A woman with short, curly hair is smiling and playing a violin. She is wearing a black sleeveless top, a light-colored vest, and a white, tiered, ruffled skirt. She is standing on a purple lattice balcony with a decorative railing. The background shows green foliage and a bright sky. A blue circular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

WE GO  
TO WHERE  
YOU ARE

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

RichmondPRA  
Together, we're better.

**COVER IMAGE**

Tamara Lunt, Hervey Bay

RichmondPRA is one of Australia's most experienced not-for-profit mental health organisations.

Since 1955, we have worked in local communities to help people on their mental health recovery journey.

**OUR VISION**

is to enable full participation within a diverse and inclusive community.

**OUR MISSION**

is to work in the community with people with a mental health issue or psychosocial disability, their families and carers to provide recovery-oriented supports and resources.

**WE VALUE**

hopes and dreams, people focus and individual strengths, inclusion, partnership, diversity and recovery journeys.

**WE HELP PEOPLE**

with a mental health issue, and families and carers, link to services that can help them live a contributing life in the community of their choice.

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## SNAPSHOT

During 2013/14 RichmondPRA provided services and programs around New South Wales and Queensland to

4,482  
people  
at 64  
locations

### OUR MAJOR SERVICES ARE

Helping people make friends, get involved and learn new things

2,382 people

Working with people to find a job

1,111 people

Supporting people where they live

989 people

## WHO ACCESSES OUR SERVICES

### FEMALE

41.8%



### AGE



<16 0.4%  
16-24 7.6%  
25-34 18.3%  
35-44 25.0%  
45-54 25.9%  
55-64 17.6%  
65+ 5.2%

### CULTURALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUND

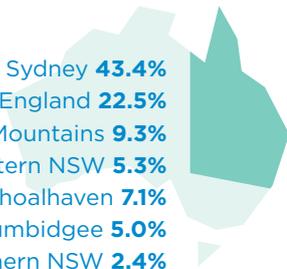
✓ 19.3%  
✗ 79.9%  
— 0.8%

### MALE

58.2%



### LOCATION



Sydney 43.4%  
Hunter New England 22.5%  
Nepean Blue Mountains 9.3%  
Western NSW 5.3%  
Illawarra Shoalhaven 7.1%  
Murrumbidgee 5.0%  
Southern NSW 2.4%  
Queensland 4.7%  
Far West NSW 0.3%

### ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

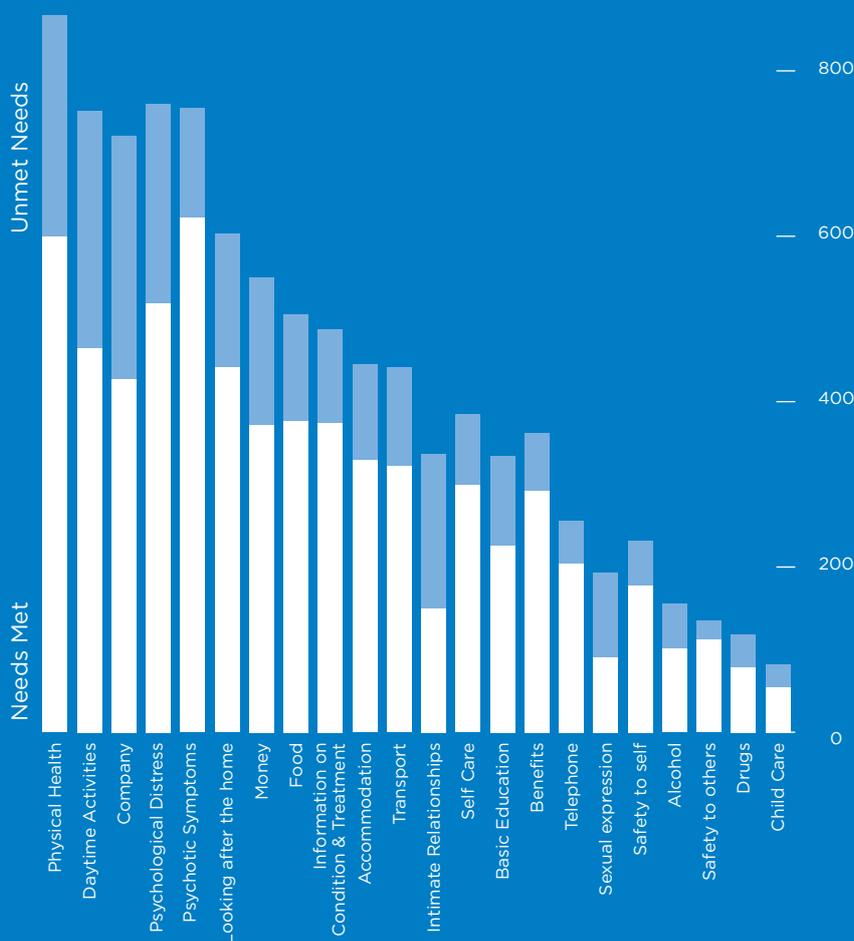
✓ 9.6%  
✗ 89%  
— 1.4%

# 96.8% of people who access our services are satisfied with the service RichmondPRA provides



(Source: RichmondPRA Guarantee of Service Annual Survey 2014)

People who access RichmondPRA services self assess their own needs for support, and tell us what they believe their unmet needs are:



(Source: RichmondPRA CANSAS Self Assessments 1/7/13 - 30/6/14)

## OUR STAFF

RichmondPRA employs **626 staff** in our total operations, of whom **42% identify as having a lived experience of mental illness.**

### 82.8%

feel proud to tell people they work for RichmondPRA

### 87.5%

understand how their role contributes to people's recovery

### 95%

believe in the work done by RichmondPRA

(Source: RichmondPRA Staff Pulse Survey, July 2014 and VOICE survey, December 2013)

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2013-2014

# 1



We won lead agency status in New England for Partners in Recovery Program (it's called the NEPIR). Additionally, we are part of another 10 Partners in Recovery consortiums across NSW selected under the national tender process through which we are providing - in collaboration with different partners in each area - coordinated support and flexible funding for people with severe and persistent mental health issues who have complex needs.

# 3



As a Registered Provider through the NDIS Pilot Site rollout in the Hunter Area, we were successfully providing support to 58 people as at 30 June 2014 and this is growing from month to month. Claims lodged every month have been paid - our systems are in place and are working and our clients are choosing and receiving a wider range of support services.

# 2

## 42% OF OUR STAFF IDENTIFY AS HAVING A LIVED EXPERIENCE

We hit a new high water mark: 42% of our staff identify as having a lived experience of mental health issues. A centrepiece of our Affirmative Action Policy, the value-add contributed by people with lived experience embraces peer support roles and all other roles. It acknowledges the capability of people to utilise their lived experience in the workplace and the community.

# 4

## WE ROLLED OUT CANSAS CONVERSATIONS

We rolled out CANSAS Conversations and accompanying training across all sites. By modelling an evidence-based, humanistic support framework to bolster consumers' ability to self-manage, RichmondPRA's consumer voices are defining the features of a new era in community based support delivery and are a central pillar in our workforce development strategy.



5



The first partnership of its kind for Kwik Kopy, it took us 10 months to move our newest social enterprise from the bottom performing franchise (a logical place to start on Day 1) to the rank of 66 as benchmarked by Kwik Kopy Head Office. It was a significant shift up in the pool of the 108 Kwik Kopy franchises operating across Australia.

7



We planned for the opening of our first headspace Centre in Bankstown and celebrate the collaboration of a culturally diverse range of local partner organisations, large and small. In Bankstown - a vibrant, energetic pocket of cosmopolitan Sydney - we look to provide quality early intervention support and services for young people 12-25 years of age experiencing mental health challenges. We opened another Young Peoples Outreach Program (YPOP) in Kogarah which is being established rapidly with management from our first YPOP in Penrith.

9



Figtree Conference Centre opened on the ground floor of our new Sydney Olympic Park head office site. It keeps getting great reviews!

*"We liked the ground floor access, going outside, excellent catering and attentive services, on-site IT, soundproof rooms, flexible room set-up with water on tables, parking - everything!"* **Michelle Everett, Mental Health Educator, Mental Health Coordinating Council**

*"Our CEO praised your facilities highly. We liked the light and airiness of the centre, the size of the rooms and placement of the screens. The onsite parking was a bonus."* **Paula Zanco, Teachers Mutual Bank**

*"We liked the staff - they are excellent, friendly and nothing is too much of a problem for them. Keith is fabulous and has a great team working with him."* **Loraine Russell, Autism Spectrum Australia (3 day Conference)**

6

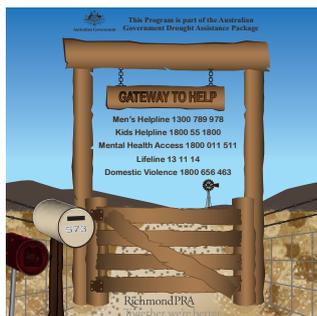
## OUR RECOVERY ACTION FRAMEWORK

Using our Communities of Practice methodology to consult with people at all levels, from all backgrounds and sites across RichmondPRA, we developed and commenced roll out of our Recovery Action Framework. It's central motivating belief: people can, and do, recover from mental illness. The Recovery Action Framework and its 8 Organisational Accountabilities are part of our continuous improvement program and proclaims that our fundamental commitment is to people with personal lived experience who access our services: they are our collaborators in service delivery, the management of mental health issues and evaluation.

8

## DROUGHT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDING

We received Drought Assistance Program funding in the northwestern region of NSW from the Commonwealth Government. We're operating in 5 out of the 7 worst drought affected areas in NSW. In so doing, we're partnering with local schools, services and businesses.



10

## SPINNAKER ON SPINNAKER OPENED ITS DOORS

Spinnaker on Spinnaker - a peer operated respite house in Hervey Bay - opened its doors. It has been a splendid addition to the service suite offered through the Resource Centre which including various groups, 1:1 support and WarmLine which operates 5-10 pm weekdays.

## SERVICES

We work in local communities to help people on their mental health recovery journey. We say “we go to where you are” because that’s the best place to help people – and we’ve been there too.

We recognise how important it is that a person stay in control of their life and set their own direction. Our role is to support and resource people. People come to us for help at all life stages. Young or old, man or woman, self referred or referred by someone else – a GP, family member or other service – our first response is to listen.

At RichmondPRA, there is NO WRONG DOOR. We do not advertise rigid pathways to entry. These just institutionalise barriers to recovery. We facilitate pathways to assistance through any one of our programs, community businesses or social enterprises or, possibly, another service. We ask each of the nearly 4,500 consumers who use our services each year to complete a self-assessment of their needs – we can sit and do it with the person, if that’s their preference.

We get the person’s permission to speak with other people who may offer helpful advice – like family, a community mental health nurse, a GP or psychiatrist. If they don’t want us to contact them, that’s OK too.

RichmondPRA employs Peer Workers in the majority of our services. The peer workforce consists of suitably trained and experienced people with lived experience of recovery from mental health issues who have an affinity for providing specialised support services to consumers. As a Peer Worker, one’s own lived experience provides an essential element and a distinct advantage to hold a place of hope, mentor and support people moving through or struggling with their own recovery journey.

## AN ACTIVE, ENGAGED LIFE

RichmondPRA offers a non-judgemental, realistic perspective as a person steers toward their goals. Our role is to support and resource people with a personal lived experience with reliable information. We help individuals break their goals down into measurable, achievable chunks. And then, we support them to take steps - small steps every day, every week, every month - to get to where they want to be and achieve their goals.

Coming through our door means different things to different people. Some do it so they can make friends or get involved. Other people come to get support to learn new things. We offer member run groups, individual support sessions and a variety of alternative activities. Best of all, many activities are selected and largely run by members themselves. We think it's important that members identify what groups and activities they'd like to participate in, based on what's important to their recovery and that the activities are peer led as a priority.

Broadly, we offer people the chance to:

- + learn new things in an informal setting like managing mental health, literacy and numeracy skills, tutoring, healthy cooking or making handicrafts (e.g. jewellery, paper/ cards, mosaics)
- + build a healthy lifestyle by participating in groups and engaging in activities that promote physical health, exercise, emotional wellbeing, addiction and disease management
- + access the community
- + explore further education
- + re-visit activities that people may have lost touch with
- + explore volunteering
- + brush up on life skills like budgeting, making appointments or filling in forms

RichmondPRA provides psychosocial support to consumers through these options:

**Partners in Recovery** providing coordinated support and flexible funding for people with severe, persistent mental health issues and complex needs, where we are the lead agency in New England and a collaborating partner in many other areas throughout New South Wales;

**headspace Bankstown** established but not operational during the 2013-2014 year and set to help young people who are going through a hard time get their lives back on track;

**Day to Day Living (D2DL)** Program providing small group and individual assistance to 1220 people in Armidale, inner Sydney, Liverpool, Newcastle, Penrith and Wollongong;

**Recovery and Resources Services (RRSP) Program**, providing support for up to 320 individuals in Armidale, Blacktown, Maitland, Moree, Taree, Temora, and Young;

**Psycho-social rehabilitation programs** providing small group and individual assistance to approximately 300 people in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Penrith and Armidale;

**The Peer Operated Service (POS) Resource Centre** in Hervey Bay, Queensland which includes a Warm Line operated by peer volunteers until 10pm each weeknight and supports 125 local people living with a mental health issue;

**Drought Assistance Package** through events, information sessions and resources all of which provide social AND economic stimulus across 5 of the 7 most drought affected areas of northwest NSW, thereby facilitating access to mental health service for rural families - farmers, business people, workers, pensioners and young people.



Bucking Bull at Moree Rodeo sponsored by RichmondPRA under the Drought Assistance Program

**Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)** Program providing support to people living in Bourke, Parkes and Cobar;

**Home Based Outreach Service** in Tumut. The type of support we offer is as varied as the individuals wanting assistance.

## SUPPORT TO FIND AND KEEP A JOB

Full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal or sessional work – the world of work is changing. RichmondPRA helps each person make the best of his or her skills in getting the job they want. We help people wedge the door open to existing and new opportunities. If a career in a certain field is a person's goal, we help them realise it.

RichmondPRA can help people investigate and enrol in trade apprenticeships, TAFE courses, specialist courses and university degrees. We support individuals to find the right job match, while they study and after obtaining their qualifications.

Sometimes, people looking for work get a job in one of RichmondPRA's own community businesses and social enterprises or in RichmondPRA's Work Incentive Scheme. This teaches job-specific skills and provides a supportive environment in which to learn about general workplace expectations: punctuality, how to work as part of a team, protocols for taking leave, how to negotiate around tasks. The bottom line is helping you get a job that delivers a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. It's why an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement that pays award-based wages to all workers covers RichmondPRA's own community businesses. We lead by example and we help consumers seeking work to negotiate with employers.

**Community Businesses and Social Enterprises** We offered 653 people work placements during the year in one of the 3 community businesses and 4 social enterprises we operate.

RichmondPRA helps job seekers identify their preferences and supports them to research the options available. Here are some ways we can help:

- + CV and Résumé preparation
- + Career and further education planning
- + Personalised job search
- + On-the-job training in one of our social enterprises or community businesses
- + Interview preparation (e.g. personal presentation, interview techniques, transport planning)
- + Job analysis by arrangement with an employer
- + Negotiation of reasonable workplace adjustments – before starting or if circumstances change
- + On-the-job support and check-ins (if needed)

**OstaraPRA branches** located for part of the year at Armidale, Redfern, Caringbah, Liverpool and Bankstown, supported nearly 750 people during the year to find and maintain a job in the open workforce.

**PreEmploy Institute**, the only educational and vocational institution of its kind in Australia offered 131 entrants a paid placement in the semester-long vocational preparation course (includes general coursework, one to one support paired with a training placement) and saw 56 graduate.

The **Work Incentive Scheme** operated in RichmondPRA sites supported over 90 people to transition into work by helping them rebuild a sense of their own employability and then to graduate on to other jobs, trades and professions in the open job market.

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Research shows that people living with a mental health issue who live where they want to are more likely to have a job, friends and better quality of life compared to those whose housing doesn't meet their needs. Good housing can help rebuild and maintain independence, day-to-day routines, confidence and social networks.

We support people to work out their priorities for their own home. When that's done, we help them make a plan to create their home. This can mean helping them lodge housing applications, doing housing inspections with them, introducing them to potential housemates we already support who are looking for another household member or any other task involved in the making of "home".

How do we help people find a place to call home? The sort of personal preferences and options we help them identify include:

- + whether they want to live alone or with others
- + how much support they want and how that is provided
- + whether they want to live in a flat, villa, house, boarding house or some other dwelling
- + how much they can afford to pay
- + if they need to apply for additional help to get housing that suits them
- + what other financial commitments they have
- + which area they want to live in
- + what community facilities they want to be close to
- + which people they want to be near (friends, spouse/lover, family etc.)

RichmondPRA provides people searching for a place to call home with support under various programs around NSW and Queensland.

In NSW these include:

**Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI)** – including many sites dedicated to providing **Aboriginal HASI** - through 26 sites that support over 330 people live in homes sourced through housing partners such as NSW Housing or a community housing organisation;

**Supported Accommodation programs** in Sutherland, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie that deliver drop in support to over 100 people living in their own homes;

**Young People's Programs** in Penrith and Kogarah assisting nearly 70 local youths in both residential and outreach services, which evaluation has shown has reduced rates of hospitalisation by up to 85%;

**Women and Children's Program** based in Blacktown – the first service of its type in Australia – continued to take referrals from all over NSW and over the past year provided over 60 women and children who have experienced trauma the opportunity to re-establish themselves, learn positive parenting and life skills whilst affording them and their children a safe, secure place to stay;

**24/7 Residential Services** where we provide high levels of in house assistance and care to 80 people who need this level of support;

**Residential Services** for 87 former boarding house residents in community based accommodation sourced through various housing partners such as NSW Housing or a community housing organisation;

**Going Home Staying Home** assisting 28 people each year who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness in the New England area as lead agency with partners in our consortium;

In Queensland, it includes the **Transitional Recovery Program MOSAIC** in Caboolture which helped 28 people to re-establish themselves in the local community after leaving the local mental health acute facility; and

## RESPITE

RichmondPRA provides three peer run respite services: two in NSW and one in Queensland.

### **Respite for Carers Service at Penrith**

offers Carers the opportunity to take some time out. RichmondPRA shares the care, by providing companionship and support for a person experiencing ongoing mental health issues while Carers take some time for themselves.

**Spinnaker on Spinnaker** is a 4-bedroom home in the Wide Bay area of Queensland. Supporting 13 people since opening in January 14, it has been specially designed for use by people who need respite from their families or who feel they are becoming unwell as a step before – in the hopes of alleviating – a hospital admission. A place at Spinnaker on Spinnaker is made available to peers that use the Consumer Operated Service (COS) Resource Centre in Hervey Bay and will eventually be offered to people who access the COS WarmLine. People can access ‘Spinnaker on Spinnaker’ for up to 3 weeks, providing they are using the resource centre for support through their recovery. Taking a preventative health approach, it is expected that ‘Spinnaker on Spinnaker’ will prevent or substantially reduce the number of hospital admissions experienced by people living with severe and persistent mental illness in the Wide Bay Area.

## COMMUNITY BUSINESSES AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

RichmondPRA owns and runs 3 community businesses and 4 social enterprises to create employment opportunities for people with mental illness. Three of these businesses operate under the Commonwealth Disability Employment Assistance Program as ‘Australian Disability Enterprises’.

These businesses provide supported employment to people with disabilities. They also meet strict service standards to ensure that people receive support that is respectful of their rights, their safety and their individual goals and ambitions.

### **ENTERPRISE**

Over the 2013-2014 year, nearly 200 people held down a part time or full time job at Enterprise. Teams operate from Croydon, Marrickville, Penrith, St Marys and Warwick Farm. Revenue is over \$1.7M p.a.

Enterprise provides services in gardening, cleaning and home and commercial premises maintenance. This year the business continued its expansion. Vocational services are tied into the program to tailor people’s support to their individual requirements. Training, peer mentorship, direction and friendship are all built into the work experience, alongside important complementary education through TAFE.

### **PRESTIGE PACKING CO. (PPC)**

Over the 2013-2014 year, over 100 people held down a part time or full time job at PPC. Revenue exceeded \$1.5M.

People who work at PPC generally seek part time work, which supplements their income from a Disability Support Pension. An increasing number of the employees at the three factories see the time spent there as a step towards moving to the open labour market, and, more importantly, a part of their recovery journey. Each PPC site has a team leader and supervisors to assist employees to perform the jobs required, and Peer Workers to support them in those areas of work and in the areas of day to day living they find challenging.

At its four factories in Marrickville, Harris Park, Seven Hills and West Ryde, PPC offers packing, shrink wrapping, collating, blister packing, and light assembly. PPC customers include Colgate/Palmolive, Commonwealth Bank, NSW Government, Woolworths, Shiseido, Bremick, and Grasshopper.

Another division provides document scanning and secured document destruction services. This service includes file preparation, scanning, indexing and warehousing for office files, maps, plans, and any archived files. There is a growing market for these services, because they allow businesses to share files locally and globally, reducing office clutter and solving storage issues and file security problems. Moving in line with global trends, PPC is transitioning into providing ‘pick and pack’ services for major companies too. These are exciting new areas for PPC as it offers people seeking to broaden their work readiness the opportunity to gain new skills.

## RENEWABLE RECYCLERS

Over the 2013-2014 year, 15 people held down a part time or full time job at Renewable Recyclers.

Renewable Recyclers reduces, reuses and recycles electronic waste (e-waste) in order to create green jobs and training opportunities for people with barriers to mainstream employment in the Illawarra region. By diverting e-waste from landfill and recovering valuable non-renewable resources that would otherwise go to waste, Renewable Recyclers is working towards a sustainable Illawarra through a range of e-waste management solutions.

Renewable Recyclers has over 50 corporate clients from whom over 500 tonnes of e-waste was processed in 2012/13. The business is struggling under newly adopted Stewardship Protocols introduced by the Commonwealth Government which were designed to divert e-waste from landfill but have failed so far to provide viability for recycling operators.

Since opening its doors in March 2010, the enterprise has picked up some impressive awards. These have included 2011 NSW Regional Achievement and Community Awards for the Business and Employment category, as a Finalist in the Manufacturing and Resources category for the Illawarra Business Awards 2012, and most recently, as Winner of the NSW Government's Green Globe 2013 Awards for Regional Sustainability.

As well as Renewable Recyclers' growing commercial success, its contribution to employment in the Illawarra is equally important. The majority of the staff are people who have experienced social disadvantage and have been recruited through our local partnership with Salvation Army Employment Plus. When various disadvantaged niche communities band together to work towards their common good, outcomes for all are amplified, strengthening and bolstering heterogeneous, resilient communities where disadvantage is simultaneously overcome.

## FIGTREE CONFERENCE CENTRE

Over the 2013-2014 year, 6 people held down a casual, part time or full time job (or did either a training placement or a traineeship) at Figtree Conference Centre.

Figtree Conference Centre is another social enterprise initiative of RichmondPRA. It is a purpose-built function centre in the RichmondPRA headquarters at Sydney Olympic Park, and catered for corporate and social conferences, events and exhibitions in 2013 - 2014. Bookings are growing exponentially.

The key difference is that the centre offers extraordinary social returns by creating supported work and career opportunities for people who live with a mental illness.

Go here to look at the venue's newly launched website [www.figtreecc.org.au](http://www.figtreecc.org.au)

Figtree Conference Centre provides:

- + An open-plan conference space with flexible partitioning to cater for between 5 and 250 people;
- + Technologically enabled facilities
- + Full access for people with disability;
- + A separate open-plan gallery for exhibitions and displays;
- + Outdoor space, accessible for break-out discussions etc;
- + An industrial kitchen with prime catering facilities, providing for basic through to premium catering requirements depending on function and budget.

Each employee is trained and mentored in the areas of conference, event, exhibition and catering management by industry experts. Vocational services give employees tailored training, mentorship and direction along with access to TAFE courses.

By encouraging employees to interact, achieve goals and make a productive contribution, their self-esteem is boosted and their recovery journey supported. Because the Centre is a commercial enterprise, employees strive to ensure that guests' expectations are met and that the overall enterprise returns a profit. Profits are fed back into the enterprise to invest in enhancing customer experience and learning experiences for employees.

## KWIK KOPY

Over the 2013-2014 year, 4 people held down a part time or full time job at Kwik Kopy.

Opening in August 2013, it took RichmondPRA just 10 months to move from the bottom performing Kwik Kopy franchise (a logical place to start on Day 1) to the rank of 66 out of the 108 Kwik Kopy franchises nationally as benchmarked by Kwik Kopy Head Office.

## THE HISTORY OF OUR KWIK KOPY FRANCHISE

Buckprint Graphics as a business operated by RichmondPRA had provided design and printing services in Sydney's Surry Hills since 1988. It has been a valuable source of work training opportunities for many of RichmondPRA's clients in the 25 years it operated. In 2011 a decision was taken to modernise this business model so that it could maintain competitiveness in a high tech environment, and offer employment more relevant to the needs of today's job seekers. RichmondPRA decided to invest in the purchase of a Kwik Kopy franchise as a way of remaining in the design and print business, and a unique partnership with Kwik Kopy Australia was developed. By purchasing the franchise, RichmondPRA has access to a proven business model based on high levels of technical expertise, great customer service and a respected name in the industry.

The decision was also taken to establish the new business as a social enterprise. This means that, even though they will probably move ultimately into jobs in the open labour market, employees of this Kwik Kopy franchise will receive support from RichmondPRA in their mental health recovery. This innovative response to the challenge of finding employment solutions for people with psychosocial disabilities was recognised with the awarding of a grant from the Commonwealth to assist in the transition of Buckprint into the new Kwik Kopy social enterprise. The new business opened its door in August 2013.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

“Together, we’re better” has proven to be a wonderful description of the outcome of the merger as we are witnessing the full effects of this inspired and ambitious process.



**It is now more than two years since the merger of Richmond Fellowship NSW and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia to create RichmondPRA. “Together, we’re better” has proven to be a wonderful description of the outcome of the merger as we are witnessing the full effects of this inspired and ambitious process.**

The fact that the merger has so compellingly met the aspirations of the Board is a credit to the management team and all staff as they have had to deal with many issues which could not have been foreseen before we embarked on this task. It is also a sign of the commitment of the individuals who have comprised the Board during this period. The Board has functioned effectively and admirably in leading the organisation at this time. It has been my privilege to be a part of this development and I thank all members for their support.

It is important to note that the merger was completed in an environment of substantial external change which placed additional demands on the senior leadership team to ensure that

our objective of a “business as usual” approach to our services to clients was achieved during this period. During the year, the organisation developed a Recovery Action Framework as our service plan which enables and promotes recovery for all those who access our services.

Whilst the organisation has a well-developed three year strategic plan which is being progressively implemented by Pamela Rutledge, our Chief Executive Officer, the Board faces a number of strategic challenges moving forward. These include the future branding of RichmondPRA, the future shape and direction of our business activities, re-generation of the Board and further growth opportunities. An outline of our thinking in each of these areas follows;

+ At the time of the merger it was realised that the appropriate name of the organisation going forward would need more detailed review to better reflect our commitment to assisting those with a lived experience of mental health issues on their recovery journey. The Board has been working with management and external consultants to develop a new brand for the organisation that can convey our commitment to the needs of the individual in promoting recovery and mental wellbeing.

+ We have been pioneers in the development of social enterprises and community businesses to assist those who have some form of work as part of their recovery goal to achieve that outcome. We are continually challenged by external competition and the needs of those that we assist to review the future shape and direction of our business models. We need to develop our capacity to assist our people to meaningfully develop their work potential through new business ventures, peer workers and appropriate commercial support functions.

+ The Board - which came together at the time of the merger - has served the organisation wonderfully during this process and recognises there is a need to provide for the ongoing regeneration of the skills and vibrancy of the Board. We have recently conducted a detailed review of the Board and the requirements of the organisation in the future and will be putting in place a program of Board regeneration to reflect these requirements.

+ Our recent past has clearly demonstrated the benefits of selective growth through merger activity and we believe there will be other opportunities to use this process to build a bigger, better and more innovative basis for servicing the needs of those who we assist.

These issues are clearly on the Board’s agenda. Given the nature of the landscape in which we work there will be other challenges ahead for the Board in the future.

**On behalf of the Board I wish to thank Pamela, the Leadership Team and all the staff of RichmondPRA for their commitment and contribution to this wonderful organisation.**

**JOHN HALL  
CHAIRMAN**



## BOARD MEMBERS

### **CHAIRMAN JOHN HALL, MBA, FAICD**

John's background is in financial markets and corporate governance. He is currently Chairman of the Bank of China (Australia) Limited and his executive positions have included Chief Executive Officer, Australian Institute of Company Directors, Managing Director, Austraclear Limited and Chief Executive of the International Banks and Securities Association. Previously John was the Chairman of the Board for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia for 10 years.

### **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN BRUCE ALCORN**

Bruce is a consultant specialising in the management and governance of not-for-profit organisations and reviews their programs and operations. He has led some of Australia's largest community service organisations, and has created and chaired a number of boards. Positions he has held include: Director of Community Welfare for the Northern Territory, Director Policy and Planning for Family and Community Services NSW, CEO of the Spastic Centre of NSW, Executive Director UnitingCare Queensland, and Executive Director UnitingCare Ageing NSW.

### **TREASURER STAN BROGAN, FCA, FGI, FAICD**

Stan continues to serve the RichmondPRA board, after having continuous service in the Mental Health industry from when he joined the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia's Board in 1995, after he retired as a partner of then Price Waterhouse. Stan holds a number of private company directorships. His accounting knowledge and business acumen continue to benefit the RichmondPRA board.

### **DR. ANDY CAMPBELL**

Andy is a psychiatrist with over 40 years' experience in public mental health services. He has regularly worked as a member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal and advised the Centre for Mental Health while providing teaching services to the NSW Institute of Psychiatry. Andy is also a founding member of TheMHS, the major provider of conferences for mental health workers in Australia. He is a convener of the Comprehensive Area Service Psychiatrist Group.



#### LEFT TO RIGHT

John Hall, Stan Brogan, Paul Clenaghan, Dr. Andy Campbell, Robyn Carmody, Desley Casey, Richard Gulley AM, Bruce Alcorn, David Sharland. *Absent: Dr. Neil Phillips*

#### **ROBYN CARMODY**

Robyn's involvement with people with mental disabilities commenced 15 years ago when she was involved in the care of a person who was suffering from a mental illness. Her involvement with the provision of facilities for those with mental illness and their carers has included a position on the Managing Board of Pioneer Clubhouse, as well as involvement with the provision of respite facilities for carers of people with mental illness. Robyn brings a range of personal and industry experience and a community point of view about health services.

#### **DESLEY CASEY**

Desley is a prominent mental health consumer activist. She has led Community Connections, a consumer operated service of Consumer Activity Network (Mental Health), since its inception. She has organised numerous forums, personal development opportunities for clients and consumers and mental health promotional events, and is a strong champion of programs that promote recovery.

#### **PAUL CLENAGHAN**

Paul is the Community and Partnerships Manager for Mental Health Services in the area of Sydney stretching from Redfern to Bankstown. As a qualified psychiatric nurse, he holds a Masters in Nursing and a Post Graduate Diploma in Nursing Management. He has a long record of service (over 25 years) to people experiencing psychosocial disadvantage, their care and support. He has published and presented on issues in mental health drug health and partnerships.

#### **RICHARD GULLEY AM, RFD, BA, LLB**

Richard is a solicitor and a Deputy President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal. He is an Accredited Mediator and Arbitrator. Richard has been a member of the Council of the Law Society of NSW, and has chaired numerous committees of the Society. In addition he was a director of the Legal Aid Commission of NSW for 19 years. In 2003 he received an Order of Australia for services to the Law and the Legal Profession.

#### **DR. NEIL PHILLIPS**

Neil is currently a Consultant Psychiatrist for Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney and Senior Specialist Psychiatrist for Greater Western Area Health Service. He broadcasts on mental health and human relationships on the "Drive" show on ABC Radio 702, and has published books for consumers and carers about psychiatric disorders. He was a former board member of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia.

#### **DAVID SHARLAND**

David has a finance controller background, holding chief financial officer and general manager roles in large private and public sector businesses. He is a Fellow of CPA Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors. David has held directorships in the private and public sectors, and provides training to directors and Boards in corporate governance and financial management.

## STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

RichmondPRA is committed to implementing the highest standards of Corporate Governance, reflecting our belief that only by recognising and implementing these high standards can we fulfil our obligations to a wide range of parties including the people who use our services, their families, our staff, employees, funding bodies and the community at large.

The Board has adopted a formal Charter setting out the functions reserved to the Board and those delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Board's role is to set the strategic direction, governance and policy framework for the organisation, then to monitor and evaluate the organisation's service and financial performance. The CEO is responsible to the Board for the management of RichmondPRA, for the implementation of the strategic direction set by the Board, and the effective performance of the organisation.

RichmondPRA's Board currently comprises 10 members, all of whom are Non-Executive Directors. No Directors receive remuneration from RichmondPRA. All Directors are required to act in the interests of the organisation, in accordance with its mission and values. Directors are recruited to provide an appropriate mix of professional and life experience to deliver value to RichmondPRA. The Board renews its membership in a progressive and orderly manner, and Directors are elected or appointed for three year terms. Staff members of RichmondPRA are not permitted to be a Director.

The Board of RichmondPRA has established three standing committees to assist in its governance and monitoring roles. As committees of the Board, they advise the Board on specific areas and make recommendations for the full Board's approval.

Each committee has a Charter which includes Terms of Reference, clearly defining their role, procedures and functions, and these are ratified by the full Board. Committees may co-opt outside members from time to time in order to bring additional skills and experience to their deliberations.

From time to time the Board may establish special purpose committees or working groups to address a particular task or issue.

The three standing committees are :

### AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

This committee is tasked with assisting the Board in fulfilling its statutory obligations, implementing sound corporate governance, and overseeing the Board's responsibilities in relation to risk management, external and internal audit, and internal control functions.

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

This committee is tasked with overseeing the Board's responsibilities in relation to financial and commercial management and reporting, investment and borrowing policy and management, and endorsement of the annual budget and underlying assumptions. Major investments and capital purchases are referred to the Finance Committee for review prior to approval by the Board.

### SERVICES COMMITTEE

This committee is tasked with assisting the Board in fulfilling its obligations, and overseeing the Board's responsibilities and commitments in relation to service quality and client satisfaction, program development and innovation, and evaluation and continuous improvement. Objectives of the committee include providing advice to management on systems and approaches for measuring the quality and effectiveness of the organisation's psychosocial programs and services, advising the Board on these important services, receiving reports from the Independent Advocate and reporting on these to the Board.

The Board has processes in place to regularly review its composition and annually evaluates its collective and individual Directors' performance and development needs. This review covers a range of issues including the Board's role and processes, interaction with management, and Director's contribution to the ongoing performance and strategic direction of RichmondPRA.

RichmondPRA respects and values our members. Our annual general meeting provides an opportunity for members and other stakeholders to meet with and question the board and management of RichmondPRA.

# ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



## CEO'S REPORT

This year has seen RichmondPRA engage with Government in the significant change and reform program underway in the mental health sector. We are well positioned for ongoing growth and achievement.



**As always, everything we do is aimed at making a difference for those who matter most – our consumers and clients who live with mental health issues. With such change afoot, the opportunity to report on happenings and achievements relevant to our clients and consumers is timely.**

The theme of change was obvious in the political arena with the Abbott coalition Government coming to power in 2013 and mental health remaining a topic of national discussion. The political shift resulted in few funding upsets, although two key funding bodies - FaHCSIA and DEEWR - were re-organised under one department, largely to facilitate better pathways under the historic National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The year was also marked by the National Mental Health Commission undertaking a major review of mental health requirements and the NSW Government considering its response to the NSW Commission's Strategic Plan.

RichmondPRA continued with political engagement at the highest levels, from

the offices of the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader down. We strive to be seen, heard and understood in political circles to inform policy development with client and consumer needs foremost in mind.

We are well into our multi-year Strategic Plan. A broad and long-term objective is to make inroads into each State and Territory - in addition to the footholds we have in New South Wales and Queensland - as per our goal of shifting further towards becoming a truly national service provider. As such we've been busy canvassing various tender opportunities. It was pleasing to see our contracts for community based mental health services in Caboolture and Hervey Bay renewed for another three years.

It's been an exhaustive year planning for branding change so we can be better identified amongst our stakeholders. Headed by our Chief Development Officer Phil Nadin, an in-house branding committee engaged a leading branding consultant to research what people think of 'RichmondPRA' as a name. The clear feedback was that the name - which was only ever considered a temporary name at the time of The Richmond Fellowship of NSW and PRA merging - has too many limitations. We've thrown the net out to everyone who has an interest in what we do and some fantastic ideas on a new name, look and feel have been pulled in. We're now at the pointy end of the rebranding journey and I'm confident that we'll be launching our new name and look early in 2015. Watch this space.

I must make special mention of Janet Meagher, who up until recently was RichmondPRA's General Manager, Inclusion. Janet, who has been a redoubtable advocate for the rights and needs of people with a lived experience of mental illness, decided to retire after 12 years with

the organisation. Her contributions have been immeasurable. Janet takes credit for designing and implementing many of the services and approaches which we regard as fundamental to our work, including the Back on Track Health Program and most recently our Recovery Action Framework. I have only known Janet for a few years and only worked with her during the past two years, but her skills and intellect have had a significant impact on my role as CEO. I have come to regard her as a mentor in my ongoing learning about recovery and the perspectives of the people we work with. Janet assured that her decision to leave is made with every confidence that the organisation is moving in the right direction. Thank you Janet.

With so much pivoting on NDIS, we were incredibly lucky to secure Fay Jackson as our new General Manager Inclusion in April 2014. Fay is a widely known and respected consumer advocate and also NSW Deputy Mental Health Commissioner. To further assist the NDIS process Fay and Program Manager for Peer Workforce Peter Farrugia are developing a proposal around Peer Workers supporting and advocating for people who rely on NDIS packages. This will ensure better outcomes for people in need of assistance and consolidate community awareness that RichmondPRA is a service of choice. The community business peer team has developed a new training program for staff delivering the CANSAS assessment and training has been delivered to 90 staff at 15 sites. Overall our Peer Workforce has grown by more than 30 percent over the past year.

The NDIS has kept us busy in the New South Wales Hunter region where we've been handling critical pilot work. In early June 55 clients had transitioned, with another 11 in train. Special acknowledgement goes to

local manager Mark Cliff and his team who have worked so hard to make this process as smooth as possible.

A highlight of the year was the Partners in Recovery (PIR) initiative commencing in the New South Wales New England area. Our General Manager Operations North West Aidan Conway spent considerable time with local manager Jim Booth as RichmondPRA led a consortium of established service providers to get PIR up and running. A formal launch and open-invitation forum was held. Both achieved widespread media coverage as part of a communications campaign to educate the community about PIR. Speakers at the forum included NSW Mental Health Commissioner John Feneley, Janet Meagher and many other notable contributors. Some 100 people are already receiving better care under the local PIR initiative and that number will grow over the next year.

We also got PIR off and running in the Greater Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes regions.

Similarly to New England, PIR in these regions was front and centre of community attention following a successful media launch which generated a groundswell of interest for our PIR 'Recovery in Action' forum which, beyond expectations, was attended by 170 people. It was the perfect occasion to gather information on what local people with mental health issues want and need. Congratulations to Chris Cassar and the local team.

The interesting point about both NDIS and PIR is that even though they are new programs that will provide people with psychosocial disabilities a much broader range of opportunities for support, they are nevertheless programs that are quite consistent with RichmondPRA's long standing philosophy and service ethos. Both programs focus on providing consumers choice and control over the services they access. Yet individual choice and control are at the heart of the psychosocial model that has guided and informed our work for nearly two decades, from when we first came to

be embrace the concept of recovery. So, while we are excited about new developments in the sector, and the benefits they can provide to people who look for our support, we are also quietly confident of our ability to continue to provide services that meet people in the place they are at, to listen to what it is that they need, what it is that they want to achieve, and to work alongside them at the pace they choose to achieve it.

Speaking of programs, our \$9.6M three-year HASI Plus accommodation program was implemented in both Tamworth and the Hunter. As part of this we are renovating the Minoa Court residential complex in Tamworth where upgrade works are well underway. This HASI Plus program provides 24 hour support for 19 clients across the two regions.

The Young People's Outreach Program in Penrith enjoyed notable successes during the year. The first of these came when we presented evaluation findings on the program and its outcomes which secured Health Department funding to allow for continuation of the program for another year. These findings include a remarkable 80% reduction in the rate of hospitalization for young people in the program. On the back of this evidence, the second success was in having the program expanded into South Eastern Sydney with new funding for three positions across the Local Health District to assist up to 16 young people.

Congratulations are in order for our Employment Services group given that our Ostara Disability Employment Services (DES) sites at Redfern, Liverpool and Armidale were all star-rated, with our Armidale office performance continuing to lead all of Ostara.

Our Pre-Employ Institute inducted 53 new participants with many taking up a range of work placements outside of RichmondPRA services - a very good outcome.

To maintain our current Quality Assurance Accreditation, a re-certification audit against the

Disability Service Standards for 13 sites was undertaken. It was recommended that our system be re-certified for the next 3 years. Sample auditing confirmed that RichmondPRA has an effective Quality Management System in place, which is a validation of the quality of service we provide.

A cross-section of RichmondPRA staff has been involved in the development of a Recovery Action Plan - a vital organisation-wide service improvement project. It was also a big year in terms of progressing our Workforce Harmonisation process to ensure we bring our people together under consistent position titles, classifications and reporting lines. A new Code of Conduct and Ethics policy was finalized following wide consultation with staff and clients. These changes are a must if we are to continue growing and leading the way in our field.

To many of us the inner workings of IT usually seem somewhere between complex and bamboozling, so how could I not make special mention of our tireless IT team? During the year they developed a New Intranet, Chirp, and Board Portal systems and there was a consolidation of the Network and VOIP which included 64 sites being visited. Thank you "Team IT".

With change and growth comes office relocations and consolidations and plenty of these took place throughout the year to take advantage of new opportunities, but also to amalgamate some offices including Seven Hills, Bega, Moree, Minoa Court Tamworth, Tumut, Goulburn, Maitland, Cooma, Griffith and more recently the Dubbo and Ulladulla offices.

**Finally, we all owe a very big thank you to the Board for its continuing support and energy as we continue our journey of growth. We can't maintain a focus on our clients and consumers without backing from the very top, and that backing, led by John Hall, makes all the difference when it comes to delivering results.**

**PAMELA RUTLEDGE**  
**CEO**

## ORGANISATIONAL ACTIVITIES

# First and foremost, we have gone where the evidence leads – a principle we have applied over many years.

Over 2013-2014, RichmondPRA has moved forward on a range of fronts. RichmondPRA has been thrilled to be part of that moment in our nation's history where recognition of the need to support mental health in the community has reached an unprecedented level of exposure in the popular consciousness. It's only logical based on reality: 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental health issue. First and foremost, we have gone where the evidence leads - a principle we have applied over many years. Operating across numerous Aboriginal countries in NSW and Queensland, our ties with and into diverse communities, with businesses and with all three levels of government have been strengthened. We now operate in more places than ever before. Our reach has extended well beyond traditional community based mental health.

The past year has been one of transition for the sector. All sorts of service rollouts in mental health have highlighted a number of new service partners and partnerships. We've got a better sense of openness and real collaboration. Small spinoffs are occurring such as partnership between CareConnect and RichmondPRA in Bankstown. We've moved in with BreakThru in Dubbo as co-location was the smart thing to do to better service consumers in the region. There have been lots of good, unintended consequences.

By partnering with non-mental health services, we're creating an awareness amongst them that 20% of people have a mental health issue - that means 20% of their clients! They look to us as role models on embracing inclusion. It's great to be a part of that shift within other services. It means people living with mental illness are starting to be serviced better by other specialist and mainstream providers, showing we're helping to break down stigma and isolation. This is a great thing!

In 1:1 service provision right through to development at a service level, our core business is still about having critical, crucial conversations about the nature of recovery. We appreciate that recovery doesn't mean people are bereft of symptoms, it just means supporting people to live their lives filled with things they want, with a sense of hope and the equanimity to be able to manage their mental health. At the same time, we aim to be ever better skilled in seeing the similarities and differences between what a consumer and their family member(s) may want. Our allegiance is to people with lived experience of mental health issues but we by no means ignore their families. People's social and emotional wellbeing is often closely associated with their families - we ignore them at their peril. This is why we operate 3 programs for Carers - 2 respite programs at Penrith and My Time at Broken Hill.

Awareness raising and education by many well-regarded government initiatives implemented by organisations such as Beyond Blue, Black Dog Institute and others has penetrated public discourse. It has led to unprecedented levels of knowledge about mental health, wellbeing and generated conversations that can start with as simple a question as R U OK? RichmondPRA's new, practice and behaviour oriented Recovery Action Framework - launched in 2014, developed using our Communities of Practice model - is our unique contribution to this widening discussion. We're initiating and having these conversations every day. What's more, we're doing it in communities who have had little to do with mental health services in the past due to choice, fear of stigma or plain lack of access.

The Recovery Action Framework's central motivating belief: people can, and do, recover from mental illness. The Recovery Action Framework and its 8 Organisational Accountabilities are part of our continuous improvement program and proclaims that our fundamental commitment is to people with personal lived experience who access our services: they are our collaborators in service delivery, the management of their mental health issues and evaluating how well we respond to them.

The flow on effects will make us more person-facing and put us in a better position to respond to the emerging requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and new funding arrangements being introduced by a range of programs. As a Registered Provider through the NDIS Pilot Site rollout in the Hunter Area, we were successfully providing support to 58 people as at 30 June 2014 and this is growing from month to month. Our participation in the Newcastle pilot has been fruitful. The result: our ability to meet people where they are has been enhanced. Claims lodged every month have been paid - our transactional systems are in place and are working to support our fabulous staff, the people who deliver on our mission, to support people living with mental health issues achieve their goals.

Our quarterly consumer mouthpiece *Panorama*, issued its 50th edition this year. Our warm congratulations go out to Warren Heggarty, Publications Officer and Consumer Journalist Cadet Grant Fitter on this achievement. *Connections*, our organisation's quarterly publication in addition to other media pieces, continues to publicise the work we do - our achievements and most importantly, the perspectives of people with lived experience.



As one of her final acts prior to retirement, Janet Meagher AM, our former General Manager - Inclusion presented on the work being achieved by RichmondPRA at the 2013 World Mental Health Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health in Buenos Aires held in August, 2013. Reports back from the rest of the RichmondPRA delegation who travelled at their own expense as a mark of their dedication, were that Janet was literally 'mobbed' as people lined up for autographs and photos. Janet connected with everyone.

When Janet retired we were delighted to locate another person with lived experience to add to the mix of the Senior Management Team, someone with other equally important perspectives to share. Fay Jackson, our recently recruited General Manager - Inclusion says:

*"What I prize in myself I see in RichmondPRA - the marriage of being fragile and fierce.*

*My fragility I can use to fiercely advocate for other people and improving the system.*

*My fragility informs my experience and what I believe is needed to bring about positive change.*

*This makes me strong.*

*Fragile and fierce is not bereft of each other and is seen most easily in the connection, the bond between parent and child.*

*Although the analogy is not meant to indicate a parental attitude towards people living with mental health issues, it does give you a sense of how we need to see ourselves in relationship, in connection to other people."*

## NEW WAYS OF BUILDING COMMUNITIES, INDIVIDUAL WELLBEING AND CONNECTION IN THE COMMUNITY

We've made some very conscious decisions about which tenders to go for. The bottom line: we submit an Expression of Interest or tender response if the initiative accords with our values. We're not an organisation who's about to engage in growth for growth's sake. We undertake 'Capacity', 'Capability' and 'Fit' tests on every opportunity presenting. For example, when the Bail Support Program we've been involved in for several years wound up during the financial year, we didn't respond to the next Corrective Services tender as we determined that it was no longer a service we felt fitted our service ethos.

The rollout of the NDIS has been part of the system wide reform we have embraced. Based on the national program reforming how mental health services are delivered, we've become closely involved with Partners in Recovery (PIR) initiative, which is aimed at facilitating better coordination of and more streamlined access to the clinical and other service and support needs of people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs requiring a multi-agency response. We recognise that there are a number of sectors central to the success of this initiative: primary care (health and mental health), the state and territory specialist mental health systems, the mental health and broader non-government sector, alcohol and other drug treatment services, income support services, as well as education, employment and housing supports. PIR supports the multi-service integration and coordination needed to ensure services and supports are matched to people's need. We're seeing an increase in knowledge management across sectors to respond to the

needs and aspirations of people with lived experience to proactively self-manage their health in the community, thereby decreasing the need for more costly clinical intervention, minimising the number of critical incidents and reducing hospitalisation rates.

Based on our capabilities that testify to our ability to realise this ideal yet difficult to achieve vision, RichmondPRA won lead agency status in New England for Partners in Recovery Program (NEPIR). Additionally, we are part of another ten Partners in Recovery consortiums across NSW through which we are providing - in collaboration with different partners in each area - coordinated support and flexible funding for people with severe and persistent mental health issues who have complex needs. RichmondPRA were one of only 5 Non Medicare Locals to achieve lead agency status in Australia. The effect of all this involvement in the PIR program positions RichmondPRA as one of the most experienced PIR organisations in NSW. It is marvellous to see that organisations are taking a more coordinated, holistic view of a person. It sets a good precedent for sector transformation towards more person-focussed services. Non-mental health services have realised that they can support people with mental illness.

At the statewide level, under the Drought Assistance Program, RichmondPRA started to provide support to rural communities to run events that benefitted farming and other local families in 5 out of the 7 worst drought affected areas in north-western NSW. More events will roll out over the next year. By doing this, we're making sure our freecall assistance number is on a vivid fridge magnet stuck on the fridge of every rural household in the affected regions. We will be there for rural families, helping them through the rough times.

While parts of NSW are experiencing the best autumn in living memory, conditions in the state's north west are worse than they were during the devastating millennium drought. Businesses are going broke, farmers are facing successive years without an income and dozens of families are leaving small country towns. Agronomist Greg Rummery says it's very dry, continuing: "Plenty of farmers in the region would have had their driest 12 month period (in) probably 100 to 130 years." Walgett Shire Mayor and mixed farmer, Bill Murray, says this drought is particularly tough, "In my lifetime this is the worst drought I've seen."

No Feed + No Water = Hard Times.

Farmers have sent their stock out on agistment to others areas. This is an expensive option. Some have sold stock off and took whatever price offered to keep food on the family dinner table. Farming families keep minimal stock in these times and work from daylight to dark feeding and watering their animals. It's a lonely existence for all the family members. So, RichmondPRA sponsor events like the Bando Station Hay Run. Farmers in Southern NSW and in Western Australia heard of the need for stock feed in Walgett Shire. After having had a couple of good seasons, they had some surplus and were ready to give their farming mates a hand. Truckie mates heard of the need to move the feed and that is what happened:

35 B-double trucks laden with hay headed for the farmers out west. The Western Australian truckies loaded and hit the Nullabor Highway bound for Burrumbuttock, the convoy meeting place. The ultimate destination: Lightning Ridge. Bando Station is 35kms north of Lightning Ridge and is the home of the Turnbull Family. At Bando Station, we saw the unloading of the 35 trucks of hay.

# GREG CARLSON'S STORY

## LIVING MY PASSION

I was born in Tasmania. Mum and dad split up when I was young. After Dad left to make a new home for us, mum surrendered us to child 'protection' and we were put in foster care. Dad had been homeless and been in gaol but he made a place for us to come and live with him. The government wouldn't let us go live with him because of his criminal record - there was no regard for the effort he'd made or understanding that people can make mistakes but can also redeem themselves.

I lived in 48 foster care homes between the ages of 5 and 13. I was shunted between institutions, group homes and foster families. My life in government care was pretty horrendous. At 13, I ran away. I paid a guy to say he was my father and sign a waiver so I could hop on the boat and go to Melbourne. I lived on the streets. I started using drugs. I ended up in gaol for assaults on police and committing a series of robberies; it was all drug related. I didn't know how to get myself out of the mess I was in. I couldn't read or write because my schooling was all over the show and so finding work was difficult.

In 2004, I sued the Tasmanian government for the abuse I'd experienced in care and I won. But I was still an addict then, using drugs and drinking. With a goatee, a bald head and teeth missing - people think I must be bad news. No one wants to listen and help you get settled in one spot. You move because you can't find work. I sold 'The Big Issue' in city after city for a while. I moved from boarding house to boarding house, homeless shelter to homeless shelter looking for a dry, drug-free place to stay sober and sort out my life. No boarding house or homeless shelter I've stayed in has ever been drug and alcohol free - even though it's in their rules. Residents pick fights with you when they're drunk or on drugs and they'll pick on you especially if you're trying to stay clean. Staying out of the way of those who want to pick fights was another reason to move. Of course, surrounded by all these men who've fallen off the wagon, I went bust more times than I can remember. But I was trying to stay clean - there was just no place where I could do that.

And to be honest, it became very hard to give up the transient life: it's an addiction in and of itself. The fear kept getting to me. When you've been kicked in the guts so many times, you're so disheartened and you think "What's the point in trying?" And moving is all I knew. You went from one sort of trouble to another and to sort it out, you move on.

Charity organisations kept making judgements about me. A couple of years ago when I'd been out of cancer surgery for 1 week and with 150

stitches in my face, I went with my RichmondPRA support worker to a charity asking for help. The woman there asked me, 'Why haven't you got a job? Why should we help you?' When they realised how wrong they'd been about 3 hours later, they rang my support worker and apologised. They didn't even have the decency to apologise to me. I was invisible.

By the time I was 39 I ended up staying at the Tamworth Homeless Men's Shelter - a Tamworth Partners in Recovery member. I'd been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and they made the referral to Linkages in September 2012 on the basis of that. I'd been in Tamworth for 2 years at that stage and I realised that it was the longest I'd ever lived in any one area. I was almost not allowed into the Linkages program - it took over 2 months to get me accepted. I was on the verge of moving again when I got the acceptance. Shane, my case manager at the shelter, he believed me. Everyone thought I was bullshitting about the abuse I'd gone through - until my file got sent up from Tasmania and then I could prove that this really did happen to me. It's a terrible thing not being believed.

At the same time, Linkages also supported me to apply and be selected to give evidence at the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. I felt a much stronger person after telling my story, but I will never have closure on the issue and this is why programs like Linkages need to exist. I'm not sure I'll ever understand the reason why the government ended the Linkages program. It's a stupid decision. Linkages gave me structure, a base to build my life from by showing me a better way of living. I'm pretty sure it saved my life. I lost so many friends to suicide, murder and gaol. People like myself. It can be avoided.

Linkages helped me get my own place, and then helped me get a computer. Funnily enough, that opened up a whole other world to me.

I met my partner Deb on the internet and she came to live with me. Together, we've bought a second hand furniture business - Wyse Byse in Tamworth. Antiques and second hand furniture is an absorbing interest for both of us. Considering what I came from, I never thought I would have anything. I thought I would always be on the streets. I guess collecting all these old and interesting wares - even though I pass them on to other people - is a way for me to reclaim all those years when all I'd have was 2 bags of clothes going from one boarding house to the next. Wyse Byse is dedicated to my dad. It's a silent promise to him every day to keep going. Now, I live my passion. I'm passionate about helping other people turn their life around and at 41, I've got a lot of time ahead of me to do just that. I want to start my own organisation, help men get back on track. The business is going well and I don't think it'll be too far off!

I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT  
HELPING OTHER  
PEOPLE TURN THEIR  
LIFE AROUND.



The Rotary Club came in to cook up a feast with the food brought by service providers who also brought along staff willing and keen to have a chat and provide a listening ear. It resulted in a great night out and a celebratory respite from the worries and troubles of farming life. And practically, it hit the right note: it gave farmers hay to take back to their own farms.

Realising that schools are close to the heart of local communities, we provided financial assistance to mount Dunedoo Central School Gala Art Day attracting students, parents and teachers from 4 schools across the Warrumbungle LGA. At the Gala Art Day, RichmondPRA staff provided local information and online referral pathways, resources and information sessions to school children and their families. We conducted information and training sessions for the Principal, teachers and office staff and provided resources to keep at the local schools to ensure ongoing information for students, teachers, parents and carers.

It has been heart warming to deliver aid to communities in distress and help businesses do the same. This has, in turn, generated business in rural areas allowing jobs to be saved in drought-affected towns - whether it's selling the food, printing flyers or the numerous other things it takes to pull various events off. It is through events such as these that we can seed, initiate and/or contribute to singularly important ripple effects that make a difference to rural and remote communities. It's throwing our hardest hit Australians - the ones that bring food to our tables and who help grow Australia's export markets - a lifeline. We leave behind resources to ensure their connection to ongoing support.

Our Housing and Support Initiative (HASI) programs have grown in various sites across NSW. We opened an Aboriginal HASI at Seven Hills as a pilot in Sydney - the biggest such Aboriginal HASI program we've had to date, following on from our successes in Batemans Bay, Griffith and Broken Hill. In keeping with our commitment to develop culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consumers, we've recruited 5 Aboriginal staff. We've secured new HASI Plus (24 hour, staff on site) accommodation support packages for additional people in Tamworth and Newcastle with some places reserved by the Minister for prisoner release program as a late addition to the service offering in the area.

As part of the 'Going Home, Staying Home' reform, we secured the new 'Homes North' services for men. So far, we've supported 30 clients with a 94% success rate. We were successful in retaining the FACS funded Women and Children's Program component of this program under the Going Home Staying Home reform. It's always gratifying to know that government appreciates the work you've done to make an initiative successful and decides to re-fund the organisation to continue delivering it, despite the need to re-engineer aspects of the program in line with the latest research and best practice.

Another important role we perform is supporting people with lived experience to feed back to government - which brings government and its role into the community and makes the workings of government accessible. The Maclure Report Focus Groups early in 2014 were a perfect example of this. The Maclure Report focus groups were

held in a variety of locations across the organisation and included face-to-face groups and others held using technology!

With approximately 137 participants, people with lived experience were extended an opportunity to have a say about the upcoming proposed changes to the Australian social welfare safety net and felt supported whilst doing so.

RichmondPRA obtained funding to operate 2 new initiatives Supporting Young People's Hopes and Dreams. We opened another Young Peoples Outreach Program (YPOP) in Kogarah which is being established rapidly with help from our existing YPOP in Penrith. So we're now in Kogarah covering South Eastern Local Health District for a 1-year pilot starting from 1 July 2014 as well as continuing our work at Penrith. Our first headspace Centre in Bankstown celebrates the collaboration of a culturally diverse range of local partner organisations, large and small. In Bankstown - a vibrant, energetic pocket of cosmopolitan Sydney - we are looking to provide quality early intervention support and services for young people 12-25 years of age experiencing mental health challenges. headspace Bankstown is a great consortium of both bigger and local providers. It includes the Arab Council of Australia, Transcultural Mental Health, Bankstown Multicultural Youth Service and ACON. All their support and enthusiasm has been outstanding. It was recognition of our clear focus and understanding of the diversity of young people in Bankstown based on our track record in making novel consortia work. Stay tuned for more news about headspace Bankstown in 2015.

## RICHMONDPRA SERVICE EVALUATION FEEDBACK EMPLOYMENT

A survey of the first five intakes of RichmondPRA's PreEmploy Institute found that 93% of respondents said the program helped them progress through their employment goals and 85% said it helped to enhance their employability skills.

A sample of the group found that, following the completion of the course, people had moved on to the following stages of employment:

- + Joined Ostara or another employment agency to start or continue looking for a job: **23 people**
- + Started/continued education course: **20 people**
- + Found a job or started working: **16 people**
- + Joined a social group or participated in social activities: **10 people**
- + Volunteer work: **9 people**

(Source: RichmondPRA Evaluation, Research and Service Development Team Report)



# “Scars heal. We know this because we’ve been there and have learned a lot.”

## PEER-TO-PEER SERVICES

RichmondPRA is contributing to sector evolution. We are a leading proponent of the engagement of peer workers in community based mental health services. With 43 peer workers as at 30 June 2014 and that number set to grow as positions requiring the special attributes of peer workers are identified as sites, programs and modes of service delivery change based on consumer’s self-identified need combined with those assessed through the NDIS and in line with national trends which inform national priorities. Dedicated peer work positions now exist across the breadth of NSW, including outreach support in the Bega Valley; hospital to community peer-link support in Newcastle; peer-based respite for consumers and carers in Western Sydney; psycho-social peer engagement in Wollongong and Liverpool; home-based peer support in Queanbeyan, Bourke, Parkes and Western Sydney.

In Queensland, we are responsible for a rare suite of Peer Operated services in Hervey Bay – the WarmLine, Resource Centre and Spinnaker on Spinnaker Respite House. Spinnaker on Spinnaker – a peer operated respite house in Hervey Bay – opened its doors in January 2014. It has been a splendid addition to the service suite offered through the Resource Centre which include various groups, 1:1 support and the WarmLine which operates 5-10 pm weekdays and has been an invaluable source of support to people who themselves track how they’re travelling and who choose to proactively reach out for support rather than be ‘notified’ to mental health services who can only react, which is at odds with self-management. Tamara Lunt shares her story of how connecting with the Hervey Bay Peer Operated Service helped her. We hope you’ll be as inspired by her as we are. Freeing up valuable clinical time is a strong and growing consequence of such initiatives.

We continue to explore best practice in the field of peer led recovery. Scott Gourlay on the NSW Mid North Coast has demonstrated how a consumer led, grass roots action can grow by sharing his story. Read about how simple it can appear but how challenging it can be behind the scenes. Being recognised for our support of peer-led recovery in the National Mental Health Commission’s 2013 Annual Report Card was a high point. Prominent amongst the letters to the Prime Minister is a letter from RichmondPRA’s Peer Support Manager, Peter Farrugia, in which he said:

*“Peer workers engage and mentor people to help them in their recovery efforts and personal challenges... Peer work has clear duties and real, ethical responsibility with tangible outcomes.”*

*“Scars heal. We know this because we’ve been there and have learned a lot.”*

*“Peer Workers don’t teach or strategise. We listen.”*

RichmondPRA through the good services of Peter Farrugia and Janet Ford, RichmondPRA’s Manager of Evaluation, Research and Service Development, are playing an increasing role in the development of national policy and educational qualifications for peer work, delivering another channel for peer worker input into the mental health system as a whole. MHCC in partnership with National Mental Health Commission were entrusted with implementing the National Peer Work Partnership. With our representation on the Technical Reference Group, we have seen approval given for the pilot program to start roll out from early September 2014. To cap it off, from a large field of trainers with lived experience, 3 RichmondPRA Peer Workers are helping to deliver the pilot Certificate IV Peer Work qualification. We have also contributed to consultations as part of ACON’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Working Group.



## TAMARA LUNT'S STORY

### A BEAUTIFUL, CREATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

In 2007, I lost my mum, 2 close girlfriends and my dad. All 4 people were gone within a year. I had a tooth extraction after this horrendous series of events and a brain bleed 2 days later. I went absolutely manic. Catastrophic grief combined with a major health event was a pretty potent trigger. I went feral for a couple of years - sleeping around, smoking lots of pot and living wild. I figured I would die like everyone else. Within a year, I'd spent my \$260K inheritance from my father, given away my house, car and everything else I owned to my ex-husband who - during this time - I divorced. I gave away 3 dogs I loved because I didn't know how to cope. I was overcome by grief; there was no comfort for it.

I'd laugh and cry my way through counselling sessions; I'd constantly be told I was too emotional. Medications were prescribed. I think the pot smoking became self-medication to deal with the effects of the meds I was on. I went into rehab at Transformations on the Gold Coast to get rid of the pot but I only lasted 2 weeks. But that short stretch did help as I was re-introduced to having household and personal routines - things like washing clothes and taking care of myself. I brought that kind of stuff back home with me. Rehab's not the only way to go - I took with me what I needed and I've done it differently.

Coming home, I found a great church. Truly, my congregation loved me back into good health. I also started volunteering in a local Op Shop and doing all sorts of other things to keep myself busy in order to stop myself from smoking pot. I went back to live in the flat beneath my old house now owned by my ex-husband, John. We shared custody of our son and it gave us a chance to re-establish a friendship. Well, we've been working on that for 3 years and for the most part, it's pretty good.

In mid 2013, I saw an advertisement for a job as a Peer Worker at RichmondPRA - where a lived experience of mental illness is a genuine occupational qualification. I didn't get the job but told Cheryl that I would like to volunteer my skills as a musician to help with the Thursday guitar group. We have anything from 4-8 people turn up each week and last week we performed publicly at organised community events for Mental Health Week. We did GREAT and received much complimentary feedback. RichmondPRA gave me the KICK START I needed to get back on my feet. The time I spent at the Resource Centre was of utmost benefit to me. It was a SAFE place where I could make use of my gifts and talents, where I felt accepted and that I belonged. This did a lot for my self-esteem and built my confidence.

I mosaicked a violin and made a quilt for the new Spinnaker on Spinnaker Respite House. It wasn't just the music and craft group. On Mondays, they held a women's group that was an opportunity for us to check in with one another. I found it to be a beautiful, loving environment that offered me the thing I most needed: encouragement.

I started to explore my options. As I had been playing music since the age of 4 and had taught kids with special needs, I decided to make a flyer, distribute it and see whether I could teach music. Now, I have 16 clients per week to whom I give private music lessons. I teach piano, guitar, harp and violin. I'm not a music therapist (I'm not trained!); I call myself a music mentor. I take on a special needs person and I bring out the best they have. I've been teaching some of my kids for 2 or 3 years. Their development is remarkable. There's a young girl with autism that I teach - she's recently blown me away with her progress. I have a young boy with cerebral palsy who comes and we are able to roll around on the floor and experience all the instruments I lay out on my studio floor. It's a life giving, freeing, creative experience for him.

I trained and worked as a mental retardation nurse back in the 80's but it looks a bit old on a CV. I started a Certificate III in Disability last year but I've deferred because I was getting too busy with my music students. I am now so busy with my own business that I only get to visit the Resource Centre once a week; it's like home away from home. If I'm having a difficult day, there is always a staff member available to discuss my concerns and help me to prioritise things - or just to share any achievements and progress I make.

John and I share custody of our son; I look after my son 4 weeks on and 4 weeks off. I'm still heartbroken over my marriage break up. Even though we are still best friends, vicious words were spoken, we hurt each other badly and I have come to accept that maybe, there are some things that will never be repaired.

I moved out of the downstairs flat - I think it was the right thing to do. I've been in my own home for 3 months! It's a little purple weatherboard cottage 2 blocks from the ocean, 2 blocks from the lake and 2 blocks from the botanical gardens. I'm managing to pay the \$260/week rent myself. I'm still a little behind financially - juggling bills, just like I suppose many other people are. Contentment - that's my life at the moment. It took me a long time to find it again.

CONTENTMENT -  
THAT'S MY LIFE  
AT THE MOMENT.

# SCOTT GOURLAY'S STORY

## BEING IN THE MOMENT

I've worked in some very senior positions in the IT field in some very well known companies. I was diagnosed 16 years ago. It was very different when I was diagnosed – they gave me medication, told me to keep taking it and sent me on my way. Because of my voices and depression, I get a lot of intrusive thoughts. At first, I took paid leave to cope, then I took unpaid leave and used my savings to live. I didn't take benefits. I'd go and get a job and work for 12-18 months before I lost the ability to cope with the voices. Then, I'd resign and cycle in and out of hospital for up to a year at a stretch. I walked through that revolving door year in and year out. I'd get really unwell, be in and out of hospital for a year before I'd feel sufficiently well again. I'd get another job. And get unwell. And give it up, And go into hospital. And start feeling well. And get another job with even less pressure. Not knowing how to cope would become a trigger for my illness, so I consciously stepped back down the corporate ladder with each job. I ended up homeless. Finally, I relented and I asked for help. I'm on the pension at the moment.

A lot has changed but not enough has changed. I'm told I'm too "high functioning". You need services so you can stay well enough to work. But if you're in a job and you can't see anyone after 5 pm, how do you stay well? If we want people to stay well, we've got to look at different solutions. That's what my life has turned into: a search for solutions.

I tend to isolate. I really have to challenge myself not to do it. Currently, I'm studying Certificate IV in Mental Health at TAFE. I usually do a talk to an in-patient unit on a Tuesday about recovery. I've had some good feedback. If 1 person gets some hope out of it, that's good.

I worked with Taree Partners In Recovery (PIR) to coordinate a community Mental Health Forum this year that 160 People attended! I MC'ed the day. We looked at service gaps in the area. Being part of the working party that organised the forum and MC'ing the day was both challenging and rewarding. The good part was managing the day. My voices don't like me being public so I had to manage that. So it was pretty challenging, standing up there and speaking to a lot of people, keeping it all together. I managed to overcome my anxiety. I was able to stretch myself.

I got great support from Kirsten, Christine, Chris, Jayne and Michelle around the Forum. On the day, they checked in with me to see that I was OK. The day following the Forum, Fay Jackson – RichmondPRA's General Manager - Inclusion phoned me to see that I was OK. Pam Rutledge,

RichmondPRA's CEO, Aidan Conway, General Manager and Fay had dinner with us the night before the Forum. I found that really important and validating. A lot of organisations have flowery values and a mission statement but these don't match the reality. What I found was that RichmondPRA's Senior Management Team were acting in line with their values. They called to ask how I was. They espoused the organisation's values. It was nice that they took the time out to recognise that it was difficult for me, that I was OK and appreciate that I could have experienced some fallout. Local people checked up on me as well but that senior people would take the time to do this was very special.

So, back to the Forum. We were able to gather lots of information on gaps. But, we had to ask ourselves, what are we going to do? A question I posed was: What can we do for ourselves? From that, we decided to stay together and start a community organisation: Recovery In Action. Our aim: to band together and create a peer run service. We're already running groups – strengths based groups. In weekly sessions, different groups explore how we get through various challenges as well as support each other and we share strategies on how are we going to stay well.

Recovery in Action - Australia is now going through the process of becoming an organisation with the assistance of Partners In Recovery. I currently act as Recovery in Action's Manager. I've been pleased to put my IT skills to use in having built the website [www.RIA-Australia.org](http://www.RIA-Australia.org) for which I wrote the content. I've started promoting us via social media – there's more work to do there. I facilitate the Hearing Voices Group - which we re-started as it had folded some 6 months ago – and I also chair Community Connect Day Committee on behalf of Recovery in Action, a social services community project that involves coordinating an annual expo day for local services. It used to be solely focussed around homelessness but it has become a lot more inclusive of services for all sorts of people who require assistance.

What have I learnt about myself during my recovery? I've discovered that I have a talent for art. It's not only good to be able to express my creativity, I utilise my art practice to develop mindfulness. It's a way for me to manage my head, my thinking. Mindfulness is a way of making my mind focus on what I want to do, rather than let my head take over. I'm just in that moment, the thoughts stop cascading, and my mind becomes really quiet. It's still a challenge and I have a lot of issues to overcome. I've got a lot of negative internal dialogue and I have quite catastrophic thoughts – I keep thinking I will fail.

My message: Keep on trying. Whether something works or not is irrelevant. It's the trying that gives it drive.



KEEP ON TRYING.  
WHETHER SOMETHING  
WORKS OR NOT IS  
IRRELEVANT. IT'S THE  
TRYING THAT GIVES  
IT DRIVE.



## **WE WORKED ON BEING BETTER: OUR VALUES, PRACTICES AND BELIEFS**

We continued to maintain an impressive measure in that 42% of our staff identify as having a personal lived experience of mental health issues. A centrepiece of our Affirmative Action Policy, the value-add contributed by people with lived experience embraces peer support roles and all other roles. We've had to do a lot of education around this initiative, outlining that such a move is not favouritism or tokenism. There's been much explanation of how recruitment selection works and merit based selection works. There is an explicit recognition that people can stay actively working whilst they experience mental health issues. Often, as soon as someone is looking a bit fragile or acting a bit unusual, they are often asked to leave the workplace to 'get better'. There is a lot of research that says that keeping people in the workplace helps them get better, has better long-term outcomes and ensures that people are less marginalised. It's harder to do for a workplace - but it works. At RichmondPRA, there's a gentleness and a patience with people who are feeling fragile. There is genuine care for people who are vulnerable.

Here, making change is the domain of all people.

RichmondPRA is at the vanguard, acknowledging the capability of people to utilise their lived experience in the workplace and the community. Peer

Workers participate and share their stories to inspire others. Staff with lived experience travel and do recovery talks there for people who've been through the prison system and who are incarcerated but found not guilty at Long Bay Gaol. Our intention is to do this on a long term basis. It is a ground breaking initiative and follows our proud tradition of working with people who have mental health issues and are involved in the criminal justice system. However, given that it is an institution within the criminal justice system, there are lots of protocol issues. There are lots of locked doors and jiggling keys to be forded before we get into the room to speak with people. But, we are sharing hope with people who have limited opportunities.

When we speak of the proportion of our workforce with lived experience, we're not just speaking about people in peer work positions. Clare Evans, RichmondPRA's Capacity and Marketing Manager is one such example of a staff member who pays forward her lived experience in the conduct of her work. Clare runs a monthly in service group for clients at North West Sydney Private. As she talks about her own experience of recovery in the context of marketing RichmondPRA's services, she is able to really connect with people with private health cover and who are outside the usual target groups we reach. It's another way in which RichmondPRA is publicising what we have to offer to every Australian, covered as we all will be by the NDIS in the years to come.

And this is the gist of what she says as she's doing it:

"When talking about recovery, I like to use a whiteboard to draw what I think of as the "mental health identity circles". I find that consumers respond really well when I use myself - I have clinical depression and anxiety - as the example. The mental health identity circles include two generic circles showing "well" and "not well" and two circles specifically relate to myself when well and not well. The point of these circles is not necessarily to tell the whole story - there can be a lot in between "well" and "not well"- but rather to provide people with a way of thinking about a mental health diagnosis and putting it into perspective with regard to their whole identity."

Clare along with other staff like Alison Perizi, RichmondPRA's Fundraising and Partnerships Manager, develop and organise representation of our organisation and the other businesses we operate at many Expo's and other events designed to raise the profile of the organisation. Clare says she specialises in "community events done cheap" where large events are subsidised by one or more larger organisations acting collaboratively where there can be any number of engaging activities which allow us to reach towards the community: service provider stalls, art therapy sessions, arts and crafts stalls, library access days and family history research support etc. It has resulted

## **RICHMONDPRA SERVICE EVALUATION FEEDBACK ACCOMMODATION**

# 86%

of tenants of RichmondPRA's community housing services reported a combined satisfaction level with the overall condition of their homes, value for money of the rent, overall satisfaction with repairs and maintenance, support to sustain tenancy and tenant involvement.

(Source; RichmondPRA Community Housing Tenant Satisfaction Survey, January 2014)



in RichmondPRA's regular appearance at 'Inner West Community Affair' in Marrickville. 'Inner West Community A Fair' is a one-stop intersectoral pop up event that operates from 10am-2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Any community member looking for services to meet their needs is invited to drop by, engage with service providers to get information, advice, referrals, education and (in some cases) services that meet their needs based on meeting the eligibility and access criteria as applied by individual service provider participants. The aim is to create a relaxed, comfortable, informative and fun environment - and it has. It's part of the new way we meet people and encourage them to engage with our service so as to support their recovery journey.

Over the past year, we rolled out CANSAS Conversations and the accompanying training across all sites. We've trained over 350 staff in NSW and Queensland, including PIR practitioners in various locations. Feedback forms where staff rate themselves on a sliding scale on how well they used CANSAS before and after. Power balance in the support relationship discussed. The central message: consumers are in control of their own recovery and staff must fine-tune their support in relation to this. By modelling an evidence-based, humanistic support framework to bolster consumers' ability to self-manage, RichmondPRA's consumer voices are defining the features of a new era in community based support

delivery and are a central pillar in our workforce development strategy.

What is CANSAS? Most people come to RichmondPRA with one or two ideas of what they want, but by reviewing 22 parts of their life briefly through the Camberwell Assessment of Needs Short Appraisal Schedule (CANSAS) questionnaire underpinned by the framework we've developed to make it work, they can get a clearer picture of their whole self and what they really want from RichmondPRA, in various aspects of their life. CANSAS is a conversation. Consumers rate their own needs as 'no need', 'need met with someone helping', or 'important unmet need'. It leads to further conversations (within 2 weeks) about their needs, wants and most importantly, their strengths to help them get there. The conversations will lead to their creation of some personal goals and a plan of action with RichmondPRA (IRP, EAP, etc) for how they and RichmondPRA will work together to help them reach their goals/get what they need and more. RichmondPRA uses the scores (without names) from across the whole organisation to evaluate and prove how well the organisation is meeting the needs of consumers, identify services or information we are not providing, target resources where they are best needed and for funding submissions and applications.

RichmondPRA have been participating in a number of reviews, all of which give us pointers as to how we can improve and evolve. This has included:

- + an external review of Aboriginal HASI services where the support of Aboriginal services and their communities has been wonderful;
- + the VOICE Survey which gives us an idea of the organisational climate as created by staff;
- + the Health and Wellbeing Staff Survey;
- + ADHC Satisfaction Survey

We also achieved accreditation under NSW Disability Services Act (DSA) 1993. RichmondPRA had until May 2015 to do this and we achieved it by May 2014, putting us 12 months ahead of schedule. It was a great achievement from everyone involved. This means we comply with our funding agreement with ADHC that we have verification under the DSA and Disability Service Standards. Read the story former boarding house resident Gavin Osland has shared to gain more of an appreciation for how important it is to deliver services in line with the DSA.

Diversity measures and specific events have been staged in line with RichmondPRA's Diversity Strategy. We're currently finishing videos to go on the website. Recruitment has been growing apace in a range of areas. Our recruitment practices have referenced national priorities for job growth as we have hosted 10 Aboriginal Trainees funded through MHCC in places such as Nowra and Moree. They're all still with RichmondPRA one year down the track. We're hoping for continued funding.

## RICHMONDPRA SERVICE EVALUATION FEEDBACK COMMUNITY

Of a sample of people who access RichmondPRA's ADHC State funded services:

# 93%

felt we encouraged them to participate in their local community and to work towards their recovery goals, and

# 98%

indicated that we support them to access services that meet their individual needs.

(Source: RichmondPRA Evaluation, Research and Service Development Team Survey, 2014)

A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a black long-sleeved top, is smiling and holding a large stack of donuts on a plate. She is wearing a black wristband on her left hand and a bracelet on her right. In the background, another woman with glasses and a black top is smiling. The setting is a brightly lit room with orange walls and red curtains.

I'M REGAINING  
MY BELIEF  
IN MYSELF.



## SANDY GAFFEY'S STORY

### FEELING HAPPIER

My dad died when mum was 2 months pregnant. Mum was everything to me – both mother and father. We were extremely close. I moved away from Griffith for about 20 years and became involved in a long-term relationship. I was initially a bartender and eventually I went to university and became an IT professional, running the e-learning facility of a Registered Training Organisation. I still used to ring mum every day. In 2005 I moved back to Griffith to live with mum. Everything was fine for years and then she started acting strangely. She began to hold delusional beliefs that I was a witch and had cursed her. Mum became verbally and physically abusive towards me. Five years ago this Christmas, she just kind of snapped and in no uncertain terms, using very colourful language, told me she didn't want to live with me. She then proceeded to take a bottle of sleeping pills. I once caught her crushing up sleeping tablets to put into a coffee she had so uncharacteristically offered to make for me. Mum was in and out of hospitals, attending one psychiatric evaluation after another and all the while, telling people I was harming her, holding her prisoner, not feeding her and not taking her to appointments. No one would believe that I was the one being abused – not even when my mum showed no signs of abuse and I was covered in bruises. I'd put my arms up when she'd go to hit me. I kept on going because I didn't have a choice. She started to blackmail me. She'd hide my car keys if I said I wanted to go somewhere. She'd tell people I'd thrown hot water on her. She'd tell people I was starving her but she wouldn't eat the food I'd made and hide it around the apartment. I began to rely on Meals On Wheels.

Although I had been given a diagnosis of Bi-Polar Disorder some time ago, I wasn't linked in with any services because they had exited me. I had never felt more alone, isolated and depressed in my life. I began to hurt myself. I would sit at the edge of my bed every night and pick at my legs until they bled. It was during one of mum's hospital admissions, where she refused to eat, take her medication and threatened to harm herself, that I was referred to RichmondPRA by Carers Assist. I had made an appointment to see a worker, Lynda, later that week. However, I held no hope that anyone could or would help me.

Prior to seeing Lynda, I was informed that mum was to be released from hospital in Wagga. I distinctly remember driving home that day feeling

overwhelmed and helpless, hoping a truck would lose control and hit me. My life was a living hell and I couldn't see a way out. Lynda seemed genuinely concerned about me during our appointment. This was an entirely new experience. For the first time in a long while, I felt a glimmer of hope and thought maybe there was a small chance of getting some help. I still felt that I didn't really deserve it but at least now I had hope!

Mum was never discharged from hospital to home. It was decided she would benefit from the support of an aged care facility as she was eating again and mostly taking her medication. The belief that I was still harming mum persisted amongst professionals in her life. I received a letter informing me that a guardianship application had been lodged. My world collapsed again. I was positive that Lynda would believe all these things about me. Everyone else did, why not her? But somehow she got through to me and helped me to understand that she believed me. Lynda's support throughout was essential.

Once mum was settled at the aged care facility, I started visiting her morning and afternoon every day. With Lynda's help, I found the strength to tell mum that I only wanted to visit her once a day. I couldn't do two visits a day anymore. I was so tired and run down: I just needed a break. Having the afternoons free meant that I could start to do some housework. I started to realise that because mum wouldn't be coming home, I could clean out and redecorate the unit the way I wanted. Lynda supported me to clear out the unit as I didn't know where to start. Every week when I knew Lynda was coming over to help me sort, I used to run over to the supermarket to get a cake for our afternoon tea. As we sorted, we talked about all sorts of things. One time, I told her about all the cakes I used to bake for my former partner who had a sweet tooth. Lynda encouraged me to start baking again after hearing how much I used to enjoy it. I rediscovered my love of cooking so much I was able to give up my dependence on Meals on Wheels.

Now I'm mostly happy with how the apartment looks. I have a vegetable patch too (which was because of the help of a RichmondPRA client and Lynda). Slowly but surely, I'm regaining my belief in myself and feel the happiest I've felt for some time!



## GAVIN OSLAND'S STORY

### LOOKING FORWARD TO THINGS EVERYDAY

When I was a kid, my dad had a small workshop in the back yard. He used to do up engines in there - I just learnt how to do things from watching him. I also did my welding ticket at TAFE when I was a lad. When dad cleaned out his tool shed, I converted it into an aviary. Birds were given to me - about 15 or 20 birds. I put a shelf and some breeding boxes into dad's old tool shed and ended up with 60 budgies. I guess I always had a thing for birds after that!

I also used to ride a motorbike but I broke my leg - it put a damper on my schooling and everything. After recovering and with my confidence pretty low, I ended up living in a boarding house. When I became too unwell to stay in a boarding house, I'd go stay in hospital. I'd then get discharged and go to live in another boarding house. It felt like living on the edge all the time - very little security for years, a couple of decades.

RichmondPRA have been supporting me for 14 years - no more boarding houses for me. They've helped me stay out of hospital. I used to get 24-hour support. While I was living in 24-hour supported accommodation with some other men in Cardiff, I needed to occupy myself so I built an N Gauge train set. It had 3 separate controllers on it. I put the train set in the garage that belonged to my unit which I wasn't using - the whole thing was 4.5m x 3.5m. After I moved out, it was too big to move without a truck and I knew I'd have nowhere to put it. So, I donated it to a local day care centre for kids to enjoy it as much as I did.

Now I'm managing by myself with drop in support after being assessed through the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) in Newcastle. I really like the support I get from RichmondPRA.

NDIA referred me to Community Based Activities, which I attend on a Monday at Valentine. We regularly have BBQ's and picnics at different locations and I also assist in setting up at the BBQs. I also have a 1:1 program with RichmondPRA where we go out on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. When I told the NDIA assessor that I like doing timberwork and metalwork, they

referred me to the Wallsend Men's Shed. The Men's Shed runs 5 days a week and I attend there on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. At the Men's Shed we do major handyman work and mow the occasional lawn. We make windchimes and other stuff that people buy at markets. They've put plans in to Council for a building on the block of land that Council have donated to them. I'm really looking forward to being part of that.

Now, at my house, I've just finished building an entertainment unit for the house and a workbench for the garage. When I moved here about 6 months ago, I was given a small cage and thought I'd start keeping finches: now I've got 1 female and 2 males. The female's young but she should start nesting soon. They have to get to about 2 years old before they start breeding. I need to save up some money - I'd love to get a motorbike again. Life's good, I'm back on track.



LIFE'S GOOD,  
I'M BACK  
ON TRACK.

# ART A REAL THING

Artwork by artists and staff  
from inner west suburbs services  
of RichmondPRA



**Art unlocks the creativity and playfulness in people. It is an invaluable tool people can use to help restore their capacity to experience happiness and joy – capacities that often atrophy during prolonged periods of feeling mentally unwell. Playfulness and creativity can help reset the soul's inner clock, predisposing people to view things positively and encouraging them towards healthy risk taking.**

The story of the Group Artwork above: A large canvas was spread on the ground and the artists were invited to drip and splatter paint onto the canvas. The artists threw and splattered paint from their brushes at first timidly. The participant's confidence grew as they saw the effects that were created with the bright colours. One of the artists noticed the shadows that were being cast on the canvas by a tree and carefully painted these in as his personal touch to the group canvas. The physical act of throwing, splattering and dripping the paint seemed to release the inhibitions surrounding future participation in art groups.

Art gives us the opportunity to intensely focus. For example, when Jane started running sessions with a group of consumers who were supported on a 24 hour basis, it was all they could do to come, sit down for 5 minutes, perhaps picking up a pencil for a minute or two – some sitting with her in total silence – before getting up and walking away. They now sit down for 2-hour periods whilst they draw and paint.

If we're not building the capabilities of people who've been unwell – and some have been unwell for decades – how can we expect them to do things like get a job and go to work where an employer pays them to achieve business goals? Guiding and mentoring people as they create art – where there are no mistakes and no wrong doors – is a perfect way to build personal capabilities that help them in employment and many other everyday life situations where the consequences of their mental health issues (eg. lack of concentration) have been barriers.



**What's the value of art in recovery and maintaining wellbeing?**

The creation of art is a process of doing things deliberately whilst leaving room for looking at the world differently. It is about interpreting and making sense of the unknown and unknowable. It's about making urges deep within us for which we have no words, only feelings, real and concrete. Art is a metaphor for our lives.

**What if I don't have an artistic bone in my body?**

In art, there is no such thing as a mistake. Mistakes are often serendipitous – they take us towards experiences and realisations we otherwise would not have had. We all make mistakes. There are things we cannot change but we adapt them and adopt them and learn from them. If people can learn to do this on paper, with clay, with knitting needles or in any artistic medium, this equips them for the inevitable experience of making mistakes every day. It helps them work out how not to unravel, to not be so hard on themselves and ultimately helps build resilience.

**ART THERAPY 101 - Session 1 "After Kandinsky"**

1. Start with a blank piece of watercolour paper. Any size. 2. Draw 4 circles and 3 triangles anywhere, of any size on the page. 3. Continue to draw any other basic shapes – as few or as many as you want. 4. Draw 4 parallel lines. 5. Draw a wiggly line connecting the circles. 6. Draw zig zag lines. 7. Colour in the shapes with oil pastels - trace the lines in colour as well. 8. Paint all over your paper in watercolour paint. 9. Enjoy!



Biljana Gorgievska, Moore St



Michelle Moreno, Seven Hills



Jess Beasley, Goulburn



Michael Kingsley, Seven Hills

“Art is the key that opens the door to what is inside a person.”

Jane Miller, Art Therapist, RichmondPRA

*The process of being uncertain and making mistakes and dealing with this offers rich material for people to explore outside art sessions. Uncertainty and mistakes – especially when there are no negative consequences – have the effect of equalising people. Being able to reflect back later on how you dealt with this in the context of making art and then transferring this capacity to your everyday life – it's a way of helping people move forward consciously through tapping into what would largely be an unconscious process.*

**ART THERAPY 101 - Session 2: "Zentangling"**

Zentangling is the applied art of doodling. You'll often see kids doodling in the margins of their books at school. The time-honoured response from teachers has been to rouse on students doing it. However, the process of doodling is contemplative – it is a learning, concentration and wellbeing aid. In fact, drawing structured patterns with short, deliberate strokes increases focus and creativity, provides artistic satisfaction and in so doing boosts a person's sense of well-being. Immersion in the creation of repetitive patterns becomes meditative. Zentangling provides a concrete analogy for the small, deliberate steps a person takes on the road to personal growth and rebuilding self esteem.

## **SUPPORT TO FIND REWARDING JOBS AND BUILD SOCIAL ENTERPRISES/ COMMUNITY BUSINESSES WITHIN A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY**

Employment is the penultimate recovery tool. So much growth, belief in oneself and confidence comes out of having a job and responsibility. This then brings independence, financial security, personal growth and facilitates reciprocity through community and other contribution. In direct contrast to psychosocial services, employment services are commercial. We can and do market ourselves and the individual. We have to have an attractive product and we have to know how to make that product work for the individual. We make accommodations – by positioning the job seeker rather than making workplace accommodations. This includes assisting people coming out of prison, hospital etc. This is how we respond – and help consumers respond – to the available job market.

The Disability Employment Service (DES) business reallocation by government required some adjustments on our behalf. One of our 4 sites – Liverpool – experienced a growth in market share which was gratifying. Esther Smith who was supported to get both her jobs at Gandangara Community Transport by OstaraPRA at Liverpool shares her story. At PreEmploy Institute, we ran 2 terms in 2013/14 which saw 56 people graduate. We're proud to publicise this initiative we developed, the only one of its kind in Australia.

See Carlyle's story to get a fuller picture of what PreEmploy offer to people who experience mental health issues in a bid to help them become work or education ready, undertake training and get a job.

RichmondPRA have contained the costs of EnterPRAise to sustain only modest increased costs and all 4 sites have an annual turnover of \$1.7-1.8M. Prestige Packing Co (PPCo) has 3 sites. PPCo's role in traditional packaging will decrease over the next few years but we are quite busy evolving a new 'pick and pack' operational model of service. Figtree Conference Centre opened on the ground floor of our new Homebush Bay head office site. It keeps getting great reviews!

## **CREATIVE OPTIONS FOR VULNERABLE OR DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE**

*"Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all..."*

**Emily Dickinson**

Whether through art or creative writing, photography or dance, RichmondPRA thread creative opportunities through all their services. Creative expression allows people to look at their lives differently – which may prompt them to deal with problems differently. Creativity can help people become active – such as options offered through the Back On Track Health (BOTH) Program – which gets that adrenalin pumping: a natural way to ward off depression. Creativity in groups helps people engage, encourages reciprocity and seeds friendships which can help combat loneliness and isolation.

Consider the stories shared by Robert Hatch and Nathan Davis and recognise the positive contribution that creativity has made to their lives and wellbeing and what this, in turn, has enabled them to give back to others. Truly, receiving helps people give.

## **RICHMONDPRA SERVICE EVALUATION FEEDBACK YOUTH**

The cohort of young people in our Young Peoples Programs continued to strengthen their connection to community while building life skills and general resilience. The amount of time the young people in this program spend in hospital has declined by over

# 80%

(Source: RichmondPRA Final evaluation Report, Young Peoples' Outreach Program, November 2013)

# We continue to believe that positive changes in mental health start with the not for profit sector.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

We do and have always believed that positive changes in mental health start with the not for profit sector. We need to be able to work more with the public mental health sector so we can be more of a conduit between the mental health sector and the community. We need to work in the public health environment and espouse the inclusion of people with lived experience in a direct way and hope we change how people are spoken about in terms of their diagnosis, symptoms and medical treatment. We take a strengths-based approach rather than focus on 'disorder' which is only a small part of who a person is.

In 2015, we look forward to the formation of Community Advisory Council to advise RichmondPRA Board. We're close to finalising a model for logic based accountability for all programs RichmondPRA deliver. Through it, we will be able to answer these fundamental questions: How does what we are delivering measure up against the national goals of the program? What is the social ROI? Through it, we hope to get a better idea about the impact of what we do, not just the inputs and outputs.

RichmondPRA sees itself at the cusp of further significant change and development in mental health as the work of the National Mental Health Commission and the New South Wales Mental Health Commission continues to take shape, and the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme grows. In this exciting climate, we look forward to the flowering of services that are not just person centred, but person led; to the people accessing our services fully understanding and exercising their rights to choice and control over those services; and to the prominence of people with personal lived experience of mental health issues across the range of community based services that are vital to support their individual recovery journeys on their way to full citizenship and contributing lives.

# PreEmploy

INSTITUTE

living, learning, working in community

Employment  
Preparatory  
Program



# I AM HALFWAY THROUGH MY COURSE RIGHT NOW AND ALL I CAN SAY IT HAS BEEN A HEALING YEAR OF RECOVERY FROM MY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION.

## CARLYLE ARBILO'S STORY

### ONE STEP AT A TIME

I've been seeing counsellors and psychologists on and off for various things since I was young. A few years ago, my GP diagnosed that I was suffering from anxiety and minor depression. Added to this, I'd had a domestic dispute with my mum and I'd just come out of a bad work situation. Leaving my employer, I had to go onto Centrelink payments. I guess you could say my life was pretty topsy-turvy.

I was at my counsellor's office in Newtown Neighbourhood Centre early this year, waiting for her to finish up with another client. I saw an advertisement for the Work Incentive Scheme at Buckingham House on the noticeboard and I applied. A mental health support worker at Buck House interviewed me. The Work Incentive Scheme ended up going through a review shortly after that so they put all recruitment on hold. However, they did offer me a place at PreEmploy Institute a few months later. I think it has turned out to be a better option than the Work Incentive Scheme at Buck House.

PreEmploy has offered me a life changing and positive course. At the start, we had to agree to a Code of Conduct. I had a lot of misconceptions about mental illness and going into a class with people who were unwell. But it's been great knowing that people really care about your welfare. We were really quiet in the beginning. Our Wednesday class was the quietest but biggest class they've had so far at PreEmploy but now, 4 months in, we've open up to each other, we ask each other for advice and support - sometimes a hug! It's amazing how much it has transformed me and all of us participating in the class. It's like a big group therapy session sometimes - not what you get at TAFE and Uni. It's taught me a lot about facing my fears. It has brought more light into my life. The group I am in feel more like friends than classmates.

Our coach Peter Tos made us laugh and supported us. Our Vocational Support Officer Kathy Te Nuku and Matthew Roberts supported us throughout the course when we came up against issues. It was nice that they were there, it really helped us evolve to become better people.

You feel like a person, not like a walking mental health issue - which is how people often look at you. You're battling what's going on inside your head, battling your thoughts as well as negativity from the outside world and it is really refreshing to be treated as a person. Everyone doing the PreEmploy course is doing different things. You get to meet people from all walks of life and you learn how they deal with their issues. I'm doing a Diploma in Accounting while another person is doing a degree at RMIT. Using 'Pathways to Recovery' through the course has been marvellous. I looked it up on Amazon - it's got 4.7 stars. They teach us things that support our recovery. It's a strange feeling to be treated as a person rather than a number. Centrelink is bureaucratic with lots of paperwork and the customer service is non-existent. I made pretty slow progress through the Centrelink system.

In PreEmploy, you feel like you are supported. People look out for you and check in with you, ask you how your job placement is going. We're putting together CV's. We deal with workplace issues - like building interpersonal skills - as well as get familiar with the kind of administrative tasks required of employed people - like filling in timesheets. There's even been a picnic day where we've gone out, played sports (in a team, backing each other up) and explored eating right so as to maintain our health. It may be the kind of stuff people take for granted but for some of us who've had some difficult life experiences or who have been out of work for a long time, these are the building blocks we need to put in place so we can go and get a job and not be caught out just because we don't understand basic expectations.

I go to my Counsellor and she said she can see a change in me because of what the course has given me. I am halfway through my course right now and all I can say it has been a healing year of recovery from my anxiety and depression. I've come to appreciate that there's no full recovery - I'm just learning how to manage my mental health issues. I want to exercise more, complete my Diploma and get a job. Once I do that, I'll be able to take stock and decide what I want to focus on next.

# ESTHER SMITH'S STORY

## LEARNING TO BE FREE

I grew up on a mission just out of Kalgoorlie in WA until I was 11. My stepmum was the matron of the mission hospital. Our only doctor was the Royal Flying Doctor Service who visited every 3 weeks - mum was able to call them on the radio in an emergency. The flight also delivered supplies. We were 3 hours away from Kalgoorlie where we went shopping once every 3 weeks for an hour or two. The outside world was kept out. When I left the mission, I was told I was not allowed to identify as Aboriginal, I wasn't allowed to speak my language. I left school without knowing how to read and write. My parents sent me off for so many tests - they couldn't work out why I wasn't learning. It was only in my 20's that I was diagnosed with dyslexia.

I got married at 17 and my husband completed suicide when I was 20. By 23, I had already experienced so much. But I realised in my 20's that I had to reconcile with my past, so I went back to where I came from to find out more. It allowed me to move ahead. I'm not a 100% Aboriginal and I'm not 100% white and I've had to learn that that's OK. You get told you're not OK because you're not black enough or you're not white enough. It's a lot harder for us to reconcile that.

I've had so much death in my life; I don't want to lose any more people. When I was 10 years old, I had a dream that I would be a mum of many children but not of my blood. I never had that nuclear family - I was an outcast in my own nuclear family, I was on the outside looking in. In a way, it set a pattern for my life - a family was who I accepted into my life. When my husband committed suicide, it forced me into a reckoning. Who am I? What did I want? It was such a waste to lose someone who was only 25. But I decided: I am not on this earth for nothing. I was meant to do something.

Now, I'm 46. I've been married 4 times; I've given birth to 3 kids and raised 8 kids - 5 of them are from Ghana. I have 6 girls, 2 boys and 9 grandkids! I was married to a Ghanaian man for 13 years. Seeing the similarities between our cultures was amazing. I brought the

5 kids he already had out to Australia to live. Those kids used to live on 1 meal a day and it took me 3 months to make them understand that they didn't need to gorge themselves at every meal, that there was food in the cupboard and that they could go and get a snack. Seeing the poverty my Ghanaian kids came from inspired me to start gathering donated medical supplies being discarded by hospitals. We shipped medical supplies to Ghana at our own expense and donated it to existing facilities as well as helped build another hospital. I also made sure my 5 kids went back to Ghana to get to know their mothers, to know where they come from. My Ghanaian husband went back and decided to get married to a former wife of his whilst we were still married. What could I do? I gave him a divorce.

I've been through the worst 2 years but I will get through it. My last hubby died of cancer and my daughter walked out and didn't pay the rent. I became very depressed. I knew I'd have to sort myself out and get a job after having nursed him (and myself) into poverty. I went and asked for help to find a job and was referred to RichmondPRA. They helped me find work at Ganadangara Community Transport. I've had lots of debt to sort out and I had to move. I have to pull the extra shifts so I can make ends meet - I still have 2 kids living at home. Whilst all of this happens, I was nominated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year in the NSW State Training Awards. I came second in the state. It was recognition of who I am by my own people, which is more than I had before.

I've been working for Gandangara as a driver during the day and I clean the head office and depot at night. My driving shifts change daily - I don't even know until the night before what time I start and finish. It's a very tough way to live. I don't work easy hours. I don't have an easy lifestyle. The only reason I do it is because I pick up the Elders and as I take them to and from appointments, we get to chat and I learn so much. I am relishing this time exploring my culture. I'm exploring what my legacy will be through transporting Elders around and hearing stories. The process is changing me.

I am being entrusted with knowledge. It's all about giving respect to our

Elders and giving them their place in community. It is more than a transport system: it's the modern way of transmitting Aboriginal culture. In this busy world, the only way to spend time with our Elders is to transport them to and from meetings and appointments. If I don't stop and listen, who will? When they're gone, the information is lost. I have early childhood memories of sitting around with the aunties. We don't do this anymore. We give Elders respect not because they earned it or deserve it, but because they have been on this earth longer. That alone confers on them the right to expect respect. They have managed to negotiate through trials and tribulations. They have learnt how to handle themselves in a world where they were stolen as tiny children, where they've survived the loss of their culture. Many of them don't know who they are and are just finding out now. They've survived. Respect.

Life has sent me some curve balls. It gets worrying - with all that has happened - and I sometimes wonder: do I know how to live a normal life? But when I feel myself close down and become bitter, I address it so I can move on freely again. I'm currently studying a Diploma of Counselling. I had deferred my studies for a little while but I'm about to re-commence. I'd like to get into counselling with Aboriginal people but such jobs are very hard to find. I believe that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are dealing with extraordinary generational loss. We have 20 year olds carrying the baggage of their mums, aunties and grandmothers. That's what needs to be addressed. They need to get healing for what was lost back there, in the older generations.

Through my life experiences, I have come to terms with my life and what has happened as a result of my choices, life circumstances as well as institutional racism combined with dispossession. I can grieve the loss but I don't need to carry it with me. The problem we Aboriginal people have is that we carry it from generation to generation. We don't learn to put the burden down. In putting it down, I learnt to be whole. I learnt to be free.

We'd like to acknowledge 'Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council' for giving their permission to take an image at the Gandangara Community Transport site.

I HAVE COME  
TO TERMS WITH  
MY LIFE...





## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

### **MOHAMMED ALKHUB GENERAL MANAGER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE**

Mohammed's area of operation encompasses all of the organisation's quality assurance systems: Work, Health and Safety; Management Quality (ISO 9001:2008); Environmental management; and Disability Service Standards. For each system, accreditation, which includes all of the necessary documentation of policies and procedures, and risk management is a high priority.

In 2013/14, particular challenges occurred with the opening of new services in new sites, ensuring that quality systems were a part of the new operations from the outset. The harmonisation of policies and procedures from the two earlier organisations prior to the merger continued to be a major task during the year, and by year's end some 80% of this workload was complete. An important part of this exercise was providing online access to all staff to documents and policies on our intranet service.

In 2013, RichmondPRA was successful in obtaining accreditation of its services under NSW Disability Service Standards a full 12 months before the Government mandated deadline. Not only does this secure NSW Government funding for a number of important services the organisation provides, it further demonstrates the commitment of staff to the provision of quality service.

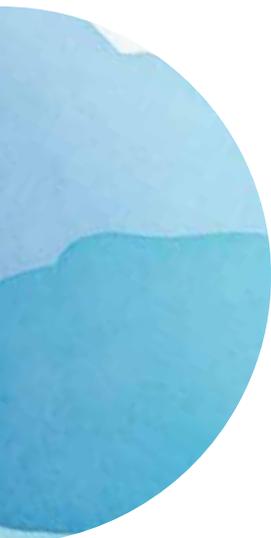
Throughout 2014 organisations providing disability services are required to adopt new National Disability Service Standards against which their service provision will ultimately be audited. This represents another business excellence task into the future.

### **AIDAN CONWAY GENERAL MANAGER OPERATIONS NORTH/WEST**

Aidan has over thirty year's experience in mental health working both within NSW Health and for the past 11 years in the Not for Profit Sector. He is tasked with overall responsibility for the service RichmondPRA provides to over a thousand people with mental health issues in the Hunter New England, Southern New South Wales, Murrumbidgee, South East Queensland and parts of Western Sydney. This Operations portfolio consists of 240 staff in 24 offices across metropolitan regional and rural areas. Maintenance of a high quality of service provision in this environment clearly represents a unique set of challenges.

The year 2013/14 has been one of notable successes on a number of fronts. Foremost among these is the organisation's leading role in the Commonwealth's major new mental health service – Partners In Recovery. As a specialist community based mental health service provider with nearly six decades of experience, RichmondPRA in Tamworth is the lead agency and enjoys the support of a strong consortium focussing on system change aimed at improving the service system to people with mental health issues.

Another highlight of the year has seen work undertaken on a Diversity Strategy for RichmondPRA. Building on RichmondPRA's vision to enable full participation within a diverse and inclusive community. The project engaged with staff from across the organisation creating diversity practice innovation projects focussed on People with a Disability, CALD, LGBTI and Indigenous Groups aimed at strengthening our ability to engage with diverse communities.



#### LEFT TO RIGHT

Mohammed Alkhub, Pamela Rutledge, Michael Smallsman, Julie Fraser, Aidan Conway, Mark Orr, Phil Nadin, Marty Golding, Andrew O'Brien, Tim Fong.  
*Absent: James Fang, Fay Jackson*



**JAMES FANG**  
**CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER**

James has responsibility for social enterprises and community businesses in RichmondPRA.

Social enterprise has been identified as a growth area in RichmondPRA. This is because it represents a more sustainable business model than other types of supported employment, and because it provides superior employment outcomes for people with disabilities. It is more sustainable because it is built on viable business models rather than a need for ongoing Government subsidy. People who work in the enterprises achieve better outcomes because wages are higher and because, being designed as “real businesses”, they help people develop transferable skills that improve their prospects of employment in the open labour market.

During the year, RichmondPRA opened its newest social enterprise with the launch of a Kwik Kopy franchise in Sydney’s Surry Hills. The store was operating successfully within a short period, and it continues to improve its performance and profitability. By the end of the year, we were well advanced in negotiations to open our next business franchise, this time in the stationery and office furniture

supply business. This will position RichmondPRA to offer a full range of office services to the not for profit sector while employing people with mental health issues in real jobs learning worthwhile skills.

The marketing of services by our community businesses also grew during the year. In a partnership with NDS, the national disability peak body, we were able to offer a wide range of services to Government and business under new procurement approaches that encourage engagement with not for profits that employ people with disability. Rather than competing amongst ourselves, by offering joint services, such organisations can provide a wider, more sustainable range of commercial services than they ever could working alone. That benefits more people with disabilities who are seeking employment opportunities, and improves the viability of the businesses as well.

As this trend grows, our businesses are realigning the services they offer to better match customer expectations. The development of “pick and pack service” out of our long standing packaging business is one example of a new direction for an old business providing better results for employees and the business itself.

**TIM FONG**  
**GENERAL MANAGER,  
HUMAN RESOURCES**

In an organisation with over 1,000 employees, Human Resources is bound to be a busy area. Tim Fong attests to that certainly being the case in RichmondPRA. Although a merger of two large organisations is now two years behind us, it is in the Human Resources area that most of the detailed work is being done to finalise the process. This was a conscious decision of the organisation – to do the job properly, rather than promptly. This meant fully understanding the role of every single person working in the organisation – what skills and qualifications were required and how these relate to a dynamic employment market that imposes its own requirements and expectations on how people will work and be supported in a challenging service environment. Having to start with two previous organisations, two different management structures, industrial arrangements, pay and data systems merely added to the complexity of the task.

While the task is still underway, the final pieces of a puzzle that also includes recruitment and selection, performance review, learning and

development, peer workforce, harmonisation activities and change management are close to coming together. Staff have been kept informed as the process has progressed, and we are aware that they appreciate being consulted on what is occurring. Staff retention levels, which were higher than industry averages to start with, are still rising, and we regularly receive feedback that RichmondPRA staff like the work that they do, and like working for this organisation.

One of the aims of the merger was to create an organisation with greater capacity to achieve operational efficiencies without compromising the high quality service that people are accustomed to. It is clear that these objectives are being realised. We have achieved significant savings in our recruitment costs and the people who access our services have continued to benefit from the broad range of support we provide.

#### **MARTY GOLDING** **GENERAL MANAGER EMPLOYMENT**

Marty's area of operations includes disability employment programs, vocational support for employees of the community businesses, the Peer workforce and PreEmploy Institute.

Commonwealth funded Disability Employment programs are subject to high standards of audit and compliance. This is a difficult program area in which to work, not only because of the challenging nature of work that involves addressing profound barriers to employment for people, but also because of the rigidities of the program structure imposed by the Commonwealth. It has long been argued that the program is not sufficiently flexible to cope with the issues that face job seekers with a mental illness. The low "success" rates of people with mental illness, as defined by the program, would also support this conclusion. However, little has been done to effect any real improvements for job seekers with mental illness, and they are still required to manage their issues to

achieve the types of outcomes the program expects.

RichmondPRA, as a foundation member of Ostara, the national consortium of specialist psychiatric disability employment service providers, operates four sites in New South Wales providing services to over 600 job seekers with mental health problems and disorders. We believe employment is the penultimate recovery tool. So much growth, belief in oneself and confidence comes from having a job and responsibility, along with independence, financial security, personal growth and contribution to community.

#### **FAY JACKSON** **GENERAL MANAGER INCLUSION**

Fay Jackson took up her duties as General Manager Inclusion in RichmondPRA during the year, following the retirement of Janet Meagher AM. Like Janet, Fay is a prominent and respected advocate for people with mental illness. Fay was appointed as Deputy Commissioner of the NSW Mental Health Commission, a position identified when the Commission was established as one to be filled by a person with a lived experience of mental illness.

Fay explains how her experience has enabled her to advocate for people with mental illness because she understands their fragility, but also because that experience has made her fiercely aware of the need for change. Both of these qualities are valued in RichmondPRA – the marriage of fragile and fierce. As General Manager Inclusion, Fay's role in the organisation is to direct the organisation wide effort that is necessary to ensure services maintain their relevance to peoples' real needs, while supporting the myriad activities across the organisation that enable the thousands of recovery journeys in which we are partners.

Fay points to RichmondPRA's own workplace practices as an example of how an organisation can support individual recovery. RichmondPRA believes that people can continue working actively even when they are dealing with mental health issues.

The research shows that keeping people in the workplace for as long as it is safe for them helps their mental health, provides better health outcomes and reduces the degree to which people feel marginalised and alienated. This approach represents challenges for the workplace, but it is worth it in the long run. The level of patience and compassion in RichmondPRA ensures the person is supported, not alienated. The organisation is conscious that it is driving change by the example it sets.

#### **ANDREW O'BRIEN** **GENERAL MANAGER OPERATIONS** **SOUTH/EAST**

While managing the diverse support activities of 235 staff in 21 locations around Sydney and NSW, Andrew has also been deeply involved in a number of important new programs for the organisation.

Foremost amongst these is the opening of RichmondPRA's first headspace service, in Bankstown. This will be a much needed service in a richly diverse community within Sydney. To address this level of diversity and local need, Andrew worked hard to mobilise a consortium of local service providers enthusiastic about working together under the proven headspace model. RichmondPRA's task is to provide leadership and co-ordination, ensuring that improved services are accessible to young people in the area.

RichmondPRA provides services in five of the seven worst drought affected areas in NSW. Andrew had the task of organising our response to this disaster after receiving Drought Assistance Funding from the Commonwealth. The program he organised includes awareness education, publicity, information and follow up support.

Following on the success of the Young People's Outreach Program in Penrith, funding was received from South Eastern Sydney Local Health District to commence a similar program in the Kogarah area from July 2014. The management of both areas falls under Andrew, and he is confident of the future success of the model in south eastern Sydney.



**PHIL NADIN**  
**CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Phil's role is to work with the CEO and Board on projects which will ensure the organisation's long term sustainability.

Following the successful sale of property owned by RichmondPRA in George Street Redfern during the previous year, Phil advised the Board on opportunities for reinvestment of the sale proceeds. The Board was careful to consider investment opportunities which would not only represent reasonable returns for a moderate risk, but also would be consistent with the organisation's social mission.

After detailed analysis of the housing and development market, the Board agreed to embark on an affordable housing scheme, involving the purchase of a parcel of land at Guildford, in Sydney's Western Suburbs, containing three single cottages. Plans for the demolition of the dwellings and construction of 41 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments under the State's Affordable Housing Plan were prepared and at the end of the year approval to proceed was awaited from Holroyd City Council. The Project is being developed under the National Rental Affordability Scheme in partnership with Community Housing Limited, a registered social housing provider and manager.

Phil also leads a Project Team within RichmondPRA overseeing the organisation's readiness for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Launched on 1st July 2013, NDIS has been designed to provide long term, individualised support to meet the needs of people with a permanent and significant disability. Many of the people who use or would in future use services provided by RichmondPRA will be supported under the new scheme. Its impact will not just be felt by people with disabilities, but also by organisations like RichmondPRA which provide services.

**MARK ORR**  
**CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

Mark's role involves managing the work of the organisation's ICT Team, Evaluation, Research and Service Development Team and the Professional Practice Team, each of whom cover all of the organisation's service and policy areas. It was an aim of the merger to provide a high quality of support to staff in each of the areas under Mark's direction, and meeting these expectations continues to drive the work programs of each of the Teams.

The major focus of ICT during the year was completion our IT network consolidation project to provide one network across all 62 sites resulting in better network speeds for staff, better access to applications, a VOIP phone system, and web filtering across all sites. The team also assisted with the setup of new sites at Five Dock, Seven Hills, Tamworth and Kwik Kopy Surry Hills and in selecting one service delivery database for the whole organisation.

The ERSD Team completed evaluations of the Recovery and Resource Services Program, undertook a survey of people living in ADHC funded programs and managed the bimonthly organisational pulse survey and the staff engagement survey. A major project was the work on data governance and data quality as it relates to people who access our services. A research partnership was also established with the University of Western Sydney a proposal to establish a Human Research Ethics Committee developed.

The Professional Practice Team provides training for the workforce, health promotion information, art activities and reflective practice opportunities. Some of the major activities of the team have included promoting women's and men's general health assessments, providing art groups in all RichmondPRA sites across NSW and developing a range of e-learning modules.

**MICHAEL SMALLSMAN**  
**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

The dual tasks of managing the organisation's finances and of reporting on them have been a constant focus for the Board and the CEO throughout the year. The complexity of the task arises not just from the size of the merged organisation, but also from the very broad range of its activities.

These now encompass not only services funded by a variety of Commonwealth and State Government agencies, but also other non Government agencies, and services where RichmondPRA is directly funded and then pays other NGO's for the services they provide. The NDIS represents another revenue model, namely fee for service, which requires the adoption of a totally different approach to service management and billing. We believe this approach will grow in future years as well as a shift to unit costing of direct and indirect service inputs. In addition, we operate a number of commercial business undertakings, as well as stewardship of an investment portfolio with a diverse range of asset classes which now includes property development in our own name. These diverse management activities were undertaken during the year in an environment where we are continuing to complete the harmonisation of practices from the two previous organisations.

Budget management is a particularly complex but necessary task, and involves the entire Senior Leadership Team, led by the CEO. It has been necessary to exercise budgetary constraint throughout the year. This was achieved without undue disruption to client service, even when it was necessary to institute tighter financial controls to contain rising costs and as a result of slow payments from some funding agencies. Nevertheless, the organisation is in a strong financial position. It is not without its financial challenges, but it is well positioned to continue to grow its range of services and to meet the ever increasing demands of Government and other funders for quality services.

## ROBERT HATCH'S STORY

### STARTING AGAIN

I was a used car salesman. I know what people think when I say that. But you know, I never recommended a car that I wouldn't be happy with myself. Customers would always come back. The yard got repeat business because I never told a lie. I live in a small town and the last thing I wanted was to go out for dinner with my wife and have someone abuse us in the club. I'd work 8 hours a day meeting customers and then, once they wanted a car, I'd work back another 8 hours at night cleaning and detailing the car to make it come up looking like new when they picked it up the next day.

I injured my back at work in 2000. It progressively got worse. I waited 5 years and the business didn't look after it. I sank into a deep depression. I gave up. The only thing I didn't give up doing was breathing. I developed suicidal intentions. I had honestly worked out a plan where I'd fill gerry cans full of petrol, put them in the car and drive into a building. I just couldn't find an appropriate building to crash into - it's the only reason I didn't do it. My wife Wendy worked in Sydney and she didn't know what she'd come back to. We talked most days and if Wendy felt something was a bit off, she'd call her sister and ask her to check up on me. We both relied heavily on our family connections. My mum used to make me go to her place every night for dinner so she could judge my condition. As Wendy points out, the one thing I never did was defy my mum.

In 2005, I had an operation where they put plates, screws and pins in my back - we had to mortgage the house to pay for it. Finally, I was able to walk straight. My first day walking around in town, someone said to me "Oh, so your compensation came through." I was angry, I was hurt. I cut them off, I went home and I sat in the house. I didn't step out of my front door for 3 years. I used to sit in my back shed all day. I was paranoid. I felt people were watching me.

My compensation did finally come through. We built an extension and Wendy's dad moved in. It was great and gave me someone to talk to. At least it was his words going 'round and 'round in my brain, not my own voice. I went to the doctor who recommended a psychiatrist and he then recommended a psychologist. My psychologist recommended RichmondPRA and explained how they could help me.

Jo from RichmondPRA came and visited me. It took her 3 months to just get me into the front yard. Someone took an interest. They cared, they were concerned. My first foray out was to Laurie Daley Oval in Junee. It might seem a small to others but to me, it was huge. That park is pretty special to me.

I'm a self-taught photographer. I've never played any sport; photography is the only hobby I've ever had. Before the accident and the depression, Wendy and I had images published in The International Library of Photography and in Australian Photography magazine. Jo encouraged me to get back into photography. I hadn't used it in so long that the batteries had leaked. But slowly, I started taking photographs again. I still have and shoot film - I prefer it because you get a greater sense of value out of your photo. You don't know what your results are until you develop them so you've got to give it all you've got, it makes you a bit more tentative to push the shutter button. With digital you can shoot 1000 images and just delete the ones you don't like. But... I've given in! I've learnt how to use a Digital SLR - though Wendy handles downloading images from the memory stick to the computer.

I've been sharing my knowledge with other RichmondPRA participants - Roseanne, Shirley, Julie, Sharon, Tony, Yvonne, Jo and Sam - as well as anyone else who pops in to the Temora Office on a Friday. But you know, when I leave home in the car, I might stop 5kms out of town on the road to Temora. I have panic attacks: Am I gonna get there? Am I gonna be on time? It's only the fact that the girls and Tony are waiting there that it forces me to go on. I teach them all the fiddly, little quirky tricks I've researched and practised. And I come home feeling excited. Anyway, we set a goal - to enter our photographs in the Temora Show. We did and Sharon came 1st in show, I came 2nd and Yvonne came 3rd. We aim to enter the Junee and Temora Shows in 2015.

My wife Wendy knows who everyone is in the group. Wendy is my joy. My rock. Without her, I wouldn't be here. I don't know what I would have done without her. She deserves a big gold medal. I have good days. I don't know why - if I did I would bottle it!

WENDY IS MY JOY.  
MY ROCK. WITHOUT HER,  
I WOULDN'T BE HERE.



# NATHAN DAVIS' STORY

## PASS IT ON

I lived with depression, anxiety and stress for many years since high school, but my darkest time was in Canberra for 6 years and the Gold Coast for 7 years. I was homeless and living on the street. I was a very trusting person, but I trusted the wrong people. I never thought I would get out. I gave up on life in general. I got back in touch with mum after a long estrangement and she encouraged me to come home.

I came back home to Tumut and I started attending the Baptist Church where Tim goes. I used to go to school with Tim. We've known each other a long time. Issues like mine hit home for Tim who'd been personally affected by the suicide of a person close to him. I've been supported by RichmondPRA for nearly 2 years - initially by Tim but now I have another support worker, Valerie who is just as lovely. I've come from dark places that I never thought I'd get out of. I now explore this through poetry and doing this has really been "chicken soup for the soul".

Since January 2014, I've been the caretaker of the Gundagai Heritage Railway. It's been wonderful learning about the importance of the railway to local businesses and in the context of NSW transport infrastructure. Gundagai played a key role in the development of NSW's strength as a supplier of agricultural goods to big cities around Australia for domestic use and for exports. I'm part of keeping that history alive.

Now I would like to "give back" to other people with mental health issues - such as raising awareness in my town and talking openly to others about depression. I recently saw a program on TV called 'Mental Health Begins With Me' and it inspired me to make a promise on their 'Promise Wall'. I promised that I would celebrate the good days and not dwell on the bad ones. Now THAT is my goal for each day! If you want to make a promise, go here: <https://1010.org.au/promises>

"I'd like to change the world. Maybe I can't. But if I can help one person, I'm happy."

## SAD TIMES

What is depression you may want to ask?  
Well, to get out of bed is a really big task.  
You get to the point you think no one cares,  
when you go out in public, you feel everyone stares.

They may not be looking at you, per se,  
But these are the feelings you feel anyway.  
Everything is fine and nothing is wrong,  
it's still hard to smile let alone sing a song.

You feel out of place and you really feel dumb  
You can't really feel anything your brain is so numb.  
You just can't think straight or even cook a meal  
You can't even express what it is you feel.

It's really scary feeling this way  
You can't control it and it won't go away.  
All you can do is just sit and cry  
The thinking won't stop even though you try.

## HAPPINESS & LONELINESS

Loneliness is...

When you feel you can't cope

Happiness is...

When God shows you hope

Loneliness is...

When there is no light through the mist

Happiness is...

A warm embrace and a child's loving kiss

Loneliness is...

When there is no love in your life

Happiness is...

An old man and his wife

Loneliness is...

Feeling lost in a crowd and not knowing why

Happiness is...

Soothing a baby when she starts to cry

Loneliness is...

How I feel today

Happiness is...

God paving my way...



IF I CAN HELP  
ONE PERSON,  
I'M HAPPY.

## FINANCE

# RichmondPRA is in a strong financial position with \$16M in cash and cash equivalents and financial assets.

RichmondPRA is in a strong financial position with \$16M in cash and cash equivalents and financial assets. The cash position is after investing \$1.75M in cash, purchasing a property in Guildford for development purposes.

Income/sales grew by 10% over 2012/13 to \$47M as a result of a full year of HASI Plus, Boarding House HASI and the many Partners in Recovery contracts. While RichmondPRA recorded a deficit in 2014 of \$598K, the deficit is manageable and very close to the budgeted deficit of \$575K. The Board adopted a deficit budget for the year to pursue a policy of investing in new and expanding services. RichmondPRA is budgeted to be breakeven or better in 2015.

The following information is extracted from the audited Financial Statements for RichmondPRA for the year ended June 2014. The detailed Audited Annual Financial Report for 2014 is available on request from RichmondPRA.

**Note:** In the accompanying financial information, Sources of Revenue 2012-13 Revenue of \$46.028M is overstated for comparison purposes by \$3.830M because the 2012-13 revenue benefitted by the initial setting up of a "Restricted Reserve" which is predominantly Income in Advance of its due date. The 2013-14 figures were not affected by this reserve. The Restricted Reserve is predominantly NSW Government funding. The non-operating income in 2012-13 was the profit on sale of a property at 153 George Street, Redfern.

## OUR SOURCES OF REVENUE 2013/14

	2013-14	2012-13
Commonwealth Government	\$14,314,735	\$13,304,696
NSW Government	\$25,874,233	\$25,230,607
Business Sales	\$3,477,804	\$3,921,356
Qld Government	\$1,556,994	\$1,923,198
Other Income	\$1,789,792	\$1,649,017
<b>Operating Income</b>	<b>\$47,013,558</b>	<b>\$46,028,874</b>
Non-operating income	\$295,836	\$5,616,213
<b>Total Income/Sales</b>	<b>\$47,309,394</b>	<b>\$51,645,087</b>

## COSTS SUMMARY

Supporting people where they live	\$22,757,083	\$22,501,103
Working with people to find a job	\$9,955,637	\$10,954,972
Helping people make friends, get involved and learn new things	\$11,610,079	\$6,628,964
Other	\$3,585,223	\$4,156,776
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$47,908,022</b>	<b>\$44,241,815</b>
	<b>(\$598,628)</b>	<b>\$7,403,272</b>

## OUR BALANCE SHEET AT A GLANCE

### ASSETS

Cash and cashable investments	\$15,992,436
Property, Plant and Equipment	\$14,714,917
Receivables	\$1,950,013
Other assets	\$294,871
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$32,952,236</b>

### LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$3,891,467
Accrued expense	\$660,390
Provision for Staff LSL and Holiday Pay	\$4,193,851
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$8,745,707</b>

### Equity

**\$24,206,529**

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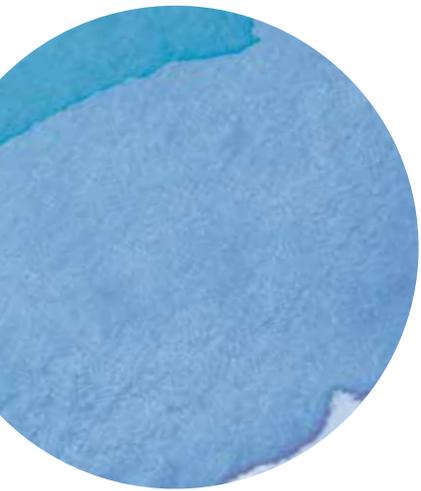
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