for us.

Thank you for all of your help Raffie. Merry Christmas to you and your family.



Coast Shelter’s refrigerated van which is serviced and maintained by Simply Smashing

BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE



Most people know that Coast Shelter provides safe accommodation to men, women, youth and families every night of the year. What people may not be aware of is the work we do to assist the increasing number of homeless people who sleep on the streets, on trains or live in caves.

Earlier this year, Charles and a group of volunteers cooked a BBQ lunch and delivered blankets, food and swags to homeless people

living in local caves. We made connections with these people and invited them all to visit the Donnison Street Community Centre for a meal, which some have done since. We plan to visit the caves again in the new year.

From this experience, Coast Shelter was amazed with the dignity they displayed and the special bond they shared. When we were invited to visit their caves, they were proud to show us what they had, even referring to the biggest cave as “Buckingham Palace”.



Left: Penny visiting the caves

Below: “Buckingham Palace”

COMMUNITY CONGRESS AWARDS

Coast Shelter attended the 5th Annual Central Coast Community Congress 'Real people Doing Real Things' Awards in October. Charles Boyton received a nomination for his role as Coordinator of the Community Centre and the Centre itself received a nomination as a volunteer group.

The Awards are aimed at building healthy communities across the Central Coast and recognise a range of

community building initiatives.

Although Coast Shelter didn’t receive an award this year, we were delighted to see Charles and the Community Centre being recognised for their contributions within our local community.



Charles Boyton (Donnison Street Community Centre), Shayne Silvers (Operations Manager) and Laurie Maher (Executive Officer)

COAST SHELTER'S NEW POET FRIEND

Cicada Christmas

Cicadas are singing
And my ears are ringing,
It's Christmas morn on the farm.
The air is as hot
As the tea in the pot
And sweat's dripping right down my arm.

My energy's sapped,
And 'though presents are wrapped
There's still so much more to be done.
While the magpies are calling,
We wish rain was falling.
Christmas, here in the sun.

But the children arrive and the place comes alive
- more presents to go 'neath the tree.
'Though the tree's "Christmas Bush"
- call it "tree", at a push -
The youngsters all eye it with glee.

Then we're off for a swim,
To the dam and jump in -
The best way we know to cool down -
And the laughter drowns out
The cicadas shrill shout
And peace and goodwill all abound.

Now, evening has come,
With a red setting sun
And it's quietened down for the night.
But my ears are still ringing,
Although they've stopped singing.
"Cicada Christmas"- too right!



Coast Shelter would like to share the story of one of our valued supporters, Sandra Binns. Our first contact with Sandra began earlier this year as we started receiving cheques in the mail.

As with all of our donations, we sent Sandra a letter of thanks, only to receive another cheque in the mail soon after. This continued until we could not write any more letters as it seemed Sandra was becoming quite the 'serial donor' (which of course is not a bad thing for Coast Shelter as we are always in need of funds for the Community Centre).

Then one day we received a cheque, a wonderful book of poetry and an explanation... Sandra J. Queensborough Binns is a local poet who has been selling her books for \$10 to support the homeless and doing quite well at it.

All of the office staff enjoy reading Sandra's book of poetry (Laurie even has a personal signed copy for his own desk!) and we are very honoured to have Sandra's support.

Sandra has kindly allowed us to share one of her Christmas poems 'Cicada Christmas'.

MARDI GRAS QUEEN HELPS THE HOMELESS

Megan Foote has been crowned 2010 Tuggerah Lakes Mardi Gras Queen and she didn't think twice about the charity she would support. Without hesitation Megan Foote chose Coast Shelter.

"I wanted a local charity so that all the money we raise will be kept on the Coast and not sent off to some worldwide organisation," Megan said.

Megan visited the Donnison Street Community Centre and said "It was a real eye opener. Some people come in with nothing, so it has made me more determined to raise money because Coast Shelter needs all the money it can get".

Megan was sponsored by Diggers @ The Entrance and raised \$10,000 for Coast Shelter.

Congratulations on your achievement Megan and thank you for your support of Coast Shelter.

Pictured left: Megan Foote (Tuggerah Lakes Mardi Gras Queen) **with Peter O'Grady** (Diggers @ The Entrance) **and Laurie Maher** (Coast Shelter) **in the Donnison Street Community Centre.**



Most would have forgotten that Coast shelter owes its existence to the original auspice of the service namely Gosford City Community and Information Service (GCCIS).

With the assistance of Gosford City Council, GCCIS established the first Crisis Family Refuge and Youth Refuge in Gosford. And it's the story of "from little things big things grow".

And throughout the growth Coast Shelter has had the ongoing support of Gosford City Community and Information Service.

Things have changed and although the

Community and Information Service is now located at Narara every month without fail the Community Centre receives a cheque to help defray the costs of the two hundred meals which Charles and his wonderful team of volunteers serve each day.

In trying to balance the budget it is a very real question as to where would Coast Shelter be without the support of the Gosford City Community and Information Service. "Certainly doing it a lot tougher than we are".



CENTRAL COAST TRIVIA NIGHT



Coast Shelter would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Trilogy PG Accountants and Milestone BelaNova in hosting a fun-filled Trivia Night to raise money for Coast Shelter.

Over 150 friends and supporters joined together at The Breakers Country Club for an entertaining evening which raised \$9,600.

Attendees put an outstanding effort into dressing up and decorating their table to win the sought after prizes of 'Best Branded' and 'Best Themed' tables.

Coast Shelter had two tables in the running to win the Trivia section of the evening. Although none of our tables won, we would like to make mention that Laurie's team came last out of the two Coast Shelter teams!

The night involved a Charity Auction by brilliant auctioneer Adam Gilbert (Adam Gilbert Real Estate) and some mind boggling trivia which was led by the professional and very quick-witted host Glenn Muirhead.

Coast Shelter would like to thank everyone who attended the night. We would also like to acknowledge the hard work and outstanding efforts of staff at Trilogy and BelaNova in organising such a professional and successful event!



OPENING OF GOSFORD MEN'S SHED



Trudy Dunn (Gosford City Rotary President), **Deborah O'Neill** (Member for Robertson), **John Welland** (Gosford Men's Shed) and **Laurie Maher** (Coast Shelter).

The official opening of Gosford Men's Shed was held on Friday 19th November. Some 100 guests, sponsors and members attended as the Federal Member for Robertson, Deborah O'Neill cut the ribbon and officially declared the Shed open.

John Welland, President of the Gosford Men's Shed, thanked everyone for their support including the Central Coast Hotels Association, Gosford City Rotary Club and Coast Shelter. In responding, Laurie Maher

congratulated the men on their achievements and the completion of the first element of the Coast Community Centre.

Gosford's new men's shed is about much more than blokes getting their hands dirty, it focuses more on men's health and promotes friendships and conversations between members. Starting with just seven members, the group has now grown to 68 and they hope numbers will continue to grow.

Although the weather was not the best, the day was an outstanding success with NBN Television covering the event and another four members signing up the following Monday.

THE CENTRAL COAST CONNECT AGAIN



Adam Harvey and Becca Cole sang on the day

Central Coast Connect Day was held at Niagara Park Community Centre on Tuesday 26th October 2010. Now in its third year, this community event has grown considerably and this year was sponsored by the NSW State Government and



Gosford City Council. The day provided a wonderful opportunity for 50 support agencies to connect with each other and with community members who are in vital need of their services.



A feature of the day was the opportunity for those in need to obtain food, clothing and personal pampering services at no cost, together with free Birth Certificates and Tenancy History Checks (TICA). A sit down lunch was provided for over 400 guests, many of whom had taken advantage of the free train and bus transport available to and from the venue.

The Central Coast has always been a community that has worked together to help others who may have fallen on hard times and Central Coast Connect Day 2010 demonstrated the great work that is being done to assist people doing it tough.

Coast Shelter would like to express a sincere thank you to St. Edwards College for their continued efforts over the years, assisting us whenever we have called on them for a helping hand. There were so many other positive outcomes from St. Edward's College involvement with Coast Shelter that need to be acknowledged.

Mr. Pat Dell (Social Justice Co-ordinator) continues to be exemplary in responding to any of our calls for assistance and arranging for the boys to help out in many ways. Some of these ways have included being instrumentalists and singers at our Homeless Memorial Service and Connect Day. The boys had quite an impact with attendees at these events. Some of the other ways the boys have played a part in helping those less fortunate in our community is through donations received as a result of school

walkathons and can drives.

With their Waterford Project community service hours, many of the St. Edward's staff and boys have volunteered at the Donnison Street Community Centre on Monday nights for many years now. Their help in preparing and serving meals to marginalised and vulnerable community members is greatly appreciated.

I am sure also that through this journey, new personal friendships have been forged or strengthened.

Well done to all of those of you who contributed in some way!!



St Edwards Students performing at the Homeless Persons' Memorial Service in the Donnison Street Community Centre

RISE UP CONCERT FOR THE HOMELESS

'Rise Up for the Homeless' was a concert held on World Homeless Day (10 October 2010) to raise funds for Coast Shelter. The event was organised by a group of local community members, including Terry Meggs, Suellen Gauci and musician Jake Cassar.

Jake's passion for raising awareness about homelessness on the Central Coast led him to spend a week sleeping rough, which he said was a life-changing experience.

"It was very disturbing. I thought I knew a lot about homelessness, but when you are out there sleeping in the open, it gives you a new insight", Jake said.

The Rise Up Concert was a day for the

community to join together and show compassion, enjoy each other's company and help the less fortunate. The event was held at the Rhythm Hut in Gosford and included a huge line-up of the Coast's finest music artists.

The day raised \$5,420 for Coast Shelter and more importantly, raised awareness about homelessness on the Coast.



Jake Cassar and Suellen Gauci - Organisers of The Rise Up Concert

COAST SHELTER REFUGES

Coimba is our men's refuge, which offers crisis accommodation and support for up to 13 men. It is centrally located within easy walking distance of Gosford CBD and transport.

Residents are offered assistance in finding permanent accommodation. Staff also assist residents to address issues which may have led to their homelessness (unemployment, alcohol, drugs, gambling etc) with referrals to local support services.

Kara is our family program, which offers crisis and medium-term accommodation for single women and women with accompanying children. Clients usually stay between 1-3 months.

Clients are offered assistance with parenting, living and social skills. Our ultimate goal is to assist residents to find permanent independent accommodation. We work closely with the Housing NSW, Centrelink, Pacific Link Community Housing and other agencies to achieve this.

Rumbalara is our medium term youth refuge, which provides accommodation for six homeless young men and women aged between 15 and 18. Residents can stay at Rumbalara for up to 12 months.

Residents are encouraged to continue with schooling, training or employment during their stay. Family reconciliation is the main focus, where this is not possible, clients are assisted to move into semi-independent living with the continued support from staff.

Maya is our medium-term young women's refuge, which provides accommodation for up to six young women aged between 14 and 18. Residents can stay at Maya for up to 12 months.

Maya is designed to empower young women and help them to continue schooling, enter the workforce or undertake full time training. Residents are offered assistance with living skills to prepare them for family reconciliation or where this is not possible, semi-independent living.



COAST SHELTER SERVICES

The **Donnison Street Community Centre** is a hub for practical support services to help homeless, vulnerable, financially disadvantaged and socially isolated citizens on the Central Coast.

The Community Centre is based on the principles of social inclusion and community participation. The overriding aim of the Centre is to assist people to maintain their tenancies and avoid homelessness.

The Centre receives no Government funding and only operates thanks to a huge volunteer workforce who prepare and serve free meals.

As well as free meals, the Centre provides food parcels, referrals, pharmaceutical assistance, No Interest Loans (NILS), Electricity (EAPA) Vouchers, free legal advice, clothing and linen, shower and laundry facilities.



The **Wyong Accommodation Support Program** offers support to medium and long-term accommodation for homeless families and individuals in cottages and units in the Wyong Shire.

All clients are assisted to find and maintain their own accommodation. Staff work closely with government departments, non-government agencies and local real estate agents to help clients overcome barriers preventing them from securing a residential lease.

The **Intoxicated Persons Program** is an initiative which provides safe protective accommodation to intoxicated or drug affected homeless men.

Local Police, Gosford Hospital and Coast Shelter work together to ensure that those who are found intoxicated or drug-affected on the streets are safely accommodated. Clients remain until they are sober and are invited to join one of our programs.

DONATION FORM - REGISTERED CHARITY No. CFN 15695

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Organisation (If any) _____

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Suburb _____ State _____ Postcode _____

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I would like to make a donation of \$

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Card Number/...../...../..... Expiry/.....

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